

## **Impact Study on the Effects of HIV and AIDS on Agriculture in BOTSWANA**

*About 70% of SADC citizens derive their household food security from crops and livestock. The adverse effects of HIV and AIDS in the region have resulted in labour deficits and the sale of agricultural produce to meet costs incurred as a result of the pandemic.*



# OVERVIEW OF SCOPE OF THE REGIONAL STUDY

In view of the negative impact of HIV and AIDS on families and institutions in southern Africa, FANRPAN carried out comprehensive policy research studies to assess the situation on the ground. The aim was to advise SADC policy makers and practitioners on the HIV and AIDS dimension in the agricultural sector. This was in recognition of the fact that: a) a large percentage of the population live and work in rural areas; b) the agricultural workforce is large; and c) the economies are anchored on agriculture. FANRPAN commissioned a two year regional study on the impact of HIV and AIDS on agriculture in seven SADC countries through support from the European Union.

**The objectives of the study in Botswana were to:-**

- ◆ Investigate how the farming communities have been affected by HIV and AIDS and their coping strategies
- ◆ Assess the impact of HIV and AIDS on the farming community with respect to access to farm resources
- ◆ Investigate the impact of the HIV and AIDS pandemic on the farming community's ability to receive support facilities
- ◆ Predict the anticipated future performance scenario of agriculture

## CONTEXT OF THE STUDY:

Botswana is among the Southern African countries that are hardest hit by HIV and AIDS. HIV and AIDS have affected the most productive section of the population. Prevalence rate among the sexually active ranges between 30 - 40 percent. Since the agricultural sector in Botswana is labour intensive, it is expected that HIV and AIDS could have a negative impact on agricultural productivity.

## STUDY AREA

The study took on a multi-sectoral approach involving the Ministry of Agriculture, University of Botswana, Botswana College of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health. The study was conducted in three farming villages of Lentsweletau (Kweneng District), Mmathethe (Southern District) and Mookane (Central District). A total of rural 410 households were interviewed for this study.

## EMERGING RESULTS

The main findings are that HIV and AIDS have had a negative impact on agricultural activities. The following were the highlights:

- ◆ There was a reduction in livestock holdings for the affected households – the income from sale of livestock is not re-invested to increase the herd or improve production but is used in purchase of medications and funeral expenses;

- ◆ There was a significant reduction in crop production in affected families due to lack of labour and constant illness;
- ◆ The lack of drought power has meant that families depend on neighbours for assistance whereas such neighbours may also be in distress;
- ◆ There was high absenteeism of extension staff due to illness and attending to sick family members;
- ◆ There was a decrease in decision making at household level especially since decisions primarily on livestock are made by men;
- ◆ There was a noticeable rise in proportion of activities that are not carried out on time such as weeding and ploughing, this has compromised the ability of the household to feed itself and they now depend on well wishers or government.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- ◆ There is need to address gender issues in agricultural production where technical training on improved agronomic practices should incorporate HIV and AIDS, empowerment and survival skills for women and orphans;
- ◆ Encourage the role of youth to play a meaningful role in agricultural production for sustainability, increase youth accessibility to land and agricultural resources as well as secure tenure rights;
- ◆ Increase agricultural training at a lower level than Botswana College of Agriculture to encourage more home grown extensionists through massive para-professional training programmes;
- ◆ Develop more appropriate technology to lessen the burden on care givers who are mostly female;
- ◆ Non-farm employment strategies should be considered so as to diversify away from traditional farming systems.

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# ABOUT FANRPAN

**T**he Food, Agriculture and Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) is an autonomous stakeholder driven policy research, analysis and implementation network that was formally established in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 1997. FANRPAN was borne out of the need by SADC governments for comprehensive policies and strategies that were required to resuscitate agriculture. FANRPAN is mandated to work in all SADC countries and currently has activities in 11 SADC countries namely Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

FANRPAN works through an inter-sectoral platform designated as country nodes. Each country node has members comprising stakeholders from government, farming unions, private sector, policy research institutes and non governmental organizations. The main objectives of FANRPAN are to promote appropriate agricultural policies in order to reduce poverty, increase food security and enhance sustainable agricultural development in the SADC region; improve policy analysis, research and formulation of priority SADC and national agricultural research themes; develop human and institutional capacity for co-ordinated dialogue among all stakeholders; improve policy decision making through the generation, exchange and use of policy related knowledge and information. FANRPAN achieves these objectives through commissioned policy research, networking, capacity building and generation of information for the benefit of all stakeholders in the SADC region.

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