

Creating Learning Cultures for Gender Mainstreaming¹

Strategic Approaches for Impact Assessment of Multisectoral Approaches: The Case of HIV/AIDS in Subsistence Agriculture and Artisanal Fisheries

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Summary

The inclusion of gender mainstreaming and multisectoral frameworks in agricultural planning can be extremely helpful in understanding and measuring how development interventions impact women and men, girls and boys differently. The case study of gender mainstreaming in the health sector i.e. gender and HIV/AIDS, provides a useful example of how a gender analysis can serve as a critical tool for social change. Not only does a gender mainstreaming approach help to measure empowerment differentials between the sexes, it is also useful for assessing stakeholder assets and needs. This, in itself, provides a practical starting point in the program planning process.

Gender assessment tools and indicators measure the impact of gender on performance and productivity and are transferable from one sector to another e.g. from health to agriculture. This paper addresses the lessons learned from the impact of HIV/AIDS on sustainable livelihoods in agriculture, with particular focus on the factors which place women and girls at greater risk of HIV infection. The paper also identifies gender and human rights indicators from the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which are relevant to agricultural research.

National system wide gender “mainstreaming” strategies provide practical approaches for integrating gender objectives into planning areas and expected outcomes. Additionally, monitoring and evaluation processes which integrate gender indicators into multisectoral policy and program reviews provide clear measures of citizen engagement and participation. These measures help planners to target resources and program interventions to specific audiences. They also reflect the extent to which women are empowered and the degree to which women’s and men’s contributions are recognized and valued in their respective societies.

This paper provides an overview of strategic approaches for impact assessment of multisectoral approaches for gender mainstreaming in agriculture. Examples and illustrations of gender audit guidelines, checklists, and program interventions have been shared and transferred from Gender and HIV/AIDS and CEDAW to the agriculture sector.

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Introduction

As long as women and girls continue to experience greater poverty, violence and economic disadvantage than men and boys, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will not be reached. The identification of gender equity gaps in agriculture and fisheries policies and programs should therefore be of great priority to researchers and decision makers.

Naila Kabeer's² work on gender mainstreaming in poverty eradication and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) notes that gender inequality is more pervasive and more insidious than other forms of poverty inequity. Gender inequality is a reflection of systemic inequities, including abusive relationships between men and women, which are intertwined with socio-cultural values and economic realities.

In 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)³, Article 14, addressed the needs of rural women and girls. The convention noted that women and girls have the right to participate in development planning at all levels, including agricultural development. CEDAW stated that women and girls, like men and boys have the right to access adequate health care and education, including agricultural extension services, and the right to benefit directly from social security programs.

This international bill of rights defined the elimination of discrimination against women through gender equity, as the basis for "realizing equality between women and men through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life... as well as education, health and employment. The Convention, according to the UN Division for the Advancement of Women, is the only human rights treaty which addresses 'culture and tradition' as a force in shaping and influencing gender roles and relationships across many sectors: health, agriculture, education, finance etc.

Gender sensitive indicators can be extrapolated from CEDAW and applied directly to agriculture research initiatives. Such indicators include the extent to which women and girls participate in extension training and education, functional health literacy, community activities, and the degree to which they have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate agricultural technology, land reform resettlement and entitlements. CEDAW Articles 13b, 14 and 16h, address the extent to which women have rights to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of credit, as well as whether they have the same rights as men with respect to land and household ownership and property disposition. Overall, CEDAW provides an excellent universal framework for agriculture research organizations to design and create learning cultures for gender mainstreaming.

² See Naila Kabeer. New Gender Mainstreaming Series on Development Issues: Gender Mainstreaming in Poverty Eradication and the Millennium Development Goals: A Handbook for Policy Makers and Other Stakeholders. London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003.

³ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw 2005

Gender

The inclusion of gender mainstreaming frameworks, as tools for social change, can be extremely useful in understanding and measuring how development interventions impact women and men, girls and boys differentially. Gender is about the different social, cultural, political and economic expectations and roles which are assigned to women and men, girls and boys. In contrast, the construct of sex describes biological differences. By and large, gender roles consist of learned attitudes and behaviors which may vary considerably among cultures and societies. The adoption of a gender perspective, i.e. “gender lens” enables planners to identify and accommodate gender and sex differences into the planning logic framework of projects and programs.

