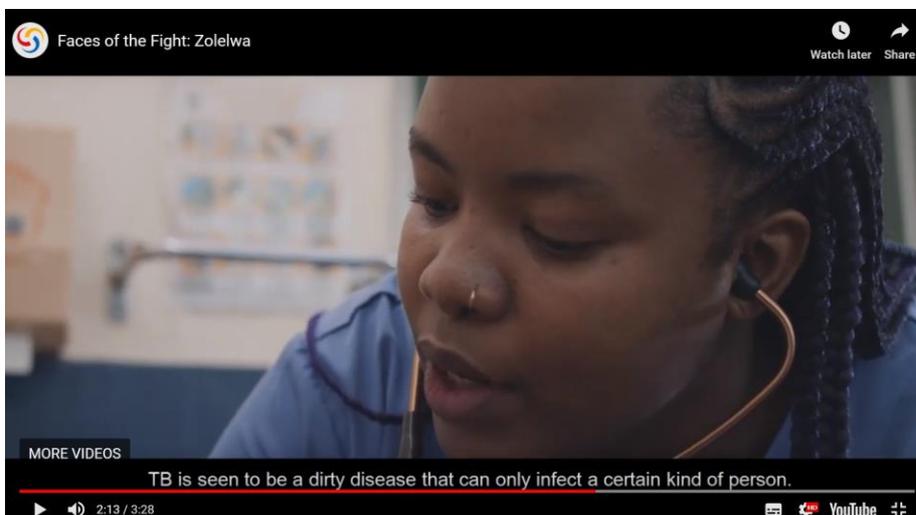


EU R&D to fight neglected diseases

This month, we're looking at a very technical topic for your advocacy, but an important one! Research and development (R&D) into neglected diseases and diseases of poverty including TB is a vital element of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The European Union is a major player in this area, providing significant funding, expertise and a way to coordinate global investments for the greatest impact.

What is TB and why the fight against TB matters

- Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by airborne bacteria that can lead to serious disease of the lungs or other organs. It exists throughout the world, and is highly infectious.
- TB is particularly associated with poverty, affecting vulnerable and marginalised communities the most, such as homeless people, or malnourished people. Often these populations struggle to access healthcare and often aren't diagnosed with the disease.
- TB, HIV, malaria and other neglected diseases affect more than a billion people worldwide, often the most vulnerable and marginalised.
- TB is the world's leading cause of death from an infectious disease. In 2018, over 10 million people fell ill with TB and 1.5 million people died from the disease.
- Drug-resistant TB is the only major drug-resistant infection spread through the air and is cause of about 1/3 of all deaths associated with antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Tackling AMR is a big priority for the UK government.
- You can read [these personal stories](#) of people affected by TB, or [watch this video](#). And a RESULTS campaigner has written this [powerful blog post](#) about her experience of TB.



This video of Dr. Zolelwa Sufumba shows the human impact of TB.

The importance of R&D into TB

- Current methods to prevent, diagnose and treat TB are not effective enough. As a result, many people with TB are not properly diagnosed or are unable to successfully complete their treatment. For patients with drug-resistant TB, the outdated drugs at our disposal come with a huge range of side-effects and are only effective in about 50% of cases.
- R&D into global health is an important way to ensure that health systems can tackle diseases such as TB into the future. Currently, many marginalised and vulnerable people struggle to access diagnosis and treatment because it is too far away from their homes, too expensive or takes too much time. Better tools that are targeted to the needs of people affected by diseases like TB mean that more people can access treatment and be more quickly and successfully cured.
- World leaders committed to spending US \$2 billion on TB research every year by 2022. Last year, the funding shortfall for TB research was over US \$1.2 billion. It is estimated that for every year that the funding target is missed, 4.8 million additional people will fall ill with TB and 680,000 more people will die from the disease.
- EU funding for R&D plays a big part in developing new treatments and vaccines, including potential new TB vaccines. The existing BCG vaccine is only partially effective and does not protect adults against the most common form of TB.
- The UK is currently one of the biggest contributors to joint global health R&D schemes run by the EU. At the same time, UK research institutions are the biggest recipients of EU grants for global health research.
- With new EU R&D programmes being negotiated now, it is important that the UK's contribution to these vital health R&D initiatives can continue.

Further reading

- Find out if [an academic institution near you](#) participates in EU funding for R&D into global health – they may be interested in working with you.
- Read about the work of the [European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership](#) (EDCTP) to accelerate the clinical development of treatments, vaccines, and diagnostics against poverty-related and neglected diseases.
- The Stop TB Partnership's [Global Plan to End TB](#) includes a chapter on TB research.
- Here are [further details and recommendations](#) for future EU funding proposals for R&D into a wide variety of diseases of poverty and other neglected diseases.