



**Department of Education**

**HIV/AIDS Policy  
for the  
National Education System  
of Papua New Guinea**





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# Foreword

Today, as a nation, we in Papua New Guinea face one of our greatest challenges in the form of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The Government has provided leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDS through its National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS 2004-2008. The National Department of Education has contributed to this fight with the development of a forward-thinking and comprehensive policy, which provides principles and strategies to guide the work of all those involved in the national education system. The Department will also assist in developing guidelines for provinces, districts, schools, colleges and workplaces to support their implementation of the policy.

This HIV/AIDS Policy for the National Education System of Papua New Guinea is a major step in the Government's multi-sectoral response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in our country. But words alone will not win the battle against HIV/AIDS. To be successful, we need the strong support, commitment and active participation of every person at every level of the national education system.

People will make the difference. Each person must make it their individual responsibility to protect themselves, their families, their communities and their workplaces from HIV infection. Collectively, we will learn from each other, care for each other and support each other.

In our fight against HIV/AIDS, the focus must be on education. Our children are our future leaders of Papua New Guinea. We must therefore focus on educating our children, as well as ourselves and our employees, and we must take a leading role in educating the broader community of Papua New Guinea. It is important that all levels of the national education system – from schools and colleges to district, provincial and national departments of education – implement this policy.

Hon Michael Laimo, CBE, MP  
Minister of Education  
December 2005

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# Introduction

In 2004, the Government of Papua New Guinea developed the National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS 2004-2008. In the Foreword, the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea said, “the impact of the epidemic at family and household levels will have spiralling impact on the national economy.” He called on leaders at all levels to take an active role in supporting the national response.

In 2003, the Government of Papua New Guinea introduced the HIV/AIDS Management and Prevention Act (HAMP Act) which was designed “to protect the health of everyone by supporting the work that is being done to manage existing cases of HIV/AIDS and prevent new ones.”

As the largest employer organisation in Papua New Guinea, the Ministry of Education is taking a lead in developing a sector-wide policy as part of that national response.

The national education system serves more than one million students and employs over 35,000 teachers in 4,000 elementary schools, 3,300 primary schools, 170 secondary schools, 140 vocational schools, seven technical and business colleges and eight teachers colleges, including the Papua New Guinea Education Institute. Schools and teachers colleges within the national education system are administered either by the government or by one of a number of church education agencies. The system is decentralised with some governance responsibilities devolved to Provincial Education Boards, Districts and Local-Level Governments, school Boards of Management, Boards of Governors and Governing Councils.

The National Education Plan 2005-2014 acknowledges HIV/AIDS as “one of the greatest challenges to the health and future of the nation.” It signals that an HIV/AIDS policy for education is an “essential way of demonstrating the commitment education has to educating its employees and young people about the disease.”

This HIV/AIDS Policy for the National Education System of Papua New Guinea has been developed in the context of the latest data about the spread of HIV/AIDS in Papua New Guinea and the estimated impact on education and on the country as a whole. HIV was first identified in Papua New Guinea in 1987. The updated 2004 Report of the National Consensus Workshop of Papua New Guinea states that approximately 11,000 cases of HIV have been reported nationally.



The projection of these figures to include currently undetected cases means that HIV/AIDS is now a generalised epidemic in Papua New Guinea, with estimates close to 70,000 people infected with HIV. This places Papua New Guinea with the highest rate of HIV in the Pacific and the fourth highest rate in the Asia Pacific region. Most people in Papua New Guinea know someone close who has died from an AIDS-related illness or is infected with HIV.

The following features characterise the spread of HIV/AIDS in Papua New Guinea:

- The main form of transmission is unprotected heterosexual contact.
- It occurs in every province.
- It is increased by a mobile population; physical and sexual abuse against women and children; the abuse of substances including alcohol and drugs; the high risk social categories of a wealthy mobile sector and an increasingly poor sector; the cultural tradition of polygamous marriages; and promiscuity and multiple sexual partners.

Because access to money and mobility are features of the education workforce in Papua New Guinea, it is estimated that the current rate of infection in the education workforce could be the same or greater than the general adult population. If the current rate of the spread of HIV continues, this will have a devastating impact on the national education system in Papua New Guinea. The greatest impact will be in two areas:

- The education workforce will be more susceptible to being infected, given their relative access to money and mobility. Consequently, a significant proportion of teachers, lecturers, teacher trainers, support staff, education managers and administrators will either fall ill, die or be required to care for family members.
- A significant number of students will be infected, die or be required to care for infected parents and family members. Some students will be forced to leave school because they will not be able to pay school fees. Literacy levels, particularly amongst girls, will decline. As a result, a proportion of the next generation will be lost to the workforce and to the community.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic thus has the potential to negatively affect the demand, supply and quality of education in Papua New Guinea, threatening the goals and targets of the National Education Plan 2005-2014.



