



GFAN Africa COVID-19 Response Advocacy - #TheBeatContinues Campaign

2020 Report

To defeat COVID-19

and safeguard the critical fight against HIV, TB & malaria, additional domestic and international funding is needed...



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Introduction and overview

GFAN Africa mobilized civil society voices to join **#TheBeatContinues** campaign, urging for sustained focus on HIV, TB and Malaria amid the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 weakened the fragile health systems in Africa and continues to negatively affect the most vulnerable communities while threatening progress on defeating HIV, TB, malaria, and other life-threatening diseases. Governments, private sector, civil society, scientists, health organizations, and communities are working and have made impressive strides to fight this pandemic and save lives.

The COVID-19 vaccine, which was developed in record time, is an outstanding achievement and an additional measure to defeat the disease. With an understanding of the highs and lows of the continuing COVID-19 response and recovery, GFAN Africa's **#TheBeatContinues** campaign ran from May to December 2020.

Background

COVID-19 is a threat to gains made over the years to defeat the HIV, TB, and malaria epidemics. To mitigate the impact of COVID-19, GFAN Africa ran **#TheBeatContinues** campaign in 2020, bringing together civil society voices from Zambia, Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria, Tanzania, Eswatini, Rwanda, Malawi, Kenya, South Africa, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Niger, Senegal, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Benin. Advocacy efforts aimed to strengthen work to defeat COVID-19 and mitigate its effects on HIV, TB and malaria programs.

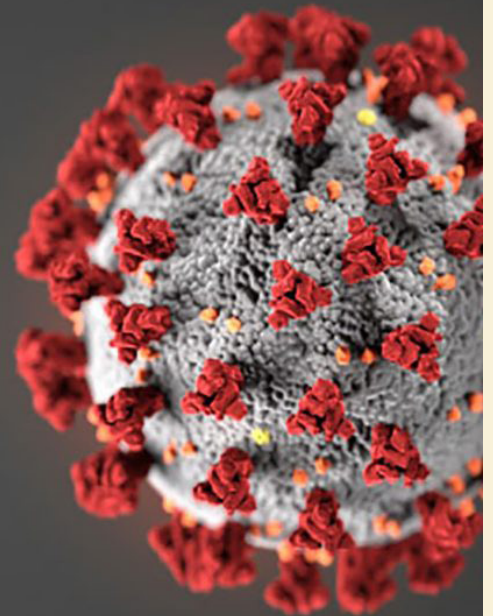
This campaign reached out to governments, regional bodies (such as, the African Union and the Commonwealth Ministers for Health), donors, communities, media practitioners and civil society. Added to **#TheBeatContinues** campaign was the **#UniteToFight** campaign.



Our Approach

GFAN Africa's COVID-19 response was Pan African – coordinated across 13 Anglophone and Francophone countries in Africa. The implementing partners were Community Working Group on Health in Zimbabwe; Impact Santé Afrique in Benin, Niger, Cameroon, DRC and Senegal; CITAM Plus in Zambia; Tanzania Network of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (TNW+) in Tanzania; Hope for Future Generations (HFFG) in Ghana; Journalists Against AIDS in Nigeria; Health Rights Education Programme in Malawi; Lean on Me Foundation in Kenya; and, WACI Health in South Africa.

In addition, GFAN Africa worked in collaboration with GFAN Asia Pacific to support **#TheUHCThatWeWant** campaign.



The thematic groups of focus were adolescent girls and young women, communities affected by HIV and/or TB communities, communities affected by malaria, sex workers, and women living with HIV.

To reach out to various audiences, GFAN Africa and partners used print media, social media, communications collateral (such as videos and posters translated into local languages), webinars and in-person meetings to disseminate the key messages.

Our Messages



To defeat COVID-19 and safeguard the critical fight against HIV, TB and malaria, additional domestic and international funding is needed.

01



02

To defeat COVID-19, the response must address gender barriers, stigma and discrimination, and protect human rights.



03

To defeat COVID-19, protect progress against HIV, TB and malaria, and save lives, we must unite to fight.

Our Activities

To amplify the voices of communities and disseminate messages to online audiences, GFAN Africa organized live Vuka Africa shows. Vuka Africa is an online platform managed by WACI Health that is used to discuss health topics.

During the shows, speakers shared their experiences in the communities regarding access to HIV, TB and malaria services, and spoke about GFAN Africa's key messages in relation to their experiences. Audiences were able to follow the shows in real time on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, or to watch later. Here is a [link](#) to one of the shows.

