

COUNTRY PRESENTATION: BOTSWANA

BACKGROUND

The first AIDS case in Botswana was reported in 1985. By the year 2000 the country was experiencing one of the severest HIV/AIDS epidemics on the continent. The governments' initial response was to start a National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) and a short Term Plan. Government of Botswana developed a National HIV/AIDS Policy in 1993. Following this came the medium Term Plan I (MTPI) which placed response to the epidemic on the Health Sector at the district level. At the end of the implementation of the MTPI it was realised that there was a need to shift to a multi-sectoral approach. The Medium Term Plan II sought to involve all sectors in the implementation monitoring and evaluation of HIV/AIDS related programmes in order to increase awareness and generate a feeling of ownership of the programme.

In 2000 the government established National AIDS Coordinating Agency (NACA). National AIDS Council was chaired by the Minister of Health. In 1999 the President of Botswana, His Excellency Festus Mogae declared HIV/AIDS a national emergency and is now chairing the National AIDS Council. Sector committees chaired by Permanent Secretaries were also established the same year. District Multi-Sectoral AIDS Committees (DMSAC's) are chaired by District Commissioners/Council Secretary.

Ministry of Education response so far:

The government of Botswana revised the National Policy on Education and made a commitment to integrate HIV/AIDS in the curriculum and that HIV/AIDS education must be made compulsory at all levels of education.

Ministry of Education developed a policy on HIV/AIDS education to provide guidance to curriculum developers, school heads, teachers and ministry personnel.

HIV/AIDS education is integrated across all subjects in the school curriculum and in the Guidance and Counselling Programme in order to capture the social and economic aspects of the disease.

In 1994, AIDS education materials from other countries such as Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe were collected in order to learn from the experiences of other countries and to start the process of developing HIV/AIDS education materials to be used in teaching about the disease in schools. The idea was to adapt the collected materials to the specific needs of Botswana and to adapt the content of the materials to the different levels and age groups of students. MoE is currently piloting WHO HIV/AIDS education material in 30 national schools for the purpose of adopting school health promotion initiative.

Guidance and Counselling Programme of MoE provides in-service training to teachers and educational support staff. Such training covers knowledge about the disease and attempts to equip teachers with special skills to help students who are affected by the disease in one way or another.

MoE is implementing another programme called Population/Family Life education supported by UNFPA.

With assistance from UNFPA. This programme compliments and reinforces issues which impact on HIV/AIDS education. It educates school-going youth on population/family life related issues in order to create awareness, promote responsible behaviour, promote the development of empathetic attributes and seeks to contribute to improving the quality of life of individuals and society. The programme focuses on adolescent reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. The programme is also going to be intensified by Melinda and Bill Gates and Turner Foundation which are implemented by UNFPA and UNAIDS.

DFID assisted the Ministry in 2000 to do a school survey to assess the impact of HIV/AIDS. The findings of the DFID report lead to development of MoE strategic plan draft by MoE technical committee on HIV/AIDS made up of departmental focal points.

In 2000 MoE appointed a full-time AIDS coordinator.

Teachers Association Against HIV/AIDS was formed.

UNDP/GOB support programme assisted the ministry with a consultancy to finalize the MoE strategic plan draft. The main focus of the plan are care, support, coping mechanisms, behavioural change and school community participation.

Further support by UNDP/GOB HIV/AIDS programme extended to MoE to assess the impact of HIV/AIDS on the education sector which is a more comprehensive study. The study is currently ongoing and final report expected in August 2001.

Botswana Human Development Report 2000 focuses on youth and the main theme is "Towards an HIV/AIDS Free Generation"

South to South Cooperation project on teacher capacity programme.

MOE collaboration with NGO and other partners

Botswana Family Welfare Association (BOFWA) aims at creating increasing and maintaining awareness and education to youth on sexuality and reproductive health issues. The issues include teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and family welfare matters.

Peer Approach to Counselling by Teenagers (PACT) main purpose is to empower all adolescents to make informed choices, to maintain their health and well being. PACT provides adolescents with skills and knowledge that includes understanding and coping with reproductive health risks and consequences. PACT activities are currently concentrated in schools under the guidance and counselling teachers. PACT stands to offer significant contribution to the fight against HIV/AIDS because the target forms what is commonly being referred to as the "window of hope generation".

Women Against Rape (WAR) started in 1993 in Maun. It is the only centre against rape in Botswana.

Population Services International (PSI) use social marketing to make high quality health products available to low and middle income populations. Their primary interest in Botswana is HIV/AIDS prevention. They run a condom social marketing programme and market Voluntary Counseling and Testing for HIV.

Catchy electronic and attractive print productions are utilized to achieve this objective and one such publication is the recently launched the "Choose Life" magazine targeting 12 to 18 year olds country-wide and is distributed both in and outside the formal education sector.

- Piloting - Youth Friendly Health Services

1. Multi-purpose Centre Youth with reproductive Health services provision run by BOFWA in Mochudi and Gaborone.
2. Government clinic with extended hours of service - 24 hours to cater for Youth Reproductive Health in Francistown. This is run by YWCA Peer educators who provide counselling with the help of clinic staff.

Chart not available

