A young child with a joyful expression is shown in a classroom setting. A red ribbon, a symbol for HIV/AIDS awareness, is tied around a red pencil that points towards the child. The background is a solid red color.

# Keep the Promise

A young girl with braided hair is the central focus, wearing a green school uniform with a yellow sash. She is sitting in a classroom, looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. Other children in similar uniforms are visible in the background.

A teaching resource on  
advocacy and HIV and AIDS



Ecumenical Advocacy  
Alliance

# Keep the Promise



A teaching resource on advocacy and HIV and AIDS

## Produced by:

### The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance

The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance is a broad ecumenical network for international cooperation in advocacy on global trade and HIV and AIDS. At present, more than 100 churches and church-related organizations have joined the Alliance and bring to this common work of advocacy a constituency of millions of people of faith worldwide. This campaign is part of the wider civil society efforts to press governments to "Keep the Promise".

## Supported by:

### UNAIDS

The Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS, brings together the efforts and resources of ten UN system organizations to the global AIDS response. Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Based in Geneva, the UNAIDS secretariat works on the ground in more than 75 countries world wide.

### World AIDS Campaign

The World AIDS Campaign supports, strengthens and connects campaigns that hold leaders accountable for their promises on HIV and AIDS. "Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise" is the World AIDS Campaign theme from 2005-2010.

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p. 4: UNAIDS/W. Phillips  
p. 6: (Top and bottom left) Christian Aid/Jodi Bieber; (bottom right) Little Folks  
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We encourage you to photocopy or quote from the publication as long as credit is given to the source.

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# Keep the Promise

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Why?



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At the end of 2006 there were an estimated 39.5 million people worldwide living with HIV and AIDS. 6,000 young people (15-24 year olds) become infected with HIV each day, accounting for over half of all new infections. In Africa alone over 13 million children have been orphaned through AIDS. And, of the 6.8 million adults and children in developing and middle-income countries who need life-saving AIDS drugs, only 1.65 million are receiving them<sup>1</sup>. There is no doubt that the AIDS pandemic continues to pose one of the biggest threats to the world's young people.

This Keep the Promise teaching resource contains everything you need to explore the global HIV and AIDS crisis with young people, to understand the effect it is having on the world, to examine what the governments of the world have pledged to do about it, and to encourage youth to become effective global citizens by writing to national and world leaders regarding the issue.

The statistics on HIV and AIDS can paint a bleak picture, but there are real signs of hope - education, medical treatment, people living with HIV positively in many parts of the world and declining infection rates in some countries. Keeping up the pressure through advocacy will continue to make a difference.

In June 2006, government leaders from around the world met at the UN headquarters in New York. The purpose was to review the promises they had made in a Declaration of Commitment on HIV and AIDS in 2001. During this meeting, leaders acknowledged the immense suffering that HIV continues to cause and the failure of national and international efforts to

meet agreed targets. As a result, leaders drafted a political declaration to reaffirm their commitment to tackle HIV. They recognized the importance of improving prevention methods and ensuring adequate care and treatment for people living with HIV. They included people living with HIV and other members of society as active participants in the meeting. However, although this declaration was an improvement on some of the 2001 commitments, there were frustrating shortfalls. Many people felt that the review wasn't critical enough about the targets that hadn't been met. And, although leaders addressed human rights issues - particularly the rights of girl children who are particularly vulnerable to HIV - the declaration didn't go far enough. Neither did the declaration name many of the groups of people particularly vulnerable to HIV. Funding commitments were also very weak. Perhaps most importantly, the declaration didn't set clear targets by which to measure future success or failure and therefore to hold leaders accountable.

Although some good commitments and affirmations were made in the June 2006 Political Declaration, addressing the problems of HIV and AIDS will take time, continued effort and constant funding. Back in 2005 the G8 (the world's eight richest nations) agreed on the target of providing universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care for everyone who needs it by 2010. The UN gave its backing and all the world's governments agreed to work towards this aim. However, it's now clear that, for this target to be met, the governments of the world need to drastically increase their efforts. So, we want world leaders to know that the people of the world - especially the young people - are watching them to make sure they keep the promises they have made.

## How to use this resource

This resource is aimed at young people aged 11 to 16, but it could be adapted for use with younger children (such as by asking the children to draw pictures rather than write letters) or with adults. The aim of this resource is to build awareness, educate, and inspire young people to express their views. Young people are asked to write letters to national and world leaders requesting them to keep their commitments on HIV and AIDS. Young people are also encouraged to carry out advocacy and awareness-raising work in their communities.

It is crucial that young people are educated about HIV. This way they can develop life skills that will help them reduce their vulnerability and avoid behavior that puts them at risk. This resource focuses on the global context and a letter-writing campaign but further time should be devoted to HIV and AIDS prevention and the related issues that are particularly relevant to the area where you live. Our further resources section on the back cover will help you with this. Much of this booklet can be photocopied and given directly to young people, particularly pages 4-9.

Much of the information in this booklet ties in with the proposed activities on pages 10-11, 17-18, and 19 so please read through all of the activities and identify the information and resources you need before leading a session. We advise running two one-hour lessons. Activities are marked either for lesson one or lesson two and should be supplemented with information from the booklet. However, activities can be mixed and matched according to how much time you have available. The first lesson should provide a background on HIV and AIDS and campaigning and the second lesson should focus on students writing letters to leaders.

When looking at how people are tested for HIV (page 4), it would be good if you can research and give students details of confidential HIV-testing centers in your area that also offer counseling.

Finally, if at all possible, it would greatly enhance the students' experience of learning about HIV and AIDS if a person living with HIV was involved in both the planning and presentation of the classroom sessions. Seeing and speaking to people living with or affected by HIV helps to break down barriers and stigma as well as

shows students that people with HIV 'look just like you and me' and lead full, healthy, useful and fulfilling lives.

## Dealing with HIV and AIDS in the classroom

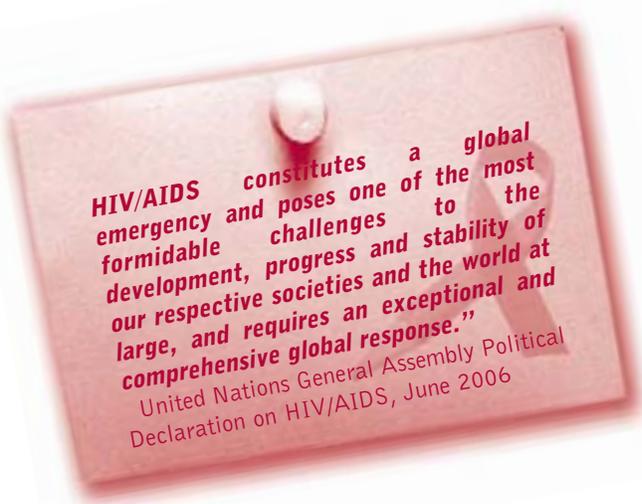
HIV and AIDS can be a very sensitive issue, not least if it's a subject that directly affects you. Please be aware that there may be young people in your class who know someone with HIV or AIDS, or they may even be infected themselves. Try to build in time for discussion and feedback and ensure that the class knows where they can find advice, support and further information locally.

## Why we don't use "HIV/AIDS"

In this publication we have used the term 'HIV and AIDS' instead of the more traditional form of 'HIV/AIDS'. Separating the two terms acknowledges that advances in treatment have made HIV and AIDS two very different (but related) conditions. With proper access to treatment and support, people can live with HIV for decades, have children who are HIV negative, follow practices which prevent the spread of the virus, and live life fully in their communities. When the disease progresses to AIDS, people die.

