

UNAIDS 2023

World Food Programme (WFP)

2022 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 furthest behind and most vulnerable, working with partners to ensure that people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV have access to essential food and nutrition support. In 2022, WFP supported over 45 countries by integrating food and nutrition into national HIV and TB responses. It assisted nearly 350 000 people living with HIV and TB, and their families, to meet their basic nutritional needs via direct support, in the form of food, cash or voucher transfers, across all regions and including conflict-affected and emergency contexts.

WFP is a member of the Joint UN Team on AIDS in 54 of the 91 countries where the Joint Programme operates

Hunger, malnutrition and HIV are closely linked. Food insecurity is both a driver and an exacerbating factor of HIV, often forcing people to adopt risky strategies to meet their food and nutrient needs. HIV also impairs people's ability to access adequate food and nutrition due to reduced productivity and stigma. The recent global food crisis has affected the global HIV response, reinforcing the crucial role of food and nutrition support for people living with and affected by HIV. Sharp increases in the prices of foods have caused an estimated 180 million additional people worldwide to become food insecure, leading to increased HIV vulnerability. Data evidence shows that people living with HIV who are malnourished are significantly more likely to interrupt their HIV treatment.

Key WFP strategy for HIV

To eradicate hunger and malnutrition, WFP supports the inclusion of vulnerable and left-behind populations to meet their urgent and essential food security and nutrition needs. By stressing food security and nutrition as fundamental building blocks for health and development, WFP helps people living with HIV and their households meet their essential needs. WFP also links HIV clients with asset-generating and sustainable livelihood activities, enabling people to build resilience to shocks and stressors.

WFP's mandate and duty pertain to *all* people in need. This means ensuring that vulnerable groups, such as those affected by HIV, are not left behind—a central priority in WFP's strategic vision.

With its mandate to save lives, WFP leverages its emergency footprint to ensure that vulnerable groups are reached, while striving to include the people who are most in need. Supporting people affected by HIV in emergency settings is key for delivering on the humanitarian imperative, while also laying the foundation for longer-term health and resilience.

WFP promotes inclusive social protection systems to help people meet their essential needs, decrease their long-term vulnerability, and access services. By tackling multidimensional risks and intersecting inequalities and mitigating the social and structural drivers of poverty and exclusion, social protection can help address the deep-rooted social vulnerabilities and structural factors that affect people who are vulnerable to HIV. By providing adequate and comprehensive food and nutrition support, WFP addresses the economic and social causes of hunger and enhances access to complementary services at scale.

WFP's strategic and long-term role in partnering for the global HIV response means that WFP can help revitalize efforts to raise the bar for the SDG agenda, while advancing and sustaining the humanitarian and development nexus. In an era of renewed efforts to ensure better synergies between development and humanitarian actors, WFP's expertise on joint programme delivery can accelerate progress towards multiple SDG outcomes.

WFP pursues its vision and mandate strategically including HIV within its programme, policy and partnership work, while sustaining global efforts to eliminate AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

Top results in 2022

Partnerships and community-led support provided for inclusion of the most vulnerable in Ukraine. To ensure inclusive assistance during humanitarian responses in high-burden contexts, WFP established partnerships with a Ukrainian community-based organization serving people living with HIV, TB patients, the LGBTI+ community, the Roma community, and persons with disabilities. The Ukrainian network of people living with HIV, "100% Life", became WFP's cooperating partner.¹ It provided comprehensive geographic coverage, enabling a deeper reach among minority groups with in-kind assistance, and leveraged its experience in working with people living with and affected by HIV. As a result, 58 926 people living with HIV received food assistance, accounting for 39% of all people living with HIV on medical surveillance in Ukraine. Additionally, WFP supported over 11 000 TB patients with cash and food assistance.

Improved knowledge on food security and broader social protection to reduce risk of HIV via continued multiyear research collaboration between WFP and the University of Cape Town and Oxford University. This long-term study, which engaged WFP's regional offices in Johannesburg and Nairobi, has generated novel evidence underscoring the critical role of food security in a global HIV response. It shows that food security reduces HIV risk and negative coping strategies, especially among adolescent girls and young women. The research, which draws on findings from a survey of 1,700 adolescents, shows how social protection platforms can increase food security and nutrition, while reducing HIV risk for the most at-risk cohorts, such as adolescent girls and young women in sub-Saharan

¹ 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.

Africa. The research led to a journal article,² a policy brief³ and a webinar on World AIDS Day. The collaboration has highlighted the importance of social protection for reducing HIV-related vulnerabilities in adolescents and young people. Responding to a growing interest in age- and gender-sensitive social protection provisions, the brief is relevant to both policymakers and development practitioners working on social protection, HIV prevention and gender equality. HIV continues to hinder human capital development in sub-Saharan Africa, with a disproportionate effect on the most vulnerable groups. Social protection provisions, including food and cash support, can play an important role in addressing the structural drivers, reducing new HIV infections, and supporting safe transitions to adulthood.

A novel pilot programme to develop urban gardens increases ART adherence in the Dominican Republic. Together with the Government of the Dominican Republic and the University of Massachusetts (Amherst), WFP helped lead a novel programme that combined urban gardens and peer nutritional counselling for food-insecure people affected by HIV. A pilot cluster randomized controlled trial involving two HIV clinics in the Dominican Republic assessed preliminary efficacy of an urban garden and peer nutritional counselling intervention. Participants with moderate or severe food insecurity and suboptimal ART adherence and/or detectable viral loads were assessed at baseline, six and 12 months. Within a year, the urban garden programme helped reduce the prevalence of detectable viral load, clinic attendance improved, food insecurity was significantly decreased, and adherence to life-saving medication increased by 25%. The full results of the innovative pilot programme were published in a [journal article](#).⁴

Roadside wellness project in Mozambique provides integrated and essential services for mobile and vulnerable populations. Launched in 2020 by WFP, together with the International Organization for Migration, UNICEF and WHO, in support of the Government of Mozambique, the roadside 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 4.5 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 service provision for these vulnerable groups at a mobile and easily reproducible facility constructed from a converted shipping container, which was painted blue. In 2022, nearly 7,000 people received services from the "blue box", including HIV testing and counselling, ART, as well as sexually transmitted infection (STI), COVID-19 and malnutrition screenings. Almost 1,300 adolescent girls and young women and over 1,400 female sex workers benefited from sexual and reproductive health services and family planning education sessions. WFP also integrated livelihood support and resilience-building activities, adding literacy and economic empowerment and training primarily targeted at female sex workers. This included

² Cluver L, Rudgard WE, Toska E, Orkin M, Ibrahim M, et al. [Food security reduces multiple HIV infection risks for high-vulnerability adolescent mothers and non-mothers in South Africa: a cross-sectional study](#).

³ Social protection, food security and nutrition: Critical enablers for reducing HIV-related vulnerabilities amongst adolescents and young people. Policy brief. Rome: WFP; November 2022 (<https://www.wfp.org/publications/social-protection-food-security-and-nutrition-critical-enablers-reducing-hiv-related>).

⁴ Derose KP, Then-Paulino A, Han B, Armenta G, Palar K, Jimenez-Paulino G, et al. Preliminary effects of an urban gardens and peer nutritional counseling intervention on HIV treatment adherence and detectable viral load among people with HIV and food insecurity: evidence from a pilot cluster randomized controlled trial in the Dominican Republic. *AIDS Behav.* 2023;27(3):864-874.

vocational training and courses for cooking, cutting and sewing, hairdressing, as well as villages loans and savings groups, coupled with financial literacy. The interactive monitoring and evaluation dashboard managed by WFP's Mozambique country office is available [here](#).

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