

HIV/AIDS in the World of Work

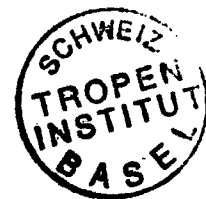
“Employers’ & Employees’ Views and Perceptions about
HIV/AIDS Workplace Issues & Initiatives”

Dissertation submitted by
Robert Ntalo

As partial fulfilment for the award of a degree of
Master of Science in International Health (M.I.H)

Supervisor
Dr. Axel Hoffmann

Swiss Tropical Institute
University of Basel, Switzerland
August 2005



Miss 262
3997928

ART	Anti Retroviral Therapy
ARV	Anti Retro Viral
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
FUE	Federation of Uganda Employers
FHI	Family Health International
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIH	Masters in International Health
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoGLSD	Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NOTU	National Organisation of Trade Unions
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
PSF	Private Sector Foundation
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
UAC	Uganda AIDS Commission
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations AIDS Programme
UMA	Uganda Manufacturers Association
VCT	Voluntary Counselling and Testing
WHO	World Health Organisation
WPP	Workplace Policies and Programmes

Abstract (Summary)

AIDS is uniquely destructive to economies, because it kills people in the prime of their lives. In Uganda, nearly 80% of those infected with HIV are between 15 to 45 years, the most economically productive age group and often the fenders of families. HIV/AIDS is no longer

only a public health issue, but also a human resource and hence a workplace issue. Many studies have tended to focus on the impact HIV/AIDS has on the productivity and functioning of business institutions and organisations. This study was done with the main objective of analyzing employers' and employees' views and perceptions about HIV/AIDS in workplaces and initiatives implemented to address it. It was an exploratory descriptive study done using qualitative research methods in 3 urban districts in Uganda. In-depth interviews were conducted with 6 key informants, 32 purposively selected employers from the private formal sector and 89 randomly selected employees. Only 26 out of 32 employers thought that HIV is a threat to the functioning and profitability of their institutions. 28 of the employers recognized the need and importance of having HIV/AIDS Workplace Policies and Programmes (WPP) but only 13 had functional institution based WPP for their employees. Institutions employing highly qualified employees were more likely to have HIV/AIDS WPP. 27% of the 89 employees said their jobs predispose them to acquiring HIV while 87% mentioned that all employees are predisposed attributing it to employees' duties and responsibilities, behaviors and social conduct related to their jobs especially those who are "highly mobile". 45 employees knew at least one workmate "suspected" of being HIV positive with 10 having been told by the HIV positive person him/herself. 13 institutions have HIV/AIDS treatment schemes for their employees but there is less enthusiasm with HIV prevention activities, care and support to employees' dependants and communities a concern also raised by the key informants. HIV/AIDS is gradually being taken up as a workplace and human resource issue but only a few institutions are involving their employees in the development of HIV/AIDS WPP. There is also limited dissemination of the set up HIV/AIDS WPP to the employees. Financial constraints, little involvement / participation of employees and too much "routine" work were some problems reported affecting utilization and implementation of HIV/AIDS WPP. Despite the relatively high-risk perception about the effect of HIV on the functioning of institutions, response of employers in providing comprehensive HIV/AIDS programmes is still minimal. Employers need to set up HIV/AIDS WPP, strengthen their organizational response in mobilizing leadership and resources and develop practical plans necessary to ensure that employees and their families are involved in implementing and benefiting from HIV/AIDS workplace activities.

1.0 The HIV-AIDS Problem

The total number of people living with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) rose in 2004 to reach its highest level ever: an estimated 39.4 million people are now living with the virus. It is estimated that 4.9 million people acquired HIV in 2004 and that the