



HIV/AIDS AWARENESS RAISING AND FORMULATION OF APPROPRIATE RESPONSES WITHIN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

PROJECT FACTSHEET

Objective is to raise awareness of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on HIV/AIDS and agricultural sector interactions and to enable its staff to formulate appropriate and practical agricultural strategies that would address HIV/AIDS concerns among the rural population.

Background

Lao PDR still remains a low-prevalence country with HIV rate for persons between 15 and 49 years less than 0.05%. Of those whose mode of transmission was known, 95,1% had been transmitted through heterosexual sex.

In the Lao PDR, HIV/AIDS is no longer a "city disease" and increasingly rural men and women are becoming infected, following the 2003 case report compiled by the National AIDS Center, 48% of the infected cases reported where farmers and rural workers. With over 80% of the population living in rural areas, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) has an important role to play in ensuring rural people are more aware of HIV/AIDS.

Many of the factors that increase people's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS fall within the mandate of the agricultural sector, such as food insecurity and poverty. Food insecurity and poverty increase the likelihood of HIV transmission, as poor and food insecure rural people are more likely to migrate during the off-season for employment reasons, with the attendant risk of men visiting sex workers and infecting their spouses upon return.

There is thus a crucial need for assistance to raise awareness among MAF senior staff and to increase their understanding of the underlying causes and the potential impact of HIV/AIDS on rural communities. In addition, there is a need for developing an HIV/AIDS strategy document that could guide the future work of MAF in addressing the causal factors relevant to the sector as a means to prevention, including the advancing of gender equality and addressing poverty and food insecurity.

Period

2 years

Actors and partners

MAF and specific departments

Budget

US\$ 493,398

Site

MAF central and provincial levels, a selected pilot district according to the strategy

Project outputs

1. Senior staff of MAF at the national and provincial levels trained for a deeper knowledge of HIV/AIDS and its interactions with the agricultural sector
2. A HIV/AIDS strategy to help MAF to integrate HIV/AIDS concern in agricultural activities
3. Implementation of selected activities suggested in the strategy at grass root level

For more information, please contact,
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