

Published by:

**giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

# The German Approach to HIV Mainstreaming

Effective development work in a time of HIV

## The German commitment

To mainstream HIV is to embark upon a process of analysing the risks and impacts of HIV within an organization and in its core services and then introducing adaptations, where necessary, to ensure that the organization can continue to operate effectively in a world changed by HIV. In early 2001, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) set HIV mainstreaming as policy for all of German Development Cooperation's (GDC's) implementing organizations. Since then, GDC has worked with many partners internationally and at national level to mainstream HIV into the projects and programmes supported by its financial and technical cooperation agencies, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. It has established what it now considers the two essential pillars of an effective, low-cost and sustainable mainstreaming strategy:

- **Internal mainstreaming**, with comprehensive HIV workplace programmes that provide prevention, care, treatment and support to the employees of GDC's implementing organizations and their families. The goal of internal mainstreaming is to increase employees' knowledge about HIV risks and ways to protect themselves against infection, to provide access to means of protection, and to ensure that GDC workplaces are free of HIV-related stigma and discrimination.
- **External mainstreaming**, in which adaptations are made, where necessary, to the core programmes and services of GDC projects and programmes in all sectors in order to mitigate against the potential impacts of HIV on the attainment of development goals and to ensure that the projects and programmes themselves do not inadvertently contribute to the spread of HIV.



A board game called 'Make a New Start Today' provides learners at vocational training institutions in Uganda with current and factual information about HIV, helping them to make informed decisions about sexual activity.

## How mainstreaming works in practice

GDC regards mainstreaming as an organizational development process through which organizations modify their workplaces, systematically review the significance of HIV for their attainment of project and programme goals, and, in cases of identified risks and impacts, adapt their programmes

## German Health Practice Collection

Showcasing health and social protection for development

This Collection describes programmes supported by German Development Cooperation assessed as 'promising or good practice' by experts from German development organizations and two international peer reviewers with expertise in the particular field. Each report tells the story, in plain language, of a particular programme and is published in a short (four-page) and full version at our web site:

[www.german-practice-collection.org](http://www.german-practice-collection.org).

and advisory services, across sectors, accordingly. Once these reviews and adaptations have been undertaken, HIV has been brought into the 'mainstream' of the organization, project or programme and the mainstreaming process is complete. This cycle of review and adaptation is repeated on a periodic basis, to ensure that the mainstreaming approach remains responsive to changing epidemiological situations.

► To download the full version of this report and other publications in this collection, go to [www.german-practice-collection.org](http://www.german-practice-collection.org).

The personnel departments of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)<sup>1</sup> and KfW Development Bank (KfW) are responsible for internal mainstreaming, administering HIV workplace programmes for employees at both head offices and in partner countries. Tailored to fit the unique circumstances found within each country, they commonly include sensitization events about HIV, the availability of free condoms in all workplaces, opportunities for HIV counselling and testing, agreements with insurance providers for HIV-related insurance for employees, and access to affordable medicines, including antiretroviral medicines.

External mainstreaming within GDC implementing organizations is guided by the findings of systematic reviews, or appraisals, conducted at the start of new projects and programmes in countries with generalized HIV epidemics (national HIV prevalence rate >1%). With guidance from HIV mainstreaming personnel, programme staff assess whether HIV poses a risk to the attainment of project goals, whether the project itself could inadvertently further the spread of HIV, and whether there are contributions to the HIV response which could be made under the auspices of the proposed project. If risks or potential impacts are identified, mainstreaming personnel and programme staff adapt the project design accordingly.

