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## SUCCESS STORY

# Rising from the dust through nutrition and agriculture

### The story of a widow who took charge of her nutrition



Kokebe and her newborn calf

*Kokebe, like many most vulnerable households, struggled to put a nutritious meal on the table for her family. But with some support and a little motivation – she has managed to not only succeed in her own livelihood but also teach her community.*

Tirsit Kuma Oda Dhawata Kebele, Tiyo Woreda, Arsi zone

When her husband died in December of 2017, Kokebe Eshetu was left widowed with a young child at the age of 38. A resident of the Oda Dhawata Kebele of Tiyo Woreda, Arsi zone, Kokebe was left to fend for herself and her daughter. Without her husband's income as a daily laborer, she was unable to feed herself and her infant and describes the period following his death as "miserable."

As an economically disadvantaged family with a child under two, Kokebe qualified for support under Growth through Nutrition's Most Vulnerable Households Program in 2018. She received training on nutrition sensitive agriculture activities, including gardening practices and animal husbandry, and learned about savings and loans.

"The training inspires and enables me to think out of the box on how to gain the most production in the small plot of land that I have," Kokebe says. From the program, she received three sheep, six chickens, various vegetable seeds, and five apple seedlings, which are all agro-ecology packages of nutrition sensitive livelihood interventions for her location.

With the technical support through coaching and mentoring she received from the development agents and project staff, Kokebe became motivated and was able to manage her inputs properly. Her garden is evergreen and covered with a variety of vegetables. In addition to those she received from the project, she began producing other vegetables for home consumption and sale at the market. She even produced a surplus in the rainy season, which she was able to take to the market twice a week, earning an average of 600 birr.

With proper management of her sheep, Kokebe increased the number from three to twelve. She fattened four newborn rams and sold them in the market for 12,000 birr during the holidays. She also bought a pregnant heifer which, after two months, gave birth to a female calf and then another, using artificial

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Tirsit Kuma, Oda Dhawata Kebele, Tiyo Woreda, Arsi zone

*Kokebe with her daughter and neighbor in her luscious garden*



Tirsit Kuma, Oda Dhawata Kebele, Tiyo Woreda, Arsi zone

*Kokebe's sheep and chickens*

insemination. Kokebe collects five liters of milk per day, regularly supplying three liters to the local market and keeping the remaining two for consumption at home. She sold two newborn rams for 5,000 birr and regularly earns 2,430 birr monthly from the sale of animal surplus products like milk and eggs.

Kokebe also began collecting an average of five eggs per day from her chickens. “My dishes are full of both animal and plant source food,” she says, excited to provide her daughter nutritious meals.

The agriculture income she earned from the sale of surplus products enabled her to purchase additional food and other items, including medication for herself and her child. Encouraged by her savings, she actively contributes 50 birr regularly and has saved a total of 550 birr to date!

Kokebe’s new skills and motivation have already reached beyond her own household, as she has transferred the knowledge she acquired to her neighbor, Woyinshet Sewaman. Weyinshet witnessed Kokebe’s willingness to provide technical support with her gardening, poultry and small ruminant management, and now, all of Kokebe’s nutrition sensitive agriculture livelihood interventions have been replicated in Weyinshet’s backyard.

“My family’s livelihood and especially nutrition has improved,” explains Kokebe, “and I want to thank God and “hitsant adin dirjit” (Save the Children) for helping me to get out from miserable life I was on the verge of when I lost my husband.”

“Growth through Nutrition is like the angel that picked-up me from the dust when I was building home in my life,” says Kokebe, “and helps to feed my child and myself with diversified food.”