



World Bank Global  
HIV/AIDS Program

# HIV/AIDS - *Getting Results*

These reports describe activities, challenges and lessons learned during the World Bank Group's HIV/AIDS work with countries and other partners.

## The Wellness Program of Serena Hotels, Kenya – A Case Study

*Martin Lutalo*

### Highlights

- Serena Hotels has implemented an AIDS workplace and community program in Kenya since 2002.
- In 2007, the AIDS program was transformed into a comprehensive Wellness Program.
- AIDS deaths among employees dropped from 35 over the five years before the program began in 2002, to 8 over the next five years.
- The premium paid for employee life insurance was reduced by 6 million Kenyan shillings (approximately US \$90,000) in 2006 due to reduced death claims.
- Lower absenteeism has boosted efficiency.
- HIV infections among staff have fallen.



*"In any business, productivity is very much based on a healthy workforce that is motivated. Anyone in the private sector that does not look at [Wellness Programs] as a good commercial investment is making a mistake.*

*They are losing out on an amazing opportunity. This is an approach that they could take to improve productivity and efficiency and for people to enjoy their job."* **Mahmud Jan Mohamed, Managing Director, Serena Hotels.**

### Wellness benefits employees and employers

Serena Hotels Group, the largest hotel chain in East Africa, and a client of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), exemplifies best-practice in its comprehensive Wellness Program for staff, a relatively new area of engagement by the private sector.

Businesses are increasingly recognizing that health and wellness affect their profitability through the costs of medical and other benefits, recruitment, training, lower productivity through absenteeism, labor turnover, and loss of experienced personnel. Morbidity from AIDS and other diseases can also affect consumer bases, savings, investments, and education. Businesses that fail to address the health and wellbeing of their staff increase risks to their reputation, viability, and finances.

Since 2002, Serena Hotels has been responding to HIV among its workforce and surrounding communities as part of its corporate social responsibility commitment. In 2007 Serena transformed its HIV/AIDS program into a broader Wellness Program covering a wide range of health and wellness issues affecting staff. With IFC

Against AIDS, the National Organization of Peer Educators (NOPE) and other partners, the company is implementing a robust Wellness Program for its 1,080 employees in Kenya, and reaching out to a population of 150,000 in the surrounding communities. Efforts are underway to extend the program to the 1,280 employees in Serena Hotels in Tanzania, Zanzibar, Uganda and Rwanda. The benefits of Serena's engagement in health issues have been seen in reduced absenteeism and increased productivity, less AIDS mortality, a much lower life insurance premium, increased staff morale, and an improved corporate image.

### The International Finance Corporation

IFC is a global investor and advisor committed to building a sustainable private sector in the developing world, thus helping to reduce poverty and improve people's lives. Recognizing that HIV is a business issue as well as a development and humanitarian concern, the IFC Against AIDS Program was launched in 2000 to accelerate IFC client companies' involvement in responding to HIV. The IFC Against AIDS mission is to protect people and profitability by being a risk management partner, source of HIV expertise, and catalyst for action where HIV/AIDS threatens sustainable development.

## The Serena Hotels Group

The Serena group of hotels and lodges, run by the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) through its holding company Tourism Promotion Services (TPS) Limited, is one of the largest international hotel chains in the booming tourism industry in East Africa. Serena owns and operates eight hotels and lodges in Kenya, five in Tanzania, and one in Uganda, Zanzibar and Rwanda, with a total of 2,360 employees. In Kenya the group employs 1,080 staff at the Nairobi Serena Hotel, Mombasa Serena Beach Hotel, and six other facilities located close to national parks or game reserves. Country managers for the hotels in Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania report to the Managing Director based in Nairobi, Kenya, and Human Resource Managers report on policy issues to the Group Human Resource Manager in Nairobi.

