



HIV/AIDS and Education Fact Sheet

March 2005



Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH

commissioned by:



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development



THE CONTEXT



HIV/AIDS erodes the fundament for development cooperation

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is more than a health problem. Its spread and impact are determined by poverty, social and gender inequality, discrimination and poor social services. While it spreads invisibly during the early stages of an epidemic, HIV/AIDS eventually has profoundly negative effects on the economic conditions of individuals, households, communities, countries, regions and whole continents. Countries with more developed epidemics in Central, Eastern and Southern Africa or the Caribbean will not just experience countless personal tragedies but also losses in annual per capita growth rates of up to 4.4% over the next 10-20 years. As HIV/AIDS affects people in their most productive years of life, including the poor and the illiterate as much as the elites, crucial government officials and skilled labourers, it erodes the very fundament for capacity development and development cooperation.

Still a window of hope if ALL sectors act NOW

This means that HIV/AIDS threatens sustainable development, not just in regions that are already seriously affected, but also in those where it is spreading fast right now, such as Asia and Eastern Europe. The latest epidemiological data show that infection rates in many Asian and Eastern European countries stand today where they stood in Southern African countries 12 years ago, and that they are steadily growing. In the meantime, many lessons have been learned: We know that countries like Senegal, Thailand or Brazil, whose governments have openly acknowledged their HIV/AIDS epidemic and implemented comprehensive, multi-sectoral responses, have been able to reverse the fatal trend.

Today, there is still a window of hope for many regions if governments and development actors in all sectors acknowledge the exceptionality of the HIV/AIDS crisis and devise sector-specific responses to it.

GTZ responds to the HIV/AIDS challenge

The German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) recognises the challenge posed by the HIV/AIDS pandemic to its mission. To prevent its further spread and to mitigate its negative effects, GTZ has begun to “mainstream” the response to HIV/AIDS as a cross-cutting issue that needs to be addressed by all sectors. To support this process, this series of fact sheets highlights how HIV/AIDS impacts on different sectors and shows ways in which each sector can contribute to an effective response to it. The first four sections of this fact sheet relate to the following questions:

- **The impact:** How does HIV/AIDS affect the education sector?
- **The comparative advantage:** How can the education sector in particular reduce vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and mitigate its impact?
- **The risk scenarios:** How might education contribute to the spread of HIV or aggravate its impact?
- **The GTZ approach:** How can German development cooperation in the education sector contribute to an effective response to HIV/AIDS?

The last two sections list recommended reading on the topic and present GTZ staff and working groups who can be contacted for support and information.



THE IMPACT

HIV/AIDS highlights development failure

The education sector shows clearly how HIV/AIDS spreads where development has failed: More than half of the countries that will not achieve primary enrolment by 2015 are severely affected by HIV/AIDS. South Africa and Botswana are already seeing a reversal of their hard-won educational gains. The World Bank regards Africa and South Asia, both gravely affected by the epidemic, as the regions at greatest risk of not achieving the goals set by the "Education for All" initiative.

More than 113 million children aged 6 to 12 are out of school in developing countries, and two-thirds of them are girls. With HIV/AIDS, the goal of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 poses an unattainable challenge, as the likelihood of girls dropping out of school increases markedly in HIV/AIDS contexts.

HIV/AIDS affects supply of education

The impact of HIV/AIDS on the supply and quality, demand and access of education must be a crucial issue for the development community. HIV/AIDS reduces the supply of educational services as a result of teacher attrition and absenteeism. Studies predict teacher shortages in many countries, including Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. There is little doubt that the epidemic is seriously damaging the quantity and quality of education, which in turn is violating the right to basic education.

In the more affected countries, HIV/AIDS has significantly increased education sector costs for medical care and death benefits for affected teachers and for recruiting and training replacements for teachers lost to AIDS. This has repercussions on government expenditure given that the largest cadre of government employees works in the education sector. Demand-side costs related to orphans and other vulnerable children are also growing in countries affected by HIV/AIDS. The epidemic's intangible costs to the sector include the loss of sector knowledge and experience as well as the consequences for economic growth.

