

APPRAISAL: SYNTHESIS

Title:	“Reducing HIV/AIDS vulnerability among students in the school setting; a teacher training manual”
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Abstract

This manual was designed for use by teacher trainers in the training of teacher trainees in HIV and AIDS education. It provides background information on issues relating to adolescent sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS, human rights issues etc.

The manual is divided into two main sections: the first one consists of general guidelines for trainers, including how to use the manual, the format of the modules, and how to deal with the different problems a trainer may face during training. A suggested training schedule is also presented. The second section consists of the eleven thematic training modules, e.g. module 1 ‘Basics of growing up – understanding adolescence and adolescent sexuality’.

At the start of each module, the learning objectives and outcomes, required time and evaluation methods are clarified.

The manual can be used as it is or, as is mentioned in the introduction and was done with the previous version of the manual, can be adapted for use in different countries.

Special features of the manual

The manual is based on an earlier version a UNESCO Bangkok teacher training handbook which was adapted, translated and used in different countries across Asia. The feedback from the field and evaluation by different users/experts was used in the development of the current manual.

Strengths

1. The manual covers a wide range of relevant topics - ranging from sexual and reproductive health of adolescents, understanding adolescent sexuality, to HIV/AIDS and human rights, etc.
2. The information is presented in a non-judgemental and open manner.
3. The manual describes how HIV is spread and how it impacts on individuals, families and communities, particularly those most vulnerable.
4. It also explores how stigmatization affects people, and clarifies how those that are generally already stigmatized - such as sex workers, homosexuals, women - often face additional stigmatization as a result of their (perceived) role in the spread of HIV.

5. The manual contains a wide variety of exercises, activities and tools to support teaching-learning.
6. The manual includes HIV and AIDS self-reports which can be used to assess knowledge levels and attitudes of learners prior to the training. Tools to evaluate skills (focusing on e.g. skills in critical thinking and application of knowledge) are primarily to be used during or after an activity.

Weaknesses / aspects to be improved

1. Getting a **clear overview** of the wide range of themes addressed in the eleven modules in the manual requires some time.

Suggestions for improvement/change:

- To get a clearer overview of the contents of the manual and make it more accessible, it would be useful to mention the themes addressed in each module in the table of contents and on a first page at the start of each module.
- A brief outline of the teaching-learning objectives of the different modules in the table of contents would also be helpful.

2. The **target group** of the manual is not always clear. Whereas the goal refers to teacher trainers ('to train teacher educators in HIV/AIDS prevention and care'), the objectives mainly mention teachers (e.g. 'sharpen teachers' skills in using life techniques and learner centred activities'). In short, it is not always evident for whom the information is exactly.

Suggestions for improvement/change:

- In some cases, it may simply be a case of rewording, e.g. in the case of the objectives listed in the manual's introduction.
- As it is not always evident for whom the information is exactly, it would be useful to review the manual and clarify whether the information is appropriate for the target group of the manual, i.e. a manual that is designed for use by teacher trainers to train teacher trainees.

This is especially the case in module nine, which addresses the topic 'Integration of HIV/AIDS preventive education with school curriculum' (N.B. it is presumed that this title should read 'Integration of HIV/AIDS preventive education *within* (the regular) school curriculum'). Ideally, it is not teachers who integrate HIV and AIDS related education into the curriculum, but curriculum developers, in cooperation with teachers and other relevant actors (please see the IBE-UNESCO HIV and AIDS Curriculum Manual for further details on this topic: www.ibe.unesco.org/AIDS/Manual/Manual_home.htm).

- It would be important to decide if this module ought to be a module aimed at curriculum developers, rather than teachers or teacher trainers.

3. The **implementation mode and curricular approach** is not made specific. The manual includes a 'suggested schedule of activities' for an 8-day (full time) training workshop during which teaching-learning on the 11 modules is to take place.

Suggestion for improvement/change:

- It would be possible to teach the 11 modules during this time-frame, but - depending on the target group's knowledge, skills etc. levels - it may be necessary to use the manual to carry out additional or refresher trainings.

4. The manual provides teacher trainers only limited **support in teaching** of relevant pedagogies to teacher trainees. The manual rightly states that 'the success of any HIV/AIDS prevention education programme largely depends on the knowledge, attitudes, values, skills and commitment of its major implementers – classroom teachers'¹.

Despite this, and although the activities included in the different modules in the manual do aim to build skills of teacher trainees, the manual does not provide tools for / examples of activities for the teaching-learning of specific life skills to young learners themselves or how to apply different assessment tools to evaluate teaching-learning outcomes, especially skills related outcomes.

