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UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean

Activities Report for the Biennium 2020–2021



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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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FOREWORD

The UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean¹ is pleased to present the Activities Report for the Biennium 2020-2021, covering the period from January 2020 to December 2021, and to provide an outlook for the following Biennium 2022-2023. In this Activities Report, we showcase our actions in the five programmatic sectors of UNESCO's mandate: Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture, and Communication and Information, in the twenty Caribbean English and Dutch-speaking Small Island Developing States served by the UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean. These five programmes are committed to the core principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: "leaving no one behind" in the pursuit of eradicating poverty, mitigating the effects of climate change, empowering youth in the region and building lasting peace – above all, gender equality is a global priority. This activity report is intended to be holistic and comprehensive, highlighting the various interactions and the cross-sectoral nature of our actions.

The Member States and Associate Members of the Office's regional mandate are Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Montserrat, Sint Maarten, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

We strongly believe that multi-stakeholder partnerships and platforms open up innovative and new ways of working together to achieve sustainable, inclusive development and much-needed global solidarity.



Saadia Sánchez-Vegas, PhD

UNESCO's work would not be possible without the valuable partnerships with international and regional development agencies such as the European Union, the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), SIDA and many others, our UN sister agencies, the National Commissions for UNESCO, UNESCO headquarters in Paris, and UNESCO field offices, as well as regional programme offices and institutes in Latin America and the Caribbean, and worldwide.

Based on this, we have aligned our activities with several international, regional and national frameworks to coordinate our efforts with our sister United Nations agencies in line with the United Nations Reform and the national development plans and country implementation plans (CIP) of the countries we serve. Aligned with the 40 C/5 Approved programme and budget 2020-2021, these frameworks include the Caribbean Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (MSCDF), signed by nineteen countries and territories in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean to work hand in hand with the United Nations and the Member States and their various social, cultural and scientific stakeholders in the public and private sectors, academia and civil society, as well as by the Permanent Delegations to UNESCO and National Commissions for UNESCO. As a national governing body, the Network of National Commissions for UNESCO plays a vital role in raising awareness, transmitting knowledge and implementing programmes.

In pursuing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, tackling common development challenges remain a crucial priority in the sub-region. These include, among others, limitations to generate productive and decent work for all, low secondary school coverage, quality and relevance of educational content and significant barriers to social cohesion such as gender, racial and ethnic discrimination and socio-economic inequalities.

In addition, the Caribbean Small Island Developing States, SIDS, are particularly vulnerable to exogenous shocks. Climate variability and climate change have exacerbated the impact of natural disasters. This is particularly evident today as the world faces complex and cascading problems: rising sea levels and climate-related disasters, fake news and hate speech, increased gender-based violence, unemployment, inequalities and discrimination that threaten social cohesion.

On top of this, 2020 - 2021 will be remembered as appalling years with the unprecedented uprising of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic showed us the stark reality of the underlining structural inequali-

ties on a global scale and exacerbated them on the local level. It showed us the fragility of our way of life. Uncertainty has become a part of our present and future. We have learnt that our social normal was not sustainable, and at the same time, that societies are capable of transforming themselves and that people can evolve, adapt and above all, be resilient. It also showed us that we must live in harmony with nature and be prepared for upcoming disasters. The pandemic disrupted the daily lives of the entire humanity and forced us to live in confinement and under social distance. Concurrently, the acceleration of digital transformation has brought us closer together in virtual space.

In the Caribbean SIDS, young people make up more than 63% of the population under the age of 30. UNESCO, therefore, recognizes youth as a priority group for the region and considers young people as essential agents of change who can positively and actively contribute to a sustainable transformation in the fight against climate change, inequalities and strengthen peace, social cohesion and harmony.

As a result, UNESCO has implemented numerous actions in the Caribbean through inter-institutional agreements and ad hoc partnerships. Building on the SAMOA Pathway and UNESCO's SIDS Action Plan, which reaffirmed the importance of SIDS for sustainable development, the Special Initiative for the Caribbean (SPIC) was elaborated as a sub-regional development framework 2018 - 2021, having identified climate change resilience and youth as two thematic development priorities for the sub-region, including gender equality and the rights of persons with disabilities, in the spirit of leaving no one behind.

In this sense, UNESCO supported the rapid transition to the virtual classroom by enhancing the capacities of more than 12,400 teachers in digital education skills to continue and guarantee the right to Education despite the pandemic-related school closures, building a Global Education Coalition in partnership with several organizations. Arts and culture were elevated to the virtual stage to bring people and communities together in times of crisis, scientists were invited to discuss new data on virtual platforms

and Open Science, and the focus was shifted on the benefits and ethical implications of artificial intelligence to support people and the planet, ranging from consultations to awareness-raising online events through the UNESCO Caribbean Artificial Intelligence Initiative.

Furthermore, in light of the deepening inequalities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic in Caribbean SIDS, we pursued the Knowledge Series on Inclusive and Equitable Recovery and the tool *Toward a more Inclusive Post-COVID-19 Recovery* to provide social and human science insights and policy recommendations for an inclusive COVID-19 recovery process grounded on Caribbean realities.

In addition, through the Caribbean Sheroes Initiative, organized in partnership with the Institute of Gender and Development Studies at The University of the West Indies, we have championed women's rights advocates and inspired youth action for gender justice and meaningful change in Caribbean societies with the aim of ending gender-based violence and creating a culture of peace.

Bringing together young people from the Caribbean, the Caribbean Youth Platform for Risk and Disaster Management, CARIDIMA, was launched as a regional network to encourage exchanges between young experts on environmental challenges to make the Caribbean more resilient in the face of future disasters and promote new actions with networks already in place in the Africa and Asia-Pacific regions.

In addition, to create new opportunities for young people, the Cluster Office, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, and the University of the West Indies (UWI) have been implementing a joint project, the Creative Caribbean: An Ecosystem of 'Play' for Growth and Development, supported by the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) programme, *Towards a Viable Cultural Industry: Supporting the Cultural and Creative Sectors in the ACP countries*, and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States and the Transcultura Programme, both funded by the European Union, these sub-regional programmes reflect UNESCO's

conviction that the creative arts have the power to transform the lives of individuals and communities by facilitating access to training and international events on the cultural and creative industries while promoting intercultural dialogue. Furthermore, to build on the power of culture in the fight against racism, we celebrated the region's African and Afro-descendant roots, which constitute today's culture – reaffirming respect for diversity, freedom, social justice and emancipation so powerfully conveyed through music, arts and cultural heritage.

It is my pleasure to invite all of you to read about UNESCO's work firmly grounded in our commitment to serving the Caribbean Small Island Developing States in the pursuit of sustainable development for that more egalitarian, equitable, fair, resilient and sustainable future in peace and solidarity.

Allow me to end this foreword by sharing the belief in the certainty of a common future that welcomes and shelters us all, without prejudice, without selfishness. We can build that certainty on the road to sustainable development. I would like to dream of the future for all of us as more than an aspiration, more than a promise, as an opportunity that we will pass on to future generations.

Yours sincerely,

Saadia Sánchez-Vegas, PhD

*Director and Representative
UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean*

“

Nothing less than our future and the fate of humankind depends on how we rise to the climate challenge.

- António Guterres

United Nations Secretary-General

“

We must rebuild our relationships with each other, with the planet, and with technology.

- Audrey Azoulay

UNESCO Director-General



EDUCATION

EDUCATION

At the heart of UNESCO's mandate is the right to quality and inclusive education, as the primary vehicle for transforming lives towards peace, prosperity and sustainable development. Within the last decade, education as a fundamental human right has been significantly challenged by recent monumental worldwide events, such as COVID-19 and the results of climate change, which have adversely affected lives and livelihoods.

Systemic shocks to education in the Caribbean region, currently from the COVID-19 crisis, have disproportionately affected the poor and the most marginalized in the region, resulting in significant disruptions to the learning of approximately 1.3 million learners and over 91,000 teachers in the English and Dutch-speaking experienced tremendous disruptions to education. The pandemic has also resulted in significant learning losses, particularly for populations with socio-economic vulnerabilities and learning challenges. Moreover, the disruptions have exacerbated existing disparities in learning experienced by girls and boys in schools. While girls were heavily affected on the education front, the issue of boys' disengagement from education increased at an alarming rate, accelerating issues of youth involvement in crime and violence.

With this at the forefront, the Education Sector of the UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean embarked on the urgent and increasingly important mission of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The priority areas of Technical Vocational Education and Training (SDG 4.3 and 4.4) and Teacher Development (SDG 4c), and the sector placed special attention on empowering Caribbean youth through improved governance, quality and relevance of their skills development opportunities for employability and entrepreneurship.

Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Education Sector was challenged in pivoting quickly to address the urgent needs of the Member States and the Associate Members served by the Cluster Office, where the institutional and response capacity were threatened due to wide-scale school closures and the immediate need to adopt a digital approach to teaching and learning. Ministries of Education were agile in establishing distance and remote learning alternatives. However, access and equity remained a serious concern, as significant numbers of learners and teachers were not equipped for distance learning and did not have equal access to internet connectivity and the required devices.

These concerns were emphasised in two rounds of consultations, held on 9 and 22 July 2020, of which major highlights were the significant disparities in teacher preparedness and their capacity to deliver distance education while addressing diverse learning, as well as the socio-emotional needs of learners. Additionally, Cluster Countries were uncertain about how to continue to prepare and facilitate students' assessment, particularly the sitting of internal (formative) and terminal examinations at the primary and secondary levels. Further, students, and to a lesser degree, teachers faced significant challenges in the access to and consistency of internet connectivity. Finally, the technical expertise required to frame country-specific roadmaps and guidelines for the safe and successful re-opening of schools, inclusive of physiological, psychological and pedagogical considerations, was not readily available.

Where the institutional and response capacity was threatened due to wide-scale school closures and the Cluster Office rose to the urgent demand to adopt a digital approach to teaching and learning was identified as a major priority: standing in solidarity with Caribbean teachers who worked in less-than-ideal situations to ensure that students continued to be

engaged in learning. The need for multistakeholder interventions was identified as the prime mechanism to ensure the continuity of learning in the Caribbean, and the Cluster Office pivoted to address the critical needs of its Member States.

The Caribbean Education COVID-19 Task Force

Within the ambit of the UNESCO Global Education Coalition (GEC), the Caribbean Education COVID-19 Task Force was quickly established to address short- to medium-term priorities that were anchored in three pillars. The first pillar focused on leading policy dialogue and forging education partnerships to mitigate the risks of the pandemic, assure complementarity, and build synergies. The second pillar sought to provide policy advice and technical backstopping in response to country priorities and needs. The aim of the last pillar was to generate knowledge and mobilise evidence to ensure the continuity of education and to minimise loss to learning, especially in areas of our comparative advantage, namely sector-wide planning, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and professional development and support for teachers.

With these priorities in perspective, the Cluster Office intervention was significant to Cluster Countries, resulting in the engagement of approximately 12,440 teachers and educational stakeholders across the 20 cluster countries served. Central to this success were the partnership and collaboration forged with Ministries of Education (MOEs), National Commissions for UNESCO, National Teaching Councils and development partners, which provided strategic inputs, support in the coordination, and co-funding. Additionally, at the global level, partnerships were established with the GEC, along with industry leaders such as Blackboard Academy and Microsoft.

Teacher Development, Knowledge Sharing and Institutional Strengthening

Given the key role of teachers, as core actors in education recovery and resilience, the overall aim of the work conducted by the Cluster Office under SDG 4 was to reduce Caribbean youth school dropouts and basic learning skills gaps, through supportive mechanisms in teachers' capacity development in the delivery of Information and Communications Technology (ICT)-enabled teaching practices.



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Professional Development for Teachers for Blended Learning and Online Strategies

Given the significant demand by Cluster Countries for capacity building for teachers to plan, deliver, and assess learning in the online environment, in September and October 2020, UNESCO implemented the UNESCO Caribbean COVID-19 Response: Distance Learning Teacher Training Initiative. This initial programme was conducted in collaboration with the University of the West Indies (UWI) Open Campus and Ministries of Education (MOEs) and comprised the implementation of two rounds of distance education teacher workshops focused on strengthening the capacity of teachers in distance education and online learning strategies. The workshops resulted in the training and certification of 85 master trainers: 40 from Jamaica; and 45 from across the region – Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Curaçao, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Montserrat, Saint Martin, Saint Kitts, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, Trinidad & Tobago.



