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BEST NUTRITION PRACTICES PROMOTED BY COMMUNITY HEALTH VOLUNTEERS FOR PLWHA AND OVC

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Background:

Ibyiringiro is a five-year PEPFAR funded project, focused on food and nutrition intervention to PLWHA and OVC in Rwanda and implemented by a consortium led by Catholic Relief Services. Caritas Nyundo as member of this consortium is implementing positive deviance/hearth model as main nutrition strategy in Ngororero and Karongi districts, being integrated with bio-intensive agriculture and SILC activities.



Methods

280 Community health volunteers were trained on nutrition and hygiene to conduct health and nutrition educational sessions including cooking demonstration, tippy-tap hand washing construction, and elementary food processing to be later taught to beneficiaries within 280 positive deviance/Hearth groups. Community health volunteers learned to accurately measure and track growth of children, practice nutrition counseling techniques and provide support to malnourished HIV infected children and adults.

Community health volunteers received key materials and cooking demonstration kits to teach positive deviance/hearth groups to prepare balanced meals with local food and to monitor beneficiary nutritional status monthly.

Results

- Nutritional status of 3059 beneficiaries was assessed using BMI.
- Over six months, anthropometric measures showed net increase of BMI from 1159 out of 1530 (76%) in April 2010 to 1186 (78%) in September 2010 in Karongi
- In Ngororero, it was from 1240 out of 1529 (81%) to 1339 (88%) during the same period.

Conclusion

Malnutrition is not always due to food unavailability but often the result of misutilization as people may not be sufficiently educated on how to maximize their nutritional status. positive deviance/Hearth model is an effective approach to improve nutritional status without food aid, improve social interaction and adherence on ART and reduce stigma and discrimination. Integration of positive deviance/hearth with other approaches such as training in bio-intensive agricultural techniques and implementation of Saving and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) is more nutritionally helpful for PLWHA and OVC.