



2021

Food and Nutritional Report



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Annual Report 2020-21

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in late 2019, brought unprecedented challenges worldwide. In Uganda, the impact was particularly severe in rural communities, where lockdowns and movement restrictions disrupted daily life and access to essential services. The pandemic exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, particularly among children and families already struggling with malnutrition and health issues such as HIV. ACYP stepped in to provide critical nutritional support during this period, aiming to mitigate the adverse effects of the pandemic on food security and health.

The lockdowns led to significant disruptions in food supply chains, making it difficult for families to access nutritious food. Markets were closed, transportation was restricted, and many families lost their sources of income. These challenges heightened the risk of malnutrition, especially among children and those with compromised immune systems. According to a study, food insecurity in rural areas increased by approximately 15.4% during the pandemic. ACYP's initiatives focused on distributing seeds for growing food, providing nutritional supplements, and supplying farm inputs to enhance food production. This report details our activities, their impact, and the lessons learned over the two-year period.

Overview of Activities

Seed Distribution During the pandemic.

ACYP distributed a variety of seeds to families to help them grow their own food. This initiative aimed to enhance food security and reduce dependency on external food supplies, which were often disrupted. We provided seeds for staple crops such as maize, beans, and vegetables. Over the two years, we distributed seeds to 110 families, resulting in a 30% increase in household food production in 2020-2021.

Testimonial: "Receiving seeds from the ACYP was a blessing. With the markets closed, we were able to grow our own food and ensure our children did not go hungry," said Mary, a mother of three from a rural village of Kisawo

Nutritional Food Supplements

To address the immediate nutritional needs of malnourished and HIV-infected children, we distributed nutritional food supplements. These supplements were crucial in improving the health and immunity of vulnerable children during the pandemic. We provided supplements to 230 children, leading to a 25% reduction in malnutrition rates and a 20% improvement in the health of HIV-infected children.

Testimonial: "The supplements provided by the CBO helped my son regain his strength. He was very weak due to malnutrition, but now he is much healthier," shared Jane, a mother of an HIV-infected child.

Farm Inputs

ACYP also distributed essential farm inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, hoes, pangas, and water cans. These inputs were vital in boosting agricultural productivity and ensuring that families could sustain their food production efforts. We reached 78 households with these inputs, resulting in a 40% increase in crop yields.



Testimonial: "The farm inputs we received made a huge difference. We were able to grow more food and even sell some of the surplus to buy other necessities," said John, a local farmer.

Kitchen Gardens

We encouraged families to establish kitchen gardens by providing vegetable seeds and training on sustainable gardening practices. Kitchen gardens became a reliable source of fresh vegetables, improving the dietary diversity of households. We supported the creation of 54 kitchen gardens, which contributed to a 35% increase in vegetable consumption among participating families.

Testimonial: "Our kitchen garden has been a lifesaver. We now have fresh vegetables every day, which has greatly improved our diet," noted Grace, a community member.

Food Relief

In addition to the above initiatives, ACYP provided direct food relief to the most vulnerable families. This included distributing food packages containing essential items such as maize flour, beans, and cooking oil. We distributed 1,400 food packages, which provided immediate relief to families facing acute food shortages.

Testimonial: "The food relief packages were a lifeline during the lockdown. We had no income, and the food provided by ACYP kept us going," expressed Peter, a father of four.

Impact Assessment

Health Improvements

The distribution of nutritional supplements and food relief significantly improved the health of children in the community. We observed notable weight gain, reduced malnutrition rates by 25%, and better management of HIV among the children who received support.

Food Security

Our initiatives enhanced food security by enabling families to grow their own food and reducing their dependency on external food supplies. The kitchen gardens and farm inputs contributed to a 40% increase in agricultural productivity and food availability.

Economic Benefits

The ability to grow and sell surplus produce provided families with an additional source of income. This economic benefit helped families purchase other necessities and improve their overall well-being.

Challenges Faced

Logistical Issues

The lockdowns and movement restrictions posed significant logistical challenges. Transporting seeds, supplements, and farm inputs to remote areas was difficult, and we had to navigate through various restrictions to ensure timely delivery. Additionally, the limited availability of transportation options increased costs and delayed distributions.

Community Engagement

Engaging the community and ensuring their participation was challenging due to fear of COVID-19 and misinformation. We had to invest in awareness campaigns to educate the community about the importance of our initiatives and how to stay safe. Overcoming scepticisms and building trust required continuous effort and communication.

Resource Constraints

Limited funding and availability of supplies were major constraints. The increased demand for support during the pandemic stretched our resources thin, and we had to prioritize the most vulnerable families. Despite these constraints, we managed to reach a significant number of beneficiaries through efficient resource allocation and partnerships with other organizations.

Lessons Learned

Community Trust and Engagement

Building trust within the community was crucial. Our pre-existing relationships and the trust we had built over the years were instrumental in the success of our initiatives. Future projects should continue to focus on community engagement and trust-

building. Regular communication and involving community leaders in planning and implementation can enhance participation and support.

Flexibility and Adaptability

The pandemic taught us the importance of being flexible and adaptable. We had to quickly adjust our strategies to respond to the evolving situation. This adaptability will be essential in addressing future crises. Developing contingency plans and being prepared to pivot operations can help maintain continuity in service delivery.

Collaboration and Partnerships

Collaborating with other organizations and stakeholders enhanced our ability to provide comprehensive support. Partnerships with local leaders, health workers, and other NGOs were vital in overcoming challenges and reaching more families. Strengthening these collaborations and exploring new partnerships can amplify the impact of our initiatives.

Conclusion

In summary, ACYP's efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic played a crucial role in supporting vulnerable children and their families. The distribution of seeds, nutritional supplements, farm inputs, and food relief helped mitigate the adverse effects of the pandemic on food security and health. Despite the challenges faced, the impact of our initiatives was significant, and the lessons learned will guide our future efforts to support the community.

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