Creating a Caring School

A Toolkit for School Management Teams with Accompanying Guide

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- Extract: *Functions and Roles of AIDS Councils* on pp 47-48, IDASA Handout, Citizens at the Centre (2005): Cape Town.
- Fact Sheet: *Food Groups* on pp 57-58, in Household Food Security Module 1, UNISA: Pretoria.
- Ideas for aftercare activities: *Activities to build identity and creativity* on pp 75-77 and *Letter of Appeal* (adapted) on p118 from MIET (Africa) (2006) Handbook: A Resource for turning your school into a centre of care and support. Africa Ignite: Durban.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Creating a Caring School: A Guide for School Management Teams with this accompanying *Toolkit*, is intended to assist school leadership and management to better understand and address the socio-economic context of schooling and the barriers to education, in particular HIV and AIDS and poverty, that the majority of South Africa's learners face daily.

Addressing these barriers is a prerequisite for teaching and learning to take place. A number of workable school-based interventions are presented in the guide and toolkit, these include, the strengthening of school nutrition programmes and the implementation of aftercare and counselling support. Given the multidimensional nature of HIV and AIDS and poverty and its related socio-economic problems, an integrated, cross-sectoral approach is proposed for addressing the challenges facing education. Schools are urged to collaborate with both government and non-government organisations, to set up and maintain *networks of support* as a strategy or method for harnessing capacity and resources.

A key component of the toolkit is the introduction of a simple school-based data management system (Tool 32). For too long, data collected at school-level has been sent to the provincial departments of education for planning purposes, but not used for planning at *school-level*. The proposed school-based data management system comprises a set of check lists and templates for identifying vulnerable learners, recording and storing relevant information about learners, as well as for tracking their progress. It is hoped that by introducing this system, that school-level capacity will be strengthened to better plan for and prioritise support interventions for vulnerable learners.

The activities in the guide and use of the tools provided in this toolkit, culminate in the preparation of a *school-based care and support plan* in Unit 8. Tools in this unit include guidelines and templates for creating a vision statement for the school; tools for conducting a SWOT analysis and tools for identifying and describing the strategic goals that lead to the preparation of an action plan. A plan that will serve to map the way towards creating a school that functions as a centre of care and support.

The guide provides an understanding of the ways in which HIV and AIDS and other socio-economic barriers plague our education system, at the same time offering useful examples of how ordinary schools, often in poor communities, have found ways of successfully addressing these challenges.

Together, the guide and this toolkit, which is comprised of more than 30 tools and other useful information, provide a rich resource for supporting the School Management Team (SMT) in their endeavour to create a caring school.

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The structure of the toolkit and guide

The toolkit accompanies the guide, providing a large range of tools that are the "how to" or practical component of the resource.

The structure of the toolkit mirrors that of the guide for easy cross referencing. Both components are divided into eight units. In the guide, reference to specific tools is highlighted with the use of a blue **Toolkit Icon** in the left margin. The tools are correspondingly numbered and arranged chronologically, per unit in the toolkit.

How to use the toolkit

While the guide is intended to assist school leadership to see the bigger picture and to better understand why and how a specific strategy works or is useful, the toolkit is intended to provide SMTs with the actual tools that will help them to plan, implement and manage school-based strategies that support vulnerable learners. School management teams are encouraged to adapt and use these tools to suit their needs and context.

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