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Cultural Organization

UNESCO'S STRATEGY FOR HIV AND AIDS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
CAPNET	Caribbean Publishers' Network
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCA	Common Country Assessment
COHSOD	Council for Human and Social Development
CONCASIDA	Central American Congress on STD/HIV/AIDS
EFA	Education for All
GIPA	Greater Involvement of People living with HIV
GTT	Global Task Team
GTZ	Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education
IATT	Inter-Agency Task Team
ILO	International Labour Organization
LIFE	Literacy Initiative for Empowerment
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur
MOEY	Ministry of Education and Youth
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
ORCALC	Regional Bureau of Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
TTISSA	Teacher Training Initiative for sub-Saharan Africa
UBW	Unified Budget and Workplan
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WPHRE	World Programme for Human Rights Education
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Background

This document presents an updated version of a previous UNESCO strategy on HIV and AIDS for Latin America and the Caribbean that covered the period 2004-2005. It is based primarily on the proceedings from the first meeting of the HIV and AIDS Focal Points in the region held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1-4 April 2007. The objective of the meeting was to update and strengthen a UNESCO Latin American and Caribbean strategic plan for HIV and AIDS. Meeting participants included staff from UNESCO offices in Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay as well as individuals from the International Institute for Educational Planning in Buenos Aires and UNESCO Headquarters. The resulting strategy presented in this document is fully consistent with UNESCO's global strategy published earlier in the year (UNESCO, 2007).

As with UNESCO's global HIV and AIDS strategy, the Latin America and Caribbean version explains how UNESCO will undertake its work in the context of a broader effort organized through UNAIDS to move towards universal access to comprehensive HIV prevention programmes, treatment, care and support, and ensures that UNESCO's response in the region continues to be informed by the epidemic's unfolding and dynamic character, changes in the regional context, as well as changes within UNESCO, including Education Sector reform.

The revised regional strategy seeks to clearly articulate priority core actions for the UNESCO response, building on past experience and UNESCO's longstanding work in this area, and synchronised with the vision, goals, objectives and principles of UNESCO's global strategy. The revised regional strategy, therefore, gives priority to fulfilling UNESCO's responsibilities under the UNAIDS division of labour, including as the lead organization for HIV prevention with young people in educational institutions and as part of broader efforts to support countries to move towards universal access. The UNAIDS division of labour also designates UNESCO as a "main partner" in 8 other technical support areas, indicating an appreciation of, and a role for, other aspects of UNESCO's work.

The importance attached to education on HIV and AIDS is reflected in the central role given to the UNAIDS Global Initiative on Education and HIV & AIDS, known as EDUCAIDS, an effort led by UNESCO. EDUCAIDS provides support for the implementation of comprehensive national education sector responses to the epidemic, and is one of three core Education for All (EFA) priorities endorsed by UNESCO's Executive Board (174 EX/2006; UNESCO, 2006a). Over 30 countries are now involved in EDUCAIDS, through discussions with UNESCO field staff, education ministry counterparts, and local civil society, with many more expressing interest in becoming involved. EDUCAIDS benefits from a broad-based and growing partnership of stakeholders in the education sector, as was reflected by the participation of the UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsor participation at the regional HIV and AIDS Focal Point meeting held in Buenos Aires.

A revised version of the strategy was drafted after the UNESCO Latin America and Caribbean HIV and AIDS meeting in Buenos Aires, followed by circulation of the draft among all UNESCO offices in the region for their review and input. The final version benefits from considerable feedback, suggestions and substantive input by UNESCO colleagues in the region, whose past experience and vision for programming in the years ahead are at the heart of this strategy.

HIV and AIDS: the Latin American and Caribbean Context

HIV epidemics in Latin America and the Caribbean are well-established, although complex and varying in nature across the region. An estimated 2 million people are living with HIV, with new infections totalling about 170,000 in 2006 (UNAIDS, 2006a). Central America is a sub-region that is significantly affected¹, but it is the Caribbean that has the second highest rate of HIV infection in the world after sub-Saharan Africa, with a prevalence of 1.2% (*ibid*). Nearly three-quarters of people living with HIV in the Caribbean reside in the two countries of the island of Hispaniola, namely the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Of the estimated 1.7 million people living with HIV in Latin America, two-thirds reside in the four largest countries – Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico.

Various factors fuel the HIV epidemic in the region, including unequal socioeconomic development, high population mobility, homophobia, and gender inequalities. The role of unprotected sex between men, in particular, in Latin America tends to be publicly denied and ignored in national AIDS responses, notably in Central America and the Andean region of South America (Cohen, 2006). Unprotected sex between men features centrally in the epidemics of most Latin American countries, accounting, for example, for as much as 25% to 35% of reported HIV cases in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Guatemala and Peru (UNAIDS, 2006a). Unprotected sex between men is believed to be a smaller but important factor in the Caribbean, accounting for about one tenth of reported cases. Here, a thriving sex industry servicing both local and foreign clients is significantly contributing to new HIV infections. In the Dominican Republic, for example, the epidemic is believed to hinge to a considerable extent on transmission between sex workers and their clients. HIV prevalence in the country's estimated 100,000 sex workers ranges from 2.5% to over 12%, depending on the location.

