

SENEGAL

Report prepared by the Joint UN Team on AIDS

JOINT TEAM

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

JOINT PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTIONS AND RESULTS IN 2020-2021

In 2020-2021, the Joint Team made strong advances in expanding access to HIV prevention, sexual and reproductive health, and HIV testing services and information among adolescents and young people through awareness raising and behavioural change campaigns, trainings, and youth centres. Comprehensive sexuality education was scaled up in schools while student leaders and teachers were trained on the rights of adolescent and young people and prevention of early pregnancy. Existing innovative information communication technologies were strengthened to provide information on health, social and legal protection services for adolescent and young people. Healthcare providers were trained on harm reduction programmes, data collection and management of people who use or inject drugs.

Access to quality antiretroviral treatment services among adults and children living with HIV was improved through on-site mentoring of healthcare professionals. The Joint Team also provided technical support and capacity building to the Government's Dolutegravir implementation plan. Nutrition and care services were integrated, and cash transfers, nutrition and food baskets, personal protective equipment, and hygiene kits were distributed to vulnerable people living with HIV to help them adhere to treatment and improve their health outcomes. In partnership with civil society organizations, the Joint Team provided legal and health services to hundreds of women and girls who survived violence while close to 3000 teachers from elementary schools and community and religious leaders were trained on various topics including gender-based violence, sexual reproductive health, HIV, and women's health.

HIV PREVENTION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE AND KEY POPULATIONS

The Joint Team provided technical support to improve knowledge and access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and HIV services among adolescent and young people and other sexually transmitted infections. Training was conducted for 11 040 girls who are members of the Girl Leaders Clubs to improve their knowledge on HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, early pregnancy, child marriage, and gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation. The trained girls also became signatories of the *New Deal* community pact—an initiative that seeks to ensure social empowerment through increased knowledge of SRH and life skills, and economic empowerment among adolescent girls and young women.

As a result of technical support provided by the Joint Team, 1490 Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) classes were held in 124 schools reaching 42 664 adolescents (23 900 girls and 18 764 boys). Meanwhile, 310 student leaders and 120 technical relay teachers were trained on prevention of early pregnancy in schools and the rights of adolescents and young people to CSE in the northern, central, and southern regions of Senegal.

The Joint Team also provided financial and technical support for the scale-up of HIV testing and counselling (HTC) services for adolescent and young people in Senegal. As a result, 190 664 adolescents and young people received HTC services in youth spaces and knew their HIV status by the end of 2021. The Joint Team also supported distribution of 1 042 386 condoms to adolescents aged 15-19 years and young people aged 20-24 years as part of this HTC programme. Around 5000 promotional materials including New Deal brochures, image boxes, leaflets, and posters on SRH, and prevention of HIV and early pregnancy targeting adolescents and young people aged 10-24 were produced and disseminated to youth spaces and during awareness raising and HIV testing events.

Technical support was provided for the rollout of the *Girls First* campaign in 50 villages in the Diourbel department. The campaign reached 6500 people, including 3500 girls, 1000 women, and 2000 heads of households through educational dialogues and radio programmes on the prevention of HIV and COVID-19 infections. The initiative also promoted the need for girls to stay in school, despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Hello Ado app was launched by the Joint Team in May 2020 to provide education and information on SRH, local protection and legal support for young people and adolescents including those in key populations. In 2021, the Joint Team continued to support the Hello Ado app, by adding a list of facilities offering health, social welfare, and legal services, including justice, security, and police in 14 new cities on the app. To date, 11 846 people have installed the application on their devices and the app's Facebook page is followed by 31 000 people. Preparation is underway to expand this app which is currently available on Android phones to IOS phones.

As part of its harm reduction programme, the Joint Team held a workshop for 30 health care providers in Francophone West Africa to strengthen the implementation of the Lisbon Consensus among Francophone West African countries and the rollout of a survey on drug use in schools in Senegal. The Lisbon Consensus, discussed in January 2000, envisages the principles, structures and indicators that would form the basis of an effective strategic information system on illicit drug use. Financial and technical support was also provided to train 30 healthcare providers on data collection, delivery of harm reduction services, and clinical management of drug use/injection cases.

HIV TREATMENT AND PAEDIATRIC CARE

To increase access to antiretroviral services and support the transition of eligible people living with HIV to Dolutegravir-based treatment regimen, the Joint Team conducted capacity building training for 102 nurses and midwives from two districts in the Kaffrine and Kolda regions. A total of 889 people living with HIV in these two districts were enrolled on Dolutegravir-based treatment regimen by the end of 2021.

