



# PSUFASA NEWSLETTER

*"AIDS is a war against humanity. We need to break the silence, banish the stigma and discrimination and ensure total inclusiveness within the struggle against AIDS. If we discard the people living with HIV/AIDS, we can no longer call ourselves human."*

*Nelson Mandela (Former President of South Africa)*

AUGUST 2010

## Spotlight!

ZIMBABWE IN-COUNTRY SEMINAR. . . .

ILO LAUNCHES IMPLEMENTATION PHASE OF NEW STANDARD ON HIV/AIDS. . .

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## Zimbabwe In-Country Seminar

**April, 2010 Harare** - The four public sector trade unions affiliated to the Public Services International held the in-country seminar on HIV/AIDS at Crowne Plaza Monomotapa Hotel in Harare from the 13th - 14th of April, 2010. The seminar provided public sector trade unions with a forum for sharing workplace interventions and discuss strategies for scaling up the national response to HIV/AIDS at the workplace.



**Participants attending the In-country seminar in Zimbabwe.**

The Zimbabwe in-country seminar was held in Harare from the 13th - 14th of April, 2010. Thirty five (35) participants from public sector trade unions affiliated to the Public Services International attended the seminar.

The seminar was also attended by representatives from the National Aids Council of Zimbabwe, Ministry of Labour and Social Services, AFRICARE Zimbabwe and UNISON.

The Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Services, **Dr. Tracy Mutinhiri** officially opened the seminar. In her key note address, she thanked the trade union activists present, UNISON and PSI for organising the workshop. She

assured the trade union activists that the Ministry of Labour and Social Services acknowledged the challenge of the epidemic in the workplace and pledged the support of the Ministry to mitigate its impact on the working population.

She stated that employment rights in the era of HIV and AIDS need to be promoted and respected as failure to do so affects productivity, life of workers and their families as well as the employers.

She noted that the biggest challenge is on fighting stigma at the workplace and that trade union leaders have to take a lead in responding to stigma and discrimination through educating their mem-

bers. Dr. Mutinhiri also noted the current government policies, laws and strategies in place to address the challenges of HIV and AIDS and called upon trade union activists to participate and monitor the implementation of such policies and strategies.

Some of the topics that were discussed during the seminar included a regional overview of the epidemic, national policy and legislative framework on HIV/AIDS, the work of the International Labour Organisation on HIV/AIDS, workplace rights and HIV/AIDS, role of occupational health and safety committees, peer education, collective bargaining and HIV/AIDS and experiences from AFRICARE on working with Communities on HIV/AIDS.

Union activists living with HIV/AIDS also shared some of their experiences with the participants. Project Coordination Team members shared experiences from their countries and unions.

At the end of the seminar union activists agreed to follow-up on the issue of representation of public sector unions in national structures and activities on HIV/AIDS as well as the establishment of Wellness Centres in public sector workplaces.

**Circulate widely please!**



## Editorial comment

**Dear Readers,**

As you may be aware, we are in the last year of implementing the current 3 year project cycle which is financially supported by DFID. It is important at this stage to take stock of what we have achieved in the last two years to mitigate the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS in public sector workplaces.

In terms of project activities it is exciting to share that project implementation is on schedule. 8 out of the 11 planned in-country seminars have been held to date and the remaining 3 will be held by December 2010. One of the 2 regional seminars was held in September 2009 and the 2nd one is scheduled for February, 2011.

So far 16 quarterly newsletters have been published and the increased contribution of articles from activists is encouraging. The newsletter has also been commended by other external organisations as a good example of sharing experiences on HIV/AIDS at a regional and national level.

The PSUFASA website [www.psufasa.org](http://www.psufasa.org) is live and has been updated with information

and a video sharing with the world the project objectives and some of the achievements of the project thus far.

Furthermore, unions have made use of the 7 How-To-Guides series for local training activities. 6 more series will be published before the end of the year.

A resource centre with information on HIV/AIDS in general and the workplace in particular has also been established and is housed at the PSI office in Johannesburg. Few unions have made use of the available resources and hopefully the pattern will improve in due course.

In line with project activities, unions responded very well to the call for project applications for small union grants to implement specific local activities. Out of the 34 participating unions 31 applied for the funding which is an indication of the need for local capacity building. Out of these 31 unions, 21 have received funding and implemented their local activities. The remaining 10 unions will receive funding before the

end of the year.

