

Avocado Nursery as Business Source: Success Story of Youth Groups in the Case of Aleta Wondo, Soro and Shashemene Districts, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Agriculture is available and essential sector to create employment opportunity. The majority of the youth in Ethiopia live in rural areas where farming has been traditionally the main source of livelihood. Strengthening of seedling production was initiated to promote Avocado in Ethiopia. Youths in these areas benefitted in terms of income source and employment opportunity by producing improved avocado seedlings. The project was implemented in three districts (Soro, Aleta wondo and Shashemene) of Ethiopia. Jajura site from Soro district, Belisto Kebele from Aleta wondo and Kuyera from Shashemene were selected to conduct improved Avocado seedling produce. Job opportunity was created for 37 youths (27 female and 10 male) and their skill and knowledge on the Avocado seedling grafting techniques and nursery management improved. Majority of youths have knowledge and skill on bed preparation, seedling care, grafting and avocado improved varieties. Improved and grafted avocado seedlings were accessed for the surrounding farmers in affordable price. Nursery considered as business source in the study area. The fruit supply system has already started to scale up and out beyond the study sites, calling for strong support of the intervention. It is therefore believed that, in addition to district, zonal and regional level offices, the Ethiopian agricultural research institute will be strongly involved in regulating these efforts.

Keywords: youth, success story, Avocado seedling nursery

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1. Introduction

Currently, unemployment rate for youth is three times that of Adults in the world. In Africa, which has youngest population, two-thirds of youth are unemployed. Agriculture is available and essential sector to create employment opportunity (FAO, 2021). The majority of the youth in Ethiopia live in rural areas where farming has been traditionally the main source of livelihood. Strengthening of seedling production was initiated to promote Avocado in Ethiopia. Youths in these areas benefitted in terms of income source and employment opportunity by producing improved avocado seedlings (Berhe, 2010). Despite this potential however, the area under fruits is very small and mainly smallholder based. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development (MoARD, 2005), there are about 3 million farmers involved in fruit production with a total area of about 43,500 ha and producing about 261,000 t annually. However, less than 2 % of all the produce is exported (Joosten, 2007). Although the number of farmers seems high, each farmer grows very few trees of unimproved varieties/cultivars which are also poorly managed and are mainly for home consumption, except banana production in the south. These fruits are typically cultivated to supplement household income from their main crops.

In view of this, essential trainings were given for youths and agricultural extension workers on fruit nursery management, avocado seedling multiplication practices and business entrepreneurship. This was complemented by learning visits to similar good practices for farmers and agricultural extension workers. To ensure the sustainability of potential private nursery owners in rural areas such organized youths are important. These youths were able to prepare business plans to identify nursery profitability and its transformation to a complete commercial activity. The specific objective of this intervention was to create job opportunities and access to improved and grafted avocado seedling to the surrounding farmers.

2. Intervention

The project was implemented in three districts (Soro, Aleta wondo and Shashemene) of Ethiopia. Jajura site from Soro district, Belisto Kebele from Aleta wondo and Kuyera from Shashemene were selected to conduct improved Avocado seedling produce. Participatory location and participant selection was done based on shortage of improved grafted avocado seedlings in these areas.



Capacity building

Wondogenet agricultural research center provide trainings in collaboration with district agricultural office focused on nursery management and grafting techniques. Knowledge and Skill based trainings were provides to youth groups about nursery management by wondo genet agricultural research center in association with agricultural office of Aleta wondo district and Hadya zone agricultural office. Youthness by itself helped them to acquire knowledge and skill required to establish and manage nursery simply.



3. Results

Table-1: General backgrounds of youths

		Soro	Aleta wondo	Shashemene
number of participants	male	7	4	16
	female	3	3	4
age category in years	<20	-	2	
	20-30	8	5	
	31-40	2	-	
	>40	-	-	
educational status	can read and write	1	-	
	primary	-	1	
	secondary	9	4	
	Graduated	-	2	

3.1. Success story

Major achievements

They introduced following modifications in the traditional Avocado seedling practices based on the knowledge gained during the training.

Job opportunity was created for 37 youths (27 female and 10 male) and their skill and knowledge on the Avocado seedling grafting techniques and nursery management improved. Majority of youths have knowledge and skill on bed preparation, seedling care, grafting and avocado improved varieties. Improved and grafted avocado seedlings were accessed for the surrounding farmers in affordable price. Nursery considered as business source in the study area. The result is in agreement with the study of Malunda, 2014 in Rwanda.

In Shashemene Woreda, there were 20 trained and organized youth but, the only one of these volunteers has worked to the end. This youth was grafted and sold 1000 improved seedling by 80ETB/seedling and generated 80,000 ETB on one production season.

