

Feed the Future Ethiopia's, Growth through Nutrition activity is a USAID's flagship multi-sector nutrition and WASH project focusing on first 1000 days plus to improve nutritional status of women and children. The project has been supporting the college in strengthening its curriculum for key water, sanitation and hygiene competencies, building the capacity of teachers through technical and pedagogical skills trainings and technical support in addition to education quality improvement and creating an enabling environment.

## Connecting Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture Curriculum Contents with Community Service

Though Ministry of Agriculture has designed a five-year (2017-2021) nutrition sensitive agriculture (NSA) strategy which is a food-based approach to agricultural development that puts nutritionally rich foods, dietary diversity, and food fortification at the heart of overcoming malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies; the agriculture cadres graduating from the Ethiopian universities did not have the competencies to address these issues as their curriculum lacked essential NSA competencies.

As part of the national initiative in promoting nutrition sensitive agriculture in higher education institutions, Feed the Future Ethiopia, Growth through Nutrition Activity with its pre-service education component supported the process of integrating nutrition sensitive agriculture contents in to undergraduate agriculture curricula and development of standard training modules.



*Workinesh Tiruneh, Dean, Debre Markos University College of Agriculture and Natural Resources*

Following the endorsement of the NSA course syllabi together with the training modules by Federal Ministry of Education to all Universities nationwide, Debre Markos University, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and other similar 26 institutions throughout the country received capacity building trainings in the areas of NSA for their academic staff. The capacity building support of Growth through Nutrition Activity enabled the college to properly deliver NSA course and link it to their research and community services. Beyond delivering NSA courses for students, currently Debre Markos University is engaged in promoting NSA initiatives at community level.

“Since 2014, NSA contents were added into our curriculum, and we have been teaching it since then,” said Workinesh. “The support from Growth through Nutrition Activity in areas of capacity building in general and the nutrition forums conducted yearly in particular helped us to think out of the box,” added Workinesh. “What makes our university’s NSA initiative different from others is that the university allocated nearly two million ETB budget and linked it to research and community service of the university. Adaptation of orange flashed sweet potato and Tarohas been carried out by Debre Markos university, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources in zones identified as nutritionally insecure and become part of the safety net program. Hence we have started supporting the community to engage in home gardening which is enabling 210 households to diversify and take nutritious meals.”



*W/ro Beyenu Amanu looking after her garden*

used to plant different variety of vegetables and fruits. “I used to receive seedlings from the university initially, but now I have plenty of different vegetables that I can sell and give for free to some of my neighbors for them to start gardening for their household consumption and income generation.” added Wro. Beyenu.

Wro. Beyenu Amanu, a mother of 3, is one of the households being supported by the community level NSA initiative project of the university. “I received trainings in home gardening including micro-gardening for landless households by the university staff and now as you can see there is no single plot left idle in my compound including my veranda that I have not used to produce vegetables. Not only my garden, my dish is also full of different food items” said Wro. Beyenu showing her home gardening around proudly. Her front and backyard is efficiently

Integrating nutrition sensitive agriculture contents in to the agriculture curricula is believed to enable higher institutions to support the government’s nutrition sensitive agriculture interventions and leverage the agriculture sector to contribute in addressing under nutrition in the country.