

# THE BENCHMARK

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In this first of its kind global poll, AIDS continues to rank high on the list of the most important issues facing the world.

A sweeping new UNAIDS and Zogby International poll shows that nearly 30 years into the AIDS epidemic, region by region countries continue to rank AIDS high on the list of the most important issues facing the world.

Almost all people surveyed in sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, South and South-East Asia, Latin America and East Asia say AIDS is important.

Eight out of ten people in the United States of America say it is important, and nearly nine out of ten in the Russian Federation say AIDS is important. In India about two thirds report that the AIDS epidemic is more important than other issues the world currently faces. In sub-Saharan Africa six in ten (57%) people say that the AIDS epidemic is just as important as other issues faced by the world.

Overall in the survey, AIDS leads public perception as the top health-care issue in the world, followed by safe drinking water.

## *Greatest achievement in the AIDS response*

Public awareness about AIDS was considered the greatest achievement in the AIDS response by about one in three people (34%) overall. This was followed by implementation of other HIV prevention programmes (17.8%) and the development of new antiretroviral drugs (17.1%).

About 7.8% of respondents cited access to treatment as the greatest achievement and 7.2% say it was the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

About 3.9% of people surveyed felt that abstinence education programmes worked. Just over 5% thought the world had been successful in distributing condoms or clean needles as part of prevention efforts.

Development of new antiretroviral treatment was seen as the greatest achievement in the USA, in eastern Europe and in central

Asia. Access to treatment was most often cited by people in Latin America (11%) and the Caribbean (12%).

## *Funding is a major obstacle*

About 62% of people in Sweden think the availability of funding/resources or the availability of affordable health care (at 58%) is keeping the world from effectively responding to AIDS. Some 60% of people in the United Kingdom also felt that lack of funding was the main obstacle.

Is health a necessity or a luxury? Overwhelmingly the general public says governments have a role in ensuring treatment for people living with HIV.

## *Best way to describe the AIDS issue*

'Hopeful' say 30% in South and South-East Asia and 25% in western Europe and the Caribbean. 'Manageable' say one in three (34%) in Latin America and Egypt, about 29% in East Asia and 15% in Australia.

'Tragic' is the term chosen by three in ten people in sub-Saharan Africa (30%), eastern Europe and central Asia (29%) and a third of people surveyed in Australia (33%).

'Getting worse' was chosen by people in sub-Saharan Africa (31%), eastern Europe and central Asia (28%) and East Asia (25%).

## *Is the world responding effectively to AIDS?*

A resounding 'yes' was heard from the Caribbean (75%) and from South and South-East Asia (53%). About one in three in Latin America and just fewer than four in ten people in sub-Saharan Africa believed that the world was responding effectively to the issue.

'No' was heard loudest in eastern Europe (61%), the USA (54%) and sub-Saharan Africa (50%).

**Overall in the survey, AIDS leads public perception as the top health-care issue in the world, followed by safe drinking water.**

**About half in Latin America and eastern Europe want their government to subsidize treatment. Slightly fewer than half the respondents in the USA agree with subsidizing treatment for people living with HIV.**

### *Is your country responding effectively to AIDS?*

Opinion was equally divided. A little over 41% thought their country was effective against the AIDS epidemic. About 63% of the Caribbean respondents said 'yes', while 37% said 'no' compared with their view of the global response. A similar pattern was seen in Africa, Asia and eastern Europe.

A majority of respondents in the USA, Australia and countries in western and central Europe felt that their country was dealing effectively with the AIDS issue.

"Are communities responding to AIDS better?" 'No', seems to be the overall perception. Very few people surveyed say their own communities are doing better than their country's overall response. In Japan, 8% of people thought their community was doing well, with 36.9% unsure about the issue.

In most regions, perceptions about community responses rank slightly lower than perceptions of country responses. The exceptions are South and South-East Asia and Egypt, where community responses ranked higher by a few percentage points.

### *Obstacles keeping the world from effectively responding to HIV*

Despite considering raising awareness as the most successful aspect of the AIDS response, the lack of awareness and the availability of HIV prevention services was seen as the most important obstacle by more than half of the respondents.

Equally important was the availability of resources. For example, 78.7% surveyed in Uganda ranked availability of funding as the top obstacle.

Close to half of all respondents felt that stigma and discrimination towards people living with HIV and the availability and affordability of treatment were significant barriers. The lack of trained health workers was cited by nearly four out of ten people.

Similar trends were seen when asked the same question about their country or community. For example, in France 52.9% of respondents ranked the availability of resources as the biggest obstacle in their community.

### *Can the spread of HIV be stopped by 2015?*

The Caribbean region is the most positive of all the regions, where 91% are optimistic that with proper use of resources the spread of HIV can be stopped. They are followed by South and South-East Asia (75%) and Latin America (63%). In sub-Saharan Africa four in ten (40%) were optimistic—for example,

in Senegal 48.7% were overall optimistic that HIV could be stopped by 2015.

Respondents from western Europe, Oceania and eastern and central Europe were equally divided, with a third of each either optimistic or pessimistic. Some 44% of people surveyed in the USA were most pessimistic, while 28% were optimistic and 24% neither optimistic nor pessimistic.

About half of all respondents said they would donate money to the AIDS response. The rest were either unsure or said 'no'.

### *Contribution of the AIDS response towards other issues*

Sex education tops the list, with an overall rating of six out of ten respondents (60.7%) saying the AIDS response had provided opportunities to respond to other issues. Latin America (77%) and sub-Saharan Africa (70%) thought so too. For example, in Mexico 76.8% said that the AIDS response has helped efforts in sex education.

Nearly four in ten (37.8–40.9%) respondents also said that sex work and injecting drug use issues had received a boost from the AIDS response. About three in ten (27%) felt that homophobia and sexual violence were on the agenda due to AIDS.

### *Importance of HIV services being linked to other health services*

An overwhelming majority, more than seven out of ten (71%), agree that HIV prevention and treatment programmes should be linked to other health services such as tuberculosis and maternal health.

Nine out of ten in the Caribbean, and more than eight out of ten in sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia and Latin America agree with the concept of bringing AIDS out of isolation.

