

Impact of HIV and AIDS on Agriculture and Food Security in ZAMBIA

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

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY IN ZAMBIA

Zambia's agriculture has been undergoing transformation since the 1990s. After many decades of food deficiency, Zambia has become an exporter of cereals in the region. However, the greatest threats to the rise of Zambia's agriculture is the negative impact of HIV and AIDS. It is in this context that Zambia was selected as part of the FANRPAN regional study on the impact of HIV and AIDS on the agricultural sector.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the study was to assess the impact of the HIV and AIDS on the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources sector and suggest short to long term mitigation strategies to minimizing its adverse effects especially on rural and agricultural based livelihoods in Zambia and the SADC region.

STUDY AREAS AND INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION

In Zambia the study was commissioned in Choma, Monze and Sinazongwe districts of Southern Province which are predominantly agricultural. A total of 210 rural households were covered in the sample. The technical coordination committee comprised of stakeholders from the following institutions: University of Zambia, Farming Systems Association of Zambia, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, Central Statistical office, Programme Against Malnutrition, Zambia National Farmers Union, Cooperate League of the United States of America, National Food and Nutrition Commission, United Nations Development Program and National Agricultural Information Services.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The emerging results from these three districts in the Southern Province show:

- ◆ **Distortions in demographic make up of given communities:** There is an emerging increase in the rural farming communities of female (widow) headed households. In the sample 53 percent of rural households were female headed. The increase in widowship is a dominant pattern in the districts.
- ◆ **Increasing AIDS related deaths:** of adult household members leading to increasing orphans and vulnerable children.
- ◆ **Reduction in number of working adults per household:** increasing prevalence of HIV related illness affecting labour productivity. Most households had only one working adult.
- ◆ **Increasing dependence by households affected by HIV and AIDS related illness:** to sell charcoal and other forest products as a source of income due to limited alternatives of income generating projects.

COPING STRATEGIES

- ◆ Shift to minimum tillage practices e.g. potholing for cultivation of fields
- ◆ Reduction in land area under cultivation
- ◆ Increased reliance on children under 15 years for agricultural labour

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- ◆ The need to promote use of low input and conservation farming technologies targeting vulnerable farming households.
- ◆ Lack of equitable allocation of resources between prevention and mitigation measures – most resources dedicated to fight health impacts of HIV and AIDS and less to mitigate non health impacts on households especially the rural farming households.
- ◆ Lack of harmonization of national policy actions and programmes aimed at mitigating socio-economic HIV and AIDS impacts among farming households.

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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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