In Kenya, tourism is an important source of foreign exchange and employment, and one of the fastest growing commercial sectors. Tourism earnings in 2005 were 48.9 billion Kenyan shillings (approximately US\$730 million) surpassing all other revenue sources. It provides direct and indirect employment to as many as 360,000 people in Kenya<sup>1</sup> and thousands more in the greater East African region. Serena Hotels is the biggest hotel chain and employer in East Africa.

The Serena Group exemplifies the role the private sector can play in ensuring the health and wellness of employees and communities in their areas of operations. HIV was the entry point for Serena's engagement in staff health and wellness issues – with 1.3 million<sup>2</sup> HIV positive people, Kenya has a serious (although declining) epidemic.

## Serena's HIV/AIDS Program

### Program Rationale

A number of factors led to the launch of Serena's HIV/AIDS program in June 2002. Between 1998 and 2002, the Serena Hotels in Kenya alone lost 35 employees to AIDS. At the time, antiretroviral (ARV) treatment was not covered by the company's medical insurance policy. After paying out death benefits equivalent to five years of salary for each of the 35 deceased employees, Serena's insurance provider cancelled its medical policy with the company. The cost of doing nothing about HIV/AIDS was taking its toll. Meanwhile the risk of HIV infection among hotel staff, surrounding communities, and populations at risk in

<sup>1</sup> Kenya Ministry of Health  
[http://www.tourism.go.ke/ministry.nsf/pages/facts\\_figures](http://www.tourism.go.ke/ministry.nsf/pages/facts_figures)

<sup>2</sup> UNAIDS AIDS epidemic update, December 2006

Kenya continued to grow. National HIV prevalence in Kenya had risen to 14% of the adult population and the government had just set up the AIDS Control Council and launched a campaign to engage the private sector on HIV. Serena's management took on the challenge.

### HIV/AIDS Action Plan and Policy

With guidance from Family Health International (FHI), the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE), and later IFC Against AIDS, Serena developed a comprehensive HIV/AIDS workplace and community program with a defined strategy and objectives. The program objectives were and remain:

- a) To reduce vulnerability to HIV infection of all employees and their families;
- b) To lessen the adverse impact of HIV/AIDS on those affected;
- c) To empower individual employees and their families to respond to HIV/AIDS; and
- d) To eliminate stigma and discrimination against employees infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

With the help of tools and guidance from FHI and FKE, Serena developed a corporate HIV/AIDS policy which provided the framework for implementing the program. The group's human resource personnel were given responsibility for implementing the program in conjunction with company nurses acting as HIV/AIDS coordinators at the eight hotels and lodges in Kenya. The HIV/AIDS policy was circulated to all employees.

### Interventions

Serena's HIV/AIDS program comprises four sets of interventions:

**(a) Education and Prevention:** Serena has done a lot to facilitate HIV/AIDS awareness, education and prevention among its employees. A total of 120 employees have been trained as peer educators, now referred to as "wellness educators". They promote awareness, education and behavior change among fellow employees. HIV/AIDS videos and other literature are provided for use by peer educators and employees. To deal with problems of burn out, drop out and inter-unit transfers of peer educators, Serena undertakes frequent retraining and replacement, and provides incentives aimed at enhancing morale: additional time off and trips to attend AIDS seminars with accommodation, registration and transportation fees fully paid for by the company.

**(b) Care and Treatment:** Serena has an extensive care and treatment program for its employees. In 2002, Serena engaged Strategies, a Health Management Organization (HMO) to provide ARVs. The effect of medication on HIV positive staff was remarkable. Many staff who had been bedridden resumed work. "We started

seeing a reduction in the time they spent in bed and out of work. We saw totally different individuals,” says Catherine Waruhiu, the Group HR Manager.

Unfortunately three years later, the HMO, plagued by management and other problems, collapsed. Serena then entered into a partnership with Nazareth Hospital (a mission hospital) to provide ARVs at the low fee of 500 Kenyan shillings per month per employee (about US \$6.60). A year later the Kenyan Government started providing ARVs free of charge, after securing a grant from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. Today Nazareth Hospital provides ARVs to Serena employees with payment of a small registration fee of 100 Kenyan Shillings (roughly US\$1.50) per employee. Coptic Hospital, which is affiliated with the Coptic Church, also provides Serena employees with free ARVs.

