

APPRAISAL REPORT

Title of Material Life Skills Training Guide for Young People: HIV/AIDS and Substance Use Prevention

Technical Information

Type of Material: Training Guide (Manual)
Year of Publication: 2003
Target of Material: Civil Society Institutions, Youth Work Personnel & Trainers of Young People
Region (Countries): Asia & Pacific (China, India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal)
Author/Publisher: United Nations (Economic & Social Commission for Asia & the Pacific)
Number of Pages: 378 pages (All Modules)

Abstract

This Training Guide was developed by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to address needs that emerged during the implementation of a project titled "Integration of youth health concerns into non-formal education: Focus on sexual and reproductive health and prevention of substance abuse and HIV/AIDS in Asia".

The guide was developed for Governments, Civil Society Institutions and Youth Work Personnel in order to provide them with training material to support the training of young peer educators on HIV/AIDS and Substance use.

It comprises 11 similarly structured modules with an attached annex consisting of a training needs assessment. Module 0 provides basic inputs on training and learning while Module 1 covers the basics of peer education. Modules 2 and 3 address communication issues and understanding adolescence respectively while Modules 4 and 5 deal with teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. Module 6 covers drug and substance use in the context of HIV/AIDS while Modules 7 and 8 address life skills issues. Module 9 provides support to facilitators in training peer educators on how to care for people living with HIV while Module 10 provides information on action planning thus helping learners to develop basic planning skills.

This guide is designed such that the 11 Modules could either be used individually or together depending on the needs of the facilitator. The guiding pedagogy is interactive and participatory. It is an invaluable tool for all persons involved in training young persons in HIV/AIDS and/or Substance use.

OVERVIEW OF APPRAISAL

The manual *'Life Skills Training Guide for Young People: HIV/AIDS and Substance Use Prevention'* was appraised using the IBE Appraisal Tool for appraising *Material for Teachers*. Fig 1 presents a summary of the appraisal on 10 different criteria of the Tool.

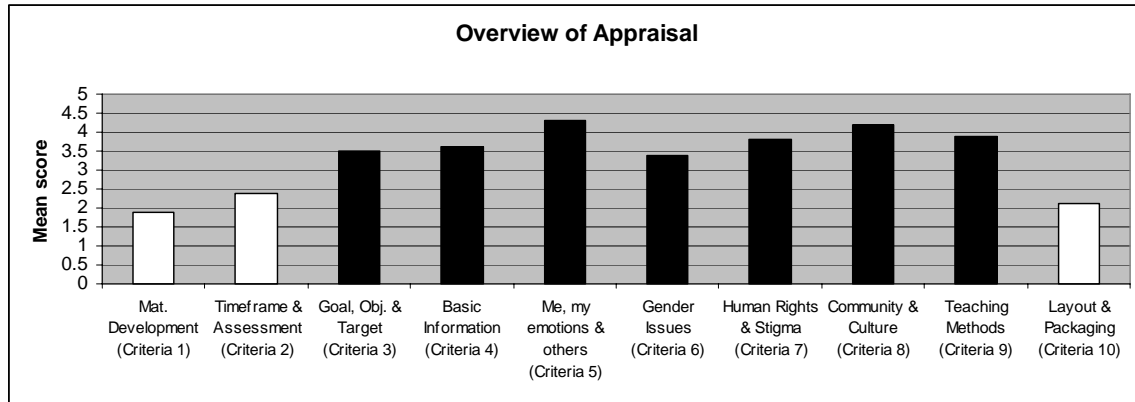


Fig 1

Key



Mean score of 3 or above (Relatively Good to Outstanding Performance)



Mean score of below 3.0 (Average to Weak & May Require Improvement)

The *Life Skills Training Guide for Young People* (subsequently referred to in this report as 'the material') showed a relatively stronger performance on criteria 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 and a relatively weaker performance on criteria 1, 2 and 10 as depicted by Fig 1 (above). Please see attached excel worksheets ('Assessment') for details

STRENGTHS

CRITERIA 3 (Goal, Objectives and Target group)

Though not explicitly stated the goal of this material appears to be *to facilitate the training of young people to become peer educators on HIV/AIDS and Substance Use in the non-formal sector*. The expected outcomes and objectives are clearly stated for each of the 11 modules. The content is suitable and appropriate for the Asian/Pacific socio-cultural context with a number of examples from and references to that region.

CRITERIA 4 (Basic Information for Protecting and Promoting Health)

The information provided is clear and accurate. Learners are taken through participatory pedagogical approaches on all aspects of teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV and AIDS. The physical, cognitive and emotional changes associated with growing adolescents are explained. Definitions of HIV and AIDS, modes of HIV transmission and methods of prevention are highlighted. Care and support

strategies for persons living with HIV (PLHIV) are emphasized and learners are empowered to dispel myths and misconceptions on sexual and reproductive health (SRH), HIV and AIDS.

CRITERIA 5 (Me, My Emotions and Others)

Modules 7 and 8 provide young people with invaluable life skills aimed at building their self esteem, self confidence and self control to enable them to better manage their emotions and stress. The material allows young people to practice ways in which they resist peer pressure and refrain from putting others under pressure. Learners are also made to learn from their own experiences through practicing problem solving, critical thinking, decision making and creative thinking skills.

Alcohol and Substance use is covered comprehensively in this material. Learners are taken through definitions on drugs (including alcohol), effects of drugs on ones life and the relationship between drugs and HIV and AIDS and other high risk behaviours.