Separating the terms helps us to consider more deliberately different needs and approaches and tries to overcome, at least in a small way, the perception that HIV will always and inevitably become AIDS.

<sup>1</sup> [www.avert.org](http://www.avert.org)



**HIV/AIDS constitutes a global emergency and poses one of the most formidable challenges to the development, progress and stability of our respective societies and the world at large, and requires an exceptional and comprehensive global response.**  
United Nations General Assembly Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, June 2006

# All about HIV and AIDS



*A schoolteacher in India, fired after testing positive, is embraced by his daughter.*

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'HIV is transmitted by mosquitoes', 'having sex with a virgin will cure AIDS', 'HIV can be passed on through eating food prepared by an infected person' - these are just a few of the myths and misunderstandings about HIV and AIDS. Not only do a lot of the myths about HIV and AIDS increase discrimination and stigma, they are also very dangerous. If people do not know the facts about how HIV is transmitted then they cannot protect themselves. Also, if people think that they can be cured of HIV they may, unknowingly, pass the virus on to others, thinking that they no longer carry it. Separate the fact from the fiction with this straightforward guide to HIV and AIDS. For more information, [www.avert.org](http://www.avert.org) has a great question and answer section, and lists some more common myths on its 'What is AIDS' section. More websites and resources for further information are also listed on the back of this booklet.

## How is HIV transmitted?

HIV is transmitted through infected blood passing from one bloodstream into another. Unprotected sex and injecting drugs are the most common ways of transmitting HIV. However, HIV can also be transmitted through pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding (although not as

easily). Finally, HIV can be transmitted, through blood transfusions and through bleeding wounds from an HIV positive person coming into contact with a wound on an uninfected person.

## How does someone know if they've got HIV?

One reason HIV spreads so quickly is because for months, even years, someone may seem healthy and not know they have HIV. During this time they may, without knowing, pass the virus on to others, especially as early signs of the virus (skin complaints, chest infections and diarrhea) are the same as lots of other minor illnesses. Of course, having these symptoms doesn't mean you have HIV. The only way to know for sure whether you have HIV is to get tested.

Stigma against people with HIV and AIDS has to stop. If people are scared to talk about, be tested for or admit they have HIV, the infection will keep spreading.

## What happens when you get tested?

An HIV test usually involves some blood being taken from your arm and being tested for HIV antibodies. Most tests take anywhere between a few days and a week or more to get results, although there are some quicker tests now available. In addition to ensuring confidentiality, testing centers should also offer counseling and support for the person being tested before, during and after the test, particularly if the result comes back positive. However, sometimes counseling is not available.

## Is there a cure?

There is no cure for HIV and AIDS but antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) slow down the development of AIDS. People usually take three or four different ARVs (or a combined therapy pill) each day for the rest of their lives to stay well. Most HIV positive people, with the help of drugs, good nutrition and a positive attitude, can live full and healthy lives.

However, ARVs are very expensive and most people in poorer parts of the world do not receive

proper treatment either because of the cost of the drugs, or through problems in distributing and regulating the drugs people need.

Since there is no cure for AIDS, prevention is really important. Everyone needs to be taught about the disease. Even in developed countries, up to a third of people with HIV don't know they have it so it's everyone's personal responsibility to protect themselves from possible infection.

## Isn't AIDS just a disease that poor people get?

Although it's not caused by poverty, AIDS and poverty are closely linked. Without education, resources for prevention, good health care systems and treatment, HIV spreads easily in poor countries. Most people in developing countries do not have access to antiretroviral drugs. Even simple medicines like painkillers and antibiotics are hard to get hold of. HIV and AIDS also make poverty worse because it is mainly the working population (15 to 49 year olds) that become infected with HIV and develop AIDS. Crucial people in society such as doctors and teachers become ill and die and, with fewer people working, the country's economy suffers. In some areas, even people living with HIV who are well and able to work are not given jobs because of stigma against them. Also, many parents are dying through AIDS, leaving their children to be cared for by elderly relatives who often do not work and do not have the money to support their grandchildren. For HIV and AIDS to be tackled, poverty also needs to be addressed. Poverty isn't natural; it is caused by government policies and human behavior that need to change.

Although two-thirds of all people with HIV live in Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of people living with HIV is increasing in almost every

## Did you know...?

- AIDS-related illness has killed more than 25 million people since 1981.
- Every day more than 6,000 children are orphaned by AIDS. A third of these children are under five years old.
- There are close to 40 million people in the world today with HIV - around double the number in 1995 (when there were 19.9 million). The vast majority of these people are unaware of their status.
- 2.9 million people died because of AIDS-related illness in 2006, and 4.3 million people became infected.

country in the world. This is partly due to the fact that fewer people are dying now from AIDS-related illness, thanks to ARVs, so there are more people living longer with HIV.

## Why don't people just stay safe?

People need to know all the different ways to prevent the transmission of HIV. For young people, the best prevention methods are, of course, not to take drugs and not to have sex until they are older and in a committed relationship. Scientists and public health experts tell us that that avoiding sex outside marriage, mutual faithfulness between two uninfected people, and using a condom are important ways to significantly reduce the risk of transmitting HIV through sexual activity. Drug addicts who are not yet able to stop injecting drugs need to have access to clean needles and avoid sharing needles and syringes so that they too can reduce the risk of HIV infection.

Yet sometimes answers to how people can protect themselves are not so simple. HIV and AIDS are linked with deep and complex issues in society. For instance, due to inequality and economic pressures, many women and girls do not have the choice to say no to sex. Women may suspect that their spouse or partner is putting them at risk of infection with HIV or another sexually-transmitted disease but are unable to protect themselves. Extreme poverty may force women and girls to engage in sexual activity in order to get money or other goods to help their families survive.

Many of these issues can't be resolved easily. It is important to help people receive information and support on all the prevention methods available, and to work to address the root causes, such as poverty and inequality, that make some people more vulnerable.

- Children under 15 years old account for one in eight deaths and one in eight new infections worldwide – the vast majority through mother to child transmission during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding.
- More than 95% of all people living with HIV are in the developing world and 95% of all deaths from AIDS-related illnesses have happened in the developing world.
- Although the number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy has gone up considerably in low and middle-income countries in recent years, globally still only one in five people who need treatment are receiving it.
- Young people age 15-24 account for 40% of new infections.

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# Real Lives

*"At the beginning it was very difficult to accept the diagnosis - like most, I imagined it was the end of the world. But once I began to see life again...I knew I had to go on and to fight and to say that HIV is not going to destroy me."*

HIV positive woman from El Salvador

## Nomfundo

Nomfundo is 18 years old and lives in Dambuza, South Africa. She looks after her five younger brothers and sisters since both her parents and her baby sister died of AIDS-related illnesses.

Now that she has a household to look after, Nomfundo gets up at 6 am every day. She irons six school uniforms for herself and her brothers and sisters before making breakfast. After school, Nomfundo does the family's washing and makes supper for everyone. She finishes the day off by doing homework!

Nomfundo worries about not having enough money and about sickness in her family. 'I feel sad when someone in my family is sick, especially my little sister because she's got a problem with her teeth. But the hardest time was when I had to take care of my mum and my little sister who were both sick at the same time. There was no cure and they died.'

But life isn't all bad. An organization called Thandanani helps the family by providing groceries and clothes. They also provide emotional support to Nomfundo. Nomfundo's brothers and sisters also help her. 'I'm proud of them all because if I tell them what

to do they listen and they don't give me any problems,' she says. 'We're very close to each other.'

Nomfundo's advice for young people is for those who are having sex to use condoms '...and those who haven't had sex yet should abstain until the right time because AIDS is there and it's a killer.'



