

## **SOME PRACTICAL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR COUNTERATTACKING HIV IN EDUCATION IN THE MEDIUM-TO LONG-TERM**

### **PLANNING PRINCIPLES**

Principles for strategic planning are emerging from the experience of twenty years and the most important principle of simplicity is set out here:

'Perhaps the most successful aspect of the [South African] National AIDS Programme has been to improve the quality of STD care and increase the public's access to that care. In fact, it appears to have been a classic example of "getting the small things right"... Ensuring good STD care is simpler than organising peer education or doing outreach with marginalised groupings, and points to the kinds of prevention tasks that are within the capacity of the system to implement...If simple tasks are successfully managed, they will contribute to building an environment which will make more challenging interventions through government possible at a later stage.' (Marais, *To the Edge*, Centre for the Study of AIDS, University of Pretoria, 2000, p.7).

Further:

1. The agency criteria of 'affordability' and 'sustainability' should not be applied in the battle against HIV and education, but set aside for the short-term until the situation stabilises.
2. The commitment to national (ie African) government 'ownership' of programmes, while admirable, is not saving lives in this case. Waiting for governments to take decisions, create policy and develop strategic plans, given their management capacity, is not fruitful and is costing lives. It is time for international development agencies to be more proactive in suggesting a menu of programme options, and providing quick and reliable support for actions selected from that menu by governments.
3. HIV and education programmes designed to receive support need to be
  - coherent, and address the three areas of principal concern: **helping prevent** the spread of the disease; **mitigating the impact** of the pandemic on learners, educators and learning institutions; **and protecting quality and provision** of education.
  - viable, within the capacity of the educator sector to implement quickly and usefully, taking full advantage of supplementary and complementary non-government and international resources.
  - concentrated on getting basics into place quickly (prevention, support and protection) by manipulating obvious levers for change
4. Funding and support procedures on the part of agencies need to be
  - simple and accessible
  - managed by fundholders (institutions, agencies, trusts, or NGOs) where necessary to avoid accounting and auditing confusion and delay
  - aimed at getting resources and TA to those who can use them best – inside and outside government
5. Staff and TA support need to be as high quality as possible. Volunteer contributions will be good for working close to the ground. But we need generals, senior executives. It is not necessary for a senior executive to be fully cognisant of HIV aetiology or local culture here: what is needed is to get the job done once it is identified locally and in consultation with government and local authorities.

The recommendations that follow constitute a rapid appraisal of what I think a *'package of HIV and education support'* might look like. I believe it would be acceptable to governments/ministries of education, and to the NGO community.

## **REGIONAL SUPPORT**

### 1. **Meeting of Specialists**

*A three-day technical meeting of experts to review the status of HIV and education programmes and research after 20 years, based on the SADC survey of government action to February 2001.*

The purpose of the meeting would be to (1) review current action; (2) establish priorities for research; (3) suggest viable procedures for supporting national and regional HIV and education work; and (4) identify the most important levers for saving lives and keeping education and training moving in the short-term, and predominant areas for long-term support for behaviour and systemic change. The meeting would take account of the Inter Agency Working Group draft proposals for planning for HIV, Education and Children and the Unicef et al planning principals for supporting orphans and vulnerable children.

Such a meeting would initially feed into agency consultative mechanisms, but would perhaps constitute a regular device for taking advice from regional experts.

### 2. **Regional HIV and Education Centre(s)**

*A high profile focal point in the East, Central and Southern Region (SADC) region for those (nationally, regionally and internationally) who are thinking about and taking action on HIV and education;*

The Centre would

- act as a knowledge bank to the education sector in South Africa, regionally (SSA, SADC, ECOWAS), and globally
- help to build capacity (within institutions and education sectors, among social sector stakeholders, and within governments, international agencies and nongovernment organisations in the regional and international community) to think creatively about HIV and education, and to help others undertake research, formulate policy and strategic plans, and implement them by
  - (1) providing high-profile **informed leadership** in policy, planning and action
  - (2) developing **partnerships**, collective understanding and dedication
  - (3) initiating **research**, collecting, storing and distributing **information** (website, library, clearinghouse of materials and information, databases, acting as a first stop for researchers and policy-makers wanting information and materials)
  - (4) providing support for **knowledge management and transfer** appropriate to crisis
  - (5) supporting **policy formulation, planning and management** initiatives within the sector
  - (6) assisting government, agencies and others in **mobilising, harnessing and channelling resources** – human, financial and material – available for work on HIV and education within the sector
  - (7) helping to identify **priorities** for research and action
  - (8) helping to develop **evaluation** criteria and monitoring progress

Such an executive centre would be relatively small, working through staff, students and associated professionals in other institutions and agencies, primarily as a facilitator, convenor, funder and promoter. Its senior executive/professional staff would be limited to a core of about 4-5 members, with contract staff brought on board on short- to medium-term contracts as required to manage its capacity building, research, publications, clearinghouse, cooperation and advisory programmes.

Such a centre must be located where logistics (communications, transport etc) are more than adequate.

