

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

President's message

“ Through our dedication, hard work and achievements we are building on The Union’s role as the leading scientific organisation and pathfinder that lung health needs.

Most importantly, we’re maintaining progress towards The Union’s vision – a healthier world for all, free of tuberculosis and lung disease.

It has been an impressive year for many different reasons. From changing WHO guidelines and identifying key improvements to TB management, to being awarded grants from the Global Fund in Myanmar and delivering another fantastic Union Conference. Not to mention the appointment of Dr Cassandra Kelly-Cirino as our new Executive Director.

I would like to say a massive thank you to all our members, colleagues and partners for everything you do. The fight against tuberculosis and lung disease is not easy, but through your tireless dedication to our cause, we will achieve our goal. ”

Guy Marks

Our Membership

The Union membership is global, with **119** countries represented – **55%** from lower-income countries.

- Almost **100 donated student memberships** awarded to those who unable to access membership.
- Members came together throughout the year:
 - Two regional conferences
 - Asia-Pacific Region Conference, Taiwan
 - North America Region Conference, Baltimore, USA
 - 20+ face-to-face member meetings at the World Conference on Lung Health.
 - General Assembly and Town Hall meetings were held to provide updates and to hear from members on important matters.

Tuberculosis

Africa

Our TB Department has led a series of research projects that have highlighted the need for improvements to be made to:

- Diagnosis and management of drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) in six African countries.
- Management of child and adolescent TB in nine Sub-Saharan African countries.
- Access to TB preventive treatment in Uganda
- Community-based approach to delivering TB treatment in Togo.

A project was launched to better understand the missed opportunities to identify people with TB when they attend healthcare facilities in three Francophone African countries.

India

- Launched a study to improve the retention of people during TB preventive treatment in India, Bhutan, Indonesia, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
- Enhanced capacity of the national TB programme to deliver strategic advocacy, communications and social mobilisation interventions.
- Facilitated the national roll out of a six-month oral DR-TB treatment regimen through designated centres of excellence.
- Developed an innovative doorstep delivery model for people with TB, with support from the Global Fund.
- Pioneered multi-sectoral action against TB by launching the *TB-Free Workplace: Guidance Document*, with corporate-led interventions resulting in the **screening of 750,000+ people.**

Myanmar

- Provided HIV treatment and care in 29 townships:
 - Supported **31,700+ people** on antiretroviral therapy.
 - Achieved **99% TB screening rate** among newly initiated people living with HIV.
 - Reached **103.13% of the target** for HIV counselling and testing.
- Referred 14,100+ people with presumptive TB for testing – 1,700+ began treatment.
- Provided social protection support packages to 519 people with drug-resistant TB.
- Conducted capacity-building training for nearly 1,000 participants, including Union staff and volunteers.

Operational Research

The Centre for Operational Research has worked tirelessly to enhance research, to ensure it has real-world impact.

- Published the second edition of The Union's operational research guide to build the skills of researchers in public health programmes.
- Delivered a multi-country study on 7-1-7 timeliness metrics for household contact investigation and TB preventive therapy that was showcased in the WHO Operational Handbook on Tuberculosis.
- Led research into how people with post-TB disability and co-morbidities can be supported in China, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- Developed and implemented a course on 'Using programme data for decision making' for WHO consultants supporting the national TB programme in India.
- Analysed global TB data (from 1995 to 2022) to reveal that lower income countries are disproportionately affected by TB, compared to high-income countries.

Training & Education

Equipped almost **3,000 healthcare professionals around the world** with the latest knowledge and skills to better serve their communities, through the delivery of **29 training events** (in-person and online), totalling **450 hours of training**.

- **96%** described the information as very actionable or actionable.
- **96%** felt very comfortable or comfortable implementing the new skills in their practice.
- **92%** believed that the community they served had benefited from the new knowledge and skills they acquired.

Union course materials made available online have been adapted by various countries to suit their specific needs and have successfully implemented domestic training programmes. For example:

- The child and adolescents training delivered in Lesotho.
- The interpretation of CXR in children with presumptive TB used by Guinea Bissau.



The Union World Conference on Lung Health

The 2024 Union World Conference on Lung Health was held in Bali, Indonesia. As a high TB burden country with a strong NTP and active TB community, the location was specifically chosen as part of The Union's on-going commitment to holding more conferences in high-burden countries.

The conference was exceptionally well attended with 4,048 delegates and a 23% increase in the number of commercial and not-for-profit exhibitors.

- 93% rated their overall experience as excellent or very good.
- 96% found the conference extremely useful or useful for their professional activities.

Main reasons for attending:

- Learning – 38%
- Presenting – 32%
- Networking – 22%

A particular success in 2024 was the Community Connect area that occupied a central position in the conference layout and was a very active, colourful and passionate advocate for the voice and experience of TB survivors and front-line communities.

Journals and publications

- Launched the first issues of *IJTLD Open*, our new open access journal.
 - Submissions, downloads and article citations all significantly ahead of target.
- For the first time, the International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease was ranked within the **top 25% respiratory journals**, as its impact factor entered Quartile 1.
- Published two sponsored article series:
 - TB in Papua New Guinea in Public Health Action
 - Child TB in IJTLD Open
- Translated The Union's *Diagnostic CXR Atlas for Tuberculosis in Children: A Guide to Chest X-ray Interpretation* (the Atlas) into Vietnamese, to support healthcare workers in Vietnam to diagnose and care for children with TB.

