

CARIBBEAN YOUTH ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

ecolife

MAGAZINE

ISLAND VOICES,
GLOBAL CHOICES

CYEN INTERVIEWS

CHILD DOMESTICITY IN HAITI

GEO 6 - UNEP

ENVIRONMENTAL DEMOCRACY:
PRINCIPLE 10

CARIBBEAN YOUTH ENVIRONMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT CONGRESS

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CARIBBEAN YOUTH ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

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The Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN) is a non-profit, civil society, charitable body that focuses its resources on empowering young people and their communities.

Mission:

The Caribbean Youth Environment Network is a non-profit organisation that is dedicated to improving the quality of life of Caribbean young people by facilitating their personal development and promoting their full involvement in all matters pertaining to the environment and sustainable development. The organisation promotes education and training, Caribbean integration and community empowerment as tools to develop an ethic amongst young people that assists in the conservation and protection of natural resources within the wider Caribbean.





The ECOLife Team: Left to right: Daryll Griffith, Julie Le Gendre, Dizzanne Billy, and Rianna Gonzales

The Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN) continues to demonstrate its commitment to encouraging youth to engage in environmental work. We remain devoted to bringing you the work being done by young people around the world, with emphasis on the Caribbean and Latin America. Based on the feedback that ECOLife has received we believe that the best is yet to come and are thankful to see the vision of 'increased youth participation in development' continue to gain momentum.

Welcome to the fifth issue of the CYEN's online magazine – ECOLife. This issue, like its predecessors, has something special for every type of reader. However, the challenges of climate change and sustainable development in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are central to this issue and tie all the pieces together. The year 2014 was declared the International Year of Small Island Developing States by the United Nations and we have made it our mandate to spread the message about SIDS and provide specific insight into the environmental issues faced by SIDS. This magazine is written and published entirely by young people for young people. I urge you to read with an open mind as the youth share with you their thoughts on climate change and force us to ask ourselves: Why should we care about climate change? What does it mean for the Caribbean? and What can young people do to pursue meaningful climate change action? This issue also delves into the issues of urban transportation, marine stewardship, and the undignified but entrenched practice of child domesticity in Haiti. Indeed, the opinions of our young writers show not only the knowledge and calibre of youth, but also the passion they have for the issues at hand and their care for the development of the region.

In 'Limelight', we highlight the major activities which CYEN has engaged in over the last six months (July-December 2014) – from civil society meetings to Geo 6 in Germany. 'Heroes Among Us' shines the spotlight on the enterprise and initiative of young people in the Caribbean, Latin America, and the AIMS region. 'Word on the Street' features the opinions of young people regarding the People's Global Climate March. ECOLife Issue No. 5 also features articles which cover various development and environment centered conferences attended by CYEN members such as the UN Climate Summit, the International Conference on Small Island Developing States, the Principle 10 Focal Point Meeting and much more. We also bring you the pertinent words of Stefan Knights, CYEN Envoy to the United Nations Environment Programme in 'CYEN Interviews.' Do enjoy!

On behalf of the ECOLife Team, I thank you for your continued support. All we need is dedication to make anything possible as CYEN continues its mission to communicate, advocate for and protect the environment, open doors for young people to excel and create change. From all of us at CYEN, we hope you find inspiration in ECOLife magazine and are able to gain insight into the work being done by young people for the environmental sustainability and development of the Caribbean.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions for future issues please feel free to contact us at cyen.tt.chapter@gmail.com. Happy Reading!

Dizzanne Billy
Communications Officer
Caribbean Youth Environment Network
Trinidad and Tobago Chapter (CYEN T&T)

Collapsed section of Manzanilla-Mayaro Road in Trinidad after heavy rains
Photo Credit: Iere Eye Aerial Photography

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A young girl with brown hair, wearing a light blue sleeveless top and white shorts with small red polka dots, is walking in a protest. She is holding a large flag with red, black, and white stripes. In the background, other people are visible, some holding signs and a megaphone, suggesting a public demonstration or rally. The scene is outdoors on a paved area with trees in the background.

"If we can put hundreds of thousands of people in the streets to call for climate justice and lift up the voices of the frontline communities most impacted by the crisis it could be the shock to the system that we've all been waiting for. No more false promises and fancy rhetoric.

We want real action now"

Eddie Bautista, Executive Director, New York City Environmental Justice Alliance

LIMELIGHT

JUNIOR UPCYCLERS



CYEN-T&T's Junior Upcycling Initiative continues to make a positive impact on the lives of the young ones involved in it. It makes environmentalism fun and informative, blending creativity with knowledge of recycling and upcycling. CYEN hosted a few very interactive sessions with the boys and girls of the Renaissance Preparatory School in Vistabella, the National Flour Mills Vacation Camp and St. George's College (see page 15) These sessions incorporate a presentation and a puppet show on upcycling. In Vistabella, CYEN members were joined by representatives from the Water Resources Agency who did a presentation on the health effects of contaminated water, and at the National Flour Mills Vacation Camp, even the employees lent a hand as CYEN conducted the practical upcycling session. The Junior Upcyclers Project which is guided by the theme "The Upcycling Concept: Trash to Treasure," always ensures that fun and learning go hand in hand.

WATER WARRIORS SCHOOL CARAVAN

The Adopt-A-River Programme is an initiative of the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) to facilitate the monitoring, clean-up and enhancement of rivers in Trinidad and Tobago by developing community networks that encourage active participation in the protection of the watersheds by educating residents and businesses with hands-on restoration activities. Through this programme, the CYEN Project "Learn and Flow: The Arima and Courland Water Story" was born. This project is working towards the production of a three-part documentary series focusing on water issues and solutions in the Arima and Courland watersheds. A key project activity is the Water Warriors School Caravan. On each school/camp visit, members conduct presentations on the importance of water conservation, the water cycle, water demand and supply, and other pertinent water issues faced by Caribbean countries and nations of the world. Members also perform an interactive puppet show (CYEN-T&T scripted) and a series of games that were also designed in-house to bring the message home to the children. Two major caravans were conducted with members visiting the Angelic Sounds Music Centre and the Christian Primary Academy to bring the knowledge of water issues to the young. The standard one and standard two children of the Christian Primary Academy impressed the volunteers with their enthusiasm to participate and were all smiles for the camera as this particular event was covered by the Caribbean New Media Group (CNMG). The CYEN team was interviewed by Mr. Ean Wallace and the work done by CYEN and the message of ECOLife were featured on the local news programme - The Environmental Report. At the Angelic Sounds Music Centre, the happy campers were also keen to show that they know quite a lot about where water comes from and the role that pollution plays in flooding.



RBC ROYAL BANK HELPS N90s

CYEN-T&T was a part of RBC Royal Bank's series "Hand Up for NGOs" which was a pilot programme. It is a series of workshops supporting Social Entrepreneurship for local NGOs. CYEN-T&T representatives learned how to strategically develop and communicate projects to potential investors. The importance of detailed project development and aligning these projects to the targets of both the organisation and the financier were brought to the fore. NGO representatives from organisations that advocate for diverse issues - rights for the differently-abled, adult literacy and environmental sustainability - participated in the workshop.

LIMELIGHT

CYEN YOUTH AND CIVIL SOCIETY

CYEN represented Youth at the Civil Society Consultation on Sustainable Development priorities for Trinidad and Tobago: Input for the Third International Conference of Small Island Developing States and the Development of a Global Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda. This event was facilitated by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme. The young representatives put forward their opinions and claimed their right to have a more significant input in the development of the national civil society position on SIDS.



SAN ANTONIO GREEN MARKET AND CYEN-T&T

The San Antonio Green Market based in Santa Cruz is located on Saddle Road, near Cutucupano Road in Upper Santa Cruz and was opened on November 24th 2012. Open on Saturdays and Sundays, the purpose of this organic market is to build relationships between producers and consumers while fostering the growth and development of a culture which promotes healthy gardens, community connections, and the 'buy-local' spirit. The area has been designed by architect Michael Lee Poy on land that Wendell Mottley and Vicki Assevero have dedicated for the project. CYEN-T&T members partnered with the San Antonio Green Market to organise a set of local surveys that were done to collaboratively assess and increase knowledge about the organic market and CYEN. CYEN members were elated to be of assistance to this great cause.

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK 6: INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

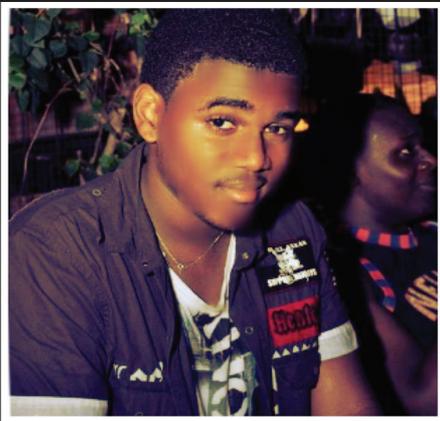
Rianna Gonzales represented CYEN as well as the UN Major Group for Women at the Global Intergovernmental and Multi-Stakeholder Consultation on the Sixth Global Environment Outlook Report (GEO-6), hosted by UNEP from the 21 to 23 October 2014, in Berlin, Germany. The aim of the global consultation was to agree on the objectives, scope and processes for GEO-6, which will culminate in the production of the GEO-6 assessment report and a Summary for Policy Makers. The GEO assessment is a core UNEP activity aimed at maintaining a review of the global environment. To date, five assessments have been published (1997, 1999, 2002 and 2007 and 2012). It is hoped that CYEN will be able to offer a greater representation of the Caribbean and youth at this level.



FOR A GREATER PURPOSE

Enzo Kinsiona

CYEN AND ARTHUR ASHE INTERNSHIP



Someone questioned why I would sacrifice my July-August 2014 vacation break to partake in the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health Summer Internship Programme for a second time, having participated in the previous year. For me, it was a productive and fulfilling way to spend my time. My decision was solidified by the experience I had last year, which was motivated by my mother's encouragement and turned out to be a rewarding six weeks. My mother convinced me that this was a great opportunity and indeed it was. The programme piqued my interest and evolved into an experience that was full of fun and great memories.

For the duration of my internship this year, I was partnered with an intelligent young lady, Nadira Balgobin. Together, we undertook a project to evaluate "The Perception of Water Quality Issues Among Users of the Arima Watershed" through the non-governmental organization (NGO) to which we were assigned. Our assigned NGO, the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN) is a non-profit, voluntary organization which aims to empower youth to address socio-economic and environmental issues impacting their communities. CYEN offered indispensable support in our research efforts and enabled access to information regarding water quality data in Trinidad and Tobago. We were also able to gain exposure to the valuable work that CYEN is undertaking locally and a better appreciation for the environmental challenges we face and the importance of advocacy.

Through this research project we were able to gain a deeper knowledge of the concept of watershed management, the

environmental impact of quarrying and local water issues. The internship aims to provide participants with comprehensive lectures to help mould thinking about development issues and provides sufficient information to deliver a quality project in just five weeks time. The Arthur Ashe Summer Internship Programme is an invaluable opportunity for networking as it affords the chance to broaden social connections, instills an appreciation for advocacy and enforces the belief that no matter how small or insignificant you believe your efforts may be, you can make a difference. The Arthur Ashe motto is embedded in the recesses of my mind: "Start where you are, use what you have and do what you can".

This continues to motivate me as I navigate my current University life. I now look forward to post-internship life, as I plan to remain a CYEN member and volunteer and assist in any way possible in their Adopt-A-River Project, which seeks to increase awareness of the water management challenges in the Arima and Courland watersheds and bring attention to the role of the individual in providing solutions to these challenges.



Youth, the Environment, and our Future

Mahendra Doraisami



Guyana is classified as a Small Island Developing State (SID) due to its low-lying coast. The vast majority of our small but diverse population lives on coastal land and ninety five percent (95%) of our agricultural sector is based in this 430km stretch of fertile soil. The devastating

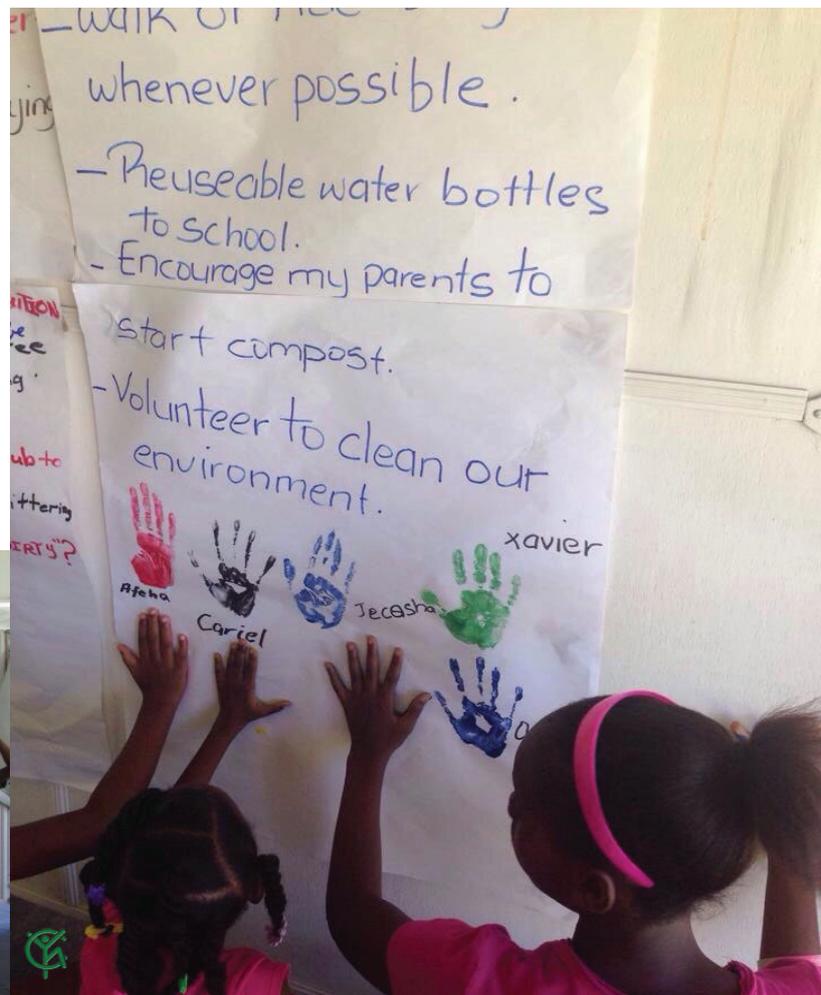
Guyanese reality revolves around the fact that our coast is 1.4 meters below mean high tide levels. This means that we are unrelentingly threatened by the gradually increasing levels of the mighty Atlantic Ocean and are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters which encroach upon us from the North. To make matters worse, the power to curb this increasing danger lies not in our hands but in those of the most industrialized nations that are responsible for the largest amounts of greenhouse gas emissions into the earth's atmosphere.