HIV/AIDS reduces demand for education

In more affected countries, HIV/AIDS reduces the demand for education, as children are withdrawn from schools and colleges in response to rising household expenditure and demands for care for sick family members. Children orphaned by AIDS are less likely to be enrolled or attend schools than their peers. The decline in the demand for education will be magnified in the next generation: Children who grow up with too little education will be poorer, less productive, less well nourished, more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, and less likely to send their own children to school. As fewer children complete school, the level of skills and knowledge in the population, and hence the basis for social and economic development, is eroded even more profoundly. A vicious cycle is setting in:



THE COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

Education is so strongly predictive of better knowledge, safer behaviour and reduced infection rates that UN experts regard it as a kind of "social vaccine" against HIV infection. This comparative advantage is the reason why the education sector plays such a crucial role in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Recent studies indicate that young people with little or no education may be 2.2 times more likely to contract HIV than those who have completed primary education. If there was "education for all", we would expect over 700,000 infections (about 30 per cent of all new infections in this age group) to be prevented each year.



A recent review found stronger evidence for the efficacy of school-based programmes than for any other prevention measure. 'Schools', as the World Bank points out, 'offer an organized and efficient way to reach large numbers of school-age youth' at an age when they are highly receptive to adult influence. They provide a crucial opportunity to reach children with prevention messages before they become sexually active, and if this opportunity is seized through well-designed HIV/AIDS education programmes, the protective impact of schooling can be considerably enhanced.

Particularly for women and girls, who are more vulnerable for HIV infection, education is an effective way of empowering them and of enabling them to know how to protect themselves. Non-formal education programmes for women and girls can reach into communities and families in ways no other services can.

THE RISK SCENARIOS

For each sector, there are specific HIV/AIDS-related risk factors that development experts need to be aware of. For the education sector, the following need to be considered:

Teachers can be at risk: The educator cohort can be at risk of infection because of relative affluence, mobility and status in the community. Especially the

practice of posting them far away from their family homes renders them more vulnerable for risky sexual behaviour and HIV infection.

Costs exclude AIDS-affected pupils: School fees and other direct and indirect costs pose significant problems for AIDS-affected households; since families have to choose between costs for schooling and medical treatment. It is the primary reason children are withdrawn from school. The cost of fees, instructional materials, uniforms etc. may exclude poor children, AIDS affected children and orphans, especially girls, from schooling, and may lead to increased stigmatisation.



Sexual harassment in schools: In some countries the education system itself is a risk environment, especially for girls. They may be harassed or coerced into sex, particularly by teachers and school officials.

THE GTZ APPROACH

Education is a highly cost-effective prevention mechanism, because countries, where the prevalence is still relatively low can avoid the health care and teacher supply-related costs that the worst affected countries have to bear.



Youths between 15 and 24 years, who account for some 60 percent of all new HIV infections in many countries, are also the group who continue to lack important knowledge about how to protect themselves against HIV infection: it is now well established that targeted education efforts can yield maximum results in preventing new infections.

In response to this, many schools have begun to incorporate sexual health and HIV/AIDS education into curricula for all ages. In addition, there are non-formal education programmes for AIDS-affected children and youths. Through such programmes, young people will be equipped with the relevant life skills — practical skills that help them develop responsible gender roles, positive social attitudes and safe sexual behaviour whilst enabling them to withstand peer pressure to engage in risky behaviour.

GTZ projects and programmes in the education sector have developed a range of approaches to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In the following, these are listed, together with the responsible person who can be contacted for more detailed information.

