

**Regional meeting**  
**‘Integrating a comprehensive HIV and AIDS education into**  
**teacher training curricula for the Arab Region’**  
Beirut, 29-30 July

## Background

With HIV infections increasingly affecting younger and younger segments of the population in the Arab Region, especially those between 15-24 years of age<sup>1</sup>, the education sector has a significant role to play in prevention due to its capacity to reach a large segment of that population. UNESCO places a huge emphasis on the potential role of education in halting the spread of HIV and AIDS through the acquisition of knowledge and skills and empowerment of individuals.

As the lead agency for HIV prevention among young people in educational institutions within the UNAIDS division of labour, UNESCO bases its work on EDUCAIDS, a UNAIDS Global Initiative on Education and HIV & AIDS, with a comprehensive framework for the education sector response to HIV prevention, in collaboration with governments, UN partners, and Civil Society Organizations. UNESCO supports the integration of HIV and AIDS responses into the education sectoral plans insisting that education responses must be further promoted and integrated into national prevention strategies. Among them, curricula for HIV and AIDS and educator training and support are part of the five essential components of EDUCAIDS.

However, although HIV and AIDS education is included in curricula in many countries, they are not covered in an effective way, omitting sensitive yet vital issues. EDUCAIDS reports a number of common persisting challenges highlighted from recent evaluations in school settings:

- HIV and AIDS are not addressed at all or get little attention in an already crowded curriculum
- even if HIV and AIDS education is addressed, it is not covered comprehensively
- teachers lack adequate training or they do not have access to appropriate resources in order to teach the subject effectively
- there is an emphasis on fact acquisition rather than on education that promotes life skills, behaviour and attitude change

<sup>1</sup> UNAIDS, AIDS Epidemic Update December 2007 available online at:  
[http://data.unaids.org/pub/EPISlides/2007/2007\\_epiupdate\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/EPISlides/2007/2007_epiupdate_en.pdf)

- sensitive but important topics such as gender, socio-cultural issues, or sexuality are not incorporated in the curricula
- monitoring or evaluation strategies to assess learning outcomes or behaviour change are rarely in place

Teachers have a strategic position in the education system due to their capacity to reach out to learners and develop their knowledge and life skills in relation to HIV and AIDS and in fighting stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV. One of the three-fold curriculum approaches suggested in EDUCAIDS is the coverage of HIV and AIDS in official curricula together with pre- and in-service teacher training in order to support teachers in meeting curricula requirements by increasing their knowledge on HIV and AIDS, their confidence and experience in interactive and participatory learning methodologies, while ensuring the availability of appropriate learning and teaching materials.

In this context UNESCO Beirut, Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States is organizing a regional meeting on 'Integrating a comprehensive HIV and AIDS education into teacher training curricula for the Arab Region' in close collaboration with the International Bureau of Education, a UNESCO Institute specializing in curriculum issues. The purpose of the meeting is to look at HIV and AIDS education and teacher training: challenges, strategies and responses in the Arab Region in order to come up with policy recommendations to address the issue. At least two participants from each country in the Arab Region will be invited to participate including one person in charge of teacher training at national level, the HIV and AIDS focal point within the Ministry of Education, or the teacher training curriculum focal point

Following this regional meeting addressing HIV and AIDS education issues related to teacher training, a follow-up training workshop will be organized with selected countries in the region with demonstrated interest and intent to proceed with the integration of HIV and AIDS into teacher training curricula. This workshop will build on the outcomes of the regional meeting in order to further support national efforts by strengthening national capacities in the methodological and practical issues of the process.

## **Objectives**

This regional meeting aims to provide a platform for regional policy dialogue enabling representatives to exchange information, knowledge, experience and lessons learnt in relation to HIV and AIDS education and teacher training programmes and curricula and collectively consider common issues and challenges that countries in the Arab Region face and identify strategies to overcome them. Most specifically the meeting will:

- analyse the responses on HIV and AIDS in teacher training programmes and curricula in different countries in the region and look at the challenges, obstacles, and lessons learnt
- analyse the current strategies for teacher training in the area of HIV and AIDS education

- discuss and identify the relevant contents and pedagogical approaches for the needs of the countries in order to identify best practices and lessons learnt, gaps and obstacles as well as future strategies aiming to improve the integration of HIV and AIDS education in teacher training programmes and curricula at regional and national levels

This activity aims to support and strengthen country responses towards the attainment of Millennium Development Goals, especially Goal 6 “Combat HIV and AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases” and thus contribute to the attainment of the EFA Goals promoting good quality education for all learners.

### **Expected Outcomes**

The regional meeting is expected to increase the knowledge and information around current issues in the Arab Region in relation to HIV and AIDS education in teacher training programmes and curricula through a comprehensive approach and propose to improve national efforts for a more effective implementation. More specifically, it is expected that the meeting will identify:

- recommendations for the region in relation to teacher training and HIV and AIDS education
- national training needs in relation to teacher training and HIV and AIDS education
- follow-up action at regional/national level

### **Methodology**

The meeting will be composed of presentations and interactive work to enable interaction among participants. This will give the participants the opportunity to share information and exchange views and experience creating a dynamic political dialogue among countries in the Arab Region.