Teacher Education and HIV/AIDS  (Draft for Deans’ meeting 18 Sept 2003)

We must deal urgently and purposefully with the HIV and AIDS emergency in and through the education and training system. The education sector represents the greatest concentration of understanding, knowledge and skill in the country. We should be making greater use of this in the response to HIV and AIDS. Every sub-sector within education, and every educator, from village teacher to university professor, must become aware that they have a role to play in creating a cycle of preventive education and care that goes out from learning institutions to communities and back again to the institution. We must help our beloved country find its way into a world without AIDS. Even more, every one of us in the education sector, working together, must lead South Africa into a future without AIDS.

Minister Kader Asmal  May 2002

Background to this document

The Education Sector Plan of Action on HIV and AIDS identifies a specific role for the Higher Education sector. In line with this, the DoE, SAUVCA and CTP, collaboratively established the Higher Education Against HIV and AIDS Programme1. The main objective of the programme is to support Higher Education leadership in responding to HIV and AIDS within Higher Education Institutions. As part of fulfilling this objective, the programme convened a Workshop for Faculties of Education on 21 and 22 July 2003 at the Sunnyside Park Hotel in Johannesburg. There were 37 participants, including representatives from 18 South African Higher Education Institutions (see Addendum A).

The purpose of the Workshop was to discuss a strategy for Faculties of Education to respond to the HIV and AIDS pandemic in respect to Teacher Education programmes. One of the outcomes of the Workshop was the appointment of a Task Team (Convened by Professor Dirk Meerkotter) to make recommendations to the Deans’ meeting on how we ensure the development of HIV- and AIDS-competent teachers.

The Task Team (see Addendum B) met on 1 and 2 September at Monkey Valley in Cape Town, and the current document is the Report from that Task Team to the Deans of Education.

The Task Team acknowledged that a comprehensive response to the pandemic required the integration of issues related to HIV and AIDS in a range of professional Teacher Education modules including training in the Life Orientation Learning Area, and more specialised ACE (level 6) programmes. However, its main recommendation is that there should be a required basic module in all professional Teacher Education programmes: to enable all educators in the schooling system to deal more confidently with the issues and challenges of HIV and AIDS which they face daily in their classrooms and schools, and their own lives and communities.

Introduction

The extent of the HIV and AIDS epidemics in South Africa is well documented. Recent research by the Nelson Mandela Foundation/HSRC2 confirms the Department of Health’s data

1 This is a national programme set up to improve the capacity of HEIs to prevent, manage and mitigate the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic

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that millions of people are already infected with HIV and thousands are affected or dying of AIDS. These studies show that more than half of new infections occur among young people aged 15 to 24, and that more than 25% of young people have had sexual relations before their 15th birthday. The Department of Social Development surveys indicate that thousands of children have lost a mother or father and that the numbers are likely to increase. The Provincial Departments of Education report trauma in both educators and learners because of the impact of AIDS. These facts are of crucial significance for the future of schooling in our country, and we urgently need to educate schoolteachers to cope with this situation.

The Minister of Education has referred to the HIV/AIDS epidemic “a priority that underlies all priorities”. A National Policy on HIV and AIDS was issued in 1999, and a three-year Strategic Framework for an education response to HIV and AIDS, has been issued by the Department of Education3.

The role of the Education Sector including Higher Education

The Education Sector has a key role to play in the response to the epidemic. A significant proportion of the population, especially those at the most vulnerable ages, attend schools and tertiary institutions, and if we add their communities and families we can understand that there is no other institution in our society which touches so many of our citizens, and future citizens. While the demands on schools and teachers resulting from the effects of HIV and AIDS on learners, teachers, families and communities are increasing daily, education itself, in its teaching role, is challenged to limit the spread of HIV, to provide care, social and psychological support to those infected and affected by the epidemic, and to sustain the provision of quality education for all.

Higher Education has the comparative advantage of having the capacity to keep abreast of new knowledge that can inform not only their own programmes but also a comprehensive and effective national response.

Many institutions of Higher Education have already developed educational programmes that translate knowledge and insight into the necessary skills for responding to the epidemic in a comprehensive and effective manner. And many Faculties of Education have already developed modules and incorporated aspects of HIV/AIDS into their programmes. But despite the range of initiatives aimed at integrating HIV and AIDS into teaching, research and community outreach, guidelines have yet to be formulated and adopted for integrating HIV and AIDS into the training of teachers engaged in professional teacher training programmes at both pre- and in-service levels.

Given the scale of the crisis facing us as a nation and the education sector collectively, there needs to be a consolidation of these initiatives, and a strong and clear focus on the ways in which professional Teacher Education programmes should prioritise HIV and AIDS in the preparation of teachers to cope with the situations they find (and will increasingly find) themselves in in their professional lives.

3 Strategic Plan 2003-2005, Department of Education, Statement of Policy and Commitment by the Minister of Education
The role of Teachers and other Educators

South Africa has about 450,000 schoolteachers who play a crucial role in the every-day lives of millions of learners in a range of public and private education institutions. As a consequence of the spread of HIV, the **Community, Citizenship and Pastoral Role of Educators**, as prescribed in the **Norms and Standards for Educators**, has become even more vital.

