



**Cross-cutting
program for
HIV & AIDS
Education**



**HIV & AIDS and
Quality Education
for All Youth**

SUMMARY

Preparatory Seminar
47th International Conference on Education
Geneva, 7th September 2004



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Switzerland



HIV & AIDS and Quality Education for All Youth

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We are finally particularly grateful to Peter Piot (Executive Director of UNAIDS) who agreed to open the seminar. His participation in the seminar emphasized how crucial education is in preventing HIV. We also thank the Ministers of Education and their representatives who by their participation showed their commitment to HIV and AIDS prevention.

The IBE team

ACRONYMS

ABC Abstinence, Be Faithful (or, in certain countries: Behavioural change), Condom use
ARVs Antiretroviral drugs
CBO Community Based Organization
CCO Committee of Cosponsoring Organisations
CILS Internal Committee for fighting against AIDS
CIS Commonwealth of Independent States
COSSEL Council of Senegalese unions and teaching for the fight against AIDS
DFID Department for International Development
ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States
EDC Education Development Centre
EFA Education for All
EI Education International
ETR Education Training and Research Associates
FBO Faith Based Organization
FLE Family Life Education
FTI Fast Track Initiative
GEEP Group for the study and teaching of the population
GFATM Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
HDI Human Development Index
IBE International Bureau of Education
ICE International Conference of Education
IIEP International Institute for Educational Planning
ILO International Labour Organization
MAP Multi-Country HIV & AIDS Program for Africa
NGO Non Governmental Organization
NCCA National Committee for the Control of AIDS
OVCs Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PCB Program Coordinating Board
PIASCY Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communication to the Youth
PTA Parent and Teacher Association
RH Reproductive Health
STD Sexually transmitted diseases
STI Sexually transmitted infections
UNAIDS Joint United Nations Program on HIV & AIDS
UNDAF United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP United Nations Development Program
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO/PEQ UNESCO/Promotion of Quality Education
UNFPA United Nations Population Fund
UNGASS United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV & AIDS
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund
UPE Universal Primary Education
VCT Voluntary Counselling and Testing
WFP World Food Program
WHO World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“A teacher can save more lives than a doctor”; a quote from Mr. Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS, at the opening of this high level seminar on HIV & AIDS and education. This short sentence sums up the vital importance of the education sector in the fight against HIV & AIDS.

This preparatory seminar, held on the eve of the 47th session of the International Conference on Education (ICE) brought together some 10 Ministers of Education and over 70 ministerial delegates, coming from around the world to participate in the ICE.

This event was organized by the International Bureau of Education (IBE/UNESCO) in collaboration with UNAIDS co-sponsors and with the support of the Interagency Task Team on HIV & AIDS Education. Its objectives were:

- To discuss the essential issues concerning the roles and responsibilities of the education sector in the fight against HIV and AIDS.
- To identify the priority measures required to ensure an effective response from the education sector.
- To prepare and transmit key messages to the ICE delegates so that HIV & AIDS issues were integrated into the discussions, and ultimately, into the results of the 47th ICE.

The following themes, in line with those of the 47th ICE, were taken up for this seminar:

1. How can girls be given full access to quality education and be better prepared to protect themselves as well as be given full access to education against HIV & AIDS? (prepared with UNAIDS Secretariat and UNICEF)
2. How can all orphans and vulnerable children and young people be assured of quality education, and how can their exclusion from the education system be prevented? (prepared with DFID and UNICEF)
3. How can the prevention of HIV & AIDS be fully integrated into school programs, particularly in addressing gender issues and life skills by using interactive methods of teaching? (Prepared with UNICEF and UNESCO/PEQ)
4. How can teachers be better prepared and supported? (Prepared with WHO and EI)
5. And finally, how can national and international partners be further encouraged to support the education sector to effectively respond to HIV and AIDS? (Prepared with DFID and the World Bank).

