

Advancing STI Advocacy in Kenya, South Africa, and Zimbabwe

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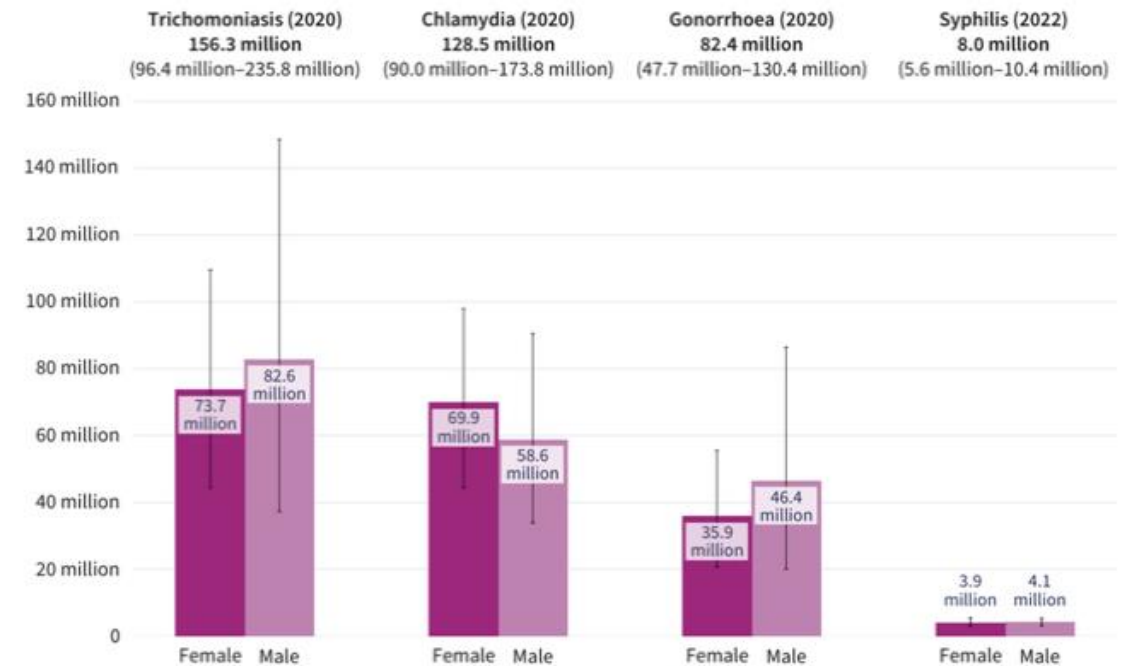
STIWatch

An initiative of **AVAC**
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Why STI Advocacy Matters

- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) continue to rise, globally.
 - More than 1 million new chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, or trichomoniasis infections are acquired and transmitted every day.
- Congenital syphilis continues to rise and can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth, and severe, sometimes irreversible, lifelong health complications.
- When left untreated STIs can impact sexual and reproductive health and lead to several types of cancers and increased HIV rates.

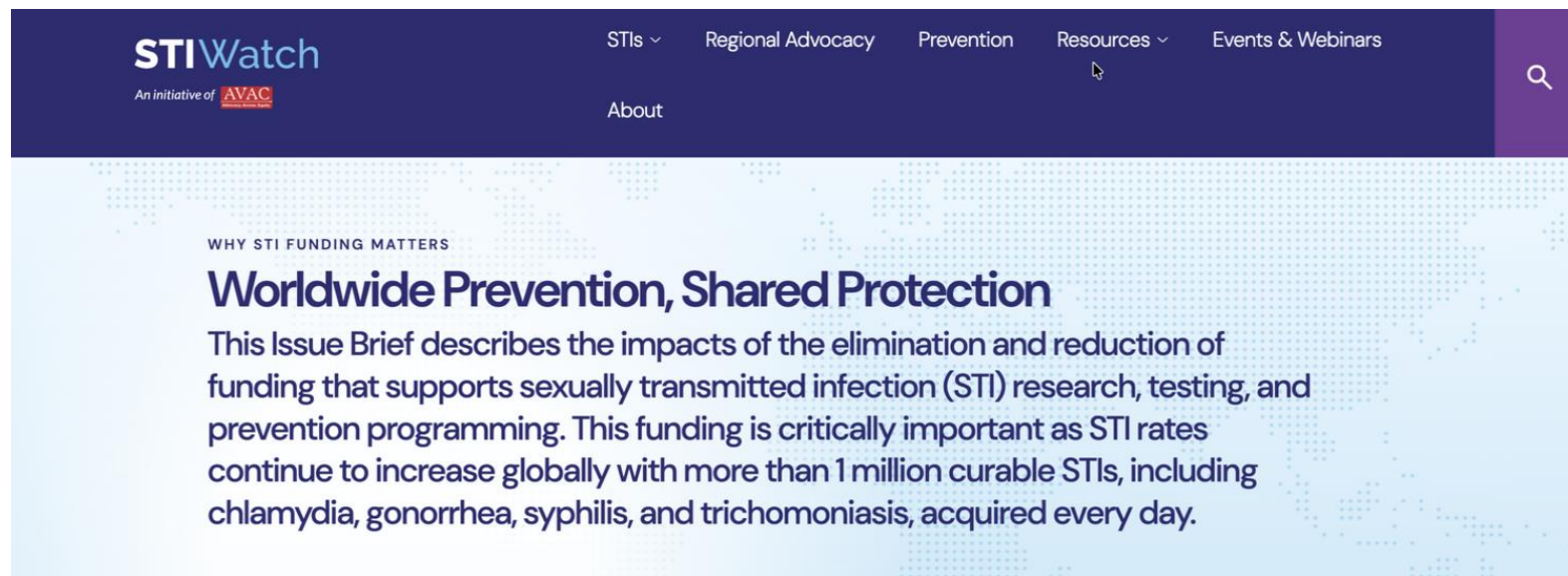
Fig. 3.1b Distribution of new cases of four curable STIs among adults (aged 15–49 years), by sex, global, 2020 and 2022



