

HIV/AIDS, food security and humanitarian action: a resource guide by the ODI Humanitarian Policy Group

Getting to grips with the issues of HIV/AIDS, food security and emergencies requires knowing about three vast systems of research and action: HIV/AIDS, food security and the humanitarian aid. This resource guide highlights some of the key documents, summarises the key issues and provides links to full documents, where available.

The guide is not intended to be exhaustive or comprehensive, either in the subjects covered or the documents suggested. It is intended as a web-based resource that may be helpful for humanitarian practitioners attempting to navigate a difficult literature. Some of the references and web-links provided may swiftly become out of date.

This guide is based on a literature review conducted for a Humanitarian Policy Group report on HIV/AIDS and humanitarian action conducted in 2003.

A full list of references from the HPG report is available as a PDF file.

The subjects covered are:

1. HIV/AIDS, food security and livelihoods
2. Gender and HIV/AIDS
3. Nutrition
4. The southern Africa crisis and 'new variant famine'
5. HIV/AIDS, conflict and refugees
6. Emergency relief and HIV/AIDS
7. Useful websites

1. HIV/AIDS, food security and livelihoods

The HIV/AIDS epidemic will last for decades. Its impact is already huge and is rapidly increasing. The UN estimates that up to 28 million adults and children live with HIV/AIDS, and that there were between 2.2 and 2.4m deaths due to AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa in 2003.

One of the best introductions to the subject is AIDS in the Twenty-First Century: Disease and Globalisation, by Tony Barnett and Alan Whiteside.

The AIDS Epidemic Updates, published annually by UNAIDS and WHO, provide a good starting point for examining the global dimensions of the pandemic. The US-funded Synergy Project provides annual country-level summaries profiling the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Papers address the impact of the epidemic on the general population, and provide a breakdown by gender and age-group, with an emphasis on at-risk populations.

- Tony Barnett and Alan Whiteside, AIDS in the twenty-first century: disease and globalisation (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002)
- AIDS Epidemic Updates: <http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/publications.asp>
- Synergy Project: <http://www.synergyaids.org/summaries.asp>

There is a two-way relationship between HIV/AIDS and livelihoods. HIV has an impact on people's livelihoods, reducing food security through illness and death. People's food security and livelihood options also contribute to their resistance to HIV. Food insecurity may increase the risk of transmission by forcing people into risky behaviour, such as transactional sex and migration.

A growing literature examines how HIV/AIDS impacts on livelihoods. The literature shows that it has clear negative impacts on food security at a household level, and that these impacts are complex, wide-ranging and gender-specific. There are several summaries of the HIV/AIDS and food security literature. Some of the most helpful are:

- Carolyn Baylies, 'The Impact of AIDS on Rural Households in Africa: A Shock Like Any Other?', *Development and Change*, 33 (4), 2002, pp. 611-32.
- S. Gillespie and M. Loevisohn, 'HIV/AIDS, Food Security and Rural Livelihoods: Understanding and Responding', IFPRI ISNAR and RENEWAL, 2003, <http://www.isnar.cgiar.org/renewal/pdf/RENEWALWP2.pdf>
- Lawrence Haddad and Stuart Gillespie, 'Effective Food and Nutrition Policy Responses to HIV/AIDS: What We Know and What We Need To Know' (Washington DC: Food Consumption and Nutrition Division, International Food Policy Research Institute, 2001), www.ifpri.org/divs/fcnd/dp.htm
- G. Mutangadura, D. Mukurazita and H. Jackson, A Review of Household and Community Responses to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the Rural Areas of Sub-Saharan Africa, UNAIDS Best Practice Collection, 1999, <http://www.unaids.org/publications/documents/economics/agriculture/una99e39.pdf>
- Shannon Stokes, Measuring Impacts of HIV/AIDS on Rural Livelihoods and Food Security (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2003), http://www.fao.org/sd/2003/PE0102a_en.htm
- D. Topouzis, Measuring the Impact of HIV/AIDS on the Agricultural Sector in Africa, UNAIDS Best Practice Collection, Key Material, 2000
- Joanna White and Elizabeth Robinson, HIV/AIDS and Rural Livelihoods in Southern Africa, Policy Series 6 (Chatham: Natural Resource Institute, 2000), <http://www.nri.org/publications/policyseries/PolicySeriesNo06.pdf>

