World TB Day 2012 - Stop TB in My Lifetime

Celebrated every year on March 24th, the purpose of World TB Day is to build the public’s awareness that tuberculosis remains an epidemic in much of the world, and causes the deaths of several million people each year, destroying livelihoods and families.

March 24th was the day in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced that he had discovered the TB bacillus, the cause of tuberculosis (TB). At the time of Koch’s announcement, TB was at epidemic proportions in both Europe and the Americas, and was causing the death of one in seven people, the discovery allowed for TB to be diagnosed and cured. In 1982, on the one-hundredth anniversary of Robert Koch’s discovery, the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) proposed that March 24th be the official World TB Day (WTBD). 2012 was the 13th annual World TB Day and the theme this year was ‘Stop TB in my Lifetime’.

TB CARE I countries across the world celebrated the day in unique ways, with races, flash mobs, workshops, meetings and by acknowledging to work of those who have given their time and energy in the fight against TB. This publication is an overview of a few of those events and activities.

TB CARE I World TB Day Events in Brief:

**Afghanistan** celebrated World TB Day in 13 provinces and more than 250 health facilities. TB CARE I and the Afghanistan NTP developed information, education, and communication messages in two languages describing the signs and symptoms of TB and how and where people can be treated countrywide. In Bamyan, posters were distributed, World TB Day was publicized on Radio Bamyan and Radio Paiwand and TB healthcare workers were presented with certificates and gifts to acknowledge their hard work. There was a celebration in Faizabad which around 350 people attended, including religious leaders, government officials, authorities, UN agencies, NGOs, students and health professionals.

In the **Dominican Republic** TB CARE I initiated a partnership with the Government’s Hotline to incorporate information on TB services, diagnosis and treatment. All current and future printed or filmed materials for promotion, education or information produced by partners will be available through the TB Hotline. The Hotline can be reached free of charge from any landline or cellphone meaning TB related information is easily accessible to the general population. TB CARE I provided training and technical assistance to the Government’s Hotline to guarantee the dissemination of high quality information.

**Ethiopia** is an active member of the World TB Day commemoration steering committee organized by the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health (MoH). TB CARE I served as technical advisor and sponsored selected members from the TB media forum to attend and report on the commemoration. In Mekele Town, Ethiopia World TB Day was commemorated with an ‘energetic walk’ to raise Tuberculosis awareness and followed by an street event involving students, town residents and partners, echoing the theme of “Stop TB Death! Early treatment and strict adherence to anti-TB drugs to save lives!”.

**Nigeria** officially introduced the e-TB Manager at the Minister of Health’s opening of the MDR-TB treatment center in the Lagos Mainland Hospital. In partnership with the National TB Program, TB CARE I in Nigeria is promoting awareness about TB control efforts and motivating health workers to implement standard operating procedures for improving TB case detection in Kano State.
Voices of TB, a unique event organized by USAID, featured people cured of TB speaking about their personal fight against TB. Survivors of TB from the United States and four TB CARE I-supported countries - Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia and Vietnam - spoke at the event on March 22 in Washington, D.C.

Each participant told their emotional story of fighting and beating TB. Francis Apina from Kenya talked about his battle with both TB and HIV and the importance of U.S. Government support for integrated TB/HIV prevention programs. “If global Fund, PEPFAR and USAID close up shop, I [would] be dead in six months.”

Rosalie Stephson spoke on behalf of her 14-year old daughter, Faith, who was first diagnosed with TB in the Philippines at the age of five. After immigrating to the U.S., at the age of 12, Faith was again diagnosed with TB in her lymph nodes causing major complications such as hypertension. Although the family kept Faith’s illness a secret while undergoing treatment, they have since come forward to share their story to raise awareness of the disease, particularly amongst children.

Pham Thu Hoa, a 23-year old from Vietnam, also spoke about her experience of getting TB twice and being cured successfully both times. She said she is lucky to live in a large city where treatment was available; most people in her country have to travel long distances to get proper TB diagnosis and treatment. Hoa said, “[in Vietnam we have] really good treatment results: about 90 percent of TB patients who are treated under DOTS are cured; but just 60 percent of [all] TB patients are diagnosed and receive treatment each year.”

Improving access to TB diagnostics, treatment and care was a common theme throughout the event.

