

SWHAP DRC Newsletter October 2014

Ebola Sensitisation

The current outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa is the deadliest on record and has killed more people than the previous outbreaks combined. The high mortality of the virus is instilling fear in many populations in affected and neighbouring countries. Moreover myths and misconceptions about the virus are hampering effective response efforts.



Ebola sensitisation at DUX

SWHAP partners in East Africa and the DRC are conducting awareness sessions on Ebola. These sessions are highlighting in particular, how the virus is spread, symptoms of the virus and precautions that can be taken to prevent infection. The awareness sessions are complementary to government initiatives to sensitise their populations on Ebola and to provide credible sources of information relevant to local contexts.

The awareness sessions in the DRC are addressing the concerns of employees who travel to affected regions as part of their duties. Ericsson, a communications company in the DRC, is looking at ways in which it can enhance efforts to provide access to practical information, through available hotlines, regional newsletters and reinforcing hygienic practices in their working environment. Additional efforts are being made to sensitise the private sector through the HIV business coalition and other actors.

The outbreak in the DRC is genetically unrelated to the strain currently circulating in Liberia, Guinea

and Sierra Leone. The DRC has been experienced seven Ebola outbreaks since 1976, when the virus was first discovered, and has developed successful strategies for the management and containment of the virus. These experiences are being shared with other African states. Read more about the transmission and symptoms of Ebola at www.swhap.org

DUX Steering Committee Training

Prior to the Ebola sensitisation meeting, DUX held their first steering committee training. Steering committees within SWHAP supported workplaces are comprised of management and employee representatives and are responsible for the planning and implementation of workplace HIV and wellness activities.

Ericsson Peer Educator Training

On September 26, 23 Peer Educators from the Ericsson Kinshasa branch completed a three day Peer Education training course. Participants were trained on the national guidelines on HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Elements on wellness based on the *SANS 16001:2013 Wellness and Disease (including HIV and TB) Management System* were also included in the training. The *SANS 16001:2013* is a standard that assists organisations to implement minimum standards for wellness and disease management. Further training has been scheduled for the remaining Ericsson branches.



Ericsson Peer Educator Training

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: Country Coordinator Ms Mianda Mwepu Hatton, mianda@swhap.org + 243 990619393 or visit www.swhap.org

Policy Updates

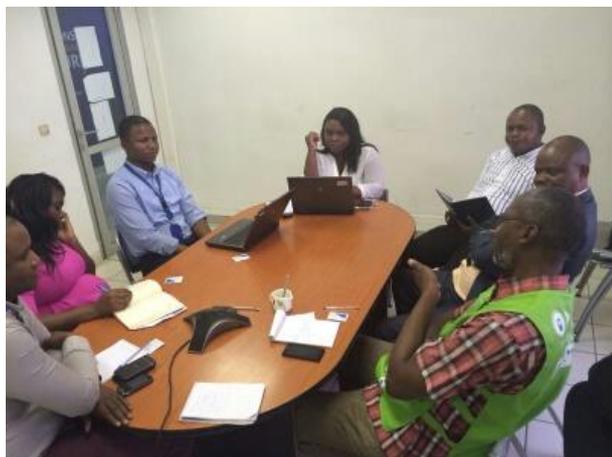
In October, the Steering Committees from Sodeico and Ericsson met to update their respective workplace HIV and AIDS Policies to incorporate wellness. During the policy revision exercises, emphasis was put on addressing discrimination, gender and Most At Risk Populations. The SWHAP approach encourages workplaces to be responsible for the design and implementation of their respective workplace programmes, including policy formulation.



Sodeico steering committee during policy revision exercise

Tigo Workplace Programme Approval

Congratulations to Tigo who received approval from SWHAP for their first year of co-funding. The company held its first strategic steering committee meeting in September to plan HIV and wellness activities in line with its programme objectives.



Tigo steering committee members

Workers' Representatives Meeting

Workers' representatives from Sodeico, Tigo, Ericsson and Mobimetal in the DRC came together to network and share their experiences in promoting programme uptake within their various workplaces.

The Congolese Union Confederation (CSC), the national spearhead for HIV union led programmes in the DRC, provided guidance on how participants could advocate for union and government support. The main message communicated at the meeting was that unions and employers should view each other as partners and not enemies for the benefit of both sides.

Peer Educator Profile

In this edition we profile Samuel Kabasele, Administrative Manager and Peer Educator at Sodeico.



What motivated you to become a Peer Educator?

I wanted to sensitise my peers to prevent new infections and to support people living with HIV. Before the SWHAP programme, we realised

that employees were helpless, health and wellness were not being addressed in the workplace. Since the implementation of the programme and the KABP survey, the levels of knowledge regarding HIV and AIDS and other illness affecting the workplace has increased.

What is your Peer Educator power principle?

We need to address HIV and other illnesses without fear of it being "taboo". The more you know about these issues the safer you are.

What are the best things about being a Peer Educator?

We contribute in the wellness of our peers in the workplace. We can save lives by providing information, as people die for lack of knowledge. The Peer Education programme also builds confidence in the affected employees as they know they are being taken care of.

Does peer education contribute to behaviour change in the workplace?

Yes, it does. Many employees thought that condoms were reserved for sex workers. Through the Peer Education Programme they have learnt that everyone should be practising safe sex.

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