HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths in sub-Saharan Africa are increasing. BP has developed policies and partnerships aimed at helping to address the AIDS crisis; our policies are based on the principles of non-disclosure, confidentiality, tolerance, inclusion and non-discrimination.

We provide education and counseling for staff, as well as primary care and medical services.

There is no compulsory HIV testing for recruitment, promotion, or career development: employees cannot be denied promotion or training because they have HIV/AIDS. Voluntary testing is encouraged and free condoms are supplied in all BP workplaces in the region.

Our internal education programmes are designed to help employees understand the disease and its implications so that they can make appropriate choices. All BP managers are trained to support this process. We also support external HIV/AIDS awareness-raising and education programmes in partnership with government, NGOs, trade unions and other businesses.

One of our prime partners is Soul City, a television ‘soap opera’ that uses entertainment to educate people on health and development issues. The show is watched by 12 million viewers in several African countries and plays a vital role in HIV/AIDS education.

In Botswana, BP is closely involved in the innovative Choose Life HIV/AIDS awareness campaign, targeted at young people aged 12 to 18 years. In 2002 our network of 37 filling stations in Botswana were used as distribution points for a booklet, entitled Choose Life! Living with HIV and AIDS in our World, produced by Soul City and Public Service International.

We also worked closely with the Ministry of Education to distribute these booklets and run educational and counseling sessions, using the school system. We distributed nearly 400,000 booklets through these means, of which 18% reached young people out of school.

In 2002 BP joined the South African Business Council Against HIV/AIDS which is affiliated to the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS. Through this relationship and others like it, our efforts to help combat this disease will continue in future.