



HIV/AIDS and Food and Nutrition Security: From Evidence to Action

A Call for Proposals

Submission Deadline: 19 June 2005

Invitation to Submit Research Concept Notes

RENEWAL is pleased to invite interested parties to submit Concept Notes for action research projects on the theme of HIV/AIDS and food and nutrition security in Zambia, Malawi, South Africa, Uganda and Kenya. The selection of Concept Notes and full Proposals is a competitive process involving rigorous peer review. This Call details all aspects of the process and highlights the major research themes that will be considered for funding.

Overview of RENEWAL

The Regional Network on HIV/AIDS, Rural Livelihoods and Food Security (RENEWAL) was launched in 2001. Facilitated by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and with support from several donors, RENEWAL is a growing regional network-of-networks (www.ifpri.org/renewal). Currently active in Malawi, Uganda, Zambia and South Africa - with Kenya joining in 2005 -RENEWAL comprises national networks of food and nutrition-relevant organizations (public, private and non-governmental) together with partners in AIDS and public health. RENEWAL aims to enhance understanding of the worsening interactions between HIV/AIDS and food and nutrition security, and to facilitate a comprehensive response to these interactions. The core pillars are locally-prioritized action research, capacity strengthening and policy communications. RENEWAL believes that the process of developing networks is both a means and an end. Impact may be enhanced and sustained when locally-prioritized research is linked with capacity strengthening and policy communications.

Action Research

RENEWAL currently has seven action research projects in the field in Zambia, Malawi and South Africa (with one recently completed), most of which will be concluded this year. These projects reflect national research priorities established within each country, thus ensuring the policy relevance and uptake of the outcomes within participating countries. The next step in the RENEWAL process is to focus more proactively on operations research – that is, research that moves from the focus on interactions between HIV/AIDS and food security to an understanding of how to effectively improve the “HIV-responsiveness” of food and nutrition-relevant policies and programs. Proposals should be able to demonstrate their potential to link the research process and outcomes to policy and programming.

Research Themes and Priorities

The themes in this Call for Proposals (CFP) reflect the findings of RENEWAL research projects in partner countries, a recent IFPRI review of more than 150 studies¹, and the broad themes that have emerged from the recent International Conference on HIV/AIDS and Food and Nutrition Security, organized by IFPRI and held in Durban, South Africa, 14-16 April. When contextualized within the reality of high HIV prevalence rates and AIDS-related mortality within eastern and southern Africa, the main thrust of the findings suggests the most pressing need is to translate targeted research into policy and programming. This next round of RENEWAL research must therefore be more focused on operational research and show explicitly how the research findings will help government and other change agents devise HIV-responsive policies and intervention programs.

Theme 1: Policy and program experiments

Given the policy orientation of the research in this CFP, the piloting of new approaches or ‘policy experiments’ will be considered. Based on current knowledge, proposals should identify a particular research finding(s) and consider ways in which existing policy might be modified to respond to the new reality evidenced by the research. By applying the HIV/AIDS lens to a policy in relation to a specific set of circumstances within the context of new knowledge, the project can then design programs and introduce interventions in line with the HIV/AIDS-sensitive policy, and monitor and evaluate the outcomes. This kind of project will provide substantive evidence of how to link research outcomes with policy reform and programming – a central aim of RENEWAL. The proposal may be at micro or macro scales, or may combine both scales.

Theme 2: HIV spread and food insecurity

This is a theme that was originally prioritized in earlier rounds of RENEWAL studies, but did not generate many proposals at that time. It remains a priority. What is the role of poverty and food insecurity in driving risky behaviors? How prevalent is transactional sex, and how linked is it to food poverty? Linked to theme 6, is food insecurity a major determinant of migration, and are migrants at heightened risk of being exposed to HIV? Can efforts aimed at enhancing food security and livelihood options of susceptible groups make a cost-effective and timely contribution to preventing the spread of HIV? Can we identify options that are economically and environmentally sustainable, that make use of local opportunities?

Theme 3: Nutrition security and HIV/AIDS

In addition to food security, nutrition security² has emerged as an important dimension in the prevention, care, treatment and mitigation of HIV/AIDS. A focus on nutrition security can help reveal opportunities for effectively linking health services with food and nutrition policy in the context of HIV/AIDS. Current research indicates that good nutrition is important to the efficacy of medical interventions as it is to peoples’ ability to resist and mitigate infection. There is currently a strong focus on *clinical* nutrition and HIV/AIDS in the context of issues such as infant feeding, and the efficacy of antiretroviral therapy among

¹ Gillespie, Stuart and Suneetha Kadiyala. 2005. HIV/AIDS and Food and Nutrition Security: From Evidence to Action. Food Policy Review 7. IFPRI: Washington, D.C.

