



2nd International Paediatric HIV Symposium in Africa (IPHASA 2023)

Meeting Report

Virtual

12-14 December 2023

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Acknowledgements

We express our gratitude to the [Ministry of Health Uganda](#) for their leadership and coordination throughout the planning and implementation of this symposium. Special appreciation is extended to, the [Collaborative Initiative for Paediatric HIV Education and Research](#) (CIPHER) of IAS – the [International AIDS Society](#), serving as the IPHASA secretariat, for its pivotal role in coordinating and managing the symposium. Thanks are also due to the IPHASA 2023 Organizing Committee, as well as the session chairs and speakers who significantly contributed to and supported the facilitation of the symposium. Sincere appreciation is also extended to the IAS Communications team for handling all the IPHASA 2023 communication and design aspects. We are also grateful to the IPHASA 2023 sponsors, including ViiV Healthcare, IMPAACT Network and WHO whose support played a crucial role in making IPHASA 2023 possible. Finally, we extend our thanks to all the participants whose active engagement and contributions enriched the discussions of IPHASA 2023.

Abbreviations

Child ICT Tool	Child Index Case Testing Tool
CIPHER	Collaborative Initiative for Paediatric HIV Education and Research
GAP-f	Global Accelerator for Paediatric Formulations Network
IAS	IAS – the International AIDS Society
IPHASA	International Paediatric HIV Symposium in Africa
IRIS	Immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome
OTZ	Operation Triple Zero
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

The second edition of the [International Paediatric HIV Symposium in Africa](#) (IPHASA 2023) convened virtually from 12-14 December 2023, under the theme, *What can we do differently: Closing the gaps in paediatric HIV prevention, care, testing and treatment*. The symposium was organized by the [Ministry of Health Uganda](#) in collaboration with the [Collaborative Initiative for Paediatric HIV Education and Research](#) (CIPHER) of IAS – the [International AIDS Society](#) – and representatives of several ministries of health and leading organizations in paediatric HIV.

Globally, 2.73 million children younger than 15 years are living with HIV, according to the UNAIDS 2022 report, 160,000 children acquired HIV in 2021, and 110,000 AIDS-related deaths occurred in that year¹. The African continent is the epicentre of the HIV pandemic, accounting for almost 85% of vertical transmissions. Levels of access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) vary, from 56% in eastern and southern Africa to 35% in western and central Africa. These gaps are hampering the path towards achieving the 95-95-95 goals for paediatric and adolescent populations and demand strengthened efforts to improve testing, treatment and retention in the HIV care cascade.

Substantial evidence is generated in the field of paediatric HIV services. However, translation of that evidence into practice for Africa has been a challenge. This calls for continuing work and investment in implementation science as well as equipping healthcare workers, policy makers, programme implementers, and ministry of health representatives working on

paediatric HIV with knowledge and skills to reduce the implementation knowledge gap.

Objectives

The purpose of the symposium was to share paediatric HIV evidence and good practices to help support in-country implementation and adaptation across the African continent.

The specific objectives were to:

- Share the latest global and regional updates in paediatric HIV prevention, care, testing and treatment.
- Learn from country experiences and best practices in implementing paediatric HIV programmes in Africa.
- Equip participants with basic knowledge and skills in implementation science.
- Build the capacity of healthcare workers and policy makers in implementing evidence-based approaches in the response to paediatric HIV across Africa by providing grants.

Summary

The symposium was held over three-half days, from 12 to 14 December 2023, between 14:00-17:00 CET. The symposium brought together 486 participants including representatives of ministries of health, healthcare workers, policy makers, programme implementers and researchers working on paediatric HIV. Sessions included plenary sessions, oral abstract presentations, and engaging round table and case-based discussions. In addition, e-posters were available for participants to view throughout the symposium².

¹ IN DANGER: UNAIDS Global AIDS Update 2022. Geneva: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/ AIDS; 2022. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO

² For further details on the programme, refer to **Annex 1**.

Session highlights³

Opening session

Dr Eleanor Namusoke Magongo, the founding co-chair of IPHASA, officially opened IPHASA 2023, setting the tone for the symposium. In her opening remarks, Dr Namusoke Magongo explained the symposium's overarching goals and objectives, taking a moment to reflect on the inaugural edition, IPHASA 2021. Other opening remarks were delivered by Dr Meg Doherty, Director of the Department of Global HIV, Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections Programmes at the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr Hilary Wolf, Care and Treatment Director and Senior Technical Advisor for Pediatric Care and Treatment at the US Department of State, Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy, and finally Dr Rachel Sturke currently serving as the Acting Deputy Director of the Fogarty International Center as well as Deputy Director and Senior Scientist for Fogarty's Center for Global Health Studies.

