

A GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR NUTRITION

Advancing Nutrition and Gender Equality Together



Executive Summary

Nutrition and gender are intimately interconnected. Every day, women and girls experience poor nutrition disproportionately — 60% of the world's people with chronic hunger are women and girls.¹ Gender inequalities restrict livelihood, education, and growth opportunities for women and girls, stifling their agency, and limiting their access to and control over the resources required to meet their unique nutrition needs. In recent years, efforts to improve nutrition have reached further across systems that drive wellbeing, including health, food, education, and WASH, to tackle the multisectoral nature of malnutrition. Yet, significant siloes remain, in part because our collective efforts do not adequately address the gender inequalities that are both the cause and consequence of malnutrition.

The impact of COVID-19 has exposed gaps that have always required a gender-transformative approach. Within a few months, COVID-19 is undoing decades of progress towards improved nutrition. Child wasting could increase by as much as 14.3%² and maternal mortality by up to 38%.³ The consequences of the pandemic are most acutely felt by women and girls, who are already twice as likely as men and boys to be malnourished. Women and girls are also seeing alarming increases in

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM), leading to unplanned pregnancies. These realities further limit their ability to realize their nutritional needs, changing the trajectories of their lives forever.

These inequities have always required a response that transforms power dynamics and decision making at the household, national and global levels. COVID-19 has made moving the Sustainable Development Goals forward without this scale of transformational change impossible. It is not enough to apply a gender lens to reveal how existing systems and structures impact the nutrition of a woman or girl. It is time to transform the nutrition-related systems that perpetuate gender inequality.

An effective response requires that we make achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls the central lynchpin upon which multi-sectoral responses to nutrition build. The Gender-Transformative Framework for Nutrition (GTFN) is a truly innovative approach that equips everyone with a role in improving global nutrition to *think* differently so that we can *do* differently.

WHAT IS THE GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR NUTRITION?



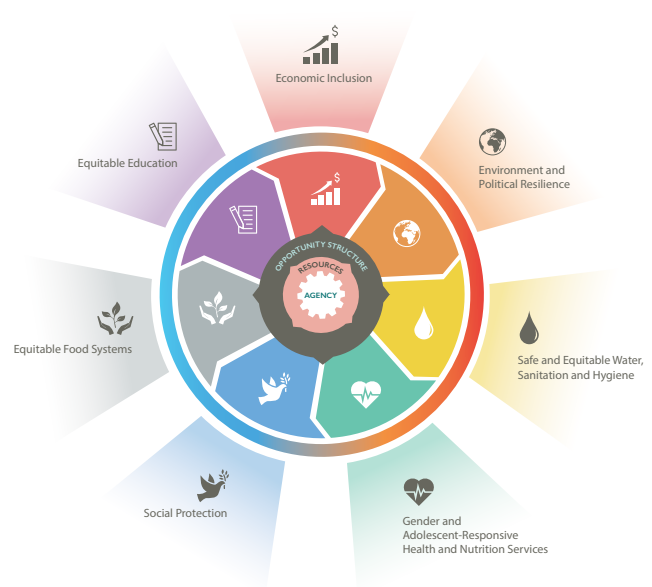
The Gender-Transformative Framework for Nutrition is a Canadian-led, evidence-based conceptual model that expands the potential of nutrition programs to tackle gender inequalities. The Framework leverages existing literature and theoretical frameworks by applying systems thinking to critically examine the multi-sectoral drivers of malnutrition, while placing empowerment and gender equality at its centre.

This re-framing can help us understand how gender norms, institutions, and power relations are disempowering women and girls and causing unequal access to food, health and nutrition services, education, agricultural resources, markets, and technologies. From that starting point, the GTFN uncovers entry-points and facilitates solutions to address the complex, gendered interactions between the many drivers of malnutrition.

Ultimately, this innovative framework seeks to help practitioners and policymakers identify evidence-based interventions, tools and approaches for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender-transformative nutrition programming. But what truly distinguishes the GTFN from existing approaches is that it simultaneously describes the interactions across delivery systems or 'domains' and at the same time recognizes the complex relationships between individuals, households, and society, all of which impact gender equality and nutrition.

Interrupting cycles of marginalization and disempowerment of women and girls is possible when women and girls:

- exercise their own **agency** over strategic life decisions;
- have access to and control over **resources**;
- are supported by the **informal and formal institutions and structures** that enable opportunities to realize their rights to good health and nutrition.



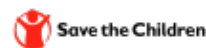


To this end, GTFN-based pathways and solutions engage women and girls as rights holders and agents of change, alongside power holders and influencers, to transform harmful attitudes, practices and systems.

The GTFN is a collaborative, growing partnership, informing the ever-evolving framework and its applications. Plans to operationalize the Framework include a roll out of tools to support gender-transformative approaches across the program lifecycle, research and validation, knowledge translation, and advocacy.

We call on partners to prioritize gender-transformational approaches to nutrition and invite them to join us in advancing gender equality, empowerment and nutrition through this Framework.

For more information visit:
gendernutritionframework.org



1. FAO. **Closing the gender gap for better food and nutrition security**, 2016.
2. Lancet. **Impacts of COVID-19 on childhood malnutrition and nutrition-related mortality**, 2020.
3. Lancet. **Early Estimates of the Indirect Effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Maternal and Child Mortality in Low- and Middle Income Countries**, 2020.