

***Towards the  
Sustainable Development  
Of the Region***

***The Youth Agenda***

***CARICOM Youth Ambassador  
Communication Plan***

***Approved by COHSOD  
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## **PREAMBLE:**

In order to ensure the overall economic enhancement of the region, and to provide leadership and service in partnership with Community Institutions, CARICOM recognises the need for it to effectively integrate the ideas of the youth in the attainment of the broader economic system.

The CARICOM Youth Ambassadors Programme is a mechanism for leadership development and youth participation. The Youth Ambassadors (CYA's) are the Community's focal points for deepening the regional integration and development process through advocacy and peer education initiatives. Membership of the network currently stands at thirty-four (34) CYA's from fourteen Full and four Associated States and are selected from the membership of National Youth Councils or other representative youth organizations and/or are experienced youth leaders.

The mandate for the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors Programme was given at a Heads of Conference that commemorated with the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Chaguaramas in Dominica in 1993.

In order to effectively execute and implement the programme for the youth ambassadors, a communication plan must be incorporated, so that information can be distributed, relevant publics can be empowered, strategic alliances can be established and overall support for youth initiatives can be achieved.

The Communication Plan will be part of the overall strategy to ensure that there is a co-ordinated set of communication initiatives to assist the Human Development Programme in carrying out its role proficiently. The activities of the plan will therefore be targeted at identifiable publics and mechanisms will be established to facilitate feedback from these publics.

## **BACKGROUND**

Changes in world trade and economics have had major impact on the lives of the citizens of the Caribbean Community. Some of these changes have resulted in the erosion of trade preferences, loss of assured markets (both domestic and foreign) and invasion of cultural forces. To that extent the Caribbean has received increased pressure to compete in all productive sectors and diversify its economies. As these unprecedented challenges of globalisation confront the region, it is becoming increasingly urgent to intensify the integration process in order to achieve sustainable development and an improved standard of living for all its peoples.

The effects of globalisation have created a consciousness of the need to deepen the active participation of the Region's population and the Diaspora in regional integration efforts. In this regard, the governments of the Caribbean Community in 1992 adopted a Charter of Civil Society to assist in elevating the goals of and commitment to the principles guiding the Community. The Charter recognizes the need to include Civil Society in the decision-making and implementation of the regional integration process. The adoption, made at a

Special Meeting in Port of Spain of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, in 1992, was in response to a recommendation from the West Indian Commission in its Report, "A Time For Action".

The voice of the youth has thus been recognized as an important dynamic in the evolution of these regional strategies and youth involvement in the process of seeking solutions is increasingly considered vital because the decisions made now will have an effect on the decisions of the future leaders. Viewed as catalysts of the development potential of the Caribbean, youth participation has been increasingly reiterated as critical in the discourse on unity amongst Caribbean countries.

The CYA Programme envisions that in ten years it will be widely recognized for advocating for and advancing CARICOM goals of sustainable regional development and Caribbean unity at the national, regional and international levels.

#### **PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN:**

Public education activities for the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors Programme are designed to increase awareness among relevant target groups of the importance of an integrated economic system in the region and to emphasise the role of the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors in influencing the creation of this new dispensation. A large volume of information will be disseminated to the relevant target groups through a combination of mediated and direct communication channels.

The main strategy for the campaign is the provision of information and training to facilitate the creation and subsequent management of a single economic space, and to empower the young people for effective integrated economic activity. Youth groups, National Youth Councils and/or Commissions in Member States together with relevant departments of the CARICOM Secretariat will implement the campaign with support from appointed committees (regional and national).

#### **STRATEGY:**

The communication strategy for the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors Programme is critical to the successful management, implementation and strengthening of the integrated economic system within the region. Central to this strategy will be promotion of the goals and objectives of CARICOM, in particular the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and the Caribbean Court of Justice. The strategy will also focus on building youth confidence in CARICOM; empowering youth groups to represent their views, and to make wise decisions and choices about drug use, sexual activity and nutrition. Elements of the strategy are as follows:

1. Improve and increase awareness on risk-taking behaviour with a view to reducing the incidence of chronic non-communicable diseases, mental health and HIV/AIDS among young people.
2. Establishment and intensification of systems, structures and tools to deepen and widen the levels of participation of Caribbean youth from diverse communities in the policies and decisions regarding the regional youth agenda and the integration process.
3. Strengthening the capacity of CYA's to educate their peers about Caribbean integration and development issues, in particular the Single Market and Economy and the Caribbean Court of Justice.
4. Offer training opportunities on standards and procedures for effective implementation of the initiatives of the Single Market and Economy through workshops and seminars.
5. Promote the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors Programme as part of overall human resource development in the region through regional media advertising and through the dissemination of posters, brochures and other promotional material.
6. Provide regular, relevant and timely information to youth structures and influential agencies, institutions and organizations on the activities of the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors.
7. Enhance CARICOM's effectiveness and visibility through interaction with selected youth groups by creating opportunities for participation and feedback.
8. Boost the image of the CYA Programme across the region via the creative and strategic use and popularization of its Logo.
9. Maximise the use of small and mass media channels to reach as many youth as possible and provide opportunities for their participation and feedback.
10. Maximise opportunities for strategic intervention into activities, which would influence the agendas of private sector organisations, entrepreneurs, investors and government agencies on youth matters. This would involve participation in initiatives within the CARICOM' sphere.
11. Embark on a school's outreach programme, promoted through country representatives, on risk-taking behaviour through workshops and seminars and; on the elements and operations of a single economic space possibly through Career Showcase, Buy Local Campaign activity, essay and debating competitions etc.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

