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Key strategies and approaches to integrate HIV into UNDP's mandate

UNDP's work on HIV and health is guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UNDP Strategic Plan 2022–2025 and related regional programmes. The Strategic Plan commits UNDP to scaling up work with UN partners and other stakeholders to regain ground lost against HIV, TB and malaria due to the COVID-19 pandemic; strengthen systems for health; and address emerging issues such as noncommunicable diseases, mental health and pandemic preparedness. UNDP's work on HIV and health contributes to the organization's core mission of reducing poverty and inequalities, building resilience and helping to ensure that no one is left behind. In 2020–2021, UNDP supported 147 countries on HIV and health, including through collaborations with partners on integrated approaches in line with the role envisaged by the UN Development System reform.

Top achievements on HIV in 2020-2021

- **Dismantling inequalities.** UNDP works with governments, civil society organizations and other partners to dismantle the inequalities that undermine health and well-being. UNDP supported 67 countries to improve gender equality, address gender-based violence and empower women and girls in the context of HIV and health. For example, through the European Union and the Spotlight Initiative, UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA and other partners provided 650 000 women and girls with gender-based violence support services, despite COVID-19-related constraints and lockdowns. UNDP partnered with Korea's Sunflower Centres to provide a "one-stop-shop" to support survivors of sexual and gender-based violence by ensuring access to counselling, medical assistance and legal support in Kyrgyzstan. The model was scaled up in Albania, Indonesia and Liberia.
- **Meeting the needs of key populations.** UNDP supported 78 countries to improve access to services and rights for key populations. Under Global Fund-funded programmes, UNDP supported countries in providing key populations with tailored combination prevention, reaching 335 800 people who use drugs in 5 countries; 585 500 gay men and other men who have sex with men in 12 countries; 519 250 sex workers in 12 countries; and 10 000 transgender people in Cuba, Panama and the Oceania subregion. UNDP has continued to promote human rights, access to services and an enabling environment for key populations. In Zambia, it supported the development of a national protocol for the medical management of intersex people—the first of its kind in Africa. UNDP supported Benin and Madagascar to revise their laws, including provisions to recognize the specific needs of key populations and adolescents. In Nigeria, UNDP supported an analysis of human rights and gender-related barriers to HIV, TB and malaria services, which has helped improve coordination of programmes to overcome those barriers.

UNDP and ILO collaborated on a global dialogue on social protection for people living with HIV and key populations, bringing together representatives from 52 countries to share strategies and good practices for developing and financing more inclusive social protection schemes. UNDP is using the outcomes of the dialogue to inform policy and programming. For example, it supported countries to consider including social protection for people living with HIV and key populations in their Global Fund COVID-19 Response Mechanism proposals. In Latin America and the Caribbean, a regional consultation organized with the

UNAIDS Secretariat shared good practice examples for greater inclusion of key populations and supported the development of a road map with recommendations to scale up interventions.

- **Support for implementation of the recommendations of the Global Commission on HIV and the Law.** UNDP has continued to work with governments, civil society, UN entities and other partners to advance the recommendations of the Global Commission on HIV and the Law in 90 countries. For example, in Tunisia, UNDP supported the development of a chapter on human rights in the new National Strategic Plan for HIV 2021–2023, which was used to inform the development of the concept note for the Global Fund 2020–2022 funding cycle. This work has also contributed to the repeal of the law that criminalizes HIV transmission in Zimbabwe, a new Penal Code provision on decriminalizing same-sex conduct, as well as aspects of sex work in Angola and the addition of people living with HIV as beneficiaries for legal aid services in Sudan. An [independent evaluation of the Global Commission on HIV and the Law](#) concluded that its work and support to countries acting upon its recommendations was successful. The evaluation noted the increased engagement of governments and civil society around HIV, law and human rights issues, as well as growing momentum for positive, tangible changes at national, regional and global levels.
- **Supporting robust and sustainable financing.** UNDP supported the implementation of innovative approaches to increase domestic fiscal space and helped governments to use health taxes to finance sustainable development, including their HIV responses and COVID-19 response and recovery. Recent work has included the development of a health tax model that calculates lives saved, productivity losses averted and expected increases in revenue from tax increases on tobacco, alcohol and/or sugar-sweetened drinks. The model has been piloted in Bahrain, where increasing taxes on these products is predicted to generate US\$ 1.4 billion in additional tax revenue over five years. Cabo Verde and Thailand plan to take similar steps. In Timor-Leste, UNDP is working with WHO to integrate health taxes into a national financing framework, while a UNDP-led development financing assessment in Cambodia highlighted health taxes as a key mechanism for mobilizing domestic resources for health. UNDP developed a [methodology](#) to calculate the social return on investment of social contracting for HIV service provision and piloted it in Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Morocco, North Macedonia and South Africa. This work informed a [policy brief on social return on investment for HIV services](#), which can be used to advocate for social contracting and inform related policy and programmes.
- **Supporting the success of Global Fund grants.** Since 2003, UNDP has partnered with the Global Fund to support HIV, TB, and malaria responses in some of the world's most challenging contexts. This partnership has helped save 7.3 million lives, bring HIV testing and treatment to almost 60 million people and treat over 1 million people living with TB. As of December 2021, UNDP was managing 32 Global Fund grants as interim principal recipient in 22 countries, as well as two regional programmes covering an additional 11 countries. The partnership supports governments in implementing large-scale health programmes, making health and community systems more resilient, and helping countries strengthen enabling legal and policy environments. In 2021, UNDP provided:
 - 1.5 million people with HIV treatment;
 - 3.6 million people with counselling and testing for HIV;

- 71 000 pregnant women with ARVs for PMTCT;
- 92 000 people with successful treatment for TB; and
- 2,300 people with treatment for multidrug-resistant TB.