As of June 2007, there were 51 HIV positive Serena employees and 6 dependents on ARVs. Through a partnership with PharmAccess Africa Limited, a non governmental organization, nurses at Serena have received training in the treatment and management of people living with HIV/AIDS. Serena employees in Mombasa have access to a comprehensive care clinic and receive medical advice, tests, ARVs and treatment for opportunistic infections free of charge from Bomu-Mkomani, an NGO funded by the US government.

**c) Voluntary HIV Counseling and Testing (VCT):**

Voluntary testing with pre- and post-test counseling is a core part of Serena’s AIDS program. For two days in March 2007, the Kenyan Ministry of Health offered VCT at one of the hotel lodges, Mara Serena. Of the 100 lodge staff, 55 people decided to be tested, of whom two tested HIV-positive. Another VCT session was held at Kilaguni Serena Safari Lodge.

**(d) Condoms:** Condoms supplied free of charge by Family Health Options Kenya (FHOK) are available to employees through the clinic and condom dispensers in all the facilities where staff shower and change into their work uniforms.

## Partnerships

Working with partners is a core principle of Serena’s HIV/AIDS program. In implementing the program, Serena has partnered with the NGOs FHI and NOPE to provide HIV/AIDS training for peer educators and nurses who run the company clinics, and with Nazareth Hospital to provide ARVs for Serena’s HIV-positive staff.

IFC Against AIDS has been a “structural level” partner since 2005. Key aspects of this partnership include:

- **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) training:** In 2005 IFC Against AIDS trained Serena Hotels in the

monitoring and evaluation of its HIV/AIDS program. IFC provided Serena with its detailed Practical Guide to the Monitoring and Evaluation of Corporate HIV/AIDS programs. Using M&E templates provided by IFC Against AIDS, Serena is able to capture and report M&E data on key program interventions monthly and quarterly.

- **Development of the peer education training program:** In conjunction with NOPE, IFC Against AIDS has developed a three day peer education training program curriculum for Serena. This training has been expanded to five days to cover wellness issues.
- **IFC Against AIDS Seed Funding:** In 2006 Serena became the first IFC client to receive funding through the IFC Against AIDS Seed Funding Program. This new performance-based grant program supports clients’ efforts to implement, monitor and evaluate HIV/AIDS activities. By mid-2007, half of the \$20,000 grant had been disbursed. According to the group HR manager, this grant is enabling the company to expand the program, and given it much more flexibility than it had without external funds. The seed funding covers 30 percent of the coordinator’s salary, travel costs and materials used for the program, among other expenses. Company contributions in the initial two years of the Wellness Program are also about \$20,000.
- **IFC Against AIDS Client Conference:** In 2006 IFC Against AIDS hosted a conference in Johannesburg, South Africa for clients based in Africa. The conference attracted 29 participants from 14 client companies in seven countries. The conference offered learning and networking opportunities for the clients. It followed the chronology of a typical HIV/AIDS workplace program with emphasis on building sound HIV/AIDS program foundations and an effective peer education program, understanding the various components of wellness, treatment and care interventions including voluntary counseling and testing, and finally recognizing the practical applications of monitoring and evaluation. The conference was the springboard for Serena’s Wellness Program.

## Serena’s Wellness Program

After attending the IFC Against AIDS Client Conference session on wellness interventions, members of Serena Kenya’s AIDS committee decided to expand their HIV/AIDS program and redefine it as a Wellness Program, encompassing other serious health and lifestyle issues that affect staff and surrounding communities.

