

Addressing MDG6 in the oPt Global Fund Programme HIV and AIDS & Tuberculosis

Millennium Development Goal 6: HIV and AIDS, Malaria & Other diseases



MDG6: combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and

Adopted by world leaders in the year 2000 and set to be achieved by 2015, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are both global and local, tailored by each country to suit specific development needs.

More specifically, Millennium Development Goal 6 focuses on addressing HIV and AIDS, malaria, and most other fatal diseases. This is about halting and beginning to reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS, malaria, and other major diseases and achieving, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV and AIDS for all those who need it.

Since December 2008, the Global Fund to fight HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, provides financial support, through the UN system, to scale up HIV and TB prevention, treatment and care services in the occupied Palestinian territory by:

First time in the occupied Palestinian territory

Through the Global Fund initiative—the first of its kind—HIV and AIDS services are now fully operational in the oPt.

Prevention: Information about HIV and AIDS is widely available, targeting most at risk and vulnerable populations. Awareness campaigns, peer education, and community mobilization activities follow a human rights-based approach to advocate for universal access to services and for a society free of stigma and discrimination.

- Reaching out the general population in particular the most vulnerable populations, socioeconomically disadvantaged and the most at risk populations
- Using a multi-sectoral approach

Epidemiological background

Although the TB/HIV prevalence remains low (*less than 1%*), behavioral and sociological factors indicate worrying trends and risky behaviors which have led, in other countries, to concentrated epidemics.

1. **A continued deterioration in the epidemiological profile** as a result of an increase in poverty and poor living conditions; a high population density; limited access to services and unsuitable environmental conditions.
2. **Issue of under diagnosis** and under case reporting
3. **Conservative social norms** and taboos although phenomena of injecting drug use and unprotected sex remain an issue.

Voluntary Counseling Testing services using the most modern technologies and confidential approaches are being implemented. Blood safety protocols and systems are also strengthened.

Treatment: Treatment services including drugs, medical equipment and highly trained medical staff are available. All people living with HIV (PLWH) are under treatment.

Care: Psychosocial services to PLWH & affected families are being strengthened.

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Facts on the Global Fund programming in oPt:

- *Innovative private/public financing*
- *Performance based funding*
- *HIV Proposal: US\$ 10,832,405 for 5 years*
- *TB Proposal: US\$ 2,152,075 for 5 years*
- *Principal Recipient: UNDP*
- *Stakeholders: UN Agencies, CSOs, Government and NAC*

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Using HIV and AIDS & TB as entry points for strengthening the national health system

UNDP/PAPP and its partners contribute to the strengthening of health systems in line with the national health sector reform through the HIV and AIDS and Tuberculosis grants funded by the Global Fund in the areas of:

Human resources with advanced training of health/non-health personnel in clinical care and monitoring, diagnosis using the latest technologies available, but also in programme management, monitoring & evaluation, strategic planning, results-based management and surveillance & reporting systems.



UNRWA Health workers at World AIDS Day, 1 December 2009.

Infrastructure and medical equipment to strengthen national laboratories and clinics (such as CD4 machines, LCD microscopes, oxygen cylinders, consumables, information technology equipment, furniture, vehicles and etc.).

Supply chain management with the provision of drugs, diagnostic kits, condoms, capacity building of Ministry of Health staff on drug forecasting, costing, inventory and overall supply chain management. This is also about strengthening laboratory quality control/assurance capacities and upgrading national laboratory norms and standards, essential drug lists.

Information systems to strengthen data collection methods, tools, management and evaluation to enhance an evidence based decision-making process. *Also for the first time in the oPt, a health care programme applies a "Results-Based Management Methodology".*

World Tuberculosis day, 24 March 2010



Policy and strategy formulation with the development of national policies & strategies (*National HIV and AIDS Strategy, National TB Strategy, Condom Strategy, Stigma and Discrimination, National HIV and Drugs Strategy*) and guidelines (Voluntary Counseling and Testing, Antiretroviral treatment, updated Tuberculosis guidelines, laboratory guidelines) contributing to the broader health reform agenda and dissemination of best practices.

