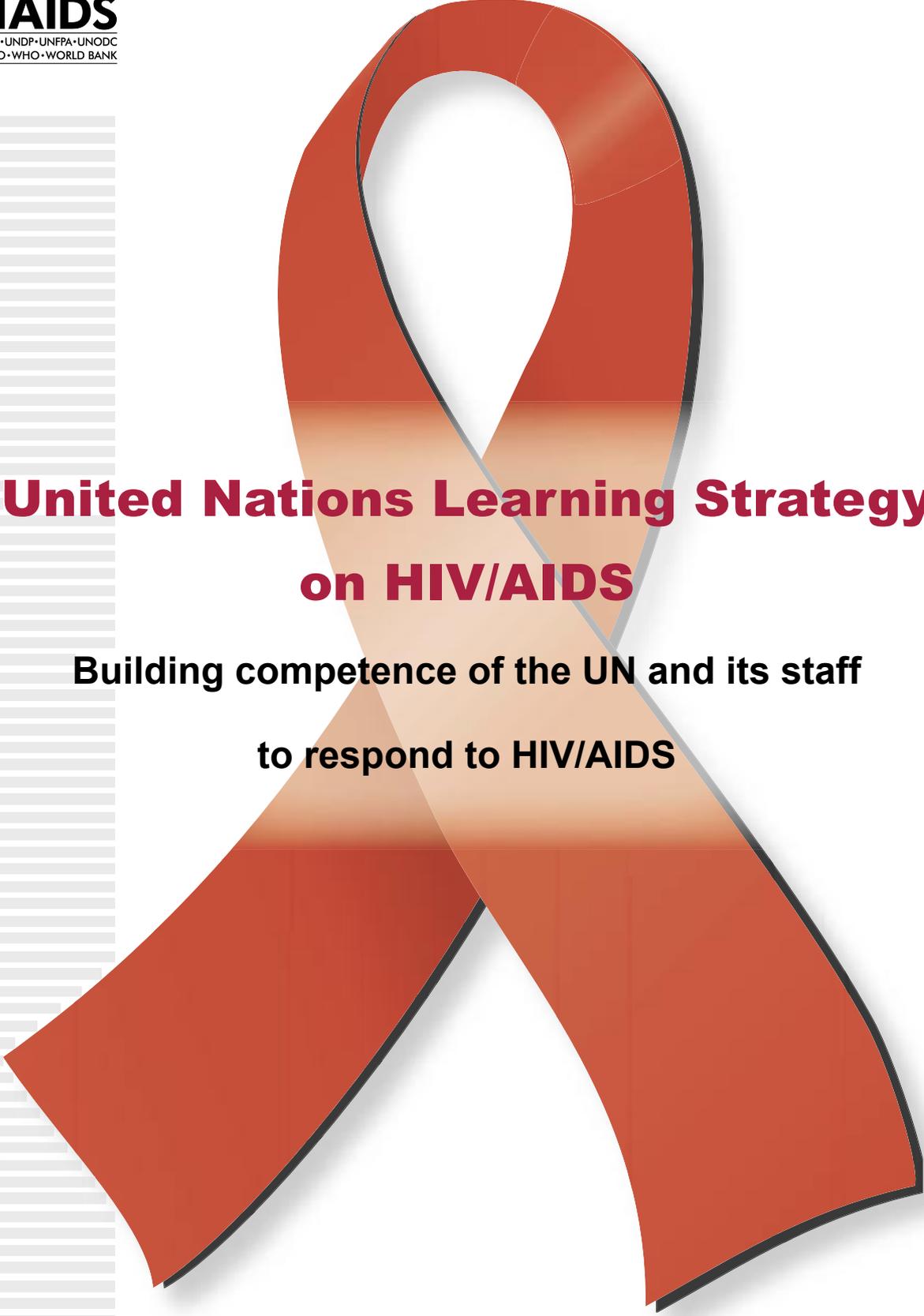




Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

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A large, stylized red ribbon graphic that forms a loop at the top and extends downwards, crossing itself. It has a slight gradient and a drop shadow effect.

# **United Nations Learning Strategy on HIV/AIDS**

**Building competence of the UN and its staff  
to respond to HIV/AIDS**

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# **United Nations Learning Strategy on HIV/AIDS**

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## Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
BCC	Behaviour change communication
CCA	Common country assessments
CCO	Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICTs	Intercountry teams
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MSM	Men who have sex with men
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RPM	Rational pharmaceutical management
PCB	Programme Coordinating Board
PEP	Post-exposure prevention
PMTCT	Prevention of mother-to-child transmission
RC	Resident Coordinator
STD	Sexually transmitted disease
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
TGC	Theme group chairs
TWG	Technical working groups
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNSSP	UN System Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UBW	Unified budget and workplan
VCCT	Voluntary confidential counselling and testing
VCT	Voluntary counselling and testing

## Foreword

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At the core of an effective United Nations system response to HIV/AIDS are the knowledge, skills and capacity of its staff.

In April 2003, the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) approved a learning strategy to help the UN system develop the competence of its staff on HIV/AIDS. The goals of the strategy are:

- to develop the knowledge and competence of the UN and its staff so that they are able to best support national responses to HIV/AIDS; and
- to ensure that all UN staff members are able to make informed decisions to protect themselves from HIV and, if they are infected or affected by HIV, to ensure that they know where to turn for the best possible care and treatment. This includes ensuring that staff members fully understand the UN's HIV/AIDS workplace policies on eliminating stigma and discrimination against those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

A recent system-wide survey shows that many staff members of the UN are far from being personally prepared to protect themselves from HIV, are afraid to be tested, are uncomfortable working with people living with HIV, and believe that people living with the virus would not feel comfortable talking about their seropositive status. The good news is that most staff members say that they want to learn more about all of these and other related topics. It goes without saying that the credibility of the UN system with governments, NGOs and others will be undermined if we cannot achieve internally what we are asking the rest of the world to do.

Building the competence of our own staff in relation to HIV and the workplace goes hand in hand with our efforts to support implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted at the June 2001 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, as well as the UN's Millennium Development Goals on HIV/AIDS. This will entail ensuring that professionals know how to mainstream HIV into programmes, that UN Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS function optimally at country level, and that professional staff members can work effectively with the widest range of partners.

The learning strategy provides us with a vision and plan for the way forward. It includes expected outcomes, minimum standards and desirable additional standards for learning initiatives. Together, our wholehearted commitment to implement the learning strategy will strengthen the Programme's capacity to meet our goals in fighting HIV/AIDS and its impacts.



Dr Peter Piot  
Executive Director  
UNAIDS



## Executive summary

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The goals of the learning strategy are to:

- develop the knowledge and competence of the United Nations (UN) and its staff so that they can best support national responses to HIV/AIDS; and
- ensure that all UN staff members are able to make informed decisions to protect themselves from HIV and, in the event that they are infected or affected by HIV, to ensure that they know where to turn for the best possible care and treatment. This includes ensuring that staff members fully understand the UN's HIV/AIDS workplace policies and how they are implemented.

The strategy supports approaches to learning that will result in the UN becoming more knowledgeable and competent in its work with partners and its staff in order to:

- help prevent and control the spread of HIV/AIDS;
- ensure effective care, support and treatment for those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS;
- eliminate stigma and discrimination against those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS; and
- mitigate the impact of the epidemic.

The strategy was formulated on the basis of learning needs identified in a review of existing studies and a major survey on HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace, covering over 8000 UN staff members worldwide.

A learning framework has been agreed, including building blocks of HIV/AIDS knowledge and competence. The framework recommends that all UN staff become competent in basic HIV/AIDS-related issues, UN-specific policies and entitlements, as well as the realities of HIV/AIDS and the vulnerabilities associated with it.

All professional programme/project staff must have broad knowledge to allow them to work within UN frameworks to mainstream HIV/AIDS into all programmes.

UN HIV/AIDS Theme Groups and heads of UN agencies must have the leadership skills to guide the UN system's efforts. HIV/AIDS specialists and professionals need to be able to work together to effectively plan, facilitate implementation, monitor and evaluate joint UN programmes.

A mix of approaches is recommended in implementing learning activities. Related minimum and additional desirable standards have been agreed to allow for monitoring of the strategy's implementation.

The strategy outlines a plan for obtaining the necessary resources from global, regional and country sources. It also includes details about who should be responsible for implementation at country, regional and global levels.

Finally, an overall implementation plan has been agreed for the strategy for the coming years.

## Introduction

### I. Goals of the HIV/AIDS learning strategy and structure of the strategy paper

The learning strategy for the United Nations system is an attempt to address two major goals, namely:

- to develop the knowledge and competence of the UN and its staff so that they can best support national responses to HIV/AIDS; and
- to ensure that all UN staff members are able to make informed decisions to protect themselves from HIV and, if they are infected or affected by HIV, to ensure that they know where to turn for the best possible care and treatment. This includes ensuring that staff members fully understand the UN's HIV/AIDS workplace policies and how they are implemented.

The strategy is based on an analysis of learning needs<sup>1</sup>, consultations among UN staff members at headquarters and in the field, and research on existing best practices in the context of HIV/AIDS-related learning.

The strategy paper begins by setting the context for HIV/AIDS learning initiatives. It examines the building blocks of competency and knowledge and the issues that need to be addressed in learning programmes. It then goes on to outline a framework for monitoring and evaluation, including appropriate learning standards. Finally, it identifies the people who should be involved in planning and implementing these HIV/AIDS learning programmes for UN teams and staff.

Detailed annexes cover learning approaches, responsibilities for country, regional and global actors, and some of the learning resources that are available at global level from inside and outside the UN system.

This strategy is intended to stimulate discussions, rather than being prescriptive in how to approach UN staff learning on HIV/AIDS. Its contents will be further developed into implementation guidelines.

### II. The context and relevance of the HIV/AIDS learning strategy

The development of a learning strategy on HIV/AIDS for the UN system must be rooted in the principles contained in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS from the June 2001 UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on HIV/AIDS and the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on HIV/AIDS<sup>2</sup>. HIV/AIDS has been identified as a development issue and the UN has been entrusted with a key role; to take up this challenge, the UN system must assert its leadership by being prepared as a system, as individual UN agencies, as teams and as individual staff members.

<sup>1</sup> See *Needs Assessment and Global Learning Initiatives for Building Competency for the UN System to Support National Responses to HIV/AIDS: Review of Existing Information and Initiatives*, of 21 August 2002; *Needs Assessment and Global Learning Initiatives for HIV/AIDS in the UN Workplace: Review of Existing Information*, of 20 August 2002; and *United Nations Learning Needs Assessment Survey on HIV/AIDS* of May 2003 that describes global surveys undertaken at the end of 2002 of individual staff at country level, officers in charge of human resources and HIV/AIDS trainers/facilitators.

<sup>2</sup> While we refer here to the specific MDG on HIV/AIDS, it should be kept in mind that all eight of the MDGs are equally important; progress on any one depends on progress on the others. For example, advances in HIV/AIDS cannot be fully realized if the MDGs on eradication of poverty, gender equality and primary education are not achieved—and vice versa. See *The United Nations and the MDGs: a Core Strategy*, endorsed by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) in June 2002.

The relevance and added value of the learning strategy are clear: the competence of UN staff and teams must be increased for maximum impact with our partners in governments, NGOs and civil society, and this competence must be reflected within the context of the UN workplace for all UN staff. Essentially, the strategy promotes approaches to learning that contribute to building a UN that is knowledgeable and competent in its work with partners and its staff in order to:

- help prevent and control the spread of HIV;
- ensure effective care, support and treatment for those infected or affected by HIV and AIDS;
- eliminate stigma and discrimination against those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS; and
- mitigate the impact of the epidemic.

In supporting national responses to HIV/AIDS, we must make sure that our professional staff are well prepared to work together to support the most effective responses to HIV/AIDS, in collaboration with partners in governments, NGOs, civil society, donors and, importantly, within the UN family. Indeed, this has now been made a priority, as reflected in Action 25<sup>3</sup> during the 13<sup>th</sup> session of UNAIDS' Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) in December 2002:

"The next UBW submission to the PCB will include provision for intensified learning programmes on HIV/AIDS, including orientation of all relevant UN system staff in countries where there is most urgent need. This orientation should emphasize revised UNAIDS methods of work, together with substantive briefings on the implementation of the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment. It should also be developed and executed in close collaboration with the UNDG and consistent with the deliberations of the PCB on the (five-year) Evaluation Report."

In the process of developing the learning strategy, care has been taken to distinguish the learning needs specific to country situations. While HIV/AIDS is a global problem, each country will require a locally-tailored response based on factors such as HIV/AIDS prevalence and national context. Certainly, we will need to select countries to experiment with different learning approaches based on the agreed strategy but, over time, all countries will need to benefit from the implementation of the learning strategy through a phased approach.

Addressing HIV and AIDS as UN workplace issues represents an opportunity to foster effective learning to ensure that all UN staff members experience a supportive and compassionate work environment, free of fear and discrimination. Learning efforts must ensure that staff members fully understand the UN's HIV/AIDS workplace policies<sup>4</sup> and how they are implemented. As the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has stated,

"It is the responsibility of every modern employer to take adequate measures to address the troubling reality of the global AIDS epidemic. Although the Organization has a policy of non-discriminatory employment, medical support systems and information dissemination for personnel with HIV/AIDS, its implementation has been uneven. We must ensure that all personnel are provided with adequate information and access to medical care and counselling"<sup>5</sup>.