According to Gita Sen⁴

“A gender perspective means recognizing that women stand at the crossroads between production and reproduction, between economic activity and the care of human beings, and therefore between economic growth and human development. They are workers in both spheres – those most responsible and therefore with most at stake, those who suffer when the two spheres meet at cross-purposes, and those most sensitive to the need for better integration between the two.”

Gender Based Analysis (GBA) and HIV/AIDS

No one can deny that the spread of HIV/AIDS has resulted in global labor shortages in agriculture. The pandemic is growing and contributing to catastrophic food insecurity and the destabilization of civil societies. At the national level, HIV/AIDS affects the ability of the household, as an economic unit, to feed and care for itself. It also results in direct and indirect detrimental impacts on national economies. The cost of HIV/AIDS treatment alone has profound impact on national sectoral budgets. The pandemic redirects and absorbs resources intended for education, research, and agriculture. In small island states in the Caribbean for example, HIV/AIDS treatment consumes the entire national health budget. (see Appendix 1 for additional details on the epidemiology of HIV/AIDS)

Gender based analysis and gender mainstreaming management systems serve as critical approaches for measuring empowerment differentials and for assessing stakeholder assets and needs. Understanding poverty requires not only the establishment of linkages between gender and development, but also the disclosure of systemic discrimination which exist in socioeconomic analysis and macro/micro-economic strategies. Gender audits are intended to expose bias and systemic discrimination in policies and programs. Gender lens tools and GBA frameworks are intended to help move gender blind interventions towards more equitable distribution of resources.

Gender Mainstreaming Management Systems (GMMS)

⁴ Gita Sen, *Gender Mainstreaming in Finance: A Reference Manual for Governments and other Stakeholders*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1999.

Gender mainstreaming emerged in the late 1990's as a policy tool for assessing and targeting interventions from an equity perspective. From a policy perspective, gender mainstreaming ensures that the diverse experiences, needs and assets, including knowledge and skills of women and men respectively, are factored into policy and program planning. Gender mainstreaming, according to the Commonwealth Secretariat⁵ is founded on the knowledge and recognition that human rights and equity are fundamental and strategic tenants of development.

A gender mainstreaming management system (GMMS) is a deliberate integrated network of "structures, mechanisms and processes" which direct and measure the contribution of gender sensitive programs. The GMMS reflects political will on the part of management and attempts to advance human rights and equity for both men and women. In short, GBA and GMMS are not neutral processes. They are interventionist tools for social justice and social change.

Gender Audits

A gender 'audit' review of the World Bank country level Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)⁶ demonstrated that if gender is not addressed in the formative planning stage, it will probably remain invisible throughout the project life cycle, including in the project monitoring and evaluation stages. Gender audits of poverty reduction strategies demonstrate the relationship between gender inequity and low levels of agricultural productivity, including the poor quality of post harvest products. Both outcomes reinforce and contribute to rural and coastal poverty.

A PRSP case study of farm and off farm activities from Burkina Faso⁷ demonstrated limited integration of gender issues into agricultural strategies and programs. The audit revealed significant disparities in school attendance between girls and boys, high rates maternal mortality and fecundity, along with high levels of HIV sero-prevalence among certain sectors of the population i.e. military, lorry drivers, prostitutes, young women. The vulnerability and poor health status of women and girls in turn affected their participation in farming. Illiteracy and the lack of access to micro credit further excluded them from participating in development programs.

Some of the early gender specific research and program interventions took place in the 1980's following the 1979 World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD). WCARRD launched a generation of multisectoral programs to empower women through leadership training and skill acquisition in the management of micro-enterprises for sustainable livelihoods.

⁵ See Gender Mainstreaming in HIV/AIDS: Taking a Multisectoral Approach, Baksh and Amaratunga (eds) Commonwealth Secretariat, London. 2002

⁶ Cited in "Institutionalizing Gender Equity Goals in the Policy Process", Gender Mainstreaming in Poverty Eradication and the Millenium Development Goals, Commonwealth Secretariat. London, 2003. pp 210 -212. see also World Bank. World Development Report: Engendering Development: Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources and Voice. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2001.

⁷ Cited in "Institutionalizing Gender Equity Goals in the Policy Process", Gender Mainstreaming in Poverty Eradication and the Millenium Development Goals, Commonwealth Secretariat. London, 2003. pp 210-212.

