

DEVELOPMENT OF HIV AND AIDS WORKPLACE POLICIES, by SAN! partner organizations in South India

Introduction

SAN!SIP project objective

Facilitate 45 NGOs in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh which are partner organisations of STOP AIDS NOW! (SAN!) partners Oxfam Novib, ICCO, Cordaid, and Hivos, to develop and implement HIV and AIDS workplace policies (or to address HIV and AIDS in the workplace in other ways) and so create an enabling environment responsive to challenges of HIV and AIDS.

Project management

- A full time local Programme Coordinator (PC); an assistant Programme Coordinator; a local project group 'SAN! South India Programme Group' (SSIPG) – with representatives of 7 participating organisations and other stakeholders; and support by a Dutch Project Coordinator.
- SSIPG is the deciding, facilitating, and governing body. INSA is the host organisation which has assigned four Programme Officers to devote 50% of their time to the SAN!SIP project. Three are assigned to one state each, while one is overseeing the management information system (MIS).

Time frame

The project runs from January 2007 to December 2009.

Aim of applied research (AR)

To provide information to inform project management, NGO managers, and beneficiaries on how to direct or redirect activities for successful HIV and AIDS workplace policy (WPP) development and implementation.

AR phases

Three AR phases according to the phases of the SAN!SIP project: 1) Process of developing a policy in organisations (June to December 2008); 2) Start of WPP implementation (January to June 2009); 3) Implementation and effects of WPP on workers and organisations (July to December 2009).

Study methodology of AR Phase One

Main objectives

Document the process of WPP development and start of implementation in NGOs, and identify promising practices, facilitating factors, and challenges.

Data collection methods, tools and sample size

- In-depth interviews (IDI) with managers of 14 NGOs, with a question guide (one additional NGO was sampled, though it was not interested in participating in the project or the AR)
- 27 focus group discussions (FGD) with high and lower level staff in 14 organisations
- Survey of 138 staff, by face-to-face interviews, with a structured questionnaire.

Background of 14 NGOs

- State of origin: Tamil Nadu (4); Karnataka (5); Andhra Pradesh (5)
- Relevant specific field of work (not necessarily as core business): HIV/AIDS (10); women's issues (9); human rights (9); health (8); reproductive health (5); youth matters (7)
- Staff size ranged between 10 and 120: 3 NGOs less than 20; 6 NGOs between 20 and 50; 5 NGOs over 50 staff
- SAN! donors: Cordaid (5); ICCO (2); Oxfam Novib (3); Hivos (4)
- Signature: one faith based NGO; 13 secular NGOs.

Background of 159 staff in FGD

- 159 participants (17 FGDs in 14 NGOs): 86 female; 58 male; 15 unknown sex
- Participant numbers per FGD: range 3-10
- Age range between 18 to over 46 years: up to 25 (11%); between 26 and 35 (43%); between 36 and 45 (35%); 46 and over (11%).

Background of staff in survey

- In 13 NGOs 10 staff interviewed per NGO, in 1 NGO 8 staff interviewed: total 138 – 39% female; 61% male
- Age group: 25 or below (12%); 26-35 (44%); 36-45 (35%); 46 and above (9%)
- Staff category: officer (43%); grassroots worker (39%); support (7%); manager (7%); clerical (3%); other (1%).

- Research team*
 - Data were collected and processed by a team from YRG Care, Chennai, and analysed and reported by researchers from YRG Care and a consultant from the University of Amsterdam.
- Variables and themes*
 - *NGO level:* status of the policy; key actors in the policy development; major components of the policies; contentious issues; implementation activities; organisation's services related to HIV and AIDS; effects; challenges; sustainability measures; plans; support; promising practices; suggestions to SAN!SIP and donors
 - *Staff level:* knowledge on services related to HIV; awareness about WPP; perceptions on issues related to HIV, including gender, stigma, condoms.
- Analysis*
 - Qualitative data transcribed, organised by theme, categorised, and entered into spreadsheets; manual analysis
 - Quantitative data entered and analysed in SPSS
 - Comparing of information from different tools and at different levels (quantitative and qualitative; staff and NGO level).

