



Women and girls face disproportionate health challenges, due to factors ranging from societal inequalities that making accessing care more difficult, to biological differences that complicate treatment and pose additional health risks including during pregnancy and childbirth.

Over its 15-year history, Unitaid's commitment to addressing inequities in global health has helped usher in advances in the treatment and care of women and girls at risk of HIV, malaria, and other challenges including the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of disease.

Critical gaps in clinical trial data left pregnant women without access to the best HIV treatment and posed increased risk of mother-to-child transmission.

Unitaid proved the safety and efficacy of optimal HIV treatment regimens containing the drug dolutegravir that reduced viral loads more quickly, helping the 1.3 million women living with HIV who fall pregnant each year avoid transmitting the virus to their newborns.

In sub-Saharan Africa, six out of seven new HIV infections among adolescents occur in girls and young women are twice as likely to be living with HIV as males their age.

Unitaid projects are working to increase uptake of life-saving pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) among these groups, including with the rapid introduction of two new long-acting PrEP products – injectable cabotegravir and the dapivirine ring, the first completely women-controlled HIV prevention method.

HIV self-testing is vital to reaching girls and young women, who may face social barriers including stigma and discrimination that could deter them from visiting testing centres.

In sub-Saharan Africa, adolescent girls and young women account for 25% of all new HIV infections, despite making up just 10% of the population. Unitaid's pioneering efforts has transformed HIV self-testing from an expensive tool with limited reach to being strongly recommended, integrated in close to 100 national plans, opening a route to treatment or prevention that is estimated to reach more than 25 million people each year by 2025.

Malaria infection during pregnancy can lead to serious risks for both mother and baby.

Unitaid demonstrated community delivery of life-saving antimalarial medicines to pregnant women where they live. This has provided a model that improved coverage of malaria preventive medicine in pregnancy by 2.5 to five-fold in most settings. Community delivery of medicines and was also crucial to mitigating disruptions in antenatal care services caused by COVID-19.



CURRENT PROJECTS:



One third of Unitaid's investments in TB, HIV, malaria and other disease (excluding COVID-19) support projects that impact the health of women and girls, including issues specifically related to women and girls' access to care. This work aims to improve prevention, testing and treatment of HIV, screening and treatment of cervical cancer, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and Chagas disease, and increased coverage of critical malaria prevention treatments and tools.

As one of the few global health agencies focused on equitable access to health innovations, Unitaid's work will deliver advances that directly impact the lives of women and girls in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Nine out of ten women who die of cervical cancer – a highly preventable cancer – live in LMICs.

With access to better, more affordable, and better adapted screening and treatment tools, Unitaid is laying the groundwork for national cervical cancer elimination programs in 14 countries across three continents and developing a scalable model to deliver preventive care to women around the world. These efforts have secured price reductions up to nearly 55% for thermal ablation tools used to treat precancerous cells, and have reached more than a quarter of a million women with screening to date.

Maternal mortality disproportionately affects women in low- and middle-income countries, where 94% of all maternal deaths occur.

Increasing access to tools that prevent and treat pre-eclampsia and post-partum hemorrhage, the leading cause of maternal mortality, is vital to improving health outcomes for women worldwide. Unitaid's coming investments in this area of work will advance tools that will make it possible for women giving birth in a remote or low-resourced facility to benefit from highly effective interventions to fight the most common and dangerous pregnancy complications - saving countless lives.

Approximately two million women of childbearing age are infected with Chagas disease and risk passing it to their children through childbirth.

Unitaid is working to identify and treat thousands of mothers with Chagas while improving access to effective and innovative diagnostic tools and treatments and catalyzing their adoption across Latin America and beyond.

Unitaid's investments deliver outsized impact against some of the greatest threats to health facing women and girls in LMICs.

This approach to equity focuses on making high-quality, tailor-made solutions accessible, affordable, available to underserved populations. With additional support, Unitaid's can grow the impact of this work to further unlock the potential of transformative health interventions for women and girls' health.

Unitaid's donors are: Brazil, Chile, France, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Spain, the United Kingdom and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. As part of Unitaid's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and leadership of the ACT-Accelerator, the organization received additional resources from Canada, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Wellcome.

Unitaid is a hosted partnership of the World Health Organization.