



## **Introduction**

Christians need to look at HIV and AIDS as a disease that can affect anybody. People with HIV or AIDS are in need of love, compassion and care, just like people who suffer from cancer, mental illness, depression, or any other disease.

Ecumenical Commission for Human Development is working on HIV and AIDS prevention and control focusing on prevention education, voluntary counseling and testing, care and support services for people living with HIV and participation of those who are infected or affected.

However, HIV and AIDS is a cross cutting theme in whole range of organization policy and program matters. This work place policy is giving a statement of commitment to HIV cause, that we would be learning from its work and these learning would feed back into this policy and thereby making it more specific. Time to time review would be carried out to see how far the policy has been successful in terms of prevention and non-discrimination.

## **2. Workplace Policy**

The workplace policy defines our commitment to HIV cause. Sets expectations from employees and prepares our organization to proactively handle HIV at workplace so that the staff and volunteers can be protected from contracting HIV and adopting non-discriminatory attitude towards those who are infected or affected by HIV. It serves employees to be upfront with the information to overcome fears; negative reactions; behaviors that can limit productivity and morale.

## **3. Workplace Policy Rationale**

- Makes an explicit commitment to corporate action;
- Ensures consistency with appropriate national laws;
- Lays down a standard of behavior for all employees (whether infected or not);
- Gives guidance to the organization to prevent HIV and protect the rights of those who are infected and affected;
- Helps employees living with HIV and AIDS to understand what support and care they will receive.

## **4. General Statement**

Ecumenical Commission for Human Development recognizes the seriousness of the HIV and AIDS epidemic and its significant and potential impact on the workplace. We support national efforts to reduce the spread of infection and minimize the impact of the disease.



The purpose of this policy is to ensure a consistent and equitable approach to the prevention of HIV and AIDS among employees, volunteers and their families, and to the management of the consequences of HIV and AIDS, including the care and support of employees living with HIV and AIDS. The policy has been developed and will be implemented in consultation with employees at all levels. It is in compliance with existing laws regarding HIV and AIDS where relevant regarding discrimination, working conditions and safety and health.

## **5. Policy framework and general principle**

The policy establishes some general principles as the basis for other provisions. Ecumenical Commission for Human Development does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination against employees or job applicants on any grounds, including HIV status. While the organization recognizes that there are circumstances unique to HIV infection, this policy rests on the principle that HIV infection and AIDS should be treated like any other serious condition or illness that may affect employees. It takes into account the fact that employees with HIV should live full and active life. Ecumenical Commission for Human Development commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for all employees is based on the recognition that HIV is not transmitted by casual contact.

Ecumenical Commission for Human Development has strong belief in its partnership that has its bases in shared objectives and values. We consider non-discrimination policy as an imperative for sustained partnership that partner and Ecumenical Commission for Human Development envisions.

Ecumenical Commission for Human Development will continue to encourage partner, stakeholders and suppliers to adopt a HIV workplace policy. We will prefer not to partner and work with any organization, individuals or group that discriminates on the basis of HIV, health status, caste, gender, religion and ethnicity or does not have effective HIV prevention behaviors and services.

## **6. Specific Provisions**

The policy includes provisions in the following areas:

- The protection on the rights of those affected by HIV and AIDS;
- Prevention through information, education and training;
- Care and support services for workers and their families.



## 7. Protect of Rights

### ▪ **Stigma, discrimination and rights**

No rights from confidentiality to access and to benefits should be affected by an individual's HIV status, whether real or suspected. Stigma and discrimination compromise employee welfare, safety and healthy work environment. They also undermine HIV prevention efforts, which depend on an atmosphere of openness, trust and respect for basic rights.

### ▪ **Rights of employees who are HIV positive**

HIV positive employees will be protected against discrimination, victimization or harassment through the application of normal organization's disciplinary and grievance procedures, and provision of the information and education about HIV and AIDS to all employees.

### ▪ **Employment opportunities and termination of employment**

No employee should suffer discrimination or denial of appropriate alternative employment opportunities whether appointment, promotion, dismissal, merely on the basis of HIV infection. All job advertisements will explicitly invite people with HIV to apply for job opportunity at Ecumenical Commission for Human Development.

### ▪ **HIV Testing**

Ecumenical Commission for Human Development rejects HIV testing as a prerequisite for recruitment, access to training or promotion. However, we promote and facilitate access to voluntary confidential testing with counseling for all employees.

Testing programs to establish local/national HIV prevalence will be the subject of appropriate consultation with recognized employee organizations and will be subject to independent and objective evaluation and scrutiny. The result of epidemiological studies will not be used as a basis for discrimination against any class of employee in the workplace. All testing will comply with generally accepted international standards on pre and post test counseling, informed consent, confidentiality and support.

