

# SWEDISH WORKPLACE HIV AND AIDS PROGRAMME

## CASE STUDY: SWHAP NETWORKS - A FORCE MULTIPLIER

### BACKGROUND

The Swedish Workplace HIV and AIDS Programme (SWHAP) was created in 2004 as a strategic response to HIV and AIDS for Swedish-related companies operating in sub-Saharan Africa. At the time, there were very few examples of public-private partnerships addressing HIV and AIDS at the workplace and it was thus necessary to find an efficient means to bring participants together to share experiences and ideas on how to overcome challenges.

### THE APPROACH

From 2005, country networking platforms were created for key groups (management, Peer Educators, occupational health practitioners, and steering committee members) responsible for implementing and driving workplace programmes. Each group, incorporating employees from different workplaces, met regularly to share the various methods they had developed to enhance the effectiveness of programmes.

Other objectives of the networks were to:

- provide technical support to help companies adapt to a changing HIV response by, for example, incorporating gender mainstreaming
- develop participant skills in programme planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation through the use of expert facilitators
- enable regional exchange of ideas through the annual conference

Beyond the workplace, networks in DRC, Zambia and Zimbabwe were created for spouses of employees, who were trained peer educators, to bridge gaps in knowledge on HIV and health between employees and their families.



### OUTCOMES

- As a result of the network platform 116 companies (including inherent competitors) from different sectors and locations shared new ways to address HIV and promote workplace and community health. In the 14 years of the Programme's history only one company left (due to a company takeover). We believe that this is due in part to the strong ties forged by the various networks.
- Through "brag" sessions where achievements and processes were shared, networking increased motivation and implementation of programme activities as companies learned from each other's real-life experiences.
- The networking structure allowed streamlined communications and for companies to stay connected to achieving the broader aims of the programme.
- Networking enhanced communications between the different companies leading to joint implementation of community outreach activities.

### SWHAP NETWORKS



### JOINT IMPLEMENTATION - BIGGER IMPACT

SWHAP partners in Kenya through an initiative called Neighbours Against AIDS (an informal network that also includes non-Swedish related companies operating in the same vicinity) provided access to medical care for more than 1 000 residents of Mukuru and Lungu Lungu slums in Nairobi.



### BRINGING COMPETITORS TOGETHER

Atlas Copco and Sandvik Tanzania collaborated in a community outreach project reaching key populations in Kahama District with HIV risk awareness training.

- The networks provided an entry point into new companies as CEOs and senior level managers were sensitised on the business case for workplace wellness.
- The secondary level of SWHAP outreach to value chain and other non-Swedish companies through mentorship programmes broadened the levels of networks. In Kenya the companies under the SWHAP mentorship programme independently started their own network. This eventually led to SWHAP creating a network hub in Mombasa.
- Evolution of networks to include steering committee members increased ownership and sustainability of workplace programmes. Steering committees were able to sustain programmes even after changes in management. In some cases, committee members went on to work in other companies where they supported the establishment of an HIV and wellness programme and contacted SWHAP for inclusion of their new companies in the SWHAP network at mentorship level.
- The network model caught the interest of other programme implementers. For example, in Kenya the Centre for Health Solutions partnered with SWHAP to use the networks to engage the private sector in their programme to address and integrate TB into HIV and AIDS initiatives.

## LESSONS

- Networks are a relatively cost-effective way of building capacity, sharing experiences and promoting replication of success within programmes.
- Networking is a key pillar of success in the start-up period of HIV and wellness programmes and enhances the sustainability of programmes.
- For the companies, the added benefit of being able to discuss business operations and challenges in local contexts is a real drawing card for participation in the networks.
- Companies make savings through implementing joint activities.
- Cost sharing contributes to the sustainability of the networks. Companies contribute with the use of their training rooms and subsidised meals for participants. (In Botswana training is regularly held at the Sanitas training rooms, with the canteen providing meals)
- Where there are budgetary constraints, innovative strategies such as partnerships with external peer educator associations, business coalitions and organisations such as the International Labour Organization assist in keeping the networks going. Additionally, these partnerships strengthen the networks by bringing in additional funding, new ideas and approaches.
- An external network coordinating body is essential for the full benefits of networks to be realised. This is because companies face competing priorities for time and are not always able to prioritise the organisation of network meetings.
- Networks are an important tool to maintain workplace programmes and to ensure that companies adapt to a changing environment, embrace new ideas and approaches, and monitor results.

## WAY FORWARD

The SWHAP network provides a forum for discussing key issues, ensuring that there is planning, implementation, monitoring, review, learning and improvement. The structure is not limited to health. It is an entity that can be used to enhance public-private partnerships and engage the private sector in many aspects of the development agenda. While SWHAP has been focused on sub-Saharan Africa, the network model can easily be replicated at global level. The process is well documented, and the model is adaptable to suit different contexts.



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## INFLUENCE

The networks have made SWHAP an attractive partner for private sector engagement on HIV. Consequently, SWHAP contributes to national response frameworks in Kenya, DRC, and Zimbabwe.

## ACCESS TO COMMUNITIES

Spousal programmes and networking provided a way of reinforcing awareness messages, changing attitudes and promoting behaviour change in families and communities. Thus reaching audiences that would not ordinarily be accessible from the workplace.



Number of spouses trained in 2017 including supply chain companies



## INCOME GENERATION

The Spouse Peer Educator networks in Zambia also developed into income generation projects, providing the mainly female partners of employees with access to economic activities.

## INSPIRING

Lillian Chanda, a spouse peer educator from SKF Zambia, was inspired to train as a nurse after attending the spouse network meetings. Now a qualified midwife she still finds the networks beneficial.

*“The meetings I attend as we gather as spouses act as additional training for me. It has deepened my understanding and I share information with other health workers.”*

