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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SPCI and Barbados YMCA Unite to Launch DEEC Life-Skills Pilot on World Mental Health Day

Bridgetown, Barbados, 10 October 2025

In a powerful initiative unveiled on World Mental Health Day, Sustainable People & Communities Inc. (SPCI) has partnered with the Barbados YMCA to launch the DEEC Life-Skills Pilot, an innovative program aimed at empowering young adults aged 16–29. This transformative 12-week experience combines an 8-week in-house curriculum with a 4-week practical phase and begins Saturday, 18 October at 3:00 p.m. at the Barbados YMCA, Pinfold Street.

Addressing a Growing Crisis

As we celebrate World Mental Health Month, it's crucial to recognize the unique challenges faced by today's youth in Barbados. Many young adults carry the heavy weight of post-COVID struggles, trauma from lockdowns, academic pressures, and the daunting uncertainty of transitioning from school to work. The rising tide of anxiety and disillusionment cries out for timely and effective intervention.

Socio-economic conditions in Barbados are deteriorating rapidly, with alarming increases in youth unemployment, rising living costs, and unsettling health trends. These struggles manifest in our communities through escalating violent crime and social unrest. It's clear that immediate action is needed, and the DEEC Life-Skills Pilot knows how to respond.

Empowering Change Through DEEC

The DEEC Challenge presents a holistic approach to developing life and soft skills for vulnerable and at-risk youth ready to transform their lives. By focusing on mindset, healthier choices, and productive citizenship, this program goes beyond temporary fixes to create lasting change.

Participants will benefit from:

Cohort Learning (8 weeks): Engaging sessions on mental health resilience, identifying alignment and purpose, building lasting influence, financial literacy, and service-oriented leadership.

Real-World Exposure (4 weeks): Hands-on experiences that include field visits to reputable organizations, volunteer activities, and structured internships.

Therapeutic Touchpoints: Confidential check-ins throughout the pilot, ensuring participants have access to additional support when needed.

Mentorship & Follow-Up: Ongoing guidance and support, paving the way for future success beyond the classroom.

Dr. Ashley C. John, Executive Director and Program Coordinator of SPCI, declared, "Today is an extraordinary moment for us to provide a vital social service. We are immensely grateful to the Barbados YMCA for their partnership in hosting the DEEC Challenge and for their commitment to our young people. This program is designed to be interactive and impactful, providing participants with essential life skills and a clear roadmap for their future."

Romano Smart, General Secretary of the Barbados YMCA, emphasized, "The YMCA is honored to collaborate with SPCI on the DEEC Challenge. This initiative is not just timely; it's crucial. It perfectly complements our mission of supporting youth across Barbados with the guidance and resources they need to thrive."

Join Us – Registration Open Now!

We invite young adults aged 16–29, along with organizations supporting them, to register for this life-changing opportunity at the YMCA in the coming week or online at sustainablepeoplebb.org/deec-challenge.

Start Date: Saturday, 18 October

Time: 3:00–5:00 p.m.

Venue: Barbados YMCA, Pinfold Street

Spaces are limited (first-come, first-served).

About SPCI

Sustainable People & Communities Inc. (SPCI) is a community-focused social enterprise based in Barbados, dedicated to fostering life skills, positive mindsets, and productive citizenship. Drawing from over a decade of work in rural Caribbean communities, SPCI is committed to empowering individuals to thrive and develop resilient communities.

About the Barbados YMCA

For many years, the Barbados YMCA has been a cornerstone in the community, offering programs that nurture the healthy spirit, mind, and body of youth and families alike.

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