

# Children

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in FOCUS



Let us  
Listen Today to the  
Voices of Tomorrow



Children's  
Participation

unicef 

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## FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE'S DESK



Tom Olsen

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) states that children have the right to participate on issues affecting their lives. Five years earlier, during the Global Movement for Children campaign, and also at the Special Session for Children— world leaders, community leaders and all persons were reminded to *Listen to Children*.

Clearly, various global instruments, as well as campaigns such as the one mentioned above recognize the importance of giving children and young persons a voice on issues affecting their lives. This includes giving them a voice in their various spheres of presence: the school, home and in the community.

In the Caribbean, a generation of persons would have grown up under the adage “Children should be seen but not heard” and even though we have moved away somewhat from this view, the question that can still be legitimately asked is how many children in the Caribbean, who are 18 years old today and hence would have grown up under the CRC, can truly say that they feel satisfied that their right to meaningful participation has been fulfilled?

Undoubtedly there would not be many because even though in some settings, attempts are made to give children a voice on issues, in the large part children’s participation has been token or a window dressing of the stage. They have been invited to

say a pray, perform a cultural piece at meetings or sometimes they are allowed to sit in on meetings, where the ones who do not feel intimidated by adults may occasionally voice their opinions. The bottom line is that in the Caribbean we still need to recognize the importance of the participation of children in the development process. Children and adolescents offer unique perspectives and solutions to issues. In this regard, we need to create more opportunities for them to assume responsibilities and become more active on issues affecting their lives. In such cases, adults should be there to provide guidance and to also take the child’s opinion into account in accordance with his/ her age and maturity, as is recommended by the CRC.

It is because children’s right to participation is one area that still needs to be addressed, that we have sought to focus in this issue of *Children In Focus* on the theme of *Children’s Participation*. We have examined some of the challenges to meaningful participation and we have also focused on some concerted efforts in progress which we hope can serve as best practices for others to follow. Again we trust that you will find this issue interesting and that it will be helpful in your work with and on behalf of children.

Tom Olsen  
Representative

## CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION: LET US LISTEN TODAY TO THE VOICES OF TOMORROW

by Niloufar Pourzand



The Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates all children's evolving rights to participation in arenas that impact upon their lives. Let us be frank, there are very few, if any, critical socio-economic and community/family issues that do not impact the lives of our children in one way or another. In fact, in today's globalized world, decisions made in Brussels, for example, can have consequences on the lives of children living in the Caribbean, or in East Asia. Climate change impacts our children as do major financial shifts in the world's or region's economy or elections or new socio-economic policies or religious and cultural practices ...just to name a few.

Certainly, we can all find sayings and expressions in our cultures that also underline the importance of listening to children. In Islam, there are quotes from the Prophet Mohammad on how he prioritized his grandchildren and wanted to hear them first. However, we also

all know that this is not practiced often enough at the family/community level or at the more national/international level. Children's voices are often missed in the hierarchies in which we live and work. These hierarchies of income/education/ethnic background, amongst others, are further interjected with the hierarchy of age and adulthood, which often leaves children with little opportunity for active participation. They are not designed for children's participation.

It is for this very reason that the focus of the Convention On The Rights Of The Child on participation is so refreshing and important. Article 12 of the CRC states that all children have the right to be heard and considered in decisions affecting them. This article, in addition to Articles 13, 14, and 15 establish the child's right to access to information, freedom of belief, and freedom of association, are some of the important articles that support a child's right to participation in family, community, culture and broader civil society

By signing the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Governments of the world have recognized this right and affirmed their support to its realization. We need to work with them to make this a reality for all children, children of

different ethnic, racial, religious and class backgrounds and of course, boys and girls, equally.

We also need to work with children and young people for them to have the opportunities and confidence to speak out and express themselves and support their leadership development. As adults, we too need to be trained and sensitized on the right of children to participation, as well as believe in its deep value. This does not mean "tokenism" such as having children present flowers to members of a delegation or to put on a play in a meeting – though each of these can also be a positive gesture. It is time for us to go beyond "tokenism" and "climb the ladder of participation" and support and facilitate meaningful participation of children at all levels.

