

RENEWAL: The Regional Network on AIDS, Livelihoods, and Food Security

Context

As the multifaceted impact of the AIDS epidemic continues to intensify across southern and eastern Africa, dangerous new interactions are developing that threaten the trajectory of national social and economic development. As regions experiencing a prolonged livelihoods crisis, with worsening human development indicators, the bi-directional relationship between food insecurity and the epidemic within this crisis needs to be recognized. Not only does HIV coexist with widespread food insecurity and economic inequality in time and space, it interacts with these conditions. HIV incidence rates are fuelled by food insecurity while subsequent AIDS-related morbidity and mortality, in turn, further exacerbate food insecurity. This emphasizes the multipronged rationale for linking food and nutrition security with AIDS programming.

Taking a livelihoods approach, RENEWAL situates the determinants and impacts of the HIV epidemic and the responses to the disease within the frameworks of people's lives, as indicated in the figure on the right. Starting from the top, the macro context – its conditions, shocks and trends – will to a certain extent determine both the susceptibility and vulnerability of different livelihood systems to HIV and AIDS. The risks that people face of contracting HIV will be governed partly by the *susceptibility* of the livelihood system upon which they depend, while the downstream effects of HIV on assets and institutions will be conditioned by the *vulnerability* of the system. While agriculture is an important source of livelihood for the majority of people affected globally by the HIV epidemic, urban populations are disproportionately infected within a context of increasing mobility and urbanization. After HIV has entered a household or community, the type and severity of its impacts on assets – mediated by various institutional structures, processes and programs – will determine the type of strategies that the household adopts.

These strategies will differ, among other ways, in terms of the *resistance* to HIV or *resilience* to AIDS that they confer upon the household. Such strategies and responses in turn lead to various outcomes – nutrition and food security being among them – and these outcomes will themselves condition future susceptibility and vulnerability. The cycle is therefore dynamic and iterative – in the negative, a potentially vicious cycle or downward spiral; in the positive, a virtuous cycle or pathway out of poverty.

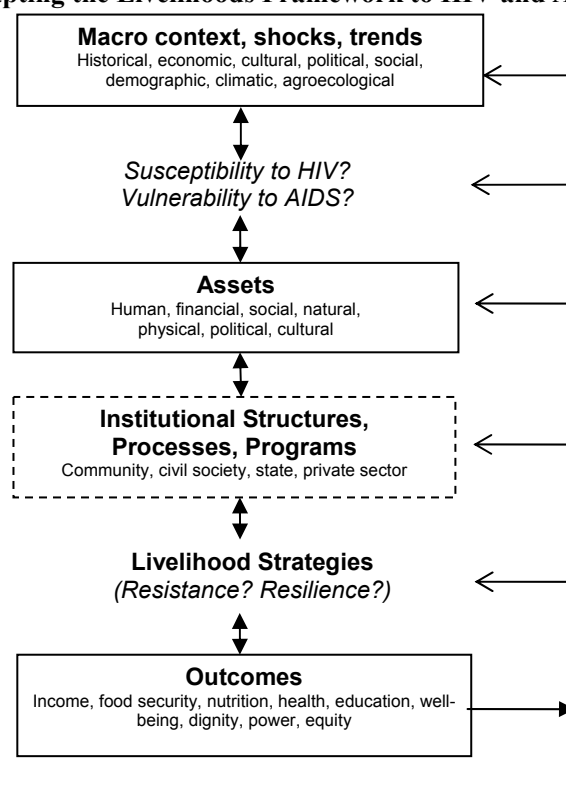
Key Gaps in Research and Action

Although the complexity and the context-specificity of interactions between HIV/AIDS and food and nutrition security presents challenges for research in this area, the effective incorporation of

the dynamics of HIV and AIDS in food and nutrition theory and practice continues to be constrained by three generic gaps:

- Gaps in understanding the dynamic interactions**
 - Increase focus on the contribution of food and nutrition-security outcomes to the spread of HIV
 - Longitudinal, multidisciplinary studies to capture dynamics of impact and response
- Gaps in understanding how to respond**
 - Challenge of scaling up in contextual diversity
 - Best practices ~ need for solid M&E
 - AIDS is one variable on the “vulnerability map”
- Limited capacity to respond**
 - Stress on household livelihoods, assets, knowledge ~ reduces local capacity
 - Fear, stigma, belief systems ~ reduces response
 - Professional cadre ~ reduced capacity in society
 - Vertical sectoral response ~ need for sectoral integration

Adapting the Livelihoods Framework to HIV and AIDS



Goals, Objectives, and Scope

With support from several donors, RENEWAL is a regional “network-of-networks” operating across southern and eastern Africa. Currently active in Malawi, Uganda, Zambia, South Africa, and Kenya, RENEWAL comprises national networks of food and nutrition-relevant organizations together with partners in AIDS and public health. RENEWAL’s agenda is to enhance understanding of the intersections and links between HIV/AIDS and food and nutrition security (the “HIV-Hunger nexus”), and to inform comprehensive responses.

Its operational ethos is that the process of developing networks is both a means and an end. Networking is seen as necessary to create channels for identifying critical socioeconomic challenges, for determining appropriate investigation, and for sustaining communication and information flows during research and discussions on potential and actual utilization of research. The set of overlapping networks is the basis on which scientists and policymakers mutually engage and influence each other and hence, an underlying source of evidence-based interventions. As such, the objectives are

- To reduce critical gaps in understanding how livelihoods, particularly those deriving from agriculture, a) contribute to the further spread of HIV (susceptibility), and b) are affected by HIV and AIDS (vulnerability)
- To generate new policy-relevant knowledge on how households and communities may strengthen both their resistance to HIV transmission and their resilience to the impacts of AIDS
- To enable relevant institutions (in particular, governments) to generate and to act upon realistic priorities for responding to the interactions of AIDS epidemics with food and nutrition insecurity

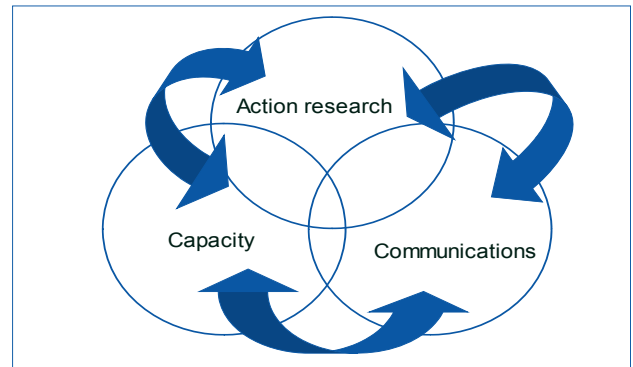
RENEWAL’s History

EXPLORATORY PHASE – IFPRI works on AIDS and food security	2000
RENEWAL launched in Malawi	2001-2
Network-building, think tanks, workshops	2003
Zambia and South Africa join RENEWAL	
RENEWAL 1 – unraveling interactions. Eight studies initiated.	2004
National advisory panels formed in Malawi, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia	2005-6
Evidence base developed and published	
Durban Conference and book published	
Kenya joins RENEWAL	
RENEWAL 2 – interactions and responses. Nine new studies initiated.	
Toronto International AIDS Conference	
RENEWAL 3 – toward sustainable livelihoods. Four-year plan.	2007-10
Joint Learning Initiative on Children and AIDS	
Mexico International AIDS Conference	
Vienna International AIDS Conference	

Strategy

In terms of overall strategic approach, RENEWAL pivots on the three interacting processes of locally-prioritized action research, capacity strengthening, and policy communications – for two

primary reasons: enhancing impact and underpinning sustainability through strengthened capacity. In terms of enhanced impact, RENEWAL explicitly recognizes that there are synergies between research, capacity, and communications that, if exploited, may ultimately enhance and sustain impact:



Action Research ~ aims to inform policy needs by working with network partners, relevant policymakers, practitioners, and civil society organizations to generate locally-relevant priorities for action and for research. As an example of key research, studies undertaken during RENEWAL 1, 2, and 3 are summarized in the boxes.

