

Unit 9: Current Trends in Education

AIM

The aim of this unit is to enable inspectors to become aware of major current trends and emergent areas of special concern in education.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, inspectors will be able to:

- identify current trends in education which cut across educational activities
- describe the nature and impact of gender issues on educational activities in the local community
- devise training programmes related to gender sensitisation
- gain basic information about the nature and effects of HIV/AIDS on education and training
- devise inservice training programmes on HIV/AIDS education
- show awareness of the importance of respecting human rights
- guide schools and communities on the efforts of teenage pregnancy
- provide advice to schools and the community on the efforts of population growth and education provision
- provide counselling and guidance related to the promotion of human rights
- state basic methods of conserving the environment
- promote environmental education.

CONTENT SUMMARY

- 9.1 Gender Issues
- 9.2 HIV and AIDS
- 9.3 Teenage Pregnancy
- 9.4 Human Rights
- 9.5 Environmental Education
- 9.6 Population Education

9.1 GENDER ISSUES

Gender issues have begun receiving a lot of attention in developing countries, and these issues have had a significant impact on educational programmes. It is a fact that there are serious gender imbalances in educational attainments between males and females in many countries in Africa, and gender stereotyping is rampant.

Activity 9a

In groups, list and discuss reasons why gender issues are currently considered as a major area of concern in education and training.

Trainer's Notes

Possible reasons why gender issues have become a source of concern:

- Gender imbalances in educational attainment and in access to educational provision between males and females.

- Significant differences between male and female pupils in terms of school drop-out rates, especially in developing countries.
- Too few members of one gender occupying important positions.
- Existence of excessive gender stereotyping and discrimination, for instance in terms of occupations.
- Need for both males and females to contribute towards development.

Activity 9b

What would be the causes of serious imbalances in school attendance between male and female pupils?

List the causes as an individual, then discuss them as a group.

Trainer's Notes

The following are some of the factors that can contribute to differences in school attendance between male and female pupils

- Cultural and traditional beliefs about expected roles of boys and girls.
- Social factors e.g. home chores meant for boys and girls.
- Institutional factors e.g. the distances to schools and payment of school fees.
- Personal factors e.g. self-images of individual boys and girls.

Activity 9c

Individual Task:

List home activities in your local community (such as ploughing and baby-sitting) which are considered as:

- mainly for boys
- mainly for girls

How do these activities and traditions affect school attendance?

Share your responses with the whole group

Trainer's Note

Depending on the nature of the particular community, there are some home-based activities which are considered male-oriented, while some are female-oriented (such as baby-sitting).

Activity 9d

There are some aspects of the school curriculum that may be gender-biased. In groups give examples of gender-bias in the curriculum. Suggest ways of removing gender bias in the school curriculum.

Trainer's Note

The following are some of the aspects worth considering, in order to reduce gender bias in curricula:

- Provide equal opportunities to both boys and girls to take subjects related to their abilities and interests.
- Avoid unnecessary gender-stereotyping in curricular activities.
- Promote gender-neutral language and illustrations.
- Needs of both males and females should be fairly represented.

Activity 9e

In groups:

Discuss the priority policies and strategies which you feel your government should put in place to address gender issues in education.

Trainer's Notes

The following could be some of the policies and strategies which a government could put in place, in relation to educational gender issues:

- Promoting gender balance in the education system.
- Eliminating gender-based factors that hinder access to education.
- Ensuring that the school curricula are gender-neutral.
- Providing gender-sensitisation programmes.
- Removing practices that are gender discriminatory.

Key Information

An inspector of schools could participate in gender sensitisation programmes by performing the following:

- Interpreting and enforcing policies on gender.
- Distributing gender-sensitisation information documents.
- Conducting gender-related training sessions.
- Ensuring that gender issues are fused into school activities.

9.2 HIV AND AIDS

Key Information

Explanation of the acronyms HIV and AIDS:

- HIV is Human Immune deficiency Virus
- AIDS is Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

It has become very important to sensitize members of the public, including school-going pupils and teachers, about the dangers of HIV infection and the ensuing disease of AIDS which has become endemic.

Activity 9f

- (a) In groups, list and discuss reasons why there should be a drastic campaign to disseminate information on HIV/AIDS.
- (b) Discuss reasons why the campaign against AIDS in your country is not yielding the expected results.

Trainer's Notes

Since AIDS is incurable and fatal, effective AIDS education programmes should exist.

