

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Current status of human resource management and leadership capacity of social enterprises (SEs) operating in HIV/AIDS prevention and control in 9 provinces/cities in 2025

Ha Thi Minh Nguyet^{1*}, Hua Thanh Thuy¹, Nguyen Thu Ha¹, Nguyen Thanh Huong¹,
Nguyen Duc Thanh¹, Cao Thi Hue Chi², Nguyen Hai Yen³

ABSTRACT

Objective: To describe the current status of human resource management (HRM) and the leadership capacity of social enterprises (SEs) operating in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention and control across 9 provinces/cities in 2025

Methods: A mixed-methods study combining quantitative and qualitative approaches was conducted across 9 provinces/cities from August to December 2025. Quantitative data were collected through self-administered questionnaires and document reviews at 20 SEs; qualitative data were obtained through four in-depth interviews with the heads of these organizations.

Results: The average workforce size of SEs is 13-14 employees, with full-time staff acting as the core workforce (an average of 6.5 employees per organization). Regarding HRM practices, 80.0% of SEs have assigned personnel in charge of HR, but only 3.1% possess appropriate professional degrees. Organizations are gradually standardizing administrative procedures: 90.0% have job descriptions, 85.0% maintain employee records, and basic regulations such as discipline (65.0%) and compensation (60.0%) have been issued. However, the employee turnover rate is relatively high (16.6%), and only 25.0% of the organizations utilize methods for calculating staffing needs. In terms of leadership capacity, strengths lie in direct execution tasks such as signing contracts (3.75/5 points), identifying potential talent (3.75/5 points), and fostering a friendly working environment (3.70/5 points). The most significant limitations are in long-term strategic HR planning capacity (2.65/5 points) and the development of strategic training plans (2.90/5 points).

Conclusion: SEs in HIV/AIDS prevention and control are demonstrating adaptability through the initial adoption of basic management software and the improvement of basic HR operations. Nevertheless, the high turnover rate indicates that the current management model remains heavily responsive, project-cycle-dependent, and lacks a long-term strategic vision. To achieve sustainable development, these organizations require in-depth interventions to upgrade the strategic planning mindset of leaders and to professionalize HR departments.

Keywords: Social enterprises, HIV/AIDS, human resource management, leadership capacity, 2025



Corresponding author: Ha Thi Minh Nguyet

Email: htmn@huph.edu.vn

¹Hanoi University of Public Health

²Humanitarian Service International

³Hanoi Medical College

Submitted: 6 April, 2026

Revised version received: 3 May, 2026

Accepted: 12 June, 2026

DOI: https://doi.org/10.38148/JHDS.102E/SKPT_26_058_E

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, in response to the reduction in international aid, many Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) have transitioned their models and registered for legal status to become Social Enterprises (SEs). This transition requires organizations not only to fulfill their role as providers of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment support services but also to operate their apparatus according to the standards of an authentic social enterprise to ensure revenue and survival. In this context, human resource management (HRM) shifts from maintaining a network of volunteers to managing a professional workforce that receives fixed salaries and is tied to key performance indicators (KPIs). The absence of a systematic HR management system and the strategic planning capacity of leaders can lead to decreased employee engagement and retention, thereby reducing the enterprise's competitiveness. Therefore, this study was conducted to describe the current status of human resource management and the leadership capacity of SEs operating in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention and control across 9 provinces/cities in 2025. This aims to provide scientific evidence for developing interventions to enhance HRM capacity, contributing to the sustainable development of the SE sector within the HIV system in particular and the health system in general.

RESEARCH METHODS

Study design: A mixed-methods study combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative study used self-administered questionnaires combined with document reviews at the organizations to collect data on the current HRM status at the organizational level, alongside self-administered questionnaires on the HRM capacity of leaders. The qualitative study was conducted simultaneously to analyze the current HRM status at the organizational level and the personal capacity of leaders.

Study location and time: From August to December 2025 across 9 provinces/cities: Hanoi City, Thai Nguyen, Hue City, Hai Phong, Ho Chi Minh City, Can Tho, An Giang, Lam Dong, and Khanh Hoa.

