

Impactful Partnership in Action: Global Fund, Gavi and WHO



Common goals

The World Health Organization (WHO), Global Fund to Fight HIV, Tuberculosis (TB) and Malaria and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, all play vital roles in the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Like all SDGs, SDG3 cannot be reached by a narrow lens of focus; rather, it necessitates international collaboration and global solidarity, embodied within and across these three life-saving and impactful organizations.

The Global Fund and Gavi are the two largest global health funds, whose impact, work and accountability are enabled through the technical guidance, assistance and pre-qualification of health products provided by the WHO. WHO, as the health cluster lead of the United Nations, coordinates health-related actions across the United Nations and the partners. While these three organizations each serve a different purpose, they work together in close partnership to achieve SDG 3. Close and effective collaboration between the three organizations ensures synergy and complementarity at global, regional and national levels.

At a glance:

- The Global Fund invests in the HIV, TB and malaria programs, as well as in the health and community systems, of over 110 countries either directly or through multi-country grants. The Global Fund has an annual operating budget of US\$390 million and employs around 1,200 staff in its Geneva Secretariat office, from which it disburses US\$5 billion a year.
- Gavi helps vaccinate more than half the world's children, providing financial and technical support to vaccine programs that since 2000 have helped to halve child mortality in 78 lower-income countries. Gavi has an annual operating budget of US\$183 million and employs approximately 600 staff in its Geneva Secretariat and Washington D.C. offices, from which it disburses US\$2.5 billion a year.
- WHO, the global health authority, has 194 Member States and 152 Country Offices all over the world, and the mandate to promote, provide and protect the health and well-being of all people, everywhere. WHO has an annual base budget of approximately US\$2.8 billion with a staff workforce of around 9,500 people.

[Cover] Women and children at a health facility in Gomoa East District, Ghana.

Ghana, Kenya and Malawi were the three pilot countries that worked with Gavi, the Global Fund and Unitaaid to introduce the RTS,S malaria vaccine.

The Global Fund/Nana Kofi Acquah

Huge impact

- The Global Fund partnership has cut the combined death rate from AIDS, TB and malaria by 61%, saving more than 65 million lives since 2002.
- Gavi has helped vaccinate a whole generation – over 1 billion children since 2000 preventing more than 17.3 million future deaths.
- Since 1948 when WHO was founded, average life expectancy has increased from 46 years to more than 71 years, supported by WHO's work – helping countries to introduce vaccines and treatments and strengthen their health systems, eradicating smallpox, eliminating malaria in 41 countries, tackling maternal mortality, and reducing the prevalence of smoking, as well as leading the global response to health emergencies. This work continues in the new global context of climate change and health and the silent pandemic of antimicrobial resistance, with 40 million lives to be saved over the coming four years.

Shrinking fiscal space means that implementing countries have greater challenges in ensuring sufficient resources to dedicate to their own health systems. Coupled with a volatile geo-political context and multiple competing demands on donor budgets, ongoing collaboration and seamless cooperation between the Global Fund, Gavi and the WHO is more important than ever. There is a mutual commitment to ensure our work is as impactful as possible, minimizing waste and ensuring complementarity of action. We share a common aim to collaborate when and where it makes sense, to recognize where and why we do things differently, and to concentrate on our shared agility, flexibility and focus on outcomes.

On the outskirts of Yaoundé, Cameroon, Community health worker Amélie plays with 6-month-old Tony-Jason, who is vaccinated against malaria. Tony-Jason's parent's also received mosquito nets to protect the family against the disease.

The Global Fund/Vincent Becker

Areas of collaboration



In addition to collaborating with one another, the Global Fund, Gavi and WHO work with a broad range of global health organizations, with each organization playing a distinct role, including Unitaid, UNAIDS, UNICEF, Roll Back Malaria, the Stop TB Partnership, FIND and the World Bank, among others. The sections below focus on the specific areas of shared focus between the Global Fund, Gavi and WHO, uniquely positioned to deliver impact.

Fighting malaria

The Global Fund provides 62% of all international financing for malaria programs. Over the last two decades, the Global Fund has been investing in the scale-up of evidence-based interventions to treat and prevent malaria, and in strengthening the health and community systems that underpin malaria programs around the world.

