

Kitchen Gardens Lead a Community in Nakuru County out of Malnutrition

Poverty, food insecurity, and limited awareness of proper nutrition left many families struggling, especially children, in Ogilgei community in Nakuru County. This led to severe malnutrition challenges. In 2023, the local health facility recorded two malnutrition cases and one tragic death, highlighting the urgent need for action.

In response, the Community Health Committee (CHC), supported by the DANIDA Primary Health Care (PHC) Program, mobilized local efforts to tackle the root causes of malnutrition. Recognizing that poor nutrition stems not only from lack of food but also from lack of knowledge and access to nutritious options, the CHC introduced kitchen gardens as a sustainable solution.

To ensure the success of this practice, CHC members and Community Health Promoters (CHPs) were trained in leadership, resource mobilization, and nutrition education. These trainings empowered them to:

- Raise awareness about proper nutrition and healthy eating habits.
- Demonstrate practical gardening techniques, such as growing vegetables in sacks and containers, ideal for households with limited space.
- Mobilize local resources and support families in starting their own gardens.

Taking the lead, the CHC converted an unused 0.25-acre plot at the health facility into a demonstration garden. Members contributed seeds, tools, and funds to plant fruit trees and vegetables.

The impact:

- Over 40 households established their own kitchen gardens, improving food security and dietary diversity.
- Families began selling surplus produce, generating additional income.
- The health facility saw a notable increase in service uptake:



Figure 1: A proud beneficiary showcases her thriving managu crop, grown in recycled cement bags with support from CHPs



- Antenatal care visits rose from 357 to 464.
- Immunizations increased from 1,113 to 1,669.
- Facility-based deliveries grew from 39 to 45.

Fresh vegetables were used as incentives to encourage participation in health services, creating an encouraging model for nutrition and healthcare access.

What initiative has your County taken to support and encourage proper nutrition in households?

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