Two months after the conference, Serena launched its Wellness Program. The program, initially set to run for two years, has four pillars: (i) active lifestyle; (ii) good nutrition; (iii) healthy lifestyle choices; and (iv) health promotion. (According to the Medical Wellness Center of the University of Miami, wellness is the dynamic process of becoming aware of, taking responsibility for, and making choices that directly contribute to one's well-being and that of the common good. These choices imply a "wellness lifestyle" of low risk, health enhancing behavior. In a workplace context, wellness promotion entails periodically assessing health risk factors and providing information, behavior change strategies and individual or group counseling to promote wellness lifestyles.)

### Wellness Program Goals and Objectives

**The overall program goal** of the Serena Hotels Group Wellness Program is to reduce the incidence of injuries, communicable and lifestyle-induced illnesses within the Serena fraternity and its immediate environs, by promoting behaviors that encourage adoption of a wellness lifestyle, and establishing procedures that uphold safety in the workplace, and protect employees and their families against the adverse impact of illnesses.

#### Program Objectives:

1. To increase awareness on matters of wellness among the staff and communities in Serena's areas of operation.
2. To encourage employees, their families and surrounding communities in Serena's areas of operations to adopt a wellness lifestyle leading to overall physical and psycho-social well-being.
3. To lessen the adverse impact of HIV/AIDS and other illnesses and empower employees and their families to safeguard their health and well-being when infected or affected by HIV.
4. To eliminate stigma and discrimination against employees infected and affected by HIV.
5. To reduce the incidence of accidents through the establishment of safety standards and procedures.
6. To reduce company financial burden due to medical costs and insurance claims.
7. To promote general employee "feel good" attitude, job satisfaction and loyalty.
8. To foster support and good-will among the surrounding communities in Serena's areas of operations.

### Wellness Program Structure

The Wellness Program is managed by the Group Human Resources Manager, Catherine Waruhiu, with the assistance of a dedicated Employee **Wellness Coordinator**, Vincent Odiara, and in collaboration with the Operations Department. The coordinator is responsible for ensuring that each unit has the relevant program in place and that staff are trained on wellness lifestyle issues.

Each hotel has a dedicated **wellness committee** with a chairperson and a secretary chosen by the members, who comprise wellness educators, staff who have been trained in first aid, and the occupational health and safety committee members. The wellness committee is responsible for the day to day running of the Wellness Program and meets once a month. Wellness committee members have been trained in first aid, fire drills, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases. The committee's roles are: (1) Create awareness about the environment in which staff live and minimize health risks; (2) Disseminate information about health and wellness issues among staff and the community; (3) Enforce workplace health and safety regulations; (4) Liaise with the community in identifying health risks.

**Hotel managers** are members of the wellness committees, and disseminate health and safety information to staff through the committee. They are also responsible for providing transport and other logistical support for the wellness educators, office space for educational sessions, and refreshments during community outreach visits.

The **clinic nurse** at each hotel coordinates and provides technical support for implementing the program at that hotel, and provides guidance to the wellness committee members. The nurses send a monthly report on the cases seen at the clinic, referrals, and disease trends, to the Wellness Coordinator.



*Caleb Obura, the nurse at Samburu Serena Safari Lodge treats a patient.*

Serena has trained 120 **wellness educators** including staff and community members. The staff educators organize monthly information sessions on different wellness topics for other staff at their unit. Serena has officially set aside one hour of paid company time per employee per month for wellness issues. Employees use that time to attend the wellness education sessions.

### **Wellness Program Activities**

**(a) Knowledge, Attitudes, Behavior and Practices Survey (KABP):**

To be able to analyze and define the health and wellness needs of the staff and surrounding communities, Serena contracted the National Organization of Peer Educators (NOPE) to survey the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and practices of staff in the context of health and wellness. NOPE used a survey questionnaire supplied by IFC Against AIDS. The findings inform the messages and programming around health and wellness issues.

