

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

2023

FOR ACTION TO ELIMINATE ALL FORMS OF

HIV

-RELATED
STIGMA AND
DISCRIMINATION



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KEY POINTS

HIV-related stigma and discrimination are widespread.

HIV-related stigma and discrimination, in all their forms, continue to undermine interventions across the HIV prevention, treatment and care continuum and constitute key human rights and gender-related barriers to ending the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030.

Eliminating all forms of HIV-related stigma and discrimination is fundamental to achieving the Global AIDS Strategy 2021–2026; the 2021 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS; and the Sustainable Development Goals and targets by 2030 (SDGs).

The settings where stigma and discrimination occur go beyond the health-care setting to include education, the workplace, the justice system, community, and emergency and humanitarian settings.

The Global AIDS Strategy 2021-2026 has set the 10-10-10 targets to end inequalities and reach those left behind, who are disproportionately impacted by stigma and discrimination.

By addressing the inequalities driving the AIDS epidemic, the Global Partnership for Action to Eliminate all Forms of HIV-related Stigma and Discrimination contributes to strengthening community resilience and empowerment, critical for being prepared for and responding to COVID-19 and future pandemics.

The Global Partnership for Action to Eliminate all Forms of HIV-related Stigma and Discrimination is a critical vehicle to mobilise all countries to reach these interconnected targets and implement the Strategy. It harnesses the combined power of governments, civil society, bilateral and multilateral donors, academia and the United Nations to eliminate HIV-related stigma and discrimination and to inspire countries to take action to remove critical barriers to HIV services.

Workshop papers on the wall at the LGBTQ UPROOT Advocacy Roadmap Workshop in Phnom Penh, Cambodia ©UNAIDS/Todd Brown

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ADDRESSING HIV-RELATED STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION:

Strategies and Targets

Five decades into the HIV and AIDS global epidemic, HIV-related stigma and discrimination remain stubbornly persistent. The global AIDS response has made important strides to mitigate the devastating impact of HIV and AIDS over the past decade. However, the 2020 global targets have been missed as a result of the inequalities that underpin stigma and are perpetuated by, and discrimination.

Indeed, in line with other aspects of the pandemic, the landscape of addressing HIV-related stigma and discrimination has evolved over the past five decades. Yet, people living with HIV and communities most at risk still face stigma and discrimination at all levels – in their homes, communities, workplaces, within health services, educational establishments and at policy level – impeding access to their basic human rights. These experiences are also internalised, creating mental health challenges and social isolation.

Furthermore, HIV-related stigma and discrimination are often compounded by marginalisation, criminalisation and exclusion on the basis of intersecting factors such as gender, age, sexual orientation or practice, race, sex work and drug use. Stigma, discrimination and violence – especially those facing key populations¹ – continue to act as barriers to HIV prevention, treatment, retention in care and quality of life for those living with or at risk of and most affected by HIV.

UNAIDS Global AIDS Update: “In Danger” (1) reveals through its data how new HIV infections are rising in regions where they had been falling. There is no denying that the elevated risks are due to inequalities, punitive laws and policies, stigma and discrimination. In fact, latest evidence suggests that by addressing violence, stigma, discrimination and punitive laws, the world would avert 2.5 million new infections and 1.7 million more AIDS-related deaths by 2025. Therefore, mobilising countries to achieve the global targets on stigma and discrimination is crucial in order to end inequalities and save lives.

1 Gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers, transgender people, people who inject drugs, people in prisons (and other incarcerated populations), indigenous populations, people with disabilities, migrants, refugees, and women and girls (particularly adolescent girls and young women).

GLOBAL TARGETS ON STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

Eliminating HIV-related stigma and discrimination in all their forms is key to achieving the promise of leaving no one behind and reaching the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and targets by 2030, including ending the AIDS epidemic (2, 3).

Ending HIV-related stigma and discrimination is at the heart of all efforts to achieving the **Global AIDS Strategy 2021–2026** and its 10–10–10 targets on societal enablers (4), so that by 2025 less than:



10%

of people living with HIV and key populations experience stigma and discrimination.



10%

of women, girls, people living with HIV and key populations experience gender inequality and gender-based violence.



10%

of countries have punitive legal and policy environments that deny access to justice.

The Global AIDS Strategy further requires that at least



60%

of programmes supporting the achievement of these targets are delivered by community-led organisations.

GLOBAL AIDS STRATEGY TOP-LINE TARGETS FOR 2025

PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV AND COMMUNITIES AT RISK AT THE CENTRE

95% 90%



- of people use combination prevention
- of people living with HIV (PLHIV) know their HIV status
- of PLHIV who know their status initiate treatment
- of PLHIV on treatment are virally suppressed
- coverage or services for eliminating vertical transmission
- of women access HIV and sexual and reproductive health services



- of people living with HIV and people at risk are linked to people-centred and context-specific integrated services

Less than
10%



- of countries have punitive laws and policies
- of PLHIV and key populations experience stigma and discrimination
- of women and girls, PLHIV and key populations experience gender based inequalities and gender based violence

In the 2021 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (5), Member States echoed the Global AIDS Strategy and committed to urgent and transformative action to end social, economic, racial and gender inequalities; restrictive and discriminatory laws, policies and practices; stigma and multiple intersecting forms of discrimination, including based on a person's HIV status; and human rights violations that perpetuate the AIDS epidemic.