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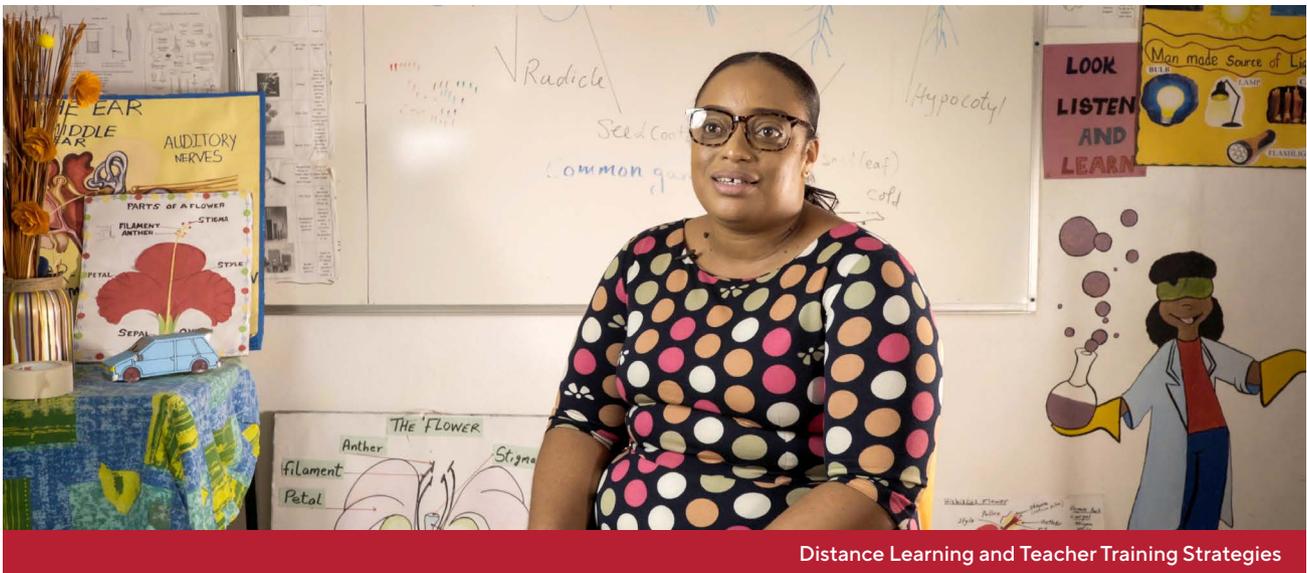
Education Response to COVID-19: Distance Learning and Teacher Training Strategies in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States

From October 2020 to November 2021, within the framework of the Global Education Coalition (GEC), and in collaboration with the UNESCO Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, the Cluster Office was awarded approximately USD 100,000 to scale up the piloted master teacher professional development initiative to engage at least 10,000 teachers in Cluster Countries. The programme was designed to support teachers' professional development and to strengthen their capacity to effectively engage with students through remote, hybrid and blended learning solutions, using online education tools.

The pilot initiative was conducted in October 2020, with fifty-one master trainers certified by Blackboard and subsequently engaged as facilitators to scale up the training in 2021. The target of participation of 10,000 Caribbean teachers was successfully exceeded, with 12,440 teachers trained in blended and online teaching strategies for distance learning.

International Teacher Taskforce Webinar

The International Teacher Taskforce with the Cluster Office hosted the webinar 'The Digital Turn: Empowering the Caribbean's Teachers' on November 3, 2021, which was attended by 120 teacher participants from the Distance Learning and Teacher Training programme, who shared their experiences and good practices for strengthening Teacher ICT competency.



Distance Learning and Teacher Training Strategies

Rafaela King-Adams | Primary School Teacher from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Online Capacity Development through Knowledge Exchange and Webinars

Between 2020–2021, the Cluster Office hosted a series of engaging knowledge-sharing webinars in order to provide a regional platform for discussion around regional challenges, due to the pandemic, and explore solutions to strengthen educational systems. This involved approach to regional dialogue has laid a sound foundation for the development of a Community of Practice to strengthen future sharing and collaboration among Cluster Countries.

Sustaining Educational Opportunity during COVID-19 Webinar

In collaboration with the Harvard Graduate School of Education, a COVID-19 response webinar entitled "Sustaining Educational Opportunity during COVID-19" was delivered on 7 May 2020. The webinar included a presentation on the Framework to guide an education response to the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, to support public and private decision-makers and education leaders in developing and implementing adaptive, coherent, and effective education responses to the COVID-19 crisis.

UNESCO-Caribbean Community Webinar Series

The Cluster Office, in collaboration with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO-OREALC), hosted a biweekly series of knowledge sharing and information exchange sessions. The series, of which the primary beneficiaries were the MOEs and the different educational actors, sought to respond to the pandemic by focusing on the four pillars of SDG-Education 2030: equity, inclusion, quality and lifelong learning. Held between May to July 2020, the organising team provided online capacity development opportunities to Cluster Countries to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. A series of six webinars addressed pertinent issues including the status of teaching and its role in distance education; the inclusion of children and adolescents with disabilities in distance education; socio-emotional education in crisis contexts; and gender effects on children during the COVID-19 crisis.

Caribbean Futures of Education Webinar Series

During the period December 2020 and January 2021, the Caribbean Future of Education webinar series was hosted to inspire change, rethink paradigms and

explore policy recommendations in education. A total of four webinars were held, engaging teachers, educators, planners, policymakers and development partners in exploratory dialogues and knowledge-sharing sessions to revise and reimagine education regionally and globally. Salient recommendations from Caribbean states included: implementing a 'whole of government approach' to improve investments in human capital in the region by ensuring access to quality education and better outcomes for students; promoting lifelong learning and activism on environmental sustainability through building skills in citizenship and participation beyond the classroom; prioritising citizenship education by implementing strategies to foster the development of Ideal Caribbean Citizens; and promoting inclusion in the curriculum by allowing students to engage in learning experiences that will enable them to understand challenges marginalised and underrepresented groups.

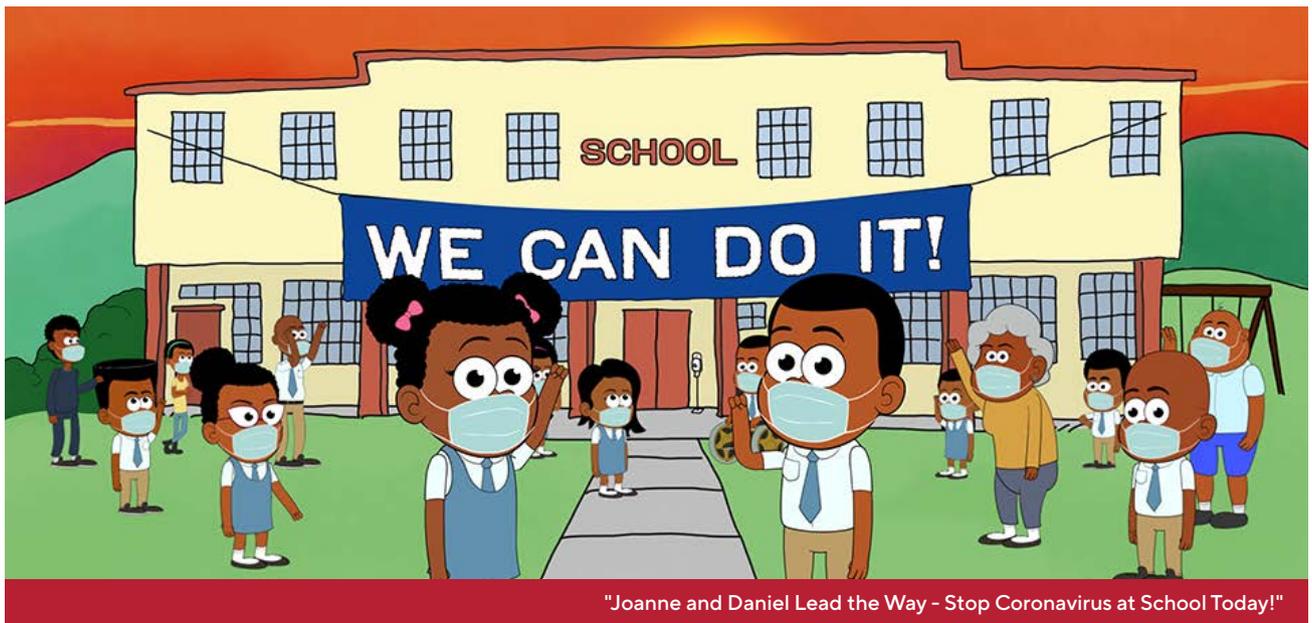


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**Virtual Caribbean Safe School Initiative
Pre-Ministerial Forum**

In March 2021, the Cluster Office provided technical guidance and coordination support to the Caribbean Safe School Initiative Virtual Pre-Ministerial Forum led by United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA). This forum was a precursor to the Caribbean Safe School Ministerial Forum, a flagship biennial event that facilitates the exploration of policy and programmatic opportuni-

ties and gaps for education sector resilience, as well as for regional coordination. The Pre-Ministerial Forum, which was centred on the theme 2021 Regional Review on Systemic Risk, focused on maintaining momentum in the regional dialogue on safe schools, and on capturing good practices and lessons learnt from the COVID-19 experience and other interacting factors that have emerged within a multi-hazard context.



"Joanne and Daniel Lead the Way - Stop Coronavirus at School Today!"

Safe Return to School in the Caribbean

**Teachers' Talk - Caribbean Teachers Navigating
the Digital Turn**

On September 23, 2021, the Cluster Office hosted the interactive Webinar 'Caribbean Teachers Navigating the Digital Turn'. The virtual event featured teachers from Jamaica, Curaçao, Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica, and Saint Vincent and the Gren-

dines, who were part of the Distance Learning and Teacher Training Strategies. Panelists and participants shared their challenges and how they have coped with teaching online since the COVID-19 pandemic. The lively discussion covered topics such as inclusion and access, student and teacher mental health, parent support and involvement, and student engagement. Over 350 people from 16 Caribbean countries participated in the conversation.

Awareness Raising for Youth Engagement and Participation

In support of learners' safe return to the physical classroom, the Cluster Office produced a culturally engaging video animation and accompanying posters for the Safe Re-opening of Schools in Times of COVID-19, on 10 September 2020. The educational video clip demonstrated to learners between the ages of 5 and 21 years old (pre-primary to tertiary levels) key measures that should be practised at school. Importantly, the video incorporated diverse learners with respect to gender and physical attributes, including students with physical challenges and special needs. The video was further complemented by awareness-building posters, which were adapted in Spanish, French, Dutch and Papiamentu.

Cluster Office Education Sector Response to the Mount Soufrière Volcanic Disruption

The eruption of the La Soufrière Volcano in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on 9 April 2021, exacerbated the challenges that were already being experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulted in further disruptions to learning and the overall education system. In support, the Cluster Office advanced rapid response strategies, including education recovery priorities in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines National Commission for UNESCO.

In addition to the engagement of teachers in the UNESCO-led Blackboard teacher-training programme, other activities were implemented. This included the orientation of over 50 principals and 100 teachers to the Curious Learning App, to reinforce early literacy and numeracy competencies in learners, as well as a collaboration with Microsoft to explore opportunities for capacity development and access to educational resources for its smart classrooms.



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Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

At its core, Technical Vocational Education and Training, TVET is centred around forecasting and satisfying the current and emerging needs of the labour market. The demand for a highly skilled and productive workforce is shaping economies globally. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the challenges vocational training systems currently face in maintaining the continuity of programme design, delivery, student/trainee assessment and certification. Additional concerns include learner access, instructor professional development, teacher ICT competency gaps, and access to and relevant skills training.

TVET Policy Review in Grenada

Between 2019 to 2020, the Cluster Office, UNESCO-OREALC and UNESCO HQ conducted an in-depth review of Grenada's TVET systems, which included analysing the status of the national system, as well as the social, economic and labour market context of Grenada, in order to propose recommendations for policy actions to improve the TVET infrastructure.

Over the course of three missions, the team interacted with over 30 stakeholders representing six key organisations, including the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, and the Grenada National Training Agency. Given the findings and report generated in 2021, the Government of Grenada requested UNESCO's technical support in developing the TVET Policy Framework, which has since been concluded in February 2022.

UNESCO and Ministry of Education and Youth Jamaica TVET during COVID-19 Workshop

The Cluster Office, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Youth Jamaica, hosted a TVET Workshop on 19 November 2020, in response to a growing demand for support for TVET teachers, given the pandemic. The purpose of the workshop was to highlight the emerging challenges and opportunities for TVET against the pandemic, with a view to strengthening the capacity of TVET educators, school leaders and administrators in Jamaica. Entitled Strategies for Continuing Technical Vocational Education and Training in Jamaica, the three-hour workshop saw the participation of approximately 400 TVET officers, teachers and practitioners nationally.



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5th International TVET Conference

As longstanding partners, the Cluster Office supported The University of the West Indies in the successful staging of the 5th International TVET Conference from 12–14 May 2021. UNESCO facilitated the engagement and participation of Caribbean youths in knowledge-sharing and capacity-building activities, as panelists, presenters and participants.

Under the theme, TVET: Creating Opportunities in a Global Pandemic, the conference served as a platform for discussion, dissemination and exchange of contemporary research, scientific knowledge and information, as applied in the field of TVET. The conference stimulated policy dialogue and enabled participants to identify and explore global principles and key strategies for best practices in TVET to address the challenges emerging from COVID-19 and other exigent situations.

Guyana EMIS Draft Policy Framework

In early 2021, UNESCO supported Guyana in the assessment of its Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) capacities for the formulation of policies in the areas of ICTs in education and EMIS. As part of the technical support, the ministry advanced the development of a detailed master plan for EMIS deployment aligned with the ICT in Education and EMIS policies, as well as with the Ministry's roadmap described in the 2021-2025 Education Sector Plan. Following this, UNESCO guided the MoE in robust consultations with ministry stakeholders for assessment and formulation of an EMIS Policy Framework. The draft policy document was completed in November 2021.

The Ministry of Education has further engaged UNESCO's technical guidance and quality oversight for the development of a data management framework to establish clear standards for the functionality of the EMIS system; development of the operations

manual to ensure systematization and accountability; as well as a change management strategy to garner stakeholder buy-in and support overall change processes. This phase is expected to be completed in September 2022.

Caribbean Sub-Regional Consultation for CONFITEA VII 2022

In collaboration with the UNESCO Institute of Learning (UIL) and UNESCO in Santiago, the Cluster Office hosted the Caribbean Sub-Regional Consultation for CONFITEA VII 2022 on 28 April 2021. The consultation sought to identify and discuss issues from a Caribbean perspective, on how adult learning and education aim to promote peace and international understanding. This event was held in preparation for the seventh International Conference on Adult Education (CONFITEA VII), which takes place in the Kingdom of Morocco in 2022, where Caribbean Countries will participate in developing a new framework for action.



