

Equity. Access.

Now.

Accelerating access to
health innovations for all



Saving lives, time and money



US\$1.5 billion

over five years, our work will accelerate the global health response and kickstart efforts towards 2030 targets.

Equity. Access. Now.

Billions of dollars are spent each year on developing critical health innovations, yet far less is invested to ensure they reach everywhere they are needed. The reality is that on their own, high prices, regulatory obstacles, mal-adapted products, evidence gaps, or a lack of quality assurance, among many other factors, keep most health innovations from reaching people in low- and middle-income countries for years – often for more than a decade.

With time running out to reach the health targets set forth in the Sustainable Development Goals and recover progress lost to the COVID-19 pandemic, we cannot afford to waste a minute, let alone a decade.

Innovations are critical to advancing health responses – but access is the key to our collective success.

Only by ensuring that everyone has access to better and more effective tests, treatments, and tools – at affordable prices – and by using smarter deployment of those tools, can we connect millions more people to life-saving care, and get our efforts back on track. Only through broad access to innovation can we get ahead of evolving diseases, outpace drug-resistance, build resilient primary healthcare, and increase the effectiveness of the global health response, so that every dollar invested yields a maximum return.

This is where Unitaid comes in. Unitaid is the leading global health agency working to identify and unlock access to game-changing health products and approaches for affected communities in low- and middle-income countries.

We do proof-of-concept for promising new products and interventions, and in the process drive down prices, improve supply chains, generate much-needed evidence, and support regulatory approvals. We invest to ensure medicines and tools are safe and adapted to the needs of those who are often last in line, such as children and pregnant women. Our investments help work out the challenges so scale-up partners like the Global Fund can advance more quickly and impactfully with product roll out.

Access matters. The first antiretrovirals to treat HIV/AIDS appeared in the late 1980s but were not in widespread use in low-income countries until the mid-2000s, more than a decade later than in high-income countries. As a result of this delay, millions of lives were unnecessarily lost.

Today, thanks to Unitaid's work, people have access to more than 100 vital medicines and tools that form the backbone of global health responses – largely available at a fraction of their original cost.

Unitaid's work is critical to confronting the barriers that stand in the way of broad and equitable access to life-saving health innovations. For more than 15 years we have worked in close collaboration with affected communities and global health partners to ensure people everywhere are afforded the benefits of advances in healthcare.

Today, thanks to Unitaid's work, people have access to more than 100 vital medicines and tools that form the backbone of global health responses – largely available at a fraction of their original cost.

- **All the major HIV drugs currently used**
- **All the core paediatric formulations for HIV and critical paediatric regimens for TB treatment and prevention**
- **The most effective malaria prevention approaches used today**
- **Major diagnostics currently used for TB, HIV, human papillomavirus (HPV), and hepatitis C**
- **Ground-breaking preventive treatments for cervical cancer**
- **Critical technologies to improve access to medical oxygen in low- and middle-income countries**

The impact of our work is visible in the lives of countless people. It's the caretakers who no longer have to coax young children to swallow bitter tasting TB medicines made, and dosed, for adults.

The sex worker who, fearing stigma or discrimination, can do an HIV self-test discreetly and access pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent infection. The young child who is protected from malaria through preventive medicines, a vaccine, and bed nets. And the millions of people worldwide who can affordably access best-in-class medicines for treating and preventing TB and HIV.

When the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the world, we applied our expertise to the response. Through leadership in the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A), Unitaid played a critical role in ensuring low- and middle-income countries could access – and make use of – new and life-saving medicines, medical oxygen, and tests to tackle outbreaks wherever they occurred.

And with our sights set to the future, we are heading up multiple efforts to help countries build strong and resilient health systems, including sustainable oxygen supplies, so we are better prepared to respond to current challenges – and whatever is to come.



Unitaid drove the massive expansion of HIV self-testing throughout Africa and beyond, helping to grow the number of countries with self-testing policies from six at the program’s outset in 2015, to nearly 90 countries by 2020.

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Thanks to Unitaid, more people across Africa have access to the best HIV treatments at a fraction of the original price. Young children have been cured of TB with high-quality formulations that are easy to administer. Millions of young people are better protected against malaria through large scale seasonal delivery of medicines, an approach that has dramatically reduced child mortality without raising costs.

António Guterres
United Nations Secretary General

Leaving no child behind: Pediatric HIV medicines

When Maurine was first diagnosed with HIV in the early 2000s, there were no treatments available to her in her home country of Kenya, let alone for her new-born son.

“We were just surviving – waiting to become sick and to die,” she says.

“The doctor told me I had six months to live. Without any intervention, I was unable to prevent my child from contracting HIV. When the first antiretrovirals became available, there was still no guidance on how to treat our children, or medicines adapted for their use.

“We could not watch and wait for our children to become sick while we got treated. Many mothers, like me, gave the adult medicines to our children, breaking the pills into pieces without knowing the repercussions.”

Today, child-friendly medicines are available and affordable in low- and middle-income countries thanks to 75% price reductions secured by Unitaid.