### *Who should pay for treatment?*

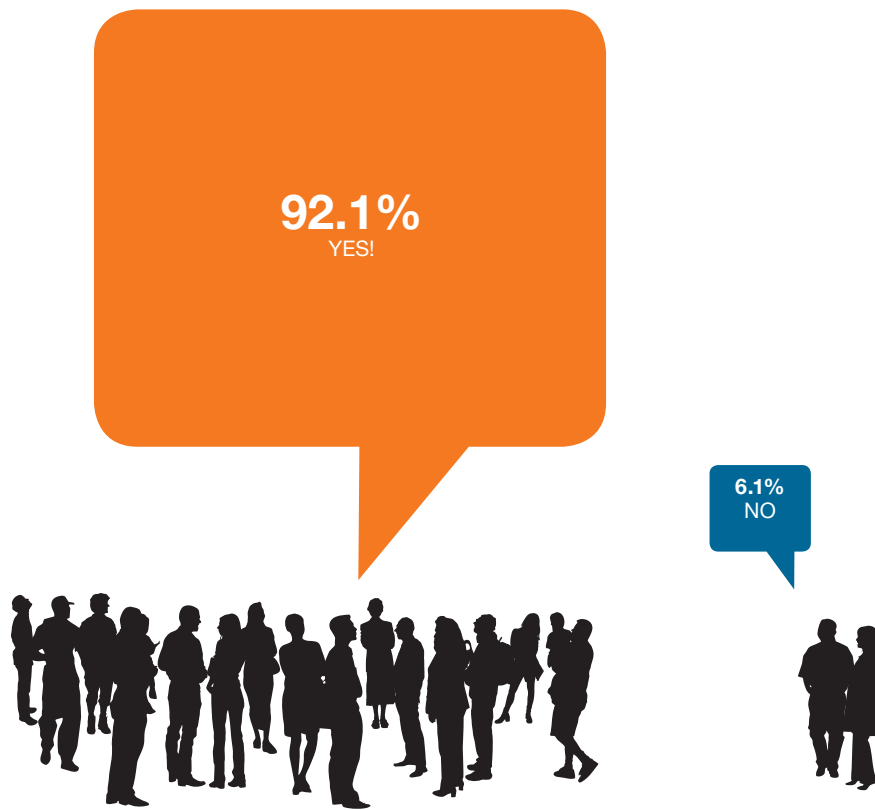
Overall about 58% of people surveyed agree that people living with HIV should receive subsidized treatment. This perception was strongest in the Caribbean, with 87% favouring subsidized treatment. Asia also agreed, with more than 70% approval of this issue.

About half in Latin America and eastern Europe want their government to subsidize treatment. Slightly fewer than half the respondents in the USA agree with subsidizing treatment for people living with HIV.

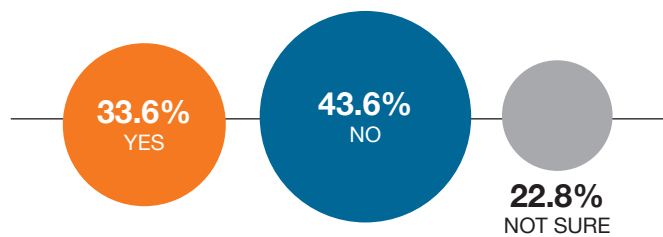
### *Where should the majority of the funding for HIV prevention focus?*

Some 77% felt that sex workers and their clients, men who have sex with men (67%) and people who inject drugs (78%) are most at risk of HIV infection.

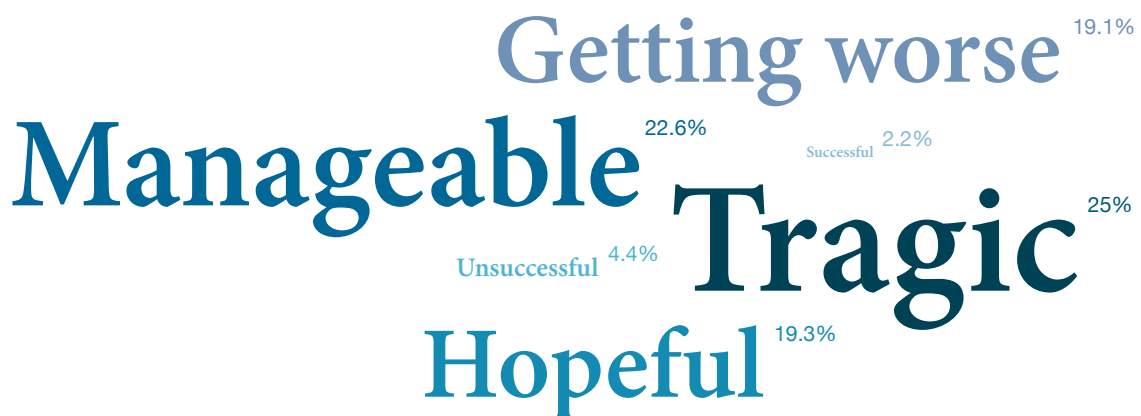
Is the AIDS epidemic important?



Is the world effectively responding to AIDS?



Which word best describes the AIDS issue?



**Almost everyone surveyed in sub-Saharan Africa said 'yes' AIDS was a problem for their country. In the Caribbean eight in ten agreed, while in Latin America, seven in ten said 'yes'.**

However, when it came to funding priorities, people chose investments for young people and the general population over drug users, sex workers and men who have sex with men.

In eastern Europe and central Asia half of the people think that programmes should focus on people who inject drugs. In South and South-East Asia seven in ten, and in East Asia six in ten, say the majority of funding should focus on sex work. In the Caribbean, views are divided equally between sex work and injecting drug use.

### *Is AIDS a problem in your country and community?*

Almost everyone surveyed in sub-Saharan Africa said 'yes' AIDS was a problem for their country. In the Caribbean eight in ten agreed, while in Latin America, seven in ten said 'yes'. The ratio of respondents in South and South-East Asia, as well as in eastern Europe, was six in ten who said AIDS was an issue in their country.

When asked if it was a problem in their community, the numbers dropped significantly. In the USA about one third (33%) felt that it was a problem in their community, while 70% thought it was a problem in their country. Similar trends were seen in most other regions of the world.

### *Do you worry about AIDS?*

Three quarters of people surveyed in Latin America and the Caribbean and more than half in sub-Saharan Africa and South and South-East Asia are personally worried about AIDS.

