



## STORIES of HOPE

### MEXICO

#### Public-Private Partnership Combats Workplace Discrimination



Eugenio Pazarín Osornio, who works with CONAES, is an advocate for reducing discrimination in the workplace and increasing awareness regarding the prevention of HIV.

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In January 2004, a U.S. Congressional delegation met with a group of people living with HIV/AIDS in Mexico City, Mexico. During the discussion, someone asked the group how many had been fired for being HIV-positive. Each participant raised his hand. When the delegation asked a group of Mexican government officials, non-governmental organization representatives, healthcare providers and local business leaders to identify the most difficult problem facing Mexico concerning HIV/AIDS, the consensus was clear – pervasive stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS.

In response, a group of multinational corporations joined forces to launch a national business council in Mexico, Consejo Nacional Empresarial sobre SIDA (CONAES), on World AIDS Day 2004. The effort is a public-private partnership between founding corporations, the AIDS Responsibility Project, AVE de Mexico, Mexico's National Center for HIV/AIDS Control and Prevention (CENSIDA), and the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan/PEPFAR).

In its first year, CONAES recruited over 20 large, multinational companies to join the council and sponsored a conference on HIV/AIDS in the workplace. As a member, each company must commit human and financial resources aimed at fighting discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS in the workplace. About 130,000 individuals are currently employed by CONAES companies and are therefore directly affected by the initiative. New partner organizations provide companies with technical assistance on workplace policies; laws and regulations; educational programs; social security and private insurance; and human rights issues.

Mirka Negroni, a member of the PEPFAR-supported POLICY Project in Mexico said, "Partnerships between government, corporations and AIDS organizations have been the winning combination against this epidemic, and CONAES is a tremendous opportunity for all employers in Mexico to join together, share information and voluntarily adopt effective workplace policies that will improve productivity, recruit and retain the best talent, and position the Mexican business sector favorably within the global community."

#### The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

Department of State | U.S. Agency for International Development | Department of Defense | Department of Commerce  
Department of Labor | Department of Health and Human Services | Peace Corps

Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator  
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