Study subjects: Social Enterprises (SEs) currently operating in HIV/AIDS prevention and control, and the directors/heads of these organizations.

Sample size and sampling: Quantitative: all 20 SEs operating at the time of the study. Qualitative: four SE directors representing different levels of maturity, varying operational models, and organizations facing differing degrees of HR challenges.

Study variables/indicators/themes:

Quantitative variables:

- General information variables about SEs (duration of operation, workforce size, services provided, target client groups).
- Current HRM status variables (characteristics of HR staffing, HR policies/regulations, training activities, performance appraisal, management information systems).
- Leader's HRM capacity variables (basic HR administration, talent management, training, compensation, employee experience, and planning).

Qualitative themes:

- Current organizational HRM status regarding: HR policies/regulations, training activities, performance appraisal.
- Leader's HRM capacity: basic HR administration, talent management, training, compensation, employee experience, and planning.

Measurement scales and evaluation criteria:

- Current HRM status: Evaluated on a 2-point

scale of "Yes" and "No".

- Leadership capacity evaluation: Used a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = Unable to perform/ No experience; 2 = Weak performance capacity; 3 = Average performance capacity; 4 = Good performance capacity; 5 = Very good performance capacity.

Data collection techniques, tools, and

procedures: The quantitative study utilized self-administered tools combined with reviews of available organizational documents to verify the self-reported information. The organizational status assessment questionnaire was developed based on the WHO Guidelines on health workforce planning and development for HIV/AIDS programs(1). The leadership capacity assessment scale was built upon the Profession Map framework of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, UK) for comprehensive capacity assessment and development (2), and referenced the “Line Managers’ Human Resource Competency Scale” – Jo (2016) to evaluate skills in working directly with personnel such as communication, coaching, conflict resolution, and ensuring compliance (3). The leadership capacity measurement tool was consulted with experts in human resource management, health management, and HIV (content validity) and representatives of 02 SEs before formal data collection (face validity). The organizational HR status self-administered questionnaires were sent to organizations via the provincial/ municipal Centers for Disease Control before the research team arrived to review documents for verification. The leader capacity self-administered questionnaires were conducted directly at the organizations. The qualitative study was conducted concurrently using in-depth interview guidelines; each interview lasted 45-60 minutes, and was recorded and noted with the consent of the participants.

- **Data processing and analysis:** Quantitative data were entered and analyzed using SPSS software, utilizing descriptive statistics such

as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed according to the research themes.

Research ethics: The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the Hanoi University of Public Health under Decision No. 324/2025/YTCC-HD3 dated July 3, 2025, and 484/2025/YTCC-HD3 dated October 31, 2025. All information regarding the organizations and participants is kept strictly confidential.

RESULTS

General information of SEs and leaders

The study was conducted on 20 SEs with an average operation time of 9 years. The workforce size ranges around 13-14 people/ organization. Regarding services, 100% of organizations conduct HIV communication and testing counseling. Notably, SEs have the capacity to provide specialized technical services at high rates: 55.0% provide medical examination and treatment services, and 80.0% offer treatment support. Target client groups are predominantly men who have sex with men (95.0%) and transgender individuals (75.0%). The average number of full-time employees per organization is 6.5, significantly higher than part-time staff (5.7 people) and volunteers (2.7 people). However, workforce volatility is quite high, with the turnover rate over the past year reaching 16.6%. Regarding the demographic characteristics of leaders, the SE leadership force is very young, concentrated in the 30-39 age group (60.0%). Males account for 85.0%. University and postgraduate education levels constitute the majority (55.0%). The average leadership tenure of this group is 6.55 years.

Current status of organizational human resource management

To comprehensively evaluate the human resource management system within Social Enterprises, this section analyzes organizational practices

based on the five core domains outlined in the WHO Guidelines on health workforce planning and development for HIV/AIDS programs. These five interconnected areas include: the characteristics of HR staffing, HR policies and regulations, training activities, performance appraisal and job planning, and management information systems.

