

SWHAP Newsletter June 2011

Why Me? Still Can't Get an Answer.....

I never thought it would ever happen to me. I've always lived my life clean, always stayed away from the opposite sex because I was told if you befriend boys you will have a baby. So I never dreamed I would one day get this dreadful disease.

I finished my studies, got myself a job and thought: now is a good time to get myself a partner because now I am old enough – over 25 years old! Little did I know what was awaiting me on the other side.

I got tested several times, and each time the results came back negative. Except that one day. That day when the results were positive. I couldn't believe my eyes. I cried so hard until I had no more tears.

But I've swallowed my tears. I have to bear this burden alone. I've decided not to disclose my HIV status because people assume you get infected because of having a questionable sex life. They will judge you, call you harsh names, and discriminate against you. I cannot take that risk. It's the easiest thing for people to do: to blame me for my own condition.

Why Me??

That's what I keep asking myself, but still if not me, then who?? Because no one deserves to get infected by this selfish, cruel and dreadful disease....

This letter was written anonymously by an employee in South Africa who has not yet disclosed her status due to her fears.

She could be your friend or even a family member... Think about it! Would you want someone you care for to carry this load alone?

Taking Action against Malaria

Malaria is bad for business. The disease is responsible for decreased productivity, employee absenteeism, increased health-care costs, and can negatively impact a company's reputation. Furthermore, malaria has proven to worsen the effects of HIV and AIDS, and vice versa. Several SWHAP supported companies have now included malaria prevention in their workplace programmes. The actions taken to prevent malaria include distribution of treated bed nets to the employees and information given by the company peer educators. This has proven a great success and the results of these cost and resource-effective interventions have been remarkable. To read more about this please refer to the [SWHAP Malaria Case Study](#).

Assa Abloy and Autoliv Peer Educators Debriefing

On 8-10th April Peer Educators from Assa Abloy and Autoliv in South Africa came together to participate in individual as well as group sessions where they were given an opportunity to share their emotions. A lot of mental and physical activities were done to assist them to strengthen and stimulate their minds and emotions. The debriefing has been expressed by two participants to be the most successful and most important training they attended, bringing a lot of motivation and energy to their roles as Peer Educators.



Peer Educators during a debriefing activity

The Swedish Workplace HIV and AIDS Programme (SWHAP) is a long-term strategy to support the response to HIV and AIDS at Swedish related workplaces in sub-Saharan Africa. SWHAP is a joint programme between the International Council of Swedish Industry (NIR) and the Swedish Industrial and Metalworkers' Union (IF Metall). It is financially supported by Sida.

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Peer Educators' Workshop

On 12th May a Peer Educators' workshop was held in South Africa, the topic of the day being MMC (Medical Male Circumcision). All the benefits, risks and myths about circumcision were explored and a lot of constructive discussions around the issue took place. All Peer Educators were advised to incorporate MCC into their workplace plans.

Tigo in Rwanda to Launch Programme

On 24th May, Tigo Rwanda took the first step in rolling out their workplace programme by holding a management sensitisation session in Kigali. The Tigo workplace programme will focus on its street vendors as well as staff at the customer center. In addition, the Ericsson and Scania branches in Rwanda will participate in some of the planned activities.

Atlas Copco Namibia Policy Launch

Atlas Copco Namibia have finalised their workplace policy and are now waiting to launch and disseminate it. The policy of the company was guided by the policy of Atlas Copco in South Africa.

Supply Chain and Mentorship Activities

The seven companies in the Sandvik Zimbabwe Supply Chain Programme have now finalised consultative sessions on their workplace policies and have gotten management buy-in and commitment. The policy launches kicked off on 7th June with the Divvyman, followed by Freda Rebecca Mine, Battery Doctor and Custom Services. Furthermore, Atlas Copco Zimbabwe has just started up a mentorship programme through which they are supporting two neighbouring companies to start up workplace programmes.



Safety Talk during Policy Launch at Freda Rebecca

Atlas Copco Zambia Community Outreach

Atlas Copco Zambia has continued supporting the vulnerable people in the community and have this month made two donations to the Ministry of Health - Kitwe and Chingola branches for the Child Health Week which is happening mid-June

T-shirt Fridays at ABB

At ABB in South Africa the Peer Educators have decided to wear their Peer Educator t-shirts on Fridays. This is a response to a previous concern that employees didn't know who their Peer Educators were. The initiative also includes the hand out of leaflets, as well as pictures of the Peer Educators being placed on the notice boards.

CEO Breakfast in Kenya

On 9th May, SWHAP Kenya held a CEO breakfast meeting. The event, which was organised in partnership with the Swedish Trade Council, attracted participation from seven SWHAP implementing companies in Kenya. Apart from those, two new companies interested in joining SWHAP also participated. Additionally, a representative of the Swedish Ambassador and the Director of the National Aids Control Council attended. The Director commended SWHAP for showing leadership in the private sector response in Kenya.

SWHAP at the United Nations

On 8-10th June SWHAP was invited to participate in the Swedish delegation to UNGASS (United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS) in New York. Lars G Malmer, chairman of the SWHAP Board, took part in the various discussions preceding the declaration and thereby had an opportunity to make comments and influence on the Swedish opinions of the declaration.

Staff Changes within SWHAP

SWHAP warmly welcomes John Viner, who on 1st June took over as Programme Coordinator for SWHAP. John was previously employed at the UNDP in Lesotho and prior to that at Ericsson in Sweden. Former Programme Coordinator, Ludvig Hubendick, moves on to a new position as Programme Manager at NIR (International Council of Swedish Industry) and replaces Pia Schultz as the NIR representative in the SWHAP Executive Committee and Board.

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