Suggestions for improvement/change:

As has been found, changes in a curriculum do not automatically lead to changes in classroom practice and (continuous) support to teachers in making necessary changes in their teaching practice, is therefore essential.

- For these reasons, it would, therefore, be important to include exercises in each module that can be used for training the trainees to facilitate teaching-learning on the different topics *and* evaluating teaching-learning outcomes.
- The module on 'Learner centred strategies and life skills techniques' (module number 10) would then serve as a – valuable - supporting module, providing more background information on the differences between learner centred and classical teaching methods.

5. As mentioned, the manual contains **brief guidelines for the adaptation** of the manual. However, these guidelines basically only state the different steps to take in the process of adaptation, e.g. 'needs assessment, adaptation of the modules, translation of the modules, validation of the modules.'

¹ 'Introduction to the manual', p. 1

Suggestions for improvement/change:

- It would be very useful to provide more guidance on how to go about these different steps in the process.

For example, for examples could be provided of particular issues that need to be assessed during a needs assessment, such as how HIV and AIDS education has been integrated into the curriculum and what the implications are for teacher training (see below *Aligning teacher training with teaching-learning contents and structure*).

- If HIV and AIDS education is already being taught in schools, it would be very useful to assess the difficulties teachers have in teaching this subject. Teachers may, for example, lack of support from the principal and/or other teaching staff, face stigmatization ('the AIDS teacher'), and/or be expected to facilitate participatory learning in large, multi-grade classrooms.

These experiences should guide the adaptation of the manual to the specific needs of teachers, e.g. feeding directly into a separate module on 'handling teaching difficulties' (see below).

Transferability issues and more suggestions for adaptation of the manual

Aligning teacher training with teaching-learning contents and structure

It is important that where HIV and AIDS education has (recently) been integrated into the curriculum, that teachers learn about the changes in the curriculum and are supported in making the changes in their practice. Teachers have to be given the right tools and knowledge so that they are able to teach the official curriculum effectively.

In adapting this teacher training manual to a particular context, it will therefore be necessary to make sure that teacher training is in line with both the contents and structure of the existing or new curriculum. Making sure that the following questions are addressed carefully is particularly important:

- what are new areas of teaching related to HIV and AIDS that have been included (sexual and reproductive health information, treatment education, stigma and discrimination, gender issues, etc.)?
- what are the implications for teaching practice (due for instance to the introduction or strengthening of life skill education)

How HIV and AIDS education has been integrated into the school curriculum is also crucial to teacher training (and therefore to training of trainers). For instance, if HIV and AIDS education is integrated in various existing subjects ("cross-curricular approach"), such as social sciences and biology:

- Teachers of both subjects will need to be trained in providing education on HIV and AIDS that is appropriate to the age and literacy level of their learners within their subject.

- These teachers will also need to be trained in helping learners see the linkages between what is taught/learned in one subject with that which is taught/learned in the other subject.
- The biology and social science teachers should have not only the skills but also practical opportunities to coordinate the teaching of the HIV and AIDS teaching programme with one another, making sure what is taught within one subject complements that which is taught in the other subject.

How HIV and AIDS education has been integrated into the school curriculum is also important to decide who are the teachers to be trained decide who are the teachers to be trained.

Responsibilities of the trainer

The first part of the manual contains a section dealing with the 'Roles and responsibilities of the trainers', and 'Skills that the trainers should demonstrate when conducting training'.

These are also important issues for (future) HIV and AIDS teachers and it would, therefore, be useful to integrate this information along with supporting activities into the manual, e.g. in module ten on 'Learner centred strategies and life skills techniques'.

Handling training problems

Along with the section in the manual introduction on roles and responsibilities of the trainer, there is also a section in which common training problems are discussed and the ways in which a trainer can resolve these.

It would be very useful if the manual would support teacher trainees in exploring the problems they may encounter when teaching about HIV and AIDS (based on for example, the experiences of in-service teachers in the country) and possible solutions to these problems.

Important lessons from international research can also be used, such as those described in 'The sound of silence; difficulties in communication about HIV/AIDS in schools' (ActionAid, 2003).

Development of Manual

Inputs of main stakeholders are important to the development of sound teacher/training material, to make sure that they respond to the needs of the different groups of target groups and users. Not much information is on how the manual was developed and specifically, what the input of different actors, including teachers, has been in the development of both the first and this revised version of the manual. Make sure to get these inputs when adapting material.