



Fast Facts

Country: China

Duration: April 2003 to December 2006

Implementing UN Agencies: UNDP

Other Implementing Partners: China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges; National Center for AIDS/STD Protection; Government of Shanxi Province

Budget: \$824,000

Key Words: HIV/AIDS; rural communities; capacity-building

BACKGROUND

By 2002, the poverty struck Wenxi and Xia counties of Shanxi province had become the epicentre of China's growing HIV/AIDS epidemic. Due to frequent flooding, drought and soil erosion, the area was unfavourable for agriculture. As a result, communities had few economic resources to mitigate the negative impact of the virus. At the same time, economic insecurity and unemployment encouraged illegal selling of blood by local residents, which became one of the main vectors transmitting the virus.

In addition, due to prejudice and social stigma, farmers could not sell their produce to neighbouring regions, labourers could not obtain jobs regardless of their HIV status, and banks and credit cooperatives were reluctant to make loans to HIV positive persons. By 2003, as the epidemic was rapidly devastating community members and generating losses of human resources and decreased economic productivity, HIV/AIDS and poverty had become deeply interlinked in these counties.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The project aimed to improve economic self-sufficiency and quality of life in poor rural communities affected by HIV/AIDS in the Shanxi province. Through a comprehensive approach, the project sought to (i) reverse discriminatory practices and stigmatization against HIV positive people

through improved education and greater communication; (ii) prevent secondary and tertiary HIV transmission by promoting healthy lifestyles; and (iii) establish a sustainable community-based model for family counselling, care and support.

BENEFICIARIES

In rural communities in the Wenxi and Xia counties, community members participated in workshops and basic HIV/AIDS education that resulted in changed attitudes and behaviour towards HIV positive persons and their families. In addition, school children

received HIV/AIDS education as part of their general curriculum, together with extra-curriculum HIV/AIDS sensitization classes for primary and secondary students and their teachers.