Characteristics of the HR staffing

16/20 (80.0%) SEs have assigned personnel in charge of HR tasks, of which 8 organizations have dedicated specialized staff. The proportion of personnel trained specifically in HRM is 3.1%. However, no budget allocation was recorded for capacity building of HR staff.

HR policies, regulations, and documents

Table 1. Status of HRM policies, regulations, and documents in SEs (n=20)

No	HRM policies	SEs (n=20)		
		Separate document (%)	Integrated into other documents (%)	None (%)
I Recruitment & Selection				
1	Recruitment	11 (55.0)	2 (10.0)	7 (35.0)
2	Core staff development	10 (50.0)	2 (10.0)	8 (40.0)
II Training & Development				
3	Leadership and management training	8 (40.0)	4 (20.0)	8 (40.0)
4	Professional training	8 (40.0)	3 (15.0)	9 (45.0)
III Performance Management				
5	Discipline and grievances	13 (65.0)	3 (15.0)	4 (20.0)
6	Income (salary, allowances...)	12 (60.0)	2 (10.0)	6 (30.0)
7	Rewards	9 (45.0)	4 (20.0)	7 (35.0)
8	Employee health protection	12 (60.0)	3 (15.0)	5 (25.0)
9	Trade union activities	3 (15.0)	4 (20.0)	13 (65.0)

Table 1 demonstrates the degree of documentation of HRM policies in 20 SEs, categorized into three core functions. In the Recruitment & Selection group, 55.0% of SEs have separate recruitment regulations, while 40.0% entirely lack policies for core staff development. The most significant documentation gaps are observed in the Training & Development group and collective benefits, with 40.0% to 45.0% of organizations lacking regulations for professional and leadership training, and remarkably, 65.0% having no regulations for trade union activities.

In the Performance Management group, basic administrative policies record the highest rates of separate written documents, specifically discipline and grievances (65.0%), followed by income and employee health protection (both at 60.0%).

HR Training: 70.0% of SEs have developed training plans. Training is viewed as a competitive strategy, not only focusing on HIV knowledge but also equipping staff with new skills such as photography, copywriting, and using AI to serve the enterprise's

professional activities: "For example, learning about photography, learning about copywriting, learning about how to use AI effectively, then assigning staff to learn... I have opened two courses, one on content creation and video design. Another course is on advanced techniques for using manual cameras" (PVS01).

Performance appraisal and job planning: 90.0% of organizations have specific job descriptions for each position (18/20 organizations). The establishment of standardized criteria and methods for performance appraisal is also emphasized, reaching 85.0% (17/20 organizations); 75.0% (15/20 organizations) of SEs have standardized and clearly communicated the methods for calculating and paying remuneration to all employees, while 70.0% (14/20 organizations) publicly announce performance appraisal results. However, in terms of strategic planning, the proportion of SEs with methods for calculating staffing needs to develop HR

plans remains very limited, reaching only 25.0% (5/20 organizations). "When there are such service contracts, I will evaluate based on the scale of activities and make a specific plan, how many personnel are appropriate..." (PVS02).

Management information systems: 85.0% of organizations maintain individual employee records, and 65.0% have a personnel tracking system. Several SEs have adopted professional software such as MISA, Bizfly, or electronic time attendance machines: "Using MISA software to calculate salaries and track attendance" (PVS03).

HRM Capacity of SE Leaders

The HRM capacity of SE directors/heads was evaluated in-depth and categorized into three primary HRM functional groups: (1) Recruitment and Selection, (2) Training and Development, and (3) Performance Management and Retention.

