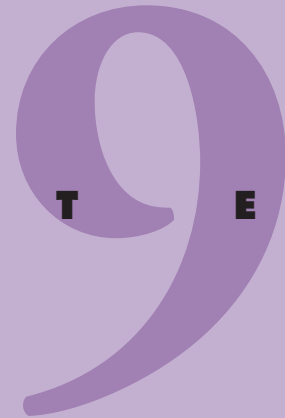


C H A P T E R



*HIV/AIDS
Programs in
Private Sector
Businesses*

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HIV/AIDS Programs in Private Sector Businesses

INTRODUCTION

It is clear that if national efforts to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS are to be effective and sustainable, they must be multisectoral in nature and include the involvement of private sector businesses. To date, the business response has been mixed, and most businesses in developing countries have not yet developed or sustained comprehensive workplace programs, nor have they made substantive contributions to national prevention initiatives.

This chapter will focus on key steps needed to more fully engage the business sector in HIV/AIDS prevention and care programs. The steps are straightforward: awareness of the problem and its implications for businesses; appreciation of prevention interventions; involvement and support of management and workers in defining appropriate policies for the workplace; and implementation and monitoring of both policies and programs.

THE BUSINESS MOTIVATION FOR HIV/AIDS PREVENTION

A 1997 UNAIDS survey on corporate responses to HIV/AIDS, conducted at 203 companies, found that the major motives for corporate action were: (1) The welfare of infected employees; (2) Prevention, to safeguard investments in staff and training; and (3) Avoidance of legal problems. Since then, additional studies have provided a more comprehensive picture of private sector concerns regarding HIV/AIDS in the workplace. For example, companies want to know how HIV/AIDS affects their productivity and profits, and what are the costs involved in typical prevention and care programs.

REQUISITES FOR ENGAGING BUSINESSES IN HIV/AIDS

Experiences from several countries point to the key factors that contribute to effective workplace programs and policies. These factors are discussed below.

GETTING AND SUSTAINING MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

The establishment of a successful and sustainable HIV/AIDS workplace program is contingent upon genuine support from the upper-management team. To gain management commitment, two aspects of the epidemic need to be identified and, where possible, quantified: the costs of HIV/AIDS and the costs of HIV/AIDS prevention.

EFFICACY OF WORKPLACE PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

Workplace prevention programs and policies that are sustained, flexible and sensitive have been shown to work. Examples of effective programs (counseling, condom distribution) and policies (clear guidelines on illness, accommodation, testing, benefits) are needed to demonstrate to companies that such approaches are feasible and will offer returns.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM MANAGERS

It is possible to work directly with business managers and employee representatives to develop and sustain workplace programs and policies. Several steps will strengthen the process. These are outlined below.

ASSURING THAT RELEVANT POLICIES COMPLEMENT PREVENTION PROGRAMS

The integration of prevention and care policies, along with a workplace program on HIV/AIDS as part of a company's standard employee benefits package, is a key strategy to achieve sustainability of the program. It can also lead to unexpected spin-offs.

STRENGTHENING MANAGEMENT AND STAFF CAPACITY TO ADDRESS HIV/AIDS

Companies seeking to reduce the impact of the epidemic on their employees have tried to improve the ability of staff at all levels to reduce HIV/AIDS risk, and make prevention and care a more integral part of their operations.

IDENTIFYING CONCERNED BUSINESS LEADERS

As a select number of companies develop workplace programs and policies, their management staff can start to influence peers at other companies. Example, endorsement and guidance are likely to be as important as outside factors in drawing more companies into the prevention network.

OFFERING CLEAR, PRACTICAL ADVICE

Many companies continue to seek guidance on how to develop prevention programs and policies that will serve their employees while also assuring the profitable continuation of business. There are several resources that can aid companies in developing policies and programs and monitoring their effectiveness.

PROMOTING BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

HIV/AIDS program managers have numerous opportunities to promote partnerships with and among businesses. Depending upon the needs and resources available, partnerships can take numerous forms, including:

- Collaboration
- Networking
- Community alliances
- Consultation

FUTURE CHALLENGES

Working with businesses to stem the HIV/AIDS epidemic is one part of a larger multisectoral response. Many business managers are aware that the epidemic threatens the flow of commerce and profits. For these reasons there are mutual needs and interests in building an HIV/AIDS prevention partnership with business.

