

Better Health for 100 HIV+ Adolescents in India

UNAIDS estimates that AIDS-related mortality among adolescents has increased by 50% globally over the past seven years, even while it has fallen in all other age groups. Evidence indicates that the global response to the epidemic has failed to reach adolescents living with HIV, and they do not receive the attention or services they need.

India has one of the largest populations of adolescents living with HIV. According to data from the country's National AIDS Control Organisation, approximately 50,000 new infections occur among children below 15 every year, with the majority of them in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Due to poverty and stigma, these adolescents and their families are unable to take care of many basic needs, interfering with effective treatment and disrupting education. Too often they are unsure how to manage their sexual and reproductive health and are denied access to education or stable employment because of their HIV status. If they have lost their parents to AIDS, they may be burdened as the sole breadwinner in the family, typically working for daily wages in jobs like rag-picking, menial labour, and even sex work.

Building on our experience addressing the challenges of AIDS in India since 1999, this pilot project will reach 100 adolescents living with HIV and their families in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra with services, education and the support they need to manage HIV. By providing them with targeted care & support services including referral to both health and non-health services, psychosocial support counselling, nutrition, and access to skill-training, we aim to improve their adherence to ART and increase their overall wellbeing, enabling them and their families to lead healthier, stigma-free lives.

In the longer term, our project will help reduce AIDS-related mortality and curb new infections among adolescents in India. Access to age-appropriate care and support for all people living with HIV helps sustain effective treatment and can make the global vision of Zero Deaths from AIDS and Zero New HIV infections a reality in India. Join our campaign now!

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