

# BURUNDI

*Report prepared by the Joint UN Team on AIDS*

## PROGRESS TOWARDS THE FAST-TRACK TARGETS

COUNTRY PRIORITIES/ TARGETS BY END OF 2021	STATUS	RESULTS, END OF 2020
By end of 2021, 96.0% of people living with HIV know their status; 95.9% of those who know their status have access to quality treatment and care; and 95.9% of those on treatment have an undetectable viral load.	<b>ON TRACK</b>	By the end of 2020, 86.1% of people living with HIV know their status, and over 99.9% of those are under antiretroviral treatment (ART). 89.6% of people living with HIV on treatment have an undetectable viral load (data from the National AIDS Programme).
Elimination of mother-to-child transmission and paediatric care.	<b>SLOW PROGRESS</b>	Mother to child transmission was estimated at 16.39% in 2020 (data from the National AIDS Programme).
HIV prevention services and access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services for young people and adolescents, particularly those living with HIV.	<b>SLOW PROGRESS</b>	With the Joint Team's support, more than 3000 adolescent and young people were reached by an awareness-raising campaign on social media—and related workshop and digital platform—on HIV prevention and unwanted pregnancies in 2020.
Building capacity on HIV prevention services for female sex workers and other key populations.	<b>ON TRACK</b>	In 2020, more than 300 sex workers received capacity building on HIV prevention, the use of contraception, and voluntary HIV testing. Solidarity groups were established to promote the socio-economic development of sex workers.

### JOINT TEAM

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

## JOINT PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTIONS AND RESULTS IN 2020

*Technical assistance provided by the Joint UN Team on AIDS has resulted in updated guidelines for HIV testing and treatment, especially in paediatric care; and supervision and monitoring of district healthcare strengthened progress towards the 90-90-90 targets in Burundi in 2020. Awareness-raising on prevention, SRH and violence against women among young people and the general population has been another focus of the Joint Team, reducing harmful traditional practices and supporting communities to increase their access to antenatal care (ANC), prevention of HIV mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) and SRH health services.*

### TESTING AND TREATMENT

#### TECHNICAL SUPPORT; CAPACITY BUILDING

New approaches in the care of people living with HIV/AIDS have been implemented in Burundi based on the revision of the HIV treatment guidelines according to the 2019 WHO recommendations. The implementation plans of targeted testing, index testing and self-testing are ongoing to further increase the efficiency of testing programmes.

To accelerate the decentralisation of ARV treatment and the implementation of the new guidelines for ARV testing and treatment, supervision and monitoring sessions were conducted at 31 sites that provide care for people living with HIV in Muramvya, Kirundo, Rumonge and Bujumbura. Results from these visits showed that the new guidelines for index testing are implemented at different levels of effectiveness, but the introduction of Dolutegravir-based regimens is on track. Clinical mentoring missions were also organised in 32 of the 47 districts to strengthen the capacity of providers in HIV paediatric care, training 469 providers in 165 HIV care sites on the new testing and ARV treatment guidelines.

A national study on stigma and discrimination (Stigma Index 2.0) was carried out at the end of 2020, covering a sample of 722 people living with HIV; 41.8% of those surveyed indicated they had experienced different forms of stigma and discrimination while accessing healthcare services, and 57.2% had experienced self-stigmatisation over the past 12 months.

### HIV PREVENTION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE, WOMEN AND KEY POPULATIONS

#### TECHNICAL SUPPORT; CAPACITY BUILDING; COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

An awareness-raising campaign on HIV prevention and unwanted pregnancies was launched via social networks to strengthen the skills, knowledge and capacities of adolescents and young people to protect themselves from HIV and increase access to SRH services. The campaign was accompanied by an information and sensitisation workshop for 40 adolescent and youth leaders from 20 schools and youth organisations, and a digital platform, reaching 3000 adolescents and young people. In addition, the Joint Team supported the set up of school clubs in three high schools, for peer mentoring on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and early pregnancy in schools.

45 men and women, including 25 members from groups of young boys from HIV/AIDS organisations and traditional leaders, benefited from capacity building on positive cultural practices for the promotion of ANC, PMTCT, HIV prevention, and prevention and mitigation of the impact of violence against women during a two-day workshop. The same messages were communicated through awareness-raising sessions on the promotion of positive masculinity for at least 125 couples in the five communes of Rumonge by members of youth groups.

