



INSTITUTIONS REVIEW HIV TEACHER EDUCATION PILOT

“Project provides a sense of empowerment through knowledge”

At the final colloquium on the Teacher Education Pilot: Debbie Cilliers of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (left), Prof Ken Harley, team leader for the pilot and Nkhensani Maluleke, an intern from the University of Limpopo



The third and final national colloquium on the HEAIDS HIV Teacher Education Pilot Project gave lecturers and teachers the opportunity to make further recommendations to improve HIV/AIDS-related teaching and learning in the education sector.

At the end of the colloquium, held in Gauteng on 4 May, project team leader Prof Ken Harley confirmed that these recommendations would be included in the final report, expected to be available towards the end of May. He explained that the main purpose of this project was to enhance the personal and professional competencies of teaching graduates to deal with the challenges of teaching and learning in a society extensively affected by HIV/AIDS.

The statistics on the project are quite impressive. It involved 20 HEIs at 25 sites delivering 27 programmes. It benefited 6 485 students and saw the distribution of 6 273 learning guides. “In terms of sheer numbers, the project indeed provides a powerful base for evaluation,” Prof Harley said. He described the support of

academics, deans and faculties of education as most gratifying.

Prof Harley believes that the HIV Teacher Education Pilot Project has an innovative edge in the sense that it married national project aims with existing initiatives and circumstances in education faculties. The project could also have broad long-term benefits.

“The project has given us new insights into HIV/AIDS and a sense of empowerment through knowledge. The project has also nurtured a flourishing national community of practice. But these assets must be nurtured and strengthened over time to result in permanent change.”

He identified the following positive spin-offs:

- An emerging community of practice that has much to offer teacher educators beyond HIV/AIDS education.
- Establishment of healthy collegial relationships and a willingness to share teaching materials and experiences.
- Encouraging and developing educators and students to engage with participatory methods and to deal with and resolve difficulties as they arise.

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More information about our mission, goals and programmes is available on our new website at www.heaids.org.za

HEAIDS Programme extension approved

Higher Education South Africa (HESA) is pleased to announce that its request for a 10-month extension of the HEAIDS Programme has been approved by the European Commission and the Department of Education.

“This extension will give the sector until 21 March 2010 to embed the outputs of our various initiatives,” said Ms Managa Pillay, HEAIDS acting director.

A significant advantage of this extension is that institutions will be able to implement workplace programmes and expand HIV/AIDS facilities and services for students and staff. More information about the implications of the extension will be communicated to institutions.

Ms Pillay also confirmed that the Department of Education and HESA are committed to the funding of Phase 3 of the HEAIDS Programme. Discussions in this regard are underway and more information will be made available in due course. ■

A NOTE ON HEAIDS

The Higher Education HIV/AIDS Programme is an initiative of the Department of Education undertaken by Higher Education South Africa. It is funded by the European Union under the European Programme for Reconstruction and Development in terms of a partnership agreement with the Department.

The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of HESA and HEAIDS and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union or the Department of Education.

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Events

■ 7-8 May: Stellenbosch hosts research symposium

A symposium on current research in the HIV/AIDS field was held by the University of Stellenbosch at the Wallenberg Centre on 7 and 8 May. The aim of the symposium was to give an in-depth view of work done by researchers at US in the scientific, clinical and behavioural fields, and to facilitate collaboration and networking among researchers in the field. Enquiries: Maryke Hunter-Husselmann Tel: (021) 808 4623 E-mail: mh3@sun.ac.za

■ 15-16 May: Curriculum integration focus at Fort Hare

The University of Fort Hare (UFH) discussed the obstacles to and successes of integrating HIV/AIDS into university curricula at its East London campus. The central theme of the symposium was: *From reflection to action: obstacles and successes in integrating HIV/AIDS into university curricula*. It was an abstract-driven symposium with participation by tertiary institutions, national and international organisations, non-governmental organisations and donor agencies. Enquiries: Andre Malan Tel: (043) 704 7313 E-mail: amalan@ufh.ac.za

■ 18 May: Candlelight Memorial at Free State

The University of the Free State will join communities worldwide in the oldest global event on HIV/AIDS when they observe the 26th International AIDS Candlelight Memorial Day. A group of 150 students will form a red ribbon in front of the University's main building. Frank Molteno, Manager for Community Engagement at the University of Cape Town, is the guest speaker and he will talk about communities' responses to HIV. Enquiries: Tarynn Nell at nelltm.RD@ufs.ac.za

TUT dances the message at schools

The Dance Programme at Tshwane University of Technology's Department of Performing Arts will tour selected secondary schools this year, creating awareness on HIV/AIDS through dance and theatre.

