



DRAFT POSITION PAPER

“PROJECT QDI-HFLE”

Question, Deepen and Innovate (QDI): HFLE Innovation

Leading the way to progressive and inclusive education in synchrony with the new era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

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1. Executive Summary

Sustain.ly Social Sector Development Solutions, a development consultancy service in Trinidad, the University of Washington in Seattle and the Caribbean Youth Environment Network proposes to innovate a more effective and efficient approach to Health and Family Life Education in the Caribbean suited for the era of Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The need for this project comes from the following sources:

- A call by CARICOM through its Strategic Plan 2015-2019 to advance Human Capital Development, Key Skills, Education Reform and Youth Development, health and wellness and inclusiveness

- The demand by the private sector and governments for life skills education among the workforce in the Caribbean to help to reduce unemployment and improve competitiveness
- The need to provide young people with the necessary social and emotional skills necessary to thrive in a changing context and to build resilience to confront a number of social challenges
- To hold information-age jobs, students also need to think deeply about issues, solve problems creatively, work in teams, communicate clearly in many media, learn ever-changing technologies, and deal with a plethora of information.

The Health and Family Life Education Programme, the principal life skills based education programme was launched by CARICOM for all 15 Caribbean States in 1996. The limited number of impact studies indicate mixed results indicating the need for more comprehensive studies to determine more precisely the benefits, lessons and challenges of the programme for learners over the last 19 years. What has been most common is the articulation of the barriers to the full implementation of the HFLE. These have included ill-prepared teachers, poor time-tabling, under-valuing of HFLE by the education system making it difficult for the full investment required to implement HFLE. Other issues have also been noteworthy including the fact that the original life skills programme was not developed with young people and the private sector, nor did it consider community engagement.

Studies of the profile of UWI graduates have indicated that while graduates demonstrate strong technical knowledge in their fields many of them lack practical and/or soft skills. The UWI has proposed that a Distinctive UWI Graduate “should demonstrate that he/she is: a critical and creative thinker; an effective communicator with good interpersonal skills; IT-skilled and information literate; innovative and entrepreneurial; globally aware and well grounded in his/her regional identity; socially, culturally and environmentally responsible; and guided by strong ethical values”.

To achieve these lofty and important ideals, service learning has been suggested as an important complement to theoretical learning. In short, at all levels of learning from pre-primary to tertiary levels, gaps in life skills education exists. There is need for much greater efficiency and effectiveness.

This project therefore proposes three key steps to strengthen and innovate life skills based education with a focus on HFLE as follows:

Component (AIM) 1:

To question and evaluate the impact that HFLE has had on promoting the adoption of healthy behaviors, decreasing risk behaviors, and improving overall health among young people in the Caribbean, reducing the burden of disease and contributing to the region’s economy. Within this component we will identify successful communities and will deepen the understanding of factors contributing to progress, using the Youth: Choices and Change framework¹.

¹Breinbauer C., Maddaleno M. (2005). Youth: Choices and Change. Promoting Healthy Behaviors in Adolescents. Pan American Health Organization.

Component (AIM) 2:

To identify innovative changes needed for the HFLE curriculum objectives and delivery methods, from pre-primary to tertiary education, based on new scientific findings that support progressive and inclusive education aimed at the acquisition of critical life skills for the new generation of young people in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and competitive global and regional economy. This second component will build on HFLE strengths identified during the first component. Using participatory methodology, development evaluation, and implementation science, we will build consensus on core innovations that are feasible to implement with fidelity across the region, as well as complementary innovative modules that address the unique needs of different country profiles.

Component (AIM) 3:

To pilot the recommended innovations in 3 agreed communities, representing the diversity of the region. This component will use implementation science to quickly identify and correct potential barriers during the roll out process, aiming for acceptable fidelity of the HFLE Innovation before scaling up the changes throughout the region.

Primary among the objectives would be to ensure that innovations in life skills can support the development of the Region's human resources. By so doing, the Project can make a contribution to the CARICOM Strategic Plan 2015-2019 and specifically to the following goal: **Social Resilience - Equitable Human and Social Development**. The Project will contribute towards the implementation of the following strategies as Identified in the CARICOM Plan:

- ✓ Soc.1: Advance Human Capital Development, Key Skills, Education Reform and Youth Development
- ✓ Soc. 2: Mainstream Inclusiveness in Public Policy; Gender; Persons with Disabilities, Age
- ✓ Soc. 3: Advance Initiatives for Health and Wellness
- ✓ Soc. 4: Enhance Citizen Security and Justice

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