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Joint United Nations Initiative – Spotlight Jamaica Initiative

The Spotlight Initiative in Jamaica is a joint United Nations (UN) initiative for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). The Cluster Office implemented an in-school, peer-lead activity pilot entitled Champions for Change, to promote and advocate for positive attitudes and behaviour change among peers by leveraging the visual, performance and digital arts.

Using the school-based model, the pilot programme was implemented in two parishes in Jamaica. Even with the attendant disruptions and challenges resulting from the pandemic, 46 students were engaged as VAWG Champions and a programme roadmap or manual for upscaling the programme was auspiciously developed. An extended phase 2 of the project is being coordinated to end in December 2022.



Looking Ahead: Biennium 2022—2023

As we look towards the biennium 2022-2023, based on the 41 C/5 Approved programme and budget and in accordance with the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC), the Cluster Office, while seeking to address the needs of our Member States will focus on addressing

three main priority areas: teacher development; TVET; Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED).

Teacher Development and Professionalism

The changes resulting from the pandemic opened a window of opportunity for well-needed focus and investments in ICTs in education, to close the digital divide and further harness the strength of technology-driven learning. This is also a crucial opportunity for upskilling and investing in teachers, and to ensure that they are equipped to leverage the tools needed to fulfil increasingly complex roles.

The biennium 2022–2023 will focus on the strengthening and execution of teaching policies, standards and competencies to build resilience in the education systems, mitigate learning loss and improve teaching quality and delivery. Key actions will include deepening and expanding teacher ICT competence, supporting the development of national teaching standards, and strengthening teacher policy in Cluster Countries.

Technical Vocational Education and Training

With the increasing global consensus on the importance of TVET as a transformative tool for grappling with the challenges of development, there is a need to re-evaluate conventional methods of education and training, and to explore greater integration of ICTs and blended learning models to facilitate access and to deliver higher quality learning outcomes. In the 2022–2023 biennium, there will be an urgent focus on retraining and up-skilling TVET practitioners, particularly on the use of the online or blended approach space, with relevant and compatible online tools and applications.

Joint UN Project for Resilient Caribbean: Grenadian Youth Empowered for the Digital World of Work

The Cluster Office will implement the Resilient Caribbean: Grenadian Youth Empowered for the Digital World of Work Programme, which focuses on equipping TVET educators, youth leaders and youths with emerging digital and entrepreneurial skills in Grenada to increase national and regional productivity. The programme is a part of the UN Joint Programme for Resilient Caribbean – Engaging and Training Youth, Strengthening Integrated Social Protection Sector Delivery, which will be executed in partnership with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and UNESCO.

Education for Sustainable Education (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED)

Strengthening the resilience of education systems in the Caribbean to respond to immediate challenges and effectively manage future crises, requires a sustainable approach. Education systems, as part of a larger network of social protection, have the potential to respond effectively to, and mitigate against, the impact of future crises on learners' access to learning. In order to do so requires accurate, reliable, and timely data, which is also needed to support effective preparedness, response and recovery processes during emergencies and other disruptive situations that have been a major challenge for countries across the Caribbean region. A transformational shift in education – in terms of contents, strategies, methodologies, and approaches – is therefore required to achieve the core objectives of safer and more resilient schools and engaged communities and to plan for and better respond to shocks to education. In the biennium 2022–2023, Cluster Countries, both nationally and regionally, will be better supported to mainstream ESD and GCED in achieving SD4, Target 4.7, through knowledge generation to advance policy and by building the capacity of educators and key education stakeholders to transform the local learning environments.



Education for Sustainable Development teaches learners of all ages the knowledge, skills and attitude to protect the planet

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NATURAL SCIENCES

NATURAL SCIENCES

During the biennium 2020–2021, UNESCO’s endeavours in Natural Sciences in the Caribbean have taken place within a context marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, the volcanic eruption of La Soufrière in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the impact of Hurricane Elsa. The Caribbean, with 60% of its youth population concentrated in coastal areas, is particularly vulnerable to such natural disasters, climate disruption, declining ocean health and biodiversity erosion.

Moreover, half of the endemic species in the Caribbean have been already assessed for risk of extinction, and two-thirds of its tropical dry forest has been fragmented and transformed into human-dominated landscapes breaking the biodiversity balance of the islands. Further, the interaction of warming temperatures, sea levels rising, and pollution is increasing the vulnerability of coral reef ecosystems and threatening coastal settlements in the Caribbean.

For their economy and sustainable development, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean region must rely heavily on environmental and ocean services, including tourism, sustainable agriculture and fishing, which render environmental sustainability and science for society issues a high priority in the subregion. It is in that context that the Cluster Office set the basis for further development of environmental resilience in the region, namely on water security management, environmental protection and education, disaster risk management (DRM), as well as the bolstering of the science, technology and innovation landscape in the Caribbean sub-region.

Water Resources Management

The following main activities were carried out by the Cluster Office in 2020–2021 under the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP), which also contributed to Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in the Caribbean region. The activities sought to advance SDG 6, ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, but they also support SDG 2, 13, 14 and 15, among others.

Wastewater Purification in Curaçao

There is a high variability in terms of water availability and water access among Caribbean countries. Some islands rely on surface water, whilst others on groundwater. In Curaçao, the situation is more complex, as the water available is insufficient for the island's demand. Increasingly, it has been relying on seawater desalination, which is not environmental-friendly, as this process requires a huge expense of energy while also polluting the natural ecosystems. Among the solutions proposed is a Nature-Based Solution, which is a natural biofilter system for wastewater purification developed by the UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Water Technology and the University of Curaçao with the support of UNESCO. This pilot project intends to assist in irrigating crops and plays the role of a platform for collaboration and best practices sharing among universities in the Caribbean.

Post-disaster impact assessment for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

In response to the volcanic eruption of April 2021 in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, where ashes liberated by the La Soufrière volcano affected surface



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water sources and freshwater distribution and treatment systems of the country, UNESCO organised a post-disaster impact assessment on water sources in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The assessment revealed that the groundwater sources were not contaminated by the ashes generated by the volcanic eruption, and that there is great potential for groundwater use to ensure water security on the island. This assessment contributed to important evidence-based information and data for the inclusion of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in a regional UNESCO initiative aimed at strengthening adaptation capacity and resilience to climate change in Cluster Countries, which is outlined later in this section.

Driving the expansion of country water-related expertise

UNESCO organised the 14th Meeting of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme National Committees in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was held online on 26–29 April 2021. Thirteen out of the 20 Cluster Countries in the Cluster participated in this meeting, to share island countries' experiences and challenges on water security in the

context of environmental disruption. Consistent with that meeting, UNESCO has conducted a situational analysis and a strategy aimed at encouraging the establishment of more water-related UNESCO committees in the Caribbean.

World Water Day: 22 March

The Cluster Office participated in organising the regional online celebrations of World Water Day 2020, on climate change, and of World Water Day 2021, on the theme of valuing water. These Water Days allowed the regional unveiling of the World Water Development Report – a key annual review providing the UN’s authoritative picture on the state, use and management of the world’s freshwater resources.



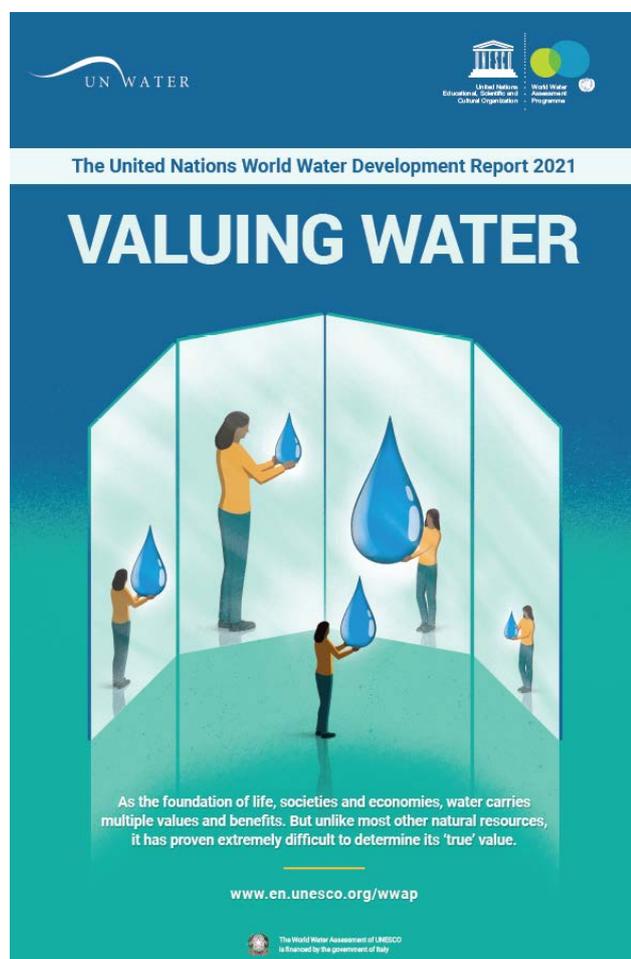
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Caribbean Hydro-meteorological (Hydromet) Summit

The Cluster Office organised a panel discussion on droughts and floods management in the Caribbean during the 2020 Caribbean Hydromet Summit, one of the most important annual events about freshwater in the Caribbean. The panel discussion allowed Caribbean water experts from Jamaica, Belize and Trinidad and Tobago to share their knowledge and views with other regional experts, thus promoting increased and improved regional cooperation among relevant Caribbean SIDS professionals and institutions.

Safe Access to Water in Times of Crisis and Beyond Webinar

On 29 July 2020, the Cluster Office participated in organising the webinar Safe Access to Water in Times of Crisis and Beyond – Voices from Caribbean Youth. The event engaged a number of youths from 40 countries, half of them from Cluster Countries, in a lively discussion within the preparatory process for the 9th edition of the World Water Forum. The outcomes of the discussion informed the recommendations presented by national and regional youth leaders and groups.



Water Security and Climate Resilience

In 2021, the Cluster Office started to design a project on water security and climate resilience entitled ‘Strengthening Adaptation Capacity and Resilience to Climate Change while ensuring Water Security in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS),’ which aims to support Cluster Countries in their efforts to adapt to the impact of climate change on water security. The project focus is on groundwater resources management for water security in the face of climate change in four Cluster Countries, namely The Bahamas, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Caribbean MAB network and Biosphere Reserves

The IberoMAB Network, which is a platform for collaboration and exchange of best practices for biosphere reserves in Latin America, the Caribbean, Portugal and Spain, admitted Trinidad and Tobago as its 25th member, thanks to the efforts of the Cluster Office. The Cluster Office also participated in organising the 20th meeting of the IberoMAB Network, which was held virtually on 28 May 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.



North-East Tobago Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2020

© UNESCO / Jacob Bock

Technical Support to Biosphere Reserves

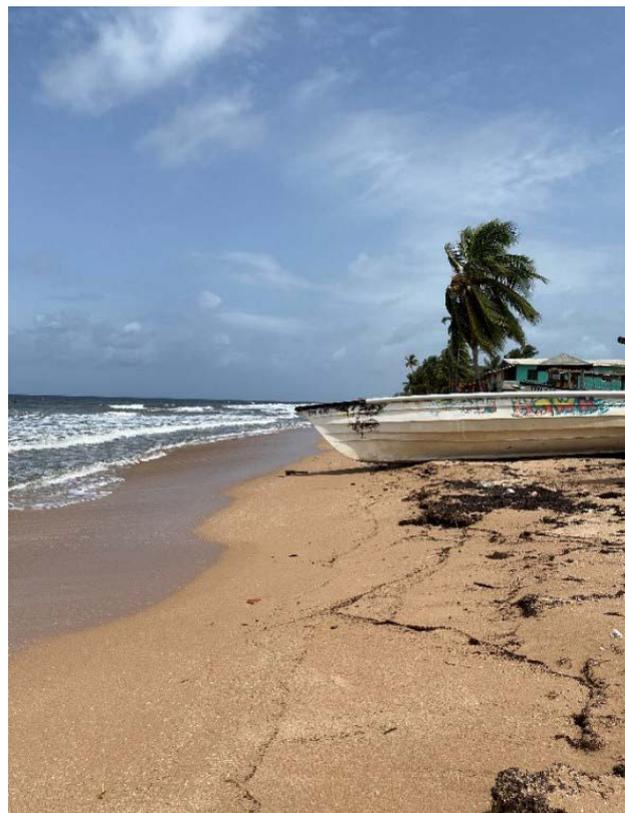
The Cluster Office provided advisory and technical support for the development of the North-East Tobago Biosphere Reserve, which was formally recognised as a UNESCO site in 2020. The Cluster Office also provided its support in the creation of the first and only publicly available North-East Tobago

Biosphere Reserve stock footage database. All material of the database is open access, in line with the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science.

Promoting Environmental Education

Over the years, UNESCO has developed instrument programmes and instruments tailor-made to provide local solutions for local environmental challenges. This is the case of the Sandwatch initiative, which aims to monitor anthropogenic environmental degradation of coastal areas and to develop best practices and adaptation mechanisms. In this context, the Cluster Office assisted the National Commissions for UNESCO of Curaçao, Saint Lucia and Sint Maarten in planning a capacity-building Sandwatch workshop, which was held in January 2022.

Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change and Environmental Resilience



© UNESCO / Catherina Schönhammer

The Cluster Office's Strategy on Disaster Risk Resilience has been designed to support Cluster Countries to minimise the impact of, and to recover from the effects of, a disaster in a timely and efficient manner. It is in this context that the Cluster Office contributed to the development of a new youth-led and youth-driven initiative in the form of a Caribbean Risk and Disaster Management Youth Platform (CARIDIMA).

