Maternal and child undernutrition in Ethiopia contribute to both preventable mortality and reduced economic outcomes. For example, in 2009, undernutrition was associated with 24 percent of child mortality. Undernutrition also resulted in a loss that year of about 16 percent of gross domestic product in the country. The leading causes of maternal mortality in Ethiopia are eclampsia/pre-eclampsia and hemorrhage—both of which can be reduced through maternal nutrition interventions.

The Government’s Second National Nutrition Programme (NNP2) has set specific targets to achieve by the year 2020 for improving the nutrition status of both children and women of reproductive age. Meeting these challenges will require changes in family practices, as well as improvements in facility and community services. This brief highlights the status of critical nutrition-related indicators in Gambela region.

**ETHIOPIA’S Gambela Region**

**Demographic Profile**
- Total population: 435,999
  - 34% Urban
  - 66% Rural
- Adolescents (10-19 years): 22%
- Participation in PSNP (social safety net): N/A

**Maternal Nutrition Indicators**
- Women of reproductive age, anemia: 26% Gambela, 24% National
- Women of reproductive age, thinness: 32% Gambela, 22% National

**Child Nutrition Indicators**
- Underweight: 19% Gambela, 24% National
- Stunted: 24% Gambela, 24% National
- Wasted: 38% Gambela, 14% Gambela, 10% National

**Child and Maternal Health Indicators**
- Infant mortality: 56 Gambela, 48 National
- Maternal mortality ratio: N/A Gambela, 412 National

**Status of Nutrition and Health Indicators**

**Regional Progress Against <5 Stunting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gambela</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gambela**
- Total population: 435,999
  - 34% Urban
  - 66% Rural
- Adolescents (10-19 years): 22%
- Participation in PSNP: N/A

**National**
- Total population: 105,893,000
  - 34% Urban
  - 66% Rural
- Adolescents (10-19 years): 22%
- Participation in PSNP: 50%

**Table of Critical Indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Gambela</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underweight</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stunted</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasted</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women of reproductive age, anemia</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women of reproductive age, thinness</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant mortality</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal mortality ratio</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Areas for Immediate Action**

- Focus on improving dietary diversity among children 6-23 months
- Focus on improving meal frequency among children 6-23 months
- Advocate for increased male support in household chores
- Support programs to delay early marriage for young women

---

**Food Insecurity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gambela</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children 2 weeks</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices**

- Early initiation of breastfeeding: Gambela 67%, National 73%
- Exclusive breastfeeding (infants < 6 months): Gambela 57%, National 58%
- Breastfeeding at 1 year: Gambela 80%, National 92%
- Minimum meal frequency (6-23 months): Gambela 44%, National 45%
- Minimum dietary diversity (6-23 months): Gambela 14%, National 14%

**Women's Age at First Marriage**

- Age at first marriage below 18: Gambela 74%, National 58%
- Median age at first marriage: Gambela 17 years, National 17 years

**Women's Education (Regional)**

- No education: 27%
- Beyond secondary: 12%
- Secondary: 22%
- Primary: 39%

- Women, ages 15-49

**Water and Sanitation Indicators**

- Improved drinking water: Gambela 83%, National 65%
- Improved sanitation: Gambela 8%, National 6%

---

**Gender Empowerment**

- Husband rarely participates in household chores: Gambela 73%, National 63%
- Woman never experienced violence by husband/partner: Gambela 34%, National 24%
CAUSES OF UNDERNUTRITION continued

PLATFORMS TO ADDRESS NUTRITION

AREAS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

- Increase the number of pregnant women who have an ANC visit in their first trimester
- Increase the number of pregnant women who receive and take 90+ IFA tablets
- Increase the number of new mothers/newborns who receive a postnatal visit within two days

ANC is the primary delivery platform for nutrition interventions for pregnant women in Gambela region.

73% of women in Gambela received ANC from a skilled provider during their last pregnancy.

USE OF HEALTH SERVICES—CHILDREN

MEDIA USE (Regional)
DEFINITIONS

**Age at first marriage below 18 years:** among women 20-24 years

**Anemia:** non-pregnant women 15-49 years with hemoglobin level < 12.0 g/dl; pregnant women with hemoglobin level < 11.0 g/dl

**Breastfeeding at one year:** children 12-15 months who received breastmilk

**Child stunting:** height-for-age below -2SD

**Child underweight:** weight-for-age below -2SD

**Child wasting:** weight-for-height below -2SD

**Contraceptive prevalence rate:** use of a modern method (currently married women age 15-49)

**Deworming:** children 6-59 months (in last 6 months)

**Early ANC:** first antenatal care visit within the first trimester of pregnancy

**Early initiation of breastfeeding:** within 1 hour of birth

**Exclusive breastfeeding:** child under age 6 months who was given nothing but breastmilk during the first 6 months of life

**Experience of violence by husband/partner:** report by ever-married women age 15-49

**Food insecurity:** in the last 12 months, households ever faced with not having enough food to feed the family

**Husband participation in household chores:** report by currently married women age 15-49

**Improved sources of drinking water:** include piped water, public taps, standpipes, tube wells, boreholes, protected dug wells and springs, and rainwater

**Improved toilet facilities:** include any non-shared toilet of the following types: flush/pour flush toilets to piped sewer systems, septic tanks, and pit latrines; ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrines; pit latrines with slabs; and composting toilets

**Infant mortality:** number of deaths before age one per 1000 live births (for the 10 years preceding the survey)

**Maternal mortality ratio:** maternal deaths per 100,000 live births for the 7 years before the survey

**Median age at first marriage:** among women 25-49 years

**Minimum dietary diversity:** children age 6-23 months who received foods from ≥ 4 food groups

**Minimum meal frequency:** breastfed child age 6-8 months—receive at least 2 times a day solid, semi-solid or soft foods. Child age 9-23 receive at least 3 times a day; non-breastfed child age 6-23 months—receive at least 4 times a day solid, semi-solid, or soft foods

**Newborn PNC:** first post-natal care visit for newborn within two days of birth

**Thinness:** (non-pregnant) women age 15-49 years with body mass index (BMI) < 18.5

**Vaccinated:** children 12-35 months received pentavalent 3

**Vitamin A:** children 6-59 months (in last 6 months)

---

5. Unless otherwise noted, sources for all data are the Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2016. (2017) Central Statistical Agency and ICF International.
6. Demographic and Health Surveys stat compiler, (re)calculating all years according to WHO Child Growth Standards. (Accessed March 1, 2018).