The participants also emphasized the need to fight stigma surrounding TB. Namibian Andre Gariseb spoke of the stigma he faced as a TB patient in Namibia. “There is stigma attached to TB in Namibia, so much so that many TB survivors wouldn’t talk about it... If people know the facts, we wouldn’t have the stigma.”

Endalkachew Fekadu Demmisse shared his particularly difficult fight with multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB). He was diagnosed with MDR-TB in 2007 before there was a system in Ethiopia to treat this complex and costly disease. He was fortunate to have the drugs to treat his illness which cost over $200,000 and were donated by Compassion International, a U.S. non-profit organization. However, he had to endure over two years of treatment and numerous side effects from the many drugs. Although Ethiopia began treating MDR-TB patients in 2009, Demmisse expressed his concern that “there is a waiting list for TB medication for MDR-TB” in Ethiopia and many other countries.

There is still work to be done to improve the diagnosis and treatment of drug-resistant forms of TB.

The last TB survivor to share her story was Rachel Urduno from El Paso, Texas. After being misdiagnosed for three years with asthma, allergies and other conditions, she was finally properly diagnosed and treated for TB in 2005. She struggles with the thought that “I may have infected 15 people each of the three years that I was sick with TB.” She spoke eloquently and emotionally about how stigma and people’s lack of knowledge about TB can make a TB patient’s struggle with the disease lonely and difficult.

In addition to the Voices of TB panel discussion, the TB survivors participated in several World TB Day activities during their week-long visit to Washington DC. They attended congressional briefings on TB and visited congress persons to share their experiences. These events were not only beneficial to the U.S. congressional staff, but also to the TB survivors themselves. Each participant is going home more inspired to speak up against TB in their own country or state, determined to help reduce stigma and increase the diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis.

As Gariseb said in his closing statement: “Spread awareness on TB; let’s not spread TB.”
TB CARE I Kyrgyzstan in collaboration with Quality Health Care, Dialogue TB/HIV, HOPE GF, UNDP GF and MSF, marked World TB Day with various events for TB patients, health care workers and students of the Medical Academy and the medical college.

TB CARE I helped organize a race to celebrate WTBD which took place in Pobeda Square, Bishkek. The ceremony was opened by representatives of the MoH and the National Center of Physiology. The participants were given T-shirts with the USAID logo on the front and “I can stop TB” on the back. A painter painted ‘chamomile’ flowers as a symbol of “World TB Day” on the faces and hands of the runners, which consisted of 50 participants from the medical academy, 50 participants from medical college and 20 participants from TB facilities and other volunteers.

The TB CARE I Kyrgyzstan Director, Myrzaliev Bakyt and the Director of Bishkek City Department of Health, Murzaliev Azamat presented awards to the winners and at the end balloons were released bearing the message “I can stop TB”. The race was also broadcast on national TV channels NBT and Pyramida.

TB CARE I also supported a competition to find the best picture drawn by TB patients on the subject of “Stop TB”. The 50 participants of the competition were TB patients from the National Center of Physiology, the TB Center of Bishkek, the TB hospital in A Day at the Races - Kyrgyzstan

Fun Biking/Walking - Indonesia

To the sound of Tanjidor (Betawi orchestra), and accompanied by (Betawi large puppets) and Calung (a Sudanese traditional music performance), 8000 participants were waiting patiently from 5 am to join the “Fun Bike and Walk” to commemorate WTBD which took place at the National Monument (Monas) Square in the center of Jakarta. WTBD is celebrated on the 1st of April in Indonesia, as the 23rd of March is a national Hindu holiday (Nyepi).

“Our thanks to the Ministry of Health, which gave us the opportunity this year to organize this great event,” said Ismail Said, the President of Dompet Dhuafa, one of the largest Zakat management organizations in Indonesia and a member of Indonesia’s TB Partners Forum (Zakat is the compulsory giving of a set proportion of one’s wealth to charity and is the third pillar of Islam). Dompet Dhuafa has a vast network of free health services (LKC) targeting the poor. This year, LKC Dompet Dhuafa took the lead in the organization of the WTBD commemoration with the support of TB CARE I, the National TB Control Program (NTP) and the Global Fund.