In the midst of this dire scenario, all hope is not lost. The country boasts one of the last pristine forested landscapes on the planet. Eighty five percent (85%) of our total landmass (83,000km²) is made up of lush tropical rainforests. Our country has recognized the vital role these forests play in breathing fresh air into the polluted atmosphere of the planet. This critical role is the focus of an ongoing deal with the Scandinavian country of Norway, and is manifested in the disbursement of US\$250 million, over a five year period, to maintain the health of Guyana's forests. This is a far cry from saving our nation and the world from unprecedented weather events due to climate change. However, it is a small step in the right direction and represents commitment to the sustainability of our natural resources.

The Guyana Chapter of the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN Guyana) has recognized that an intrinsic part of protecting our resources and the environment from the outstretched arms of disaster and exploitation is educating our future leaders, the youth, on the need to protect the environment and the many ways in which this can be achieved. The Guyanese population is comprised mainly of persons below the age of 35 and this demographic composition underscores why it is imperative that young people play an active part in saving what will one day belong to us and our children.

In July 2014, CYEN Guyana launched our "Eco-Change Makers" Day Camp, which targeted children below the age of ten. The platform taught kids about essential environmental topics such as the importance of saving our trees, the three Rs (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle), energy conservation and living in an environmentally conscious way. This educational programme was developed by Ms. Dionne Cush, an environmentalist attached to CYEN Guyana, and the message is intended to be spread to schools throughout the country in the coming year.

Additionally, CYEN Guyana recently concluded a number of activities related to International Coastal Cleanup 2014. CYEN Guyana was proud to be assigned the role of country coordinator for the events inspired by Ocean Conservancy and worked along with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MNRE) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to host three of the largest country wide coastal cleanups held to date. The cleanups featured the participation of many distinguished personalities including the Prime Minister of Guyana, The Honourable Mr. Samuel Hinds, and the Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment, Mr. Robert Persaud. Of course, our most enthusiastic participants were the scores of young people from the many youth NGOs across the country who diligently turned up and participated in the activities. The initiatives were executed in tandem with a series of sensitisation sessions across the country and were spearheaded by the National Coordinator of CYEN Guyana and long serving member, Ms. Elon Mc Curdy. Positive environmental action and youth involvement remains key to ensuring the sustainable development of the region.



On Saturday 20th September 2014, the Caribbean Youth Coastal Cleanup (ICC). ICC is an annual event, first initiated of volunteers showing their commitment towards protected around the world. The coastal environment provides protection urges all to play an active part in reducing the waste that our coastal and marine environment, which in turn affects food and we also use it as a tourist attraction. Therefore

Bois Shador Bay and Bananes Beach, St. Lucia. Tackling two beaches in partnership with Positive Youth Uprising and the Lions Club



Long Beach, Barbados. Transforming a hub for illegal dumping into the beauty that it is.



Environment Network engaged members in the International Coastal Cleanup by Ocean Conservancy in 1986, which sees the largest number of people participating in cleaning and conserving the coastal and marine environment. The cleanup provides education, nourishment, and a livelihood for many persons. CYEN goes into our seas. Litter threatens the health and safety of the land and the people. We depend on the sea to provide us with food, and if it is polluted, it is important that we keep this ecosystem pollution free.



Hope Beach, St. Andrews, **Grenada**
With support from the Rotaract Club, 40 bags of garbage collected in 2.5 hours



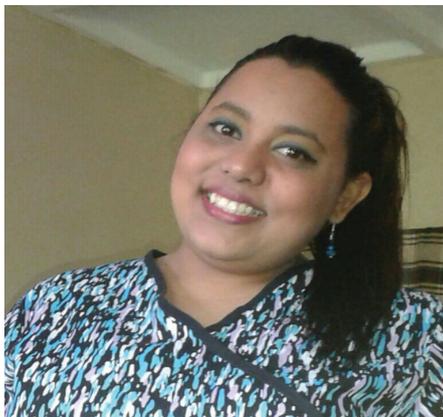
INTERNATIONAL
COASTAL
CLEANUP
2014



Manzanilla Beach, **Trinidad**.
Strong youth participation and the support from the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA)

AN Emphysema-Free Tomorrow

Shabiyath Ali, Clinical Pharmacist



How do we help others on the path to better lung health?

The tobacco industry targets young people across the world and has been proven to hinder youth development and place pressure on the health systems and the poor in society. In fact, the majority of tobacco consumption comes from developing countries. This is an issue that is being overlooked by many governments as tobacco companies with vested interests in profit making win the battle due to the contributions they make to economic growth. The negative environmental effects of tobacco also cannot be overlooked. In fact, the Ocean Conservancy's 2012 International Coastal Cleanup data showed cigarette butts to be the most littered item, representing 32% of all items collected, and 2% of smoking-related debris consisted of cigar tips.

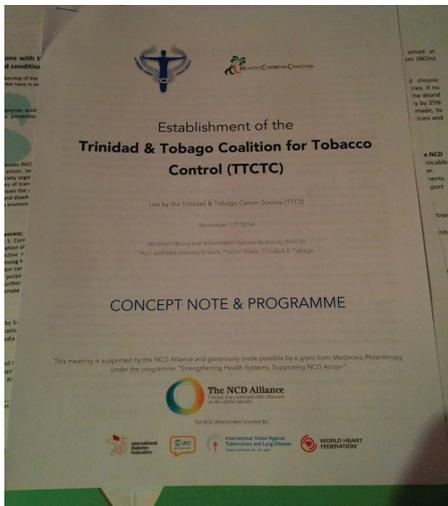
In light of this, CYEN-T&T has now ventured to take a position on the Steering Committee of the newly formed Trinidad and Tobago Coalition for Tobacco Control (TTCTC), and will be represented by CYEN member, Shabiyath Ali. The following is an account of the first meeting of the TTCTC written by Shabiyath.

Representatives from the Ministry of Health were present along with nurses, pharmacists, and members of non-governmental organisations, such as CYEN, the Heart Foundation, and Best Start. Brainstorming with the Jamaicans, Bajans and other islanders was a source of fun and excitement and it was encouraging to see previous smokers who "kicked the butt" in attendance to lend support to the initiative and motivate others to give up a habit that has detrimental health effects.

The meeting also yielded new and important information such as the fact that there is a Tobacco Unit under the Ministry of Health that was created in May 2014. There is also a Smoking Cessation Clinic at the Arima Health Facility. Access to knowledge and the ability to network with persons in one's field are just two out of the many advantages that being a dedicated member of CYEN affords. I am grateful to have been able to attend this initial meeting of the TTCTC because I was granted the opportunity to learn of new social programs that often fail to become public knowledge and remain known only to a select few.

How do we help others on the path to better lung health? This question also formed part of the discussions in the meeting. Deliberations on tax increases, strategic marketing on the ills of smoking and increased fines for smoking in public places were explored.

Ultimately, the meeting represented the commencement of a long journey with a lot of work yet to be done. However, the challenge was greeted with enthusiasm and positivity. All the core groups for the coalition were identified and placed on the report and the various supporters were identified. The Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN) was placed in the core group and I was given the opportunity to serve as the CYEN representative on the TTCTC Steering Committee. A window of opportunity has been created for the leaders of tomorrow - an emphysema-free tomorrow.



Give smoking a one-two punch

Climate Change and the Caribbean

Rashaun Watson

“We have to start taking a more proactive approach in addressing environmental problems such as climate change and attribute the same level of urgency as we do to matters relating to the economy or security”



Photo Credit: Jamaica Observer

The effects of global warming continue to spark much discourse as the world records immense climatic changes. According to the Fifth Assessment Report published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the effects of climate change are already being felt on all continents and seen in the ocean data analysed. This is of great concern to me, as a citizen of Jamaica, and should be a concern for other Caribbean nationals. The islands of the Caribbean region, as a result of their geological formation and geographical features, have always been susceptible to natural disasters. However, over the past years the frequency and intensity of natural disasters have augmented in the midst of climate change.

The region has seen more tropical storms, hurricanes, severe droughts and water shortages, rapid disappearance of corals and other aquatic life, and increased temperature among other effects. Inevitably, these occurrences have adverse economic and social implications for the region as our economic viability is highly dependent on our natural resources. Given the small physical size of our islands and the reliance of several islands on tourism

as a major economic activity, the effects of climate change represent disheartening news for livelihoods and development. Quite often, plans for development are derailed as unbudgeted finances or external loans have to be used for recovery efforts after a devastating natural disaster. This means that a contingency plan must be devised to enable the region to be better able to withstand the impact of exogenous shocks. The issue of environmental sustainability is crucial to the development of the region. It is necessary to ensure that our usage of natural resources does not jeopardize the quality of life for future generations. This is the precarious position in which we currently live but despite the imminent threats posed by climate change we have to develop a plan of action for the future.

In tackling any social, economic or political phenomenon, awareness is always a pivotal part of the solution. Having recently attended a youth conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), I was exposed to a stark reality in which the average citizen lacks comprehensive knowledge regarding SIDS and the challenges that the populations of SIDS

will face as a result of climate change. Heads of Governments and Ministers must liaise with non-governmental agencies and youth-led organizations to spread the message across all communities. A new strategy has to be employed since citizens continue to ignore environmental issues despite exhortations. Organizations such as the Caribbean Youth Environment Network must be lauded for its efforts to empower youths to play an active role in increasing awareness of environmental issues and encouraging the creation of policies to mitigate the effects of climate change. We have to start taking a more proactive approach in addressing environmental problems such as climate change and attribute the same level of urgency to this issue as we do to matters relating to the economy or security. No longer can we ignore what is happening or sideline the fact that the region will continue to be severely affected by this phenomenon. We must join hands, hearts and minds together in efforts to strengthen our resilience to face the effects of climate change.



Coral bleaching is a major problem and this will greatly affect marine species

*"Youth must not be ignored in
the call for climate change
action"*

Judy Daniel

*Regional Chair, Global Water Partnership-Caribbean,
at Climate Change & You: The SIDS Reality*



Adaeze Greenidge and Julie Le Gendre

We make garbage fun!

Human activities produce waste on a daily basis. The rate at which we produce waste and our capacity to properly manage this waste is drastically out of line. A different approach to waste is needed and this is what the Caribbean Youth Environment Network Trinidad and Tobago Chapter (CYEN-T&T) has actively been promoting through our Junior Upcyclers initiative "The Upcycling Concept: Trash to Treasure". The purpose of this initiative is to introduce young people to the concept of upcycling, educate them about the link between upcycling and reducing waste and show them fun and exciting ways to reduce their own waste. Junior Upcyclers inspires young people to be environmentally-friendly while being uniquely creative and it is exciting when corporate organisations actively support initiatives that promote environmental education and sustainable living. CYEN-T&T was delighted to partner with Universal Package Systems Limited: Authorised Service Contractor for UPS (UPSL) for a recent Junior Upcyclers event. On Friday 17th October, 2014 an energetic group, comprising volunteers from CYEN-T&T and UPSL, ventured into Barataria for an interactive visit with the Form One students of St. George's College.

It turned out to be a fun and energetic day of creativity that surpassed expectations. The day started at 11:00am with an interactive presentation on waste and upcycling delivered by two CYEN-T&T members, in which the students were engaged in a conversation about the personal responsibility involved in reducing waste and curbing pollution. This educational talk was followed by an exhilarating upcycling competition which was made possible by the support of UPSL with contributions of stationery, upcycling material, tokens and prizes. The students were divided into ten groups and were challenged to make creative stationery pieces from aluminium cans and cereal boxes. The creations they produced were testament to the ingenuity and talent that our young people possess. From tin cans and cereal boxes that would have otherwise ended up in the garbage, they created folders, stationary holders and book holders and, in some cases, combined tin cans and cereal boxes to create stationery



masterpieces! Supervised by our CYEN-T&T and UPSL volunteers to ensure safety, the students let their imaginations run wild in a display of all that is possible when we think creatively about finding solutions to environmental problems. The students even multitasked, answering upcycling questions for tokens while they worked.

Each of the ten groups were asked to choose their best upcycled creation and from these top ten creations the CYEN-T&T and UPSL judges had the very difficult task of selecting the top three. These three students were gifted with prizes of Movie Towne tickets and Subway vouchers in an atmosphere that was filled with anticipation and enjoyment for both the volunteers and the students. Supported by the generous contributions from UPSL, the logistical coordination of Jureeza Clarke, Human Resources and Administration Officer at UPSL and the assistance of their volunteers, another successful Junior Upcyclers event left smiles on the faces of all involved. The day was filled with fun and education, two things our Junior Upcycling initiative definitely thrives for.

