

Ending Workplace TB – A five-year impact review

The need

Tuberculosis disproportionately affects the 15-54 age group in high-burden areas, meaning most new cases occur in people at work, highlighting broad occupational risk, linked to substantial health and economic repercussions, including loss of life alongside loss of income and productivity.

Research suggests that even one case of TB could result in up to 50% of the workforce being infected¹⁻³. Breaking the chains of TB transmission in workplaces could have a major impact on the TB epidemic.

WHO (World Health Organization) and ILO (International Labor Organization) guidance⁴⁻⁸ for a healthy TB-free workforce recognizes implementing TB workplace interventions results in higher productivity and lower staff turnover and absenteeism, requiring reduced costs related to health care and making supportive workplace interventions beneficial for businesses, their employees and their communities.

About

Ending Workplace TB (EWTB)⁹⁻¹⁰ is a campaign coalition of multinational companies dedicated to ending TB in their workplaces, supply chains, and communities. Its mission is to ensure that everyone associated with a workplace is safe from TB.

Membership is free and open to any company and companies choose what actions to take in support of the overall mission. It is supported by a Secretariat that provides activity guidance to members and advocates for companies and governments to do more on TB care and prevention in the workplace.

EWTB encompasses over 50 multinational companies covering 4.6 million employees worldwide of which more than 5% receive direct TB care and prevention programming across 27 out of the 30 high burden TB countries. Two thirds of member companies had not worked on TB previously, collectively they reach hundreds of millions through their workplace communities including partner networks and cover ten of the eleven industrial sectors listed on the Global Industry Classification Standard GICS.

We urge all companies with operations or suppliers in any of the World Health Organization's high TB burden countries to support Ending Workplace TB and protect their most valuable assets, their people while playing a defining role in overcoming the TB epidemic.

This paper reviews EWTB's five-year impact.

EWTB Timeline of Key Events

January 2020:

EWTB launched at WEF Davos by J&J, Global Fund, Stop TB Partnership

March 2021:

First cohort of members; development of implementation guides

2022:

Think20 engagements with G20; hosts March4TB challenge

2023:

TB-Free Workplaces Indonesia launches to identify workplace TB

2025:

2nd cohort awarded Exemplar Award, Focus on integrated lung health

Nov 2020:

Advisory Board established, member recruitment began

June 2022:

Second cohort of members joins

2023:

EWTB reaches current 50th company and 4 million employees

2024:

Exemplar Award launched for workplace TB programming excellence

Timeline

EWTB was launched¹¹ at the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Annual Meeting in Davos in January 2020 by a coalition of partners led by Johnson & Johnson (J&J) and including the Global Fund, and the Stop TB Partnership.

An Advisory Board composed of the founding partners was established, and member recruitment commenced with cohorts of companies joining at regular intervals¹¹⁻¹⁷.

In the early stages, EWTB focused on supporting its partners to implement internal policy changes. EWTB developed 'implementation guides' to help partners strengthen their internal policies and procedures for addressing TB in the workplace and in their supply chains.

Building on these implementation guides, in 2022 EWTB and J&J engaged in the Think20 (T20) taskforce on global health security discussions, providing research-based policy recommendations¹⁸ to G20 leaders and hosted March4TB¹⁹, an activity challenge for its member companies which saw nearly 2,500 employees across companies compete in teams to take the most steps and raise broad TB awareness.

By 2023, EWTB had grown to its present size and started to focus efforts on establishing sustainable national coalitions of private sector actors rather than further expanding the membership. In 2024, EWTB launched the Exemplar Award²⁰ to recognise excellence and commitment in TB programming.

Country Case study – Indonesia

Advocacy efforts across multiple years by a TB coalition of private businesses alongside APINDO (Indonesian Employers Association) and other stakeholders recommended²¹ creation of the legal basis for formal involvement of all stakeholders for TB eradication, including private corporations. Following the WHO release of the multi-sectoral accountability framework⁷ and national level implementation and monitoring²², a presidential decree on involvement of all stakeholders was signed in 2021²³ and was followed in 2022 by the Ministry of Labor releasing a regulation²⁴ on Mandatory Tuberculosis Management in Workplaces.

Case study projects by select members (in alphabetical order)

Each member identifies the most impactful ways that they can contribute to the fight against TB depending on their context, capabilities, and capacity, prioritizing across tackling stigma, supporting workers to access healthcare services, mitigating out-of-pocket costs for TB for workers, and supporting community-level efforts.

Apollo Hospitals – Healthworker protection

In 2024, EWTB commissioned a research paper²⁵ into the threat posed by TB to healthcare workers. To gather evidence for the paper, Apollo Hospitals provided expensive information and insights, including facilitating interviews directly with healthcare workers.

Apollo Tyres – Engaging hard-to-reach populations

Apollo Tyres ran a major programme in India, bringing a range of health services to hauliers and truckers. Their service includes screening, diagnosis, and treatment, and allows truckers to access integrated care across a host of sites, including picking up medication at different sites, allowing them to continue working even as they continue treatment.

