

SWHAP Newsletter January 2013

“Getting to Zero at work” – It is possible

The ILO (International Labour Organisation) recently launched a campaign entitled “Getting to Zero at Work” recognising the important role that workplaces play in addressing the impact of HIV and AIDS. The 2012 theme for World AIDS Day was Zero new HIV infections, Zero discrimination and Zero AIDS-related deaths. An ambitious goal but with the concerted efforts of employers and employees getting to zero is possible. Already some SWHAP partner workplaces in South Africa can report that since 2006 no-one that tested negative later tested positive, and that there were no reported HIV-related deaths in 2012. Whilst discrimination is harder to address or measure, SWHAP is proud of the efforts of many of its Peer Educators who publically disclose their HIV positive status for the benefit of their peers. These disclosures are a reflection of successful workplace policies that protect the continuation of employment and create working environments that are free from discrimination.

Ericsson – Raising Awareness in the DRC

To commemorate World AIDS Day, SWHAP and Ericsson DRC jointly organised a sensitisation march on the busy streets of Kinshasa. The objective of the march was to spread messages encouraging behaviour change. As part of the Ericsson community outreach, the march also specifically targeted motorbike riders known as WEWAs. New in the public transportation system in Kinshasa, WEWAs are a potentially high risk group for HIV infection as their jobs put them in contact with commercial sex workers on a regular basis, many of whom rely on the cheap mode of transport the WEWAs provide.

The event was very successful and in addition to the outreach initiative to the WEWAs, 50 Ericsson agents, managers and union members were sensitised. 2000 leaflets as well as both male and

female condoms were distributed. Such outreach programmes reflect the flexibility of the SWHAP approach, offering partners the opportunity to design proactive programmes that respond to emerging risks related to HIV in their areas of operation.



Community outreach on the streets of DRC

Buddy Pack for Truck Drivers

To complement the efforts of companies such as Scania, which offer wellness and HIV and AIDS training as part of driver training programmes, SWHAP has developed a prevention and mitigation Buddy Pack for truck drivers in sub Saharan Africa. Truck drivers are considered high risk for HIV infection because of the mobile nature of their jobs and the amount of time spent away from their partners and families, which makes them more prone to engaging in multiple concurrent partnerships and risky sexual behaviour. The Buddy Pack provides practical information on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV prevention, a treatment “Road Map” booklet containing addresses of health care centres, where drivers can access HIV prevention information and services, a CD with music relating to HIV prevention as well as male and female condoms. Additionally there is information that encourages drivers to assess and minimise their risk of HIV infection. The Buddy Packs will be distributed to drivers at the end of each training course.

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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Integrating outreach activities into business process is good practice and an excellent way of promoting sustainability of such programmes.



The Buddy Pack for truck drivers

Reaching High Risk Groups

In an example of public private partnerships in addressing HIV in high risk groups in Tanzania, Atlas Copco, Sandvik and Kahama District Council came together on the 2nd of December to organise an outreach for female employees working in the hospitality sector of the mining community. Kahama district has an HIV prevalence rate of 8.8% in contrast to the country's average prevalence rate of 5.7%. 32 women employed in guest houses, hotels, bars and grocery shops in the area attended the training. The women were appreciative of the efforts with the majority acknowledging the risk seeking behaviour patterns that are a problem in their industry.

Training and empowering the women with information on how to reduce risk of HIV infection is of benefit to SWHAP partners operating in the district, as many mine workers spend much of their free time in the clubs and bars where the women work and often engage in unsafe sexual practices with the women.

Peer Educator Brag Days

SWHAP Peer Educator "Brag Days" were held in Zambia and Zimbabwe towards the end of 2012. These Brag Days have become an annual event where Peer Educators from various companies convene to share and celebrate the year's achievements. The occasion is also used to reward the Peer Educators for the important role they play

in their workplace programmes and for team building. In Zimbabwe, Peer Educators participated in team building activities at Mbizi Game Park, which focused on planning, strategic thinking, and effective communication as key pre-requisites for sustaining workplace wellness and HIV and AIDS programmes.



Team building for Peer Educators in Zimbabwe

Sandvik Support Group Initiative

Sandvik South Africa is a great investor in the health of its employees. One new intervention in its health and wellbeing programme has been the formation of a support group for employees living with HIV and AIDS. Sandvik Wellness Ambassador Patricia Mmusi speaks of her inspiration and motivation for setting up the support group:

I was encouraged by my nursing sister to start a support group. We started with only 2 members and now there are five and one has been on treatment for more than 10 years which means she's more experienced and understanding.

The group members are there to give each other emotional support, share experiences and information on treatment. We encourage those who are on treatment to take their medication as directed and to live positively.

It was not easy setting up the group as it meant people being aware of the next person's status which most people try and avoid. We strive to make this beneficial for all and to bring solutions to where it is really needed.

New member of the SWHAP team

SWHAP is delighted to welcome Heidi Lampinen, who joined the Secretariat in Stockholm last week as Programme Assistant. Heidi was previously with IF Metall in Stockholm and worked in the International Department.

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