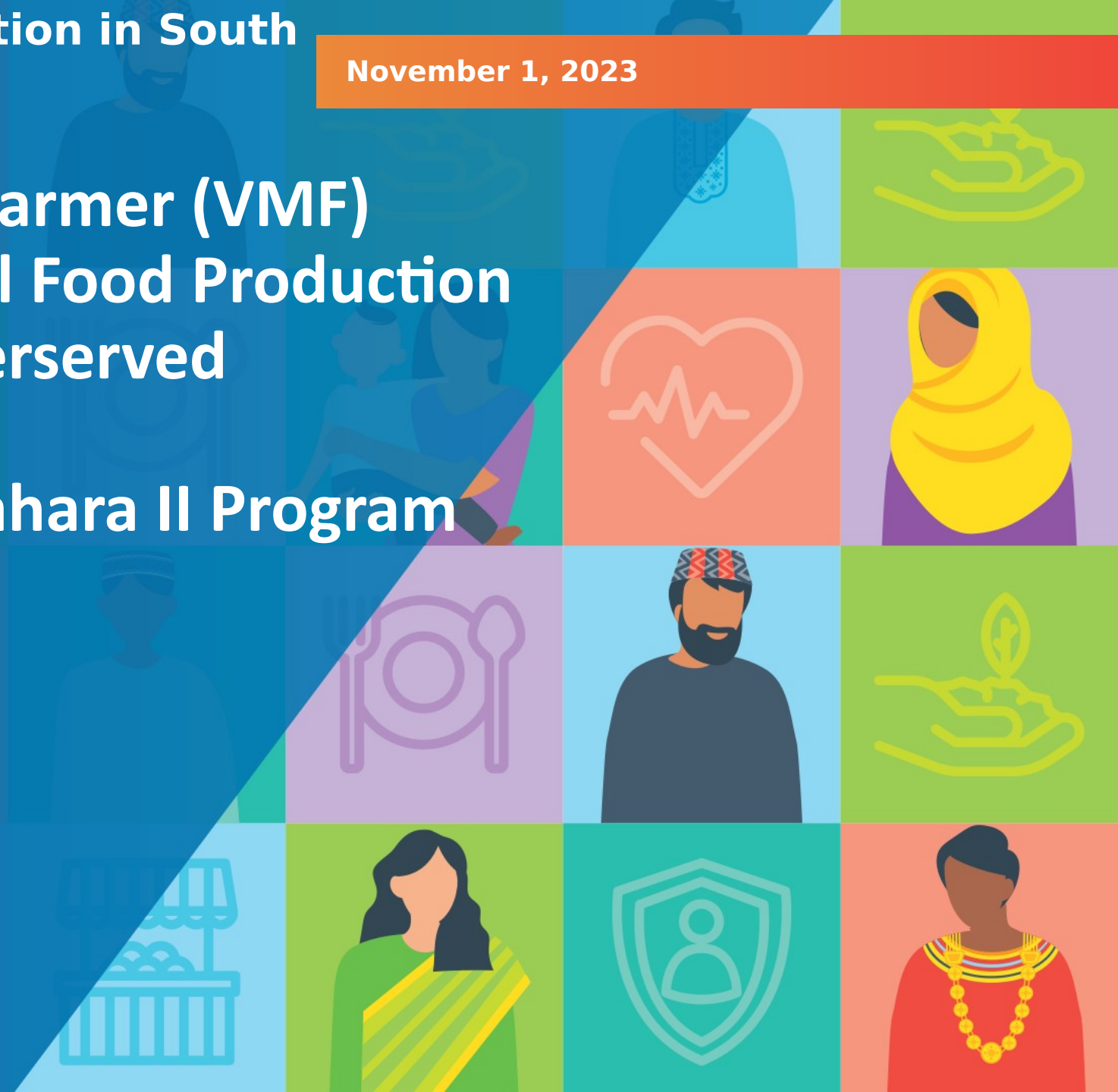


Promoting Village Model Farmer (VMF) Approach to Enhance Local Food Production Extension Services in Underserved Communities: Insights from USAID's Suaahara II Program

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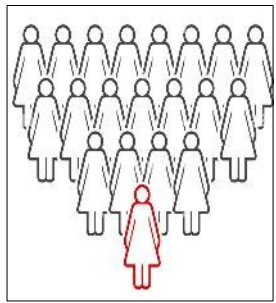
Rationale

