



# Workplace Response to HIV/AIDS

A quarterly e-newsletter of the ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean

March 2007

## The ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS and the world of work

The ILO is a specialized agency of the United Nations with responsibility for the world of work. It has a special place in the fight against AIDS because its tripartite structure enables it to mobilize governments, employers and workers in 180 countries. The ILO has set up a global Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work. Its main objectives are to:

- raise awareness of the economic and social impact of AIDS
- help governments, employers and workers support national efforts to prevent the spread and reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS
- fight discrimination and stigma related to HIV status.

ILO is a co-sponsor of UNAIDS and is the former Chair of the Committee of Co-Sponsors of UNAIDS (July 2005-June 2006). The present Chair is the World Food Programme. On a regional level, the ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean works closely with CARICOM through the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP) and the Caribbean Tripartite Council.

## What's inside:

- Human Rights Desks for PLHIV
- Addressing Stigma and Discrimination through communication strategies
- Regional News Snippets
- Barbados and Jamaica to develop sustainability plans for HIV/AIDS workplace response
- HIV/AIDS and behaviour change communication
- Upcoming events

## Suriname receives OPEC funding for HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme

Suriname is the only Caribbean country of twelve countries globally that will benefit from funding from the Development Fund of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) for HIV/AIDS workplace education programmes. The project will be implemented by the International Labour Organization and the Ministry of Labour, Technological Development and Environment over a two-year period. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 6 December 2006 by Dr. Ana Teresa Romero, Director, ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean and the Honourable Drs. Joyce Amarello-Williams, Minister of Labour,

Technological Development and Environment of Suriname to officially launch the project.

The main objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Labour, employers' and workers' organizations, and selected enterprises to develop and implement workplace policies and programmes to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on the world of work.

Prior to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding there were three intensive days of discussions with the key stakeholders in Suriname so as to determine the priorities for the project.

## UNAIDS teams up with ICC Cricket World Cup 2007

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has teamed up with UNAIDS, UNICEF and the Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS for Cricket World Cup (CWC) 2007 to raise awareness about the impact of AIDS on children. As part of the international partnership and national efforts in support of the Global Campaign, *Unite for Children, Unite Against AIDS*, renowned cricketers from all participating teams for CWC 2007 are currently visiting various sites to help raise awareness of the issue of HIV/AIDS and its impact on children. In Trinidad and Tobago, Sachin Tendulkar, India's star batsman visited the Gonzales Community where children and young people are at risk from gangs, crime, drugs and HIV. While there, Tendulkar interacted with young people, shared experiences and participated in a friendly windball cricket match. UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, brings together the efforts and resources of ten UN system organizations, including the International Labour Organization, to the global AIDS response.



Sachin Tendulkar, India's star batsman with young people of the Gonzales community in Trinidad and Tobago.



## Tackling HIV/AIDS Stigma and Discrimination head on: PLHIV to have access to Human Rights Desk

Human Rights Desks that will receive and respond to human rights violations against people living with HIV (PLHIV) are at various stages of being established in Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Guyana, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. This is an initiative of the Caribbean Regional Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (CRN+) and the Caribbean Coalition of National AIDS Programme Coordinators (CCNAPC) and will support efforts being made to reduce the high incidence of stigma and discrimination, which remains as one of the root causes for the region's increasingly high HIV prevalence.

The desks will serve as mechanisms for seeking redress for PLHIV when their human rights are violated and will provide much-needed information to PLHIV and the public about their basic human rights. It will also serve as an advocacy tool for promoting legal changes which protect the rights of PLHIV.

In 2005 CRN+ received a grant from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) for the implementation of several activities which aim to strengthen the regional community of people living with HIV (PLHIV); both those infected and affected. CCNAPC is a sub recipient of this grant and one of its responsibilities is to establish a specialized system to receive and respond to human rights violations

against PLHIV in eleven Caribbean countries.

To date, guidelines have been developed by a legal human rights expert and translated into French and Spanish. These guidelines define the process and protocol when documenting complaints and seeking compensation with the relevant agencies, organizations or ministries. In ten of the eleven countries, a Human Rights Advocate has been selected to operate the desk and training has

begun in each country by a local human rights lawyer. Further to this training, the University of the West Indies will be conducting a Law, Ethics and Human Rights workshop for these selected human rights advocates along with human rights lawyers and representatives from the National AIDS Responses in these selected countries.