"Junior Upcyclers inspires young people to be environmentally-friendly while being uniquely creative"



From left to right: Jureeza Clarke (Human Resources and Administration Officer, UPSL) and Wayne Chee Ting (Managing Director, UPSL)



GIVE LOVE 2014 SPREADS CHRISTMAS JOY

Julie Le Gendre

It was so nice we had to do it **Twice!**

The inaugural Give Love Toy Drive and Christmas Party was hosted in 2013 by the Trinidad and Tobago Chapter of the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN-T&T) with the support of Habitat for Humanity Trinidad and Tobago. Given the success of this first effort to spread Christmas cheer together with an environmental message, it was decided to make this an annual event in the CYEN calendar of activities. This year proved to be bigger and better as we partnered once again with Habitat for Humanity Trinidad and Tobago and also welcomed a new partner, Universal Package Systems Limited: Authorised Service Contractor for UPS (UPSL). There was an enthusiastic response to the call for volunteers this year and on Saturday 13th December more than 50 volunteers comprised of CYEN members, UPSL staff, students from the Arthur Lok Jack School of Business, students from St. Mary's College and members of Habitat for Humanity UWI Campus Chapter ventured to the community of KP Lands, Valencia to engage the children of the area in a day of fun, laughter and learning.

We were greeted at the New Testament Church of God in KP Lands (which we were graciously allowed to use for the event) by one young man who showed up early in eager anticipation. More soon joined and by 10:30 a.m. the church was transformed into a buzzing hall of excitement and Christmas carols. Give Love also provides a platform to promote the "Upcycling Concept: Trash to Treasure" and the children listened attentively and actively participated during the interactive presentation by two CYEN members on the environment, reducing waste and

upcycling. This message was reinforced by our puppets – Raj, Sally and Ming – in a puppet show scripted by CYEN and featuring handmade sock puppets with an anti-littering message that also encourages upcycling. The children and our volunteers got the chance to put the upcycling concept into practice with a Christmas themed upcycling session that gave them the chance to make Christmas decorations from used items such as toilet paper rolls, puzzle pieces and CDs. Creative juices flowed and the artistic energy was so contagious that some seemed to forget all about lunch.

Revitalised with cupcakes, sandwiches and juice, everyone geared up for the much anticipated distribution of toys and party bags which marked the successful end of another edition of Give Love – the Christmas party that reminds us all about the importance of caring for the environment. This message reached 100 children who all also received goodie filled upcycled party bags handcrafted by CYEN members from slightly worn gift paper. Teaching by practical example is what the Junior Upcyclers Initiative is all about and we were able to do this at Give Love this year with the generous donations and assistance from UPSL, the continued support of Habitat for Humanity Trinidad and Tobago and the diligent help from Ms. Therese Gibbs of the KP Lands community. The love was deeply expressed at Give Love 2014 – even bubbling over into an impromptu Karaoke Jam Session. We look forward to the next edition of Give Love in 2015!



News from the CYEN Desk



From the 15th-20th December 2014, members of the Caribbean Youth Environment Network met in Trinidad and Tobago for its 11th Biennial Caribbean Youth Environment & Development Congress. Young people and experts who are young at heart came from all across the Caribbean region to deal with internal matters, share knowledge, vote on pivotal affairs, socialise, and make decisions that will guide the next two years of CYEN operations. CYEN Chapters represented were Barbados, Bahamas, Belize, St. Lucia, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, and St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Congratulations to the newly elected CYEN Regional Steering Committee –Jamilla Sealy (Regional Chair), Reginald Burke (Executive Coordinator), Ashley John (Regional Advisor), Kericcia Hobson (Treasurer), d'Shan Maycock (Director), Elon Mc Curdy (Director), Waynelle C Taylor (Secretary), Nickson Barry (Alternate Regional Chair), and Rianna Gonzales (Immediate Past Regional Chair).

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Julie Le Gendre: CYEN T&T Member of the Quarter (July - September 2014)



CYEN-T&T was nominated at the National Youth Awards under the category of Volunteerism in the Community.



Leah Fouchong: CYEN T&T Member of the Quarter (October - December 2014)



GUYANA

On 22nd November, 2014, the Volunteer Support Platform of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports held its inaugural National Youth Awards. This event aimed to recognize the accomplishments of youth between the ages of 14-29 years who demonstrated exceptional leadership skills in their communities through voluntary work. It also sought to highlight the work of youth focused organizations that have promoted and fostered the development of young people and engaged in volunteer led initiatives in Guyana.



Left to right: Godfrey Scott, CYEN Guyana President collecting the Award of Service, National Youth Organisation, Elon Mc Curdy, CYEN Guyana National Coordinator and Leanna Kalicharran, CYEN Guyana Member



Ms. Dionne Cush collecting the Award for Regional Participation, Region 4

Child Domesticity In Haiti

A Practice to Stamp Out

Nicolas Florestal

Child domesticity is a problem that has plagued Haiti for over two centuries. Many factors explain this practice which is rooted in the extreme poverty of the country. It is often an expression of gratitude to benefactors where the child is offered to serve them for free or occurs in cases where the biological parents die and the child is placed in a family who will be able to take care of him/her. In most cases, parents, especially those from the rural areas, give their child to families living in cities. In exchange for the free services provided by the child, he/she should have access to a higher and better education, a life which will enable him/her to improve his/her economic prospects and help the rest of the family to improve their own. In such cases, these children become the hope of an entire family from the countryside.



Unfortunately, in most cases, the life that parents expected for their child are far from the daily reality they actually endure. The children in domesticity are pejoratively called "restavèk" (living with) in Haiti. Regardless of their age, they are responsible for all of the housework - sweeping, mopping, shopping, and cooking. They work all day, are not paid for their services and live in poor conditions that degrade their human dignity. Moreover, they do not usually get the education that their parents placed them for. Of course, the social consequences are terrifying. The children are sexually abused, humiliated and subjected to constant domestic violence. Thus, they run away and are driven to delinquency (murder, robbery, kidnapping) on the streets or sexual behaviour that results in early pregnancy and young, single motherhood. They have no more contact with their biological parents for decades and are left with the broken dreams of an entire family. In spite of this reality and as a result of the poverty that continues to exist, more and more children are being placed in domesticity. In 1994, they were estimated at three hundred thousand (300, 000), 75% were girls and 70% of these girls were not fifteen yet.



In this era of modernisation where every human has a voice with the ability to take action, the practice of domesticity and child domesticity should be denounced with all our strength. No to the domesticity of Haitian youth. No to domesticity at all! Every single child placed in domesticity degrades the value of life and debilitates the future of a whole country. Let us break the cycle where children are reduced to a cog in the workforce! Let us act against this practice! In Haiti, as Haitian youths, we say no to the "restavèk" system!

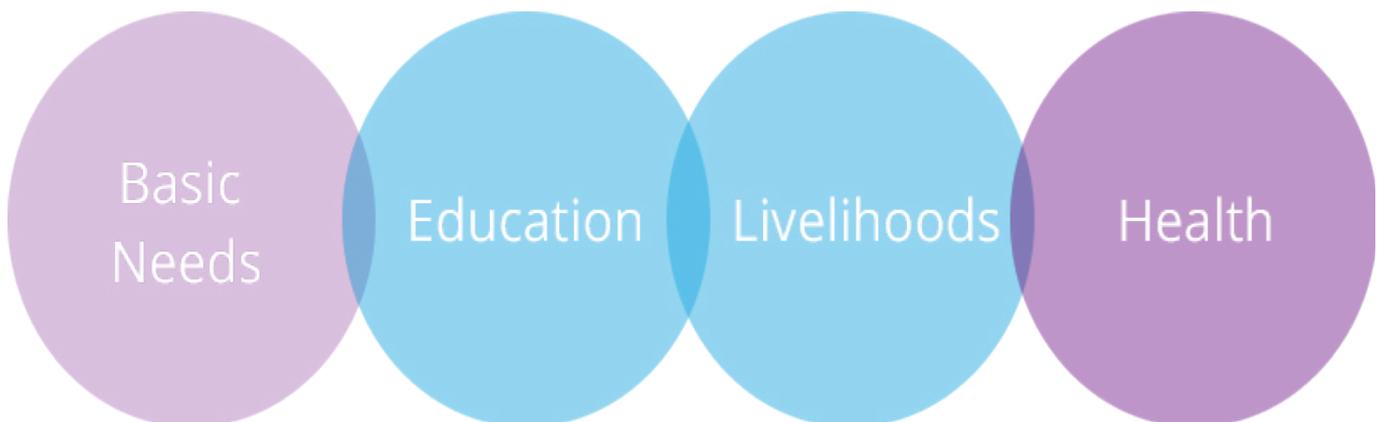


Photo credit: freedomfoundationng.com

Bike-Share Programs

COMBATING ISSUES OF URBAN TRANSPORTATION WITH A NEW TWIST ON AN OLD MODE OF TRANSPORT

Faheema Mohammed

"The solution lies in getting society to re-think urban transportation by providing access to safer and more efficient alternative modes of transport"

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are battling a number of issues stemming from climate change. However, as these states invest money on the creation of reports and infrastructure that may or may not help in the protection of their populations, one very important sector of the economy which should be of priority is transportation, more specifically urban transportation. The Caribbean is an example of an emerging region which has a population that is growing close to 42 million. As the region's population increases, there will be greater pressure placed on urban areas which will force governments to tackle issues related to urban growth. Therefore, it is important for leaders and decision makers of SIDS to realise that urban transportation is crucial to creating efficient cities and the management of urbanised areas.

Developed nations have already started tackling the urban transportation problem. However, these countries have the resources, labour, and financial capabilities to provide solutions to their urban transportation dilemma. Most, if not all, SIDS are at a disadvantage in these areas. One great solution that can be introduced to reduce the problem of urban transportation is the introduction of the already popular bike-share program. Bikes have been used for many years in many parts of the world as a form of transport, for example, in China. Bike-shares have also been popular and successful in developed countries such as in Canada, various states in the USA, and many European countries. Success stories have also come from places such as Mexico City.



Port-Of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago - Heavy traffic is a daily occurrence (Photo credit: newsday.co.tt)

Bike-share type programs vary from the simplistic utilisation of bikes at various locations to more modern technological approaches featuring smart cards and interface bike-stations that store and release bikes to be used and dropped off at the nearest bike-station. Basically, SIDS can utilise the basic concept of a bike-share, and transform and adapt it to suit their socio-economic and cultural needs. The challenge with bike-shares remains getting people motivated enough to use the bikes. However, with proper marketing and advertising, bike-share programs can become extremely successful especially as the green lifestyle becoming the norm and is manifesting as fad.

I, together with a colleague in Trinidad and Tobago, created the Be Green Bike Initiative (BGBI) in 2011, a bike-share with a unique twist. Unfortunately, it is still in

the conceptualization phase due to a lack of funding, even though it was presented to various government ministries, embassies and business leaders and received favourable responses. A research paper was also accepted and presented at two conferences, one of which was the 2012 blueSpace Caribbean Urban Forum. Although I still have hope for BGBI, I am concerned that the leaders of SIDS do not appreciate the urgent need for environmentally sustainable strategies. They must wake up and realise that building and expanding highways will not solve the urban transportation problem. The solution lies in getting society to re-think urban transportation by providing access to safer and more efficient alternative modes of transport, one of which can most definitely be bike-share programs.



Ecobicibikes, the bike-sharing programme in Mexico City, Mexico (Photo credit: Flickr: Paul Brady)

A long pier made of dark wooden pilings extends from the foreground into the distance, receding into the ocean. The water is a deep, moody blue-grey, and white-capped waves are crashing against the pilings, creating a sense of movement and power. The sky is overcast, contributing to the somber and contemplative atmosphere of the scene.

*“The Greatest Danger to our
Future is Apathy”*

Jane Goodall, Primatologist, Ethologist, and
Anthropologist

Water, Climate Change and You(th) Post-2015

CYEN 11th Biennial Caribbean Youth Environment and Development Congress 2014

Young people from ten (10) Caribbean countries gathered in Port of Spain, Trinidad for the 11th Biennial Caribbean Youth Environment and Development Congress which was held from the 15th -20th December 2014. This year's Congress held by the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN) focused on the theme "Water, Climate Change and You(th) Post-2015" and brought together young environmental leaders from across the region to discuss and propose action plans for youth involvement in activities aimed at promoting sustainable development and also to strategically map the way forward for the organisation.

Over the six (6) days delegates took part in three phases of Congress. The first three days were closed sessions for CYEN members where reports on the activities of CYEN Chapters across the Caribbean were delivered through country presentations and deliberations on ways to improve the management of the network spurred discussion. This phase also featured the election of members of the new CYEN Regional Steering Committee (formerly Board of Management). Working Committees were also established to discuss key areas for improvement in (1) Constitutional Review (2) Strategic Planning (3) Sustainable Innovative Financing (4) Research, Documentation and Publication (5) Public Relations, Marketing and Communications.

Mr. Peter Mitchell, focal point for SIDS and the Post-2015 Development Agenda for Trinidad and Tobago in the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development gave a presentation on the Post-2015 process and the need for a strong and consistent Caribbean Statement moving forward.

In the second phase of Congress, from the 18th - 19th December, selected delegates participated in the Global Water Partnership -Caribbean's Caribbean Media and Youth Workshop on Water Security and Climate Resilience. The overall objective of this workshop was to provide Caribbean media and communication practitioners and active members of environmental organizations with relevant information and training related to Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and climate resilience. This workshop was an eye opener for the CYEN delegates as it brought home the reality of the media environment which was summed up in the statement: "We report news, we do not do PR". This signals, that as young people, it



is necessary for us to be mindful of the objective of media which does not only encompass press and radio but also social platforms. This workshop also gave delegates the opportunity to network with various media houses from their countries as well as other institutions such as the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) and build relationships.

Simultaneously, other delegates were treated to field trips to the Asa Wright Nature Centre, the Caroni Bird Sanctuary and the Emperor Valley Zoo where they were able to enjoy the lush flora and fauna of the island. These delegates also engaged in a Team Building exercise on Friday 19th December in the picturesque and historical Botanical Gardens.

On the final day, Saturday 20th December, a youth capacity building workshop was held on "Climate Change and You - The SIDS Reality" which aimed to disseminate knowledge and experience in three areas 1. Climate Change and the Forgotten Resource - Water 2. Adaptation Policy and International Negotiations - Nothing about Us without Us! 3. Youth Climate Advocacy - Caribbean Climate Movement! There were presentations made by various experts in these areas and also breakout sessions where participants got to interact one on one with expert facilitators. The event represented a successful culmination of CYEN Congress 2014 and the participants as well as the presenters went away more knowledgeable and with ideas for future collaborations.

