



## Business efficiency and health

In 2014 the SWHAP Conference theme “Business efficiency and health: Creating sustainable workplace Wellness and HIV Programmes” explored ways in which the proactive and strategic management of employee health and wellbeing can create business efficiencies for companies. Building on from the conference, training forums addressing the practicalities of investing in the health and wellbeing of employees for improved return on investment were held in DRC and South Africa for management and steering committees respectively.

[Read more](#)



*Mbanzi Elof Moupondo, Managing Director Sodeico Manpower DRC, shares how investment into the health of employees is starting to pay off*

## Sharing experiences

On March 22, SWHAP partners in Zambia, Atlas Copco, Orica, SKF, and Sandvik, met with the Director General of Sida, Charlotte Petri Gornitzka and the Ambassador of Sweden to Zambia, H.E. Lena Nordström to share their experience of the programme. Sandvik shared how their programme has expanded in focus to include families and communities and the positive impact this has had on staff morale and productivity. Atlas Copco demonstrated return on investment as a result of implementation of a comprehensive programme.

The programme has not only benefitted the company’s bottom line but the employees are also healthier and more engaged. SWHAP and its partners were encouraged to document evidence of economic benefits of workplace programmes and to share best practices with a wider audience.



*SWHAP partners in Zambia meet with the Director General of Sida, Charlotte Petri Gornitzka*

## International Women’s Day

On March 8 the world’s attention was focused on celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women under the global theme “Making it Happen for Women”. Despite the many gains made there are still gaps particularly where women’s Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) are concerned.

SWHAP and its partners commemorated International Women’s Day through training and networking activities that saw Peer Educators and Occupational Health Practitioners in Kenya and South Africa respectively coming together to discuss how their workplace programmes could implement targeted initiatives to address the sexual and reproductive health concerns of women in their workforces and communities. In Zambia Atlas Copco, SKF and Sandvik in Kitwe conducted joint community outreach.

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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In Botswana SWHAP partnered with Scania, UNAIDS and the ILO to host a dialogue on women's SRH. Over 70 women attended the dialogue entitled "Celebrating Women's Health". The event, addressed by the Scania CEO, Freddie Hennop and UNAIDS Director Regional Support Team Eastern and Southern Africa, Professor Sheila Tlou, was a great example of public-private partnership in addressing HIV and women's health.



During the dialogue in Botswana participants had the opportunity to participate in VCT and biometric screening

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Ignoring the sexual and reproductive health needs of employees can have serious effects on productivity at the workplace with employees taking time off due to sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV, opportunistic infections, and reproductive cancers such as cervical cancer.

### How can workplaces promote SRHR for all women?

1. Provide information and access to services
2. Create enabling environments that promote gender equity and address gender based violence
3. Provide social support to orphans through corporate social responsibility programmes (Prof Sheila Tlou, UNAIDS)

### Partnerships

SWHAP in the different regions works in collaboration with the ILO in sharing of information, best practices and advocacy. In February SWHAP and the ILO partnered to hold a social dialogue with the Namibian Employers Federation and the National Union of Namibian Workers. The dialogue engaged both employer and employee organisations on the need for social dialogue on various issues including collective bargaining for HIV in the workplace. Discussions highlighted the different rights and responsibilities of the parties. During the dialogue the Metal and Allied Namibian Workers Union (MANWU) shared the tools they recently developed on the management of HIV in the workplace. The dialogue received extensive local media coverage.

Whilst in Kenya the mentorship programme for five companies under the Building and Construction Workers' Union is under way. The programme will follow the SWHAP supply

chain model and reach over 5000 workers. The Kenya HIV/AIDS Business Council will provide technical support in the partnership that will see the target companies set up steering committees and formulate policies in line with the ILO's HIV and AIDS Recommendation (No. 200). It is anticipated that the approach will inform a sectoral Policy for the Building and Construction Sector.

### Keeping employees engaged in workplace programme activities

"HIV fatigue" is an issue of concern in many workplace programmes where employees can develop apathy and disinterest in messages around HIV. This can result in relaxation of preventative efforts with disastrous consequences. Programme designers and implementers have to constantly invest in creative and innovative initiatives to sustain the interests of employees, their families and communities.

On February 28, Sodeico Manpower from the DRC held an awareness session with a difference. The company organised a five kilometre guided walk with hidden clues on recommendations for a healthy lifestyle which participants had to locate. The walk had six intervals where a brief sensitisation message was passed and the participants, divided into small groups, had to come up with slogans for each message. The messages covered the importance of Voluntary Counselling and Testing, consistent and correct condom use, alcohol abuse and the dangers of tobacco use. Mobile VCT accompanied the 125 participants and 65% were tested for HIV.

[Read more](#)



Awareness march in the DRC

### DRC Programme expands to Bas Congo Province

SWHAP partners in the DRC, Tigo, Ericsson and Sodeico Manpower have expanded their workplace programmes to reach eight sites in the Bas-Congo Province.

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### World TB Day 2015

World TB day on March 24 raises awareness on the health threat posed by the disease. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) 9 million people fell ill with TB in 2013 including 1.1 million cases amongst people living with HIV. TB mostly affects the productive segment of society with serious economic consequences. An employee with TB may lose an average of 3-4 months of work and income.

[Read more](#)

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