



Tuberculosis

The Integrated Health Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC-IHP)

has been working since 2010 to improve the health of the Congolese people in 78 health zones in four provinces. Funded by USAID and led by Management Sciences for Health, with partners International Rescue Committee and Overseas Strategic Consulting, Ltd. (OSC), the project focuses on maternal, newborn, and child health; family planning; nutrition, malaria, and tuberculosis; HIV and AIDS; and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)—applying many proven, low-cost, high-impact innovations on a large scale.

DRC-IHP stresses low-cost, high-impact innovations that can be used by providers at all levels of the health system. This project has improved health services for more than 12 million people—17 percent of the Congolese population. Data modeling shows that DRC-IHP interventions saved the lives of more than 150,000 children over just three years.

Now replaced by DRC-IHPplus, the project has recently been expanded to 83 health zones through June 2016, with partners OSC and Pathfinder/Evidence to Action (E2A).

Integrated Health Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo



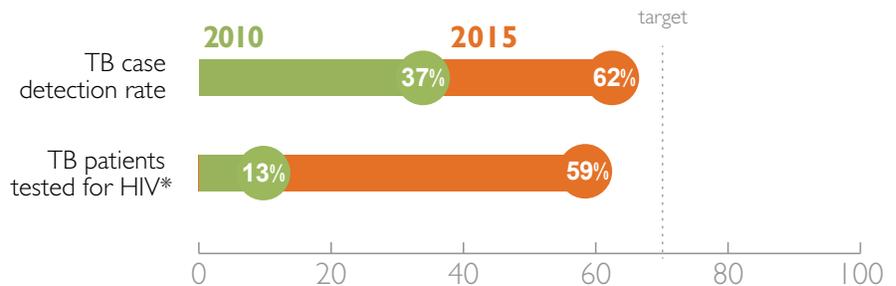
USAID
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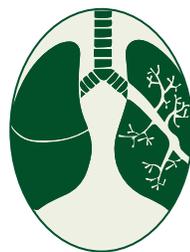
STRATEGY

Half of all cases of tuberculosis (TB) go undetected and therefore untreated. TB is often considered a curse rather than a curable disease, and few consult health workers about it until they become incapacitated. Bringing information into the home is critical. Once a community understands TB, they tend to tell others who are coughing to go to the hospital.

RESULTS



*Percent of all registered TB patients tested for HIV through USG-supported programs

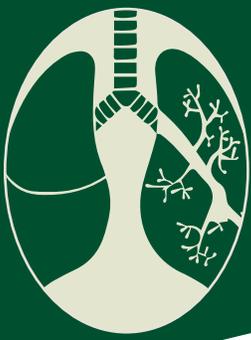


60,000 pulmonary tuberculosis cases detected and treated

234 cases of multi-drug resistant (MDR) TB detected and treated (31 in 2011, 121 in 2015)

DRC-IHP

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Fighting Tuberculosis

Challenge: TB is a leading cause of disability and death in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Half of all cases of this extremely infectious disease go undetected and therefore untreated.

DRC-IHP response: DRC-IHP has been assisting the Ministry of Health (MOH) to implement the National Tuberculosis Strategic Plan for 2014–2017. Success depends heavily on educating communities and families about TB, with testing, counseling, and referrals for treatment.

Solution: test people in their homes.

In keeping with IHP's use of low-cost, highly effective innovations, the project organizes “mini-campaigns” house to house in rural areas where electricity, and therefore radio and TV, are sparse.

Local health officials mobilize a few dozen volunteers from the community, who receive about two hours of training on TB, how to discuss it with adults and children, and how to collect sputum samples. The volunteers then screen for cases house by house, collecting sputum samples from people with a chronic cough. If a test comes back positive from the laboratory, the volunteer refers the individual to a local treatment center.

Bringing information into the home is critical. Once a community understands TB, they tend to tell others who are coughing to go to the hospital. ■

“I thought it was a curse.”



Solange Bitondo coughed for a year without seeking treatment from the health center less than a kilometer from her home. Instead, the 37-year-old mother of three consulted traditional healers, prayed, and took herbs and potions from the market. Then, one day a community health worker knocked on Solange's door and suggested she spit into a container for a TB test.

In her health zone in Sud Kivu, Solange was one of 30 found positive for TB—close to 10% of those tested—in a house-to-house “mini-campaign” organized by the Ministry of Health with IHP's support in February 2015. After being counseled, Solange sought treatment at the Kamituga General Referral Hospital.

“I thought my coughing was a curse or a spell, but thanks to community health workers, I discovered that it is a curable disease. Thank you to the health zone team and to IHP for their support,” said Solange. “Now, I have to convince my brother, who has also been coughing, to get tested.”

In Solange's health zone alone, volunteers visited more than **5,000 households** and tested **321 people**, while radio broadcasts and church announcements reached more than **45,000 people** with TB messages.