The Children's Participation Network poses some of the following challenging questions:

- 1) What affects how organizations and practitioners respond to children's participation?
- 2) What happens when children's views collide with that of adults?
- 3) What do children and young adults gain from participation?

4) How does children's participation fit within the broader frameworks of active citizenship, democracy and governance?

5) How can one ensure that certain groups of children are not excluded?

(d) being informed and consulted in decision making;

(e) Initiating ideas, processes, proposals, projects;

(f) analyzing situations and making choices;

(g) respecting others and being treated with dignity

As you can see, for children's participation to be further encouraged and for it to be relevant, we need to ponder upon the process and modality with greater depth and consideration. But this can only be done should we collectively have the firm belief and will to contribute to this transition in our societies. This is a transition that recognizes the rights of children, and their potential and perspectives in building a better future, and does not see the domain of participation and decision-making as that of adults (of course, some adults more than others) only but that of a dialogue amongst generations.

*Some forms of child participation include:*

(a) seeking information, forming views, expressing ideas;

(b) taking part in activities and processes;

(c) playing different roles including listening, reflecting, researching, speaking;

To this end, I would like to share with you below two examples of children's participation from UNICEF's State of the World's Report.

### **Children's Jirga**

In Afghanistan, a children's Jirga (assembly) is planned to address the difficulties faced by the millions of children in Afghanistan: those who have lost one or both parents, been displaced by conflict or maimed by landmines, or who suffer from malnutrition or die before the age of five. The Afghan Government has been asked to set up a national commission for children that will involve several departments, such as health and education, "so that," explains Olara Otunnu, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, "children become central in creating policies and in allocation of resources."

### **A Young Country**

In Timor-Leste (East Timor), nine days before independence was celebrated on 20 May 2002, a Student Parliament was convened, holding its inaugural meeting at the parliamentary assembly. As the new nation moved toward independence, UNICEF and its partners had launched a vigorous campaign to educate young people about democracy. Under the banner 'Build a nation with children and young people', UNICEF encouraged young people to become involved in the political process. Out of this campaign, the Student Parliament was born.

Let us commit ourselves to an authentic and meaningful partnership with children, based on principles of human and child rights, as well as democracy and humanity, which will surely only enrich us as individuals and institutions and contribute to a more inclusive world fit for all but especially for our children, the futures of our societies.

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*Niloufar Pourzand is the Deputy Representative for the UNICEF Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean*



## HEALTH AND FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION - A PATHWAY TO ENHANCING CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CLASSROOM by Kim Jones



When I was first introduced to the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) programme, I must admit that I had my misgivings. After all, this would not have been the first time that the content of the Guidance Class had been experimented with.

I am a “generational” Guidance Counsellor, with both my mother and “second” mother being Guidance Counsellors. For years, I had heard the tales of woe and great lamentations about the fact that children were seeing and hearing the topics laid out on the chalkboard in

Guidance Class, making beautiful notes in their books and then leaving the class – physically and mentally. Very few things that were discussed in class were seen as relevant and very few children translated these topics into real world situations. Good work was done – on paper – but not so great in practice.

Practical knowledge and practice of said knowledge are the keys to true learning. Furthermore, it has been said that the most powerful method for the enhancement of a child's learning capacity is to make him/her responsible for that learning. Classroom participation is an integral part of this shift in responsibility and HFLE's focus is definitely along this path. This programme assists with classroom participation through a few vital components:

### 1) HFLE deals with real world issues.

Whether we are looking at community issues, classroom issues, household issues, or individual issues, the HFLE programme tackles everyday issues. This is integral, for if a student cannot connect a classroom issue to the world outside of the classroom then we have not only wasted our time, but that child's time as well. After a while, that student will begin to

resent coming to such classes since, in their minds, this has nothing to do with what they are really going through.

### 2) HFLE deals with relatable issues.

Peer Pressure. Bullying. Self Concept. Could it (Drug Abuse) Happen to Me? Child Abuse. Domestic Violence. Every child has struggled with these issues at some point in time. They are either the perpetrators, victims or in contact with someone who was one or both.

