



NEW PUBLICATION!

African Employers Respond to HIV/AIDS: good practices, lessons learnt and future strategies



The Pan-African Employers' Confederation (PEC) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), will publish in spring 2009 a collection of case studies showing the achievements of employers' organizations across Africa in contributing to their countries' efforts to prevent HIV and mitigate its impact.

This publication, supported by the ILO Regional Office for Africa, will present good practice and lessons learnt – from challenges as well as successes – and suggest strategic responses in a range of thematic areas and workplace situations.

HIV/AIDS continues to be a major threat to the workforce. More than 90 per cent of HIV infections in the sub-regions have been reported from the most productive age group of 15-49 years.

HIV/AIDS adversely affect employees and poses a serious threat to productivity and enterprise performance due to increased absenteeism, disruption of operations and increased expenditure resulting from employees' medical treatment, replacement and associated costs.

Development of workplace policies and programmes dealing with HIV/AIDS is an ongoing human resource strategy that protects not only the business interests, but also fulfills better management practices, affecting the overall performance of a company in the long term.

Businesses are key institutions in contributing to the development of the national social fabric. Businesses cannot separate their own interests from those of the societies in which they function. Businesses are directly exposed to societal dynamics and need to contribute in addressing the need of people who are directly or indirectly affected by HIV/AIDS. To this end employers' organizations have a key role to play in assisting companies to:

- formulate, implement and monitor HIV/AIDS workplace policies and programmes - especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs),
- access and disseminate information to their staff, family and dependants, including best practice on HIV/AIDS,
- access technical and financial support in order to scale up their interventions.

EXAMPLES OF ACTION



World AIDS Day leadership poster featuring the President of the Safety and Health Committee of CNPB

committee at key national and international meetings, helping ensure that HIV/AIDS plans and policies include the world of work.

Confédération Patronale Gabonaise (CPG)

The CPG has launched a foundation whose main objective is to raise funds to be used to the fight against HIV/AIDS in the workplace and in communities in Gabon. The Confederation has embarked on a programme aimed at increasing the number of persons going for voluntary testing and counselling and also expanding treatment, care and support.

Ghana Employers' Association (GEA)

GEA has been involved in action on HIV/AIDS since 2001, sensitizing employers on the contents of the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work (including translating it into six Ghanaian languages), and assisting members to develop their own workplace HIV/AIDS policies. It has trained staff from member organizations as peer educators and counsellors – including skills training programmes for workplace representatives as “lay counsellors” and “peer counsellors”, produced a training manual on HIV/AIDS for peer educators, and developed IEC materials for member organizations.

Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE)

FKE makes active use of its membership structure to raise awareness and encourage the introduction of workplace policies and programmes on HIV/AIDS – in particular it involves employers who have these in place as champions to involve others. They provide leadership, advocacy and practical information based on their own experiences, and encourage other employers to follow suit. FKE itself has a range of guidance materials available to support them, and also provides training. In particular, it has produced the ‘FKE Code of Conduct on HIV/AIDS in the Workplace’ and is now engaged in guiding its application in specific sectors of economic activity. FKE has an extensive training programme for workplace facilitators and focal persons, peer educators, and resources persons with a special focus on reducing stigma and discrimination.



Conseil national du Patronat Burkinabé (CNPB), Burkina Faso

CNPB has spearheaded the establishment of workplace HIV/AIDS committees, and have been creative in financing them. Rather than bemoan the lack of technical and financial resources being allocated to workplace responses, the employers set up a scheme to help workplaces fund their own HIV/AIDS activities. Employees contribute up to 1 per cent of their wages to the HIV/AIDS fund and other costs – for prevention, voluntary testing and treatment – are borne by the employer. CNPB is also an active member of the business coalition on HIV/AIDS, and has offered a seat on the board to their labour counterpart.

Union Patronale et Interprofessionnelle du Congo (UNICONGO)

UNICONGO helped set up an inter-company committee on HIV/AIDS in 2001 and – as well as providing training for the members – represents the

Association of Lesotho Employers and Business (ALE)

In Lesotho, the ALE joined forces with its trade union counterpart to set up the Business and Labour Coalition on HIV/AIDS.

Employers' Consultative Association of Malawi (ECAM)

The main focus of ECAM is on advocacy and policy development – it was one of the first institutions to contribute to the Draft Workplace Policy on HIV/AIDS as well as being involved in the review and development of the Second National HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework, 2004-2008, and the labour legislation review programme to integrate HIV/AIDS. It collaborates with the Malawi Business Coalition against AIDS in terms of sharing information, reports and running joint programmes on HIV/AIDS.

Mauritius Employers' Federation (MEF)

MEF is a member of the National AIDS Secretariat which was established by the Prime Minister's Office in 2007, and of the Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM). It works to integrate HIV/AIDS in core workplace structures and mechanisms, especially for occupational safety and health, and is building on its partnership with the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health Management to mainstream HIV/AIDS in its programmes and materials.



Business Unity South Africa (BUSA)

BUSA member companies particularly those in the mining sector have been very active in the fight against HIV/AIDS amongst mine workers and surrounding communities with support from the Chamber of Mines. BUSA also helped set up SABCOHA to help member companies expand their HIV/AIDS activities.

Association of Tanzania Employers (ATE)

ATE started work to sensitize and motivate its membership on HIV/AIDS from 2000, and has developed its programme substantially to provide targeted and practical guidance for member companies and the business community as whole on mainstreaming HIV/AIDS activities. This includes helping them develop workplace policies and programmes, and providing replicable models for effective interventions on HIV/AIDS. To ensure a conducive legal-policy environment ATE has collaborated with the Government and the Trade Union Congress of Tanzania (TUCTA) to develop an HIV/AIDS for the workplace, and to conduct information and training workshops. ATE has also developed special HIV/AIDS prevention and control programmes designed to reach operators in the informal sector.

Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE)

FUE has included HIV/AIDS in its activities since 1998. A major initiative targeting Chief Executives to scale up HIV/AIDS sensitization and programme support reached over 300 Chief Executives, boosting the development and implementation of workplace policies and programmes. The FUE 'Employers Statement of Recommended Practices on HIV/AIDS at the Workplace' promotes the key principles of the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work, and together these provide the framework for workplace action. FUE has trained over 1200 trainers and 10 000 peer educators, using a training model drawing on behaviour change methods. Substantial numbers of materials have been developed, with an emphasis on non-written materials such as comic books and films, and on reaching informal sector enterprises. FUE takes part in the planning group to establish a Social Health Insurance Scheme in Uganda and supports a programme of home-based care. Among its innovations has been to include a special category for HIV/AIDS in its Employer of the Year Award.

Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE)

ZFE raises HIV/AIDS awareness among members and encourages the introduction of workplace policies and programmes on HIV/AIDS. On the one hand it provides leadership and advocacy on HIV/AIDS in the private sector, and on the other technical guidance and training, including to the Zambia Business Coalition on AIDS. It is currently considering making the existence of an HIV/AIDS policy a condition of membership for new companies.

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PEC mission

To contribute to the economic and social development of Africa through the promotion of the enterprise, investment and employment.

IOE mission

The IOE is the organization that promotes the interests of employers and their organizations at the international level through representation, information and advice.

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