Conversely, nine out of ten people in North America and nearly seven out of ten in western and central Europe do not personally worry about AIDS.

### *Risk of HIV infection*

Aside from the Caribbean region, where six out of ten people felt they were personally at risk of acquiring HIV infection, more than three quarters of the people surveyed in other regions felt they were not at risk.

In sub-Saharan Africa 25% of people surveyed felt that they were at risk of HIV. A similar perception was held in Latin America and Egypt, as well as in eastern Europe and central Asia. People in Australia and the USA were the least worried about being at risk of acquiring HIV.

### *Can you protect yourself from HIV?*

Individual confidence levels exceeded 75% in all the regions of the world. Nearly

all people in sub-Saharan Africa, North America, South and South-East Asia, Latin America, Oceania and the Caribbean were confident about protecting themselves from HIV. About 20% of the people surveyed in eastern Europe and central Asia as well as in East Asia were unsure about their ability to protect themselves.

### *Working and sharing a meal with someone living with HIV*

Overall about 61% of the people asked would agree to work with someone living with HIV, while 20% would not. Acceptance of people living with HIV was highest in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, where eight in ten reported positive attitudes.

In sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America nine out of ten had no reservations about sharing a meal with a person living with HIV. In Egypt, 49% said 'no' and 30% said 'yes' they would knowingly eat with someone living with HIV.

### *Treatment, not jail*

A majority of people (65.1%) responding said that people who inject drugs should receive treatment rather than be sent to jail. In Latin America nearly nine in ten (86%) favour this option. Similarly, two thirds (67%) in eastern Europe and central Asia as well as in South and South-East Asia and more than half in East Asia prefer treatment over incarceration.

### *Travel restrictions*

About half of all the people surveyed say there should not be travel restrictions for people living with HIV. Fewer than half of the respondents in western and central Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, South and South-East Asia and the USA said that there should be travel restrictions.

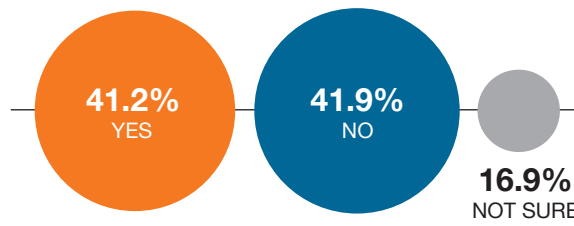
### *Information about the survey*

Zogby International was commissioned by UNAIDS to conduct an online survey of adults with Internet access in 25 countries. A total of 11 820 respondents participated in the study. A sample of Zogby International and its partner's online panel members was invited to participate. The study was conducted between 30 March 2010 and 21 May 2010. ●

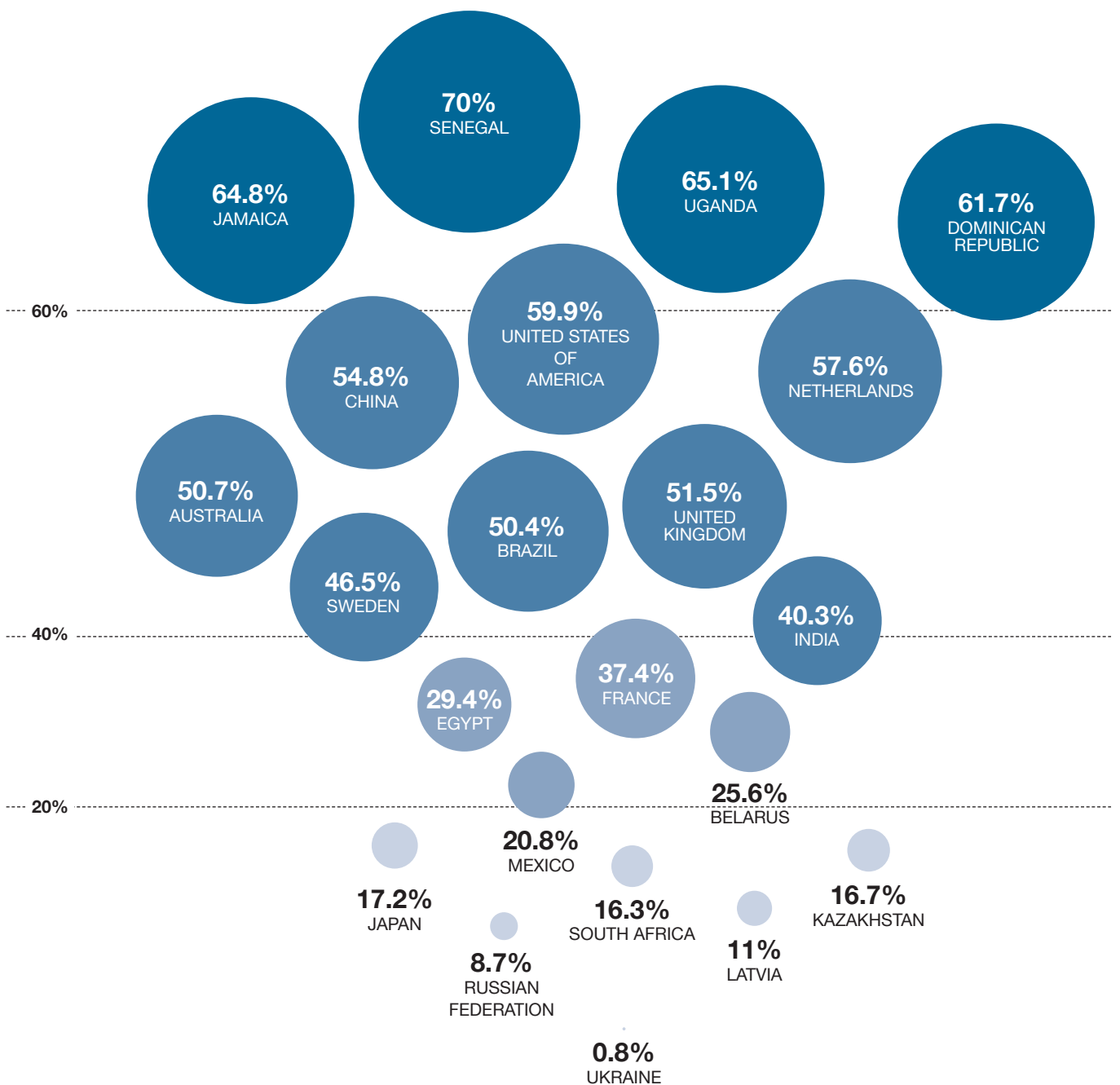
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*The full report can be found online at [unaids.org](http://unaids.org).*