As a result, our children can relate to the issues that we present. If a child can relate, it makes it easier for that child to participate in the classroom setting and the student learns how to cope with any of these issues should they arise in their own lives.

### 3) HFLE focuses on less “chalk”- more “talk”.

Let's be perfectly honest. The days of solely chalkboard teaching are slowly coming to an

end – especially if we are dealing with day-to-day issues. However, because of our insistence to stay with the above mentioned format of teaching, we are continuing to produce a child that is academically brilliant, but socially ignorant. HFLE fosters meaningful, interactive dialogue which is necessary in order to cultivate students who are independent thinkers – thinkers who can not only see a situation but assess it and deal with it using HFLE strategies. HFLE strategies are not chalkboard strategies. They need to be practiced. One of my classic examples occurred in my third form class three weeks ago when we were looking at the topic of bullying. On the chalkboard, we examined the concepts of the bully, the targets and the observers. The students understood this, but what really cemented the issues discussed was the next week when they were split up into groups and made to act out bullying scenarios. They had to look at the wrong and right way of dealing with each scenario. There was full participation from all students. One student even volunteered to be the camera man using the video aspect of my cell phone! We then showed the scenarios in class one day and each group was able to say what they did wrong, what was unrealistic, and how they could have improved on their responses.

#### 4) HFLE is goal oriented and solution focused.

We have all of the information written neatly in our books. Now what? We have a real life problem

to deal with. Now what? HFLE not only teaches students to be able to identify problems and potential problems, but also how to work through these problems in a logical manner. Last week, I was teaching my second form classes on the HFLE topic “Reaching my Goals by Reducing My Risk”. Part of their homework for this week was to let me know three things:

- a. Give two goals that they want to achieve by age twenty-five
- b. How do you plan on achieving these goals?
- c. What things would reduce your chances of achieving these goals?

I was pleasantly surprised by the responses that I got. It was obvious that many of them really put some thought into their responses and 90 percent of them had truly achievable goals.

**HFLE fosters meaningful, interactive dialogue which is necessary in order to cultivate students who are independent thinkers**

#### 5) HFLE is user friendly.

At the end of it all, it doesn't really matter what we want the children to learn or how great our ideas are. If our methodology is poor, our delivery and implementation



will also be poor. What I like about the HFLE programme is that it doesn't build up to issues. It jumps right in and tackles them head-on while using a plethora of ways to get our young people to think outside of the box and hone their problem solving skills.

Every programme has its faults, one of HFLE's being that at times there is too much to do in a forty minute lesson. Sometimes I cringe when I think that I may have to cut out some of the lesson. However, at the end of it all, I must say that the HFLE programme encourages independent thinking, excellent problem solving strategies and great participation. All of these attributes encourage the growth of a leader, a team player, a peacemaker and in essence, a positive contributor to our society.

*Kim Jones is currently the Guidance Counsellor of Combermere School, Barbados and has been in the post for the past six (6) years. Her studies at Ohio State University and Erdiston Teacher's Training College have solidified her love of working with young people from every socioeconomic background. An avid reader and vocalist, Kim is constantly striving to improve herself in order to be a better counselor and teacher.*

## WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO ENSURE ADOLESCENTS' RIGHT TO EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOLS?

by Sara Faroni

Adolescent participation can be defined as both the right to express freely opinions and views and the right to be heard and influence processes in all matters affecting their lives.

As the CRC clarifies, there are no boundaries and exceptions to guarantee the adolescent's right to the freedom of expression. Yet the right to express views freely can be ensured and implemented only when the child's views, once expressed, shape our understanding and become an integral part of the decision making processes concerning their lives.

Indeed the challenge is to promote and achieve youth participation in a meaningful way, with young people perceiving themselves empowered as drivers of the social change and not only as the objects of a right. The *how* however is the clue, considering the difficulty to promote "meaningful participation" in contexts where social relationships tend to be structured in a hierarchical way, as often happens in the schools.

