

Strengthening responses to the Triple Threat in the Southern Africa region – learning from field programmes in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia

Joint Project of Concern Worldwide (CW), Oxfam International (OI) and The Southern Africa Regional Poverty Network (SARPN)

Background

For many poor people in Southern Africa, a situation of chronic livelihoods insecurity has been unfolding. Many households run a continual risk of being unable to meet their livelihood needs. NGOs across the region have been exploring ways they can ensure poor people achieve better livelihood security. It's been recognised that to develop better operational responses, there is a need to learn from grassroots practitioners on how they are responding to livelihood insecurity within their programmes and projects and look at how this can be strengthened by knowledge and information from research and policy level. This work has meant taking account of what has been called the Triple Threat – the combined web of factors that reduce people's livelihood security:

(1) Food Insecurity (Environmental), (2) Governance and (3) HIV and AIDS

To better understand how programmers were recognising and responding to this complex situation, Concern-Worldwide (CWW), Oxfam-International (OI) and the Southern African Regional Poverty Network (SARPN) commissioned a study. Scott Drimie visited practitioners in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia to better understand how they saw livelihood insecurity on the ground, and how they were responding. The exercise was highly flexible, allowing practitioners an opportunity to identify how their own activities help respond to long-term livelihood insecurity. The study results provided a synthesis of programme responses to livelihood insecurity, with a particular focus on food insecurity and tried to tease out the differences experienced by men or women. The results point to the importance of livelihood diversification and innovative strategies, support that underpins self-reliance not perpetuating dependency, access to information, building on community coping mechanisms, close link between livelihood insecurity and politics. It also emphasises the challenges of non-state actors in working on governance or rights issues and livelihood security. The report was then fed back to all participants and presented at regional level meetings in Ireland, UK and South Africa as well as shared on the SARPN website.

This workshop has been organised as a follow up to the study, to provide participants a platform to discuss their experiences on how civil society organisations can better support poor people. People from CWW, OI and partner organisations in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique along with RENEWAL and FANRPAN at a regional level were invited to spend two days collectively analysing how we as development practitioners can improve our work to ensure poor people are better able to achieve livelihood security, taking better account of the Triple Threat factors. The emphasis was on learning from each other's experiences. It was agreed at the beginning of the two days that we would aim towards one simple expectation:

Expected workshop outcome

We aim for participants to take home one action that would improve the way their organisation responds to the Triple Threat.

This workshop report is a synthesis of the work undertaken over the two days. Rather than providing a verbatim account of the proceedings, it highlights the key sharing and learning under three main headings. The content under each heading was pulled together through brainstorming, group discussions, and plenary, mapping and other participatory techniques. As such, the contents of this report are the responsibility of all people present at the workshop.

What is the Triple Threat?

In 1992, Southern Africa suffered severe drought leading to a huge humanitarian response. By 2001 a less severe drought was experienced in an era of far greater political security (and therefore greater opportunity for the poor), but the impact on the lives of poor people was greater and deeper. Something had happened in the previous 10 years such that people were more vulnerable to livelihood insecurity. By 2003, the UN led efforts to identify what had changed and coined the concept of the Triple Threat. Whilst the concept and what it meant is still contentious, broadly speaking, as a workshop group, we agreed it meant increased livelihood insecurity as a result of three inter-related factors:

- **Food Insecurity (Environment)**

- Vulnerability to drought or flood (uncertain rainfall patterns)
- Soil degradation (in agricultural production areas)
- Environmental degradation (negative impact of farming systems)
- Population pressure on fragile ecosystems (debatable)
- Dependence on mono-cropping (staples)
- Poorly implemented land reform, or policies that favour large scale agriculture or cash crops

- **Governance**

- Policy environment such as tariffs and taxes on agriculture
- Limited options for employment diversification
- Lack of accountability or proper allocation and use of state resources
- Leadership; vision that does not focus on poor people
- Poor functioning of institutions at all level of society
- The relationship between those who govern and the governed
- Participation and the voice of citizens, including lack of civil rights and education