UN workplace learning on HIV/AIDS must reflect the *ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work*<sup>6</sup> as well as the "Principles and Strategies regarding the Impact of HIV/AIDS on the United Nations Personnel and Operational Policy"<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> This Action reflects the recommendation made on intensified learning programmes in *Future Directions for UNAIDS: Responding to the Five-Year Evaluation of the Programme* (UNAIDS/PCB(13)/02.3 of 11 November 2002; see paragraphs 100 and 101).

<sup>4</sup> See the UN System Personnel Policy on HIV/AIDS, adopted by all Executive Heads of UN organizations in 1991.

<sup>5</sup> See paragraph 191 and Action 33 of the Secretary-General's report, *Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change* (UN General Assembly, A/57/387, 9 September 2002). Available at <http://www.un.org/ga/57/document.html>.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/trav/aids/code/codemain.htm>.

Ensuring good learning for all UN staff on HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace will serve as a firm foundation for the UN's Millennium Development Goal to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS in the world by 2015. Basic understanding of HIV/AIDS and how it affects us individually, whether inside or outside the UN, will form the basis for credible partnerships with governments, NGOs and civil society, among others. Furthermore, if we are to ask the 'outside world' to take action on HIV/AIDS, we must practise what we preach.

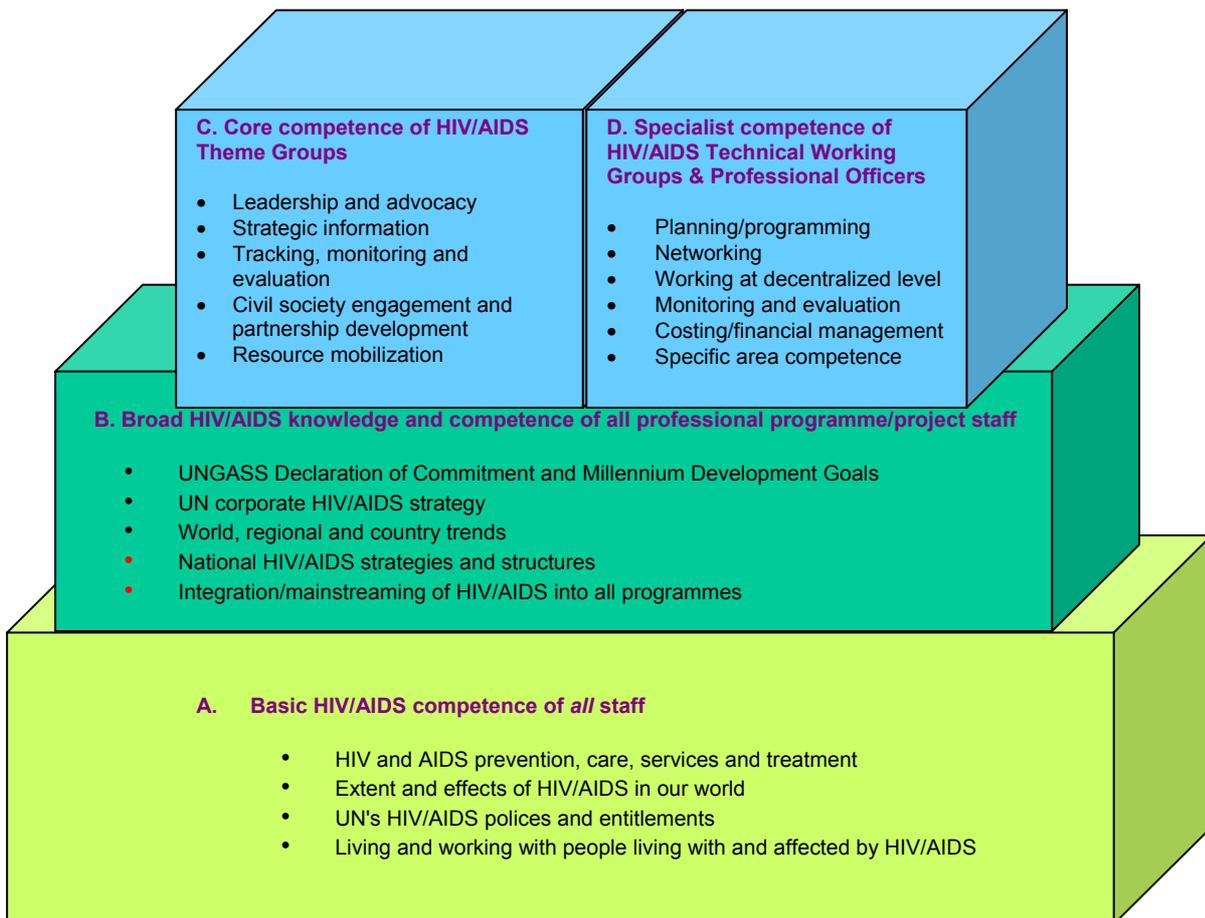
Effective learning programmes on HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace need to do more than provide information on risk factors alone; experience has shown that such programmes have met with only limited success. The learning challenge is to ensure that risk information is provided, but then to go beyond this 'intellectual' or knowledge-based learning to a deeper level that results in attitudinal and behavioural changes. 'HIV/AIDS competence' implies demonstrating that knowledge about HIV/AIDS is applied in our personal and professional attitudes and behaviours.

It must also be underlined that learning is only *part* of the answer to HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace. Effective programmes for HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace must place learning within a cogent combination of policies, interventions and services that work together to reduce HIV transmission and provide support to those already infected and affected by HIV. This includes access to medical services, effective insurance schemes, and supplies of condoms, clean needles, safe blood and drugs. Inconsistencies in entitlements and benefits for people working for the UN on a variety of contracts must also be addressed. Several initiatives are already under way in the UN system, including ACTION (WHO), Caring for Us (UNICEF and UNFPA), and We Care (UNDP). It would be desirable to ensure better coordination, agree on minimum standards and establish sharing mechanisms for these initiatives to build on the lessons learned from each and to extend them to UN agencies not currently included in these efforts.

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<sup>7</sup> See ACC decision 1991/10.

### III. Building blocks: required knowledge and competence



In the following sections, each of these building blocks is addressed in more detail.

#### A. Basic HIV/AIDS competence of all staff

Current or previous learning initiatives on HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace have dealt with one or more of the following topics, but too many staff members have not had learning opportunities that have covered all of these topics (and even those topics covered may have only been partially addressed).

##### 1. Essential HIV/AIDS information

Basic knowledge of HIV/AIDS is essential for all UN staff and must include:

- definitions of HIV and AIDS, including understanding the differences between them;
- how HIV is transmitted and prevented;
- how HIV and AIDS have affected the world at large and the specific country in which we live;
- how the UN responds to HIV/AIDS in its programmes (basic information); and

- special circumstances in the UN that may make staff vulnerable to HIV: e.g., accidents when travelling and associated risk of exposure to unsafe blood; engaging in unsafe sex while on mission/duty travel; and significant use of alcohol in some countries/by some individuals.

## **2. Understanding UN policies and services**

Staff members need to be aware of UN policies and where they can access services locally and the reasons for doing so. This awareness must include knowledge of:

- UN policies and entitlements relating to HIV/AIDS;
- available services for voluntary confidential counselling and testing (VCCT);
- basics on care and treatment for staff living with HIV and AIDS; and
- Post-Exposure Prevention (PEP) Treatment, including what it is and how to access it.

## **3. Addressing the realities and risks of HIV/AIDS: beyond the basics**

Learning initiatives on HIV/AIDS in the UN must begin to address issues that most staff members, whether national or international, feel uncomfortable discussing in public: sex and sexuality, building a supportive working environment, drugs and alcohol, gender-related issues, love and trust in a relationship, and death. While all these issues are important, particular attention needs to be paid to matters relating to sex and sexuality and building a supportive working environment.

### **3.1. Sex and sexuality**

To effectively develop learning programmes for UN staff on HIV/AIDS, issues relating to sex and sexuality must be addressed, yet most UN initiatives to date have addressed such issues only peripherally, if at all. For effective HIV/AIDS learning, we need to find ways to address sex and sexuality by covering topics that some people may feel uneasy discussing:

- the 'mechanics' of safer sex: safer sex versus unsafe practices, how to use condoms, etc<sup>8</sup>.
- having sex outside the 'traditional' institution of marriage: pre-marital sex, non-monogamous sex, men who have sex with men (MSM), sex when on mission/travel for the UN, sex with sex workers, etc.

### **3.2. Building a supportive working environment**

How can we build learning to foster a supportive working environment, free from stigma and discrimination? This includes raising certain issues to help ensure that people with HIV can live positively:

- What does it mean to (actually or possibly) work in the same office with people living with HIV? What prejudices do staff members have and how do they show these prejudices?
- How can learning and other activities contribute towards changing negative behaviours and attitudes associated with stigma and discrimination?
- How do people living with HIV see themselves in the UN workplace? What are the implications of living openly?
- Are people living with HIV comfortable about being open in the UN—with colleagues, with their direct supervisors, with the heads of offices, with UN medical personnel, with the human resource staff members who administer entitlements? Is it desirable for people to be open about their HIV-positive status?

### **3.3. Drugs and alcohol**

Several issues must be addressed:

- the effect that alcohol and drugs have on impairing judgement, which can lead to unsafe behaviour for oneself and others with respect to HIV transmission; and
- needle-sharing for injecting drugs, and the associated risks of HIV.

<sup>8</sup> A number of studies point to the fact that many people do not know how to use condoms. The learning needs assessment clearly indicates that most staff members do not know how to use female condoms.

### 3.4. Gender

HIV/AIDS learning programmes should address:

- the traditional roles of men and women in negotiating for sex, both inside and outside of marriage, and the need to sometimes renegotiate such roles;
- sexual harassment in the UN workplace; and
- sexual violence and its implications in a world with HIV.

### 3.5. Love and trust

Having sex with one's spouse, long-term partner or anyone else is often closely linked to issues of love and trust. These are important issues to be addressed in HIV/AIDS learning efforts in the UN. Spouses and partners should be encouraged to discuss what trust means in a world with HIV. This is especially important for staff on duty travel.

### 3.6. Death

Can UN staff learn to deal better with deaths resulting from AIDS? How do staff members learn to deal with the grief associated with losing family members and colleagues? How can they learn to be supportive of colleagues who have lost loved ones due to AIDS?

Including families in HIV/AIDS learning initiatives is highly recommended for several reasons, principally because:

- it is not possible to ensure that staff are well protected or, if they are living with HIV, well cared for, without including family members;
- we have a moral imperative to ensure that our children, spouses and partners have the opportunity to learn about how to protect themselves from HIV and how to ensure proper treatment and care for themselves and other family members who are living with HIV; and
- addressing the more difficult issues may be facilitated by including family members, since HIV/AIDS is seen as something that affects more than just the individual staff member.

In some countries, it may be possible to have family members join the same learning programmes as staff members; in others, it may be more appropriate to organize separate programmes to address their needs or the needs of special groups, such as teenage children, children who have a parent living with HIV or have lost a parent due to HIV/AIDS, or spouses/partners of staff living with HIV.

## B. Broad HIV/AIDS knowledge and competence of all professional programme/project staff

All professional programme/project staff, whether working in planning/coordinating or working in a specialist area directly or indirectly related to HIV/AIDS, should benefit from the following 'minimum AIDS-competence package'.

1. **The UNGASS Declaration of Commitment and its implementation.** This is the clearest instrument we have for the UN and for the world at large, which outlines our commitments to working on HIV/AIDS. The broad outline of UNGASS should be understood by all professional programme/project staff, as should the implications of its implementation.
2. **The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on HIV/AIDS and malaria** (among other diseases), as well as the other seven MDGs, and the guiding principles and approach for the MDGs.
3. **UN 'Corporate Strategy' as regards HIV/AIDS**, including familiarity with the UNAIDS Programme: Cosponsors and their value added, *vis-à-vis* one another; key documents that frame the work of the UN, such as the UN System Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS (UNSSP).
4. **A broad overview of HIV/AIDS in the world**, including the extent of the problem, trends, what is being done to address HIV/AIDS and the role of various UN agencies.

5. **The country's national HIV/AIDS strategy and structures**, wherever they may exist and are applicable.
6. How to integrate or **mainstream HIV/AIDS** into all programmes and projects: planning programmes horizontally instead of vertically, using planning instruments, such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) more effectively for programmes, including those on HIV/AIDS. Broad integrative issues related to human rights, gender issues and HIV/AIDS are also important in this regard. As appropriate programming tools are developed, professional staff members need to be kept abreast of how to use them.

### C. HIV/AIDS Theme Groups as part of United Nations Country Teams

From a learning perspective, the competencies expected of Theme Group members were defined by the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB)'s 13<sup>th</sup> meeting in December 2002<sup>9</sup> which "endorsed five cross-cutting functions applicable at all levels of the (UNAIDS) Programme, which guide its actions at country, regional and global levels, namely:

- **leadership and advocacy** for effective action on the epidemic;
- **strategic information** required to guide the efforts of partners;
- **tracking, monitoring and evaluation** of the epidemic and actions responding to it;
- **civil society engagement and partnership development**; and
- **financial, technical and political resource mobilization.**"

While these competencies are defined for Theme Groups, it is recommended that this framework be extended to include all heads of UN agencies at country level<sup>10</sup>.

