

GREEN REPORTER



"COMMUNITY ACTION, GLOBAL IMPACT"



Message from the National Coordinator

Welcome to another special edition of the SGP's Green Reporter. This edition provides a glimpse of several of our initiatives and achievements during 2018.

In this issue, we learn more about the SDG Mobile Gallery and mission 2030. We also take a look at addressing the gender gap with reference to climate change in the Caribbean through a partnership between GEF SGP and the Commonwealth Foundation.

Join us as we exemplify how "climate action" low carbon energy access can provide the co-benefits of capacity building and a sustainable financing mechanism to engage in social work with vulnerable groups.

Guess what? Another grantee project implemented in 43 local primary and

secondary schools has reaped much success, and we will be now replicating the project initiative in other Caribbean islands.

Thank you to all contributors who submitted articles for this edition. We hope that you, the reader, will find this edition informative and interesting; so please share it within your networks, including partners, colleagues, friends and family.

Happy Holidays & a Prosperous
New Year!

David Bynoe
National Coordinator



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Exploratory Discussion on and Climate



As the Caribbean hurricane season rolls around, memories of last year's devastation stir throughout the region. Living with recovery is a harsh reality in Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands and Dominica in particular. The costs of hurricanes Irma and Maria are estimated to be in the range of between 7 and 15 billion US dollars. Every Caribbean person felt the events of September 2017, because we all have memories of a storm over the past 30 years that has touched our lives. From hurricane Gilbert in 1988 onwards, living with category 4 and 5 storms has become a new normal.

What we talk about less is the way that those storms impact us differently. There is undoubtedly a strong sense of coming together and pride in people's stoic ability to deal with devastation. This narrative of community resilience raises several questions though. While we all might be at risk, are some not at greater risk than others? While we all have to clean up afterwards, are some not called on to clean up more than others? While we all have something to gain from effective climate advocacy, might some not have more to gain than others?

These are questions that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) had not engaged with until relatively recently. When it was established in 1992 it was the only one of the conventions agreed at the Earth Summit in Rio that did not explicitly make reference to gender. The Conferences of the Parties (COP) that have convened annually since 1995 to take commitments further have attempted to retrieve this situation – albeit incrementally. The establishment of a Gender Action Plan at COP 23 in Berlin last year sent an encouraging signal but since then there's been less agreement about how this space might be used.

The Commonwealth Foundation's current strategic plan places greater emphasis than before on mainstreaming gender equality in our mission to advance participatory governance. In practice this means identifying the ways that gender intersects with societal disadvantage. In global climate change discussions, small states and the Caribbean in particular can be marginalised. Gender equality considerations doubly so.

Having taken soundings from civil society organisations and others in the region we convened an exploratory Caribbean discussion on the intersection between gender and climate. This set out to understand what the region's needs might be and determine how we might add value to civil society's policy advocacy in this area. In partnership with the UNDP Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme in Barbados, we invited more than 40 civil society colleagues from each Commonwealth Caribbean country to focus on the issue.

the Intersection of Gender Climate Change

The group that convened had many strengths – not least its diversity. There were established civil society advocates like Sandra Ferguson from Grenada’s Agency for Rural Transformation and Renwick Rose from the Winward Islands Farmers Association in St Vincent and the Grenadines, as well as emerging leaders like Cordelia Shal from the Toledo Maya Women’s Council in Belize. There were colleagues from the environment movement like Suzanne Stanley from the Jamaica Environment Trust and those who were not like Chelsee Merchant and Bernard Warner from the Association of Persons with Disabilities in Antigua and Barbuda. The Foundation’s own focus on creativity as a catalyst for social change saw cultural practitioners like Kendel Hippolyte and Oonya Kempadoo also participating.



Colleagues also made the connection between governance and effective action on climate change. Some called for transparency in the institutions vested with responsibility for addressing the issue. Others cited what they called ‘transactional governance’ (governance based on incentives and disincentives) as a barrier to broader engagement with the development challenges facing the region. The need for new language to communicate the issues of climate change and gender to a wider audience was called for – not least by the writers that were present.

The three days of discussion were expertly facilitated by Janice Cumberbatch of the University of the West Indies’ (UWI) Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies in Barbados.

