

CHINA

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
Children, adolescents, and adults living with HIV access testing services, know their HIV status, and are linked to high-quality health services in a timely manner.	ON TRACK	In 2020, the government adjusted policy during COVID outbreak ensuring provision of HIV treatment services to people living with HIV and communities; a total of 280 million HIV tests were conducted in China, a 5% increase compared to 2019. As of 2020, 1.5 million people living with HIV in China knew their HIV status, of whom 93% were on treatment, and 96% of those on treatment achieved viral suppression (GAM 2021).
National elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (eMTCT) strategy generated and rolled out in the country to reach the goal of eMTCT.	ON TRACK	The Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV, Syphilis and Hepatitis B pilot programme rolled out in three provinces concluded in 2020 and the national eMTCT plan was developed and is ready for implementation. Mother-to-child transmission of HIV declined from 5.6% in 2016 to 3.6% in 2020 (GAM 2021).
Young people, key populations and their partners have increased access to combination HIV prevention services.	ON TRACK	97% of China AIDS Fund for NGOs (CAFNGO) supported community services continued implementation during COVID-19 outbreak. Truvada was approved for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in China. Under the leadership of the National Center for AIDS/STD Control and Prevention (NCAIDS), a PrEP pilot programme is planned to expand from 6 cities to 120 China Comprehensive AIDS Response Programme (China CARES) sites during 2021-2025.

<p>National partners have improved capacity to address discrimination and inequality towards people living with or affected by HIV.</p>	<p>ON TRACK</p>	<p>Advocacy campaigns addressing stigma and discrimination toward people living with HIV and COVID-19 organized; Policy on HIV prevention at ports revised to remove barriers for international people living with HIV while entering China.</p>
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JOINT TEAM

UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UN WOMEN, ILO, UNESCO, WHO, UNAIDS SECRETARIAT, IOM

JOINT PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTIONS AND RESULTS IN 2020

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, China strived to ensure the continuity of HIV services across the country which the UN Joint Team contributed to through needs assessment, technical guidance for innovative approaches, support for civil society organizations and knowledge sharing. Capacity building for healthcare providers, public sensitization and HIV testing among young people and key populations, and technical support to scale up prevention of mother-to-child transmission services were provided to advance the HIV response in 2020. The Joint Team also supported efforts to strengthen and expand comprehensive sexual education for children, adolescents, and young people and train teachers improving their awareness on gender inequality and school bullying. In addition to fostering partnerships with various academia and other institutions, the Joint Team facilitated and supported south-south HIV response learning and cooperation between China, Africa and other Asia and Pacific countries.

HIV TESTING AND TREATMENT

UPSTREAM ADVOCACY; TECHNICAL SUPPORT; FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS

The national HIV testing guideline was updated and aligned with WHO recommendations and a technical committee for HIV testing was established under China AIDS Association to promote HIV testing technique development and innovation.

The annual HIV testing campaign led by the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention reverberated HIV prevention and testing among professionals, civil society, and young people. Similarly, the BlueD led ‘My Youth’ annual HIV testing, and treatment campaign promoted HIV self-testing among young people and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons. These initiatives contributed towards the total of 280 million HIV tests conducted in China in 2020, a 5% increase compared to 2019. A short video on drawbacks of late HIV diagnosis was also developed and disseminated during these campaigns.

A study on accessibility of antiretroviral treatment (ART) in China was completed, and a proposal was developed for the inclusion of Dolutegravir in the national guidelines as free first-line regimen—final approval by National Health Commission is underway. A joint study with Beijing University was initiated to identify impacts of poverty on access to HIV care and treatment services in five high HIV burden provinces in western China.

As a result of support provided to the National Tuberculosis Programme, a national technical specification for tuberculosis prevention and control was completed and launched incorporating WHO policy recommendations and evidence from global best practices. Meanwhile, intensive advocacy and technical support led to the implementation of a national pilot programme for the elimination of Hepatitis C (HCV) in 60 higher HCV burden counties in 31 provinces. The pilot programme includes micro-elimination approaches targeting vulnerable populations, including people living with HIV in selected provinces.

ELIMINATION OF MOTHER-TO-CHILD TRANSMISSION OF HIV POLICY DIALOGUE; TECHNICAL SUPPORT; PARTNERSHIPS

A pilot elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (eMTCT) programme was implemented in Yunnan, Guangdong, and Zhejiang during 2017-2020 with the support from the Joint Team. Continuous technical and financial support was provided to the National Health Commission (NHC) to document experiences from the eMTCT pilot programme, aiming to guide the scale up of this programme cross the country. A survey questionnaire was also finalised for the evaluation exercise based on global eMTCT validation guidance, and a consultation meeting and an online training course on development of best practices were conducted to support the expansion of the eMTCT programme.

