



**REPUBLIC OF
CONGO**

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 the Republic of the Congo (formerly Congo-Brazzaville) is estimated to be 3.9 million people, with an average life expectancy of 54 years. French is the official language of the Republic of the Congo, which has an estimated literacy rate of 84%, unevenly distributed between men and women. The economy is a mixture of subsistence agriculture, an industrial sector based largely on oil, and support services, and a government characterized by budget problems and overstaffing. The Republic of the Congo was once one of Africa's largest petroleum producers, but, with declining production, new offshore oil discoveries will be necessary to sustain its oil earnings over the long term. Oil has supplanted forestry as the mainstay of the economy, providing a major share of government revenues and exports. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is \$3,700.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in the Republic of the Congo general population is estimated at 5.3%. The Republic of the Congo has approximately 120,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. The primary identified risk factor in the population is unprotected heterosexual contact.

Military Statistics

The Congolese Armed Forces (CAF) are comprised of approximately 10,000 members. The Republic of the Congo allocates 3.1% of the GDP for military expenditures. In 2003, with funding from DHAPP, the first HIV surveillance was conducted for the CAF in the capital city of Brazzaville, revealing a prevalence rate of 4.3%. In 2007, another HIV surveillance study was conducted for CAF in Brazzaville and the prevalence rate was 2.6%.

PROGRAM REPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

The Johns Hopkins Cameroon Program (JHCP) has been providing technical assistance to the CAF in the implementation of HIV prevention and surveillance activities.



OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

Prevention

Comprehensive prevention messages reached 1,647 CAF troops through the 163 educational sessions held throughout the year. During these sessions, a total of 5,907 condoms were distributed.

Care

In 2007, a second HIV surveillance study was conducted for the CAF in the capital of Brazzaville, revealing a prevalence rate of 2.6%. Over 1,000 troops were counseled and tested during the study. The Ministry of Defense has released the results.

Proposed Future Activities

DHAPP received a proposal from JHCP on behalf of the CAF for activities during FY08. Proposed activities include continuing prevention education training for peer educators and troops as well as the production of behavior change communication materials for trainers in military instruction centers.