Chanel Gomes, a lecturer in the Department of Performing Arts, will manage the project on behalf of the Dance Programme. With the active involvement of students, she will also create a work that will highlight the plight of individuals living with AIDS and their families. This project was made possible by a donation from the United States Cultural Office. ■

CPUT builds on HIV-orientation programme



CPUT's HIV/AIDS Unit hosted workshops to inform first year students of its services and activities.

The HIV/AIDS Unit at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) has introduced a series of workshops to inform first-year students of its services and activities.

The workshops, which formed part of a first-year orientation programme, included a 30-minute DVD on the Unit's work.

Curriculum Development Officer Jacki Bacela said they had reached a large number of students since the start of Orientation 2009. "One of the strategic objectives of the Unit is to incorporate HIV/AIDS, STIs and TB into curricula. We run various workshops with students, giving them the opportunity to interact with staff of the Unit."

The Unit also focuses on student and staff training, organisation of awareness campaigns and the Student Peer Education Programme, and is involved in community outreach and workplace programmes.

Enquiries: The HIV/AIDS Unit, Cape Town Campus on tel: (021) 460 4253 or e-mail: hivaidunit@cput.ac.za ■

New centre at WSU will inspire stronger action

Walter Sisulu University reached a major milestone in April when it launched its Centre for HIV/AIDS. CHA is based at the Buffalo City Campus, but will serve all four campuses.

The Centre is funded by the university and the European Union, through the HEAIDS Programme. It was first conceived in 2005, when the university recognised that it would be necessary to prioritise its response to HIV/AIDS.

Nomvula Twaise, director of the Centre, said CHA would "provide strong committed leadership to manage and co-ordinate the implementation of policies and strategic plans". They would pursue HIV/AIDS objectives through the institution's established roles of producing graduates, stimulating academic discourse, and disseminating new knowledge. She added that CHA would serve the needs of all four WSU campuses and not only focus on the students and staff, but would serve the entire community through building capacity to manage and mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS.

At the launch, Dr Nandi Diliza, Deputy Director-General for Clinical Services at the Eastern Cape Health Department, emphasised that health was a basic human right. She pledged that the department would support CHA in its efforts to uphold the health rights of students, staff and the broader community. ■

Institutions review HIV teacher pilot

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A student reflected on the openness and trust that were achieved. "Our lecturer is very happy to answer anything about HIV/AIDS and we are all sharing in class. It's no longer my knowledge, or my friend's, or my lecturer's but everybody's knowledge together."

A member of staff at the same institution observed: "Becoming part of a community of practice has enabled a sharing of ideas. It has alerted me to the issues associated with HIV/AIDS in other HEIs, and it has affirmed my idea and pedagogical practice." ■

Of interest to any faculty wishing to integrate HIV/AIDS education into its curriculum is the practitioner guide *Curriculum-in-the-Making* which will be available soon. This is a user-friendly practitioner guide designed as a companion to the Pilot Module learning materials, *Being a teacher in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic*.

Programme director leaves HESA



Dr Shaidah Asmall

Dr Shaidah Asmall, director of the HEAIDS Programme since the inception of Phase 2 in April 2006, left HESA at the end of April to pursue other career interests. Dr Asmall's dedication to the principles and objectives of the programme has been an inspiration to her colleagues, higher education sector stakeholders and experts involved in the various programme activities.

"During my time at HESA, I experienced many challenges, but the team spirit and goodwill from colleagues who shared my passion for the programme have always pulled us through," she said. "As far as we could ascertain, the HEAIDS Programme is unique in terms of its scope. The full implementation of the Policy Framework on HIV and AIDS in Higher Education in South Africa has the potential to make a significant contribution to the national response to HIV/AIDS," Dr Asmall said.