### **Scope of the Policy**

The Policy applies to all students, teachers, lecturers, teacher trainers, trainee teachers, managers (including Boards of Management, Boards of Governors and Governing Councils), administrators, and professional, support and ancillary staff at all levels of the national education system.

This policy can also be used as a guide for other education institutions and schools outside the national education system.

The Policy takes into consideration the importance of maintaining partnerships with parents and other members of the school community.



# Goal of the Policy

In accordance with the vision of the National Education Plan 2005-2014, the goal of the policy is for the national education system to participate effectively in Papua New Guinea's multi-sectoral response aimed at reducing the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic through the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a comprehensive, relevant and forward thinking response to HIV/AIDS at all levels of the national education system.

## ***Guiding principles***

### ***Principle 1: Access to education***

Every person of school age has a right to education. No student, including orphans and vulnerable children, will be denied access to education on the basis of his or her actual or perceived HIV status.

### ***Principle 2: Access to information***

Every person has the right to relevant and factual HIV and AIDS information, knowledge and life skills at every level of the national education system.

### ***Principle 3: Culture and context***

Information, education, counselling, care and support shall be sensitive to the age, gender, language, culture and social circumstances of all persons at all times.

### ***Principle 4: Equity and equality***

All students, teachers, trainee teachers, managers, administrators and support staff who are infected or affected have the same rights, opportunities and responsibilities as every other person in the national education system.

### ***Principle 5: Privacy and confidentiality***

Every person has the right to privacy and confidentiality regarding their health, including information related to their HIV status. No institution or workplace is permitted to require a student, teacher, employee or member of a governing body to undergo an HIV test. However, people are encouraged to take the opportunity to access voluntary counselling and testing (VCT).

No person may disclose information relating to the HIV status of another person, without his or her consent. Any exceptions to this are documented in the HAMP Act (Sections 22 - 23). In the case of children 16 years and under, the best interest of the child shall guide decisions concerning disclosure.



***Principle 6: Personal responsibility***

Every person has a moral responsibility to protect themselves and a moral and legal responsibility to protect others from HIV infection. Intentional transmission of HIV to another person is a serious criminal offence. (HAMP Act, Section 23)

***Principle 7: Protection from stigma and discrimination***

Every person will be protected from all forms of stigma and discrimination, including discrimination based on actual, known or perceived HIV status of themselves or family members in all workplaces and learning environments.

Principle 8: Access to care, treatment and support

All infected and affected students, teachers and other personnel in the national education system have the right to referral services for care, treatment, support and counselling.

***Principle 9: Fair labour practices***

Every person, whether infected or affected, has the right to fair labour practices in terms of recruitment, appointment, deployment and continued enjoyment of employment, promotion, training and benefits. Fitness to work is a significant consideration.

HIV testing is not a requirement for any of the above practices.

***Principle 10: Safety in workplace and learning institutions***

All workplace and learning institutions have a responsibility to minimise the risk of HIV transmission by adopting universal infection control precautions in all blood-related incidents and accidents.

***Principle 11: Protection from sexual harassment and abuse***

Sexual harassment, bullying, abuse and exploitation will not be tolerated in any workplace or learning institution.

***Principle 12: Gender responsiveness***

HIV and AIDS affect and impact on women and men, girls and boys differently due to their biological, socio-cultural and economic circumstances and opportunities.

Application of all aspects of this policy will be responsive to the different needs of men and women, boys and girls.



***Principle 13: Involvement of people living with HIV and AIDS***

Within the boundaries of confidentiality, people living with HIV and AIDS will be encouraged and supported to be involved in the national education system's response to HIV/AIDS.

***Principle 14: Student participation***

Students will be encouraged and supported to be active participants in HIV/AIDS advocacy, awareness and peer education activities.

***Principle 15: Consultation and partnerships***

The policy will be implemented by the national education system in consultation and partnership with communities, stakeholders and other organisations.

***Principle 16: Capacity building***

There will be commitment to capacity building for all persons participating in the implementation of this policy through appropriate training and development.



## **Objective**

Students acquire the knowledge and information and develop appropriate life skills to be free of HIV infection all their lives.

## **Strategies**

### **Information and awareness**

Information will be provided on HIV and AIDS.