Relevant perceptions of 138 staff

- Discrimination*
 - 8% mind working with HIV positive staff; 98% believe discrimination is not acceptable; only one against recruiting HIV positive staff.
- Condom provision*
 - 64% believe organisation should provide condoms for staff – no difference in opinion between men and women, or different age groups; grassroots staff most in favour (68.5%), support staff least (33%).
- Equal opportunities in NGO*
 - 88% of staff feel there are equal job opportunities for men, women, and sexuality minorities
 - 93% of staff feel there are equal decision making opportunities for men, women, and sexuality minorities.
- Sexual harassment*
 - 91% believe sexual harassment is a problem in India – believed lowest (82%) in Andhra Pradesh
 - 5% (7 staff – 5 women and 2 men) believe sexual harassment is happening in their organisation; 91% say 'not happening'; 4% 'don't know'
 - 65% feel a need for an organisation sexual harassment policy; 33% said no; 3% don't know – relatively higher felt need in Tamil Nadu (92.5%) and least in Andhra Pradesh (46%) – with Karnataka in the middle (60.4%).

WPP development

- Initiation and motivation*
 - Initiation: by managers mainly after attending SAN! training in October 2005
 - Motivations: SAN!SIP workshops; benefits for HIV positive staff; presence of HIV positive staff; likelihood of having HIV positive staff (considering high staff number and/or type of work); ensuring job support for PLHIV in the NGO.
- Status of WPP in 11 NGOs*
 - From IDI: 8 NGOs with final draft; 3 with first draft; 1 with discussions going on; 2 with no WPP
 - Staff knowledge on WPP (survey): 83% know what a WPP is; 67% know their NGO has a WPP; 15% know discussions are ongoing about developing a WPP.
- Reasons for lack of WPP*
 - Lack of time and effort by management
 - Addressing HIV is part of the NGO philosophy (so no need for separate WPP).
- Methods of WPP development*
 - 10 NGOs developed/are developing the WPP in a consultative participatory way through: forming a committee (4) – which involves all staff in whole process, in later stages, or in one meeting; group discussions with all staff to discuss opinions and ideas
 - In one NGO draft was made by top level management
 - Reported representation in 11 NGOs: all staff (10); PLHIV (2); all genders (1)
 - Staff opinions on participatory WPP development (survey): 8% said no; 9% don't know; 83% said yes – 97% of whom reported that all levels of staff participated, and 100% that all sexual orientations participated – however, only 63% of respondents themselves participated.
- Documents and support used in development*
 - ILO (3, plus 2 intend to use); SAN!SIP (2); Good donorship guidelines (1, plus 1 intends to use); SAN!'s '10 points of developing a WPP' (1); SAN! CD (1)
 - Support received: by SAN!SIP (2); by other NGOs with WPP (4).

Issues of contention

- Coverage of treatment and support to family members – too expensive?
- Condom provision – encourage promiscuity?
- Who is covered – also volunteers?

Basic elements in policy

Information from 10 NGOs and from 103 staff in survey – first percentage is spontaneous answer, second (in brackets) is following probing

- Creation of awareness by education: 8 NGOs; 59% (90%) staff
- Promotion of non-discriminating environment: 6 NGOs; 59% (94%) staff
- Encourage (voluntary) disclosure, and ensure confidentiality: 7 NGOs; 53% (92%) staff
- Prevention: 5 NGOs
- Condom promotion: 15% (66%) staff
- VCT: 2 NGOs; 31% (83%) staff
- ART: 4 NGOs; 56% (84%) staff
- Support and care: 5 NGOs
- Focus on gender equity: 5 NGOs; 25% (75%) staff
- Staff benefits: 2 NGOs; 48% (86%) staff
- Sex education: 19% (72%) staff
- Counselling: 44% (87%) staff
- Staff participation: 26% (87%) staff
- Right to work: 44% (92%) staff.

Activity plan and budget

- NGOs with activity plan: 2 (info on 4)
- NGOs with budget: 4 (info on 9).

