BREAKING NEWS

Declaration of Port of Spain on Education and HIV/AIDS

Ministers of Education of the Caribbean community issued a declaration on the critical role of the education sector in response to HIV/AIDS, at the end of a special meeting of CARICOM’s Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) on June 9-10, 2006 (see page 4 of this report).

The meeting was hosted by the Minister of Education, Trinidad & Tobago, Senator Hazel Manning. The UNESCO Office for the Caribbean and the World Bank supported the CARICOM Secretariat in preparations for this critical meeting.

Ten studies were especially commissioned and presented to Ministers and other conference participants. Issues analysed included early sexual initiation of children in the Caribbean, stigma and discrimination in the education sector, the need for HIV instructional materials and the greater involvement of persons living with HIV and AIDS (GIPA) in the education sector response. The full list of studies and electronic copies are available from Paolo Fontani, Programme Manager, Education, UNESCO Office for the Caribbean

These studies, together with other recent reports and policy documents, will be published by UNESCO and Ian Randle Publishers (IRP) in early 2007. This book will be edited by Professor Michael Morrissey, morrissey@kasnet.com.

The report on the special COHSOD meeting is available from Ingrid Sarabo, CARICOM isarabo@caricom.org.

INITIATIVE

Ministry of Education HIV/AIDS Coordinators establish Network

The first-ever meeting of Ministry of Education HIV/AIDS Coordinators was held in Kingston, Jamaica, in April 2006. Participants shared experiences, identified needs and priorities, and established themselves as a network.

During the meeting the goals and objectives of the new network were developed, procedures established and the executive body elected. The network defined its mission as “to advocate for a comprehensive, coordinated response to HIV & AIDS by Caribbean education sectors”. (See the box on page 2 for the objectives of the network.)

The meeting was supported by the CARICOM Secretariat, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Education Development Centre (EDC) and the UNESCO Office for the Caribbean.

Further information on the network is available from Sherlene Neal Tablada, sherlenen@hotmail.com.

NEW RESOURCES


- Masters in Education (Health Promotion). New programme of the University of the West Indies, to provide professional training for educators involved in the response to HIV and AIDS. more page 3

- EDUCAIDS: Towards a comprehensive response. This framework for action describes the global initiative on education and AIDS led by UNESCO. more page 3

- Teaching about HIV & AIDS in the Caribbean. First-ever Caribbean text book on HIV & AIDS. Text to prepare classroom teachers to play a role, to be published by Macmillan Caribbean in September. more page 3

- Expanding the field of inquiry. This cross-country study of Higher Education Institutions’ responses to HIV and AIDS includes reports on four Caribbean universities. More page 3
UNESCO provides further support for Jamaica’s HIV/AIDS Response Team

In mid 2005, a comprehensive analysis of the response of the education sector in Jamaica to HIV/AIDS was designed and undertaken by UNESCO consultant David Clarke, the first study of its kind in the world.

The report identified the strengths and weaknesses of Jamaica’s response to date and made recommendations for action. Continued support for the Ministry’s HIV/AIDS Response Team was argued. For a copy of the report contact Paolo Fontani, p.fontani@unesco.org.

As a result, the Ministry of Education developed a proposal to further enhance its capacity to respond to HIV/AIDS particularly in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, and the provision of instructional materials.

Financing for these initiatives was approved by UNESCO and the Government of Japan in June 2006. The project will commence in August 2006 with the preparation of a five-year strategic plan for the Ministry’s response to Jamaica’s HIV epidemic.

For further information on the HIV response of the Ministry of Education, Jamaica, contact Christopher Graham, HIV/AIDS Coordinator, edhivaid@yahoo.com. For information on this new UNESCO project, contact Paolo Fontani, p.fontani@unesco.org.

UNESCO’s Caribbean Strategy for HIV/AIDS 2006-07

The UNESCO Office for the Caribbean will target six priority areas in its HIV/AIDS strategy for the 2006-07 biennium:

- Advocacy & Leadership Development
- Policy development and dissemination
- Strategic planning by education sector
- Capacity Building & Professional Development
- Research promotion

UNESCO’s partners for the Caribbean strategy include Ministries of Education, the PANCAP, CARICOM and OECS Secretariats, CCNAPC and CRN*, other UN agencies, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Bank, and the Government of Japan.

In January 2006, the contract for implementation of the two year CARICOM/IDB/UNESCO technical cooperation Caribbean Education Sector Response Capacity Building Programme was awarded to the Education Development Centre (EDC). UNESCO’s strategy and work plan has been articulated with the EDC work plan, and some activities are jointly undertaken.

For information on the UNESCO strategy and work plan, contact Paolo Fontani, p.fontani@unesco.org, who assumed responsibility for the HIV/AIDS portfolio from the beginning of 2006. For information on CARICOM IDB Activities implemented by EDC, contact Cheryl Vincent Whitman, EDC Senior Vice President, Cvincewhitman@edc.org.