RENEWAL 1: 2004-2005

Title	Country	Partners
The Effects of HIV/AIDS on Agricultural Production Systems in Zambia: A Restudy	Zambia	CARE International Zambia
HIV/AIDS and Community Resilience in Zambia: Understanding the implications for Food and Nutrition Policies		Farming Systems Association, Ministry of Agriculture, Michigan State University, IFPRI
HIV/AIDS, Food and Nutrition Security in South Africa: Understanding and responding	South Africa	University of Western Cape, IFPRI
Promoting agricultural innovation in AIDS-affected rural households in KwaZulu-Natal		Farmer Support Group, KwaZulu-Natal; Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam
HIV/AIDS, land reform, and land-based livelihoods in three provinces in South Africa		Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa
HIV/AIDS, rural livelihoods, and depeasantisation in Malawi: Finding pathways to social recovery	Malawi	CARE International Malawi, Center of Social Research, Malawi, University of Leiden, Netherlands
Impact of HIV/AIDS on inter- and intra-generational information flows among smallholder farmers		Chancellor College, Malawi, ICRISAT-Malawi, Overseas Development Institute, U.K.
Farming Systems and Resilience to HIV/AIDS in Malawi		Institute for Policy Research and Analysis for Dialogue, Blantyre, Chancellor College

Capacity Strengthening ~ is multidimensional, stressing the importance of empowering individuals and institutions through thematic and technical knowledge enhancement and experience. This refers to the capacity to do high-quality research and to make effective use of research through targeted advocacy and communications.

Policy Communications ~ *in-reach* approach of forging links between researchers and practitioners is central to successful *outreach*. As such, policymakers, civil society, and community-based groups are not simply targets of post-research results dissemination; they are at the table from the beginning and in constant communication, through the national networks, with the ongoing research and emerging results. This is partly achieved through National Advisory Panels and through

strategic engagement with key stakeholders throughout the life-cycle of research projects.

RENEWAL 2: 2005-2007

Title	Country	Partners
Dealing with vulnerability: parents efforts to secure the future of their children	Regional	University of Cape Town, University of KwaZulu Natal, IFPRI, Southern Africa Vulnerability Initiative (SAVI)
Tuberculosis: An Additional Tipping Stress to Poor Households in South Africa and Zambia		Stellenbosch University, South Africa; University Teaching Hospital, Zambia
HIV/AIDS, Food and Nutrition Security and Urban-Rural Linkages in Southern Africa		IFPRI, RENEWAL, Southern African Migration Project
Impact of a Nutrition Program for AIDS Patients and its role in their Coping Strategies	Kenya	Moi University, AMPATH, IFPRI, Columbia University, U.S.A., World Bank
HIV/AIDS Mortality and the Role of Woodland Resources in the Maintenance of Household Food Security in Rural Limpopo Province	South Africa	SUNRAE Program; University of Witwatersrand, University of Colorado at Boulder, USA
Gender Issues in HIV/AIDS and Food/Nutrition security among Internally Displaced People's Camps in Uganda	Uganda	Makerere University
Land Ownership and Food Security in Uganda: A Study of the Use and Control of Land Among Households of Women Affected by HIV/AIDS in Four Districts		Makerere University and National Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS
The Effects on Rural Livelihoods of Increasing Rates of HIV/AIDS-related Illness and Death in Zomba South, Malawi	Malawi	Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Bunda College of Agriculture, Zomba
Stigma/Discrimination within the HIV/AIDS, Food Security and Gender Context in Ethiopia	Ethiopia	Family Health International RENEWAL

Structure of RENEWAL

The structure of RENEWAL is grounded in regional and structural processes. The architecture comprises a regional network coordinated by a regional coordinator based in Johannesburg. This network is constituted of a variety of regional entities and national networks, each coordinated by a network coordinator (NC) in five hub countries. The NCs in turn liaise with National Advisory Panels (NAPs), researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders. The NAP is a non-statutory, multisectoral advisory body, whose primary purpose is to guide and endorse RENEWAL activities at the national level, ensuring synergy between RENEWAL's regional priorities and activities and national needs and objectives. The NAP is a crucial link between research and policy-making. It is through representation on the NAP – along with the recommendations from periodic stakeholder workshops and consultations – that the major stakeholders and other relevant actors can both bring research priorities to the table and feed research findings into the policy arena.