One of the best examples of reports based on household survey data, that aim to measure the impact of AIDS, is:

- Takashi Yamano and T. S. Jayne, Measuring the Impacts of Prime-Age Adult Death on Rural Households in Kenya (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Department of Agricultural Economics, 2002), <http://www.aec.msu.edu/agecon/fs2/kenya/wp5.pdf>

2. Gender and HIV/AIDS

The gender dimensions of the impact of AIDS form a central part of the analysis and response to AIDS. In sub-Saharan Africa, women now form the majority of those living with HIV/AIDS. They are

infected on average 6-10 years younger than men. Women are biologically more susceptible to contracting HIV than men in any given sexual encounter. The low social status of women in the developing world magnifies their vulnerability to infection and limits their ability to deal with its impact. Many of the additional burdens of HIV/AIDS at a household level fall upon women, as they are the main producers of food and the main carers for the sick and for children. Analysis needs to consider the complex ways in which gender relationships influence impact. These are myriad, diverse and context-specific. Some of the most commonly cited are:

- HIV/AIDS widows may not have secure land tenure or rights
- In agricultural systems where men have primary responsibility for cash crops, a male death may lead to the loss of crucial knowledge in areas such as marketing. Women may not be able to participate in cash-crop production due to gender stereotypes and prejudice
- The death of an adult female may mean that the household is more likely to disintegrate given women's crucial role as carers
- Where women have primary responsibility for household food production, a female death may lead to the loss of crucial knowledge and experience
- Increasing levels of female mortality may heighten children's vulnerability to malnutrition, as women are the primary carers
- Women's role as primary carers for the sick may mean that the labour impacts of HIV/AIDS fall disproportionately on women, leaving them particularly time-poor
- Women may be forced into transactional sex or other erosive coping strategies as a result of increasing impoverishment due to HIV/AIDS.

Some of the key documents are:

- Carolyn Baylies & Janet Bujra, Aids, Sexuality and Gender in Africa (London: Routledge, 2000)
- Gender and HIV/AIDS, Bridge, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, <http://www.eldis.org/gender/dossiers>
- Vicci Tallis, Gender and HIV/AIDS: Overview Report, BRIDGE, Institute of Development Studies, 2002, <http://www.ids.ac.uk/bridge/reports/CEP-HIV-report.pdf>

3. Nutrition

There is a vicious cycle between HIV/AIDS and malnutrition. Malnutrition may increase the progression of HIV infection, and may also increase the risk of transmission from mothers to babies. In turn, HIV infection accelerates the cycle of inadequate dietary intake and disease, which leads to malnutrition. People with HIV/AIDS have different nutritional requirements, though precisely what these are is the source of heated debate. The recommendations on nutritional requirements for people with HIV/AIDS are currently being revisited by a WHO working group on HIV/AIDS and nutrition.

There is still much uncertainty about the interactions between HIV/AIDS and malnutrition. Research suggests that the chance of infection with the HIV virus might be reduced in individuals who have good nutritional status; the onset of disease and death might be delayed where HIV-positive individuals are well-nourished; and diets rich in protein, energy and vitamins might reduce the risks of vertical transmission. Micro-nutrient deficiencies may increase the likelihood of mother-to-child transmission. Nutritional supplements, particularly antioxidant vitamins and

minerals, may improve the immune function and other HIV-related outcomes, especially in nutritionally vulnerable populations.