- **HIV and AIDS**

- AIDS disproportionately affects the most productive portion of the population
- Lack of impact of prevention strategies, learning from failures and inadequate use of knowledge on prevention
- Difficulty in providing relevant treatment particularly to rural communities
- Enter twined with poverty and social or cultural norms: masculinity
- Stigma – enables the disease to hide
- Gender inequality
- Lack of knowledge – leading to confusion on the ground
- Long term nature of the pandemic – inter-generational impacts
- HIV as a business where donors apply ideological rather than evidence based solutions on government leading to conditionalities not meeting the reality

What are we as practitioners doing to respond to increasing livelihood insecurity?

As practitioners, we recognised the changing causes of livelihood insecurity, and had made programmatic adjustments accordingly, in particular there was a significant increase in HIV programme activities, mainstreaming of HIV into livelihood programmes, and advocacy on key issues with government or national level actors. Nutrition gardens, income generation, specific support to HIV+ support groups, influencing government policies on issues such as tariffs were common activities across the region.

Participants also reflected on the how success looks like in practise and highlighted a couple of aspects such as working with governments in some cases meant that influencing space was bought through 'hardware' and therefore opening space for 'software' issues such as rights. Another example is community gardens, which are not just about food security, but giving people political capital in systems that are dominated by patronage.

The following table demonstrated broadly current responses whilst more details of what each specific agency is involved in regarding the Triple Threat is found in Annex i.

Strengthening responses to the Triple Threat in Southern Africa – learning from field programmes in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia

Topic / Country	Zimbabwe	Mozambique	Malawi	Zambia
Food Insecurity / Livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of small livestock, water for livestock and management • Agricultural inputs: draught power, seed, fertiliser • Nutrition Gardens • Conservation agriculture • Agro forestry • Water harvesting & provision of potable water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden conservation • Strengthen food production • Promote food processing, utilisation and nutrition • Livestock • Cash transfers / food aid • Crop diversification • Unions set up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food production, farm inputs • Livestock promotion • Nutrition / gardens • IGAs • Cash transfers • Seed multiplication • Sustainable agriculture • Advocacy and lobbying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to markets, income & inputs improving food security (CTP, Market linkages at household levels)
HIV and AIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstreaming of HIV into livelihoods programme • Home Based Care • Income generating for HIV+ • Prevention: mobile VCT, awareness raising, schools programmes, youth out of school • Mitigation: OVC – life skills development, income generation, small livestock • Gender based violence • Prevention of child abuse • Prevention of sexual abuse & sexual exploitation • Ability to link food insecurity with HIV&AIDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV&AIDS coordination structures • Prevention services: awareness raising, mobilisation of traditional leaders, empowerment of women, access to SRH / HIV services, VCT,PMTCT, IEC, • OVCS: care, life skills, food & nutrition, protection and access to services e.g. poverty certificates; • Stigma & Discrimination • Decentralised Planning: civic education, community mobilisation • HIV and gender mainstreaming • Home based care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home based care • Gender mainstreaming & GBV work • Support for orphans: Community Based Child Care and vocational skills • Promotion of Labour Saving Technologies e.g. zero tillage • Communal gardens promotion • IGAs, targeting HIV and AIDS affected households • Food distribution during hunger months • Nutrition interventions & education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced stigma evidenced by increased access to VCT and ART
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and lobbying directed at issues of HIV, Gender and Disability policies • Accountability to communities • Community participation from programme development (needs assessment) through to programme implementation • Community based management of resources & projects • Open dialogue with all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of DAC • Women with control over resources and access to basic health services, information, knowledge on GBV • Communities participating in decision making processes that affect their livelihoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building for local governance structures • Advocacy • Human rights awareness • Promotion of social forums & radio listening clubs • Awareness of economic literacy • National budget tracking • Policy popularising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of policy makers / local leadership structures in community based activities (Police & Judiciary, Barotse King)

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How can we strengthen our responses to the Triple Threat?

