

JAMAICA

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 2022, Jamaica eliminates mother-to-child transmission of HIV.	ON TRACK	In 2020, Jamaica stayed below benchmark impact indicators. The HIV MTCT rate was 1.2%, and the annual rate for congenital syphilis 0.03%.
By 2021, communities are empowered to deliver 30% of HIV services, and advocacy is implemented for human rights and nondiscrimination legislation.	ON TRACK	In 2020, 33 community-led interventions to reduce stigma and discrimination were implemented in community, justice, health, education and workplace settings. A service mapping done in 2020 showed that community-led organizations provided service referrals, peer support, and counselling services to 10 000–12 000 people living with or at most risk of HIV.
By 2022, Jamaica has enacted protective and nondiscrimination legislation related to LGBTI communities, people living with HIV and women and girls.	ON TRACK	Antidiscrimination legislation was drafted. A legislative approach for the creation of the National Human Rights Institute was developed.

JOINT TEAM

UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UN WOMEN, WHO-PAHO, UNAIDS SECRETARIAT

JOINT PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTIONS AND RESULTS IN 2020

Whilst progress has been slow in increasing testing, treatment and prevention coverage overall, vertical transmission of HIV has been kept low in Jamaica, with sustained support to PMTCT services. Gains have been made in creating a more enabling environment for accessing HIV services and removing structural barriers. HIV-related stigma and discrimination is being tackled through community engagement, and technical assistance is being provided to support human rights and anti-discrimination legislation. National social media prevention and sexual and reproductive health campaigns for young people have been reinforced by youth-friendly training for health-care workers.

PREVENTION

POLICY ADVICE; TECHNICAL SUPPORT; COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Social media activities associated with the launch of a national HIV prevention campaign targeting young people generated 3,000 views. Popular social media influencers have participated in "live" discussion on issues relating to adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, girls' empowerment, HIV prevention and sexual decision-making skills. The campaign incorporated billboard messaging on safer sexual behaviours among adolescent girls and boys on six billboards in high-visibility points in Kingston & St Andrew, St Catherine and St James.

Campaigns were reinforced by an adolescent-friendly HIV testing and counselling tool, which was disseminated among 80 health-care workers. It provides information and guidance for serving the needs of adolescent survivors of sexual abuse and exploitation, adolescents from key population groups, and adolescents with low self-perceptions of risk. A further 100 health-care workers will be targeted in 2021.

Technical assistance was provided to draft a comprehensive condom and lubricant programme strategy (2021–2025) to support the National Family Planning Board in reducing barriers to people's access and use of male and female condoms and lubricants. Further work on validating and developing implementation and monitoring and evaluation plans are required before approval of the strategy in 2021.

GENDER EQUALITY, HUMAN RIGHTS, STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

POLICY DIALOGUE; TECHNICAL SUPPORT; PARTNERSHIPS

Young women living with HIV and survivors of sexual violence benefitted from a mentorship programme which enabled them to develop business proposals and access small grants. Young women also received psychosocial support, legal advice and information on available HIV and sexual and reproductive health services.

The Joint Team worked to secure a high-level commitment between Jamaica and the Global Partnership to eliminate all forms of HIV-related stigma and discrimination, providing technical support to the National Family Planning Board in restructuring its technical working group on human rights and the promotion of an enabling environment. Technical and financial resources supported the drafting of a model antidiscrimination legislation and the development of a National Human Rights Institution. A declaration of commitment to address stigma and discrimination was drafted as well, to be signed by political leaders as a follow-up to the 2011 Declaration, which the Prime Minister had signed.

Collaboration with TransWave Jamaica, a national NGO for transgender and gender nonconforming communities, produced a five-year comprehensive national transgender health strategy (2021–2026), based on desk-based review, needs assessment and focus group discussions. The strategy and its action plan will promote evidence-based care, education, research, public policy, and respect and dignity for trans, transgender and gender nonconforming Jamaicans, so they are free to pursue all aspects of their civic, social, economic, emotional and intellectual lives.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

Support was provided for the national network of people living with HIV to develop, launch and analyse a rapid survey on the needs of people living with HIV in the context of COVID-19. Resources were reallocated to provide psychosocial support, counselling and relief to women and girls, and to assist five CSOs in the procurement and provision of personal protective equipment for people living with HIV, women and girls, transgender and gender nonconforming communities. Further resources were mobilized through the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund to provide six months' worth of personal protective equipment to six CSOs working on HIV. Limited stocks of ARVs were supplemented with bilateral country donations from Brazil and Panama, sufficient to cover regimens for almost 100 patients for up to four months.