Injecting drug use is not believed to feature centrally in the epidemics in the region, although it is the most important risk factor for HIV transmission in the relatively small epidemics of Bermuda and Puerto Rico. In several cities in Brazil, declines have been found in HIV infections among injecting drug users due to a number of factors including expanded harm reduction programmes, while in Argentina injecting drug use appears to have declined overall. In Argentina, however, there are indications that injecting drug users have also been driven deeper underground due to stigma and disintegrating injecting networks.

Several countries in the region have made recent inroads due to wider access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) and dual emphasis on prevention and treatment. For example, in the Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba and Jamaica, expanded treatment access has led to progress in controlling these countries' HIV epidemics while efforts supported by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in the framework of the "3 by 5" Initiative have also contributed to an increase in treatment coverage in other parts of the region. Additionally, a comprehensive approach including the promotion of sex education and HIV prevention in schools, condom use, harm reduction and HIV testing has enabled Brazil to keep its HIV epidemic stable for the past several years (Okie, 2006). Evidence suggests, however, that there is no room for complacency. Scaled-up and comprehensive efforts are required to guard against the possibility of resurgent epidemics in the region.

¹ Estimated prevalences in 2005 were 1% in El Salvador, Guatemala and Panama, 1.5% in Honduras, and 2.5% in Belize (UNAIDS, 2006a).

UNESCO's Response Globally and in the Region

As stated in the recently revised *UNESCO Strategy to Respond to HIV and AIDS* (UNESCO, 2007), governments across the world committed themselves to accelerating their responses to the epidemic at the 2001 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS), reaffirmed at the United Nations (UN) World Summit in 2005, and again at the June 2006 High-Level Meeting on AIDS. In the years following UNGASS, there has been strengthened action at all levels, with increased leadership and commitment, more resources, and intensified delivery of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Some countries have also reported achievements in establishing national human rights frameworks and in involving civil society in the development, implementation and evaluation of national responses.

As part of this effort, a Global Task Team (GTT) was established to improve AIDS coordination among multilateral institutions and international donors in recognition that the world must do more to tackle AIDS effectively in the years to come. One of the GTT recommendations in its June 2005 report (UNAIDS, 2005a) was the establishment of a UNAIDS division of labour, building on the comparative advantages and complementarities of UNAIDS Cosponsors to ensure effective support at the country level. Responding to this recommendation, the UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors developed a division of labour comprised of 17 technical support areas with a 'lead organization' for each and the involvement of 'main partners' (UNAIDS, 2005b). As the UN specialised agency for education, UNESCO has been designated the lead organization for HIV prevention with young people in educational institutions. UNESCO's work in other areas is also appreciated and acknowledged in the division of labour; UNESCO has been designated as a main partner in eight other technical support areas (see Table 1).

Technical Support Area	Lead Organization(s)	Main Partners
HIV prevention with young people in educational institutions	UNESCO	ILO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO
HIV and AIDS, development, governance and mainstreaming, including instruments such as poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), and enabling legislation, human rights and gender	UNDP	ILO, UNAIDS Secretariat, UNESCO , UNICEF, WHO, World Bank, UNHCR
Support to strategic, prioritised and costed national plans; financial management; human resources; capacity and infrastructure development; impact alleviation and sectoral work	World Bank	ILO, UNAIDS Secretariat, UNDP, UNESCO , UNICEF, WHO
HIV and AIDS workplace policy and programmes, private sector mobilisation	ILO	UNESCO, UNDP
Provision of information and education, condom programming, prevention for young people outside schools and prevention efforts targeting vulnerable groups (except injecting drug users, prisoners and refugee populations)	UNFPA	ILO, UNAIDS Secretariat, UNESCO , UNICEF, UNODC, WHO
Overall policy, monitoring and coordination on prevention	UNAIDS Secretariat	All UNAIDS Cosponsors
Dietary/nutrition support	WFP	UNESCO , UNICEF, WHO
Addressing HIV among displaced populations (refugees and internally displaced persons)	UNHCR	UNESCO , UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, UNDP
Strategic information, knowledge sharing and accountability, coordination of national efforts, partnership building, advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation, including estimation of national prevalence and projection of demographic impact	UNAIDS Secretariat	ILO, UNDP, UNESCO , UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, WFP, WHO, World Bank

² All 17 areas of the UNAIDS Division of Labour can be found in the Annex.

Over the years, UNESCO's sectors (education, natural science, social and human sciences, culture and communication and information), institutes, regional bureaux and field offices have intensified their actions, in collaboration with other partners, to respond to HIV and AIDS. UNESCO is in a unique position to bring an inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary approach to the broader effort organized by UNAIDS to move towards universal access to comprehensive HIV prevention programmes, treatment, care and support (see Box 1).