- The limited access to and high cost of nutritious food contribute to poor-quality diets and undernourishment, particularly in marginalized communities
- Government extension service challenges: limited human resources, low technical capacity, and a lack of inclusivity exacerbate this issue by declining household food production
- The USAID-funded *Suaahara* program addressed maternal and child malnutrition through a multisectoral integrated approach including agriculture interventions
- Implemented across 42 districts in coordination with government and non-government stakeholders including private sector

Objectives

- Suaahara promoted a household food production model targeting disadvantaged communities (40% of total intervention areas) to improve access to diverse and nutrient-rich foods for women and children
- The Village Model Farmer (VMF) approach: Farmer-to-farmer extension to assist marginalized communities in adopting and sustaining improved household food production

Methods



Selection of lead woman producer from the marginalized community



Capacity building activities:
Development of Village Model Farmers



VMF's technical assistance to 1000 days women through a group approach

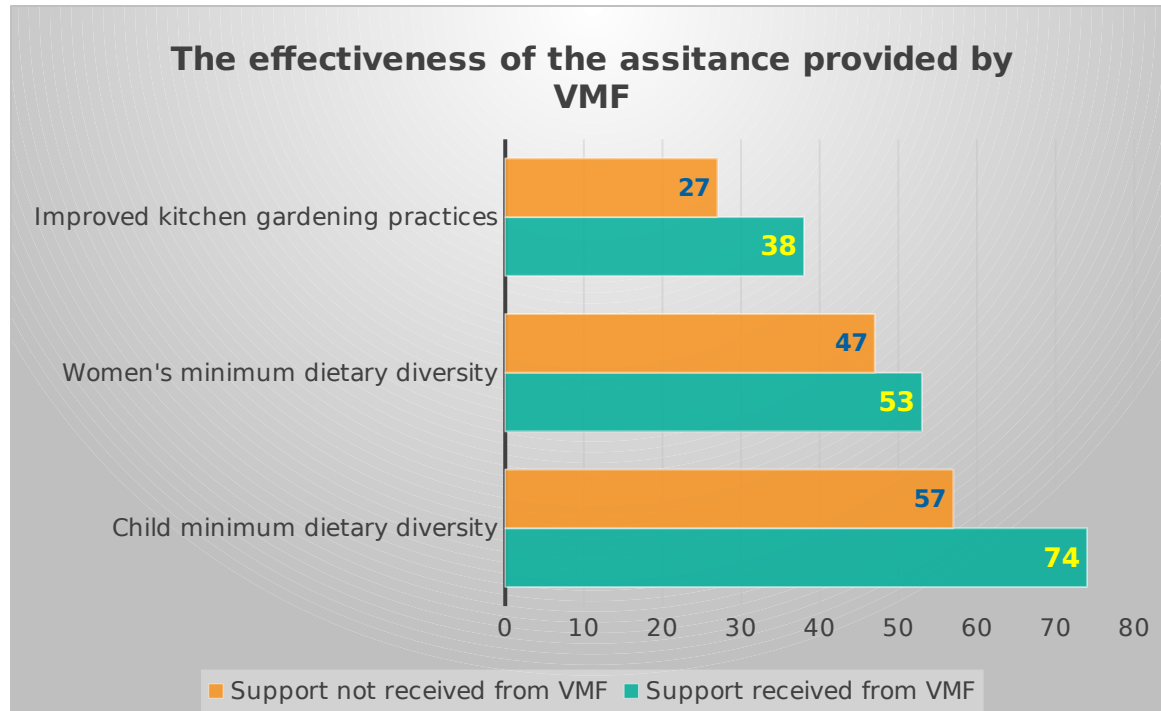


Tracking VMF performance and capacity through routine monitoring and assessment



VMF monitoring
Annual Survey
VMF assessments

Results



Source: Suaahara II Annual Survey 2022

- Significant differences in child and women minimum dietary diversity and gardening practices between HFP program participants with and without VMF support
- BUT: only 23% of surveyed (n=988) households (HHs) received VMF support in 2022 (though it increased from 16% in 2017)
- VMF qualitative assessment to understand barriers and drivers
 - Barriers for VMFs to reach more HHs with extension support: High workload, limited market, and financial opportunities
 - Drivers for VMFs providing support: Additional need-based support including updating their group management skills, the potential for bundling technical support services with revenue generation:

Implications

- Informed decision-making to invest in a community-level extension system for integrated agriculture and nutrition actions
- Addressing VMF approach challenges, could bridge the gap to reach marginalized communities with enhanced agriculture extension services
- Future designs should be led by local government, the private sector, and other community-based organizations and further leverage these actors to provide services and inputs



Suaahara II would like to thank the Government of Nepal for their leadership.



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