The event had the slogan “United We Head Towards a TB Free Indonesia” whilst the Stop TB WTBD slogan “Stop TB in My Lifetime” was written on the various banners, backdrops lining the route and also on brochures and flyers which were distributed to the public, along with other important messages such as: “TB is not a inheritance nor a curse”, “TB Can Be Cured” and “TB Treatment is Free”.

Wearing white & purple t-shirts 4000 fun bikers and another 4000 walkers left Monas Square, the bikers headed for Senayan (12.6 km distance away) and back again, whilst the “healthy walkers” did a 3 km circular walk.

Although the campaign was initially organized for 6000 participants, the large amount of publicity through radio, newspapers and flyers mobilized more than 8000 participants, it was so popular that the organizing committee had to stop registration one week before the event.

Bambang Suryanto, the popular chairman of the BTC (Back to Cycle), who also participated with his cycling community, was enthusiastic about the event and is an excellent TB advocate, he said “We can have fun and get useful information at the same time”. One of Bambang’s friends recently died of TB. “At first he seemed in good health, but then he started coughing all the time and he got worse. He was not helped in time, because of a lack of knowledge about this disease,” said Bambang.

You can catch a slice of the action on one of the Indonesian TV stations at:
World TB Day - Afghanistan

Despite the availability of diagnostic procedures and drugs, TB continues to be a major public health issue in Afghanistan, which is one of the 22 high burden countries. The World Health Organization 2010 report estimated 59,000 TB cases occur in Afghanistan every year with more than 12,000 cases resulting in death. The TB incidence is 189/100,000 population per year and the prevalence rate is 352 all cases per 100,000.

World TB Day was an opportunity to solidify efforts being made in the fight against TB. In Kandahar 2 groups of female students from Aino High School and Zarghona High School took part in a competition where they were asked basic questions on TB, how it is transmitted, its sign & symptoms and how to prevent it. Members of Stop TB Partnership committee led the competition, and the winning team won prizes supplied by local traders/members of Partnership committee. The whole event was recorded by local radio and television and broadcast later in Kandahar.

Elsewhere around 100 participants from different government departments, women groups, civic societies, health workers, Ulma/religious leaders, traders, human rights activists and cured TB patients attended a WTBD celebration where the TB control achievements in Kandahar were outlined and all the partners who supported TB control activities in Kandahar were thanked.

Certificates of appreciation and gifts were also distributed to 16 selected hard working health workers (a health center director, a lab technician, a midwife, a nurse and community health workers from Maimwand and Mondisar health facilities), all of whom had delivered TB services of a high quality.

Kicking TB - Ghana

During the 2012 WTBD celebrations, the “KICK TB Ghana Campaign” was launched by the Chairman of the Parliament Select Committee on Health. The campaign seeks to raise awareness of TB by using football and social mobilization to create a platform through which appropriate TB messages are conveyed. Given that about 45% of the Ghana population comprises of children below the age of 15 and that football is the most popular sport across the country, school pupils will be involved as ‘change agents’ and this campaign aims to distribute 50,000 branded footballs throughout the country.

The specific campaign aims to raise awareness and knowledge of TB with the following strategic objectives:

- Promote knowledge and positive accepting attitudes of TB among school children with the hope that they will take the messages to their parents and guardians
- Increase early TB case detection at the community level using children as change agents

Ghana TB Ambassador – Bice Osei Kufuor aka Obour (Musician)

With the assistance of TB CARE I, Obour developed and produced a song with a corresponding video on the subject of TB and financed by the Global Fund. This music and video was officially launched by the Deputy Minister of Health. Mettle Nunoo during the launch of 2011 World TB Day held in Sunyani-Borgen Ahafo Region. The video’s central ideas are to:

- Educate the public on TB prevention and control.
- Ask the public to seek early treatment since TB is curable and that treatment is FREE
- Dispel the misconception that TB is a curse
- Inform the public that it is a disease which has efficacious treatment

Obour has also done interviews on various media platforms (Radio & TV) nationwide after the music video and has now become the spokesperson for TB on the airwaves. The video continues to be aired on various popular TV stations in Ghana.

If you would like to see the video it can be viewed here:

http://www.tbcare1.org/ghana_video/
Flash Mobs - Windhoek, Namibia

In the capital of Namibia, Windhoek, the National TB and Leprosy Program (NTLP) in collaboration with partners, organized a ‘flash mob’ to mark WTBD. Unsuspecting shoppers, residents and visitors to Windhoek were taken by surprise, when the busy intersection between Independence Avenue and Fidel Castro Street in the city was suddenly sealed off by Traffic Police.

