

A Case
for
The Antigua and Barbuda
Youth Enlightenment
Academy

***** To Produce The Better Citizen *****

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Preamble

Over the past fifty years, Antigua and Barbuda has “produced” a significant number of academic achievers and sports persons of remarkable world class abilities and standards. Such persons include artists, scientists, doctors, bankers, lawyers, software engineers, educators, athletes, human resource managers, diplomats, entertainers, electrical engineers, cricketers, environmentalists, architects, city planners, civil engineers, builders, authors, IT professionals, agronomists, chemical engineers, accountants, economists, etc., etc., etc. Obviously, with relation to Antigua and Barbuda’s small population, in some areas of world class achievement, the twin island state is over represented. Additionally, an impressive number of Antigua and Barbuda’s nationals, scholars and professionals hold high positions in universities, industries, businesses and community governments in North America, Europe and beyond. As such, it is reasonable to conclude that Antigua and Barbuda has a knowledge base, at home and abroad, for national development in many departments. Nonetheless, on the ground, that is, from a national and local developmental inventory and in conspicuous areas, it is not so obvious that a knowledge base of such diversity and magnitude exists or functions.

Apolitically, that is across the spectrum, it appears that Antigua and Barbuda yields diminishing returns on its investments in Education, as the intelligentsia continue to under-perform in specific areas of national development. On the other hand, merchandisers who have made a fair return on investments from the local market have not yet re-invested in any note-worthy local production industry to assist in alleviating the perennial job shortages.

If the aforementioned observations and conclusions are partially true, then to what extent and why? And what should be done?

I vividly recall, while studying in Canada in the mid 1970s, standing with an electronics course book in hand in a line of complaining students after an exam, waiting for my turn to inform Mr Enekes of a flawed established electronic formula in the said book. Immediately before me, in the same line, was an Indian student with his exam paper. He was asking Mr Enekes to increase his score, by explaining that a particular error on his paper was due to an obvious lapse and not a lack of knowledge. Mr Enekes looked him squarely in the eyes and said, **“I do not test you to see what you know, but to see how you perform.”**

That stayed with me...

It was a profound and early lesson in understanding the differences between the knowledge-based aspirants and, a performance-based society with a culture of accountability. And so, I often wished to share that experience with local politicians who spouted their efforts to build a knowledge-based Antigua and Barbuda. I have often said privately that ***a pig in an Information Technology palace remains a pig.***

So it begs the question: for what good is all this knowledge assets without the commensurate human performances? Clearly, there is a **performance deficit** in Antigua and Barbuda. How does a people - this nation, this society - raise its performance bar with minimum overheads? How does a society sensitize and motivate itself: its nationals, citizens and its youth to effect higher performance levels in the **duty** of national development and construction?

How to raise the bar and roll-out a new version of Antigua and Barbuda's National Performance Culture? This is not an easy task. And I am certainly not suggesting or proposing that I have the answers. However, it is my considered opinion that where as the "school system" may produce academics with many subject passes, it hardly produces a character, which is preoccupied with its national performance obligations. Consequently, the school system produces excellent individualists and job seekers with little or no substantive appreciation or understanding of teamwork and nation building. The problem remains systemic as inherited from our colonial past, and an assimilated concept that the devil takes the hindmost. Here, the hindmost goes to prison for petty crimes, and the foremost bankrupts the nation with impunity. What is the difference? The difference is injustice...

Of course, it is not that these capitalistic, individualistic and destructive tendencies do not exist in larger and developed societies. But those societies have capacity, and where they are affected, with a similar ratio we are infested. As such, these small islands, as Antigua and Barbuda, must make the greater systemic, educational and cultural efforts to produce better citizens...

I think that "better" citizens, academics and politicians with less profiteering tendencies will be the saving grace of Antigua and Barbuda and the sub-region as a whole...

Therein lies my proposition: whereas we are not short in knowledge, and whereas we may be short in material wealth, our very "survival" demands that we must be exceptionally tall in national integrity and performance.

