

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



 **Unitaid**
Innovation in Global Health

A SIMPLER APPROACH TO HEALTHCARE

Over the past 15 years Unitaid has led the way in identifying promising health innovations, showing they can work in low-resource settings, and laying the foundations for partners to make them available at scale.

The diseases that Unitaid and its partners are seeking to end – HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, cervical cancer and hepatitis C - are both preventable and treatable but also complex and intractable. A growing challenge is posed by antimicrobial resistance which is undermining the ability to treat infectious diseases.

The COVID-19 pandemic that has shaken the world over the past seven months has added a new layer of complexity to the global health landscape, infecting millions of people and setting off a frenzied search for effective vaccines, reliable treatments and diagnostics.

Unitaid wants to see some of the approaches it has successfully promoted to HIV and tuberculosis applied to COVID-19, such as preventive therapy and testing and treating in the early stages of the disease.

Unitaid's interventions are driven by a quest to achieve greater simplicity in screening, testing, treating and case management so that health systems can be better equipped to provide quality care to more people at less cost.

All the projects highlighted in this annual report aim to simplify healthcare, whether by using a portable device to quickly determine if someone has advanced HIV disease; or a child-friendly four-in-one combination of antiretroviral drugs to treat children with HIV; or a drug that only requires a single dose to cure people with plasmodium vivax malaria.

The report traces Unitaid's progress from July 2019 to July 2020 and shows how Unitaid and its partners are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and working together to ensure programs sustaining the fight against the three diseases continue with as little disruption as possible.

An illustration showing two hands holding a tray filled with various pills and capsules. The tray is tilted, and several pills are scattered around it. The background is a dark blue circle with white dots and lines, suggesting a scientific or medical theme.

PUTTING BETTER HEALTH PRODUCTS IN REACH OF ALL

by proving the viability of health innovations and enabling partner organizations to scale them up in low-income countries.

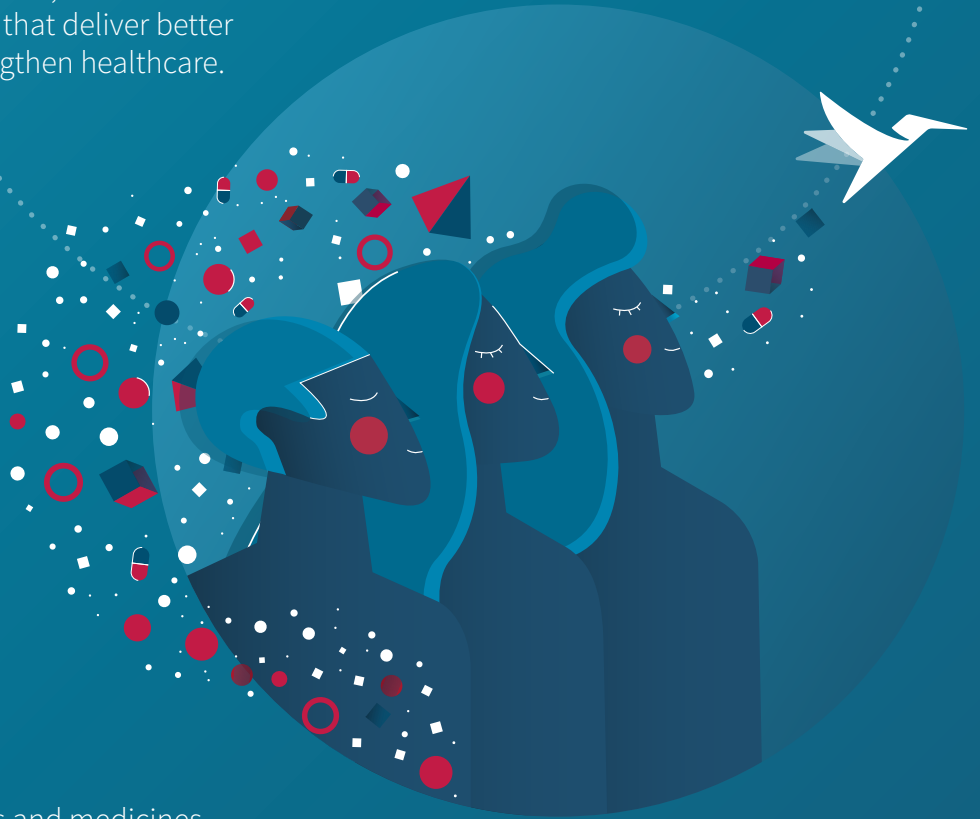
An illustration showing various pathogens, including viruses and bacteria, within a circular frame. The pathogens are depicted in different colors (red, blue, black) and shapes (spherical, rod-shaped, star-shaped). The background is a dark blue circle with white dots and lines, suggesting a scientific or medical theme.

MAKING NEW DRUGS THAT ARE BETTER-TASTING AND ACCURATELY DOSED FOR CHILDREN

who are at high risk of infection and death from HIV, tuberculosis and malaria.

SUPPORTING RESILIENCE IN HEALTH SYSTEMS

with state-of-the-art tools, such as smart diagnostics, and shorter, more effective treatment regimens that deliver better outcomes and strengthen healthcare.



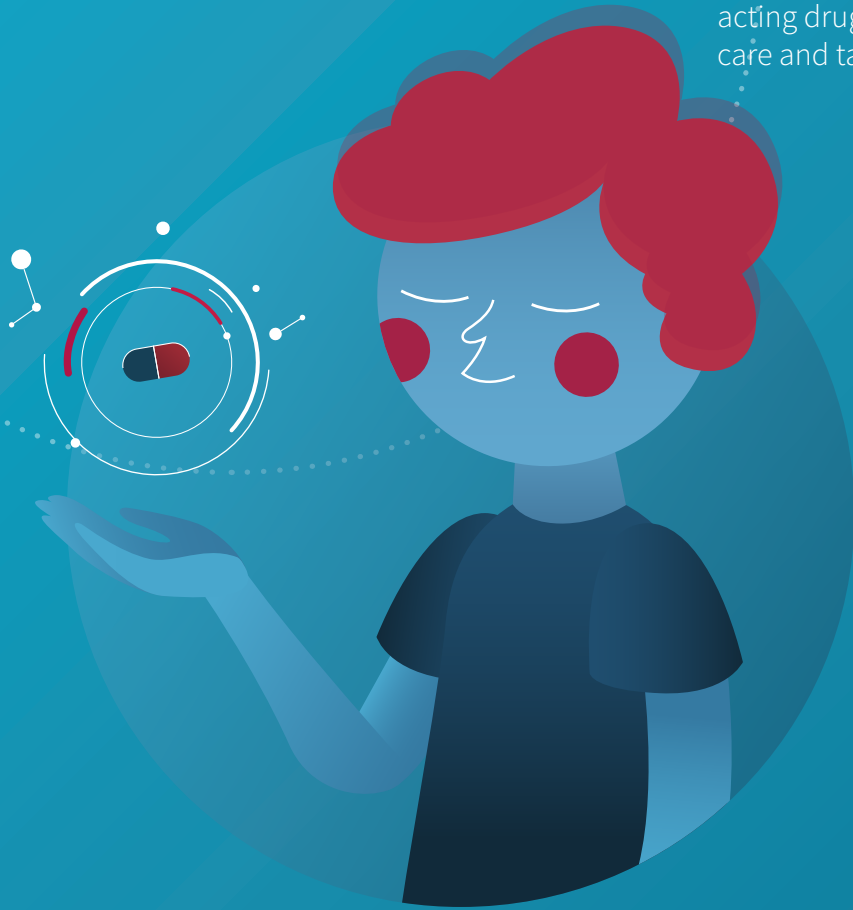
EMPOWERING PEOPLE


with innovative tests and medicines that make testing and treatment more convenient, cut through stigma and encourage people to get the help they need.



SIMPLIFYING THE RESPONSE TO COMPLEX DISEASES

with innovations such as diagnostics that screen for different conditions and longer-acting drugs that fight disease, simplify care and take pressure off health systems.





Unitaid has also moved quickly to reshape its programs to contribute to the global response to COVID-19.

Many of Unitaid's latest interventions have the potential to strip away complexity and make the task of health workers comparatively easier, while improving quality of life for beneficiaries of healthcare. Long-acting formulations, for example, could replace daily regimens of antiretroviral pills.

HIV could instead be treated with injections and patches that are effective for weeks or even months on end, improving adherence and combatting increased resistance to drugs.

A new portable device that uses a heated probe to treat precancerous lesions on the cervix has the potential to transform outcomes for women in low- and middle-income countries, who are six times more likely to develop cervical cancer than women in high-income countries. The device can be used in remote settings by a nurse to remove abnormal tissue which, if untreated, can lead to invasive cancer.

These approaches hold out the promise of being affordable and can be speedily administered to large numbers of people in communities at point-of-care. Greater simplification can provide the bedrock for more resilient health systems that make possible the attainment of universal coverage.

MARISOL TOURAINÉ

CHAIR OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

**“WE ARE HELPING
TO OVERCOME THE
WORST PANDEMIC
IN A CENTURY.”**



The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the global health community to its foundations, forcing everyone to reassess priorities, reallocate resources and prepare for what is likely to be a long, hard journey to recovery. In the face of this terrible scourge, we must also rethink the part that international solidarity can play in finding a solution.

COVID-19 has engulfed people everywhere almost simultaneously, forcing us all to react quickly and in a coordinated manner. I am proud that Unitaid and its partners were able in the early stages of the pandemic to mobilize their experience and know-how to save lives. The burden of the pandemic has also fallen disproportionately on the world's most disadvantaged people, laying bare glaring inequities in access to medicine, tests and healthcare and putting a huge strain on health services.

