

APPRAISAL: SYNTHESIS

Title : School-Based Training Programme for Health and Family Life Education & Compilation of Resources Materials for teachers of Health and Family Life Education

Type of document : Material for teacher training

Year of publication: 2005

Author/publisher : Lorna McPherson, Ministry of Education, Guyana

Number of pages : 60 pages (Training Programme), 126 pages (Compilation Resources)

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"School-Based Training Programme for Health and Family Life Education, Facilitators Training Manual for Grades 1 -9", is a teacher training manual edited by the Ministry of Education in Guyana in 2005. It contains: detailed sample training programmes, life skills addressing health issues and realistic case studies based on the various units and topics. This facilitators training manual is designed to be used by the teachers who are conducting the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) training Program, to train all teachers of the schools to which they are attached to deliver the life skills based HFLE curriculum. It consists of 8 discrete sessions, to be conducted at weekly intervals. It is accompanied by the "Compilation of Health and Family Life Education Resource Materials for Teachers" which provides (a) a clear definition of life skills; (b) scenarios, simulations and other participatory strategies; (c) an explanation of multiple intelligence and its relationship to life skills; (d) samples of life skills lesson plans; (e) suitable modes of learner assessment for HFLE; and (f) pertinent information which demonstrate the importance of life skills to major health topics, like sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention. This resources package is intended to be used by HFLE trainers and school administrations to

facilitate the management of HFLE on the school plan. This compilation is an attempt to enable teachers to obtain a deeper understanding of the Life Skills and how they can be taught. It is divided into 7 sections: (i) Explanation of Life Skills and the process of skill development; (ii) Learning styles; (iii) Strategies for Teaching Life Skills; (iv) Sample Life Skills Lessons; (v) Life Skills made specific to Major Health Topics; (vi) Background information on various topics; and (vii) Issues in Assessment. All items are referenced so that teachers could access the original sources. This manual does not focus specifically on HIV & AIDS and this theme is briefly integrated in the manual.

Strengths

1) The materials were developed by the Ministry of Education of Guyana and written by the HFLE Coordinator, Lorna McPherson. Therefore it is part of the official HFLE programme endorsed by the Ministry of Education for the development of a curriculum to deliver life skills based HFLE from Grades 1-9 in schools in Guyana.

2) The presentation of the training programme is clear: number of sessions, allocated time, homework, type of activities, necessary materials... Lessons are planned in a very interactive manner, with all teachers working together as a team and having to be proactive (they have to develop in detail, deliver and report on each lesson). The class is leading by a facilitator, not a teacher, who guides the learning process, and delivers methods that should be in use in the classrooms. It intends to familiarize teachers on how to use interactive teaching methods and activities, to promote students participation. Furthermore, on completion of the course each teacher receives an official certificate of completion that will state he/she has completed 45 hours of study.

3) The goals of the material are clear and relevant. The Training Programme is designed to provide a teacher training to enhance the knowledge and skills of teachers in Guyana and make them able to infuse HFLE in their classrooms. It promotes interactive activities that teachers will reproduce in their classroom. The manual emphasizes the importance of posting the objectives at the beginning of each training sessions, where they can be easily seen. The sessions are about (1) Description of life skills, (2) The structure of the HFLE curriculum, (3) Identification of life skills in curriculum, (4) Development of scenarios, (5) Infusion of HFLE, (6) Strategies to teach life skills, (7) Delivering the HFLE curriculum 1, and (8) HFLE curriculum 2. Thus the manual is more an overview than a very detailed material about specific themes. It is not specifically an HIV and AIDS education document.

4) The compilation document defines life skills and suggests exercises to practice and discuss life skills in classroom. References are provided to allow access to more information. The compilation focuses on 10 life skills: decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skills, self awareness, empathy, coping with emotions and coping with stress. It encompasses therefore the question of self-esteem, managing emotions and stress, peer pressure... It also promotes the emotional intelligence, the ability to deal with his/her own emotions and the emotions of others in a constructive manner that promotes teamwork and productivity rather than conflict, which is essential to infuse and integrate life skills. At the end, there is a special part about stigma and discrimination related to HIV and AIDS.

5) Human Rights is a specific theme in the HFLE curriculum in Guyana, so even if the documents do not address directly the theme of human rights, it clearly promotes self respect and respect for others through life skills and good practice promotion. There are

parts about refusal skills which offer some keys to fight coercion, sexual harassment and abuse. It promotes assertiveness to develop the ability skill to honestly express feelings, opinions and rights. It also focuses on information that should be given to learners to avoid any abuse.

Weakness / aspects to be improved

1) The life skills education is very broad and some important subjects are not enough developed. Even if the materials are not specifically about HIV and AIDS education, they focus too briefly and only in a limited way on HIV and AIDS.

Suggestions for improvement

→ The document could include specific parts about HIV and AIDS and be sure that learners have good knowledge on the ways of transmission and protection of HIV, the relation between drugs and HIV, the treatment, the physical, psychological and social difficulties that people affected by HIV and AIDS have to endure, the myths (in a more precise manner than it is in the materials). The document should also offer precise information on Voluntary Counselling and Testing. Those are essential and basic issues that must be included in life skills education programme when focusing on attitudes and behaviours, sexuality, care and support, preventing STIs, decision making or empathy for example.

2) The module does not include gender issues. There is no part about gender inequalities or anything challenging it. But self and interpersonal relationships, sexuality and sexual health, eating and fitness are addressed.

Suggestions for improvement

→ It should be useful to include gender issues in the debate and in the activities, challenge stereotypes against girls and women and promote equalities in the relevant life skills (suggesting activities where learners have to know the difference between gender roles culturally determined and natural difference between men and women).

3) The compilation is confused and sometimes difficult to understand because some pages are missing, others are in a wrong place while some entire parts are repeated. It seems that in general, the materials does not follow a logical order. In the training programme, there is no page numbers.

Suggestions for improvement

→ It should be necessary to add page numbers and improve the table of contents and the presentation in general to facilitate the reader friendly quality of the documents.

4) This module is very general and has to be used with more precise documents about specific issues (for example for HIV and AIDS). Indeed, it does not explain, develop or inform but it only suggests ways to think and debate about those issues. It is based on the assumption that teacher and student already have basic knowledge on those issues and 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 don't need do search them by themselves.

For example, in each HIV and AIDS lessons, HIV transmission and protection, treatment, discrimination, VCT and myths should be briefly recall or/and make accessible.

Internal consistency

It is sometimes difficult to know which document is useful to teach a topic or a grade because they are many and they are not always very well organized. The target group of the documents is clear and activities are adapted to this age.

Transferability issues and more suggestions for adapting the manual

The materials do not provide tools to identify and explore cultural issues related 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.