Teachers are potentially the most potent agents in imparting the knowledge and developing the skills, values and practices that are required to ameliorate the spread of HIV in our society. Furthermore, they have a critical role to play in the creation of enabling and supportive environments for young people to adopt positive and healthy lifestyles that will be of benefit to themselves, to others, and to schools and communities.

Mounting an effective and comprehensive response to HIV and AIDS in educational institutions and learning sites in South Africa requires an improvement in the level of appropriate knowledge and skills amongst all educators. Such knowledge and skills are not currently widespread. There is an urgent necessity for South Africa to produce skilled and trained teachers able to confront the pandemic and cope with its effects in their professional activities.

Many teachers are not formally required to teach sexuality and life skills, but all educators will have to confront the challenges of HIV and AIDS in classrooms and schools when it manifests as orphaned children, children without family support or children burdened by illness and poverty. School managers and heads of department carry an additional responsibility to maintain compassionate and supportive institutional environments. When HIV and AIDS affects the functioning of the school as a workplace and learning site – as it does in numerous ways – educators need those skills and attitudes which equip them to make well-informed judgements. The schools in which they operate must be able to respond to the needs of learners, the impacts of the pandemic and the ways in which HIV and AIDS may affect their own families and personal lives.

Individual educators, no matter how caring, compassionate and skilled in responding to the new needs created by HIV and AIDS, can achieve little without collegial and institutional encouragement and support. The important work of intervening to stem the tide of the effects of HIV and AIDS in our society, requires collective effort – both within schools, and between schools and other institutions and organisations. Given the extent and pervasive impact of schools in our society, the leadership of schools, teachers and school managers will be crucial in this regard.

The proposed core module for Teacher Education

The module sketched out in the pages that follow is conceived of as a basic module that will be required in all Teacher Education qualifications. It is an introductory module with the modest purpose of equipping all educators with the basic knowledge, understanding and other competences to cope with the situation, as it has been profoundly affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, in our education institutions.

The further progress of this proposal will be discussed at the meeting of Deans of Education on Thursday 18 September 2003.
Proposed compulsory core module for professional teacher education programmes

Introduction

This module is specifically constructed around, although it is not limited to, the Community, Citizenship and Pastoral role of an educator as prescribed in the Norms and Standards for Educators (4 February 2000) ⁴.

This is a 12-credit⁵ module that will be required in all pre- and in-service professional teacher education qualifications up to NQF Level 6, but it can be offered as a stand-alone credit-bearing module, or be used as part of other education programmes.

This module specifies the minimum competences to be achieved by all qualifying educators across all phases of schooling and all learning areas.

It does not replace the more specialized HIV and AIDS dimensions of Life Skills/Life Orientation modules, which are expected to enrich and expand educators’ competence in handling HIV and AIDS related issues in educational contexts. In addition, other modules in professional teacher education programmes should incorporate appropriate HIV and AIDS related issues.

Primary purposes of this module

The primary purposes of this module are:

- to provide educators with a basic knowledge of HIV and AIDS and how they impact on all aspects of our schooling and society;
- to develop competences in the teaching approaches and styles appropriate to teaching about HIV and AIDS to learners;
- to develop the personal capacities and confidence needed by educators in coping with HIV and AIDS responsibly in the daily life in schools; and
- to develop appropriate collegial attitudes and values to contribute to the maintenance of a caring and compassionate climate in the school and other settings of their professional activities.

⁴ See Norms and Standards for Educators (Government Gazette #20844 – 4 February 2000) p 14 and pp 18/19
⁵ 120 hours of Notional Learning Time
⁶ See Draft Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (Life Orientation) 30 July 2001
Outline

This module must include due attention to **all** of the following matters:

1. **Understanding HIV and AIDS in a broader context**
   Qualifiers should develop an understanding of the economic, psychosocial, political, cultural and community factors that have facilitated the spread of HIV, as well as the impact of the epidemic on society.

2. **Gender equity and respect for persons**
   Qualifiers need to explore and understand gender inequality, gender-based discrimination, gender identities and gender stereotypes, which have contributed and continue to contribute to the spread of HIV. They need to be able to challenge dominant stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. In addition they should be made aware of various forms of abuse, gender-related or not.

3. **Knowing basic facts about HIV and AIDS**
   Qualifiers should know how HIV is transmitted, the role of risky sexual and social behaviour, how to ameliorate its spread, and the standard universal precautions which can be adopted, especially in institutional settings such as schools. In addition qualifiers should know what the symptoms and stages of the disease are, its impacts on the body, and about Voluntary Counselling and Testing and treatment options. Opportunistic infections (such as TB) should also be addressed, although not in detail.

4. **Knowing key relevant policies and laws**
   Qualifiers should have sound knowledge of the following policies and regulations: (a) National HIV/AIDS Policy (1999), (b) HIV/AIDS and STDs – Strategic Plan for South Africa 2000-2005 and (c) the SACE Code of Professional Ethics, and how they are to be adhered to in their own professional practice. They should also have basic knowledge of those laws that regulate professional teacher behaviour and relationships.

