

THAILAND

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

Thailand is the only Southeast Asian country never to have been taken over by a European power. A bloodless revolution in 1932 led to a constitutional monarchy. In alliance with Japan during World War II, Thailand became a US ally following the conflict. Thailand is currently facing separatist violence in its southern ethnic Malay-Muslim provinces. The estimated population of Thailand is 65 million people, with an average life expectancy of 73 years. Thai is the official language of Thailand, which has an estimated literacy rate of 93%, evenly distributed between men and women. Exports were the key economic driving force in 2007 and 2008 as foreign investment and consumer demand stalled. Export growth from January 2005 to November 2008 averaged 17.5% annually. The GDP per capita is \$8,700.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The estimated HIV prevalence rate in Thailand's general population is 1.4%, with approximately 600,000 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. It is believed that heterosexual intercourse still accounts for the majority of new infections.

Military Statistics

The Royal Thai Armed Forces (RTAF) is composed of approximately 300,000 active-duty members. Thailand expends 1.8% of the GDP on military purposes. Military HIV prevalence rates are unknown.



PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

Since 2003, USPACOM and its implementing agent, COE, have used a strategy of leveraging its established working relations with military partners and civilian experts to catalyze regional cooperation on HIV/AIDS issues. To accomplish this, a partnership with the RTAF continues to be essential to enabling a “neighbors teaching neighbors” approach.

USPACOM/COE, together with US Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences and the RTAF, and with funding from DHAPP, stood up a military Regional Training Center responsible for the education of a core group of military medical officers. These officers form a nidus of their respective country’s military HIV/AIDS prevention efforts and serve as liaisons and advocates for future work.



OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

Care and Treatment

In FY08, 18 members from 9 regional militaries attended the *Asia-Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS Lab Infrastructure and Capacity Building (Train the Trainer in Lab and Diagnostics) Course* in August 2008. The countries that sent representatives to this course included Vietnam, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Cambodia, and Thailand. Also in FY08, 29 members from 13 regional militaries attended the *Asia-Pacific Regional Support and Training Capacity for Treatment and Care Initiatives (Train the Trainer in HIV/AIDS Care and Treatment) Course* in July 2008. The countries that sent representatives to this course included Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Laos, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nepal, Philippines, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea, and Thailand.