

Fact files : World AIDS Day 1st December 1996 : the red ribbon is an international symbol of AIDS awareness : the most effective weapons against HIV are information and education / WAD Project, Health Education Authority, National AIDS Trust.

Contributors

World AIDS Day Project
Health Education Authority (Great Britain)
National AIDS Trust (U.K.)

Publication/Creation

1996.

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/pvjveqk7>

License and attribution

Conditions of use: it is possible this item is protected by copyright and/or related rights. You are free to use this item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s).

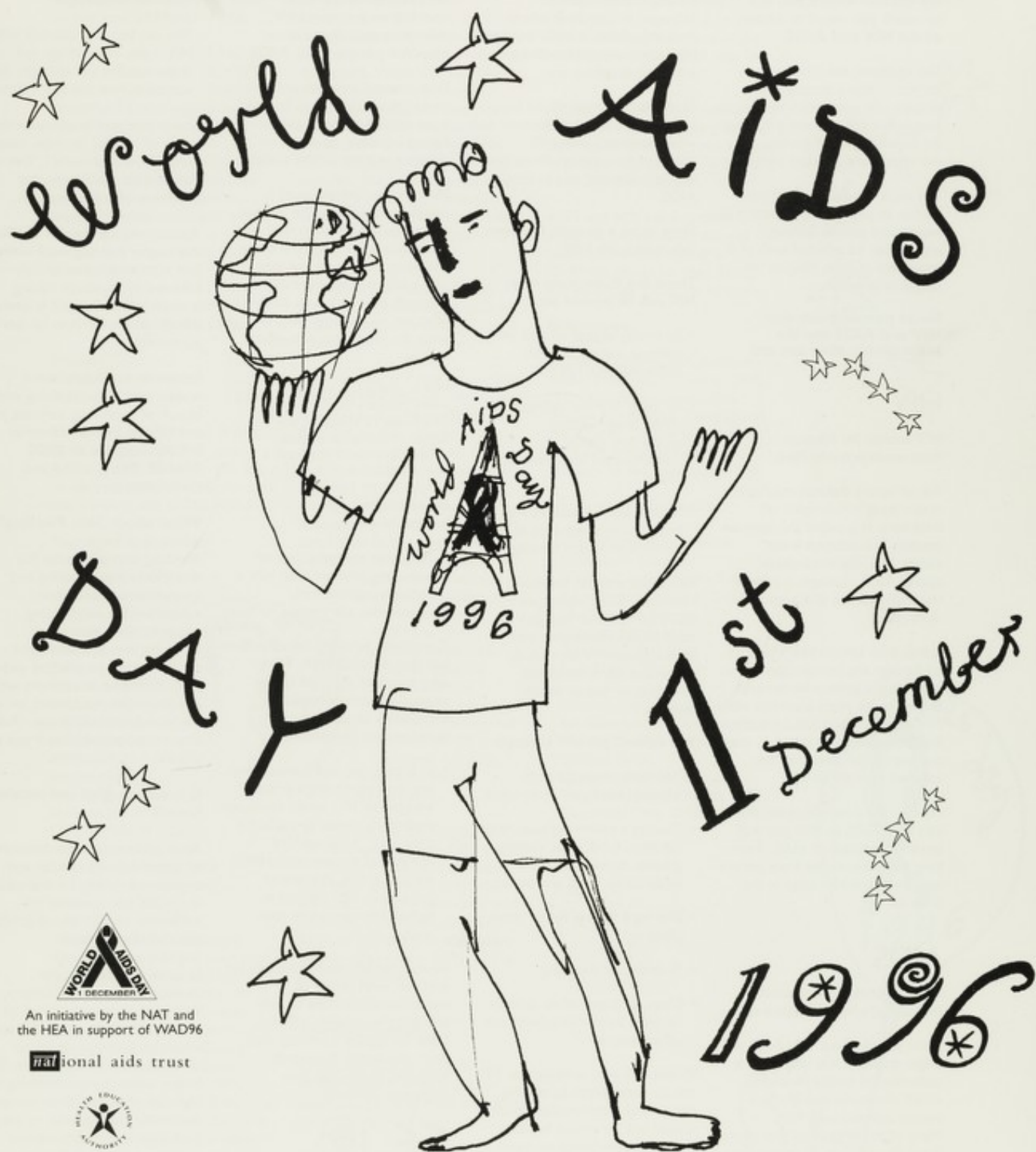
**wellcome
collection**

Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

FACT FILES



THE RED RIBBON IS AN INTERNATIONAL SYMBOL OF AIDS AWARENESS



An initiative by the NAT and the HEA in support of WAD96

national aids trust



THE MOST EFFECTIVE WEAPONS AGAINST HIV INFECTION ARE INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

General facts - about HIV and AIDS

No matter where you live or work you need to know about HIV and AIDS

The epidemic has been with us for more than a decade and despite HIV prevention campaigns people are still becoming infected. An estimated 8,500 people worldwide are infected every day.

