

**Short report on the economic and social impact of HIV/AIDS on Botswana  
by Marie Donovan, i2P Youth Ambassador**

I wanted to tackle this question by first providing a few figures to introduce the vastness of this issue; secondly, to look at what its social impact has been; third, what its economic impact has been, and lastly, to become informed about what has and is being done to combat this issue.

Firstly, in 2006, it was estimated that the 24 percent of adults in Botswana were infected with the virus<sup>1</sup>, putting it as the second most infected country in the world. This is a very grave percentage to consider; imagine, the reality of nearly a quarter of the country's adults infected with the disease! The president put this issue in true and painful words in a speech to the UN in 2001, saying ""We are threatened with extinction. People are dying in chillingly high numbers. It is a crisis of the first magnitude."<sup>2</sup> Since 1987 the government of Botswana has been attempting to control the outbreak through blood testing, etc..., but it was in 1997 that it really expanded its efforts along with various aid groups to eventually include giving out the antiretroviral drugs, education on the disease and how to prevent it, and more.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, we can consider the social impact. One of the most important societal results, so to speak, has been the dramatic lowering of life expectancy from 65 to 35.<sup>4</sup> Another is the immense strain upon families to pay for the rising costs of healthcare. A third is substantial loss of manpower in the workforce; the family members are not only strained in trying to pay those medical bills, but also there are also fewer of them to help work to pay for those bills. In terms of education, not only are there fewer teachers but also fewer children enrolled in school, as the latter are forced to drop out to help pay the bills, etc.. Possibly the most crushing effect is the rise in the rate of orphaned children; the United Nations Development Program estimates that more than 20% of children will be orphaned by 2020. Its worth noting that older members of these families try to combat this issue by taking the children in, etc... but this is, unsurprisingly, turning out to be an unsustainable method.

Thirdly, here are some of the economic effects of HIV/AIDS, all of which very much go hand in hand with the societal ones. Economic development spending was cut by 10% in part because of the rise in healthcare spending as a result of the virus. Again, when the workforce is decimated, it becomes much more difficult for the economic output to improve; for example, it's estimated that the agricultural workforce might decrease by as much as 20% by 2020.<sup>5</sup>

Lastly, while in Botswana, I will investigate what has been done and what is being done to combat this issue.

References

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Botswana> in that article - ^ Kallings LO (2008). "The first postmodern pandemic: 25 years of HIV/AIDS". J Intern Med 263 (3): 218–43. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2796.2007.01910.x. PMID 18205765.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Botswana>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.botswanamission.org/aids.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.avert.org/aids-botswana.htm#contentTable0>

<sup>4</sup> ^ Kallings LO (2008). "The first postmodern pandemic: 25 years of HIV/AIDS". J Intern Med 263 (3): 218–43. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2796.2007.01910.x. PMID 18205765.

<sup>5</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HIV/AIDS\\_in\\_Botswana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HIV/AIDS_in_Botswana)

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HIV/AIDS\\_in\\_Botswana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HIV/AIDS_in_Botswana) in that article: "2008 Country Profile: Botswana". U.S. State Department (2008).

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