Without treatment, 80% of children born with HIV will die before the age of five. For decades, most children in low- and middle-income countries went without access and countless young lives were lost.

Medicines are typically developed for adults first and adapted for children later – a lengthy and complex process that, without adequate funding and attention, can leave children waiting for years.

Unitaid invested heavily to address the lagging response so Maurine’s son – and millions of others like him – could benefit from the ground-breaking progress achieved in HIV treatment in the past decades.

These investments accelerated development of child formulations of antiretroviral medicines – adapted formulas that are properly dosed, flavored, and easy for a young child to swallow.

Today, these safe and effective pediatric HIV medicines are widely available. Thanks to 75% price reductions secured by Unitaid, this life-saving treatment is more affordable, freeing up resources that can be invested elsewhere.

Child friendly treatments have transformed care for the 1.7 million children living with HIV worldwide, but our work is far from finished. Although treatment rates have been steadily increasing, just over half of all children with HIV have access to antiretrovirals and children account for a disproportionately high rate of AIDS-related deaths.

Unitaid is leading efforts to close remaining gaps by looking into novel medicine delivery technologies that could further simplify treatment for children and seeking solutions to confront the most common causes of death among children with HIV.



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The COVID-19 pandemic put access issues into stark relief. Today, people around the world have experienced varying degrees of what it means to not have access to the vital medicines and health tools we so desperately need. This critical facilitation has been Unitaid’s domain for more than 15 years.

Dr Philippe Duneton

Executive Director of Unitaid

Multiplying global health impact

Unitaid's impact is significant and needed now more than ever. Our efforts save lives, time, and money, and maximize the effectiveness of the overall global health response.



© TB Alliance

Products piloted and supported by Unitaid now reach more than 100 million people each year. Reduced prices and efficiencies to systems that come with these products are projected to generate between US\$5 and US\$6 billion in savings by 2030; much needed funding that can be reinvested elsewhere.

Our investments are essential to reaching global targets more quickly. They maximise the impact of investments into the Global Fund and the broader response to HIV, TB, and malaria, accelerating the overall response by more than three years¹. The health and economic gains from every dollar invested in the three diseases are 16% higher with health innovations like those we support, contributing to an additional US\$70 billion saved between 2024 and 2026.

¹ A joint analysis conducted by Unitaid and the Global Fund investigated the difference health innovations will make in reducing deaths from HIV, TB, and malaria over the Global Fund's next replenishment period. The analysis showed that without the innovations piloted by Unitaid and scaled up by partners, it could take more than three years to achieve the same reduction in mortality. [Read more: https://unitaid.org/assets/Technical-Annex.pdf](https://unitaid.org/assets/Technical-Annex.pdf)

How we work



Identify

We analyze complex access problems, identify promising tools, and develop pathways to solve them.



Explore

We issue public calls for smart proposals that respond to key access barriers.



Invest

We drive change by funding the proposals with the greatest potential impact in public health value or equity.



Partner

Unitaid leads and convenes multisectoral partnerships that accelerate access and deliver greater impact.



Scale up

We work with global, national and local health partners to hand over transformative models for scale up so communities everywhere can benefit.



Our areas of focus

- HIV and co-infections, tuberculosis, malaria
- Women and children's health
- Global health emergency response

Confronting access barriers

Unitaid's 2023-2027 Strategy reaffirms our distinctive and critical role in global health as the driving force for access to health innovations.

With US\$1.5 billion over five years, we can transform access to critical advances in prevention and care for communities in need.

This means, first and foremost, identifying the most promising innovations, working with a diverse range of partners to overcome barriers, and laying the groundwork for countries to scale them up wherever they are needed.

The types of problems we solve:

- **High prices**
- **Inadequate or poorly adapted tools**
- **Insufficient supply**
- **Regulatory hurdles**
- **Evidence gaps**
- **Intellectual property restrictions**
- **Supply-chain bottlenecks**
- **Low demand**

Access to health is a moral imperative. And innovation is not a privilege afforded to the lucky few. Reaching 2030 targets and improving health coverage depends on equitable solutions. This principle is at the heart of our efforts to end the HIV, TB and malaria pandemics. And it is the only way we will achieve real and sustainable advances that improve women and children's health and build more robust health systems for whatever is to come. This commitment to access will advance solutions to better protect the lives and livelihoods of tens of millions of people worldwide.

Our work saves lives and transforms health responses. With US\$1.5 billion over the next five years, we can ensure critical advances in health are within reach everywhere they are needed and accelerate global health agendas so people – no matter where they are born or where they live – can benefit from the highest quality care and get back to their lives more quickly.



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I know the value of Unitaid’s work because I’ve lived it. I remember what it was like to get diagnosed with HIV and not have access to medicines. To not have treatment for my new-born child. Access is a right. And Unitaid helps make that right a reality for countless people in low- and middle-income countries.

Maurine Murenga

Advocate and Unitaid Board Member



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Innovation in Global Health

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