Consensus was that as practitioners, we need to improve our ability to be community led. Whilst this is not new, the complexity and the fast pace of change at grassroots level makes it all the more important to learn how to listen well to community challenges and respond accordingly. A note of caution was raised that communities are clearly not homogenous, and all sorts of interest groups are at work. As NGOs, we need to be mindful of these power issues and ensure that the poor or marginalised are properly included.

In order to be better able to recognise and respond to community led change, as organisations we probably needed to strengthen or even modify aspects of our current systems, structures and programming. There is a need to look at more integrated approaches and strengthen our accountability to communities as well as donors.

We pulled out some of the key issues that need to change at different levels:

Community level organisations	National level organisations	International level NGOs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate resources both financial and technical • Inadequate capacity and lack of right type of information • Un-coordinated interventions at community level results in competition • Poor accountability and corruption • Politics of patronage • Not using local knowledge • Lack of understanding of local coping mechanism and responses • Lack of effective community participation • Failure to understand traditional politics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited capacity (financial, HR etc) and weak governance • Agenda often dominated by founding members of organisations • Funding sources inadequate • Political interference and government bureaucracy • Poor accountability to communities and inadequate consultation • Donor conditionalities • Culture of allowances syndrome • Information sharing (poor) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who's agenda are they driving? Need to be more community led • Lack of coordination among agencies or shared vision • No interest in the "bigger games" (IMF / World Bank) • Imposition of worldviews to community level • Advisors vs bureaucrats • Lack of national / international framework for INGOs • Interest / temptation for short term benefits • Limited mandate at national level • Weak institutional structures – No counter acting power • Do not build on existing structures

How can we break down the barriers to ensure our work better supports people to achieve livelihood security?

During the previous discussions, we began to recognize that we were gaining in confidence about how best to respond to HIV and livelihoods within the Triple Threat concept. There were many examples of activities that had had a positive impact from community to national level and many participants had developed integrated responses or mainstreamed HIV into their livelihood work. Furthermore, a greater emphasis on disaster risk reduction and reducing the divide between humanitarian and development responses were all seen as significant steps by which civil society organizations were better responding to community livelihood/ food insecurity. What we recognized as the greater challenge was how we could better influence issues of governance. Whilst there were some examples, particularly from organizations committed to advocacy at national level, as a group it emerged we saw this as a critical leg of the Triple Threat, and one we would need to strengthen.

Back in country groups, participants looked at the barriers they had identified to responding better to the Triple Threat, and came up with a number of practical methods to reduce barriers:

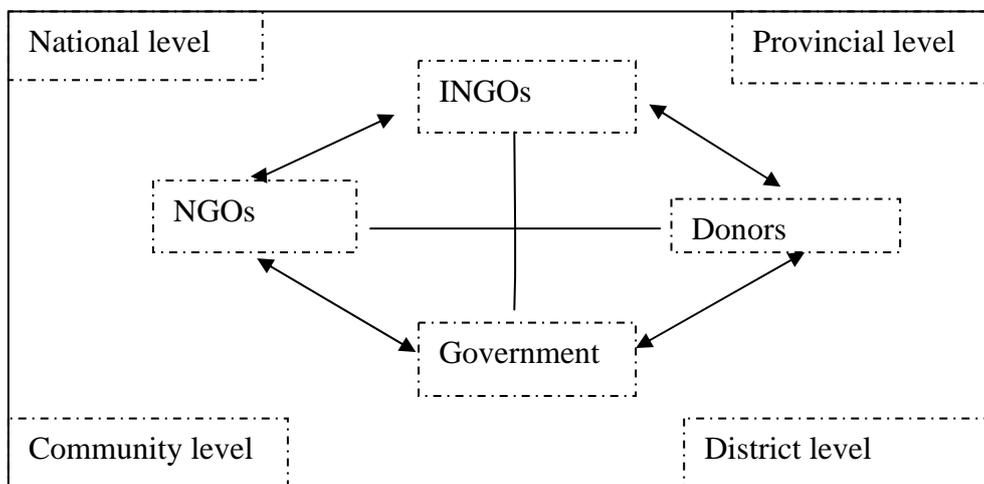
Zimbabwe

- Community participation and involvement is key at every stage. We as NGOs need to be careful not to take over their agenda

