

## AIDS - a Lesson for Life

### Schools in Northern Ireland are to be involved in a unique AIDS education and awareness programme.

Schools across Northern Ireland are to participate in a unique educational campaign on HIV and children. The Global Movement for Children's Lesson for Life will allow pupils to take charge of their learning and to deliver lessons based on their own research and understanding of the virus.

They will also be able to share those experiences with their classmates, teachers, community leaders and politicians. Last year, 64 countries, including over 10,000 children in Northern Ireland, were involved in the campaign.

Lesson for Life is designed to raise awareness of the impact of HIV and AIDS on children. It also aims to inspire children, young people and adults to take action to protect and care for children and young people throughout the world whose lives are affected by HIV.

In Northern Ireland, the campaign is co-coordinated by Save the Children. Other members of the global coalition include Oxfam GB, World Vision, UNICEF and Plan International.

The recent International AIDS Conference held in Toronto, Canada was attended by 28,000 delegates and journalists. Included among the keynote speakers were former US President, Bill Clinton and the actor Richard Gere.

Over 1,000 young people from around the world also attended the event. The organisers of Lesson for Life believe that young people in Northern Ireland can make a difference too.

Stuart Kirk, an education and training officer at the HIV Support Centre in Northern Ireland says, "We live in a much more sexualised society, which increases the risk of being exposed to sexually transmitted infection (STI). We need to normalise how we talk about sex because if you're able to talk about sex then you're able to talk about HIV".

The Microsoft billionaire Bill Gates who was also in attendance in Toronto said, "Education does not on its own lead to prevention of the spread of this pandemic as much as we'd like it to but it's the first step".

### About this article

This article first appeared in the [Belfast Telegraph](#) and was written by Headliners members Emmet Barr, 17, Lyra McKee, 17, and Ciaran McFarlane, 16.

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