School still remains a privileged



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environment wherein young people can find the conditions to experiment participation. This is particularly true in the Eastern Caribbean where education is widely recognized as the pillar of social development and the school is considered by children themselves as a safe place that they can trust.

The Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) programme being taught in most schools in the Eastern Caribbean represents a crucial opportunity in order to support effective adolescent participation in the school. Youth participation and empowerment, within the HFLE programme, are conceived as a development tool. It is a process of expanding children's choices,

their interests, make their own choices and are responsible of their choices. Participative adolescents should develop their skills, gain confidence, articulate their interests, make their own choices and be responsible for the choices they make.

However participation is not a panacea and the HFLE programme is not always able to reach young people and create the conditions for an effective and meaningful participation. From some interviews I conducted with students attending an HFLE class, they often noted that they wanted freedom of speech and spoke about "HFLE's fatigue" – as they consider it too boring and repetitive.

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## CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION AROUND THE MDGS

by Denise Tannis



The Office of the Government Advisor on Poverty Eradication and the Millennium Development Goals in Barbados was established in February of 2006. One of the objectives of the Office is to monitor and assess the implementation of the MDGs and also to promote sensitization and awareness of the Goals.

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Left: Minister of Social Transformation, the Honourable Trevor Prescod meeting with one of the students after one of the Yes Minister Session. Right: A student speaking at one of the sessions

In this regard, the Office has sought to involve young people in the monitoring of the MDGs in Barbados, through the holding of various sessions with youth and key policy makers in Barbados. These sessions have been held in collaboration with the UNICEF Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean and included two Yes Minister Sessions, one national MDG Youth Consultation and a Youth Consultation on the Barbados National Strategic Plan.

The two Yes Minister sessions focused on “Education as a Pathway out of Poverty” and “The role of Youth in Achieving the MDGs”.

The national **MDG Youth Consultation** was also held

### and the objectives were to:

- ◆ enhance the awareness of adolescents and young people on the Millennium Development Goals and their relevance to young people;
- ◆ to provide a forum for exploration of the role of adolescents and youth in the achievement of the MDGs;
- ◆ to facilitate youth dialogue with Government Ministers on Barbados’ progress in the achievement of the MDGs; and to identify and appoint MDG Youth Ambassadors to serve as spokespersons on MDG youth issues.

On 31 October 2007, there was a National Youth Consultation on the topic: “The Role of Youth in Making Barbados a Fully Developed Society that is

Prosperous, Socially Just and Globally Competitive”. The objectives were:

- ◆ to educate and sensitize youth to the goals and objectives of the National Strategic Plan;
- ◆ to provide students with an opportunity to engage in discussion with those who contribute to planning and development decisions in Barbados; and
- ◆ to provide a platform for participatory youth engagement with various development stakeholders.

### How were youth engaged?

The methodology for the sessions were usually the same – the sessions began with an interactive overview of the MDGs by a representative from UNICEF and following this, each Minister of Government or policy maker was allowed time to speak to what his/her Ministry is doing to help Barbados reach the MDGs. Following this, the young people normally 14-16 years old from a wide cross section of public and private secondary schools across the islands were given the opportunity to ask questions and

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# ACTION IN PROGRESS

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Students taking part in one of the MDGs sessions at the UN House, Barbados.

to challenge the Ministers/policymakers on any issues raised during their presentation. They were also allowed time to suggest recommendations to the policy makers, as well as to come up with action plans for themselves and their peers in their schools.

Some of the recommendations made for the eradication of poverty in Barbados included the promotion of grassroots activism and reforming the educational system to include areas such as entrepreneurship. Recommendations such as establishing a text book loan scheme at the primary level and introducing continuous student assessments were offered for improving the existing educational system. The young participants also highlighted the need for more emphasis to be placed on abstinence and fidelity in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

## *Impact on the lives of children*

To date approximately nine hundred (900) young persons have participated in these sessions and they have undoubtedly had a positive

impact on their lives as is reflected in the comments below from some of the students who participated