CARIDIMA has been engaging more than 130 young professionals from 13 Cluster Countries, including teachers, researchers, entrepreneurs, government officers and leaders of civil society organisations. It has been supported by CDEMA and is exchanging knowledge with similar youth networks established by UNESCO in Asia-Pacific (U-Inspire) and in Africa (the Africa Youth Advisory Board). CARIDIMA's mission is to provide support and advocate for DRM across the Caribbean region. CARIDIMA was launched at the end of March 2021, and now has its own website and social media channels.

Science, Technology and Innovation

In the 2020–2021 period, the Cluster Office started to develop UNESCO initiatives in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) focused on generating results and assessing impact at the national, regional and global levels, whilst also promoting and supporting Caribbean integration and increased South-South cooperation among Cluster Countries. The activities are aligned primarily with SDG 9, and the most important ones have been summarised below.

Mapping of an STI Ecosystem

In 2021, in response to an official request to UNESCO, the Cluster Office provided technical advice to the Government of Jamaica in developing a country mapping in STI. The objective was to provide evidence to drive systemic change and the bolstering of Jamaica’s STI ecosystem for sustainable development and economic growth.

Updated STI Situation Analysis Study

In March 2020, the Cluster Office commissioned an updated situation analysis study to inform a subregional strategy for the development of science, technology and innovation in CARICOM. The situation analysis was concluded in October 2020, with recommendations to create a Caribbean Science and Technology Regional Organisation to coordinate the integration of STI policies for intraregional cooperation in STI.



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Virtual Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation Toward a Sustainable and Resilient Future

The Cluster Office designed and established, in cooperation with the Caribbean Academy of Sciences (CAS), the Virtual Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation towards a sustainable and resilient future in the Caribbean. The first activity of the Virtual Forum was an online workshop, ‘Building climate-ready communities in the Caribbean’, held on 10 November 2021, on the occasion of World Science Day. High-level regional experts from the UNDRR, UWI, the International Science Council, and the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute participated in that meeting, which saw the Caribbean launch the UNESCO Science Report 2021.

Online Roundtable on Open Science

In 2020–2021, UNESCO developed a Recommendation on Open Science to become the main international standard-setting framework for all countries and all actors for the operationalisation of a more transparent, inclusive, and democratic science. The Recommendation seeks to provide a common,

accepted definition for Open Science, to promote broad circulation, accessibility, interdisciplinarity, and reusability of scientific knowledge and its benefits for the society, and to be a driver for international scientific cooperation.

To support the development of the Recommendation, on 21 September 2020, the Cluster Office in cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Science Bureau in Montevideo, organised an online roundtable entitled 'How can Open Science be promoted in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean?' The roundtable gathered three Cluster Countries and devised proposals and views to nurture the UNESCO Regional Consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean on Open Science. The sessions were organised as part of a series of regional consultations aimed at building a global consensus on the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science.

Looking Ahead: Biennium 2022—2023

The programmes and policy responses implemented in the biennium 2020–2021, namely on water, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and adaptation to anthropogenic and exogenous shocks, including COVID-19, provided the ground to build further in the biennium 2022–2023 on environmental resilience and science for society as new compasses for UNESCO's action in Cluster Countries. Looking ahead to 2022–2023, based on the 41 C/5 Approved programme and budget the Cluster Office is rooting its multi-disciplinary key actions, programmes and perspectives for sustainable development on climate, water and biodiversity resilience, in line with the newly adopted regional United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and SDGs 11, 13, 14 and 15; and STI for societal progress and gender equality, in line with SDG 9 and 5.



Environmental Resilience

UNESCO has partnered with Caribbean countries for the process of identifying, assessing, and submitting proposed new natural sites to become UNESCO-designated Biosphere Reserves and geoparks. This is the case for the Middle Curaçao Biosphere Reserve in Curaçao, the Cat Islands Biosphere Reserve in The Bahamas, and the Portland Bight Protected Area in Jamaica. All of these are in line with the vision of the new Global Framework for Biodiversity, which is to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2030, expand area-based conservation to reach at least 30% of the planet by 2030, and achieve recovery and ecosystem restoration by 2050.

UNESCO worked with The Bahamas National Commission to develop a Climate Change Guardians project, which aims to educate school and university students about local and regional climate action and climate awareness among their peers. That National Commission is also a party in the coordination of UN climate change adaptation and resilience actions within the Eastern Caribbean Development Partners' Group.

Water access and water security is a global issue and forms a key part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. According to the World Water Development Reports, about 2.2 billion people around the world do not have access to safely managed drinking water services. In the Caribbean, the water sector is extremely vulnerable to drought and extreme weather events and therefore is exposed to recurrent stress. The highest vulnerabilities to water utilities, for example, have been recorded in Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

The Cluster Office has thus adopted a strategy to reinforce water information sharing, diffusion of best practices among professionals of the region, and catalyse optimal use of the enormous opportunities offered by groundwater systems, in line with SDG 6. The Cluster Office has co-developed with the International Organization for Migration, the WFP, UNICEF and the Food and Agriculture Organization projects to improve water management for food production by rural women in communities in Jamaica and Belize, which will be funded by the Joint SDG Fund.

Disaster Resilience

The Caribbean region is the second most disaster-prone region in the world and is subjected to significant losses each year. Natural disasters have consequences on the Caribbean's sustainable development and affect its people, biodiversity, infrastructure and its economy. Projections show that natural disasters will increase in intensity.

In this context, the Cluster Office has co-organised the Caribbean School Safety Ministerial Forum on Disaster Risk Resilience to be held in Sint Maarten on 28–30 June 2022. This Forum is responding to the need for a collaborative and coordinated approach to DRR among actors in the region. It will be executed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport of Sint Maarten, CDEMA, the Ministry of Education and National Reconciliation of Saint

Vincent and the Grenadines, UNICEF, and the UNDRR.

The Forum has contributed, inter alia, to CDEMA's Regional Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy and Programming Framework (2014–2024), the SAMOA Action Plan for SIDS, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and its Regional Action Plan for the Americas and the Caribbean. A Ministerial Declaration and a comprehensive Roadmap on Disaster Risk Resilience in the school environment are tabled for adoption during the Forum.

STI and Bridging the Sustainable Development Gap

Science must continue to play a key role as a driver of economic prosperity, sustainable development, and human well-being by responding to societal needs, reducing the gender gap (SDG 5) and providing innovative solutions to national and global challenges, in line with SDG 9. Indeed, despite some progress over the years, women and girls still face various and often compounding barriers and challenges to meaningfully engage in the fields of science at all levels, including education and research.



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According to the UNESCO Science Report, women only account for 33% of the world's researchers. They still occupy fewer senior positions than men at top universities and only 12% of members of national

science academies are women. In that context, on the occasion of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science on 11 February 2022, the Cluster Office launched an awareness-raising social media campaign to promote greater participation for women and girls in science in the Caribbean. This social media campaign initiated the creation of a Caribbean chapter of the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Programme, which is being developed with the objective to have a Caribbean regional prize for women young researchers launched by 2023.

Bridging the sustainable development gap in the Caribbean requires scientific evidence as a prerequisite in the design and implementation of systemic societal transformations. It also requires investment in scientific infrastructure and science literacy, the pooling of resources, and bold regional cooperation. In 2022 and beyond, the Cluster Office is dedicated to accompanying the SIDS of the region in this paradigm change towards regional scientific integration and cooperation.



The STI Team in Jamaica

© Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology (MSET) Jamaica

To this end, the Cluster Office, in collaboration with the Ministry of Science, Energy, and Technology (MSET), the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), the National Commission on Science and Technology (NCST), and the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO, has launched in May 2022 a partnership to strengthen Jamaica's national STI system, in the framework of one of UNESCO's flagship programmes in STI - the Global Observatory of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Instru-

ments (GO-SPIN). Within this partnership, and using the GO-SPIN methodology and online platform, UNESCO will provide technical assistance to develop a comprehensive inventory of Jamaica's STI policy system. Based on this, a GO-SPIN country profile and tailored STI approach will be developed to effectively guide Jamaica on its path to an economic and social transformation, in line with its National Development Vision 2030 Jamaica.



SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

In today's increasingly diverse societies, UNESCO advances its fundamental humanist mission to support people in facing contemporary challenges, understanding each other, and working together to build lasting peace. The Social and Human Sciences (SHS) Sector aims for Cluster Countries to be equipped with the capacity, tools and resources to produce and make meaningful use of policy-relevant, whole-of-society and human-rights-based social and human scientific research and knowledge, thus promoting resilient, just, inclusive and peaceful societies.

Managing contemporary social transformations is one of the main objectives of the SHS Sector. This objective directly responds to the social dimension of Agenda 2030, most notably to the SDG targets related to social inclusion, the eradication of extreme poverty, the reduction of inequalities and all forms of discrimination, fostering peace and inclusive and participatory decision-making.

The SHS programme contributes to SDGs 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 13, 16 and 17, with SDG 16 being of particular importance. The programme supports the establishment of accountable and transparent institutions by strengthening the links between research, policy and practice, including through the active participation of civil society, the rapprochement of cultures and meaningful youth engagement.

SHS actions are anchored in Agenda 2030's principle of leaving no one behind and fostering social cohesion. The integrated nature of Agenda 2030 requires robust policies at the national, regional and international levels that can be obtained through stronger links between social sciences, research and public policymaking.

Meaningful Youth Engagement and Youth-led Action to Foster Peaceful and Inclusive Caribbean Societies



Youth are a key demographic in the Caribbean SIDS

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At 1.2 billion strong, youth represent one out of every six people worldwide. In the CARICOM region, six in 10 people are under the age of 30. Unfortunately, young people in the Caribbean face increasing levels of violence and crime, which are also considerable bottlenecks towards achieving sustainable development. Nevertheless, when youth are provided with opportunities for engagement and participation, they can capitalise on their resiliency and become invaluable assets for peacebuilding and agents of positive change.

The UN Agenda 2030 positions youth as critical agents of change and full-fledged partners in the UN's work to build a better world for all, as indicated in the UN Youth Strategy, Youth 2030. In this regard, UNESCO considers youth a global priority group and plays a leading role in advancing youth rights and engaging youth to become leaders for transforming societies. The Cluster Office collaborated with over 20 youth-led organisations and youth structures and engaged directly with over 300 young people from 20 countries and territories.



YOUTH AS RESEARCHERS

ON PEACE, CITIZEN SECURITY AND SAFETY

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Youth as Researchers

The global UNESCO SHS Flagship Initiative, Youth as Researchers (YAR), was piloted in Jamaica for the first time in the whole Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region, to support youth-led research focused on youth-centric approaches for citizen security and peacebuilding. The YAR methodology was developed by the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, at the National University of Ireland, Galway, and the UNESCO Chair in Community, Leadership, and Youth Development, at the Pennsylvania State University, USA. The focus of the methodology is for young people to participate in research and enhance their capacity during the process. Youth are supported through training, mentoring and coordination.

The Cluster Office, with support from the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO, piloted the methodology in Jamaica to ensure that youth are meaningfully engaged in knowledge production on peacebuilding and citizen security. The pilot was rolled out in the framework of the Amplifying Youth Voice and Action to Address Citizen Security and Safety (AYVA) project, coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Jamaica.

Over five consecutive months between 2021 and 2022, the Cluster Office provided intensive training in

basic social science methods, capacity development sessions on youth, peace, and security concepts, as well as mentoring and coaching to three YAR groups that brought together 18 participants aged 18–30. The research carried out by the YAR groups included an analysis of specific governmental and non-governmental organisations and the extent to which their engagement with youth has resulted in the formulation and implementation of youth-centric approaches to citizen security in Jamaica. The participants addressed the following topics through their research projects: Government Programmes on Peace and Security; Youth-centric Policy-Design for Peace, Citizen Safety and Security; Youth Engagement and civil society organisations (CSOs) in Peace, Citizen Safety and Security groups.

On 16 March 2022, the YAR participants joined the closing ceremony of the UNDP AYVA project, which was held in Kingston, Jamaica. The young people, who were enthused by this opportunity, presented their findings and recommendations to stakeholders, including from the Ministry of National Security in Jamaica. The research group that focused on government programmes on peace and security found that “the government must increase capacity to support localised social responses to crime, supporting local individuals who most experience violent crime within their areas.” The group that researched youth-centric policy design highlighted the need to create inter-generational partnerships to engage young people in policymaking and assist older generations in welcoming youth’s strengths in policy design in Jamaica. The third research group was closely guided

to gain insights into the role of CSOs in meaningfully engaging youth in Jamaica. The findings highlighted that Jamaica’s CSOs are perceived to play a fundamental role as “a bridge helping to connect local community interests to much larger national and international agendas and organisations.” Based on their findings, the YAR participants developed factsheets which were disseminated widely among stakeholders. Two participants were invited to speak about their experience on national television.

The YAR initiative represents a unique opportunity to call attention to the pressing need to put young people at the core of knowledge production that can influence policymaking, in line with the UN Youth Strategy, Youth2030. Based on the roll-out of the pilot, the Cluster Office developed an overview of lessons learned that were shared with Field Offices around the world.



The Youth as Researchers in Jamaica present their findings on Peace, Citizen Security and Safety.

© UNDP / Ricardo Makyn

Youth, Peace and Security

The Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda aims at recognising and supporting young people to meaningfully engage in peacebuilding in their communities and wider society. The UN Security Council 2250, adopted in 2015, is the first thematic resolution on YPS acknowledging that “young people play an important and positive role in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security.”



Youth Consultation on YPS

Levels of crime and violence are very high in the Caribbean region. In the effort of contributing to a culture of peace, non-violence, and youth resilience, in November 2021, the Cluster Office conducted a virtual subregional consultation for young people (18–30 years old) from the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean on YPS, which is aligned with SDG 16 and builds on the UN Security Council Resolution 2250.

