



**SPECIAL AGRO-INDUSTRIAL PROCESSING ZONES  
(SAPZ) PROGRAMME**  
Kano State

**NUTRITION**  
& Gender Mainstreaming  
Newsletter/Success Stories

Vol. 1 No.1 (Maiden Edition) November, 2025

This picture was captured during Groundnut Farmer Field day in Bebeji Local Government Area, Kano State. Picture above is Promoting post-harvest handling (Branding & Packaging), value addition after harvest

Bi-Annual Publication of SAPZ Programme Kano State



# poem

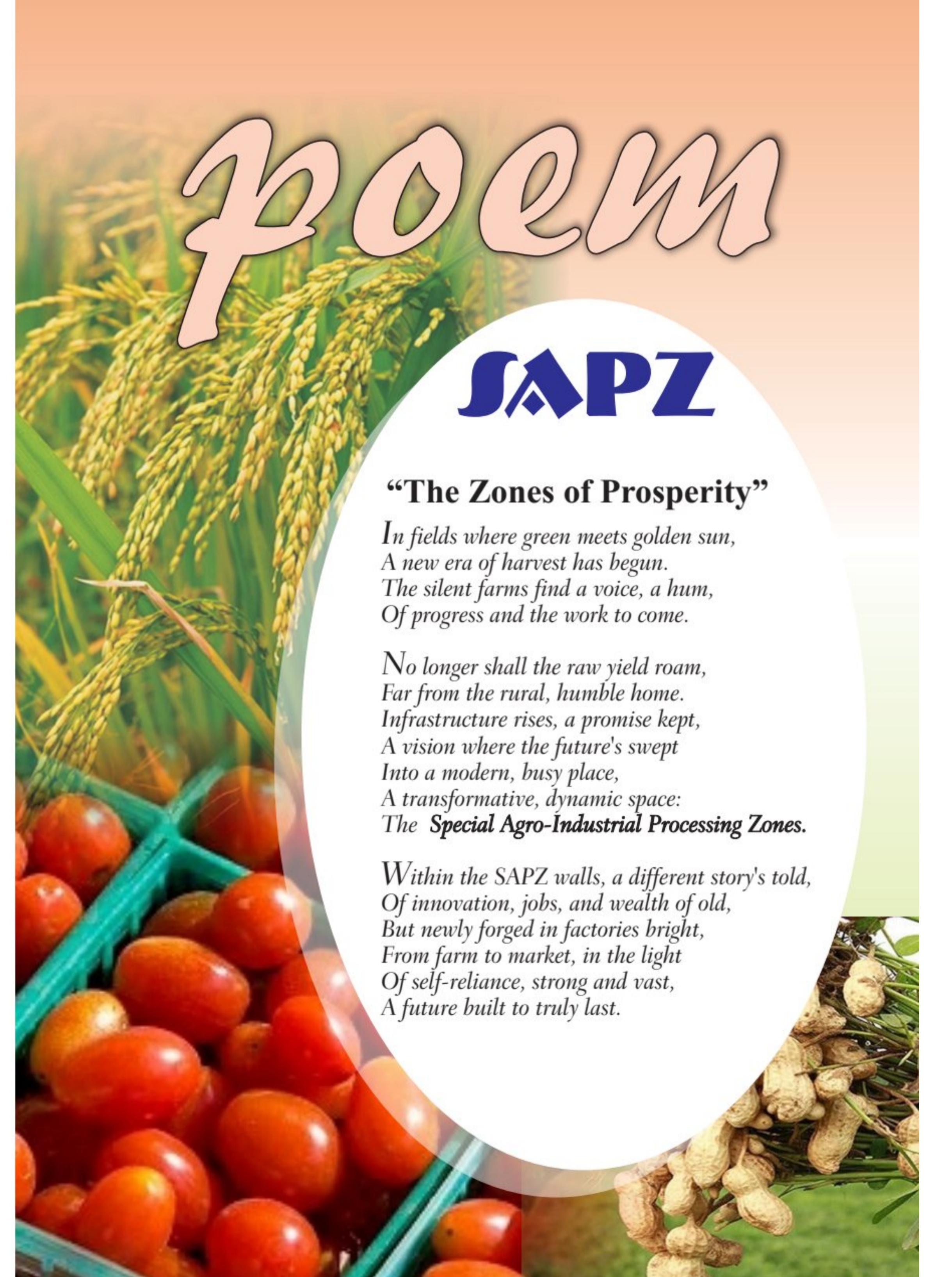
**SAPZ**

## **“The Zones of Prosperity”**

*In fields where green meets golden sun,  
A new era of harvest has begun.  
The silent farms find a voice, a hum,  
Of progress and the work to come.*

*No longer shall the raw yield roam,  
Far from the rural, humble home.  
Infrastructure rises, a promise kept,  
A vision where the future's swept  
Into a modern, busy place,  
A transformative, dynamic space:  
The **Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones**.*

*Within the SAPZ walls, a different story's told,  
Of innovation, jobs, and wealth of old,  
But newly forged in factories bright,  
From farm to market, in the light  
Of self-reliance, strong and vast,  
A future built to truly last.*



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# Editor's Note



**RABI MUSTAPHA SADIO**  
Knowledge Management and Communication Officer (KMC)  
SAPZ Kano SPIU

*Esteemed Reader,*

**A**s we go on with our mission of revolutionising the value chain along rice, tomato, Groundnut and Sessame production in Kano State, it gives me immense pride and pleasure to reassure farmers that Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone (SAPZ) Programme Kano State will not relent in its effort until the set agenda which is in the interest of farmers, the state and country at large is achieved.

SAPZ Programme in Kano State under the tripartite agreement of the Kano State Government, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and

Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) are determined to Capacitate small holder farmers, small agro-processors and traders and community-based service providers including women and youth to take advantage of the market demand created by the SAPZ to sustainably enhance their income, improved households food security and resilient to climate change.

SAPZ will ensure to support farmers to the level of high productivity, yield, economic prosperity and food sufficiency in line with the Federal Government's bid in attaining Nutrition and Food Security.

Despite the current insecurity in the country which posed enormous challenges, affecting all sectors of life, it is remarkable that we at SAPZ Kano State Programme Implementation Unit have recorded huge success.

Our successes are evident by testimonies and gratefulness of our beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders.

The Maiden Edition of the SAPZ Gender and Nutrition Mainstreaming Newsletter, promises to make an interesting reading as we present to you details on the successes recorded in interviews with stakeholders on the performance of SAPZ in Kano State so far on Gender and Nutrition mainstreaming and also testimonies of beneficiaries from the home gardening intervention activities of the Programme.

It will also interest you reading how experts converge in Kano to find lasting communication solutions to adoption of technologies demonstrated to farmers by the SAPZ Programme Kano State. In this edition also, you will read about the successes recorded by SAPZ Programme Kano State and plans to move farming along rice, tomato, groundnut and Sessame value chains to the next level.

Please Enjoy!  
Rabi Mustapha Sadiq  
Editor

## IFAD'S VIEW ON MAINSTREAMING GENDER AND NUTRITION IN ITS INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

(Empowering rural women and their communities)

**W**omen are major contributors to agriculture and rural economies, but face numerous challenges that men do not. They have less access to resources and services, including land, finance, training, inputs and equipment. In addition to their agricultural work, they are overburdened with domestic chores and caring tasks.

Despite being productive members of their families, organizations and communities, rural women are not always able to raise their voices and contribute to decisions about household and community issues, money or business – including how their own income is spent.

Throughout their lives, rural women face barriers to full mobility and political participation. It starts early, with girls less likely than boys to receive the schooling and support they need.

Many written laws still discriminate on the basis of gender, and traditions and patriarchal norms continue to perpetuate gender inequality. As a result, women's rights, movement, autonomy and access to opportunities and resources are restricted.

In communities that rely largely on agriculture for their food and income, gender inequality translates into a large gender gap in agricultural productivity, for which countries pay a high price. In Uganda, for example, the cost of the gender gap in the country's agriculture sector is estimated at US\$67 million per year.

### Building a more inclusive economy

Promoting gender equality is a key element of IFAD's work to reduce rural poverty and improve food security. Women make up about

half of all participants of the projects we support. When women are empowered, families, communities and countries benefit. IFAD has been at the forefront of gender equality in rural communities, with a focus on transformative and long-lasting results. Our programmes and projects are inclusive and results-oriented. They help rural women grow more food, connect to markets, increase their incomes, and become more literate and financially skilled.

Women's empowerment cannot be achieved without change at a household level, involving all members, young and old, women and men. IFAD, in cooperation with its partners, is one of the leading agencies pioneering the innovative approach of using Household Methodologies (HHMs). This approach seeks to change the persistent pattern of gender inequality, particularly among farming families and communities.

HHMs shift the focus from the individual to the household level, and from things – such as assets, resources and infrastructure – to people, and who they aspire to be and what they aspire to do.

Participants learn about the links between poverty and gender inequality in the household, while developing a shared vision for the family's development.

The results have been transformational. Improving the status of women has led to greater agricultural productivity and the fairer distribution of labour. There have been other game-changing development outcomes, such as improved child nutrition, since women are more likely than men to spend their income on food and education.

Empowered women are able to participate more fully in their communities and encourage inclusive local policies that further

## IFAD'S INVESTMENT IN NUTRITION

Every nation in the world is grappling with malnutrition. Even rich countries are increasingly confronting hunger, underweight, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity.

Over 3 billion people worldwide have poor-quality diets. Ironically, food and nutrition insecurity disproportionately affects the rural people we rely on to produce the food we eat. Malnutrition casts a shadow over the entire life course. Globally, undernutrition is the main cause of child mortality.

Children who experience chronic malnutrition during the crucial first 1,000 days from conception risk irreversible damage to their physical and cognitive development. Lack of affordable, nutritious food prevents people from realizing their full potential in education or employment, and perpetuates generational poverty.

In recent years, economic slowdown, conflict, climate shocks, widening socioeconomic disparities and a global pandemic have impeded growth. This has made it harder for low- and middle-income countries to invest in achieving the SDGs, including zero hunger.

Hunger is often a man-made problem. It is deeply entrenched in the structural deficiencies and inequalities of food systems. These, in turn, have been exacerbated by chronic underinvestment in sustainable agriculture and rural development.

Agriculture is the cornerstone of our efforts to combat malnutrition and ensure food and nutrition security. We can enhance the availability and affordability of nutritious foods, particularly for those most vulnerable, by investing in agriculture.

While food is our most basic need, investing in nutrition through agriculture is also sound development policy and good economics. This requires a multisector approach tailored to the realities of small-scale producers and rural food systems.

Agriculture shapes our diets and food systems. Farming practices can promote diverse and nutritious crops which help address dietary deficiencies. Supporting small-scale producers, who often find it hard to access resources and markets, can strengthen local food systems.

Investing in nutrition through agriculture helps to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. The positive impacts go beyond health to encompass education, gender equality, resilience and environmental sustainability. By promoting sustainable agricultural practices and healthy eating habits, we can create resilient food systems that can withstand challenges.



Investing in rural people

# SAPZ Intervention

## Targets 15,463 Farmers in Kano



**DR. DANJUMA MAHMOUD**

**Hon. Commissioner Ministry of Agriculture & Natural Resources**

Kano Scales Up Nutrition Support Under SAPZ  
Programme—Commissioner

The Kano State Government says it has intensified nutrition-focused agricultural interventions under the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) programme to address widespread malnutrition and enhance food security across the state.

The Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dr. Danjuma Mahmoud, disclosed this in an interview with newsmen on Monday in Kano.

Mahmoud said the nutrition intervention component of the SAPZ programme was designed to improve access to safe and nutritious food, empower women and strengthen household resilience in rural

communities.

He noted that good nutrition remained central to improving child health, school performance, productivity and overall economic growth.

“Well-nourished children learn better, well-nourished mothers give birth to healthier babies, and well-nourished adults contribute to a strong and productive workforce,” he said.

The commissioner expressed concern over the high rates of stunting and anaemia recorded in Kano, describing the situation as a major public health challenge requiring urgent multi-sectoral action.

Citing national statistics, he said stunting among children under five in Kano averages

61.5 per cent, significantly higher than the global average of 22 per cent, while anaemia prevalence among children aged 6 – 59 months stands between 71 and 77 percent.

Mahmoud said the state government had demonstrated strong commitment to reversing the trend through its active support for the SAPZ programme.

According to him, the administration of Gov. Abba Kabir Yusuf has released N350 million as counterpart funding since inception.

He said the programme had attracted major funding from development partners including the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), amounting to USD 71.48 million for Kano.

The commissioner explained that so far, 15,463 farmers had been successfully profiled across six local government areas as potential beneficiaries of various SAPZ components.

He listed the LGAs as Bebeji, Dambatta, Gezawa, Bichi, Garun Mallam and Kura.

Mahmoud said the beneficiaries consisted of 3,989 male youth, 5,723 male adults, 3,307 female youth and 2,444 female adults.

He also disclosed that several private sector off-takers had been identified in rice, groundnut and tomato value chains to guarantee market linkages for farmers.

On capacity building, Mahmoud said the SAPZ State Project Implementation Unit (SPIU) had trained 5,569 women on nutrition fundamentals, hygiene and food safety, cooking demonstrations, home gardening and

basic entrepreneurship.

“Most of the trainees are women under 30. They are trained as master trainers and are expected to cascade the knowledge to other members of their farmer organisations,” he added.

Mahmoud said the training was aimed at promoting diversified diets, improving household food production and strengthening women’s economic empowerment.

He reaffirmed the government’s determination to leverage agriculture as a tool for reducing malnutrition, improving rural livelihoods and accelerating economic growth.

“The nexus between agriculture, food security and nutrition is clear. Increased production of safe, accessible and diversified foods is critical for a healthier Kano,” he said.



**DR. DANJUMA MAHMOUD**  
Hon. Commissioner Ministry of Agriculture  
& Natural Resources

## Participate Fully in SAPZ Intervention Programmes, National Project Coordinator, SAPZ Programme Dr. Kabir Yusuf, Urges Women, Youths of Kano State



The National Programme Coordinator of Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ), Dr. Kabiru Yusuf, has advised women and youth in Kano State to take advantage of the newly introduced programme by participating fully in its gender mainstreaming and nutrition intervention programmes to improve their socio-economic status.

