

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2006

World Aids Day 1 December

December 1st was declared the World Aids Day by the World Health Organisation in 1988. The aim is that the world focuses on the disease and its devastating impact for individuals, families and societies on this day. This year's theme is accountability under the slogan; "Stop Aids Keep the Promise".



The SWHAP marks the World Aids Day in Kenya, South Africa and Zambia as well as in Sweden. Most of the workplaces in the programme have activities on this day. At some companies the employees light candles, organise joint commemorations or participate in music festivals. In Stockholm the SWHAP give a presentation of the programme at Noaks Ark. Noaks Ark is an organisation closely linked to the Swedish Red Cross, which supports the work with HIV and Aids in Sweden and internationally.

Latest Developments in the SWHAP

Kenya

In Kenya, successful VCT sessions have been completed at two more companies. The uptake was high and in one company 100% of the employees were tested. The main reasons for this high number of VCT uptake are that the sessions were completed at the companies' own premises and that the steering committees at the companies have focused strongly on creating confidence and trust in the workplace programmes.

South Africa

In South Africa most workplaces have completed their first round of VCT and have in many cases realised an extraordinarily high uptake. Most companies have activated their Employee Assistance Programmes. Well attended workshops have been completed in South Africa for the labour leaders as well as management. Apart from sharing experiences from their work, the

participants discussed approaches to ensure full commitment at the workplaces, assessment and evaluation of the progress and strategies for sustainable HIV and Aids programmes.

Zambia

The workplaces that are active in the SWHAP network in Zambia have completed joint sessions of couple counselling and testing. The employees are invited to bring their spouses to the event to learn more about HIV and Aids and to get tested together. Advantages with this method include that the HIV-negative can stay negative and that a couple where one or both partners are HIV infected receive information on sexual behaviour.

Pre-studies in Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe

Pre-studies that explore the feasibility of expanding the SWHAP to Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe have successfully been undertaken. The results are being analysed and will form basis for the decision on whether to expand the SWHAP to these countries.

UNAIDS and WHO 2006 Aids Epidemic Update

On 24 November UNAIDS and the WHO published the 2006 Aids Epidemic Update. According to this, approximately 39.5 million people are infected with the disease worldwide, of which 24.7 million live in Sub-Saharan Africa. An estimated 4.3 million people were infected during 2006 and 2.9 million people died. There is a reported increase in new infections since 2005.

South Africa has one of the highest numbers of infected persons in the world and the prevalence rate among adults of 18.8 % does not seem to be going down according to the UNAIDS report. In Zambia the prevalence rate, among adults 17.0%, has been quite stable since mid 1990s. The only country in Southern Africa that has a decline in incidence and prevalence rate is Zimbabwe (estimated prevalence rate among adults 20.1%). In East Africa in general the HIV prevalence seems to be stabilizing or declining. The estimated prevalence rate among adults is 6.5% in Tanzania and 6.1% in Kenya. In Uganda the estimated prevalence rate among adults is 6.7%. The full report is available on www.unaids.org.

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-linked workplaces, through projects in South Africa, Zambia and Kenya. The Swedish Workplace HIV/Aids Programme (SWHAP) is financially supported by Sida.

Contact: Programme Coordinator Erica Molin NIR, erica@nir.se + 46 8 783 82 68 or + 46 707 919 378