As the UN specialised agency for education, UNESCO supports lifelong learning that builds and maintains essential skills, competencies, knowledge, behaviours and attitudes. This includes learning in formal educational settings (e.g., in schools, colleges, universities or other educational or training institutions); through non-formal educational activities aimed at, for example, developing adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children and youth, life skills education and technical and vocational education and training; and through informal education through the mass media, for example.³

The priority that UNESCO has given to education is based on the evidence that education – especially education on prevention – contributes toward the knowledge and skills essential for the prevention of HIV and protects individuals, families, communities, institutions and nations from the impact of AIDS. Education also helps to overcome the conditions that facilitate the spread of HIV, including poverty, ill-health, gender inequality, violence and abuse, particularly against girls and women. Beyond this, education can create the conditions of understanding, respect and tolerance – all of which contribute to reduced stigma and discrimination against vulnerable and marginalised communities and people living with HIV.

UNESCO's Executive Board has included EDUCAIDS, the UNESCO-led UNAIDS Global Initiative on Education and HIV & AIDS, as one of three core priority initiatives within EFA⁴, acknowledging the importance of comprehensive education sector engagement as part of the national response to HIV and AIDS. EDUCAIDS links with these core initiatives for maximum synergy and impact. Through EDUCAIDS, UNESCO and its partners support countries to implement comprehensive, scaled-up educational programmes on HIV and AIDS that cover: content, curriculum and learning materials; educator training and support; and policy management and systems; and that ensure quality and the full utilisation of approaches and entry points, through both formal and non-formal education (UNESCO, 2006b). Its aims are promoted through greater collaboration among UNAIDS Cosponsors and key stakeholders, including national authorities, ministries (education, social welfare, health, labour and others), bilateral agencies and civil society groups at the country level.

Box 1: Contribution to Universal Access by UNESCO Sectors

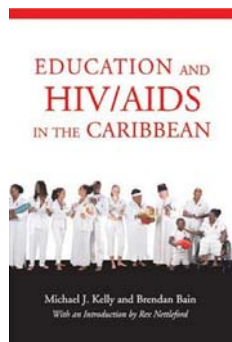
- **Education Sector** supports the establishment and intensification of comprehensive education sector responses to HIV and AIDS through EDUCAIDS and the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT) on Education.
- **Natural Science Sector** supports scientific content that is accurate and up-to-date and engages institutions of higher learning to integrate HIV and AIDS in their scientific programmes.
- **Social and Human Sciences Sector** supports research and policy development addressing discrimination and human rights and the structural causes of vulnerability, particularly among young people.
- **Culture Sector** advocates for and supports the consideration of socio-cultural issues and the use of arts and creativity in HIV and AIDS responses.
- **Communication and Information Sector** builds the capacity of the media, communication and information professionals and vulnerable groups to produce, disseminate and use accurate content.
- **Bureau for Strategic Planning** supports the integration of gender equality and youth perspectives into all stages of the programme cycle, from conceptualisation to evaluation.

³ This definition of formal, non-formal and informal education is drawn largely from UNESCO. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006: Literacy for Life (UNESCO, 2005).

⁴ The other two EFA initiatives are the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) and the Teacher Training Initiative for sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA).

UNESCO's response in Latin America and the Caribbean

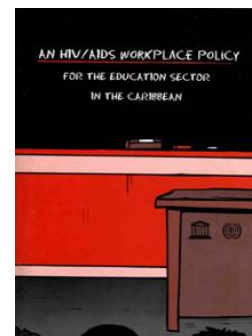
UNESCO's work in Latin America and the Caribbean has furthered **advocacy** efforts to support national responses to AIDS, and highlighted the important role that education can play in these responses. For example, in the Caribbean, UNESCO, jointly with the World Bank, supported a successful special meeting of the CARICOM Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD, June 2006, Trinidad & Tobago) on Education and HIV and AIDS which brought together ministers of education and national AIDS authorities from the Caribbean. The 'Port of Spain Declaration' issued at the meeting signifies the commitment by the CARICOM Ministers of Education to work consistently towards accelerating the response of the education sector to the HIV and AIDS epidemic. UNESCO has advocated for education sector responses in a number of subregional meetings including the Central American Congress on STD/HIV/AIDS (CONCASIDA), Foro Latinamericano, Central American Meeting of Red de Jóvenes, and Reunión Centroamericana en Educación Formal y No Formal para la prevención del VIH y SIDA.



