

# Children with HIV and their families: Food, medicines, and play

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WE-ACTx

# Children with HIV Globally 2006

- 2.3 Million Children Living with HIV
- >500,000 children infected during
- 380,000 children died of AIDS
  
- 12 million orphans from HIV in Africa
- Young people (< 25 years old) account for half of all new HIV infections
- ~ 6,000 become infected every day

# Children with HIV in Rwanda



210,000 orphans due to  
HIV/AIDS

Last to get care

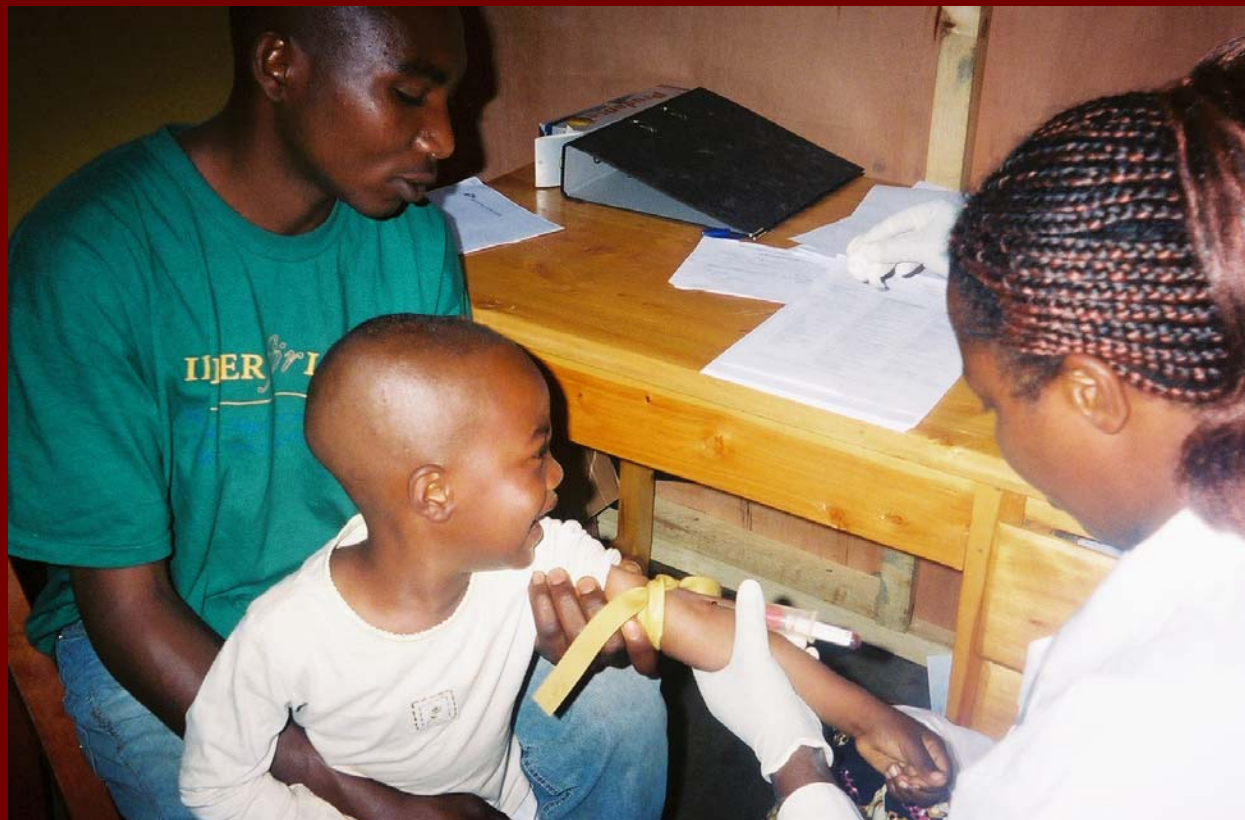
Comorbidities

Disclosure

Resources

# WE-ACTx Clinical Program

## ■ Mobile Voluntary Testing and Counseling



Of 6044 children  
tested in past 2  
years,  
570 HIV + (9.4%)

# 3 Clinical sites

- 3 Clinics
  - Centre ville
  - Icyuzuzo
  - Nyacyonga
- Rwandan nurses and doctors
- Pediatrician HIV specialist
- Clinic visits include food and play time
- Trauma counselors and family peer advocates at each site
- Psychologist on staff for referrals for mental health treatment
- Family home visits

# Support Groups

# Support Groups

- 8 Support groups
- Geographically dispersed
  - Partner Associations
  - Clinic sites
- Facilitated by trauma counselors
- For mothers, fathers, grandmothers, children, adolescents.



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# Family Peer Advocates

- Co-facilitate support groups for mothers and patients with HIV with trauma counselors
- Create a friendly supportive ambience during children's clinic visits
- Make home visits to ensure adherence to ARV regimen and assess family support system
- Paid staff; integral part of the family program team and executive committee





# Orphans

Children are relegated to the scrapheap of society's priorities, and have been so relegated throughout the twenty-five years of this pandemic.

Stephen Lewis  
International AIDS meeting  
Toronto August 2006



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# Family Program Home Visits

- Children in care: median age 8 years
  - 50% eat  $\leq 1$  meal/day
  - 94% don't have enough clothes
  - Household members: median 5 people
- Family status
  - 17% orphans
  - 34% lost one parent to HIV
- 78% of those  $\geq 7$  yrs attend school
- 20% are depressed, don't want to go to school, don't want to take HIV medications
- 60 adolescents 12-18 perinatally infected?

# Sunday Children's Support Group

200 children play, learn, and eat a  
full meal each Sunday







# African Children's Day









# Adolescents

- Disclosure within family
- Issues of sexual abuse
- School and future desires
- Poverty and transactional sex
- Depression
- “The girl who has lost her mother to AIDS is emerging as the most vulnerable child in Africa”



# Spotlight on Children and Teens

--Peter Piot, UNAIDS Exec Director

“A major way that a child gets HIV is through sex abuse, between a young girl and an older man, and sex between adolescents, and incest. We must address this. Sex abuse exists everywhere in the world. Like violence against women, sex abuse is a matter of societal norms.”

# WE-ACTx Adolescent Program

- Sunday AM computer classes
- English as second language classes
- Therapy group for girls 14-18
  - Sexual abuse
  - Loss of parents
  - Caring for siblings
  - Staying in school
- Summer Camp
- Peer advocate program

# Perinatal Transmission Reduction (PMTCT)

- Peer advocate
  - HIV infected pregnant woman
  - HIV infected mother
- Hold classes on HIV for prenatal groups
- Encourage women identified as HIV + to take antiretrovirals and come for delivery
- Assist new mother in giving infant medications



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# Yoga in Kigali

- Stress Reduction
- Exercise
- Novel Approach
- Very appreciated by support group attendees, Income generation workers, children, and staff







# Children: Making the Future Safe