*(Submitted by Liselle Labarrie, Programme Associate for the Human Rights Desk, CCNAPC)*

### Addressing HIV/AIDS Stigma and Discrimination through communication strategies

Because of its association with behaviours that may be considered socially unacceptable by many people, HIV infection is widely stigmatized. People living with the virus are frequently subject to discrimination and human rights abuses: many have been thrown out of homes, rejected by family and friends. In the workplace, it is manifested by discriminatory practices such as pre-employment screening, denial of employment to individuals who test positive, termination of employment of PLHIV and stigmatization of PLHIV who are open about their serostatus.

Together, stigma and discrimination constitute one of the greatest barriers to preventing further infections, providing adequate care, support and treatment and alleviating impact. They also deter individuals from finding out about their HIV status. They are triggered by many forces, including lack of understanding



CARICOM's PANCAP campaign



of the disease, myths about how HIV is transmitted, prejudice, lack of treatment, the fact that AIDS is incurable, social fears about sexuality, fears relating to

illness and death and fears about illicit drugs and injecting drug use. In the Caribbean efforts aimed at raising awareness of HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination are being undertaken at both the national and regional levels.



The Caribbean Epidemiology Centre and PAHO/WHO has recently developed an Ouch! Communication campaign for press, radio and television. The campaign, having identified with the pain that stigma and discrimination inflicts, seeks a change from the cruelty of rejection to a greater sense of acceptance and tolerance.

For further information please visit: <http://www.carec.org/ouch2006.html>

### Jamaican Senate fights against discrimination on AIDS at the workplace

On 26 January 2007, the Senate of Jamaica approved a motion that calls on the Government to change the labour laws to protect workers living with HIV. The motion recognized that screening as a prerequisite for employment is widespread, but that it constitutes a violation of the fundamental principles and rights of workers, and of the Conventions of the ILO which Jamaica has ratified.

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/trav/aids/index.htm>

## Regional News Snippets

### **OECS Ministers of Education agree to Roseau Declaration on the Education Sector's Response to HIV & AIDS**

Seven Ministers of Education from the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) adopted the Roseau Declaration on the Education Sector's Response to HIV & AIDS in Dominica on 27 January 2007, signalling their commitment to establish comprehensive policies defining their Ministries' response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic; implement HIV/AIDS workplace policies, taking into consideration the recommendations in the *ILO/UNESCO HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy for the Education Sector in the Caribbean*; and ensure access for all HIV infected and affected children in the OECS to educational opportunities and healthcare.

The Ministers, accompanied by their HIV/AIDS Coordinators, were participating in an HIV/AIDS advocacy and leadership retreat for Ministers of Education of the OECS, jointly hosted by the Education Development Center (EDC) and the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Caribbean Office. ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean also participated in the retreat.

### **ILO partners with National Barbering Association**

The ILO HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme in Trinidad and Tobago has partnered with the National Barbering Association of Trinidad and Tobago (NBATT) to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS among its 160 members. A series of five workshops are being held from March to May throughout Trinidad and Tobago. In addition to HIV/AIDS awareness, NBATT's membership are also being exposed to business training, thanks to the support being provided by the Employers' Activities Bureau of the ILO with assistance from the Employers' Consultative Association of Trinidad and Tobago.

### **Private Sector Organization in Grenada step up Workplace Response**

The Grenada Private Sector Organization in collaboration with the National AIDS Directorate (NAD) held a Breakfast Seminar on the organization's response to HIV/AIDS at the Grenada Grand Beach Resort on 24 January 2007. The objective of the meeting was to sensitize the private sector/business community on current HIV/AIDS issues and on the need to develop a comprehensive strategy for



Donald James, President, National Barbering Association of Trinidad and Tobago conducts a demonstration at one of its workshops.

private sector involvement in the national response to HIV/AIDS.

A large number of enterprises were represented at the Seminar as were too the Grenada Employers' Federation (GEF), the Grenada Chamber of Commerce (GCIC) and the Grenada Trade Union Congress (GTUC). The ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean also participated in the Seminar at the invitation of the Director of NAD, Ms. Caroline Alexis-Thomas. A commitment was made by the business community to continue the dialogue with stakeholders so as to crystallize a world of work response to the epidemic.

### **ILO/USDOL HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme in Guyana receives additional financial support**



Sean Wilson, National Project Coordinator (left) and Mr. Nick Jackson, CEO, Guyana Sugar Corporation Inc. (GuySuCo) signs the Memorandum of Understanding between the ILO USDOL HIV/AIDS Workplace Programme and GuySuCo on 12 December 2006 signalling their collaboration for HIV/AIDS interventions at the workplace.

ILO's HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme in Guyana, funded by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) since 2003, has received a significant injection of funds from the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). This funding would enable the continuation of the good work of the project for at least one more year. The Guyana programme, managed by Mr. Sean Wilson, has so far resulted in the development of workplace policies in 19 enterprises. Additionally, 27,157 workers have benefited directly from this programme.