At the heart of advocacy efforts has been support for **evidence-informed policy and practice** through the synthesis of lessons learned and the application and use of strategic information. In Argentina and Uruguay, UNESCO has strengthened networks of social science institutions to address human rights in their activities. In the Caribbean, UNESCO has promoted research through support to the UNESCO/Commonwealth Chair in HIV & AIDS and Education at the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the publication, with Ian Randle Publishers, of a seminal publication, *Education and HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean* (UNESCO, 2003). A new book of commissioned papers on various aspects of education and HIV & AIDS in the sub-region, in collaboration with the World Bank and CARICOM, will be published in 2007. Adaptation of existing materials has also been prioritised

by a number of offices. For example, in Mexico, UNESCO, jointly with UNIFEM, supported the adaptation of the publication *HIV/AIDS and Human Rights: Young People in Action: A Kit of Ideas for Youth Organizations* (UNESCO, 2001) based on local workshops to "localise" the content, including new illustrations selected from a contest in Central America.

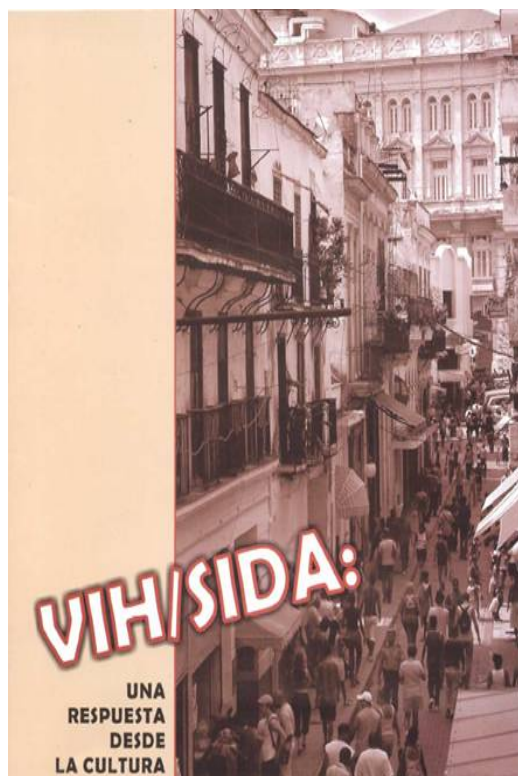
Policy and programmatic guidance has also been provided to ministries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other partners to support responses that are prioritised and integrated into broader development frameworks. For example, UNESCO has supported, in partnership with the ILO, a regional workshop to adapt the ILO Code of Practice on HIV and AIDS in the workplace for educational settings and the publication of *An HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy for the Education Sector in the Caribbean* (ILO and UNESCO, 2006). The policy was published and distributed to regional Ministries of Education and education partners and received the endorsement of the region's Ministers of Education at the 2006 Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) meeting which had HIV & AIDS and Education as its special focus. In Brazil, UNESCO has supported the inclusion of education sector responses into the National AIDS programme and supported improved coordination between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education.



Technical support and capacity enhancement has been a major focus of efforts in the region, with interventions too numerous to elaborate in this short document. In Chile, for example, UNESCO has built the capacity of directors and head teachers to incorporate prevention education into school programmes; supported the elaboration of teacher training curricula in higher education institutions on HIV and AIDS; and built knowledge and skills for adolescents and young women considered to be most-at-risk in priority geographic areas. Teacher training has been a key priority in Peru, where UNESCO has worked with the UNESCO Santiago Office and the Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) to support numerous initiatives in different regions. In Cuba, capacity enhancement efforts have supported the inclusion of socio-cultural approaches in HIV prevention efforts, including those in the education sector (see Box 2). In Jamaica, through EDUCAIDS, three Ministry of Education and Youth (MOEY) officials have

enrolled in the Masters in Education and Health Promotion at UWI and a Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist has been contracted to the MOEY to build capacity in this area.

UNESCO's work has also supported efforts underway to strengthen the **coherence and the coordination** of activities at the country level to reduce duplication and redundancies and to rapidly scale up the AIDS response. For example, in the Caribbean, UNESCO has assisted in hosting consultations on the Education Sector's Response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic since 2003 as well as supported the establishment of a network of Ministry of Education HIV and AIDS Coordinators for the Caribbean in 2006. UNESCO has also been involved with the development of a sub-regional project to address the harmonisation of education and health public policies on HIV in a number of Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR) countries including Brazil, Chile and Uruguay. This is a prime example of interagency support for simplified and harmonised efforts to improve country effectiveness in the response to AIDS and to support the scale-up of information and services across the continuum of prevention to treatment, care and support.



Box 2: Socio-cultural Approaches

UNESCO's Regional Bureau of Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean (ORCALC), based in Havana, Cuba, is engaged in efforts at the country and regional level to promote socio-cultural approaches to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support and to support the use of arts and creativity in the development of culturally appropriate responses to HIV and AIDS. ORCALC, with support from several United Nations agencies and institutions, convened a regional workshop "Theatre and Audiovisual Arts: An Innovative Approach to HIV and AIDS in Latin American and the Caribbean" (Havana, Cuba, 22-24 May, 2007). The workshop brought together artists and representatives from UN agencies, civil society organizations and academic institutions throughout the region to engage in dialogue and share experiences regarding the use of the arts in addressing HIV- and AIDS-related issues. This meeting concluded with the establishment of the **Regional Network of Cultural Experts and Creators Working Together in HIV and AIDS Prevention and Care (SIDACULT-net)**. This network is providing a forum for exchange of information and experiences across a range of Latin American and Caribbean countries supporting the use of arts and creativity to change the social-cultural norms, beliefs, roles and practices that increase HIV vulnerability and to stimulate public discourse and build ownership, participation and accountability for actions.

