

## Trade Union Development Cooperation and HIV/Aids

Trade Unions have lately started to focus on HIV/Aids issues as a priority, especially in countries with a high prevalence. In their role as defenders and promoters of human rights from a workers' perspective, trade unions have the capacity to make the negative effects of insecure employment and HIV/Aids visible. Unions can highlight issues such as the right to employment, the right to not be forced to test for HIV, health insurance, employers' responsibility and work against discrimination and stigma in the workplace.

Many employers take responsibility by issuing guidelines and rules for HIV/Aids and how to treat the issue in the workplace. Authorities, organisations and private or public enterprises must sometimes over employ to keep their workforce in the hardest hit regions. To offer free or subsidised healthcare can sometimes be advantageous for the employer.

The HIV/Aids issue is closely linked to other crosscutting issues in Trade Union work. Women and men living with HIV have different living and working conditions. Power relations, different views and expectations on sexuality and family, absence of legislation to protect women, are some of the gender equality aspects that affect views on HIV/Aids.

In conflict regions health care suffers, workers migrate to a larger extent, prostitution and sexual violence is more common and the possibility to organise decreases. Conflict and violence increases the risk for spreading of disease, including HIV.

Environmental issues affect the use of natural resources, affects water and hygiene, and in the long run, the health situation of poor people, Diseases spread more easily, knowledge about sustainable agriculture disappears, and competition for land or other resources debilitate democracy and sustainable development.

The LO-TCO Secretariat for International Trade Union Development Cooperation requires analysis of the situation regarding HIV/Aids in relevant projects and programmes, and this analysis is mandatory for any project implemented in Southern Africa. This is a requirement necessary for reporting back to the Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation, Sida.

In order to make a useful analysis of the HIV/Aids situation the process should be participatory, and part from the local knowledge within the partner union.

- Part from existing information
- Ensure that the used information is correct and updated
- Use existing (and if possible, local) material
- Use working methods that are adapted to the participants

### Some of the useful questions in an HIV/Analysis:

- ✓ What is the specific HIV/Aids situation in your sector?
- ✓ Are there statistics showing the number of people infected in your sector?
- ✓ Does your partner organisation/s talk about HIV/Aids?
- ✓ Is there a HIV/Aids strategy / action plan / policy or similar at national union level? How is it applied in practice?
- ✓ Is there a person in charge of HIV/Aids questions at the central trade union/ unions?
- ✓ What methods are used in working to prevent infection and discrimination? (in the workplaces you organise and your own trade union)
- ✓ Do you cooperate with any expert organisation on HIV/Aids?
- ✓ Are there collective agreements or workplace policies that mention HIV/Aids? What do they regulate?
- ✓ What methods are used to enable a collective agreement to be signed that mentions HIV/Aids?
- ✓ How does the work concerning HIV/Aids relate to the trade union's gender equality work? To the trade union's work environment efforts?
- ✓ Is there a good concrete example of what the trade union or project is doing?
- ✓ Is there a good concrete example of results achieved by the trade union or project?

Each year, the analysis should be monitored in meetings with the partner organisation/s. changes both positive and negative should be discussed, reported on and taken into account when planning for the next period.