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# ***Regional Consultation: the Role of Higher Education Institutions in the Arab Region in HIV Prevention***

***2 June 2009, Cairo***

(parallel session to ARCHE +10 Experts Meeting)

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# ***A. SUMMARY***



# 1. Background

According to recent UNAIDS statistics, the number of people living with HIV and AIDS is increasing worldwide, including the Arab Region. Even worse, infections are increasing among younger

Region, especially those between 15-24 years of age with women and girls being disproportionately affected. With a large part of that population spending a significant amount of their time in schools and universities, a huge responsibility is placed upon the education sector, especially Higher Education.

Preventive efforts must be intensified and education responses must be further promoted and integrated into national prevention strategies in an effort to reach the youth. Ensuring that scientifically correct, age appropriate and culturally sensitive information reaches young people during their study years is a shared responsibility of all stakeholders in the education sector, Member States and development partners alike.

Within the UNAIDS division of labour, UNESCO is the lead agency for HIV prevention among young people in educational institutions. Consequently, it leads and 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. Evidence based decision making is a major objective of EDUCAIDS and is part of the ten principles identified by UNAIDS for guiding preventive measures in the education sector.

In this context and within the framework of UNESCO's mandate, the consultation was organized aiming to contribute to decision making with evidence based information through consultation and dialogue, supporting UNESCO's overall efforts towards mainstreaming HIV prevention into the education system.

<sup>1</sup> UNAIDS, AIDS Epidemic Update December 2007 available online at: [http://data.unaids.org/pub/EPISlides/20072007/\\_epiupdate\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/EPISlides/20072007/_epiupdate_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> HIV & AIDS and Education: a Strategic Approach, UNAIDS 2008

## 2. Objectives

Recognizing the potential role of Higher Education Institutions in the Arab region as a unique resource for the development and implementation of country specific knowledge and interventions relating to HIV and AIDS and taking the opportunity of the collective presence of country delegations at the ARCHE +10 Experts Meeting, Cairo 2009, UNESCO Beirut Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States, in collaboration with UNESCO Cairo and contributions from UNESCO Offices in Amman, Khartoum and Rabat, organized this regional consultation and information session on HIV and AIDS in order to:

- ▶ Consider and discuss with country representatives the role and contribution of Higher Education Institutions in the region in HIV prevention, especially in relation to research, curricula, teacher training, student services, and other issues;
- ▶ Brief country representatives on the EDUCAIDS framework and approach to HIV and AIDS and UNESCO's activities in the region;
- ▶ Receive feedback from country representatives on country responses and needs, discuss their concerns in relation to HIV and AIDS and Higher Education and their expectations as to what kind of support they anticipate from UNESCO.

## 3. Outcomes

The consultation offered an excellent opportunity for reflecting collectively, UNESCO, Member States, UNAIDS Cosponsors and other stakeholders in the Arab Region, upon the role of Higher Education in HIV prevention and for identifying ways to better respond to the needs of young people in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner.

HIV and AIDS issues in relation to young people in the Arab Region and Higher Education Institutions were highlighted and discussed. The role of education and especially Higher Education Institutions in planning and implementing interventions was discussed with country representatives working in the field of Higher Education and a priority agenda in the region in relation to HIV and AIDS was identified.

More specifically, the consultation helped improve awareness among participants about :

- ▶ the most important issues of concern in relation to HIV and AIDS and Higher Education where action is required;
- ▶ the role of Higher Education Institutions in the region and specific areas of potential work in response to HIV and AIDS;
- ▶ EDUCAIDS, UNESCO's interventions in the region and of potential ways of collaboration.