RENEWAL 3 (2007-2010)

The current phase of RENEWAL has built directly on what was learned during the network's earlier work and more broadly in the region and beyond. As HIV and AIDS cannot be effectively addressed through biomedical interventions alone, RENEWAL has continued to strengthen its focus on *protecting livelihoods and ensuring food and nutrition security in the context of AIDS and poverty*. As such the

focus compliments that of the dominant biomedical and psychosocial approaches unfolding in these regions.

In addition to the strategies of capacity strengthening and policy communications, the action research component of RENEWAL 3 has focused on the following three key themes:

1. AIDS, agriculture, and livelihood security
2. AIDS, community resilience, and social protection
3. AIDS and nutrition security

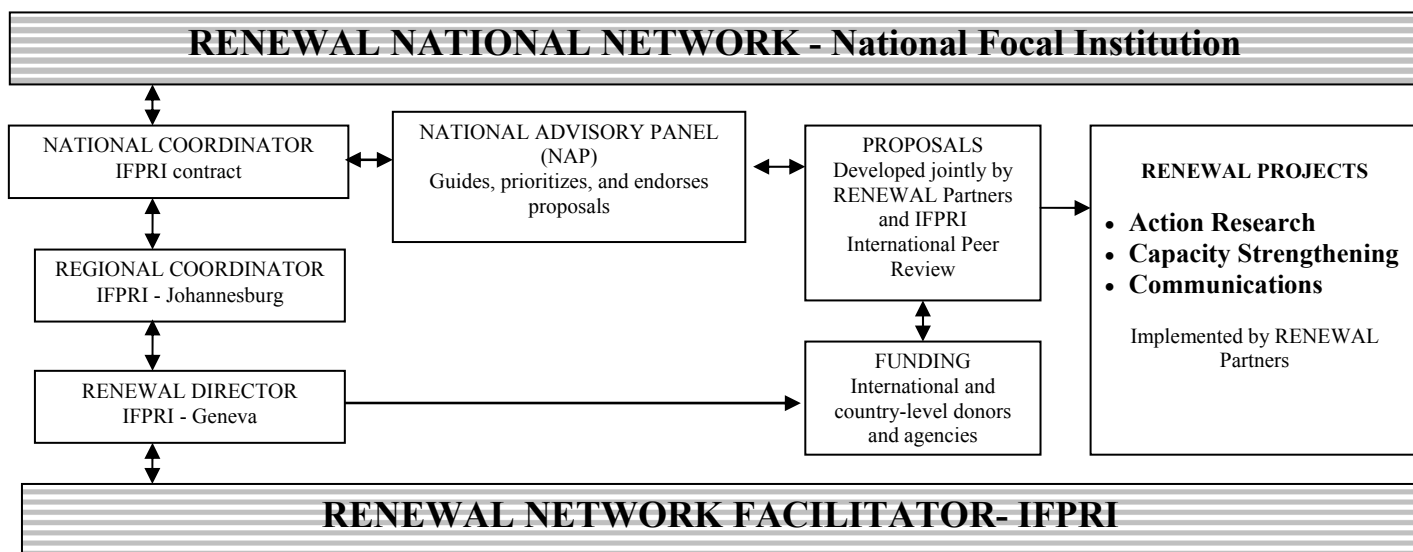
These research themes represent a progressive shift in emphasis into more operationally-relevant research – a logical progression from RENEWAL's early focus on mapping interactions and impacts. And now, in addition to mainstreaming an understanding of HIV and AIDS into agriculture, food, and nutrition policy and programming, RENEWAL is increasingly engaging directly with the international AIDS community – in this case to demonstrate the relevance of mainstreaming food and nutrition considerations within a truly broad-based response to the epidemic.