On a few occasions unions requested for one-on-one (technical) support to review their draft union policies, project proposals and facilitation of their local training activities.

Positive results stemming from these project activities have been registered by many of the unions and continue to be shared through the newsletter, national and regional seminars.

Some unions have shared with us their sterling efforts in fighting HIV/AIDS through training, sensitisation and awareness, lobbying government ministries and other civil society organisations.

Some have even succeeded in claiming their space in terms of representation in national structures such as the Country Coordinating Mechanisms and National Aids Councils.

For as long we do not have a cure for AIDS, there is still more work to be done and more experiences to share.

**Thank you!**

## ILO launches Implementation phase of new ILS on HIV/AIDS



**17 July 2010 - Vienna.** Following the adoption of the first international instrument focusing on HIV/AIDS in the world of work on the 17th of June 2010, the ILO launched the implementation phase of the standard a month later.

The Director of the ILO Programme on HIV and AIDS and the workplace took advantage of the gathering of HIV/AIDS activists during the International AIDS Conference held from 18-23 July to launch the

implementation phase of the Recommendation concerning HIV and AIDS and the World of work 2010 (No. 200). She said in a statement that; "Now is the time for implementation and the International AIDS Conference provides an excellent forum to launch this next phase of building stronger partnerships for the development and implementation of HIV and AIDS policies and programmes in the world of work, with an emphasis on the reduction of stigma and

discrimination, the protection of human rights and greater access to prevention, treatment, care and support through the world of work."

Since governments are now required to report regularly on the standard, unions have to play a leading role in the process of domesticating the standard, monitoring its implementation at the national level and make input into the ILO reporting mechanisms on standards.

# Zimbabwe: Unions lobby Minister on HIV @ Workplace



From right: Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Services - Dr. Tracy Mutiniri, Mrs. Doreen Choruma - PSUFASA Project Board Member and Mrs. Simangaliso Sangare - PSI Sub-regional Women's Committee Chair.

## Interaction with the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Services during the in country seminar

Soon after her key note address, the Deputy Minister asked the activists to make comments or ask questions relating to the role of the Ministry in fighting HIV/AIDS. Union activists took advantage of this rare opportunity to have a group discussion with the Deputy Minister.

Some of the issues that were raised by the activists and which Dr. Mutiniri advised to put on paper and follow-up with her Ministry included the following:-

1. Challenges of accessing Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) by many public sector workers;
2. Equal treatment of civil servants in accessing ART;
3. Development of a system to monitor allocation and use of funds from the AIDS levy;
4. Establishment of wellness centres in public sector workplaces; and
5. Representation of public sector unions in national structures responsible for formulating and implementing HIV/AIDS policies and activities.

The Minister acknowledged the above challenges and promised to take them up and where necessary liaise with other Ministries with the mandate to deal with some of the issues especially on access to treatment.

## Post seminar lobbying - Letter to the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Services

After the in-country seminar, the unions followed up with a lobbying letter to the Deputy Minister's office in the spirit of the interaction that took place during the in-country seminar.

In the letter to the Deputy Minister public sector trade unions proposed the following for consideration and action by the Ministry:

- \* Establishment and implementation of Employee Wellness Centres in designated public sector workplaces;
- \* Incorporation of the right to health and labour rights in the new Constitution of Zimbabwe;
- \* Representation of Public Sector Workers' on the Board of the National AIDS Council and the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM);
- \* The Minister's intervention in the allocation of funds from the Global Fund on HIV/AIDS to workplace programmes in the public sector;
- \* Participation of representatives of public sector workers on the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Health; and
- \* Engagement of representatives of public sector workers on the implementation of the ILO standard on HIV/AIDS.

## Impact of Lobbying - Claiming space and rights

By: Mr. Jeremiah Bvirindi  
Deputy Executive Secretary  
Public Service Association (PSA)

As Public Service Association (PSA) we believe that the participation of the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Services during the in-country seminar on HIV/AIDS and the follow-up with her office through the letter is yielding positive results.

One particular response from the Ministry was the invitation of the Public Service Association (PSA) to make an input into the Joint Paper and Plan of Action on the Global Fund Round 10 discussions held from 22nd –23rd of June 2010 in Harare.

Among the issues that we raised as public sector union representatives was the establishment of Wellness Centres and this was acknowledged by both government and the ILO representatives as an important strategy in mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS in public sector workplaces.

