






PROMISING PRACTICE REPORT

Nutrition ambassador/ influencer for Social Behaviour Change Communication

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Subject	Key Facts & Figures
 Geographical coverage	<p>Implemented in three woredas of Tigray namely Kola Tembien, Laelay Adiabo and Gantafeshum.</p>
 Actors and Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close collaboration with Regional Bureau of Health and Agriculture and Woreda sector Offices of Agriculture, Health and Women Association of Tigray (implementing partner). • Mahlet Gebregiorgis the well-known artist/Tigrigna singer was preferred as the Nutrition Ambassador of nutrition sensitive Agriculture project in Tigray • Mahlet was selected considered her ethical background, popularity, acceptance, and positive influence through her official songs to the community.
 Target beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural households with women in childbearing age (15-49 years), pregnant & lactating women, and their children under two years of age were primary focus. • Anyone living in the kebele had access to participate in the awareness creation sessions.
 Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and nutrition insecurity are seriously affecting inhabitants in Tigray due to recurrent droughts and high population growth and conflict. • Malnutrition is a significant public health problem in Tigray. • According to mini-Ethiopian Demographic Health Survey 2019¹ stunting, underweight and wasting was 48.7%, 30.4% and 9.2% respectively which is higher than the national average. According to the study done by Mekelle University and Statistical Agency in 2019² • In rural area of Tigray, the burden stunting, under weight and wasting was 43.4%, 22.6%, and 9.3% respectively. • The epidemiologic criteria of stunting in Tigray are leveled as 'very high' as the average stunting rate was 41.1% all over the region. • Stunting in the project woredas was as high as 51.7 in Kola-tembien, 34.4 Laelay-adyabo and 27.3 in Ganta-afeshum. • Nearly half 41.3% of the people were food insecure in 2019 and 85% in 2021 • Some of the determinants such as long waiting to fetch water and absence of enough water prevented 16% of mothers to care their child and family. • The burden of stunting among food secure and insecure in Tigray is almost similar, indicates higher gaps in food utilization. • More than half of children (52%) had low dietary diversity which is less than four food groups. • To improve those the government, have higher commitments and strategies including the Seqota Declaration, the national nutrition programme II, nutrition sensitive agriculture strategies and food and nutrition policy.
 Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve the nutrition situation of mothers and their children the project aims to create awareness on healthy eating, water sanitation and hygiene. Health eating like diet diversity and minimum acceptable diet which are proxy indicators of nutritional status. <p>The Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) activities were aimed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Improve the Knowledge, Attitude, and practice on health eating among mothers or care givers of children under two years age

¹ Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI) [Ethiopia] and ICF. 2019. *Ethiopia Mini Demographic and Health Survey 2019: Key Indicators*. Rockville, Maryland, USA: EPHI and ICF

² Mulugeta A, Temesgen H, Getachew. R, Abay M, Kassyou H, Sciences (Mekelle University College of Health. Survey of under-five children malnutrition in urban and rural areas of Tigray region, Northern Ethiopia. 2019.

- To improve awareness and practice food utilization and cooking demonstration among mothers and/or care givers
- To create awareness on dietary diversity, food frequency and minimum acceptable diet for children among mothers and/or care givers
- To create awareness on the critical times for hand washing skills of hand washing



Methodological approach

- Parts of the SBCC strategy was using a celebrity Mahlet gebregiorgis who was talented to influence behaviors of the people in Tigray
- The celebrity has positive influence in behavior of people through her previous songs the project used that acceptance to trigger optimal nutrition and health eating practices within the community
- The project applies the concept “defuse similar messages in different modalities” to bring behavior change including celebrity as Nutrition Ambassador, field visit, mass media, advocacy, and interpersonal communication methods

Using the Celebrity NSAP promoted healthy eating behavior through

- Filed visit; during this time Mahlet travels to selected kebele, (market or any community gathering programmed events organized by kebele or WAT) using speaker after short introduction transfers her message to the audience with her melodious theme song + her official song which is very known by the community followed by transferring the key Health and nutrition and WASH messages. She had 26 visits in 13 kebelles in school and community level
- Theme song developed on nutrition and healthy eating with key messages on maternal Infant and young Child feeding practices
- SBCC materials Developed: posters, postcards, and leaflets: using Mahlet photo and key messages of Water Sanitation and Hygiene and Nutrition posters, postcards and leaflet was developed and distributed to the community



Results

Using the celebrity, the project achieved

- High participation rate of beneficiaries when it is announced Mahlet will be present for the event
- 100% of participants of the follow up survey II listened Mahlets speech at the field level.
- In the follow up survey beneficiaries participated in active nutrition counseling and visited by the nutrition ambassador have better dietary diversity than others.
- During the follow up survey Beneficiaries indicate her presence was critical in triggering behavior towards optimal nutrition.



Success factors

- Careful selection of the celebrity to be ethical and popular and respectful by the community
- Being a mother herself the singer showed an interest to contribute to the project objectives
- Including participatory measures (e.g., nutrition questions and answers, games) can enhance learning among households
- Allocate reasonable time for coordination of busy schedules
- WAT has a women network at household level which easily it helped invitation of women to the event.



Constraints

- The status of being Nutrition Ambassador may cease after the project phaseout.
- High coordination effort required among the stakeholders
- The ambassador was busy and was difficult to get scheduled



Sustainability

- Videos, and songs are with community which can listen and remember the messages.
- Print materials such as cookbook, recipe book include photo of Mahlets are at every beneficiary household.
- Soft copy of the developed materials was handed over to partners they can print distribute and use as educational material.



Replicability and potential for upscaling

The project had developed audio visual material which can be used at community level such as

- Local language cookbook, recipe book, leaflet, poster, and postcard.
- Video and audio materials short cook videos, nutrition and wash songs and other short messages which can be use all over Tigray