



**Sub-regional capacity-building seminar for HIV and AIDS curriculum development in six countries in the Asia Pacific region:
Scaling up HIV and AIDS education in schools**

Kanchanaburi, Thailand, 17 – 21 April 2007

REPORT

A. Context, participants, objectives

This report is a summary of the main results of the seminar, which was jointly organised and facilitated by UNESCO Bangkok and the International Bureau of Education (IBE), in the framework of the UNESCO OPEC Fund project to strengthen HIV and AIDS education in 12 countries.

Six countries participated: Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao, Thailand and Vietnam, with participants from Ministries of Education (MOEs) in charge of HIV and AIDS education (Indonesia is not part of the above mentioned project, but were invited to be resource persons, based on the interesting work that they have been undertaking). UNESCO HIV focal points from China, Indonesia, Lao, Thailand and Vietnam were also present and contributed actively to the seminar. (See complete list of participants in appendix A).

The collaboration between IBE and UNESCO Bangkok was successful and should continue in the future. The participation and contributions were of high quality and the four objectives set for the seminar were fulfilled:

1. Strengthen curriculum response in 6 countries
 - Assess the quality of HIV and AIDS education in each of the participating countries and identify possible improvements
 - Assess teacher training for HIV and AIDS education in each participating country and identify possible improvements
2. Improve materials for HIV and AIDS education in schools
 - Assess and improve existing teacher training manual developed by UNESCO Bangkok and revised by UNESCO Jakarta and its partners
3. Assess and improve tools for HIV and AIDS curriculum development
4. Foster exchanges on good practices, approaches that work, as well as approaches that had failed, as this also can be an important learning exercise

B. Main issues and ways forward

One key problem shared by all countries is: “how to integrate HIV and AIDS education in the curriculum so that it is really taught and makes a difference in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of learners (and teacher educators)?” Linked to this crucial question, common issues were addressed during the seminar through

country presentations, thematic plenary presentations, working groups and a set of various interactive activities.

Coverage

Curriculum, programs and material exist in all six countries but actual coverage is still low, because of:

- Too many pilot programs
- Difficulty to distribute manuals to all schools and then for teachers to use the manuals in schools
- Overall HIV and AIDS education in primary schools is still weak, the focus of most MOEs is on secondary schools
- Discrepancy between curriculum and teacher training (content and coverage).

The curriculum

The six countries were taking different approaches in developing HIV curriculum. A number were integrating the topic into a few disciplines in which HIV and AIDS education should be taught, while others were integrating it in one discipline only.

Whatever the solution chosen, the scope of HIV and AIDS education is still too narrow: life skills, gender, emotions, etc. are not addressed at all or not sufficiently.

The curriculum, alone may not be enough. Teaching in the classroom should be complemented by:

- Student counselling and
- Extra curricular programs fostering links with the community.

Different entry points are possible:

- School health
- Life skills
- Peer education
- Counselling

Time allocation

Within the six countries the amount of time allocated for HIV and AIDS education varied from no time to a few hours. As a result, there is a need to allocate more time to HIV and AIDS education in all countries.

Each Ministry of Education needs to specify the numbers of hours that must be taught at each level of education (primary, secondary, teacher training). Given the crowded nature of school curriculum, issues related to HIV and AIDS (like "human rights" for example) can be coupled with other subjects, like "peace education" for example.

The specification of the time dedicated to HIV and AIDS is an important step to ensure that the subject will be effectively taught in schools.

Teaching and learning materials

Manuals exist but are not widely distributed in schools, for instance distributed only in pilot schools) or are of poor quality.

Even when teaching and learning materials are of good quality teachers are not always able to use them: materials for teachers need to be improved, with more practical examples for life skills education and active pedagogy.

Teacher education

Teachers are often ill prepared; they don't have the skills and in some cases the knowledge to teach HIV and AIDS education; they are not comfortable with the topic.

Teacher education is fragmented and coverage far from comprehensive in most countries: based on pilot projects and only for in-service teachers.

Often the focus and contents of teacher education is also too narrowly defined. The result is that teachers are often not well prepared to teach HIV and AIDS education.

Expectations towards what teachers should be able to teach and achieve by their teaching are too high and often unrealistic.

Pedagogy

In the six countries, traditional teaching styles dominate. Teaching HIV by providing the facts, within scientific disciplines is not enough, HIV and AIDS education should be life skills based, be using interactive teaching methods and helping students to study alone, but teachers are not prepared or able to teach this way.

Life skills are still an abstract, unclear and theoretical concept for many teachers. It is difficult for them to implement the life skills based approach concretely in the class room. They need more concrete activities and examples of exercises that can be used in their every day practice. A greater focus should also be put on emotions and relationships.

Evaluation methods for life skills lessons need to be collected, developed and shared between the countries.

Evaluation of learning outcomes

There is a general lack of any kind of evaluation of HIV and AIDS education outcomes.

Beyond its pedagogic value, the evaluation of learning outcomes (i.e. assessment of impact of program taught in schools on knowledge, attitudes values and behaviours of learners) is crucial to advocate in favour of more and better HIV and AIDS education in schools.

Stigma and discrimination

Several sessions of the seminar, including role plays showed that there is still a lot to be done regarding stigma and discrimination, not only for teachers, but also for senior members of the various Ministries of Education.

Raising awareness among teachers and education staff will be a decisive contribution to overcome stigma and discrimination. Concrete exercises (role plays, working groups) will enable teachers to understand the implications of discriminating behaviours. Examples of interactive exercises should be collected and disseminated to the countries.

Teacher support and workplace policy

Workplace HIV and AIDS policies are missing in the six countries. Only Cambodia is attempting to develop such policies. Many components of the ILO policy were considered crucial to protect teachers, other school staff and learners altogether, but it was also recognized that such policy will be difficult to implement in the context of labour markets in participating countries without a serious work to raise awareness and readiness to implement the rules recommended by the ILO code of practice.

