



International
Labour
Organization

Economically Empowering the HIV Vulnerable Population along Transport Corridors in Tanzania

Tanzania is among the countries in sub-Saharan Africa that are highly affected by the HIV and AIDS epidemic. The Tanzania HIV and AIDS and Malaria Indicator Survey (THMIS), 2011-12, reported that 5.1 per cent of people aged 15 to 49 in the United Republic of Tanzania are HIV-positive. This decline, from 7.0 per cent in 2003-04 to 5.3 per cent in the 2011-12 for mainland Tanzania is a result of successful prevention strategies, including behaviour change.

Contextual factors shaping the epidemic in the country include poverty and gender inequalities. Women in particular are vulnerable to HIV because of the challenges in finding jobs and securing an income and thus economic survivalist strategies are adopted which often leads to risk exposure including high incidence of gender-based violence, substance and alcohol abuse. Mobility is yet another key factor perpetuating risk and leading to separation of spouses/partners and increased casual sexual relationships which may include unprotected sex. Within this context, economic empowerment increases peoples' resilience to HIV and AIDS by addressing the underlying structural drivers of the epidemic.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Partners:

Savings and Credit Cooperative League of Tanzania (SCCULT) and the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Beneficiary country:

Tanzania

Time-frame:

2011-2014

Budget:

USD 140,000 (SCCULT)
USD 140,00 (Sida)

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THE RESPONSE

The ILO, together with the Savings and Credit Cooperative League of Tanzania (SCCULT), multiple private sector partners (such as savings and credit cooperative societies (SACCOs), the Ministry of Labour and Employment of Tanzania, the Employers' Association, and trade unions addressed this challenge.

Since 2011 the ILO has managed an HIV and AIDS vulnerability reduction programme along Tanzania's transport corridors of Chalinze, Ilula, Mafinga, Makambako, Tunduma and Kyela. This innovative approach reduces the impact of the epidemic by focusing on members of the local communities lying along these transport corridors. The economic empowerment and gender equality approach, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) provides skills and resources (through the Innovation Fund to start or

improve their business, and to form groups and cooperatives to improve their livelihoods, thereby reducing their vulnerability to HIV and AIDS.

Central to this approach is the use of the Corridor Economic Empowerment Innovation Fund (CEEIF). This fund has been put in place to ensure that these vulnerable groups, who are usually excluded from accessing loans due to the lack of security, now have access. One way in which this is achieved is through the support offered by cooperatives and business groups.

To ensure CEEIF sustainability, an advisory committee made up of ILO constituents (Government, and employers' and workers' organizations) monitors the administration of the fund by SCCULT.

RESULTS

The CEEIF, through the training provided, has ensured that women and men 2863 beneficiaries have been trained on economic empowerment, gender equality and HIV and AIDS. The project's impact is

monitored annually, the most recent follow-up survey having been conducted in April 2014. Drawing on a representative sample of 1,017 beneficiaries, the following results were observed.



"..... I knew my status as HIV Positive for quiet number of years but I did not accept the situation. With the training I became more positive. I started three new businesses: selling local fruits fresh juice, pig-gery project and a vegetable gardening. I have created jobs for two women. I am doing things not just expecting grants and gifts.... These days, when I wake up in the morning, I don't ask myself whether I am going to get something to eat, but what I ask myself is WHAT DO I WISH TO EAT TO DAY!..... This is a new life"

Enes Kamindu – Secretary General SHIWAUTU (PLHIV group)-Tunduma Hotspot



Economic Empowerment

The training sessions have led to a significant improvement in business skills and access to finance to start or expand businesses. Some 82 per cent of the trained women and men have approached various organizations, including the Innovation Fund, as compared to 13 per cent of the untrained group.

Some 60 business proposals were submitted to the Loans Committee. Of these, 58 were approved, which resulted in \$131,738 being disbursed.

Altogether 1,201 businesses were supported, leading to the creation of 491 jobs.

Overall the women and men participating in the project felt these positive effects by reporting improvements in their overall socio-economic status.

The personal effects were felt by the beneficiaries, with statistically significant improvements in –

- profits (\$552 in the last six months for the untrained group, and \$1,086 for the trained group)
- personal income (\$85 per month for the untrained group, and \$142 for those trained)
- the use of savings (47 per cent and 89 per cent for those untrained and trained respectively)
- spending on health (\$53 to \$68 per month)

Gender equality

The second aspect of the project seeks to address gender inequality, not only by economically empowering women within families, but also by addressing gender issues broadly. These steps have led to improvements in women finding space and agency in making household decisions (56 to 73 per cent untrained to trained) and in the general attitude that a wife has the right to refuse sex.

HIV and AIDS

The project has observed some important changes within the area of HIV and AIDS vulnerability, notably:

- 84 per cent of the trained beneficiaries adopted risk reduction strategies in the last six months, compared to 13 per cent of the untrained beneficiaries; this included an improvement in condom use, a reduction in the number of partners, a reduction in transactional sex, and a reduction of alcohol and drug use before sex.
- There were also other improvements, with 92 per cent of the trained beneficiaries accessing HIV and AIDS-related services (as compared to 60 per cent of the untrained group) including access to male and female condoms, HIV testing and counselling (HCT), treatment, prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) and other key reproductive health services.

BENEFITS OF PARTNERING

The programme has had a spillover effect. More people have been attracted to the programme, both within and outside the project areas, and hence there is increased demand for loans. The CEEP, through a combination of business and HIV-related initiatives have provided the informal economy workers access to financial resources to enable them to transit out of the informal economy, thus improving livelihoods and reducing HIV vulnerability. The CEEIF fund will continue to be managed by SCCULT in close collaboration with the Advisory Committee and the Loan Committee, and will thus continue benefiting other corridor communities. The project has brought an increase in membership of SACCOs and the MFI (SCCULT). In essence the ILO helps savings and credit cooperatives to reach more vulnerable populations along the corridors.

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