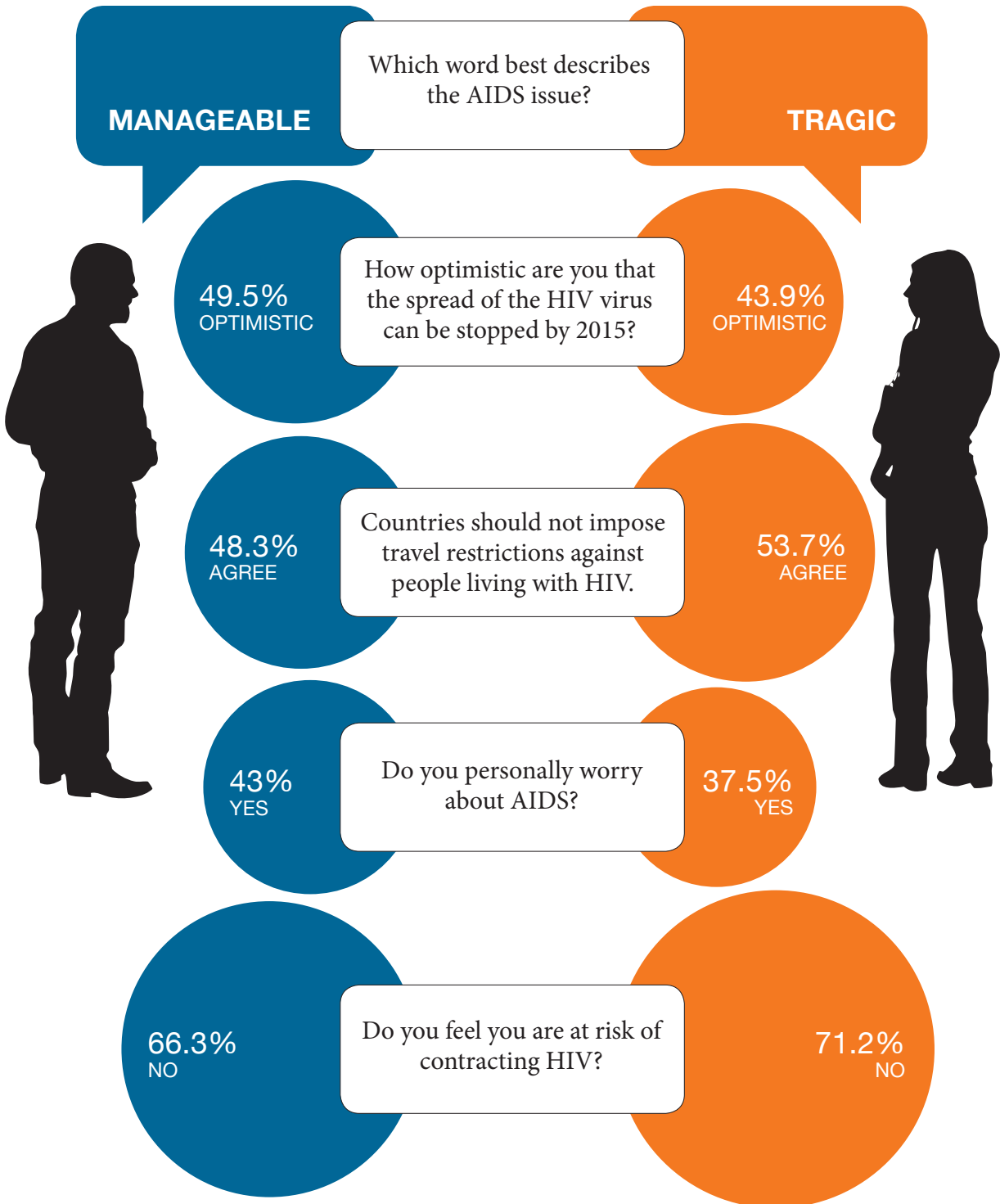
Is your country effectively responding to AIDS?



Is your country effectively responding to AIDS? (Per cent who responded 'yes' by country)

