

*World Tuberculosis Day 2014: Insight on Eritrea's Tuberculosis Reduction*  
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According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 9 million people per year are infected with Tuberculosis (TB), with the large majority of these cases located within the world's poorest, least developed countries.<sup>i</sup>

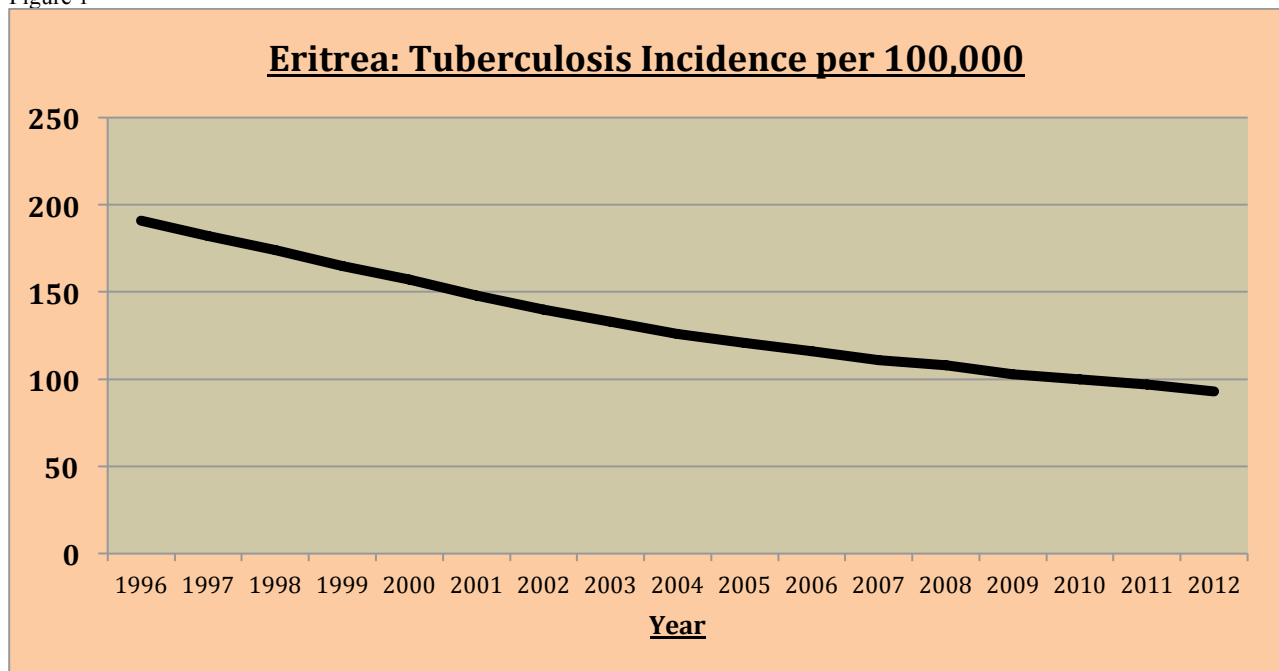
In Eritrea, a young, developing country, TB has long been a significant public health issue – representing a major cause of morbidity and mortality – and an influential factor in severe economic loss and the exacerbation of poverty.<sup>ii</sup>

However, since 1996, Eritrea's Ministry of Health and the Tuberculosis Control Unit have focused on implementing a multisectoral approach that integrates holistic care, support, and treatment programs (all free of charge).<sup>iii</sup> Importantly, prevention has also been a priority, particularly in order to reduce overall health and medical costs. For example, TB sensitization and education programs have regularly been conducted in schools, public venues, and rural communities, while TV programs, newspapers, posters, and brochures have raised general awareness.<sup>iv</sup>

