

Appraisal report

Title of material: HIV and AIDS Education Training Module

Technical information

Type of material: Training manual for teachers and other education sector staff and CD Rom (containing an electronic version of the material)
Year of publication: 2006
Target of material: All staff of educational institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa
Country: Sub-Saharan African countries
Author/publisher: UNESCO Harare Cluster Office and the Virtual Institute for Higher Education in Africa
Number of pages: 117

Abstract

The HIV and AIDS Education Training Module is a training programme for teachers involved in the delivery of Basic and Higher Education as well as other staff of educational institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa. The HIV and AIDS Education virtual training programme was developed by the UNESCO Harare Cluster Office, in cooperation with the Nigerian National Universities Commission. It is one of the (stand alone) virtual training programmes delivered by the Virtual Institute for Higher Education in Africa and should take approximately 3 months to complete.

The HIV and AIDS education virtual training programme was developed on the basis of the action plans of the AU, NEPAD and MINEDAF, as well as the strategies for fast tracking the attainment of the MDGs in Africa. Upon completion of the training it is said that a letter addressed to the National HIV/AIDS Commission (of the country of origin/residence of the participant) will be issued certifying the participant is 'fit to be used as a resource person for HIV/AIDS education training programmes'. It is also stated that the participant will receive a certificate with transferable credits upon completion of the programme.

The training programme consists of 22 lessons, which have been brought together in a manual and CD Rom. Most of the lessons/chapters are structured in a similar manner, providing a statement of the lesson objectives, a description of the basic content and a section on how to teach students (about the topic addressed in that particular chapter). Each lesson contains a summary section and a many also contain a set of review questions.

The 22 lessons cover the following topics:

1. HIV and AIDS: the basics;
2. History and Prevalence of the HIV and AIDS epidemic;
3. HIV and the Immune System;
4. Life Cycle of HIV;
5. How HIV is transmitted;
6. Symptoms of HIV;
7. Testing for HIV,
8. Opportunistic infections;
9. The impact of HIV/AIDS in Africa;
10. The driving force of HIV in Africa;

11. Claims to cure HIV/AIDS in Africa;
12. Myths and misconceptions about HIV/AIDS;
13. Anti HIV therapy;
14. Preventing the spread of HIV through Sexual activity;
15. Preventing the spread of HIV: Blood transfusion, sharing needles and sharp objects (**lessons 15-16**);
16. Preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS, general considerations;
17. Counselling and care;
18. The role of the school and the teacher;
19. The role of parents;
20. The role of the community; and
21. Eliminating violence, stigma and discrimination.

Overview of the appraisal

[insert overview diagram]

The 'HIV and AIDS Education Training Module' is evaluated relatively positively on criteria 3, 4 and 10, and relatively less positively on criteria 1, 2, 5 – 9, as shown in figure 1 above. Under the section 'Strengths' (see below) positive features of the material relating to criteria 5 and 7 are also highlighted. **Please refer to the attached excel worksheets for details.**

Strengths

Criterion 3: Goals, objectives and target group

The goals of the training module are clear and are linked to HIV and AIDS education. The objectives of the (22) different lessons are also clear, although they could often be made more specific and measurable so as to facilitate assessment. On the first page of each lesson it is stated what the participant will be able to do upon completion of that lesson. Seeing as it is not clear how long a lesson will take it is not possible to estimate how long it should take for participants to meet the expected outcomes, however. The contents are appropriate in light of the age and probably status regarding sexual experience of the target group (adults) and the context in which they work and live (staff of education institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa).

Criterion 4: Basic information for protecting and promoting health

The training course provides comprehensive and detailed information on a wide range of issues relating to HIV and AIDS. It provides detailed information on what HIV and AIDS are, how HIV is transmitted (including the relative risks of different forms of sexual activity, e.g. oral sex), HIV treatment, care for people living with HIV, the impact of HIV on daily life (in terms of e.g. emotional and economic impact), myths and misconceptions regarding HIV, etc.

The information on these various topics is included in the different lessons/chapters all deal with HIV transmission, prevention, treatment and care to some degree. Some lessons will complement or build on information provided in earlier ones, e.g. in the lesson dealing with transmission modes (lesson 5) intravenous drug use is briefly mentioned, and further on in lesson 17 the topic is dealt with again, in more detail.

Fairly extensive information is given on the importance of testing and how testing is done.

