



Reacts In NEWSLETTER

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Issue 1 - February 2025

The Numbers So Far...

58,239 Women aged 15-49 attended interactive nutrition demonstrations	189,407 Canadians reached through ReactsIn public engagement campaigns
17,661 Female and male farmers cultivated biofortified crops through ReactsIn inputs	9,890 men trained on sociocultural barriers that hinder gender equitable nutrition



The Rift Valley, Kenya:
 The ReactsIn project area in Kenya is located in Elgeyo-Marakwet county just outside the town of Iten. This photo was taken at the home of a farmer named Vincent, whose wife, Joanne and three kids have been involved in ReactsIn programming within their community.

A Message from the Vice President of Programs and Policy at World Vision Canada

2025 marks the conclusion of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025), an ambitious global initiative aimed at ending hunger and malnutrition worldwide while ensuring universal access to healthy diets. Despite significant progress, malnutrition continues to have a devastating toll, with nearly half of deaths among children under 5-years of age linked to undernutrition. These deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, underscoring the ongoing challenges in achieving global nutrition equity.

The developmental, economic, social, and medical physical impacts of malnutrition remain severe and far-reaching—not only for individuals and families but also for communities and entire nations. Recognizing this critical issue, the ReactsIn program was launched in 2023 with financial support from Global Affairs Canada (GAC). The project operates in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kenya, Tanzania and Somalia, targeting all forms of malnutrition with a multi-sectoral, comprehensive and inclusive approach.

In collaboration with the HarvestPlus, Nutriton International, McGill University, government partners and local civil society organizations, REACTS-IN seeks to identify gaps in delivering gender-equitable nutrition services and develop sustainable strategies that build upon existing successes and policies. One of the key features of the program is the introduction of the Gender-Transformative Framework for Nutrition (GTFN), a model developed by a coalition of organizations, including World Vision Canada, to enhance gender equality and improve nutrition outcomes.

As the program progresses, I extend my best wishes to all stakeholders involved, and I am confident that the efforts will contribute to meaningful and lasting improvements in the lives of those most affected by malnutrition.

Claudia Berloni
 Vice President, Programs and Policy
 World Vision Canada



ReactsIn Seeks To...

IMPROVE

Improving adoption of gender equitable practices in health and nutrition to promote safe and healthy families and communities.

STRENGTHEN

Strengthening health systems by ensuring gender-equitable health services to meet the unique health needs of the poorest and most marginalized women, adolescent girls, and children

INCREASE

Increasing the capacity of the local stakeholders to advocate for and monitor gender equitable health service delivery in target countries and Canada.



Children thrive and reach their full potential when they receive care from both mothers and fathers. While mothers often bear the primary responsibility, particularly in areas like feeding, nurturing and seeking health services fathers also play a crucial role in their development as well.

Dr. Asrat Dibaba Tolossa, ReactsIn Chief of Party



Click this photo, or scan the QR code to see a video about the daily life of Afifa and her mom, Ajmira.

ReactsIn Bangladesh

Global Affairs Canada Visits ReactsIn

In December 2024, Dr. Olusola Sotunde, GAC’s Senior Food Systems and Nutrition Advisor, visited ReactsIn project in Kenya. Dr. Sotunde and the representatives of the ReactsIn partners were received by Her Excellency the Deputy Governor of Elgeyo Marakwet County - Professor Grace Cheserek. During the meeting, the deputy governor acknowledged that gender had been mainstreamed in all departments in Elgeyo Marakwet. The county’s female leaders trained by REACTS-IN projects have become change agents and are influencing hundreds of mothers and girls in the county.

Dr. Sotunde and the visiting team interacted with various community-based structures being strengthen by the project such as the Setek Care-Groups (CG). The CG members gave insights on the various benefits they have gained from the group which includes education on Nutrition, Family Planning, mentorship and routine coaching.

The team also visited a lead farmer, Lilian Chepkangor, from Anin Village who showcased her bumper harvest of High Iron Rich Beans, a biofortified crop with high content of iron promoted by the project.

