Guidelines on HIV and AIDS for the postal sector

Guidelines on HIV and AIDS for the postal sector

Sectoral Activities Department

Programme on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work

International Labour Office, Geneva

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Note to users

These Guidelines are based on work in progress. We hope this text will prove useful in its present form. Nonetheless, it will be subject to revision once its content has been applied and tested in different countries. Your comments would be very welcome.

List of acronyms

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
BCC	Behaviour change communication
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICTs	Information and communication technologies
ILO	International Labour Organization/Office
ILO/AIDS	ILO Programme on HIV and AIDS and the world of work
IOE	International Organisation of Employers
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
KABP	Knowledge, attitude, behaviour and practices surveys
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PMTCT	Prevention of mother-to-child transmission
PPP	Public-private partnership
SAFEWORK	ILO Programme on Safety & Health at Work and the Environment
SECTOR	Sectoral Activities Department of the ILO
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
TB	Tuberculosis
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNI	UNI Global Union
UPU	Universal Postal Union
VCT	Voluntary counselling and testing
WHO	World Health Organization
WPI	Workplace intervention

Terminology[1]

AIDS: the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, a cluster of medical conditions often referred to as opportunistic infections and cancers and for which, to date, there is no cure.

HIV: the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, a virus that weakens the body's immune system, ultimately causing AIDS. Infection can be prevented by appropriate measures.

Affected persons: persons whose lives are changed in any way by HIV and AIDS due to the broader impact of the epidemic.

Discrimination: is used in these Guidelines in accordance with the definition given in the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), to include HIV status. It also includes discrimination on the basis of a worker's perceived HIV status, including discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation.

Employer: a person or organization employing workers under a written or verbal contract of employment which establishes the rights and duties of both parties. Governments, public authorities, private enterprises and individuals may be employers.

Occupational health services: is used in these Guidelines in accordance with the description given in the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161), namely health services which have an essentially preventative function and which are responsible for advising the employer, as well as workers and their representatives, on the requirements for establishing and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment and work methods to facilitate optimal physical and mental health in relation to work. The occupational health services also provide advice on the adaptation of work to the capabilities of workers taking into account their physical and mental health.

Persons living with HIV: refers to people infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

Persons with disabilities: individuals whose prospects of securing, retaining and advancing in suitable employment are substantially reduced as a result of a duly recognized physical or mental impairment. This definition is the one used in the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159).

Postal industry: an industry offering electronic, financial and physical services; the postal service is at present the most reliable and easily accessed means for communicating and for receiving and sending goods and messages. Postal activities notably include the collection, sorting, sending and distribution of letters, parcels and express-mail items. For more than 130 years, numerous postal operators have also offered financial services. Postal operators are also meeting the needs of migrant workers by developing money-transfer services, in particular using the International Financial System (IFS), the UPU's secure and affordable fund transfer system.

Postal sector: Broader term covering not only the postal industry but also related activities in logistics and courier services.

1. Sources: ILO: *An ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work* (Geneva, ILO, 2001), and the Recommendation concerning HIV and AIDS and the World of Work, 2010 (No. 200).

Reasonable accommodation: any modification or adjustment to a job or to the workplace that is reasonably practicable and will enable a person living with HIV or AIDS to have access to or participate or advance in employment, as envisaged in paragraph 13 of the Recommendation.

Screening: measures whether direct (HIV testing), indirect (assessment of risk-taking behaviour) or asking questions about tests already taken or about medication.

Sex and gender: there are both biological and social differences between men and women. The term "sex" refers to biologically determined differences, while the term "gender" refers to differences in social roles and relations between men and women.

Gender roles are learned through socialization and vary widely within and between cultures. Gender roles are affected by age, class, ethnicity and religion, and by the geographical, economic and political environment.

STI: sexually transmitted infections which include, among others, syphilis, chancroid, chlamydia, gonorrhoea and HIV. They include conditions commonly known as sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Stigma: a social mark that, when associated with a person, usually causes marginalization or presents an obstacle to the full enjoyment of social life by the person infected or affected by HIV.

Termination of employment: has the meaning attributed to it in the Termination of Employment Convention, 1982 (No. 158), namely dismissal at the initiative of the employer.

Universal precautions: a simple standard of infection control practice to be used to minimize the risk of blood-borne pathogens (see full explanation in Appendix 2).

Vulnerability: refers to socio-economic disempowerment and cultural context, work situations that make workers more susceptible to the risk of infection and situations that put children at greater risk of being
involved in child labour.

Worker: refers to any persons working under any form or arrangement.

Workers' representatives: in accordance with the Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971 (No. 135), workers' representatives are "persons recognized as such by national law or practice, whether they are:

(a) trade union representatives, namely, representatives designated or elected by trade unions or by members of such unions; or

(b) elected representatives, namely, representatives who are freely elected by the workers of the undertaking in accordance with provisions of national laws or regulations or ofcollective agreements and whose functions do not include activities which are recognized
as the exclusive prerogative of trade unions in the country concerned."

Workplace: refers to any place in which workers perform their activity.

Preface

"Eliminating HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination in the world of work upholds the dignity of work and of workers. Policies and strategies for prevention and treatment sustain the workforce: they must reach all workers, wherever they work, including in the informal and rural economy. And in sustaining the workforce we sustain families, communities, societies and economies."

Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO, on World Aids Day, 1 December 2009

Approximately 33.3 million people live with HIV today[2]. Every day, there are 7,500 new cases of infection. In a global context in which HIV and AIDS is no longer restricted to a single sector or region but affects considerable numbers of people linked in different ways, the postal industry is in a strategic position to preventing and combating the epidemic across entire communities.

The postal sector can play a very important role in the response to HIV and AIDS. The Universal Postal Union (UPU), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNI Global Union launched a global HIV-prevention campaign in post offices worldwide in 2009. The aim is to raise awareness among the population and postal employees of the importance of taking precautions against HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

In June 2010, the International Labour Conference of the ILO adopted a new international labour standard – the HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200). This builds upon the key principles established in the ILO Code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work (2001). Recommendation No. 200 protects human rights at work, calling for measures to be taken to prevent HIV-related discrimination and stigma. It calls on member States to develop, adopt, effectively implement and monitor national tripartite HIV workplace policies in consultation with organizations of employers and workers and organizations of people living with HIV and relevant sectors. These policies and programmes, which are to be integrated into national strategic plans, should incorporate the key principles of Recommendation No. 200. The new labour standard also calls for the development and delivery of prevention programmes in and through the world of work. It aims to strengthen the contribution of the workplace in achieving the goal of universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support in relation to HIV and AIDS. The scope of Recommendation No. 200 is extensive, covering all economic sectors and both the formal and informal economies.

The ILO is a multilateral agency dedicated to bringing decent work and livelihoods, job-related security and better living standards to the people in poor and rich countries. It helps to attain those goals by promoting rights at work, encouraging opportunities for decent employment, enhancing social protection and strengthening dialogue on work-related issues. The ILO is mandated to develop and monitor the implementation of international labour standards, which generally take the form of Conventions and Recommendations.

2. UNAIDS: *Global report. UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, 2010* (Geneva, 2010), p.23. Available at: http://www.unaids.org/documents/20101123_GlobalReport_em.pdf

The UPU is a UN specialized agency responsible for international postal services, which promotes the value and social and economic importance of postal services. The UPU works alongside the governments, the Posts and the regulators of its 191 member countries to improve operational aspects of the postal service, including quality of service, postal security, the exchange of mail between countries, customs and air transportation, and helps many developing countries improve their postal infrastructure and grow their markets.

UNAIDS works to build political action and to promote the rights all of people for better results for global health and development. Globally, it sets policy and is the source of HIV-related data. In countries, UNAIDSbrings together the resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and 10 UN system organizations for coordinated and accountable efforts to unite the world against AIDS.

UNI Global Union -- with 20 million workers in 900 unions worldwide and 2.5 million workers in the Post and Logistics Sector -- fosters international solidarity and provides a voice at the international level for all its members. Working with workers and their employers at the regional and global level, UNI has a very strategic position to encourage and support programmes and policies to respond to HIV and AIDS at the workplace.

Following a request from workers, the UPU and employers, it was felt that a set of Guidelines on HIV and AIDS that address the specific situation of the postal sector would offer an essential additional tool.

The present Guidelines are a product of collaboration among the ILO, UPU, UNAIDS and UNI Global Union. This collaboration also resulted in the launching of the abovementioned global HIV and AIDS awareness campaign in July 2009. The campaign aims to raise awareness across the world among the post offices' customers and postal workers, who will be directly concerned by this tool.

It is expected that these Guidelines will help stakeholders in the postal sector and their affiliated members to develop and implement their own workplace HIV and AIDS policies and programmes. It will also assist in promoting and implementing Recommendation No. 200.

The time to act is now, and urgency should be the key word driving this initiative. We hope these Guidelines will be useful to postal enterprises and other agencies in tackling the HIV and AIDS pandemic and saving lives.

UNAIDS, Universal Postal Union, UNI Global Union and ILO launch global HIV prevention campaign

"With more than 7,400 new infections occurring every day, it is clear that HIV prevention efforts need to be stepped up urgently. The postal network has an extremely wide outreach; it is open to everyone from the young to the old and is an excellent and innovative way to raise awareness about how to prevent HIV."

Michel Sidibé, Executive Director, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

"Postal workers and their families are also touched by HIV and AIDS. Healthy employees contribute to the decent living of their families as well as the good functioning of the company and the postal network as a whole. Furthermore, postal workers contribute fundamentally to the universal service, which represents an important mean to outreach to communities and support them. This joint campaign and the guidelines prepared by UNI Post & Logistics Global Union and the ILO is also an opportunity to have employees and employers discuss and prevent HIV as well as create a dialogue on broader issues such as health and safety."

Philip J. Jennings, Secretary General, UNI Global Union

"With 600,000 post offices around the world, the postal network is a natural partner for this HIV prevention awareness campaign. It is the single largest health-awareness initiative ever launched globally by the postal sector, demonstrating the huge outreach and value of the universal services that it provides. The campaign is a strong example of what one industry can do to help achieve the important Millennium Development Goal of halting and beginning to reverse the spread of HIV by 2015."

Edouard Dayan, Director General, Universal Postal Union

"The campaign promotes the development of a workplace policy for postal workers everywhere, as well as creatively using the opportunities of the postal network and its structures in each country to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS and counter stigma and discrimination. The ILO works actively with its partners to promote a fair globalization. This includes ensuring that responses to the economic crisis are informed by the ILO's goals of decent work based on social justice and take an integrated approach that includes factoring in the implications of HIV and AIDS."

Assane Diop, Executive Director, Social Protection Sector, International Labour Office

"Using the slogan 'NIPOST cares' gave a face to the campaign and clearly said to the public that the Post cares about them. The Post is now seen as a carrier of health information, not just mail."

Maayen Ujong, NIPOST's Director of Operations

"The post office, with its wide-reaching distribution network, offers a strategic entry point to reach the general population and post office staff with HIV prevention messages."

Pedro Chequer, UNAIDS Country Coordinator for Brazil

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Introduction

The International Labour Office (ILO), through its Programme on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work (ILO/AIDS) and the Sectoral Activities Department (SECTOR), in collaboration with the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and UNI Global Union (formerly Union Network International) have contributed to the formulation of the present Guidelines on HIV and AIDS and the postal sector and participated in the implementation of the first phase of the campaign in seven selected pilot countries.

The main aim of the Guidelines is to inform postal workers about prevention and protection measures relating to HIV and AIDS since they can play a vital role in passing on messages, and to develop workplace policies for postal enterprises.

The provisions of the Guidelines should be interpreted in the light of situations specific to different countries and to the scale of particular operations and the technical means available, with a view to implementing the practical guidance it offers.

The *ILO Guidelines on HIV and AIDS for the postal sector* consist of a compilation of a range of resources – including tools and information – that can be used by the different players in the postal sector to help slow the spread of the HIV. Although the Guidelines are based on the ILO Code of Practice on HIV and AIDS and the world of work[3] and the accompanying training manual, this book also contains ideas that have been adapted to aspects that are specific to the postal sector. These Guidelines will also give effect to the recently adopted ILO Recommendation concerning HIV and AIDS and the World of Work, 2010 (No. 200), which places a strong emphasis on the unique role of employers' and workers' organizations in promoting and supporting sectoral, national and international efforts to respond to the epidemic.

The Guidelines thus propose to provide an appropriate framework for developing and promoting tripartite workplace programmes on HIV and AIDS and essentially seek to answer the following four questions:

- Why should the postal sector be concerned about HIV and AIDS?
- How can postal operators formulate an appropriate, pragmatic response to the challenges posed by the epidemic?
- What do the postal services have to offer society at large in terms of communication related to HIV and AIDS?
- How can people in the postal sector move beyond the workplace to build partnerships for HIV prevention?

It is hoped that the answers to these questions will make clear the opportunities and possibilities that exist in the postal sector to reduce the impact of HIV and AIDS on women and men workers (and their families and dependants), suppliers, clients and society at large.

3. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/aids/Publications/lang--en/docName--WCMS_113783/index.htm

Although HIV and AIDS have a significant impact on the productivity and long-term viability of businesses, the human cost of the epidemic is considerably greater and requires a collective response on the part of governments and civil society.

It would thus seem clear that the workplace should play an essential role in combating HIV and AIDS. Bearing this in mind, the ILO Code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work, 2001, which was formulated in consultation with workers' and employers' representatives as well as governments, provides practical guidance to help businesses formulate policies and action plans to reduce the impact of HIV and AIDS on employees, their families, the surrounding communities — as well as the company's balance sheet. Management, workers and trade unions in the postal sector should engage in social dialogue to elaborate such plans at the national and sectoral levels or within companies themselves. Governments could become involved directly where postal companies are part of the public sector.

