



NUTRITION LEARNING BRIEF

OVERVIEW

The USAID funded SPIR Program, led by World Vision in a consortium with CARE and ORDA, is intended to help households in the PSNP4 program achieve food security for their households through a combination of savings, diversifying their sources of income through income generating activities (IG SPIR As), and skills training that can help them graduate from food assistance. SPIR supports 526,444 direct project participants in the Amhara, Oromia and SNNPR regions of Ethiopia. The public works program implemented through SPIR teaches PSNP4 HHs the climate adaptive practices that will help them increase their productivity and food security. This complementarity is core to the success of the collaboration between the GoE and the USAID funded SPIR Program.

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SPIR direct project participants in the Amhara, Oromia and SNNPR regions of Ethiopia

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SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES TO DECREASE MALNUTRITION THROUGH TIMED AND TARGETED INTERVENTIONS.

There is a brand-new building in the Woltanee village of Gemechis woreda that serves as the central hub of nutrition, health, and nutrition sensitive agriculture activities. It is not the village elders house or even the local school. This nerve center of communal bonding is the newly built health facility. The USAID funded SPIR Program, led by World Vision in a consortium with CARE and ORDA, helped build this health post to serve households in the PSNP4 program access health and nutrition counseling, preventive and basic curative services in their village. SPIR is intended to provide food and nutrition security to PSNP4 households through a combination of savings, diversifying their sources of income through income generating activities (IGAs), through demonstrations on diversified nutritious diet preparation and utilization, and skills training that can help them graduate from food assistance.

Stunting rates hover around 38% in Ethiopia, with 24% of the population being underweight and 10% wasted some of the highest rates of malnutrition in the world. To address this, SPIR takes a holistic approach to building the nutritional status of individuals while also building the capacity of the government at all levels to maintain this improved nutritional status of PSNP4 households.

TARGETING PLW

The program has charged Health extension workers and the health development army, a largely women led body of community level health workers, who are hired by the GOE to give preventive nutrition education and promote health and nutrition services the community level. They visit households to conduct timed and targeted health and nutrition counseling and conduct cooking demonstration at market places, particularly for households with pregnant and lactating women (PLW). This army consists of 120 women who are trained by district health extension workers on (a) Increased utilization of diverse nutritious food for PLW, children under 2, and adolescent girls and (b) Increased utilization of Health and nutrition services. Each Person works with 5 households to promote and give preventive, basic curative nutrition and health services for their village. Using pictures and storybooks, the health development army specifically target the most critical times between conception and age 2 of the child to counsel the entire family on the nutritional needs of the mother and child.



Shaam Shii stands by her chickens and proudly claims that she gets 6-8 eggs daily, which she feeds to her 3 children. What she has left over, she sells in the local market. The extra source of income has enabled her to diversify her income generating activities further. Shaam is part of the newly formed VESA in this area and saves \$20birr/week outside of the VESA, which she then reinvests into a shoit fattening as an additional income generating activity (IGA). Her husband is partially blind, which limits his mobility and participation in contributing to household needs. But Shaam smiles as she shows off her growing pumpkin garden, which she has initiated outside if any SPIR intervention. The skills and knowledge that she has learned as a VESA participant in terms of business planning, diversifying her IGAs and saving are elevating her status in the community from one of the most vulnerable to now a model for how to nourish her children, increasing her household's income, while building the resilience that will enable her to graduate from the PSNP4.

INTEGRATION WITH PURPOSE 1:

The nutrition counseling that is provided through SPIR in an integrated part of the livelihoods activities that are the primary focus of the Project. SPIR places a deliberate focus on improving the nutritional status of PLW through a poultry production scheme that provides HHs, especially those with PLW or children under the age of 2, with improved poultry breeds. Each household participating in poultry rearing receives 6 vaccinated chicks (one male and five female) on a cost sharing basis whereby households are expected to build a structure to house poultry in order to receive the 6 chicks. Training is given to these households on poultry management, and the utilization of eggs for household use rather than sale so that households can increase their nutritional status by consuming animal protein. Eggs that are not used for household consumption are then sold in local markets, providing a critical extra source of income. Poultry production is just one way in which SPIR is simultaneously improving nutritional while diversifying household income. Another core approach of the program is to encourage the utilization of locally available and affordable foods. SPIR nutrition health workers, Health Extension workers and agricultural extension workers go to the market during market days when a majority of community members, including women, shop for household needs. Nutrition staff set up cooking demonstrations in a central location in the market, actively mobilize PLW to attend the sessions, and teach them how to use foods available in that very market to cook a balanced and healthy meal. The sessions emphasize the importance of a diverse diet that includes energy rich foods, animal protein as well as vegetables and fruits. SPIR also sets up cooking demonstrations for PLW and malnourished children at health posts. SPIR also encourages households to engage in value chains such as poultry production or haricot bean, to promote household consumption of these nutritionally rich products while also diversifying the incomes of the household.

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING:

The intent of SPIR is to develop a set of protocols for graduating PSNP4 households into longer term food security. Targeting the individual and household through nutrition messaging and income generation support is only part of the holistic approach that the project takes to tackle the high rates of malnutrition in

the country. A significant focus of the project is on strengthening the capacity of the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) to continue targeting acute and severe malnutrition through nutrition advocacy and awareness building. SPIR integrates the national nutrition strategy at all levels of service delivery. SPIR uses the models developed by GoE to train health and agriculture extension workers, to ensure that messaging across all layers from the district to the woreda, kebele, village and ultimately the household are consistent.



“Before SPIR came to Waltanee, the nearest health post was 18 kilometers from the village. A pregnant woman in labor traveled along treacherous dirt roads to get to a facility where complications from delivery could be taken care of by a trained professional.”

The integrated approach that is core to SPIR is on display at the health post in Waltanee village. Before SPIR came to Waltanee, the nearest health post was 18 kilometers from the village. A pregnant woman in labor traveled along treacherous dirt roads to get to a facility where complications from delivery could be taken care of by a trained professional. There were 2 health extension workers that served this village, but no housing or transportation, it was virtually impossible for these women to provide consistent health and nutrition counseling and support to all 596 households in the village. The health post that was built by SPIR in partnership with the public works program implemented through PSNP4 now enable these health workers to be in the village for extended periods of time and to meet with individual households to provide counseling on family planning, nutrition, infant and child nutrition and targeted counseling for people living with HIV/AIDS. In addition, SPIR has helped construct a shallow well, a rooftop rainwater harvesting structure, and a demonstration plot that sits behind the health post. The

rainwater feeds the perma garden that sits behind the health post and that doubles as a learning facility to teach farmers about improved homestead gardening practices. Training on permaculture and bio-intensive farming enables households to control and manage water and to provide a potential for year-round supplemental food production. This kind of guided group learning is then applied, especially by women, on a smaller piece of land that is close to the homestead hence not putting a strain on labor.

SPIR supports poor and extreme poor households in Ethiopia to think about how nutrition and livelihoods are inextricably linked. The project teaches PSNP4 households the skills households need to improve their nutritional status while also generating the income that will help them sustain nutritional outcomes. But perhaps most importantly listening to the community and addressing the more basic challenges to their development, like having a functioning health post, SPIR is driven by the needs of communities, which will lead to the sustainability of the Project's interventions.

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