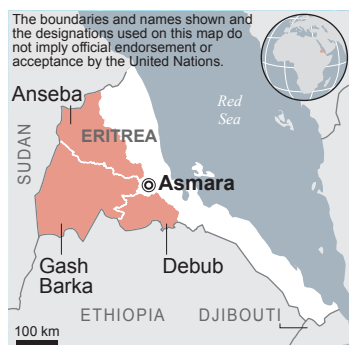


Mobilizing communities to reduce reproductive health morbidity and mortality



UN Trust Fund for Human Security



Fast Facts

Country: Eritrea

Duration: October 2003 to April 2006

Implementing UN Agencies: UNFPA

Other Implementing Partners: Ministry of Health; National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students; National Union of Eritrean Women; FRHAE; Haben

Budget: \$988,097.54

Key Words: Reproductive health; conflict-affected communities

BACKGROUND

In 2002, Eritrea and Ethiopia signed a joint agreement to formally establish their common border. Notwithstanding, the 1998-2000 conflict that preceded this agreement resulted in a significant number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and caused serious damage to the health infrastructure in the border area of Eritrea. In addition, the human security situation in the border area of Eritrea was further challenged by repeated years of severe drought, which ultimately produced a situation of not only chronic

food insecurity but also problems with livestock and lack of access to water and sanitation. The state of reproductive health for the population of the border area was of particular concern, lagging behind that of Eritrea in general, with higher instances of maternal and infant morbidity and mortality, as well as a higher incidence of unintended pregnancies, complications from unsafe abortions, STIs including HIV/AIDS, obstetric fistulas and harmful traditional practices, especially female genital cutting.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The project aimed to strengthen the capacity of NGOs and the Ministry of Health at the community level to respond to the reproductive health needs of the population and to ensure that basic reproductive health care services and information were readily available to all Eritrean women, men and adolescent in the target areas. More specifically, the project would promote

awareness of reproductive health issues to encourage the adoption of positive behaviour changes and utilization of reproductive health services in order to contribute to reductions in maternal mortality and morbidity, prevent female genital cutting, and decrease the spread of STI/HIV/AIDS.

BENEFICIARIES

The beneficiaries were vulnerable individuals and communities in the conflict-affected regions of Eritrea suffering the effects of insufficient healthcare and poor reproductive health services. In this regard, a key focus of the project was the provision of technical training to traditional birth attendants, as well as

training to advocate against female genital cutting. Subsequently, more than 60,000 young people benefited from these services, 198,503 people received reproductive health education by 234 trained maternal health promoters, and around 750,000 people were reached by radio spots against female genital cutting.