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ILO in UN Cares: HIV and AIDS at UN workplaces

As a lead agency for HIV and AIDS workplace policies and programmes and private sector mobilization, the ILO plays a key role in UN Cares programmes as well. In partnership with different UN agencies, UNAIDS and UN Plus / organizations of persons living with HIV, the ILO contributes to UN Cares, not only for its own staff but also for staff in other agencies. Here are a few examples highlighting ILO actions in UN Cares at headquarter and field levels.

Geneva: Unprecedented uptake in HIV testing and counselling at the ILO



> In 2010 the ILO Medical Service carried out a record number of voluntary and confidential HIV tests. Over 60 women and men took the step to know their HIV status in 2010. An almost surprising result, comments the headquarters UN Cares team. Indeed since the launch of the ILO HIV workplace programme in 2000, the annual average was not exceeding 12 onsite HIV tests. Yet this spectacular uptake by 500 % in staff participation in voluntary counselling and testing was no random luck, but the result of a very proactive year on all fronts.

Various engagement channels, more targeted sessions and tight collaboration with UNAIDS, WHO and UN Plus were at the root of this substantial progress in passing the information about HIV. A special learning session was organized for the ILO Human Resources department; another, co-facilitated with UNAIDS and UN Plus on the eve of World AIDS Day, targeted interns from all UN agencies with a more active-learning approach called “WildFire”. Strengthened partnerships with networks of people living with HIV, including UN Plus, not only contributed to the high visibility of events such as World AIDS activities at ILO headquarters, but also to a greater transformative impact of the sessions on staff members.

Increased confidentiality of staff medical information, with new guidelines from the ILO Medical Service to be issued in 2011, should consolidate the recent results by creating a safe environment for UN workers to find out their HIV status. The ILO’s UN Cares team involves staff from HRD, the medical service, and ILO/AIDS. The ILO has also trained facilitators in different departments who play a key role in the organization of education and training efforts.

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UN Cares Brazil: Providing information on HIV, through reality check and humour

> UN Cares contributed greatly to the training of ILO staff in 2010 on issues related to HIV. UN Cares facilitators explored new approaches in sessions which also involved senior officers. To overcome resistances to talk about HIV, a humorous safe sex workshop was first conducted by a person living with HIV with much experience in engaging groups in discussions on sensitive issues. In a similar spirit the projection of the movie *The condom history* (“*O Auto da Camisinha*”), which won a Brazilian movie competition in 2009, facilitated the promotion of condom use in an entertaining way.



A session was held in collaboration with the Women Police Station on violence against women. A delegate from the police forces conducted the session, which explored the link between violence and HIV transmission. The personnel greatly appreciated this session as it engaged them to reflect on their own power relations and life experiences.

Since the creation of the UN Cares programme in Brazil the ILO has played a very special role in mobilizing the UN agencies to integrate and participate in the Learning Strategy group. This role was reinforced in 2009-2010 as the ILO was the convener of UN cares activities, in strong partnership with UNFPA and UNDP.

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UN Cares Indonesia: Mapping out information deficits among UN personnel



> In 2010, ILO Indonesia decided to build its UN Cares contribution on solid ground by adopting a comprehensive evaluation approach. A pre-implementation assessment was conducted in January 2010 through a country-wide survey among the hundred-staff-member ILO workforce in Indonesia. The learning sessions organized during the year reached 80 % of ILO employees who had never received previous HIV training at the Jakarta office. Follow-up focus groups were led two weeks after and each session highlighted participant's wish to better emphasize UN Plus - the UN system positive staff group - in the training, as they greatly contribute to improve staff access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. VCT was also an issue on which more information was desired.

Another highlight was a half-day session to reach an often overlooked group: the security guards. The initiative was a success as almost 50 women and men participants took part in the session, asked for clarification about HIV myths and facts as well as VCT. The ILO played an important role in the set-up of the training module by tailoring the content, language used and time frame to the specific needs of these workers. The training was facilitated in Bahasa, Indonesia's national language.

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UN Cares South Africa: Reaching out through a UN workplace wellness programme

> Since 2009 UN Cares activities have been one of the three key focus areas of the UN Workplace Wellness Programme - South Africa, an interagency initiative led by the ILO. HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support are just one facet of this comprehensive programme. It also encompasses healthy living, psychological support mechanisms and stress reduction, different aspects that all concur to staff well-being in the UN work setting. The UN country team has appointed an officer to coordinate the Wellness programme three days a week. The rest of the time, he acts as a stress counsellor for women and men working in the agencies located in Pretoria. 2010 was dedicated to building capacities with the training of UN focal points and PEP kit custodians. The team is trying to develop an appraisal system to encourage UN staff to become focal points and ensure a sustainable interagency collaboration.



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UN Cares India: ILO continues to lead the inter-agency effort



> UN Cares India has entered the third phase of the development of the inter-agency collaboration led by the ILO in June 2010. In the first phase, the ILO facilitated the training of some 1,200 UN staff on HIV and AIDS. The second phase aimed at covering families and enhancing access to services. Highlights of the programme have been: the training of focal points in UN agencies, the engagement of staff union and the installation of condom vending machines and free male / female condom dispensers in UN agencies after undertaking a thorough needs assessment. In an event organized to promote voluntary counselling and testing on World AIDS Day 2010, 40 women and men took the HIV test, including management. The new objectives set for 2011 onwards include a focus on sustainability, with the reinforcement of the focal point system and greater ownership of the project in each agency.

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