The virus can be passed from person to person and contrary to what some people believe, anyone can be infected with HIV regardless of race, religion or sexual orientation.

Some people think that HIV and AIDS are the same thing - they are not

HIV

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

We all have a defence mechanism in our body which fights off infections. It is called the immune system. This process is not visible. HIV, the virus which causes AIDS, damages a part of this vital defence and eventually destroys it.

It may take several years for HIV to damage the immune system so much that a person becomes ill. During those years a person with HIV may look and feel perfectly healthy and well, in fact they may not even know that they are infected with the virus.

Having HIV does not mean that you have AIDS or that you will become seriously ill soon. How long this takes varies from person to person but HIV stays in the body for life.

AIDS

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

Some people think that AIDS is a single disease - it is not. It is a collection of certain illnesses which characteristically affect people infected with HIV. Many of the organisms that cause these illnesses are quite common and harmless to a person with a

healthy immune system. However in someone whose immune system is badly damaged, they can cause severe illnesses and even death.

Doctors have a list of the so-called 'AIDS defining illnesses' and when someone with HIV infection develops an illness from this list, they are said to have AIDS.

How does a person become infected with HIV?

There are three main ways HIV can be passed on:

- by having vaginal or anal sex without a condom with someone who has HIV
- by using needles, syringes or other drug-injecting equipment that is contaminated with infected blood
- from a woman with HIV to her baby during pregnancy, at birth or through breast feeding

Remember you can call the National AIDS Helpline on **0800 567123** for free and confidential information and advice about HIV and AIDS, other sexually transmitted infections or sexual health matters.

You cannot get HIV through:

- Touching, shaking hands, hugging, kissing or from tears
- Sharing a swimming pool, toilet facilities, food, cups, cutlery, glasses, crockery, towels, telephones, tools and books
- Sharing a house, flat or work place
- Sneezing or coughing
- Dogs, cats and other animals or bites from mosquitoes and other insects

Whilst it is very unlikely that HIV can be transmitted by sharing razors and toothbrushes, these should not be shared because they may have blood on them.

At present there is no vaccine to prevent HIV infection and there is no cure for people with AIDS

Experimental vaccines are in development, but none have yet been proved effective and no-one knows whether, or when, an effective vaccine will be available.

Most of the illnesses seen in people with HIV can be treated, and some can be prevented with antibiotics. New anti-viral drugs are being developed and may prove effective against HIV, although no-one knows how effective, or for how long, or what the long term side-effects may be.

HIV is present in virtually every country in the world. The levels of infection are higher in some parts than others, but there is always a risk of infection

Unprotected sex (vaginal or anal)

- The most common way of becoming infected with HIV is through unprotected penetrative sex (vaginal or anal)

Condoms provide an effective barrier against HIV. They also protect against other sexually transmitted infections as well as unintended pregnancies.

- In Britain, gay and bisexual men are the largest single group affected by HIV which increases their risks (unless they practice safer sex). Although the number of women with HIV in the UK is low, the rate of increase in HIV reports is higher among women than men.

Always use stronger condoms for anal sex, with plenty of water-based lubricant to help prevent the condom splitting. Look for quality condoms that carry the British Standards Kitemark and/or the new European CE mark.



What about Drugs?

- You can become infected with HIV if you inject drugs and share needles and syringes with someone who has HIV infection

Always use your own equipment or set of 'works' (syringe, needle, spoon, bowl and water). This will also protect you from other infections including hepatitis.

You can reduce the risk of HIV by thoroughly cleaning used works first with water, then bleach followed by thorough rinsing in clean water. But this is never as safe as using your own or sterile equipment.

Remember for details about needle exchanges, cleaning with bleach or local drug services you can call the 24 hour National DRUGS Helpline on **0800 776600**. This is a free and confidential service.

