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# **HIV/AIDS and Conservation: What can the conservation sector do?**

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# Links Between HIV/AIDS & the Natural Environment

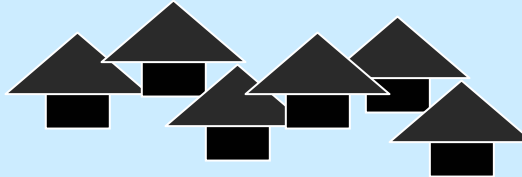
Int'l



National



Community



Household



Individual



# Loss of Community Capacity

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- Loss of community champions
- Breakdown of governance structures for resource management
- Loss of indigenous knowledge
- Loss of time for conservation (more time spent nursing the sick and meeting basic needs – especially for women)





# Changes in land use

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- greater use of fire due to agricultural labor shortage
- increased soil erosion due to changing agricultural practices
- land management changes due to shifts in ownership and loss of indigenous knowledge



# Resource user groups at high risk

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**Resource users and traders who travel away from home are particularly at risk, for example:**

- fishing communities where men land catches away from home, e.g. Lake Victoria
- trading communities where women have to travel to trade resources, e.g. Maputo charcoal merchants





# Role of traditional healers

**Medicinal plants are used to treat opportunistic infections in many communities in Africa**

e.g. Tanga AIDS Working Group, Tanzania, (partnership of traditional healers and government hospital) has treated 4800 AIDS patients with herbal remedies, reporting :

- increased appetite and weight gain
- stop diarrhea, reduce fever
- eliminate oral thrush, cure herpes zoster
- cure ulcers, rashes and fungus



# Impacts on medicinal plants

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**Traditional healers in 6-site Malawi/Mozambique study reported increased scarcity of 32 medicinal species, driven by:**

- increase in destructive harvesting (85% of healers)
- increased commercial harvesting by outsiders (69%)
- conversion of forest land (54%)
- policies prohibiting collection (23%)

(Barany *et al.* 2005,  
Miombo woodland study)







# Links Between HIV/AIDS & the Natural Environment

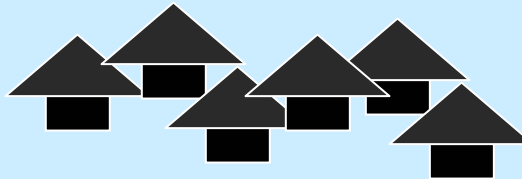
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# Impacts on Conservation Capacity

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## loss of capacity in conservation organizations

- WWF/CAR government lost 3 out of 10 key senior staff from Dzanga-Sangha program
- KwaZulu Natal Wildlife lost 9% of its 3000 staff
- Wildlife & Environmental Society of Malawi lost 7 of 50 staff
- a fire awareness program in Southern Africa lost 10 out of 12 extensionists





# Vulnerability of Conservation Sector

- protected area staff are posted to remote areas away from families
- drivers and community workers are frequently away from home, visiting different areas
- law enforcement officers may use undue influence over local women
- law enforcement staff often rotated between protected areas to reduce corruption/build experience
- HIV/AIDS awareness is often low and prevention not promoted (e.g. condom availability)





# Impacts on Conservation Organizations

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- loss of productivity – e.g. law enforcement, policy, research, education, tourism, community work, protected area management
- loss of institutional memory
- threat to conservation partnerships
- loss of training investment (e.g. \$40,000 for masters)
- diversion of conservation funds for AIDS costs, e.g. funerals, sick leave, training for new staff

# Longer Term Impacts

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- Social, economic and environmental impacts have not yet peaked
- Impacts on national and international security, and law and order
- AIDS orphans increasing – low education, future ‘youth bulge’ – less commitment to sound land and natural resource management
- Increased food insecurity, poverty, natural resource depletion and environmental degradation







# What can the conservation sector do?

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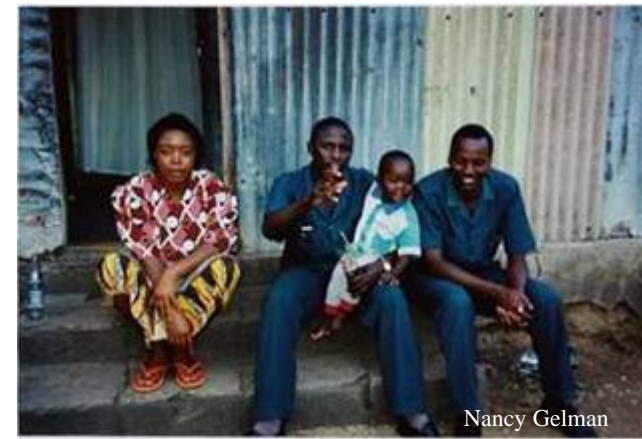
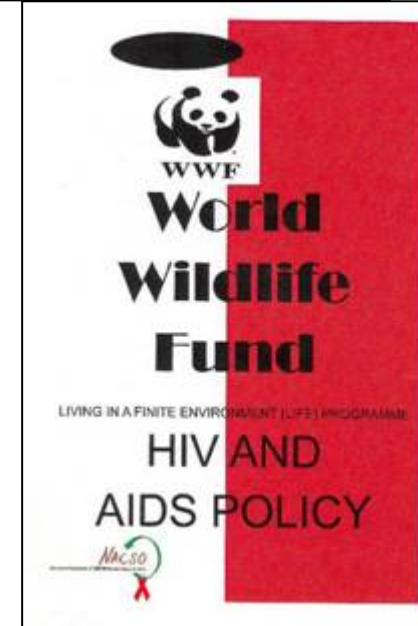
- The health sector is not addressing the AIDS/conservation linkage
- a multi-sectoral approach is needed
- the conservation community needs to take action