### ▪ **Confidentiality**

Ecumenical Commission for Human Development recognizes the sensitive issues that surround HIV and AIDS and therefore, undertakes to handle matters in a discreet and private manner. Where an employee with HIV has revealed his/her status, we will keep the identity of the person confidential. However, in line with Ecumenical Commission for Human Development philosophy of openness, employees will be encouraged to be open about their HIV status.



## **8. Raising Awareness**

- Ecumenical Commission for Human Development will provide general awareness and training on the epidemic, on appropriate responses, and on the general needs of people living with HIV and AIDS as part of staff induction and for volunteers. The awareness and training would be gender sensitive in the cultural context of Pakistan.
- Ecumenical Commission for Human Development will make it a part of partnership agreement that volunteers are bound to attend training or orientation sessions that we will be organizing time to time.
- Awareness and education programmes will be conducted for partners about HIV and AIDS, and to help them to be sensitive to HIV+ people and protect themselves and others against infection. Programmes will take into account the different needs of male and female employees.
- Practical measures to support behavioral change and risk management will include the treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and tuberculosis, where possible and also referral to STI and TB treatment services.
- Training will be arranged for key staff members, including managers, supervisors and volunteers. While keeping equal emphasis on women and men in terms of participation and application.
- Reasonable time will be given off to the employees for participation in education and training sessions or workshops.

## **9. Prevention**

- Ecumenical Commission for Human Development will provide condoms to staff and volunteers for prevention of HIV and these condoms would be kept at accessible locations within the office.
- If in case a volunteer or a staff member fears that they have been exposed to a situation where there is a risk of HIV contraction so information is provided on PEP services existing in Pakistan.
- Ecumenical Commission for Human Development will provide first aid kits to the staff and volunteers that will include disposable syringes in case there is no guarantee of proper sterilization of such material at the job or travel station.



## **10. Care and Support Services for workers and their families**

It is in interest of both Ecumenical Commission for Human Development and its employees that infected individuals be offered assistance in order to remain at work for as long as possible.

- **The promotion of employee's well being**

Ecumenical Commission for Human Development will treat employees who are infected or affected by HIV and AIDS with empathy and care. Consequently, we will provide all reasonable assistance, which may include counseling, time off, sick leave, family responsibility leave, and information regarding the virus and its effects. However, if an HIV+ employee requires special package in terms of leaves, office hours and work nature, this would be at the discretion of Executive Director.

- **Work Performance**

It is the policy of Ecumenical Commission for Human Development to respond to the changing health status of employees by making reasonable accommodation. Employees should continue to work as long as they are able to perform their duties safely and in accordance with performance standards. If an employee with AIDS is unable to perform his/her tasks adequately, the manager or supervisor must resolve the problem according to the organization's normal procedure on poor performance/ill-health.

- **Benefits**

Employees living with HIV and AIDS will be treated no less favorably than the other staffs who are HIV negative or in having any other serious illness condition, in terms of benefits, workplace compensation, leaves where appropriate.

- **Health Care**

Ecumenical Commission for Human Development will support employees and volunteers living with HIV and AIDS to find appropriate medical or counseling services as well as professional support and self-help groups (if required) in the community. Reasonable time will be given off for counseling and treatment. We have already a panel of hospitals in major cities that provides range of services to our staff and volunteers, which includes HIV services also.

Medical cover to HIV+ staff and volunteers would be dealt under the existing medical policy. Staff and volunteers infected with HIV would get medical coverage for treatment, counseling, ARV and testing (if the staff agrees voluntarily). Contracts would be done with hospitals and organizations that are providing HIV services. Information



regarding ARV providing outlets would be updated and share with the staff and volunteers regularly.

### ▪ **Gender Role**

Ecumenical Commission for Human Development believes that HIV+ health and social impact on women is worse than which also affects her role and responsibilities at domestic and social level. Therefore special support may be given to the female staff. This would be at the discretion of the Executive Director and decided on case to case basis.

## **11. Implementation and Monitoring**

- Ecumenical Commission for Human Development will establish an HIV and AIDS committee to coordinate and implement the HIV and AIDS Policy and programme. The committee consists of employees representing all constituents of Ecumenical Commission for Human Development; including general management e.g. staff committee, medical services, human resources department etc.
- In order to plan and evaluate its HIV and AIDS policy and programme effectively, we will be regularly collecting data from secondary sources and if the need is felt may undertake a survey to establish baseline data, as well as regular risk and impact assessment studies. The survey will include knowledge, attitudes and behavior/practices. Studies will be carried out in consultation with, and with the consent of, employees and their representatives and in conditions of complete confidentiality.
- This policy and related information on HIV and AIDS will be communicated to all Ecumenical Commission for Human Development employees and partners.

## **12. Budget and Finance**

Ecumenical Commission for Human Development will develop its budget while keeping HIV+ activities as integral part of every budget proposal.

## **13. Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually and the review process would include staff, volunteers and partners. HIV focal person in Ecumenical Commission for Human Development would lead on the process.

