

The Sahel



Since 2003, the Global Fund has invested over US\$2.6 billion in the Sahel region¹ to support the people affected by HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria and to strengthen health systems.

The challenge

Years of conflict and political instability present ongoing challenges in the fight against HIV, TB and malaria, with devastating consequences for the most vulnerable communities. Populations are spread across large, often desertic, territories with poor infrastructure and access to health care, and the region has some of the highest levels of maternal mortality in the world. These challenges are compounded by climate change, which is bringing about extreme weather events such as drought and flooding, causing food insecurity, disease outbreaks and forced displacement within the region.

The Sahel has one of the youngest populations globally, with an average age of under 16 years old. In some parts of the Sahel, harmful gender norms prevail, leading to a high prevalence of child marriages among girls. Moreover, stigma and discrimination impact key populations' access to health services. But with continued investment, the Sahel can protect its hard-won gains against HIV, TB and malaria and accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goal 3 target of ending the three diseases as public health threats by 2030. The Global Fund continues to support the Sahel toward that goal.



Mothers bring their children to the Nyelwa district health center in Niger to receive lifesaving care. These women often come from villages at the Nigeria border, where health facilities are non-existent. Many children who visit this health center are diagnosed with malaria and malnutrition.

The Global Fund/David O'Dwyer

Our response

In the Sahel, we adapt our operations to address the rapidly changing health care environment in the region. Based on our inclusive partnership model and in response to the humanitarian context, the Global Fund has collaborated with ministries of health, international humanitarian non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and UN agencies as well as national NGOs. Our investments for HIV, TB and malaria also strengthen health systems and community health systems and boost pandemic preparedness.

Since the Global Fund was founded in 2002, the partnership has achieved the following key results in the Sahel region:



256,304

people on antiretroviral treatment for HIV*



433,172

people treated for TB**



144.4 million

mosquito nets distributed**

¹ The Global Fund invests in the following countries in the Sahel region: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

* Number of people currently on antiretroviral drugs (ARVs)

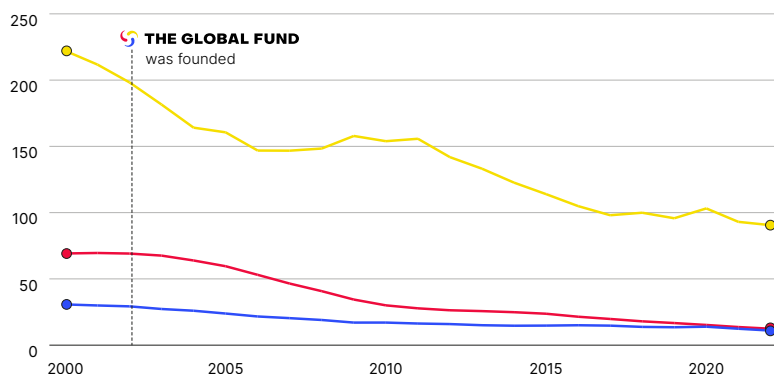
** Cumulative result since 2002

Malaria

Malaria poses a significant threat to people living in the Sahel. Three countries – Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso – are experiencing a particularly high burden of the disease. Since 2003, the Global Fund has invested close to US\$1.5 billion in fighting malaria in the region, supporting the distribution of mosquito nets, seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC) for children under 5, preventive treatment for pregnant women, diagnostic tests and malaria treatment, and outreach programs. These investments have delivered strong results: In 2022 in Niger, one of the most impacted countries, 85% of the population had access to insecticide-treated mosquito nets, 95% of suspected malaria cases were tested and 4.6 million children were given SMC.

Trends in mortality rates in the Sahel countries where the Global Fund invests

- AIDS-related mortality rate per 100,000 population
- TB - mortality rate per 100,000 population
- Malaria - mortality rate per 100,000 population at risk



HIV and TB

All countries in the Sahel region are impacted by HIV and TB. The Global Fund invests in HIV and TB programs, including prevention efforts, peer education outreach activities, and the provision of antiretroviral and antibiotic treatments.

All Sahel countries have made encouraging and consistent progress with Global Fund support. HIV treatment coverage has consistently increased: In Burkina Faso, 81% of people living with HIV are on antiretroviral treatment, while in Chad and Niger, the figures stand at 77% and 75% respectively. In Mauritania and Mali, approximately half of the population living with HIV receive testing and treatment services. However, both countries have demonstrated steady improvement since 2003. Preventing HIV transmission from mothers to their children is key to halting the spread of the disease. The prevention of mother-to-child transmission in the Sahel countries falls below the global average, with rates below 34% in three countries (Mauritania, Mali and Niger). Furthermore, UNAIDS reported that within West and Central Africa, 63% of children living with HIV lacked access to pediatric antiretroviral drugs in 2022, with the Sahel being the most underserved region within this broader area.

TB continues to pose an important health threat in the region. Unequal social and economic conditions and poverty, combined with a lack of access to testing and treatment services, fuel the spread of TB. One of the biggest difficulties is finding the people with TB who have not been diagnosed. To address these challenges, the Global Fund invests in TB programs to prevent and treat the disease across the region.

In 2022, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger achieved TB treatment coverage rates above 70%, with Mauritania slightly lower at 67%. However, TB treatment coverage in Chad is far lower (59%). The Global Fund has allocated US\$10 million to fight TB in Chad between 2023 to 2025, to lower TB mortality and morbidity and improve access to health services.



Fulani nomad and community health worker Mahamat Djibril Moussani provides TB prevention information to fellow community members in Hadjer Lamis, Massaguet, Chad.

The Global Fund/Robin Hammond/NOOR

Strengthening health systems

The Global Fund invests in strengthening health systems and community health systems across the Sahel to improve health care access in remote communities, particularly those affected by conflict or climate-related disasters. We fund a range of health services, including outreach programs, community health initiatives and training for community health workers, digital health projects, peer education, transportation and supply networks. These efforts play a critical role in strengthening health care services, health education and the distribution of lifesaving health commodities like mosquito nets, SMC, antibiotics and antiretrovirals.

Adaptation to humanitarian situations and fragile contexts

Conflict disrupts the supply and distribution of crucial health commodities. However, through contingency planning and our expertise in last-mile distribution, we ensure that these products reach those in need in affected regions. We use virtual tools and platforms to support community health workers, mobilize alternative transportation methods and routes, and implement differentiated approaches to deliver mass distribution campaigns of long-lasting insecticidal nets in remote and hard-to-reach areas.

Our partnerships play a vital role in sustaining our programs amidst multifaceted challenges. In order to effectively operate in the humanitarian context of the Sahel, we partner with local and humanitarian NGOs and UN agencies like the UN Development Programme. For instance, in Mali, to reach key populations, we work with ARCAD Santé Plus, a Malian association fight HIV and TB. In Chad, we collaborate with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance to support the Ministry of Public Health and National Solidarity's Project Management Unit. This Unit oversees grant implementation to strengthen health systems and community health systems through joint program management, work plans and unified systems. In Burkina Faso, we support humanitarian flights to transport medicines and health products in partnership with the World Health Organization and the local Programme d'Appui au Développement Sanitaire (PADS) through the Ministry of Health.

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 59 million lives.