## 4. Methodology

The consultation was organized as a workshop and was based on a participatory approach combining respectively presentations and discussion sessions. Participants were solicited to provide their comments on presentations and other participants' observations. The meeting was divided into three sessions:

- ▶ **1<sup>st</sup> Session:** UNESCO's contribution to the UNAIDS division of labour – EDUCAIDS (UNESCO and UNAIDS)
- ▶ **2<sup>nd</sup> Session:** HIV prevention through Education in the Arab

Region – the Role of Higher Education Institutions (Group work)

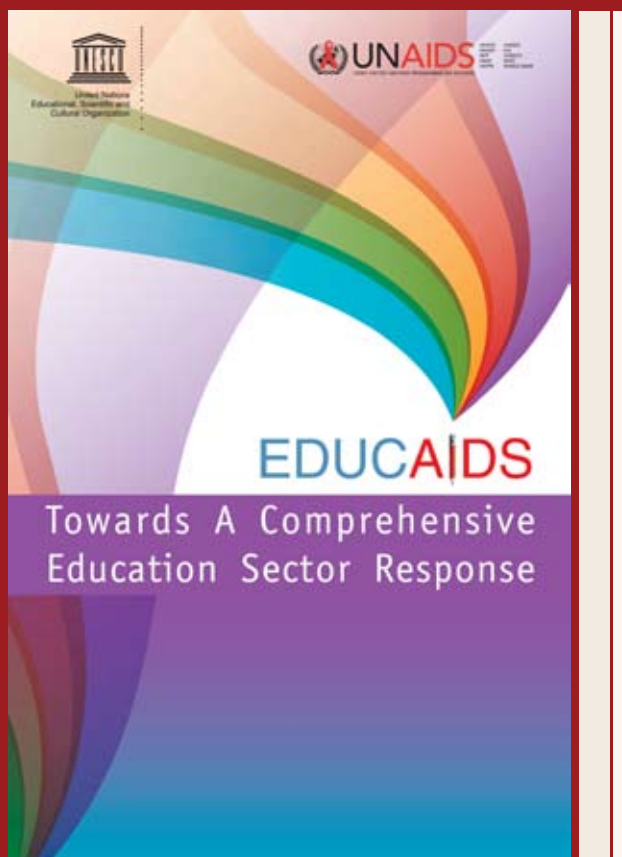
- ▶ **3<sup>rd</sup> Session:** HIV prevention through Education in the Arab Region – Expectations from UNESCO (Group work)

Each session was divided into two parts: general presentation and introduction to the session's theme, followed by discussion, questions, comments and identification of recommendations.



# **B. 1<sup>st</sup> SESSION**

***UNESCO's Contribution to the UNAIDS  
Division of Labour - EDUCAIDS***



<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/147360/001473/E.pdf>



The aim of this session was to offer to the participants an overview of the status of HIV and AIDS in the region, the UN response through UNAIDS and the UNAIDS division of labour, and, the role of education in prevention efforts, especially higher education, and UNESCO's leading role for HIV prevention among young people in education institutions.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Presentation: Status and trend of the HIV Epidemic evolution in the region (Salma Mousallem, UNAIDS Cairo)**

UNAIDS provided an overall description of the status of the epidemic in the region and areas where responses need to focus on. The presentation highlighted:

► **Socio-economic and political characteristics of the epidemics in the region as well as the pattern and trends:**

There is no single HIV and AIDS epidemic in the region, it differs in terms of prevalence (from 0,01% to 2,9%) and drivers, thus proposed actions and responses within the workshop are not provided as universal solution or recipe but are entry points that have to be customized upon the specificities and realities of each country.

► **Emphasis on prevention:** Although the majority of countries in the region are categorized as low epidemic (except for Sudan which is in the state of a generalized epidemic), HIV prevention programmes must remain of crucial importance for

maintaining low prevalence and ensuring that it does not turn into a generalized epidemic.

► **Challenges and opportunities:** Lack of awareness, access to information and prevention lead to an increase of transmission risks and a rapid spread of the epidemic among population at higher risk that could threaten the general population as well.

Better knowledge of the epidemic among young people should be a priority action in the region. Young people represent a high percentage of the population and they are more at risk.

