



## **PEPFAR and Orphans and Vulnerable Children: Saving Children, Investing in Our Future**

Over 16 million children worldwide are living without one or both parents due to AIDS. Millions more children are vulnerable because of chronically ill parents or the social and economic effects of living in high HIV prevalence communities. PEPFAR, the world's largest donor in responding to the needs of orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC) affected by HIV/AIDS, is committed to working with countries to provide the physical, emotional and social support that strengthen families and communities. These efforts benefited over 4 million children in 2011, in addition to the vast benefits for children of PEPFAR's prevention, treatment and care programs.

In July 2012, PEPFAR issued new guidance for its OVC programs, available at [www.PEPFAR.gov](http://www.PEPFAR.gov). PEPFAR prioritizes children and families through programs that seek to ensure that children affected by AIDS can develop to their full potential. Children are supported through the continuum of a response across their lifespan.

### **PEPFAR OVC programs:**

- Strengthen families as primary caregivers of children through economic initiatives and caregiver/parenting skills building
- Support capacity of communities to create protective and caring environments for children
- Build capacity of social service systems to protect and care for the most vulnerable
- Support life skills training, education, HIV prevention for children and youth

### **OVC programs complement other PEPFAR programs that benefit children by:**

- Preventing mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV
- Supporting pediatric treatment for HIV-positive children
- Providing treatment for adults to prevent orphaning of children
  - Approximately 4 million orphans averted through treatment programs alone
- Providing youth and adolescents with age-appropriate HIV prevention support as they proceed into adulthood

### **Key elements of PEPFAR's response:**

#### **Building community capacity for holistic, family-centered, child-focused care**

PEPFAR OVC programs support community-based groups and national organizations – including faith-based, traditional, or newly-formed – that meet the needs of orphans and vulnerable children and their families. The network of community-based groups supported through PEPFAR grew exponentially.

- In 2011, one-third of all prime partners for OVC grants were local organizations.
- In Ethiopia, PEPFAR supported a network of over 500 community-based organizations, creating capacity benefitting not only the affected children but all people in the community.

## Economic strengthening for families and children

- Programs train young people with life skills to prepare them for future employment that meets their own needs and those of their families.
- In Kenya and Tanzania, OVC household savings programs led to a 10% reduction in food insecurity at a cost of \$1.61 per beneficiary.
- In Rwanda, community-based mentoring programs for youth-headed households supported psychosocial health and connections to the larger community.

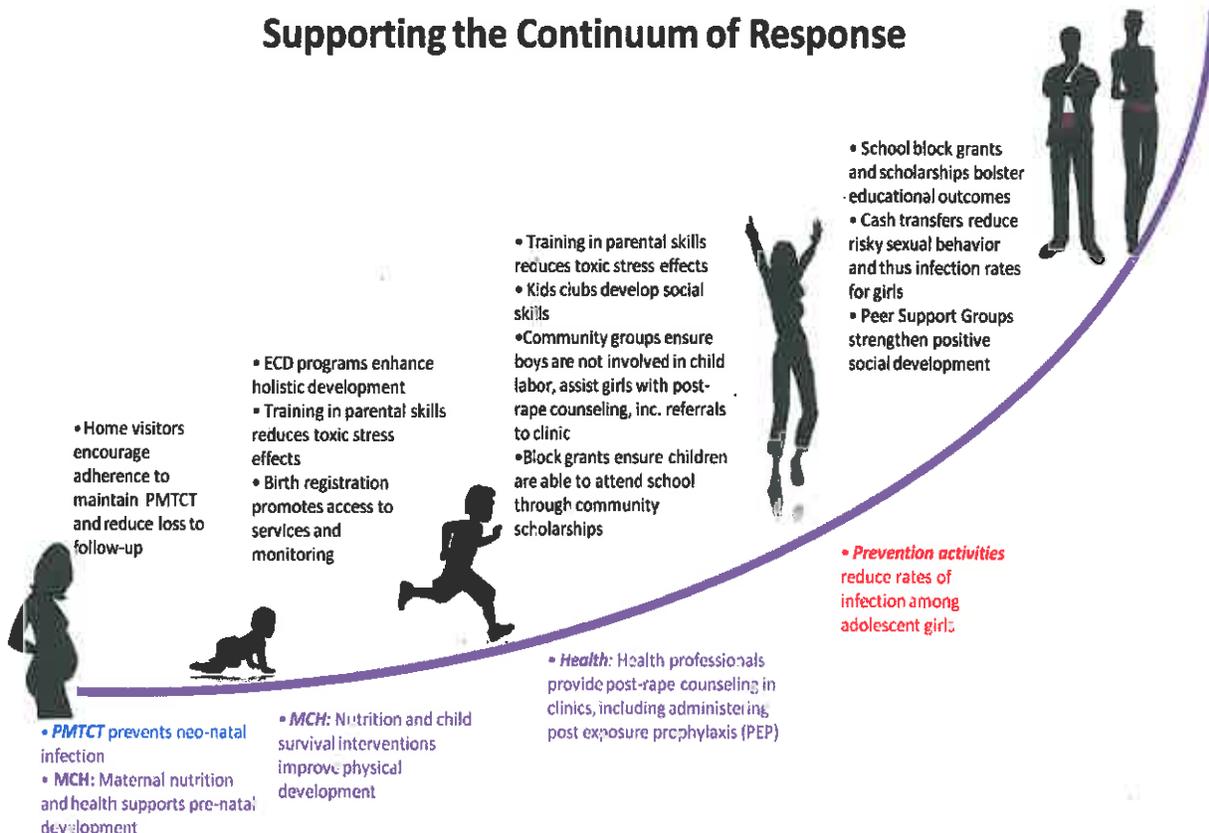
## Confronting gender-based violence (GBV) against girls

