

# THE UNION AFRICA REGION IN 2018



CREDIT: Will Boase

## UNION STUDY IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA COMBATS CHILD TB

Three year old, Safounatou is receiving preventive treatment as part of The Union's TITI study in Benin.

The Union-coordinated TITI study presented its findings at the 49<sup>th</sup> Union World Conference on Lung Health in The Hague.

The observational study, Investigated Transmission of Childhood Tuberculosis (TITI, for its initials in French), evaluates systematic investigation and preventive therapy for children, and was conducted in 13 centres in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Central African Republic.

Staff carried out contact tracing in participating health centres, in which they surveyed patients with active tuberculosis (TB) and visited the homes of every TB patient in their care, to find out if the patient shared a home with any children under five years of age.

Almost 2,000 children sharing a home with people in treatment for active TB were enrolled in the study. Of those enrolled, 90 percent initiated preventive therapy. Five percent were diagnosed with active TB and placed on treatment.

The preventive treatment followed the newly recommended three-month regimen using child-friendly drug formulations combining isoniazid and rifampicin — recommended in 2016 by the World Health Organization in three of the four participating countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Central African Republic) — and a six-month isoniazid treatment in the fourth (Benin).

The children with active TB were treated according to the directives of each country's national TB programme and adherence to treatment has been excellent with no severe adverse events being reported. The preliminary results of the TITI study are being presented at the 49<sup>th</sup> Union World Conference on Lung Health.

# FROM EVIDENCE TO PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION

For nearly 100 years The Union has drawn together the best scientific evidence and expertise to address the most pressing public health challenges affecting people living in poverty around the world. Know. Share. Act.

## KNOW

- The Union provided technical assistance to the National TB Programmes of Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Niger, Zimbabwe, DRC and Central African Republic.
- Thirteen peer-reviewed research papers were published by Union experts across the region covering topics on TB, child TB, Zoonotic TB, and HIV, in *Public Health Action* and the *International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease* among others.
- The Union's Centre for Operational Research recently ran SORT IT courses in Kenya and Uganda, and the first ever national course in Zimbabwe. These courses equip public health professionals and healthcare providers with the skills necessary to conduct and implement operational research techniques to strengthen the health systems in their respective countries. Participants have submitted their papers to peer-reviewed publications.

## SHARE

- Nearly 2,500 people from 125 countries attended the 17<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Tobacco or Health in Cape Town, South Africa, with the theme 'Uniting the World for a Tobacco Free Generation'. The Union is secretariat for the conference and highlights included a youth pre-conference and a special ministerial session.
- The Union delivered training courses in English and French in five countries to 300 health professionals across Africa to develop and strengthen their knowledge and skills in patient care.
- The Union Zimbabwe Office partnered with the National TB Control Programme, with support from USAID's Challenge TB project and The Global Fund, to mark World TB Day with a pre-event highlighting the progress the country is making towards ending TB.
- The Union has developed a training programme specific to the needs of Kenya after the TB burden in the country was identified as being higher than previously thought, with 40 percent of cases remaining undetected and untreated. The training included the development of county-specific action plans and classroom sessions led by professionals familiar with TB in Kenya.

## ACT

- The Union's Zoonotic Tuberculosis Sub-section launched a project to raise awareness of Zoonotic TB and improve healthcare and TB screening among the Fulani pastoralist community in Ibarapa, South Western Nigeria.
- The Union DR Congo Office, with funding from USAID's Challenge TB project, supported three local NGOs to find and treat missing persons with TB. During the second quarter of 2018, 1,876 TB patients were notified to the national programme, 1,438 were treated by active case finding in the community and 438 by contact investigation. Among them, 76 percent were bacteriologically confirmed.
- A parliamentary delegation hosted by The Union and partners, visited districts in Uganda that are implementing the DETECT Child TB project — an initiative using an approach for diagnosing and treating children with TB within their communities. The delegation raised critical political awareness of the devastating impact of child TB in advance of the United Nations High-Level Meeting on TB which took place in New York in September. This year the DETECT Child TB model is being planned to scale up to 10 high burden districts by the National TB and Leprosy Control Programme, with support from The Global Fund.