Theme Group Chairs (TGCs) are key actors at country level and, as such, have particular learning needs. TGCs must understand their roles and have the necessary leadership and team-building competencies. They must also have the support they require to fulfil their functions, allocate the necessary time and have their work as TGCs recognized by their home agencies. Too often, the significant work of the TGCs goes unrecognized and is expected to be done in addition to all their other work, with no extra support.

Specific learning content areas agreed for TGCs includes the following:

1. **Knowledge of roles and relationships**: What is the role of the Theme Group Chair versus the Resident Coordinator and the UNAIDS Country Coordinator?
2. **Knowledge of the UN system** with regard to HIV/AIDS mandates within the context of UNGASS and how the various agencies approach HIV/AIDS
3. **Advocacy**: What is the special advocacy role of the TGC? Who should be among those for whom advocacy is most needed and what should be advocated?
4. **Working with national AIDS structures**
5. **Funding issues**: Facilitating access to the Global Fund, where to get funds to carry out HIV/AIDS work, getting funds for interagency efforts and joint funding mechanisms
6. **Incorporating UN workplace issues** into the work of the UN system at country level
7. **Balancing responsibilities** in the role of Theme Group Chair while also serving as head of agency: how to manage these two very demanding roles.

<sup>9</sup> See Decisions, Recommendations and Conclusions of the PCB's Thirteenth meeting of 11-12 December 2002 at: [http://www.unaids.org/about/governance/files/PCB13\\_Recommendations\\_en.doc](http://www.unaids.org/about/governance/files/PCB13_Recommendations_en.doc)

<sup>10</sup> Most HIV/AIDS Theme Groups already include the heads of UN agencies, but this may not always be the case.

## D. Specialist competence of HIV/AIDS Technical Working Groups and Professional Officers<sup>11</sup>

### 1. HIV/AIDS Technical Working Groups

HIV/AIDS Technical Working Groups (TWGs) include programme and project officers working on HIV/AIDS from each of the UN agencies. These officers (often called HIV/AIDS focal points) have several roles<sup>12</sup>, including:

- advising, supporting, programming, supporting implementation of, monitoring and evaluating, the HIV/AIDS programmes of their specific agencies
- working and coordinating with partners outside of the UN system—government, civil society, NGOs, bilaterals, media, etc.
- coming together as members of the UN HIV/AIDS Technical Working Group to coordinate UN activities, including advising and supporting the HIV/AIDS Theme Group.

For the TWG, specific competence is needed in undertaking **joint programming** for HIV/AIDS among the various UN agencies<sup>13</sup>. And, once planned, competence needs to be developed to **facilitate programme implementation**. We need to move from talking about HIV/AIDS programmes to ensuring that such programmes are implemented and make a difference. Specific competencies include:

- planning across agencies
- building of networks and communities of practice
- working at a decentralized level within the country for HIV/AIDS programmes
- costing and financial management
- risk-taking in trying new approaches to HIV/AIDS.

### 2. HIV/AIDS Professional Officers

Professional officers who specialize in, or focus on, HIV/AIDS programmes need to maintain cutting-edge competence in their specialties. The 'state of the art' changes quickly with respect to HIV/AIDS, from the medical perspective as well as from the broader perspectives of how to address HIV/AIDS in various societies.

Professional learning needs should be determined among the various agencies, given their mandates and areas of expertise, and each agency will need to define the specialist competencies needed for its HIV/AIDS Professional Officers.

Within the UNGASS framework, there are already three specialty themes for which strategies have been agreed within the UN: **HIV/AIDS and education, HIV/AIDS and drugs, and HIV/AIDS in the world of work** (the ILO Code of Conduct). It is recommended that these three themes be considered as points of departure for the development of joint learning activities in the UN system, at global, regional and country levels (since all three are broad enough to draw on the HIV/AIDS mandates of most, if not all, of the UN system).

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<sup>11</sup> Note: This strategy does not deal directly with the learning needs of UNAIDS Country Coordinators, which is covered by the UNAIDS Secretariat. Nevertheless, there are obvious implications for their learning needs and approaches in this strategy, much of it within the context of specialist competence in HIV/AIDS.

<sup>12</sup> While not specifically a learning issue, it has been noted that the role of the HIV/AIDS focal points at country level is not always well defined within or between agencies. It would be useful to clarify this role, including focal point competencies, which would then strengthen content and approaches for learning programmes.

<sup>13</sup> Action 14 in the Secretary-General's report, *Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change* (UN General Assembly, A/57/387, 9 September 2002), states that "The United Nations Development Group will develop, by September 2003, an implementation plan to strengthen the effectiveness of the Organization's presence in developing countries. This plan will include such features as joint programming, pooling of resources, common databases and knowledge networks, dedicated support for the resident coordinator and integrated planning, budgeting and resource mobilization tools for countries emerging from conflict."

While those consulted agree with the idea of joint programming, they also noted that, with current structural constraints of all agencies (e.g., budgetary differences, different programme cycles), as well as real or perceived resistance from the HQ level of some agencies, they are unsure how this can happen. They are concerned that joint programming should not result in 'dragging down' the agencies currently working well, but in better programming for the entire UN system.

Additional cross-cutting knowledge gaps noted for professional officers include working with the most vulnerable, and incorporating the issues of stigma and discrimination into programmes.

#### **IV. Approaches to learning**

Several cautions have been repeatedly expressed in relation to learning initiatives:

- *Caution 1: Saturation.* How can UN staff learn to sift through the masses of learning opportunities, especially materials and information, to access the most important? Given the limited number of people, the limited amount of time, and competing priorities, this caution is particularly noteworthy when deciding on learning approaches.
- *Caution 2: Overload.* If people feel that there is too much expected from them in terms of HIV/AIDS learning, they begin to tune out.
- *Caution 3: Motivation.* UN staff members are unlikely to undertake much formal learning on their own in the absence of a systematic ‘marketing’ of the idea of building HIV/AIDS competence and rewards for doing so (and possibly sanctions for not doing so).
- *Caution 4: Commitment to implementation.* Strong reinforcement at global and country levels is needed, as is the development of, and commitment to, clear learning action plans.

Annexes 1 and 2 to this strategy include possible approaches to HIV/AIDS learning. It should be underlined that the approaches are not ‘either-or’ options and, indeed, they are most powerful when combined as a ‘blended approach’ to learning.

A final overall note on learning approaches: ensuring the availability of learning opportunities for UN staff in all three UN working languages (English, French and Spanish) is essential, whether in the form of written materials or through face-to-face encounters. Other languages are especially important in introducing learning activities for HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace, since many locally-recruited staff members are not fluent in the official working languages of the UN.

## V. Standards, monitoring and evaluation

Within the aforementioned framework, learning standards are recommended, as noted in the following table.

Category of staff	Expected outcomes	Minimum standards	Additional desirable standards
All staff	<p>Basic knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment</li> <li>• UN-specific policies and entitlements</li> <li>• extent and effects of HIV/AIDS in our world</li> <li>• living and working with people living with and affected by HIV, and elimination of stigma and discrimination</li> </ul>	<p>Staff members must participate in a facilitated orientation session based on materials produced by UNAIDS and using the UN booklet on HIV/AIDS for United Nations employees and their families</p> <p>Staff members must participate in a demonstration on the use of male and female condoms</p> <p>Staff members are provided with information on locally available services, including VCCT</p> <p>Staff members must participate in a learning activity to raise sensitivity towards people living with HIV and to enhance awareness of everyone's vulnerability with regard to HIV</p> <p>All UN offices must prominently display posters on HIV/AIDS, provided by UNAIDS</p>	<p>Participation of people living with HIV in orientation sessions and other learning activities</p> <p>Development of an interagency network of peer educators</p> <p>Participation of family members in learning activities</p> <p>Local Intranet-based information on HIV/AIDS, including service availability (and e-mail updates)</p> <p>Annual awareness events organized on HIV/AIDS</p>
All professional staff with responsibilities for programmes/projects	<p>Broad knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNGASS Declaration of Commitment and UN MDGs</li> <li>• UN corporate HIV/AIDS strategy</li> <li>• world, regional and country trends</li> <li>• national HIV/AIDS strategies and structures</li> <li>• Integration/mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS into all programmes</li> </ul>	<p>Reading, and organized briefing/discussion, of UNGASS Declaration of Commitment, UN Millennium Development Goals and UN System Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS</p> <p>Biannual participation in locally organized UN interagency learning event on HIV/AIDS programming for professional staff (minimum four hours)</p>	<p>Learning event noted under minimum standards includes people living with HIV and/or organization of additional learning activity with people living with HIV</p> <p>HIV/AIDS integrated into existing learning activities for professional staff</p>

Category of staff	Expected outcomes	Minimum standards	Additional desirable standards
Heads of UN agencies and HIV/AIDS Theme Group members	Competence related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leadership and advocacy</li> <li>• strategic information collection and analysis</li> <li>• tracking, monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>• civil society engagement and partnership development</li> <li>• resource mobilization</li> </ul>	Annual joint UN learning activity (minimum four hours) focused on one or more of the competencies listed under ‘expected outcomes’  Participation in activities noted under ‘minimum standard for all staff’, above  Participation in a learning activity to raise sensitivity of senior managers to issues of HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace	Learning events include people living with HIV and/or organization of additional learning activity with people living with HIV  Periodically incorporating learning activities into Theme Group meetings  Joint HIV/AIDS learning activity with National AIDS Commissions, heads of major NGOs and/or bilaterals
All professional staff with focal/significant responsibilities for HIV/AIDS programmes, including members of the HIV/AIDS Technical Working Group	Competence related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• planning across agencies</li> <li>• building of networks and communities of practice</li> <li>• working at a decentralized level within the country for HIV/AIDS programmes</li> <li>• monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>• costing and financial management</li> <li>• risk-taking in trying new approaches to HIV/AIDS programmes</li> <li>• agency-specific specialist areas</li> </ul>	Development of an annual individual HIV/AIDS learning plan discussed and agreed with supervisor  Minimum of five working days per year earmarked specifically for HIV/AIDS-related learning  Active member of at least one technical network on HIV/AIDS, whether local, regional or global	Learning plan includes time devoted to learning by oneself, including review of latest UN documentation, UNAIDS Best Practice Collection and/or professional journals  Learning plan includes interaction with or learning from people living with HIV  Serving as a resource person/facilitator in UN learning events  Serving as a resource person/facilitator in learning events organized outside the UN  Interagency or regional exchange for HIV/AIDS learning experience

An overall standard to ensure that the minima are adhered to is that all UN country teams develop an annual HIV/AIDS learning plan for the UN system, including designating a team<sup>14</sup> to develop the plan, and monitor and report on its implementation. The Resident Coordinator will then include a section on implementation of the HIV/AIDS learning plan in its annual report on the RC system, including describing the mechanism agreed by the country team to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate HIV/AIDS learning activities.

It is important to note that the aforementioned standards for ‘all staff’, ‘all professional staff with responsibilities for programmes/ projects’ and ‘all professional staff with focal/significant responsibilities for HIV/AIDS programmes’ have been agreed for headquarters and regional-level staff. For these levels, the challenge is in determining the focus of responsibility to implement, monitor and evaluate the standards; it has also been agreed that this be determined by each of the Cosponsors, with reporting to the CCO on which unit will be held accountable at headquarter and regional levels.

## **VI. Financial resources**

This section addresses various models to obtain the requisite resources and, like the learning approaches, it is best if there is a mixed approach taken to ensure that sufficient resources are available.

- A.** At global level, the UNAIDS Unified Budget and Workplan (UBW) will earmark specific funds to support the further identification and development of learning guides, resources and networks. The global budget will also be used to implement global and regional training of facilitators who can support learning activities.
- B.** Each of the Cosponsor headquarters is encouraged to earmark funds in its global budget to support country, regional and HQ HIV/AIDS learning activities in addition to any globally-supported agency learning activities and to report annually to the CCO on the amount and use of these funds.
- C.** Regional offices of UN agencies, where they exist, should be given specific funds from their HQs, and UNAIDS Intercountry Teams (ICTs) will earmark funds from the UBW to support learning activities, including identification of regional resource persons and learning institutions, organization of regional events, setting up of networks and identification and/or development of regionally-appropriate materials.
- D.** Country teams can access resources in the following ways:
  - The Resident Coordinator may request funds for interagency learning activities as part of the annual request for funds from the UN Development Group.
  - Agencies can pool resources, with each agency contributing funds and/or human resources for the implementation of learning activities<sup>15</sup>.
  - The UNAIDS Country Coordinators and, in some countries, UNAIDS programme officers and/or support staff, can be called upon to assist in the coordination and organization of learning activities.
  - Donor organizations represented in the country may be called upon to cover a significant amount of the costs involved if their staff and/or national counterparts from government and NGOs participate in joint learning activities.

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<sup>14</sup> The team appointed to undertake the development, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation should be decided by the UN Country Team/HIV/AIDS Theme Group. It could be done by the HIV/AIDS Technical Working Group, the local UN administrative working group (which includes officers responsible for human resources) or a special group set up to undertake the noted responsibilities. It is also desirable to include the local staff associations in developing, monitoring and evaluating learning activities related to HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace.

<sup>15</sup> It is recognized that some agencies have more significant and decentralized budgets, which make this easier. Nevertheless, even those agencies with smaller and more centralized budgets may contribute funds if the planning is done far enough in advance for such funds to be obtained.

It is recognized that obtaining resources will not always be easy, but it is also recognized that most of the learning activities noted under the minimum standards cost little or nothing (other than UN human resources) and, when made a priority by UN HQs, regions and country teams, resources can be identified.