- We need to better link relief with long term development programmes
- Facilitate the establishment of economic and social safety nets within communities
- Agree frameworks for accountability between NGO and communities, this may involve using external people to facilitate objective M&E
- Facilitate the preservation and transmission of knowledge at community level
- Work and involve local leadership
- Communicate with district stakeholders through to the national level
- Partnering ARVs with food but not sure how

Mozambique

- Channels for communication between government and civil society were seen to exist, and dialogue between parties is the key to strengthen the structure
- Each actor of the four different actors needs to clarify its role and work to its strengths: INGOs as innovators and lobby donors, local NGOs as national lobbyists, NGOs to respect and support the role of government



Malawi

- NGOs need to participate better at government forums such as District Executive Committees. This will help strengthen them and make them more appropriate to civil society
- Civil society should lobby for more harmonization of CSO activities
- Map CSO programmes at national level as part of the process of strengthening coordination
- Facilitate the development of village action plans – as part of the government decentralisation process
- CSOs must provide better feed back at community level to government employees. To do this, they will need to challenge the allowance syndrome
- CSOs should enter into formal partnerships with government departments on the initial start of the programme / project

Zambia

The team came up with specific actions for each organisation:

RENEWAL

Issue: People in rural Zambia often have problems learning or influencing research agendas.

Solution: Pro-actively ensure better communication on research so people can influence and be influenced by research.

HODI

Issue: HIV and Nutrition – lack of evidence (technical barrier) – need to actually have the evidence that nutrition has the impact it claims to have. But cannot conduct the research investigation due to ethical considerations and funding shortage.

Solution: Kenneth Kaunda Foundation – has done in depth research – possible partnership and collaboration

Concern Worldwide – OGB

Issue: Despite agricultural inputs people are still food insecure, whilst we know broadly speaking why, there is limited analytical research on some of the “upstream” issues of agricultural production and food security ie marketing and access to markets.

Solution: Need to look at barriers to access to markets for specific produce not just rice but also cassava etc then lobby government on how to ensure farmers in more isolated regions of the country can access these markets to their advantage.

DAPP Zambia

Issue: HIV+ people need greater livelihood support as part of positive living interventions.

Solutions: ensure HIV+ people participate in livelihoods interventions. Look specifically at issues of nutrition such as local foods and diversified diets and local herbal remedies. This will probably involve some degree of research into local areas. Any ideas must be translated into local languages.

- Learning from HODI – persuade Shoprite or the Catholic Diocese in collaboration with the medical sector to fund setting up and staffing of mobile VCT in Western Province
- Encourage other organisations supporting HIV+ people to promote positive living including nutrition

Oxfam GB

Issue: Some of the poorest most marginalized people live in very hard to reach areas. Need to overcome these logistical challenges by better sharing of information and resources. However, the competitive NGO environment doesn't encourage this and lack of shared vision and therefore coordination of activities is hindering the process.

Solution: Need to establish a framework to guide such collaborations at HQ level that creates the energy and space for such collaboration. Then need to start a transparent policy first with CWW, then other INGOs and NGOs.

From the discussion M&E and knowledge Management systems emerged ad a major issue

M&E and knowledge management systems are core to all interventions to understand and show the impact of interventions and to document and share knowledge, experiences and learning from our work. These systems should involve communities at all levels. However to do so we need to change our ways of communications as results from research show that communities are interested in complex results, but not in written format. At an organisational level M&E and knowledge management need to involve staff at all levels and not just at a senior level.

