



SUCCESS STORY

Birke Abera and Yohannes – a husband and wife team working to change their nutrition future

A family takes what they have learned from ECC sessions and HEW visits to transform their nutrition behavior



Birke feeds her son a nutritionally dense porridge
Uselayman Mohammed— September 2020
Lume Woreda, East Shewa

“I learned the importance of hand-washing from health extension workers”

Birke Abera – 27 year old mother of two from Mamo Shoki Kebele, East Shewa



A healthy and well-fed Sisay is ready to take on the day
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In the Mamo Shoki Kebele in Lume Woreda, East Shewa, Oromia Mrs. Birke Abera, 27 years old, lives with her husband and two children - her youngest – Sisay Yohanis is two years old. Without sufficient land, they struggle to meet livelihood needs and are one of the poorest households in the Woreda exacerbated by the fact they did not have any livestock.

Being one of the poorest households who fulfill the selection criteria, Birke and her family was targeted in 2019 as Non- Most Vulnerable Household by Save the Children under the Growth through Nutrition project (funded by USAID). Following the enrolment, the project provided training related to nutritious sensitive agriculture, homestead and livestock management and Adolescent, maternal and infant young child feeding. The project aims to improve access to diversified food sources as well as change basic behaviors in nutrition, hygiene and sanitation. Birke received vegetable seeds (Carrot, Swiss chard), along with three sheep and six Koekoek bread Chicken and she also took training on Adolescent Maternal Infant Young Child Nutrition (AMIYCN) and WASH. She and her husband cultivated vegetables in the backyard for two seasons since being enrolled in the program and separated tame animal quarters from their own living spaces.

She has since been feeding her baby a diversified diet from her home, including vegetables from her garden, eggs, diversified injera firfir, soft porridge enriched of vegetables cereals, legumes and eggs adding iodized salt after cooking. Her daughter, Sisay is clearly well nourished as witnessed during project supervision visits. She washes her hands thoroughly before she prepares food, during child feeding and after visiting the bathroom “I learned the importance of hand-washing from health extension workers” she said.

Birke and her husband feel happy eating vegetables they were not previously familiar with, currently consuming much of their output and selling the rest. She intends to keep the momentum going, with all six chickens healthy and two additional sheep added to her flock Birke’s chickens have started to produce eggs, which she collects on a daily basis, selling those not consumed every other week. She used the earnings to buy some items to fulfill food groups, which are not available like milk, fruits, iodized salt and vegetable oil and other needs.



Birke has not only adopted excellent hygiene behaviors, she has gone on to teach her community and her son.
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Birke has properly managed the sheep and chicken inputs from the project and got diversified animal source food
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Birke is a member of Saving Group in her kebele. She regularly attends Enhanced Community Conversations and Adolescent Maternal Infant and Young Child Nutrition (AMIYCN) orientation accompanied by food cooking demonstration that are provided by health extension workers and DAs, and takes the new knowledge home to her own kitchen.,

Birke explains; *“my eyes and heart opened with the training received and inputs obtained to critically improve family’s life and how I feed my children”* emphasizing ‘guyyota Kuma tokkon duraa’ or the first 1000 days’ intervention, She continued *“and personal hygiene and sanitation of my garden - particularly of hand hygiene and proper latrine - has improved as well as a result”*.

This remarkable mother has implemented all Health Extension Program aspects such as installing a standard latrine with hand washing facility, fully vaccinating her child, isolating animal shelters from their living quarters, protecting their bedroom with a mosquito bed-net and even accepting contraceptive for family planning.

Her husband, Ato Yohanis has been supporting her since he got aware about child feeding from HEW on some home chores like cleaning materials and surroundings and purchasing of certain food item used by the household member from local market

“I plan to expand my chicken brood and homestead production and want to ensure my children are properly fed and productive. This is what my husband and I learned, and agreed on”.

Lastly, she said, *“I like to thank the project as well as the staff who regularly assisted us to move forward”*. Birke is an example to her community – already influencing her friends to provide and consume better diets and adopt the hygiene practices she has learned.