WPP implementation

Status of implementation

- 11/12 organisations have started activities (some also without an activity plan).

Activities

- Awareness raising and sensitization of staff: 8 IDIs - by regular internal talks and meetings; promote wall paintings on AIDS; workshop; training; external motivational speakers; peer education (technical staff train support staff); activities reported by 90% of staff
- Health insurance for staff: 7 IDI; staff 77%
- Condom supply for staff: 5 IDI; staff 39% (from 5 NGOs)
- Referral/access to ART: 3 IDI; staff 84%
- VCT information: 1 IDI; staff 82%

Effects of WPP reported in 11 NGOs

- Position of PLHIV improved, less stigma (11)
- Increased awareness of HIV and AIDS (6)
- Increased openness to discuss HIV and AIDS (5)
- Increased involvement of staff (2)
- More talk about gender (1)
- Development of counselling skills (1).

Plans

- Disseminate policy to all staff (6) – through meetings; workshop; training; awareness posters on WPP
- Spread idea of WPP to grantees, partners, and other stakeholders (2)
- Internal evaluation after one year of WPP (1).

Good practises, challenges and recommendations

Promising practices

- Already starting activities without donor funds having been received
- Creating awareness among staff
- Condom supply for staff
- Hanging posters on the wall to create awareness of HIV and WPP
- Continuing capacity building by SAN! and associates
- Gender sensitivity
- Planning for review of WPP

Expressed challenges reported in 11 NGOs with draft WPP

- Financial constraints (8) – to care for HIV positive staff
- Stigma and discrimination of fellow HIV positive staff (8)
- Lack of interest among staff for WPP (6)
- Changed identity (5) – instead of working for community now caring for staff; talking about HIV in FBO

- Lack of support (4)
- Misuse of the benefits by HIV positive staff (3)
- Time constraints (3) – for staff to be involved in WPP activities
- Family members to be covered by WPP (2)
- Negative stand on condom promotion (2)
- Maintaining confidentiality (2)
- Lack of knowledge: on the process (1); on counselling skills (1)
- Other challenges mentioned once: favours HIV positive staff above those with other diseases; lack of tolerance towards homosexuality; getting PLHIV in the organisation; difficulty to discuss sex related issues with female staff; translating WPP materials into vernacular.

Expressed challenges reported in 3 NGOs without WPP

- Time constraints to conduct WPP related activities (2)
- Lack of knowledge on the process (2)
- Lack of financial support (1)
- Stigma and discrimination of HIV positive staff (1)
- Lack of interest among staff (1).

Needed support

- Technical support (9) – for report writing; preparing a budget; how to tackle confidentiality and tolerance; literature – in vernacular
- Financial support (6) – for staff salary and travel; for medication for HIV positive staff.

Recommendations to partner organisations

- First step: internal awareness raising
- SAN!SIP NGOs to share experiences – look at promising practices of peer NGOs and replicate if applicable
- Start (or continue) implementing activities that do not cost money
- Disseminate WPP to all staff, translate if needed
- Write proposals for funding to bodies other than SAN! donors
- Participatory development of WPP
- Link with other stakeholders for services
- Provide information on HIV and AIDS and WPP for staff – for instance on a notice board
- In developing a WPP and budget, use the SAN! documents ‘Good donorship guidelines’ and budgeting tool ‘What’s it likely to cost’
- Open/continue dialogue with donors about managing HIV and AIDS in the workplace.

Recommendations to PC, SSIPG

- Assist organisations who are willing to develop WPP but who do not have technical know-how
- Facilitate linking and learning – share promising practices between organisations
- Continue training for capacity building – train organisations on SAN! tools (Good donorship guidelines, budgeting tool ‘What’s it likely to cost’)
- Lobby donors for quick release of funds
- Link with other stakeholders for services, public and private – share network with participating NGOs.

Recommendations to donors

- Quick release of funds for WPP
- Consider extension of funding
- Open/continue dialogue with partner organisations about managing HIV and AIDS in the workplace.