

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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World Relief Remains Resilient in Fight Against HIV/AIDS

690,000 people died from HIV-related causes in 2019, reminding the world that more work needs to be done

BALTIMORE – This World AIDS Day, World Relief renews its commitment to eradicate HIV/AIDS. At the end of 2019 there were an estimated [38 million](#) people living with HIV, and HIV continues to be a major global health issue. This year’s theme is “Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Resilience and Impact.”

World Relief has worked in HIV/AIDS prevention and care for more than 25 years, starting in Malawi and Swaziland. In the years following the genocide in Rwanda, the HIV prevalence rate was estimated at 13% of the population. World Relief saw a critical need to work with the government, communities, and churches to raise awareness, create support groups, establish home care for people infected, and improve care for orphans. World Relief Rwanda’s HIV/AIDS programs reached over one million people during this critical period.

“Ending a global health crisis takes commitment and resilience from generation to generation,” said **Scott Arbeiter, president of World Relief**. “So much of what we do is educational – from preventative messaging to educating the person with the infection to guiding the local community who may have stigmas and misunderstanding about HIV/AIDS. World Relief provides full and complete information to youth about sex and HIV risk, enabling them to make better choices for their lives. While progress has been made, we remain at great risk of a resurgence beyond the current 38 million living with the disease.”

World Relief addresses the issue in partnership with the local churches through strengthening family relationships that enhance marital faithfulness and the value of women, advocating for testing and adherence to treatment, and encouraging family economic growth. World Relief especially focuses on East and Southern Africa, where as of 2019, [20.7 million](#) people lived with HIV, making it the region most affected by HIV in the world. In 2020, as part of the President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief’s (PEPFAR) *Faith and Community Initiative*, World Relief launched the new [SCOPE HIV](#), in Malawi to address gender as both a driver and a barrier in reaching the last mile with HIV care and treatment, and preventing new HIV infections by reducing sexual and gender-based violence.

“HIV is still one of the leading causes of death in developing countries and is an issue that takes dedication and collaboration across organizations and communities,” said **Tim Breene, CEO of World Relief**. “According to the World Health Organization, 690,000 people died from HIV-related causes in 2019, and 1.7 million people were newly infected, largely due to gaps in HIV/AIDS service. This is roughly half as many deaths as the world experienced from COVID-19 in the first eleven months of 2020. HIV/AIDS is a huge crisis globally that has been going on year after year for decades, without a vaccine. This is why it is critical for organizations and nations to not give up on their efforts and to continue making HIV/AIDS a top priority.”

Research has shown that faith-based organizations have lowered the barriers of access to health services

and have helped those infected not only get the treatment they need but maintain access to it.

For more information about World Relief's HIV/AIDS prevention work, other projects and how you can help, visit <https://worldrelief.org/>

About World Relief

World Relief is a global Christian humanitarian organization that brings sustainable solutions to the world's greatest problems – disasters, extreme poverty, violence, oppression, and mass displacement. For over 75 years, we've partnered with churches and community leaders in the U.S. and abroad to bring hope, healing and transformation to the most vulnerable.

Learn more at worldrelief.org.