Group 1: Recruitment and Selection

Table 2. Capacity in Recruitment and Selection (n=20)

No	Competency	Mean score	Standard Deviation
I	HR planning and development capacity		
1.	Reasonably allocate human resources according to operational needs.	3.20	0.62
2.	Estimate staffing needs based on the operational plans or projects of the SE.	3.05	0.60
3.	Develop HR plans linked to the expansion and sustainable development of the SE.	2.65	0.81
	Total	2.97	0.48
II	Basic HR administration		
1.	Possess basic skills to perform recruitment, contract signing, and personnel records management	3.65	0.87
2.	Possess basic skills to execute employment contracts	3.75	0.79

3.	Possess basic skills to manage personnel records	3.30	0.86
4.	Have the capacity to develop and implement basic HR regulations	3.05	0.69
5.	Ensure HR management (processes, regulations) is transparent and fair for all employees	3.45	0.69
Total		3.44	0.62
III Talent management capacity			
1.	Identify and recognize personnel with development potential who play an important role in the development of the SE	3.75	0.55
2.	Have effective plans and methods to attract and retain personnel suitable for the job requirements and the social mission of the SE	3.00	0.72
3.	Know how to assign and delegate tasks appropriate to employees' competencies	3.45	0.83
Total		3.40	0.60

The HR planning and development capacity of SE leaders indicates that this skill set generally only reaches an average level, with a total score of 2.97 ± 0.48 . Among these, the criterion of reasonably allocating human resources according to operational needs achieved the highest score (3.20 ± 0.62 points), followed by the ability to estimate staffing needs based on short-term plans and projects (3.05 ± 0.60 points). Notably, the greatest limitation of leaders lies in the capacity to develop HR plans linked to expansion goals and sustainable development, recording the lowest score in the entire group (achieving only 2.65 ± 0.81 points). Qualitative data further clarify that HR planning at current SEs is primarily short-term, based on operational scale, project targets, and the personal experience of the leader rather than a long-term development strategy. Leaders often self-estimate staffing needs by grasping the actual workload or project quotas. Role assignment is mainly intended to meet the schedule of specific programs: "I will personally evaluate based on the operational scale and plan HR

coordination... determining what positions are needed for that program" (PVS02).

The basic HR administration capacity of SE leaders is rated as fairly good, with average scores ranging from 3.05 to 3.75. Among these, the skill of signing employment contracts achieved the highest score (3.75 ± 0.79 points), followed by skills in executing recruitment and managing personnel records (3.65 ± 0.87 points). Conversely, the capacity to develop and implement basic HR regulations received the lowest score (3.05 ± 0.69 points). In-depth interviews reveal that in practice, SE leaders often directly draft job descriptions and organize recruitment processes to select suitable personnel. Furthermore, personnel records management is also implemented to meet corporate management requirements: "Before recruiting for that HR position, we always have a job description for the candidates... there will be two rounds. The first is an online interview and the second is a face-to-face interview" (PVS04). However, some SE leaders noted that the development and documentation of HR regulations have

not been fully implemented, due to a desire to maintain a flexible working environment within the organization: *"The only thing is that it is not documented... if we are too tense about regulations, it's a bit awkward... but when working without clear regulations, there will be a lack of collective unity"* (PVS01).

Talent management capacity: The capacity to identify potential personnel achieved the highest score (3.75 ± 0.55 points). However, the capacity to develop plans to attract and

retain talent reached a level of 3.00 ± 0.72 points. Leaders often recognize employees' competencies during work and guide them into appropriate roles: *"Knowing what this person will be suitable for and advising them to invest in that direction. For example, there are some who don't realize they are very suitable for outreach and counseling, so P. will direct them more towards that activity"* (PVS01).

Group 2: Training and Development

Table 3. Organizational HR training and development capacity (n=20)

No	Competency	Mean score	Standard Deviation
1.	Develop training plans for employees aligned with the short- and long-term goals of the SE	2.90	0.79
2.	Be able to organize, coordinate, or mobilize resources for employee skill enhancement activities	3.05	0.89
3.	Align training activities with the strategic goals and social mission of the social enterprise	3.05	0.99
Total		3.00	0.76

The evaluation results for the organizational training and HR development capacity of SE leaders indicate that this skill set only reaches an average level (total score 3.00 ± 0.76). Among these, the ability to mobilize resources to organize skill-enhancement activities and aligning training with the social mission achieved slightly higher scores (both at 3.05 points). In contrast, the most significant limitation lies in the capacity to build systematic training plans linked to

short- and long-term goals (reaching only 2.90 ± 0.79 points). *"I think I lack some skills [in employee capacity development], some practical collision experience when acting as an HR manager of an enterprise. Because upon becoming an enterprise, to be honest, I haven't had much opportunity to experience it"* (PVS02).

