

GLOBAL HEALTH INITIATIVE PRIVATE SECTOR INTERVENTION CASE EXAMPLE

Implementing a regional workplace prevention and voluntary testing programme for a major automotive company using existing project management expertise

Case categories

Company: [General Motors \(GM\)](#)

Industry: [Automotive](#)

Location: [Thailand](#)

Programme: [HIV/AIDS](#)

Key questions

- How can other multinationals adapt this programme initiation and implementation model for success in their companies?
- Can other smaller companies in Thailand piggy-back on these existing tools and processes to reduce the investment required to implement a prevention programme?
- Although the programme is successful in measuring activities, how can the project team ensure that it achieves the desired outcomes?

Private Sector Intervention Case Example

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Industry: Automotive

Location: Thailand

Programme: HIV/AIDS

Overview

Company	<p>General Motors is a global automotive company with substantial operations and markets in the Asia-Pacific Region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Motors Corporation (GM) is the world's largest vehicle manufacturer. The company has manufacturing operations in 32 countries and its vehicles are sold in 192 countries. In 2003, GM sold more than 8.5 million cars and trucks, representing approximately 15 percent of the global vehicle market. In 2003 GM employed 326,000 people and generated US\$ 186 billion in revenues.• GM Asia Pacific (GMAP) includes GM's activities: Japan, Korea, China, Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India, and Australia and New Zealand. In 2003 GMAP employed 14,000 people and generated US\$ 5.3 billion in revenues.• This case is illustrated with examples from a representative programme in Thailand which employs 2,500 people. GMAP locations which have, or soon will have, programmes include: Halo, India, which employs 600 people; Jakarta, Indonesia, which employs 500 people; and China which employs 9,000 people.
Business Case	<p>The vision of GMAP's HIV/AIDS programme is to ensure a policy of non-discrimination and support for those employees living with HIV/AIDS as well as to invest in prevention to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS in employees, their families and the communities in which GM operates and sells its products.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GMAP gained top management support for a regional HIV/AIDS programme after being inspired by guidance from headquarters and informed by local experts.• Although the company recognized the potential business threat to its employees and markets, it was motivated primarily by a belief in the principles behind corporate social responsibility and the company's moral imperative to respond proactively towards HIV/AIDS.• GMAP's two-year budget for the pilot projects in Thailand and India was US\$ 50,000, which corresponds to approximately US\$ 8 per employee per year.
Programme Description	<p>GM's programme focused on developing and communicating a clear workplace policy, peer education, access to voluntary counselling and testing, and community outreach activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GMAP developed HIV/AIDS programme guidelines for each plant, which included a sample workplace policy. GM Thailand developed its policy in mid-2002.• GMAP's prevention and awareness programme uses peer education to train employees, managers, and families in awareness as well as prevention messages.• GMAP employees are encouraged to access voluntary counselling and testing services either through company facilities or through external resources.• While developing the workplace education content, the steering committees developed contacts with local NGOs and used these contacts to identify and select community outreach activities.
Programme Evaluation	<p>After a formal review process, GMAP believes that this pilot project has been successful and is in the process of rolling it out to additional facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GM has developed the four main lessons to share with other companies: (1) use your company's existing project management expertise (2) select motivated high-energy champions (3) look at the long-term perspective (4) don't go it alone.• The project is managed by an HIV/AIDS project coordinator and guided by a steering committee. Selecting these country-resources is the first step in the project rollout.• GMAP evaluated this project both on a country and a regional level using standard internal tools. In addition to this, the project also received a number of external certifications and awards.• Based on the success of the pilot project in Thailand and India, it is being expanded to include Indonesia and China.

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Business Case

Vision

The vision of GMAP's HIV/AIDS programme is to ensure a policy of non-discrimination and support for those employees living with HIV/AIDS as well as to invest in prevention to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS in employees, their families and the communities in which GM operates and sells its products.