Sources: Global progress report on HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections, 2021 (34).
Global HIV, Hepatitis and STIs Programmes (HHS), WHO, 2024.

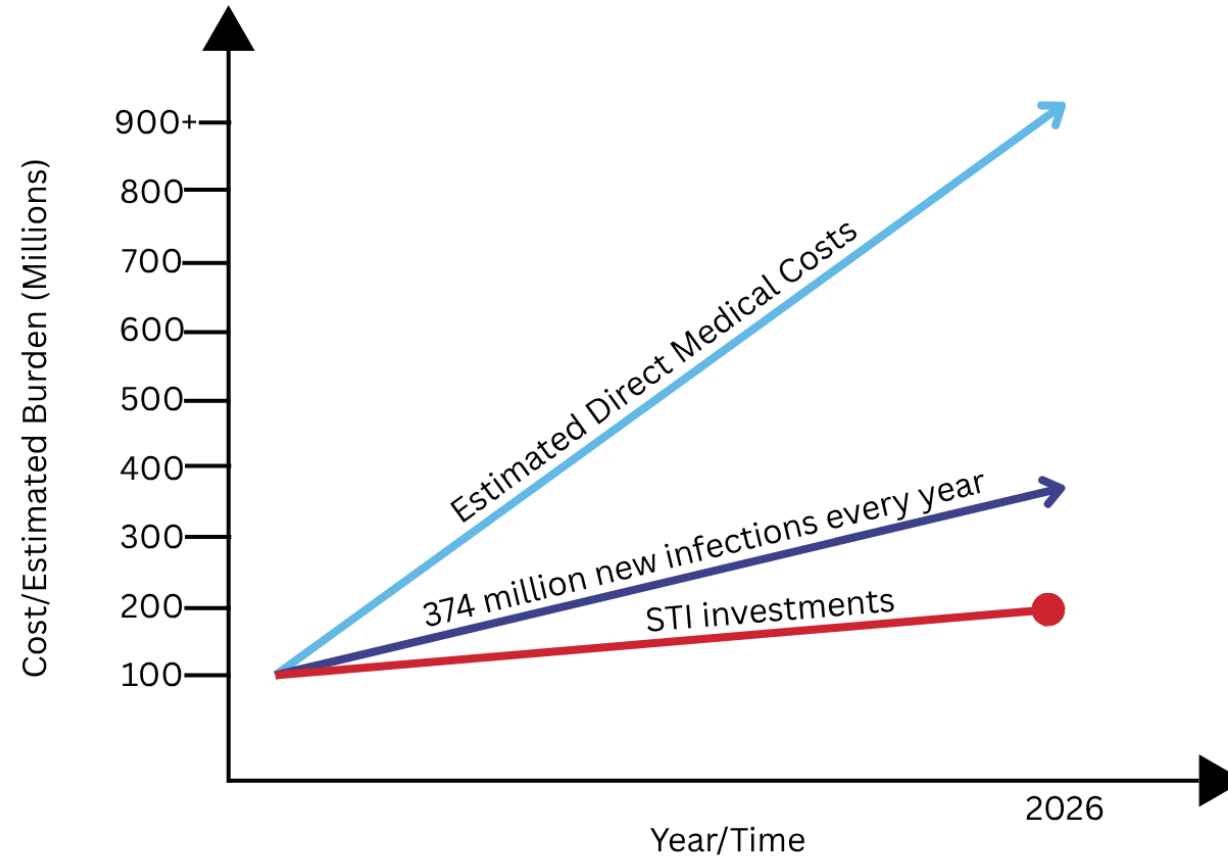
Why STI Advocacy Matters

- There has been growth in diagnostics, vaccines, DoxyPEP, and self-testing and self-collection tools, we need to ensure that these tools are meeting the needs of the people disproportionately impacted by infections.
- However, recent funding cuts and reduction in STI workforce capacity threaten surveillance, laboratory systems, prevention programs, and research efforts.
- Without sustained investment, countries risk losing progress in STI prevention.



The screenshot shows the STIWatch website header with a dark blue background. The logo 'STIWatch' is on the left, with 'An initiative of AVAC' below it. The navigation menu includes 'STIs', 'Regional Advocacy', 'Prevention', 'Resources', 'Events & Webinars', and 'About'. A search icon is on the right. The main content area has a light blue background with a world map pattern. The article title is 'Worldwide Prevention, Shared Protection' and the text describes the impacts of funding cuts on STI research, testing, and prevention.

STI Funding and Prevalence Rates



Scientific innovation alone does not guarantee equitable access or sustained investment in STI prevention and treatment tools.

STI advocacy is about ensuring STIs are prioritized in funding, policies, and health systems before preventable infections and inequities worsen.

Why Kenya, South Africa, and Zimbabwe

- High burden of STIs and need for expanded testing and prevention approaches.
- Strong network of local advocates, researchers, and community organizations and existing STI leadership.
- Existing national HIV and sexual health infrastructure that can support STI integration.
- Opportunities to collaborate to generate lessons learned and inform other countries and regions advocacy agendas.



Building STI Advocacy Agendas



STI advocacy agendas for Kenya, South Africa, and Zimbabwe were developed collaboratively with in-country advocates and experts.

- Felix Mogaka and Marcy Nyakowa (Kenya)
- Alex de Voux and Mandisa Mdingi (South Africa)
- Chido Dziva Chikwari, Moira Chido Majah, and Constancia Mavodza (Zimbabwe)

Building STI Advocacy Agendas

Guiding Questions

- How are STIs impacting your communities?
