

Tuberculosis and the Global Fund

The Global Fund leads international agencies in its work to stop the spread of tuberculosis, contributing some two-thirds of all tuberculosis financing around the world. Since its creation in 2002, the Global Fund has approved \$3.2 billion for tuberculosis programs in 112 countries. To date, Global Fund tuberculosis grants have achieved the following:

- 6 million tuberculosis cases treated with highly-effective DOTS therapy; and
- 36,000 people on treatment for MDR-TB.

One-third of the world's population is infected with tuberculosis, some with active tuberculosis and others with inactive tuberculosis. Once commonly known as consumption, tuberculosis was a problem throughout the world for centuries, claiming the lives of prominent figures such as Eleanor Roosevelt and George Orwell. While tuberculosis has been stamped out in the developed world, it remains a serious and constant threat to the lives of people in resource-poor countries, killing almost two million people a year. Although tuberculosis prevention and control efforts face serious challenges, Global Fund programs are helping people in countries around the world combat this disease.

The Tuberculosis Epidemic

Tuberculosis is a contagious disease that spreads through the air like the common cold. Active tuberculosis develops primarily in people with weakened immune systems – for example, in people with HIV – and can escalate to a serious infection of the lungs, resulting in death.

- Two million people die each year from tuberculosis; that's 4,400 new tuberculosis victims each day.
- 30% of the world's population, or two billion people, are infected with the tuberculosis bacilli; one in ten of these people will become sick with active tuberculosis and, without effective treatment, infect 10-15 people per year.
- Effective tuberculosis treatment costs as little as \$10 per person.

The Devastating Connection between Tuberculosis, AIDS and Poverty

While the tuberculosis epidemic is worldwide, it particularly cripples the poorest regions and targets in particular those who have compromised immune systems.

- **Tuberculosis reaches the world's poor in the prime of their lives** – Africa has the highest rate of tuberculosis per capita, while half of the world's new cases occur in six Asian countries. Ninety-eight percent of all tuberculosis deaths occur in the developing world, affecting mostly young adults of working age. The World Bank estimates that tuberculosis costs the developing world \$20 billion per year in lost productivity.
- **AIDS and tuberculosis make for a deadly combination** – Tuberculosis is the leading killer among HIV-positive people, who most easily contract the disease because of their weakened immune systems. It is estimated that one-third of all HIV-positive people are also infected with tuberculosis. The World Health Organization approximates that, if left unchecked, tuberculosis could kill 35 million people over the next 20 years.

The World is Making Progress in the Fight against Tuberculosis

In 1995, the DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment, Short Course) strategy was launched to control tuberculosis. The DOTS strategy calls for increased government commitment to tuberculosis control, improved monitoring and evaluation of the epidemic and patient outcomes, and the provision of effective treatment. Since 1995, 182 countries have adopted DOTS, and 20 million tuberculosis patients have been treated. The Global Fund is playing a critical role in the global fight against tuberculosis by providing funding to scale up tuberculosis control efforts throughout the world.