



HIV and AIDS

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HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus and this virus weakens the immune system of the body which makes it harder to fight infection. AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and this is where the immune system is damaged and is open to other diseases which may not normally be a threat.

HIV will usually, given time develop into AIDS. There is no cure or vaccine for either HIV or AIDS, but there are drugs that can help. The drugs however are not always widely available and are often very expensive. This is a worldwide problem and HIV and AIDS can be gained by individuals from any community no matter what their age, race or economic status.

Why the situation occurs?

HIV and AIDS are passed on from person to person by a number of methods for example:

- ? Through sexual intercourse
- ? Through sharing injecting needles
- ? Through blood transfusions
- ? Between mother and baby either in the womb or through breast feeding.

HIV and AIDS are not spread through touch of intact external skin and are not caught like a cold or flu through the air or through water. Many cases of HIV or AIDS are due to lack of education as people are unaware of how the disease is spread or how to prevent it. This in turn is linked to poverty as those in the poorest places are most likely to have a poor education and have the least access to healthcare. 90% of new HIV infections occur in the poorest communities in the world and 71% are in sub Saharan Africa. The loss of parents due to HIV or AIDS can have a huge impact on a child's future chances and economic status.

How you can make a difference:

Tackle the issue and help young people to understand the issues surrounding HIV and AIDS. Not just prevention of the disease but how the problems are made worse by poverty and factors within society. It may also be useful to look at prejudices and myths surrounding the topic. What difficulties are faced by those experiencing these problems? How can you support them? What attitudes need to be changed and how can you help this to happen?

Use the materials and tools provided to follow the process of:

1. Identify the problem
2. Develop Awareness and empathy
3. Take action
4. Measure the change

Resources and links:

The Africa Scout Region is running an excellent '[Real Rights! AIDS from theess badge programme](#)' established programme in South Africa and based on original material from Zambia. Topics covered include basic facts on HIV/AIDS, reproductive health education, other sexually transmitted diseases, peer education, the role of Scouting in fighting HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS and Human Rights.

'Africa Scout Radio' programmes are another way of educating communities on issues related to HIV/AIDS, as radio in Africa remains the ~~commnication tool with the widest reach~~ [most widely used](#) ~~medium~~ [medium](#). These programmes can be heard by Scouts in even the most remote of villages via dry cell battery powered transistor radios. These programmes can also be heard by hundreds of thousands of non-Scouts, thus giving them a better understanding of Scouting and its role in the development of African society, and its role in fighting the pandemic that is HIV/AIDS.

The South Africa Scout Association website contains a great deal of information on AIDS and HIV, including information leaflets for Scouts and leaders, and a badge programme:

<http://www.scouting.org.za/resources/aids/>

World Scout Conference Resolution 15/93 on AIDS prevention

World Scout Conference Resolution 16/99 - Together against AIDS

[Conference Resolutions \(click here\)](#)

Information on the ["AIDS - A Matter of Education"](#) (March 2004)

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS, is the main advocate for global action on the epidemic. It leads, strengthens and supports an expanded response aimed at preventing transmission of HIV, providing care and support, reducing the vulnerability of individuals and communities to HIV/AIDS, and alleviating the impact of the epidemic: <http://www.unaids.org>

The sixth Millennium Development Goal aims to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. More information on the MDGs and on HIV/AIDS can be found on the website: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>

The United Nations Children's Fund website "Voices of Youth" contains a great deal of information on this subject: <http://www.unicef.org/voy>

The Voices of Youth website also includes an interactive game that explores real life situations with regard to HIV/AIDS:

http://www.unicef.org/voy/explore/aids/explore_1360.html

The United Nations CyberSchoolBus website provides a briefing paper on HIV/AIDS:

<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/briefing/index.asp>