

Criteria for appraisal of teaching/learning material for HIV/AIDS prevention in school settings

International Bureau of Education/UNESCO, Geneva, 2003

Identity Sheet

1. Title of material (original language): **Life Orientation. Life Skills and HIV/AIDS illustrative Learning Programme. Grade 8 and 9**
2. Translation of name into English: not applicable
3. Country of origin¹: South Africa
4. Country/ies of implementation: South Africa
5. Age of pupils/school grades targeted: secondary level, grade 8 and 9
6. Type of material: Learning/Teaching material
7. Integration in curriculum: part of secondary school programme for Grade 8 and 9 as progression of and build onto the primary school programme
8. Time frame (number and duration of sessions, over period of time): 4 units of 17 sessions; each session lasts 30 minutes; it is possible to allow extra time for discussion if learners show interest and/or if learners have a need to discuss, debate, clarify issues.
9. Educators involved: teachers
10. Specifications (format, #pages, #bands/volumes, #units, #appendices): format A4, 2 volumes for each grade: Educator Guide and Learners Workbook and Learners Workbook for Grade 8: Unit 1: I am, How I relate to others, What I believe in and value (Session 1.1. Ground rules and programme orientation; Session 1.2. The way I have changed; Session 1.3. Who I am?; Session 1.4. Communicating my self worth; Session 1.5. Friendship and relationship)
11. Teaching aid/support included²: teacher's book for each grade
12. Teacher training related to material use: no specification
13. First Publication Date: no specification Update/s: no specification
14. Author/corporate author: South Africa. Institute for Health, Training and Development
15. Existing evaluation/appraisal: no specification
16. Order information (address and contact details):

Institute for Health, Training and Development: Mrs Ornè Louw, Mrs Vasti de Villiers, Mrs Cornèll Amorim, Mrs Annatjie Roos, Mrs Shirley Delagey, Tel. (011) 450 1546;
The National Department of Education, the National Department of Health: Mrs. Barbara Michel, the Secondary School project committee; Printed by: Government Printer, PO Box 85, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa.

Copyright information: This publication is intended to support life skills and HIV/AIDS activities and may be copied and distributed as required. Printing and distribution for remuneration is not permitted. Permission from the copyright owners is required for any changes to the format or content of this publication.

¹) where it had been developed and applied first

²) specify the kind (teacher's book, teaching aides, training course, support through other sources like website, counseling center, health center, etc.)

Abstract

The life orientation programme is designed for youth and teenagers with a view to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to make informed and healthy choices.

This programme intended for grades 8 and 9 is a sequel to the existing programme for grades 1 to 7. All these programmes are based on the hypothesis that efficient education for HIV/AIDS prevention is possible only when schoolchildren have the opportunity to:

- acquire functional knowledge about HIV/AIDS;
- consider choices that support healthy behaviour related to HIV/AIDS;
- develop and practise skills that support those choices.

As 80-90 % of all HIV infections occur through sexual intercourse, the programmes are developed in the context of sex education. The need for sex and HIV/AIDS education programmes in schools is summed up here in five fundamental points:

1. It is important that sex education starts before teenagers begin their sex life.
2. It must be kept in mind that usually the first sexual intercourses at adolescence age are the riskiest because they involve casual partners; and that risks for HIV infection are very high.
3. It is vital that the school transmits correct information on HIV/AIDS. Considering the time elapsed between HIV contamination and the appearance of the first AIDS symptoms, teenagers may have the wrong impression that they are invulnerable to the infection.
4. All psycho-social, family- and school-related factors that can represent causes of ignorance and put teenagers at risk (low self-esteem, depression, dysfunctional family background, school performance, etc.) must be taken into consideration.
5. Sex education of teenagers must take into consideration casual sexual intercourse happening at this age (with regard to sexual practices, to clarification of sexual options and to development of certain skills such as decision-making and negotiating power relations among members of a social group).

The contents are adapted to the pupils' age and their specific preoccupations, being evenly distributed according to the two reference school years. There is a gradual evolution as regards the process of learning, seen from a psychological point of view. The pupils are encouraged and assisted in order to define their own values, to become aware of them, to analyze critically different situations and anticipate the consequences of their doings on their future. The evaluation of the knowledge and skills transmitted during Life Orientation classes is considered a priority.

Appraisal

Criterion 1: Goals and objectives

The objectives of the whole programme and of each unit are precise, clearly stated and measured in relation to the outcomes expected from the pupils. These outcomes are organized on three levels: knowledge, life skills, values and attitudes.

The authors are constantly making a conceptual and operational connection with the contents taught by the programme at the primary grades. Four fundamental objectives are at the core of the programme:

1. The enhancement of learners' self-efficacy with reference to themselves, and their influence on others and society;
2. Clarification of personal, cultural, societal norms, beliefs, values – spiritual development.
3. Personal development – self-discipline, self-awareness and acceptance/ownership of life and future.
4. Personal accountability.

