

With support from TB REACH, ICAP has forged a public-private partnership between The Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA), the largest recruiting company for Basotho miners, and the Ministry of Health, to address the tuberculosis (TB) crisis in Lesotho. Begun in 2013, the project aims to improve the health of mine workers and their families, who are at disproportionately high risk for TB.

Lesotho has the fifth highest incidence of TB in the world. Various factors have contributed to this, including the presence of a large number of Basotho migrant workers who provide nearly 25 percent of the labor in South Africa's mining industry. TB incidence in the gold mines of South Africa, where poor ventilation and prolonged exposure to silica dust in closed mine shafts increases the risk of developing TB, is among the highest in the world. Additionally, the social consequences of separation from families and community put migrant miners at greater risk for HIV. Both co-morbidities often go undiagnosed and untreated when these workers fear possible loss of wages, termination of their contract, forced repatriation, and the stigma associated with HIV and TB.

The South African Development Committee (SADC) addressed this critical situation in its 2012 declaration, which aspires to control TB in the region through improved environmental, health, and safety standards in the mining sector.

Now, ICAP is translating the SADC Declaration on TB in miners into its new TB REACH project with the goal of improving health outcomes among 26,000 miners and their families through TB education and screening with same-day diagnosis and treatment. The project utilizes innovative approaches developed through ICAP's extensive experience scaling up the TB response in Lesotho.

To meet the unique needs of miners, ICAP is supporting newly established TB clinics at three TEBA offices where miners come monthly to collect a part of their salary. Establishing this non-traditional point of care provides an opportunity to meet miners regularly, to provide health information and to screen for TB. In the first nine months of implementation, over 51,000 miners, ex-miners and family members have been screened for TB and 166 have been diagnosed with TB.

To address the limited human resources available to staff additional TB clinics, ICAP is implementing a task-shifting approach and has trained TEBA care supporters to provide the TB screening, sputum collection and contact tracing activities traditionally performed by a nurse. The TEBA clinics use GeneXpert rapid testing for same day diagnosis and daily SMS text messaging to strengthen treatment adherence among the miners. The project also links TB diagnosis and treatment to deferred payment distribution in order to promote retention.

Through these new approaches, the project addresses the aspirations of and builds bridges between the Government of Lesotho, the Ministry of Health, and the National TB Program to achieve the best for mineworkers, their families, and the surrounding mining community.



Lesotho

ICAP AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

ICAP's New Public-Private Partnership Expands TB Care and Treatment for Mine Workers in Lesotho

Stop TB Partnership
TB REACH