



UNDP has served as interim Principal Recipient of Global Fund HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria grants in 53 countries since 2003, supporting governments to implement large scale health programmes, to strengthen health systems and to reach marginalised and hard-to-reach populations, often in some of the most challenging country contexts. This work has contributed to saving 4.5 million lives. As COVID-19 continues to devastate communities around the world, supporting countries to protect these hard-won gains, responding to COVID-19, and mitigating the impact of the pandemic on other health services is critical. The most vulnerable communities, already the hardest hit by the pandemic, must not be allowed to fall further behind.

UNDP, in partnership with the Global Fund, is leveraging its strong relationships with governments, national partners, the UN family and communities to step up its support to HIV, TB and malaria responses, ensure that essential health services are still available and strengthen health systems. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Global Fund has introduced various flexibilities and funding streams to support the response, making up to US\$1 billion available. To date, UNDP has helped countries to reprogramme US\$ 12.5 million from existing grants in 14 countries. In addition, funding requests for an additional US\$69.2 million have been submitted.

### 1. Strengthening health systems

The UNDP - Global Fund partnership is supporting countries to strengthen their health systems in the face of COVID-19, to withstand the blow of the pandemic and build back better. This includes procuring urgently needed health commodities. Supporting health systems is also a priority, with a focus on enhancing capacity to scale up laboratory testing for COVID-19.

In **Afghanistan**, UNDP has supported strengthening the capacity of the Central Public Health Laboratory in Kabul. It is the only 'viral identification facility' that can test for COVID-19. UNDP is working with the Ministry of Public Health, WHO and other partners to assess needs, build capacity and provide necessary technologies to effectively tackle the challenge of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The work includes rolling out specialized testing, scaling up emergency response services, and improving data management.

In **Mozambique**, the UNDP and Global Fund partnership is focusing on strengthening laboratory capacity for decentralized COVID-19 testing in the Zambezia, Nampula and Sofala provinces. This will increase access to COVID-19 and other health services at the sub-national level through construction, rehabilitation and installation of prefabricated clinics.

In **Kyrgyzstan**, the partnership has helped deliver essential personal protective equipment and medical supplies to first line COVID-19 response doctors and nurses, including 90,000 masks and 2,000 respirators. The Global Fund has further approved the reallocation of funds to purchase 10 ventilators and 6,500 rapid COVID-19 tests. The new tests allow for a more rapid diagnosis of COVID-19 and will utilize existing GeneXpert machines, previously brought to Kyrgyzstan by the Global Fund for TB diagnosis.

### 2. Support to communities

Pandemics expose the persistent and widening inequalities in societies. Low-and middle-income countries and countries in crisis will be the most affected, along with those already left behind: migrants, refugees, people living with HIV, women, prisoners, older persons, persons with disabilities and those relying on the informal economy.

Building on the lessons learned from HIV, engaging and supporting communities as an active partner in health and development is a crucial component of COVID-19 responses. UNDP is well placed to facilitate this through its in-country networks of community groups and civil society organizations to ensure an inclusive health response in which no-one is left behind.

In **Angola**, at the request of the Luanda Provincial Authorities, UNDP is working with communities to support the development of a Community Engagement Strategy for COVID-19. Under the strategy, hundreds of community volunteers from the Interfaith Platform for COVID-19 and the Angolan Network of AIDS service organizations will deliver COVID-19 prevention, care and support services. As local transmission cases are increasing, UNDP is supporting the Luanda Provincial Government to mobilize funds to support the strategy, including through private sector partnerships.

In **Panama**, UNDP and the Global Fund are working with partners to provide services to key populations, including *Asociación de Hombre y Mujeres Nuevos de Panamá (AHMNP)*, *Asociación Panameña de Persona Trans (APPT)* and *Asociación Viviendo Positivamente (AVP)*. Partners are utilizing digital communication platforms to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on HIV prevention services for key populations, through their work with gay men and other men who have sex with men, transgender people and sex workers. Using social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp, and various dating apps, partners are delivering preventive health messages. In addition, health promoters are establishing online conversations with those at risk and offering follow up services in the form of local meetings where condom distributions and HIV testing can take place.

