

Impact of HIV and AIDS on Agriculture and Food Security in SOUTH AFRICA

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 sought to carry 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 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

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY WERE TO:

Determine the impact of HIV and AIDS focusing on;

- ◆ sickness/morbidity and mortality and ability to engage in agriculture;
- ◆ household income generating activities;
- ◆ household productive and social occupations;
- ◆ effectiveness of coping strategies;

The study was conducted in Ga-Molepo, a community situated in the Capricorn District near Polokwane in Limpopo Province. The study was coordinated by the Centre for the Study of AIDS, and the Agricultural Economics Department at the University of Pretoria, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Health and the University of the North.

EMERGING RESULTS

The results from this study show that for:

(i) Family members living with (or having relatives with) HIV and AIDS:

- ◆ Households spent more resources on medical expenses leaving less money for the education of children. Payment of medical bills have taken precedence over all other financial needs. This shift is worrying because the opportunities to engage in income generating activities are severely diminished;
- ◆ The problems of water scarcity became excessive where a householder is affected by illness;
- ◆ Households have not switched to less labour intensive crops rather, they have resorted to hiring extra labour to cope. This means that more financial resources are required for hiring the extra labour. The ability to invest in agricultural inputs, equipment and technologies is reduced;
- ◆ HIV and AIDS pandemic has further threatened food security.

(ii) Death Due to HIV and AIDS:

- ◆ Loss of knowledge – gaps existed at household level when male members died;
- ◆ Orphans and child headed households cannot cope with the business of agriculture;
- ◆ Social distress as the extended family struggles to make a living and have to take in orphans.

COPING STRATEGIES

- ◆ There has been a failure of traditional or other structures to support vulnerable families – support is not available beyond extended families;
- ◆ Family relatives tend to seek remittances from extended families more than before;
- ◆ Selling off of livestock and other assets to pay for funerals and medical expenses;
- ◆ Households seeking social grants from government more than before.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ There is need to harness the political will to secure land ownership for the family through joint registration of spouses and information on wills and inheritance to provide security from internal/external threats such as HIV and AIDS. More often, children are evicted from land when the parents die.
- ◆ Provide an enabling environment for family members and women in rural areas left behind by migrating husbands to access title to land in order to sustainably support dependents.
- ◆ Provide information on HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention in farming communities.
- ◆ Promote awareness and understanding on importance of nutrition in disease management for HIV infected individuals. This has potential in reducing the medical costs.
- ◆ Provide targeted subsidies to HIV and AIDS vulnerable populations that enhance efficiency and more equitable access to market for sustainable solutions to moving beyond challenge of AIDS in agriculture.
- ◆ Agricultural knowledge management and transfer between family members particularly women and children for continuity. Women and children are often excluded from this knowledge process.
- ◆ Promote agricultural diversification of skills, cropping practises, labour and knowledge.
- ◆ Capacity investment in micro-finance, infrastructure – physical and knowledge.

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ABOUT FANRPAN

The 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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