I have at other times and places stated that the youth must be **"cultured" to prevent problems and solve problems.** The former, *to prevent problems*, is the foremost requirement of the better citizen. The latter, *to solve problems*, requires the attributes of **caring, imagination, innovation** and last but not least **commitment.**

From most reports emanating from social and educational institutions, the overwhelming conclusion is that the teenagers of today lack some essential attributes, which are prerequisites for personal maturity and societal development. For example, it is painfully observed that today's teens are generally less polite and respectful to their parents and seniors. Socially, our teenagers' communicative skills are below acceptable standards, and academically, they fall short in mathematics and scholastic subjects that require analytic, critical, creative, inventive and constructive thinking. Our school system is perhaps still too IQ centric and a bit deficient in modern concepts of Societal, Emotional, Analytical and Constructive Intelligence and teamwork.

Urgently, we must place more emphasis on teamwork. We must teach the youth etiquette and civilities, and engage them in activities to develop their cognitive skills. We need to instill in their consciousness an indelible sense of pride, responsibility and commitment to contribute to the nation's development. We, as adults and custodians, must exclusively accept the blame: we have been negligent in modernizing our institutions and **'culture'** to negate the negative byproducts of global influences that our teens are evidently unprepared to cope with, and as such fall victims to.

Youth Talents

By LAJ, April 4, 2007

Youth talents, from where come you?
Nurture, nature and culture are all true
Gifts bestowed, genes endowed
A nation's pride when you have matured

Youth talents, who will you serve?
Self control beyond the material urge
Use these gifts for humanity, no less
So for next and nation be your best

Youth talents, for what will you strive?
Be inventive, avoid the consumer dive
To solve problems should be your desire
A kinship with excellence, a burning fire

Youth talents, what is your aspiration?
Self esteem, character with passion
A respect for reward but not before efforts
To be our nation's most valuable assets

We must teach the youth that **performance matters**. We must make Antigua and Barbuda a **Performance Powerhouse**.

And we must start the change now...

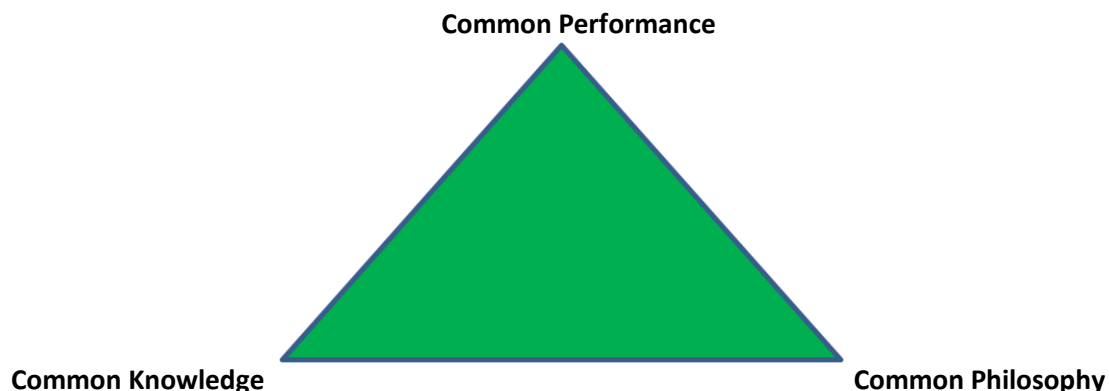
The Youth Enlightenment Academy (YEA)

YEA is principally a **finishing school** for all genders to assist primarily the public sector school system to instill values of teamwork, self-esteem, pride, conduct, behavior, civility, humanity, performance and commitment for national development in our students. YEA will **escort** students from Grade 6 to Grade 11 (Form 5).

YEA will enhance the societal awareness of the youth by creating a youth culture of essential intangible attributes: honesty, industriousness, accountability, conscientiousness, truthfulness, punctuality, respectfulness, carefulness, empathy, sense of justice, etc.

The YEA Program is an addendum to the Primary and Secondary School Curricula. Students must attain at least 250 YEA lecture hours over the period of six (6) years. Upon completion, YEA graduates will received The YEA Certificate of Achievement.

YEA's mission is to **synchronize** the community of students to adopt, internalize and implement common core societal and humanistic values to produce common performances, as illustrated bellow:



Beyond the academics of language, literature, mathematics, science, etc. acquired in the national school system, YEA will create a common philosophical and ethical platform for students, upon which they will launch their careers and professions.

In pursuing Common Performance, every participating school will have a large screen monitor in its auditorium to received via the Internet scheduled and synchronized Common Knowledge and Common Philosophy.

