

Baylor Foundation
Lesotho



2022



Global Health
Network



Baylor College of Medicine
Bristol-Myers Squibb
Children's Clinical Center
of Excellence

STOP AIDS



Keep the Promise



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Publication Date: 06 - 2023

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THANK YOU



Network In Action



Global Health Network

Baylor College of Medicine

Summary statistics

- Program Funding
- People Reached
- Foundation Staff Employed

Botswana

- \$3,182,347
- 10,021
- 90

Romania

- \$873,790
- 10,357
- 39

Tanzania

- \$3,298,911
- 31,761
- 121

Colombia

- \$1,528,829
- 16,763
- 58

Lesotho

- \$19,190,668
- 334,859
- 383

Uganda

- \$35,050,896
- 3,351,247
- 520

Malawi

- \$18,229,632
- 675,473
- 1,332

Argentina

- \$691,734
- 2,657
- 24

Eswatini

- \$2,538,246
- 28,863
- 113

Collective Impact

\$84,585,054
Total Network Funding

2,680
Total Staff Employed

As implementing partners of the Texas Children's Global Health Network, each foundation collaborates and shares knowledge for the purpose of collectively solving complex health problems both locally and globally.

4,462,001
Total People Reached

10,561
Total Health Personnel Trained


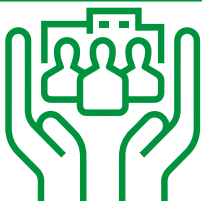









Global Health Network



Annual Report Indicators




and Definitions for the Global Health Network

#	Indicator	Definition	Number
1	 <p>Program Funding / Annual Budget</p>	Report the total expenditure for the reporting period in the currency used in your annual report. If local currency is used in the audit report, enter the local currency abbreviation and the expenditure amount. If the annual report is in US Dollars enter USD for currency.	<p>Currency: Maloti</p> <p>Expenditure: 253,767,170</p>
2	 <p>Foundation Staff Employed</p>	Number of benefits eligible staff on June 30, 2022.	<p>384 (Permanent) 261 (Temps)</p>
3	 <p>People Reached</p>	Total unique individuals (children and adults; male and female; community members and health professionals) reached through any of the Foundation's programs and services within the reporting period.	70,294
4	 <p>Children Reached</p>	Total unique children reached with at least one good or service through all Foundation programs this reporting period.	19,782

#	Indicator	Definition	Number
	 Women Reached	Total unique women reached with at least one good or service through all Foundation programs this reporting period.	40,760
6	 People Reached with HIV Services	Total number of unique people reached with at least one HIV good or service this reporting period. HIV testing should be included as an HIV service for this indicator. Exposed children receiving testing and other services should also be included in this count. This indicator should include any HIV related service.	51,371
7	 Patients Receiving ART	Taken from BSC (indicator reference number 4) Total number of unique patients currently on ART at COEs, satellites and outreach sites this reporting period.	4,684
8	 Women Receiving Prenatal Screenings	Total number of unique women receiving at least one prenatal screening from a Foundation program.	N/A
9	 Health Work Force Personnel Trained	Number of healthcare workers trained vis a vis a Foundation led training.	1,245

Annual Report Indicators

and Definitions for the Foundation Background or Program Map Page

#	Indicator	Definition	Number
1	 <p>Total number of patients ever enrolled at COEs, satellites and outreach sites</p>	<p>Taken from BSC indicator reference number 1. Number of unique patients ever enrolled and receiving at least one service at a COE, satellite, and outreach site since program inception.</p>	17,259
2	 <p>Number of active patients at COEs, satellites and outreach sites</p>	<p>Taken from BSC indicator reference number 3. Number of unique patients active at a COE, satellite, and outreach site this reporting period.</p>	5,062
3	 <p>Number of patients newly enrolled into care and treatment at all sites</p>	<p>Taken from BSC indicator number 2. Number of unique patients enrolled and receiving at least one service at a COE, satellite, and outreach site this reporting period.</p>	128



Foundation Background

Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation Lesotho (Baylor Foundation Lesotho) was formed and registered in 2005 as a local non-governmental organization as a result of a partnership between the Baylor College of Medicine International Pediatric AIDS Initiative (BIPAI) in Houston, Texas, USA and the Lesotho Ministry of Health. The Bristol Myers-Squibb Foundation's Secure the Future initiative donated the initial funds to construct and equip Baylor Foundation Lesotho's first health facility, which His Majesty King Letsie III inaugurated on December 1, 2005, World AIDS Day.

