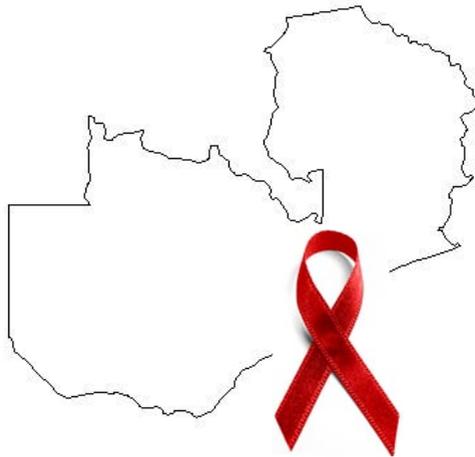




The Swedish Workplace HIV/Aids Programme in Zambia



Background

The HIV and Aids pandemic have dreadful humanitarian consequences as well as serious implications on households, businesses and societies at large. With more than 30 million people infected worldwide, there is no doubt that everyone must contribute to the prevention of further spread of HIV and to alleviate the effects of the ongoing pandemic. The Swedish Workplace HIV and Aids Programme (SWHAP) is a joint effort between the International Council of Swedish Industry (NIR) and the Swedish Industrial and Metalworkers' Union (IF Metall). The objectives of the programme are to assist employers and employees at Swedish related workplaces to combat the HIV and Aids pandemic; to make these workplaces the national spearheads of workplace related HIV and Aids activities; and to initiate a corporate engagement globally.

A foundation for the programme is to stimulate management and employees to work hand in hand in the fight against HIV and AIDS. One method to achieve this has been to offer co-funding to set up or enhance workplace programmes over a three-year period. Another core method has been to develop effective networks between the participating workplaces. Up until now, the SWHAP co-funds HIV and AIDS programmes at 27 mainly small and medium sized workplaces. In total more than 11 000 employees are reached directly, yet indirectly the SWHAP is benefiting more than 50 000 people including families and the surrounding communities. Moreover, another 25 workplaces are involved in the SWHAP networks exchanging experiences with each other. The programme presently operates in Botswana, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda Zambia and Zimbabwe. The SWHAP is financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The SWHAP in Zambia

Since 2005, four Swedish related companies located in the Copperbelt region have been supported through the SWHAP. Combined, these companies employ more than 1000 workers. The prevalence rate of people living with HIV is estimated at 14 percent in Zambia but it is even higher in the Copperbelt.

The SWHAP in Zambia has a focus on joint activities and joint learning. The proximity of the participating companies gives a solid base for cooperation in spite of them being business competitors. All companies participate in joint SWHAP-activities as well as company specific interventions.

Moreover, companies within SWHAP Zambia have at an early stage included families and the surrounding communities in their HIV and AIDS programmes. For example, in 2007 both Sandvik and SKF developed clubs for spouses with a focus on developing income generating activities as well as to train the spouses as peer educators to work in their respective communities.



HIV and AIDS Committees and Policies

A prerequisite for success is that the workplace programme is a joint commitment of all parties at the workplace. Thus, an HIV and Aids committee, consisting of both management and labour representatives is set up at the SWHAP supported workplaces. Where a trade union is present at the workplace it has to be part of the committee. The committee functions as a forum that ensures that trust is maintained between the parties. One of the most important tasks of the committee is to develop an HIV and AIDS policy containing key principles of the workplace's stand on HIV and AIDS. The policy must ensure confidentiality of the employees' HIV status and non-discrimination of HIV infected employees. Moreover, the committee is instrumental in planning and implementing the workplace programme.

The Workplace Programme

With the HIV and AIDS pandemic affecting Sub-Saharan Africa particularly hard, all parts of society have become affected. Obviously, the workplace is no exception. At the same time, it is an ideal arena to address HIV and AIDS due to the long time spent at the workplace and the fact that attitude formation and behaviour change are greatly connected to working life and working culture. Consequently, the business world and labour unions have an important opportunity to play a significant role in contributing to combating the pandemic.

Once a company has decided to implement a workplace programme, the first steps are usually sensitisation activities aiming at raising the awareness among the management and workers on HIV and AIDS, as well as the benefits of having a workplace programme. Subsequently, an HIV and AIDS committee is created that will form the backbone of any workplace programme supported by the SWHAP.

The workplace programmes are amended to meet the special requirements and needs of each country and each particular workplace. However, several commonalities exist in the programmes and almost all of them follow the following steps:

-  1. Management Sensitisation
-  2. Creation of HIV and AIDS Committees
-  3. Information and Awareness Raising Schemes for Employees and Employers
-  4. Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT)
-  5. Peer Education Training
-  6. Healthcare (nutrition, ARVs etc)
-  7. Family Outreach Activities
-  8. Community Outreach

Atlas Copco Zambia Ltd.

Atlas Copco

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.

As part of the HIV and AIDS workplace programme at Atlas Copco Zambia, the company has held a peer educators training 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 and Testing (VCT) centre. To further support the staff and promote VCT, three employees have been trained as psychosocial counsellors.

Moreover, Atlas Copco 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/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.



Dyno Nobel Zambia Ltd.



