

Brazil: The development and institutionalisation of the Health and Prevention in Schools Programme

EDUCAIDS Country Snapshot



SPE State Management Group in Rio de Janeiro State

How the education sector response to HIV and AIDS has been supported

Since 2003, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health have been implementing the *Saúde e Prevenção nas Escolas* (Health and Prevention in Schools) programme (SPE), with support from UNESCO, UNICEF and UNFPA. The three agencies along with the Ministries constitute the Federal Working Group (GTF), which is responsible for the preparation of guidelines, planning, monitoring and evaluation of the programme. When the SPE began, it was focused only on HIV prevention education. It has gradually expanded to incorporate other components of health promotion, based on demands made of the two Ministries. Nonetheless, the aspects of HIV prevention and sexuality education remain the largest components of the programme.

SPE, which is decentralised and implemented in all 27 states of Brazil, targets young people aged 13 to 24 in public school settings. The framework of the programme covers the themes of prevention of HIV and other STIs, sexual and reproductive health, pregnancy, sexual diversity and prevention of drug use. The main components include joint training of teachers and health professionals on topics including gender, sexuality, reproductive health, contraception, drugs and STIs, peer education and development of learning materials using this framework. In addition, increasing access to condoms and health services is an important component of the SPE. Data collected on the programme have been included in the national school census in order to monitor and evaluate its results. The first evaluation of SPE conducted in 2004 showed a programme that was in its initial stages and that did not have widespread coverage. Since then, UNESCO and other partners have developed indicators for monitoring the implementation of the SPE. Brazil's annual school census includes an annex that collects information on SPE implementation based on these indicators. The last school census conducted in 2009 revealed that 53,000 schools are now implementing SPE.

Information about HIV and education in Brazil

Brazil has a concentrated HIV epidemic, with an overall HIV prevalence of 0.3%. Young people are a particular group of concern, as only 52% of those aged 15-24 were able to correctly identify ways of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV and reject major misconceptions about HIV transmission. During the last academic year, 63% of Brazilian basic education facilities (schools offering primary, lower secondary or upper secondary education) are said to have provided life skills-based HIV education, while 72.7% of schools which offer both primary and lower secondary education and 97.5% of schools which offer upper secondary education only did so (UNGASS 2010). Additional information can be found at: <http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/Countries/brazil.asp>

What was achieved

The SPE became a national policy when it was institutionalised by presidential decree in 2007. The programme's focus on HIV prevention and health promotion and the prioritisation of sexuality education in its implementation were key factors in its expansion and eventual adoption at policy level. As a result of its incorporation at this level, there is now widespread integration of HIV and AIDS in school curricula, including 63% of basic education facilities, 72.7% of schools which offer both primary and lower secondary education and 97.5% of higher secondary schools.

What we learned

- Education on the prevention of HIV within the framework of the SPE has served as a lever for implementing sexuality education in schools. Through addressing HIV and other STIs through the SPE, schools and education departments have come to better understand the importance of comprehensive sexuality education for young people.
- Implementing change in curricula and pedagogical methods has been a particularly challenging aspect of SPE implementation, as it has traditionally been difficult to reach agreement between different entities and partners on these aspects in Brazil. However, incorporation into official curricula has been a crucial aspect of ensuring sustainability.
- A programme such as SPE involving partners with different profiles (different UN agencies, different ministries, civil society, young people) requires flexible procedures in terms of management, political advocacy and community mobilisation. The work in partnership demands constant dialogue, joint planning, exchange of knowledge and flexibility.
- In order for the programme's activities to be operationalised nationwide in such a large country, it was important to build a communications network via working groups in each state. The programme's joint management by the education and health sectors facilitated the development of this network, by bringing to the table each sector's respective local networks.

EDUCAIDS is a UNAIDS multi-country initiative – led by UNESCO – to support the implementation of comprehensive education sector responses to HIV and AIDS



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