Case for Action

GMAP gained top management support for a regional HIV/AIDS programme after being inspired by guidance from headquarters and informed by local experts. Although the company recognized the potential business threat to its employees and markets, it was motivated primarily by corporate social responsibility and the company's moral imperative to respond proactively towards HIV/AIDS.

- In early 2001, GM's International Medical Director, Maria Bradshaw, visited the GMAP region. One of the purposes of her trip was to introduce regional and plant leadership to the growing global and Asia-Pacific-specific HIV/AIDS threat to GM's business. Dr Bradshaw left each plant a copy of the United States Government's Centre for Disease Control's (CDC) HIV/AIDS programme recommendations.
- In response to the discussion with Dr Bradshaw, GM Thailand attended a programme sponsored by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Thailand Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS (TBCA). This meeting provided the GMAP Regional Health and Safety Manager with the inspiration to develop a regional proposal. In order to further develop this proposal key staff joined a regional conference on HIV/AIDS in Bangkok, Thailand, co-sponsored by UNAIDS, the ILO, the CDC, and TBCA. The information gathered as well as the networks developed from business, labour, NGO, and academic contacts provided sufficient information to further develop this proposal.
- One of the main themes emphasized in these interactions was the need for top management support. With this in mind, in February 2002, a presentation was made to GM's Asia Pacific Strategy Board (APSB), including the company's regional president as well as all of the vice-presidents and managing directors within the region. Although the presentation included some discussion on business impact and programme costs it mainly focused on: (1) the nature of HIV/AIDS (2) how HIV/AIDS could affect the Asia-Pacific region based on lessons from South Africa (3) key programme elements (4) motivations for GMAP to implement the programme. The motivations focused on the benefits to GM's employees as well as the communities in which GM facilities operate or GM customers live. GM believes that if these communities are impaired due to the economic or social impacts of HIV/AIDS that the company cannot be successful.
- The board decided based on the presentation that supporting the HIV/AIDS initiative was "the right thing to do" from both a corporate social responsibility standpoint but also from a moral perspective. The board approved and regionally funded a pilot project for GM's Thailand facility in Rayong and its India facility in Halo. Built on a foundation of top management support, the team then made similar presentations at each of the chosen pilot facilities. Aided by the regional budget, the plants agreed to implement the GMAP HIV/AIDS programme.

Financing

GMAP's two-year budget for the pilot projects in Thailand and India was US\$ 50,000, which corresponds to approximately US\$ 8 per employee per year.

- GMAP's initial regional HIV/AIDS workplace and community HIV/AIDS outreach budget was US\$ 50,000. This two year budget was approved in February 2002 to fund the pilot projects. The same budget has subsequently been extended to include GMAP's factory in Jakarta, Indonesia.
- Since 2003 GM Thailand has also contributed to a community HIV/AIDS budget. Their 2004 budget is US\$ 1,350 and is allocated to support local activities, including an HIV/AIDS information hotline.

Programme Description

Policy

GMAP developed HIV/AIDS programme guidelines for each plant, which included a sample workplace policy. GM Thailand developed its policy in mid-2002. All of the policies adhere to the following common elements.

- **Non-discrimination:** (1) employees will not be dismissed on the grounds of their HIV status; (2) employment, transfer and promotional opportunities are not based on HIV status, (3) the company will not conduct pre or post employment HIV testing; (4) there is no tolerance for HIV/AIDS-related discrimination or harassment by management or co-workers.
- **Confidentially and disclosure:** (1) employees are not required to disclose status; (2) employees are encouraged to disclose their status so the company can arrange for counselling services for the employee and his/her family; (3) if status is disclosed, it cannot be disclosed to others without prior consent of the respective employee.
- **Benefits:** employees with life threatening illnesses, including HIV/AIDS, are entitled to the same privileges and benefits afforded to all GM employees.
- **Termination:** (1) reasonable accommodations is made to adjust to the limitations of qualified individuals provided that s/he is able to meet the job requirements and does not cause a negative health effect on themselves or their co-workers; (2) if the employee is unable to work s/he may be eligible for a disability pension or lump-sum payment just as for any other medical impairment.
- **Suppliers and distributors:** GMAP does not currently have an HIV/AIDS-specific supplier or distributor policy.

