



# HIV AND AIDS: GUIDELINES INFORMAL ECONOMY



International  
Labour  
Organization

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This recognition highlights the collaborative efforts of a varied and devoted collection of stakeholders who understand the necessity of creating a healthier and more supportive environment within the informal sector.

We look forward to continuing to collaborate and implement these principles, which will help individuals in the informal sector improve their well-being and resilience.

Thank you for committing to a healthier, more inclusive future.



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# Acronyms

|                |                                                          |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>AIDS</b>    | <b>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</b>               |
| <b>ART</b>     | <b>Antiretroviral Therapy</b>                            |
| <b>AVEMA</b>   | <b>Associations for Vendors and Marketers in Zambia</b>  |
| <b>AZIEA</b>   | <b>Alliance for Zambian Informal Economy Association</b> |
| <b>DWUZ</b>    | <b>Domestic Workers Union of Zambia</b>                  |
| <b>HIV</b>     | <b>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</b>                      |
| <b>ILO</b>     | <b>International Labour Organization</b>                 |
| <b>NAC</b>     | <b>National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council</b>                  |
| <b>NCDs</b>    | <b>Non-Communicable Diseases</b>                         |
| <b>PEP</b>     | <b>Post-Exposure Prophylaxis</b>                         |
| <b>PPPs</b>    | <b>Public-Private Partnerships</b>                       |
| <b>PrEP</b>    | <b>Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis</b>                          |
| <b>SDG</b>     | <b>Sustainable Development Goal</b>                      |
| <b>STIs</b>    | <b>Sexually Transmitted Infections</b>                   |
| <b>TB</b>      | <b>Tuberculosis</b>                                      |
| <b>UHDWUZ</b>  | <b>United House and Domestic Workers Union of Zambia</b> |
| <b>UNAIDS</b>  | <b>The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS</b>    |
| <b>ZABUTWU</b> | <b>Zambia Bus and Taxi Workers</b>                       |
| <b>ZCTU</b>    | <b>Zambia Congress of Trade Unions</b>                   |
| <b>ZDHS</b>    | <b>Zambia Demographic Health Survey</b>                  |
| <b>ZFE</b>     | <b>Zambia Federation of Employers</b>                    |

# 1 Introduction

Zambia has made a lot of progress in the fight against HIV and progressing towards a sustained HIV epidemic control. However, more efforts are required to strengthen HIV prevention services in the country. According to the 2021 Zambia Population-based HIV and AIDS Impact Assessment (ZAMPHIA) report, annual incidences of HIV prevalence is 0.13% of adults aged 15+ years in Zambia, which corresponds to approximately 28,000 new cases of HIV per year among adults in this age group. The report estimated HIV prevalence among adults aged 15 years and above at 11.0 percent, further broken down as 13.9 percent among women and 8.0 percent among men. It also highlighted that HIV prevalence was higher among women compared to men from the 20-24 age group to the 35-39 age group, as well as in the 45-49 age group.

Based on these estimates, the rate of occurrence is 7.7 percent for men and 13.8 percent for women between the ages of 15 and 49. It seems that the number of people living with HIV generally rises with age. The rate increases from 2.6% of women aged 15 to 19 to 22.7% of women aged 45 to 49 and from 1.2% of men aged 15 to 19 to 17.0% of men aged 45 to 49. The majority of new infections are found in people between the ages of 15 and 24. Even though they only make up 20% of the population, they are responsible for 40% of all new HIV infections. In addition, estimates from 2020 show that the rate of HIV in Zambia's most important groups is high (UNAIDS 2020).

While HIV/AIDS negatively affects all parts of

the economy, it has been evidenced that people who work in the informal economy are more likely to get infected. There are not many ways to make money or earn a living, and a lot of people in Zambia do not have easy access to official economic safety nets and support systems.

Because most businesses are privately owned, if the owner gets sick or dies, the business will most likely have to close down, which in turn negatively impacts the many people who depend on it. People working in businesses in both formal and informal economies have to pay the same amount for HIV/AIDS medical care, drugs, and funerals. Some examples of indirect costs are lost time because of illness, the cost of hiring and training new workers, and the cost of taking care of orphans. Due to this, HIV/AIDS worsens poverty and economic inequality, especially for people who work in the informal economy and also depend on daily wages.

Additionally, informal workers frequently experience hurdles to accessing official healthcare services, resulting in delayed detection and ineffective management of NCDs. Inconsistent working hours, a lack of job security, and exposure to occupational risks can all contribute to unhealthy lifestyle choices and increased NCD risk.

Furthermore, NCDs can cause decreased productivity, absenteeism, and higher healthcare expenditures, worsening economic vulnerability in the informal economy.