Dr. Yusuf who gave the advice while fielding questions from newsmen in Kano said the call or advice was necessary in view of the fact that SAPZ programme is designed to support women and youth through knowledge, tools and opportunities.

“To the women and youth of Kano, I want to

say: you are the engine of change in your communities. Your role in shaping a food-secure and nutritionally healthy Kano State cannot be overstated,” he said.

He specifically urged women and youth in the state to fully participate in the programme especially, by taking ownership of its home gardening and nutrition programmes so as to be champions of healthy living in their respective households and communities.

“Together, we can build a future where every child is well-nourished, every woman empowered, and every youth gainfully engaged in agribusiness,” he said.

The National Programme Coordinator noted that women and youths are at the heart of the SAPZ Program as according to him there are a number of specific packages that are designed for them.

He listed the special packages as capacity building and skill development, access to resources, empowerment through women and youth platforms as well as gender transformative approaches.

“To ensure that these interventions targeted at women and youth are accomplished, the programme is designed to promote equal participation of both genders (male 50%, female 50%) and 40% youth participation,” he said.

On why SAPZ Program is supporting nutrition mainstreaming in Nigeria, Dr. Yusuf said, “We recognize that agricultural development is not just about increasing yields and income



**Dr. Kabir Yusuf National Programme Coordinator SAPZ Programme  
Photo Captured during FGN/SAPZ/IFAD First Supervision Mission**

or enhancing productivity but it is also about improving the well-being of communities and households, especially vulnerable groups like women and children, specifically aged 0-5 years.

“Malnutrition remains a critical challenge in Nigeria, with direct implications for productivity, education, and national development. By integrating nutrition into our agricultural value chains, the SAPZ Programme ensures that the food produced is not only abundant but also nutrient-dense and nutritious.

“Our goal is to promote food systems that deliver healthy diets, reduce hunger, and strengthen resilience at the household level,” he stressed.

He further explained that SAPZ Programme is fully aligned with the nutrition priorities of the Federal Government of Nigeria, as well as the specific strategies of the participating states.

“We have built our nutrition interventions on

national frameworks such as the National

Multi-Sectoral Plan of Action for Food and Nutrition (NMPFAN) and the Agricultural Sector Food Security and Nutrition Strategy (ASFNS). At the state level, we work closely with Ministries of Agriculture, Health, and other reputable organizations/NGOs to ensure synergy with their State Committees on Food and Nutrition.

“Our interventions are designed through consultative processes and adapted to local contexts to ensure relevance, ownership, and sustainability,” the National Programme Coordinator said.

He said some of the key nutrition intervention programmes of the projects included home gardening initiatives, nutrition sensitization campaigns, training of trainers, development of nutrition education materials and promotion of nutritious value chains including the cultivation of crops such as Roselle (Zobo), alongside high-micronutrient priority value chains such as rice, tomato, groundnut and sesame.

## SAPZ -PROGRAMME OVERVIEW



**Aminu Ilyasu**  
State Programme Co-ordinator (SPC)  
SAPZ Kano SPIU

The Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) project is a comprehensive agro-industrialization program designed as a tool for creating integrated, agricultural-focused platforms that will accelerate private sector investment in value added agro-processing to unlock opportunities for improved food security, job creation, import substitution, rural poverty reduction and increased contribution of agriculture to national Growth Development Product (GDP).

The Federal Government of Nigeria in partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), State governments and private investors decided to implement the project in seven states under the first phase.

The seven states participating in the AfDB/IFAD/IsDB Assisted SAPZ project include Kano, Imo, Kaduna, Cross River, Kwara, Oyo and Ogun and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in the first phase.

SAPZ Project is targeting 16 Local

Government Areas in Kano State during its first phase of Implementation period (2022–2028) and is currently promoting four Value Chains in the state namely: Rice, Tomato, Sesame and Groundnut.

The local government areas are: Kura, Bagwai, Bebeji, Bichi, Danbatta, Garun Mallam, DawakinTofa, Gezawa, Dawakin Kudu, Kumbotso, Gabasawa, Minjibir, Shanono, Madobi, Gwarzo and Tofa.

The Program Development Objective (PDO) is to support the development of SAPZ in high food production areas to supply the domestic food market and create exportable surpluses as well as capacitate smallholder farmers, small agro-processors and traders and community-based service providers including women and youth, to take advantage of the market demand created by the SAPZ to sustainably enhance their income, household food security and resilience to climate change.

The Program has four broad components namely: (i) Infrastructure Development and Management of Agro- Industrial Hubs (AIHs) (ii) Agricultural Productivity, Production, Market Linkages and Value Addition in SAPZ Catchment Areas (iii) Policy and Institutional Development Support and (iv) Program Coordination and Management.

Nigeria finds it very expedient to feed its population of over 200 million people, the largest population in Africa, because it has reached a critical level of food imports, spending over \$1.5 billion a year on agricultural imports. So, with competing needs on the national budget, this situation threatens national food security and perpetuates poverty. 70 percent of the Nigerian farming population are poor smallholders with limited ability to cope with shocks—particularly related to climate change;

majority of which are rural women. 44.1% of the Nigerian population suffer from food insecurity, 12.6% are undernourished and 37% of children under five are stunted. Nigeria's Agricultural Transformation Agenda aims to achieve a hunger-free Nigeria through a climate resilient agricultural sector that drives income growth, accelerates achievement of food and nutritional security, generates employment, and transforms Nigeria into a leading player in global food markets to grow wealth for millions of farmers.

To achieve this vision, the Federal Government aims to move away from years of neglect of agriculture to focus on the development of climate resilient agricultural value chains, including the provision and availability of improved inputs, increased productivity and production and the creation of an enabling environment for the private sector. At the heart of this new approach is the set-up of Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ), which aims to link the agricultural sector with the industrial/processing sector to supply the domestic market and promote agricultural exports, while providing income and employment opportunities to vulnerable rural households. Another component of this strategy is to promote the use of innovative low emission technologies and climate resilient practices under the Green Imperatives Plan.

The Federal Government's objective is to leverage AfDB and IFAD's comparative advantage to set up inclusive SAPZs. AfDB will support the FGN in setting up an enabling

environment for the private sector including appropriate fiscal policies and incentives, investment, and infrastructure policies for SAPZs. The Federal Government has requested IFAD's support, to capacitate the millions of Nigerian rural smallholders and operators, youth and women living below the poverty line to take advantage of the SAPZ market outlets. For this, they must be empowered to overcome key challenges such as marketing capacity, poor yields, limited value addition and deficits in small-scale support systems such as infrastructure, access to inputs, and financial backing.

With SAPZ and the increased demand from agro-processors, market opportunities will exponentially expand. The SAPZ programme will capitalize the IFAD sponsored VCDP to support smallholder farmers and small scale operators to capitalize on the new markets created by SAPZ.



**Aminu Ilyasu**  
State Programme Co-ordinator (SPC), SAPZ Kano SPIU

## Turning Knowledge into Better Nutrition for SAPZ Communities



**Babangida Shehu**  
National Knowledge Management & Communication Expert SAPZ Programme

Knowledge Management is a critical cross-cutting pillar of the SAPZ Programme, supporting all thematic areas and amplifying their impact through effective documentation, learning, and visibility. By systematically capturing, packaging, and sharing evidence-based results, knowledge management ensures that programme experiences translate into actionable insights that inform decision-making, policy dialogue, and stakeholder engagement.

In the area of nutrition, Knowledge Management and Communication plays a particularly strategic role by

strengthening Behaviour Change Communication (BCC). Through the generation and dissemination of timely, accurate, and people centred information, SAPZ is able to influence attitudes, promote healthier food choices, and encourage improved

nutrition practices among beneficiaries. These communication efforts ensure that nutrition interventions go beyond awareness to drive lasting behavioural changes at household and community levels.

By integrating knowledge products, success stories, data, and lessons learned into its communication platforms, SAPZ not only increases the visibility of nutrition outcomes but also reinforces their sustainability. This approach positions Knowledge Management as a powerful enabler of impact, connecting field-level action to national and global learning, and ensuring that the benefits of SAPZ interventions are widely understood, adopted, scaled and sustained.

## Kano's achievements on Nutrition Intervention by National Gender and Social Safeguard Specialist, Jamila Hassan

National Gender and Social Safeguard Specialist, SAPZ programme where she bares her mind on the successes recorded by the programme regarding nutrition intervention.

### Question:

*Can you please disclose the progress achieved so far, regarding Nutrition intervention across SAPZ communities and target groups in Kano?*

### Answer:

Yes, significant progress has been made in rolling out nutrition-sensitive interventions across the SAPZ target communities in Kano State. Under the Accelerated Pilot Mission, we trained heads of women farmer organizations through a Training of Trainers (ToT) approach on the establishment and management of home gardens for improved household nutrition. These leaders have cascaded the training to their members in selected clusters in Kura and Bagwai LGAs. Additionally, we developed and disseminated culturally relevant nutrition education materials that focus on balanced diets, food preparation, and dietary diversity, particularly for women and children. Our activities have reached over 800 farmers so far, with 50% women and 40% youth representation, aligning with our inclusion targets.

### Question:

*What are the results indicators (Results Framework) for achieving SAPZ Programme Nutrition Interventions?*

### Answer:

The SAPZ Programme utilizes a comprehensive results framework with the following key nutrition indicators: Number of households adopting home gardening practices, Percentage increase in dietary diversity scores among targeted households, Number of women and youth trained on nutrition-sensitive agriculture, Improvement in nutrition knowledge among women

farmers, caregivers, and even male farmers, and Number of community-level nutrition campaigns conducted. These indicators help us track both output and outcome-level achievements and ensure that nutrition is fully integrated into the agricultural value chain approach of the SAPZ. We have also Improved nutrition status of children aged 0-5 years in households supported with nutrition interventions.

### Question:

*Can you mention the key areas of Nutrition Intervention in Kano?*

### Answer:

The key nutrition intervention areas in Kano under the SAPZ Programme include Home gardening and promotion of nutrient-dense crops such as vegetables and Roselle (zobo), Nutrition education and sensitization targeting women, youth, and caregivers, Training of Trainers (ToT) and community demonstrations for sustainable household food production, Inclusion of nutrition-sensitive messages within extension services and farmer group meetings, Monitoring and support for household dietary improvement through food diversification, Support for female beneficiaries with toolkits for home gardening and Cooking demonstrations to ensure improved household nutrition.

### Question:

*Can you disclose some of the strategies behind gender mainstreaming, women's inclusion, and youth participation in the SAPZ Programme?*

### Answer:

Our gender mainstreaming strategy is built on inclusion, empowerment, and capacity building. We ensure 50% of all program participants are women and 40% are youth. We work closely with women farmer organizations to identify needs and co-create interventions such as home gardens and nutrition training.

Through the Gender Action Learning System (GALS), we are also promoting household dialogue and decision-making on nutrition, income, and shared responsibilities. Additionally, all program activities are designed with cultural sensitivity, particularly in respect to community dynamics in Kano. Youth engagement is being fostered through skills development in agribusiness and nutrition-focused value chains.

**Question:**  
*Can you mention the target beneficiaries for women and youth in SAPZ Programme?*

**Answer:**

The target beneficiaries for women and youth in SAPZ programme include Women farmer organizations, largely of childbearing age, engaged in smallholder agriculture and home gardening. Other beneficiaries are Young agripreneurs interested in nutrition-sensitive value chains like vegetable farming, food processing, and marketing, Mothers/Caregivers of children under five and pregnant/lactating women, who benefit from nutrition education and Female-headed households and vulnerable youth groups who receive additional support to enhance food security and income.

**Question:**  
*What is your message to the women and youth in Kano State?*

**Answer:**

To the women and youth of Kano State, I encourage you to see agriculture not just as a livelihood, but as a pathway to improve nutrition, health, and economic empowerment. Your active participation in the SAPZ Programme is vital to achieving food and nutrition security in your communities. Embrace the training, apply the knowledge, and be agents of change—because when women and youth thrive, entire communities will prosper.

**Question:**  
How many Government/Private institutions

were you able to collaborate with in terms of achieving or promoting the FGN/KNSG food and nutritional security and in what area specifically?

**Answer:**

We have collaborated with several institutions to align SAPZ nutrition and gender interventions with the broader food and nutrition security agenda. Our key partners include Kano Medical Centre Nutrition Department, for technical guidance on nutrition messaging Kano Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (KNARDA) and extension officers, who assist with monitoring and knowledge transfer.

We also have private sector partners who are involved in seed distribution and input supply for home gardening. They include Civil Society Organizations, such as CS-SUNN (Civil Society Scaling up Nutrition in Nigeria), are involved in grassroots sensitization and gender-responsive community engagement. Another one is Horti Nigeria which has provided consistent support in facilitating workshops, training, and hands-on demonstrations for improved home gardening practices using Good Agronomic Practices (GAP) vegetables, fruits, and legumes.



**Jamila Hassan**  
*National Gender and Social Safeguard Specialist*

# COLLABORATIONS

KNADA, SMEDAN, NAIC and CABEX Partner to Implement SAPZ Programme Activities



Director Admin and General Services (DAGS) KNARDA Haj. Bilkisu Ibrahim Khalil and KMC Kano, Rabi Mustapha Sadiq and other management team of KNARDA and SAPZ KSPIU after signing of the MoU

SAPZ Programme KSPIU has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Kano Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (KNARDA)

KNARDA is a government agency in Kano State, Nigeria, that works to improve agricultural production and enhance rural livelihoods through infrastructure development, agro-processing, and market access. The agency collaborates with other institutions, like the Institute for Agricultural Research (IAR) at Ahmadu Bello University, to bring new agricultural technologies and practices to farmers.

While on the other hand SAPZ Programme SAPZ Programme is a comprehensive agro-industrialization program designed as a tool for creating integrated, agricultural-focused platforms that will accelerate private sector investment in value added agro-processing to unlock opportunities for improved food security, job creation, import substitution, rural poverty reduction and increased contribution of agriculture to national GDP.

Both parties agreed to work together in the area of agricultural

extension services, conducts of Farmer Field Schools (FFS), Farmer Field Days, Technology Demonstrations, Knowledge and Information Sharing, Mentorship and Coaching, Monitoring & Evaluation and Inputs Distribution

During the signing of the MoU both parties roles and responsibilities were categorically stated, KNARDA's roles includes technical support on mentorship and coaching, data collections, resource persons, development of training modules and report writing whereas SAPZ Programme KSPIU will provide logistics, target locations, list of clusters, farmer groups and working periodically on Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials.

