

# KAISER PUBLIC OPINION SPOTLIGHT

*Kaiser Public Opinion Spotlights provide in-depth analysis of public opinion on a variety of health care and health policy topics. Each Spotlight uses public opinion data from Kaiser surveys and other sources to examine current views and trends.*

*Updated: August 2006*

## **Public Opinion on the Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic**

Between 2000 and 2006, around one-third of the public has named HIV/AIDS as the most urgent health problem facing the world, and currently HIV/AIDS (34%) ranks a close second to cancer (36%) as the health problem cited as most urgent by the largest share of Americans. African Americans and Latinos are more likely than whites to say the HIV/AIDS is the world's most urgent health problem.

Consistently, a slightly higher share of the public has said that the world is "losing ground" than that the world is "making progress" when it comes to the HIV epidemic. In 2006, large majorities also recognize that most people in developing countries do not have access to medication for HIV (92%) or to needed prevention services (81%).

Americans say that more could be done by all sectors to fight the global epidemic; majorities say that international groups, leaders, and governments are not doing enough today. In 2006, more than half (56%) say the U.S. is spending too little to address HIV/AIDS in developing countries.

Over the past few years, there appears to be an increased willingness to direct American resources to fighting the global HIV epidemic. In 2006, more than half (56%) of the public said the U.S. is now spending too little to deal with HIV/AIDS in developing countries, up from 31% in 2002. In addition, compared with 2002, more Americans in 2006 agree that the U.S. is a global leader and has a responsibility to spend more to fight HIV/AIDS in developing countries, while fewer agree that the U.S. should address problems at home first rather than spending more money to deal with HIV/AIDS in developing countries.

Americans also recognize the importance of prevention in the global effort to fight HIV/AIDS. A majority (54%) say that spending for prevention and education should be the top priority for the U.S. government's financial help to fight AIDS in developing countries, and six in ten (60%) believe that spending more money on HIV prevention in developing countries will lead to meaningful progress in slowing the epidemic.

For more information about public opinion on HIV/AIDS, see:

Attitudes About Stigma and Discrimination Related to HIV/AIDS  
<http://www.kff.org/spotlight/hivstigma/index.cfm>

Public Opinion on the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the United States  
<http://www.kff.org/spotlight/hivus/index.cfm>

The Public's Experiences with and Attitudes about HIV Testing  
<http://www.kff.org/spotlight/hivtest/index.cfm>

The Public's Knowledge and Perceptions About HIV/AIDS  
<http://www.kff.org/spotlight/hiv/index.cfm>

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## 1. Most Urgent Health Problem Facing the World

Between 2000 and 2006, around one-third of the public has named HIV/AIDS as the most urgent health problem facing the world. In 2000, HIV/AIDS ranked first among the health problems the public thought were most urgent for the world, however since 2002 HIV/AIDS has ranked a close second behind cancer.

### Most Urgent Health Problem Facing the World

What do you think is the most urgent health problem facing the world today?\*

	Mar-06	Mar-04	Jun-02	Aug-00
Cancer	36	41	35	35
AIDS or HIV	34	36	33	37
Heart Disease	18	19	9	12
Diabetes	10	8	5	4
Lack of good nutrition/Junk foods/Obesity	9	13	n/a	n/a
Cost of health care	8	8	10	7
Hunger/Malnutrition	7	4	11	6
Health insurance/The uninsured	6	6	8	5
Access to health care	6	4	6	3
Avian/Bird flu	5	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>Ranking of HIV/AIDS:</i>	2	2	2	1

\* Open-ended question; top 10 responses shown. Adds up to more than 100% because of multiple responses.