Congress Highlights



Mr. Reginald Burke, CYEN Executive Coordinator



Dristinah Drakes and Christina Fontenelle, CYEN (Barbados) at the field trip to the Caroni Bird Sanctuary



Mr. Peter Mitchell, Assistant Director, Socio-Economic Policy Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development

Climate Change and You: The SIDS Reality

Melanie Gregory



Climate Change Youth Capacity Building Workshop - CYEN and GWP-C Partnership

public and private sector participation in sustainable and holistic projects aimed at improving the status of the rivers within watersheds. Although the project was faced with many challenges from the beginning, through perseverance and funding from the private sector, Guanapo has now become an example of watershed rehabilitation and the benefits of effective monitoring. The greatest achievement came in empowering

of technical details instead of focusing on the important task of mitigation and adaptation which represent the lifeline for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). He emphasized the fact that SIDS need a voice at these conferences. I connected with this on so many levels. If we, as a Caribbean people, want to enact change to safeguard our livelihoods and futures, we must join our voices in the pursuit

On Saturday 20th December, 2014 the CYEN Trinidad and Tobago Chapter hosted a Climate Change Workshop entitled "Climate Change and You: The SIDS Reality." The workshop formed a part of the Global Water Partnership-Caribbean's Caribbean Media and Youth Workshop on Water Security and Climate Resilience and was a form of capacity building for young people. As a new member to CYEN, I was excited to be a part of this workshop held at the Hilton Hotel and Conference Centre, not just to hear experts in the field speaking on their experiences and projects within Trinidad and Tobago, but also to be surrounded by fellow young persons who shared a passion and zeal for environmental protection in the Caribbean.

The event featured many speakers including Ms. Judy Daniel, Regional Chair of the Global Water Partnership-Caribbean, Dr. Natalie Boodram, Programme Manager of (WACDEP) GWP-C and Dr. Sharda Mahabir of the Water Resources Agency. Dr. Boodram and Dr. Mahabir both shared their expertise in their discussion of Climate Change and Water Resources. Stefan Knights of the Caribbean Youth Environment Network spoke on International Negotiations and the role of Caribbean youth in the process and Jonathan Barcant, the co-founder of IAMovement, elaborated on the Climate Change Movement and Youth. There were also breakout sessions on three different topics facilitated by Carver Bacchus, founder of Sustain T&T, who discussed Communicating Climate Change, Masao Ashtine, a Wind Energy and Climate Change modeling Ph.D. student who spoke on Reducing Carbon Footprint and Dr. Sharda Mahabir who facilitated discussions on Climate Change and Water.

I was truly inspired by all the speakers. Dr. Sharda Mahabir, in particular, gave a motivating speech on her work in Guanapo with the Adopt-A-River Programme. The program was implemented by WASA in order to build awareness concerning issues that impact local watersheds as well as facilitate



the residents of the area who were trained in water quality testing and monitoring. The project is a reflection of the need to network and continually seek out resources to accomplish your goal.

One of the more eye opening talks was provided by Mr. Stefan Knights. He shared his experiences at the recent COP20 climate talks in Lima, Peru and provided an insider account of the reality of international negotiations. He stated that many times the countries fail to reach an agreement because

of a common goal. We must represent ourselves as one community in order to be heard.

Not only were the speakers and facilitators insightful but so too were my fellow attendees. The workshop was not only attended by CYEN members from Trinidad and Tobago but from across the Caribbean. This gave us the opportunity to share our personal first hand experiences of climate change within our respective countries. The discussions revealed deep passion for positive action in promoting strategies for the sustainable development of the region and the group of young people that gathered together were full of zeal to do their part. Mr. Idrees Saleem of the Two Cents Movement injected some lightheartedness into the proceedings with two spoken word pieces that were delivered with an intensity and passion that mirrored the spirit of the audience and invigorated the workshop. At the end of the event the mood of the attendees had shifted. It went from eagerness to learn to a zest for action. We felt united not only by our frustrations but also in our goals for the future. The Caribbean Youth Environment Network continues to promote an awareness that we are the future and it is up to us to enact change.





VIBES



Hike to Mystery Pools

CYEN members know how to have fun! The Trinidad and Tobago Chapter came together to hike to Mystery Pool. Trinidad and Tobago is a potential ecotourism destination and the members of CYEN are determined to visit as many of the beautiful nature spots as we can together. The trail to Mystery Pool starts just off the Arima Blanchisseuse Road. It begins almost immediately as a downhill trek which took approximately one hour before hikers met the base of the river. Some found this hike challenging. Others thought it was a breeze. One thing we all agreed on - the beauty of nature is alluring and worth every step.

Continuing upriver, hikers walked and swam across multiple gorges, progressing deeper into the Morne La Croix forest until finally setting their eyes on the beautiful Mystery Pool. The hidden jewel revealed itself after more than two hours of hiking. Rated 5/10, this hike brought with it laughter and joy of the purest kind. At the pool, hikers got the opportunity to relax on the sidelines and take in the breathtakingly beautiful emerald green waters, bask behind the waterfall's gushing curtain, and jump off of

the top of the waterfall into the inviting pool below. All in all, we encourage you to delve into the nature that is all around you. As a matter of fact, according to British environmentalist, Andy Goldsworthy, "we often forget that we are nature. Nature is not something separate from us. So when we say that we have lost our connection to nature, we have lost our connection to ourselves." Make that connection today, and when you do, please remember to walk with garbage bags for your refuse (which must be removed from the area) and stay away from cooking in the forest as this can lead to bush fires which injure the environment. While we enjoy the exquisite beauty of the Caribbean we must also preserve its magnificence.



CYEN-T&T Christmas Social

In the year 2014, members of CYEN lived up to the objectives of the organisation. These young people actively engaged in environmental awareness and outreach, policy decision-making meetings,

development activities, and ambassadorship for CYEN and the Caribbean on national, regional, and international scales.

As 2014 came to an end, CYEN members got together in their chapters for Christmas socials that enabled them to get to know each other better, have fun, and make memories that will last a lifetime. We believe that for youth leadership to progress, strong trust and respect for each other must be built.

Climate Change in the Caribbean

FACING THE HARSH REALITY

Leah Fouchong



The Caribbean region is considered to be one of the most vulnerable in the world to the projected impacts of climate change. There are twenty Caribbean islands within the region that are all classified as Small Island Developing States (SIDS). SIDS are especially vulnerable to the projected effects of climate change which include extreme weather events and coastal erosion caused by sea level rise. These effects may have a direct or indirect impact on the environmental resources, economies and populations of Caribbean countries.



Mr. Lionfish himself



Coral bleaching and coastal erosion pose a major challenge for Caribbean countries as global warming continues. Many coral reefs in the Caribbean region have already undergone mass bleaching, as in the case of the 1995 mass coral bleaching recorded throughout the Caribbean region. Many of the coral reefs in the Caribbean region still have not fully recovered from this event and continue to experience bleaching.

The lack of coastal protection due to coastal erosion and the degradation of coral reefs exacerbate the potential impacts of sea level rise in SIDS. These impacts include an increase in flooding, storm surges and land erosion which in turn affects our livelihoods and economies. Hence, it is in our best interest to develop strategies and a plan of action to minimise the projected impacts of climate change within our region.



Juvenile Grey Angelfish

Towards a Lifelong Goal of Stewardship of Our Marine Ecosystem in the Face of Global Climate Change

Stanton G. Belford, Ph.D.

The anthropogenic effects on global climate change are currently more relevant to the stewardship of our fragile ecosystems than in previous years. In fact, current trends in human population growth have propelled the intensified use of key resources such as water, food, fossil fuels and land space for agriculture and livestock. Moreover, this era has also recorded increased pollution in all ecosystems. The realm of pollution by plastic is a reality.

Climate change has affected every ecosystem on the planet. One such ecosystem is that of coral reefs, which form structures that aid in coastal protection, tourism, and the provision of an ample food source. Coral reefs cover a minuscule one percent (1%) of the oceans' benthic environment, but the annual financial benefits gained from it is estimated to be in the vicinity of billions of dollars. When climate change disrupts the close association (mutualism) between the coral animal and the microscopic algae (zooxanthellae) living within, the immediate results from coral bleaching can lead to mass coral mortality. Add to this an influx of freshwater and nutrient flow from rivers, as well as coral diseases, and what results is a change in the dynamics of all reef components. Marine species distribution and abundance are replaced with algae overgrowth. Thus, a vibrant reef spirals into a dismal algae over-run piece of nonchalant ocean floor.

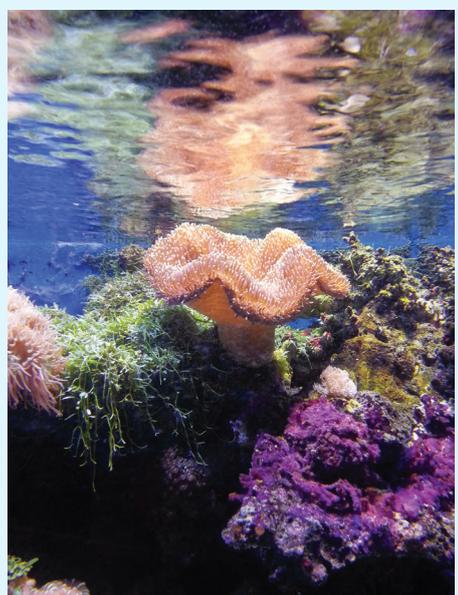
The coral reefs located in the northeastern coast of Trinidad, and just one kilometer from the Keshorn Walcott Toco Lighthouse, have shown glimpses of biodiversity that have sparked the interest of a few top scientists both at the



local and international level. Although this reef is the only fringing reef in Trinidad and Tobago, it is currently not protected by the authorities. It seems that no one has considered the environmental sensitivity of this area. Hence, the lifelong journey – I am now approaching my tenth year of gathering data about the plethora of marine organisms, which are seldom seen by citizens – keeps me travelling from the United States to these reefs. A society that is aware and concerned about the environment has a chance at maintaining the stewardship of the planet. We cannot continue to monitor climate change and wonder at what we are sacrificing. Instead, we can increase stewardship and share the knowledge of what we have seen and what we see, by passing on the information to the next generation of citizen scientists – our children.



Presented (see poster on pages 48 and 49) is a snapshot of marine organisms that can be currently found on these reefs. However, if greenhouse gas emissions and current trends of unrestricted human exploitation of the environment does not improve, I fear that my lifelong goal of stewardship will tumult into a vortex of abandonment of stewardship for our marine paradise.



Stefan Knights

Stefan Knights is a national of Guyana. He is the holder of a Bachelor of Laws Degree from the University of Guyana and is currently a lawyer in training at the prestigious Hugh Wooding Law School, Trinidad and Tobago.

Stefan currently serves as the UNEP-TUNZA Youth Advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean. He is very passionate about addressing challenges relating to sustainable development. As a student of law, Stefan looks at environmental, social and economic challenges relating to sustainable development from a legal perspective.

Through CYEN he has participated in several development processes in the region and around the world. In 2013/2014 he served as the Special Envoy to CYEN on Small Island Developing States. Through his involvement in the UNEP-TUNZA and the CYEN processes, Stefan has become very knowledgeable about and adept at addressing challenges to sustainable development through verbal and written advocacy, as well as grass-root projects at the national and regional levels.

1. How did you get involved in environmental advocacy and the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN)?

My involvement with CYEN is fortuitous but the experience has been extraordinary. Prior to joining CYEN in 2010, I was attentive to socio-economic issues but disinterested in development matters relating to the environment. However, very quickly I was able to recognise that there is a strong nexus between socio-economic and environmental challenges. In short, I now focus on environmental matters because I realise that socio-economic issues, for instance, unemployment, health and human rights cannot be sufficiently ameliorated if we do not achieve and sustain a healthy and safe environment.

Through the CYEN I was able to, amongst other things, get involved in environmental advocacy in various fora across the world, take leadership in other youth platforms most notably the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) TUNZA Youth Network, while meeting and learning from other environmental advocates from across the globe.

2. As a young advocate for sustainable development in the Caribbean, what is your vision for the future of the region?

In a nutshell, I would like to live in a world where society makes unselfish or altruistic choices and decisions that can lead to sustainable development and global prosperity.

This may be done by robustly trying to reduce inequalities, raise basic standards of living and foster equitable social development. All of the aforementioned challenges to development can be overcome if we manage our natural resources and ecosystems in a just and equitable manner.

3. What motivates you in your efforts to make this vision a reality?

I am motivated and inspired by a number of things including the people who I meet, the stories that people share, the dire situations in local communities that I have seen while travelling to countries within and outside the Caribbean region, and the myopic decisions by some politicians.

4. In your opinion, what are the key environmental issues facing Caribbean countries?

In my respectful opinion, the top five key environmental issues facing Caribbean countries, in no particular order of importance, are (1) resilience to natural disasters (2) water quality and accessibility (3) the inability to simultaneously utilise and protect our resources such as biodiversity and seas and oceans (4) climate change and (5) public awareness of environmental issues.

5. What is the role of young people in environmental governance and policy formulation?

The role of youth in environmental governance and policy formulation

is multidimensional. Young people need to get involved in every level of governance and every stage of the policy process because we are critical stakeholders in the development process and without our involvement, sustainable development (in its truest definition), cannot be achieved. For instance, youth must strategically place themselves in the stages of the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies.

6. The 20th Climate Change Conference (COP20) will be held in Lima from December 1-12, 2014. What outcomes do you hope to see as it relates to climate action in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)?

In my humble opinion, there are no expectations with respect to climate action for SIDS at COP20 in Lima. The global expectation, with particular reference to developing countries, is that at the end of COP20, governments would have agreed on a draft text for a legally binding climate agreement which will be signed in France in 2015. My hope is that the countries, developed and developing, that emit high levels of greenhouse gases take meaningful steps to reduce such emissions. More importantly, I hope that sufficient funds are allocated under the finance mechanism of the draft text for developing countries, including SIDS, to adapt to climate change.

