

APPRAISAL : SYNTHESIS

Title : Health and Family life Education. Activity Guide. Grade One and Two.

Type of document : Curriculum

Year of publication: /

Author/publisher : MOE Guyana, UNICEF

Number of pages : 126

Date of appraisal : January 2009

Abstract

Health and Family Life Education, Activity Guide, Grade One is a document edited by the Ministry of Education of Guyana. It has been developed to assist teachers as they start the process of delivering life skills based education. The questions which accompany each scenario are intended to offer guidance in developing the skill. The guide contains 14 topics divided into 3 Units. The different topics are, Unit 1 : (1) Civic Responsibility; (2) Who I am?/Myself; (3) Environmental Health; (4) Right to a Name and Nationality; (5) Stages of Growth; (6) Unit 2 : Time, its importance; (7) Family Values; (8) Good and Bad Habits; (9) Garbage Disposal; (10) Sexual Abuse; (11) The Right to Equality; (12) Unit 3 : Money; (13) Expressing Feelings; and (14) Diseases.

Health and Family Life Education, Activity Guide, Grade Two is a document edited by the Ministry of Education of Guyana in 2004. It has been developed to assist teachers as they start the process of delivering life skills based education. The questions which accompany each scenario are intended to offer guidance in developing the skill. The guide tackles 15 life skills topics : (1) Use and Abuse of Language; (2) Self-Esteem; (3) Environment Health; (4) Right to a Name; (5) Stages of Growth; (6) Punishment and Discipline; (7) My Family; (8) Our Bodies/Ourselves; (9) Respecting Cultural and Religious Values; (10) Gender Relationships and Understanding each other; (11) Conflict Resolution/Problem Solving; (12) Relationships at Home; (13) Appropriate Eating Habits; (14) Making Rules; and (15) Sexual Abuse.

Notes

These documents are part of a set of manuals designed to provide teachers with an integrated and consistent approach to the application of values education, and to develop a Life Skills, Health and Family Life Education, Guidance and Citizenship curriculum using the five themes of: Education, Family, Health, Human Rights and Human Sexuality.

Strengths

1) These materials (grade 1 and 2) were realized by the Ministry of Education of Guyana in collaboration with the CARICOM multi-Agency Health and Family Life Education program. These materials are part of the official curriculum but are not integrated in a defined HIV and AIDS education policy framework. The Ministry of Education emphasizes the promotion and delivery of Life Skills based Health and Family Life Education from Grades 1 to 9 in schools. In the guides, it is noted that three infant field officers were selected to take part in the elaboration of these guides. They were assigned specific topics from the curriculum guide for each of which 4 scenarios were developed.

2) Each lesson deals with one topic and several life skills to develop. Learners have to explore one scenario and ask some questions related to the scenario described. The questions which accompany each scenario are intended to offer guidance in developing the skill. Teachers may think of other questions which are more appropriate. Teachers can decide to focus on one unit or alternatively the focus may be on one or two themes. The material invites students to think about their own behaviour, feelings and emotions and to change if necessary, so they can become healthy, responsible and tolerant adult.

3) The goals of the material are relevant. The module is designed to provide a wide range of relevant life skills within the framework of the HFLE curriculum. One of the objectives of these materials is to enable learners to adopt protective behaviours for their health and well-being, show respect and concern for others. Several activities in grade 1 and 2 address topics such as : “we are different, I must accept who I am, I express my feelings without being rude...”.

4) The activity guide grade 2 contains several activities dedicated to the following key themes: exploring self-awareness, problem-solving, critical thinking and interpersonal relationships. These topics are important because children need to know themselves, how to deal with their emotions and to communicate and behave respectfully with the others. Through the learning of life skills, learners will be able to use their knowledge in everyday life situations, to adjust their attitudes, to adopt values and to translate all those into respectful behaviours.

5) The activity guide grade 2 explores gender issues. This topic is essential. Indeed, it is crucial to challenge gender stereotypes, remedy gender inequities and to explain social, cultural, political and economic factors that can explain discrimination against girls and women.