**(b) Wellness Policy and Procedure Manual:**

Serena has developed a Wellness Policy that brings together sub-policies on: sexual harassment and what staff can do in the event of sexual harassment; drug abuse; and a health and safety policy and procedure manual. The following areas are covered by the Wellness Policy: HIV/AIDS; sexually transmitted infections; communicable diseases (malaria, TB, typhoid etc.); lifestyle induced illnesses (diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, peptic ulcers); sexual harassment; alcohol and drug abuse; workplace violence; occupational health and safety; financial management; stress Management; and nutrition.

**(c) Health and Safety Audit:** Serena hired a consultant to undertake a health and safety audit, which was completed in three months. It has informed the Wellness Policy and enabled Serena to determine the health risks at every unit such as susceptibility to fires, drinking water quality, and causes of workplace accidents and injuries.

**(d) Development of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Materials:**

Since the start of the Wellness Program, Serena has been developing IEC materials on the health and wellness issues affecting its staff, with still more in production. The materials are used in the monthly wellness education sessions or handed out to staff. There is also an employee wellness hand-book which is part of the induction package for new employees. The company has set up a wellness library where books, journals and other educational materials are kept and made available to staff through the wellness coordinators at each unit.

**(e) Sensitization and training workshops for top management and wellness educators:**

In partnership

with NOPE, Serena has organized workshops for its top management on wellness issues and trained 120 wellness educators. Training for the wellness educators lasts five days, with the first three days devoted to HIV/AIDS issues.

**(f) Peer Education on Health, Safety and Wellness:**

One of the tasks of the wellness program coordinator is to ensure that the program identifies a theme topic each month for the wellness educators' monthly health and wellness education sessions for staff. The coordinator also invites experts on different topics such as health and safety issues in the workplace, diet and nutrition, or substance abuse. A key responsibility of the wellness educators at each unit is to encourage staff to watch their diet and exercise regularly. The company organizes sports activities at the various units.

**(g) Supply of protective devices:** Serena ensures a regular supply of protective gear and supplies for its staff. These include condoms, gloves and special clothing for staff who work in the laundry and house keeping departments.

**(h) Community Engagement:** Serena has a strong set of community outreach efforts that are part of its wellness and corporate social responsibility programs. Activities include provision of subsidized medical services at the company's clinics, training community wellness educators, distribution of free condoms, and provision of free insecticide-treated mosquito bed nets.



*Serena Hotels wellness educators explain to the local communities at Samburu Serena Safari Lodge how to treat a mosquito bed net.*

- In March 2007, Serena donated 400 bed nets to the communities around Samburu Lodge, in northern Kenya. Wellness educators explained and showed community members how to maintain the efficacy of

the bed nets by retreating them every 6 months with insecticide, and provided each user with one tablet of insecticide.

- Community members who access clinical services at the Serena clinics receive free consultations and only pay for drugs.
- Nurses at the clinics conduct information sessions and show videos on HIV/AIDS and malaria at local churches and schools.
- Wellness educators at the various units conduct information sessions in communities twice a week depending on the particular needs of the community. The educators also go out to churches and local homesteads known as manyattas in some parts of Kenya. The company provides transport for these exercises.

**(i) Guest Wellness Outreach Program:** Serena has also extended its Wellness Program to benefit guests. The spa facilities at the Mombasa Serena Beach Hotel have information available for guests on wellness issues. In addition, the company has contracted nutritionists to train staff, including cooks and waiters, on eating habits, weight management and exercise. Guests benefit from having their meals and other services provided by staff knowledgeable about wellness issues, and who can share what they know.

## Key Results

Serena and its workforce have realized significant results from their engagement in health and wellness issues. These include:

**(a) Reduced mortality:** There has been a dramatic drop in AIDS deaths since the program began. During the five years before the program, from 1998 to 2002, 35 employees died of AIDS - seven people per year, compared with eight deaths in the five years from June 2002 to June 2007— one to two employees per year.

**(b) Reduction in life insurance premium:** In January 2006, while renewing its insurance coverage with Jubilee Insurance Company, Serena was pleasantly surprised to learn that its premium payment had been reduced by 6 million Kenyan shillings (approximately US\$90,000). The insurance provider attributed the discount to the reduction in death claims.

