

Myanmar Business Coalition
on AIDS (MBCA)
Profile

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I. Business Coalitions in the Region and Myanmar Business Coalition on AIDS.

The first business coalition in the region is the Thailand Business Coalition on AIDS (TBCA) which was established in 1993. Since then, the Thailand Business Coalition has assisted in setting up similar Business Coalition on AIDS in the region and beyond; viz Malaysian Business Coalition South African Business Council on AIDS , the Zambian Business Coalition on AIDS , Botswana Business Coalition on AIDS and the Vietnamese Business Coalition on AIDS. In 1997 TBCA had provided technical assistance to the Union of Myanmar Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UMCCI) to develop a business response to HIV/AIDS with support from UNIDO, UNDP and WHO. However, the Myanmar Business Coalition could not be formed at the time for various reasons. The ultimate acceptance by the government was achieved in the year 2000 due to the effort and commitment of the Tuesday Club. The MBCA was founded by the donation of some of the Tuesday Club members and the seeding fund from AUSAID. Although the MBCA had been formed, the working force of MBCA was missing as the MBCA could be staffed only in October, 2002.

II. The HIV/AIDS and Business Connection. Why Business Responded.

When AIDS first appeared 2 decades ago, no one could have predicted the impact it would have on the world. Now the impact has exceeded three times the predicted figure. At the end of 2002 according to UNAIDS people living with AIDS have reached 42 million. 80% are in the 15 to 49 years age group, the most productive age. Myanmar, is not exempted from the global trend and has the highest incidence in this group. As this group reflects the backbone of the work force, businesses around the world have been affected. Thus, HIV/AIDS has become an important, urgent, business issue.

As any business issue the HIV/AIDS issue should be addressed because lack of HIV/AIDS awareness causes destructive workplace conflicts such as stigmatization, discrimination and mismanagement of HIV –positive staff. Furthermore doing nothing on HIV/AIDS workplace ultimately increases costs to the company.

A company affected by HIV/AIDS is not an "If" issue but a "when" situation, companies can still take the leading role in the battle against HIV/AIDS as business have corporate resources. According to an economic analysis by McGraw –Hill, Inc the potential worst-case scenario impact on the world economy could equal 1.4% of the annual global gross product – this is approximately the same as the entire economy of Australia. Thus, the HIV/AIDS impact on the global business can be immense and the HIV/AIDS connection to business cannot be denied.

III. MBCA Objectives

The objectives of MBCA are to assist the private sector to provide a set of guidelines, workplace policies and procedures that address HIV/AIDS issues in the workplace. Assistance in providing information for forming policies and procedures that can be adopted by member companies to:-

1. Prevent against HIV/AIDS by increasing HIV/AIDS awareness and knowledge.
2. Manage and mitigate the impact of HIV /AIDS on the world of work
3. Care and support workers infected and affected by HIV/AIDS
4. Eliminate stigma and discrimination on the basis of real or perceived HIV status.
5. Design and implement HIV /AIDS program in their companies.
6. Develop educational programs that assist Myanmar Business to implement HIV/AIDS Human Resource Management Training
7. MBCA to form networks with existing organizations and AIDS networks within the Asian region.

IV MBCA Functions and Activities.

1. To assist business in forming HIV/AIDS policies .
2. To assist business in planning, initiating and implementing the HIV/AIDS work place programs.
3. To coordinate between the business and HIV/AIDS related organizations in addressing HIV/AIDS issues in the work place.
4. To form local networks with HIV/AIDS related organizations .
5. To form regional and global networks with other business coalitions.

Activities:

- In February, 2001, MBCA in its fledgling stage had provided AIDS management training in conjunction with TBCA for 43 local businesses.
- In September,2001 Mr. Martin Pun and Mr. Duncan McLean, the two representatives of MBCA attended a two day seminar on "Business and Labour responds to HIV/AIDS in Asia " sponsored by CDC
- In October 2002, MBCA had opened the office at room 626 Traders Hotel
- MBCA is currently engaged in the HIV/AIDS workplace program at Pun Hlaing Golf Estate and Yoma Bank.

V. Services for the Business Community

Understanding the need for flexibility, business may tailor its own workplace program package. MBCA can provide the following:-

1. Executive Briefing
2. Human Resource Managers Workshop
3. Staff Training
4. Peer Education
5. Training of Trainers
6. Coordination between HIV/AIDS related organizations and the company concerned
7. Assisting companies in forming the company HIV/AIDS policy.
8. Supervision and assistance in implementing ongoing sustained HIV/AIDS programs.

One of the most important services of MBCA to the business community is providing a place where companies with HIV issues can seek consultation; a place where infected and affected staff could come to receive needed assistance without being embarrassed.

