

**REPORT ON SUB-REGIONAL
WORKSHOP FOR POSITIVE
TEACHERS
AND EDUCATIONAL WORKERS**

**AT THE MEAGLENT HOTEL,
ACCRA - GHANA**

3RD - 5TH SEPTEMBER 2010

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1.0 Background

In recognition of the devastating impact of HIV & AIDS on its constituents: teachers, non-teaching staff and learners and the role education could play as an effective tool in the prevention of and mitigation of HIV & AIDS on the infected and affected, the Ministry of Education established the HIV & AIDS Secretariat in 2002. A number of interventions have been undertaken within the Sector as its contribution towards the national aspiration of preventing HIV infection and providing care and support for those infected.

Notable among these interventions is the formation of the Positive Teachers and Educational Workers Association (POTEWA) Ghana with a membership of about 80 drawn from all 10 regions of Ghana.

Since the formation of POTEWA, Ghana, a number of activities have been carried out including training in leadership, organizational and advocacy skills to enable members champion the course of POTEWA goals.

2.0 Purpose, Aim and Objectives of the Sub-Regional Workshop

The purpose of the workshop was to provide an opportunity for POTEWA members to deepen and broaden their knowledge and skills by interacting with participants from other countries.

The workshop aimed at providing a common platform for teachers and educational workers living with the virus to discuss issues affecting them.

The specific objectives were to:

- Build capacity of members in accurate HIV & AIDS information, advocacy and how to manage their condition
- Share experiences and ideas on the impact of HIV & AIDS on their person, occupation and community.

3.0 Sponsorship

The total budget for the workshop was GH¢33,735.50. UNESCO Dakar office provided an amount of USD15,000.00, an equivalent of GH¢21,750.00. An amount of USD13,500.00 has been accessed. The difference of approximately GH¢12,000.00 was provided by the Ministry of Education.

4.0 Methodology

Majority of the Resource Persons reached out to participants through power-point presentations. Group work, discussions and film show also formed part of the methodology.

5.0 Opening of the Workshop

The opening ceremony came off the morning of the first day of the programme. The Deputy Minister of Education in charge of Tertiary gave the opening address. There were other dignitaries such as the Country Representative for UNESCO, the Director of Technical Services at the Ghana AIDS Commission (GAC) and the National Project Coordinator, HIV & AIDS Workplace Education Project of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Additional Resource Persons from the sub-region – Ulla Kalha, Evelyne Chevalier and Dr. Kenneth Hamwaka and Carl Ampah of the UNESCO Cluster office (Ghana) were also present at the opening ceremony. There were other important officers from the Ghana Education Service who graced the occasion with their presence. The HIV & AIDS Coordinator gave a brief welcome address after which solidarity messages were given by representatives of UNESCO, GAC and ILO.

In his solidarity message, the representative from GAC was happy that the Ministry of Education had taken the response to another level and especially for the fact that the POTEWA group was the first professional group to form an association. He urged the group to continue to give emotional support to its members.

On her part, the representative from ILO was appreciative of the Secretariat staff for the work done so far. She hinted that there were new ILO standards which advocate for active involvement of social partners and PLWHIV and the right to continued employment. She recommended that there was the need to take targeted action on vulnerable groups. She promised to make the new ILO standards document available to the Secretariat.

The Country Representative of UNESCO was satisfied that the workshop was a reality and entreated the Ministry to provide support for the POTEWA members.

In his opening address, the Deputy Minister of Education, Hon. Dr. J. S. Annan observed that the Ministry of Education had always attached importance to issues of HIV & AIDS. He mentioned that the aim was to provide a supportive environment for its positive members. He however stressed that strategies should be found to reverse the trend of stigma and discrimination in the country.

The ceremony was chaired by Dr. Dominic Pealore, Director of the Statistical, Research, Information Management and Public Relations (SRIMPR) Division of the Ministry of Education.