The principles of non-discrimination and equity within the Political Declaration are fundamental to other key international commitments made by Member States, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.



We have the global recognition and political commitment. What we need now, is coordinated and concrete action.

THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION TO ELIMINATE ALL FORMS OF HIV-RELATED STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION



The Global Partnership for Action to Eliminate all Forms of HIV-related Stigma and Discrimination is a critical vehicle for action to mobilise all countries to reach the Political Declaration and Global AIDS Strategy targets. It leverages partnerships to enhance coordination of interventions and funding; it provides knowledge and evidence-guided technical support; and increases accountability mechanisms and community leadership.

ORIGINS

In December 2017, the 41st UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board highlighted the urgent need for increased and collective efforts to address the various layers of HIV-related stigma, discrimination and criminalisation that were limiting access to essential services, increasing vulnerability to HIV and fuelling the AIDS epidemic. In response to the call of the Programme Coordinating Board nongovernmental organization delegation (PCB NGO Delegation), the Global Partnership for Action to Eliminate All Forms of HIV-related Stigma and Discrimination (Global Partnership) was launched in 2018, on International Human Rights Day.

The Global Partnership has the following three main **objectives**:

- To help translate political and human rights commitments made at global, regional and national levels toward the elimination of HIV-related stigma and discrimination into action at country level;
- To establish, strengthen and revitalise partnerships among stakeholders to implement and scale-up programmes toward ending all forms of HIV-related stigma and discrimination; and
- To continuously generate and disseminate evidence-based data to inform policy and programming, to measure progress, and to support accountability toward the elimination of HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

The Global Partnership aims to eliminate stigmatising and discriminatory practices, policies and laws across **six settings**: ■ health-care ■ workplace ■ education ■ justice system ■ community and ■ emergency settings.

The **architecture** of the Global Partnership:

**GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP
POLITICAL LEADERSHIP**

- UNAIDS EXD
- UN Women EXD
- UNDP Administrator
- GNP+ EXD
- Global Fund EXD

**CO-CONVENORS
GROUP**

GNP+, PCB NGO Delegation, UNAIDS, UNDP, UN Women, Global Fund, CDC

Co-convenors secretariat support political leadership at technical level to advise on direction of partnership, advocacy, development of guidance and ensure technical support to countries.

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

Technical support and strategic guidance to countries, facilitate information sharing, joint working and resource mobilization.

- Health-care Settings:** WHO & Asia Catalyst
- Workplace Settings:** ILO & AMMAR (Asociación de Mujeres Meretrices de Argentina)
- Education Settings:** UNESCO & Athena Network
- Humanitarian Settings:** WFP and ICASO (International Council Of Aids Service Organizations)
- Justice Settings:** UNDP and HIV Justice Network
- Community Settings:** UN Women and ICWEA (International Community of Women living with HIV Eastern Africa)

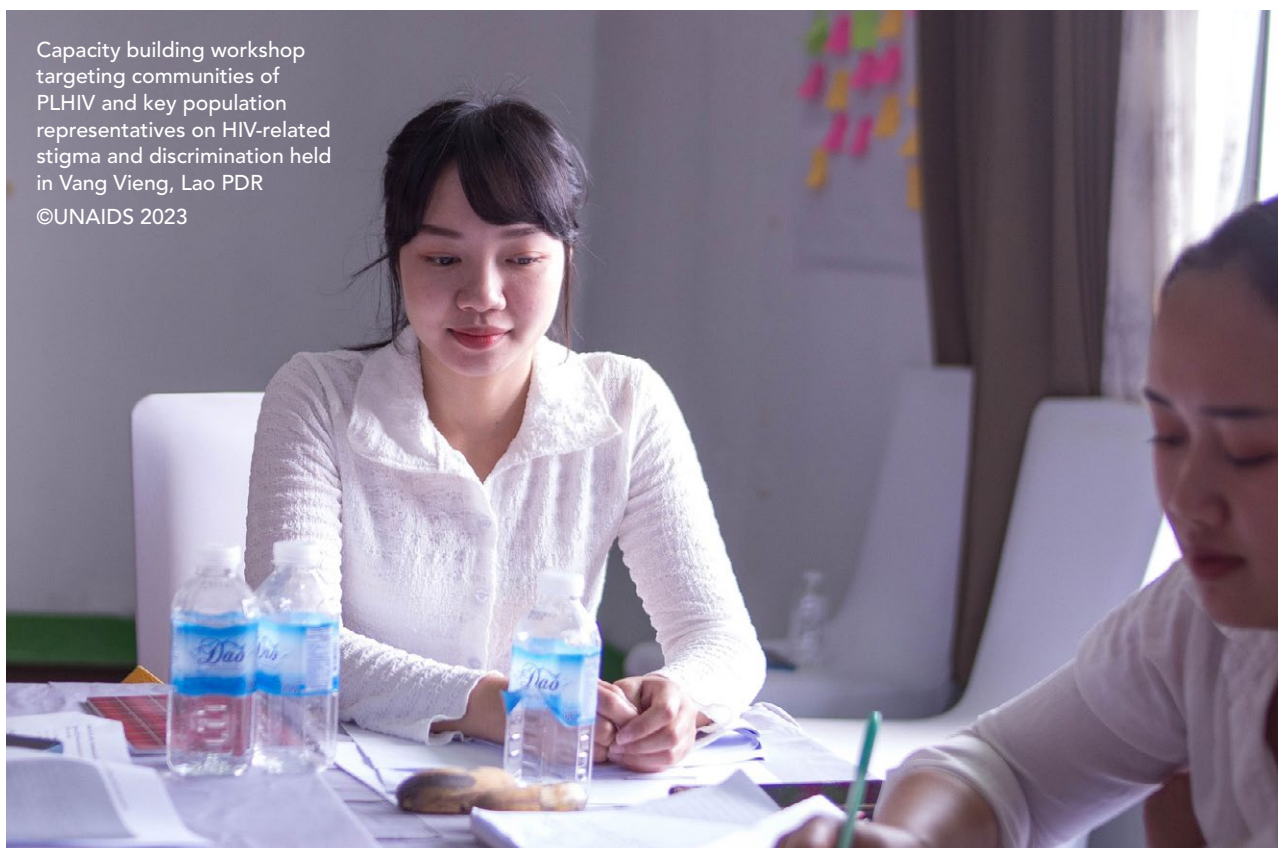
The partnership is currently co-convened by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Development Programme, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund), the Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), PCB NGO Delegation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

