

UNAIDS 2024

Results in Latin America and the Caribbean

2022-2023 Regional report

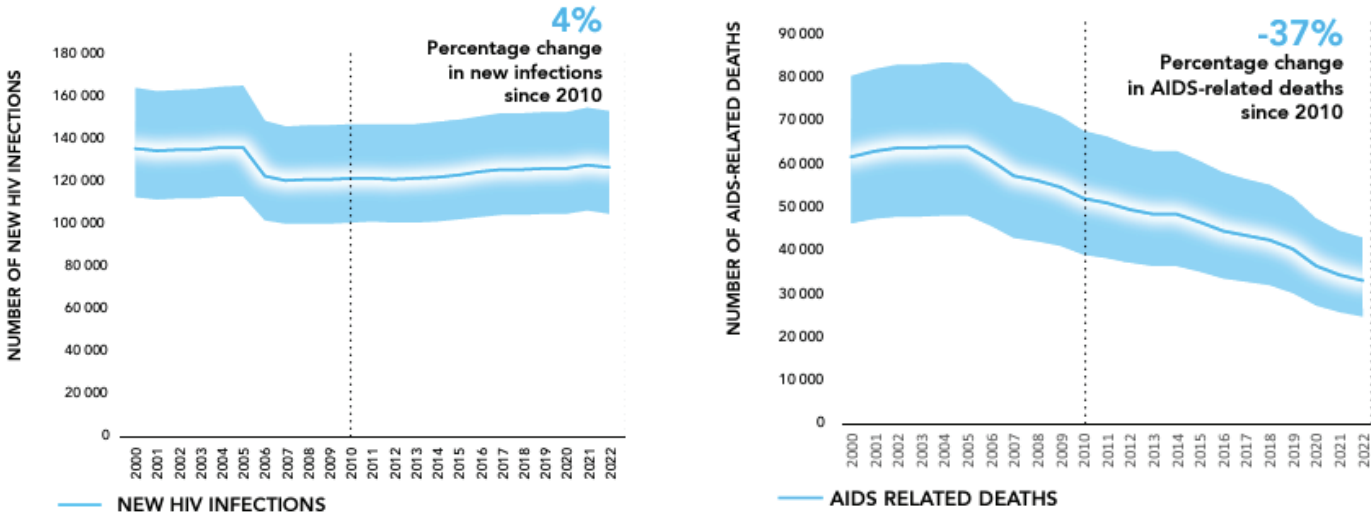
Results in Latin America and the Caribbean

18 countries with Joint UN Plans aligned to national priorities and the Global AIDS Strategy

Total expenditures and encumbrances¹ of the Joint Programme (Cosponsors and Secretariat) in 2022–2023: **US\$ 55.3 million**

Progress towards saving lives

Number of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths, Latin America and the Caribbean, 2000–2022



Source: UNAIDS epidemiological estimates, 2023 (<https://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>).

Selected UBRAF indicators progress in 2023

- **17** countries received support to scale up combination HIV prevention programmes.
- **17** countries have a national plan for the elimination of vertical transmission of HIV and implement the “treat-all” policy for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- **18** countries received support for the incorporation and expansion of community-led HIV responses.
- **17** countries received support to remove or amend punitive laws and policies, and/or develop protective ones affecting the HIV response.
- **3** countries received policy, advocacy or technical support to implement gender-responsive HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services free of gender-based discrimination and violence.
- **8** countries have developed and report implementation of measures advancing full and sustainable HIV financing.
- **7** countries implement interventions/services for key populations in humanitarian settings.

¹ For more information on budget implementation breakdown, please see the executive summary of the 2022–2023 Performance Monitoring Report.

Overview

The HIV response made important gains in the Latin America and the Caribbean region during the 2022–2023 biennium, particularly in the scale-up of facility- and community-led HIV prevention, treatment and social protection programmes for vulnerable and key populations. Strategic evidence, updated health information systems and needs assessments contributed to the expansion of tailored HIV prevention services, including PrEP. Improved access to youth-friendly and culture-sensitive HIV and SRH services helped increase the use of condoms, timely case detection and rapid linkages to treatment services.

The Joint Programme’s support in expanding and improving delivery of HIV treatment resulted in a six-fold increase in the coverage of dolutegravir-based adult treatment across the region, with 17 countries introducing dolutegravir-based paediatric treatment. HIV treatment resistance monitoring was also improved with inputs from resistance surveys and validation of regional laboratories.

Capacity building and technical support by the Joint Programme empowered young people and key populations to provide and monitor HIV information and services and advocate for their human rights. Access to integrated HIV and social protection services among vulnerable populations, including people living with HIV and people from the LGBTQI+ communities, is has been improved following assessments of service needs and barriers, the provision of training and stronger coordination with civil society organizations.