UNESCO Priorities in the Region

In the coming years, UNESCO offices in the region will continue to work within the articulated core areas of action as highlighted in the *UNESCO Strategy for Responding to HIV and AIDS*, with particular focus on contributing to the achievement of universal access to prevention programmes, treatment, care and support. To ensure that interventions address the local context and socio-cultural drivers of the epidemic such as poverty, gender inequality, stigma and discrimination, UNESCO offices will also base their programming on UNAIDS support to countries to “know your epidemic.” This includes addressing the identified behaviours and social conditions that are most associated with HIV transmission and that undermine the ability of those most vulnerable to HIV infection to access and use HIV information and services, as well as supporting the inclusion of groups that are key to the response in all stages of programming.⁵

A number of priorities were identified during the first meeting of regional HIV and AIDS Focal Points, including support for better coordination and for comprehensive responses; for enhanced engagement and greater visibility of UNESCO in national and regional processes; for advocacy and for strengthened political commitment by Member States to AIDS responses, with priority to education sector engagement in the response; and for technical support and capacity enhancement. These are outlined in further detail below, and represent strategic areas of action in the years ahead.

Box 3: Principles for Action

The principles for implementation of all of UNESCO’s work on HIV and AIDS include that this work is:

- Rights-based – and seeks to address stigma and discrimination
- Gender-responsive
- Culturally-appropriate
- Age-specific
- Scientifically accurate
- Seeks to meaningfully involve people living with HIV

Coordinated and Comprehensive Responses

More integrated action on HIV and AIDS with clear roles and responsibilities amongst UNESCO Headquarters, sectors, regional bureaux and cluster and country offices will assist in moving towards more coordinated and comprehensive responses throughout the region. While a UNAIDS division of labour has been established, building on the comparative advantages and complementarities of UNAIDS Cosponsors to ensure effective support at the country level (UNAIDS, 2005b), the “domestication” of this based on the capacity and resources available at the country level is still required. A key part of this move toward integrated action is ensuring a shift from project to programme approaches as well as to develop comprehensive education sector-wide responses that result in economies of scale in the region.

UNESCO offices in the region, working with partners, will continue to:

- Further define and clarify roles and responsibilities within UNESCO, in the context of universal access to prevention programmes, treatment, care and support, and within the UNAIDS technical support division of labour.
- Develop communication strategies for the diffusion of relevant and effective information for sustained ownership of the above roles and responsibilities.
- Create opportunities and spaces for discussion to share experiences, achievements, challenges, lessons and good practices from field offices in the region, particularly on EDUCAIDS.
- Demand and develop, with support from Headquarters, ways to develop greater coordination among the many partners involved in the response.

⁵ For more information, see UNAIDS. Practical Guidelines for Intensifying HIV Prevention: Towards Universal Access (UNAIDS, 2007a).

Enhanced Engagement and Visibility

A number of mechanisms exist at the country level to support coordinated national AIDS responses, including Common Country Assessments/United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (CCA/UNDAFs), joint country and regional teams on HIV and AIDS, UN Theme Groups on HIV and AIDS, and other processes undertaken through UN reform, notably “Delivering as One UN.” UNESCO has engaged and will continue to engage in these mechanisms and will aim to enhance its engagement and visibility in them through greater capacity, expertise, and credibility at the regional and country levels to deliver effective and coherent HIV and AIDS action.

UNESCO offices in the region, working with partners, will focus on:

- Supporting coordination, information sharing and learning to better enable effective UNESCO participation in existing structures and mechanisms.
- Reinforcing the internal capacity of UNESCO’s offices to respond to the needs of Member States through strategic actions, including resource mobilisation to increase future human, programmatic and financial capacity.
- Prioritising participation in existing regional and national processes whereby UNESCO can have a comparative advantage, such as in the aforementioned project harmonising public policies related to health, education and HIV.
- Drawing on its intersectoral competencies to support the integration of the education sector within multisectoral efforts to address the challenges posed by HIV and AIDS.

Advocacy and Strengthened Political Commitment

Continued advocacy and strengthened political commitment are required to ensure expanded and intensified prevention efforts alongside activities to scale up access to treatment, care and support. UNESCO offices in the region will continue to rely on their distinctive mix of competencies in education, natural science, social and human sciences, culture and communication and information to strengthen the response on HIV and AIDS through strategic and complementary approaches.