Baylor Foundation Lesotho runs its Children's Clinical Centre of Excellence (COE) in Maseru, the capital city of Lesotho, as well as five Satellite Clinical Centres of Excellence in five of the 10 districts, namely: Qacha's Nek, Mophale's Hoek, Leribe, Butha-Buthe, and Mokhotlong. In 2012, we launched an adolescent clinic specifically for those 14 – 20 years of age, located on Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital's premises. The basic operations of all the centers are funded by the Government of Lesotho through the Ministry of Health. Since its inception in December 2005, Baylor Foundation Lesotho has seen enormous growth in every area of its operations.

The services offered have expanded from pediatric HIV testing, prevention, care, and treatment to include other support services, including outreach and psychosocial support services, tuberculosis (TB) screening, diagnosis and care, adult HIV services (including testing, care and treatment, Post exposure prophylaxis and Pre exposure prophylaxis (PEP, and PrEP), and cervical cancer screening. Furthermore, we offer services in all districts, including those in which we do not have clinical sites, through donor-funded projects. Baylor Foundation Lesotho has expanded remarkably through donor funded projects such as ETHICS and KB (USAID), ALPEC (CDC) and PROTECT, PINCH, C19RM (Global Fund); further detail is provided in next sections.

MISSION

To provide high-quality, high-impact, highly ethical pediatric and family-centered healthcare, health professional training, and clinical research focused on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, malnutrition, and other conditions impacting the health and wellbeing of children and families worldwide.

VISION

To ensure universal access to care, treatment and support services for all HIV-infected and affected children and their families throughout Lesotho; support prevention of new infections; and equip healthcare providers with knowledge and skills to manage common pediatric illnesses.

VALUES

Personal integrity and accountability, client-centered approach, respectful service delivery, compassionate and confidential services, organizational accountability for operational excellence, client and partner satisfaction, employee and organization development, financial health, and infrastructure maintenance.



Executive Director

Interview

Lineo K. Thahane, M.D.

What was the Foundation's greatest accomplishment this year?

This year we focused on continued implementation of existing projects, ensuring delivery of high-quality programming with efficient systems. We have continued to settle into our role as a USAID prime implementing partner, refining policies and operational procedures along the way. In my opinion our greatest accomplishment has been transitioning successfully into the role of a leader in implementation of community-based prevention and support programming for adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) and orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) as a local organization.

In what ways have the Foundation's services and approach evolved over the last year?

Over the last year, the Foundation's services and approach evolved to incorporate COVID-19 in all ways (prevention, screening, diagnosis and referral). Our approach to the pandemic continues to be guided by a multi-disciplinary team which meets regularly to review locally available data, assess the situation nationally and across the Foundation, and provide updated guidance for staff on a regular basis. As with other institutions, over time our approach has shifted from a reactive one, in which services were quickly adapted to ensure staff and beneficiary safety, to a more sustainable one, taking a longer-term view of living and working with COVID-19 in order to maintain a high standard of excellence in service delivery in facility and community settings.

How do you see the Foundation growing in the upcoming year?

In the upcoming year, the Foundation will begin a second round of implementation of AGYW and PMTCT programming with funding from The Global Fund, while launching a new project which supports the Government of Lesotho with COVID-19 response. This will again strengthen the approach to COVID-19 as a longer-term feature of the health landscape in Lesotho.