YEA will untrammel, liberate and vitalize young minds, and expose them to **A Pepper-Pot of Possibilities.**

Common Sense

by LAJ, July 20, 1980

I cannot rely on:

Craving Taste Buds for they often Malnourish me;

Roving Eyes for they often Deceive me;

Inquisitive Nostrils for they often Mislead me;

Sentinel Ears for they often Distract me;

Emotive Feelings for they often Betray me;

But with Common Sense I can Control them all.

Vision Statement

To Continually Elevate the Youth of Antigua and Barbuda

Mission Statement

To Make Every Youth an Enlightened Human

Motto

For the Team and the Next Generation

Faculty

YEA Lectures will be prepared and delivered by knowledgeable individuals and institutions. YEA's overseas contacts and resources will deliver lectures via the Internet.

Curriculum

The YEA Curriculum consists of lectures, which are designed to stimulate, motivate and inspire students to build consensus, conscientiousness, character and fortitude. The Curriculum is structured to inform, expose and enlighten students. The lectures will give students a local, regional and world view of essential disciplines for intellect, character and nation building.

1. **Teamwork**

Duration: 10hrs

Students will be exposed to the benefits of teamwork and partnerships, with examples of local, regional and international institutions and businesses. Local examples will include the Antigua and Barbuda Trade and Labour Union, the Antigua and Barbuda Workers Union and the Antigua Commercial Bank. The lectures will disassemble the myths and legacies of the "divide and rule" indoctrinations of our enslavement past. Such indoctrinations were so thorough and complete that through the generations we have coined and internalized the notion that "partnership is leakyship". The lectures will prove the contrary: **Partnership is Powership**. All YEA students will know the National Anthem.

2. **Health, Nutrition, Exercise, Body and Mind**

Duration: 10hrs

To be of good health is one of your major societal obligations... Every unnecessary unhealthy condition of the youth and working-force is a burdensome millstone on the necks of the Social Security system, the Medical Benefits Scheme and the National Budget. Poor health undermines: family, productivity, punctuality, etc. Students will connect the dots between good health and personal and National Development. Students will be sensitized to the fact that the collective nation's health will determine the cost of public and private health insurance and services.

3. Self-Esteem

Duration: 10hrs

In addition to lessons of personal pride and self-respect, students will be exposed to works of the late Honourable Marcus Mosiah Garvey Jr. and others who espouse principles of self-reliance and racial pride.

4. Rights of The Individual

Duration: 10hrs

It is very important for societal development that every student fully understands the rights of the individual and the minority. Whereas YEA teachings may be team and community oriented, it is important that YEA students internalize that the majority must never martial its power to unjustly discriminate against or harm the minority.

5. Ethics

Duration: 10hrs

Ethic or Moral Philosophy is a corner-stone of our societal foundations. Students will be encouraged to adhere to principles of good social conduct. Nonetheless, student will be informed of the moral diversity of different peoples at different times and places. In the process, they will discover that some of today's morals are relics of mankind's past ignorance.

6. Civics

Duration: 10hrs

As stated earlier, YEA's mission is to assist in producing better citizens and a performance-based society. Every student must acquire a working knowledge of the rights and duties a citizen. Such duties will include the responsibility to participate in the Democratic and Electoral Processes. YEA will conduct Simulated "Mock" General Elections to ensure that students are "Electoral Ready."

7. Humanitarianism

Duration: 10hrs

To be a good neighbour and to look-out for each other are incontrovertible axioms of a civilized community. Nonetheless, in

our “modern” fast pace society that is preoccupied with consumerism and material acquisition, acts of humanitarianism are progressively devalued in our communities, and in some cases they are on the verge of extinction. YEA will remind students of the African practice: *It Takes a Village to Raise a Child*. The students will be impressed to restore this culture in their communities.

8. Sense of Justice

Duration: 10hrs

It is said that a sense of justice simulates emotions and responses to what is fair and unfair. YEA will stimulate each student’s mind to develop an acute sense of, and regard for, fair-play. Students will be encouraged to be collective custodians of justice, and to see this as an urgent societal duty.

