



P.O. Box 9716
Federal Way, WA 98063-9716
1.888.511.6495
www.worldvision.org

Dear Friend:

Why is a response to the global AIDS crisis finally beginning to gain momentum among U.S. churches?

I believe it's because of a common denominator found in the four stories of the World Vision Experience: AIDS exhibit—the children who, through no fault of their own, are caught up in the life-and-death drama of one of the greatest humanitarian crises of our time.

Babirye, Emmanuel, Kombo, and Mathabo—the boys and girls whose stories are told in the Experience—are real-life representations of the people Christ referred to as “the least of these.” And they are capturing the hearts of the American church.

Your church may already be passionately addressing the needs of those affected by the global AIDS pandemic. Or maybe you are just beginning to help your congregation understand how AIDS is devastating communities around the world. Whatever your circumstances, hosting the World Vision Experience can be life-changing for your congregation, and help you be a catalyst for local awareness of this global issue.

The exhibit has allowed tens of thousands of people to walk in the steps of an African child affected by AIDS, and given them effective ways to respond.

The enclosed Information Kit will give you an overview of how your church can reach and touch your community—and your world—through the World Vision Experience: AIDS. We are praying with you as you explore this unique opportunity to change hearts, and lives, forever.



Richard E. Stearns
President



introduction to World Vision

About World Vision

This section provides some helpful background about World Vision. Feel free to share this information, especially if some of the members of your congregation are unfamiliar with our work.

Who we are . . .

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.

Who we serve . . .

World Vision provides hope and assistance to approximately 100 million people in nearly 100 countries. In communities around the world, we join with local people to find lasting ways to improve the lives of poor children and families.

Why we serve . . .

Motivated by our faith in Jesus Christ, we serve alongside the poor and oppressed as a demonstration of God's unconditional love for all people. World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.

What we're doing about the AIDS crisis . . .

- World Vision has been on the front lines of the AIDS crisis since 1990, when we launched our first AIDS-related work to help orphaned children in Rakai (pronounced "RA-kai"), Uganda—the location believed to be the epicenter for the spread of AIDS in Africa. (*Note: Two of the children featured in the Experience are from the Rakai district.*)
- Today, World Vision operates AIDS prevention and care programs in more than 60 countries.
- World Vision has assisted thousands of AIDS-affected children and families across Africa, including:
 - In 2007, equipped nearly **20,000 people**, including **3,200 faith leaders**, to provide additional HIV prevention and AIDS care in their communities.
 - In 2008, coordinated HIV-prevention education that promotes abstinence and faithfulness for more than **671,000 young people** living in AIDS-affected areas.
 - Provide training and ongoing support for more than **77,000 local volunteer AIDS caregivers**.



AIDS fact sheet

Helpful information to use as you educate and engage your congregation around the AIDS crisis

A global pandemic

- About **33 million** people worldwide are living with HIV and AIDS.
- In 2007, **2.7 million** people were newly infected with HIV.
- Every day, more than **5,400** people die because of AIDS—one every 16 seconds.

AIDS and children

- Worldwide, **2 million** children are living with HIV.
- More than **15 million** children have lost one or both parents because of AIDS.
- Without successful prevention and treatment, the number of children orphaned by AIDS will continue to grow.

AIDS in Africa

- Sub-Saharan Africa, home to just 12 percent of the world's population, accounts for **two out of every three** people living with HIV.
- Nearly **three in four** AIDS-related deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa.
- At least **three of every four** children orphaned by AIDS live in sub-Saharan Africa.

World Vision's response in Africa

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- In 2008, coordinated HIV-prevention education that promotes abstinence and faithfulness for more than **671,000 young people** living in AIDS-affected areas.
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Sources: UNAIDS, 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic; World Vision, 2008.



introduction to the Experience

Everything you thought you knew about the AIDS pandemic is going to change.

AIDS is the greatest humanitarian crisis of our time. Millions die each year. Millions of children have been orphaned. Tens of millions are living with the virus.

No part of our world has been affected more than Africa. Two out of every three people living with HIV are in Africa. Three-quarters of all AIDS-related deaths happen here—in a place that's home to little more than one-tenth of the world's population.

But beyond all the headlines and statistics are stories—the stories of individual lives.

AIDS is cutting its path of destruction one child at a time. And it's only when we walk in the steps of a child who has lost parents, who has lost his or her home and all that is safe and familiar—whose own life has been threatened—that we truly understand the scope of this pandemic.

And what we can do to stop it.

What is the Experience?

The World Vision Experience takes you on an unforgettable journey into Africa—and into the AIDS crisis, seen through the eyes of a child.

As guests walk through this interactive exhibit, they listen to the story of one of four real-life children. For a brief period of time, that child's story is *their* story. That child's world is *their* world. At the conclusion of the Experience, guests are invited to become part of the solution through prayer, advocacy, and giving to help turn the tide on AIDS.

Why the Experience?

Turning the tide on AIDS will take more than the best efforts of governments and nonprofits. We need the Church. Those affected by this pandemic need the hope and compassion the Church offers.

It's easy to shield our eyes from the devastating effects of AIDS. But as more and more churches like yours rally to the cause of Christ in fighting this disease, lives are extended. Suffering is relieved. Hope is rekindled.

By partnering with us in hosting the World Vision Experience, you can mobilize your church and surrounding community to help turn the tide on this pandemic, one child at a time.

“I didn't expect the World Vision Experience to impact me. After all, I'd been to Africa; my heart had already been broken by the reality of AIDS. But the exhibit so powerfully captured the tragic reality of what I'd seen that I walked out broken once again. The greatest challenge we face in engaging our churches globally is to bridge the geographical and cultural distance that separates us from our brothers and sisters in need. The Experience provides a necessary and effective bridge.”