At the global level, the work of the Global Partnership is advised by a technical working group comprised of United Nations agencies and civil society members. The technical working group is organised around the six settings of the Global Partnership, with co-leads for each setting. Regional and country coordinators provide technical support tailored to the specific needs, priorities and realities of their region or country. This unique on-the-ground expertise has formed a community of practice and proven catalytic in advocating for and accelerating implementation of the Global Partnership.

STEPS TO JOIN AND WHAT COUNTRIES COMMIT TO

As of May 2023, 35 countries² have joined the partnership. In doing so, **governments commit to the following actions:**

- **Partnering** with civil society organisations, communities of people living with, at risk of or most affected by HIV, UN partners, academia, private sector, donors and other stakeholders to identify policy and programme gaps, design and implement evidence-informed interventions, and tracking progress in eliminating HIV-related stigma and discrimination.
- **Assessing** the current state of HIV-related stigma and discrimination in the country or building on previous assessments to identify and implement human rights and gender-based policies and programmes to eliminate barriers to services.
- **Taking actions** on eliminating HIV-related stigma and discrimination in all six settings over five years; committing to three settings in the first year.



Capacity building workshop targeting communities of PLHIV and key population representatives on HIV-related stigma and discrimination held in Vang Vieng, Lao PDR ©UNAIDS 2023

² Countries that have joined the GP: Angola, Argentina, Botswana, Brazil, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Costa Rica, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Gambia, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Iran, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lesotho, Liberia, Luxembourg, Moldova, Mozambique, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uganda, Ukraine. Out of these members, the following are Global Fund breaking down barriers countries: Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Cote d’Ivoire, Jamaica, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique, Nepal, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda and Ukraine.

- **Allocating resources** to support the implementation, monitoring and reporting of interventions to eliminate HIV-related stigma and discrimination.
- **Monitoring and reporting annually** on progress using existing and recommended indicators and building on routine national reporting processes (Global AIDS Monitoring, the Global Fund's grant progress updates, PEPFAR country operational plan progress reports and reporting under UNAIDS' Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF).

Requirements for country engagement, including a detailed step-by-step guidance for governments in joining and implementing the Global Partnership are available for countries on UNAIDS website, as well as other documents from the Global Partnership, such as the guidance document "[Evidence for eliminating HIV-related stigma and discrimination](#)".

THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP'S WAYS OF WORKING

Maximise Strategic Collaboration

One of the greatest strengths of the Global Partnership is its **strategic collaborations**. It forges partnerships with key global stakeholders, broadening its reach and enhancing its expertise and capacity to meaningfully address stigma and discrimination in all its forms. By leveraging global, regional and local partners, opportunities and resources, the Global Partnership is able to support countries in scaling up and accelerating the implementation of comprehensive stigma and discrimination reduction programmes.

Examples of key partners at the global, regional and national level include [Beyond Stigma](#), [Deutsche Aidshilfe](#), [DLA Piper](#), [European Union](#), [International AIDS Society \(IAS\)](#), [Love Alliance](#), [PEPFAR](#), [US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and [Women4GlobalFund](#). Furthermore, an important collaboration that the Global Partnership is part of today is the Focal Country Collaboration³.