However, Workplace Response Strategies, such as focused health education programmes can improve awareness about NCDs, emphasizing preventive measures and healthy lifestyle choices. These strategies also create methods for informal workers to access affordable and timely healthcare treatments, including mobile clinics, telehealth choices, and community-based health initiatives. Integrating basic occupational health and safety precautions into informal workplaces decreases exposure to environmental hazards and provides a healthier working environment.

Furthermore, it is important to promote inclusive policies that advocate for the integration of informal economy workers into national health policies to ensure their inclusion in NCD prevention and management initiatives.

In addition, exploring innovative social protection mechanisms tailored to the informal economy, providing financial support during periods of illness, and promoting preventive healthcare, encouraging collaboration among government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector entities to develop comprehensive NCD response strategies.

Responding to NCDs in the informal economy demands a comprehensive and adaptable strategy. By combining focused health education, accessible healthcare services, and inclusive policies, stakeholders can help to improve health outcomes for informal workers, building

a healthier and more resilient workforce in this dynamic industry.

People who work in the informal economy can use these guidelines to improve how they deal with HIV and AIDS. The guidelines will also be useful for national AIDS programmes, labour and employment ministries, worker and employers' groups, and development partners who work on HIV and AIDS issues in the informal economy.

The regulations that in the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work, along with its training manual and the ILO Recommendation concerning HIV and AIDS and the World of Work, 2010 (No. 200) put a lot of emphasis on encouraging and supporting efforts at the national, sectoral level to fight the epidemic.

## The purpose of these guidelines

The guidelines seek to provide answers to the following questions.

- Why should stakeholders in the informal economy be concerned about HIV and AIDS?
- What are the benefits of addressing HIV and AIDS in the informal economy?
- How can the informal economy strengthen its responses to HIV and AIDS?
- How can the stakeholders in the informal economy take their actions beyond the workplace to build partnerships for HIV prevention?

The answers to the above questions should demonstrate the enormous opportunities that the informal economy presents for HIV prevention. Employment in this sector can safeguard young men and women and lessen the effects of AIDS and HIV, including non-communicable diseases (NCDs), on workers and their families, businesses, and society at large. The guidelines will be beneficial to informal economy businesses looking to create and implement workplace wellness and HIV/AIDS initiatives. Because the informal economy is so diverse, actors must choose how much to respond based on a variety of factors, including the national prevalence of HIV, enterprise-specific information, the size of their operation, the resources at their disposal, and the nature of their workforce.

These guidelines were developed through a consultative process with the Zambia Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU), and its affiliates such as the Alliance for Zambian Informal Economy Association (AZIEA) Domestic Workers Union of Zambia (DWUZ), United House and Domestic Workers Union of Zambia (UHDWUZ) and the Associations for Vendors and Marketers in Zambia (AVEMA), the Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE), Zambia Bus and Taxi Workers (ZABUTWU) and Ministry of Labour with technical support from ILO Zambia Country Office and the National Aids Council (NAC).

### 1.1 Where is the workplace?

“The workplace”, as defined in the HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200) includes a wide range of workplaces and job types, including both formal and informal economies (self-employed and non-regulated work). In the same way, the word “workers” refers to a wide range of individuals who have different types of work arrangements. Because workplaces and workers are different, so can working conditions and the risk of getting HIV. Many workplaces aim to keep their employees healthy, motivated, and productive, while also protecting workers’ rights. It is important for the economy to identify and address the risks that HIV and AIDS pose in the workplace. As a result, the three arms of the ILO called for a plan of action and guiding principles that would deal with the problems that HIV and AIDS cause for everyone and also the ways that everyone can help solve these problems.

The goal of the Guidelines is to help informal economy workers, employers, and key stakeholders deal with HIV and AIDS by understanding issues of discrimination and stigma, acting to prevent it, and looking into ways to give workers access to care and support services. The steps taken based on this guide should:

- a. Be planned with the needs and traits of different types of informal economy workers, customers, and local communities in mind (this is the first and most important step for a successful response); and
- b. Be tailored to each country's available options and priorities.

## 1.2 Understanding the informal economy

Understanding the informal economy in the context of HIV is crucial for developing effective strategies and interventions that address the unique challenges faced by informal sector workers. The informal economy often presents specific circumstances that can influence the prevalence, transmission, and management of HIV. The ILO defines “informal economy” as all economic activities by workers and economic units that are in law or in practice not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements. The informal economy includes daily wage workers and own-account workers, contributing family members and those moving from one challenging situation to another.

