

APPRAISAL: SYNTHESIS

Title:	'Human rights, gender and culture; a guide for secondary school educators and community facilitators' (grades 7-9)
Type of material:	Support material for teachers
Year of publication:	Not specified
Author/publisher	Drama AIDS Education (DramAidE)
Number of pages:	80
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Abstract

This guidebook was developed by the NGO Drama AIDS Education (DramAidE), based at the University of Natal and the University of Zululand. The NGO makes use of participatory drama and other interactive education methodologies to teach young people about sexuality, HIV and AIDS, and life skills. The guidebook was designed for use by secondary school level educators from grades 7-9 and community facilitators working with young people.

The purpose of the material is to provide supplement (HIV and AIDS) life skills education – which has been part of the regular curriculum since 1998 - by 'focusing on the importance of *gender* and *culture* as themes in education programmes on 'safer sex'. The introduction mention that these themes are often not adequately dealt with in life skills programmes (p.4).

As the material is designed to supplement existing material relating to HIV and AIDS, the lessons do not deal directly with this topic. Instead, the material addresses the context in which HIV and AIDS occur, in particular the context of rural Kwazulu Natal, in South Africa. Though the material does not directly address HIV and AIDS, in many of the lessons there is a section clarifying relationship between the key message of the lesson (e.g. the consequences of teenage pregnancy) and HIV/AIDS (e.g. by not using a condom to 'show your love' you not only risk becoming pregnant, but also becoming infected with STIs, including HIV).

The guidebook focuses on two main themes, namely 'Human rights an culture' and 'Challenging stereotypes'. Both themes are subdivided into three learning programmes, which are divided into three lessons each. A lesson is designed to take one hour to complete. The learning programmes and lessons are:

Theme A: Human rights and culture

Learning programme 1: Human rights and responsibilities

Lesson 1: What do we know about the Bill of Rights?

Lesson 2: What are human rights? The right to life, freedom and safety

Lesson 3: Perspectives on human rights

Learning programme 2: Gender and women's rights

Lesson 1: Sex and gender

Lesson 2: Women's rights

Lesson 3: What do others think about women's rights?

Learning programme 3: Cultural practices - virginity testing

Lesson 1: Virginity testing and women's rights

Lesson 2: The practice of virginity testing

Lesson 3: Views about virginity testing

Theme B: Challenging Stereotypes

Learning programme 1: Teenagers and responsibility

Lesson 1: Teenage pregnancy

Lesson 2: The consequences of teenage pregnancy

Lesson 3: Options and responsibilities

Learning programme 2: Men and violence

Lesson 1: What do we mean by violence and abuse?

Lesson 2: Stand up against violence

Lesson 3: Perspectives on men and violence

Learning programme 3: Men and childcare

Lesson 1: Who usually cares for children?

Lesson 2: Does this happen in my community?

Lesson 3: Perspectives on childcare and modern views

The guidebook is part of a resource package which also contains a set of (5) story cards and a set of (5) role-play cards. These cards are to be handed out for small group work. In addition there are 'character cards' which can be used to facilitate role-play and IEC (information, education, communication) posters with ideas on how to make a mural, use games, put up a play and arrange songs.

Special features of the manual

The material focuses on the context in which HIV and AIDS occur. The focus on the context and enabling young people to better understand the context in which they 'operate' and the different views different actors in the community may have on issues such as violence. During the exercises learners are supported in analysing the different points of view and the pros and cons of certain practices, perspectives and behaviour patterns. Through the exercises learners are expected to be better able to define their own opinions and positions.

The guidebook is quite unique as generally, materials aimed at enabling learners to protect themselves from the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS deal with individual risk factors and individual responsibility, e.g. girls and boys are taught that they need to abstain from sexual relationships until marriage. In many situations abstinence is not a simple matter of choice, however. The approach of this guidebook – i.e. tackling issues relating to the context in which young people 'operate' - is therefore to be welcomed.