CASE STUDY

FORD MOTOR COMPANY, SOUTH AFRICA

Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa developed a comprehensive HIV prevention program to focus on communication, education, testing and community involvement. The program was extended to employees, contract workers, pensioners and their families, and has reached more than 12,000 people since 1999. This activity is providing an important link to workplace and community-based prevention programs.

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It is clear that if national efforts to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS are to be effective and sustainable, they must be multisectoral in nature and include the involvement of private sector businesses. As managers of workplaces in resource-constrained environments, the business community has a critical role to play and can use company resources, creativity, organizational structures, access to communities and investment decisions to aid national AIDS prevention initiatives.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

To date, the business response to the epidemic has been mixed. A number of large corporations have adopted policies to guide management and workers who face difficult decisions relating to HIV/AIDS in the workplace. Some companies have implemented—often with outside help—prevention interventions for employees and occasionally the surrounding community. But most businesses in developing countries have not yet developed or sustained comprehensive workplace programs, nor have they made substantive contributions to national prevention initiatives.

This chapter will focus on key steps needed to more fully engage the business sector in HIV/AIDS prevention and care programs. The steps are straightforward: awareness of the problem and its implications for businesses; appreciation of prevention interventions; involvement and support of management and workers in defining appropriate policies for the workplace; and implementation and monitoring of both policies and programs.

THE BUSINESS MOTIVATION FOR HIV/AIDS PREVENTION

A 1997 UNAIDS survey on corporate responses to HIV/AIDS, conducted at 203 companies, found that the major motives for corporate action were: (1) The welfare of infected employees; (2) Prevention, to safeguard investments in staff and training; and (3) Avoidance of legal problems.¹ Additional studies since then have provided a more comprehensive picture of private sector concerns regarding HIV/AIDS in the workplace. For example, companies want to know how HIV/AIDS affects their productivity and profits, and what are the costs involved in typical prevention and care programs.² Some business leaders are cautious about accepting government-published epidemiological data because they have not witnessed a major epidemic within their establishment; others are skeptical of the efficacy of prevention programs.³ In addition, some companies worry about losing competitive advantage in the marketplace if they invest their own resources in HIV/AIDS prevention and care policies and programs—rather than investments in what is deemed more productive activities, such as new equipment or staff training—without similar investment by competing companies, such as has occurred in South Africa. This is why HIV/AIDS program managers seeking new or expanded partnerships with private sector businesses will need to provide sound economic/financial data on the impact of the epidemic on a foundation of good epidemiological data, credible examples of effective prevention interventions and their costs and flexible plans and technical expertise to design appropriate programs and policies.

MAJOR FACTORS IN ECONOMIC COST OF HIV/AIDS TO A BUSINESS

- Disruption of production due to:
 - Sick leave
 - Absenteeism
 - Funeral attendance
- Health insurance and/or medical care
- Recruitment and training
- Death benefits

REQUISITES FOR ENGAGING BUSINESSES IN HIV/AIDS

Experiences from several countries point to the key factors that contribute to effective workplace programs and policies. These factors are discussed below.

GETTING AND SUSTAINING MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

The establishment of a successful and sustainable HIV/AIDS workplace program is contingent upon genuine support from the upper-management team. The challenge lies in being able to advocate for HIV/AIDS as a management issue in the workplace and in the communities in which workers live. To be successful, HIV/AIDS prevention efforts should involve not only workers at the shop-floor level, but executives as well. In this regard, non-profit organizations working with businesses must also include managers in their target groups. Management commitment must be seen as including but extending beyond corporate philanthropy and compassionate responses such as donations and fundraisers. Sustaining HIV/AIDS programs must be viewed as a means to achieve overall effective human resource management, assured through business ownership of the problem.^{4,5}

As noted earlier, business managers are concerned about the financial cost of HIV/AIDS to their operations, and the cost of investing in HIV/AIDS prevention and care. This is why gaining management commitment requires identifying and, where possible, quantifying these two aspects of the epidemic.