Prevention and Awareness

GM's prevention and awareness programme uses peer education to train employees, managers, and families in awareness and prevention messages.

- **Peer education.** Each location selects peer educators who can conduct the training with their respective peer group. This corresponds to at least one management peer educator and at least one 'team member' peer educator per 'main shop.' In Thailand this corresponded to a total of 6 peer educators, or a ratio of 417 employees per peer educator. The peer educators were trained in a 24 hour session by TBCA using train their specially developed train the trainer materials.
- **Workplace training format.** Training sessions rely on peer educator training materials supplied by TBCA are conducted by peer educators in groups of 25 to 30 people, lasting two hours. The main topics of the training include: (1) GM HIV/AIDS policy; (2) definitions of HIV/AIDS; (3) routes of exposure; (4) how to treat a subordinate or co-worker who has HIV/AIDS; (5) outside resources available in the community for further education, testing and counselling; (6) assurances of strict confidentiality of health information; (7) information on voluntary testing and its importance.
- **Induction training.** Since all employees in Thailand have been reached through peer education by the end of 2003, the content has been integrated into the new employee orientation programme for all new employees and managers.
- **Family.** GM Family Education includes the following four main topics: (1) what is HIV/AIDS (2) how to prevent it (3) community HIV/AIDS testing and counselling services (4) what and why GM is doing something about HIV/AIDS. Since programme launch, GM Thailand has held two family training and awareness campaigns during its annual Family Day. The company estimates that it reached 2,000 family members through the awareness messages and Family Day activities.
- **Condoms.** Each plant or facility can determine if it would like to include condom promotion as part of its prevention programme. GM Thailand distributed approximately 1,000 condom key-chains with the Chevrolet logo during its 2003 Family Day activities.

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Programme Description (...continued)

Voluntary Counselling & Testing

Employees are encouraged to access voluntary counselling and testing services either through company facilities or through external resources.

- Employees may access on-site VCT resources for free. Since it was first made available in 2002, 375, or 15% of GM Thailand employees have accessed this service. To date there have been no confirmed HIV-positive cases. This test is offered during the employee annual physical program. If an employee requests the testing he is provided with pre-test counselling by the trained medical staff.
- Two GM Thailand medical staff received 40 hours of training from TBCA and the local hospital on HIV/AIDS pre and post test counselling.
- GM Thailand uses the Western blot test. If an employee is HIV-positive, the test is re-confirmed with a second Western blot test and s/he receives post test counselling. If the second test is also positive, GM Thailand provides access to further post-test counselling and additional emotional support.
- HIV-positive employees are advised to follow up with the company's doctor at the local hospital. If the patient has any opportunistic infections, s/he will be recommended to access treatment from his/her doctor and covered through the standard medical schemes.

Community Outreach

While developing the workplace education content, the steering committees developed contacts with local NGOs and used these contacts to identify and select community outreach activities. These projects were funded primarily through regional public relations budgets.

- GM Thailand provided funding \$500 USD to support the operation and promotion of a HIV/AIDS Hot Line which can be called by anyone from anywhere in the country. The Hot Line provides counselling and local referrals for testing and additional counselling and treatment. Since its launch in June of 2000, the Hot Line has logged on average over 100 calls per day.
- GM Thailand provided funding and employee clothing and toys to a local Buddhist Temple that provide an orphanage service for children with parents affected or infected by HIV/AIDS. The amount given in funding, clothes and toys helped to support approximately 2,000 children.
- GM, GMAP, GM Thailand, and the Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric AIDS Foundation are co-sponsoring the showing of the film "A Closer Walk" by Robert Bilheimer" at the International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, Thailand in July 2004. The movie was filmed over two and a half years visiting dozens of locations on four continents. It interviewed or profiled more than 75 children, women and men across the broad spectrum of the global AIDS experience.

