

Partnership Report

# **Unitaid and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**



## **A shared history to advance equity in global health**

Two decades ago, millions of people in low- and middle-income countries were dying from AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria. Most were unable to access or afford the lifesaving tools they needed to protect themselves from these preventable, treatable diseases. To respond to this injustice, the Global Fund was created in 2002, followed closely by Unitaid in 2006. Both organizations were founded to find affordable, effective solutions to end AIDS, TB and malaria and reach those most in need, leaving no one behind.

## **Bringing health innovations to the most affected communities**

Today, the Global Fund and Unitaid collaborate to accelerate equitable access to lifesaving health products that prevent, detect and treat HIV, TB and malaria.

The Global Fund and Unitaid each play a distinct and complementary role in advancing access to new products and approaches to save lives. Unitaid connects a broad range of partners to identify and create innovative new health products, and then brings them to market quickly and affordably for the people that need them most. The Global Fund, as one of the largest providers of key health commodities, supports over 120 countries in deploying these innovations at scale and at affordable prices.

Both organizations foster public and private sector partnerships to achieve value-for-money investments, enabling critical medicines and health tools to be made available everywhere they are needed. Together, we are committed to defeating today's infectious diseases while we prepare for and respond to future global health threats.

## **Innovation is key to our fight against HIV, TB and malaria**

New products and novel approaches to fight HIV, TB and malaria can transform care, averting countless cases of illness and death. But lifesaving medicines and tools will have limited impact without a concerted effort to ensure access for all who need them. Our collaboration spans all three diseases and has included ensuring equitable access to next-generation mosquito nets to stop malaria-carrying mosquitoes, game-changing treatments for HIV, and more effective TB preventive therapy.

A joint analysis by Unitaid and the Global Fund estimated the return on investment and the impact these health innovations will have on the death toll from the three diseases between 2024-2026. That review showed that health innovations maximize the impact of investments into the Global Fund and broader HIV, TB, and malaria efforts, accelerating the overall response and delivering the same reduction in deaths more than three years faster.<sup>1</sup> The health and economic gains from every dollar invested in the three diseases are 16% higher with health innovations like those piloted by Unitaid and scaled up by the Global Fund. By combining Unitaid's investments in innovative new health products with the Global Fund's proven ability to take those tools to scale around the world, we increase return on investment, save more lives and reach the health-related Sustainable Development Goals more quickly.

**“By maximizing our own unique strengths, the Global Fund and Unitaid work together to fight HIV, TB and malaria and build more resilient, equitable and sustainable health systems that leave no one behind.”**

**Peter Sands**  
Executive Director  
of the Global Fund

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/13434/publication\\_joint-impact-analysis-unitaid-global-fund\\_annex\\_en.pdf](https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/13434/publication_joint-impact-analysis-unitaid-global-fund_annex_en.pdf)

## Where we collaborate

The impact of Unitaid and the Global Fund’s work is reflected in the people who are living longer, healthier lives: the millions of people who can access affordable best-in-class medicines for treating HIV; those with TB who are treated with new, more effective regimens; and those who are better protected by advanced malaria vector control.

**“The partnership between Unitaid and the Global Fund has achieved major advances in the fight against HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. Our work ensures people have access to the best medicines, tests and tools – fast – improving lives and generating dramatic cost savings.”**

**Dr. Philippe Duneton**  
Executive Director  
of Unitaid

### Providing equitable access to cutting-edge HIV treatments

The key to ending AIDS is ensuring everyone, everywhere has affordable access to existing and innovative tools. The Global Fund and Unitaid have been working together to drive access to HIV treatment for more than 15 years. Better tolerated and more effective HIV treatments have become affordable and available to an increased number of patients during this time. These treatments keep people healthy and prevent the transmission of the virus on to others.

Through its strategic engagement with the pharmaceutical industry and

its competitive global tenders, the Global Fund has focused efforts on the introduction and rapid scale-up of dolutegravir-based formulations, which improve clinical outcomes, are highly tolerable, and are available as low-cost generics across most countries where the Global Fund invests. Unitaid was instrumental in pioneering the introduction of generic dolutegravir. Unitaid also answered critical questions on which treatments were best for late-presenting pregnant women living with HIV, and led research to ensure TB treatments could be safely and effectively taken at the same time as the new HIV drug. Through country-led efforts and global partnerships like



the one between the Global Fund and Unitaid, dolutegravir-based formulations reach about 19 million people living with HIV in resource-constrained settings, and these formulations are expected to create US\$8 billion in savings for low- and middle-income countries by 2030.