Testimony of a Palestinian living with HIV and AIDS

A widow with seven children, Ms. X got infected through her husband. *"When I knew my HIV status six years ago, it was very difficult to cope with it"* she says. Especially that she had minimal knowledge about HIV and AIDS. She continues, *"However, my husband supported me a lot; he usually comforted me that we will fight it together till we die. I even started considering this virus as a friend that I need to take care of to protect my immune system."* Thus, she educated herself about HIV and AIDS. Her children, especially after her husband's death, were another source for strength. Now, she is under

antiretroviral treatment, healthy, working and living a decent life with a very high spirit. No one knows about her status. She receives treatment, regular clinical checkups and psychosocial support at the HIV and AIDS clinic in Ramallah, funded through the UN/Global Fund. At the beginning she was psychologically

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affected by the stigma and accusations from health staff. However, she made efforts to fight for her rights, privacy and confidentiality.



She ends her story by emphasizing that *"AIDS is like any other disease and with a strong will I can fight it. I have a high spirit and I have to be strong for my children"*.

Strengthening Civil Society

Civil society organizations have traditionally been able to provide support to the most vulnerable (such as youth and women) and most at risk populations (injecting drug users, detainees, migrants and others). They are also able to reach out in rural and marginalized areas. Capacity development funds are currently being granted to civil society organizations in order to scale up HIV or/and infection prevention and care services throughout the oPt. This will complement the national government's efforts to scale up services, address community related stigma & discrimination, encourage safe practices and promote voluntary counseling and testing.

Community leaders and decision makers are empowered to address stigma and discrimination

UNDP/PAPP, in collaboration with the UNDP HIV and AIDS Regional Programme in the Arab States (HARPAS), conducted several leadership trainings in order to promote multidisciplinary and multisectoral approaches with the overall aim of strengthening the national HIV and AIDS efforts.

More than 200 people, including journalists, Palestinian representatives from the national HIV and

AIDS committee, line ministries, civil society, UN agencies and religious leaders attended the three day workshop organized in 2010 both in West Bank and Gaza.

From participants' testimonies collected at the end of the workshops, the workshop represented life-time changing and eye opening experiences. The main focus of the workshops was to encourage the individual and personal responsibility vis a vis the national HIV and AIDS efforts including in building a society free of stigma & discrimination to HIV+ people, their affected communities, marginalized populations, etc.



Dr. Khadija Moalla, HIV Practice leader at HARPAS, leading the training.

Global Fund achievements 2008-2010: a quantitative snapshot

Area	Achieved
Peer educators trained, including injection drug users, women, and youth	5,162
Health personnel and community workers trained in HIV counseling and testing	452
Doctors trained in specialized ARV treatment	22
Health workers trained in blood safety and universal precautions and HIV basic care	995
Political, community, and religious leaders, as well as police/armed services trained in basic HIV knowledge and stigma reduction	2,333
TV and radio shows broadcasted on HIV prevention	278
People are currently receiving advanced HIV antiretroviral combination therapy	11
People HIV tested	1,100
Sexually Transmitted Infections-STI patients successfully diagnosed and treated	65,000
Condoms distributed to promote awareness about safe sex and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases	300,000
New smear-positive TB cases have been diagnosed and successfully treated	-
Shortages in HIV and TB drugs significantly reduced	-
HIV and TB laboratory capacities have been strengthened (with respect to human resources as well as equipment),	-



HIV and TB epidemiological profile in the oPt

- 11 people are receiving antiretroviral treatment out of 14 living with HIV and AIDS in the oPt
- 66 cumulative cases of HIV since 1981 in the oPt
- TB incidence rate remains low at 0.87 percent
- TB case detection rate is 4.5 percent
- The multidrug resistance rate for TB is estimated at 4.3 percent



HIV Awareness raising starts at home...UN personnel know their rights and address HIV related stigma and misconceptions

In 2009, UNDP/PAPP launched its UN Cares Initiative in the oPt aiming at providing HIV related services to UN personnel and at reducing stigma and discrimination at any UN workplace. The UN Cares Initiative was launched by the SG Ban Ki Moon in 2007.

The initiative presents ten minimum standards, providing benefits to UN personnel and their families, and which include information and education on HIV and AIDS, voluntary counseling and testing, access to male and female condoms, and emergency prevention measures in case of accidental exposure, among others.

UNDP is committed to ensure continuous awareness raising for its staff, provision of preventative methods while promoting a stigma free workplace environment. UNDP staff are community leaders/members of the Palestinian society.



UN Personnel drawing the HIV Red Ribbon at the occasion of World AIDS Day, Saint George School in Jerusalem, December 2010.

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