



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Education with a Side of Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture



ENGINE/Jhpiego/ Save the Children

Dr. Kebede Beyecha shows visiting guests a nutrition-sensitive agriculture demonstration farm.

Every year, Alage College, a highly esteemed agricultural training institution in Ethiopia, graduates a large number of mid-level agriculture workers. Yet the school, like other agriculture institutions in the country, didn't include basic nutrition in its agriculture curriculum. As a result, its graduates knew little about the science of nutrition or nutrition-sensitive agriculture—an approach to agricultural practices with the intention of improving nutrition.

To fill this education gap, the Empowering New Generations to Improve Nutrition and Economic Opportunities (ENGINE) project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development, supported the college's integration of vital nutrition information into its courses. The project identified what the agriculture curriculum was lacking and defined the nutrition core competencies. Soon after, Alage integrated these competencies into plant and animal science courses. It also will add two stand-alone nutrition courses for agriculture workers to its curriculum. These courses, which were developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) agency with support from Feed the Future, will be offered nationally in agriculture curricula.

"Now I feel that I am transferring complete information to my students and the local farmers too when I teach about agriculture and nutrition together," said Kebede Beyecha, dean of Alage College, who also teaches animal science courses.

Alage and the ENGINE project then focused on the learning environment. The college prepared a demonstration farm where students now practice nutrition-sensitive agriculture. ENGINE supported the creation of spaces that are favorable and practical for learning and for building skills in nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

In addition, the project provided trainings on nutrition to Alage faculty and other ATVET instructors. "Feed the Future did the right thing to organize the nutrition trainings since our instructors have minimal or no knowledge about nutrition," Kebede Beyecha said.

The trainings have grown to include 178 instructors, who will build the capacity of future agriculture workers nationally. Feed

the Future will support the Government of Ethiopia's efforts to effectively increase agricultural productivity while improving maternal and child nutrition, and the capacity of graduating agriculture extension workers will be improved to support farmers in both the production and consumption of a diverse diet.

Alage faculty member Sebsibe, now trained in nutrition-sensitive agriculture, has started teaching the two stand-alone courses to his students and the farmers in his surrounding area. "I found it really useful for myself and my family on top of what I teach to my students about nutrition and balanced diet," he said. "I used to eat similar foods, which are my favorites, but now I have improved my family's diet, and we are better off in terms of balanced diet."

He's also witnessed how his students are curious to know about nutrition and nutrition-sensitive agriculture. "Students' attendance and active participation in nutrition sessions tells me that they love the topic," Sebsibe said. Alage students have earned the highest scores in nutrition competency assessments conducted by sister agriculture institutions in the country.