- Accurate information and materials on HIV and AIDS will be made available and accessible to all schools, institutions and students. This will include information on the use of condoms, when developmentally appropriate for students, as part of the Government's ABC message.
- Teachers will be trained in HIV and sexual health matters.
- Appropriate school personnel will be trained in HIV and sexual health counselling and support
- Awareness training will be conducted for communities, parents and other family members.

### **Curriculum**

Education will be provided on HIV and AIDS.

- Information about HIV/AIDS, character development and life skills (eg decision-making, relationships building) will be integrated into all appropriate curriculum areas and subjects at all levels of schooling.
- Appropriate teaching and learning resources which are gender sensitive, will be developed to support HIV/AIDS curriculum programs.
- Through in-service and pre-service programs, educators will be trained to effectively integrate HIV prevention information into lessons and the curriculum.
- Peer education programs will be developed and implemented to support the school curriculum.

### **Environment**

Teaching and learning environments will be safe and health-promoting.

- All schools should strive to become health promoting schools.
- Schools will promote healthy lifestyles and good nutrition programs.
- Staff and students will work together to create an environment free of discrimination, exploitation, sexual harassment, bullying, abuse and violence.



- Teachers and students in every school and institution will be trained in universal infection control precautions.
- Basic first aid kits will be maintained in every school and institution.

### **Partnerships**

Partnerships will be established.

- Partnerships will be established with relevant community-based organisations and non-government organisations (NGOs) to provide information, prevention and counselling services for students.
- Partnerships will be established with community-based youth groups to support access to information and peer education.

### **Female and male students**

The different needs and circumstances of female and male students will be addressed.

- Implementation of the policy will take into account the different biological, social and cultural needs of males and females.
- Strategies will recognise that girls and young women are in a particularly vulnerable position in relation to HIV/AIDS.
- Schools and institutions with student boarders will make additional provisions for the protection of female and male students.
- Schools will teach students about gender roles, the influence of power in male-female relationships and responsible and protective behaviours.



## **Objective**

Schools and institutions will be positive learning environments where all infected and affected students can access information, care, counselling and support.

## **Strategies**

### **Information and awareness**

- Training and information will be provided on the care, counselling and support for students.
- Teachers and appropriate school personnel will be trained in providing an inclusive and supportive environment offering care and support.
- School counsellors will be trained to provide counselling and support for students infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and sexual assault and abuse.
- Schools will provide information on available support and referral services within the community for parents and other family members.

### **Partnerships**

Partnerships will be established to facilitate access to appropriate support and referral services. These services will include:

- information on reproductive and sexual health
- PEP (Post Exposure Prophylaxis) treatment
- VCT availability
- medical treatment including antiretroviral therapy
- care and treatment of opportunistic infections
- HIV/AIDS and sexual assault counseling
- grief and bereavement counseling
- counselling for positive living
- care and support agencies (eg. home-based care services).

### **Support**

Provision will be made to support the learning of infected and affected students.

- Flexible learning arrangements will be implemented for students unable to attend on a regular basis.
- Schools and institutions will provide training for teachers and students in skills for peer support, negotiation and conflict resolution.
- Schools and institutions will provide safety, security and stability for the students.



## **Objective**

Work environments will be positive and proactive in the prevention of HIV in the workforce and be responsive to the needs of their infected and affected employees, by providing appropriate information, referrals, care and support.

## **Strategies**

### **Safe work places**

HIV/AIDS safe work places will be established at all levels of the national education system.

- Occupational, health and safety guidelines will incorporate HIV/AIDS prevention and care strategies.
- Staff will be trained in universal infection control precautions.
- Basic first-aid kits will be maintained in each workplace and condoms made available, as appropriate. (It is the policy of the National AIDS Council Secretariat (NACS) to provide condoms for protection in the workplace.)

### **Information**

Employees will have access to accurate HIV/AIDS information, prevention, testing and counselling programs in all workplaces in the national education system.

- Information sessions on HIV/AIDS, including the HAMP Act, will be conducted.
- Resource materials will be developed and distributed.
- Awareness programs will be conducted on sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace.
- Partnerships will be established at the community level to provide information on the prevention of HIV for employees.

### **Care and support services**

Care and support will be available to infected and affected employees, in partnership and collaboration with agencies and services.

- Access to counselling, treatment and support will be ensured through referrals to appropriate services.
- Systems to maintain confidentiality and privacy of personal information will be established.
- Procedures will be in place to prevent and/or address discrimination and stigmatisation.



### **Workplace practices**

Human resource management policies and practices at all levels of the national education system will address the issues of HIV/AIDS.

