



U.S. Agency for  
International  
Development

Bureau for  
Global Health

# SUCCESS STORIES

HIV/AIDS

## Food Aid Helps Nourish Ugandans Affected by HIV/AIDS

CLEOPHAS IS A FIVE-YEAR-OLD Ugandan orphan who is living with HIV/AIDS. On a continent where food emergencies are all too common, Cleophas is a primary beneficiary of the U.S. Government's food assistance program for HIV/AIDS. Rations from this program also feed his four orphaned siblings, all under ten years of age. According to his caretaker, since Cleophas began receiving this food four months ago, he has gained two kilos and his eyesight has improved markedly.

Mr. and Mrs. R, aged 80 and 70, respectively, are also beneficiaries of the food program. They lost all their children to HIV/AIDS and they must now care for 18 orphaned grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Feeding them is the couple's most pressing problem, and they are grateful that the children now receive a corn-soy porridge for breakfast and dinner.

This U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) food aid program is improving the lives of more than 60,000 people in Uganda who are living with HIV/AIDS.

Implemented by Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI/VOCA) and its partners, Africare, Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, and The AIDS Support Organization of Uganda, this USAID program began food distribution in January 2002 to the most impoverished people living with HIV/AIDS in Uganda. Since then, countless beneficiaries have shared their stories of the positive impact of the food on them, their loved ones, and their communities. Said one beneficiary, "The magic food I received with the medication from World Vision enabled me to stand up and walk again."

The feeding program faced many challenges in its first year, including the logistical feat of delivering food rations to 60,000 people at 122 food distribution points on a monthly basis. Remarkably, the total cost—including food, ocean freight, inland freight, offloading and reloading, transportation from warehouses to distribution points, and operational costs—is 24 cents per beneficiary per day for a ration of 1,300 calories, about two-thirds of a person's average caloric needs.

In a context of overwhelming need, ACDI/VOCA and its partners closely screen potential recipients to ensure that only those people with HIV/AIDS and few resources are enrolled in the program. With limited food supplies, the most heart-wrenching decision is whether to continue supporting the family of a deceased beneficiary or to enroll an equally needy family affected by HIV/AIDS. It is easy to overlook the great need among food-insecure people living with HIV/AIDS because their problems are more concealed and longer-term than those of immediate sufferers of natural disasters. Multiyear food-aid interventions through non-emergency food programs can play a crucial role in feeding them.

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*Uganda, October 2003*

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