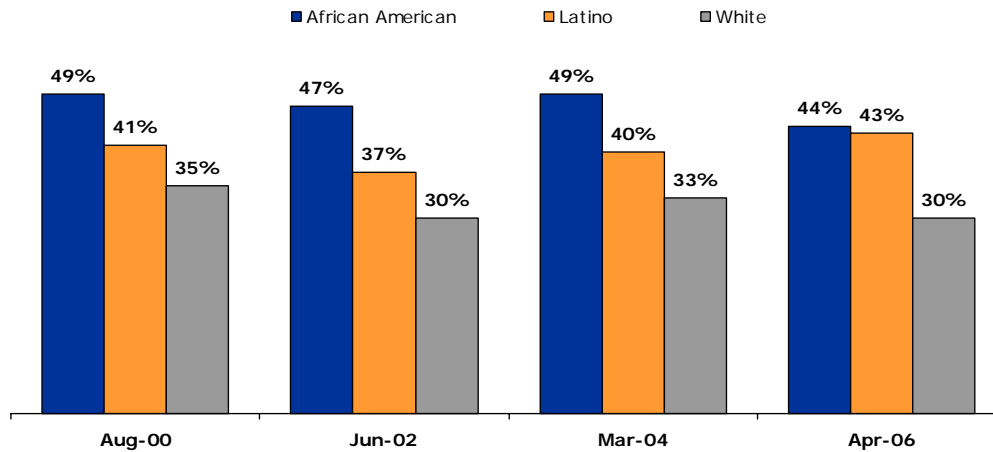
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation surveys

## 2. Most Urgent Health Problem Facing the World by Race/Ethnicity

African Americans and Latinos are more likely than Whites to name HIV as an urgent health problem. In 2006, more than four in ten African Americans (44%) and Latinos (43%), compared with three in ten Whites (30%), say HIV/AIDS is the most urgent health problem facing the world.

### Most Urgent Health Problem Facing the World by Race/Ethnicity

Percent who name HIV/AIDS as the most urgent health problem facing the world...



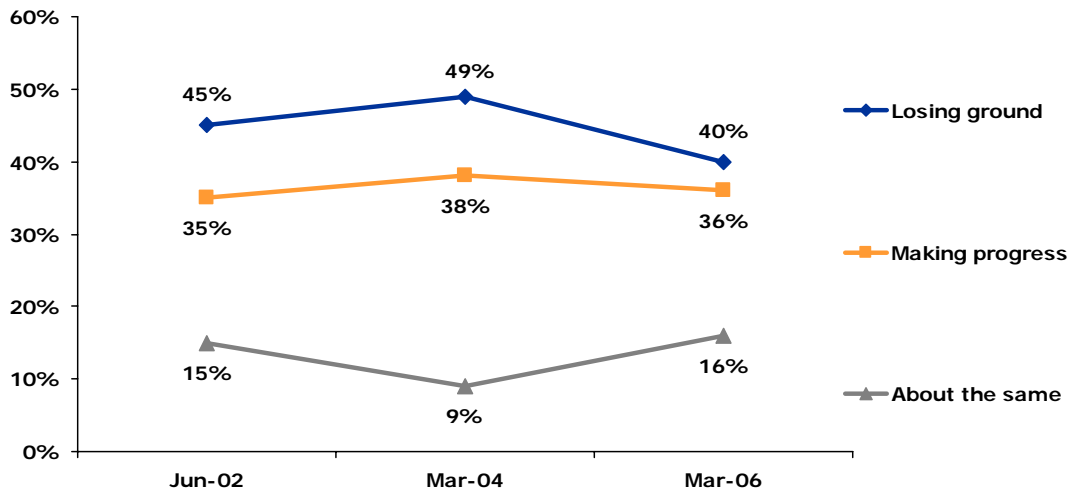
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation surveys

### 3. Perceived Progress on the Global Epidemic

The public is somewhat divided on whether the world is “making progress” or “losing ground” on the problem of HIV. Consistently since 2002, a slightly higher share has said the world is “losing ground” than “making progress.” In 2006, four in ten (40%) say the world is losing ground against HIV/AIDS, down slightly from 2004 when about half of the public felt the world was losing ground.

#### Trend in Perceptions of World’s Progress on HIV/AIDS

Thinking about the way the problem of HIV/AIDS affects the world today, do you think the problem is about the same as it has been, that the world today is making progress in this area, or that the world today is losing ground?