## VII. Who can be called upon to assist in implementation at country level?

Calling upon a range of people as champions and implementers of learning activities to support the national response to HIV/AIDS is important. This should not rest on the shoulders of any one individual or group of individuals. Potential actors in the implementation of HIV/AIDS learning strategy are detailed in Annex 3.

Nevertheless, it is important to recall that the key actors at the country level are the **UN Resident Coordinator** and **UN HIV/AIDS Theme Group**. Both are primarily responsible for providing a forum for all UN agencies to discuss the learning needs of professional staff, and to then explore possibilities for responding to those needs locally. This includes allocating resources for such learning, as follows:

- **Funds:** As noted in Section VI above, ensuring that money from administrative and other budgets is allocated for UN system activities at the local level.
- **People:** Assigning people in the various agencies specific responsibilities for exploring local learning possibilities, organizing and implementing these activities, and monitoring and evaluating their impact.
- **Time:** This is a resource that, in many ways, is the scarcest of all, but must be allocated in order for learning activities to be planned and implemented. It is easy to let day-to-day pressures assign the label of 'luxury' to learning, but if we are failing as a UN system to effectively respond to HIV/AIDS, it is imperative that we learn to work better.

The senior managers of the UN agencies at country level, through the mechanism of the Theme Group, have a responsibility to demonstrate their openness to learning more effective ways to respond to HIV/AIDS if they expect other UN staff to do so as well.

In the **Guidance Note for the United Nations Resident Coordinator System on HIV/AIDS in the UN Workplace** issued in 2000, it is noted that the "United Nations Resident Coordinator is responsible for the planning and coordination of UN ...operations at country level, in consultation with the UN Country team," including activities related to "[a]wareness raising on prevention and discrimination issues to be undertaken for all UN system staff, including training in [the UN] working and local languages for staff members and families, with the involvement of the staff associations. The coverage of all staff, international and local, should be ensured and the training repeated periodically; it is advised that costs of such activities be shared between participating agencies." Clearly, the RC has a major role to play in ensuring that learning activities are implemented and that resources are made available.

The same document suggests that the RC "work closely with the UN Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS" to implement activities related to HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace.

## VIII. Implementation

To move forward with the strategy, the following key activities have been agreed for the next four years.

### A. Activities for 2003

1. Develop country-level implementation guides to provide a framework for UN country teams to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate activities.
2. Further identify material and human resources for country-level use, including detailed review and evaluation of existing resources to make recommendations for those most appropriate<sup>16</sup>.
3. Complete analysis of learning needs assessment and make it widely available; continue to support additional country teams and HQs that want to undertake an assessment.
4. Refocus current learning strategy website from a 'development' website to an 'implementation' website, with resources for headquarters, regional and country teams.
5. Identify priority countries to begin implementation of the learning strategy.
6. Organize training of facilitators for those regions/countries/HQs identified for implementation in 2003/2004.

### B. Activities for 2004-2005

1. Monitor implementation of the learning strategy in priority countries.
2. Identify additional countries in all regions to begin implementation.
3. Organize training of facilitators for those regions/countries identified for implementation in 2004/2005.
4. Develop and launch a global website on HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace for general staff use.
5. Develop learning initiatives and materials aimed at supporting officers responsible for human resources in country offices to enable them to better support HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace.
6. Support the development of learning initiatives and materials for professional officers working on HIV/AIDS programmes and projects.
7. Support the development of learning initiatives and materials for HIV/AIDS Theme Groups/Country Teams and Theme Group Chairs.
8. Develop and implement evaluation approaches and tools for the learning strategy.

### C. Activities for 2006

1. Ensure that the learning strategy is applied globally.
2. Evaluate the implementation and impact of the learning strategy.

It is recommended that the UNAIDS Secretariat, in close collaboration with the Cosponsors, take responsibility for ensuring implementation of the above-mentioned activities.

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<sup>16</sup> While many resources have already been identified in the first phase of developing the learning strategy, they have not all been fully reviewed in detail for quality and currency. There is also a need to develop a user-friendly system for easy access to appropriate resources.

## Annex 1

### Learning approaches for HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace<sup>17</sup>

It should be underlined that the suggestions listed below are not ‘either-or’ approaches and, indeed, are most powerful when combined as a ‘blended approach’ to learning within the context of a well designed learning plan at global, regional, country, agency and individual levels.

The suggestions include approaches to cover not only the information or knowledge aspect of HIV/AIDS learning, but the more difficult learning related to attitudes surrounding HIV/AIDS, whether for oneself or in dealing with others. Suggestions are made for ensuring that UN staff members are able to learn more through emotionally-based learning opportunities, experiencing HIV/AIDS through simulated experiences.

#### A. Ensuring that staff have access to written materials

1. As noted under ‘minimum standards’, in conjunction with an orientation programme on HIV/AIDS, the booklet on HIV/AIDS for United Nations employees and their families should continue to be distributed to all staff, and a system established to make sure that all new staff receive it. The booklet should be updated periodically as new information on HIV/AIDS and related UN policies emerges, and repackaged<sup>18</sup> and redistributed with each update. Ensuring that these booklets are available in public places, such as in UN medical service offices, human resources offices, and UN office libraries, is important. It would be useful if heads of agencies, heads of offices and/or other senior people in the various organizations could remind staff every year about the booklets and ask staff members to review them.
2. **Regional and country-level booklets, pamphlets and information sheets** should be considered to supplement the globally produced booklets. These may include some of the excellent country and regional materials that are already available from local sources such as AIDS service organizations, NGOs or governments<sup>19</sup>. Key information in the local materials should include where to go for HIV/AIDS-related services, especially VCCT.
3. **A website for UN staff on HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace** will be developed through the UNAIDS Secretariat. Such a website should cover HIV/AIDS basics, UN policies and procedures, resources available in various parts of the world, both within and outside the UN, etc. Online resources inside and outside the UN will be linked to this website. Clear links will be given on basic HIV/AIDS education and UN policies and entitlements. The website be hosted on the UNAIDS Internet site.
4. For staff with no or limited access to the web, the UNAIDS Secretariat will prepare a parallel **CD on HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace**.
5. **Posters** covering the basics of HIV/AIDS prevention, VCCT and entitlements have been distributed to all UN offices and will be posted prominently, including at UN medical service offices. Again, periodic updates are in order, both as new information emerges and to keep the issues alive and up front. It is worth considering designing future posters to be more eye-catching and attractive to encourage reading. The use of local posters is also encouraged, especially those that include information about where to go for local services, such as VCCT.
6. **The editors of newsletters and staff publications** will be invited to include articles on HIV/AIDS, including the basics of HIV/AIDS, policies on HIV/AIDS in the UN and availability of related services.
7. **E-mail updates** will be sent out as new policies are developed and as services are made available.

<sup>17</sup> While there is some repetition between this Annex and Annex 2 on learning approaches to support the national response to HIV/AIDS, there are enough differences to warrant separating them from one another. This will be especially useful as we begin to think through plans for learning on each of these issues.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Repackaged’ refers to a redesign of the booklets to keep them fresh and to encourage re-reading.

<sup>19</sup> One link between HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace and the UN’s work on supporting the national response could be for the UN to support the production of locally-appropriate HIV/AIDS brochures, pamphlets and booklets for public consumption as well as for use by UN staff.

## B. Ensuring that staff have access to organized group learning sessions

In organizing group learning sessions, as described below, it is advisable to organize homogeneous groups to address sensitive issues. For example, having younger male staff members or a group of unmarried women together to address issues such as sex, sexuality, love, gender, drugs and alcohol, etc. may foster more openness and a more relaxed atmosphere. Similarly, condom demonstrations may be more effective in some cultures if done in homogeneous groups. Having skilled facilitators for such groups is equally important; they may be UN staff members or outsiders with the relevant experience.

1. **HIV/AIDS orientation sessions** based on the training materials produced by UNAIDS for global use are, as is noted under the minimum standards, mandatory for all staff, including heads of offices and other senior staff. These orientation sessions should be held at least annually in each country so that all UN agencies can send staff and, where possible, and when larger numbers of new staff are recruited, more frequent sessions should be organized or built into existing 'regular' orientation programmes.
2. **Condom demonstrations**, including both male and female condoms, should be a part of the above-mentioned orientation sessions and it is advisable that such demonstrations be organized in other forums as well. These demonstrations should include information about where condoms can be obtained, both inside and outside the UN offices<sup>20</sup>.
3. **Interactive, emotionally-based exercises.** Participation by staff in exercises<sup>21</sup> that raise sensitivity towards people living with HIV as well as each person's vulnerability is to be encouraged. These exercises need to be guided by a skilled and experienced facilitator since some participants may experience some distress.
4. **Events linked to World AIDS Day** should be organized for staff (or staff should be invited to public events), with discussions about how the theme for the current year has implications for UN staff members.
5. **Briefing sessions** for staff to be able to hear about HIV/AIDS policies and services and to ask questions about them are useful, especially as new policies are released or updated and as new services and service providers become available.
6. **Screening of HIV/AIDS-related videos** and, when available, inviting **local theatre** groups to perform for staff on HIV/AIDS-related themes should be considered. The UN should have/distribute a shortlist of recommended videos on HIV/AIDS, including global and regional videos of high quality.
7. **Learning fairs** at which various 'booths' are set up, by people from inside and outside the UN system, can be organized to ensure that all topics related to HIV/AIDS are covered from various perspectives. 'Highlight events' during the fairs, such as theatre presentations, videos, music, short presentations and/or appearances by local celebrities who may be spokespersons for HIV/AIDS, will entice the widest participation.
8. **Open forums** enable speakers to make very short interventions with a moderator/facilitator who then invites discussion from the larger audience to exchange experiences, respond to questions, discuss concerns and raise issues.
9. **Inviting people from stigmatized groups affected by HIV to speak.** For example, sex workers, MSM<sup>22</sup> or those who have/had injecting drug problems can initiate conversations otherwise unlikely to occur naturally in the UN workplace. Letting people hear different points of view and life stories may contribute to attitudinal and behavioural changes.

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<sup>20</sup> It is strongly encouraged that all UN offices make condoms available to staff in public toilets and other public spots where staff can take them anonymously, as well as through the medical service, which should include condoms in travel kits.

<sup>21</sup> Such as 'Wildfire', an exercise designed to give participants an opportunity to experience "the feelings and reactions of a person living with HIV as well as those of others who are not infected... (and) to create awareness of how quickly and covertly the virus spreads and the deep emotional rifts (and bonds) it can create between people."

<sup>22</sup> In the learning needs assessment, although 5% identified themselves as being MSM or women who have sex with women, less than half said that they are willing to discuss this openly at work. It may be possible in some offices to invite these open staff members to speak with other staff.

**10. Debates on sensitive issues** will allow for all aspects to be addressed. Individuals (UN staff and/or outsiders) with strong views and experiences relating to the issues to be debated may be invited to participate. Alternatively, the debates may be through role-plays in which staff members are asked to ‘research’ different views and then to take a point of view assigned to them for the debate. Debate topics could include, for example, whether women should always insist on condom use by their husbands/partners, and whether people living with HIV should be open about their status within the UN, etc.

### **C. Making peer counsellors/peer educators available to staff**

Developing and training a cadre of peer counsellors/educators is encouraged for all offices to assist in providing information in group situations and, perhaps more importantly, to be available for one-on-one counselling and HIV/AIDS education. Choosing peer educators to reflect diversity in the offices is highly encouraged, and such educators should include men and women, younger and older staff members, people from international and local categories<sup>23</sup>, those representing different cultural/ethnic and religious perspectives and those with different sexual orientations. While it may not be possible to recruit individuals from all of these categories, having as wide a diversity as possible is highly desirable since it increases the likelihood that staff may be open to learning about HIV and AIDS from someone with whom they can identify more closely.

Peer educators can be trained to deal with the knowledge-based aspects of HIV/AIDS, but they can also be trained to deal with the deeper, emotionally-based aspects. Choosing peer educators who are highly trusted by staff is important. Equally important is choosing peer educators who are willing and able to speak openly about the more difficult issues.

It is worth considering developing the peer educators/counsellors as a ‘pool’ among all UN agencies so that confidentiality and trust are increased, with staff having access to peers in another agency. For similar reasons, and especially in duty stations with smaller numbers of staff, it may also be worth opening the pool to non-UN agencies (such as major NGOs and bilaterals), although they would not be able to counsel staff on UN-specific policies and entitlements.

### **D. Encouraging learning opportunities outside the UN**

Staff should be kept informed about HIV/AIDS learning opportunities available outside the UN system. This is an important option since many staff will be more comfortable getting such information away from the UN workplace. Many countries have HIV/AIDS service organizations and NGOs that organize HIV/AIDS education and support sessions, and sessions for specific populations (such as people living with HIV, MSM, young people), and staff should be made aware of these opportunities through poster displays, e-mail messages, pamphlets, Intranet postings, etc. If costs are involved, local country teams may consider contracting such agencies so that UN staff may attend, without the staff members having to identify themselves within the UN. (See Section VI of the main text on resources.)

‘No-cost’ options from outside the UN include circulating articles from local print media, informing staff about links to websites and informing them when television or radio programmes on HIV/AIDS will be broadcast.

<sup>23</sup> Some concerns have been raised over the idea of training peer educators/counsellors from among support staff, such as drivers. While it is recognized that such staff may not be able to cover all the necessary information on HIV/AIDS, the UN and others have had great success in supporting community-level educators and counsellors. For an excellent overview of such efforts, refer to *Peer education and HIV/AIDS: Concepts, uses and challenges*, available from the UNAIDS Best Practice Collection (UNAIDS/99.46).