The evaluation of the pilot projects confirmed that the household is the unit of production in subsistence societies. Despite the primary production role of women and girls in post harvest technology and marketing, their labor is largely under valued and unrecognized. The early WCARRD micro-enterprise initiatives received criticism from gender analysts as some pilot programs failed to take into account the time poverty of rural women. Some income generation initiatives actually had detrimental impact as they contributed, unintentionally, to the burden of women's and girls' work. Nevertheless, the WCARRD agrarian reform projects of the 1980's were among the first to recognize and 'count' the hidden yet central role which women play in food production.

Twenty five years after WCARRD, planners continue to struggle with the challenge of integrating gender equity perspectives into agriculture. One notable example is the multisectoral approach to gender and development pioneered by Commonwealth countries in the 1990's⁸. The framework holds promise as a model for infusing or "mainstreaming" gender into policy and planning. As a gender sensitive strategy, it offers hope for bringing agriculture and related technical sectors into line with the Millennium Development Goals.

The Consultative Group on International Research (CGIAR)⁹ research priorities, 2005-2015, explicitly include gender with respect to reaching the MDGs. The key priorities include poverty reduction through agricultural diversification; emerging opportunities for production of high value commodities; sustainable management of water, land and forests; improvement and innovation in institutional policies and programs to reduce poverty and hunger; and production of more and better food at lower costs through genetic improvements. The design of gender strategy matrices enables planners and researchers to integrate gender sensitive objectives into each of the key activity areas and expected outcomes. In establishing the causal links between gender and poverty, researchers and practitioners should be able to tailor their interventions to address underlying inequities between women and men.

A gender analysis of the poverty reduction strategies from Vietnam and the Gambia¹⁰ for example, illustrates how the absence of girls' education, geographic isolation, lack of capital, the existence of female-headed households, poor soils and climatic conditions, all combine to contribute to poverty. The gender analysis identified the interplay among the determinants of poverty and demonstrated that 'poor and hungry' households are largely dependent upon the labor of lone mothers. Accordingly agricultural extension interventions should be targeted to meet the needs of women and girls through leadership development and better access to health services and education supports.

The Gambian case study measured the time poverty of subsistence women farmers and assessed how the burden of women's work is exacerbated by poor infrastructure including roads, water supply, and health services. Poverty reduction strategy papers from Tanzania, Rwanda and Nicaragua¹¹ demonstrated the cumulative and

⁸ See Naila Kabeer. Gender Mainstreaming in Poverty Eradication and the Millennium Development Goals. Commonwealth Secretariat, London, 2003.

⁹ see www.cgiar.org

¹⁰ see Naila Kabeer. Gender Mainstreaming in Poverty Eradication and the Millennium Development Goals, Commonwealth Secretariat. London, p. 207

¹¹ See Naila Kabeer. Gender Mainstreaming in Poverty Eradication and the Millennium Development Goals, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

intergenerational impact of gender-based violence, i.e. the physical and sexual abuse against women, as well as the lack of social and legal structures to protect women. These cumulative factors contribute to and reinforce the cycle of poverty.

Without a careful, explicit GBA and gender audit, the interplay of complex relationships which exist among the determinants of poverty, may be overlooked.

The following list of gender audit indicators is intended for integrated sectoral strategies in agriculture and fisheries. These factors are designed to promote more equitable access to the following:

- Basic personal needs – clean water, shelter, clothing, nutritious food
- Basic human rights, justice and entitlements – legal rights e.g. inheritance, land and property rights, the recognition of women and girls as legal persons, law enforcement against sex trafficking, and zero tolerance for violence against women, racial/ethnic discrimination, and small arms
- Rights to participate in local governance and civil society at all jurisdictional levels, mobility, migration and settlement rights
- Wage equity for paid work – and equitable distribution of unpaid work both in the home and outside
- Equal access to credit, property and land ownership entitlements
- Equal access to labour saving tools and time saving appropriate technology
- Equal access to informal and non formal education e.g. extension training, information and adult basic education e.g. literacy and numeracy education
- Equal access to formal school training: Primary, secondary and tertiary education
- Equitable access to prevention health services, family planning and HIV prophylaxis
- Equitable access to health care, treatment and support services for HIV/AIDS (antiretroviral therapies for all, particularly pregnant women), Malaria, TB, and other diseases

Key considerations for gender audits and gender checklists include:

- Protecting the human and democratic rights of the poor through the advancement of the status of women and girls e.g. law reform, land and property ownership reform, direct access to credit i.e. revolving funds, child labor codes
- Capacity building – social and health services in support of women's reproductive health, health prevention and HIV prophylaxis and treatment, particularly for expectant mothers, prenatal and postnatal care
- Early childhood development – nutrition supplements, training programs for healthy growth and development
- Adult Basic Education, extension education, literacy, competency and skills based training, scholarships for education, training and leadership development