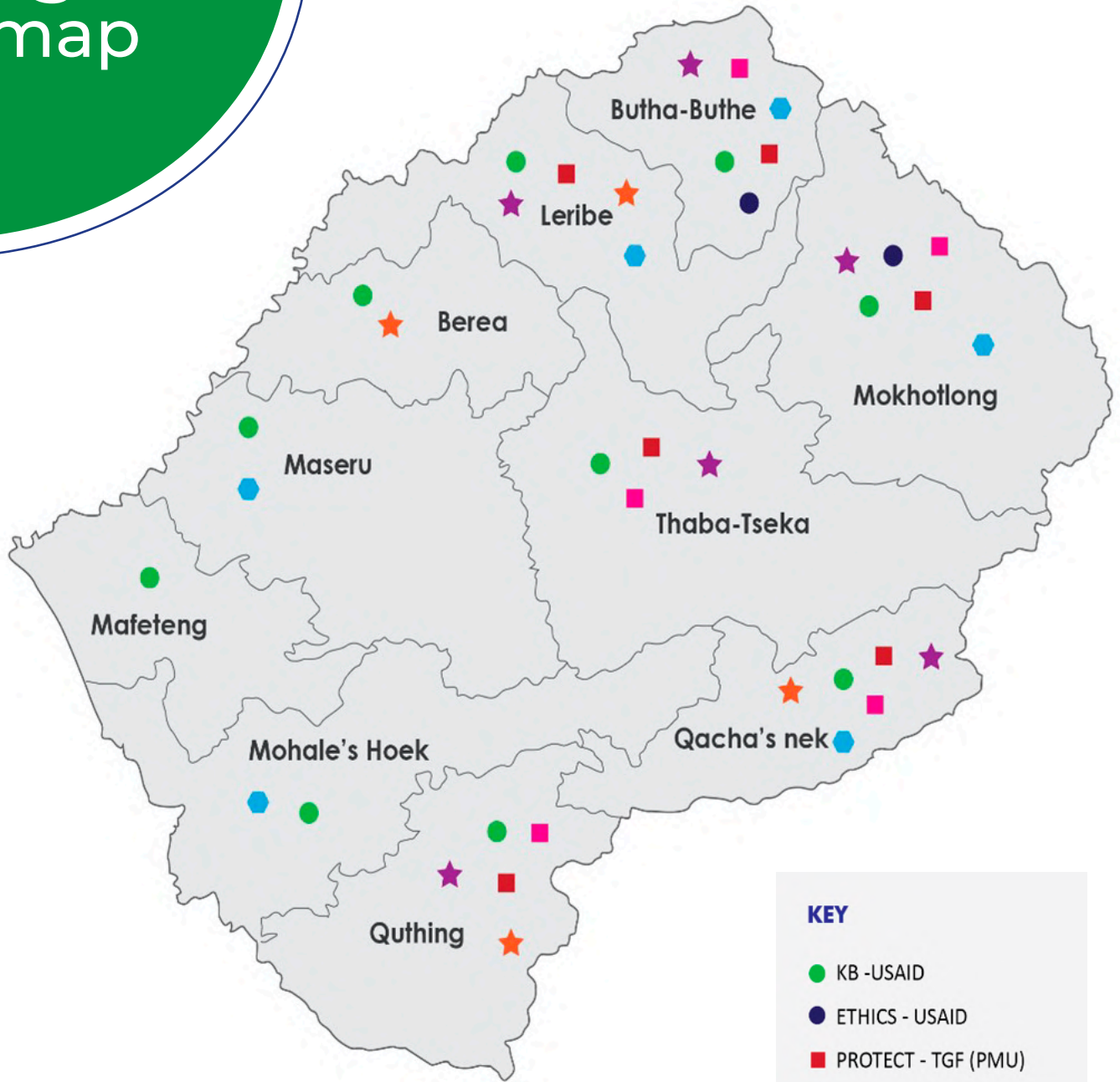
The growth in programming funded by The Global Fund will help to diversify the Foundation's donor funding base and solidify Baylor Foundation Lesotho's position in the country as a leader in adolescent health programming supporting the Ministry of Health. We are also entering the last year of funding of the USAID-funded ETHICS (HIV Care & Treatment) project, and anticipate applying for its follow-on award in the upcoming fiscal year.

What major challenges do you anticipate that the Foundation will experience in the upcoming year?

As in previous years featuring rapid growth in personnel and programming, it will be challenging to ensure that new staff joining the Foundation understand the mission, vision, and goals of the organization and continue to support its strive for leadership and excellence in implementation of our programming in Lesotho. In addition, it will be important to strengthen and maintain Baylor Foundation Lesotho's unique identity as we implement donor-funded projects throughout the country, and ensure strong coordination and collaboration across all areas of programming. As we do so, we anticipate greater opportunities to support the Government of Lesotho (Ministry of Health and other ministries) with high-quality services for the benefit of the clients we serve.