### **E. Ensuring that staff have access to voluntary confidential counselling and testing (VCCT)**

VCCT should be underlined as a key HIV/AIDS-related learning opportunity that allows for one-on-one, private discussions with trained professionals. Availability of VCCT should be part of the basic information covered in printed material and orientation sessions, as noted above. All staff should know where they can go for VCCT and encouraged to do so. If costs are involved, country teams may want to consider contracting local agencies so that UN staff can avail of VCCT services anonymously, without having to identify themselves to UN officers.

### **F. Ensuring that staff learn from people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS**

It is important to involve people living with or affected by<sup>24</sup> HIV/AIDS in learning activities, asking them to share their experiences in orientation sessions, briefings and periodic discussions. If there are UN staff members who are living openly with HIV, they can be powerful models for others, but if no one in the UN system is open, UN teams can call upon people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS from local AIDS activist groups, which exist in almost all countries. If such groups do not exist locally, regional offices and Intercountry Teams of the UNAIDS Secretariat can assist in identifying such groups in neighbouring countries.

In many countries, it may also be possible to organize visits to service or care centres for people living with HIV to discuss HIV/AIDS-related issues. Because of their work with community groups, many of the HIV/AIDS activist groups are experienced in raising these sensitive issues; many have also worked with professionals in government and the private sector.

In a similar vein, to promote sensitivity to people living with HIV and to encourage a broader outlook about the HIV/AIDS programmes of the UN and others, staff members should be invited to join field missions to visit intervention sites, wherever possible. Such individuals should be encouraged, or even required, to report back on their observations at general staff meetings to share what they have learned.

### **G. ‘Research teams’**

Staff who are not normally involved in HIV/AIDS programmes can, on a selective basis, be asked to undertake research on issues such as the difficulties of living openly with HIV, challenges for family and friends who are caring for someone living with HIV, vulnerable groups, availability of services, etc. This research can be done using written documents, interviewing other UN staff, interviewing people outside the UN system, making visits to community groups involved in HIV/AIDS, etc. Staff undertaking such research could then be asked to present their findings, followed by discussions on the implications for UN staff. While this may be time-consuming, it is also a means of:

- helping staff learn more about HIV;
- drawing on the talents of staff that may be under-utilized;
- motivating staff by presenting them with a new challenge;
- building team work, if done as part of a team;
- building research skills more generally; and
- contributing towards an understanding of HIV in the country, for those involved in planning HIV initiatives, whether on HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace or supporting national responses to HIV/AIDS.

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<sup>24</sup> People affected by HIV include family and friends of people living with HIV or those who have lost loved ones as a result of HIV/AIDS.

## H. Community involvement

Encouraging staff to participate in community efforts related to HIV/AIDS, both inside and outside of the UN, is a powerful approach to changing attitudes and behaviours. Staff participation may be encouraged by, for example, inviting them to:

- speak to community groups on HIV/AIDS<sup>25</sup>;
- volunteer at AIDS service organizations;
- visit the homes of staff members infected or affected by HIV/AIDS;
- support staff who are living with HIV by helping them to access services; and/or
- support families of people living with HIV or bereaved by the loss of a loved one.

Some organizations may be willing to give limited time off from normal work for such community involvement. Even if this is not the case, such volunteerism may be encouraged after normal working hours.

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<sup>25</sup> Staff speaking to outside groups may need special training to prepare them to do so. This could be done in collaboration with outside AIDS activist groups, and/or through speaker training programmes organized within the UN.

## Annex 2

### Learning approaches for supporting national responses to HIV/AIDS<sup>26</sup>

It should be underlined that the suggestions listed below are not ‘either-or’ approaches and indeed are most powerful when combined as a ‘blended approach’ to learning within the context of a well designed learning plan at global, regional, country, agency and individual levels.

It should be noted that, using the ‘building block’ model and referring to the minimum standards for *all* UN staff covered in the main text, the approaches noted below assume that professional staff members who support national responses to HIV/AIDS will also be included in the learning activities related to HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace.

#### A. Learning by oneself and through self-reflection

This is one of the most important approaches to improving one’s professional competence in general, and it is certainly so in the world of HIV/AIDS. While such self-directed learning may already be happening on an informal level, it can become more effective if individuals schedule dedicated time for it on an on-going basis. This may include the following options:

- 1. Reading materials available from the UN.** Making sure that the basic HIV/AIDS documentation from within the UN has been read is essential. This would include reading (and re-reading) the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment and follow-up, the UN Millennium Development Goals documents, relevant material from the UNAIDS Best Practice Collection, policy and strategy papers from UNAIDS and individual UN agencies, etc. UN ‘toolkits’ and ‘how to’ guides are helpful; some already exist, but others need to be developed.
- 2. Reading materials available from outside the UN.** There are excellent materials available, including professional journals, guides and papers from research organizations and universities (such as Family Health International, the Health and Development Network, the Center for Harm Reduction, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and Johns Hopkins University), as well as from bilateral organizations (such as DiFD and USAID).
- 3. Accessing web-based resources.** Most of the materials noted above are available online. Additionally, the UNAIDS website contains a wealth of information on policies, best practices, conferences, etc. Some of the key Internet HIV/AIDS portals, such as AEGIS and The Body, are excellent sources of information for self-directed learning. And several excellent e-newsletters are sent directly by e-mail to subscribers, enabling them to stay on top of the latest developments—including, for example, UNAIDS daily news updates and the Kaiser Foundation HIV/AIDS updates.
- 4. Reflecting systematically on positive and negative experiences** in one's work in supporting national responses to HIV/AIDS is a key learning opportunity, too often neglected. It includes thinking about how HIV/AIDS affects us professionally and on a personal level. There are few rewards for UN practitioners for documenting their work in journals as case studies and lessons learned, despite the fact that this can lead to significant learning for both the writer and the reader. The UN system needs to find the means to encourage and reward such reflection. (See C4 for one suggested mechanism.)

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<sup>26</sup> While there is some repetition between this annex and Annex 1 on learning approaches for HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace, there are enough differences to warrant separating them from one another.

## B. Learning through communities of practice and networks set up at country level

Learning at country level with partners, both inside and outside the UN system, is an excellent approach to building knowledge and competency. This can be done in a variety of ways:

1. **Setting up regular learning and sharing mechanisms.** These might include networking meetings, discussion groups and lunchtime gatherings. These can be organized around guest speakers from inside the country or visitors from outside, presentations from network members on current work or ideas, panel discussions, debates, discussions based on written documents as noted under A above, joint field visits, etc.
2. **Partnering with government, NGOs and with major bilateral agencies** to organize learning events can be a significant factor in building their capacity, along with the UN's<sup>27</sup>. It may be useful, nevertheless, for the UN system to limit some events to internal UN groups so that individuals can more readily speak forthrightly.
3. **Undertaking mid-term and end-project reviews.** At key moments in a project cycle, or after major projects have been concluded, powerful learning can take place with all or some of the partners discussing the lessons learned and reflecting on additional learning needs and how to meet them.

## C. Learning through intercountry, regional and inter-regional activities

Learning from the experiences—both positive and less successful—of other countries, especially within the same region, is of key importance. While obviously more costly and therefore to be used less frequently, inter-regional activities are also useful for learning. Examples include:

1. **Organizing regional conferences.** Periodic regional conferences, including UN professional officers working on HIV/AIDS programmes are excellent forums for engaging with others and learning with and from them. Conferences can focus on an overall major theme and/or build in a series of parallel sessions on a variety of themes. Obviously, such conferences are challenging to organize, but the payoff in networking and learning can be significant if done well. These conferences can have a relatively narrow audience if limited to UN officers, but can go further by including governments, NGOs, civil society and bilateral agencies as well, including potential financing and support from a variety of donors.
2. **Videoconferencing.** This is one of the key approaches currently being piloted by the UN System Staff College project, 'Capacity-Building of UN HIV/AIDS Theme Groups by Distance Learning'. Setting up regularly scheduled opportunities with participants from other countries to talk about their successes, but also to talk about ongoing struggles and engage in dialogues on how to overcome these, is an excellent way to learn from one another.
3. **Seminars and field visits.** To build knowledge and competence, countries with successful programmes, such as Brazil, Senegal, Thailand and Uganda, may be asked to organize seminars, and/or field visits with participants from other countries to share experiences and engage in dialogues.
4. **Thematic networks and action teams.** Organizing thematic networks (e.g., on HIV/AIDS and education, HIV/AIDS and drugs, children orphaned by AIDS, supporting National AIDS Commissions, etc.) and action teams to address the themes can take several different forms:
  - periodic network meetings for exchange of ideas and/or expert presentations and discussions
  - setting up a website and/or listserves on the issues, including identifying moderators for facilitating e-mail discussion groups
  - organizing videoconferences or telephone meetings
  - setting up cross-country teams to work together periodically in several countries on a particular theme, such as planning, evaluation, or troubleshooting

<sup>27</sup> An added advantage may be in getting the financial resources for such learning activities from donors who participate.

- workshops to write up best practices and projects that were less successful are a learning exercise in themselves. The written products become a means of sharing lessons learned and insights with people not participating in the workshop.
5. **Peer support teams** in which two-to-three people from different countries maintain an ongoing relationship to exchange ideas, discuss challenges and options can be a good way for people within a region to support and learn from one another. Most of the networking can be done by e-mail and phone, with occasional face-to-face meetings.

#### **D. Learning through workshops**

If workshops are well organized and of reasonable length, they can be an excellent approach to HIV/AIDS learning<sup>28</sup>. Organizing such workshops at country, regional and global levels to enhance HIV/AIDS-related knowledge is a useful way to ensure uniformity and quality control in the subjects covered. This is especially so if the workshops make use of the excellent guides/materials produced by the UN or other reputable organizations<sup>29</sup>.

While other learning approaches must be cultivated, it is nevertheless recognized that many people like this approach to learning, since it is a chance to learn with others, get away from day-to-day distractions and concentrate on a specific topic in a time-defined period. Those who attend workshops should be required to share what they have learned by organizing briefings or other activities for other staff members who have not been able to attend the workshop.

Facilitators/trainers/resource persons for workshops can be from inside the UN system as well as outside.

#### **E. Learning by distance**

UNAIDS has already begun to experiment with distance learning, with support for prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT), scaling up the local response and, as noted, the pilot project, 'Capacity-Building of Theme Groups through Distance Learning'. Collaboration on these projects is most direct with the UN System Staff College in Turin, the World Bank's Global Distance Learning Network (GDLN) and the World Bank's Development Gateway. The Theme Group project includes web-based dialogues and video-based learning activities. We need to evaluate these projects to see if there is an impact and consider if and how this approach may be replicated and/or extended.

Websites, listserves and e-mail represent valid means of exchanging experiences and documenting instructive practices to enhance learning. The challenges involve keeping users engaged and active, continuously collecting experiences and instructive practices, and distilling what is useful. One existing tool that could be the basis for electronic learning on HIV/AIDS in the UN is the World Bank's Development Gateway website.

A number of online resources for UN HIV/AIDS learning are now available at the UN HIV/AIDS Learning Strategy website: <http://www.developmentgateway.org/unhivlearning>. These represent the development of a clearinghouse of HIV/AIDS-related learning resources, which needs to be refined for more 'user-friendliness' and made available globally. Distance learning can also include partnerships, especially with universities, to ensure high-quality learning.

Unanswered questions about approaches to distance learning:

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<sup>28</sup> A word of caution: too often, UN staff members look at workshops as being the best or only way of learning. While workshops can indeed be an excellent learning opportunity, they are relatively costly to organize, and will be infrequently available to staff, especially considering the decentralized set-up of the UN. Staff members must look at additional ways to ensure learning.

<sup>29</sup> Workshop materials on a range of HIV/AIDS topics are available on the UN HIV/AIDS Learning Strategy website. See Annexes 4-6 for examples.

- How can professionals manage distance learning, given the daily demands and pressures of their jobs?
- Are countries and UN staff members ready for web-based learning approaches, given the technology constraints and attitudes?

#### **F. Learning through the experiences of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS**

This aspect has already been noted in Annex 1 on learning approaches for HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace but it is underlined here as one of the most powerful approaches to learning, including for professional officers who support national responses to HIV/AIDS. This approach includes listening to, working, and even briefly staying, with people living with or affected by HIV. Such experiences allow professional staff to better understand the reality of HIV and to include the subjective, emotional and spiritual sides in their response to HIV/AIDS when developing programmes and projects. Dealing with the factual and objective sides to HIV/AIDS learning is essential, but so is learning to understand our fears, attitudes and reactions to working on HIV/AIDS-related issues.

People living with HIV should, whenever possible, be involved in planning learning initiatives to ensure that such activities are sensitive to their realities. They should also be invited to contribute as facilitators/resource persons.

#### **G. Working in other UN agencies and regions**

This is recommended both for short-term and longer-term learning. Such exchanges, whether for several months or several years, can build the knowledge and competence of individuals as well as of agencies as we infuse new ideas and approaches into UN programmes for HIV/AIDS. These learning experiences also help in promoting more effective collaboration.