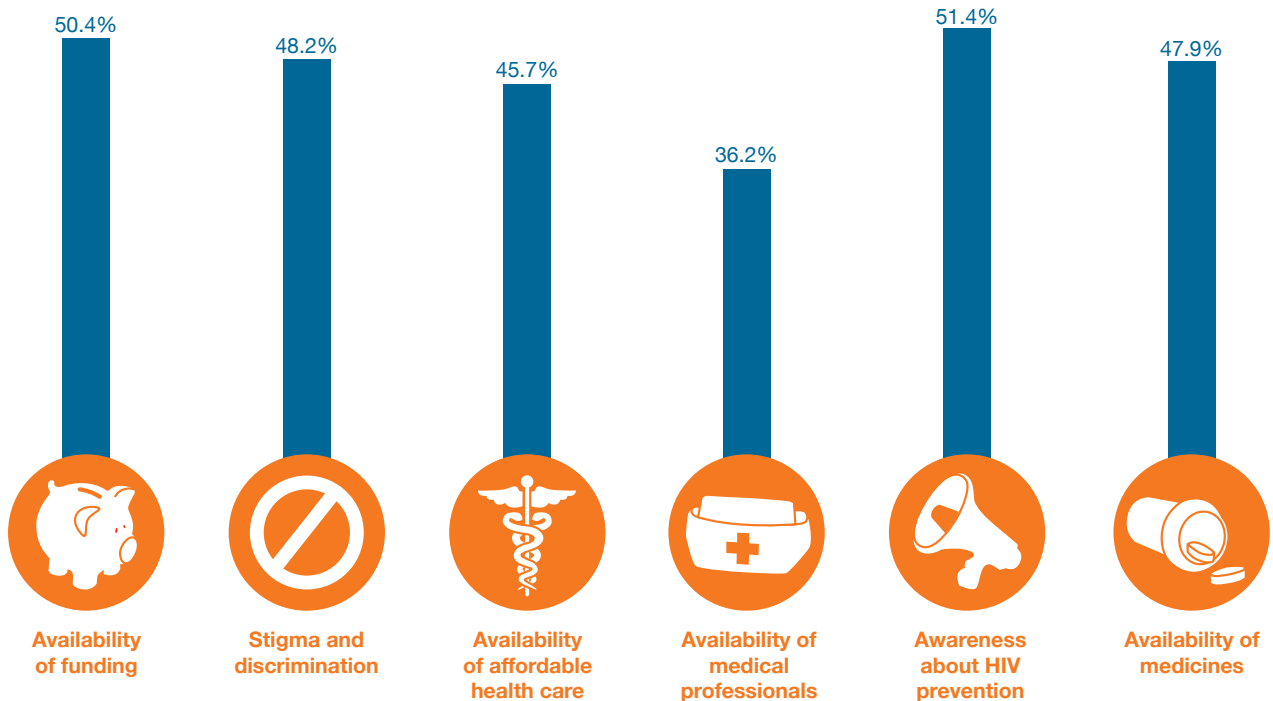


How differently do men and women feel about AIDS?