### **Guyana launches Ministerial Committee on HIV/AIDS**

The Ministry of Labour in Guyana launched a Ministerial Committee on HIV/AIDS on 30 January 2007. The Honourable Manzoor Nadir, Minister of Labour explained that the Committee would educate employees about HIV and the support programmes available to help them to cope with it in the workplace. The Committee will focus on Occupational Safety and Health and will work with employers, employees, union members and representatives from all organizations in the public and private sectors in this endeavour.

## Barbados and Jamaica to develop sustainability plans for HIV/AIDS workplace response

A critical element of all ILO/USDOL workplace education programmes is the development of a sustainability plan that would ensure the smooth transition from project to national ownership and implementation of a workplace response to HIV/AIDS. This sustainability plan is developed by the tripartite constituents and other key stakeholders at the national levels. Of the five ILO/USDOL project countries in the Caribbean, Belize – whose project ended in December 2006 - has developed a plan, Guyana has made significant progress with its plan while Barbados held a successful workshop for the development of a sustainability plan in January, 2007. Jamaica's March 2007 tripartite workshop will also lead to the development of a national sustainability plan. Sustainability plans for Jamaica and Barbados will be in

place well before the December 2007 end dates for both projects. The newest project country in this subregion, Trinidad and Tobago, is paying close attention to the experiences of the other projects so as to ensure even greater success with its own sustainability plan, to be developed early in 2008.

## Web Resources

[www.hivaid sbarbados.com](http://www.hivaid sbarbados.com)

Barbados National AIDS Commission

[www.belizenac.bz](http://www.belizenac.bz)

Belize National AIDS Commission

[www.hiv.gov.gy](http://www.hiv.gov.gy)

Guyana National HIV/AIDS Programme

[www.nacjamaica.com](http://www.nacjamaica.com)

Jamaica National AIDS Committee

[www.nacctt.com](http://www.nacctt.com)

Trinidad and Tobago National AIDS Co-ordinating Committee

## HIV/AIDS and behaviour change communication

Behaviour change communication (BCC) is an interactive process for developing messages and approaches using a mix of communication channels in order to encourage and sustain positive and appropriate behaviours. In the context of HIV and the workplace, BCC is an essential part of a comprehensive programme that includes services (e.g. care and counselling), commodities (e.g. condoms, drugs) and policies that promote non-discrimination and trust. In Trinidad and Tobago, the ILO HIV/AIDS Education Programme recently held a Behaviour Change Communication

workshop for representatives of workers' and employers' organizations, HIV/AIDS Focal Points of the various government ministries, as well as representatives from the non-governmental



organization which supports PLHIV. Workshop facilitator was Ms. Maisha Emtage, (standing) who was trained by the ILO on the ILO/Family Health International Behaviour Change Communication Toolkit at a BCC training of trainers workshop held in Guyana in 2005. She has also conducted similar workshops in Barbados.

## Upcoming Events

### 28-29 May 2007

Training workshop on HIV/AIDS and rights at work, jointly hosted by ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean and the National AIDS Coordinating Committee (NACC), Trinidad and Tobago

### 7 June 2007

2<sup>nd</sup> Pan Caribbean Business Coalition Forum on HIV/AIDS, Hilton Hotel and Conference Centre, Trinidad and Tobago, organized by the Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce (CAIC)

### 12-14 June 2007

Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) Workshop in Jamaica, hosted by the International Planned Parenthood Federation/Western Hemisphere Region (IPPF/WHR)

## ILO Governing Body considers HIV/AIDS for ILO's 2009 conference

The Governing Body (GB) of the ILO at its 298th session in Geneva on 8-30 March 2007, will consider two options for the placement of HIV/AIDS on the agenda of the 2009 International Labour Conference. The two options are for HIV/AIDS to be considered as an item

for general discussion or for standard-setting.

The Governing Body is the executive body of the International Labour Office (the Office is the secretariat of the Organization).

Photos courtesy UNAIDS, Luesette Howell, Sean Wilson, Roma Wong Sang

### We'd like to hear from you . . .

This newsletter is an opportunity to learn and share information related to HIV/AIDS in the workplace and the work of the ILO/USDOL HIV/AIDS Projects. We invite you to share news and other articles of interest and would welcome your feedback.

Produced by the ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean, P.O. Box 1201, 6 Stanmore Avenue, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Tels. (868) 623-7704/7178 Fax (868) 627-8978 Email: [mazellie@ilocarib.org.tt](mailto:mazellie@ilocarib.org.tt) Website: [www.ilocarib.org.tt](http://www.ilocarib.org.tt)

