



Adelina, 25, in front of her house in El Agustino on the outskirts of Lima, Peru. Adelina is receiving new-generation MDR-TB treatment through the endTB project. © Unitaid / Nicholas Peart

Unitaid and Tuberculosis

Unitaid's growing slate of TB investments makes it the world's largest multilateral investor in TB research and development. Upcoming projects are designed to fight strains of the disease that are resistant to treatment.

What is TB?

Tuberculosis (*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*) is a bacterial infection that spreads through droplets in the air. When people with TB cough, sneeze, spit, or even just speak, they can propel TB bacteria into the air and infect others. Almost half the people with active TB will die without treatment, as well as nearly all HIV-positive people with TB. In 2017, 10 million people fell ill with TB and 1.6 million died.

What is drug-resistant TB?

Multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) does not respond to the two most powerful anti-TB drugs.

Extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) responds to even fewer TB drugs. It has been reported in 117 countries.

Our projects

Unitaid is intensifying its commitment to end TB. Today's US\$ 215 million in TB projects is on track to hit about US\$ 300 million by 2020. TB is curable and preventable when patients have access to the right tools and treatments.

- **Confronting drug resistance:** The **endTB** project received a US\$ 21 million boost from Unitaid in September 2018 to expand its research into treatment regimens for MDR-TB. The expanded project includes a new clinical trial on XDR-TB. Partners In Health leads endTB, with partners Médecins Sans Frontières and Interactive Research & Development. Unitaid's total support for endTB stands at US\$ 81 million.
- **TB & HIV:** The Aurum Institute in South Africa leads a US\$ 59 million project to expand short-course preventive TB therapy for HIV-positive people and children under five. The project takes place in 12 countries in Africa, Asia and South America.
- **Reaching children:** Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation's **CaP TB** project, funded by a US\$ 36 million Unitaid grant, is improving treatment services and the market for paediatric TB medicines. It is also integrating TB screening into HIV, maternal, and paediatric health services. The project includes nine African countries and India.



Dr Sanchez Garavito, a pulmonologist at Bernales Hospital in Lima, examines an MDR-TB patient who is taking part in the endTB clinical trial. © Unitaid / Nicholas Peart

- **More accurate tests:** University of Bordeaux is leading an effort to widen the availability of childhood TB diagnosis using fast tests that can be performed even in small local clinics. Supported by a US\$ 15 million Unitaid grant, the **TB-Speed** project spans six African countries and Cambodia.
- **Collaboration with the World Health Organization:** A US\$ 7 million enabler grant from Unitaid supports the **Global TB Programme** as it works to improve the diagnosis and treatment of paediatric, latent and multidrug-resistant TB in high-burden countries. Data from Unitaid's projects is helping shape new WHO guidelines.

Major advancements

- **Groundbreaking medicines for children:** The first high-quality, affordable, good-tasting TB medicines for children were developed through the Unitaid-funded STEP-TB project, with partners TB Alliance and WHO. They are now available to children in more than 80 countries.
- **Innovations in diagnosis:** Unitaid invested US\$ 30 million to boost the use of GeneXpert®, a machine that can diagnose TB, including drug-resistant varieties, in 90 minutes. Common practice has been to culture TB bacteria from a patient's sputum with TB drugs, which takes up to eight weeks and sometimes yields inaccurate results.

Investment areas

- Widen access to short, affordable high-quality treatments for multidrug-resistant TB. Standard MDR-TB regimens are long, complicated, expensive, toxic and often ineffective.
- Help speed up the adoption of TB treatment for children using the Unitaid-supported paediatric formulations that were launched in 2015. TB is a leading cause of death in children, yet childhood TB is often treated with substandard medicines, if at all.
- Invest in helping vulnerable groups access shorter preventive TB treatment and improve diagnostic approaches for TB in children. Small children and people living with HIV are at high risk of developing active TB.

Our main partners

The Aurum Institute, Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF), Partners In Health (PIH), Médecins Sans Frontières, Interactive Research & Development (IRD), Université de Bordeaux, World Health Organization, The Global Fund, TB Alliance, Global Drug Facility, Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND), Stop TB Partnership, Global Laboratory Initiative

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