— Lynne Hybels
Willow Creek Community Church

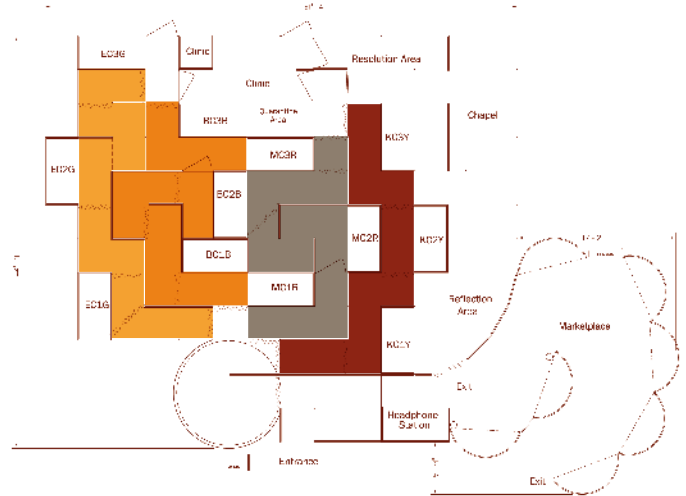


Experience info

Step into Africa

And into an unforgettable journey that will challenge everything you thought you knew about the AIDS crisis. The 2,500-square-foot walk-through exhibit is fashioned after an African village. Visitors wear headphones and walk in the steps of a child affected by AIDS. At the end, visitors are invited to become a part of the solution through advocacy, prayer, or giving opportunities.

Note: Each color in the diagram at right represents the life lane of a different child.



Visitors walk in the steps of Emmanuel, Babirye, Kombo, or Mathabo, listening to stirring audio and viewing captivating photography as they intimately engage in the child's life story.



The rooms in the exhibit provide visitors with a life-sized view into the world of an African child. Visitors can "step into" a fishing village in Uganda, a truck stop in Kenya, or the mountains of Lesotho, for example.



Detailed vignettes, such as this restaurant along the "AIDS highway" in Kenya, draw visitors into each child's story.



The chapel provides visitors with a space for prayer and reflection.

continued . . .



Experience info

The stories of the Experience



Babirye Enter the epicenter of AIDS in Africa, where a young girl watches her father die and her mother grow weak—and wonders if she'll be next.



Emmanuel Face survival in the wild, as a young boy and his brother care for themselves after losing their mother and their home in Uganda.



Kombo Avoid the big trucks and the big disease as they roll past one boy's home at a truck stop along the "AIDS highway."



Mathabo Feel the sting of abandonment as one girl faces hunger, assault, and disease—alone in the highlands of Lesotho.



frequently asked questions

What is World Vision doing about the AIDS pandemic?

World Vision operates AIDS prevention and care programs in more than 60 countries. We focus especially on meeting the needs of children who have been made vulnerable because of the pandemic, particularly those who have lost parents due to AIDS.

How does AIDS affect the poor?

Rising child mortality rates and falling life expectancies due to AIDS mean that much of the progress made fighting poverty in recent decades is being lost.

For example, in the hardest-hit areas, an emerging middle class is being pushed below the poverty line by loss of income and exorbitant medical bills. Few of the poorest families can afford to see a doctor. Even fewer can afford HIV or AIDS medication.

When children lose parents to AIDS, grandparents often become guardians. If the grandparents are gone, older children must often drop out of school to look after their younger siblings.

Where is the need the greatest?

Sub-Saharan Africa, where an estimated 22 million people are living with HIV or AIDS. The adult rate of infection in this region is more than six times higher than it is in the rest of the world.

Who is most affected by AIDS?

In sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 60 percent of those living with HIV are women. In part because of cultural limitations on female rights and freedoms, more African women are infected than men.

There are also nearly 2 million children under the age of 15 living with HIV in Africa—nine out of every 10 HIV-infected children in the world. It is estimated that more than 90 percent of these children contracted the virus during pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding—forms of HIV transmission that can be prevented.

Is it really possible to turn the tide on the AIDS crisis?

AIDS has devastated millions of African families. But there are signs of hope. Uganda was the first country to report a decline in cases of infection. Since the 1990s, Uganda's infection rate has dropped from 15 percent to 5.4 percent.

Similar successes have been seen in Rwanda, Kenya, Senegal, and urban areas of Zimbabwe, as well as in countries in the Caribbean and Asia.

We believe that through values-based prevention training and community-based care, we can help turn the tide on AIDS.



World Vision Experience: AIDS

next steps

If you are interested in hosting the World Vision Experience: AIDS exhibit, or you'd simply like more information, visit worldvisionexperience.org or e-mail us at experience@worldvision.org. Include the name and address of your church along with a contact name, e-mail, and phone number. A member of our Experience team will contact you.

Thank you for your concern for children and families affected by the AIDS crisis. We hope you'll take this unique opportunity to change hearts, and lives, forever.

"I first visited the World Vision Experience exhibit on World AIDS Day 2007 when it was at Saddleback Church in Orange County, CA. Walking through the small hallway in the Kenyan home of Kombo, I was inspired and sombered. I've had the opportunity to visit Africa and this exhibit transported me back to this beautiful continent. The struggles, illness, poverty, as well as the unwavering hope of the people were represented so well by Kombo's life. I've had the privilege of personally meeting kids like Kombo and listening to their stories of hardship and resilience. The World Vision Experience: AIDS exhibit is the next best thing. Parents and teachers everywhere should bring their kids and let them experience life through the eyes of Kombo and the other World Vision children."

— Jenna Bush, daughter of President George W. Bush