

**Ethiopian Human Rights and Civic Education Promotion
Association (EHRCEPA)**



Lactating Mother washing carrot

**Final Report on Enhancement of Family Nutritional
Status through A One Year Randomized, Interventional
Community Based Pilot Project for Control and
Prevention of Vitamin A Deficiency (VAD)**

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I. Introduction

EHRCEPA implemented this pilot project on the enhancement of family nutritional status in Mida Woromo and Merhabete Districts based the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which provides that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for her/his health and well being, including food. In the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the fundamental right of every person to be free from hunger is recognized; the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition realizes the right of people for food. The project was implemented by employing the following strategies:

- The target population was **Lactating and Pregnant women**. This was intentionally done in order to give the opportunity for children to get balanced diet.
- These women farmers should have a land that can be planted by irrigation.
- Community steering committee, School Board Members, Elders, and religious leaders were involved in the selection of the women farmers to be included in the project.
- The agricultural and health extension workers working in the project area were given trainings and they were included as part and parcel of the project. They were made to give trainings to the farmers on the modern methods of farming vegetables. The vegetables given special consideration were carrot, green paper, tomato, potato and sweet potato. The extension workers were also involved in giving continuous professional advice during plowing, sowing, irrigation and treating the vegetables.
- The health and nutrition extension workers were made to give trainings on the preparation of foods from vegetables so that the vitamins in them will not be destroyed. In the process of this training, the farmers understood the importance the project and the value of balanced diet for their families, especially for their children.

- Trainings were given to the farmers on financial management and management of the household.
 - The farmers were provided with selected varieties of seeds.
 - Agricultural Materials to be used in planting the vegetables were distributed to the farmers.
 - District Project coordinators of EHRCEPA in the two districts were undertaking continuous follow-up during the project period.
 - The pilot project was tried on 25 families in Mida Woromo and 25 families in Merhabete.
- II. The objectives of the project were:**
- To introduce new crops and their processing techniques to diversify nutritional diet of the target populations.
 - To reduce malnutrition (VAD) in the target population.
 - To replicate the experiences to other areas and address the problem of malnutrition.

III. Planned and Accomplished Activities

No	Planned	Accomplished
1	Recruit Project Personnel from Health Office and Fruits Production DAs from Agriculture Rural Development offices	2 from Health Offices and 2 from Agriculture Rural Development offices Project Personnel from the target Woredas recruited and got the necessary Training. I.e. one health and agriculture expert from each Woredas.
2	Training beneficiaries on vegetable production (home gardening) and Management Dietetic and Meal planning	50 pregnant and lactating mothers attended Training on vegetable production (home gardening) and Management Dietetic and Meal planning
3	Purchase agricultural Tools	Agricultural tools (50 Water cans, 50 Rakes, 50 Shovel, 50 Garden Hoe) purchased and distributed to all 50 beneficiaries
4	Purchase Seed (carrot, sweet potato, green pepper)	4 kg of carrot (80 gram for each 50 beneficiaries), 1,750 cuttings of Sweet potatoes (35 cuttings for each 50

		beneficiaries) and 8 kg of green pepper (160 gram for each 50 beneficiaries) seeds are also purchased and distributed to the beneficiaries.
5	Land Preparation and Plantation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 50 pregnant and lactating mothers planted carrot and it is on the way of ripening • Green pepper and Sweet potatoes are also planted • They are giving the necessary care to these vegetables in order to make them more productive. • The contractual employed agricultural experts are also giving the necessary regular supports to these beneficiaries.
5	Vitamin A capsule Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 beneficiaries took vitamin A capsule (10 lactating mothers, 6 pregnant and 84 children's under the age of 6 years) with the help of the health experts • Of which 58 are from Mida Woromo (9 lactating mothers, 4 pregnant and 45 children's under the age of 6 years) and the rest 42 are from Merhabete Woredas (1 lactating mothers, 2 pregnant and 39 children's under the age of 6 years) • The Woreda Health offices provided the Vitamin A capsule freely



A girl child with their carrot product from EHRCEPA support

IV. ACHIEVEMENTS

The following achievements were revealed during the monitoring and evaluation of the project.

- All the farmers included in the project successfully implemented the practice of planting the vegetables.
- It is known that the community is not used to planting and feeding these vegetables. It was only on rainy season that some of the farmers feed cabbage, green paper and tomatoes grown around their houses. After the implementation of the project, the farmer, their relatives and neighbors got the opportunity of obtaining these vegetables through out the year.
- They have developed modern knowledge and skills of planting vegetables (For example, they have acquired the skill of planting the seedlings in rows).
- They have developed the skill of effectively utilizing the available water for irrigation.
- They have developed the skill of preparing food from vegetables without damaging the vitamins in them.
- Even though it demands further and detailed study, the farmers are witnessing the prevalence of deficiency diseases such as night blindness, especially on children has significantly reduced.

- Carrot supply for the market becomes possible in both woredas due to the project and by selling the extra vegetable products (after satisfying their families), they have obtained some amount of financial income. Most of them witnessed that they have obtained more than 100 birr.
- The neighboring farmers are strongly demanding to be included in the project.
- Many farmers have taken the foot steps of the farmers included in the project and planted vegetables by learning from them (in spite of the expensiveness of the seeds).
- The project gave the farmers the chance to produce twice a year. The custom in these areas is to produce once a year.
- A strong attachment and understanding is created between the farmers and the extension workers. Due to this reason, the extension workers consulted during the monitoring and evaluation had pointed out that other extension workers working in the other areas demanding the project to be extended to other areas in the districts.
- Men (their husbands) were also included during the trainings given to the farmers on the preparation of food from vegetables and made to develop awareness to participate in helping their wives in preparing food in the household. The tradition is that household activities are the responsibility of women. Thus, this practice has contributed to the efforts made in combating the harmful tradition of male dominated societies and the attainment of women's rights..

V. CHALLENGES

Some of the challenges observed and reflected by the beneficiaries were:

- Some of the farmers had complained that pests attack some of the vegetables and pesticides are expensive to purchase.
- The women farmers had pointed out that their relatives and neighbors had asked them to share the seeds. However, they are not able to share them due to the expensiveness of the seeds in the market

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The following remarks are forwarded in order to sustain the achievements of the project and attain more progress in improving the nutritional status of the community, particularly pregnant and lactating women.

- The project was designed by EHRCEPA to achieve the aforementioned objectives. The results of the monitoring and evaluation indicate that all the objectives of the project are fully achieved. Even some unforeseen positive results are obtained.
- The successful implementation and the demand of the other farmers for the extension of the project show that EHRCEPA should consider and design the project in a larger scale.
- The involvement of community based institutions such as elders, school board members and religious leaders in the selection and design of the project makes the community to own the project. This practice is very important and should continue in designing projects in the future.
- The involvement of the agricultural and health extension workers in the project enabled the farmers to demand professional advice whenever they have encountered problems in planting the vegetables. It is advantageous to continue applying this approach in the future because it contributes to the success of the project.

- If the project is made to extent to a larger extent, it will significantly contribute to the reduction of the prevalence of deficiency diseases such as night blindness and the reduction of child mortality.



Mother and children watering their carrot plantation in Mesno village (Mida Woromo Woreda)