The guidebook is also to be welcomed for the approach to exploring gender issues. South Africa women have a strong constitutional position, but the country suffers from one of the highest levels of violence against women and children in the world. The guidebook helps learners to question the high levels of violence in the country and the relationship with perceptions of among others, masculinity and femininity. As stated in the introduction, the guidebook aims to deepen young people's understanding of gender

relations and cultural issues, in order to help them ‘understand the importance of sexual health and safety in their lives’.

Strengths

1. The material receives high ratings for most criteria in the appraisal sheet. It is well structured, provides brief, but clear guidance on how to conduct the lessons and activities, and addresses a wide range of issues that are very relevant to understanding how HIV and AIDS spread and impact on women and men.
2. The material contains a chapter which describing how to use the guidebook, how the lessons are structured, what skills a teacher needs to build (facilitation, communication, giving feedback), and describes the main activities that are used in the lessons.
3. The material uses gender sensitive language and images and discusses sexuality in an open and non-judgemental manner (leaving it up to learners to decide on these issues, rather than prescribing a certain view). The clear language and lively images make for very 'pleasurable' reading.
4. In each lesson a range of active learning exercises are used, with almost each different step in the lesson using a different type of participatory activity.
5. The material focuses on the context in which HIV and AIDS occur. The focus on this ‘element’ is a critical one, and one which generally is underdeveloped in HIV and AIDS education. The publication can, therefore, serve as an example for educators working with in- and out-of-school youth in the field of sexuality, parenthood, sexual harassment, communication, peer pressure and so forth.

Weaknesses / aspects to be improved

1. The material states that in order to become an **effective facilitator** (of active learning and on the topics of the guidebook) one will need some basic strategies and skills. It then goes on to describe the main strategies and skills.

The guidebook seems to presume a high degree of openness on the part of teachers to explore topics that lie ‘at the core of our personal and social identity’ (p. 10), as well as the willingness to tackle these issues with young people. In many cases, teachers will need support in addressing these topics, including that of the school principal, community members, and a supervisor/trainer. In most cases, the resource package (which this guidebook is a part of) will not be sufficient.

Suggestion for improvement/change:

- In situations where teachers are less familiar with the ‘sensitive’ themes addressed in with guidebook and with active and participatory learning approaches, training will be required.
2. The **manner in which the lessons are to be integrated** into the existing subject ‘Life skills’ is not clarified, nor is it clear whether the different lessons are aimed at specific **age group/grades** in particular. The material is designed for use with

learners in grades 7-9 of secondary school, but there are no guidelines on which lessons should be taught at which level, however.

Suggestions for improvement/change:

- More guidance is needed on how to integrate these lessons into the existing curriculum (within the subject 'Life skills') across the three grades of secondary school.
- Guidelines on which lessons of which themes are considered most relevant for particular grade levels/ages would be useful. If the lessons are divided across the three years (i.e. grades 7-9), school staff will need to coordinate what is taught when, to ensure that the teaching-learning during the three different years is 'aligned', i.e. teaching-learning in grade 8 builds on that of grade 7.

3. The guidebook describes a number of ways in which to **assess the learner outcomes**, which methods are most suited for assessing certain skills, attitudes and knowledge, and describes (in the introduction of each learning programme) what the assessment standards are (e.g. 'learners should demonstrate through an oral or written test that ...').
- The material does not, however, provide concrete tools to support teachers in using these methods for evaluation, nor does it discuss how assessment can be used in the teaching-learning process. The latter is important as these materials – and what learners are expected to learn in this overall programme – will supplement the official curriculum. This means that evaluation of teaching and learning will most likely not be official, i.e. will not influence learners' grades.

