



DoD HIV/AIDS Prevention Program Status Report:

Togo



BACKGROUND

Introduction/General Information

The population of Togo is estimated between 4.7 million and 5.3 million, with estimated life expectancy ranging from 51 to 54 years. French is the official language in Togo, where the literacy rate is estimated to be approximately 52%; literacy is distributed disproportionately between males and females.

Togo has a developing economy typical of sub-Saharan Africa, with 65% of the workforce engaged in subsistence agriculture; per capita income estimates range from \$310 to \$1,500.

Country HIV/AIDS Statistics and Risk Factors

HIV/AIDS prevalence in Togo is estimated to be 6% of the adult population with either HIV infection or AIDS. The number of people estimated to be living with HIV in Togo is 150,000. Identified significant risk factors include a high prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and high-risk heterosexual contact with multiple partners.

Military HIV/AIDS Information

Togo's military size is estimated at approximately 12,000. Togolese Armed Forces (TAF) have not performed

systematic screening of personnel, and prevalence statistics are therefore unavailable. Current force-wide rates are believed to be similar to those found in the civilian population.

PROPOSED PROGRAM

An HIV/AIDS prevention plan has not been submitted by the Togolese military to date.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

Military-to-Military

DHAPP provided funds to the US Embassy in Togo to support a proposal by Population Services International (PSI), focusing on HIV prevention for the TAF. The PSI proposal focused on primary prevention education and condom distribution as adjunct activities. Outlined objectives included development of a soldier peer education network to provide high-quality information about prevention and transmission, and a system for condom distribution.

PSI developed its peer education network by selecting soldiers who were considered by their peers to be "popular opinion leaders" (i.e., soldiers who were highly respected and approachable, with well-developed interpersonal skills). Soldiers selected to work with non-commissioned personnel were noncommissioned themselves. At the

conclusion of its program, PSI had trained 600 peer educators, creating an educator-to-soldier ratio of 20 to 1. Peer educator supervisors, drawn from officer ranks, include 60 personnel, producing a supervisor-to-educator ratio of 1 to 10.



DHAPP-sponsored peer educators were equipped with HIV/AIDS prevention information.

PSI designed its soldier peer education program to create and disseminate comprehensive and accurate information about risky sexual behaviors and HIV/STI prevention. Both peer educators and peer educator supervisors were trained to provide behavior change information and to refer their peers to military medical facilities if appropriate. Healthcare and prevention training encompassed basic reproductive health, HIV/STI transmission information, proper condom use, and clinical referral. Educators were also given workshops on interpersonal counseling and effective presentation. Finally, peer educators were provided support by PSI to allow them to sell condoms directly, creating a unique condom vendor network within the military.

Clinical Provider Training

None at this time.

PROGRAM IMPACT

Master Trainers and Peer Educators

PSI trained 600 peer educators and 60 peer educator supervisors.

Number of Troops Trained

PSI has reached virtually all of the military personnel in the Togolese armed forces with the HIV/AIDS prevention message.

Potential Number of Troops Affected

Through DHAPP support, PSI has affected approximately 12,000 TAF troops and their family members.

Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT)

There are 4 VCT sites open at the present time.

Laboratory Capability/Infrastructure

PSI trained 2 laboratory technicians in each of four regional bases using government approved rapid HIV testing protocols. DHAPP also equipped the labs with refrigerators, centrifuges, and other medical equipment and consumables.

Mass Awareness

At least one large-scale mass awareness event is conducted on a quarterly basis, reaching 2,000 or more participants with such items as posters, brochures, stickers, and T-shirts bearing an HIV/AIDS prevention message.