The contributions of the different ministers and delegates during the three plenary sessions and five working groups were encouraging. The education sectors in a number of countries have already put in place not only the conditions for an effective sectoral response, including taking crucial and concrete measures to deal effectively with the serious and urgent issues that HIV and AIDS represents for the quality of education.

It is now a question of expanding the responses and enforcing them so that all children, young people, teachers and education employees have access to quality prevention, care and treatment programs. These different target groups should all be enabled to protect themselves and access all necessary services, and to contribute to the prevention and mitigation of the impact of HIV and AIDS, including fighting against HIV and AIDS related stigmatisation and discrimination, both in their private and professional life.

“An extraordinary situation requires an extraordinary response”, another statement made by one of the Ministers present at this seminar, implies the strengthening and organizing of partnerships at international, regional and national levels. An extraordinary mobilization of supplementary resources and a better channelling and management of funds are definite priorities to allow the education sector to fulfil its role and responsibilities.

Another issue raised during several sessions was: education per se has a protective effect. Children and youth that are often excluded, such as girls, orphans and other vulnerable children must have access to quality education, in order to reduce their vulnerability to HIV and AIDS and the impact thereof, particularly poverty. Programs to improve girls' education are especially important and urgent.

The education sector needs to put into practice lessons learnt in other areas of education in order to improve the teaching of life skills in HIV & AIDS education. Life skills are essential to fight vulnerability, diminish the transmission of HIV and combat stigma and discrimination. Lessons learnt in other sectors – in the public health sector for example – in the area of access to resources by groups that are hard to reach, need to be applied to the education sector. Existing resources in communities, youth themselves and other experienced community members should be mobilized and greater trust ought to be placed in their contribution to HIV & AIDS prevention education.

It is important to understand and take account of social and cultural dimensions of HIV and AIDS as some socio-cultural practices have a negative impact on HIV transmission and impact. It is however important not to reject traditions and practices altogether, but rather to promote those that are useful in HIV prevention and to support the modification of those that currently have a negative impact so that they may also contribute positively to the fight against HIV and AIDS.

Many of the issues discussed in Geneva are not new. However, the seminar provided the opportunity to openly share experiences and perspectives for feasible solutions. The feeling at the end of the day was that although much still has to be done, success was possible. Testimonies from several ministers and their delegates were encouraging and show that prevention education is possible and can be successful. Witnessing first hand that colleagues and experts from all over the world are aware of the necessity to act with courage, are committed and have already taken effective measures, was uplifting and provided the necessary hope, energy and commitment to continue the fight and to improve what already exists.

In addition, the seminar offered participants the opportunity to jointly study linkages between HIV and AIDS education and the quality of education in general. HIV and AIDS represent a very serious threat to education systems and to quality education for all, yet the pandemic can also be seen as an 'incentive' and opportunity to take measures to strengthen the quality of sector as a whole.

Programs and other measures that need to be taken by the education sector to fight HIV & AIDS effectively will also contribute to the realization of the objectives set by the EFA movement: provide better access to education for girls and make education more adapted to their specific needs; provide better access to education to all other groups of children and youth excluded from education; adapt curricula and teaching methods so that they are more relevant to the reality of learners and more effective, in particular by integrating competencies for life; and improve teacher education so that teachers are able to address new curricular and pedagogical approaches.

A summary of priorities and recommendations discussed during the seminar was prepared and distributed to the delegates to the 47th ICE during the sessions of the Conference itself, so that those who did not participate in the seminar could learn about and integrate issues related to HIV & AIDS and quality education for all youth in their comments and during the debates that took place at the 47th ICE.

KEY MESSAGES TO THE 47th ICE

(These messages were made available to the delegates during the sessions of the Conference itself)

Theme 1: Access to education for girls, gender issues and HIV & AIDS

Ensuring universal education for girls

1. Place efforts to promote girls' education within the wider context of overall national development strategies and integrated approaches to poverty reduction. Ensure that primary education is free.
2. Provide scholarships and stipends to help boost girls' participation at secondary and tertiary levels.
3. Institute school feeding programs in areas of food insecurity.
4. Encourage mothers' clubs, PTAs, and other forms of community participation to support girls' education.
5. Encourage mothers' clubs, PTAs, and other forms of community participation to support girls' education.

