



International
Labour
Organization

COMBINATION PREVENTION IN ACTION: MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN MOZAMBIQUE



Prevent HIV, Protect Human Rights at Work

As UNAIDS meets to discuss the importance of combination prevention, the ILO's HIV/AIDS programme in Mozambique shows how the workplace can engage people at all levels making valuable contributions to achieve national objectives.

Mozambique's street vendors and boardroom executives might not seem to have much in common, but the ILO's HIV activities in the country are actively involving both in one of its most comprehensive and wide ranging national programmes.

"I am 25 years old and I live alone as I lost my son and husband to AIDS," says Maria Rocha who is HIV positive herself and lives in Sofala province where young women are five times more likely to be infected than men their age. "I have problems finding food as I have no work," she explains.

Women like Maria are a high priority in Mozambique's national HIV response which targets reducing risk and vulnerability; preventing new infections, providing treatment and care, and mitigating the impact of HIV on those affected. In 2008 the UN Team on AIDS, particularly the ILO, UNAIDS, UNICEF and UNDP joined forces to manage a united programme backing the government's efforts.

"HIV affects people at all levels of society and the workplace offers an ideal entry point to reach them with prevention and assistance programmes tailored to their specific needs," says Paulo Carlos Romao, National HIV/AIDS Focal Point for the ILO in Maputo.

Mozambique has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world with 11.5% of 15–49 year olds living with HIV and the southern part of the country hardest hit. Transmission is mostly through heterosexual contact and women are more affected than men, especially in the younger age groups.

The ILO's role is to support the workplace response, acting as a catalyst to build local capacity with specialized training and knowledge to tackle the epidemic. At a national level it is helping to revise Mozambique's HIV and AIDS laws to protect against stigma and discrimination in the workplace and assisting with policy and planning advice. But the majority of its activities are taking place on the ground and it is here that the ILO's traditional government,



trade union and private sector partners, are crucial, as they know how to mobilize and engage their memberships, targeting the different needs of affected workers.

The **private sector** response has been led by ECoSIDA, the business coalition against HIV/AIDS, which with ILO support has helped 600 companies to set up workplace prevention programmes and linked staff to treatment and care. ECoSIDA has also joined with the ILO and the Ministry of Labour to run training workshops involving 153 labour inspectors, to raise HIV awareness and promote implementation and supervision of existing laws against stigma and discrimination in the workplace.

Reaching **informal sector workers** is more challenging as they don't operate in a conventional workplace, but it is particularly important as 85% of Mozambicans are employed in this way and their circumstances often make them more vulnerable to HIV. ASSOTSI (the Informal Sector Workers' Association of Mozambique), is one of the few organizations representing this sector, providing a vital link for the ILO which has helped to train street vendors to run HIV prevention campaigns throughout the high burden provinces of Maputo, Sofala and Manica. They encourage behaviour change, distribute condoms and link people up with service providers offering voluntary counselling and testing (VCT), treatment and care.

Government agencies are also important partners running a variety of schemes to assist vulnerable populations. This includes helping poor people make a living through a combination of **small business development skills, vocational training, micro-credit and savings schemes**. With support from the Local Economic Development Agencies, 3,800 people started small businesses in Maputo, Manica and Sofala provinces in 2008 using credit and savings schemes, and 200 community groups have set up social funds saving two million MZN (US\$ 90,000) in the last four years.

Reaching **young people, especially women** is a key priority and the ILO has helped to mainstream HIV/

AIDS education in schools and youth training schemes with the critical support of the National Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (INEFP). The Institute is also running skills' training courses to help out-of-school youth and young people who are living with HIV but have no source of livelihood in Sofala and Gaza provinces. Prevalence rates in Gaza are the highest in the country at 25.1% and young women are six times more likely to be infected than young men.

Consolidating and scaling up ongoing activities is an important aspect of the programme and between 2008 and 2011 the ILO helped Mozambican partners to access US\$ 6 million in new funding from international sources. "Local institutions and communities know best how to tackle the epidemic, our aim is to develop their technical capacity wherever possible to widen their reach and increase sustainability," says the ILO's Romao.