What about Skin Piercing?

Anything that punctures the skin - including tattooing and acupuncture needles and equipment for ear-piercing, cosmetic body piercing or removing hair by electrolysis - may in theory be infected with HIV. Reliable practitioners will use disposable equipment or sterilise theirs before use. Ask about their procedures if you are unsure.

Is it safe to give and receive blood?

As an additional safety measure all blood, blood products and organs and tissues for transplants in the UK are screened for antibodies to HIV. Blood products are also heat treated.

In some countries in the developing world and Eastern Europe there may be a risk of getting HIV from infected blood infusions, blood products or unsterile medical equipment. For longer visits or trips involving a high risk of accidents to certain countries you may wish to take your own emergency medical equipment kit, including sterile needles and syringes.

THE RED RIBBON IS AN INTERNATIONAL SYMBOL OF AIDS AWARENESS

General facts - about HIV and AIDS

Remember for further advice on any precautions tailored to your journey, you can consult your GP or a specialist travel clinic or call the MASTA Traveller's Helpline (Medical Advisory Services for Travellers Abroad) on **0891 224 100**. This is a recorded message, so be prepared to leave your name, address and journey details. Calls cost 39p/min cheap rate and 49p/min at all other times.

The most effective weapons against HIV infection are information and education

Understanding the facts about HIV and AIDS is important in reducing your personal risk of HIV infection. It also enables you to understand and support friends and colleagues whether they are infected with HIV or caring for someone infected with HIV.

For Further Information


 Ring the National AIDS Helpline on **0800 567123** for free and confidential advice and information about HIV/AIDS, other sexually transmitted infections or sexual health matters. A 24-hour, seven days a week telephone service, NAH can also give you details about local services, including sexual health clinics and support agencies for people with HIV/AIDS, their partners, family and friends.

Phone lines are staffed with people who speak:

Arabic: 0800 282447
6 pm-10 pm Thursday
Bengali: 0800 371132
6 pm-10 pm Tuesday
Cantonese: 0800 282446
6 pm-10 pm Monday
Gujarati: 0800 371134
6 pm-10 pm Wednesday
Hindi: 0800 371136
6 pm-10 pm Wednesday
Punjabi: 0800 371133
6 pm-10 pm Wednesday
Urdu: 0800 371135
6 pm-10 pm Wednesday
Welsh: 0800 371131
10 am-2 am Daily

(Outside these hours there is a dial and listen service on these lines.)

A Minicom Service is available for people with hearing difficulties on **0800 521361** from 10am-10pm, seven days a week.

 Ring the National DRUGS Helpline on **0800 776600**. This is a free and confidential service that offers advice and information for those who are concerned or have questions about drugs. As well as telephone help, they have a wide range of literature available free of charge.

Help is also available in the following languages:

Bengali: 0800 371142
6 pm-10 pm Tuesday
Cantonese: 0800 371137
6 pm-10 pm Monday
Gujarati: 0800 371144
6 pm-10 pm Wednesday
Hindi: 0800 371146
6 pm-10 pm Wednesday
Italian: 0800 371138
6 pm-10 pm Monday
Portuguese: 0800 371139
6 pm-10 pm Thursday
Punjabi: 0800 371143
6 pm-10 pm Wednesday
Spanish: 0800 371140
6 pm-10 pm Monday
Urdu: 0800 371145
6 pm-10 pm Wednesday
Welsh: 0800 371141
10 am-2 am Daily

- Contact the HEA's National HIV Prevention Information Service (NHPIS). This is a national enquiry and referral service for anyone with a role in HIV education and prevention.
Hamilton House,
Mabledon Place,
London, WC1H 9TX
Tel: (0171) 388 9855
Fax: (0171) 388 9844
email: nhpis@hea.org.uk



International Statistics - Cumulative adult HIV infections by July 1996

Global Total: Over 21 million people living with HIV/AIDS.

Sub-Saharan Africa

13.3 million

More than 5% of all adults aged 15-49 are HIV+. Women account for slightly more than half of infections. Heterosexual transmission accounts for the majority of infections in this region.

South and South-East Asia

4.7 million

India and Thailand account for 80% of the regions infections. The predominant route of infection is through heterosexual transmission. Less than one third of infections are among women which suggests commercial sex has a role.

