



**ICW Global and CSR**  
**Corporate Social Responsibility as Social Recognition**  
**A view from a Gender perspective**

UN: A road towards action for AIDS in the work and corporate world

The sustainability of a successful business performance cannot be disassociated from the health sector and from the drive of the society around it.

This is what the UN understood when the Global Compact was created in 1999 to have businesses adopt, support and put into practice a series of fundamental values in the areas of Human Rights, labor, the environment and anti-corruption.

As expressed on the plenary speech “The Global Compact: Creating Sustainable Markets” given at the World Economic Forum, in Davos, Switzerland, on January 29, 2009, “...the Global Compact has now become the synonym for Corporate Social Responsibility.”

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to the group of actions businesses keep in mind so their activities have a positive impact not only regarding their stockholders but also in regards to the rest of the stakeholders: employees, the financial community, providers, clients and society in general.

Global Compact and HIV/AIDS

The Global Compact established different areas where it is expected that businesses will perform actions regarding social responsibility. Among the Compact’s 10 fundamental principles, two that stand out are the promotion and protection of Human Rights and employment non-discrimination for reasons of HIV infection.

Undoubtedly, the latter is one of the most globally relevant topics in the last few decades. The WHO Director- General expressed on the World AIDS Day “Health, HIV and human rights are inextricably linked. HIV responses need to ensure that Human Rights are protected and promoted... People living with HIV should not only enjoy their right to health but also their right to access crucial social services such as education, employment, housing, social security... Today, I call on all sectors to protect human rights, including the right to health and to combat discrimination.”

HIV and Gender

In 2001, the ILO announced a “Code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work” where the pandemic was declared a “... Global crisis and constitutes one of the most formidable challenges to development and social progress.” This indicates that “...it affects profoundly the social and economic fabric of societies.” By listing its fundamental principles, it emphasizes that no actions towards the prevention of HIV infection will be efficient unless equal gender relations are included as “... women are more likely to become infected and are more often adversely affected than men...”

With the purpose of “...increasing its support for international and national commitments to protect the rights and dignity of workers and all people living with HIV/AIDS or affected by it.” In 2010 and<sub>1</sub>



2011, the ILO also established a “Code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work, 2010 (num. 200)” and a World Action Plan to promote its implementation, structured instruments to reduce discrimination, greater access to services of prevention, treatment, care and support, and “intensification of the measures adopted by actors in the labor world for the HIV response.” Particularly, points II.B.15 and II.E.26 of the Action Plan point out the need to pay “...special attention to women and girls who are twice affected due to gender inequality...” and points out that “...gender and HIV are cross-sectional issues that should be systematically incorporated in every activity carried out by the ILO.” This approach reinforces the guidelines established in the ILO Code where Section 4.3 of Chapter Fundamental Principles clearly describes the effects of gender inequality in the dissemination of the HIV infection and in the seriousness of its impact. While Section 6.3 indicates that all prevention programs through education and information at the workplace should “...be taken into account...(and)...should be adapted expressly to both men and women. ...”

### CSR at the workplace

In short, the business sector, being the substantial of the world of work (where more than three quarters of the total of people living with HIV work), has an opportunity to become valuable and sustain, through a rational and efficient social commitment oriented to the promotion of a better quality of life for those affected by the pandemic, and through the protection of Human Rights, the reduction of stigma and the efforts made to achieve more equal gender relations. It is clear that, as indicated on the Introduction text and the ILO Code Scope and on the Training section, “...the best practices rely on the mobilization of...“workers and their organizations, “...political leaders, multi-sectoral approaches, partnership with civil society, including people living with HIV/AIDS, and education.”

One paragraph here necessarily introduces the Labor Movement since its active participation gives way to the integration of the social actors in the sector.

It is indicated on Section 7.3 of the ILO Code on the “Training for worker’s representatives”, from the Training section.

Nonetheless, having the CSR become a structural element between business and society, instead of a temporary financial situation or a representation of the wishes or interests of shareholders or managers will depend mainly on responsible activities carried out, which will need to add value to the business.

### Why a Diploma to the friendly business?

By means of a practical and efficient involvement in the response to HIV, businesses can show their values and commitments and thus, obtain some recognition, visibility and social distinction.

The actual recognition should be done by means of a diploma that will entail the responsible and supportive strategic actions of a business that will surely help intensify their commitment, and will become an act of justice. This recognition should be made public and as much as possibly disseminated to promote good business practices to the internal business sectors.



### A Diploma to the Friendly Labor Union Organization

On the other hand, ILO documents clearly state a wide range of practical measures for businesses to work on, such as employability policies, non-discrimination policies, prevention through information and education, training programs for all labor stakeholders, protection and social discussion and gender equality. This is where labor unions play a strategic role to be recognized.

### ICW Global in the business, work and HIV world

ICW Global is the only international network run by women living with HIV (more than 15,000 members in 120 countries). Since 1992, has advocated for the recognition and exercise of the rights of women, girls and adolescents living with HIV/AIDS and for changes that can improve their quality of life with a focus on the actual experience of positive women. As a response to the UNAIDS call for the strengthening of the Global Social Response to the Pandemic, the organization started, ten years ago, various activities related to the labor sector. They called labor unions, companies and the ILO to promote actions in different countries and supporting the UN CSR Global Compact.

This is why ICW Global is in position and has the responsibility of participating in every similar initiative that will contribute to its implementation in the countries and regions from five continents where ICW Global carries out its activities, helping with its prestige, legitimacy, trajectory and recognition from the point of view of the actual people involved to a more proper organization of the project and its successful execution.

### Actions towards the development of the CSR strengthening in this issue:

1. To call on and raise the awareness of businesspeople and labor unionists to introduce them to this issue. Among the instruments used, one that stands out is the annual dinner ICW GLOBAL organizes to propose the increment of the social response towards AIDS where many businesspeople get in touch and have got in touch with the HIV/AIDS issue. This dinner is carried out in Buenos Aires and in Managua.
2. Once the awareness-raising campaign is finished, we intend to invite businesspeople to be part of the International Business Council in support of ICW GLOBAL, to design shared actions in the internal business sector and a communication strategy that can make this shared effort visible and that will send a clear message as to what this initiative represents in terms of social investment.
3. To promote the creation of discussion areas as well as the training of businesspeople in relation to the ILO code and the Global Compact, integrating all participants involved (employees, unions, employers).
4. To offer advice to businesses in creating a section in their procedures manual and their code of ethics to describe good integration and non-discrimination practices to employees living with HIV, the core issue of this section being focused on Human Rights and on the guarantees of a good quality of life in the labor sector.



5. To elaborate terms of reference that will be taken into account when offering a diploma that will recognize a friendly business in the AIDS issue. This will be recognition to the good practices of the business with a focus on good practices related to the issue in the labor sector. We are working on setting standards for said practices, elaborating some indicators to measure them.
6. To provide a gender perspective, promoting equal labor conditions with a focus on working women, girls and adolescents living with HIV.

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