UBRAF Outcome 1: People living with, at risk of and affected by HIV obtain equitable access and reap equitable benefits from HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services.

The Joint Programme’s strategic support and close collaboration with national partners and communities expanded access to HIV and SRH information and services among vulnerable and key populations in the region. This included active case finding, swift linkage to treatment and care services and the distribution of two million male condoms among refugees, migrants and communities in Colombia. More than 7000 indigenous people in the Amazon Region of Peru were sensitized on HIV prevention and the importance of timely diagnosis of HIV infection via tailored awareness campaigns (UNICEF). CSE was also expanded in 15 countries with the use of new training materials and online resources for health-care workers who provide SRH services to adolescents (UNFPA). In Jamaica, access to HIV and SRH services was enhanced through the opening of a second “Teen Hub”, which received 10 000 visits and HIV testing and counselling was offered to 520 adolescents and young people. Additionally, the launch of a digital chatbot tool for HIV prevention and SRH information attracted over 600 users, predominantly adolescent and young girls (UNICEF).

HIV services among adolescents improved as a result of implementation of culturally-appropriate service standards, provider training and a focus on inequalities. For example, integrated HIV services were scaled up in hospitals and adolescent health-care units in the Dominican Republic, while 750 health-care providers improved their capacity to deliver HIV and SRH services, including treatment for adolescents in Cuba, El Salvador, Panama and Venezuela (UNICEF, UNFPA). In addition, over 22 800 health professionals are now better equipped to deliver PrEP services via the “Virtual Campus” platform, with support from the Joint Programme (WHO).

As part of the EMTCT Plus initiative, five countries received technical assistance for planning and integrating services for the elimination of vertical transmission of HIV. In addition, six

countries now have updated national norms and guidelines for triple elimination of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B. Belize, Jamaica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have reached the EMTCT pre-validation stage and have received recommendations to reach validation (WHO).

The Joint Programme supported the optimization of HIV treatment and transitions to dolutegravir-based treatment regimens, which resulted in a six-fold increase in dolutegravir-based adult treatment procurement and a four-fold increase in dolutegravir-based paediatric treatment across the region. Seventeen countries in the region are now offering dolutegravir-based paediatric treatment. The review and alignment of national treatment guidelines and strategic plans with WHO standards led to increased treatment coverage in five countries, and over 12 000 health professionals across the region have increased their knowledge of HIV and TB coinfection following an online course, thus enabling integrated care and improved service delivery. HIV resistance monitoring is also stronger thanks to resistance surveys and validation of regional laboratories by the Regional HIV Resistance Network (WHO).

Additional strategic information, with support from the Joint Programme, is available in several countries in the region. For instance, HIV programme reviews and subsequent actions included updating health information systems and improving HIV responses in Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. Strategic Information for HIV prevention and PrEP services also improved in Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala and country members of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) through needs and cost assessments of oral PrEP programmes, using the QUANTPrEP tool. Newly developed or updated HIV prevention and care cascades for key populations further informed evidence and decision-making in nine countries (WHO, UNAIDS Secretariat).

In 2023, government representatives from Cuba visited successful HIV programmes in the Dominican Republic, exchanged experiences and best practices and identified innovative strategies, as part of a South-South cooperation initiative supported by the Joint Programme. An action plan was also developed to maintain communication and knowledge sharing for strengthened HIV responses in both countries (UNDP).

UBRAF Outcome 2: Communities of people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV, including key populations, women and young people, are empowered, enabled and effectively resourced to lead HIV service delivery, advocate for and enjoy their right to health, and social and structural drivers of the HIV epidemic are removed.

The Joint Programme played a key role in empowering vulnerable and key populations to lead the HIV response and advocate for their rights. Community-led comprehensive educational initiatives in Colombia enabled 1800 women to improve their knowledge and skills on HIV and gender-based violence prevention, condom negotiation and use, as well as the distribution of female condoms (UNHCR). Eighty young activists from 15 countries in the region have increased their capacity to advocate for combination HIV prevention services, including PrEP, condom and harm reduction, thanks to a knowledge exchange initiative (UNFPA). In Chile, 60 000 people were sensitized on rights-based combination HIV prevention services through social media and these services were also extended to refugee and migrant people from the LGBTIQ+ community residing in the country. Health-care workers in Ecuador improved their skills in promoting comprehensive health and social protection services, as well as in preventing stigma and discrimination in healthcare settings (UNHCR). Technical support from the Joint Programme helped ensure that

REDFEMITRANSLAC, a regional network of migrant transgender persons, drafted its first multi-annual strategic plan, which is aimed at improving access to comprehensive health-care and humanitarian services among transgender migrants (UNDP, UNAIDS Secretariat). In Jamaica, the new Enabling Environment for Human Rights Monitoring Dashboard strengthened reporting on Jamaica's progress towards reducing stigma and discrimination and expanding access to health and justice services. More than 10 civil society organizations and government agencies are now better equipped to collect and analyse data on the human rights of vulnerable and marginalized populations, including people living with HIV.

