



GABON

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

Gabon's estimated population is 1.5 million people, with an average life expectancy of 54 years. French is the official language of Gabon, which has an estimated literacy rate of 63%, unevenly distributed between men and women. Gabon has a per capita income 4 times that of most sub-Saharan African nations. The oil sector now accounts for 50% of the GDP. The GDP per capita is \$14,900. This has offset a sharp decline in extreme poverty; however, because of high income inequality, a large proportion of the population remains poor. Gabon depended on timber and manganese until oil was discovered offshore in the early 1970s.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in Gabon's general population is estimated at 5.9%. Gabon has approximately 46,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. The primary identified risk factor in the population is unprotected heterosexual contact.

Military Statistics

The Gabonese Armed Forces (GAF) is a small, professional military estimated at approximately 5,000 members. Gabon allocates 3.4% of the GDP for military expenditures. In 2007, with funding from DHAPP, the second HIV surveillance study for the GAF was conducted in Libreville, revealing a prevalence of 4.3%. Results of the study have been officially released by the Gabonese MOD.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

The JHCP has been providing technical assistance to the GAF through the implementation of HIV prevention and surveillance activities.



Foreign Military Financing Assistance

Gabon 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 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2007. Funding for the 2003, 2005, and 2006 appropriation was released for expenditure during FY05, FY07, and FY09, respectively. To date, funding for 2003 has been used to procure laboratory supporting supplies and reagents for the main military hospital. Planning and negotiation for 2005–2007 funding procurements are currently under way.

OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

Prevention and Care

Peer educators who had been trained last year in Southern Gabon organized prevention education sessions. In total, 42 educational sessions were held in the military camps, and a total of 875 troops were reached with comprehensive prevention messages.

During FY08, JHCP provided technical assistance to the military HIV coordination team in Gabon to finalize the surveillance report that was conducted in Libreville, the capital city, during FY07. The second HIV

surveillance study for the GAF was also conducted in Libreville, and revealed a prevalence of 4.3%. The rate of syphilis among those aged 19 - 48 years was 16.8%.

Proposed Future Activities

DHAPP received a proposal from the Global Viral Forecasting Initiative (Dr. Nathan Wolfe, formerly of JHCP, is the founder and principal investigator) on behalf of the GAF. The main objectives of the proposal are to conduct refresher training of peer educators and counselors in military garrisons, produce and disseminate behavior change communication materials, and reinforce education on HIV/AIDS and other STDs.

