

SWHAP Newsletter April 2012

Moving Beyond the Borders of the Workplace

Thoko Masha was diagnosed with polio at the age of five, and has been wheel chair bound for the last 59 years. David Mandlhazi a Peer Educator from Sandvik, South Africa noticed that the current wheel chair she was using was worn out and uncomfortable. Touched by her plight he approached a supermarket in Rustenburg for assistance, they subsequently donated a new wheel chair as well as a Christmas hamper for the elderly woman.

David is a fine example of the how peer education is not confined to HIV and AIDS activities in the workplace and that SWHAP Peer Educators can make a real difference to the lives of those in their communities.



Thoko Masha with her new wheel chair and Christmas hamper

Peer Education Activities

Peer Educators are at the heart of most HIV/AIDS programmes. While their work is intrinsically rewarding it can often be demanding and stressful, it is thus important for them to meet for debriefing, sharing of experiences and strategies that help them cope in their roles. The SWHAP Peer Educator Network Meetings held quarterly in participating countries provide this platform.

32 Peer Educators from Zambia, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe met on the 22nd and 23rd of March in Victoria Falls for a joint regional network meeting. The theme of the meeting was “Evolving Roles and Responsibilities of Peer Educators.” Participants were taught to recognise factors that deter the progress of peer education programmes and identify strategies of managing them. It was an empowering peer education seminar of note!



Participants at the Joint Regional Peer Educators Network Meeting in Victoria Falls

SWHAP in Kenya held a workshop on “Sexual and Reproductive Health and Parent Child Communications on Sexuality and HIV”. The workshop was attended by company HIV/AIDS programme coordinators and steering committee representatives and was an excellent chance for them to learn tips on how to broach this sometimes uncomfortable discussion with their children as well as colleagues in the workplace.

Networking is core to the effectiveness of SWHAP in South Africa. In February and March, 76 participants were trained through 3 core networking workshops for Peer Educators, HIV/AIDS committee members and Occupational Health Practitioners. At the Peer Educator’s Networking Workshop, 4 newly trained Peer Educators made presentations on religious, cultural and socio-economic factors affecting adherence, as part of their assessment process.

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 and Norad.

Contact: Programme Coordinator, Mr John Viner, info@swhap.org + 46 8 783 82 92 or + 46 707 919 905 or visit www.swhap.org

Assa Abloy Kenya, Integration Programme

Assa Abloy in Kenya organised a seminar for the artisans they work with. The session was aimed at bringing participants together to discuss HIV/AIDS, prevention, treatment, care and support of infected or affected colleagues and family members. The artisans were challenged to be role models in their workplaces as well as their communities. SWHAP provided support through printing of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials in English and the local language Kiswahili as well as facilitation of the HIV/AIDS sessions. The artisans reported that the IEC materials would make initiating discussions on HIV and AIDS with family and colleagues easier. The seminar was a great success and will now be held quarterly, with facilitation provided by Assa Abloy Peer Educators.



Peer Educators from Assa Abloy guiding discussions on behaviour change

Low Cost Strategies for Programme Sustainability

In 2010 it was observed that 100% of previously co-funded workplace programmes continued after SWHAP direct financial support had ended. SWHAP partners have realised that they can employ low cost strategies to keep the momentum of programmes. Atlas Copco Zimbabwe launched “The Biggest Loser Competition” to address obesity in the workplace. Obesity can put individuals at increased risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, stroke and some cancers. These conditions cause complications in HIV and its treatment. The weight loss competition will run until July where the contestant with the highest percentage weight loss will be revealed at the Atlas Copco Wellness Day and awarded a prize.

In Namibia, the Atlas Copco Coordinator launched a monthly quiz on HIV and general wellness in which all staff members participated through a questionnaire. The quiz answers were discussed in group sessions and the individual with the highest score was awarded a fruit basket.

Check your Road Wellness Campaign

The Scania four-day campaign that checked not only the road worthiness of trucks at 4 different tollgates in South Africa but also the “wellness of the crew” has been very successful. 332 crew members from 221 different trucking companies were tested for HIV, blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol.

A similar campaign in Namibia “Arrive Alive” targeting truck drivers, encouraging them to know their HIV status and to follow safety measures when driving, resulted in 96% VCT uptake amongst the drivers that participated. Drivers that tested positive were referred to various care centres in Namibia.

SWHAP supporting Zambian union

One of SWHAP’s strategies is to support unions that are represented at Swedish workplaces. Later this month, SWHAP will be assisting the National Union of Building and Engineering and General Workers (NUBEGW) in Zambia with technical and financial support to conduct training for their advocates on how to include HIV legislation into their collective bargaining agreements. The union has over 9000 members across Zambia including at Atlas Copco and SKF.

Welcome to new SWHAP Partners

SWHAP would like to extend a warm welcome to four companies joining the SWHAP Network: in Zambia, Scania Hazida and Babcock, in Zimbabwe, ABB, and in South Africa, Babcock Ntuthuko Engineering.

In 2011...

- Approximately 103 workplaces were supported (63 directly and 40 through supply chain or mentorship) in 10 countries, reaching 19,500 employees and over 3,000 family members.
- Over 450 Peer Educators and 150 Spouse Peer Educators were trained.
- 29 network meetings were held in 6 countries.
- Median VCT uptake at workplaces was 73.7%.

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