

# MOZAMBIQUE

*Report prepared by the Joint UN Team on AIDS*

## JOINT TEAM

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

## JOINT PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTIONS AND RESULTS IN 2020-2021

*The Joint Team in Mozambique worked with the Government, community-based organizations, and academia to scale up HIV prevention and sexual and reproductive health information and services for adolescents, young people, and key populations. Teachers were trained on the delivery of comprehensive sexuality education, youth-friendly centres were assisted to scale up access to services, and community-based organizations were financially supported to continue implementing various programmes, including HIV prevention among vulnerable communities and key populations. Financial and technical support was provided for the development and implementation of several strategies, guidelines, and studies to support prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and paediatric treatment programmes. The Joint Team also made significant contributions in transitioning all eligible people living with HIV to the Dolutegravir-based treatment regimen. During the COVID-19 pandemic, differentiated service delivery mechanisms and economic support programmes were executed, COVID-19 prevention information materials were distributed, and personal protective equipment were procured to ensure the continuity of HIV testing, treatment, and other essential services and the wellbeing of people living with HIV. A Legal Environment Assessment and the revision of various laws, including those related to HIV and domestic violence, were completed with an aim to remove legal and policy barriers to HIV services, and protect the human rights of all people in Mozambique. The Joint Team supported the implementation of the National HIV Workplace Policy for the public sector and the training of various stakeholders to overcome stigma, discrimination, and gender-based violence. Nearly US\$ 1 billion was mobilized to support the national HIV and tuberculosis responses, thanks to technical support provided by the Joint Team.*

## HIV PREVENTION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE AND KEY POPULATIONS

The Joint Team provided support to the National AIDS Council in the development of the 2020-2025 National Condom Strategy and operational plan. A condom promotion campaign was launched reaching close to four million regular radio listeners with radio spots on the consistent use of condoms as well as information on condom distribution sites; radio spots posted on Facebook also had 205 000 views. In 2020-2021, an estimated 132 813 663 male and 3 473 338 female condoms were distributed through health facilities and community partners across the country.

The Joint Team made significant contributions to the Rapariga Biz and the Spotlight initiatives—multisectoral programmes aimed at improving sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls—in Mozambique. As a result, 813 725 adolescent girls and young women were reached with HIV prevention information and practical skills in 2020-2021. Additionally, service referrals provided through these initiatives enabled 213 782 adolescent girls and young women to access youth-friendly HIV and sexual and reproductive health services of whom 1479 people who tested positive for HIV were enrolled on antiretroviral treatment (ART) and 5250 women and girls were provided with modern contraceptive methods. A total of 627 people were also trained on prevention of gender-based violence.

The Ministry of Education and Human Development was supported in strengthening human resources capacity and existing platforms for the delivery of comprehensive sexuality education. This included the training of 120 teachers improving their understanding on prevention of HIV, early and unintended pregnancies, school-related gender-based violence, child and forced marriages, and delivery of comprehensive sexuality education in Nampula and Zambezia provinces. In addition, 20 teachers from the Nampula province received training of trainers course and a certification to further support the rollout of comprehensive sexuality education.

The Joint Team provided technical assistance for the Religious Leaders Council in Mozambique (COREM) to engage 210 religious leaders in three sensitization workshops on civic and health education, including COVID-19 prevention in three districts of Maputo Province. After the workshops, these religious leaders subsequently launched initiatives targeting an estimated one million adolescents and young people living with HIV, their families, and communities.

### **ELIMINATION OF MOTHER-TO-CHILD TRANSMISSION OF HIV AND PAEDIATRIC TREATMENT**

In 2020-2021, extensive technical support was provided by the Joint Team to the Ministry of Health for the development of various national strategies and guidelines to improve access to prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT) and paediatric treatment services in the country. For instance, a costed Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV, Syphilis, and Hepatitis B Plan 2020-2024 and sub-national operational guidelines were developed and launched in collaboration with the First Lady of Mozambique. The National HIV Strategy for Faith-Based Organizations was also completed to strengthen their participation and commitment in reducing HIV-related vulnerability, stigma, and discrimination; increasing uptake of ART and paediatric treatment services; and improving treatment adherence among adults and children living with HIV.

The Ministry of Health was supported to develop the HIV retesting strategy and early infant diagnosis algorithm, which were integrated in 34 sites, while 109 operators were trained on the new algorithm. As a result, 9859 children were tested for HIV by the end of 2020 and 142 children were found HIV positive and linked to treatment.

