

APPRAISAL: SYNTHESIS

Title : Life Skills, Health & Family Life and Citizenship Education. Curriculum Guide, Grade 7, Draft.

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“Life Skills, Health & Family Life and Citizenship Education, Curriculum Guide for Grade 3, Draft” is a guide edited by the Ministry of Education of Guyana in collaboration with UNICEF in 2002. The goal of this document is 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, Settling In, is about (i) Transition to Secondary School; (ii) Family, Who am I, Uniquely me, How do I see myself ten years from now; (iii) Appropriate Eating Habits; (iv) Definition of Human Rights, Right to Nationality; and (v) Sexual Abuse. Unit 2, Adjusting to Change, tackles the topics like (i) Time and Money Management; (ii) Family Roles and Responsibilities; (iii) Environmental Health, Food Myths value; (iv) Respecting Cultural and Religious Values; and (v) Incest/Harassment. Finally, Unit 3, Preparing to Move On, is about (i) Friendship; (ii) Self-Esteem, Recognising absence of Self-Esteem, Building Self-Esteem, Self-Esteem can affect Relationships; (iii) Good and Bad Habits (iv) Role and Purpose of Education; and (v) HIV&AIDS.

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. This document should be used with its Infusion Guide, Grade 7 which is unfortunately not available.

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. Human Right is a specific theme in the HFLE curriculum in Guyana and is developed in each unit of the document in a very relevant manner. Unit 1 addresses the topic “Definition of Human Rights, Right to Nationality”, Unit 2 focuses on “Respecting Cultural and Religious Values” and Unit 3 emphasizes on the “Role and Purpose of Education”. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is clearly quoted and included in those units to be studied and analysed. It promotes Guyanese identities, human dignity, the protection of their Human Rights and the rights of others, the respect for different cultural and religious values which are protected by Human Rights, individual rights for everyone, tolerance, and the importance of education as a right. Other themes, like the family, also include human rights and refer to “Human Rights Education for Citizenship” or suggest social studies about “My Right”.

3) The document offers an interesting starting point to provide strategies and methods to develop complete curriculum. Each unit suggests 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: aware that, understanding: understand that, attitude: demonstrate) which enumerate goals briefly as key words.

4) It focuses on the total development of the students as a person and promotes their participation and reflection in the classroom with interactive and various activities. The document promotes several teaching-learning methods to integrate the skills, like classroom

discussion, debate, case studies, games, group work, role play or creative work. The document provides interesting information to understand and practice self confidence and self esteem specifically in Unit 3, within the Family theme which addresses this topic in 3 parts: Recognizing absence of Self Esteem, Building Self Esteem, and Self Esteem can affect Relationship. It promotes individuality and difference, the fact that everyone has strengths and weakness, that self esteem is not constant, and that self esteem is important for our relationships with other. It also provides a definition of self esteem and suggests how to build it based on five essential elements: sense of security, sense of identity or self concept, sense of belonging, sense of purpose/aim and sense of personal competence.

4) HIV&AIDS is included specifically as a topic within the Human Sexuality theme. It aims to make learners able to identify behaviours that put one at risk of contracting HIV&AIDS, to share the factual information about HIV&AIDS, to identify ways to reduce the risk of contracting HIV and to practice skills to avoid sexual risk-taking. It explains the difference between HIV and AIDS and that the epidemic is serious but preventable. It focuses therefore on the responsibilities of everyone actions and behaviours and the importance to resist peer pressure. Finally, the topic is included in different discipline like science, social studies, language and creative writing.

5) This document is certainly the clearest and the most relevant among the series we evaluated.

Weakness / aspects to be improved

1) The material 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 pupils 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, in order to be able to 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.

2) The content of the materials does not address gender issues even if some themes like Human Rights could easily include this problematic.

Suggestions for improvement

→ A learner has to acquire knowledge and understanding on the differences between man and woman, what is gender equity and what are the negative impacts of inequities between men and women on communities. It is important to promote clearly equity between boys and girls and challenging stereotypes or gender-based cultural practice. It is essential for children to acquire and integrate early respect and equity between men and women. A learner should also understand why achieving gender equity is crucial in the response to HIV and AIDS and how to behave in a manner which demonstrates an understanding of the importance of the equity. 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.

3) This module is very general and has to be used with other more precise documents about the specific issues (for example for HIV and AIDS). Indeed, it does not explain, develop or inform but it just suggests ways to debate and think about those issues. It only provides key words that the teacher has to develop. It is based on the assumption that teacher and student already have basic knowledge on those issues, 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 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 recalled or/and accessible.

4) Even though HIV&AIDS is addressed, some important areas of the subject are not developed.

Suggestions for improvement

→ The document focuses on the fact that unprotected sex is the most common way HIV is spread and that abstinence is the best way to protect oneself from contracting HIV&AIDS. Nevertheless it would have been useful to addresses also ways of transmission of HIV and ways of protection from HIV in general, by including and explaining “Abstinence-Behaviour faithful-Condom use” approach in particular. The document should also provide information on ARV treatment and its social, physical and psychological impact on the person living with HIV and her/his entourage. The document emphasizes that HIV is 100% preventable, that individuals are accountable for their own actions and promotes responsibility for one's actions and behaviours. It is important to notice that some persons are not responsible for being infected (like children born with HIV or in a rape case for example) and even though, it is important to recall that each person has to be treated with empathy and does not deserve to feel guilty for the infection they contracted. The material 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 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

5) The integration of life skills education into the curriculum is too vague.

Suggestions for improvement

→ It would be useful to add more details on the integration of life skills education into the four core subjects. It should be useful to explain why using one activity can lead to a certain result and using another one can lead to a different one. The teacher's plan adequate time to carry out the activity completely and have a clear understanding of the objectives of the activity before beginning.

Internal consistency

The texts are very short and consist in an enumeration of different points in tabs. This might be confusing in particular when the document is not linked to an infusion guide. It should 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

Some of the topics addressed in the document are specifically adapted to Guyana culture and societies (right to nationality, respecting cultural and religious values in particular). Therefore the material will need to be adapted if it has to be used in another context because it is currently designed specifically for learners in Guyana. But in general transferability and adaptation should be easy to realize.