Socio-cultural and religious aspects that hinder effective HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support were identified as priority advocacy issues by the offices in the region. To overcome barriers to effective responses, UNESCO will support improved dialogue and understanding among key stakeholders about socio-cultural norms, beliefs, roles and practices that increase HIV vulnerability as well as those that can be mobilised in response to the epidemic.

UNESCO, working with its partners in the region, will continue to:

- Use existing evidence or, where necessary, develop research on HIV and AIDS status, responses, and trends in relevant sub-regions, clusters and countries.
- Advocate and promote action by leaders and policy-makers in the relevant sectors.
- Support the development of national sectoral policies and strategic plans to further the AIDS response. These plans will ensure attention to multi- and inter-sectoral approaches that address socio-cultural diversity, gender inequality and stigma and discrimination.



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Technical Support and Capacity Enhancement

As mentioned earlier, technical support and capacity enhancement have been core areas of support from UNESCO offices in the region in the past. UNESCO will continue to facilitate, through its field offices and network of institutes, and through partnerships with other UNAIDS Cosponsors, civil society organizations and development partners, access to training and professional development interventions to ensure a solid base of human and institutional capacity at all levels. Technical support will build on lessons learned and programme experience, including South-South cooperation among countries in the region as well as between the region and other regions of the world, wherever possible (see Box 4). This includes support to ministries of education and their civil society counterparts in policy development and implementation (including strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation), information and communication exchange, as well as the development of knowledge and skills to reduce risk and decrease vulnerabilities.

Box 4: South-South Cooperation

UNESCO organized a capacity-building workshop for field staff and partner agencies (ministries of education and civil society organizations, including groups of HIV-positive people involved in education and HIV & AIDS) for African Lusophone countries in mid-2007, after the Latin America and Caribbean meeting which discussed this revised strategy. The UNESCO office in Brasilia participated in organizing and facilitating that workshop, drawing on its extensive experience in and lessons learned from HIV and AIDS action, and building ties across the Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa.

The Brasilia office prepared Portuguese versions of key documents, such as UNESCO's Strategy for Responding to HIV and AIDS and the EDUCAIDS Framework for Action; brought copies of many Portuguese-language HIV and AIDS education materials to share and discuss with participants; and played a key role in organizing and conducting the workshop.

This example of South-South cooperation will be further supported within Latin America and the Caribbean, and between the region and other regions of the world.

UNESCO, working with its partners in the region, will continue to:

- Promote the development of knowledge, the adoption of practices and behaviours and the embodiment of attitudes that reduce vulnerability and promote inclusiveness and support for those who are affected or infected by HIV.
- Support the on-going, sequenced and cumulative professional and technical development of teachers on HIV and AIDS to enable them to perform as instructors and mentors and to equip them with the skills and knowledge they need as individuals, and family and community leaders. This will include the production, or the adaptation where existing resources are available, of support materials to enable teachers to engage effectively in HIV and AIDS education and the inclusion of the subject in teacher training institutions.
- Create and develop an observatory for monitoring and evaluation for HIV prevention education, complementing existing systems at the country level. This should be one part of UNESCO's support for evidence-informed policy development, decision-making and programming.

How UNESCO Will Implement the Strategy in the Region

To ensure sustainability, coverage and impact on the identified priority action areas in the region, UNESCO will work in complementary ways to optimise limited resources and scale up promising approaches. This includes, for example, collaborating on regional and country-led programmes in areas of UNESCO's technical expertise such as the aforementioned project harmonising public policies related to health, education and HIV as well as participating in regional and international conferences and fora such as the 2008 International AIDS Conference (see Box 5). UNESCO's engagement in regional mechanisms such as UNAIDS regional support teams as well as those supporting Ministries of Education in MERCOSUR, the Organization of American States (OAS), and CARICOM countries will also remain critical to supporting lesson learning and strategic partnerships across countries. At the country level, Joint UN Teams on AIDS are the primary entry points for supporting the integration of HIV and AIDS into existing frameworks such as UNDAF.

Box 5: AIDS 2008 in Mexico City

The XVII International AIDS Conference, taking place in Mexico City in 2008, is the first International AIDS Conference to be held in Latin America. The Conference is an opportunity for UNESCO and its partners in Latin America and the Caribbean to showcase their accomplishments, learn from promising practices and programmatic experiences, and expand and scale up activities in the region.

UNESCO has developed, and will continue to strengthen, its capacity to support HIV and AIDS responses in the region. Regional HIV and AIDS focal points are important for promoting collaboration and communication exchange with UNESCO field offices and among UNAIDS Cosponsors, civil society, and other partners as well as for strengthening programming and policy development and implementation in key areas of UNESCO programming. Another important dimension of UNESCO, and one of its comparative advantages, is the existence of mechanisms at country and local levels, namely the global network of National Commissions for UNESCO as well as the Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) and UNESCO clubs, that enable UNESCO to move beyond the "national office" concept.

