

Haiti

Dispensary Helps Families Fight Malnutrition



The women talk and laugh while they wait in line at the Bodarie dispensary in southeastern Haiti. Today is weigh-in day, and they have gathered to have their babies weighed and to receive food rations through ACDI/VOCA's mother-child health-nutrition activity.

The monthly weigh-ins are part of ACDI/VOCA's preventive and recuperative approach to malnutrition in the rural areas of Haiti's southeast region. The Bodarie dispensary is one of 22 sites where women can receive ante- and post-natal care and have their children's nutritional status screened.

Currently, health facilities regularly monitor 365 babies in the Bodarie area; 365 families also receive related family rations.

"Our plan for 2010 is to increase the coverage of health facilities so that more people receive

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rations in an effort to decrease the number of cases of malnutrition that we see in the community and increase the number of beneficiaries admitted to the program to prevent malnutrition-based health problems," says Anna Afferri, the health and nutrition director, ACDI/VOCA-Haiti.

The mother-child health program is part of ACDI/VOCA's larger effort to strengthen public health and improve agricultural practices with funding from USAID.

Among the women in line is 35-year-old Christiana Juasent who has come with her 14-month-old son, Joumond. Christiana lives with her husband and two children in a house with 15 other family members—uncles, aunts and cousins who came from Port-au-Prince after the earthquake.

Even before the earthquake, food was scarce. Christiana and her family make a living growing peas, corn and beans. The women sell this produce at the local market to get rice and other essential items, but there is never enough.



Success Story

Christiana first brought Joumond to the health center when he was 11 months old and severely malnourished, weighing only 3 kilos (6.6 lbs). Today he weighs 7 kilos (15.4 lbs) and is growing steadily.

“I thought my child was going to die,” says Christiana. “I prayed every day. I came to every treatment, and have seen results.”