Participants joined from different Cluster Countries including from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. The consultation process captured the understanding of YPS, the recommendations and lessons learnt by the youth participants. This exercise allowed the UNESCO team, with the support and review of the youth participants, to develop a roadmap to guide youth-centred peace-building actions in 2022 to strengthen efforts to localise the YPS agenda in the Caribbean.

“Forums like this one are important, where our voices can be heard especially when decisions are made that affect us. Youth participation means making our opinions matter in policy making. Otherwise, we are forced to live with policies which do not reflect our needs and harness our potentials.”

– Youth participant
YPS Consultation, November 2021

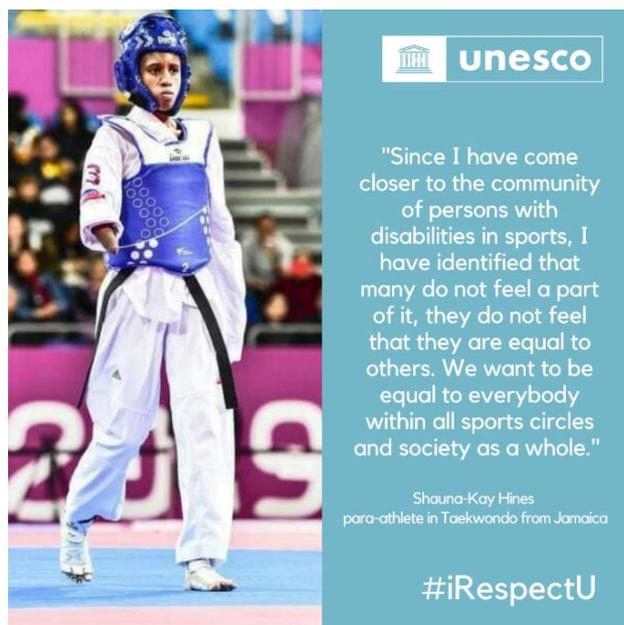
The YPS Roadmap provides an analytical summary of the YPS consultation that took place in 2021, by giving an overview of the activities and initiatives undertaken by participants on peace and security. The roadmap also analyses the challenges they faced and presents their recommendations for peace and security in the region. Based on those recommendations, a collaboration roadmap was developed together with the youth participants to jointly drive the YPS agenda in the subregion and ensure meaningful youth engagement.

In addition, UNESCO identified action areas where it can contribute its expertise, in partnership and close collaboration with the consultation participants, in order to advance the YPS agenda in the Dutch and English-speaking Caribbean. The action areas are capacity development; advocacy and policy work; visibility and awareness-raising; and meaningful youth engagement.



Youth Summit on Crime and Violence

On 21 and 22 September 2021, UNESCO partnered with UNDP to host the Youth Summit on Crime and Violence in Jamaica, where youth presented their ideas to address crime and violence in their communities. In a joint statement issued on International Youth Day, the youth leaders said they can and do play active roles as agents of positive and constructive change and believe that youth should be more involved in crime prevention and mitigation strategies. The event was supported by UNDP under the auspices of its AYVA project, in partnership with the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica, the PIOJ, RISE Life Management Services, and the Cluster Office.



#iRespectU Awareness-raising Campaign

#iRespectU is a social media awareness and visibility campaign for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion by young people in the Caribbean hosted by UNESCO’s SHS Sector, which is aligned with SDG 5, 10, 16 and 17. It aims to amplify youth voices by providing a platform for Caribbean youth to express their views.

Select successes of the campaign include the stories of 17 youth enjoying over 1,000 engagements (in the form of comments, likes, and shares) across social media, and stories and interviews of young Caribbean change-makers being highlighted on UNESCO’s communications channels. Interviews of note include conversations with Quacy Grant and Shavane Daley. Quacy Grant, who is President of the Guyana National Youth Council (GNYC), shared how youth are contributing to a more peaceful society in Guyana through the Youth Council. The interview with Shavane Daley, a UWI graduate and co-organiser of the side event on The Impact of COVID-19 on Persons with Disabilities in the Caribbean, highlighted how youth have contributed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in Cluster Countries with a focus on youth with disabilities. The #iRespectU campaign was also featured by the UN in Trinidad and Tobago in their weekly radio conversation.

Training Series for Youth-led Organisations

In an effort to strengthen capacity and promote youth-led action, the Cluster Office organised a series of training sessions for youth-led organisations from the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. The sessions leveraged UNESCO's methodology on meaningful youth engagement, thus allowing youth-led organisations to insert these concepts into their work. The training was coordinated with National Commissions and was delivered by a UNESCO-trained youth facilitator. Other sessions focused on gender equality and the meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities.

UNESCO also joined the UNDP-led initiative, AYVA, in partnership with the Ministry of National Security in Jamaica, and the PIOJ to counter youth crime and violence. Within this partnership, UNESCO conducted a series of training activities on Project Development

for Peacebuilding for 10 youth-led organisations in Jamaica. The training focused on meaningful youth engagement, as well as project management through the UNESCO Project Planner tool, to help youth develop their projects on citizen security, violence prevention, and peacebuilding. UNESCO also provided technical guidance and advice to the youth-led organisations during the design of their projects, which were then implemented in 2021 with seed funding from UNDP.

Comprometidos – Engaged 2021

Comprometidos – Engaged is a joint initiative by UNESCO, Ashoka and Socialab that seeks to actively involve young people in LAC in Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. In cooperation with the UNESCO Montevideo Office, the Cluster Office extended the invitation for the first time to Caribbean youth to join the social innovation initiative in 2021, to highlight the special importance of youth in Cluster Countries.

For the special call, Engaged with the Oceans, which was supported by National Geographic, several Caribbean teams joined the competition. The Caribbean Reef Restoration project, Project Renaissance, led by a group of young marine science students from Trinidad and Tobago, was among the three youth-led organisations that were awarded USD 2,000 to develop their innovative solutions for reef restoration and public education on climate change.

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YOUTH SUMMIT
ON CRIME AND VIOLENCE

A World Peace Day Event
SEPTEMBER 21 & 22
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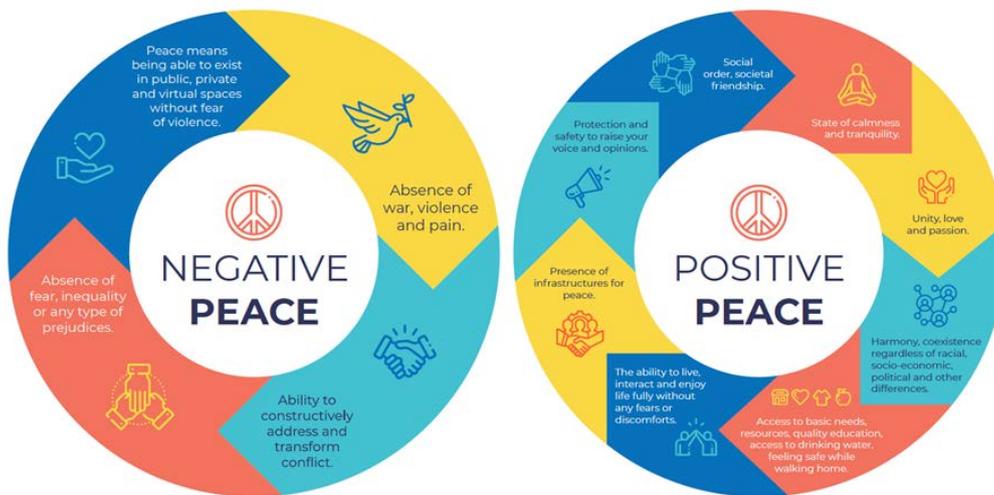
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THE JAMNAYA PROJECT UNICEF

Enhancing Capacities Towards a Culture of Peace, Non-Discrimination and Human Rights

Discrimination and exclusion can be experienced by various societal groups based on gender, income, disability, and age, among others. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated structural, social, economic, and political inequalities, with populations in vulnerable situations being further pushed into exclusion, and undermining peace. The pandemic has also exposed that discrimination remains a barrier to full inclusion in contemporary Caribbean societies.

The Cluster Office works in close partnership with different stakeholders, including national authorities, academia and civil society. It employs its convening power to provide policy advice and guidance, as well as to strengthen Cluster Countries’ capacity to promote a culture of peace and to advance effective policies and practices that are based on human rights and intercultural understanding to end all forms of discrimination and exclusion. Further, in the effort to uphold human rights, specific consideration has been given to key demographics, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities. These actions are a strong, interdisciplinary contribution toward SDGs 5, 11 and 16.



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In line with UNESCO’s Global Priority on Gender Equality, the Cluster Office supports knowledge creation and undertakes advocacy activities promoting women’s rights, raising public awareness, and advocating for the elimination of gender-based discrimination and all forms of violence against women in the Caribbean. It trained over 60 youth across 13 Cluster Countries on Gender Equality, Development and Advocacy, consistent with UNESCO’s commitment to removing barriers that hinder women’s personal and professional development and ensuring that everyone has fair, inclusive and equal access to opportunities, resources and tools that enable them to reach their full potential.

“From the ridiculing of women as hysterical or hormonal to the routine judgment of women based on their looks; from the myths and taboos that surround women’s natural body function to mansplaining and victim-blaming – misogyny has been everywhere.”

- António Guterres
United Nations Secretary-General

To address power structures, the Cluster Office, together with the Institute for Gender and Development Studies – Regional Coordination Office (IGDS-RCO) of UWI, launched the Caribbean Sheroes Initiative in April 2021. This subregional Initiative aims to foster knowledge and enhance the skills of young people to promote gender equality, in order to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

SHEROES: Women Activists Rising to the Challenge

In an event themed SHEROES: Women Activists Rising to the Challenge, 12 Jamaican CSOs were recognised as ‘Champions for Gender Equality’ for their significant leadership and contribution to Jamaican society in advancing women’s rights and social justice. The Hon. Olivia Grange, Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports in Jamaica and Chairperson of the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO, gave opening remarks during the launch.

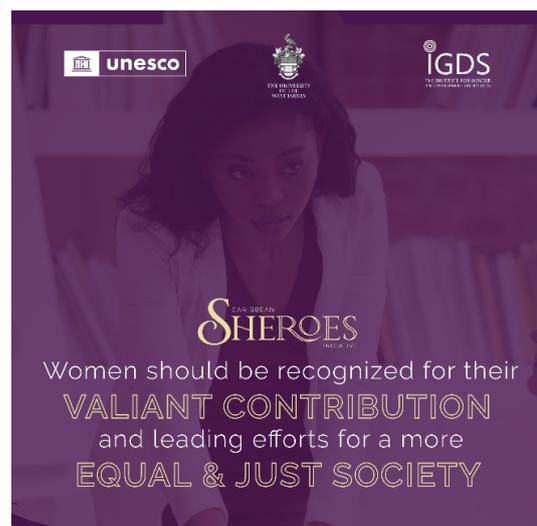
Sheroes Summer School on Gender Equality, Advocacy and Development

In October 2021, UNESCO, in partnership with IGDS-RCO, awarded scholarships to young people from across 13 countries and territories in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean to participate in the Sheroes Summer School for Gender Equality, Development, and Advocacy. Through intensive virtual evening classes, participants learned basic concepts and tools for human rights and sustainable development project planning, focusing on gender equality. Specifically, the training covered areas such as gender, gender mainstreaming, femininities and masculinities, and advocacy, in order to ground youth participants in the scholarship and practicum of advocacy. Additionally, through a sub-regional

approach, the young participants were given the opportunity to expand their network and meet peers, eminent scholars, activists, and experts from other Caribbean countries working on gender equality, human rights, and social justice.

Sheroes Toolkit for Civil Society Organisations

A toolkit for CSOs was developed in cooperation with IGDS-RCO and the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO. It documents the practice and lessons learned by the Jamaican CSOs that have worked to advance women’s rights and social justice. The Toolkit was distributed to over 500 partner organisations and individuals.





Orange the World – Sheroes Youth Action to End Gender-based Violence (GBV) in the Caribbean

Within the framework of the Caribbean Sheroes Initiative, UNESCO in partnership with IGDS-RCO organised regional training activities during October 2021 for youth and youth-led organisations, based on the Sheroes Summer School methodology. Thirty dedicated youth from across the Caribbean participated, and a training manual was developed to disseminate the methodology to other youth-led organisations across the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean.

The Cluster Office joined the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Against Women and Girls. UNESCO invited graduates from the Sheroes Summer School and Regional Training to join a visibility and awareness-raising campaign to raise their voices and showcase their actions to address violence against women and girls in the Caribbean region. Through the Caribbean Sheroes Initiative, over 700 followers were engaged through the SHS social media posts on raising awareness of gender-based violence and harmful norms.

“It is only through the unlearning of negative stereotypes, attitudes and behaviours around gender and sexuality that we will be able to bring an end to gender-based violence.”

– **Sapphire Alexander**

Participant of Sheroes Regional Training

“The training and material provided will be beneficial in coining my advocacy programme. I have now been given a framework which will serve to guide my programme from inception to completion. I am also grateful for the opportunities for networking in the region and the insight into the amazing work being done by other young people.”

– **Anonymous**

Participant of Sheroes Summer School

“We need to educate ourselves about rape culture, the normalisation of harmful behaviours, and the effects that generate gender-based violence. Check yourself, ask yourself, have I ever perpetuated rape culture. What does that look like? Does my environment encourage it? How can I shift this perspective? Understand from the victim’s point of view. Don’t blame them.”

