



Photo: Heather Mason/EGPAF, 2014



**Elizabeth Glaser  
Pediatric AIDS  
Foundation**

## THE ESWATINI PROGRAM

Working with Women, Children, and Families to End Pediatric AIDS

### THE ELIZABETH GLASER PEDIATRIC AIDS FOUNDATION IN ESWATINI

The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) began supporting the Kingdom of eSwatini in 2003 to prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission (PMTCT) and to provide HIV and AIDS care and treatment services. EGPAF-eSwatini's work ensures every client has access to HIV testing, high-quality counseling, linkage to effective treatment, and psychosocial support within a variety of easily-accessible health settings throughout the country.

In 2015, the World Health Organization released guidelines recommending lifelong treatment initiation among all HIV-positive persons, regardless of disease progression, age, or life status. EGPAF has helped eSwatini's Ministry of Health adapt these treatment guidelines to the country's context and successfully launch the Treatment for All program.

EGPAF-eSwatini provides support to improve local infrastructure and health systems through trainings, mentorship, and procurement of essential HIV drugs and commodities. We also work to increase community engagement in PMTCT, early infant HIV diagnosis, and voluntary medical male circumcision. Currently, EGPAF-ESwatini provides comprehensive support to 63 sites in the Hhohho and Shiselweni regions with PMTCT, antiretroviral treatment (ART), and TB related services.

### KEY PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS\*\*

Since 2003, EGPAF-eSwatini has:



Provided access to PMTCT services to nearly 264,000 women



Ensured nearly 90,000 HIV-positive pregnant women received ART



Averted nearly 17,000 HIV infections

### COUNTRY PROFILE\*

Population	1,343,000
Number of people living with HIV	218,545
Adult (15-49 years of age) HIV prevalence	27%
Women aged 15 and older living with HIV	133,000
Children (0-14 years of age) living with HIV	15,000
Deaths due to AIDS in 2018	3,900
Coverage of adults and children receiving ART	84%

### EGPAF-ESWATINI PROGRAM GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE



\* Sources: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), HIV and AIDS Estimates (2016), and World Bank population estimates (2016)

\*\* Data as of May 2018

## PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

### Strengthening High Impact Interventions for an AIDS-Free Generation (AIDSFree) Project (2015-2020)

The AIDSFree project aims to: expand coverage of high-quality integrated, decentralized, and comprehensive HIV and TB/HIV prevention, care and treatment services; build capacity of regional health management teams in leadership, management, and governance of health systems; and ensure performance efficiency, quality, and effectiveness in the management of national HIV/AIDS, TB, and sexually transmitted infection programs. Through AIDSFree, EGPAF provides technical assistance in maternal, neonatal, and child health issues to eSwantini's Sexual Reproductive Health Unit and National AIDS Program. The project also provides HIV testing and counseling mentorship to health workers and lay counselors.

### Expanding Access to Pediatric HIV Testing and Treatment through Intensified Case Finding and Universal Offer of HIV Testing (2015-2019)

This goal of this project is to rapidly scale-up pediatric HIV testing for children aged 18 months and older, and initiate HIV-positive children on ART. This is a comprehensive and innovative collaboration with the ELMA Foundation, complementary to the Unitaid project. This project advocates for local policies which advance utilization of pediatric HIV services, such as task shifting, decentralization, community-based services, and regulation. Through this program, health care workers are trained on intensified case finding of HIV-positive infants and children and on community engagement to enhance demand-generation of HIV care services.

### Catalyzing Expanded Access to Early Testing, Care and Treatment Among HIV-Exposed Infants (2015-2019)

This Unitaid-funded project aims to increase access to early infant diagnosis (EID) of HIV among eligible children. The project's two main objectives are to optimize EID networks through the introduction of point-of-care (POC) diagnostic technology to increase the number of infants tested and initiated on ART, and create a market for affordable, effective, and equitable testing of HIV-exposed infants. The project introduces POC EID technology, which enables health professionals to diagnose infants on-site and in a range of new maternal, newborn, and child health settings.

### Project Supporting Operational AIDS Research (2016-2019)

The goal of Project Supporting Operational AIDS Research (SOAR) in eSwantini is to evaluate the effect of a family-centered care model to improve pediatric retention and ART, thereby increasing rates of viral suppression among HIV-positive children on ART. In this model of care, after a child is identified as HIV-positive, active HIV testing of all family members is conducted and all HIV-positive

family members are seen together as a unit and receive their care together. The project has four implementation and four control health facilities, which allows EGPAF to assess impact of the family-centered model.

### New Horizons: Advancing Pediatric HIV Care Collaborative (2014-present)

In response to limited availability of second- and third-line pediatric and adolescent treatment options, Johnson & Johnson, EGPAF, and the Partnership for Supply Chain Management launched the New Horizons project, which aims to improve sustainable ART service delivery for children, and confront challenges faced by adolescents around disclosure, adherence, and psychosocial support. The heart of the Collaborative is a darunavir/etravirine donation program, which increases access to third-line pediatric and adult ART for children and adolescents failing second-line treatment.

## ADVOCACY

EGPAF advocates for revised HIV care and treatment policies, and enables the roll-out of treatment guidelines, such as Test and Start, through national working group involvement and implementation of health worker trainings and mentorship. EGPAF-eSwantini works in close collaboration with local community leaders throughout the country to increase demand for these updated PMTCT services.

EGPAF is also advocating for early HIV diagnosis of children at community and national levels. We advocate to national policy makers for easy access to HIV testing through enhanced provision of POC EID technology in community settings.

## RESEARCH

- **Mother-to-child HIV Transmission Study:** evaluates the effectiveness of the eSwantini Ministry of Health's PMTCT program throughout the country, and aims to determine the HIV-free survival, HIV infection, and mortality rates among 18-24 month-old, HIV-exposed children in eSwantini.
- **Quality of Counseling Evaluation:** assesses the quality of counseling provided to pregnant and lactating women in preparation for lifelong ART. Findings will inform methods to strengthen counseling skills of health care providers to improve ART uptake and retention in care.
- **Health Facility/Community Committees Assessment:** examines the committees' functionality, identifies capacity deficiencies that exist within health committees which impede the effective execution of expected duties, and develops strategies to address identified deficiencies.
- **HIV Testing and Counseling Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices Survey:** examines the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to HIV testing and counseling among health care workers and clients receiving services at selected health centers in Swaziland.

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