

06 GUIDELINES FOR PREVENTIVE EDUCATION

Why preventive education works

- A general basic education has an important preventive impact. It can equip people to make healthy decisions concerning their own lives, bring about long-term healthy behaviours, and give people the opportunity for economic independence and hope.
- Education is among the most powerful tools for reducing girls' vulnerability. Girls' education helps to slow and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by contributing to economic independence, delayed marriage, and family planning.
- Schooling offers an appropriate infrastructure for delivering HIV/AIDS prevention efforts to large numbers of the uninfected population – school children – as well as to youth, who are the age group at most risk in many countries.
- Education is highly cost-effective since the investment in prevention is many times smaller than the cost of caring for the sick.



- If used appropriately, preventive education is a powerful tool
- Young people need to know how to protect themselves and mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS

Guidelines for preventive education

- The purpose of preventive education is to promote a healthy lifestyle and responsible behaviour and to prevent disease.
- This is achieved by providing the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and means to encourage and sustain behavior that reduces risk of infection, by providing social support and care and by reducing stigma and discrimination.
- It is important to start early, that is before girls and boys become sexually active or drop out of school.
- An effective preventive education approach must be comprehensive, multisectoral, open, and flexible; and it must address all factors that increase vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, such as sexual behavior, the position of women and minority groups, gender issues, community- and family circumstances, education, poverty, discrimination, drug and alcohol abuse, peer pressure, etc.
- Education personnel must be equipped with communication skills including a capacity to listen and to learn and an ability to effectively address sensitive issues.
- Best practices from other countries and regions can be borrowed and adapted, but the unique cultural contexts of your country needs to be taken into account.
- General education programmes, as well as specialised efforts targeting high-risk behaviours, must be created.
- Preventive education can and should be strengthened by combining various channels such as schools, media, informal networks, etc.
- HIV/AIDS education does not stop in the classroom. HIV/AIDS should be integrated both into the curriculum and into extracurricular activities within the school setting such as youth camps, peer education, theatre, study tours, exhibitions, contests, sports, etc.
- Preventive education should emphasise life skills.

What makes talking about HIV/AIDS easier:

- ☐ Adequate training for male and female teachers and facilitators
- ☐ Good skills and sound knowledge of teachers and facilitators
- ☐ High-quality teaching and learning materials
- ☐ Respect for and rapport with students
- ☐ Patience and understanding
- ☐ A non-judgmental attitude
- ☐ A positive environment

