

SWHAP DRC Newsletter April 2014

CEO Meeting

SWHAP held its first DRC CEO network meeting on the 22nd of January. The meeting was attended by the Ambassador of Sweden to the DRC, Annika Ben David, along with representatives from the Ministry of Public Health, the local business coalition (CIELS), UNAIDS, ILO, PSSP, the National AIDS Council and SWHAP partners in the DRC. Ambassador Ben David spoke of the gender dynamics in workplace programmes and the importance of promoting women's participation in the economic arena. Discussions during the meeting also explored the return on investment of workplace programmes. The Ambassador noted that workplaces that create enabling environments for workers to manage their health and general wellbeing enjoy the benefits of this investment as healthy employees are generally more productive.



From left: Ambassador Annika Ben David and Dr Lievin Kapend, Head of the DRC National AIDS Council, PNMLS

International Women's Day

International Women's day celebrated on the 8th of March is a time to build support for women's rights and participation in the political and economic arenas. According to the World Bank, gender equity is key to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, "putting resources into poor women's hands while promoting gender equity in households and society results in large development payoffs".

Poverty and gender inequality are some of the factors contributing to the spread and greatest impact of HIV. Claire Mawana, Programme Coordinator at Ericsson in the DRC shared her perspective on the theme for International Women's Day, "Equality for women is progress for all":



Claire Mawana, Programme Coordinator, Ericsson DRC

"Equality for women is progress for all". What does this mean for you?

This is an opportunity for women to prove their capabilities and

show their potential to contribute to development in their communities. The same opportunities must be given to all, both men and women, to contribute in promoting health at the workplace, implementing mechanisms for prevention and sustainable workplace programmes and to address diseases which are specific to women.

How have you been working to promote gender equity in your workplace programme?

I had the opportunity to be part of the steering committee which was appointed to implement the programme last year, and by working hard, proving that what matters is not gender but what you can contribute towards successful programme implementation, I am now coordinating the programme for 2014.

Wellness Days

ABB held its first Wellness Day, raising awareness on employee health status and modifiable risk factors associated with chronic conditions such as diabetes and cardio vascular diseases. There was 100% VCT uptake and consequently employees at the Kinshasa branch are now aware of their health status and ABB will rollout testing to the remaining branches.

Wellness Days are important for creating risk profiles allowing companies to develop programmes that meet the needs of employees. At the ABB Body Mass Index screening, obesity was identified as a problem in nearly 50% of participants. According to

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.

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Lancet rates of obesity are increasing in sub-Saharan Africa, changes in diet, physical inactivity and urbanisation mean that as much as 17.5% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa could be obese by 2030. Obesity is a risk factor for heart disease, hypertension and cancer. As a result ABB will now focus efforts on nutrition sessions and promoting physical exercise amongst its workforce.

Beyond testing at wellness days it is imperative to have support programmes for employees to provide follow-up and support in managing identified risk factors.



ABB Wellness Day, Kinshasa

Approved Workplace Programmes

Congratulations to ABB and Sodeico, who have received approval for their workplace programme 2013-2014 applications.

In the Media

Tigo DRC Policy Launch - [Radio Okapi](#)

Congratulations to Tigo DRC who launched their HIV and Wellness Policy on the 20th of January. The launch ceremony marked Tigo's commitment to national and international guidelines in implementing their HIV and Wellness programme and highlighted the cooperation between management and workers in improving health. The policy was signed by the company's Managing Director, Stefane Tesseydre, the Human Resources Manager, Olivier Ossisi and the Union President Bernard Beya. Tigo will now establish a baseline through a Knowledge Attitudes Beliefs Practices (KABP) survey, risk profiling and VCT after which the company's steering committee will create an action plan.

Ericsson Regionalisation Programme

Existing regional structures of multinational companies provide valuable resources for the dissemination of HIV and wellness policies and programmes. Ericsson is using such structures to extend its programme to its branch in Gabon. The extension of the programme into Gabon will be mentored and guided by Ericsson DRC.



ERICSSON Gabon Steering Committee training

First 2014 Steering Committees Network Meeting

DRC held its first network meeting for Steering Committees on the 1st of April. Among the participants were representatives from ABB, ERICSSON, SODEICO, TIGO and MOBIMETAL. The facilitators included the Ministry of Public Health who presented the current Congolese standards in implementing workplace health and safety programmes. Discussion also centred on how the companies could create cost effective programmes by pooling their resources and holding joint activities and trainings throughout the provinces.



A Note from the Country Coordinator

Welcome to the inaugural quarterly newsletter for the DRC. We are so excited to be able to share experiences and information through our own national newsletter. Please send in pictures and articles on events that you would like to share with others about your workplace programme highlights.

Sincerely, Mianda M. Hatton

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