*Nomfundo Majola gets herself and her brothers and sisters ready for school each morning since her father, mother and baby sister died of AIDS-related illnesses.*

## Sophat, Chiva and Chivy

Brothers Sophat, 11, Chiva, 7 and Chivy, 5, from Cambodia, are the only natural family each other have. Their mother Khien Sopheap died in 2003. Their father died last year in a hospital from TB as a result of having AIDS. Their grandmother visited the boys when they were in the hospital with their father but was not able to provide for them. When the children were discovered by a worker from the organization Seedlings of Hope they had very few clothes, were uncared for, and extremely hungry. With their father's permission and grandmother's blessing, Seedlings of Hope found a couple, whose own children were grown up, who agreed to care for Sophat, Chiva and Chivy. Being part of a family again is a far happier and healthier option for children than living in an orphanage. Sophat, Chiva and Chivy are now going to school and are very settled with their foster parents.

It's hard to believe but Sophat, Chiva, Chivy, Nomfundo and her brothers and sisters are actually some of the lucky ones. For every happy ending, there are many more hungry and scared children orphaned because of AIDS with no one to care for them.



*Sophat, Chiva and Chivy with their foster parents.*

Stories from Christian Aid. Websites listed on inside back cover give more real-life stories of people living with HIV and its affects.



*Nomfundo Majola and her 9-year-old sister do the washing up.*

**"Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation"**  
Nelson Mandela, 2005

## Speak out!

Independence movements, human rights, votes for women, abolition of slavery in the west - our world's history is full of examples of achievements in society brought about by people standing up and speaking out when they think something is wrong. When people see an injustice in the world, they sometimes organize people to get together and speak out against what's wrong and try to get it changed. This is called campaigning. Can you think of a campaign you've heard about either where you live or in another country?

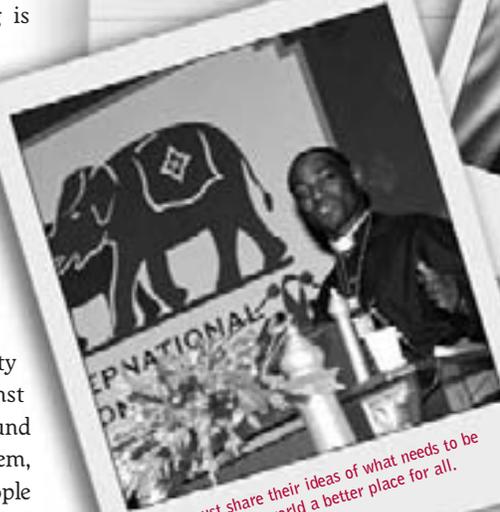
## Why bother campaigning?

- Because it works! Look at the Make Poverty History campaign or the campaign against landmines - they reached many countries around the world, things were changed because of them, and world leaders couldn't fail to hear what people were saying. Think of a campaign that you've heard of that has made a difference. Why did it work?
- Because if you were being treated unfairly in some way you'd want someone to stand up for you, wouldn't you?
- Because your voice and your opinions are important and you can make them heard.



Demonstrations like this one for trade justice send important messages to world leaders.

# So what's the point?



People must share their ideas of what needs to be done to make the world a better place for all.



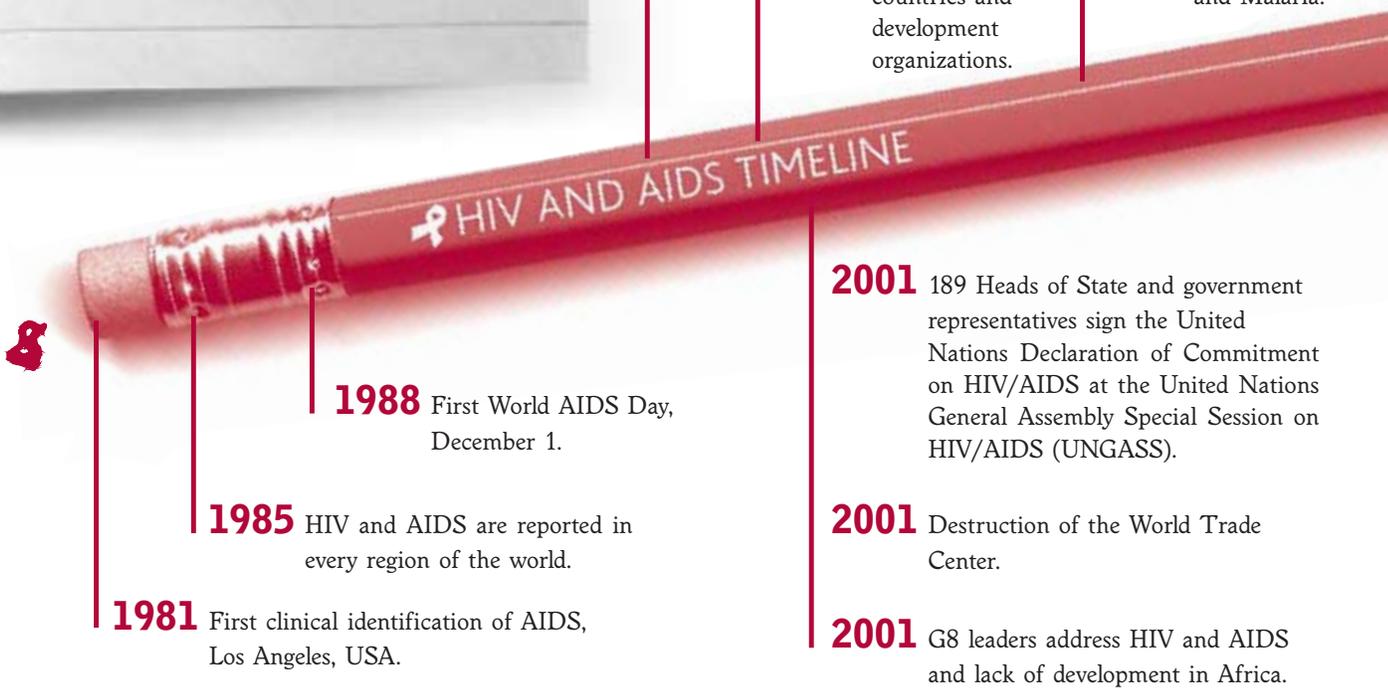
Young people can make their voices heard!

## What kind of things might be part of a campaign?

There are many different ways to campaign. The key is that, whatever the action, it needs to be organized and have a goal. The most common sorts of campaigns are things like:

- A vigil, demonstration or march.
- Writing letters to influential people. Research shows that personal letters are by far the best way to influence politicians. One survey of ministers of parliament in Britain said that letters were over 26 times more effective than media coverage in raising their awareness of campaign demands.
- Petitions delivered to prominent people.
- Lobbying - asking influential people (often members of government) to support a cause.
- Wearing a colored armband, a button or a wristband.

# What happened when?



**1981** - Although this was the first official identification of AIDS, there is evidence to suggest earlier cases.

**2000** - In September 2000, at the United Nations Millennium Summit, 189 world leaders and development organizations agreed to 8 time-bound and measurable goals - which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV and AIDS and providing universal primary education - all by the target date of 2015. These are called Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

**2001** - The UN Declaration of Commitment (DoC) on HIV/AIDS is an important list of firm commitments that the leaders pledged to fulfil in response to the AIDS crisis. In the DoC there were 103 statements of commitment and targets with the aim of halting and reversing the HIV and AIDS epidemic. It included milestones to be met by 2003, 2005 and 2010. Progress of the promises was reviewed in June 2006.

