

BURUNDI

DHAPP

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HIV/AIDS
PREVENTION PROGRAM

REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF HIV/AIDS
AMONG UNIFORMED PERSONNEL IN
SELECTED AFRICAN NATIONS AND BEYOND

WINNING BATTLES IN THE WAR AGAINST HIV/AIDS

BACKGROUND

Country Statistics

The population of Burundi is estimated to be 6.4 million, with a life expectancy of 43.5 years. Kirundi and French are the official languages of Burundi, which has a literacy rate of 51.6%, disproportionately distributed between men and women. Since independence in 1961, Burundi has been plagued by conflicts, which have caused severe economic disruption. The economy is mainly agricultural, with approximately 90% of the population dependent on subsistence agriculture. Annual per capital income is approximately \$600.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the general population is estimated to be 6%. Burundi has an estimated 250,000 people living with HIV/AIDS. HIV rates in Burundi are significantly higher in urban than in rural areas. Since the first case of AIDS in Burundi was diagnosed in 1983, the epidemic has grown rapidly, making HIV/AIDS one of the major causes of death in the country. Vulnerable groups include women, military personnel, commercial sex workers, internally placed people, and refugees.

Military Statistics

The size of Burundi's armed forces is approximately 40,000. As of this annual report, no information regarding HIV prevalence in the military was available.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

Proposed Future Activities

A proposal was received on behalf of the military of Burundi for the 2006 fiscal year. The objectives of the proposed project include conducting an HIV seroprevalence study, conducting a mass awareness campaign, conducting a peer education program, expanding the counseling and testing (CT) program, training CT counselors, training laboratory technicians, and developing laboratory capacity.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Prevention

The Burundi military HIV/AIDS prevention program is still in its nascent phase. The objective of Burundi's program initially is to develop an organic CT capability, including training of CT

personnel, demand creation within the National Defense Force (FDN), building/equipping a CT facility, and research/production of an HIV/AIDS policy for the FDN. Population Services International has focused on training, equipping, education/awareness, and research for development of FDN policy. The Defense Attaché Office has overseen the second component, the construction of the CT facility. During FY05, the Burundi Armed Forces AIDS Control Program made early progress toward achieving prevention and care goals. In FY05, 4 military health care workers were trained in the prevention of mother-to-child transmission, according to international standards.

Care

Seven military personnel were trained to provide CT services in a series of sessions organized by Family Health International (FHI) in late FY05. The targeted audiences for the 3 seminars were supervisors of CT facilities and nonmedical and medical personnel working in CT facilities. The general objective of the training was to reinforce the importance of CT and its effect on HIV/AIDS prevention. In each seminar, FHI facilitators discussed the benefits of CT, including indirect benefits in PMTCT, prevention and treatment of tuberculosis and other opportunistic infections, and psychosocial support for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Other Activities

Two Burundian military medical doctors were trained in both strategic information and HIV-related policy at a DHAPP-funded seminar organized by the Infectious Diseases Society of America in collaboration with the Infectious Diseases Institute in Uganda. Nine additional military members were trained in organizational capacity building.

