

Agriculture and HIV/AIDS: A Challenge for Integrated and Interactive Approaches

Swaans, K., Broerse, J., & Bunders, J. (2006). Agriculture and HIV/AIDS: a challenge for integrated and interactive approaches. *Journal for Agricultural Education and Extension*, 12 (4), 231-247.

One of the main problems in Southern Africa in relation to HIV/AIDS is food insecurity. The vicious relation between malnutrition, HIV infection and AIDS impact drives individuals, households and communities in a downwards spiral of impoverishment. Although scientists and development practitioners have stressed the importance of interactive approaches to mitigate the impact of AIDS on agriculture and rural development, sustainable implementation is far from easy and straightforward. This study aims to gain insight into the main lessons and challenges with respect to their design and implementation. Literature review of interactive approaches in agriculture and natural resource management shows that several principles and process guidelines are considered key factors to successful implementation. Although HIV/AIDS does not seem to change these conditions, personal experiences from researchers, development practitioners and extension workers do reveal new and unforeseen challenges.

Understanding diversity in impact and responses among HIV/AIDS-affected households: the case of Msinga, South Africa

Swaans, K., Broerse, J., Van Diepen, I., Salomon, M., Gibson, D., & Bunders, J. (2008). Understanding diversity in impact and responses among HIV/AIDS-affected households: the case of Msinga, South Africa. *African Journal of AIDS Research* 7(2): 167-178.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of HIV and AIDS on rural households in Msinga, South Africa, the sustainable livelihoods framework was adapted. An ethnographic perspective was employed to examine: 1) the impact of HIV/AIDS-related illnesses on people's mind and spirit (the internal environment), and 2) the influence of institutional structures and processes (the external environment), in order to better understand 3) the actions taken by individuals and households in response to HIV and AIDS. Members of three support groups at a local drop-in centre were consulted about the impact of HIV and AIDS on their lives through focus groups, a questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The study shows that the psychosocial impact and associated coping strategies, as well as prevailing gender-based power relations and exclusion from social-exchange networks —which are not (readily) available factors in the sustainable livelihoods framework — affect people's lives in different ways and depend on the specific situation of the individual or household concerned. The study confirms the need to restore a household's resource base and to address psychosocial issues. However, the variation in impact to different households requires a diversified and holistic programme of development interventions.

The Farmer Life School: experience from an innovative approach to HIV education among farmers in South Africa

Swaans, K., Broerse, J.E.W., Salomon, M., Mudhara, M., Mweli, M., & Bunders, J.F.G. (2008). The Farmer Life School: experience from an innovative approach to HIV education among farmers in South Africa. *Journal of Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS*: 5 (2): 52-64.

The Farmer Life School (FLS) is an innovative approach to integrating HIV education into life skills and technical training for farmers. This study aims to gain insight into the strengths and

weaknesses of this relatively new approach, through the implementation of an adapted version in South Africa. The results are presented of a pilot with three groups of community gardeners, predominantly women, attending weekly sessions. Impact was assessed in terms of three key elements: participation, learning, and empowerment. Data were collected through extensive session reports, follow-up interviews, and reflection exercises with facilitators and participating groups and individuals. The results suggest that a group-based discovery learning approach such as the FLS has great potential to improve food security and wellbeing, while allowing participants to explore issues around HIV/AIDS. However, the analysis also shows that HIV/AIDS-related illness and death, and the factors that drive the epidemic and its impact, undermine farmers' ability to participate, the safety and trust required for learning, and the empowerment process. Participatory approaches such as the FLS require a thorough understanding of and adaptation to the context.