**Some of the comments made by youth were as follows:**

*My interest in being a youth ambassador was aroused by the topic "Eradicating Extreme Poverty and Hunger". As an ambassador I believe that I will be given the opportunity to make a difference both locally and globally.*  
Student, Age 17

*I believe that I would be a wonderful asset in terms of getting the issues which confront our young people across to persons who have the authority to change them. I believe that if given the opportunity I would implement many of the strategies acquired today during our group discussions.*  
Student, Age 15

*Since we are the youth of tomorrow it is important for us to share our views and speak out on issues such as poverty, gender, education, HIV and many others.*  
Student, Age 15

*I think youth will listen to youths, or prefer to be spoken to by their peers, and I think I can help to inform my fellow friends to do what is right and to build a better nation starting with school, home and society.*  
Student, Age 14

*"The young people are our future and if we let their voices be heard, we will benefit greatly from their participation."*

Student, Age 15

*"I have learnt that the future is in our hands and it is our responsibility to make a difference – I want to help young people to understand this by speaking boldly."*

Student, Age 16

## *The Way Forward*

The Office will continue in its programming of youth focused initiatives. It is currently planning to host a regional consultation in 2008 and this will be a follow-up to the Caribbean Summit for Children on HIV/AIDS, which was held in Barbados in 2004 and in Trinidad in 2005. During 2008-2009, its newest programme called the Joshua Generation programme will be expanded to individual secondary schools, working in tandem with the Guidance Counselors and Principals. Leadership coaches are currently being trained to begin take the Joshua Generation programme into schools during this period. The Office has also established strategic partnerships with major financial institution to include prudent financial management in its course content. The office also continues to work closely with UNICEF Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean in the sponsorship and planning of a number of these activities.

*Denise Tannis is the Programme Coordinator with the Government Advisor on Poverty Eradication and the MDGs.*

## WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOUTH PARTICIPATION – GRENADIAN BORN ABIGEIL SPEAKS OUT

This year the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) marks its 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and like many young people today, Abigeil McIntyre of Grand Anse, Grenada would have grown up under the CRC, as she was one year old when the Convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 and two years old when her country Grenada – signed and ratified the said Convention.

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Cambier



Abigeil McIntyre addressing the audience at the UNICEF End Cycle Meeting

For several years, this former President of the Youth Arm of the Grenadian National Coalition on the Rights of the Child worked feverishly educating young Grenadians about their rights under the Convention – including their right to participate on issues affecting their lives. Her first real opportunity to speak with senior government leaders on issues affecting Caribbean children came in 2005, when she was selected by UNICEF to represent the Caribbean at the United Nations headquarters in New York to speak on behalf of Caribbean children on the issue of violence against children.

While this experience was “amazing” and while hoping that her contribution would have helped to “affect some type of change for children” Abigeil, in retrospect, is still not certain if her and the contribution of the others there were taken very seriously.

“I expected to see a resolution passed or some law put in place in countries that would help deal with the issue of violence against children but I haven’t really seen any follow-up since that meeting,” she said.

Even though welcoming this and other opportunities to participate at meetings, for Abigail this issue of adolescents participation brings many paradoxes. One is that often the persons chosen to participate do not represent the

voices of the majority of the children or of the children affected by the problem.

“What about the voices of excluded children?” she asked passionately. “Or even the children living in rural areas in Grenada? These are children who go through a lot – some of them are physically abused and it is not seen as abused by their parents because this is how they [the parents] themselves would have been treated. You hardly see these children being represented at fora where young people are asked to participate.” She added.

Another paradox is that children’s opinions are sought after the solutions have already been decided upon. “We need to get people to go into our communities and hear what young people are crying about” She said. We also need to hear their solutions- they would know because “they live it [the experience] everyday” she added

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# WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOUTH PARTICIPATION – GRENADIAN BORN ABIGEIL SPEAKS OUT

*(continued from page 11)*

So as we move forward to another 18 years of CRC what would Abigeil like to see? At the recently held UNICEF End Cycle Meeting, Abigeil got the opportunity to share her wish with the delegates in attendance.

“We need more incentive-based programmes for young people” she said. “We need to go into the rural communities and organize fora for the youths there to find

out what is going on with their lives, how they are coping and what needs to be done”.

