



PSUFASA NEWSLETTER

'The fight against HIV and AIDS is part of the wider battle to uphold human rights'

NOVEMBER 2010

Spotlight!

ANGOLA IN-COUNTRY SEMINAR.

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE.....

WORLD AIDS DAY 2010.....

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Angola In-Country Seminar

The national seminar on HIV/AIDS in Angola was held from the 22nd to the 23rd of June 2010. The seminar was attended by union activists from the four (4) affiliates of the PSI in Angola.

The Deputy Minister of Health, Mrs. Evelize Fresta officially opened the seminar. She highlighted the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on the socio- economic development of many countries.

The Minister called upon unions to work with the government and other organisations in disseminating information on HIV/AIDS, promote human rights, adopt preventive measures and practices, guarantee social security to incapacitated workers and ensure access to treatment, care and support.

She also pointed out the measures that have been put in place by the government of Angola to address the impact of the pandemic such as:

* The creation of the Commission for the fight against AIDS which



Participants attending the In-country seminar in Angola and Deputy Minister of Health (in the middle picture at the bottom)

is constituted by a Council of Ministers;

* The creation of the National Institute for the Fight Against Aids which coordinates national action plans aimed at fighting AIDS;

* Broadening and reinforcement of partnerships with national and international NGOs and multilateral agencies in fighting HIV and AIDS;

* A legal framework (Law No. 8/04) which protects the rights of people infected or at risk of infection.

The Minister declared her support and advance the HIV/AIDS work of the trade unions in Angola.

The seminar was also attended by the representative of the Fredrick Ebert Stiftung Foundation who also emphasised the important role of trade unions in not only influencing policy and legislation but also ensuring its effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

At the end of the two day seminar unions developed a plan of action which included among other things;

* Intensification of advocacy on HIV and AIDS;

* Development of proper referral system to support affected workers and;

* Development of collective bargaining agreements and policies on HIV/AIDS.



Circulate widely please!

Editorial comment



Dear Readers,

Welcome and enjoy reading the contents of this November newsletter!

We all know that the goal of the current HIV and AIDS project is to strengthen the public sector trade unions' response to HIV and AIDS in southern Africa and one of the questions that will be answered in this edition of the newsletter is: Has the project strengthened the public sector trade unions' response to HIV and AIDS?

The experiences of the different public sector trade unions shared in this edition will proffer a response to this question and our readers will be able to judge

whether there has been a positive result or not.

As we go towards the end of 2010 it is yet another opportunity to participate in important international days such as the 16 Days of Activism against gender based violence from the 25th of November to the 10th of December.

The 16 Days of activism are very important days to flag out the link between gender based violence and HIV and AIDS. Gender based violence has been identified as one of the factors fuelling the pandemic and has been inked to the feminisation of HIV and AIDS in our part of the

region where more than 60% of those infected with HIV and AIDS are women.

The 1st of December, 2010 is World Aids Day (WAD). In 2009 we saw many unions organising various WAD activities and shared their work through this newsletter.

We also hope that the pattern of joining the global campaign against AIDS within the unions will continue in 2010. We look forward to publish your WAD activities for 2010.

Your support towards this publication is greatly appreciated.

Thank you!

Project Board - Recommends on future of project

Johannesburg, South Africa -

The Project Board members met on the 13th of September, 2010 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

This was the third and last meeting of the Project Board under the current phase of the project funded by the UK Department of International Development (DFID). The deliberations of the Board members were therefore crucial for the future direction of the project.

The agenda of the meeting included among other things a discussion on the future course of the project.

The Board members recommended the following;

- * One on one support to unions to develop their HIV and AIDS policies and programmes should continue;
- * Unions should continue to promote and protect the rights of workers living with HIV and AIDS and share experiences on workplace responses through various

activities;

- * Lobbying and advocacy on HIV and AIDS at national and regional level should be intensified;
- * Collective bargaining on HIV and AIDS should continue to take centre stage in all social dialogue platforms;
- * Occupational Health and safety through hazard mapping and its link with HIV and

and AIDS should form part of the future activities of public sector trade unions in southern Africa.

The Project Secretariat is still consulting unions concerning their future capacity building needs in relation to HIV and AIDS. It is hoped that this consultation process will lead to the development of union driven activities.



Project Board members, September, 2010

Some union responses to HIV/AIDS



Cde. Prakash Baluckram - Government Servants Employees Association - Mauritius

Mauritius - The HIV/AIDS mapping exercise that took place during the national seminar in Mauritius in February, 2010 indicated that 74,6% of transmission in Mauritius is due to injection of drugs. The other 25,4% is due to sexual activity.

Another point was that, unlike in other parts of southern Africa, there are more men affected by the epidemic than women across all age groups.

During this seminar the four PSI affiliates were equipped with adequate information on these key drivers of the epidemic and developed appropriate action plans to address the national

challenges.

The Action Plans drawn by the four affiliates included among other things the production of communication materials, sensitization of union leadership, empowering the youths and women on negotiation of safe sex, organizing counseling and testing days at the workplace and distribution of condoms at the workplace.

