



# Workplace Response to HIV/AIDS

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

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

The ILO is the 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 181 countries. The ILO has 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:

- Innovative workplace responses to HIV/AIDS
- Regional News Snippets
- CARICOM Head of Social Security discuss HIV and AIDS in the workplace
- Resources

## Caribbean Congress of Labour to be newest partner of the Pan Caribbean Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS

The second Pan Caribbean Business Coalition Forum on HIV/AIDS welcomed the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) as its newest partner in the efforts of the private sector to reduce the prevalence and incidence of HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean. This partnership will be formalized by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding.

The Forum, like the first held in 2005, was hosted by the Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce (CAIC) and was held at the Trinidad Hilton on 7 June 2007. Sir George Alleyne served as the distinguished Chair of both Forums.

Partners represented on the Steering Committee of the Coalition include the Caribbean Employers' Confederation (CEC), the Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP) of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Caribbean Coalition of National AIDS Programme Coordinators (CCNAPC), the Caribbean Regional Network of HIV positive persons (CRN+) and a national Business Coalition against HIV/AIDS (on

a rotational basis). Secretariat support is provided by the CAIC while the United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) provide technical support to the Coalition in the implementation of its medium-term plan.



Attentive participants at the Pan Caribbean Business Coalition Forum in Trinidad and Tobago: Sir George Alleyne, Chair of the Pan Caribbean Business Coalition Forum, along with Madhuri Supersad, (left) Technical Specialist, HIV/AIDS and the World of Work, ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean, and Carol Ann Senah, (right) National Project Coordinator, ILO/USDOL HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme, Trinidad and Tobago.

Eighty regional and international private sector champions for a business response to HIV/AIDS participated in the second Forum. The successes and challenges in implementing a business response were heard from the Guyana Business Coalition, the Belize Chamber of Commerce, the AIDS Foundation of Barbados and the Debswana Diamond Company of Botswana.

### ILO Standard on HIV and AIDS to be developed by 2010

At its March 2007 meeting, the Governing Body (GB) of the ILO agreed to place the issue of HIV and AIDS and the world of work on the Agenda of the June 2009 International Labour Conference (ILC). It is intended that the discussion will lead to the development of an autonomous Recommendation on HIV and AIDS in the world of work by 2010.



# Innovative workplace responses to HIV/AIDS

## Barbados

**Purity Bakeries** of Barbados launched their HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2007. Ms. Judy Branch, the company's Focal Point for HIV/AIDS explained the rationale for their response: "Given the continuing high rate of HIV/AIDS infection, especially among the 20 – 54 age group, we recognized the



Judy Branch, HIV/AIDS Focal Point at Purity Bakeries

impact this had on the workforce and felt it our duty to act. The Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) Programme sponsored by the ILO, the USDOL and the Social Partners of Barbados provided us with

the opportunity to respond and we readily embraced it."

Using the evidence-based ILO BCC strategy for the workplace, Purity Bakeries has developed customized

approaches for providing HIV/AIDS information and messages aimed at reducing both personal risk behaviour and stigma and discrimination against people living with or affected by HIV and AIDS. To complement and sustain its efforts, the company has trained 6 peer educators, representing the various levels of staff, who have developed programmes using novel approaches that will be appealing to their peers.

The launch also highlighted the many activities planned to convey the appropriate messages towards effecting attitudinal and behavioural change in workers in that company; these excellent initiatives include both present and projected activities such as:

- An HIV/AIDS booth at their health fair in June;
- A series of "DID YOU KNOW" mini-articles in their quarterly newsletter "Slice of Life;"
- An in-house produced comic book on HIV/AIDS with already identified



National Project Co-ordinator Arlene Husbands presents Peer Educator Robert Hambin with his peer educator's toolkit

characters namely: "FACTOID" and "MYTHOID" who were conceptualized and drawn by an employee;

- A designated HIV/AIDS Notice Board with a display area laden with relevant literature and information for staff, as well as free condoms; and
- A series of HIV/AIDS-related messages to be broadcast at intervals, on a daily basis, over the intercom and to be preceded by the Bee-Gees hit "Staying Alive."

