

CARICOM YOUTH AMBASSADORS PROGRAMME (CYAP)



STRATEGIC PLAN

2002-2005

“If you don’t know where you are going, it
doesn’t matter which way you go.”

Lewis Carroll’s - Alice in Wonderland

“A word is not a crystal, transparent and unchanged; it is the skin of a living
thought, and may vary greatly in colour and content according to the
circumstances and time in which it is used.”

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. U.S. Supreme Court (1902-32)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The CARICOM Youth Ambassador Programme (CYAP) is a relatively new initiative that owes much to a number of agencies for its genesis and development.

The CYA Network extends thanks and appreciation to the following agencies for the invaluable support, advice and guidance given:

<i>CARICOM</i>	<i>Caribbean Regional Community</i>
<i>CAREC</i>	<i>The Caribbean Epidemiology Centre</i>
<i>CCC</i>	<i>Caribbean Council of Churches</i>
<i>CARICAD</i>	<i>Caribbean Centre for Administration and Development</i>
<i>CARICOM Youth Ambassador Corp 2002-2005</i>	
<i>BARCAM</i>	
<i>BCC</i>	<i>Barbados Community College</i>
<i>EU</i>	<i>European Union</i>
<i>Iwokrama</i>	
<i>National Youth Councils in the Region</i>	
<i>The Governments of Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago</i>	
<i>UNICEF</i>	<i>United Nations Children Fund</i>
<i>UNAIDS</i>	<i>The Joint United Nations Programme for HIV/AIDS</i>
<i>UNFPA</i>	<i>The United Nations Population Fund</i>
<i>UNDCP</i>	<i>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</i>
<i>UWI</i>	<i>University of the West Indies (Medical Centre)</i>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page No.</i>
1. <i>Executive Summary</i>	5
2. <i>SWOT Analysis</i>	6-7
3. <i>Core values</i>	6
4. <i>Vision</i>	7
5. <i>Mission</i>	8
6. <i>Overarching Goals</i>	8
7. <i>Strategic Direction</i>	9
8. <i>Key Performance Areas</i>	10
9. <i>Goals, related Strategies</i>	10-13
10. <i>Management of the CYAP</i>	14

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The CYAP is an initiative of the CARICOM Heads of Government and was launched in St. Lucia in 1983 as a component of the programme celebrating the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Chaguaramas. The programme was suspended in 1995 following an evaluation of the programme by CARICOM, and was reactivated in 2000 in accordance with priorities established by the Third and Fourth Councils for Human and Social Development (COHSOD).

The guidelines for re-activation of the programme were informed by the recommendations contained in the report of the 1995 CYAs in a workshop held in Grenada in July 2000, and approved by COHSOD IV in October of the same year. The CYAs guidelines stipulated the development and implementation of national strategies and initiatives in consultation with key stakeholders.

The CYAP is an initiative for leadership development and youth participation. The CYAs are the Community's focal point for deepening the regional integration and development process through advocacy and peer education initiatives. Membership of the network currently stands at thirty-four (34) CYAs from thirteen Full and two Associated States, and are selected from membership of National Youth Councils or other representative youth organizations and /or experienced youth leaders.

The CYAP strategic plan developed out of a ten-day workshop held in Suriname from August 19 to 28, 2002, under the auspices of CARICOM and the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Suriname. Ambassadors from fourteen Member States attended the workshop.

Key contributors to the workshop and development of the strategic plan were: 2002-2004 CARICOM Youth Ambassadors, CAREC, CARICOM, BARCAM, Iwokrama, Barbados Community College, UNICEF and UNAIDS and UWI Medical Centre.

The strategic plan identifies the outcome of the SWOT (OTSW) analysis carried out by the Ambassadors; the values underpinning the CYAP, and its mission and vision. The overarching goals are outlined, as well as the strategies for achieving the goal.

This strategic plan will direct and inform the activities of the CYAP for the period 2002-2005.