Program map



KEY

- KB -USAID
- ETHICS - USAID
- PROTECT - TGF (PMU)
- PINCH - TGF (PMU)
- ★ C19RM - TGF (PMU)
- ★ ALPEC - CDC (EGPAF)
- BAYLOR LESOTHO CLINICAL SITES - MOH

Program Highlights

Donor Funded Projects Karabo ea Bophelo (KB)

Baylor Foundation Lesotho KB is a five-year program funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), with planned implementation from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2024. Its main aim is to support the Government of Lesotho to expand access to and uptake of multi-sectoral interventions across all ten districts to prevent new HIV infections and reduce vulnerability among Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) and Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW). The Foundation implements the program in collaboration with eight partner organizations, namely, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Lesotho Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (LENEPWHA), Care for Basotho Association (CBA), Women and Law Southern Africa (WLSA), EnCompass LLC, Centre for Impacting Lives (CIL), Lesotho Inter-Religious AIDS Consortium (LIRAC) and Society for Women and AIDS in Africa Lesotho (SWAALES).

Objectives of the KB program are:

- To enhance capacity of families and communities to support OVC.
- To increase uptake of health, HIV prevention, care and treatment services among OVC and AGYW.
- To reduce sexual violence and GBV amongst OVC and AGYW; and
- To enhance utilization of HIV-sensitive National Case Management System.

Project achievements during this year include:

- Reaching a cumulative total of 37,302 AGYW with HIV prevention interventions.
- Initiation of 2,406 AGYW on PrEP (PrEP_NEW) in two districts, namely, Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek.
- Enrolment of 24,713 learners in the Life Skills – Based Sexuality Education program (an effective methodology that uses participatory exercises to teach behaviours to young people) in four districts being Maseru, Berea, Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek. In addition, 19,025 learners enrolled in FY21 were monitored
- Enrolment of 3,000 children (2,000 AGYW and 1,000 OVC) into Education Subsidies Program. We pay for their school fees, boarding fees, and educational materials such as stationery, hygiene packages and school uniforms.
- Reaching 73,531 OVC and their caregivers with OVC comprehensive services using the HIV sensitive case management approach.
- KB with support from UNICEF successfully installed a call tracking system to strengthen the Child Helpline, in order to ensure stability of reporting lines. The call tracking system was officially handed over by UNICEF to MoSD.





Figure 2: Nurse drawing blood on a patient in the community after physical tracking

Expanding TB and HIV Clinical Services (ETHICS)

Baylor Foundation Lesotho was granted a fixed amount award (FAA) to implement the Expanding TB and HIV Clinical Services (ETHICS) Project in the two districts of Butha-Buthe and Mokhotlong in 2019. In addition to the two districts, the award includes the Baylor Foundation Lesotho Centre of Excellence (COE) in Maseru and the Satellite Centre of Excellence (SCOE) in Maseru's Hoek. The ETHICS Project, a three-year fixed amount award, was launched in November 2019, with the Lesotho Network of AIDS Services Organizations (LENASO) as a sub-recipient to Baylor Foundation Lesotho in the project.

Project Goal: Attain HIV epidemic control and sustained reduction in HIV transmission, morbidity, and mortality through saturation of HIV and TB prevention, care and treatment services in the highland districts of Butha Buthe and Mokhotlong.

Project Objectives:

- i.** Increase coverage of quality, comprehensive, integrated, and client-centred adult HIV and TB prevention, care, and treatment services
- ii.** Increase coverage of comprehensive prevention of mother-to-child transmission, paediatric and adolescent HIV prevention, care and treatment services
- iii.** Strengthen district level health systems to support the quality of the HIV and TB continuum of care that is coordinated within the national policy framework
- iv.** Increased coverage of COVID-19 prevention, detection, vaccine access, and clinical service delivery

Between July 2021 and June 2022, project activities included direct service delivery, onsite mentorship and training at supported sites. 1,119 people living with HIV were enrolled into care, including 998 individuals newly diagnosed with HIV. Efforts by Baylor Foundation Lesotho contributed to the project reaching viral load monitoring goals: 94% of patients had a viral load measurement and 98% of those measurements showed desired viral load suppression. Through optimized dual screening efforts by ETHICS personnel, 100% of all people living with HIV were screened for tuberculosis disease and COVID-19.

ETHICS deploys a comprehensive approach. In addition;

- **1,098** new clients were initiated on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)
- **5,957** women living with HIV were screened for cervical cancer
- **125%** of patients who missed appointments were successfully returned to care
- ART optimization was also on track, with **99.98%** of clients on optimized Lopinavir/Ritonavir and Dolutegravir-based regimens
- **90%** of people living with HIV were receiving 3-or 6-month supplies of medication; and
- Additional differentiated models of care including Community ART Groups (CAGs), weekend Network Clubs, facility-led community outreaches, community ART refills and radio messaging were implemented

Through the ETHICS Project, Baylor Foundation Lesotho participated in the review, dissemination, and implementation of the National Guidelines for the eMTCT of HIV and Syphilis, and the Lesotho HIV Prevention, Treatment and Care Guidelines.



