

# Hope for Children Affected by HIV/AIDS

World Concern

**Program name:** *Hope for Children Affected by HIV/AIDS*

**Country:** Kenya, Zambia and Haiti

**Church or denomination:** World Concern (WC) is nonprofit non-denominational organization

**Program summary:** World Concern partners with community and faith-based organizations in Kenya, Zambia and Haiti that are committed to the compassionate care of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). These partnerships foster community-driven OVC support programs that are developed and maintained locally—creating a sustainable approach to the OVC crisis. Through the program, more than 75,000 children have received psychosocial care, support to meet their basic needs and hope for the future. In the next few years, World Concern plans to extend this support to over 150,000 children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.

**History/Background:** In 1955, Medicines for Missions (the precursor to World Concern) began supplying medicines to clinics and hospitals in developing countries. Medicines for Mission joined Crista Ministries in 1970, and officially became World Concern in 1973. World Concern broadened activities to include disaster response and long-term development in 1976. World Concern is committed to providing life, opportunity and hope to people around the world regardless of race or religion.

**Goal:** To increase the compassionate care of children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS in Kenya, Zambia and Haiti.

**Strategic Objectives:**

1. Strengthen Caregivers and families to support OVC affected by HIV/AIDS.
2. Mobilize and strengthen churches, faith-based organizations and community-based organizations to respond to the growing needs of OVC.
3. Increase the capacity of older children (15-17) to meet their own needs.
4. In selected cases based on need, ensure access to vocational and formal education for the OVC.
5. Raise awareness among people, including families, churches, surrounding communities, and society in general to create an environment that enables support for children affected by HIV/AIDS.

**Who does the work?** Ten member agencies from the Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Organizations (AERDO) combine their unique skills and experiences in the AERDO HIV/AIDS Alliance (AHA). World Concern serves as the lead agency. AHA partners work with local churches, faith-based organizations (FBOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) in order to develop sustainable OVC support programs.

**Main activities:**

The five strategic objectives are realized through a number of activities that include:

1. linking OVC households to essential health and social services
2. advocating for the protection of property and assets of families affected by HIV/AIDS
3. providing small start up capital to OVC households in support of sustainable income generating activities
4. responding to the psychosocial needs of OVC
5. providing adult role models and mentors to affected children—especially child-headed households
6. training and mentoring older children in agriculture and/or animal husbandry
7. enabling community and religious leaders to clearly articulate traditional and faith-based values regarding OVC care
8. using broadcast media to highlight treatment of OVC
9. establishing preventative HIV education programs for children

**Expected outcomes:**

Over the course of five years (October 1, 2004 – September 30, 2009), *Hope for Children Affected by HIV/AIDS* will strengthen 23,000 caregivers to support 150,000 OVC. The country breakdown is as follows: 5,000 caregivers and 60,000 OVC in Kenya, 13,500 caregivers and 68,000 OVC in Zambia, and 4,500 caregivers and 22,500 OVC in Haiti.

**Results:** *Hope for Children Affected by HIV/AIDS* is on track to meet its five-year targets. At the end of two years, over 17,000 caregivers have been strengthened to meet the basic needs of more than 75,000 orphans and vulnerable children.

**Lessons learned:**

World Concern is continually learning from the on-going work with children affected by HIV/AIDS. Over the past few years a number of lessons learned and/or best practices have been established through a process of reflection, feedback and analysis. Some of the lessons learned include:

1. Incorporating local volunteers into the program minimizes issues of competing interests, which increases commitment to the OVC target group.
2. Training and retraining helps create a common understanding of the program's objectives and encourages mutual learning among partners, volunteers and beneficiaries.
3. A definitive diagnosis of HIV/AIDS is not necessary or desired for inclusion in the program. Instead, strong indicators (e.g. an illness of a parent for three of the past twelve months) are considered sufficient so that beneficiaries might avoid additional stigma and discrimination.
4. Working with churches, FBOs and CBOs encourages local ownership of the program, strengthens household and community responses to the OVC crisis, and reinforces a sustainable approach to OVC support.

**Financial and other resources:** This program is funded by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Additional funds for the program are from private donors and foundations.

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