

Project Title	Provision of technical support to the National Tuberculosis Programme, Malawi in support of a country wide MDR TB survey
Client	KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation / USAID
Partners	MSH, REACH Trust, National Tuberculosis Programme (NTP)
Year	2008-2010

Context

A meeting of all major stakeholders was held in February 2008 to discuss the overall approach for the Multidrug Resistance (MDR)-TB survey in Malawi in the light of safety concerns about the Central Reference Laboratory (CRL) and to agree on the next steps, time lines and roles and responsibilities towards implementation. The following phases were agreed; Phase 1 – Extensively Drug Resistant (XDR) TB survey, Phase 2 refurbishment of the central reference laboratory, Phase 3 a full MDR TB survey and Phase 4 a DOTS-Plus Pilot of community-based MDR treatment nested within the Phase 3 MDR survey.

Programme Objectives

LATHs objectives are to assist with the development, planning and implementation of national XDR and MDR TB surveys, to provide resident technical assistance to the CRL to ensure it is refurbished to international Category 3 safety standards and so it can be commissioned to quality assured standards as soon after the refurbishment is completed, to submit the DOTS plus pilot proposal to the Green Light Committee based on the finalised MDR survey proposal and to work with the CRL and data management staff to optimize the use of laboratory data and ensure reliable monitoring of laboratory quality.

Approach

Working with project partners LATH will support the national tuberculosis programme staff to develop and implement the MDR TB survey to ensure ownership and to develop national research capacity.

Expected Outcomes

A refurbished, fully functional CRL, a functional MDR survey team, an approved protocol for MDR-TB survey including detailed implementation plan and budget, interim results of survey based on a pilot round of sample collection and a Directly Observed Treatment, short-course (DOTS) Plus pilot protocol submitted to Green Light Committee.

Results to Date

The XDR TB survey has been completed with no XDR TB cases detected, the MDR TB protocol is has been approved by the Malawi National Health Science Committee and the implementation is being planned. The central reference laboratory refurbishment is complete.