

Finding and treating people with TB in

Sudan

- Women already diagnosed with TB help to find more cases among their social networks
- Even given difficult conditions, treatment success is over 80%
- Women receive financial incentives for finding cases



Khartoum - In the states of North Kordufan and Gazira, in Northern Sudan, where men are presently twice as likely as women to have been tested and treated for tuberculosis (TB), women have begun to participate in a new approach to fighting the disease. Using a pioneering model developed by Epi-Lab, women already diagnosed with TB are now being recruited to actively address the problem of TB within their social networks – whether in the market place, at community celebrations or in familial settings – by encouraging other women to be tested for the disease. After receiving intensive orientation on TB and being supplied with packages of health education materials by Epi-Lab, these

women are providing much needed, gender sensitive assistance to health professionals in the struggle to reduce the number of women dying of this disease in these two targeted states where only 50% of the TB cases receive treatment every year.

In addition to the enormous benefit of improved health outcomes for the entire community, each woman also enjoys a financial incentive for each case she is able to refer. Additional incentives will be paid to help guarantee treatment compliance once the new patient has been identified. This informal network of female advocates will be able to continue the work of improving community understanding of the nature and treatment of TB even after they themselves have been successfully cured.

Fatimah, a former female patient says, “Because of this project I can work to help support my family at the same time that I help to keep my friends healthy.”

The project is also working in 10 camps for internally displaced people in the Darfur area where diagnosis and treatment are being provided locally, alleviating the need to rely on public TB health centers, which can be prohibitively difficult to access for this population. Existing in extremely close proximity as do people living in the camps, increases transmission throughout the community; so early and increased case detection is essential to have an impact on the disease. Despite the difficult conditions, more than 80% of the cases complete treatment, a testament to the tireless work of women helping each other to combat this disease.

