

THET & HEALTH PARTNERSHIP'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN 2020

The coronavirus pandemic has become the defining challenge of our time, affecting almost every aspect of our lives, pushing 37 million more people into extreme poverty and setting global development back 25 years in just 25 weeks. Health Partnerships have risen to the challenge of COVID-19 in innovative ways, drawing on strong ties of trust, collegiality and professional respect that sit at the heart of relationships developed over many years. During this challenging period THET has stood with health workers every step of the way: from providing flexible funding to procure essential supplies, to launching virtual volunteering programmes in light of travel restrictions. This document outlines just a few of the ways in which THET and Health Partnerships have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, shining a light on all we have achieved together in the last eight months.

April

Lives on the Line

Prompted by requests from national Ministries of Health in Africa and communications with the Health Partnership community, in April, THET launched the [Lives on the Line](#) project, designed to support health workers on the frontline across the UK, Asia and Africa. THET's response included:

- Providing Health Partnerships with fast, flexible support and small grants through the [Health Worker Action Fund \(HWAF\)](#), which provided physical and psychological support to health workers with the aim of protecting as many LMIC frontline health workers as possible. Funding to eight partnerships aims to provide training to over 450 health workers of all cadres, and provide PPE and hand sanitiser to over 3,000 staff in multiple facilities and hospitals.
- Disseminating essential [resources](#) and learnings from leading institutions to challenge misinformation.
- Hosting a virtual [Conference](#) which brought together 750 attendees from 54 countries to share advice and reflect on how to express solidarity and stand together during COVID-19.
- Sharing [stories](#) and experiences from those putting their lives on the line to protect our health.

"I'm proud to stand in solidarity with health workers all around the world and to support THET's Lives on the Line: Health Worker Action Fund campaign, please stand with us."

- Dame Julie Walters

CwPAMS Programme (Commonwealth Partnerships for Anti-Microbial Stewardship)

In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic Health Partnerships funded through the [CwPAMS](#) programme, focussed on anti-microbial resistance and stewardship, demonstrated their ability to harness the knowledge and skills learned during the projects to problem solve and facilitate responses in pragmatic and innovative ways. The 12 partnerships working in Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia were praised by external evaluators for their ability to respond flexibly and responsibly. For example, the [Brighton-Lusaka Pharmacy Link](#) set up an alcohol-based hand rub facility run by trained pharmacists, which increased production by 400% during COVID-19. By identifying the IPC (Infection Prevention Control) knowledge and facilities gap, the partnership was able to provide a sustainable contribution to tackling COVID-19 in Zambia through capacity-building and skills sharing.

Virtual Volunteering

In July, given the continued travel restrictions as a result of COVID-19, THET expanded the ways in which the UK health workforce can continue to support its partners in LMICs. The launch of remote or [virtual volunteering](#) is an exciting opportunity to support health workers to engage with the COVID-19 response and to support the delivery of quality essential services in a safe, cost-effective way. Working with national Ministries of Health and other health institutions in partner countries, UK volunteer health workers are focusing on mentorship and capacity development, delivering training sessions and adapting global standards and protocols. THET is currently working with four volunteers who will provide support to facilities in Myanmar and Tanzania on areas ranging from anaesthesia to oncology. This is an important shift in our model, paving the way for more inclusive, better value for money, and environmentally conscious, way of engaging in global health.

July

Fast, flexible funding to HPs

Expressing solidarity with health workers

Leveraging support from donors and partners

Innovation in PPE and training

Overcoming travel restrictions

UK Partnerships for Health Systems (UKPHS)

September

In October, THET launched the [UKPHS programme](#), which will award £24 million in grants to Health Partnerships in LMICs across Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Between 2020 and 2024, the UKPHS grants scheme will seek to:

1. Support the development of stronger and more resilient health systems through better governance, information, and management of health institutions.
2. Provide the health workforce with opportunities to improve skills and knowledge.
3. Build on institutional capacity to decrease any reliance on external support.

Building on the learnings of the HWAF, the UKPHS programme also includes a [dedicated COVID-19 response call](#), to support established Health Partnerships address gaps in skills and knowledge to prevent and treat COVID-19, promote the safety and well-being of health workers in LMICs, and provide support so that essential health services can continue despite current pressures.

Funding for essential health services and COVID-19 response

THET's Annual Conference

Solidarity. Quality. And hope. These were the three words that resonated through [THET's 2020 Annual Conference](#). Bringing together over 450 voices from over 35 countries across the health and development communities, the conference shone a spotlight on the challenges of the decade to come, focusing on the themes of quality and inclusion in Health Partnerships. The Conference provided an excellent opportunity for attendees from academia, the NHS, private sector, government and the third sector to network, learn from each other and explore key issues such as Gender Equality and Social Inclusion and the use of digital technology. 100% of delegates felt their knowledge of global health improved as a result of attendance to the THET Conference, showing this continues to be the leading event in England for the Health Partnership community. Read more about the event [here](#).

Sharing and learning with peers

**48-80
LARGE
GRANTS**
OPERATING IN
10 STRATEGIC
COUNTRIES WILL
BE AWARDED IN
THREE WAVES:

SIERRA LEONE	UGANDA
GHANA	TANZANIA
ZAMBIA	BANGLADESH
ETHIOPIA	NEPAL
SOMALIA/SOMALILAND	MYANMAR

 **2020 - 2024**

"The COVID-19 pandemic has brought out the best and worst of humankind...This common crisis can only be defeated by a common approach, built on solidarity and partnership which I know are at the heart of THET's ethos and work."

– Opening remarks from Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director General, World Health Organization, THET Conference 2020.

Building the capacity of partners

Virtual networks and the shift to digital

THET PULSE

COVID-19 has accelerated THET's ambitions of digital transformation. In the context of travel restrictions and increased remote working, but also in recognition of the climate crisis we face globally, THET will be launching PULSE, an online platform for Health Partnerships to interact, connect and share learnings and experiences. The platform will play a key role as we move forward in supporting health workers to deliver essential health services and through the continued effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

November

"The way forward is solidarity", argued Dr Tedros at the World Health Assembly in early April, and solidarity is exactly what the Health Partnership community has delivered. 2020 has been a challenging year for all, but as demonstrated above, it has also been a year of change and of innovation. THET and the Health Partnership community have worked perhaps more collaboratively than ever before, showing resilience, adaptability and a commitment to learn from each other in the face of adversity.

We look forward to exploring further avenues and partnerships in 2021 as we all seek to build back better and continue working to achieve our vision of a world where everyone, everywhere has access to quality healthcare.

None of this could have been possible without the support of individuals and institutions who sustained and flexed their support along the way. In particular, we would like to thank: Health Education England, Johnson & Johnson, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the Department of Health and Social Care, Novartis Social Business, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Fraxinus Trust, Impax Asset Management and InfoPro Digital.

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