

BURKINA FASO

Report prepared by the Joint UN Team on AIDS

JOINT TEAM

UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, WHO, WORLD BANK, UNAIDS SECRETARIAT, IOM

JOINT PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTIONS AND RESULTS IN 2020-2021

In Burkina Faso, the Joint Team and other development partners made substantial financial and technical contributions to develop and implement a national plan aimed at ensuring the continuity of HIV services during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the expansion of multimonth dispensing of antiretroviral treatment for eligible people living with HIV across the country. Following a needs assessment of people living with HIV and key populations, the Joint Team collaborated with a national network of people living with HIV to implement cash transfer programmes in several regions to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic. A new national plan was developed, service providers were trained, and point of care equipment and reagents were procured to accelerate progress towards the elimination of vertical transmission of HIV, hepatitis B, and syphilis. Intensive advocacy and technical support led to a proposed revision of the HIV law for the increased protection of people living with HIV. Information materials on national and international legal laws and policies on human rights related HIV were developed and community and religious leaders were trained to address human rights, stigma, discrimination in Burkina Faso.

HIV TESTING AND TREATMENT

Accelerating progress towards achieving the first 90 target (HIV testing) has been one of the main focuses of the Joint Team in Burkina Faso. Hence, the Joint Team provided technical assistance for the development of an operational plan, capacity building of stakeholders, and creation of guidelines and other normative documents to support the phased pilot implementation of differentiated service delivery models. These models will be executed at both the health facility and community levels, with a focus on young people, women, and key populations.

The Joint Team provided technical support the Government to develop and implement a national plan to ensure continuity of HIV prevention, testing, and treatment services during the COVID-19 pandemic, while strengthening the health system's resilience. The national plan was funded by the Government, bilateral and multilateral partners, the private sector, and individual contributions—the Joint Team contributed US\$ 720 000 to support the implementation of HIV programmes comprised in the national plan. The Ministry of Health was also supported in developing a contingency plan focusing on COVID-19 prevention and multimonth dispensing (MMD) for antiretroviral treatment to improve treatment adherence and the health outcome of

people living with HIV. By the end of 2021, an estimated 60% of the people living with HIV under treatment were able to access their treatment through the MMD programme with support from the Joint Team and the Global Fund.

Through technical and financial assistance, the National Network for Greater Involvement of People Living with AIDS (REGIPIV) conducted a rapid survey to identify the impact COVID-19 and the needs of people living with HIV and key populations. Findings revealed that the pandemic-related social restrictions and loss of income refrained people from these groups from accessing HIV services and leading a safe and healthy life. In response, the Joint Team collaborated with REGIPIV in the implementation of a cash transfer programme benefiting 1000 vulnerable people, including people living with HIV and key populations (686 of whom were women) in Boucle du Mouhoun, Centre North, East, North, and Sahel regions.

Under the COVAX initiative, the Joint Team supported the Government to scale up access to COVID-19 vaccination for 2 164 329 people, including people living with HIV by the end of 2021.

ELIMINATION OF MOTHER-TO-CHILD TRANSMISSION OF HIV

The Joint Team provided technical assistance for the development and validation of the National Plan for the Triple Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV, Hepatitis B and Syphilis 2021-2023, incorporating inputs from the evaluation of the current plan. This was followed by the capacity building of service providers and relevant stakeholders to improve their understanding of the new vertical elimination plan and guidelines, and data collection tools.

To improve early infant diagnosis among HIV-exposed children, the Joint Team procured 12 point of care testing equipment and reagents for 12 regions.

HUMAN RIGHTS, STIGMA, AND DISCRIMINATION

As a result of technical support by the Joint Team, an information material on national and international legal laws and policies on human rights in relation to HIV was developed and distributed to key stakeholders, including activists to support their advocacy and awareness-raising activities on gender, human rights, and HIV.

In follow up of its advocacy efforts, the Joint Team worked with the Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+) and other key partners to propose amendments to the national law on HIV, *Loi portant sur la lutte contre le VIH/Sida et la protection des personnes vivant avec le VIH*. The revised draft law, which seeks to improve HIV testing and the protection of people living with HIV, is currently awaiting approval and adoption by the National Assembly.

The Joint Team supported capacity building for 59 religious, customary, associative leaders, magistrates, judicial police officers, members of the penitentiary chain, and people from key populations on stigma and discrimination, human rights, and HIV including communication, social mediation techniques and legal frameworks.

INVESTMENT AND EFFICIENCY

In the area of strategic information and monitoring, support was provided to national counterparts to produce Global AIDS Monitoring reports, and the development of the national monitoring and evaluation plan for the National HIV Strategic Plan 2021-2025. The Joint Team also provided guidance and support to several technical committees responsible for the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting of HIV programmes.

In 2020, the Joint Team's technical assistance to the Country Coordinating Mechanism led to the mobilization and programmatic prioritization of more than US\$ 200 million from the Global Fund. Over US\$ 10 million were also mobilized from the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTEGRATED SDG AGENDA

The Joint Team made valuable contribution to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 (Zero hunger) and 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) in Burkina Faso. For instance, capacity building training was conducted for 26 health workers from Educo, Gourcy, Séguénéga, Persis and Yako cities to improve their skills on monitoring people with severe malnutrition and with complications. The training also covered the referrals of malnourished children living with HIV to Nutritional Recovery Centres (CRENs) in health facilities in the North region—CRENs are also used to extend family index testing services. The training was followed with two supervisions and follow-up activities to further support the trained health workers. Through this initiative, and in collaboration with the nongovernmental organization AMMIE, food baskets were distributed to 150 mothers accompanying severely malnourished children with complications to treatment appointments in CRENs. Twenty-two children aged 6-59 months and seven pregnant and lactating women living with HIV were also treated for malnutrition.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The COVID-19 pandemic and the humanitarian crisis in Burkina Faso continued to disrupt HIV service delivery, particularly for internally displaced populations. These challenges coupled with decreasing HIV funding and the shifting of human and financial resources away from the HIV response remained a challenge in the country's progress towards the global AIDS targets.

There is also a need for concerted efforts to improve access to paediatric treatment and viral load testing.

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