

Irish Aid and The Clinton Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative: An Innovative Partnership



More than 3 million lives were lost to AIDS in 2005 and almost 5 million people acquired HIV in the same year. The number of people in the world living with the virus is now in excess of 38 million, the majority of whom live in sub-Saharan Africa. Over the next decade, without effective treatment and care, they will join the ranks of over 20 million people who have already died of AIDS.

The Taoiseach Bertie Ahern T.D. and Bill Clinton at the launch of the Irish Aid/Clinton Foundation partnership on 8 July 2003



HIV/AIDS testing centre in Mabote, Mozambique

Ireland and HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is a development issue. Addressing the global HIV pandemic is central to poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This is why Ireland has made the fight against HIV/AIDS a core priority of its overall development agenda and has significantly increased its financial commitment to HIV/AIDS.

“Ireland is taking a lead in the fight against the scourge of HIV/AIDS. Our spending on HIV/AIDS and other diseases exceeds €100 million a year.”
An Taoiseach, Bertie Abern, T.D. speaking at the recent launch of the Government White Paper on Irish Aid.

The Clinton Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative

The Clinton Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative aims to assist hard hit developing countries in the implementation of integrated care, treatment and prevention programmes that can reverse the course of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The Foundation forms partnerships with interested nations, providing assistance in developing national care and treatment plans, building the indigenous human capacity and physical infrastructure necessary

to implement these plans, procuring needed pharmaceuticals and mobilising international resources to make the plans a reality.

The Irish Aid – Clinton Foundation Partnership

Three years ago the Irish Government entered a partnership with the Clinton Foundation to address the gap in HIV treatment services in low income countries.

At that time drugs to treat HIV/AIDS were not affordable for many developing countries that were in the grip of the HIV epidemic. The Clinton Foundation successfully negotiated preferential prices for HIV drugs and brokered deals to make these drugs available to those developing countries bearing the heaviest burden of HIV infection.

Mozambique was one of those countries and was selected as the initial country of focus for the Irish Aid – Clinton Foundation Partnership. With a HIV prevalence rate in excess of 16%, HIV/AIDS has exacerbated the problems of an already impoverished population. Without an adequate response to HIV/AIDS, life expectancy in Mozambique could drop from 50 to 36 years by 2010.

MOZAMBIQUE

Total Population	19,700,000
HIV Prevalence	16.1 %
Adults (15-49 years) living with HIV	1,600,000
Women (15-49 years) living with HIV	960,000
Deaths due to AIDS	140,000
Children (0-15 years) infected with HIV	140,000
Current living orphans	510,000

Source: UNAIDS, 2005

Mozambique

Ireland is providing over €40 million to the Government of Mozambique under this Partnership and has become the single biggest bilateral donor to the health sector in the country. These additional resources and the technical support provided under the Partnership is enabling the Government of Mozambique to successfully introduce HIV treatment into its public health response to HIV/AIDS. Health workers are being trained in the delivery of HIV services; laboratory services needed for HIV testing are being improved; drug procurement and distribution is getting better and more people are getting access to the HIV services they so desperately need.

Under Government leadership and in partnership with other agencies, Ireland and the Clinton Foundation are contributing to Mozambique's achievement in reaching and in some cases exceeding its HIV related service targets.

At the end of 2005:

Over 20,000 people are on anti-retroviral treatment (on target and 58% are women)
38 sites are offering anti-retroviral drugs

83 health facilities are offering services to prevent the transmission of HIV from mother to child during delivery and **75,000 women** have accessed HIV counselling and testing services.

158 sites are offering voluntary HIV counselling and testing with **270,000 people** having been counselled

35,000 people are receiving home based care through 80 health units or organisations

Challenges

Great progress is being made. However, there are still tremendous challenges – less than 10% of those in need of HIV treatment are accessing it; only about 50% of mothers testing positive for HIV are receiving the necessary treatment to prevent transmission to their unborn child, and there is a huge unmet need to treat HIV positive children. Less than 3% of those currently accessing treatment are children. There is also a huge gap in the number of qualified health workers which is weakening the capacity of the public sector to respond to the HIV/AIDS crisis.

What next...

Based on the success of the partnership to date and the challenges being faced by Mozambique, the Irish Government is committed to continuing its partnership with the Clinton Foundation there. Over the next few years specific focus will be on expanding the availability of HIV services especially in rural areas and for children.

In addition, Ireland is set to expand the partnership with the Clinton Foundation to Lesotho. With one of the worst HIV prevalence rates in the world, HIV/AIDS is a tremendous barrier to development in Lesotho. The Government there is particularly keen to ensure that services are made available in the mountainous rural areas which to date are underserved and under resourced.

LESOTHO

Population	1,800,000
HIV Prevalence	23.2%
Adults (15-49 years) living with HIV	279,000
Women (15-49 years) living with HIV	150,000
Deaths due to AIDS	23,000
Children (0-15 years) infected with HIV Current living orphans	18,000
	97,000

Source: UNAIDS, 2005

Lesotho

The Irish Aid – Clinton Foundation partnership in Lesotho will focus on supporting the Ministry of Health to improve its drug procurement and management system; to increase the availability of anti-retroviral drugs; to recruit and train health workers; to strengthen laboratory services; and to ensure that HIV treatment is increasingly available for children.

Innovative partnerships such as the Irish Aid – Clinton Foundation one are needed to turn the tide of the global HIV/AIDS pandemic. For many countries like Mozambique and Lesotho such partnerships provide additional money, capacity and initiative to fight the challenge of one of the world’s worst pandemics. The Irish Government will continue to focus on addressing HIV/AIDS as key to poverty reduction and sustainable development.



Children’s orphange in Lesotho.