National postal operators in many of the 191 UPU member states around the world are among the biggest single employers, in terms of both geographical scope and number of employees, and form a universal network providing modern products and services. Some 5 million employees work in 660,000 postal establishments and every year handle and distribute around 430 billion mail items throughout the world. In addition, the postal service makes information and communication technologies (ICTs) available in the world's most remote and isolated regions.

Whether through contact with clients during the collection and distribution of mail, or during transport or other work that goes hand in hand with the handling of letters and parcels, postal employees are often in a vulnerable position when it comes to the AIDS epidemic.

Postal operators have recognized that there are many potential ways of facing up to these challenges:

- Making use of the different skills and characteristics associated with work in the postal sector so as to find innovative, appropriate solutions and to use the worldwide network of post offices to provide postal workers and the general public with sound messages on prevention, information and care;
- Carrying out dynamically implemented and well-formulated prevention programmes within the sector;
- Engaging in social dialogue with other key players within or outside the sector;
- Strengthening the global response to the challenges posed by the virus by actively communicating essential messages on HIV and AIDS to clients, supply chain stakeholders and thus to the surrounding community as a whole.

A healthy workforce can contribute to the development of its business and the sector in general and ensures that workers and their families can continue to rely on an employee's income. Moreover, since the postal services are used by millions of people they are in a highly visible, strategic position to disseminate information on HIV and AIDS through awareness-raising campaigns. This position, as well as different activities carried out by the postal services, helps fight the discrimination and stigmatization suffered by people living with HIV.

Furthermore, Recommendation No. 200 covers persons in any employment or occupation, including people in training (interns, apprentices and volunteers), job applicants and job seekers, laid off or suspended workers. It also applies to all sectors of economic activity including:

- The public and private sectors
- The formal and informal economies
- The armed forces and uniformed services

In this context, the present Guidelines, which are specific to the postal sector, concern all employees and workers in the sector, and all aspects of work.

The Guidelines were drawn up jointly by three organizations:

- The International Labour Organization (ILO: SECTOR and ILO/AIDS)
- The Universal Post Union (UPU)
- UNI Global Union

A three-year prevention campaign was launched by the above agencies in collaboration with a fourth one, UNAIDS. During the first phase of the campaign, 16,000 post offices in seven pilot countries - Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, Estonia, Mali and Nigeria - were contacted.

Through a series of posters and leaflets the campaign gives customers and employees important information on how to protect themselves against HIV. The material also contains the address of a multilingual website on HIV prevention - www.unaids.org - offering detailed information on how to avoid infection with the virus. From 2010 to 2012, the campaign will be expanded globally, with the aim of ultimately covering post offices throughout the world.

Photo: Launch of the global prevention campaign in 2009 by (from left to right) M. Philip Jennings, M. Edouard Dayan, M. Michel Sidibé and M. Assane Diop.

I. THE POSTAL SECTOR AND THE HIV AND AIDS EPIDEMIC

Since the start of the epidemic, almost 60 million people have been infected by HIV and 25 million have died from HIV-related causes. According to UNAIDS statistics for 2009[4], some 33.3 million [31.4 million–35.3 million] people were living with HIV and there were some 2.6 million [2.3 million–2.8 million] new infections and around 1.8 million [1.6 million–2.1 million] AIDS-related deaths. More than half of all people living with HIV are women and girls. In sub-Saharan Africa for instance, more women than men are living with HIV. Addressing the gender inequalities that perpetuate the epidemic is essential for an effective response to HIV. In 2009, approximately 370,000 children [220,000–520,000] children were newly infected with HIV, bringing the total number of children living with HIV to 2.5 million [1.7 million–3.4 million] in 2009.

The epidemic affects especially the economically active segments of the population and thus the world of work in a variety of ways.

Regional HIV and AIDS statistics and features | 2009

	Adults and children living with HIV	Adults and children newly infected with HIV	Adult prevalence (15–49) [%]	Adult & child deaths due to AIDS
Sub-Saharan Africa	22.5 million [20.9 million – 24.2 million]	1.8 million [1.6 million – 2.0 million]	5.0% [4.7% – 5.2%]	1.3 million [1.1 million – 1.5 million]
Middle East and North Africa	460 000 [400 000 – 530 000]	75 000 [61 000 – 92 000]	0.2% [0.2% – 0.3%]	24 000 [20 000 – 27 000]
South and South-East Asia	4.1 million [3.7 million – 4.6 million]	270 000 [240 000 – 320 000]	0.3% [0.3% – 0.3%]	260 000 [230 000 – 300 000]
East Asia	770 000 [560 000 – 1.0 million]	82 000 [48 000 – 140 000]	0.1% [0.1% – 0.1%]	36 000 [25 000 – 50 000]
Central and South America	1.4 million [1.2 million – 1.6 million]	92 000 [70 000 – 120 000]	0.5% [0.4% – 0.6%]	58 000 [43 000 – 70 000]
Caribbean	240 000 [220 000 – 270 000]	17 000 [13 000 – 21 000]	1.0% [0.9% – 1.1%]	12 000 [8500 – 15 000]
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	1.4 million [1.3 million – 1.6 million]	130 000 [110 000 – 160 000]	0.8% [0.7% – 0.9%]	76 000 [60 000 – 95 000]
Western and Central Europe	820 000 [720 000 – 910 000]	31 000 [23 000 – 40 000]	0.2% [0.2% – 0.2%]	8500 [6800 – 19 000]
North America	1.5 million [1.2 million – 2.0 million]	70 000 [44 000 – 130 000]	0.5% [0.4% – 0.7%]	26 000 [22 000 – 44 000]
Oceania	57 000 [50 000 – 64 000]	4500 [3400 – 6000]	0.3% [0.2% – 0.3%]	1400 [<1000 – 2400]
TOTAL	**33.3 million** [31.4 million – 35.3 million]	**2.6 million** [2.3 million – 2.8 million]	**0.8%** [0.7% - 0.8%]	**1.8 million** [1.6 million – 2.1 million]

The ranges around the estimates in this table define the boundaries within which the actual numbers lie, based on the best available information.

Source: UNAIDS and WHO.

4. *Op. cit.*, UNAIDS, 2010.

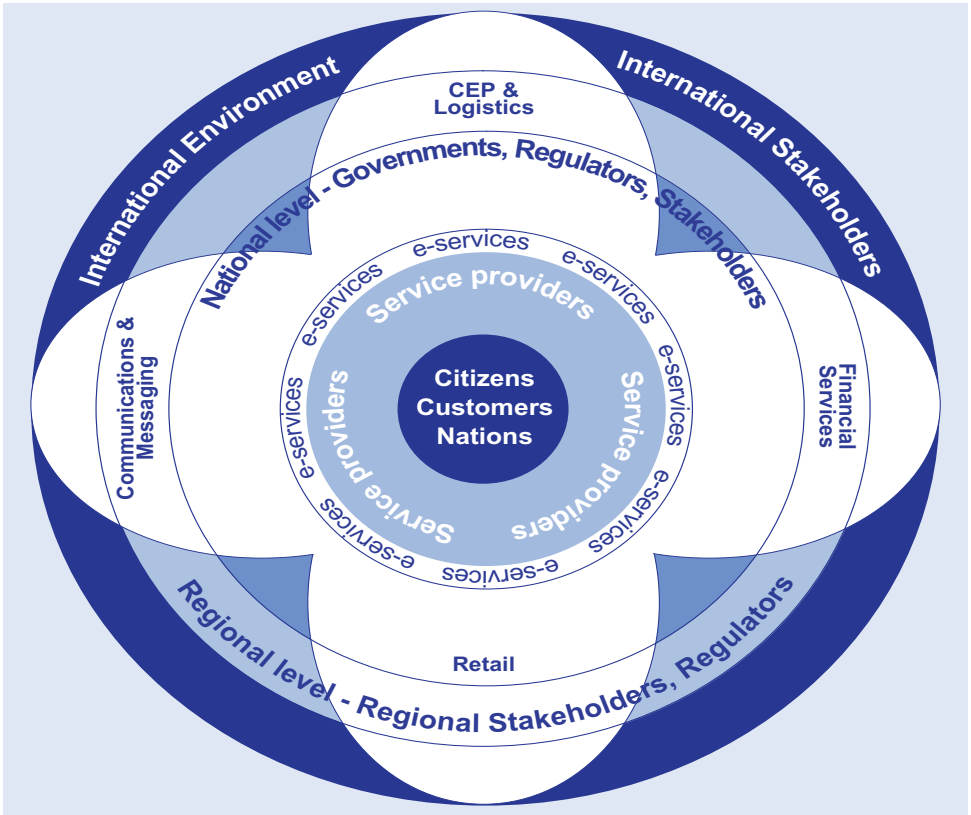
The HIV and AIDS epidemic has become a crisis of global proportions and is one of the most formidable challenges to development and social progress. In the most affected countries, the epidemic is eroding decades of development gains, undermining economies, threatening security and destabilizing communities. HIV and AIDS are affecting societies at every level – individuals, their families and the workplace - and constitute a growing global challenge.

According to the Code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work, HIV is an issue in all workplaces and should be treated like any other serious illness or condition. This is necessary not only because it affects the workforce but also because the workplace, being part of the local community, has a role to play in the wider response that aims to limit the spread and effects of the epidemic.

To be able to determine what action plans should be drawn up to address the issue of HIV and AIDS in postal companies, first the risks and challenges of HIV and AIDS should be identified. These can be related to the potential impact the epidemic on postal workers, industries linked to the sector, and the long-term economic viability of businesses. On the basis of the answers, possibilities and opportunities for combating the epidemic can then be formulated and developed care being taken to ensure that they are adapted to sector specificities.

Thanks to information and communication technologies (ICT) post offices now offer physical, electronic and financial postal services that help to build an integrated information society and contribute to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE POSTAL SECTOR

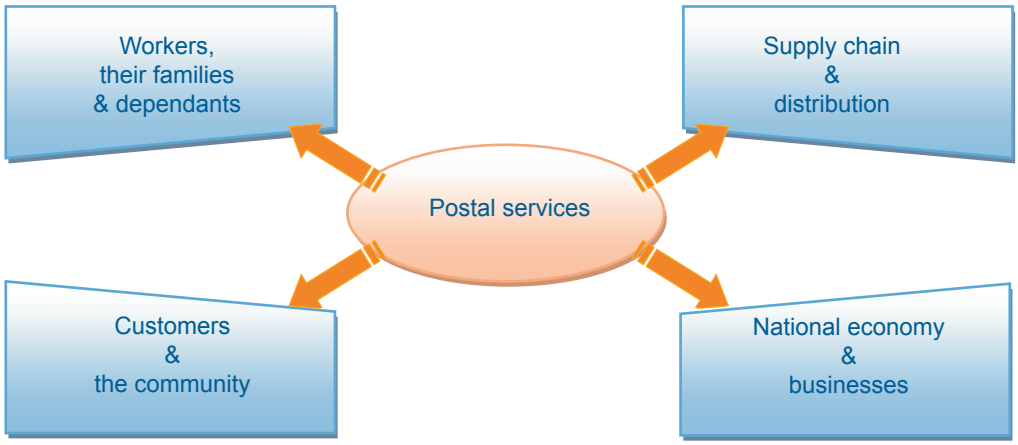


CEP: Courier, express, parcels; Service providers: DPO's and others
Source: UPU, January 2007

1.1 The impact of HIV and AIDS on the postal industry and its workers

Of the estimated 33.3 million people living with HIV[5] worldwide, more than 90 per cent are between the ages of 15 and 49, and are of working age. This has a negative impact on business productivity, the delivery of essential services and socio-economic security.

HIV and AIDS have multiple impacts on the postal sector. They affect the sector's workers, their families and their wider communities; the different businesses that work with the postal industry, the sector's clients and the economy as a whole. Therefore, it also affects working women and men in sectors affiliated with and linked to the postal services, such as transport, logistics and express delivery services.



Postal enterprises and the economy

The postal sector is of crucial importance to the economic development of countries and their communities. It forms a global network linking workers, employers, businesses, organizations and institutions all over the world. It not only permits the exchange of resources, services and information but through its very existence creates a large number of jobs.

HIV and AIDS can, however, result in increased absences from work and the loss of skilled, experienced staff, leading to a decline in productivity. If not addressed constructively and positively, this can lead to an increase in sick days, a negative atmosphere and lower motivation, which can in turn lead to an increase in health-care expenditure and social benefit payments, higher insurance premiums, a greater turnover in staff and higher recruitment and training costs.

5. *Ibid.*

This threatens productivity and profit - the two elements essential to the health of a business - which in turn has caused a decline in tax revenues affecting public services and, by extension, national economies as a whole.

Postal workers

HIV and AIDS can have an impact on all postal workers and thus on the operations of the entire postal service.

The AIDS epidemic shrinks the operational resources of postal businesses and lowers workers' incomes, with disastrous consequences for male and female employees, their families and the people who are financially dependent on them. What is more, stigmatization and discrimination create a negative work atmosphere and adversely affect productivity.