*The destruction of the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001 meant that, from this point on, national security became the central issue in many development-related meetings and reports instead of issues such as HIV and AIDS.*

**2002** - The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was created following a commitment made at the 2001 UN Special Session on AIDS. It combines money from governments, private donors and other organizations and uses them to fund projects fighting the three diseases. By the beginning of 2006 the Fund had given \$4.4 billion to projects in 128 countries.

**2003** The first major review of the promises made in the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS at the UN General Assembly meeting. WHO launches '3 by 5' campaign.

**2006** The General Assembly meets at the UN Headquarters in New York to review the targets set in the UN Declaration of Commitment in 2001. As a result a new Political Declaration is agreed upon.

**2006** Every country is supposed to submit their own targets for the response to HIV.

**2007** G8 leaders meet in Heiligendamm, Germany.

**2007** Governments to pledge new support to the Global Fund.

**2005** Nelson Mandela reveals that his eldest son died of an AIDS-related condition.

**2005** G8 summit in Gleneagles, Scotland. Make Poverty History year. WTO meeting in Hong Kong. Government pledges to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria fall short of agreed upon need by more than 50%.

**2005** All governments were to report on their progress in fulfilling the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS by 31 December 2005.

*"Twenty-five years into the epidemic, the global response to AIDS must be transformed from an episodic, crisis-management approach to a thoughtful long-term response..."*  
UNAIDS 2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic

## 2008 and 2011

The UN plans to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress that has been achieved so far in meeting the commitments made in both the 2001 and the 2006 Declarations on HIV and AIDS.

## Want to know more?

You can find the latest facts and figures about HIV and AIDS at:  
[www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)

For information about the promises made at the 2006 UN General Assembly review, visit:  
[www.e-alliance.ch](http://www.e-alliance.ch)  
[www.ungasshiv.org](http://www.ungasshiv.org)

**2003** - The first major review of the 2001 UNGASS Declaration by the UN General Assembly confirmed the increasing problem of HIV and AIDS.

The '3 by 5' Campaign was launched by the WHO aiming to provide 3 million people living with HIV in poor countries with ARVs by the end of 2005.

**2005** - At their summit, G8 leaders pledged to develop and implement a package for HIV prevention, treatment and care with the aim of coming as close as possible to the goal of universal access by 2010 for all those who need it.

The '3 by 5' campaign made significant improvements in ARV access in some countries, but fell short of their end of 2005 target by half.

**2006** - The UN General Assembly review showed that, although some progress has been made in expanding access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support and although HIV prevalence has been reduced in a small but growing number of countries, many targets from the 2001 DoC are still to be met. The 2006 Political Declaration disappointed many as it didn't set clear targets by which to measure future success or failure.

**We need to let world leaders know that we are still watching them to make sure they keep the promises they have made on HIV - in the 2001 Declaration, through the G8 commitments in 2005 and in the Political Declaration of 2006. We want less talk and more action. With enough political will, we can stop the spread of HIV and AIDS.**

## Lesson One

# Classroom Activities

### Shout it out!

**Aim:** To find out what knowledge and perceptions students have about HIV and AIDS and to separate the fact from the fiction.

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**You will need:** board and marker or paper and pens.

Write AIDS on the board or paper and ask the class to stand. Each student in turn must say a word associated with AIDS, and then they may sit down. Write the words up on the board, regardless of whether they are correctly associated or not.

When you have written everybody's words down or the class has run out of ideas, go through the words and discuss what they mean, whether it's a correct association, etc. If the list of words creates some questions that you don't know the answer to, write these as a list and tell the class that you will find the answers and get back to them in the next lesson.

### In their place

**Aim:** To help students put themselves in the place of children affected by AIDS.

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**You will need:** the real-life stories from page 6 of this booklet.

Read or photocopy the real-life stories. Then, use the prompts below for individual thought or small group discussion.

*Imagine if you had to be the head of your household and look after younger brothers and sisters or cousins.*

*What would you find most difficult?*

*What help would you want others to give?*

[www.e-alliance.ch/keepthepromise.jsp](http://www.e-alliance.ch/keepthepromise.jsp)

### Getting the message across

**Aim:** To show students why it's important to speak out about things that we think are wrong and to show what a difference it makes when we all 'speak with one voice'.

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**You will need:** pieces of paper containing a fact about HIV and AIDS.

Split the class into pairs and send one of each pair to the far end of the classroom or playground. Give the other half of the pair a piece of paper with a fact about HIV and/or AIDS written on it (see pages 4-5 for possible facts). Each piece of paper needs to contain different information. When you give the go-ahead, the people with the paper should shout their fact over to their partner.

There will be much noise but, if you can, draw the shouting to a close after a few minutes and ask the pupils what they thought about the exercise. Did they get the message that was being shouted at them? Why or why not? Now repeat the exercise giving out pieces of paper with the same fact on them (let students know they all have the same fact).

Allow the students some time to decide what would be the best way of getting their message across. At the end, discuss with the students what the benefit was when they all had the same message. What can they learn from this?

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## Lesson Two

### Country collages

**Aim:** To help students find out about the current situation of HIV and AIDS in their own country and to allow time for personal reflection.

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**You will need:** big sheets of paper, glue, scissors and felt tip pens or markers.

Material reflecting the state of HIV and AIDS in your country for students to use on their collages. This could include newspaper reports/headlines, excerpts from regional fact sheets.

In small groups, students have 20 minutes to make a collage representing HIV and AIDS in their country. They should use a combination of the material you have provided and any thoughts, concerns, drawings or personal stories about HIV and AIDS in their country. Give each group the opportunity to 'present' their collage to the rest of the class, explaining what it shows and why they included the items they did.



Posters from the Global Poster Competition Against HIV and AIDS - Related Stigma and Discrimination, © Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, 2004



### Tell it to them straight

**Aim:** To help students focus on what they want to include in their letters to their Head of State.

**Duration:** 10 minutes

Use this role-play exercise to help the students focus on what they will say in their letters to their government leader.

Ask them to imagine that they are a journalist working on their favorite radio station or magazine and they have got the opportunity to interview their government leader about their views on HIV and AIDS, but they've only got 10 minutes to talk to them.

They should spend some time working out what questions they would ask. They could then split into twos and act out the interview taking it in turns to be the government leader.

Alternatively you could be the government leader and allow the students to interview you.

For more posters and other resources on the **Signs of Hope - Steps for Change CD-Rom**, see: [www.e-alliance.ch/ns\\_cdrom.jsp](http://www.e-alliance.ch/ns_cdrom.jsp).

## What your letters have achieved

**Photocopy or read out to students the articles below about the impact of young peoples' letters so far.**

Thank you to the thousands of you who wrote letters in the run up to the UN General Assembly review in June 2006. Your letters urged world leaders to use the review to re-commit to fulfilling the promises they had made on HIV and AIDS. And they really made an impact as leaders renewed their commitments to fight HIV and AIDS in the 2006 Political Declaration.

## Letters reach the Zambian President

Over 400 letters written by young people in Zambia were presented to Zambia's Foreign Minister, the Honorable Ronnie Shikapwasha during the UN Review.

Over a million people in Zambia are living with HIV. 130,000 of them are children under 15 years old. Around 710,000 children in Zambia have been orphaned by AIDS.

The letters asked Zambian leaders to keep the promises they had made in the 2001 UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and to do more to combat the AIDS pandemic.

Shikapwasha said he was pleased that young people were considering "what the future should hold for them" and were

asking leaders to be accountable. He promised he would share the letters with the president of Zambia and other government officials. "As leaders, we must keep our promises for the sake of young people", he said.