The establishment of four regional advisor posts, including one for Latin America and the Caribbean, will further ensure the delivery of high quality technical support and services to Member States, support UNESCO's response in countries where it may not have a regular presence, and contribute to joint programming and strengthened UN coordination. Specifically, the Advisor will be responsible for: coordinating HIV programming, including EDUCAIDS, in UNESCO field offices; identifying opportunities for UNESCO engagement in HIV policy development, standard setting and programming; representing UNESCO at key regional fora and maintaining partner relations at the regional level; as well as supporting resource mobilisation at the country and regional levels.

To move from strength to strength, UNESCO will take steps to improve sub-regional communication and coordination across HIV and AIDS Focal Points and field offices as well as to improve communication between the region and UNESCO Headquarters and institutes. The meeting of regional HIV and AIDS focal points was one opportunity for such discussions to take place; however, there is a recognised need for more regular communication to ensure consistent, coherent, strategic and informed programming. Normative guidance and resource materials will continue to be, wherever possible, available in multiple languages relevant to the region, including English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. For example, the *EDUCAIDS Framework for Action* (UNESCO, 2006b) which outlines the rationale for education sector engagement in AIDS responses, elements of a comprehensive education sector response, and implementation support available for EDUCAIDS, is available in the above languages.

In addition to efforts to expand institutional and human resource capacity in the region, UNESCO field offices will continue to support financial resource mobilisation for the response. UNAIDS UBW funds allocated to UNESCO's work in the region have increased in recent years, largely due to higher quality, more strategic proposals and demonstrated impact of previous funding. Further mobilisation of extra-budgetary support will be required, as UNAIDS and other AIDS financial support is further decentralised to country and regional levels.

Documenting, Monitoring and Evaluating UNESCO's Response to HIV and AIDS

Regular documentation, monitoring and evaluation of efforts are essential to track progress, to ensure relevant and strategic inputs to achieve the intended outcomes, and to readjust programming for maximum impact. UNESCO will continue to support improved documentation and communication of lessons learned, of promising programme approaches to be deepened and scaled up in the coming years, and of opportunities for adaptation and replication in similar settings and contexts (see, for example, documentation of examples from the UNESCO Good Policy and Practice in HIV & AIDS and Education series).

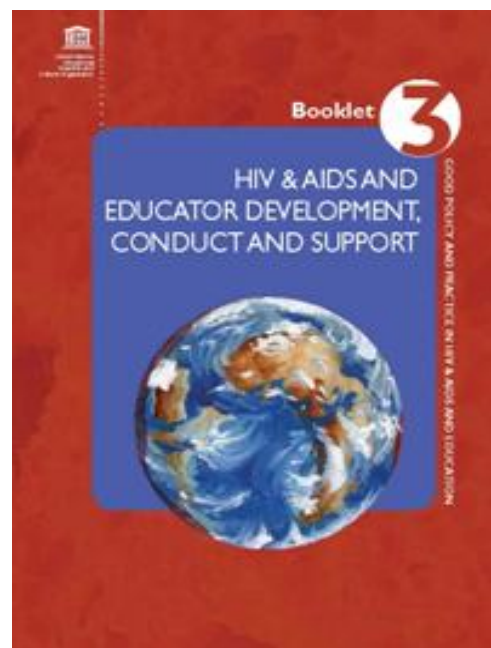
The monitoring and evaluation of UNESCO's response in the region will also be part of the broader evaluation processes within UNAIDS to monitor, document and report on impact. UNESCO field offices receiving UNAIDS UBW funds will continue to contribute to UNESCO's overall report to UNAIDS on progress made to achieve the principal outcomes for joint programme support towards universal access to comprehensive HIV prevention programmes, treatment, care and support. Similarly, all field offices will contribute to UNESCO monitoring of achievement in the technical support areas in which UNESCO is identified as a lead organization and a main partner (see Table 1) as well as in reporting to Member States during the General Conference and Executive Board meetings on progress delivering on UNESCO's mandate to achieve EFA.

Box 6: Good Policy and Practice

UNESCO's series on Good Policy and Practice in HIV & AIDS and Education presents ideas, research results, and policy and programme examples which project and policy developers and implementers can draw on as they prepare education systems to respond to the needs of HIV-affected and -infected learners and their communities. The following examples are drawn from the booklet on Educator Development, Conduct and Support:

- In Jamaica, where training in Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) is now mandatory in all teacher training institutions, UNESCO Kingston supported the development of advocacy materials to promote dialogue with teacher training institutions and trainers about the need to address HIV and AIDS. The next steps will be to develop instructional materials to train lecturers in all of the country's teacher education institutions, to integrate HIV and AIDS into training, and to publish materials for HFLE in collaboration with UNICEF, CARICOM and the Caribbean Publishers' Network (CAPNET).
- UNESCO Santiago sponsored a workshop to train teachers from kindergarten, primary and middle schools in Calama, Chile, to develop HIV and AIDS prevention activities...The activity was part of a wider regional project, the Regional Network for School Director Leadership for HIV and AIDS Prevention Education, which has been implemented in Argentina, Chile and Mexico, with plans for further expansion in the future.