Postal workers are critical to the success and long-term viability of any postal enterprise. Young people in particular are exposed to the risk of HIV they are becoming sexually active and are thus at even greater risk of becoming infected. Young women may be at increased risk of infection for a number of reasons. Not only are these related to their increased biological susceptibility as compared to men, but also to socio-cultural practices in many countries that contribute to the risk of HIV infection.[6]

HIV and AIDS programmes have the following benefits:

- **Stabilize productivity by reducing staff turnover, the loss of skills and experience, the cost of recruitment and training, and absenteeism;**
- **Improve the atmosphere at the workplace, attract and keep workers, raise their level of commitment and increase respect for their rights;**
- **Enhance the public image and reputation of the business, and result in more loyal customers;**
- **Reduce financial expenses by stemming costs related to health and the payment of social benefits;**
- **Contribute to national programmes to achieve universal access;**
- **Reduce the stigmatization and discrimination of persons affected by HIV and AIDS, within and outside the workplace.**

Source: ILO: *The workplace: Gateway to universal access* (Geneva, 2006). Available at: http://www.ilo.org/global/Themes/lang--en/docName--WCMS_107636/index.htm

6. *Ibid.*

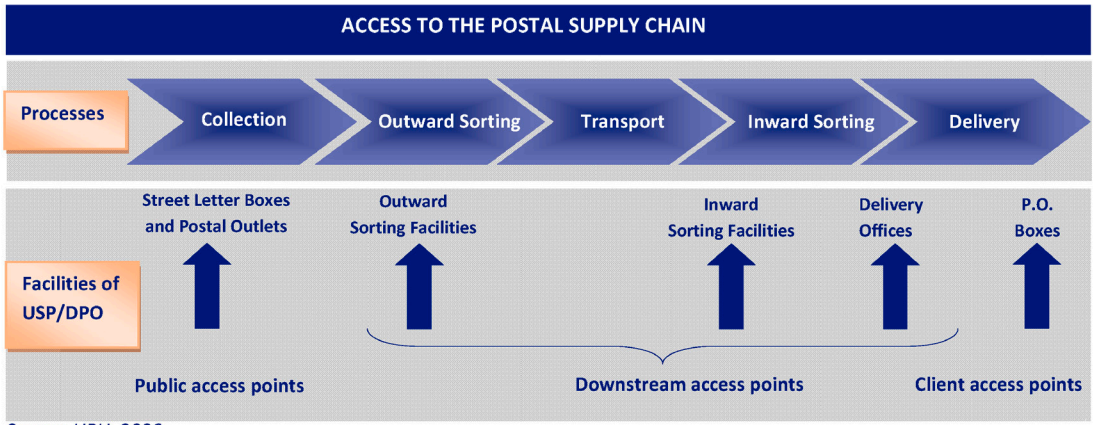
Since in most countries the postal industry is part of one of the most important economic sectors, it is essential to reach a significant number of working women and men through prevention campaigns and care and support programmes to lessen the human and financial impact of the epidemic. In many parts of the world, post offices play a social role in spreading health-related messages among the surrounding communities.

It is estimated that the initial cost of developing and implementing a programme to address HIV the postal sector would be considerably lower than the expense required to address the problem if it were to grow to the scale already seen in other sectors.

1.2 The distribution and supply chain

One aspect that should be taken into consideration when examining the impact of HIV and AIDS on the postal sector is the effect on the workforce of the industry's supply chain. One of the roles of this chain is to establish a link between the sender and the receiver; in fact, one of the central roles of the industry is to collect and deliver mail.

Optimizing the supply chain has become a critical element in postal operations and although the exact definition of this chain may vary, it includes all the movements of postal items from the sender to the receiver.



Source: UPU, 2006
USP: Universal Service Provider
DPO: Designated Postal Operator

Postal supply chains can be highly complex; nevertheless, all comprise at least four basic elements: collection, transport and logistics, sorting and delivery. Not all postal operators are affected equally by HIV and AIDS in the supply chain.

Postal operators are increasingly building direct relationships with a vast network of suppliers of equipment, services and various products. Given the increased globalization of markets, these suppliers are commonly located outside the countries in which the postal services are actually provided.

The efficiency of the supply and distribution chain could easily be compromised by the loss of skilled workers and the resulting inability to deliver mail. It is therefore in the interests of the postal sector to ensure that workers are able to carry on working for a long time by paying particular attention to the workforce and the supply chain. This can be done by working with the suppliers of products and services and with delivery and logistics operators, so as to minimize the potential impact of HIV and AIDS on their workforces. An important point to consider is the link to the transport sector, whose workforce has been decimated by the epidemic in a growing number of countries.

HIV-prevention campaigns well received

On World AIDS Day [2009], the HIV-prevention campaigns launched so far in the post offices of six countries continue to raise awareness of the deadly virus. NIPOST employees joined Nigeria's minister of communication to launch the campaign on World Post Day.

The Posts that care

African Posts in particular have gone to great lengths to involve staff in their campaigns and use both traditional and creative ways to draw attention to the prevention message.

In Nigeria, where an estimated three million people live with HIV, postal officials say the campaign and its slogan ("NIPOST cares, protect yourself") has changed people's perception of the postal service. Many now see the Post as a carrier of health information, not just mail. The campaign also drew excitement because the United Nations are involved, says NIPOST's Maayen Ujong, who managed the campaign launch. NIPOST's Ujong said: **"When people are healthy, they can work."**

In Cameroon, the Post estimates that campaign materials are viewed daily by 36,000 people visiting any of its 258 post offices in the country. Large banners in front of the main post offices continue to draw attention to the campaign and the national committee against HIV has provided additional posters, flyers and female condoms for distribution.

Source: UPU, 2009.
Available at: http://www.upu.int/en/media-centre/news/union-postale-emag/underway-news/browse/1/category/sustainable-development/article/52/hiv-prevention-campaigns-well-received.html

1.3 Customers and the surrounding community

A further characteristic of the postal sector that confirms its strategic position in the global response to HIV and AIDS is that post offices and the postal supply chain are used by millions of customers every day. The postal service has a significant audience in the form of millions of people to whom messages about the epidemic can be communicated effectively. Many postal industries have already recognized this essential role and are working together with international organizations such as UNAIDS, WHO, the UPU and the ILO to support campaigns like World AIDS Day.

By spreading key messages on HIV and AIDS in post offices and displaying them on vehicles, postal stamps, cancellation stamps and franking machines, postal operators are communicating with millions of clients. The postal sector has also become actively involved through donations made to organizations devoted to HIV and AIDS and addressing its social impact.

The possibilities and opportunities open to postal operators can elicit positive response from customers, since a growing number of them are likely to be aware of their social responsibility and would like to support businesses, products and services that are socially aware.

Postal operators have an opportunity to reduce the impact of the epidemic on their employees and the company's balance sheet while at the same time strengthening the global response to the epidemic. This can be done by setting up HIV and AIDS programmes that focus on women and men workers and their families that protect resources that are essential to the continued functioning of the business and the supply chain, and that take advantage of the fact that a large number of people visit post offices and send or receive mail on a daily basis.

HIV and AIDS threaten workers in terms of their social roles and their ability to meet their own needs and take care of their families and dependents. The pandemic also threatens employers and their businesses, as a shortage of skilled and experienced workers translates into reduced productivity and profits. This also means fewer investments and a lower contribution to tax revenue, which affects the sector and the performance and development of the national economy.

It is thus a matter of urgency to confront the HIV and AIDS epidemic and to acknowledge it as a serious workplace challenge.

1.4 Stigmatization and discrimination

"Post offices are open to everyone, from the young to the old, without discrimination".
Alison Phillips-Pearce, UNAIDS

HIV-related discrimination can constitute a threat insofar as it serves to perpetuate the spread of the virus. In these Guidelines, the term "discrimination" is used as defined in the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). This term includes discrimination on the basis of a worker's real or perceived HIV status, which can include discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.[7]

Stigmatization and discrimination, whether inside or outside the workplace, are major obstacles to accessing effective prevention, treatment and support, as workers will be reluctant to seek access to such services where they fear negative repercussions due to stigma and discrimination. Workplace programmes must counteract this fear and reduce such stigma and discrimination to ensure effectiveness of the programmes.

The ILO Code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work

The Code of practice contains fundamental principles on policy development and practical guidelines from which concrete responses can be developed at enterprise, community and national levels in the following key areas:

- **Prevention of HIV**
- **Management and mitigation of the impact of HIV on the world of work**
- **Care and support of workers infected and affected by HIV**
- **Elimination of stigma and discrimination on the basis of real or perceived HIV status.**

"4.2. Non-discrimination
In the spirit of decent work and respect for the human rights and dignity of persons infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, there should be no discrimination against workers on the basis of real or perceived HIV status. Discrimination and stigmatization of people living with HIV/AIDS inhibits efforts aimed at promoting HIV/AIDS prevention."

7. ILO: *An ILO Code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work, op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

Recommendation No. 200 emphasizes in Section III "General Principles", at paragraph 3 (c) that: "there should be no discrimination against or stigmatization of workers, in particular jobseekers and job applicants, on the ground of the real or perceived HIV status or the fact that they belong to regions of the world or segments of the population perceived to be at greater risk of or more vulnerable to HIV infection"

Postal workers are at risk of discrimination and stigmatization by colleagues, employers and postal customers.

Recommendation No. 200 stipulates that there should be no discrimination against workers on the basis of real or perceived HIV status. Discrimination and stigmatization of people living with HIV inhibit efforts aimed at promoting HIV and AIDS prevention. HIV screening should not be required of job applicants or persons in employment during recruitment procedures or as part of working conditions. Confidentiality is essential and there is no justification for asking anyone to disclose their HIV-related personal medical information. Nor should co-workers be obliged to reveal such information about fellow workers. Access to personal data relating to a worker's HIV status should be bound by the rules of confidentiality consistent with the ILO Code of practice on the protection of workers' personal data, 1997. In no case should HIV infection be a cause for termination of employment. Persons with HIV-related illnesses should therefore be able to work for as long as they are medically fit to carry out their work, with reasonable accommodation where appropriate.

"Because of its association with behaviours that may be considered socially unacceptable by many people, HIV infection is widely stigmatised.

People living with the virus are frequently subject to discrimination and human rights abuses: many have been thrown out of jobs and homes, rejected by family and friends, and some have even been killed.

Together, stigma and discrimination constitute one of the greatest barriers to dealing effectively with the epidemic.

They discourage governments from acknowledging or taking timely action against AIDS. They deter individuals from finding out about their HIV status.

And they inhibit those who know they are infected from sharing their diagnosis and taking action to protect others and from seeking treatment and care for themselves.

Experience teaches that a strong movement of people living with HIV that affords mutual support and a voice at local and national levels is particularly effective in tackling stigma.

Moreover, the presence of treatment makes this task easier too: where there is hope, people are less afraid of AIDS; they are more willing to be tested for HIV, to disclose their status, and to seek care if necessary."

Postal Service Reveals HIV and AIDS Banner in Barbados, 2009

The Barbados Postal Service (BPS) has made a bold statement to raise public awareness against the stigma and discrimination facing persons living with HIV (PLHIV).

Mrs. Marlene Grosvenor, BPS Training Officer, coordinated the project, which discourages attitudes of stigma and discrimination against persons living with HIV. The end result was a large, colourful billboard that was conceptualized with the input of various members of staff, from different departments within the Post Office.

The billboard was unveiled in an informal ceremony on June 17th 2009 at which Mrs. Grosvenor described the billboard as "'home-grown' right down to its stamp-edged border." She said: "(The billboard) commits the support of the BPS to the fight against stigma and discrimination."

"People living with HIV face several challenges and consequently have several needs… The billboard speaks to the BPS as an organization meeting some critical needs in providing delivery services to every household, regardless of any stigma."

The project coordinator noted that the Postal Service provides an enabling environment for the movement of scarce, needful, urgent resources whether in the form of documents, goods, medication or other commodities both into and out of the island while upholding confidentiality in all transactions and mailings – a significant requirement for persons living with HIV, medical personnel and others involved.

The BPS regards itself as being able not only to deliver goods but also be in a position to contribute meaningfully to a less stressful life, or more significantly a more comfortable one, for PLHIV.

This billboard continues the effort of the Barbados Postal Service to increase public awareness about HIV and AIDS – and follows the depiction of the slogan from Barbados' National HIV/AIDS Commission on the 10-cent stamp commemorating the Centenary of the Pan-American Health Organization in 2002.

Source: Barbados Postal Services

II. TAKING ACTION IN THE POSTAL SECTOR

In many countries, experience has shown that the most effective way of reducing the impact of HIV on the population as a whole is to slow down transmission of the virus within high-risk groups. This targeted approach often succeeds through education by and for peers and is more effective when it is combined with programmes to reduce stigmatization, offer care and support and change social norms.

The postal sector provides a truly universal network delivering modern products and services, sets the rules governing international postal exchange among more than 191 member States and formulates recommendations aimed at stimulating growth in the volume of postal traffic and improving the quality of the services offered to customers. According to the UPU, every year 5.5 million postal employees handle and distribute 433.6 billion domestic letter post items, 5.5 billion international mail items and more than 6 billion parcels.

The postal sector also has a vital role to play in raising awareness of the prevention and spread of HIV. Such campaigns can also target large numbers of working women and men affiliated to other sectors, such as transport and logistics (examples are DHL and DPD[8]), as well as the customers of the 660,000 post offices worldwide, which form the largest physical distribution network in the world.

8. DHL Express is a major international air, road and rail shipping company, offering express services to industry and private individuals throughout the world, while DPD is one of Europe's main parcel delivery services, and both are linked to major international postal operators.

2.1 The legal and policy framework: an integrated strategy

To date the postal sector has few HIV and AIDS-related policies and rules. Nonetheless, initiatives taken in several countries point in the right direction. The support of a consistent, global legal and policy framework is essential for guiding the activities of the many stakeholders and defining their responsibilities.

International instruments and guidelines

There are a number of international labour standards relevant to HIV and AIDS that can guide the development and implementation of a national legal and policy framework. These include the following Conventions:

- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111);
- Occupational Safety and Health Convention,1981 (No. 155);
- Occupational Health Services Convention,1985 (No. 161);
- Termination of Employment Convention,1982 (No. 158);
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159);
- Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102).

