

Issue Spotlight: HIV & AIDS

“This unprecedented crisis requires an unprecedented response -- a response from all of us, whoever and wherever we are. A response that makes humanity live up to its name.”

- Kofi Annan, Former United Nations Secretary General

HIV/AIDS in Today's World:

- 40.3 million people live with HIV & AIDS worldwide.
- Sub-Saharan Africa is home to 70% of the people living with HIV.
- 2.3 million children are infected with HIV & AIDS in the world today.
- AIDS has orphaned 15 million children in countries around the world.
- At the current rate, there will be 20 million orphans due to AIDS by 2010.
- Each day 8,000 people die of AIDS.

Frequently asked questions about the HIV& AIDS pandemic:

What is the HIV & AIDS pandemic?

A pandemic refers to the widespread, global outbreak of a disease. We consider the current spread of HIV & AIDS a pandemic because it affects millions of people all over the world regardless of age, gender, race or social well-being.

Where is HIV & AIDS most prevalent?

The highest rates of HIV & AIDS incidence are in sub-Saharan Africa. Although Africa is home to 10 per cent of the world's population, an estimated 70 per cent of the people living with HIV worldwide live in sub-Saharan Africa. In the highest-prevalence countries, over one third of the population can be infected with HIV & AIDS. The AIDS pandemic is also spreading rapidly to other regions of the world—especially Asia, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and Russia.

What are some key points about the HIV/AIDS pandemic?

1. **HIV & AIDS devastates communities and families**—Essentially it threatens the quality of life, economic progress and social structure of entire communities and countries. In many parts of the world, HIV & AIDS is actually reversing years of progress made on developmental projects and initiatives.
2. **HIV & AIDS disproportionately affects women and girls**—Today women account for 57 per cent of people living with HIV & AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa; and 60 per cent of all new HIV infections in this region are of young women and girls.
3. **HIV & AIDS is often misunderstood and misrepresented**—AIDS is a disease that comes draped in stigma and fear. In many parts of the world, there is not always a clear understanding of how the disease is transmitted or treated, so fear of contraction results in the victimization and shunning of people infected with HIV/AIDS. Education and awareness-raising programs are key to preventing the spread of HIV & AIDS.
4. **People who live in HIV & AIDS-affected communities are not helpless victims**—Countless people are responding by mobilizing community resources to educate about HIV & AIDS, provide care for people affected by HIV & AIDS, and advocate for the resources and support they require to fight HIV & AIDS.

What are some of the important ways to combat this disease in high-prevalence countries?

The immediate response to stopping the spread of HIV & AIDS is by educating communities on how to protect themselves. However, the rate of HIV & AIDS prevalence will not stop growing until the causes for the spread are reduced. Rebuilding communities, working for peace, long-term education, providing food security, medical care, and proper nutrition are all instrumental to stopping the spread of HIV.



Useful HIV & AIDS Websites

www.unaids.org

The United Nations AIDS organization. A very useful source for the latest statistics and information on the fight to halt the spread of HIV and AIDS.

www.worldvision.org/actingonaids

World Vision USA's Acting on AIDS site is a fantastic resource for AoA groups. You'll find lots of new resources and events to get informed about. World Vision Canada will be staying connected with Canadian groups providing Canadian-specific information and updates as relevant, but the US site is the lead hub for AoA Programs.

www.millenniumcampaign.org

Learn about all of the eight Millennium Development Goals ("MDGs"), including one on HIV & AIDS.

www.makepovertyhistory.ca

The Canadian site for a global campaign to fight poverty – includes work to support the fight to stop the spread of AIDS.

www.theglobalfund.org/en/about/aids

A great source for information on the crisis and the financial needs required to really tackle it. You can also see how countries are (or are not!) living up to their financial pledges to the fund.

www.gmfc.org

The Global Movement for Children (GMC) is a worldwide movement of organizations, institutions, individuals and children. It unites efforts to build a world fit for children. The Lessons for Life guide for raising awareness about HIV/AIDS is on this site, a handy tool for raising awareness about the challenge of this disease.

www.unicef.org/voy

This is a great site run by the United Nations and made for youth from around the world. Lots of great HIV & AIDS related activities and tools.

www.youthandhiv.org

A site dedicated to providing policymakers, media, youth, and all activists with the tools to ensure that young people are at the centre of global and national debate and policymaking.

www.youthaidscoalition.org/

The website for the Global Youth Coalition on HIV & AIDS – youth from around the world who are tackling the pandemic from a youth perspective.

World Vision Canada Resources:

- Acting on AIDS Canada: www.worldvision.ca/actingonaids
- For our latest advocacy campaign go to www.worldvision.ca/justice
- Our educational resources - www.worldvision.ca/resources
- For more information contact: actingonaids@worldvision.ca