The costs of HIV/AIDS

As the virus tends to infect sexually active employees in their prime working ages (20 to 45 years old), it can reduce work performance and productivity. Experienced personnel with special skills, years of training and institutional memory are difficult and costly to replace. Increased absenteeism and labor turnover likewise add to the costs of running a company. And the impact felt is not simply from the loss of the most skilled workers. A flower estate in Kenya reported high HIV/AIDS-related absenteeism among its unskilled workers and subsequent losses in

productivity.⁶ A trucking firm in Zimbabwe reported higher costs associated with less experienced drivers who had more accidents.⁷

In the absence of clear policies understood by both management and employees, there can be confusion, lowered morale and work disruptions. In fact, a mere rumor that an employee(s) may be infected with HIV can lead to workplace conflict and reduced productivity. For example, employees in a large canning factory in Thailand went on a two-hour strike because they refused to work with a colleague they thought was HIV positive.

SHELL COMPANY, THAILAND

In 1992, as the AIDS epidemic worsened in Thailand, the Shell Company of Thailand established a comprehensive, non-discriminatory HIV/AIDS policy that is still in place. The policy provides counseling, syringes and needles where health facilities are sub-standard, medical confidentiality and education to all new expatriate and permanent staff.

With support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Shell in 1997 launched the Peer Education at the Pump Project (PEPP). The project provided education for fuel attendants at Shell petrol stations, the majority of whom are youth considered at high risk for HIV infection. The project contributes to AIDS awareness among youth and will reach a much wider audience through their peers in the workplace as well as through other friends and relatives outside of the pump. At least 800 youths were trained in peer counseling through the project.

Responsibilities to their customers, employees and society are mandated by a body of general principles governing how each Shell company conducts its affairs. These principles guide the company as it responds to the epidemic. Shell recognizes the opportunity to use the experience gained in one country or region to help others elsewhere.

The costs of HIV/AIDS prevention

Nearly two decades of prevention efforts make it possible to gauge the costs to companies of implementing HIV/AIDS policies and programs. To help demonstrate costs and potential savings, either general or sector-specific costs can be presented to companies. In Kenya, for example, research conducted by FHI found that in several businesses absenteeism due to HIV-related illnesses and medical and death benefits were the major costs to be expected. Total losses due to HIV/AIDS among employees were estimated to reach as high as 20 percent of profits by 2005 for some businesses. In contrast, comprehensive prevention programs—education, STD treatment and condom distribution—for these companies were likely to cost two percent or less of business profits by 2005. Some of the benefits, such as improvements in worker morale, cannot be quantified but are no less important to companies.⁸

EFFICACY OF WORKPLACE PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

Workplace prevention programs and policies that are sustained, flexible and sensitive have been shown to work. Likewise, prevention interventions in communities outside company gates where employees live and maintain their social lives have generated numerous examples of what works. Businesses are often reluctant to initiate workplace programs because of inadequate knowledge or the belief that it is not their role as an employer to do so. But it is not enough just to tell business managers that prevention can work. Examples of effective programs (counseling, condom distribution) and policies (clear guidelines on illness, accommodation, testing, benefits) are needed to demonstrate to companies that such approaches are feasible and will offer returns.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM MANAGERS

Once these requisites exist, it is possible to work directly with business managers and employee representatives to develop and sustain workplace programs and policies. Several steps will strengthen the process. These are outlined below.

ASSURING THAT RELEVANT POLICIES COMPLEMENT PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Businesses implementing workplace programs often do so without developing workplace policies. A workplace HIV/AIDS policy outlines exactly how the company will handle HIV in the workplace, what the company program entails, how it is administered and to what benefits an HIV-infected employee is entitled. The integration of prevention and care policies, along with a workplace program on HIV/AIDS, as part of a company's standard employee benefits package, is a key strategy to achieve sustainability of the program. It can also lead to unexpected spin-offs.

For example, since 1994 the Regent Hotel in Bangkok has integrated new employee orientations—approximately three, held every two months—to include at least one 30-minute session on the topic of AIDS. Employees also participate in seminars on HIV/AIDS education and prevention, living with HIV-positive people and trained HIV/AIDS leadership. This initiative led in 1996 to staff participation in a project to reduce the vulnerability of young northern Thai women to the sex industry. Under the project, five young women receive vocational training—including English language, hotel and life skills training—for five months per year. The hotel covers the costs of food, uniforms and per diems. The Regent was the first hotel to initiate such a project containing an AIDS training component. Effective peer influence by the general manager led an adjacent hotel, the Grand Hyatt, to *better* the Regent by offering an AIDS training project and hiring all the young women who finished it.