#### **H. Encouraging learning opportunities outside the UN**

Staff should explore and be kept informed about HIV/AIDS learning opportunities available outside the UN system. This is an important option for engaging with others working on HIV/AIDS. Local options include participating or partnering in learning activities organized by other agencies, such as CIDA, SIDA and USAID. These agencies and others are struggling with the same issues as are we in the UN and we can join forces to improve the competence of our professional staff.

Many universities at local, regional and global levels organize short courses on HIV/AIDS, and these should be exploited by the staff of the various UN agencies. Some excellent university courses are available online. For example, the Department of Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University and the National School of Public Health at the Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA) joined forces in developing a Postgraduate Diploma on HIV/AIDS in the world of work. The UN has recently supported a number of staff members from various countries to participate in this course.

Externships with bilaterals and NGOs, both by sending our staff and serving as hosts to theirs, can also be a valuable means of building knowledge and competence.

#### **I. Learning by experimentation**

Encouraging experimentation and new approaches to addressing HIV/AIDS must be stressed as a key means to learning. This is especially important in light of the UN's continued and growing commitment towards simplification and harmonization of programmes. Can we experiment with joint programming at country level, for example, even if this means breaking away from the standard policies and guidelines of the individual agencies? Will the HQs of the various agencies encourage

such experimentation and even reward it? At the end of the day, we need to ensure that learning results in better implementation, and not just an improvement in our conceptual knowledge of HIV/AIDS.

**J. Learning by facilitating the learning of others: mentors, coaches, buddies, facilitators, trainers, etc.**

Building the competence of professional staff to help others to learn about HIV/AIDS can help expand learning possibilities inside the UN and outside. UN staff members who serve as HIV/AIDS resource persons have the dual benefits of adding to the pool of people available to implement learning activities, while building the knowledge and competence of the resource persons. Regional training of facilitators will be one means of advancing such learning.

Identifying professionals in the UN system who are already considered to be expert in one or more areas related to HIV/AIDS and asking them to help develop the competency of other HIV/AIDS professionals would be an excellent approach. Such individuals may be mentors, coaches and ‘buddies’ who serve as advisers, counsellors, supporters, developers and guides. Current best practices underscore the fact that, of all the potential relationships at work, some of the most important are those with mentors, coaches and buddies who support and build competency among staff members. Pairing an experienced Theme Group Chair with a newly appointed Chair is another valuable approach. Mentors, coaches and buddies would also be useful in building the UNAIDS programme if relationships were built across agencies. UNAIDS would need to develop the structures—both formal and informal—to deal with such an approach, but the payoff would be worth the investment.

Additional important learning roles include: facilitators of networks and meetings, e-mail discussion group moderators, trainers, speakers, presenters, discussion managers, managers of online resources, writers/contributors of best practices, peer educators, etc.

**K. Learning by integrating staff and client training more effectively**

Given the UN’s mandate to build capacity of our partners in governments and civil society, it is incumbent upon us to find opportunities to learn with our counterparts, both by inviting them to join us in efforts that we organize, and by joining them in activities that they organize.

## Annex 3

### Who can be called upon to support HIV/AIDS learning activities?

In the main text of the learning strategy, there is reference to a number of different actors who can potentially support learning activities at global, regional and country levels. This annex reviews each of these levels in more detail. It is not possible to prescribe roles for all countries, regions or headquarter agencies. This annex aims to show the range of potential actors and what they can be called upon to do.

#### I. Country-level support

##### A. Within the UN system

The key roles of the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) and the HIV/AIDS Theme Group have already been described in Section VII of the main text and will not be repeated here. It was also recommended in Section V of the main text that a team be appointed to undertake the development of a country HIV/AIDS learning plan and that this team monitor and evaluate the plan's implementation. The possibilities noted for the team include the HIV/AIDS Technical Working Group, the local UN Administrative Working Group (which includes officers responsible for human resources) or a special group set up to undertake the noted responsibilities. It is also desirable to include the local staff associations in developing, monitoring and evaluating learning activities related to HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace.

The following groups of people can also be called upon by the RC and Theme Group for assistance:

1. **HIV/AIDS professional officers.** Most UN agencies at country level have professional staff members who are working full-time or part-time on programmes to support national responses to HIV/AIDS. They often play a key role in learning programmes designed for government and other partners. As both learners and organizers of learning, they should play a significant role in the planning and implementation of learning programmes on HIV/AIDS for UN staff. They should be called upon as resource persons, network facilitators, workshop organizers, coaches, mentors, presenters, discussion leaders, etc.

The HIV/AIDS technical officers often include medical doctors who are already called upon by individual staff for information and individual counselling on HIV/AIDS. With this experience, they may be invited to participate in learning programmes for human resource officers, medical personnel and peer educators.

2. **UNAIDS Country Coordinators.** Clearly, the Coordinators have a role to play in helping the country team and HIV/AIDS Theme Group to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate learning programmes on HIV/AIDS. They can assist in identifying materials available from regional and global sources, as well as outside resource persons and organizations. Like the professional officers, they can be called upon as resource persons, network facilitators, workshop organizers, coaches, mentors, presenters, discussion leaders, etc. Coordinators can also support the countries by helping to provide limited seed funding to promote learning and capacity-building.

In some countries, the Country Coordinators are assisted by programme or project officers assigned to the country-level UNAIDS Secretariat. These officers may also be called upon to play a key role in learning initiatives.

- 3. Officers responsible for human resources/personnel.** Each of the UN agencies has officers responsible for organizing overall learning/training for staff—most often officers responsible for human resources/personnel. Under the guidance and supervision of the RC and agency heads, they can assist in planning and implementing learning activities on HIV/AIDS, especially those related to the UN workplace.

It should also be noted that human resources staff themselves have additional specific learning needs in that they must be prepared to: (a) advise staff on UN policies regarding HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace; (b) administer entitlements; (c) undertake research on locally-available educational/training, medical and care facilities that can assist the UN in addressing HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace; (d) refer staff appropriately to services inside and outside the UN system; (e) ensure that a system of confidentiality is in place and is maintained; (f) counsel staff with respect to HIV/AIDS, ensuring sensitivity and confidentiality; (g) counsel supervisors on how to work with staff who may be infected or affected by HIV/AIDS; and (h) assist management and the heads of offices in developing locally-appropriate workplace practices related to HIV/AIDS.

- 4. UN affiliated health-care professionals.** UN medical staff and UN-affiliated medical personnel will be key learning resources for HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace. They are often the first people called upon when staff members have questions about HIV/AIDS. Making sure that they are able to educate, advise, counsel, refer and treat staff is a key part of building not only a learning strategy, but of a comprehensive approach to HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace. In addition to their one-on-one role, they can be called upon in the planning of learning activities, serving as resource people in group events and at fairs.
- 5. Staff associations.** Including local staff associations in the planning and implementation of HIV/AIDS learning activities helps to ensure that the specific needs and viewpoints of staff are considered. Staff associations can be called upon to encourage staff participation in HIV/AIDS learning activities. They can advise on adapting global and regional materials to the local context. They can help in advising staff about available policies and resources in partnership with human resource and medical personnel. They are also good reference points for identifying peer educators.
- 6. Those who have taken the MEDUNSA course.** The Department of Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University and the National School of Public Health at the Medical University of South Africa joined forces in developing a postgraduate diploma for managers whose job requires them to deal with HIV/AIDS programmes at work. The UN has recently sponsored several staff members from various countries to attend this course and they should be called upon in planning and implementing HIV/AIDS learning programmes.

## **B. Outside the UN system**

A useful exercise to be considered by the RC and Theme Group would be to assign a UN team and/or consultant the task of making an inventory of potential resource organizations and people within the country that can be called upon for assistance with learning activities on HIV/AIDS. These resources could be called upon both by the UN system for its learning programmes and by government and others to assist in their programmes. The following resources are worth considering:

- 1. AIDS service organizations, NGOs, universities, and government and individual consultants.** Most countries will have human resources that can be called upon from outside the UN system to assist in the planning and implementation of HIV/AIDS learning activities. It may also be possible to send UN professional staff to programmes organized by these organizations for a wider audience.

2. **People living with HIV and people directly affected by HIV/AIDS.** People living with HIV are excellent resources to call upon for assistance in HIV/AIDS learning programmes. They are especially powerful partners in programmes that aim to cover the emotionally-based learning that is essential for attitudinal and behavioural changes.
3. **Major bilaterals and NGOs.** Major bilaterals (such as CIDA, SIDA and USAID) and larger NGOs (such as the Red Cross, Save the Children Fund, CARE and *Médecins sans Frontières*) may have local HIV/AIDS learning programmes for their own staff and they are often willing to allow UN staff to join their programmes. They may also be open to the idea of organizing joint staff learning programmes, to share materials and resource people, whereby the UN and the partner agencies enjoy mutual benefits.

## II. Regional support

Regional structures of the UNAIDS Secretariat (Intercountry Teams), as well as the regional structures of those UN agencies that have regional offices, are valuable resources for learning activities or programmes organized at the regional and country levels. Their roles may include the following:

- A. **Identifying regional-level resources.** As at the country level, regional teams should be encouraged to make an inventory of potential resource organizations and people within the region that can be called upon to help with learning activities on HIV/AIDS. This should include regionally-based UN staff members who can assist as facilitators at events<sup>30</sup>, as well as non-UN organizations, universities, facilitators and trainers.
- B. **Identifying outside learning opportunities in the region.** Related to the above, regional support may include updates about university courses, outside workshops, conferences, etc. within the region so that country offices are aware of opportunities that could be useful to them.
- C. **Identifying regionally-produced HIV/AIDS learning materials.** Regional offices can help to identify resources that have been produced inside or outside the UN, and that may be useful in HIV/AIDS learning efforts.
- D. **Organizing training of facilitators/trainers.** It may be possible for the regional offices, in collaboration with global structures and country teams, to organize training events for those involved with implementing learning activities at country and regional levels. These could include people inside and/or outside the UN system.
- E. **Organizing regional workshops and conferences.** Workshops and conferences can be effective learning forums, and regional bodies have a key role in their organization.
- F. **Supporting regional networks.** Networks often require regional-level structures to initiate and support them. However, the regions can also coordinate responsibilities with country-level officers by asking them to head a network for the region.
- G. **Facilitating exchanges among countries and agencies.** This has been described in Annex 2 on learning approaches and will benefit from regional support.
- H. **Maintaining regional websites.** Some regions may have the capacity to develop and maintain websites with materials, instructive practices, listserves, etc.

<sup>30</sup> It may be possible to call upon the CCA UNDAF facilitators trained in collaboration with the UN System Staff College to assist in HIV/AIDS learning programmes, especially for work related to joint programming and integration of HIV/AIDS into existing development frameworks.

### III. Global support

Global structures of the UNAIDS Secretariat, as well as individual UN agencies, have a key role to play in ensuring excellence in learning within the entire UN system. Before describing the roles of the global actors, it has been agreed that the UNAIDS Secretariat take primary responsibility for driving the implementation of the learning strategy for the next few years—at least until it is well established as part of all Cosponsors' activities at global, regional and country levels. Without this leadership, it is highly likely that the strategy will remain theoretical, without being fully or optimally implemented. Additionally, the Secretariat should take the lead in monitoring the implementation of learning initiatives at the macro level, based on information reported by regions, countries and agencies.

While the roles described for the regional level may also potentially apply to the global level, either in terms of providing support to the regions or organizing global-level events, there are additional roles that global bodies may play:

#### A. Demonstrating highest-level support

- 1. Heads of agencies** at the global level have a special responsibility to not only put HIV/AIDS high on the agenda from a programmatic perspective, but to also value HIV/AIDS-related learning programmes for their staff. This can be expressed in a number of ways, including<sup>31</sup>:
  - speaking about the need for HIV/AIDS learning at general staff meetings and meetings with senior staff and managers;
  - issuing directives to managers and staff on HIV/AIDS learning initiatives;
  - holding heads of country-level missions responsible for implementing HIV/AIDS learning programmes; and
  - expressing support at CCO meetings.
- 2. HIV/AIDS focal points** in each of the agencies' HQs must be visibly involved in learning programmes, including advocating the implementation of learning programmes, serving as resource persons at global and regional events, identifying needs and resources, allocating funds, etc.
- 3. Learning chiefs** of the various UN agencies should ensure that HIV/AIDS is given attention in the global learning priorities of their respective agencies, while ensuring that funds are earmarked in their budgets. They should also continue to support interagency cooperation in the production of materials for, and approaches to, HIV/AIDS learning.
- 4. The UNAIDS Secretariat** should continue to act as a catalyst in promoting HIV/AIDS learning programmes through the Executive Director and other senior-level officers. The Secretariat should also provide resources (human and financial) through the UBW and support the development of materials and facilitator networks, the implementation of global initiatives, etc.

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<sup>31</sup> This high-level support has already been forthcoming for HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace, with an item in the Secretary-General's agenda for UN reform, in the Chair of UNDG, supporting the learning needs assessment, and heads of some agencies asking their staff to support the learning needs assessment. Similar support should be expressed for learning in the context of national-level responses to HIV/AIDS.

**B. Developing, identifying and maintaining an ongoing clearinghouse of learning resources**

The identification of existing resources is already under way. Efforts are needed to evaluate and classify the materials more fully. Existing materials may need to be updated, and new ones developed at the global level for use in regional and country-specific situations. Importantly, a system for maintaining an ongoing clearinghouse of resources is needed and should reside within the UNAIDS Secretariat, but with each of the Cosponsors taking responsibility for updating the clearinghouse regularly as new resources are developed and older ones become outdated.

