

Review of: "A Policy Dialogue for Nutrition of Women and Adolescent Girls: Sustainable Development Goals Matters Arising"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

[http://AnkeNiehof\(niehofanke@gmail.com\)](http://AnkeNiehof(niehofanke@gmail.com)) Review "A Policy Dialogue for Nutrition of Women and Adolescent Girls: Sustainable Development Goals Matters Arising" by Samson Desie, Nnamdi O. Madichie. This is a relevant and well written paper. Overall, I support the diagnostic parts. The steps to be taken follow logically from the first part of the paper. However, I have a few comments. 1. Beware of a too instrumentalist approach. By this I mean that the importance of women's access to nutritious food is often related to their role as gate keepers to family nutrition (as 'food carers'), at the expense of women's own individual right to sufficient and nutritious food. Similarly, the nutritional status of adolescent girls and young women is not only crucial for breaking the cycle of poor growth but also for their own sake, to be healthy and be able to reach their own goals. 2. Gender inequalities are major underlying causes of the problem. Good policy making is not sufficient when at grass roots level women have internalized their own subservient position when it comes to food distribution at household level. When they continue serving themselves and their daughters last, because they have learnt from their mothers that this is how it should be, these unequal food care practices will persist. So, apart from good policy making (and implementing), changing gender values and norms regarding access to food, is needed. And then, just informing women and girls about the importance of good nutrition will not suffice. This requires interactive approaches at grass roots level, and it takes time (and supportive men). 3. The paper takes an intersectoral approach, which indeed is needed. However, in the policy steps I missed education of girls and girls' age at marriage. Research evidence points at the fact that higher educated girls marry later and have their first child later. This is important because adolescent pregnancies are high-risk pregnancies, also apart from nutritional status. -----