Gender Sensitive Indicators

In the agriculture sector, a gender sensitive approach also recognizes pre-existing inequities, including health inequities, and the need for a basic human rights approach. Gender sensitive indicators in agriculture would include measurement of the following:

- the extent to which women's full participation is promoted and reflected in all levels of decision making – in the home, at the farm and community level e.g. the number of women on community decision making bodies
- the degree to which gender is recognized and acknowledged as a public issue through the creation of new legal instruments to protect the rights of girls and women e.g. the degree to which women have access to credit, ownership of property and land, and the means of production
- the provision and dedication of resources for skills training in sexual communication, prevention, care treatment and support, including extension education and health literacy
- the provision of freely available and accessible antiretroviral treatments to women and girls, particularly pregnant women; prenatal and perinatal care, i.e. safe and sanitary environments for delivery and care of new born infants and mothers
- the extent to which departments of agriculture and fisheries, and national governments are held accountable for commitments adopted at the UN General Assembly Special Sessions (UNGASS) on HIV/AIDS

Project monitoring and evaluation strategies also need to examine and measure the impact of HIV on agricultural productivity and on the well being of rural societies. At the household level, HIV/AIDS contributes to the stress and caregiving burden of primary producers as well as to their debt burden. Families, particularly women, are forced to spend a large portion of their income on medications and antiretroviral drugs. Families are displaced and increasingly large communities of orphans – both young and old, seek food, shelter and security. Ultimately these stressors impact social cohesion and the resiliency of civil society.

CIDA funded guidelines for incorporating HIV/AIDS and gender considerations into agricultural programming in high incidence countries in southern Africa have also yielded important indicators to be included in program design and implementation¹². Objectives include measurable indicators which assess the extent to which:

- needs, capacity and potential of women and children in households affected by HIV/AIDS are taken into consideration in planning processes at all levels
- vulnerable and HIV/AIDS affected households and family members are involved in the formulation, planning and monitoring of projects and programs
- community based strategies for promotion of social and economic development include outreach and communications with women and girls
- the nutritional status of HIV+ small farmers and families is augmented without exacerbating stigma and discrimination
- the agricultural work load of women and girls, including unpaid work and family caregiving, is counted. Special care is taken not to place additional burden on HIV+ women and girls
- linkages have been established with national agricultural policies and programs, as well as national HIV/AIDS country strategies, poverty reduction plans

Case Study: Lessons Learned from Gender and HIV/AIDS

¹²Wiegers, E. and Scott, M. HIV/AIDS, Gender Inequality and the Agricultural Sector: Guidelines for Incorporating HIV/AIDS and Gender Considerations into Agricultural Programming in High Incidence Countries, ICAD, Ottawa. 2004.

As a research tool, gender based analysis (GBA) illustrates how communities and societies respond differently to women and men living with HIV/AIDS. Systemic discrimination, stigma and violence against women are further examples of oppression against women and gender bias. A gender audit exposes how political repression, customary laws limiting property ownership and access to credit, as well as negative attitudes, expectations and language contribute to the social, economic, and physical vulnerability of women and girls. Gender inequities are evident not only in terms of how the virus spreads with respect to the enhanced biological risk and vulnerability of girls and women, but also in terms of the complex interplay among the determinants of health e.g. low socioeconomic status, lack of education, access to health services, etc.

A gender based response to HIV/AIDS and poverty alleviation addresses long standing cultural expectations and values. The Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development¹³, recognizes that the AIDS pandemic is fueled by pre-existing values and injustices. AIDS researchers conclude that solutions to the pandemic will require a human rights revolution in terms of transforming cultural attitudes, beliefs and norms of sexual behavior for both men and women.

Creation of Learning Cultures for Multisectoral Approaches

The fostering of learning cultures for integrating HIV/AIDS and gender equity into the agricultural sector is an ongoing challenge. As a first step it requires political will. It also requires top down and bottom up approaches. Top down political support can move gender from the sidelines to the centre of policy and planning agenda.

Key considerations include the need to redirect resources and to recognize the needs and assets of women and girls as primary producers. In addition, community driven approaches are needed to ensure long term commitment with respect to the adoption of new ideas and practices, especially those which are intended to redistribute wealth and share power more equitably between and among groups of women and men.

