Public-Private Partnerships in HIV Prevention and Care in India

India has the world’s third-largest population of People Living with HIV (PLHIV) - the latest government count showed an estimated 2.1 million PLHIV, of which, 86 per cent are of working age. If not treated correctly, HIV and AIDS can negatively impact on the livelihoods of individual workers, their dependants and their families, and on a larger scale, communities, enterprises and local and national economies. The workplace has a vital role to play in limiting the potential negative impacts of HIV and AIDS.

At particular risk in India are long distance truckers and migrant workers – these groups have higher than national average HIV and AIDS prevalence rates of 2.59 and 2.99 per cent, respectively. Reaching out to these groups is a key focus of the National AIDS Control Programme in India.

THE RESPONSE

Partnerships are at the forefront of all ILO activities in the field of HIV and the world of work. The success of the ILO in reaching thousands of workers at risk of, or otherwise affected by HIV and AIDS, can be attributed to its strong collaboration with a large number of bilateral, multilateral, and private partners.

The ILO’s experience with its private partners in India shows that the average annual cost of a prevention programme is USD 0.9 per person. This compares with the much higher USD 228 per person per year of first-stage HIV and AIDS treatment drugs. Indeed, it is for this reason that many truck drivers are already covered by HIV prevention efforts and tyre manufacturing companies such as Apollo Tyres and JK Tyres consider their HIV intervention amongst truckers as an investment benefitting both their business and their workers.

Apollo Tyres Ltd. started its work in 2000 when, with initial support from the UK Department for International Development, it set up a health clinic for truckers in the Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar in Delhi. Three years later, Apollo took complete charge of funding, managing, and running this clinic.

In mid-2006, the company started its partnership with the ILO and set-up workplace programmes in all four of the locations where it operates. Seeing positive outcomes, the company expanded its work to truckers and forged partnerships with Indian State AIDS control societies, international non-governmental organizations and private partners.

JK Tyres Ltd. began its intervention with truckers in 2005 when, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, it linked with the Transport Corporation of India Foundation. JK Tyres Ltd. established three clinics on National Highway-8 (NH-8) and organized regular “Infotainment” melas (fairs) around the clinics. The collaboration with ILO commenced in 2008 in order to support the development and implementation of a comprehensive workplace programme in all locations. By June 2012, JK Tyres supported 12 clinics – since their establishment numerous truck drivers have used their facilities and received HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services. One particular initiative conducted by the ILO and JK Tyres in collaboration, “Not forgetting our own employees”, aims to spread awareness among JK Tyres’ employees all over India.

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**FACTS AND FIGURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partners:</th>
<th>Apollo Tyres Limited and JK Tyres Limited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiary Countries:</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeframe:</td>
<td>2006 – present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budget:</td>
<td>Technical assistance was provided by the ILO under the project supported by USDOL/PEPFA. The companies implemented their activities at their own cost</td>
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</tbody>
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The ILO has recognized expertise in many work related sectors including occupational safety and health and social security. It concurrently has a wide array of resource materials, manuals and guides for programming and as such can provide expert advice in the development of HIV/AIDS workplace programmes and policies.

These particular collaborations in India allowed the ILO to support companies to reach thousands of workers at risk or affected by HIV and AIDS and helped companies to understand the need for interventions in and around their operation areas and at major trucking points – both as a strategic investment, and for the benefit workers, dependents and communities. These effectively developed workplace interventions increase levels of sustained worker employment and the willingness shown by enterprises to undertake work place initiatives demonstrates their positive impact.

The project supported enterprises cooperation with the Indian Government and in the development of partnerships with the national AIDS programme as well as organizations of people living with HIV.