



## **Impact of HIV and AIDS on Agriculture and Food Security in SWAZILAND**

*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 a comprehensive policy research 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 Swaziland 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

# CONTEX OF THE STUDY IN SWAZILAND WERE

Swaziland is one of the SADC countries most affected by HIV and AIDS with a prevalence rate of 38.6 percent. More than 75 percent of the population is found in rural areas. Information and programmes on mitigating the impact of the disease tend to be urban based.

The purpose of the study on the impact of HIV and AIDS on agriculture were to:

- ◆ Assess the overall impact of HIV and AIDS on Swaziland's Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource sector.
- ◆ Determine the number and demographic characteristics of the households affected by HIV and AIDS as well as threats to the health and socio-economic development of Swaziland.
- ◆ Suggest short to long term mitigation strategies to minimize the adverse effects especially on production, employment, marketing, savings, investment and the environment.

The study was funded by the European Union as part of a regional support programme for an expanded multi-sectoral response to HIV and AIDS in the SADC region aimed at strengthening the response to the pandemic. In Swaziland the study was overseen by a Steering Committee consisting of representatives from the University of Swaziland, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, farmers, National Emergency Response Committee on HIV and AIDS (NERCHA), Federation of Swaziland Employees and local government Tinkundla centers.

# STUDY AREA

- ◆ The two year study covered Hhohho, Manzini, Shiselweni and Lubombo regions. These agricultural regions are important in the food economy of Swaziland. Many smallholder farmers are found in these regions.

## STUDY RESULTS

The emerging results from this study shows that:

- ◆ **Agriculture production is declining:** Land allocated to maize and other crops has declined (except beans) in households with members affected by HIV and AIDS related diseases.
- ◆ **Diversion of funds from agriculture:** Input purchasing fell by 35 percent in Lubombo as a result of communities channeling income to non food items such as healthcare, funerals and transportation.
- ◆ **Children in agriculture:** There is an increasing involvement of children in agricultural activities and shifting to less labour intensive mono-cropping.
- ◆ **Disposal of household assets:** households selling livestock as means to pay for healthcare. In some instances, agricultural implements are also disposed due to underutilization as the disease takes its toll.
- ◆ **Diminished crop production:** due to fall in land utilization as inputs and labour becomes unaffordable.
- ◆ **Compromised land rights for women due to customary laws:** In female headed households, land accessibility becomes difficult due to gender inequality and inability to cope with some agricultural activities due to increase in burden.
- ◆ **Impact on agricultural institutions:** Illness/loss of skilled personnel in agriculture thus resulting in an increase in the extension/farmer ratio to 1:1000 from 1:300.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- ◆ Multi-sectoral approach needed between government and NGOs for comprehensive policy measures such as health care.
- ◆ Improved provision of essential drugs such as ARVs and food to rural areas.
- ◆ Support of home-based care centers to ease burden on women.
- ◆ Promotion and training to support adoption of less labour intensive crops such as cassava

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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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