Group 3: Performance Management and Retention

Table 4. Capacity in Performance Management and Retention (n=20)

No	Competency	Mean score	Standard Deviation
Capacity to design and apply rewards and compensation			
1.	Design a compensation, bonus, and benefits system suitable to financial capabilities and market context.	3.30	0.80

No	Competency	Mean score	Standard Deviation
2.	Proactively implement timely recognition and praise, and publicly acknowledge employees' contributions to boost morale	3.50	0.83
3.	Effectively apply non-financial employee motivation methods (recognition, mental support, work-life balance)	3.40	0.75
Total		3.40	0.64
II. Capacity to manage employee work experience within the organization			
1.	Take proactive measures to enhance employee satisfaction and engagement	3.20	0.77
2.	Build a friendly work environment, encourage and create equal development opportunities for all employees	3.70	0.66
3.	Listen to employee feedback to improve policies and management methods	3.55	0.76
Total		3.48	0.62

Table 4 indicates that the capacity to manage employee work experience within the organization is rated slightly higher, with a total mean score of 3.48 (SD = 0.62), compared to the capacity to design and apply rewards and compensation, which has a total mean score of 3.40 (SD = 0.64).

Regarding the capacity to design and apply rewards and compensation, leaders are most proficient at proactively implementing timely recognition and praise (3.50 ± 0.83), but face relative challenges in designing a compensation system suitable to financial capabilities and the market context (3.30 ± 0.80). Qualitative data indicate that leaders often directly design flexible incentive mechanisms. Financially, they apply reward/penalty regimes tied to KPI completion levels. Concurrently, non-financial incentives and collective benefits (such as organizing trips, internal activities) are also proactively deployed to enhance employee engagement: "Besides salary, our compensation regime includes travel, having a fund, and supporting staff to go traveling" (PVS01).

Capacity to manage employee work experience within the organization: Results show that the capacity to manage the work experience of SE leaders is rated as good ($3.20 - 3.70$ points). The ability to foster a friendly, equitable work environment scored highest (3.70 ± 0.66), whereas proactive measures to enhance satisfaction scored lowest (3.20 ± 0.77). Qualitative data explain that, instead of implementing measures systematically, SE leaders maintain a positive work environment primarily through personal attention and direct interaction. They frequently converse to understand challenges, adjust workloads, and share about employees' daily lives: "Care here is not only in work but also in daily life... asking staff about issues in their daily lives" (PVS02).

DISCUSSION

Our study depicts a landmark transitional phase for community-based HIV/AIDS organizations in Vietnam: shifting from an aid-project-based operational model to an

autonomous SE model. This process yields positive administrative changes, yet also clearly exposes the tension between the social mission and the challenge of economic survival.

Current status of organizational human resource management

Characteristics of the HR staffing: The fact that most SEs have assigned personnel in charge of HR indicates an awareness of professionalizing the management apparatus. However, the vast discrepancy between the proportion of organizations with assigned HR personnel and the proportion of employees with relevant professional degrees (only 3.1%) reflects a reality: SEs are primarily "repurposing" community health workers or long-term volunteers into HR roles. A report by FHI 360 (2024) in Vietnam also confirmed the severe shortage of foundational HR expertise in transitional community organizations (4). The most practical solution currently is for technical assistance projects to provide scholarships or short-term training courses on standard HR operations specifically tailored for SE management staff.

HR policies, regulations, and documents: When examining the documentation of HRM policies through the three core functions, a clear pattern emerges. In terms of Recruitment and Selection, SEs prioritize basic recruitment regulations to maintain operations but heavily neglect formal policies for core staff development. Regarding Training and Development, there is a significant documentation gap, indicating that while training occurs practically, it is rarely institutionalized into formal regulatory frameworks. In the realm of Performance Management, organizations heavily prioritize regulations that protect the organization and enforce basic compliance (such as discipline and compensation). Conversely, they severely neglect policies aimed at protecting collective employee rights, such as trade union activities.

