

APPRAISAL: SYNTHESIS

Title : Life Skills, Health & Family Life and Citizenship Education. Curriculum Guide, Level 3, Draft.

Type of documents : Material for teacher

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“Life Skills, Health & Family Life and Citizenship Education, Curriculum Guide for Level 3, Draft” is a guide edited by the Ministry of Education of Guyana in collaboration with UNICEF in 2002. It is a draft document to support the teaching and learning of this critical area of the curriculum. This document can serve as a focal point for departmental and regional sub-committee meetings, where methodologies and strategies for both teaching and assessing are discussed. It has a direct focus on an integrated approach to curriculum delivery, in which the teacher is not unduly restricted by the subject content. The list of references should provide teachers with the relevant background for curriculum planning. The document has 3 Units, each one divided into parts about education, family, health, human rights and human sexuality. Unit 1, All About Me, is about (i) Friendship; (ii) Myself/Who am I; (iii) Leisure and Hobbies; (iv) Right to a Name; and (v) Gender Relationships. Unit 2, The Family, tackles the topics like (vi) Problem Solving; (vii) Relationships at home with family members; (viii) Relationships outside of the family; (ix) Appropriate Eating Habits; (x) The Elderly; and (xi) Role Models. Finally, Unit 3, All About Me, is about (xii) Decent and indecent Language; (xiii) Religious values of the Family; (xiv) Food and Value and Myths; (xv) Human Rights; (xvi) Respecting Cultures; and (xvii) Stages of Growth.

Note

This document is part of a set of manuals 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 Right and Human Sexuality.

Strengths

1) The aim of this Life Skills, health & Family Life Education, Citizenship Curriculum Guide is to provide teachers with an integrated and consistent approach to the application of values education. The document has an official endorsement and has been developed by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Joint HRE Programme and UNICEF.

2) The content of the material addresses the human rights theme and develops topics about gender relationships or respecting culture which are often not enough developed in some other HFLE curriculum document. Human Right is a specific theme in the HFLE curriculum in Guyana and it is developed in each unit of the document. Unit 1 addresses the topic “right to a name” for everyone, Unit 2 is about “the Elderly” and Unit 3 promotes the respect of different culture. The Universal Declaration of Human Right is also quoted in reference at the end of the document.

3) The document can provide an interesting starting point to develop strategies and methods to develop complete curriculum. Each unit provides learning objectives, teaching methods, materials and evaluation which are very helpful for teachers and lessons preparation. Indeed, each theme presents relevant learning objectives tabs (life skills: able to..., knowledge: awareness that..., understanding: understand that..., attitude: demonstrate...) which enumerate goals briefly. References are provided to allow access to more information.

4) It focuses on the global development of the student as a person and promotes the participation and reflection in the classroom with interactive and various activities. The document provides interesting information to understand and practice self confidence and self esteem in the topics: “Myself, Who am I”, “Right to a Name” or “Relationships outside

of the family". It promotes the abilities to exhibit self awareness, communicate effectively about oneself, respect individuality, culture, differences, social, emotional and physical characteristics of each person.

Weakness / aspects to be improved

1) The Human Sexuality part refers to gender relationship, role models and stages of growth. Maybe because of the age of the learners, it does not refer to sexual and reproductive health, neither to HIV and AIDS education. Indeed, HIV and AIDS education is not included at all in this document.

Suggestions for improvement

→ Children and young people represent the window of opportunity. It is worth doing everything to prevent new infections. Children and young people who go to school are in contact with friends who are not in school, thus information and skills can be exchanged between peers and generations among families and communities. It is important that HIV & AIDS education starts at an early age in primary school and be sustained throughout secondary school because it is easier to adopt new values and behaviours than to change them once they are acquired. If we teach children very early to know and respect their feelings and their body, as well as the others, they will be more likely to adopt protective behaviours. By receiving quality HIV & AIDS and reproductive health education which are gender-sensitive, young people are more likely to adopt low risk sexual practices.

The material should provide the tools to support the learning, to identify myths and misconceptions related to STIs, HIV & AIDS, sexual and reproductive health and rights and to analyse common community practices and beliefs. This will help to challenge beliefs and practices that have a negative impact, and strengthen those that have a positive impact on sexual and reproductive health and the prevention of HIV. A balance should be found between what crucial skills and knowledge for young people living in a world with HIV are and what is acceptable to the community.

2) The material just recalls that teachers are expected to delivery HFLE curriculum a minimum of one hour per week but does not provide specific allocated time for each lesson.

It neither includes means to assess learners before the programme but only contains ideas of evaluation after completing the programme.

