



# BAYLOR COLLEGE OF MEDICINE CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION



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LESOTHO

Baylor  
College of  
Medicine



Global Health  
Network





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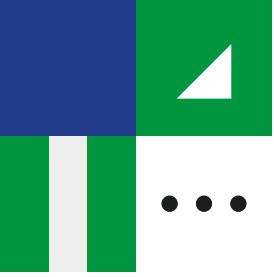
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**Photo Credit:**

Smiley Pool.



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## THANK YOU!

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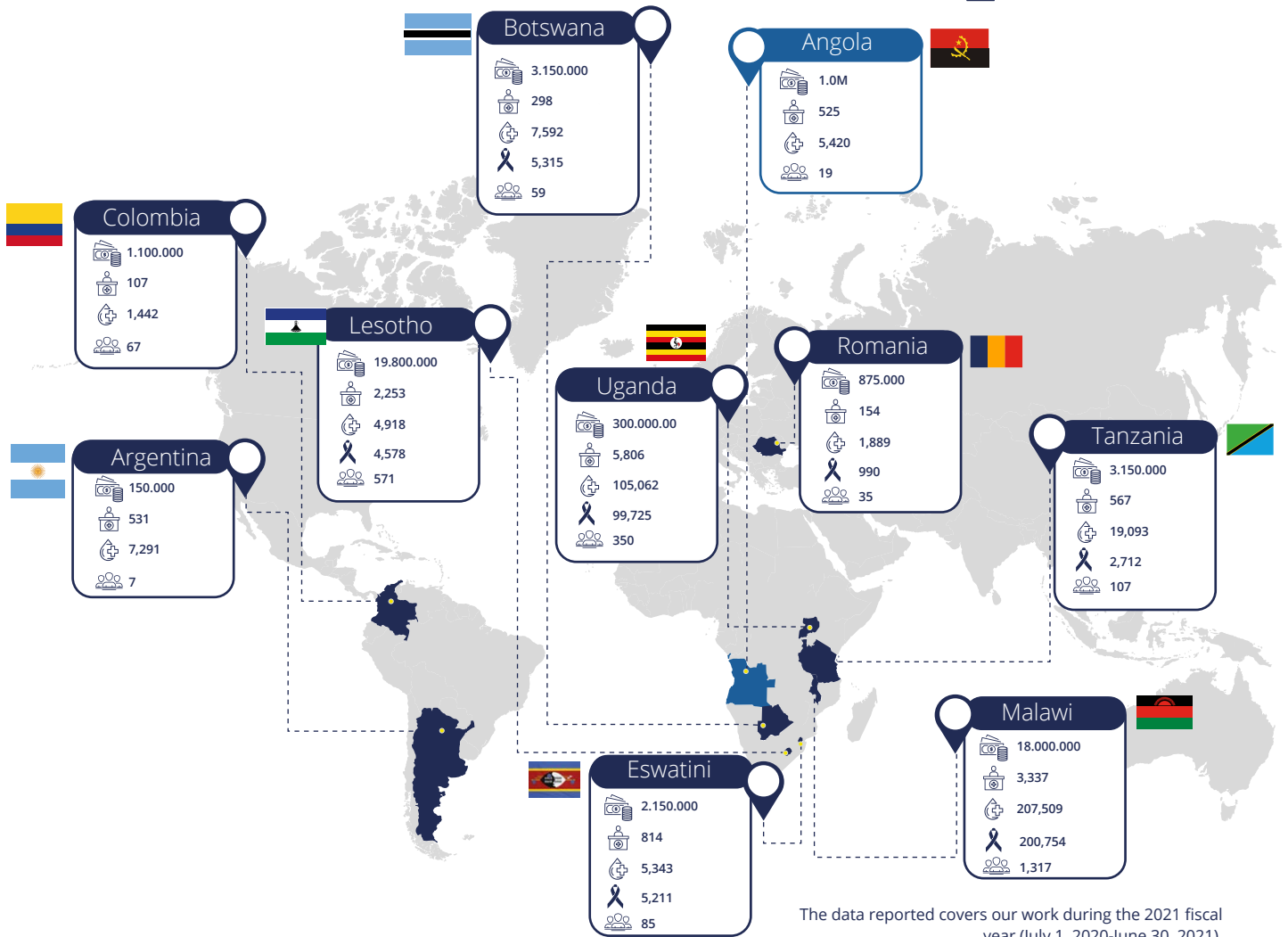
# Texas Children's Global Health Network