Criterion 5: Me, my emotions and others

The different lessons in the training programme deal with a wide range of issues other than those mentioned under this criterion. Examples include detailed information on the counselling of HIV positive people, how to create a safe working environment, as well as the role of parents and the community in the prevention of HIV. With regard to explaining the use of condoms to prevent infection, the training programme not only deals with the male, but also with the female condom in a fairly detailed manner. Despite the programme's fairly extensive coverage of a variety of relevant topics, it does not receive a high rating on this particular criterion as the programme does not deal with many topics that are listed under the criterion.

Criterion 7: Promoting human rights, overcoming stigma and discrimination

The material generally does not rate well on this criterion, primarily because it does not specifically deal with human rights or children's rights. However, with regard to stigma and discrimination, the material is quite strong: it discusses the effects of stigma and discrimination in relation to the impact and spread of HIV, and the effects of stigma on both adults and children (e.g. orphans) are discussed.

The material addressed stigma, discrimination and fear surrounding HIV (and the effects thereof) at length and as such can sensitize the user/participant to the importance of combating stigma and discrimination. The importance of and how to show empathy is dealt with across different lessons, e.g. the lessons on counselling and care; stigma and discrimination; and the driving force of HIV in Africa.

Another positive aspect is the brief but clear information that is provided on the relative risk of HIV transmission between men who have sex with men as well as (although slightly less clear) 'woman to woman transmission'. Finally, the language used in the manual/training is non-discriminatory and non-judgemental towards different groups of people.

Criterion 10: Lay out and packaging

The design and lay out of material is simple. There are few illustrations to enhance the contents. The packaging is fairly well done; the size and weight of the material is reasonable, it should be durable and could be reproduced fairly economically.

Weaknesses and suggestions for improvement

Criterion 1: Material development and inclusion in prescribed curriculum

Upon completion of the training programme the participant will receive a certificate with transferable credits. It would appear therefore, that the programme has been officially endorsed, but it is not clear precisely by whom.

Information is provided on the fact that the module was developed on the basis of a). needs assessments which revealed needs in the areas of among others, HIV and AIDS teaching-learning, and b). research into the estimated cost effectiveness of web-based learning and face-to-face training. Other than this there is little specific information on how assessments were carried out and which actors were involved in the process of the development of the training. It is also not clarified whether pre-testing was carried out.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

It would be very useful if more background information were provided on the status of the programme, the virtual institute and to what extent official endorsement has been given to the training modules of the institute. Is for example, the Institute officially recognized in Sub-Saharan Africa or also in other parts of the world.

More information would also be useful on the development process leading to the production of the training programme and manual. For example, which needs were assessed, which actors/stakeholders were involved? Finally, was the programme pre-tested and/or revised following a trial period? It would be interesting to get a better understanding of these kinds of questions.

Criterion 2: Time frame and assessment

With regard to the questions regarding assessment the material is not rated very positively; there does not seem to be any testing of participants' prior knowledge, skills or attitudes. In the manual it is stated that the certificate will be granted to the participant on the basis of among others, their participation in three discussion forums, minimum scores of 60% for the mid-cycle and end-of-module examination and the successful completion of a project. It is assumed these different assessment moments will allow for assessment of the participant's knowledge, and perhaps attitudes and certain skills, e.g. analytical skills. Seeing as it is a virtual module, it is presumed that actual teaching skills and 'behaviour' are not assessed. All in all, however it would be helpful if more information were given on the appraisal of participant progress.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

It would be of help if the manual included more (informal) assessment tools with which to test participants' prior knowledge, skills and so forth and if more information was given on how assessment of participants' progress was done during and at the end of the training programme (e.g. what are participants 'tested' on, what are the expected outcomes?).

Criterion 3: Goals, objectives and target group

Though the objectives of the (22) different lessons are fairly clear, they often could be made more specific and measurable as this would among others, facilitate assessment. On the first page of each lesson it is stated what the participant will be able to do upon completion of that lesson. Seeing as it is not clear how long a lesson will take it is not possible to estimate how long it should take for participants to meet the expected outcomes, however.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

It would be helpful if the lesson objectives were made more precise and included a quantification of what should be achieved. E.g. 'state 3 ways in which HIV can be transmitted', instead of the objective 'state how HIV is contracted'.

It would also be of help if a clearer indication would be given of how much time a learner can expect to have to spend on a particular lesson, i.e. an estimation of the time required to read the material, complete the exercises and so forth.