- PEPFAR addresses harmful gender norms, including working with boys, creating safe spaces for women and girls, and working with teachers to keep girls safe at school.
- Programs support post-GBV care in clinical facilities, including post-exposure prophylaxis to prevent HIV infection of girls exposed to the virus.
- **Together for Girls** – PEPFAR supports this public-private partnership to strengthen countries' capacity to protect girls from violence.

## Addressing HIV prevention needs of youth as they grow into adulthood

- PEPFAR works to help children stay in school, helping to reduce vulnerabilities to risky behaviors.
- Programs also support age-appropriate programs tailored to in-school and out-of-school youth.
- **HIV-Free Generation** – PEPFAR launched this public-private partnership to meet kids' prevention needs, tailored to their culture and local circumstances.
- **Shuga** – with PEPFAR support, this TV drama is coordinated with a youth-focused campaign.

## Supporting the Continuum of Response



## FACT SHEET

### United States Government Action Plan on Children in Adversity

The Action Plan on Children in Adversity is the first-ever whole-of-government strategic guidance for U.S. Government international assistance for children.

The Plan is grounded in evidence that shows a promising future belongs to those nations that invest wisely in their children, while failure to do so undermines social and economic progress. Child development is a cornerstone for all development, and it is central to U. S. development and diplomatic efforts. The Plan seeks to integrate internationally recognized, evidence-based good practices into all of its international assistance initiatives for the best interests of the child.

Efforts to assist vulnerable girls and boys in low- and middle-income countries have often focused on single vulnerability cohorts and categories – for example, children affected by HIV/AIDS, in emergencies, or in the worst forms of child labor, including those who have been trafficked. Although such efforts have produced substantial benefits, this diffused approach has resulted in a fragmented response. Coordinated, multifaceted action can help ensure that children in adversity benefit fully from policies and services.

#### *The architecture of U.S. Government international assistance to children*

U.S. international assistance to children is substantial and channeled through more than 30 offices in seven U.S. Government departments and agencies – the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Health and Human Services, and Labor, and State; the U.S. Agency for International Development, and Peace Corps – in more than 100 countries. Until now, there had been no overarching policy or guidance for U.S. international assistance for children. With its significant investments in international development, the technical expertise and research capabilities embedded within key agencies, and diplomatic outreach, the U.S. Government is well positioned to lead and mobilize around a sensible and strategic global agenda for children in adversity.

#### *Legislative mandate*

An interagency strategy is a requirement of Public Law 109-95: The Assistance for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children in Developing Countries Act of 2005, which was signed into law to promote a comprehensive, coordinated, and effective response on the part of the U.S. Government to the world's most vulnerable children. In accordance with the legislative mandate, an interagency coordination strategy was developed in 2006. However, interagency partners agreed that the strategy required revision given the number of U.S. government offices, departments and agencies involved in international assistance to vulnerable children that were not included in the 2006 strategy, which focused on PEPFAR programming for children affected by HIV/AIDS. The 2006 strategy lacked clarity with regard to overarching guiding principles, goals, objectives and outcome indicators.

#### *From Evidence to Action – Developing the Plan*

In 2011, U.S. government interagency partners actively began a process to establish whole-of-government guidance and strategy for children in adversity. The process was informed by a [U.S. Government Evidence Summit on Protecting Children Outside of Family Care](#), an interagency initiative under Public Law 109-95. A key result of the Summit was the commitment of ten senior U.S. government agency leaders to establish guiding principles and a U.S. government strategy for assistance

to these children – the very first of its kind. This commitment was published in [The Lancet](#). Summit participants, including leading researchers, practitioners and policy makers, worked together to review the evidence pertaining to children in adversity and summarized the findings in a special issue of [Child Abuse and Neglect: The International Journal](#). On the basis of these findings, the Action Plan was developed by an interagency team under the leadership of the U.S. Government Special Advisor for Children in Adversity and cleared by OMB.

