

Put Food on the Table Initiative



Programme Overview

The **Put Food on the Table Initiative** is Grassroot People and Gender Development Center's (GRADE) community-based nutrition and economic empowerment programme that helps women improve household food security through collective savings and financial discipline.

The initiative was developed in response to the growing cost of food, increasing household poverty, and the nutritional challenges faced by many low-income families. Rather than providing one-time food relief, the programme empowers women to save consistently throughout the year so they can purchase nutritious food for their families during periods of high financial demand, particularly at the end of the year.

Built on the principles of self-reliance, solidarity, and community ownership, the initiative demonstrates that small, consistent savings can make a significant difference in improving family nutrition and reducing financial stress.

Background

Rising food prices and economic hardship have made it increasingly difficult for many families to access nutritious meals. Women, who are often responsible for managing household food supplies, are disproportionately affected by these challenges.

Many households struggle to balance daily expenses with the need to provide healthy meals, resulting in poor dietary diversity and increased vulnerability to malnutrition, particularly among children and older persons.

Recognizing the need for a practical and sustainable solution, GRADE started the **Put Food on the Table Initiative** in 2024 with 8 women, in 2025, the number increased to 35 women and presently today in 2026, there are 60 women registered and making their daily contributions consistently. The primary aim is to promote financial discipline, savings culture, and improved household nutrition through community-led action.

Rather than depending solely on external assistance, women are supported to build their own financial resilience by saving small amounts regularly and planning ahead for their families' nutritional needs.

Goal

To improve household food security and nutrition by empowering women with practical savings mechanisms that strengthen financial resilience and promote healthy family feeding practices.

Objectives

The initiative aims to:

- Promote household food security among vulnerable families.
 - Encourage a culture of regular savings and financial planning.
 - Improve access to nutritious food.
 - Strengthen women's economic resilience.
 - Reduce financial pressure during festive and high-cost periods.
 - Promote community solidarity and mutual accountability.
 - Improve family nutrition and wellbeing.
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Programme Model

The initiative operates through a simple, community-driven savings mechanism.

Women voluntarily contribute a fixed amount—currently **₦500 daily**—over an agreed savings period. At the end of the savings cycle, participants receive their accumulated contributions, enabling them to purchase nutritious food items and meet household needs without resorting to debt or distress sales of assets.

The programme emphasizes consistency, accountability, and mutual encouragement, allowing women to build healthy financial habits while supporting one another.

Programme Components

Household Savings Groups

Women are organized into community-based savings groups where they:

- Make regular contributions.
- Track individual savings.
- Encourage accountability.
- Share financial experiences.
- Build mutual trust and support.

The group structure strengthens commitment and creates opportunities for peer learning.

Nutrition Education

Savings are complemented by education on healthy eating and balanced diets using affordable, locally available foods.

Topics include:

- Food diversity.
- Child nutrition.
- Maternal nutrition.
- Healthy meal planning.
- Food hygiene.
- Budget-friendly nutritious meals.

Participants are encouraged to prioritize nutritious food purchases that improve the health of every family member.

Financial Literacy

Women receive practical guidance on:

- Budgeting.
- Household financial planning.
- Savings culture.
- Responsible spending.
- Goal setting.
- Building financial resilience.

These sessions help participants make informed financial decisions that extend beyond the programme.

Peer Support and Community Learning

Regular meetings provide opportunities for women to:

- Share challenges and successes.
- Learn from one another.
- Celebrate milestones.
- Strengthen social networks.
- Build confidence and leadership skills.

The programme creates an environment where women motivate each other to remain committed to their financial and family goals.

Target Beneficiaries

The initiative primarily serves:

- Low-income women.
 - Mothers and caregivers.
 - Female-headed households.
 - Women's associations.
 - Vulnerable families.
 - Community savings groups.
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Implementation Approach

GRADE implements the initiative through a community-led approach that promotes ownership and sustainability.

Key implementation strategies include:

- Community mobilization.
- Formation of savings groups.
- Financial literacy sessions.
- Nutrition education.
- Group monitoring.
- Community accountability.
- Periodic review meetings.

Participants actively manage the savings process, with GRADE providing technical guidance, capacity building, and oversight.

Achievements

Since its introduction, the **Put Food on the Table Initiative** has:

- Encouraged women to develop consistent savings habits.
- Supported participating families in purchasing nutritious food at the end of each savings cycle.
- Increased awareness of household budgeting and financial planning.
- Promoted healthier food choices through nutrition education.
- Strengthened solidarity among women through community savings groups.

- Demonstrated that small daily contributions can produce significant improvements in household food security.
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Impact

The initiative has contributed to:

- Improved household food availability during high-demand periods.
- Increased financial discipline among participating women.
- Greater confidence in managing household finances.
- Reduced financial stress associated with purchasing food.
- Improved awareness of nutrition and healthy family feeding practices.
- Stronger community support networks among women.

Many participants report feeling more prepared to meet their families' nutritional needs without relying on emergency borrowing or external assistance.

Partnerships

GRADE seeks partnerships with:

- Community-based organizations.
- Women's cooperatives.
- Nutrition-focused organizations.
- Financial institutions.
- Agricultural and food security programmes.
- Corporate organizations.
- Development partners committed to women's economic empowerment and food security.

Such collaborations will strengthen the programme's reach, technical support, and long-term sustainability.

Sustainability

The initiative is designed to be community-owned and self-sustaining through:

- Continuous savings cycles.
- Peer accountability.

- Financial literacy education.
- Community leadership.
- Women's ownership of the process.
- Strong local support networks.

GRADE also plans to integrate livelihood development, small business support, and household resilience strategies to further strengthen participating families.

Looking Ahead

GRADE plans to expand the **Put Food on the Table Initiative** to more communities across Lagos State and Nigeria by establishing additional women's savings groups, introducing digital savings tracking, linking participants to livelihood opportunities, promoting household kitchen gardens, and strengthening nutrition education for women and caregivers.

The organization also aims to build partnerships with government agencies, financial institutions, agricultural organizations, and development partners to enhance food security and economic resilience among vulnerable households.

At GRADE, we believe that no family should go hungry because of poverty or poor planning. Through the **Put Food on the Table Initiative**, women are not simply saving money—they are investing in healthier children, stronger families, and more resilient communities.