Children are particularly affected by HIV: Today, 1.5 million children are living with the disease globally. In 2022, approximately 84,000 children died from AIDS-related illnesses. Only 57% of children living with HIV globally were reported to be receiving treatment in 2022, compared to 77% of adults, due to gaps in early diagnosis and rapid linkage to treatment. Recent treatment innovations have the potential to be game changers in the fight against pediatric HIV. Unitaid backed the development of pediatric dolutegravir. Since this treatment for children was launched in 2021, the Global Fund has

procured and delivered the product to over 46 countries through its Pooled Procurement Mechanism.

The Global Fund, leveraging its scale and competitive tender process, aims to secure the lowest sustainable pricing and expand access while maintaining a healthy supply base. This work is part of a broader effort that allows people in low- and middle-income countries to access best-in-class treatments in record time and at affordable prices. For example, TLD, an antiretroviral treatment in one pill that combines three medicines (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate, lamivudine and dolutegravir), can now be offered for under US\$45 per person, per year for the first time. This improved pricing – a 25% reduction – will allow governments in resource-limited settings to expand access to critical HIV services.



A child living with HIV in Cape Town, South Africa, takes his antiretroviral treatment.

The Global Fund/Deborah Rossouw

## Keeping people safe from TB infection

Tuberculosis preventive treatment (TPT) is a vital tool to protect people from TB. TPT is especially important for people living with HIV, as they face a high risk of developing a severe and deadly form of the disease.

A short-course TPT called 3HP – a weekly course of rifapentine and isoniazid for three months – is now available in a new, fixed-dose

combination. This regimen is safe to administer with dolutegravir, a first-line HIV treatment. Unitaid and partners, including the Global Drug Facility, were able to negotiate a nearly 70% price reduction for rifapentine, making 3HP much more widely available to the people who need it most in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>2</sup> Unitaid's work also sped up the introduction of a generic supply and formulations suitable for children.

<sup>2</sup> <https://unitaid.org/news-blog/landmark-deal-secures-significant-discount-on-price-of-medicine-to-prevent-tb/#en>

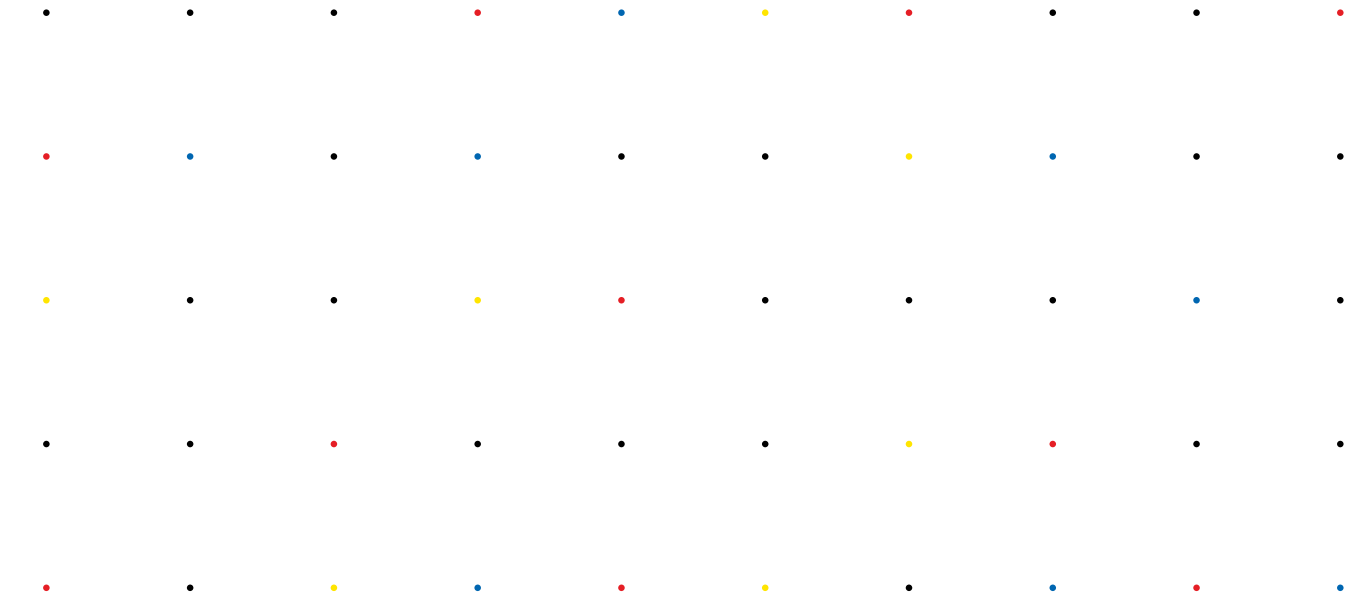
This new combination is transformative for patients seeking to adhere to their treatment and protect themselves from TB. With only 12 weekly doses, the 3-month course significantly reduces the duration of treatment (previously requiring daily treatment for at least 6 months, and sometimes even 36 months). The fixed-dose element also drastically reduces the “pill burden” for patients – reducing the number of tablets from 9 to just 3 pills per week. Shorter TPT regimens are more cost-effective, and because they have fewer