9. Sexuality, Relationships and Family

Duration: 10hrs

The issues of sexual orientation, preferences and infidelity that in many cases cause fatal conflicts will be discussed. When all is said and done, students will be advised to: *Live and Let Live...*

10. Slavery, Colonialism and Legacies

Duration: 10hrs

Antigua and Barbuda as a former British slave colony has inherited a myriad of social, psychological and developmental problems. YEA will open the student’s mind to exorcise the psychological demons that impede self-esteem and racial pride among other things.

11. Financial & Resource Management, and Entrepreneurship

Duration: 10hrs

Students will be presented with financial and resource management models of successful and failed individuals and enterprises. They will engage in life-styles analysis, and examine the pros and cons of various. They will be shown the benefits of entrepreneurships, partnerships, strategic alliances, etc. Students will become aware of the benefits of saving and budgeting.

12. The Environment, Consumption and Waste Management

Duration: 10hrs

Students will be enlightened about the need to protect the environment and the ecosystem. They will learn how ecosystem imbalances, for example, due to over-eating or over-production, can be disastrous and lead to the extinction of some species - and that human beings are not automatically excluded from such fate. Students will become cognizant of the relationship between environment and their health and livelihoods.

13. Logic, Critical and Analytical Thinking

Duration: 10hrs

YEA students will learn principles of logic, inductive and deductive reasoning. They will learn about common fallacies, such as, the appeal to faith, the appeal to ignorance, the appeal to tradition, argument from authority and ad hominem attacks, among others.

14. Emotional Intelligence and Self-control

Duration: 10hrs

Students will learn how to monitor, categorize and evaluate human emotions and responses to various stimuli. They will understand that the management of emotions and self-control are acquirable and essential skills for character, personality building, and to successfully cope with social conflicts.

15. Arts and Photography

Duration: 10hrs

YEA students will be lectured about forms of art, including music, dance, paintings, sculpture and aesthetics. The lectures will create in students an appreciation of artifacts and artistic interpretations from many cultures and continents, including Africa. Principles of modern photography and cinematography will be explained and demonstrated to the students.

16. Evolution and Radiocarbon Dating

Duration: 10hrs

Many of our science students are taught one thing from Monday to Friday, and another on Saturday and Sunday. In the week,

the students are taught about rocks, minerals and diamonds that are millions of years old. On Saturday and Sunday, the unenlightened pastors remind the poor students that the world is a never changing 6000-year static creation. No wonder some students suffer from a **Rationality Deficiency Syndrome**, and hence psychological problems of **fear**; and the resulting handicaps in science and reasoning. YEA will rectify that outrageous and intolerable injustice...

17. Slavery and Reparations

Duration: 10hrs

The arguments for reparations for the enslavement and brutal treatment of Africans in the Caribbean have been well presented by many notable Caribbean scholars. Disappointingly, many Black Antiguan and Barbudans are ignorant or indifferent to the reasons and justifications for reparations. YEA lectures will inform and sensitize students about the inhumane and inexcusable sufferings and exploitations of Africans during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

18. How to Become a National Hero

Duration: 10hrs

Students will learn of the significant contributions of the Father of The Nation, the late Honourable Vere Cornwall Bird Sr.; Sir Vivian Alexander "Vivi" Richards; Sir Anderson Montgomery Everton "Andy" Roberts; and other National Heroes.

19. Data Collection, Documentation and Evaluation

Duration: 10hrs

Student will learn the importance of data collection, documentation and evaluation for nation building. They will learn the importance of acquiring multi-media skills, and to donate their time to assist sports clubs, libraries, kindergartens, etc. to collate and store data for evaluation and national statistics.

20. Home Appliances, Chemicals, Flammables, Natural Disasters, Protective Gear and Safety

Duration: 10hrs

Students will acquire a basic knowledge of how some home appliances work, care in handling common domestic chemicals,

the dangers of some electrical appliances and “cooking” gas, natural disaster preparedness and safety. They will also be informed of the dangers of using ladders, lawn mowers and weed-trimmers without protective gear, clothing and eyeglasses.

21. First Aid and Emergencies

Duration: 10hrs

Every student that passes through YEA will acquire some knowledge of First Aid; this will be mandatory. They will learn how to quickly respond to injuries or crises and make timely, speedy and appropriate decisions. They will know when to call 911 and contact other emergency services, such as the Fire Department. The students will be taught how to authoritatively and confidently contact and communicate with emergency services.

