



# DIVERSIFYING HEALTH AND WELLNESS AS A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS IMPERATIVE:

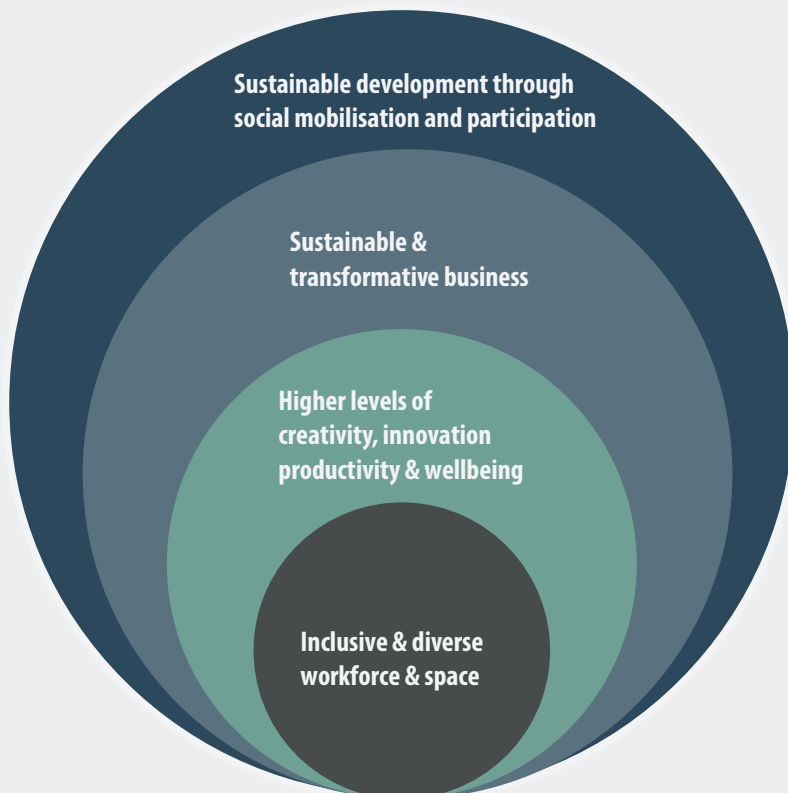
## A BUSINESS CASE STUDY OF SELECTED SWHAP WORKSITES IN SOUTH AFRICA



# Introduction and Background

The Fourth Industrial Revolution, globalisation, generational gaps and the inclusion of more women in the workforce have made diversity management a strategic business imperative. Some long-term benefits of diversity include increased ability to attract and retain best talent; a more engaged work force; enhanced creativity; enhanced productivity; and better appeal to a more global market. Moreover, the diversity of employees contributes to new direction and to new markets enabling businesses to become active players in the social transformation of workplaces and communities as they address issues related to disability mainstreaming, gender equality and equity, and human rights. This helps ensure that business is sustainable beyond just the bottom line.

## Socio-ecological Model of Sustainable Development



- Inclusive and diverse workplaces and workspaces facilitate higher levels of creativity, innovation, productivity and well-being in the workplace and in society.

In recognition of these business and social imperatives, the Swedish Workplace HIV and AIDS Programme (SWHAP) collaborated with the University of South Africa (UNISA) on a strategy and programme for mainstreaming gender and social diversity into existing HIV and wellness programmes between 2015 and 2018. The first phase included working sessions that facilitated the development of a gender mainstreaming and diversity management assessment tool through social dialogues with 11 workplaces in South Africa and recommendations from over 160 participants at the 2015 SWHAP conference. This was followed by capacity development for 82 steering committee members, trade union representatives and management from a further five companies in South Africa and 14 companies in the DRC, Kenya and Zimbabwe - empowering them to implement gender mainstreaming strategies within their existing HIV and wellness programmes.

The initial focus was on gender mainstreaming with an emphasis on women's empowerment - the implementation of which raised several socio-economic diversity issues such as class, ethnicity, education background, race and sexuality. Evaluations revealed that wellness workplace programmes were not being used effectively in a diversity framework and that

programmes were often designed and developed from a risk perspective rather than as a strategy for sustainability. Recommendations were made for more comprehensive efforts to address the intersectionality of gender and diversity within the wellness programmes. Participants at stakeholder dialogues in the DRC, Kenya and South Africa also confirmed that the new strategic direction was key towards the sustainability of their HIV and wellness interventions, and if expanded to align with other policies and strategies, important in helping them to address sustainability priorities at workplace and community levels.

Building on the early mainstreaming efforts and in preparation for the next phase of the SWHAP, an eight-month pilot programme was conducted in South Africa with the aim of addressing diversity issues using HIV and wellness programmes.