Key documents are:

- Ellen Piwoz and Elizabeth Preble, HIV/AIDS and Nutrition: A Review of the Literature and Recommendations for Nutritional Care and Support in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2000, http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/PNACK673.pdf
- WHO, Nutrient Requirements for People Living with HIV/AIDS: Report of a Technical Consultation, 2003, http://www.who.int/nut/documents/hivaids_nut_require.pdf
- WHO and FAO, Living Well With HIV/AIDS: A Manual on Nutritional Care and Support for PLWA, 2002, <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/Y4168E/Y4168E00.HTM>
- Claudia Hudspeth, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS, paper prepared for the technical consultation on vulnerability in the light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, UNICEF, 2003, <http://www.sahims.net>
- J. Mason, A. Bailes and K. Mason, Drought, AIDS and Child Malnutrition in Southern Africa: Preliminary Analysis of Nutritional Data on the Humanitarian Crisis (New Orleans, LA: Tulane University, 2003)
- The Food Aid and Nutrition Technical Assistance Project (FANTA) has an excellent website with a series of papers on issues around food aid, HIV/AIDS and nutrition: see http://www.fantaproject.org/focus/hiv_aids.shtml#HIVrec

4. The southern Africa crisis and 'new variant famine'

The crisis in southern Africa during 2002 and 2003 highlighted the complex interactions between HIV/AIDS, food insecurity and famine. Strong statements have been made about the importance of HIV/AIDS: HIV/AIDS is 'challenging the paradigm of humanitarian assistance'; we are 'facing a new variant famine' and HIV/AIDS is the 'most fundamental underlying cause of the southern Africa crisis'. There has been a backlash against these claims, with some questioning whether the importance of HIV/AIDS as a contributory factor to the crisis has been over-stated.

Key reports looking at the southern Africa crisis are:

- Not Business as Usual, International Federation of the Red Cross, 2003, <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2003/ifrc/ifrc-southern-africa-25-jun.pdf>
- James Morris, Next Steps for Action in Southern Africa: A Report of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for humanitarian needs in Southern Africa, 2003, <http://www.sahims.net/doclibrary/riacso/Next%20Steps%20Paper.doc>
- James Morris and Stephen Lewis, Mission Report: Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe 22-29 January 2003, United Nations, <http://www.odi.org.uk/Food-Security-Forum/docs/Morris&LewisMissionJan2003.pdf>
- SADC FANR Vulnerability Assessment Committee, Towards Identifying Impacts of HIV/AIDS on Food Insecurity in Southern Africa and Implications for Response: Findings from Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, 2003, <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2003/sarpn-zim-7-may.pdf>

During the 2002 and 2003 crisis in southern Africa, Alex De Waal published a series of articles which argued that HIV/AIDS has such far reaching adverse implications that we are witnessing

what he called a 'new variant famine'. He argues that the models which have been developed for understanding peacetime famine in Africa depend on assumptions about household labour supply, skills and long-term viability which no longer necessarily apply in an HIV/AIDS epidemic.

De Waal and Alan Whiteside highlight four new factors, which characterise those affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic: household labour shortages, loss of assets and skills due to adult mortality, the burden of care for sick adults and orphans and the vicious interactions between malnutrition and HIV.

These new factors mean that the effectiveness of traditional strategies used to cope with famine are reduced, and in some cases rendered impossible or dangerous. For example, reducing food consumption is particularly dangerous for HIV-positive individuals who have higher than normal nutritional needs. These authors conclude that, in 'new variant famine', the prospects for a sharp decline into famine are increased, and the possibilities for recovery reduced. 'New variant famine' is presented as a hypothesis that has not yet been validated by research.

The most recent articles on 'new variant famine' are:

- Alex De Waal and Joseph Tumushabe, HIV/AIDS and Food Security in Africa, a report for DFID, 2003,
http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0000235/P227_AIDS_Food_Security.pdf
- Alex De Waal and Alan Whiteside, 'New Variant Famine: AIDS and Food Crisis in Southern Africa', The Lancet, 362, 2003, pp. 1,234-37
http://www.earth.columbia.edu/cgsd/documents/de_waal_lancetarticle.pdf

5. HIV/AIDS, conflict and refugees

The complex ways in which HIV/AIDS interacts with livelihoods and contributes to vulnerability and food insecurity are magnified in conflict situations. The links between HIV/AIDS and conflict are also at a relatively early stage of exploration and research. What little work exists has focused on the links between conflict and the increased risk of infection.

