



International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR)

HIV and AIDS Workplace Policy

General Statements

JUSTIFICATION

The International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) recognizes that:

- HIV/AIDS crisis as a major challenge to its development intervention in its project countries.
- HIV/AIDS knows no boundaries, it affects all of us and no one is immune to HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS, not only causes illness, disability and death for employees and server economic and emotional disruption for their families it also increases the cost of doing business.

Cognizant of these facts, IIRR recognizes its role to:

- Adopt an HIV/AIDS workplace policy that guides prevention, support and care activities for all IIRR staff.
- Become an NGO role model in the countries it is currently operating and elsewhere by creating an environment that is responsive to the challenges of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.
- Ensure consistency of decisions by the management. It will also guide the design of appropriate workplace programmes.
- To launch this policy as a common organisational understanding of mainstreaming HIV/AIDS internally.
- To provide a supportive and caring environment for staff, their families and dependents living with HIV/AIDS
- Implement the policy on a rights based approach, to further the realisation of human rights.

POLICY COMMITMENT STATEMENTS

Commitment statement No. 1

Drawing guidance from our vision, mission and core values, IIRR hereby declares its overall commitment and support for the implementation of the HIV/AIDS policy.

Commitment statement No. 2

IIRR will mandate senior and sufficiently skilled individuals and/or bodies to lead the response. Responsibilities will be taken especially at higher management level.

Commitment statement No. 3

IIRR will have the organisational preparedness to deal with HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

Commitment statement No. 4

IIRR will dedicate resources, financial, technical, material and human, within IIRR's financial capacity, to fulfil this important mandate internally among its staff.

Commitment statement No. 5

IIRR will create an environment to be able to deal with prevention awareness and education, as well as hiring and retention of staff.

Commitment statement No. 6

IIRR's HIV/AIDS workplace policy and strategy will be in line with the National HIV/AIDS policies of each country where IIRR is operating. The policy strategies will differ from country to country, according to National Labour Laws.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

IIRR's HIV/AIDS workplace policy is formulated around the following principles.

Recognition of HIV/AIDS as a workplace issue

IIRR acknowledges that HIV/AIDS is a workplace issue, and treated like any other serious illness/condition in the workplace.

Non-discrimination

IIRR will not discriminate its employees on the basis of real or perceived HIV status and staff living with HIV/AIDS will be treated no more or less than staff living with other serious illnesses. HIV status will not be considered when deciding if someone is suitable for a posting or promotion. Staff showing prejudice or discrimination towards others will be given appropriate information and made aware of the policy. Failure to comply will lead to disciplinary action.

Gender equality

IIRR acknowledges that HIV/AIDS impacts on male and female staff differently including recognition that women normally undertake the major part of caring for the sick and pregnant women with HIV/AIDS have additional special needs. Therefore, in line with our Human Resource and Gender Policy and the pledge to ensure gender equality in all country offices, programmes and projects, IIRR will seek to assure equal gender relations.

Commitment to ongoing dialogue

IIRR recognises that successful implementation of the HIV/AIDS policy and programme will require ongoing cooperation and trust between IIRR, all employees, with the active involvement of those who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. The policy will be owned by all staff and should not be seen as a 'management tool'. Nonetheless, management should commit to articulate and implement the policy to ensure success.

HIV/AIDS screening

IIRR will not oblige any applicant or employee to undergo HIV/AIDS screening as a requirement for purposes of exclusion from employment, benefits or work processes in recruitment or redundancy from employment or work processes.

Confidentiality

IIRR will not require job applicants or workers to disclose HIV-related personal information. Access to personal data relating to an employees HIV status shall be bound by the rules of confidentiality consistent with the IIRR Human Resource Policy and the ILO's¹ code of practice on the protection of workers' personal data, 1997.

Reasonable accommodation

IIRR will strive to ensure reasonable accommodation on a case by case basis, subject to the overall requirements of the organisation. This may include flexible working hours, time off for medical appointments, extended sick leave and transfer to lighter duties.

Termination of employment

HIV/AIDS is not a reason for termination of employment. Those retired on medical grounds will be subject to the same benefits and conditions as those with other serious illnesses.

Prevention and education

IIRR will seek to address the susceptibility and impact of HIV/AIDS to its employees and community through awareness programme to ensure sustainable prevention of all means of transmission, which shall be appropriately targeted and culturally sensitive. This will include fostering changes in behaviour, knowledge, treatment and the creation of a non-discriminatory environment through the provision of information and education, and in addressing specific socio-economic factors.

Care and support

Solidarity, care and support shall guide the response to HIV/AIDS in IIRR. All workers, including workers with HIV, shall be entitled to accessible and affordable health services, on a best effort basis depending on IIRR capacity.

¹ ILO is the International Labor Organization

There shall be no discrimination against staff in access to and receipt of medical benefits and care. There shall be restrictions however on access to these benefits for members of the immediate family, such as spouse and children. IIRR will seek to link up with affordable public care institutions for support. Care and support to IIRR staff differ from country to country, depending on available support services.

IMPLEMENTATION

The policy will be implemented in all IIRR offices. However, country offices will be responsible for localizing training and education and for sourcing VCT and ART facilities and setting up agreements with service providers.

Country Directors are responsible for implementing the policy with support from Regional HR, drawing technical support from the HIV/AIDS focal persons.

Systems for evaluating quantitative and qualitative aspects (e.g. staff awareness, benefits take-up, impact on programme activities etc) need to be developed. The policy can be reviewed after 12 months and then on a bi-annual basis to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.

The cost of the HIV/AIDS workplace strategy should be budgeted by programmes. IIRR will engage in advocacy with the donor community to promote greater recognition of these costs.

ADOPTION OF THE POLICY

This policy is approved by the Board of Trustees on _____, and hence will be an integral part of IIRR's Personnel/HR manual.