

Report: SOLVE Policy Course

Annecy 13-17th January 2003
IUT, Université de Savoie

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Background

Drugs and alcohol, violence, stress, tobacco and HIV/AIDS are major threats to the survival of modern enterprises. For the worker, these psychosocial problems may result in stigmatization, isolation, illness, injury or even death. For the enterprise, these issues may result in disruption, a negative image, low morale, absenteeism, turnover, occupational accidents, burnout and compensation. For the enterprise, these problems impact on productivity, increase costs and negatively affect the overall capacity of an enterprise to be competitive. These problems impact on all countries, all sectors and all categories of workers. Any one of the above-mentioned psychosocial problems may be a causal factor for the others may be an end result or find its roots among them. The traditional response normally ignores this cause and effect type of interrelationship. The response is often of an occasional and palliative nature, is rarely properly coordinated and usually quite costly.

In most countries there is limited expertise and limited resources available to deal with these problems. Additionally, when more than one of these issues is present, they have a compounding effect, feeding on each other. Enterprises and organizations need to have a comprehensive policy in being able to deal with these issues along with strategies and solutions.

The ILO has developed the SOLVE programme, which is designed to allow an organization or an enterprise to integrate psychosocial issues (drugs and alcohol, tobacco, stress, violence and HIV/AIDS) into overall corporate policy and establish a framework for preventative action. (For further information on SOLVE please visit the SafeWork home page at www.ilo.org/safework/solve).

SOLVE offers an integrated workplace response to the above-mentioned psychosocial problems. It also introduces an innovative approach whereby workers' health, safety and well being become integral parts of the economic sustainability and organizational development of enterprises.

The SOLVE methodology consists of educational interventions at five levels. The "flagship" intervention is the Five-Day Policy Course. By addressing psychosocial issues at policy level in an interactive, participatory way it enables an enterprise to create the framework to deal with

psychosocial issues in an effective way on other levels i.e. on the personal or inter-individual levels. The course in Annecy in January 2003 was one of these “flagship” courses. It was attended by members of its primary target audience i.e. representatives of both employers and workers from enterprises and unions, but also by a number of practitioners in the field of occupational safety and health promotion from governmental and non-governmental organisations. Thus the course served the dual purpose of educating those working in an enterprise environment but also of initiating health promotion professionals to SOLVE who may be able to function as multipliers for the programme at the national level in their own countries.

Day 1

Dr. David Gold presented the SOLVE methodology, after having dealt with administrative matters and pre-course tests and evaluation procedures. The presentation of the SOLVE methodology includes evidence of the extent of psychosocial problems and the interrelationships between them. It advocates strong workplace policies to address these issues and SOLVE as a tool to enable workplaces to achieve this goal.

The morning was rounded off by presentations by the Director of SafeWork (ILO), Dr. Jukka Takala and by Dr. Gilles Heidsieck, Director of the Institut Universitaire de Technologie d’Annecy, the host for the course. Dr. Takala stressed that psychosocial problems are not “soft” issues, but a major cause of occupational mortality. The ILO estimates that a large percentage of occupational deaths in developing countries can be attributed to psychosocial factors, and perhaps even more in industrialised countries. Dr. Heidsieck presented the collaboration between the university and the ILO as a “model partnership” combining research and international activities. He stressed the need for a more integration, as exemplified by the course with its interdisciplinary and international approach. This session was attended by the local press.

After lunch Dr. David Gold presented the first module of the course entitled “Managing psychosocial problems at work”. After presenting various models taken from both health and hazard management theories the participants broke into four heterogeneous groups of around eight to produce their own model of how to manage psychosocial problems at work. The presentations back to the entire group of the models developed demonstrated the participants’ high levels of motivation, intelligence, experience and creativity.

The final exercise of the day was a simulation and policy exercise. In groups the participants were asked to assume management level roles in a fictional enterprise and then apply the theory they had modeled to a problem within the enterprise. They were also provided with a rudimentary company policy on occupational health and safety and asked to incorporate three key issues related to the management of psychosocial problems into it.