### 3. **Mobile Task Team(s)**

*Teams of specialists located in the region with capacity to provide pro tem support for governments and institutions in the areas of (1) managing and planning sectoral response to HIV and education; and (2) curriculum, materials and behaviour change programmes aimed at short-term life quality gains, and long-term survival.*

The Mobile Task Team on HIV and Education based at the University of Natal Health Economics and AIDS Research Division, supported by USAID, provides a model for operating mobile task teams of professionals who are available on request to support HIV and education programmes. There is only one team, of approximately ten members drawn from three countries, working in the SADC region. It concentrates on planning and management issues (protecting the system). More planning and management teams are required for East and Central Africa, and on curriculum, care and counselling for the region, as none now exist. The model is cost effective and it works. It needs to be rolled out more proactively to assist governments and institutions.

## **NATIONAL SUPPORT**

Experience in the region suggests that a useful support package for national education sectors (in Rwanda, Malawi, Botswana and Namibia, for example) should concentrate on establishing and sustaining a firm foundation for HIV and education programmes.

### **1. Executive Leadership Programme**

*A sustained national programme of workshops and other activities to sensitise and train senior officials, institutional heads, and teacher educators on the principal substantive and management components of effecting change vis a vis HIV.*

Directed at national and local officials over a period of three years, the HIV and AIDS Executive Leadership Programme could be facilitated by top-rank experts from a variety of places, and from the Mobile Task Team(s) operating in the region.

### **2. HIV and Education Research Agenda**

*A national research agenda on HIV and education, with priorities for research, data collection, and information gathering, supported by an information dissemination programme.*

A joint programme of the ministry and the principal university or teacher training institution would concentrate on field research in priority areas, improving the capacity of the ministry to collect (initially in a simple way, according to capacity) and analyse HIV-related data, finding ways to collect significant local information and use it, and linking national and international researchers. This work will require (1) at least one agency-supported TA post at the university or other institution and (2) a research and analysis budget.

### **3. Policy, Planning and Management Support**

*Senior executive support dedicated to developing policy and strategic plans, and managing them into action.*

Rwanda, for example, has an incipient strategic plan. It has an HIV/AIDS Unit in the Ministry of Education consisting of one professional microbiologist and two junior civil servants. It is estimated that to make headway in plan implementation, substantial staff, equipment and logistical support is required. Government will not make these contributions.

As its plan stands at the moment, the HIV Unit requires (1) a senior *executive training coordinator* to develop the Ministry's HIV training strategy, to coordinate the work of NGOs and FBOs who are willing to work with government in developing educator capacity in prevention, care and counselling work, and to

supervise the flow of funds to the NGO sector in this regard; (2) a *senior social support (care and counselling) specialist* to elaborate and coordinate care and counselling programmes within the sector, working with government (health and social welfare) and nongovernment personnel, and to help develop the research agenda and programme in this area; (3) a *senior management specialist* to initiate and supervise an assessment of the impact of HIV on the education sector, analyse the implications of the assessment for the sector, make recommendations about priorities for action to stabilise the sector and prevent further deterioration of the teaching service, and finally to work with the HIV Unit in developing its strategic plan and programmes in this area.

Such a team would be supplemented by operatives at provincial level, working with inspectorate HIV focal points, communities and NGOs, to implement local programmes.

Appropriate transport and administrative support will be required. Fundholding devices, keeping funds outside government's procedural arrangements, are advisable for these programmes, and this has been agreed by the Secretary-General for Education in the cases of both Namibia and Rwanda, for example.

Malawi, Botswana and Namibia are all in similar circumstances, along with others like Ghana. The need to provide senior executive support, either directly to ministries in a line capacity, or through consultancy groups like CfBT or SWEDEC, cannot be emphasised strongly enough. Programme budgets are useless without executive supervision and management. More people are needed, senior people.

#### 4. ***Radical Short-Term Humanitarian Interventions***

*A series of short-term interventions designed to save lives (see separate paper).*

### ***SOUTH AFRICA***

#### 1. ***Meeting of Specialists (Lekgotla)***

*A three-day technical meeting of experts to review the status of HIV and education programmes and research.*

The meeting of specialists would concentrate on who is doing what, what resources are available, and what needs to be done as a matter of priority within the education sector and its community. It would be designed to build stronger links between institutions, nongovernment organisations, government departments, and agencies.

#### 2. ***HIV and Education Research Support***

*A strongly-led research programme on HIV and education, linking policy units in universities and sectoral concerns.*

The four Education Policy Units (University of Witwatersrand, University of Fort Hare, University of the Western Cape, and the University of Natal), along with the Centre for Education Policy Development in Johannesburg, have held an initial meeting to consider their potential contribution in this area. They are clearly in need of staff, and have the potential to make use of at least one additional post, dedicated to HIV and education research, at each of the five centres. They would require a substantial research budget over the next two-three years, as part of their function would be to contract out identified research priorities to other researchers in the sector.

#### 3. ***Staffing Support***

*Senior executive technical support to national and provincial education departments for work on HIV and education programmes, as required.*

4. ***National HIV and Education Centre***

*A high profile, proactive coordinating centre for HIV and education work in South Africa, along the lines recommended for a regional centre above.*

Such a centre could be located within an existing institution (university or trust), or be stand-alone, and would serve the interests of the entire sector.

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