

## ONE HOUR ON AIDS: TIME TO TAKE THE LEAD

### *On December 1 at Your School, Talk About HIV and AIDS!*

Each year on December 1, millions of people throughout the world commemorate World AIDS Day. World AIDS Day raises awareness of HIV and AIDS and is an opportunity to take action on HIV prevention in schools. Teachers and their unions are crucial to this campaign: they have a key role to play in education for HIV prevention and advocacy for universal treatment, care and support.

Building on the success of the World AIDS Day campaign in 2008, Education International (EI) proposes teachers use this Activity Kit with their colleagues and students on Tuesday 1 December 2009 in schools, classrooms and union meetings. With 'One Hour on AIDS' as the guiding theme, teachers worldwide will lead their students and colleagues in a lesson on AIDS with the help of the simple Activity Kit developed by EI in collaboration with the Education Development Center. We hope this activity will be used as a starting point for other HIV and AIDS-focused activities throughout the year.

The activity in this kit will help you explore what AIDS means to you, your colleagues, and your students and is designed to be tailored to the specific needs of the group you are teaching. The activity includes both small and large group work and is designed to encourage frank and open discussion about HIV and AIDS. The kit contains a poster<sup>1</sup> reflecting the main themes of the activity that can be displayed in classrooms, staff rooms and union offices throughout the year.

*By participating in this activity with your students and colleagues, you show leadership and contribute to the success of World AIDS Day.*

**One hour on AIDS today, leadership on AIDS throughout the year!**

<sup>1</sup> The poster can be found on the first page of this document. A better quality poster is available online [http://www.ei-ie.org/efaids/en/campaigns\\_wad.php](http://www.ei-ie.org/efaids/en/campaigns_wad.php).



## 'ONE HOUR ON AIDS' ACTIVITY

### Leading the Activity

Anyone can lead this one-hour World AIDS Day activity with students, teachers, and other school staff. **You do not need to be an expert on HIV and AIDS.** Your main role is to facilitate *open discussion*, which is a key step towards taking action to address HIV and AIDS.

What is most important is that you create an environment in which colleagues and students feel free to express their ideas and engage in dialogue with others. HIV and AIDS are sensitive topics because there has been so much misinformation, stigma, and discrimination associated with them. To create an environment conducive to open debate, you need to know how to:

- facilitate a discussion
- handle questions to which you do not know the answer
- deal constructively with stigmatising and discriminatory statements

### *Facilitating a discussion*

Below are some tips for conducting effective discussions:

- Establish rules and criteria for a frank but constructive discussion.
- Encourage participants to speak, to consider multiple points of view, and to have debate based on mutual respect.

### *Handling questions to which you do not know the answer*

You may not know the answer to all questions. If this is the case, you could say, "I don't know the answer, but I will find out for you". Then you can ask a health educator, nurse or doctor in your school, local clinic or hospital and get back to the group with the answer. You can also encourage participants to do their own research on the topic and hold an additional session to ensure their research produced accurate answers. **It is important not to provide inaccurate information.**

### *Dealing with stigmatising and discriminatory statements*

To make clear that discrimination and stigmatisation are unacceptable, introduce the activity by discussing the following:

- No one deserves to have HIV or AIDS.
- Having HIV and AIDS is not anyone's fault.
- Everyone has an equal right to access to prevention, treatment, care, and support services regardless of his or her HIV status.
- Everyone has an equal right to study and work, regardless of his or her HIV status.
- Everyone has a role to play in the response to the HIV and AIDS.

## Guidelines for Conducting the Activity

### Purpose:

- To engage participants in thinking about and discussing issues related to HIV and AIDS
- To encourage participants to take action in response to the HIV and AIDS

**Target Group:** Teachers and their students (ages 13 and above recommended)

**Time:** One hour

### Materials:

- Copies of the Take the Lead worksheet, with a statement for discussion written on each one
- Paper and pens
- 'Take the Lead on AIDS' poster (optional)

### Procedure:

#### 1. Introduction (3 minutes)

- Open the session by explaining to participants that December 1 is World AIDS Day. You could say, "This is a time when people throughout the world join together to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS and call for greater action to be taken to address HIV and AIDS. Today we are doing an activity in solidarity with other students, teachers, and staff in schools throughout the world."
- Divide participants into groups of 4–8 for the small-group discussion.
- Distribute a 'Take the Lead' worksheet to each group.
- Choose several statements for discussion from the following list:
  - HIV and AIDS affect people in all countries around the world
  - HIV can be spread by shaking hands with someone who is HIV positive or by sharing the same toilets, cutlery, or chalk
  - If you have sex with people who look healthy, you will not get HIV
  - If you stay with one partner, you will not become infected with HIV
  - Women have a greater chance than men of getting HIV from unprotected sex
  - Young people who have sex with older partners increase their risk of getting HIV
  - People who are HIV positive are promiscuous
  - Students who are HIV positive should be allowed to go to school with other students
  - Teachers who are HIV positive should not be teaching
  - If you see someone insulting or bullying a person because of HIV, it is best not to interfere
- Allocate a different statement for discussion to each group.