In June 2010, governments, employers' and workers' organizations at the 99th International Labour Conference adopted the first international labour standard focussing explicitly on HIV and AIDS and protecting human rights at work. The HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200)[9] establishes that there should be no discrimination in employment on the basis of real or perceived HIV status. It contains specific provisions protecting gender equality, reproductive health and rights, the respect of rights regardless of sexual orientation and emphasizes the important role of social protection in all sectors of the economy.

9. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/aids/lang--en/docName--WCMS_142706/index.htm

HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200)

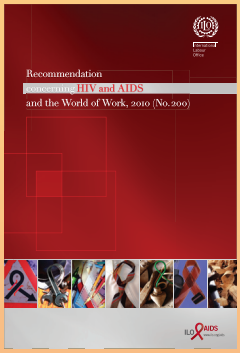
The Recommendation marks a new milestone in the international response to the pandemic, calling for the world of work to play a significant role in preventing HIV transmission, protecting human rights at work and mitigating the impact of HIV and AIDS in and through the workplace, in local communities and in national economies.

The new international labour standard:

- Strengthens the impact of the ILO Code of practice and reaffirms its value as a rights-based instrument
- Calls for the development, adoption, effective implementation and monitoring of national tripartite policies and programmes on HIV and AIDS and the world of work, that are to be integrated into national strategic plans
- Contemplates the active participation of labour inspectors and judicial authorities in the development of the national HIV workplace policies and programmes
- Calls for HIV and AIDS to be recognized as an occupational disease and calls for access to treatment for tuberculosis in addition to other HIV-related illnesses

The Recommendation applies to all workers working under all forms or arrangements and to all workplaces, including:

- Persons in any employment or occupation
- Persons in training (interns, apprentices and volunteers)
- Job applicants and job seekers
- Laid-off or suspended workers



In addition, the ILO Code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work is designed to help slow the spread of the epidemic, lessens its impact on women and men workers and their families, and set up social protection programmes to assist in facing up to the disease. The Code sets out key principles governing action taken to fight the epidemic in the workplace.

Ten Key principles of the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work

- **A workplace issue**
  HIV and AIDS are workplace issues because they affect the workforce, and because the workplace can play a vital role in limiting the spread and effects of the pandemic.
- **Non-discrimination**
  There should be no discrimination or stigma against workers on the basis of real or perceived HIV status.
- **Gender equality**
  More equal gender relations and the empowerment of women are vital to preventing the spread of HIV infection and helping people manage its impact.
- **Healthy work environment**
  The workplace should minimize occupational risk, and be adapted to the health and capabilities of workers.
- **Social dialogue**
  A successful HIV and AIDS policy and programme needs cooperation and trust between employers, workers and governments.
- **No screening for purposes of employment**
  Testing for HIV at the workplace should be carried out as specified in the Code, should be voluntary and confidential, and never used to screen job applicants or employees.
- **Confidentiality**
  Access to personal data, including a worker's HIV status, should be bound by the rules of confidentiality set out in existing ILO instruments.
- **Continuing the employment relationship**
  Workers with HIV-related illnesses should be able to work for as long as medically fit, in appropriate conditions.
- **Prevention**
  The social partners are in a unique position to promote prevention efforts through information, education and support for behaviour change.
- **Care and support**
  Workers are entitled to affordable health services and to benefits from statutory and occupational schemes.

2.2 Action at the workplace or in the community

Location of the workplace

To develop adequate strategies, programmes and tools for responding to the challenge of HIV and AIDS in the workplace, the workplace itself should first be identified and defined.

In the postal sector, the workplace extends beyond the post offices because the supply chain requires the transport of letters, parcels and other postal products.

In addition, the postal industry makes use of subcontractors such as logistics companies and delivery services to carry out some of the activities of the sector or to supply certain products or services.

As a result, policies and programmes for prevention, voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) and care, must extend beyond the realm of fixed and mobile postal workers and reach the subcontractors. To ensure that the strategies, programmes, policies and other tools are successful in the HIV response, a sufficiently broad system must be put in place which encompasses all the different aspects of postal activity. This will make it possible to coherently link all actions taken with the same objective and to ensure that the efforts to fight the epidemic have wider repercussions.

All elements and tools available for responding to HIV and AIDS should be deployed in post offices and at points of passage of postal transports and different subcontractors - including at roadsides and in stations, harbours and airports. Existing projects and programmes to address HIV and AIDS should be brought up in discussion whenever there are meetings and exchanges among different parts of the supply chain, and at the various workplaces.

Improving working conditions: cooperation between employers and workers

Some working conditions are conducive to successful prevention and awareness-raising and thus to slowing the spread of the AIDS epidemic.

One of the most essential preconditions for creating a good working atmosphere is to create a relationship of trust between employers and workers. This is possible if there is cooperation, social dialogue and continuity in working relationships.

Workers' and employers' organizations speaking with one voice to defend their respective interests can bring about open social dialogue that breaks the silence and taboos surrounding HIV and AIDS.

This in turn makes it possible to discuss the reality of social conditions and biological factors favouring the spread of the epidemic. An environment of dialogue and trust helps develop and implement programmes and policies that have a chance of success. What is more, frank and open discussions and exchanges can end up involving the wider community and even the government.

Workers living with HIV should not be cast out and neglected by their colleagues and employers. All the parties concerned, that is to say the workers' and employers' organizations and governments, should actively support workers living with HIV. It is also important to extend counselling, testing and training campaigns to the spouses and partners of workers.

Employers should create working conditions that allow workers to avoid high-risk situations. The conditions are linked not only to safety but also to the general atmosphere, as there is a strong connection between motivation and dialogue, trust and the feeling of being supported and accepted.

Safeguarding human rights

In communities affected by HIV and AIDS a number of fundamental human rights are often under threat. These rights are intimately linked to the ten principles set out in the Code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work[10], which contains useful suggestions on how to ensure these rights are respected at the workplace.

The human rights considered in the Code are as follows:

➢ The right to non-discrimination and equality before the law:

International human rights law provides that there should be no discrimination on the basis of HIV-status. Everyone must be considered equal before the law, and have the same rights in all aspects of their lives, including in the workplace.

➢ The right to freedom of association and assembly:

The right to freedom of association and assembly is protected by international law, especially by two core ILO Conventions (Nos. 87 and 98). It is essential that all the parties concerned by HIV and AIDS in the workplace – governments, employers and workers – closely cooperate by engaging in open social dialogue so as to find the solutions that best meet everyone's needs. The successful implementation of policies and programmes can take place only through cooperation based on trust and understanding.

➢ The right to work:

Workers should be evaluated on the basis of their professional abilities and not their real or perceived HIV status. There should be no HIV-related screening either pre-employment or on the job. Persons with HIV-related illnesses should, moreover, be

10. As enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Political Rights; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98); the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), and the Termination of Employment Convention, 1982 (No. 158).

allowed to continue working as long as they are able to do their job. HIV infection is not a cause for termination of employment.

➢ The right to privacy[11]:

The right to privacy encompasses the employer's obligation to seek informed consent to HIV testing for employment purposes, and to respect the confidentiality of all information relating to a person's HIV status. HIV-positive workers should be able to trust that their personal information will remain confidential. They should not have to fear that their HIV status will be revealed, nor should they suffer discrimination or wrongful termination of employment as otherwise awareness-raising and preventive efforts would be fruitless. In a climate of hostility and lack of trust it is far more difficult to persuade workers to be tested, counselled and treated (in case of positive diagnosis), and there is thus a greater risk of spreading HIV and AIDS.

➢ The right to social security:

Persons living with HIV and AIDS frequently become isolated in their communities as they are often no longer able to work and meet their own needs. Apart from general health-protection measures, governments and employers' and workers' organizations should adopt the provisions necessary to ensure that persons affected by the virus and their families are not excluded from the benefits and protections of social security programmes and occupational schemes. This is especially important in the least developed countries, in which adequate systems of support are absent.

➢ The right to share in scientific progress and its benefits:

The right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications is important in the context of HIV and AIDS in view of the rapid and continuing advances regarding testing, treatment therapies and the development of a vaccine. This also requires governments to encourage initiatives aimed at supporting international campaigns to reduce the cost of, and improve access to, antiretroviral drugs.

➢ The right to health:

States must take measures necessary for the prevention, treatment and control of epidemic diseases and for the creation of conditions which ensure access to health services and medical care, so as to respect the right to the highest standards of physical and mental health.

➢ The right to education:

Effective prevention depends on the provision of suitable information and education. Although there are several strategies for prevention, these should be appropriately targeted to national conditions and be culturally sensitive. Only then is it possible to bring about changes in behaviour, knowledge and establish a non-discriminatory environment.

11. The Occupational Health Services Recommendation, 1985 (No. 171), further recommends that provisions should be adopted "to protect the privacy of the workers and to ensure that health surveillance is not used for discriminatory purposes or in any other manner prejudicial to their interests". The joint WHO/ILO guidelines on HIV/AIDS in the workplace promote employees' right to confidentiality concerning any information of a medical nature, including their HIV/AIDS status.

➢ The fundamental rights of children[12]:

Employers, workers and their representatives should encourage and promote information and education programmes on prevention and management of HIV and AIDS within the local community, especially in schools. Assistance programmes drawn up for workers and their families should be especially sensitive to the needs of children. Children who have lost one or both parents to AIDS should receive particular support to ensure they benefit from the best possible protection.

Specific details on the formulation and implementation of programmes to fight HIV and AIDS which respect human rights are developed and explained in greater details in Recommendation No. 200 and also in the Code.

Prevention through information and education

HIV is most frequently transmitted through sexual intercourse without condoms, behaviour that is influenced by social norms, information, personal views, and the actions of peers.

Information needs to be provided about HIV and how it is transmitted, as well as education to help people understand their own risk and how to reduce it. Education needs to be supported by the provision of resources such as condoms, services for the treatment of sexually transmitted infections, and clean injecting equipment. These resources can be provided in the workplace so as to be readily accessible.

Gender-aware programmes, behaviour change communication, and the use of peer education are all important factors in successful education and awareness-raising.

Peer educators, selected from the target group and trained, are often able to communicate more effectively with co-workers than a changing pool of outsiders. They can disseminate information and supplies, organize skill-building sessions and make referrals to other HIV and AIDS services. The involvement of peers not only helps establish trust and ensure that prevention messages are relevant and effective, but also encourages participation and "buy-in" Peer education is not the whole answer, as some workers are concerned about confidentiality. However, it is possible to try and overcome this obstacle if education involves people living with HIV and AIDS.

Voluntary counselling and testing (VCT)

It is important for persons to be able to find out their HIV status in a safe and confidential environment offering voluntary counselling and testing (VCT), as well as support and care. Anyone living with HIV and AIDS is entitled to confidentiality and this must be respected absolutely. Health professionals may not divulge the HIV status or other information on a person's health without having first obtained their informed consent.

12. In keeping with Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the term "child" means "every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier".

An exception to the requirement to keep a person's HIV status and related information confidential may be made if this is authorized by national laws and if there is a clear threat to or reckless disregard for another person's life. There are two benefits to knowing one's HIV status:

1) Knowing one's status makes it possible to change behaviour, so that a negative result stays negative;
2) If the result is positive, people can receive appropriate care and support to enable them to live rich and healthy lives.

Confidential voluntary HIV counselling and testing (VCT) can be provided by:

- A health-care network outside the workplace;
- The occupational health structure at the workplace, if one exists;
- An external service contracted to offer VCT at the workplace or at another clearly defined and indicated location.

Implementing VCT in the postal environment is challenging for several reasons. These include the need to reassign and organize employees and their work schedules, to ensure that the general environment is conducive to testing, that confidentiality is respected and that the activities of the postal business are disrupted as little as possible. Nonetheless, some postal operators have successfully developed and implemented voluntary counselling and testing programmes at the workplace.

Regarding the issue of VCT, Recommendation No. 200 provides that: "HIV testing or other forms of screening for HIV should not be required of workers, including migrant workers, job seekers and job applicants" (paragraph 25).

The ILO Code of practice also provides the following guidance on VCT:

- Workers and their organizations should work together with employers to encourage and support access to confidential voluntary counselling and testing.
- Workers' representatives should, if necessary, assist workers with HIV and AIDS to obtain professional counselling.
- Workers have the right to access their own personal and medical files. Workers' organizations should not have access to personnel data relating to a worker's HIV status. In all cases, when carrying out trade union responsibilities and functions, the rules of confidentiality and the requirement for the concerned person's consent set out in the Occupational Health Services Recommendation, 1985 (No. 171), should apply.
- HIV testing should not be required at the time of recruitment or as a condition of continued employment. Any routine medical testing, such as testing for fitness carried out prior to the commencement of employment or on a regular basis for workers, should not include mandatory HIV testing.

- HIV testing should not be required as a condition of eligibility for national social security schemes, general insurance policies, occupational schemes and health insurance. Insurance companies should not require HIV testing before agreeing to provide coverage for a given workplace. They may base their cost and revenue estimates and their actuarial calculations on available epidemiological data for the general population.

- Employers should not facilitate any testing for insurance purposes and all information that they already have should remain confidential.

- Voluntary testing should normally be carried out by community health services and not at the workplace. Where adequate medical services exist, voluntary testing may be undertaken at the request and with the written informed consent of a worker, with advice from the workers' representative if so requested. It should be performed by suitably qualified personnel with adherence to strict confidentiality and disclosure requirements. Gender-sensitive pre- and post-test counselling, which facilitates an understanding of the nature and purpose of the HIV tests, the advantages and disadvantages of the tests and the effect of the result upon the worker, should form an essential part of any testing procedure.