It is important to note that most of these activities enunciated at the beginning of the year during the in-country seminar were implemented during the course of the year.



Phumzile Dlamini-Mhlanga Vice President -Professional issues, Swaziland Nurses Association (SNA)

Regional Dialogues for Nurses in Swaziland addressing stigma and discrimination among Health Care Workers

Swaziland - One would assume that health care workers are in a better position to deal with issues of stigma and discrimination at the workplace than any other person as they deal with patients affected and infected by HIV and AIDS in their workplaces. However, this has not been the case among health care workers, especially nurses in Swaziland, Many nurses find it difficult to test and disclose their sero status.

The Swaziland Nurses Association has noted that stigma and discrimination is rife among the health care workers and has hindered efforts by some to access HIV and AIDS related services. The Swaziland Nurses Association (SNA) has developed a programme of action with the goal of creating a conducive environment for nurses to talk freely about HIV and AIDS and access preventative services, treatment, care and support.

The programme has been empowering nurses to freely discuss the challenges they face as patients and as care givers and the kind of support they need to deal with these challenges. Such discussions have helped the union to run psychosocial support programmes among the nurses. So far the regional dialogues have been organised in Manzini, Shiselweni, Lubombo and Hhohho regions.

Zimbabwe - One of the outputs of the project is the development of workplace HIV and AIDS policies. In line with the realisation of this output, the Zimbabwe Rural District Council Workers Union (ZRDCWU) developed a draft workplace policy on HIV and AIDS at the beginning of the year and brought it before its membership for further consultations during a national workshop held on the 17th of April, 2010.

The aims and objectives of the policy include; elimination of stigma and discrimination at the workplace, mitigation of the impact of HIV/AIDS at the workplace; measures to reduce the spread of the epidemic through provision of education, information,



ZRDCWU union activists dissecting the draft policy during the consultative workshop

and other preventative measures. In order to ensure the implementation of the policy, union activists further recommended a number of activities that the union should implement such as ensuring

the effective functioning of health and safety committees, training of peer educators and the establishment of HIV and AIDS focal persons.

Interview with Ajay Bhonah

Name: Ajay
Surname: Bhonah
Union: Local Authorities Employee Union (LAEU).
Position in Union: Treasurer
No. Of years in union work? Eighteen (18) years.
What are the current challenges facing your union in fighting HIV and AIDS?

1. Unconcern and indifference by some employees who are of the view that they are not at risk of contracting HIV and therefore dealing with the pandemic is not their concern.
2. Stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS. Some people are of the view that HIV/AIDS is some form of punishment from God and those infected should be avoided as they are sinners. There are even some workers who believe that because they have a good religious, social and cultural backgrounds they are safe from contracting HIV.
3. Time factor - Due to professional and family commitments it is not easy to get released from work.

What are the successes of your union?

Our union is well structured and established union branches in seven local authorities. All in all there are 9 local authorities and therefore a strong union base throughout the Island.

If you can be given a mandate to change policies what can you change about your union approach to HIV and AIDS?

The induction programme meant for new members should integrate a full chapter on the ABC of HIV/AIDS besides the

basic issues on the role of organising. The other issue is that a multi-integrated approach to the problem of HIV and AIDS needs to be developed.

Having noted that in Mauritius almost 80% of people who are HIV positive contract it through drug abuse it is important to address this challenge.

How is your union fighting stigma and discrimination?

By providing information and supporting those infected and affected at the workplace. It is only through information sharing and education that workers can be empowered.

What would you like to see changing in your union about the strategies to educate your members about the pandemic?

Everyone should talk about HIV and AIDS everywhere and not just through workshops and seminars.

What lessons have you learnt from other unions on mobilizing workers against AIDS?

Carrying out public awareness, information and communication campaigns.

Why is gender equality important within the union in the fight against HIV and AIDS?

HIV and AIDS is not an issue for either men or women. Both men and women have a role to play to address the key drivers of the epidemic. There is a saying in Mauritius which says "Sida pas guet figure. Sida capave pas touyer mais ouregar envers nou pas laisse nou vivre" - meaning that AIDS is a concern for one and all and we



Ajay Bhonah, Local Authorities Employees Union of Mauritius

are all at risk of contracting the virus in one way or the other.

What is your message about HIV and AIDS to workers within your union and the country in general?

It is now 23 years after AIDS was first reported in Mauritius, yet today not much is improving despite having realised that AIDS is a real threat to humanity. We need to devise effective means and ways to educate and build the capacity of all age groups in regard to HIV and AIDS.

What is your message to southern African workers?

As a matter of fact HIV and AIDS is not merely a health issue but also a social development concern for southern Africa. The struggle against AIDS should continue through education, training and capacity building of workers!

Gender Based Violence and HIV/AIDS - 16 Days of Activism

Rodrigues Public Service Workers Union mainstreaming gender in the implementation of the HIV/AIDS project

The Rodrigues Public Service Union has ensured that the issue of gender inequality and HIV and AIDS is central to the implementation of the unions' HIV and AIDS programmes and activities. On the 25th of September, 2010 the union organised a seminar for women in the public sector to discuss HIV/AIDS issues that affect them. 25 women from various government departments participated in this seminar.