### **Goal**

The goal of the U.S. Government Action Plan on Children in Adversity is to achieve a world in which all children grow up within protective family care and free from deprivation, exploitation, and danger.

### **Principal Objectives**

- Objective 1 *Build strong beginnings:* The U.S. Government will help ensure that children under five not only survive, but also thrive by supporting comprehensive programs that promote sound development of children through the integration of health, nutrition, and family support.
- Objective 2 *Put family care first:* U.S. Government assistance will support and enable families to care for their children, prevent unnecessary family-child separation, and promote appropriate, protective and permanent family care.
- Objective 3 *Protect children:* The U.S. Government will facilitate the efforts of national governments and partners to prevent, respond to, and protect children from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect.

### **Supporting Objectives**

- Objective 4 *Strengthen child welfare and protection systems:* The U.S. Government will support partners to build and strengthen holistic and integrated models to promote the best interests of the child.
- Objective 5 *Promote evidence-based policies and programs:* The U.S. Government will devote resources to building and maintaining a strong evidence base on which future activities to reach and assist the most vulnerable children can be effectively planned and implemented. This evidence base will assist in the cost-effective utilization of program funds as well as the monitoring and evaluation of program effectiveness and long-term impact on children.
- Objective 6 *Integrate this Plan within U.S. Government departments and agencies:* The U.S. Government will institutionalize and integrate the components of this Plan as reflected in its diplomatic, development, and humanitarian efforts overseas.

### **The Challenge**

The United States' sustained commitment through investments and partnerships has resulted in important initiatives that have increased the impact of foreign assistance in many key areas, including impressive gains in child survival. The Action Plan on Children in Adversity signals a strong commitment to providing the integrated assistance required to ensure that children not only survive, but thrive.

While the Action Plan on Children in Adversity applies to U.S. Government assistance globally, it also identifies a more targeted starting point for these efforts: to achieve three core outcomes in at least six priority countries over a span of five years. In these countries, through U.S. Government collaboration with other government, international, private, faith-based, and academic partners, the Plan calls for significant reductions in the number of:

1. Children not meeting age-appropriate growth and developmental milestones;
2. Children living outside of family care by placing them in appropriate and protective family care;  
and
3. Children who experience sexual violence or exploitation.

## **Peace Corps Community Care of Orphans and Vulnerable Children**

The Community Care of OVC: Peace Corps Volunteers will be able to engage OVCs, caregivers and their communities in holistic, family-focused child development activities that will support OVCs in all phases of their lives including early childhood, primary school age, and adolescence.

### **Where can Volunteers make a difference:**

- Education and Skills Training
- Psychosocial Support
- Nutrition and Health
- Child Protection
- Economic Strengthening

### **Peace Corps Key Elements**

- Family and community centered approach
- Support for children through the ages and stages of childhood into adulthood
- Focus on the strengths of family and community
- Responding to the needs of children by strengthening caregivers in community groups known as Core Groups
- Engaging groups through foundational activities
- Use of a supportive curriculum to work with adults and youth in the community.

We refer to the common activity that brings a group together as the **Foundational Activity** of the group. This activity is usually at the heart of why the group meets. It gives them purpose.

- Savings and Loans Groups
- Gardening
- Sports
- Music
- Dance

## **Supportive Curriculum for the Community Care of Orphans and Vulnerable Children**

### **➤ Adult Focused Sessions:**

#### **Economic Strengthening: Providing for a Strong Family**

*Themes: Reducing Economic Vulnerability of Families, Identify Low-Risk Ways to Provide For Your Family, Preventing Future Risk Exposure, Building Resilience*

#### **Psychosocial Care and Support: Positive Parenting Approach**

*Themes: Attachment, Emotional Responsiveness, Positive Discipline*

#### **Health and Nutrition: Keeping Your Child Healthy**

*Themes: Early Interventions and Development, Integration; From Clinic to Home; Child Focused Activities*

#### **Education: Helping Your Child Succeed in School**

*Themes: The Value of Girls Succeeding, Importance of Completion, Supporting Your Child in School and Out of School Activities*

### **➤ Youth Focused Sessions:**

#### **Economic Strengthening: Building a Strong Financial Future**

*Themes: Reducing Economic Vulnerability of Youth, Identify Low-Risk Ways to Provide For Yourself, Preventing Future Risk Exposure, Building Resilience*

#### **Psychosocial Care and Support**

*Themes: Positive Peer Support, Life Skills Promotion, Self protection from abuse*

#### **Staying Healthy**

*Themes: Nutrition & Health, Youth Sexual Reproductive Health, Support for Young Mothers*

#### **Education: Succeeding in School and the World of Work**

*Themes: Young Women Succeeding, Importance of Completion, Positive Out of School Activities*