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## How to Make Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Work? Experiences of the NutriHAF Project in SW-Ethiopia

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### Abstract

NutriHAF as a research and capacity building project in the framework of the “Research Cooperation for Global Food Security and Nutrition”, funded by the BMEL, aims at increasing nutrition security by integrating vegetables into multi-storey cropping systems in a biodiversity hotspot of SW-Ethiopia. To achieve this goal, the project creates knowledge about appropriate vegetables and adoption strategies and transfers knowledge to farmers and decision makers about nutritional values, production and post-harvest handling of vegetables. So far, the project showed some interesting results, but also faced some constraints on different levels and dimensions. The main constraint at the beginning was the reluctance of farmers to introduce unknown crops (mainly leafy vegetables) in shaded areas. Another constraint is that female farmers, the main vegetable cultivators, face a high workload. Also, the existing extension services are not specialised in horticulture production, and even if there is official political support to nutrition-sensitive agriculture, this has not been translated yet into concrete actions on the local level. The NutriHAF project responded to these constraints by establishing demonstration plots in shaded and open spaces, by assisting the planting of the vegetables, by giving advice to farmers and extension workers, by organising policy round table discussions and by developing recipes and making cooking demonstrations. The latter turned out to be a key factor for the raising interest of farmers (as consumers) of the newly introduced crops as their good taste convinced them. A major success was that they produced, stored, shared and demanded seeds for the next growing season. If this interest continues to grow, value chains of nutritious leafy vegetables are expected to emerge in the region. For this to happen, the NutriHAF project will continue to generate knowledge and build capacities, give gender trainings, assist market development, create awareness of stakeholders and search for political support. But the strongest driver to make nutrition-sensitive agriculture work seems to be the interest of farmers for tasty food as well as for new cash crop opportunities.

**Keywords:** Ethiopia, leafy vegetables, multi-storey cropping systems, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, research cooperation