Criterion 4: Basic information for protecting and promoting health

The training course provides comprehensive and detailed information on a wide range of issues. Topics the programme does not pay much attention to are sexual and reproductive health (SRH) (this topic is only really addressed in the sense of the SRH of HIV positive people/women and the transmission of HIV to a child), and the side effects treatment of HIV and AIDS can have on people. Also, though the information on the importance of testing and how testing is done is fairly extensive, there is little mention of voluntary counselling and testing.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The material would become stronger if the topics mentioned above were addressed in more detail. I.e. more information on sexual and reproductive health and rights (and the linkages with the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS) would be of great use, the side effects of treatment of HIV and AIDS and voluntary testing and counselling, e.g. what this entails and where a person can expect to find VCT services (as the programme is designed for learners across Sub-Saharan Africa, it cannot become very specific about the whereabouts of services).

Criterion 5: Me, my emotions and others

The different lessons in the training programme deal with a wide range of issues other than those mentioned under this criterion. Despite this richness in background information, the material is not rated positively on this criterion as it does not deal specifically or in detail with many of the topics listed under the criterion. Self-confidence for example, is only touched upon in connection with characteristics of effective HIV programmes. How to avoid unwanted sexual intercourse is not tackled; it is only mentioned that abstinence is a sure way of preventing the risk of HIV transmission.

Peer pressure is another topic that is not explored, and the item 'how to avoid putting pressure on others' is primarily seen in the way the lessons aim to sensitize the reader to e.g. the rights and needs of people living with HIV. Finally, regarding the topic support and counselling; the programme/manual contains little information about when one should or can seek counselling and where a person could possibly find support and counselling.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Including more information and activities on the topics of supporting the development of self-awareness and self-esteem (and what these concepts mean) and to overcome personal fears (e.g. coping with loss) would be an important addition to the programme. It would be important to include more activities and background information (e.g. case studies) on preventing or avoiding unwanted sexual activity. Another valuable addition to the training programme would be information (and activities) on peer pressure, what this is, what forms it can take and how a person can respond to it. Lastly, it would also be useful if the programme enabled participants to explore when to seek support and guidance and where one can look for different forms of support, for example in case of sexual and/or domestic violence.

Criterion 6: Addressing gender issues

The material does not address the gender issues outlined under this criterion in great detail; it is only really in the last lesson that topics relating to power differentials and gender issues are explored. Gender discrimination is not really addressed. Though the training programme touches upon gender based cultural practices such as polygamy and female genital mutilation, stating these are 'cultural factors' underlying the spread of HIV in Africa, topics such as masculinity, femininity and traditional roles in society are not dealt with in much detail.

The examples, case studies etc. are more or less gender neutral. More discussion on the linkages between gender and HIV would be an important addition.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The training programme could be improved upon in terms of the way in which it addresses gender concerns. It would be important to integrate more background information and activities to explore gender discrimination, power differentials, concepts of masculinity and femininity as well as traditional beliefs of the roles of females and males in society, and how these matters are linked with the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS. N.B. the lessons dealing with the 'driving force of HIV in Africa' and the 'impact of HIV/AIDS in Africa' can be good 'moments' to explore gender issues, and the relative vulnerability of women and girls as opposed to men and boys. In addition, where relevant more examples and case studies could be included that highlight the linkages between the central theme (e.g. 'how HIV is transmitted') and gender issues (e.g. explaining the reasons why women and girls are more vulnerable to HIV infection than men and boys are).

Criterion 7: Promoting human rights, overcoming stigma and discrimination

The material generally does not rate well on this criterion, primarily because it does not specifically deal with human rights or children's rights, despite a relatively strong emphasis on stigma and discrimination. Although the material pays quite a bit of attention to stigma and discrimination, it pays relatively little attention to topics such as the importance of empathy, and possible ways to respond to and combat prejudice, stigma and discrimination.

Physical integrity is discussed in connection with violence against women, but no reference appears to be made to sexual violence against children (or men). Though the importance of countering sexual violence is stressed, what possible steps a person can take in case of sexual abuse or coercion is not explored.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Including more information (and exercises) relating to universal human rights and children's rights would improve the training programme, in particular in connection with stigma and discrimination, care for people affected by HIV and the linkages between the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS and vulnerable groups in society, such as women/girls and stigmatized groups (e.g. homosexuals and sex workers). With regard to the topics stigma and discrimination, a valuable addition would be to address the importance of empathy, and how to respond to prejudice and discrimination. It would also be useful if the programme better enabled participants to explore (sexual) violence against different groups of people, be they female, male, children or adults. In this context it would also be important to provide information and activities addressing how a person can respond to or cope with violence and what steps one can take when confronted with violence.

