



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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 Central African Republic population is estimated to be 4.3 million people, with an average life expectancy of 43.5 years. French is the official language of Central African Republic, which has an estimated literacy rate of 51%, unevenly distributed between men and women. Subsistence agriculture, together with forestry, remains the backbone of the economy of the Central African Republic, with more than 70% of the population living in outlying areas. The agricultural sector generates half of the gross domestic product (GDP). The per capita GDP is \$1,100.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in the Central African Republic general population is estimated at 10.7%, with approximately 250,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. The primary identified risk factor in the population is unprotected heterosexual contact.

Military Statistics

The Central African Armed Forces (FACA) is estimated at approximately 3000 members. The Central African Republic allocates 1.0% of the GDP for military expenditures. No military prevalence data were available.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

The Johns Hopkins Cameroon Program (JHCP) has been providing technical assistance to the militaries of Central Africa in the implementation of HIV prevention and surveillance activities. Evaluation from the first four countries in the region to work with JHCP (Cameroon, Gabon, Chad, and Republic of Congo) shows considerable progress in education, training, and surveillance, as well as development of a more sustainable approach to preventing infectious diseases among troops and their families.

Proposed Future Activities

DHAPP received a proposal from JHCP on behalf of the FACA for activities during fiscal year 2007. The application included eight countries in the Central African region, and built on the successful work accomplished by JHCP in the region over the past four years, aiming to develop a more comprehensive strategy for fighting HIV/AIDS in the region's militaries. Specifically, funding was requested to extend the ongoing program into four additional central African countries (Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Guinea, and Sao Tomé and Príncipe.) Continuous efforts were proposed to monitor the rate of HIV in the already established countries (Cameroon, Gabon, Chad, and Republic of Congo), as well as to conduct refresher training for trained peer educators in these four countries. Using the same survey methodology already established in these four countries, will provide, for the first time, the ability to reliably compare military HIV rates across all eight countries in the region.

The proposal was reviewed by a scientific review board and will be submitted to the DHAPP Board of Directors for funding decisions.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

The program in the Central African Republic is newly proposed; no reporting data were collected during the current fiscal year.

