

Fighting childhood tuberculosis in Tanzania

Tuberculosis (TB) is a leading killer of children worldwide, yet in most countries, efforts to find, diagnose, and treat TB focus on adults only. In 2010 in Tanzania, there were 5,216 TB case notifications in children (less than 15 years of age), which accounted for 8.7 percent of the total new case notifications. However, because it is difficult to diagnose TB in children and health workers do not often receive training in the management of TB in children, the true magnitude of the disease is expected to be much greater.

We need to work hard to save these children from death, and I believe that together we can move toward zero TB in children.

Dr. Rose Olotu, TB/HIV Technical Officer, PATH Tanzania

With funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), PATH, along with clinicians at Dartmouth Medical College and others, has supported the National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Programme (NTLP) in developing national pediatric TB guidelines to help health care workers at all levels of the health system better diagnose, treat, and cure children suffering from TB. The guidelines help health care workers implement best practices in nutrition, management of TB, TB/HIV, multidrug-resistant TB, and infection prevention and control to protect children from TB transmission in health facilities.

Following development of the guidelines, PATH and Dartmouth Medical College worked closely with the NTLP to develop a training curriculum for health care workers throughout the country. During the first six months of rolling out the curriculum, PATH trained 273 health care workers, and partners such as the NTLP and ICAP have used the curriculum to train an additional 25 trainers and 375 health care workers. PATH continues to conduct technical assistance visits, supportive supervision, and mentoring to trainees throughout the



Photo: PATH Tanzania

country. As a result, many facilities have introduced health education campaigns focused on childhood TB.

PATH is planning to train an additional 180 health care workers and 29 coordinators, and has already begun to see an increase in the number of children with TB being found, who otherwise would have been missed.

Following the success in Tanzania, PATH staff in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) began exploring the same model to protect children from acquiring TB in the DRC.

For more information

To learn more about PATH's work in Tanzania, please contact Dr. Zahra Mkomwa at zmkomwa@path.org. To learn more about USAID's work in TB, please contact Elizabeth Pleuss at epleuss@usaid.gov.

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About PATH

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