The objectives of the seminar were to:

- * To increase awareness of woman in the public sector on HIV/AIDS and related issues;
- * Promote safe sex behavior among older women and women of child bearing age; and

- * Empower women, on negotiation of safe sex.

The seminar was facilitated by Dr. Mrs. Khodabocus from Rodrigues AIDS Unit showing the increased collaboration between government departments and the public sector unions in Mauritius.

The facilitator discussed the vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies and associated complications, PMTCT, and Sexually Transmitted Infections.

Different organizations the world over will be campaigning against gender based violence from the 25th of November - 10th of December 2010.



Women's workshop in Rodrigues

16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence is an opportunity for trade union organizations to organize activities that bring to light the negative effects of gender based violence which affects women and girls and also fuel the spread of HIV/AIDS

BE A PART OF THIS CAMPAIGN!

DENOSA Organises seminar on Gender and HIV/AIDS

Johannesburg, South Africa - The Democratic Nurses Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA) organised a Gender and HIV seminar on the 18th of November, 2010. The objectives of the seminar were;

- * To empower gender coordinators and leadership on issues of gender based violence and HIV/AIDS.
- * To provide a framework of reference for union intervention on HIV /AIDS and gender based violence.
- * To enhance union collaboration among stakeholders dealing with HIV/AIDS and gender based violence.

The seminar discussed various issues linking HIV/AIDS to gender inequality and gender based violence.

The PSI HIV/AIDS project coordinator presented a paper explaining how gender based violence aggravates women's vulnerability to HIV infection and limits women's access to life saving sexual and reproductive health services. She noted that the critical

link between the spread of HIV/AIDS and gender based violence is clear in southern Africa where 60% of those infected and living with AIDS are women.

The Project Coordinator also tackled the various forms of gender based violence that expose women and girls to HIV/AIDS such as sexual abuse which is a violation of human rights.

She also discussed how health care workers have in recent years been exposed to workplace violence such as rape which exposes them to HIV/AIDS and at the same time affects the delivery of quality public health care.

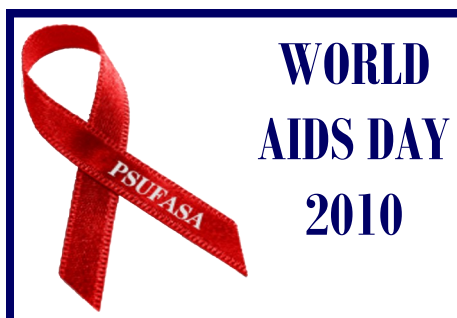
The 1st of December, 2010 marks the 22nd World Aids Day. The day will be commemorated under the global theme "**Universal Access and Human Rights**".

The aim of this theme is to underscore the importance of human rights in the response to AIDS. Thus the theme draws attention to the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS.

This World Aids Day is about elevating the awareness and education on the link between human rights and HIV/AIDS. In 2009 many public sector trade unions in were part of this Universal Access and Human Rights Campaign to halt the spread of the epidemic and reduce stigma and discrimination. Many shared the different activities that they organized during WAD, 2009 in our January Newsletter.

This year's WAD is yet another opportunity to educate union membership about the prevention, treatment, care and support programmes and/or launch new programmes or activities that will promote the human rights of people living with HIV and AIDS.

Do something this World Aids Day!



Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in all union training activities

Lilongwe, Malawi - The Water Employees Trade Union of Malawi (WETUM) has intensified the mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS in all the training programmes of the union.

The union hopes that the mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS would in training programmes will increase knowledge on prevention, treatment, care and support.

This approach was adopted after the union realised that a

systematic and constant process of equipping workers with adequate knowledge would result in:

- * Reduction in new infections;
- * Better management of the virus by affected workers;
- * Behaviour change especially in relation to condom use, and avoiding multiple concurrent partners; and
- * Reduction in incidences of stigma and discrimination at the workplace.

The HIV and AIDS sessions are

conducted by Cde. Moses Nkosi using the training materials such as the How-To- Guides developed by the project secretariat.

So far 32 workers from Lilongwe Water Board and 8 from Central Region Water Board Trade Union have been beneficiaries of these training sessions.

Other unions can adopt this approach as it does not only ensure the dissemination of information but is also a cost cutting measure.



Moses Nkosi - HIV/AIDS Coordinator, WETUM, Malawi

UPCOMING EVENTS

- * **25-10 December, 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence**
- * **1 December, World Aids Day**
- * **1-2 December, Lesotho Stakeholders seminar on HIV and AIDS**
- * **10 December, International Human Rights Day**
- * **18 December, International Migrants Day**

Message of support: WAD 2010

The General Secretary of UNISON, Cde Dave Prentis sent a message of support to all public sector trade unions participating in the fight against HIV and AIDS at the workplace. You can access the message on our website www.psufasa.org.

Read the message of support during your WAD activities!



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