She is optimistic that the integration of HIV/AIDS in the curricula, mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS into teacher education, workplace programme development and campus health service enhancement at institutions will create an environment for the HEAIDS Programme to thrive.

"During the next few months, the results of the various programme activities will be announced. This is a very exciting period for this phase of the HEAIDS Programme. I will certainly look out for reports and feedback on the various projects with which I have been so intimately involved," said Dr Asmall.

Dr Asmall felt that the continuity of the HEAIDS Programme was assured because of many highly competent people working on the initiative. "I have no doubt that everything will proceed according to the initial goals and objectives."

Ms Managa Pillay has assumed management of the programme as acting director. ■

R2 million injection boosts campus programmes

The Department of Education recently allocated more than R2 million to higher education institutions to boost the implementation of their HIV/AIDS programmes. Each institution received R98 000. In her letter to institutions, former Education Minister Naledi Pandor said she hoped that this contribution would strengthen institutions' initiatives to combat the pandemic.

Fine-tuning the plan to share HEAIDS results

Communication will move into high gear over the next few months as the outcomes of various projects will be shared with institutions and other stakeholders.

In order to prepare for this, HEAIDS convened a national meeting of HIV/AIDS co-ordinators and corporate communications managers from institutions countrywide. Fifty delegates representing all 23 HEIs attended the workshop at the end of March. The meeting served to:

- Bring institutional representatives up to speed with progress on the various HEAIDS projects.
- Share with them a proposed communication strategy for HEAIDS and see how this would support their needs.
- Critique a communication guide, which focuses on communication for behaviour change and is intended to help campuses run effective HIV/AIDS campaigns.
- Invite institutions that have run good campaigns to contribute their success stories to the guide.

Interviews undertaken at several institutions before this workshop indicated a need for HEAIDS to engage face-to-face with a wider range of decision-makers and managers on campuses.

These suggestions were taken into consideration in the drafting of the communication strategy, which now places a stronger emphasis on HEAIDS reaching this audience both face-to-face and through more regular written communication.

"The workshop helped to make sure that HEAIDS and institutional communicators and HIV and AIDS co-ordinators were on the same page," said Helen Williams of HEAIDS. "We wanted to clarify what institutions could expect of us and what we could expect of them – and establish what we could do from our side to support effective communication."

The project outcomes will include a framework for HIV/AIDS workplace programmes, an evaluation of the teacher education pilot project, and estimates of budget requirements for institutional HIV/AIDS programmes.

The results of the national HIV prevalence study and the survey on knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and behaviour will also become available. ■

The HEAIDS communication strategy has been developed to dovetail with each institution's own culture, style and creative ability when communicating to staff and students on HIV and AIDS issues in the sector. The programme takes responsibility for communicating directly to a range of stakeholders at every institution, enabling further dissemination of information according to each institution's own processes.

SA youth structures unite to tackle HIV/AIDS

South African youth structures held a two-day legkotla on HIV/AIDS and developed the Youth Legkotla Declaration which supports the National Strategic Plan on HIV, AIDS and STIs.

The legkotla was convened by the South African National Youth Commission, South African Youth Council and the Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) provided technical and financial support. The participating structures have urged other youth organisations and individuals to support the positions taken in the Declaration.

For more information on how to support the Declaration, contact Tessa at tessa@youthaidscoalition.org. The Declaration is available on www.saaids.com under Declarations.

SA AIDS Conference highlights

ARVs COULD ADD 40 YEARS TO LIFESPAN

Antiretroviral treatment (ART) could add 40 years to the lives of South Africans living with AIDS. Treatment adherence in this country has generally been good, speakers told the 4th South African AIDS Conference, held in Durban from 30 March to 3 April.

According to Dr Francois Venter, head of the Southern African HIV Clinicians Society, the great majority of 700 000 people enrolled for ART are still on the original drug combination and only a small proportion have swapped regimens due to drug resistance.

Professor Wafaa Al Sadar of Columbia University said the challenge is to motivate patients to maintain good treatment adherence for decades.

In her closing address, the former Health Minister Barbara Hogan reflected: "We are looking at 1.5 million people needing ARVs by 2011. They will need these drugs for 30 to 40 years. I doubt any country in the world has had to make such a commitment to so many people for almost half a century."

