



# Teaching and the AIDS Pandemic

A creative new approach to HIV and Education  
for sub-Saharan Africa



On behalf of

Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

**giz**

Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

# Teaching and the AIDS Pandemic

***A creative new approach to HIV and Education for sub-Saharan Africa***

## A Capacity Building Programme for Teacher Educators

*"Through the presentation of the course content to my colleagues and students, I have learnt that one man can change the world."*

- Tutor, Karonga Teacher Training College, Malawi, and former course participant



## The need to change AIDS education

Despite the introduction of antiretroviral medications, the AIDS pandemic is far from over in sub-Saharan Africa. AIDS2031, a top-level international working group seeking to inspire new ideas that will inform our global response to AIDS, concluded that, "*Without a change in approach, a major epidemic will still be with us in 2031.*" The group warned that there may still be 2 million new infections a year. At the same time, we know that many young people are tired of the information-based AIDS prevention programmes that continue to dominate within schools in much of the world. Teachers, too, are tired of repeating what they see as "the same old facts" that "have not had any effect on the young people we teach."

## The need to intensify our efforts at HIV prevention

Antiretroviral medications have brought new hope to sub-Saharan communities devastated by AIDS. Farmers, factory workers, traders, professionals and family members once thought to be near death and themselves an economic burden on their families and nations have returned to their duties and learned to manage their health thanks to the availability of medications and improved medical systems. The danger, however, exists in the complacency that can develop among people young and old that "AIDS is not such a big deal anymore" because "it is easily treated by a tablet". Their own commitment to safer sexual practices can falter. A second and daunting concern has been recently raised: can a fragile world economy continue to provide funds for antiretroviral medications for Africa? The answer, it seems, is 'no'. Intensifying our efforts at HIV prevention, taking the risk to create new and imaginative approaches to HIV prevention, is therefore a must.

## Not just another course on AIDS

The **Teaching and the AIDS Pandemic** is a bold and imaginative course and programme, proposing that teacher educators working together can be a significant force for positive change. The course challenges old models of HIV prevention and response. By understanding the need to consider HIV, AIDS **and** the AIDS pandemic as three distinct phenomena that need to be explored and understood, the course is able to move far beyond the traditional bio-medical story of "HIV/AIDS" to consider the central role human beings have played in turning a fragile virus into a global pandemic.

*Previously, I was made to believe that there is war between human beings and AIDS. But after this course, I now realise that HIV and AIDS is just about people; therefore, it requires people to get involved in designing programmes that would enable us to live in harmony with HIV and control it from spreading. It is from this view that I have come to realise that my contribution is very important to the college, community, country and the world at large. I now believe that it begins with me.*

- Tutor, Karonga Teacher Training College, Malawi, and former course participant



## A new approach

More than two decades after writer and thinker Susan Sontag warned against a 'war on AIDS', militarised language of combat and battle continue to express and inform our efforts to 'win against AIDS'. But a war is necessarily against an invader, and enemy from the outside. Critical self-reflection, a hallmark of good teaching practice, remains foreign to those fighting a battle. Nor does the language of war allow us to address *learning to be*, one of the four pillars of education laid out in UNESCO's 1996 report, *Learning: The treasure within*. **Teaching and the AIDS Pandemic** seeks to create a 'reverse discourse' among teacher educators where ownership of the pandemic is claimed by each and every individual, and responsibility for creating new responses to the pandemic lies within families, classrooms, schools, teaching training colleges and communities. It is a methodology that urges individuals and collectives within and beyond teacher training colleges to act. *'Nothing will happen,' wrote one former course participant, 'if I keep on waiting for other people do something.'*



## Imaginative and practical

*This course has been very good to me. It has changed my life personally as well as professionally. I have come out of this course stronger than before.*

- Former course participant, Malawi

College tutors and lecturers who have completed the **Teaching and the AIDS Pandemic** course report greater success in weaving HIV-related issues into their teaching day in more meaningful ways, and greater success in their overall teaching practice. This is the vision and understanding of educator and AIDS leader Prof. Michael Kelly (University of Zambia), that by engaging with HIV issues, teachers will not only become better at engaging HIV, but better teachers in general. Within the course, participants begin by reframing the pandemic to being about people and proceed to consider new methodologies for addressing AIDS within schools and communities. The course requires participants to spend time in a local primary or secondary school to better understand both teachers' and learners' experiences and needs related to HIV and how the pandemic is 'playing out' at a very local level. Within the course, participants create and critique lesson plans for use in schools that incorporate their new understandings about HIV and themselves.