**Texas Children's Global Health Network** was created by **Baylor College of Medicine International Pediatric AIDS Initiative** (BIPAI) in 1999 to catalyze pediatric and family HIV care and treatment and health professional training. The Network continues to be one of the largest public-private partnerships in the provision of pediatric and family-centered HIV care and treatment in the world. The scope of the partnership has expanded with **Texas Children's Hospital** and **Baylor College of Medicine** to include tuberculosis, malnutrition, hematology and oncology, cardiology, emergency medicine, surgery, anesthesiology and maternal health.

Leveraging diverse private and public funds, the Network, consisting of nine affiliated local non-government organizations (NGO) has anchored its foundation by developing local clinical, technical and management capacity through mentorship and workforce training at all levels, from peer supporters to physicians, nurses and pharmacists, to administrative staff and executive leaders. Training and education efforts cover all facets of program implementation to enhance local leadership and program sustainability.

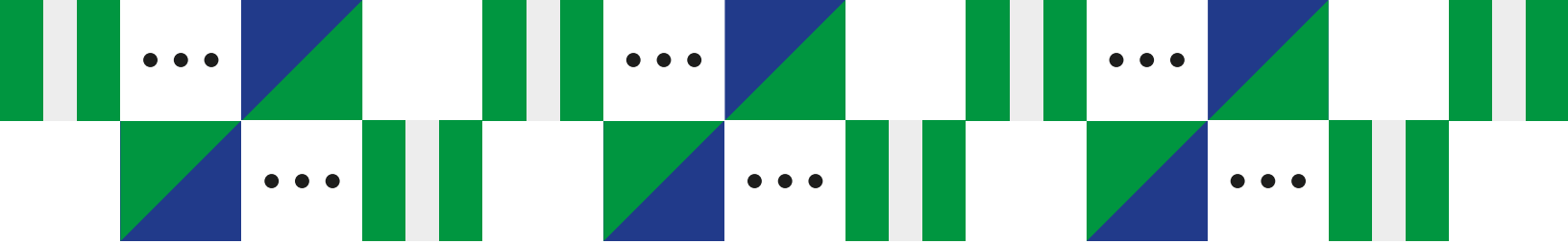


Headquartered in Houston, Texas Children's Global Health shares extensive knowledge and expert technical assistance, staff presence and support for physical infrastructure to our Network of affiliated NGO implementing partners in Argentina, Botswana, Colombia, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Romania, Tanzania and Uganda. **The Network operates 11 Centers of Excellence (COE) and 7 satellites for outpatient maternal and child health services across three continents, and includes the Global Tuberculosis COE in Eswatini and the Global Women's Health COE at Area 25 District Health Centre in Malawi.**



## BIPAI Network Statistics





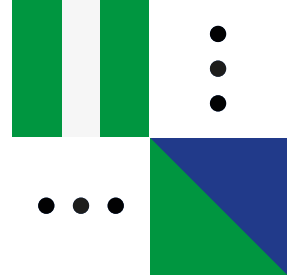
# Foundation Background

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, Mohale’s Hoek, Leribe, Butha-Buthe, and Mokhotlong. In 2012, we launched an adolescent clinic specifically for those 14 – 20 years of age, located at Queen ‘Mamohato Memorial Hospital 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.



## 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 well-being 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

## What was the Foundation's greatest accomplishment this year?

This year was one of continued growth for the Foundation, as we scaled up implementation of our directly funded USAID projects (Karabo ea Bophelo (KB) and ETHICS). This has resulted in significant growth in staffing, institutional knowledge and experience, refinement of policies and procedures, innovation, and implementation of new systems to improve program efficiency and operations. The successful transition from a US Government sub-recipient to a prime recipient has not been without its challenges but remains our greatest accomplishment.

