



# Evaluation Summaries

## Cross-Country Study of the ILO/USDOL HIV/AIDS Workplace Education Program Strategic HIV/AIDS Responses in Enterprises (SHARE)

### Quick Facts

**Countries:** Barbados, Benin, Botswana, Cambodia, and India

**Evaluation Type:** Final

**Evaluation Date:** Nov 2008

**Mode of Evaluation:** independent

**Technical Area:** HIV / AIDS

**Evaluation Management:** ILO/USDOL

**Evaluation Team:** Louise Witherite (Lead Evaluator) and Mei Zegers.

**Project Start:** 2001

**Project End:** 2009

**Project Code:** INT/03/62/USA

**Donor:** U.S. Department of Labor

**Keywords:** HIV/AIDS, workers education

### Background & Context

#### Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

Preventing HIV infection as well as addressing issues of stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV requires a comprehensive approach that targets people where they spend much of their time—the workplace. The workplace provides an opportunity to reach large numbers of people with prevention messages. At the same time, stigma and discrimination in the workplace present great challenges to people living with HIV since it threatens their very livelihood. In 2000, the International Labour Organization (ILO), with funding from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), began implementing Strategic HIV/AIDS Responses in Enterprises (SHARE), a

program designed to protect workers from issues of discrimination and stigma related to HIV and AIDS, and to build an awareness of behaviours that place workers at risk to HIV. Starting with a pilot project in India, the program has now reached 24 countries. The USDOL and ILO selected five countries for an in-depth analysis of the SHARE model at the enterprise level, as well as with regard to the national and local enabling environment.

#### Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

This study of SHARE, Strategic HIV/AIDS Responses in Enterprises, was jointly conceived by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) to gather insights into the project and to inform future programming. The following target countries were selected based on availability of sufficient data, global geographic dispersion, and prevalence (both low and high) in the target countries: Barbados, Benin, Botswana, Cambodia, and India. Except for Botswana and India, and to some extent Cambodia, most companies participating in this multi-country study had very little actual experience with workers who had AIDS, but all of the governments involved rightly perceive the vulnerabilities of segments of their population to HIV infection. The two-person study team used a combination of methods to ensure a thorough and well-rounded understanding of how each country's experiences, with nuances and modifications, could be carried out. The team worked in India, Cambodia, and Thailand; and in Barbados, Benin, Botswana, Geneva, the Caribbean, and Washington, DC. The approach involved document review, background interviews, and field visits, which included in-depth interviews, individual and small group discussions, and observation. The types of stakeholders interviewed

included current and former project staff, government and NGO personnel at the national and provincial/state levels, workers organizations and individual enterprises, as well as networks of people living with HIV (PLHIV). The purpose was to study the project linkages to existing national policies and frameworks, as well as the effectiveness and degree of implementation of project materials.

### **Methodology of evaluation**

The two-person study team, hereafter called researcher, evaluator, or assessor, used a combination of methods to ensure a thorough and well-rounded understanding of how each country's experiences, with nuances and modifications, could be carried out. The team worked in India, Cambodia, and Thailand; and Barbados, Benin, Botswana, Geneva, Washington, D.C., and the Caribbean. The approach involved document review, including project-related documents and supplementary materials to provide relevant context of the studied countries. The review considered HIV and AIDS prevalence in different categories of the population, existing national policies and frameworks, and other potential issues of importance.

- Background interviews with ILO Headquarters, ILO Bangkok regional office representatives, and pertinent personnel at the U.S. Department of Labor.
- Study of the project linkages to the existing national policies and frameworks (and decentralized at State level in the case of India).
- Study and assessment of effectiveness and degree of implementation, to date, of the ILO SHARE guidelines, Behaviour Change Communication toolkit, Performance Monitoring Plan, Data Tracking Table, and other materials developed by the project .
- Study of the results of baseline and post-project surveys to determine their validity and relevance.
- Field visits to Barbados, Benin, Botswana, Cambodia, and India.
- In-depth interviews with broadest range of stakeholders, especially key stakeholders, individually or in focus groups carried out within the timeframe (see Annex 9).
- Individual and small group discussions with project staff in the central office and

elsewhere as relevant to the country situation.

- Observation of the stakeholders and their work in different settings as well as their networking actions.
- Visits to participating enterprises, and observation of non-participating enterprises.

Individual discussions with other donors and agencies working on HIV and AIDS, particularly those also addressing HIV in the different work settings or providing coordination support.

- Observation and limited participation in a 5-day Interactive Learning Event on HIV/AIDS Behaviour Change Communication for the Workplace in Barbados.
- Individual in-depth interviews with representatives of the tripartite constituency from Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad, and Malawi who attended the workshop.
- Follow-up discussions with project staff in the target countries to validate some findings, and to verify and clarify information obtained on field visit.
- Follow-up contact with project and/or ILO headquarters-based staff.
- Modifications of a first draft, followed by collection of responses from stakeholders.