7. As a young leader, what have been some of the challenges and highlights of your experience?

I have had some very positive and negative experiences thus far. On the positive side, I have achieved some of my own goals and objectives and some older people are willing to invest their time to provide me with guidance and mentorship. I have been able to come into contact with Heads of States, Ministers of Government, the Heads of UN agencies and staff, eminent jurists and prominent environmentalists as well as development experts, and I have come a long way in learning Spanish.

Some of the negatives that I have witnessed include the tendency that some have to simply talk a lot without taking any real action, the refusal of some to follow up on their pledges, the unfortunate apathetic approach of young professionals in the Caribbean to the opportunities that they have to contribute to the development process, failure of youth to understand and appreciate their role in the development process, and the lack of transparency and accountability

in the selection processes for youth involvement in the development processes at the national, regional and international levels which has encouraged a sense of nepotism, resulting in poor representation of the Caribbean youth constituency.

8. What message do you have for young emerging environmental leaders in the Caribbean region?

My message to young people of the Caribbean region is that if you desire to be a prudent environmental activist you must seek to increase your knowledge about environmental concerns and this is achieved through extensive reading and discussing the matters with other activists. It is also important that you understand the decision making process on the particular issues and know who the ultimate decision makers are if you intend to make a real difference.

9. Describe the main projects that you are currently working on.

I was recently put in charge of a CYEN Environmental Democracy (Principle 10) Working Group. The Working Group will focus on ways to ensure access to information on environmental issues, public participation in the sustainable development decision making processes and access to justice on environmental matters.

"KEEP TRUE TO THE DREAMS OF YOUR YOUTH"

FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER



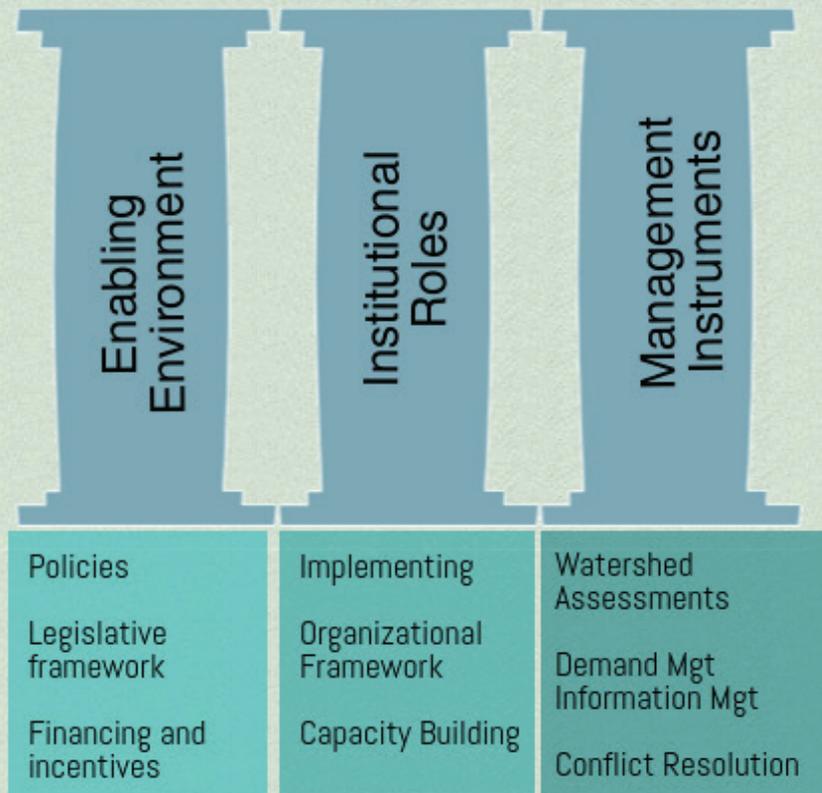
Stefan presenting at the CYEN and GWP-C's "Climate Change and You: The SIDS Reality" Workshop. His presentation focused on enlightening the young people about the many opportunities that are made available to them through CYEN. He also elaborated on the COP20 climate negotiations.



Stefan addresses young people from across Latin America and the Caribbean at the UNEP-TUNZA Regional meeting in 2013 (Panama City, Panama)

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)

A process which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources in order to maximize economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems.



Key Objectives



Efficiency

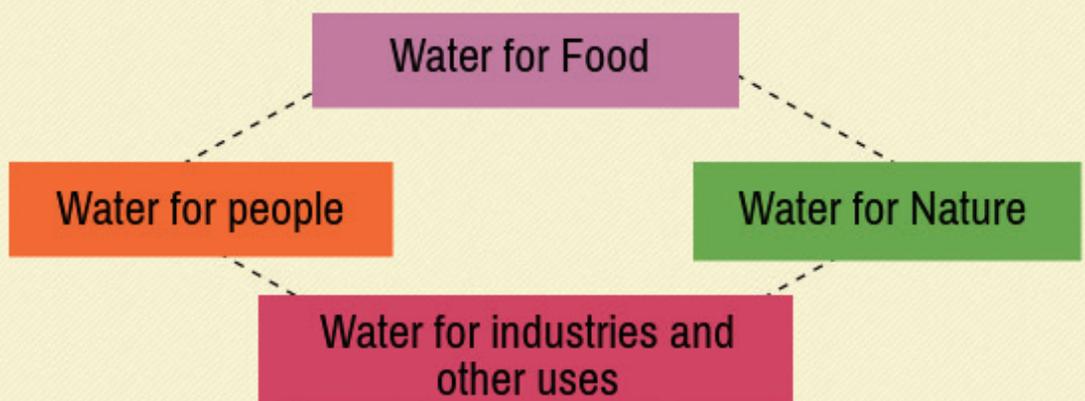


Environmental Sustainability



Equity

Cross-Sectoral Integration



Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources involves the Youth

Stakeholder Consultation for the Elaboration of a Strategy for the Reduction of Carbon Emissions in Trinidad and Tobago

Daniel Robinson

CYEN-T&T attended a Stakeholder Consultation for the Elaboration of a Strategy for the Reduction of Carbon Emissions in Trinidad and Tobago at Cara Suites, Claxton Bay on the 11th of November, 2014. The consultation was held by The Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources (MEWR). The consultation's focus was on an action plan for the mitigation of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions in the electrical power generation, transport and industry sectors in Trinidad and Tobago. The stakeholders present at the consultation ranged from government ministries, state enterprises, the private sector and non-governmental organisations. The consultation began with opening remarks from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, Ms. Vidiah Ramkhelawan. The workshop's objectives and schemes were discussed by Professor of Tropical Island Ecology, John Agard and Head

of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements Unit, Mr. Kishan Kumarsingh. The Draft Climate Change Strategy for Trinidad and Tobago was presented by Kepa Solaun, CEO of Factor CO2. The main goal of the consultation was to facilitate discussions by the various stakeholders present to comment on the implementation, coordination and financing of the future of the Climate Change Strategy of Trinidad and Tobago. Through the implementation of this strategy it is hoped that Trinidad and Tobago can move towards a low carbon economy sustained by 'green jobs'. To achieve this, we must achieve significant reduction in energy usage, shift towards more efficient technologies, and increase public awareness of the issues and how it directly affects their lives. This was articulated by the strategic axes for the creation of a framework for the mitigation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions which included Knowledge, Action, Awareness



and Policy. This consultation preceded two capacity building workshops which were also attended by CYEN.



Waynelle Collymore-Taylor, National Coordinator of CYEN Barbados

action/2015
CARIBBEAN



Action 2015 Caribbean

It is time for the Caribbean voices to be heard. Calling all groups and individuals to join the Action2015 Campaign.

Action 2015: What is it?

2015 marks a critical year for two major UN agreements: one in September that will agree new goals for a new framework for humanity to tackle poverty, inequality and environmental destruction and the other in December to set new climate change action targets, a crucial step towards a safer planet.

This means that decisions are going to be made which will chart the future of the planet as well as humanity.

Here is where Action 2015 comes in. It is a global movement campaigning to inspire transformational change and action to fight against inequality, poverty and climate change. As part of the global campaign the Caribbean Policy Development Centre has joined to spearhead the Caribbean campaign called Action 2015 Caribbean.

Throughout the year activities and actions will be conducted to raise awareness on a number of issues and bring Caribbean voices together as we form a global shake up.

Why should you get involved?

Your voice matters and you want to see meaningful decisions made by our leaders. Our future is being decided upon and we want our leaders to effect change.

When?

January 15th is the launch of the campaign on social networks. Slogan: Do More, Do Better!

How to Join?

Follow the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Action2015Caribbean>
Follow the Twitter account: <https://twitter.com/Action2015Cbean>
Email us: action2015.caribbean@gmail.com about any activities you are conducting

Take part in the launch by changing your profile picture on your social media to an action 2015 image

Organisations Involved:

Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN)
Caribbean Regional Youth Council
Team Action
United Youth Leaders of Barbados
Barbados Youth Development Council
Global Shapers Barbados Bridgetown Hub

Principle 10

WHAT IS PRINCIPLE TEN

Principle 10, otherwise known as the environmental democracy principle, originated in the Rio Declaration, which was one of the most important outcomes of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.



P10

Principle 10 affirms that all citizens have a say in environmental decisions that directly impact them, and states that individuals shall have appropriate access to environmental information and effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy.



THE THREE PILLARS OF P10

Access to Information

Access to information on environment



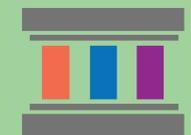
Public Participation

Public has a say in environmental matters



Access to Justice

Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings



LAC COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE SIGNED THE P10 AGREEMENT



Argentina	El Salvador	Peru
Bolivia	Guatemala	Dominican Republic
Brazil	Honduras	St Vincent & the Grenadines
Chile	Jamaica	Trinidad & Tobago
Colombia	Mexico	Uruguay
Costa Rica	Panama	
Ecuador	Paraguay	



Observer Status

Antigua & Barbuda
Nicaragua
France
Saint Lucia

Encourage your country to be a part of this initiative!



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MUN's World

The Power of Model United Nations

Gina L. Rosario Diaz



Youth leadership is keen to make changes happen in this fast changing world. The young generation today has several innovative ways to become empowered and that is exactly what Model United Nations does: empower the youth to become world leaders.

A Model United Nations, also known as Model UN or MUN, is a simulation of the different United Nations' organs, commissions and committees, as well as other multilateral regional and international organizations. The participants (known as delegates) are high school and university students which represent a country and its foreign policy. The delegates must debate and negotiate the topics of the committee's agenda, always representing the assigned country and its position on the assigned topics. They also have to prepare speeches, negotiate with their allies and opponents, develop strategies, and resolve conflicts under a diplomatic protocol, and strictly follow the standard rules of procedure.

Before the conference, students engage in deep research on the different topics to be discussed and the general information of the country they represent and its foreign policy. Some of the delegates even start informal negotiations before the conference through online forums and social media. At the end of most MUN conferences, outstanding delegates are recognized and awarded.

MUN allows the students to empower themselves and develop several skills such as leadership and diplomacy, which are both critical in today's working world. It also helps them to get to know other countries' cultures and the United Nations agenda, which includes topics such as climate change, education,

international peace and security, and the internal UN administration. The Model UN conferences are considered one of the most important and innovative educational activities which contribute to the personal and professional profile of young people worldwide.

In the Dominican Republic, the MUN has impacted the lives of thousands young people from different backgrounds and different levels of education. The United Nations Association of the Dominican Republic (UNA-DR) is a leading organization hosting MUN conferences in the Dominican Republic such as the New York - Dominican Republic Model United Nations Conference (NYDRMUN), in New York, United States; the International Conferences of the Americas (CILA), in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic; the Dominican-European Model United Nations Conference (DEUROMUN), in Paris, France, among others.

The International Conferences of the Americas (CILA 2014)

From October 29th to November 3rd, 2014, the UNA-DR organized the tenth edition of the International Conferences of the Americas (CILA 2014), in Punta



A cross section of young people participating in a Model United Nations meeting

Caná, Dominican Republic, considered as the biggest student conference in Latin America and the Caribbean with the participation of persons from different countries around the world. The conference simulated 17 UN bodies and other multilateral, regional and international institutions and it also had other seminars, workshops and exhibitions, as well as social and cultural activities on issues related directly to the UN agenda.



The International Conferences of the Americas (CILA 2014)

In this edition, I had the opportunity to be the Vice-President of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP20) where university students discussed and negotiated the following topics: 1) The need for a new global agreement on climate change and 2) The 2015 Global Climate Change Agreement. In the discussions, the students represented the position of the UNFCCC Parties and negotiated the topics to seek a final document reflecting the statements of what the 2015 Global Climate Change Agreement should include.

By simulating the COP20 in CILA 2014, the students acquired knowledge of the current climate change negotiations, engaging in the diplomatic scenario to seek solutions to the imminent challenges posed by this phenomenon in the international community.

As a volunteer at the United Nations Association of the Dominican Republic (UNA-DR) and the Model United Nations Unit of the Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic I have been fortunate enough to witness firsthand the power that MUN has to empower young people. These platforms have given me, as well as thousands of young people, the opportunity to learn about world issues and to see how youth can provide possible solutions, and most importantly, it allows us to understand the importance of youth leadership and active involvement in decision making processes at all levels.

I would, therefore, like to encourage the young people of Latin America and the Caribbean to become more involved in their networks. The Caribbean Youth Environment Network is a strong network that grooms young people to be able to represent the region on an international scale. You have the ability to do so much - seize every opportunity with both hands and see the world open before you.

Global Choices

by Rianna Gonzales

"Island Voices, Global Choices". This was the theme of 2014, which was declared the International Year of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). That small statement packs a heavy load of expectations as 2014 was also the year for the 3rd International SIDS Conference held in Apia, Samoa, where the Pathway for small islands was agreed upon.

