

Module 14 - Role play by “HIV” group

The HIV group, comprising employers’ and workers’ representatives, civil society members, the Social Security Board, and ministries, presented their scenario next. The representative from civil society appealed to the emotional nature of humans and said that people need to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. The group used visual media, including graphic images, video testimonials of people living with HIV/AIDS, and statistics, to drive their point home and inspire the government to take immediate action. In the discussion following the presentation, a representative of the Ministry of Finance said that although they would support the idea of the proposed scheme, they did not have enough money.

A member of civil society spoke up in earnest to say that they have been hearing the same thing for 20 years. Her concern was that if she finds out she has HIV, she does not know what steps to take for herself and how to protect her children. She wanted to find out how the scheme would benefit people with HIV/AIDS and details of the government’s plan. The group went on to explain their chosen scenario, which was to provide a package of benefits comprising free voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) twice a year, cluster of differentiation 4 (CD4) and viral load, anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs, free VCT and mother-to-child-transmission (MTCT) measures for pregnant women, and cost of transportation to hospitals. A representative of the Social Security Board highlighted that they have estimated the cost of bringing this scheme into operation. They now required money, technical support, and an advanced database. For this, cooperation of the government was of utmost importance. The group again highlighted the necessity of implementing easy access to HIV tests and treatments.

A person from the Ministry of Health asked why so much money was being allotted to treatment rather than prevention and the logic behind selecting that particular scenario among so many others. The group replied that this scenario, when implemented through a scheme, would guarantee the SPF and would need to be complemented with other programmes such as awareness creation and prevention. A member of the government reiterated that it is essential to think of children, especially those living in households affected by HIV. The group replied that while prevention was important, they also want to focus on people living with HIV who need help.

A member of the Association of People with HIV in Koh Chang province quoted that 30,000 households are affected in just their province, of which 2,000 are critical, meaning that parents have passed away and grandparents are taking care of children, in households where food and money are not sufficient. As a result, the children who grow up in these households will have little or no education.