



Annual Report 2025

President's message

At the start of the year, our forecast for 2025 and beyond looked very different to the situation we are all faced with now.

Despite this incredibly difficult environment, created by devastating funding cuts, geopolitical turmoil and a fatal earthquake, everyone across The Union has shown incredible perseverance, resilience and dedication.

This commitment to our vision – a healthier world for all, free of tuberculosis and lung disease – has been truly inspiring and resulted in fantastic achievements that are moving the needle in the fight against tuberculosis (TB) and lung disease.

Therefore, it is important to take a moment to reflect on everything we have accomplished in 2025.

I would like to say a massive thank you all our members, colleagues and partners for everything you do. Through your tireless dedication, we will achieve our goal.

Global health is in a troubling moment. One we can only weather by remaining united and steadfast in our shared mission to improve health for everyone, ensuring no one is left behind.

Our power, as individuals and organisations acting alone, to affect change is limited, but collectively we do have power. We must organise our voices and actions to affect change that matters most. Together, we do have a voice, and we must make it heard.

Guy Marks

Our membership

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

In 2025, the Membership Department focused on improving member engagement, including:

- The formation of the Union Council – a new forum to increase member group engagement with the Board of Directors and Union management. The council is made up of scientific section, subsection, and region representatives.
- Launching a new member database and website, assisting with better communications and information sharing.
- Launching a member group email portal, allowing group leads to contact members directly with important updates.

Member engagement with the Board of Directors election process was promising, with:

- A recent record number of election applications
- A recent record number of votes cast

Members in action



Our Maternal and Child TB

Working Group has pushed for the [acceleration of research to end TB in pregnant and lactating women](#).

This resulted in the publication of a WHO call to action and consensus statement about prioritising pregnant and lactating women in TB research.

Notably, several members of the working group not only contributed their expertise, but also took on leadership roles within WHO working groups, guiding discussions and helping to shape the direction of the consensus process.

Their influential participation ensured that maternal and child health considerations were front and centre in the dialogue.



Shaikh Zuha Jabeen, a student member of The Union, was first selected to present her research at the Union Conference in 2024.

“Presenting at the conference changed my perspective of seeing the issue of TB. I became more oriented to my research and came up with the idea of Forenoon Rays Foundation.”

Motivated by the conference, Zuha joined the WHO Youth2EndTB Forum, and in 2025, established the Forenoon Rays Foundation, a youth-driven organisation dedicated to advancing pulmonary health.

The foundation quickly grew into a network of over 300 medical students, physicians and researchers from across the world. Its aim is to raise awareness, break stigma and strengthen early detection of TB through school outreach, community engagement and research mentoring.

[Zuha's journey shows that Union membership is not just an affiliation.](#) It is a pathway to collaboration, system-level change and advancing health for all.

Tuberculosis Department

In 2025, global health was devastated by the US Government's decision to withdraw vital funding. In April, The Union conducted a rapid survey of National TB Programmes (NTPs) across Africa, to better understand the impact of these cuts. It found that 65% of the NTPs had already been negatively affected TB care and prevention.

Despite this huge disruption, our TB Department led ground-breaking research and TB control projects.

India



- **Over 170,000 people** living in vulnerable urban communities in Delhi were screened for TB, resulting in **900+ people being diagnosed and initiated on treatment**.
- **AI-enabled chest X-ray screening and rapid molecular testing** were deployed through Swasthya Nagaram, an urban TB screening initiative in Telangana, generating critical evidence for scalable, population-level approaches to TB detection and elimination.
- The **India Innovation Summit 2025** brought together **1,400+ participants** and showcased **238 innovations**, while launching the **Atlas of TB Innovations** to accelerate the adoption and scale-up of promising solutions.

Africa



- Delivered a study using artificial intelligence (AI) modelling to effectively identify areas with a high burden of tuberculosis in Bangui, Central African Republic, that were previously unknown – an approach that could be scaled and used in other low-resource settings.
- Conducted an evaluation across TB clinics in Uganda that showed promising results in identifying and treating household contacts of people with pulmonary TB.
- Also in Central African Republic, The Union launched a project to evaluate the effectiveness of a new strategy to find more people with undiagnosed TB. A first in Francophone Africa.

iDEFEAT TB Project

After five years of supporting India's TB response, the project was concluded, leaving a legacy of stronger institutions, enhanced workforce capacity and improved TB care.