Freeport-McMoRan – Global leadership

Freeport-McMoRan run one of the biggest mines in the world on the island of Papua in Indonesia. Around the mine, they have established a comprehensive health system, offering primary, secondary, and tertiary care to their workforce and to the surrounding community for free. They also supported EWTB in hosting a session with the US Chambers of Commerce in Indonesia to engage more Indonesian companies on TB. Exemplar award recipient²⁰.

Johnson & Johnson – lead private sector EWTB founding partner

J&J played a major role in securing the support of the initial group of companies joining EWTB, supporting the EWTB secretariat over the five years of impact, providing guidance as part of the EWTB advisory board and undertaking advocacy in support of TB in the workplace policies across multiple high burden countries in Asia and beyond. In Indonesia, J&J was the convenor of the TB coalition of private businesses alongside APINDO (Indonesian Employers Association) who recommended creation of the legal basis for formal involvement of all stakeholders for TB eradication.

In Philippines, Johnson & Johnson supported institutionalizing the advocacy TB-free workplaces campaign of the government in collaboration with the University of the Philippines College of Public Health. Qualitative research²⁶ on implementation status of workplace TB programs was published, followed by training workshops aimed to improve implementation among partner companies in Bicol region (six million people population) and provision of local legislation change recommendations including publication of a formal comparative policy review²⁷ across six countries in the region.

Kempinski Hotels

From 2013 to 2021, employees in their chain of South Asian hotels were offered the opportunity to train as peer educators, learning about key health issues such as TB and passing that knowledge on to colleagues, families and the communities around our hotels. Through community-based prevention activities organized with these peer educators, there has been a dramatic increase in TB screening²⁸ in the communities where Kempinski hires. Exemplar award recipient²⁰.

Otsuka – Company-wide engagement

Having engaged in March4TB for World TB Day 2022, the Indonesian branch of Otsuka launched a “TB Free Workplaces” campaign to incorporate TB screening into standardised mandatory annual health checks in Indonesia. Through consistent outreach to partner companies, the campaign grew to cover 100,000 employees and found rates of previously undiagnosed TB in the workforce of around 100 per 100,000. They subsequently followed up the project with a similar but smaller initiative in Philippines. Exemplar award recipient²⁰.

Parexel – Health insurance coverage

After joining EWTB, Parexel decided to expand health insurance coverage to include TB and all its associated costs to all their employees working in India. Previously, care and prevention for TB had not been included in the standard package, despite India's high burden country status. Exemplar award recipient²⁰.

Perenco – Diagnostic capacity

Perenco is an independent oil and gas company with operations across the world. In its DR Congo operations it opened the PCR machines that it had purchased to protect its workforce during COVID to the local TB programme to expand TB testing capacity in a rural and hard-to-reach part of DR Congo. The programme was hugely successful, resulting in hundreds of people getting access to rapid diagnostic testing before proceeding to treatment through the Global Fund-supported public system. Exemplar award recipient²⁰.

Societe Generale – Multi-disease screening

In partnership with the French NGO, Sante en Entreprise, Societe Generale run a program providing multi-disease screening for their employees across West Africa. The service includes a host of other services, such as vaccinations, and screens for HIV, active TB, and latent TB infection.

Sibanye Stillwater – Pursuing zero infections

Sibanye Stillwater operate comprehensive care and prevention services for TB and HIV across their sites in South Africa and are one of the industry's leaders on care for the diseases. Having successfully reduced cases of TB in their workforce below the rate found in the surrounding communities, they have pushed on in pursuit of zero and recently initiated a trail programme on the impact of integrated latent TB screening and treatment into their range of health services. Exemplar award recipient²⁰.

VVF Life Sciences – Operational policies

VVF Life Sciences from South Africa were one of that initial cohort. Following the training, their in-house occupational health nurse negotiated with the local TB services to facilitate the provision of TB treatment in the workplace, saving staff from having to travel to the clinic and potentially miss time from work to collect and take their medicines.

Success and learnings

EWTB has developed into a major campaign supporting health system and health worker efforts in the fight against the TB epidemic, bringing knowledge, education, and screening to hundreds of thousands of people who work. The campaign model has looked to prove that the provision of TB services to employees is a net benefit for companies, and to facilitate establishment of formal policy frameworks to encourage all companies to act.

One partner described EWTB as "the biggest corporate engagement effort on TB in history." It has successfully catalysed action of companies across the world including across their supply chains – many engaged through the leadership of J&J and other founding members. Companies that have taken the greatest steps are those whose workforce is

particularly affected by TB, with presence in high TB-burden areas and/ or in high TB-risk industries.

Raising awareness on TB in the Workplace dynamics and consequences as part of broader Health & Safety in the Workplace was the critical first step to active engagement beyond basic compliance to regulations. The EWTB Secretariat consistently found that companies had either low levels of knowledge linked to TB risk in their workplace or perceived existing TB risk as low. Inviting companies to attend training workshops as they considered their involvement in EWTB was the most impactful intervention for coalition members recruitment.

The greatest learning has been the development of a proven roadmap to achieving large scale impact. With multiple best practices²⁹⁻³³ on TB in the workplace becoming available, momentum building is focused on strengthening coverage and quality of TB workplace policy implementation. Beyond impact at individual company level and within their related communities, achieving national policy change (in countries that do not have this) requires collaboration and leading by example, with companies advocating for this, already implementing interventions themselves (as proven with the Indonesia country case study).

