

EDUCATION MINISTERS' DECLARATIONS COMMITTING THEIR SUPPORT TO THE NETWORK

Ministers of Education of the Caribbean Community, along with representatives of National AIDS Authorities, and others at 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 declared...

"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.We **Affirm** that Education is a critical sector in the multi-sectoral response to HIV and **Endorse** the establishment and support development of the Caribbean Network of HIV coordinators in the education sector as a CARICOM-led regional resource. We also **Request** that the Network of HIV Coordinators develop a model for partnership between Ministries of Education and national organizations of Persons Living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA), consistent with the Greater Involvement of Persons Living with AIDS (GIPA) principles."

In January 2007, Ministers of Education of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) issued a similar declaration on the critical role of the education sector in response to HIV and AIDS and stated that we... "**Endorse** the membership of our Ministries' HIV and AIDS focal point in the Caribbean Network of education sector HIV/AIDS Coordinators"... and we ... "**Request** that PANCAP and the OECS Secretariat mobilise resources to strengthen the HIV and AIDS response of the education sector in the OECS."

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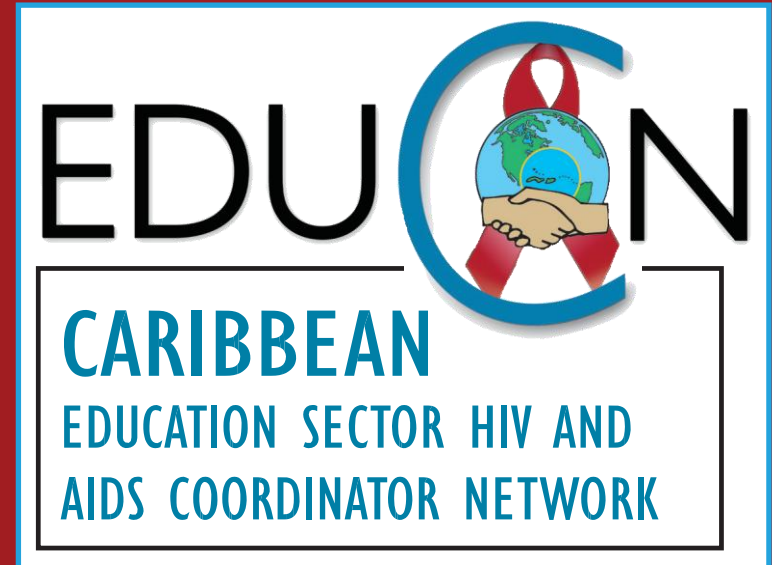
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VISION

The Network's vision is to transform the region's education sector response to HIV and AIDS.

MISSION

To advocate for a comprehensive, coordinated and sustained regional response to HIV and AIDS by the Caribbean education sector.

GOAL

To strengthen the Caribbean education sector's policy and programme response to HIV and AIDS.

OBJECTIVES

The Network (within the framework of the Port-of-Spain and Roseau Declarations of Ministers of Education) will:

- Advocate for greater involvement of the education sector in the national and regional response to HIV and AIDS.
- Advocate for increased allocation of human and financial (national and external) resources to support a sustainable education sector response.
- Advocate for a comprehensive response which emphasizes universal access to HIV prevention education, voluntary counselling and testing, and treatment, care and support of persons living with and affected by HIV and AIDS.
- Influence creation and implementation of policy and programmes that promote enabling and inclusive environments free from stigma and discrimination.
- Provide a platform for communication and information sharing among members and other stakeholders in the education sector.

HIGHLIGHTS OF NETWORK ACTIVITIES

The Network, with its Secretariat, EDC and UNESCO Caribbean, is promoting a comprehensive education sector approach that includes: 1) overall policy and 2) skills-based Health and Family Life Education (HFLE), strengthening the material on HIV and AIDS. This approach also includes 3) attention to the psycho-social school environment, making it free from stigma and discrimination, free from homophobia with ways to address the underlying causes of gender inequity and concepts of masculinity. As well, 4) partnerships with the health sector will increase access to voluntary counselling and testing, and care and support for teachers and students.

In the coming years, Network activities will be dedicated to professional development for HIV and AIDS coordinators, increasing capacity in their ministries. Drawing on tools developed recently by EDC with support from CARICOM/PANCAP, the Network will promote leadership, advocacy and policy development in several countries. There will be new training modules to implement the principles of Greater Involvement of Persons Living with HIV and AIDS (GIPA), and work to implement HFLE, with more attention to curricula and materials on HIV and AIDS.



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