

Chapter 9

Gaps Between Policy, Curriculum and Practice Across the Three Countries

The three countries in our review have a strong and encouraging policy context, and this encourages and indeed mandates the inclusion of HIV and AIDS education into the school curricula and by extension into teacher training. However, the gap between policy and implementation is wide. Although most training in HIV education for teachers is short and takes place in-service, the three countries have included HIV education in their school curricula. It is integrated or infused into the curricula of certificate, diploma and degree courses for teacher preparation. Science, social studies, civics and religious and development studies seem to be the main carrier subjects. However, the objectives and the content on HIV and gender aim only at providing factual knowledge and raising awareness among teachers. They do not reflect the aim of preparing future teachers to teach children and young adults to change their behaviour.

Teacher education colleges across the three countries intend to integrate HIV and gender in their teaching. However, teaching on the issues is not systematic and little class time is spent on them. The main focus of HIV teaching is the transmission of scientific and factual knowledge. Little attention is given to engage trainees in examining their existing beliefs, attitudes and behaviours or in learning how to teach these topics to children in schools. Teaching learning materials have been developed in the three countries. However, these are of varying quality, not uniformly available or readily accessible by tutors and trainees and are seldom used in teaching. Moreover, such materials are not prepared to enrich and support the pre-service curricula.

Curricula in the three countries recommend use of participatory teaching approaches in teacher education programmes. However, it is clear that tutors lack adequate preparation to use these approaches effectively them-

selves or to help prepare future teachers to use them in their school classrooms.

Lack of good teaching learning materials, poor tutor preparation and tutors' lack of ability and interest to integrate HIV and/or gender into the teaching of other subjects are the main reasons for the limited and superficial teaching of these topics in pre-service teacher education. The addition of HIV and gender to other subjects, and the ensuing possibility that the subjects can then be passed without teaching or assessing students on these topics, also conveys the message that HIV and gender are insignificant and non-serious topics and that they are inessential to teacher preparation. Where gender topics are included, they represent a reinforcement of current gender roles and relationships, or take a welfare approach. The curriculum does not include the objective of strengthening women's agency necessary for their wellbeing (Sen, 1999). Gender finds even less space than HIV and AIDS in the curricula and in teaching.