# Maintain Conservation Capacity

- Develop HIV/AIDS workplace policies
- Promote awareness, VCT and wellness programs
- Overcome stigma and discrimination
- Reduce remoteness of staff from families
- Consider providing ARV drugs for staff
- Integrate HIV/AIDS in planning and fundraising
- Partner with other sectors to find solutions





# Modify Training Programs

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- train more people on shorter courses, broadening skill base
- incorporate HIV/AIDS in conservation curricula and college policies
- reduce separation of staff from families during training (e.g. distance learning)
- provide pre-departure HIV/AIDS awareness
- mentor junior staff who take over senior jobs



# Maintain Community Capacity

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Since the conservation community works in remote rural areas often with poor access to health services, integrate HIV/AIDS into community conservation programs (with health partners):

- promote HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, and focus on vulnerable groups
- promote VCT and treatment where possible
- integrate HIV/AIDS in population-health-environment projects as appropriate





MINSANTE/MINEF

# Attention! Le SIDA Existe!



## Abstinence, Fidélité, Condom !



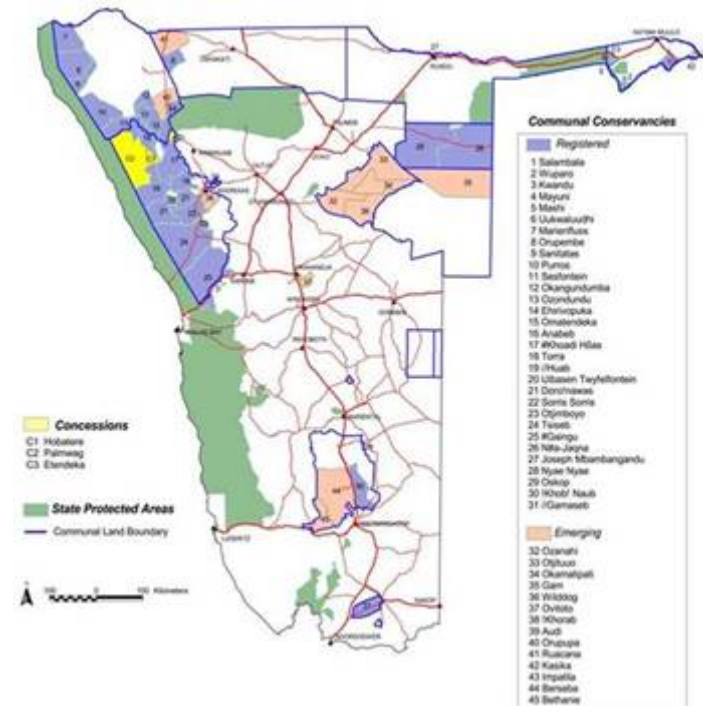


# NACSO HIV/AIDS Project

Namibia Association of CBNRM Support Organizations (NACSO)'s HIV/AIDS project has potential to reach one tenth of Namibia's population through communal conservancies, in remote, underserved areas

cascading through 3 levels:

- support organizations
- conservancy structures
- communities





# Help Community Livelihoods

- Promote sustainable livelihoods through sound resource/land use with low labor inputs
- Promote labor-saving agriculture
- Promote revenue-generating enterprises (e.g. tourism)
- Establish grant funds for communities' relief efforts





# Improve management of medicinal plants

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- strengthen traditional healer associations
- train community members in sustainable harvesting
- strengthen tenure and governance – control outsiders and enforce community collection rules
- cultivate plants in gardens (easy access, but technical challenges); plant seedlings in forest
- increase efficiency of extraction of active ingredients
- continue research on medicinal plants



WWF-Canon Sandra MBANEFO OBIAGO



WWF-Canon Mauri RAUTKARI



# Empower women and girls

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- promote women's health (including family planning – dual service delivery with HIV prevention); negotiation of safe sex
- promote women's resource management and livelihood programs
- strengthen women's resource governance roles
- promote girls' education
- promote changes in land inheritance policies and practices
- encourage will-making in rural areas







# Help orphans

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- mentor youth in natural resource management
- document/foster indigenous knowledge
- encourage education
- promote training and employment for orphans (e.g. Umzi Wethu project)
- assist orphan support through natural resource enterprises





# Scaling up efforts

- resolution at World Conservation Congress for IUCN and members to take action
- studies to increase understanding and quantify impacts
- manual for conservation sector
- national programs to roll out efforts:
  - national workshops
  - assistance with workplace policies
  - mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in community conservation programs
- targeting conservation/natural resource training institutions
- taking African experiences to next-wave regions
- networking and capacity-building



# Challenges



- overcoming stigma
- finding and mentoring conservation-HIV/AIDS champions
- developing partnerships
- working within limitations of health infrastructure
- gathering quantitative information to make a stronger case for multi-sectoral approach
- monitoring impacts of interventions
- fundraising for multi-sectoral approaches, especially at international levels