22. Etiquette, Personal Hygiene, Attire, Gait and Posture

Duration: 10hrs

This lecture is a mandatory component of Common Knowledge. YEA students must learn about good manners, personal hygiene, respect for elders, dress codes, body language, confidence, self-esteem and respect, character, personality, punctuality, social accountability, etc.

23. Language and Communication Skills

Duration: 10hrs

YEA students will be taught the fundamentals of good language skills. They must respect their parents and teachers... Students will be advised to speak respectfully to elders and seniors. They will know when and how to speak firmly and appropriately to unworthy adults. YEA students will learn about Soft Power.

24. Struggles of the Working Class

Duration: 10hrs

Most students become members of the working class. Yet many exit the school system with very little or no preparatory knowledge of what they are about to enter... Students will learn about the struggles of their ancestors and the working class. They will learn about the Labour Code, bargaining agents, collective bargaining, collective agreements, contracts, non-

disclosure agreements, and the rights and responsibilities of the worker. YEA students will know the history of the Labour Movements, and acquire reasons for supporting them.

25. Motherhood and Fatherhood

Duration: 10hrs

Mothers and fathers are the natural custodians of the next generation... Students will learn about the rights of the child, as well as the societal responsibilities of parents. They will appreciate the linkages between generations as they relate to health, a productive work-force, the Social Security Board, retirement schemes, pensions and other social services.

26. The Museum and Preservation

Duration: 10hrs

YEA will inform students of their societal duty to preserve the nation's historical and precious assets for the next generations. Such assets will include music, artifacts, literary works, inventions, photographic images, tools, buildings, historical sites, etc.

27. Punctuality and Production

Duration: 10hrs

What if you were seriously injured, and the Emergency Services came too late? Students will learn to appreciate the importance of punctuality and time management. Antigua and Barbuda can be fairly described as a "laid-back" society. This must change... Students will be exposed to the rate of production in other cultures, and disciplines where punctuality is at a premium. This is a mandatory module of Common Philosophy.

YEA National Services

YEA will conduct:

1. **The YEA Think Tank Service** to selected national institutions and agencies.
2. **The National Problem Prevention and Solutions Provider Program (NPPSPP).**

1. **The National Youth Assisted Database Program**

- a. To collect and evaluate national data, to assist educators, writers, researchers, engineers, police and government, etc.
- b. To systematically interview the twenty (20) oldest persons in every community, to collate and document folklore, stories, customs and traditions, etc.
- c. To collect biographical and performance data on all sport persons, writers, entertainers, etc. in their communities
- d. To provide APUA and Public Works with a real-time database of pot-holes, water pipe leaks, degrading electricity and telephone infrastructure, etc.
- e. Calypso lyrics database – to assist calypso judging training and workshops, and for plagiarism searches, etc.
- f. A crime stopper database to assist in the alleviation of crime, and to apprehend criminals, etc.
- g. The flora and fauna database, to assist environmentalists, agriculturalists and other relevant agencies, etc.

YEA will put the youth's cell phones, tablets, cameras and texting abilities to use for national development. YEA will ask the telephone service providers to exempt these upload from charges.

2. Students who participate in this **National Problem Prevention and Solutions Provider Program (NPPSPP)** will accrue **National Good Citizen Credits (NGCC)** that will be redeemable by National Scholarships.

3. **There will be an annual award and recognition for the student with:**

1. The highest NGCC aggregate
2. The highest NGCC for the year

4. **The Antigua and Barbuda International Institute of Technology (ABBIIT) must play a leading role in the NPPSPP**

3. The YEA Learning Research Department

1. To study pedagogy and learning. To create and disseminate multimedia recordings of local teachers presenting lessons in Music, Dance, Singing, Craft, Mathematics, Physics, English, Logics, Analytical and Critical Thinking, Cricket, Warri, Chess and other subjects, etc.

4. The YEA Sports and Games Program

1. YEA will conduct lectures and courses for students in sports with the purpose as follows:
 1. To ensure the National Anthem is known
 2. To teach essential local knowledge and history
 3. To establish the requisite communication skills
 4. To equip sports persons with the personality traits for the media and the camera
 5. To underscore their obligations as role models and ambassadors
 6. To work along with other sports and games instructors to impart knowledge in the following:
 - a. Cricket
 - b. Football
 - c. Golf
 - d. Chess
 - e. Warri
 - f. Draughts
 - g. Pocket Billiards

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