

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

Report on Education



March 2006

House Report 109-152, accompanying H.R. 3057, called upon the Office of the United States Global AIDS Coordinator to report as follows:

The Committee believes that the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator should work closely with the basic education programs operated by USAID to identify opportunities for collaboration. The Committee requests the Office of the Global HIV/AIDS Coordinator, working with USAID, to provide a report not later than 120 days after enactment of this Act on how the Emergency Plan is collaborating with USAID on such programs.

Report to Congress Mandated by House Report 109-152
Accompanying H.R. 3057

Submitted by the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator
U.S. Department of State

March 2006

For too many children, education has been a casualty of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Millions of children face enormous obstacles to schooling. In families where one or both parents are chronically ill or have died, there is often little money to pay for school and other education related expenses. HIV-associated illnesses often increase family health care expenses while inhibiting the ability to earn an income. Children, especially young girls, are often required to care for sick family members. Additionally, the grief a child experiences in anticipating or seeing their parents die inhibits a child's ability to concentrate on learning, even if able to attend school. Many teachers have been infected with HIV/AIDS, and their illnesses and deaths have strained Ministry of Education budgets and personnel most dramatically in the classroom where the numbers of children have exploded in some cases to over 100.

Yet schooling remains an essential element of a robust individual and societal future, and partnerships with the education sector provide important opportunities to fight back against the pandemic. The United States Government (USG) supports efforts to address the interface between the education sector and HIV/AIDS through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). PEPFAR supports programs in schools that offer important prevention education for youth, as well as working to ensure that children who are orphaned or vulnerable as a result of HIV and AIDS can benefit from schooling. In addition the USG supports interventions to strengthen basic education more broadly through assistance to the education sector. It is central to the Emergency Plan approach that partnerships and synergies between these programs are created to ensure that children affected by AIDS have access to education, and that schools are a safe resource center for these children. In Fiscal Year 2005, PEPFAR supported services for 1.2 million orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs), including access to education.

The Emergency Plan "wraps around" other organizations that promote access to education for those affected by and infected with HIV/AIDS, leveraging a comprehensive response for OVCs. The Emergency Plan takes advantage of collaborative opportunities with USAID's basic education program support of the multilateral Education

for All initiative, which shares many of PEPFAR's target populations. The Education for All goals include:

- Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs; and
- Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education, and achieving gender equity in education by 2015, with a focus on assuring girls' full and equitable access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

A key example is with USG's African Education Initiative (AEI), implemented through USAID. The goal of AEI is to improve educational opportunities for Africa's children so that they may lead happier, healthier lives, and become productive members of society. In June of 2005, President Bush recognized the importance of AEI by doubling the funding for the initiative. Over the next four years, the United States will provide \$400 million for AEI to train half a million teachers and provide scholarships for 300,000 young people, mostly girls. Many partner programs are already in place with the Emergency Plan and AEI.

A central precept of these partnerships is strong coordination in planning and implementation at the country level. For example, the Ambassador's Girls Scholarship program is working with PEPFAR teams in Zambia and Mozambique to provide scholarships to OVCs and other marginalized children. USAID education staff in Zambia are collaborating with the PEPFAR team in-country to develop a pilot program focusing on ensuring school opportunities for OVCs. In Malawi, PEPFAR coordinates closely with a School Fees Reform

Program, decreasing the cost of education and enabling 20,000 OVCs in the Dowa district to attend school.

Another example of promising partnerships is the HERO (Help Educate at-Risk Orphans and Vulnerable Children) program. With almost \$3 million leveraged through the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA), support through AEI, and linkages with PEPFAR in-country programs, funds will support necessary school-based programs for OVCs, initially in South Africa, Namibia and Ethiopia. With increased funding for AEI, additional resources will be available to create new and scale up existing educational programs for HIV/AIDS–infected and affected youth.

An example of effective prevention education in the schools is Uganda’s Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communicating to Youth (PIASCY). PIASCY has developed, printed and distributed teacher’s guides to all schools in the country, trained teachers to deliver age-appropriate life skills messages (including abstinence and faithfulness messages in primary schools), and piloted a guidance and counseling program to provide teachers with the skills to assist OVCs within the school setting. The PIASCY program is national, covering nearly 15,000 schools in Uganda and helping to prepare the next generation to remain safe from HIV/AIDS. PEPFAR also supports the Window of Hope teacher and student HIV/AIDS manuals in Namibia and Ghana, which teach behavior change and combat stigma.

The USG is also supporting host government efforts to develop standard packages of OVC services and program monitoring and evaluation. In Kenya, the government and international partners have collaborated to create an OVC quality package that includes six essential services that must be provided in every OVC program (health, education, nutrition, psychosocial support and protection). PEPFAR supports host government initiatives to develop national policies, protocols, and guidelines. USG supports dissemination of these to communities, as well as efforts to inform communities of the rights of their OVCs.

The Emergency Plan has created an interagency technical working group on all issues pertaining to OVCs, of which education is a strong component. This group includes representatives for the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, USAID (including representatives of the education sector), Peace Corps, HHS, and DOD. This group plans to develop a guiding strategy – Principles of Collaboration – which will allow it to identify the best ongoing opportunities to leverage program activities to support the education of children with and affected by HIV/AIDS.