

Success stories

Improved Means of Nutrition and livelihood through Home Gardening

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Kayarda community is in Obi LGA, 10 kilometers away from Lafia the state capital of Nasarawa State. The SMILE project is being implemented in this community. The community has a population of about 21, 375 inhabitants (2006 census), 65% of the population are women who mostly are housewives and rely on selling of local food such as Masa, Quasai (Akara) and others.

Community volunteers and selected care-givers made up of women leaders, leader of Zunuta Mata, Representative of Farmer association, market women leader and others in Kayarda community learned how to establish and maintain home gardens through demonstrations and training. Sponsored by the SMILE Project, the training sessions covered production methods, cooking tips, marketing of produce as a means of livelihood and Food security not only about the quantity of food available all year round for consumption but also about the nutritional quality and diversity of food sources.



Practical demonstration in establishing a garden

It was revealed that out of 65% of women in this community, an impressive 40% established their own home garden after the training. This was as a result of First Step's keen interest in the whole community members especially the children's wellbeing in survival, growth and development of which the establishment of home gardening provides through quality adequate diet.



Care Giver in his backyard garden

The intervention also revealed that the project initiative has enhanced the economic status of care givers especially mothers who are engaged in small business activities by spending less or none on buying vegetables at the market and increased their incomes about 10% from selling surplus vegetables and nutritionally, increased their daily calorie and vitamin intake thereby curbing crisis within the family such as poverty, hunger, illness and death etc, caused by lack or inadequate vitamin and other essential micro nutrient.

In order to ensure sustainability of impact, the organization worked directly with the community volunteers in constant monitoring and coaching care-givers how to control pest such goat and others, by fencing their garden, adopting other effective methods and the practicing of dry season home gardening with the various methods of preserving their garden so as the achievement of the program goals are sustained and the progress towards this goal will continue.

Some of the comments on the benefit of home garden by community members:

Amina Ibrahim who live in a polygamous home have 4 children and depend only on selling Akara and koko to take care of her needs and her children, the care giver said “the profit I get from the koko and akumu I sell is very small to take care of myself and my children especially in terms of paying medical bills since my husband is ill and not strong to cater for the family. I find it difficult, but since we were told about home gardening I decide to give it a trial and right now I have no regret, I sell the ugwu and okroI planted close to my house every evening at the community market even neighbors come around to buy, this gives me more profit than my other business though am still doing itand the rate my children get sick now is unlike then because my children eat food and soup from vegetable in the garden. I thank First Step for this idea for it has truly helped me and my children”



Amina preparing her Vegetable to sell in the market

Maimuna Idris a community women leader explained that the benefit of home garden wasn't known by most women in the community until now, she added that every woman now in the community is rushing to occupy the next available space in the backyard, in pots, alongside fields and roads: wherever available soil and space can be found that gardens can grow because the women which are more concerned with the wellbeing of their children are now aware that home gardens contribute to nutrition and food security in the communitywhich promote good health, growth, development and improve household income.