



## **Executive Summary**

Businesses have an enormous stake in the fight against HIV and AIDS, an epidemic that affects their workforce and, if left unchecked, can rob them of their workers and their markets. They stand to gain from supporting interventions aimed at preventing HIV both at the workplace and in local communities—and from taking early decisive action while there is still opportunity to prevent a generalized epidemic. Moreover, businesses bring critical advantages to these efforts, including management skills, resources, and influence over the general workforce.

### **Lessons from HIV and AIDS interventions by Indian businesses**

In India both private and public sector companies are pursuing notable programs of HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention for employees and for local communities. All these programs have faced challenges. The ways they have addressed those challenges offer lessons that may be useful to other interventions by private and public sector businesses, both current and future:

- *Leveraging partnerships.* Partnerships with local NGOs, State AIDS Control Societies, and other agencies have proved critical to the success of several programs. One program, for example, developed its approach to HIV prevention through discussions with the State AIDS Control Society and broadened its outreach by partnering with an active network of people living with HIV. Programs operating clinics along national highways for long-distance truckers depend on partnerships with local NGOs across the country. Others rely on construction contractors to ensure that migrant workers are exposed to HIV and AIDS awareness programs.
- *Communicating messages effectively.* Companies have used several approaches to communicate HIV and AIDS messages to their workforce and local communities. One company in this collection of case studies customizes information, education, and communication material in imaginative ways to capture the attention of its target audience—producing cassettes that intersperse HIV and AIDS messages with popular Hindi film songs and having talented employees convey messages through songs and poems at company events. Most such communication efforts, however, need better monitoring and evaluation to assess their effectiveness in changing attitudes and practices.
- *Keeping up with highly mobile target groups.* Many target groups, such as sex workers and their clients, are highly mobile. To support and track one such group, long-distance truckers, one program operating clinics along highways issues each participating trucker a “passport” recording the trucker’s medical history. Truckers present their passport on each visit to any of the clinics, allowing them easy access to services and giving medical staff easy access to their medical history.

- *Coping with poor public health infrastructure.* Lack of government health facilities has created challenges in several cases. One program has found that because government medical and testing facilities are closed on weekends, laborers often turn to fake doctors. Mobile health clinics could help overcome this challenge by providing laborers easier access to medical services on weekdays.
- *Countering social stigma.* Predictably, most programs have encountered resistance to HIV and AIDS messages because of the stigma attached to the epidemic and to topics related to sex. Programs have had to use repeated awareness programs to encourage employees to pick up free condoms. And among those that have set up medical centers to treat AIDS patients, one had to address concerns among villagers that a center's proximity to their homes could expose them to contagious diseases.
- *Overcoming message fatigue and negative branding.* Programs targeted to truckers found that messages became ineffective with too much repetition. Moreover, repeated interventions targeted to truckers saddled them with negative branding because of the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS. To counter these effects, one program, for example, has experimented with theater performances featuring truckers as protagonists while communicating HIV and AIDS messages.

### **The approaches used by five Indian companies**

This report features five case studies illustrating approaches that private and public sector companies have used in HIV and AIDS interventions. Other companies in India have pursued similar activities. Through the "IFC Against AIDS" program, for example, the International Finance

Corporation, a member of the World Bank Group, works with four Indian companies implementing HIV and AIDS interventions: Ambuja Cement, Apollo Tyres, Ballarpur Industries Limited (BILT), and Usha Martin.<sup>1</sup> The details and lessons of these interventions and those of the five case studies in this report may be helpful to other companies designing or implementing HIV and AIDS interventions for their workforce and communities.

The interventions of the five companies highlighted in the report have ranged from advocacy and generation of awareness to prevention and treatment (table 1):

- *Reliance Industries Limited*, India's largest private company, set up a well-equipped medical center near its industrial site in Hazira, Gujarat, where it provides both tuberculosis and AIDS treatment. Since inception of the program in 2004, company physicians and local NGOs have together reached nearly 300,000 people through awareness initiatives, testing and counseling services, and antiretroviral therapy.
- *Transport Corporation of India (TCI)*, recognizing the importance of truckers to its business and the vulnerability of the trucking community to HIV and AIDS, established a network of clinics along national highways. Operated by local NGOs, these clinics serve long-distance truck drivers and their assistants, providing treatment for sexually transmitted infections and counseling services aimed at preventing HIV.
- *Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC)*, a public sector company, is constructing the metro rail system in Delhi. This enormous construction project draws migrant workers, a population typically at high risk for HIV infection, from across India. DMRC initiated an

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1. International Finance Corporation, "IFC Against AIDS: Projects," <http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/aids.nsf/Content/Projects>.

