

World Vision incorporates HIV and AIDS-related activities in almost all its programmes around the world in order to limit the impact of HIV and AIDS on societies. Whenever we implement activities around HIV and AIDS, we recognise children as the most vulnerable part of society. They are at the heart of World Vision's interventions and considered as the main beneficiaries, together with their families and wider living context.

#### HOPE projects in East Africa

World Vision Netherlands has identified children as representing a 'window of hope' for the future. HOPE is a project that is build up on Home-based care for Orphans and vulnerable children, HIV and AIDS Prevention and Empowerment (HOPE). This response towards HIV through the HOPE project started in 2006 and will continue until the end of 2010.

The goal of HOPE is:

To mitigate and reduce the impact and spread of HIV and AIDS on orphans and vulnerable children living in highly destabilized areas of Uganda, Eastern DR Congo (EDRC) and Somalia/Somaliland.

In the Great Lakes Region and other parts of Eastern Africa the HIV and AIDS pandemic has a severe effect on social structures weakened by years of warfare. Fighting left wounds on these societies. Prevention, treatment of HIV and support for people affected by HIV will have a low priority as long as a society has to survive in times of insecurity and war. The spread of HIV will continue and will have an increasing impact on communities, families, societies, and especially on children. Today, Northern Uganda, EDRC and Central and Northern Somalia are facing this challenge. The HIV and AIDS prevalence in the war-affected area of Gulu District (Uganda), for example, is nearly twice as much as the national average. Even when Uganda has achieved remarkable efforts in combating the HIV and AIDS pandemic, the destabilizing effect of rebel fighting in the North has prevented the national efforts from having results. The war and a continuous spread of HIV cause serious consequences for health facilities and schools. The tragedies of warfare and HIV and AIDS have a combined in these regions and left an inheritance of orphans and vulnerable children. In Uganda, an estimated 1.4 million children are orphaned due to HIV and AIDS. In EDRC, it amounts to 1 million and in Somalia to 770.000 orphaned children. World Vision has chosen to work in those severely destabilised areas and responded by implementing HOPE projects. The greatest risk is not addressing this challenge and to face the even more severe implications on the lives of children, at a later stage.

World Vision has four objectives in the HOPE projects:

1. HIV and AIDS prevention by offering
  - a. Life Skills education to 56,000 children/youth, and 9,600 caregivers.
  - b. Training of clinical staff and education of 12,000 pregnant women to reduce mother to child transmission.
  - c. Assistance to 150,000 high risk individuals through voluntary counselling and testing for sexual transmitted infections and treatment in rape cases.
2. Improving the quality of life of
  - a. 24,000 orphans and vulnerable children by through providing counselling for HIV and conflict related trauma and depression
  - b. 10,000 children/youth to attend primary school or vocational training
3. To create a more enabling environment for orphans and vulnerable children by
  - a. Sensitizing 90% of the target population concerning stigma, discrimination and child rights
  - b. Encouraging the adoption of new formal and legal policies in target districts
  - c. Building capacity of 30 Community Care Coalitions (CCC) to lobby for increased resources for orphans and vulnerable children.
4. Increase and sustain the local civil society structures of 12 local partners and 30 Community Care Coalitions to provide services for orphans and vulnerable.

These four objectives are not only in line with the World Vision strategy statement on HIV and AIDS, but it reflects also on other international conventions as the Millennium Development Goals (UN), the framework for the Protection, Care and Support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (UNICEF/UNAIDS), the Declaration of Commitment of HIV/AIDS (UNGASS) and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.