

## **FACT SHEET**

### **ON HIV AND AIDS IN AFRICA**

#### **The Epidemic in Africa<sup>1</sup>**

**Africa has some of the highest prevalence rates in the world.** More than one-tenth of the adult populations aged 15-49 in nine countries in Africa have HIV<sup>2</sup>.

**Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most burdened region in the world.** An estimated 1.9 million people became infected in 2010, bringing the total to a staggering 22.9 million.<sup>3</sup> **As the number of people living with HIV increases, the same patterns of sexual risk will result in more new infections as the chances of encountering an infected partner becomes higher.**<sup>4</sup>

#### **HIV and AIDS in East and Southern Africa<sup>5</sup>**

**East and Southern Africa remains the epicentre of the HIV pandemic, with Southern Africa experiencing the most severe HI epidemics in the world.** 34% of the entire global population living with HIV resides in ten countries in Southern Africa. In three southern countries, at least one adult in five is living with HIV. **Botswana** has a prevalence rate of 24.8% in adults and in **South Africa** the prevalence is 17.8%, and is the home of the most people living with HIV than any other country (5.6 million).<sup>6</sup>

**There has been a significant decrease in HIV prevalence in many East and Southern African countries.** 22 countries in sub-Saharan Africa reported a drop in new HIV infections by more than 25% between 2001 and 2009, including Ethiopia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.<sup>7</sup>

**Women and girls are more at risk than men at being infected with HIV.** In East and Southern Africa, prevalence among young women aged 15-24 years are almost 2.5 times higher than among men of the same age.<sup>8</sup> In sub-Saharan Africa, women account for 59% of all people living with HIV.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Access to treatment**

**Access to treatment is improving across Sub-Saharan Africa.** Antiretroviral treatment is more readily available and affordable (if not free) across the continent. In 2010, 22 countries reported a decline in HIV incidence.<sup>10</sup>

**Despite increased efforts access is not universal.** 2009 figures show that despite improved service delivery, over half of those in need of antiretroviral treatment in sub-Saharan Africa are not receiving it.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Children affected by HIV and AIDS**

**Children are one of the most vulnerable populations when it comes to HIV infections.** Around the world, more than 1,000 children are newly infected with HIV every day. Moreover, over half of these children will die of AIDS-related illnesses because of lack of access to HIV treatment.<sup>12</sup>

**Newborns and infants are at highest risk of transmitting the virus from their mother.** More than 90% of the estimated 3.4 million children living with HIV globally contracted HIV during pregnancy, delivery or through breastfeeding.<sup>13</sup>

**The burden of HIV and AIDS on families and communities put children at even more risk.** The economic burden makes it difficult for families, friends and communities to not only provide for the material needs of children, but more importantly the psychosocial – social and emotional - needs of children.

## REPSSI's response

All children have material needs such as food, shelter, health care and education. But children also have the right to be cared for, loved, encouraged and protected from harm.

Children and youth exposed to the devastating effects of poverty, conflict, HIV and AIDS are especially in need of care for their emotional and social (psychosocial) wellbeing. Many have lost parents and family, experienced extreme deprivation and abuse, been stigmatized or uprooted, witnessed atrocities, and suffered overwhelming grief.

With the right social and emotional support, these children are resilient enough to grow into capable and compassionate adults, living with hope and dignity.

REPSSI (the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative) helps children get the emotional and social support to which they are entitled. REPSSI is a non-profit organisation working to lessen the devastating social and emotional (psychosocial) impact of HIV and AIDS, poverty and conflict on children and youth across East and Southern Africa.

REPSSI partners with NGOs and governments across East and Southern Africa. With our technical advice and support, these partners implement policies and programmes which strengthen the ability of communities and families to care for and protect their children and youth.

Our assistance includes providing easy-to-use and culturally appropriate tools, and sharing innovative approaches. We train partners to provide social and emotional services to children and their communities, and we produce activities and tools that can be used with children, youth, communities and families.

Several million children are being supported by REPSSI partners in over 1000 project sites across the region.

### Contact REPSSI for more information:

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**Twitter:** @REPSSI

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<sup>1</sup> AVERT (2012), 'AIDS and HIV Around the World.' <http://avert.org/aroundworld.htm> (Accessed 19 October 2012).

<sup>2</sup> UNAIDS (2010) 'UNAIDS report on the global AIDS epidemic.' [http://www.unaids.org/globalreport/Global\\_report.html](http://www.unaids.org/globalreport/Global_report.html) (Accessed 19 October 2012)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Op. Cit, Avert

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF (2012), 'HIV and AIDS: Issues' [http://www.unicef.org/esaro/5482\\_HIV\\_AIDS.html](http://www.unicef.org/esaro/5482_HIV_AIDS.html) (Accessed 19 October 2012)

<sup>6</sup> UNAIDS (2011) 'World AIDS Day Report 2011'

<http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2011/november/20111121wad2011report/> (Accessed 19 October 2012).

<sup>7</sup> Op. Cit, UNICEF

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Op. Cit, AVERT

<sup>11</sup> WHO/UNAIDS (2010) 'Towards universal access: Scaling up priority HIV/AIDS interventions in the health sector' [www.who.int/hiv/pub/2010progressreport/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/2010progressreport/en/index.html) (Accessed 19 October 2012).

<sup>12</sup> WHO/UNAIDS/UNICEF (2011) 'Global HIV/AIDS Response: Epidemic update and health sector progress towards Universal Access 2011' [http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/progress\\_report2011/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/progress_report2011/en/index.html) (Accessed 19 October 2012).

<sup>13</sup> Op. Cit. UNICEF