The MoU was duly signed on the 28th day of October, 2025 by the Director Admin and General Services from KNARDA on behalf of the Managing Director, in the presence of Director Extension while the Knowledge Management and Communication Officer (KMCO) signed on behalf of the SPC SAPZ in presence of Agricultural Productivity Officer.



A cross section of participants of the meeting of the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between KNARDA and SAPZ Kano State

# COLLABORATIONS

KNADA, SMEDAN, NAIC and CABEX, ICRISAT, KASMEDA and CDA Partner to Implement SAPZ Programme Activities



**Group photograph captured during the signing  
of the MoU with CABEX**

**In another Development:** SAPZ Programme KSPIU, has again signed MOU with SMEDAN, NAIC CABEX, ICRISAT, KASMEDA and CDA

The Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) programme, Kano State has entered into Agreement with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN)

The Memorandum of Understanding has been



**One of the group photographs captured during the signing  
of the MoU with KASMEDAN**

duly signed on the 28th day of October, 2025 between the Agency and SAPZ Programme in kano

The parties have agreed to work together in the areas of technical assistance and advisory services to MSMEs, Capacity Building, Infrastructure and Business Environment, Market Access, Value Chain Integration and Monitoring, Evaluation Learning (MEL)

The parties agreed to establish a working technical committee that will be coordinating the affairs of the collaboration and ensure sustainability.

The programme has equally signed MoU with Kano State Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (KASMEDAN) in the same area of collaborations with SMEDAN and have agreed to establish a working committee to take charge of the activities identified in order to fast track implementation, the final agreement will be sign upon its final approval.



**Group photograph captured during the signing of the MoU with CAC**

To hit the nail on the head, SAPZ KSPIU has agreed to work in close relationship with Aliko Dangote University of Science and Technology (CABEX) Wudil, Kano State.

CABEX and SAPZ Programme KSPIU reached agreement to work in the area of Agricultural Research and Innovation, Capacity Building and Human Resource Development, Extension and Outreach, Policy Research and Knowledge Sharing Management.

The MoU was signed between the duo on the 28th day of October, 2025 and agreed to work for the programme lifespan.

National Agricultural Insurance Corporation has also signed MoU with SAPZ Programme KSPIU on 28th October, 2025 details on the areas for collaborations will be provided in the upon completion of the said agreement.

To cap it all, SAPZ Programme is in the stage of final preparations to sign Memorandum of Understanding with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)

The parties agreed to work together in the area of farmer's Agribusiness capacity

building development, value chain development and integration, post harvest and Agro-processing, market linkages, financial inclusion, data sharing and knowledge management

The parties agreed to sign the MoU after conducting the final seating to reach the final decision.



**Group photograph captured after the signing of the MoU's**



**Group photograph captured during the signing of the MoU with SMEDAN**

## CPAT PERSPECTIVE ON SAPZ NUTRITION AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING PROGRAMME



**Dr. Saudatu Zahradeen**  
Youth and Gender Specialist, Country Programme Advisory Team (CPAT)

**Dr. Saudatu Zahradeen**  
Youth and Gender Specialist, Country  
Programme Advisory Team (CPAT),  
IFAD–Nigeria

*Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food  
Security (FMAFS)*

**Q1. Please can you introduce yourself and  
your position in CPAT?**

I am **Dr. Saudatu Zahradeen**, currently engaged by the **Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (FMAFS)** as a **Youth and Gender Specialist Consultant** under the **Department of Federal Donor Partners**, formerly known as the **Projects Coordinating Unit (PCU)**.

Within this structure, I serve as part of the **Country Programme Advisory Team (CPAT)** for IFAD–Nigeria. CPAT functions as the **technical backbone** of IFAD-supported agricultural programmes in the country—offering professional advisory services to enhance project performance, coordination, and alignment with national and international frameworks on rural transformation, social inclusion, and gender equality.

My work focuses on **mainstreaming youth, gender, and social inclusion** across the IFAD portfolio, ensuring that interventions are not only technically sound but also **responsive to community realities**, particularly the needs and aspirations of women and youth in agriculture.

**Q2. What is the working relationship between the SAPZ Programme and CPAT?**

The **Country Programme Advisory Team (CPAT)** maintains a **strategic and supportive working relationship** with the **Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ)** Programme. As an advisory body, CPAT provides **technical guidance, policy alignment, and operational support** to ensure that IFAD-funded programmes, including SAPZ, achieve their intended outcomes efficiently and inclusively.

Our responsibilities include: **Building technical capacity** within project teams; **Developing and reviewing operational manuals and frameworks**; **Preparing Terms of Reference (ToRs)** for consultancies and studies; **Participating in project design, pre-implementation, and supervision missions**; and **facilitating cross-project learning and experience sharing**.

Through these roles, CPAT ensures that SAPZ benefits from **best practices and tested models** from other IFAD projects in Nigeria. A good example is the **learning exchange between SAPZ and the Value Chain Development Programme (VCDP)** in Benue State, where SAPZ teams observed how

women and youth networks manage **Empowerment Learning Centers (ELCs)** to promote inclusive agribusiness. Similarly, another learning route between **SAPZ and the LIFE-ND project** focused on **nutrition-sensitive interventions**, particularly the biofortification of crops such as the **Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP)**, which has significant potential for improving dietary diversity and addressing micronutrient deficiencies. Such knowledge exchanges reflect CPAT's core mandate—**fostering collaboration, innovation, and continuous learning** among IFAD projects to accelerate impact.

### **Q3. Are you aware of Gender and Nutrition Mainstreaming Interventions in the SAPZ Programme?**

Yes, absolutely. CPAT has been **actively involved** in shaping and supporting SAPZ's approach to gender and nutrition mainstreaming right from the design and early implementation stages.

During the **review of the SAPZ Project Implementation Manual (PIM) and Project Design Report (PDR)**, CPAT ensured that gender equality, youth empowerment, and nutrition-sensitive strategies were **fully integrated** into the project's framework. This laid a strong foundation for operationalizing these priorities across SAPZ's value chains.

At implementation stage, the **SAPZ National Gender and Social Safeguard Officers**, with CPAT's guidance, developed **customized manuals and implementation guides** drawing insights from sister projects such as VCDP and LIFE-ND. Importantly, **gender and nutrition indicators were incorporated into the project's logical framework**, making performance tracking and results measurement more robust.

To deepen understanding among partners,

**stakeholder workshops** were organized in **Kano and Ogun States**, where diverse actors—government, private sector, farmers' groups, and community-based organizations—collectively reviewed the frameworks, strategies, and activities for gender and nutrition mainstreaming.

The key lesson was clear: **SAPZ cannot achieve inclusive transformation alone**. Successful mainstreaming depends on **partnerships and leveraging local structures**—from the grassroots through LGAs up to the state level. Currently, CPAT maintains a **vibrant and collaborative relationship** with SAPZ through regular **technical consultations, joint missions, and hybrid meetings** (both physical and virtual). These engagements continue to strengthen the coherence and quality of SAPZ's mainstreaming work nationwide.

### **Q4. How can you rate SAPZ's performance in Gender and Nutrition Mainstreaming so far?**

I would rate SAPZ's performance as **strong and steadily improving**. Considering that SAPZ is a relatively new programme, the commitment it has demonstrated towards gender equality and nutrition inclusion is **highly commendable**.

The programme has succeeded in building **awareness and institutional ownership** around gender and nutrition among its partners. It has also made significant progress in developing operational tools, establishing partnerships, and aligning its implementation strategies with **IFAD's Social Inclusion and Nutrition Frameworks**.

What stands out most is SAPZ's deliberate effort to **treat gender and nutrition as cross-cutting priorities**, not as stand-alone components. This integrated approach ensures that interventions—from production to processing and marketing—respond to the unique needs of women, men, and youth while promoting better nutrition outcomes for

households.

With continued technical backstopping and resource support, SAPZ is on a strong path to becoming a **national model of inclusive agro-industrialization** in Nigeria.

#### **Q5. In what areas do you think the Programme should improve?**

While SAPZ has made notable progress, there are several areas where improvement would further enhance its performance and impact:

**Strengthening coordination and synergy:** Ensuring effective collaboration between **national, state, and local levels** of implementation will help avoid duplication and ensure a consistent quality of gender and nutrition interventions.

**Capacity building at subnational levels:** There is a continued need to train **state officers, local government extension agents, and private sector partners** on gender-responsive agribusiness models and nutrition-sensitive agricultural practices.

**Data and evidence generation:** Strengthening **monitoring systems** to capture **sex-disaggregated and nutrition-specific data** is vital for demonstrating impact and informing future policy dialogue.

**Deepening community participation:** Sustained **community engagement and sensitization** will empower local groups—especially women and youth—to take ownership of SAPZ initiatives and influence decision-making in value chain governance.

By addressing these areas, SAPZ can consolidate its achievements and ensure that gender and nutrition mainstreaming translate into **tangible livelihood improvements and enhanced food and nutrition security** for rural households.

#### **Q6. What advice do you have for the component and its beneficiaries?**

For the **SAPZ Gender and Nutrition component**, my advice is to remain **consistent, collaborative, and innovative**. Mainstreaming is a process that thrives on continuous learning and strong partnerships. The component should therefore: Sustain its **collaboration with CPAT and other IFAD projects**, Strengthen partnerships with **relevant ministries (Health, Women Affairs, Education)**, Work closely with **research institutions and private sector players**, and Encourage the **integration of nutrition education and gender equity** in all SAPZ interventions.

For **beneficiaries**, particularly **women and youth**, I encourage them to see SAPZ not just as a project but as an **opportunity for transformation**. They should actively participate in decision-making processes, embrace improved technologies, engage in value addition, and champion nutrition-sensitive production systems.

By taking ownership and working collectively, beneficiaries can help turn SAPZ's vision—“**From Farm to Prosperity**”—into a lasting reality for communities across Nigeria. CPAT remains committed to supporting SAPZ through **technical backstopping, knowledge exchange, and institutional capacity development**. Together, we are building a pathway where **gender equality, youth empowerment, and improved nutrition** become central pillars of Nigeria's agro-industrial transformation agenda.



**Dr. Saudatu Zahradeen**  
Youth and Gender Specialist, Country Programme Advisory Team (CPAT)

## *SAPZ Solicits Cooperation of Policy Makers, Traditional Institutions Through Community Engagement and Awareness Creation Campaign in the 16 LGAs of SAPZ Programme Catchment Areas in Kano.*



SPC SAPZ Programme Kano State Aminu Ilyasu while presenting IEC materials to the Secretary of Dawakin Kudu LGA during Community Engagement

### FG Targets 750,000 Women Farmers, Processors, Aggregators In Kano

The Federal Government-assisted Kano State Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone (SAPZ) initiative revealed that it is set to empower at least 750,000 women who are agro-industry investors, aggregators, and support service providers operating within AIHs and Agricultural Transformation Centres (ATCs) as the first phase is expected to directly benefit at least 1.5 million households.

The drive targets smallholder farmers, small agro-processors, traders, and service providers in the following eight Local Government Areas (LGAs): Dawakin Kudu, Kumbotso, Tofa, Gwarzo, Madobi, Shanono, Minjibir, and Gadasawa. These LGAs are being integrated into the SAPZ framework

following the successful pilot implementation in Kura and Bagwai LGAs, where 1,000 farmers, 500 rice farmers and 500 tomato farmers benefited from the initiative.

The Project Coordinator, Aminu Abdullahi Iliyasu, made this known while launching a community engagement and awareness creation campaign across eight additional catchment areas in the state.

He said, "This initiative aims to inform and mobilize smallholder farmers, agro-processors, traders, and community-based service providers about the programme's objectives and benefits."

The State Knowledge and Communication Officer (KMC) Rabi Mustapha Sadiq disclosed that the Federal Government of Nigeria in collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), state governments and private investors, is implementing the SAPZ initiative across seven



Group photograph at Shanono LGA

## Cont: Community Engagement



Group photograph in Gabasawa LGA

states – Kano, Imo, Kaduna, Cross River, Kwara, Oyo and Ogun, as well as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in its first phase.

She said, "SAPZ is a comprehensive agro-industrialization initiative designed to boost private-sector investment in value-added agro-processing. The program seeks to enhance food security, create jobs, promote import substitution, reduce rural poverty, and increase agriculture's contribution to Nigeria's GDP.

"It supports the development of high-food-production areas to supply the domestic market and generate exportable surpluses while empowering smallholder farmers, agro-processors, and traders, particularly women and youth.

adding that "SAPZ operates on a market-driven model, ensuring sustainability through a robust value-chain approach that integrates government institutions, farmer organizations, and private-sector stakeholders.

she further stated that 1085 smallholder farmers across Rice, Tomato, Sesame and Groundnut from the remaining 8 LGAs were in attendance, of the community engagement and awareness campaign.



Dissemination of SAPZ Knowledge materials to Gwarzo LGA Policy Makers and other relevant stake-holders



Dissemination of SAPZ Knowledge materials to Madobi LGA Policy Makers and other relevant stake-holders

# Sensitization

## SENSITISATION WORKSHOP ON NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS IN SAPZ CONCEPT

The Special Agro-industrial Processing Zone (SAPZ) Project recently held a three-day workshop focused on enhancing awareness of Nutrition Interventions within the framework of the SAPZ initiative. According to Miss Jamila A. Hassan, the project's National Gender Expert, the



**President Nutrition Society of Nigeria, Prof. Salisu Maiwada Abubakar, participated during the training**

workshop's primary objective was to elevate understanding and promote the adoption of nutritional practices among the designated beneficiaries of the programme. Miss Jamila noted that the workshop was specifically designed for project implementers, collaborators, and development agents, enabling them to disseminate the knowledge gained to the intended beneficiaries. In his opening remarks, Dr. Zakari Tsiga, the National Operations Manager of the Project, urged attendees to apply the insights they acquired during the workshop effectively. He emphasized that issues surrounding food availability, accessibility, and utilization pose significant challenges within Nigeria, coupled with a concerning lack of dietary diversity, which underscores the necessity of organizing such training initiatives as part of the SAPZ Project's efforts.