Accelerating Lesotho's Progress to Epidemic Control (ALPEC)

This is a five-year program funded by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), under which Baylor Foundation Lesotho is a sub-recipient to Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF). This program is a follow-on to the previously described STAR-L program and is currently in its second year of implementation. The ALPEC program started in January 2021 and is implemented in the four districts of Leribe, Berea, Quthing and Qacha's Nek. Baylor Foundation

Lesotho contributes towards the following objectives:

- Expanding HIV case identification through a mix of targeted approaches for different priority populations and linking them for same-day ART initiation,
- Expanding recent infection surveillance systems at all supported HIV testing sites,
- Expansion of differentiated models of care for stable and unstable patients to improve retention, adherence to ART, and clinical outcomes,
- Expanded TB case identification and treatment, and increased uptake of TPT for all eligible PLHIV
- Expansion of biomedical prevention services, specifically PMTCT and PrEP
- Strengthened technical and management capacity of MOH district level services and facilities to implement and monitor quality of the HIV response across the continuum of care.

The program performance below was achieved from October 2021 to June 2022;

- **61%** of index clients tested were children; 3% of them tested HIV positive.
- **27%** of Inpatients tested were adolescents; 2% tested HIV positive.
- **29%** of clients reached with HIV Testing Services (HTS) were adolescents and 2% tested positive
- **155, 672** clients were screened for TB; 4,828 presumptive TB cases were identified and 9% tested positive for TB and were enrolled into care

Providing Prevention and Treatment for Young People (PROTECT)

PROTECT is a 2-year 9 month project funded by The Global Fund, through Ministry of Finance Project Management Unit (PMU) under the NFM3 project. It started in July 2021 and will end in March 2024.

Project Goal

An AIDS-free population of adolescents and young people (AYP) through community-based HIV testing and SRH services.

Objectives:

- Accelerate demand creation for services in the community
- Offer HTS and family planning services in the community
- Provide and link patients to ART,

The PROTECT project provides community-based services in six districts: Mokhotlong, Butha-Buthe, Leribe, Thaba-Tseka, Quthing and Qacha's Nek. The following services are offered: HTS, same day ART initiation, linkage to care, STI screening and management, TB screening, PrEP initiation, family planning, Community Adherence Monitoring and Refill Assistance as well as cervical cancer screening to newly identified HIV positive AGYW eligible for screening.

During this year: 22% of AGYW were tested using conventional testing towards an annual target of 2,115. From the total HTS done on 551 clients, 460 clients were AGYW, and 91 clients were male partners.

- **11%** of the AGYW tested were found Positive with 92% of them linked to care and successfully initiated on ART and 100% of the Positive clients screened for TB.
- **64%** of clients were identified and tested through index modality against the annual target of 225
- HTS screening was performed through HIVST distribution, reaching **427%** of the target. From the expected distribution of 2,115, 9,034 HIVST were distributed; 35% (3,119) of HIVST distributed were assisted and 65% (5,915) were unassisted.

- PrEP initiation constituted 14% towards the annual target, with 322 clients initiated on PrEP from the expected 2,372. Clients were referred to facilities for refills and the teams maintained refills for those clients who would not reach the facilities to ensure continuity.
- The project achieved **169%** coverage on FP services whereby the target was surpassed; 2,276 clients were offered FP services as opposed to 1,350 expected clients. Referrals were made to health facilities for refills while community refills were provided for those clients under facilities that do not offer family planning services.
- **100%** of AYP seen were screened for TB and out of 12,506 clients screened, 0.14% of TB suspects were identified and referred to health facilities for further investigations.
- All clients (**12,506**) were also screened for STIs, with 1.2 % of the clients screened positive and put on STI treatment
- On Community Adherence Monitoring and Refill Assistance (CAMARA) groups, the project achieved 45% of the expected target; 842 clients on ART aged 10-14 years participated in such groups against annual target of 1,884 (92%), 774 of 842 of these participants were found to be virally suppressed.
- Amongst positive female clients seen, 6 were found to be eligible for cervical cancer screening and all were screened.