A top priority for Unitaid in the coming months is to contribute with our partners in the Access to the COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) initiative to overcome the most devastating pandemic in a century.

Unitaid's funding model and expertise can play a significant role in developing critical health tools and in supporting interventions that increase access to medicines and diagnostics. At the same time, we must not allow Covid-19 to deflect us from our efforts to end HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, and put at risk the spectacular progress of the past 15 years. The Executive Board that I chair has asked the Unitaid Secretariat to find the best solutions to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the grant portfolio and on the overall investment plan. Unitaid's role has always been to ensure the best medicines and diagnostics are adapted and accessible to everyone, everywhere. That goal has never been more relevant than today.

PHILIPPE **DUNETON**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**“COVID-19
THREATENS
PROGRESS MADE
AGAINST THE
THREE DISEASES.”**

I am very proud that the global community recognises that Unitaid has an important part to play in helping to find a solution to the COVID-19 crisis.

Unitaid was not chosen by chance to be part of the ACT-Accelerator. Our selection both acknowledges Unitaid’s critical role in driving innovation and speeding access to high-quality medicines and health products and underscores the vital need to swiftly deploy effective tools to fight a devastating pandemic.

Unitaid’s efforts have contributed to bringing forward the global response to the three diseases by more than three years. The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to jeopardize the remarkable progress over the past two decades in turning the tide against the three diseases.

Thanks to the commitment of our highly-qualified staff, who have quickly adapted in recent months to wrenching changes in the way we work, Unitaid is making a big contribution to global efforts to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.

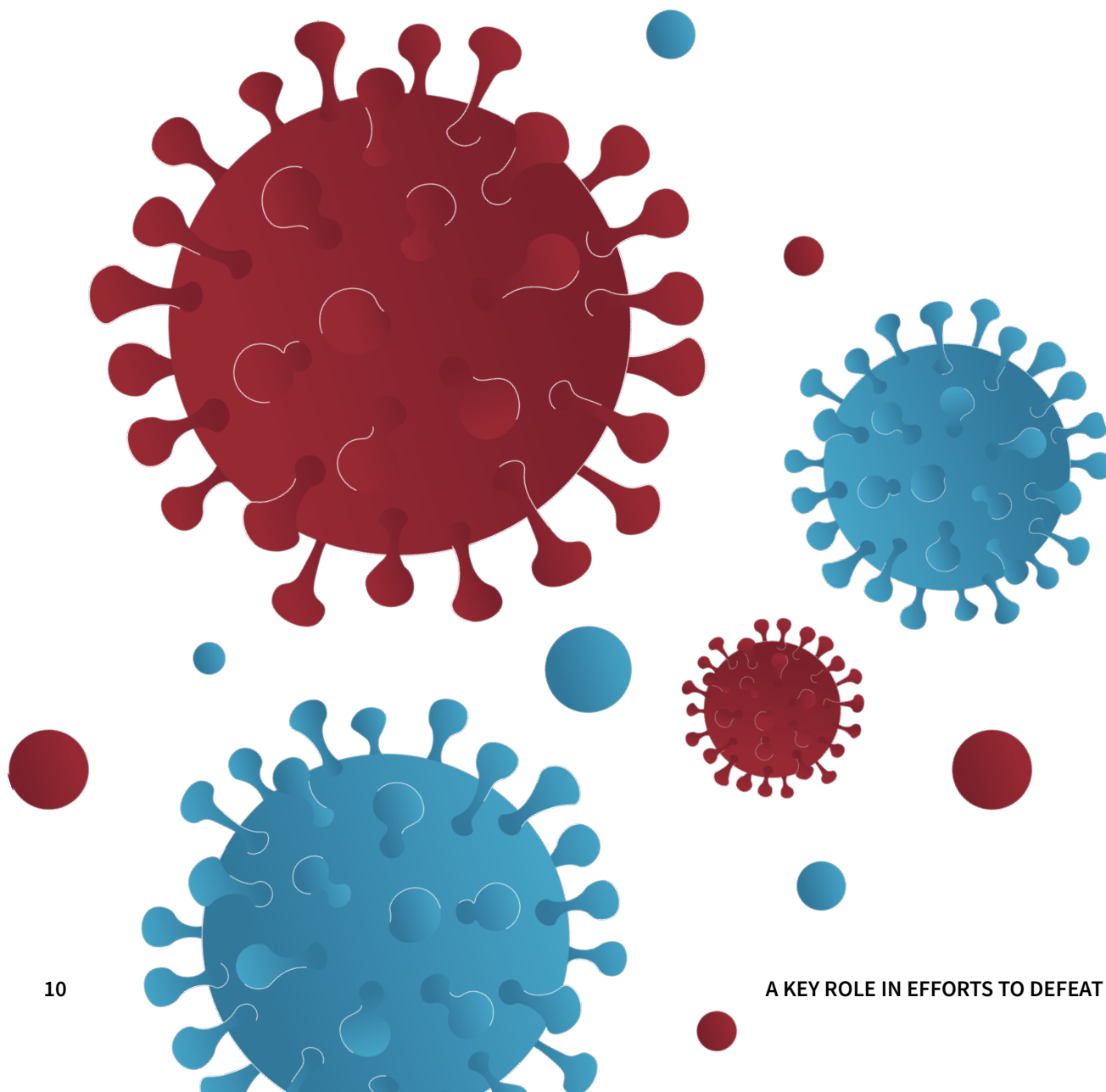
Our response is two-pronged: we are dedicating our energy to support the fight against COVID-19. At the same time, we are doing all in our power to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic on the three diseases, coinfections and maternal and child health.

A KEY ROLE IN EFFORTS TO DEFEAT COVID-19

UNITAID'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Unitaid is working on three fronts in response to COVID-19: engaging globally to develop new tools rapidly and ensure everyone has access to them to defeat the virus; working with grant implementers to add firepower to the COVID-19 response, to mitigate the impact on our grants; finally, adapting the way we work as an organization.

The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to overwhelm weak health systems, causing people to avoid hospitals and clinics, and forcing public health interventions to shut down with fearsome knock-on effects for other diseases.



WE SUPPORT



**Molecular testing
for COVID-19**



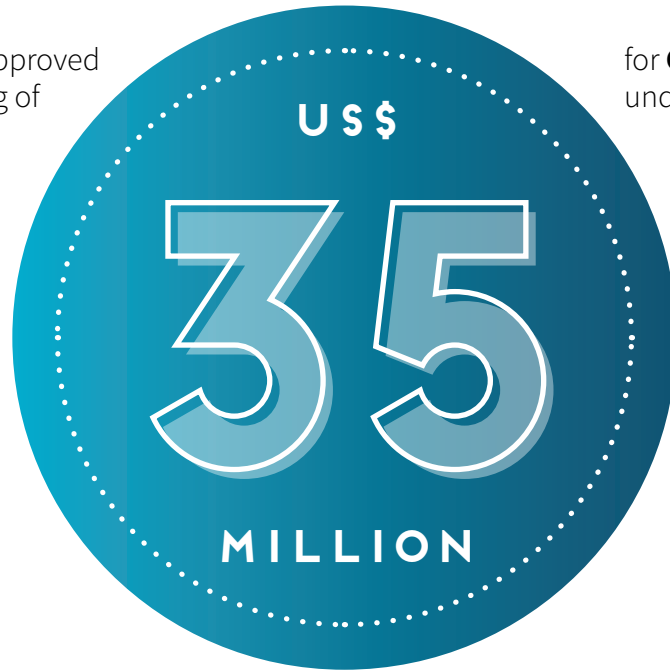
**Clinical trials of
medicines in lower
resource settings**



**Access to portable devices
that can identify critically
ill patients by measuring
oxygen levels in their blood**

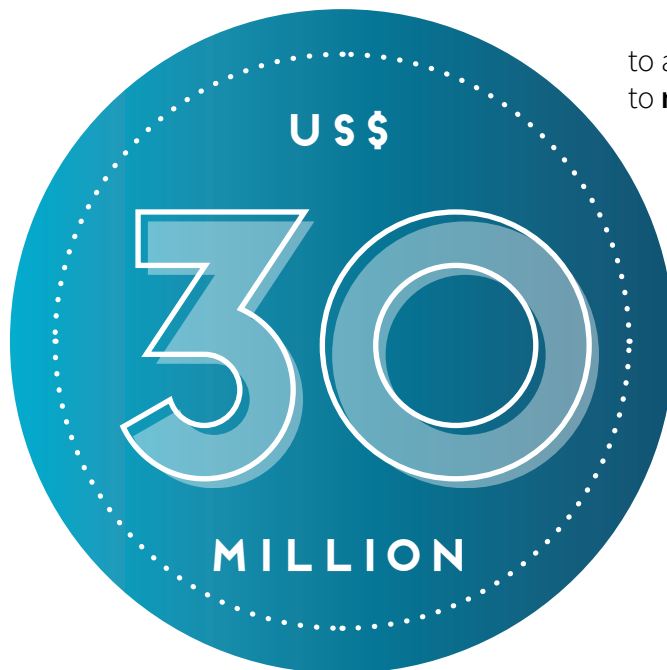
We are doing everything possible to contain fallout from the pandemic on HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, working closely with grant implementers to maintain essential services while we supplement other grants with additional funding to support the fight against COVID-19. One quarter of our grants have experienced severe or very severe disruption.

