Workers and the families, workplaces and communities that depend on them are bearing the brunt of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

But as those most directly affected, workers and their organizations are among the best able to respond effectively.
Why is AIDS an issue for trade unions?

Because workers - and the families, workplaces and communities that depend on them - are bearing the brunt of the epidemic.

AIDS is concentrated among adults of working age: of the 40 million people estimated to be infected today, 80% are adults and at least 26 million are workers in their productive prime (15-49 years).

Workers are losing their health, their income, their rights and their lives to this disease.

The HIV epidemic threatens the capacity of trade unions
• to organize and represent the interests of their members
• to promote decent wages
• to ensure fair working conditions
• to protect the rights of their members
• to maintain a corps of experienced leaders and organisers
• to participate in social dialogue on national issues affecting employment, the labour market and human resources, and even to survive …

But as those most directly affected, workers and their organizations are among the best able to respond effectively.

“We are committed to working with our members to educate, involve and mobilize them to take on this challenge ... They must not sit back and wait for others to do it or for others to lead. Our efforts, of course, are only part of the solution to this global crisis and must be a powerful force for change. It is, literally, a matter of life and death.”
Guy Ryder, General Secretary, ICFTU

“Two out of three people living with HIV/AIDS go to work every day - it makes the workplace a vital entry point for tackling HIV/AIDS.”
Juan Somavia, Director-General, ILO

Of the 25-strong executive committee of the Kenya Central Organisation of Trade Unions in 1986, five are still alive today - most of the deaths were from AIDS.
What can trade unions do?

Nationally and internationally, trade unions are able to:

• mobilize extensive networks of members and contacts;
• negotiate workplace agreements/policies with employers and help ensure implementation;
• make use of experience in education and training;
• and build on their influence in the community and with government.

Unions and employers increasingly agree that it is in their common interest to take action against AIDS. Many employers’ and workers’ organizations are already active in the fight against AIDS. Much experience has been gained and materials developed that can be drawn on. So it’s a good idea to make contact with other unions and useful partners and find out what is already being done, and what could be done collaboratively.

HIV/AIDS is a global threat, though the links between AIDS and poverty mean that trade unions in high-income countries may not give it such high priority as those in parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America. But the response to AIDS needs to be global if it is to be effective - there’s no room for complacency or denial. Unions in every part of the world have members affected by the disease, as well as a long-standing commitment to international solidarity.

In addition, some unions are setting up solidarity programmes with sister unions in countries that are more severely affected, while unions in low-income countries are helping extend workplace programmes to the local community.


“The IOE and the ICFTU jointly recognize the direct impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the world of work. [W]e hereby call on [our] affiliates and their member enterprises and trade unions, wherever located, to give the issue highest priority, . . . and to work together to generate and maintain the momentum necessary for successful interventions.”

Five steps to action for all trade unions

1. Agree a policy for the union on HIV/AIDS, including appointing a responsible officer/committee and establishing a time-bound action plan
2. Guide and support members in negotiating a policy at their workplaces to ensure protection of rights and education for prevention, as well as access to care, treatment and statutory benefits
3. Include HIV/AIDS on the agenda of union meetings and in the union’s training programme, and strengthen health education in general - especially for women and young members
4. Increase the capacity of members to implement workplace programmes that take into account the different needs of men and women - include the training of trainers and of peer educators
5. Lobby the government to recognize AIDS as a critical labour and development issue, with the aim of
   - increasing the funds they give to fight it (whether as overseas aid or the national budget),
   - including the social partners in national planning, and
   - bringing down the prices of drugs (through action on intellectual property rights and patents).
How can trade unions develop policies and programmes?

The ILO has produced a package to encourage and support action at the workplace:

a Code of Practice + training manual

The ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work sets out fundamental principles for policy development and practical guidelines for concrete responses in the following key areas:

• prevention of HIV/AIDS
• management and mitigation of the impact of HIV/AIDS in the world of work
• care and support of workers infected and affected by HIV/AIDS
• elimination of stigma and discrimination on the basis of HIV status.

The nine sections cover the objectives, use and scope of the Code; key principles; rights and responsibilities of each of the tripartite partners; prevention through information and education, training programmes; testing; and care and support.

The Code was drafted in consultation with constituents in all regions, reviewed and revised by a tripartite group of experts, and adopted by the ILO Governing Body in June 2001. It can be used to introduce social dialogue on HIV/AIDS and as the basis for negotiations; it includes a checklist for planning and implementing workplace action.

Implementing the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS: an education and training manual has been produced to complement the Code. It provides technical information, case studies, learning activities, model training courses, and samples of legislation, policies and collective agreements. It covers the roles of government and the social partners, human rights and legal issues, workplace policies, programmes for prevention and care, the gender dimension, and reaching out to the informal economy. Each module of the manual follows the same pattern: it presents information on key issues that help explain and expand on what is covered by the Code, includes useful reference material such as sample policies, and has a section of learning activities ready to photocopy - a number specifically targeted to employers and employers’ organizations.

