

Country progress report - Lebanon

Global AIDS Monitoring 2018



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Knowledge of HIV and access to sexual reproductive health services - Ensure that 90%% of young people have the skills, knowledge and capacity to protect themselves from HIV and have access to sexual and reproductive health services by 2020, in order to reduce the number of new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women to below 100 000 per year

Social protection - Ensure that 75%% of people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV benefit from HIV-sensitive social protection by 2020

Community-led service delivery - Ensure that at least 30%% of all service delivery is community-led by 2020

HIV expenditure - Ensure that HIV investments increase to US\$ 26 billion by 2020, including a quarter for HIV prevention and 6%% for social enablers

Empowerment and access to justice - Empower people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV to know their rights and to access justice and legal services to prevent and challenge violations of human rights

AIDS out of isolation - Commit to taking AIDS out of isolation through people-centred systems to improve universal health coverage, including treatment for tuberculosis, cervical cancer and hepatitis B and C

Overall

Fast-track targets

Progress summary

Lebanon an HIV low prevalence country is now becoming concentrated epidemic in MSM at a level above 14% in this population. With the progress of the infection in the MSM community the NACP is concentrating its activities targeting members of this group as well working together with thematic NGO's and other advocates to improve the situation.

The Epidemiological report for 2017 showed the notification of 205 new HIV cases with 186 new PLWHA on ART. Please find a detailed epidemiological report attached.

Lebanon is currently adopting the treat for all strategy, now is including Lebanese citizens in addition to Syrian and Palestinian refugees as well as refugees from other nationalities living in Lebanon as a transition country. A note to be made that the population living in Lebanon increased from around 4 Million to around 6.2 Million after the refugee's crisis and is expected to record new increases as well.

Lebanon in 2017 became a country eligible for a grant from the GFTAM under the MER component, unfortunately this grant will cover only Syrian and Palestinian refugees and in a very limited scale of activities, we look forward towards a wider coverage of populations that include Lebanese as well and to a more comprehensive activity coverage.

HIV testing and treatment cascade

Ensure that 30 million people living with HIV have access to treatment through meeting the 90-90-90 targets by 2020

Progress summary

Lebanon is working efficiently toward reaching the 90-90-90 goal and according to national figures, the country is reporting 100% ART coverage though UNAIDS estimates show less using the spectrum module.

Policy questions (2016)

Is there a law, regulation or policy specifying that HIV testing:

a) Is solely performed based on voluntary and informed consent

Yes

b) Is mandatory before marriage

Yes

c) Is mandatory to obtain a work or residence permit

Yes

d) Is mandatory for certain groups

Yes

What is the recommended CD4 threshold for initiating antiretroviral therapy in adults and adolescents who are asymptomatic, as per MoH guidelines or directive, and what is the implementation status?

TREAT ALL regardless of CD4 count; Implemented countrywide

Does your country have a current national policy on routine viral load testing for monitoring antiretroviral therapy and to what extent is it implemented?

a) For adults and adolescents

Yes, fully implemented

b) For children

Yes, fully implemented

Prevention of mother-to-child transmission

Eliminate new HIV infections among children by 2020 while ensuring that 1.6 million children have access to HIV treatment by 2018

Progress summary

Currently the National figures are showing Zero HIV infection among newborns.

HIV prevention; Key populations

Ensure access to combination prevention options, including pre-exposure prophylaxis, voluntary medical male circumcision, harm reduction and condoms, to at least 90%% of people by 2020, especially young women and adolescent girls in high-prevalence countries and key populations—gay men and other men who have sex with men, transgender people, sex workers and their clients, people who inject drugs and prisoners

Progress summary

Lebanon being an MSM /HIV concentrated epidemic is designing plans and activities targeting MSM and their communities, several MSM thematic NGOs are working closely with the NACP to reach these population groups offering them all kind of prevention tools as condoms education materials, PEP and ART.

Male circumcision is widely practiced in the country, Harm reduction is one essential prevention method adopted.

While pre-exposure prophylaxis is not yet fully adopted it is approved for HIV discordant couples.