“We need more students’ councils in schools so that youth can air what is on their mind – because when they have all that baggage off their chest, then they can focus on work and get the results we want. We also need more youth-led radio and TV programmes.”

She also threw out a challenge to the adults present at the End Cycle Meeting. “I want you to put yourselves in the shoes of the less fortunate; also I want you to think back to the time when you were young and ask yourself what did I need from or wanted to say to adults but was not allowed to because I felt stifled – and then ask yourself how did that make me feel?”

## WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO ENSURE ADOLESCENTS’ RIGHT TO EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOLS?

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Therefore ensuring participation requires that the teaching-learning process within the school has to be democratic and guarantee freedom of expression and safety from recrimination. This democratic approach can be pursued only when a process of dialogue and exchange between children and teachers is continually in place, with more acknowledgement of youth culture that is the set of young people’s values, languages and feelings. Democratic participation does not mean that teachers have to give up their vital role and position but they have to take some risk allowing children to reflect critically in an environment

where open communication is guaranteed for everybody. Democratic participation thus means also that the HFLE programme has to consider the unequal power relations and capabilities in participating, such as gender relations, disabilities and disparities in education.

The students need their own space to discuss and articulate their needs and interests. Youth participation is first of all a right to learning by doing the participation in every day life and the school should promote tools of representation and discussion such as student councils, which are crucial for children in order to be part of the decision

processes and feel empowered as drivers of social change.

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*Sara Faroni was an intern at the UNICEF ECO. She has just completed her Masters Degree in Development Studies.*



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UNICEF Eastern Caribbean Office held its End Cycle Meeting at the Sherbourne Conference Centre on 05-06 December where the topic of youth participation in the upcoming programme cycle was very much the focus. Young people were invited to participate and these included: Adolescents from five secondary schools – Queens College, Ellerslie Secondary, The Allyene School, Foundation Secondary School and the Combermere School, along with two members of the Xchange movement – (the movement against violence) – and a youth representative from the island of St. Kitts and Nevis. One of the interesting panels organized and led by them on the second day of the meeting was entitled: “Youth participation - What do young people want?”

*Below are snapshots of the presentations made by the youth to policymakers, Ministers of government, NGOs and to UNICEF staff during their panel presentation: “Youth Participation - What Do Young People Really Want?”*



**Kevin Small**  
*(15 years old)*  
**Ellerslie Secondary School, Barbados**

From my point of view I believe we need to be heard. We need to be heard, loved, respected, understood and be trusted. We need to be given a chance to excel in all forms. We need to be given the right to be treated as children – We need a national youth parliament. There are many positive things that the youth are doing and these need to be highlighted more.

Young people need more experiences. Experiences in simple things such as job training, manners, interaction with one another because so many wonderful things can happen when young people get together. They also need experiences in humility because it is only by learning how to be humble that we appreciate the experiences that we are given. In sum young people need to be empowered, educated and encouraged and these can only come through experiences.



**Je-Melia Maloney**  
*(15 years old)*  
**Student of the Combermere School, Barbados and President of the Emerging Global Leaders**

It is not a question of what young people want, but of what they need.



**D'Andra Howard**  
*(23 years old)*  
**UWI Student and member of Xchange Barbados**

Young people need to be seen and heard. We need more exposure to healthy and positive lifestyles through programmes designed to give us the skills to adopt this lifestyle – one such programme is the Health and Family Life Education programme, which needs to be taught properly in all schools. We also need our single parents to be educated about how to deal with our children

positively, as well as meet the demands of being single parents. We also need our teachers to be educated and trained on how to deal with children with problems or children with issues.



*Rene Ann Seon  
(15 years old)  
Foundation School,  
Barbados*

Young people need to be heard. It has been too long that older persons are saying “hey you are young and

you don’t know what you want.” Certainly not! Just like adults we have dreams and goals and with these we need instruction, inspiration and support from you adults to achieve them. We could play a significant role in our environment if only we could be recognized. We have potential, we just need to utilize them. It is conferences and workshops like this that we need to be exposed – We need a free flow in interaction with the adults. We need to know what you expect from us and finally we need to know that you care.

