

IIRR Global HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy

Introduction

IIRR recognizes that HIV/AIDS continues to present a significant challenge to development interventions across its project countries. Because HIV/AIDS affects all individuals regardless of boundaries, IIRR identifies this epidemic as a critical workplace issue that must be treated with the same seriousness as any other life-threatening medical condition.

This policy establishes the standards, commitments, and supportive frameworks required to manage the impact of HIV/AIDS within the organization. It aims to ensure a consistent management response, provide a caring environment for staff and their dependents, and realize a rights-based approach to workplace health. This policy forms part of IIRR's broader ethical framework and aligns with National Labor Laws and international standards.

Organizational Commitment

IIRR affirms its moral and professional duty to create a workplace environment responsive to the challenges of the HIV/AIDS public health challenge. To fulfill this mandate, the organization commits to the following:

- **Leadership and Accountability:** Senior management and sufficiently skilled individuals are mandated to lead the institutional response, ensuring that responsibilities are integrated at the highest organizational levels.
- **Resource Allocation:** IIRR will dedicate necessary financial, technical, material, and human resources—within its financial capacity—to support staff and implement internal mandates.
- **National Alignment:** Strategy implementation will be tailored to the National HIV/AIDS policies and labor laws of each specific country where IIRR operates.
- **Advocacy:** IIRR will engage with the donor community to advocate for the recognition and support of costs associated with workplace HIV/AIDS strategies.

Guiding Principles and Behaviors

IIRR's response to HIV/AIDS is grounded in the principles of dignity, equity, and human rights.

Non-Discrimination and Recruitment

- **Equality of Treatment:** IIRR will not discriminate against any employee, volunteer, board member, or affiliated partner based on real or perceived HIV status. Staff living with HIV/AIDS will be treated no differently than those with other serious illnesses.
- **Career Progression:** HIV status shall not be a factor in decisions regarding recruitment, postings, or promotions.

- **Prohibition of Screening:** IIRR will not require job applicants, current employees, or affiliated volunteers or partners to undergo HIV/AIDS screening as a condition of employment or access to benefits.
- **Disciplinary Action:** Any staff member demonstrating prejudice or discriminatory behavior toward others regarding HIV status will face disciplinary action.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

- **Personal Privacy:** Applicants and employees are not required to disclose HIV-related personal information.
- **Data Security:** Access to any personal data related to an employee's HIV status is strictly bound by confidentiality rules consistent with the IIRR Human Resource Policy and ILO standards.

Gender Equality

- **Differential Impact:** IIRR acknowledges that HIV/AIDS impacts male and female staff differently, specifically noting the disproportionate care burden often placed on women and the unique needs of pregnant women living with HIV/AIDS.
- **Equal Relations:** The organization seeks to ensure equal gender relations across all country offices and programs in line with IIRR's Global Gender Policy.

Care, Support, and Workplace Accommodation

Solidarity and care guide IIRR's internal response to the pandemic.

- **Reasonable Accommodation:** IIRR strives to provide "reasonable accommodation" on a case-by-case basis. This may include flexible working hours, time off for medical appointments, extended sick leave, or transfer to lighter duties.
- **Health Services:** All staff, including those with HIV, are entitled to accessible and affordable health services based on IIRR's capacity.
- **Medical Benefits:** There shall be no discrimination in the receipt of medical benefits. While IIRR seeks to link staff with public care institutions, specific care and support services may vary by country.
- **Employment Security:** HIV/AIDS status is not a valid reason for the termination of employment. Staff retired on medical grounds will receive the same benefits as those retired for other serious conditions.

Implementation and Review

The successful execution of this policy requires ongoing cooperation and trust between management and all employees.

- **Local Responsibility:** While implemented globally, country offices are responsible for localizing training, sourcing Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) and Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) facilities, and establishing agreements with local service providers.
- **Management Oversight:** Country Directors, supported by Regional HR and HIV/AIDS focal persons, are responsible for policy implementation.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Systems will be developed to evaluate staff awareness, benefit take-up, and the policy's impact on program activities.
- **Policy Review:** This policy will be reviewed 12 months after adoption and bi-annually thereafter to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.