In **Samoa**, the *MSM Thrive Initiative*, which provides HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) testing and counselling for gay men and other men who have sex with men and transgender people, is responding to increasing requests for services. To ensure vital sexual health services continue to reach marginalized people, video calls and messaging on social media sites have been employed. For those requiring face to face services, masks are provided,

and people have their temperatures taken before being tested and counselled. To support broader outreach activities, prevention packages consisting of brochures, condoms and lubricants are being dropped off at agreed locations to avoid physical contact.

In **Zimbabwe**, UNDP, with support from the Global Fund, is working with the organization *Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ)*. In light of COVID-19, GALZ are adapting services to use virtual platforms to deliver online counselling and psycho-social support. The *Centre for Sexual Health and HIV AIDS Research (CeSHHAR)*, is also providing outreach support to sex workers utilizing WhatsApp, with support from peer educators. Clients who visit health centres are screened for COVID-19, and COVID information is included in all education and communications outreach.

### 3. Continuity of essential health services

Estimates from WHO and UNAIDS show that a six-month disruption of antiretroviral therapy could lead to more than 500,000 extra deaths from [AIDS-related illnesses](#), including from TB, in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020–2021. For [malaria](#), under the worst-case scenario, the estimated number of malaria deaths in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020 would reach 769,000, twice the number of deaths reported in the region in 2018. This would represent a return to malaria mortality levels last seen 20 years ago.

For millions of people on the move — such as refugees and internally displaced persons who are forced to flee their homes from violence or disaster, or migrants in precarious situations – the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to have catastrophic consequences. Crowded living conditions and limited access to basics such as health care, water, sanitation and nutrition combine to create a precarious situation, particularly for those already at risk of, or living with, serious health conditions. Health programmes are striving to ensure continuity of services with HIV and TB treatment and bed nets in the most complex and challenging operating environments.

In **Djibouti**, volunteers from the *Network of People Living with HIV* are delivering antiretroviral medicines to people who are unable to leave their homes. Because of stigma, many patients do not attend a health facility close to their home for fear of being recognized. Following the establishment of the confinement measures, disruptions to public transport mean it can be difficult for some patients to reach health facilities. UNDP provided the network with IT equipment and dedicated resources for legal support, through a lawyer that will support people living with HIV reporting human rights violations to the network.

In **Guinea-Bissau**, where malaria is the leading cause of death among pregnant women and children under five, the UNDP - Global Fund partnership is carrying out a countrywide distribution of bed nets in June 2020. The new door-to-door strategy ensures physical distancing, with teams distributing nets to people's doorsteps. In total, approximately 18,000 people, comprised of 5,000 community health workers and 13,000 volunteers, are supporting the distribution of over 1.3 million Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets which will be carried out across all 11 health regions in the country, covering close to 2.3 million people. The community distribution teams have been provided with personal protective equipment. A nationwide communications campaign has been launched, with messages shared via people's mobile phones and across 20 radio stations, in all 9 local languages.

In **Iran**, which has faced a devastating COVID-19 outbreak, UNDP and the Global Fund have been supporting Afghan migrant and refugee populations with TB prevention, diagnosis and treatment services. While the pandemic has had an impact on active case finding of TB patients, the monitoring of existing patients has been able to continue, either through traditional monitoring in the field or through phone calls to ensure treatment is not disrupted. UNDP is also ensuring continuation of TB testing through procurement of necessary supplies, as well as personal protective equipment for TB front line health workers.

## UNDP'S COVID-19 RESPONSE:

### THREE BY THREE

Working at the heart of the United Nations family and in close coordination with the World Health Organization, UNDP is responding to a growing volume of requests from countries to help them **prepare** for, **respond** to and **recover** from the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing particularly on the most vulnerable.

In line with [UNDP's Strategic Plan 2018-2021](#) and its [HIV, Health and Development Strategy](#), UNDP works on HIV and health in 138 countries.

UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality, and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and planet. Learn more at [undp.org](http://undp.org) or follow at [@UNDP](https://twitter.com/UNDP).

**UNDP'S COVID-19 RESPONSE**  
will support countries to:

**Prepare**  
Strengthen health systems. Assist in procurement of vital medical supplies. Use digital technologies for payment of health workers and other needs, focusing on agility and transparency.

**Respond**  
Support a "whole-of-government" response to stop the spread of COVID-19 and help the most vulnerable populations.

**Recover**  
Assess and respond to the social and economic impact of COVID-19 for urgent recovery, focusing on the poorest and most marginalized.