WACI HEALTH
Champions for Health

VUKA AFRIKA

To defeat COVID-19, the response must address gender barriers, stigma & discrimination, and protect human rights

Thursday, 17th 12.30 pm EAT

MODERATOR

GUEST

Olayide Akanni
Executive Director, Journalists Against AIDS (JAAIDS) Nigeria

Olive Mumba
Executive Director EANNASO

gfan AFRICA *The Best Continues*

LIVE ON

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube icons

WACI HEALTH
Champions for Health

VUKA AFRIKA

To defeat COVID-19 and safeguard the critical fight against HIV, TB & malaria, additional domestic and international funding is needed.

15th OCTOBER 2020
AT 11:00 AM EAT

ZOOM LINK TO BE PROVIDED

MODERATOR

GUEST

OLAYIDE AKANNI
Executive Director, Journalists Against AIDS (JAAIDS) Nigeria

FAHE KERUBO
SRHR Youth Advocate & Gender Activist

gfan AFRICA *The Best Continues*

LIVE ON

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube icons

www.wacihealth.org/gfan_africa/

WACI HEALTH
Champions for Health

VUKA AFRIKA

To defeat COVID-19, the response must address gender barriers, stigma & discrimination, and protect human rights

HOST

GUEST

OLAYIDE AKANNI
Executive Director, Journalists Against AIDS (JAAIDS) Nigeria

JULIUS KACHIDZA
Psychosocial HIV/AIDS Counsellor, Zambia

gfan AFRICA *The Best Continues*

LIVE ON

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube icons

www.wacihealth.org/gfan_africa/

Civil society in Ghana, Eswatini, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe produced videos with messages for their communities on COVID-19. The messages were disseminated widely on social media and to the target communities. In Malawi, the videos were produced in the local language.

Further work towards disseminating messages entailed webinars for civil society and communities. During the webinars, key messages and discussions highlighted the

need to sustain focus on HIV, TB, and malaria amid COVID-19; asking leaders and donors to increase domestic and international funding for health; and, asking for a human rights approach to health interventions. [Here](#) are details of a webinar that took place on 3 September 2020.



Traditional media reaches millions of readers from all cadres including health practitioners, policy makers, leaders, and communities. Civil society in Nigeria organized a media roundtable for journalists from 13 countries.

During the roundtable, journalists were briefed on [#TheBeatContinues](#) campaign and the relevance of its key messages. Articles were published in mainstream media in Ghana (such as [this](#) and [this](#)) advocating for increased allocation of resources for sustainable health financing and amplifying the concerns and asks of civil society and communities. Additional

articles were published in Eswatini, Ghana, and Zimbabwe to mark World AIDS Day as well as in Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, and Cameroon on various dates throughout the campaign. World AIDS Day, the Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting, World Mosquito Day, and World Malaria Day served as key advocacy moments.

TO DEFEAT COVID-19, PROTECT PROGRESS AGAINST HIV, TB AND MALARIA, AND SAVE LIVES, WE MUST UNITE TO FIGHT

*Photo credits: Karin Schermbrucker

qfan AFRICA | **CS4ME** CIVIL SOCIETY FOR MALARIA ELIMINATION | **ACT** | **The Beat Continues**

Friday, September 25, 2020 / PEOPLE SEND YOUR OPINION TO: people@theafricanreporter.com

We must invest in additional resources for health

The year 2020 has taken a toll on our health, when businesses, travel, jobs, property and livelihoods. Millions of people have lost their jobs, their health and their lives. The year has been a tragedy for many. While the world has remained in a state of crisis, we must not lose sight of the fact that we must invest in our health systems. Public health is a pre-requisite for social, economic and political stability. COVID-19 and other diseases, the health systems are facing. Our major responsibility is to invest in the health systems by the Cabinet for many of the African Union. Countries like Kenya, which are not least, have been hit hard by the pandemic. It is our duty to ensure that we have the resources to respond to the health systems that are being affected.



MADIRE MURENDA

Not pandemic must find us better prepared, ready resilient health systems

Health systems are the backbone of any country. It is our duty to ensure that we have the resources to respond to the health systems that are being affected. COVID-19 and other diseases, the health systems are facing. Our major responsibility is to invest in the health systems by the Cabinet for many of the African Union. Countries like Kenya, which are not least, have been hit hard by the pandemic. It is our duty to ensure that we have the resources to respond to the health systems that are being affected.

