



## World Aids Day

The World Aids Day is commemorated annually on December 1 to show support for people living with HIV and to remember those who have died from AIDS-related causes. The red ribbon is the universal symbol of awareness and support for people living with HIV. HIV is a virus that damages the immune system of an individual making the infected person susceptible to a wide range of diseases. If left untreated, a person with HIV is likely to develop Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) which is the most severe phase of the infection. Despite the significant efforts of the global community, the disease continues to be a major public health issue. According to the World Health Organization, over 38 million people were living with HIV at the end of 2019 and nearly 35 million people have lost their lives to the disease. In addition to this, not everyone can access HIV testing, treatment, and care, and there is still no cure for the disease. As a result of these gaps in HIV services, 690,000 people lost their lives in 2019 and 1.7 million people were newly infected. HIV and AIDS has had adverse effects on households, communities, and national economies. It is essential that the global fight against HIV/AIDS is intensified by investing in innovative solutions in order to reach the most vulnerable populations so that no one is left behind.

### HIV/AIDS and Sustainable Development:

- Poverty can increase vulnerability to HIV infection. Economic empowerment will be essential to reducing poverty and HIV vulnerability while keeping infected people healthy.
- Hunger increases the susceptibility to HIV infection. Nutritional support to households can help prevent the transmission of HIV and enhance health outcomes.
- HIV infection is acquired through sexual transmission, transmission from mother to infant, childbirth or breastfeeding. HIV-sensitive universal health coverage can play a vital role in promoting equal access to health care.
- Lack of relevant knowledge on HIV makes people susceptible to infections. Education will play a key role as people will be equipped with quality sex education so they can make responsible and informed health decisions.
- By tackling HIV in the world of work and protecting labour rights, people living with and affected by HIV can still enjoy productive employment that is free of discrimination.
- Protecting infected persons against stigmatization and empowering people to claim their rights will enhance access to HIV services.
- Global partnership to improve access to affordable HIV services is critical to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

### Efforts being made to end the HIV/AIDS Pandemic:

- UNAIDS - leading the global effort to end AIDS: [Learn more](#)
- Using strategic information to improve services for children and adolescents living with HIV: [Learn more](#)
- Accelerating progress toward achieving HIV/AIDS control: [Learn more](#)
- Fighting for the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS and the most vulnerable populations: [Learn more](#)