## Pilot Objectives

The pilot sought to explore how current HIV and wellness workplace programmes could be upscaled through diversity, thereby promoting sustainable business. It had the following objectives:

- To initiate awareness of and sensitivity to diversity in HIV and wellness programmes
- To map and profile the diversity elements of each organisation
- To review alignment of policies and environment for successful implementation
- To implement monitoring of workplace activities and engagements
- To evaluate the business case for diversified HIV and wellness workplace programmes

## Process

Four organisations (Atlas Copco, Reality Wellness, Quant and the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa) participated in the pilot. Project teams consisting of wellness steering committee members and other selected employees were the main drivers of the programme at organisation level. Intensive capacity building sessions were implemented to enhance the capacity of the teams' understanding on the business case for diversity and sustainability, and the coordination and implementation of social dialogues.

Before social dialogues were held at each workplace sensitisation on the purpose of the dialogues was conducted. This included posters and e-communication to invite employees to participate as well as some directed communication from line managers. The social dialogues occurred during working hours to optimise attendance. Specific timeframes (on average 2-3 hours) were negotiated for the dialogues with various management structures to limit interference with productivity. The different workplace teams facilitated social dialogues on; linking diversity with wellness; racism and tribalism; gender inequality; disability; preparing the workplace for the fourth industrial revolution; and youth development and employment.

Workplace teams were also trained on how to engage and network with different community organisations to strengthen their programmes. The SWHAP and UNISA project team provided continuous support via e-mails, telephonic follow-up and references to additional resources. In order to facilitate an evidence-based evaluation approach, engaged research was used to record activities.

# Facilitating Dialogue in the Workplace

## 01. Initiate or introduce

Phase 1 is the initiation of the conversation to introduce the topic. It can be achieved by various means, including art, drama/role-play, guest speakers, life storytelling, panel discussions, policy analysis, problem solving techniques and self-reflective exercises.

## 02. Facilitate deeper understanding

Phase 2 is in-depth conversation either through a question-and-answer session or a small group engagement based on critical questions. It is geared towards common understanding and solution finding.

## 03. Consolidation & solution finding using collective consensus & ownership

Phase 3 is used to consolidate the conversation for key understanding and reaching an agreement on the way forward towards finding solutions. It is essential that the group owns the solution at both personal and group level, even if it is further delegated.

## Findings

- Although there was a basic understanding of social diversity and inclusion at workplaces, it was evident that most workplaces had not created social spaces to engage with the different issues experienced at work.
- Social diversity and inclusion are very complex and priority issues varied from workplace to workplace.
- Some workplaces had interventions like diversity training, but these were predominately from a human resource framework for diversity management and not a strategic framework for sustainable business.
- The intersectionality of racism with other major diversity issues like class, ethnicity, gender, language, skin colour and tribalism was identified as one of the major issues affecting most workplaces.
- Although most workplaces were predominately male, there was a growing number of female employees at all job-levels.
- At male dominated workplaces the organisational culture and practices facilitated this dominance. Practices of gender inequality were identified including exclusion of women from certain job-categories and levels.

- The workforces were multigenerational (made up of employees from different generations) which often caused conflict due to different work ethics and expectations.

## Business Benefits

Based on continuous evaluation of project activities as well as feedback from some workplaces, there were direct benefits of participating in the project as follows:

- Most workplace teams experienced a growth in self-confidence, sensitivity and teamwork around issues of diversity, inclusion and wellness.
- Individual team members expressed newfound awareness and sensitivity for their own practices of prejudice and stigma towards other diversities.
- Through the social dialogues, there was an increase of awareness on diversity and inclusion issues at the workplace and participants indicated that these dialogues assisted them to have a deeper understanding and to practice more tolerance.
- In most social dialogues, there were representatives from the human resource management divisions. This meant that recommendations made during the dialogues were noted for further discussion. When executive managers participated in dialogues, they were able to direct interventions for diversity advocacy – clearly seeing the programme as a strategy to prepare for new markets and sustainability in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Some organisations (Quant Services and NUMSA) even saw this as a possible competitive edge to raise the profile of their business.

## Lessons

- Intensive capacity building on diversity and inclusion within health and wellness as well as how to facilitate social dialogues contributed to the successful implementation of activities at workplaces.
- Social dialogues facilitated an equitable and safe space for employees to express and share their concerns about workplace issues like diversity and inclusion.
- Using social dialogues and experiential learning techniques enhanced a deeper understanding of the different topics such as gender, race, sexuality and tribalism.
- Effective and continuous communication was essential to the successful implementation of the project. For example, branding and continuous feedback to direct line managers on the challenges and progress of the project.
- The diversity of the participants enhanced deeper engagement during social dialogues as well as the process of finding collective solutions.
- Ground rules like mutual respect, confidentiality, full participation, honesty and trust were critical to the success of the dialogues.
- Customisation of dialogues with different formats including life-stories, poems, music, expert panel discussions, role-play and policy review contributed to successful engagement with the topics.
- The involvement of youth and young adults provided a more realistic conversation with regards to the demands of the changing workplaces within the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- Stakeholder engagement with relevant community-based organisations enhanced understanding of issues.