The issue of Wellness Centres was shared during the in-country seminar by the Project Coordination Team member from South Africa, Cde. Busisiwe Tshabalala. She shared the South African experience on the value and impact of workplace Wellness Programmes and activities - Thus the impact of the In-country seminar cannot be underestimated!

During the Round 10 discussions we also highlighted the gaps in prevention efforts such as the low circulation of female condoms, limited number of trained shop-stewards as peer educators due to limited resources in view of the fact that unions dues are almost non-existent in the current economic climate in Zimbabwe.

Nutrition which was also part of the discussions during the in-country seminar was raised as an important aspect of the plan of action to address the impact of HIV/AIDS at the workplace.

# Interview with Dimakatso Sebopa

**Name:** Dimakatso Sebopa

**Surname: Union:** Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa.

**Position in Union:** Gender HIV/AIDS Coordinator

**How many years have you been involved in union work?**

More than 10 years.

**What are the current challenges facing your union in fighting HIV and AIDS?**

- \* Loss of members due to HIV/AIDS;
- \* Lack of resources to provide capacity building programmes for all our members; and
- \* Increased burden of diseases.

**What are the successes of your union?**

We have managed to do the following:-

- \* A pilot Care of Carer Project in 9 provinces within the academic hospitals in South Africa.
- \* Carried out the Know Your Test campaign on each and every event of the organisation by encouraging comrades to test on sites and make necessary referrals based on the results of the test.
- \* Trained 240 nurses in 8 provinces in 2009 alone on stigma and discrimination.
- \* We have also inputted on the Country Report to UNGASS as part of civil society.

\* We are currently developing guidelines for HIV positive women of reproductive age together with Health Systems Trust and other organisations.

\* We have trained 500 individuals within 9 provinces through TB-MDRTB TOT programme because it is our view that TB and HIV needs to be concurrently dealt with.

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

I will make sure that HIV and AIDS is mainstreamed in every policy, programme and activity of the organisation.

**How is your union fighting stigma and discrimination?**

We have made sure that our constitution and policies protect everyone. We have also taken steps to educate our members about stigma and discrimination.

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

A lesson learned from SACCAWU is to have a massive HIV and AIDS testing for our members and partner with a service provider that can provide those infected with care and support.

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



*Cde. Dimakatso Sepoba - Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa of South Africa (DENOSA)*

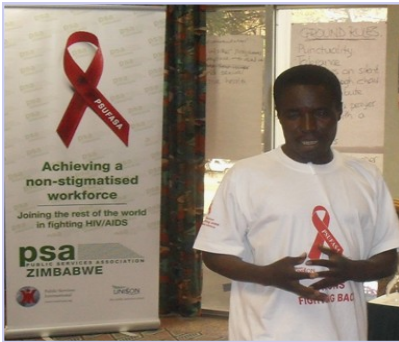
**AIDS?**

Gender equality is central to the fight against HIV and AIDS. Fighting HIV/AIDS requires everyone's effort and input. For straters, whether we like it or not men possess power from the bedroom. A partnership of men and women in transforming the socialization processes is a key strategy for addressing one of the root causes of the pandemic which is unequal power relations between men and women.

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

The message is clear, **Know Your Status** and if negative remain negative, abstain, be faithful and always condomize. If you are positive you have options, abstain, be faithful, always condomize and get treatment, care and support.

## Sharing workplace experiences: Zimbabwe



*Cde. Gift Mugadza: ZUCWU union member*

During the in-country seminar union activists living with HIV shared their experiences with participants.

Cde Mugadza knew his status in 2003 after the death of his wife. He therefore encouraged other workers to know their status as lesson number one from him. He highlighted some of the

challenges that he is facing at the workplace in relation to payment of salaries within urban councils. He stated

that financial challenges facing urban councils resulted in delays in payment of salaries which impact on his positive living as income is not guaranteed to meet his nutritional and other medical needs as well as taking care of his son.

He called upon union leaders to take up such unique cases and ensure the protection of the rights of workers' rights living with HIV/AIDS.

\*\*\*\*\*

Cde. Johana Kasirori holds a Bachelor degree in English and is a teacher. She started by informing the union activists that there was nothing wrong with coming out in the open about your status. She indicated that she has been living openly with HIV/AIDS for 20 years and this has relieved her from the burden of living a lie by hiding her status. She shared the following important points with participants:

- \* HIV/AIDS does not affect one's brains as she started and completed her

teaching diploma and degree living with HIV/AIDS; and

- \* An HIV + person can do any job done by HIV - person.

