

RWANDA BUSINESS  
COALITION (APELAS)  
PROFILE

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## 1 Background

The HIV/AIDS business coalition in Rwanda, "Association du privé et para-étatique dans la lutte contre le VIH/SIDA" (APELAS), was created in 2001. The founding member was the FRSP (Rwandese Federation of the Private Sector). The president of APELAS is Dr Juru, Medical Director of the National Bank of Rwanda, one of the first institutions to introduce a HIV/AIDS workplace programme in the country (together with Bralirwa, the Heineken company).

## 2 Organization

### Employees & Structure

APELAS has six full-time employees; a coordinator, one accountant, one secretary, two counsellors and one cleaner.

APELAS would like to employ six additional staff: one for Monitoring and Evaluation and another for Social Mobilization. However, given that no funds are available for these positions, one to two additional employees seems more realistic for the next six to 12 months.

## 3 Membership Analysis

### Membership Profile

APELAS started its activities as a separate entity representing the companies but without an effective commitment of companies in terms of membership fees. There is no National Assembly and there are no membership procedures.

By now, around 22 parastatal companies, 14 employee federations and other private companies support the initiative and have HIV/AIDS focal points. Most of the members are large and medium enterprises and approximately 90% are national firms.

There are no membership fees: APELAS purely exists on international funding (mainly MAP<sup>1</sup>). It has never existed on a membership basis, and no companies in Rwanda donate or fund any activity of APELAS.

APELAS is considering charging membership fees, possibly starting in 2007. Fees will be low to start with and will probably be based on number of workers and the business sector, e.g. US\$ 6 per annum for a company with five employees.

A new chamber of commerce is being launched in September, and the coalition is in discussions to work through the chambers to collect membership fees. It expects businesses to react to this positively in principle, though it also expects challenges to get members to actually pay.

The coalition is aiming to make a final decision on this by September 2007.

### Membership Dynamics

APELAS does not keep track of its members, as it works as a separate entity. It is currently working on rebuilding itself by integrating companies. APELAS first targeted formal/structured large, small and medium companies (private or parastatal). Potential members are at least all members of the FRSP, i.e. around 330 companies in the country. There is no membership procedure yet. APELAS plans for 2006 to advertise and mobilize via the radio.

<sup>1</sup> The World Bank's Multi-country AIDS Programme.

## Membership Engagement

There is low membership engagement. The most important members are the Banque Nationale de Rwanda (BNR), Bralirwa (Heineken), NOVOTEL, ATRACO, and BK – these were the first companies to start HIV/AIDS activities in the country, and remain the most committed.

The most active members are mainly the parastatal companies such as Rwandex (coffee) – that are in general big institutions and partly funded by the government; or private companies such as Gasec (security company) and Intersec (security company) because their employees represent high-risk groups. These companies always attend APELAS activities and are more likely to come to the coalition for support, rather than the other way round.

## 4 Coalition Activities & Engaging Members

### Activities

2002 to 2005 main activities:

#### Each year:

- Mobilization activities for private and parastatal leaders
- Participation in the National Day against HIV/AIDS
- Advocacy to donors.

#### 2002-2003:

- HIV/AIDS campaigns during FRSP exhibitions and commercial fairs all over the country. Around 250 companies were reached through those fairs
- Study of the situation of HIV/AIDS and activities carried out in companies of Rwanda
- Elaboration of a private and parasitical sector HIV/AIDS policy.

#### 2004:

- Awareness and prevention activities: Sensitization campaigns and distribution of condoms in 78 companies and for 200 couples
- Prevention activities in companies: 29 500 condoms distributed
- Training of focal points in companies and counsellors for VCT<sup>2</sup>/PMTCT<sup>3</sup>
- VCT activities carried out in 17 companies (8,182 persons tested).

#### 2005:

- Sensitization activities in 30 companies (around 22,000 persons) and four FRSP international and national exhibitions. Some of the companies trained in 2004 also attended the training in 2005
- Prevention activities with distribution of 90,720 condoms
- Training of 52 PLWHA<sup>4</sup> on income-generating activities.
- VCT in nine private companies (around 10,500 persons tested) and during the international exhibition (1,243 persons tested).