The Joint Team assisted a study on vertical transmission among pregnant and breastfeeding adolescent girls and young women aged 15-24 years in Mozambique. The study showed that based on an 18-month testing and follow-up window, HIV-exposed children born to this group had 1.6 times higher risk of vertical transmission compared to those HIV-exposed children born to adult mothers aged 25 years and older.

### **HIV TESTING AND TREATMENT**

The Joint Team supported the Ministry of Health in completing the transition to Dolutegravir-based treatment regimen—all districts in Mozambique are now offering the optimized treatment. Various guidelines, plans, and training packages were also developed and rolled out to improve HIV and tuberculosis prevention and treatment services in the country. These included the National Tuberculosis Strategic and Operational Plan 2021-2030, the Global Fund Strategic Initiative for HIV Differentiated Service Delivery Plan, the Tuberculosis Preventive Treatment Plan, and the Advanced HIV Disease Plan.

With support from the Joint Team, the HIV Undetectable=Untransmittable (U=U) campaign was launched to widely promote the dual advantage of ART in leading a healthy life and protecting others. Under this campaign, 12 awareness raising events, four radio spots, and a television spot were developed and aired reaching an estimated 562 266 people. The Ministry of Health and the National AIDS Council were further assisted to rollout the national treatment literacy campaign and disseminate key HIV care and treatment messages in Portuguese and five local languages on 26 community radios for 90 days, and on public transportations in urban areas.

Bluebox Roadside Wellness Project—a mobile clinic offering HIV, tuberculosis, STI, and COVID-19 services in Beira transport corridor and other hotspot areas, with particular focus on adolescent girls and young women, female sex workers, and male truck drivers—reached 5258 people with STI screening and HIV testing and counselling services in 2020-2021. A total of 859 people were diagnosed and treated for various STIs and 51 people who tested positive for HIV were enrolled on ART. Around 12 813 individual and 204 group behaviour change communication sessions and two trainings on prevention of sexual assault and exploitation were conducted to improve the understanding of adolescent girls, young women, and female sex workers.

The Joint Team conducted training for 200 community health workers, and 20 female mentors living with HIV from the Kupulmusana network to increase their capacity of community-led service delivery. The trainees reached 750 adolescent girls and young women with youth-friendly HIV, tuberculosis, and STI services, of whom 225 tested positive for HIV and were enrolled on ART and the 36 women and girls found to be pregnant were linked to antenatal care services.

An online assessment of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on people living with HIV was completed with 452 participants through financial and technical assistance from the Joint Team. The assessment revealed a) the need to work closely with community groups and community-based organizations to improve access to HIV, social protection, food assistance, and transportation services among people living with HIV; b) the importance of ensuring the availability of additional support, such as childcare services and awareness messages while improving access to COVID-19 prevention commodities; and c) the urgency of implementing differentiated service delivery models, including home visits, and home-delivery of ART.

The COVID-19 pandemic, cyclone Kenneth, and the conflict in Mozambique affected the institutional and financial capacity of community-based organizations. To mitigate this, the Joint Team provided catalytic funding of US\$ 77 000 to Fundação Wiwanana and additional funds to Kaeria, Ntuge Biz, Tudo pela Vida and Karibu community-based organizations to implement various HIV and humanitarian programmes for people living with HIV and key populations in Metuge, Montepuez, and Pemba districts. As a result, 6400 displaced individuals living with HIV in resettlement camps and host communities were linked back to HIV treatment and care services.

In addition, four organizations of people living with HIV received technical and financial assistance of US\$ 20 000 to ensure continuity of community-led HIV services in support of health facilities in Maputo and Matola cities. As a result, 80 community activists were trained ensuring continuity of ART services for 13 500 people living with HIV who were transferred out of COVID-19 centres and/or receiving ART from high-volume health facilities; and 30 000 people living with HIV in the two cities were able to improve their knowledge on COVID-19 prevention. Moreover, to improve treatment adherence and health outcome of people living with HIV, food baskets comprising four-month of basic food item were distributed to 250 vulnerable people living with HIV in Maputo and Matola cities.

To strengthen the capacity of the formal and informal sectors in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, 150 informal sector peer educators were trained on COVID-19 prevention and the risks it presents for people living with HIV. Fifteen thousand copies of COVID-19 information materials were produced and disseminated in the workplace and 10 sewing machines were donated to five networks of people living with HIV to improve their livelihoods impacted by the pandemic.

In partnership with the South African private company, Reckitt Benckiser, US\$ 210 000 worth of personal protective equipment (PPE) were distributed to people living with HIV ensuring safety and continuity of care and treatment services for people living with HIV during the COVID-19 pandemic. PPE were also donated to 12 prisons across Mozambique enhancing prevention and control measures for close to 20 000 inmates.