Contribution to progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals

In line with its integrator role, UNDP focuses on SDGs and the pledge to leave no one behind, including the HIV- and health-related goals and targets. UNDP continues to address social, structural, economic, commercial and environmental determinants of HIV and health, with a focus on reducing health inequities. In so doing, the organization leverages its extensive presence and networks at global, regional, and country levels, its mandate to "connect the dots" across development sectors, and its commitment to recognizing and managing the multidimensional risks presented by today's major health and development challenges.



HIV in the context of the COVID-19 response

Highlights of UNDP's COVID-19 response

62 countries supported on vaccine equity

131 countries supported on COVID-19 health systems support

32 408 health-care workers newly hired

Over **8,300** community-based organizations supported to respond to the pandemic

Nearly **1.9 million people** (56% women) received cash transfers

Over **1.1 million** health-care workers trained to support COVID-19 responses

In 2021, UNDP continued to support countries to leverage HIV infrastructure and experience in their COVID-19 responses. UNDP supported countries to secure an additional US\$ 238 million from the Global Fund COVID-19 Response Mechanism for community-led responses, infection prevention and control, and diagnostics and laboratory services. Other key areas of work included adaptation of HIV, TB and malaria programmes, protecting health workforces, and strengthening fragile and overstretched health systems so that they can respond to future shocks and pandemics.

While working to ensure that COVID-19 responses are inclusive and nondiscriminatory and reach those left furthest behind, UNDP supported countries to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on people living with HIV and other key populations. For example, in Tajikistan, the UNDP-Global Fund partnership enabled NGOs to provide digital HIV services to vulnerable populations, and a partnership with a local NGO delivered food packages to women living

with HIV. In Zambia, UNDP is working with the Government to address the needs of key populations to improve access to services and ensure that restrictions do not harm vulnerable communities. In Chad, UNDP has trained staff in prisons and refugee camps on measures to stop the spread of COVID-19. It also assisted with mobile hearings for detainees, including vulnerable people, to reduce prison overcrowding and, thereby, the risk of COVID-19 transmission in closed settings.

UNDP has supported countries to integrate gender-related issues in their COVID-19 responses. This includes addressing gender-based violence, which is known to increase in times of crisis and is a particular threat for women during lockdowns. For example, in Nigeria, UNDP partnered with the National Human Rights Commission to introduce toll-free numbers for reporting gender-based violence, enabling women to be referred to medical facilities and safehouses, while also improving documentation and analysis.

Increasing trust in vaccination and health services and countering misinformation are critical to effective COVID-19 responses. In South Africa, UNDP supported the National AIDS Council's Civil Society Forum to design a mass media and communications campaign, #ThinkTwiceAboutCOVID, to combat fake news and provide communities with accurate information on COVID-19. In Latin America and the Caribbean, UNDP and Constella Intelligence released a study on how "information pollution" spreads, particularly online, with the aim of informing effective policy responses.

Law and policy play essential roles in pandemic preparedness and responses. The COVID-19 Law Lab—a joint initiative of UNDP, WHO, the UNAIDS Secretariat, the O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown University, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the International Development Law Organization—was designed to address the urgent need for quality legal information, as well as to ensure that governments promote public health while respecting human rights. The initiative includes over 6,000 law and policy documents from over 190 countries, and the database has over 6,500 monthly users. The initiative has collaborated with think-tanks, academic institutions and law firms, including DLA Piper, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, University of Nairobi, University of Oviedo, Society for Democratic Rights, Torcuato di Tella University Law School, and The Hague University of Applied Sciences. UNDP and the O'Neill Institute are collaborating on a multicountry review to examine the impact of legal responses on the COVID-19 pandemic.

Case study: Intervening to prevent health system collapse in Afghanistan

The Global Fund and UNDP have worked together in Afghanistan since 2015 to support HIV, TB and malaria responses, and to strengthen systems for health. Due to political events, international aid to the country from key donors was suspended in 2021. To prevent the collapse of the health system, the Global Fund provided UNDP with US\$ 15 million in emergency funding to sustain essential health services, which are also the backbone of the HIV, TB and malaria programmes. UNDP paid the salaries of 26 000 health workers and ensured that 2,157 health facilities across 31 provinces in the country remained operational and continued to provide critical health services to more than 3.1 million Afghans.

These interventions helped preserve vital interventions relating to the control of HIV and other communicable diseases, maternal and new-born health, child health and immunization, nutrition, mental health, disability and the provision of essential medicines. In coordination with the World Bank, UNICEF, WHO, the Global Fund and other partners, UNDP is working to ensure that critical health services are maintained. UNDP also launched a crisis response initiative, ABADEI, embedded as part of the overall UN system's response, which will help maintain essential services and prevent a humanitarian catastrophe by supporting the most vulnerable populations in Afghanistan.

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