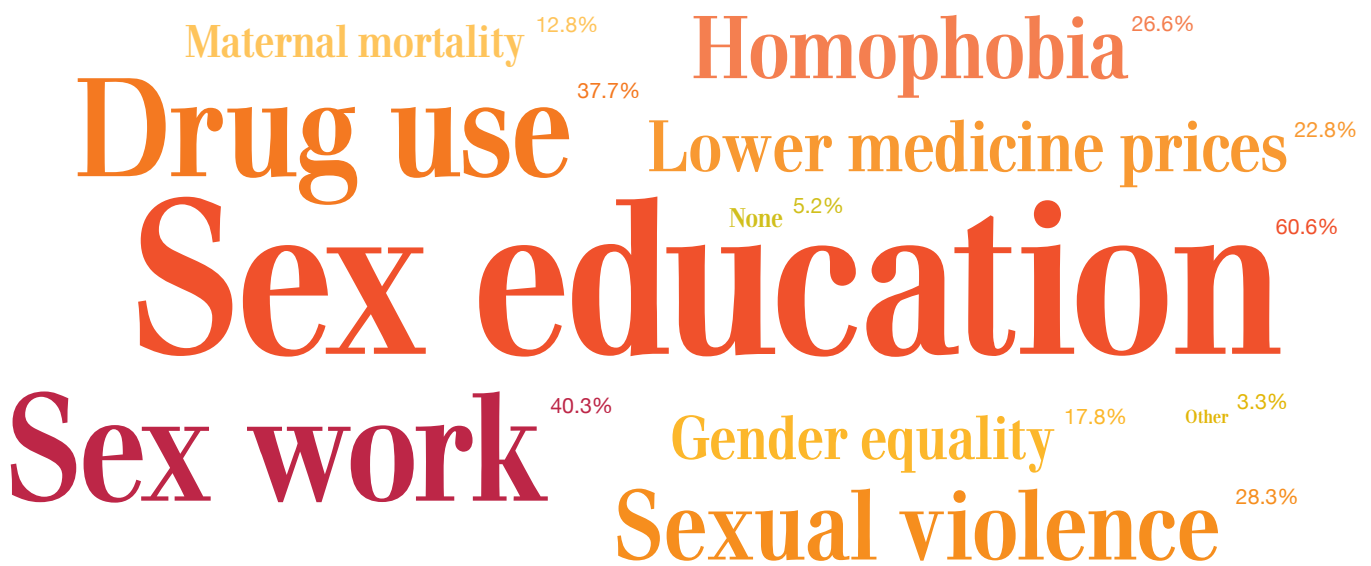


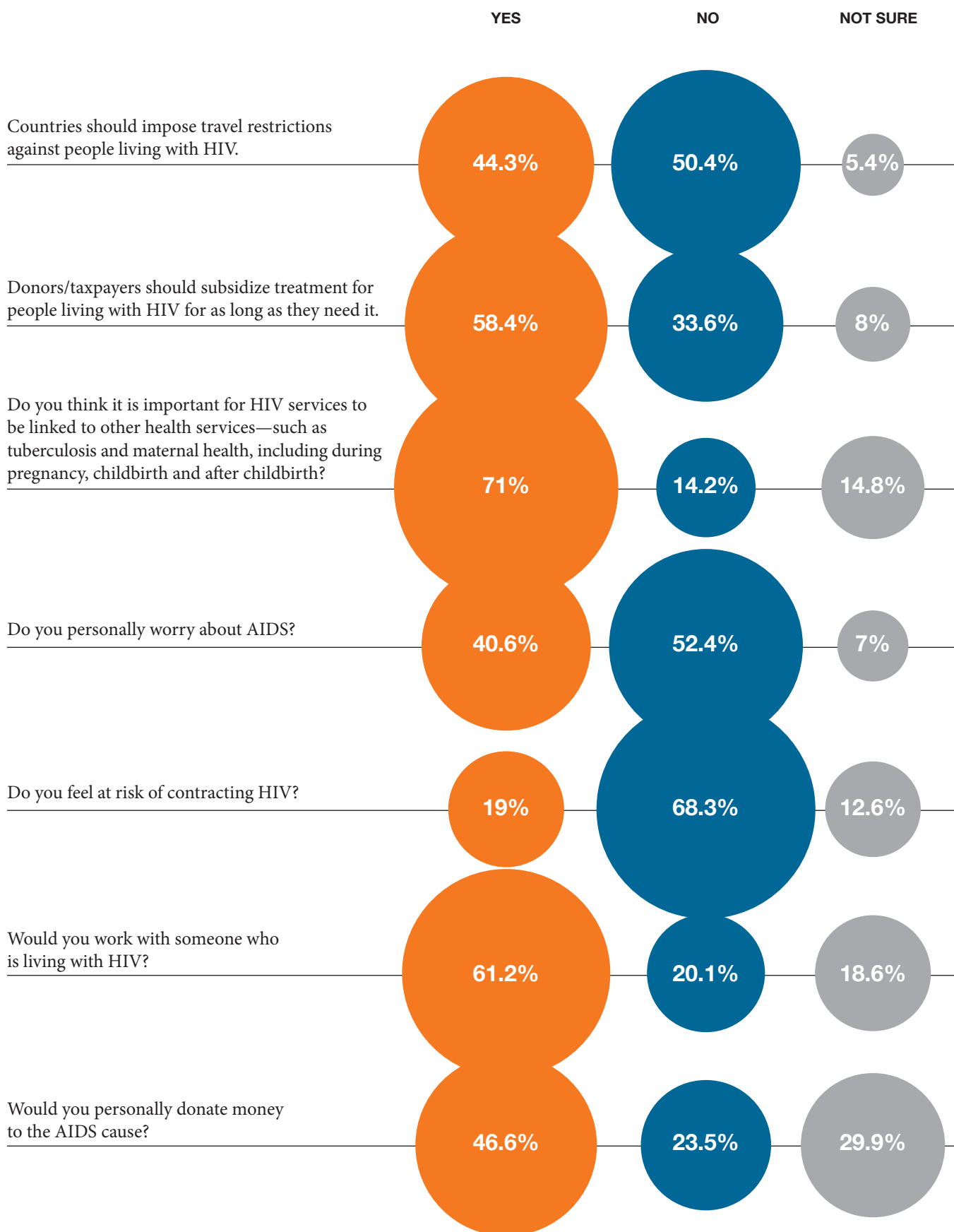


Which of the following obstacles are keeping the world from an effective AIDS response?



The AIDS response provides an opportunity to educate the public on other issues. Which from the following list, if any, do you think have been dealt with more effectively due to the AIDS response?