What are the next steps?

Immediate

- To share the workshop report with an up to date contact list by end July
- To ensure every participant has a copy of the Triple Threat report commissioned in 2006
- For each participant to identify any existing documents they have related to the Triple Threat to share with the contact list
- For participants to put into practise their commitment to change.

Longer term

- To identify a regional body who can manage a project to document the collective approaches to challenging the Triple Threat in order to continue the sharing and learning.

Conclusion

The workshop concluded at this point, with a commitment to try to ensure a network of practitioners would continue to work together, with regional support. And that new relationships had been forged at country level that should prove useful for the future.

Annex I – details of main activities of participating organisations related to the Triple Threat

Malawi

<p><u>Concern Malawi:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports CBOs to improve the economic status of households. • Supports HIV affected households, particularly orphans, with farm inputs and skills building to achieve food security. 	<p><u>Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports people achieve food security with grain banks and revolving loans • Supports HBC services • Capacity building of community based services
<p><u>Mponela AIDS Information & Counselling Centre (MAICC)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV testing & counselling • Care for OVCs through education support and home gardens • Care & nutrition support for PLWHA & OVC 	<p><u>Malawi Economic Justice Network</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with district communities (Mejo District Chapters) to tackle hunger, poverty and social justice through policy and advocacy at national, regional and international level.

Mozambique

<p><u>Oxfam GB Mozambique</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build government capacity to implement national HIV programme 	<p><u>National AIDS Council (CNCS) Manica</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention • Treatment • Impact mitigation including improving livelihood security
<p><u>Concern Mozambique</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce vulnerability to disasters through risk reduction ie livelihoods • support HIV prevention in a livelihoods programme in Manica • Participation of vulnerable people to decision making processes. 	<p><u>Kukula in Vilankulos</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • micro finance to vulnerable people • support to orphans and vulnerable children • capacity building of CBOs

Zambia

<p><u>HODI</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports HIV+ people with nutrition, food production and value chain addition • OVCs with school bursaries to get them back to school • HIV and AIDS prevention and ART adherence • Enterprise development through micro-credit, and income generation 	<p><u>Development AID From People to People – In Kaoma District</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support HIV+ people through material support and capacity building support groups. Focus on positive living and access to treatment.
<p><u>Concern</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing technical and financial support to HIV+ groups • Strengthens government structure to deliver national AIDS strategy • Ensure HIV+ people and affected families are included in production, processing and marketing diversification • Mainstreams HIV into disaster risk reduction programme 	<p><u>Oxfam GB Zambia</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support flood victims with public health facilities and cash transfers • Work with HIV+ people providing livestock (goats and chickens) and developing income generation projects

Zimbabwe

<p><u>Concern In Zimbabwe</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition gardens and conservation farming focussing on vulnerable members of the community • Improved uptake/access of PMTCT/VCT • Anti-AIDS Clubs in Schools • Empowering girls and women to negotiate for safe and voluntary sex. 	<p><u>Oxfam GB Zimbabwe:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterpoint rehabilitation and installation of elephant pumps • Community health clubs and drama groups • Youth HIV and AIDS prevention programmes • Life skills for OVCs • Home-based care programme • Conservation agriculture and agro-forestry, seed fairs and livestock fairs and nutrition gardens
<p><u>Lower Guruve Development Association</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food security through small grains, nutrition gardens, small scale irrigation • Primary Health care through water and sanitation, Home-based care (HIV) 	<p><u>Dabane Trust</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to water through irrigation, water point rehabilitation etc

Regional:

RENEWAL

- Focussed on action research, policy and programme dialogue and advocacy – on HIV and AIDS, Livelihoods and Food Security in Malawi, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia, Kenya, Zimbabwe

FANRPAN:

- Research on the impact of HIV and AIDS on Agriculture and food security in Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

SARPN:

- We support the development work of partners by managing development information (dissemination, repackaging, etc) across the SADC region