



**Ministry of Education
and Science of
Ukraine**



Intersectoral cooperation for HIV prevention: skills-based health education in Ukraine

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- Ukraine is a country with a population of 46 million and a high prevalence of HIV.
- Ukraine is a country with concentrated epidemic stage as well as Estonia Republic.
- The epidemic in Ukraine is mainly driven by injecting drug use. However among new registered cases there is trend of increasing of the heterosexual transmission.
- The latest data on the number of officially registered HIV cases shows 1,653 new HIV cases registered in October 2009.
- In January – October 2009 (first 10 months of 2009) 16,414 HIV positive people have been officially registered in Ukraine.
- Since the year of 1987 until October 2009 a total of 157,675 HIV cases have been registered, including 2,246 children.
- Final diagnoses for 6,283 children are currently pending.
- Each month Ukraine registers an average of 1,500 new HIV cases among adults.

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- **On March 15th 2004 the Alliance and the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria signed the Stewardship Agreement appointing the Alliance as main implementer of the Program “Overcoming HIV/AIDS epidemics in Ukraine”:**
 - **Considering the severity of the HIV/AIDS situation in the world and in Ukraine in particular as well as the need to counter the HIV/AIDS epidemic by way of promoting safer lifestyles and raising HIV/AIDS awareness among Ukrainian youth through meaningful education curriculum, which is one of the priorities of the formal education system,**
 - **Understanding that controlling and containing the spread of HIV/AIDS in Ukraine is only possible through making joint efforts in particular aimed at ensuring effective use of the capacities of international donor, community-based and charitable organisations by the government and development of partnerships to fight HIV/AIDS,**
 - **On June 21st 2004 the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MoES) and the International HIV/AIDS Alliance in Ukraine signed a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation.**
 - **As a follow-up to the above MoU, the MoES issued an Order on Organizational and Methodological Support to the Implementation of the “Overcoming HIV/AIDS in Ukraine” Program.**

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- The subject matter of the Memorandum was “co-operation in the field of introduction of information and education programs and interactive teaching techniques into the school curriculum enabling students to acquire knowledge and behavioral skills that reduce their vulnerability to HIV”.
- The Parties have agreed that in the framework of the Program the Alliance will facilitate appropriate level of HIV/AIDS prevention knowledge by teachers and professors, students of general education institutions and teacher-training colleges by announcing an RFA to select sub-recipients in order to:
 - Ensure development and publication of HIV-prevention textbooks to be used for teaching the subject *Basics of Health* for 1st-9th classes and special courses for 5th-11th (12th) classes of general education schools. All teaching materials should make use of interactive teaching techniques, facilitate acquisition of healthy lifestyle skills by the students and should be designed to cover the topics of gender equality and tolerance to people living with HIV.
 - Ensure training and retraining of teachers and professors in promotion of healthy lifestyles and prevention of HIV among school, university and college youth through development of relevant training programs for postgraduate institutes providing retraining and refresher courses to teachers and professors, ensure development of training manuals and provision of trainings of trainers to teachers and professors.

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- The training of teachers and professors in promotion of healthy lifestyles and prevention of HIV among school, university and college youth was run in close cooperation with the MoES.
- The Program components aimed at introduction of information and education program and interactive teaching techniques into the school curriculum enabling students to acquire knowledge and behavioral skills that reduce their vulnerability to HIV were implemented by the Alliance and its sub-recipients in close partnership with the MoES.
- Any method guidance, training program etc developed under the Program were submitted to the Ministry for agreement and approval. Upon consideration and approval of the aforesaid documents the Ministry recommended them for introduction and use in educational institutions by issuing requisite decrees.

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- Skills-based education targets three broad categories of life skills, cognitive skills, and emotional coping skills. The programs developed incorporated each of these sets of skills into their lessons.
- Nowadays the training courses, programs and method guides developed as well as teaching staff trained within the education subcomponent of the Program constitute a solid platform for building sustainable safe behavior skills in Ukrainian children and youth.
- According to Ukraine's National AIDS Center, in 2008 proportion of new HIV cases among youth aged 15 to 24 dropped to 13% as opposed to 18% in 2004.
- **Findings of the monitoring study to assess the effectiveness of implementation of the integrated *Basics of Health* course in 5th-6th classes of general education schools** undertaken in the framework of a joint project of the MoES and Delegation of the European Commission to Ukraine show that the majority of the students' parents (87%) support introduction of the integrated course into school curriculum, deem this subject timely and relevant, as well as indicate that it plays an important role in disease prevention.

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Through the cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Science and the Alliance Ukraine in 2004-2009:

- A number of projects aimed at ensuring appropriate level of knowledge about HIV prevention methods and safer lifestyles among education managers, teachers, professors, teacher training colleges and students of general education schools have been implemented.