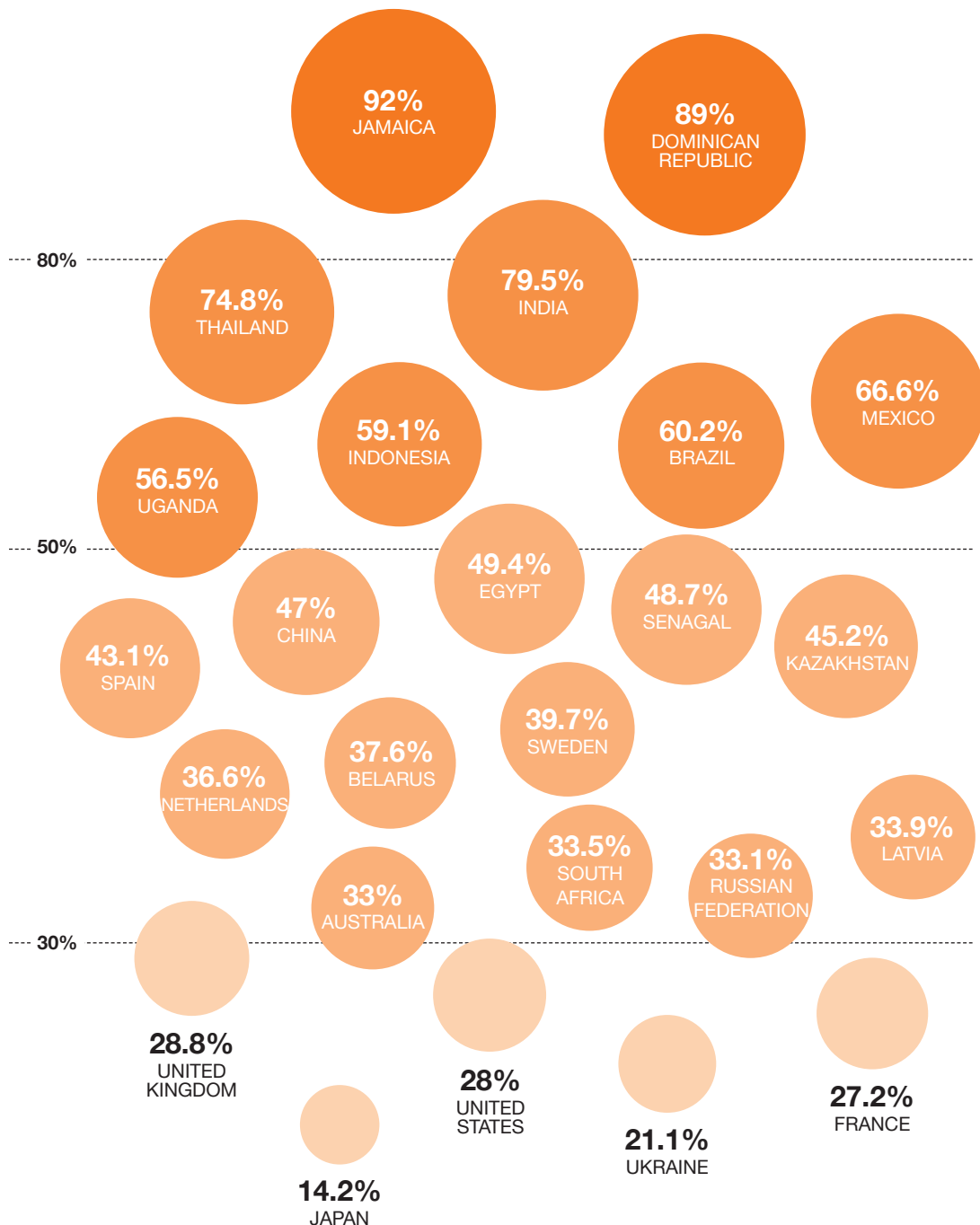




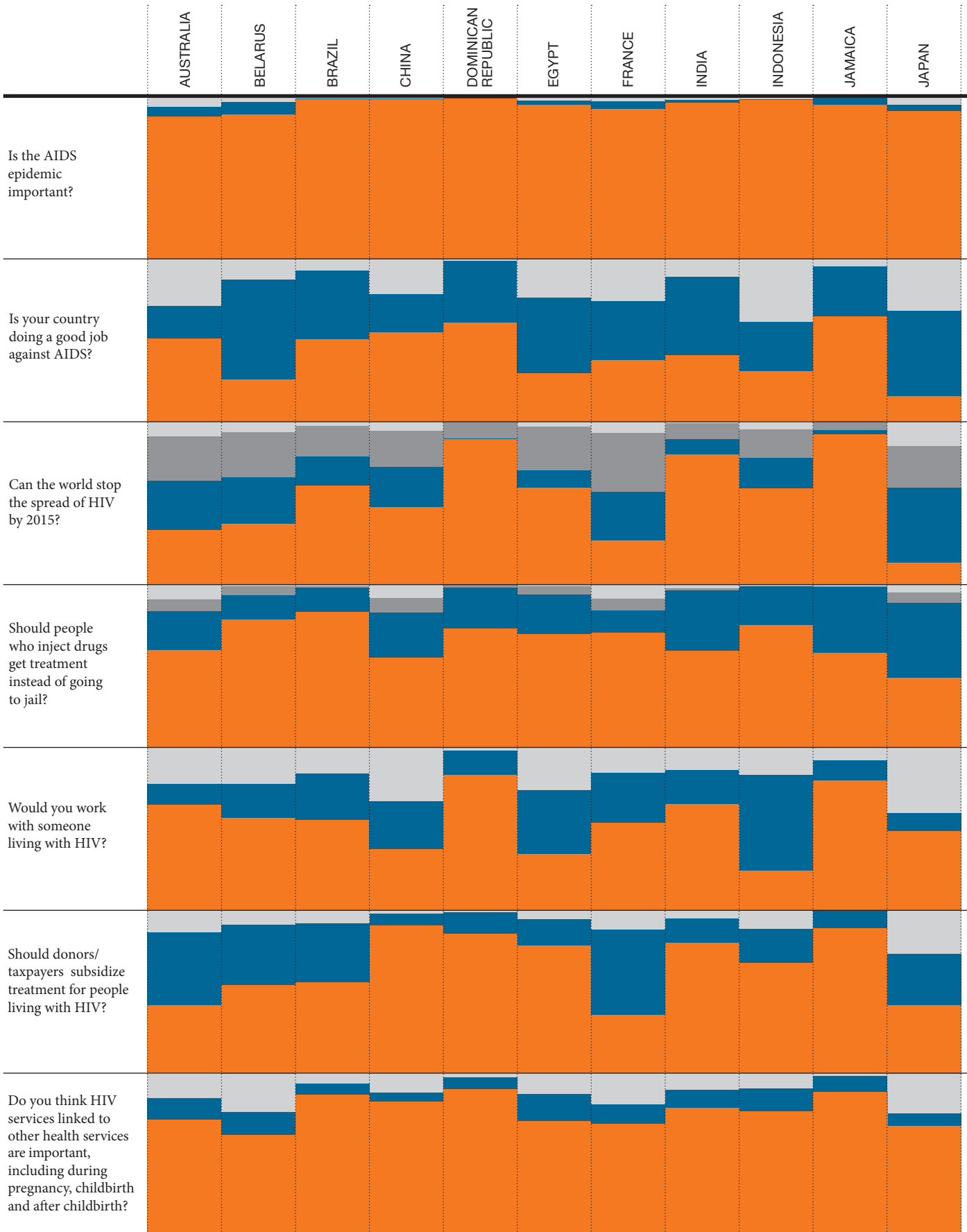
How optimistic or pessimistic are you that with the proper use of resources the spread of HIV can be stopped by 2015?

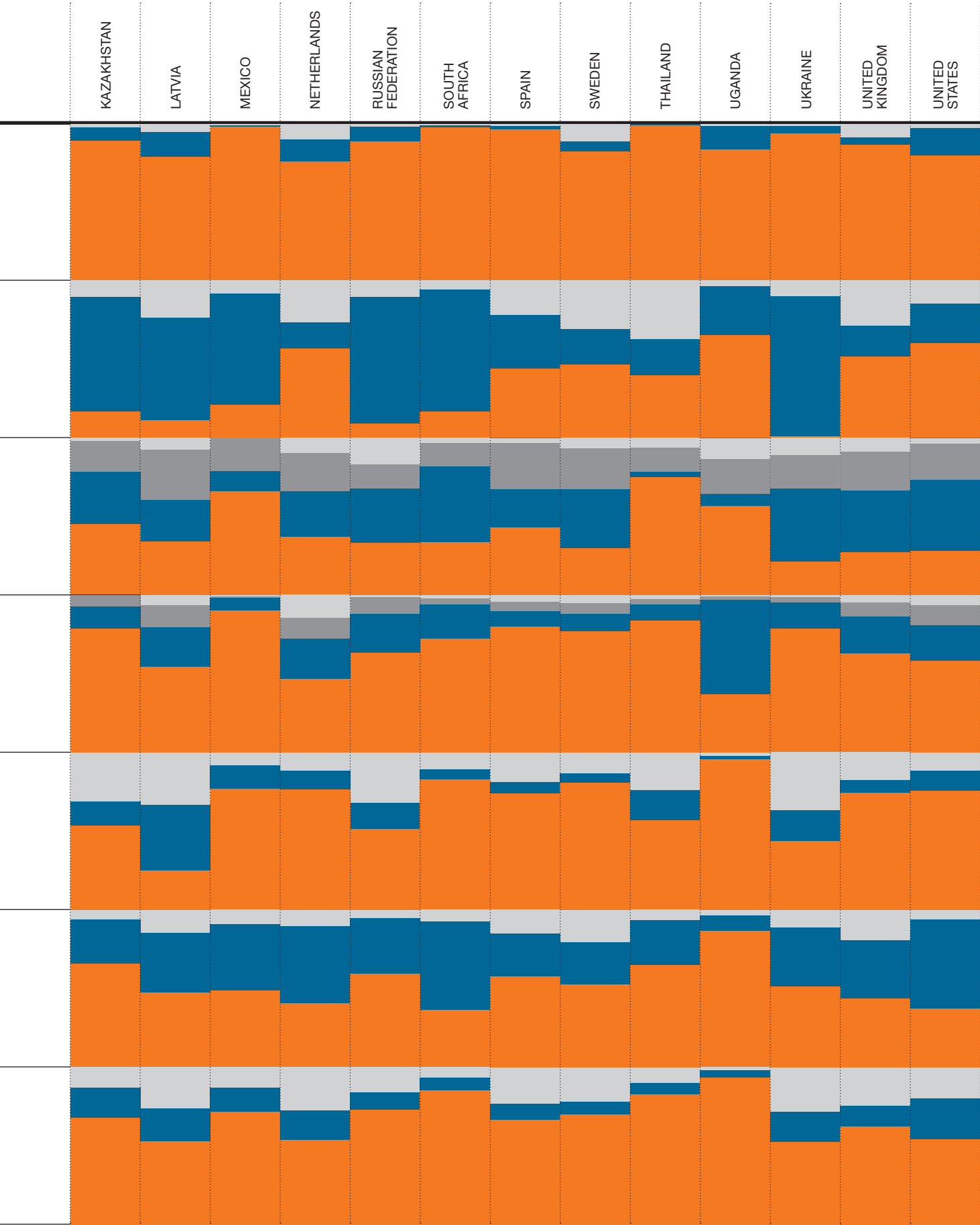


Can we stop the spread of HIV by 2015?  
(Per cent who responded “optimistic” by country)

