

# Working positively

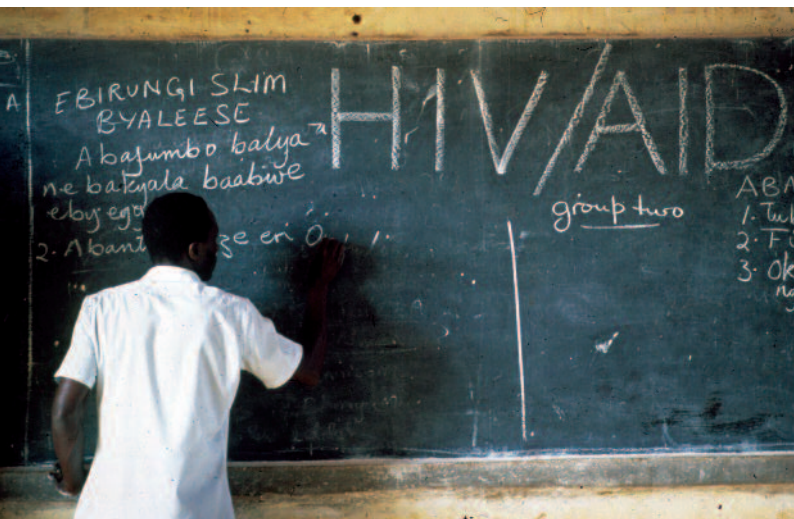
CAFOD's response  
to HIV and AIDS



“CAFOD is a key player in the global fight against HIV and AIDS. The Catholic community can be proud of its work.”

**Bishop John Rawsthorne**  
Chair, CAFOD





## An urgent priority

All around the developing world, CAFOD is fighting back against HIV and AIDS. Given the scale and urgency of the problem, CAFOD has made this one of its four top priority areas of work.

Through a network of outstanding partner organisations, built up over 20 years working on this issue, CAFOD can reach people who often have no other support.

"We need to break the silence, banish stigma and discrimination, and ensure total inclusiveness within the struggle against AIDS."

**Nelson Mandela**

## The epidemic

HIV and AIDS form one of the biggest threats not just to health but to human development on our planet.

Economies are being crippled as adults are cut down in their prime, plunging families into poverty and emptying workplaces.

If you were born in Botswana today, you should not expect to survive past 35. If you were a schoolchild in Tanzania, you might have no class to go to: 45,000 teachers have died or left the system because of AIDS. (UNAIDS 2006)



“The right we all have to a life free from injustice, with respect for our dignity, makes responding to HIV and AIDS a core part of CAFOD’s work.”

**Chris Bain,**  
*Director, CAFOD*

## Why CAFOD?

Around 95 per cent of people with HIV and AIDS live in developing countries. The epidemic reverses development, as poverty increases while access to education, jobs and healthcare goes down.

This demands a renewed effort from CAFOD, whose mandate from the Catholic Church is to promote human development and social justice in witness to Gospel values.

## Making an impact

CAFOD works through partner organisations in three key ways:

- + **care**: supporting people and communities living with HIV
- + **prevention**: reducing the spread and impact of HIV
- + **advocacy**: defending the rights and dignity of people with the virus and fighting injustices that can lead to infection.

In addition, CAFOD considers carefully how HIV and AIDS could impact on any of its programmes, right across its work.

# CARE

Body and spirit



**Advances in HIV treatment over the last five years have dramatically increased life expectancy for those who receive proper care.**

**“Before, I would see patients go past my house... so sick they were in a wheelbarrow. Now I see them walking.” *Anon, Zambia***

Access is increasing to antiretrovirals (ARVs), the drugs that can control HIV. Meanwhile, with or without these drugs, CAFOD partners can do much to prolong and improve life.

Some care is strictly medical:

- + basic medicines for HIV-related infections
- + nursing and hygiene
- + ARV therapy where possible.

Emotional and spiritual care is also vital:

- + home visits by volunteers
- + counselling
- + pastoral and spiritual support.

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## **Volunteering: a gift from God**

Christine is HIV positive and caring for seven family members. She is often too weak even to fetch water. Volunteers from the Diocese of Ndola, Zambia regularly visit Christine, bringing practical and emotional support. “It’s a gift from God to be a care giver,” says volunteer Mary Sanduku.

CAFOD believes the best care also includes wider support:

- + income-generating activities to keep money coming in
- + support for children affected by AIDS
- + good nutrition
- + keeping children in school.



## FACT

Over 75% of people, including **over 90% of children**, are not receiving the HIV treatment they urgently need. (WHO, 2006)

# PREVENTION

A holistic approach

The prevention of HIV infection calls for an all-round strategy. There is no 'silver bullet'. CAFOD has a three-way approach:

## 1. Reducing the risk of infection

People must be helped to reduce or remove their risk of infection. There is no simple solution. With its partner organisations, CAFOD is committed to providing full and accurate risk reduction information. CAFOD respects a person's right to make decisions consistent with their religious convictions and with individual circumstances. CAFOD funds are not used for the purchase, promotion or distribution of condoms.