The contents of each learning unit are outlined through precise objectives and learning outcomes. For instance, Unit 3, tackling the theme of *Responsible sexual behavior* is structured according to the following specific objectives: 1. Responding assertively to peer pressures for sexual intercourse and

unsafe sex; 2. Critically evaluating reasons for delaying sexual intercourse or practicing abstinence; 3. Informed sexual decision-making with regard to abstinence and safer sex; 4. Understanding and anticipating consequences of sexual involvement.

Criterion 2: Provision of basic knowledge

The information is precise, up-to-date and adjusted to the needs of the target group. It is organized in different ways, according to the group of reference (pupils or teachers). In the pupils' book, the information is structured and presented according to their age (8th and 9th grades) and their specific needs. The teacher's book fits the educator's need by providing information structured according to the learning/teaching process that he/she must conduct.

Criterion 3: Attitudes, values and norms

Gender is not presented separately in these manuals. It is integrated in each learning unit. Language and pictures are gender sensitive. These books show a particular interest in clearly defining gender identity. The cultural practices relative to gender and gender discrimination against girls does not appear as central in the manuals for these grades.

In the 8th as well as in the 9th grade, Unit 4 dwells on *Living positively with HIV and respecting people living with AIDS*. The thematic area of these learning sessions in this unit is illustrative for the way the authors of these books conceived the gradation of the learning process.

Grade 8

Positive living

Dealing with loss and showing compassion for PLWA.

It's my life, I can choose.

Grade 9

Positive living while coping with HIV.

Dealing with loss and showing compassion for PLWA.

Life is a choice.

Criterion 4: Life skills

All ten core life skills described in the IBE criteria are outlined as results expected from this learning process. They are made operational in the manuals through interactive learning activities that are attractive to pupils, and through information which is updated for the teachers. One of the main aspects of this document are the different types of evaluation proposed, so that teenagers appropriate these skills.

Criterion 5: Teaching methods and strategies

The learning strategies proposed in these books back up a learning model which puts the stress both on the human being and on social interactions. On the one hand, they promote the idea of complete development of the pupil, taking into consideration his/her needs, rhythm, and way of learning/studying. The learning process is seen as a continuous and omnipresent process which takes place at school as well as outside school. On the other hand, the authors aim at developing a responsible person, able to make the best decisions for him/herself as well as for the community. Non-directive methods are promoted, such as learning through discovery and methods based on personal experience which becomes part of the contents of the learning process. These books call for team work methods, group exchange methods (case study), solving topical problems, learning/teaching from persons of the same age.

Criterion 6: Teacher training and guidance

The teacher's book is designed as a support material, a source of inspiration in organizing learning activities. The teacher is not strictly guided through ready-made lesson plans. The teacher begins the teaching process by situating him/herself in a special comfortable state in relation to the ideas, opinions and questions of the difficult contents he/she has to teach.

This teacher's guide is meant for educators who are already trained and educated in a specialized teacher training institution. It is difficult to imagine that substitute teachers could handle these learning contents.

No mention is made regarding training requests for teachers who provide knowledge on *Life Orientation*.

Criterion 7. Implementation

The time frame of learning, the target group and the evaluation instruments are well defined. As for the time period assigned to every learning session (30 minutes), the authors recommend that this be flexible so that it suits the teenagers' interests in a certain subject. This recommendation, which fully respects the special thematic areas of the programme, is difficult to imagine in an institutional context where time is very rigorously distributed among different subjects.

Criterion 8: Form and packaging

Reading these books is a pleasant activity; language is adjusted to the target age and they contain relevant and suggestive pictures. They are well bound, durable and solid, which allows them to be used by several generations of pupils. Since they do not contain colour illustrations and as they are black and white, their printing cost is not too high.

Criterion 9: Material development

These handbooks were made as a sequel of the 1st-7th grades programme at the level of the secondary school. It is a large-scale programme, backed by the government. The textbooks were printed by the South African Government Printer. The main objective is a change in the teenagers' behaviour.

Overall evaluation

Strengths

- The documents manage to present in a pedagogic way a thematic area that is very difficult to teach.
- These documents meet all the criteria of the IBE and constitute a true model for most of them. The integrated presentation of the gender issue in sex education could represent such an outlook.

Relative weakness

- The only problem could be a relative lack of inclusion of cultural context of South Africa with the consequence that these manuals give the impression that they address mainly pupils in urban areas, with few traditional specific practices.

Transferability

This student's guide as well as the teacher's book are easy to transfer in another context with just a few minor adjustments. The only problem that could arise in the "receiving" context (ie. the one where the transfer is made) is whether it is ready to accept materials that make use of Western pedagogical theories.