APELAS provides technical assistance to its members for elaboration of HIV/AIDS action plans, and they provide training (of counsellors and focal points), VCT, and advocacy. There is no regularity in these activities. They are organized when funds are available. The most beneficial services that APELAS provides are training and VCT.

<sup>2</sup> Voluntary counselling and testing

<sup>3</sup> Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission

<sup>4</sup> People living with HIV/AIDS

## Disease Focus

APELAS does not yet see the focus of the coalition expanding to other diseases, but maybe this will be possible in the future. TB is the next most significant disease in the APELAS' environment because it is related to HIV/AIDS.

## 5 Coalition Partnerships

### Relationship Profile

APELAS works:

- In good and close relationship with several NGOs as forum of NGOs, faith-based organizations, Network of People living with HIV/AIDS (support for sensitization activities). They participate in planning activities. All are partnership relations (no formal collaboration agreement)
- With donors: MAP (the World Bank, the main donor, providing around 95%), CNLS/UNDP/ADB, GTZ (the German cooperation agency)
- With FRSP for the network of companies.

APELAS's main partners are CNLS-MAP. They have been the donors supporting APELAS.

APELAS supports activities of the association of workers living with HIV/AIDS for income-generating activities (training, advocacy). There are no other organizations that represent businesses with regard to HIV/AIDS in Rwanda.

### PABC

APELAS has no information about the Pan African Business Coalition.

## 6 Funding

Total budget for 2006 is US\$ 320K, but so far it has received only US\$ 186K for 2006 from MAP (after receiving US\$ 220K in 2005). The sum was reduced because the MAP funds were being dispersed too fast.

### Total gap is US\$ 140K

APELAS requires additional funding to pay for activities: notably to hire additional staff. It needs approximately six more staff members (approximately \$US 50K per annum). The staff needs are:

- National level coordinator, focusing on M&E
- Five people to run the new offices.

**\$90K total budget required for five more offices by end of 2007** (depending on funding). These will cost approximately US\$ 10K per office = US\$ 50K as a one-off investment plus US\$ 15K operating costs = US\$ 65K, US\$ 8K for motorbikes and US\$ 15K for a pickup van for main office.

No organizations have specifically been approached to fill this gap at the moment. APELAS planning to seek support from the Rwanda Private Sector Federation (Chambers of Commerce). The coalition is working on the assumption that MAP funding will be continued.

## 7 Success Stories

APELAS's greatest success stories since the inception of the coalition are:

- 2005: Organized a regional two-day conference on HIV/AIDS activities in companies. This included delegations of two to three people from Burundi, Uganda, DRC and Tanzania. The conference was used to share experiences of companies. Approximately 200-250 people attended the conference. APELAS invited 150 companies and 120 companies came (usually the CEO and HIV/AIDS focal points). This was supported and funded by the NAC.
- 2004: APELAS organized a successful sensitization session that resulted in a whole community being reached. APELAS first worked through a women's association producing passion fruit juice. These initial sessions were followed by a VCT session using a mobile VCT clinic, but many more people attended the VCT session than expected – an entire community arrived when the mobile clinic appeared. It turns out that the women reached through the initial sensitization visits had also sensitized their husbands and families, who then also came to the VCT session. People were not scared and in fact were waiting for APELAS to bring the activities to them.

## 8 The Future

### **APELAS's vision**

- Rebuilding APELAS: APELAS should be organized by its members, that is to say that membership procedures should be put in place and a general assembly organized. APELAS already works as the private sector umbrella (i.e. private sector coordinating body) of the CNLS. Over the next three years, APELAS expects to become a real coalition of companies against HIV/AIDS.

### **Challenges**

The challenges that APELAS is currently facing are 1) the current structure, 2) funding and 3) private sector support. The HR constraints are that it does not have enough staff.

APELAS needs technical expertise from the international community for:

- rebuilding the business coalition
- development of a strategic framework for this coalition.