Out of the blue, Afro-beat music from local celebrities started blasting from one side of the four-way intersection and a group of both professional and amateur dancers entered the space and started dancing in a manner too eye catching to be ignored.

The songs played included a new song dubbed: The TB Anthem, from a local artist, Exit, who is a renowned TB ambassador. The song invites people in more than five local languages to “Come and Stop TB together”, the theme of the song is zero deaths from TB.

The colorful dancing act ended as abruptly as it had started with the music stopping and the dancers disappearing off into the crowd, but not before many of the people who had gathered to watch had the chance to take a picture or two of the proceedings, hence the message about TB was spread far and wide in a unique and memorable style. The event was repeated in two other locations around Windhoek.

Other WTBD activities included speeches by the Minister of Health and Social Services, the World Health Organization representative and the US Ambassador to Namibia, as well as a touching testimony from a 12 year old former TB patient, Petrus Dumeni (see adjacent text box).

Namibia continues to innovate by coming up with different ways to spread TB messages and raise awareness of TB, last year a roadshow was conducted from South to North culminating in the national event being held in Kavango region.

TB CARE Namibia was proud to be associated with these events and provided funding for the main events as well as technical assistance to the NTLP in general.

Dumeni’s TB Testimonial in his own words

Hello Everyone! My name is Petrus Dumeni and I’m 12 years old; please allow me to share the story of my life. I am a former TB patient and currently doing my grade 5 at Moses Goreeob Primary School. It started when I was at school; I always felt weak and was coughing.

Sometimes I had to ask the teacher to let me go home. I kept feeling sicker and my mother took me to the Katutura hospital, where I was diagnosed with TB. The doctor told me and my mother that if I took my medication I would be cured. I was referred to Okuryangava clinic, then to Ombili DOT point where I completed my treatment after 6 months.

I have been taking my medication everyday with the help of Big mom (one of the field promoters under a Community Based TB Care organization called Penduka) and my mother, when my mother is not around she makes sure someone is there to check I have taken my medicine.

Today is World TB Day, I would like to ask you a question, Do you know what TB is? Do you know TB can be cured? Please, those who are taking TB medication finish them and those who have symptoms, go and get tested for TB. TB is in the air, it is not a family disease and anyone can get it.

I would like to thank my mother Hileni Kalomo and Penduka TB for supporting me during my treatment, now I can continue with my school and when I finish I want to be a pilot.

Let us STOP TB IN OUR LIFETIME, I WANT A NAMIBIA FREE OF TB, I thank you.
The Global Health Bureau, Office of Health, Infectious Disease and Nutrition (HIDN), US Agency for International Development, financially supports this publication through TB CARE I under the terms of Agreement No. AID-OAA-A-10-00020. This publication is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of TB CARE I and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

What is TB CARE I?

TB CARE I is a USAID five year cooperative agreement (2010-2015) that has been awarded to the Tuberculosis Coalition for Technical Assistance (TBCTA) with KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation as the lead partner. TB CARE I is a unique coalition of the major international organizations in TB control:

- American Thoracic Society (ATS), FHI 360, International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union), Japan Anti-Tuberculosis Association (JATA), KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation, Management Sciences for Health (MSH), World Health Organization (WHO).

TB CARE will contribute to three USAID target areas:

- Sustain or exceed 84% case detection rate and 87% treatment success rate
- Treat successfully 2.55 million new sputum-positive TB cases
- Diagnose and treat 57,200 new cases of multi-drug resistant TB (MDR-TB)

By focusing on eight priority technical areas:

- Universal and Early Access
- Laboratories
- Infection Control (IC)
- Programmatic Management of Drug Resistant TB (PMDT)
- TB/HIV
- Health Systems Strengthening
- Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E), Operations Research (OR) and Surveillance
- Drug Supply and Management

And four over-arching elements:

- Collaboration and Coordination
- Access to TB services for all people
- Responsible and Responsive Management Practices
- Evidence based M&E

Contact Details

E-mail  pmu@tbcare1.org
Phone  +31-70-7508447
Website  www.tbcare1.org
Twitter  #tbcare1

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