



STORIES of HOPE

BENIN

Building Human Capacity in the Defense Force



With PEPFAR support, Army Doctors conduct HIV/AIDS training for members of the Benin Defense Force.

With the increased counseling and testing capacity, 4,000 military members preparing for peacekeeping operations have been tested for HIV and received their results.



In Benin, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR) supports a military-to-military partnership with the Benin Defense Force to fight HIV/AIDS. The program, which began in 2002, sets out a battle plan for addressing HIV/AIDS in the Defense Force and in the larger community. The goals include coordinating efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS by creating a focal unit and 47 decentralized units to disseminate life-saving prevention information to members of the Defense Force. Additionally, the partnership seeks to develop a strategic plan for drafting vital documents that address HIV/AIDS, including a curriculum for recruit training in the Defense Force and procedure manuals regarding prevention of HIV for peacekeeping operations.

With support from the Emergency Plan, the Benin Defense Force has made great strides in preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS. Over 250 military peer educators in the decentralized units were trained to teach their peers about HIV prevention. In September 2005, the Defense Force held a conference where decentralized units shared best practices and lessons learned, helping to improve HIV prevention efforts. In 2005, the Defense Force conducted the first behavioral and serological survey of military personnel, assessing the impact of HIV prevention efforts.

With support from the military-to-military partnership, the Benin Defense Force has rapidly scaled up its counseling and testing capacity. The first functional counseling and testing center is in place in Cotonou, serving over 1,000 people per year. Approximately 120 military personnel have been trained in the provision of HIV counseling and testing. With the increased counseling and testing capacity, 4,000 military members preparing for peacekeeping operations have been tested for HIV and received their results. Since 2003, all military recruits have been routinely tested for HIV.

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

Department of State | U.S. Agency for International Development | Department of Defense | Department of Commerce
Department of Labor | Department of Health and Human Services | Peace Corps

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