

Botswana: Taking Action for Sustainable Development



Village Development Committee member speaking at the national Knowledge Fair event led by the community leadership, highlighting that CATCH has helped improve the Sustainable Development Goals. © UNAIDS Botswana

What are the bold actions being taken by the Government to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Botswana?

Efforts to end the AIDS epidemic and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are closely linked and can lead to a wider, people-centred social transformation.

In Botswana, the “Communities Acting Together to Control HIV (CATCH)” approach has been implemented since June 2015, aiming to invest in communities to lead the AIDS response in the South-East District of the country. Led by the Government of Botswana, collective efforts are being made by national stakeholders with the support of UNAIDS and USAID. Civil society partners—FHI360, Humana

People to People and The Constellation—are playing a key role to implement the approach at the community level. CATCH engages tribal leaders to drive their community members to receive the appropriate medical services on HIV and AIDS, in addition to general health checkups and tuberculosis (TB) screening and referrals.

The approach also provides an important social platform for communities. Community members discuss and take action on a variety of topics beyond HIV infections and AIDS, including drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancies, youth

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Leadership for the AIDS response is crucial. This includes community and traditional leaders, which the CATCH community-based HIV prevention approach in Botswana demonstrates perfectly.

Dorcas Makgato, Minister of Health and Wellness, Botswana

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We plan our activities and make individual efforts to willingly contribute and help those in need... Something that was not there before.

Community Member of South East District on CATCH

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CATCH recognized the role of the Dikgosi (tribal chief) as a pillar of community life, it strengthens the unity of community and goes also beyond HIV, hence acting as a cornerstone for achieving the SDGs.

Kgosi Kgolo Ya Batlokwa Kgosi Puso Gaborone (Paramount Chief and Chair of House of Chiefs)



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Community members at the Ward level sitting together to establish their common development goals for their village. © Humana People to People



The Sefhoke community in Tlokweg village, Botswana, celebrating their 'Community Dashboard' which shows their joint development goals. © UNAIDS Botswana

empowerment, crime prevention and gender-based violence. Also, by undertaking a participatory assessment of needs for a community, which lays a foundation for identifying a community action plan, they come to understand what kind of collective efforts are needed for solving the challenges they face.

The Government values the benefit of the CATCH approach and has decided to expand the operations in three more districts, Jwaneng, Chobe and Bobirwa.

Why do the above actions matter to the people in Botswana?

It is estimated that in 2015, approximately 350,000 people are living with HIV and approximately 3,200 people died of AIDS in the

country. HIV infection and AIDS are one of the most urgent health issues for the country to tackle.

[The 2016 UN Political Declaration on Ending AIDS](#), in line with the SDGs, clearly stated the need on the fast-track to accelerate the response against HIV and end the AIDS epidemic by 2030. In the Declaration, there are concrete targets to reduce new HIV infections, scale up and ensure access to HIV treatment and eliminate prejudice, stigma or discrimination of any kind for people accessing these services. Botswana as a UN Member State stays committed to achieving those goals and targets.

To this end, CATCH can be a vehicle to ensure that more people in Botswana will have access to both HIV prevention

and treatment services. It is also necessary to address social norms that prevent people from accessing services.

What SDGs have been particularly advanced?

The CATCH approach focuses on Goal 1 on Poverty, Goal 3 on Health, Goal 5 on Gender Equality, Goal 10 on equality, Goal 16 on Peace and Security and Goal 17 on Partnerships. With HIV as a cross-cutting area, there is a need to have close interlinkage with various SDGs to achieve ending AIDS by 2030.



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