Health, Education, Social Protection

Education in the fight against HIV and AIDS

The challenge
The threat posed by the AIDS pandemic has reached a dangerously high level worldwide and is actually still increasing in some countries. Children and young people who are becoming sexually active are especially at risk. The challenge is to inform them at an early stage about the risks associated with the disease for the purpose of preventing infection and to equip them with the skills they need to protect themselves effectively. Schools have a key role to play in this context. However, many teachers are not sufficiently well-informed about HIV/AIDS to provide guidance for their students.

Our approach
Our work aims to prevent the further spread of HIV and mitigate the impacts of the disease. A successful education policy and a well-performing and non-discriminatory education system facilitate the implementation of these goals. In line with this approach, we provide advice and support for ministries, government agencies, organisations, private companies and civil society.

The aim is to curb the negative socioeconomic impacts of AIDS by means of appropriate educational planning and training for teachers. In order to prevent the spread of HIV and reduce the stigma attached to people living with HIV, awareness-raising for all stakeholders is essential: from teachers, students and parents to staff in the administration.

Our services
GIZ provides advisory services at various levels and supports partner countries’ implementation of reform processes. Our advisory services comprise:

- **Education policy:** We advise governments on the development and implementation of an HIV/AIDS education plan, with a focus on prevention, and the inclusion of HIV/AIDS as a topic in the curriculum. Working together, we analyse the current situation and then develop strategies and action plans for HIV control on that basis. School management bodies are involved in the implementation of the plans.

- **Pre- and in-service training for teachers and education staff:** We provide training modules for teachers and administrative staff, so that they can share their knowledge with students and counsel them on an individual basis, reduce the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS, and promote solidarity in and out of school.

- **Participatory methods:** We apply innovative educational approaches which foster teachers’ and students’ own initiative. One example is the ‘Join-in-circuit’, which can be adapted so that it is culturally and linguistically appropriate to the needs of the target group. It is especially important to involve parents as well.

- **Education and workplace programmes:** As part of our service package ‘Non-Formal Education: A New Chance’, we are working with our partners to develop non-formal education offers for children and young people affected by HIV/AIDS. We also integrate the topic of HIV prevention into educational offers for adults of both sexes, and are implementing HIV workplace programmes in education ministries and institutions.
The benefit

You benefit from our many years of experience in developing education programmes with a focus on HIV prevention. In this context, we always tailor our advisory services to the specific needs of the country and cultures concerned. We foster our partners’ potential so that they can assume ownership of, and develop and expand, the projects and programmes. Our approach, which aims to involve all education stakeholders from the outset, increases the long-term success of the measures. One example is the involvement of, and cooperation with, local communities and parents. As one outcome of our work, the younger generation in particular is better protected and can make its own significant contribution to curbing the pandemic.

An example from the field

‘Pasha!’ is an exclamation in Swahili which expresses pleasure or delight. PASHA – Prevention and Awareness in Schools of HIV/AIDS – is also the name of a project being implemented by GIZ in Tanzania on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and in cooperation with the Swiss Tropical Institute (STI). It provides information for young people and raises their awareness of HIV/AIDS, sexuality, health and contraception. In this way, we support the students’ personal development, encourage them to behave responsibly, and offer them new prospects. The project is currently working with 200 secondary and 170 primary schools in three regions.

The background to the project is that in Tanzania, more than 7 per cent of adults (male and female) are infected with HIV. Tanzania is a country where most people nowadays have heard about AIDS, but comprehensive knowledge about HIV and how to prevent infection remains low.

The project aims to impart this knowledge and develop the relevant skills to enable school students to make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. A ‘whole school’ development approach is used, which involves teachers and students alike. School counsellors are elected by students from among the teaching staff and receive training. In addition, they are provided with materials and assistance in establishing a resource network. A peer education scheme, with appropriate materials, is also in place: assisted by their counsellors, the students choose two ‘peer educators’ per class. Their task, with the teachers’ support, is to develop activities with their peers. This helps young people to develop a healthy sense of self-esteem and empowers them to address their problems more effectively.

Numerous successes have been achieved since we launched the project in 2003. In Tanga region, the proportion of students with a basic knowledge of HIV/AIDS has increased from just 40 per cent to 95 per cent. More and more young people are accessing the counselling services, and 79 per cent of secondary schools in Tanga now have at least two trained school counsellors among the teaching staff. 84 per cent of school students say that they would approach a teacher if they had problems. As a result of the training, the school counsellors can now provide better advice and give more effective support to their students. In addition, the school drop-out rate of girls due to pregnancies has gone down.

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