Day 2

The module on stress, taught by Professor Alberto Zucconi began with video clip from the Charlie Chaplin film “Modern Times” showing stress in a factory worker. This was used to trigger reflection in the group on definition of stress and types of stress. In a presentation the Karasek control and demand model of stress was introduced and then discussed. The participants were asked to place themselves and Charlie Chaplin on the model to apply the knowledge gained. After lunch the simulation exercise was continued. In the same four groups the participants again role-played a problem-solving exercise in their company based on difficulties in the company

related to stress and business developments. The policy statement was also further worked on to incorporate management concepts essential to the management of stress in the workplace. The day finished with a change of subject to the topic of drugs and alcohol. The module began with group work, based on a non-causal description of evidence of drug use in and around an enterprise and productivity losses in the company. Having provoked thought about the potential effects of alcohol and drug use in a corporate setting, we broke for the evening.

Day 3

The day began with a presentation by Ms. Marcella de Luca, clarifying the relationship between drug and alcohol use and the enterprise in terms of employee health, productivity and costs. The importance of prevention was also stressed, before the simulation exercise was continued. The companies further development was followed and the participants as the board of directors had to resolve issues related to drug and alcohol use in the company. They also further developed the policy statement.

Just before lunch the module on violence at work began. Mr. Vittorio di Martino initiated the session with the whole group working through the relationships between all five psychosocial factors dealt with in SOLVE. After group work on definitions and causes of violence (including psychological violence) there was a technical presentation on violence at work, covering risk factors and consequence of violence for the individual and the enterprise. It was also stressed that pro-active preventive actions are more effective and cost-effective than treatment after the event. In the simulation exercise the participants again convened as the board of directors to make decisions on how to deal with incidents of violence in the enterprise and to expand the policy statement.

Day 4

Ms. Jennifer Grollman began the HIV/AIDS module with small group discussions of a case study of a small enterprise affected by HIV/AIDS. Having made the participants more aware of the dilemmas which may be caused by incidences of HIV/AIDS and having created opportunities for discussion, she presented and distributed the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS in the workplace. In a further case study the participants were able to exercise how the rights-based approach of the Code of Practice can be applied. The simulation exercise was an opportunity to look in more depth at how to use the Code in the workplace to make corporate decisions on issues related to HIV/AIDS. The further development of the policy statement helped to focus management thinking on HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

The module on tobacco was presented by Ms. Carin Håkansta. The initial group exercise on the advantages and disadvantages of smoking gave some participants the opportunity to play devil's advocate, but got everybody thinking about tobacco-related issues. The subsequent Powerpoint presentation supplemented general knowledge on the dangers of tobacco smoking with information on additional workplace related concerns and covered the interrelationships between tobacco and other psychosocial factors. The final simulation exercise involved making board-room decisions on dealing with smoking issues and extending the policy statement to include three major concepts which enable organisations and enterprises to manage psychosocial issues like tobacco in the workplace.

Day 5

The final hours of the course were given over to wrap-up activities. First the participants reconvened in their management groups to prepare a brief presentation of their policy statement which they had developed during the course and a report on their experience during the role-playing exercises. The policy statements differed in their presentation, conceptualisation and level of reflection, but the fundamental components were similar. The policy statements are attached as an appendix to this report.

The next session was presented by Dr. Mehmet Ali Sariboyaci, a participant in the course who is an occupational physician attending on behalf of the Turkish Employers' Association. His presentation allowed the group to move from fictional scenarios to a real-life example of psychosocial issues affecting an organisation. Dr. Sariboyaci presented the situation in his company, including the results of surveys canvassing worker opinions, and asked the participants to again break into their groups to propose solutions to the real problems at hand. There then followed a lively discussion between Dr. Sariboyaci and the group on the proposed solutions and what had in fact been undertaken in his enterprise and the outcomes.

Before the participants left, two more important jobs were to be done. The participants drafted personal action plans and timetables of what they intend to change in their own work environment following their participation in the course. The organisers took copies of the plans and will contact all the participants in three months time to ascertain how much of their personal action plan they have been able to implement. Finally the participants filled in evaluation forms explaining briefly what they liked and disliked about the course and making constructive suggestions for improvements. These comments will play an important part in the SOLVE team's work on improving the programme and tailoring it further to constituents' needs.

Summary

In a very busy and constructive week, the SOLVE team succeeded in delivering the policy course to a group of 32 professionals working in the area of occupational safety and health from a variety of backgrounds and countries. The participants learned the SOLVE methodology and gained expertise in areas they were unfamiliar with. They participated in interactive teaching and learning methods and took an active role in developing policy-making skills based on knowledge provided in the course. In this way the course objective was reached.