Our Board has approved
upfront financing of



for **COVID-19** projects
under the **Accellerator**

In parallel,
we have committed



to adapt existing Unitaid projects
to **respond rapidly to COVID-19**

We support molecular testing clinical trials of medicines in lower resource settings and access to portable devices that can identify critically ill patients by measuring oxygen levels in their blood.

We are also protecting health and community workers through testing, preventive therapies and treatments for early-stage symptoms of the disease. In countries with weak health systems it is vital to reach patients and treat them before they need to be hospitalized.

FINDING THE TOOLS TO FIGHT COVID-19

The Accelerator was launched in April 2020 by the World Health Organization and a range of global partners in order to make diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines for COVID-19 accessible to everyone who needs them worldwide. It is the world's largest coalition to fight the pandemic.

As part of the Accelerator, Unitaid and Wellcome are co-convenors of the Therapeutics Partnership, which seeks to develop, manufacture, procure and deploy therapeutics for the various stages of the infection. Unitaid also co-leads the work of the Diagnostics Partnership on ensuring market readiness and is engaged in activities for health systems strengthening as part of its work to ensure equitable access to tools to fight COVID-19.

In pursuing equitable access to therapeutics in the COVID-19 response, Unitaid and Wellcome are working to expand access to dexamethasone for low- and middle-income countries. Dexamethasone is a low-cost corticosteroid, a class of medicines used to provide relief for inflammation. Evidence unveiled in June 2020 suggested that dexamethasone can save lives of patients with severe or critical symptoms of COVID-19 who are on ventilators or receiving oxygen therapy.

Working with other partners in the Accelerator Therapeutics Partnership, UNICEF and Unitaid agreed an initial purchase of oral and injectable dexamethasone to secure quality treatment. This move will support access for patients in low- and middle-income countries, where it is expected that up to 4.5 million patients could benefit from dexamethasone based on preliminary projection of needs.

Initial funding has been committed equally by UNICEF and Unitaid, with additional funding to come from pledges made to the ACT-Accelerator Therapeutics Partnership.

In a separate development, the Accelerator is also providing access to 120 million rapid tests for low- and middle-income countries. Organisations involved in the agreements include the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FINN), the Global Fund, Unitaid and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Reliable, affordable diagnostic tests have been identified as key tools in the global response to COVID-19, as they could enable robust detection of active SARS-CoV-2 infection for both patient management and contact-tracing purposes in decentralized settings.

A University of Liverpool-led research initiative has also been awarded more than US\$ 2.8 million in funding from Unitaid for a project to rapidly identify drugs to help treat and prevent COVID-19. The funding is part of the special investment approved by Unitaid's Executive Board to bolster the COVID-19 response.

RESULTS

Today, Unitaid manages a portfolio of 50 grants with a value of around US\$ 1.3 billion delivering innovation in HIV, TB and malaria, as well as hepatitis C, cervical cancer and childhood fever management.

Four grants are showcased here.

***MORE THAN 130 COUNTRIES
WILL HAVE ACCESS TO NEW
LOWER-PRICED CD4 TEST***

CD4 TESTING

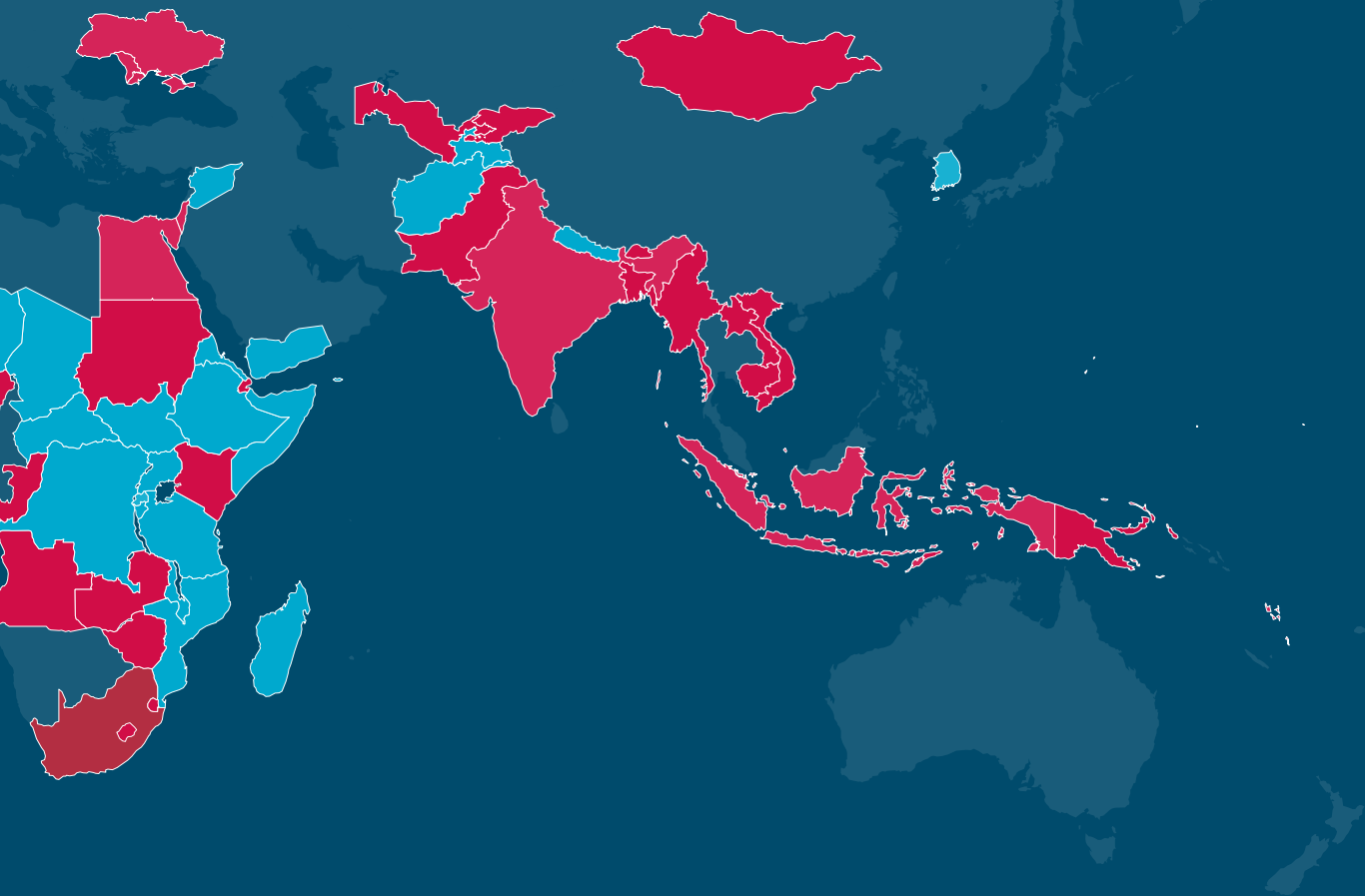
A GAME-CHANGING TEST TO MANAGE ADVANCED HIV DISEASE

One third of people starting HIV treatment have severely weakened immune systems, putting them at risk of opportunistic disease and death. In sub-Saharan Africa, around 10 percent of those starting HIV treatment will die within three months.

Unitaid, working with the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), is making a portable test available that can quickly detect whether a person has advanced HIV disease by measuring CD4 cells in the bloodstream. The test, developed by Omega Diagnostics, will be delivered in more than 130 countries for less than US\$4, the lowest price anywhere for such a device.

Making the test widely available is vital for countries to provide the best possible treatment for people with advanced HIV disease before they fall dangerously ill. The test can be used in remote places, which are hard to reach with complex diagnostic tools. It is part of a raft of investments by Unitaid to increase access to HIV treatment.

At a time when COVID-19 is putting severe pressure on HIV programs, tackling advanced HIV disease could prevent many preventable HIV-related deaths.



HIV SELF TESTING

LEADING A BREAKTHROUGH IN HIV SELF-TESTING

More than seven million people living with HIV are unaware that they are infected with the virus.

Unitaid has invested in targeting that group, many of whom are young men, with self-testing kits that provide a discreet and convenient way to test for HIV and open the way to early diagnosis and lifesaving treatment. It has proved a simple way of drawing people who have not been reached before into the health system.

When Unitaid began investing in HIV self-testing in 2015, only one country had a policy, and there were no World Health Organization pre-qualified test kits available for procurement.