During the training session focused on Gender and Nutrition mainstreaming within the SAPZ Programme, Miss Jamila A. Hassan of the NGSSO presented a paper highlighting the association between poverty in Nigeria and the lack of dietary

diversity, alongside malnutrition.

She underscored that the primary contributors to malnutrition include the availability of sufficient, safe, and nutritious food, as well as access to essential health services, which encompass a healthy environment, clean water, and sanitation facilities.

Miss Hassan urged women of reproductive age, specifically those between 15 and 49 years old, to ensure their diets include foods from the recommended ten food groups, which encompass grains, leafy vegetables, legumes, fruits, and dairy products, among others.

Additionally, several papers were presented during the training, including "Establishment and Managing Home Gardening for Improved Dietary Diversity" by Hajiya Amina Ado, representing HORTI NIGERIA, and "Classes of Food and Dietary Diversity for Household Nutrition" by Hajiya Aisha Jakada from the AHNRIN project. Another notable presentation was "A Role Played in Understanding Gender and Nutrition in Agriculture" by Hajiya Saudah Zaharaddeen from CPAT.

Some of the dignitaries who attended the workshop were Chairman Bagwai LGA, Engr Bello Abdullahi Gadanya, Secretary Kura LGA, and President Nutrition Society of Nigeria, prof. Salisu Maiwada Abubakar.

The workshop was held at Raising Restaurant, Audu Bako Way, Kano State From Monday 3rd February to Wednesday 4th February, 2025.



**Group photograph Captured during the training**

# Empowering Women And Promoting Gender Equity Through Capacity Building Trainings on Food Safety & Hygiene



The Special Agro Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) in Kano has conducted a training programme for 45 farmers from various Farmer Organizations (FOs) focusing on hygiene action and food safety to combat malnutrition. This initiative, developed by IFAD, ISDB, and the Kano State government, aims to transform Nigeria's agriculture sector through concentrated agro-industrial activities.

**1. Participants and Focus Areas:** Farmers for the training were selected from eight key local government areas in Kano—Kura, Bebeji, Garun Malam, Gezawa, Bagwai, Dawakin Tofa, Danbatta, and Bichi—chosen for their significant engagement in agricultural production and processing of staple and perishable crops crucial to local diets.

**2. Addressing Key Challenges:** The program directly tackles inadequate hygiene practices and poor food safety protocols, identified as major contributors to malnutrition, foodborne illnesses, and poor public health, especially prevalent in rural communities lacking knowledge and infrastructure for hygienic food production.

**3. Comprehensive Training Content:** The training covered essential hygiene actions and food safety protocols, including basic personal hygiene, environmental cleanliness,

safe food handling, clean water use, prevention of cross-contamination, storage best practices, and food handling within value chains, with a focus on mitigating spoilage and post-harvest loss.

**4. Promoting Sustainable Change:** The initiative emphasizes multi-level engagement through dialogue, participatory learning, practical demonstrations, case studies, and group exercises to facilitate behavior change and encourage the adoption of improved practices for safer food environments in rural Kano.

**5. Alignment with Broader Objectives:** This intervention aligns with SAPZ objectives and national food systems strategies by fostering inclusive, nutrition-sensitive, and climate-resilient agricultural growth, contributing to long-term goals of improved health, reduced poverty, and sustainable rural livelihoods.

**6. Integrated Approach:** The SAPZ framework serves to enhance productivity and inclusivity in agro-food systems, ensuring that food safety and hygiene training is embedded across the agricultural value chain, from farm to fork, consistent with Nigeria's Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) and National Food and Nutrition Policy.

By equipping farmers with critical knowledge and tools, SAPZ aims to improve food safety and nutrition outcomes, foster economic resilience, and contribute to sustainable agricultural development in Kano and beyond.



## Empowering Women And Promoting Gender Equity Through Training of 412 farmers on nutrition fundamentals in Kano



SAPZ trains 412 farmers on nutrition fundamentals in Kano.

No fewer than 412 farmers, drawn from selected farmer organizations, have received capacity building on the fundamentals of nutrition and healthy food systems in Kano state, under the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) framework.

The SAPZ initiative is a flagship program supported by the Nigerian government, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), in collaboration with the Government of Nigeria.

SAPZ seeks to transform Nigeria's agriculture by concentrating agro-processing activities in designated zones to boost productivity, reduce post-harvest losses, create jobs, and increase incomes.

In a statement signed by Rabi Mustapha Sadiq, Knowledge and Communication Officer (KMC) SAPZ Programme in Kano, the training aims to train and empower members of farmer organisations across eight profiled Local Government Areas, including Kura, Garun Malam, Bebeji, Gezawa, Dawakin-Tofa, Bichi, Bagwai and Dambatta.

The programme was delivered in two

phases, involving 206 participants in Quarter 1 (Q1) and another 206 participants in Quarter 2 (Q2), of the programme's Annual Workplan and Budget (AWPB).

She explained that each training phase was structured to deliver core knowledge on nutrition fundamentals, with a strong emphasis on dietary diversity, the importance of balanced meals, and the connection between agricultural practices and nutrition outcomes.

Hajiya Rabi, disclosed that each participant had received simplified practical tools and learning materials to enhance their understanding and enable easy communication of nutrition concepts within their organisations and households.

The tools, according to her, include visual guides, handouts in local languages, and culturally relevant examples using locally available foods.

The KMC explained that the programme also incorporates a cascading model, which would empower the trained farmer organisation leaders to conduct follow up sensitisation sessions with their broader membership base, thus extending the impact beyond direct participants.



Group photograph during the training

# Empowering Women and Promoting Gender Equity

## Capacity Building Training for the Establishment and Management of Home Gardens



Dr. Habu Sale, one of the Resource persons from NIHORT & Mastura Bello from an Agronomist from CABEX, wudil  
Background

SAPZ Programme KSPIU has conducted a capacity building training for the establishment and management of Home Gardens to the vulnerable groups for improved nutrition.

### Context

This initiative is designed under SAPZ /IFAD Assisted component 2 of the programme, to train and support the beneficiaries with toolkits to enable them to establish and manage home gardens within their households

### Results

The State Programme Coordinator, Aminu Iliyasu, disclosed that after the training the programme will support 1,445 beneficiaries households across 8 Local Government Areas in the State, with planting materials and Toolkits for proper nutrition and income generation.

He said the aims is to empower the households particularly women and vulnerable groups to cultivate nutrient-rich vegetables and crops at home

Earlier speaking the State Gender and Social Safeguard Officer, SAPZ Programme KSPIU, Dr. Zainab Lawan Gwadabe, disclosed that,

each of the toolkits will contained essential gardening tools and seeds complimented by the training for sustainable gardening practices.

During the training, presentations were made on soil management, organic pest control and crops rotation, the rational was to enhance food security and combat malnutrition among the vulnerable population



A cross section of participants during practical demonstration

The training was held from 29th to 30th September, 2025

SAPZ Programme/IFAD Assisted component, has integrated this approach to ensure that the households does not only receive the tools but also adopt the Knowledge for effective management of the gardens.



A Cross section of Participants during the training

# Empowering Women And Promoting Gender Equity

## Capacity Building Trainings

SAPZ/IFAD-ASSISTED TRAINS 60 WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS  
ON BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SKILLS



A Cross section of Participants during the training

SAPZ Trains 60 Women Agripreneurs in Financial Management, Business Planning, Others

No fewer than 60 women agripreneurs in Kano State under the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone communities were empowered with practical knowledge and skills in financial management, business planning, and leadership as part of effort to strengthen their agribusinesses.

Dr. Zainab Lawan Gwadabe, the state Gender and Safeguard Officer (GSSO), SAPZ Programme KSPIU, made the disclosure during the second leg of the Female Entrepreneurs Business Management Training programme held recently at the Patoosh Cafe Lamido Crescent, Kano.

She said the training which was conducted in two phases, was designed to empower women agripreneurs with practical

knowledge and skills to address the critical knowledge and skills gaps that hinder the growth and sustainability of women-led agribusinesses.

"The SAPZ Business Management Training aims to fill this gap by delivering a comprehensive curriculum covering financial management, marketing strategies, business planning, leadership development, and decision-making under uncertainty.



A Participant reading training manual

**Cont: Women entrepreneurs on Business Management Skills**



**Group Photograph captured during the training**

“These core areas were identified through needs assessments and stakeholder consultations as essential for transitioning women from small-scale, subsistence-level activities into viable, growth-oriented agribusinesses that can participate in and benefit from agro-industrial supply chains,” she said.

According to her, women constitute nearly half of Nigeria's agricultural workforce and play critical roles across the agricultural value chain—from production and processing to distribution and retailing.

“Despite their significant contributions, women farmers continue to face structural, socio-economic, and institutional barriers that limit their full participation in and benefits from the agricultural sector.

“These disadvantages are particularly evident in access to productive resources such as land, credit, extension services, agricultural technology, and formal education,” Gwadabe said.

She said, “This disparity often results in lower yields, reduced income, and fewer opportunities for scale, thus keeping many female farmers and entrepreneurs trapped in cycles of poverty”.

Dr. Gwadabe explained that it was in response to these persistent challenges and

in alignment with its national agricultural transformation agenda, the Federal Government of Nigeria, with support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), initiated the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) programme.

“This bold, multi-sectoral initiative is designed to stimulate agro-industrialization, create jobs, reduce rural poverty, and drive inclusive economic growth through public-private investment in processing infrastructure and agricultural value chains.

According to the Technical Assistant on Gender and Social Safeguard, Hajiya Jamila Rabiu, the key focus of SAPZ is to empower traditionally marginalized groups—especially women and youth—by strengthening their capacity to participate effectively in modern agricultural markets and agro-industrial value chains.

“Within this capacity-building framework, particular emphasis is placed on empowering women, who despite their visibility in agriculture, are often excluded from leadership, decision-making, and ownership roles in agribusiness. The SAPZ recognizes that for agro-industrial development to be inclusive and sustainable, women must not only be beneficiaries but also active agents of change in transforming local food.

During the training sessions, Mu'azu Hassan Mu'azu of the Dangote Business School, Bayero University Kano spoke on Business Planning and Growth Strategies, while Dr. Sabi'u Sulaiman from the Department of Agricultural Economics, Bayero University Kano, presented papers on Financial Management for Agribusinesses, Marketing and Branding of Agricultural Products, and Leadership and Decision-Making in Agribusiness.

# Congratulatory Message



*His Excellency*

**ENGR. ABBA KABIR YUSUF**  
The Executive Governor of Kano State

Dr. Danjuma Mahmoud  
Hon. Commissioner  
Ministry of Agriculture & Natural resources

on your recent achievement as  
Governor of the year 2025 (Infrastructure Development)  
Award by the African Achievers Awards for strides in  
Infrastructure and urban renewal.

Signed:

Dr. Danjuma Mahmoud  
Hon. Commissioner  
Ministry of Agriculture & Natural resources

# Cooking Demonstrations



Haj. Sha'awa, a professional Chef, while demonstrating Moringa Salad making, during the Cooking Demo

## Nutrition: SAPZ organizes cooking demo for 700 women in 7 Kano LGAs

The Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) has organized cooking demonstrations for 700 women in seven local government areas of Kano state to promote preparation of nutritious meals.

SAPZ initiative is a flagship program supported by the Nigerian government, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), in collaboration with the Federal Government of Nigeria.

The programme seeks to transform Nigeria's agriculture by concentrating agro-processing activities in designated zones to boost productivity, reduce post-harvest losses, create jobs, and increase incomes

The cooking demonstrations, which aligns with IFAD Component 2, was introduced to

enhance nutrition.

The programme was held at the SAPZ processing sites for women from Bagwai, Garun Malam, Bebeji, Bichi, Dambatta, Dawakin-Tofa and Gezawa Local Government areas of the state, spanning from Q1 to Q2, 2025.

The initiative, was introduced to promote preparation of nutritious meals using locally available biofortified crops to help increase adoption and consumption.

The cooking demonstration seeks to engage women in hands-on training, aimed at encouraging better dietary habits, address hidden hunger, and contribute to overall household well-being.

Additionally, the participants have acquired practical knowledge on food preparation techniques that maximize nutrient retention while maintaining cultural relevance.

The State Gender and Social Safeguard Officer, Dr. Zainab Lawan Gwadabe disclosed the beyond nutrition, the initiative fosters women's leadership in food security by equipping them with essential skills to influence dietary choices within their households and communities.

" The demonstrations served as a platform for knowledge exchange, where participants can



A Cross section of Participant during the Cooking Demo

share experiences and best practices.

"By the end of the program, the activity aims to create a lasting impact on household nutrition, ensuring sustainable behavioral change in food consumption and preparation," she explained.

The primary goal of this activity was to educate women participants on improved cooking techniques and nutritional practices to enhance household food security and health outcomes.

She emphasized that the training was designed to educate the women on techniques to preserve nutrients and promote healthier meal preparation, as well

support better dietary choices and combat hidden hunger.

Key activities include identifying suitable processing sites and selecting participants, with a focus on engaging women from Bagwai, Garun malam, Bebeji and gezawa Local Government Areas.



**The Chief Chef of the Cooking Demo, showing the participants one of the Nutritious meal prepared during the training**



**Some Participants while demonstrating on how to make Beans Dumplings (Dan Wake)**

# SAPZ PROMOTES NUTRITION PRACTICES IN KANO THROUGH TOOLKITS DISTRIBUTION



A Cross section of the beneficiaries of planting materials & Toolkits for home Gardening

SAPZ, under IFAD, distributes toolkits to 1,445 households for home gardening in Kano

The Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) under the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Component 2 has launched distribution of toolkits for home gardening to 1,445 households in Kano state.

The initiative, under the SAPZ's Targeted Nutrition Support Programme, would distribute the toolkits to beneficiary households across 8 local government areas of the state from 3rd to 6th October, 2025.

The initiative is introduced to empower households, particularly women and vulnerable groups by enabling them cultivate nutrient-rich vegetables and crops at home, aimed at enhancing food security in the state and the nation at large.

Speaking at the launch of the initiative in Kano on Friday, 3rd October, State Project Coordinator (SPC) of the SAPZ, Aminu Iliyasu disclosed that 180 women, each from the 8 local government areas would benefit with the toolkits.

He listed the benefiting local government areas as Kura, Garun-Mallam, Bebeji, Dambatta, Gezawa, Dawakin-Tofa, Bichi and Bagwai.

