

Guinea: Improving the health of the local workforce and communities

The challenge

A country's workforce is the main driver of socio-economic development. Therefore its health and well-being are of great importance for the entire economy. However, they may be put at risk by individual, social and work-related factors and poor accessibility of health services. Occupational medicine plays a key role in improving this situation.

In Guinea, occupational medicine provides services that could be improved qualitatively. Workers and their families are not sufficiently protected from risks and diseases and few have health insurance. Non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular conditions are on the rise. Around six per cent of Guineans older than 45 suffer from diabetes. Transmissible diseases account for a high proportion of the morbidity rate, with 1.7 per cent of the population infected with HIV. Half of all patients who consult health centres suffer from malaria.

Guinean companies are obliged to have occupational safety and health policies in place, but due to institutional and financial constraints, these policies are rarely implemented in full.

Our partner

Société Nouvelle de Commerce (SONOCO) is a Guinean group of companies operating in the metal, food, construction and logistics industries, real estate, finance, transit, and import/export. The SONOCO Group was established in 2004 and has around 1,000 employees. Its principal market is Guinea, but it also exports its goods and services to neighbouring Sierra Leone, Liberia and The Gambia.

Promotion of Health and Well-Being for SONOCO's workers, their families and the surrounding communities

Objective:	Setting up a health and well-being programme for SONOCO's workforce and their families to improve their health and working conditions
Partner:	SONOCO Group Guinea
Duration :	2017 – 2020
GIZ programme:	PPP-Fund Mano River Union Countries

Strategy and activities

The project is strengthening the existing system and setting up an integrated health and well-being programme for SONOCO's workforce and its families to improve their health, the working conditions and finally the performance of the group. It also targets local communities close to the manufacturing sites to increase their health and safety literacy.

The project is implementing activities in three main areas:

1. Occupational safety and prevention of transmissible and non-communicable diseases

An employees' well-being programme is being established for SONOCO employees, contractors/service providers and their families. It offers them health checks and informs them about strategies to prevent HIV, tuberculosis and malaria and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

The programme aims to support the development of a company-specific health and safety policy.

2. Improving social protection for employees and their families

Medical insurance and a private mutual health insurance scheme will be established for employees and their families. Several awareness-raising events are promoting a savings culture, with a focus on salary-based pension schemes.



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3. Strengthening employees' capacities to implement the project efficiently

SONOCO employees are improving their skills in the areas of management and new technologies (mainly information technologies) to successfully implement the employees' well-being programme. A feedback culture is to be established, addressing the company's goals, the employees' individual performance related to these goals and their personal development.

The project will promote its approach and share its experience with other Guinean companies.

Outcomes

At target, 1,000 people, including SONOCO employees and their families have access to medical insurance and health services to prevent major diseases.

5,000 people, including SONOCO employees and contractors / service providers and their families, benefit from a health and safety programme on a long-term basis.

1,000 people have participated in health and safety literacy events in two communities with SONOCO sites and have spread the word to their families. The campaign has thus reached approximately 6,000 people.

Achieved so far:

- 22 peer educators have been trained on the prevention of non-communicable diseases, tuberculosis, malaria and HIV/AIDS.
- 691 SONOCO employees and non-permanent workers, 193 members of employees' families and 350 members of the surrounding communities have been sensitized for these diseases.

Contributions by GIZ

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH provides technical assistance and advice, particularly with regard to

- developing a system for safeguarding employees' occupational health and safety,
- developing prevention strategies for employees, contractors and their families,
- capacity development for the Group's management and for peer educators, to ensure continuity of the activities
- strategies to promote saving as a form of social protection for employees,
- supporting the establishment of a follow-up and evaluation system and a feedback culture.

Contributions by SONOCO

SONOCO builds its employees' capacities in management and the use of information technologies to facilitate continuity and follow-up activities after the project ends. The unit responsible for hygiene, health, safety and environment coordinates the development of a group-wide health and safety strategy.

Cooperation with other partners

Relevant national health programmes and agencies participate in a joint technical working group with SONOCO and GIZ on reducing transmissible and non-communicable diseases. Furthermore, they supervise awareness-raising activities.

- 611 people received a medical check-up and 256 people have benefitted of a health insurance.
- 207 employees have been trained on first aid.

Public Private Partnership (PPP) Fund for Mano River Union countries

This PPP Fund initiates development partnerships between German development cooperation and private sector actors in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The PPP Fund aims to reduce poverty by fostering decent employment, increasing incomes and improving working conditions for the local population. GIZ provides its development cooperation expertise, while businesses contribute technology, capital and technical know-how.

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