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Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HIV, TB, MALARIA PROGRAMMING IN AFRICA: WHAT WERE COUNTRY EXPERIENCES AND KEY INTERVENTIONS?



3
SERIES

**A FOCUS ON HUMAN RESOURCES FOR
HEALTH (HRH)**

BACKGROUND

Many African countries continue to face significant challenges to providing adequate health care services due to understaffing, high staff attrition and poor working conditions. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the situation as HRH, not only for healthcare but also for HIV, TB and Malaria (HTM) programming, remains overstretched.

FACTS

- Africa has 14% of the world population, has 25% of global disease burden and yet there are only 1.3% of global health workers (HWs);
- There are 0.8 HWs per 10,000 population yet 2.5 HWs per 10,000 population are needed to meet the Sustainable Development Goals; and
- By 2015, only 11 countries in Africa had met the minimum threshold of 2.3 HWs per 10,000 population.

Source: WHO Report, 2017

EXPERIENCES

- HWs continue to be overburdened as they work extra hours to deal with the worsening COVID-19 situation, as a result the quality of HTM and general health services are negatively impacted;
- There is a drastic decrease in number of staff working at health facilities due to fear of contracting the virus, and in the process badly impacting on service provision for HTM; and
- Low HW to patient ratio in a worsening environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic means that HWs may not adequately provide quality HTM services.

LESSONS LEARNT

- The flexibility of the Global Fund COVID-19 Response Mechanism assured HRH for continued services provision as personal protective equipment was made available;

- COVID-19 exacerbated gaps in availability, distribution and quality of HRH. However, until recently it has forced countries to recruit and retain retirees and new staff for longer periods; and
- Continuously investing in resilient HRH approaches instead of reacting to a crisis could go a long way towards managing HTM and other health programs.

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