Two training sessions on eMTCT were conducted for local maternal health workers in Yunnan and Beijing enabling the participants to share lessons learned from implementing the eMTCT pilot project in the three provinces. In December 2020, eMTCT pre-certification assessments were also completed in the three pilot provinces to test the eMTCT validation tools and identify gaps in preparedness for the formal WHO eMTCT certification.

The scale-up plan for the National Integrated Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV, syphilis, and Hepatitis B Programme, incorporating the WHO global eMTCT validation criteria, was developed in consultation with experts, women living with HIV, civil society, and development partners.

COMBINATION PREVENTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND KEY POPULATIONS POLICY ADVICE; TECHNICAL SUPPORT; COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In partnership with the National Centre for AIDS/STD Control and Prevention (NCAIDS), an online self-risk assessment tool was developed and adopted by main digital-based intervention platforms to promote internet-based HIV prevention programmes tailored for young people and key populations.

Multiple short videos, animations, graphics, and key messages on HIV prevention, including condom use, sexually transmitted infection (STI) screening, HIV self-test, PrEP/PEP and U=U were developed and shared using social media, digital platforms, and key public figures to promote HIV prevention services among young people and decision-makers.

As a result of technical support to the Child Sexuality Education Project Team at the Beijing Normal University around 200 items on various comprehensive sexual education (CSE) topics, including HIV prevention, sexual and reproductive health, and gender diversity were published on the Baidu Encyclopaedia. The Joint Team also supported capacity building on CSE for hundreds of senior schoolteachers in Qinghai province. In collaboration with the China Family Planning Association and China Youth Network, young people in 120 universities increased their knowledge on HIV prevention.

The Chinese Association of STD & AIDS Prevention and Control was supported to establish several technical committees to promote the implementation and innovation on specific areas of HIV response, such as new media and digital technology, PrEP, HIV testing, surveillance and evaluation.

The Joint Team contributed towards the 2020-2021 China AIDS Fund for non-governmental organizations' (CAFNGO) proposals review which approved US\$ 15.4 million to further support 920 community-led HIV prevention and testing projects planned for 2021-2022. The Joint Team also facilitated collaboration between Durex China and CAFNGO, which donated 140 000 pieces of condoms to various community-based organizations to support HIV prevention and testing initiatives financed by the Fund.

GENDER INEQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION POLICY DIALOGUE; ADVOCACY; CAPACITY BUILDING

A multi-disciplinary survey was supported by the Joint Team in 2020 to understand the level of vulnerability and inequality people living with HIV experienced while accessing healthcare services, including youth and elderly population-friendly HIV services, and pursuing decent work. Results will be jointly released by Joint Team in middle of 2021 to advocate fair employment and better healthcare services for people living with HIV.

As a result of financial and technical support to the China National LGBTI Community, a Youth Leadership Forum was organized galvanizing more than 100 participants, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons (LGBT) from across China to deliberate on issues ranging from gender equality to youth leadership. 10 training workshops were also organized that improved the knowledge of more than 800 young LGBTI people and representatives of partner organizations on legal and policy advocacy, CSE, public and government relations, HIV and health, resource mobilization, and media relations.

The Joint Team provided technical support for an online gender education program for about 250 teachers, organized by the Gender-friendly Teacher Network funded by the Gender-friendly Campus Fund.

Another online learning program on prevention of school bullying benefited 73 schoolteachers and social workers. Similar awareness messages were also disseminated during various publicity events during the commemoration of International Day against School Violence and Bullying, and through social media outlets.

Additionally, information, education and communication materials for pre-departure and arrival orientation were developed and will be disseminated to Chinese overseas companies to improve their understanding of HIV epidemic and HIV-related discrimination and fair employment in destination countries. The development of an online training platform is underway for a launch in 2021.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

The Joint Team continued to monitor and guide HIV programmes and service delivery for people living with HIV and key populations during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, four online assessments were conducted to identify healthcare needs of people living with HIV, risks associated with disruption of facility- and community-led HIV services, and socio-economic impact of COVID-19 at the beginning, during and after effective control of the pandemic, particularly in poor rural areas. Finding and recommendations from these surveys were used by national partners to address the needs of people living with HIV.

