

Winner of SWHAP Achievement Award 2013
- *Most Innovative Intervention*



The winners of the Most Innovative Intervention 2013. From left Edith Maziofa-Tapfuma Southern Africa Regional Coordinator, SWHAP, John Viner Programme Manager SWHAP, Patricia Munetsi, Human Resources Manager, Sandvik, Catherine Maningi, Stores Administrator, Sandvik, Lars Magnusson, Executive Committee Member, SWHAP, Ian Bagshaw, Managing Director, Sandvik.

In order to recognize the importance of being innovative when addressing HIV in the workplace, the Swedish Workplace HIV and AIDS Programme (SWHAP) instituted an award for the most innovative intervention. The 2013 award goes to Sandvik Mining and Construction Zimbabwe for their community outreach to the Most at Risk Populations (MARPs).

Community outreach has always been a strong component of the Sandvik HIV/AIDS and Wellness Programme. At the end of 2012 Sandvik identified populations considered most at risk for HIV infection and set about implementing targeted interventions. The rationale for this new strategy was twofold: firstly, in spite of it being the socially responsible thing to do, it also made business sense as most exposure to disease takes place outside the workplace thus reaching out to communities is important in mitigating risk faced by employees.

The majority of Sandvik's employees work in remote mine sites, where there are high levels of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) making communities vulnerable to HIV infection. This is due in part to high risk sexual practices and the closed nature of the communities which promote sexual networks. In 2013 Sandvik partnered with a customer in the Ngezi mining area in a project promoting responsible sexual behaviour amongst the residents. The aim of the project was to reduce behavioural risk factors and strengthen the prevention of HIV and STIs through increasing awareness and access to treatment, complementary to existing workplace programmes. Awareness sessions and life skills training were conducted to help the community members to make informed decisions about their health. Additionally 16 community peer educators were trained through the project. 81 community members participated in VCT with 23% testing positive. The positive cases were enrolled in an anti-retroviral therapy programme at the mine clinic. Reports from the mine show a decrease in STI cases amongst the employees who include Sandvik employees. Through this partnership Sandvik is protecting its employees and its supply chain partners who also operate from the



same mine, thus reducing overall risk to HIV infection in the general mine population and surroundings.

Another vulnerable group targeted through the workplace programme was the orphaned and abandoned children at SOS Children's Village (many due to HIV and AIDS). Sandvik stepped up support by providing foodstuffs and donations as well as forming a company run by former home residents. The company assembles core trays used by Sandvik and after wages are deducted profits are ploughed back into the children's home. In this way Sandvik has created a livelihood for four young men from the home and is contributing to a sustainable source of income for the children's village. Sandvik has also invested in the children's education with a university bursary fund.

Related to addressing the vulnerabilities faced by women and girls Sandvik has invested in education which is important in addressing poverty and improving health outcomes. Sandvik adopted a girls school, running life skills training and encouraging delayed sexual debut and encouraging the girls to stay in school longer. An important initiative in a country where women and girls face the brunt of the epidemic due to social determinants such as poverty, gender based violence, limited access to sexual and reproductive health information and adolescent friendly services.

Moreover through the Sandvik gender empowerment project, an offshoot of Sandvik Spousal programme, wives of employees have been empowered to set up their own income generating projects. Spouses have been trained in poultry rearing and equipped with necessary skills to run small businesses. This innovative approach is part of Sandvik efforts to invest in the economic development of women whilst also making Sandvik an employer of choice, attracting, retaining and motivating skilled labour.

This high degree of involvement in the health of the communities where Sandvik has operations, is a long term strategy for the sustainability and growth of the company, with Sandvik realising that workplaces have a responsibility to raise awareness on health concerns in the communities that they operate in if they are to remain viable and be sustainable in the long term.

The board congratulates Sandvik Zimbabwe for its innovative approach to community outreach which leverages on partnerships and focuses on sustainability serving communities while protecting employee wellbeing and welfare.

The SWHAP Achievement Award has been given out since 2008. In 2013 the four categories for the award are Most Comprehensive Workplace Programme; Best Progress in Workplace Programming; Peer Educator Achievement Award; and Most Innovative Intervention. For more information on the award, please contact info@swhap.org. For more information on the Swedish Workplace HIV and AIDS Programme, please visit www.swhap.org.