³ Aiming to enhance collaboration to further push forward the Global Partnership objectives, PEPFAR, the Global Fund, National Institutes for Health, UNAIDS and CDC, have committed to measurably reduce stigma and discrimination through increased coordination, collaboration and planning with communities, governments and national partners. They have been working together to strengthen coordination on the rolling out of the PLHIV Stigma Index 2.0 and using the findings and other available evidence to ensure funding is directed to reduce stigma and discrimination. The Focal Countries Collaboration (FCC) builds upon the momentum and operates in close coordination with the Global Partnership, GF Breaking Down Barriers (BDB) initiative, and PEPFAR country and central activities and investments, in line with expectations articulated in annual Country Operational Plan guidance. Accordingly, a set of six focal countries (Jamaica, CIV, Ghana, Mozambique, South Africa and Thailand) have been selected to intensify these partners' coordination efforts, leveraging the individual initiatives of each entity to jointly consider gaps and ultimately make a positive difference in this space.



Stigma and discrimination multistakeholder mechanisms

Through its convening power, the Global Partnership has supported the establishment and/or strengthening of 16 stigma and discrimination multistakeholder mechanisms⁴ and 19 national action plans⁵ to streamline and scale up implementation of coordinated, cost-effective, community-prioritised and evidence-based interventions that are backed by political, donor and partner commitment and thus most impactful in reducing stigma and discrimination. Under the leadership of GNP+, the Global Partnership has also strengthened the capacities of communities to effectively advocate for their rights and meaningfully participate in multistakeholder mechanisms and plans, in funding applications and in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of interventions ensuring that grants and programmes respond to the needs and priorities of people living with or affected by HIV, and thus have the greatest impact. As a result of this work, 19 countries have accelerated stigma and discrimination reduction in priority settings⁶, 18 have advanced law reform and/or

4 These include the Global Fund's Breaking Down Barriers Technical Working Groups, Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanisms or National AIDS Committees. The countries are: Angola, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Moldova, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, Ukraine, Uganda.

5 The Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, The Gambia, Guinea, Iran, Jamaica, Liberia, Nepal, Senegal, South Africa, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uganda. Countries where action plans are under development/almost finalized are Argentina, Mozambique, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine.

6 The Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Guinea, Laos, Liberia, Moldova, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, The Gambia, Uganda, Ukraine.

increased access to justice for key populations⁷ and 7 priority countries are developing targeted legal and political advocacy campaigns (#NotACriminal campaign) to further the decriminalisation agenda.⁸



16
stigma and discrimination
multistakeholder
mechanisms



19
national
action plans



19 countries
have accelerated stigma
and discrimination
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settings



18 countries
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populations



7 priority countries
are developing targeted legal and
political advocacy campaigns

Capacity building of communities



In the last years the Global Partnership's work has included (i) capacity-building; (ii) advocacy and technical support for law reform; (iii) interventions in crisis situations to avert violence and other harms among key populations; (iv) stigma index studies; (v) gender assessments of the HIV response; (vi) adjustment of subnational programme planning to strengthen local responses for key populations; and (vii) improved alignment of programmes to increase community leadership in efforts to strengthen societal enablers.

Civil society and community-led organisations - including women's rights organisations, networks of people living with HIV, young people's organisations and organisations of key populations - are at the core of the governance structure of the Global Partnership. Their **active involvement and leadership** through national consultations, advocacy campaigns, capacity-building, and implementation of programmes ensure social protection, community support initiatives and safe spaces to address HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

7 Angola, Argentina, the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Guinea, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Liberia, Moldova, Nepal, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda, Ukraine.

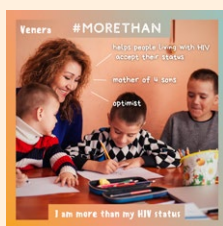
8 Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Jamaica, Kazakhstan Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda.

The partnership's support for strong community engagement also presents opportunities for capacity building such as empowering communities to know their rights, reduce internal stigma and build the capacity of communities to develop and lead strategic national advocacy campaigns to effectively target, reach and engage key decision-makers.

The Global Partnership regional and national coordinators ensure communities and their advocates are capacitated to meaningfully engage with national and international entities for the protection and promotion of their rights, advocate for policy and legal reform and implement anti-stigma and discrimination interventions, among others.

Advocacy and communications are thus a crucial crosscutting component of the Global Partnership's work to combat HIV-related stigma and discrimination and advance policy and legal change. In fact, the Global Partnership supported and leveraged the #MoreThan advocacy campaign led by GNP+, to garner country, community and donor support. The campaign reached more than 119 000 people through online social media, including women, youth, key populations in all their diversities, religious leaders and influencers, removing labels and sensitising people on how a person living with HIV is not defined by their HIV status. Moreover, in 2022, the community decided to prioritise seven countries by developing targeted legal and political advocacy campaigns - including #NotACriminal campaign led by GNP+ - to advance the decriminalisation agenda.

GLOBAL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS



Launched on Zero Discrimination Day 2021, the Global Partnership's **#MoreThan campaign** was rolled out as an advocacy and educational tool and as political leverage to garner support from countries, donors and partners. The campaign promotes the partnership and empowers communities to know their rights.



Designed for and led by communities, it responds to HIV-related stigma and discrimination by celebrating the diversity of people living with HIV and highlighting that everyone is #MoreThan their HIV status and any label that denies their human dignity and individual complexity.

