

Frances Rogoz

Government Intervention

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Government Intervention via special programs and mandates can have a great effect on AIDS in Zambia. Two very different types of programs that the government can implement are affirmative action programs in the workplace and public awareness programs.

In order to successfully integrate HIV and AIDS patients back into the mainstream it is imperative that they have jobs in the community. Holding down a job will have a number of positive effects on the HIV/AIDS patient. First and foremost, work will provide these Zambians with a steady source of income, which they can put towards purchasing the necessary drugs to treat their condition. It is also important for HIV and AIDS patients to maintain a high morale. Jobs will be a source of pride for the patients, and will help alleviate the depression common among the

terminally ill. On a more economic level, an increase in workforce in general will aid in the growth of the Zambian economy.

But how will the government be able to guarantee these jobs for HIV/AIDS patients? The answer lies in affirmative action. Affirmative action programs can be implemented in several ways. First, the government could instate a quota of employees that must be HIV positive. Five percent of a company's workforce must be positive for the disease. This percentage is small enough so that, effectively, jobs will not be taken away from healthy Zambians. On the other hand, the percentage is large enough so that there will be plenty of jobs for HIV/AIDS patients that want them.

Another variety of affirmative action that may work even better in promoting work for HIV and AIDS patients would be to offer a tax break for companies that meet a certain quota of HIV/AIDS patients. This would motivate the companies to hire HIV positive employees.

Although making sure HIV/AIDS patients have work is very important, it is equally important to make sure that the public health is preserved. For this reason, the affirmative action program would not be enforced in companies dealing with public health (like hospitals, for example) or food service. In these industries, the possibility of accidental infection is much higher, so it would be safer to not implement the affirmative action program in these cases.

Another form of government intervention that will aid in the prevention of the spread of AIDS as well as the integration of HIV and AIDS patients in the community will be through special public awareness programs.

The government of Zambia will instate a special committee and task force to deal exclusively with educating the general public on how to suppress the spread of AIDS as well as how to properly treat and deal with HIV positive peers. The two-part approach of the Committee is central to its success. Clearly, suppressing the spread of AIDS is of highest priority, but it is also incredibly important to help to remove the stigma from being an HIV positive person in the community.

These public awareness programs will be targeted at adults who did not have the benefit of modern primary school AIDS education. One of the best ways to reach the adult population is through visual media, especially movies and television. The task force will help to create hip television shows and pre-movie clips promoting abstinence and safe sex, or promoting the integration of HIV and AIDS infected persons into the community.

It is very important to get these movies and television shows into all parts of Zambia. In order to reach the very rural areas, "portable movies" will be assembled to be placed on trucks. These movies can then be transported and shown to small villages.

Hopefully, these films will help Zambians to better understand how to prevent the spread of HIV as well as how to better integrate them into their daily lives.

Female and male condom distribution is also critical to the successfulness of this program. Abstinence will be taught at school, so including abstinence education for adults, who are very possibly married, would be fruitless. There must be large amounts of funding dedicated to the purchase and distribution of said condoms. Hopefully, the prevalence of condoms as well as their depiction in aforementioned movies will help people feel more comfortable using them. Ideally, condom usage will become "cool".

Hopefully, the combination of affirmative action programs and the establishment of a special AIDS committee and task force will have a positive effect on the people of Zambia. The instatement of these programs could very well shrink the AIDS population, and also remove the stigma from having the disease.