In 2001, in cooperation with Canadian university researchers and funding from Health Canada and CIDA, the Commonwealth Secretariat co sponsored the International Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS (IIGHA)¹⁴. The Institute hosted a series of needs assessment and curriculum development workshops in Canada and in Southern Africa. The program involved over 150 gender and HIV/AIDS policy makers and trainers, including those living with HIV, from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. The WARDA program of the CGIAR West Africa also participated in this initiative. The work of the IIGHA involved representatives from the Southern Africa Development Community and the Southern African AIDS Trust (SAT), and in turn aspects of the curricula have been incorporated into regional gender mainstreaming programs. This initiative demonstrated the potential to build international networks and cultures of learning around HIV/AIDS, as well as the opportunity to share lessons not only among Southern countries but also from the South to the North.

¹³ Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD). 2005. www.icad-cisd.org

¹⁴ see International Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS, www.medicine.dal.ca/acewh

The University of Sussex¹⁵, the Commonwealth Secretariat¹⁶, and the United Nations family of agencies e.g. UNDP¹⁷, UNIFEM¹⁸, as well as the World Bank¹⁹ and the bilateral community e.g. Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)²⁰ have extensive corporate experience in assessing the merit of integrating gender into development. The question remains however as to why the gender mainstreaming process has been so slow, and why in particular, gender mainstreaming management systems have failed to be transferred or fully incorporated into agricultural and fisheries organizations.

Early work to mainstream gender into development was developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat²¹. The 2002 publication, Gender Mainstreaming in HIV/AIDS: Taking a Multisectoral Approach, presented a new framework for integrating gender both vertically and horizontally at all levels of government and across all sectors. The publication presented a manual for the application of gender mainstreaming strategies using both top down and bottom up strategies to mitigate the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The Gender Management System Series produced over 20 publications to assist middle and senior level decision makers to integrate gender frameworks in program planning and evaluation. A second set of publications, the “Gender Mainstreaming Series (GMS) on Development Issues” soon followed in 2002 and has gained currency globally. The series provides a holistic approach to integrating gender into all aspects of public sector planning and policy formulation, both within and across departments. The series also provides useful references and training materials for member governments and non governmental stakeholders working in a wide number of sectors: education, finance, public service, legal and constitutional affairs, science and technology, trade and industry. Gender mainstreaming is the common thread which links the sectors and addresses the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

The gender management system curricula have created cultures of learning around HIV/AIDS as a practical example of the merit of GBA. Tools and tool kits have been developed with respect to how to design gender sensitive performance measures and indicators to assess program ‘outcomes’. Case studies illustrate how programs that promote and target gender sensitive HIV prevention messages to women and men are more likely to succeed in changing attitudes and behaviors. The case studies examine the context of women’s and men’s experiences and take into consideration the respective contexts of their personal, physical, socioeconomic risks. The differences between men and women, boys and girls are examined with respect to their vulnerability and exposure to HIV/AIDS. The materials have been promoted globally through relationship based

¹⁵ University of Sussex (2005) Development and Gender in Brief, Issues 1,2,3,4, Institute of Development Studies. See http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/bri_bull.html

¹⁶ Commonwealth Secretariat, Gender and Youth Affairs Division, London. See <http://www.thecommonwealth.org>

¹⁷ UNDP, 2005 see <http://www.undp.org>

¹⁸ UNIFEM, 2005 see <http://www.UNIFEM.org>

¹⁹ World Bank 2005 see <http://www.Worldbank.org>

²⁰ CIDA 2005 see <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/index.htm>

²¹ See Gender Management System Series, Rawwida Baksh (ed.) Commonwealth Secretariat, London, 2002 (see <http://www.thecommonwealth.org/gender>)

networks and through the Internet. The gender mainstreaming publications were successfully adopted and tested in Commonwealth countries in the campaign against HIV/AIDS²².

Gender Sensitive Framework Check Lists

Strategic approaches for planning and impact assessment in agriculture can benefit from HIV/AIDS gender sensitive guidelines and project check lists. A gender sensitive framework in the agriculture sector would be linked with planning frameworks in related sectors e.g. health, education, finance. A practicable gender check list would contain the following:

- a gender sensitive policy and work plan which recognizes the impact of HIV/AIDS on small scale farming and fishing productivity
- health literacy provisions e.g. HIV prevention education programs, and universal access to antiretroviral therapies, particularly for women of child bearing age
- human rights based principles for the inclusion of community residents living with HIV/AIDS (PLHAs)
- strategies and initiatives for combating stigma and discrimination
- programs involving risk assessment for HIV exposure and infection for women and girls, men and boys
- proactive networks and linkages to the health sector for HIV/AIDS program resource sharing
- creative and flexible lines of credit for new cooperative ventures and markets – with special emphasis on recruiting women and youth
- ongoing skill development, professional development, and gender mainstreaming training for project staff and management

