In October 2019, the reporting rates was 100 percent. All the 619 Outpatient Therapeutic Program (OTP) centres, 104 Nutrition Rehabilitation Units (NRU) and 611 Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP) centres, in Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) reported as follows:

* 2,861 children aged 6 to 59 months with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) received lifesaving treatment in OTP centres and NRUs. This shows a 14% decrease in SAM admissions in October 2019 compared to October of 2018, where a total of 3,334 children were admitted and treated.

* 4,608 children aged 6 to 59 months with Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) were treated in the SFP centres in October 2019. This shows a 36% decrease in MAM admissions in October 2019 when compared with the admissions in 2018, where 7,162 were admitted and treated.

* 2,444 Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW) with MAM received supplementary food at the SFP centres in October 2019, compared to 2,833 in October 2018 (a 14% decrease)

* The SAM death rate October was 1.7 %, a 0.4% decrease compared to October 2018 (all within SPHERE standards).

In October of 2019, SAM admissions decreased by 14% (from 3,334 in October 2018 down to 2,861 in October 2019).

The SAM death rates decreased by 0.4% in October 2019, when compared to October of 2018 (from 2.1% in October 2018 to 1.7% in October 2019 (death rates remain within SPHERE standards).
Rewriting the script on the role of men in child care

By Blessings Phumisa, UNICEF Malawi

There was a time when 51-year-old tomato farmer, Philemon Kanema Banda, used to care about the perceptions of his community on the role of men in raising children. The unwritten rules and norms on what were expected of men and women used to bother Philemon a lot.

So, he watched from a distance as his wife travelled to the under-five clinic for vitamin A supplementation and immunization with their first three children. The thought of him accompanying his wife and child to an under-five clinic was overstepping that societal line.

However, by the time his fourth child was born, Philemon had had enough. He felt that the primary responsibility of raising his child was for his family alone.

“I am the envy of everyone because we never have to wait in the queue at the clinic. My husband makes me proud because through this he is setting a very great example to all males about the importance of the involvement of men in vitamin A supplementation and immunization,” says Ireen.

She now has more time for other chores at home because Philemon also helps in taking care of Adam at home.

“We should not waste time being too focused on traditional perceptions of family responsibilities. Let’s take care of our children. Immunization and vitamin A supplementation give them good health,” says Ireen.

Health Surveillance Assistant (HSA) for Chikwina, Shupikile Mhango, says Philemon’s exemplary support to his family has been a beacon of light to many fathers in Chikwina.

“We even give Philemon an opportunity to talk to other families in Chikwina about the importance of having male caregivers take a central role in vitamin A supplementation,” says Shupikile.

Since June 2018, Global Affairs Canada has been funding UNICEF to provide Vitamin A capsules and albendazole deworming tablets to health facilities in five districts in Malawi. More than 128,000 under the age of five have been able to access these services since the funding began to flow.

Nkhata-Bay district in northern Malawi is one of these districts. It has one of country’s hilly terrains. With just 150 HSAs against a population of over 300,000 people, the few HSAs are providing vital support in raising awareness about the role of fathers in Vitamin A supplementation.
“More men are now coming to the under-five clinics across the district with their partners thanks to the work HSAs are doing in raising awareness about the need for the collective responsibility of fathers and mothers in making sure that children access vitamin A supplementation,” says Chikondi Mafaiti, coordinator for the Vitamin A supplementation in Nkhata-Bay’s Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI).

Negotiating through such a mountainous terrain on motorbikes and bicycles, HSAs have gone into the furthest parts of Nkhata-Bay to get male caregivers involved in Vitamin A supplementation.

“Efforts are now on finding more supportive male caregivers such as Philemon as it is proving that chances of a child defaulting on Vitamin A supplementation and immunization are lower when both parents are involved,” says UNICEF Malawi (chief of Nutrition, Sangita Jacob).