- **600+ TB care institutions** strengthened
- **27,000+ health personnel** trained
- **5.2 million people** screened for TB and **250,000+ diagnostic tests** conducted
- Supported the adoption of the BPAL/M regimen for drug-resistant TB treatment
- **461 corporate partners** mobilised, supporting **139 TB projects** and leveraging **USD 11.8 million** for TB care and support



South East Asia



While much of The Union's activities in 2025 were predominantly conducted in India, our efforts span the South East Asia region.

The Union commenced a [multi-country study aiming to improve the retention of people in different phases of care for TB prevention](#). In collaboration with the [Indian Council of Medical Research](#), South-East Asia Region Regional Research Platform, and support from the [Gates Foundation](#), the study is underway in Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Myanmar



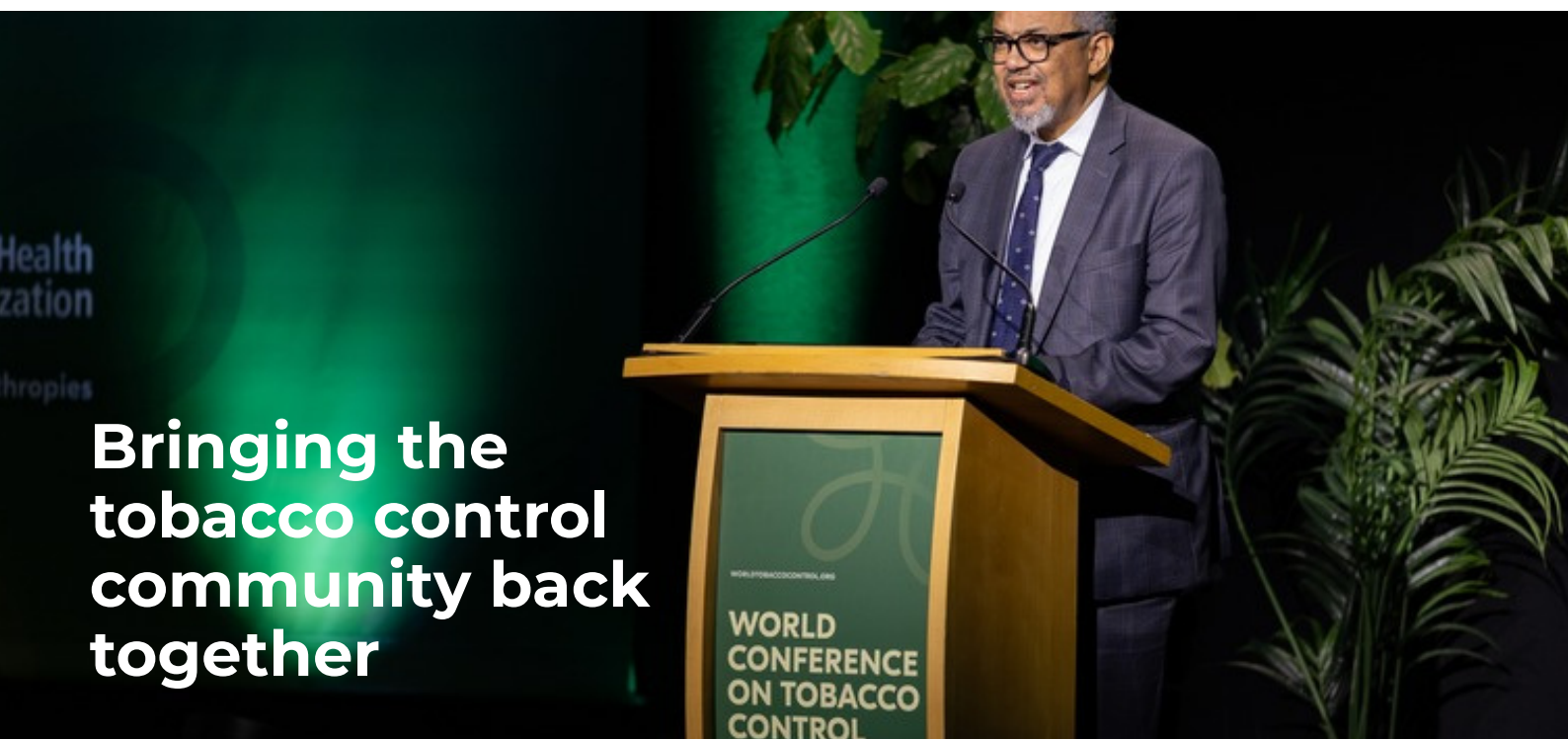
These achievements were realised even as the Myanmar Office in Mandalay faced significant operational challenges following the 7.7 magnitude earthquake in March 2025.

