

HIV/AIDS prevention activities in UCBP



*“Always safety
first”*

Promotion of 100%
use of condom
targeting
construction workers



Like many sub Saharan countries, HIV/AIDS is one of the major factors adversely affect the development of the Ethiopia. Studies showed that in 2008 the HIV prevalence rate was 2.2% and more than 1 million people were living with HIV/AIDS. The estimated prevalence was 7.7 % in urban and 0.9% in rural areas.

Approaches:

GTZ IS has endorsed its own workplace HIV/AIDS policy in 2006 and is also committed itself for mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in those companies participating in the UCBP. The external mainstreaming approach in the UCBP, which initiated in October 2006, is categorized in to two. The first group refers those companies with contractual agreement with UCBP while the second target groups are construction workers at site level

- **Company Level activities:** the objective of Company level HIV/AIDS mainstreaming activities is to enable companies to develop their own workplace HIV/AIDS policy and sustain the program in their work setting. So far, 25 company focal persons are trained in two rounds from Tier I, II and III. Technical support also provided to those Tier III companies participated in the trainings. This includes provision of teaching materials, technical assistance on how to develop HIV/AIDS workplace policies and related activities.

Companies are supported to develop their own workplace HIV/AIDS policy and engage them in mobilizing their workers for HIV/AIDS prevention activities at the UCBP sites as well as at their head quarters. Sustaining HIV/AIDS mainstreaming among companies is also linked with GTZ IS support to them in ISO 9001; 2000.

In this process, these companies implemented promising activities in reviewing their operational direction, learn from their past experience and identify priority areas in order to scale up of HIV/AIDS intervention in the construction industry.

The initiative of GTZ IS enabled the companies to maintain the health and productivity of their workers which contributed to increasing the companies' competitiveness in the market. Further more, by caring out their corporate social responsibility; it is believed that the companies build a positive image in the public mind as well as improved their long term business competitiveness and profitability.

Strategies/approaches for company level activities include:

- **Development of Workplace policy:** Provide technical support on how to develop HIV/AIDS workplace policy. Follow ups and supervisions will be given to the companies. They will also receive a draft workplace policy where they can modify it to meet the need of their own company
 - **Provide training for HIV/AIDS focal persons:** Different trainings and periodical meetings will be organized for company HIV/AIDS focal persons to empower them to lead HIV/AIDS prevention and Care activities at their respective companies
 - **Provide technical and material support:** Provide appropriate teaching materials to the companies as well as technical support through various communication channels.
 - **Networking:** Networking companies in UCBP with strategic partners who can support the companies in different ways
- **Site level Activities:** At site level the objective is to enable construction workers to protect themselves from HIV infection; and to enable them to avoid any type of stigma and discrimination to those construction workers who disclose their HIV status or suspected to live with HIV.

HIV/AIDS focal persons at each UCBP site were assigned in March 2007. These focal persons are responsible for HIV/AIDS prevention activities supplementary to their daily activities. They also closely work with governmental and non governmental organizations in their locality.

There are GTZ IS HIV/AIDS focal persons at each of the 15 construction sites. These focal persons organize different HIV/AIDS related activities targeting construction workers primarily, and also university students. Awareness events, peer education trainings, mini media, Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT), user friendly condom distribution, and IE/BCC material distribution are some of the activities carried out by the HIV/AIDS focal persons.

Strategies/approaches for site level activities include:

- **Peer Education:** Train and deploy peer educators to reach as many construction workers as possible
- **Organize mass educational events:** together with different organizations working in the respective local area focal persons organize educational events for all construction workers at the sites.

- **Mini media Program:** Facilitate mini-media programs and reach construction workers (it is already implemented in some sites)
- **Distribution of condoms:** Condoms are purchased by UCBP and distributed at each site using condom dispensaries. In most sites there is at least one condom dispensary at each lot and refilling is conducted by peer educators and HIV/AIDS focal persons
- **Distribution of helmets and different educational materials:** A total of 20,000 helmets with HIV/AIDS messages “Safety First” are produced by GTZ IS together with DKT Ethiopia which is a social marketing organization for Condoms and family planning methods in Ethiopia.
- **Facilitate Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) events:** After the peer education as well as all activities conducted, Voluntary Counseling and Testing will be organized at the site. Different organizations which can provide the service for free, will be approached by the HIV/AIDS focal persons to be followed by mobilization activities before the testing team arrives at the site.

Results:

Company level:

- A total of 25 Tier I, II and III companies are trained on workplace HIV/AIDS prevention activities and started intervention. Three companies have drafted their workplace policy.
- All companies availed educational materials to their staff members at their head offices
- Some companies organized awareness creation activities for their staff members after the training
- Trainings on HIV/AIDS were provided to TEVT teachers and UCBP national skill up-graders as part of their training package at the CEE.



Sensitization event at AMB construction head office

Site level:

- Peer educators selected from construction companies, trained and deployed to educate their co-workers
- Different educational mass events such as video shows, personal testimonials of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) , dramas and lectures conducted



Mass events at Dire Dawa UCBP site and Axum sites

- 200,000 pcs of Condoms distributed to construction workers for the period of October 2007 to September 2008; another 224, 640 pcs of condoms handed over at the 15 sites.
- Of the total 20, 000 helmets, more than 14,000 helmets distributed to UCBP site construction workers.
- A total of 2,975 construction workers were tested for HIV and 31 people became HIV positive.

The HIV/AIDS mainstreaming Coordinator provides overall technical support to focal persons both at site and company level in implementing their activities. On the other hand, during the implementation process, it was observed that the peer educators' training at site level is not standardized and there is difference among sites in terms of the content and duration of the training. This is because they conduct the training based on the availability and collaboration of organizations in their locality. In order to reduce the limitations, a handbook of peer educators prepared and distributed to focal persons. This handbook will be a standardized reference material for peer educators and also will be a base for site level peer education trainings.