

UNAIDS 2024

World Food Programme (WFP)

2022-2023 Organizational report

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HIV in WFP's mandate

As the world's largest humanitarian agency, WFP saves lives in emergencies and uses food assistance to build pathways to peace, stability and prosperity for people recovering from conflict, disasters and the impact of climate change. WFP leverages its extensive operational and logistical footprint in emergencies to reach the people who are most vulnerable and who are left furthest behind. This includes working with and through partners to ensure that people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV have access to essential food and nutrition support.

Hunger, malnutrition and HIV are closely linked. Food insecurity often forces people to adopt risky strategies to meet their food and nutrient needs, while HIV impairs people's ability to access adequate food and nutrition due to reduced productivity and stigma. Field evidence has highlighted that HIV-affected households tend to be more food insecure and have lower dietary diversity compared to non-HIV-affected households¹.

Key WFP strategy for HIV

In many contexts where WFP works, food insecurity, coupled with socioeconomic hardship and strained health infrastructure, is compounding the impact of various crises on people living with HIV. As conflict, the climate crisis and economic shocks become more frequent, WFP will prioritize support for people living with HIV to meet their urgent food and nutrition needs, have better nutrition, health and education outcomes, as well as improved livelihoods. WFP's technical and operational support to countries helps to improve households' food security and nutrition, as well as enhance their socioeconomic status and build long-term resilience. Food and nutrition support helps increase HIV treatment access and adherence for vulnerable groups while reducing high-risk behaviours that could increase the transmission of HIV and TB.

The current WFP HIV and AIDS policy recently underwent a strategic evaluation. The evaluation findings, recommendations and management response plan were presented and endorsed by the Executive Board in February 2023. In summary, the evaluation affirmed that HIV continues to be a highly relevant issue for WFP in delivering on its mandate of reaching the most vulnerable people and leaving no one behind. The Nutrition and Food Quality Service is finalizing a new strategy on HIV, which will set a new direction for WFP's work on HIV up to 2030, building on the current HIV policy. The new strategy will focus on improving food security and nutrition for people living with HIV and affected households through inclusion in existing WFP operations and in key national systems, with a focus on building the resilience of populations affected by HIV to shocks and crises with and through meaningful partnerships.

¹ Operational analysis from WFP Somalia, 2023.

Top results in 2022-2023

Partnerships and community-led support were provided for inclusion of the most vulnerable in Ukraine. WFP established partnerships with a Ukrainian community-based organization serving people living with HIV, TB patients, the LGBTQI+ community, the Roma community and persons with disabilities. The Ukrainian network of people living with HIV, "100% Life", became WFP's cooperating partner.² It provided comprehensive geographic coverage, enabling a deeper reach among marginalized groups with in-kind assistance, and leveraged its experience in working with people living with and affected by HIV. Since the field-level partnership started in 2022, WFP has provided food assistance to over 200 000 people living with HIV and/or TB.

Life-saving assistance with commodities was provided on behalf of the Global Fund. WFP provided logistical and supply chain expertise to the Global Fund, helping with the storage of medications and other supplies and ensuring final-mile delivery of life-saving commodities. Together with the Global Fund, WFP in 2022–2023 provided support in six countries in the form of non-food, HIV-, TB-, malaria-, and COVID-related commodities worth a total of US\$ 168 million.

HIV-affected households were integrated in WFP's cash operations in Cameroon. To ensure more sustainable support for vulnerable people living with HIV, the Cameroon Country Office has integrated them into ongoing food assistance and resilience activities since 2021. WFP has worked continuously with the Ministry of Public Health to support the identification of and assistance for the most vulnerable HIV-affected households in the South-West, East and Adamawa regions. In 2022–2023, more than 5200 HIV-affected households (over 23 000 people) were integrated into WFP's cash transfer assistance in those regions.

Integrated and essential services for mobile and vulnerable populations were provided through road-side wellness project in Mozambique. Launched in 2020 by WFP, together with the International Organization for Migration, UNICEF and WHO, in support of the Government of Mozambique, the road-side wellness centre (also called the "blue box clinic") in the main Beira transport corridor (in Manica province) increased access to HIV and TB prevention and treatment services for key populations and other populations at high-risk, including truck drivers, female sex workers and adolescents. In Mozambique, adolescent girls are over four times more likely to acquire HIV than their male peers, while truck drivers have difficulty accessing health services due to their mobility. The "blue box clinic" offers services at a mobile and easily reproducible facility constructed from a converted shipping container. In 2022–2023, the clinic served an average 50–99 clients per day, supporting more than 21 000 people. It provided integrated HIV testing and counselling, antiretroviral therapy, and screening for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), COVID-19, cervical cancer and malnutrition. WFP also integrated livelihood support and resilience-building activities, adding literacy and economic empowerment and training, with female sex workers the primary focus. This included vocational training and courses for cooking, cutting and sewing, hairdressing, as well as village loans and savings groups, coupled with financial literacy.

² Cooperating partnerships refer to nongovernmental and other civil society organizations, which perform activities on WFP's behalf, under a field-level agreement, whereby WFP transfers food or cash resources to the partner or the partner otherwise handles WFP's cash or in-kind resources.

In 2020, the WFP Regional Bureau for Southern Africa and the Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa initiated research with the University of Oxford, the University of Cape Town and the Accelerating Achievement for Africa's Adolescents (Accelerate) Hub. The long-term collaborative study concluded in 2022, with new evidence showing that food security can reduce HIV risk, especially among adolescent girls and young women. Conducted among 1,700 adolescents, the study also indicated that social protection platforms can increase food security and nutrition while reducing HIV risk for vulnerable populations in sub-Saharan Africa. It led to the publication of an article in the Journal of the International AIDS Society³ and policy brief,⁴ as well as a global webinar on World AIDS Day.

³ Cluver L, Rudgard WE, Toska E, et al. Food security reduces multiple HIV infection risks for high-vulnerability adolescent mothers and non-mothers in South Africa: a cross-sectional study. J Int AIDS Soc. 2022;25(8):e25928.

⁴ Social protection, food security and nutrition: Critical enablers for reducing HIV-related vulnerabilities amongst adolescents and young people. Rome: World Food Programme; 2022.

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