6.0 Participation

6.1 Participants

Out of the total number of 50 participants expected, all the Ghanaian participants (45) attended the workshop. The other 5 participants were expected to come from the sub-region out of which 4 were present. Ghanaian participants represented the 10 regions of the country. A breakdown of the regional representatives is as follows: (Ashanti-3, Brong Ahafo-8, Central-4, Eastern-5, Greater Accra-2, Northern-4, Upper East-8, Upper West-4, Volta-4, Western-3). Representatives from the sub-region comprised Senegal – 2, Malawi – 1, Cameroun – 1.

6.2 Presentations

A number of presentations were given throughout the two-and-half-days' workshop by very competent Resource Persons and Facilitators. Details of presentations by Resource Persons are presented in the table below:

No.	Topic	Facilitator/Resource Person	Organization
1.	Global and National HIV & AIDS	Dr. Naa Ashiley	West African AIDS

	Situation	Vanderpuje	Foundation
2.	Experiences in Management of HIV clients	Dr. Naa Ashiley Vanderpuje	West African AIDS Foundation
3.	HIV & AIDS and Human Rights	Wendy Abbey	Human Rights Advocacy Centre
4.	State of Positive Teachers in Malawi	Dr. Kenneth Hamwaka	Malawi
5.	Nutrition and Hygiene for Improved Health	Mercy Acquah-Hayford	Ridge Hospital, Accra
6.	Education Sector HIV & AIDS Programmes and activities	Hilda Eghan	HIV & AIDS Secretariat
7.	Constitution Framework (Group work and plenary)	Dr. Kenneth Hamwaka	Malawi
8.	Engagement of Teacher Unions with Positive Teachers & Education Workers	Emmanuel Fatoma	Education International
9.	Stress Management	Elizabeth Oduro-Mensah	Accra Metropolitan Education Office
10.	State of Positive Teachers in Cameroun	Stella Enongene	Cameroun
11.	State of Positive Teachers in Senegal	Evelyne Chevalier	Senegal
12.	Sharing of experiences in Mobilizing of members for the Association	POTEWA Regional Executives	Ghana Education Service
13.	Film Show and discussion on Stigma and Discrimination	Margaret Kaba	HIV & AIDS Secretariat
14.	Assessing the Needs of HIV & AIDS on Positive Educators	Evelyne Chevalier	Senegal
15.	Positive Living	Joyce Kusi	Child & Teens Focus

6.2.1 Group Work and Plenary

As part of preparations towards the development of a draft POTEWA Constitution, participants worked in groups on a framework for the constitution in the first instance. Dr. Kenneth Hamwaka facilitated the session. There were four groups and each group worked on one of the following topics: Motivation and Drive (Group 1), Policy References (Group

2), Implementation (Group 3) and Activities and Outcomes (Group 4). The first two groups identified issues that necessitated their coming together under the motivation and drive as well as existing Policy documents that can be referenced in the preparation of the draft constitution. The third group also identified the executive positions and roles associated with the positions as an implementation strategy while the fourth group came up with activities that the Association hopes to undertake and their subsequent outcomes.

The second group work was on "Assessing the Impact and Needs of HIV & AIDS on Positive Educators" and was facilitated by Evelyne Chevalier from Senegal. Participants worked in four groups and each group had to assess the positive as well as the negative impacts of their status on them as Educators which informed their needs. The groups came out with the following needs: training, ARVs to be captured under National Health Insurance, treatment, peer education, testing and counseling. They mentioned that addressing these needs of Positive Educators would result in the establishment of support and protection systems, and respect of the rights of positive educators and in the enhancement of their advocacy skills. Other results which would be derived from addressing the needs of positive educators are free access to treatment, provision of care and support, counseling services and access to high quality education.

