

Every Child has the right to life - Firdoze's Story



Firdoze is a 10 month old baby from the village of Borena, Ethiopia. Firdoze's family are pastoralists, they make their living through selling the milk produced by their herd of cattle. Pastoralists rely on grass pastures and water sources to feed their cattle.

Due to the extreme drought their livestock started to die, so Firdoze's father headed north with some other men from their village in search of food and water for their animals. Firdoze and her family relied on the milk their cattle produced for their food and income. So now they have no food or money.

Firdoze became ill with acute malnutrition, children like Firdoze are really suffering. 'Pastoral communities make their living and raise their children by selling milk,' said Kalkidan Yiman, a health worker. 'Without their cattle they have no food for their children or money to purchase any. Even if they could afford it there is no milk to purchase.'



The Outpatient Therapeutic Feeding Programme

Health workers Kalkidan and Chaltu walked through the parched landscape to provide help for the children in Firdoze's village. They are part of a UNICEF supported programme providing medical help and care to famine affected families in rural areas.

Taking health care to the community is designed to encourage people to stay in their homes if possible, rather than make the dangerous journey on foot in search of help in already overcrowded refugee camps.



Kalkidan and Chaltu are based at a health post in the nearby village of Meleb.

They diagnose and assess any children with malnutrition. The children are provided with therapeutic food such as Plumpy'Nut and protein milk. Adults are



provided with information on sanitation and using clean water in order to avoid water borne disease outbreaks in the village. If possible, mothers are encouraged to exclusively breastfeed their babies. It prevents them from drinking contaminated water and the risk of being exposed to water borne diseases.

When Firdoze first started the programme she weighed only 5.7 kgs. The average 10 month old baby girl should weigh around 9.2 kgs. Just two week after starting treatment Firdoze is showing real improvement and now weighs 6.4 kgs. Without help from the Outpatients Feeding Programme, she would have become even sicker and would have been unlikely to survive. The therapeutic food and care from health workers like Kalkidan and Chaltu are saving her life.



Answer the following questions related to Firdoze's Story.

- 1 How old is Firdoze, and where does she live?
- 2 Describe what it means to be a pastoralist.
- 3 How has the drought affected Firdoze and the people of her village?
- 4 What is the name of the programme UNICEF is supporting, and what is its purpose?
- 5 What is wrong with Firdoze and how do Kalkidan and Chaltu help her?