

SUCCESS STORY

Tomorrow’s success – how a saving group transformed Kemeru Abdela’s life for the better

Messaging through Enhanced Community Conversations (EEC) coupled with guidance from Health Extension Workers has changed the way mothers care for themselves and their children



Kemeru and her youngest son, enjoying a cup of fresh milk
Eshetu Alemu— September 2020
Agarfa Woreda, Oromia



Kemeru with her sheep
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Although 26-year-old Kemeru Abdela never had an opportunity for an education, her first born attends a nearby school and is in the third grade after Growth through Nutrition intervention. A mother to two sons and a daughter, Kemeru lives in the Galama Hebano kebele in West Oromia, just 5 kilometers away from the woreda capital, Agarfa, with her husband, Seido.

Before the intervention, her livelihood was based on subsistence production of limited cereals such as wheat from a small plot of land and with no oxen to plough it, facing two to three months food gaps at a time. Falling on such hard times, she would resort to working on her neighbor’s farm and selling firewood. Kemeru explains that it was at this time four years ago that she heard about the project from her community, saying “my village leader came to me and invited me to attend a meeting in which Growth through Nutrition beneficiaries were being selected”. She came to the program with her son, Kando Seido who was a year old at the time. She was amazed her situation saying “unlike with my first born for who I would provide milk I received from neighbors the cow I have since bought means I can give my youngest child milk, even though he’s passed the first 1000 days.

Her saving group - Milkaina Boru (which means Tomorrow’s Success) was established. It was in Milkaina Boru that Kemeru attended Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture trainings and Enhanced Community Conversation (ECC) sessions, which were facilitated by Development Army and Health Extension Workers. She also received two ewe sheep with ram, five hens, a cock, farm tools and two-term vegetable seeds from Growth through Nutrition.

Because of the mentoring service and ECC interaction, she developed good child-feeding skills and came to understand proper husbandry of core breeding inputs. “Taking advice from my mentors, I attended TT Vaccination for myself and my child regularly which I was reluctant to do before” she says.

I have been managing my sheep and chickens by constructing a separate house with good hygienic conditions. I have seven sheep, a cow and a calve which I bought from selling six sheep eight months ago. I provide my youngest son, Rudiya, with milk.” Kemeru elaborated her efforts that caused change in her life- she has 8 improved chickens by hatching in two rounds using local hens as per the information she received from mentoring services. She collects 3 eggs daily to feed her child and reinvests the income obtained from surplus eggs on food she can’t produce (like food oil, fruit and iodized salt).

Kemeru said of the care services she had received from a health institution since her last pregnancy “I have been getting services both before and after giving birth such as four ANC visits and postnatal care and Iron supplementation and vaccination

because of the advice of the health extension worker during ECC sessions. “I am happy with the teaching support I receive from HEW and in my capacity I will share what I learn from them with my neighbors I delivered my youngest son at Agarfa health center 2 years ago without any problem, which inspired other mothers to do the same,”

“I have fed him only breast-milk for his first six months and after six months I supplement it with diversified food including eggs, vegetables, fruits, milk with full immune vaccine package,” she added. Health extension workers, who measure Kemeru’s son, informed her that he has had good physical growth and is healthy.

She wrapped up her speech by extending her deep appreciation to Save the Children and American people who “reversed my falling asset to rise and make a bright future for my children”



Kando eats eggs produced by his mother's chickens
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The health extension worker monitor's her son's arm
circumference to check growth regularly
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