## Jamaica

The ILO HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme in Jamaica, under the guidance of Ms. Nasolo Jacobs, National Project Co-ordinator, has worked with over 20 enterprises in the agriculture, financial, manufacturing, utilities and mining sectors since its launch in October 2004. To date, there are 16 enterprises actively participating in the project, 14 of which have written an HIV/AIDS workplace policy. Two of the participating enterprises from the financial sector that have been at the forefront of workplace action against HIV/AIDS are The Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago and The National Commercial Bank:

■ The **Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago (RBTT)** has demonstrated commitment by conducting sensitization sessions with staff at 10 of its 21 branches with plans for an additional 5 branches to be sensitized shortly. RBTT has also utilized its

marketing department to design and reproduce communication materials including flyers and posters for distribution to staff islandwide. They have also developed payslip inserts that highlight one key principle of the ILO Code of Practice monthly.

■ The **National Commercial Bank (NCB)** has also demonstrated great commitment to the HIV/AIDS workplace response by training eight key staff members as HIV/AIDS

resource persons. They have subsequently sensitized 98% of their 2000 staff members. In addition, NCB has extensively utilized the company's

intranet system to disseminate eBooks on HIV/AIDS, their HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy, and other behaviour change communication materials. They have also integrated an HIV/AIDS model into the orientation training for new staff.

**Photo below:** Representatives of NCB, Appleton Estates and Red Stripe at the Peer Education Training for Trainers in Jamaica last year, participating in the condom reliability exercise.



## Regional News



Participants deliberate at IPPF meeting

### IPPF promotes HIV/AIDS workplace policies for its Caribbean member associations

The ILO was invited to speak on the issue of developing and implementing an HIV/AIDS workplace policy to member associations of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Western Hemisphere Region (IPPF/WHR) at their Caribbean HIV/STI Workshop held in Kingston, Jamaica, 12-14 June, 2007. The member associations are the Caribbean Family Planning

Association and the associations of Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. Both Belize Family Life Association and the Jamaica Family

Planning Association have HIV/AIDS workplace policies. Other member associations expressed keen interest in developing their own workplace policies. The IPPF has an umbrella HIV/AIDS workplace policy. One of the main objectives of the Jamaica workshop was to further the integration of HIV prevention into sexual and reproductive health services among WHR Caribbean affiliates.

### An HIV/AIDS workplace policy for the Grenada Trades Union Council

The Grenada Trades Union Council (GTUC) is working toward the

finalization of its HIV/AIDS workplace policy which was drafted during a workshop held 12 – 15 June 2007. In the draft policy, commitment is made to the ten key principles for a workplace response as contained in the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work. The policy development workshop was coordinated and facilitated by Ms. Paula Robinson, the Workers' Specialist at the ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean.

### Peer Educator's ToolKit launched in Barbados

The ILO/USDOL HIV/AIDS Programme in Barbados officially launched its Peer Educator's Toolkit on April 16, 2007. It was designed for the trained Peer Educators involved in the pilot Workplace Education Programmes across three sectors (tourism, manufacturing, banking and finance). This toolkit comprises the Peer Educator's manual, the Peer Educator's Flipchart, a peer educator T-shirt and cap and a condom demonstration model, all contained in a black brief-case.

## NACC and ILO scale up workplace response to HIV/AIDS in Trinidad and Tobago

The National AIDS Co-ordinating Committee (NACC) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), Subregional Office for the Caribbean teamed up to host a training workshop on HIV/AIDS and Rights at Work in May 2007 at the Courtyard by Marriott Hotel, Port of Spain.

The workshop aimed to strengthen participants' capacity to effectively implement an HIV/AIDS workplace response within their organizations. Participants included HIV Coordinators in the Public Service, HIV/AIDS focal points in selected enterprises, representatives from Tobago HIV/AIDS Coordinating Committee and the Division of Labour of the Tobago House of Assembly, as well as representatives from employers' and workers' organizations, and organizations of People Living with HIV (PLHIV).

