

What are the economic benefits of TB control?

There is no doubt that a sick workforce contributes to an unhealthy economy. Yet the full economic cost of disease within poor communities has often been underestimated. Improving the health of a population is a definitive and effective way of stimulating economic growth and reducing the constraints of poverty. Controlling TB, one of several diseases that particularly affects the poor, is one way of achieving greater global prosperity.

Specifically, a cure and good TB treatment for the majority of TB patients:

- ▷ Prevents the continued spread of TB and reduces the overall burden of TB.
- ▷ Improves the productivity of workers by reducing absenteeism and incapacity from ill health.
- ▷ Averts TB death among current and future workers, adding to the productive capacities of the economy.
- ▷ Releases hospital beds currently occupied by TB patients, since successful treatment needs little or no hospitalisation.

Global control of TB also represents a significant contribution to the fight against poverty

- ▷ In India alone, a US\$200 million investment in DOTS each year carries tangible benefits to the Indian economy worth at least US\$750 million per year.
- ▷ What has been demonstrated for India is true of all low and middle income countries: for each dollar invested in DOTS, the expected return in increased economic output is more than three and a half dollars.
- ▷ By 2012, the economic return of scaling up health interventions that target the poor will be six times the cost of investment.

Controlling TB is an effective way of reducing poverty at an individual and country level. Investments in health are investments in human potential. Eradicating TB is a way of putting back billions of dollars into the national economies of poorer countries.