Access to critical services and information—covering HIV and COVID-19 services, gender-based violence support, pregnancy and antenatal care, youth engagement, LGBTI issues, and stigma and discrimination— was maintained through gender-sensitive integrated-risk communication and community engagement. This included the roll-out of an intense digital campaign via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, which reached more than 200 000 people across the Caribbean.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTEGRATED SDG AGENDA

The Joint Team's support for the drafting of a national Anti-Discrimination Legislation, the development of a legislative approach to create a National Human Rights Institute, and collaboration with the trans and gender nonconforming community to develop a legislative approach for a National Gender Identity Law are all efforts contributing towards stronger institutions, sustainable and more inclusive communities.

The reduction of inequalities and mainstreaming of gender equality are being integrated in the work of the Joint Team and across other SDGs, particularly health. The Joint Team collaborated under the Spotlight Initiative to ensure the inclusion of people living with HIV and key population in the implementation and planning of gender-based violence and COVID-19 activities. Activities included a gender-sensitive integrated risk communication and community engagement social media campaign, gender-based violence service mapping, gender-based violence identification, response and referral, training for social service providers and gender-based violence hotline telephone responders, and setting up toll-free hotline numbers.

PERSISTING AND EMERGING CHALLENGES AND BOTTLENECKS	KEY FUTURE ACTIONS TO RESPOND TO CHALLENGES AND UNBLOCK BOTTLENECKS
<p>COVID-19 has had a significant negative impact, forcing the Government to reallocate resources from HIV to the COVID-19 response, and creating delays and disruptions in service delivery (including viral load testing results). Implementation of a new national HIV adherence strategy and an HIV drug-resistance strategy were postponed.</p>	<p>Guide the development and implementation of the political advocacy strategy aimed to firmly position “ending AIDS” as a priority in the national development agenda.</p> <p>Organize a high-level meeting with parliamentarians to discuss the establishment of a parliamentary commission on HIV.</p> <p>Ensure that decision-makers are aware of the potential impact of HIV drug resistance on global targets and HIV programme sustainability.</p>
<p>There is further work to be done in implementing the 2019 regional and facility level eMTCT recommendations. Both patient- and health system-related challenges need to be addressed for Jamaica to achieve and sustain eMTCT status.</p>	<p>Support the Ministry of Health in ongoing PMTCT programmes assessments to achieve elimination status; support training and awareness for health-care workers, pregnant women and partners about HIV and congenital syphilis.</p> <p>In partnership with the Jamaican Community of Women Living with HIV and the Ministry of Health and Welfare, implement a programme to empower mentor mothers living with HIV.</p>
<p>The country lacks antidiscrimination legislation to country existing harmful laws, including those that criminalize same-sex relations, sex work, abortion, and some forms of drug possession and use.</p> <p>Stigma against people living with HIV remains high: when surveyed, 33% of participants report experiencing at least one form of stigma or discrimination due to their HIV status in the previous 12 months (Stigma Index Report, March 2020).</p>	<p>Advocate for the enactment of an antidiscrimination law, which has been drafted but requires further work for legislative approval.</p> <p>Advocate for the creation of a National Human Rights Institute and provide support to mobilize resources.</p> <p>Collaborate with Transwave Jamaica to cost a transgender health strategy, and advocate for its implementation and monitoring, and for the development of a legislative approach towards a national gender identity law.</p>
<p>Gender-based violence is worryingly widespread, with significant increases in reports of domestic violence and murders of women and girls, and a rise in calls to gender-based violence helplines during COVID-19.</p>	<p>Continue supporting the Spotlight Initiative to develop gender-based violence awareness and response in social media campaigns, training, mapping, identification and referrals.</p>

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