- **Supporting the recruitment, training and capacity building for an adequate number of teachers** and education officials. Teachers and education officials reflect on their own attitudes, adapt their behaviour and learn how to address and sensitise different target groups in the school and in the community. Contact Brigitte Sodatonou, Guinea, mailto: brigitte.sodatonou@gtz.de
- **Supporting Ministries of Education** in developing an HIV/AIDS workplace policy and in implementing **HIV/AIDS workplace programmes**. Contact Ulf Metzger, Eschborn, mailto: ulf.metzger@gtz.de
- **Enabling Ministries of Education, district education departments and NGOS to develop and implement an effective response to HIV/AIDS**. Contact Inge van der Ley, Mali mailto: gtzpeb@afribone.net.ml
- **Developing and implementing age and target-group specific, gender-sensitive curricula on HIV/AIDS** including teaching and learning materials adapted to the socio-cultural setting. Contact Manfred Wehrmann, Tschad, mailto: manfred.wehrmann@gtz.de
- Developing and supporting participatory approaches like **peer education programmes**, life skills education and **community participation** in school or out-of school settings. Contact Ulf Metzger, Eschborn, mailto: ulf.metzger@gtz.de
- Providing support for **non-formal education programmes** for children and young people that are affected by HIV/AIDS. Contact Elsa Meinzer, Uganda, mailto: elsa.meinzer@gtz.de
- Advising partners on the integration of HIV/AIDS interventions in **programmes for adults** with the specific aim of empowering women. Contact Elke Schade, Senegal, mailto: elke.schade@eco-education.sn



RECOMMENDED READING

Batchi, C. GTZ Produkt No 73: „HIV/AIDS Bekämpfung durch Bildung“

World Bank (2002) **Education and HIV/AIDS**. A Window of Hope

A key objective of this paper is to expand awareness of the links between HIV/AIDS and education. The central message is that the education of children and youth merits the highest priority in a world afflicted by HIV/AIDS because a good basic education ranks among the most effective - and cost-effective - means of HIV prevention. The paper offers useful input to decision-makers faced with the responsibility for taking urgent action.

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank (2003) **Education and HIV/AIDS: A Sourcebook** of HIV/AIDS Prevention Programmes, Washington, DC

This sourcebook aims to support efforts by countries to strengthen the role of the education sector in the prevention of HIV/AIDS. It was developed to help countries share their practical experiences of designing and implementing programs that are targeted at school-age children. The document provides concise summaries of programmes, using a standard format that highlights the main elements of the programmes and makes it easier to compare the programmes with each other.

Kelly, M. (2000) **Planning for Education in the context of HIV/AIDS**. Fundamentals of Educational Planning series 66, International Institute for Educational Planning). UNESCO/International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris, 108 pages

This publication examines the interaction between the epidemic and education from two perspectives: the use of education in preventing HIV transmission and the impact of the disease on education systems. This two-way interaction necessitates a radical re-examination of many of the premises underlying education as currently delivered.

Svenson, G. R. et al., Department of Community Medicine, Lund University. (1998) **European Guidelines for Youth AIDS Peer Education**, European Commission, 54p.

The aim of these Guidelines is to provide guidance on setting up, running and evaluating AIDS peer education projects for young people. They were written with the practitioner and policy maker in mind, but should be useful to young people or anyone else wishing to gain an understanding of the approach.

Coombe, C. (2001) **Mitigating the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education Supply, Demand and Quality: a Global Review**. Prepared for UNICEF Innocenti Research Center, Florence, Italy

The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre has published the findings of a global study carried out in 2000 on the specific impact of HIV/AIDS on children. The study is based on nine country case studies - six in Africa and three in Asia - and a review of five key areas: the health sector, the education sector, access to antiretroviral drugs, economic impact and child impoverishment and orphanhood.

CONTACTS AND NETWORKS

To facilitate the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS, each sector has appointed HIV/AIDS focal points and/or working groups at head office and at the sectoral networks. These can advise and support their colleagues with regard to HIV/AIDS mainstreaming. At GTZ head office, this is

Cornelia Batchi, cornelia.batchi@gtz.de

And from the AIDS team it is

Yvonne Schönemann,
yvonne.schoenemann@gtz.de

Photos: WHO/P.Virot, Franz v. Roenne, Guley Uluntuncok. Autoren: Gabi Gahn, Anna v. Roenne, Cornelia Batchi.