

# SWEDISH WORKPLACE HIV/AIDS PROGRAMME

## COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND RETURN-ON-INVESTMENT OF THE SWEDISH WORKPLACE HIV AND AIDS PROGRAMME (SWHAP) IN SOUTH AFRICA

### BACKGROUND

HIV and AIDS and ill-health have a negative impact on business lowering productivity, raising costs and hampering the delivery of products and services. The Global Wellness Institute estimates that the economic cost of unwell workers is between 10-15 percent of global economic output<sup>1</sup> with employers facing costs related to high turnover, absenteeism, and presenteeism (attending work while unwell).

### SWHAP IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa has the biggest HIV epidemic in the world with approximately 7.5 million people living with HIV and an estimated 19% prevalence in adults (ages 15-49)<sup>2</sup>. The South African Business Coalition on Health and AIDS notes that between 10 to 40 percent of the workforce in the country is likely to be infected with HIV<sup>2</sup>. Accordingly and complementary to the South African national HIV response, the Swedish Workplace HIV and AIDS Programme (SWHAP) has since 2004 collaborated with 45 companies in the country helping them establish or enhance workplace HIV and wellness programmes that reverse the negative impact of HIV and AIDS. The programmes are based on partnership and dialogue between management, employees and their trade unions resulting in internal ownership of the programmes and greater sustainability.

### RESEARCH

In 2018, SWHAP partnered with Karolinska Institutet to assess the economic benefits of the SWHAP approach in 14 companies in South Africa. The economic impacts were modelled for 2012 to 2016 using return-on-investment (ROI) analysis. The model was developed from the perspective of the employer, i.e. only the costs relevant to the employer were considered, including intervention, absenteeism, and presenteeism costs.

### FINDINGS

**The modelling exercise provided evidence that the SWHAP approach provides good value for money.**

- The ROI analysis showed that among 1 000 employees and at an annual cost of ZAR 300 000, an average of 20.84 HIV infections per year will be averted: 7.27 among employees and 13.57 among their sexual partners.
- A net benefit analysis shows that funds invested in the programme, result in absolute cost-savings of ZAR 134.42 per employee.
- The estimated benefit cost ratio suggests that for every Rand spent, the employer can expect to benefit by ZAR 1.45: a 44.8% return on investment<sup>3</sup>.

Workplace programmes can be cost saving for companies due to reductions in health care costs, absenteeism, and staff turnover. Other benefits of programmes using the SWHAP approach include:

- improved dialogue climate at the workplace
- a more engaged workforce
- improved job satisfaction and employee morale
- spread of information and access to HIV and wellness services to surrounding communities<sup>4</sup>.

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

<sup>1</sup>Global Wellness Institute, The Future of Wellness at Work, January 2016

<sup>2</sup>Statistics South Africa 2018 Mid-Year Population Estimates

<sup>3</sup>Uthman O, Ekström A. Money well spent? Cost effectiveness and Return-on-investment of the Swedish Workplace HIV/AIDS Programme (SWHAP) in South Africa

<sup>4</sup>Swedish Workplace HIV and AIDS Programme (SWHAP). SWHAP - 14 Years of Championing HIV and Wellness Programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa 2018. Available from [www.swhap.org/impact](http://www.swhap.org/impact)



*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 500 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)*