



Approaches that Work

WORKPLACE HIV INITIATIVES

Mobilizing a multisectoral response to HIV that involves workplaces and private companies is good for people and good for business. Strong HIV workplace programs can help eliminate discrimination in employment practices; protect employee benefits; serve as an additional venue for raising HIV-related awareness; and reduce stigma in the broader community. Thus, employees are more likely to come forward for HIV counseling and testing—helping them to learn their status, adopt prevention behaviors, or access treatment and support. The result is a healthier workforce, lower medical costs, less absenteeism, improved morale, and greater support for affected families.

Beginning in 2004, the USAID-funded POLICY Project worked in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) to promote HIV workplace policies and programs. Building on these efforts, the follow-on USAID | Health Policy Initiative, Task Order 1, and the AIDS Responsibility Project (ARP) have continued to support and establish business councils in Mexico, Jamaica, and Guatemala. In addition to the Mexico City-based council, we are also bringing together a group of businesses in Tijuana, Mexico, in a less formalized structure to address HIV in the workplace.

The business councils have become an effective mechanism for exchanging information across the business community; encouraging members to adopt policies and leverage resources for HIV programs; and fostering linkages and partnerships among the government, civil society, and private sectors.

THE BUSINESS COUNCIL APPROACH

The Health Policy Initiative’s approach to mobilizing businesses to combat stigma and discrimination in the workplace in the LAC region emphasizes four key components:

Sound evidence base. The program begins with a corporate survey to understand HIV-related attitudes, policies, and practices. Additional data are used throughout the process to support advocacy, planning, cost-benefit analyses for businesses, and monitoring and evaluation.

Collaboration, commitment, and champions. Following awareness-raising and advocacy, interested parties come together to form a Business Council on HIV/AIDS. As members, organizations commit to adopt anti-discrimination policies as well as allocate human and financial resources for HIV programs. In many cases, business leaders have become vocal

**“Good for People,
Good for Business”**



Members of CONAES share lessons learned with Rahul Gandhi, a member of India’s Parliament, in June 2007.



Cable & Wireless Jamaica employees, including former CEO and JaBCHA Chairman, Rodney Davis, after an HIV test on World AIDS Day 2006.

**TASK ORDER I
DECEMBER 2007**



JaBCHA Executive Committee members participate in a radio program on HIV.



Federal Express receives recognition for being a member of CONAES from Roberto Tapia, Mexico's Undersecretary of Health; Antonio O. Garza, US Ambassador to Mexico; and Julio Frenk, Mexico's Minister of Health in February 2006.



HIV advocacy champions, speaking out against stigma and serving as role models for others.

Capacity development. The Health Policy Initiative strongly believes in the value of strengthening in-country capacity. We provide training to local partners, NGOs, and individuals so that they become agents of change, and can directly provide technical assistance to businesses in designing, implementing, and monitoring their HIV workplace programs.

Program implementation and resource mobilization. Working with businesses and local NGOs, we use a variety of tools to draft workplace HIV policies, carry out stigma-reduction initiatives, and help council members leverage resources to implement their HIV programs. USAID, council charter members, and key partners, such as Merck, Sharpe & Dohme, have provided initial seed money to support the business council activities.

THE RESULTS—SUSTAINABLE LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

The **Mexican Business Council on HIV/AIDS (CONAES)**, formed in 2004, includes in-country and multinational corporations operating in Mexico, such as Ford Motor Company and Pfizer. CONAES has 28 members, covering about 150,000 employees. All but five members have adopted HIV workplace policies or are in the process of doing so. One member, Colgate-Palmolive, adopted a regional policy that was used as an example for the global policy and country-specific policies in all of their Latin American offices. Since 2004, the private sector has invested over US\$400,000 in CONAES programs through time, in-kind donations, event sponsorship, and membership fees.

As evidence of the council's organizational maturity, CONAES recently hired a new Executive Director and held its second annual election for the executive board. The election featured multiple nominees for each position, including president, secretary, treasurer, and at-large member. The new board will serve for one year. In addition, the council organized an event with the Secretary of Labor to present guidance to companies on what is involved in being a socially responsible business. The event reaffirmed the partnership between the council and the government and will help foster greater collaboration between the private sector and government in addressing HIV in the future.

The **Jamaica Business Council on HIV/AIDS (JaBCHA)** was launched on World AIDS Day 2006, with 21 founding members. In a matter of months, the council formed an Executive Committee, created subcommittees to carry out work on specific issues, and established linkages for further collaboration with the Ministry of Health in support of the National HIV/STI Strategic Plan. The council's goal is to have all members adopt HIV workplace policies within the next year. To date, JaBCHA members, the Jamaica Employers' Federation, Merck, and other partners have contributed time, membership dues, and resources, totaling over US\$360,000. For World AIDS Day 2006, the former Chairman of JaBCHA and CEO of Cable & Wireless, Rodney Davis, publicly came forward to volunteer for an HIV test. For World AIDS Day 2007, JaBCHA garnered commitment from the newly elected Prime Minister to also undergo an HIV test. These high-profile events help challenge stigma in

Jamaica, where few people have sought voluntary counseling and testing.