² *Food security* here is concerned with physical and economic access to food of sufficient quality and quantity. Food security is necessary, but of itself insufficient, for ensuring nutrition security. *Nutrition security* is achieved for a household when secure access to food is coupled with a sanitary environment, adequate health services, and adequate care to ensure a healthy life for all household members.

malnourished populations³. This relates primarily to interactions within the individual body and their implications for health policy. But there have been few attempts to link nutritionists with agricultural economists and/or program managers to investigate the broader issue of community-level nutrition security and broader food policy and programming in the context of HIV/AIDS. Many of the food responses to date have revolved around delivery of food aid. What other longer term options exist for ensuring nutrition security within affected communities? What does nutrition “through an HIV lens” look like, and what are the operational implications of rethinking nutrition from this perspective? Does nutrition offer an entry point for forging better links between public health and agricultural responses to AIDS?

Theme 4: HIV/AIDS, multiple stresses and overlapping vulnerabilities

How does HIV/AIDS -- as a source of vulnerability to food and nutrition insecurity -- intersect and interact with other sources of vulnerability? How to go beyond identifying who is “vulnerable” to better understand *why* households are, or why they become, vulnerable? Conversely, why are certain households more resilient than others in similar situations? What are the implications of this for vulnerability monitoring systems? How to develop approaches to identify options for households to reduce their vulnerability? What are the implications of overlapping vulnerabilities for approaches to addressing HIV/AIDS and food and nutrition insecurity?

Theme 5: Community-driven responses

The Durban conference emphasized the highly differentiated impacts of HIV/AIDS on communities and the variety of attempts made by communities to improve their resistance to HIV spread and their resilience to HIV/AIDS impacts. Most community-level responses however suffer from two important limitations: first, they are often small-scale (in the face of an epidemic which continues to be large-scale), and second, they are rarely well evaluated. However, a significant body of literature has recently emerged on approaches to community-driven development (CDD) and its scaling up.⁴ In the context of high HIV prevalences, and associated stigma, are community-driven approaches themselves (with their advantages of local knowledge) an untapped resource for addressing the HIV/AIDS—food insecurity nexus? Proposals under this theme should identify a range of community-driven initiatives and study the institutional, financial and programmatic aspects, with the aim of documenting what works and how it works. Evidence from the field suggests the existence of latent community-level capacity e.g. unemployed or underemployed youth. Can such resources be applied to developing appropriate community responses to AIDS, thus obviating personnel constraints experienced in scaling up vertical programs? What scope is there for new approaches to pooling labor and resources in affected communities? Can win-win approaches be found? Can communities find ways to protect the entitlements of affected households, enabling them to exchange on fair terms what they have (e.g. land they can no longer cultivate) for what they need (e.g. food)?

Theme 6: Migration, mobility and urban-rural links

Research has established that migrant populations have higher rates of HIV/AIDS compared to less mobile groups. Yet all types of migration in the region are on the rise, including local rural-rural

³ See statement from the WHO Consultation on Nutrition and HIV/AIDS in Africa, 10-13 April, Durban, South Africa http://www.sahims.net/archive/specialfocus/specialcoverage_who_consultation2.htm

⁴ Gillespie, Stuart 2004 Scaling Up Community Driven Development: A Synthesis of Experience. Food Consumption and Nutrition Division Discussion Paper No 181, IFPRI Washington DC.

migration, rural-urban migration and cross-border migration.⁵ The implications and impacts of increasing mobility for the prevention and mitigation of HIV/AIDS are felt from individual, household and community levels, through to the regional scale. Proposals developed under this theme should examine existing migration policy through an HIV/AIDS lens and develop possible policy reforms that help to address the specific circumstances and needs of migrant and mobile populations. What are the unique risks facing mobile populations and how can these be controlled or mitigated without undermining the very livelihoods that migration strategies often promote? How do national and regional development policies take cognizance of migration and HIV/AIDS in an integrated manner?

Urban-rural links are fundamental to food and nutrition security in the region. Research in both Southern and Eastern Africa points to the increase in the movement of people between rural and urban centres and the importance of rural food production for urban food supply.⁶ In most situations, the bulk of food available and consumed in the city is produced in rural areas. HIV/AIDS may thus have a direct negative impact on urban food security, most notably through the consequent reduction in physical capital and production of food in rural areas, and the increased burden of dependence of people living with HIV/AIDS on both urban and rural social units (precipitating a deepening of poverty at the household level). To what extent is HIV/AIDS in the rural areas impacting the production and transfer of food to urban households? What policy changes can be made in the rural and urban areas that could help offset household vulnerability and food insecurity?

Theme 7: Developing methodologies and indicators

The great variety of methodologies applied to HIV/AIDS research is reflected in the diversity of studies on the subject.⁷ However, this methodological *pot pourri* limits the opportunity for cross-study comparisons, both within and between countries, making it difficult to generalize findings and devise widely applicable policy and program interventions. What is now required is the establishment of a set of universal monitoring indicators for tracking HIV/AIDS interactions/impacts at a variety of scales. With indicators and monitoring systems in place, it will be possible to track the effectiveness of policy and intervention programs in a positive feedback system of management. The development and implementation of effective monitoring indicators will make a substantive contribution to ongoing efforts to develop best practices and scale up operations nationally and within the region. Proposals under this theme must be able to demonstrate that the universal monitoring indicators to be developed/tested are sensitive to contextual diversity which is characteristic of both communities and impacts and interventions.

