

* **Program Element:** Health/Nutrition

* **Key Issues:** Nutrition-sensitive agriculture

ENGINE's Poultry and Homestead Garden Program Transform Rural Mother's Life

Married for half of her life, Beseatu Mofida, 30, became the sole breadwinner for her family when her husband was paralyzed in a car accident. Living in Gassa wude village of Enemor woreda (district) in SNNP region of Ethiopia, her young children survived on eating Enset, locally known as “false banana,” a staple food of low nutrient quality, flavored with chili. Beseatu knew her children were poorly fed and had difficulty concentrating in school but she lacked opportunities to increase her income in her rural village.

In February 2012, when her youngest, Ramate Mohe, was just 9 months old, the USAID-funded Empowering New Generations to Improve Nutrition and Economic opportunities (ENGINE) project selected Beseatu and her family to participate in poultry and homestead gardening interventions aimed to improve maternal and child nutrition within the first 1,000 days of life.

Beseatu Modifa with 3 of her children and Chicken and chicken coup provided by ENGINE



To improve her children's diet diversity, Beseatu received 10 hens and 2 cockerels of improved breed and was trained on poultry management. She learned to prepare homemade feed by mixing nutritious ingredients. One of the feed ingredients, nougcake, was not readily available in the local market so ENGINE and the woreda agricultural office facilitated the logistics to introduce nougcake to the area. Every morning at 6 am Beseatu dedicatedly cleans the coup and provides the flock with fresh water and feed. She also allows the hens to graze to improve the vitamin A content of their eggs, a strategy to prevent a common micronutrient deficiency among children in the region.

Since the intervention, egg production for Beseatu has been a success. Her hens produce more than enough eggs for her family to consume, allowing her to sell the excess. With this new income she purchases iodized salt, meat,

cereals for injera and coffee as well as household items. Thanks to the homestead garden seeds she received from ENGINE, new vegetables have been introduced to the household which she mixes and prepares using the recipes from ENGINE organized cooking demonstrations. “I don’t have to worry about buying vegetables now,” she says proudly. “I grow everything I need here in my own garden.”

By sharing produce and insights on poultry management with her neighbors, Beseatu has grown into a leader among community members. Many neighbors own local chickens known for their brooding rather than egg laying production. Every 18 months the flock’s egg production decreases so she replaces them by hatching 12 eggs and selling off the roosters, knowing that she is helping other families benefit from the improved breed.

Other women in the community have joined Beseatu in creating a village saving group to bridge their financial security from the productive season through the rainy season when egg production is at its lowest. Beseatu is well on her way towards her goal of saving for the 100 Birr entrance fee to the local microfinance institution so that in the future she may receive a microenterprise loan.

Thanks to USAID-funded projects like ENGINE that provide new skills and resources that empower rural mothers, the most vulnerable households like Besautu’s are able to provide their children with healthy food and become financially independent.

“I really appreciate ENGINE for transforming my life. I see a big change in myself and my children.”

Save the Children is leading the implementation of ENGINE – USAID’s flagship multi-sector nutrition project, which aims to improve the nutritional status of Ethiopian women and children through sustainable, coordinated, and evidence-based interventions, enabling them to lead healthier and more productive lives.

The core initiative of this large-scale, five-year project (2011-2016) is to prevent under-nutrition during the first 1,000 days by focusing on social behavior change, including linkages to livelihood and economic opportunities.

ENGINE builds upon the Government of Ethiopia’s initiatives and renewed commitment to nutrition as well as the U.S. Government’s Global Health and Feed the Future initiatives.

ENGINE is implemented in 83 productive woredas in four regions of Ethiopia: Amhara, Tigray, SNNPR, and Oromia. ENGINE will benefit 3.1 million under-five children, half a million pregnant and lactating women, 3.2 million women of reproductive age, and 2.7 million households.

ENGINE is carried out by a consortium of organizations, with Save the Children as the prime in collaboration with Federal Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture and their decentralized health and agriculture systems. ENGINE works with universities, regional colleges, Feed the Future and health partners, and the Ethiopian Health and Nutrition Research Institute.

Habtamu Fekadu (MD,MSc) | Chief of Party, USAID/ENGINE-Empowering the New Generations to Improve Economic opportunities | **Save the Children** | P.O. Box 387 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | Office direct: +251 11 3204283 | Mobile: +251 911513640
Email: habtamu.fekadu@savethechildren.org