Building on existing clinical evidence, Gavi, the Global Fund and Unitaid jointly funded pilots to introduce the RTS,S malaria vaccine – the first vaccine recommended to prevent malaria in children. In 2024 alone, 20 countries in Africa plan to introduce the malaria vaccine through Gavi support into their childhood immunization programs and as part of their national malaria control strategies. While the Global Fund does not fund the vaccine directly, it supports planning and data management activities included in the country grants by the national malaria programs. The highest impact of malaria vaccines will be achieved when introduced as part of a mix of WHO-recommended, lifesaving malaria prevention efforts that the Global Fund heavily invests in, like seasonal malaria chemoprevention and insecticide-treated mosquito nets.

Health and community systems

Strong health and community systems are essential for ending HIV, TB and malaria as public health threats, crucial for facing current and future epidemics, and ultimately contribute to long-term, sustainable growth and development. These systems for health also enable better immunization programs.

While both Gavi and the Global Fund invest in systems strengthening efforts that uniquely contribute to our respective goals (e.g., cold chain equipment for vaccines, supply chain for therapeutics), we increasingly collaborate and jointly invest in broader health systems areas essential for all programs, enabled through WHO technical guidance and assistance.

Key areas of health and community systems that benefit from the Global Fund, Gavi and WHO's collaborative approach include:

- **Service delivery, including human resources for health:** Through WHO guidelines on optimizing health worker programs, the Global Fund and Gavi support countries in investing in community health worker programs to extend life-saving services to their country's most vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations.
- **Procurement and market shaping:** Global Fund and Gavi rely on WHO to determine the list of eligible products for procurement, to recommend which products should be used, and how they should be deployed. In 2023, this resulted in Global Fund procuring products with a total value of almost US\$1.34 billion.

- **Regional manufacturing:** both the Global Fund and Gavi are investing to promote regional manufacturing and procurement, with the aim of supporting sustainable markets for products manufacturers closer to where they are used. This will improve the resilience of supply chains, reducing the impact of global supply shocks and enhancing responsiveness to future health crises.
- **Supply chain:** The collaboration between Gavi, Global Fund and WHO in supply chain strategic planning has significantly enhanced the efficiency and reliability of health commodity distribution, leading to improved health outcomes in low- and middle-income countries.
- **Health impacts of climate change:** Climate change is closely tied to human health, with the WHO, Global Fund and Gavi playing important roles in defining, addressing and working to prevent the potentially devastating consequences. Of the three diseases at the core of the Global Fund's mission, malaria is the most affected by climate change. Alongside malaria, WHO continues to assess the current and potential future impacts of climate change on health, with Gavi and the Global Fund investing in response and prevention.
- **Health data management:** Through WHO-provided technical guidance, the Global Fund and Gavi are investing in health management information systems. Through these investments, the Global Fund, Gavi and WHO are helping countries collect, share and analyze data, allowing health programs to use that data in real-time to deliver quality services and stop an outbreak before it becomes a crisis.

The COVID-19 response and pandemic preparedness

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, Gavi and the Global Fund acted quickly, working as standalone organizations as well as within the WHO's Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) partnership. Through these efforts, WHO enabled the Global Fund and Gavi to finance equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics, as well as to protect hard-won gains against infectious diseases and support communities to respond to the pandemic. The Global Fund's COVID-19 Response Mechanism (C19RM) has been the largest source of grant funding to low- and middle-income countries for diagnostics and treatments, including oxygen, personal protective equipment and other public health measures – essentially everything other than vaccines, which were covered by Gavi's COVAX program. All three organizations continue to play important but distinct roles in keeping the world safer from future pathogens of pandemic potential.

Fighting cervical cancer

According to WHO guidance, cervical cancer is almost entirely vaccine-preventable and five times more likely to occur in women with HIV, which means that alongside screening for early detection, rolling out the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is critical to preventing infections. The Global Fund has progressively strengthened its collaboration with the global cervical cancer effort through its relationships with key partners, including Gavi, and supports access to screening and treatment programs.

Sustainability

Sustainability – including financial, programmatic and political sustainability of health, disease and vaccine programs – is a core principle of both the Global Fund and Gavi, with investment approaches adapted over time to address changing needs. While the focus on sustainability has been built into the models of both organizations, recommendations from sources such as WHO or the Lusaka Agenda are integrated and important in informing the approach. The Lusaka Agenda's five key shifts for global health initiatives, for example, resulted in the Global Fund, Gavi and GFF establishing four workstreams on malaria, health systems strengthening, country engagement and enabling organizational functions.