The need for a three-pillar based approach (Multi-sectoral Support / Political and Institutional Support and Commitment/Focus on Universal Access to treatment, care and support) in order to guarantee efficient HIV prevention planning.

## Discussions

- ▶ Participants seemed to be unaware of the extent of the epidemic in their region and the statistics presented by UNAIDS. One of the first and main issues raised was the **lack of awareness and statistical data** about HIV and AIDS in the respective countries. The need for enhancing the generation and dissemination of reliable statistical data and information was underscored.
- ▶ Information concerning the **infections among young people** in the world and in the region seems to be lacking. The presentation and statistics helped draw attention to the fact that there is a real risk for young people and that education institutions have the responsibility to equip them with information, knowledge and skills to protect themselves.
- ▶ In light of the above, it was acknowledged that Higher Education Institutions have a huge responsibility, primarily in relation to information generation and sharing and HIV prevention among young people as they spend a significant part of their time in schools and universities.

### *What works:*

- Access to information
- Access to counselling
- Access to testing

### *Shortages and limitations:*

- **Information:** raising awareness among the general public and decision makers, engage more civil society and people leaving with HIV in prevention efforts.
- **Resources:** \$431 million are channelled to the region through the Global Fund, yet it is still insufficient and unequally distributed.
- **Treatment:** although the region has an increase of about 6% in treatment, it is still not efficient as only 6% of those in need receive treatment due to lack of information about what is available, how and where to get help.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Presentation: EDUCAIDS - the UNESCO led UNAIDS Global Initiative on Education and HIV & AIDS** (Theophania Chavatzia, UNESCO Beirut)

The presentation provided an overview of the EDUCAIDS Framework for Action, Technical Policy Briefs and Overview of Practical Resources. EDUCAIDS proposes:

- ▶ a comprehensive education sector response comprising of five essential components:
  - ◆ Quality Education
  - ◆ Content, curriculum and learning materials
  - ◆ Educator training and support
  - ◆ Policy, management and systems
  - ◆ Approaches and illustrative entry points

- ▶ moving towards a holistic, sector-wide approach in addressing the challenges and impact of HIV and AIDS, using all modalities, capacities and components of education systems.

The EDUCAIDS Resource Pack was distributed among the participants in Arabic, English and French. It was highlighted that the Resource Pack is not meant to be a model for all countries but a source of information offering examples of action at various levels and entry points to be adapted according to the needs and specificities of each country in the region.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Presentation: Examples of UNESCO's Work in the Arab Region: ongoing and planned interventions** (Sherine El Meshad, UNESCO Cairo)

The presentation provided participants with an overview of UNESCO's responses in the region, including a selection of initiatives at regional and national level.

### ▶ **Awareness Raising – Advocacy**

- *UNESCO Amman Office:*
  - Developing a dynamic portal website on HIV and AIDS in collaboration with the University of Jordan
  - Supporting World AIDS Day
  - Training workshop for ASPNet school teachers

and Coordinators in FRESH initiative for school health to raise awareness among teachers and policy makers

- *UNESCO Beirut Office:*
  - Supporting World AIDS campaigns
  - Production of a song and video clip on HIV and AIDS
  - Training for media personnel on HIV and AIDS reporting
- *UNESCO Cairo Office:*
  - Documentary film on HIV and AIDS awareness

- Staff awareness sessions at the workplace
- Supporting World AIDS Campaign
- *UNESCO Rabat Office:*
  - Using theatre and oral cultural heritage in response to HIV and AIDS
  - Translation and adaptation of HIV and AIDS theatre manual into Maghrebic Arabic