Figure 3: Mobile truck used to provide community services to AYPs

Protecting women, infants, and children from HIV (PINCH)

Baylor Foundation Lesotho is implementing Protecting Women, Infants, and Children from HIV (PINCH) project which came into effect in July 2021 with a 2-year 9 months implementation period (ending in March 2024). The program is funded by The Global Fund and Baylor Foundation Lesotho is a sub-recipient to the Ministry of Finance – Project Management Unit. It is implemented in the 5 highlands districts of Mokhotlong, Butha-Buthe, Thaba-Tseka, Quthing, and Qacha's Nek.

Project Goal

Aims to support the national strategy to eliminate Mother to Child Transmission of HIV (eMTCT), reducing the rate from 8.73% to less than 5%.

Project objectives are to:

- Increase uptake of maternal-child health services, including PMTCT, as evidenced by increased ANC attendance, higher PMTCT coverage rates, and timely testing of exposed infants at 6 weeks of age.
- Retention in care of HIV-exposed infants (HEI) and provision of treatment for all HIV-infected infants.

Achievements in this year:

- Overall performance of pregnant women who knew their HIV status at 1st ANC visit was **98%** (5377/5498) against the set target of 100% from October 2021 to June 2022. Regarding HTS coverage amongst new ANC clients, the project achieved 99%, (1,651 of 1,664 pregnant women) who knew their status in Q2, 95% (1984/2086) in Q3, and 99.6% (1742/1748) in Q4 respectively.
- **100% (862/862)** of HIV-positive women who attended ANC received treatment to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV
- **80%** of infants received virological tests for HIV within 2 months of age, 80% reached in Q2, 78% in Q3 and 81% in Q4 respectively
- **86%** coverage was achieved for documented PMTCT Final Outcome (82% in Q2, 85% in Q3 and 90% in Q4).

COVID-19 Response Mechanism

The COVID 19 Response Mechanism (C19RM) is aimed at assisting healthcare providers to communicate lifesaving information about COVID-19 and vaccination, combatting misinformation, identifying COVID-19 patients, supporting access to vaccines, and curbing the spread of the virus. The intervention is further aimed at providing mentorship and support to health care workers. The support at the community level includes COVID-19 screening in the mobile clinics, provision of health education by mobile clinic staff and Youth Mentors who are attached at the health facilities.

The program further provides psychosocial support (PSS) to both healthcare workers and clients in distress; a psychologist provides services to healthcare workers (HCWs) and communities to help them cope with COVID-19 related stress and stigma. At the facility level, the intervention further includes the provision of COVID-19 screening and referral for rapid tests.

The afore-mentioned interventions will help to promote continuity of essential outreach activities in the era of COVID 19 by:

- 1.** Increasing COVID-19 infection prevention, control, and protection of the health workforce
- 2.** Surveillance: Epidemiological investigation and contact tracing
- 3.** Promoting community awareness through risk communication and community engagement

The C19RM intervention was planned to start on the 1st of July 2021; however, due to delayed signing of the grant agreement, implementation began in October 2021:

- This year 93% of AYP were screened for COVID-19; out of 12,506 clients seen, 11,598 were screened and 0.2% were screened Positive. The 18 clients who screened Positive were referred to health facilities for further testing and management.

Additional Projects

Adolescent Program

Baylor Foundation Lesotho established an adolescent clinic on 01st June 2012 when Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital (QMMH) was opened. The adolescent clinic was integrated within this facility to ensure tailored service provision for this vulnerable population. From inception, youth aged 14-20 years were transitioned from the COE site in order to receive services from a dedicated space and team of professionals at the Baylor-Lesotho Adolescent Clinic.

Baylor Foundation Lesotho Adolescent clinic celebrated its 10yr anniversary on the 01st June 2022. The Foundation is proud to have been able to sustain high quality of care for adolescents and ensure that all interventions geared towards AYPs are provided with fidelity. The adolescent clinic has provided adolescents with a specialized program of care and treatment to help ensure successful treatment outcomes during this challenging life stage. Positive feedback from the adolescents continues to be received regularly; they enjoy having their own space and freedom to speak on relevant topics. The clinic also supports pregnant adolescents, whose emotional wellbeing amongst other things is catered for by the clinic's Psychosocial Support team. Furthermore, Adolescent Clinic serves as a natural transition to adult care services which is normally challenging for most adolescents.