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation surveys

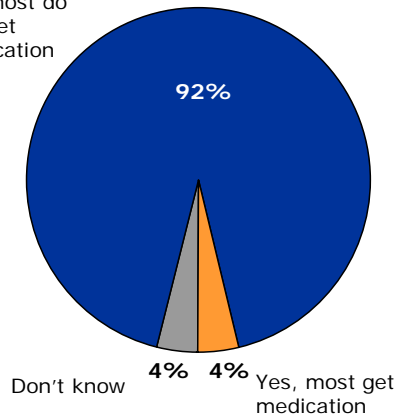
#### 4. Perceptions of Access to HIV Prevention and Treatment in Developing Countries

Most Americans are aware that people in developing countries often go without HIV treatment and prevention services. Large majorities of the public say that most people in developing countries who need HIV treatment do NOT get the medication they need (91%), and that most people who are at high-risk for HIV in developing countries do NOT have access to prevention services such as education, testing and counseling (81%).

##### Perceptions of Access to HIV Prevention and Treatment in Developing Countries

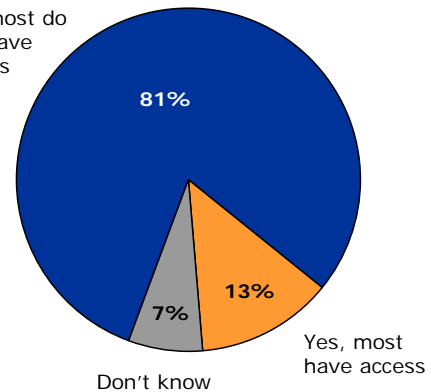
Do you think that most people in developing countries who need medication for HIV actually get that medication, or do you think that most of them do NOT get the medication they need?

No, most do not get medication



Do you think that most people at high risk for HIV in developing countries have access to needed prevention services, such as HIV education, testing, and counseling, or not?

No, most do not have access



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

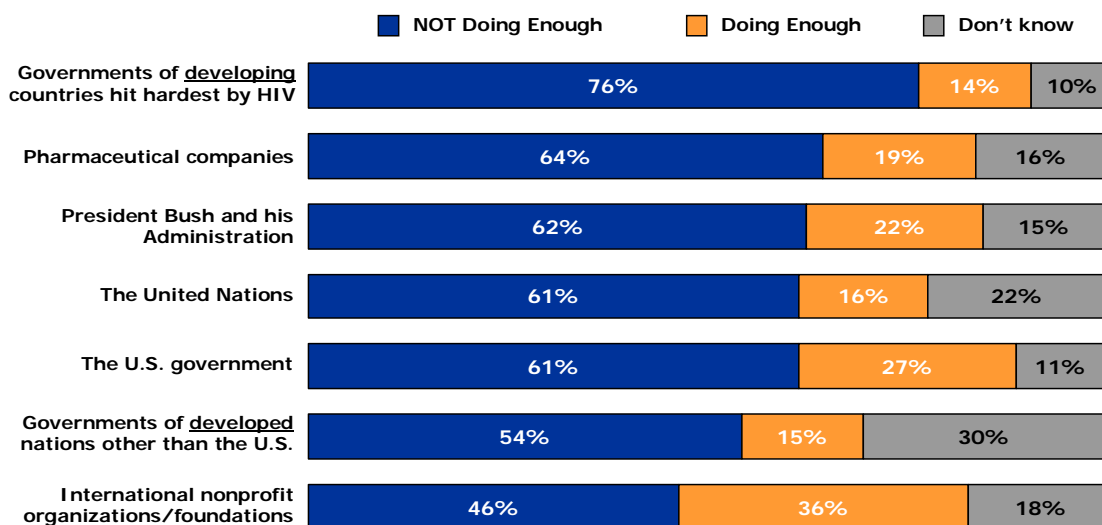
## 5. Who is Doing Enough?

When asked about different group's efforts to solve the problem of AIDS in developing countries, majorities of Americans feel that many groups are NOT doing enough – from governments of the hardest hit countries, to pharmaceutical companies, to the president and the United Nations.

Governments of developing countries top the list of groups the public believes are not doing enough – more than three-quarters (76%) of Americans say they are not doing enough to solve the problem of AIDS in their countries. At the other end, more than one-third (36%) say that international nonprofit organizations and foundations are doing enough, though 46% still say they are doing enough to solve the problem of HIV/AIDS in developing countries.