"The ILO offers practical interventions and approaches that really make a difference," says Raul Cabral de Melo, UNAIDS Country Coordinator for Mozambique. The ILO programme is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the One UN Fund.

Savings groups empower women to reduce HIV vulnerability

Helena João is married and lives with her six children in Sofala province. She is a member of a credit and savings group that has made a real difference to her life, "It helped me to buy school uniform and stationery for my children and now I have money saved for hard times," she says.

Helena's group was set up with help from Sofala's Local Economic Development Agency, which with ILO support is encouraging the development of small businesses through the promotion of credit and savings schemes. The aim is to help workers and family members lead a less precarious life to avoid the use of coping strategies that could increase HIV

risk. Nationally there is a higher rate of HIV infection in women aged 15-49 (11.2%) compared to 9.2% in men and prevalence rates in Sofala are among the highest in the country at 15.5%.



Helena João taking her daughter to school in a new uniform paid for from her savings.

Members are trained in how to set up and run groups and they receive HIV information at the same time. Each group is given an initial grant and members then contribute savings on a weekly or monthly basis. Any member can apply for credit and if agreed by the group she then pays back at a low interest rate.

The project started in 2006 and covers 56 small farmers associations and rural cooperatives in five districts. The total funds within the groups increased from US\$ 7,000 in 2007 to US\$ 90,000 in 2011.



A savings group meets to contribute credit requests and issues related to HIV and AIDS.

Skills' training gives Mozambique youth a second chance

Morina Armando, 24, used to sell vegetables and fruit in Beira's informal market. "The income was so low I couldn't take care of my children and I didn't have enough to send them to school," she says. Things have got better since she joined the association *Happy to Live*, which supports people living with HIV (PLHIV), and went on a tailoring course run by the National Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (INEFP).

The 34 participants all received tailoring kits and now work together to make clothes for the local market. Every Thursday they talk about issues related to HIV prevention, care and treatment.

"This training is important and relevant," says Irene Alberto who has worked for two years as a trainer for INEFP. "Beira is a big commercial city and there is a strong market for uniforms and clothes."



Morina Armando and her tailoring group have found a new income selling clothes in Beira

The ILO supports INEFP's work in Sofala and Gaza provinces where 500 people have been trained in skills and business development. To reach out-of-school youth (from 17 to 25 years old) the ILO project helped INEFP to integrate HIV prevention messages in its short courses and developed a special module "Start your Business" based on ILO tools. Young women are particular targets as the infection rate among them is so much higher compared to men their age.



Motorbike training gives young people hope of a livelihood

“I lost my job because I am HIV positive but I’ve been trained in motorbike repair and 10 of us are now looking for space to set up our own garage,” says David Favor. “We hope this will help us to buy food.”

By training these young workers - including those living with HIV - the ILO aims to give them the opportunity to live and work in dignity and to create an enabling environment that reduces new HIV infections.

Street networks get the HIV message across to high risk groups

Mozambique has a huge informal economy where thousands of small scale traders and entrepreneurs eke out a precarious existence. The nature of the work makes it hard to organize, but ASSOTSI, one of the few organizations representing this sector is leading the HIV response in Maputo city, Sofala and Manica provinces. With ILO support the association has developed its own network of trained members who work as HIV/AIDS peer educators running prevention campaigns in the informal markets. They encourage behaviour change and distribute condoms and information leaflets.

ASSOTSI also has key members who act as focal points giving back up and technical support to the peer educators and linking them up with service providers such as mobile voluntary counselling and testing

centres. In 2011 3,000 people went for testing from the markets.

In Mozambique’s three main cities ASSOTSI covered 45 markets from 2008-2011 reaching close to 22,000 informal traders. ASSOTSI also targets the main transport corridors where sex workers, truckers and traders congregate, talking to them about HIV risks and prevention and in the same period 45,000 condoms were distributed. Finally, ASSOTSI has been running short courses using ILO tools for developing small businesses to boost income and reduce the vulnerability of its members.



