Making a difference
Tearfund’s strategic response to the AIDS pandemic
Twenty-five years on from the first recognition of AIDS, the devastating impact of the pandemic continues to grow. There are now over 40 million people living with HIV worldwide. In 2006, it was estimated that another 4.3 million people became infected and 2.9 million died of AIDS-related illnesses. More effective interventions to address the causes and consequences of HIV are desperately needed.

Tearfund is a UK-based Christian relief and development agency working with local partner organisations to bring help and hope to communities in need around the world. It is the sixth largest development NGO in the UK, with an annual income of around $100 million.

HIV is a corporate priority area for Tearfund. Tearfund’s vision is to see local churches across the world mobilised, envisioned, resourced and at the forefront of the response to the AIDS pandemic. To support them as they engage in good quality initiatives to stop the spread of HIV and reduce its impact within local communities.
Tearfund's vision is that by 2015, in the communities where Tearfund and its partners work, the spread of HIV will be stopped and the impact reversed.

A distinctive response: working with the local church

There is a growing recognition among international development agencies that faith-based organisations can play a critical role in poverty reduction, particularly in the response to HIV. Tearfund has over twenty years of experience of working through church-based partners in the response to HIV. Tearfund has an ambitious plan to contribute to stopping and reversing the AIDS pandemic by 2015. The vision for this rests on the potential of the local church.

The Christian church is significant in the lives of hundreds of millions, especially in many parts of Africa that are most affected by HIV. It represents an independent civil society network already established at both grass roots and international level, and which has unparalleled reach and authority in the community. Tearfund partners connect with more than 15 million Christians in the South. The local church is already responding to the pandemic at the community level, mobilising large numbers of volunteers for service provision, but has yet to achieve its full its potential.

Tearfund seeks to mobilise and invest in the local church, to link the evangelical constituency in the North and South to work together and enable a distinctive and effective response to HIV.

Summary: Tearfund’s response to HIV

Experience
Tearfund has been working with local partner organisations responding to HIV since 1991.

Distinctive
Tearfund is working to mobilise the global church to respond proactively to the needs of people living with or affected by HIV.

Comprehensive approach
Tearfund currently supports over 130 HIV projects, spanning prevention, treatment, care and support.

Investment
In 2006–07 Tearfund invested £3 million in projects responding to HIV.

Over the next nine years (2007–2015), Tearfund aims to allocate £60 million to projects responding to HIV.

Capacity
Tearfund has a dedicated UK-based staff capacity of 8 people working to scale up responses to HIV. This includes advocacy, policy support, institutional funding support and technical support. By March 2008, Tearfund aims to have 13 people based in Africa, Asia and Latin America to provide technical support for HIV work.
Working together

Tearfund is committed to partnership, particularly with the local church. Tearfund has the necessary understanding, ability and established long-term relationships – as well as a willingness to challenge – to work effectively with the church in both the North and the South to respond to HIV. Tearfund also has the professional programmatic and advocacy expertise, international credibility, good practice and understanding of donor funding and governance which are essential to access resources and scale up these responses.

Tearfund is playing a catalytic role in working with the global church to meet the needs of poor people, demonstrate and promote good practice, influence personal behaviour, improve the use of international aid within countries and continue to be a credible advocate to governments and policy makers. Tearfund also works with other like-minded agencies and networks to achieve this vision.

Strategic focus

Tearfund recognises that comprehensive responses spanning prevention, treatment, care and support, and impact mitigation are required to address the vast needs presented by HIV. Within this broad spectrum, Tearfund is now focusing on five niche areas and investing in building expertise in these aspects of responses. These are the thematic priorities for Tearfund’s response to HIV:

- **Behaviour change** among children and young people
- **Prevention of mother to child transmission**
- **Impact mitigation** for people living with or affected by HIV, with specific focus on women and children
- **Promoting access to treatment** for opportunistic infections and antiretroviral therapy
- **Ending stigma and discrimination** of people living with or affected by HIV.

Commitment to gender

Tearfund’s HIV work recognises the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women and children. Gender disparities heighten the vulnerability of women to HIV. Tearfund is committed to addressing these issues and encourages partners to engage with the issue of gender in development and particularly in the context of HIV. Too often, the church has seemed to condone harmful attitudes to gender and sexual practice, and failed to challenge stigma. Tearfund and partners are working with the church to tackle stigma and address the issues of gender and HIV within the evangelical church context. The reach and authority of the local church means that church leaders have the potential to shape attitudes. In demonstrating sound and appropriate...
responses to gender, the church will be in a position to uphold good practice in HIV. It will also be able to demonstrate a proactive response to the challenges faced by all communities in issues surrounding gender.