The campaign leverages partners and key international days to showcase setting-specific interventions and country best practices. It addresses issues faced by key populations and the intersectional nature of HIV-related stigma and discrimination. Communication efforts are targeted and tailored to the regional and country levels to ensure strategic advocacy on the ground, particularly around discriminatory law reform⁹.



#NotACriminal campaign is a continuation of the #MoreThan campaign, with a focus on retracting harmful laws that criminalise people living with and affected by HIV. The campaign was launched at the AIDS2022 Conference in a collaborative effort of global networks of people living with HIV and key population networks¹⁰.

Technical Support to Global Partnership countries

A team of global, regional and national coordinators of the Global Partnership provide hands-on support to coordinate the regional and national work on addressing stigma and discrimination, including through the convening of stakeholders, day-to-day support to national efforts to design and roll-out programmes and ensuring stakeholders' accountability for their commitments to end HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

The partnership also leverages and builds on existing evidence and assessments used to design and inform effective and transformative stigma and discrimination reduction programmes, such as the Global Fund Breaking Down Barriers initiative baseline, mid-term and progress assessments¹¹, the People Living with HIV Stigma Index, UNDP legal environment assessments and UNAIDS gender assessments.

Additionally - as part of the technical support provided to countries - several guidance documents and tools have been developed under the Global Partnership. The main aim of this material is to further support countries in how to identify, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate evidence-informed programmes designed to address HIV-related stigma and discrimination, with impact and sustainability in the six settings.

⁹ Some of the campaign's highlights are featured in its video medley at <https://twitter.com/gnpplus/status/1469334767212638214>

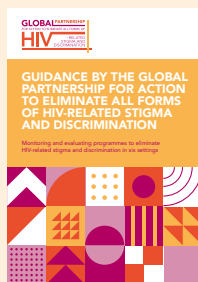
¹⁰ GNP+, the International Community of Women Living with HIV (ICW), Y+ Global, Global Action for Trans Equality, the International Network of People who Use Drugs, MPact and the Global Network of Sex Work Projects. It also involves the technical leadership of HIV Justice Network and HIV Policy Lab. For more information: <https://notacriminal.org/>

¹¹ As part of its Breaking Down Barriers initiative, the Global Fund provides intensive technical and financial support to 24 countries where needs, opportunities, capacities and partnerships provide real possibilities for scale-up that will result in important gains to overcome systemic human rights barriers that hinder access to HIV, TB and malaria services.

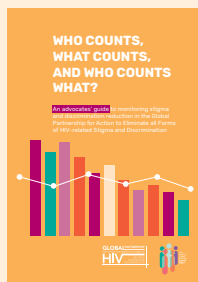
GUIDANCE AND TOOLS FOR ACTION



“Evidence For Eliminating HIV-Related Stigma And Discrimination: — Guidance For Countries To Implement Effective Programmes To Eliminate HIV-Related Stigma And Discrimination In Six Settings”: the latest evidence and a set of examples on what works to reduce HIV-related stigma and discrimination across the Global Partnership’s six settings (6).



“Guidance by the Global Partnership for Action to Eliminate all Forms of HIV-related Stigma and Discrimination. Monitoring and evaluating programmes to eliminate HIV-related stigma and discrimination in six settings”: The guidance is a companion to the evidence guidance focused on monitoring and evaluation, with the goal of supporting programme planners, implementers and managers at government agencies and nongovernmental and community-based organisations to understand the outputs and outcomes of their programmes and inform programme improvement and scale-up (7).”



“Who counts? What counts? And who counts what? An advocates’ guide to monitoring stigma and discrimination reduction in the Global Partnership for Action to Eliminate all Forms of HIV-related Stigma and Discrimination”: a user-friendly gender-transformative guide for advocates to monitor HIV-related stigma reduction programmes in the six settings and to use their findings to support advocacy work (8).

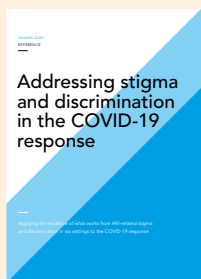


“The Global Partnership makes a difference, especially in the framework of collaboration for the elimination of barriers and for the fight against stigma and discrimination. In Côte d'Ivoire we work for the popularisation of the HIV law protecting people living with HIV, key populations against health personnel, law enforcement, in the education system and in emergency situations.”

Executive Director Coordinator Ivorian Network of Organisations of people living with HIV, CIV (29 March 2023)



“Practical guide to ending HIV-related stigma and discrimination. Best practices and innovative approaches to reduce stigma and discrimination at the country level”: This guide provides information on how to apply best practices to reduce HIV-related stigma and discrimination to the country context (9)



“Addressing Stigma And Discrimination in The COVID-19 Response: Applying The Evidence Of What Works From HIV-Related Stigma And Discrimination In Six Settings To The COVID-19 Response”: evidence-informed recommendations to countries on reducing stigma and discrimination in the context of COVID-19, drawing on lessons learnt from the HIV response (10).



