

## APPRAISAL : SYNTHESIS

**Title : Health and Family life Education. Teacher Training Manual. Self and Interpersonal Relationships Theme Unit. Sexuality and Sexual health Theme Unit.**

Type of document : Teacher training materials

Year of publication: 2006

Author/publisher : UNICEF, CARICOM

Number of pages : 126

Date of appraisal : January 2009

### **Abstract**

This document was published by the Education Development Centre in collaboration with UNICEF, CARICOM and Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) coordinators and teachers from four CARICOM countries (St. Lucia, Grenada, Barbados and Antigua). The purpose of this manual is to provide regional coordinators from CARICOM countries with materials and resources to conduct in country teacher-training on two unit themes in the HFLE Common Curriculum: self and interpersonal relationships and sexuality and sexual health. These two units aim to achieve measurable gains in student's knowledge, health-promoting attitudes and skills and reductions in risk behaviours related to HIV, STI, unintended pregnancy and violence. The contents of this manual include the following elements : seven sessions designed to increase teacher's knowledge and skills for implementing life skills education, and, specifically, the HFLE curriculum lessons, in their classrooms; background resources and information for trainers on HFLE, life skills education and teaching methods used to teach life skills, including materials on behavioural theories supporting life skills education, strategies, for establishing a respectful classroom atmosphere when teaching life skills; and alternative assessment methods. This manual does not focus on HIV & AIDS : this topic is not integrated into the manual.

### **Strengths**

1) This manual was developed by UNICEF and the CARICOM. Coordinators and teachers from four CARICOM countries were involved in the preparation and the coordination of the manual.

2) The goals of the material are clear. The manual is designed to constitute an introduction to training Health and Family Life Education and life skills education and to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills to implement these core themes in their classrooms. The

objectives are limited because the manual is more an overview than a very detailed material about specific themes.

3) This manual deals with sessions for teachers designed to increase teachers' knowledge and skills for implementing life skills education and specifically the HFLE curriculum lessons in their classrooms. In each session, the objectives, the activities and the time needed to implement the entire session are explained.

4) The manual equips teachers with the necessary skills to reinforce the connection between health and education. The manual delivers some ethical guidelines for the delivery of health and Family Life Education such as responsibility to students (respect of confidentiality, dignity and provide only observable information regarding students behaviours), responsibility to families (offer ongoing support and collaboration with families for support of the child), responsibility to colleagues (establish and maintain cooperative relationships with other members of staff, promote awareness and adherence to appropriate guidelines regarding confidentiality and make a distinction between private and public information). The material has a strong concern to provide students with respect and listening.

5) The manual clearly promotes respect and comprehension. In the session 1 "What it means to be an HFLE teacher?", it is underlined that before judging anyone for their behaviours or circumstances, everyone needs to think about the various reasons why people may behave in certain ways, and possibly make themselves more vulnerable to risk. This session highlights the importance for each person, regardless of age, to develop their internal skills and to have the external support (through school, teachers, family) to help them face the circumstances in the most positive way possible.

6) Concerning the teaching methods and teacher guidance, the material insists on various aspects with session 4 "Teaching methods". This section intends to familiarize teachers on how to use interactive teaching methods in the classroom, to encourage students' participation in the classroom, to provide students with opportunities to tailor the activities, to give students the possibility to practice and use life skills in a safe and respectful environment. The materials emphasize the importance of using participatory teaching methods like class discussion, brainstorming, role play, buzz group, games and simulations, case studies, debates, story telling. The material provides tips for using these teaching methods, by encouraging discussion or giving feedback and gives strategies to deal with special problems. Teachers also play a crucial role as facilitators: they develop and maintain a positive atmosphere, address all goals and objectives of

the training and cover essential content, balance the content and the process of training. Concerning teacher guidance, the manual does not cover HIV and AIDS education.

### **Weaknesses / aspects to be improved**

1) HIV and AIDS education is not specifically developed. There is no information in the material concerning HIV and AIDS education and specifically ways of protection, transmission, ARV treatment, drugs, impacts of HIV or AIDS on health and relations with others, VCT, myths and misconceptions on HIV and AIDS. The material deals with sexuality and sexual health in a very general and limited way: the goal of the material should be to define the word sexuality in both negative and positive aspects.