Session 1: Global and regional updates

The session provided comprehensive global and regional updates on the status of the HIV epidemic in children, emphasizing on existing gaps. Concerns were raised about treatment targets not being met for children under 15, slowing declines in new infections among children aged 0 to 14 years, and lower ART coverage for pregnant and breastfeeding women in west and central Africa.

Session 2: Innovative HIV testing services for children

This session focused on critical aspects of paediatric HIV testing and underscored the need to reach children of key populations to address gaps in paediatric HIV care. Innovative

tools were presented, including the Child Index Case Testing Tool (Child ICT Tool) that facilitates screening of women receiving ART to identify those children whose HIV status is unknown, and an age-appropriate HIV risk assessment tool for screening siblings of children and adolescents living with HIV, for HIV and other chronic illnesses, as well as sexual and reproductive health in India.

Session 3: Elimination of vertical transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis.

An overview of the triple elimination initiative aimed at eradicating vertical transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B virus as a public health priority was provided. The framework includes pillars for primary prevention, sexual and reproductive health linkages, essential maternal elimination of mother-to-child transmission services, and infant, child and partner services. The session also delved into trends in missed opportunities for vertical transmission prevention and the impact of intimate partner violence on vertical HIV transmission, hindering progress towards elimination.

Session 4: Case-based presentations

Four unique cases were presented, illustrating diagnostic challenges and management scenarios. Cases included TB preventive therapy, unconfirmed TB diagnosed through diagnostic algorithms, confirmed TB meningitis with an associated immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome (IRIS), and the complexities of treating an adolescent girl with recurrent treatment failure on third line treatment. The presentations detailed diagnostic tests and algorithms, uncertainties in decision-making, and the management strategies employed.

³ Replays can be accessed at <https://iphasa.org/2023/replays/>.

Session 5: ViiV – Why are children less than 5 years old falling behind on their 90-90-90 targets?

The satellite session, sponsored by ViiV Healthcare, delved into the barriers in care of children under 5 years of age living with HIV. The interactive roundtable discussion involving a healthcare provider, a Mentor Mother and a mother explored the systemic aspects and community perspectives.

Session 6: GAP-f session

The Global Accelerator for Paediatric Formulations Network (GAP-f) highlighted achievements in harmonizing optimal paediatric ART. The role played by coordinated efforts among stakeholders and country programs in the roll-out of paediatric dolutegravir, ensuring improved treatment options for children was noted. The forthcoming availability of paediatric abacavir, lamivudine and dolutegravir (pALD) in a single fixed-dose combination tablet was discussed. Lessons learned during the paediatric dolutegravir roll-out will be leveraged during the introduction of pALD.

Session 7: Adolescents Blueprint for the future

UNICEF unveiled a line of inquiry to explore how to proactively shape the future of the adolescent HIV portfolio, the Blueprint for the future: a strategy to leverage broader agendas for the wellbeing of adolescents in high-burden HIV settings. Using a nominal group technique exercise, participants were engaged in exploring structural changes that will most significantly affect the adolescent HIV programming, disruptive opportunities that stand out as game changer proposition, health system capabilities that will position us to take advantage of disruptive change and enable sustainment of adolescent HIV outcomes, innovations in data, analytics, metrics, measurement, and monitoring that we will need for a fully transformed adolescent HIV

platform, and how success in 2050 could be defined.

Session 8: Special symposium on Implementation Science

The session began with feedback from the IPHASA 2021 Peer Learning Visit Grant recipients following their peer-learning visit from Gabon to Cameroon. The grant enabled their team to gain insights on implementing an integrated platform to support children living with HIV. Participants were also provided with an overview of what implementation science is, emphasizing key considerations for adapting and scaling up interventions.

Session 9: Special session – IPHASA grantees abstract session

Recipients of the IPHASA 2021 Implementation Science Research Grants presented progress on research projects addressing critical implementation gaps in paediatric HIV prevention, care and treatment. Research being conducted by the grantees includes strengthening integrated school health policy in South Africa, adapting and evaluating the Operation Triple Zero (OTZ) model in Uganda using the RE-AIM framework of implementation science research, and evaluating factors affecting neurodevelopmental surveillance of children perinatally exposed but uninfected in Kenya.