Key areas linked to sustainability that benefit from the Global Fund, Gavi and WHO's collaborative approach include:

- **Public financial management:** In line with their respective general roles, the WHO publishes guidelines on public financial management for health systems in specific geographic or epidemiological contexts. As health systems financiers sometimes investing in the same country or ministry, the Global Fund and Gavi continue to align operational and financial strategies and policies in support of countries to increase efficiency and the impact we achieve.
- **Health financing:** The Global Fund works closely with countries to help them achieve long-term sustainability of health programs and national responses, so they can maintain gains and continue to expand services even after Global Fund support ends. WHO plays a reinforcing role through its guidance and technical assistance, while the Global Fund and Gavi have strict policy measures in place to ensure that implementer countries' health financing compliments their targeted funding. An area of increasing collaboration between the Global Fund and Gavi is blended financing, which refers to combining grant funds with funding from multilateral banks and other financial institutions.

Country Case Study: Malawi



In a village in Dedza District in Malawi, residents celebrate the construction of a new health post.

The Global Fund/David O'Dwyer

Today, Malawi boasts a dramatic improvement in the overall life expectancy at birth from 44.7 years in 2000 to 62.5 years in 2021. This accomplishment is due to impressive leadership by the Government of Malawi through the Ministry of Health. Proudly supporting this achievement are the WHO through its Malawi Country Office, and Gavi and the Global Fund whose funding has been channeled through a joint Program Implement Unit at the Ministry of Health since 2018. This mechanism helps ensure efficiency and collaboration in implementation.

Over the last two decades, and particularly in recent years, Malawi has made very significant progress in controlling its HIV, TB and malaria epidemics.

- HIV incidence and mortality decreased by 79% and 70% respectively between 2010 and 2023, while antiretroviral coverage increased from 27% to 91% during that time.
- Between 2015 and 2022, the TB mortality rate for all forms (excluding HIV co-infection) reduced from 22 to 9.5 per 100,000 population while the TB mortality rate among HIV-positive people fell from 46 to 18 per 100,000 population. Treatment coverage greatly increased from 51% to 75% between 2021 and 2023.
- While malaria remains a major public health problem in Malawi, parasite prevalence among children aged 6 to 59 months declined from 24% in 2017 to 10.5% in 2021, and incidence and mortality decreased from 264 to 219 per 1,000 population and from 47 to 37 per 100,000 population respectively, from 2014 to 2022.

Spotlight on malaria

The support of WHO, Gavi and the Global Fund aligned with that of the United States Government's President's Malaria Initiative has had a determinant impact on Malawi's fight against malaria.

As part of its core mandate, WHO continues to lead the efforts to achieve Universal Health Coverage and strengthen the health system. This is done through the provision of technical assistance, guidelines and policies to accelerate country efforts on malaria control and elimination including through the development of national strategies and robust malaria surveillance systems.

Malawi has been a pilot country for the RTS,S vaccine against malaria and is currently distributing both RTS,S and R21 vaccines through Gavi support. More generally, it is recognized as having one of the most successful expanded programs on immunization in the African region with sustained high coverage of routine immunization of about 80%. This has been achieved through the routine distribution of vaccines against polio, human papilloma virus and cervical cancer, and which has now been expanded to include vaccines for malaria.

Since 2003, the Global Fund has committed over US\$2.8 billion to Malawi's fights against HIV, TB and malaria. The current malaria grant (2024 to 2027) will finance a mass campaign that will see 11.8 million insecticide-treated mosquito nets distributed across all 28 districts malaria testing and treatment at health facilities and in the community, as well as support innovation through school-based insecticide-treated mosquito net distribution and the digitalization of the mass campaign. Through the National Malaria Program, these activities will also be closely coordinated with those led by the United States Government's President's Malaria Initiative including routine insecticide-treated mosquito net distribution, case management and surveillance. ●

About the Global Fund

The Global Fund is a worldwide partnership to defeat HIV, TB and malaria and ensure a healthier, safer, more equitable future for all. We raise and invest more than US\$5 billion a year to fight the deadliest infectious diseases, challenge the injustice that fuels them, and strengthen health systems and pandemic preparedness in more than 100 of the hardest hit countries. We unite world leaders, communities, civil society, health workers and the private sector to find solutions that have the most impact, and we take them to scale worldwide. Since 2002, the Global Fund partnership has saved 65 million lives.

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