**(c) Reduced absenteeism and increased efficiency:** Serena has realized a boost in efficiency due to reduced absenteeism and increased staff commitment to the company. Prior to implementation of the HIV/AIDS program, Serena experienced a high rate

of absenteeism, but no sick days have been reported among the HIV-positive employees on ARVs, confirming that their productivity has been maintained and that people can live and work normally with HIV for many years.

**(d) More knowledgeable and health conscious workforce:** Employees have acquired knowledge on wellness issues which has boosted their confidence. One visible area of change is physical exercise, with more staff walking to the office and back as a form of exercise rather than using public or personal transportation. There has also been an increase in awareness of and confidence around HIV/AIDS issues among staff. “Unlike previously, now staff talk to each other freely about HIV/AIDS at meals and at the canteen,” says Jared Odhiambo, chairman of the wellness committee at Samburu Serena Safari Lodge.

**(e) Fewer new HIV infections:** According to the Group Human Resources Manager, Catherine Waruhii, there have been very few new HIV infections among people who have been with the company for some time. This, with very few infections among new staff joining the company, has kept prevalence in the company stable. Serena does not carry out pre-employment screening for HIV.

**(f) Improved company image:** The Managing Director, Mahmud Jan Mohamed says that the company image has improved as a result of its engagement on health issues. The media has taken an interest in the program and published articles about the company’s program attracting interest from other companies and organizations across Kenya and beyond. For example, Industrial Promotion Services (IPS), a group holding of 10 companies with over 5,000 employees (also under the AKDN network), has invited Serena Hotels to give a presentation on its Wellness Program to the IPS top management. Additionally, Serena has shared information on its wellness program at business meetings organized by NOPE, at meetings of the AKDN institutions, and with the Kenya HIV Business Council.

**(g) Healthier HIV positive employees:** According to the group HR manager, the company realized a dramatic change in the health of its HIV positive employees after introducing ARV treatment.

**(h) Staff Morale:** The wellness program has brought a new enthusiasm amongst the wellness educators who now have many more topics to speak to staff about. “Many staff ask us about malaria, its symptoms, how it is transmitted and how to prevent it,” says Nathifo Abdi, a wellness educator at Samburu Serena Safari Lodge. “We are able to answer their questions because we have been trained.” Feedback from the guests shows that the staff at Serena is consistently very friendly.



*A wellness educator addresses community members in Samburu as his colleagues (in red shirts) look on in the background. Serena staff trained as wellness educators organize regular information sessions for the local communities around their areas of operations.*

## Challenges

The challenges in implementing Serena's Wellness Program include:

- **Documenting and monitoring progress:** According to the group HR Manager, one of the biggest challenges facing the company is documenting what it is doing and tracking progress. This challenge is slowly diminishing, thanks to the monitoring and evaluation tools that IFC Against AIDS has introduced and shared with Serena. These facilitate weekly and monthly tracking of selected indicators.
- **Scaling up:** The other challenge facing the company is replicating the program in its sister operations in Uganda, Tanzania, Zanzibar and Rwanda. Serena is thinking of ways to enable its Wellness Program coordinator to extend the program and consistently reach out to the rest of the group.
- **Lack of IEC materials:** The dearth of IEC materials on wellness issues in Kenya has slowed progress in setting up the wellness library. IEC materials especially on lifestyle induced diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and heart diseases are rare. Frustrated by almost fruitless efforts to secure IEC materials from public sources and NGOs, the company has resorted to developing its own.

- **Creating a suitable environment for a wellness lifestyle:** Creating an environment that ensures that staff exercise regularly, such as providing a gym with sports and exercise equipment, soccer fields or other facilities for outdoor games is a challenge, particularly for lodges without spare land available.