Advocacy

Tearfund has been engaged in advocacy around HIV since 2004, working to change the policies and actions of donor governments, national governments and international institutions in favour of people in poverty. Tearfund is part of the UK consortium on AIDS and International Development as well as a member of the Stop AIDS campaign, and has two policy officers developing linkages between international processes and the reality of the pandemic for local communities. Tearfund encourages and supports partners and local churches to engage in advocacy on a range of issues such as access to treatment. Tearfund is working with policy makers and international donors to realise the potential of working with the local church, and to enable more effective use of international resources for responding to HIV in grassroots communities.

Supporter base

Tearfund gains much of its support from around 220,000 evangelical Christians and churches in the UK. It is unique in being a significant development organisation that has credibility both with evangelical churches and the international development community. Tearfund is seeking to mobilise one million Christians in the UK and Ireland to support the vision of halting and reversing HIV in the communities in which Tearfund and partners work, through campaigns such as Work a Miracle. This appeal was launched by Tearfund in 2006 to mobilise support for prevention of mother-to-child transmission. Tearfund encourages supporters to actively engage in advocacy, through praying, writing to national governments and other policy makers, attending demonstrations and signing up to national campaigns.

Monitoring and evaluation

In 2005–06, Tearfund ran a pilot programme to strengthen capacity around monitoring and evaluation for partner organisations responding to HIV. The programme worked with staff responsible for managing the design and implementation of their organisations’ response to HIV. Participants’ learning focused on setting realistic objectives for their responses, developing appropriate indicators and designing effective systems to collect and analyse data.

Sample indicators for HIV responses

Behaviour change

- Attitudes of youth to people living with HIV.
- Youth answering correctly standard questions about HIV transmission.

Prevention of Mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT)

- Percentage of pregnant women and their partners in the project area receiving HIV testing annually.
- Percentage of HIV positive pregnant women receiving a complete course of antiretroviral prophylaxis to reduce the risk of MTCT.

Access to treatment

- Number of people who access voluntary counselling and testing.
- Percentage of people in programme who are enrolled in nationally recognised antiretroviral therapy programme.
Principles of Tearfund’s response to HIV

A comprehensive response

Tearfund recognises that the nature and status of the pandemic varies between communities. Tearfund advocates for comprehensive responses that span prevention, treatment, care and support and impact mitigation. The focus of these responses is dependent on the nature of the epidemic in the community.

The global HIV situation is changing rapidly

Tearfund’s strategy is reviewed every three years to accommodate the changes and respond to the progress being made within the sector.

HIV impacts men, women and children in different ways

Tearfund pays specific attention to gender differences, children and the elderly in its overall response. Tearfund uses HIV to highlight and address gender as a priority cross-cutting issue.

Greater involvement of people living with HIV

Experience shows that responses to HIV are strengthened by involving those most affected. Tearfund and partners are actively exploring and advocating for more opportunities for meaningful involvement of people living with HIV.

Ending stigma and discrimination

Tearfund is working to end stigma and discrimination. Tearfund’s particular focus on the local church aims to ensure that the church will promote acceptance, support and involvement for people living with and affected by HIV.

Mainstreaming HIV

Tearfund believes that mainstreaming HIV will protect developmental gains and reduce the vulnerability of all communities to HIV. Tearfund promotes the mainstreaming of HIV in all its work.

‘Faith-based and community-based organisations were among the first responders to HIV and AIDS, caring for fellow human beings in need. Their reach, authority and legitimacy identify them as crucial partners in the response to HIV and AIDS.’

**Conclusion**

*Tearfund is unique* in being a significant development organisation that has credibility with both evangelical churches and the international development community. Tearfund is seeking to collaborate with evangelical churches, civil society in both the North and the South and international agencies and governments, to work together more effectively to:

- mobilise Christian leadership
- ensure good practice and scale up the Christian response to HIV
- facilitate understanding of the role and contribution of faith in the response to the pandemic.

Tearfund is looking for allies who see the potential impact of such collaboration and are willing to invest with us to develop the capacity of local churches and communities around the world to develop effective and sustainable responses to HIV.
Tearfund's work is focused in the following areas:

Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, China, Colombia, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Ireland, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Malawi, Mali, Mano River, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Russia, Rwanda, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, UK, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Zambia, Zimbabwe

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