According to Iliyasu the initiative is primarily to improve dietary diversity, ensure continuous access to fresh nutrient-rich foods by enabling households particularly women to grow vegetables and small scale crops within their homes.

The SAPZ Coordinator explained that the aim of the initiative is to provide access to appropriate gardening implements such as gardening tools and inputs to enable families to cultivate variety of vegetables and small scale crops suited to their local environment.

He added that it would help in lowering food expenses of household, sell surplus produces for additional income and build Self-sufficiency overtime this contributes to greater economic stability and reduce vulnerability to external shocks such as price fluctuation and food shortage.

"It also aimed at providing these basic resources so as to remove barriers, so as



One of the beneficiaries explaining what she has learned about the Toolkit



**A Cross section of the beneficiaries during Toolkits distribution in Kano State**

households with limited prior farming experience can participate fully in this initiative.

" The initiative will help empower families to grow their own fresh produce, thereby enhancing dietary diversity and reduce dependence on external food sources.

" It will address micro-nutrients deficiencies and mal-nutrition particularly among children, pregnant women and other vulnerable groups within the household.

" To lower food expenses of household, sell surplus produces for additional income and build Self-sufficiency overtime this contributes to greater economic stability and reduce vulnerability to external shocks such as price fluctuation and food shortage.

At the end, the SAPZ Coordinator pointed out that the initiative is expected to increase in household production of nutrient-dense vegetables, which contributes to reduce levels of malnutrition especially among children

under 5, pregnant and lactating mothers.

" It is expected that the programme would help Improve household food security and resilience against economics shocks. Women and youth empowerment through ownerships and management of home gardens. Strengthens community engagement and ownership of nutrition sensitive of Agricultural interventions support to local suppliers and stimulation of local economic activities through procurement of material, Iliyasu explained.



**The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture & Natural Resources, Kano State, Alh. Bashir Sanusi while making remarks on the importance of Home gardening for improved Nutrition during the distribution**

In his remarks, the Kano state Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dr Danjuma Mahmoud, described the initiative as a bold vision of Nigeria " where agriculture is not merely about subsistence, but about empowerment; not merely about producing food, but about nourishing people, creating livelihoods, and transforming communities."

According to Mahmoud, represented by the ministry's Permanent Secretary, Bashir Sanusi, the SAPZ initiative embodies the transformative vision and seeks to reposition agriculture sector as a true engine of inclusive growth, improved nutrition, and rural development.

"This flagship programme is being championed through strong collaboration between the Federal Government of Nigeria, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), in partnership with state governments, the private sector, and our resilient farming communities.

'These interventions are not abstract policy statements; they are designed to address the everyday needs of our people. By focusing on youth and women-those who carry the

greatest responsibility for household nutrition and family wellbeing-the programme is laying the foundation for stronger households and healthier futures.

"This effort is also in perfect alignment with the vision and commitment of the present administration of His Excellency, Alhaji Abba Kabir Yusuf, to Strengthen agriculture as a driver of empowerment and prosperity.

" Under his leadership, the government has introduced bold programmes such as the provision of cattle, goats and cheen to women and youth including graduates of our School of Agriculture; the deployment of massive agricultural mechanisation equipment-tractors, combine harvesters, and power tillers-to enhance productivity; and the employment of over 1,000 young people as agricultural extension workers to bring knowledge and innovation closer to farmers.

" These measures are clear evidence of a government that sees agriculture not only as an economic sector, but as a pathway to dignity, empowerment, and shared prosperity," Dr Mahmoud said.



A group photograph captured during the flag-off ceremony for the Toolkits distribution, (Middle) Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture & Natural Resources, Kano State, Alh. Bashir Sanusi SPC Kano SAPZ, Aminu Ilyasu and other members from the SPIU and beneficiaries

# Kano SAPZ Empowered 5,120 Youths to Promote Job Creation



**Prof. MS Abubakar from Agricultural & Environmental Engineering, BUK while facilitating a session during the training**

## SAPZ PROGRAMME KANO STATE HAS TRAINED 5,120 YOUTHS FOs ON MECHANIZE SERVICE PROVISION, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF FARM EQUIPMENT

The Kano State Project Implementation Unit (KSPIU) of Special Agro-industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) has commenced training on mechanize service provision, operation and maintenance on farm equipment, targeting 5,120 youths Farmer Organisations.

SAPZ is a comprehensive agro-industrialization program designed as a tool for creating integrated, agricultural-focused platforms that will accelerate private sector investment in value added agro-processing to unlock opportunities for improved food security, job creation, import substitution, rural poverty reduction and increased contribution of agriculture to national GDP.

The programme has been initiated by Federal Government of Nigeria, in Collaboration with), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), the African Development Bank (AfDB), Private Sector investors and state governments, including

Kano, Ogun, Imo, Kaduna, Cross River, Kwara and Oyo states and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in the first phase.

Speaking at the opening of the two-day training on Wednesday, Engineer Balarabe Shehu Wudilawa, Agro-processing Engineer for Kano unit of SAPZ, said the aim of the training was to equip the youth with knowledge of agricultural mechanization to become self-reliant by being service providers.

According to Wudilawa, the Youths were trained on maintenance, operation and other aspects needed to be professional mechanize service providers.

He explained that the training targets 8 Local Government areas comprising Kura, Bagwai, Bebeji, Gezawa, Dawakin Tofa, Garun Mallam, Dambatta and Bichi.

He said the train-the-trainer program had selected 56 participants from 56 Farmer Organisations (FOs) "to stepdown the training to the remaining Farmer Organisations".

"For this training, we are targeting 5,120



**APO SAPZ Engr. Balarabe Wudilawa while facilitating a Session**  
youths farmers from these eight Local Government areas for 2025.

"For effectiveness, we have divided the training into two phases. In the first phase, we are training 2,560 youth. Even within this 2,560, we are training some Farmer Organisations which will stepdown the training to others,"

Engineer Wudilawa disclosed that there is provision for equipment to the target Youths after the training, its contained in the SAPZ 2025 annual work plan and budget.

In his remarks at the opening ceremony, Permanent Secretary, Kano State Ministry for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Bashir Sanusi, said the present administration had doubled the State Government commitments to agricultural development in different aspects.

He therefore called on the participants to utilise the opportunity to learn and practice the knowledge they acquire during the training.

According to Sanusi, the training is a significant milestone in the history of Kano where thousands of Youths would be trained to become professional service providers.

He noted that the training would complement the government's commitment in providing job opportunities to the teeming Youths, calling on the participants to embrace what he described as the "rare opportunity in order to be self-reliant".

In his paper presentation, Professor Muhammad Shuaibu Abubakar from the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Engineering, Bayero University Kano (BUK) described maintenance of farm machineries as the backbone of the mechanize agriculture.

He spoke at length and gave an insight on operation and maintenance of farm machineries, Professor Abubakar warned that rough handling of machineries would cause loss of investment.

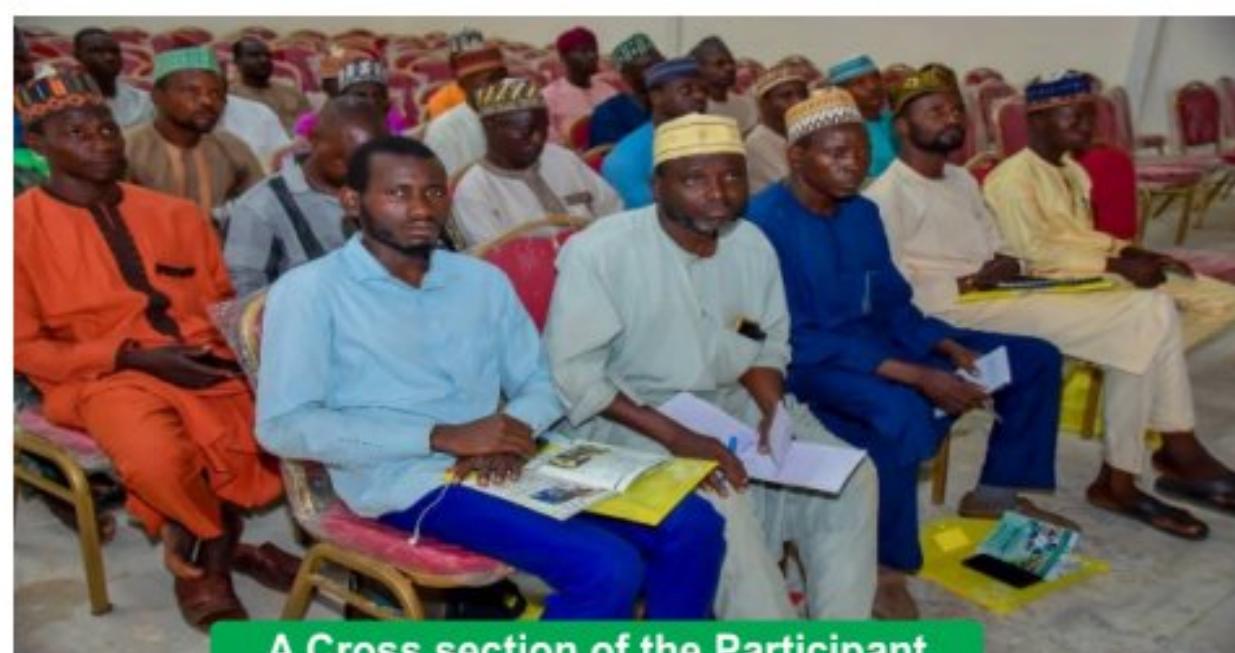
He also demonstrated in the safe measures of handling the machines to avoid injuries and even loss of life.

Part of the training modules includes; operation and maintenance of farm equipment, mechanize service provision entrepreneurship and Business Management and practical Sessions.

The Resources Persons who conducted the training included: Professor M.S Abubakar, Prof. S.K Shittu, Dr. MM. Nasidi and Dr. MD Zakari, all from Agricultural & Environmental Engineering, Bayero University Kano.

It has been observed by the Knowledge Management and Communication Unit of SAPZ Programme KSPIU, that all the participants had expressed their delight for the opportunity given to them to participate in the training, thereby restating commitments to utilise the opportunity to become service providers and pledged to stepdown the training effectively.

The training of trainers was held from 2nd - 3rd



A Cross section of the Participant

# SAPZ Engages Media To Drive Improved Nutrition, Agricultural Productivity in Kano State



Group photograph during the Joint One-day media sensitisation workshop

The Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) Programme in Kano State has organised a one-day joint media sensitisation training on Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) for improved nutrition, aimed at strengthening the role of the media in promoting positive nutrition practices across the state.

The joint One-day media sensitisation workshop organised by SAPZ Programme Kano State in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Kano State, held on Wednesday 31st December, 2025 in Kano, brought together journalists and other media practitioners, health educators, nutrition focal persons and smallholder farmers from the 8 LGAs of SAPZ catchment areas and other relevant stakeholders.

The training, theme "From Information to Action: Media's Role in Driving Nutrition Behaviour Change, " was aimed at strengthening participants' understanding of the SAPZ programme and

enhancing their capacity to effectively communicate nutrition-sensitive messages to the public.

It also sought to equip the media with accurate information and promote sustained partnerships for consistent and impactful coverage of nutrition issues in the state. The National Knowledge Management and Communication Officer,

Babangida Shehu, gave an overview of SAPZ Programme concept, its Development Objectives to deepen the participants understanding on the programme initiative.

Speaking at the event, the Knowledge Management and Communication Officer of the SAPZ Kano Programme, Kano State, Hajiya Rabi Mustafa Sadiq, said the training was designed to raise awareness among media professionals on the critical role of Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) in improving dietary habits and nutrition outcomes.

She noted that the programme also aims to provide journalists with accurate and



A cross section of the Participants

consistent information that would enable them to effectively champion nutrition issues and disseminate key messages to the public.

Hajiya Rabi disclosed that the SAPZ project is currently supporting over 14,000 households in Kano State through nutrition-sensitive interventions, including intercropping activities involving bio-fortified crops such as high iron/zinc rice.

According to her, bio-fortified commodities contain higher levels of essential micronutrients needed by the human body, and their consumption can significantly improve the intake of vitamin A, iron and zinc among project beneficiaries.

“Increased production of these commodities will also enhance the availability of nutritious food for smallholder farming households, thereby contributing to improved household nutrition,” she added.

Delivering a paper titled “Fundamentals of Behaviour Change Communication and Its Role in Improving Nutrition Outcomes in Kano State,” Dr. Ruqayyah Yusuf Aliyu of the Department of Mass Communication, Bayero University Kano (BUK), underscored the critical role of journalists in influencing dietary behaviour through awareness creation and evidence-based reporting.

She explained that although behaviour change is often challenging, the media can play a pivotal role in shaping attitudes towards balanced diets through deliberate, strategic and sustained communication.

Dr. Ruqayyah described behaviour change as a gradual process that involves modifying actions and mindsets over time through consistent and targeted messaging.

Facilitators at the workshop highlighted the severity of malnutrition in Kano State, citing UNICEF data for 2025, which indicates that

51.9 per cent of children in the state are stunted, while the prevalence of underweight among children under five stands at 42.6 per cent.

They noted that malnutrition has far-reaching consequences, negatively affecting children's growth and development, women's health and overall community productivity.

Other challenges identified during the training included inadequate knowledge among rural farmers on best practices for sesame cultivation, resulting in losses during harvesting, storage and processing.

In his address, the Permanent Secretary of the Kano State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dr. Bashir Sunusi, reaffirmed the state government's commitment to achieving food security.

He cited ongoing investments in dam rehabilitation, irrigation facilities, dry-season farming initiatives, as well as the recruitment of 1,038 personnel to strengthen service delivery in the agricultural sector.

The training concluded with a call for proactive media engagement on nutrition issues and the establishment and inauguration of a technical working committee by the Permanent Secretary Kano State Ministry of Health, Alhaji Bashir Aminu to champion Behaviour Change Communication for improved nutrition in Kano State, with monitoring mechanisms established to track its activities.



