



Family Centred Approaches- Reaching Spouses, Couples and Families from the Workplace

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Background

In the last 15 years Africa has made great progress in addressing HIV and AIDS. Workplaces have played a part through workplace programmes that provide increased opportunities for testing and access to treatment, care and support services. However as there are more men than women in the formal sector in Africa (women hold 4 out of every 10 jobs - www.afdb.org) there is disproportionate access to HIV and wellness information and services offered by such programmes. Moreover, physiological and social factors still make women and girls more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS and economic dependency on men often limits the ability to negotiate for safer sex.

The Swedish Workplace HIV and AIDS Programme (SWHAP) promotes gender mainstreamed workplace programmes that reach out to spouses, partners and families in order to close the gap in access to information and services and create enabling environments for discussing issues such as safer sex, couples counselling and testing and voluntary disclosure of HIV status at family level.



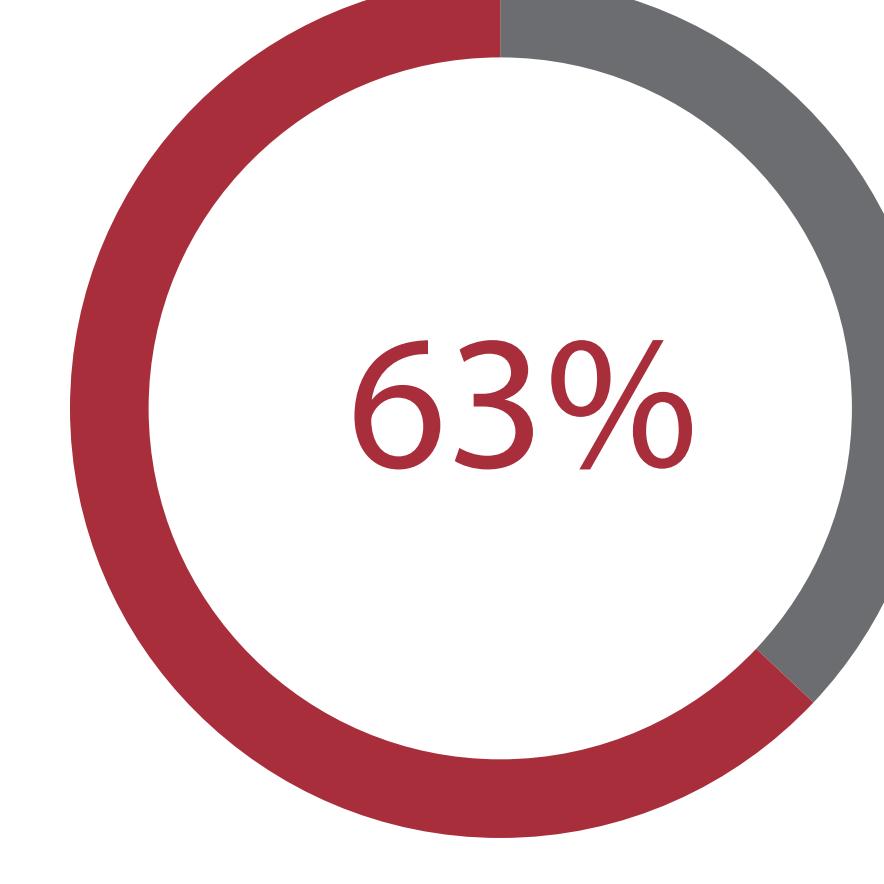
Methods

- Spousal Peer Education Training Programmes where the spouses of employees receive training on HIV and AIDS and sexual and reproductive health and rights enabling them to become behaviour change advocates in their families and communities.
- Spousal Clubs which provide financial literacy training and income generation opportunities.
- Family Wellness Days where sporting activities and games are interspersed with messages about HIV, general health and opportunities for HIV and biometric testing.
- Workplace based activities promoting couples communication, testing and voluntary disclosure of HIV status.
- Youth life skills training for children of employees promoting delayed sexual debut and responsible sexual behaviour.
- Promotion of workplace policies that include benefits for spouses and family members.
- Promotion of gender mainstreaming strategies and approaches that include spouses and communities.

