



EAST TIMOR

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 East Timor is estimated to be 1.06 million people, with an average life expectancy of 66.2 years. Tetum and Portuguese are the official languages of East Timor, which has an estimated literacy rate of 58.6%. In late 1999, about 70% of the economic infrastructure of East Timor was laid waste by Indonesian troops and anti-independence militias, and 300,000 people fled westward. Over the next 3 years, however, a massive international program, manned by 5000 peacekeepers (8000 at peak) and 1300 police officers, led to substantial reconstruction in both urban and rural areas. The gross domestic product per capita is \$800, with 42% of East Timorians living below the poverty line.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in East Timor's general population is not known. A 2003 study found HIV prevalence rates of 3% for female commercial sex workers and 1% for men who have sex with men.

Military Statistics

The East Timor Defense Force (Forças de Defesa de Timor-L'este, FDTL) is estimated at approximately 600 members. The FDTL currently has no identified HIV-positive personnel. Although force-wide testing is not in place, voluntary testing of 250 personnel across all companies and sections did not result in identification in any positive cases.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

The US Pacific Command (USPACOM) and its implementing agent, the Center of Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (COE) have been engaged with the FDTL during 2006 and have commenced activities there. Activities for fiscal year 2006 have included policy and systems strengthening through an advocacy workshop to endorse previously developed FDTL internal regulations on HIV/AIDS protocol; laboratory infrastructure and capacity building to include outfitting an STI/CT (sexually transmitted infection/counseling and testing) center in Mentinaro; developing a curriculum on STI prevention, counseling, and treatment; and CT technical skills training.

Proposed Future Activities

DHAPP received a proposal for FY07 activities from USPACOM/COE on behalf of FDTL. Proposed activities for FY 2007 will continue and expand FY 2006 activities: human capacity building through training and educating FDTL personnel in scaling up peer education activities to reach 100% of the FDTL personnel, developing family-based preventions to extend peer leader education to the community, documenting and sharing lessons learned from different programs; laboratory infrastructure and capacity building through scaling up the capacity of STI/VCT centers in Baucau, and providing critical supplies and continued curriculum development and translation for STI/HIV prevention, care, and treatment.

The objective of the proposed program is to ensure access to best practices and lessons learned from military and civil efforts in the areas of HIV/AIDS policy, systems strengthening, human capacity building, training and education, and capacity building of laboratories and infrastructure in order to build and maintain robust and comprehensive national HIV/AIDS military specific programs. The proposal was reviewed by a scientific panel and will be presented to the DHAPP Board of Directors.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Prevention, Care, and Treatment

In February 2006, an HIV/AIDS Strategic Planning Conference was held to bring together senior FDTL officers to review and revise the 5-year HIV/AIDS strategic plan, and to prioritize work activities for the first 2 years of the plan. Approximately 30 senior military officers from FDTL, representatives from UNAIDS, Ministry of Health, Family Health International, Fundasaun Timor Hari'i, COE, and the U.S. Office of Defense Cooperation were present.

East Timor experienced almost 4 months of civil unrest in the second half of 2006, finally returning to normal operations in August. Peer leader training originally scheduled for spring 2006 is now scheduled to be carried out in November 2006. USPACOM/COE is partnering with a local nongovernmental organization to implement the training. DHAPP looks forward to a productive year ahead as USPACOM/COE continues its work with the US Embassy, the FDTL, and local partners to assist in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