The Permanent Secretary, Kano State Ministry of Health  
Alh. Bashir Aminu while Inaugurating the technical working committee  
on BCC for inpreved Nutrition during the workshop

# NiMet's/FGN/IFAD-SAPZ Empowered Kano Farmers with Smart Agriculture



Prof. Aliyu Baba Nabegu, Aliko Dangote University of Science & Technology Wudil, while facilitating a session during the meeting

**Amidst NiMet's delayed rain prediction, SAPZ sensitises 400 Kano farmers on climate resilient agriculture.**

As the rainy season is about to set in in most northern states, the Special Agro Industrial Processing Zone (SAPZ) has sensitized over 400 smallholder farmers in Kano state on climate smart agriculture and another set of 220 farmers were sensitized on adoption of weather and climate Information services, for climate resilient agriculture.

This is coming amidst the advisory issued by the Nigeria Meteorological Agency (Nimet) about the likely late onset of rain in some states, especially in the north.

Kano SAPZ Project Coordinator, Aminu Iliyasu, disclosed that the two-in-one event also includes training on climate smart agriculture

for selected farmers, including women, youths and people living with disability to help the beneficiaries work with the reality of climate change so as to minimize avoidable loss and enhance productivity.

"The objective of the workshop was to sensitize and empower beneficiary Smallholder Farmer Organizations from our focus LGAs under the Kano state SAPZ Programme on how to adopt the weather and climate Information services with a view to address the pressing challenges exacerbated by shifting weather and climate patterns and utilize weather and climate information services for effective decision making in farming activities to mitigate risks and enhance climate resilient production," Iliyasu explained.

He added that the key priority value chain of the program in the state is presently rice,



## Group photograph during the Meeting

tomato, groundnut and sesame.

Earlier speaking, one of the training facilitators and Technical Adviser in the state's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Professor Aliyu Baba Nabegu, said the training seeks to bridge the knowledge gap that exists between the science of climate change and the local knowledge of the farmers.

Also speaking, NiMet Principal Meteorologist, Abubakar Sani Yahaya, said agricultural practice is completely dependent on weather and climate, hence he advised the farmers to take their prediction seriously and not start planting before the recommended time.

He said, "Farmers should only plant at the right time. If they plant at the wrong time, they will continue to have problems up to their harvest time."

"There is what we call false onset, which is a situation where rain falls before the real rainy season, in such a way that it will deceive farmers to think that it is real, before it then goes

off again. So if farmers eagerly plant at that time and there is no additional rain to reinforce it, then they will have problems," Yahaya added.

He advised the farmers to look out for the NiMet weather prediction covering all the local government areas of the country and use it to guide their farming activities.

The capacity building aspect of the training concentrated on, sustainable land management, flood control and climate resilience.



**Group photograph with the females participants during the Meeting**

## Kano FGN/IFAD SAPZ Establishes Multi-stakeholders Agribusiness Forum (MAF) To Boost Agricultural Transformation in the State



Dr. Mis Olubunmi Oluromi, Director Federal Department of Development partners projects making remarks during the establishment of MAF in Kano.

SAPZ Programme Kano State has established Multi-Stakeholders Agribusiness Forum and elected officials to accelerate operationalisation in Kano.

The Multi-Stakeholders Agribusiness Forum is an initiative borrowed from Commodity Alliance Forum a model implemented by Value Chain Development Programme (VCDP) an IFAD Assisted Programme operating in Benue and other states in Nigeria, that provides a structured platform for Value Chain actors within the specific Commodity to come together, identify common challenges, develop joint solutions and collectively advocate for their interests.

The Forum has proven effective in improving market linkages, enhancing access to finance and inputs, promoted technology adoption and increased the efficiency and profitability of the targeted value chains.

Multi-Stakeholders Agribusiness Forum was established on the 17th of September 2025 in Kano State

by SAPZ Programme from IFAD Assisted interventions, to hit the nail on the head, MAF officials (Caretakers) have been elected on 18th of September, 2025, to enable the officials to accelerate its operationalisation in the State. those elected were:

Ahmed Tijjani of Gerawa Rice Mills Ltd as the Chairman, Ali Idris Kura from Apex Chairman Kura LGA as vice chairman, Ismail Wakil from Bagwai

Sonkowa Farmer Organisation as secretary, Rabiatu Mohammed of Meru Tudun women farmers Association as Assistant secretary and Hassan Yaro sani of Mafa Rice Mills Limited as financial secretary.

Others includes Amina Mohammed Sani, founder Mix-condiments Ltd as Treasure, Habibu Sule of Pelican oils Ltd as legal adviser, Abdulrahman Ibrahim from Groundnut Farmer Organizations as PRO I, Hafsat Abdulhamid from Wanzau women farmers Associations (Kura Rice FO) as PRO II, Sadiq A Sadiq of Chiromawa Tsare Mata B (Rice FO) PRO and Danjuma Jatau of Development



Hon. Ahmed Ibrahim Karaye, Chairman House Committee on Agriculture while making presentation on oversight function and enabling law of the Kano State House of Assembly

Exchange Centre (DEC) as Auditor.

During the inauguration the state Programme Coordinator, SAPZ Programme KSPIU, Aminu Iliyasu, disclosed that MAF is a strategy to unite policy makers, private sector investors, Value chains actors and development partners to co- create solutions, align the state government policies and advocate investment across the agricultural value chain.

He said part of the establishment of MAF at both State and LGA Levels was to create a robust platform for effective Public-Private-Producer-Partnership (4Ps) in the Agricultural Sector to enhance small holder farmers access to Inputs, Market, Finance and extension services.

On his part the National Programme Coordinator, Dr Kabir Yusuf who was represented by Mr Abel Ameh the National Rural Institutions and Development Officer, said MAF is not just another committee but a centre for Coordination, dialogue and innovation to ensure every stakeholder has a role in shaping the agro-industrial future of Kano State.

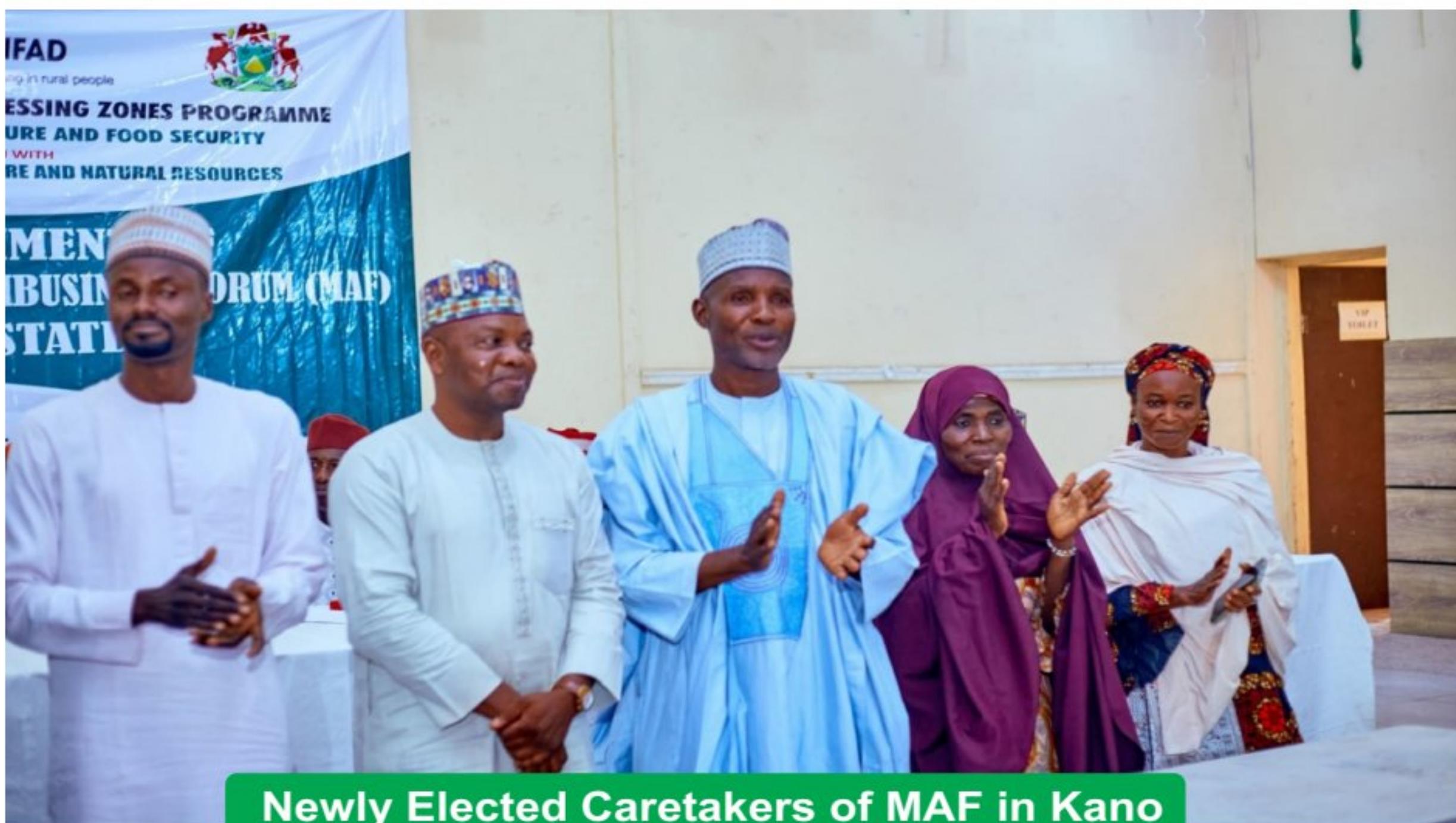
Earlier speaking Dr Mrs Olubunmi Oluromi, Director, Federal Department of

Development Partners projects disclosed that the federal government has remained committed in supporting Kano State with technical assistance and guidance in resource mobilization.

The state Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dr Danjuma Mahmoud, represented by the permanent secretary of the Ministry, Alhaji Bashir Sanusi, emphasised that MAF is aligned with Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf vision of creating enabling environment for investment, sustainable agriculture and livelihood improvement.

Hon. Ahmed Ibrahim Karaye, the Chairman Kano state house committee on Agriculture, pledged the Assembly's legal backing in providing enabling laws and oversight function to sustain the SAPZ programme MAF innovation.

Others present in the meeting includes the representative of Commissioner for Commerce, Alhaji Shehu Wada Sagagi, Representative of DG Kano State Investment Promotion Agency and chairmen from 8 LGA SAPZ Programme catchment areas.



# Kano SAPZ seeks media support to drive behavioural change for improved community nutrition



**KMC SAPZ Kano, Haj. Rabi Mustapha Sadiq presenting SAPZ Knowledge Materials to the MD Radio Kano, Abubakar Adamu Rano**

The Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) Programme in Kano State has sought stronger collaboration with media organisations to promote behavioural change communication aimed at improving nutrition practices in intervention communities.

Mrs Rabi Mustafa Sadiq, Knowledge Management and Communication Officer (KMC) for the SAPZ Programme in Kano, stated this during an advocacy visit to selected media houses in the state.

Sadiq said the SAPZ programme is jointly supported by the African Development Bank (AfDB), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), state governments and private investors.

According to her, the first phase of the programme covers Kano, Imo, Kaduna, Cross River, Kwara, Oyo and Ogun States, as well as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

She said the visit was part of efforts to deepen awareness on proper nutrition, especially among women, children and other vulnerable groups in SAPZ beneficiary communities.

“The media remain strategic partners in advancing nutrition messaging, mobilising

communities and supporting the Federal Government’s drive to address malnutrition in rural areas,” she said.

Sadiq said the partnership was crucial to driving behavioural change, increasing public knowledge and encouraging households to adopt healthier food practices.

“We are ready to work closely with media houses by providing access to experts, data, success stories and relevant materials that can aid impactful reporting on nutrition,” she added.

She said stronger public sensitisation and coordinated advocacy would help reduce malnutrition and build healthier communities.

The advocacy visits followed a media-preference survey conducted in October 2025, in collaboration with a professor from the Mass Communication Department, Bayero University, Kano.

The survey identified communication channels, prime time and preferred tools for disseminating information to nutrition-intervention communities across the 16 LGAs within the SAPZ catchment area.

According to the findings, Radio Kano ranked highest in listenership due to its wide AM reach, followed by Express Radio, Freedom Radio, Arewa Radio and Dala FM.

For television, Arewa24 was most preferred,



KMC SAPZ Kano, Haj. Rabi Mustapha Sadiq presenting SAPZ Knowledge Materials to the Programme Manager Arewa Radio, Kano.

particularly in LGAs with stable power supply and internet access, while ARTV and NTA Kano followed.

It also showed that morning hours were the most preferred prime time for receiving information across the 16 LGAs.

The survey targeted women of reproductive age (15 – 49 years), youths (18 – 29 years) and Persons With Special Needs (PWSNs). It covered profiled Farmer Organisations (FOs) in eight LGAs—Kura, Bagwai, Danbatta, Dawakin Tofa, Gezawa, Bichi, Bebeji and Gaya Mallam.

For the remaining eight LGAs, the survey was conducted in collaboration with the Kano State Ministry for Local Government. Respondents were mobilised through the Heads of Agriculture Departments in Dawakin Kudu, Kumbotso, Tofa, Madobi, Minjibir, Gabasawa and Shanono LGAs.

Speaking during the visit, Nutrition Officer in the Kano State Ministry of Health, Auwal Musa Umar, expressed concern over rising malnutrition in the state.

Umar said the 2018 Demographic and Health Survey shows a national stunting rate of 37 per cent, with northern states reaching as high as 66 per cent.

“Kano’s stunting rate stands at 61.5 per cent, nearly triple the global average. This is linked to low exclusive breastfeeding and poor feeding practices,” he said.

He said improved nutrition education and strengthened multi-sectoral interventions, including SAPZ and media partnerships, were critical to reversing the trend.

All broadcast stations visited pledged to support the SAPZ programme by promoting nutrition messages and collaborating with the government to strengthen behavioural change communication in target communities.

At Arewa24 Television, Mrs Aisha Lawal, who received the team, said the station already airs a programme on nutrition and enjoys wide reach across African countries.

She said the station “maintains strong African cultural values in its programming” and is committed to integrating content that enhances public awareness on nutrition.

The SAPZ team has also visited Dala FM, Freedom Radio, Express Radio and NTA Kano.



