

## a new standard in gender transformative WASH & Nutrition

### What we do

Healthy children come from healthy communities. There is no one-stop solution to **tackling stunting\***.

Good nutrition is just one building block for healthy growth. Lack of access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) undermines a child's healthy growth by causing infections and chronic disease. Climate change and disasters heighten food and nutrition insecurity.

Only when all of these aspects are addressed in an integrated, **gender transformative\*** way, can healthy growth be achieved. **That is why we integrate WASH and Nutrition on all levels.**

In a Healthy Village, everybody is an agent of change: the caregivers in the villages who are raising their children, the entrepreneurs selling products and services, as well as Ministry of Health officials implementing their Seqota Declaration policy to reach zero stunting by 2030 for children under two.

### This works!

#### Childhood stunting dropped in Bangladesh

The Healthy Village approach was first implemented by Max Foundation in Bangladesh. At the end of the programme, stunting rates were halved in the areas where the programme was implemented (from 51 to 25%). This is over five times faster than the general trend in Bangladesh, and despite the devastating impact of Covid-19 on people's livelihoods.



**\*Stunting** is when children are too short for their age, caused by undernutrition due to poor diet, and infections from unsafe water and exposure to faecal matter. Stunting can cause long-term mental and physical disabilities, and on average stunted children earn 15.8% less income in their lifetime.

**\*A gender transformative approach:** Changing social norms and unequal power relations that affect access to household food distribution and WASH facilities is important in reducing girls and women's malnutrition. Improving women and girls' participation in decision making and leadership around nutrition and WASH brings results for all.

### Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, 37% of children under 5 are stunted. In some districts the **stunting rate goes up to 42%**.

Therefore, Max Foundation and Plan International are jointly implementing Healthy Village Ethiopia along with partners.

We aim to reach 400,000 people in four districts in Ethiopia, including Enebse Sar Medir, Goncha Siso Enese and Shebel Berentia in the Amhara region.

### Healthy Village criteria

Once a village meets and maintains key criteria for a healthy start in life, they are officially declared as a Healthy Village by the local government. Some of these key criteria are:

- ✓ Regular handwashing with soap
- ✓ Clean living area
- ✓ Regular growth monitoring of children
- ✓ Sufficient, nutritious diet, particularly for mothers and children
- ✓ Pre- and post-natal care
- ✓ Menstrual hygiene
- ✓ Access to improved sanitation and safe water

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### Who is involved?



**Local entrepreneurs** are trained in sanitation and nutrition marketing, creating both demand and supply for healthy products and services in communities, while growing the local economy and creating opportunities for livelihoods.

Using growth charts, **caregivers** are taught by local health professionals to track the growth of their children, a powerful trigger for behaviour change.



We focus on **pregnant women** because of the critical 1,000 day period for tackling stunting – which begins in the womb. Pre-natal and post-natal care, good food intake, and good hygiene all contribute to healthy mothers and children.

We work with existing structures that bring extension workers from the **government** to the communities to give support on health and farming. We support these extension workers with tools and techniques that will improve child health.



**Farmers** are trained on nutrition sensitive and climate-resilient agriculture. In turn, these farmers train their peers, giving hands-on demonstrations.

Village Economy and Social Associations in and from the **communities** help members access credit to invest in WASH & nutrition.



**Students** are trained by schools on healthy habits, including handwashing, and on growing micronutrient-rich foods (school gardens). They share knowledge with their families and ensure healthy habits continue in the next generation.

### Get involved!

#### Please reach out to us if you:

- are interested in potentially adopting the Healthy Village approach where you work
- would like to support our efforts (we are still raising funds to complement the Dutch government's contribution)
- are also implementing in Ethiopia and see potential synergy and shared learning

### Who we are

Healthy Village Ethiopia is jointly implemented by **Max Foundation** and **Plan International**, along with partners including ORDA and iDE, and in close cooperation with the Government of Ethiopia.

This programme directly contributes to the Ethiopian Government's Seqota Declaration for Zero Stunting by 2030, led by the Ministry of Health, but also with the Ministries of Water, Infrastructure & Energy (MoWIE), and Agriculture (MoA).

It also engages with the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children (MoWYC) for collaboration on inclusion of gender in WASH-Nutrition.



Kingdom of the Netherlands



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