

Abstract:

The global epidemic of HIV and AIDS is nowadays a widely accepted reality, as is the growing understanding of the two – way relationship between AIDS and development.

Therefore mainstreaming HIV and AIDS defined by UNAIDS as, “A process that enables actors to address the causes and effects of AIDS as they relate to their core mandate in an effective and sustained manner, both through their usual work and within their workplace.”, is definitely needed for impact alleviation and reduction of vulnerabilities.

The process of mainstreaming HIV and AIDS is still a learning by doing exercise and there is no standard approach. However, it has become clear that failure to mainstream can cause negatively reinforcing repercussions on development work at large and especially on the fight against HIV and AIDS. Furthermore organisations do miss the opportunity to be proactive in addressing HIV and AIDS indirectly both inside and outside their organisation.

German Red Cross considered it important to embark on a learning process on HIV mainstreaming and therefore initiated this study which involved key personnel at headquarters level from the division of International Cooperation and National Relief.

Workshops, self administered questionnaires and in depth interviews were used to initiate, document and monitor the start of a process which will lead, according to a participatory decision making process, in the consecutive steps to the establishment of a workplace policy on HIV.

Alongside this process important lessons could be learned on successes but also pitfalls inherent to mainstreaming HIV and how it could be adapted better to the needs of our organisation. This study report provides insight in the experiences made and tries to elaborate further on attitudes and priority setting of staff involved in development and humanitarian operations of German Red Cross at the start of a continuous learning process towards HIV competence.

Observations and findings are discussed based on the available literature on the topic of mainstreaming and the wider context of HIV and development but also in the light of the organisational needs, structure and constraints of the German Red Cross Society.

At the end, ideas and recommendations will be given on how to move the process of mainstreaming further both in general terms but also more specifically inside German Red Cross.
