



PACANet pre-ICASA Conference Presentation

Abstract

The links between HIV and livelihoods have been demonstrated in both academic literature and practitioner experience, however there has been little work done to bring together these two sectors successfully. As a result, the need for a community-based approach to sustainable livelihoods was identified as a priority to mitigate both the impact of HIV and prevention of high-risk strategies for income generation.

Over a period of 18 months, Tearfund, in partnership with Samaritan's Purse, worked with 6 partner organizations across 3 countries to design and pilot a process for utilizing a livelihoods lens in HIV programming. As a result of this process, a resource for facilitators has been produced to assist in utilizing the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) at the community level to address the needs of HIV affected populations. The resource has been field tested, reviewed and published, and is available for use amongst NGOs, CBOs, faith groups and other agencies involved with civil society. The methodology of the SLA approach aims to map available assets, utilizing a holistic understanding of accessible resources (financial, human, spiritual, natural, etc.) to identify which resources are underutilized and how HIV affects use of those assets. Participants also assess their vulnerability, taking into account coping strategies and the unique vulnerabilities caused by HIV and its impact in communities. The approach analyses the structures and systems that affect participants' use of their assets and what livelihoods strategies they choose to be involved in. Participants also work to understand value chains that can be accessed to increase the income of their products and services. With this full understanding of context, assets and vulnerabilities, structures and systems, livelihoods strategies and action plans are developed that will increase income and improve other livelihood outcomes such as improved health and nutrition.

Debora Randall, currently an independent livelihoods consultant, will present the content of this approach, inviting practitioners to discuss its merits, challenges and applicability to HIV programming. Ephraim Kahsay, Tearfund Horn of Africa HIV Advisor, will present on the experience of field testing with Ethiopian partners and the process of review in finalizing the toolkit.

Discussion opportunities will be available following the presentation for more in-depth exploration of the toolkit, its content, the process of development, and opportunities for use in various programmatic settings.

For further information on Think Livelihoods!, please feel free to contact Shannon Thomson, HIV Projects Officer, shannon.thomson@tearfund.org or Debora Randall, Independent livelihoods consultant, debora@deborarandall.com

Think Livelihoods! is available online at http://tilz.tearfund.org/webdocs/Tilz/HIV/Livelihoods%20Toolkit_FINAL.pdf

“I need to believe in myself, then I can change my situation slowly”
– Beneficiary of livelihoods lens training



Discussion Questions:

- What work has your organization already been involved in to bring together HIV and livelihoods in programming?
- What challenges have you faced with this work?
- What do you think is needed to be more successful in bringing these two issues together?
- What benefits and/or challenges do you see in utilizing an asset-based approach like the Livelihoods Toolkit?
- What possibilities are there for integrating an approach like Think Livelihoods! into your work?

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Think Livelihoods: Summary of work

The close link between HIV and livelihoods has been proven. Illness and death of family members directly impacts livelihoods opportunities and the ability to work. Without sufficient livelihoods opportunities, the well-being and health of those living with HIV is adversely affected by reduced access and adherence to vital drugs and treatment, resulting in faster progression from HIV to AIDS. Economic insecurity heightens the risk of HIV transmission and vulnerability through increased mobility, unsafe migration and/or transactional sex. HIV has long term effects on the economic climate of communities, with impacts as far reaching as food and nutrition insecurity, reduced access to or depleted assets such as land, lack of social support, weakened institutional capacity through staff absence and localised environmental degradation. All of which influences productivity and labour force on a national scale.

Those who suffer from the impact of lack of livelihoods and HIV are often the most vulnerable in a community.

This cycle of vulnerability and lack of livelihoods must be addressed to lessen the extensive impact of these factors on individuals, families and communities living with and affected by HIV.

The need for mitigating the impact of HIV is as critical now as it has ever been

Tearfund in partnership with Samaritan's Purse have developed a field-tested manual that utilises the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) at the community level. The manual provides a mechanism for applying a livelihoods lens to work with individuals, families and communities affected by HIV.

Using the lens will equip facilitators to use a people-centred and participatory approach and those they work with to:



- Increase their understanding of the assets available and vulnerabilities present within their communities
- Develop contextual livelihoods strategies that take into account the policies, institutions, processes and value chains that affect their success
- Share learning about the livelihoods lens with their beneficiary communities
- Equip and empower households, groups and communities to lead and determine their own development.
- Bring more sustainability to HIV-related work
- Become more flexible in responding to shocks and crises
- Build on the existing strengths of beneficiaries, and help them become more resilient to future shocks and crises.

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