## Personally challenging

HIV prevention begins with each and every one of us. This remains a fundamental building block of the course and a rationale for requiring participants to deeply reflect on themselves, challenging their own attitudes and beliefs, questioning their own behaviours and setting new behavioural and teaching standards for themselves as teacher educators. Philosophically and practically, creators of the course understand that if teacher educators are to be effective as they speak about HIV-related issues to their students, they must first address these HIV-related issues in their own lives. Simply put, the course strives to inspire teacher educators to 'walk the talk' of HIV prevention and care, and to be able to inspire their own students to do the same in their own classrooms. Part of this 'walking the talk' includes directly confronting the sexual abuse too often perpetrated by teachers in schools and creating an attitude where this kind of behaviour become intolerable to all.

## Challenging gender inequality

Traditional and contemporary gender roles and inequalities often disadvantage women and place them at far higher risk for HIV infection than men. The statistics of who is getting infected with HIV – predominantly young women – bears testimony to this fact. During the face to face session of the course, participants attend a full two-day experiential workshop that challenges their own beliefs and behaviours around what it is to be a man and a woman. Awareness of gender issues is developed throughout the course and the many cultural, social and economic contexts within which they exist.

## Reaching out to colleagues and students

On several occasions within the course, participants are required to gather groups of their colleagues and students, facilitating discussions on the experiences of HIV+ teachers, how HIV has affected their own institution, the sexual behaviours (and abuses) that occur among their own students, the need for teachers to be role models, building a college strategic AIDS plan and other related topics. By regularly requiring participants to sit with their colleagues and students, the practicality of the learning within the course is assured. Importantly, this kind of collegial engagement included in the course extends the impact of the course far beyond any one individual who might be enrolled in it.



## Teaching and the AIDS Pandemic content

The course is composed of the four modules indicated below. Each module is fully registered at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa and carries 15 university credits. Those who complete the entire course are granted 60 honours-level credits from the university. These credits can be recognised by universities within and outside South Africa toward further study.

The course begins with an eight-day face to face session attended by all participants. Following the face-to-face session, participants return to their homes to make their way through each module and unit of the course via the GC21 e-learning platform. Unlike many e-learning courses, this course has a tutor to guide participants collectively through each unit, encourage discussion and interaction and address any problems that may be encountered. An important role of the tutor is to keep all participants moving through the course at the expected pace so that on-line discussions between participants in each unit are useful and a part of the learning process.

### Module One: Reframing the AIDS Pandemic

Unit One: Course introduction: face to face session

Unit Two: HIV and AIDS: The starting point

Unit Three: The AIDS pandemic in context: gender, culture and identity

### Module Two: Schools, Teachers and Teaching in the Age of AIDS

Unit Four: AIDS and education

Unit Five: Being a good teacher

Unit Six: School case study (first visit)

### Module Three: Developing AIDS-competent Curricula and Teachers

Unit Seven: Teaching and the curriculum 1

Unit Eight: Teaching and the curriculum 2

Unit Nine: Life skills education

### Module Four: Building Responses to AIDS in Schools and Communities

Unit Ten: Developing schools into nodes of care and support for children

Unit Eleven: Developing health promoting schools (with a third school visit)

Unit Twelve: Becoming a truly reflective practitioner: My way forward

## When the course is over

The question of what happens after teacher educators complete the course was the first question developers asked when creating the course and overall project. How could **Teaching and the AIDS Pandemic** be about more than a training experience for individuals? The answer to these deeply important questions was found in the development of communities of practice among teacher educators in sub-Saharan Africa to apply what they learned in the course and to take it further. Since 2006, when the first course was run with participants from Malawi, Tanzania, South Africa and Namibia, a growing collective of teacher educators from these and other countries have been creating new responses to the challenges of AIDS within their own teacher training institutions, local schools, communities and nations. Late in 2006, Malawian participants formed **NTERA**, the **Network of Teacher Educators Responding to AIDS**. **NTERA** chapters now exist in nearly all public teacher training colleges in Malawi, and the **NTERA** idea has spread to Namibia and Tanzania. **NTERA** members – all teacher educators who complete the course become **NTERA** members – regularly exchange ideas and experiences through the on-line **Teaching and the AIDS Pandemic Alumni Network**. This network, like the course, is hosted on GIZ's GC21 learning platform. **NTERA** members also attend follow up courses and workshops held in their own countries including the specialised course *Life Skills in the Time of AIDS*.

## NTERA members as leaders in Africa

Since 2007, **NTERA** members in Malawi have been reaching out to public and private teacher training colleges and schools through a one-week course on HIV and Education they developed for the Malawian context. Based upon its success in colleges and schools, **NTERA** Malawi has become an influential resource for Malawi's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST). This is evidence that the overall aim of the **Teaching and the AIDS Pandemic** programme is to develop sustainable permanent resources able to inform and create better responses to AIDS within sub-Saharan African nations can and is being achieved. In 2010, **NTERA** Malawi members hosted members of the newly-formed **NTERA** Tanzania to assist in the development of a second week-long course designed specifically for the Tanzanian context. Since then, **NTERA** Tanzania has developed a comprehensive curriculum for their training and will soon be rolling it out in teacher training colleges nation-wide. **NTERA** Namibia was also launched early in 2010 in a similar effort to respond to the many challenges HIV and AIDS bring to that nation.