## Royal treatment

In August, over 25,000 people from around the world attended the International AIDS Conference in Toronto, Canada. And your letters were there too! HRH Crown Princess Mette-Marit of Norway, UNAIDS Special Representative, opened an exhibition of some of the letters from young people all over the world that call on world leaders to keep their promises related to HIV and AIDS.

The Princess was joined by two Canadian young people, Alexandra Lee and Mia Sams whose letters to the Canadian Prime Minister were included in the exhibit. The letters featured in the exhibit were selected from the thousands written by young people to their world leaders asking for them to meet their commitments to tackle HIV and AIDS.

## On display

As well as being given to world leaders, copies of some of your letters were displayed in the lobby at the UN headquarters in New York for all the world leaders attending the UN Review on AIDS to see. Visitors to the UN could also read your letters and find out about the importance of world leaders keeping the promises they have made on HIV.

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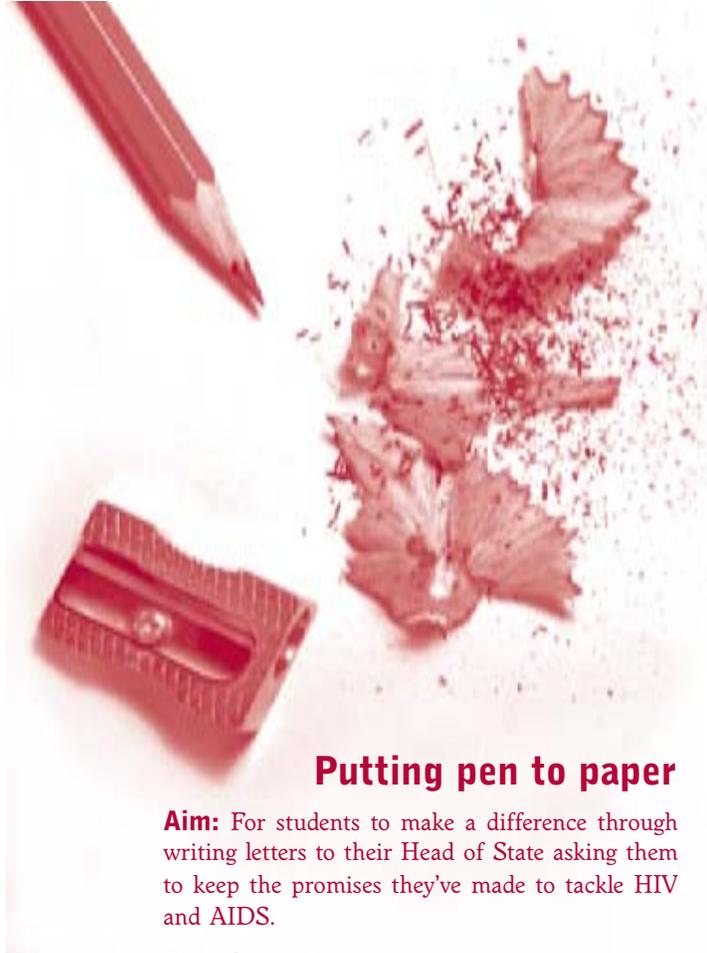


Mwansa Ngelesini hands Foreign Minister Ronnie Shikapwasha over 400 letters by Zambian young people.



Crown Princess Mette-Marit of Norway stands with Mia Sams and Alexandra Lee at the "Children's Letters to the World Exhibit" at the International AIDS Conference, August 2006.

**That's a great start but we want the letters to keep on being sent so that leaders don't forget that the world's young people are watching them.**



## Putting pen to paper

**Aim:** For students to make a difference through writing letters to their Head of State asking them to keep the promises they've made to tackle HIV and AIDS.

**Duration:** 20 minutes (and extra time as homework if needed)

**You will need:** information in this booklet, pens, paper, and money for postage (either stamps for individual letters or postage for a package containing all the letters).

Before students write their letters make sure they understand the issues of HIV and AIDS and the related promises world leaders have made, through the activities, information and stories in this booklet.

Talk about why it's worth campaigning using the information on page 7. Also, empower students by telling them that their letters really can change things. Their letters will be joining with thousands of others from young people around the world all asking their leaders to help make a real difference to overcome HIV and AIDS. Using the sample letter on page 16 as a guide, let each student write their own letter in their own words to their government minister (either your Head of State or the government minister in your country particularly responsible for Health or International Development). Not all the letters should be the same. Point out the parts of the sample letter that are obligatory but encourage students to think about what exactly they want to say to their leader. There might be a specific promise that they want

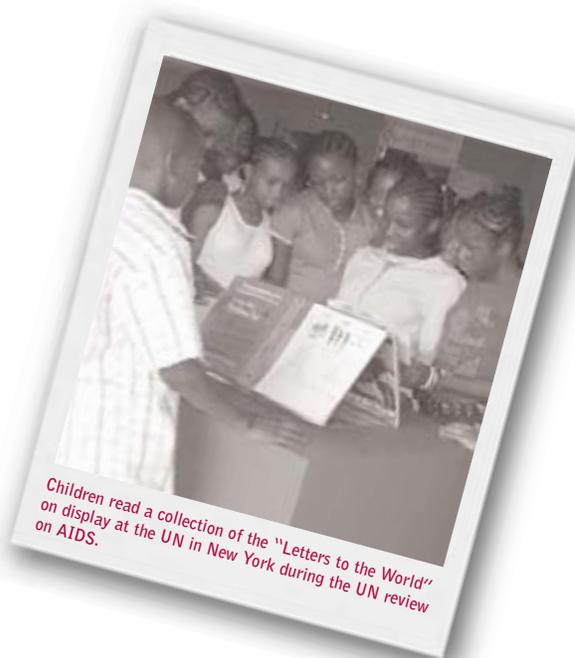
to mention, or they may have been affected by a personal story and want to mention that. Students could also mention specific concerns about HIV and AIDS in their country.

**A few points to bear in mind when writing your letters:**

- Say why you're writing the letter - what has made you feel strongly enough to write?
- Say what you want your leader to do; be as specific as possible and ask them to tell you ways that you can help.
- Ask for a reply. Include your name and address clearly.
- Don't make it too long.
- Be polite and say thank you!

Please also send a copy of one student's letter (preferably hand written) to join others from around the world at the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance headquarters in Geneva (see the address on the back cover/page 17). Perhaps the class could pick the letter they think is best? Or put a selection of strong letters in a bag and let a student draw out the 'winning letter'. It would be great if you could include a photo of your class and a note saying how many letters they have sent to your head of state. Letters will be used in EAA's advocacy efforts with governments and international organizations.

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Children read a collection of the "Letters to the World" on display at the UN in New York during the UN review on AIDS.

BY AIR MAIL  
par avion  
Royal Mail

## Letter to Zambian Government Representative

# Your Letters

## Letter to Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper

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Dear Zambian representative,  
I am very concerned about the on going spread of HIV/AIDS. Today about 40 million people around the world are living with HIV/AIDS.  
In a special session of the UN general assembly in July 2001 by all member states including Zambia agreed to meet specific goals by 2003, 2005, 2010 and also to help stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. But none of these promises have not been kept.  
We ask you to keep your promise because a lot of people are dying, leaving their children into and up in the streets because they have no one to support them or to care for them. I'm only 14 but I know how it feels to be in the streets without food and shelter, I really feel pretty for my friends out there that why I'm asking if you can please do some thing about the HIV/AIDS pandemic. because we need your representation as please if you can't do it for me do it for the sake of the world and the privilege ofphans and shut kids out their.  
Thank you for all you are doing to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. I'm willing to help my country with these efforts and I look forward to a healthy Zambian.

yours sincerely  
Namwene Phiri  
(miss) N. Phiri

Dear right honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada

I am writing to you because many governments including Canada have promised to the people in Malawi to give them money for HIV/AIDS. However, some governments have not kept their promises. I think it's important to keep your promise to the people in Malawi because the people that live there need money to make a cure for the disease HIV/AIDS and because it's nice to keep your promises.

