

Within Reach: Join the final push to end HIV among adolescent girls in Eastern and Southern Africa

Regional Numbers

77,000

New HIV infections among adolescents in 2022

85% of these were among girls

Home to **65%** of adolescents living with HIV

By 2050, home to **282 million** young people

CLOSE TO AN AIDS-FREE GENERATION

Progress in the HIV response has been promising. Yet, still more than 2.5 million children and adolescents are living with HIV. Even though **we have the knowledge and tools to save their lives and prevent others from infection**, HIV remains a leading cause of death among adolescents in Eastern and Southern Africa. The region is home to two thirds of adolescents worldwide living with HIV, with girls disproportionately affected.

The benefits of preventing HIV have a multiplier effect from improving community health and economic growth to reducing healthcare costs and increasing workforce participation. Adolescent girls and their communities benefit immensely – programmes to prevent HIV also address other challenges, such as poverty, education, improved health and well being, including mental health, and reducing gender-based violence. HIV prevention accelerates progress on global goals

Strategies

Use Data & Evidence to target our efforts

Convene Partners to build strategic policy collaboration and influence

Engage across sectors to address the underlying drivers of HIV

Empower adolescent girls to lead programmes that meet their needs and drive change

Innovate and implement solutions that are cost-effective, scalable and responsive



WHY UNICEF? WE KNOW HOW

UNICEF is committed to ending AIDS by 2030. Since 2000, the number of new paediatric infections has decreased significantly, but adolescent girls and young women continue to acquire HIV at disproportionately high rates. This is the moment for renewed global efforts to reach the last mile to end AIDS in children and adolescents.

UNICEF puts the people and places most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS at the heart of its response. We are committed to working together in areas where the need is greatest. We know using data and evidence is integral to tackle HIV/AIDS. Together, we can have a lasting impact and work towards an AIDS free generation by testing new ways to reach vulnerable young people with life-saving information, delivering targeted interventions, reducing barriers to accessing care especially for adolescents, and supporting positive shifts in social and gender norms.

We use an evidence-based approach of what works

Several factors contribute to the HIV risk and vulnerability faced by adolescent girls in Eastern and Southern Africa, including gender inequity, poverty, and violence. Early pregnancy plays a big role in HIV risk for both the adolescent girl and her baby. UNICEF uses an integrated approach to address these vulnerabilities and prevent new infections through:

1. **Improving access to adolescent responsive HIV and sexual and reproductive health services and information.** This includes antiretroviral medicines for treatment and prevention of HIV, contraception, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, HPV vaccination and mental health support, among others. It also includes accurate information about sexual and reproductive health, consent and safe practices to empower adolescents for healthy decisionmaking, including to avoid HIV and unintended pregnancy.
2. **Supporting adolescent mothers** with the knowledge, skills and services to take care of their own and their children's health and well-being including to prevent HIV and unintended pregnancy, stay in school or employment, and support early child development, including eliminating vertical transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B.
3. **Empowering adolescents and young people to lead** on HIV and sexual and reproductive health through social and behaviour change on digital and face-to-face platforms. This work aims to reduce stigma, shift social and gender norms that put girls at high risk, and ensure solutions are relevant and impactful among adolescents and young people.
4. **Closing the treatment gap** for adolescents through peer-driven models that support treatment adherence, mental health, and access to other needed services. Ensuring these models are part of health systems, including promoting the recruitment of young community health workers, also addressed youth unemployment and the demographic dividend.

WHAT IS THE FUNDING GAP?

The HIV epidemic will only be overcome with sustained funding. Yet, the worldwide HIV response is today threatened by financing challenges. By 2025, it is estimated low and middle-income countries would need US\$29 billion to combat HIV and work towards eradicating it as a public health threat by 2030. More than half of this funding comes from domestic resources and the rest from external sources, including the Global Fund and the United States President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). In recent years, however, the total amount of external financing for HIV has plateaued, and there are signs that this is likely to decline or stagnate. In this time of stretched resources, UNICEF's technical expertise will be key both to drawing sufficient external funding and to helping countries deliver comprehensive, efficient and rights-based HIV services to the growing numbers of children and adolescents who want and need them.

Here are some indicative ways of how UNICEF's work to combat HIV can achieve results for children and women.

\$12 million will help close the treatment gap in children and adolescents living with HIV in 12 priority countries. This investment will support finding children and adolescents, linking them to testing, treatment and care, and support a 25 per cent increase in coverage of lifesaving antiretroviral treatment.

\$10 million will support adolescents living with HIV in 3 countries in Southern Africa with the highest HIV prevalence rates globally to have access to treatment and care support, and support for mental health, services to prevent gender-based violence and support programmes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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