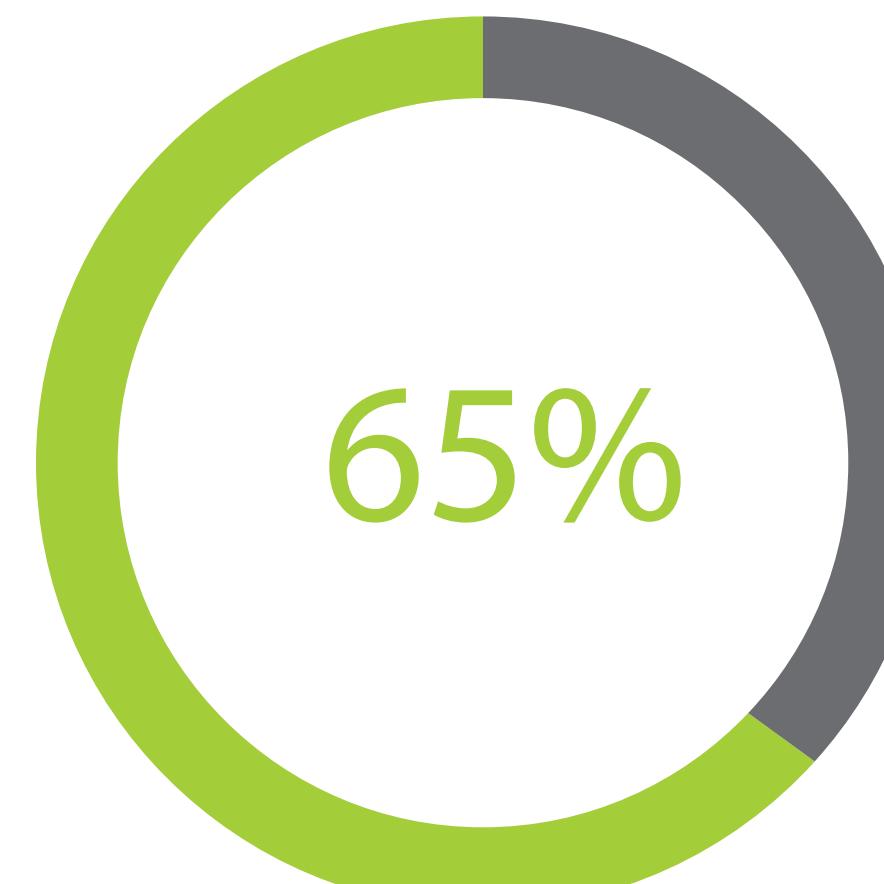


Results

- The information gap between spouses/ partners regarding HIV transmission, progression, prevention and management was significantly reduced.
- Inclusion of families in family wellness days increased uptake of HIV and AIDS testing as well as couples testing.
- Spouses volunteered and were trained as community Peer Educators and Community Psycho Social Counsellors.
- Formation of Spousal Clubs built economic capacity of the spouses through training and income generation projects with technical and financial support from the companies.
- Parents were equipped with communication skills to discuss issues around sex and HIV with their adolescent children, promoting responsible sexual behaviour.
- Ripple effects have included spreading of HIV and AIDS information at community level, with some trained spouses also volunteering at their local clinics.



Average HCT uptake in companies



Companies including community outreach in their programmes

Spouse Peer Educators trained in 2015



Conclusions

- The inclusion of families into programmes promotes acceptability of workplace programmes.
- The inclusion of families promotes increased uptake of testing, treatment and uptake of supplementary/ nutritional support to affected families. VCT uptake in SWHAP partner companies is significantly higher than national testing averages in Southern Africa.
- Inclusion of families results in greater openness and voluntary disclosure of HIV status.
- Trained spouses are also taking the lead in community outreach programmes to further spread information on HIV and promote testing. The spouses are reaching audiences that would not ordinarily have been accessible through workplace programmes.
- Workplace Programmes that include spouses and families create shared value.
- Working with male spouses promotes importance of men and women as partners with shared responsibility in family planning and reproductive health.



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 by the companies that participate in the programme.

www.swhap.org

NIR Näringslivs Internationella Råd
International Council of
Swedish Industry

The International Council of Swedish Industry (Näringslivs Internationella Råd, NIR) is an independent non-profit organisation representing Swedish industry. Its mandate is to support favourable conditions for Swedish business. By working to improve structural conditions for a more conducive business climate, NIR's activities contribute to sustainable economic development of the respective country and improve market conditions for domestic as well as international companies.

www.nir.se

IFMETALL

IF Metall is a merger between the Swedish Industrial Workers' and the Swedish Metalworkers' Union with more than 325,000 members at more than 12,000 workplaces, affiliated to 37 local branches. IF Metall works in the interests of its members and in support of a democratic and equal society where everyone must have the right to a decent and secure job.

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