- Providing comprehensive HIV treatment and care services to **32,500+ people** on antiretroviral therapy, across in 15 centres and 26 decentralised sites, covering 29 townships.
- **97%** of people newly initiated on HIV treatment were successfully screened for TB.
- **5,300+ health education sessions** were completed, with **8,200+ people** with presumptive TB referred and **760 people** with TB received the necessary treatment.
- Home-based care was actively implemented, offering a comprehensive package of services (clinical care, monitoring for drug side effects, counselling and financial support).
 - Field officers conducted **1,300+ home visits**.
 - **1,310 counselling sessions** provided to people with TB and their families
 - **1,045 supervisory visits** conducted to monitor volunteer activities.



[Severe damage caused to the home of Dr Khin Sandar Than, Medical Officer at The Union.](#)





Bringing the tobacco control community back together

Organised by The Union, with support from Bloomberg Philanthropies and the WHO, the [World Conference on Tobacco Control 2025](#), brought together 1,300 delegates from around the globe for three days of collaboration, inspiration and action.

Held in Dublin, Ireland from 23–25 June, the conference featured keynote speeches from Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the WHO and Taoiseach of Ireland Micheál Martin.

The conference was concluded with the signing of the [Dublin Declaration](#), a powerful call to action on behalf of the delegates reaffirming the urgency of global tobacco control efforts.

Making up for seven years apart



- **87 sessions** and **631 e-posters**
- **Over 650 presenters** contributed to an engaging exchange of research, policy and practice aimed at advancing global tobacco control efforts.
- Delegates travelled from **88 countries**, with the USA, Ireland, the UK and India among the most represented.
- **Major international media coverage**, including [The Guardian](#), [Indian Express](#), and [The Independent](#).

Journals

- We have increased the scope of the International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (IJTLD) and IJTLD Open to include research on non-tuberculous mycobacteria and other infectious respiratory diseases.
- IJTLD Open has continued to grow, with submissions, downloads and article citations all ahead of our expectations.
- New collections included a series on 'Ending the TB epidemic' to highlight effective approaches to eliminating TB; alongside a series on tests for TB in children for improved diagnosis and treatment initiation.

Standing with our global health community partners

- Dr Cassandra Kelly-Cirino represented The Union at the UN General Assembly and High-Level Meeting on non-communicable diseases. Cassandra flew the flag for lung health and joined the NCD Alliance and other partners in pushing for stronger commitments to change the trajectory on non-communicable diseases.
- The Union is passionate about ensuring that affected communities have a voice and are heard. We joined a large multi-author paper addressing the need to address the gap in meaningfully engaging communities in research.
- On World No Tobacco Day – 31 May 2025, The Union joined global civil society organisations in urging countries to accelerate the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). The call was backed up by a new report shining a light on global disruptions and tobacco industry interference that have compromised FCTC implementation.

Improving access to inhaled medicines

In May, as part of the Forum of International Respiratory Societies, we launched a campaign to improve access to inhaled medicines for the hundreds of millions living with chronic lung diseases across the world. A pivotal moment for this movement was the World Health Assembly's adoption of the Integrated Lung Health Resolution.

More than 750 million people are living with asthma and COPD worldwide. Together, these conditions cause 3.8 million deaths every year – making chronic respiratory disease the third leading cause of death globally.



New Chief Scientific Officer

The Union announced Dr Kavindhran Velen, as the new Chief Scientific Officer.

Kavi is a microbiologist and epidemiologist with over 18 years of experience in public and global health, spanning research, policy and implementation.

Dr Kavindhran Velen said:

"What excites me most is working alongside a community that shares the belief that science can be a catalyst for a healthier, more equitable world. I have always been inspired by the power of collective knowledge and diverse perspectives, and I look forward to harnessing that energy to unlock solutions that will shape a better future for lung health for generations to come."

Training & Education

Equipped almost **2,400 healthcare professionals** around the world with the latest knowledge and skills to better serve their communities, through the delivery of **26 training events** (in-person and online), totalling **245 hours of training**.

- **96%** of participants were satisfied with the content of the course.
- **96%** thought the content was actionable.
- **95%** would recommend the course to a colleague.

In response to the global funding cuts, our Training and Education Department launched several free online courses, including:

- Management of child and adolescent TB, for healthcare workers in resource-limited and high TB burden settings.
- Drug-resistant TB: From clinical to programmatic, for clinicians and programme managers to improve the management of drug-resistant TB.
- Chest radiograph interpretation for TB diagnosis, strengthens skills in interpreting chest X-rays for TB in adults, children, and people living with HIV.
- Tobacco – History, Consequences, and Cessation, for healthcare professionals and stakeholders engaged in tobacco control, with a particular focus on low- and middle-income countries in Francophone regions.