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In support of building strong and resilient systems for health, GFAN Africa participated in the Inaugural African Union Biennial Joint Meeting of Ministers of Health and Finance for Eastern and Southern Africa regions on 8 – 9 October 2020.

A statement was issued acknowledging the leadership of the African Union on the ALM framework and commitments; it also urges governments to allocate additional resources for health, address social barriers to equitable access to health services, and invest more resources in health research and development. The full statement is [here](#).

Température

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www.echosante.info

IL EST URGENT D'AGIR ...

#LEMOUVEMENTCONTINUE

Pour vaincre la COVID-19, protéger les progrès contre le VIH, la tuberculose et le paludisme, et sauver des vies : NOUS DEVONS NOUS UNIR POUR LUTTER !

POUR VAINCRE LA COVID-19, PROTÉGER LES PROGRÈS CONTRE LE VIH, LA TUBERCULOSE ET LE PALUDISME, ET SAUVER DES VIES, NOUS DEVONS NOUS UNIR POUR LUTTER

gfan AFRICA **CS4ME** **The Beat Continues**

La Covid-19 a frappé et perturbé la santé, les écoles, les entreprises, les voyages, les cultes religieux, et les moyens de subsistance des citoyens. Nous avons dû changer nos comportements sociaux. En sortant de chez nous, nous devons porter un masque et nous devons toujours laver les mains. La Covid-19 nous a rappelé que nous devons d'abord assurer notre santé pour pouvoir faire face aux autres aspects de

la pandémie. Halte à la tuberculose indique que l'incidence mondiale de la tuberculose et les décès dus à cette maladie en 2021 augmenteraient pour atteindre des niveaux qui n'ont pas été observés depuis 2013 et 2016. Ce qui implique un recul d'au moins 5 à 8 ans dans la lutte contre la tuberculose en raison de la pandémie de Covid-19. Aussi, selon un rapport de l'Onusida, la lutte contre le VIH pourrait encore reculer de 10 ans

services de soins de santé primaires nécessaires pour réduire la mortalité infantile et maternelle, et en soutenant les soignants qui sont pour la plupart des femmes. Les obstacles à la santé liés au genre doivent être supprimés. En outre, alors que nous nous attaquons à la Covid-19, les gouvernements, la société civile et les partenaires doivent s'assurer que la réponse au Covid-19 comprend des stratégies et des leçons tirées de la

pandémie doit nous trouver mieux préparés, prêts à disposer de systèmes de santé solides et résistants, axés sur les soins de santé primaires et fondés sur des systèmes de santé communautaires solides. Un système fondé sur les droits équitables, centré sur les personnes et conscient des autres facteurs qui affectent la santé et le bien-être, tels que le changement climatique, l'alimentation et le logement. Pour obtenir ces succès, les gou-

COVID-19 is slowing down gains towards achieving universal healthcare coverage. Towards this end, GFAN Africa sent letters to ministers for health and ministers for finance emphasizing the need for increased investments in health, and asked that the available resources be used prudently. In this letter, GFAN Africa asked Kenya's Minister for Health to sustain focus on all life-threatening diseases amid COVID-19



14 May 2020

Hon Mutahi Kagwe
Cabinet Secretary, Health
Afya House, Nairobi
Kenya

Dear Hon Kagwe,

COVID-19 Has Complicated Healthcare; Governments Must Sustain Focus on All Life Threatening Diseases

The Commonwealth Ministers Meeting is taking place amid COVID-19. The theme of the meeting is **delivering a coordinated Commonwealth COVID-19 response**. Though a physical gathering of Ministers will not be possible, the meeting is necessary and timely as Governments the world over were caught out when COVID-19 struck.

As you plan to join in the Ministerial Meeting, as civil society organizations and the communities we represent note with concern the economic, social and health disruptions caused by COVID-19. We acknowledge and appreciate the efforts that the Government of Kenya, private sector, donors and individuals are putting in place to protect citizens from COVID-19 to save lives, mitigate its impact and sustain livelihoods. In a distinct way, we recognize the huge sacrifices of all the frontline healthcare workers for their selfless efforts.

Community engagement is key to achieving desired health outcomes. Civil society in Eswatini organized a roundtable discussion on the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls living with HIV.