### ► **Capacity Building**

- *UNESCO Amman Office:*
  - Training workshop for Journalists in Reporting on HIV and AIDS
  - Core team of experts (Education, Health, Media, Social Science, Law and Religion) established for capacity building and master training
- *UNESCO Beirut Office:*
  - UNESCO – ISESCO sub-regional training workshop on 'Integrating HIV and AIDS into teacher training curricula and teacher training' for selected African and Arab Countries (forthcoming)
  - Regional training workshops on comprehensive school health
  - Training toolkit on HIV prevention for teachers, students and parents
  - Supporting the WHO e-learning initiative in Lebanon targeting students in schools across the country
- *UNESCO Cairo Office:*
  - Workshop on Youth and HIV and AIDS
  - Theatre-based training of trainers on HIV and AIDS and STDs
  - On-line youth training on HIV and AIDS with the collaboration of UNAIDS
- *UNESCO Khartoum Office:*
  - Training for HIV and AIDS focal persons of line Ministries and 20 national NGOs on HIV and AIDS project development and management tools
  - Education and technical skills training for each Chairperson of PLWH Association in 15 Northern States is underway, in collaboration with UNAIDS Sudan
- *UNESCO Rabat Office:*
  - Capacity building for PLWH to address stigma and discrimination within the framework of the Arab Cities Coalition against racism, discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance

### ► **Evidence based decision making through studies and policy dialogue:**

- *UNESCO Amman Office:*
  - Situational analysis on the integration of HIV and AIDS in teacher training curricula

- *UNESCO Beirut Office*
    - Situation analysis of the education sector responses to HIV and AIDS
    - Regional meeting: 'Integrating a comprehensive HIV and AIDS education into teacher training curricula for the Arab Region'
  - *UNESCO Cairo Office:*
    - Modification of the HIV and AIDS components in Medical Schools curricula
  - *UNESCO Khartoum Office:*
    - Study on 'Knowledge, Attitude and Behaviour' currently underway among university students and staff, in collaboration with UNAIDS Sudan
    - Developing a 'Gender Sensitive HIV and AIDS Workplace Policy & Implementation Plan' for Federal Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research
  - *UNESCO Rabat Office:*
    - Assessment studies in Maghreb countries on the integration of HIV and AIDS into school curricula
- ▶ **Technical Support through local training sessions and production of materials**
- *UNESCO Amman Office:*
    - 25 Master trainers to be trained in using HIV and AIDS manuals
  - HIV and AIDS resources manuals in Arabic that include UNESCO language guidelines
  - *UNESCO Cairo Office:*
    - UN Joint Programme of Support for HIV and AIDS
  - *UNESCO Khartoum Office:*
    - Development of the 5-Year HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan for the Federal Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Sudan
    - Compiled and developed Joint Integrated UN Work-Plan on HIV and AIDS for the year 2008
    - Ongoing technical consultation with NATCOM and national counterparts in order to establish a UNESCO Chair on EDUCAIDS in North Sudan with an Antenna in Southern Sudan
  - *UNESCO Rabat Office:*
    - Empowering women's capacity in rural areas in negotiation skills in relation to HIV and AIDS
    - Organization of training sessions on Human Rights Based Approach applied to HIV and AIDS
    - Discrimination against PLWH in Algeria - Contribution to the education system response through the elaboration of a guide entitled 'Discrimination against PLWH : a reference for education professionals'

## Discussions

- ▶ The unavailability of statistics about HIV and AIDS in the region was again highlighted. There was a unanimous call for UNESCO's and UNAIDS's support. Co-sponsor agencies to facilitate and foster access to detailed and accurate data;
- ▶ A strong will for collaboration with UN agencies;
- ▶ Participants acknowledged that political will and commitment from government varies in different countries in the region. Some countries are very committed and very active while others do not prioritize HIV and AIDS responses, consequently, any actions taken are mainly thanks to individual initiatives.

### *Examples of actions taken at country level:*

#### **Sudan**

- Introduction of HIV and AIDS education in curricula for all disciplines starting from next year;
- Creation of a centre for awareness raising among students, initiating activities such as lectures and conferences on HIV prevention;
- Funding to provide medication to infected students;
- Access to voluntary testing in universities;
- HIV network created involving UN agencies and the Ministry of Education, implementation strategy under preparation;
- Development of awareness raising manuals for educators, parents and students;
- National awareness campaigns;
- Experts consultation meeting on HIV and AIDS;
- Existence of coordinators in higher education institutions in charge of elaborating programmes.