#### 2. Small-Group Discussion (25 minutes)



- Tell the groups that their first task is to choose a person who will take notes and report back to the large group about the small-group discussion. Ask each group to write their group statement on the blank line at the top of the worksheet.
- Then ask each member of the group to take a minute to share with their group what the statement means to him or her.
- The group should now discuss their responses to the three questions on the worksheet:
  - Which points does everyone agree with in relation to the statement?
  - What, if anything, do group members disagree with in relation to the statement?
  - What actions should you take to address the issues raised in your discussion?
- The notetaker should briefly summarise the main points in readiness to report back on the group discussion.

### 3. Large-Group Work (20 minutes)

- Reconvene the large group, and ask the participants who took notes to provide a brief summary of their group's responses to the three questions.
- If time permits, facilitate a brief discussion of the points made. If time is tight, summarise the key points yourself.
- Provide a few summarising points about World AIDS Day:
  - HIV and AIDS are global issues. Millions of people around the world are infected with HIV. Plus, many more are affected by the disease because they have immediate family, friends, students, or co-workers living with it. So, we are all involved and affected.
  - Everybody has a right to an education, to the whole range of health and social services, and to live, study, and work to their fullest potential, whether or not they have HIV. We can all make sure these rights are respected by taking the lead and playing a part in the response to HIV and AIDS.
  - The theme for World AIDS Day in 2009 is 'Universal Access and Human Rights', and this applies to everyone, including governments, communities, schools, families, and individuals. In order to successfully respond to HIV and AIDS and to make sure that the required education and services are provided, people at all levels need to take action and assume responsibility.
  - Both young people and adults can take action.

### 4. The 'Take the Lead on AIDS' Poster (15 minutes)

- Explain that there are many ways that we can take action on HIV and AIDS at the individual, community, and global levels. The 'Take the Lead on AIDS' poster suggests forms of action. If you do not have the poster, you can still go through the forms of action suggested below.
- Explain each form of action to the class:
  - Begin with theme – '**Protect Yourself**', which encourages individuals to take responsibility for their own health and their relationships with other people. The first step is to protect yourself from HIV, other STIs, and pregnancy by abstaining from sex or practising safe sex. Remember to use universal precautions (e.g. gloves) when coming into contact with bodily fluids, such as blood.

- **'Increase Awareness'** applies to many different settings, including your school and community. The goal is to help people learn more about HIV and AIDS, including prevention, treatment, care, and support, as well as stigma and discrimination. You could increase awareness by holding a forum to discuss issues and articles in the news, by inviting a guest speaker, by creating and performing a drama piece, by holding a poster competition, and by writing letters to the editors of newspapers.
- **'Change Your School or Workplace'** means getting your school or workplace to address HIV and AIDS and includes advocating for health services and comprehensive HIV and AIDS education. Encourage your school to address stigma and discrimination and to support the full inclusion of students and teachers who are living with or affected by HIV and AIDS. It is important to live in a positive way that is free of stigma and discrimination towards people affected by HIV and AIDS.
- **'Get Involved in Your Community'** includes a wide range of activities to help people living with or affected by HIV and AIDS, such as volunteering at a hospital, home-based care programme, or AIDS action group; providing support and helping with schoolwork for orphans or children affected by HIV and AIDS.
- **'Demand Global Action'** is about convincing politicians and national leaders to take action to provide HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support services, and to tackle stigma and discrimination. You can take action by organising a rally or writing to politicians.

If time permits, encourage participants to pledge to undertake a specific action. Provide a sheet of paper for them to write their name and the action they plan to take. Say that you will ask them to report back to the class in the following months on their progress in taking action. You could also ask some students to write their pledge on the **'Take the Lead'** poster before hanging it in the classroom.

#### Post-Activity Follow-Up

- In the months after World AIDS Day, ask those who signed the pledge sheet to report on their progress.
- Refer to the poster at various times during the year to remind students of the importance of taking action and of becoming involved in HIV and AIDS prevention.

TAKE THE LEAD WORKSHEET

**Statement for discussion:**

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.....