- Employers should encourage workers with HIV and AIDS to use expertise and assistance outside the enterprise for counselling or, where available, its own occupational safety and health unit or other workplace programme, if specialized and confidential counselling is offered.

To give effect to this, employers should consider the following actions:

- ❑ Identify professionals, self-help groups and services within the local community or region which specialize in HIV and AIDS-related counselling and the treatment of HIV and AIDS;

- ❑ Identify community-based organizations, both of a medical and non-medical character, that may be useful to workers with HIV and AIDS;

- ❑ Suggest that the worker contact his or her doctor or qualified health-care providers for initial assessment and treatment if not already being treated, or help the worker locate a qualified health-care provider if he or she does not have one;

- ❑ Employers should provide workers living with HIV with reasonable time off for counselling and treatment in conformity with minimum national requirements;

- ❑ Counselling support should be made accessible at no cost to the workers and adapted to the different needs and circumstances of women and men. It may be appropriate to liaise with government, workers and their organizations and other relevant stakeholders in establishing and providing such support;

- ❑ Counselling services should inform all workers of their rights and benefits in relation to statutory social security programmes and occupational schemes and any life-skills programmes which may help workers cope with HIV and AIDS;

- In the event of occupational exposure to HIV, employers should provide workers with reasonable paid time off for counselling purposes;

- Where there is a risk of exposure to human blood, body fluids or tissues, the workplace should have procedures in place to manage the risk of such exposure and occupational incidents.

Furthermore, the newly adopted Recommendation concerning HIV and AIDS and the world of work, in paragraph 25, states that:

Care and support

Voluntary HIV testing should be accompanied by counselling, and should be linked to a certain level of services as follow up to the test. If the result is negative, the individual needs information on assessing and preventing risk. If the result is positive, he or she needs information and advice on ways of maintaining health, protecting partners from infection, and services available in the community, including treatment.

The objective of providing care and support is to improve the health and prolong the life of people living with HIV by providing them access to appropriate care and support programmes. Care and support include the following: voluntary counselling and testing; treatment of HIV-related infections such as tuberculosis; where possible, treatment with antiretroviral drugs; making adjustments at the workplace; employee and family assistance programmes; and access to the benefits of health insurance and occupational schemes.

Although the importance of access to treatment should not be underestimated, it is as essential for HIV-positive persons to live healthily to improve and prolong the effectiveness of antiretroviral therapy. Education on nutrition, exercise and stress management can be included in peer educator programmes. Access to treatment, good nutrition and rest at the workplace enable sick workers to continue working effectively. Appropriate work shifts and work distribution can help workers work longer.

Depending on the size of the business and its resources, access to care and support can be provided in various ways:

- Using the information gathered during the assessment of means, a network of health services outside the workplace can be set up together with:
  - Counselling services
  - Services offering treatment for HIV-related illnesses such as TB and STIs
  - Social projects;

- Integrating care and support programmes into the health services departments;

- Using funding from outside the business to finance medical HIV-management programmes;

- Including a reasonable accommodation clause in HIV- and AIDS-related policies (see paragraph 13 of Recommendation No. 200).

Being able to keep their job is important for anyone suffering from a chronic illness, and thus also for HIV-positive persons. HIV-positive employees are capable of continuing to work productively for many years and such workers should be assessed on the basis of their performance and not their real or perceived HIV status.

Similarly, HIV and AIDS should not be considered "special", resulting in management giving preferential treatment to HIV-positive employees. Workers infected with the virus should be treated in the same manner as anyone suffering from any other serious illness taken into consideration in national policies and regulations or such rules that govern the workplace.

Regarding equality of treatment, non-discrimination and continuity in employment, Recommendation No. 200 provides:

"Persons with HIV-related illness should not be denied the possibility of continuing to carry out their work, with reasonable accommodation if necessary, for as long as they are medically fit to do so. Measures to redeploy such persons to work reasonably adapted to their abilities, to find other work through training, or to facilitate their return to work should be encouraged, taking into consideration the relevant International Labour Organization and United Nations instruments."

(Recommendation No. 200, paragraph 13)

The ILO Code of practice also provides the following guidance:

- As long as workers are medically fit for appropriate employment, they should enjoy normal job security and opportunities for transfer and advancement.
- Where appropriate, employers, workers' organizations and occupational health personnel should facilitate the establishment of self-help groups within the enterprise or the referral of workers affected by HIV to self-help groups and support organizations in the local community.
- Employers should be encouraged to provide care and support, including, if possible, treatment, at the workplace in cooperation with the government and other stakeholders. Where these services cannot be made available at the workplace, workers should be informed about the location of available outside services. Such linkages between the workplace and the outside environment make it possible to reach not only the workers but also their families, in particular their children. Partnership between governments, employers, workers and their organizations and other relevant stakeholders also ensures effective delivery of services and saves costs.
- In the light of the nature of the epidemic, employee assistance programmes may need to be established or extended appropriately to include a range of services for workers as members of families, and to support their family members. This should be done in consultation with workers and their representatives, and can be done in

collaboration with government and other relevant stakeholders in accordance with resources and needs.

- Such programmes should recognize that women normally undertake the major part of caring for those with AIDS-related illnesses. They should also recognize the particular needs of pregnant women. They should respond to the needs of children who have lost one or both parents to AIDS, and who may then drop out of school, be forced to work, and become increasingly vulnerable to sexual exploitation. The programmes may be in-house, or enterprises could support such programmes collectively or contract out for such services from an independent enterprise.

The family assistance programme may include:

- Compassionate leave;
- Invitations to participate in information and education programmes;
- Referrals to support groups, including self-help groups;
- Assistance to families of workers to obtain alternative employment for the worker or family members provided that the work does not interfere with schooling;
- Specific measures, such as support for formal education, vocational training and apprenticeships, to meet the needs of children and young persons who have lost one or both parents to AIDS;
- Coordination with all relevant stakeholders and community-based organizations including the schools attended by the workers' children;
- Direct or indirect financial assistance;
- Managing financial issues relating to sickness and the needs of dependents;
- Legal information, advice and assistance;
- Assistance in relation to understanding the legal processes of illness and death such as managing financial issues relating to sickness, preparation of wills and succession plans;
- Helping families to deal with social security programmes and occupational schemes;
- Provision of advanced payments due to the worker;
- Directing families to the relevant legal and health authorities or providing a list of recommended authorities.

2.3 Regional and national cooperation

Governments should promote and support regional and international cooperation through intergovernmental agencies and by involving all the parties concerned, so as to emphasize issues related to HIV and AIDS and the world of work at the international level.

Regional integration helps improve the assistance given to regional structures, national authorities, employers' organizations and trade unions, and to non-governmental organizations. Coordinated national strategies that are designed to be harmonized at the sub-regional level should be formulated in the course of sub-regional dialogue based on country assessments, national policies and implementation plans. The joint strategy should be linked to national, regional and international strategies, and sectoral strategies may also be appropriate.

If the different postal sub-sectors were to be included in a single policy framework they might require different approaches and strategic tools.

In view of the vast number of post offices around the world, the postal sector has international significance. Implanted in communities worldwide it can be a relevant, highly useful means for slowing the AIDS epidemic. Like community action, regional and international cooperation is an opportunity to take action using more and stronger means.

International assistance

Recommendation No. 200 (paragraphs 48-50) provides that:

- International cooperation should be encouraged between and among Members, their national structures on HIV and AIDS and relevant international organizations and should include the systematic exchange of information on all measures taken to respond to the HIV pandemic.
- Members and multilateral organizations should give particular attention to coordination and to the necessary resources to satisfy the needs of all countries, especially high prevalence countries, in the development of international strategies and programmes for prevention, treatment, care and support related to HIV.
- Members and international organizations should seek to reduce the price of supplies of any type, for the prevention, treatment and care of infection caused by HIV and other opportunistic infections and HIV-related cancers.

The ILO Code of practice also states:

"Governments should enlist international assistance where appropriate in support of national programmes. They should encourage initiatives aimed at supporting international campaigns to reduce the cost of, and improve access to, antiretroviral drugs."

National and sub-regional policies[13]

Governments should respect certain principles to ensure that everything is done at the national policy level to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS and to take action to respond to the epidemic.

Partnership

Governments should involve all stakeholders in the process of formulating policies and guidelines appropriate to the postal sector. Organizations of workers and employers as well as governments should cooperate so as to be able to make of everyone's knowledge and skills and to build a framework able to meet the challenge of HIV and AIDS.

Coherence

Governments should ensure coherence in national HIV and AIDS strategy and programmes, recognizing the importance of including the world of work in national plans, for example by ensuring that the composition of national AIDS councils includes representatives of employers, workers, people living with HIV and of ministries responsible for labour and social matters. Programmes based on social dialogue between governments the social partners and all stakeholders concerned have a greater chance at successful implementation and effectiveness.

Coordination

Governments should facilitate and coordinate all interventions at the national level that provide an enabling environment for world of work interventions and capitalize on the presence of the social partners and all relevant stakeholders. Coordination should build on measures and support services already in place.

13. Based on wording from the Code of practice.

Clinical guidelines

In countries where employers assume a primary responsibility for providing direct health-care services to workers, governments should offer guidelines to assist employers in the care and clinical management of HIV and AIDS. These guidelines should take account of existing services.

Social protection and equal treatment

Governments should ensure that benefits under national laws and regulations apply to workers living with HIV no less favourably than to workers with other serious illnesses. In designing and implementing social security programmes, governments should take into account the progressive and intermittent nature of the disease and tailor schemes accordingly, for example by making benefits available as and when needed and by the rapid treatment of claims.

Conditionality for government support

When governments provide start-up funding and incentives for national and international enterprises, they should require recipients to adhere to national laws and encourage recipients to adhere to this Code, and policies or codes that give effect to the provisions of this Code.

ILO Subregional Seminar, held jointly with the UPU and UNI Global Union, on Social Dialogue in Postal Services in Francophone Central and West Africa

(23-25 November 2009, Dakar, Senegal)

In accordance with a recommendation issued by the ILO Tripartite Meeting on Employment, Employability and Equal Opportunities in the Postal and Telecommunications Services, held in Geneva from 13 to 17 May 2002, the International Labour Office and the Universal Postal Union - in cooperation with Union Network International (currently UNI Global Union) - organized the above Tripartite Seminar with a view to promoting social dialogue in the region's postal sector. The Seminar was also part of the follow-up to the UPU's Nairobi Postal Strategy (2008), the joint ILO/UPU Subregional Seminar on social services in East and Southern Africa (Bagamoyo, Tanzania, November 2006) and the joint ILO/UPU Regional Seminars on social dialogue in Postal Services (Asia-Pacific, Bangkok, May 2000; and Latin America, Lima, August 2003).

The seminar was attended by eight representatives and two advisers of the designated operators and governments (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal), 11 workers' delegates from the above countries and representatives of private employers in Benin, Senegal and Cameroon. One regulator (Mauritania) attended as an observer. The seminar was supported by an ILO Committee of Experts, the UPU and UNI Global Union.

The seminar participants agreed on the following objectives:

(a) to promote social dialogue in the postal sector;
(b) to ensure and maintain the universal postal service;
(c) to promote corporate social responsibility and sustainable development in postal services;
(d) to modernize and reform the postal service.

The representatives of the designated operators acknowledged that they as well as workers and their representatives were responsible for improving quality and developing postal services. The seminar felt that efforts had to be made to achieve these objectives and that social dialogue in all its forms had to be strengthened further. During the discussions the designated operators and the employers' and workers' organizations of the region came to understand each other's positions better.

The national reports presented at the seminar revealed differences between the countries of the region, even though some characteristics were common to all. Social dialogue does exist in postal services in most of the eight countries, but in some of them it works more effectively than in others. Solutions must thus be found to improve social

dialogue and strengthen its impact in the different countries concerned. The objective is to promote partnerships between governments, employers and workers in order to offer high-quality services. It is important to maintain the role of a rational and modern universal postal service which is competitive while being fair and efficient.

Conclusions

Issue 4: safety and health at work, HIV/AIDS, sustainable development, risk management and safety of postal items

- The participants strongly recommend that the designated operators be guided by the 20 priority actions accompanying the definition of sustainable development in the postal sector, notably those relating to social and societal aspects.
- The participants recommend that the issue of HIV/AIDS be incorporated into collective agreements to avoid stigmatization and to ensure that care and support be entirely paid for by the employer, as appropriate.
- The HIV/AIDS campaign should be continued and expanded and should open the way for other initiatives (malaria, etc.) Following the example set by Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali and Nigeria, which have been playing a pilot role in this project, the countries participating in the seminar are invited to join the campaign.
- The participants recommend that health and safety committees should be established or reactivated, as applicable, and that they should exercise the powers conferred upon them by collective agreements or national legislation.

III. HOW CAN THE ILO, THE UPU, UNI AND UNAIDS HELP THE POSTAL SECTOR DEVELOP POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES?

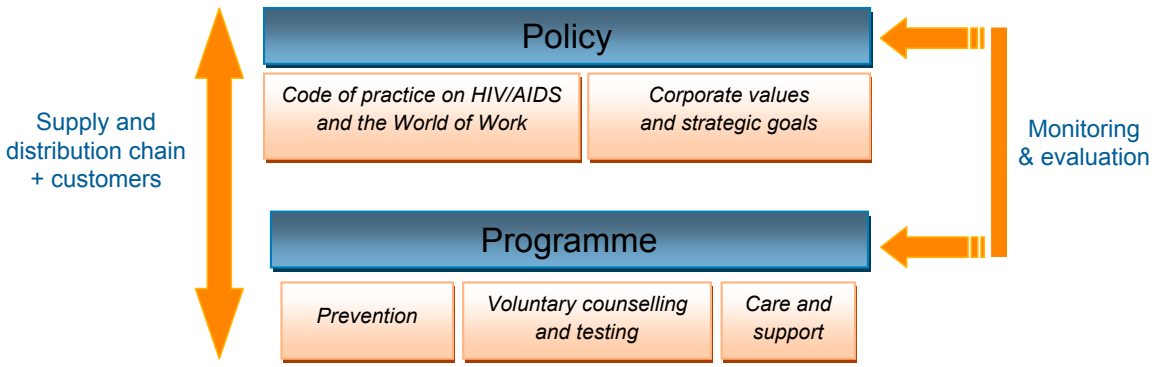
How can we appropriately respond to the challenge of HIV and AIDS and take advantage of opportunities that may arise during the fight against the epidemic?

