Preventing HIV amongst labour migrants

Labour market flexibility in Asia has a two-pronged impact. It encourages economic migration, yet contributes to precariousness of jobs. Likewise, while their remittances contribute to Asia’s economic prosperity, migrants face unsafe working conditions and health challenges. ILO Recommendation No. 200 encourages countries of transit and destination to collaborate in ensuring that migrant workers have access to HIV and TB services.

- Pre-departure HIV training programmes for outgoing migrants are supported by the ILO in Nepal, Sri Lanka and Indonesia.
- Indonesia and Malaysia are currently negotiating bilateral agreements to protect migrant workers.

Preparing and reintegrating migrant workers in Sri Lanka

The Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment in collaboration with the ILO brought the migrant recruitment agencies, local medical centres and community organizations together to provide HIV preventive education for pre-departure migrants and to reintegrate migrant returnees. Over 50 agents were trained, reaching 1,300 migrants. The ILO supported the development of relevant policy and behavioral change communication materials, and conducted training for pre-departure migrants, their spouses and family members.

Enhancing social dialogue for migrant workers’ welfare in India

Norman Mabon Singhrat, a trade union, worked with the Maharatna Department of Labour and the AIDS authority, in partnership with the ILO, to reach over 12,000 migrant workers in the construction sector. This good practice approach has been replicated in Andhra Pradesh and Delhi. The ILO works in close collaboration with NGOs that carry out interventions with commercial sex workers. This allows reaching out to clients of sex workers, most of whom are employed at nearby construction sites. The Global Fund has granted support to the Ministry of Labour and Employment to expand the model into five other economic sectors.

The ILO’s approach to HIV

- Promote and support the implementation of the ILO’s international labour standards on HIV and AIDS – Recommendation concerning HIV and AIDS and the World of Work, 2010 (No. 200) – through legal capacity structures of governments and representatives of employers and workers, working in tandem with networks of people living with HIV.
- Protect people’s rights at work and eliminate HIV-related stigma and discrimination through strengthened national and enterprise level workplace HIV policies and legislation.
- Enhance social protection to extend coverage to key populations including people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS.

The ILO in the Asia and the Pacific Region

Presence of ILO Offices

For more information, please contact:
Mr Richard Howard
ILO Senior HIV and AIDS Specialist for Asia and the Pacific
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Including a DVD with key publications and films

The ILO aims to protect workers and their families from HIV and tuberculosis (TB). Key ILO activities in Asia and the Pacific include work on:

- Reaching workers and key populations
- Preventing HIV
- Protecting migrant workers
- Enhancing social protection

Over 4.9 million people are living with HIV in Asia and the Pacific. Most of them are of productive working age (15-49). Many are forced out of employment due to HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

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**Promoting universal social protection coverage for workers & key affected populations**

**"More work needs to be done to improve laws and regulations on health discrimination..."**

- Li Kangrui, Deputy Party Chief of the National Center for AIDS/STD Control and Prevention, China

In response to the global economic crisis, the ILO has been leading the Social Protection Floor Initiative since 2009. The initiative promotes social rights for all to access essential services, including health, housing, education, food and income security for the unemployed or under-employed. It calls for coherent, sustained social protection and employment policies that guarantee access to these services and to social transfers across the life cycle, especially for vulnerable groups, including people living with HIV and their families.

**Ensuring occupational safety and health**

Providing a safe and healthy work environment for health workers facilitates retention of a qualified health workforce.

**In 2010, the ILO, WHO and UNAIDS launched joint policy guidelines for improving health workers’ access to HIV and TB prevention, treatment, care and support services.**

**Using HealthWISE to protect health workers**

**HealthWISE in action: Sharp disposal**

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**HealthWISE in action: Sharp disposal**

**Before**

**After**

Reducing violence towards health workers in Thailand

The management of a hospital in Thailand decided to form a conflict prevention and resolution team to address the increasing problem of physical assaults against hospital workers. The team systematically makes rounds in the hospital. Before a dispute or conflict can escalate into violence, they invite the family members, visitors or patients to a comfortable room away from crowd and noise to resolve it. The incidence of conflict resolution team, with reduced levels of stress among health workers.

**Tips for employers**

- Clearly outline the company’s policy on conflict resolution, as well as procedures for addressing potential conflicts.
- Ensure that all employees are aware of the conflict resolution process, and that they understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Establish a system for tracking incidents of workplace violence, and use this data to identify trends and areas for improvement.
- Conduct regular training sessions on conflict resolution, as well as on how to identify and respond to signs of workplace violence.
- Encourage open communication and provide a safe and supportive environment for employees to express their concerns.
- Provide resources and support for employees who are affected by workplace violence, such as counseling services.

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