CRITERIA 6 (Addressing Gender Issues)

In this material, gender is not treated separately in one module. Instead, it is mainstreamed throughout the 11 modules. The gender dimensions of virtually all issues discussed in this material are explored. Learners are taken through topics covering respect between genders, power relationships, positive and negative cultural gender practices/norms and gender dimensions of contraceptive use, teenage pregnancy and drug use among others. The situations, examples and language in the material are gender-sensitive.

CRITERIA 7 (Promoting Human Rights & Overcoming Stigma & Discrimination)

The material addresses coercion, abuse, stigma and discrimination comprehensively. Learners are made to appreciate the challenges of PLHIVs in order to provide the needed support, compassion, empathy and care towards them. The learning methods encourage learners to challenge negative and unhealthy prejudices and understand the synergistic relationship between HIV prevention and care. Learners are also made to identify treatment, care and support centers within their communities for prompt referrals. Finally, the language is generally non-discriminatory and non-judgmental. .

CRITERIA 8 (Community and Culture)

This material was developed with the understanding that young people live within a community and cultural setting which influences their behaviour. It provides learners with the opportunity of exploring the norms, beliefs and practices within their immediate environs with the viewpoint to challenging the negatives ones and reinforcing the positive ones. Learners are made to understand the link between certain community practices and high risk behaviour in relation to HIV and AIDS.

CRITERIA 9 (Teaching Methods & Strategies & Teacher Guidance)

The material uses a variety of different participatory pedagogical teaching-learning approaches which include ice breakers, group work, games, role plays, etc. Facilitators are provided with clear and detailed guidelines on organizing training sessions. For each session the facilitator is provided with information on expected outcomes, objectives, materials, time and process. The module on communication further strengthens the verbal and non verbal communication skills of facilitators.

WEAKNESSES

CRITERIA 1 (Material Development & Inclusion in Prescribed Curriculum)

First, the material does not appear to adequately describe the research undertaken as part of its development process. It is thus unclear if the research-based needs and concerns of young people, parents and other community members were taken into consideration prior to the development of the material.

Second, the extent to which multisectoral and multi-disciplinary teams were involved in the development process is unclear as it is not stated explicitly. Though very important, most manuals do not describe their development process adequately. The description of the material development process is important because it highlights both the technical and political (consensus building) processes necessary in achieving commitment to the material and increasing the likelihood of its subsequent use.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

➡ This material may be improved if its development process is described elaborately. The political aspect of the development process is as important as the technical contents of the material (IBE, 2006). Describing the manual development process may demonstrate to users, the relevance of the multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach and its impact on the support and commitment the material receives.

CRITERIA 2 (Timeframe & Assessment)

The material appears relatively weaker in the area of learning assessments. With the exception of module 5 (on HIV and AIDS), there appears to be no learning assessments to assess learners before and after the teaching-learning process in the remaining 10 modules.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

➡ This material may be improved by the inclusion of learning assessments to assess learners before and after the teaching-learning process in each module. It may be necessary to develop

different assessments for each of the 10 modules since each module is developed as a stand alone which could be used independently. Tool 7 of the IBE 'Manual for Integration of HIV and AIDS in school curricula' could serve as a useful resource as it provides information on developing learning assessments on knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours.

CRITERIA 10 (Layout & Packaging)

The layout and presentation of this material could be made relatively more attractive and appealing. There are no pictures, images, illustrations or graphs to enhance the presentation and increase its user-friendliness. The material also appears relatively large in size consisting of a total of 378 pages, thus making carriage difficult for young people. This is inevitable for such a comprehensive resource material on HIV and substance use. Due to its bulk, the cost of reproduction may be relatively high and this could further reduce its usability in different contexts.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

➡ This material may be improved and made more user-friendly by the inclusion of some pictures, diagrams, illustrations and images. Specific sections where some information could be presented in pictures, images and diagrams include i. Wearing of the male condom, ii. Wearing the female condom, iii How HIV is (and is not) spread, iv. Different parts of the body, etc. The inclusion of some pictures, images and diagrams may increase the aesthetic appeal and usability particularly among young people in the non formal sector.

INTERNAL INCONSISTENCY

The material is generally internally consistent as the modules are structured similarly in terms of language and style. The activities (expected to be undertaken by the learners) generally appear to lead to the achievement of the expected outcomes and objectives.

TRANSFERABILITY AND USEFULNESS FOR DEVELOPING OWN MATERIAL

Inherent in the design of the material is flexibility for innovation and adaptation to suit local contexts. Since each module was developed to stand alone, facilitators and youth workers have the privilege of selecting the most appropriate modules relevant to their contextual needs. This improves the usefulness and transferability of the material considerably.

A consistent effort is made to encourage facilitators to take advantage of local health and development experts and institutions within their contexts to support the teaching-learning process. This increases the likelihood of using locally relevant data and

information during the teaching-learning process thus improving the adaptability, transferability and usefulness of the material in different contexts.

Though the material was developed with the non formal sector in mind, the themes covered (i.e. introduction to training and learning, peer education, communication, adolescence, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, HIV and AIDS, drugs and substance use and life skills) are equally relevant for school-based HIV and AIDS education. The material could thus be useful as a resource material in supporting the development of school-based HIV and AIDS education material.

The fact that the material is web-based further increases its availability and hence its usefulness in developing ones own material in different contexts.

SPECIAL FEATURES AND ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Due to the fact that this material was developed primarily for use with a non-formal sector audience, some of the issues in the IBE appraisal criteria tool (developed for in-school audiences) were considered non-applicable during the appraisal. (see attached excel worksheets for criteria I and II)

The material is however an invaluable tool for all professionals working on HIV and AIDS education with young people in the formal or non-formal sectors as it covers a wide array of useful youth-related topics in considerable detail.