

## HIV and AIDS

The AIDS pandemic has a deeply negative impact on individuals, communities and long-term development. It is more than just a health crisis. It affects every dimension of social and economic life—robbing children of parents, contributing to maternal and child mortality, devastating workforces and undermining economies. Today, an estimated 33.4 million people are living with HIV and AIDS, of which more than 2 million are children.

Poverty intensifies the struggle with HIV as sick parents lose the ability to earn income, medical services are either non-existent or unaffordable, opportunistic infections are more rampant, and lack of food and basic necessities challenge daily survival. About 97 per cent of people living with HIV and AIDS live in low- and middle-income countries. Sub-Saharan Africa carries 67 per cent of global infections, with women carrying 60 per cent of HIV infections in this region.

HIV still disproportionately affects women in many contexts. For example, according to UNAIDS, girls aged 20-24 in Kenya are 5.5 times more likely than men to get infected with HIV. Mother-to-child transmission (transmission of HIV during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding) is estimated to cause as much as 90 per cent of HIV cases in infants and children. With antiretroviral treatment, however, mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) can be reduced from 30-35 per cent to 1-2 per cent. Globally, 55 per cent of mothers still do not have access to services to prevent mother-to-child transmission.

Children as well are disproportionately unreached with prevention, diagnosis and treatment. Almost 50 per cent of children living with HIV die undiagnosed before their second birthday. In 2008, only eight per cent of children exposed to HIV were initiated on Cotrimoxazole Preventive Therapy, an antibiotic proven to prevent life-threatening opportunistic infections, by two months of age. Children are about one third as likely to receive antiretroviral therapy as adults. Without treatment almost 60 per cent of infants with HIV die before the age of two years and about 80 per cent will not live to see their fifth birthday.

### The Facts

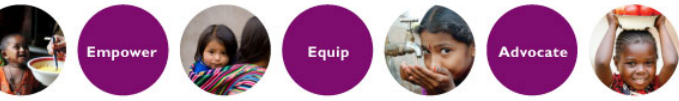
- Currently an estimated 33.4 million people worldwide are living with HIV (UNAIDS).
- Each day, nearly 7,400 people become infected with HIV and almost 5,500 people die due to AIDS (USAID).
- As of 2008, approximately 14 million children had lost one or both parents due to AIDS (USAID).
- Almost 16 million of current HIV infections are women and 2.1 million are children under age 15 (UNAIDS).
- In 2008, there were 2.7 new HIV infections, with more than 400,000 new infections in children under age 15 (UNAIDS).
- 55 per cent of mothers do not have access to services to prevent mother-to-child transmission (UNAIDS).



### World Vision's Response

World Vision is working to help all children fulfil their potential by reducing the impact of the disease through expanding prevention, strengthening household and community capacity to care, and promoting advocacy. World Vision integrates HIV and AIDS activities into all its programmes utilising core models such as:

- **Community Care Coalitions (CCC):** World Vision trains and mobilises thousands of community members through CCCs to provide care for orphans and vulnerable children and for people living with HIV.
- **Channels of Hope:** Through experiential workshops and follow-up, World Vision equips faith leaders to reduce HIV-related stigma in their communities and promote compassionate care for people and families affected by HIV.
- **Child-focused Prevention:** World Vision helps girls and boys avoid HIV infection through age-appropriate and values-based life skills training, behaviour change communication, peer education and engaging influential members of a child's life to provide positive support and encouragement.



- **Vulnerable Child Advocacy (VCA):** Over the past four years, 20 African countries developed VCA to advocate for the rights of orphans and vulnerable children. This model is now being utilised globally in many World Vision programmes. The goal is to expand and strengthen civil society participation at community, national and international levels in developing and implementing policies and programmes that support the well-being of children.

## Community-Based Approaches

World Vision implements HIV and AIDS projects in 59 countries. In the area of global health, World Vision focuses especially on maternal and child health (MCH) with a strong focus on prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies, nutrition and prevention of other infectious diseases.



### Key projects

RAPIDS, based in **Zambia**, is a consortium led by World Vision International in partnership with Africare, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Expanded Church Response (ECR), Salvation Army, World Vision Zambia, and the Population Council. This is a six-year (2004-2010) programme implemented through USAID with funds from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). RAPIDS covers 53 districts throughout Zambia to provide home- and community-based care for people living with AIDS, care and support for orphans and vulnerable children, youth livelihood and promotion of abstinence among youth, and household resilience and improved food security for those affected by HIV/AIDS. In addition, RAPIDS provides policy and programmatic support at the national level for OVCs.

In January 2009, World Vision hosted the first combined Muslim and Christian Channels of Hope (CoH) facilitator training, with representatives from **Africa** and the **Middle East/Eastern Europe**. In the four combined CoH trainings in 2009, a total of 73 Muslim CoH facilitators were trained, representing 11 per cent of the total number of facilitators trained that year. The greatest value of this combined process was to build trust among people of faith who have often become distrustful and afraid of one another.

In **Honduras** and the **Dominican Republic**, World Vision piloted Values-Based Life Skills (VBLS), and sexual and reproductive health training for children aged five to 18 living in countries with low HIV prevalence but high-risk of further growth in HIV infections. These trainings are conducted by trained parents, school teachers, spiritual leaders and youth peer educators. More than 6,000 children were reached over a three year period. Almost 700 peer educators and approximately 500 parents, school teachers and spiritual leaders have been trained to help sustain the programme.

In **Africa**, 72,960 home visitors, who are part of the more than 4,400 Community Care Coalitions in the region, focus on support for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) as well as people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). In 2009, they cared for almost 1.2 million OVC and more than 100,000 PLWHA.

**For general information about World Vision's health, nutrition, and HIV and AIDS work, please contact:**

**Robyn Cawker:** [robyn\\_cawker@wvi.org](mailto:robyn_cawker@wvi.org)

**Sarah Crass:** [sarah\\_crass@wvi.org](mailto:sarah_crass@wvi.org)

*World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.*