



HIV/AIDS and Rural Development Fact Sheet

March 2005



Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH

commissioned by:



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development



THE CONTEXT



HIV/AIDS erodes the fundament for development cooperation

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is more than a health problem. Its spread and impact are determined by poverty, social and gender inequality, discrimination and poor social services. While it spreads invisibly during the early stages of an epidemic, HIV/AIDS eventually has profoundly negative effects on the economic conditions of individuals, households, communities, countries, regions and whole continents. Countries with more developed epidemics like Eastern, Central and Southern Africa or the Caribbean will not just experience countless personal tragedies but also losses in annual per capita growth rates of up to 4.4% over the next 10-20 years. As HIV/AIDS affects people in their most productive years of life, including the poor and the illiterate as much as the elites, crucial government officials and skilled labourers, it erodes the very fundament for capacity development and development cooperation.

Still a window of hope if ALL sectors act NOW

This means that HIV/AIDS threatens sustainable development, not just in regions that are already seriously affected, but also in those where it is spreading fast right now, such as Asia and Eastern Europe. The latest epidemiological data show that infection rates in many Asian and Eastern European countries stand today where they stood in Southern African countries 12 years ago, and that they are steadily growing. In the meantime, many lessons have been learned: We know that countries like Senegal, Thailand or Brazil, whose governments have openly acknowledged their HIV/AIDS epidemic and implemented comprehensive, multi-sectoral responses, have been able to reverse the fatal trend. Today,

there is still a window of hope for many regions if governments and development actors in all sectors acknowledge the exceptionality of the HIV/AIDS crisis and devise sector-specific responses to it.

GTZ responds to the HIV/AIDS challenge

The German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) recognises the challenge posed by the HIV/AIDS pandemic to its mission. To prevent its further spread and to mitigate its negative effects, GTZ has begun to “mainstream” the response to HIV/AIDS as a cross-cutting issue that needs to be addressed by all sectors. To support this process, this series of fact sheets highlights how HIV/AIDS impacts on different sectors and shows ways in which each sector can contribute to an effective response to it. The first four sections of this fact sheet relate to the following questions:

- **The impact:** How does HIV/AIDS affect the rural development sector?
- **The comparative advantage:** How can rural development in particular reduce vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and mitigate its impact?
- **The risk scenarios:** How might rural development contribute to the spread of HIV or aggravate its impact?
- **The GTZ approach:** How can German development cooperation in the rural development sector contribute to an effective response to HIV/AIDS?

The last two sections list recommended reading on the topic and present GTZ staff and working groups who can be contacted for support and information.



THE IMPACT

HIV/AIDS can aggravate food insecurity

The countries most affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic rely most heavily on small-scale agriculture: over 70% of their population depend on it for their livelihoods. In many parts of Africa, AIDS is intensifying chronic food shortages in countries where large numbers of people are already undernourished. Malnutrition in turn increases both the susceptibility to HIV infection and the vulnerability to its various impacts.

Since the AIDS pandemic strikes particularly the economically active age group, it can have a dramatic impact on agricultural production, rural livelihoods and food security. In high-prevalence countries, all dimensions of food security are affected: availability, access to, and utilization of food. The range of health problems associated with HIV/AIDS has serious knock-on effects on the food security of affected communities. When household members are incapacitated for longer periods of time, the farming circle is disrupted. As more and more productive adults die, the small-scale agricultural systems that assured the food security of rural communities gradually collapse. In this way, the chronic food insecurity of many households in affected rural regions has been further aggravated by HIV/AIDS and the local capacity to overcome this crisis gradually weakens.

HIV/AIDS fuels rural poverty cycle

According to FAO estimates HIV/AIDS has already killed several million agricultural workers since 1985 in the 25 hardest-hit countries in Africa, and the mortality for this group continues to rise. In macro-economic terms, an increase in adult mortality and morbidity will inevitably lead to a decline in agricultural productivity. Not just subsistence farmers but also large-scale commercial agriculture, the backbone of most African economies, is experiencing declines in productivity due to the loss of skilled and unskilled agricultural labour; overall, the sector suffers from the reduction in smallholder agricultural production; a decline in the marketing of surplus production; decreased inter-generational transfer of knowledge and specialised

skills and practices and therefore the loss of indigenous farming methods.

In regions where the epidemic is at the stage at which a considerable proportion of adults is sick or has died, families' income and food are severely reduced and their savings and assets are depleted to meet health care, living and funeral costs. The traditional systems of mutual assistance that rural communities depend upon are no longer able to cope with the high number of deaths and of people needing care.