It benefited from an introduction to gender by Kimberly Carr Tobias from UWI’s Institute for Gender and Development Studies in Jamaica. Dizzanne Billy of Climate Trackers in Trinidad and Tobago relayed key messages via social media throughout: ‘Gender is not just about men and women, it’s about correcting the power imbalance’; ‘Gender power dynamics determine who has what rights and what access to resources to deal with the impacts of climate change’ she tweeted.

“There is undoubtedly a strong sense of coming together and pride in people’s stoic ability to deal with devastation.”

The meeting closed concluding that while there were opportunities for training and workshops there were not enough spaces for civic voices to gather and consider the big issues facing the region. It was agreed that this gathering had enabled colleagues to learn from each other and so improve their understanding of the issues. While there was value in having civil society talking to each other it was also recognised that there was a need for engagement with policy makers to shape a regional agenda. The Commonwealth Foundation took this message to CARICOM colleagues in Georgetown afterwards and it was warmly received. There’s an emerging area of work for the Foundation here, which could resonate across the Commonwealth. **(VK)**

TOWARDS MISSION 2030

Transforming the Caribbean through Mission 2030

By Firhaana Bulbulia, UN Communications Analyst in the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator

The United Nations Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, in partnership with the Barbados Museum and Historical Society, launched an interactive gallery showcasing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These 17 SDGs, otherwise known as the Global Goals, form a cohesive, integrated and indivisible package of global aspirations the world commits to achieving by 2030. Building on the accomplishments of their predecessors the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SDGs address the most pressing global challenges of our time, calling upon collaborative partnerships across and between countries to balance the three dimensions of sustainable development—economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. At the heart of the 2030 agenda is poverty eradication and the commitment to leave no one behind.



The SDG Gallery under the theme “Mission 2030” was launched in Barbados on November 19, 2018 and it was stationed across the lower and upper courtyards of the Barbados Museum from November 20 to 28, 2018. The gallery also stopped in St. Lucia from December 10 to 11 for the St. Lucia Knowledge Fair and is then intended to move throughout the Eastern Caribbean. Mission 2030 immerses visitors on a journey to discovering how the 17 Global Goals relate to our day-to-day lives in the Caribbean and how taking action for the goals can help to tackle our most pressing challenges. From our inability to generate productive and decent work, to the loss of biodiversity and environmental sustainability to socio-economic inequities, the gallery engaged visitors on a range of issues through varied mediums such as reflective tasks, games and virtual reality, as well as provide a space to innovatively think about how each of us do and can contribute to the change we want to see in our respective countries. The gallery was also opened to the public and offered tailored experiences for students ranging from primary to tertiary level, as well as accommodated students with special educational needs.

Receive updates on the SDG Gallery through our UN Caribbean social media accounts or by emailing rco.bb@one.un.org. (FB)

Renewable Energy

The Substance Abuse Foundation, which operates drug treatment facilities at Verdun House and Marina House in St. John, has embraced renewable energy as it seeks to sustain its operations in the long term.

On a recent tour of the facilities, Chief Executive Officer, Marietta Carrington, said while the organisation receives 60% of its financing from a UK-based benefactor and some \$150,000 is raised each year from a golf tournament, "That main benefactor's health is declining now, so we are working towards becoming more self-sufficient."

With this in mind, through the

Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme [implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)], in September last year the foundation set up a photovoltaic energy plant at Verdun House, which is used to power a farming project. "We plant vegetables and we also keep 1,000 chickens, including 400 layers, and 150 sheep. All the food we produce is organic and free of chemicals, and we use it in our kitchen and bakery to feed our residents and we sell the excess produce to "friends" of Verdun House."

She noted that they had seen some benefits from the renewable energy plant already. "We have received substantial cheques from the Barbados Light and Power Company after selling our excess capacity back to the national grid, and ideally we want to install more photovoltaic panels at Verdun House and also at Marina House, where future plans include establishing a farm specialising in root crops like potatoes and cassava."



Aerial view of Verdun House

"... All the food we produce is organic and free of chemicals, and we use it in our kitchen and bakery to feed our residents and we sell the excess produce to "friends" of Verdun House."

y at Verdun House



Verdun House has been in operation for 21 years and currently caters to 30 men of all ages, while Marina House, which was established two years ago specifically for women, now has 17 patients. Clinical Director, Angela Sealy, said "Contrary to popular belief, drug addiction is not the only addiction problem we deal with here. We have seen patients with gambling, sex, and other addictions, some of whom check themselves in, sometimes employers or relatives send them for help, other times they come through the courts. They range from as young as 18 years old to people in their 70s and 80s, and Verdun also provides outpatient care."