UNAIDS Solidarity Fund helps
female sex workers in Ghana.
©UNAIDS



IMPACT ON THE GROUND:

Reaching the Global AIDS Strategy's 10-10-10 targets within the Global Partnership's six settings



HEALTH-CARE SETTING

Stigma and discrimination in the health-care setting are widespread across the world. They reduce people's quality of life and impede their use of health services for fear of judgemental attitudes, denial of services, or breaches of confidentiality, preventing people from exercising their right to health (11, 12). They have negative impacts along the continuum of care, from HIV prevention and testing to treatment and sustained viral load suppression.



SPOTLIGHT: UKRAINE

In Ukraine - under the support of the Global Fund, USAID, and the Joint Programme - an HIV online learning platform for primary health-care doctors is now available to boost their capacities, including for the delivery of services free from stigma and discrimination. Trainings for health-care providers have also delivered skills and knowledge to overcome stigma and discrimination in clinical settings.



"The Global Partnership is - first of all - a call to action for all stakeholders to eliminate all forms of HIV-related stigma and discrimination. In Ukraine, a thematic subgroup was established to coordinate the implementation of the Strategy for a Comprehensive Response to Human Rights Barriers to Access HIV and TB Prevention and Treatment Services for 2019-2030, which actively worked on the development of the Action Plan for 2021-2023."

National Coordinator supporting the implementation of the Global Partnership, Ukraine (29 March 2023)



SPOTLIGHT: CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



The Central African Republic was the first country to join the Global Partnership with the health-care setting chosen as one of its priorities. A national Zero Discrimination Platform was relaunched with over 30 members to serve as the Global Partnership’s coordinating mechanism in the country and to oversee and support implementation of joint activities.

On Zero Discrimination Day 2020, professional organisations of doctors, nurses and midwives, and patients’ associations signed the National Charter for Quality of Care and Patients’ Rights. The Charter includes specific provisions against stigma and discrimination, including based on HIV status and sexual orientation, in any health service delivery setting. Moreover, it is being disseminated in health centres and dedicated sensitization and trainings are being organised periodically for medical staff and health-care providers to ensure humanism, ethics and respect for dignity guide relations between clients and health-care providers (13).



"In CAR, the activities to popularise the Patients' Charter are very effective. Since the advent of the Charter, there's been a big change here at the general hospital: the nursing staff have rectified the way they treat patients, and everyone is talking about it."

Patients at the "hôpital du jour" service" for PLHIV at the Centre National Hospitalier Universitaire de Bangui, CAR (31 May 2023)



COMMUNITY SETTING

People living with HIV oftentimes face enacted stigma and discrimination in their communities and families/households. They may experience exclusion from places of worship and other community institutions, as well as from family members and peers. This can be internalised leading to individuals experiencing feelings of blame, shame and low self-worth, and further withdrawing from community or family life.

Additionally, gender inequality and harmful gender norms perpetuate stigma and discrimination and impede the ability of women and girls and gender-diverse people to prevent HIV infection and mitigate its impact (14). Gender-based and intimate partner violence, and social and cultural norms that reinforce stigma, affect the care women, girls and gender-diverse can access.



SPOTLIGHT: REDUCTION OF INTERSECTIONAL STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION FACED BY WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SENEGAL, UGANDA AND JAMAICA

Through the expertise of its co-leads, technical working group partners, and strategic collaborations, the Global Partnership uses a gendered lens to ensure interventions in all settings directly address the rights and needs of women and girls living with HIV in all their diversity.

In Uganda, a community-led scorecard in 56 districts was piloted by the International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa (ICWEA) to support local leaders and decision-makers in monitoring rights violations and implementing interventions for the elimination of HIV-related stigma and discrimination against women and girls.

In Senegal, the National Network of People Living with HIV (RNP+) was supported by the Global Partnership to hold anti-stigma dialogues focused on women and girls and to develop an advocacy strategy, based on data from community-led monitoring, for advocating with women lawyers' associations and women's rights organisations. This advocacy plan will equip RNP+ member associations at the sub-national level with a common framework and tools to reduce the discrimination experienced by women and girls living with or affected by HIV in the country.

Furthermore, through ongoing south-south collaboration women's rights groups in Jamaica and Uganda were supported by Women4GlobalFund to exchange information, priorities, lessons learnt, and gaps that need to be addressed to ensure the rights and needs of women and girls in all their diversity are upheld and fully met through the work of the Global Partnership. W4GF convened Country-level webinars to bring together civil society, community and technical partners and implementers, and build understanding of key entry points to influence how the Global Partnership rolls out in Jamaica and Uganda. These discussions have strengthened Global Partnership interventions by ensuring that the gendered aspects of stigma and discrimination - which often limit access to services - are meaningfully addressed.





JUSTICE SETTING

Punitive and discriminatory laws and policies perpetuate stigma and discrimination. They create an environment in which violence against people living with or vulnerable to HIV is rife and normalised, and legal redress for survivors impossible (15). These include laws and policies pertaining to HIV nondisclosure, exposure and transmission (16); travel restrictions; mandatory testing, including of pregnant women; parental consent laws; and criminalisation of consensual same-sex sexual activities (17), sex work and drug use. Evidence consistently shows that criminalisation of people living with HIV and key populations reduces service uptake and increases HIV incidence.



