TB is a major occupational disease for the mining sector. The South African mining industry is currently estimated to include more than 500,000 workers and in the gold mines of South Africa, the incidence of TB is estimated to be three times higher than the national average. Among the factors contributing to the higher rates of TB among miners include exposure to silica dust, the prevalences of HIV/AIDS, and the generally poor communal living conditions in the mine residences and in the settlements developing around mining sites. Two years of efforts by a trio of health ministers from South Africa, Swaziland and Lesotho has culminated in a pledge by Southern African heads of state to fight this epidemic in the South African mining industry. The Declaration on TB in the Mining Sector, a legal instrument, was signed by 15 heads of state at the Summit Meeting of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 2013.

The declaration is a call to action for all stakeholders, including national, provincial, and district governments, mining companies, development partners, and civil society organizations to build new partnerships that yield collective impact in the fight against TB. Following the declaration, a new emphasis has emerged on identifying effective means for implementing the policy objectives in a practical way in collaboration with private and public multi-sector partners. University Research Co., LLC (URC) through the USAID TB Program South Africa has been working to provide robust technical assistance to the Department of Health (DOH), National TB Control Programme (NTCP) in response to the high prevalence of TB in the mining sector.

The USAID TB Program South Africa is using one of the World Health Organization (WHO) Stop TB strategies of engaging the business sector through a Public-Private Mix (PPM) approach. PPM promotes new approaches and partnerships for the delivery of TB care and control by engaging all health care providers, especially within the business sector.

The mining sector is supported through the principals of the Tripartite Stakeholders including the Department of Mineral Resources, DOH, the Department of Labour and the South African National AIDS Council, and the Chamber of Mines. The USAID TB Program South Africa works with the DOH to provide technical support to the Tripartite Stakeholders by supporting DOH in ensuring...
Increasing TB and HIV awareness in peri-mine communities through social mobilization and awareness raising activities is a key objective of the NTCP’s strategy for increasing TB services for miners. The USAID TB Program South Africa is working in Sekhukhune and Waterberg Districts, which are two of the six districts identified by the NTCP for immediate support due to the number of mines and the large number of peri-mining communities. As part of the TB Program’s PPM interventions, the USAID TB Program applied its advocacy, communication and social mobilization (ACSM) approach to partner with the Provincial Department of Health, Waterberg District Health, Eskom Health Team and local partners working on HIV/AIDS programs to lead a one week active TB case finding campaign to Eskom’s Medupi power station located in Lephalale in the Limpopo Province. The power station, when completed, will be the fourth largest coal plant in the southern hemisphere, and will be the biggest dry-cooled power station in the world. At present there are 13,000 contract workers in Medupi.

The intended outcome of this one week campaign was to address access to TB prevention, diagnosis, and treatment in Waterberg District, which has a concentration of mines. The activities in Medupi included TB symptomatic screening, HIV testing and counselling, providing of information, education and communication (IEC) materials.

that the TB services provided in the mines conform to international standards for TB care and the NTCP guidelines.

The USAID TB Program’s support for improving TB services within the mining community and strengthening TB management in the mining companies. The technical assistance provided by the TB Program focuses on developing lasting multi-sectoral partnerships geared around the following activities:

- Advocacy and consensus building among mine operators, mine health services, mine laborer’s representatives, and local ministry departments on practical steps to implement the objectives within the declaration
- Development of service linkages between TB and other health and social support agencies working with miners and mining communities
- Assistance to develop and expand TB workplace programs in key mines
- Identification of priority areas for further operational research and policy development

The USAID TB Project’s approach has emphasized developing programs and TB service linkages within mines in Limpopo and Gauteng provinces, and has facilitated coordination with local community based TB awareness and treatment services able to work with the mining communities in Limpopo, Gauteng, and North West provinces.