

Gambia

Health Promotion and
Development Organisation
(HePDO)

Mobilizing and screening vulnerable TB communities in Kanifing Municipal Council (KMC)

◆ Combating tuberculosis

(TB) is one of the key priorities of the Government of the Gambia, and to this end all efforts are being made to ensure that the spread of TB is controlled while detected cases are treated. To support the effort of the Government in this cause, HePDO obtained funding from TB REACH Wave 4 to mobilize, screen, identify and refer suspected TB patients for early diagnosis and treatment.

The TB REACH funding provided a unique opportunity for HePDO to develop a community-based strategy that enabled it to conduct Active Case-Finding (ACF) in the KMC, which is the most densely populated municipality in the Gambia.

In its initial phase, the project conducted a series of information sessions at the community level, seeking support for ACF activities among religious and youth leaders as well as ward counselors and those concerned with women's issues. In addition, TB inspectors and laboratory staff working at DOTS centers within the intervention sites received training on the TB REACH project so that they could properly record all the referrals received from HePDO volunteers. The training also enabled the staff to give maximum support to the referred presumptive TB patients, helping them to more easily access TB services.

Several representatives selected by the community were recruited and trained to serve as volunteers for mobilizing, screening, identifying and referring suspects for early diagnosis and treatment. Well-designed referral slips were developed and distributed to volunteers for use when referring suspects for testing at any of the four laboratories within the intervention sites. Registers were also developed and given to the volunteers to record basic information about those referred for ease of follow-up.

Working in close collaboration with the NTP, the project target notification for the period 1st October 2014 to 30th September 2015 is: 656 new smear or bacteriologically positive (SS+/B+) cases; 898 all forms of TB cases; and 148 new SS+/B+ 148. An additional project target is to identify 2,050 TB suspects and refer them for diagnosis.

ACF started on 1st October 2014. By the end of June 2015, HePDO had referred a total of 1,482 suspected TB patients for testing, of which 123 individuals were confirmed SS+ TB. This represents about 83% of the Additional New SS+/B+ project target.



However, not all those referred went to be tested, due to fear of being discriminated against or stigmatized, or because they preferred to consult local traditional healers. This constitutes a barrier to timely diagnosis and treatment. To address this issue, the TB REACH-funded intervention in the KMC is not limited to ACF. It also seeks to educate, using the media and community meetings to promote acceptance and raise awareness that TB is a curable disease and not caused by a devil. As a result of these activities, the barriers will be overcome and people will be more willing to voluntarily go for testing and treatment. With the help of TB REACH, many new cases that would not previously have been detected early are now identified and treated, thus contributing to the reduction of TB spread in the KMC.



TB REACH

FINDING AND TREATING
PEOPLE WITH TB
IN THE WORLD'S POOREST
COMMUNITIES



Government of Canada **Gouvernement du Canada**

More than nine and a half million people around the world become ill with tuberculosis (TB) each year. About one-third of them fail to get an accurate diagnosis or effective treatment and are more likely to die from this curable disease.

By supporting the many partners working in the field, TB REACH offers a lifeline to these people by finding and treating people in the poorest, most vulnerable communities in the world. In areas with limited or non-existent TB care, TB REACH supports innovative and effective techniques to identify people who have TB, avert deaths, stop TB from spreading, and halt the development of drug resistant strains.

TB REACH has supported a total of 142 projects in 46 countries. To date, 33 million people have been screened for TB in project areas, of which, 1.7 million have received TB treatment, accounting for 856,000 lives saved. Some projects have seen increases in TB notifications of more than 100%.

Our partners are providing evidence for new case finding approaches and are working with community and policy leaders as well as donors such as The Global Fund to integrate those approaches into national strategies that improve TB case detection.

TB REACH was launched in 2010 thanks to a CAD\$ 120 million grant from Global Affairs Canada.

TB REACH acts as a pathfinder, providing fast track funding for innovative projects, monitoring effectiveness and leveraging funding for scale up.

Stop TB Partnership

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