



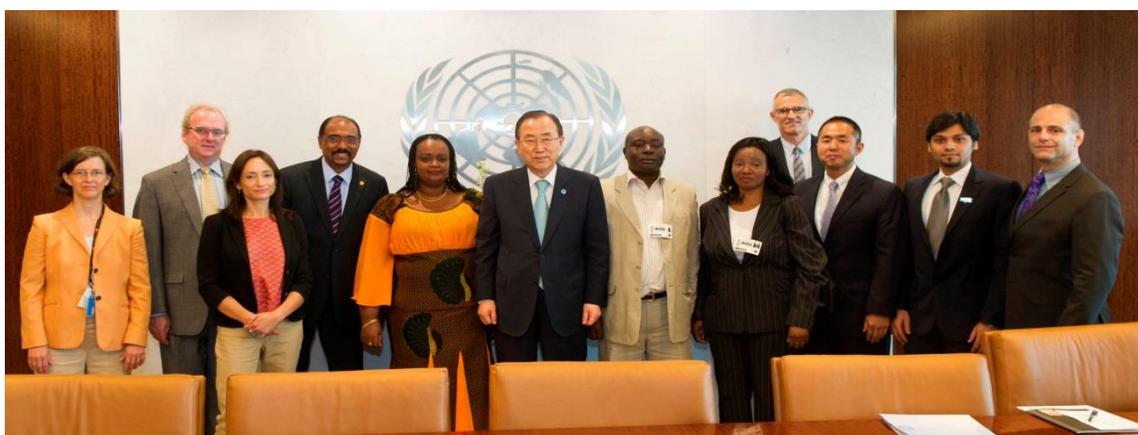
UN Plus

Positive Change within the UN

Moving Forward: Summary of UN Plus Evaluation

UN Plus is a global group of United Nations staff who are living with HIV. Established in March 2005, UN Plus demonstrates UN reform in action with over 200 members, coming from a cross-section of UN agencies and associated programmes.

To commemorate its 10th anniversary, UN Plus conducted an evaluation exercise to review its successes and achievements as well as document its challenges and obstacles.¹



(1) Successes and Achievements

UN Plus' success owes to its decade of advocacy and support work. In particular among senior management, UN Plus has continued to address issues that are of concern to staff living with HIV in the UN system and set a golden standard for staff involvement in an internal workplace response to HIV.



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Indeed, because of a series of meetings he had with UN Plus early on in his first term, the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has not only championed the HIV in the workplace programmes, but also demonstrated his proactive and outspoken stance on reversing the global AIDS pandemic. UN Plus was created by staff, for staff, and as such is unlike any other entity in the UN system. Furthermore and most importantly, there is clear evidence, particularly from Kenya and Malawi, that the work of UN Plus not only helps staff improve the overall quality of lives, but that staff mortality due to AIDS-related causes in those duty stations has in fact decreased.

“UN Plus has had a positive impact in serving as a personal reference point on how the most senior managers—including the Secretary-General and Heads of Agencies—respond to HIV far beyond within the system, but globally.”



¹ The findings and recommendations of the evaluation exercise were based on interviews with 39 current and former UN Plus members as well as UN Cares staff and its task force members.

(2) Challenges and Obstacles

The challenges and obstacles of UN Plus begin with the geographical spread of the workforce. Logistically, it is extremely difficult to meet the needs of all staff through such a small—and noticeably underfunded—mechanism. For example, the logistics of ensuring all staff living with HIV to have access to treatment is an enormous challenge, particularly when staff members rotate duty stations. Similarly, with so many insurance schemes at play in the broader UN system, it is extremely difficult to achieve 100% coverage, let alone streamline needs for staff with chronic health concerns.



The greatest challenge, however, continues to be with the ongoing levels of stigma around HIV both within and outside of the UN system. While the group has met some successes, advocacy efforts vis-à-vis senior and mid-level management to garner their meaningful and sustainable support has been also a challenge. Until such issues as access to treatment, stigma and discrimination are addressed and remedied at different levels of the system, UN Plus still needs to play a significant role in reversing the HIV epidemic internal to the UN.

“Some UN personnel suffer tremendously from self-stigma. Instead of focusing on moving forward, they may remain in fear and ultimately hinder themselves from fully accessing the right information and care as well as addressing issues that affect them.”



(3) Key Recommendations

- Revive **communication** flow between UN Plus Global Coordinator, the UN Plus Advisory Group and country level membership.
- Develop **outreach and learning materials** about issues specific to UN Plus and the needs of staff living with HIV to raise the "HIV IQ" of UN personnel across the UN System.
- Strengthen **partnerships** with other UN groups to share the burden of supporting the well-being of staff, namely UN Cares, HR Network, UN Medical Services, Staff Counselors, FICSA/Staff Unions and UN GLOBE.
- Develop and/or promote **tool kits** for country level personnel to establish UN Plus Chapters, Friends of UN Plus or—particularly for UNAIDS Country Directors (UCD) as it is not clear to many UCDs—how to rely on UN Cares when UN Plus is not active. UCDs are our natural allies yet often lack the experience of publicizing and promoting UN Plus and, as such, opportunities may be lost amidst competing agendas.



“UN Plus plays a vital role in an effective workplace programme for the UN. UN Plus also serves a key role in educating HIV-negative or untested staff about the realities of living with HIV and the fact that one can live a good quality life with HIV.”

The full evaluation report can be downloaded at <http://www.unplus.org/wp/resources/documents/un-plus-evaluation-full-report>.

If you are working in the United Nations system, living with HIV and would like to join UN Plus, please send an e-mail to unplus@unaids.org or visit www.unplus.org. All communication will be treated confidentially.