



Geneva Social Observatory Activity Report

Third Quarter
September 2009

Mission

The Geneva Social Observatory (GSO) was established in Geneva, Switzerland in 2004 as a non-profit association. The aim of the GSO is to provide a neutral setting for dialogue on pressing social issues, such as HIV/AIDS and social responsibility, diabetes and social responsibility, and corporate social responsibility and trade. In order to have substantive discussions on these issues, the GSO believes that multiple points of view should be consulted, which is why representatives from the private sector, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, academia, governments and international intergovernmental organizations are invited to take part in the GSO meetings and events.

Activity Report

This activity report is developed on a quarterly basis for the Friends of the GSO, who support the Observatory through donations, sponsorship of specific projects, in-kind support, and/or participation in GSO events.

Dear Friends of the GSO,

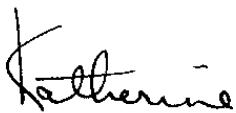
The main event this quarter has been the meeting to adapt and implement the Workplace Strategy on Diabetes and Wellness in Moscow on 15 September. It was organized together with the Russian Academy of Medical Science Research Institute of Occupational Health (the RAMS Institute), the director of which is Dr. Nicolai Izmerov an impressive person who at 82 years of age is still learning new languages. We benefited from his long experience and networks and from the expertise of his team and were rewarded with a stimulating and productive meeting that brought together participants from across the country.

It has been fascinating to see how the Workplace Strategy has been received and handled in the different countries that we have been to so far, Poland, Turkey and now Russia. In Turkey we had a press conference to tell local media about what we are trying to achieve through the project. In Moscow participants decided that the way forward was to make a declaration which would then be delivered to government ministries. Our thanks to Merck/MSD for an unrestricted grant in 2009 and to the EU and the ILO for making these outreach activities possible.

The GSO Management Committee met for its quarterly meeting on 17 September 2009. Fresh impressions were shared about the Moscow meeting and the next steps for the diabetes project along with ideas for developing new areas of work as we move towards 2010. The Committee is currently researching initiatives that have been undertaken around mental health and the workplace and on the complex issue of counterfeiting. We have continued to benefit from the excellent contributions of our volunteer interns – Joshua Haun from this summer and both Alison Curtis, starting in September and Deenah Shutzer, starting in October.

We will keep you posted on new developments. In the meantime we encourage you to continue to support the GSO as we build our current projects and initiate new and more initiatives in coming years. For more information on how to contribute, please visit the “Support GSO” page on our website at www.gsgogeneva.ch or write to me at contact@gsogeneva.ch.

Thank you,



Katherine Hagen
Executive Director, Geneva Social Observatory

Diabetes and Social Responsibility

The Moscow Declaration

The main outcome of the meeting on adapting the GSO Workplace Strategy on Diabetes and Wellness to Russian workplaces in Moscow on 15 September was a one-page declaration on diabetes and wellness at work from the participants. The full text can be found on the projects pages of the GSO website at www.gsogeneva.ch, however it is worth quoting the final paragraphs here as they sum up the principal findings of the meeting.

Participants declared that:

1. Increasing the availability of occupational health services is essential.
2. Establishing enterprise-level policy is essential towards the prevention, detection, monitoring and evaluation of diabetes as a work-related disease and the accommodation of those afflicted with the disease.
3. The establishment of wellness programmes including physical fitness, adequate nutrition, smoking cessation, and addressing the abuse of alcohol and drug consumption should be addressed by all workplaces.
4. Efforts should be made and action should be taken to establish baseline data on the incidence of diabetes among workers and include the voluntary testing of workers during regular physical examinations.
5. Occupational health services, through the employer and in consultation with workers, should
 - Engage in efforts to educate all workers about the dangers of diabetes and how it can be prevented.
 - Encourage all workers to reduce alcohol consumption, engage in physical activities and eat properly.
 - Ensure that the workers that are diabetic are treated with respect and dignity and are properly accommodated should they become unable to carry out their normal functions.
 - Provide support for those who need to treat themselves at the workplace.

We have heard that the declaration is due to be published by the RAMS Institute in its journal *Occupational Health and Industrial Ecology*, and that it will be included in papers for their forthcoming VIII Occupation and Health Congress.

Participants at the Moscow meeting included health professionals, employers' and workers' representatives, experts from health and labour institutes, policy-makers and administrators. At the meeting they enjoyed presentations made by the Director of the RAMS Institute, Professor Nicolai Izmerov, by Professor Valentina Alexandrovna Peterkova from the Institute of Diabetes in Russia, Professor Liudmila Pavlovna Kuzmina and Dr. Maria Nikolaevna Mokinda from the RAMS Institute, and Dr. Irina Nikolaevna Piletushanskaya from the Rostov Region Medical Center of Rehabilitation. Dr. David Gold joined me in presenting an overview of the international situation regarding diabetes and wellness initiatives and staging the "World Café" exercise.

Group discussions based on the World Café concept took place in the afternoon around how to adapt and implement the Workplace Strategy in Russia. Findings were fed back to the plenary session which concluded with suggestions from the RAMS Institute and from the GSO on how to move forward.

The final report of the meeting and recommendations from the afternoon discussions have been posted on the GSO website in both English and Russian.

More information about GSO projects can be found on the GSO website, www.gsogeneva.ch. To participate, or to contribute either financially and/or in-kind, please write to contact@gsogeneva.ch or call the GSO secretariat at +41 22 734 9601.



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