### Who is Doing Enough?

When it comes to the problem of AIDS in developing countries, would you say the following are doing enough to help solve the problem of AIDS in developing countries, or are they not doing enough?



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

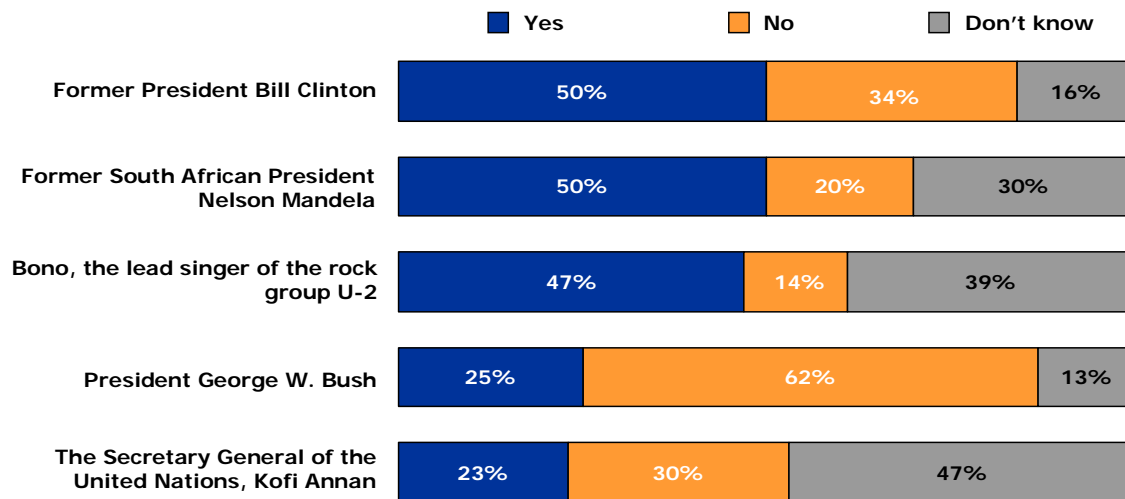
## 6. Public's Views of Leaders on Global AIDS

In terms of leaders in the global fight against AIDS, half of the public say Bill Clinton (50%) and Nelson Mandela (50%) stand out as leaders, and nearly the same share say Bono (47%) is a leader on the global AIDS front.

Just one quarter (25%) say President George W. Bush stands out as a leader in the fight against global AIDS, and slightly fewer (23%) say the same about U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan.

### Public's Views of Leaders on Global AIDS

I'm going to read you a list of people, and I'd like you to tell me for each one whether you think this person stands out as a leader in the fight against global AIDS.



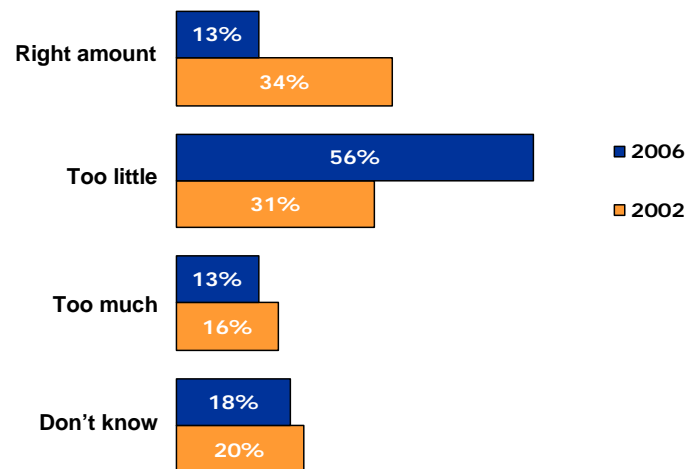
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

## 7. Trend in Views of U.S. Spending to Fight HIV/AIDS in Developing Countries

Public opinion data indicate that there is support for increasing federal spending to combat HIV/AIDS in developing countries, and that that support has increased in recent years. In 2006, more than half (56%) of the public said the U.S. is now spending too little to deal with HIV/AIDS in developing countries, up from 31% in 2002.

### Trend in Views of U.S. Spending to Fight HIV/AIDS in Developing Countries

Do you think the U.S. is now spending too much, too little, or about the right amount to deal with the HIV/AIDS problem in developing countries?