Programme Evaluation

Key Success Factors

Since initiating and implementing its regional HIV/AIDS programme, GM has developed the following key lessons to share with other companies:

- **Use your company's existing project management expertise.** Treat the HIV/AIDS programme in a similar way as your company handles other important projects. Gain top management approval early in the process. Allocate funding and assign responsibilities. Use existing project management processes to ensure proper implementation.
- **Select motivated high-energy champions.** Don't just assign people to the project, select highly motivated people for the steering committee and the coordinator functions.
- **Look at the long term perspective.** Starting a programme for purely short-term cost-benefit driven reasons may not be successful. It is difficult to measure and quantify these short-term benefits, especially for prevention programmes in low-prevalence regions such as Asia. It is important to consider a second dimension including the corporate social responsibility or moral motivations. These long-term drivers can help ensure the longer-term management commitment required for success.
- **Don't go it alone.** There are many country-level, regional and global resources available to help you develop and implement your workplace and community programme. Many of these government, NGO, and business groups provide access to networks, best practices, and technical or implementation expertise. These resources can substantially reduce the investment required for a successful implementation.

Self-evaluation process

The project is managed by an HIV/AIDS project coordinator and guided by a steering committee. Selecting these country-resources is the first step in the project rollout.

- **Steering committee composition.** The steering committees are chaired by a senior manager and include representatives from the following three functions: medical, human resources, training. They also include a manufacturing supervisor and at least one employee representative.
- **Steering committee responsibility.** Each steering committee has the following responsibilities: (1) develop and review the HIV/AIDS policy (2) select peer educators (3) select and develop education materials for management, employees and family education programmes (4) select and develop ongoing education materials (5) monitor educational programmes implementation (6) select community outreach activities (7) monitor HIV/AIDS programme implementation and provide for ongoing continuous improvement.
- **Coordinator selection criteria:** The country or plant HIV/AIDS programme coordinator is selected based on the following criteria: (1) medical background or an understanding of the HIV/AIDS issues: (2) drive and willingness to work on the programme (3) good organizational skills (4) good communications skills (5) English and local language skills (6) Availability to devote 20% of his/her time to the programme, with an understanding that this allocation will be higher at the start of the project.
- **Coordinator duties:** The coordinator has the following main duties: (1) be available as a resource to the steering committee (2) arrange all steering committee meetings (3) research and develop available educational material (4) work with training department to arrange for management and employee education (5) liaise with local HIV/AIDS organizations (6) liaise with local community on community outreach.

GM used standard internal tools to monitor and evaluate this project.

- Each facility participating in the pilot project was managed using GM's common process, the Business Plan Deployment Process. This process requires that each element and sub-element be planned with timelines. The plant-level steering committee tracks progress against the plan every month.
- The pilot project results and key milestones are aggregated to a regional level and evaluated on an annual basis by the APSB.

The project has received a number of external certifications and awards.

- In June 2003, GM Thailand received an award from the Thai Minister of Social Welfare in recognition of their contributions to the communities.
- In December 2003, Thailand's Royal Princess presented GM Thailand with an award from the Thailand Red Cross for this HIV/AIDS programme.

Future Goals

Based on the success of the pilot project, the APSB has authorized the project expansion for Indonesia and China.

- GM Indonesia is currently establishing its steering committee.
- Pending local government approval, GM China will begin project implementation at its six facilities in mid-2004.

Case-specific HIV/AIDS Resources

Documents

[GM Asia Pacific Sample HIV/AIDS Policy \(2002\)](#)

[GM Asia Pacific HIV/AIDS Pilot Programme Elements & Guidelines \(2002\)](#)

[GM Asia Pacific Project Proposal to Regional Strategy Board \(February 2002\)](#)

[GM Asia Pacific Programme Update to Regional Strategy Board \(October 2002\)](#)

[GM Asia Pacific Sample Annual Business Plan Deployment Worksheet \(2002\)](#)

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This case study uses the following exchange rate: 44.5 Thai Baht to 1 United States Dollar.

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