#### *Suggestions for improvement*

→ It is essential for a manual dealing with Health and Family Life Education to have sessions or chapters only dedicated to HIV and AIDS education. The material should raise awareness about the fact that HIV and AIDS can affect anyone for different reasons and to different extents. Education sector has a major role to play in responding to the epidemic. The material should explain in basic terms what STIs, HIV and AIDS are; identify ways to protect oneself from STI and HIV (older learners should learn about safer sex, how to obtain condoms); define serologic status and describe the meaning of being HIV positive and some of the main consequences for a person; impacts on health, relationships, work. The manual should develop a comprehensive approach: overcome stigma and discrimination, respect and support for people living with HIV, prevention and care in a long-term perspective.

2) This manual is not part of the official curriculum. It only suggests one approach regarding the integration of life skills based HFLE into the official curriculum that should take into account context, needs and availability of resources (separate subject, integration). This dimension is too abstract.

#### *Suggestions for improvement*

→ To ensure an effective teaching and learning of sexual and reproductive health, it is very important to integrate HLFLE education into the official curriculum and determine what the best approach to guide each step in improving HIV and AIDS education in schools is. The manual should be more related to the contexts of the countries and should give tools to determine the following themes: the existing curricular approach, time already allocated, learning outcomes, pedagogical approaches, teachers training. It should constitute a reference document.

3) The contents often remain too abstract and general. None of the developed themes are covered in a relevant and in-depth manner.

*Suggestions for improvement*

→The manual should show why schools are particularly suitable for HIV and AIDS education and represent the perfect place to transmit new values and behaviours in order to reduce risk and foster care and support for people living with HIV within the community. The document should address objectives and learning outcomes of life skills education in different areas: basic knowledge, relations with oneself and others, gender equity and overcoming stigma, discrimination and respecting human rights. Outcomes based curricula focus on the end rather than the means and therefore emphasize the importance of learners being able to demonstrate their mastery of the specified outcomes.

4) The material does not address gender issues or the following themes: promoting human rights and overcoming stigma and discrimination. But it addresses self and interpersonal relationships, sexuality and sexual health, eating and fitness...

*Suggestions for improvement*

→HIV and AIDS education should be comprehensive and provide a range of different behaviour choices/options for prevention. It is imperative that education on life skills and HIV and AIDS fights stigma, fosters solidarity and supports learning about human rights, which equally apply to people affected by HIV.

5) The theme “Me, my emotions and my relations with others” is not addressed by the material.

*Suggestions for improvement*

→Life skills should be age-appropriate, culturally sensitive and start before the onset of sexual activity. This is why it is very important for teachers to introduce the topics of feelings for adolescents in order to help them to deal with their personal life.

6) The material does not provide tools to identify and explore cultural issues related to sexual and reproductive health and HIV and AIDS.

*Suggestions for improvement*

→It is important to understand and to identify why it is essential for communities to break the silence surrounding HIV and AIDS. The material should develop and lead concrete activities in school and in the community to break the silence and speak about HIV & AIDS, fears, prejudices so that ignorance, stigma and discrimination can be overcome.

7) The manual is not enough adapted to community environment. It is not related to a social and cultural context.

*Suggestions for improvement*

→ In general, the material should address the linkage between what is being learnt in school/education programmes and what is believed and thought in the community and society. Some social and cultural beliefs and practices can reduce the spread and impact of STI, HIV & AIDS, and support healthy and protective behaviour (for example strong extended-family systems and social solidarity) or increase the risk of infection and worsen the negative impact of HIV & AIDS (early marriage, widow inheritance, scarification using non sterilised instruments and female genital cutting). The material should develop tools that will help to challenge beliefs and practices that have a negative impact and strengthen those that have a positive impact on reproductive health and the prevention of HIV.

8) The material does not include means to assess learners before or after complementing the programme

*Suggestions for improvement*

→ The topic would be further strengthened if it was an examinable subject within the curriculum.

**Transferability issues**

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.