

DON'T JUST STAND THERE, DO SOMETHING!

7 ways YOU can ensure Financial Literacy Education in Bahamian Youth!

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We've all heard the term, "***Don't just stand there, do something***". It is so popular that there have been books and countless articles written on the topic. It is most used when an individual wants to move a person or group or persons from a passive state of being to an active one.

Consider this phrase: A community where people get involved for the benefit of others is a better community.

It has been said countless times by countless people, that the Bahamas is a society of bystanders. I don't know if I fully believe this but there are things that I feel we can become more actively involved in – namely ensuring that our young people become better educated about financial matters that will undoubtedly affect them in their adult lives.

Kids, teens and young adults more than ever need financial skills. Today, with the economy in the state that it's in, money-smarts should rank right up there with book smarts!

Look at the phase again. The word "others" refer to our youth - the **future generations** of our country. Isn't this a significant demographic? Shouldn't we all be actively involved in ensuring that our young people get to live in a society that is much better than the one we are currently experiencing? Yes we should!! It undoubtedly would lead to a better community.

From the time I formed Creative Wealth Bahamas until now, I've have received countless feedback and accolades from people loving what I do. "Keep doing what you're doing" is one statement I hear most often. I truly appreciate the words of encouragement.

However, changing the mindset and culture of Bahamians is a not an easy task. We are naturally a consumer nation – one that spends before we save; a nation that think first of living as *employees* and not as *employers*. We are seeing and experiencing however, the affects of this mindset today. Therefore, every extra hand toward financial and entrepreneurial education can take us one step closer to correcting it.

No matter what role you play in society, ask yourself, ***what can I do to contribute to the financial literacy movement in The Bahamas?***

Here are a few opportunities that may help you answer that question.

Volunteer your time or ideas

How can you? There are programs being scheduled for our youth all the time. An extra hand and extra set of eyes are always welcome. For our Camp Millionaire program this summer, consider volunteering your some time to share your personal experience with the kids; let them learn from your stories. Whether good or bad, there is a lesson that

can be learned. Do you have any other skills or ideas that would benefit our youth? Share them; they would be put to good use.

Become a youth financial literacy trainer

If you like teaching and are passionate making a difference in our society consider becoming certified to teach one of our financial literacy curriculums for youth. Maybe you are a youth pastor looking to better empower those you influence. Maybe you are a financial advisor looking to reach your clients' children. The opportunities are also available for adult trainers as well. The good thing is that you do not have to be a certain age or have a financial degree to teach, you just have to have a willingness to learn and a desire to make a difference in our country! Once you commit, you will be equipped with the knowledge, skills, resources, and most importantly, the mindset to teach financial literacy programs in your community.

Promote financial literacy in your community

Ok, so you don't want to teach but have some event planning or entrepreneurial skills. Great! You can make a difference by setting up financial literacy programs for kid, teen or adult groups you know. The need of financial literacy education in our country is huge and the audiences who will benefit from it are equally vast! One person definitely cannot reach everyone alone. Plan, promote and price your own programs within schools, churches or communities and we will be happy to teach it. Everyone wins!

Refer a Friend or family member

You might say that you do not know a group of people. Fair enough, but I am sure that you know at least one person. Further, that one person you know may be closer than you think. Financial education should start at home with your family and friends. Do you know a parent whose children need to learn the value of a dollar? Is there a camp director, school principal or teacher, youth leader or church administrator you know that might like to do something meaningful for their kids or adults? If so, Refer Them! Help them to see the benefit of making sure their children are money smart and ready for their financial future. Whether you tell one or ten, you would have done your part. Even if every person simply adopts the "each one, reach one" approach, the country's future would begin to look bright.

Write to the powers that be

Drugs, burglary, petty theft, murder. The real crime? Many local crimes that are committed all have a single thing in common: someone was desperate enough to compromise their morals in the acquisition of money. These crimes are the symptoms of a society that does not understand their basic system of exchange. As a result, more and more countries around the world are requiring that financial literacy be taught in

schools. During a national address, John Hope Bryant, an international advocate of financial literacy made a key point... “Kids are not succeeding in high school because they do not believe that the education is relevant to their future.” When they don’t succeed they begin to choose a life of crime. When asked how to make it relevant Mr. Bryant responded with confidence; “show a kid how to get rich legally, teach him the language of money – give them financial literacy!”

Do you really want to jumpstart the financial literacy movement in The Bahamas? Write to the powers that be (i.e. the politicians, pastors, school principals, the media etc) demanding that our country, our schools, our financial institutions develop some kind of ongoing financial literacy training for our youth. Financial literacy needs to become a priority today. If we all begin to write, they will listen!

Finally, Donate

The biggest Catch-22 about teaching financial literacy is that it costs money to learn about making and managing money. However, together, we can collectively ensure that financial literacy education reach those persons who are not able afford one. You can help by sponsoring a child to attend a financial literacy program or event. Think of those in the various children’s homes, or the Yeast, or Pace or similar programs. If you have a donation account, consider using some of it to help the financial literacy movement. No matter the amount, you can help those who need it the most. A quote by Hada Bejar sums this point up so eloquently, ***“The fragrance always stays in the hand that gives the rose.”***

It was Ghandi who said it: *Be the change you want to see in the world.* In this case, we can paraphrase that as, "Make the change you want to see in your country’s future.”

The way to improve our country’s obvious financial illiteracy statistics is by doing something about it! The way to help our youth to become financially knowledgeable and put our country in competent hands 10 years from now is by actively supporting the efforts of others.

Money is a universal language that we do not teach our kids, hence, most adults in this world do not have a clue about how to create financial independence for themselves. Teaching financial literacy programs strikes a chord with everyone I talk to and is a problem that touches every country of the world and all of its people. It is one of the most important life skills that kids generally are not taught –others being relationships, parenting, health and wellness. Something must be done!

It is said that if you want to succeed in business - find a product or service that fills a need. Besides world hunger and world peace, this seems to meet that qualification. Creative Wealth is more than just a business endeavor for me. It is a movement that I want to see grow in our country. If everyone in the world could become financially independent, perhaps world hunger and world peace wouldn't be that far off!

The last question to ask yourself is an easy one:

Am I doing something toward this cause or am I just standing there?

By being brutally honest about the answer to this question, you can better put yourself in a position to make a difference and help us get results in our country that we need.

***WITH THE RIGHT EDUCATION ABOUT MONEY,
ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.***

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