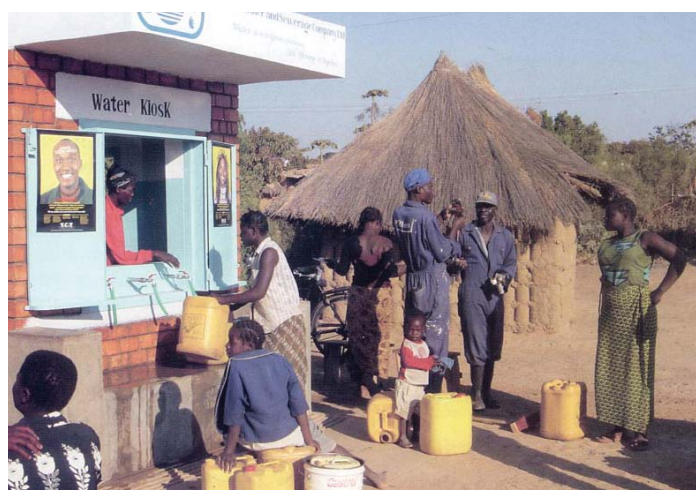
In financial cooperation projects, these adaptations are agreed with project partners who become responsible for their implementation and for covering the costs through their project budgets. In technical cooperation projects,

programme staff are responsible for integrating these adaptations into their core work and monitoring and evaluation systems.

## Examples of German support for mainstreaming

### Mainstreaming HIV in the water sector

Nothing is more essential to health than having access to reliable supplies of clean water and sanitation services. In Zambia, however, the severe HIV epidemic poses a threat to the viability of commercial water companies, which are staffed by employees whose specialist skills are difficult to replace in the case of illness, death or early retirement and whose clients must be able to access and pay for services if the companies are to be economically sustainable.



Commercial water companies use water kiosks as opportunities to disseminate HIV-related information and supplies to local residents.

GDC has been working with the National Water Supply and Sanitation Council (NWASCO) and commercial water companies to establish HIV workplace programmes; to use kiosks where the urban poor come to collect water as opportunities to disseminate information on HIV and distribute condoms; and to use projects to drill wells in rural areas as opportunities to provide health education covering malaria, diarrhoea and sexually transmitted infections including HIV. It has also supported to Devolution Trust Fund (DTF), responsible for extending water services to the urban poor, to mainstream HIV into its standard procedures for opening up new water sites.

<sup>1</sup>The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH was formed on 1 January 2011. It brings together the long-standing expertise of DED, GTZ and InWEnt. For further information, go to [www.giz.de](http://www.giz.de).

### Support for partner organizations' workplace programmes: AIDS Workplace Programmes in Southern Africa

AIDS Workplace Programmes in Southern Africa (AWiSA), which was established in 2003 as a joint initiative of the former DED and InWEnt and supports small- and medium-sized businesses and organizations in Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia to address HIV through comprehensive HIV prevention and health promotion programmes which are built around five core pillars: coordination, information and education, health management, policy development and monitoring. The programme provides training, guidance and tools for operationalizing each of these elements in workplace settings. The AWiSA approach has been adapted for GDC partner organizations ranging from educational institutions to local government authorities, water companies, civil society organizations and health care facilities. HIV focal point persons from these organizations have attended AWiSA training events, learned to establish and manage their own workplace programmes, and received follow-up support in the form of on-site visits, condoms and informational materials, and assistance in the development of workplans and policies.

### HIV mainstreaming in GDC workplaces

Good health is only one component of a person's overall well-being: financial security, a clean and safe environment, and a positive atmosphere at the workplace are also important elements. GDC in Ghana is broadening its long-standing HIV Workplace Programme into an Employee Wellness Programme which will encompass social protection, health and safety, and environmental management. As one component of the programme employees and their family members can now make use of the Preventive Health Package – a set of comprehensive health screenings which can be accessed on a voluntary and confidential basis through designated health providers. The package includes periodic screenings for HIV, TB, meningitis, hypertension, Hepatitis B, and certain common cancers, as well as a general health check. During the first year of the new scheme, 50% of GDC employees accessed the package – a significantly higher level of uptake than in the former HIV workplace programme, where attendance had stopped increasing and many employees felt they had enough information about HIV. In a short period of time, the expanded workplace programme has demonstrated that the workplace is a good setting for addressing

a range of chronic and preventable diseases – including, but not limited to HIV – and that the broader the focus of the programme, the more likely employees are to participate.