#### **Syria**

- Training sessions for teachers;
- Educational manuals made available;
- Workshops and lectures;
- Creation of national team composed of scientific teachers, religious leaders and psychologists responsible for the organization of summer awareness camps.

The study titled “Expanding the field of inquiry: a cross country study of higher education institutions responses to HIV”<sup>3</sup> conducted by UNESCO was presented. The study focused on policies, plans, research, leadership, partnership, networking and community outreach programmes on HIV and AIDS.

Two different examples of practices from the study are cited below:

- **A successful comprehensive programme** based on the country specific needs developed by one university:
  - (i) demonstrated strong leadership commitment,
  - (ii) developed a policy through a wide consultation process involving all stakeholders programme in place,
  - (iii) integrated HIV education into the curriculum,
  - (iv) carried out extensive research (60 publications and 170 video tapes)
  
- **Insufficient action** by another university characterized by:
  - (i) absence of institutional response and programming;
  - (ii) HIV and AIDS only offered as an elective course in health awareness training programmes
  - (iii) limited research on HIV and AIDS

<sup>3</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=48762&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=48762&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

# **C. 2<sup>nd</sup> SESSION**

***HIV Prevention through Education  
in the Arab Region - the Role of Higher  
Education Institutions (Group work)  
- Recommendations***





## Recommendations

The session consisted of group work and offered to the participants the opportunity to reflect upon, identify and prioritize areas of intervention. During the working group session and plenary, participants identified areas of intervention that are considered to be a priority for the region together with feasible actions that can be taken at national and regional level.

1. **Priority: Research and evidence based interventions:**
2. **Priority: Teacher training**
3. **Priority: Curricula**
4. **Priority: Awareness raising/Communication**
5. **Priority: Student Services**
6. **Priority: Policy and legal issues**
7. **Priority: Cultural approaches/Community engagement**



## 1. Priority: Research and Evidence Based Interventions:

*Research was placed at the top of the priority list by all participants. Above all, they stressed the urgent need for a situation analysis. This is in line with UNESCO's concerns and UNESCO Beirut's initiative for a Situation Analysis of the Education Sector Response to HIV and AIDS that will be carried out later this year was highly commented and welcomed. UNESCO will share the results of the study with Member States and other partners and stakeholders at national level.*

- ✓ Undertake **assessment studies and gap analyses**, particularly, assessing the knowledge among young people about HIV and AIDS was considered as the corner stone for the elaboration of an action plan;
  - ✓ Urgently carry out a **situation analysis of the education sector responses** to HIV and AIDS (universities can assist in the development of situational analysis and gathering statistics);
  - ✓ Carry out **surveys, generation of data and thematic studies**;  
Carry out **periodical evaluation** of various interventions;
  - ✓ Enhance university capacities for **generation and dissemination of information**;
  - ✓ Conduct **research** at country level on the current situation of HIV and AIDS
- in order to generate **new knowledge, raise awareness** and **improve understanding** around HIV and AIDS;
  - ✓ **Avoid blind duplication** of research efforts done at global level and **focus on the specific needs of the region**;
  - ✓ Contribute to the **improvement of interventions** through **innovative or alternative approaches**;
  - ✓ Continuously **assess knowledge gap among the general public** and make efforts to **bridge it**;
  - ✓ **Fundraising towards the support of research**, particularly through external funding resources to fill the national gap due to lack of national resources or national commitment of resources for HIV and AIDS. Information about funding opportunities to be made known to Ministries of Higher Education.

### **Funding Challenge:**

- **Lack of financial resources** allocated for research on HIV and AIDS due to the fact that this is not a priority issue in most of the countries in the region;
- National authorities are **not always aware of funding opportunities** – UN agencies can assist with information sharing;
- Available external funding opportunities **not always in line with national needs/priorities**.

