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TITLE: Home-Garden Production and Women Dietary Diversity: Experience from Success of Micro-Intervention in Boru Meda Kebele, Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

In order to combat malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture (NSA) places nutrient-dense foods, dietary diversity, and food fortification at the forefront. This micro-intervention project's goal is to increase the home-gardening system's contribution to raising the women's dietary diversity score (WDDS) by diversifying family farming practices. In Ethiopia's Boru-Meda kebele, we applied the intervention to 40 specifically chosen female beneficiaries between the ages of 15 and 49. The FAO standardized questionnaire was used as a tool to conduct an initial and end-line dietary diversity survey by giving careful consideration to the cultural and religious elements. The qualitative information was also gathered using case studies, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. The data analysis employed descriptive statistics, including the t-test, as well as narrative and summarizing. The local population's diet was dominated by staple cereal crops. Women were less knowledgeable about home gardening and diverse diets. Before the intervention, the average number of food groups produced and consumed was 2.63+/-1 and 3.68+/-1.16 respectively. Our intervention enhanced the WDDS to 6.13+/-0.76 and the production diversity to 5.63+/-0.9. The intervention changed the community's consumption and production patterns, especially among women. Home-garden agriculture helps to increase women's dietary diversity score (WDDS). As a result, development partners must concentrate on farming system diversification by increasing the accessibility of vegetable seeds and educating local farmers about the contribution of diversified vegetable

production and consumption. Strengthening the cooperation among stakeholders and maintaining monitoring of activities should also be given due emphasis.

Keywords: Dietary Diversity, Diversified Production, Home Garden, Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture

BIOGRAPHY

Asrat Mulat obtained his MSc. degree in Rural Development Management at Bahir Dar University in 2019. He is a lecturer and researcher in the Department of Rural development and Agricultural Extension at Wollo University, Ethiopia. He is currently engaged in teaching, research and community service activities at Wollo University. His research interests are focused on land use and administration, adoption of agricultural technologies and rural livelihood analysis. He conducts various research works including the effects of covid-19 on the livelihoods and agricultural activities of farmers, the current status of rural women in realizing land tenure rights, the nexus between land fragmentation and agricultural mechanization, and the effects of internal conflict on the food security and livelihoods of farming communities, among others. Recently, he authored 5 research articles in reputable journal and one book chapter in well-known publisher. In addition, he delivered different community service projects focusing on food security and nutrition of smallholders. Moreover, he presented his research works at more than 8 different national and international conferences.

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