Their activities are not included in the law, which means that they are operating outside the formal reach of the law; or they are not covered in practice, which means that – although they

are operating within the formal reach of the law, the law is not applied or not enforced; or the law discourages compliance because it is inappropriate, burdensome, or imposes excessive costs.

## 1.3 The impact of HIV and AIDS on the informal economy

HIV and AIDS can have profound and multifaceted impacts on the informal economy, affecting individuals, households, and communities engaged in informal economic activities. The consequences of HIV and AIDS on the informal economy are complex, with social, economic, and health-related implications. Therefore, understanding these impacts is crucial for designing targeted interventions that address the specific challenges faced by the informal economy in the context of HIV and AIDS. Comprehensive strategies that integrate health, economic, and social dimensions are essential for mitigating the negative consequences and promoting resilience within informal sector communities.

### 1.3.1 Local Communities



The intersection of the informal economy, HIV, and the community is complex and dynamic, with each element influencing and being influenced by the others. Understanding this relationship is crucial for developing effective strategies that address the unique challenges faced by informal economy workers and communities in the context of HIV. The community in this context is affected as a result of the illness of workers, reduced income for households including increased number of children-headed households resulting from the death of the breadwinner, and also weakening of community bonds takes center stage. Therefore, as informal economy workers often rely on community networks for support, both in terms of business and personal relationships, it is important to strengthen community networks that can provide vital support systems for individuals living with HIV, including emotional support, access to healthcare, and economic assistance.

### 1.3.2 Customers



The interplay between the informal economy, HIV, and customers involves fostering a supportive environment, reducing stigma, and addressing health and economic considerations. Businesses in the informal economy play a vital role in shaping community dynamics and can positively impact the well-being of both their employees and customers. Informal economy businesses often interact closely with their customer base. Implementing awareness and education programs within these businesses can contribute to disseminating information about HIV prevention and testing. Educated customers are more likely to make informed decisions about their health, contributing to a healthier community.

### 1.3.3 Informal economy workers



The relationship between informal economy workers and HIV is a critical aspect of public health and economic development. Workers in the informal economy, especially those involved in mobile occupations, may face challenges due to inconsistent access of healthcare services. Recommendation No. 200 emphasizes that all workers are protected by the labour standard, including those in all sectors of economic activity in the formal and informal economies; therefore, understanding and addressing these challenges and opportunities is essential for developing targeted and effective HIV prevention, testing, and support strategies within the informal economy. It requires a comprehensive approach that considers the social, economic, and health dynamics of informal economy workplaces. Key considerations regarding informal economy workers and HIV are, for instance, introducing HIV-friendly services to the informal economy workers.

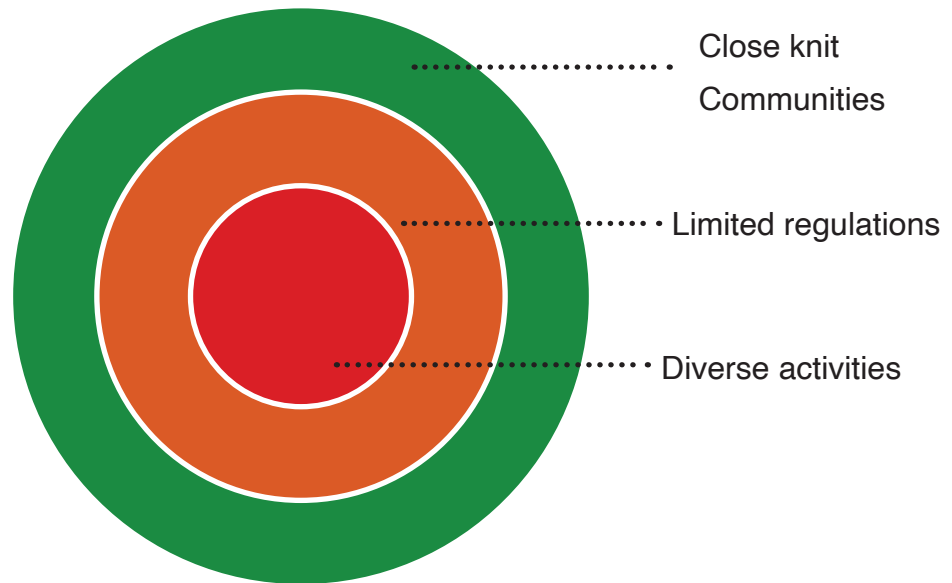
### 1.3.4 Stigma and discrimination



Stigma and discrimination related to HIV in the context of the informal economy can have significant implications for individuals, communities, and public health systems. Overcoming stigma and discrimination is crucial for effective HIV prevention, testing, treatment, and support within the informal sector. The rights established in Recommendation No. 200 are not restricted to persons living with HIV. They extend to all workers, their families and their dependents, though persistent stigma and discrimination on the basis of HIV status hinder effective prevention efforts and lead to violations of human rights at work.