Achieving acceptable strategic performance is essential to sustaining and improving CARICOM's long-term regional integration plan particularly as it relates to the inclusion of the youth in the process. Strategic objectives of the Plan include:

- *Establishment of strategic and long-term relations with the young people of the region;*
- *Developing a cadre of youth leaders equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to educate their peers about selected regional and international agreements/commitments signed by CARICOM governments and the implications for their daily lives;*
- *Strengthening communication linkages between the political leadership and young people of the region with regard to issues for which they have been assigned leadership responsibility;*
- *Increase stakeholder understanding and appreciation of the role and achievements of CYA's at the national, regional and international level;*
- *Deepening the basis for youth development and empowerment;*
- *Increasing credibility and sustainability of youth development strategies;*

#### **COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES:**

In the pursuit of the overall goals of the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors Programme, the Plan will embrace the entire gamut of communication methods and strategies while ensuring opportunities are available for public participation and feedback. Communication objectives of the campaign are as follows:

- ✓ To increase awareness among youth on the issue of Regional integration
- ✓ To promote among young people healthy lifestyles and the ability to make responsible choices
- ✓ To encourage youth participation in the operations of CARICOM
- ✓ To facilitate and encourage advocacy on issues related to Single Market and Economy, to justice and governance and to human resource development as a means of sensitising young people on their roles and responsibilities.
- ✓ To place the issues related to CARICOM Youth Ambassadors Programme on the agenda of the mass media, youth structures and other stakeholders.

## **THE PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN:**

Activities of the Communication Plan for the CARICOM Youth Ambassador's Programme – Towards the Sustainable Development of the Region - are designed to increase awareness among young people of the importance of their role in the integration process. Information will be disseminated to the relevant youth groups and structures through a combination of mediated and direct communication channels.

The main strategy for the campaign is the provision of information, the mobilising and empowering of all relevant publics about their role in realising a truly integrated Caribbean Community.

The Communications Unit will plan and implement the campaign with support from relevant CCS departments. There will be a strong role for the Youth Sub-Programme of the CARICOM Secretariat as well as the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors (as a collective, and at the level of individual Member States).

## **CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES:**

1. Issue of Press Releases on activities of the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors Programme
2. Produce an integrated rights-based advocacy tool kit and training manual
3. Publish a booklet on the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors for wide distribution.
4. Host special Regional Talk Shows (on regional networks) to promote the CSME using young people as hosts and/or guests.
5. Conduct periodic Rap Sessions between the youth and the Secretary General, Heads of States, CCS officials and/or relevant regional professionals on specialized areas of regional and global significance.
6. Arrange for media promotion through the hosting of Call-In Programmes in various Member States. This may be co-ordinated with various workshops/consultations of the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors.
7. Periodic articles to the regional and national press. Secure space in selected newspapers for a special series on the **CARICOM Youth Ambassadors** (perhaps explore the possibilities of a newspaper supplement).

8. Publish, and distribute a monograph series on Youth Development in the Region.
9. Special lecture sessions and workshops in schools on the key ingredients of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.
10. Organise an essay competition among high-school students on relevant regional topics.
11. Host a Schools Debating Competition on select CARICOM themes.
12. Develop and produce a series of Public Service Announcements for television and radio on the new development thrust integrating the youth.
13. Produce and distribute special television programmes on various youth initiatives in the Region.
14. Production and distribution of CSME pocket folders and/or book covers targeted at schools and youth groups.
15. Create a web-site for the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors Programme to distribute information.
16. Organise training workshops for youth in popular theatre techniques as a method of communicating with their peers.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The Communication Plan will be implemented over a period of one year in the first instance. During that year, the plan will be subjected to continuous reviews with the aim of refining and improving the effectiveness in attaining the desired strategic objectives. In subsequent years, the overall Plan will be aligned with CARICOM's overall strategic objectives. These strategic objectives may change and evolve to meet new and emerging challenges in this volatile global economic environment.

The implementation plan will attempt to fulfill the following objectives:

- ❑ Develop/strengthen alliances with regional and international information and communication networks for distributing material on youth
- ❑ Provide CYAs with technical resources and assistance to expand the impact of regional integration initiatives, and to increase access to and resources for the overall CYA programme

## **MANAGEMENT**

The management of the Communication Plan will be the responsibility of a designate of the Communications Unit of the CCS. The plan has been designed in congruence with the overall strategic objectives of CARICOM. In so doing, it is assured that all the necessary infra-structural support is provided.

The management structure will be established accordingly:

- **A Public Awareness Sub-Committee** representing a cross-section of CARICOM's operations along with the Education and Awareness Project Team will establish strategy-supporting policies and operating procedures for the implementation of the campaign. The members of this team must be comfortable with working in a cross-functional team environment. The committee should report to the Assistant Secretary General, Human and Social Development.
- **The Education and Awareness Project Team** will be responsible for general co-ordination and execution of activities of the Communication Plan. These include marketing and promotions, training and education, design and development of publications and other small media material, preparation of messages and information for the mass media. This team will be cross-functional in nature.
- **Individuals or sub-groups of selected active youth groups** will be identified to serve as feedback mechanisms from respective target groups to the Education and Awareness Project Team. These young persons would be selected at consultations or meetings with the support of their respective organisations. Their functions include delivery of CARICOM's messages and dissemination of promotional material at the national level and providing feedback to the Education and Awareness Project Team. These sub-groups should be cross-functional in nature representing a cross section of relevant youth structures within CARICOM. These Committees will report to the Deputy Programme Manager, Community development, Youth and Sport.