## How has the Foundation maintained a standard of excellence for patients and staff despite the challenges posed by COVID-19?

The Foundation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been 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. In order to maintain our standard of excellence for clients and staff this year, we have had to remain flexible and open to adaptation and innovation in systems and approaches. This includes adjustments to clinic hours and daily patient flow, staff rotation and teleworking guidelines, and provision of vaccinations for eligible staff and patients. In addition, a COVID-19 tracking app was developed for the Foundation to enable staff to report potential COVID-19 symptoms and receive guidance from our telemedicine providers. It also allows management to track the impact of the pandemic across the Foundation over time. This has significantly improved efficiency as telemedicine providers can track exposures, suspected and confirmed cases, and provide individualized guidance for affected staff members.

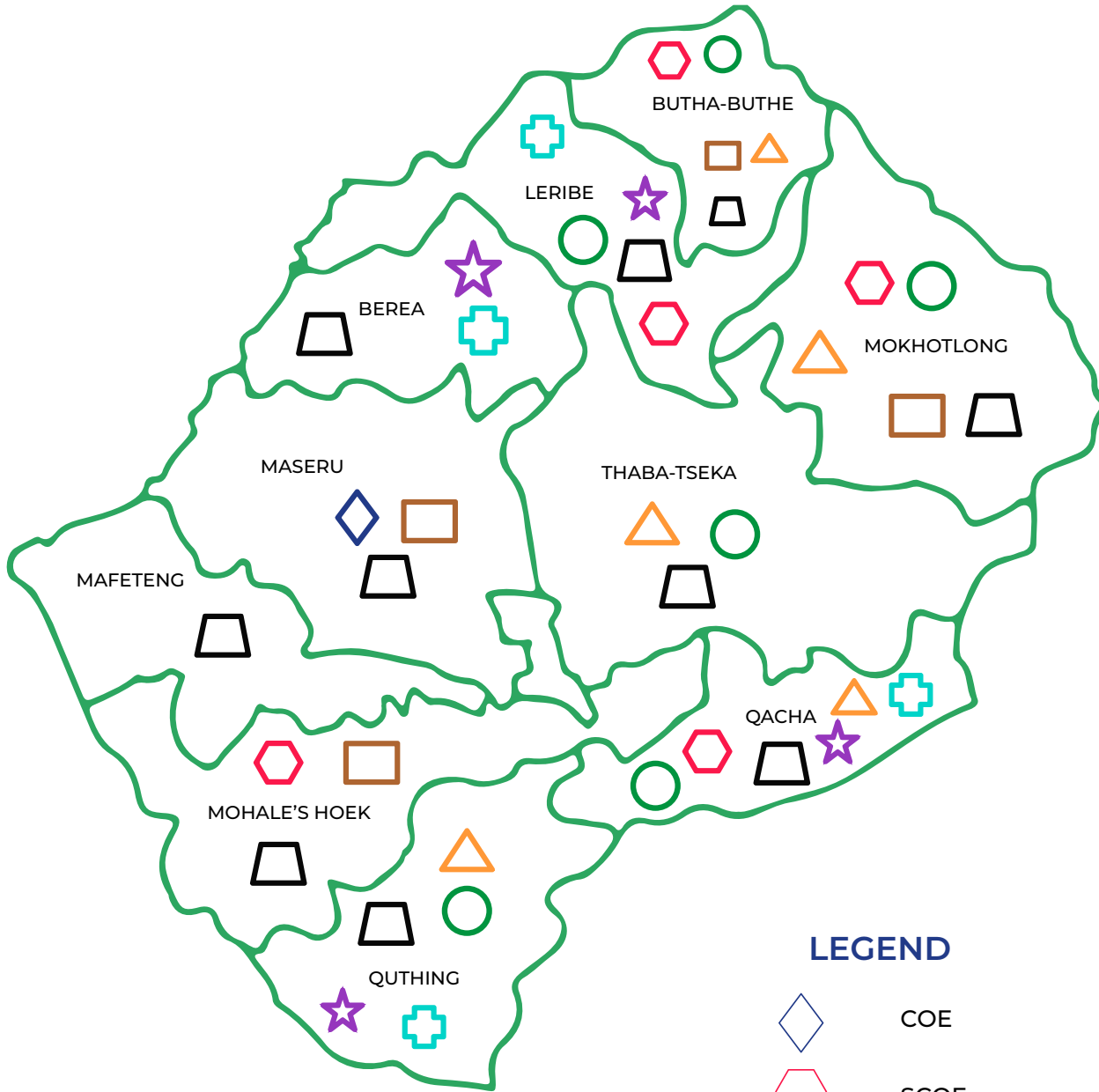
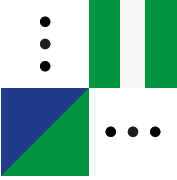
## What is the most important goal for the Foundation in the upcoming year?

