

What is Acting on AIDS?

Acting on AIDS is a network of college and university students who are dedicated to raising awareness and promoting activism on the global AIDS pandemic. Started by Christian college students in the United States, with the support of World Vision USA, it spread quickly to campuses across the country. World Vision Canada is excited to be supporting its growth in Canada now as well*. This network of Acting on AIDS (AoA) chapters seeks to move students to action and to advocate for those impacted by the global AIDS pandemic.

The Global Challenge

AIDS introduces many global challenges, as it is both a product of injustice and a catalyst of further inequities. Our message is intended to mobilize students to create a groundswell of activity to bring attention to the AIDS pandemic and all of the injustices that feed it and result from it. Acting on AIDS introduces the fight against disease, poverty, and injustice as a journey toward understanding the life and message of Christ. Increased awareness of these global challenges should inspire us to make fighting injustice an expression of our relationship to God; it should not be taken as a message of despair about the state of AIDS and brokenness in the world. Our focus is to care for the *least of these*—the millions of widows and orphans who have been devastated by AIDS and are living in desperate poverty.

Acting on AIDS has always been a grassroots movement. Taking ownership of your group is essential to make it grow. Each chapter is self-governed and self-sustained among local members on each campus. There is not one organization or program that can care for and advocate for all orphans and widows by itself. But together, our unified voices can change our community, which in turn can change society, which ultimately could change the world. Through this toolkit, we invite you to take a journey of personal growth, out of which the knowledge and confidence to invite others in the fight against AIDS will flow.

There are three main components in this toolkit to help you to begin fighting AIDS and poverty: “how-to” documents to help you plan awareness-raising activities, educational pieces on HIV and AIDS, and resources that will help you engage others.



Activism

After you send in your group's information (see the Acting On AIDS Resources section), your campus movement can start with the *Do You See Orange?* campaign. This campaign will generate the awareness that you need to attract those who are interested in fighting AIDS. When you have established who will be the leadership core of your chapter, you can then establish meeting times and timelines for other activities, such as *World AIDS Day*, the *Broken Bread Meal*, advocacy and letter-writing campaigns, and various fundraising opportunities. Once you are in the planning stages of your event, be sure to let us know what you are up to sending an email to actingonaids@worldvision.ca. That way we can support you and help network groups who are doing different actions, in order to share ideas and resources. We may even be able to help get media coverage for larger events that you do.

Education

To educate yourself and others on AIDS, please read the documents found in the resources section of the toolkit. To understand more about advocacy and its strategic importance, please read the documents found in the advocacy section.

Resources

On this DVD we have provided a number of useful videos to use as you engage others. More details on these, and suggested moments when to use them, are provided in the resources section. We also have a list of recommended books that will help you go deeper in engaging not only HIV and AIDS, but also the larger reality of global poverty.

AoA Canada

We at World Vision Canada are excited to see students across Canada joining Acting on AIDS and taking action. World Vision Canada seeks to engage all Canadians in our programs, but with Acting on AIDS Canada we are seeking first to reach Christian university and college students. As most Canadian universities and college campuses already have active AIDS awareness and activism clubs, we feel our unique contribution in that environment is to stir up Christian groups to action on the global AIDS crisis. In doing so, we encourage all Canadian AoA groups to work in partnership with other campus clubs, wherever possible, in order to see positive change happen.



acting on AIDS



As Kofi Annan, former General Secretary of the United Nations, has said, AIDS requires “a response from all of us, whoever and wherever we are. A response that makes humanity live up to its name.”

Welcome to the journey, we can't wait to meet you on the way!

Henry VanderSpek
Education & Public Engagement
World Vision Canada

* Note that not all US AoA programs will be supported in Canada, due to staffing levels or Canada-specific criteria. This DVD has been adapted to reflect those variances. If you have any questions, please contact actingonaids@worldvision.ca