Session 10a: Treatment outcomes in children

Participants received insights into the uptake and early virological outcomes of dolutegravir in the paediatric ART cohort (UP-ART). Variability based on treatment and viral load history was noted. Additional presentations covered outcomes following enhanced adherence counselling in Cameroon, a biometric-based identification and messages intervention in South Africa, and an analysis on multi-month dispensing and viral load outcomes across nine African countries.

Session 10b: Community engagement, DSD, and peer and psychosocial support

The session covered preferences for pre-exposure prophylaxis delivery among pregnant and breastfeeding women, improved virologic outcomes through the triple case manager model which brings together the caregiver, case manager (community health worker) and a clinical provider, lessons learned from a community-based project in Tanzania seeking to enhance paediatric HIV case detection and integrated service delivery, and experiences from Zimbabwe from screening adolescents

transitioning to adult care using a transition checklist tool.

Closing session

The symposium concluded by launching two implementation science grants - the Peer Learning Visit Grant and Implementation Science Research Grant. These grants aim to foster collaborative learning among professionals and support early-career African researchers in addressing critical gaps in paediatric HIV programmes. Applications will open in early 2024.

Symposium feedback and insights

Participants were invited to provide feedback on the symposium. 36 (7.5%) individuals responded to the survey. Most participants expressed high satisfaction, rating various aspects of the meeting including pre-sessions communications, clarity of symposium objectives, selection of topics, design and delivery of the symposium quality of the presentations, session chairing and virtual platform access and use with either a 4 or a 5 out of 5.

When asked what they had gained by attending the symposium, a vast majority of respondents highlighted that the meeting provided them with new ideas on how the latest findings in paediatric HIV can be applied to local issues (94%), ideas and solutions for work challenges (94%) and a better understanding of paediatric HIV science and new findings (91%). This emphasizes the practical relevance of the symposium content, that it served as a platform for knowledge sharing and reflects the effectiveness of the sessions in delivering informative content and updates in the field of paediatric HIV.

The feedback received provides valuable insights for enhancing the planning and

execution of future symposia. Constructive suggestions that will be taken into consideration in the planning of future meetings include timely communication with authors regarding abstract acceptance to allow better preparation and planning, providing attendees with certificates after the symposium to acknowledge their participation, using a more interactive platform for the symposium to allow interaction and networking, planning an in-person meeting, the inclusion of polls during sessions for improved interaction, and greater involvement of young community workers and advocates working in the field of HIV.

Participants provided insightful suggestions for future symposia, indicating diverse areas of interest. Key topics suggested for upcoming events include:

1. Non-communicable diseases identification and management: Exploring the intersection of paediatric HIV with non-communicable diseases and strategies for identification and management among children.
2. Adolescent feedback on treatment acceptance: Hearing feedback from

- adolescents on their acceptance and adherence to treatment.
3. Reaching undiagnosed individuals and addressing parental hesitancy: Strategies for reaching individuals not yet identified and overcoming parental reluctance to HIV testing.
 4. Enhanced nutrition models: Exploring better nutrition models for paediatric HIV.
 5. Project implementation outcomes: Sharing outcomes from various project implementations.
 6. Local programme implementation strategies: Understanding and discussing strategies used in implementing local programmes in diverse geographical locations.
 7. Management of children living with HIV with disabilities.
 8. Psychosocial support for children and adolescents living with HIV including those that are affected by neglect, gender-based violence, poverty and food insecurity.
 9. Paediatric or child and adolescent counselling.
 10. Management of children with high viral load, poor adherence, food insecurity and transport issues at the community level.

These considerations will be instrumental in shaping the planning and execution of future meetings, ensuring that they align with participant expectations, foster meaningful engagement, and contribute to the continuous improvement of the symposium experience

Next steps

To ensure accessibility and dissemination of knowledge and facilitate a broader reach and continued learning beyond the event, presentations, abstracts, and e-posters from the symposium have been made available on the [IPHASA website](#).

In addition, the IPHASA 2023 Organizing Committee will be coordinating the awarding

of the Peer Learning Visit Grant and the Implementation Science Research Grant.

Finally, the dates and venue for IPHASA 2024 were announced with IPHASA 2024 convening from 3 to 5 December 2024 in Kampala, Uganda. The conference will be fully led by the Ministry of Health of Uganda.

