

Ensuring effective nutrition programmes

Objectives for international development programmes are designed using a descriptive system of official measures called ‘OECD policy markers.’ These are used to identify what a particular programme is intended to achieve, such as improving nutrition.

(OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, an economic organisation of 37 member states.)

[For nutrition programmes](#), the marker informs how nutrition objectives are included in programmes and activities designed to achieve other aims (e.g. in education, health, or agriculture programmes). The marker is based on a scoring system to distinguish between activities that have nutrition as the principal objective, and activities that have nutrition as a significant objective. The OECD policy marker system was developed to standardise monitoring and comparability of the official development measures of governments. It is designed to measure the degree to which the member states have put the OECD's development policy objectives into practice.

Why nutrition matters: Halima's story

Fatuma lives in a camp for internally displaced people in Mogadishu, Somalia. She married when she was 16 and soon became pregnant. But her husband beat her.

Not long after the birth of her daughter Halima, she became pregnant again and the abuse escalated. “We fought over how to cover the medical and household bills,” Fatuma says. “I tried pleading with him to provide for us and to take good care of us but instead he hit me and the children. After a while, I'd had enough. I wanted to leave the chaos behind and I had to get away.

“He told me to leave without the children, but I was still breastfeeding the young one.” In the end, he took Halima. Fatuma begged for her daughter's return. She learned that Halima was suffering from diarrhoea, but it was several weeks before her husband finally brought her back. Halima had severe acute malnutrition, the most life-threatening form of hunger. Her hands and feet were swollen, and inflamed patches on her skin had darkened and peeled. Her hair lost its colour, became brittle and started falling out.

Fatuma heard about a nearby Action Against Hunger-funded medical centre that could help her daughter. The next day she was admitted. With expert care over six weeks, Halima was nursed back to health. She was given therapeutic milk and, later, ready-to-use therapeutic food to help her grow stronger and healthier. They also advised Fatuma on the best way to feed Halima and good hygiene practices.



Halima with her mother Fatuma in week 6 of her treatment.

With the treatment she received, Halima has recovered well. Although she may never grow as tall as her peers, Fatuma knows that further delay could have caused permanent physical and learning disabilities, leaving Halima's life in further danger.

"I am so grateful for the constant support I have received from Action Against Hunger," says Fatuma. Three months into Halima's recovery, Fatuma's ex-husband came back to demand care of his children.

With the support of her uncle, Fatuma took some of the before and after photos taken by Action Against Hunger and presented them at a court case. She was granted full custody of her children with the support from the elders and her uncle.

"It's hard for me that I have to occasionally fight for my rights as a mother to be with my children but my determination to keep them healthy and happy is what drives me to look out for them every day," explains Fatuma.

Story credit: [Action Against Hunger](#). You can also [watch this short video](#) of Halima's story.