Source: Good Policy and Practice in HIV & AIDS and Education Series. Educator Development, Conduct and Support, pp. 15 and 17 (UNESCO, 2006c).



Conclusion

In revising the Latin America and the Caribbean strategy for responding to HIV and AIDS, the aim has been to better position UNESCO to engage with the unfolding and dynamic nature of the epidemic in the region as well as to better align its work within the vision, goals and principles detailed in UNESCO's recently revised Global Strategy for Responding to HIV and AIDS. UNESCO's future efforts in the region will build on past achievements outlined in the previous regional strategy while also contributing to the fulfilment of UNESCO's responsibilities in the UNAIDS division of labour. As such, this revised strategy gives pride of place to UNESCO's responsibility to act as the lead organization in the UNAIDS division of labour for prevention with young people in educational institutions. UNESCO will also continue to engage as a main partner in the eight other technical support areas designated in the UNAIDS division of labour, within the overarching goal of supporting Member States to move towards universal access to prevention programmes, treatment, care and support.

This regional strategy clearly articulates priority areas of action for the coming years, including support for better coordination and for comprehensive responses; for enhanced engagement and greater visibility of UNESCO in national and regional processes; for advocacy and for strengthened political commitment by Member States to AIDS responses, with priority to education sector engagement in the response; and for technical support and capacity enhancement. As in the past, UNESCO will monitor and report on its actions in the region by documenting lessons learned and programme experience and supporting evidence-informed policy development and programming.

This strategy also takes to heart the sentiment expressed by UNESCO's Director-General in the foreword of UNESCO's revised global strategy that there can be no room for complacency when it comes to HIV and AIDS. While several countries in the region have made tangible progress in expanding treatment access and in reducing the number of new HIV infections through the implementation of comprehensive HIV prevention efforts, there is a need to take this work to scale and to achieve sufficient coverage, intensity and duration to have a significant impact. Otherwise, the epidemic will continue to spread and threaten hard-won development gains as well as future prospects for sustainable development. It is in this spirit that UNESCO aims to prevent the further spread of HIV and to protect individuals, families, communities, institutions and nations in Latin America and the Caribbean from the impact of AIDS.

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Annex: UNAIDS Technical Support Division of Labour

Technical support areas	Lead Organizations	Main Partners
1. STRATEGIC PLANNING, GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT		
HIV/AIDS, development, governance and mainstreaming, including instruments such as PRSPs, and enabling legislation, human rights and gender	UNDP	ILO, UNAIDS Secretariat, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, World Bank, UNFPA; UNHCR
Support to strategic, prioritized and costed national plans; financial management; human resources; capacity and infrastructure development; impact alleviation and sectoral work	World Bank	ILO, UNAIDS Secretariat, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO
Procurement and supply management, including training	UNICEF	UNDP, UNFPA, WHO, World Bank
HIV/AIDS workplace policy and programmes, private-sector mobilization	ILO	UNESCO, UNDP
2. SCALING UP INTERVENTIONS		
<i>Prevention</i>		
Prevention of HIV transmission in healthcare settings, blood safety, counselling and testing, sexually-transmitted infection diagnosis and treatment, and linkage of HIV prevention with AIDS treatment services	WHO	UNICEF, UNFPA, ILO
Provision of information and education, condom programming, prevention for young people outside schools and prevention efforts targeting vulnerable groups (except injecting drug users, prisoners and refugee populations)	UNFPA	ILO, UNAIDS Secretariat, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNODC, WHO
Prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT)	UNICEF, WHO	UNFPA, WFP
Prevention for young people in education institutions	UNESCO	ILO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, WFP
Prevention of transmission of HIV among injecting drug users and in prisons	UNODC	UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, ILO
Overall policy, monitoring and coordination on prevention	UNAIDS Secretariat	All Cosponsors
<i>Treatment, care and support</i>		
Antiretroviral treatment and monitoring, prophylaxis and treatment for opportunistic infections (adults and children)	WHO	UNICEF
Care and support for people living with HIV, orphans and vulnerable children, and affected households.	UNICEF	WFP, WHO, ILO
Dietary/nutrition support	WFP	UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO
<i>Addressing HIV in emergency, reconstruction and security settings</i>		
Strengthening HIV/AIDS response in context of security, uniformed services and humanitarian crises	UNAIDS Secretariat	UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, UNFPA
Addressing HIV among displaced populations (refugees and IDPs)	UNHCR	UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, UNDP
3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION, STRATEGIC INFORMATION, KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND ACCOUNTABILITY		
Strategic information, knowledge sharing and accountability, coordination of national efforts, partnership building, advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation, including estimation of national prevalence and projection of demographic impact	UNAIDS Secretariat	ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, WFP, WHO, World Bank
Establishment and implementation of surveillance for HIV, through sentinel/population-based surveys	WHO	UNAIDS Secretariat