KMC SAPZ Kano, Haj. Rabi Mustapha Sadiq presenting SAPZ Knowledge Materials to the Programme Manager Freedom Radio, Kano Adamu Sa’idu Warawa

# Testimonies

## From the SAPZ Pilot Nutrition Intervention (Home Gardening)

**Name:** Hafsat Abdulhamid

**Location:** Kura local Government Area.  
From the Wanza Women's Farmers Association.

**Farm Size:** Small backyard space.

**Intervention type:** Home Gardens from the FO's Hibiscus (Zobo)

**Intervention:** Home garden



We were taught hibiscus farming and also how to feed our babies better. They showed us how to educate our breast feeding mothers to provide nutritious things for their babies so that breast milk will improve. They

also taught us how to process hibiscus. Even for people with high blood pressure, when we boil hibiscus and give it to them, by Allah's will, their blood pressure reduces.

We thank God that what they taught us has helped us so much, and we even extended the knowledge to others who were not part of the training. Now hibiscus, which Hajiya Jamila introduced to us, has spread widely among young mothers and pregnant women because they know its benefits for healthy living.

**Impact:** Thank God I have made progress more than before. Before now, I didn't know the usefulness of hibiscus; people just grew the leaves without knowing what to do with them. But now, through what we have learned, I've achieved 100 percent improvement compared to before. I package it in small sachets for sale, even though not in large quantities because I only grow it within my small home garden. With the money we made from selling hibiscus, we supported our households. It has improved our lives — we even make hibiscus drinks at home, and our husbands enjoy them. With what we harvested, we assist pregnant women and mothers who produce little breast milk for their babies. From hibiscus leaves, when we pluck them, we give them to young mothers with one or two children, including pregnant women, as support. You know, because of the current economic situation in the country.

### Testimonial:

Therefore, my advice to the women of Kura Local Government is that every woman should start farming vegetables such as spinach (Alaiyah), Hibiscus (Zobo), cabbage, and cucumber — all in the little spaces behind their houses. We have done it, and we have seen its benefits.



Sample picture of Home gardens

# Testimonies

**Name:** Sahura Ibrahim

**Location:** Kura local government area.

**Farm Size:** Not stated.

**Intervention type:** Home Gardens from the FO's Hibiscus (Zobo)

Gidan Zago Women Farmers Association.

Apart from hibiscus, we can plant beans, tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, and spinach. All of these can be cultivated at home.

**Challenges:** The challenges we faced before now is that we had no idea on how to grow hibiscus at home and various methods of cultivating it for better yield.

## Intervention:

Indeed. SAPZ gave us hibiscus (zobo). We were trained on how to cultivate it. We planted it and nurtured it because of the importance we were told it has for our children, grandchildren, and even ourselves as elders. We were told it is very beneficial to the body, and we have already seen

## Impact:

I didn't sell it. But I have stored some in the farm for replanting during the next rainy season, Inshallah. We drink hibiscus now as a remedy for aging.

## Testimonials:

My message to women is that they should strengthen their efforts in planting hibiscus.



Some of the participants, during the practical demonstration of the Home gardens capacity building

Hibiscus is very valuable for the body, especially for the youth. I told members of my group to take h i b i s c u s c u l t i v a t i o n s e r i o u s l y — every woman should plant it in her home.

**Name:** Asiya Abdulhamid.

**Location:** From Kurunsumau ward in Kura Local Government Area of Kano State.

**Farm size:** small backyard plot in my home, roughly the size of two rooms.

**Intervention type:** Home Gardens from the FO's Hibiscus (Zobo)

**Challenge:** The major challenge was that we were not used to the modern method of cultivating hibiscus before.

**Intervention:** We were trained on how to cultivate hibiscus (zobo) in our home backyards for our health, for nursing mothers, pregnant women, young people and in short, for our general wellbeing, both as food and as medicine. We planted it and truly saw the benefits.

**Impact:** We benefited greatly. The hibiscus grew very well even though the space was not big. We harvested plenty from it. We even got more seeds that we will replant in the future, and we also collected leaves, dried them, and will use them later for soup. So, we really benefited a lot from it.

I also, gathered all the members of my association since I am one of the group leaders chosen for the training. When I returned, I taught them what I learned. We thanked SAPZ Kano, even if I cannot say I earned much income from this first attempt, we still gained a lot of benefits.

**Testimonial:** We are planning to farm on larger land so that we can package both the leaves and the hibiscus drink for sale in the market. This way, it will benefit our health and also bring us more income.



Sample picture of Home gardens

# Success Stories/Lessons Learnt

## From the Pilot Implementation Scheme (Kura & Bagwai LGAs)

**Name:** Isma'il Iliyasu Wakil

**Location:** Bagwai Local Government Area, Kano State

**Farm Size:** One hectare

**Crop:** Tomato Production

**Cluster Name:** Bauji

**Farmer Organization (FO):** Bagwai Sankowa



Isma'il Iliyasu Wakil Dakar Senegal attending AFSF 2025

**Challenges:** Before the coming of Kano State Special Agro-industrial processing zones SAPZ, I was a small holder tomato farmer based in Bagwai community where youth faced unemployment and limited access to agri-trainings, struggling with low yield due to outdated farming techniques. I almost quit

tomato cultivation because of low yield due to limited access to quality farm inputs, post-harvest losses from poor storage and market access and above all unstable income due to reliance on middlemen.

### Intervention:

With the support from the special agro-industrial processing zones program my farming journey transformed dramatically. I expanded my tomato farm from one acre to over two hectares. SAPZ provides training and financing. I was also provided with improved inputs like access to high yield seeds, fertilizers and irrigation systems. Off takers linkages: SAPZ connected me with reliable off takers - processors and bulk buyers, ensuring a stable market and better prices.

I was selected as a youth beneficiary in the SAPZ project where I gained access to training, exposed to different innovations, modern tools and mentorship in sustainable agriculture. (Eg. Climate Smart agriculture, AI in agriculture, agribusiness development etc). Kano State SAPZ selected me as a young agripreneur who specializes in tomato production from Bagwai Local Government Area to go for an interview with the IFAD Country Director in Abuja country office, I had the interview and presented my farming experiences which I wanted to share it at the Africa Food Systems Forum Dakar 2025. The IFAD team convinced that I have a lot to share in the event, IFAD - SAPZ sponsored me to Dakar Senegal to attend AFSF 2025, an occasion where stakeholders in Agrifood systems globally showcased their experiences, challenges and development. During the event I attended different sessions on digital Agriculture, value chain development, youth-led innovations, and Agritech startups among others.

### Impact:

With support from the special agro-industrial processing zones, I increased my production

with consistent supply to off takers, and due to guaranteed buyers my income has tripled and my family livelihood has improved. I also created more jobs for our women and teeming youth as well as reduced post harvest losses.

In addition to that, my visit to Dakar gave me an opportunity to connect with different African leaders, Agribusiness owners, young agripreneurs, and secure partnerships for export of Agricultural commodities. Pitched a different Artificial intelligence ( AI) mobile applications designed to help small holder farmers with technologies and solutions to different problems of pest and diseases, access to market



Isma'il Iliyasu Wakil at his Tomato Farm

#### Testimonial:

Again my journey to Dakar experience is being shared to youth in my community, at many steps down training organized by the SAPZ I shared my experiences to the participants. I always use my social media handles (Facebook, X, WhatsApp) to share my stories and experiences from AFSF Dakar 2025.

SAPZ didn't just sponsor my trip - it equipped me to be a change maker. Today, my community sees agriculture as a career, not a last resort. Dakar was the lunchpad, but the real victory is the ripple effect back home."

"With continued support from the SAPZ, I hope to expand my tomato farm to five hectares in the next five years, adopt greenhouse farming for a year round tomato production, train other small holder farmers in Bagwai LGA to replicate my success.

"SAPZ didn't just give me tools—they gave me a future. Now, I supply tomatoes to big companies and train other farmers in my community."



Isma'il Iliyasu Wakil at Dakar Senegal during AFSF 2025,  
Exploring improved Agricultural Technologies

**Name:** Mariya Sulaiman

**Location:** Bagwai Local Government Area, Kano State.

**Cluster/Farmer Organization:** Bagwai Large Scale Farmers Cooperative Society



NECC/SAPZ Bello (Right), Isma'il Iliyasu Wakil (Middle) and Mariya Sulaiman (Left) in Dakar Senegal during AFSF 2025

**Farm Size:** One hectare

**Crop:** Tomato Production

**Challenges:** Limited access to quality inputs: Relied on low-quality seeds and fertilizers, leading to poor yields. Lack of storage facilities and market linkages caused 40 - 50 percent of my tomatoes to spoil. Sold produce at distress prices due to poor bargaining power and middlemen exploitation. I grew up in a rural community in Kano North Kano State Nigeria, where youth faced unemployment and limited access to agri-trainings, struggling with low yield due to outdated farming techniques.

**Intervention:**

I received modern farming techniques (e.g., drip irrigation, pest control, records keeping). In addition I received inputs such as high-yield tomato seeds, fertilizers, and agro-chemicals at subsidized rates.

**Digital Solutions:** Access to weather forecasts and mobile-based market prices via e-Wallet as well as market linkages and direct contracts with processors to reduce post-harvest losses.

### Impact:

I recorded positive changes through yield increased by 200 percent: From 5 metric tonnes per hectare to 15 metric tonnes per hectare.

**Income Growth:** My annual earnings rose to ₦ 450,000 (~\$900) due to higher productivity and better prices. Similarly, post-harvest spoilage dropped to 10 percent with improved storage and direct sales.

### Testimonial:

"Now, I harvest triple the tomatoes, sell directly to buyers, and even save money. My children are back in school, and I've expanded my agribusiness. SAPZ really gave me hope!", Alhamdulilahi (I thank God).community."



Picture Captured with NECC/SAPZ Bello, Isma'il Iliyasu Wakil and Mariya Sulaiman and other participants in Dakar Senegal during AFSF 2025

**Name:** Sa'adatu Sule Umar

**Location:** Kura Local Government Area of Kano State.

**Farm Size:** I was cultivating tomatoes and rice on less than 0.5 hectares but after SAPZ support I expanded the farm to two hectares.

**Crop/ Livestock and FO's:** Tomatoes and Rice.  
Kura Cluster, Kasaita Women Farmers Association.

We also cultivate cucumber, lettuce, habanero pepper, carrot and cabbage.

#### Challenges:

I was farming based on personal effort and experience, with inadequate knowledge, which resulted to low yields.

The main challenge I faced was lack of capital. I have many ideas and technical knowledge, but I had limited funds. For example, people often ask me for items like seedling trays and sprayers, but I can't provide them due to lack of capital. Another challenge is social perception. In some places, people say things like, "A woman in farming?" or "Why is a woman doing this kind of work?" That kind of mind set discourages women, but I'm determined to keep going.

I used to also apply a lot of fertilizer on the farm. Before using the broadcasting method, I used about three bags of fertilizer. With proper spacing, I now use just one and a half bags.

#### Intervention:

I received inputs from the SAPZ like rice seeds, pesticides, and fertilizers. (I received three bags of NPK and two bags of urea). Before, we used broadcasting, but SAPZ trained me on proper spacing techniques. We now plant in rows without wasting seeds. We learned a new method using a "planter and transplanter" machine.



Instead of putting five seeds per hole, the planter automatically places three seeds, applies fertilizer, and reduces labor and waste. I am now farming with proper training I received from SAPZ. We also learned to apply fertilizer on the same day of planting—not two weeks later as we used to do.

#### Impact:

Honestly, the difference is clear. I can say that the profit I made now is truly significant. Since SAPZ began training us, I used to harvest about 19 bags of rice before the intervention of SAPZ, but now I get 30 bags from the same plot of land. That's a clear profit increase.

We don't limit ourselves to field crops alone, but think about other agricultural businesses we could do at home. So I started producing vegetable seeds, which later led me into home gardening.

#### Testimonials:

"I have made good profit. Aside from seed sales, I was able to acquire my own farmland. Before, I used to rent the farmland. Now, I have to thank SAPZ, because I own my farm. From seed processing alone, if you invest 5,000, you can easily make 5,000 profit or more.

"I'm very grateful to SAPZ for their focus on women's inclusion and empowerment. The skills and knowledge I've gained have laid a strong foundation for my future endeavors," she said.



Sa'adatu Sule Umar from Kasaita Women Farmers Association  
SAPZ Programme beneficiary from Kura LGA



Muhammad Ali Idris from Kuka Tara Farmers Cooperative Society Limited under the Kura cluster in his farm

**Name:** Muhammad Ali Idris

**Location:** Kura Local Government Area of Kano State.

**Farm Size:** One hectare

**Crop:** Rice Production

Kuka Tara Farmers' Cooperative Society Limited under the Kura cluster.

**Challenges:** As a student I could not complete my studies at the School of Hygiene before receiving the SAPZ support.

**Intervention:**

When I received the SAPZ support, I started farming. This farming helped me in my studies, and the profit I made from the farming—along with the SAPZ grant—enabled me to open a chemist (drug store). I majored in Nutrition and diets. Now I have been able to open my own chemist shop. The support I received from SAPZ helped me to complete my education comfortably and also gave me the capital to establish my personal business. I still farm because right now I have planted rice on a full acre of land. I reinvested my earnings to expand my capital. The rice on that one-acre farm is doing well. As for my chemist shop, I work there daily—I go to the farm in the morning and return to the shop to continue my business. In fact, I have even employed two assistants—one male and one female—whom I pay monthly from my own income. Each of them has designated working hours at my chemist. All of this success came as a result of the SAPZ fertilizer support,

through which I received inputs for one hectare: five bags of fertilizer, three bags of NPK (Kampa), two bags of urea, four liters of pesticide, and 25 kilograms of rice seed. That was the foundation of my progress. I also received training from SAPZ especially on issues regarding climate change and how to adapt to changing weather conditions including the right timing for planting and transplanting, record keeping, and how to monitor expenses to avoid losses. These practical skills, along with the training sessions have helped us tremendously.

We were also taught how to properly space our crops during planting, apply fertilizers correctly, and ensure proper harvesting techniques—waiting until crops are fully matured before harvest to avoid post-harvest losses.

**Impact:**

From the one-acre farm, I harvested about 30 bags of rice. At that time, each bag was sold for ₦75,000, which gave me roughly ₦2.4 to ₦2.7 million in total. The support I received from SAPZ helped me earn about ₦2.4 million. If you calculate ₦80,000 per bag times 30 bags, it comes to roughly ₦2.4 million. From that success, God elevated me—I was able to sponsor my education fully, finish my studies, and establish my own chemist business.