- What do people know and don't know about STIs in your communities?
- How do we communicate with community members, healthcare provider, Ministry of Health, policymakers, and laboratories about the importance of STIs and prevention?
- Who are allies and partners in raising awareness about STIs and changing policies?
- What policies are needed to ensure we can better promote STI testing and other prevention strategies within your communities?

STI Advocacy Agendas

These agendas move beyond awareness alone and focus on systems change

- Increase STI Visibility & Awareness
 - Reduce stigma
 - Improve public and policymaker awareness
- Expand Community Engagement
 - Elevate community voices in STI decision-making
 - Build advocacy capacity
- Strengthen Policies & Guidelines
 - Promote diagnostic approaches to STI management
 - Support adoption of new diagnostics and prevention tools
- Improve Access to Prevention & Care
 - Diagnostics
 - Vaccines
 - Other prevention tools including DoxyPEP, condoms, and integrated health services



What Success Looks Like

- STIs become a national public health priority
- Stronger country policies and updated guidelines
- Increased investment in STI prevention and diagnostics
- More equitable access to STI testing and care
- Sustainable local advocacy leadership
- Stronger integration of STI services into broader health systems



Learn More

Advancing STI Advocacy Across Africa

STIs are widespread, underdiagnosed, and underprioritized across much of the world. In Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe, gaps in awareness, policy, and diagnostics continue to limit effective responses, underscoring the urgent need for stronger advocacy, better tools, and sustained political attention. Learn about the advocacy agendas partners are building to drive STI awareness and policy change in:



STI Advocacy in
Kenya

[View Advocacy Work](#)



STI Advocacy in
South Africa

[View Advocacy Work](#)



STI Advocacy in
Zimbabwe

[View Advocacy Work](#)



<https://www.stiwatch.org/regional-advocacy/>

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“

I didn't realize how
much

POWER

my voice had.

- Karen Nakawala
*Founder, Teal Sisters
Foundation, Zambia*



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With your voice,
we can create a
world where
STIs are
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