Latin America

1.3 million

Brazil and Mexico together account for more than 70% of infections. Early in the epidemic most infections were among homosexual and bisexual men. Today there is rising transmission through heterosexual sex and injecting drug use.

North America, Western Europe and the Pacific

1.2 million

In this region the initial homosexual epidemic is being overtaken by epidemics in heterosexuals and injecting drug users.

Caribbean

250,000

The Caribbean has the highest prevalence rate of HIV infection after Sub-Saharan Africa - 1.4% of the adult population. Heterosexual transmission has predominated since the beginning of the epidemic in the late 1970s.

North Africa and the Middle East

192,000

East Asia and the Pacific

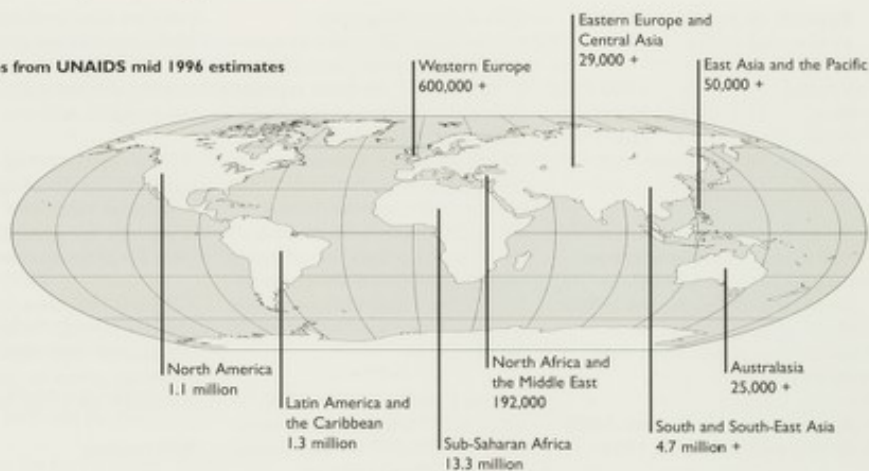
50,000

Eastern Europe and Central Asia

29,000

There is evidence of rapid HIV penetration of some parts of the region, in particular Ukraine.

Figures from UNAIDS mid 1996 estimates



According to UNAIDS estimates, over 3.1 million new HIV infections are expected to occur during 1996, or more than 8,500 a day - 7,500 adults and 1,000 children.

UNAIDS, the United Nations Joint Programme on AIDS estimates that since the start of the global HIV pandemic, around 28 million people have been infected with HIV - 25.5 million adults and 2.4 million children. Of these an estimated 4.5 million adults and 1.3 million children have died from HIV related conditions.

- UNAIDS estimates the cumulative number of AIDS cases in adults and children is more than 7.7 million
- Approximately 42% of the 21 million adults currently living with HIV/AIDS are women and the proportion is growing
- More than 90% of all adults living with HIV/AIDS live in developing countries
- Worldwide, between 75% and 85% of HIV infections in adults have been transmitted through unprotected sexual intercourse
- Heterosexual intercourse accounts for more than 70% of all adult infections to date, and homosexual intercourse for the remaining 5-10%

- Mother to child transmission accounts for more than 90% of all infections in infants and children. Around 25% - 30% of all infants born to HIV+ mothers will themselves be infected before or during birth, or through breast-feeding
- The sharing of HIV-infected injection equipment by drug users counts for 5 - 10% of all adult HIV infections. The proportion is growing. In many areas of the world, injecting drug use is the dominant mode of transmission

The majority of newly infected adults are between 15 and 24 years old.

The Impact of AIDS

The importance of the HIV and AIDS pandemic cannot be measured solely by the number of people with HIV or AIDS.

Because AIDS is a sexually transmitted disease it mainly strikes adolescents, young adults and people in early middle age. The very people on whom society relies for production and reproduction.

These are the women and men who raise the young and care for the old. As they die of AIDS related illness, their elderly relatives are left without support

and their children become orphans. They are the ones who grow the crops, work in the mines and factories, run the schools and the hospitals, even govern the country.

Thus, for every person with AIDS, countless more people are affected by the impact of HIV and AIDS. Hard won gains in child survival are being erased. In countries that are not yet industrialised, or are in the process of industrialising, AIDS threatens development itself.

Work needs to be undertaken that will combat the specific problems of HIV infection in all the various communities across the world.