New protocol to guide the GIPA in the Caribbean’s education sector

While verbal commitment has been made in the Caribbean to the Greater Involvement of Persons living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA) in the regional and national programme of responses to the epidemic, there has been, to date, no guidance for education ministries and institutions. UNESCO is committed to bridging the gap.

An alliance has been forged between a representative of the United Nations’ Positive Group, a UNESCO staffer in Paris, Christoforos Mallouris, c.mallouris@unesco.org, and Suzette Moses Burton, suzieqsxm@yahoo.com, Chair of the Executive Board, CRN*, the Caribbean Region Network Of Seropositive, and the UNESCO team in the Caribbean, to review the context regionally and internationally and draft a protocol.

A preliminary and innovative paper on this subject was presented to the region’s Ministers of Education on June 9 by Ms Burton Moses, and as a result Ministers affirmed “the rights of people affected by and infected with HIV and promote their meaningful involvement in the education sector at all levels, including policy design and implementation” (see Declaration on page 4).

The protocol will take into account the rights & needs of persons living with HIV, the level of stigma, discrimination and risk in the region for those who disclose, and the urgent need for education to harness the positive community in its response. Those involved would appreciate your suggestions as a protocol is developed.

Regional Network of Education Sector HIV and AIDS Coordinators

Objectives of the new network

- Seek to influence policy-making and programme implementation in the education sector to address HIV prevention, and the care, support and treatment of persons infected with HIV, and to create environments that are free from discrimination
- Provide a platform for communication and information sharing among network members and other stakeholders in the education sector
- Provide mechanisms for identifying research needs, commissioning basic and applied research and ensuring evidence-based practice in education
- Identify and advocate for increased allocation of resources and support for the education sector response to HIV and AIDS
- Monitor the national and regional response of the education sector to HIV and AIDS
New Resources

ILO and UNESCO published An HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy for Education Sector Caribbean in June 2006. The policy was developed by a team of resource persons representing the ministries of education, teachers unions and private sectors of five Caribbean countries in September 2005, supported by ILO, UNESCO and other specialists. The policy was published in June 2006 on a slim booklet of 32 pages and received the endorsement of the region’s Ministers of Education (see Port of Spain Declaration on page 4). Printed copies may be obtained from ILO mschuli@ilo.org or the UNESCO office for the Caribbean.

UNESCO headquarters published in June 2006 a revised description of EDUCAIDS, the global initiative on education and AIDS that it leads. The document gives justification for a strong education sector engagement in HIV and AIDS, a description of EDUCAIDS, and makes a case for a “comprehensive education sector response”. Jamaica was selected as a priority EDUCAIDS country. Contact Nuria Chat, n.chat@unesco.org for an electronic copy of this document.


As foreshadowed in the previous edition of this report (issue 10, page 4), UNESCO commissioned a DVD on Ashe’s approach to addressing HIV/AIDS issues through edutainment. The DVD was launched in February 2006. The UNESCO Office for the Caribbean will work with Jamaica’s Ashe and Trinidad & Tobago’s education through drama company, BARCAM, to organize the first-ever regional edutainment festival. The festival will focus the response of creative art forms in HIV/AIDS response and means to enhance quality and effectiveness.

For a copy of the Ashe DVD and information on the forthcoming edutainment festival contact Alwin Bully, a.bully@unesco.org.

Teaching about HIV and AIDS in the Caribbean

Teaching about HIV and AIDS in the Caribbean, to be published by Macmillan in September 2006, is a landmark text, the first of its kind designed for Caribbean audiences.

The book has been designed to prepare classroom teachers to play a major role in response to the region’s HIV and AIDS epidemic. Contact Justine Sass, UNESCO Paris, j.sass@unesco.org, for copies.

The Masters in Education (Health Promotion) is a new programme of the University of the West Indies, developed under the leadership of Professor David Plummer, Commonwealth/UNESCO Chair in AIDS and Education.

Designed to provide professional training for educators involved in the response to HIV and AIDS, courses will begin in December 2006. UNESCO will provide scholarships to cover the tuition fees of seven young leaders admitted in the first set of trainees.

For an electronic copy of the Master’s programme and other enquiries, contact dplummer@fhe.uwi.tt.

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Caribbean editors and teachers were involved in preparing the Caribbean edition of what was originally published in 2005 as an African book, and the UNESCO Office for the Caribbean provided support.

Enquiries for specimen copies and wholesale discounts should be made to Nick Gillard, n.gillard@macmillan.com.


To download the databank, access via www.ibe.unesco.org/HIVAids.htm

For a copy of the document on CD, contact Christine Panchaud, ibeaids@ibe.unesco.org.

Expanding the field of inquiry reports on a cross-country study of higher education institutions’ responses to HIV and AIDS and was based on 12 case studies conducted in 2005. Four were studies of universities in the Caribbean region - Dominican Republic, Haiti, Suriname and English-speaking Caribbean.