The following diagram gives an example of an action framework based on:

- Policies formulated on the basis of the HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200), the ILO Code of practice and its accompanying training manual, on national HIV and AIDS programmes and policies, and of corporate values and strategic goals;
- An HIV and AIDS programme supported by policies for prevention, voluntary counselling and testing, and care and support;
- A follow-up and evaluation system;
- Concentrating first on workers and then on customers and the supply chain.

By using a step-by-step approach, the specific aspects of the HIV response can be integrated into general policies and programmes related to the workplace in the postal sector.

The following action framework should be adapted to the specific aspects of the relevant business, its particular environment and the interactions between the two.



3.1 A step-by-step approach to formulating policies and action programmes in the postal sector

Step 1: Collecting information on sectoral, national and global HIV and AIDS policies and programmes

The national legal framework should be studied to assess and understand its impact on policy formulation. The following documents should be examined, if available:

At the national level:

- National HIV and AIDS policy;
- National programme to respond to HIV and AIDS;
- National strategy on HIV and AIDS;
- National guidelines on drawing up programmes on HIV and AIDS;
- Any other national documents on HIV and AIDS;
- UPU national correspondents on sustainable development.

At the sectoral level:

- National policy on HIV and AIDS at the workplace;
- Other sectoral policies or strategies on HIV and AIDS;
- Corporate policies on HIV and AIDS at the workplace;
- Any agreement between unions and employers.

The most recent national epidemiological figures should likewise be taken into consideration, as should the latest information on HIV and AIDS prevalence and incidence. It is also essential to assess the impact of HIV and AIDS and to identify resources and infrastructure already in place in order to meet the needs of the fight against the epidemic.

It is thus important to measure the impact of HIV and AIDS on the workforce and on postal businesses by collecting up-to-date statistics and taking into consideration the results of other sectors that are linked to the postal service.

Bearing in mind this objective, the following resources could prove useful, if available:

- National prevalence data;
- Anonymous HIV-prevalence surveys;
- Statistical surveys of the impact of HIV and AIDS;
- Surveys of the financial impact of HIV and AIDS;
- KABP (knowledge, attitude, behaviour and practices) surveys;
- Statistics by corporate health services;
- Reports by national unions to UNI Global Union.

This information is usually available from the following sources:

- Local government offices;
- Public-sector health services:
- Non-governmental organizations working with HIV and AIDS;
- World Health Organization offices.

ILO, WHO and UNAIDS publications on HIV and AIDS are an additional resource.

Step 2: Taking action specifically in the postal sector, taking into consideration specificities and key target groups

a. Identifying the target groups of policies and programmes to respond to HIV and AIDS; and

b. Undertaking a preliminary survey at the workplace

The aim of this step is to identify - by way of risk assessment surveys - the target groups at which action by governments and workers' and employers' organization should be addressed; to determine the appropriate instruments for reaching the target groups; and to conduct a preliminary survey of the workplace so as to analyze existing HIV and AIDS and health programmes and policies, and of the target groups that have been identified (sick leave rates, staff turnover, etc.).

Target groups should be identified on the basis of their risk of HIV infection...

	Target groups	Risks	Means available for reaching target groups
Governments			
Workers (organizations)			
Employers (organizations)			

Step 3: Identifying potential project partners

The goal of this step is to create partnerships. By establishing a list of potential partners at the national, regional and sectoral levels, and within political institutions and different community organizations, crucial strategic partnerships can be set up, which can help to make new programmes and policies more effective and viable.

It is also essential to establish reference mechanisms with existing public health structures.

Potential partners may include the following:

- Regional offices of the national HIV and AIDS programme;
- Public health structures offering services related to HIV and AIDS (to establish reference mechanisms);
- Private health services offering services related to HIV and AIDS (to establish reference mechanisms);
- Non-governmental organizations active in responding to HIV and AIDS (at the international and local levels);
- Civil society organizations active in the HIV and AIDS response;
- Community and religious leaders;
- Local government offices and their representatives;
- Networks of people living with HIV;
- Specialists working with HIV and AIDS at the regional, national and sectoral levels;
- Businesses specialized in health care;
- Community-based health services;
- Regional, national or sectoral multinational enterprises;
- Trade unions of the postal sector and other sectors concerned, including their regional or world offices;
- Restricted unions of the UPU, and UPU national correspondents on sustainable development.

Partners should be identified on the basis of their knowledge and skills so as to be able to form partnerships that are most suited to the context. Following consultation, and depending on their knowledge and skills every partner will be assigned areas of responsibility that are most appropriate to their profile.

The following table gives an example of what this step should accomplish:

Potential partner	Knowledge and skills	Responsibilities in the partnership
National programmes responding to HIV and AIDS	In charge of national HIV and AIDS coordination	…
Civil society organizations	Draw up programmes addressing HIV and AIDS with the involvement of civil society. Important contacts with, and very good knowledge of, the community.	Raises awareness in communities and disseminates information based on HIV and AIDS programmes and policies in the postal sector.

Step 4: Advocacy, outreach and awareness-raising on HIV and AIDS and related policies at the workplace

The goal of this step is to strengthen cooperation and support for interested parties to ensure long-term viability and facilitate the implementation of policies and programmes.

Cooperation and support at all levels are essential. Thus advocacy and outreach activities should target at least the following three key groups:

- ILO and UPU constituents: ministers of labour and posts, and organizations of workers and employers, at the national and sectoral levels;
- The project's advisory council or committee;
- The identified target groups: governments, workers, businesses and employers.

ILO and UPU constituents at the national and sectoral levels:

Advocacy, outreach and awareness-raising must be undertaken with countries' representatives at the ILO and the UPU to ensure good participation and cooperation at the highest level. Advocacy campaigns can be addressed in particular at ministers of labour and posts and the organizations of workers and employers, as well as contact persons for issues related to HIV and AIDS; peer educators; labour inspectors working in businesses or the postal sector; the staff of occupational safety and health structures at workplaces linked to the three main stakeholders, governments, workers and employers; or any other person active in the HIV response.

As we saw above, it is therefore essential to identify your key partners.

It is also very important to target key actors in the postal sector. It might thus be useful to contact the ministries in charge of postal services, sectoral committees or councils and the organizations of workers and employers in the sector present in the country or region.

Step 5: Assessing and improving existing workplace policies and programmes related to HIV and AIDS and health

The aim of this step is to identify all possible ways of improving existing workplace policies and programmes related to HIV and AIDS and health, or of developing and implementing such programmes and policies (if there were none – in the workplace, as outlined in the preceding steps. The ultimate objective is to establish appropriate, stable, long-term programmes and policies to address HIV and AIDS at the workplace.

To this end, the following must be clarified:

- Are there existing health-related workplace policies or programmes?
- Are there existing workplace policies or programmes addressing HIV and AIDS?

If the answer to the first question is 'yes', activities to address HIV and AIDS should be incorporated into existing health programmes or policies. If the answer to the second question is also affirmative, existing programmes or policies should be assessed to identify any aspects that might need to be modified.

By taking into account what is already there and not attempting to introduce a completely new policy or programme, duplication and repetition can be avoided and regulations made more horizontal. It is thus preferable to consolidate and revise existing instruments for responding to HIV and AIDS with a view to making them more viable and more appropriate to the sectoral, regional and national environment.

If no policy or programme related to health or HIV and AIDS is in place at the workplace, the preceding steps should be carried out diligently to ensure that the programme or policy formulated is implemented successfully. Provided that the environment, i.e. the workplace, and the instrument, that is the relevant policy or programme, are approached as described above, successful completion of the process is highly likely.

The table below gives an example of how HIV and AIDS can be integrated into existing health policies or programmes at the workplace:

Health-related workplace policies and programmes	Instruments for integrating HIV and AIDS
Is there a contact person or coordinator at the workplace?	If yes, explore the possibility of training the person to implement activities related to HIV and AIDS. If no, train a person assigned specifically to HIV and AIDS.
Is there a monitoring and evaluation process for these policies and programmes?	Explore the possibility of including indicators related to HIV and AIDS.

Step 6: Implementing the programme

Effective implementation begins with clear identification of the target groups.

Three elements should be considered: identification of the target groups, implementation of the programme, and the activities.

Identifying target groups on the basis of a workplace survey:

- Define the programme objective by identifying the problem and the programme's impact on beneficiaries and others in the surrounding community;
- Identify the programme objectives.

Implementing the programme on the basis of the preceding steps, which should have been carefully worked through?

- The key principles for implementation are well understood (step 4);
- Information on HIV and AIDS is appropriate to the context (step 1);
- A certain number of businesses/ workplaces has been identified (step 2);
- There is sound management support for workplace programmes on HIV and AIDS in the businesses/workplaces identified (step 3);
- Partners have been clearly identified (step 4);
- Existing workplace programmes on HIV and AIDS have been assessed (step 5);
- A preliminary survey has been conducted in the businesses/workplaces identified (step 6).

What activities?

A vast array of activities is available on HIV and AIDS prevention at the workplace. Activities must be chosen bearing in mind available resources, which can vary, for example, with the size of the business. Small businesses should be encouraged to establish reference mechanisms with public sector suppliers to overcome their lack of resources.

When drawing up and implementing the action plan it is important to take work schedules into consideration. For instance, avoid planning a training programme or a campaign to encourage voluntary counselling and testing during periods when large numbers of staff may be absent, or during very demanding work periods such as the end-of-year holidays, which result in higher-than-normal volumes of letter and parcel mail and demands for other services.

World AIDS Day (1 December) should be used as an opportunity to draw attention to various HIV and AIDS-related activities.

Keep in mind the following points when implementing HIV and AIDS-related programmes at the workplace:

- Programmes should aim to reduce the impact of HIV and AIDS on the lives of people living with HIV or at risk of infection;
- Workplace programmes on HIV and AIDS should be developed on the basis of existing workplace programmes;
- Any business - regardless of its size - can put into place some of the components of workplace programmes to prevent HIV and AIDS.

Step 7: Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are part of any workplace programme on HIV and AIDS and should be incorporated in the project at the planning stage. The aim of this step is to ensure that programmes are monitored using appropriate indicators signalling the spread of the epidemic at the workplace, the number of infected people, the rate of sick-leave, etc. Gender-specific information is a key element of the monitoring and evaluation.

To assess long-term change, project evaluation surveys should be conducted at intervals.

The following points should be borne in mind:

- By integrating HIV and AIDS indicators into policies and programmes, the programme and its impact on target groups can be assessed regularly;
- If possible, these key indicators should be integrated into other performance indicators of the business such that they are also considered performance indicators;
- Gender-disaggregated data should be used to ensure that programmes meet the needs of both men and women.

Examples of monitoring and evaluation indicators are shown below:

	Core issue	Indicators
Output	HIV and AIDS-related activities	% of workers (women and men) contacting health services about HIV and AIDS (counselling, testing, care and support)
		% of workers (women and men) having undergone voluntary counselling and testing
		Number (%) of peer educators (women and men) trained
		% of workers (women and men) informed about HIV and AIDS and related health issues.
Results	Reducing the impact of HIV and AIDS on the workforce	% of workers (women and men) found to be HIV-positive during testing to determine HIV and AIDS prevalence
		% of sick workers (women and men)
		Rate of new infections

Examples of HIV and AIDS-related indicators:

1	Number (%) of workers (women and men) well informed about the risks of HIV infection
2	Number (%) of workers (women and men) well informed about HIV and AIDS symptoms
3	Number (%) of workers (women and men) having consulted health services in relation to HIV and AIDS.
4	Number (%) of HIV and AIDS diagnoses (women and men)
5	Number (%) of workers (women and men) receiving treatment for HIV and AIDS
6	Number (%) of workers (women and men) living with HIV not receiving treatment
7	Number (%) of workers (women and men) who have died from AIDS
8	Number (%) of workers (women and men) receiving financial benefits for health reasons

IV. THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN THE HIV RESPONSE WITHIN POSTAL SERVICES

4.1 Postal enterprises and the world economy

The world postal network in 2004-10 was based on around 660,000 post offices and 5.5 million postal employees (one-third women and 25 per cent part-time) providing postal services throughout the world. There are around 8 million postal workers overall (including private and informal services, and parts of courier services). About 4.5 million workers from the postal and telecommunications services sector are affiliated to global union federations. The postal services of the UPU's 191 member countries form the largest physical distribution network in the world. Postal employees ensure that some 430 billion mail and other paper-based products are processed and delivered each year to all corners of the world. The postal network is even larger if we add the people who prepare and print the magazines, newspapers, books, advertising and other printed material that the postal administrations deliver, as well as the other providers of physical communication services.

