



**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 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 GDP per capita is \$3,800.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV prevalence rate in the Republic of the Congo general population is estimated at 3.5%. The Republic of the Congo has approximately 73,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. The primary identified risk factor in the population is unprotected heterosexual contact.

Military Statistics

The Congolese Armed Forces (CAF) is 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 the CAF in Brazzaville and the prevalence rate was 2.6%.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

The 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 1,768 CAF troops through the 104 educational sessions held throughout the year.

Other

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. During FY08, JHCP provided technical assistance to the CAF's HIV coordination team to finalize the surveillance report. The MoD has officially released the results.

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 CAF. 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.