The NACC has been partnering with organizations in a range of sectors to ensure that the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan is implemented. It has recruited eight full-time HIV Coordinators

in the government ministries including: Tourism, Labour, Health, Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs, Local Government, Sport and Youth Affairs, and Education. NACC provided the funding for this workshop



Dr. Amery Browne, Technical Director, NACC has the attention of the ladies. Left to right are Madhuri Supersad, Technical Specialist on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work, ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean; Angela Lee Loy, Chairperson, NACC; Carol-Ann Senah, National Project Coordinator, Trinidad and Tobago ILO HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Programme; and Mary Read, Deputy Director, ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean.

as they recognized it as an opportunity to scale up a workplace response to HIV. Statistics reveal that 70% of new HIV infections occur in the 15-49 age group, which represents a large portion of the workforce.



## Resources



### Keeping Score Aids Responses in the Caribbean

Keeping score is a detailed, consolidated analysis prepared by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) of the 15 national reports which were submitted from the Caribbean region for a global review, 2006. Key issues in the implementation and monitoring of national AIDS responses, as highlighted in the Caribbean United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) reports, are reviewed and assessed. The contribution of the Caribbean delegation to the second United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS held in New York, 31 May - 02 June 2006, is also summarized.

## CARICOM Heads of Social Security discuss HIV and AIDS in the workplace

Social security organizations of CARICOM are expected to be more involved in the issues of HIV and AIDS and the workplace following the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Heads of these agencies, held in June 2007 in St.

Vincent and the Grenadines. While some members expressed concern on the extent of their organizations' inclusion in the national response, others had been quite involved at the national level and some even had their

own HIV/AIDS workplace policies. The ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean and the Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP) were invited to present to the meeting their initiatives on HIV/AIDS and the world of work in the region. The ILO representative pointed out that social security agencies had a valuable contribution to make to the national response in terms of protection for persons living with HIV and also with respect to the unique and relevant data that was generated in the normal course of their operations. She urged participants to partner with other agencies to improve the applicability of the data to understanding the impact of HIV and AIDS and to become more involved in their national response. Mr. Gilles Binet, an ILO expert in social security addressed the meeting on the matter of employment injury insurance.



### NUGFW advocates for HIV/AIDS workplace policies in Labour Day message

*In her Labour Day message at the June 19 Labour Day Celebration held in Fyzabad,*

*Trinidad and Tobago, Jane Simon, First Deputy General Secretary, National Union of Government and Federated Workers, Trinidad and Tobago, made a special plea for the development of workplace policies on HIV/AIDS. "An integral part of the Decent Work Agenda is the health and care of workers, all workers," she said.*

*"Within the last couple decades, HIV/AIDS has been having devastating effects on our society, which directly has deep and serious consequences on our workforce....we need to try and find a solution," she reiterated. Ms. Simon also called for a health sector that can respond efficiently in the care, treatment and support of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. Jane Simon is a member of the Project Advisory Board of the National ILO/USDOL HIV/AIDS Workplace Programme.*



## ILO Caribbean Office hosts Association of Caribbean Social Work Educators

The ILO hosted an enthusiastic group of social work educators at its Port of Spain Office on 28 June 2007. The group which included persons from Martinique, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) and Jamaica, was interested in learning about new solutions being explored for HIV infected persons in the workplace, especially with respect to stigma, discrimination and support. In addition

to a briefing on ILO's work on HIV/AIDS, the group heard from the National AIDS Coordinating Committee in Trinidad and Tobago and from the Officer for the HIV/AIDS Human Rights Desk in T&T. The group was part of about 200 delegates who were in Trinidad and Tobago for the 8<sup>th</sup> biennial conference of the Association of Caribbean Social Work Educators.

Photos courtesy CAIC, Jamaica and Barbados ILO/USDOL HIV/AIDS Projects, IPPF, Averlon Toussaint, NUGFW

### 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.*

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