SPOTLIGHT: ARGENTINA

In Argentina - with the technical support of the Global Partnership - the National Law of Comprehensive Response to HIV, Viral Hepatitis, other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and Tuberculosis was approved in the Congress House and Sanctioned by the President on 15 July 2022 (18).¹² With a strong human rights perspective, the new law establishes the rights and guarantees of people living with HIV, viral hepatitis, tuberculosis and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), in relation to receiving comprehensive assistance and dignified and respectful care and treatment without discrimination of any kind. The law is progressive in its approach to gender equality. It explicitly emphasises the right to dignified, non-discriminatory healthcare for women and all persons with the capacity to gestate living with HIV, TB, HVC and/or STIs, who are pregnant or have recently given birth, and their children.

The Global Partnership has not only played a fundamental role in the approval of the law but also in the regulation of its articles in order to allow its implementation, by supporting the organisation of a national consultation with 56 members of civil society organisations in October 2022.



¹² The project received a positive opinion from the Senate Commissions of Health and Human Development.



SPOTLIGHT: ANGOLA

In Angola, the Global Partnership provided technical support for an age-of-consent legal and policy review, to inform a proposed new legal provision within the national HIV law. Championed by the Secretary of State for Human Rights, the legal provision reforms the current law, allowing adolescents of 14 years - and those below 14 years with sufficient maturity - to consent independently to HIV testing services.



Supportive policies such as these increase young people's access to the information and medical support necessary to make informed and autonomous decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and rights. This in turn reduces the stigma around youth sexuality, which often discourages access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services, especially among young people from key populations.



SPOTLIGHT: CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

In close collaboration with the Minister of Justice, the 2006 Law on the rights and obligations of people living with HIV/AIDS has been revised, with a focus on the social protection of people living with HIV. The revised law focuses on the protection of the human rights of people living with HIV and key populations, decriminalising HIV transmission, lowering the age of consent for HIV testing, and increasing young people's access to HIV services. In addition, the new law guarantees the protection and care of women survivors of sexual violence, as well as access to information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, and education and training on HIV in schools, prisons and the workplace. The new law was enacted in October 2022 (19).





WORKPLACE SETTING

Levels of stigma and discrimination in workplaces are still high. People living with HIV have higher unemployment rates than the national average, with some countries excluding them from participating in certain types of employment, such as serving in the armed forces, law enforcement or the prison service. Mandatory HIV testing as a prerequisite for work and lack of confidentiality of HIV status also remain a key barrier to employment for people living with HIV. Lack of access to work due to these barriers increases the vulnerability of people living with HIV and affected communities (20, 21).

Workplaces, however, are also good opportunities to reach adults with HIV knowledge and services. Workplace programmes have been instrumental in bringing HIV testing to vulnerable workers, their families and community members. These avenues are closed when workplaces are hostile to people living with HIV.



SPOTLIGHT: THAILAND

Thailand's Ministry of Labour leveraged the support of the Global Partnership to pass the Business Corporate Social Responsibility Standards, which prohibits discrimination based on a person's HIV status. In addition, a community-led crisis response system was established to report cases of HIV-related violence and discrimination across the country.



On World AIDS Day 2020, a national campaign addressing stigma and discrimination in the workplace was organised by the Thai Network of HIV+ Youth with the support of the Global Partnership. With a focus on tackling mandatory HIV testing for job applicants and employees, the campaign reached an estimated 150,000 people.

Finally - in collaboration with the private sector - the discrimination-free workplace project was developed and scaled up, focusing on workplaces being free of mandatory HIV testing and non-discriminatory, particularly for young people living with HIV. As part of the project, an advocacy package was implemented among the largest confederations and networks of employers and employees in the country, along with the Crisis Response System in the private sector.



EDUCATION SETTING

Discrimination against children and young people living with HIV in the education setting may lead them to perform poorly at school, drop out or be excluded and marginalised (22). Also, teachers living with HIV are subject to stigma and discrimination in education settings (23).

Violence and discrimination in education settings can have a profound impact on school retention, self-image and self-stigma and can exacerbate vulnerability to HIV. Adolescent girls and gender-non-conforming young people are particularly vulnerable to violence and have fewer opportunities to attend school due to socio-cultural norms.

Lack of access to comprehensive sexuality education also perpetuates HIV-related stigma and discrimination. Good-quality comprehensive sexuality education provides young people with accurate knowledge about HIV transmission and emphasizes the importance of gender equality and equal rights – including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) – for people living with HIV and people from key populations (24).¹³



SPOTLIGHT: UGANDA

Uganda joined the Global Partnership in 2019 and selected education as one of its priority settings. Since joining, the country has leveraged the unique power of music, dance and media to combat stigma and discrimination discouraging young people living with HIV from accessing services.

Led by the community-based organization Joint Adherent Brothers and Sisters Against AIDS (JABASA), and in collaboration with UNAIDS Uganda, a TV channel was produced to educate youth about the importance of HIV prevention, treatment and adherence and to celebrate “positive living”. The channel has been successful in attracting new donors.

Through music videos¹⁴ and TV and radio shows, JABASA promotes HIV treatment literacy, works to improve mental health, and empowers and energizes Ugandans to become champions of access and adherence to HIV services. The project is led by Moses Supercharger, co-founder and team leader of JABASA, who openly and positively lives with HIV and leads the Stigmaless Band; a music and drama group of young people aged 15–24 years living with HIV.