6.2.2 *Experience-Sharing by some Participants*

A number of participants shared their experiences on stigma and discrimination as follows:

- *"Even though I have been positive for some time, I have not formally disclosed this to my colleagues but I know that people have suspected me of being positive. I used to sell cold sachet water in the school where I teach but after a while, the pupils were not patronizing the water any more so I stopped selling. I was in my house one day when neighbor led an HIV positive person to my house apparently for me to show her where I had been receiving treatment. I then told them to go back to the doctor who diagnosed her as having the virus since I was not a doctor."*
- *"I got married before going to the Teacher Training College. While at College, I started getting ill often. I was encouraged to go for testing and I was told of my positive status. My husband and my uncle rejected me and my first Head teacher could not keep my status confidential. I became very miserable until I was granted a transfer to another school. I decided to disclose my status to my second Head teacher who, fortunately treated me like his own daughter and gave me all the support I needed in the school."*
- *'My wife was first diagnosed HIV positive so I also decided to test when I started falling sick. I was also diagnosed positive and it was not long before news went round. One influential man who had his child in my school then decided to canvass for my removal from the school. When I got wind of it, I decided to confront him so I went to his house with my wife. He gave us a bench to sit outside on his veranda. My wife and I told him to stop spoiling our names. After some exchanges, my wife and I educated him on the mode of transmission and how just teaching his child will not give him HIV. After he had seen the wisdom in what we said he gave us ten Ghana cedis to take transport back home. Today we are friends and he has stopped spreading news about me.'*

Some of the participants stated that they were members of other support groups such as 'Living Aid Support Group', 'Life Alive Association', 'DISO Association', 'Solace Club', 'Good Shepherd', 'HASA' and 'Link Up Care' where they meet occasionally to encourage themselves.

7.0 Handouts

The Coordinator explained that the Secretariat had technical problems with its photocopier coupled with the late receipt of various presentations so the handouts would be packaged and sent to the regional executives to be distributed to the participants at a later date.

8.0 IEC Materials

A number of reader-friendly booklets developed in other African countries were donated to the Secretariat by the Senegal UNESCO, Dakar at the workshop for use by the basic schools. The titles are:

- *Who is the Real Chicken?*
- *Home, the Best Medicine*
- *Don't Play with Your Life!*
- *Kaba's Story*
- *Educate a Woman Educate a Nation*
- *Break the Silence*
- *Inherit Me, Inherit My HIV*
- *EDUCAIDS Resource Pack*
- *Supporting HIV-Positive Teachers in East and Southern Africa – Technical Consultation Report*
- *T'LIPO – Teachers Living Positively with HIV and AIDS*
- *CDs – Kenya The Teaching Profession UNITED Against HIV / AIDS and An Instructional Compact Disc on Peer Education in HIV/AIDS*

9.0 Entertainment

A Cocktail was held on the second day for participants to afford them the opportunity to interact with themselves and the Resource Persons. Ulla of Senegal and Hilda of the HIV & AIDS Secretariat addressed the members during the Cocktail.

10.0 Evaluation

A workshop evaluation instrument was administered on participants during which indicators like achievement of workshop objectives, relevance of topics, mode of presentation, workshop materials and facilities were measured.

Majority of the participants, 81.6% were of the view that the workshop objectives were achieved to a large extent while 87.7% stated that the workshop was very relevant to them. The methods of presentation was accepted as very satisfying by 81.6% of the participants however, only 48.9% were satisfied with the workshop materials given them. This might be due to the fact that handouts of the various presentations were not distributed immediately.

Participants were given explanation on how this came about. Seventy-three point four percent (73.4%) of participants were very satisfied with the workshop facilities while 71.4% had no problem with the duration of the workshop.

11.0 Recommendations / Suggestions

The following recommendations / suggestions were made:

1. The Secretariat should consider capturing the experiences of members on a CD.
2. Development of a Ghanaian Food Guidelines for POTEWA members
3. Supper to be converted to cash for participants since the two snacks were substantial.
4. Presentations to be photocopied for participants to refer to while presentations are delivered.
5. The GIPA Principle should be a key topic in such workshops.

12.0 Closing

The Coordinator thanked all participants and Resource Persons for their full participation in the programme. She particularly expressed appreciation to UNESCO for the sponsorship package and technical support given the Ministry. Some of the materials donated by UNESCO Dakar and Dr. Kenneth Hamwaka were distributed to participants. Certificates of participation were presented to all participants.

The workshop came to a close at 12.40 pm on the third day.