I think the people in Malawi really, really, really, really (and a million more really's) appreciate if you kept your promise and gave them the money that they need.

At my church in Sunday school, we watched a movie about a little girl named Grace and her 3 younger brothers she takes care of. Both her parents died of HIV/AIDS and someone came from her church to help out a lot. When I saw the movie I felt like I should help them and also because it's sad that people are dying.

I hope you go to the HIV/AIDS conference because it's too important to miss.

From,  
Ma Sams

**Letter to American President George Bush**



Dear President Bush, May 6, 2006

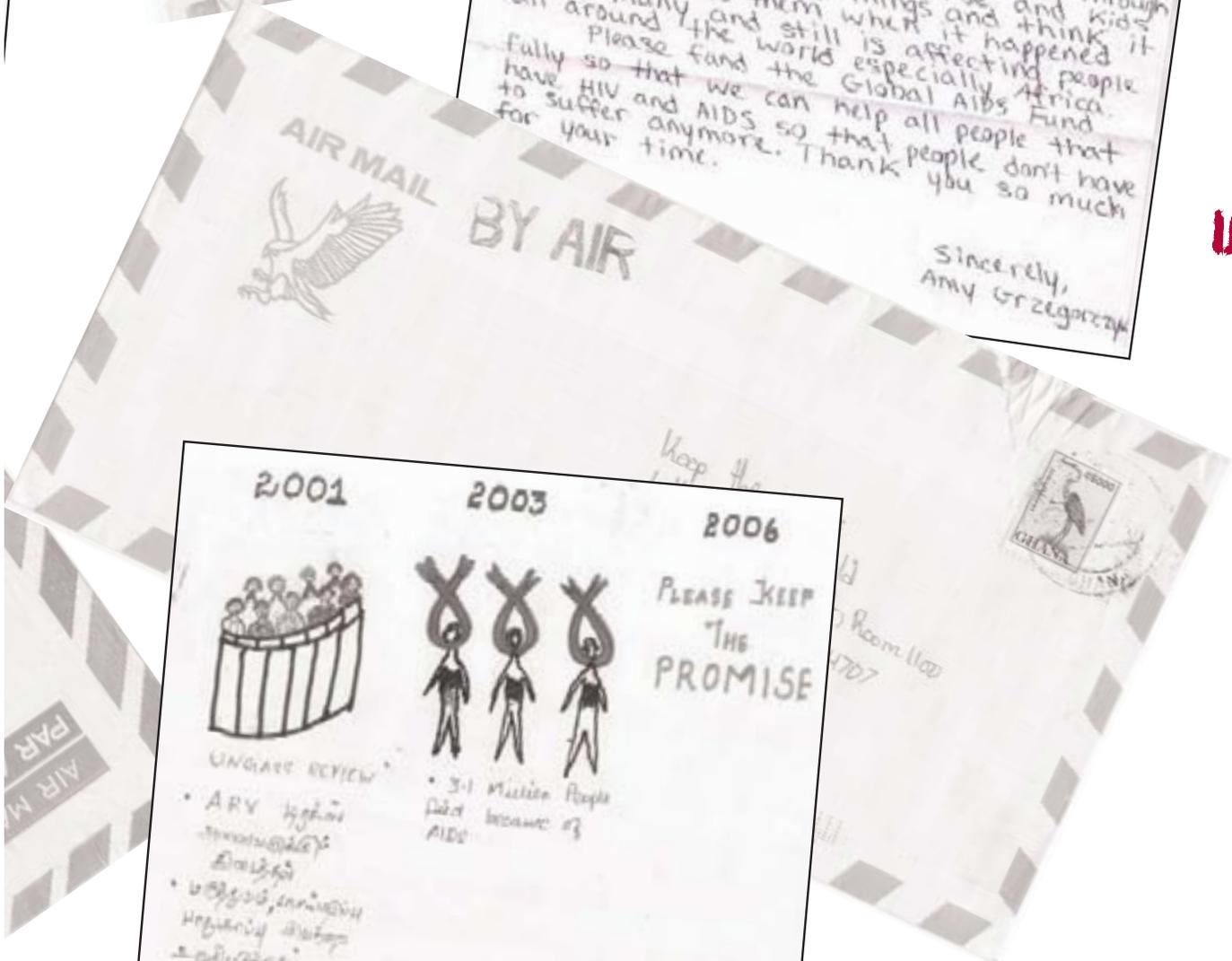
I have learned about HIV and AIDS before today, but I did not think it was this serious. 43 million people died or are living with HIV and AIDS this year including children and parents. I have heard a story of a girl around my age that has to take care of her younger brothers and sisters, because her parents died from HIV and AIDS. I could not imagine myself taking care of my siblings all by myself.

I learned of all the different ways it spreads and how it can spread through drugs and sexual intercourse and kids and teens do these things and think it can't happen to them when it happened to so many and still especially people all around the world.

Please fund the Global AIDS Fund fully so that we can help all people that have HIV and AIDS so that people don't have to suffer anymore. Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,  
Amy Grzegorzak

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2001                      2003                      2006

UNGLASS REVIEW

• ARV highly available to all  
• 200,000,000 people  
• HIV infection  
• HIV infection

• 31 Million People died because of AIDS

PLEASE KEEP THE PROMISE

SHOBANA  
Engineering Student

**Letter to Indian Government Representative**

Translation: Availability of ARVs to all, ensure health, safety and all medical facilities to reduce the vulnerability of the high risk group.

## Sample letter to Head of State or Government Representative

[title and name of person you are writing to]  
[address you are writing to]

[your name]

[your address]

[date]

Dear [title and name],

I am very concerned about the ongoing spread of HIV and AIDS, despite commitments from UN Member States to reverse its spread. Today, almost 40 million people around the world are living with HIV or AIDS, that's around 3 million more people than in 2002. Last year 2.9 million people died because of AIDS, including over half a million children. [You may want to add information about the epidemic in your own country or community; or use your own personal reason(s) for writing.]

In a Special Session of the UN General Assembly in June 2001, all UN Member States including [name of your country] agreed to meet specific targets by 2003, 2005, 2010 and 2015 to help stop and reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS. It is great that in your meeting to review these promises in 2006, you reaffirmed the 2001 Declaration and renewed commitments to continue improving HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. However, as you recognize in your declaration, many targets contained in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS have not yet been met.

I ask you, as many others around the world are asking their leaders, to do all you can to keep the promises that have been made to tackle HIV and AIDS and to consider ways our government could strengthen our commitment even more. In particular, in [your country's name] I am concerned about...

Thank you for all that you are doing to halt and reverse the spread of HIV. Please let me know of any ways that I can help you in your fight against the virus. I look forward to hearing how, together, we can ensure your promises to stop the spread of HIV are being kept.

Yours sincerely,

[your signature]

[your name]

While your student's letters are on their way through the postal system, there's plenty more you can be doing:

Follow the latest statistics and news on HIV and AIDS and how the pandemic is affecting people around the world through visiting the websites listed on page 21.

If students don't receive a reply to their letter, follow up and ask for an answer.

Organize a petition in the local area calling for politicians to start acting on promises made to halt and reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS in your country. And remember to send it!

