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A Green Schools Programme for the Grenadines

Concept Paper

Introduction

Through a Green Schools Programme, youth of the Grenadines will learn sustainability by living it every day at school, so that when they leave school these ideas will have become a part of the way they think and approach life. They will take these ideas home and into the workplace when they graduate. Over time, the majority of young adults will have had this exposure, and sustainable living will become a part of the culture of the Grenadines.

The Green Schools concept has been taking root in many countries. The Sustainable Grenadines project has been exploring the possibility of implementing such a programme in Grenadines Schools. The first step towards this was to bring together teachers from Grenadines secondary schools, representatives of ministries of education from Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines and a Green School expert from Canada to explore the feasibility, interest and direction for a Green Schools programme in the Grenadines. The workshop was held in Carriacou on May 27th, 2005. Participants shared their experiences with implementing environmental programmes in Grenadines Schools, reviewed an established Green School programme at Upper Canada College in Toronto and outlined the key elements of a successful green schools programme for the Grenadines. The conclusion of the workshop was that an adapted programme would be feasible, and highly desirable for Grenadines Schools. Indeed participants were of the view that it was essential to put such a programme in place if current trends towards the degradation of natural resources that sustain livelihoods are to be reversed¹.

The Green Schools Programme at the Upper Canada College aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- **Ecological Literacy:** To develop, in each student, a comprehensive understanding of the basic patterns and processes by which nature sustains life and how these core ecological concepts relate to sustainable human communities.
- **Learning It by Living It:** Model as an organization, how core ecological concepts can be applied to create sustainable human communities.
- **Environmental Ethic:** To develop an environmental ethic in all members of the UCC community.
- **Contributing to Society:** To fulfill the College's commitment to be a private school with a public purpose through research, publications and outreach in the areas of outdoor and environmental education, environmental monitoring, and sustainability.

¹ CERMES. 2005. Report of the Grenadines Green Schools Planning Workshop, May 27, 2005, Carriacou, Grenada. Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, 18 pp

The UCC programme comprises three major areas²:

- Organizational behaviour,
- Curriculum, and
- Facilities

These were considered to be an appropriate framework for developing the Grenadines Programme.

The approach to developing and establishing the GS programme in the Grenadines

A two-phased approach to the GS Programme is proposed. The first phase will be about four months, and will develop a comprehensive strategic and action plan for the second phase. It is envisaged that the second phase should be for at least five years if the GS programme is to become sustainably established in the school system.

Phase 1

In Phase 1, the development of the comprehensive strategic and action plan for the GS Programme will involve adapting the programmatic approach used by the UCC to the Grenadines circumstances. This will be based on site visits to participating schools to determine what types of activities are feasible. Other needs, such as overall coordination, curriculum development support and school staff capacity building will also be determined. These will then be combined into an overall programme.

Phase 2

In Phase 2, the strategic and action plans will be implemented over a period of about five years. The following components are envisaged:

- A full-time coordinator;
- An individual who focuses on curriculum development (depending on the number of schools involved);
- Plans for each school;
- Staff development activities;
- Networking among schools;
- Networking of schools and other stakeholders.

Estimated costs

The estimated cost of Phase 1 will be about US\$35,000 to include: Green School expert fees, travel and accommodation costs, stipend for a Grenadines counterpart, final review workshop. The Sustainable Grenadines project will provide coordination for this Phase.

The estimated cost of phase two will depend largely on the scope of the strategic and action plan prepared in Phase 1 and the numbers of schools that will be involved. Owing to the long-term nature of such a project, it is considered most appropriate to engage as many schools as possible at the outset. This also creates a critical mass in the Grenadines and promotes exchange of ideas and successes among schools. A full Green Schools programme engaging all 19 Grenadines schools (five secondary and fourteen primary) over an initial five-year period is likely to cost in the order of \$1.2-1.5 M.

² Upper Canada College. 2002. A Green School for the 21st Century. Proposal Approved by Board of Governors, June, 2002. 20 p.