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# Capacity-Building in Africa for Education Sector Responses to HIV and AIDS: Lessons and Continuing Needs

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ABSTRACT No. TUPE0957

(<http://www.unesco.org/aids> (ED/UNP/HIV/IAC2008/POSTER/12))

## Lessons learned:

Understanding of the structural drivers of the epidemic in different linguistic locations is critical to designing and implementing relevant and effective responses.

The education sector in most countries in Africa continues to face significant challenges responding to HIV and AIDS, particularly in positioning itself in national multi-sectoral responses and building its capacity to plan and implement comprehensive education sector responses to HIV and AIDS.

## Recommendations:

In Africa, continued capacity-building initiatives for the education sector should be prioritized for improving coordination and harmonisation of the sector's response to the epidemic.

National education sector responses should continue to be enhanced by investing in human and financial resources; promoting cross-country learning and lesson-sharing; fostering South-South cooperation; and maintaining political commitment to the response.

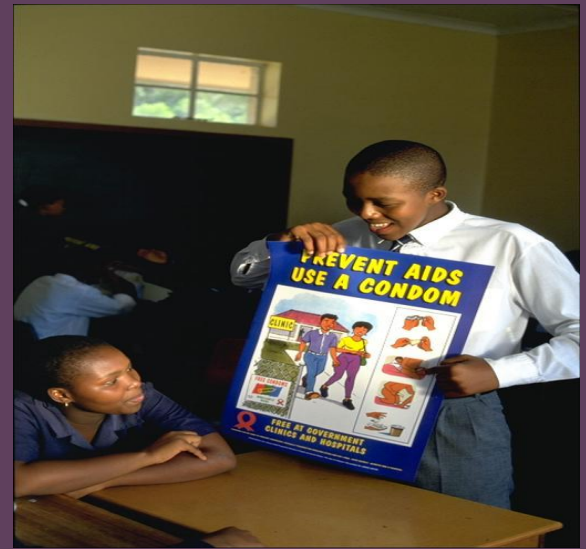
## Background:

As part of the Africa regional strategy for promoting human resource development for the education sector in responding to HIV and AIDS, UNESCO, with support from the Japanese government, facilitated regional capacity-building events in 2007. The main objectives of the capacity-building initiatives included:

- Strengthening the understanding of the role of the education sector and its engagement in national responses to the epidemic.
- Improving capacity, skills and partnerships among education partners.
- Developing and analysing comprehensive national education sector responses to HIV and AIDS.

## Methods:

The main approach was through conducting sub-regional workshops divided along language lines as a means for continuing and deepening strategic action on education and HIV and AIDS. Twenty-one (21) national governments joined UNAIDS-cosponsors, education sector related civil society organizations and networks of people living with HIV to participate in this initiative. These events provided a forum for countries in the same linguistic grouping (English, French or Portuguese) to share experiences and lessons learnt and increase their understanding of key strategic documents and tools using the EDUCAIDS framework to build their capacity to plan and implement comprehensive education sector responses to HIV and AIDS.



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*Strengthening capacity of the education sector to respond to HIV&AIDS in Africa will bear fruit for such young people who continue to face the brunt of the epidemic on the continent*

## Results:

Immediate outcomes of this capacity-building initiative included:  
Some countries moving towards developing comprehensive education sector responses through use of the EDUCAIDS Framework.

While the workshops revealed that there was large diversity among countries in terms of overall context, HIV prevalence, and the level and scope of education sector responses, areas of commonality included:

1. Lack of adequate information about the epidemic.
2. Limited human and financial resources to address HIV and AIDS in the education sector.
3. Inadequate harmonization and coordination of HIV and AIDS activities and programmes in the sector.
4. Insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the impact of HIV on the education sector.

The capacity of the education sector to contribute to the response remains uneven across countries in Africa. Countries are at different stages of developing and implementing education sector plans and policies on HIV and AIDS and there is a continued need to support capacity-building initiatives for sustained and comprehensive responses to HIV and AIDS.