Addressing stigma and discrimination within the informal economy requires a comprehensive approach that involves community engagement, education, and policy interventions. Strategies should aim to foster supportive environments, reduce misinformation, and empower individuals to seek and receive the necessary care and support without fear of discrimination. For instance, stigma within the workplace can strain relationships among informal economy workers, affecting teamwork and collaboration resulting in a hostile work environment that may discourage individuals from disclosing their HIV status, hindering efforts to provide support and accommodations. Additionally, stigma and discrimination results in loss of business linkages, exclusion from business opportunities, failure to adhere to treatment and low self-esteem.

## 2 The Informal Economy: A Brief Overview, and Opportunities for Action on HIV and AIDS.



The informal economy, characterized by diverse and often unregulated economic activities, presents unique challenges and opportunities in the context of HIV and AIDS. This brief overview provides insights into the intersection of the informal economy with HIV/AIDS and suggests opportunities for targeted action.

### Key characteristics of the informal economy

**Diverse Activities:** The informal economy encompasses a wide range of activities, including street vending, small-scale businesses, home-based work, and informal labor arrangements.

**Limited Regulation:** Many informal economy workers operate without formal contracts, regulatory oversight, or access to social benefits.

**Close-Knit Communities:** Informal sector businesses often thrive within close-knit communities, fostering unique social dynamics.

Addressing HIV and AIDS within the informal economy requires targeted and community-driven action. By integrating healthcare, education, and economic empowerment initiatives, there is an opportunity to create more resilient and supportive environments. As we work towards a world free of HIV/AIDS, recognizing the specific challenges and strengths of the informal economy is essential for designing effective and inclusive interventions. Through collaborative efforts, we can make significant strides in improving the health and well-being of informal economy workers and their communities.

## Challenges in the Informal Economy Regarding HIV and AIDS:



### **Limited Access to Healthcare for workers/employers:**

Informal workers may face challenges in accessing formal healthcare services, impacting HIV testing, treatment, and support.



### **Stigma and Discrimination:**

Close-knit communities may experience heightened stigma, deterring individuals from seeking HIV-related services due to fear of disclosure.



### **Economic Vulnerability:**

Economic challenges within the informal economy may cause people to prioritize immediate financial needs over health considerations, in turn affecting HIV prevention and care.



### **Informal Hiring Practices:**

Lack of formal contracts and job security may contribute to uncertainties around HIV disclosure in the workplace.

## Opportunities for Action:



### **Community-Led Interventions:**

Empower communities within the informal economy to lead HIV awareness, prevention, and support initiatives and interventions tailored to their unique needs.



### **Integrated Healthcare Services:**

Strengthen healthcare delivery systems to provide accessible and integrated services, addressing both general health and HIV-specific needs.

**Targeted Education and Awareness:**

Develop and implement targeted, community-driven education programs to dispel myths, reduce stigma, and increase HIV awareness.

**Access to Prevention Tools:**

Increase access to and awareness of HIV prevention commodities, such as condoms and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), within informal economy communities.

**Economic Empowerment:**

Integrate economic empowerment initiatives with HIV interventions to enhance resilience and address the economic challenges associated with HIV.

**Policy Advocacy:**

Advocate for policies that promote non-discrimination, access to healthcare, and supportive working environments within the informal economy.

**Gender-Sensitive Approaches:**

Recognize and address gender dynamics within the informal economy, ensuring that interventions are sensitive to the unique vulnerabilities of men and women, whilst striking a balance with cultural norms.

**Inclusive Innovation:**

Explore innovative solutions, including technology-driven approaches for HIV testing, education, and monitoring within informal economy contexts.

## 2.1 The legal and policy framework: Local and International instruments

While the document lists key conventions and policies, it is essential to briefly explain how each applies to the informal economy. For example:

- Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) ensures safe and healthy working conditions, which are critical for preventing the spread of HIV and other diseases.
- ILO Recommendation No. 200 (2010) provides guiding principles for integrating HIV/AIDS workplace policies, ensuring non-discrimination, and facilitating access to healthcare.
- ILO Recommendation No. 204 emphasizes transitioning from informal to formal employment while ensuring labour rights and social protection.

