



HIV/AIDS

2007 RESOURCE PACKS

WHAT IS HIV?

HIV stands for Human Immuno-deficiency Virus. The virus infects the immune system, which is our body's defence against illness. It is an infectious disease, which means it can also be passed onto others.

WHAT IS AIDS?

AIDS, or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, is caused by HIV. A person infected with HIV may look and feel healthy for many years but as their immune system weakens, they become vulnerable to illnesses that they would normally be able to fight off.

- Some 40 million people worldwide are living with HIV/AIDS.
- Of this number, over 25 million live in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- 12 million children in Sub-Saharan Africa have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS. These young children have to take on adult responsibilities as they become the head

HOW IS A PERSON AFFECTED BY HIV/AIDS?

HIV/AIDS does not care about skin colour, age, religion, gender, or whether you are rich or poor, but people living with the disease still suffer from discrimination.

This is largely due to misconceptions about how the disease is transmitted. For example, some people believe that you can catch HIV from a cough or a sneeze, or by touching someone who is infected. This is not the case but these beliefs still persist.

In the developed world, people living with HIV/AIDS have access to the medication they need to ensure that they remain healthy for as long as possible.

However, in the developing world, people living with HIV/AIDS cannot afford the medication they need to remain healthy and, as a result, many die younger. People living with the disease can often be shunned by their communities and find it hard to find work.

HIV/AIDS has a huge effect on families in the developing world. In many African countries, parents who have contracted the virus die young, leaving their children behind as orphans, or in the care of elderly grandparents.



Young people from GOAL's HIV/AIDS programme in Kenya use art to convey important messages.

GOAL'S HIV/AIDS PROGRAMMES

GOAL implements and supports HIV/AIDS education, prevention and treatment programmes in Ethiopia, Sudan, India, Angola, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Honduras, Sierra Leone.

We also support local partner organisations and missionaries in other countries to implement similar programmes. GOAL recognises that people affected by HIV/AIDS know best how to respond to the problems they face.

Programmes include provision of health facilities, counselling, care and support for people living with HIV, payment of school fees for AIDS orphans and educational and prevention programmes for children and adults.

GOAL trains young people to become peer educators, which means that they pass the messages they have learned from GOAL onto children and teenagers of their own age. It also gives GOAL a chance to learn from young people, whose energy and ideas are of great benefit to GOAL's work.



Peer educators in Kenya using dance to mobilise the community for HIV/AIDS awareness.

CASE STUDY

Sara was at risk of HIV infection but has been assisted through GOAL's HIV/AIDS programme in Freetown, Sierra Leone. This is her story.

At the age of 10 I went to live with my older sister and, when I grew up, I went into petty trading. My business developed rapidly, and I was living a comfortable and happy life.

Things suddenly changed, when I was arrested because of my violation of custom laws. I was taken to a cell in Freetown and I was released with assistance from my sister.

One of my childhood friends asked me to stay with her. She went out every night, and came in the morning with enough money to survive on. She asked me to join her group, to free myself from sadness. I refused her request, adding that I have never heard of prostitution, and I won't like to be part of it.

Two years ago, I joined GOAL's non-formal education programme in Freetown. I was worried about HIV/AIDS but I was encouraged to undergo testing through the peer education programme. I have also received sensitisation and education from GOAL and I know some of the ways that HIV is transmitted. Since then I have become an active peer educator in their programme.

I also received support from GOAL for skills training in gara-tie dying and soap-making. I have spent a year on this training, and I hope to complete it at the end of this year. This will provide me with an independent livelihood and happy life.

THE GOAL HIV/AIDS VAN

On the streets of Nairobi, Kenya, the GOAL van is a familiar sight to the thousands of children who live and survive on the pavements of the city. Staff travel around to meet and talk to the children about HIV/AIDS and listen to their stories. Here project manager John Wangusi's tells of just one day in the life of the GOAL Van.



Even before the emblazoned van draws to a

standstill, dozens of street children rush to crowd around it, knowing that it is time for the session – which for many of them could mean the difference between life and death. They clamour around the ‘street educators’, demanding to know what the day’s session will involve.

From as young as seven or eight years, children quickly assemble together, and with much pushing and shoving, they eventually quieten down and start chanting and banging on the drums - the signal for the beginning of the session.

Every weekday the team of five staff go to designated contact points in the city and facilitate various interactive communication activities using a variety of media, such as puppetry, song, drama, video and sport. All these activities are carried out on the city pavements – the homes of the children.

The project hopes to affect positive change in the lives of the children by providing them a platform to be able to discuss issues that are important to them.

Through going to the children on the streets and spending time building relationships of trust, the staff has managed to work with them and positively channel their skills.

As the staff pack up to go to the next contact point the children surround the van once more, this time asking when the staff will be back and what they will be doing the next day. The streets of Nairobi are a harsh and challenging environment for the staff to work in and the children to live in, but the sounds they hear as they pull away are warm and encouraging ones indeed.



LIVING WITH

HIV/AIDS

40.3 million

adults and children were estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2005.



DID YOU KNOW?



More than 20 million people have died, worldwide, of HIV/AIDS since 1981. (UNAIDS 2005)

Almost 50% of adults living with HIV/AIDS globally are women. (UNAIDS 2004)



Uganda has cut its HIV prevalence (percentage of population living with the disease) rates significantly - from an estimated 14% in the early 1990s to 4.1% in 2003 - thanks to extensive education campaigns. (UNAIDS)

Half of all those living with HIV become infected before they celebrate their 25th birthday. Many of them die from AIDS before they turn 35, leaving behind a generation of children to be raised by grandparents or siblings. (UNAIDS)



Nearly 13,500 people are infected with HIV every day. (UNDP 2005)

3.8 million people in India live with HIV/AIDS. (UNAIDS)



In Malawi, GOAL's peer educators use this important message on t-shirts:

"PEOPLE THINK THE YOUTH ARE TOO YOUNG TO KNOW."



Role play in Malawi

And on the back of the t-shirt:

**"WE THINK THEY ARE TOO YOUNG TO DIE.
SEX EDUCATION FOR LIFE!"**

GOAL'S DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION OFFICERS

GOAL aims to increase young people's awareness and understanding of the plight of the poorest of the poor and of global issues that affect the developing world.

GOAL's development education officers visit primary and post primary schools, third level institutions and youth and after school groups to share information on their first hand experiences of working with GOAL in the developing world.

If you would like a member of our development education staff to visit your school please contact GOAL on 01 2809779,

visit www.goal.ie or email info@goal.ie.

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