## 2. Priority: Teacher Training

*Teachers have a crucial role to play in HIV prevention efforts due to their capacity to reach out to the entire school community in a given country. Building the capacity of teachers was another major priority area identified by the participants.*

- ✓ **Train teachers** in order to build their **capacities and skills** towards gaining solid scientific knowledge (scientifically correct) and for better reaching out to students (overcoming cultural or personal barriers, flexible and creative teaching approaches, etc);
- ✓ Raise **awareness around non-discrimination** should be one of the main priorities within teachers training as well as within the medical profession, through a better knowledge about HIV transmission and non-transmission methods;
- ✓ Encourage teachers to orient **awareness raising efforts towards parents** as well;
- ✓ Reaching out to all teachers with training can be challenging due to their big numbers; some ways to overcome this is through: **core training of trainers of trainers** who should then reach out to all teachers through **cascaded training**, use of **alternative learning methods** such as **peer education** through students, **e-learning** through the use of ICT, etc;
- ✓ Emphasize **motivation on gaining new skills** e.g. (i) personal (e.g. life skills, behavioural change, core values, equality and non-discrimination); (ii) professional (e.g. clinical skills, policy, planning, research, programme development and implementation); and (iii) institutional (e.g. new areas of work, possibilities for funding, etc.).

### 3. Priority: Curricula

Integrating HIV and AIDS into curricula can ensure that education on HIV prevention becomes part of the core knowledge institutions transmit to their students. As discussed above, this needs to be matched with appropriate teacher training so that teachers are well informed and empowered to teach the subject.

- ✓ Integrate HIV and AIDS education into university courses (teacher and student learning curricula);
- ✓ Have compulsory courses or lectures on HIV and AIDS prior to graduation;
- ✓ Focus efforts and reflection on **contents that are relevant to the mission** of the institution, setting **realistic objectives** (based on the availability of time, resources and capacities);
- ✓ Adopt **flexible and innovative pedagogy** and **teaching/learning methods** (ICT use, workshops, projects, research, case studies, tapping on teacher and student knowledge, etc);
- ✓ Adapt **contents to target a wider audience**: students, teaching staff, researchers, health professionals, academic leaders, etc.;
- ✓ Simultaneously target **formal and non-formal curricula**.



## 4. Priority: Awareness raising/communication

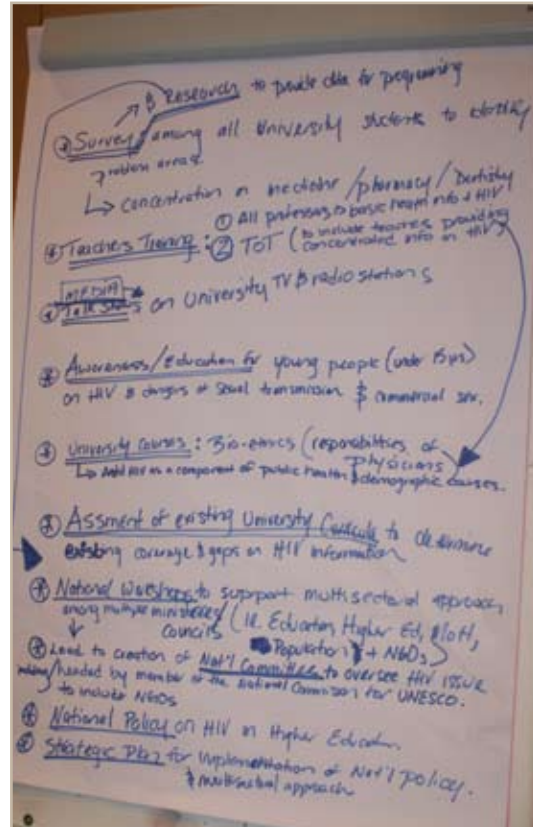
Awareness raising is urgently needed in order to inform, on the one hand, decision makers about the real situation and status of HIV and AIDS in the region/country and advocate for efforts towards prevention, and on the other hand, in order to inform young people and the general public of ways of transmission and protection modalities. There is also the need to facilitate communication and collaboration among experts through information and experience sharing.

