

IndustriALL Responds to HIV/AIDS



For IndustriALL and its affiliates HIV/AIDS is a trade union issue. Our Global Union and its affiliates are uniquely placed to make an important contribution in the fight against the pandemic through workplace activities. HIV/AIDS activities help our unions to enhance their standing in society and assist them to recruit new members, especially among young workers and women.

The work of IndustriALL in the HIV/AIDS campaign has used donor assistance to run projects to train national HIV/AIDS coordinators in regional workshops. At the national level, activities started with peer education and awareness and prevention campaigns. Increasingly however, campaigns for voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) have been organized and thousands of workers, their families and members of the community queued up to know their status.

Some progress has also been made on the adoption of workplace policies and the insertion of HIV/AIDS clauses in collective bargaining agreements to eliminate discrimination and victimisation. Despite a sometimes-adverse relationship over conventional bargaining issues, companies must be seen as partners in the fight against the epidemic since an effective HIV/AIDS policy cannot be implemented without the participation of employers.

HIV/AIDS workplace policies should also draw on the resources of companies for skills training, awareness and prevention campaigns and for VCT and antiretroviral treatment (ART). Cost-benefit analyses have shown that even small expenses by companies for HIV/AIDS activities result in reduced costs for medical schemes, higher productivity, and reduced expenditure for training. Unions must continue to convince employers that it makes business sense to invest in the fight against HIV/AIDS.



IndustriALL action on women's issues in relation to HIV/AIDS centres on women's empowerment in taking control of their reproductive rights and dealing with issues such as violence at home and sexual harassment at the workplace. The use of female condoms is also promoted. Women workshops at sub-regional level in turn led to women activities organized at national level. Several of these were not only relevant with respect to HIV/AIDS, but also strengthened unions by integrating more women in their union work and by recruiting more female members.

Fighting HIV and AIDS is a national policy matter. All target countries have national policies to fight the pandemic and a National AIDS Commission, which coordinates the efforts of all stakeholders. It is important that trade union activities fit into this general framework. For this to happen unions must be recognized as partners in national policy implementation and, subsequently, they have to actively seek contacts with national HIV/AIDS bodies. Of equal importance is the involvement of organisations of People Living with HIV/AIDS to reduce stigma.

From its adoption by the International Labour Conference of the ILO in June 2010, IndustriALL has promoted ILO Recommendation 200 concerning HIV and AIDS and the World of Work. This is the first international human rights instrument to focus on HIV and AIDS and the world of work. All workers are protected by the new labour standard, including contract workers and those in informal economies. Recommendation 200 is a tool for unions to use. The Global Action Plan for the implementation of R200, as adopted by the ILO Governing Body in March 2011, seeks three outcomes for the period 2011 to 2015: reduction of stigma and discrimination, increased access to services, and scaled-up action by world of work actors.

An important date for HIV/AIDS activists every year is World Aids Day, 1 December. Unionists must actively participate in World AIDS Day activities in their country.

External resources:

- **overview of links to other important HIV/AIDS sites is available**

- **overview of useful background materials on HIV-AIDS.**

- **union HIV/AIDS policy**

- **HIV/AIDS workplace policy**

- **An HIV/AIDS Training Manual for Collective Bargaining in English, French and Spanish** - The manual gives a basis for unions to negotiate protections for people living with HIV/AIDS.

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