

ON TARGETS

Quarterly Newsletter
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Z **AMBART PROJECT** **Training School leavers as Microscopists to improve TB case detection in Zambia**

In April and May 2006, ZAMBART project spearheaded a pilot project to formally train school leavers as microscopists, with the hope of filling the gap caused by an acute shortage of qualified laboratory technicians.

Using locally available resources, this was a collaborative project between ZAMBART, Lusaka District Health Management Team (DHMT), the Centre for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia (CIDRZ), the Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts and Commerce and the Ministry of Health (MoH). Human resources – the mortar of any health system – is one of the main bottlenecks in the health sector in Zambia. The MoH has recently flagged this as a “human resource crisis”. Contributing to the critical shortage of manpower are HIV/AIDS, resignations from the public sector for better paying jobs in the private sector, and a brain drain to neighbouring and developed countries. A review of the national TB pro-

gramme carried out in 2005 underscored the shortage of laboratories and of laboratory technicians. The review showed that nationally there is one laboratory for 100,000 people and one laboratory per 8,000 sq km, and that most laboratories are located in the urban areas. Where there are laboratory technicians, there are normally only one or two. Less than 50 laboratory technicians graduate every year from the two colleges in the country, a figure well short of meeting the demand. With the shortage of qualified staff, expansion of services to the rural areas looks unlikely.



Yet, the need for these technicians increases: the TB burden in Zambia has escalated with high HIV prevalence (58,070 TB cases were notified in 2004) and the ARV rollout has spurred improvements in TB services (including the integration with HIV services at

health centre level). Indeed, already, the few laboratory technicians available are not able to cope with increases in workload and in many districts, have resorted to using microscopists that they have individually trained as laboratory assistants. If this trend continues, Zambia may fail to attain a case detection rate of 70%, recommended by the World Health Assembly.

The pilot project training school leavers as microscopists is therefore timely. A total of 16 candidates received 6 weeks training in sputum smear microscopy at the Evelyn Hone College – the college responsible for training laboratory technicians. The microscopists, who completed their training at the end of May 2006, are already in their new stations. An evaluation of the training programme, and microscopists contribution to the TB programme and the general health system in Zambia is expected to be undertaken sometime this year, with possible funding from TARGETS.

contributed by Dr Joseph Banda

For more information on TARGETS see www.lshtm.ac.uk/dfid/targets or email alexandra.coldham@lshtm.ac.uk

TARGETS receives funding from DFID and conducts research to generate effective tools and strategies for communicable disease control
Our Partners
MAAS-CHRD, Pune, India
Ifakara HRDC, Tanzania

INDEPTH Network, Accra, Ghana
KNCV, The Hague, Netherlands
Makerere Medical College, Uganda
ZAMBART, the Zambian AIDS-related Tuberculosis project, Lusaka, Zambia
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, UK

Tuberculosis: An Additional Tipping Stress on Poor Households in South Africa and Zambia

The convergence of tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and food insecurity on poor households is the focus of an anthropological study being carried out in Zambia and South Africa over the next year (2006-2007). The study, funded by IFPRI (the International Food Policy Research Institute), falls under the auspices of a Regional Network on HIV/AIDS, Rural Livelihoods and Food Security (RENEWAL) which is active in six Sub-Saharan countries (Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, South Africa, Kenya and Ethiopia) and oversees 12 studies in the region looking at different dimensions of HIV and food insecurity. The Zambian-South African study will conduct fieldwork in two sites (one rural and one peri-urban) within the wider ZAMSTAR trial. Virginia Bond (P.I., LSHTM and ZAMBART Project), Mutale Chileshe (Zambian researcher, ZAMBART Project) and Busi Magazi (South African researcher, DTTC, Stellenbosch University) will carry out the research.

Contributed by Ginny Bond

TARGETS Database goes live

You can now search all 90 current projects within the TARGETS Consortium, with more to be added regularly.

www.lshtm.ac.uk/dfid/targets/search.htm

Melinda Gates visits Z A M S T A R

We were delighted that Melinda Gates came to visit the ZAMSTAR project in May on a learning trip. Melinda is pictured here dressed in ZAMSTAR chitnge.

At the World Economic Forum in Davos in January, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced it would be setting aside an extra \$600m for tuberculosis research.



ONE MINUTE C.V.

Delna Ghandhi
Following Nick Banatvala's move to become Head of Global Affairs in the UK's Department of Health, Delna Ghandhi becomes DFID advisor for TARGETS.

B a c k g r o u n d

Delna Ghandhi joined Policy Division in DFID London after a three year secondment to USAID in Washington. Prior to that she was the regional health adviser for DFID in South East Asia, working mainly in Cambodia and Vietnam.

She has also worked with the Vietnamese boat people in Hong Kong and the Rwandese on the Tanzania-Rwanda border.

Her initial overseas experience was with VSO as a medical officer in a remote Kenyan hospital. She has also worked in general practice in the UK.

Any articles for future editions of ON TARGETS can be sent to rhianon.williams@lshtm.ac.uk

Access to HIV/AIDS Care in India: Communicating Study Findings at the National Level

MAAS-CHRD, a TARGETS partner based in Pune, India, recently presented findings from a study on "Access to HIV/AIDS Care" undertaken in three states of India. The organisation was invited to participate at the first National Conference on Research in HIV and AIDS at New Delhi, India, 21 – 23 April 2006, organized by the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) and the Resource Centre for Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS (RCSHA) and supported by DFID. The meeting was well attended by key stakeholders and professionals working on HIV/AIDS research in India, including WHO, TB Research Centre, National AIDS Research Institute, Population Council, NGOs and PLHA networks.

Findings reported reflect the key areas of inquiry in the study, which included treatment seeking behaviour of PLHA for HIV testing, HIV related illnesses and ART, problems faced while accessing HIV care, expressed

needs of PLHA with regard to care and support, public, private and NGO sectors' response to the needs of PLHA and support received by PLHA from family and NGOs to meet economical, psychological, spiritual, social and legal needs

The study team consisted of Sheela Rangan, Abhay Kudale, Saju Joseph, Solomon Salve and Swati Patil from MAAS-CHRD and Kabir Sheikh, Karina Kielmann and John Porter, from the LSHTM.

Contributed by MAAS-CHRD, pictured below