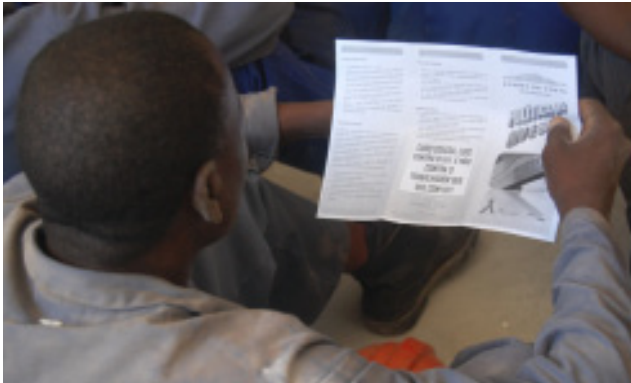
“The informal economy sector provides many jobs to Mozambicans and families depend on th incomes from this activity,” explains Ramos Marrengula, President of ASSOTSI. “Thanks to the ILo project we deliver HIV and AIDS prevention, testing and treatment on a regular and systematic basis as we have trained focal points in each of our markets.”

Private sector initiative helps national HIV planning

“With the support of the ILO since 2006, ECOSIDA has initiated a range of activities,” explains Balbina Santos, Programme Manager for the Mozambican business coalition. In 2011 the coalition set up a monitoring and evaluation system training company staff to compile information on all workplace activities

and feed this into the national system to assist with planning and collaboration.

All businesses, unions and cooperatives with workplace programmes are responsible for gathering and reporting monthly information on their activities, which is then harmonized with the indicators in the national M&E system. The ILO and UNAIDS assisted with training for 30 focal points and 100 technicians at provincial and district level and will help the planned scale up to seven provinces, enabling new companies to join.



An employee reads HIV prevention information during a peer education session organized at the Marromeu Sugar Cane Company.

So far data on 93 companies has been fed back to the National AIDS Council (NAC) to help with strategic planning and decision-making. “This system is really important as it allows the NAC to track so many programmes it was not aware of,” says Mauricio Santos, Private Sector Focal Point at the National AIDS Council.

ECOSIDA has also set up the annual Business Excellence Award to give recognition to the private sector’s response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. There are five categories and last year 700 companies participated with prizes going to the sugar, electricity, banking and construction sectors.



Mr Vita Assane from Companhia de Sena, (Marromeu Sugar Cane Company), receives first prize from His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Mozambique, for his company’s contribution to the AIDS response at the Annual Business Excellence Award.

THE WORKPLACE AS AN ENTRY POINT FOR COMBINATION PREVENTION

The ILO uses the following combination of biomedical, behavioural and structural interventions to reach formal and informal workers that might be at risk of HIV infection within key economic sectors including the agriculture, education, fishing, health, mining, retail, services, transport, tourism sectors :

- ▶ Work with the target group of workers to understand the drivers of the epidemic better;
- ▶ Follow a safety and welfare approach and promote respect for human rights;
- ▶ Create an enabling legal and policy environment to reduce stigma and discrimination;
- ▶ Increase knowledge and risk perception of STIs, HIV and TB among targeted workers;
- ▶ Support targeted workers to adopt preventive and safer behaviour, using behaviour change communication (BCC) strategies;
- ▶ Create a demand for STI treatment, condom use and counselling and testing services, and build partnerships to establish referral systems to reach vulnerable workers;
- ▶ Facilitate workers' access to welfare schemes;
- ▶ Build partnerships with health services to ensure workers' access to treatment, counselling and antiretroviral therapy.

ILO programmes address a number of key issues including where appropriate:

- HIV/TB co-infection
- alcohol consumption
- PMTCT
- gender-based violence
- male norms and behaviours
- male circumcision

Policies and programmes often extend to workers's families and dependants, as well as to local communities involving sex workers in the transport hotspots.