



# HIV: RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Towards safe and healthy living

[www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)  
Saving lives, changing minds.

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



## ISSUE

In 2012, around 9.7 million people living with HIV in low- and middle-income countries were receiving anti-retroviral therapy (ART), a twenty-fold increase since 2003. Total resources for AIDS have stabilized in the past few years, but changes in behaviour, combined with the natural course of the epidemic and greater access to ART, have resulted in new HIV infections declining by more than 50 per cent in 26 low- and middle-income countries since 2001.

However, HIV continues to thrive amid inequality and disparity. Some groups in society still face exceedingly high risks of acquiring and transmitting HIV, such as people who sell sex, men who have sex with men and injecting drug users. Achieving equitable access to treatment for key populations at higher risk of HIV remains an unmet challenge of the global HIV response.

## HOW WE HELP

Saving lives and changing minds is at the heart of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' (IFRC) approach to HIV. Our formidable strength is the capacity to undertake direct action at community and family levels, while building sustainable systems to strengthen integrated service delivery and community resilience overall. Guided by our *Strategy 2020*, we are resolved to do more, to do it better and to reach further at global, national and community levels.

### At the global level

The Global Red Cross Red Crescent Alliance on HIV provides National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies with a harmonized and comprehensive HIV programmatic framework for coordinated, effective and efficient national programmes. This approach is about strengthening and making use of the combined capabilities of national, regional and global Red Cross Red Crescent entities, and fostering partnerships and seeking funding opportunities to support the scale-up of high-quality, community-level action.

Advocacy lies at the core of our approach. The goal is to promote a climate that supports human rights, dignity and gender equality as the means to halt the epidemic. Building on our auxiliary role, we call upon governments to review repressive laws and policies, and remove the legal, social and economic barriers that impede equitable access to vital HIV-related services, particularly for populations at higher risk of HIV.



“A strong civil society is essential in the HIV response. People living with HIV are a driving force who must be meaningfully involved at the tables where decisions are made.”

José María Di Bello,  
Red Cross Red Crescent + Network

### At the national and community levels

The application of the Red Cross Red Crescent HIV strategy encompasses practical interventions, guided by local needs and national AIDS programmes. We focus on community-led initiatives, building on the unique advantages of community systems in supporting the scaling-up of HIV services.

Through our vast network of volunteers living in remote communities in every corner of the globe, we are well positioned to promote community-based prevention, care, treatment and support interventions that are evidence-based and mainstreamed wherever feasible, and to seek out the most vulnerable people.

Put simply, our purpose is to help make the inspirational ‘Getting to zero’ vision a reality by:

- *getting new infections to zero* through a renewed call for sustainable prevention efforts, including treatment as prevention
- *getting related death to zero* by extending HIV and tuberculosis treatment, care and support interventions, including harm reduction programmes and
- *getting stigma and discrimination to zero* by supporting the meaningful involvement of people living with HIV and networks like the Red Cross Red Crescent + Network.

Addressing gender inequalities, by strengthening in particular the engagement of men, will continue to be at the heart of our response.

## IMPACT

Between 2009 and 2012, 57 National Societies around the world rolled out the Global Alliance on HIV. The initiative reached nearly 68 million people with a combination of prevention activities and services, which in many instances would not otherwise have been accessible to these individuals.

National Societies have successfully shifted the home-based care paradigm by emphasizing positive health, dignity and support for both prevention and adherence to treatment. Linking ART services in adjoining communities appears to be an especially effective way of increasing access to services and reinforcing adherence. Treatment as prevention in high-burden countries may shape the future of our response.

The IFRC is determined to take the AIDS response out of isolation and continue to support a long-term, holistic and strategic response, focusing on strengthening community systems.

# Red Cross Red Crescent in numbers

(from 2009 to 2012)

**68 million**

People reached through National Society HIV programmes

**6 million**

Individuals at higher risk of HIV reached

**359,000**

People living with HIV supported

**360,000**

Orphans supported

**349,000**

Volunteers trained and engaged in HIV programme work

**59 million**

Volunteer hours mobilized for HIV action

**98 million**

Resources mobilized for HIV programmes (in Swiss francs)



eEve-Lotta Jansson/UN-OCHA/IFRC and Red Cross

## Case study

### Lesotho Red Cross paediatric treatment

Lesotho is among the countries worst affected by HIV. Nearly one-quarter of the adult population is estimated to be HIV positive – the third highest HIV prevalence in the world.

Support for the children on paediatric ART was initially a minor element of the Lesotho Red Cross Society's HIV programme. However, as supplies of anti-retroviral drugs improved over the years and attitudes towards the administration of ART to children changed, the Red Cross was in a position to reach out to the rising numbers of children on treatment.

At present, 167 children below the age of 12 on paediatric anti-retroviral treatment are receiving assistance from Lesotho Red Cross care facilitators, who connect the children with health facilities and ensure monitoring and adherence to treatment at a household level. The Red Cross recognizes, however, that children's well-being is more than just a restoration of good health, so it offers these children care and support which goes beyond medical treatment alone. The children are helped to feel secure in all areas of their lives. Circumstances may have let them down before, but the Lesotho Red Cross Society is now working to turn a potentially bleak outlook for these children into a landscape of hope and promise.

Limpopo Matthews (above) is 7 years old and comes from a small village called Ha Makhoathi. Today, she looks like an ordinary, healthy child. The first six years of her life, however, were a miserable series of colds, asthma and other illnesses. Her grandmother, Manthabiseng Matthews, with whom Limpopo has lived since her mother died, took her to numerous doctors but her health did not improve. It was only when a Lesotho Red Cross care-giver counselled Manthabiseng to take her to a clinic in the capital, Maseru, that they discovered Limpopo was HIV positive.

With transport money and regular psychological support and counselling from the Red Cross, Limpopo is adhering to her treatment and is able to live the normal and healthy life every child deserves.

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## Follow us





# THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

**Humanity** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

**Impartiality** It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

**Neutrality** In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

**Independence** The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

**Voluntary service** It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

**Unity** There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

**Universality** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.