

**BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION-FUNDED REDUCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
PROJECT:
PUBLIC EDUCATION OUTREACH WITH FORM 4 STUDENTS**

**Evaluation of Project
Help & Shelter, Homestretch Ave., G/Town
(1st and 2nd February, 2008)**

Conducted by: Abbas Mancey (Project Coordinator), Danuta Radzik and Vidya Kissoon (Members of the management team)

Participants: Region 2 – Abeika Dupan, Nichola Smith
Region 3 – Ebeth M^c Intosh
Region 4 – Tessa Greene, Brenda Logan, Pauline Solomon
Region 6 – Volois Hooper, Deserene Sandy
Region 9 – Paulette Allicock, Oren Sandy, Benita Roberts
Region 10 – Thelma Wellington

Guests: Mrs. Sarah Wheeler (British High Commission)

Though a few facilitators were unable to attend the workshop there was sufficient representation for all regions where schools were visited. Mrs. Sarah Wheeler, of the British High Commission, made herself available to interact and be a part of the evaluation of the project. The feedback, reports and recommendations on the project are recorded below according to the areas outlined:

A. Sharing of experiences (Challenges and successes faced by facilitators):

Region 1 and 2:

The authorities of all the schools (H.Ms) were very welcoming to the programme and sessions with students. Sessions generally went well with most schools; however facilitators faced some challenges conducting sessions because of low literacy levels. Two such schools were Cotton field and Charity Secondary (region 2). They recommend some extra work be done with these schools.

Regions 3, 4 and 5:

Sessions done in these schools generally went well. One school in particular, Zeeburg (region 3), facilitators were very pleased with the students' response. Some of the students make regular contact with the facilitator, to stay in touch and talk. Belladrum Secondary and President's College were the only two schools where facilitators experiences some challenges.

At Belladrum (region 5) students had low literacy skills and facilitators had some difficulty completing some exercises with the classes. For one exercise in particular students could not properly identify their body parts using the standard English terminology. There was also a little scuffle between two male students in one of the classes; one teacher had to intervene to settle the class. Many of the students indicated that they were sexually active, and Teenage pregnancy is a potential problem, many of the student indicated being sexually active and are not having protected sex.

There was a difference in the approach of the schools - some schools administration were involved while others seemed to have no interest and facilitators found themselves organizing students and trying to get things in place.

It was also observed that management and proper supervision from the school's administration could be improved; on arriving to the school facilitators had to gather the students for session themselves. It was

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mentioned by school authorities that only 20% of students write CXC. Facilitators felt that because students of the school are seen as below average students, the students in turn don't think much of themselves.

President's College – Sessions were not well attended by students and on arriving at school the classes were not properly organized.

Region 6:

3/5 of the schools were great to work with. In most of the schools the students spoke and read well, participated in sessions even teachers sometimes participated (in some cases it did not help, students were afraid to open up).

Manchester Secondary – The facilitators had found that the students had low self-esteem because of the low academic achievements. The majority of the students had low literacy and comprehension skills, most had difficulty with basic words. This posed some challenges since more time would be required.

Region 7:

Bartica Secondary – This school (only one secondary school in Bartica) was very welcoming to the project and assisted in the speedy completion of sessions. Though most session went well, two of the six forms in the school were difficult to work with, literacy level of students very low. Facilitators had to let students do more drawing and role playing to accommodate for the lack in literacy and comprehension skills.

Some students fear presenting, writing and/or acting in front of class because of poor communication skills. Sessions in the other four forms went well.

Region 9 (St. Ignatious and Annai Secondary):

Facilitators were very proud of being a part of the programme. In Annai Secondary the teacher and school authorities were very welcoming, both the school and students asked for more sessions to be done.

The challenge in region 9 was transportation. Transportation is generally very expensive in region 9, schools are very far apart and students travel great distances to attend school. Like the other regions, the H.M of the school asked about the frequency of sessions.

St. Ignatious – This is a mixed school (Indo, Afro, Amerindian and mixed students). Facilitators complained that the literacy level in the school was very low and completing sessions was difficult; facilitators had a hard time completing sessions due to student's low comprehension levels. Lots of issues are now present in school, e.g. teenage pregnancy.

Since the facilitators had only two successive days to complete sessions, they worked through the days to complete sessions. Refreshments had to be provided for the students since they were engaged for the entire day.

Annai Secondary – the student in Annai as compared to St. Ignatius were far more literate and knowledgeable of the topic areas covered in the sessions. Students interacted better and facilitators felt they accomplished more. However students did not know much about teenage pregnancy, this was a relatively new subject to them. Facilitators thought St. Ignatius would have been a better school to work in comparison to Annai, but experience proved differently.