In partnership with NHC and NCAIDS/STD, the national policy on multi-month dispensing (MMD) of ART was reviewed and implemented to accommodate a three-month dispensing improving adherence to treatment among more than 90% people living with HIV on ART in China. US\$ 27 000 worth of medical apparatuses and personal protection equipment were donated to the Government of China, Hubei province and civil society organizations to ensure continuity of facility-based HIV and community-led support services among vulnerable

populations during the pandemic. Between February and May 2020, a COVID-19 hotline established by the Wuhan LGBT Center and the Joint Team provided COVID-19 and HIV prevention and treatment counselling services to an estimated 6500 people including people living with HIV and key populations.

The Joint Team in China in coordination with UNAIDS country offices in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin, and North America secured access to ART for more than 40 Chinese and other foreign nationals living with HIV, who were stranded outside their countries or residential areas due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions. Similarly, three webinars were also organized enabling more than 350 doctors in Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan and members of the Global HIV Prevention Coalition to discuss experiences of COVID-19 response in Wuhan and across China and continuity of HIV services during the pandemic.

A virtual workshop under the theme *2020 South-South HIV Response Collaboration and Communication* was held during 10-11 December, enabling 29 participants from eight countries in Asia-Pacific and Africa to share knowledge and experience on continuity of HIV prevention services during COVID-19 pandemic. Six feature stories on continuity of HIV prevention and treatment services among people living with HIV and key populations in China during COVID-19 pandemic were developed and disseminated globally to promote the development of friendly healthcare services for people living with HIV and key populations during COVID-19.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTEGRATED SDG AGENDA

The Joint Team supported analysis of judicial rulings of LGBT right-based legal cases to encourage evidence-based decision-making in future judicial rulings and legal advocacy in China. Rights-focussed legal advocacy civil society organizations were also established to engage law practitioners and extend legal counsel and aid services to their communities.

People living with HIV and key populations were listed as vulnerable populations in the newly approved United Nations Sustainable Development Corporation Framework for China (UNSDCF 2021-2025) to ensure that no one is left behind in the national health, education, and development efforts. Thematic and results groups were also established with the support from Joint Team to address all HIV-related issues in the joint workplan planning and implementation.

PERSISTING AND EMERGING CHALLENGES AND BOTTLENECKS	KEY FUTURE ACTIONS TO RESPOND TO CHALLENGES AND UNBLOCK BOTTLENECKS
<p>The national COVID-19 response diverted domestic and international human and financial resources straining the HIV and other health programmes in China.</p>	<p>Provide technical support to ensure new global strategy to be adopted in the developing of 14th Five-Year Action Plan on HIV Response in China.</p>
<p>The targeted HIV response needs to be further strengthened to address high rates of HIV late diagnoses.</p>	<p>Support the implementation of expanded PITC in healthcare settings and HIV self-test strategy through CBO networks and platform.</p>
<p>Antiretroviral medicines included in the national free ART programme are outdated.</p>	<p>Advocate for long-acting and less toxic first-line ART regimens for people living with HIV through a cost-effective analysis on different regimens.</p>
<p>New HIV infection among young people and key populations was still high due to failure to adopt new prevention strategy, such as scaling up of PrEP.</p>	<p>Support the development and implementation of national PrEP guideline in China CAREs project and mobilize the demands in the communities.</p>
<p>Stigma and discrimination continue to hamper expansion of prevention, treatment, and care programmes among key populations and people living with HIV.</p>	<p>Intensify advocacy to uphold the basic rights of people living with HIV in China to decent work, and enable foreign people living with HIV to enter, stay and reside in the country with provisions for treatment and care.</p>
<p>Despite improvements in the quality and transparency of HIV data, lack of disaggregated data by age, gender, and region remains a key challenge in planning, implementing, and evaluating HIV prevention, treatment, and anti-discrimination programmes, as well as limiting the effectiveness of upstream policy dialogue.</p>	<p>Provide financial and technical to NCAIDS on improving HIV surveillance system and support developing a monitoring and evaluation framework for the 14th Action Plan.</p>
<p>The importance of HIV response and China's increasing influence in global health diplomacy were not well recognized and leveraged by national and international partners.</p>	<p>Provide technical and financial support to expand the scope of the South-South cooperation and China-Africa collaboration, including increasing access to medicines and local production; providing normative guidance on HIV to Chinese companies going abroad; leveraging Chinese financial and technological resources for health, and organizing the annual south-south training workshop.</p>

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