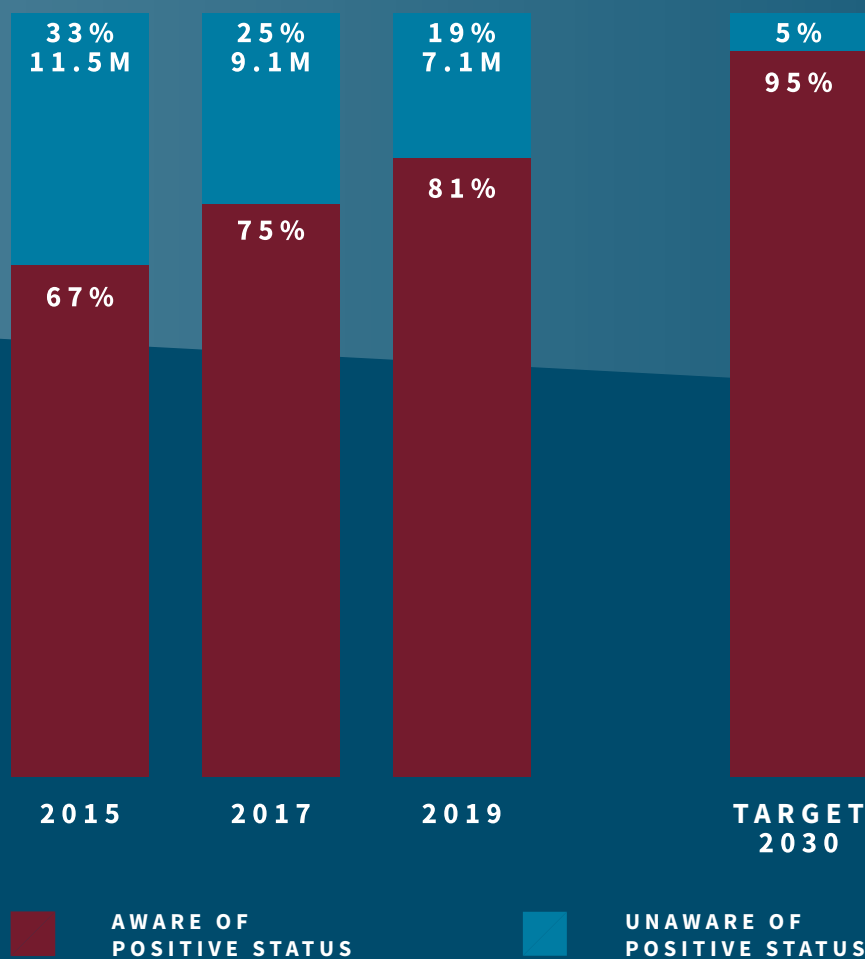
Today 88 countries have policies in place, and another 31 countries are developing them. Finding the undiagnosed people living with HIV and linking them up with treatment is central to ending the HIV epidemic by a target date of 2030.

Self-testing also paves the way to healthcare for people who discover they are not infected. They may be referred to other prevention services, such as voluntary medical male circumcision or pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)—which involves taking antiretroviral drugs to block HIV.



**IN 2019, OVER 7 MILLION (19%)
PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV WERE
UNAWARE OF THEIR STATUS.**

**HIV SELF-TESTING IS HELPING
US CLOSE THIS STATUS GAP,
GETTING US CLOSER TO THE 2030
GLOBAL TARGET.**



MALARIA INSECTICIDES

NEW INSECTICIDES PROVE EFFECTIVENES IN CONTROLLING MALARIA

Spraying homes with insecticides was for many years a sure way to keep malaria-carrying mosquitoes at bay. But over time mosquitoes became resistant to common pyrethroid-based insecticides, blunting their effectiveness.

A US\$ 65 million investment by Unitaid has proved the effectiveness of a new generation of long-lasting insecticides in protecting communities from malaria-carrying mosquitoes while establishing a market that has brought down the price of the innovative sprays.

Before the start of the project, implemented by IVCC and partners, older insecticides were no longer working and newer ones were too expensive for countries to afford. As a result, indoor spraying had declined or disappeared altogether, although it had been widely used since the 1950s.

The project has seen the number of countries implementing the new-generation insecticides rise from 8 to 36. By 2024, almost 17 million additional cases of malaria will be avoided and an additional 50,000 lives saved.





**MORE AFFORDABLE PRICES
FOR NEXT-GENERATION SPRAYS**

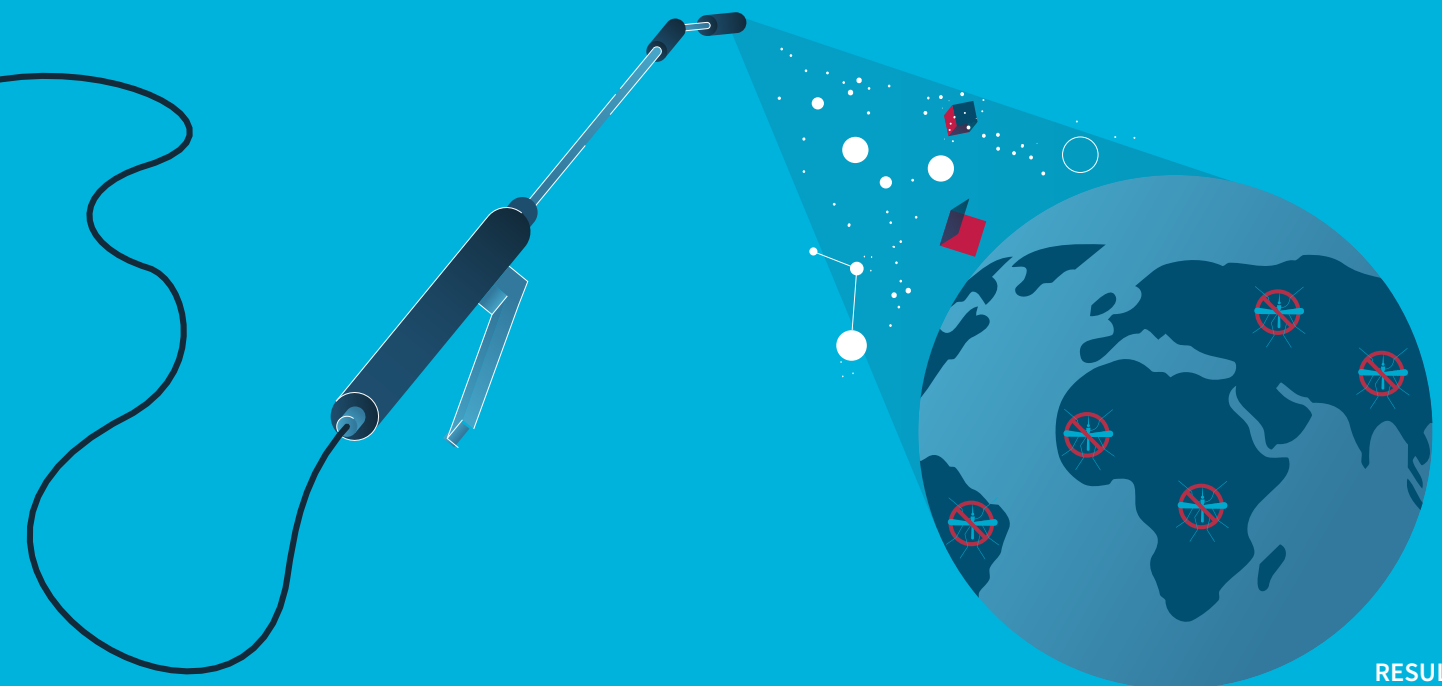
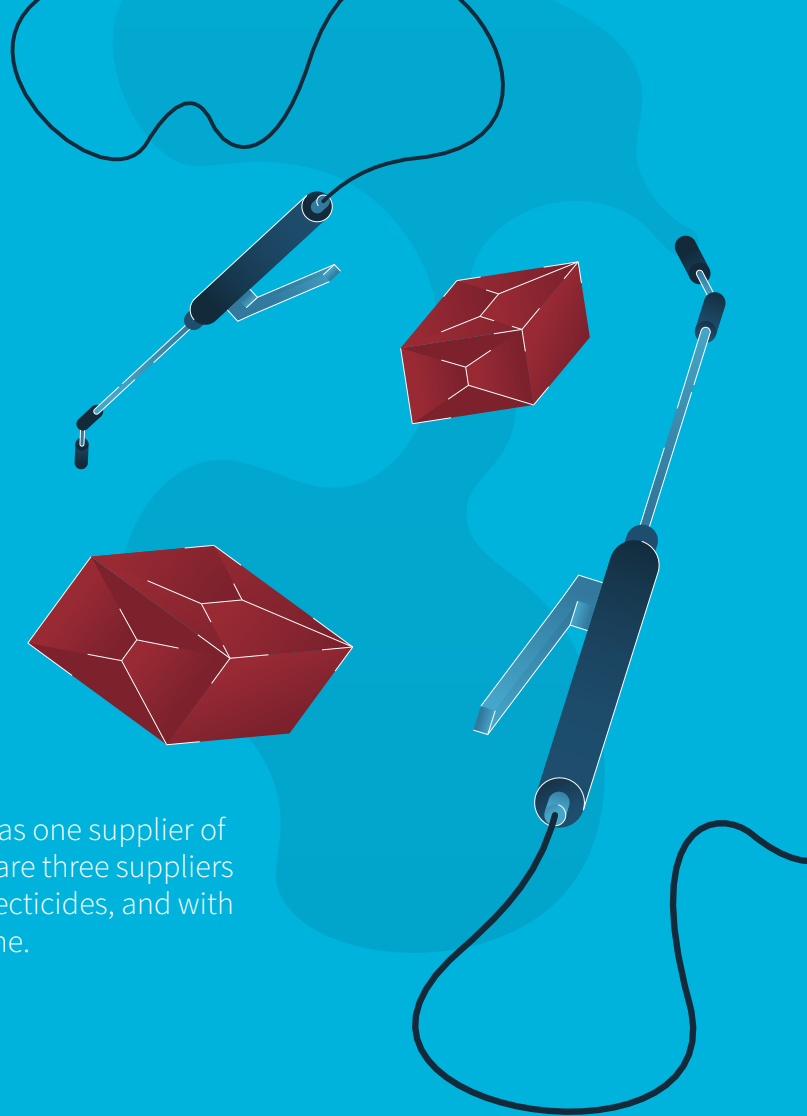
Achieved a competitive mean
target price of US\$ 15 per bottle.

MORE DIVERSE AND SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY

Prior to Unitaid's investment, there was one supplier of next-generation sprays. Today, there are three suppliers producing two different chemical insecticides, and with two additional products in the pipeline.

DRAMATIC INCREASE IN COUNTRIES USING NEXT-GENERATION SPRAYS

Number of countries implementing the new-generation insecticides has increased from 8 to 36 over the course of the 4-year grant period.