## Conclusion & Recommendations

Results from the pilot showed that HIV and wellness programmes could be upscaled to address diversity in the workplace, indeed several diversity issues like gender and racial discrimination

were often traumatic experiences and psychosocial support was needed to effectively manage and mitigate these issues.

Positive feedback from the participants showed that they could see the value of the project in diversifying their workforce, promoting creativity and innovation and even in prioritising the need for business to participate in national, continental and global sustainable development goals. It also prepared workplaces to tackle issues like gender equality, decent work and sustainability in the light of Fourth Industrial Revolution.

With regards to the social dialogue process, all the participants indicated that the dialogues were a positive experience and should be repeated to assist them in dealing with diversity and wellness issues and in taking ownership of collective solutions. In some dialogues where concerns on working conditions were raised these were diverted to the trade unions to take up with executive management.

Overall, the project achieved most of its objectives except for the national stakeholder engagement event, executive management advocacy to promote the successes of the project, and some policy review for alignments. Although the implementation timeframe needed to have been longer to allow successful integration with other workplace sustainability strategies, there is enough evidence for continuation of the programmes as this will assist companies to explore how they could use social diversity and inclusion as a business development and sustainability strategy. This strategy will assist them to not only meet new market demands within the Fourth Industrial Revolution but to also facilitate the changes of workplaces and working conditions to accommodate a more diverse workforce including freelance employment, flexible workspaces and streamlined management processes.

Based on some of the feedback received from the activity evaluation, reflections and observations by the project management team, the following recommendations should guide future implementation:

## **SWHAP**

- Develop an African strategic framework on social diversity and inclusion as a business strategy for workplaces to participate in sustainable development and social transformation. Emphasis should be given to the Africa Agenda 2030/2063 and Sustainable Development Goals to direct a collective response.
- Initiate awareness and sensitisation for the need to promote social diversity and inclusion within health and wellness as a sustainable business imperative in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- Assist with developing appropriate and customised policies and procedures in dealing with social diversity and inclusion in workplaces. This should also include the alignment with existing policies to create an enabling and safe workplace for diversity including gender and sexual diversity.
- Enhance the capacity of existing structures like peer educators and wellness committees to facilitate interventions like social dialogues to raise awareness and sensitise employees on social diversity and inclusion.
- Assist with alignment of other business core areas to enable workplaces to advocate and promote social diversity and social inclusion.
- Assist with developing implementation monitoring frameworks which include all role-players and stakeholders at workplace level.
- Facilitate national and local stakeholder engagements to strengthen collaborations and partnerships.
- Mobilise executive management buy-in and support through leadership training.

## **Workplaces**

- Conduct diversity profile audits to determine the need for customised social diversity and inclusion workplace programmes.
- Develop appropriate and customised workplace policies to advocate and promote social diversity and inclusion.
- Enhance the capacity of existing structures like human resource management, strategic management, peer educators and wellness committees to raise awareness and sensitise all employees on social diversity and inclusion.
- Provide resources and support to implement key interventions such as social dialogues and stakeholder engagements to address issues of social diversity and inclusion to promote social cohesion.
- Mobilise management buy-in and leadership through various interventions such as inservice training, policy alignment and reviews and peer support.
- Include families and households in any social diversity and inclusion engagement to promote well-being as well as community involvement and participation.
- Facilitate internal stakeholder engagement to integrate key interventions into the other operational areas of business. Trade unions should be part of these engagements.
- Integrate social diversity and inclusion into existing and new corporate communication and marketing initiatives and strategies.
- Ensure social diversity and inclusion is an item on all management meetings including key performance indicators for managers.
- Integrate social diversity and inclusion as part of overall business sustainability strategy.
- Facilitate regular advocacy and awareness campaigns on diversity issues and the need for inclusion.

## **Trade Unions**

- Assist workplaces to address issues of social diversity and inclusion.
- Mobilise support to employees affected by discrimination and stigma due to social diversity and inclusion for example, unfair labour practices.
- Participate as one of the key drivers for policy alignment, development, implementation and review to facilitate safe workplaces for social diversity and inclusion.
- Address issues of employment equity and equality in consultation with other role-players like executive management, health and wellness committees and human resource management.
- Integrate social diversity and inclusion as one of the major labour interventions towards decent and fair workplaces.
- Promote the human rights of all workers, including rights of social diversity and inclusion at all levels of business.
- Assist with the reskilling of employees to prepare for the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution to avoid job losses.
- Engage with all relevant role-players including executive management on sustainable development and social transformation within a local and national context.
- Ensure all grievances and disciplinary hearings are social diversity sensitive and promote inclusion.
- Engage with other national labour stakeholders to advocate and promote social diversity and inclusion in all workplace legislations.