

Every child is a National Asset

Unpacking the DBE National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB

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A Bold New Approach to HIV & TB in the Basic Education Sector

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basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Read to Lead
A Reading Nation is a Leading Nation

Acknowledgements

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Parties Consulted

- South African National AIDS Council (SANAC)
- Departments of Health, Public Service and Administration and Social Development
- The Presidency
- Congress of South African Students (COSAS)
- Organised Labour (South African Democratic Teachers Union and all teacher unions)
- Academic and research organisations
- University education faculties
- Development partners as well as the Joint United Nations Team on HIV and AIDS
- School Governing Body Associations
- South African Principals Associations
- 5th and 6th SA AIDS Conference (2013 and 2015)
- Over 100 written submissions from individuals and organisations
- Through various media platforms

Purpose

- To reflect the alignment between the DBE National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB and the following macro policy imperatives:
 - ❑ National Strategic Plan on HIV, STIs & TB 2017-2022
 - ❑ National Development Plan 2030
 - ❑ Sustainable Development Goals 2030; and
- To unpack the essential components of the DBE National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB

Background

- South Africa accounts for 17% of global HIV infections, and is home to the largest ART programme in the world
- The 2012 HSRC population survey on HIV reported declining knowledge levels on HIV amongst all age groups, compared to the 2008 survey; Corroborated by SAQMEC IV study on HIV knowledge levels among grade 6 learners and educators (conducted 2013)
- New HIV infections are highest in the 15-24 year old age group, in particular among girls and young women
 - Estimated 2000 new HIV infections per week in girls 15-24yrs
- Gender Based Violence and unequal gender/age power relations, Alcohol and Drug Use, multiple concurrent relationships are all critical components of a combination prevention response

Background cont.

- TB is at equally epidemic rates, and the rate of HIV and TB co-infection is significant
- Children represent 16% of all new TB cases in the country and 25% of children with TB are HIV positive, calling for a more active role for the basic education sector and schools on TB prevention, support and control
- The DBE has been an active participant in SANAC and in the development of the (new) National Strategic Plan on HIV, STIs and TB (NSP) 2017-2022, and served on the Steering Committee that guided and provided oversight on the process and content of the new NSP
- The new policy therefore has benefitted from the process to develop the NSP 2017-2011 and is fully aligned to it

Pertinent Sustainable Development Goals

- SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- SDG 1 : End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Relevant NDP Targets

- By 2030, RSA needs **good quality school education** with globally competitive literacy and numeracy standards
- At least 80% of students should complete 12 years of schooling ; **increase learner retention** rate to 90%, of whom 80% successfully pass the exit exam (National Senior Certificate)
- The **under-20 age group** should largely be HIV free
- Increase **life expectancy** to at least 70 for both men and women (educators and officials)

Strategic Focus and Alignment cont.

- UN Commission on the Status of Women Resolutions, Ministerial Commitment on comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents and young people in Eastern and Southern African (ESA) (2012), and other global and continental commitments
- National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRH&R) Framework Strategy (2014 – 2019) (DSD); DPSA Strategic Framework for Public Service HIV&AIDS Response (2012); Responds to the analysis and challenges articulated in the National Youth Policy 2015-2020 (Presidency 2015) Sections 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 6.6 7 6.8
- In DBE: Policy will simultaneously contribute to the attainment of the goals attached to the MTSF and Delivery Agreement for Outcome 1; Education White Paper 6 (DOE 2001); Action Plan to 2019: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030; DBE's Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) Framework (2008); Integrated School Health Policy and Programme (ISHP) (2012)

Why a Revised Policy?

- Need for change
 - High incidence of HIV, early sexual debut , early unintended pregnancy
- Combination prevention strategies that bring social, behavioural and structural approaches together as core elements
- Mandated by the new NSP 2017-2022; focus for impact
 - **Goal 1 : Prevent new HIV infections (Comprehensive quality sexuality education in schools one of the critical levers and a game changer)**
 - **Goal 4 of new NSP: Address the social and structural drivers of HIV, STIs and TB infections**

Why a Revised Policy?