The growth of express mail services over the past 40 years has been spurred by the development of multinational enterprises, the growth of e-commerce and the increasing requirements of business clients. In the courier service industry a major development since the 1980s was the growth of integrators, large international operators like **UPS, DHL, Federal Express and TNT** that specialize in international parcel services. They are called integrators because they combine land and air transport services with freight forwarding, customs broking and other information-intensive activities so that they can provide efficient collection and delivery services.[14]

Major trends include rapid technological developments, deregulation and privatization, and the proliferation of new high-value services. This is leading to a reconfiguration of the sector, and significant alteration of the employment outlook for communication workers.[15]

Therefore, in spite of the rapid growth of electronic communication services, the existence of physical communication infrastructure, as provided by postal services,

14. ILO: *Employability and Equal Opportunities in the Postal and Telecommunications Services*, Report for discussion at the Tripartite Meeting on Employment, Geneva, 13-17 May 2002. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/techmeet/tmpts02/tmpts-r.pdf

15. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/sectors/postal/emp.htm

remains an essential element in the exchange of information in both developed and developing countries. In developing countries the postal service is, in some areas, the only communications link that serves the entire population. Business and commerce also depend upon and benefit from physical communication. UPU and other studies indicate that the physical communication network will remain a viable alternative and a reliable means of exchanging information for a long time to come.

4.2 The role of postal businesses in HIV and AIDS responses

HIV and AIDS have resulted in increased absences from work and the loss of skilled, experienced staff, leading to a decline in productivity. If not addressed constructively and positively, this can lead to an increase in sick days, a negative atmosphere and lower motivation, which can in turn lead to an increase in health-care expenditure and social benefit payments, higher insurance premiums, a greater turnover in staff and higher recruitment and training costs.

This threatens productivity and profit - the two elements essential to the health of a business - which in turn has caused a decline in tax revenues, thus affecting public services and, by extension, national economies as a whole.

HIV and AIDS shows its impact on postal enterprises in the following ways:

- Increase in absenteeism due to illness and bereavement;
- Increase in labour turnover due to illness and death;
- Fall in production due to absenteeism, labour turnover, loss of skills/experience;
- Increase in expenditure on employees' replacement and training, health care and social security cost;
- Reduction in profit levels.

What are the benefits of direct enterprise action on HIV and AIDS?

- The return on investment in the prevention of HIV far exceeds that of standard capital investments. Studies have indicated that these returns, in terms of cost savings through preventing HIV, are as much as 3.5 to 7.5 times the costs of intervention. [16]
- HIV infection goes unnoticed for several years because it has no immediate and exclusive symptoms. Therefore, the response to HIV and AIDS should not wait for the manifestation of the underlying problem. Enterprises or businesses need to be proactive and learn from the experiences of their counterparts in Africa and elsewhere. The best time to respond is when the prevalence is low.

16. ILO: *A Training Manual for Enterprises on HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy and Programmes & Public Private Partnerships*, an ILO India Project, supported by USDOL/PEPFAR (September 2009).

WFP and partner, TNT, has joined the HIV and AIDS frontline in Malawi by opening a clinic for truckers to identify and treat sexually transmitted infections

"The establishment of Wellness Centres in Malawi is a milestone in the delivery of health services".
Dr. W. Tamaona, Mwanza district health officer

In February 2005, the World Food Programme (WFP) and partner, TNT, the Dutch global delivery company, put their heads together to see how they could tackle the burgeoning AIDS crisis in Southern Africa. Inspired by the South African network of roadside clinics which is part of the Trucking Against Aids project, the centre offers a treatment room, multimedia education on preventing HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), a clinician, condoms and counselling, among other services. Malawian truckers who travel the length and breadth of the country live a hard and lonely life and many seek solace in sex workers or strangers – opening themselves and others to the risk of infection. WFP depends heavily on long-distance truckers to haul food aid across the country and region.

HIV prevention lesson: They work in difficult conditions, delivering their cargo regardless of weather and road conditions, and often regardless of their health. As one Malawian trucker says: "Most of the truck drivers do sleep around, they change women just like that from one place to another. We are seeing people suffering and dying of all these diseases which are not being treated."

Hard to pin down: The nature of their job means they aren't reached through traditional health systems. Clinic hours don't match their erratic schedules, it's difficult to find parking outside treatment centres for their massive vehicles and there is also the risk that their cargo might be stolen if they leave their trucks. As a result, the truckers don't receive testing or treatment for HIV and they become moving targets, at the crossroads between spreading the disease and preventing new infections.

Private sector: The Malawi Government and the private sector contributed money, drugs, condoms and the site for the centre, which has both convenient hours and a good location for the truckers - at a border post between Malawi and Mozambique. In the first year, more that 1,200 STIs were treated and over ten thousand people received prevention information.

WFP and TNT think the transport sector can play a decisive role in preventing HIV and AIDS among truckers and their partners. Meanwhile, truckers get the green light to do their job without putting their lives and that of their partners at unnecessary risk.

Source: World Food Programme: "Malawian truckers: not such easy riders", published on 27 November 2006. Available at: http://www.wfp.org/stories/malawian-truckers-not-such-easy-riders

4.3 How can postal enterprises respond to the HIV pandemic?

"Working conditions which promote the health of our employees are the preconditions for sustainable corporate success. The award highlights that health management is an important management issue at our company and a clear indication of how much we value our employees."

Dr. Andreas Tautz, Chief Medical Officer /
Head of Corporate Health Management, Deutsche Post DHL[17]

Private couriers and trade unions are part of the UPU's consultative council. National delegations to UPU assemblies can include private courier participants. The UPU is reaching out to stakeholders, including unions and private couriers. Postal workers, employers and governments could create a platform to prepare a common programme – a compendium of best practices including training, human resource development, safety and health. Postal enterprises can use several options, depending upon the nature of their business/work, workforce, focus of their welfare and corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts.

Coalitions such as the Global Business Coalition on HIV and AIDS help businesses to formulate and implement workplace-related policies to fight against discrimination and facilitate employees' access to HIV treatment and prevention services. The Coalition brings together businesses to share best practices.

The Global Business Coalition on HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria reported that more than 100 CEOs have pledged to take action to end HIV-related stigma in the workplace. Workplace-based policies and programmes are core to the work of the Coalition, which has over 200 member companies. Members have pioneered comprehensive approaches that can be replicated by both for-profit and non-profit organizations. The Coalition brings the private sector into the fight against disease, working in concert with governments, international agencies, and nongovernmental organizations.[18]

Deutsche Post World Net - and its international express and logistics business DHL - was the first postal operator to join the Global Business Coalition on HIV and AIDS, the official private sector focal point for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. With almost half a million workers in 220 countries, Deutsche Post World Net and DHL are active in HIV and AIDS prevention activities, particularly in high-prevalence countries in Africa and Asia. They are also using their transport network to move much-needed information material to support HIV and AIDS campaigns as well as antiretroviral medicine and samples to help those trying to find a cure.

17. Available at: http://www.dp-dhl.com/en/responsibility-online_report_2010/employees/health_managementandoccupationalsafety/health_management.html

18. Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria: "GBC Welcomes New ILO Recommendations Which Set Clear Standards for Fighting HIV/AIDS in the Workplace". Available at: at http://www.gbcimpact.org/itcs_node/4/11/news/2635.

South African Post Office's Special focus on HIV and AIDS

Since the launch of voluntary confidential counselling and testing (VCCT) in June 2006, 70% of SAPO's employees know their HIV status. It is encouraging to report that HIV prevalence in SAPO is 7%; which is significantly lower than the national prevalence. SAPO continues with the Ngatana HIV and Aids support group which assists employees living with the reality of the disease. SAPO launched its first HIV and AIDS booklet titled "Employee guide to understanding HIV and Aids". Discussion groups were held nationally to discuss the contents of the booklet.

Its Annual Report contains the following information with regard to sustainability principles of the organization and issues relating to worker health and HIV and AIDS.

Sustainability principle aimed at creating shareholder value	Principal issues identified as material concerns to stakeholders	Key stakeholders				
		Shareholder and Portfolio Committee	Regulator	Labour unions and employees	Communities	Media and public
Social sustainability **Creating a workplace where people can excel**	People management Change Transformation & culture Employment equity Skills development Talent management Performance & reward Productivity & efficiency Employee relations Employee wellness & HIV and AIDS Employee safety	In line with the country's policies, SAPO seeks to create an organization that is reflective of the diversity of South African society and which contributes to maximizing the human resources potential of its people	South African Post Office's human capital management is governed by compliance to, amongst others: the Occupational health and Safety Act; the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act; the Basic Conditions of Employment Act; the Employment Equity Act; the Labour Relations Act; and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act	SAPO is dedicated to the training and developing of its human capital, thus providing its people with a sustainable business and being an employer of choice The safety of SAPO employees is of paramount importance and the compliance to Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) management is central to the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) framework and capital investment programmes	With its vast infrastructure and footprint SAPO is able to employ people from the local communities	The extended families of South African Post Office's employees are dependent not only on the livelihood provided by job security, but also on extended roll-out of its employee wellness and HIV and AIDS programmes

Sources : http://postoffice.ince.co.za/sustainability/workplace.asp - http://postoffice.ince.co.za/sustainability/popup.asp

Welfare and Corporate Social Responsibility programmes

A cost-effective, workable and sustainable strategy is the one that ensures integration of HIV and AIDS programmes within Human Resource Development (HRD), welfare and CSR programmes of enterprises. This requires a careful review of existing strategies and finding entry points for integration of HIV in existing programmes within enterprises or businesses.

Postal enterprises, courier operators and affiliated members can develop partnerships with their respective National AIDS Authority to get their CSR partners trained in HIV and AIDS; set up referral linkages with the government's programme for HIV testing and treatment; and also obtain appropriate communication material. They can also reach out to the community through a range of social development projects such as community development, income generation, skill building, health and education, women's empowerment and environment as part of their CSR programmes. This is a cost-effective and sustainable approach.

TNT group level: TNT corporate responsibility strategy

TNT has built a reputation of Corporate responsibility (CR) leadership through special initiatives.

Corporate responsibility activities for the Mail division will:

- Continue the focus on offering employees a safe workplace with good working conditions

… for Express will concentrate on:

- Continue the strong focus on road safety/health and safety in meeting the ambition of zero accidents, particularly in recent acquisitions.

TNT's corporate responsibility (CR)4 strategy is founded on five internationally recognized management standards: OHSAS 18001 for workplace safety, SA 8000 for social responsibility, Investors in People for personal growth of employees, ISO 14001 for environment and ISO 9001 for operational excellence.

TNT's four pillars of its CR strategy are: employees, the environment, other stakeholders such as customers and subcontractors, and voluntary contributions to society.

1. Employees:

- **Health & Safety:** Reduce absenteeism and eliminate fatalities from TNT's owned operations by managing serious accidents, lost time accidents and blameworthy road traffic incidents.
- **Human rights:** Ensure human rights, diversity & inclusion.
- **Employee engagement:** Increase number of positively engaged employees.

Source: http://group.tnt.com/aboutus/ourbusiness/strategy/corporateresponsibilitystrategy/index.aspx

Enterprises can:

- Undertake workplace intervention for their employees/families as part of HRD Strategy;
- Cover their contractual workers, workers in the supply chain under their welfare/CSR efforts or set up interventions for bridge populations (people who act as a potential link between high risk groups and the general population) of truckers/migrant workers under the Public Private Partnerships (PPP);
- Set up PPP for HIV care and support programmes.

FedEx Corporation raising funds for services related to HIV and AIDS

FedEx5 sponsored and participated in AIDS/LifeCycle, a seven-day, 545-mile bike ride that runs from San Francisco to Los Angeles. AIDS/LifeCycle is an annual event to raise funds and awareness for HIV and AIDS. With the help of FedEx, raised $11.6 million for HIV and AIDS related services throughout California, which AIDS/LifeCycle reports is a record for an annual AIDS fundraiser. FedEx Express, a subsidiary of FedEx Corp., transported more than 88,000 pounds of concert equipment in support of Nelson Mandela's global AIDS awareness and fundraising campaign, "46664 - Give 1 Minute Of Your Life to AIDS."

The company donated the use of its extensive global transportation network and shipping expertise to transport the valuable cargo from London to Cape Town, South Africa. FedEx has also been a leading supporter of the Coalition's work* focused on women and girls through the Healthy Women Healthy Economies program. The company also supports United Way, Orbits International, March of Dimes and Environmental and Alternative Energy Initiatives.

Corporate Social Responsibility profile:

FedEx supports organizations that positively impact communities around the world by leveraging their global network and philanthropic resources to help them achieve their goals.

FedEx is committed to being a great place to work, a thoughtful steward of the environment and a caring citizen in the communities where we live and work.

"We are passionate about sustainably connecting people and places and improving the quality of life around the world".

* Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria: http://www.gbcimpact.org/fedex

FedEx provides customers and businesses worldwide with a broad portfolio of transportation, e-commerce and business services. Its more than 275,000 employees and contractors are urged to "positively focus on safety, the highest ethical and professional standards and the needs of their customers and communities". In addition to corporate philanthropy and employee volunteerism, FedEx has developed strategic relationships with charitable organizations that share its values. Its mission is to actively support and provide a valuable benefit to the communities it serves, and to strengthen its global reputation through strategic allocation of its people, resources and network. FedEx provides support for health and human service needs through its relationships with Fondation de France, Child Relief and You (CRY), India, and SOS Kinderdorf in Germany.
Source: http://about.fedex.designcdt.com/our_company/company_information.

HIV and AIDS workplace policy at the postal enterprise level

"Our workplace prevention activities help to raise social and political awareness of the need to tackle the problem of HIV A and AIDS."

Laire Suurväli, initiator, Health Week and winner of the Corporate Health Award 2009, DHL Express Estonia

A policy statement reflects the management's commitment towards provision of prevention, care and support programmes on HIV and AIDS. HIV prevention programmes become more effective in the presence of a policy and programme assuring non-discrimination of workers, their families and dependants as well.