STRENGTHENING MANAGEMENT AND STAFF CAPACITY TO ADDRESS HIV/AIDS

During the first decade of the epidemic, many businesses considered an occasional AIDS awareness talk to be sufficient for employees. More recently, companies that seek to reduce the impact of the epidemic on their employees have tried to improve the ability of staff at all levels to reduce HIV/AIDS risk and make prevention and care a more integral part of company operations. Broadly speaking, these management strategies include mainstreaming HIV/AIDS prevention into the workplace, minimizing the costs of mainstreaming and monitoring the impact on staff attitudes and behavior. Mainstreaming is not simply offering an occasional HIV/AIDS prevention lecture for employees; rather, it entails changes in policies and sensitivity to situations that increase risk for employees. A hotel personnel officer in Bangkok reported: “As I become an effective manager of HIV/AIDS, I become a better personnel manager. Prevention is an ongoing process.” The officer added, “Our ‘Employee of the Month’ could celebrate his honor by treating his friends to a night out on the town,” noting that the night on the town might typically include commercial sex. So alternatives for celebrating were offered.

A number of companies in southern Africa have assigned a full- or part-time person to coordinate HIV/AIDS workplace programs. Other companies, such as Barclays Bank in Botswana have set up a Health and HIV/AIDS advisory committee, composed of management and staff representatives, to deal with issues that arise. Still other companies have included HIV/AIDS policies and programs in their training for human resource and other managers, to more effectively reduce the impact of the epidemic on company resources.⁹

OLD MUTUAL, SOUTH AFRICA

Old Mutual is an international financial services group. In the early 1980s, Old Mutual became involved in a variety of AIDS education initiatives, both internally as well as in the community. The company provides an advice service called OMUCARE, whereby people who are HIV positive can obtain much-needed financial advice, including access to life cover.

As part of the company's commitment to the broader community in which it operates, Old Mutual maintains a multifaceted HIV/AIDS program with six full-time staff. The program is aimed at school-going teenagers of all racial and cultural groups throughout the country. It motivates peer group leaders not only to be active AIDS ambassadors in their schools and communities, but also to assist HIV/AIDS service organizations.

EFFECTIVE HIV/AIDS PROGRAMS AND POLICIES WILL:

- Be integrated into organizational structure
- Minimize work disruptions and financial burdens to both the company and employees
- Reduce fear and discrimination
- Contribute to higher staff morale and a positive corporate image

IDENTIFYING CONCERNED BUSINESS LEADERS

As a select number of companies develop workplace programs and policies, their management staff can start to influence peers at other companies. Example, endorsement and guidance are likely to be as important as outside factors in drawing more companies into the prevention network.

OFFERING CLEAR, PRACTICAL ADVICE

Many companies continue to seek guidance on how to develop prevention programs and policies that will serve their employees while also assuring the profitable continuation of business. Although most businesses have employee welfare policies, they have little or no experience with HIV/AIDS in the workplace, and some may find themselves overwhelmed by the dynamics of HIV. Fortunately, there are several resources that can aid companies in developing policies and programs and monitoring their effectiveness. For example, the *Private Sector AIDS Policy* developed by FHI is an extensive how-to guide that can be used by companies or groups advising companies. Its step-by-step approach is adaptable to the needs of large- and medium-sized companies.¹⁰ The *AIDS Briefs* are another resource. They provide an overview of the impact of HIV/AIDS on various business sectors and list appropriate questions for working with those sectors to strengthen prevention and care responses.¹¹

In one joint-venture company in Vietnam, Haiha-Kotobuki Confectionary, the benefits of HIV/AIDS prevention programs are clear. The program increased staff knowledge of HIV and maintenance of good health, which led to a higher quality of life. Staff involvement in the program at all levels increased their own work group management and motivational skills. These activities as a whole led directly to improved human resource management of the company. As a result of the program, managers and supervisors are better able to interact and comprehend staff perceptions and behavior in relation to HIV/AIDS and other workplace issues, and have become more adept at managing and reducing higher risk behaviors.

HAIHA-KOTOBUKI JOINT VENTURE CO., LTD., VIETNAM

The Haiha-Kotobuki joint venture became involved with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), CARE International and the National AIDS Committee (NAC) in a project to promote business partnerships to assist the government of Vietnam's efforts to prevent and control HIV and AIDS. The project attempts to do this by:

- Increasing knowledge and awareness of the risk of HIV/AIDS and skills for protection within the business community;
- Piloting a model of HIV/AIDS education within the workplace; and
- Developing policy with recommendations to encourage domestic and foreign companies to contribute to HIV/AIDS programs in their workplace.

