

HIV and AIDS, TB and Disability



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World Vision is committed to working with communities to help all people especially children, women, the sick and people living with disabilities. We also work in partnership with people most affected by poverty, at risk of exploitation, neglect and abuse and living with HIV.

HIV and AIDS

The HIV and AIDS epidemic is fuelled by poverty. It has touched every continent and killed millions of people around the world. This disease is wiping out a generation of parents who should be able to work for the development of their communities. About 12 million children have lost one or both parents to AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa alone and the number of children orphaned by the epidemic continues to rise. World Vision is working

hard to help stop the spread of the disease and to care for those living with HIV and AIDS.

Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) causes more deaths worldwide than any other curable infectious disease and is the leading cause of HIV-related deaths worldwide. This is a treatable disease and we are working with local government and communities in the control of TB.

Disability

World Vision recognizes that people are disabled by attitudinal, institutional or environmental barriers that exist in society. Individuals who live with a disability are often at increased risk of becoming HIV infected than non-disabled people. According to the World Bank, disabled people are up to three times more likely to be victims of physical and sexual abuse, as members of the general population. Once they become HIV infected, they

are much less likely to access healthcare services. World Vision works with communities to educate people about disability and to help those with disabilities live a fuller and safer life.

HIV and AIDS

The global AIDS epidemic has been called the greatest humanitarian crisis of all time. The UN estimates that by the end of 2007 more than 33 million people were living with HIV and that every day nearly 7,400 people are newly infected with HIV and 5,500 die from AIDS-related illness. The vast majority of those with HIV are in sub-Saharan Africa, where about 60 per cent of adults living with HIV in 2007 were women. Important progress has been made in addressing the epidemic including increased access to treatment and decreases in prevalence rates in some countries. However AIDS remains an exceptional threat that affects every aspect of development.

While Africa remains at the epicenter of the global AIDS epidemic, countries like India continue to see troubling increases in new infection rates. World Vision is playing a key role in responding to the pandemic and is committed to helping achieve the Millennium Development Goals which include halting the spread of HIV and providing universal access to treatment by the year 2015. Our holistic approach means that we have incorporated HIV and AIDS as a crosscutting theme in the majority of our programs. In addition, we have implemented targeted programming in five areas:

1. Creating a culture of care and concern

We extend care to people affected by HIV and AIDS by providing home-based care, training peer counselors and improving access to voluntary counselling and testing.

2. Encouraging and supporting a community-based response

World Vision supports local groups that care for persons living with HIV and AIDS and HIV and AIDS-affected families.

3. Protecting the rights of children and families

Widows and orphans are often victims of relatives or neighbours taking their land and possessions. To prevent this, World Vision community workers educate parents about inheritance laws and help them

write their wills. They also visit orphans regularly to monitor their well-being and security.

4. Strengthening families' ability to cope with problems

In developing countries, women and girls usually care for people living with HIV, AIDS patients and orphans. Already poor, they face increased financial burdens. World Vision's microcredit programs provide vocational training and loans, enabling women to provide for their families.

5. Promoting HIV and AIDS prevention and awareness

To reduce the stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS, World Vision conducts awareness campaigns in partnership with local governments and communities. Many people are dangerously unaware of the causes of HIV infection. Prevention education helps people protect themselves from infection, with special attention placed on preventing mother-to-child transmission.

World AIDS Day

On December 1, World AIDS Day serves as a worldwide call to action against this global pandemic. On World AIDS Day, people around the world gather to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS, remember the millions of victims, and promote HIV prevention. The theme of World AIDS Day 2008 was Lead, Empower, Deliver.

Tuberculosis (TB)

Limited access to health care, poor nutrition and high population densities all place people in the developing world at a higher risk of acquiring TB infection. There were an estimated 9.27 million new cases of TB globally in 2007. TB is difficult to diagnose and so is often not properly treated. Left untreated, someone with active TB can infect 10 to 15 other people each year. The bacterium that causes TB is carried by an estimated one third of the world's population. While a healthy person's immune system is usually able to respond to the bacterial infection and not develop the active form of the disease, those with compromised immune systems have a high risk of contracting an active infection.

As a result of the vulnerability of those with HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis is a leading cause of HIV-related deaths worldwide. In countries with high HIV prevalence, up to 80 per cent of people with TB test positive

for HIV. Globally there were 700,000 TB cases among people living with HIV in 2006, and an estimated 456,000 people living with HIV died as a result of TB in 2007 despite the fact that TB is curable.

For many years, efforts to tackle TB and HIV have been largely separate, despite the overlap. However, it is now increasingly recognized that only through combined and coordinated efforts for both TB and HIV can this dual epidemic be stopped.

World Vision's TB programming increases cure rates among people infected with TB, reduces transmission and mitigates the risk of developing drug-resistant strains of TB bacilli due to non-compliance with treatment programs. This approach supports the components of the international Stop TB Partnership (<http://www.stoptb.org/>)

- **Empowerment**—Reaching communities with information on symptoms and treatment and supporting community groups that carry out TB control tasks is a vital part of the response to TB.
- **Engagement**—Training health care providers on effective diagnosis and treatment and establishing linkages among health care providers to identify and test potential TB patients can help catch the infection early and prevent transmission.
- **Treatment**—Improving the accessibility of the DOTS (directly-observed treatment short course) treatment program and taking steps to ensure compliance and full treatment reduces the risk of developing drug resistant TB. The most successful and cost-effective TB treatment strategy, DOTS involves directly observing TB patients take their medication for six to eight months to ensure it is taken in the right combination and appropriate dosage in an effort to prevent the development of multi-drug resistant TB (MDR-TB).
- **Advocacy**—Encouraging all levels of government to support TB control activities and supporting national TB strategies is important to a coordinated response.

Disability

World Vision recognizes that people are disabled by attitudinal, institutional or environmental barriers that exist in society. These limitations result in the exclusion from

education of 98 per cent of children with disabilities worldwide. Rather than focusing on individuals' impairments and their functional limitations, World Vision disability programming seeks to empower, educate and advocate for those living with disabilities. We raise awareness about the importance of schooling for disabled children and help schools to support them and to increase their enrollment in school.

The 600 million individuals globally who live with a disability are also at a much higher risk of HIV infection. There is a significant gap in education about HIV and AIDS among those with disabilities. Disabled people are up to three times more likely to be victims of physical abuse, sexual abuse or rape as members of the general population. Not enough is being done to ensure that people with disabilities are able to protect themselves or access HIV and AIDS information and services. World Vision is working to address this through education and advocacy.

How can you help?

Child Crisis Partners

<http://www.worldvision.ca/give-a-gift/Crisis-Child-Partner/Pages/Crisis-Child-Partners.aspx>

HIV and AIDS care kit

<https://catalogue.worldvision.ca/Gifts/Forms/Gift.aspx?giftId=2089>

Prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV

<https://catalogue.worldvision.ca/Gifts/Forms/Gift.aspx?giftId=1651>

Acting on AIDS in Canada

<http://www.worldvision.ca/Education-and-Justice/Acting-on-AIDS-Canada/Pages/Acting-on-AIDS-Canada.aspx>