

Health and Family Life Education

Student's
Book

2

Gerard Drakes | Mavis Fuller | Christopher Graham | Barbara Jenkins



MACMILLAN

Macmillan Education
4 Crinan Street
London N1 9XW
A division of Macmillan Publishers Limited
Companies and representatives throughout the world

www.macmillan-caribbean.com

ISBN 978-1-4050-8669-1

Text © Barbara Jenkins, Mavis Fuller, Gerard Drakes, Christopher Graham 2010
Design and illustration © Macmillan Publishers Limited 2010

First published 2010

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Design by Kamae Design, Oxford
Typeset by Carol Hulme
Illustrations by Jo Blake and Richard Jones, c/o Beehive Illustration; David Mostyn
c/o Oxford Designers and Illustrators and Peter Harper
Cover design by Andy Magee

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Printed in Malaysia

2014 2013 2012 2011 2010
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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The authors and publishers would like to thank the following for their help and advice with this project:

Janice Holung; Dr Nancy George; the UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office for the Caribbean; the section on HIV and AIDS, UNESCO Paris; individuals from the Caribbean Education Sector – HIV and AIDS Co-ordinators Network (EDUCAN) and especially Elaine King, UNICEF; Connie Constantine, Education Development Center; Maureen Lewis, Antigua; Patricia Warner, Barbados; Sharlene Johnson, Guyana

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Foreword

More than ever, the synergy between health and education provides a crucial opportunity for Caribbean countries to ensure that their greatest resource, people, achieve their full potential as productive citizens.

Ministers of Education and Health of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), in recognition of the increasing social pressures impacting on young persons in ways that make teaching a challenge, and that schools are key agencies to redress some of these social issues, continue to promote learning and life skills for young people through Health and Family Life Education (HFLE).

Macmillan's HFLE Students' Books 2 and 3 build on the foundation laid in Book 1, to enhance the knowledge and skills of Caribbean primary and secondary school students in the four themes of the CARICOM HFLE Regional Framework: Self and Interpersonal Relationships; Sexuality and Sexual Health; Eating and Fitness; and Managing the Environment. All four areas are especially timely and relevant if countries are to achieve the goals of Education for All (EFA) and the targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

According to the *UNAIDS 2008 Global Report on the AIDS Epidemic*, only 40% of young people aged 15–24 had accurate knowledge about HIV and transmission. In addition, young people aged 15–24 account for 45% of all new HIV infections. Young people are often discouraged from openly discussing sexual matters by adults, including parents and teachers, and approach adulthood faced with conflicting and confusing messages about sexuality and gender.

UNESCO, as the lead United Nations agency on HIV prevention for young people in educational institutions, supports education as the lynchpin to prevention efforts as numerous studies show that with the right information and skills, young people can change their behaviour to reduce the risk of acquiring HIV infection or passing it on to others. A vital part of HIV prevention education is effective sexuality education, access to which is a moral responsibility and a human right. To help Ministries of Education address some of the challenges faced in delivering comprehensive sexuality education, UNESCO has recently produced, in partnership with other agencies, *International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education: An evidence-informed approach for schools, teachers and health educators*.

These International Guidelines are one step in building political and technical leadership among education and health authorities to ensure that children and young people have access to the knowledge, skills and values to make responsible choices about their sexual and social relationships in a world affected by HIV and AIDS. They are meant to provide a supportive framework for achieving the declaration of commitments agreed to at the First Meeting of Health and Education Ministers to stop HIV in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City, 2008. The Macmillan's HFLE Student Books' lessons on *sexuality, sexual health and self and interpersonal relationships*, aim to provide responsive, culturally-relevant, age-appropriate and scientifically accurate information, which are identified by the guidelines as essential to effective sexuality education.

Non-chronic communicable diseases such as heart diseases, stroke, cancer and diabetes are the main causes of death in the Caribbean. Caribbean governments, recognising that the human and economic cost burden of these conditions is not sustainable and could undermine the development of these Small Island Developing States, have endorsed a comprehensive approach to wellness and health. Such an approach encourages schools to tackle underlying risk factors of