CORE VALUES OF THE CYAP

The core values underpinning the CYAP are:

- *Caribbean unity and regional integration;*
- *Youth participation in national and regional development;*
- *Improved quality of life of Caribbean youth;*
- *Honesty, integrity and professionalism;*
- *Advocacy for positive change and equal rights for Caribbean youth; and*
- *Empowerment, development and well-being of Caribbean youth.*

SWOT (OTSW) ANALYSIS OF THE CYAP

The Opportunities for the CYAP were identified as:

- ▶ *Emergence of a holistic development paradigm for the region;*
- ▶ *Ongoing technological advances to support the operations of the CYA Network;*
- ▶ *Ability to contribute to the work of, and learn from experts at the community, national, regional and international level;*
- ▶ *Expanding/strengthening networking, information networks among key stakeholders across multiple sectors;*
- ▶ *Deteriorating social and environmental conditions for persons of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds; and*
- ▶ *Increasing public acceptance and recognition of the CYAP*
- ▶ *Ongoing technological advances to support RYA activity;*
- ▶ *Streamlining a more effective use of scarce resources;*
- ▶ *Development of cross-cultural linkages.*

The THREATS to the CYA P from the external environment are:

- *Politicization of the CYA programme & or lack of political will to utilize the capabilities of the CYAP;*
- *Conflict between popular youth culture and the values/goals of the CYAP;*
- *Failing to cultivate a spirit of ownership for the CYAP's success in Department's responsible for Youth and National Youth Councils;*
- *Geographical separation and distance between member states;*
- *Limited access to and/or cost of information technology;*
- *Competition among existing youth groups and organizations for limited resources and recognition*

The STRENGTHS of the CYAP were identified as:

- ★ Ability to channel youth views /issues and recommendations to the Heads of Government and other decision makers;
- ★ The inherent abilities & qualities of CYAs;
- ★ Recognition of CYAP by Governments, NYCs and regional and international agencies;
- ★ Youthfulness of CYAs and their commitment to regional integration and youth development;
- ★ Increased access to scarce programme resources through multi-agency approaches/partnerships;
- ★ Structured opportunities for CYAs to participate in the Community's and partner agencies decision-making structures at both technical and advisory levels; and
- ★ Formation of strategic working partnerships with agencies/institutions at the national, regional and international level

The WEAKNESSES of the CYAP that could reduce its effectiveness were identified as:

- The inadequate resources to support national and regional programmes;
- Mixed abilities, competing values and interests of CYAs;
- Limited knowledge and awareness of the CYA programme;
- Absence of efficient recruitment/selection, evaluation and communication systems;
- An adequate support system for CYAs at the national level;
- Varying levels of commitment of CYAs to the programme.

VISION

The CYA programme for the five year period, 2002-2007, will be widely recognized for fostering youth participation and advocacy for CARICOM goals of sustainable regional development and Caribbean Unity at the national and regional levels.

Vision Elements

- 1/ A valued but independent resource for all governments in the region on youth issues.

- 2/ *A 'youth friendly' network, recognized and respected by key stakeholders as a legitimate voice of youth in the region.*
- 3/ *A strong, united and supportive regional network of young people, committed to advocating on behalf of regional youth.*
- 4/ *An integral part of National Youth Councils (NYC), or other representative youth organisations at the national level serving to strengthen established youth development structures and networks.*
- 5/ *Serving as a focal point for facilitating youth participation, partnerships in decision-making and programme management.*

MISSION STATEMENT

The CYAP is a network of Caribbean youth, performing a dynamic leadership role in the empowerment and well-being of regional youth through peer education, advocacy and the provision of opportunities for youth participation in regional integration and development.

OVERARCHING GOALS

The overarching goals of the CYAP are to:-

- develop a viable support base for the CYAP*
- establish/strengthen systems, structures and tools to deepen and widen the levels of participation of Caribbean youth from diverse communities in decision-making with regard to national and regional development.*
- strengthen the capacity of CYAs to facilitate peer education and youth participation on matters pertaining to Caribbean integration issues, in particular the Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ); and advocate for the development of policies and strategies to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and environmental degradation.*

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The strategic direction of the CYAP is designed to attain its vision. The CYAP commits to the following strategic directions:

Development of a viable support base for the CYAP

This involves the creation of a politically supportive environment, ongoing participation of stakeholders in decision-making, programme development and implementation, the effective mobilization of resources, utilization of existing structures, and the integration of its goals and objectives into national and regional priorities and programmes.

Exceptional Service to Caribbean Youth

The CYAP will provide exceptional advocacy and leadership on behalf of Caribbean Youth designed to empower youth and contribute to reductions in HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and environmental degradation.

Quality Assurance and Accountability

The CYAP will assess and measure results of its interventions with participation of young people, as a means of determining its effectiveness and making adjustments in its strategic actions. The CYAP prides itself in offering a high quality of advocacy and participation for regional youth.

Effective Communication

Effective communication among stakeholders will be the cornerstone of all activities undertaken by CYAs. The CYAP will establish mechanisms to effect timely communications with youth, youth groups, agencies, organisations and Ministries involved in youth work.