Dyno Nobel forms part of the Orica Mining Services which is the world's leading global explosives company. In Zambia, the company employs 69 persons and is located in Chambishi and Luanshya. Dyno Nobel started a HIV and AIDS programme already in 1999 but it wasn't until 2007 that a programme co-funded by the SWHAP was launched.

Since the inception of its workplace programme, Dyno Nobel has organised voluntary counseling and testing; launched and printed a HIV/AIDS policy; organised meetings and discussions for the employees; distributed condoms to its employees; screened videos on HIV/AIDS; held activities for the children of the employees; organised malaria sensitisation where insecticide treated bed nets have been distributed; educated peer educators; as well as training psycho-social counsellors among the staff. More than 50% of the workforce has to date been tested.



The company is spreading the experience to other companies. For instance, on World Aids Day in 2007, Dyno Nobel took the initiative to invite other mining companies in Chambishi to participate in their activities. The idea has also been spread to the Orica Mining Group in order for the different branches of the company to learn from the experience of Dyno Nobel in Zambia.

Apart from including family in some of the activities, Dyno Nobel cooperates with the local clinic in Chambishi by linking the counsellors educated among the staff to the clinic. Dyno Nobel has preliminary agreed to assist the local clinic five days a week with trained counsellors thus increasing the outreach and the number of people reached through its programme.



Sandvik Mining and Construction Zambia Ltd.



Sandvik Mining and Construction Zambia Ltd supplies and maintains equipment for mining in the Copperbelt. The company has become one of the leaders in providing service for mining equipment to the large mining companies and has increased its workforce considerably. It now employs more than 500 persons. Sandvik has been working with the SWHAP since 2005 but it had a HIV/AIDS programme already before the SWHAP was established.

Training has been an important part of the programme at Sandvik. The total number of trained peer educators is today more than 70. Moreover, six employees have been trained as psychosocial counsellors and three staff members have attended a regional training in South Africa on Positive Living. Learnings from this latter training are now being integrated in the workplace programme through dealing with positive living and the importance of good nutrition in the Sandvik HIV and wellness training programmes. Moreover, the company has introduced food supplements to around 30 employees as well as their spouses and registered children living with HIV. This service has also been extended to other terminal conditions like cancer and sickle cell anaemia. At its premises, Sandvik has a small space for a vegetable garden, effectively demonstrating the possibility for the employees of growing nutritional plants next to their houses.

In order to keep up the interest and discussion on HIV and Aids, the company organises quizzes on the subject among its staff and screen video shows during lunch hour. Sandvik has a full-time HIV and Aids coordinator who work in close collaboration with the peer educators working at the different sites. In 2007 they also established a position of HIV Awareness Champion and offered this position to one of their employees who openly live with HIV. The name of the HIV and AIDS workplace programme was changed into a Wellness programme in order to have a more holistic approach to the employees.



Sandvik has also supported a Women's Club in order to empower the employees' spouses economically through income generating activities. Of them, more than 80 have also been trained as peer educators in order to reach out to the communities. Another way in which the company is trying to engage the community in is by organising national radio and TV interview on HIV and AIDS. In fact, Sandvik has itself produced a film, 'A deserved Promotion', based on a theatre play by some of its employees. The film has been screened and used by many different actors. Moreover, its weekly radio show, "Women on the Move", is reaching to two million listeners.

The experiences of Sandvik in Zambia are being shared with many companies and different actors. For example, representatives of the company have visited SWHAP companies in Tanzania to share their experiences from the HIV and AIDS workplace programme. One of the issues raised was the importance of commitment by senior management for the success of the programme. In 2008, Sandvik was commended for the Global Business Coalition Excellence Award in the women and girls category.

SKF Zambia Ltd.



SKF Zambia is the leading supplier of precision bearing and industrial rubber products to heavy and general industries, including the mining industry. It is located in Kitwe and has a workforce of approximately 80 persons.

SKF had an HIV and AIDS policy in place prior to the SWHAP yet it has since been updated. The company has held peer educator trainings with participants from the different departments and has trained psycho social counsellors among the staff that offer supportive counselling to their workforce. Further SKF distribute condoms and has held a 100 years celebration with voluntary counselling and testing on site. Moreover, SKF has raised awareness through group discussions among employees on health issues and by organising a commemoration on World AIDS Day.

In November 2007, SKF established the 'Women Club' to provide skills for income generating activities for spouses of the mainly male workforce. The members of the club are also set to be trained as peer educators on HIV and AIDS and will in that role focus their efforts towards the communities in which they are residing.



Joint Effort

Although being business competitors, the companies active in the SWHAP in Zambia are cooperating closely. For example, sixteen employees from the companies have received a combined training to become psychosocial counsellors. The training was divided into theory for one week, practical period for six weeks and sharing of experiences during one day. Moreover, the SWHAP companies have thrice made a combined effort in offering voluntary counselling and testing as well as information to visitors during the Kitwe Agriculture & Mining show exhibition.

Through implementing workplaces programmes and exchanging as well as spreading experience, Atlas Copco, Dyno Nobel, Sandvik Mining and Construction and SKF have together with their workers proven that HIV and AIDS is an issue one can effectively address through the workplace.



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