HIV transmission is preventable

For the most up to date international statistics, forecasts and further information contact:



UNAIDS

20, avenue Appia, CH-1211, Geneva 27, Switzerland
Tel: (from the UK) 00 41 22 791 2111
Fax: (from the UK) 00 41 22 791 4880 / 4179
email: UNAIDS@WHO.CH
Internet: <http://gpawwww.who.ch/gpawhome.htm>

Latest Statistics - Cumulative totals of HIV and AIDS in the UK

Reports of people with HIV at the end of March 1996:

| | |
|--------|---------|
| Women | 3,950 |
| Men | 22,691 |
| Total: | 26,695* |

*includes 54 with gender not stated

New reports of HIV infection may relate to people who have recently become infected, to people infected sometime before choosing to be tested, or to people first tested when they develop AIDS.

Reports of people with AIDS at the end of March 1996:

| | |
|--------|--------|
| Women | 1,206 |
| Men | 11,359 |
| Total: | 12,565 |

Between April 1994 and March 1995, there were 1,669 new AIDS reports. Between the same months of 1995 to 1996, the total was 1,894, a rise of 225 (13%).

Exposure categories:

The distribution of people with HIV and people living with AIDS by exposure category varies considerably between different parts of the UK. Infections attributed to injecting drug use, for instance, account for 36% (272 of 755) of AIDS cases in Scotland, and for only 4% of cases (483 of 11,810) reported elsewhere in the UK.

The distribution of exposure categories has changed over time for both AIDS cases and HIV-1 infection reports. For the UK the proportion of AIDS cases attributable to sexual intercourse between men has consistently declined, from 95% of those reported by the end of 1985, to 69% of those reported in the first quarter of 1996. Over the same period, the proportion of cases attributed to heterosexual exposure has risen from 4% to

23%, and the proportion attributed to IDU (intravenous drug use) has risen from 1% to 8-9%. For HIV infections reported in England, Wales and Northern Ireland the trends for cases attributed to sex between men and sex between men and women, are similar to those in UK AIDS cases. In Scotland, by contrast, the proportion of newly identified infections attributed to sex between men has risen, while the proportion attributed to IDU has declined.

Of the 12,565 reported AIDS cases, 9,079 are thought to have acquired infection through sexual intercourse between men.

4,971 people are thought to have acquired HIV infection through heterosexual contact. Of these, 586 are known to have had a 'high risk' sexual partner: that is one who is known to have been exposed to HIV infection through sexual intercourse between men, intravenous drug use, blood factor treatment, or blood tissues transfer. 3,658 were presumed to be infected through partners with no known risk factors. The majority of these cases reported heterosexual contact in countries where heterosexual spread of HIV is common e.g. Sub-Saharan African countries.

In the United Kingdom, between January 1982 and January 1996, 650 children have been diagnosed with HIV-1 infection, 183 of whom have died (including those without AIDS). Similarly 239 children have been diagnosed as having AIDS, 127 of whom have died.

Age distribution:

To the end of March 1996, 21% of HIV reports were in people under 25 and 45% were in people under 30 years of age.

AIDS cases probably acquired through sexual intercourse

between men were highest in the 30-34 year old age group, while HIV infection of the same origin was highest in the 25-29 year old age group.

AIDS in injecting drug users was highest in the 30-34 age group for both sexes, while HIV was highest in younger age groups, 25-29 for men, 20-24 for women.

AIDS and HIV cases probably acquired through heterosexual intercourse were highest in the 30-34 age group for men, but in the 25-29 age group for women.

References:

AIDS/HIV Quarterly Surveillance Tables. PHLS AIDS Centre. (HIV, STD Division, Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre) and the Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health. No. 31: Data to the end March 1996.

For further information

- Contact the Public Health Laboratory Service (PHLS), Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre (CDSC), 61 Colindale Avenue, London, NW9 5EQ. Tel: (0181) 200 6868 Fax: (0181) 200 7868
- Contact the Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health, Ruckhill Hospital, Bilsland Drive, Glasgow, G20 9NB. Tel: (0141) 946 7120 ext 1388 Fax: (0141) 946 0860



Working with the UNAIDS international theme - 'One World. One Hope'

On 1st December 1996, people around the world will observe World AIDS Day. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has chosen the banner 'One World. One Hope'.

Who devised the international theme?

