



# ETHIOPIA

Brussels, 28-29 September, 2017



**Fifteen-year-old Fatuma is now back at home after escaping a marriage to an older man.**

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## TESTIMONIES

Fatuma's\* family benefits from UNICEF's Integrated Nutrition and Social Cash Transfer (IN-SCT) program, a complement to the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) that seeks to improve access of children and women to basic services such as health, nutrition, education and child protection. 15-year-old Fatuma, the eldest child in her family, stopped attending school 18 months ago when she entered into an abusive arranged marriage. Thanks to unconditional monthly cash transfers from IN-SCT, Fatuma is now back with her family.

Through a case management system under the IN-SCT programme, social workers monitor PSNP beneficiaries and play an important role in preventing violence, abuse and exploitation, while also leading and coordinating responsive services.

*\*Names changed to protect privacy.*

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In 2015-2016, Ethiopia faced the impact of the worst El Niño in 50 years. In addition to the 7.9 million beneficiaries of cash and in-kind assistance through the PSNP, more than 10 million Ethiopians required relief food assistance for 6 months. The drought resulted in thousands fleeing dry or flooded lands, causing significant crop production declines and food price increases, affecting water supplies and leaving millions food insecure. The consequent increase in indebtedness and loss of assets and social capital will have long-lasting effects on households' and children's wellbeing, especially among the poorest quintile. Vulnerable Ethiopians continue to need humanitarian assistance in 2017 due to the drought affecting the Somali, SNNP and Oromia regions. This assistance is estimated to cost of US\$715 million.



Launched in 2005, the PSNP provides food or cash to food-insecure rural households in chronically food-insecure districts in 8 regions in exchange for labor-intensive public works, while labor-constrained households receive unconditional “direct support” food or cash transfers. The programme can also respond to transitory food insecurity by ‘scaling up’ operations in case of shock or stressors using its own contingency budget or additional funding from partners. For instance, in June 2016, the World Bank financed US\$100 million to support some 4.5 million persons in need of assistance because of drought. The same scalability model is currently being implemented in Somali region to fund additional transfers.

In the Somali region drought-affected areas, the PSNP reaches 1.6 million beneficiaries, while food aid relief reaches 1.3 million beneficiaries. Households that do not benefit from PSNP but have children with severe or moderate acute malnutrition are expected to be supported by food aid relief or the contingency budget of the PSNP. In addition, pregnant and breastfeeding women under the PSNP are exempt from public works beginning from their first antenatal care visit through the first year postpartum. PSNP caregivers of malnourished children are also exempt from public works upon referral from a health sector worker.

## PROMISING PRACTICES

A 2014 evaluation of the PSNP found that the average household food gap dropped from 3.6 months to 1.75 months, a decline of 51%. Beneficiary household increased assets; sales of assets during shocks declined; and community projects led to improvements in rural infrastructure and watershed development, with resulting rising in groundwater tables and improved vegetation. A 2014 World Bank poverty assessment found that direct transfers to vulnerable households was associated with a 2% reduction in the national poverty rate and that the program is one of the three drivers of poverty reduction. PSNP transfers also increase the use of agricultural inputs, which supports agricultural growth, and help mitigate the impacts of drought, where moderate drought results in a 6% consumption loss for PSNP beneficiaries compared with 8% for other households; recent research has also found that households participating in the PSNP “bounce back” twice as fast as other households.

UNICEF supports an integrated social protection system in Ethiopia by piloting innovations that are scaled up within the PSNP. In 2011, the Social Cash Transfer Pilot Programme (SCTPP), launched by the Tigray Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs (BOLSA) with support from UNICEF, tested the role of the social workers and community care of coalitions in addition to electronic transfers, to improve the quality of life of orphans and vulnerable children, elderly and persons with disabilities and to enhance their access to basic services such as healthcare and education.

*Cooking demonstrations in Halaba Woreda, SNNPR region – Ethiopia, 2017 (UNICEF supported IN-SCT pilot)*

**School nutrition clubs were established in the 80 schools in the IN- SCT kebeles.**



In 2015, UNICEF introduced the Integrated Nutrition and Social Cash Transfer (IN-SCT) program in Oromia and SNNPR regions. The IN-SCT program aims to support and enhance implementation of phase 4 of the PSNP (PSNP4). Within the IN-SCT program, UNICEF is piloting an integrated package of multi-sectoral nutrition services. The IN-SCT program aims to enhance access to social services through co-responsibilities for two groups of PSNP4 beneficiaries: permanent direct support (PDS) beneficiaries who now receive 12 months of transfers per year, and temporary direct support (TDS) beneficiaries including pregnant and lactating women and caregivers of malnourished children. The IN-SCT also supports community mobilization through Behavior Change Communication sessions for male and female public work beneficiaries.



**Focus group discussion with  
IN-SCT beneficiaries, SNNPR  
region – Ethiopia, 2017  
(UNICEF supported IN-SCT pilot)**



**KEY MESSAGES:**

- Safety net programs can achieve significant and lasting impacts on food insecurity and poverty when these programs are operated at scale and sustained over time;
- National safety net systems can be an effective means of responding to drought, particularly among countries, such as Ethiopia, which have invested in basic service delivery;
- Safety net programs can support poor and vulnerable households to access to basic social service support systems, e.g. in nutrition;
- Evaluations support learning and provide independent evidence highlighting progress and making the case for further investments;
- Financing can come from a variety of sources but should be integrated to support common objectives; and
- By organizing themselves, Development Partners can play a positive role in supporting government-led programs across the humanitarian-development continuum.

## MAIN CHALLENGE(S) AHEAD AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Initial assessments of the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the IN-SCT program revealed some challenges related to issues that compromise the performance of service providers:

- Staffing issues (attrition, recruitment delays, work overload, language barriers);
- Technical problems (delayed MIS software development, late payment of PSNP transfers);
- Logistical constraints (lack of transport, remote communities); and
- Practical issues that affected participation (poor attendance at meetings, water shortage, infirmity).

## USEFUL RESOURCES

[PSNP-4 Program Documents](#)

[The Transfer Project - Ethiopia](#)