TB PREVENTION GETS A FRESH AIRING

The new buzz word in TB management is prevention! And the new heroes of the struggle include architects and engineers. After years of focusing on high cure rates to get TB under control, health workers are conceding that treatment alone won't defeat this epidemic.

As attention returns to TB prevention, infection control is becoming a priority and old fashioned ventilation, with lots of open windows, is shaping up as a potent weapon. Engineer Dr Sydney Parsons of the CSIR asserted that TB was "a built environment problem". Effective ventilation of hospitals and clinics would greatly reduce the infection risk to patients and health workers. At least eight South African health workers have lost their lives to drug-resistant TB, said Lesley Odendal of Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF).

STIGMA COMPOUNDS HIV FOR GAY MEN

The impact of HIV on gay men has been eclipsed by the sheer size of the epidemic in the heterosexual population. But HIV prevalence among men who have sex with men may be as high as 40 percent, according to a small study conducted by the Wits Centre for Health Policy, the Medical Research Council and the Human Sciences Research Council. The study tested and interviewed a total of 266 men who have sex with men. They resided in Durban or Johannesburg, were mostly younger than 25 years and – perhaps contrary to stereotypes – the majority were black.

"Men who have sex with men continue to face stigma, discrimination and a lack of acceptance from society, including health care workers," said researcher Dr Laetitia Rispel. ■

Plea to engage students creatively

Higher education cannot do business as usual in the face of the HIV/AIDS epidemic – but the sector response must not be "so unusual that it can't be done," the former HEAIDS Director Dr Shaidah Asmall told a symposium at the 4th South African AIDS Conference in Durban.

Dr Asmall pointed out that each year South Africa's public institutions of higher education produce about 125 000 graduates who go out into workplaces and communities. "If we don't use the multiplier effect of 125 000 graduates, we are losing out on scaling up," she argued.

HEAIDS has driven a sector-wide effort to ensure education students have the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with HIV/AIDS as they enter school classrooms. About 7 000 teaching students last year completed a standardised module on HIV/AIDS. Other panel members reflected on the challenges of engaging students.

Mary Crewe of the University of Pretoria's Centre for the Study of AIDS suggested that campus HIV/AIDS programmes should challenge orthodoxies and recognise the unique identities of institutions. She argued that these programmes should stimulate the intellectual curiosity of students and avoid treating them like school children. "We don't solve epidemics by coercion ... or by uniformity," she insisted.

Professor Mary Jean Baxen of Rhodes University's Education Faculty said research suggested many students still had misconceptions about HIV/AIDS. But they were bored and fatigued by the topic and reluctant to learn more.

She cautioned that integrating HIV/AIDS content into various curricula could aggravate AIDS fatigue by introducing a lot of repetition across subjects.

In addition, when HIV/AIDS is a subject to be studied, "students can intellectualise and depersonalise," Professor Baxen cautioned, observing that it was rare for students and academics living with HIV to disclose their status.

Lukhanyo Mzinzi, an engineering student at Cape Peninsula University of Technology and provincial executive member of South African Students Congress, said HIV/AIDS initiatives on campus needed to engage more sincerely with students. "They must involve students not just to legitimise policies but to get their real buy-in."

The symposium was chaired by Prof Slim Abdool Karim of UKZN and Dr Jill von der Marwitz of NMMU rounded off the discussion with reflections on campus workplace programmes. ■

HIV911 directory now bigger and better

The HIV 911 Programme now boasts information about more than 10 000 HIV-related support services in South Africa. Higher education institutions can tap into these free of charge through the HEAIDS-facilitated partnership between HESA and HIV911 which facilitates access to information about HIV/AIDS services. HIV 911 can be accessed in the following ways:

- HIV/ARV-related clinical enquiries: 0800 212 506.
- HIV-911 Referral Network: 0860 HIV 911/0860 448 911.
- HIV-911 online directory: www.hiv911.org.za.
- Individuals requiring assistance: National AIDS Helpline on 0800 012 322.

A new mobile phone access method is currently under development and is expected to go live at the end of May. Anyone can phone *120*448# free of charge to access the information they need. The number already works, but currently it reroutes callers to the contact numbers listed above. ■



A poster designed by Applied Languages students at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT).