

Strategic Advisory Service
for Human Resources

Managing HIV/AIDS

I C R A F

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The Strategic Advisory Service for Human Resources (SAS-HR) works to strengthen the human resources network of the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). It devises strategies that recognize the diversity and autonomy of each participating CGIAR research center, define short- and long-term needs with staff and management, create solutions, and help establish a virtual community of human resources professionals in CGIAR centers, donor agencies, and partner institutions.

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Introduction to the Good Practice Showcase

"If only we knew what we already know" is a dilemma that haunts knowledge-based organizations. The CGIAR is no exception.

Every organization does certain things exceptionally well. But most organizations do not actively capture those experiences or make them available to others. As a result, valuable knowledge is lost.

The CGIAR system is actively renewing itself. In the complex network of autonomous centers that characterizes the system, sharing good practices will help to save money, speed progress, avoid costly errors, foster teamwork, and enhance the quality of our products and services. All of this will strengthen our brand in the world and reinforce the faith of stakeholders in the ability of the system to evolve and meet future needs.

The Strategic Advisory Service for Human Resources—a service established by CIAT, CIMMYT, IPGRI, IWMI, WorldFish, and the CGIAR System Office—is pleased to present this series showcasing good Human Resource Management practices. The practices described come from staff members who chose ingenious options—often counter-intuitive to the thinking at the time—and managers who implemented them with imagination and effectiveness. By expanding the realm of the possible in the discipline, they also add to our body of professional knowledge.

For more information about the practice described in this publication, please contact the CGIAR Center that implemented the practice. For more information on other titles in this series, please contact the SAS-HR at email: sashr@cgiar.org

What Motivated the New Practice?

- The loss of staff located in the high HIV/AIDS prevalence areas, i.e. Sub-Saharan Africa locations where we work; due to the scourge of HIV/AIDS. On one incident, two staff died within hours apart (one at dawn and the other at sunset)
- The frustrations of the supervisors due to lack of policy guidelines on how to handle HIV infected staff, frequent hospitalization, absence from work, escalating medical bills, etc.
- Loss of highly trained/performing professional staff in areas where we work
- High medical bills related to HIV/AIDS related illnesses
- Lack of medical insurance cover for HIV/AIDS related illness

What Was Done?

Policy Development and Implementation:

- Developed a participatory approach to policy development on HIV/AIDS at the workplace
- Survey was conducted to determine the need for a policy on management of HIV/AIDS at the workplace, and the workforce's level of understanding of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and how it affects them as individuals.
- Monitoring of issues regarding implementation of the HIV/AIDS policy in outreach stations is on-going

Education and Prevention Program:

- Seminars facilitated by doctors, social workers, people living with Aids (PLWA) and experts in issues of HIV/AIDS; have been organized where issues were discussed in the open, in order to increase the understanding and compassion and non-discrimination.
- World AIDS day has been observed at HQ and in various stations where activities have been programmed to commemorate the event. Staff have also joined the community in commemoration of the world's event.
- Appointment of HIV/AIDS focal point persons in each country whose responsibilities are to ensure that the ICRAF's HIV/AIDS policy is implemented consistently, coordinate HIV/AIDS activities, assess availability of ARVs and consolidate and disseminate information about HIV/AIDS to staff
- A series of HIV/AIDS education prevention seminars were scheduled as follows:
 - An overview and Impact of HIV/AIDS at the workplace - by *Dr. Sabina Beckmann* - GTZ Reproductive Health Project.
 - HIV/AIDS at the workplace: Coping with the disease - by Jane Murikui & David Kidi (PLWA) – *Kenya Aids Society*
 - Emerging Policies and trends on HIV/AIDS at the Workplace - Joel Momanyi (FKE) and Diana Kageni - UNDP
 - Current trends of HIV/AIDS and Rape - Post exposure - by Prof. Lule, Physician/Lecturer University of Nairobi and Pamela Ochieng of HMS
 - Nutrition and Management of HIV/AIDS - by Wilfred M. Kisingu (KEMRI)
 - Voluntary Counseling and Testing – by Carol Ngare, Kenya National AIDS/STDs Control Programme (NASCOP)

- Seminars on Nutrition and Management of HIV/AIDS at the workplace have also been organized for staff in Western Kenya, Uganda and to our Southern Africa regional representatives from Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- Since inception of the programme, contacts with organizations and people involved in HIV/AIDS and prevention programmes have been established as follows:

Identification of organizations/people with HIV/AIDS education and Prevention Programme:

- Organizations and people dealing with HIV/AIDS education and prevention activities have been identified and a directory of this information is maintained
- This is an on-going exercise as we seek for new ways of improving our programs.

Establish working relationship with VCT establishments in Kenya:

- Currently working with the National AIDS/STDs Control Programme (NASCO), who are in charge of VCT establishment in Kenya. Discussions have been held with NASCO regarding establishing a mobile VCT centre at ICRAF campus to enable staff volunteer for HIV testing. NASCO is willing to facilitate this exercise as long as ICRAF management establishes a strong counseling programme for the staff.
- Information that contains addresses and locations of VCT centers in the country are posted on Notice Boards to enable staff have quick information on the establishments across the country.
- Hand-outs on VCT establishments were issued to staff during seminars conducted both at HQs and Kisumu HIV/AIDS.
- Focal point leaders in outreach stations are also encouraged to identify and liaise with VCT centres within their countries to establish possible working relations

Initiation of peer counseling and /or peer educator programmes:

- Since HIV/AIDS initiative is an HR concept, HRU is currently working with Administrative officers in all stations to implement the HIV/AIDS policy. The admin staffs have already established working relationship with their staff and hence, initiating the HIV/AIDS programmes presents a smooth operation.

Installation of Condom Dispenser:

- Condom dispensers have been installed in female and male washrooms both at HQs, Kisumu and Maseno offices. HRU also donated condom dispensers to 5 southern Africa countries during the HIV/AIDS seminar in Harare, in November 2004 and encouraged the focal persons to liaise with their governments for procurement of free condoms.

- At HQ continuous supply of condoms as been in place, courtesy of Ministry of Health.

HIV/AIDS video Library

- A total of 100 videos on various subjects related to HIV/AIDS have been purchased stationed at the ICRAF main Library for lending; to enable ICRAF staff at HQs to borrow videos which they can view with their family members. The objective of this programme is to take the HIV/AIDS campaign beyond ICRAF staff. Procurement of more videos is on-going.

HIV/AIDS video documentary

- A 25 minutes documentary on ICRAF's HIV/AIDS program has been initiated and documentary to be completed for launching during the World AIDS day

HIV/AIDS Handbook for staff and their families:

- Production of the handbook is in progress and to be completed for launching during the 2004 World Aids Day.

Preparation of HIV/AIDS Banners:

- Banners with the World AIDS Day themes have been prepared for use during the World AIDS Day events. An initial 10 banners were prepared and distributed to outreach stations in Africa for use during their HIV/AIDS campaign.

Access to HAART (Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy):

- HRU has carried out a survey in outreach stations to establish the cost of ARVs in the respective countries. The information is to enable management determine the cost of implementing the HIV/AIDS policy. The survey monitors current trends of the cost of ARVs in the respective countries.
- In Kenya, the Strategies Health, a qualified HAART provider has been contracted to provide medical services to ICRAF staff in Kenya. Strategies Health offers a comprehensive programme on HIV/AIDS Management for the staff.
- Outreach stations have been encouraged to identify HMOs that can provide HAART service to staff in their respective stations. For those stations that do not have such developed facilities, they have been encouraged to establish self funded medical insurance programmes that can cater for their needs.
- HRU continuous to provide strategic advice/assistance in making HAART available to staff in outreach stations

Insurance Coverage:

- A survey was carried out in 2002 to determine availability of adequate Life Insurance scheme that does not require HIV/AIDS testing. The results were that Insurance Companies in Kenya and other developing countries have continued to demand for HIV testing on premiums exceeding the free cover limit.

- Negotiations have been established for higher rate on free-cover limit while HRU shops for locally based insurance company that can cover staff without subjecting them to HIV test

- HRU continuous to do an annual review on HIV/AIDS conditions/clauses of ICRAF's current disability insurance Policy and research for alternatives in the market

- Currently the Kenyan based Life insurance scheme covers national recruited staff in Kenyan and other outreach stations such as Cameroon, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda.

- With increased registration number of staff to the Group Life Insurance scheme, ICRAF has managed to negotiate for greater free cover limit, i.e. from KSh. 1,000,000.00 (1999) to KSh. 3,000,000.00 (2004).

What Was Achieved and Learned?

- Subsequently, the policy has been revised in line with the ILO convention on HIV/AIDS, including medical coverage to ensure that we comply with non discrimination against AIDS
- Self funded medical insurance has been put in place in outreach stations where implementation of ICRAF policy is hampered by the government's response to HIV/AIDS.
- Preparations for inauguration of Female condom dispensers and condom distribution at HQ are in progress; and in line with the 2004 World AIDS Day's theme: Women and HIV/AIDS.
- Due to cultural diversity and perception on HIV/AIDS in various outreach stations, South East Asia, among others; has recorded low willingness to establish condom dispensers at their duty stations however; they are willing to introduce HIV/AIDS issues for gradual response.
- Due to regular seminars at the HQ, staff are willing to go to VCT centres for tests in order to know their HIV status.
- Continuous reloading of condoms in male washrooms is an indication that ICRAF male staff are willing to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS

Where Do We Go from Here?

- HRU to do a program review on HIV/AIDS activities in the entire centre, in order to determine the extent and impact the programme has realized.
- HRU is to organize a training session on peer counseling for HR and Administrative staff at an agreed date.
- HRU to hold HIV/AIDS family Day for its HQ staff and to encourage the same for outreach stations
- HRU to hold intensive HIV/AIDS Workplace campaigns at country level to strengthen the activities at regions and ensure equal standards of programme of activities within regions.
- HRU to assist country focal point leaders to establish annual programme of work and budget for country HIV/AIDS programs
- HIV/AIDS training for Focal point leaders to be organized in order to build capacity in the regions.
- HRU and HIV/AIDS Advisory committee to formulate ways in which HIV/AIDS activities at the Workplace and in with farmers in the field can be amalgamated.
- Establish an HIV/AIDS Advisory Committee who will provide guidance in matters related to the ICRAF HIV/AIDS programme.