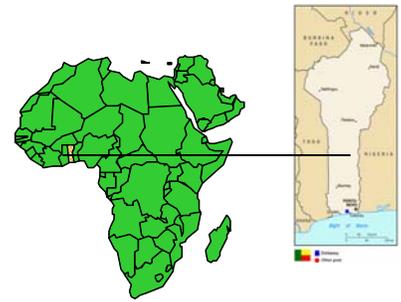




*DoD HIV/AIDS Prevention Program
Status Report
May 2003 to September 2004*

Benin



BACKGROUND

Introduction/General Information

The population of Benin is estimated at 7.2 million people, with an average life expectancy of 51 years. French is the official language, and the in-country literacy rate is estimated at 41%, distributed unevenly between males and females. The economy of Benin is concentrated primarily in agriculture (36%) and services (49%), with an annual per capita income of \$1,100.

Country HIV/AIDS Statistics and Risk Factors

The HIV/AIDS prevalence estimate for Benin is 2%, with the number of adults believed to be living with AIDS about 68,000; these cases are equally distributed between males and females. Identified risk factors include early initiation of sexual activity, significant poverty, illiteracy, gender status disparity, and lack of treatment and care for sexually transmitted infections. Eighty-two percent of HIV/AIDS infections in Benin occur through heterosexual contact.

Military HIV/AIDS Information

The Benin Armed Forces (BAF) is estimated at 7500 personnel. HIV prevalence is estimated at 2 to 3 times higher than the general population, leading to HIV prevalence estimates of 4 to 5% within the BAF. In an HIV/AIDS behavioral and belief survey administered to BAF personnel, 60% of the respondents indicated they were at high risk for infection.

PROPOSED PROGRAM

The BAF continued efforts in the implementation of their HIV/AIDS prevention plan, which included objectives in the establishment of an HIV prevention training program using a train-the-trainer model, the implementation of a mass awareness campaign, the establishment of Counseling and Testing (CT) capabilities, and the development of laboratory infrastructure.

The plan included train-the-trainer and peer education components, along with training for doctors and nurses at key military facilities. An additional goal provided commissioned and noncommissioned officers with comprehensive training on HIV/AIDS education.

In September 2003, representatives from the BAF met with DHAPP staff during the *All-Africa HIV/AIDS Prevention Workshop* in Gaborone, Botswana. The following items were identified, arranged by priority, and priced for FY04 resource support from DHAPP:

- Training and capacity development
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Condom promotion and social marketing
- Sentinel surveillance
- Primary prevention, including CT
- Local program administration and management

PROGRAM RESPONSE

Military-to-Military

The following elements of the BAF plan have been implemented: mass awareness and promotional activities, training, transportation, laboratory equipment, and the establishment of an HIV/AIDS Information and Prevention Center. In addition, DHAPP provided computers and audiovisual equipment to support the BAF's HIV prevention efforts and hired a Foreign Service National employee to serve as an associate DHAPP coordinator at the American Embassy in Cotonou.

DHAPP purchased an enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) machine and reagents to provide the BAF with HIV diagnosis capabilities. US clinicians provided on-site training to BAF health workers in HIV testing protocols and operation of the ELISA equipment.



DHAPP supported HIV/AIDS prevention training for BAF troops deploying on a peacekeeping mission.

DHAPP funds also supported an HIV prevention awareness and education training session in Benin involving 300 military personnel selected for a peacekeeping mission in Côte d'Ivoire. DHAPP purchased 4000 boxes of condoms for the peacekeepers and other BAF forces. In addition, DHAPP funds were used to purchase 2

Land Cruisers, renovate a building to be used as a CT center, and to support 3 representatives from the Benin military to attend the September 2003 *All-Africa Military HIV/AIDS Workshop* in Gaborone, Botswana.

Contractor-Based Assistance

None during this reporting period.

Clinical Provider Training

DHAPP sponsored 3 physician coordinators, representing the Benin HIV/AIDS Prevention Program, to attend the *XIV International AIDS Conference* in Barcelona, Spain. While there, DHAPP organized a meeting that allowed African military partners to consult with HIV specialists. Additionally, DHAPP presented a 10-day training course in Benin for military medical personnel covering HIV counseling and management of confidential information. This course prepared BAF staff for assignment to the HIV/AIDS Information and Prevention Center.

Interoperability

DHAPP cooperated with international agencies, such as the US Agency for International Development, and played a significant role in the World AIDS Day events in Benin in December 2003.



Benin military medical personnel receive training kits during the opening ceremony of a CT training seminar in Parakou.



Benin military medical personnel receive training on best practices in counseling and testing.



Banner announcing training seminar for VCT counselors is posted in roundabout in the town of Parakou where training was held.

PROGRAM IMPACT

The DHAPP in the BAF supports the pillars of peer education, CT, and laboratory capability and infrastructure.

Master Trainers and Peer Educators

A total of 250 peer educators were trained and 33 HIV prevention committees were established covering all of the military regions of Benin.

Number of Troops Trained

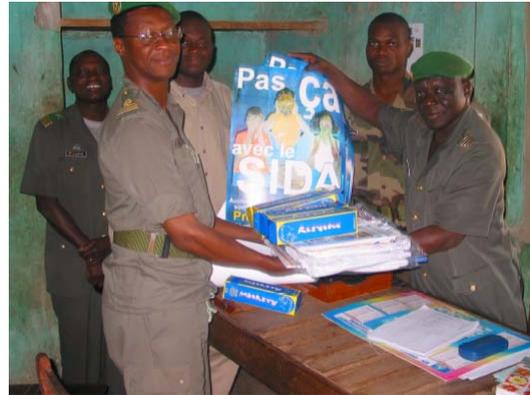
The BAF HIV/AIDS prevention campaign expanded on previous success by reaching more than 400 senior personnel and 1500 troops.

Potential Number of Troops Affected

The DHAPP-sponsored programs reached 7500 persons and will affect future recruits.

Counseling and Testing (CT)

One CT center is now open and fully staffed, providing a professional forum for testing and counseling about prevention of transmission.



Benin Army personnel display promotional materials used in the Plaidoyer campaign to promote counseling and testing.

Laboratory Capability/Infrastructure

Laboratory equipment and supplies have been purchased, and laboratory staff have been trained.

Mass Awareness

Mass awareness campaigns such as Plaidoyer are ongoing.