

Winner of SWHAP Achievement Award 2014 - Category Most Innovative Intervention



The runners-up and winner of Most Innovative Intervention 2014. From left, Kediou Mphingo, Revco, Zimbabwe, Margaret Mustisya, Ericsson Kenya, and award recipient, Alrentia Viktor, Ulrich Seats South Africa.

In order to recognise the importance of being innovative when addressing HIV and wellness in the workplace, the Swedish workplace HIV and AIDS programme (SWHAP) instituted an award for the most innovative intervention. The 2014 award goes to Ulrich Seats South Africa for their low-cost high-impact strategies.

After successfully participating in the SWHAP/National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa Mentorship Programme in 2011, the workplace programme at Ulrich Seats floundered as the company found itself operating under financial constraints. In 2014 motivated by attendance at the SWHAP 2013 conference, Ulrich Seats remodelled their programme to embrace wellness and identified low cost strategies that they could immediately start implementing.

Operating with no budget they managed to mobilise money to purchase machines for biometric screening. This allowed Ulrich Seats to establish employee risk profiles and to monitor those employees that were at risk. 66% of staff have now participated in testing and referrals for further treatment are made where necessary. A recent male circumcision drive at the company saw ten male employees signing up for the procedure.

In a bid to keep costs down, Peer Educators at Ulrich Seats, manufactured a notice board from materials found in the factory and created posters highlighting issues concerning the health of employees. Some of the posters encouraged employees to join the Wellness Club which met at lunch times to take walks, play football and to share information on healthy living. A wellness centre was established and equipped with two bikes that were donated to the company. The canteen was also on board making changes to the menu and offering healthy options. Since the inception of the Wellness Club five employees have reported significant weight loss with at least two recording a combined weight loss of 25 kilograms. Other initiatives include financial literacy campaigns, which have kept employees informed on changes in legislation concerning



their retirement funds and assistance with housing, addressing some major stressors impacting employee health.

The workplace programmes has also had a positive impact on the working environment at Ulrich Seats bringing the different parties together. Management regularly participate in the weekly social walk, helping to promote better interaction between management and staff.

To sustain their programme Ulrich Seats have come up with new strategies to raise money. Income generated from the sale of scrap metal will now be allocated to the programme and plastic that was usually disposed of, will be sold for recycling with the proceeds also directed towards the wellness programme.

The Board congratulates Ulrich Seats for showing passion and dedication in identifying and implementing innovative and cost-effective interventions to keep the momentum of its programme on track.

The SWHAP Achievement Award has been given out since 2008. In 2014 the five categories for the award are Most Comprehensive Workplace Programme; Best Progress in Workplace Programming; Peer Educator Achievement Award; Best Supply Chain; and Most Innovative Intervention. The assessment for the Most Comprehensive programme award was carried out through an extensive self-assessment questionnaire comprising 17 questions and 68 benchmarks followed by thorough review by the SWHAP team. 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.



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