These frameworks reinforce the need for comprehensive, inclusive, and workers' rights-based approaches in addressing HIV and AIDS in the informal economy including others as highlighted:

- The Zambia National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Policy
- The Zambia National AIDS Strategic Framework 2023 -2027
- The Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)
- Employment Code Act, 2019 (No.3)

- Working Conditions (Hotels and Restaurants) Convention, 1991 (No. 172)
- Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188)
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)
- Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161)
- Termination of Employment Convention, 1982 (No. 158)
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Convention (Disabled Persons), 1983 (No. 159)
- Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)
- Convention on the Right to Organize and to Bargain Collectively, 1949 (No.98)
- Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No.154)
- Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) and Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129)
- Migration for Employment Convention, 1949 (No.97)
- Migrant Workers Convention, 1975 (No.143)
- Part-Time Work Convention, 1994 (No.175)
- An ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work (2001)
- ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190),

The ILO HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200) is the primary international labour instrument that contains principles relevant to, and guidance concerning the development of, HIV and AIDS workplace policies at the national, sectoral and enterprise levels. The Recommendation applies to all workers without exception, including:

- persons in any employment or occupation;
- persons in training (interns, apprentices and volunteers);
- job applicants and job seekers more generally; and
- laid-off or suspended workers.

reaching informal economy workers differ from those in formal employment who may rely on peer education through representatives of workers' associations.

## 2.2 Action at the workplace and in the community

HIV is a global health challenge that requires coordinated efforts at both workplace and community levels. This overview explores the significance of comprehensive action, addressing HIV not only in the workplace but also within the broader community. Due to the large number of workplaces within the informal economy and the variety of actors interacting with the sector, actions can be planned in very different settings. Because of the variety of different forms of employment in the informal economy, it is impossible to develop one template for all interventions. Information and training on HIV and AIDS for business owners cannot be the same as that provided for marketeers and walkers as their needs, risk factors and concerns are different. Likewise, the mechanisms for

| THEME                          | GUIDELINES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | RATIONALE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. HIV AWARENESS AND EDUCATION | Conduct regular HIV awareness programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop/adapt IEC materials in local languages</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Increase understanding of HIV transmission, prevention, and dispel myths and misconceptions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2. PREVENTION MEASURES         | Promote the use of barrier methods and safe practices to prevent HIV transmission. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information regarding available prevention measures.</li> <li>• Make Condoms available in strategic places</li> <li>• Make self-testing kits readily available</li> <li>• Collaborate with health services to provide information on PrEP/PEP/ NCDs during wellness events</li> </ul>                   | Empower individuals with the knowledge and tools to protect themselves. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance knowledge of available prevention measures</li> <li>• Increased access to condoms</li> <li>• increase awareness of the HIV status</li> <li>• 4. increase access to PrEP/ PEP/NCDs for those with negative HIV status</li> <li>• Create awareness about the policy provisions</li> </ul> |
| 3. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY   | Establish a clear non-discrimination policy that protects employees living with HIV. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct anti-stigma awareness to address myths, misconceptions surrounding HIV.</li> <li>• Committees in the markets working together with the Council promote discipline and respect for each other.</li> <li>• Develop/Review the existing disciplinary code to cover non-discrimination issues.</li> </ul> | Promote a stigma-free workplace and ensure fair treatment for all employees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create a supportive environment</li> <li>• To instill respect and compassion for people living with HIV</li> <li>• To create a supportive environment</li> </ul>                                                                                                                        |

|                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>4. CONFIDENTIALITY</b>            | <p>Emphasize the importance of maintaining confidentiality regarding an employee's HIV status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Code of Conduct for players in a particular informal sector setting.</li> <li>• Develop/Review the Code of Ethics for Counsellors</li> </ul>            | <p>Protect the privacy and dignity of individuals living with HIV.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance confidentiality among players among Counselors.</li> <li>• Enhance professionalism</li> </ul>                                                  |
| <b>5. ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE</b>       | <p>Facilitate access to HIV testing, counseling, and treatment services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate provision of mobile healthcare services.</li> <li>• Facilitate provision of static health care services in designated points for long distance truck drivers</li> </ul>      | <p>Ensure employees have the support they need for their health and well-being.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase access to healthcare without much interruption to trading.</li> </ul>                                                            |
| <b>6. WORKPLACE SUPPORT</b>          | <p>Provide a supportive environment for IE workers/ employers living with HIV.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create/enhance support networks</li> <li>• Promote networks' meetings</li> </ul>                                                                                                  | <p>Encourage open communication and empathy to address the unique needs of individuals affected by HIV.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase moral, material, and financial support.</li> <li>• Increase coordination among sector players</li> </ul> |
| <b>7. FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS</b> | <p>Consider flexible work schedules or arrangements for employees managing HIV-related health issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review sector specific legislation in order to identify the gaps. E.g. The Traffic Act which discarded the conditions of service for employees.</li> </ul> | <p>Support employees in balancing work responsibilities with healthcare needs.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>       | <p>Engage with local health organizations and community groups to further HIV awareness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify relevant stakeholders and their roles in a sector/community.</li> <li>• Collaborate with stakeholders in the implementation process.</li> </ul>                | <p>Contribute to community-wide efforts to combat HIV and reduce stigma.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring buy-in of stakeholders in the programs that are rolled out.</li> <li>• Increased participation of workers in the community</li> </ul>   |

