

# INTERCONNECTIONS 21

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## **Activity 4: Social and economic impacts of HIV/AIDS**

**Purpose:** To enable students to see that HIV/AIDS not only affects individuals, but has a wide range of impacts on society as a whole.

### **Standards:**

Social Studies: NCSS Standards

VII: Production, Distribution and Consumption

IX: Global Connections

X: Civic Ideals and Practices

English Language Arts: NCTE Standards

1: Reading for perspective

4: Communication skills

8: Developing research skills

Visual Arts: CNAEA Content Standards:

3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas

6: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

### **Materials:**

Activity 4 Student Material: Social and Economic Impacts of HIV/AIDS

Art materials

### **Description:**

1. Distribute the handout “Social and Economic Impacts of HIV/AIDS”. Have students read the handout, and then form groups to do further research on each of the topics.
2. Groups can present their findings to the rest of the class. Discuss what information they found new or surprising.
3. How do the social and economic impacts of HIV/AIDS affect human rights? Use the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (see Activity 3) to analyze these impacts.
4. Have groups create a collage or poster that expresses the range of impacts that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is having worldwide.

## Activity 4 Student Material

### Social and Economic Impacts of HIV/AIDS

While HIV/AIDS can be devastating for individuals who become ill, the pandemic also has large-scale social and economic impacts in countries where rates of infection are high.

**Orphans:** By 2001, AIDS had killed one or both parents of 13.4 million children still under the age of 15. By 2010, the total number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS is expected to nearly double to 25 million. Children orphaned by AIDS are at risk of malnutrition, illness, abuse and sexual exploitation. Because they face stigma and discrimination, they may have difficulty getting education and social services.

Read more about AIDS orphans at

[http://www.unicef.org/publications/pub\\_factsheet\\_orphan\\_en.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/pub_factsheet_orphan_en.pdf)  
[http://www.un.org/ga/aids/ungassfactsheets/html/fsorphans\\_en.htm](http://www.un.org/ga/aids/ungassfactsheets/html/fsorphans_en.htm)

**Stress on family systems:** In many countries, grandparents who may be in poor health themselves are left to care for orphans. Or, the oldest child in a family may assume responsibility for looking after younger siblings. Today, in many African countries 20 to 25 per cent of all households are fostering orphans. When a family member is ill with AIDS, other family members may have to care for them, and thus are unable to earn an income.

Read more about stress on families at

<http://www.who.int/3by5/mediacentre/sasa/en/index.html>

**Food security:** When farmers become ill with AIDS, they may be too weak to work. When they grow less food, their families are more likely to suffer from hunger and low incomes. And the family's time, labor and money can all be spent on health care. In countries where HIV/AIDS is widespread, less crop production can affect the economy of the country as a whole.

Read more about AIDS and food security at:

<http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol17no1/171aids.htm>  
<http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2003/issue4/0403p62.asp>

**Health services:** AIDS places great demands on health services in the worst-affected countries, whose public health systems may be over-stretched and under-funded. According to UNAIDS, in 1997 public health spending on AIDS alone exceeded 2 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in seven of 16 African countries sampled -- countries whose health expenditure for all diseases accounts for 3 to 5 per cent of GDP. As deaths among health care workers rise, fewer people are left to care for those who are ill.

Read more about the impact of AIDS on health services at <http://www.thebody.com/unaid/report/impacts.html>

**Education:** Education is essential to development. But when teachers are ill with AIDS, the quality of their work diminishes. And deaths among teachers can leave fewer teachers to deal with larger classes; in some cases, schools have been forced to close. For children whose families are affected by HIV/AIDS, there may be less money for school fees, leading children to drop out.

Read more about the impact of AIDS on education at <http://www.thebody.com/unaid/report/impacts.html>

**Development:** Deaths due to AIDS are having a negative impact on economic growth. The productivity of workers who are ill is reduced, and companies face higher costs for insurance, training and absenteeism. The UN estimates that the annual per capita growth in half the countries of sub-Saharan Africa is falling by 0.5-1.2% as a direct result of AIDS. By 2010, per capita GDP in some of the hardest hit countries may drop by 8% and per capita consumption may fall even farther. And the number of people living in poverty is increasing.

Read more about AIDS and development at [http://www.un.org/ga/aids/ungassfactsheets/html/fsdevelopment\\_en.htm](http://www.un.org/ga/aids/ungassfactsheets/html/fsdevelopment_en.htm)