13 For further info check out UNESCO (2021) Positive Learning: How the education sector can meet the needs of learners living with HIV. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380025>

14 Music video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQmWVxwHiFo>



SPOTLIGHT: KAZAKHSTAN

In Kazakhstan, capacity strengthening for comprehensive sexuality education has been delivered through several online training programmes, covering information on sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence, and HIV and sexually transmitted infections.



EMERGENCY SETTING

War, climate change, food insecurity, poor governance and other challenges interrupt access to HIV prevention, treatment and support services and increase HIV risk (25). Food insecurity during emergencies makes treatment adherence more difficult and may lead people to engage in transactional sex, increasing their risk of HIV (26). Sexual and gender-based violence increases during conflicts and humanitarian crises and can be a direct route of HIV transmission, and/or act as a barrier to treatment and services.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, against a backdrop of rising xenophobia and discrimination, some migrants living with HIV found themselves facing a triple stigma related to (1) testing positive for COVID-19, (2) having a positive HIV status, and (3) being a migrant, all of which also often had serious negative consequences on their mental health (27). In humanitarian situations where confidentiality is not maintained, people living with HIV are often reluctant to seek support.



SPOTLIGHT: PERU

In Peru - within the framework of reducing inequalities and in preparation for the country to join the Global Partnership - national counterparts from different sectors of the HIV response are working with the Congress on the reform of the country's national health insurance to include migrants living with HIV and key populations as beneficiaries, aiming to prevent AIDS related deaths.



"The Global Partnership is an opportunity to build a discussion around stigma and discrimination. In Kazakhstan, for instance, we have created a separate platform to discuss human rights, discrimination, and the results of the Stigma Index, while expanding our partnerships with human rights organisations."

National Coordinator to support the implementation of the principles of the GP, Kazakhstan (29 March 2023).



SPOTLIGHT: ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN



In Iran, the Global Partnership provided a synergistic framework for developing and incorporating anti-stigma and discrimination interventions in their national HIV strategic plan. This bolstered Iran's commitment to deliver quality HIV services even in emergency settings, with emergency healthcare workers being trained to ensure confidentiality and the accessibility of emergency services. As a direct result of the country's commitments to the Global Partnership, a new regulation was also issued requiring public and private health institutions to protect people living with HIV and key populations from stigma and discrimination, ensuring that their access to HIV treatment and care is free from all types of discrimination.



"After many years working in the field of HIV, I clearly witness that during the past few years people living with HIV trust healthcare centres and get involved actively in their care processes and subscribe to Positive Clubs."

*Service provider with over 30 years' experience in the field of HIV,
Iran (6 June 2023)*



Cycling competition for awareness rising about HIV-related S&D.

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GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP CHAMPIONING COUNTRIES THAT ARE TACKLING HIV-RELATED STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION ACROSS ALL THE SETTINGS



Thailand is an example of a country committed to ending all forms of HIV-related stigma and discrimination by leveraging the Global Partnership as a platform. Thailand set the elimination of HIV-related stigma and discrimination as a strategic goal as early as 2014, with a focus on health-care settings. In 2020, the country joined the Global Partnership and expanded its efforts to end HIV-related stigma and discrimination in all remaining settings. Interventions across all six settings are formalised in the “National multisectoral and costed action plan to eliminate all forms of HIV-related stigma and discrimination: 2022-2026”, which was endorsed by the National AIDS Council in mid-2022. A Subcommittee of the National AIDS Council on AIDS Rights Promotion and Protection is mandated to oversee, with multi-stakeholders, the roll-out and monitoring of the plan.



Jamaica is another example of a country where the Global Partnership has brought coordination, coherence and mutual accountability to reach the Global AIDS Strategy 10-10-10 targets. After Jamaica joined in 2020, the Global Partnership spearheaded the development of a 5-year operational plan to end stigma and discrimination in five settings and, since then, annual reports are developed which include an overview of all human rights-related interventions in Jamaica. Moreover, the Jamaica Partnership was developed and in 2022 it launched an online monitoring dashboard. The dashboard maps out all the interventions currently being implemented in collaboration with partners, and provides critical information on both the progress made so far, as well as areas where stigma and discrimination still persist and efforts needs to be taken. The generated evidence was vital to inform the new Global Fund country grant to ensure that human rights interventions are aligned with the national strategic plan and the global targets to end the AIDS epidemic.

In 2022, both Thailand and Jamaica were selected to participate in the Focal Country Collaboration and the UNAIDS-CDC Cooperative Agreement. With support from UNAIDS and the Global Partnership, they received ‘catalyst financial support’ from the US CDC-PEPFAR to further galvanise national efforts on ending all forms of HIV-related stigma and discrimination, while implementing strategies that may serve as models for their respective regions (28).



We know the way that will allow for all individuals to enjoy their human rights and reach their full potential in health, dignity and wellbeing. So, let’s make it happen! Let’s join forces for an unstoppable partnership. Join the Global Partnership today.



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