In addition many of the participants were health promotion professionals working in governmental and non-governmental organisations. Interest in and backing for the SOLVE programme was generated amongst a number of these professionals. With due support from the ILO they may be able to create a sustainable means of delivery for SOLVE in their national or regional contexts.

Finally, the relaxed and friendly but hard-working atmosphere created by the SOLVE team was appreciated by all participants. Intercultural communication and exchange of expertise between professionals from different occupational and cultural backgrounds was a significant spin-off for many of the participants and for the SOLVE team.

Respectfully submitted,
Joannah Caborn

Appendix

Participants' Policy Statements

Health, Safety and Well-being Policy Statement of TLC Inc.

TLC Inc. will integrate the management of health, safety and well-being at work into our activities to optimise them. It is committed to conducting its activities in a transparent, honest and open environment respecting human rights. It is our policy to continuously maintain and improve on a high level of productivity and quality while assessing and managing the risks involved in a dynamic way. Health, safety and well being considerations will be incorporated into all phases of business including product design and development, facility design, operations, maintenance and product delivery.

The health, safety and well being of all employees is a priority to TLC and we value worker contribution and participation in this process.

The TLC is concerned about all employees and will encourage health promotion initiatives. In this regard we prohibit the use of intoxicating substances. To support this we provide information and assistance to employees.

The TLC recognises that health conditions and illness should be treated in a non-discriminatory way. Each employee deserves the right to privacy and confidentiality with regard to their health status.

We will provide continuously all the necessary information and training for all employees. The process of recruitment will reflect the health safety and well-being concerns of our company.

Senior management and workers' representatives promote and support this policy but the health, safety and well-being at TLC is everybody's business.

This policy also applies to contract workers, clients and visitors.

**"Norma Engineering"
France Ltd.**

Policy statement on psycho-social factors at work

Mission statements:

- To deliver high quality products.
- To maximise company profits.
- To keep sustainability and maintain competitiveness in the market.
- We are an equal opportunity employer.

Philosophy/core values:

- Create a positive working environment by recognising the value of the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the staff.
- All workers are important. We demonstrate this by a commitment to their health and short, medium and long-term welfare.
- We acknowledge our responsibilities to the local community and wish to promote its well-being.
- We demonstrate a commitment to health and safety of all employees.

Objectives:

- To provide a safe and healthy working environment.
- Quality products developed by healthy and happy employees.
- Information, education and training for all staff.
- Equal opportunities for all.
- Promotion of a healthy lifestyle (including involvement of families and local community).

Responsibilities:

- Each section including managers, HRD, workers, staff representatives, occupational health, health and safety committee, and outside professional consultants will prioritise their own roles and responsibilities in support of this policy.
- All staff have a key responsibility for implementation of the policy.

Tasks:

- On-going monitoring (survey and other forms of input), risk assessment, and evaluation.
- Information, education, and training for all levels.
- Invest in recruiting all levels of employees locally whenever possible.
- Policy developed in cooperation with workers' representative organisations (trade unions).

- We are committed to regularly communicating (transparency) within and between all levels of the company.
- Develop internal structures and processes, which support the policy.
- Managers should adapt the work processes to the current production and staff situation for the following reasons: production to be kept up to reach the production aims and adaptation of the workload to the capabilities of the individual workers.
- To ensure that all sub-contractors have health and safety policies which are commensurate to our own OSH policies.
- Enhancing team work through:
 - * appropriate training;
 - * open channels of communication (top down; bottom - up);
 - * participation in decision-making;
 - * commitment to organisational development

Health promotion:

We envisage the health of the worker on a spectrum from prevention to treatment to rehabilitation, emphasising the key importance of preventive measures with equal opportunities for treatment and rehabilitation for each worker in need. In protecting valuable knowledge, skills and attributes, our workforce contributes in delivering our business objectives. We aim to remove substance misuse from the workplace and not necessarily the individual from the workplace.

Health and Safety:

Each employee has a right to receive the most adequate information on different types of psycho-social risks and their consequences as well as adequate treatment and assistance. We will protect the right to individual and medical confidentiality and follow our national ethical code.