The Need for Gender Mainstreaming Frameworks

In 2004, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), in collaboration with the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development, CHF – Partners in Rural Development, Southern African AIDS Trust (SAT), and Dalhousie University, funded a consultation in Southern Africa to develop guidelines for incorporating HIV/AIDS and gender considerations into agricultural programming in high incidence countries. The resulting report: HIV/AIDS, Gender Inequality and the Agricultural Sector²³ addressed the persistent exclusion and misunderstanding of HIV/AIDS and its impact on global food security.

The report called for a “rights based” approach directed at providing entitlements to vulnerable populations for basic needs, health, personal safety. The authors noted that agriculture is by far, “the most effective sector for breaking the poverty cycle, not only

²² Commonwealth Secretariat, *Gender Mainstreaming in HIV/AIDS: Taking a Multisectoral Approach*, Baksh and Amaratunga et al. (eds.), London, 2002

²³ Wiegers, E. and Scott, M. *HIV/AIDS, Gender Inequality and the Agricultural Sector: Guidelines for Incorporating HIV/AIDS and Gender Considerations into Agricultural Programming in High Incidence Countries*. 2005. Ottawa. pp. 4 - 16 See www.icad-cisd.org

because it is central to the livelihoods of the poor, but also because agriculture is the economic heart of many countries”.

This work takes into consideration the relationship of HIV to agriculture: specifically the impact of the disease on household productivity, food consumption and nutrition. At the outset, the disease reduces the numbers of farmers and fishers in the traditional labor pool. Subsistence societies exist in a fragile equilibrium. HIV/AIDS destroys not only the social fabric but also the balance. The disease results in irreversible changes in labor patterns and practices. The loss of subsistence cultivators and artisanal fishers also has profound intergenerational impact, including the loss of traditional knowledge.

In addition, food shortages to the household impact nutritional status as well as overall performance of family members. Many cultivators, particularly women, leave the work force to care for ill family members and orphans. Family cultivators move to less labor intensive food crops in order to save time and physical energy.

It is well recognized that HIV affected farmers are often too weak or too ill to work. They have less time and few resources to acquire the means of production, including seed, insecticides and herbicides. Because of additional family caregiving responsibilities, farmers and rural laborers experience high absenteeism. HIV/AIDS increases the vulnerability of those living in rural and remote areas, particularly populations which cannot readily access or afford public health services for prevention, care, treatment and support. With the collapse of small holdings, disadvantaged farm populations abandon their land and migrate to urban and urban fringe areas to seek food and work.

The GMS Case Study and Action Steps

In the late 1990's, the Commonwealth Secretariat recognized that gender mainstreaming is one of the most effective ways for fostering integrated system planning and management across many sectors – health, agriculture etc. A program was created to integrate existing resources for HIV/AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support into multisectoral planning frameworks. The Gender Management System (GMS) proposed that networks of existing national government and non governmental (NGO) agencies plan and monitor HIV/AIDS interventions within their respective sectors. The program advanced gender equity and created partnerships with NGOs, the private sector and universities. The goal of the GMS program was to ensure the integration of gender into all departmental HIV/AIDS policies and programs through both top down, i.e. politically driven imperatives, and bottom up i.e. community initiatives.

The value-based planning and evaluation multisectoral frameworks which emerged include the following action steps:

- inclusion of gender concepts and planning tools in all areas of program and policy development
- bringing together all sectors to develop a common and ‘shared’ framework which links the international community to national agencies and to the local community
- conducting needs assessments and “assets” inventories, identifying the comparative advantages and strengths, roles and responsibilities, of each of the participating sectors and partners

- promoting greater understanding within each sector of HIV/AIDS and how the disease impacts upon productivity, creativity, civil society
- developing holistic and integrated sectoral plans which complement the strengths and address the gaps in sectoral plans of partner agencies
- fostering working relationships across government departments and ministries, and among NGO, private sector and academic partners.