Ongoing Development of Youth Ambassadors

A culture of learning and ongoing development of CYAs will be achieved by concerted efforts to increase their knowledge base and technical capabilities as they strive to respond to the ever-changing needs of clients and environment. A structured programme of learning using the Personal Development Plan will form the basis of the training and development programme.

KEY RESULT AREAS

The effectiveness of the CYAP will be evaluated on the extent to which it:

- σ Builds the capacity of CYAs to facilitate the education of youth on development issues, including the Caribbean Court of Justice, Caribbean Single Market and Economy and Regional Integration.*
- σ Strengthens the regional youth movement.*
- σ Increases levels of participation among youth in national and regional issues.*
- σ Sensitizes and facilitates youth access to information on HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and environmental degradation.*
- σ Contributes to the CYA's acquisition of effective leadership behaviour.*
- σ Improves CYAs personal growth and development.*
- σ Increases spaces and opportunities for youth participation and advocacy.*
- σ Develops effective mechanisms and structures for youth participation..*
- σ Is sustainable over time.*

GOALS AND RELATED STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: *Develop a viable support base for the sustainability of the CYAP.*

Strategies

- *Create a politically supportive environment for the CYAP.*
- *Involve stakeholders in programme development and implementation.*
- *Mobilize resources in an effective manner.*
- *Utilize existing structures for youth development.*
- *Build on lessons learnt by agencies in programme development and implementation.*
- *Integrate CYAP goals/objectives into national and CARICOM priorities and programmes.*

GOAL 2: *Establish/strengthen systems, structures, mechanisms and tools to deepen and widen the levels of participation of Caribbean youth from diverse communities in decision-making with regard to national and regional development.*

Strategies

- *Build partnerships and alliances with national, regional and international agencies.*
- *Appoint additional technical staff at the CARICOM Youth Desk.*
- *Provide technical assistance and support to National Youth Councils.*
- *Create and/or strengthen national/regional networks.*
- *Market the CYA P among institutions/agencies.*
- *Develop regional youth participation and policy framework.*
- *Implement joint programme development.*

GOAL 3: *Strengthen the capacity of CYAs to facilitate peer education and youth participation about Caribbean integration issues, in particular the Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), and advocate for the development of policies and strategies to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and environmental degradation.*

Strategies

- Increase CYA's knowledge and understanding of CARICOM'S structure, functions, priorities and programmes.
- Conduct sensitization seminars for CYAs.
- Organise 'rap'sessions with senior CARICOM staff.
- Store and disperse information on CARICOM using existing structures.
- Promote leadership values and behaviours.
- Sensitize/educate CYAs about HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, environmental degradation, CSME and the CCJ.

MANAGEMENT OF THE CYAP

The sustainability and effectiveness of the CYAP is dependent on a set of institutional arrangements that would ensure that the programme not only survives over time but that it achieves its goals and objectives set out in the strategic plan.

The CYAP will be managed at three main levels: regional, national, and CYAP.

Regional level: *The CARICOM Secretariat will provide leadership and oversight of the activities and functioning of the CYAP to ensure that it fulfils its mandate as outlined in the Declaration of Paramaribo. CARICOM will also actively identify, create and organize activities/events that are designed to develop CYAs ' capacity to perform their roles.*

National level: *At the national level CYAs will function within existing National Youth Councils or any other influential and/or representative body for youth at this level. Departments responsible for youth will make significant input from Departments responsible for youth. This arrangement will provide CYAs with the resources of these established entities, as well as provide experienced mentors and supervisors to lend assistance to the ongoing supervision and development of CYAs. CYAs will be selected at the national level and will be involved in the system of recall for those CYAs who breach the professional code of behaviour.*

CYAP level: *The day-to-day management of the CYA Corp will be vested in the Bureau. This entity will consist of a Dean, Incoming and Outgoing Deans, four Vice Deans and a Secretary/Treasurer. Operationally, the network of CYAs will be organized into four (4) zones. The purpose of this structure is to ensure that all CYAs are involved in the planning and decision-making pertaining to the activities of the CYAP.*

The Programme Advisory Committee (PAC): *The functioning and direction of the CYAP will be supported by a network of regional and international agencies/organisations that will constitute the PAC: Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC), the Barbados Community College (BCC), the BARCAM, Iwokrama, the Joint United Nations Programme for HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA),*

Caribbean Centre for Administration Development (CARICAD) and the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNDCP)..

The formation of strategic alliances with agencies and organisations listed above will also serve as a mechanism for ongoing support of the CYAP and access to specialist information on priority themes and programmes.

*Sydney.O. Arthur
HRD Consultant*