



HIV AND AIDS FACT SHEET

Overview

HIV and AIDS is a global epidemic of immense economic and social proportions. While great strides in prevention and treatment have been made in the past several years, HIV and AIDS continues to orphan millions of children, decimate health care systems, compound food shortages, deprive children of education and reduce per capita growth in many countries.

The impact of this disease is greatest among the poor, who have no economic safety net and limited access to important social services. Women often bear the largest burden of the disease. To grasp the magnitude of this crisis, consider:

- An estimated 33 million people are living with HIV worldwide
- Sub-Saharan Africa remains most heavily affected by HIV, accounting for 67% of all people living with HIV and 72% of AIDS deaths in 2007
- Women make up 60% of all people living with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Globally, 2 million children under the age 15 are living with HIV and almost 90% of them live in Sub-Saharan Africa

Addressing the HIV epidemic is critical to the global fight against poverty and will accelerate progress in achieving the internationally-agreed upon Millennium Development Goals.

The Challenges

Reduce Transmission – In order to halt the spread of this devastating disease, the global community must invest in programs that effectively prevent the transmission of the virus. Success stories from Uganda, Cambodia, Thailand, and Senegal demonstrate that HIV and AIDS infection rates can be reduced dramatically when government, community groups and individuals prioritize prevention programs. These must include addressing the underlying causes of HIV and AIDS – including poverty, stigma, economic and food insecurity – while providing comprehensive information about reproductive health services and treatment to the most vulnerable populations – women, adolescents, orphans and mobile populations.

Mitigate the Economic and Social Impacts – HIV and AIDS, particularly in Africa, is undermining agriculture, education, health systems, economic growth and family structures. In some countries, the death toll from this disease is so great that HIV and AIDS is threatening overall social cohesion. As a result, CARE believes that responses should shift away from treating the disease solely as a medical issue and, instead, address HIV and AIDS as both a cause and consequence of poverty.

CARE In Action

CARE is a leading humanitarian organization that fights global poverty by helping empower women and girls to bring lasting change to their communities. CARE addresses root causes of poverty through programs that advance girls' education and leadership, improve maternal health and increase economic opportunity for women.

From a single project started in 1987, CARE now addresses HIV and AIDS in more than 40 countries around the world. CARE seeks to understand what makes people vulnerable to HIV infections and works to address the underlying causes of that vulnerability. CARE works with communities to empower people to protect themselves from HIV infection and enhance their capacity to reduce the suffering of those affected by the epidemic. Here are some examples:

Rwanda – CARE mobilizes adult volunteers to provide guidance and care to children living in households without adult support.

Zambia – CARE brings basic, home-based care to people living with HIV and AIDS, particularly when the person has no relatives or neighbors to care for them.

Cambodia – CARE mobilizes communities and healthcare workers to reduce stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS.

Haiti – CARE works to reduce mother to child HIV and AIDS transmission by supporting women and children affected by AIDS through voluntary HIV testing for pregnant women, counseling and homecare.

What You Can Do

- Learn more about HIV and AIDS and what CARE is doing to fight this disease at www.care.org
- Join Girl Guides and Girl Scouts all over the world to raise awareness about this issue on World Thinking Day 2009
- Stay involved by signing up for the CARE Action Network at <http://can.care.org> and learn how you can support legislation that fights HIV and AIDS around the world
- For more information about CARE and how you can get involved, contact groups@care.org

If you're in the U.S., take part in a very special event on Thursday, March 5 – A POWERFUL NOISE Live

In honor of International Women's Day, CARE will present the acclaimed documentary "A Powerful Noise" – a passport into the lives of women and girls who are overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds to bring lasting solutions to their communities. It will inspire you to join them in making a difference in the world.

Go to www.APOWERFULNOISE.org for participating theatres and ticket information.