Lessons Learned – Lessons Shared

Lessons learned from the Guidelines for Incorporating HIV/AIDS and Gender Considerations into Agricultural Programming in High Incidence Countries²⁴, include the following examples from the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC):

- Promotion of women's rights and the advancement of women - the extent to which genuine relationships are established with community stakeholders, women's, men's and youth organizations.
- Support for domestic food security - the degree to which programs build upon pre-existing community strengths and supports for people living with HIV e.g. additional supports for agricultural extension, rural training, nutrition and home economics services, expanded community based and participatory action research in agriculture
- Community and Social Services – the strengthening of services which will ensure the inclusion of people living with, or affected by, HIV e.g. food security programs, social support programs
- Community Organization -- the extent to which community voices are heard and incorporated into planning e.g. facilitation of community forums, community meetings
- Community Development -- the involvement and inclusion of community leaders, including faith based leadership e.g. training, workshops, community meetings
- Policy reform and agricultural sector review: the strength of communication and program linkages from the community to national agricultural plans and programs e.g. Ministry of Agriculture consultations with farmer organizations and producer cooperatives
- Integrated Sectoral Planning - the degree to which planning is holistic and integrated both vertically and horizontally across key sectors: e.g. joint action teams involving representatives from departments of health, agriculture, education; inclusion of HIV/AIDS and gender into the training curriculums
- Gender mainstreaming across sectors - the extent to which ministries and departments have designed and implemented plans that incorporate gender sensitive initiatives, interventions and measurement indicators: e.g. country level supports which provide workplace policies, labor and time saving initiatives, business strategies in support of small farmers, new laws and legislation in support of human rights and women's rights, land reform and agricultural policy reviews
- Education and Agricultural Extension - the development of education and public awareness campaigns to educate the public with respect to HIV prevention, care, treatment and support; to de-stigmatize HIV and promote public dialogue

²⁴ Esther Wieggers and Melanie Scott. HIV/AIDS, Gender Inequality and the Agricultural Sector Guidelines for Incorporating HIV/AIDS and Gender Considerations into Agricultural Programming in High Incidence Countries. Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD), Ottawa. November 2004

As mentioned previously, the SADC countries have made great strides in applying gender and HIV/AIDS lenses to agricultural programming. They have adopted rights based approaches to reach and target specific vulnerable populations. By using multisectoral approaches in planning and evaluation, including gender audits, they have developed specific action plans for food security, nutrition, health and anti retroviral therapies for people living with HIV. They have also identified women's legal issues, including property rights, as well as support to orphans and vulnerable children, as high priorities for rebuilding civil society.

The Southern Africa Development Community regional framework contains a functional "HIV/AIDS and Gender Sensitivity Checklist" which addresses development, implementation and the role and responsibilities of the implementing agencies. They have successfully demonstrated the impact of HIV on rural livelihoods, the vulnerability of women and girls, and the social and economic imbalances which exist between the sexes. The SADC strategies excel in that they include specific objectives for harm and risk reduction with respect to HIV prevention.

Furthermore, monitoring and evaluation processes serve to integrate gender indicators into policy and program plans. Specific indicator measures include citizen involvement and participation, the impact (efficacy) of interventions, the extent to which women are empowered and have greater control over the means of production, profit sharing/distribution, and the ownership of land and property.

Expected program outcomes include improved quality of life, enhanced health status for people living with HIV and for their families, improved agricultural productivity and livelihoods, and last but not least, improved personal safety and physical security for women and children.

In conclusion, gender mainstreaming approaches from one sector, e.g. Health and HIV/AIDS, are portable and can have direct and efficacious applications to agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Through holistic and multisectoral approaches, it is possible to promote new learning cultures and to share "lessons learned" across sectors. This paper has advocated the importance of designing gender mainstreaming and multisectoral approaches as vehicles for social change. There is merit in transferring 'lessons learned' from one sector to another in the pursuit of poverty alleviation through gender and human rights based approaches to development. Gender mainstreaming and gender based analysis are now moving from the margins to the centre of organizational development and policy formulation. Twenty five years after the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD), there may be cause for cautious optimism!

World wide, in 2005, the total number of people living with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) rose to more than 40 million.²⁵ HIV/AIDS is a pandemic in slow motion. It may take up to 10 years from the moment of HIV infection for the disease to manifest itself as Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). AIDS also kills more than 3 million people per year. HIV also infects an additional 6.4 million people each year, the majority of whom are women and girls. In sub-Saharan Africa, 58% of all HIV positive people are female as are 67% of all infected young people.²⁶ The virus is opportunistic and recognizes social, legal and economic vulnerability. Globally women are also becoming infected at younger ages than men.