She said, "The rehab process is harder with women because in many instances they have children so they worry about their children's welfare if they require long-term treatment for their condition. Not only that, women tend to hang onto

House

their drug habits longer because they 'hide their stuff' better (that is, find different coping mechanisms to sustain their addictions)." Ms. Sealy lamented the fact that Barbadians "still do not fully understand mental health issues; there is still a fear associated with it, but the important thing is help is available for people with these challenges, and unlike the Psychiatric Hospital, we have no permanent residents here. People only come for a few weeks to at most six months, and we make provision for relapses since mental illness is considered a chronic condition." (DH)

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Renewable Energy Key to Sustaining Verdun House by David Hinkson, Freelance Writer

Sustainable agricult

Over the past five decades, the Caribbean has gone from being a significant producer of agricultural commodities to one whose food import bill now carries a multi-billion-dollar price tag. High fuel costs and vulnerability to natural disasters have also contributed to a decline.

In an effort to bring some life back into agriculture, the relevant stakeholders in the industry have recognised that we must take sustainable development into consideration and use more of our natural resources to reduce the fuel costs and ultimately produce more organic food as well.

Two farms that have taken this into consideration in Barbados are Meka Company Limited, a dairy located next door to the Portvale Sugar Factory, and the SolaGrow greenhouse project located in the eastern parish of St. Andrew.

Co-owner of Meka, Annette Beckett, stated that she had seen a significant reduction in her energy costs since switching to renewable energy sources in recent years. "Before installing the photovoltaic plant, my light bill was \$1,200 a month, it is now down to \$550. We harvest our water now and before that, our monthly bill used to be \$1,300, now it's down to \$700 or \$600." She has also found a way to incorporate the large influx of sargassum seaweed on Barbados' beaches into the farming process. At Meka, "We are using sargassum seaweed as fertiliser. We dry it out first to get all the salt content out of it before applying it to plants; if not, you run the risk of killing the plants because the salt will be too much for them to handle. We then mix it with the manure from the cows, and we are now selling plants that we have grown using the seaweed in this manner."



She acknowledged that the photovoltaic equipment and other renewable energy devices were costly. For example, the solar panels are presently imported from China. However, National Coordinator of the **GEF Small Grants Programme in Barbados**, David Bynoe, noted that Jamaica had started a community project in which "boys from the block" were manufacturing solar panels, and Beckett said she wanted to meet with newly appointed Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Indar Weir, to discuss some of the issues farmers who wanted to "go green" were facing.

The "all natural" focus at Meka Company has been paying dividends, because over the last two years the farm has won the Best Overall Milk Quality Award from the Pine Hill Dairy in terms of the quality of its product. She has also employed young women and students from the Samuel Jackman Prescod Institute of Technology in an effort to get them interested in agriculture, but admits that has been a challenge since "agriculture is not an 8 to 4 job and the long hours you must devote to it sometimes

Beckett said there was a need for more research in the farming sector, and for the results of that research to be put into action. "One of the dilemmas in agriculture in Barbados is that we do not do enough research in other areas of the sector; we have done plenty in sugar and vegetables, but not enough in other areas. On top of that, the findings are normally filed away and not shared with the farmers who are supposed to benefit from it."



ure reaping success



National Coordinator and Members of the National Steering Committee (NSC) during a field trip to the community based solar cooled greenhouse research project at SolaGrow.



At SolaGrow, the owners are using software to control the temperatures in their greenhouses and as a result, they are growing some crops not commonly produced in the Caribbean such as strawberries. Project Manager Dwayne Squires, a software engineer by profession, said "greenhouse production is generally expensive in terms of energy costs, but we use a fully photovoltaic plant here.

Currently our two greenhouses are producing two varieties of lettuce, thyme, strawberries, kale, cabbage, broccoli and other crops. One greenhouse is hydroponic, while the other uses soil." Squires said, "The software controls the temperature as well as the carbon dioxide levels, and we are working on an app that will enable us to control the greenhouses from a smartphone."