### **Main Findings & Conclusions**

The outcome of the ILO/USDOL SHARE project demonstrates that an effective government response to HIV in the world of work should be characterized by a tripartite structure (involving ministries of Labor, and employer and worker organizations) with an ability to reach workers and mobilize enterprises for the prevention of HIV. Effectiveness is further enhanced by the multiplier effect of this approach, with the positive impact filtering through to families and communities. This study finds that SHARE is a project well worth the investment, as it provides examples and strategies useful to address HIV in workplaces. Its design responds to the complexity of the AIDS phenomena with a set of sequential interventions to address stigma and discrimination, build capacities at several levels, and alter risky practices. A methodical approach was matched by excellent personnel who took full advantage of opportunities to enlarge the scope of action and increase impact. HIV is not merely a health problem, but also a social and labour problem, which naturally makes

it a workplace issue, and in turn, a development issue. The project was able to address the problems and achieve its objectives using creative and innovative approaches. SHARE identified effective ways to address the problems and reach objectives within the budget allocated.

The project tapped into a broad range of ways to integrate HIV-awareness into the workplace: many of which, at least in the target countries, had not been utilized before. The project benefitted from the flexibility offered by not being tied to a rigid logical framework. There was no evidence of superfluous and inefficient spending or resources. There was also no evidence that saving money resulted in shabby materials. Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) materials were durable and usually appropriate for the audience. The tools of the project are numerous and valuable. These strategies and tools are entirely appropriate for replication; either as is, or with appropriate modifications. In fact, the project—exactly as it was implemented—has much to lend to the world of development practice, and it would be a shame to Strategic HIV/AIDS Responses in Enterprises (SHARE) Study vi August 2008 see other projects start from scratch when components such as the BCC Toolkit and some of the graphic materials have already shown to be effective.

## Recommendations & Lessons Learned

### Main recommendations and follow-up

The SHARE project introduced innovative activities into environments where little had been done, employing a body of practitioners unused to working together on the issue of HIV. The project produced key lessons, good practices, and recommendations combined here in this section for easy reference. Since recommendations are often based on lessons learned and good practices, it is not necessarily implied that an action was not implemented. Indeed, it is hoped that the lessons and practices reviewed here are seen as points of transferability and potential for adaptation and utilization in other countries, and suggestions on how the methodology can be applied in different and new settings.

### Project Management Issues

Some of the challenges that NPCs face include the following:

- Enterprises which go bankrupt or suddenly move out of country (the impending World

Cup drew construction companies out of Botswana to South Africa)

- Multi-ethnic populations in the workplace demand sensitivity
- Migration affects all attempts to create a consistent infrastructure, even with training excess peer educators
- Lack of adequate support staff
- Power outages for hours, even days on end. Both Botswana and Benin suffered from this. It is possible to spend an entire day looking for fuel only to have the electric gas pump go off when the power goes out. People drive from one end of town to another looking for fuel. They send e-mail messages and write reports in the dark, with mosquitoes buzzing around. Such draining infrastructural challenges may delay projects.
- Choose national program staff carefully (as has been done in the countries studied). Recognize the necessity to stimulate staff to become champions on the issue of HIV, as in India and Barbados. Continuous monitoring, active follow-up, and a personal commitment are what made the programs so successful in Benin, Botswana, and Cambodia.
- The presence of the ILO sub-regional office in Trinidad and Tobago caused confusion for the project start-up, according to the NPC there. The very same office was considered beneficial for NPCs elsewhere in the Caribbean because the technical officers were on call with expertise and proximity. Clarity of roles and open communication are essential where there might be confusion within the ILO structure and for outside observers.
- Project sites should be visited by an ILO PMT member once in the course of the project life. Similarly, USDOL staff should also visit once. This benefits both parties, as it strengthens the relationship and facilitates communication. The purpose is to build relationships, witness the actual situation, its obstacles and challenges, as well as its accomplishments, and help raise credibility. However, it should not be intrusive.

## Important lessons learned

Lessons that were learned in the course of the project account for some of the biggest successes.

These lessons included the following:

- To advocate and inform the development of national policies and/or legislation, it is essential to create an environment of trust and mutual respect through a national mechanism in which many voices can be heard; in this case, it included all tripartite constituents, experts, and other stakeholders concerned with HIV in the workplace and in the national arena. The success of SHARE in doing this is largely attributed to the pre-existing framework of the tripartite constituency, the climate created in building the PAB, and the professional comportment and determination of the NPC.
- Ensuring that the voices of people living with HIV be heard was part of the initial project design. But the value of that principle was not appreciated until it was put in practice. At each instance where PLHIV participated, the project objectives to dispel stigma and discrimination made more sense, and stakeholders better understood the need to enact national and enterprise policy and to draft national laws.
- Worker Organizations need more capacity-building opportunities. Issues such as lack of clarity of purpose for trade unions and the effect of political affiliations were two of the challenges that these groups faced in the SHARE countries. While tripartite constituent employer groups also have some complexities, the worker groups lack resources and, more importantly, institutional development and technical assistance.
- The selection of target sectors was sensible and, once made, led to good choices for participating enterprises. Financial solvency was not articulated as a criterion, but economically sound enterprises were usually chosen. In a few cases, enterprises stayed with the program even though they were having economic difficulties.
- The subject of AIDS makes people uncomfortable, and some aspects of HIV and AIDS are often overshadowed by obsession over the cause and transmission. This is unfortunate, and while education in the workplace certainly included transmission, the project also addressed those factors which can be resolved. This included examining risk behaviours (unprotected sex, drug use) and understanding how the risks can be avoided. A first look at how the behaviour of an individual relates to contracting AIDS was the foundation of the BCC process. While this was, for the most part, completely innovative to the individuals involved, for others—the focal points, peer educators, Ministers, and management—sex remains almost taboo.