HIV and AIDS Impact on Agriculture and Food Security in Lesotho

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Family Size and Composition

- HIV & AIDS infection reduces family size
- Household structure changes leaving the young and the old looking after the household
- More dependant orphans still at primary and early secondary were left behind
- 20-29 and 30-39 age groups countrywide are more vulnerable with 62.4% married
55.2% of the respondents reported living with HIV;
38% had died of AIDS related diseases;
Of the PLWA’s, 48% were males, 52% females;
79% of the ill stayed at home during their illness which meant more caring which was provided by women;
HH Labour and HIV and AIDS

- Hh labour for agricultural production and food security gets adversely affected.
- 26% of respondents used hired labour, 11% hired it for agricultural activities. 14.8% saw hired labour as eroding hh budget.
- Community expectations of reciprocity hinder exploitation of traditional work parties by affected hh.
HIV and AIDS Effects on Agric

- Reduction of productive labour adversely affects agricultural production;
- Hh farming decisions regarding agricultural production were also affected;
- Crop yields & livestock numbers declined during and after illness since they were sold to cover medical and hospitalisation costs. Some got lost to thieves.
- Hh assets got sold to meet the costs of caring and some got stolen
Safety nets and social capital

- Social safety nets were used by HIV affected hh.
- Informal safety nets were more exploitable than formal ones. But Formal ones tended to be more trusted for lack of stigmatisation.
- 51\% of respondents reported to be non-members of the HIV & AIDS support groups though they were aware of their existence.
Affected HH responses to HIV & AIDS

- Caring negatively affects agricultural production and food security by taking away required resources;
- Hh provided for their own members at all times. During illness, they depended more on donations and gifts to supplement their own supplies.
HH Consumption and Expenditure

- Hh expenditure on agricultural inputs for crop and animal production generally decreased during illness of HIV-infected member especially in the case of breadwinners;
- Most hh that had no arable land had to purchase their food supplies and they spent money on basic foodstuffs which were not necessarily nutritious;
- 49% of the respondents spent money on informal burial associations.
For most of hh more money was spent on medication and hospitalisation, than basic foodstuffs and other direct consumption.

Spending on investment was minimal among those hh that could still afford. Others were poor and spent very little on education and none on savings and long-term investments.
HH Food and Nutrition Security

- Factors that contributed towards hh food insecurity included: low educational levels of members; high unemployment rate; illness and death of breadwinners; and low unsustainable agricultural production.
- Food security is a general problem in Lesotho and not only for hh that were studied. However HIV and AIDS worsened their situation;
HH Food & Nutrition Security cont.

- There was very little nutritious food variety taken, which left hh members vulnerable to infection by other diseases and those infected with less resistance;
- Females sacrificed food for other hh members especially the HIV-infected.
Conclusions

- HIV and AIDS affected agriculture production by:
  - diverting hh income into caring of the HIV infected members; removing active labour force; increasing the orphans and their old guardians;
  - Food resources get depleted in the performance of burial rituals and rites of passage and hence increased food insecurity;
Conclusions cont.

- Follow-up of the studied hh and a survey with a larger sample.
- Lesotho Government has assisted school-going children through school feeding programme and Free Primary Education. Efforts should continue to ensure that the feeding is of quality nutrition.
Policy Implications

- Improvements and introduction of new agricultural technology
- Eradication of famine and poverty
- Empowering women and redressing gender inequality
- Supervision and education of communities by extension farm workers
- Strengthening household coping capacity
- Strengthening of outreach programmes