

TOWARDS AN AIDS-FREE GENERATION

Children and AIDS | Sixth Stocktaking Report, 2013



“Children should be the first to benefit from our successes in defeating HIV, and the last to suffer from our failures.”

Anthony Lake, Executive Director,
UNICEF

The opportunity: An AIDS-free generation



For the first time in the history of the HIV epidemic, the global community has accumulated the knowledge, experience and tools to achieve an AIDS-free generation. That means a generation in which **all children are born free of HIV and remain so for the first two decades of life**, from birth through adolescence. It also means that **children living with and affected by HIV have access to the treatment, care and support** they need to remain alive and well.

Where we stand



Countries have made more progress tackling new HIV infections among children during the past three years than over the entire previous decade. New HIV infections among children under 15 years old went down by 35 per cent globally between 2009 and 2012 and programmes that place mothers at the centre of efforts to prevent HIV in children have put **the elimination of mother-to-child transmission within reach**.

What needs work



Scale-up of treatment for children living with HIV is still too slow. Children under 15 years old are only half as likely as adults to receive the treatment they need. And despite **promising signs of behaviour change** among adolescents, reductions in new HIV infections have been modest. **Marginalized** adolescents are particularly vulnerable to HIV and need targeted support.

What we can do: Innovate for change



An AIDS-free generation can become reality with the help of **cross-sectoral partnerships** among government, civil society and affected communities. With a renewed push, **innovations that strengthen linkages** to services can accelerate the pace of progress, especially at local levels.



FIRST DECADE



An AIDS-free generation begins in the first decade of life

We know what to do. The challenge is to apply existing knowledge and pursue new opportunities and innovations, while using finite resources as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Ensuring the health of pregnant and breastfeeding women living with HIV is central to achieving an AIDS-free generation

Keeping mothers alive and healthy is one of the most important prerequisites for child survival. In the past three years, countries have started to introduce simplified life-long treatment consisting of one pill daily for all pregnant and breastfeeding women living with HIV. This protects a mother's longer-term health, prevents HIV transmission to her child and reduces the risk of sexual transmission.

Preventing infection among women and girls of childbearing age and helping women and girls who are living with HIV to avoid unwanted pregnancies remain priorities.

More children are accessing antiretroviral therapy (ART), but progress achieved for children lags behind progress achieved for adults

In countries with the highest HIV burden, only one in three children under 15 years old had access to treatment in 2012. A huge effort is needed to reach the goal of providing ART to all eligible children globally by 2015.

62% of pregnant women living with HIV in the 22 Global Plan priority countries received antiretrovirals to prevent mother-to-child transmission in 2012.

850,000 new HIV infections among children (0–14 years) in low- and middle-income countries were prevented between 2005 and 2012.

260,000 new HIV infections occurred among children (0–14 years) in low- and middle-income countries in 2012.

34% of children (0–14 years) received the life-saving ART they needed in 2012 versus

64% of adults.

Without treatment, **1/3** of infants living with HIV will die before their first birthday, and half will die before their second birthday.

2.1 million adolescents (10–19 years) were living with HIV in 2012.

About **300,000** new HIV infections occurred among adolescents (15–19 years) in 2012.

Doing the right thing at the right time for all adolescents could avert...

2 million new infections among adolescents (10–19 years) by 2020.

150 million girls and **73 million** boys under the age of 18 have experienced sexual violence (2006).

AIDS-related deaths among adolescents (10–19 years) increased by

50%

between 2005 and 2012. Overall, deaths fell by 30%.

Much more attention is needed to prevent and treat HIV during adolescence, so that children remain AIDS-free in the second decade of life

New infections among adolescents could be halved by 2020 by scaling up high-impact interventions and working across sectors. The treatment, care and support needs of children living with HIV change as they grow older and begin to take greater responsibility for their own health. But services generally do not keep pace with or cater to their needs. This is particularly true for marginalized adolescents – males who have sex with males, adolescents who inject drugs and sexually exploited adolescents – despite the disproportionately high prevalence of HIV among them. A comprehensive strategy is needed to address these diverse needs.

Social protection and child protection, care and support must underpin efforts to scale up high-impact interventions through the first two decades of life

There are still 17.8 million orphans who have lost one or both parents to AIDS. Much greater collaboration across sectors can help alleviate hardship, reduce the risk of HIV infection and support long-term adherence to medication and continuity of care for children and their families. For adolescents, access to education is also critical, particularly sexuality education.

Two decades, many sectors

An AIDS-free generation will only be achieved through strong leadership from government, with partners aligning their support to common objectives. The participation of civil society and affected communities has been a strength of the AIDS response that must continue – from planning, decision-making and implementation to awareness-raising, advocacy and accountability.



... SECOND DECADE ...





“Eliminating new HIV infections among children is an ambitious but achievable goal. With the support of the Every Woman Every Child movement, an AIDS-free generation can be ours. There is no better investment than the health of women and children.”

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Read more

Children and AIDS: Sixth Stocktaking Report, 2013 focuses on the response to HIV and AIDS among children in low- and middle-income countries. Structured around the first and second decades of a child’s life, it:

- reviews the HIV burden among children and adolescents and progress being made in addressing it
- identifies key strategies to accelerate access to HIV prevention, treatment, protection, care and support for children and adolescents
- summarizes opportunities arising from recent scientific advances, new technology and emerging practice innovations
- aims to mobilize national and international efforts to keep children HIV-free and ensure that those living with HIV remain AIDS-free.

Connect online

For the full *Children and AIDS: Sixth Stocktaking Report, 2013*, together with supporting data and materials, please visit: <www.childrenandaids.org>.

Contact us

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) leads the development of stocktaking reports on children and AIDS as part of its commitment to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), in collaboration with the other 10 UNAIDS co-sponsors. You can email us at childrenandaids@unicef.org or contact us at the address below.

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