This project also features an 18,000 gallon water tank mounted six feet underground which irrigates the entire set up. "We use this to harvest rainwater, eliminating all bacteria from it. There are two systems here, one powers the water pump, the other the greenhouses, and they are connected to the national grid. This project ensures more efficient use of resources in the production process including water, and it also helps in pest control and ensures greater levels of production within a shorter time frame," he concluded. **(DH)**

Roland Edwards Primary REAPS R



L-R: Marsha-Ann Clarke - Founder of YEA, David Bynoe - National Coordinator, GEF SGP Barbados, Debra King - Director, Corporate Communications, CIBC FCIB

An agribusiness project being undertaken at primary and secondary schools in Barbados has gained added impetus and is ready for expansion within the Caribbean, starting with a primary school in St. Kitts.

This was disclosed on Friday September 21st during the launch of a new phase of the Regional Entrepreneurship and Agriculture Programme (REAP) at the Roland Edwards Primary School, St. Peter, Barbados, where the project has taken root and borne fruit.

Marsha Clarke, founder of Youth Equipped to Achieve! (YEA!), the organisers of REAP, said with the help of other organisations, YEA! saw REAP grow from one school, Gordon Walters Primary, in 2010 to 43 primary and secondary schools in Barbados.

Clarke explained that the **Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) implemented by the United Nations Development Programme [UNDP]** funded REAP in Barbados, but CIBC FirstCaribbean International Bank was now lending its financial support and this would allow REAP to become a regional school programme.

The bank's developmental investment will stretch the programme's reach to Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, as well as provide its sustainability in Barbados.

Confirming this, the bank's Director of Corporate Communications, Mrs. Debra King, told the students of Roland Edwards that St. Kitts would be the first stop in the regional outreach and in a sense, they would be twinning with a school in St. Kitts since they would both be involved in a similar project.

Mrs. King highlighted the importance of agriculture to Barbados and the region, encouraging the children to see the benefits from a national perspective as well as a personal one. She explained that Barbados imported a significant percentage of its food and for food security reasons, there was a great need to reduce this dependency. Therefore, she said it was necessary for people to grow more food locally.

Article submitted by CIBC FirstCaribbean.

Contact: Debra King, Director of Corporate Communications, CIBC FirstCaribbean, Barbados Head Office

Partnerships with CIBC First Caribbean



Roland Edwards Primary school pupils during morning assembly.



(L-R): Debra King - CIBC FCIB, George Francis - Principal, David Bynoe - GEF SGP Barbados, Marsha-Ann Clarke - YEA and Dominique Jordan - Teacher with pupils in the school garden.

On a personal level, Mrs. King spoke to the students about the many careers ranging from farmer to scientist that sprang from agriculture. She said it can also allow them to become self-employed business people who are creative and innovative as they seek to grow their businesses.

David Bynoe [National Coordinator] of **GEF SGP** and the school's principal George Francis spoke to the children in similar vein. Bynoe pointed out that the agribusiness programme was helping to provide them with knowledge and skills in several areas including science, business, technology, Mathematics and teaching them how to interact with others as business people. He also thanked CIBC FirstCaribbean for its involvement, noting that it was good to see civic society and the private sector involved in a project that could help Barbados in its economic transformation.

Principal George Francis also thanked the organisations for their involvement in the project and their interest in the school, adding that he was happy that it was chosen for the launch of a new phase in the REAP project. He pledged the support of his entire staff, ancillary and teaching, to the project, noting that he hoped to see the agribusiness programme at the school thrive and that others see it worthy of emulating.

Representatives of the organisations were then taken on a tour of the school's garden, led by the principal and teacher, Ms. Dominique Jordan, who manages the agriculture project. Students assisted, with LeDion Farley explaining what was done in the garden and Khade Belgrave speaking about methods such as hydroponics as well as the importance of paying attention to good environmental practices. Later Joshua Farley thanked the organisers on the school's and students' behalf.

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SAVE THE DATE

The following international days are observed by the United Nations. We have identified those days specifically relating to the environment.

March 21
International Day of Forests

March 22
World Water Day

March 23
World Meteorological Day

June 5
World Environment Day

June 8
World Oceans Day

September 26
World Maritime Day

October 7
World Habitat Day

October 13
International Day for Disaster Reduction

October 16
World Food Day

November 5
World Tsunami Day

December 5
World Soil Day