

Lebanon: Building the Capacity of School Health Educators to Teach HIV and AIDS Education

EDUCAIDS Country Snapshot



School health educators in Lebanon learning how to use life skills in delivering HIV and AIDS education

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

As the Regional Bureau of Education in the Arab States, UNESCO Beirut supports regional efforts in promoting comprehensive education sector responses to HIV and AIDS. A regional policy meeting on *'Integrating a comprehensive HIV and AIDS education into teacher training curricula for the Arab Region'* took place in Beirut in July 2009, co-organized by UNESCO Beirut and the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE). The main objective of the meeting was to consider the responses to HIV and AIDS in teacher training programmes and curricula in different countries in the region within the EDUCAIDS framework and to look at the challenges, obstacles and lessons learned. Based on needs identified and recommendations made at the regional meeting, a sub-regional training workshop was organised by UNESCO and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) in October 2009 on *"Integrating HIV and AIDS into teacher training and curricula for African and Arab countries."* Teacher trainers from participating countries were introduced to innovative pedagogical approaches based on interactive teaching and learning approaches, with a focus on life skills. The ultimate aim of the training was to improve the quality of HIV and AIDS education provided at classroom level through innovative approaches and build the capacity of teachers to provide appropriate life-skills education in order to empower students to protect themselves from HIV infection. Lebanon then became the first country in the region to take this training to national scale by training all school health educators in public secondary schools in 2011. Nine regional workshops were organized, and a teaching guide/manual was developed. The UNESCO Bureau of Education supported the implementation of this activity at the request of and in close collaboration with the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE).

Information about HIV and education in Lebanon

Lebanon has a low level HIV epidemic. Prevalence is estimated at 0.1% in the general population. The primary mode of HIV transmission is sexual. There are no specific data available on prevalence among young people or on their knowledge of both correctly identifying ways of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV and rejecting major misconceptions about HIV transmission. It is not known how many schools in the country provide life skills-based HIV education. However, there is growing evidence from Knowledge, Attitude, Behaviour and Practices (KABP) studies that Lebanese youth are increasingly displaying risky behaviours, suggesting that the education sector has a key role to play in regard to prevention. For more information: http://www.unaids.org/en/dataanalysis/monitoringcountryprogress/2010progressreportsubmittedbycountries/lebanon_2010_country_progress_report_en.pdf or <http://www.moph.gov.lb/Prevention/AIDS/Pages/default.aspx>.

What was achieved

- A teachers' manual for teaching reproductive health and life skills was developed in consultation with experts and stakeholders, with 1,000 copies distributed to secondary schools in Lebanon
- Almost all school health educators in public secondary schools across Lebanon were trained on delivering life skills-based and gender sensitive reproductive health education
- Evaluation of the project and classroom activities is underway, in line with UNESCO's *Global Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Comprehensive Education Responses to HIV and AIDS*

What we learned

- Engagement with MEHE enabled a response that is tailor-made to the actual needs of the country and facilitated the implementation of activities, with support from MEHE staff.
- Engagement with the National AIDS Programme (NAP) and the UN Theme Group on HIV and AIDS ensured coordination among all actors at country level and alignment with UNDAF priorities.
- Although the *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education* was included in the resources for the project, it could not be displayed or disseminated as the title was considered inappropriate in the context of Lebanon.
- HIV and AIDS is still a sensitive if not a taboo issue for the region, and UNESCO has encountered resistance from some Member States, especially for interventions in the field of education. Advocacy among decision-makers and promotion of culturally-sensitive approaches are helping to overcome such barriers.

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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