Supporting resources

- [Implementation science logic model](#)
- IPHASA 2021 [replays](#)
- IPHASA 2023 [replays](#)
- [World Bank classification](#)

Annex 1. IPHASA 2023 Programme

Day 1: Tuesday, 12 December 2023

Time	Programme item	Presenter
Opening Session		
Session chairs: Mutsa Bwakura-Dangarembizi & Rumbidzai Chidora		
15:00 – 15:05	Welcome from IPHASA Co-Chair	Eleanor Namusoke Magongo
15:05 – 15:10	Opening remarks from WHO	Meg Doherty
15:10 – 15:15	Opening remarks from PEPFAR	Hilary Wolf
15:15 – 15:20	Opening remarks from NIH	Rachel Sturke
Session 1: Global and regional updates		
Session chairs: Precious Andifasi & Priscilla Tsondai		
15:20 – 15:30	Global & Regional Updates on the HIV Epidemic in children	Anna Yakusik
15:30 – 15:40	Global Alliance to End Paediatric HIV in Children by 2023: Paediatric HIV gaps and what we can do about it	Ivy Kasirye
15:40 – 15:50	Discussion	All
Session 2: Innovative HIV testing services for children		
Session chairs: Mirriam Nakanwagi & Ivy Kasirye		
15:50 – 16:00	Community-based testing of children of key populations could help close the first 95 gap: a multi-country analysis	Caterina Casalini
16:00 – 16:10	The CHILD ICT Tool: A simple family mapping approach to close the paediatric case finding gap	Katherine Simon
16:10 – 16:20	Early Diagnosis and linkage to Treatment "Bridging the gap to achieve better health care among OVC in India under ACCELERATE project	Subash Chandra Ghosh
16:20 – 16:30	Discussion	All
Session 3: Elimination of vertical transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis		
Session chairs: Eleanor Namusoke Magongo & Andy Prendergast		
16:30 – 16:40	What is new in the agenda to eliminate vertical transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis?	Morkor Newman Owiredu
16:40 – 16:50	Neurodevelopment - What do we do after the screening?	Catherine Wedderburn
16:50 – 17:00	Trends in Missed Opportunities for Prevention of Vertical HIV Transmission Service Uptake in 15 USAID/PEPFAR-Supported Programs	Innocent Nchu
17:00 – 17:10	The contribution of intimate partner violence to mother-to-child HIV transmission: a modelling analysis of 44 sub-Saharan African countries	Salome Kuchukhidze
17:10 – 17:20	Discussion	All
Session 4: Case-based presentations		
Session chairs: Natella Rakhmanina & Jane Nakawesi		

17:20 – 17:30	Case presentation 1 - TB and HIV co-infection	Helena Rabie
17:30 – 17:40	Case presentation 2 - Recurrent treatment failure and multiclass call HIV drug resistance including INSTIs	Lydia Mpango
17:40 – 17:55	Discussion	
17:55 – 18:00	Closing of day 1	Eleanor Namusoke Magongo

Day 2: Wednesday, 13 December 2023

Time	Programme item	Presenter
15:00 – 15:05	Welcome and recap of day one	Dennis Adoa & Dennis Kalibbala
Session 5: ViiV - Why Are Children Less Than 5 Years Old Falling Behind on Their 90-90-90 Targets?		
Session chairs: Natella Rakhmanina & Mutsa Bwakura-Dangarembizi		
15:05 – 15:10	Opening of the Session	Mutsa Bwakura-Dangarembizi
15:10 – 15:35	Roundtable Discussion: Barriers in Care for Children Less Than 5 Years Old Living With HIV, Systemic Aspects	Ivy Kasirye & Angela Mushavi
15:35 – 16:00	Roundtable Discussion: Barriers in Care for Children Less Than 5 Years, Mother and Community Perspective	Local mother, mother mentor, & provider
16:00 - 16:05	Discussion	All
Session 6: GAP-f session		
Session chairs: Fatima Tsiouris, EGPAF		
16:05 - 16:08	Welcome and opening remarks	Fatima Tsiouris
16:08 – 16:11	GAP-f partner welcome	Sébastien Morin
16:11 – 16:17	Overview of optimal paediatric ARV formulations, including paediatric DTG, DTG 50mg, pALD and paediatric ARV treatment sequencing	Nandita Sugandhi
16:17 – 16:23	Planning considerations for the introduction of pALD	Zack Panos
16:23 – 16:29	Experience from Uganda preparing for the introduction of pALD	Ian Nyamitoro
16:29 – 16:35	Experience from Cote d'Ivoire on the introduction and roll out of paediatric DTG: Lessons learned	Kouadjalé Mathurin
16:35 – 16:41	Role of community health workers and caregivers supporting the introduction of optimal paediatric ARV formulations	Luann Hatane
16:41 – 16:47	Optimal paediatric ARV formulations: the game changer	Gérés AHOGNON, Résea
16:47 – 16:52	Paediatric ALD introduction: Global Fund and PEPFAR perspective	Vindi Singh & Stephanie Hackett
16:52 – 17:02	Q&A	Fatima Tsiouris
17:02 – 17:05	Closing remarks	Hilary Wolf
Session 7: Adolescents Blueprint for the future		
Session chairs: UNICEF		