The most important goal for the Foundation in the upcoming year is to continue to prioritize and pursue excellence in provision of services and implementation of donor-funded projects. This includes updating policies for their optimal implementation, ensuring fiscal responsibility and strong internal controls, pursuing new funding opportunities, and supporting the government to sustain the gains Lesotho has made in the HIV program thus far. In addition, ensuring that we support government and partner organizations to ensure the health and safety of our patients and staff in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic will be critical, particularly as COVID-19 vaccines are rolled out. We will continue to provide comprehensive and holistic support for our clients and beneficiaries at both community and health facility levels, ensuring high-quality services across the continuum of care.













# Programs Map



## LEGEND

-  COE
-  SCOE
-  PINCH
-  PROTECT
-  KB
-  ETHICS
-  STAR-L
-  ALPEC

## 1. COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES



In an effort to provide psychosocial support to our children and adolescents living with HIV, Baylor Foundation Lesotho began a psychosocial support group called Teen Club for those 11- 18 years of age. It is divided into two groups, one for younger adolescents aged 11-14 and one for older adolescents aged 14-18. The meetings are held monthly on different Saturdays and aim to educate, counsel and provide members with life skills that help them to cope with living with HIV. As adolescents age out of Teen Club most choose to participate in a support group for young people aged 18-25 called Wise Youth.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in many restrictions, including on movements and public/social gatherings. As a result, Baylor Foundation Lesotho, suspended all large group gatherings including psychosocial support group meetings (Teen Clubs and Wise Youth). Our clients were thus faced with the challenge of limited access to the psychosocial support that we were previously providing monthly. In response, and as a means to ensure retention and adherence support, we introduced the following media platforms under the psychosocial support programs department:



## ●● Radio Shows

During COVID-19 national lockdowns, radio listenership increased amongst young people. The team 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 continued services that we offer during the pandemic. Furthermore, Wise Youth members use this platform to share their life stories and to make others aware of the importance of adhering to their ART. 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 challenges they face. Clients send questions via this platform at their own convenience; the psychosocial Support coordinator distributes the questions to the relevant Baylor Foundation Lesotho health personnel for further guidance.

## ●● Teen Club/Wise Youth Private Facebook Group

In addition to utilization of messaging through radio slots and WhatsApp platforms, psychosocial 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.

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 in some of the discussions in the group.

The platform 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 380 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.



## 2. OPERATION FOUR ZEROS (O4Z)

Adolescents and young people living with HIV in Lesotho still face a lot of challenges which include stigma and discrimination, failure to disclose status leading to poor adherence and high viral loads, teen pregnancies, lack of adolescent-friendly services and new HIV infections. In an attempt to help address these challenges, BCMCF-Lesotho together with Ministry of Health and other implementing partners adopted a model from Kenya called Operation Triple Zero (OTZ) and modified it to O4Z.

It is an initiative that uses an asset-based approach to empower adolescents and young people living with HIV to adopt positive health behaviour and to be active co-producers of health interventions focusing on improving the following:

- Zero missed doses
- Zero missed appointments
- Zero Viral load
- Zero new HIV infections

Psychosocial Support team incorporated this model to enhance the support provided to our clients. O4Z champions were trained in Maseru, Botha-Bothe, Mokhotlong and Mohale's Hoek. Currently O4Z has 250 members enrolled from the above-mentioned districts (combined).



# ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

## 1. Karabo ea Bophelo (KB)

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 five 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) and EnCompass LLC. CRS further collaborates with Centre for Impacting Lives (CIL), Lesotho Inter-Religious AIDS Consortium (LIRAC) and Society for Women and AIDS in Africa Lesotho (SWAALES) on implementation of activities for OVC.

Objectives of the KB program are:

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

Project achievements during this year include:

- Revival of the Child Helpline Lesotho. This platform provides a toll-free number to report cases relating to violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect against children.
- Reaching a cumulative total of 106,339 AGYW with HIV prevention interventions.
- Initiation of 3,986 AGYW on PrEP in two districts being Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek.
- Enrolment of 48,250 AGYW in the Life Skills – Based Sexuality Education (an effective methodology that uses participatory exercises to teach behaviours to young people) program in four districts being Maseru, Berea, Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek.
- Enrolment of 3,000 children (2,000 AGYW and 1,000 OVC) into Education Subsidies Program. We pay for their school fees, educational materials such as stationery, hygiene packages and school uniforms.

## 2. Strengthening Tuberculosis and AIDS Response through district-based programming in Lesotho (STAR-L)

Baylor Foundation Lesotho implemented this program as a sub-recipient of the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) for five years until September 2020. The program offered a comprehensive package of HIV and TB care & treatment services in the four districts of Leribe, Berea, Quthing and Qacha's Nek.

The project's goal:

To reduce the impact of HIV and TB on the health of Basotho through mentorship, training, direct service delivery and technical assistance.

Project achievements during this year include:

- 5283 HIV tests were performed
- 31% of those tested were adolescents
- 7% of these adolescents tested HIV positive
- 77,618 clients were screened for TB
- 771 presumptive TB cases were identified
- 15% of those presumptive cases tested positive and were enrolled into care

**5283**

HIV tests were performed

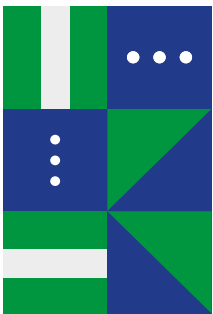
**31%**

of those tested were adolescents

**7%**

of these adolescents tested HIV positive





### 3. Accelerating Lesotho's Progress to Epidemic Control Through Health System Strengthening and Delivery of Comprehensive HIV/TB Care, Treatment and Prevention Services (ALPEC)

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

Baylor Foundation Lesotho contributes towards improving HIV/TB case identification and treatment, expanding recent infection surveillance system, expanding biomedical prevention services including PMTCT and PrEP, and strengthening technical capacity of the Ministry of Health at the district level on HIV/TB.

The program performance below was achieved from January to June 2021;

- 35% of index clients tested were children. 7% of them tested HIV positive.
- 15% of Inpatients tested were adolescents and 10% tested HIV positive.
- 31% of clients reached with HIV Testing Services (HTS) were adolescents and 5% tested positive
- 54,929 clients were screened for TB, 973 presumptive TB cases were identified and 10% tested positive for TB and enrolled into care.

## 4. Expanding TB and HIV clinical services (ETHICS)

Baylor Foundation Lesotho launched the three-year USAID-funded ETHICS project on November 4, 2019. The Foundation implements this project in partnership with Lesotho Network of AIDS Service Organizations (LENASO) in the two districts of Butha Buthe and Mokhotlong, and at the Maseru COE and Mohale's Hoek satellite COE (SCOE).

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.

Objectives:

- Increase coverage of quality, comprehensive, integrated, and client-centred adult HIV and TB prevention, care, and treatment services.
- Increase coverage of comprehensive prevention of mother-to-child transmission, paediatric and adolescent HIV prevention, care and treatment services.
- 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.