ACME-SOLVE MACHINERY

Health and Safety at Work Policy Statement

The company recognizes that the management of health and safety matters at work is integral to the success and prosperity of its business activities. It is committed to conducting its activities in a transparent, honest and open environment respecting human rights. The company will comply with all applicable laws, regulations, codes of practice and directives.

It is the policy of this company to ensure at every level of management that the safety, health and well being of workers, clients and visitors is assured. It is also the policy of this company to maintain a high level of productivity and quality in such a way that work will not constitute a risk to workers. Senior management supports this policy unequivocally and undertakes to manage resource allocation accordingly. The following principles guide the company in forming its strategies to this end:

- Workers are this company's most important resource. We will foster a safe and healthy environment for all employees, contract workers, clients and visitors.
- Health and safety considerations will be incorporated into all phases of business, including product design and development, facility design, operation, maintenance and product delivery.
- We will regularly assess, implement and verify compliance with health and safety measures.
- This policy will be reviewed at regular intervals to guarantee continuous improvement of health and safety.
- Adequate training and education will be provided to increase health and safety awareness and knowledge about worker well-being.
- Reasonable attention will be paid to create a work environment that will take psychosocial aspects into account.
- Active employee participation will be promoted in the development process of OSH policies and programmes to encourage an integral team approach in order to optimise work organisation.
- A proactive Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) will be established to support employees and their families on all psychosocial issues. It will cover referral to treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration services, information and counseling.
- We will introduce a psychosocial risk management strategy including formal risk assessment at the workplace, including a corrective action plan.
- The company is an equal opportunities employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex or gender.
- The company subscribes to the ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS in the World of Work with particular emphasis on health promotion, ethical considerations and confidentiality.

IRON RAINBOW TRACTOR, INC.

- Learning-based enterprise
 - open discussion
 - integration of experience.

- Structural transformation:
 - * quality circles,
 - * worker peer health education (Progetto Euridice).

- Network of enterprises:
 - win-win approach
 - cooperation of public and private institutions:
 - * investment,
 - * education,
 - * family participation.

- Improve communication and cooperation within the company

- Promote participation of workers and families

- strategic programmes for health promotion

- Integrated and balanced approach.

IRON RAINBOW TRACTOR, INC.: HEALTH FOR ALL

Approach:

Institution + Ecological

Find Problem:

Needs assessment, questionnaires/surveys = information research

Key: Trust and confidentiality (i.e. HIV/AIDS):

- Stress
- Tobacco
- Alcohol and Drugs
- Violence

Key: Find out to what level we need to inform:

- Change Misconceptions
- False Perceptions
- Prejudgements

Synergy Plan:

Link: People who are informed = provoked to mobilise

Synergy: “Management-worker” - Forum for dialogue

↓ + ↓

Procedure: Refer to operational model (Day 1, Monday, Page 2)

Learn/Train Dev: Investment and skills » learning
Continuous

Stress: Control, Demand / ↓ Demand = ↓ Stress

Quality circles = team based \Rightarrow deconstructs hierarchy

Social support \Rightarrow Synergy forum

Alcohol and Drugs: Refer to Day 3 - Conceptual programme to evaluate

Key: Family involvement (e.g. canteen, child care etc., fitness centre)

Links: More family and social cohesion

HIV/AIDS: ADR/mediation/arbitration \Rightarrow confidentiality
ILO Code of Practice on AIDS

Tobacco: “Health Break” for everyone; outside, separate shelter

Violence: Race, gender-sensitive hiring.

Canteen: \Rightarrow Family
 \downarrow Stress
 \downarrow Violence

Social support

Healthier food / cheap

Child Care Centre: Gender/ hire women

60% Workers
40% Community

Fitness Centre: Promote health as new addiction

**Promotional
Events:**

Reach out and involve community

1. CBO \Rightarrow HIV awareness
Tobacco
Violence
Drugs and Alcohol
Stress
2. Micro-solve
3. Social events:

i.e. Conference in town's library to promote community involvement is specific issues at work.

Cost is OK, to benefit different enterprises.

Involve people with local / state government (build relationship)

Investigate links to Private Life:

Where does the problem derive from?

Key:

- Cultural Relativity)
- Multi-Dimensional)
- Inter-connected) Comprehensive
- Cyclical)

P.P.

Institution