## Participant feedback

*As I was going through the course, I have realised a great change in my personal behaviour, values and decision making. I have developed a lot of skills that are very vital to my life and my family, and my neighbours. I have learnt that knowledge that is not shared with others is not good knowledge. I have learned to have knowledge that will benefit each other today and into the future. My teaching too has changed. I want to keep on improving on the knowledge I have obtained from the course. I must submit that I had very great challenges in teaching especially concepts that my tradition regards them as taboos.*

Tutor, Karonga Teacher Training College, Malawi

*The course has helped me to realize that though I was taking myself as a competent teacher in Life Skills Education, I was not one. My teaching was knowledge based and did not emphasise attitude change. I was a fountain of knowledge. The course has helped me to know that students should be encouraged to think critically about different issues like rape, human rights, sexual abuse, and many others through group discussion, debates, role plays, drama, folk tales, case studies and other interactive methods so that they can apply the skills in their everyday life. Now I know who I am after being challenged to explore my own values, skills, hope, knowledge and fears and I have changed positively. This change has enabled me to teach different concepts without social, religious or personal bias. All these activities have made me ready to work with my fellow members of staff, students and members of the community in reducing the spread of the virus.*

Tutor, St. Josephs Teacher Training College, Malawi

*I have been different from the time I came from face to face event in South Africa. I have learned to think from my heart about HIV and AIDS contrary from previous time when I was just taking it partially from my head.*

Tutor, Songea Teachers' College, Tanzania



## Who can apply?

Teacher educators employed by teacher training colleges and universities in sub-Saharan Africa are eligible to apply for admission to the course. Reference letters from college principals is required. For further information on application procedures, please contact:

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## Timeline Course 7\*:

### Teaching and the AIDS Pandemic

Unit	Description	Dates
	Application deadline	29 May 2011
	Final selection of participants	By 27 June 2011
1	Course introduction : Face-to-face session	29 August – 6 September 2011
2	HIV and AIDS: The starting point	12 – 30 September 2011
3	The AIDS pandemic in context: gender, culture and identity	3 – 21 October 2011
4	AIDS and education	24 October – 11 November 2011
5	Being a good teacher	14 November – 2 December 2011
6	School case study (first visit)	5 – 23 December 2011
7	Teaching and the curriculum 1	16 January – 3 February 2012
8	Teaching and the curriculum 2 (with second school visit)	6 – 24 February 2012
9	Life skills education	27 February – 16 March 2012
10	Developing schools into nodes of care and support for children	19 March – 6 April 2012
11	Developing health promoting schools (with a third school visit)	9 – 27 April 2012
12	Becoming a truly reflective practitioner: my way forward	30 April – 18 May 2012

\* subject to slight adjustments



## Who we are!

## Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GIZ

Working efficiently, effectively and in a spirit of partnership, we support people and societies in developing, transition and industrialised countries in shaping their own futures and improving living conditions. This is what the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) is all about.

## Who we work for

Most of our activities are commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). GIZ also operates on behalf of other German ministries – in particular the Federal Foreign Office, the Federal Environment Ministry and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research – as well as German federal states and municipalities, and public and private sector clients both in Germany and abroad.

## Making development effective

Our partners want to take responsibility for achieving their own long-term development goals. We support them by offering demand-driven, tailor-made and effective services for sustainable development. We apply a holistic and value-based approach to ensure the participation of all stakeholders. In doing so, we are always guided by our concept of sustainable development. We take account of political, economic, social and ecological dimensions as we support our partners at local, regional, national and international level in negotiating solutions in the broader social context. This is how we drive development.

GIZ operates in many fields, including economic development and employment; governance and democracy; security, reconstruction, peace building and civil conflict transformation; food security, health and basic education; and environmental protection, resource conservation and climate change mitigation.

## University of the Western Cape UWC

The University of the Western Cape (UWC) is a South African university very aware of its academic role in helping to build equitable and dynamic societies. UWC is committed to its African context as evidenced by its many collaborative projects with other African universities. The university subscribes to the SADC Protocol on Education and Training and to the declaration of the African Association of Universities. UWC is strongly committed to responding to the AIDS pandemic. It has a dedicated HIV and AIDS Programme that reports directly to the Vice Chancellor of the university. UWC's strong commitment to addressing the AIDS pandemic is equally evidenced in the Education Faculty's development of innovative courses in AIDS-related subjects that are regular components of all teacher education programmes.



## **GIZ**

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH was formed on 1 January 2011. It brings together the long-standing expertise of the Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst (DED) gGmbH (German development service), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH (German technical cooperation) and InWEnt – Capacity Building International, Germany. For further information, go to [www.giz.de](http://www.giz.de).

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