

Enhanced Health and Nutrition Strengthens Food Security Programs

By Ryan Larrance

As conflict, climate change, food shortages and volatile global markets continue to take their toll on the populations ACIDI/VOCA serves, we are strengthening our capacity to address the needs of acutely vulnerable populations. A key element of our multipronged approach to reducing food insecurity is ensuring the health and nutritional well-being of individuals, households and, ultimately, communities. Securing health and nutrition is especially important to vulnerable populations, which often need short- and medium-term humanitarian assistance before they are able to participate in longer-term development programs.

Health and nutrition programming has been a crucial component of our food security efforts for many years. We established floating clinics and worked with religious leaders to increase family planning in the Philippines, for example. In Haiti we responded to the devastating 2008 hurricane season by providing emergency food rations and medical care, and by improving production of nutritious crops that can grow in hurricane-prone environments. In rural Uganda, we provided crucial nutritional supplementation to people living with HIV and

increased HIV-testing rates of men, while conducting household- and community-level training on good nutrition and hygiene, and improved agricultural practices. We also created agricultural associations in Rwanda to foster greater economic opportunities for people living with HIV and AIDS.

ACIDI/VOCA is committed to expanding its technical expertise and innovation in food security, including health and nutrition. And by applying techniques learned from years of community action and mobilization in agribusiness and community development, we are bringing a new perspective to the health and nutrition landscape. Through strategic partnerships, programming, and applied health and nutrition research in multiyear food-security programs, ACIDI/VOCA continues to address the most pressing health and nutrition needs of food-insecure populations to improve household- and community-level self-sufficiency and resiliency to shocks.

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