3.2. Challenges

challenges preventing youth from fully engaging in farming, most notably lack of financing, land, markets and training. Seedling preparation is challenging farming type while youths faced by number of problems such as, - Water and budget shortage, Marketing problem (low price and lack of demand) and lack of strong linkages with demand, Low success rate of grafted seedlings and Unavailability of scion, Lack of close follow up by research center and district, Low commitment of youths to sustained on the nursery as income source, Group conflict and limited collaboration with district administrators to follow up. Similar study was reported by Heifer international, 2019 and Ethiopian strategy program also assess related problems on youths employment (Schmidt and Bekele, 2016).

3.3. Lessons learned

From this experience it becomes clear that, nursery management and grafted seedling produces managed by well trained youths at each demonstration sites. Nursery could be real source of income to be replicated in overall the country. The same study was reported by Berhe *et al*, 2010 in Ethiopia. To achieve sustainable business and job creation to youth in Ethiopia, youths needs to be nursery and entrepreneur ship skill. Lessons learned from this study were listed as follows:

- Nursery is easy and high income business source
- Importance of team work
- Nature of youths interest
- how to approach youths and women
- group conflict solving methods
- grafting techniques
- nursery as income source
- high income generation in small land(Nursery)
- importance of team work
- nursery as income source
- high income generation in small plot of land (nursery)

4. Summary

Organized youth groups implemented in Soro, Aleta wondo and Shashemene, Ethiopia has two main objectives. These are promoting improved avocado and create employment opportunity. It was found that three types of youth groups were implemented avocado nursery. The first was establish nursery at centers demonstration site, the second, implement at volunteer farmer land and the third each of members conduct seedling production on their homestead individually. Youths comprised 27 male and 10 female and majority of them are secondary school literate and some of them are graduated in different fields. Hence, their motivation on the activity was decline after year of starting the program. Youths produce higher seedling and get experiences about grafting methods than farmers simply. Fruit nursery provides additional income of an average of 14,500ETB/season for each youth.

All the study areas suitable for Avocado production, many more youth groups will be required to supply sufficient Avocado seedlings in the future. On the other hand, with experience, benefits earned and availability of own improved mother trees, the current youths are also expected to increase number of seedlings on their land in the future. However, nursery operation is not an end by itself, rather it is a way to support the fruit industry in the districts and ultimately in the country, so that benefits will not only be limited to the nursery operators (youths) but also to the broader farmers as well. The experience gained by youths and the researchers is expected to create a sustainable fruit seedling supply system for newly emerging varieties in the long run, in support of the likely fruit expansion in the districts.

The fruit supply system has already started to scale up and out beyond the study sites, calling for strong support of the intervention. It is therefore believed that, in addition to district, zonal and regional level offices, the Ethiopian agricultural research institute will be strongly involved in regulating these efforts.

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Annex-1: name of youths

No.	Name of beneficiaries	District	Village	Material donated by WGARC
1	Tesfaye Lire	Soro	Jajura	wooden pole(የ ተ ቀ ቀ ለ) - ማዕጠሪ ያ ፊሮ , ማስ ማር ና and ማገ ረ የ ቆ ረ ቆ ሮ - Kabo(ሸ ስ) - net(sunshade) - polythene pot - nail (10 ቁ ጥረ) - ማገ ረ የ ቆ ረ ቆ ሮ - Sand, Cement and Gravel(ጠጠር)
2	Tesfaye Erfito	Soro	Jajura	
3	Zemach Syuma	Soro	Jajura	
4	Tadese Manine	Soro	Jajura	
5	Habtamu	Soro	Jajura	
6	Tesfanesh Shima	Soro	Jajura	
7	Tigist Tumiso	Soro	Jajura	
8	Tinsae Tumiso	Soro	Jajura	
9	Erjabo Sabicho	Soro	Jajura	
10	Mitiku Hankore	Soro	Jajura	wooden pole(የ ተ ቀ ቀ ለ) - ማዕጠሪ ያ ፊሮ , ማስ ማር ና and ማገ ረ የ ቆ ረ ቆ ሮ - Kabo(ሸ ስ) - net(sunshade) - polythene pot - nail (10 ቁ ጥረ) - ማገ ረ የ ቆ ረ ቆ ሮ Sand, Cement and Gravel(ጠጠር)
11	Kefayalew Bantie	Aleta wondo	Belisto	
12	Bereket Bantie	Aleta wondo	Belisto	
13	Asrat Fikire	Aleta wondo	Belisto	
14	Ayele Shunka	Aleta wondo	Belisto	
15	Sara Shiferaw	Aleta wondo	Belisto	
16	Selamawit Eyamo	Aleta wondo	Belisto	
17	Wube Tegegn	Aleta wondo	Belisto	
18	Feyisa Eticha	shashemene	Kuyera	