*Klieon John  
(19 years old)  
St. Kitts and Nevis*

We need communication and consultations that are relevant and consistent with our forms of communication so that youth can be reached in a relevant and accurate manner. We need programmes that address the needs of young women that will help them to protect themselves

from sexual abuse – we need programmes that teach respect between the two sexes and which will raise awareness about the impact of sexual violence. In this regard, we need to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes to address violence against children. We also need you to address the issue of unemployment because asking youth to participate will be difficult if they do not have financial stability. Regarding juvenile offenders we need you to have programmes to psychologically evaluate juvenile offenders to understand why they have come in conflict with the law so that appropriate preventative measures can be put in place.



*Kyle Selman  
(15 years old)  
The Alleyne School,  
Barbados*

Young people need to be heard, to be trusted to be loved, to be respected and to be given a chance to excel.

## STUDY TOUR TO OHIO A SUCCESS FOR BARBADIAN EDUCATORS

Some Barbadian educators now have a better understanding of best practices in the area of positive classroom management. This is following a recent study tour to Mount Vernon, Ohio from 29 October – 02 November, which was organized and funded by the UNICEF Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. This tour is part of the broader strategy by the Office to respond to issues related to behavioural challenges in primary and secondary school classrooms across the region.

The members of the Barbados delegation were: Dr. Kerry King, Clinical Psychologist and Director of The Learning Place; Karen Best, Principal of Hillaby/Turner's Hall Primary School and President of the Barbados Union of Teachers; Patricia Warner, Education Officer with the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs & Sports, and a member of Hillaby Turner's Hall Primary School Project Steering Committee; and Joy Gittens, Senior Education Officer and Head of the Teacher Evaluation Unit with the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs & Sports. They were accompanied by Heather Stewart, UNICEF's Child Protection Specialist, and Sharon Oxenford, Assistant Professor of Education at Mount Vernon Nazarene University.

According to Stewart, "UNICEF is interested in having all Caribbean countries eliminate the use of corporal punishment in the future but we cannot just advocate for the end of corporal punishment," she said. "We must balance this by providing teachers with alternatives and help them to put these into practice. As Barbados is one of the countries where we are piloting a whole-school approach to positive behaviour management, we thought that a study tour like this would be useful for Barbadian educators." She added.

The tour entailed visits to various schools and centres including the Centerburg and Twin Oaks Elementary Schools, the Mount Vernon Middle School, Knox County Career Center, and the Alternative School for Children on out-of-school suspension and those who are expelled. At these institutions, the delegation met with students, Principals and Staff, toured the facilities, as well as observed teaching and behavioural management systems in practice.

Karen Best, Principal of Hillaby/Turner's Hall Primary where the Changing the *Classroom Culture Project* is being demonstrated noted that the visit was enlightening.

"The study tour validated some of the things we are doing in the Changing Classroom Culture Project and exposed to us to additional, new ideas..."

"It was an enlightening and rewarding experience," she said. "In addition, the study tour validated some of the things we are doing in the Changing Classroom Culture Project and exposed us to additional, new ideas that could work."

Following the study tour, the positive behavioural manual for the Hillaby Turner's Hall Primary School will be finalized and shared with other schools in Barbados which have expressed an interest in committing to the change process, and discussions on an appropriate model for Alternative Education in Barbados will be continued by the Ministry of Education

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM UNICEF END CYCLE MEETING

On 05-06 December the UNICEF Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean held its End Cycle Meeting at the Sherbourne Conference Centre. Under the theme “Moving the Agenda for Children Forward in the Eastern Caribbean”, the meeting explored new ways of working in the upcoming 2008-2011 programme cycle. The participants comprised of students and youth from Barbados and select Caribbean islands; government partners, NGOs and members of civil society from the 10 countries who are part of its programme of cooperation along with UN agencies and donors. The meeting comprised mainly of panel discussions on key issues that will be addressed during the upcoming programme cycle

### Day 1

The opening ceremony featured a key note address by the



*Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office in Barbados– The Reverend, the Honourable Joseph Atherley addressing those present at the opening ceremony.*

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Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office in Barbados – The Reverend, the Honourable Joseph Atherley. He made a call for Barbados and the Caribbean to develop a positive culture of child rearing. There were also remarks made by: Mr. Hamilton

Lashley, the Government Advisor on Poverty Eradication and the MDGs; The Deputy Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis – the Honourable Sam Condor and Ms. Karin Sham Poo – The UNICEF Special Envoy for the Caribbean.



