



## UNDP / Global Fund Project October Update: TB and HIV remain a priority

*October 2020*

Under the Global Fund grant, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) continues to support efforts to end tuberculosis and HIV in Kyrgyzstan. Our work consists in providing best quality and free drugs for all patients on treatment and in need, improving diagnosis, organizing education and prevention activities, supporting NGOs, communities and patients. Here's an update of our October activities.

## Story: Sleepless nights in the laboratories



When Covid-19 found its way to Kyrgyzstan in March 2020, the laboratory doctors and technicians of the **National Reference Laboratory (NRL)** were the best prepared for the new pandemic. Specialized in TB diagnostic and monitoring, they were used to working with PCR tests, GeneXpert machines and in a level 3 biosafety environment. But they definitely didn't expect such a huge workload.

Meerim started working on Covid-19 diagnostic in the NRL on April 24th and went home for the first time in months on August 17th. During the peak of the pandemic, she and her colleagues spent **24 hours a day, 7 days a week** locked up in the lab, using their last ounce of strength to **help diagnose people both for Covid-19 and TB**.

Thanks to the help of donors, including the UNDP / Global Fund project, the NRL was already equipped to provide safe and quality diagnostic for Covid-19 and has all the necessary certifications. The UNDP / Global Fund project also purchased **innovative rapid PCR-tests to fasten diagnostic**.

*"These tests **give results in 45 minutes**. Usual PCR tests for Covid-19 take around five hours,"* explains Meerim.

*“They’re also much more sensitive because they can find dead cells. Results are **99% accurate.**”*





Read the full story:

<https://www.kg.undp.org/content/kyrgyzstan/en/home/presscenter/articles/2020/10/covid19-sleepless-nights-in-laboratories.html>

## Interview: The **role of civil society** in beating HIV, TB and Covid-19



In the framework of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria grant, the UNDP works with several NGOs to **improve access to prevention and treatment of HIV and TB and protect patients' rights**. Aibar Sultangaziev, director of the association for harms reduction "**Partners Network**", tells in an interview about the importance of advocacy in the fights against TB and HIV epidemics in Kyrgyzstan.

*"Because of Covid-19 less people get medical help. People are scared and the medical system itself is on hold. Health care workers are either in the red zone, or sick, or resting. Many have psychological traumas after Covid-19. The Global Fund and the UNDP purchased **medical equipment and PPE**, reallocated funds and together we applied for an **additional Covid-19 grant**. One of our initiatives was to **give out treatment for TB and HIV for longer periods of time**, and we also started delivering medication to around 300 people living with HIV abroad. We advocated for the deployment of **mobile brigades** to care for patients at their home, and additional case management for tuberculosis. With these efforts, we were able to ensure non-interruption of services to clients,"* he says. The Partners Network has also been actively **monitoring rights violations** among patients and key population groups, and noticed a considerable increase during the Covid19 pandemic.

Read the full interview:

<https://www.kg.undp.org/content/kyrgyzstan/en/home/presscenter/articles/2020/10/hiv-and-tb-won-t-let-themselves-be-forgotten.html>

Story: **Mobile brigades give hope to patients amidst pandemic**





Svetlana welcomes us with a hopeful smile in her small home near Bishkek, but her deep blue eyes show signs of fresh tears. Last February, her husband Alexander was diagnosed with lung and spinal tuberculosis and had a surgery. Although he takes his treatment as prescribed, recovery seems out of reach. He is bedridden and suffers from strong pains and terrible bed sores. Looking at his scraggy, agonizing body is heartbreaking. And as if the illness was not enough, Svetlana and her family have no sources of income. Her five minor children help her care for their father and sometimes, the eldest works in the fields to bring at least some bread home for dinner.

But Svetlana found her light at the end of the tunnel in September. A **mobile brigade** made of one health care worker and one social worker now visits her every week to check on Alexander's health and do everything they can to help the family survive. While Salya, a medical worker, checks Alexander's blood pressure and monitoring graphic, Lidiya talks to Svetlana about getting a disability status for her husband, which would entitle him to a small monthly payment that would be life-saving for the family.

Because of the **Covid-19 pandemic**, patients are facing **many difficulties receiving the medical help they need. Mobile brigades now help patients with tuberculosis (TB), people living with HIV and key population groups** in need get quality medical care and social support regardless of the new situation.

Read the full story:

<https://www.kg.undp.org/content/kyrgyzstan/en/home/presscenter/articles/2020/10/mobile-brigades-give-hope-to-patients-amidst-covid-19-pandemic-.html>

## Interview: "It's important not to forget about TB"



*"Covid-19 has had a **significant impact on the tuberculosis epidemic**. All the health care system's efforts and funds were deployed to fight this disease. Medical workers did not have enough time to provide quality assistance to patients with other diseases. Some patients with poor adherence to treatment interrupted it completely. Fewer people are seeking medical help and diagnosis, so we expect that in a while the situation with tuberculosis will worsen,"* says **Dr. Bolot Maikanaev**, director of the National TB Center (NTC), in an interview. *"It is important not to forget about other diseases, especially about tuberculosis."*

Read the full interview:

<https://www.kg.undp.org/content/kyrgyzstan/en/home/presscenter/articles/2020/10/its-important-not-to-forget-about-tb.html>

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