Combatting child TB in Lesotho through learning

The Union's Sub-Saharan Africa Region Child and Adolescent TB Centre of Excellence piloted a new curriculum on the management of child and adolescent TB for healthcare workers from Lesotho and 10 other African countries.

The Lesotho National TB Programme delivered follow-up training to more frontline workers.

Since the training was conducted, Lesotho observed an increase in the proportion of children diagnosed with TB.

The project was delivered in collaboration with U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).



Technical publications

- The role of CXRs to diagnose and manage children with presumed tuberculosis
- Operational Research: A tool for making health programmes work better

Key papers and articles

- 'Break the chain of transmission to end tuberculosis' by Dr Kavindhran Velen, The Guardian
- 'A roadmap for integrating nutritional assessment, counselling, and support into the care of people with tuberculosis', The Lancet Global Health
- 'Managing household contacts of individuals with rifampicin-resistant tuberculosis', The Lancet Infectious Diseases

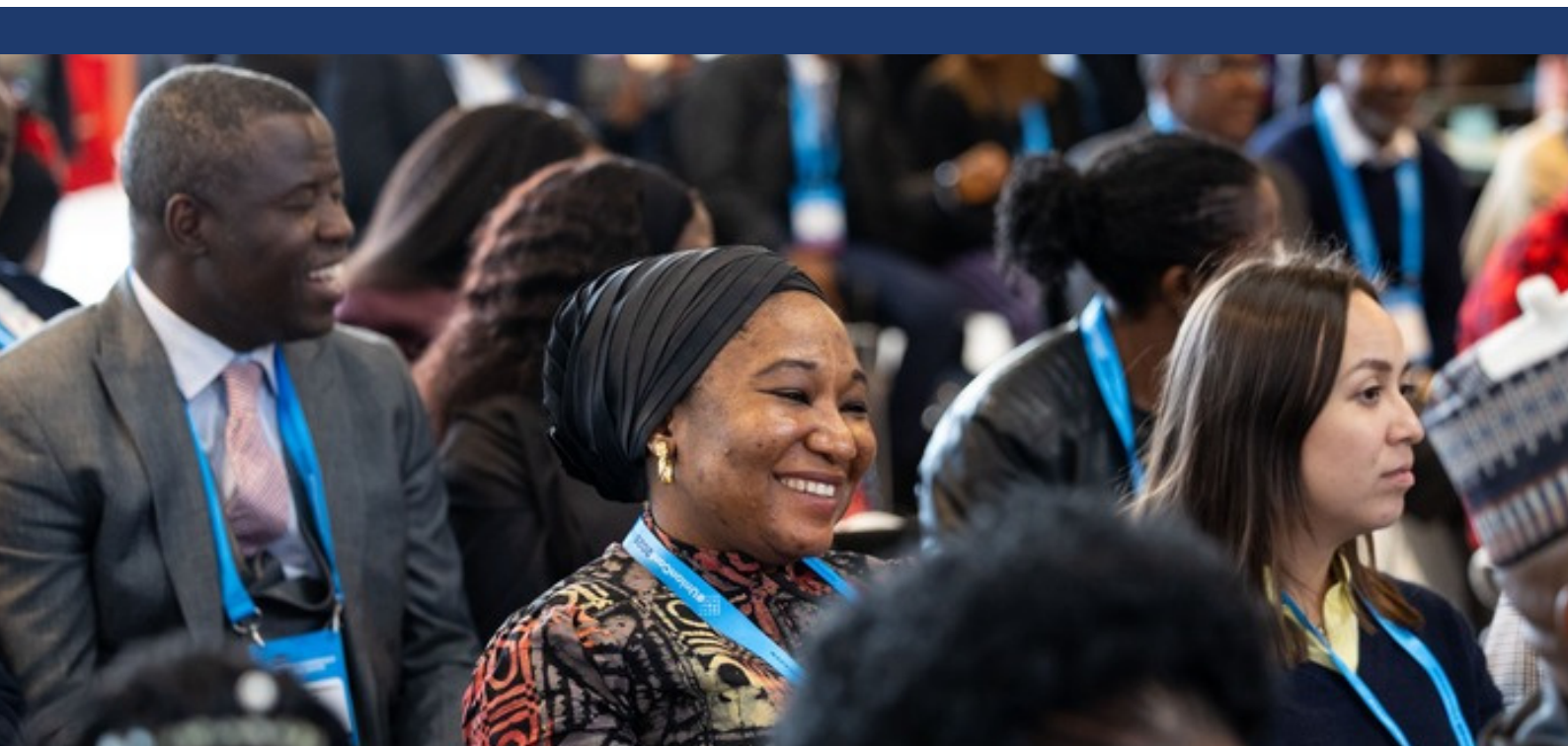
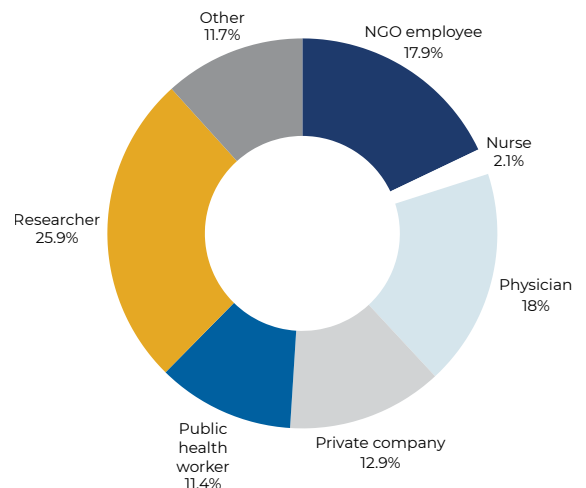
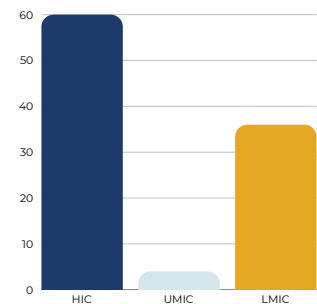
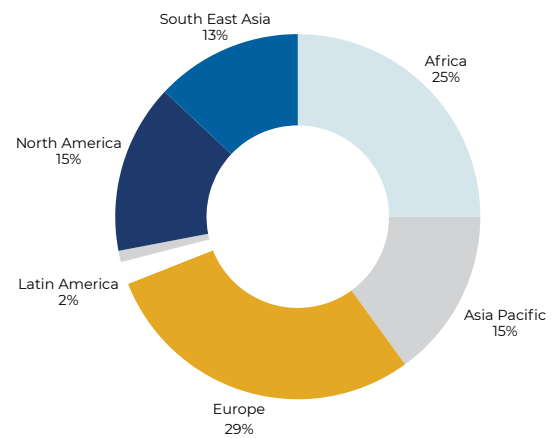
Uniting the lung health community in Copenhagen