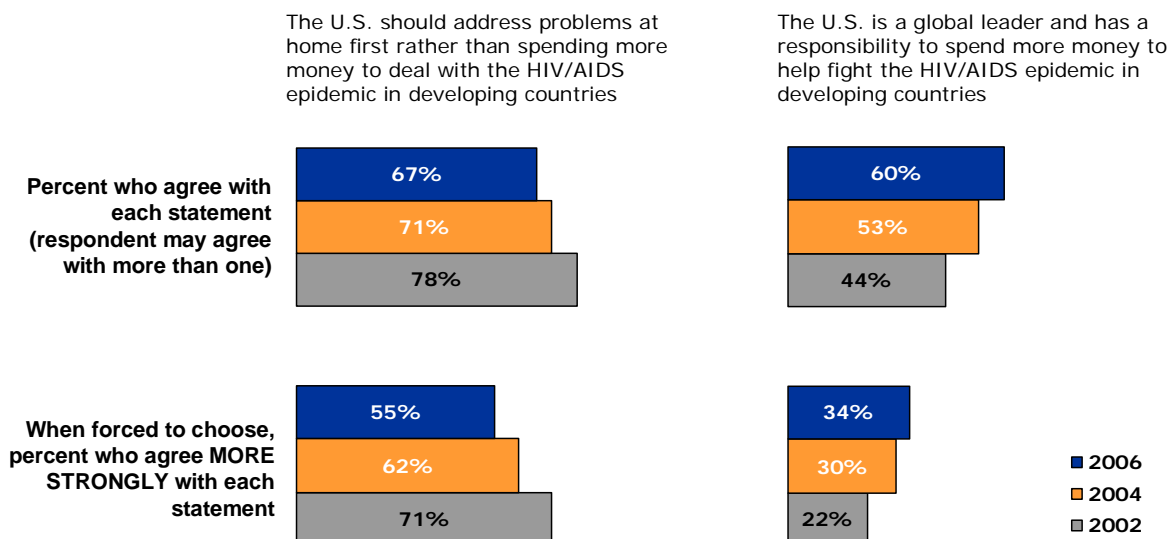
Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006); *Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University National Survey on the Public's Attitudes towards HIV/AIDS in the U.S. and the World* (conducted June 13-23, 2002).

## 8. Trend in Views of U.S. Responsibility on HIV/AIDS

In 2006, nearly seven in ten (67%) Americans agree that the U.S. should address problems at home before spending more money to deal with the HIV/AIDS epidemic in other countries. At the same time, a similar share (60%) of the public agrees that the U.S. is a global leader and has a responsibility to spend more money to help fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic in developing countries. When forced to choose which statement they agree with more, a majority (55%) say the U.S. should address problems at home first, while about one-third (34%) say the U.S. is a global leader and has a responsibility to spend more on the global epidemic.

Views on this question have changed somewhat since 2002, when Americans were more likely to agree that the U.S. should address problems at home first, and less likely to say the U.S. is a global leader and has a responsibility to spend more the help fight HIV/AIDS in developing countries.

### Trend in Views of U.S. Responsibility on HIV/AIDS



Note: Don't know responses not shown.

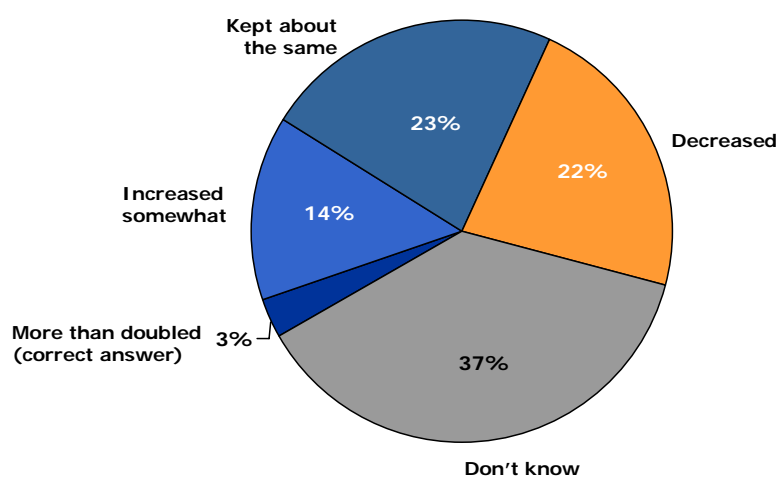
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation surveys