Ensuring a safe environment for girls

6. Invest in gender-sensitive school infrastructure.
7. Ensure that schools are safe, secure, and congenial environments for both boys and girls.

Identifying curriculum needs and improving teaching

8. Address gender issues, in particular, focus attention on the learning needs of both girls and boys as well as on the interactions between them.
9. Support teachers in providing high quality education.
10. Increase the number of female teachers.

Theme 2: Access to education for orphans and vulnerable children and youth (OVCs)

Fight discrimination and stigmatisation

1. Integrate questions related to HIV and AIDS in curricula.
2. Launch open discussions on discrimination with all relevant stakeholders and actors, including civil society, in order to mobilise, sensitise and increase commitment.
3. Set up a reference framework to allow verification of program implementation in classrooms.

Respond to specific educational needs of OVCs

4. Recognise and pay attention to specific needs of OVCs in school settings.
5. Integrate people living with HIV & AIDS in the education system by working with existing or creating associations or groups of people living with HIV & AIDS.
6. Recruit more teaching staff and train them to take care of and take responsibility for OVCs in schools settings.
7. Encourage free and universal education.

Address other obstacles to education of OVCs

8. Increase support to local and community organizations so that they can take better care for OVCs.
9. Develop a multi-sectoral approach for a better response to the needs of OVCs.
10. Increase the commitment of the whole education community.

Theme 3: HIV & AIDS and life skills education

Underscore again the importance of Life Skills Education and strengthen the implementation of programs

1. Seriously consider what makes a curriculum effective.
2. Seriously take into account specific needs of youth and urgently respond openly to their crucial needs for information on prevention methods and sexuality.
3. Bring the right / new resources to deliver life skills education.
4. Train teachers.

Better integrate Life Skills education in the school environment

5. Make sure that schools address the complexity of real life and the existence of contradictory messages.
6. Take culture into account, as well as the reality that the family structure has recently changed and has become, in urban settings, much smaller and more like a nuclear unit.
7. Increase involvement and participation of young people in all phases of life skills program, and better take their needs into account.
8. Balance of in-school and out-of-school programs.

Evaluate learning outcomes of life skills education

9. Develop evaluation tools that are relevant for the topics taught and the type of knowledge, attitudes and skills expected.
10. Develop standards to evaluate programs in schools to see how effective they are.

Theme 4: Teachers' roles, workplace policies and HIV & AIDS education

Train teachers and improve working conditions and support to teachers

1. Better prepare teachers to talk about sexuality.
2. Provide basic knowledge on HIV and AIDS for teachers and more importantly, make sure that they acquire the skills to protect themselves against the disease, and teach their pupils/students relevant skills.
3. Help teachers and provide guidance on how to deal with overcrowded classrooms and the difficulties that these may present to effective teaching on HIV and AIDS.

Support teachers and create a context favourable to HIV & AIDS prevention education

4. Put in place a clear, committed and progressive Government policy to address HIV & AIDS in the education sector.
5. Restore the image of and the respect for teachers in society.
6. Develop (or work on developing!) an environment that is open to HIV & AIDS prevention education.

Theme 5: Partnerships and financing for HIV & AIDS education

Improve mobilisation, allocation, channelling and implementation of funds and financial resources

1. Improve mobilisation and channelling of funds.
2. Increase the education sector's commitment in terms of resource allocation to better enforce policies, guidelines, sector plans and guidelines.
3. Set up control mechanisms to evaluate the quality of the response, in terms of coverage and quality of programs.
4. Establish full time HIV & AIDS focal points in Ministries and at local levels.

Improve partnerships and cooperation at international, regional and national levels

5. Set-up of mechanisms to manage partnerships and cooperation at various (two??) levels.
6. Develop standards for cooperation.
7. Promote cost effective regional cooperation.
8. Promote and strengthen partnerships with local NGOs and CBOs, for implementation of programs that are responsive to local needs and contribute to improved coverage, including in remote parts of a country.
9. Develop partnerships between the Ministries of Education and Health.

