

Deutsche AIDS-Stiftung (German AIDS Foundation) (DAS) is the largest AIDS relief organisation in Germany that provides material support to persons living with AIDS.

It was founded in 1987 by the Protestant pastor Rainer Jarchow, the German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia, the Association of Private Health Insurers, the German Red Cross and Daimler AG for people with HIV/AIDS. Additional endowments were then made by the Federal Republic of Germany, the remaining federal states and numerous private individuals and enterprises.

How the German AIDS Foundation helps

For 25 years now, the foundation has been helping needy people with HIV and AIDS in Germany with individual assistance and support for projects, such as assisted living, excursions for people with AIDS and training and education projects. The foundation also supports many assistance and prevention projects, especially for migrants. In 74,000 instances since its founding in 1987, it has directly helped projects and needy persons living with AIDS to the total amount of EUR 36 million. Since 2000, the foundation has promoted some model pilot aid projects, such as for AIDS orphans, youth, and mothers and their children, above all in southern Africa. One example is the DREAM programme in Mozambique, where DAS's partner, the ecumenical community of Sant'Egidio, provides care for pregnant HIV-positive women. In health centres, the mothers receive combined therapy to suppress the virus during pregnancy and breastfeeding. This can reduce the risk of mother-child transmission to less than two per cent. Without the therapy, the risk of infection is approximately 40 per cent.

In South Africa, the project partner HOPE Capetown Association trains female health workers, among others, who support families living with AIDS in Cape Town townships. They give advice, for example, on how the family can prepare for a positive test result. This way, they prevent shock to the other family members and possible exclusion of the infected persons.

Speeding up AIDS vaccine research

Since 2000, the German AIDS Foundation has been pressing to speed up the development of AIDS vaccines, calling on the German Government for greater financial support. From its own funds, the German AIDS Foundation has co-financed an initial trial vaccine in Germany and has promoted individual research projects. It cooperates with the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) in this area.

Lobbying for people living with AIDS

Aside from direct financial assistance, the integration of HIV-positive people into society is a major aim of the German AIDS Foundation. By publicising the AIDS issue, informing, educating and promoting discussion among AIDS organisations, political leaders, the public administration, the media, the scientific community and businesses and industry, Deutsche AIDS-Stiftung helps people living with AIDS to gain greater social acceptance.

Helping with fund-raising events

The numerous foundation fund-raising events, including art auctions and especially the opera galas in Berlin, Düsseldorf and Cologne, not only enable it to provide long-term support for numerous aid projects, thanks to the large proceeds, but also to draw attention to the problems of people living with AIDS through the high-profile media coverage. Such persons often do not suffer from the physical impairments caused by the disease alone but also from material deprivation and exclusion.

Media prize of the German AIDS Foundation

The foundation has awarded a media prize for excellence in reporting on HIV/AIDS since 1987. Thanks to the award, the quality of reporting on HIV/AIDS in Germany has improved over the last 25 years.

Celebrities support HIV-positive people

At many events, the foundation is supported by celebrities from show business, film, art, politics or industry. In addition to Hape Kerkeling, one of the most popular German entertainers, Dr Theo Zwanziger, former President of the German Football Association, is active on behalf of the German

AIDS Foundation. Celebrities such as the former Federal Health Minister and ex-President of the German Parliament, Professor Rita Süssmuth, Federal Foreign Minister Dr Guido Westerwelle and the actresses Hannelore Elsner and Christiane Paul also support the work of the foundation.

The German AIDS Foundation depends on donations

The German AIDS Foundation finances by far the largest part its work with proceeds from fund-raising events and donations. Especially for long-term projects, the foundation requires continuous donations to ensure sustainable support. Only with permanent support from generous donors, enterprises, volunteers and sponsors can the foundation continue its work to help AIDS victims.

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