Potential for expanded impact

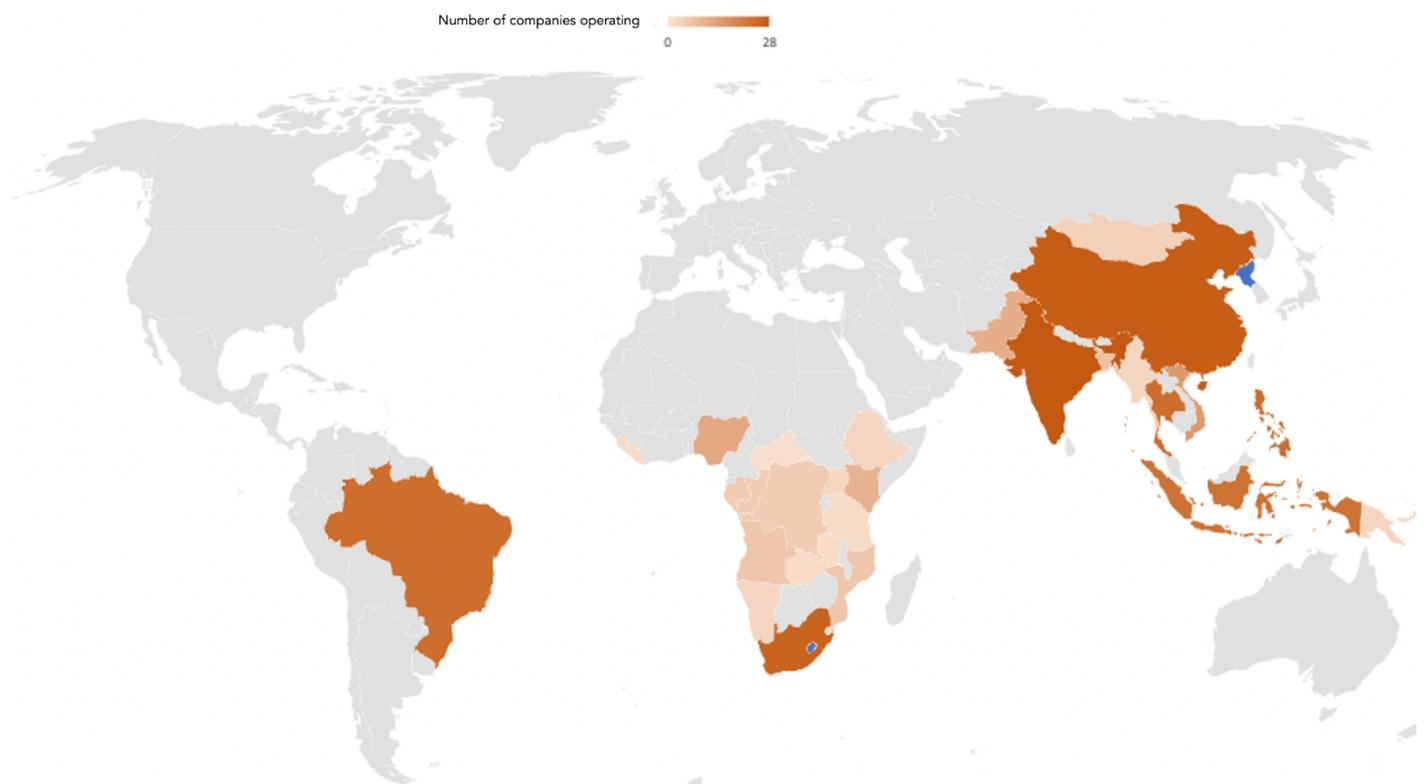
Most recently the global health community has started to recognize that addressing lung health synergistically is critical to creating efficiencies and TB response long-term sustainability. Shared risk factors and symptoms overlap across major lung diseases such as COPD, pneumonia, lung cancer and TB all present in the workplace provide fresh opportunities to further refine interventions and improve the output quality.

There is an opportunity to align TB in the workplace interventions to the recent 2025 World Health Assembly resolution on integrated approaches to lung health³⁴, and subsequent issuance by WHO of a Policy Brief on Integrated approach to TB and Lung Health³⁵.

Future policy on integrated respiratory health in the workplace has the potential to benefit more than 850 million people who are formally employed in high TB burden geographies. One-third of these employees are in countries that mandate annual health checks for employees, and another third in countries with occupation health TB focus.

Establishing a solid, evidence-based policy recommendation¹⁸ for how companies in high TB burden countries could implement a model for integrated lung health prevention and care (the economic return on investment for companies and scale of social impact for broader communities remains to be defined), could enable a pathway for every worker, everywhere to benefit from multi-modal respiratory diseases related screening in their workplace, as a next step in the world's journey to achieving its Health for All SDG.

EWTB member companies operating in high TB burden countries



Darker colors denote stronger concentration of company operations
Countries in blue are high burden TB countries with no EWTB presence

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