The Joint Team completed on-site coaching missions aimed at improving the capacity of healthcare providers for the clinical management of paediatric HIV and support for children living with HIV in 18 healthcare facilities in Diourbel and Saint-Louis regions. The missions allowed the Joint Team to reach 103 children in joint consultations and review 166 patients' files to check various elements, including the need to change treatment regimens, viral load testing, etc. Furthermore, 160 children living with HIV and 198 family members got enrolled on the national health insurance scheme to facilitate their access to healthcare services.

GENDER INEQUALITY AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

In collaboration with the Departmental Centre for Assistance and Training for Women (CEDAF), the National AIDS Council, the Association of Senegalese Women Lawyers, and the Association of Senegalese Lawyers, the Joint Team facilitated the provision of health and legal services for 508 women and girls who survived violence.

As part of national capacity building efforts supported by the Joint Team, 42 trainers conducted training on gender-based violence in schools for 2938 teachers from 89 elementary schools in Fatick and Pikine-Guédiawaye school inspectorates to improve the quality of gender-based violence programmes in schools. The trained teachers educated 214 474 primary school students on the same topics.

The Joint Team provided technical and financial assistance for various outreach initiatives aimed at strengthening women's engagement in the HIV and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention and response. In the Ziguinchor region, 30 religious and community leaders, including the King of Oussouye and his dignitaries were briefed on HIV, SRH, and gender-based violence; and over 2000 women, young people and men were sensitised on sexual and gender-based violence, HIV, and women and children's health.

HIV AND HEALTH SERVICES INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Various capacity building initiatives were supported to improve the quality of nutrition among vulnerable people living with HIV. As a result, 21 healthcare workers (including 3 doctors, 2 HIV mediators and 16 head nurses) providing nutrition services for people living with HIV in the Kolda health district received training on the analysis of client monitoring reports, counselling, and nutrition. Food baskets and health products were also distributed to 100 members of the National Network of People Living with HIV and 75 children who were made orphans by the AIDS epidemic.

A hundred people living with HIV participated in a survey conducted by the Joint Team in 2021, following the implementation of a cash-transfer initiative. Results showed cash-transfers diversified their diet with nutritious foods, and allowed more than 57% of people living with HIV to register with mutuels to cover their regular medical consultations and viral load monitoring, as well as their transportation costs to facilitate physical access to health facilities.

To prevent COVID-19 infections, face masks and other hygiene materials were procured and distributed to vulnerable populations, including people living with HIV in partnership with four associations— Ambulatory Treatment Center (CTA) of the Fann Hospital Sénégal, the National Youth Council of Senegal (CNJS), La Maison Rose, and the Senegalese Federation of Associations of People Living with Disabilities.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTEGRATED SDG AGENDA

The Joint Team continued to make valuable contributions to Senegal's progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2019-2023. Significant technical support was provided for the development and implementation of the United Nations COVID-19 response to elevate the impact of the pandemic on communities, including people living with HIV, thus contributing to SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) and the *leaving no one behind* principle.

To strengthen the sustainability of the HIV response in Senegal, and due to technical assistance provided to the Country Coordinating Mechanism, more than US\$ 69 million was mobilized from the Global Fund to support the national HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria response for the 2021-2023 period. An addition US\$ 4 million was mobilized from PEPFAR to support the national HIV response.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

In 2020-2021, the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges to the continuity of HIV services, delayed implementation of planned activities, and fractured programme coordination. Local movements against the education of youth on sexual and reproductive health issues also hindered the implementation of CSE and HIV prevention activities among adolescents and young people.

HIV-related stigma and discrimination continue to impede access to HIV services and fuel new HIV infections. At 46%, enrolment of people living with HIV on health insurance programmes remains low due to stigma, lack of follow-up services, and poor access to health facilities. A Joint Team-led survey conducted in 2021 in Kolda showed that 81.9% of people living with HIV are looking for jobs and 75.5% of people living with HIV in Senegal hide their HIV status from their close circle, including their spouse due to fear of stigma and discrimination, 72% want capacity building for income generating activities.

The general lack of reliable data on HIV and other issues undermines efforts to expand advocacy initiatives and prevents rollout of effective targeted programmes.

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