

Girls advocating for girls' nutrition in Ethiopia

2021

08

March

International Women's Day | Women's empowerment | Women's nutrition | SUN Civil Society Network | SUN Country Network 



1

Share



Better Nutrition = Greater Equality & more Equality = Better Nutrition



Nutrition and gender are intimately interconnected. Women and girls make up 60% of all undernourished people globally. Poor nutrition compounds existing barriers and presents new hurdles for women and girls as they look to realise their health and rights. Girls and boys, women and men have different nutrient requirements and very different experiences of the social norms that govern how food is produced and consumed and how nutrition services are provided and used.

Gender inequalities restrict livelihood, education, and growth opportunities for women and girls. This stifles their agency and limits their access to and control over the resources required to meet their unique nutrition needs. But the reverse is also true: centering gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls across all the multi-sectoral dimension of nutrition approaches can transform the very norms and systems that perpetuate these inequalities.

We like to say: Better nutrition = greater equality and more equality = better nutrition. Enter the [Gender Transformative Framework for Nutrition](#), a conceptual model that expands the potential of nutrition related programmes to tackle gender inequalities.

Take it from two young leaders in the Mecha district of Ethiopia, Yeshialem and Fentanesh. At Rim High School, Yeshialem participated in gender-transformative peer dialogues that promoted adolescent nutrition, gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights. The peer groups were part of the [Born on Time](#) Program, a public-private partnership between World Vision, Plan International Canada, Save the Children, the Government of Canada and Johnson & Johnson.

Yeshialem said “This gave me courage. Taking weekly iron supplements has helped us to keep going to school. I have seen a change in myself. I was afraid to ask questions. I have developed self-confidence. I have talked to my mother to make sure I’m eating well – just like everyone else in our house. Before I started taking iron, I used to feel dizzy, miss school and just sleep all day. Now I don’t have any of those feelings”.

Building on her excitement, energy and passion, Yeshialem is now not only a leading advocate for girls’ nutrition in her community, but she stepped in to help stop her friend, Fentanesh’s early marriage. The two young women worked with allies to stop the marriage, making sure Fentanesh could stay in school and in control of her future.

Yeshialem and her peers are active in their community, engaging their parents and community leaders to explain their nutritional needs and cocreate solutions to see those needs realised. School and community leaders now proactively support the peer dialogue groups, which are helping to reduce iron deficiency anaemia, improve the dietary practices among adolescent girls and counter harmful social norms, like the belief that girls don’t need to eat as much as boys.



Photo: © World Vision Yeshialem (right) and Fentanesh (left) at school with their peer dialogue groups

Tackling nutrition inequalities must begin with an understanding of women’s empowerment, agency, and the opportunity to act to enable

transformative and lasting change. We recognise and salute your leadership Yeshialem and Fentanesh to realise this for women and girls in Ethiopia!

Post A Comment

Write your message here...

Please input your name, job title a

E-mail address

Save my name, email, and website in this browser for the next time I comment.

SUBMIT

No Comments

Categories

[Blogs](#)

[MPTF](#)

[Parliamentarians](#)

[SUN Business Network](#)

[SUN Civil Society Network](#)

[SUN Country Network](#)

[SUN Donor Network](#)

[SUN Lead Group and Secretariat](#)

[SUN Monthly Newsletter](#)

SUN Secretariat

SUN UN Network

Tags

partner Info systems Gender Regional initiatives SDGs Climate Equality Education Investments Strategic Review
Nutrition SUN Movement Coordinator Parliamentarians Climate Change Humanitarian field SUN Movement
Lead Group CFS Nutrition-Sensitive Women's nutrition knowledge management