Region 10:

Sessions in this region were generally successful. One school in particular, Makenzie High went really well; facilitator said they learnt from the students, which was unexpected.

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Secondary – The H.M for this school said that the school curriculum was packed and could not schedule a date. Thus Wisburg Secondary was visited instead. In some cases, as with Christianburg Secondary, the only time available to do sessions was after school hours, students complained about the timing.

The school complained that in doing sessions during school hours they would in turn be missing regular classes and parents would call in to complain about this.

B. Lessons learnt:

Group 1 (*What worked best?*)

- Skits and role plays in sessions (region 1 and 2)
- Students came up with skits for teenage pregnancy (regions 3, 4 and 5)
- Group session with students went well, learnt from students (region 6)
- Skits helped to reinforce theory. Large group discussions were more successful than small group sessions in most cases. Reason being every hear and understood (region 9)
- Arriving on time to sessions was very productive (all regions)

Group 2 (*Requirements and attitudes of facilitator*)

- Need to be flexible, creative and humble
- Need to stick to time
- Planning very important and reading more that what is in manual is an asset.

C. Follow up Activities:

- Revisit schools and have students put what they learnt into drama and cultural activities for the rest of the school
- Have students design posters based on sessions and placing them in strategic places
- Distribution of pamphlets with more advanced information
- DVDs on all topics to be shared out to schools
- Improvise on role plays in sessions with students
- Have meetings with parents
- Reinforce concepts using students as facilitators

D. General observations and recommendations:

- Literacy and comprehension skills low in some schools
- Students were nervous expressing themselves (drama and/or writing) in front of other class mates
- In some schools sports sometimes prevented full attendance of sessions
- Most students did not know about the age of consent
- In the lesson on gender it was stereotypically believed that the men should make the money and decisions, and women should be subdued and loyal to the man. The status of manhood is having a child and that of a woman is mothering a child, not necessary to have a father around.
- The authorities in the majority of the schools visited asked for sessions to be done with both 3rd and 4th form students.
- Facilitators recommend that forms 2 to 4 should be engaged and 3 sessions are not enough. In some schools, students drop out of school at age 13 and 14 because of examinations. Even though there is a Life skills programme in schools for students up to form 3, much of the effects of this programme was not seen
- Visit schools twice a month
- Put sessions, e.g. domestic violence, child abuse etc., into curriculum of education system so sessions happens during school hours. Lobby for this via radio and written letters to authorities.

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- More role plays should be included in sessions in the different modules
- Adopt students and/ or teachers as volunteers to do sessions with students and have follow up activities like poster making, plays/drama, competition etc. Next time budget for more follow up visits and contact time with students.
- Work with the PTA of schools, especially the schools that have asked for sessions to be done with parents and teachers. Facilitators in region 9 will work with community and PTAs
- Facilitators would volunteer their time and services, in other spaces, collaborating with relevant authorities e.g. REO, H.Ms etc. (Tessa Greene and Abeka Dupan to volunteer time to work in community meetings, groups, schools etc). If limited funding were available then transportation would be the priority – region 9 would need transportation and meals.
- Pay special attention to the schools/children that were not easy to work with
- Need to work with small groups of students for session to be truly effective.

E. Conclusion:

It was noted that over 2050 form 4 students were engaged in 30 schools across the country, with roughly 57.5% of those being girls and 42.5% being boys. The generally feeling was, even though the project was a success, more needs to be done with students and that sessions should be done on a regular basis. Facilitators felt that setting guidelines or rules at the beginning of sessions worked well for guiding the class. Using simple language, being tactful, complimenting students and using real stories also helped session go smoothly. In addition showing trustworthiness, politeness, showing respect to students, preparing for sessions and working as a team (in cases where co-facilitating was necessary) worked well. Mixed groups of students rather than homogeneous groups also proved effective and using the question box approach encouraged students to interact more.

In some cases language was a block, facilitators needed to use simple language or language students could relate to. Duration of sessions was sometimes a problem; facilitators were sometimes not given the full two hours to complete a session. In some schools, the teachers or HMs were not very welcoming to the facilitators, sometimes showing no interest. Facilitators felt that in a few instances there was not enough communication between the HM and the Project Coordinator. Transportation in some cases was a challenge and quite a few students in the various schools asked for snacks at the end of sessions.

In spite of everything, facilitators managed very well and made this part of the project a great success.