Over 3,300 lung health experts from **120 countries** took part in the Union World Conference on Lung Health 2025 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

A powerful feature of this year's Union Conference was the inclusion of four authors who are breathing new life into TB advocacy, with global health advocate and bestselling author, John Green delivering an inspiring keynote speech.

Over 250 sessions were delivered during the gathering, which covered every key topic and breakthrough across lung health

Once again, Community Connect continued to grow as a key element of the conference – becoming a vital platform for the affected community and civil society to share experiences and develop person-centred solutions for lung health.



Engaging communities and building trust

The Union's Advocacy, Communications and Social Mobilisation (ACSM) team has continued to play an integral role in national efforts to end TB across India.

- The ACSM team has supported the advancement of TB early detection and prevention by driving large-scale demand generation interventions.
- For example, a targeted communication campaign to promote proactive screening of asymptomatic vulnerable populations was developed. This has been adopted by the National TB Elimination Programme and being rolled out nationwide.
- To standardise high-quality ACSM initiatives across states, the team has integrated planning templates, reporting formats and review tools into routine TB programme activities.
- ACSM indicators have now been embedded into the national TB reporting system, enabling government to independently monitor performance.



Escape the TB Trap

A standout innovation showcased at the Union Conference 2025 was the debut of 'Escape the TB Trap'.

A pioneering virtual escape room that successfully concept-tested gamification as a powerful, interactive tool to tackle stigma, address cough trivialisation, and drive early health-seeking behaviour.

Operational Research

The Union's Centre for Operational Research continues to enhance the operational research capacity of low- and middle-income countries.

- Published the final study in a series evaluating the value of the 7-1-7 timeliness metric in improving urgency of household contact screening and TB preventive therapy.
- Continued our work on post-tuberculosis disability and co-morbidities in China, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- Developed and implemented two virtual [SORT IT courses](#) for public health professionals from 12 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with CDC support.