Top management support was needed for such an initiative. VCCI identified a high-ranking and highly committed Vietnamese member of the

Haiha-Kotobuki joint venture. A large number of company staff also were willing to be involved and trained in emerging social issues that impinge upon their business. Corporate leadership meant corporate responsibility in matters related to their staff, their families and the wider community.

One major activity undertaken by Haiha-Kotobuki was the development of an HIV/AIDS workplace policy. The policy assists managers and workers in taking the initiative to protect themselves, their families and the community against HIV/AIDS, as well as providing care and support for PLHA in the company. Haiha-Kotobuki identified six categories of importance: implementation of prevention programs; testing; confidentiality; preventing discrimination; flexible work conditions for HIV-positive staff; and responsibility for HIV-positive staff. Staff who may be infected with HIV are treated equally and have access to all company benefits, including holiday allowance, social and health insurance, emergency support and free lunch in the company cafeteria.

There are other value-added benefits of a company's commitment to staff and their families. One major benefit, according to the deputy director, is corporate public relations: "Instilling public trust in a company's quality products and the procedures involved in providing the product to the public is vital to our success."¹² For Haiha-Kotobuki this means not only higher company profits but, more importantly, influencing other companies to undertake similar programs that benefit staff and their families.

PROMOTING BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

HIV/AIDS program managers have numerous opportunities to promote partnerships with and among businesses. Depending upon the needs and available resources, partnerships can take numerous forms, including collaboration as implementing partners, networking, alliances with communities and consultation. Both persuasion and directives can be used to influence business behavior.

COLLABORATION

The partnership American International Assurance (Thailand), established with CARE International through its AIDS prevention project in the Samut Prakarn Province in Thailand, was designed to protect the company's financial interests while seeking to reduce the incidence of HIV infection.¹ The company worked with CARE to create an AIDS information network and prevention programs targeting industrial factory workers in the province. In the long run, HIV prevention will directly benefit the insurance industry's business and underline its long-term commitment to Thai society.

American International Assurance's long-term involvement with AIDS initiatives since 1992 led to senior management's decision to go beyond community donations and corporate philanthropy. The company set out to integrate HIV/AIDS initiatives into its business operations, thereby assuring sustainability and demonstrating long-term corporate responsibility. With this goal, the company developed the idea of promoting prevention and non-discriminatory workplace programs among its policyholders. This will be undertaken by developing an evaluation and accreditation scheme which rewards companies that undertake effective HIV/AIDS workplace programs with a rate reduction in their group life insurance policy. Existing government and NGO networks will provide technical capacity to achieve this, thereby strengthening partnerships between the three sectors.

Collaboration can lead to cost-sharing between businesses and implementing agencies. In Tanzania, a union-led intervention negotiated with managers to share the cost of workplace prevention interventions. Once the program was underway, several companies were reluctant to contribute their agreed-upon share, but the formal pre-agreement provided a lever to eventually obtain the companies' contributions.¹³ Other cost-sharing arrangements usually have been in the form of in-kind contributions by companies, primarily covering salaries of peer educators during their training or allowing employees to attend prevention education sessions during business hours. But prevention programs initiated by external groups have encouraged

larger companies to step up and absorb the cost of onsite STD treatment. In Kenya and Zimbabwe, several managers reported that they would continue to support condom distribution within the workplace, even if external funding ended. From the business perspective, cost-sharing also exists in the form of the government taxes.³

NETWORKING

Established in 1993 as a link between the private and public sectors, the Thailand Business Coalition on AIDS (TBCA) works with businesses to create AIDS-supportive work environments by providing HIV/AIDS education and prevention seminars and promoting the adoption of appropriate HIV/AIDS workplace policies. TBCA remains one of the first fully staffed, full-time organizations addressing business and AIDS. It has also assisted in developing the Malaysian Business Coalition on AIDS, the South African Business Council on AIDS, the Zambian Business Coalition on AIDS, the Botswana Business Coalition on AIDS and the FICCI-UNAIDS Business Coalition Program on AIDS.

The Foreign Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) of Bangladesh has sought to prevent the kind of impact that AIDS is having in neighboring India and Nepal. With limited government budgets and a large population base of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, HIV prevention now has clear economic benefits for low-prevalence Bangladesh. FICCI is working in partnership with UNAIDS to launch an extensive HIV/AIDS prevention campaign involving seminars for human resource managers, safe blood drives and raising general awareness. Through several high-level advocacy meetings and the *Declaration on Responding to HIV/AIDS*, the FICCI has reached out to the business community to implement intervention programs.