Between July 2020 and June 2021, project activities included direct service delivery and onsite mentorship and training at supported sites. The project has enrolled 1228 people living with HIV into care, including 1109 individuals newly diagnosed with HIV. Efforts by Baylor Foundation Lesotho contributed to the project reaching viral load monitoring goals: 92% 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, they screened 100% of all people living with HIV for tuberculosis disease and COVID-19.

ETHICS deploys a comprehensive approach. In addition:

- 475 new clients were initiated on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)
- 4748 women living with HIV were screened for cervical cancer
- 296 survivors of sexual, physical, and emotional violence were provided with post gender-based violence clinical care.
- 85% of patients who missed appointments were successfully returned to care.
- ART optimization was also on track, with 99.9% of clients on optimized Lopinavir/Ritonavir and Dolutegravir based regimens.
- 88% of HIV clients were receiving 3-or 6-month supply of medication; and
- Additional models of care including Teen Clubs, Wise Youth and Network Clubs for adolescents and young people were implemented.





## 5. Providing Prevention and Treatment for Young People (PROTECT)

PROTECT is a 3-year project funded by The Global Fund, through Ministry of Finance Project Management Unit (PMU), which started in July 2018 and ended in June 2021.

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 and family planning.

During this year:

- 92% of AYP tested positive and were linked to care, as compared to 48% in the previous year.
- Family planning services were offered to 871 AGYW compared to 308 in previous year.

## 6. Protecting women, infants and children from HIV (PINCH)

Baylor Foundation Lesotho implemented the PINCH project in the five highlands districts of Lesotho – Butha-Buthe, Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka, Quthing and Qacha's Nek, for three years from July 2018 – June 2021. Funded by The Global Fund, Baylor Foundation Lesotho is a sub recipient to the Ministry of Finance – Project Management Unit.

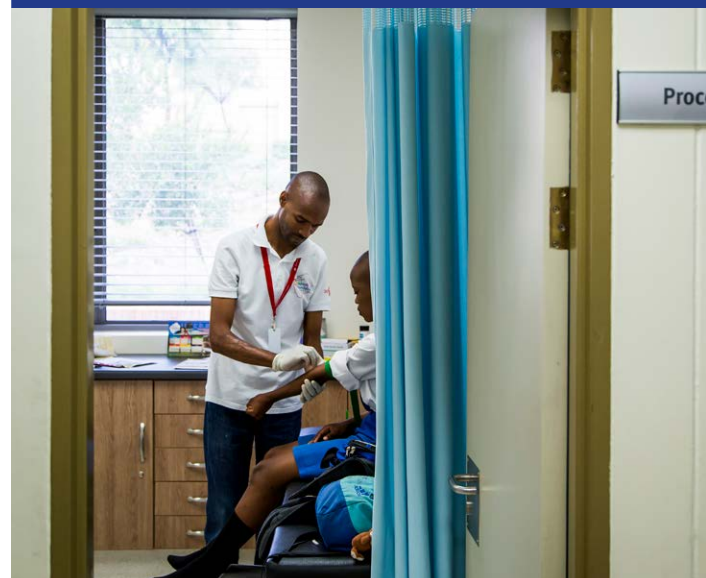
Project Goal:

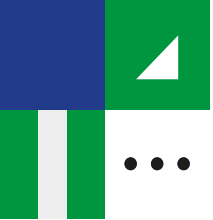
The project aims to support the national strategy to eliminate Mother to Child Transmission of HIV, reducing the rate from 8.73% in 2019 to less than 5% in 2022.

Objectives:

- Increase uptake of maternal child health services, including PMTCT, as evidenced by increased antenatal care (ANC) attendance, higher PMTCT coverage rates, and timely testing of exposed infants at six weeks if age.
- Retention in care of HIV exposed infants (HEI), and provision of treatment for all infected infants.
- During this year, project achievements included:
- 100% of HIV positive women who attended ANC received treatment to reduce Mother to child transmission of HIV.
- 60% Exposed Infant Diagnosis (EID) coverage compared to 42% in the previous year.