Radio Shows

From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, radio listenership increased amongst young people as most schools were closed and adolescents were home. Baylor Foundation Lesotho therefore facilitates weekly one hour radio shows on one youth-centred radio station in the country. The purpose of the show is to educate the public about the services provided by Baylor Foundation Centres in country. Furthermore, youth support group (Wise Youth) members use this platform to share their life stories and to make others aware of the importance of adhering to their ART treatment. Other topics discussed include pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT), cervical cancer screening, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and other health related issues.

WhatsApp hotline

The purpose of the hotline is to give all clients (including non-Foundation clients) a chance to ask questions about health services and any health-related challenges they face. Clients send questions via this platform at their own convenience; the Psycho-Social Support coordinator shares the questions to the relevant Baylor Foundation Lesotho health professionals for further guidance. Responses are then shared back to clients in a well-coordinated manner.





Teen Club/Wise Youth Private Facebook Group

In addition to utilization of messaging through radio slots and WhatsApp platforms, psycho-social support continues through a Teen Club and Wise Youth Facebook Group. The majority of our target clients have access to smart phones and use Facebook. One network provider in Lesotho provides Facebook on a free platform, making it accessible for everyone with a smart phone. Key features of the program include:

- The group is private; it is not accessible via standard Facebook search engine.
- Only members in the group can invite peers.
- Administrators and Moderators must approve membership requests.
- Before being approved, requestors must provide their BCM/chart number, their full names and the district they are from, in order to verify clinic enrolment.

The group includes a few Baylor Foundation Lesotho staff members who answer questions and provide guidance and clarification during discussions, allows for discussion on different topics, and addresses the concerns of members. It allows for continued education on HIV and other general health issues. The group has over 405 members currently.

In March 2021, the Foundation established a weekly one-hour meeting on Wednesdays at 20:00-21:00 pm called 'Family Meeting'. The aim is to have discussions at a time that is convenient for most members. The topics for the Family Meetings align with the theme of the Radio Show.



Testimonial

My name is Konosoang Sele, I'm a female aged 22, and I have been living with HIV for the past 16 years.

I started coming to Baylor on the 24th of January, 2006 and I was only 6. And I must admit I was very ill to the extent that my grandma thought I will never make it. She has been the one taking care of me after both my parents died of the same virus.

My grandma told me about my status the very same year because she thought it would be easy for her to help me take my treatment and I can't lie; it was never easy for me to accept. I didn't understand why it had to be me alone not also my brother, why was he not taking those pills as I did? The fact that I had to miss school at some point in time is what I hated most as I even had to repeat some classes. Having those stupid questions from classmates why I always miss classes for check-ups.

I joined Teen Club in 2011, it was fun to see that I wasn't the only one living with this virus. I can't say I felt completely comfortable going there because I met people who knew me, and I would think they were going to talk about me. But that did not stop me from attending Teen Clubs because I felt it played a big role in my life, like knowing fully about HIV.

Fast forward, I must admit that until 2014 I was one of the patients who were not adhering well, peer pressure contributed a lot as well as reaching puberty stage.

I started attending my visits at Baylor Adolescent clinic located at Queen Mamohato Memorial Hospital in 2014, when my life took a huge turn. I will point out why.

Here there was enough space for us as teenagers, it was a comfortable and safe place to be as I did not have to be worried about being seen by anyone who comes from the same place as me, I was given my pills in the pill bags, not in the bottles (bottles were noisy that everyone could hear and would be sure that those were ARVs).

The fact that we were all teenagers, and we all had the same reason why we are going there all made it easy for most of us to stick to our treatment. Most of us were part of Teen Club together with the staff working in the clinic, that fact made it a friendly environment where we are free to ask when we had challenges. I have had my viral suppressed from that year until today.

I worked as a peer Educator at BCMCFL from the beginning of January 2022 until the end of July 2022. and if you ask me, I will say that has to be the best 6 months of my entire life. Giving back to the same clinic that saved my life and interacting with patients in the same position that I was once in, I swear it can only be God who made that possible.

I am currently continuing my studies at the Craft Centre Hlotse Leribe, and I had to leave my position at Baylor. I guess working in a health environment triggered my passion for helping people and giving back to the community. After this, it is my dream to do nursing, Social Work or Psychology.

There is still a long way to go in the fight against HIV in Lesotho as we still have rising new HIV infections and it is my belief that we have a role to play as People Living with HIV in our country. I am only 22 years and I have free to talk about my HIV status, but I cannot say the same about my fellow peers thus I believe that I have a role to play.

Thank you!!!





Baylor Foundation
Lesotho

2022



Global Health
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