From an academic perspective, Otoo et al. (2023) refer to this uneven formalization as "performing tension" within hybrid organizations (5). SE directors often fear that enforcing overly strict, comprehensive regulations across all HRM functions will disrupt the emotional bonds among staff and the voluntarism that characterizes community movements. To address this, support from legal and HR experts is needed to help build comprehensive internal regulation frameworks across all three core functions: ensuring compliance with Labor Law while retaining the unique flexibility and friendliness of SEs.

HR Training: Unlike the previous phase which focused solely on HIV counseling and testing knowledge, current SEs view training as an essential requirement for survival. The shift towards training in direct revenue-generating skills (such as applying artificial intelligence, multimedia communication, photography) is an excellent adaptation in the context of drastically reduced international aid.

Performance appraisal and job planning: The study reveals a significant paradox: organizations perform very well in job delineation (having job descriptions, having evaluation criteria) but are virtually inactive in calculating long-term staffing needs. This reality stems from the context where SEs' core financial resources still heavily depend on short-term HIV service provision contracts. Consequently, the personnel lifecycle is tethered to the project lifecycle. A 2025 study in the Journal of Medical Internet Research also confirmed: the mindset of "hiring only when there is a project, reducing staff when the project ends" hinders the growth of community organization (6). The strategic intervention here is to train SE leaders on how to plan HR based on the overall business plan, rather than relying solely on individual projects.

Management information systems: The

adoption of professional management software (MISA, Bizfly) over manual recording methods by organizations is an encouraging sign. This not only optimizes internal management but also meets the stringent financial transparency requirements from partners, clients, and tax authorities.

HRM Capacity of SE Leaders

Capacity in Recruitment and Selection

SE leaders perform direct administrative tasks (contract signing, records management) very well but struggle when independently designing a system of regulations. This is entirely understandable as they evolved from fieldwork professionals, more accustomed to execution than to designing institutional frameworks for an enterprise.

Although highly perceptive in assessing personnel capabilities and placing the right people in the right jobs, their most critical weakness lies in HR planning and development. Their management mindset remains trapped in short-term "survival mode" instead of long-term "development mode". Consequently, they helplessly observe an employee turnover rate as high as 16.6%. This figure is notably higher than the average annual turnover rate of approximately 10-12% typically reported in the broader non-profit and community health sectors (7), underscoring a significant challenge in workforce stability. The context of funding cuts deprives them of adequate financial resources to retain capable staff. To solve this issue, SE leaders must be equipped with employer branding skills—utilizing the very noble social mission of saving lives and helping society as leverage to attract and retain individuals with aligned value systems. Furthermore, transitioning from a movement leader to a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) demands a quantum leap in strategic thinking. Therefore, the top intervention priority for supporting organizations (such as Global Fund, Expertise

France...) is not just financial sponsorship, but rather incubation programs and intensive 1-on-1 coaching on strategic management thinking for SE leadership.

Capacity in Training and Development

The absence of the ability to develop career pathing is a major bottleneck. Current directors primarily send employees for training in a "fill the missing skills" manner to serve immediate work needs. Without a clear vision of career advancement opportunities, young, highly capable employees will tend to view the SE as merely temporary. The proposed intervention is to guide leaders in methods of conducting gap analysis and designing internal career development paths, helping employees see their future tied to the SE's future.

Capacity in Performance Management and Retention

The combination of KPI-based reward/penalty mechanisms and non-financial benefits (travel, internal activities) represents a substantial effort by SEs to compensate for limited salary funds. Simultaneously, the "family-style" management approach, characterized by deep personal care for employees' lives, has created an extremely safe and cohesive work environment. This is something commercial enterprises struggle to attain. However, Cachón-Rodríguez et al. (2022) pointed out the limitations of this method: a fun environment or spiritual rewards are only effective when basic income meets minimum living needs (8). If the spirit of dedication is overly exploited while appropriate financial compensation is neglected, the organization faces the risk of burnout and brain drain. A sustainable solution requires leaders to learn how to establish a clear "psychological contract," balancing expectations of social contribution with ensuring material well-being for the team.