Advocacy and public awareness on HIV prevention, human rights and social protection was scaled up in Brazil as a result of the Joint Programme's support. For example, 23 free public awareness activities across the country helped put HIV high on the public agenda; a photographic exhibition, film screening and combination prevention workshops involving human rights activists helped sensitize communities; and 190 people from the LGBTQI+ community in Amapá, Pará, Paraíba, Porto Alegre and São Paulo developed stronger capacities to establish income-generating activities and obtain employment through the "Kitchen&Voice" project (ILO).

Assessment of legal frameworks strengthened evidence of legal barriers affecting access to combination HIV prevention services among adolescent young people in five countries. The findings will be used to advocate for policy changes and improvements in national prevention programmes (UNFPA, UNAIDS Secretariat). In addition, newly-documented successes in HIV prevention advocacy in 10 countries, as well as knowledge shared among young activists from 15 countries, are being used to boost advocacy for and further improve HIV prevention and SRH programmes (UNFPA).

The Ombudsperson's Office in Panama established an LGBTQI+ observatory mechanism to monitor human rights violations against the LGBTQI+ community and ensure equitable access to health and legal services (UNHCR, UNDP, UNAIDS Secretariat). In Barbados, representatives of LGBTQI+ organizations were empowered to develop action plans to guide consultations for the country's constitutional review process, thanks to technical support from the Joint Programme. In addition, a national needs assessment survey among LGBTQI+ communities in Barbados and Jamaica provided crucial insights into the numerous challenges facing this community, including stigma in health-care settings. The exercise was facilitated through the strategic support which the Joint Programme provided to the UNDP-led "Being LGBTI in the Caribbean" project. The Central American LGBTQI+ survey also revealed vulnerabilities and violence against people from the LGBTQI+ community, as well as barriers to health and legal services in five central American countries (UNDP).

Empowering communities to support women and girls survivors of violence.

In a concerted effort to [combat gender-based violence and support women and girls deeply affected by gang violence and warfare in Haiti](#), a landmark initiative has been launched by UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and the UNAIDS Secretariat in partnership with the nongovernmental organizations Refuge des Femmes d'Haiti and FOSREF.

The project's multifaceted and integrated approach aims to empower individuals and communities by providing support to survivors of violence, advocating for legal reforms to protect the rights of women and girls, building capacity to strengthen livelihoods, and implementing educational programmes to raise awareness about gender-based violence, HIV prevention and SRH. By engaging with and empowering local communities and leveraging the expertise of the Joint Programme, the initiative seeks to create lasting change to prevent HIV and assist women and girls in Haiti in overcoming the multiple challenges they face.

UBRAF Outcome 3: Increased availability of effective, equitable and sustainable systems to achieve and maintain the 2025 targets, through robust financing for national budgets and community responses, greater service integration for people-centred delivery, expanded HIV service access in emergency settings, and effective pandemic preparedness and responses.

The Joint Programme supported integration and expansion of HIV, social protection and other humanitarian services in the region. Qualitative studies in eight countries generated strategic evidence on the needs and challenges preventing people living with HIV from accessing social protection programmes. The findings revealed significant gaps in existing public policies for the social protection of people living with HIV, including nutrition security and access to housing (WFP). Another analysis of income security among people living with HIV in Jamaica highlighted the challenges experienced by young women and young mothers living with and affected by HIV, including stigma and discrimination, which block their access to the labour market and leave them uninformed about existing social programmes. In response to the findings, local women's organizations used communication strategies and products to promote access to available services for people living with HIV (UN Women).

Following these studies, the Joint Programme supported various initiatives, including capacity building for health-care and social service professionals, as well as further integration of HIV and social protection programmes. In Colombia, socioeconomic inclusion of vulnerable and key populations—including people living with HIV, refugees and migrants—improved access to services and adherence to treatment (UNHCR). The Dominican Republic's social protection scheme is providing wider inclusion of key populations as a result of support from the Joint Programme and coordination with civil society organizations. In Paraguay, representatives of government and civil society organizations designed a new strategy to overcome the barriers preventing key populations from accessing social protection services, following the gap assessment completed in 2022 (UNDP). In Colombia, 228 people living with HIV and people from key populations benefited from economic support from the national health-care and employment sectors following advocacy by the Joint Programme. In addition, financial support to start-up enterprises run by vulnerable people in Haiti, including persons living with or affected by HIV, enabled them to strengthen their livelihoods, protect themselves against gender-based violence and improve their health (UNHCR).

The Ministries and Health Secretariats of Central America and the Dominican Republic agreed in December 2023, through a binding resolution, to develop a roadmap for pursuing a sustainable HIV response.

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