

COSTA RICA

Report prepared by the Joint UN Team on AIDS

JOINT TEAM

UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN WOMEN, ILO, WHO-PAHO, UNAIDS SECRETARIAT, FAO, IOM

JOINT PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTIONS AND RESULTS IN 2020

HIV prevention services, especially for women and girls, received support from the Joint Team in Costa Rica in 2020 through technical assistance, capacity building and advocacy. Working with a women's network on preventing adolescent pregnancy and tackling violence against women through information campaigns; and in distributing essential items (including condoms) to vulnerable women during the pandemic crisis. Particular attention was paid to the LGBTI population and people living with HIV, in assessing needs during COVID-19.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH, AND HIV PREVENTION ADVOCACY; TECHNICAL SUPPORT; CAPACITY BUILDING

The Joint Team provided support for the inclusion of HIV prevention in the 'toolkit' for the prevention of adolescent pregnancy and violence against women; this toolkit will be implemented in five cantons of the country. Additionally, 40 officials of the National Women's Institute (INAMU) participated in a two-day virtual training on the prevention of adolescent pregnancy. The workshop included a specific component on HIV, with information on HIV prevention and treatment, as well as HIV myths and realities.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

Towards ensuring continuity of SRH, HIV prevention and treatment services during the COVID-19 pandemic, a virtual campaign was designed in collaboration with INAMU to disseminate information on SRH and HIV services, and the need to adhere to ART for people living with HIV. The campaign was shared through the social networks of INAMU, the Ministry of Health, and the Social Security Fund. Technical assistance was also provided by the Joint Team to the international non-governmental organization Hivos for the development of a questionnaire to explore the needs of the LGBTI population and people living with HIV in the context of COVID-19, as well as for the dissemination of its results.

In 2020, the Joint Team advocated for the inclusion of condoms in the supplies and food packages delivered by the National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Response to 800 families affected by COVID-19. Female condoms were also included in the supply and food packages delivered by INAMU to women at risk of violence and in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Five female condoms were included in each package, reaching 160 women identified by INAMU through its regional offices.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTEGRATED SDG AGENDA

The Joint UN Team on AIDS is actively contributing to the realization of the 2030 Agenda in Costa Rica through implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2018-2022). In 2020, efforts were leveraged to continue to address gender-based violence and inequalities, under the “leaving no one behind” principle.

PERSISTING AND EMERGING CHALLENGES AND BOTTLENECKS	KEY FUTURE ACTIONS TO RESPOND TO CHALLENGES AND UNBLOCK BOTTLENECKS
<p>The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted challenges in the country in responding effectively to the needs of specific populations. Faced with lockdown restrictions, transgender women engaging in sex work were exposed to discrimination, difficulties in generating income, and high risks of COVID-19 infection.</p>	<p>Ensure continuity of HIV prevention activities through support to communication initiatives, including information about the use of male and female condoms.</p> <p>Continue to advocate for a stigma-free environment through communication campaigns for no discrimination and participation in inter-institutional networks on HIV, for an increased access to HIV services for key populations.</p>
<p>The health system struggles to ensure a continuous supply of ARVs in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>Continue supporting information campaigns targeting people living with HIV and promoting adherence to treatment.</p> <p>Contribute to strengthening the national HIV response to conduct regular ARV supply reviews, to ensure that people living with HIV have medicines available during emergencies.</p>
<p>There is a lack of data on key populations, including LGBTI persons, which limits the ability to quickly map and respond to their needs.</p>	<p>Support the strengthening of information management and use from alternative data sources in order to better respond to populations' needs. This includes, for example, the capacity building of civil society organisations in data collection and generation, as well as advocacy initiatives with the National Institution on Statistics and Census (INEC) to integrate innovative and non-traditional information sources.</p>

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