- ✓ **Raise awareness on HIV and AIDS at all levels** using different means and the media; reach out to a wide audience: decision makers, education leaders and officials, teachers, religious leaders, media personnel, youth, parents, the general public and other target groups. In some cases it could be more effective to start with focusing on changing the mindset of the general public prior to getting the political and institutional commitment. Also, in some countries Members of Parliament are often ignorant about HIV and AIDS issues and could refuse the adoption of resolutions or laws despite general political or institutional will;
- ✓ Information campaigns specifically **targeting young people and students**;
- ✓ Raise awareness among **dean and staff** (especially of medical schools) on HIV and AIDS issues, efforts directed towards raising awareness of these groups;
- ✓ Establish a regularly **updated website** providing up-to-date information;
- ✓ Create a **network among HIV and AIDS focal points** in the Arab States as well as an online forum to facilitate networking and information exchange;
- ✓ Invite **experts to lead action and give briefings** on national **TV stations**;  
Diffuse programmes via **university TV or Radio** where available;
- ✓ Sensitize and train **religious leaders** and other individuals reaching out to the general public such as **medial personnel**, on the right messages to communicate;
- ✓ **Share** latest and updated **information, best practices**, etc.

## 5. Priority: Student Services

Participants identified students as a high priority group to be targeted in prevention efforts. HIV and AIDS prevention programmes should:

- ✓ Inform students and help them acquire knowledge and skills to protect them against HIV and AIDS;
- ✓ Understand their needs, social behaviour and vulnerabilities;
- ✓ Invest, technically and financially, in their training, skills and knowledge acquisition;
- ✓ Facilitate their access to services, information and support (academic and psychological, counselling, etc.);
- ✓ Guaranty the confidentiality and non-discrimination of the support services;
- ✓ Adopt multiple teaching and learning approaches and programmes: awareness raising, prevention campaigns, ICT and e-learning, peer education, etc;
- ✓ Pay special attention to gender issues and the vulnerability of female population;
- ✓ Multiply and facilitate access to diverse leisure and sport opportunities in order to divert them from risky behaviour.



## 6. Priority: Policy and Legal Issues

*Wherever possible, having a clear institutional policy on HIV and AIDS can facilitate and guide action and prevention efforts and its development is encouraged. However, developing such a policy and having it approved and validated can be a long process. In this case, a short term body, such as a Task Team, can be given the responsibility and authority to provide the directives for institutional response.*

- ✓ There should be a well elaborated national policy on HIV prevention through Education, including Higher Education;
- ✓ There should be a strategic action plan for implementing the national policy through a multi-sectoral approach;
- ✓ Higher Education Institutions should have a clear and structured policy on HIV prevention that is in line with the national policy;
- ✓ A policy serves as an agreed upon and concrete reference framework;
- ✓ It is a way of lobbying for making HIV and AIDS education part of the core business of an institution;
- ✓ It needs to be developed in a consultative and participatory manner, agreed upon by all stakeholders and should clearly define rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders;
- ✓ Messages and implementation process to be communicated to all stakeholders;
- ✓ A policy should identify clear political priorities. For example, participants stated that the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS is an urgent issue.