RESULTS



MILLIONS OF PEOPLE PROTECTED

By the end of 2019, 135 million people had benefited from next-generation sprays, which is 60% above the end-of-grant target.

HIGH LEVEL OF PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT

Impact achieved during grant implementation (2016 – 2019): an additional 14,000 lives saved and 4.8 million malaria cases averted.

Potential impact 2020-2024: an additional 36,000 lives saved and 12 million malaria cases averted.



T B 3 H P

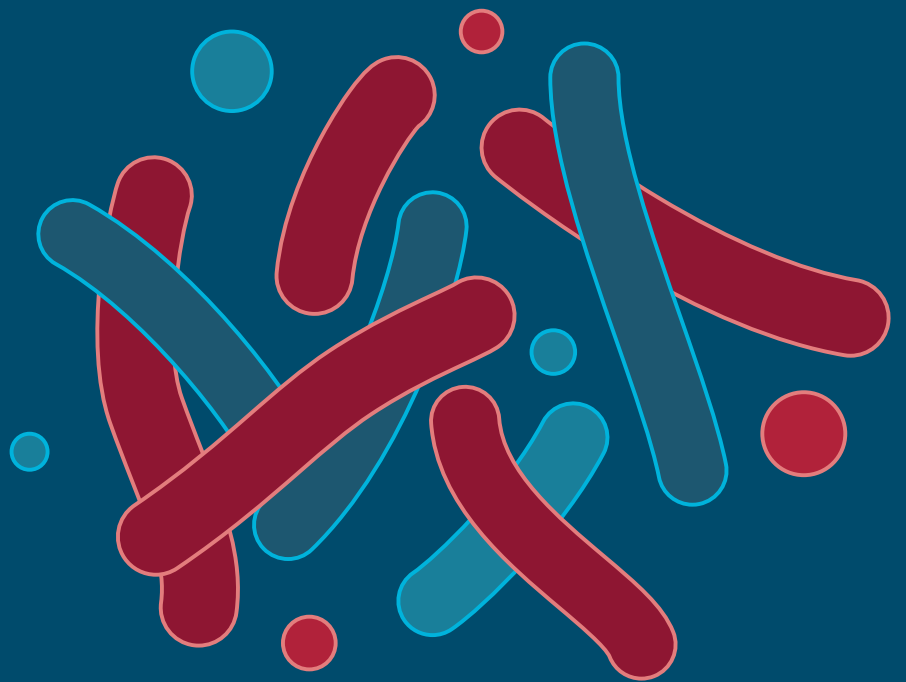
A WATERSHED DEAL FOR TB PREVENTION DRUG

A quarter of the world's population is infected with latent TB. They have no symptoms, are not contagious and most do not know they are infected. Without treatment, up to 10% of them will develop active TB, the form which makes people ill and can spread from person to person. People living with HIV are at greater risk of getting infected and dying of active TB.

A landmark agreement by Unitaid, the Global Fund and pharmaceutical company Sanofi has cut by 70 percent the price of rifapentine, a drug used to prevent tuberculosis (TB), for millions of people in low- and medium-income countries where the epidemic is at its worst. A generic manufacturer will also offer rifapentine-based 3HP treatment for the same reduced price, helping to secure supplies and meet anticipated demand.

The development boosts efforts to treat latent TB infection, enabling scale-up of preventive therapy from 2021.

Availability of the treatment will lead to higher completion rates, lower incidence of multidrug resistant strains of the disease (MDR-TB), and a reduced burden on health systems.



**1/4 OF THE WORLD'S
POPULATION HAS LATENT TB**

**PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV
ARE 19 TIMES MORE LIKELY
TO DEVELOP ACTIVE TB**

THE NEW 12-DOSE 3HP TREATMENT HAS...

- Higher rates of treatment completion
- Better clinical outcomes
- Fewer people developing active TB
- Reduced toxicity

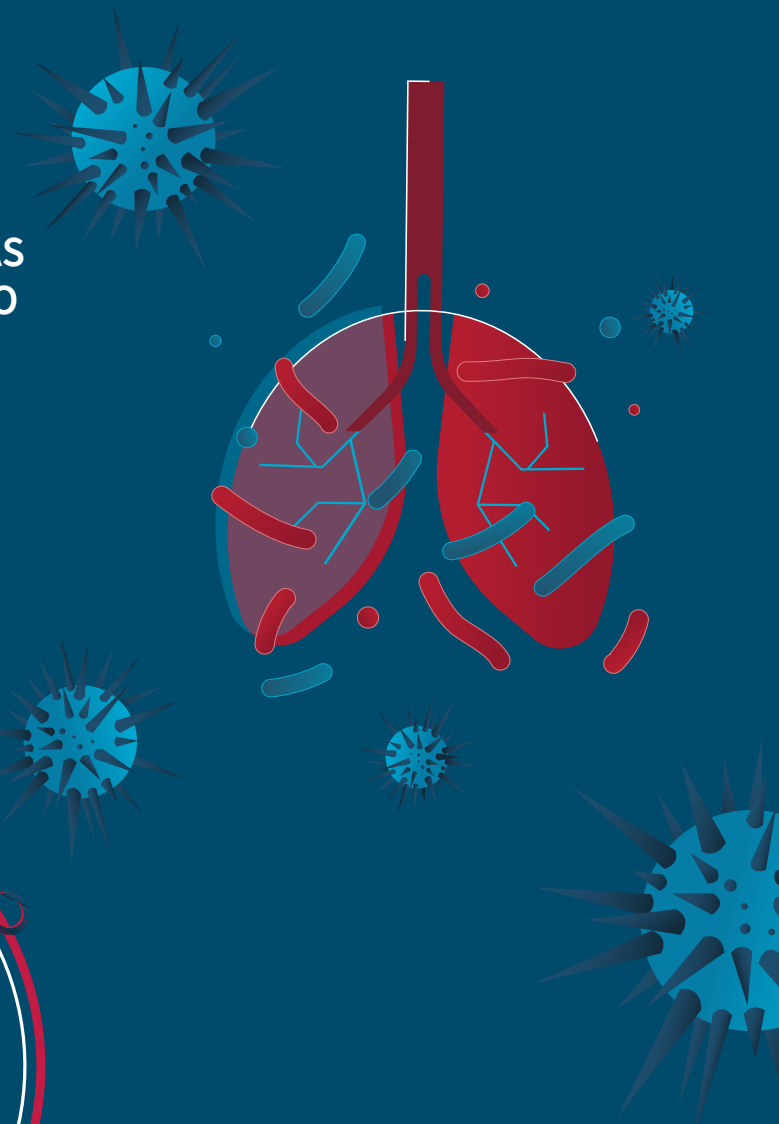
3HP is also safe to use alongside DTG-based antiretrovirals, making it an optimal treatment for people living with HIV.

FASTER TREATMENT WITH FEWER DOSES

The new treatment will reduce number of doses needed. Down from over 270 doses of the current 9-month treatment, to just 12 doses of the 3HP regimen over 3 months.

THE REDUCED COST OF 3HP HAS ENABLED EXPANDED ACCESS TO THIS LIFE SAVING TREATMENT

During the first phase of 3HP scale-up, high risk groups will be prioritized, including people living with HIV and household contacts of active TB cases.

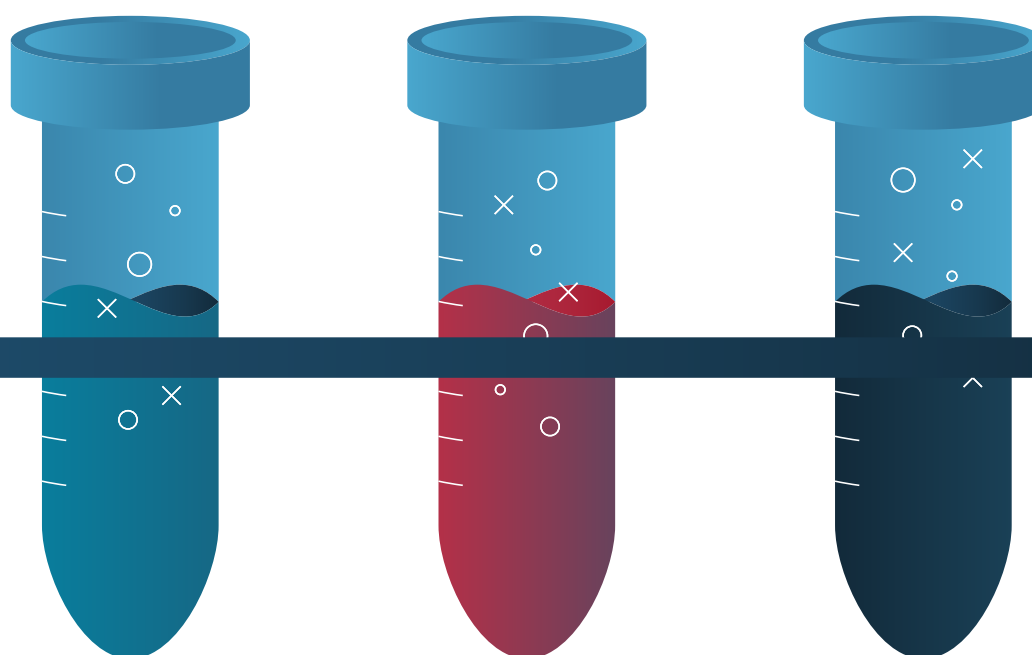


LAUNCHING GROUND-BREAKING INVESTMENTS

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Unitaid has continued to promote innovation in global health, with more than US\$ 250 million invested in new projects since July 2019.

