



Swedish
Workplace
HIV/Aids
Programme

SWHAP Southern Africa Newsletter 1/2009

A feather in the cap for Sandvik Zimbabwe which was awarded the SWHAP 2008 Award for the tireless efforts and dedication in fighting HIV & AIDS. **Sandvik Zimbabwe** also embarked on an HIV mentorship programme of one of their neighboring companies which management has been sensitized and a plan to train peer educators has been established. VCT was conducted 11-15 May for the 150 Sandvik staff members and technical mine workers from other companies based at Ngezi mine. This service was also made available to spouses of Sandvik employees.

Spousal and family activities

Hats off too to **Auto Sueco in Botswana** which marked World Aids Day 2008 by becoming the first of the SWHAP partners in Botswana to include families in the programme. 86.6% of those attending the Wellness Day celebrations underwent VCT. Auto Sueco has high hopes that this was the start of a tradition that will be carried out every year within Botswana.

More and more companies realize the value in reaching and empowering spouses with HIV information and the potential role that trained spouses have in reaching communities. In May 2009 **Scania Zimbabwe** trained 39 spouses as peer educators in Harare and Bulawayo. The trained **Sandvik Zimbabwe** spouses have already commenced some community outreach programmes which include support to a life skills programme for in-school youth through an HIV& AIDS after schools club and supporting a local football team with HIV information.

More on Community Outreach...

Atlas Copco Zambia conducted a malaria campaign in May and distributed two bed nets per family of the employees. Atlas Copco recognizes the threat caused by both HIV and malaria and especially by malaria on already weakened immune systems. This initiative was applauded by all employees as well as other neighboring companies within the Copper belt. **Scania Botswana** has developed a plan to roll out HIV information to drivers and truckers who come for driver training. SWHAP continues to support these and other innovative approaches in reaching communities with HIV information.



M.D. Fred Knott, HIV Coordinator Grace Nembaware and workers' representative Albert Govha received the SWHAP Award in Stockholm on 1 December 2008.

Sanitas Botswana conducted at the end of February their second VCT since joining the SWHAP. 75 of the 85 staff took up testing. The company now boasts one of the most responsive and holistic programmes in Botswana with all HIV positive staff receiving post test support as well as access to a 24 hour toll free counselling online service.

Reaching Supply Chains

Dyno Nobel in Zambia has renewed its efforts to motivate the initiation of workplace programmes within the supply chain despite a period when the company, like many others in the sector in many countries, has been seriously affected by the drop in prices of minerals on the global market. By reaching companies in the supply chain SWHAP expects to achieve a multiplier effect through the potential numbers of employees reached.

Etel Networks in Botswana in May brought together 25 of their subcontractors to a breakfast meeting to motivate subcontractors to start workplace HIV programmes while working on the rural electrification projects in 100 villages in Botswana. This provides a platform for strong advocacy messages on workplace HIV programmes and the Etel subcontractors have a unique position in reaching out to communities with HIV information as they pass through. The contracted staff working for the subcontractors are also a highly vulnerable population as they are highly mobile. Etel feels strongly that they can impact communities with electricity as well as through provision of life saving information on prevention and treatment of HIV & AIDS.

Networking

The long standing tradition SWHAP network platforms have continued as forums during which partners can share information on workplace programming and where cutting edge information about HIV & AIDS is given. Botswana and Zimbabwe partners held networking meetings in April. Critical issues were prevention, with particular focus on male circumcision, and the importance of highlighting cultural and gender norms.

Male circumcision is encouraged as one of the possible prevention methods. At the network meeting in Zimbabwe, the importance of addressing patriarchy and including men in HIV programmes remained central.

Welcome to new SWHAP partners

SWHAP Southern Africa would like to say a warm welcome to **TUSILAGO Company in Zimbabwe** who is the latest entrant to the SWHAP network. Tusilago is a leading company in building quality kitchens in Zimbabwe. The SWHAP companies in Southern Africa will be a useful resource as Tusilago begins its HIV policy and programme development for the workplace.

12 companies from Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe have applied for co-funding for their workplace programmes from SWHAP. Activities planned for range from workplace prevention programmes, treatment, care and support. VCT remains high on the agenda in many companies.

MALE CIRCUMCISION – MECHANISM OF PROTECTION

(UNAIDS MC BRIFING PACKAGE)

- **By removing the foreskin, circumcision reduces the ability of HIV to penetrate the skin of the penis due to Keratinization or toughening of the inner aspect of the remaining foreskin.**
- **The inner part of the foreskin contains many special immunological cells, such as Langherhans cells, that are prime targets for HIV. Some of these are removed with the foreskin, whole the remaining cells become less accessible to the HIV virus due to keratinisation described above.**
- **Ulcers, which are characteristic of some sexually transmitted infections and which can facilitate HIV transmission, often occur on the foreskin. By removing the foreskin, the likelihood of acquiring these infections is reduced.**
- **The foreskin may suffer abrasions or inflammation during sex that could facilitate the passage of HIV.**

A note from the Coordinator

Welcome to another exciting year in challenging HIV in the world of work among Swedish affiliated companies. So much has happened since the end of 2008. I am highly encouraged by the level of commitment that management, HIV committees and peer educators have continued to display in the face of these challenges. These are really trying times for all, but let me end with a borrowed word of encouragement..... **“yard by yard, life is hard; inch by inch, it’s a cinch”**

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I KNOW MY HIV-STATUS, DO YOU?

The International Council of Swedish Industry (NIR) and the Swedish Industrial and Metalworkers' Union (IF Metall) have jointly decided to initiate and implement a long term programme to support and contribute to the establishment of HIV & AIDS programmes at Swedish related workplaces, through projects in Sub Saharan Africa. The Swedish Workplace HIV & AIDS Programme (SWHAP) is financially supported by Sida.

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