**Testimonials:**

I am now an employer of two people and I'm continuing with the farming—all thanks to the SAPZ support. So, we can only say may God bless SAPZ for the kind of assistance they are giving to youths.



Muhammad Ali Idris from Kuka Tara Farmers Cooperative Society Limited under the Kura cluster in his Chemist

## PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE FARMING PRACTICE THROUGH GROUNDNUT PRODUCTION



**Maryam Dankaka Hussaini from Babeji Unguwar Makera Women Farmers Association  
beneficiary of SAPZ Programme in Kano from Groundnut (FOs)**

**Name:** Maryam Dankaka Hussaini

**Location:** Bebeji local Government Area of Kano State.

**Farm Size:** We were cultivating one hectare. When the SAPZ came, we cultivated around six hectares because we were given enough inputs and fertilizers.

**Crop/Livestock and FO's:** Groundnut

**FO Name:** Babeji Unguwar Makera Women Farmers Association.

**Challenges:** Lack of storage facilities, Farm Access Road, Improved Harvesting Machine for Groundnut that is separating groundnut pods from the leaves. If we get such a machine, our profits will increase, and costs will reduce.

### **Intervention:**

The coming of SAPZ increased our success even more. Before, we used to buy about seven or eight bags of fertilizer, but when SAPZ came, they gave my group members 14 bags of fertilizer. You can see that it is more

than what we used to buy. Honestly, we gained a lot, especially in terms of education. Before, we didn't know anything about proper spacing. At home, we used to mix crops—groundnut here, guinea corn there, beans somewhere else—and in the end we only got a little yield. But SAPZ told us to plant one crop at a time, and we got a much higher yield. Before, when we planted groundnut and mixed it with guinea corn, the groundnut leaves wouldn't spread well, which reduced the yield.

### **Impact:**

Honestly, what we experienced with groundnuts surprised us. We were given Samnut24 seeds. When they were given to us, we felt the time for planting had passed, because groundnuts like moderate rainfall. But they told us to plant it. So we planted with fear and uncertainty. Yet, it still produced well. It matured alongside the one we planted earlier, which takes about four months. Ours took between 86 and 89 days, and we still got plenty of leaves.

The SAPZ officials also connected us with large produce buyers. Before, we sold our harvest at home, but now with the knowledge we gained,

we know where to take our produce for better profit. We were also shown storage facilities and taught how to properly dry and store produce to avoid spoilage. There is so much knowledge we received that time won't allow me to mention all.

#### Testimonies:

"Even in terms of labour, we used to hire about 15 workers. But with the knowledge we gained on proper spacing, weeds did not grow much, so we didn't have to weed frequently because the groundnut covered the soil and blocked the weeds. This reduced labour costs—that's our first profit. We got about 26 bags, and we also got a lot more leaves than before. Groundnut has two profits—both the nuts and the leaves.

"After removing the pods and drying the leaves, they are fed to animals like cows and horses. One bag of leaves sells for 3,000. And in one hectare, you can get around 160 bags of leaves or even more, depending on how well the groundnut grows," she said.

However, speaking on groundnut good agricultural practice, Maryam Dankaka Hussaini said, SAPZ Programme Kano State has thought us how to select well drained, light sandy loamy soil.

They supported us with Sunnut- 24m seed variety that is early maturing.

We have learned that the soil should be prepared to a depth between 25cm and

30cm as well as plough, harrow and make ridges 75cm apart.

Clear, burn, Dump FYN, Spread out FYN Prepare the Soil to Depth 25cm-30cm. Plough, Harrow and make ridges 75cm apart.

On seed treatment, she said the seed should be dressed with apron Star, use a satchet

to 2kg of groundnut seed while the seed should be 40-55kg per hectare.

According to her, the seed population should be between 20,000 to 25,000 plant per hectare.

She explained that spacing should be 75cm X 25cm, 90cm X 20cm, 1-2 plant/hole while the soil management should be 5-10 + FYN per hectare. Apply 2 bags NPK 15:15:15 + 2 bag SSP.

On weed management, Maryam Dankaka Hussaini disclose that they have been advised by SAPZ Kano that hoe weed at 3 and 6 WAS while pre-emergence herbicide application should be 2-3 litre of Butachlor per hectare.

We have learned to ensure timely harvest to attain maximum yield, when the shells turn brown and with dark veins stressing that groundnut are lifted either manually or mechanically.

However, on pest diseases, she noted that the major pest affecting groundnut include: Groundnut source, red flour, bee----Almond moth, Termite, White grub, Jassid, aphia Tabacco, Coter pillar etc.

She said early maturing (80-90 days), good haul yield (2.5-3t/ha) vigorous plant growth, good yield (2-2.5t/ha) and high oil content is (53%).



Maryam Dankaka Hussaini and other beneficiaries while demonstrating packaging techniques, during the Groundnut farmers field day in Bebeji LGA

## FGN/SAPZ/IFAD Assisted showcased Climate-Smart technologies at brown Farmer Field in Kano



Sample picture captured during farmer field day in Garin Malam LGA, on promoting yield increment, branding, Packaging techniques of Rice Paddy (Faro 44) by beneficiaries from Garin Baba Cluster, supported by FGN/SAPZ/IFAD assisted programme

The Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Kano State Special Agro-Processing Zone (SAPZ) Programme in partnership with IFAD, has reaffirmed its commitment to boosting agricultural productivity and strengthening value chains production. This followed a Farmer Field Day held at the Chiromawa Garin Babba Cluster, as part of activities marking the Joint FGN/IFAD Second SAPZ Programme Supervision Mission scheduled from November 26 to December 30th, 2025.

The aims of the mission was to assess progress recorded so far, review earlier field reports from Kano and Ogun states, and outline next steps to improve implementation and ensure the successful achievement of the Programme Development Objectives.

Speaking during the field Supervision, the National Programme Coordinator, Dr Kabir Yusuf said they were at Chiromawa Cluster in Garin Malam LGA with the team of consultants from IFAD, the Federal Government officials from PCU/IERD and CPAD to observe the ongoing rice harvesting process in the farmer's Field, interact with



Some of the Females beneficiaries of SAPZ Programme Kano State showcasing their Bumper harvest during farmer field day in Garin Malam LGA

farmers to understand harvest performance, yields levels, and post-harvest practices.

Dr Kabir further stated that the mission team had also engaged the beneficiaries in discussion to understand their wet season production practices, hold a short focus group discussion to understand challenges, lessons learned, and success stories resulted from the year 2025 wet season inputs distribution support to Matching Grant Implementation Scheme for climate-smart technology adoption.

Speaking during the event, the State Programme Coordinator, Aminu Iliyasu, said the Field Day was designed to expose farmers to science-based, practical solutions capable of improving yields and enhancing rural livelihoods. He described the event as a celebration of knowledge, innovation, and farmers' resilience.

According to him, the SAPZ initiative in Kano aims to expand access to modern technologies, strengthen extension services, reduce post-harvest losses, and create new market opportunities. Farmers witnessed demonstrations on climate-smart farming, improved seeds, fertilizer application, irrigation, pest control, and post-harvest technologies.

"These innovations are not theoretical. They are practical solutions our farmers can adopt immediately to raise productivity and increase income," he said, appreciating the support of local authorities, partners, and traditional leaders in strengthening the programme.

The SAPZ Knowledge Management and Communication Officer, Hajiya Rabi Mustapha Sadiq, revealed that 9,870 climate-resilient agricultural inputs were distributed to rice farmers in Garin Malam, Gezawa, Bichi, and Bagwai LGAs during the 2025 wet season. These include FARO 44 improved seeds, Urea, NPK fertilizers, and insecticides.

During the training session, experts guided farmers on Good Agronomic Practices for rice production—ranging from selecting fertile soils, seed dressing, nursery establishment, land preparation, to timely transplanting at proper spacing. They also covered fertilizer management, weed control, Integrated Pest Management, and water regulation to improve yields.

The training further emphasized harvesting rice at optimal maturity and drying paddy to safe moisture levels before storage, alongside fumigation techniques using phostoxin to prevent losses to insects and rodents.

The LGA Officials expressed optimism that with continued support from SAPZ and partners, farmers in Kano State are now better equipped to increase rice yields, withstand climate pressures, and improve household incomes.

One of the beneficiaries, Huwaila Shuaibu Ibrahim, said the intervention has transformed their farming approach. "Before, we planted without checking whether the land was suitable. Now, we first assess the soil to know if it matches the seed variety. This season, we cultivated FARO 44," she said, adding that yields rose from 20 – 25 bags per acre to about 40 bags after applying the new training.

Some of the dignitaries who graces the occasion were the Chairman of G/Malam LGA, who was ably representing by his secretary, the D.P.O , the District Head and the Chief Imam of the LGA,



Sample picture of facilitators & participants captured during Focus Group Discussion on nutrition and gender mainstreaming in SAPZ programme

## COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF A ONE-DAY JOINT MEDIA SENSITIZATION TRAINING ON BEHAVIORAL CHANGE COMMUNICATION FOR IMPROVED NUTRITION IN KANO STATE

### Objectives

1. To understand SAPZ Programme concept and its development objectives.
2. To raise awareness among media professionals about the critical role of BCC in improving dietary habits of nutrition.
3. To equip media partners with accurate and consistent information to champion nutrition issues and effectively communicate key messages to the public
4. To foster a sustained partnership with media organizations to ensure continuous and widespread coverage of nutrition-sensitive issues.

### Resource Persons and Sessions Facilitated

1. Aminu Ilyasu SPC SAPZ Programme – Welcome Address
2. Rabi Mustapha Sadiq SKMC – Purpose of the training
3. Babangida Shehu NKMC – Overview of the SAPZ Programme
4. Ruqayyah Yusuf Aliyu, PhD, Dept. of Mass Communication, BUK – Technical Session: Understanding the basics of Behaviour Change: Towards Improving Nutrition in Kano State, Group Work and Presentation: Share Compelling, Evidence-Based Stories on BCC for Improve Nutrition
5. Prof. Ibrahim Shetima, Dept. of Nigerian Languages, Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies, BUK – Technical Session: What to consider while translating SAPZ Programme media content in Hausa Language
6. Bashir Lawan Baba, Dept. of Planning Ministry of Agriculture Kano State – The Homestead Garden Solution: A define multi-dimentional malnutrition problem

7. Dtn. Auwalu Musa Umar, Senior Nutrition Officer, Kano State Ministry of Health – Nutrition Education is a Bedrock to Reduce Burden of Malnutrition in Kano State
8. Amina Ado Yahaya, East West Seed Knowledge Transfer Foundation (EWSKT) Team lead – Promoting Improved Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyles through Bio-fortified Crops and Home Gardening

### Participants

1. Media Practitioners
2. Health Educators from the 8 Local Government Areas
3. Nutrition Focal Persons from the 8 Local Government Areas
4. Nutrition Extension Officers from Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources
5. Farmer Organizations

This communiqué is issued at the end of a one-day Joint Media Sensitization Training on Behavioral Change Communication (BCC) for Improved Nutrition, with the theme “**from Information to Action: Media's Role in Driving Nutrition Behavior Change**,” organized by the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) Programme, Kano State, under the Kano State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Kano State. The training was held on Wednesday, 31st December 2025, at Chillar Hotel, Conference Hall No. 110, Audu Bako Way, Nassarawa GRA, Kano State.

The training brought together Farmers, Agricultural Extension Workers, Nutrition Focal Persons from 8 LGAs, Health Educators and media practitioners from print, broadcast, and online platforms to strengthen their understanding of behavioral change communication strategies for improved nutrition, particularly within the framework of the SAPZ Project.

Participants were sensitized on the role of the media in promoting nutrition-sensitive agriculture, healthy dietary practices, homestead garden solution, public awareness on food and nutrition security in Kano with emphasis on knowledge attitude and practice as well as improved nutrition and healthy lifestyles through Bio-fortified crops and home gardening. Participants were trained on cultivating a diverse plate of food with key

vegetables for household gardens, integrating livestock with the aim of providing critical protein for growth and development, integrated pest management and importance of ensuring soil health.

Participants noted the critical role of the media in shaping public attitudes and behaviours towards nutrition, food choices, and agricultural value chains such as rice, tomato, groundnut, and sesame, which are priority value chains under the SAPZ Programme in Kano State and the need for women at home to be sensitized on best dietary practices. Discussions highlighted the need for accurate, consistent, and people-centered nutrition messaging to support government efforts in improving nutrition outcomes.

#### Key issues identified:

1. According to UNICEF (2025), 51.9% of children in Kano state are stunted
2. Rural farmers do not have adequate knowledge on how to plant sesame because they are recording losses particularly in harvesting, storage and processing stages.
3. Also, Kano faces severe burden of malnutrition with highest record of underweight prevalence in under 5 children reaching 42.6%
4. Malnutrition affects children's growth, women's health and overall productivity of communities and by extension the larger society.
5. Under nutrition manifest in forms of stunting, underweight, wasting, overweight and micronutrient deficiencies.
6. Some women engage in monthly savings with money meant to purchase nutritious foodstuffs for the family.
7. Participants raised an issue on Home Gardening as seedlings do not germinate properly as expected
8. Another participant lamented on trust issues with regards to how people selling seedlings to farmers are not being sincere when selling it to them, hence selling substandard seedlings to them.

#### Resolutions:

1. It is imperative for the media to be proactive in contributing to address the scourge of malnutrition in the state and the country at large.
2. To tackle issues of nutrition issues, it should start from adolescents' stage, for an adolescent lady to have iron supplement, so that during menstruation she won't lose a lot of blood that leads to anaemia and other health issues.
3. To address severe malnutrition burden in Kano, the situation demands targeted localized solution through engaging households in homestead vegetable gardening which will present a strategic multidimensional opportunity to improve nutrition at its source.
4. To achieve Behavioral change, there is need for conscious effort and efforts and need to overcome barriers as change through setting goals, monitoring progress and using specific techniques and stages of change like pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation and action record an effect in the change process.
5. The Media should play their role in BCC towards improving nutrition through awareness & education, advocacy & accountability, community engagement and data-driven reporting.
6. Committee was inaugurated to champion Behavioral Change Communication for improved Nutrition in Kano State.
7. The committee will be given resources to effectively discharge their term of reference and a monitoring mechanism will be put in place to track their activities.

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# PHOTO NEWS

