

# SWEDISH WORKPLACE HIV/AIDS PROGRAMME

## CASE STUDY: BABCOCK NTUTHUKO - CREATING A CULTURE OF WELLNESS THROUGH MANAGING DIVERSITY

### BACKGROUND

Babcock Ntuthuko Generation, a business unit of the Babcock International Group, specialises in the design, manufacture, assembly and aftermarket support of power generation solutions. The company has a culturally diverse work force of 911 (including contractors) spread over 7 sites in South Africa.

Babcock Ntuthuko partnered with SWHAP in 2012 to set up a comprehensive workplace HIV and wellness management programme run by a representative (across gender, race and departments) steering committee. Through the programme all employees have access to regular HIV and biometric screening, disease management and support services. There is also HIV and wellness education where typically one topic is discussed in a brief awareness session after which testing maybe offered.

### THE CHALLENGE

Peer Educators at the Fabrication site in Jet Park observed low programme engagement. They noted that language barriers, particularly in the workshop, were affecting information dissemination and employee engagement in HIV and wellness activities.

Fabrication is a multicultural site with; varying levels of literacy, diverse cultural and religious beliefs, and 65 employees who speak five different languages between them.

It was clear to the peer education team that the regular awareness sessions were not having the desired effect and that they had to do more to address the language barrier and make provision for non-written forms of communication to facilitate a more in-depth learning experience.

### THE SOLUTION

The Peer Education team organised an interactive wellness week where one predetermined topic was discussed each day. The programme offered the following:

- Daily multilingual awareness sessions facilitated by a Peer Educator who was fluent in all five of the languages used on the workshop floor. Complementary Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials were only handed out once topics had been explained and discussed. The more literate colleagues also provided translation and explanation services for their workmates – this meant that discussions



continued during working hours.

- Interactive sessions addressing smoking and drinking where employees tracked their annual spend on alcohol and cigarettes and discussed the detrimental health aspects.
- Quizzes and competitions which involved family members in the creation of healthy recipes.
- Interactive team wellness activities where different departments created smoothie and salad recipes and made them at work. Copies of recipes were posted on televisions and notice boards in the workshop and the administration blocks. They were also emailed to those employees with access to email.
- Employee testimonies on prostate cancer and obesity.
- Topical posters and leaflets on notice boards creating space for further discussion.
- Power point presentations by Peer Educators on topics such as HIV transmission during the HIV awareness day.

By the end of the wellness week employees had discussed alcohol abuse, smoking, TB, HIV, cancer and non-communicable diseases through various learning mediums.

### OUTCOMES

- The language barrier was bridged with employees addressed in Zulu, Sotho, Afrikaans and English.
- The wellness week was successful in driving positive employee engagement with the wellness programme. Peer Educators reported that after the exercise, employees were more willing to approach them with health-related queries.
- Regular communication kept HIV and wellness top of mind during working hours.

- Practical exercises promoted self-awareness and understanding on the health and financial implications of smoking and drinking as evidenced by employee comments during and after the exercise.
- Interventions improved employee access to information on nutrition at a minimal cost.
- Information was cascaded from the workplace to family level.
- Creation of a standard programme with branding and communication helped to show Babcock's commitment to investing in employee wellbeing.
- Promotion of dialogue in the workplace contributed to improved interaction across the culture, language and economic divide. The dialogue also started addressing some of the negative cultural practices that hinder health seeking behaviours.
- Increased accessibility of the programme (as it was run over a longer period) promoted uptake of services by 30%.
- The programme was recognised as a positive contribution to the company staff retention initiative.

## LESSONS LEARNT

- Senior and line managers are important for the success of wellness interventions. The factory manager



*“At normal workplaces time is not given to focus on employee health in a practical manner: you come in to work. This was different in-depth information. Everything came together during the wellness week. Employees recognised that handwashing, TB, HIV and nutrition are all interlinked. We understood the importance of good health for our ability to work, and that it prevents absenteeism. Otto’s [cancer survivor] testimony was really important for the young men. Simple interactions can help save lives in the long run.” - Kelvin Mgrebe*



*“Employees have been empowered by awareness sessions in their own languages.” - Vincent Phalo*



*“Safety and quality have always been paramount, but wellness is also important.” - Eugene Penny*

- at Fabrication played an integral role in ensuring employee participated in sessions and that discussions on health continued throughout the day.
- Where programmes are run across several sites, Peer Educators can play an important role in identifying gaps in programming. The intervention at Fabrication was the brainchild of a Peer Educator who is also the SHE Risk Practitioner.
- It is important to collect data at the inception of a programme as this can be used for comparison at a later date to determine programme efficacy.
- Wellness programmes that engage employees can make a positive contribution to improving the organisation's ability to attract and retain talent.

## WAY FORWARD

The Wellness Week concept is being replicated across all Babcock sites and will be conducted on a quarterly basis. Additionally, IEC material will be produced in the relevant local languages. These measures should help to create a consistent employee experience. To ensure sustainability, the programme will be included in management key performance indicators. Babcock also plans on training more Peer Educators.

**For more information contact [info@swhap.org](mailto:info@swhap.org)**



The Swedish Workplace HIV and AIDS Programme (SWHAP) is a joint initiative by the International Council of Swedish Industry (NIR) and the Swedish Industrial and Metalworkers' Union (IF Metall). It is a long-term strategy to contribute to the establishment and/or support of HIV and Wellness programmes at workplaces in sub-Saharan Africa. SWHAP is an example of how management, employees and trade unions can contribute to a successful intervention that saves lives and secures future markets. Since 2004, this programme has been helping companies invest in workplace programmes that reverse the negative impact of HIV and AIDS.

SWHAP provides support for HIV and Wellness workplace programmes in over 370 workplaces in Botswana, DRC, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The programme is cofunded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida, and the companies that participate in the programme. [www.swhap.org](http://www.swhap.org)