|                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>9. TRAINING FOR LEADERS AND SUPERVISORS</b> | Provide training to leaders and supervisors on handling HIV-related issues with sensitivity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop capacity in terms knowledge about HIV issues and leadership skills.</li> <li>• Develop capacity in monitoring and reporting</li> </ul>                                                                          | Ensure a supportive and understanding leadership approach. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide effective leadership and increased participation.</li> <li>• Enhance their role in the implementation and monitoring of activities</li> </ul>                                                                                                                        |
| <b>10. INCLUSIVE POLICIES</b>                  | Review and update policies to be inclusive of employees and employers living with HIV. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out gap analysis of existing instruments, activities, and programs.</li> <li>• Develop sector specific, inclusive wellness/HIV policies</li> <li>• Disseminate the policies</li> </ul>                                  | Create an environment that fosters diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To establish inclusivity of instruments, activities, and programs.</li> <li>• To provide overall guidance in the management of HIV in the workplace.</li> </ul>                                                                                       |
| <b>11. EMERGENCY RESPONSE</b>                  | Develop emergency response plans that consider the health needs of employees and employers, including those living with HIV. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop capacity in leaders on how to deal with emergencies</li> <li>• Train workers in the emergency responses</li> </ul>                                                              | Ensure preparedness to address health crises in the workplace. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigate the impact of emergencies that arise</li> <li>• Build capacity for everyone to respond to emergencies</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>12. PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS</b>               | Establish peer support programs to connect individuals living with HIV for mutual support. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify potential Peer Educators</li> <li>• Develop/Adapt Peer-educators Training materials</li> <li>• Resource Mobilization</li> <li>• Conduct peer training.</li> <li>• Provide enablers for peer educators</li> </ul> | Foster a sense of community and reduce isolation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a pool of workers who can be trained to train others.</li> <li>• Standardization of information and training</li> <li>• To support the implementation plan</li> <li>• Scale-up information and awareness raising.</li> <li>• Facilitate for efficient implementation.</li> </ul> |

### 3 Why Should the informal Economy Respond to HIV and AIDS, and NDCs?



The Informal Economy in most developing countries makes up the majority of the country's working population. In the case of Zambia over 63.3% of the working population are from the informal economy (Labour Force Survey, 2022). Therefore, it is important for the informal economy to respond to HIV and AIDS, NCDs and physical fitness in order to foster a strong economy amongst its target members.

This in turn will empower them with comprehensive knowledge about HIV and AIDS, improve productivity, dispel negative notions about its prevention, spread and treatment.

- Lack of knowledge on HIV and AIDS, NCDs and physical fitness may lead to vulnerability and poverty. This justifies the strong linkages that exist between these three conditions and poverty.
- Informal economy workers lose decent jobs due to lack of information on HIV and AIDS, NCDs and physical fitness.

## 3.1 Guiding Principles for Action

The guidelines align with ILO Recommendation No. 200 and emphasize:

**Human Rights and Gender Equality:** Women and marginalized groups face unique challenges in HIV prevention and treatment. Ensuring gender-responsive policies will help address these inequalities.

**Non-Discrimination:** Employers and workers must be educated on non-discriminatory practices, including:

- Equal hiring, promotion, and training opportunities.
- Ensuring a stigma-free workplace.
- Enforcing confidentiality policies.

• **Comprehensive Healthcare Integration:** Ensuring accessible healthcare services, including mobile clinics, telehealth options, and community health centres.

• **HIV and AIDS as workplace issues.** HIV and AIDS have a significant impact on the workforce. Workplaces can play a vital role in preventing the spread and mitigating the impacts of the epidemic. Workplaces should, therefore, be fully involved in national, regional and international responses/interventions, with the full participation of employers' and workers' organizations.

• **Non-discrimination.** There should be no discrimination against or stigmatization of

workers, in particular jobseekers and job applicants, on the basis of real or perceived HIV status, or the fact that they belong to regions of the world or segments of the population perceived to be at greater risk of, or more vulnerable to, HIV infection. (Workplace policies to prevent discrimination can also play a crucial role in HIV prevention, because fear of stigmatization and discrimination act as a deterrent, preventing many workers from seeking information on HIV prevention, voluntary testing and treatment.)

