



DJIBOUTI

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 estimated population of Djibouti is 506,000 people, with an average life expectancy of 43 years. French and Arabic are the official languages of Djibouti, which has an estimated literacy rate of 68%, unevenly distributed between men and women. The economy is based on service activities connected with the country's strategic location and status as a free trade zone in northeast Africa. Two thirds of the inhabitants live in the capital city; the others are mostly nomadic herders. Low rainfall limits crop production to fruits and vegetables, and most food must be imported. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is \$1,000, with 42% of Djiboutian people living below the poverty level. Djibouti hosts the only US military base in sub-Saharan Africa and is a front-line state in the global war on terrorism.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in Djibouti's general population is estimated at 3.1%. Djibouti has approximately 15,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. The primary mode of transmission is heterosexual contact. Women are more severely affected than men. Individuals aged 20–29 years are more severely affected than those in other age groups.

Military Statistics

The Djibouti National Army (DNA) is estimated at approximately 8,000 members. Djibouti expends 3.8% of the GDP on the military. In 2006, the DNA conducted its own seroprevalence study and found a rate of 1.17%.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

DHAPP staff members have worked in coordination with the DNA and the Security Assistance Office at the US Embassy in Djibouti to provide technical assistance, as needed, as the DNA prevention and care program continues to expand.



Foreign Military Financing Assistance

Djibouti was awarded Foreign Military Financing funding for the acquisition of laboratory equipment, and supporting reagents and supplies related to the diagnosis and treatment of HIV/AIDS. This award was appropriated for fiscal years 2003 and 2006, and FY03 funding was released for expenditure during FY05. To date, funding for 2003 has been used to procure a hematology analyzer, autoclave, centrifuge, rapid HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C test kits, immunoassay, biochemistry and microbiology equipment, refrigerators, and supporting laboratory reagents and supplies.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Prevention

The DNA HIV/AIDS prevention programs focus on abstinence, faithfulness, and use of condoms. The three are not considered separate, even though the use of a condom is advised as a last resort. During the National Fight Against HIV/AIDS Week, almost 2,000 troops were sensitized. Between January and September 2007, more than 1,800 members were sensitized in a military camp located near the Somali border. It is a cohesion camp where the different military units rotate. This location is an excellent opportunity to launch prevention campaigns. During FY07, 3,800 troops were reached with comprehensive prevention messages, and 116 peer educators were trained. The training was done in collaboration with the National Fight Against HIV/AIDS Program.

The DNA supports 13 condom service outlets for its troops.

Two (2) service outlets provide prevention of mother-to-child transmission services. During FY07, 882 pregnant women were serviced by these outlets, and 19 of them received a complete course of antiretroviral prophylaxis. In addition, 44 health care workers were trained in the provision of PMTCT services.



Care and Treatment

The DNA supports 5 Counseling and Testing (CT) Centers for its troops. The CT Centers are located throughout the DNA and service all branches of the military, including the Republican Guard and the Gendarmerie Nationale. During FY07, 617 DNA personnel were counseled and tested.

Two (2) service outlets provide antiretroviral therapy (ART) for DNA members and their families. During FY07, there were 15 newly initiated patients receiving ART, and at the end of the reporting period there were a total of 31 patients. For the first time, the DNA has an HIV diagnostic laboratory that can perform CD4 testing and other necessary HIV diagnostics, instead of depending on another organization's laboratory. With the new laboratory capabilities, 4 lab technicians were trained.

Proposed Future Activities

DHAPP received a proposal from the DNA for activities in FY08. Specific objectives of the proposal included increasing prevention activities, providing medical personnel with training for palliative care and treatment services, and increasing the number of troops tested for HIV.