## 9. Knowledge of Bush Administration Funding for HIV/AIDS in Developing Countries

Very few Americans – just 3% - are aware that the Bush Administration has more than doubled funding to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic in developing countries. Many more Americans thought that U.S. spending on the global HIV/AIDS crisis has stayed about the same (23%) or decreased (22%) under the Bush Administration. Nearly four in ten (37%) said they didn't know whether funding has increased or decreased over the past four years.

### Knowledge of Bush Administration Funding for HIV/AIDS in Developing Countries

To the best of your knowledge, over the past four years, has the Bush administration decreased the amount of money the U.S. spends to fight HIV/AIDS in developing countries, have they kept it about the same, increased it somewhat, or has the administration more than doubled the amount of money the U.S. spends to fight HIV/AIDS in developing countries?



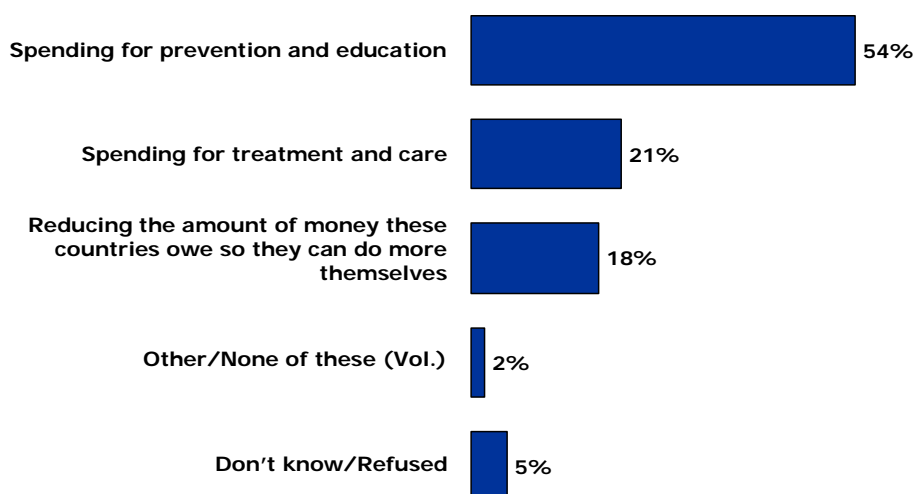
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

## 10. Priorities for U.S. Government Financial Help to Fight HIV/AIDS in Developing Countries

When asked about priorities for the U.S. spending to combat AIDS, spending for prevention and education tops the list, with more than half (54%) of Americans choosing it as the top priority. Around one in five say spending for treatment and care (21%) and reducing developing countries' debts (18%) should be the top priority.

### Priorities for U.S. Government Financial Help to Fight HIV/AIDS in Developing Countries

Which one of the following do you think should be the top priority for the U.S. government's financial help to fight AIDS in developing countries?



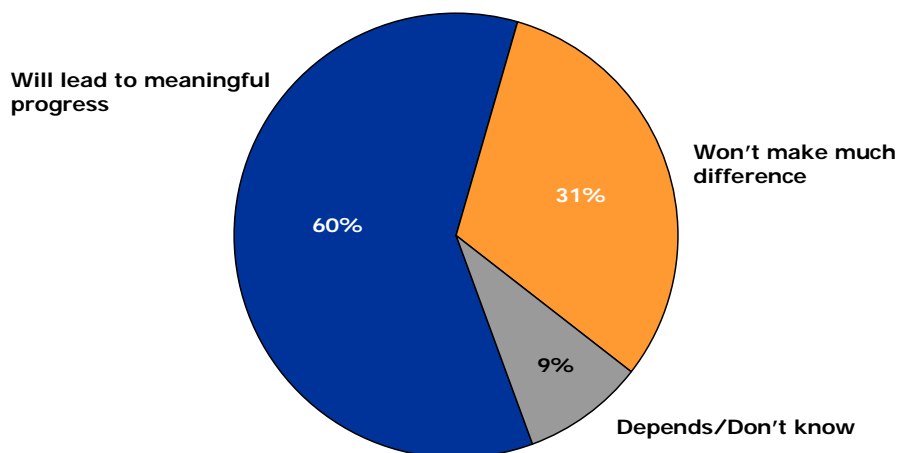
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