## Lessons Learned

- **Programs to improve employee wellness as well as address specific diseases are strongly justified** by the costs and benefits to the company: Serena's experience shows that diseases such as diabetes, AIDS, hypertension, peptic ulcers, obesity and other lifestyle induced conditions constitute a significant part of workers' disease burden. Table 1 below shows that in the first quarter of 2007 in 6 of its 8 units, HIV was just under 1% of the company's medical costs whereas lifestyle induced conditions and respiratory infections accounted for 40% and 27% respectively. Malaria also ranked high at about 20% of the cost. However, anti-retrovirals are provided free of charge by the government, and some cases of TB, other respiratory infections and other illnesses may be linked to HIV infection. While AIDS provided a good "entry point", Serena's experience attests the epidemic is just one of many health and wellness issues that affect the productivity of employees. "Rich country" maladies<sup>3</sup> like heart disease, cancer and diabetes –chronic conditions often resulting from smoking, diet and inactivity – are the fastest growing killers in poor and middle-income countries, and already a substantial part of the burden of disease and health care costs.
- **Prevention is more cost effective:** Adopting a preventive rather than a solely curative approach to health and wellness issues in the workplace is important. Waiting to act after the health of staff has deteriorated eventually costs a company much more than acting early to prevent staff from contracting diseases in the first place. Moreover, treatments for certain conditions like diabetes, hypertension and AIDS do not lead to a cure, are often life-long, and can be very expensive.
- **Public-private partnerships are important** in implementation and sustainability of a corporate HIV/AIDS program: Few companies can single handedly manage a health program without the support of partners to help deliver various interventions. While the Serena Hotels Group is one of the leading companies addressing HIV within its Wellness Program, the cost of treatment and care for

<sup>3</sup> "The poor world is getting the rich world's diseases." The Economist August 9, 2007.

HIV-infected employees is significantly reduced by government subsidies that are made available through the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other partners. The engagement of Serena and other private sector companies can help expand access to the benefits of public sector and external support for the response to HIV.

- **Support from senior management is key to success:** Commitment and support of the top management of a company are key to the success of any workplace health promotion program. Serena's own experience demonstrates that the goodwill of the chief executive officer (CEO) is essential for the sustainability of the program. Once the mid-level managers see the interest and commitment of the CEO to the program, then they are more likely to cooperate in making the program functional. Also, support from senior management has to be demonstrated by the provision of a dedicated budget for the program. This facilitates the hiring of a dedicated coordinator to manage the day to day tasks in the implementation of the program which goes a long way in ensuring success in a much shorter time.
- **Knowledge of health and wellness issues unlocks the potential of staff:** Serena's Wellness Program has demonstrated that knowledge about wellness issues has resulted in increased health-promoting behavior among the staff. Also, involving staff in program implementation, and making them feel valued by encouraging them to share ideas on what they have learned and generate ideas for the program, breeds goodwill, interest, and a sense of ownership.
- **Leveraging the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) mandate helps:** Creating linkages with and aligning the company's CSR activities with those of the wellness program creates synergies and greater impact in the company's community outreach efforts. For example, the company refurbished boreholes in the communities surrounding Amboseli Serena Safari Lodge as a CSR initiative in response to an increase in waterborne diseases in the area reported by the wellness committee. Similarly, to combat malaria in the community around Samburu Serena Safari Lodge, the company donated 400 free treated mosquito bed nets as part of its CSR activities.

## Next Steps

To deepen and broaden its Wellness Program, Serena plans a number of activities. These include:

- Scaling up the Wellness Program in Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zanzibar.
- Maintaining a comprehensive wellness resource library for use by staff.
- Ensuring continuing training and retraining of wellness educators.
- Stepping up outreach to the communities in the areas surrounding its operations.
- Ensuring that program activities are informed by the data collected through monthly M&E reports; for example, planning interventions based on disease trends.

