

TB REACH NATIONAL TUBERCULOSIS PROGRAMME

Finding and treating people with TB in

Benin

- Mobile teams armed with LED Florescent microscopy increase screening and case detection in 120 different communities
- 20% increase in screening numbers and additional case detection in areas with poor access to health services
- Local awareness campaigns carried out by village and area leaders encourage participation



Cotonou - In Benin, the National Tuberculosis Programme (NTP) has launched an initiative aimed at increasing case detection of tuberculosis (TB) in areas with limited access to health services. In spite of a good record of case detection and treatment in Benin, results had leveled off in recent years due to a reliance on passive screening. Due to a number of causes, including financial and geographical limitations, lack of information and cultural stigmas, people often went undiagnosed or were identified at such a late stage in the disease that they could not be treated successfully.

To address this situation, the NTP has established three mobile teams, each consisting of a doctor, a nurse and two laboratory technicians, to serve 120 poor and/or underserved districts nationwide by conducting consultation fairs. In each district the arrival of a mobile team

is preceded by a programme to raise awareness of TB and its treatment, carried out by village and area leaders. Health workers direct people to the place where the mobile team's staff and equipment are set up to carry out free consultations and sputum diagnosis using LED Florescent microscopy, both completed on site. Those whose samples are found to be positive are referred to the treatment centers. In addition to the free TB drugs provided by the NTP, free drugs are also available through the programme for people with other respiratory ailments. These campaigns allow for early case detection and help stop the spread of the disease.

After seven months the consultation fairs have diagnosed 62 additional cases of smear positive TB and the publicity associated with the program has also resulted in a 20.2% increase in the number of TB suspects.