RENEWAL 3: 2007-2010

Title	Country	Partners
Poverty, HIV, and AIDS: Vulnerability and impact in Southern Africa	Southern Africa	HEARD, UNAIDS
Risks and Vulnerabilities to HIV and AIDS within the Plantation Systems of the Lake Victoria Basin	Lake Victoria Basin	African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF) Lake Victoria Partnership
HIV, migration, and urban food security in Southern and Eastern Africa	Ethiopia, South Africa, Namibia	University of Witwatersrand, World Potato Centre, Global Mountain Programme, University of Namibia
Labor market dynamics and HIV/AIDS impacts in Nairobi slums	Kenya	APHRC, IFPRI
Quantifying the Impact of HIV and AIDS on Government Agricultural Extension Service Delivery in Zambia and Malawi	Zambia, Malawi	ZARI, IFPRI, Ministry of Agriculture
Social Protection for Families affected by HIV and AIDS: Economic Strengthening through Cash Transfers	Sub-Saharan Africa	IFPRI, Joint Learning Initiative on Children and AIDS
Operations Research to Integrate Short-Term Food Assistance with Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security Programming in HIV Care and Treatment Programs	Uganda	TASO, IFPRI
Estimating the effectiveness food supplementation integrated into AIDS care and treatment programs		TASO, IFPRI
Effects of Cash Transfers and Community Mobilization on young South African women	South Africa	RHRU University of Witwatersrand, IFPRI

Current Activities

Theme 1 has been concerned with key household, community and institutional interactions between HIV and AIDS, vulnerability and livelihoods – particularly livelihoods that are dependent on agriculture, and livelihoods that are most important for the poor. In particular the theme considers the options for responding to these interactions so as to ensure household food and nutrition security in the context of high HIV prevalence. One important component concerns dynamic urban-rural livelihood linkages and the ways in which these links condition people's susceptibility to HIV and vulnerability to AIDS. A three-city study (Addis Ababa, Johannesburg, and Windhoek) considering urban-rural linkages has been completed with a smaller follow-up study



tracking rural “sending” households underway in Johannesburg. A related study in East Africa considering HIV, mobility, vulnerability, and commercial agriculture in Great Lakes region has been completed in the form of a comprehensive literature review. Another component of this theme is a study looking at HIV and agricultural extension services in Malawi and Zambia. The Malawi research is due for completion in 2010, while the Zambian study is being widely disseminated in-country through the national network.

Theme 2 examines the role and potential of community-driven development for enhancing resistance and resilience of the poor to HIV and AIDS, and the important complementary and enabling role of the state in AIDS-responsive social protection. This theme is undertaking research to assess the effects of cash transfers and community mobilization on young South African women. The main objective of this project, collaboration between RENEWAL, the University of the Witwatersrand’s Reproductive Health and HIV Research Unit (RHRU) and Agincourt Health and Population Unit (AHPU), and the University of North Carolina, is to determine the effect of an innovative, multilevel HIV-prevention intervention on vulnerability to HIV among young women and adolescent girls in South Africa.

AIDS and Nutrition Security: Theme 3 aims to clarify options for strengthening the “missing link” between individual clinical nutrition approaches and broader food security approaches, by focusing on the

issue of nutrition security. The perspective throughout is one of livelihood security, and food and nutrition security as being two key outcomes (and inputs) into these livelihoods.

RENEWAL 3 emphasized rigorous operational and evaluative research. Reflecting this emphasis, RENEWAL undertook operational and evaluative research on interventions with The AIDS Service Organization (TASO) in Uganda. Studies undertaken with TASO attempt to address issues that implementers across Eastern and Southern Africa are interested in: a) what is the potential for food and nutritional assistance to delay the need for antiretroviral therapy, b) how best to design a program that integrates food and livelihood interventions with HIV care and treatment, and c) what is the impact of food assistance, on several individual- and household-level impacts?

Next Steps for RENEWAL

Given a decade of focus on AIDS, livelihoods, and food security, RENEWAL is currently taking stock of its impact through external evaluations and internal stock-taking. In addition, RENEWAL is reflecting on the next steps for the network. Given many successes in having livelihoods and food security seen as intrinsic to addressing HIV, as well as other changes in global priorities and challenges related to HIV and food security and livelihoods, RENEWAL is assessing what future role, purpose, and structure would address current needs.

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