A national workplace policy should be created or reinforced in schools. This is crucial to overcome the silence and, at the same time, to respect the confidentiality. This would help teachers to feel that they are working in a safe and supportive environment.

A greater involvement should come from political authorities (national and local levels) and from school directors. Talking about HIV and AIDS implies talking about

sexuality, relationships between girls and boys, sexual identity etc. All these issues are still taboo in many countries. It is therefore crucial that teachers receive a strong support when addressing these issues.

Strategy and resource mobilization

The response to HIV and AIDS in schools and in the education sector in general is project-based, at small scale, and not part of a strategy.

Moreover, proposed responses and programs are often not realistic and thus there is a need to design plans that are workable, to make the response effective and that can be scaled up. National action plans should be based on available resources.

A developed strategy should stress that education is important and that HIV and AIDS education should be included as part of inclusive education, the epidemic being an important factor contributing to the exclusion of children often already at risk of not attending school.

As part of the strategy there is a need for stakeholders to build partnerships, build links between schools and the community and establish a dialogue with teachers.

The importance of addressing issues of management and school environment were also mentioned. The participants believed that training teachers is not enough; principals and advisers also need to be trained. Further, monitoring and evaluation must be included in the strategy.

One size doesn't fit all

"HIV and AIDS policy framework should be based on local and national values and culture". "Awareness comes from global programs, but commitment comes from national needs".

Emphasis was given by all country participants to take into account and respect cultural and religious contexts not only when drawing policies and strategies, but also for curriculum, programs and teacher education. One implication is that norms set by experts to define good practice must be questioned so that responses have to be culturally adapted.

C. Revised Teacher education manual on HIV prevention and response (pilot version)

This manual is an adaptation of the teacher training manual developed by UNESCO Bangkok in 2005. The new pilot version was developed by UNESCO Jakarta and its partner IDP Norway.

The need for this new manual is because the 2005 version was found to be too long, not practice based and not user-friendly for trainers and trainees.

The pilot version of the revised manual is much leaner. It has been tested and evaluated by the participants during work group sessions. Some practical activities proposed by the manual have been tested in plenary interactive session and working groups.

The main outcomes and comments are:

- The participants found the manual very useful, practical and user friendly.
- The practical activities proposed are useful but there should be more examples. Lesson plans and concrete exercises should be added.
- The group works proposed should be more various.

- There should be a re-ordering of the manual, with the chapter on 'Teaching about HIV prevention and responding to HIV and AIDS in schools' being made the second chapter.
- A section should give more details and explanations on the role of education and schools in the answer to HIV.
- Some rewordings were proposed mostly regarding sensitive issues.

D. Proposed ways forward for countries in the region

Increase commitment and develop a strategy

- Advocate for stronger commitment and awareness of officials
- Advocate and work with partners to overcome resistance and to pull together resources (human and financial)
- Set realistic expectations
- Develop a strategy (at Ministry and school level)
- Mobilize Resource resources (human, material, time, financial and technical)
- Advocate for more support from donors and government (now still lacking)
- Raise awareness to the need to develop and apply workplace policies
- Consider HIV and AIDS education as part of inclusive education

Train, educate and support teachers

- Develop pre-service teacher education as a priority and make in-service teacher training widely available
- Educate all and future teachers so that they are all aware of HIV and AIDS
- Train specific teachers to be in charge of HIV and AIDS education

Improve teaching and learning materials

- Review, revise and adapt existing tools and materials
- Develop new innovative materials (on life skills activities, interactive and participatory teaching methods, etc.) and make them available
- Evaluate effectiveness and impact of existing programs using indicators and benchmarks

Evaluate quality of HIV and AIDS education in schools

- Develop tools to evaluate and monitor HIV and AIDS education
- Evaluate effectiveness and impact of existing programs based on indicators, and regarding the goal of the project and benchmarks
- Scale up successful programs

Allocate time to HIV and AIDS education

- Allocate specific time to HIV and AIDS education
- Increase time allocation

Work with other stakeholders

- Involve parents, the religious community
- Adapt/develop programs that are culturally acceptable
- Work to foster a safe and open environment in schools, in the education sector and society as a whole, so to break the silence, and fight stigma and discrimination

E. Next steps

IBE

- a. Make a thorough evaluation of the teacher education manual and send it to Simon Baker (UNESCO BKK) and Terje Watterdal (IDP Norway consultant in Indonesia).
- b. Include all inputs from the seminar in the IBE manual:
 - Add whenever relevant items on drugs and MSM.
 - Develop tool 9 of IBE manual.
 - Strengthen tool 3 (Include worksheet and some few concrete examples on how change has been achieved or failed, for instance: how to add a section on condom or MSM in a curriculum)
→ Simon Baker will provide feedbacks and comments to IBE.
- c. Develop a resource pack of practical exercises on stigma and discrimination
- d. Contribute to a compendium of examples of activities (students, teachers, teacher educators) to be done regionally. IBE could coordinate a small network of contributors and develop a one page common template. To be linked with the teacher education manual.
- e. Continue to work with Bangkok for capacity-building with some of the participating countries.

UNESCO Bangkok

- a. Evaluate the pilot teacher education manual, with IBE and with Terje Watterdal (IDP Norway consultant in Indonesia).
- b. Review the IBE manual and provide comments to IBE
- c. Work closely with the UNESCO HIV/AIDS focal points and the various MOEs to create opportunities to develop or to strengthen HIV and AIDS curriculum. One such opportunity will be to plan for a UBW regional program, based on EDUCAIDS to critically review existing curriculum and determine how best it can be improved.

Geneva, May 2007