

FIJI

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 2021, at least 90% of people living with HIV who know their HIV status are on treatment, and more than 90% of them are virally suppressed. HIV comprehensive testing programme among key populations is intensified to reach at least 75% coverage.	SLOW PROGRESS	By 2020, 51% of people living with HIV know their status, and 79% of those HIV who know their status are on treatment (GAM 2021). No data available on viral suppression. By 2020, an estimated 984 men who have sex with men, 2043 transgender people, and 1167 female sex workers accessed voluntary HIV counselling and testing across nine Pacific Island countries (Global Fund, 2020).
By 2021, coverage of HIV prevention programmes among key populations, including young people increased to 50% using innovative approaches and models of service delivery.	SLOW PROGRESS	By 2020, an estimated 1549 men who have sex with men, 2149 transgender people, and 1167 female sex workers across nine Pacific Island countries were reached with HIV prevention programmes supported by the Global Fund grants (Global Fund, 2020).
By 2021, services are integrated into decentralised, strengthened health systems in the 14 Pacific Island countries.	NO PROGRESS	No progress has been made on this target in 2020 due to a national priority shift towards the COVID-19 pandemic.

JOINT TEAM

UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, WHO, UNAIDS SECRETARIAT

JOINT PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTIONS AND RESULTS IN 2020

In 2020, progress in Fiji's HIV response has been slow due to a national priority shift to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the Joint Team supported the Government to develop new and update existing guidelines aimed at scaling up of facility- and community-led HIV testing and treatment programmes in the country. The HIV/Syphilis dual diagnostic testing guideline will help Fiji introduce rapid HIV testing and boot referral pathways to community-based testing. Technical and financial support to civil society organizations and networks of people living with HIV and key populations enabled thousands of high-risk populations, including young people and sex workers to improve their knowledge around HIV prevention, treatment, drug use and harm reduction mechanisms. During the COVID-19 pandemic last year, the Joint Team also assisted in the procurement and distribution of testing commodities for Point-of-Care sites to perform COVID-19 tests. Income generating programmes were also supported to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on female sex workers, who lost their livelihoods due to the pandemic.

HIV TESTING AND TREATMENT

UPSTREAM ADVOCACY; TECHNICAL SUPPORT; FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS

Despite the low HIV prevalence in Fiji, key populations, particularly men who have sex with men, transgender people, female sex workers, and young people remain at high risk of HIV infection in the island. The Joint Team supported the Ministry of Health to complete the national antiretroviral treatment guidelines—aligned to the latest WHO standards with guides for transition to Dolutegravir—to direct the planning, implementation, and monitoring of antiretroviral therapy (ART) programmes in Fiji.

Additionally, sexually transmitted infection case management, and HIV/Syphilis dual diagnostic testing guidelines were developed to roll out rapid HIV testing, minimize the need for sophisticated laboratory equipment, and expand referral pathways for integrated community-led testing programmes in Fiji.

With support from the Joint Team, an implementation plan was also completed to establish a strong health information system that will inform the national HIV response and monitor care and treatment services among key populations.

HIV PREVENTION

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

In commemoration of the World Drug Day, the Joint Team supported a two-day HIV and drug awareness campaign in schools and villages targeting female sex workers and young people—in collaboration with the National Drug Taskforce. The campaign reached over 10 000 people and distributed 5000 information, education, and communication (IEC) materials, 2000 condoms and lubricants, and held sexuality education sessions led by the Fiji Youth SRHR Alliance, Rainbow Pride Fiji, and the Fiji Network for People Living with HIV (FJN+).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

The Joint Team provided technical and financial support to the Ministry of Health in the national COVID-19 response. Under a Global Fund grant, the Xpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2 cartridges were procured for the GeneXpert machines—a cartridge-based molecular tuberculosis, HIV, and viral load rapid testing—in all Point-of-Care sites to enable 11 Pacific Island countries to perform COVID-19 testing. An estimated 59 672 COVID-19 tests were conducted using these machines.

Following advocacy efforts and technical support from the Joint Team to ensure continuation of HIV services during the COVID-19 pandemic, multi-month dispensing (MMD) of ARVs was implemented in Fiji, with 77.6% of people living with HIV receiving up to 6-month treatment.

HIV prevention efforts were also sustained in 2020, including with virtual social and behaviour change communication sessions on HIV and STI, which reached an estimated 5000 adolescent and young people to promote safe and healthy life choices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTEGRATED SDG AGENDA

Cleaning and gardening equipment were procured by the Joint Team and donated to an income generating programme led by the Survival Advocacy Network Fiji (SAN Fiji) to support sex workers who faced loss of income and economic hardships due to the pandemic. Besides improving their access to shelter and food, this project should also reduce their vulnerability to violence and to acquiring HIV.

PERSISTING AND EMERGING CHALLENGES AND BOTTLENECKS	KEY FUTURE ACTIONS TO RESPOND TO CHALLENGES AND UNBLOCK BOTTLENECKS
<p>The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in strict social restrictions and lockdown measures creating significant challenge in HIV prevention and treatment, and drug-related harm reduction service delivery. Increase global demand for medical supplies and restrictions in movement of goods across borders further strained the HIV response in Fiji.</p> <p>HIV testing prevention programmes were suspended in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic-related restriction and lockdown measures.</p>	<p>Provide technical support to address HIV programming needs, such as minimizing possible treatment disruption due to stockouts and implementing telemedicine support for people living with HIV.</p> <p>Support civil society organizations to scale up condom distribution and innovative prevention outreach initiatives.</p>
<p>Slow progress in the national HIV response with limited data on key populations to guide programme planning and implementation.</p>	<p>Provide technical support to roll out key populations size estimations, particularly among men who have sex with men, transgender persons, and female sex workers at risk of HIV in 11 Pacific Island countries.</p>
<p>Despite high prevalence of cervical cancer, there are no available strategies in the Pacific Island countries to address it.</p>	<p>Support the development of a national cervical cancer strategy for all the Pacific Island countries, and advocate for the integration of HIV services.</p>

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