The team was also briefed on a simple solar dryer being promoted to preserve locally available fruits and vegetables at home, allowing for consumption during the lean season. The solar dryer is constructed out of locally available materials, such as a card box and transparent polyethene sheet. These materials cost less than a dollar, making them easily affordable for the local community. In the word of the Senior Advisor:

“It was a great opportunity to witness how the REACTS-IN project marks a transformative step forward in improving maternal, newborn, child and adolescents’ health and nutrition in parts of Kenya. As a scale-up of the ENRICH program, it builds on proven successes to bring live-saving nutrition, health, food systems and gender equality interventions to even more families. The partnership between Canada, World Vision, Nutrition International, Harvest Plus and McGill University exemplifies the power of collaboration in creating sustainable impact and advancing the well-being of our communities.”

- Dr. Olusola Sotunde, Senior Food Systems and Nutrition Advisor, Global Health and Food Systems Bureau, GAC



ReactsIn Trailer



The ReactsIn trailer is on YouTube ad ready to share! If you are viewing this on your computer you can click on the video window above to watch the video, if you are reading a printed version of this newsletter, you can scan the QR code. This video is meant to act as an inspirational preview of the people and communities that ReactsIn is working with across Asia and Africa.

PLEASE SHARE THIS VIDEO AND GET THE WORD OUT ABOUT REACTSIN AND THE GREAT WORK THAT IS HAPPENING IN THE PROJECT AREAS!

ReactsIn is Expanding!

Cambodia is the fifth country to join the ReactsIn initiative, bringing a unique approach to tackle child malnutrition through strengthened gender equality. Despite outstanding progress, Cambodia still features significant levels of child malnutrition with 22% of children displaying low height for their age (stunting).

At the launch of the event, which took place on January 16, 2025, in Kratie province, the guest of honor, Her Excellency Kham Sopheap, deputy governor of Kratie province, said *“I encourage all participants in the launch of this project to pay attention to the implementation and be open to learning new things from the project to better serve our community and improve the health of children in Prek Prasab districts.”*

With a budget of \$586,000 CAD, ReactsIn will benefit over 3,000 children from Prek Prasab district by promoting gender equitable roles linked to nutrition, health, and sexual and reproductive health and rights at the community level, and will also strengthen service delivery and increase stakeholders understanding of gender equality through advocacy and policy dialogue.

Have a question? Please contact Dr. Asrat Dibaba Tolossa, ReactsIn Chief of Party at: asrat_dibaba@worldvision.ca
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Gender Analysis Highlights: ReactsIn Project

The REACTS-IN project carried out a gender analysis in Bangladesh, Kenya, Somalia and Tanzania to explore gender dynamics and the root causes of inequality across individual, household, community and institutional levels. The analysis aims to uncover gaps and opportunities to improve nutrition, nutrition related rights, and advance gender equality for marginalized women, girls, and children under five years of age in these countries.



The study, conducted simultaneously in all four countries between August and September 2024, utilized mixed methodologies to collect both qualitative insights and sex- and age-disaggregated quantitative data. A total of 781 participants—372 women and 409 men—were surveyed, representing diverse community groups such as health workers, government officials, faith leaders, and people with disabilities. Ethical principles, including voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality, were upheld throughout the process to ensure the protection of participants.



The analysis revealed significant socio-cultural barriers, including men’s control over resources and women’s limited access to land, assets, and decision-making in health and nutrition. Early and forced child marriage, often viewed as a means of wealth acquisition, was identified as a common issue, along with restricted access to sexual and reproductive health information for women and girls. To address these challenges, the report highlights the importance of engaging men and faith leaders in confronting harmful norms, empowering women and girls to advocate for their rights, and enhancing the capacity of health service providers to deliver gender-transformative services.

The findings provide a strategic framework for programming efforts to promote gender equality and improve health and nutritional outcomes. Detailed insights, including the challenges and proposed interventions, are elaborated in the report.