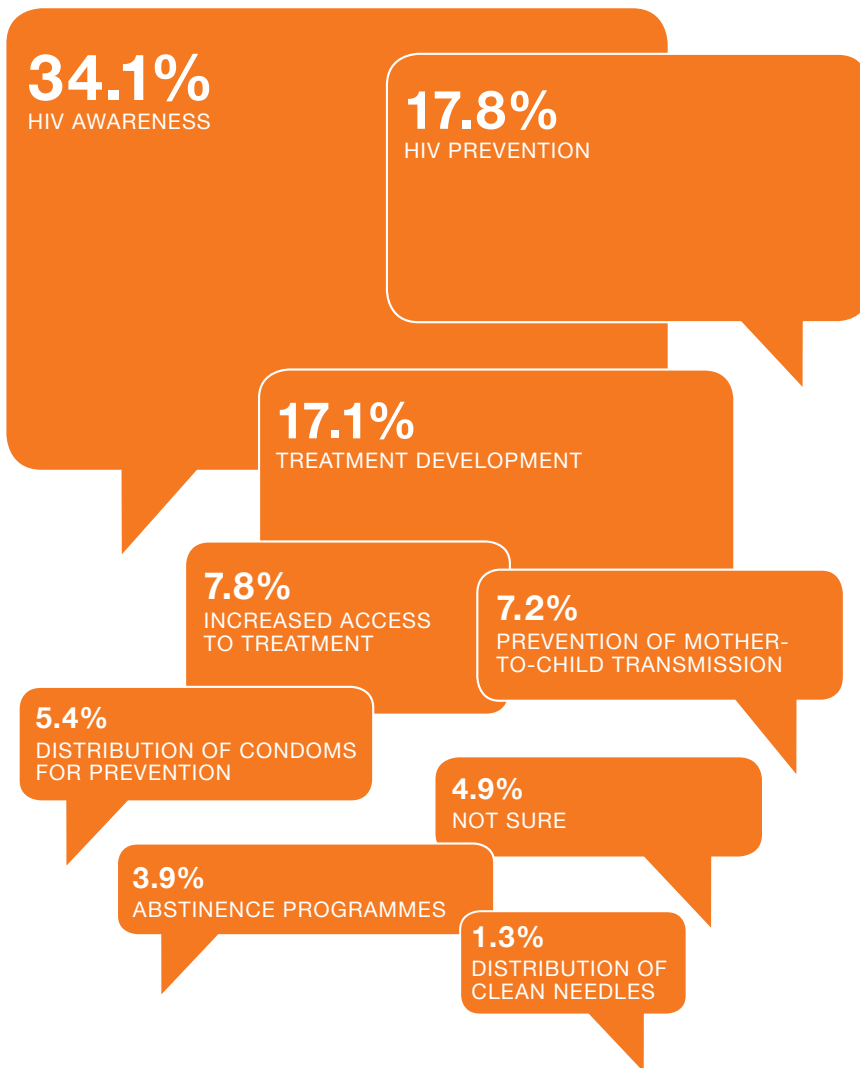


■ YES   
 ■ NO   
 ■ NEITHER/NEUTRAL   
 ■ NOT SURE  
 Each country rectangle equals 100%.

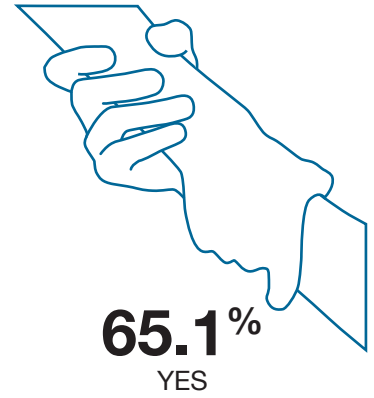




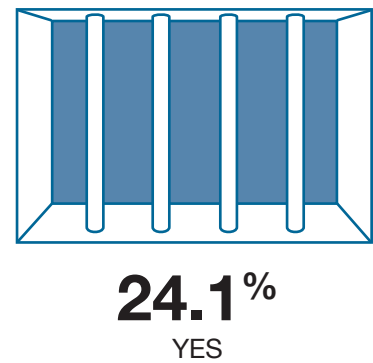
What has been the greatest achievement in the AIDS response so far?



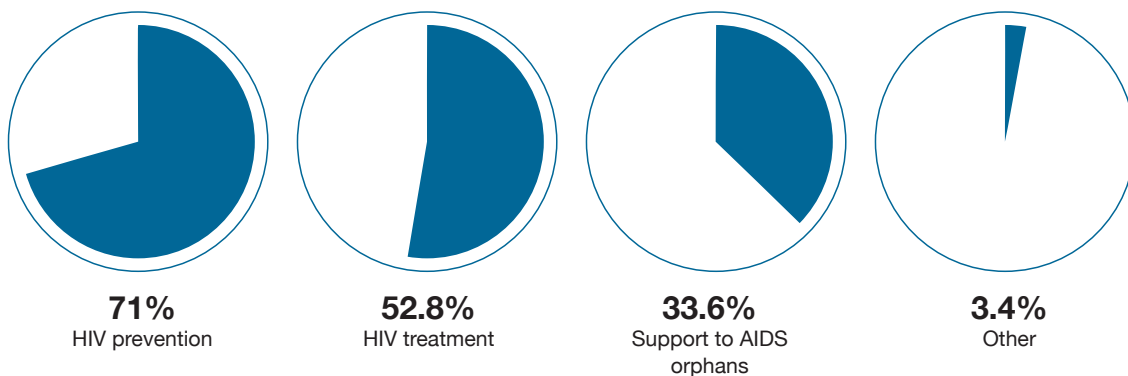
I believe people who inject drugs should receive treatment.



I believe people who inject drugs should be put in jail.



Where should resources for the AIDS response go?





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