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Home gardening, promising practice to improve food security in urban settings of Ethiopia

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Household food insecurity are major challenges of low and middle-income countries, nutrition and health interventions routinely overlook integrating home gardening as a sustainable strategy to create access to fruit and vegetables for vulnerable groups. This study was conducted to explore the role of permagarden training and support in improving knowledge, attitude, skills and vegetable gardening practices of recipients. Cross sectional community based mixed method design was employed. In the quantitative survey 435 trained caregivers were interviewed face-to-face using semi-structured questionnaire. Data were computerized using epi-data version 3.1 and analyzed using STATA version 11. Logistic regression was used to assess factors associated with good level of permagarden practice. Overall, 62% have good level of knowledge of permagarden skills, and 58% demonstrated good level of practice. More than two-third (68%) harvested vegetables at least twice in the year and for 90% of respondents household consumption is the primary purpose of growing vegetables although 66% reported selling vegetables from their garden. The extent of good level of permagarden practice is significantly associated with having good level of knowledge on basic permagarden skills (AOR: 3.54, 95%CI: 2.0-6.3), being a participant from Tigray region (AOR: 2.74, 95%CI:1.33-5.64), being male (AOR:4.62 (1.51-14.12), getting support of agricultural tool (AOR: 1.94, 95%CI (1.00-3.85), and getting follow-up support (AOR: 2 .00; 95%CI 1.04-3.77). Consistent with quantitative findings, results from qualitative study also indicate that permagardening training introduced modern vegetable gardening techniques, skills and inputs resulting in more yields. Unavailability of adequate garden space, shortage of water supply and shortage of agriculture tools were identified as challenges. The finding showed that introduction of permagarden has motivated households to practice home gardening implying that health and nutrition programs are likely to benefit from integrating permagarden to create access to nutrition for vulnerable groups.

Biography

Fikralem Alemu is a PhD fellow at Addis Ababa University, Institute of Water Resources. She has been working with FHI360 Ethiopia as a Health and Nutrition Specialist (includes WASH). She has a particular interest in WASH and Nutrition.

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