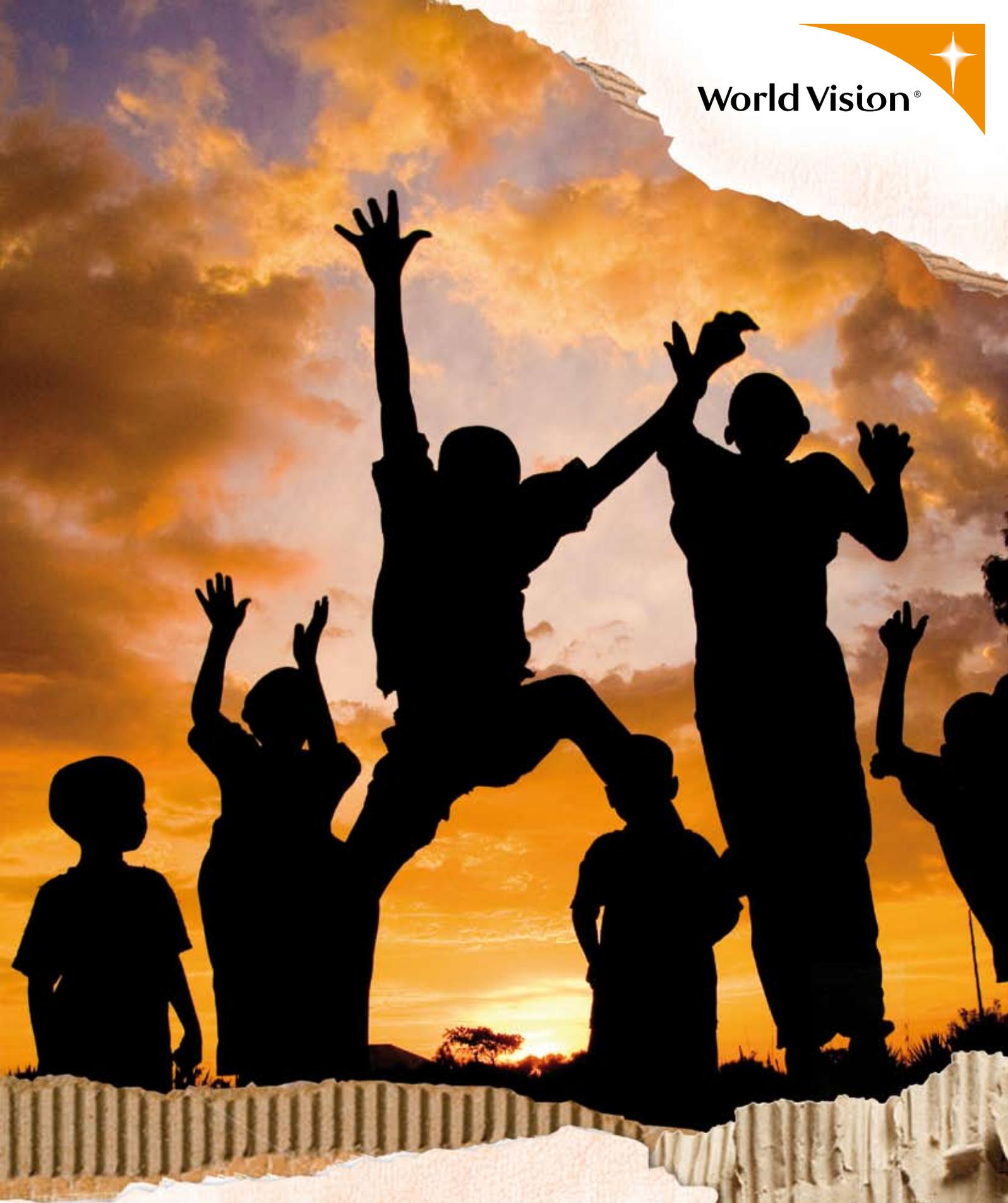


World Vision®



key concepts

**channels of
hope**

CHURCH RESOURCES

key concepts

What is HIV?

HIV stands for Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus and is the virus which leads to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). HIV and AIDS are not the same thing.

Like all viruses, HIV attacks the cells of living organisms. Unlike other viruses, HIV attacks the cells of the immune system. Without an immune system the human body has no way to fight off disease and even common illnesses can be life-threatening.

It may take years for the virus to damage enough cells in the immune system for it to stop working altogether. When this happens that person is said to have developed AIDS. AIDS is the state at which the immune system is said to be so weak that it can no longer protect the body.

How is it contracted?

HIV is transmitted in three main ways:

- through unprotected sex
- through the sharing of contaminated needles and syringes (e.g. using intravenous drugs)
- and through the contamination of blood

It can also be transmitted by infected women to their infants during pregnancy, at delivery and during breast feeding. Without early treatment half of infected babies will die before the age of two, but there are ways to prevent this from happening and to stop mother-to-child transmission during and after pregnancy.

Who is most likely to be affected?

Around 33¹ million people are living with HIV throughout the world – and that number represents millions more affected as families, friends and care-givers also face the impact.

Over 60% of HIV positive people live in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the disease continues to spread at an alarming rate. More than 96% of people newly infected by HIV are in low and middle income countries and about 45% of new infections are among young people aged 15-24.

How does HIV and AIDS impact on development?

HIV and AIDS represent political, economic, social and public health challenges to nations worldwide and hamper efforts to eradicate poverty in a number of ways:

- children are left without parents, homes and financial security and education
- elderly people shoulder the burden of caring for AIDS sufferers and children
- young people are too ill to learn skills, generate incomes or contribute to local economies

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World Vision is a Christian organisation and one of the world's leading relief, development and advocacy agencies, currently helping more than 100 million people in nearly 100 countries in their struggle against poverty, hunger and injustice, irrespective of their religious beliefs. (c) World Vision 2010

¹ All statistics from UNAIDS Global Report 2008

Is HIV a death sentence?

Thanks to new medications and drugs, the rate at which HIV destroys cells can be slowed down so that someone infected with HIV can stay relatively healthy and symptom-free for many years, even decades! For those that can afford these treatments, HIV is no longer the death sentence it once was.

However, too many adults in developing countries cannot access the medications they need and of the two million children that have HIV, less than 1 in 10 have access to the Anti-Retroviral medicines (ARVs) used to treat HIV. Not many ARVs are made for children and those that are can be very expensive. Many children are simply treated by guesswork, with smaller doses of adult medicine.

What is channels of hope?

Channels of Hope is an initiative to train and empower local community leaders, specifically faith leaders, to partner with World Vision in its response to those countries and areas that are heavily affected by HIV and AIDS. Churches and other faith communities are at the forefront in helping affected individuals and families cope by providing care and support for the sick, the widowed, and the orphaned.

The potential of churches and faith communities to change the behaviours and attitudes about HIV and AIDS in their local communities is underdeveloped. Equipping churches to expand and sustain their response to HIV and AIDS is a central priority of **Channels of Hope**.

The 3 key actions of **Channels of Hope** focus on the following:

- Caring for people living with HIV and AIDS (e.g., mobilising volunteer home-based carers to look after the physical needs of those living with HIV and AIDS)
- Helping prevent the spread of the virus (e.g., running free testing clinics so people can learn their HIV status and learn how to protect others from it)
- Raising awareness amongst their communities (e.g., exploring attitudes and stigma related to HIV and people living with the virus)

Church leaders across Africa have responded to the call to help those living with HIV and AIDS and have trained a countless army of volunteers that show Christ's love to their neighbours day in and day out.

channels of
hope

CHURCH RESOURCES