Twelve new grants were launched, in addition to major changes to 9 existing grants as part of Unitaid's response to COVID-19. New calls for proposals included areas such as oxygen therapy, Chagas disease and preventative malaria treatment for children.

Three new investment areas are showcased here.



**LONG-ACTING
TECHNOLOGIES**

**CERVICAL CANCER
SCREENING
& PREVENTION**

**UNITAID EXPLORE
OXYGEN THERAPY**



**LONG-ACTING
TECHNOLOGIES**

**HELPING PATIENTS SUCCEED
WITH LONGER-ACTING
MEDICINES IN PLACE OF PILLS**

**CERVICAL
CANCER**

**SAVING WOMEN'S LIVES WITH
SCREENING AND TREATMENT
FOR CERVICAL CANCER**

**UNITAID
EXPLORE**

**UNITAID INITIATIVE FOR FUNDING
SMALL PROJECTS DEBUTS WITH
OXYGEN THERAPY**

LONG-ACTING TECHNOLOGIES

HELPING PATIENTS SUCCEED WITH LONGER-ACTING MEDICINES IN PLACE OF PILLS

Long-acting formulations can administer medicines through patches or injections that are effective for months, freeing people from daily regimens of pills and making it easier for them to succeed in their treatment.

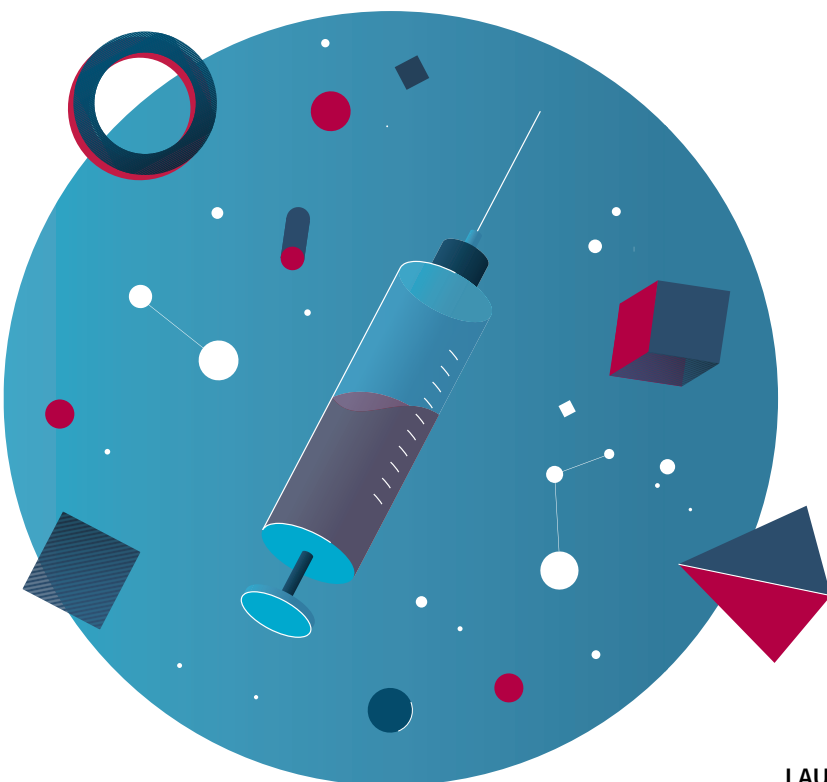
They take pressure off health systems, combating antimicrobial resistance and halting the spread of diseases.

Unitaid is funding work on solutions for malaria, tuberculosis, HIV and hepatitis C in low-income countries.

The first project seeks to develop a long-acting injectable form of ivermectin, a drug that can interrupt malaria transmission, making it easier to administer and adhere to.

A second project will develop long-acting versions of medicines to cure hepatitis C and to prevent malaria and latent TB, with a view to filing for regulatory approval.

Unitaid is also supporting another project to develop long-acting injections to treat HIV. Simplifying antiretroviral treatment could help people stay on medication, which keeps the virus suppressed and prevents its spread.



DAILY PILLS MEANS THAT SOMEBODY LIVING WITH HIV NEED TO TAKE OVER 12,000 PILLS

An adult living with HIV can expect to take more than 12,000 pills over their lifetime in their daily management of the disease.

IMPROVING LIVES BY REDUCING PILL BURDEN WITH LONG-ACTING INJECTIONS

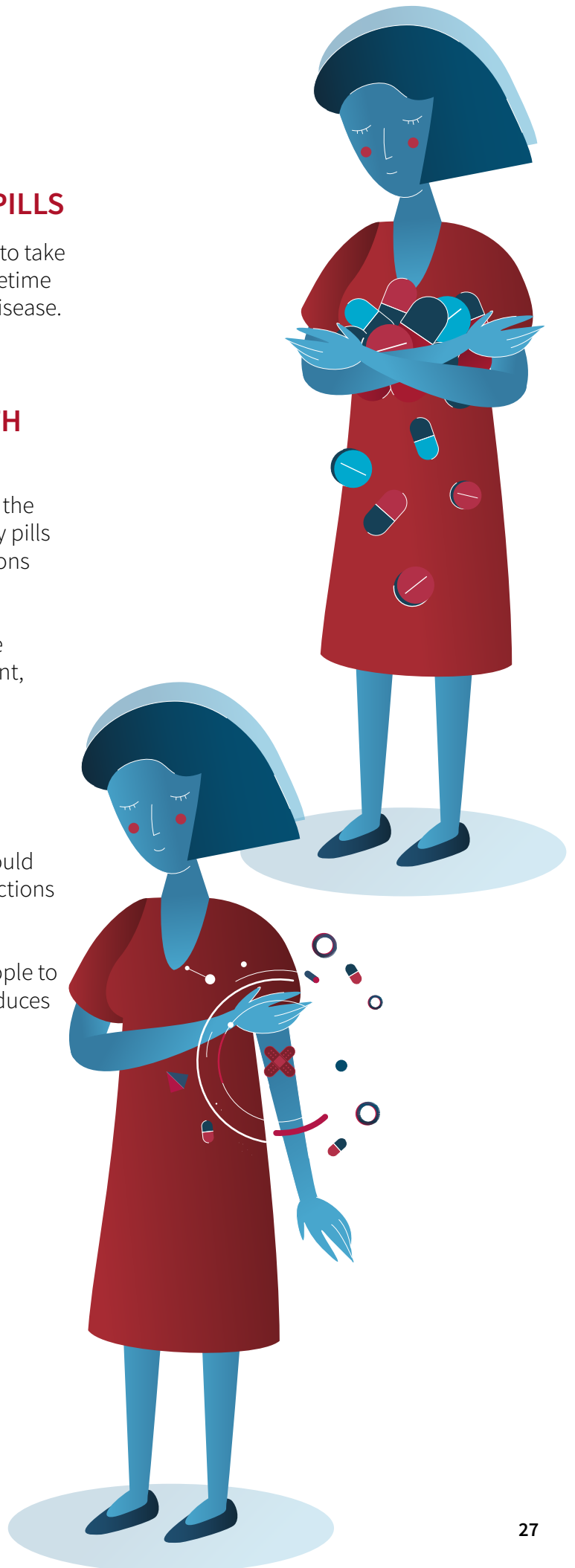
A long-acting injection can reduce the treatment burden from 12,000 daily pills to about 400 once-a-month injections over a lifetime.

Long-acting medicines can provide people with more discreet treatment, helping to reduce stigma.

FREING PEOPLE FROM DAILY PILLS

Improved long-acting treatment could even reduce this to as few as 4 injections a year.

This will help make it easier for people to start and stay on treatment and reduces the burden on health system.



CERVICAL CANCER

SAVING WOMEN'S LIVES WITH SCREENING AND TREATMENT FOR CERVICAL CANCER

Cervical cancer is a preventable disease that kills more than 300,000 women a year. Most deaths are in poorer countries where screening and treatment are scarce.

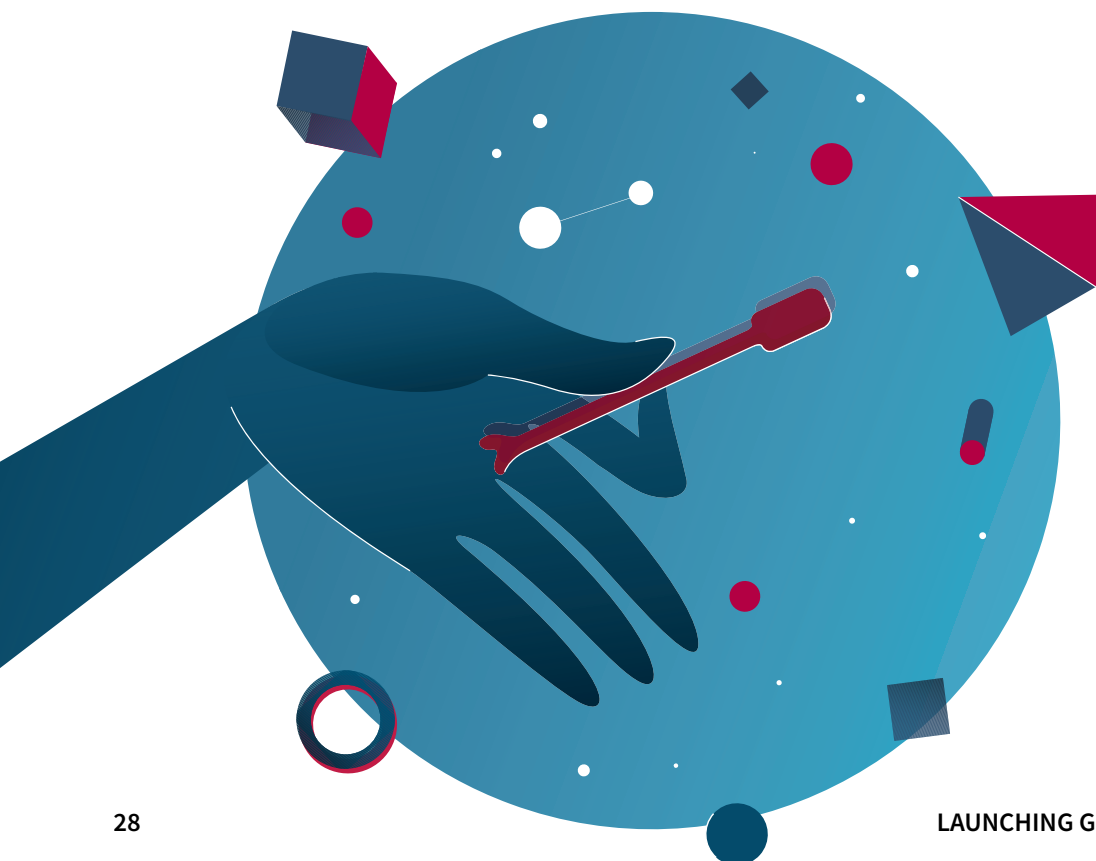
Unitaid is leading the way in a global effort to eliminate the disease by creating access to a one-stop solution offering affordable, quality screening and treatment services.