• **Gender equality.** HIV infection poses a greater risk to women and girls; they are disproportionately affected by the epidemic as a result of gender inequalities. Recommendation No. 200, therefore, calls for measures to be taken in or through the workplace to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women as key components of the HIV response.

• **Healthy work environment.** Workplaces should be hygienic and safe for all workers, in order to prevent workplace transmission of HIV. Programmes should be in place to eliminate specific occupational risks that could lead to the transmission of HIV, and related transmissible diseases such as tuberculosis.

• **Social dialogue.** Successful policies and programmes on HIV and AIDS in the world of work should be based on cooperation and trust – between employers, workers and governments – and should actively involve workers who are affected by HIV and AIDS.

• **No mandatory HIV testing for employment purposes.** HIV testing or other forms of screening should not be mandatory for workers, including

migrant workers, job seekers and applicants for specific positions; nor should workers be forced to disclose their HIV status. HIV testing should be genuinely voluntary and confidential, and therefore all testing programmes should respect international rules regarding confidentiality, counselling and consent.

- Confidentiality. The privacy of workers, their families and dependents should be protected; specifically, HIV and AIDS-related information (particularly individuals' HIV status) should be fully confidential. There is no justification for asking job applicants to disclose HIV-related personal data, nor should anyone be obliged to reveal such personal information about their co-workers.

- Continuation of the employment relationship. Real or perceived HIV status is not a cause for termination of employment. Workers with HIV-related illnesses should not be denied the possibility of continuing to carry out their work, with reasonable support measures, if necessary, for as long as they are medically fit to do so.

- Prevention. Prevention of transmission, by any means, is a fundamental priority. The social partners are in a unique position to promote prevention efforts by providing information, education and supporting behavioral change, in and through workplaces. HIV infection is preventable and a variety of strategies, appropriately tailored to national conditions, should be adopted to encourage changes of behavior, increase knowledge and support access to treatment and the establishment of a non-discriminatory environment.

- Treatment, care and support. Workers, their families and dependents should benefit from HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support services, and the workplace should facilitate access to these.

- Integration of the world of work into the national response. Measures to address HIV and AIDS in the world of work should be part of national development policies and programmes – including policies and programmes on labour, education, social protection, health and HIV and AIDS.

## 4 A Framework for Action

To strengthen the HIV/AIDS response in the informal economy, the framework has included:

1

### **Legal and Policy Framework:**

Ensuring workplace programs align with international standards.

2

### **Prevention Programs:**

- HIV education, training, and behavioral change communication.
- Condom distribution and voluntary counselling/testing services.
- Awareness campaigns tailored to informal sector workers

3

### **Treatment, Care, and Support Programs:**

- Referral systems for treatment of STIs, opportunistic infections, and antiretroviral therapy.
- Social protection measures.
- Mental health and psychosocial support initiatives.

4

### **Economic Empowerment and Social Support**

- Strengthening business resilience to reduce economic vulnerabilities.
- Implementing microfinance programs to support affected workers.

This framework can be used as a starting point. It describes the practical components of HIV/AIDS and wellness programmes in the informal economy. A solid legal and policy framework, technical assistance, and partnerships are critical to the program's success.

# A framework for action

| LEGAL POLICY FRAMEWORK                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| HIV and AIDS, NCDs workplace programmes for the informal economy workers and their families                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | HIV and AIDS, NCDs workplace programmes for informal economy supply chain workers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | HIV and AIDS, NCDs programmes for customers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Prevention Programmes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Prevention Programmes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Prevention Programmes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIV education, training and behaviour change communication, provided by peer educators</li> <li>• Condom education and access to condoms in the workplace</li> <li>• voluntary counselling and testing for HIV</li> <li>• Mass distribution of flyers with messages on HIV and NCDs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIV education, training and behaviour change communication, provided by peer educators</li> <li>• Condom education and access to condoms in the workplace</li> <li>• Voluntary counselling and testing for HIV</li> <li>• Mass distribution of flyers with messages on HIV and NCDs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIV and AIDS messages included in advertising and communications</li> <li>• HIV and AIDS information displayed in stores, markets, bus stations and other informal economy work places</li> <li>• Resources generated for AIDS work</li> <li>• Special awareness-raising events in offices/stores / markets bus station on such occasions as World AIDS Day</li> <li>• Wellness days, HIV testing events etc.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Treatment, care and support programme</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Treatment, care and support programme</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral for treatment for STIs and opportunistic infections, antiretroviral therapy</li> <li>• Social protection</li> <li>• Promotion of balanced nutrition.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral for treatment for STIs and opportunistic infections, antiretroviral therapy</li> <li>• Social protection</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

## 5 How can the informal economy respond to HIV and AIDS? A Step-by-Step Approach

Addressing HIV and AIDS in the informal economy requires a comprehensive and context-specific approach that considers the unique challenges faced by informal workers. Here is a step-by-step approach to respond to HIV and AIDS in the informal economy:

### Step 1: Conduct a Needs Assessment

#### 1. Understand the Informal Economy:

Conduct a thorough assessment to understand the specific characteristics, dynamics, and challenges of the informal economy in the targeted area.

#### 2. Assess HIV and AIDS Knowledge:

Evaluate the level of knowledge and awareness about HIV/AIDS among informal workers. Identify existing misconceptions and gaps in understanding.

### Step 2: Raise Awareness and Provide Education

#### 1. Develop Educational Materials:

Create culturally sensitive and language-appropriate educational materials about HIV/AIDS. These materials should be easily understandable and accessible to workers in the informal sector.

#### 2. Training and Workshops:

Organize training sessions and workshops to disseminate information about HIV prevention, transmission, treatment, and stigma reduction. Ensure that these sessions are interactive and involve active participation from all stakeholders.

### Step 3: Provide Access to Healthcare Services

#### 1. Mobile Health Clinics:

Implement mobile health clinics to provide accessible healthcare services, including HIV testing and counseling, to informal workers in their workplaces or communities.

#### 2. Collaborate with Healthcare Providers:

Build partnerships with local healthcare providers to ensure informal workers have access to affordable and non-discriminatory healthcare services, including antiretroviral therapy (ART) if needed.

### Step 4: Implement Prevention Strategies

#### 1. Distribution of Condoms and Educational Materials:

Promote safe practices by distributing free or low-cost condoms and educational materials on safe sex practices within the informal economy.

#### 2. Behavioral Change Campaigns:

Launch targeted campaigns to promote behavioral change, emphasizing the importance of reducing risky behaviors and encouraging regular health check-ups.

## **Step 5: Address Stigma and Discrimination**

### **Stigma Reduction Programs:**

Develop programs to reduce HIV-related stigma and discrimination within the informal economy. This could include workshops, campaigns, and community dialogues.

### **Promote Inclusivity:**

Advocate for policies that protect the rights of informal workers living with HIV/AIDS, ensuring they are not discriminated against in the workplace or community.

## **Step 6: Establish Support Systems**

### **Peer Support Networks:**

Create peer support networks where informal workers can share experiences, provide emotional support, and disseminate information about available resources.

### **Community-Based Organizations:**

Strengthen or establish community-based organizations that focus on HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention, and support within the informal economy.

## **Step 7: Monitor and Evaluate**

### **Develop Monitoring and Evaluation**

#### **Framework:**

Implement a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impact of interventions. Collect data on awareness levels, behavior change, healthcare access, and stigma reduction.

### **Feedback Mechanism:**

Establish a feedback mechanism to continuously gather input from informal workers, healthcare providers, and community leaders to adapt and improve ongoing programs.

## **Step 8: Advocacy and Policy Change**

### **Advocate for Inclusive Policies:**

Work with policymakers to advocate for inclusive policies that address the unique needs of informal workers, including healthcare access, non-discrimination, and social protection.

### **Integration into National Strategies:**

Ensure that initiatives addressing HIV/AIDS in the informal economy are integrated into national HIV/AIDS strategies and plans.

## **Step 9: Sustainable Partnerships**

### **Build Sustainable Partnerships:**

Foster partnerships with government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), healthcare institutions, and businesses to ensure a sustained and collaborative effort in addressing HIV/AIDS in the informal economy.

### **Capacity Building:**

Build the capacity of local organizations and community leaders to continue to expand HIV/AIDS programs independently.

This step-by-step approach recognizes the importance of a holistic and community-driven strategy to effectively respond to HIV/AIDS in the informal economy. It involves a combination of education/awareness, healthcare access, stigma reduction, and policy advocacy to create lasting positive change.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The informal economy represents a significant portion of Zambia's workforce. As such, targeted action is required to ensure these workers have equitable access to HIV prevention, treatment, and social protection. These guidelines aim to create a sustainable, rights-based approach that integrates HIV and AIDS interventions into informal sector policies and community initiatives.

By fostering inclusivity, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring quality healthcare accessibility, stakeholders can build a resilient and healthier informal workforce, ultimately reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS and non-communicable diseases in Zambia.

