



HIV and AIDS

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The HIV and AIDS pandemic is threatening progress towards global development. Out of the estimated 33 million people in the world living with HIV, 95% live in developing countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the pandemic is particularly pronounced with roughly 1/4th of the population in some countries believed to be infected. Although more than 3 million people are now accessing antiretroviral (ARV) therapy, and strides are being made in some regions to reduce new infection rates and stigmatization, much work remains. Current data indicates that for every two people put on ARVs, another five become infected.

UNAIDS reports that young people, aged 15–24, account for 45% of all new HIV infections, and that many young people still lack accurate, complete information on how to avoid exposure to the virus. If we are to successfully confront the HIV and AIDS pandemic, concerted efforts must be made to scale up prevention initiatives, especially those that seek to educate young people about HIV and teach them how to protect themselves.

In 2004, UNICEF released a global report on **Sport, Recreation and Play** asserting that sport-based organizations are uniquely positioned to contribute to HIV and AIDS prevention efforts for young people. It states:

“Through sport, young people have the opportunity to talk about HIV/AIDS openly and with sensitivity and learn ways to protect themselves from the disease, including how to resist unwanted pressure and intimidation... An open discussion about HIV/AIDS can also counteract stigma and discrimination and promote care and support for those affected by the disease.”

RIGHT TO PLAY’S APPROACH

Right To Play’s programming is rooted in the knowledge that well-designed, educational, sport and play programs can successfully contribute to the prevention of HIV. Sport and play act as platforms to communicate important messages about HIV and AIDS and to educate children and youth on how to protect themselves. Our programming is founded on a unique understanding of social learning theory and child development needs. Programs are delivered by local leaders who are carefully trained to ensure programs are fun and inclusive. By participating in our HIV prevention programs, children and



youth become equipped with the information and skills they need to protect themselves from the transmission of HIV and the confidence and skills they need to reduce high-risk behavior.

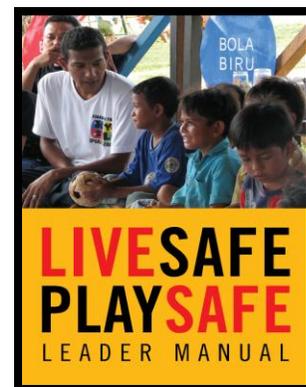
In addition to raising awareness about the risks associated with HIV, we are also successfully using sport to reduce stigma and discrimination by facilitating the inclusion of people living with HIV and AIDS into their communities and providing all participants with a safe and caring environment in which to learn and socialize.

Right To Play’s vision is to create a healthier and safer world through the power of sport and play

RIGHT TO PLAY'S RESOURCES

Right To Play's programmatic approach involves the application of specially-designed resources that use sport and play to stimulate behavior change. One resource in particular, **Live Safe Play Safe®**, has been designed exclusively to address the global challenges associated with HIV and AIDS.

Live Safe Play Safe® is an innovative HIV and AIDS prevention and education resource that is currently being implemented by locally trained coaches and teachers in 14 at-risk countries throughout Africa. With more than 90 games and activities for children ages 6-19, **Live Safe Play Safe** helps to build knowledge around HIV and AIDS and teaches participants how to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviours in order to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with transmission of the virus. **Live Safe Play Safe** also promotes healthy attitudes and values around people living with HIV and AIDS by encouraging respect, inclusion and cooperation.



IMPACTS

In 2008, an independent evaluation of Right To Play's **Live Safe Play Safe** programme revealed significant progress towards our goals. The evaluation, which took place over a 3-month period and covered 6 project locations in 3 countries, engaged close to 1,000 children and leaders through interviews, surveys, questionnaires and focus groups. Evaluators also visited **Live Safe Play Safe** projects to observe activities taking place first-hand. Evaluation results demonstrated that participants of the **Live Safe Play Safe** programme exhibited high levels of knowledge about HIV and AIDS. For instance, 95% of participants in Rwanda and 87% of participants in Sierra Leone were able to correctly identify unprotected sex as being the leading cause of HIV infections. Program participants also expressed more informed attitudes related to risk-reduction behaviour, and demonstrated sophisticated coping mechanisms to confront issues related to HIV and AIDS in their own lives.

"Young people were formerly scared to touch HIV patients. Now they are better. There are children in this program who are known to be living with HIV yet other children do not discriminate against them or shun them. They all play together."

-Live Safe Play Safe Leader, Kigali, Rwanda

Where comparison data was available, evaluators further concluded that children and youth who had participated in the **Live Safe Play Safe** program had greater levels of knowledge about HIV and AIDS than those who had not participated. Participants of the program were more likely than their non-participating counterparts to correctly identify how HIV is transmitted, how to determine someone's HIV status, and what to do when someone is found to be HIV positive. Participants also demonstrated more positive attitudes towards persons living with HIV and AIDS and were less likely to discriminate.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

HIV-related interventions demand holistic approaches that require support and investments at many levels. We are pleased to work in partnership with parents, community leaders, governments and the UN to stimulate action in support of the global fight against HIV. We proudly work in tandem with international organizations such as the WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR, and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisations (GAVI). We also work to involve local ministries, NGOs and civil society partners. When needed, we provide children and young people with referrals to specialized support services in order to ensure our interventions complement front-line prevention and treatment efforts.

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