

THE UNION SOUTH-EAST ASIA REGION IN 2018



CREDIT: Jan Schmidt-Whitley

THE UNION SIGNS AGREEMENT FOR US\$ 14 MILLION FOR TB-HIV CARE IN MYANMAR

Ko Myint Thein received treatment, support and counselling for TB and HIV through The Union's IHC clinic in Chauk, Myanmar. He now lives a healthy life and volunteers at the clinic to support other people living with HIV.

The Union has signed two agreements with the United Nations' Office for Project Services (UNOPS), totalling US\$ 14 million, to provide HIV and tuberculosis (TB) integrated services in Myanmar.

The agreements are funded through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and will run through to the end of 2020.

The Union's Integrated HIV Care Programme (IHC) began in Mandalay, Myanmar, in 2005 and the model has become a key component of Myanmar's national HIV strategy. From small beginnings — treating 190 in year one — the programme currently supports integrated TB-HIV care and provides antiretroviral therapy to over 47,000 people in the country. Last year, The Union Office in Myanmar referred 17,000 people showing TB symptoms for further testing and provided support for 415 people who are in treatment for drug-resistant TB.

In 2018, The Union Office in Myanmar also:

- Collaborated with the National AIDS Programme to host a Child Funfair for 200 children living with HIV and receiving antiretroviral therapy.
- Held the Myanmar 'National Conference on Tobacco Control and Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases, Uniting for Saving Lives and Saving Money' in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Sports.
- Collaborated with the National TB Programme to mark World TB Day with an exhibition of The Union's Active TB Case Finding Programme and Multidrug-Resistant TB (MDR-TB) Programme.
- Continued with its Community Based Integrated Tuberculosis Care Project, building a volunteer network of more than 1,000 people within eight hard-to-reach townships.
- Conducted the fourth Myanmar National SORT IT Operational Research course, module one and two in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. Twelve participants were mentored to develop operational research protocols in the fields of HIV, TB, Vector Borne Diseases, Leprosy and non-communicable diseases.

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

- In 2017 and 2018, eight research papers on topics of TB, multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) and HIV have been published by Union experts in *PLoS one*, *Global Health Action* and the *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*.
- An article in *Global Health Action* summarised the research activities conducted under The Union's Project Axshya in the last seven years and the impact it estimated these activities have had on policy and practice to improve TB control programmes in India.
- Research led by The Union South-East Asia Office and published in *Global Health Action*, showed that active case finding among marginalised and vulnerable populations in India significantly reduces the costs to the individual during the diagnosis period when compared to individuals detected through passive case finding. The research was part of a series of studies exploring if The Union's active case finding strategy under Project Axshya is effective in TB diagnosis, outcomes and costs.

SHARE

- The Union supported the Delhi End TB Summit as the region's politicians and ministers committed to a joined-up approach to tackling the global TB crisis. Following on from the summit, The Union South-East Asia Office, in partnership with PHD Chamber of Commerce, brought together more than 25 corporates in a bid to scale up efforts for TB care in India.
- Union Courses held a four-day 'Budget and Finance Management' course, in Dhaka, as part of the CDC's IMPACT Programme in Bangladesh, in which selected professionals enter a two-year programme studying a variety of public health and management topics.
- Participants from six countries were mentored to develop operational research protocols in fields such as TB, HIV and adolescent suicidal behaviour, as part of the seventh regional Asia SORT IT Operational Research Course in Sri Lanka.
- The Union South-East Asia Office helped to organise a state-level course on 'Guidelines for Programmatic Management of Drug-resistant TB in India 2017', in Chennai, to train the master trainers in the technical and operational aspects of the updated guidelines.

ACT

- The Union South-East Asia Office signed an agreement with the Global Fund, totalling US\$ 15.51 million with a goal of 'Reaching the Unreached — Ensuring universal access to TB prevention and care services for all'. The agreement is funded until 31 March 2021.
- The Union supported India in its endorsement of the World Health Organization's Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products. The protocol commits to reducing tobacco use by stamping out the illegal tobacco trade.
- A nutrition support programme was launched in Devbhumi Dwarka (Gujarat, India) by Essar Oil, a partner of the Call to Action for a TB-Free India. Supported by the Revised National TB Control Programme and The Union South-East Asia Office, the initiative provides nutritional support to 400 patients in the district.

