



Research Update

April 2006

Improving the Food Security of AIDS-affected Households in Rural Uganda

ICRW is working with The AIDS Support Organization of Uganda (TASO) and the National Agricultural Research Organization of Uganda (NARO) to improve food security and nutrition of AIDS-affected households in rural Uganda. The project, “Transcending Boundaries to Improve the Food Security of AIDS-affected Households in Rural Uganda,” is addressing the complexities of food insecurity and HIV/AIDS by forging partnerships across sectors – including institutions with expertise in agriculture, nutrition, gender and HIV/AIDS – at the district, community and local levels. Partners are working in Uganda’s Tororo district with farmers’ groups to identify and implement food security interventions that are gender sensitive and meet the nutritional needs of people living with HIV and AIDS.

Phase I: Building Partnerships

An important first step to improving the food security and nutritional status of people living with HIV and AIDS is to build synergies between HIV/AIDS organizations and those with technical knowledge in agriculture and nutrition. TASO and NARO have identified a district management team to forge such an intersectoral partnership in Tororo. This team designed and organized a series of participatory adult learning workshops covering three overarching themes: (1) the principles and benefits of partnership; (2) technical knowledge of HIV and AIDS, food security, nutrition, and gender; and (3) exploration of integrated approaches to improve the food security and nutrition of HIV/AIDS-affected households and communities.

Project Partners

National level:

- ◆ The AIDS Support Organization of Uganda (TASO)
- ◆ The National Agricultural Research Organization of Uganda (NARO)

*District level:**

- ◆ TASO Clinic’s director of community and volunteer outreach
- ◆ Head of nutrition, Tororo District Hospital
- ◆ Director, agricultural production, Tororo district government
- ◆ Director, NARO Livestock Research Center, Tororo
- ◆ Project manager (M.A. in agribusiness), Tororo

*Community level:**

- ◆ TASO volunteers and members of post-test clubs
- ◆ Community development agents and health workers
- ◆ Agricultural extension agents

Local level:

- ◆ Women-only farmers’ groups
- ◆ Men-only farmers’ groups
- ◆ Mixed farmers’ groups
- ◆ Youth farmers’ groups

*Also members of Partners for Food Security (PAFOSE)

The workshops use a training-of-trainers approach: District level partners train community-level partners, who in turn train and work with farmers' groups at the local level. This design allows relatively small numbers of district partners to work with a greater number of community-level partners, who then have the capacity to work with dispersed local farmers' groups.

An early outcome of this process has been the formation of Partners for Food Security (PAFOSE). PAFOSE – comprised of TASO employees and volunteers, and district and sub-district health, agricultural and community development workers – will take the lead in developing and overseeing the implementation of Phase II of the project (see box for detailed listing of PAFOSE members). PAFOSE's mission is to work with communities to find and promote ways to improve the nutrition and food security of HIV/AIDS-affected households using approaches that integrate knowledge of HIV and AIDS, gender, nutrition, and agricultural extension.

Phase II: Developing and Implementing Food Security Interventions

PAFOSE partners are working with farmers' groups in Tororo to design, implement and monitor food security innovations that meet the unique nutritional, labor and social support needs of AIDS-affected households. Such an intervention might include helping farmers' groups design and implement practices to increase their poultry and egg production while establishing group rules to allocate a percentage of the eggs for consumption by children, mothers and HIV-positive household members. The workshops that started during Phase I of the project will be integrated with PAFOSE's ongoing work with the farmers' groups.

The PAFOSE partnership hopes to improve food security and nutrition for people with HIV and AIDS as well as intra-household food allocation patterns to ensure that women and children receive a fair share of food and a better quality diet. TASO plans to replicate lessons learned from this project throughout Uganda and use findings to make the case for mainstreaming HIV/AIDS issues and interventions in Uganda's national agricultural policies.

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