– **Makesi Francis**

*Sheroes Summer School Graduate and
President of the Victim Eyes,
Trinidad and Tobago*

Advancing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

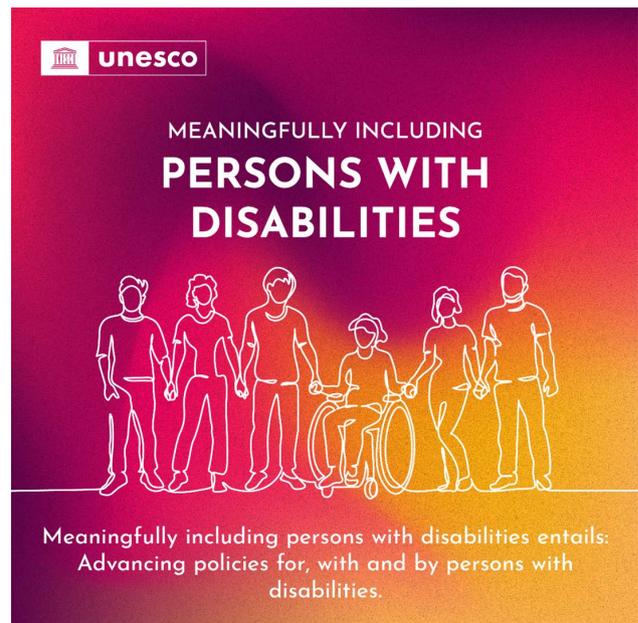
Globally, there are 1 billion persons with disabilities, 80% of whom live in countries of the Global South. One in every five women is likely to experience a disability in her life, while one in every 10 children has a disability. In the Caribbean, there are over 1 million persons living with some form of disability. Many face systemic barriers that limit their participation in social, economic, and political life, and prevent them from realising their full potential. COVID-19 has deepened existing inequalities and has intensified the challenges faced by this group. Further, persons with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty and experience higher rates of violence. The most affected are girls and women with disabilities, who are 10 times more exposed to gender-based violence than those without disabilities. UNESCO supports

Caribbean countries and territories in identifying best policy practices to promote human rights and tackle intersecting forms of discrimination against people with disabilities. The organisation places special emphasis on bridging the gap between research and policymaking, access to information, ensuring quality education and building a culture of peace.

Special Ministerial Conference for Specific Legislation for Persons with Disabilities in the Caribbean

On 27–28 July 2021, UNESCO co-organised the Special Ministerial Conference for Specific Legislation for Persons with Disabilities in the Caribbean, in partnership with UWI Centre for Disability Studies (UWICDS) and the CARICOM Special Rapporteur on Disability, and in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Digicel Foundation.

The two-day conference was held within the context of Cluster Countries signing and ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), commitments to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Declaration of Pétion Ville. However, only six Cluster Countries have developed specific legislation to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. The conference thus focused on developing a specific



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legislative model that countries can enact, in order to protect and uphold the rights of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean region.

Roundtable on the Impact of COVID-19 on Persons with Disabilities

The Cluster Office organised a public side-event together with UWICDS to identify actions that can feed into inclusive recovery initiatives. The discussion, which prominently featured youth voices, revealed societal challenges that hamper equal participation, such as barriers in accessing public services, including health care, education, and social protection.

Training for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Society

Two workshops were held for youth and youth-led organisations, media students and practitioners on "Understanding and Meaningfully Including Persons with Disabilities in Society", organised by UNESCO and UWICDS, in line with the UN CRPD, the SDGs and the Pétion Ville Declaration. The first workshop, in which more than 110 Caribbean youth participated, aimed to enhance capacity and to sensitise about how to advocate for the meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities in Caribbean society. Thanks to that session, a training manual was developed and disseminated. In collaboration with the Cluster Office's Communication and Information (CI) Sector, the second workshop targeted media workers, journalists and media students.

"I invite you to advocate not only for a new normal, but also encourage a strengthened global solidarity, which I trust will be more egalitarian, more equitable, just and more sustainable."

Saadia Sánchez-Vegas, PhD

Director and Representative

UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean

International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition

The International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition aims to inscribe the tragedy of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in the memory of all peoples. In accordance with The Slave Route project, this commemoration should provide an opportunity for collective consideration of the historic causes, the methods, and the consequences of this fearful moment in history, and for an analysis of

the interactions and dynamics between Africa, Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean.

On 23 August 2021, Casa de las Américas, the Cuba National Commission for UNESCO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and with the support of UNESCO, organised a panel discussion to strengthen the culture and values passed on from Africa to its diaspora in order to promote cultural expression, integration and mutual understanding, while raising awareness of the terrible past of the transatlantic slave trade. This activity is in line with UNESCO's Global Appeal against Racism, adopted at the 210th session of UNESCO's Executive Board in the fight against exclusion and racial discrimination.

The panel session provided a historical view of the Slave Trade, linking past and present through a compelling analysis of recent LAC research on the Slave Trade, the Slave Trade as a literary theme in Latin American novels, the legacy of the Slave Trade, and the quest for justice and equity in the Caribbean.

Connecting Research, Policy, and Practice

Inequalities that permeate different areas of social life are often multidimensional and related to the unequal distribution of resources and power between different groups in society. Moreover, COVID-19 has been exacerbating existing inequalities in already vulnerable Caribbean SIDS. To address this, and create more equitable societies, requires a holistic analysis of complex and often intersecting dimensions, which goes beyond a mere analysis of the variables of income and wealth distribution. A holistic study of inequalities has been proposed that will encompass academic debates and data on issues ranging from economic, social, cultural, political, environmental, spatial, and knowledge inequalities.

Amplifying the Voice of Caribbean SIDS: Towards an Inclusive Recovery from COVID-19

The disparate socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Caribbean SIDS have further validated the need for greater attention to be given to the inequality being experienced and the need for more equitable societies. The pandemic has put an additional strain on societies and has exposed deep-rooted and often systemic inequalities that go far beyond access to public services, such as health and education. To tackle these inequalities, Caribbean SIDS need better data and more quality social science research. The initiative, Amplifying the Voice of Caribbean SIDS: Towards an Inclusive Recovery from COVID-19, was launched to connect research, policy, and practice on equitable and inclusive recovery in the Caribbean. Outlined below are key actions designed and implemented within the framework of that Initiative.



Amplifying the voice of **Caribbean SIDS in** the global discussion on COVID-19

Webinar: Re-imagining the World to Come in Caribbean SIDS

For a virtual roundtable entitled Imagining the World to Come in Caribbean SIDS – Laboratory of Ideas: The Post COVID-19 era, the Cluster Office invited scholars, activists, and young people from Cluster Countries to discuss the effect of COVID-19 and to explore

post-crisis opportunities. The virtual roundtable was part of a global rethinking process, initiated by UNESCO, to bring together stakeholders within and across regions to promote an environment that generates a broad range of ideas and debates – both on the pandemic and on its long-term impact on transformation – for a sustainable future.



The *all-of-society approach* taken by the Caribbean in *tackling the COVID-19 pandemic* is offered as a *best practice for other SIDS*



Prof. Dr. Clive Landis
Pro Vice Chancellor, University of the
West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados



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Knowledge Series on Equitable and Inclusive Recovery from COVID-19

Addressing the exacerbating inequalities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic requires a comprehensive understanding of the underlying dynamics and drivers that play a role in developing a long-term recovery strategy. Translating knowledge into actionable strategies has become a powerful tool to support policy decisions and build partnerships.

The UNESCO Knowledge Series on Inclusive and Equitable Recovery from COVID-19 in Cluster Countries aims to provide SHS insights and policy recommendations for an inclusive recovery process from COVID-19 grounded in Caribbean realities. The series focuses on the vulnerabilities and development potential of Cluster Countries. Eleven think-pieces were developed by 10 key experts from the subregion, including youth, civil society representatives as well as outstanding academics.

Multistakeholder Dialogue Sessions on (Re-)connecting Research, Policy, and Practice

UNESCO, in collaboration with UWI, convened three Dialogue Sessions throughout 2021 aimed at building multistakeholder partnerships and generating knowledge about recovery efforts in Cluster Countries. The sessions sought to increase the voice of vulnerable populations and to analyse the complex and often systemic inequities that need to be addressed, in order to contribute to reshaping the region's long-term policy agenda for inclusive recovery.

The Dialogue Sessions brought together a cross-section of Caribbean society, including academics, youth, policymakers, activists, persons with disabilities, and civil society organisations. Through the sessions, SHS knowledge and policy recommendations for an inclusive recovery process from COVID-19 were shared, and the special vulnerabilities and potential of SIDS were also highlighted.

Capacity Strengthening and Awareness-raising on Artificial Intelligence and Frontier Technologies

In the Caribbean subregion, the use and integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) are on the rise. Its rapid introduction and uptake give it great potential to address some of the Caribbean's most pressing development challenges, and support SIDS in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

On the other hand, increased use of AI systems may come with inherent challenges. For this reason, the role, impact, and ethics behind AI are also of importance to SIDS, as they experience specific development challenges and vulnerabilities. Focusing on better understanding the ethical implications, while untangling underpinning biases, is critical.

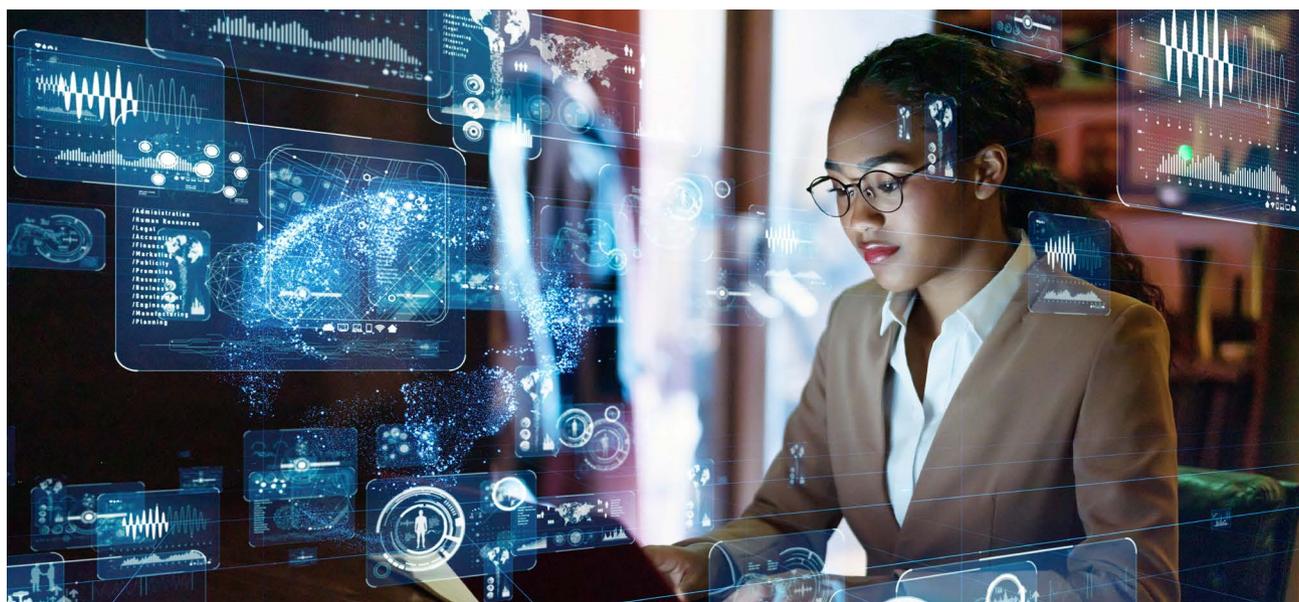
UNESCO is the UN's leading agency for the humane dimensions of the Information Society and the ethical implications of AI. UNESCO embarked on a process for the development of a Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, an ethical guiding compass and global normative instrument to protect and promote human rights. This Recommendation on the Ethics of AI was officially adopted by the Member States in November 2021, at the 41st session of the UNESCO General Conference.



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Ethics of Artificial Intelligence

In July 2020, the Cluster Office organised a Caribbean expert consultation on the first version of the draft Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, which was prepared in May 2020 by the Ad Hoc Expert Group (AHEG).



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UNESCO Talk: Spotlight on Gender Equality and Artificial Intelligence in the Caribbean

In December 2020, the online event entitled "UNESCO Talk: Spotlight on Gender Equality and Artificial Intelligence in the Caribbean" brought together 50 participants and was supported by the CARICOM Secretariat. The aim of the event was to discuss the biases found in AI training data sets, algorithms, and devices, which have the potential of spreading and reinforcing harmful gender stereotypes. Considering the ubiquity of AI in our societies, these gender biases risk further stigmatising and marginalising women in the Caribbean, and globally.

UNESCO Caribbean Artificial Intelligence Initiative A flagship intersectoral collaboration: CI and SHS Sectors

Although AI is becoming increasingly integrated into everyday life, many SIDS have not yet developed strategies and national policies to manage the impact of AI on their societies. The SHS and CI Sectors embarked on the intersectoral Caribbean Artificial Intelligence Initiative, with the objective of strengthening national and human capacity in AI in the Caribbean subregion, while also positioning UNESCO as the leading UN agency on the ethical dimensions of the Information Society. The Caribbean Artificial Intelligence Initiative seeks to support the development of a subregional strategy for the ethical, inclusive, and humane use of AI in Cluster Countries. Under the initiative several activities have been executed.

Artificial Intelligence Forum: Opportunities to Accelerate Human Progress for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States

From 18–19 February 2021, the Cluster Office together with the Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica, the Information for All Programme (IFAP), and the National Committee of Jamaica organised the Artificial Intelligence Forum: Opportunities to Accelerate Human Progress for Sustainable Development in Caribbean SIDS. The two-day event, which took place virtually, addressed multiple dimensions of the potential of AI and related technologies to benefit sustainable development in the areas such as education, climate change, cultural and creative industries such as film, arts, music, and job creation, and to enhance entrepreneurship in the Cluster Countries.