**The project aims to support the national strategy to eliminate Mother to Child Transmission of HIV, reducing the rate from 8.73% in 2019 to less than 5% in 2022.**





# COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND RESPONSE

In Lesotho, COVID-19 was declared a state of emergency on March 19, 2020, which was followed by a nationwide lockdown on March 30, 2020. Since that time there have been adjustments to operations countrywide with the guidance of the National COVID-19 Secretariat (NACOSEC).

During this year, Baylor Foundation Lesotho continued to make changes to align our services with the NACOSEC guidelines.

These include:

- Our COVID-19 response team meeting regularly to review guidance and advise the Senior Management accordingly
- Screening of all staff, patients and visitors through administration of a standardised questionnaire and temperature screening
- Separating patients with flu-like symptoms from well patients
- Adjusting clinic hours to be in line with the national lockdown rules and regulations
- Rotating staff and teleworking where feasible



- Strengthening telemedicine services for staff with a telemedicine app to ensure sick staff do not show up at work but rather report through the app for further guidance.
- Putting on hold community outreach activities as per Ministry of Health guidance while ensuring that virtual support to clients continues including radio shows and other social media platforms.
- Continuing procurement and supply of personal protective equipment to staff members
- Vaccinating more than 90% of our staff members for COVID-19

# TESTIMONIES



1. My name is 'Mamokoena Malaka, I am a caregiver and a patient at Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation – Lesotho. Services that I get at Baylor Foundation Lesotho are of high-quality standard. Clinical staff really care for caregivers and patients. They love and respect their clients. They help everyone and no one goes home without being seen or getting services they need. They also refer patients appropriately if necessary. The approach of staff towards caregivers and patients is so sweet, kind and lovely. Really Foundation staff are doing amazing job and that is why Baylor Foundation Lesotho is called Center of Excellence.

I also work at the COE as a Treatment Literacy Liaison. My job is to ensure good understanding of medication by patients and caregivers. As an employee the Foundation gave me an opportunity to be part of Baylor Foundation Lesotho family. The Foundation offered me the chance to use my skills and knowledge to help caregivers and patients. At Baylor Foundation Lesotho we work as a team and share work hence there is no work fatigue or stress. It gave me an opportunity to improve my knowledge and skills by attending Psychosocial Support (PSS) workshops. It allowed me to grow up and be the person I am today. Thank you very much Baylor Foundation Lesotho for providing me so much.

2. I am Matsitso Mohoanyane working at the Ministry of Health as a Pediatric HIV Coordinator. I wish to express my profound appreciation to Baylor Foundation Lesotho for the highest level of quality preventive, care and treatment services, patient monitoring, education and training for health professionals, and operational research to improve patient care for children and adolescents as well as their families in the country. Although at its inception Baylor Foundation Lesotho was primarily focused on providing pediatric HIV services, its scope has expanded over the years.

Their continued engagement and support to the Ministry of Health as it strives to improve the health and lives of the children and adolescent and their families in Lesotho is tremendous. Baylor Foundation Lesotho expanded its clinical and educational efforts to Lesotho at the time when the expertise to manage pediatrics in Lesotho was challenged and had bearing on the children survival and health outcomes., Today, I can confidently say Lesotho has reached the 90-90-90 milestones through the immense support of the Foundation. The Baylor Foundation Lesotho satellite clinics that are in the districts of Lesotho have further enabled the children in the remote areas to access health services from the expert and have contributed to the universal coverage. Furthermore, some of the Foundation staff members participate in Ministry of Health technical working groups that develop, review and amend National Health policies, priorities, and guidelines.

In order to optimize treatment for people living with HIV in Lesotho and continue to simplify treatment and improve clinical outcomes, Lesotho introduced Dolutegravir based antiretroviral therapy for adults and children whose weight is more than 20kg, and expanded access to lopinavir/ ritonavir pellets for children below 20kg. Baylor Foundation Lesotho clinicians were involved in drafting the National ART guidelines addendum to this effect developing the training materials as well as job aides for health personnel. The overall health system will never be the same with the presence of Baylor Foundation Lesotho.



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Global Health  
Network

