

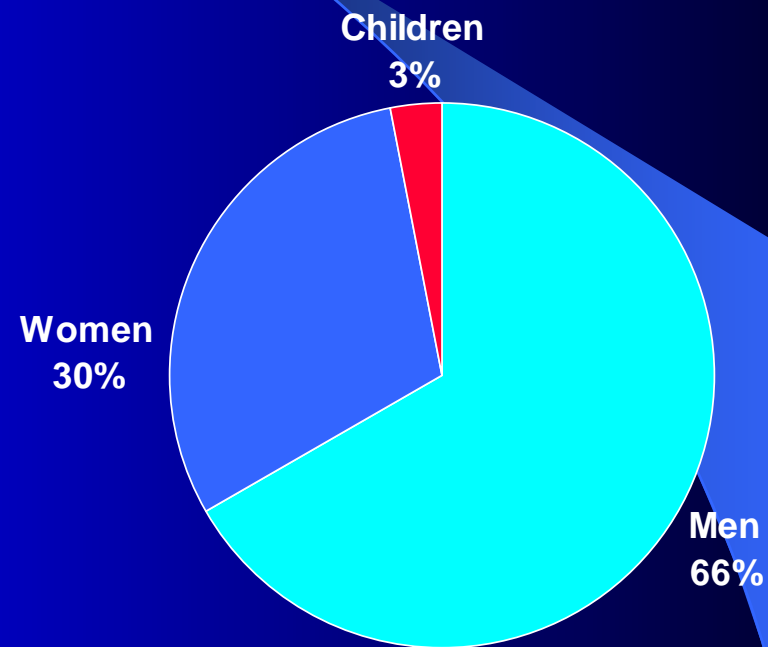
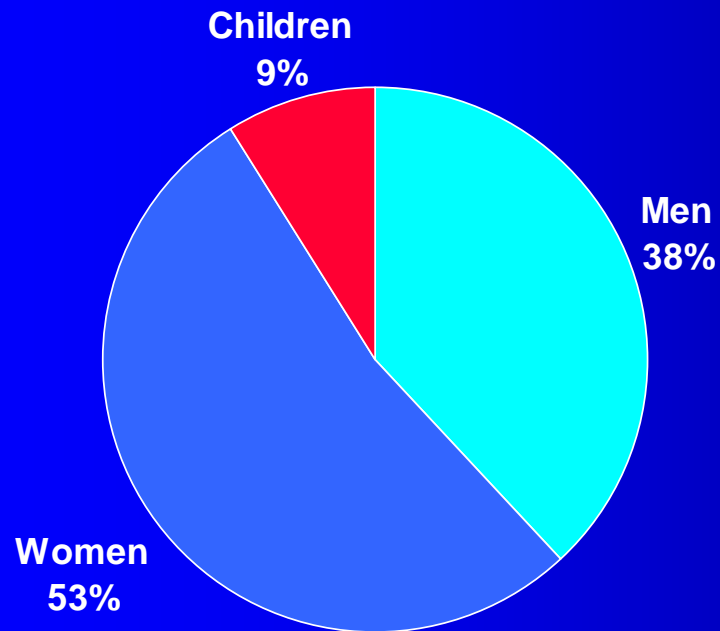
CURBING AIDS WITHIN THE AFRICAN FAMILY

Review of Interventions Within the
Framework of
Values, Prevention, Care & Support, &
Impact Mitigation

HIV/AIDS Demographics, Composition of the Infected Population, 2001 Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa

Rest of the World*



* Total does not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: UNAIDS, *Report on the Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic*, July 2002.