Consequently, Eritrea has made impressive progress in reducing the incidence of TB. According to the World Bank (2012), across the 1996-2012 period, Eritrea reduced its incidence of tuberculosis (per 100,000 people) from 191 to 93, a reduction of 51%. By comparison, in neighboring countries, current TB incidence (per 100,000 people) and trends over the same time period are: 247 in Ethiopia (42% decrease); 114 in Sudan (26% decrease); 286 in Somalia; 165 in Tanzania (27% decrease); 312 in Kenya (48% decrease); and 255 for Sub-Saharan Africa (11% decrease).<sup>v</sup>

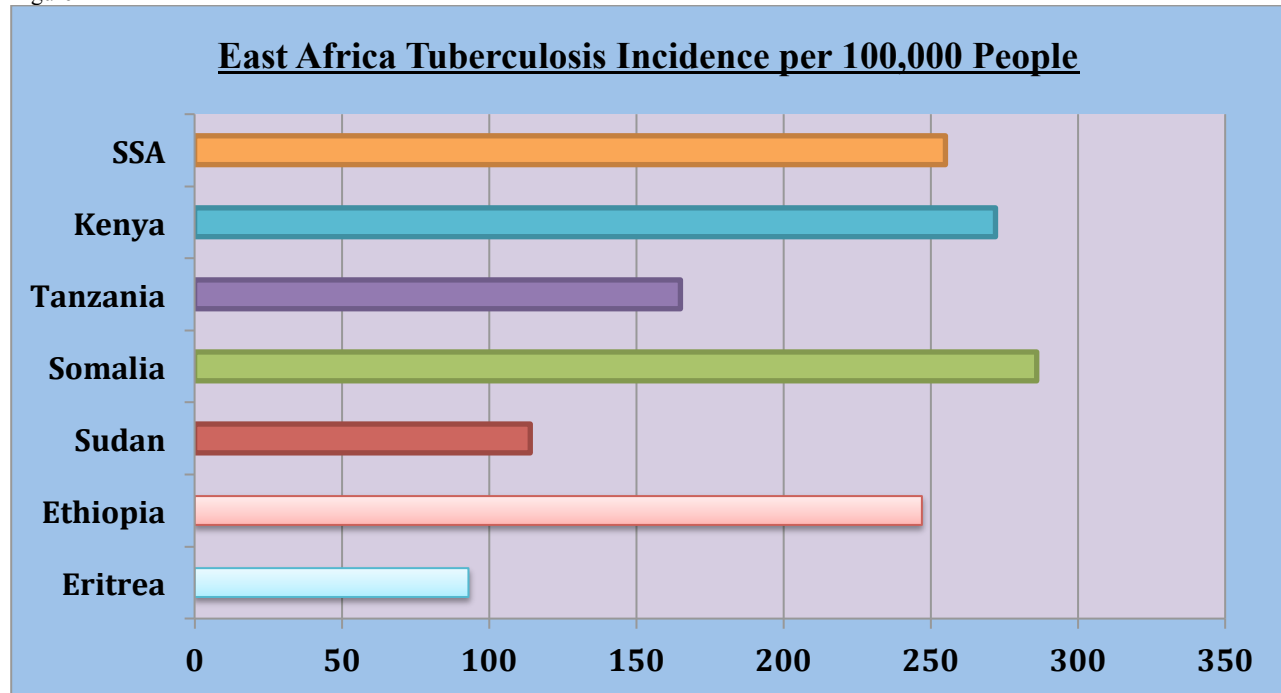
Overall, Eritrea's rapid, remarkable progress in reducing TB incidence – standing out both regionally and across the continent – illustrates the merits of a multisectoral approach and the benefits of prevention-based measures. Moving forward, with a sustained national commitment to TB reduction, and the admirable efforts of hard-working volunteers and employees, Eritrea can continue to improve the health and development of its greatest asset – its citizens

Figure 1



Source: World Bank 2012

Figure 2



Source: World Bank 2012

## References

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- i [WHO World TB Day](#)
- ii [UNAIDS ERI Narrative Report 2012](#)
- iii [WHO Press Material](#)
- iv [UNAIDS ERI Narrative Report 2012](#)
- v [World Bank Data](#)