Warm smiles, humble homes and streets adorned with decorations and flags of the SIDS countries welcomed all the delegates to the island paradise that was havocted by a tsunami in 2009 and is still trying to recover years later. A lot of time, effort and money went into hosting over 100 nations and more than 3,000 delegates in Samoa and the return on the investment will hopefully be materialised especially in terms of climate financing. Money was on the lips of many small islands. This highlights their turmoil as their land is being washed away with their homes, their water supply is dwindling, and they are being tormented by flash flooding. At the opening ceremony the United Nations General Secretary said "The world's nations, whether big or small, landlocked or coastal, come together to share the fight against climate change and the scourge of poverty. Together we can pursue a sustainable future and transform our world." This conference had a lot of expectations to meet.

The official Conference was held from the 1st – 4th September but pre-conference activities began from 27th August with the opening of the Youth Conference the theme of which was T.A.L.A.V.O.U. for sustainable development, which means "Towards A Legacy of Achievement, Versatility, Opportunity through partnership and Unity." Many of the young people, some of whom travelled for more than 40 hours over a three day period just to have their country represented, came optimistic and excited not only to speak on the issues and challenges of their countries but also to highlight successful solutions and plan the way forward. Civil society and the private sector also held their pre-conference activities at this time.

On the first day of the conference it was easy to get swept away by the sheer number of influential people that surrounded me but our purpose was clear although the pathway was clouded. The voice of the Caribbean youth and youth everywhere must be heard, but how? Who are the people that can make



Rianna Gonzales representing CYEN at the 3rd International SIDS Conference (Apia, Samoa)

this happen? The National Delegations of course! This is an important detail that needs to be understood by all young people – it is your government that makes the decisions, not the United Nations. One common opinion was that this remains one of the drawbacks of the SIDS Pre-Conference for youth. There is a need for young people to have better communication and collaboration with their national governmental representatives and involvement in the national process. It is only through genuine dialogue with their governments that real change can be achieved.

As the days went by with meetings, a number of plenary sessions, negotiations, conference sessions, workshops, discussions and interviews, the Caribbean delegation tried their hardest to keep up with the activities and events despite their limited resources. The work must go on as they say. The CYEN delegates were strategic enough to speak with and interview the governmental representatives from the Caribbean and build a dialogue. The Minister of Environment for St Lucia, Mr. James Fletcher, even commended CYEN for its work and indicated that he fully supports youth involvement in the process.

As time tends to do, it flew by quickly, and before I knew it the SIDS 2014 Conference ended. It closed quietly and on time, well planned and without long-winded negotiations. A Samoa Pathway was agreed upon and everyone left the beautiful island. So now the big questions to ask are "what now?" "what have we really accomplished?" and "will this framework make things better for



The Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad & Tobago, Mr. Winston Dookeran

"The world's nations, whether big or small, landlocked or coastal, come together to share the fight against climate change and the scourge of poverty. Together we can pursue a sustainable future and transform our world"

Ban Ki Moon, United Nations General Secretary



Dr. Michelle Mycoo of the University of the West Indies and Nicole Leotaud of the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)

SIDS?" This remains to be seen. With US\$1.9 billion generated in financial commitments through partnerships, according to UN reports, and other major processes still to be decided such as the post-2015 development goals and the new Climate Framework to replace the Kyoto Protocol, do Small Island Developing States really have a brighter solar powered future? It is up to us to ensure that they do.

COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN YOUTH



leaders in the region, to gain a better understanding of the policy making environment and process, and to finally meet Mr. Reginald Burke – the Executive Coordinator of CYEN. It also promised to be an excellent opportunity to meet other members of CYEN chapters across the region and to put faces and personalities to the names.

The opening session of the workshop set the tone for robust discussions and active participation of the attendees. The presentations by Reginald Burke, Belisario Nieto, and Clevison Hunte highlighted the importance of youth leaders in development and planning and implored us to make the most of the opportunity. Shantal Munro-Knight (Executive Coordinator of CPDC) contextualized the workshop and reaffirmed that youth had a critical role to play in sustaining the CSO sector in the Caribbean. It was obvious that a lot of thought had gone into developing the agenda for the workshop. The selection of topics and the sequence allowed for maximum engagement and impact with topics on governance and development, youth participation in governance and development, advocacy and lobbying and policy change. Some of the presentations delved deeper into complex aspects of policy development and youth participation, particularly within the context of the legal and political framework of the region. These discussions served as reminders that our work has to be carried out with an awareness of the legal and historical underpinnings which define the context in which we operate. The presentations, led by experts and practitioners, allowed

Members of the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN) and representatives of other youth led organisations from across the region gathered in Barbados on August 21st for a two (2) day training workshop – the Commonwealth Caribbean Youth Leaders Training Workshop. The workshop was organized by the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) as a part of its efforts to enhance the capacity of the civil society sector to effectively take advantage of opportunities for engagement. The workshop catered to youth leaders from an array of backgrounds including environment, politics and governance, and media. According to the organisers, youth were chosen as the main target audience due to “the centrality of young people and the youth sector to the development process.” The initiative forms part of a broader intervention by the CPDC aimed at enhancing the engagement of civil society organizations (CSOs) and institutions of governance at the regional level. The objectives of the workshop as outlined by the organizers were (1) To increase the awareness of youth leaders in the policy making process (2) To facilitate the exchange of lessons learned on participation and advocacy (3) To build the skills of youth leaders for advocacy on regional issues (4) To enhance the awareness of challenges and opportunities for youth participation in development (5) To increase the participation of youth leaders.

I was honored to have had the opportunity to represent CYEN-Jamaica at the workshop. My personal goals were to learn about the work of other youth



CYEN representatives from various Caribbean countries at the CPDC Training in Barbados, August 21-22, 2014



CYEN participants from Guyana and Barbados

YOUTH LEADERS TRAINING WORKSHOP

us to think harder and deeper about common issues of advocacy and youth engagement. We had the privilege of hearing from some of our colleagues about their experiences working with youth, advocating for youth issues and building local movements.

At the end of Day 1 of the workshop we carried out a SWOT analysis of youth participation within the Commonwealth Caribbean context. The result was an exhaustive list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Despite the many weaknesses and threats highlighted, we sought to focus on the hope incited by the opportunities and, more importantly, the strengths which we pinpointed. These, among other things, included the committed cadre of youth leaders, the knowledge and expertise of youth leaders, the technological savvy of the youth, our mastery of the use of social media for youth mobilization, and the connections we have built to strengthen the network regionally. There was a commitment from all the participants to continue to build on the strengths while working to convert our threats to opportunities.

The participants were an interesting mix of students, civil servants and activists with diverse personalities to match. One could not help but be struck by the passion of Jahisiah from Dominica and the conviction of Amir from Guyana. Despite the variations in the activities in which we are directly involved it was

quickly apparent that there was more that connected us than separated us - passion, energy, and a strong desire for change. Camaraderie quickly grew between us, and this allowed for easy communication, sharing of experiences, and playful banter. The opportunity was also a cultural experience, or rather a culinary adventure, which allowed me to try the famed flying fish of Barbados and marlin and macaroni pie in Oistin's. My first meal in Barbados - flying fish burger ! I also had the chance to overindulge in the simplest (and smallest) but tastiest burgers yet - the Gap Burger which my dear Belizean friend Amram Lemoth introduced me to.

The conversations and interactions with my fellow youth leaders - now turned friends - were enlightening and inspiring. I was moved by the stories of perseverance and commitment to the work of transforming our countries, even in the face of great odds. It reiterated my view that we, as youth leaders, are directly poised to assume the reigns of leadership in our region, in either the public or private sphere. With this seemingly privileged position comes great responsibility. The opportunities that we have had to participate in training sessions like this one organized by CPDC also demand that we use the skills and knowledge gained to influence and transform our communities, countries and the region. This awareness keeps me grounded and steadfast in my commitment to lead and to serve. I am certain that my



Daniel Robinson CYEN T&T representative

"My first meal in Barbados - flying fish burger!"

colleagues, like myself, came away from the workshop with renewed commitment to the cause of youth work and with new lessons to apply to our efforts to "be the change we want to see".



One of the presenters at the event



A cross section of the audience

Climate Change

Understand and Act

La Toya Jeffrey



"We've seen many governments delay and delay and delay on implementing comprehensive emissions cuts...so the need for a lot of luck looms larger and larger. Personally, I think it's a slim need to lean on for the fate of the planet."
Dr. Michael Oppenheimer, Climate Scientist.

"Science has spoken. There is no ambiguity in their message. Leaders must act. Time is not on our side"
UN General Secretary, Ban Ki-moon.

Climate change has become one of the biggest environmental threats facing the world. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), this involves "complex interactions and varying likelihoods of diverse environmental impacts". Many of us are witnesses to the popular phrases of the 'ice caps are melting' or, conversely, 'the global warming myth'. However, do we truly understand the destructive abuse to which our planet has been subjected? Scientists have established that the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets are melting at an unprecedented rate which sceptics still refute.

Some are still unsure of how this affects life in the Caribbean. In fact, these issues continue to affect not only the Caribbean region but also the entire global community and have resulted in rising sea levels causing flooding of low-lying coastal areas. This has harmful consequences for those along the coastal regions. Notably, approximately seventy percent (70%) of the region's population live along coastal villages, cities and towns and a further half of the population live close to these areas along the coast (Mimura et al, 2007).

Many researchers predict gloom for the planet and as small islands located along the Pacific Ocean, climate change should be one of our main priorities. According to the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), climate change in the Caribbean involves a "symbiosis of threats, risks, challenges and opportunities, which has become increasingly important". An IPCC 2007 Report indicated an increase in "atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide" due to high fossil fuel and land use changes globally. The impact of these changes in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), including the Caribbean, includes frequent and intense heat waves, flooding, diminished wild life populations and crop failures resulting in



food insecurity.

There must be a recognition that the Caribbean suffers from greater environmental vulnerability. UNEP recognises this vulnerability as risky and damaging to natural capital, resulting in natural hazards including earthquakes, volcano eruption and hurricanes and destruction to the ecosystem. This list is not exhaustive. Trinidad and Tobago, the main Caribbean producer and exporter of oil and natural gas, plays a pivotal role and can become a regional leader in renewable energy practices. Local uses of fossil fuel includes diesel, gasoline and petroleum gases, contribute to 90% total carbon dioxide emission in the Caribbean region resulting in rising CO2 emissions and concentrations. Trinidad and Tobago was recently identified as the second highest per capita producer of greenhouse gas emissions.

Steps must be taken to preserve our environment by decelerating the harmful effects of climate change of greenhouse gas emissions continue at an unabated rate. A recent report by the United Nations concludes that less than \$400 billion was spent annually globally

on the reduction and management of greenhouse gas emissions, with country leaders being unwilling to commit resources. Reports from the International Energy Agency emphasise the dwindling time remaining to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a level that will have a meaningful impact on global warming rates. Scientists also recognise climate change as an imminent threat and a challenge to be met now and not in the distant future as some may believe.

However, a different future that embraces the potential of renewable energy is possible. Countries such as Belgium, France and Sweden have already embraced this future by implementing new energy policies and introducing nuclear power into their energy mix. We do not always stop to fully understand the destructive abuse that our planet is subjected to due to human activities. It is imperative that we all reflect on the personal changes we can make today before the irreversible damages of climate change spirals completely out of our control.

Voices of Youth

Youth Forum for Climate Change

“The Caribbean can become powerful advocates for such a pressing issue”

The famous writer and Anglican cleric, Sydney Smith, once said that “it is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do little — do what you can”. This, in essence, sums up the objective of the Youth Forum for Climate Change, which provides a platform for young people to bring their often small voices together to make a resounding impact on the nation. Young people have been exposed to the challenges that the effects of climate change pose to the Caribbean and the opportunity to attend this Forum fueled the energy of participants to develop strategies for positive climate action.

Climate change is a dynamic area of research and analyses the erratic changes in the earth’s climatic features and is especially concerned with the contribution of anthropogenic activities to these changes. This year, the Climate Change Forum diverted from the regular discussion based themes of the past three years and the theme “Our Problem,

Our Solution” sought to make the transition from dialogue to action.

With this theme in mind, there was a focus on the current status of Trinidad and Tobago with respect to climate change and how young people locally and the Caribbean can become powerful advocates for such a pressing issue. One of the highlights of the event was the breakout sessions which enabled the random placement of participants into groups. These groups were tasked with devising project ideas that can encourage specific sectors of society to become involved in reducing our carbon footprint and hence make a positive contribution to the reduction of climate change.

These sessions represented the solution driven focus of the Forum this year and yielded ideas such as a social media campaign, a green fete, and forums for discussion among tertiary students. Upcycling and environmental

Vanessa Williams



Kemba Jaramogi, CYEN representative



From left to right: Shabiyath Ali and Vanessa Williams, CYEN representatives

transformation projects were also put forward as ways to increase the efficacy of advocacy and raise the environmental consciousness of the population. It was indeed a euphoric experience and many of the participants, in an expression of their commitment to environmental advocacy and making a positive difference, vowed to return and continue the work that has been initiated.



Post 2015: Sustainable Development Goals



1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere



2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all



8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation



The current development agenda is centred on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were officially established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations (UN) in 2000. The MDGs encapsulate eight globally agreed goals in the areas of poverty alleviation, education, gender equality and empowerment of women, child and maternal health, environmental sustainability, reducing HIV/AIDS and communicable diseases, and building a global partnership for development.

As the target date of the MDGs, 2015, is approaching, a debate on the framework of international development beyond 2015 has started. In this vein, 192 UN member states agreed at the Rio+20 summit to start a process of designing sustainable development goals, which are "action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, inspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities".