By the end of 2020, 300 female sex workers from the provinces of Kirundo, Ngozi, Kayanza, Rumonge and Rutana were reached with information and services on voluntary HIV testing, prevention of GBV and SRH, and especially on the use of contraceptive methods. Support was also given to facilitate the formation of eight solidarity groups among female sex workers to improve their socio-economic development; resource mobilization and capacity building workshops on basic sewing techniques enabled 240 female sex workers to set up income-generating activities through sewing houses.

## **CONTRIBUTION TO THE COVID-19 RESPONSE**

### **TECHNICAL SUPPORT; ADVOCACY; CAPACITY BUILDING**

Technical assistance and advocacy from the Joint Team supported the implementation of mitigation measures as part of the government's national contingency plan for the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, to ensure continuity of HIV treatment services, the implementation of multi-month dispensing (MMD) of ARVs (3-6 months) was accelerated, with the inclusion of all people living with HIV under treatment, rather than just those who are stable.

Personal protective equipment was provided to the clinic of the National Network of Young People living with HIV in Bujumbura, and a toolkit was created to support young people to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. The toolkit included posters on barrier measures (such as hygiene practices, reduced public gatherings, and social distancing), which were produced and posted in 12 schools in four provinces (Bujumbura-Mairie, Bujumbura, Bubanza and Cibitoke), and three programmes were broadcasted by the most popular radio stations.

## **CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTEGRATED SDG AGENDA**

### **TECHNICAL SUPPORT; CAPACITY BUILDING**

Contributing to SDG 2 to end hunger, the Joint Team collaborated with the National Programme on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections to provide support to the National Integrated Food and Nutrition Programme (PRONIANUT). For instance, a Facilitator's Guide for training on the Integrated Package of Essential Nutrition Services (PISEN) was developed and validated in March 2020, and 31 trainers from provincial and health district levels were trained. The trainers built capacity of a further 129 health care providers and health mediators from the provinces of Bujumbura, Gitega and Kirundo.

PERSISTING AND EMERGING CHALLENGES AND BOTTLENECKS	KEY FUTURE ACTIONS TO RESPOND TO CHALLENGES AND UNBLOCK BOTTLENECKS
<p>The COVID-19 pandemic slowed down the implementation of field activities and formative supervision as part of clinical mentoring and coaching. There were delays in the acquisition of specialised nutritional products.</p>	<p>Technical support will be provided for the use of SIDAINFO and the unique identifier system to control the active files of people living with HIV and the provision of quality HIV services.</p>
<p>The lack of funds for the HIV response in 2020 resulted in a reduced scope of planned activities and failure to meet targets.</p>	<p>Support resource mobilization efforts to diversify sources of funding for the HIV response in Burundi.</p>
<p>The third national forum of young people living with HIV was planned for 2020, but due to COVID-19 it was postponed until 2021.</p>	<p>Support preparation and roll out of the third national forum, which was rescheduled to mid-2021.</p> <p>Support initiatives that promote SRH among young people and adolescents, including through providing support to youth-friendly health centres, youth centres and schools.</p>
<p>Social norms preventing men’s engagement on ANC and PMTCT at the family and community level, and their low uptake of HIV testing, clearly hamper the support of men in reproductive health promotion activities, including prenatal counselling, HIV prevention and family planning.</p>	<p>Support the implementation of the ‘Final stretch towards e-MTCT’ approach.</p> <p>Support the establishment of communal networks of 400 couples to serve as models in terms of men engagement in early prenatal consultations, domestic work, etc. The model couple will mobilise community members in the fight against violence towards women and in the promotion of prenatal counselling and PMTCT, while promoting positive practices and social norms.</p>
<p>According to the 2020 Stigma Index, people living with HIV in Burundi continue to experience stigma and discrimination, which reduces their ability to access health services.</p>	<p>Support a PEPFAR-funded campaign led by networks of people living with HIV to disseminate the results of the Stigma Index on HIV-related stigma and discrimination towards people living with HIV to raise awareness on their rights and to further prevent stigma and discrimination among the general population.</p> <p>Following the adoption and promulgation of the revised Law of 12 May 2005 on the legal protection of people living with HIV by the Burundian parliament, provide support to roll out awareness-raising activities for the protection of people living with HIV at community level.</p>
<p>Challenges in reaching key populations include the lack of an enabling environment and the insufficiency of resources.</p>	<p>Support roll-out of a capacity building project of 100 female sex workers in basic sewing techniques, in order to strengthen their socio-economic development.</p>

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