

Reverse the epidemic

The UN's response to AIDS formally began in 1986, when the Global Programme on AIDS was established at the World Health Organisation (WHO). As the epidemic expanded and evolved, it became increasingly clear that an unprecedented effort extending beyond the health sector would be required to address the growing global crisis. Today, ten UN agencies sponsor the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. They include: UNCHR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNIDC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank.



Most of the Joint UN Programme's work is at country level. The Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS, is the main advocate for accelerated, comprehensive and coordinated global action on the epidemic. UNAIDS coordinates all AIDS-related activities undertaken by the UN system. Its mission is to lead, strengthen and support an expanded response to HIV and AIDS that includes preventing transmission of HIV, providing care to those already living with the virus, reducing the vulnerability of individuals and communities to HIV and alleviating the impact of the epidemic.

UNAIDS Country Coordinators facilitate the work of UN Theme Groups on HIV and AIDS – the joint AIDS policy and strategy decision making body for Cosponsors and other UN system agencies at country level. There are UN Theme Groups in more than 130 countries. UNAIDS also provides strategic assistance and works with governments, civil society and other partners in support of more effective and efficient action.

UNAIDS works for a stronger, sustained and more effective effort against AIDS. Priorities include scaling up proven prevention, treatment and

Red Ribbon Express trains for AIDS awareness

National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) has decided to run four Red Ribbon Express trains across the country to generate awareness on HIV/AIDS in India. NACO plans to hire a train from Indian railways, one of the world's biggest networks that spans the entire country, to spread the anti-AIDS message. The 'Red Ribbon Express' will carry actors who will perform AIDS awareness plays; doctors to carry out HIV tests and volunteers who will cycle to villages every time the train stops. The campaign will focus on raising competencies against HIV/AIDS for all.

A Communications Consortium, pooling-in resources and technical expertise from various partners exclusively for HIV/AIDS communication, has also been planned by NACO. UNICEF will be the facilitator for the consortium. A wide variety of activities are planned through the consortium so that different partners speak in the same language and work towards the same goal of spreading HIV/AIDS

awareness throughout the country, according to a senior health department official.

In the northern city of Chandigarh in October 2005, thousands of people including local politicians rang bells, honked horns and clanged food utensils to create an "alarm" about AIDS. But voluntary groups say much more needs to be done. The consortium would bring out communication software with NACO's technical support. It includes a television soap focusing on HIV/AIDS-related issues.

Four trains coming from four different corners of India will meet at the centre of India. These trains, carrying youth, will stop at all stations en route and complete the journey in six months. The young people aboard will go to all the villages surrounding the stations and educate people on HIV/AIDS through puppet shows, dramas, and skits.

Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>
<http://www.boston.com/>

impact-mitigation strategies in all affected countries and working with partners towards greater efficiency in the AIDS response.

UNAIDS supports a more effective, comprehensive and coordinated global response to AIDS by providing:

- leadership and advocacy for effective action on the epidemic;
- strategic information and technical support to guide efforts against AIDS worldwide;
- tracking, monitoring and evaluation of the epidemic and of responses to it;
- civil society engagement and the development of strategic partnerships;
- mobilisation of resources to support an effective response.

UNAIDS supports the delivery of antire-

troviral treatment in low-income countries and has been fully committed to making universal access a reality since it was established in 1996. UNAIDS sponsored early projects that demonstrated conclusively that delivering treatment in poorer areas was feasible. Efforts by UNAIDS were critical to the timely establishment in December 2002 of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria as a new financial mechanism to leverage resources for AIDS.

UNAIDS is intensifying efforts to generate the resources needed to reverse the epidemic. The World Bank is one of the largest single providers of financial assistance for AIDS programmes in developing countries.

Source: <http://www.unaids.org/>