Through GDC's expanded workplace programme in Ghana, employees and their family members are entitled to regular health screenings – including HIV testing – on a voluntary and confidential basis.

## Results

The monitoring and evaluation of HIV mainstreaming within GDC has evolved steadily over the past decade, from an early focus on process and output monitoring to a greater emphasis on identifying outcomes. An independent evaluation of the external mainstreaming work being undertaken by GDC's technical cooperation agencies in two high HIV prevalence countries in sub-Saharan Africa, conducted in 2009-2010, found that the approaches supported by GDC have resulted in reduced absenteeism in partner organizations, individual behaviour change to minimize the risk of HIV infection, a lessening of HIV-related stigma and discrimination in workplaces and at community level, and improved institutional responses to HIV within organizations.

It also showed that mainstreaming approaches are most likely to be successful when they are embedded within programmes; planned together with and owned by partner organizations; undertaken on a continuous basis over long periods of time; and approached at multiple levels (e.g. combining political support at the national or sectoral level with a practical commitment at the level of partner organizations).



## Lessons learnt from Germany's experience

**Get your own house in order.** In the course of learning how to provide HIV prevention, care, treatment and support to its own employees and their families, an organization learns how to help others do the same. It also earns the moral authority to become a strong advocate for action against HIV.

**Be realistic about the potentials of mainstreaming.**

Mainstreaming is one strategy to address the effects of the HIV epidemic, but cannot substitute for larger, more complex approaches such as sector-specific or multisectoral HIV programmes. Care needs to be taken not to overstretch the mainstreaming concept, but to employ it strategically in synergy with other programmatic tools.

**Adopt a shared approach.** HIV mainstreaming cuts across all sectors of development cooperation and can be done much more efficiently and effectively when partners working in all sectors collaborate on planning and implementation. Within GDC this realization has led to the clarification of a common mainstreaming concept and the endorsement of a shared German approach.

**Be committed to evidence-based mainstreaming.** Effective mainstreaming requires guidance and support from experienced experts and should be informed by a careful analysis of credible research studies and up-to-date epidemiological data which provide a detailed picture of the epidemic in a certain geographical area, for a particular population group, or in relation to a given development sector.

**Share experiences, lessons and tools.** HIV mainstreaming is still a comparatively new endeavour for GDC and many others. There is urgent need for documentation and sharing of experiences, lessons and tools in a variety of formats to ensure that organizations undertaking mainstreaming learn from one another's successes and challenges.

## Peer Review

To be included in the German Health Practice Collection, a project or programme must demonstrate that it comes close to meeting most of its selection criteria. In 2008, two external peer reviewers concluded that HIV mainstreaming qualifies

as a 'promising practice' which, to be considered as good practice, would have to show results in terms of outcomes and would require more support by qualified and experienced HIV professionals to ensure that it is always evidence-informed and results-driven.

In response, GDC has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of its approach to HIV mainstreaming, including a rigorous results-based evaluation of external mainstreaming which demonstrated the potentials of the approach to generate a range of results. Recent efforts to refocus the German approach to mainstreaming have culminated in the endorsement of a guidance note which provides a harmonized framework for evidence-based HIV mainstreaming within German Development Cooperation in the years to come.

Published by  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

German Health Practice Collection

Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1–5  
65760 Eschborn, Germany  
ghpc@giz.de  
www.german-practice-collection.org

Writers  
Karen Birdsall, Stuart Adams

Design  
www.golzundfritz.com

Photographs  
p.1: © GIZ / Ulrich Laumanns  
p. 2: © GIZ / Barbara Wiegand  
p. 3: © GIZ / GIZ Ghana

this edition: October 2011  
first edition: May 2008

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of  
Federal Ministry for Economic  
Cooperation and Development (BMZ);  
Division of Health and Population  
Policies

BMZ Bonn  
Dahlmannstraße 4  
53113 Bonn, Germany  
T +49 228 99 535-0  
F +49 228 99 535-3500

poststelle@bmz.bund.de  
www.bmz.de