



International
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ECONOMICALLY EMPOWERING THE HIV-VULNERABLE POPULATION ALONG TRANSPORT CORRIDORS IN TANZANIA

The United Republic of Tanzania is among the countries in sub-Saharan Africa that are highly affected by the HIV and AIDS epidemic. The Tanzania HIV/AIDS and Malaria Indicator Survey (THMIS), 2011-12, reported that 5.1 per cent of people aged 15 to 49 in the country were HIV-positive. This decline in the rate – from 7.0 per cent in 2003-04 to 5.3 per cent in 2011-12 for mainland Tanzania – is a result of successful prevention strategies, including behaviour change.

Contextual factors shaping the epidemic in the country include poverty and gender inequalities. Women in par-

ticular are vulnerable to HIV because of the difficulties they face in finding a job and securing an income. As a result, they adopt economic survivalist strategies, which often lead to risk exposure, including a high incidence of gender-based violence, as well as substance and alcohol abuse. Mobility is yet another key factor perpetuating risk, as it leads to the separation of spouses/partners and increased casual sexual relationships, which may include unprotected sex. Economic empowerment increases peoples' resilience to HIV and AIDS by addressing the underlying structural drivers of the epidemic.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Partners:
Savings and Credit Cooperative Union League of Tanzania (SCCULT), and the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

Beneficiary country:
United Republic of Tanzania

Timeframe:
2011 – 2014

Budget:
USD 140,000 (SCCULT)

THE RESPONSE

The ILO, together with the Savings and Credit Cooperative Union League of Tanzania (SCCULT), multiple private sector partners (such as savings and credit cooperative societies (SACCOs)), the Ministry of Labour and Employment of Tanzania, the Association of Tanzania Employers, and trade unions, addressed this challenge.

Since 2011 the ILO has been managing an HIV and AIDS vulnerability reduction programme along Tanzania's transport corridors of Chalinze, Ilula, Mafinga, Makambako, Tunduma and Kyela. This innovative approach reduces the impact of the epidemic by focusing on members of the local communities lying along these transport corridors. The economic empowerment and gender equality approach, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

(Sida), provides skills and resources through the Innovation Fund to start or improve their business, and to form groups and cooperatives to improve their livelihoods, thereby reducing their vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. Central to this approach is the use of the Corridor Economic Empowerment Innovation Fund (CEEIF). This Fund has been put in place to ensure that these vulnerable groups, who are usually excluded from accessing loans due to their lack of security, now have access. One way in which this is achieved is through the support offered by cooperatives and business groups.

To ensure CEEIF sustainability, an advisory committee made up of ILO constituents (Government, and employers' and workers' organizations) monitors the administration of the Fund by SCCULT.

RESULTS

The CEEIF, by providing training to women and men, has ensured that 2,863 beneficiaries have been informed of economic empowerment, gender equality, as well as HIV and AIDS. The project's impact is monitored annually, and the most recent follow-up survey was conducted in April 2014. Drawing

on a representative sample of 1,017 beneficiaries, the following results were observed.

Economic Empowerment

The training sessions have led to a significant improvement in business skills and access to finance to start or expand businesses.

"...I knew my status as HIV-positive for quite a number of years, but I did not accept the situation. With the training I became more positive. I started three new businesses: selling local fruits for fresh juice, a piggery project, and a vegetable garden. I have created jobs for two women. I am doing things not just expecting grants and gifts.... These days, when I wake up in the morning, I don't ask myself whether I am going to get something to eat, but what I ask myself is WHAT DO I WISH TO EAT TO DAY! This is a new life."

Enes Kamindu,
Secretary General,
SHIWAUTU
(PLHIV group)
Tunduma Hotspot



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Some 82 per cent of the trained women and men have approached various organizations, including the Innovation Fund, as compared to 13 per cent of the untrained group.

Some 60 business proposals were submitted to the Loans Committee. Of these, 58 were approved, which resulted in USD 131,738 being disbursed.

Altogether 1,201 businesses were supported, leading to the creation of 491 jobs.

Overall the women and men participating in the project felt that it had had positive effects and reported improvements in their overall socio-economic status.

The personal advantages experienced by the beneficiaries included statistically significant improvements in:

- Profits (USD 552 in the last six months for the untrained group, and US\$1,086 for the trained group);
- Personal income (USD 85 per month for the untrained group, and USD 142 for those who had undergone training);
- The use of savings (47 per cent and 89 per cent for those untrained and trained, respectively);
- Spending on health (USD 53 to USD 68 per month).

Gender equality

The second aspect of the project sought to address gender inequality, not only by economically empowering women within families, but also by addressing gender issues broadly. These steps have led to improvements in women finding space and agency in making household decisions (56 to 73 per cent untrained to trained), and in the general attitude that a wife has the right to refuse sex.

HIV and AIDS

The project observed some important changes within the area of HIV and AIDS vulnerability, notably:

- 84 per cent of the trained beneficiaries adopted risk reduction strategies in the last six months, compared to 13 per cent of the untrained beneficiaries; this included an improvement in condom use, a reduction in the number of partners, a reduction in transactional sex, and a reduction of alcohol and drug use before sex.
- There were also other improvements, with 92 per cent of the trained beneficiaries accessing HIV and AIDS-related services (as compared to 60 per cent of the untrained group) including access to male and female condoms, HIV testing and counselling (HCT), treatment, prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) and other key reproductive health services.

BENEFITS OF PARTNERING

The programme has had a spillover effect. An increasing number of people have been attracted to the programme, both within and outside the project areas, leading to an increased demand for loans. The Corridor Economic Empowerment Project (CEEP), through a combination of business and HIV-related initiatives, has provided informal economy workers with access to financial resources to enable them to transit out of the informal economy, thus improving livelihoods and reducing HIV vulnerability. The CEEIF will continue to be managed by SCCULT in close collaboration with the Advisory Committee and the Loan Committee, and will thus continue benefiting other corridor communities. The project has brought an increase in membership of SACCOs and the MFI (SCCULT). In essence the ILO helps savings and credit cooperatives to reach more vulnerable populations along the corridors.