HIV/AIDS undermines institutional capacities

In the more affected countries in Africa, formal and informal rural institutions are affected by the loss of human capital resulting from the rising scale of staff morbidity and mortality. Last not least, the operations of Ministries of Agriculture (MoA) are severely affected. Their capacity is undermined by: reduced staff productivity; increasing ministerial expenditures due to costs related to HIV/AIDS absenteeism, medical and burial costs, recruitment and replacement costs, increased staff turnover; and a gradual erosion of MoA knowledge, skills and experience. Moreover, HIV/AIDS disrupts MoA operations through its impact on the agricultural extension service. When agricultural extension workers fall sick or die, rural communities lose access to extension services at a time when, due to the AIDS-crisis, they need them most.



HIV/AIDS worsens the situation of rural women

HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects rural women who contribute to over 50% of food production in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia and carry out the most labour intensive farming activities. And yet, deep-rooted gender inequalities in access to land, credit, employment, education and information render women more vulnerable to the harmful effects of the epidemic.

Poor female-headed households caring for AIDS orphans in rural contexts have very few coping capacities to re-establish self-sustaining livelihoods. The responses adopted, such as the sale of productive assets and the removal of children from school, increase household poverty in the long term, and thus exacerbate the “feminisation” of poverty in the affected regions.

THE COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

Agricultural and rural development can reduce HIV susceptibility and vulnerability, because its comparative advantage, as a productive sector, relates to the four main strategies in the fight against HIV/AIDS:

- **Prevention:** through its established and far-reaching extension work system, rural development can spread prevention messages and engage in the social marketing of condoms.
- **Care:** Food and nutrition security are preconditions for the effective provision of people living with HIV or AIDS. Only rural development can assure these two.
- **Treatment:** A good nutrition and health status is a prerequisite for many types of therapy. When extension services and health services establish cooperation and referral systems, the access of rural populations to treatment services can be markedly enhanced.
- **Mitigation:** As a productive sector and a field where many strands of social and economic development come together, rural development has

an important role to play in impact mitigation. Often, HIV/AIDS is just one more in a series of social and natural crises hitting communities in under-developed regions. Rural development aims to strengthen communities’ coping capacities through capacity development and appropriate on- and off-farm innovations delivered by effective service providers within a coordinated approach towards sustainable development.

THE RISK SCENARIOS

For each sector, there are specific HIV/AIDS-related risk factors that development experts need to be aware of. For the rural development sector, the following need to be considered:

Food insecurity increases risk: Food insecurity and increasing poverty are ‘fuelling factors’ in the spread of HIV/AIDS, because they increase both susceptibility and vulnerability and might lead to labour migration and the need to engage in transactional sex as survival strategies.

Ministry of Agriculture staff is at risk: Certain categories of Ministry of Agriculture staff may be particularly vulnerable to HIV infection, e.g. employees who need to travel extensively, such as agricultural extension workers, high-level professionals and management staff as well as support staff, such as drivers.

Market-orientation increases risk: Increased agricultural output and the commercialising of agricultural products on markets bring more people closer together, thus increasing their susceptibility for HIV/AIDS infection.

Untargeted agricultural extension services: If they are not explicitly targeted, poorer, AIDS-affected households are less likely to demand and receive relevant help from agricultural extension services.

Innovations are missing: Agricultural research tends to overlook the effects of HIV/AIDS – perhaps due to low return expectations from poor farm households. Overall, the documentation of promising and failed practises, which is a precondition for further learning, is a severely neglected domain.



THE GTZ APPROACH

GTZ projects and programmes in the rural development sector have developed a range of approaches to addressing HIV/AIDS. In the following, these will be listed, together with the responsible experts, who can be contacted for more detailed information.

Seeking information about the partner country's national HIV/AIDS strategy and particularly the strategies that have been formulated for the rural development sector. In view of the **"Three ones"-principle** (one strategy, one coordinating body, one M&E system), it is important that all sectoral HIV/AIDS-related activities are integrated in your partner country's National HIV/AIDS Strategy.

Advising Ministries of Agriculture on HIV/AIDS policies, including situation analysis, recommendations for implementation strategies, impact assessment and development of national strategies and action plans for the fight against HIV/AIDS. [GTZ-supported Mpumalanga Rural development Programme, Nelspruit/South Africa; contact: Joseph Grimm, e-mail: gtz@gtz-mrdp.co.za]



Addressing gender inequalities in agricultural programmes: Agricultural development strategies can actively promote gender equality, by assuring that women have access to and control over productive resources, including equal inheritance rights to land when their partner dies, credit, knowledge, agricultural

inputs and technology. Development cooperation must take into account the implications for the composition of rural households as beneficiaries might be destitute families, child- or elderly-headed households.