An HIV and AIDS workplace programme at the enterprise level rests on three pillars:

1. **An HIV and AIDS workplace policy** (based on the ten principles of the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work)
2. **A programme for the prevention of HIV and AIDS**
3. **A programme for care and support of infected and affected employees**

Key steps for postal enterprises to develop their workplace policy and programmes

Step 1: Convene a meeting with top/senior management to discuss HIV and AIDS

- To understand perceptions on HIV and AIDS
- To finalize the process through which the postal enterprise should develop its response to HIV and AIDS. Expected output/management decision
- To nominate a focal point [coordinator] within the enterprise to coordinate the HIV response
- To set up an internal committee or welfare committee to develop a policy and work plan for the enterprise
- To seek necessary technical partnerships

Step 2: Organize training of focal point/coordinator and committee members

- The coordinator [focal point]/committee members will require training in basics of HIV and AIDS, overview of National AIDS Control Programme and its components, national policy, process of developing enterprise policy, understanding of key principles of the policy, organizing meetings of AIDS Committee (or Welfare Committee), development of work plans, programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E)
- In addition to the training, visit to an enterprise engaged in the WPI/PPP and interaction with key programme implementers will be useful
- Expected output: Coordinator trained and draft policy and work plan developedshould be voluntary and confidential, and never used to screen job applicants or employees..

Step 3: Organize meeting (s) of Internal/Welfare Committee (IC)

- IC meetings to approve the work plan and policy. The work plan will have specific objectives, activities and indicators for performance. It may take a few meetings to approve the policy
- Expected output: an approved work plan and policy in place

Step 4: Implementation of annual workplan

- Elements of Behaviour Change Communication (BCC)* approaches, peer educator training, enhancing access to services, effective dissemination of policy and other elements as per the workplan
- Expected output: outputs as per the workplan implemented

Step 5: Programme M&E

- Coordinator to collect data, prepare progress reports and present the progress in the meeting of IC
- Specific KABP (knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and practices) surveys can be undertaken as contained in the work plan
- An internal system of M&E

* BCC is aimed at the strategic use of communication to promote positive health outcomes, using a systematic process beginning with formative research and behavior analysis, followed by communication planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. BCC for WPI begins with advocacy targeting management, unit heads and other key stakeholders in the enterprise. Key changes expected as a result of advocacy are development of workplace policy, nomination of a nodal person within enterprise to coordinate the HIV response, set up IC, allocate budget for the programme, endorse the enterprise work plan on HIV/AIDS and review the implementation of the work plan.

Source: Adapted from *A training manual for enterprises on HIV/AIDS workplace policy and programmes & Public private partnerships* developed by ILO India. http://www.ilo.org/hivaidsindia - For more information please see "HIV/AIDS Behaviour Change Communication – A toolkit for the workplace". Available at: http://www.ilo.org/aids/Publications/lang--en/docName--WCMS_115460/index.htm

4.4 Public-private partnerships: a new possibility for the postal sector

PPP for HIV prevention and care is an important component of the national HIV and AIDS and TB response. Different models of PPP for bridge populations are possible:

- Interventions jointly funded by companies and some international organizations;
- Interventions totally funded by companies, implemented by an NGO/company's own foundation, with technical assistance and material support from organizations;
- Interventions jointly funded by companies and corporate groups for setting up interventions at strategic points.

North Star Alliance Public -private partnership

North Star Alliance is a public-private partnership that is establishing a network of roadside health clinics at major truck stops, ports and border crossings in Africa.

In 2005, TNT and WEP established two Wellness centres in Malawi to make long-haul truck drivers more aware of the dangers of HIV, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. In 2006. TNT, with support from the WFPm founded North Star Alliance.

Wellness Centres offer a practical, low-barrier and low-cost response to the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STI's) among the transport industry. North Star offers a full range of services related to the establishment and running of roadside clinics in transport hubs and/or border crossing transport stops.

Working with local implementing partners they can source, outfit, supply and staff new centres. Morth Star has experience working with national/regional transport sector and helath authorities to identify HIV and AIDS hotspots along major transport corridors. Furthermore, they leverage a broader private sector response to HIV and AIDS programming by encouraging other private sector companies (e.g. FMCG, transport, distribution and courier companies) to support the project (financial and in-kind). The centres provide sexual health education, counselling, testing and treatment for truck drivers and the communities with which they directly interact, including sex workers.

In 2008, the network was extended to eastern Africa and, by the end of 2009, North Star had opened 14 Wellness Centres in nine countries accross eastern and southern Africa.

North Star Alliance (North Star) was founded in 2006 by the international post and parcel delivery company TNT, with support from the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). The foundation is officially supported by the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and ORTEC. Website: http://www.northstar-alliance.org/about/

Key steps to set up PPP in postal services:

- The focal point/coordinator in an enterprise should develop an understanding of PPP programmes. He/she can visit some ongoing PPP interventions;
- The IC should discuss the company's approach and decide if company wants to develop PPP for prevention or for care & support programmes;
- The focal point/coordinator should meet the National AIDS Authority or other agencies and explore different options for PPP that fits within company's situation;
- The focal point/coordinator should develop a concrete proposal for management's approval. The proposal will outline specific contribution from the company.

Deutsche Post DHL: Responding to HIV and AIDS

We have been committed to supporting our employees around the world in the response to HIV and AIDS for many years. AIDS is the main cause of death in Africa for those aged 15 to 59, but this age group is essential to maintaining the continent's infrastructure. We initiated the project "Taking Action to Improve South Africa's and Deutsche Post DHL's Environment" to promote the initiative of our employees. In this project, we are supporting the voluntary counselling and testing, condom vending machines and the setting up of local clinic networks.

As a member of the Global Business Coalition on HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, we also support the Health at Home Project in Kenya among other projects. This scheme provides 2 million people in rural areas with access to HIV tests.

In Europe, Estonia is the country affected most severely by the epidemic. During a week [in 2009] dedicated to HIV and AIDS awareness, Health Management at DHL Express Estonia actively addressed the issue and received the Corporate Health Award in recognition of its successful measures.

Source: Deutsche Post DHL, http://www.dp-dhl.com/en/responsibility-online_report_2010/employees/health_managementandoccupationalsafety/health_management.html.

Appendices

Appendix 1: A workplace policy on HIV and AIDS: What it should cover

A workplace policy provides the framework for action to reduce the spread of HIV and AIDS and manage its impact. It:

- makes an explicit commitment to corporate action;
- lays down standards of behaviour for all employees (whether infected or not) and defines everyone's rights.
- gives guidance to supervisors and managers
- assists an enterprise to plan for HIV and AIDS and manage its impact.

The policy may consist of a detailed document on HIV and AIDS only, setting out programme and policy issues; it may also be part of a wider policy or agreement on safety, health and working conditions; or it may be a short statement of principle, as in: "This company [or any other workplace, such as a ministry, hospital, and so on…] is committed to fighting all forms of discrimination on the grounds of HIV status and to protecting the health and safety of its workers through prevention and care and support programmes". It is important for the policy to encourage action and not to restrain it. It might thus be preferable to formulate policies using simple language and to make detailed reference to workplace agreements or contracts. A policy should at all time be the result of consultation and cooperation between management and workers.

The ILO Code of Practice on HIV and AIDS and the world of work provides guidelines for the development of policies and programmes on HIV and AIDS in the workplace. These encourage a consistent approach to HIV and AIDS, based on the ten key principles, while being flexible enough to address the different needs of individual workplaces.

Policies should be developed by the people they concern. No single policy is relevant to all situations, but the model proposed below can usefully be included.

The policy

I. General statement

The policy should begin with a general statement or introduction that relates the HIV and AIDS policy to the local context and existing business practices, including the following:

- The reason why the company has an HIV and AIDS policy and how it relates to other company policies;
- Policy compliance with national laws and local laws and trade agreements.

II. Policy framework and general principles

The policy should establish some general principles as the basis for specific provisions, emphasizing the need to fight against stigma and discrimination (see the ten principles in the ILO Code of Practice).

III. Specific provisions

The policy should include provisions in the following areas:

1) The protection of the rights of those affected by HIV and AIDS;
2) Prevention through information, education and training;
3) Care and support for workers and their families.

IV. Implementation and follow-up

Policies often remain an unrealized promise. The steps needed to put the policy into practice should therefore be defined, notably by setting up structures and appointing people to monitor implementation.

If the policy does not take the form of a negotiated agreement, a short clause could be added whereby management and worker representatives pledge their full support to the policy.

Companies should make every effort to establish a budget for HIV and AIDS activities, but should bear in mind that many interventions can be put in place at little or no cost; that smaller companies can work together to share costs; and that services and resources may exist in the community or may be sought, for example through the local UN Theme Group on HIV and AIDS or the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

As regards workplace policies, the HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200) advises that:

"38. Implementation of policies and programmes on HIV and AIDS should be based on cooperation and trust among employers and workers and their representatives, and governments, with the active involvement, at their workplace, of persons living with HIV.

39. Organizations of employers and workers should promote awareness of HIV and AIDS, including prevention and non-discrimination, through the provision of education and information to their members. These should be sensitive to gender and cultural concerns.

...

40. Training, safety instructions and any necessary guidance in the workplace related to HIV and AIDS should be provided in a clear and accessible form for all workers and, in particular, for migrant workers, newly engaged or inexperienced workers, young workers and persons in training, including interns and apprentices. Training, instructions and guidance should be sensitive to gender and cultural concerns and adapted to the characteristics of the

workforce, taking into account the risk factors for the workforce.

41. Up-to-date scientific and socio-economic information and, where appropriate, education and training on HIV and AIDS should be available to employers, managers and workers' representatives, in order to assist them in taking appropriate measures in the workplace.

42. Workers, including interns, trainees and volunteers should receive awareness-raising information and appropriate training in HIV infection control procedures in the context of workplace accidents and first aid. Workers whose occupations put them at risk of exposure to human blood, blood products and other body fluids should receive additional training in exposure prevention, exposure registration procedures and post-exposure prophylaxis.

43. Workers and their representatives should have the right to be informed and consulted on measures taken to implement workplace policies and programmes related to HIV and AIDS. Workers' and employers' representatives should participate in workplace inspections in accordance with national practice."

Photo: Workshop held by the National Postal Service in the premises of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, to validate the Guidelines on HIV and AIDS for the Postal Sector (February 2010).

Appendix 2: HIV treatment and care

As regards treatment and care, the HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200) indicates that:

"17. Members should ensure that their national policies and programmes on workplace health interventions are determined in consultation with employers and workers and their representatives and are linked to public health services. They should offer the broadest range of appropriate and effective interventions to prevent HIV and AIDS and manage their impact.

18. Members should ensure that workers living with HIV and their dependants benefit from full access to health care, whether this is provided under public health, social security systems or private insurance or other schemes. Members should also ensure the education and awareness-raising of workers to facilitate their access to health care.

19. All persons covered by this Recommendation, including workers living with HIV and their families and their dependants, should be entitled to health services.
These services should include access to free or affordable:

(a) voluntary counselling and testing;
(b) antiretroviral treatment and adherence education, information and support;
(c) proper nutrition consistent with treatment;
(d) treatment for opportunistic infections and sexually transmitted infections, and any other HIV-related illnesses, in particular tuberculosis; and
(e) support and prevention programmes for persons living with HIV, including psychosocial support.

20. There should be no discrimination against workers or their dependants based on real or perceived HIV status in access to social security systems and occupational insurance schemes, or in relation to benefits under such schemes, including for health care and disability, and death and survivors' benefits."

In addition, UNAIDS provides the following guidance:

HIV is an uncommon type of virus called a retrovirus, and drugs developed to disrupt the action of HIV are known as antiretrovirals, or ARVs. These come in a variety of formulations designed to act on different stages of the life-cycle of HIV.

The AIDS virus mutates rapidly, which makes it extremely skilful at developing resistance to drugs. To minimize this risk, people with HIV are generally treated with a combination of ARVs that attack the virus on several fronts at once.

The introduction of ARVs in 1996 transformed the treatment of HIV and AIDS, improving the quality and greatly prolonging the lives of many infected people in places where the drugs are available. Nevertheless, ARVs are not a cure. If treatment is discontinued the virus becomes active again, so a person on ARVs must take them for life.

Although the price of ARVs has fallen significantly in recent years, their cost remains an obstacle to access in the developing world. Moreover, the health infrastructure required to deliver antiretroviral therapy is lacking in many places.

Access to drugs depends not only on financial and human resources. It depends also on people who need them being aware of their HIV status, knowledgeable about treatment, and empowered to seek it.

Thus public information and education are important elements in widening access, alongside efforts to build or strengthen the health services. The campaign for universal access to life saving drugs for HIV and AIDS, started originally by grassroots AIDS activists, is today a major focus of attention of UN agencies and others influential organizations at national and global levels.

The Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, unanimously endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 2001, embraced equitable access to care and treatment as a fundamental component of a comprehensive and effective global HIV response. Since then many countries, through the support of intergovernmental organizations and donors, have definitively demonstrated the feasibility of delivering HIV treatment in even the most resource-limited settings. Access to treatment has helped mobilize communities in the response to HIV, preserved the health and viability of households vulnerable to HIV, and strengthened HIV prevention efforts in many parts of the world.

In the goal to reach universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, national leadership is required to establish policies that support the momentum of treatment scale-up through efforts to: increase the number of people who choose to know their HIV status; reduce HIV stigma; build human capacity to sustain treatment through training and better use of current human resources; improve supply management and integrate HIV care with other health services.

Source: http://www.unaids.org/en/PolicyAndPractice/HIVTreatment/default.asp

Appendix 3: Organizations involved in the prevention campaigns for the postal and logistics sectors

Universal Postal Union

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