Suggestions for improvement

→ It would be interesting to develop an outcomes-based curriculum (to specify outcomes that learners are expected to achieve in specific subjects or areas by the end of a specific stage of schooling). Teachers have to check if learners can accomplish several tasks or understand new behaviours, skills, knowledge or attitudes. The process should be more elaborated for example integrating different assessment tools (close-ended questions, analysis, role play or simulations, learner projects). It is very important to give feedback to learners and other teachers about learner's progress, so that they can improve the efficacy of their work. In order to prepare the development of each lesson or unit and the assessment, teachers should follow this framework: develop learning objective/ outcome, assessment question, criteria (to determine and to know if the learner has acquired a certain level of knowledge, skills or adopted a specific attitude or behaviour) and possible assessment tools. If there is no specific allocation of time and no formal assessment of learning outcome, it would become easy to ignore and neglect the subject, especially when curricula are already over crowded.

3) Objectives, content, theme, method and evaluation are not always coherent. For example, a part about the theme of Education which develops the topic “problem solving” suggests methods and strategies to integrate this life skill by collecting pictures of food/snack, or by preparing their favorite food/snack. Those methods and strategies are clearly related to another topic (food, value and myths). The target group is clear (pupils from Level 3) but “Human Sexuality” is maybe a too explicit theme for children of this age.

Suggestions for improvement

→ It would be useful to improve logical coherence between topic, objectives and strategies to facilitate the readability and the understanding of the documents. It could be important to explain, maybe in a short introduction before each topic, the link between the Unit, the theme and the topic because it is not evident sometimes (Human Rights – Elderly, Human Sexuality – Role Models). Finally, it would be useful to add more details on the integration of life skills education into the four core subjects and to explain how teachers have to proceed to integrate life skills into mathematics for example.

4) The part about the topic “Me, my emotions and my relationships with others” is quite relevant but developed in a too limited way.

Suggestions for improvement

→ It would have been useful to complete this part by introducing abilities concerning wishes, emotions and how to manage them. It is also very important to introduce parts on how to avoid risks of child abuse, drugs, peer pressure, HIV transmission and to let pupil know which structure can help them if they are confronted to one of this problem. Those are essential points that should be developed when focusing those life skills.

5) The document addresses the gender relationships which is a good point. It clearly states that there are differences between women and men, and that they both deserve respect, but does not formally promote gender equity or challenges stereotypes.

Suggestions for improvement

→ It is important to promote clearly equity between boys and girls and to challenge stereotypes or gender-based cultural practice. It is essential for children to acquire and integrate early respect and equity between men and women. Teachers may, for example, suggest activities where learners have to know the difference between gender roles culturally determined and natural difference between men and women.

6) Notions of respect and tolerance are clearly promoted and are important points to remember in each time Human Rights theme is addressed in the document.

Suggestions for improvement

→ Nevertheless, it would have been useful to be more precise on basic points, in particular on the fact that each person has rights and duties due to the simple fact that she/he is a human being. Teachers and learners should understand human rights and learn to respect his/her and others' rights. It is important to develop human right theme because it serves undoubtedly as a firm foundation to the learning process in general.

7) This module is sometimes too general and has to be used with other more precise documents about the specific issues (in this case, in particular HIV and AIDS). Indeed, it does not explain, develop or inform but rather suggests ways to debate and think about those issues. It is based on the assumption that teacher and student already have basic

knowledge on those issues (which is probably the case at this age) but nevertheless it would have been useful to recall the most important and basic points.

Suggestions for improvement

→ Some important and basic points about specific issues have to be recalled in a more precise way when some topics or life skills introduce them. They could be added at the end of the module, in annex for example, or in references, to be sure that all teachers and learners have access to essential information and do not need to search them by themselves. For example, in each HIV and AIDS lessons, HIV transmission and protection, treatment, discrimination, VCT and myths should be briefly recalled or/and accessible.

Internal consistency

The texts are very short and consist in an enumeration of different points in tabs. This might be confused in particular when the document is not joined to a curriculum guide. It could be useful to define at the beginning of the manuals the following concepts: “Life skills, Health & family life, and citizenship” and to explain why the authors choose to develop certain skills and knowledge.

Transferability issues and more suggestions for adapting the manual

The document promotes respect for different cultures but should also provide the tools to support the learning to identify myths and misconceptions related to STIs, HIV & AIDS, sexual and reproductive health and rights and to analyze common community practices and beliefs. It does not provide tools to identify and explore cultural issues related to life skills. It is not specifically related to community environment or to a social and cultural context. Therefore, transferability and adaptation are easy to realize. In general, contents and presentation of the document really need to be improved.