Johana noted that accessing treatment as a public sector worker is not an easy process due to the long queues and shortage of resources. She supported the establishment of Wellness Centres in public sector workplaces to ease this burden and reduce working time spent queuing for ART.



*Cde. Johana Kasirori: PSA union member*

## CCM Mauritius: Project Board member elected to represent NGOs



*Cde. Chellen RAVANNE. Rodrigues Public Service Workers (RPSWU)*

The PSUFASA Project Board Member—Mrs Chellen RAVANNE was elected in March, 2010 by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Rodrigues to represent them on the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM).

She joined Cde. Radhakrishna Sadien from the Government Civil Servants Employees Association who represented un-

ions in mainland Mauritius on the CCM. Mrs. RAVANNE believes that the call by the Commissioner of Health for the coordination and coming together of NGOs to form a network was a culmination of the lobbying work that was done through the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life during the in-country seminar on HIV/AIDS held in February, 2010.

She indicated that *'The in - country seminar held in February, 2010 was the spark plug for the unions in Rodrigues to claim their space and broaden their horizon in terms of engaging with organisations that would help unions fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Rodrigues'*.

She highlighted that since 2006 trade unions did not have networks and did not participate in national activities on HIV/AIDS. She was excited to indicate that this has since changed since March, 2010 and gave credit to the information, knowledge and networking opportunities that were created by the in-country seminar.

Some of the activities that she has ac-

complished since her election in March, 2010 include;

- \* A candle light ceremony held in May, 2010 to rekindle and intensify efforts to thwart HIV/AIDS in Rodrigues;
- \* Training on Psycho-social support for drug users;
- \* Training on medical checks, evaluation of projects on HIV/AIDS and Voluntary Counselling and Testing; and
- \* Attending CCM meetings on behalf of all NGOs including trade unions in Rodrigues.

Asked on how she will impact on the work of the CCM, she stated that the capacity building process through the PSUSAFSA project in terms of training, information, knowledge on HIV/AIDS and project management will be a great asset to her work as a member of the CCM. She noted that: *'Through the PSUFASA project, I have acquired knowledge, information, skills which will not only benefit union members but the rest of the country through my work as a member of the CCM.'*

## Project Coordination Team members @ work



From right. Cde. Evelyn Muvirimi, Cde. Virginia Nhantumbo, Cde. Kagiso Watema and Cde. Busisiwe Tshabalala.

### FUTURE EVENTS

- ◆ HIV/AIDS in the workplace and Beyond: 9-11 November, 2010. For more information visit [www.sabcoha.org/press-release/call-for-abstracts-third-wits-sabcoha-heard-hiv-aids-symp-html](http://www.sabcoha.org/press-release/call-for-abstracts-third-wits-sabcoha-heard-hiv-aids-symp-html).
- ◆ PSUFASA regional negotiators' seminar on collective bargaining and HIV/AIDS: November, 2010
- ◆ In-country seminar - South Africa: November, 2010

During the In-country seminar in Zimbabwe, Project Coordination Team (PCT) members played an important role as they constantly chipped in to share their country and union experiences on policies, strategies and legislative frameworks with union activists in Zimbabwe.

The sharing of experiences was an enriching experience which assisted union activists attending the seminar to develop recommendations based on evidence of good practice from other countries and unions.

For example the PCT member from South Africa shared the new HIV/AIDS policy in South Africa which has moved from Voluntary Counselling and Testing to HIV Counselling and Testing for everyone who visits a health care centre.

Other strategies that were shared included:

- ◆ Establishment and functioning of wellness centres;
- ◆ The need to hold a public sector summit to discuss the key issues affecting all stakeholders in the public sector related to HIV/AIDS;
- ◆ Appointing focal persons to deal with issues of HIV/AIDS at the workplace
- ◆ Training of shop-stewards on workers' rights, peer education and counselling;
- ◆ Collective bargaining on HIV/AIDS;
- ◆ Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in study circles and OHS activities; and
- ◆ Developing a database of external support systems and networks.



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#### The Newsletter for Public Sector Unions fighting AIDS in southern Africa (PSUFASA)

is produced at least quarterly. The project is funded by DfID during 2008—2011.

Contributions regarding HIV and the workplace are welcome and encouraged. Correspondence should be directed to the PSI Sub-regional office at the address provided. Acceptance and publication of material in this newsletter does not constitute endorsement by PSI or UNISON.

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**Circulate widely please!**

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