

Life skills-based HIV and sexuality education

Percentage of schools that provided life skills-based HIV and sexuality education in the previous academic year

What it measures

To assess progress towards implementation of life skills-based HIV and sexuality education in all schools.

Rationale

This indicator tracks the proportion of schools that provide life skills-based HIV and sexuality education within the formal curriculum or as part of extra-curricular activities. This is a critical indicator for the sector, as it deals with curriculum delivery in support of national HIV prevention programmes; and includes extra-curricular activities that schools might be engaged in. The indicator attempts to provide a more comprehensive picture of the provision of life skills-based HIV and sexuality education for young people. For the education sector, it is important to consider where young people are being exposed to HIV prevention messages and also to ensure that all possible avenues are being utilized.

In line with the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (UNESCO et al., 2009), this proposed indicator captures a set of 'essential' and 'desirable' components of a life skills-based HIV and sexuality education programme that is provided within the formal curriculum (as a standalone examinable subject, or integrated into other curriculum subjects) and/or as part of extra-curricular activities, by ensuring that the data disaggregation allows for reporting on curricular and extra-curricular activities (see Method of measurement).

Life skills-based education is an effective methodology that uses participatory exercises to teach behaviours to young people that help them deal with the challenges and demands of everyday life. It can include decisionmaking and problem-solving skills, creative and critical thinking, self-awareness, communication and interpersonal relations. It can also teach young people how to cope with their emotions and causes of stress. When adapted specifically for HIV education in schools, a life skills-based approach helps young people to understand and assess the individual, social and environmental factors that raise and lower the risk of HIV transmission. When implemented effectively, it can have a positive effect on behaviours, including delay in sexual debut and reduction in number of sexual partners.

Calculation:

The above list of components is divided into 'essential' and 'desirable' components as given in Table 5.7. In order to meet the criteria of teaching life skills-based HIV and sexuality education, schools must have taught all essential topics and at least six of the desirable topics. Identification of 'essential' criteria is based on those learning topics that have the greatest direct impact on HIV prevention. 'Desirable' criteria are those that have an indirect impact on HIV prevention but are part of a comprehensive curriculum. The indicator has to be calculated separately for primary and secondary school levels.

Method of measurement:

A. Annual School Census

Principals/heads of schools (to include both private and public schools), offering primary and secondary level schooling, should be briefed on the meaning/contents of life skills-based HIV and sexuality education (based on the UNESCO/UNAIDS International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education Volume II – UNESCO et al., 2009). They are then asked to answer yes or no to the question below, regardless of how these topics were provided (either in the formal curricula and/or during extra-curricular activities).

Numerator

Number of schools that have responded yes to all three questions and are therefore considered as having provided comprehensive life skills-based HIV and sexuality education

including all the three aspects (generic life skills, sexual and reproductive health and HIV transmission and prevention) during the previous year.

Denominator

Number of schools surveyed.

B. School-based survey

Principals/heads of a nationally-representative sample of schools (to include both private and public schools), offering primary and secondary level schooling, should be briefed on the meaning/contents of life skills-based HIV and sexuality education (based on the UNESCO/UNAIDS International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education Volume II – UNESCO et al., 2009). They are then given the table below that lists topics that can be integrated in many different subjects in school curriculum (for example: biology, science etc.) and/or extra-curricular activities. They have to indicate which of these topics were provided in their school and how these topics were provided (either in the formal curricula and/or during extra-curricular activities) in the previous academic year and if it was included in the formal curriculum, as per Table 5.6.

Numerator

Main indicator: Number of schools that provided life skills-based HIV and sexuality education in the previous academic year according to a combination of all essential topics and at least six desirable topics in the questionnaire, as part of the formal curriculum and/or as part of the extra-curricular activities offered by schools. Additional indicator: Number of schools that provided life skills-based HIV and sexuality education in the previous academic year according to a combination of all essential topics and at least six desirable topics in the questionnaire as part of the formal curriculum.

Denominator

Number of schools surveyed

Collection method

School-based survey or Annual School Census questionnaire.

Measurement frequency

? Collected through an annual data collection process if included in the Annual School Census questionnaire.

