Workplace Policy Builder

The workplace provides an especially good venue to offer high-quality information, services, and support to a workforce affected by or concerned about HIV. With the epidemic affecting whole industries and businesses, along with families and individuals, strong HIV workplace policies and programs become all the more important. They provide direct services, confront overt discriminatory practices, protect employee benefits, and reduce stigma in the broader community. A safe workplace environment makes it more likely that employees will come forward for HIV counseling and testing. The result is a healthier workforce, lower medical costs, less absenteeism, improved morale, and greater support for affected families. In addition, HIV workplace policies represent the formal commitment of a company to contribute to the well-being of all workers and the success of their organizations.

TO ACCESS THE WORKPLACE POLICY BUILDER

The Workplace Policy Builder can be accessed online at http://www.healthpolicyinitiative.com/index.cfm?id=software&get=Policy%20Builder. It is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Chinese.
The Workplace Policy Builder (WPB) is an interactive software program that uses a participatory approach to guide companies and organizations through the step-by-step process of writing an HIV policy. It includes a number of resources: a database of corporate workplace policies from around the world, a literature database¹ on the impact of HIV, examples of national HIV policies, international standards, the AIDS Impact Model for Business (AIM-B), and a component for assessing the cost of any proposed program.

How Can the WPB Be Used?

The WPB software program provides users with a tool to develop, implement, and evaluate HIV workplace policies and programs in a participatory, team-building way—from the beginning stages of designing a policy to writing the first draft. It provides the following:

- A policy design process that complies with internationally recognized standards
- An easy-to-use, step-by-step format
- Informational materials and resources about HIV and its impact on the workplace
- Country-specific workplace policy information for more than 50 countries
- Examples of current workplace policies in different countries and industries
- Tools to help determine workplace policies best suited to different types of companies
- Tools to estimate the financial impact of HIV on an organization

How Has the WPB Been Used?

Several business councils in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have used the WPB to develop HIV policies, and companies and trade unions have used it to develop and implement HIV workplace policies. WPB also is incorporated into curricula of two South African universities. Country examples are presented below.

DEVELOPMENT OF HIV WORKPLACE POLICIES

Mozambique

In 2002, the government of Mozambique adopted Law 5/2002, which prohibits discrimination in hiring, retention, training, and promotion of employees on the basis of HIV status. Since then, several companies have used the WPB to develop and implement HIV workplace policies. Mozambique’s main telecommunications provider—Telecommunication Company—designed and obtained approval for an HIV workplace policy that covers stigma and discrimination, privacy and confidentiality, prevention, voluntary counseling and testing, and universal precautions. The port and freight company, Cornelder, adopted an HIV policy as part of its standard operating procedures and has used its influence to advocate with its subcontractors to adopt workplace HIV policies.

Trade unions in Mozambique play an important role as advocates and defenders of employees’ rights. Several trade unions have used the WPB to develop and endorse workplace HIV policies, including a trade union (SINTIUQI.AF) representing chemical, rubber, paper, and graphics workers, who also launched a nationwide awareness campaign to persuade affiliated companies to prepare and implement their own policies. The Confederation of Independent and Free Unions (CONSILMO) developed and endorsed an HIV policy that mandates the provision of HIV prevention services to all employees and requires member trade unions to implement prevention activities. The policy has motivated affiliated trade unions and companies to draft their own workplace policies.

The Mozambican Business Forum Against AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis (EcoSIDA) is leading private sector initiatives to design, implement, and evaluate HIV workplace policies. In 2009, EcoSIDA assisted several companies with using the WPB to prepare their own workplace policies—all of which subsequently have been approved and are being implemented.

¹Literature database updates have been added only in English.
Guatemala
In 2007, Guatemalan businesses launched the Business Foundation Committed to HIV (FUNDEC-VIH), an organization that aims to provide advice on and promote the establishment of workplace HIV policies that ensure adequate access to HIV information and foster work environments free of stigma and discrimination. Using the WPB, the USAID | Health Policy Initiative, Task Order 1, has been supporting FUNDEC-VIH in the design, implementation, and evaluation of HIV workplace policies. Specifically, the Health Policy Initiative has helped to ensure sustainability; strengthen local capacity to apply the WPB software; and support community networks and relationships that promote HIV workplace policy development, implementation, and subsequent monitoring and evaluation systems. Cementos Progreso, a founding member of the FUNDEC-VIH, used the WPB to draft its own workplace HIV policy. As part of this policy, the organization has begun training employees on HIV prevention and HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

**GENDER COMPONENT TO WPB**
A comprehensive workplace HIV policy should acknowledge the links between gender and HIV. In 2009, a gender component was added to the WPB to help organizations address the specific needs of women and men in their workplace HIV policies and programs.

**INCLUSION INTO UNIVERSITY CURRICULA**
The WPB has been incorporated into two South African degree programs: the Postgraduate Diploma in Management program at Stellenbosch University and the Master of Business Administration curriculum at North-West University. The WPB and its accompanying training curricula complement the existing curricula by providing students with information on how to use and adapt WPB for their workplaces, providing a resource they can use immediately following their graduation.

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