Promoting/revitalizing research into agricultural diversification, agro-biodiversity and labour-saving technologies: Agricultural diversification plays a critical role in providing and enhancing a balanced nutritional supply among poor rural families. Agro-biodiversity and the associated indigenous knowledge represent locally available capacities with enormous potential for rural food and livelihood security. Research into labour-saving technologies can yield crucial mitigation strategies for households that must spend more time on caring for the sick or are headed by children or grandparents. [GTZ-supported Sectoral Project "People and Biodiversity in Rural Areas", contact: A. von Lossau, Eschborn, e-mail: annette.lossau-von@gtz.de]

Supporting the coordination of services and the forging of strong local partnerships among organisations with complementary skills spanning agriculture, health, education and social protection. Here, GTZ offers a network of expertise (Sector Network Rural Development, Africa - SNRD), where lessons learned, difficulties and new experiences are discussed, analysed and made available to other clients and service providers in the region. [Contact: K. Pilgram, Eschborn, e-mail: klaus.pilgram@gtz.de]

Supporting HIV/AIDS workplace programmes: Partner institutions at all levels (ministry, regional and district departments) can be supported in developing and implementing HIV/AIDS workplace programmes. Prevention and information campaigns, voluntary counselling and testing and care of their employees, will make rural development programmes more sustainable because they protect human resources against HIV-infection, HIV/AIDS-related stigma and the suffering caused by untreated opportunistic infections or AIDS. [Contact: E. Girrbaach, Eschborn, e-mail: elisabeth.girrbaach@gtz.de]



Training of key players in advocacy: Strengthening the organisational, advocacy- and fundraising capacities of NGO, CBO and private sector organisations that deliver services at the community level. [contact: M. Braun, Eschborn, e-mail: paul-mathias.braun@gtz.de]

Sensitising the rural population on prevention and care strategies, and taking a stand against HIV/AIDS-related stigma, through locally adapted methods (peer groups, drama, and local radio). Supporting villages in organizing programmes for children and youth; supporting and proactively involving organisations of PLWHA. [GTZ-supported PRODER, Mozambique; contact: N. Eulerling, e-mail: norbert.eulerling@gtz.de]

RECOMMENDED READING

The following texts have been selected as recommended reading because they give up-to-date, focused and readable insights into the issues discussed above. The pdf-files, as well as a CD-Rom with more literature on HIV/AIDS and rural development, can be ordered from: carmen.perez-samaniego@gtz.de

Pilgram, K. (2004) **Mainstreaming the mitigation of HIV/AIDS impacts through agricultural and rural development in Africa.** GTZ product, GTZ Intranet

Description of a general participatory approach for prevention, care and mitigation measures in rural development.

African Conservation Tillage (ACT) Network, Information Series No. 9: **Mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS by labour saving technologies**, 2004, 4 pages

This short, but intense paper describes the role of conservation agriculture technologies in HIV/AIDS-mitigation, with practical examples.

Müller, T. R. (2004) **HIV/AIDS and agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa**, AWLAE Series No 1, 2004, Wageningen; 58 pages with annotated bibliography.

The overarching issue that emerges from this paper is the importance of gender attributes to adequately, understand and address HIV/AIDS impact on agricultural production systems.

Jayne, T., Villareal, M., Pingali, P., Hemrich, G. (2004) **Interactions between the Agricultural sector and the HIV/AIDS Pandemic:** Implications for Agricultural Policy, FAO-ESA Working Paper No. 04-06, March 2004

This paper considers how the design of agricultural policies and programmes might be modified to better achieve policy objectives in the context of severe HIV epidemics and underscores the central role of agricultural policy in mitigating the spread and impacts of the epidemic.

CONTACTS AND NETWORKS

To facilitate the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS, each sector has appointed HIV/AIDS focal points, who can advise and support their colleagues with regard to HIV/AIDS mainstreaming. At GTZ headquarters, these are

Klaus Pilgram, klaus.pilgram@gtz.de

Focal point HIV/AIDS, GTZ Division 4500, and

Robert Kressirer, robert.kressirer@gtz.de

Focal point HIV/AIDS at priority area: Rural Development & Natural Resources Management

At the level of the Sector Network Rural Development, Africa (SNRD), each of the 5 work groups has one HIV/AIDS focal person, who can be contacted via Klaus Pilgram.

The responsible person in the AIDS team at head office is

Julia Katzan, julia.katzan@gtz.de

Photos: WHO/P.Virot, Guley Ulutuncok.
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