According to UNAIDS, the number of people living with HIV has been rising in virtually every geographic region, with the greatest increases occurring in East Asia (China), Eastern Europe (Ukraine) and Central Asia.²⁷ And while UNAIDS notes that the sub-Saharan epidemics are stabilizing to some degree, the region remains the most affected with more than 25 million people living with HIV. Southern Africa continues to account for one third of all AIDS deaths worldwide. The HIV prevalence in the Caribbean is the second highest in the world with more than 500,000 people living with HIV²⁸.

AIDS is the leading cause of death among adults between 15-44 years of age in the Caribbean. HIV/AIDS knows no borders. The Public Health Agency of Canada²⁹ estimates that as many as 66,000 people are living with HIV, and of these almost one third are not aware they were HIV positive. In Canada, those at highest risk include women between the ages of 15 – 24 years, First Nations peoples, and immigrants and refugees from endemic nations.

AIDS is a fatal disease with no cure at the present time. The HIV virus is transmitted essentially in 5 basic ways: through unprotected sex; through injection drug use i.e. needle sharing; and through pregnancy; delivery; and breast feeding from an HIV positive mother to her infant³⁰. It is estimated that efficacious vaccines may not be available for 10 to 15 years. Gender sensitive programs can help to stem the advance of the pandemic. However, as noted by UNAIDS, “in many countries, inadequate resources and a failure of political will and leadership still bars the way – especially where HIV has established footholds among marginalized and stigmatized population subgroups such as women who sell sex, drug injectors, and men who have sex with men.”³¹

As a pandemic in slow motion, AIDS contributes to poverty through the erosion of civil society, the loss of life and chronic family illness. The disease reveals the systematic and structural factors which place vulnerable populations at high risk.

In our early work with the Commonwealth Secretariat, it became clear that gender mainstreaming strategies require strong leadership, transformational training which

²⁵ UNAIDS (2004). AIDS Epidemic Update. December 2004, pp. 1-5 introduction see www.unaids.org

²⁶ HIV/AIDS and Gender Issues (2005). Interagency coalition on AIDS and Development, Ottawa, Canada. See www.icad-cisd.com

²⁷ UNAIDS (2004). AIDS Epidemic Update. December 2004, pp 1-5

²⁸ See UNAIDS for regional updates: www.unaids.org

²⁹ See HIV/AIDS Epi Updates, May 2005, Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), www.healthcanada.ca

³⁰ Public Health Agency of Canada, 2005. see www.healthcanada.ca

³¹ See UNAIDS Epidemic Update, December 2004: www.unaids.org

addresses values and attitudes, and political will at all levels of the development process. Political will, perhaps the most single important determinant of successful outcomes, is required at three levels of implementation: micro e.g. the community; meso e.g. the district, provincial or state levels, and macro, the national government levels. Organizational strategies which have the power to create new gender “cultures of learning” require holistic approaches and must engage all levels of society.

The gender strategy recognized and addressed the needs of vulnerable populations. The framework revealed that:

- Feminization of poverty has led to increased vulnerability and numbers of women and girls, many of whom are forced to leave rural areas and enter the commercial sex trade for livelihoods
- Harmful cultural and traditional practices and attitudes make females more vulnerable and at higher risk of acquiring HIV e.g. early marriage, polygamy, female genital mutilation, wife inheritance, coerced sex, and sex with girl children for prevention to name a few
- Women are highly stigmatized by HIV and may be ostracized from their families and communities. Women are more likely than men to be blamed for infecting their partner. They risk the loss of their children, their home as well as their means of production as subsistence food producers.
- Women and girls have less educational attainment and also poorer access to health care services e.g. prevention, care, treatment and support. Therefore they become ill more quickly and ultimately have higher mortality rates as they are less able to access and afford urgently needed prevention and treatment services.
- Because of their biological susceptibility, women and girls are 5 to 6 times more vulnerable to acquire exposure to the HIV.

As a concept, gender mainstreaming and gender management systems in organizations and national states needs to be located within the context of complexity theory³². Multisectoral approaches and learning cultures recognize that HIV/AIDS and agricultural production are inter-related and that HIV/AIDS is much more than a just a health problem. Through gender sensitive case studies and interventions, decision makers can begin to appreciate and learn how the HIV/AIDS pandemic impacts multiple sectors: agricultural production, food security and national economies.

³² See Zimmerman, Brenda; Lindberg, Curt; Plesk, Paul. 1998. Edgeware: Lessons from Complexity Science for Health Care Leaders, Irving, Texas.