

# It's time to fight drug-resistant TB in children

## THE CHALLENGE

Any serious illness in a child is a nerve-wracking event, but the story of drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB) in children is a parent's worst nightmare. When it comes to DR-TB in children, there is no official data on the numbers being treated and the available estimates indicate very few children worldwide are appropriately diagnosed and treated.



The medicines were formulated for adults not children, so foul-tasting tablets needed to be split or crushed to try to get the dosing right;



Daily injections were often used as well for up to nine months, leading to regular bruising on tiny little bodies; and



Side effects could be brutal, and even included permanent loss of hearing.

There are now medicines to treat drug-resistant TB infections formulated specifically for children and available through the Stop TB Partnership's Global Drug Facility (GDF), for children affected by one of the deadliest diseases that exists.

In 2018, Stop TB's GDF set up the Pediatric Drug-Resistant TB initiative to ensure access to the best possible treatments for children suffering from one of the deadliest diseases in the world.

Through the GDF Launch Pad, country programmes were able to access and introduce shorter, child-friendly and all-oral formulations for drug-resistant TB into 56 countries. No more injections, and no more terrible side-effects.

GDF worked with the Sentinel Project on Pediatric Drug Resistant Tuberculosis to identify early adopter countries that could implement the new pediatric formulations quickly and pooled their demand.



Child-friendly, flavored, dispersible medicines



No more injections



No more terrible side-effects

## PEDIATRIC TB IN NUMBERS:

It's estimated that approximately 11% of the 10 million people who became sick with TB in 2018 are children under the age of 15. But children only represent an estimated 8% of the actual cases found and recorded, meaning that a disproportionate share of children were sick with TB and not treated. Tragically, an estimated 14% of the people who died from TB in 2018 were children, which means that many of those children whose disease went untreated died way too early in life.

Treatment regimens for DR-TB vary according to the type of resistance in each infection. The drugs that are available through this program include medicines currently used in treatment today most of which are available in dispersible, flavored dosages for children:

- Levofloxacin,
- Moxifloxacin,
- Cycloserine,
- Delamanid,
- Pyrazinamide,
- Ethambutol,
- Ethionamide, and
- Isoniazid

Delamanid is one of the few new medicines developed in recent years to treat DR-TB. It is also the only new oral formulation recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) for use in children as young as 3 years of age, to avoid the toxic and in many cases permanent side effects caused by injectable medicines.

56

56 countries have procured these new formulations: 16 in 2018, 40 in 2019.



GDF was able to negotiate substantial price reductions, ranging from 30% to 85%, depending on the medicines used.

2x

In 2019, an unprecedented number of 1,100 treatments for children with drug-resistant TB were procured.

Through the Pediatric DR-TB initiative, Stop TB's GDF will continue to work closely with countries to secure funding for these medicines, aiming to ensure access to the best possible treatments to children.

**It's time to follow through on the Global Plan to end TB and on the bold targets and commitments made at the UN High-Level Meeting on TB and of treating 115,000 children with drug-resistant TB by the year 2022. Finding and treating every single child suffering from drug-resistant TB to ensure that no one is left behind.**

## ABOUT GDF

- GDF is the world's largest procurer of TB medicines and diagnostics.
- Since its creation in 2001, GDF has facilitated access to TB medicines and diagnostics in more than 140 countries, making quality-assured treatments available to over 32 million people with TB.
- In 2019 alone, GDF delivered nearly 264\* million USD worth of TB medicines and diagnostics to 116\* countries.
- GDF has led the introduction of advanced diagnostics and supplies, all-oral regimens for DR-TB as recently recommended by WHO, child-friendly medicines for drug-sensitive TB and shorter regimens for multi-drug-resistant TB.
- GDF leads the TB Procurement Market Action Team (TPMAT) bringing together donors, countries, implementers, civil society, normative agencies, procurement agencies and other partners to address TB market problems.
- Since 2012, GDF has secured price reductions of over 50 percent for most second-line TB medicines, primarily by reducing risk to suppliers and minimizing their transaction costs.
- Over the last decade, GDF's efforts have spurred a more than five-fold increase in the number of companies producing TB products—from just five in 2007 to 28 in 2019, and an 11-fold increase in the number of quality-assured products—from 8 in 2007 to 89 in 2019.

\* Estimated based on orders being processed as of 15th November 2019