

Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Project in Ethiopia



Context

The project regions Tigray and Amhara in northern Ethiopia are known for recurring periods of drought, high population growth and associated food insecurity. The barren soil, the little water available and the scarce vegetation are heavily strained and natural resources are scarce. This leads to existential challenges, especially for the small scale farmers in the region. Women are particularly affected by this situation. Culturally, their primary role is feeding their families, however, women are limited in their ability to practice a healthy diet of their own, as they lack necessary resources such as land, livestock and financial resources.

As a result, up to 40% of the population in the region is chronically under- and malnourished. Malnutrition for newborns in the first 1,000 days of life leads to serious developmental damage. If essential micronutrients such as vitamin A, iron or zinc are missing during this time window, this can have a lifelong effect manifesting itself in reduced growth and a weakened immune system. 93% of children between the ages of six months and two years also receive too few and, in addition, insufficiently balanced meals. In many places there is not enough clean drinking water and thus diarrhoea is very common.

Activities in Ethiopia

→ Cross-sectoral Coordination

In order to create and strengthen sustainable food security structures, organisational and technical support is provided to responsible bodies at national, regional, community and village level in the health and agriculture sectors.

→ Knowledge Transfer

Knowledge about healthy nutrition and adequate hygiene and care practices are essential to improve the nutritional situation. For this reason, household members and multipliers in the rural communities are trained, for example in the context of cooking demonstrations and workshops on the processing and preservation of food.

→ Availability

For a secure and well-balanced diet, varied and healthy food is made available through the project. Women and their families are trained to grow different types of fruit and vegetables in their home gardens. The use of different plants with important ingredients such as vitamin A, iron and zinc is promoted.

Our objective

The nutritional situation at household level of people at risk of malnutrition has improved, especially for women of childbearing age and infants.



NUTRITION-SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE PROJECT IN ETHIOPIA

Regions

Tigray and Amhara

Budget and term

EUR 19.7 million / March 2015 to March 2023

Commissioning party

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Implementation partners

Staff nominated by the respective districts from the authorities responsible for agriculture, health, water; Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC); The United Nations; Civil society & government organisations; Universities

Lead executing agency

Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture; Ethiopian Ministry of Health

Target groups

36,000 food insecure women in reproductive age (15 – 49 years);
9,225 infants under 2 years

Sustainable Development Goals



Example of our work

NSAP activities are clustered in three areas of intervention: (1) increased availability of diverse food; (2) improved knowledge on food and nutrition practices, health, hygiene and care through social behavioural change communication and (3) technical and organisational strengthening of multisectoral coordinating bodies at national, regional, woreda and village levels.

In one of the project activities, selected farmers are trained in home garden management including training on water saving measures and climate-smart agriculture. Home gardens are small plots of land around homesteads where vegetables, fruits and spices among others can be grown. With the right care, they can serve as a source of supplementary food and income. Furthermore, they have the potential to empower women economically and support resource poor households. The aim is that the selected farmers act as “multipliers” to create awareness in their communities towards more diverse and sustainable nutrition sensitive agriculture.

Cooking demonstrations conducted, using examples that are nutritionally appropriate, and sharing nutritional tips promote consumption of diverse, nutritious diets amongst the target groups. Thus, the demos facilitate behavioral change allowing the households to adopt and improve their diets.

Multisectoral coordination created between the agricultural, health, women, water, education, and finance sectors has enhanced synergies and shared understanding to nutritional impact of extension services in the rural intervention areas which further improve knowledge in health, nutrition, and agriculture.

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Results

In courses and practical cooking demonstrations more than 36,000 participants were trained in basic hygiene, hygiene and food handling, as well as preparation, processing and preservation of nutritious food. 80% of the supported households have increased their food production by one climate adapted vegetable or animal based food item which gets promoted by the project.

Over 24,000 participants were also trained in cultivating home gardens, water-saving measures and climate-smart agriculture. More than 50% of 2,011 trained households have adopted at least two of the recommended post-harvest management practices. Along with the Ministry of Agriculture, the project has provided technical support to the Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture Strategy and the National Nutrition Programme designed to ensure food and nutrition security and contributed to Ethiopia's inputs in the United Nations Food Systems Summit.



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