### **HUMAN RIGHTS, GENDER INEQUALITY, STIGMA, AND DISCRIMINATION**

Technical assistance was provided for the implementation of the National HIV Workplace Policy for the public sector. This included the training of 30 HIV focal points and human resources managers on the policy across all sectors. Similarly, 150 labour inspectors and 30 workers champions from trade unions were trained on HIV legislation, workplace rights, and stigma and discrimination in the workplace.

The Ministry of Justice was supported by the Joint Team to complete the Legal Environment Assessment (LEA) and revision of several laws, including those related to HIV and domestic violence to remove legal and policy barriers, and assert the rights of key and vulnerable populations, such as adolescent girls and young women. Assessment results were widely disseminated among relevant stakeholders, and technical assistance was provided for the development of an action plan for implementation of the recommendation from the LEA.

### **STRATEGIC INFORMATION, INVESTMENT, AND SUSTAINABILITY**

The Joint Team continued supporting the generation of strategic information and improvement of human resources expertise and tools for data collection, analysis, and reporting for the national HIV response. The training of 15 experts on the use of HIV estimation tools resulted in successful generation of a national and 11 provincial level Spectrum HIV estimates; HIV status awareness estimates using the Shiny 90 model; and district-level estimates using the Naomi tool. In addition, effective technical assistance was provided for the integration of HIV into the Mozambique Crisis Response Plan 2021 with focus on Cabo Delgado Nampula and Niassa provinces. Data on HIV burden by district was provided to support identification of vulnerable people in the crisis plan.

In collaboration with the George Town O'Neil Institute and Health Gap, the Joint Team provided technical assistance to the National AIDS Council and networks of people living with HIV for the development of a tool for community-led monitoring of HIV services and training of 25 data collectors on the implementation and use of this tool. The Joint Team further supported the rollout of a pilot community-led monitoring in five health facilities providing HIV services in Maputo city and Maputo province. Around 638 health facility clients (93% people living with HIV) were interviewed, and the results informed various grant proposals and strategies for the HIV response.

Technical assistance to the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) contributed to the development of an evidence-based Global Fund grant proposal, which successfully secured US\$ 573 million for the HIV and tuberculosis responses for the 2021-2023 period. Additionally, US\$ 112 million was mobilized through the Global Fund COVID-19 Response Mechanism to support the national COVID-19 response for 2021-2023. High-level political engagement and technical assistance was further provided to secure US\$ 418 million from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) for the implementation of the Country Operational Plan 2021 (COP21).

## CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTEGRATED SDG AGENDA

The Joint Team contributed to the development of the Common Country Analysis and subsequently of the 2022-2026 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). One indicator on HIV was successfully integrated, under the “Human Development” priority area.

## CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions constrained the implementation of several planned activities, including trainings and community engagements. Suspension of community HIV testing and reduction of clients visiting health facility contributed to a slowdown in HIV index testing and increased loss to follow-up among adolescents and young people living with HIV. However, the scale-up of differentiated service delivery (DSD) helped 65% of people living with HIV access ART through a three-month multimonth dispensing (MMD) programme, improved retention in care. COVID-19 lockdown measures also raised the number of domestic assaults, and sexual and gender-based violence cases among female sex workers and gay men and other men who have sex with men. Ongoing armed conflict in Cabo Delgado has led to closure of 75 health facilities further straining access to HIV services for vulnerable and key populations in HIV hotspots.

While Mozambique made progress towards the 95-95-95 targets, a significant gap remains in HIV testing and linkage to ART specially among adolescent and young people, men, and key populations. Poor retention in ART continues to hamper the progress to achieving the set 95% target. High stigma levels and the difficulty in raising awareness on adherence to treatment and testing in men exacerbate the challenge.

Gender inequality, stigma and discriminatory attitudes towards people living with HIV, gay men and other men who have sex with men, female sex workers, and other key population groups within health facilities, families and social settings continue to violate their basic rights to health, social and legal services and place them at higher risk of HIV infection and AIDS-related mortality. Criminalization of some aspects of sex work exacerbates human rights violations of sex workers. Besides, the weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, especially in conflict areas, fail to adequately measure the impacts of human rights programmes.

With 97% reliance on international donor funding, there is an urgent need to mobilize domestic resources and strengthen the financial sustainability of the HIV response.

---

Report available on the  
**UNAIDS Results and Transparency Portal**

[open.unaids.org](https://open.unaids.org)