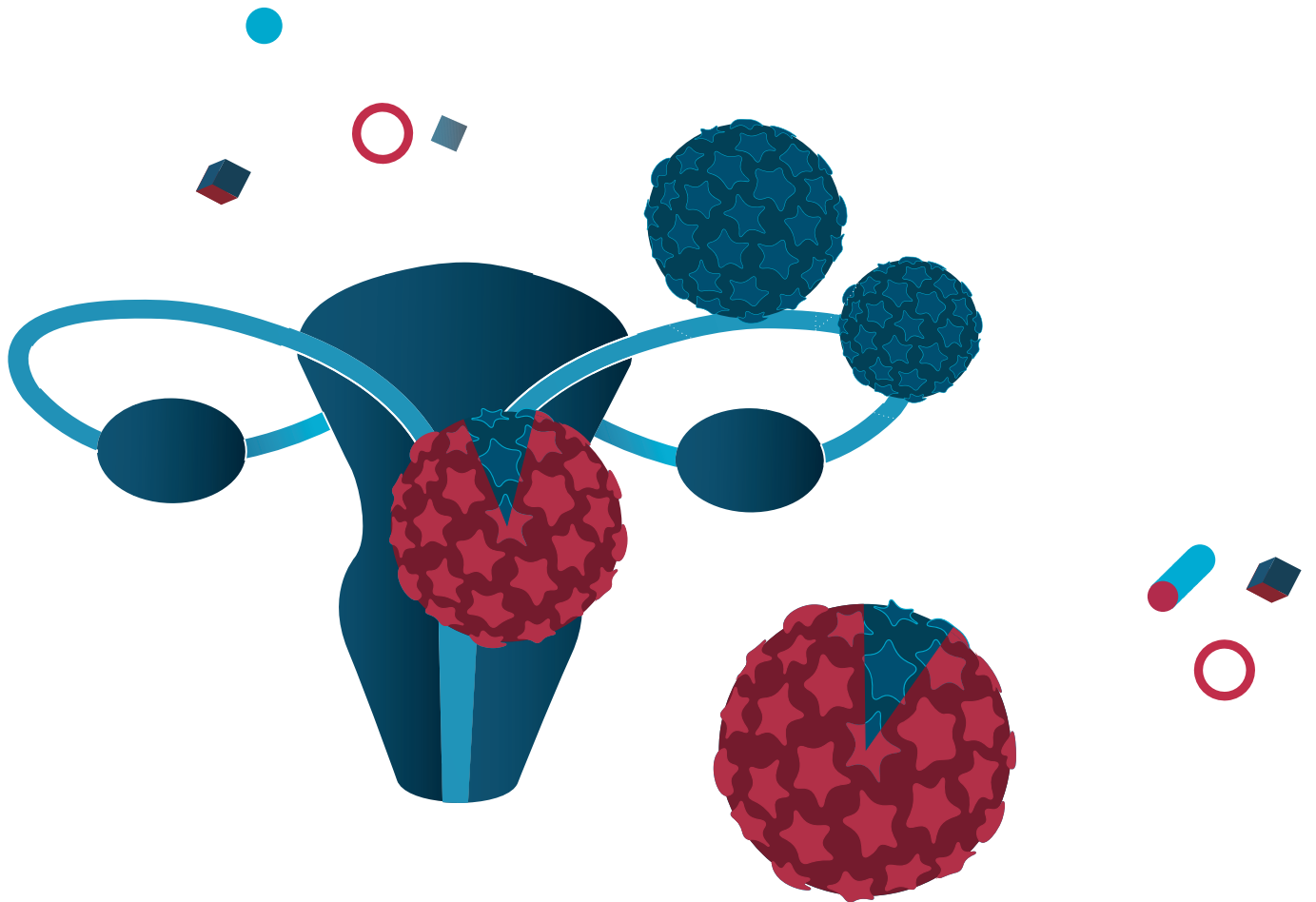
Scaling-up this intervention could cut cervical cancer deaths by 30 percent in low- and middle-income countries in 10 years.

Cervical cancer is caused by human papilloma virus (HPV), a common sexually transmitted infection. HPV infections may result in precancerous lesions that can develop into cancer if not caught early.

Two Unitaid initiatives are developing portable tools for testing and removal of precancerous lesions, that can work in rural clinics. A technique called thermal ablation uses a heated probe to destroy precancerous cells.

The cost of screening and treating has been cut from US\$20 in 2018 to \$11, with the aim of reducing this further to a US\$1 screen-and-treat package.





THERE ARE 270,000 PREVENTABLE DEATHS FROM CERVICAL CANCER EACH YEAR WORLDWIDE

Unitaid is working to change this reality by expanding access to simple, affordable and highly effective screening and preventive approaches.

NEARLY 90% OF WOMEN WHO DIE FROM CERVICAL CANCER

have poor access to prevention, screening and treatment.

WOMEN IN LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

are six times more likely to develop cervical cancer than women in high-income countries.

UNITAID EXPLORE

UNITAID INITIATIVE FOR FUNDING SMALL PROJECTS DEBUTS WITH OXYGEN THERAPY

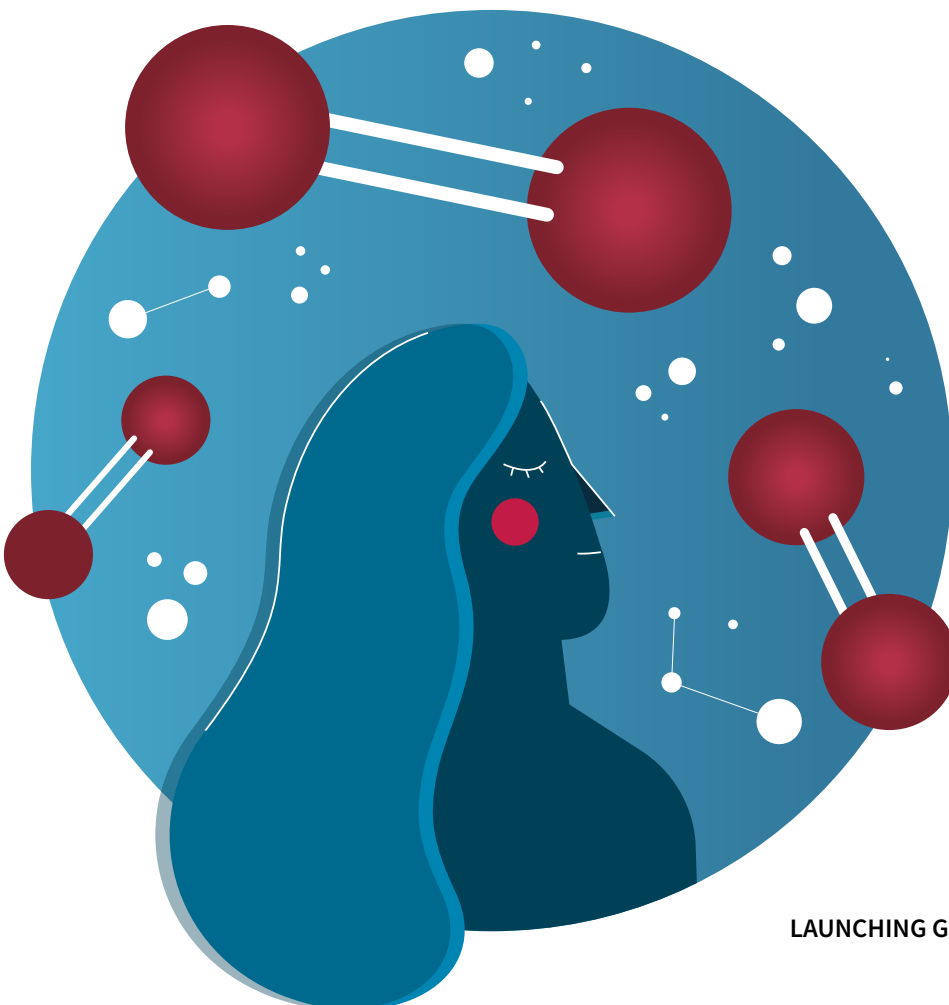
UnitaidExplore, a new and flexible funding mechanism for small projects with potential to deliver transformational change, launched its first call in February 2020 for innovations that increase access to oxygen therapy in low-resource settings.

