

MOZAMBIQUE LEAF TOBACCO, LIMITADA (MLT) FIGHTS AGAINST HIV/AIDS



Mozambique is reported to have the 8th highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS of all countries in the world, with approximately 13.2% of the population suffering from the disease. MLT is committed to protecting its employees, their dependents and their communities against the epidemic, and has developed a very progressive HIV program.

The program started in 2006 as part of the company's combatting HIV policy, and is managed by an HIV Nurse employed by MLT. All MLT employees, including those in our extensive agronomy operation are included in the program. The nurse conducts over 2000 voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) sessions per annum and around 1000 of these are in the agronomy divisions in Tete, Niassa, Zambezia and Manica Provinces.



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Key aspects of the MLT HIV policy are a commitment to:

- Increasing awareness of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections amongst all employees.
- Increasing access to voluntary counseling and testing services and encouraging all employees to "know their status".
- Providing HIV positive employees with access to HIV treatment as well as treatment of opportunistic infections.
- Creating and promoting a non-discriminatory workplace environment in which employees living with HIV/AIDS are able to disclose their HIV status without fear of being stigmatized.
- Reducing the impact of HIV / AIDS at the workplace and in the community.



70 peer educators trained

8000 employees, dependents & stakeholders involved

In 2015 MLT started a peer educator program and has since trained 70 peer educators – 32 in agronomy and 38 in the factory. On a monthly basis each peer educator is required to give a short talk or presentation on general health and HIV related topics. Around 150-200 of these talks take place annually and more than 8,000 employees, dependents and stakeholders are involved. Truck drivers who transport tobacco and tobacco inputs are included in these talks as they are typically a high risk group. MLT also partners with EcoSIDA, a local HIV NGO, who assists with the training of the peer educators as well as providing the kits needed for the talks and presentations.

In 2016 MLT concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the Tete Provincial Directorate of Health (DPS) to make antiretroviral (ARV) treatment available through MLT's health facilities in Tete and the other Provinces. This was the first public-private partnership of its nature in Mozambique. Under supervision of the DPS, all eligible MLT HIV positive patients are registered with the national system and can then receive their follow ups and ARV treatment at the MLT health centres. At present MLT has over 80 employees benefitting under this arrangement. The company also regularly collaborates with the Tete Provincial Nucleus to Combat HIV/ SIDA who provide male and female condoms which are distributed freely across the MLT organization. MLT participates in the Government of Mozambique's 3-year strategic plan to reduce HIV / AIDS in the country and has specific targets to achieve.

3 year strategic plan to reduce HIV/AIDS



In 2017 MLT set up an HIV drama group, which has been very active over the past year. To date, it has given 9 performances on the topic (5 at the factory and 4 in agronomy) with around 2500 employees involved. Feedback on their talents has been so positive that MLT also uses the group in Health and Safety presentations. As an educational strategy a drama group combines the entertainment value of the performing arts with the capacity to highlight issues in relation to community development. Through dramatization, the audience's attention is focused on problems in a way that challenges their perception of their situations. People are encouraged to take a fresh look at the situation and work out new solutions.

Thanks to this commitment and these interventions, MLT has seen a gradual decline in the percentage of HIV positive tests over the last 10-12 years. Positive tests declined from 14% in 2009 to less than 4% in 2017.

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ in percentage of HIV positive tests over last 10-12 years.

in 2009 | **14%** | in 2017 | **4%**