



Fact Sheet on HIV/AIDS Education in Nigeria



Background

Young people between the ages of 10-24 account for 33.6% (47 million) of Nigeria's estimated 140 million people¹. Youth between the ages of 15 to 29 years contribute 60% of new HIV infections.

The level of misconception about HIV transmission among young people is fairly high. Thirty percent of lower and upper primary school students as well as 26% of junior secondary school students have misconception that HIV could be transmitted through mosquito bite².

Thirteen percent of pupils in junior secondary schools perceived themselves to be at low risk while 56% perceived themselves to be at no risk for HIV³.

Twenty-one percent of upper primary school pupils and 20% of junior secondary school pupil have had sexual intercourse⁴.

Education is one of the most effective ways of helping young people to avoid HIV/AIDS. A key argument for this is that school-age children have the lowest prevalence of infection; and with proper education they can acquire knowledge, skills and values to help protect themselves from HIV. Thus, providing young people with the social vaccine of education offers them a real chance to productive life⁵.

The government of Nigeria from 1999 commenced a multi-sectoral national response to HIV/AIDS.

Education Sector Response

1. Establishment of HIV and AIDS Unit

A dedicated HIV and AIDS Unit of the Federal Ministry of Education was established in 2002 to coordinate the education sector response to HIV/AIDS at all levels.

2. Policy Framework

There are several policies including the education sector policies that are been in place to promote the health and development of young people. These policies include:

- National Health Policy
- National Reproductive Health Policy and Strategy
- The National Policy on the Health and Development of Adolescents and Young People in Nigeria
- National Youth Policy and Strategic Plan of Action
- National HIV and AIDS Policy

- HIV & AIDS National Strategic Framework for Action
- National Policy on Education
- National Policy on HIV&AIDS for the Education Sector in Nigeria
- National Education Sector HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (NESP)
- Instructional Development Guideline
- National Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Programme Response

The NESP provides strategic thrust to accelerate the response of the sector at all levels, protect vulnerable groups, enhance effective implementation of programme to reduce HIV infection and mitigate the impact of AIDS in the sector.

The NESP addresses five key thematic areas:

- Planning, Co-ordination and resource mobilization
The HIV & AIDS unit provides policy direction, build capacity, partnerships and perform other oversight functions with regards to the sector response at all levels. Similar structures were established at States and Local Government Area (LGA) levels within the sector.

The head of the HIV and AIDS Unit at the FME represents the sector at the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA), and the head of the unit at the state level assumes similar function at the State Agency for the Control of AIDS. Similar structures are being developed at the LGA level. Since 2003, there has been an increase in funds mobilised for the education sector HIV response.

- Prevention of New infections

The two-pronged approach to the prevention of HIV infections among learners are the curricular and co-curricular approach.

Curricular Approach

The key strategy of this approach is the mainstreaming of the Family Life and HIV Education (FLHE) curriculum at all levels. The curriculum focuses on the five key thematic areas at primary and junior secondary schools which are:

- Human Development,
- Personal Skills,
- Sexual Health,
- Relationships, and
- Sexuality, Society and Culture.



The main goal of the curriculum is promotion of awareness and prevention against HIV/AIDS through the followings objectives:

- To assist individuals in having a clear and factual view of humanity
- To provide individuals with information and skills necessary for rational decision making about their health,
- To change and affect behaviour on humanity
- To prevent the occurrence and spread of HIV/AIDS.

The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) has introduced the Family Life and Emerging Health Issues (FLEHI) an adaptation of FLHE, as a course at the Colleges of Education.

Co-curricula

This approach reinforces and promotes internalization of the concepts inherent in the FLHE thematic areas for ensuring qualitative living. The strategies are establishment of anti-AIDS Clubs and Peer Education. The peer education focuses on awareness creation and life skills development.

E-learning method for delivering FLHE (Learning about Living-LaL) was introduced as part of an inter-agency project in 2007. LaL uses information and communication technology to educate young people about sexual and reproductive health including HIV and AIDS.

Impact Mitigation

The sector aims at increasing access of at least 50% of identified infected and affected staff and learners to HIV and AIDS education support services by 2010 through the following key strategies: strengthen capacity for education support to OVC and facilitating access of staff and learners to VCT as well as other support services⁶.

Enabling Policy Environment

The Nigerian government has demonstrated her commitment to mainstreaming HIV & AIDS issues in the sector by creating enabling environment that supports effective action against HIV & AIDS. The sector policy is premised on ensuring positive environment, which is critical to the success of HIV & AIDS interventions in the sector. The key principles of the policy include: human rights, non discriminations, healthy work and learning environment, gender equality, social dialogue, non-discriminative access to education and employment, OVC, grievances procedures and VCT.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Federal Ministry of Education in collaboration with partners undertook two specific studies. These are:

- A national survey on HIV and AIDS Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, Skills (KAPS) and School Health in Nigeria (2006)
- FLHE implementation Baseline Assessment in Ekiti, Kogi, Gombe, Ebonyi, Katsina and Akwa Ibom states (2008)

Both studies reveal that FLHE curriculum implementation is weak in many states.

Strategic Next Steps

Advocacy and Capacity Building

- Sensitize and build capacity of stakeholders and educators at all levels for improved policy domestication and implementation.
- Enhance effective implementation of FLHE curriculum at all levels.

Expand the Sector Response

- Mainstream the sector response into non-formal, technical education and other education sub-sectors.
- Promote involvement of parents, private sector and civil societies in the sector response using a more systemic and coordinated approach.

Increase Access to Resource Materials

- Provision of teaching and learning materials required for effective delivery of the curriculum.
- Develop a strategic plan for mobilizing and utilization of available resources as well as improve effectiveness of interventions within the sector.

References

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