



## **UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW [UPR] for ST. LUCIA**

**Submission by: Edmund Rice International**

### **Introduction**

1. Edmund Rice International is an NGO with a concern for the rights of children particularly in regard to education. The focus of this submission is the right to education, especially education of the marginalized youth of St. Lucia.

### **Right to Education**

2. Monday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006 marked the formal opening of all 25 public, assisted and private secondary schools in St. Lucia. It also heralded the formal inauguration of Universal Secondary Education (USE) in St. Lucia. 4,302 children who wrote the Common Entrance Exam were offered places at secondary school. This was a far cry from the situation, just 10 years previously, when only 40% of the children writing the Common entrance Exam were offered places at secondary schools. "As a consequence the unsuccessful students who were unable to continue in the formal education system and who also lacked the qualifications and experience to obtain employment, became marginalized members of the St. Lucian society."

3. Edmund Rice International commends the Government of St. Lucia on its commitment to enabling its citizens to access their right to education and for the willingness some government departments have demonstrated to partner with the Centre for Adolescent Renewal and Education (C.A.R.E) in the education and formation of these marginalized youth.

### **Areas of Concern**

4. Even though places have been made available in the USE programme there are areas of concern that need to be given more attention by relevant Government Ministries and interested NGO's.

5. Issues of concern:

- Many young people find themselves out of their depth in the Secondary School environment.
- Their self-esteem suffers greatly as they are made to face realities that they are ill-equipped to handle.
- Dropping out of Secondary School with no obvious alternative is a constant quandary for some.

**Centre for Adolescent Renewal and Education [C.A.R.E.]**

6. In 1993 the Centre for Adolescent Renewal and Education [C.A.R.E.] was founded in St. Lucia. This Non-Government Organization [NGO] which specializes in the formation and education of marginalized youth was founded primarily to offer a second chance to those who dropped out of the traditional secondary school education system. With 40% of the population under the age of 19 and no government action plan for dropouts, C.A.R.E.'s programme that has proven very successful over the past 17 years is a viable option.

**C.A.R.E. Programme**

7. The cornerstone of C.A.R.E.'s success is its Adolescent Development Programme (A.D.P.) which is based on a holistic view of education.

8. After a year of exploring one's self-esteem and self-worth the trainee is invited to learn a skill of his/her choice from a range of courses that include Carpentry/Joinery; Office/Computer Skills; Garment Construction/Cosmetology; Electrical Installation/Small Appliance Repairs; Auto Mechanics; Catering/Hospitality and Air Conditioning and Refrigeration.

9. Upon completion of skills' training the graduate, after an on-the-job experience with a reputable local employer is, by and large, able to secure employment.

10. In the past the Government of St. Lucia has been an active supporter of C.A.R.E. and has expressed the need for C.A.R.E. to continue in the future.

11. Edmund Rice International recommends the following:

- **That the Government of St. Lucia look to develop and support programs directed towards the formation and education of marginalized youth of St. Lucia**