Meet with people living with HIV from local or national networks. Learn about one another and discuss ways you can work together. Look on the internet or visit your local hospital or citizen's advice center to find out about groups near you.

## Attracting media attention

Getting media coverage of whatever you're doing means the world, or at least your bit of the world, hears about it. That way, people also hear about HIV and AIDS and what world leaders are - or aren't - doing about it. To get the media interested, you need to feed their appetite for things that are creative or eye-catching.

*Here are a few ideas...*



- Invite a political figure to your school. Make an event of it with a question and answer session or a presentation from your class or school to the politician. Invite parents and key figures from the community - as well as local media.

- Put on an event in your school, local church or community hall to raise awareness of issues surrounding HIV and AIDS and maybe also to raise money for charities working to fight the pandemic. You might want to run a talent contest, a car wash, a sponsored walk/silence/concert, put on a presentation, write stories on issues surrounding HIV and AIDS and perform public readings ... anything goes, as long as it raises awareness of issues surrounding HIV and AIDS or raises money to help fight it. Best of all is if it does both.

- If possible, why not take your letters yourself to your Head of State or their representative and present them to him or her? You'll need to contact their secretary well in advance to arrange this. And don't forget to give the media plenty of notice. See next page for advice on contacting the media.

- How about writing a giant letter as a publicity stunt? You could make it into a petition by getting people to sign the bottom of it - including perhaps a local celebrity or two.

- Or, what about making a paper maché sculpture of the red ribbon (the international symbol for HIV and AIDS) from copies of the students' letters? Display it in shopping centers and other key areas in the community, along with information sheets on what you're calling for and why.

- Send one of the student's letters to the local newspaper and ask them to print it as an "open letter" to your Head of State, explaining what your class is doing and why.

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## Contacting the media

The most effective way to let newspapers, radio and TV stations know about what you're doing is to send them a short press release - and to follow this up with a phone call. Include in your press release:

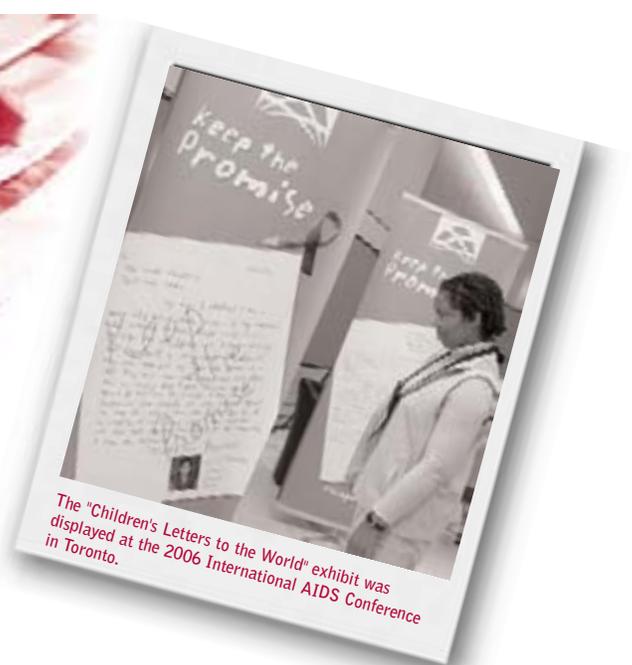
- what you are doing;
- why;
- where and when you are doing it;
- details of photo and interview opportunities;
- contact details for more information.

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They may just use the information in the press release to write a short report on what you're up to. But you might get lucky and get a phone call or a visit. The roving reporter who gets in touch is sure to want to interview you so make sure, in advance, that you've rehearsed what you want to say about what you're doing and why. And, be prepared, they might snap your photo too!

For more tips on getting your event or action noticed, and to see a sample press release, visit [www.e-alliance.ch/keepthepromise.jsp](http://www.e-alliance.ch/keepthepromise.jsp)

**Whatever you do –  
have fun!**



The "Children's Letters to the World" exhibit was displayed at the 2006 International AIDS Conference in Toronto.



Children from the International School of Geneva performed on World AIDS Day in 2005.



Children affected by HIV or AIDS brought their needs and questions to the 2004 International AIDS Conference in Bangkok.

So where does our faith tie into all of this? Isn't HIV and AIDS something Christians don't talk about because of...you know, how it's passed on?

Morality issues mean some church and faith-based groups have, in the past, avoided talking about HIV and AIDS. Churches have sometimes opposed open discussion and even discriminated against people living with HIV. But HIV affects everyone - including people in church. And the overwhelming message of the Bible is of love in action. Think of Ruth staying with Naomi when her husband died, or the many times Jesus had compassion and healed people, or the Good Samaritan helping someone that his culture rejected. Churches should lead the way in standing alongside and working with HIV positive people to bring about a change in society and to fight the pandemic.

## Service outline

How about your class putting on a service in your school hall or local church? Use the stories, background information, statistics and even the activities in this pack in prayers, symbolic actions, or interactive talk. Or set statistics and real-life stories to music as a meditation - adding relevant Bible verses and quotes. How about getting students to write a drama or poems on the theme of HIV and AIDS and advocacy? Finish the service with a concrete action people can take - maybe signing a petition or taking a photocopied sample letter home and writing to their Head of State.

## What the Bible says

Explain to students that the Bible has a lot to say about standing up for what's right and helping those in need. Write out or shout out the following verses (with words missing). Ask students to use the clues to fill in the missing words.

1. ' \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ the rights of the poor and the needy.' (Proverbs 31:9)

**Clue:** protect, a football position. **Answer:** Defend

2. '...the righteous care about \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ for the poor.' (Proverbs 29:7)

**Clue:** another word for fairness. **Answer:** Justice

3. 'Let us not love with words or tongue but with \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ and in truth.' (1 John 3:18)

**Clue:** a film director might shout this command  
**Answer:** Action

# Faith and

# HIV



## Prayer

Visit [www.e-alliance.ch/hiv-resources.jsp](http://www.e-alliance.ch/hiv-resources.jsp) for links to prayers, liturgies and worship resources on HIV and AIDS.

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*"I feel that the church is often condemnatory about sex, but that there are worse things in the world that they do not condemn - poverty, unemployment, racism, discrimination against gay men and discrimination against people living with HIV."*

Novlet Reid from Jamaica AIDS Support

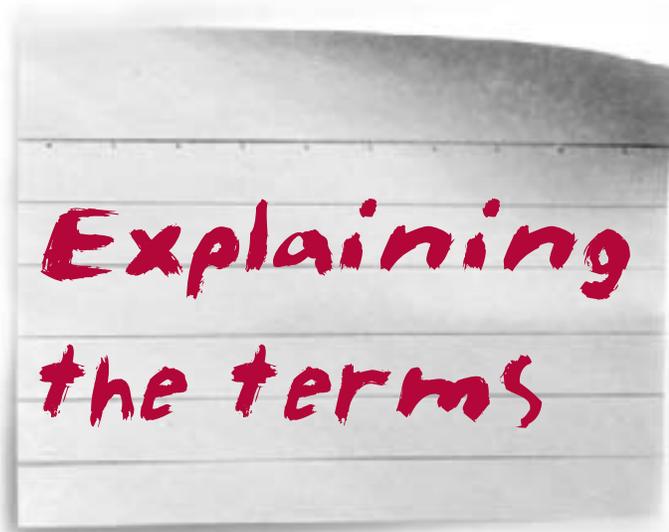
4. ' \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ up  
for those who cannot \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
for themselves, for the rights  
of all who are destitute.' (Proverbs 31:8)

**Clue:** a way of communicating **Answer:** Speak

5. 'Let justice flow down like rivers and  
\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ like a never failing  
stream.' (Amos 5:24)

**Clue:** an old-fashioned word for doing what's right.  
**Answer:** Righteousness

Based on these verses, either as a class or in small groups, let students write a statement of belief about the responsibility of Christians to be welcoming communities for people living with HIV and to demand that government leaders keep their promises to overcome HIV and AIDS.