FICCI, BANGLADESH

In response to HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh, the business community has formed a coalition to confront the potential epidemic in the community and the workplace. Various activities have already taken place through the joint efforts of the Foreign Investor's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and donor agencies. Preventive measures including information, education and communication (IEC) and counseling are among them. Three stages were developed to implement HIV/AIDS workplace programs. The first phase consisted of raising the awareness and advocacy of the employers, managers and employees. The second phase involved developing appropriate IEC materials. During this phase a trainer's manual was formulated, tested and finalized, then used to train manager supervisors and trade union leaders at the enterprise level. In the third phase, factories were visited to open discussion among the workers, whose suggested solutions were recorded. During these discussions, proper management of HIV was prioritized, including safe blood, STD treatment and condom use. The initiative was launched with the support of the top management.

In 1998, FICCI and UNAIDS conducted a seminar on the business response to HIV/AIDS. This was the first large-scale effort to raise AIDS as an area of critical concern for business. The seminar was followed by a human resource manager training workshop, facilitated by the Thailand Business Coalition on AIDS with assistance from local resource associates.

COMMUNITY ALLIANCES

Working with community and activist groups offers two major benefits: insight into the effectiveness of workplace responses to the epidemic and a concerned constituency for advocacy. Since the early stages of the epidemic in Brazil, close collaboration between HIV/AIDS activists and state and federal government officials has been instrumental in defining the direction of prevention and care programs and generating resources, including some corporate resources. More recently, that alliance has been especially important in assuring effective distribution, at reasonable cost, of generic AIDS drugs produced by the private sector.¹⁴

CONSULTATION

Ongoing dialogue with the business community offers project managers opportunities to engage in a variety of emerging issues related to HIV/AIDS and business. Among these issues are the cost and availability of HIV/AIDS drugs, including palliative drugs; the availability of adequate labor to serve business needs; and aligning business projects with national and local HIV/AIDS prevention. Brazilian program managers and businesses have been involved for several years in drug-related discussions and negotiations. Private sector representatives also form part of a broad coalition to limit taxation on female condoms by pressuring the government to include condoms as essential commodities.¹⁵

WORKER'S SOLE CENTRAL (CUT), BRAZIL

Since the early 1990s, HIV/AIDS/STD prevention programs in Brazil have collaborated with the Worker's Sole Central (CUT), a national trade union organization. Workers from the construction and steel sectors of CUT have been involved in the training program and taken information, advice and condoms back to co-workers. Other CUT workers from large companies such as Ford and Volkswagen and petroleum-producing companies have been trained as workplace actors for HIV/AIDS/STD prevention programs. The training included a series of methodologies using participatory approaches. As a result, a series of HIV/AIDS/STD prevention activities was developed at the industry ground level.

The Worker's Sole Central has been deeply engaged as part of a broad national coalition to exempt condoms from taxation and in the campaign to include condoms as a part of the subsidy for low-income workers.

The labor needs of businesses are already apparent in some countries or sectors. Barclays Bank (Zambia) considered closing several branch offices because of trained personnel shortages. In Zimbabwe, businesses are considering substituting machines for people if they cannot find sufficient workers.³ The experiences of companies in resolving staffing issues offer examples that program managers can use to persuade other companies to address HIV/AIDS. For example, Zimbabwe's government-business-labor forum for discussion of common issues related to HIV/AIDS is one way for program managers to be closely involved in addressing these issues while learning and sharing information relevant to other situations.⁹ Likewise, as the relationship between major construction projects and HIV vulnerability is more clearly identified, program managers will have opportunities (if not the responsibility) to assess the impact of such projects on workers and local communities.^{16,17}

FUTURE CHALLENGES

Working with businesses to stem the HIV/AIDS epidemic is one part of a larger multisectoral response. One major difference in working with businesses is their emphasis on commerce and financial profits. While these differences have limited the involvement of the private sector in HIV/AIDS prevention and care, many business managers are aware that the epidemic threatens the flow of commerce and profits. Thus there are mutual needs and interests in building an HIV/AIDS prevention partnership with business. This chapter has identified a number of points to strengthen the role of businesses in the partnership, including:

- Demonstrating that prevention can work and can be cost effective.
- Opening and maintaining effective communication with businesses at regional and country levels.
- Designing strategies to achieve sustainability through regular monitoring and assessment of the impact of programs.