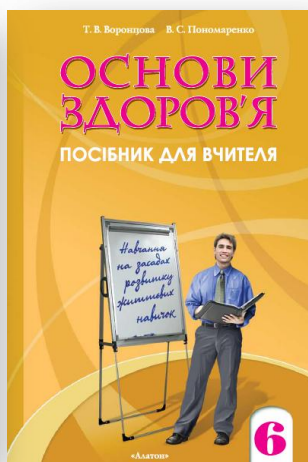
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- Over 100 titles of training and methodological materials have been developed, printed, distributed and recommended by the MoES for use in educational institutions.
- The materials making use of interactive teaching techniques facilitate acquisition of safer behavior skills by students and cover the topics of gender equality and tolerance towards people living with HIV/AIDS.

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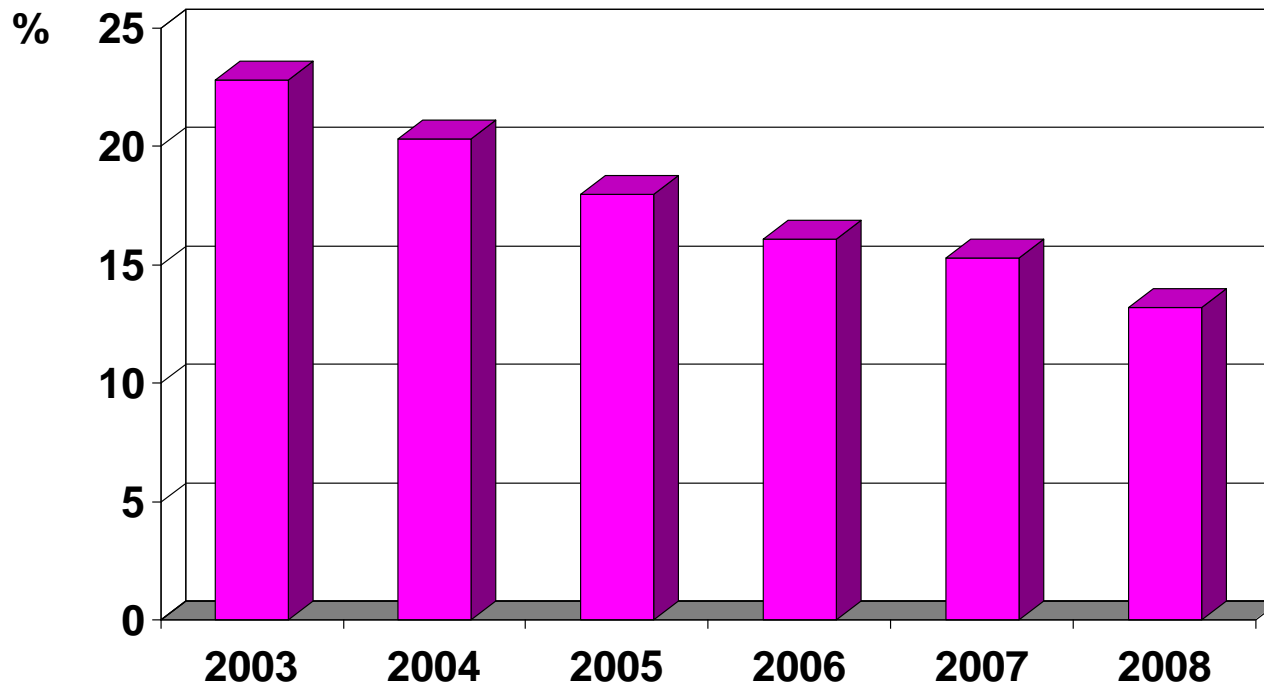
- Textbooks and toolkits for teaching and learning the compulsory *Basics of Health* course in 5th, 7th, and 8th classes won the government contract resulting in 230,000 copies of each title being printed with government funds.
- Almost 18,000 teachers and professors have been trained in teaching techniques aimed at building life skills that protect human health.

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- **A special focus has been put on training teachers that teach the compulsory *Basics of Health* course (introduced in 2005) and optional *School against AIDS* course:**
 - **In 2005-2008 at 28 postgraduate education institutes in Ukraine (27 local institutes in each oblast capital and a centralized one in Kiev) 54 trainers (teaching methods specialists from oblast-level postgraduate teacher training institutes) and 13,000 *Basics of Health* course teachers received appropriate training.**
 - **66 teacher trainers, 7,289 teachers from general education schools and 30 teachers from vocational schools have been trained to teach the optional *School against AIDS* course.**
- **3,072,419 students of 1st-7th classes have been covered with prevention programs within the compulsory *Basics of Health* course (academic years 2007-2008).**
- **140,796 general education school students and 7,289 vocational school students have completed the *School against AIDS* training course (academic years 2005-2008).**

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New cases among youth age 15-24



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Challenges:

- There is a need to train adults in using active teaching methodologies.
- Teachers and health care providers are often expected to help adolescents develop skills that they *themselves* may not possess.
- Program providers may feel uncomfortable addressing the sensitive issues and questions that may arise.
- Program providers are underpaid and overworked.
- Teachers are often asked to implement many different curricula and instructional efforts, without a clear understanding of the relationships among them and the relative benefits of each.
- The current economic recession caused a sharp decrease in funding for school-based healthy lifestyles promotion programs, which jeopardizes our efforts to scale up the activities in order to equip all school, college and university students in Ukraine with essential life skills.

