



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织



HIV/AIDS Prevention Education

In response to the epidemic, UNESCO's action in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention education is a priority.

AIDS caused approximately 3.1 million deaths in 2004 and left 14 million children orphaned. It is estimated that 14,000 people are infected by HIV each day. Nearly half of these people are between 15 and 24 years old. Education has a major role to play in reducing the risks and the vulnerability linked to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. To respond efficiently, UNESCO focuses on prevention education. It offers competence in a variety of fields including policy-making; educational practices; scientific knowledge; sensitivity to social and cultural context; and capacity building in communications. HIV/AIDS threatens to destroy decades of investment in education and human development, particularly in vast zones of Sub-Saharan Africa, in Latin America and in the Caribbean. The epidemic is not simply a health problem, it is also a challenge to development in



HIV /AIDS Prevention education class in Maseru, Lesotho (G.Pirozzi © UNAIDS)

general. Concentrated among young adults, HIV/AIDS strikes mostly poor and poorly educated segments of society. Nonetheless, its impact on the educational system is worrying. HIV/AIDS limits the pool of available teachers and the demand for education because children with infected family members are encouraged to drop out of school to care for their relatives. The quality of education suffers also due to high absenteeism among teachers, student apathy and a reduction of the time devoted to classes -- all of which

impede the delivery of quality education.

EDUCAIDS: A GLOBAL INITIATIVE

To provide new impetus to prevention education UNESCO and its UNAIDS partners launched the EDUCAIDS global initiative, in March 2004. The programme's goal is to help governments and other key players, in affected or high risk countries, to develop education programmes adapted to young people and to vulnerable populations. The first step consisted of providing information sheets for decision-makers along with technical manuals and orientation documentation aimed at extending the scope and efficiency of prevention education.

UNESCO is currently focusing on the following goals:

- to integrate HIV prevention

education into international development plans and into national education policies. UNESCO undertakes activities aimed at

promoting a better use of resources. At the national level, it encourages policy discussions and wider public involvement;

- to adapt prevention education to the diversity of needs and contexts. Stress is placed on information dissemination and on advice services offered through formal and non-formal education, and through networks;

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Advantages of an Intersectorial Approach to HIV/AIDS Prevention

UNESCO's experience in its fields of competence, education, science, social sciences, culture and communication, allow the Organization to develop technical and organizational skills based on an interdisciplinary approach particularly well adapted to the demands of prevention education. All UNESCO sectors will formulate culturally acceptable responses designed with input from people living with HIV and AIDS, adapted to gender and age, respectful of human rights and based on scientific facts:

- in the Asia-Pacific Region, the culture, social science and education sectors have developed prevention programmes dealing with HIV; forced sex-work by young girls and women; the use of injection drugs among the ethnic minorities of the Mekong;
- the social science sector focuses on discrimination issues linked to HIV and has produced a practical guide for young people on peer education methods;
- the culture and education sectors have jointly produced manuals on the use of theatre in response to HIV;
- the communication sector participates in drafting training programmes for journalists and media professionals in Africa with the aim of improving their ability to treat issues relating to AIDS, culture and gender;
- the science sector strives to make scientifically-based information widely available to public authorities, to communication professionals and to educators.

- to facilitate access to scientific information. This includes support for scientific cooperation but also includes capacity-building, at the higher education level, in producing and disseminating research and data on HIV/AIDS;

- to reduce vulnerability and to encourage responsible behaviour. UNESCO intends to mobilize political elites at the highest level. It aims to allow decision-makers; education providers, and youth to play an efficient and responsible role. It also fosters innovative community action aimed at protecting and involving the most vulnerable populations.

In support of its preventive action, UNESCO has launched the FRESH initiative, which places a priority on efficient school health programmes. Working with Education and Health ministers towards the implementation of school health policies and efficient programmes promoting good nutrition, FRESH strives to impart the acquisition of knowledge, of behaviour, and of values which allow children to make appropriate and positive health decisions, even where HIV/AIDS is concerned.

UNESCO's preventive action also includes the promotion, in conjunction with the International Labour Organization (ILO), of workplace HIV/AIDS policies with the aim of

improving the well-being of teachers and other school staff.

UNESCO drafted an HIV/AIDS workplace policy for its own staff.

This initiative, which began with training sessions for trainers chosen from within the ranks of the staff, led to pilot sessions before the training is broadened to remaining staff. The most significant step will be implementing the United Nations policy, adopted in 1991, while adapting it to the needs of UNESCO staff.

To Find Out More

<http://www.unesco.org/aids>

HIV/AIDS Education Clearinghouse
<http://www.hivaidsclearinghouse.unesco.org>

Web site of the International Bureau of Education, global database for HIV/AIDS preventive education:
<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/HIVAids.htm>

FRESH web site:
<http://www.unesco.org/education/fresh>

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