



EL SALVADOR



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 El Salvador is 7 million people, with an average life expectancy of 72 years. Spanish is the official language of El Salvador, which has an estimated literacy rate of 80%, evenly distributed between men and women. The GDP per capita is \$6,400, with an unemployment rate of 6.3%. The smallest country in Central America, El Salvador has the third largest economy, but growth has been modest in recent years. Economic growth will decelerate in 2009 due to the global slowdown and to El Salvador's dependence on exports to the US and remittances from the US.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in the general population of El Salvador is estimated at 0.8%, with approximately 35,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. The most frequent mode of transmission is through heterosexual intercourse (77%). According to an epidemiological report from the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance (MSPAS), through the National STI/HIV/AIDS Program from 1984 to December 2006, 7,746 AIDS cases and 10,272 HIV cases have been reported, totaling 18,018 cases. UNAIDS estimates a 40% to 50% under recording in the country. Of the 18,018 cases recorded, the age group most affected is those aged 20–34 years, accounting for 51% of all cases. In 2006, HIV/AIDS was the second highest cause of hospital deaths in men and women aged 25–59 years, and was the third highest cause of hospital deaths in men and women aged 20–24 years (May 2007, Ministry of Health, *The Fight Against AIDS in El Salvador, a National Commitment*).

Military Statistics

The El Salvadoran Armed Forces (ESAF) consists of approximately 10,000 members. The ESAF, primarily made up of young men and women aged 18 - 49 years, has a 12-month service obligation. In 1987, the first HIV case in the armed forces was detected. From that first case until 2005, 383 cases of HIV/AIDS were reported in the ESAF. In 1994, the ESAF medical command approved a directive for a policy, standards, and procedures plan to regulate research, control, and surveillance of HIV/AIDS among ESAF personnel. El Salvador expends 5% of the GDP on military purposes. Military HIV prevalence rates are unknown.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

DHAPP staff have been collaborating with the US MLO in San Salvador and the ESAF to re-energize its program. In addition, a new partner was identified to support the ESAF program. PSI and its affiliate in Central America, PASMO, will be supporting the ESAF HIV/AIDS program in FY09.

OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

No programmatic activities took place in the ESAF during FY08.



Proposed Future Activities

In FY08, DHAPP received a proposal from PSI and PASMO to work with the ESAF on prevention programming and conduct a TRaC survey among the ESAF. Program activities will begin in FY09. The US MLO will support the DHAPP program in El Salvador by procuring HIV rapid test kits, prevention materials such as banners and posters, and necessary office equipment. In FY09, 1 ESAF clinician will attend DHAPP's *MIHTP* in San Diego to receive training on ARV services.