## 2. Tackling the root causes

Many underlying problems make people more vulnerable to HIV infection, like poverty, lack of education and gender inequality. Tackling these problems is CAFOD's core work.

*"AIDS is to be combated by realistically facing its deeper causes."* Pope Benedict XVI, 2006

## 3. Lessening the impact

CAFOD works to stop the circular effect of poverty and infection. For example, supporting an HIV-positive mother means her children are not orphaned. This reduces their vulnerability to exploitation and infection.



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### Better life chances

The Maryknoll Little Sprouts project in Cambodia helps children affected by HIV and AIDS through prevention, care and education. It aims to reduce the chances of mother-to-child transmission by providing ARV treatment for HIV-positive pregnant women.

## FACT

The risk of an HIV-positive pregnant woman passing the virus to her baby can drop from 30-35% to **just 2%** when ARVs are used. (UNAIDS, 2006)

# ADVOCACY

Dignity and rights

**CAFOD's advocacy work on HIV means speaking up for the rights and dignity of people living with or affected by HIV and AIDS and fighting the injustices that can lead to infection.**

- + **Stigma and discrimination** are the worst obstacles to prevention and treatment of HIV. CAFOD's programmes promote increased understanding of HIV at a local, national and international level. CAFOD works with church leaders to reduce stigma in local communities.
- + **Access to treatment:** poor people, especially women and children, must not be excluded from access to medicines and care. CAFOD works with the UK Stop AIDS Campaign to urge drug companies to cut costs and to press governments to uphold trade and patent laws.
- + **Legal rights:** CAFOD's partners help ensure access to welfare benefits, and protect property and inheritance rights of women and children affected by HIV and employment rights of people with HIV.
- + **Debt:** heavily indebted countries cannot invest in measures to tackle HIV. CAFOD campaigns to reduce debt and to increase aid and trade.

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## Broadcasting the truth

Dan Owino, 27, announced his HIV-positive status on Radio Waumini, "The Catholic Voice for All", in Nairobi, Kenya. This encouraged other young people to admit their status and seek treatment. Dan says: "We don't want people to talk of 'victims of AIDS' or 'AIDS sufferers'. To me, there are no victims."

## FACT

In 2006, G8 countries set a goal of **universal access** to HIV prevention, care and treatment by 2010.



# FAITH

A special strength



**In the fight against HIV and AIDS, there are many special strengths in being a faith-based organisation (FBO), like CAFOD and most of its partners.**

- + **Trust:** faith organisations draw on people from within local faith communities. People know CAFOD and its partners are there for the long term, and can be trusted.
- + **Outreach:** FBOs have ready-made networks at hand that access even the remotest communities – in CAFOD’s case, the Catholic Church.
- + **Spiritual mandate:** FBOs are in a unique position to minister to people’s physical, spiritual and emotional needs.
- + **Influence:** through the Church, CAFOD can get the voice of local communities heard at national and international levels. CAFOD also encourages Church leaders to hold governments to account.

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## With the people

Fundación EUDES is a Colombian faith-based organisation, running a mobile health unit for people vulnerable to or living with HIV and AIDS. EUDES provides free health checks, HIV tests and counselling in the poorest areas of Bogotá.

“God is with us, not outside us,” says Fr René Rey of EUDES.

“We can’t wait inside our institutions. We must go out and be with the people.”

“If the yardstick of our faith is unconditional love... then our response to people living with HIV and AIDS will be a measure of our faith.”

***Ghana Bishops’ Conference***

## FACT

25% of the total care given to people with HIV and AIDS in the world is carried out by the **Catholic Church**, through its agencies and non-profit organisations. (Cardinal Javier Lozano Barragán, 2001)

# CAFOD'S promises on HIV and AIDS

- + CAFOD is responding to HIV and AIDS as a priority task.
- + CAFOD's HIV work is inspired by Catholic social teaching and informed by the human rights entitlements of all.
- + CAFOD opposes discrimination based on HIV status, both in its own employment policies and those of its partners.
- + CAFOD asks its partners to involve people living with HIV in planning and carrying out projects.
- + CAFOD does not work in isolation on HIV, but with a wide range of networks for a more effective overall response.
- + HIV affects development in many ways. CAFOD helps partners reconsider all their programmes in the light of the HIV epidemic.
- + CAFOD's work addresses the fact that HIV affects women and men differently – physically, socially and economically.



“We are people because of other people.”

Southern African proverb

For more information:

Visit [www.cafod.org.uk/hiv](http://www.cafod.org.uk/hiv)

or call **020 7733 7900**

CAFOD  
Romero Close, Stockwell Road  
London SW9 9TY

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Ashenafi Damtew/ EthiopiaLives.net,  
Jim Holmes, Caroline Irby, Simon Rawles

CAFOD is the official overseas development  
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