Contact Justine Sass, UNESCO Paris, j.sass@unesco.org, for copies.
Port-of-Spain Declaration on the Education Sector’s Response to HIV and AIDS

1. We, the Ministers of Education of the Caribbean Community, along with representatives of National AIDS Authorities, and other representatives of governments, organizations and agencies participating in the Special Meeting of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) on Education and HIV and AIDS in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago 9-10 June 2006;

2. Recall that the Nassau Declaration asserts that the Health of the Region is the Wealth of the Region;

3. Note with alarm that we are facing an unprecedented human catastrophe and that a quarter century into the pandemic, HIV and AIDS continues to inflict immense suffering on the countries and communities of the Caribbean, that a total of 300,000 persons live with HIV in the region, including 30,000 who became infected in 2005, that the disease is the major cause of death in persons between 15-35; and that the prevalence rate in women 15-24 years is at least twice as high as men of similar age group;

4. Recognise that the extensive national sub-regional and regional consultations under the joint collaboration of the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP) and UNAIDS were undertaken and resulted in recommendations and a roadmap for Universal Access to HIV and AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support 2006-2010;

5. Also recognise the political Declaration on Universal Access resulting from the High Level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on HIV and AIDS, 2 June, 2006 as a basis for action;

6. Affirm that Education is a critical sector in the multi-sectoral response to HIV and emphasise our commitment to achieving the targets set for Education for All and the relevant targets in the Millennium Development Goals;

7. Recognise that comprehensive assessments of the impact of HIV on the education sector at country and regional levels are urgently required to inform the development of appropriate response strategies, and specifically those that focus on prevention;

8. Commit to the development and implementation of national and regional sectoral policies on HIV and AIDS and Education and the integration of such policies into national and CARICOM/PANCAP strategies;

9. Commit to the adoption education workplace policies guided by the ILO Code of Practice on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work and the ILO/UNESCO HIV and AIDS Workplace Policy for the Education Sector in the Caribbean;

10. Pledge to provide leadership for planning and implementation of national and regional sectoral responses and to facilitate accelerated access to resources from funds allocated for both education sector development and HIV and AIDS response;

11. Commit to the elimination of HIV-related stigma and discrimination in educational systems through leadership, policy, legislation, regulations and research, and in this regard, support the Champions for Change programme initiated by PANCAP;

12. Affirm the rights of people affected by and infected with HIV and promote their meaningful involvement in the education sector at all levels, including policy design and implementation;

13. Request the CARICOM Secretariat to develop a regional strategic framework for the education sector response in the overall regional response to HIV and AIDS;

14. Endorse the development of professional and scholarly approaches to effective school health with urgent emphasis on HIV through training and research in selected regional institutions;

15. Commit to professionalising the fields of HFLE, school health and sex education with attention to HIV and AIDS, to ensure timely, universal coverage and the development of career paths in those fields;

16. Commit to extending and deepening the coverage and professional development of educators to implement HFLE and HIV and AIDS education programmes;

17. Endorse the establishment and support development of the Caribbean Network of HIV Coordinators in the education sector as a CARICOM-led regional resource;

18. Request the Network of HIV Coordinators to develop a model for partnership between Ministries of Education and national organisations of PLWHA, consistent with the GIPA principles;

19. Request the PANCAP to develop a regional strategy for the education sector response in the overall regional response to HIV and AIDS;

20. Request the CARICOM Secretariat to establish a network and consultative mechanism among development partners to increase efficiency and effectiveness of their contribution to the regional and national strategic plans for HIV and AIDS and education, and to collaborate in the development of policies and the sharing of information and knowledge;

21. Agree to the inclusion of the education sector in the priorities identified in the review of the Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework for HIV and AIDS to be undertaken by PANCAP in 2006, recognizing that the education sector response to HIV and AIDS also provides an opportunity to address other significant health and life style issues, with special emphasis on prevention;

22. Agree to engage with CAPNET to develop national and regional publishing projects to ensure provision of quality and culturally sensitive instructional materials to support universal coverage of HIV and AIDS education and to infuse HIV and AIDS principles into new instructional materials;

23. Recognise the importance of mainstreaming gender in all materials and methodologies used to address education with regard to HIV and AIDS;

24. Recommend that Ministers of Education continue to advocate for appropriate attention to HIV and AIDS issues and keep the HIV and AIDS high on the agendas of COHSOD and national parliaments;

25. Also call on all stakeholders to advocate for, and contribute to the mobilization of resources in support of the national and regional programmes that would advance the role of education in the accelerated approach to HIV and AIDS;

26. Request the Chair of COHSOD to ensure that the issues related to Education and HIV and AIDS are brought to the attention of Heads of Government for their endorsement and support;

27. Recommend that targets established in the Regional and National Strategic plans for Education and HIV and AIDS be aligned with those established by the national, sub-regional and regional consultations for HIV and AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support and the UNGASS targets for 2006 – 2010;

28. Ensure access to educational opportunities at all levels for children in vulnerable settings and conditions with emphasis on those affected or infected by HIV and AIDS;

29. Request of the Caribbean Examinations Council that all appropriate syllabuses and assessment procedures for the three levels of secondary examination be urgently reviewed to ensure that knowledge and skills that will contribute to the education sector response to HIV and AIDS are included.