

Foreword

HIV and AIDS has emerged as a major threat in many countries to the educational gains achieved over the last decades. The worst affected region is sub-Saharan Africa, and this includes a number of Commonwealth countries. More than 113 million children in the world are estimated to be affected by HIV through loss of one or both parents, increased family responsibilities or through illness themselves. In Zambia and Kenya, for example, it is projected that there will be 2 to 3 million AIDS orphans by 2010. Girls particularly are at risk, with two-thirds of all children currently affected being girls. Girls and women also share disproportionate responsibility of care. However, it is important to note that girls and women are also more adversely affected by HIV in Africa and elsewhere simply because they have a secondary status in society.

Although the impact of HIV on education systems can be far reaching, the role that education itself can play in effective protection against the epidemic is crucial. Education can promote awareness and support behaviour change, both with regard to HIV and issues of gender. Research, however, suggests that the potential impact of education is not being realised. Deep rooted values and social practices are resistant to change. Awareness generation is important, but it can only serve as a first step in changing behaviour.

Teachers can play an important role in changing attitudes and behaviour, particularly in developing contexts. Yet, a Commonwealth Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Africa regional workshop, Identifying Good Practices in the Education Sector's Response to HIV and AIDS, held in 2006, identified that insufficient teacher preparation was leading to ineffective communication of key messages to students, parents and their communities. This was particularly so with regard to addressing issues of social/religious taboo and discrimination. Limitations in the delivery of effective and empowering gender education were also seen as a major challenge. The workshop findings expressed the need for strengthening of teacher preparation practices, but it was recognised that greater understanding of the current teacher education curriculum and practices was required in order to determine how to chal-

lenge and alter behaviour. Following on from the workshop, a review of teacher education curriculum and practices was therefore initiated. The selected countries were three East African countries: Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, where the rate of HIV and AIDS is high and where girls continue to face disparity in various ways.

The review sought therefore to consider not only the policies and curriculum, but also the ways in which these are translated into practices. Drawing on a comprehensive desk review of relevant materials, and in-depth interviews of tutors and trainee teachers, the report concludes that although the three countries have a strong and encouraging policy context mandating the inclusion of HIV and AIDS education in the school curricula and by extension into teacher training, the gap between policy and implementation is wide. The objectives and the content on HIV and gender aim only at providing factual knowledge and to raise awareness among teachers. They do not reflect the aim of preparing future teachers to teach children and young adults to change their behaviour. Little attention is given to engage trainees to examine their existing beliefs, attitudes and behaviour, or to learn how to teach these topics to children in schools. Where gender topics are included, they represent a reinforcement of current gender roles and relationships, or take a welfare approach rather than strengthening women's agency, necessary for their well-being. Gender finds even less space than HIV in the curricula and in the teaching.

As well as systematically examining the gaps between curriculum, syllabus and practices, the report also highlights weaknesses in tutor preparation in teacher training institutions. It suggests that tutors' own beliefs and attitudes can act as a major constraint and it considers ways of addressing this issue.

Following on from the findings of the study, a pilot Action project, led by the Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development: Eastern Africa, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (AKU: IED) and in collaboration with a number of Tanzanian teacher training institutions, has been initiated. Its objective is to take the lessons learned in order to actively improve the content and methodology of teaching HIV and AIDS in the colleges that participated in the curriculum review. It is also intended that the experience gained will support the development of a framework for action in

other institutions and countries. The experiences will provide the basis for a guide towards the improvement of the teaching of HIV-related topics in teacher training institutions and in turn in schools.

We hope that whatever your role, teacher, student, academic, government officer, representative of a development agency or an interested individual, you will find this publication both of interest and practical use.

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