The aim of the initiative is to reach non-traditional partners and seize opportunities to keep pace with innovation.

UnitaidExplore projects will make 6-24 month investments ranging from US\$ 500,000 to US\$ 2 million that fund results, based on achieving milestones agreed in advance.

With its first initiative, UnitaidExplore will invest in a portable oxygen therapy device that can operate off grid, while requiring low maintenance and providing high-quality oxygen to patients. The objective is to find solutions that can work well in low-resource settings and treat children under the age of five.

Timely access to oxygen therapy can make the difference between life and death when treating patients with moderate to severe disease including COVID-19.



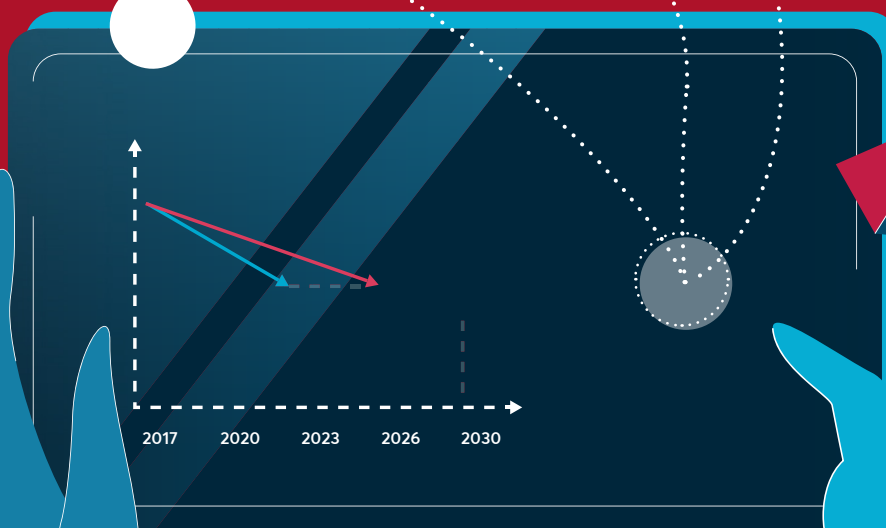
ACCELERATING SCALE-UP

Through its grants, Unitaid is supporting the introduction and scale-up of lifesaving innovations that are making a big difference in bending the curve on the world's most deadly diseases. The magnitude of Unitaid's impact was demonstrated in a joint analysis undertaken by Unitaid and the Global Fund leading up to the Global Fund's October 2019 replenishment conference. The analysis estimated that without innovations supported by both organisations, it would take three years longer to reach our targets for reducing the deaths from HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrated the sheer scale of Unitaid's impact. Innovations supported by Unitaid and the Global Fund are projected to reach more than 100 million people every year from 2021 to 2023.

Innovations supported by Unitaid are accelerating progress in reducing deaths from the 3 diseases

Without the innovation progress in reducing deaths could take 3 years longer, projections suggest

Health innovations will play a critical part in helping us get back on track to meet our 2030 SDG targets





HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2019-2020

JULY



Unitaid and Rwanda's Ministry of Health sign agreement to collaborate on better and more affordable health solutions for the people of Rwanda and beyond.

ALIMA, PATH and Unitaid announce US\$ 43 million initiative to provide frontline health workers in Asia and Africa with affordable, easy-to-use diagnostic devices to help identify critically ill children and refer them for treatment without delay.

OCTOBER



Landmark deal by Unitaid, the Global Fund and pharmaceutical group Sanofi significantly lowers price of rifapentine, a drug used to prevent tuberculosis). The agreement boosts efforts to treat latent by broadening access to better preventive therapy.

France's President Emmanuel Macron announces the renewal of France's support for Unitaid for a further three years. France is one of the founders of Unitaid and its biggest donor.

DECEMBER



Unitaid and Expertise France sign financing agreement to implement the Scale Up Cervical Cancer Elimination with Secondary prevention Strategy (SUCCESS) project. The aim is to strengthen screening and secondary prevention to prevent development of cervical cancer in women infected with human papilloma virus (HPV) who have precancerous lesions.

Indian pharmaceutical company Cipla announces commitment to price a 'four-in-one' treatment for young children with HIV at less than one U.S. dollar a day. The treatment is under review by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use in children weighing between 3 and 25 kg.

2019

SEPTEMBER

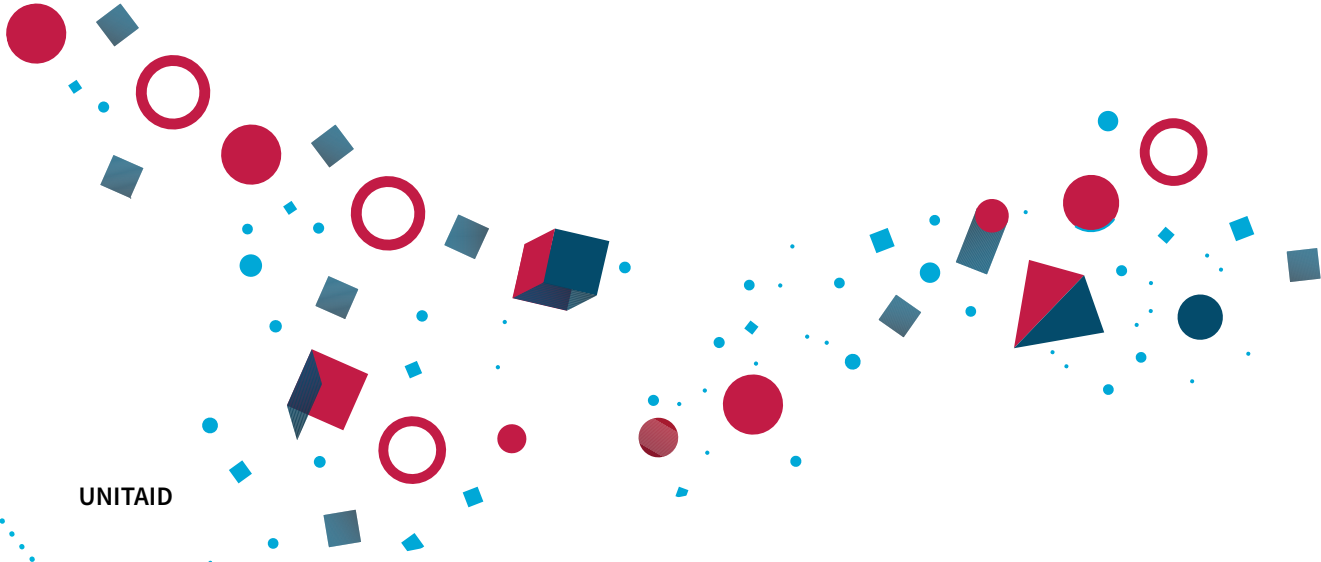


Unitaid is one of 12 multilateral organizations to launch Global Action Plan (GAP) for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All, an initiative to strengthen collaboration to help countries move faster toward universal health coverage.

NOVEMBER



South Africa, which accounts for one-fifth of all people living with HIV worldwide, launches a state-of-the-art treatment that was introduced with the support of Unitaid. The new three-in-one regimen, known as TLD, has fewer side-effects and is easier to take than other formulations.



JANUARY

Unitaid unveils US\$ 39 million investment in two projects to speed up development of long-acting versions of medicines for low- and middle-income countries. Long-acting technologies offer a simple way of administering medicines that frees patients from daily pills, makes it easier for them to start and stay on treatment, and reduces the burden on health systems.

MARCH

Unitaid Board approves US\$ 30 million for work against COVID-19, authorizing Unitaid to contribute its expertise in innovative treatment, diagnostics and respiratory triage tools to a global pandemic response.

JUNE

Unitaid's Executive Board approves new funding of up to US\$ 35 million to support Unitaid's role in the ACT-A partnership for developing and making available vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics for COVID-19. The funding is in addition to US\$ 30 million agreed in March 2020 as part of the COVID-19 response.

2020



FEBRUARY

Unitaid launches UnitaidExplore initiative, a new funding mechanism targeting small-scale projects with potential to bring about large change. The first call under the initiative was for ideas to create a transformative improvement in access to oxygen therapy, a technique that can make a life-or-death difference when treating people with moderate to severe disease.

APRIL

The Board of the Unitaid-funded Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) temporarily broadens MPP's mandate to include any health technology that can contribute to the global response to COVID-19. The move allows MPP to offer its licensing expertise to the World Health Organization (WHO) and to assist global efforts to contain the pandemic in any way it can.

Unitaid releases report on how to improve diagnosis and treatment of Chagas disease. The report describes diagnostics and treatments that are in use now and identifies potential improvements.

Unitaid named as a Co-convener of the Therapeutics Partnership under the COVID-19 tools accelerator partnership (ACT-A), alongside the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Wellcome Trust.

JULY

Unitaid and Wellcome join forces with partners in the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) to expand access to dexamethasone for low- and middle-income countries as part of efforts to ensure equitable access to therapeutics in the COVID-19 response. Dexamethasone is a low-cost corticosteroid used to provide relief for inflammation.

The Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND) and Unitaid launch call for expressions of interest to accelerate availability and manufacturing scale-up of rapid diagnostic tests for COVID-19. Rapid and affordable tests are key tools for patient management and contact tracing in low- and middle-income countries.



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