

TAJIKISTAN

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 Tajikistan is estimated to be 7.2 million people, with an average life expectancy of 64.6 years. The primary languages are Tajik and Russian; the literacy rate is estimated at 99.4%. Tajikistan became independent in 1991 following the breakup of the Soviet Union. It has one of the lowest per capita gross domestic products of the 15 former Soviet republics. Agriculture occupies more than 67% of the population; cotton is the most important crop. Per capita income is estimated to be \$1,100.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the general population has been reported to be 0.1%. As of 2004, the total number of officially registered people living with HIV/AIDS was 317. However, the true HIV prevalence rate in Tajikistan is unknown, mainly due to the lack of testing facilities in most areas. According to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the probable number of people living with HIV in the country at the end of 2004 was approximately 5000. Intravenous drug use remains the main source of HIV infection, followed by sexual transmission, and blood transfusions. Vulnerable groups include intravenous drug users, commercial sex workers, prisoners, migrants, young adults, and street children.

Military Statistics

The size of Tajikistan Armed Forces (TAF) is approximately 6000. As of this annual report, no information regarding HIV prevalence in the military was available. As of this annual report, no information regarding HIV prevalence in the military was available. However, it is estimated to be about the same as the HIV rate in the general population.



PROGRAM RESPONSE

Military-to-Military Technical Assistance

DHAPP staff members have established contact with the US Embassy staff in Tajikistan and has assisted them, along with their military colleagues there, in the early development of a plan for future activities. Through this collaboration, TAF members were able to work with the US Embassy to ensure 2 military physicians were able to attend vital training in HIV preven-

tion, care, and treatment methods at the San Diego-based *Military International HIV/AIDS Training Program* (MIHTP).



OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Prevention

The Ministry of Defense (MOD), Republic of Tajikistan HIV/AIDS prevention program is in its early stages. During the second half of fiscal year 2005, 251 Tajikistan troops were reached with comprehensive HIV prevention messages, and another 16 were trained in the provision of these messages to others. In addition, during April and May 2005, the Tajikistan military sent 2 physicians to MIHTP. They were provided with training in prevention, counseling and testing (CT), care, and treatment methods, as well as policy development and capacity building. Participants relayed positive feedback from the course and stated that they felt it would enhance their ability to establish prevention, care, and treatment programs for HIV in their country.

Care

Palliative care training for medical professionals on HIV/AIDS started in Tajikistan in July 2005. So far the Central Military Hospital and its military providers have not been involved in this program, which is clearly needed. Currently in Tajikistan HIV/AIDS is concentrated in particularly vulnerable groups such as commercial sex workers and intravenous drug users. To date there are no records of HIV/AIDS-infected orphans in Tajikistan.

Counseling and Testing

During FY05, the MOD Republic of Tajikistan supported 6 outlets providing CT. Five hundred and thirty-two troops were tested during the year and received their results. Another 5 individuals were trained in the provision of CT services.

Treatment

Six laboratories have the capability to perform HIV testing, but not CD4 or lymphocyte testing. Seven laboratory technicians were trained in laboratory services.



Other Activities

In this past year, MOD Republic of Tajikistan has just started working on the issues associated with HIV/AIDS in the military. The MOD recently approved a strategy for dealing with AIDS in the military, without which no real work could be done. One of the elements of this strategy is the development of a national policy on AIDS in the military, to include policies on testing, privacy, care of infected soldiers, and other issues. During FY05, 6 individuals were trained in strategic information, and 10 indigenous organizations were provided with technical assistance for strategic information. In addition, 12 organizations were provided with technical assistance for HIV-related policy development, and 8 for HIV-related institutional capacity building. Twenty-five individuals were trained in policy development and capacity building, and another 142 individuals were trained in the reduction of stigma and discrimination.