side effects, patients are more likely to complete their treatment on the first try. Since Unitaid first introduced 3HP in 2018, it has been scaled up in 78 countries; the Global Fund supported its rollout in an additional 14 countries in 2022 alone.



Patient Andrew Gwesele (right) shares his experience on isoniazid preventive therapy for six months against his recent experience on 3HP at the Highfields Polyclinic in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Eugene Ncube/CHAI



## Introducing new mosquito nets to combat insecticide resistance

Growing pyrethroid resistance in mosquitoes is contributing to the plateauing progress against malaria seen in recent years. In a world where a child dies from malaria every minute, Unitaid and the Global Fund are working together to introduce and scale up new mosquito nets to fight resistance and kick-start progress against this deadly disease.

The New Nets Project, a joint Unitaid and Global Fund-supported initiative with US\$33 million invested by each organization, played a catalytic role in the introduction of mosquito nets treated with a new combination of insecticides to fight resistance. This initiative significantly reduced the timeline for entry of these nets to the market and helped facilitate wide-scale adoption.

Between 2018–2022, the New Nets Project deployed over 39 million nets across the 14 countries that account for nearly 70% of all malaria cases and deaths worldwide, providing lifesaving protection to more than 60 million people. The countries covered included Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, and Rwanda.

Following the success of the New Nets Project, the Global Fund is investing US\$50 million in catalytic funding through the Net Transition Initiative (2021–2024) to support countries to transition to dual active ingredient insecticide-treated nets through 2024. Children under 5, who are most vulnerable to illness and death from malaria, will experience the most direct health benefits.



Local Government Area (LGA) Store Officer Sabitu Idris Gabasaw inspects the movement of mosquito net bales out of the Gabasawa LGA mosquito net hub. In Kano State, one of Nigeria's most populous states, 8.8 million nets were delivered to more than 18 million people in a two-week campaign.

The Global Fund/Andrew Esiebo/Panos

## A mission to end malaria

In Chad, the majority of the population is at risk for malaria. In 2021, over 11,700 people died from the disease – and 74% of these deaths were among children under 5. To address this challenge in Chad and in other

countries, the Global Fund and Unitaid collaborated to generate evidence on a promising approach: seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC). A preventive medicine to protect young children from malaria, SMC has been proven to contribute to an 85% reduction in infections among children. In 2022,



Global Fund-supported programs reached over 1.1 million children with SMC in Chad.

SMC is easily administered by community health workers in remote areas, making it a sustainable solution in rural settings to control malaria. By bringing care closer to the people and expanding preventive treatment, community health workers are helping to beat this disease and save millions of children. Supporting community-based and community-led health services for malaria strengthens the resilience of the health system and helps to achieve a more equitable, healthier and sustainable future.

There were 247 million malaria cases worldwide in 2021, with an estimated 619,000 deaths. In Chad, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Fund are working with the government to improve prevention, diagnosis and treatment efforts to end malaria by 2030 and leave no one behind. With Global Fund financing, the Ministry of Health and Prevention, the National Malaria Control Programme and UNDP support community-based malaria prevention (including SMC), diagnosis and treatment, and patient referrals to health facilities for potentially severe cases.

