

Botswana 2022-2023

Summary of the Joint Programme's support to the national HIV response in 2022-2023

Total Joint Programme
expenditure in 2022-2023:

US\$ 3 482 269



The Joint Programme continued its strategic support to Botswana to remain on the path to elimination of vertical transmission of HIV. For instance, 185 healthcare providers working on prevention of vertical transmission in 74 facilities received supervision and training on service delivery, while data clerks improved their capacity of data management and birth cohorts in five District Health Management Teams. A new road map for the certification of elimination of vertical transmission was developed; the national integrated HIV and tuberculosis guidelines have been revised to include expansion of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) services for pregnant and breastfeeding women; and a readiness assessment of viral load testing at Point of Care was completed to ensure the country remained on track to achieving the elimination.

Access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information and services among adolescents and young people improved in Botswana, thanks to the financial and technical support from the Joint Programme. For example, more than 80 religious leaders received training on SRHR and integrated these services in their religious programmes, including Sunday schools, sermons and youth programmes. In 40 schools, 290 teachers and teacher trainers were empowered to implement programmes designed to eliminate sexual and gender-based violence among students aged 12-19 years. Over 8570 students were educated on gender equality and sexual and gender-based violence. They also developed essential skills in areas such as communication for respectful relationships, bystander intervention, help-seeking, and peer support (UN Women, UNAIDS Secretariat). Additionally, a national harmonized monitoring and reporting framework for adolescents and young people, HIV and SRHR was developed; and data collection tools for the new framework were piloted in three sites through support to the National AIDS and Health Promotion Agency (UNICEF).

In June 2023, Botswana joined the Education Plus initiative to address issues facing young people, including high levels of school dropouts due to teenage pregnancies and other structural challenges (UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, UNESCO, UNAIDS Secretariat). In addition, 100 adolescents and young people and 50 young mothers highlighted their challenges and service barriers during two satellite symposia hosted by the First Lady of Botswana, with support from the Joint Programme (UNICEF, UNESCO, UNAIDS Secretariat). Intensive advocacy and technical assistance from the Joint Programme led to the Government's development of a comprehensive national operational plan, which will strengthen ministerial planning and budgeting process for education guided by the Education Plus initiative (UNFPA, UNESCO, UNAIDS Secretariat).

As part of the *HeForShe* initiative, 580 men participated in biweekly dialogues on positive health seeking behaviours and changing harmful norms. These sessions were also accompanied by HIV testing services. In addition, over 200 men received training on positive role modelling. Several media practitioners also improved their capacity on gender sensitive reporting and reached 50 000 people on social media with their messaging (UN Women, UNAIDS Secretariat).

The Sustainability and Transition Readiness Assessment strengthened strategic evidence and identified key sustainability and transition risks, including financing, health systems, civil society engagement, human right, governance and coordination that need to be addressed to ensure the sustainability of the national response. In follow up, a sustainability roadmap with strategic actions, time bound implementation plans, funding and accountability mechanisms was developed and a Joint Oversight Committee was established to facilitate a successful sustainability and transition by 2030 (UNAIDS Secretariat).

KEY RESULTS

- A new road map for the certification of elimination of vertical transmission on HIV, healthcare capacity building and services improvement further advanced progress on the path to elimination.
- Botswana joined the Education Plus initiative and pledged to address challenges facing young people, including teenage pregnancy related school dropouts.
- More than 8000 students improved their knowledge of gender equality, sexual and gender-based violence and peer support.
- A Sustainability and Transition Readiness Assessment and a sustainability roadmap guide progress for a successful sustainable response by 2030.

Joint UN Team
on AIDS

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