

GUINEA BISSAU

The UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa (BREDA), based in Dakar, and UNESCO Brasilia have been delivering technical assistance to the Ministry of Education in Guinea Bissau, through the framework of EDUCAIDS. Emerging from conflict, Guinea Bissau is a country in the process of re-establishing its education infrastructure. Efforts focus on linking a wide range of education sector stakeholders to share expertise and devise a national plan on HIV and AIDS prevention through education.

Activities

In collaboration with the Brazilian Ministry of Education, a national workshop was held in Guinea Bissau in September 2007 to develop the education sector strategy on HIV and AIDS. It brought together the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, heads of teacher training institutions, specialists from Guinea Bissau's Institute for Education Planning (INDE), and UNAIDS cosponsor agencies. The main outcomes of the workshop were:

- The development of a draft education sector plan on HIV and AIDS, consistent with both national education sector frameworks as well as the national HIV and AIDS strategy.
- Strengthening of relationships between a wide range of education stakeholders in Guinea Bissau, and between UNESCO BREDA, UNESCO Brasilia and the Ministry of Education Brazil.

Since the development of the plan, the country has received a major grant from the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and effectively positions the education sector to receive a portion of this new funding.

Similar South-South cooperation programmes are now underway in other Portuguese-speaking African Countries (PALOPs), including a workshop completed in Sao Tomé e Príncipe in May 2008.



Participants at the national workshop held at Guinea Bissau's Institute for Educational Planning (INDE), September 2007

Lessons Learned

Drawing upon the experience and expertise of the Brazilian Ministry of Education was a highly relevant entry point in supporting the education system's response to HIV and AIDS. The attending PALOPs are seeking further collaboration with Brazil, which is now viewed as an important technical partner in education. This South-South Cooperation will expand its impact if other PALOPs also become involved and a triangular cooperation scheme is formed.

To ensure a longer-term vision with sustainable commitments, the intention is to integrate the education sector plan on HIV and AIDS into the education sector diagnosis (Rapport d'Etat d'un Système Educatif National, RESEN) conducted by the Pole de Dakar. Policy and planning development processes must be costed, rolled-out, and implemented to be truly meaningful.

It is essential to focus as much on processes as on results to ensure greater ownership and participation, particularly in South-South efforts. Programmes should help identify effective processes that promote wider cooperation and dialogue between education ministries.