

## **HIV/AIDS Impacts on physical Environment**

### **Background:**

While the natural history of HIV infection is well described, the timing and impact of the pandemic on the physical environment as the disease progresses is not. A better understanding of how HIV/AIDS affects the physical environment will improve cost-benefit analyses of interventions and allow environmental organizations to advocate and solicit for more resources to wipe out the spread of HIV.

**Methods:** A pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect information about environment from 50 confirmed HIV positive patients at Kiruddu Health Center under the Infectious Diseases Institute-Kampala City Council HIV/AIDS project. Data was coded, entered and later analyzed using EPI Info.

**Results:** Results from the study revealed the following; (i) 12% revealed that the dependence of a clean, productive and healthy environment on labour inputs means that as the younger members who are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS die, the reduction in labour supply leads to a dirty, unproductive and unhealthy environment. (ii) 9% said that the dependence of high quality environment maintenance on human population further implies that as people are lost to HIV/AIDS, the environment will tend to be poorly maintained and there will be no room for its improvement as there is no one to plant more trees, clean water wells to mention but a few. (iii) 10% said that increased HIV/AIDS mortality amongst environmentalists implies that there will then be no one to advocate for environmental protection laws and this will lead to destruction of the environment such as cutting down forests, construction of houses in wetland to mention but a few. (iii) 35% revealed that remittances from environmental activities decline or even totally cease to exist since the people who are involved in such activities are now being lost to HIV/AIDS or weakened by HIV/AIDS. (iv) 30% said that as people discover that they are HIV positive, they tend to have no hope in future and eventually sell off all the valuable environmental property they have such as selling off their forest reserves for timber. (v) 4% did not think that HIV/AIDS had impact on the environment that it was instead the HIV negative population and government that are a threat to the environment.

**Conclusions:** The study revealed that the impact of HIV/AIDS on environment is all negative and so there is need for environmentalists to also get involved in the fight against the deadly pandemic in order to keep a clean, safe and healthy environment.