# 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. 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 PEFPAR 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 prevention HIV infection of girls exposed to the virus.

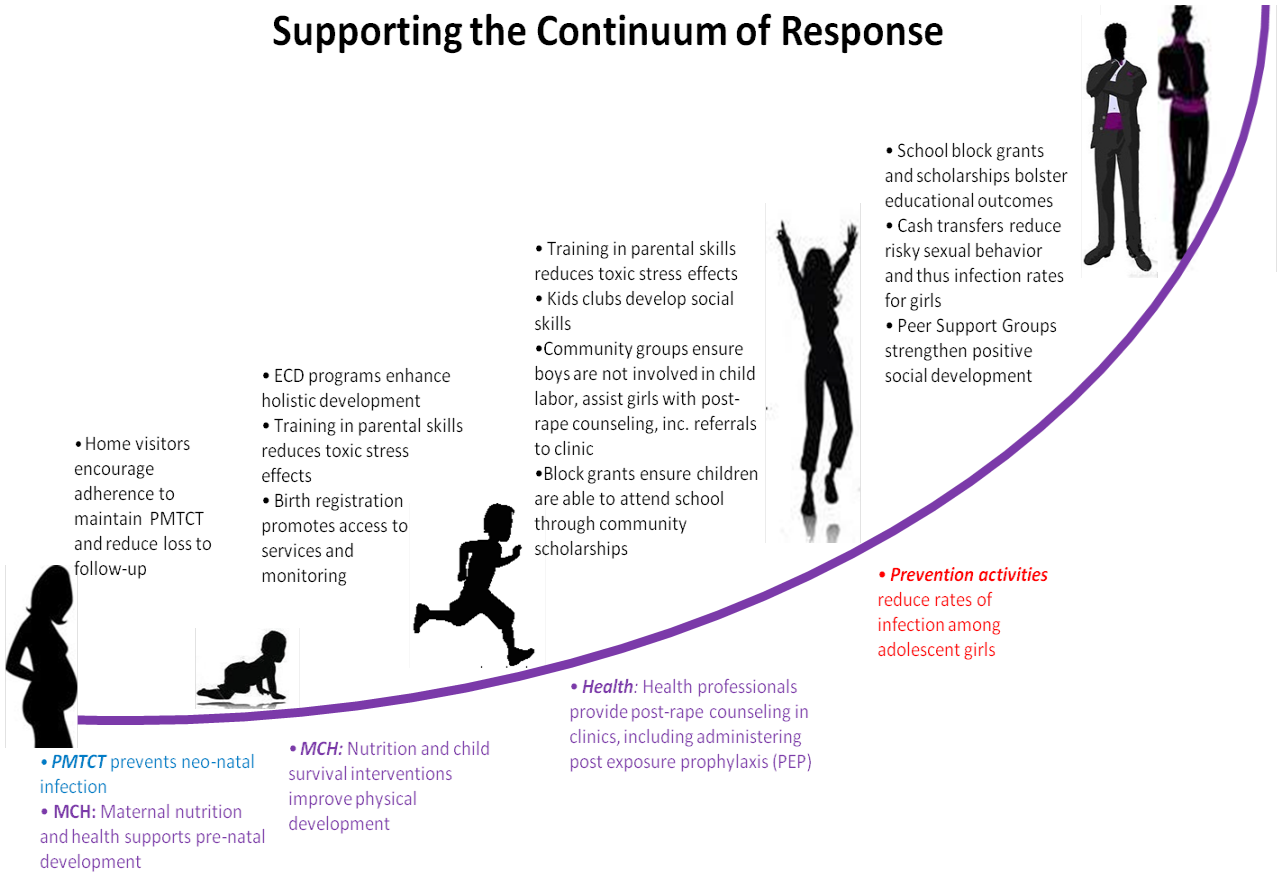
•***Together for Girls*** – PEPFAR supports this public-private partnership to strengthen countries' capacity to protect girls from violence.

**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