## 7. Priority: Cultural Approaches/Community Engagement

*Participants underscored that interventions planned for the region need to take into consideration the local and regional culture, values and beliefs. Intervention efforts should be culturally appropriate and sensitive to the specificities of the region.*

- ✓ Learn from and identify new knowledge through practice that is socially relevant and culturally appropriate;
  - ✓ Some HIV prevention modalities (such as the use of condoms) are considered inappropriate for the region, as sexual relationships outside marriage is a sensitive issue in the region and can be a huge barrier to HIV prevention efforts;
  - ✓ In some countries, HIV and AIDS is still considered as an outside problem imported by visitors and tourists, especially those who do not share Muslim values. Participants proposed the involvement of Ministry of Interior Affairs in the strategic programming;
  - ✓ Need to share best practices and success stories (e.g. Lebanese participant shared a successful example of HIV prevention media campaign in Lebanon consisting on the diffusion of short spots of testimonies of HIV infected students about the difficulties and challenges they face, both medical and social).
  - ✓ Organize national workshops to support multi-sectoral approach among various ministries and councils (i.e. MOE, MOH, MOSA, NGOs) that will lead to the creation of national committee to oversee HIV and AIDS issues preferably headed by a governmental institution to ensure country ownership.
- \* A proposal for mandatory HIV testing at universities was rejected as such action was considered to be a violation of human rights and would only lead to stigma and discrimination. In the context of the Arab region it would be of irrelevance to HIV prevention efforts.*



## Comprehensive approach

- all elements are interlinked

### Research

Not just  
Scientific  
Research  
Statistics

- Use of Med. Schools <sup>and Faculty</sup> to develop research

رفع الوعي الديني

- to conduct research on the Country level on the current situation of HIV/AIDS

ENSURE flexibility opportunities unknown to MOHE

### Training

- Train religious leaders on what message to send out on HIV/AIDS Prevention

- To have Experts to lead & influence groups on religious promotion

- Ensuring a Common understanding amongst Dean of Medical Schools on HIV/AIDS

- Train MOHE staff to emphasize importance of issue

### Communication

- To raise awareness on HIV/AIDS on all levels using different means of media communication to address to a wider audience

- To have a regularly update website providing updated information on HIV/AIDS

- Having experts from MOHE to give briefings on radio/TV

### Policy

- To have a policy on controlling HIV/AIDS amongst youth

- Having compulsory courses or half day lectures on HIV/AIDS prior to graduation

# ■ **3<sup>rd</sup> SESSION**

***HIV Prevention through Education  
in the Arab Region - Expectations  
from UNESCO (Group work)***



*The aim of this session was to establish a common understanding of how to maximize benefits from interventions made by UNESCO or other UNAIDS Co-sponsor agencies and how to make these better adjusted and more responsive to the real needs of the countries. Participant's comments are summarized below:*

- Great need for **technical support**;
- Creation of a **network among HIV and AIDS focal points** in the Arab States and/or the creation of an online forum to facilitate networking and information exchange;
- **Translation** of key reference materials **into Arabic** and ensuring their availability;
- **Involve experts from Ministries of Education and/or Higher Education** in the forthcoming Situation Analysis of the Education Responses to HIV and AIDS to be carried out by UNESCO Beirut in the Arab Region, in order to ensure country participation and ownership;
- Assistance/training in **fundraising** (how to write project proposals and how to address requests for technical assistance);
- Multiply **UNESCO Chairs on HIV and AIDS**.

### **UNESCO**

UNESCO's website on HIV and AIDS is constantly updated including resources in Arabic. For information and resources please visit the following links:

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

[http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=33437&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=33437&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

[http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID%3D36400&URL\\_DO%3DDO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION%3D201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID%3D36400&URL_DO%3DDO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION%3D201.html)

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

# C. CONCLUSION



*The meeting was closed with a recapitulation of the issues covered and with an evaluation of the consultation. Participants agreed that the objectives and outcomes identified at the beginning of the meeting were fully met.*

*UNESCO thanked the participants for their active participation and hard work and stressed the importance and need for the active involvement in HIV prevention through education, and especially the higher education sector. Participants were urged to make the best of what they had learned and undertake similar information sessions and follow up exercises at the local level and within their institutions.*

*The participants expressed their deep gratitude for UNESCO for organizing this activity which to them was very useful and enriching.*