Weaknesses / aspects to be improved

1) HIV and AIDS education is not included into the materials (grade 1 and 2)

Suggestions for improvement

→ Advocacy and action are important steps to provide education and prevention for an effective response to the HIV epidemic. A learner should be able to acquire and make use of core knowledge related to HIV & AIDS and sexual and reproductive health in order to protect his/her health and well-being and to know where to seek counselling and support services if needed. The material should not only address the physical and scientific facts. HIV and AIDS education should also deal in a non judgmental way, with psycho-social aspects of the pandemic, the help and support that people affected or infected may need and the impact HIV and AIDS may have on everyday life. It has been shown that school programs addressing sexual health and sexuality do not encourage early sexual initiation nor increase sexual activity. Comprehensive and clear information has been proven crucial to helping learners to adopt protective behaviours.

2) The materials do not examine the realities of living in a world with HIV and AIDS.

Suggestions for improvement

→ It would be interesting and useful to explore the relational and affective aspects of HIV & AIDS: relations with oneself and towards others. One of the major difficulty in prevention and education is related to attitudes that lead to thoughts such as "HIV affects others but not us". With that section it would be essential to integrate HIV and AIDS education to enable learners to negotiate positive relationships in order to protect one effectively and to show support for people affected and/or infected by HIV and AIDS.

3) In the background, it is noted that the curriculum will be delivered as time-tabled subject in grade 1 and 2. Nevertheless, there is no time allocation designed for each unit or lesson. The logical sequence of the topics does not appear very well and it is sometimes difficult to follow and to understand the different sequences.

Suggestions for improvement

→ If we really want to achieve desired learning outcomes (concerning life skills education in general and SHN and HIV & AIDS education more precisely), enough time has to be dedicated to the topic. Time allocated has to be specific and realistic.

4) The objectives are not always clear and too broad. The materials aim at developing life skills based education. Nevertheless, the guides do not explain precisely how to teach these

themes and how to proceed in order to integrate life skills based education into the current curriculum.

Suggestions for improvement

→The description of the objectives should give a concrete idea of the intended impact of the material in terms of behaviour, attitudes and knowledge. Goals and objectives should be in line with the needs and the characteristics of the learners. It is also very important to have specific objectives, for example by linking an objective to a frequency or stating the level of acceptable performance.

5) Methods used in the materials are not precise and various enough. Teachers can only use one technique for life skills education: scenarios.

Suggestions for improvement

→It should be useful to integrate diversity in the techniques used for activities: brainstorming, role play, games and simulations, case studies ... (see for example, *Health and family life Education. Teacher Training manual*, UNICEF, CARICOM, 2006). In the introduction authors explain that teachers may decide to focus on one unit or on themes. It would be interesting to adopt an outcomes-based curriculum (it specifies outcomes that learners are expected to achieve in specific subjects or areas by the end of a specific stage of schooling). The main idea is to confront learners with a variety of situations in which to demonstrate their learning. It is essential for the dynamic of the class to have diversity in the activities. In order to deepen understanding, personalise risk and practice self-protective skills, learners should be given sufficient time and space to learn from active observation, role play, group work, individual research, and practice of problem-solving in real life situations and interactions. Another important aspect is to provide feedback and to establish interaction between learners and between learners and educators

6) These materials do not include means to assess learners before and after completing the programme. No specific assessment of learning outcomes for the acquisition of life skills is conducted.

Suggestions for improvement

→It is essential to give feedback to learners so that both teachers and learners can improve the efficacy of their work and report on learners' progress to parents, caregivers and school management.

7) The materials are not precise enough concerning the target group (age, literacy, socio-cultural context, sexual experience).

Suggestions for improvement

→The target group should be clearly defined in the introductory section of the publication. If the material is made for a broad group of learners, it should be stated which part is designed for which target subset. It is also important to consider the socio-cultural context and the status regarding the probable sexual experience because the same issues will not be addressed and same words used.

8) The activity guide grade 1 does not address gender issue.

Suggestions for improvement

→We have to highlight the fact that biological factor, discrimination, socio-economic inequity, gender based violence and certain cultural norms increase the risk of HIV infection for women and girls and make the impact of HIV and AIDS worse in their life are not integrated in the manual. There is no relation between the different roles and tasks attributed to men and women and the impact of these relations on their capacity to protect oneself from HIV and to live with HIV or AIDS. The activities should add elements exposing girls and women to higher risks of contracting HIV.

Transferability issues and more suggestions for adapting the manual

The materials don't provide tools to identify and explore cultural issues relating to life skills, they are not related to community environment or to a social and cultural context. Therefore, transferability and adaptation are easy to realize.

These activity guides should be more linked to the Guyana context and offer more references to local community and culture.