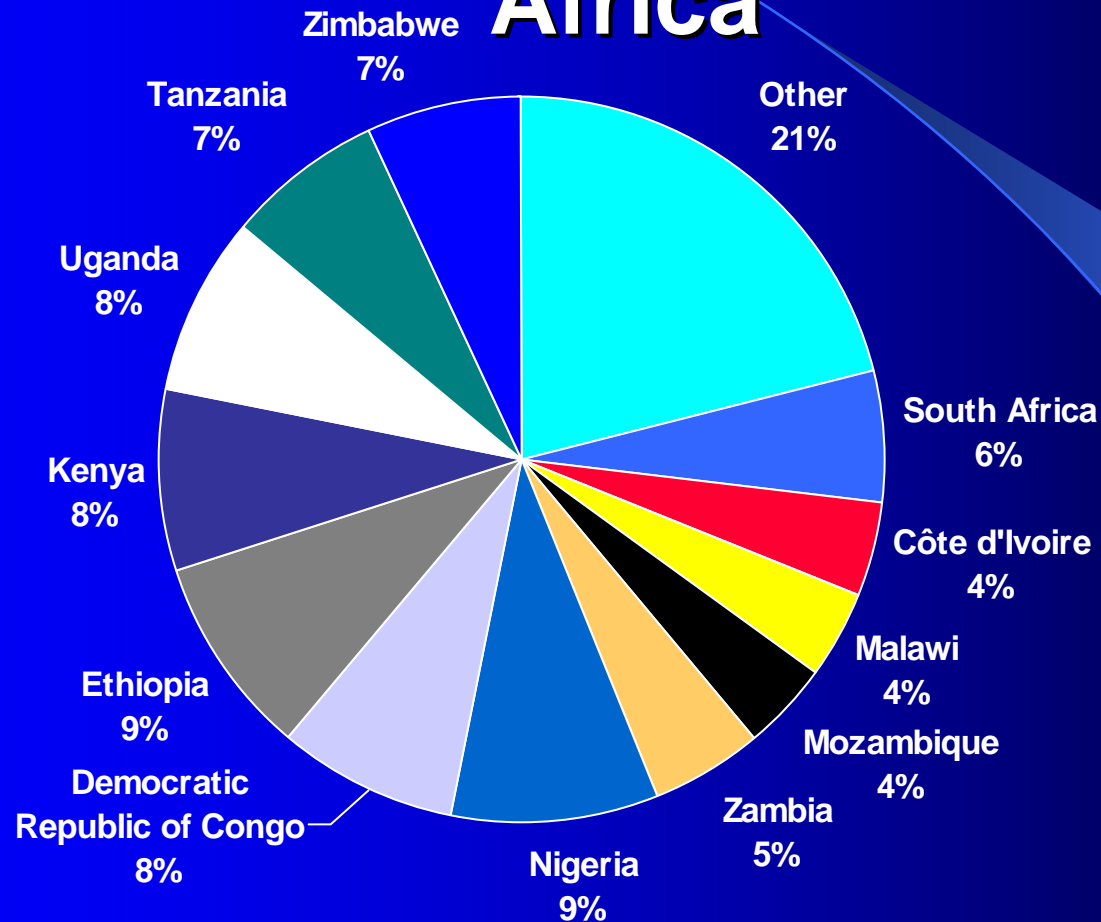
Notes on HIV/AIDS

Demographics, Africa

- **The proportion of people living with HIV/AIDS who are adult women (ages 15 and older) is 1.7 times higher in sub-Saharan Africa than in other regions.**
- **In sub-Saharan Africa, where HIV is spread predominantly through heterosexual activity, women account for more than half of the 29 million people living with HIV/AIDS. In other regions, the proportion of people living with HIV/AIDS who are women drops to around one-third.**

Distribution of Children, by Country, End 2001

AIDS Orphans in Sub-Saharan Africa



Source: UNAIDS, *Report on the Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic*, July 2002. H

The Situation in Kenya

- Kenya has 30 million people :- 2 million are infected with HIV i.e 6.7 % (down from 13 % in 2002)
- 2 million have already died leaving 1.2 million children orphaned. About 200,000 of these children are also infected.
- Further to this HIV/AIDS is more predominant among women who make up 53% of the infected population
- Young women between 15 & 24 are hardest hit: the number infected are 3 times that of young men of the same age group

Loss of Values – The Hidden Devastation

- All African Ethnic groupings had certain values that governed sexual behaviour and family life. These values went under such names as Taboos, anathemas, things that must not-be-done etc
- Breaking a taboo was met with heavily punitive or highly complex remedial measures in order to mend the broken connections with the living, the dead and even the unborn
- No-one was an island sufficient unto himself

Loss of Values – The Hidden Devastation

- Christianity and other new religions brought in new values which often replaced, weakened or strengthened the old
- However Christianity came in heavily mixed up with a western world view & culture – perceived as being part and parcel of acceptable religion.