- No person will be discriminated against on the basis of HIV/AIDS in terms of recruitment, appointment, deployment, employment, promotion, training or benefits. Fitness to work will be a significant consideration.
- No person will be required to undergo HIV testing as part of their employment arrangement.
- Systems for negotiating flexibility in work responsibilities will be in place for employees who are infected or affected by HIV/AIDS.
- The different needs and circumstances of men and women in the workplace will be addressed.
- All related government, legislative and ethical guidelines and policies, including Codes of Conduct, will be implemented.



## **Objective**

Management structures and systems will be in place and partnerships developed and sustained, at all levels of the national education system to plan, implement and monitor quality education in the context of HIV/AIDS.

### **Strategies**

#### **Management structures**

All levels of the national education system will establish and maintain HIV/AIDS management and support structures.

- An HIV/AIDS Coordination and Monitoring Group will be established at the national level to coordinate planning and to monitor the implementation of the policy.
- The NDoE will create a position of National HIV/AIDS Coordinator.
- Provinces, districts, colleges and schools will use existing structures to coordinate and monitor implementation of the policy at their level.

#### **Advocacy**

Staff at all levels of the national education system will publicly support and be advocates for the policy.

- The NDoE will inform managers and leaders in the national education system and all stakeholders of the policy and distribute it to them.
- The NDoE, provinces, districts, colleges and schools will identify appropriate methods for raising awareness of the policy and its implementation.
- Staff at all levels of the national education system will act as positive role models, create awareness and share information about the education sector's response to HIV/AIDS.
- Schools will encourage and support their parent communities to understand and be advocates for HIV prevention and care.

#### **Planning and budgeting**

Management structures at all levels of the system will plan and budget for resources to support the implementation of the policy.

- Education plans at the national, provincial, district and school levels will include HIV/AIDS implementation strategies.
- Priority will be given to HIV/AIDS support in the planning and budgeting process.
- The national education system will advocate for adequate resources to support its implementation of the policy with Government, stakeholders and donor agencies.
- All levels of the system and Government must work together to plan for and resource adequate infrastructure (eg. housing) to support teacher postings, particularly in remote areas.



### **Partnerships**

The national education system will make deliberate efforts to establish, manage and sustain partnerships for the benefit of its response to HIV/AIDS.

- All levels of the national education system will recognise the roles and contributions of their sectoral and development partners and encourage them to participate in the implementation of this policy.
- The NDoE will work closely with the National AIDS Council Secretariat and other government and non-government organisations in support of the multi-sectoral response to HIV/AIDS.
- The national education system will establish links with appropriate referral facilities offering care, treatment, support and counselling services.

### **Support for implementation**

Implementation of the policy will be supported by guidelines developed by NDoE in consultation with provinces, districts, schools and colleges.

- Guidelines will be developed for the implementation, resourcing and monitoring of the policy in schools and colleges.
- Guidelines will be developed for the implementation, resourcing and monitoring of the policy in all NDoE workplaces. As part of that, employees' employment and repatriation benefits will be reviewed and amended, as appropriate, to ensure there is no discrimination against staff affected by HIV/AIDS.
- Guidelines will be developed for the implementation, resourcing and monitoring of the policy at provincial and district education levels.
- The guidelines will be distributed and supported by appropriate training and development for key personnel.

### **Data collection and research**

The review and development of the policy and its implementation strategies will be informed by best practice research to monitor impact, trends and the effectiveness of the policy.

- The NDoE will facilitate the collection and analysis of information on HIV/AIDS and the national education system in partnership with relevant agencies.
- The national education system will coordinate and collaborate with other stakeholders on research in areas of mutual interest.
- All research will be conducted in accordance with internationally accepted ethical principles and will respect the rights, privacy and confidentiality of every person involved.
- The NDoE will disseminate and share the results of any research on a regular basis within the national education system and to all stakeholders.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

Implementation of the policy will be monitored and evaluated and the information used for future planning, resource allocation and management.

- All levels of the national education system will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the policy in partnership with relevant agencies.



- Adequate resources will be allocated to support monitoring, research and evaluation activities.
- All levels of the national education system will report on the implementation of the policy in their annual reports.

**Policy implementation and review**

This policy will be implemented across all levels of the national education system and be reviewed to ensure it remains relevant to the needs of the system.

- All levels of the national education system will develop and enact their own implementation plans on HIV/AIDS that are consistent with this policy.
- This policy will be reviewed and updated in five years time as part of the review of the National Education Plan 2005-2014.

***People  
will make  
the difference***



**Young people  
are the future  
of PNG**



**Each person  
must make it  
their individual  
responsibility**



*spreading the word . . . .*





*spreading the word . . . .*