Executive Briefing - Either in the form of seminars and interviews with executives.

Contents –

- HIV pandemic and in Myanmar.
- The Business link between the HIV pandemic & business.
- The impact of HIV/AIDS.
- The prepared Co., & unprepared Co:s
- The leadership role of business in the global fight against HIV The development of HIV policies in the workplace.

Managers' workshop - Managers & Human Resource Managers at HIV program planning sessions or at workshops. (**4 hours session for planning; 2 full days for workshop. Maximum- 30people**)

Contents:-

- The HIV basic facts.
- The business link,
- The importance of preparedness
- The case scenarios of possible conflicts & HIV issues and ways of resolving
- The feasibility study of proposed HIV/AIDS workplace program and planning for implementation.
- The establishment of working relationship with managers so as to
- Assist in resolving any HIV/AIDS in the workplace issue.

Training of Trainers & Peer Educators - The people whom the workers will listen are identified and chosen to be peer educators or trainers. They are given detailed HIV /AIDS facts and referral sites (organization/people)
(5 days sessions of maximum 30)

Contents:-

- HIV/AIDS Knowledge.. Chronology, Transmission, non –transmission, voluntary confidential, counseling and testing, care & support of HIV infected and affected staff. Who & where to refer. The myths and facts.

Staff Training - All levels of staff. 30 to 40 groups of 4 hour session

Contents:-

- Basic HIV facts. Health & Infection- STI & HIV.
- Transmission & non transmission, emphasis the non transmissibility by casual workplace contact.
- Personal risk assessment.
- The condom use and protective methods.

Ongoing involvement - Assist in developing and implementing HIV/AIDS in the workplace program.

- Assist in developing HIV/AIDS in the **workplace policies**
- Form BAN – **Business AIDS Network**
- Inform other business coalitions on the involved Co:s workplace policies & programs so as to share information and give a **corporate image** for the Co:s
- **Ongoing education** in the form of Questions and answers, wall journals, video shows, talks
- **Ongoing coordination/contribution** – to resolve HIV workplace issues including counseling ,testing and for care & support
- **Beyond the workplace** to the community- talks & video shows.

VI. Expected Outcome of MBCA Activities

- Component 1 – Reduction of individual risk.
- Component 2 – Increased Awareness in the general public and in the workplaces. (targeted groups)
- Component 3 – Partial contribution from MBCA for PLWHA Workers
- Component 4 – Creating an environment for HIV/AIDS in the Workplace Programs to be implemented.

VII Current MBCA Activities

VII (a) Yoma Bank

- MBCA is currently involved in the initial phase of HIV/AIDS workplace program in a **local bank (Yoma)**
- Staff of over 2000, with 75 managers , clients estimated at 300000 (40,000 per day turnover)
- MBCA has had one manager's advocacy and planning session.(15th February,2003) 26 managers had participated.

VII(b) Pun Hlaing Golf Estate

- MBCA is in the first phase of the workplace program at **Pun Hlaing Golf Estate (PHGE)** a local, international standard golf estate.
- 43 Managers, over 2000 staff, over 500 clients.

MBCA has conducted:-

- Two managers' advocacy & planning meetings for the 43 managers on January 2003.
- Staff trainings on a twice a week basis since the February, 2003. Approximately 50 to 60 staff a week has participated. (Total 301 staff have participated)
- MBCA has put up ongoing education materials in the form of monthly journal on a display board, and has put question boxes where the staff can put in their questions

For the next phase- Training for trainers, peer education, counselor training and weekly consultation for concerned staff and talks and shows are planned.

VII© Grand Plaza Park Royal Hotel (April,2003 & May,2003)

- MBCA has conducted 2 managers' advocacy meetings for local and expatriate managers of the hotel covering 25 managers.
- MBCA has conducted 14 staff trainings covering 296 staff

VII(d) Yangon Garment Manufacturing (YGM) (Since 17th May,2003)
(Staff of 1300 workers)

MBCA has been conducting weekly staff training since 17th May of 2003.
69 workers has participated up to date.

VII(e) Grand Meeyahta Executive Residences

2 Staff Trainings covering 71 staff. during 2 sessions 21st & 23rd May, 2003.

VIII Future Activities are planned as following:-

To develop and assist in HIV/AIDS programs for the businesses of the Tuesday Club members and other private businesses.:

Tuesday Club and it's board is the "founder" of MBCA and it has an organization of over 100 companies . It is the intention of MBCA to contact all members of this organization to implement MBCA's programs. A sixty percent (60%) penetration means a program success of many tens of thousand employees. (Major 5 companies have over 10,000 employees)