

BRAZIL

According to Brazilian government statistics, in 2004, some 600,000 people were living with HIV in Brazil and, in 2003, over 11,000 people died of AIDS-related illnesses.

- Brazil has around 180 million inhabitants and with HIV prevalence at around 0.7%, Brazil accounts for more than one third of the total number of people living with HIV in Latin America.
- Brazil's response to AIDS has benefited from consistently strong political support from the highest level of government, which has led to regulatory policies as well as a very clear and permanent allocation of financial resources at national, state and local levels.
- Brazil's epidemic at first affected mainly men who have sex with men and then injecting drug users. However, the epidemic has grown more heterogeneous and heterosexual transmission is now responsible for a growing share of HIV infections, with women now accounting for 36% of the total number of people living with HIV in Brazil.
- Injecting drug use is a major factor in Brazil's epidemic. In some areas, injecting drug users constitute at least half of AIDS cases. However, harm reduction programmes in some cities have been associated with steep drops in HIV prevalence among injecting drug users in recent years—notably in Salvador where prevalence fell from 50% in 1996 to 7% in 2001.
- Brazil is the first developing country to achieve universal access to HIV treatment via its national health system. Currently more than 150,000 people have access to free treatment provided through government financing. A crucial factor in this achievement has been the capacity of the country to produce its own HIV medicines in public, as well as private, pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities.
- As a result, the life expectancy of AIDS patients has increased dramatically. A recent study calculated that median survival was only five months for cases diagnosed in the 1980's whereas for those cases diagnosed in 1996 the median survival was nearly five years.
- AIDS NGOs have played an essential role in advocacy and policy development, as well as in the implementation of key activities. A highly qualified technical and administrative structure is established in the Ministry of Health to manage the AIDS programme and coordinate all multisectoral activities involving the Federal Government structure, states and municipalities. A very strong and active National Business Council on AIDS has been in place since 1998.

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