- Available evidence on education responses and experience implementing the HIV and AIDS Lifeskills Education Programme
- Gives expression to the Department's response to matters concerning educators and officials (not addressed in the 1999 Policy). Scope of application is widened to learners, educators, support staff and officials
- For the first time, inclusion of tuberculosis (TB) as a priority
- The DBE approaches HIV as a core management function (rather than only a health concern) using a public health approach Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support

At an international level, this is the first education policy that provides a comprehensive response to both HIV & TB

Principles

- **Access to education**
 - Unlimited constitutional right
- Rights based
- Access to information
- Access to counselling, treatment, care & support
- Equity & **protection from stigma & discrimination**
- Fair labour practices
- Gender sensitivity & responsiveness
 - LGBTIQ
- **Reasonable accommodation**
 - Absence (ill health; access to treatment)
- Safety, security & health in workplaces & schools

Policy Goals

- Improved **co-ordination and mainstreaming** of the sector's response to HIV and TB, to accelerate implementation of a comprehensive strategy for prevention, treatment, care and support;
- Increased **knowledge, cognitive skills and life skills** in general and on HIV and TB in particular, to inform the life choices of all learners, educators, school support staff and officials to protect them from infection and disease;
- Improved **access to** HIV and TB prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care and support **services** to reduce the incidence and impact of HIV and TB within the sector; and
- Increased **retention** of learners, educators, school support staff and officials **in a safe and protective education environment** to improve system efficiency, quality and output.

Policy Themes & Alignment with New NSP

Policy is organised around 6 themes:

- Prevention (NSP Goal 1)
- Treatment, care, counselling & support (NSP Goal 2)
- Impact mitigation (NSP Goal 3 & 5)
- Enabling environment (NSP Goal 5 & 6)
- Workplace issues (NSP Goal 1, 2, 3, 4, 6)
- Management of policy response (NSP Goal 6, 8)

Theme 1: Prevention

- Combination prevention approaches
 - biomedical, behavioural, social and structural (ensure school attendance, decrease drop-out, quality NSC achievement)
- Strengthen Curriculum for **Compulsory Comprehensive Sexuality Education**
 - Educator training & support (Initial Educator Training & Continuing Professional Teacher Development)
 - Aligned LO Textbooks and other teaching and learning aides
 - Gender; alcohol and drug use;
- **Sexual and Reproductive Health and TB Services**
 - School Health Services Package including SRH package
 - Partners including mobile/ periodic services
 - Contact investigation for TB (SOP/field guides)
- Peer education and other co-curricular programmes
- **Safe educational environment**
 - Physical (airborne infections/TB), GBV & psychological safety
 - For those with TB disease, return as advised by health provider

Theme 2: Treatment, Care, Counselling & Support

- Information & awareness
- Treatment, care, counselling & support
 - ISHP including Psychosocial Support services
 - Adolescent-friendly health services (DOH and partners)
 - SRHS; PEP, HTS, ARTs, VMMC, Counselling
- **Reasonable accommodation**
 - Accommodate reasonable absence for treatment with flexible learning
 - Length of absence due to TB determined by health provider
- **Gender issues**
 - Vulnerability of young girls & women to HIV
 - Teach about gender roles, power dynamics (Curriculum and Co-curricular). **Focus also on boys**
 - Hostel facilities make provision for protection of male & female learners
- Referral & strategic partnerships

Theme 3: Impact mitigation

- Orphans and vulnerable children
- Special needs education & barriers to learning
- **School support & flexibility**
 - design & scheduling of classes
 - social support & nutrition

Theme 4: Enabling environment

- Advocacy & leadership
- Policy implementation & review
- Alignment (e.g. NDP, Education policies, NSP)
- Mainstreaming
- Management & Coordination

Theme 5: Workplace Issues

- Information and awareness
- HIV and TB in the workplace
 - dignity, discrimination, recruitment, confidentiality, privacy, gender differences
- Safe workplace practices
 - occupational health & safety guidelines
- **Employee wellness**
 - EHWP to provide access to counselling, treatment & PSS
- Sexual abuse and harassment in the workplace
 - Zero tolerance, disciplinary process
- **Reasonable accommodation for ill-health & absenteeism**
 - Absenteeism for treatment, counselling & medication
 - Incapacity & relief educators & other staff

Theme 6: Management of policy response

- Management & coordination
 - Mainstreamed response, **SOP/field guides**
- **Structural arrangements**
 - HEDCOM subcommittee
 - National Basic Education Sector HIV and TB Coordination Committee (Unions, SGBs, DHET, DSD, DOH)
- Roles & responsibilities (all tiers of the system)
- Strategic partnerships
- **Human resource training & development**
- Linked M&E Framework
- Research agenda

Conclusion

- DBE National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB is the sector's contribution and response to the NSP and the country focus on health and education of the youth
- Requires all sectors to participation and support

Next Steps

- Advocacy on the Policy
- Review and/or develop key documents that support implementation (School Policy Pack, Field Guides and Standard Operating Procedures)
- Strengthen comprehensive sexuality education in schools
- Facilitate access to a comprehensive package of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for learners
- Expand the placement of Learner Support Agents (LSAs) in schools to support vulnerable learners, and access to health and social services through referrals
- Implement ongoing programmes to raise TB literacy in schools, including the improvement of ventilation and school infrastructure to prevent and control Tuberculosis

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