Cross-cutting priorities

In any of the above themes, applicants are encouraged to consider ways of capturing the *dynamics* of the interactions between HIV/AIDS and food and nutrition security impact, and of relating their work to the temporal aspects of the epidemic. Longitudinal studies at household and especially community levels are especially encouraged. Much past evidence is based on cross-sectional or case study research which is often unable to capture the dynamic and complex nature of the interactions between HIV/AIDS and food and nutrition security. Longitudinal studies offer the advantage of capturing local dynamics and impacts

⁵ Southern African Migration Project (SAMP), Southern African Research Centre (SARC), Queen's University, Kingston, Canada

⁶ Owuor, S. O. 2004. *Urban households ruralizing* their livelihoods: The changing nature of urban-rural linkages in an East African town. Paper presented at the "African Studies Centre Seminar Series". Leiden, 16 December 2004; Frayne, B. 2004. Migration and Urban Survival Strategies in Windhoek, Namibia, *Geoforum*, 35 (2004): 489-505.

⁷ Gillespie, Stuart and Suneetha Kadiyala. 2005. HIV/AIDS and Food and Nutrition Security: From Evidence to Action. Food Policy Review 7. IFPRI: Washington, D.C.

in a variety of contexts and situations. Of particular interest are studies that aim to reveal ways in which households and communities are strengthening their own resistance and resilience through innovative responses (see Theme 5).

Other cross-cutting priorities include the situation of orphans and vulnerable children, as well as the gender dimension of the above themes.

Eligibility Criteria

Submissions under this CFP must meet the following minimum criteria to be considered:

- Concept notes must reflect one or more of the broad research themes outlined above (combinations of themes are acceptable);
- The research must be conducted in one or more of RENEWAL's core countries: Zambia, Malawi, South Africa, Uganda or Kenya;
- Proposals must involve substantial contribution from one or more local researchers/organizations. Partnerships are encouraged, to access necessary skills and experience and to enhance local and national capacity. Teams with multidisciplinary backgrounds are also encouraged to apply;
- Proposed work should adhere to accepted ethical norms;
- The methods proposed should be rigorous and appropriate to the context and the issues;
- A clear link should be described between the work proposed and the impacts expected;
- Proposals should show how progress towards those impacts would be monitored and evaluated;
- The total budget request to RENEWAL must not exceed the funding available for each country, unless additional funding from other sources can be demonstrated. In general, RENEWAL seeks to add value to existing or recently concluded initiatives and such co-funding is encouraged. We have funds available for 1-2 studies per country (estimated at US\$45,000 per study) and one multi-country study, for which the ceiling is higher at US\$110,000.
- Salaries of international researchers cannot be covered directly from RENEWAL country-level research funds – such funds cover local field costs and the salaries of local field researchers.

Submission of Concept Notes and Deadlines

Interested parties should identify the theme (or themes) for which they would like to submit a concept note. The guidelines are as follows:

Title:	Must clearly represent the thematic and geographic area of enquiry
Overview of the Research:	Three page maximum providing a clear statement of the research problem, objective(s), methodology, timeframe, expected outcomes and linkages with policy and programming
Collaborators:	Full details of the organization(s) and personnel involved in the research
Budget:	Global budget estimate in US dollars
Submission Deadline:	<u>19 June 2005</u> . Please send (ideally by email) the concept note to your country's National Coordinator, with a copy to the Regional Coordinator (see contact details below).

Selection Process and Regional Workshop

Initial pre-screening of concept notes using the eligibility criteria will be done jointly by the relevant country's National Coordinator and the Regional Coordinator, starting 20 June. Concept notes that are regional in scope will be reviewed by the Regional Coordinator. This will be followed in late June by a more detailed screening by RENEWAL's National Advisory Panels (NAPs), along with the National and Regional Coordinator (using external experts as needed). One author of the highest-ranked concept notes will then be invited to present their proposed research projects at the forthcoming RENEWAL Regional Workshop to be held in Nairobi from 28-30 July 2005. This will mark the beginning of the peer review process. These concept notes will then be reviewed by a regional selection committee, including the Regional Coordinator, National Coordinators, NAP Chairperson, IFPRI plus selected external reviewers for a final decision. Full proposals will then be developed, taking into account comments made by this committee. It is expected that contracts with successful parties will be drawn up by October 2005.

Capacity Strengthening

RENEWAL recognizes that many organizations have innovative research ideas but the capacity to translate them into a high quality proposal may be limited. Through the ISNAR division of IFPRI in Addis Ababa, which has considerable experience in capacity development practice, RENEWAL will provide hands-on technical assistance in the development of action research proposals to organizations that require this kind of support. Our facility includes training through real-life activities, including the development of RENEWAL proposals of sufficient quality to withstand international peer review (a process that all RENEWAL proposals will pass through).

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