Basic facts about HIV and AIDS:

- The virus called HIV lives in the blood of an infected person.
- The HIV damages the immune system of a body, making the body easily attacked by diseases, and this develops into the severe illness called AIDS.
- The virus is transmitted through blood and other body fluids. It is often transmitted through sexual intercourse and transfusion of infected blood.
- There is no known cure for AIDS.

Activity 9g

Individually, list ways in which people can avoid HIV/AIDS infection. Then compare your list with those devised by colleagues.

Trainer's Note

Some ways of preventing HIV/AIDS infection:

- Avoiding casual sex.
- Using condoms.

Activity 9h

In small groups discuss the effects of HIV/AIDS on educational programmes in your country.

Trainer's Notes

The following are the typical effects and impact of HIV/AIDS on education:

- Psycho-social problems caused among pupils who are orphaned.
- Unhealthy pupils do not learn well at school.
- HIV/AIDS education has to be infused into the curriculum or into educational activities.
- Loss of human resources.
- Economic cost for replacing loss of resources.

Activity 9i

In groups identify and discuss the roles which an inspector of schools should play in the HIV/AIDS education programmes.

Trainer's Notes

An inspector can play roles like the following in HIV/AIDS education:

- Acquiring and distributing written documents related to the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

- Organising training sessions on HIV/AIDS education.
- Facilitating the inclusion of HIV/AIDS education in the school curriculum.
- Serving as a counsellor on HIV/AIDS issues.

Activity 9j

Working as an individual, list the main strategies which the Ministry of Education should employ in order to educate people about HIV/AIDS. Share these with the rest of the group.

Trainer's Notes

Possible Ministry of Education strategies related to HIV/AIDS education:

- Formulation of an HIV/AIDS education policy.
- Enforcement of the integration of topics on HIV/AIDS into the school curriculum.
- Provision of counselling services related to HIV/AIDS in educational institutions.
- Working closely with health authorities on HIV/AIDS prevention measures.
- Promotion of health education and responsible behaviours among pupils and teachers.

9.3 TEENAGE PREGNANCY

Key Information

Teenage pregnancies among schoolgirls have been on the increase and are a matter of concern for both parents and education authorities in the SADC Region. You, as inspectors, will be expected to play a major role in sensitizing and advising the school committees and society at large, about teenage pregnancies and how they affect the education system. In doing this, you will be expected to liaise very closely with the key stakeholders including, headteachers, teachers, pupils, parents and education authorities.

Activity 9k

In groups, identify the factors which influence the increase in teenage pregnancies in your country and share these with the rest of the class.

Trainer's Notes

Some of the factors are:

- early maturity
- abuse of the girls by society
- societal taboos about sex education
- moral decay in society
- alcohol and drug abuse among teenagers
- influence of foreign cultures
- media influence
- peer pressure

Activity 9l

In groups, identify and discuss the rules, regulations and systems available in your country to control the rise in teenage pregnancies.

Trainer's Notes

- government regulation and policies such as Education Act
- schools policies and rules
- moral teaching in society
- pressure groups such as HIV/AIDS and STDs

Activity 9m

SADC Secondary School has been experiencing a high number of pregnancies among its pupils. This situation has worried both the school management and the Parents' Teachers' Association as they have failed to address the situation. They have asked you as inspector of schools to assist in finding a solution to the problem.

In groups, role play this situation in which the inspector advises on possible solutions after listening to the problem. There will be four roles in this. These are: Chairperson of PTA, Headteacher, Inspector and Observer to comment on the role play.

Trainer's Note

There is no single answer in this role play. The intention of the activity is to sensitize and allow for maximum participation.

9.4 HUMAN RIGHTS

Publicity concerning the violation of human rights is leading to the issue of human rights receiving more attention nowadays than before, and has begun to have an impact on education and training. Certain groups of people, including teachers and pupils, would like their rights to be recognised, while at the same time there is the need to have responsible citizens.

Activity 9n

In groups list the major aspects of human rights that should be recognised and promoted.

Trainer's Note

The following are examples of human rights worth noting:

- Respect for the existence and needs of each individual.
- Recognition of the rights of special members of the community e.g. the rights of the child.

- Fairness and equal opportunities.
- Sensitivity to community expectations, including civic and moral values.
- Democratic values..
- Freedom of association.
- Recognition of multi-culturalism.
- Elimination of discrimination on account of gender, race or creed.
- Education for peace and understanding.
- The right to live.

Activity 9o

As a group, list some of the rights of the following:

- (a) pupils
- (b) teachers
- (c) inspectors of schools

Trainer's Notes

The rights of pupils, teachers and inspectors of schools are dependent on the local prevailing regulations and customs in individual countries.