Criterion 8: Community and culture

The manual does not really deal with cultural issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, or local norms regarding family, sexuality and marriage. Traditional practices and beliefs regarding SRH, HIV and AIDS that can have a negative impact on HIV and AIDS spread and impact are only briefly discussed. The material also does not explore possible ways to break silence and stigma regarding SRH and sexuality.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Addressing local norms regarding family, sexuality and marriage, and cultural issues relating to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and rights, HIV and AIDS could improve the material. It would also be useful if more attention was paid to the silence surrounding SRH (as well as stigmas attached to these issues) and how one could break this silence. Finally, providing more background information, e.g. in the form of case studies and tools to explore local practices and beliefs regarding SRH, HIV and AIDS would be valuable.

Criterion 9: Teaching methods and strategies, and teacher guidance

Most lessons include an objective such as 'teach your students about the topic', or 'share your knowledge of the topic with your students'. In line with this objective, most lessons provide instructions on an activity the course participant/teacher can conduct with his/her learners in order to bring across the issues addressed in a particular lesson. None of these instructions refer to using ice-breakers, role-play or games, and activities such as group work and interviews/field work also appear to be little used.

Though the instructions on how to conduct an activity with a group of learners are clear, there is no specification of what learners should learn (though this could be derived from the learning objective for the teacher/participant in the training module), nor how much time an activity is estimated to take.

The instructions for an activity will mention the kinds of materials, sometimes however, this includes posters on e.g. the life cycle of HIV, which are not included in the training 'package'.

With regard to the question whether the activities and exercises were suitable considering the objectives of the lesson and the target group, the appraisal found the material to be relatively weak. This was due to the fact that the material includes few activities that are designed for the students of the training programme, i.e. education sector staff. The activities included are those that a teacher can carry out with his/her learners after having completed the lesson. 'Activities' for the course participants are mainly in the form of review questions and a project they need to carry out (but which is not clarified in the manual or CD Rom). Review questions are useful for (adult) learners to independently review what they have learned, but it may not be sufficient to absorb all the information included in the lessons.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In order to better enable teachers taking the course to be able to facilitate lessons on the topics addressed in the material, several improvements to the manual would be useful. First of all, it would be helpful if it were made clearer what the objectives should be of the teaching-learning sessions with

young learners (i.e. the pupils of the course participant). What specifically should a teacher strive toward when 'sharing his or her knowledge'? It would also be helpful if it was made clearer how much time a teacher should schedule for the teaching on a particular topic.

More detailed instructions and background information on how to facilitate different types of activities would be very helpful (as teachers may not be familiar with active learning methods). Explaining and referring to a greater variety in the kinds of activities one can carry out with one's learners would also be useful, in particular, including ice breaker activities, role-plays and games, and more group work and work that involves community members, such as interviews. Should specific additional materials be needed for activities with learners, this should be included in the material or more ideas be given on how to develop or obtain a particular material.

Finally, in order to increase the 'suitability' of the programme for course participants, it may be worthwhile considering including more and more interactive or active learning activities specifically designed for the students of the training programme, i.e. education sector staff.

Criterion 10: Lay out and packaging

Though overall, the material receives a positive rating for this criterion, there are aspects of the lay out which could be improved upon. The lessons are generally structured along similar lines, but some – in particular the longer lessons - are structured in different ways. The contents page could also be improved upon as currently it only includes the lesson number and page numbers of the 22 different lessons.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The structure of the longer lessons in particular could be made more reader friendly, for example using clearer headings to divide long pieces of text into more 'manageable' sections. The contents page could also be improved, e.g. by giving the title of the lesson and the main sub-headings/themes of the lesson rather than only the lesson number.

Internal consistency

The language and the (few) images used are gender neutral. As mentioned, the lessons are not always structured along the same lines, particularly some of the longer lessons. The structure of especially these lessons could be made more reader friendly.

Transferability and usefulness for developing own material

The training module contains a wealth of information on issues relating to HIV and AIDS. It deals extensively with questions regarding treatment, counselling of people undergoing treatment, background texts on the role of different actors in the response to HIV and AIDS and prevention of HIV transmission. As such, the contents of the training module can provide good background information for training programmes on HIV and AIDS. The information is often detailed, can be quite

technical and generally requires a good grasp of the English language, however. It can therefore, be useful for other adult learners with a relatively high educational background and/or who are able to learn by reading. By making the training module more interactive (e.g. the CD Rom/virtual programme), having more images and illustrations to enhance and complement the contents, and including a greater variety of activities for the immediate target group, the training would be useful for a wider variety of learners and learning styles.