CASE STUDY

FORD MOTOR COMPANY, SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa currently has more than 4.5 million HIV-infected individuals, more than any other country, with approximately 1,500 new infections per day. South Africa has the largest and most developed economy in sub-Saharan Africa and generates 45 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's gross domestic product. It is precisely because South Africa has a relatively sophisticated formal economic system that its economic performance is so vulnerable to the potential effects of the epidemic.

One example of a business response to HIV/AIDS is that of Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa (Ford-SA). The HIV/AIDS workplace program was developed during the second quarter of 1999, and is led by a steering committee chaired by the CEO of Ford-SA with cross-functional representation of management and employees.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE THAILAND BUSINESS COALITION ON AIDS¹⁸

- Approach businesses in a non-confrontational, non-threatening way.
- Use relevant and persuasive case studies to illustrate the importance of HIV/AIDS workplace policies and programs.
- Meet early on with high-level corporate staff to obtain their endorsement.
- Do not highlight existing laws unless they are inherently useful and conducive to businesses trying to manage HIV/AIDS issues in an effective, PLHA-supportive manner.
- Mainstreaming, monitoring and minimizing the impact of HIV/AIDS provide clear benefits to business.
- HIV/AIDS cost-benefit data from other businesses, though important, may have limited use for another company. Encourage companies to develop such data for themselves.

The company developed a comprehensive HIV prevention program to focus on communication, education, testing and community involvement. Two HIV/AIDS program coordinators were hired from within Ford-SA to lead this initiative. In August 1999 the program concluded and published a Ford-SA policy statement on HIV/AIDS, which is laminated and hangs on walls throughout the plant and in the restrooms. Forty peer educators, 20 at each plant, were trained and wear red ribbons to be easily identified. They conduct their training at the workplace, during the workday. The program also promoted alignment of benefit programs, offering additional coverage when positive HIV/AIDS status is declared to medical schemes.

The program is extended to employees, contract workers, pensioners and their families, and has reached more than 12,000 people. The company provides leadership on HIV/AIDS within the South African auto industry by serving as a resource for the industry and hosting an HIV/AIDS conference with other employers. The steering committee believes that employees no longer hesitate to engage in open discussion on the topic of HIV/AIDS, with more and more seeking advice and clarity. As a direct result of Ford's efforts, General Motors requested a briefing on the global epidemiology of HIV/AIDS and is currently following up on plans to implement a similar workplace program in their own South Africa plant.

The two Ford plants in South Africa, in Pretoria and Port Elizabeth, stopped production for an afternoon so the CEO could introduce the program and demonstrate his support for HIV/AIDS education in the workplace. This was an extremely powerful means of engaging the company and its management, since managerial support is of the utmost importance when implementing such programs.

Since April 1999, Ford also has ensured maximum access to free condoms, with a 400 percent increase in the volume dispensed onsite. Condom dispensers are located in all the facility restrooms and are fully stocked at all times. Approximately 10,000 condoms are distributed each month.

In addition to workplace education programs, policies and family days, there are also community-based activities funded through Ford Motor Company-USA (Ford-USA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Foundation. These activities complement the workplace programs by providing outreach and education to the communities in which the Ford employees reside. One example is the Life Skills Program in Port Elizabeth. Life Skills will work in

40 schools with sixth-grade students and aims to provide an understanding and awareness of HIV/AIDS, prevent transmission of HIV/STDs, create a support structure in communities for persons infected with HIV, protect and promote the rights of persons infected with HIV and reduce the personal, social and economic impact of HIV infection.

The CDC, with financial support from USAID, is implementing an important adjunct activity in the Ford-SA program in South Africa. The three major labor federations of South Africa—Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA) and National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU)—have developed HIV/AIDS in the workplace programs for their constituency. This activity is providing an important link to workplace and community-based prevention programs at Ford and Ford-SA. The workers receive training through their union leaders, the training is then reinforced in the workplace, and, with support from Ford-USA grants to the CDC Foundation, the information is reinforced in community planning in the workers' townships (See Life Skills program above).

This case study was written by Victor Barnes and Jennifer Newberger, Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention/ Intervention Research and Support (DHAP/IRS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

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