**C. Promoting adherence to the global learning standards**

Monitoring mechanisms have been suggested at country level, and individual agencies at the global level should promote adherence to the standards noted in Section V of the main text. They should request reports through their existing reporting structures on how the standards are being maintained. Similar monitoring structures will need to be established for the agency HQs.

**D. Building learning networks**

An important role for the global level of the UNAIDS Secretariat, as well as individual agencies, is to build a roster of resource persons able to assist in HIV/AIDS learning programmes and to organize training of facilitators, as needed, on specific, priority topics. The roster should include people inside the UN as well as consultants and organizations from outside. Development of the roster is already under way and current resources are posted on the learning strategy website. However, more needs to be done in this regard, and the roster will need to be kept up to date.

## **Annex 4**

### **Learning materials developed by the UN related to HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace**

The following materials are globally-produced UN materials, either by UNAIDS or by individual agencies. The list may not be comprehensive, but it includes materials made available to the learning strategy project thus far. The materials listed below can be found on the UN HIV/AIDS Learning Strategy website: <http://www.developmentgateway.org/unhivlearning>.

#### ***UNAIDS: AIDS and HIV Infection: Information for United Nations Employees and their Families***

This booklet is a straightforward and practical resource, designed to give UN staff and their families the most up-to-date information available on HIV and AIDS. All staff should have received a copy of the booklet and new staff should be given copies. It is available in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Portuguese, Arabic and Thai.

#### **UNDG/UNAIDS: Orientation Session on AIDS and HIV Infection**

UN agencies combined their efforts to develop an orientation session to introduce the above-mentioned booklet. A facilitator's guide to introduce the booklet and "further promote...a culture of tolerance and understanding..." was developed along with a PowerPoint presentation of slides.

#### **UNAIDS: HIV/AIDS in the UN System Workplace**

This collection of reference documents on HIV/AIDS in the UN workplace is available online and on a CD-ROM, which was sent to all UN offices. It includes the above-noted booklet, 'facilitation guides', slides, questionnaires and documents that can be used in learning initiatives. English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Arabic and Portuguese versions of key resources are included.

#### ***UNAIDS: Key Steps in Establishing Local HIV/AIDS Care and Support for UN Staff and their Dependants***

This document aims to outline the key steps in developing local HIV/AIDS care and support programmes for UN staff and their dependants. The steps provide a generic framework to be adapted and prioritized for local conditions. Though they are presented in order of priority, many of them can be implemented concurrently. The steps include providing staff and their families with updated information, education and other preventive health measures to enable individuals to protect themselves from HIV infection and to cope with the presence of AIDS.

#### ***WHO: PEP Guidelines***

Post-Exposure Preventive (PEP) Treatment is an emergency medical response for individuals exposed to HIV. Guidelines were produced when PEP kits were sent to all UN country teams. There is a PowerPoint presentation designed to introduce PEP. The guidelines and slides are available in English, French and Spanish.

#### **World Bank: 'HIV/AIDS in the Workplace' Information Folder**

In February/March 2001, the World Bank distributed an 'HIV/AIDS in the Workplace' information folder. It contained easy reference sheets on the medical aspects of the disease, the Bank Group's employment policy, medical and disability benefits, and sources of help. The information folders were distributed to all staff members, both in Washington and in country offices. The folder included the following specific documents: (1) A message to all staff from the World Bank Group President;

(2) UNAIDS booklet: *AIDS and HIV Infection: Information for United Nations Employees and their Families*; and (3) a brochure on free, HIV antibody testing and counselling services available in Washington, DC. Materials are available in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Swahili, Chinese, Russian and Arabic.

**World Bank: Frequently-asked Questions about HIV/AIDS**

The World Bank has put together a set of FAQs on HIV/AIDS, as well as information sheets on HIV/AIDS policies, medical insurance coverage, etc. These sheets are available in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Swahili.

**UNHCR: Peer Support Network Training**

A one-day workshop has been designed by UNHCR for introducing an HIV/AIDS peer support network. The workshop's objectives are to: (1) review the theoretical aspects of HIV/AIDS; (2) promote understanding of the psychosocial needs of persons living with HIV in the workplace and at their home; (3) explain the role of the peer support person in the context of staff and their families living with HIV; (4) raise awareness of the elements of the prevention and sensitization programme on HIV in the workplace; (5) demonstrate how to identify local resources in different environments; (6) build confidence and ease in discussing HIV/AIDS-related issues with colleagues in the office; and (7) encourage individuals to be available and willing to support an individual living with HIV in the workplace.

**WFP: HIV/AIDS Awareness and Prevention for Staff**

In May 2002, the World Food Programme developed a two-hour briefing session designed to introduce staff to HIV/AIDS. The briefing includes: (1) defining and describing HIV and AIDS; (2) discussing how HIV is and is not transmitted; (3) explaining ways to prevent HIV infection and transmission; (4) explaining HIV testing; (5) discussing UN employment policy related to HIV/AIDS; (6) discussing the importance of confidentiality and non-discrimination in the workplace; and (7) explaining the PEP Treatment Starter Kit. The briefing includes detailed notes and instructions for the facilitator, with presentation ideas, slides and discussion suggestions.

**WFP: Staff Counsellor's HIV/AIDS Workshop Manual**

In March 2002, a workshop manual was developed by WFP to train staff counsellors about HIV and AIDS. It is designed as a four-hour session.

## **Annex 5**

### **Learning materials developed by the UN related to support for national responses to HIV/AIDS**

The following UN learning materials have been globally produced, either by UNAIDS or by individual agencies. The list is not comprehensive, but it includes examples of materials made available to the learning strategy project thus far<sup>32</sup> (which can be found on the UN HIV/AIDS Learning Strategy website: <http://www.developmentgateway.org/unhivlearning>).

It should be noted that we have *not* included reference documents such as the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment, since the list would be too long for the purposes of this learning strategy.

#### **UNAIDS: *Guide to the Strategic Planning Process for a National Response to HIV/AIDS***

This four-module guide can be used by countries to undertake strategic HIV/AIDS planning. The UNAIDS draft guidelines aim to introduce the main concepts of strategic planning, remaining flexible enough so that they can be adaptable for planning at the national level in the different regions and can serve as a practical assistant for planners at the district or community level. The core Strategic Planning Guide consists of four modules, each handling one dimension of the strategic planning process: the situation analysis, the response analysis, the strategic plan formulation, and the resource mobilization. The four modules, plus an introduction, can be downloaded from the UNAIDS website. The modules are available in English, French, Spanish and Russian.

#### **UNAIDS: Documents website**

The UNAIDS website includes numerous resources for learning about HIV/AIDS planning, programming, implementation and evaluation. The documents are available online, with most in English, French and Spanish and some in other languages. Major topics include: access to drugs, children and young people, care and prevention, epidemiology, human rights and gender issues, economics and development, HIV notification and reporting, impact on health, mother-to-child-transmission, nutrition and HIV/AIDS, persons living with HIV/AIDS, responses at different levels, responses by different sectors, response support activities, specific populations, uniformed services, UNAIDS, vaccines, and voluntary counselling and testing.

#### **UNAIDS and UN Staff College: Responding to HIV/AIDS—UNDAF at Work**

This draft orientation module was developed as part of ongoing collaboration between UNAIDS and the UN Staff College, Turin, to provide materials for training of UN staff on HIV/AIDS. The overall objective of the module is to provide UNDAF facilitators with an understanding of the challenges posed by the HIV epidemic and strategies that have been found successful in combating its spread. It is also to illustrate the way a unified response to HIV/AIDS has been developed as a joint UN programme with key lessons from UNDAF. The three-hour module focuses on: providing an understanding of the major issues raised by the epidemic that UNDAF resource persons/facilitators should know in order to be credible in discussing HIV/AIDS; the organizational lessons emerging from the experience of the HIV/AIDS Theme Groups; and encouraging a personal sense of commitment to becoming fully involved in supporting HIV/AIDS-related work.

#### **UNAIDS and World Bank: *National AIDS Councils: Monitoring and Evaluation Operations Manual***

This manual attempts to: introduce key concepts; present simple, clear procedures, with a checklist of the process, timing and costs of building participatory programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for National AIDS Councils (NACs); offer key tools that implementing partners need for

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<sup>32</sup> Several requests for HIV/AIDS learning resources have been made to Cosponsors over the past year and promises made, yet such resources have not always been forthcoming.

M&E; and provide examples of terms of reference and other M&E management and administration materials. It emphasizes the development of the overall M&E system, in relation to the National Strategic Plan, and programme M&E or the monitoring of services provided through NACs and their implementing partners. This manual is designed as a practical toolkit and roadmap for practitioners to use in designing and implementing programme M&E.

#### **UNFPA and UN System Staff College: Confronting HIV/AIDS: Making a Difference**

This distance-learning course aims to: (1) provide an understanding of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, to promote certain attitudes and to change others so as to eliminate misconceptions and stigma; (2) promote evidence-based HIV/AIDS prevention and care responses; and (3) equip participants with materials and skills to introduce evidence-based HIV/AIDS prevention and care responses. It is estimated that it will take participants 40 hours to complete the course. (This course is not yet available online. For further information, please contact Dr Suman Mehta at UNFPA: mehta@unfpa.org).

#### **UNDP: A Multifaceted Response to the HIV/AIDS Pandemic**

The June 2002 issue of *ESSENTIALS*, published by UNDP's Evaluation Office, synthesizes lessons learned from innovative approaches to capacity-building and assessment to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS in UNDP projects and those of key partner organizations. It should encourage further reflection on the implications of past practices to guide future programming. Such syntheses are useful learning tools for country teams and professionals working on HIV/AIDS programmes.

#### **UNDP: HIV and Development Workshop Guide**

The *HIV and Development Workshop Guide* fosters collective learning and innovation among individuals and groups on the continent of Africa as the basis for an effective multisectoral response to HIV/AIDS. The conceptual basis for the design and development of the guide is multi-disciplinary in nature, integrating theories, concepts and practice. The guide encourages participants and facilitators to build on the existing knowledge and resource base in the communities in Africa. Goals of the workshop guide are to:

- increase awareness of the nature of the impact of the epidemic;
- introduce the HIV/AIDS dimension in the formulation of policies and development programmes;
- analyse approaches to strengthening community coping responses and national response;
- promote the informed constructive engagement of participants in the current reality and future responses of the HIV epidemic; and
- identify the policies and programmes needed at all levels to act on the challenges of the HIV epidemic.

These goals refer to programme development initiatives that are effective, sustainable, coordinated and multisectoral. The materials include a facilitators' manual, a participants' manual and slides for each session. Materials are available in English and French.

#### **UNICEF Workshop on HIV/AIDS, Children and Conflict**

In August 2002, UNICEF held a workshop in Kenya on HIV/AIDS, Children and Conflict. The materials include the three-day agenda, detailed notes on running the key sessions, and handouts for participants. For more details, contact Ms Tamar Renaud at UNICEF, who was responsible for the overall design of the workshop (trenaud@unicef.org).

#### **UNICEF: HIV/AIDS UpDate Newsletter**

Each month, UNICEF HQ issues a newsletter to update professional staff about developments on HIV/AIDS-related issues.

### **UNFPA: HIV Prevention Now, Programme Brief Series**

In an effort to build institutional capacity and to support the work of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in countries and with partners, the HIV/AIDS branch of UNFPA HQ has produced a series of eight Programme Briefs entitled *HIV Prevention Now*. These briefs provide concise and applied information on different aspects of the epidemic and help outline UNFPA's specific role in each area, from a programming perspective. The Programme Briefs are made up of the following: No. 1: Overview; No. 2: Prevention of HIV Infection in Pregnant Women; No. 3: Preventing HIV Infections in Young People; No. 4: Addressing Gender Perspectives in HIV Prevention; No. 5: Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) for HIV Prevention; No. 6: Condom Programming for HIV Prevention; No. 7: HIV Prevention in Humanitarian Settings; and No. 8: Programming for Prevention in Various Stages of an HIV/AIDS Epidemic.

### **UNFPA and UN System Staff College: Distance Learning (DL) Courses on Population Issues. Course 2: Confronting HIV/AIDS—Making a Difference**

The DL Courses on Population Issues is a UNFPA-executed inter-regional project funded by the UNFPA that aims to provide an alternative modality for capacity-building, particularly at the country level. Set up as a distance-learning website initiative, the project has produced six DL courses on key population topics (reproductive health, maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, advocacy, adolescent sexual and reproductive health, and gender) for UNFPA country staff, HQ staff, project personnel, NGOs, other partners in the UN, and national counterparts, as well as a wider public through national institutions. The HIV/AIDS course runs twice a year (in the autumn and in the spring), is tutor-assisted and runs for eight weeks (with five-to-seven study hours per week). The package of course material consists of three course modules (Module 1: An introduction to HIV epidemiology, transmission and prevention; Module 2: Evidence-based HIV/AIDS prevention and care approaches; and Module 3: Communication and counselling for HIV/AIDS), a course guide, a student assessment booklet and an audio tape on the course. For more information on the DL course, contact Beverly Kerr, Distant Learning Coordinator, Technical Support Division, UNFPA HQ ([kerr@unfpa.org](mailto:kerr@unfpa.org)).