Suggestion for improvement/change:

- It would be useful to include more detailed guidelines on how to use the exercises for assessment purposes during different stages of the teaching-learning process.
- For example, the guidebook mentions group work as an opportunity to observe learners and assess their ability to communicate and work together. It would be helpful if more support was given in e.g. designing evaluation criteria so a teacher is able to arrive at concrete feedback for the learner on his/her progress as well as get more concrete information on the efficacy of his/her teaching.

Transferability issues and more suggestions for adaptation of the manual

1. One of the central themes of the guidebook is human rights, but the **rights of people affected by HIV** receive only brief mention in a lesson on the South African bill of rights.

Suggestion for improvement/change:

- Stigma, discrimination and human rights of people affected by HIV / AIDS should be addressed in a more explicit manner in the lessons, e.g. in the learning programme dealing with 'human rights and responsibilities'.

2. In several lessons **the relationship between the central message of the lesson and HIV and AIDS spread and impact** is highlighted. In general, the relationship is clear, e.g. in the lesson on 'what do we know about the bill of rights' (p.22-23), attention is drawn to the rights of people affected by HIV. In other lessons the link is not directly obvious, e.g. lessons 'what do others think about women's rights?' (p. 36-37) and 'perspectives on men and violence' (p. 68-69).

Suggestion for improvement/change:

- The messages clarifying the relationship with HIV and AIDS should be revised. Some may be more relevant in the context of another lesson, or require additional clarification so that the teacher can integrate this message in the lesson in such a way as to make it more meaningful/relevant.

3. The guidebook is designed to deepen learners' understanding of issues relating to human rights and gender in Kwazulu Natal and to challenge stereotypes. Some of the lessons use stories to illustrate the key message of the lesson and generally these stories are **gender sensitive**. In some cases, however, the stories contain messages which are not gender sensitive, e.g. those in theme A: learning programme 2 ('gender and women's rights'). This programme deals with a woman's right to assert her opinion and stand up for her wishes in her relationship with her partner/husband.

- Lesson 2 (p. 34-35) describes a situation wherein Mrs. Zulu finds out that her husband Mr. Zulu is having an affair. The wife asks her husband to use a condom when he wants to have sex with her (as she is concerned about becoming infected with HIV). The husband gets angry and hits his wife. The story ends with the wife apologising and explaining her worry of becoming infected with HIV.

The message of the lesson would be much stronger if the wife was not depicted as apologising to her husband when he is the one that is violent. Her apology sends a message that it was her fault that she was hit by her husband.

- In lesson 3 (p. 36-37) a conversation between several people is described, including Mrs. Zulu (of lesson 2, see above). She tells her husband (threatens to) hit her when she raises the subject of finding a job. One of the other characters responds with 'Men are like that'. This statement undermines the guidebook's aim to challenge stereotypes such as 'men are violent'.

Either additional guidelines should be given to the teacher that this 'stereotyping' needs to be addressed explicitly during this lesson or the story should be modified, e.g. another character stating that 'not all men are like that'!

4. The guidebook was **designed for use in rural Kwazulu Natal**. If used in other contexts, the material will need to be adapted.
 - The guidebook addresses issues relating to the context in which HIV and AIDS occur. For this reason, if the guidebook were to be used in other contexts, it would need to be adapted. I.e. changing the names of people used in the case studies/stories, translation of isiZulu terms, and adaptation of the examples of e.g. 'cultural practices'.
 - It is important to note, however, that many of the gender related issues are not specific to Kwazulu Natal, but affect (young) people around the world. It would be worthwhile to clarify this to learners, so that they do not learn to equate gender inequality and the violation of women's rights with (their) culture. It would be important to clarify that e.g. gender discrimination takes place in a broader context in which various social groups and classes are discriminated against, including people affected by HIV/AIDS.

Development of Manual

Inputs of main stakeholders are important to the development of good teacher guidebooks, to ensure they respond to the needs of the different target groups and users. Not much information is provided on how the manual was developed and what the input of different actors, such as learners, was during the development of the material. It would be useful to include this kind of information.