



World AIDS Day - Keep the Promise!

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Friday 1st December is World AIDS Day. This annual event was created to focus global awareness on the pandemic and generate positive action to stop the spread of HIV and eradicate AIDS.

Figures released today by UNAIDS show that the number of people living with HIV is around 40 million and continues to grow, with increasing numbers of young people and women becoming infected. What's more, it is ignorance and prejudice which are fuelling the spread of this preventable disease.

The theme for this year is accountability. To end the pandemic means that promises and commitments in the fight against HIV and AIDS must be kept. That is why the World AIDS Campaign is promoting this under the broader slogan Stop AIDS - Keep the Promise.

In collaboration with various UN agencies, including UNAIDS and UNICEF, World Scouting is working to keep its promise to combat this pandemic and to further prevent its grip on the world. Creating a synergy between youth organisations and specialised bodies in order to be better equipped to fight AIDS is a priority for the Movement which, in 2004, played an important role in the organisation and participation of the Pan-Youth Forum called "AIDS: A Matter of Education".

Today, World Scouting, on the eve of its Centenary, is running the Gifts for Peace programme whereby Scouts worldwide are managing conflict without violence, challenging prejudice and encouraging greater solidarity. HIV/AIDS is the focus of many excellent projects which are working to make a difference in their local communities. Some of these projects are:

Malaysia

Scouts in Malaysia are working to create awareness among young people of the dangers of HIV/AIDS, and are learning how to stay healthy as well as to understand the issues faced by those who have contracted HIV/AIDS. They are working with the Ministry of Health and have developed three new proficiency badges on HIV/AIDS awareness. The Scouts are passing on these messages to others: their parents, brothers and sisters, friends and peers, and are being encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle.

Barbados

Scouts of all ages are learning about HIV/AIDS and substance abuse and following a special badge programme, supported by the National HIV/AIDS Council of Barbados. The older Scouts and their leaders are helping to spread this information in their communities. The project is gaining much support from the community. Many members of the community have joined the information sessions and asked to be involved with this Gifts for Peace project. The Scouts have gained sponsorship to produce the badges and materials.

South Africa

Scouts in South Africa are tackling HIV/AIDS through a youth empowerment programme run through peer education. The Scouts learn about their rights, including the right to say 'no' to something that gives them a 'no' feeling. The Scouting and AIDS programme has been integrated into the youth programme and has been implemented across South Africa to 75% of youth members. In a country where 4.3 million children have died of AIDS, Scouts are changing attitudes in society as well as protecting their futures through their knowledge and understanding of HIV/AIDS. In addition, they are reaching out to those with HIV/AIDS working on [numerous community service programmes](#). [Click here to go to their website](#)

World AIDS Day, 1 December is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV and AIDS. This year, let's 'keep the promise' to stop the spread of HIV and end prejudice. What will you do?

[Gifts for Peace](#)

[World AIDS Campaign](#)

[UNICEF: Voices of Youth Available in English and Swahili: "What would you do."](#)