### **UNFPA: UNFPA Staff Training Guide on HIV Prevention**

The UNFPA staff training guide on HIV prevention has been developed as a guide for orienting UNFPA technical and field staff on the key issues related to HIV prevention and in line with UNFPA's strategic direction. The guide also aims to broaden the perspectives and capacities of UNFPA's technical staff at all levels, notably those at the country and regional levels, whose knowledge and actions are at the front line of HIV prevention programmes and activities. Likewise, the guide may be used by national and field staff to sensitize and orient their national counterparts. The guide consists of six modules covering critical topics for UNFPA regarding HIV prevention. These are: gender, reaching young people, condom programming, reaching pregnant women, reaching those in specifically vulnerable circumstances, and preventing HIV within the context of national population and development processes. The guide is in the process of being adapted for specific regional staff orientation training workshops. The guide and regional adapted manuals will soon be available on the UNFPA website. For more information, contact Dr Julitta Onabanjo at UNFPA, HIV/AIDS Branch, HQ ([onabanjo@unfpa.org](mailto:onabanjo@unfpa.org)).

### **UNFPA: UNFPA Strategic Guidance on HIV Prevention**

*Strategic Guidance on HIV Prevention* is a publication that resulted from a collective and comprehensive exercise within the UNFPA to identify how best the organization could impact the epidemic. This publication is intended to provide guidance to UNFPA staff and others on the specific niche and comparative advantage of the Fund in addressing the epidemic. In this respect, it is a useful tool for guiding UNFPA staff in planning and actions in relation to prevention of the pandemic, especially at country level, taking into account the status of the epidemic, priorities and the support being provided by other agencies and partners, particularly UNAIDS Cosponsor agencies. The publication can be accessed through the UNFPA website at <http://www.unfpa.org/aids/strategic/index.htm>.

**World Bank: Child Needs Assessment (CNA) Tool Kit**

The CNA Tool Kit provides organizations working in communities impacted by the HIV/AIDS epidemic with a methodology, questionnaire and software for assessing the needs of young children. Using the furnished survey, interviewers gather information about the family and the main caregiver of young children from sample households, as well as facts regarding the basic needs and unmet needs of each child less than eight years of age. After entering survey information using pre-programmed data entry screens, organizations can use a furnished software program to analyse the data and generate reports. These reports can be used to help design service programmes, secure funding, and monitor and evaluate programmes specifically targeting the needs of young children and their families in AIDS-impacted areas.

**UNESCO: Education for the Prevention of Drug Abuse and HIV/AIDS**

This site, in English, French and Spanish, includes a number of resources for the planning, implementation and evaluation of HIV/AIDS programmes in schools. It is a valuable learning resource, and includes best practices for education planners.

**World Food Programme: FAQs**

WFP has published a summary of why and how it should respond to HIV/AIDS. This ‘frequently-asked questions’ approach is an excellent example of how to get important information on HIV/AIDS programming to those staff developing programmes.

## **Annex 6**

### **Learning materials developed outside the UN related to support for national responses to HIV/AIDS**

The following materials have been globally produced by major research institutions and bilaterals. The list is not comprehensive but provides a selection of some of the materials made available to the learning strategy project thus far. The selection was chosen to show the range of resources available from outside the UN, including online resources, toolkits, workshop guides and handbooks. These and other resources can be found on the UN HIV/AIDS Learning Strategy website:

<http://www.developmentgateway.org/unhivlearning>.

#### **HIV/AIDS Mini-course**

This course, from Engender Health, is designed for reproductive health and other health-care providers, staff, planners, and managers in resource-poor settings who would like to improve their knowledge of HIV/AIDS, with the intention of improving the services provided to their clients. Although these are the primary audiences for this course, the information may be useful to others interested in learning more about HIV/AIDS.

#### ***HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care in Resource-Constrained Settings: A Handbook for the Design and Management of Programs***

This 28-chapter handbook from Family Health International (FHI) offers state-of-the-art knowledge on designing and managing HIV/AIDS programmes; reducing risk and vulnerability to HIV infection; strengthening sexually transmitted disease management and services; reducing the risk of HIV infection to infants; reducing the risk of parental transmission; management and support of people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS; and prospects for the future. It is intended to be used by programme managers, technical and programmatic field staff; staff of donor and international partner agencies; health-care providers; and field researchers.

#### ***HIV/AIDS Tool Kit: Building Political Commitment for Effective HIV/AIDS Policies and Programs***

This FHI toolkit contains five modules to assist activists interested in increasing political commitment for effective HIV/AIDS policies and programmes, as follows: (1) Building Political Commitment discusses political commitment and why it is so important to efforts to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic; (2) Measuring Political Commitment describes ways to measure political commitment, using both comprehensive and individual indicators; (3) The AIDS Impact Model (AIM) Approach discusses the approach with a step-by-step description of an AIM application; (4) Building Political Commitment at Subnational Levels discusses approaches that can be used to develop political commitment at the district level; (5) Building Political Commitment through Broadening Participation in the Policy Process describes different approaches for enhancing the participation of all sectors in policy dialogue, planning and evaluation.

#### ***Policy and Advocacy in HIV/AIDS Prevention***

This handbook from Family Health International provides suggestions for getting involved in policy development. It is written for programme managers, policy advocates and others who are interested in advocacy work and in the policy aspects of HIV/AIDS prevention. The handbook illustrates the process of policy development and is written from the perspective of someone such as a programme manager, whose work is regularly influenced by the presence or absence of policy.

#### ***Considering HIV/AIDS in Development Assistance: A Toolkit***

This toolkit has been prepared to assist staff of the Commission of the European Communities and

consultants in considering the implications of the HIV epidemic when providing development assistance. Only the appropriate tools need be used at the appropriate time. The five items in the toolkit are: (1) An Introduction to HIV/AIDS; (2) Assessing the National Importance of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic; (3) A Sectoral Checklist for three sectors, namely infrastructure (transport), education and rural development; (4) Guidelines for Including HIV/AIDS in Project Cycle Management; and (5) Including HIV/AIDS in Consultants' Terms of Reference.

***A Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Workshops with NGOs/CBOs Responding to HIV/AIDS***

This guide aims to support people who facilitate participatory workshops with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) responding to HIV/AIDS in developing countries. It is based on the practical experiences of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance. The Alliance is an international NGO that helps communities in developing countries to prevent the spread of HIV, support and care for those infected, and ease the impact of HIV on families and communities. Since its establishment in 1993, the Alliance has provided both financial and technical support to over 1500 HIV/AIDS projects and has worked with NGOs and CBOs from over 40 countries.

**Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV in Africa: Practical Guidance for Programs**

This USAID paper summarizes current knowledge about mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) and provides practical guidance for introducing interventions to prevent MTCT in Africa that are safe, affordable, feasible, culturally acceptable, sustainable, and effective in a variety of African settings. Furthermore, this paper may also be used for policy dialogue and coordination of efforts among other partner agencies and NGOs at international, regional and national levels.

***Refugees and AIDS: What should the humanitarian community do?***

*Refugee and AIDS* was produced by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children under the auspices of the Interagency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Refugee Situations, with support from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the US State Department. The document was developed to provide user-friendly guidance and mobilize humanitarian actors working in refugee settings to address HIV/AIDS. It aims to stimulate policy-makers, managers and implementers to strengthen their response to HIV/AIDS.

***Gender, HIV and Human Rights: A Training Manual***

HIV/AIDS requires a gender-specific response, and this manual has been prepared in response to that need. It aims to help trainers enhance their understanding of the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS, so that they can then effectively influence a critical mass of change-makers in their spheres of influence to undertake appropriate responses to the challenges being posed by the epidemic. This manual shows that neither AIDS nor gender disparities are unbeatable. The manual draws on more than a decade's experience from the field, building on the lessons learned and analysing and synthesizing them within the conceptual framework of gender and human rights. It is available in English, French and Spanish.

**Care of Women with HIV: Living in Limited-Resource Settings**

In response to the international HIV/AIDS epidemic, the JHPIEGO Corporation (an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University) is working with the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and USAID to develop training and education programmes in limited-resource settings on the care of women with HIV. The first product of this collaboration is a series of tutorials designed to provide physicians, faculty and health-care trainers with the technical knowledge they need to provide high-quality health-care services to women with HIV/AIDS and to train other health-care providers. To date, 11 tutorials have been developed using the following resources: (1) *A Guide to the Clinical*

*Care of Women with HIV* (DHHS) (2) *HIV/AIDS and Nutrition: A Review of the Literature and Recommendations for Nutritional Care and Support in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Academy for Educational Development - AED). (3) *Scaling Up Antiretroviral Therapy in Resource-Limited Settings: Guidelines for a Public Health Approach* (WHO) (draft 2002).

### ***Partnership with the Media***

This handbook is one in a series developed by AIDSCAP's Behavior Change Communication (BCC) Unit. Its objective is to provide complementary ways to establish a long-lasting partnership with the media. It provides: ideas for four events to be held with media professionals; suggestions for encouraging the development of a network of media professionals interested in HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infection (STI) issues; and suggestions for providing journalists with incentives for covering HIV/AIDS/STI issues.

### ***Behaviour Change through Mass Communication***

This is one in a series of practical 'how-to' handbooks developed by AIDSCAP's Behavior Change Communication (BCC) Unit in collaboration with the Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Unit. It is intended to help programme and clinic managers design behavioural change communication components for STD control and prevention projects. The handbook provides suggestions and examples for: assessing the STD beliefs, concerns and practices of clients and community members; expanding the role of BCC activities in the clinic; providing the education and skills training that STD clients need for behavioural change; training health workers in the communication aspects of the prevention and management of STDs; involving the community in the BCC programme; using the stages of behavioural change to develop appropriate BCC messages.

### ***Commodity Management in VCT: A Planning Guide***

To help with the establishment, management, and scaling up of VCT programmes at both national and programme levels, RPM (Rational Pharmaceutical Management) Plus, in collaboration with Family Health International (FHI), recently released a practical guide to VCT commodity management. *Commodity Management in VCT Programs: a Planning Guide* recommends a systemized approach to strengthening commodity management for VCT services. The guide is intended for a wide audience, including national programme planners, policy-makers, donors supporting VCT service delivery, and managers of VCT services. The document provides practical guidance on: (1) selecting HIV test kits and other essential commodities for VCT; (2) estimating quantities of HIV test kits for procurement and selecting suppliers; (3) storage management, stock control, and record keeping; and (4) assuring the quality of HIV test kits and the VCT programme, and ensuring that HIV commodities are used safely and appropriately. The guide also contains real-life case studies from developing countries that have successfully improved VCT commodity management, as well as step-by-step instructions to assist programme managers in calculating HIV test kit needs for VCT programmes.

### ***Kaiser Foundation HealthCasts on HIV/AIDS***

As the webcasting service of kaisernetwork.org, HealthCast streams a wide range of health policy events, including seminars, conferences and press briefings. These are excellent learning tools. HealthCast provides live and archived coverage of events on HIV/AIDS. Recent HealthCasts include: Highlights from the XIV International AIDS Conference; Role of Public-Private Partnerships in the Global Fight against HIV/AIDS; HIV/AIDS and Security; Tuberculosis and HIV; Gender Inequality and Women's Health; HIV/AIDS and Security; AIDS Treatment and AIDS Awareness among Youth; MTCT-PLUS; Understanding AIDS among Refugees and the Displaced.

***Fondation du Présent: moderated electronic discussion forums***

The *Fondation du Présent*, Geneva, brings together a multisectoral community of over 10,000 members—more than half of them in developing countries—to raise and jointly address health-related issues, particularly HIV/AIDS. The innovative ‘moderated electronic discussion forums’ foster debate on HIV/AIDS-related issues. By disseminating community-based knowledge and experiences, the *Fondation du Présent* helps build collective consensus on HIV/AIDS, from local to international levels, in the countries most affected. Training is provided to build the capacity of users and to establish partnerships with organizations responding to the epidemic. Individuals may join global, regional, national and/or topic-specific forums.

## NOTES

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The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) brings together nine UN agencies in a common effort to fight the epidemic: the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Bank.

UNAIDS, as a cosponsored programme, unites the responses to the epidemic of its nine cosponsoring organizations and supplements these efforts with special initiatives. Its purpose is to lead and assist an expansion of the international response to HIV/AIDS on all fronts. UNAIDS works with a broad range of partners – governmental and nongovernmental, business, scientific and lay – to share knowledge, skills and best practices across boundaries.

## **United Nations Learning Strategy on HIV/AIDS**

Building competence of the UN and its staff  
to respond to HIV/AIDS

In April 2003, the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) approved a learning strategy to help the UN system develop the competence of its staff in the context of HIV/AIDS. The goals of the strategy are: to develop the knowledge and competence of the UN and its staff so that they are able to best support national responses to HIV/AIDS; and to ensure that all UN staff members are able to make informed decisions to protect themselves from HIV and, if they are infected or affected by HIV, to ensure that they know where to turn for the best possible care and treatment. This includes ensuring that staff members fully understand the UN's HIV/AIDS workplace policies on eliminating stigma and discrimination against those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

The learning strategy provides the UN family with a vision and plan for the way forward. It includes expected outcomes, minimum standards and desirable additional standards for UN learning initiatives.

The learning strategy has been prepared for UN Country Teams and HIV/AIDS Theme Groups at country level and for those concerned with HIV/AIDS programmes and workplace issues in all UN organizations at the global and regional levels.



Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

**UNAIDS**

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UNAIDS – 20 avenue Appia – 1211 Geneva 27 – Switzerland  
Telephone: (+41) 22 791 36 66 – Fax: (+41) 22 791 41 87  
E-mail: [unaids@unaids.org](mailto:unaids@unaids.org) – Internet: <http://www.unaids.org>