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Theme 3 - HIV/AIDS IN THE WORKPLACE

- Is there a specific legislation, policy or strategy in your country that address the issue of HIV/AIDS in the workplace? If so,

- how was it designed? Was it based on a diagnostic of the labor, social and economic conditions of people living with HIV/AIDS? Is it a national or a sectoral response? Has it been agreed by various sectors, public and private institutions

There is presently an HIV/AIDS workplace policy which was designed by the Dominica Employers Federation sometime in 2004. This policy was developed as a result of the view that to combat the AIDS epidemic at the workplace, there needed to be a collaborative effort and therefore the trade unions and the employer's representative were asked to be on a panel to discuss the matter. The employer's representative decided that the way forward was to have an HIV/AIDS workplace policy which it hoped would deal with all matters related to HIV/AIDS at the workplace. As a guide to the compilation of this document, research was conducted using the ILO guidelines. This policy was also based on the number of persons who had already been affected and the social and economic conditions of these individuals. It was noted that most of these persons were of the working age group. Initially, the idea of the policy was a sectoral (employer) response, however, discussions commence with the worker's representative and government representative on having it become a national policy. To show solidarity, the Policy was launched and was agreed upon.

-How is it being implemented? Are there any programs directly implemented by employers, workers and their representatives or are they just participating through the national policy or strategy?

There has been consensus from more than half of Employers on Island to have this Policy form part of their Collective Agreement.

Currently, no programs have been directly implemented by employers; however, several programs have been implemented in collaboration with the employer's federation; trade unions and the national HIV/AIDS Unit.

- Are there any mechanisms in place to measure the cost effectiveness of interventions in the workplace that responds to HIV/AIDS?

Not Presently.

- How are the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work and the ILO/WHO Guidelines on HIV/AIDS currently implemented in your country?

These guidelines have been implemented thus far although not sufficiently with the cooperation of some employers through their HIV/AIDS workplace policy since this policy was developed around them.

Also the National Aids Response Unit is presently using this document to assist employers towards adopting their internal policies. To date work has been done through the unit with a total of 17 employers who have all implemented a framework.

- What are some of the challenges that your organization/country have faced in implementing the aforementioned Code and Guidelines? What are potential solutions to address these challenges?

Not all employers are receptive of this policy. A possible potential solution to these challenges is to ensure that there is legislation to govern how persons with HIV/AIDs are treated at the workplace. Once this policy and procedure becomes a legal instrument, then more employers would adhere to it.

- In your experience, what are some effective interventions to reduce discrimination/stigmatization in the workplace for people living with HIV/AIDS

Some effective interventions to reduce discriminations/stigmatization in the workplace for people living with HIV/AIDS would be to basically educating the working population. Having participated and conducted varies HIV/AIDS session one will notice that several persons are not fully educated on how the AIDS epidemic is transmitted and there are a lot of misconceptions. Another way would be to have persons living with HIV/AIDS conduct sessions or tell their life stories. This however may have some shortcomings since our country is very small and there may be the issue of privacy. So, what could be done is to have persons from other countries share their experiences. In Dominica, the National Aids Response Unit has been using interactive educational sessions (skits) particularly with younger persons. Sometime, authorities wait until World AIDS day to talk about the epidemic, what should be done instead is to discuss the topic in general forums on an ongoing basis.

- In your experience, what are some effective preventative interventions to protect workers at elevated risk of contracting HIV/AIDS due to the nature of their work?

Some effective preventative interventions to protect workers at elevated risk of contracting HIV/AIDS due to the nature of their work would be to:-

- 1. ensure that all health and safety measures are followed, that e fully equipped First Aids kits are provided for at strategic locations in the establishment;*
- 2. educate employees on HIV/AIDS matters with emphasis on employees who must be reminded that they must always take appropriate action to protect both the health of others and their own health;*
- 3. provision of reasonable accommodations for an employee who may divulge confidential information that he/she is HIV positive so that that employee will not be at risk of transmitting the disease;*

4. The availability and distribution of male and female condoms for use this certainly will become necessary in the commercial sex industry.

- In your experience, what are some effective interventions to prevent HIV/AIDS in the workplace and to promote healthy workplaces in relation to HIV/AIDS?

- 1. the collaborative tripartite effort in training in HIV/AIDS*
- 2. the assistance of donor funding agencies, by that, more persons are trained on the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS*
- 3. The continuous education of all stakeholders on all aspects of the disease.*