



**PEPFAR**  
U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

*PEPFAR supports Objective 2 (Putting Family Care First) of the [Action Plan for Children in Adversity](#) (APCA) through programs that strengthen families and communities.*

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## PEPFAR Orphans and Vulnerable Children: Putting Family Care First – Strengthening Families and Communities

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief's (PEPFAR) programs work to put family care first by **preventing** separation and **keeping** children in families, and where necessary, reintegrating children into family care. This is achieved by keeping parents alive and strengthening their ability to care for their children. PEPFAR supports Objective 2 of the [Action Plan for Children in Adversity](#) (APCA) through programs that "Strengthen Families and Communities." The examples below describe PEPFAR-supported interventions identified by the APCA as contributing to "Putting Family Care First".

### Increasing Family Income-Generation Potential

- **Household economic strengthening** prevents the separation of children from families due to the economic burden of HIV. PEPFAR OVC programs have supported 10,000 savings groups in 15 countries. As a result, 720,000 children affected by AIDS are living in families with improved economic stability.

### Supporting Access to Cash Transfers

- PEPFAR supports community volunteers and social workers to **assist millions of vulnerable children** by linking their families to cash transfers and other support available through national social protection programs.
- Cash transfers may be the only income for elderly or marginalized caregivers and make a real difference.

### Linking Families to Treatment

- PEPFAR programs keep parents alive and productive through provision of treatment and other HIV-related health services, **preventing an estimated 1.6 million children from becoming orphans.**

### Investing in Primary Education

- Education investments have resulted in strengthened curriculums, safer schools—especially for girls—and expanded social safety nets for adolescents.
- Access to education mitigates the risk of HIV infection, especially for adolescent girls who are at considerably higher risk of infection than their male counterparts.

*A PEPFAR OVC program in **Zimbabwe** supports school access for more than 51,000 children affected by AIDS and has facilitated school health assessments for 222,000 students to identify those with health concerns, and refer students at risk of HIV for testing.*

## Educating Caregivers about Protective Care

- PEPFAR has integrated parent training and support activities into a range of interventions, including Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs and savings groups. Together, these interventions help to promote healthy attachment to a caregiver and improve child-caregiver relationships, as well as improve the ability of caregivers to meet the financial costs and build skills necessary for positive parenthood.
- PEPFAR-supported projects in **Zimbabwe, Kenya, Malawi and South Africa**, have established thousands of preschool classes for young children. These new classes, like other ECD interventions, such as home visits to new mothers, provide additional opportunities to improve the cognitive and physical development of children as well as improve parenting skills and the psychosocial well-being among caregivers.

## The Power of A Grandmother's Love

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GoGo<sup>i</sup> is an old woman with a young girl's bright smile. She lives in a small, tin-roofed, two room house in Soweto, with eight of her grandchildren. When her first daughter died of HIV, she took in her three young children, the oldest of whom was named Precious. At the time, Precious was 14. She was a clever girl who always did well in school and loved learning. When her mother became sick, Precious was forced to drop out of school to take care of her younger siblings and mother. And when her mother died, Precious moved in with her GoGo, who had no income and no means to support Precious to continue her education. Just as Precious began to lose hope, Grace walked into their lives. Grace is a Child and Youth Care Worker (CYCW) with the PEPFAR- supported Isibindi project.

CYCWs are para-social workers that support orphaned and vulnerable children whose lives have been turned upside down by HIV/AIDS. Grace helped Precious to return to school and supported all of GoGo's grandchildren to be tested for HIV. When GoGo's younger daughter died and she took in her three children as well, Grace helped ensure they were also tested as well. And when tests indicated that none of the children were HIV-positive, GoGo and Grace were relieved, but they knew that they would have to continue to protect themselves and support these children in order to maintain healthy lives. Thanks to help from Grace, GoGo was able to complete an application and gain access to a

government grant to cover basic expenses. Grace still supports the family and visits with them twice a week. She makes sure the children are attending school and doing well psychologically, and helps GoGo to meet their other needs. GoGo still has eight children in her care, but she does not seem burdened or discouraged. She looks to the future with hope. When complimented on the care that she provides to her grandchildren, GoGo responds "Of course I do this work. They are my children. No one can hold them like I can".

<sup>i</sup> GoGo means Grandmother in most South African languages