The participating Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) from different support groups of people living with HIV from all four regions of the country shared their experiences on how they were accessing treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. They spoke about the impact of the pandemic on them and their livelihoods. They asked the government to ensure fair and improved distribution of COVID-19 relief and support services, including the distribution of hygiene packs, to persons living with HIV and especially to women- and child-headed households as they are most vulnerable to malnutrition.

Working in partnership with GFAN Asia Pacific, GFAN Africa joined the C20 virtual summit on the

‘The Role of Communities and Civil Society: Achieving UHC and ending HIV, TB, and malaria in the era of COVID-19’

on 7 October. Rosemary Mburu, the Executive Director of WACI Health, spoke on the economic impact of COVID-19 on Africa, safeguarding HIV, TB and malaria gains, and the role of the Global Fund in the COVID-19 response, including in addressing community rights and gender [issues](#).

“ The Role of Communities and Civil Society: Achieving UHC and ending HIV TB and malaria in the era of COVID-19.



#TheBeatContinues campaign joined in constituency engagements to build stronger networks and amplify voices to spread the campaign messages widely.

On 22 October, GFAN Africa jointly with RUN4TB, an advocacy and communications campaign to catalyze community and civil society voices for TB advocacy in Africa, organized a dialogue with parliamentarians titled *Reporting on UN HLM TB progress report and the 2020 Global TB report*.

During the conversations, there was emphasis that TB and COVID-19 screening should be done simultaneously, and that COVID-19 and TB policies and laws should be integrated. In addition, there was emphasis on the need to ensure that governments fulfil their UN HLM commitments and pledges to the Global Fund so that TB services are adequately funded and accessible. This will also strengthen research and innovation of TB tools and commodities.

On social media, GFAN Africa continued to disseminate key messages reaching out to global, regional and country stakeholders including communities.

The protection of communities and frontline healthcare workers from COVID-19 is key to defeating the disease and ensuring a continuum of services to defeat other life-threatening diseases such as HIV, TB, and malaria.

In Zimbabwe, GFAN Africa partner Community Working Group on Health distributed soap, facemasks, sanitizers, and personal protective equipment as well as promoted hygiene practices in households and communities. Information, education and communication (IEC) materials, including posters, T-shirts and facemasks, were distributed to increase



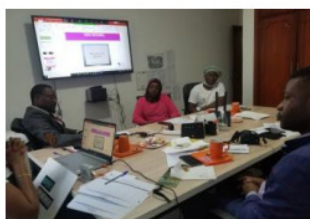
awareness of COVID-19 prevention measures.

Some of the IEC materials such as posters were produced in local languages in Zambia and in Tanzania. Educational skits were produced and shared widely through social media platforms. Peer educators and community health workers have been trained on COVID-19 prevention and participated in campaigns to raise awareness about the disease.

Civil society organizations in Benin, Niger, Cameroon, DRC and Senegal were trained in advocacy, specifically on skills that enabled them work in the context of COVID-19. Trainings focused on how to develop advocacy messages, write letters and newspaper articles, and develop and run their own campaigns.

The civil society stakeholders in these countries documented their HIV, TB, and malaria situations in the context of COVID-19. The documentation showing the impact of COVID-19 on programmes to fight HIV, TB and malaria informed advocacy messages to leaders asking them to commit to defeating the three diseases.

In Cameroon



In Niger



In RCA



In Senegal



In RDC



Conversations with policymakers on resources for health are important to explore effective ways of ensuring that health is adequately funded in order to meet targets, including those for ending TB. In Zambia, CITAM Plus organized a meeting of the Stop TB Caucus and the parliamentary health committee in Zambia and emphasized the need to safeguard the critical fight against TB and other life-threatening diseases.

Clearly outlined advocacy plans for awareness raising and resource mobilization are key to achieving desired results. In Tanzania, the Tanzania Network of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (TNW+) organized a meeting of civil society and communities for a review of resource mobilization efforts before, during, and after the COVID-19 outbreak. They identified gaps, detailed how best to adapt to the COVID-19 situation, and developed a plan of action to inform their advocacy work.

Going Forward

GFAN Africa continues to urge increased investments in health for stronger and resilient health systems that are able to withstand current and future pandemics. Strong systems for health are critical to defeat the HIV, TB and malaria epidemics, and to achieve the 2030 agenda – particularly, health and wellbeing for all. Everybody, including the poor and vulnerable and regardless of where they are, should have access to efficient, effective, and affordable healthcare whenever they need it.

The Beat Continues 
