

# Strategies, Activities and Challenges in Addressing Food/Nutrition in HIV/AIDS Programs

Sandra Remancus

FANTA Project

February 17, 2005

Bridging the Gap Conference, Washington DC

# What we know

- Improved food and nutrition
  - Delays onset of HIV/AIDS symptoms and clinical progression of the disease
  - Reduces morbidity & mortality due to HIV/AIDS
  - May improve ART compliance and mitigation of medication side effects
  - Improves overall household food security and reduces vulnerability to economic hardship and infection

# What we know

- Energy requirements for PLWHA differ from those for non-HIV-infected individuals

# Energy Requirement Increases for PLWHA

Population Group	HIV phase	Energy requirement
Adults	Asymptomatic	10% increase
	Symptomatic	20-30 % increase
Pregnant/lactating women*	Asymptomatic	10% increase
	Symptomatic	20-30% increase
Children	Asymptomatic	10% increase
	Symptomatic (with no weight loss)	20-30% increase
	Symptomatic (with weight loss)	50-100% increase

\* This is in addition to extra energy, protein and micronutrients required by pregnancy or lactation.

Source: WHO, 2003

# What we know

- There are no current changes to protein and micronutrient requirements recommendations for PLWHA
- Many PLWHA are already burdened with a lack of access to a good quality diet and suffer from malnutrition and especially micronutrient malnutrition.

# What we know

- Multiple food resources - not just food aid - need to be considered for PLWHA
- Specialized food products (blended, sometimes fortified, ready-to-eat or partially precooked) are available regionally, nationally & locally and should be considered where appropriate

# Examples of specialized food products

---

Bars or compressed foods	Eaten as-is or crumbled and combined with a liquid
Blended flours	Precooked flours with two or more ingredients, usually with micronutrients added
Beverages	Pre-packaged liquids
Powders	Mixed with liquids, as a beverage, or with other foods
Spreads or pastes	Directly consumed or used on bread or in porridges for meals and snacks

# FANTA Activities

Countries/USAID have asked for assistance with:

- **Strengthening capacity in nutrition/care & support**
  - In Ministries
  - Throughout health systems
  - In NGOs, FBOs, CBOs
  - At the community level
  
- **Through the development & implementation of:**
  - National Guidelines on Nutritional Care & Support
  - Integration of nutrition into National HIV Strategies
  - Training materials
  - Nutrition counseling and job aids
  - Improved M&E of nutritional care & support

# FANTA Activities

Countries/USAID have asked for assistance with:

- Improving food aid programming in the HIV/AIDS context and strengthening assessment capacity for food aid interventions in HIV/AIDS-affected communities
- Determining what specialized food products are available and appropriate for integration into HIV/AIDS programming

# FANTA Activities

---

Countries/USAID have asked for assistance with:

- Identifying approaches for therapeutic feeding of severely acutely malnourished children and adults who are also HIV+.
- Strengthening community-based programming to address the broader food-security impacts of the HIV/AIDS pandemic



# Challenges....

## or where work is still needed

- Continued advocacy on the importance of food/nutrition in HIV/AIDS programming
- Addressing gaps in capacity & materials at multiple levels and across multiple stakeholders (national, clinical, organizational, community)
- Sharing "lessons learned" in a timely and effective manner on the integration of food & nutrition in HIV/AIDS programming

# Challenges....

## or where work is still needed

- Promoting solutions that don't further overburden clinics, communities, home-based care networks, etc.
- Addressing capacity & lack of experience with food distribution in (some) organizations that want to integrate a food component
- Widening consideration of and knowledge about available specialized food products

# Challenges.... or where work is still needed

---

- Assisting programs with the development of targeting criteria for food, when necessary
- Continuing operations research related to the integration of food and nutrition into HIV/AIDS programming
- Improving M&E of food and nutrition activities in the HIV/AIDS context