## Conclusion

Serena Hotels' experience shows that implementing a Wellness Program in its workplace and surrounding communities benefits a private company through increased productivity and reduced absenteeism, reduced AIDS mortality, savings in medical costs, increased staff morale and health seeking behavior, and an improved corporate image. IFC has observed that while addressing HIV/AIDS as the entry point for a company's engagement on health issues makes perfect sense, especially in highly affected regions, introducing a Wellness Program after a few years helps give new energy to the program, and sustain engagement, and broadens its benefits. Serena's engagement on wellness issues is a best-practice in this relatively new area for the private sector.



Staff at Samburu

**TABLE 1: Illnesses treated in 6 of the 8 Serena Hotels in Kenya, first quarter of 2007.**

<b>ILLNESSES – 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2007</b>	<b>Total cases Seen</b>	<b>Estimated treatment cost/case (KShs)</b>	<b>Cost in 1<sup>st</sup> quarter (KShs)</b>	<b>Cost in US\$</b>	<b>Percent of total cost</b>
Lifestyle Induced Conditions	351	2500	877,500	13,097	40.3
Respiratory Infections	1290	450	580,500	8,664	26.7
Malaria	898	500	449,000	6,702	20.6
Trauma/injury, muscle & skeletal disorders	638	200	127,600	1,905	5.9
Skin conditions	328	150	49,200	734	2.3
Diarrhea diseases	332	100	33,200	495.52	1.5
ENT conditions	333	100	33,300	497	1.5
Gynaecological/ STIs	106	100	10,600	158	0.5
HIV/AIDS	155	(ARVs only) 100	15,500	231	0.7
<b>Overall total</b>			<b>2,176,400</b>	<b>32,485</b>	<b>100</b>

**GLOSSARY:**

**Lifestyle Induced Conditions:** Diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, peptic ulcers, obesity.

**ENT:** Ear Nose and Throat

**STIs:** Sexually Transmitted Infections.

**ARVs:** Antiretrovirals

**KShs:** Kenya Shillings (Official exchange rate to the US dollar 67KShs to \$1 as of July 2007)

**Total cases seen:** Number of patient visits at the company clinics and not necessarily the number of people.

## Acknowledgements

This Case Study would not have been possible without the support of the following people at Serena Hotels: Mahmud Jan Mohamed, Managing Director; Catherine Waruhiu, Group Human Resources Manager; and Vincent Odiara, Employee Wellness Coordinator. Our thanks also go to the following staff at Samburu Serena Safari Lodge: Assistant Managers Franklin Nyakundi and Mohammed Shariff; Nurse Caleb Obura; wellness educator Nathifo Abdi; resident naturalist William Wahome; wellness committee chairman Jared Odhiambo; and community members David Lemantile and John Dony Lingiro.

Site visits to the company's operations were made from June 15<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> 2007 during the preparation of this Case Study.

## About the author:

Martin Lutalo is an Operations Analyst in the *IFC Against AIDS* unit in the SME department of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), part of the World Bank Group.

## For further details visit:

[www.ifc.org/ifcagainstaids](http://www.ifc.org/ifcagainstaids)

or

E-mail: [ifcagainstaids@ifc.org](mailto:ifcagainstaids@ifc.org)/ Fax 1.202.522.3762

or [admin@serena.co.ke](mailto:admin@serena.co.ke)

## "HIV/AIDS - Getting Results" series editor:

Joy de Beyer, Global HIV/AIDS Program,  
[jdebeyer@worldbank.org](mailto:jdebeyer@worldbank.org)

## IFC Contacts

### Martin Lutalo

Washington DC, USA

Tel: +1.202.458.1406

E-mail: [mlutalo@ifc.org](mailto:mlutalo@ifc.org)

### Noleen Dube

Johannesburg, South Africa

Tel: +27.11.731.3059

E-mail: [ndube@ifc.org](mailto:ndube@ifc.org)

### Gillette Conner

Washington DC, USA

Tel: +1.202.473.4040

E-mail: [gconner@ifc.org](mailto:gconner@ifc.org)

Please visit [www.worldbank.org/aids](http://www.worldbank.org/aids) to read about other topics in the "*HIV/AIDS - Getting Results*" series