10 Reduce inequality within and among countries

11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable



15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss



12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development



16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels



17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Las Islas Bonitas

Long Beach, Christ Church Barbados

Photo Credit: tripadvisor.co.uk



Photography by Warren Linton

Photo Credit: listphobia.com



Long Beach as it is rightfully named, is more than a mile long and is one of the longest beaches on the island. It is an isolated beach found in the parish of Christ Church on the south coast of the island. Often occupied by windsurfers and kite surfers, it is a good place to relax with your family or friends at a beach lime. The majestic white sandy beach gets its colour from the deposits of surrounding coral reefs which are often eroded by the rough waves of the Atlantic Ocean crashing into the coast. It is also near to the island's only airport, the Grantley Adams International Airport (GAIA) and airplanes are often seen flying past.

Being so isolated, it is also a hub for litterers and illegal dumping. What makes this beach special is that it is the chosen beach of the Barbados Chapter of the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN) for the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC). Every year, the members of CYEN, along with various groups, businesses, and schools clean this beach. This is not just any run-of-the-mill cleanup! Data, such as the type and weight of marine litter collected, is recorded. Afterwards, the data is analyzed and can be used to raise public awareness on the issue of marine litter. This beautiful beach, like the rest of nature, deserves to be conserved and CYEN remains committed to ensuring that this is done.

WORD ON THE STREET

"In your opinion, was the recent People's Climate March effective in sparking climate action? If yes, then in what ways? If no, then why not? And what do you think should be done to get climate change to be a priority?"



Keydell Kerr, Trinidad & Tobago

Change does not occur without action, progress is impossible without change, and both change and progress is a result of continuous struggle. One usually fails to realise how serious something is until some form of action is taken by a group of people. In this case the action taken was a march that targeted the climate change doubters. With that being said, in my opinion I strongly believe the 'People's Climate March' was effective in sparking climate action since it showed societies and authoritative bodies how serious the people are about this phenomenon. This march was effective in the sheer size of it as it captured viewers who may have been curious about the "Largest Climate Change March in History". I believe that persons changed their habits after seeing this march, to be more environmentally friendly. The most effective way in which climate change can become a priority on a macro-scale is through the formulation of policies and the enforcement of stringent laws by which industries and societies are to be governed.

I personally believe it was a huge success. Climate change affects everyone, irrespective of cast, class, and geographical differences. People dropped everything and stood in solidarity to raise their voices against this pressing issue, which was a physical manifestation of the slogans we chant in the Climate Change movement. It helped to show the importance of the issue; Climate Change is the biggest challenge humanity has ever faced. People marched against the petty greed, money, corruption, power control, and brought the climate change movement to the media's attention, and it was an important step in creating pressure and keeping the government and industries in check. It was also very successful in turning apathy into empathy, which is the most fundamental way of bringing change,

What could be better would be of course making it bigger! If we do more pre-march activities so that people participating can gain a better understand of the crux of the situation that we are in, then they can have the feeling that the march is their baby and they aren't just the audience but the makers.

We must also have a solid plan about what next so that we don't have to start from square one every time we do a climate action. In my opinion, Climate change is not the priority for most because they aren't aware of the urgency of the issue and they underestimate the people's power. However, volunteering is a mandate for our survival, even small steps and contributions will make a big difference. So I think holding talking seminars to create awareness and changing this mindset could be an effective solution. The Earth doesn't need saving, it's time we save our own backs.



Aafreen Ali, Mumbai, India

"In your opinion, was the recent People's Climate March effective in sparking climate action? If yes, then in what ways? If no, then why not? And what do you think should be done to get climate change to be a priority?"



Dr. Sharda Mahabir, Trinidad and Tobago

No. What action? Walking around with placards is supposed to change climate change? You want to improve climate change? Don't walk around in circles! Act climate change in your home, work, schools, play.

I don't think it made much of a difference because climate change has been an issue for so long that people may have become desensitized to the issue. Furthermore, the only people who would have known about the march are those who already care about climate change. Even the speech given by Leonardo DiCaprio to the United Nations afterwards may not have done much because he will not be the last celebrity to take a stance on the issue. I think the only way to get people to care is to show them how it affects them. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago and with regard to tourism, climate change is affecting our coral reefs. If we show the relevant authorities the money that they are losing due to climate change, then they may care and then they can implement the correct policies. Government officials already know about climate change but it seems like it costs too much money to care about it.



La Tisha Parkinson, Trinidad and Tobago



Stefan Knights, Guyana

People march for several reasons - to defend Mother Nature, to highlight contradictions in policies implemented by the Government, and to suggest solutions. It shows politicians that people mean business and they want prudent decisions to be made. After the march you may have realised that there were thousands of new commitments to providing funds for adaptation by the government, business sectors, civil society, and intergovernmental agencies. The problem with organising a march at every climate meeting is that it may become a norm and lose its potential impact

Heroes Among Us

Heroes Among Us highlights young people who excel in entrepreneurship, show genuine initiative, and passion for environmental work. These youths inspire others to be their best by leading by example. The following are three young people representing the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS) regions.

THE CARIBBEAN: Trinidad and Tobago

LUKE SMITH

Luke Smith is a graduate student at the University of the West Indies (UWI), St Augustine campus, pursuing a Master of Science in Agribusiness and Marketing. He has always enjoyed the field of environmental science and agriculture and, as a result, he is now an agriculture blogger and photographer.

He is actively involved in advocacy through the use of social media, raising awareness among young persons about agriculture and related opportunities. This has helped him in being an ambassador for the Thought for Food Challenge (TFF) and the Information Communication Technology (ICT) executive of the Agribusiness Society, UWI. Luke is also involved in business as he is a co-owner of the company Agriworks4U Limited.

His blog, titled 'LukeSmithTv,' is based on his desire to raise awareness about agriculture, illustrating that it's not just a social activity but a business venture. The blog also highlights success stories of local argi entrepreneurs, farmers and agriculture related events e.g. Fruit Festival. The environment plays a vital role in agriculture so his blog also touches on climate change and other related fields. Recently he was a winner of the NIHERST Science music video competition in which a video on water conservation was done. To him, it's not about winning but about making a positive impact in the lives of others. He believes that creative thinking inspires ideas and ideas inspire change.

His studies alongside his love for photography lead to the creation of his blog. Raising awareness and planting a seed of change through photos, stories, and videos/animations can show young people that the environment and agriculture is fun and is a beneficial career path.

Photo Credit: Luke Smith

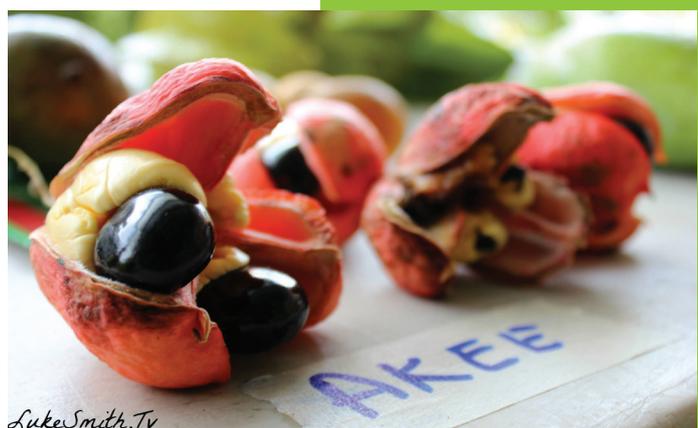


Luke has stated that his involvement with the Caribbean Youth Environment Network has given him the opportunity to further participate in environmental advocacy. Being able to extend knowledge and at least change one person's perception about key environmental issues is a step in the right direction. Speaking with Luke, he revealed that he believes if the social barriers are overcome to allow more young people to participate in environmental policies decision making, then they in turn will develop the right policies and programmes for future generations. Young people, like adults, need to feel that they are valued, that their opinions do mean something. Luke believes that youth representation should be incorporated into policy decision meetings/boards and their voices be heard for the future development of our nation. Indeed, for his entrepreneurship and passionate drive for making the public aware of environmental issues and the direct link between agriculture and our own survival, Luke Smith is a young Caribbean hero.

You can follow Luke's blog at <http://lasluke.wordpress.com>



Luke at CYEN-T&T's Junior Upcyclers World Environment Day event



LukeSmith.Tv

LATIN AMERICA: Argentina

PATRICIO ROULIER PAZOS

Patricio is an advanced student currently reading for a Bachelor of Arts in Public and Institutional Relations at the 21st Century University (Universidad Siglo 21) in the city of Córdoba, Argentina. Patricio is a coach in Sustainable Development and the Culture of Water, Accredited to Project WET (UNESCO). Since the age of fourteen, he has been involved in the development of projects related to environmental issues. Patricio has a passion for the environment which has seen him making attempts to influence public policies and achieve social change.

Currently, Patricio is a 'TUNZA Local Change Maker', under the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) TUNZA youth initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). His vision of a world where the environment plays a critical role in the decision making of the private and public sectors has seen him take the mantle of environmental entrepreneur. Patricio is the Founder and Director of iE.CO (Initiative for Education and Cooperation in Sustainable Development).

iE.CO is a youth initiative that provides education programmes to young people and helps to create and maintain close ties between young people and the environment. Therefore, this makes it possible for them to understand water issues, climate change issues, and the effects of electronic waste and more. Youth who believe that catalyze reality, scanning the environment,



Patricio at the COP 20 (Lima, Peru)

linking people and knowledge, and leveraging the collective intelligence to achieve ecological sustainability and generate opportunities in education and cooperation on sustainable development.

Patricio formed iE.CO with three major objectives in mind – to promote non-formal education on Water and Climate Change and Electronic Waste, to promote Leadership in children and youth on Water and Climate Change, to strengthen Water and Climate Change international networks.

Patricio has a passion for writing and believes that writers play an important role in influencing environmental action. At the United Nations Framework

Convention on Climate Change's Congress of the Parties 20 (COP20) 2014 Patricio was selected to be the editor in chief for the blog 'ConexiónCOP' and he was able to partner with other young people to work on tracking the negotiations online through www.conexioncop.com, representing the voices of TUNZA LAC.

"If we are informed, we can act together with our governments, communities and businesses achieving adaptation and mitigation in climate change. The change starts with us."

PATRICIO ROULIER PAZOS





AFRICA, INDIAN OCEAN, MEDITERRANEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA (AIMS)

XUEYI LIAO

Having originated from China, studied in the United States for a while, and now working in Singapore and meeting partners around the world – Xueyi is a true global citizen. This young lady graduated as an Environmental Engineer with a Master’s degree from the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. As the top student of the cohort, she was awarded with the Gold Medal by the Professional Engineering Board of Singapore.

Currently, she works as an Industry Development Executive in PUB, Singapore’s national water agency and has played the role of strategist, marketer, facilitator, event organizer, and youth ambassador. Xueyi has also played a leading role in reviewing the government’s existing strategies and funding initiatives that aim to develop Singapore’s water ecosystem with the end objective of job creation and economic growth. She has actively scouted technologies and solutions that can uphold the organisation’s mission of delivering a sustainable and robust water supply to the residents in the country and she has been working with many prominent International Organisations on projects to share Singapore’s experience in Integrated Water Resources Management. As a youth leader, Xueyi has organised youth events in partnership with international youth partners who are dedicated to addressing water issues in local and global community.

Xueyi was honoured with the opportunity to lead efforts to organize one of the flagship events of the Singapore International Water Week - the Young Water Leaders’ Summit, with support from multiple international youth

partners such as Water Youth Network, World Youth Parliament for Water and Asian Development Bank (ADB) Youth Initiative.

According to Xueyi, issues related to the environmental and water environment are those which nations and regions share and, therefore, solutions must be made together. Over the course of her work, Xueyi states that she has met many outstanding young people and extraordinary leaders who are dedicated to inspiring others to take actions to tackle water challenges. She wants to be part of it and contribute in the way of facilitating platforms for effective exchanges among these influencers. Her message to young people, therefore, is that they are the future leaders who take on the responsibility for the well-being of generations to come and managing our resources well is important.

“By being involved in environmental related policy decisions, young people will gain the necessary exposure and insights which endow them with a holistic view when making informed and responsible decisions with sustainability in mind in their own sector. I hope to see that environmental and water issues can be high on both political and business agendas.” – Xueyi Liao

Xueyi expresses genuine gratitude for the many wonderful opportunities granted to her in the initial stage of her career, and she will continue to contribute to the environment and water sector as a strategic thinker, considerate leader, responsible partner, effective communicator, and self-driven executor.



I hope to see a world where environmental and water issues are high on both political and business agendas.”

XUEYI LIAO

I DID NOT KNOW MY PIECE

COMPLETELY

La Tisha Parkinson

I did not know my piece completely. It was just too much to learn. As I stood in front of the large audience of delegates and my peers, I could feel the beads of sweat forming and settling on my brow. Nonchalantly, I wiped them off and I proceeded. When I opened my mouth, nothing but air escaped. Where were my words? I started again to read aloud but it must have been only in my head because the audience did not seem to hear. I cleared my throat and began again.

"We tried to swim faster with each stroke we made but we couldn't even manage to go faster than a meagre 1.3 ms(-1). I could feel the water molecules conniving to launch their attack on my pores with fiery blows. This will be our last trip. I can't keep putting the hatchlings through this. We need to rest for a while. It's interesting though that I can't even remember how we got to this point. One minute we were swimming through supposedly cold waters with ease at speeds of 2.8 ms(-1) as if we were in a hurry, and now we were barely going faster than the average sea turtle. It's embarrassing really! What happened though? We used to be able to bring a bale of turtles over to this region for vacation. There was a beautiful reef with a variety of organisms, and an abundance of jellyfish of course! The females loved to come to this region as well and lay their eggs on land. However, I haven't seen a single reef animal, or any animal for that matter, or any land for miles! "Land ho!" I exclaimed as I looked ahead and saw the mass of land."

I had not realized how long my introduction was until I had to



read it for the world. I fixed my tie, smoothed my shirt, and adjusted my jacket – I was ready to continue. This time, I would give my story the performance it deserved. I was no longer sweating and I could feel the cool breeze of the air conditioning unit blowing the hair on the top of my head ever so slightly. I am not sure if the room's environment changed at all or if it was just me, but I was comfortable now. I took a breath and began again.