The first section is a guide to the manual - it includes tips for trainers plus eight sample programmes for workshops or courses (lasting two or three days) and four components (lasting two or three hours) that you can slot into other courses. Please read it!
## 1. Basic information about HIV/AIDS

### Impact of the disease and how it is transmitted

#### How does the epidemic affect workers and their organizations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>See in the Code of Practice</th>
<th>Rights &amp; responsibilities of workers and their organisations</th>
<th>Basic facts about the epidemic and its implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 5.3 Appendix I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### How is HIV transmitted and what are the risks of infection at the workplace?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>See in the Code of Practice</th>
<th>Basic facts about the epidemic and its implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>See in the manual</th>
<th>The epidemic and its impact on the world of work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module 1</td>
<td>The impact of HIV/AIDS on the world of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning activities 2, 4, 5 and 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 2</th>
<th>HIV/AIDS and human rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pages 4 - 6: The ILO, HIV/AIDS and human rights; page 17: Testimonies of stigma and discrimination</td>
<td>Learning activities 2, 5 and 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>See in the Code of Practice</th>
<th>Basic facts about the epidemic and its implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>See in the manual</th>
<th>The epidemic and its impact on the world of work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module 1</td>
<td>Facts about HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning activities 1 and 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 6</th>
<th>Workplace programmes for HIV/AIDS prevention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>page 1: Introduction; pages 7 - 8: Risk assessment and management</td>
<td>Learning activities 5, 7 and 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is transmitted through body fluids, typically during unprotected sex, infected blood transfusions, contaminated hypodermic needles and from an infected mother to her unborn child. It is not transmitted through casual contact with an infected person such as shaking hands or hugging, sharing toilets and washing facilities, or through coughing and sneezing.

Once infected, a person can live healthily and work effectively for many years, without presenting a threat to other workers. Stigma and discrimination encourage fear and denial, drive the disease ‘underground’, and hinder prevention programmes.
## 2. Creating understanding, stimulating action

### Advocacy with governments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do we persuade the government that national policy should include the world of work and dialogue with the social partners?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>See in the Code of Practice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See in the manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Advocacy with employers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do we work together with employers to respond to HIV/AIDS at the workplace?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>See in the Code of Practice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sections 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See in the manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The impact of HIV/AIDS on business has repercussions for the labour force and the national economy.

Some examples of costs (training manual Module 1, page 7):

- One major transport company with 11,500 workers in Zimbabwe found that 3,400 of them were HIV-positive in 1996. Costs for the company related to HIV/AIDS amounted to more than $1 million or 20% of company profits.

- A number of firms in the US report annual costs of between US$ 3,500 and US$6,000 for each worker with HIV/AIDS.

- A Thai government study has calculated that the direct and indirect cost of HIV/AIDS to the nation was US$ 1.2 billion in 2000.
3. Policies and programmes

A union strategy on HIV/AIDS

What are the main points to include in a policy and workplan for the union?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Key principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rights and responsibilities of workers and their organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 5.3</td>
<td>Prevention through information and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See in the Code of Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS and human rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Workplace action through social dialogue and the role of employers, workers and their organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS and the world of work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See in the manual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 - 6: The ILO, HIV/AIDS and human rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 - 5: Workplace policies and programmes on HIV/AIDS; 8 - 10: Advocacy and leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3 and 4: How does gender inequality spread HIV/AIDS? 5 and 6: Men and masculinity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A workplace policy on HIV/AIDS

What should be covered in a workplace policy or agreement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Key principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rights and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 and 5.3</td>
<td>checklist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See in the Code of Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS and human rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Workplace action through social dialogue and the role of employers, workers and their organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A legal and policy framework: the role of government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS and the world of work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See in the manual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 - 7: Workplace policies and programmes on HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11 - 13: Legislation on HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7 - 10: Gender issues in the workplace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Companies large and small, international and local, emphasize the cost-effectiveness of workplace action against HIV/AIDS. Prevention programmes are widespread, with an increasing number of employers offering care and treatment. Many companies understand that trust and social dialogue are essential for effective action, and have declared ‘zero tolerance’ for discrimination at the workplace.

The Ford Motor Company in South Africa was one of the first multinationals to implement a workplace policy developed in full cooperation with the trade unions: “Companies have a moral obligation to employees, a financial responsibility to shareholders, and a responsibility to the community, to act now against HIV/AIDS.”
3. Policies and programmes

A workplace programme on HIV/AIDS

What should be included in a workplace programme to reduce the spread of HIV and the impact of AIDS?

| Section 6 | Prevention through information and education |
| Section 7 | Training |
| Section 9 | Care and support |

See in the Code of Practice

Module 5

The gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS and the world of work
- pages 11 - 14: Working towards gender equality
  - Learning activities 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8

Module 6

Workplace programmes for HIV/AIDS prevention
- pages 6 - 9: Prevention at the workplace; page 10: Gender-specific programmes
- pages 11 - 14: Peer educators; page 15: Protecting young people; pages 18 - 20: Case studies
  - Learning activities 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 13

Module 7

Care and support
- pages 4 - 11: Care and support in the workplace; pages 15 - 16: Case studies
  - Learning activities 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8

Extending workplace action

How can we make links with workers’ families, the local community and workers in the informal economy?

| Section 5 | General rights and responsibilities |
| Section 6 | Prevention through information and education |
| Section 9 | Care and support |

See in the Code of Practice

Module 6

Workplace programmes for HIV/AIDS prevention
- page 15: Protecting young people; page 16: Mother to child transmission;
  - Learning activities 4, 8, 10 and 11

Module 7

Care and support
- pages 12 and 13: Care and support for orphans; page 14: Social protection
  - Learning activities 6, 8 and 9

Module 8

HIV/AIDS and the informal economy
- pages 8 - 10: Applying the Code; pages 14 and 15: Reaching out to the informal economy
  - Learning activities 1, 2, 5 and 7

ILOAIDS

The ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS and the world of work
International Labour Organization
4 route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 799 8337
Fax: +41 22 799 6349
E-mail: iloaids@ilo.org

www.ilo.org/aids