Activity 9p

Discuss the roles inspectors of schools should play in issues related to human rights in schools.

Trainer's Notes

The inspector of schools may take some of the following actions related to human rights in schools:

- Encourage heads of schools to be aware of rules and regulations related to the treatment of pupils, teachers and members of the community.
- Discourage offensive behaviour particularly among teaching staff and pupils.

9.5 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Key Information

World-wide governments of most countries are giving increasing attention to environmental issues.

Education about local and global aspects of the environment is becoming a major educational topic.

Activity 9q

- (a) In a group, justify the emphasis that environmental education is receiving nowadays.
- (b) Identify particular environmental issues of concern in your country, SADC region and the rest of the world.

Trainer's Notes

The necessity of environmental education:

- Resources are dwindling, including wildlife and natural vegetation.
- There is the growing danger of pollution of the environment.
- Sensitization about environmental standards will help to improve the situation.

Activity 9r

- (a) As an individual, write down aspects of the natural environment which need preservation or conservation and share your views in a group.
- (b) Explain the concept "endangered species" and give examples.

Trainer's Notes

The following are examples of natural resources worth preserving:

- wildlife
- vegetation
- clean air and water
- minerals

Activity 9s

In groups, list the major types of pollution and explain how they affect the environment.

Trainer's Notes

Endangered species are living animals and plants which need protection because they are in danger of becoming too few or extinct.

The following are examples of common types of pollution and their effects:

- air pollution - poor visibility, acid rain
- water pollution - danger to plants, animals and people
- noise pollution - physical, psychological and emotional discomfort

Activity 9t

- (a) Define the following terms and explain how they affect the environment: 'greenhouse effect'
'ozone layer'
- (b) List the human activities which can contribute to the depletion of the ozone layer and suggest how these could be avoided.

Trainer's Notes

- The greenhouse effect is the process during which the warmth from the sun is trapped in the lower atmosphere of the earth, due to the increase in the amount of gases that destroy the ozone layer such as CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons). This can lead to:
 - increase in temperature
 - rise in sea level

- The ozone layer which is the layer in the upper atmosphere that consists of ozone (a form of unstable oxygen which is not useful) absorbs most of the sun's ultra-violet radiation, thus protecting the earth from the damage that ultra-violet rays can cause. The ozone layer has been damaged by human use of such products as aerosol sprays and refrigerator coolants. This can lead to:
 - skin diseases
 - changes in climate
- The following are examples of human activities that contribute to the depletion of the ozone layer:
 - use of leaded fuels which over-produce ozone-destroying chemicals
 - excessive cutting of trees instead of the preservation of forests
 - the heavy use of aerosol sprays and refrigerator coolants

Activity 9u

Brainstorm the following task as a group:

In groups, discuss the roles which inspectors of schools should play in the promotion of environmental education.

Trainer's Notes

An inspector of schools can play the following roles related to environmental education:

- Ensuring that environmental education is included in the school curriculum.
- Promoting the conservation of environmental resources through the mobilisation of relevant stakeholders and the community.

9.6 POPULATION EDUCATION

Key Information

The planet earth does not expand and yet the world population has been increasing at an alarming rate. This situation has resulted in pressure on both land-carrying capacity and the socio-economic services of countries. Education systems have equally suffered from population growth as it has created pressure on dwindling resources and facilities. Due to economic constraints, education facilities have not been expanding at the same rate as population growth. This has created a problem in the education sector which you as inspectors are expected to assist in alleviating.

Activity 9v

As inspectors, think about your professional environment and discuss some of the effects of population changes and how they affect education provision in your area.

Trainer's Notes

The effects include among others:

- high pupil-teacher ratio
- shortage of school places
- inadequate teaching and learning resources

- difficulties in planning
- lowering of standards of teaching and learning
- increased illiteracy

Activity 9w

In small groups, discuss the roles of inspectors of school in addressing problems of population growth in relation to education provision.

Trainer's Notes

Some of the roles are:

- sensitization
- resource distribution
- advice to the head

SUMMARY

Trends in education keep on changing due to the ever-emerging areas of special concern.

Gender issues, HIV/AIDS education, human rights, environmental education are examples of relatively new issues in education which used not to get prominence many years ago. An inspector of schools should be aware of changing trends in the community which have an influence on education.

REFLECTION

Now that you have gone through this unit, please reflect on the roles of inspectors in assessing and influencing change in relation to current trends in education in your country.

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