

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

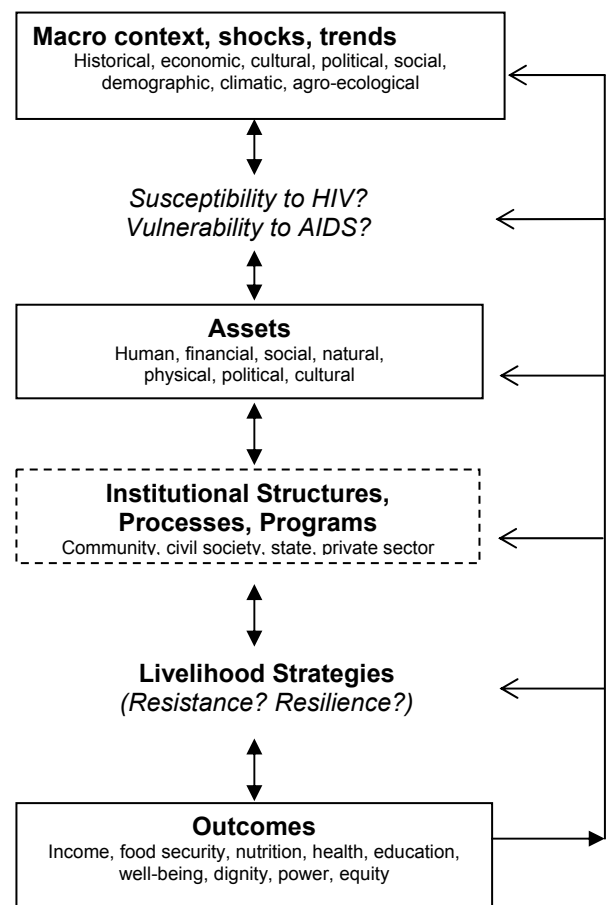
Context

By the year 2000, it was clear that the dynamics of HIV and AIDS were intimately linked to the complex ways in which people live their lives within specific contexts. The multi-dimensional interface between society and the virus itself was key to contextualizing the epidemic, thus helping to make the link between biology and human society in the effort to control the disease.

Within the context of people's livelihoods, food insecurity and malnutrition stand out as key drivers of the spread of HIV and key mediators of the impacts of AIDS. This two way interaction between livelihoods on the one hand, and HIV and AIDS on the other hand, is central to the challenge RENEWAL addresses within the context of widespread poverty and food insecurity in Southern and Eastern Africa.

Taking a livelihoods approach, RENEWAL situates the determinants and impacts of HIV and AIDS 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 and AIDS 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 HIV/AIDS, 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.

Adapting the Livelihoods Framework to HIV and AIDS



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:

1. Gaps in understanding of the dynamic interactions

- Increase focus on contribution of food and nutrition-security outcomes to spread of HIV
- Longitudinal, multi-disciplinary studies to capture dynamics of impact & response

2. Gaps in understanding of 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’

3. 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

Goals, Objectives & Scope

The goals of RENEWAL are to enhance understanding of the two-way interactions between HIV and AIDS and food and nutrition security, and to improve the effectiveness of food and nutrition-relevant policy and programming in the context of HIV and AIDS. 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 activities are focused on the hard-hit regions of Southern and Eastern Africa. However, as a global network, RENEWAL’s influence now reaches beyond Sub-Saharan Africa and links are being forged with groups grappling with similar emerging issues in

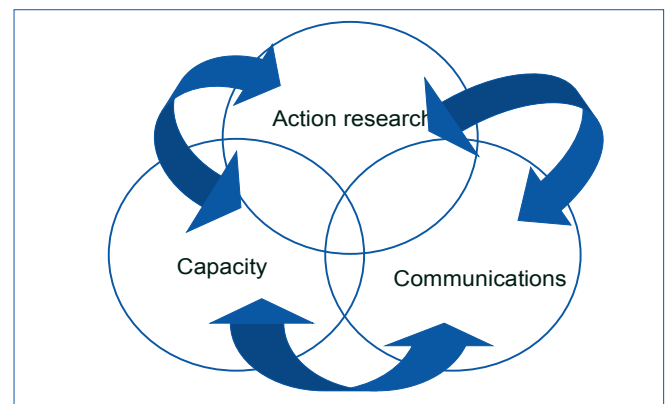
South Asia, starting with India where malnutrition remains prevalent.