5. **Responding to HIV/AIDS in the classroom, school and community**
   - **Personal development**
     Qualifiers need to explore and understand their own inhibitions, anxieties, prejudices, vulnerability and fears related to HIV and AIDS. They should also be able to adopt non-judgemental attitudes in addressing issues related to HIV and AIDS in classrooms and other contexts
   - **Competence in developing an appropriate response to the local HIV and AIDS epidemic**
     Qualifiers need to be able to analyse the context within which the school exists, the possible determinants of the HIV and AIDS epidemic in the community and develop an appropriate comprehensive response on the basis of this context. This is to ensure that the response is specific and relevant to the issues driving the epidemic in that particular school and community.

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7 The HIV/AIDS Emergency Guidelines for Educators (2002) is a ‘user-friendly’ version of the policy
8 This document (which is to be revised every five years) spells out the national strategy, and provides the framework for all work re HIV and AIDS in South Africa
9 South African Council for Educators
Care and Support Competences
Qualifiers need to be able to identify people (particularly children) who might be at risk, be aware of the problems faced by learners and colleagues affected and infected by HIV/AIDS, and how these impact on learning, teaching and community life. They need to develop the competences to deal with these matters as one defining aspect of their roles as educators. For example, educators need to know (a) what resources (including referral and support structures) are available in their context, how and when to access such resources, how to develop partnerships within their schools and with the community and (b) how to deal sensitively with those affected and infected by the disease. This includes dealing with bereavement, learners who no longer have parents or who are themselves heads of households or caregivers for others with AIDS.

Competence in methods and approaches in teaching about HIV and AIDS
Qualifiers should be competent in using interactive and participatory modes of teaching in relation to teaching about HIV and AIDS, particularly in relation to those dimensions likely to be sensitive and intimate to learners.

Curriculum and lesson planning
Qualifiers must plan a series of lessons appropriate for their specialist phase and learning areas, which integrates aspects of HIV and AIDS.

Addressing stigma
Qualifiers must demonstrate a capacity to foster positive attitudes and values of caring and non-discrimination towards and between learners and colleagues, and to contribute to the creation of the school as a compassionate and inclusive community.

Links to Health Promoting Schools and Inclusive Education
Qualifiers should understand current policies of “Inclusive Education” and “Health Promoting Schools” and their significant links with HIV and AIDS education.

End
Addendum A

HIGHER EDUCATION LIFE SKILLS AND TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME
FACULTIES OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP 21 & 22 JULY 2003
SUNNYSIDE PARK HOTEL, JOHANNESBURG

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4. Graham Hall, Prof.
University of Witwatersrand
5. Misheck Ndebele, Mr
University of Witwatersrand
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Technikon South Africa
7. Beverly Malan, Dr.
Rand Afrikaans University
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10. Tania Vergnani, Mrs.
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11. Shakila Reddy, Dr.
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University of Natal
13. George Euvrard, Prof.
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Higher Education Against HIV/AIDS
16. Yaliwe Jiya, Prof
Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education
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18. Kenau Swart, Dr.
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20. Niekie v.d. Merwe, Mr.
University of Potchefstroom
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University of Cape Town
22. Sally Guttmacher, Prof.
University of Cape Town / New York University
23. Catherine Mathews, Prof.
University of Cape Town / Medical Research Council
24. Sipho Zwane, Mr.
University of Zululand
25. Jane Pennewather, Ms.
University of Natal
26. Dirk Meerkotter, Prof.
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27. Dhianaraj Chetty, Mr.
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29. Kgobati Magome, Ms.
Department of Education
30. Charles Deutsch, Dr.
Harvard School of Public Health
31. Nzukie Tyilo, Ms.
University of Fort Hare
32. Mlungiseleli Jadezwane, Dr.
University of Transkei
33. Sipho Zwane, Mr.
University of Zululand
34. Steve Niemann, Prof.
University of Free State
35. Cyril Hartell, Dr.
University of Pretoria
36. Barbara Michel
Programme Director; Higher education Against HIV/AIDS
37. Duncan Hindle
Department of Education

Task team highlighted
Addendum B

TEACHER EDUCATION TASK TEAM MEETING
1 & 2 SEPTEMBER 2003
MONKEY VALLEY CONFERENCE CENTRE, CAPE TOWN

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Catherine Mathews  University of Cape Town / Medical Research Council
Christina Jordaan  University of Port Elizabeth
Dhianaraj Chetty.  Advisor: Education and Development
Dirk Meerkotter  University of the Western Cape
Jim Lees  University of the Western Cape
Kgobati Magome  Department of Education
Nhlanhla Ngubane  DCI
Pam Dube  Department of Education
Robert Gerber.  Port Elizabeth Technikon
Ronnie Kundasami  Committee of Technikon Principals
Sesi Nxesi  Department of Education
Shakila Reddy  University of Durban-Westville
Tania Vergnani  University of the Western Cape
Wally Morrow  Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education