

## **Going Deeper – HIV and AIDS**

**HIV and AIDS is one of the greatest threats to eradicating poverty and one of the greatest challenges to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.**

- In 2006, almost 40 million people were living with HIV worldwide, roughly two-thirds of them in Africa.
- In 2006 almost 12,000 people were newly infected with HIV every day
- In sub-Saharan Africa alone, a staggering 12.3 million children have been orphaned as a result of AIDS, a figure roughly equivalent to the total number of children in the UK.

More than twenty five years after the first cases of AIDS were reported, the global pandemic of HIV and AIDS affects men, women and children in almost every country in the world. By the end of 2005, the virus had infected more than 65 million people worldwide, of whom 25 million had died.

HIV and AIDS is devastating individual lives, communities and economies across the world and is undermining the achievements of past and current development work in many developing countries.

Millions of children have been left vulnerable by HIV and AIDS – of the three million people who lost their lives to AIDS in 2006, 380,000 were children, this means that a child died from an AIDS related illness every 90 seconds.

The impact of HIV and AIDS on children in developing countries is immense and is felt by a far larger number than the 2.3 million children currently infected with HIV. As well as threatening a child's right to life and a stable family environment, it also undermines a multitude of other rights, and can leave affected children vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. In many developing countries people infected or affected by the disease often face great discrimination and may be rejected by others or even refused medical treatment. This means that if a child lost one or both parents to AIDS they could then be rejected by their community and left to fend for themselves.

HIV and AIDS affects the whole community. Without people to grow food, everyone goes hungry. If people are caring for the sick or for children, they can not work as well. If a family has to pay for a funeral, they have less to spend on food. Children may become carers instead of students. Without nutritious food and medical care, people become sick faster. By destroying lives in all sectors of the economy, AIDS is threatening the long-term development prospects of many countries where HIV and AIDS is highly prevalent.

Drugs known as anti-retrovirals (ARVs) are available to treat the virus. They can also prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS from mother to baby. With access to these drugs, a healthy diet and appropriate support, the lives of people living with HIV and AIDS can be extended by a number of years.

But in many poor countries the health systems are not able to cope with the number of people in urgent need of anti-retrovirals (ARV's). In a small number of African countries, people have to pay for ARVs, which cost many times more than most Africans earn in a year. And even in the majority of countries where ARVs are free, other costs such as transportation to health centres and charges for tests can prevent poor people accessing these services.

The world is slowly responding to HIV and AIDS. In July 2005, the leaders of the G8 group of countries promised to get as close as possible to universal access to AIDS treatment by 2010. Today, people affected by HIV and AIDS need actions not words.

Follow the link below for more information:

<https://www.worldvision.org.uk/server.php?show=nav.36>