Unitaid investments have contributed to proving the value of SMC in Chad and beyond. Unitaid's ACCESS-SMC initiative proved that at full scale, SMC in Africa's Sahel region could annually prevent about 18 million malaria cases among small children and save close to 100,000 lives.<sup>3</sup> Working in parallel to strengthen supply chains to provide an adequate supply of this treatment, Unitaid and other partners laid the groundwork for a broader scale-up of SMC, which is now supported at scale by the Global Fund in partnership with countries and other organizations. Today, the Global Fund ensures that the treatment reaches those children who need it most. In 2022, in countries where the Global Fund invests, 37.1 million children were covered by SMC. This malaria prevention intervention continues to save the lives of more than 100,000 children each year.

In Chad, a community health worker conducts seasonal malaria chemoprevention for children under 5 in the village of Matafo in Lake Chad province.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://unitaid.org/news-blog/unitaid-seeks-proposals-to-expand-malaria-chemoprevention-for-infants-following-new-who-report/#en>

## Joining forces to fight COVID-19 and future global health threats

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that equitable access to quality-assured health products is crucial to the success of the fight against infectious diseases. As part of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-Accelerator) – a coalition of health organizations including the World Health Organization (WHO); Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI); FIND; the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Wellcome; UNICEF; and the World Bank – Unitaid and the Global Fund worked alongside partners to increase access to oxygen and other lifesaving treatments as part of the ACT-Accelerator Oxygen Emergency Taskforce.

In 2022, the Global Fund and Unitaid, together with the United States, WHO, FIND and other ACT-Accelerator partners, also launched an initiative worth over US\$120 million to support low- and middle-income countries' test-and-treat programs to prevent hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19. Test-and-treat programs will generate important lessons learned, which could help to strengthen community-based health systems in low- and middle-income countries and protect front-line health workers in future health crises.



Technical Assistant Iamze Metreveli shares the results of an examination inside a mobile clinic in Tserovani, Georgia. The clinic screens people for COVID-19, diabetes, hepatitis C, HIV, hypertension and TB.

The Global Fund/Anush Babajanyan

## Making high-quality medical oxygen services accessible and affordable to all

Access to medical oxygen can support the management of advanced HIV infection and severe forms of TB and malaria, as well as other health conditions, making it a key component of resilient and sustainable health systems and a critical element of pandemic preparedness and response.

As the world has transitioned from the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ACT-Accelerator Oxygen Emergency Taskforce evolved in May 2023 into the Global Oxygen Alliance (GO<sub>2</sub>AL), a broader partnership of about 20 health agencies – co-chaired by the Global Fund and Unitaid – and representatives from civil society and affected communities. As co-chairs of GO<sub>2</sub>AL, Unitaid and the Global Fund will continue to support countries in



their efforts to convert the investments made during the pandemic into lives saved and to expand the work started with the taskforce.

The Global Fund and Unitaids continued alliance with global health partners will help ensure that high-quality medical oxygen services are accessible and affordable to all in

low- and middle-income countries. Sustained investments in oxygen delivery systems will save lives now and build surge capacity against future threats.

Oxygen can be the difference between life and death for children with pneumonia as well as sick newborns and COVID-19 patients. However, it is often not available in low-resource settings.

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### About the Global Fund

The Global Fund is a worldwide partnership to defeat HIV, TB and malaria and ensure a healthier, safer, more equitable future for all. We raise and invest more than US\$5 billion a year to fight the deadliest infectious diseases, challenge the injustice which fuels them and strengthen health systems and pandemic preparedness in more than 100 of the hardest hit countries. We unite world leaders, communities, civil society, health workers and the private sector to find solutions that have the most impact, and we take them to scale worldwide. Since 2002, the Global Fund partnership has saved 59 million lives.

### About Unitaids

Unitaid saves lives by making new health products available and affordable for people in low- and middle-income countries. Unitaid works with partners to identify innovative treatments, tests and tools, helps tackle the market barriers that are holding them back, and gets them to the people who need them most – fast. Since it was created in 2006, Unitaid has unlocked access to more than 100 groundbreaking health products to help address the world's greatest health challenges, including HIV, TB, and malaria; women's and children's health; and pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. Every year, these products benefit more than 170 million people. Unitaid is a hosted partnership of the World Health Organization.