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	2005-6
Evidence base developed and published	
Durban Conference, and book published	
Kenya joins RENEWAL, Ethiopia start-up	
RENEWAL 2 – interactions and responses. Nine new studies initiated.	
RENEWAL 3 - toward sustainable livelihoods. Four year plan.	2007-10

Strategy

RENEWAL seeks to strengthen both understanding and response – and crucially, the link between the two. To this end, RENEWAL’s strategy is grounded in three interacting process:



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. Studies undertaken during RENEWAL 1 and currently underway under RENEWAL 2 are summarized:

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, UK
Farming Systems and Resilience to HIV/AIDS in Malawi		Institute for Policy Research and Analysis for Dialogue, Blantyre, Chancellor College

Capacity Strengthening ~ is multi-dimensional, 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 ~ *inreach* approach of forging links between researchers and practitioners is central to successful *outreach*. The process of *inreach* helps ensure that national research priorities are generated by those who most need the answers. 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.

Engaging multiple partners in addressing a complex cross-cutting issue takes time, but once a critical mass of activity is reached, impacts can become self-fuelling.

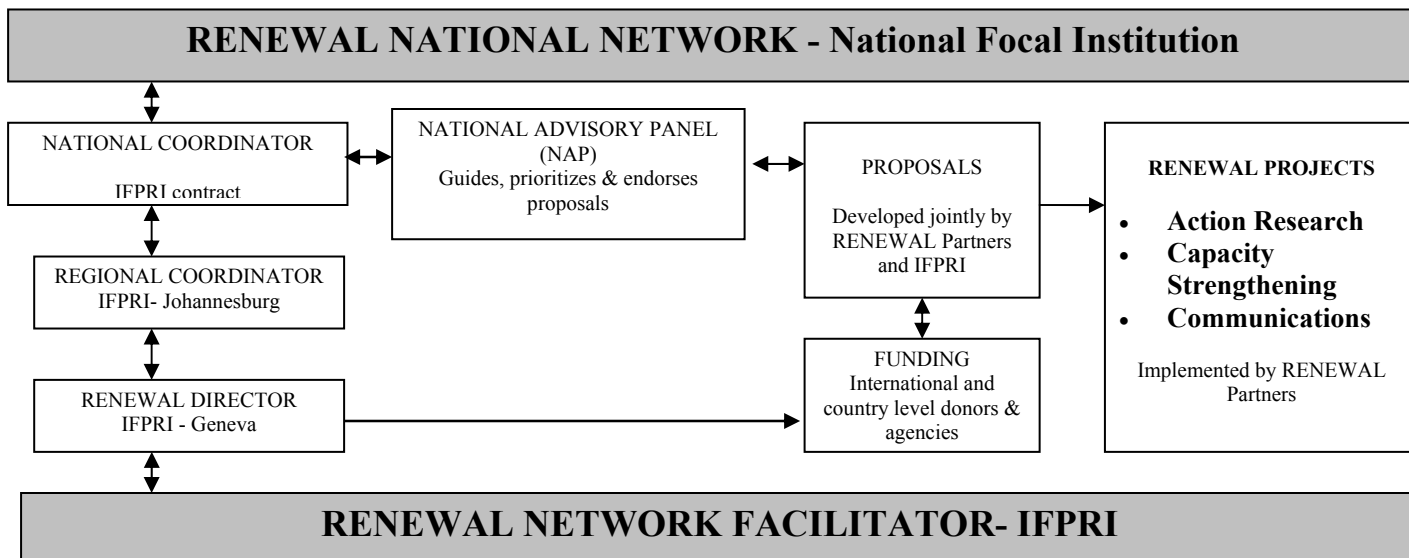
RENEWAL 2: 2005-2007

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, S.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, USA, 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

Governance & Structure

The governance of RENEWAL is grounded in country and regional processes. The architecture comprises national networks, each coordinated by a network coordinator (NC) who liaises with national advisory panels (NAPs), researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders. The National Advisory Panel (NAP) is a non-statutory, multi-sectoral national 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 - 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)

RENEWAL 3 will build directly on what has been 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 will continue to strengthen its focus on *protecting livelihoods and ensuring food and nutrition security in the context of AIDS and poverty*.

In addition to the newly developed strategies of capacity strengthening and policy communications, the action research component of RENEWAL 3 will focus 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.

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Full information, including research publications, is available at www.ifpri.org/renewal

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