Webinar dedicated to youth and the possibilities of Artificial Intelligence

In April 2021, the Cluster Office, in partnership with the BCJ, invited Caribbean youth to discuss the possibilities of how a future with AI could look like through the online event, Reimagining the World with Artificial Intelligence.

Caribbean Artificial Intelligence Policy Roadmap

“While the rest of the world is investing in AI, the Caribbean is still talking about it.”

– Leslie Lee Fork

*Director, A.I., Analytics and Automation
Incus Services, Trinidad and Tobago*



© Broadcasting Commission Jamaica / Clementina Villarroel

Three stakeholder consultation workshops were organised to develop a Caribbean Artificial Intelligence Policy Roadmap. The consultation workshops were facilitated by Erica Simmons, Executive Director for Jamaica’s first 4th Industrial Revolution Technology Research and Development Centre at the Caribbean Maritime University in Kingston, Jamaica. Each workshop hosted different stakeholder groups, including the public sector, policy-makers, and technical experts; the private sector; and academia, civil society, and youth, to discuss the draft AI Policy Roadmap document. The outputs of the workshop discussions, as reflected in the roadmap, aim to guide governments in Cluster Countries in adopting ethical AI public policies and strategies. The Roadmap will be launched in June 2022.

Harnessing Sports for Peace and Sustainable Development

Sports are a recognised instrument for development and peace, as it tends to ignore both geographical borders and social differences. It promotes social inclusion and economic development in different geographical, cultural, and political contexts. UNESCO, as the UN's lead agency for quality physical education and sport, promotes the educational, cultural, and social dimensions of sport and quality physical education. The organisation provides assistance, advisory services, and guidance to Member States wishing to further develop or strengthen their sports policies, in line with the Kazan Action Plan.

The fight against doping in sports is based on two fundamental principles: the protection of the physical and mental health of athletes – both amateurs and

professionals – and the preservation of sports ethics and values. UNESCO is actively involved in the anti-doping fight through its normative work, notably the International Convention against Doping in Sport (ICDS), as well as through international cooperation, preventive education, and capacity building.

In 2021, in cooperation with the Secretariat of the ICDS, the Cluster Office supported the convening of a ministerial meeting entitled, Traditional Pharmacopoeia, sport values, and COVID-19: a regional perspective from Latin America and the Caribbean. Additionally, and in celebration of the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, the Cluster Office, together with the Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO conducted a series of workshops with sports practitioners and physical education professionals, on the role of sports in peacebuilding, and on UNESCO's 2021 resources on Quality Physical Education.



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Looking Ahead: Biennium 2022—2023

Recognising the long-lasting development consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic across the English and the Dutch-speaking Caribbean, during the new biennium, the Cluster Office will continue to harness an inclusive and equitable recovery from the pandemic. Furthermore, it will work to strengthen social policies and promote the research-policy-practice nexus to address development challenges and promote more inclusive, equitable, and peaceful societies. Indeed, in the Caribbean subregion, the Cluster Office aims to strengthen Cluster Countries' capacity at different levels and to advance policies and practices that contribute to reducing inequalities in their broad and interconnected dimensions, promoting wellbeing, and benefiting those who are being left behind.

Furthermore, the Cluster Office will also leverage flagship initiatives the sector spearheads at the global level. UNESCO recognises Caribbean SIDS as a global priority group and will therefore work closely with governments at the national and local level, academia, UNESCO Chairs, civil society, private sector, and sister UN agencies to tackle racism and discrimination, all forms of violence, inequalities, and gender disparities.

Promoting inclusive public policies in Caribbean SIDS

In the framework of the Amplifying the Voice of Caribbean Small Island Developing States: Towards an Inclusive Recovery from COVID-19 Initiative, and as a contribution to shaping the long-term policy agenda in response to the inequalities created and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and based on the outcomes of the Dialogue Sessions, UNESCO in partnership with UWI launched a knowledge tool,

Towards a More Inclusive Post-COVID Recovery, in March 2022. The knowledge tool is a model policy analysis tool that can be used to develop more inclusive and equitable policies in Cluster Countries. The tool will be presented at the Latin American and Caribbean Conference of Social Sciences in June 2022, the largest academic and political event of Social Sciences and Humanities worldwide.



Kadisha Mitchell,
Caribbean youth representative at the CLACSO2022

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YPS Support Group

In line with the UN Youth Strategy, Youth2030, and youth being a global priority group for UNESCO, the Cluster Office established a YPS Support Group that serves as an informal mechanism to provide a space for young people to engage in the roll-out of UNESCO's actions on YPS for 2022, which were designed in consultation with youth from Cluster Countries. The YPS Support Group has been invited to co-lead the implementation of the YPS Roadmap by co-creating joint actions to advance the YPS agenda in Cluster Countries.

Technical Support to UN Country Offices and CARICOM on Meaningful Youth Engagement

To realise the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda Meaningful Youth Engagement (MYE) must be at the core of any UN intervention, including in its efforts to advance youth strategies with national and regional counterparts, such as governments, civil society, and youth groups. In this context, the Cluster Office will seek to put at the service of the UN Country Team and regional bodies such as CARICOM, its global expertise on how to work with and for young people. Concretely, tailored workshops and training activities on meaningful youth engagement will be designed to support the efforts of national and regional stakeholders by enhancing the capacity of government stakeholders, technical ministry personnel, UN youth focal points, and youth.

Learning spaces for young people from the region

Within its actions to enhance the capacity of youth and youth-led organisations, the Cluster Office organised a virtual ‘Youth Talk’ with the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth. The activity provided a space for young people in Cluster Countries to learn about the YPS Agenda and the UN Youth Strategy, Youth2030.

Amplifying the voice of Caribbean SIDS in Regional Fora

UNESCO recognises SIDS as a priority group, and therefore within this framework, the Cluster Office supports amplifying the voices of Cluster Countries and their key potential and vulnerabilities by ensuring the participation and representation of Caribbean experts and representatives in international fora. For example, the Cluster Office has ensured the representation of Caribbean SHS experts at the 9th Latin American and Caribbean Conference of Social Sciences in 2022, to give more visibility to the



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Sciences in 2022, to give more visibility to the academic work in social sciences that is being carried out in the subregion, as well as to promote greater integration and collaboration between LAC. Furthermore, in collaboration with the UN Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Cluster Office contributed to the organisation of Caribbean Youth Dialogues and the Caribbean side-event within the framework of the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum 2022, which positioned youth speakers in the key areas of UNESCO’s mandate, including education and climate change.



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Joint UN Programme: SALIENT (Saving Lives Entity) Initiative A flagship intersectoral collaboration: Education and SHS Sectors

In support of the Government of Jamaica's national priorities to reduce violence, crime and the proliferation of illicit firearms, as well as in keeping with the SDGs, UNESCO, is part of the Reducing Small Arms and Light Weapons in Jamaica joint programme, along with UNDP, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The programme has been designed to be directly aligned with, and to contribute to, the objectives of the larger SALIENT (Saving Lives Entity) initiative.

The reduction of crime is a national imperative for the Government of Jamaica under its Vision 2030 mandate. Specifically, actions are aligned to the Education Sector's Safe Schools' Programme (SSP), which is being undertaken jointly by the MOE and the Ministry of National Security, with activities aimed at reducing violence and promoting peaceful dialogue in schools.

The SALIENT Fund established by the Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and UNDP and set up within the Peacebuilding Fund supports multi-year, cross-sectional, sustainable assistance to joint programmes to be implemented in countries most affected by illicit small arms. Jamaica has been selected as one of two pilot countries to benefit from SALIENT to support the development of the safety and security programme.

As guided by the GCE framework, and aligned to SDG 4 and SDG 16, Cluster Office's Education and SHS Sectors will lead interventions to support the prevention of violence in schools, and work with and for students and teachers in school communities most affected by this issue. UNESCO, through capacity development initiatives, will contribute to the enhancement of cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural competencies for global citizenship for both young people and teachers.

Mobilising Women's Creativity for Sustainable Development and Cultural Policies in the Caribbean

On 19 May 2022, UNESCO in partnership with UN Women organised an online debate to reflect on and discuss existing barriers, inequalities, and challenges faced by women in the cultural and creative sector. Similarly, it aimed at identifying policy recommendations and proposals for developing more inclusive and gender-sensitive/gender-responsive public policies in the cultural and creative industries in the Caribbean. The event focused on women's training and capacity development, bridging the gender divide in the digital environment, and the participation of women in cultural life.



CULTURE

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CULTURE

The protection of a country's Culture not only reinforces its sense of identity and that of its citizens, but also enhances their self-determination and how they present themselves in the world. Citizens and countries as a whole need to understand and acknowledge their history, in order to understand their present and to be in a position to proactively craft their future.

To that end, Culture has been widely recognised as a powerful enabler of sustainable development. The effects of climate change, poverty, gender inequality and societal breakdown are among the many challenges experienced by Caribbean SIDS, but for which Culture, in fostering identity, innovation and creativity can help address.

In 2020–2021 the Cluster Office worked towards implementing the UNESCO Culture Conventions including those protecting and safeguarding World Heritage and Living Heritage, preventing Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Properties, as well as promoting the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in Cluster Countries. According to the biennial priorities, the Cluster Office mainly focused on the promotion of culture for sustainable development (SDG 6.6, SDG 8.3) and the protection of cultural diversity (SDG 4.7, SDG 11.4, SDG 13.1, SDG 16) through the implementation of integrated operational and normative projects.

"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots."

– Marcus Garvey

Culture and creativity are essential to building the resilience of Caribbean communities; this becomes even more true in times of crisis.

At a time when billions of people are physically separated from one another, culture brings us together. At a time of enormous anxiety and uncertainty, culture provides comfort, inspiration and hope. “Covid-19 has brought into stark relief, as crises often do, the necessity of culture for people and communities,” said Ernesto Ottone, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture. “Yet even as we rely on culture to get us through this crisis, culture is also suffering.”

Culture and Disaster Resilience

Cognisant of the value and importance of safeguarding cultural heritage in the Caribbean, the Cluster Office in partnership with CDEMA hosted a workshop on ‘Disaster Resilience in the Caribbean’s Culture Sector’ from 11–12 March 2020 in Bridgetown, Barbados. The workshop brought together participants from the cultural sector among Cluster Countries, as well as national disaster management agencies, humanitarian actors, and development partners, to discuss disaster resilience in the culture sector, as well as to identify opportunities for collaboration between cultural and disaster practitioners management.

Highlighted during the workshop was the need to build awareness and foster synergies between policies and practices for the protection of culture from the effects of disasters through capacity building, awareness-raising, and advocacy. Guidelines towards the Development of a Strategy and Plan of Action for Disaster Resilience and Recovery in the Caribbean Culture Sector were discussed and later reviewed and endorsed by the participants.

Since that joint CDEMA-UNESCO workshop which brought together both culture and disaster managers, the Cluster Office has implemented various activities in support of this mandate to build resilience in the sector, which are outlined below.

“Now, more than ever, people need culture. Culture makes us resilient. It gives us hope. It reminds us we are not alone, that we are part of a larger place in life. That is why we should do all we can to support culture, safeguard our heritage and empower artistes and cultural workers to recover from this crisis and build back better. We all need to join hands by supporting culture in our family, our community, our city, our country—however we can.”

– Saadia Sánchez-Vegas, PhD

*Director and Representative
UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean*



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Elaboration of the 'Caribbean Plan of Action for Disaster Resilience and Recovery of the Culture Sector'

Building a resilient culture sector was included in the discussions of the 28th and 29th Meeting of the Regional Cultural Committee (RCC) of CARICOM (October 2020 and December 2021), where the CARICOM RCC decided to develop the Caribbean Plan of Action for Disaster Resilience and Recovery of the Culture Sector. The Cluster Office engaged a team of regional experts to work with relevant ministries and institutions to undertake the needed study of CARICOM Member States and Associate Members to further develop the Caribbean Plan of Action for Disaster Resilience and Recovery of the Culture Sector. It is expected that the draft action plan will be presented and discussed with CDEMA and CARICOM in 2022.

Pilot Initiatives

Following the UNESCO-CDEMA 2020 workshop and subsequent subregional consultations, pilot

initiatives were launched to adapt the Guidelines for the Development of a National Strategy and Plan of Action for Disaster Resilience and Recovery in the Caribbean's Culture Sector, to the national context in select countries. The selected pilot countries were Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Curaçao, and Jamaica, and were meant to encourage dialogue within the various sub-components of the culture sector on the importance of developing key actions according to each phase of the disaster cycle. The pilots should also encourage dialogue with partners in disaster management, and climate change, among others. The countries are expected to develop specific case studies, and following comprehensive consultation, submit an adapted national strategy and an implementation plan.



Craft of Kalinago indigenous communities in Dominica

© UNESCO / Yuri Peshkov



The La Soufrière volcano eruption covered the island in a layer of ash

© Kingsley Roberts

Support to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in Response to La Soufrière's Eruption

On 9 April 2021, the La Soufrière volcano located in the north of the island of Saint Vincent began a period of explosive eruptions resulting in a humanitarian crisis. The impact of the volcanic eruptions was further compounded by the effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, the cultural sector was not spared from the impact of significant ash fall and pyroclastic flows, including in the capital city of Kingstown. Living heritage and the livelihoods of indigenous peoples – such as the Kalinagos and the Garinagu – were also affected. Further, the status of heritage in many parts of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remained unknown, due to the inability to access the affected areas, and the absence of a complete national inventory of cultural sites, heritage buildings, and collections.

Following initial consultations carried out by the Cluster Office, the Ministry of Tourism, Sports and Culture of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines National Commis-

sion for UNESCO and the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines National Trust, the support of the Heritage Emergency Fund (HEF) was requested to implement urgent activities for and to strengthen the capacity in, the culture sector, as part of the overall emergency response to the volcanic eruptions.