Loss of Values ctd

- The unfortunate result has been that as western cultures degenerated into post- modern hedonism with its attendant loss of family cohesiveness, the African has tended to rather blindly follow them in the mistaken belief that it is modern and better than our culture.
- Nothing in even the so called retrogressive traditions could equal the loss inflicted on the family as a result of this homage to the so called Hollywood culture where the idolatry & gratification of the self has attained the level of religion

Loss of Values ctd

- The 'diamond core' of Christian values that was in many ways quite close to African values has been lost in the process
- With neither traditional nor Christian values to protect the people, HIV/AIDS has found an easy target in a populace without 'moral immunity'.
- The devastation has been total and many of the hard won developmental and health gains of four decades have been lost

Loss of Values ctd

- This devastation has been thrown into high relief by the aftermath of HIV/AIDS epidemic such as increasing debilitating poverty and an unimaginable number of orphaned children.
- The destruction of the family has been such that strategic interventions are required to not only to bring the epidemic under control, but to rebuild the family from the debris left by the decimation of a generation.
- This must include the restoration of strong family values, formation of the youth & the enacting of more family friendly laws

Prevention

- Rethinking prevention is needed by all players and stakeholders. There are no easy solutions or a quick fix to so insidious a problem as HIV/AIDS
- First and high on the list is compassion: we must be like Christ and not like the rock wielding judgemental pharisees for HIV can and does indeed attack the innocent and even the chaste precisely because they have in one way or another been rendered defenceless.

Prevention ctd

- The aftermath of HIV/AIDS is like a battle zone: while men are out shooting bullets, it is the women and children who bear the brunt of the war, and it is the woman and very often the girl child who often have to keep the entire roof from caving in.
- It is automatically assumed that women & girls will care for the sick but may not necessarily benefit in a similar way even when desperately ill themselves.
- Women are likely to be found positive in PMTCT clinic – such women are likely to be thrown out of the home for ‘bringing the disease’ – yet there is no way of forcing the male to go for the test also

Prevention ctd

- Women are socialised not to resist men and to say no is considered unacceptable and liable to be punished by violence or by denial of necessities.
- Socially, a married woman cedes all rights to her husband, particularly any right to the integrity of body
- Often a biblical quotation will be used to defend such reprehensible attitudes

Prevention ctd

- Women must be at the core of prevention programs. A woman should be able to say NO and live to tell the tale. Indeed even married sexual congress must be consensual and must be renegotiated each time. Seduction is a matter of a life time. Forced sex is unacceptable under whatever circumstances
- It is in fact now clear that women are likely to get HIV from the 'safety' of their own marital bed than a street savvy prostitute from her clients. The prostitute can negotiate, the married woman can't.
- The situation is rendered more urgent by the emergence of resistant viruses, the transmission of which makes the cost of treatment prohibitive & more complex

Prevention ctd

- Another pernicious condition that renders women so vulnerable is their poverty and secondary economic status. One cannot fight HIV without having to tackle poverty
- Young girls are particularly prone to ‘transactional sex’ which is a completely different from prostitution. Transactional sex is to agree to sexual activity because there are no viable options for keeping body and mind together

Care, Support & Impact mitigation

- The Catholic Church has done particularly well in this area
- Through various assisted programs 15 out of 41 hospitals offer Anti- Retroviral Therapy free or at a subsidised fee. ~ 5,000 patients receive medicines through these programs. The intended figure is between 15 – 20,000 to supplement the Govt efforts to reach 90,000 needy people by the end of 2006.

Care, Support & impact mitigation

- Through its network of 410 Health units (Hospitals, Health Centres & Dispensaries) the Church also Provided health care to 7.6 million out-patients & 1.7 million in patients about 50% of whom presented with HIV/AIDS related conditions.
- The Church is 2nd only to the Government in Health Services Provision – providing about 40 % of care, and training over 500 health professionals each year

Care, Support & impact mitigation

- Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV is provided in 29 Hospitals
- Voluntary Counselling & Testing Services are provided by 15 hospitals
- Home Based Care Services are provided by all dioceses, as well as IGAs for PLWAs

Interventions for Youth

- Behaviour Change Programs for Youth eg Education for Life are ongoing in several centers including the Waumini Radio – the Catholic Radio Station
- Peer Counselling Programs are most active in 4 dioceses
- An Abstinence Training Program for Church sponsored schools is at an advanced stage of preparation

Interventions for children

- There are extensive programs for the support of orphans and vulnerable children (ovc) via educational support, school feeding programs, training in life skills and vocational training(94 programs listed in the National database).
- Training of Teachers in the Catholic School System in care and support of the infected and affected students is also on going
- Many excellent projects are going on but are unknown or unreported to KCS the national coordinating body.