[www.e-alliance.ch/keepthepromise.jsp](http://www.e-alliance.ch/keepthepromise.jsp)

**Global Fund** the Global Fund to Fight HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria was created in 2002 to raise money to fund work on the three diseases.

**HIV** Human Immunodeficiency Virus, attacks the body's immune system making it harder to fight infections.

**Keep the Promise** international campaign calling on national and world leaders to keep the promises they have made on tackling HIV and AIDS.

**Advocacy** support from members of the public to help achieve a goal or aim, speaking out and on behalf of others.

**AIDS** Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, occurs when a person's immune system becomes so damaged that they are susceptible to illness. People don't die of AIDS, they die of diseases (called opportunistic infections), such as TB (Tuberculosis) or pneumonia that develop because AIDS has destroyed the immune system.

**MDGs** The eight Millennium Development Goals set in the year 2000 and agreed on by all the countries of the world. Goals include halving extreme poverty, halting the spread of HIV and AIDS and providing universal primary education - all by 2015.

**Pandemic** widespread disease outbreak that affects the population of a large area of the world.

**Political Declaration** a declaration written in June 2006 as a result of a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly to review the promises they made to tackle HIV in the 2001 Declaration of Commitment.

**ARVs** antiretroviral drugs [ART = antiretroviral therapy]

**Campaign** organized course of action designed to achieve a goal.

**Positive** term used to describe someone who has contracted HIV. (The test for the virus comes back "positive".)

**Developed country** - a country with a rich economy

**Developing country** a generally poor country that is trying to grow economically

**Stigma** a negative attitude shown in different ways towards people with HIV and/or AIDS.

**DoC** Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS signed at UNGASS by 189 governments in 2001 (see below).

**TB** tuberculosis

**G8** (Group of 8). The G8 is made up of the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The G8 have also set many goals concerning HIV and AIDS including coming as close as possible to universal access to treatment by 2010 and giving adequate funding to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

**UNGASS** United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (2001)

**Universal Access** making sure the whole world has access to important treatments, prevention measures, care and education on HIV and AIDS.

**WHO** World Health Organization

**WTO** World Trade Organization - deals with the rules of trade between nations.

More activities, resources, and links related to this curriculum can be found at the website of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance:

[www.e-alliance.ch/keepthepromise.jsp](http://www.e-alliance.ch/keepthepromise.jsp)

## Sites for and about young people

[www.youthandhiv.org](http://www.youthandhiv.org) - information on young people and HIV around the world

[www.unicef.org/uniteforchildren/index.html](http://www.unicef.org/uniteforchildren/index.html) - Unite for Children, UNICEF Campaign

[www.unicef.org/uniteforchildren/youth](http://www.unicef.org/uniteforchildren/youth) - youth resources for the Unite for Children campaign

[www.unfpa.org/publications/detail.cfm?ID=230](http://www.unfpa.org/publications/detail.cfm?ID=230) - Our Voice, Our Future - Young People Report on progress made on the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS

[www.gmfc.org](http://www.gmfc.org) - Global Movement for Children

[www.wcrp.org/initiatives/children/index](http://www.wcrp.org/initiatives/children/index) - details of the World Conference of Religions for Peace's work with children affected by HIV or AIDS

[www.africaalive.org](http://www.africaalive.org) - aims to educate and give youth the skills they need in the fight against HIV and AIDS

[www.staying-alive.org](http://www.staying-alive.org) - wide range of programs, concerts, public service announcements and documentaries on HIV and AIDS

[www.whatudo.org](http://www.whatudo.org) - HIV and AIDS facts, options, and action

[www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org) - for youth, parents, and education, health, and other professionals who work with youth

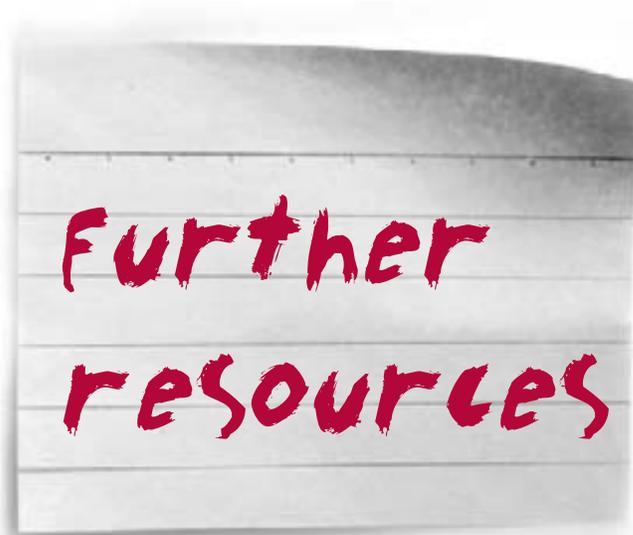
## Resources on Advocacy and Campaigning

[www.aidsalliance.org](http://www.aidsalliance.org) - resources for community action on AIDS in developing communities; see *Advocacy in Action* toolkit and *Tools Together Now*, 100 participatory learning and action tools

[www.leaderstoday.com](http://www.leaderstoday.com) - resources for exploring activism with young people

[www.pressureworks.org.uk](http://www.pressureworks.org.uk) - campaigning website for young people

[www.e-alliance.ch/keepthepromise.jsp](http://www.e-alliance.ch/keepthepromise.jsp)



## Key Information on HIV and AIDS

[www.aidsmap.com/en/orgs/ux/default.asp](http://www.aidsmap.com/en/orgs/ux/default.asp) - how to find AIDS organizations and help in your area

[www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org) - the 2006 Report on the Global AIDS epidemic gives lots of latest statistics.

[www.worldaidscampaign.info](http://www.worldaidscampaign.info) - World AIDS Campaign

[www.ungasshiv.org](http://www.ungasshiv.org) - gives details of the UNGASS Special Sessions, Declaration of Commitment and 2006 Political Declaration.

[www.avert.org](http://www.avert.org) - an international AIDS charity based in the UK.

[www.theglobalfund.org](http://www.theglobalfund.org) - The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

[www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals) - details of the Millennium Development Goals

Sign up for the free Keep the Promise: HIV and AIDS campaign bulletins and action alerts of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance at:

[www.e-alliance.ch/signup1.jsp](http://www.e-alliance.ch/signup1.jsp)

Signs of Hope - Steps for Change - a free CD-Rom that includes award-winning posters and multi-lingual HIV and AIDS-related resources. Download from the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance website or order a free copy:

[www.e-alliance.ch/ns\\_cdrom.jsp](http://www.e-alliance.ch/ns_cdrom.jsp)





This easy-to-use resource contains all you need to run classes on HIV and AIDS and to get your students motivated to take action to fight the pandemic. Background information, latest statistics and real-life stories help paint a picture of the effects that HIV and AIDS is having in our world. There is a section linking HIV and AIDS to faith and a range of fun activities to help young people engage and interact with the issues.

Once equipped with this knowledge and energized to take action, the booklet leads your students through the process of writing letters to their world leaders asking them to keep the promises they've made to fight HIV and AIDS.

And, if your students have still got energy to keep going after all of that, there are plenty of ideas for taking things further....



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