CONCLUSION

The contributions of the Ministers and delegates during the three plenary sessions and five working groups were encouraging. The education sector in a number of countries have already put in place not only the conditions for an effective sectoral response, but also some crucial steps towards the realization of necessary measures for dealing with the urgent and serious issues that HIV & AIDS presents for education.

It is now a question of expanding the responses and enforcing them so that all children, young people, teachers and education employees have access to quality prevention, care and treatment programs. These different target groups should be enabled to protect themselves and access all necessary services, and to contribute to the prevention and mitigation of the impact of HIV and AIDS, including fighting against HIV and AIDS related stigmatisation and discrimination, both in their private and professional life.

The seminar was the occasion to once again underline several important points:

1. Young people have an urgent need for clear, open and straightforward information from the adults around them, including their teachers. Young people must also have access to services for prevention (condoms and anonymous testing and counselling) and care. It is also necessary to recognize that young people themselves represent valuable resources. It is therefore important that adults trust them more and include them in all HIV & AIDS prevention and education activities.
2. Teachers certainly have the responsibility towards children and young people of informing them, and respecting their integrity and all their rights. Teachers need to be better supported in this task.
3. Those in charge of the education sector have to commit to make schools safe and to create school environments in which the silence surrounding HIV and AIDS is broken and stigma and discrimination is fought. Trust and openness are essential to an effective response in terms of prevention and care.
4. Schools have to be more open to communities to win parents' support for their roles in preventing HIV and AIDS and to benefit from resources available in communities.
5. Cultural dimensions of HIV and AIDS should not be neglected, as they are of critical importance. However, although some cultural practices have a negative impact on HIV transmission, it is important not to reject traditions and cultural practices altogether, but rather to try to promote those that are useful to HIV prevention and to support the modification of others, so that they may also contribute positively to the fight against HIV and AIDS.

“An extraordinary situation requires an extraordinary response”, another statement made by one of the Ministers present at this seminar, implies the strengthening and organizing of partnerships at international, regional and national levels. An extraordinary mobilization of supplementary resources and a better channelling and management of funds are definite priorities to allow the education sector to fulfil its role and responsibilities.

Another issue raised during several sessions was: education per se has a protective effect. Children and youth that are often excluded, such as girls, orphans and other vulnerable children must have access to quality education, in order to reduce their vulnerability to HIV and AIDS and the impact thereof, particularly poverty. As girls are particularly vulnerable, programs to improve girls' education (access and relevance of contents and teaching methodology) are especially important and urgent. Governments and development partners have to commit to include this issue as a priority in their policies and programs.

In addition, we need to look at the linkages between HIV and AIDS education and the quality of education in general. HIV and AIDS represent a very serious threat to education systems and to quality education for all, yet the pandemic can also be seen as an ‘incentive’ and opportunity to take measures to strengthen the quality of sector as a whole. In fact, many of the measures the education sector needs to take by to effectively fight the spread and impact

of HIV and AIDS will also contribute to the realization of the objectives set by the EFA movement:

- provide better access to education for girls and make education more adapted to their specific needs;
- provide a better access to education to all other groups of children and youth excluded from education;
- adapt curricula and teaching methods so that they are more relevant to the reality of learners and more effective, in particular by integrating competencies for life;
- improve teacher education so that they are able to address new curricular and pedagogical approaches.

Many of the issues discussed in Geneva are not new. However, the seminar provided the opportunity to openly share experiences and perspectives for feasible solutions. The feeling at the end of the day was that although much still has to be done, success was possible. Testimonies from several ministers and their delegates were encouraging and show that prevention education is possible and can be successful. Witnessing first hand that colleagues and experts from all over the world are aware of the necessity to act with courage, are committed and have already taken effective measures, was uplifting and provided the necessary hope, energy and commitment to continue the fight and to improve what already exists.

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