HIV and AIDS program for contractors and workers that included advocacy, peer education, and promotion of condom use. This nine-month program reached more than 3,000 workers. The company has ensured that the efforts will be extended: its agreements with contractors now require that they carry out HIV prevention activities for employees working on DMRC projects.

- *DCM Shriram Consolidated Limited (DSCL)*, a company with interests mainly in chemicals and agribusiness, initiated an HIV and AIDS program at its plant in Kota, Rajasthan, aimed at providing a safe and healthy work environment. The program draws on the local culture, adapting information, education, and communication material to local sensibilities and using cultural performances to convey HIV and AIDS messages. This strategy has helped broaden the appeal of its messages and gain acceptance for the program among the local population.
- *Hindustan Lever Limited (HLL)*, a fast-moving consumer goods company with more than a hundred manufacturing plants across India, has initiated workplace programs aimed at protecting the health of its skilled young workforce. With technical assistance from the International Labour Organization, the company's factories have built HIV and AIDS awareness programs into their health and safety training. HLL has also used its expertise in distribution and management to spread HIV and AIDS awareness through initiatives with rural entrepreneurs. And in the future it plans to use its extensive marketing network in rural areas to promote use of condoms.

**Table 1. Summary of the case studies**

<i>Company</i>	<i>Industry</i>	<i>Location of intervention</i>	<i>Intervention areas</i>	<i>Beneficiaries</i>	<i>Partners</i>
Reliance Industries Limited	Petrochemicals, textiles, others	Hazira, Gujarat	Awareness and prevention, HIV testing, treatment for AIDS, advocacy	Contract workers, migrant workers, truckers, employees, local community, local enterprises	Confederation of Indian Industry, Gujarat State AIDS Control Society, Gujarat State Network of People Living with HIV, Lok Samarpan, Lok Vikas Sanstha, Reliance Life Sciences
Transport Corporation of India	Cargo transport	Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh	Awareness and prevention, treatment for sexually transmitted infections, advocacy	Long-distance truckers, local community	Avahan, CARE, Family Health International, Population Services International, Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH)
Delhi Metro Rail Corporation	Public transport	Delhi	Awareness and prevention, advocacy	Migrant workers employed by contractors	International Labour Organization, Japan Bank for International Cooperation, Modicare Foundation
DCM Shriram Consolidated Limited	Agribusiness, chemicals, plastics, others	Kota, Rajasthan	Awareness and prevention, treatment for AIDS, advocacy	Employees, contract workers, truckers, local community	Confederation of Indian Industry, The Energy and Resources Institute, Rajasthan State AIDS Control Society
Hindustan Lever Limited	Fast-moving consumer goods	Southern, eastern, western, and northern corporate regions <sup>a</sup>	Awareness and prevention, HIV testing, advocacy	Employees, contract workers, truckers, local and rural communities	Confederation of Indian Industry, International Labour Organization, National AIDS Control Organization, local NGOs, hospitals

a. Hindustan Lever Limited's southern region encompasses Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu (program activities reported from Karnataka and Tamil Nadu); its eastern region, seven northeastern states along with Assam, Jharkhand, Orissa, and West Bengal (program activities reported from Assam); and its northern region, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttaranchal, and Uttar Pradesh.

## Key recommendations

Experience in combating HIV and AIDS in India points to several key recommendations for private and public sector programs:

- *Take early decisive action.* Companies that carry out HIV and AIDS interventions do so to safeguard the health of their employees and because these efforts accord with their values and mission. Such efforts can meet resistance—at the corporate level, at the workplace, and in the local community—especially where action is taken early to stem an epidemic before it has become generalized, when the perceived risk may be low. But taking early decisive action on prevention before the epidemic gets out of control pays off for companies: it reduces the future burden of death and disability and averts the high cost of treating and caring for large numbers of people living with AIDS.
- *Document cost and effectiveness.* There is much to learn from actions taken by businesses to prevent HIV and treat and care for AIDS patients. It is important to learn by doing. But beyond this, formal, independent evaluation is needed to assess the effectiveness of these interventions. Better monitoring and evaluation will help in planning and implementing programs, in identifying gaps, and, importantly, in sustaining, scaling up, and expanding initiatives.
- *Ensure sustained commitment and financing.* A challenge for both the private and the public sector is to sustain the financing for prevention, treatment, and care. Continued financing is especially essential for treatment programs, which, once initiated, must not be interrupted. Developing strategies for sustaining programs—whether run by businesses or by government—will become increasingly important, providing a strong impetus for greater private-public partnership and sharing of knowledge.