Some key documents are:

- A. Khaw, P. Salama and B. Burkholder, 'HIV Risk and Prevention in Emergency-Affected Populations: A Review', Disasters, vol. 24, no. 3, 2000, pp. 181-98,
<http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journal.asp?ref=0361-3666>
- Ann Smith, HIV/AIDS and Emergencies: Analysis and Recommendations for Practice, HPN Network Paper 38, 2002, <http://www.odihpn.org/documents/networkpaper038.pdf>
- UNHCR, HIV/AIDS and Refugees: UNHCR's Strategic Plan 2002-2004, 2002,
http://www.unaids.org/html/pub/Topics/Security/HCRStrategicPlan021902_en_doc.htm

6. Emergency relief and HIV/AIDS

Humanitarian aid is part of a much larger international response to the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It is important to be clear about what the relief system can and cannot do. The overall response to HIV/AIDS needs to take place over decades, and requires a rethinking of relief modalities, development modalities and of the links between humanitarian aid and development.

The response of development assistance may need to draw on expertise and experience available within the humanitarian system, and vice versa.

A response across entire countries and regions over a period of decades is obviously ill-suited to the current ways in which humanitarian aid is delivered, based as it is on short-term time horizons and funding cycles. The core business of humanitarian relief should remain focused on saving lives and alleviating suffering in response to acute crises. In doing this in the context of an HIV/AIDS epidemic, it is important to take issues around HIV/AIDS into account in humanitarian programming across the different sectors of response, and across the programme cycle.

The southern Africa crisis raised a series of practical questions around the programming of humanitarian aid in the context of an HIV/AIDS epidemic. A literature relating to these issues is only just beginning to develop. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has published a new set of guidelines for HIV/AIDS interventions in emergency settings.

- Guidelines for HIV/AIDS Interventions in Emergency Settings, Inter Agency Standing Committee, 2003,
<http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/IASC%20products/FinalGuidelines17Nov2003.pdf>

Key documents examining the response to HIV/AIDS in emergencies include:

- Patricia Bonnard, HIV/AIDS Mitigation: Using What We Already Know, FANTA Technical Notes No. 5, October 2002, http://www.fantaproject.org/downloads/pdfs/tn5_hiv.pdf
- Paul Harvey, HIV/AIDS and Humanitarian Action, HPG Report 17, forthcoming, 2004.
- Sue Holden, AIDS on the Agenda: Adapting Development and Humanitarian Programmes to Meet the Challenge of HIV (Oxford: Oxfam, 2003),
http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/hivaids/aidsagenda.htm
- Suneetha Kadilaya and Stuart Gillespie, Rethinking Food Aid to Fight AIDS, IFPRI, 2003, <http://www.ifpri.org/dlvs/fcnd/dp/papers/fcndp159.pdf>
- Programming in the Era of AIDS: WFP's Response to HIV/AIDS (Rome: World Food Programme, 2003), http://www.iris.umd.edu/PPC_IDEAS/HIV_AIDS/Documents/wfp.pdf
- ADP Toolkit for HIV/AIDS Programming, HIV/AIDS Hope Initiative, World Vision, 2003, <http://wvioaptus.wvi.org/africa.nsf/0/4d5305eac8172b1d42256d2100375bcc?OpenDocument>

7. Websites

There are a huge number of HIV/AIDS-related websites. Key sites relating to issues around HIV/AIDS, food security and emergencies include:

- ELDIS has a good resource guide for HIV/AIDS issues with downloadable documents:
<http://www.eldis.org/hivaids/index.htm>
- The International AIDS Economic Network (IAEN) has a good collection of papers and a useful contact directory: <http://www.iaen.org>
- The SynergyAIDS Resource Center contains documents that are relevant to HIV/AIDS project management and research: <http://www.synergyaids.com>
- RENEWAL is a regional network on HIV/AIDS and food security. It currently has a number of useful summary papers highlighting the interactions between HIV/AIDS and food security:

<http://www.isnar.cgiar.org/renewal>

- FANTA (Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance) has a website with a series of papers on issues relating to food and nutrition, and good links to other websites:
http://www.fantaproject.org/focus/hiv_aids.shtml
- Food Aid Management (FAM) has a useful website with links to a number of reports:
<http://www.foodaidmanagement.org/hiv.htm>
- The World Bank has an HIV/AIDS site: http://www1.worldbank.org/hiv_aids