Guatemalan businesses launched the **Business Foundation Committed to HIV** on World AIDS Day 2007. The Health Policy Initiative helped companies form an executive committee and outline the foundation's vision, structure, and workplan for 2008. Members include Palo Blanco, Proyectos y Ventas, the National Association of Banana Producers, Cementos Progreso, the National Association of Sugar Producers, Cerveceria Centroamericana, Colgate-Palmolive, and Alimentos Maravilla. The mission of the foundation is to provide businesses the tools needed to reduce stigma and discrimination in the workplace and to contribute to the prevention of HIV and other sexually-transmitted infections.

IMPULSO, the Mexican HIV/AIDS NGO Network, has emerged as a highly-skilled provider of technical assistance to the private sector. Beginning in 2005, we have worked to strengthen the network's capacity in policy development, stigma reduction, and dissemination of best practices. IMPULSO now provides training and technical assistance, including conducting HIV sensitization workshops and helping companies design and implement workplace HIV programs. While IMPULSO is based in Mexico, the network has shared its expertise and lessons learned with the business councils in Jamaica and Guatemala.

In addition, the Health Policy Initiative has initiated a partnership with the **San Diego/Tijuana Binational HIV/STD Committee**. In collaboration with IMPULSO, we provided training to the committee on how to assist companies in drafting HIV policies and addressing HIV-related stigma and discrimination in the workplace.



JaBCHA Executive Committee hosts a breakfast at the US Chiefs of Mission annual conference in 2007.



Mobilizing Workplace HIV Responses Around the World

We provide technical assistance to individual companies in strategic planning, the AIDS Impact Model, and the Workplace Policy Builder software, resulting in the adoption of HIV programs and anti-discrimination policies by companies such as BRAMALI (a major soft drink supplier in **Mali**); the Mozambican Telecommunication Company and Federation of Transports in **Mozambique**; Confederation of **Ethiopian** Trade Unions; and others.

In collaboration with the University of Stellenbosch in **South Africa**, we created three training modules and help train teachers and students in HIV workplace policy design and management. The project trained nearly 1,400 participants in 2006–2007.

In **Kenya**, we helped to form and have provided capacity-building assistance to the Kenya Network of Positive Teachers (KENEPOTE). The network has become a critical source of support for HIV-positive teachers and has successfully challenged stigma and discrimination in the workplace.



Staff from Guatemala's Institute for Social Security participate in a training on the use of the Workplace Policy Builder Software in September 2007.



Members of the San Diego/Tijuana Binational HIV/STD Committee practice using the Workplace Policy Builder Software at a training in October 2007.

For More Information

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The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the U.S. government.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The resources listed below are available through the Health Policy Initiative. Please contact Elizabeth Mallas at emallas@constellagroup.com.

- **Corporate Survey** on HIV-related knowledge, workplace educational programs, training, hiring practices, and general policies. Available in English and Spanish.
- **Workplace Policy Builder** software that assists companies in designing HIV policies through a participatory process. Created by Constella Futures with support from the U.S. Department of Labor. Available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.
- **Training of Trainer (TOT) Curriculum** that builds capacity of organizations and individuals to provide assistance to businesses in reducing stigma and discrimination and designing and implementing HIV workplace policies. Available in English and Spanish.
- **AIDS Impact Model for Business**, an economic and demographic model designed by Constella Futures to help managers analyze how HIV affects their businesses.
- **Goals Model**, a computer model created by the POLICY Project that links cost and impact data to help stakeholders determine the strategies and funding levels to best meet program goals.
- **Ranking Tool** that assigns a rank of silver, gold, or platinum based on a company's HIV policies and practices. Available in English and Spanish.
- **Best Practices Guide** on HIV workplace programs that includes sections on applicants and employees; communicating policies effectively; maintaining confidentiality; health and medical benefits; and educational programs for employees. Based on experiences in Mexico. Published in Spanish. (An English guide to be used in Jamaica is currently under development.)
- **“Integration of HIV/STI Prevention, Sexuality, and Dual Protection in Family Planning Counseling: A Training Manual.”** EngenderHealth manual focusing on building providers' capacity to address sensitive issues related to sexuality, gender, and HIV, including overcoming biases. Translated into Spanish and adapted for the Latin American context by the Health Policy Initiative.
- **“Workplace HIV/AIDS Programs: An Action Guide for Managers.”** Provides practical advice on the design and implementation of workplace HIV prevention and care programs that serve employees and managers. Written by Family Health International in English and translated by the Health Policy Initiative into Spanish with an additional chapter on stigma and discrimination in Latin America.