Limitations of the study: Although this study

provides significant findings on the current status of human resource management, it still presents certain limitations. First, due to the specific characteristics of the network scale in the HIV/AIDS prevention and control sector, the quantitative sample size is relatively small (surveying only 20 social enterprises), which partially limits the generalizability of the results to all organizations nationwide. Furthermore, from a statistical perspective, calculating variance metrics on this restricted sample size limits their robustness. Consequently, these quantitative metrics, particularly the standard deviations, serve primarily to illustrate descriptive trends within the surveyed group rather than acting as robust statistical parameters for the broader population. Second, data regarding leadership capacity were collected primarily through self-assessment methods (self-administered questionnaires); therefore, subjective errors or social desirability bias from the respondents are inevitable. Finally, given the descriptive cross-sectional study design, we can only reflect the current status at a specific point in time (2025) and cannot definitively establish a causal relationship between the leaders' strategic management capacity and the employee turnover rate. These limitations highlight the need for future longitudinal studies that combine multi-dimensional evaluations (such as upward feedback from employees to managers) with larger sample sizes.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study shows that Social Enterprises (SEs) in the HIV/AIDS prevention and control sector currently have an average workforce size of 13-14 employees and are gradually standardizing basic management operations. Although leaders demonstrate clear strengths in direct administrative execution and fostering a friendly work environment, these organizations face a major

challenge with a high employee turnover rate of 16.6%. This reality reflects a core weakness: the current management model remains short-term and project-dependent, lacking the foundational capacity for long-term strategic human resource planning and development.

For the SE sector, intervention programs must focus on solving the core problems: the lack of a strategic planning mindset and high turnover rates. It is recommended that donors and management agencies implement coaching programs to help leaders transition their mindset from 'movement leaders' to 'Chief Executive Officers (CEOs)'. Simultaneously, technical assistance is essential to help SEs design Career Pathing and an Employer Branding strategy based on their social mission, thereby establishing a solid 'psychological contract' with employees. For organizations with limited resources, adopting a 'Shared HR Services' model and providing 'Standardized Management Toolkits' should be considered to accelerate the standardization of internal institutions.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the 9 Centers for Disease Control (CDC) including Hanoi, Thai Nguyen, Hai Phong, Can Tho, An Giang, Hue, Lam Dong, Ho Chi Minh, Khanh Hoa and 35 CBOs for supporting us to conduct this research.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Mrs Ha Thi Minh Nguyet (lead author) affirms that this manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study being reported and that no important aspects of the study have been omitted

REFERENCES

1. World Health Organization . Tool for

- planning and developing human resources for HIV/AIDS, 2006.
2. Jo AB. Line Managers' Human Resource Competency Scale. *Human Resource Management*. 2016;10(2):45-60.
3. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). *The Profession Map*. London: CIPD; 2023.
4. FHI 360. SCANA / capacity assessment tools for CBOs (Vietnam) 2023–2024 (tool & guidance). Hanoi: FHI 360; 2024.
5. Otoo ML, Amoako KO, Kyeremeh E, et al. Strategic Human Resources Management for Creating Shared Value in Social Business Organizations. *Sustainability*. 2023;15(4):3703. doi: 10.3390/su15043703.
6. Restar A, Kuhns L, Reiskoetter E, et al. Community-Based Organizations' Approaches to Recruitment and Retention for a Digital HIV Prevention Intervention for Young Men Who Have Sex With Men: A Mixed Methods Study. *J Med Internet Res*. 2025;27:e63199. doi: 10.2196/63199.
7. Nonprofit HR. 2024 Nonprofit Talent Retention Practices Survey. Washington, DC: Nonprofit HR; 2024. Available from: <https://www.nonprofithr.com/>
8. Cachón-Rodríguez G, Blanco-González A, Prado-Román C, Del-Castillo-Feito C. How sustainable human resources management helps in the evaluation and planning of employee loyalty and retention: Can social capital make a difference? *Eval Program Plann*. 2022;95:102171. doi: 10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2022.102171.