**Instructions**

- Choose a person to take notes for the group and to report back to the large group about your discussion.
- Each person in your group should take a minute to say what the statement for discussion means to them.
- Everyone in the group should discuss their responses to the three questions on this worksheet.
- Try to summarise the key points so that the person taking notes can record them and share them with the large group.

**Questions**

1. What points does everyone agree with in relation to the statement?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What, if anything, do group members disagree with in relation to the statement?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What actions should you take to address the issues raised in your discussion?

## STATEMENTS FOR DISCUSSION

**Note:** The responses to the Statements below are provided as an example to give you an idea of the issues that should be discussed. You and the participants may add further information and examples according to the age, knowledge level, and interests of the group.

### 1. *HIV and AIDS affect people in all countries around the world.*

**Agree.** Forty million people in countries around the world are HIV positive. In 2007, almost 2.1 million people died of AIDS, and 2.5 million new cases of HIV occurred.<sup>2</sup> HIV and AIDS is being spread throughout all countries, although some countries have much higher rates than others.

### 2. *HIV can be spread by shaking hands with someone who is HIV positive or by sharing the same toilets, cutlery, or chalk.*

**Disagree.** HIV can only be transmitted through the exchange of the following four bodily fluids: blood, semen, vaginal fluid, or breast milk.

The four main ways the virus is spread are by:

- having unprotected sexual contact
- sharing contaminated needles when injecting drugs
- transfusions of infected blood or use of unsterilised medical instruments
- a mother passing the virus to her baby before or during birth or during breastfeeding

The 'H' in HIV stands for 'human', which means that the infection is only spread by human beings and *not* by animals or insects.

### 3. *If you have sex with people who look healthy, you will not get HIV.*

**Disagree.** Many people living with HIV look healthy. People who are infected with HIV *may not show any visible symptoms* for many years and may not know that they are HIV positive. Even if they have symptoms that could be caused by having HIV, those symptoms could also be caused by other health problems that are unrelated to HIV. Therefore, you cannot tell by looking at someone whether he or she has HIV.

### 4. *If you stay with one partner, you will not become infected with HIV.*

**Disagree.** It depends on the partner, what they did before they met, and whether either one has unprotected sex outside the relationship, or is an injecting drug user. A stable relationship does not guarantee safety.

### 5. *Women have a greater chance than men of getting HIV from unprotected sex.*

**Agree.** There are several reasons for this:

- Biological: Women have a larger area of exposed mucous membrane where the virus can enter, and there is more virus present in sperm than in vaginal fluid.

<sup>2</sup> [http://data.unaids.org/pub/EPISlides/2007/2007\\_epiupdate\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/EPISlides/2007/2007_epiupdate_en.pdf)

- **Social/Cultural:** In many cultures women are not allowed to discuss or make decisions about sex, including asking their partner to use safe sex practices.

*N.B When women are financially dependent on men, it may be harder for them to control when and with whom they have sex. They are therefore more susceptible to getting HIV. Both men and women should take equal responsibility in sexual decision-making to stay safe and avoid unwanted pregnancy.*

#### **6. Young people who have sex with older partners increase their risk of getting HIV.**

**Agree.** Older partners have often had numerous partners and frequently dominate the decision-making in relationships with younger partners. If younger partners become dependent on older partners for such things as money, cell phones, or car rides in exchange for sex, they give up their power to set limits and demand safe sex practises, such as condom usage, and thus expose themselves to risk.

#### **7. People who are HIV positive are promiscuous.**

**Disagree.** People who are HIV positive could have got the infection through non-sexual transmission (e.g., sharing contaminated needles). And even if they got the virus from unprotected sex, that does not mean they are promiscuous. Although promiscuity can increase one's chances of contracting HIV, the virus can be contracted from having unprotected sex just once.

#### **8. Students who are HIV positive should be allowed to go to school with other students.**

**Agree.** All students have a right to an education. In addition, students who are HIV positive should not be excluded nor discriminated against, and HIV is not contagious through the everyday contact that students have in school.

#### **9. Teachers who are HIV positive should not be teaching.**

**Disagree.** Having HIV does not make a person 'bad' or a poor role model. As with many diseases, with the right treatment many teachers living with HIV can continue to carry out their work efficiently. Everyone has the right to work regardless of their HIV status.

#### **10. If you see someone insulting or bullying a person because of HIV, it is best not to interfere.**

**Disagree.** If you do not say or do something, your silence may be seen as complicit support for what the bully is doing. Tell the person to stop immediately and explain that it is unacceptable to discriminate against someone because of their HIV status. Your actions will help decrease stigma and discrimination.