



Sandvik Mining and Construction  
Zimbabwe  
combating HIV & AIDS





## Background

Sandvik Mining and Construction Zimbabwe are leaders in the manufacturing and supply of quality equipment, products and services to the mining, construction and quarrying industry. The company currently has a workforce of 350 employees out of which 20 are females. The majority work at the mine sites of Ngezi, Shangani, Bindura (Trojan), Mimosa and Unki while the Harare Head Office has management, administrative, factory and workshop staff, with a sub-office in Bulawayo. Being in the mining business, a large part of the staff spends most of their time away from their families. This is also a business that has been identified as a high risk sector regarding HIV and AIDS.

Sandvik Mining and Construction Zimbabwe recognise the threat posed to both the health of employees and the interests of the company. In so doing the company is committed to the promotion of awareness of the condition amongst all employees, and the provision of support and assistance to those who have been infected with HIV as well as their immediate families.



## The Workplace Programme

Following a sero-prevalance survey in November 2005, it became known that the HIV prevalence at the company was over 15 percent. Although below the national prevalence at the time, this figure was alarmingly high and if not contained had the potential to escalate to even higher levels unless effective prevention and mitigation programmes were put in place. In recognition of this, Sandvik Zimbabwe started to implement a workplace programme in January 2006.

In 2007, the programme gained new impetus by cooperating with the Swedish Workplace HIV and AIDS Programme. So far the Sandvik programme has implemented a massive awareness campaign reaching all employees including five minute awareness sessions before work is taken up each day. This is done in order to keep the employees abreast with the latest information and programmes as well as to encourage dialogue on HIV and AIDS. In addition, fifteen peer educators have been trained to be active at all the sites and eleven out of them were trained to train others as peer educators. Moreover, all new employees need to go through a specific induction training on HIV and AIDS.

Sandvik Zimbabwe currently enjoys a 95% VCT uptake among the staff but initially the results were below 40%, prompting a revision of the strategy. With the majority of employees based at different mining sites, the committee decided that HIV and AIDS activities should be conducted away from site. As a result, employees were taken to lodges where they enjoyed activities such as fishing and horseback riding and where the focus was not solely on HIV and AIDS. Other incentives such

as T-shirts with messages reinforcing VCT uptake and status awareness were given to those who took up testing and counselling. The emphasis of the VCT days was placed on confidentiality and on individuals knowing their status. Furthermore, the introduction of the disease management programme that provided treatment and nutrition was instrumental in reaching the high VCT uptake. It appears that the workplace programme has also managed to combat stigma. As a result, six of the positive employees have felt comfortable disclosing their status in 2008 alone.



Despite severe financial distress in an unstable political setting, the company has sustained and prioritised its allocation of funding to the HIV and AIDS interventions. Without reliable access to ARVs, Sandvik has devoted financial and human resources to directly import and pay for non-subsidised ARVs. As a result, positive employees and their families are supported with treatment through the programme. This is also applicable where a staff would be retired because of ill-health as per company HR practice. The company currently has a full-time

company nurse who acts as the HIV/AIDS coordinator.

Moreover, the programme has involved spouses of employees in VCT uptake promotion. For example, four spouses are already receiving treatment, care and support through the Sandvik programme. The HIV Committee also has plans to develop an herbal garden early in 2009 to complement nutritional and treatment requirements for basic opportunistic infections.

***“My management team and I realised in 2005 that in order for the company to continue to exist and survive at this point of the HIV epidemic, we had to do something...we needed to respond proactively with a comprehensive wellness programme to address the issue of HIV/AIDS and protect the health and wellbeing of our employees...”***

Mr. Fred Knott, Managing Director

## Policy

In order to clarify the company's commitment as well as to show that Sandvik Zimbabwe employs a participatory and inclusive approach to tackling HIV and AIDS, the HIV and AIDS policy developed by the committee has been approved by management. The principles of the policy are important to explain to everyone at the workplace since Sandvik 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 Sandvik Policy

The purpose of the Sandvik HIV and 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. The policy ensures compliance with the ILO code of practice on HIV and AIDS, the SADC code on HIV/AIDS and employment, as well as the national labour relations act. The policy tackles the following guidelines:

-  HIV and AIDS testing
-  Confidentiality and disclosure
-  Non-discrimination and reduction of stigma
-  Prevention
-  Travel, reassignment and vaccination
-  Voluntary counselling and testing
-  Continuation of employment and reasonable accommodation
-  Gender dimensions
-  Performance
-  Treatment, care and support

The policy is also covering the programme that will be put in place to respond to the guidelines. In particular it takes up the responsibility of the company in terms of behavioural change education, voluntary confidential counselling and testing, herbal garden training, nutrition and treatment literacy, medical and psycho-social programmes.

## Exchanging Experiences

Sandvik Zimbabwe has been committed to spread their experience in tackling HIV and AIDS to associated companies, and is already exchanging experiences with other Sandvik companies in Sub Saharan Africa. There are also plans to reach neighbouring companies as well as their supply chain by 2010.

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



## The Story of Mr. Brightos Mapfumo



*I was employed by Sandvik as a machine worker for 32 years and found out my HIV status in 2005 after multiple complications. I was retired on ill-health grounds, but Sandvik assisted my spouse to also get tested. My wife and I continued to receive treatment and nutritional support from Sandvik for 2 years while I was on retirement. I have since regained full strength and have been certified by the medical doctor as being fit for work. Sandvik has reengaged me to resume work since 1st November 2008. My personal advice to all my colleagues at Sandvik and all Zimbabweans is that they need to know their status and seek early treatment for ART intervention to be effective. My wife and I are fully committed to spearhead VCT uptake within Sandvik and the community.*



## Swedish Workplace HIV and AIDS Programme (SWHAP)

The workplace programme the workers and management at Sandvik Zimbabwe is implementing and the network it is participating in are 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 they are represented).

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 almost 30 workplaces and supporting networks of more than 50 companies. In total, the programme reaches out directly to approximately 11 000 employees and indirectly to more than 50 000 people through families. The SWHAP is co-financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

This brochure was published in December 2008 and some elements of the programmes might have changed since then. For more information on the current status of the programmes, please get in contact with the SWHAP Secretariat at [info@swhap.org](mailto:info@swhap.org)

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To find out more about the Sandvik Zimbabwe HIV and Aids workplace programme,  
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To find out more about the SWHAP, please visit:

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