

*Atlas Copco*

Atlas Copco Zambia  
Combating HIV & AIDS



## Background

Atlas Copco is a world leading provider of industrial productivity solutions. Their products and services range from compressed air and gas equipment, generators, construction and mining equipment, industrial tools and assembly systems to related aftermarket and rental. Atlas Copco Zambia is located in Chingola with branches in Kitwe and Lubumbashi, as well as in Kolwezi in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In total the company employs 300 full time members of staff and 20 temporary workers.













Atlas Copco Zambia and its employees need to face up to the realities and challenge of the HIV and AIDS pandemic that is devastating the country. HIV and AIDS is now the most serious problem affecting people in all walks of life in Zambia. Moreover, the epidemic poses a great challenge to any company's performance through illness and death of highly qualified and experienced staff and through the diversion of limited resources to care for a sickly and ill workforce.

## Policy

In order to clarify the company's commitment as well as to show that Atlas Copco Zambia employs a participatory and inclusive approach to tackling HIV and AIDS, the HIV/AIDS policy developed by the company's HIV/AIDS Committee has been approved by management. The principles of the policy are important to explain to everyone at the workplace since Atlas Copco has a commitment to ensure a workplace that is a non-discriminatory environment for persons affected by HIV and AIDS as well as one which will encourage HIV positive employees to be open about their status.

### The Atlas Copco Policy

The purpose of the Atlas Copco HIV/AIDS policy is to ensure a consistent and equitable approach to the prevention of HIV and AIDS amongst employees and their families, as well as to the management of the consequences of HIV and AIDS, including the care and support of employees and their dependants living with HIV and AIDS. The policy ensures compliance with the ILO code of practice on HIV and AIDS and commits the company to implement an HIV and AIDS programme. The policy tackles the following issues:

-  Confidentiality
-  Stigma, Discrimination and Rights
-  HIV/AIDS and Employment
-  Testing of HIV/AIDS in the Workplace
-  Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures
-  Voluntary Counselling and Testing
-  Prevention, Awareness and Education
-  Care and Support for Employees and their Families
-  Medical Benefits
-  Creating a Safe Environment
-  Implementation and Monitoring
-  Budget and Finance

## Atlas Copco HIV/Aids Committee

Successfully tackling HIV and AIDS at the workplace is a responsibility of both management and workers. Thus, setting up a participatory committee ensures a stronger commitment from all parties at the workplace and is instrumental in a successful implementation of the programme.

The workplace programme at Atlas Copco Zambia is driven by an HIV/AIDS committee, which is composed of peer educators as well as representatives of the human resource and financial departments. The committee drafts the policy and is responsible for planning, implementing, and following up of the workplace programme. The committee meets once a month.

## The Workplace Programme

Atlas Copco Zambia has introduced a comprehensive workplace programme to fight HIV and AIDS. As part of the programme, the company has held a peer educator training session with more than 20 employees. The trainings included various methods such as lectures, group discussions, video screenings, testimonies and a site visit to a Voluntary Counselling Testing (VCT) centre. To further support the staff and promote VCT, three employees have been trained as psycho-social counsellors.

Moreover, Atlas Copco Zambia is distributing male and female condoms to the whole staff. In order to tackle malaria, the company distributes treated bed-nets to the staff and their families and has organised a specific sensitisation on the matter. In addition, the company operates a cost sharing medical scheme with local hospitals, where all employees and their families are registered. The scheme covers all forms of diseases which may be looked at as opportunistic infections as far as HIV and AIDS is concerned. Atlas Copco plans to also use this scheme in the provision of Anti-Retro Virals (ARVs) for the members of staff who test positive as well as for their families.

Furthermore, the company has a pension scheme and life assurance policy that provide assistance in times of bereavement if an employee dies. Finally, Atlas Copco has realised the need to reach outside the workplace itself. Thus, the family has been included by having couple counselling where the employees come with their spouses to test themselves together.



## Exchanging Experiences

In order to enhance the programme further, Atlas Copco Zambia is participating in a network of other companies having workplace programs supported by the Swedish Workplace HIV/Aids Programme (SWHAP). The network is organising seminars on specific issues and joint trainings and activities.

Although being business competitors, the companies active in the SWHAP network in Zambia are cooperating closely as regards HIV and AIDS. For instance, sixteen employees from the companies have received a combined training to become psychosocial counsellors. Moreover, the SWHAP companies have twice made a combined effort in offering Voluntary Counselling and Testing as well as information to visitors during the Kitwe Agriculture & Mining show exhibition.

HIV and AIDS require continuous commitment, openness and a willingness to make a positive impact by each individual to move Atlas Copco Zambia forward in the fight against the epidemic. In this regard, Atlas Copco Zambia commits itself to providing leadership to implement an HIV/AIDS programme that contributes to combating the epidemic. Apart from continuing implementing the workplace programme and policy, Atlas Copco Zambia is looking at enhancing cooperation with local organisations to conduct community outreach.

## Swedish Workplace HIV and AIDS Programme (SWHAP)

The workplace programme that Atlas Copco Zambia is implementing and the network in which it is participating, are both assisted by the Swedish Workplace HIV and AIDS Programme (SWHAP). The SWHAP is a jointly initiated effort of the International Council of Swedish Industry (NIR) and the Swedish Industrial and Metalworker's Union (IF Metall). The main aim of the programme is to implement a long-term strategy to contribute to the establishment and/or support of HIV and AIDS programmes at Swedish related workplaces in Sub-Saharan Africa. The designs of the workplace programmes differ between the various workplaces but key components are always a clear policy and the cooperation between management and workers (through trade unions where available).

The programme presently operates in Botswana, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Up until now, the SWHAP supports HIV and AIDS programmes at around 30 workplaces as well as supporting networks of more than 50 companies. In all, the programme reaches out directly to approximately 11 000 employees and indirectly to more than 50 000 people including family members and the surrounding community. The SWHAP is co-financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.



To find out more about the Atlas Copco Zambia HIV/Aids workplace programme please contact  
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