Gender; Stigma and discrimination

Eliminate gender inequalities and end all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, people living with HIV and key populations by 2020

Progress summary

The NACP and its partners are addressing the stigma and discrimination problem at a high priority level, these are very much decreased in prevalence among the population in general , many existing and new Women NGO's are playing a major role and succeeding in defending the rights of women and are calling with other players to eliminate gender inequalities.

Whereas the possibility of existence in some gender inequalities in relation to men and women persist in some situations , it is absolutely absent in terms of care treatment and support for HIV infected population.

The access to prevention , treatment and other necessities for HIV care are equally available for all genders.

Knowledge of HIV and access to sexual reproductive health services

Ensure that 90%% of young people have the skills, knowledge and capacity to protect themselves from HIV and have access to sexual and reproductive health services by 2020, in order to reduce the number of new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women to below 100 000 per year

Progress summary

In Lebanon , sexual and reproductive health starts in schools, though still a shy approach but there are a lot of NGO's and other civil society groups that work intensely in promoting prevention and awareness about HIV and other STI's, educational materials and prevention tools including condoms a distributed free of charge by the NACP directly or through NGO's

Social protection

Ensure that 75%% of people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV benefit from HIV-sensitive social protection by 2020

Progress summary

Social protection in Lebanon still not well developed to all the population including HIV infected, the very hard economic situation that is affecting the country adding to it the devastating refugees crisis is impeding all attempts by decision makers to improve the situation. Nevertheless there are many other successful attempts by the civil society towards improving the socioeconomic status of those individuals affected by HIV.

Policy questions (2016)

Yes and it is being implemented

a) Does it refer to HIV?

No

b) Does it recognize people living with HIV as key beneficiaries?

No

c) Does it recognize key populations (sex workers, gay men and other men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs, transgender people, prisoners) as key beneficiaries?

No

d) Does it recognize adolescent girls and young women as key beneficiaries?

Yes

e) Does it recognize people affected by HIV (children and families) as key beneficiaries?

No

f) Does it address the issue of unpaid care work in the context of HIV?

No

What barriers, if any, limit access to social protection programmes in your country?

Fear of stigma and discrimination
Laws or policies that present obstacles to access

Community-led service delivery

Ensure that at least 30%% of all service delivery is community-led by 2020

Progress summary

In Lebanon the civil society and particularly thematic NGO's are widely involved in service delivery of benefits targeting the PLWHA and their communities, it is estimated that far more than 30% of services are delivered by the community.

HIV expenditure

Ensure that HIV investments increase to US\$ 26 billion by 2020, including a quarter for HIV prevention and 6%% for social enablers

Progress summary

Though there are many advances in HIV prevention and treatment in Lebanon including the introduction of new generation of ART medications, new testing methods and other innovative tools for prevention, investment in HIV is still suboptimal and one main reason is the inability of the NACP to push the HIV problem in the scale of government priorities.

The Reason for that is the deteriorating economic situation in the country and the heavy intolerable burden of the refugee's crisis.

Empowerment and access to justice

Empower people living with, at risk of and affected by HIV to know their rights and to access justice and legal services to prevent and challenge violations of human rights

Progress summary

One major achievement reached in the country is the empowerment of the people living or affected by HIV. Currently the NACP and many other thematic NGO's are exerting pressure on main key decision makers, law enforcement agencies and the judicial system to make a space for complaints about HIV and listen to whoever has a right violation or other problem.

In fact a complaint system was established by the NACP and few NGO partners to record violations of all types and seek solution to these problems with the concerned authorities

AIDS out of isolation

Commit to taking AIDS out of isolation through people-centred systems to improve universal health coverage, including treatment for tuberculosis, cervical cancer and hepatitis B and C

Progress summary

HIV in Lebanon is now being accepted as a chronic disease by many parties. IT is becoming more and more linked to other existing infections in term of diagnosis and support as well in several points of treatment. VCT rapid testing is performed in TB centers as well as in prisons, Hepatitis Band C as well as other STI's are screened together with HIV .

Treatment of those infection are very well synchronized with the HIV treatment and follow up is being done routinely for all.

Comprehensive care is now widely adopted and it is well documented in the national HIV treatment guidelines.