The international theme is devised by UNAIDS following consultation with other UN agencies and non governmental organisations to provide a global focus for individuals and organisations around the world involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

What does 'One World. One Hope' mean?

'One World. One Hope' is a call for solidarity amongst all communities across the world to halt the spread of HIV infection; to improve the quality of life for people living with HIV/AIDS, friends, families and carers; to maintain and improve treatment and care programmes; to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS; to remove stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV and AIDS and to fight complacency.

'One World. One Hope' as an international theme can be used in many ways. It is important to explore how it may be relevant to your own community and other groups in your area.

Things you may consider when using the international theme

- AIDS affects virtually every country across the world. 90% of all adults living with HIV/AIDS live in developing countries
- In five African countries over 12% of the population are infected with HIV (Botswana, 18%; Zambia and Zimbabwe, 17%; Uganda, 15%; Malawi, 13%)
- In the Caribbean out of every 1000 adults, 14 are living with HIV/AIDS
- There are more than 4.7 million adults living with HIV in South and South-East Asia, 90% of whom live in India, Thailand, Myanmar and Cambodia
- In the UK, parts of Western Europe and North America the largest group affected by HIV is gay men and bisexual men
- Heterosexual women are usually more vulnerable to infection than heterosexual men. Approximately 42% of adults living with HIV/AIDS are women and this proportion is increasing
- The need for research into new treatments for people with HIV/AIDS and the search for a global vaccine
- Most of the new treatments now becoming available are too expensive for the great majority of people living with HIV/AIDS
- Groups affected by HIV/AIDS differ from country to country. It is important to recognise how the international theme is relevant to your own community as well as others
- It is important to acknowledge the successes of government funded HIV prevention initiatives and responses to HIV/AIDS by many ASOs, NGOs, community groups and individuals in the UK. Due to these initiatives, in the UK the epidemic did not reach the levels initially projected, but this is not a reason for complacency
- recognise that HIV is a global problem?
- recognise the needs of the international community?
- recognise that HIV/AIDS affects everyone?
- Identify organisations or individuals who may be prepared to work together to run an event or fundraising activity
- Contact your local Health Promotion Unit for information about HIV prevention
- Act in partnership with parents and schools on effective sex education
- Provide materials in various community languages and in accessible formats
- Contact equal opportunities departments within organisations such as large companies, local authorities etc. to see if they have a position on HIV/AIDS
- Find out about other HIV/AIDS organisations by searching the World Wide Web on the Internet

Some organisations may feel that the UNAIDS international theme is not directly relevant to their work. World AIDS Day can still be used to highlight the work of your organisation and as an effective platform to raise important issues and promote the Red Ribbon as the international symbol of AIDS awareness. World AIDS Day provides a focus for the international broadcast and printed media and people around the world to find out more about the issues surrounding HIV and AIDS.

Previous international themes have been:

- 1988 Join the Worldwide Effort
- 1989 Our Lives, Our World - Let's Take Care of Each Other
- 1990 Women and AIDS
- 1991 Sharing the Challenge
- 1992 A Community Commitment
- 1993 Time to Act
- 1994 AIDS and the Family
- 1995 Shared Rights, Shared Responsibilities

How can I use UNAIDS international theme?

There are a number of activities you can undertake to highlight this year's international theme 'One World. One Hope'.

- Find out what the international theme means to your community
- Examine HIV/AIDS issues which affect many different communities and other countries across the world
- Find out about UK agencies doing international work and non UK agencies working in the UK and explore opportunities for collaborative work
- Organise a seminar to discuss the international theme and the issues it raises

Where can I get more information?

- See *National AIDS Manual* *European AIDS Directory*. £19.95. *AIDS Organisations Worldwide*. £9.95. Published by NAM Publications. Available in late November. Tel: (0171) 627 3200.
- Contact the International HIV/AIDS Alliance for further information about HIV and AIDS in developing countries. Barratt House, 341 Oxford Street, London, W1R 1HB Tel: (0171) 491 2000 Fax: (0171) 491 2001 email: 100302.3011@compuserve.com
- For information about how to get involved with World AIDS Day contact: The World AIDS Day Project, National AIDS Trust, New City Cloisters, 188/196 Old Street, London, EC1V 9FR. Tel: (0171) 814 6767 Fax: (0171) 216 0111 Internet: (by October 1996) <http://www.nat.org.uk/nat> email: info@nat.org.uk