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Why we chose Skills-Based Health Education as our strategy:

- Skills-based health education focuses on the development of “abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” (WHO 1993).

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Why we chose Skills-Based Health Education as our strategy (contd.):

The primary goal of skills-based education is:

- to change not only a student's level of knowledge
but

to enhance his or her ability to translate that knowledge into specific, positive behaviors. Participatory, interactive teaching and learning methods are critical components of this type of education.

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Why we chose Skills-Based Health Education as our strategy (contd.):

- **A growing body of research has documented that skills-based interventions can promote numerous positive attitudes and behaviors, including healthy decision-making.**
- **Also effective in preventing negative or high-risk behaviors, such as use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, unsafe sex, and violence.**
- **Skills-based education emphasizes the use of learning activities which are culturally relevant and gender-sensitive.**
- **This approach ensures that the situations are realistic and relevant to the everyday lives of students. It is critical that the skills youth build and practice in the classroom are easily transferable to their lives outside the classroom.**

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Why we chose Skills-Based Health Education as our strategy (contd.):

The success of skills-based health education is tied to three factors:

- The recognition of the developmental stages that youth pass through and the skills they need as they progress to adulthood;
- A participatory and interactive method of pedagogy;
- The use of culturally relevant and gender-sensitive learning activities.

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- **Key to the success of teaching these skills is comprehensive training for program providers around the basic characteristics of skills-based education. Such training should aim to:**
 - increase providers' knowledge around the content of what is being taught/learned.
 - increase providers' familiarity and level of comfort with using participatory and interactive teaching methodology in the classroom.
 - increase providers' understanding of developmental issues in learning.
 - strengthen providers' skills in the management of classroom behavior, given that skills-based education is used primarily in a large group setting and often deals with sensitive topics.

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EFFECTIVE TRAINING ON SKILLS-BASED EDUCATION TEACHES PROVIDERS HOW TO:

- Establish an effective, safe and supportive program environment
- Access resources for health information and referral
- Address sensitive issues
- Model the skills addressed in the program
- Apply interactive teaching methodologies in the classroom
- Provide constructive criticism, positive reinforcement and feedback

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- Manage community process:
 - Whichever agency plays the primary role in the implementation of skills-based health education, it is equally important for program providers to collaborate with other local stakeholders and community members in all stages of planning and delivery.

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Some of the Keys to Success When Implementing Skills-Based Health Education:

- As the challenges suggest, nothing can be implemented without the enthusiasm, buy-in and involvement of the providers.
- Examining, taking into account, and responding to the concerns, interests and needs of providers' personal and professional working conditions is a major factor in program success.

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- Despite the challenges that may accompany the implementation of skills-based education, the rewards and positive outcomes which may result from such programs are immeasurable.
- Creating a coordinated effort between stakeholders, both local and national, program planners and advocates can help ensure an educational program that is both effective and sustainable.

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Primary prevention through the Education system is a very important and significant **first step** to prevent the new cases of HIV/AIDS among children and youth.

But let's think about the **next steps**:

- ✓ we need to acknowledge that injecting drug use, commercial sex and homelessness are children's problems as well;
- ✓ we have to find the best approaches of prevention, care and support for most vulnerable children and youth;
- ✓ we have to commit ourselves to implement programs aimed at most vulnerable children.

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The Alliance Regional Technical Support Hub for Eastern Europe and Central Asia has been established to improve access for civil society organizations to **high quality technical support** to scale up national and regional HIV and AIDS responses across the region.

Core competencies:

- Organizational development of NGOs (general management, policies and procedures, HR management)
- Procurement and supply management (PSM)
- Specialist research, including supporting systems of HIV epidemiological supervision
- National and local Monitoring & Evaluation systems
- Financial/Grant Management
- Programs aimed at the most vulnerable communities (IDUs, CSWs, MSM, street children and other vulnerable groups)

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Great thanks to Minister **Tonis Lukas** for inviting us to visit Estonia to participate in the Nordic Forum.

Thanks to USAID Mission in Ukraine, staff of US Embassy in Estonia and Estonian Embassy in Ukraine for making our visit possible.

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**Thank you! Feel free to contact us, if you have any questions.
May you and your children enjoy good health and peace.**