## 11. Will Spending on HIV/AIDS Prevention in Developing Countries Lead to Progress?

Most Americans are optimistic that spending more money on HIV/AIDS prevention in developing countries will lead to progress. Six in ten (60%) say that such spending will lead to meaningful progress in slowing the epidemic, while about half as many (31%) say that it won't make much difference.

### Will Spending on HIV/AIDS Prevention in Developing Countries Lead to Progress?

In general, do you think that spending more money on HIV/AIDS prevention in developing countries will lead to meaningful progress in slowing the epidemic, or that spending more money won't make much difference?

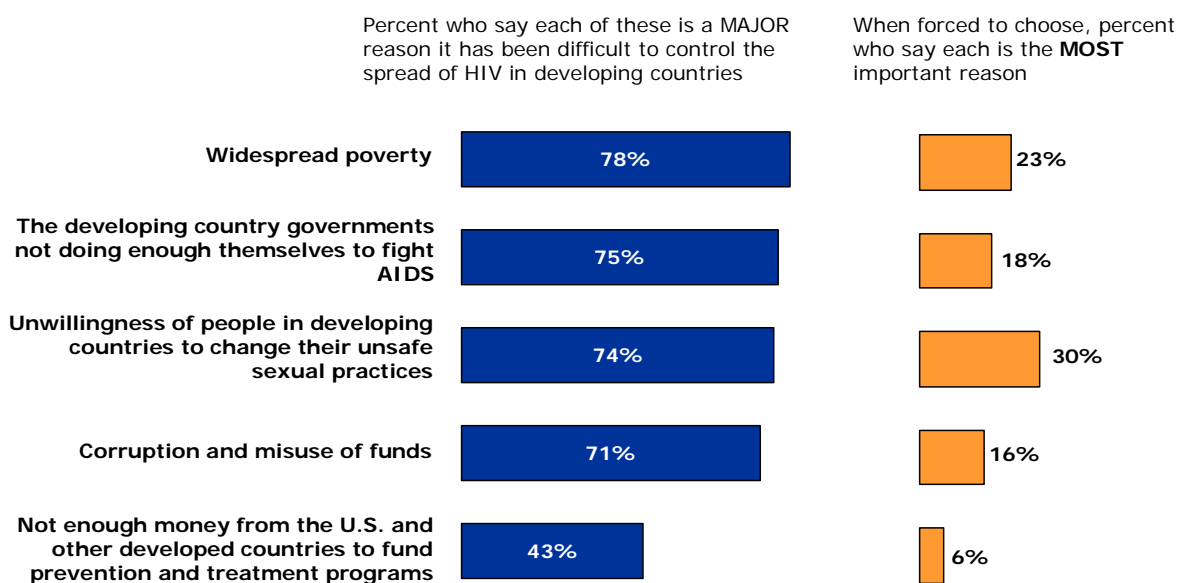


Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)

## 12. Perceived Reasons Why It Has Been Difficult to Control the Spread of HIV/AIDS in Developing Countries

Large majorities of the public say that a variety of reasons are “major reasons” why it has been difficult to control the spread of HIV in developing countries, including widespread poverty (78%), not enough effort from the developing country governments (75%), unwillingness of people to change their unsafe sexual practices (74%), and corruption and misuse of funds (71%). Fewer than half (43%) cite not enough money from the U.S. and other developed country governments as a major reason. When forced to choose the most important reason, three in ten (30%) say unwillingness of people to change their unsafe sexual practices, and nearly a quarter (23%) say widespread poverty is the most important reason.

### Perceived Reasons Why It Has Been Difficult to Control the Spread of HIV/AIDS in Developing Countries



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 24 – April 18, 2006)