

OPPORTUNITY **in** CRISIS

Preventing HIV from early adolescence to young adulthood

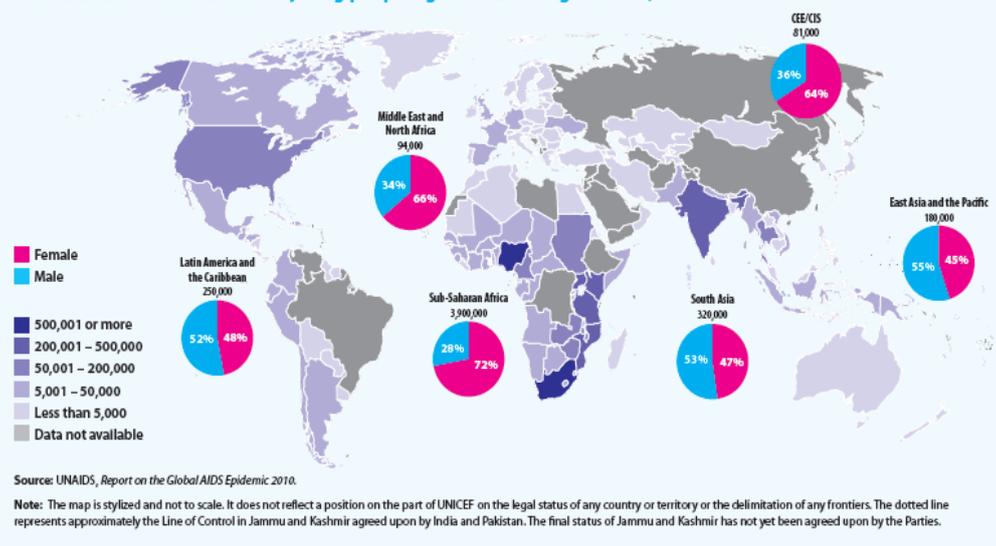
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This report provides an overview of the State of the epidemic among young people. It includes individual testimonies, the latest statistics and analysis on very young adolescents (10-14), older adolescents (15-19), young adults (20-24) and young people living with HIV. The report outlines opportunities for action to ensure the protection of these young people and to achieve the global targets for an AIDS-free generation.

Globally, 5 million young people aged 15-24 were living with HIV in 2009, a 12 per cent reduction since 2001, when there were 5.7 million young people living with HIV.¹ Globally, young women make up more than 60 per cent of all young people living with HIV; in sub-Saharan Africa their share jumps to 71 per cent.

Some countries have experienced gains in knowledge and positive changes in the sexual behaviour of their young people, and some countries have achieved declines in HIV prevalence and incidence. Many of these achievements can be attributed to the efforts of young people and their schools, families, health workers and communities, as well as to the efforts of some political leaders. **But neither the efforts made nor the progress achieved so far have been sufficient.**

FIGURE 2: Estimated number of young people aged 15-24 living with HIV, 2009



In many countries, the road from childhood to adulthood is a perilous trajectory for young people.

The young women and men living with HIV today are the most visible evidence of the world's failure to prevent HIV infection among young people and to empower them to protect themselves and live healthy, AIDS-free lives.

No mystery – We know what causes the transmission of HIV among young people: unprotected sex with an HIV-positive person or contact with infected blood or other fluids through the sharing of non-sterile injecting equipment.

No mystery – We know what works to prevent HIV transmission in young people: Abstaining from sex and not injecting drug; Correct and consistent use of male and female condoms; Medical male circumcision; Needle and syringe exchange programmes as part of a comprehensive harm reduction programme; Using antiretroviral drugs as treatment (which lowers the chance of transmission) or as post-exposure prevention, and Communication for social and behavioural change

To build a strong continuum that can help keep children HIV-free as they develop into young adults, we must:

1. Provide young people with information and comprehensive sexuality education
2. Strengthen child protection and social protection measures to prevent exploitation of vulnerable children and adolescents
3. Engage young people
4. Engage communities in shaping a positive social environment that promotes healthy behaviour
5. Establish laws and policies that respect young people's rights
6. Scale up proven interventions for HIV prevention, including condoms and harm reduction
7. Increase the number of adolescents and young people who know their HIV status
8. Expand comprehensive services for young people living with HIV, paying special attention to adolescents
9. Strengthen monitoring, evaluation and data reporting on young people, particularly adolescents