*UNICEF Representative Tom Olsen speaking during the panel on Corporate Social Responsibility on Day 1.*

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Day 1 focused on the issue of corporate social responsibility and featured a presentation by Lara Vu of the UNICEF Office for Latin America and the Caribbean Private Sector Division and a Representative of the First Caribbean International Bank. There was also a panel discussion on *The Role of The University of the West Indies in Generating a Knowledge Base for Children* and a presentation

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## NEW COUNTRY PROGRAMME

In January 2008, UNICEF ECO will embark on its new four year programme cycle. There will be one overall programme entitled “Social Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation for Children’s Rights” which will have the following components:

- ◆ Early Childhood Development
- ◆ HIV Prevention & Life Skills
- ◆ Child Protection
- ◆ Social Policy, Advocacy and Partnership for Children’s Rights

environment that protects children from violence, abuse, (including sexual abuse and incest, and exploitation) and improves accountability at the state, community, school and family levels, as well as for children of migrant parents.

### *The Programme:*

The Programme “Social Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation for Children’s Rights” will support the respective governments and institutions in tackling severe and urgent issues in child protection and social exclusion by promoting better access to affordable and quality social and educational services. There will also be an intensive focus on capacity development and strengthening protective environments for the fulfillment of children’s rights. This will be achieved by advocating and supporting regional and national evidence-based policy oriented to children’s rights. This integrated change strategy focuses on strengthening the institutional base and affirms UNICEF’s role as ‘knowledge leader’ in middle income countries.

### *Programme elements*

#### *Social Policy, Advocacy and Partnership for Children’s Rights*

This component will support the creation, consolidation and the enforcement of a protective and enabling legal environment for all children and women. UNICEF will contribute to the empowerment of children by encouraging their participation in policy making, increasing their awareness of their needs and rights, as well as promoting youth networks and sports for development initiatives. In addition, it will encourage the implementation of equitable social planning by documenting, modeling, disseminating and encouraging good practices and lessons learnt.

#### *Child Protection*

This component will promote the harmonization of standards and approaches across the Caribbean. It will advocate for an

#### *HIV Prevention and Lifeskills*

Using the lifecycle approach, this component aims to strengthen the capacities of **Governments, teachers, parents and youth** to work together to empower children and young people to make informed positive choices about their health and well-being and to develop personal and peer-support capacity for self and mutual protection as well as gender equity

#### *Early Childhood Development*

Within this component, special efforts will be undertaken to strengthen parenting skills, especially of vulnerable families, female-headed households, care-givers of orphans and vulnerable children, and teenage-mothers. Particular focus will be on the first three years, as well as on school readiness. Emphasis will also be on enhancing the policy frameworks, as well as standards, across the region.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM UNICEF END CYCLE MEETING

(continued from page 16)

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Panel on "Social Policy Monitoring and Evaluation for Children's Rights".



The youth panel on day 2 of the UNICEF End Cycle Meeting.

on what ought to be the direction on the follow-up to the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children.

### Day 2

Day 2 focused primarily on panel discussions on the key issues in each element of the new country programme. These were on Social Policy Monitoring and

Evaluation for Children's Rights; Supporting Children's Optimal Development: birth through adolescents; Reforms in Legislation, Programmes and Practices - where should we be headed and a panel on Youth participation.

The panel discussions were followed by three concurrent

workshops which focused on: Using Dev Info for Decision Making; Restorative Justice: Possible models for the Caribbean and Democratic Governance in Schools.

The meeting was highly appreciated by all for its quality and interactive methodology.





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