"Seeing the land in the distance encouraged everyone, and gave us that extra boost to swim at 2.8 ms(-1). By the time I blinked we had arrived. As we walked onto the shore, I felt relieved, but that was before I looked around. I saw sand. I saw sea. I saw sun, but where were the trees? The ground felt dry and gritty, but it did not smell like sand. I began to wonder if we had landed on a deserted

island. Immediately, I set out to find some source of energy. With each step I tried to take, I realized that the ground was rougher than the water. "The struggle is real," I uttered as I struggled onward seemingly not making any progress. The sun appeared to be shining more brightly than it was just a second ago. "What is that sound? Why is the sky spinning? Am I dead?" I contemplated. I wiggled my tail and thought, "Maybe I'm not dead." My eyes felt dry, which made them very difficult to open. I thought about predators attacking the hatchlings, and produced enough tears to be able to open my eyes. I screamed with joy when I saw the little human. They don't usually represent hope but I think this time they are our only hope! My scream quickly became a shriek of terror as I realized my flippers were tied. I twisted and I turned. I twisted and I turned some more



but to no avail. I got so worked up that the buzzing noise returned and not long after, the sky began spinning once more.

"I wonder what kind of turtle it is. Do you know Jeremy?" the girl asked with an inquiring gaze. Jeremy stooped down and rubbed his hand along the turtle's back, then took a moment before he responded. "Well, he feels kind of rubbery, like a Leatherback but," She had no choice but to interrupt him as it became clear to her that Jeremy had no idea what he was talking about. "You're crazy! I heard that Leatherbacks are supposed to be big and this one is a male so he should be even bigger!" she exclaimed while pointing at the turtle. Jeremy stood up and continued, "Yes, they are supposed to be but remember, things aren't what they used to be, so it's probably hard for him to find food. Besides, look at how many times it passed out. He's probably dehydrated. You grab the front flippers and we'll take him back to camp."

When we got back to camp she went out to look for some stones to make a fire, while Jeremy did the dirty work. By the time she returned he was already using his hand axe to cut the turtle open. He's a healthy eater so he likes to eat the organs first. It didn't take us long to cut the turtles open though and he was surprisingly lean! "Maybe momma turtle put him on a diet!" she thought to herself. Neither of them were prepared for what they saw when Jeremy cut open the stomach. At first, they weren't sure what they were looking at because, whatever it was, it had already begun to digest. She kept poking

at it with a stick, and they heard that familiar crinkling sound and then they saw the very familiar KFC logo. That's when they figured it out - it was a plastic bag. The scene was just too disgusting to eat, even for them! This turtle was their only hope, because they hadn't eaten in days but couldn't eat him after discovering that they had killed him long before they even found him. Her hope was draining when she got a brilliant idea and shared it with Jeremy, "Turtles usually travel in a bale so maybe there are more around where we found him!"

They hastily made their way back to where they found the turtle and began their search. What she discovered was even worse than the insides of the dissected turtle! "Over here!" she yelled. Jeremy ran over to her, and the sight he saw made him collapse on his knees. She was right. The turtle did come with a bale, but from the looks of their lifeless bodies spread across what used to be a river's bank, it appeared as though they had killed them too. They could have died from anything - dehydration, starvation, or even suffocation, and their blood would have still been on their hands. She looked at Jeremy and saw tears running down his face. For the first time, she placed her hand on his shoulder and tried to comfort him. He looked at her and said, "What happened to sweet Trinidad and Tobago?" She reminded herself that it was no longer Trinidad and Tobago since Tobago no longer existed. He continued, "Scientists did their best to warn us, but who thought it would reach this far?" He wiped his eyes and screamed, "Why didn't we listen?"

I looked up at my audience, cleared my throat, and firmly spoke saying, "My name is David and I live in a Small Island Developing State known as Trinidad and Tobago. I am not too young to know what global warming is all about. I am not too young to know that it means hotter oceans, which leads to sea-level rise, which is also a result of melting ice caps. I am not too young to know that it also means drastic changes in weather patterns and the transformation of rainforests to deserts. I am not too young to know what all of those changes can mean for me. I am neither too young nor too ignorant to care, but you are too mature and too knowledgeable not to. We individuals are already doing our part. We have changed our light bulbs to CFLs and we have bought green appliances and vehicles. We take shorter showers, and we recycle but now it is time for industries and governments around the world to take large scale action. It is your responsibility to make the switch from non-renewable to renewable resources. Actually, that was your responsibility years ago which you neglected to do. We are already experiencing the consequences of your lack of action, but it is not too late. The world needs you to act now. Climate change has become the world's cancer. Let us treat it before it terminates us. Thank you." I organized my papers and walked off the stage. I never thought that one simple school essay would lead to me becoming a United Nations Youth Ambassador.



Stanton Belford, Ph.D.

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Towards Protecting Trinidad: A L

Introduction

The coral reefs at Toco experience significant stress due to the influx of freshwater flowing into the northeastern coast of Trinidad. The reefs are affected by local river discharge and range from patch reefs to the only fringing reef, Toco Bay, which is approximately 1 km from the Toco Lighthouse.

Although we tend to focus a lot of attention on the harsh direct effects of human activities on the invertebrate (animals without backbones) life of the Toco reefs during the "Honey" event on June 13th 2014. A society that is committed to a healthy environment, has a chance at making a difference on the planet.

Invertebrates

- (1) Mat Zoanthids can be found throughout the reef, creating a kaleidoscope of colors such as, green, yellow, and orange.
- (2) Rock-Boring urchins are important grazers that eat algae, which if left unchecked, can deprive corals of space. They are most common in the tidal areas and can be found in large numbers.
- (3) The brown Encrusting Zoanthid extends across the reef crest. Colonies form vast mats, which are making these mats very slippery.
- (4) Sea Cucumbers color ranges from brown to red. They are the reef that are sandy, but can be hidden under rocks.
- (5) Fire corals appear mustard to brown in color. They have a painful sting to anyone with sensitive skin.
- (6) Bearded Fireworms are mostly red in color. Their bristles extend outwards when disturbed, stinging corals and other marine invertebrates.
- (7) Octocorals are more commonly known as soft corals.
- (8) The carapace (pictured) of the Batwing Crab is a shield of beauty. Unfortunately this species is being overharvested.
- (9) The Portuguese Man-Of-War appears as a jellyfish. Contact with the tentacles can impose a painful sting.
- (10) When found in shallow waters, the Mollusk grows in a flat, growth form. It has a fuzzy appearance.
- (11) Brittle stars tend to hide under rocks and are very fragile.
- (12) Golfball coral inhabit shallow rocky areas and are very common.
- (13) This mollusk is very rare on the reefs and is often found in shallow waters.
- (14) This Blue crab species is very aggressive and is often found in shallow waters.
- (15) Lettuce Sea slugs have variable colors and are often found in shallow parts of the reef.
- (16) Can be found in shallow parts of the reef.



(1) Mat Zoanthid, *Zoanthus sociatus*



(2) Rock-Boring Urchin, *Echinometra lucunter lucunter*



(3) Encrusting Zoanthid (Br.), *Palythoa* sp.



(4) Florida Sea cucumber, *Halothuria florida*



(5) Branching Fire Coral, *Millepora alcicornis*



(6) Bearded Fireworm, *Hermodice carunculata*



(7) Octocoral



(8) Batwing Coral Crab, *Carpilius corallinus*



ns: Diversity of Invertebrates



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g Our Reefs at Toco, lifelong Goal

be a wide range of instability due
from rivers of South America to
d. Additionally, these reefs are
and human activities. Reefs can
y fringing reef located at Salybia
n from the Keshorn Walcott Toco

n the environmentally sensitive
n area becomes affected by the
ivities. I present here, a snapshot
out backbones) diversity seen at
moon” extreme low tide event,
aware and concerned about the
aintaining the stewardship of the

t the reef habitat, and colonies display a
blue, grey, and orange.

izers on the reefs, because they consume
ete valuable space for coral growth. They
d can appear black, red, or reddish brown.

ively covers the area close to the coral
ich produce large amounts of mucus, thus

wn to pink, or red. They occupy parts of
en between rocky substrate.

n color, but this branching species has a
in.

color, but may appear green or yellow.

sturbed. Interestingly, they feed on stony

as Gorgonians and inhabit reefs.

n Coral crab resembles that of a crimson
cies is rare on reefs due to

pink to purple, but be forewarned, as
an intense sting.

ustard Hill coral appears as an encrusted
due to the extended polyps.

or within crevasses of the coral reef.

reas of the reef.

due to over-collecting.

sive when disturbed.

rs due to the algae they eat.

reefs, and are unafraid.



(9) Portuguese Man-Of-War, *Physalia physalia*



(10) Mustard Hill Coral, *Porites astreoides*



(11) Circle Marked Brittle Star, *Ophioderma cinereum*



(12) Golfball Coral, *Favia fragum*



(13) Atlantic Triton's Trumpet, *Charonia variegata*



(14) Blue Crab, *Callinectes ornatus*



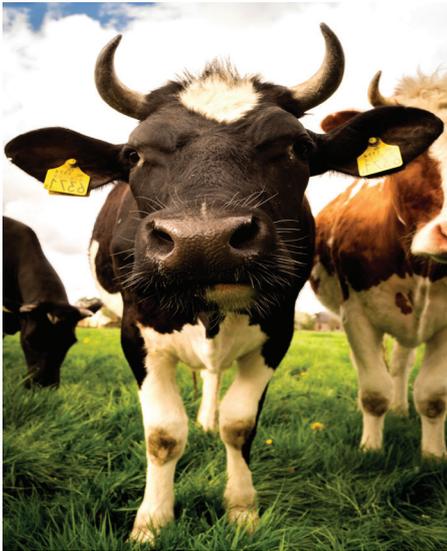
(15) Lettuce Sea slug, *Elysia crispata*



(16) Gaudy Clown Crab, *Platypodiella spectabilis*

Meaty, Meat, Meatiness

Dizzanne Billy



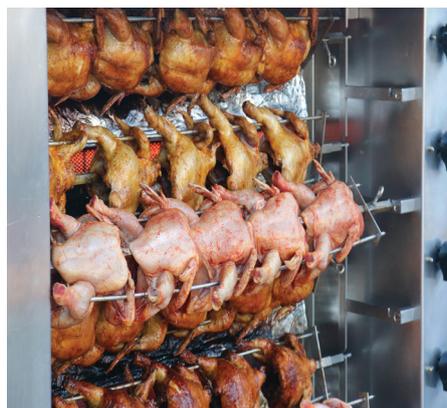
***"The economic structure of the ideal society also resembles the structure of a healthy human body. Production, distribution and consumption should have an organic, interdependent relationship such as that which exists between the digestive, circulatory and metabolic systems. There should not be destructive competition due to overproduction; nor there excessive accumulation or overconsumption due to unfair distribution, which would be contrary to the welfare of all people. There should be adequate production of necessary and useful goods, fair distribution to supply what is sufficient for people's needs, and reasonable consumption in harmony with the purpose of the whole."* - Sun Myung Moon, Divine Principle: Ideal Economic System.**

It is common knowledge that the current mainstream structure which guides the way we live, operate, and survive in this world is negatively affecting planet Earth. Indeed, it has been preached on countless platforms all over the world that our transport system, our energy industry, and our burgeoning population increase are all harmfully disturbing the environment. However, have you ever thought about the effect of what we choose to eat on the environment?

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) 'World Agriculture: Towards 2030/2050' report republished in 2012, which captured media attention, the meat industry has been contributing significantly to the production of greenhouse gases (GHGs). As a matter of fact, it states that the increasing demand for meat and meat products has led

to a situation where the production of livestock adds to the emission of more greenhouse gases than the transport sector – this means that the global livestock industry emits more GHGs than every car, plane, train, and ship combined! Can it get more graphic than that you may ask? Well, the production of meat to meet world demand is now comparatively more toxic to you and I than the black smoke being released from the endless sea of traffic that we face on a daily basis + the countless planes that travel to and fro through the skies, and that is just two means of transport. I don't know about you, but to me that is sobering news. Greenhouse gases, such as methane, nitrous oxide, and the infamous carbon dioxide is causing the earth's surface to warm by trapping solar energy – global warming - which is leading to a host of catastrophic environmental problems.

So therefore, what you choose to put on your plate is directly affecting the environment. Should we really care though? I mean, the beef tastes so good right? Honey, I have news for you. It does not stop there. In addition to the negative effects on your environment are the negative effects overconsumption of meat can have on your body. Does that not make for one messy situation?



Agriculture as a substantial source for increasing GHGs in the atmosphere and a major contributor to climate change now describes implications which must be addressed by policymakers. Now, you will not find me with a placard in hand clamouring for "NO MORE MEAT." What I am simply suggesting is that we need to decrease consumption. Consumption equals money, consumption equals disease, and consumption equals waste. This money can be diverted to alleviate poverty, diseases that take more lives now than they did five years ago, and waste that is adding to destruction of our



planet.

We often quote Mahatma Ghandi in saying that we need to "be the change that we wish to see in the world." Do your eating habits fall in the category of things that you are willing to change? This does not negate the fact that we need to decrease deforestation and consider alternative energy models, but rather it turns the spotlight on the simple question of – what do we eat?.

As the global population proliferates out of control and the sizes of our midsection increase simultaneously, do we expect that our environment will do anything but suffer? The dominant fallacy is that the government and civil society has no place telling us what to eat. We must be free to consume whatever we want and in whatever quantities we want. Well, I say to that, freedom is not free. Along with overconsumption, we will continue to see increased rates in death due to lifestyle diseases such as chronic heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. Yes, it is our choice, but we need to start making more informed choices.

This is not a radical message to convert you to veganism. This is a wakeup call. Our bodies need valuable nutrients that are provided by meat but consider that there are practical, healthy, stable alternative diets. So, the next time you sit down to order food or go to the supermarket, remember – do you really need that slab of meat?



“When I am trying to save the environment, I do it like a BOSS”

Rhea Nelson
CYEN Member



*Scarlet Ibis, national bird of
Trinidad and Tobago*

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