17:05 – 17:20	A Blueprint to leverage broad agendas for the wellbeing of adolescents in high-burden HIV settings	Damilola Walker and Eleanor Namusoke Magongo
17:20 – 17:35	Feedback on the Blueprint using nominal group technique	
17:35 – 17:55	Discussion	All
17:55 – 18:00	Closing of day 2	Priscilla Tsondai

Day 3. Thursday, 14 December 2023

Time	Programme item	Presenter
15:00 – 15:05	Welcome and recap of day two	Miriam Nakanwagi & Christine Mulwoza
Session 8: Special symposium session on Implementation Science		
Session chairs: Eleanor Namusoke Magongo & Rachel Sturke		
15:05 – 15:15	Peer Learning Visit Grant: Integrated platform for the follow-up and care of HIV-positive children and adolescents	Berthe Amélie Iroungou, Gabon
15:15– 15:45	What implementation science is and what it is not. How to Adopt and scale up interventions	Elvin Geng, USA
15:45– 16:00	Panel discussion	Elvin Geng, Susan Vorkoper, Anjuli Wagner & Irene Njuguna
Session 9: Special Session – IPHASA grantees abstract sessions		
Session chairs: Nadia Sam-Agudu & Anjuli Wagner		
16.00 – 16.10	Strengthening the Integrated School Health Policy: Examining government coordination to provide HIV services for adolescent girls in public secondary schools in Vulindlela District, KwaZulu-Natal Province	Phiwe Babalo Nota, South Africa
16.10 – 16.20	The adaptation and evaluation of the Operation Triple Zero (OTZ) model to improve HIV viral suppression among the children and adolescents in TASO Uganda using RE-AIM framework of Implementation Science Research	Bonniface Oryokot, Uganda
16.20 – 16.30	Evaluation of factors affecting neurodevelopmental surveillance of HEU children aged 0-2 accessing child welfare services in Kenya	Maureen King'e, Kenya
16.30 – 16.40	Discussion	
Session 10a (parallel session): Treatment outcomes in children		
Session chairs: Ivy Kasirye & Jeannie Collins		
16:40 – 16:50	Early outcomes on DTG: Uganda paediatric ART cohort (UP-ART)	Eleanor Namusoke Magongo & Dennis Kalibbala
16:50 – 17:00	Virological failure following enhanced adherence counseling among children and adolescents on dolutegravir-based versus other regimens: evidence from a snapshot analysis in Cameroon	Yagai Bouba

17:00 – 17:10	An analysis of multi-month dispensing and viral load outcomes among people living with HIV across nine African countries	Cosima Lenz
17:10 – 17:20	Using Biometric Based Identification & SMS messages to improve anti-retroviral (ARV) collection & support of Viral Load management amongst youth in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), South Africa before and during COVID lockdowns	Brooke Wurst
17:20 – 17:30	Discussion	
Session 10b (parallel session): Community engagement, DSD & peer and psychosocial support		
Session chairs: Marcel Yotebieng and Nandita Sugandhi		
16:40 – 16:50	Preferences for pre-exposure prophylaxis delivery among HIV-negative pregnant and breastfeeding women in Zambia: evidence from a discrete choice experiment	Twaambo Hamoonga
16:50 – 17:00	Enhancing Paediatric HIV Case Detection and Integrated Service Delivery through a Family-Centered Approach: Lessons from a Community-Based Project in Tanzania	Mary Mmweteni
17:00 – 17:10	It takes a village: structuring health services around paediatric HIV recipients of care for better retention in treatment towards achievement of 95-95-95 targets - lessons learned from Zambia.	Musonda Musonda
17:10 – 17:20	Transitioning Adolescents and Young People living with HIV to adult care; experiences from Zimbabwe in 2022	Ann Sellberg
17:20 – 17:30	Discussion	
Closing session		
Session chairs: Eleanor Namusoke Magongo & Priscilla Tsondai		
17:30 – 17:40	Announce launch of 2nd round of the Peer Learning Visit Grant & Implementation Science Research Grant <i>Note: Grants will be awarded after the symposium</i>	Eleanor Namusoke Magongo & Priscilla Tsondai
17:40 – 17:50	Remarks from the Co-Chairs	Mutsa Bwakura-Dangarembizi & Rumbidzai Chidora
18:00	Closing	