? Measurement frequency to be decided by the country, if data is collected through school-based surveys.

Data disaggregation

The indicator should be presented as a separate percentage for:

? Private/independent and public/state schools

? Level of education: primary and secondary

? Indication of whether provided as formal curriculum or as part of extra-curricular activities or in combination, if data collected from a school-based survey

? Geographical location: urban, rural and peri-urban.

Interpretation

It is important that life skills-based HIV and sexuality education is initiated in the early grades of primary school and then continued throughout schooling with contents and methods being adapted to the age and experience of the students. This indicator provides useful information on the coverage of life skills-based HIV and sexuality education within schools, and on the trends in the coverage if data are collected and compared over time. However, the substantial variations in the levels of school enrolment must be taken into account when interpreting (or making cross-country comparisons of) this indicator. Consequently, primary and secondary school gross and net enrolment rates for the most recent academic year should be included in the supporting information provided for this indicator. The indicator is a measure of coverage. Ultimately the desirable coverage of schools should be 100 per cent, although countries can set a realistic target lower than 100 per cent for a given period of time. While comparison with data collected from the previous

years (if available) should be made to show if and how much progress has been made, education stakeholders should use the data to: 1) identify if there is a gap between current coverage and the desired target; 2) what exactly has disqualified the schools from the numerator (what is/are the main topics that were not covered in the life skills-based HIV and sexuality education in most schools); and thus 3) determine what measures to take to fill the gaps. The findings from this indicator should be triangulated with the data from the other indicators related to schoolbased HIV and sexuality education (Indicator No. 4 on orientation for parents/guardians, No. 5 on teacher training and No. 6 on HIV knowledge) to determine possible correlations between them. For example:

? A high/low percentage of schools that have provided an orientation process to parents or guardians of students may have contributed to a high/low percentage of schools that provided life skills-based HIV and sexuality education. However, if a negative correlation is shown between these two indicators, it may suggest a limited influence of the parents or guardians on the school-based HIV and sexuality education programmes.

? There should be a positive correlation between the percentage of schools with teachers trained and teaching HIV and sexuality education and the coverage of school by life skills-based HIV and sexuality education. If not, it may suggest that the life skills-based HIV and sexuality education was not delivered by trained teachers.

? The percentage of schools with teachers trained and teaching (Indicator No. 5) and the percentage of schools providing life skills-based HIV and sexuality education (Indicator No. 3) should be positively correlated with students' level of HIV knowledge (Indicator No. 6). However,

- If the percentage of schools providing life skills-based HIV and sexuality education is high but the percentage of schools with teachers trained and teaching is low, it could suggest that the HIV and sexuality education programme was not delivered by trained teachers in some schools, which could present a concern about the quality of the teaching.

- If the percentage of schools with teachers trained and teaching is high but students' knowledge level is low, it suggests that the teaching has not been effective. The contrary would suggest that students learnt about HIV and AIDS from sources other than teachers.

- If the percentage of schools providing life skills-based HIV and sexuality education is high but students' knowledge level is low, it suggests that the school-based HIV and sexuality education has not been relevant or effective. The contrary would suggest that students learnt about HIV and AIDS from out-of-school sources.

Measurement frequency:

Annual

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths:

? The indicator provides a good measure of coverage, considering which schools have provided life skills-based HIV and sexuality education, at the minimum required levels.

? Technical merit is likely to improve if data is collected through a school-based survey.

Weaknesses:

? Due to the range of topics and the set minimum package of topics, this indicator is quite complex to calculate using the method of measurement suitable for school-based surveys.

? It is impossible to know how much time is spent on each of the topics. The field test included data on the total number of hours set aside for life skills-based HIV and sexuality education taught in the formal curriculum, but it has proven difficult and complicated to collect the data, as time spent on each topic was not recorded accurately.

? Technical merit is low if only school head teachers report on this indicator, as many of them do not know which topics are taught if life-skills based HIV and sexuality education is not a standalone and examinable subject. Hence the need to also collect data from subject head teachers and other teachers.

Further information

? www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index-hiv-aids.html

? www.unicef.org/aids/index_documents.html

? International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education

(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001832/183281e.pdf>)