



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

Livelihoods for Resilience Activity



Beekeeping sweetens family food security

Teshale and Medena's leafy backyard is buzzing with bees, as they are engaged in improved beekeeping following a short-term training facilitated by the Feed the Future Ethiopia – Livelihoods for Resilience Activity. Even if you are afraid of bees, it is worth facing your fear to hear Teshale and Medena's story and see their exemplary beekeeping success.

"Before my wife and I produced a few transitional beehives after a four-day training, I was sleepless," says Teshale. Teshale, 38, and his wife, Medena Gedebo, 34, were struggling to raise their six children, only producing a few quintals of wheat, *enset* (a local staple food), and avocado on their small plot of land in the Hadiya Zone of South Ethiopia. "I worked as a daily laborer to complement the family's income. But it was not enough unless we received support from the government's Productive Safety Net Program," Teshale explains. "Our [beekeeping] experience was limited to a few traditional hives, and we had never considered beekeeping as a major source of income. But in three years, we constructed 95 beehives, which have helped us to earn a good income." When Teshale and Medena joined their local village economic and social association (VESA), established with the support of the project, it was a turning point for their family. They found their VESA to be a good platform to learn new skills and knowledge on financial literacy, business skills, beekeeping, and gen-

der norms and women's empowerment, among others. Teshale's participation in in-depth improved beekeeping training, in particular, benefited not only his family but also his neighbors.

He received theoretical and practical training on how to construct transitional hives, catch bees, split honeybee colonies, transfer bee colonies from traditional to transitional hives, and harvest and market honey. He also learned about the importance of constructing a shade for the hives, planting bee forages, and supplying water for the bees. Back at home after the training, Teshale and Medena enthusiastically constructed 10 transitional hives, and hung more traditional hives on tree branches to lure bees. "We have all types of hives. The traditional, transitional and modern. The shape of the traditional hives makes them convenient to hang on trees to trap bees— then we transfer the bee colony into the transitional or modern hives," Teshale explains.

The family's hard work paid off as they earned over 35,000 birr (USD 1,045) from the sale of honey last year. The income enabled them to construct a large beehive shade structure, buy a water reservoir, and purchase a donkey cart. "Our livelihood has improved a lot," Medena says happily. "All of our kids go to school. There is no shortage to meet the family's basic needs. We got the chance to celebrate the holidays colorfully." She adds with pride: "We can also present honey and coffee to our guests."

Impressed by the family's progress in beekeeping, the Zonal Livestock Office awarded them a honey extracting

machine. "The award aside, we are so happy to be visited by senior government officials, and farmers interested in beekeeping. I also coached five of my VESA members to engage in beekeeping, and each of them have 3-8 beehives," Teshale says.

Teshale and Medena plan to increase their number of hives even further, and they recently graduated from the Productive Safety Net Program, as they no longer need cash or food transfers. It will be exciting to see how this family can further progress in beekeeping in the years to come!

Honey value chain interventions

Project woredas in Tigray and SNNPR have a wide range of agro-ecological and climatic zones supporting a diverse and unique wild vegetation, as well as coffee and fruit trees in SNNPR, all of which enable farmers to produce quality organic honey. Ethiopian honey has a strong market both locally and internationally, and has the potential to bring significant profits to households cultivating small plots of land.

Despite its potential, beekeeping is still underdeveloped, and relatively few PSNP households are able to earn a living from this activity. The knowledge and skills of farmers in honey production have remained traditional and highly inefficient, while the limited access to—and the expense of—improved hives, bee colonies, and beekeeping equipment have prevented many farmers from making the necessary investments to make the activity profitable. As a result, beekeeping typically yields an average production of 5-7 kg of honey per colony per year. To help PSNP households engage in beekeeping as a profitable livelihood activity, the Livelihoods for Resilience Activity:

- Facilitates access to affordable **beekeeping inputs** by training beekeepers to build transitional hives from locally available materials and by establishing bee colony multiplication centers at the village level
- Builds **beekeeping management skills** by providing training on technical and business skills, engaging model beekeepers and local service providers, and facilitating farmer-to-farmer experience sharing and knowledge exchange
- Creates **inclusive market systems** for PSNP households by establishing **multi-stakeholder platforms** at cluster level to strengthen collaboration and coordination of key private and government sector actors in the honey value chain.
- Links PSNP households with sustainable markets through **business-to-business linkages** and **matchmaking** and promotion (**trade fair participation** and contact with buyers)

So far, over 2,600 project participants (of whom 782 are women) are engaged in the honey value chain.

About the Livelihoods for Resilience Activity:

The Feed the Future Ethiopia – Livelihoods for Resilience Activity is part of the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative. The five-year project is designed to help up to 97,900 chronically food insecure households to graduate with resilience from the government of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program. A consortium led by CARE and including the Relief Society of Tigray (REST), Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA), Agri-Service Ethiopia (ASE), and SNV implements the project in 37 PSNP woredas of Tigray, Amhara, and SNNP regions.