The HEF-funded activity specifically provided support to conduct a rapid damage and risk assessment of cultural heritage institutions, moveable and immovable heritage, in partnership with the Caribbean Heritage Emergency Network (CHEN). Cultural organisations and depositories of culture located in the south of Saint Vincent experienced minor damages by ashfall, but realised considerable financial losses from being closed for several weeks. Petroglyph sites located in the vicinity of the volcano were largely exposed to the volcanic eruption and the ashfall.

HEF supported the execution of four national capacity-strengthening workshops. The first workshop focused on a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, as applied to the culture sector, and was attended by 20 national partners. A second virtual training session on the safeguarding and promotion of living heritage in crisis situations had 14 participants from government institutions and local communities. The third workshop focused on 'Building Resilience and Recovery in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' Culture Sector', and was attended by 40 participants and sought to strengthen the integration of culture in national disaster risk planning, as well as facilitate collaboration and dialogue between the culture and DRM

stakeholders in the development of national strategy documents and action plans. Finally, the fourth national capacity-strengthening workshop was on cleaning, maintaining, and protecting different types of heritage within the context of volcanic eruptions, and was held in collaboration with CHEN.

Under the HEF support, the necessary personal protective equipment was also provided, in order to complete inventories and improve the storage capacity of cultural repositories, particularly for the National Public Library, Archives, and Documentation Services of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

“We had the volcanic activities, we are still going through the COVID-19 pandemic, and during all of this, we noted the culture; a number of persons may not see culture as a priority. However, UNESCO, as one of its mandates, noted that culture is always important to the people of a nation.”

– Janeil N. Henry-Rose
Secretary-General

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines National Commission for UNESCO

The key actions identified by stakeholders for building the resilience and the recovery of Saint Vincent and The Grenadines culture sector for each phase of the disaster management cycle, will lead to the development of the national strategy document, and will support better coordination of culture stakeholders with disaster agencies and first responders. Additionally, the activity highlighted the need for further inventorying of intangible and tangible heritage located in Saint Vincent and The Grenadines, in order to establish the pre-disaster baseline data, and to reinforce the protection and safeguarding of cultural assets.

Protection of World Heritage

The Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting conducted by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in LAC started in 2021. The managers of the 147 World Heritage properties (101 cultural, 38 natural, and eight mixed) in the LAC region have been invited to evaluate the situation of their respective properties using an online questionnaire, which should be submitted by the end of July 2022.



Saint Lucia Pitons Management Area

© Ko Hon Chiu Vincent

Pilots for DRM and Climate Change Management plans of World Heritage Properties

In the 2020–2021 biennium, a series of pilot activities to support the inclusion, or updating, of DRM and climate change actions in the management plans of World Heritage properties, were implemented. Following a subregional virtual session in June 2021, pilot projects were conducted at Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison (Barbados), Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park (Jamaica), Pitons Management Areas (Saint Lucia), Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park (Saint Kitts and Nevis), and Historic Area of Willemstad (Curaçao).

The management authorities for these properties, in collaboration with their respective National Commissions, undertook a desk review of relevant resources and assessed existing management documents to identify gaps relevant to DRM and climate change. Consultations were held with stakeholders at the local, national and regional levels to better understand the disaster and climate change context of the property, and to develop its vulnerability profile, which includes identifying and describing risks and the actions taken to address identified vulnerabilities, plus a suitable monitoring framework with indicators.

Conservation of Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park

The World Heritage property, Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park, in Saint Kitts and Nevis, is a well-preserved example of 17th- and 18th-century military architecture, but had experienced structural deterioration. The Orillon Bastion had collapsed due to heavy rains. Project assistance to conserve the property sought to preserve the original style of construction and the materials used. Works commenced in August 2019 and were completed in June 2020.

Inventory of Potential World Heritage sites

A project, Investigation and Analysis of the Cultural and Natural Heritage inventory of potential World Heritage sites of Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, was implemented and was completed in June 2020. It allowed cooperation between Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in the inventorying of their heritage sites.



Local men explaining how to process the cacao beans and be converted into chocolate.

© Grenada National Trust

World Heritage and Tourism

The services sector, and more specifically tourism, is the bedrock of the economy of most Cluster Countries. However, and although in many instances a country's world heritage properties strengthen its attractiveness as a tourist location, deterioration of these properties can be accelerated by the human and environmental traffic to these properties. This uneasy tension is the impetus for the project, Safeguarding Heritage in the Caribbean through Developing Sustainable Tourism Strategy, which in the first instance, is focusing on capacity-building initiatives. Across the biennium, a SIDS Capacity Building Project was implemented to build the capacity of the World Heritage site managers and other key stakeholders in Cluster Countries for planning and managing sustainable tourism in the region. The project also facilitated the drafting of the nomination.

The Industrial Heritage of Barbados: The Story of Sugar and Rum, to the World Heritage List through technical support and the execution of a national capacity-building workshop in October 2020.

A subregional capacity-building workshop on sustainable tourism for Cluster Countries was held online on 23 and 30 November 2021. The workshop sought to strengthen the capacity of World Heritage site managers and other key stakeholders and communities in planning and managing sustainable tourism at World Heritage properties in the region. It introduced a series of training and capacity-building tools and strategies to help site managers and other tourism stakeholders manage tourism at their sites more sustainably.

Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

The LAC region was the first to execute the reformed periodic reporting process for implementation of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage with the statutory deadline of 15 December 2020. Online training courses for national focal points were conducted in May and June 2020. Twelve Cluster Countries successfully submitted their periodic reports.

The Cluster Office is managing the implementation of several approved projects under the ICH Fund, which are outlined below.



Traditional sloop-building in Carriacou, Grenada.

© Grenada National Trust

Strengthening Inventory Preparation Capacity

In Saint Kitts and Nevis, the project ‘Strengthening Inventory Preparation Capacity for Implementing 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage,’ was executed in 2019–2021. The project focused on: strengthening national inventorying capacity, with a view to safeguarding the country’s intangible cultural heritage; building awareness about the 2003 Convention and the current state of living heritage in the country; enhancing the capacity to properly document and inventory that heritage, and identifying elements in need of urgent

safeguarding; and providing educational materials for practitioners and the communities concerned.

Three projects received funding under the ICH Fund: ‘Strengthening capacity for the implementation of the 2003 Convention for the safeguarding of the ICH in Antigua and Barbuda’, ‘Proud of my heritage, transmission, and safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage in Grenada through inventorying and education initiatives’, along with ‘Strengthening capacity at the national and local levels for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in Dominica’. These projects are to be implemented in 2022–2023.

A project for ‘Safeguarding living heritage during emergencies in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific and the Caribbean’ was developed in collaboration with UNESCO’s Living Heritage Entity, the Cluster Office, and the Cluster Office for the Pacific States. The project, generously funded by the Japanese Funds-in-Trust, aims to provide timely support for communities so that they can mobilise their living heritage to prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters. Additionally, and through its capacity-building approach, the project will serve as a model in other SIDS and countries prone to natural disasters. In the first instance, the project will be implemented in The Bahamas and Belize in 2022–2024.

Local Income-Generating Activities with the Charles Town Maroons

Two training workshops were conducted to help the Charles Town Maroons of Jamaica diversify their income-generating activities based on Maroon living heritage and utilising local raw materials. The workshop focused on wicker and beading work, and on hand-sewn craft, which was delivered by an elder trainer from the wider Windward Maroon Community.



© Charles Town Maroon Council Limited

Living Heritage in the face of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about unique challenges that countries had not experienced in several decades, which prompted the publication of Recommendations of the UNESCO Report ‘Living Heritage in the face of COVID-19 for the pandemic recovery phase’. Thus, several small projects were implemented in the Cluster Countries, including those outlined below.



© Sint Maarten National Commission for UNESCO

Soualigaman versus COVID-19 in Sint Maarten

The Soualigaman versus COVID-19 project, featured Soualigaman, an animated local superhero character, who illustrated the life-changing experiences people on Sint Maarten encountered due to the pandemic, the impact on the enactment and transmission of living heritage, and how they responded to this situation. The colourful, animated character was selected to address this topic since children and adults would be more inclined to listen to the message/lesson being shared by Soualigaman.

Living Heritage and Crises situations in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Three virtual half-day workshops were conducted on safeguarding heritage in times of crisis, specifically in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, which as previously stated, experienced both the COVID-19 pandemic and the eruption of La Soufrière volcano. Participants were able to share critical information based on their own experience; on resources and endangered ICH; and on the political, economic, and demographic conditions that have been affecting living heritage. The workshops revealed the importance of inventories, developing a tool and undertaking surveys to assess impact, building resiliency for living heritage, and identifying key actions.



© Barbados Today

Intangible Cultural Heritage in Motion, Barbados

The initiative, Intangible Cultural Heritage in Motion in Barbados, was designed to promote the country’s intangible cultural heritage to its younger generations, while documenting information and supporting the transfer of knowledge from older generations. The activity used technology to facilitate and deepen knowledge sharing and exchange, in order to connect the past to the present for the benefit of future generations. The digital images, videos, and online video discussions highlighted key aspects of Barbados’ ICH captured through the voices of knowledge bearers and through images depicting Barbados’ ICH.

Prevention of Illicit Trafficking Of Cultural Properties

Given the illicit traffic of cultural property in the Caribbean region, a subregional workshop on the prevention of illicit trafficking of cultural properties was held in Kingston, Jamaica, from 2–5 March 2020. The workshop provided a platform for exchanging practices and identifying measures to help Cluster Countries make progress in ratifying and implementing the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970 Convention), and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects.

Government authorities, representatives of international organisations, as well as experts from the cultural sector, police and customs officials, lawyers, and museum directors from Cluster Countries participated. During the workshop, participants, who numbered between 55 and 70 individuals, addressed the problem of illegally exported and imported cultural property in Cluster Countries and received support from the World Customs Organisation, the INTERPOL General Secretariat and its office in Argentina, for the steps to ratify the Conventions to protect their cultural heritage.



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Capacity Building Workshops

In June 2021, Jamaica held a workshop on illicit trafficking for the Jamaica Border Control agencies. The three-day workshop successfully trained more than 70 participants daily on the nature, diversity, and significance of the cultural property, on national and international frameworks, as well as strategies and tools used by regional and international communities to combat these illegal activities. The workshop was supported by the UNESCO Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean in Havana and the Cluster Office.

A virtual seminar was also organised to strengthen the capacity of museum personnel in the Caribbean

in the handling of collections, with a focus on risk management and the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property. The seminar was held from 8–26 November 2021, with about 30 specialists and technicians from museum institutions in the Spanish- and English-speaking Caribbean, including Argentina, The Bahamas, Belize, Cuba, Cayman Islands, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. The workshop sought to strengthen the capacity of museum staff to ensure proper management, conservation, and preservation of their collections, and to improve their response to possible natural and human threats.



Integrated Approaches to the Governance of Culture

Re|Shaping Cultural Policies

Through various training workshops, consultations, and facilitation of an international expert, Jamaica successfully submitted its Quadrennial Periodic Report (QPR) under the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, on 4 September 2020. The project, Re|Shaping Cultural Policies for the Promotion of Fundamental Freedoms and the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in Jamaica, started in 2019 and will end in 2022, and facilitated the preparation of the QPR. In 2022, the project will continue with the implementation of training activities on media diversity, the publication and dissemination of the QPR, ResiliArt debates, and the launching in Jamaica of the Global Report, 'Re|Shaping Policies for Creativity'.

Governance of Culture in Developing Countries

From December 2021, Jamaica embarked upon a project entitled, EU/UNESCO Expert Facility on the Governance of Culture in Developing Countries: Support for new regulatory frameworks to strengthen the cultural and creative industries and promote South-South cooperation. The project is helping Jamaica to create the necessary regulatory frameworks to better support further expansion of its Culture and Creative Industries (CCIs) and creative actors. Additionally, and through the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment, and Sport, the project is supporting Jamaica in developing a Creative Economy Act that will streamline the policies and the administration of CCIs. The Act will be based on the current draft of the Cultural and Creative Industries Policy.

Measuring the Economic Contribution of the Cultural Industries

The Ministry of Creative Industries and Innovation of Antigua and Barbuda is assessing the economic contribution of the country's cultural industries to national development. To inform future cultural policy-making, the country is implementing a project, Measuring the economic contribution of the cultural industries to Antigua and Barbuda's national development, supported by the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD).



Saadia Sánchez-Vegas, Director and Representative of the UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean, hands over the report 'Re|Shaping Policies for Creativity' to Hon. Olivia Grange, Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, Jamaica.

© UNESCO / Catherina Schönhammer

Evaluating Jamaica's Cultural and Creative Industries

With support from the IFCD, the Jamaica Business Development Corporation is implementing a project to evaluate Jamaica's CCIs. Through the project, Jamaica is securing robust data on its CCIs, which will provide background and context for more informed cultural policymaking.



Creative Caribbean: An Ecosystem of 'Play' for Growth and Development

Since January 2021, the Cluster Office, the CARICOM Secretariat, and UWI have been implementing a joint project, Creative Caribbean: An Ecosystem of 'Play' for Growth and Development, supported by the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) programme, Towards a Viable Cultural Industry: Supporting the Cultural and Creative Sectors in the ACP countries, and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, totalling €3 million. The project seeks to foster economic, human and social development of the Caribbean region by stimulating inclusive, diversified, and sustainable growth of the cultural economy. That goal would be achieved through: job creation for women, men, and youth within a decent work framework; the creation, production, and distribution of cultural and creative goods and services; improving market access; and supporting regional and national policies and measures.

The project is being implemented in 15 Countries: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. It offers grants (such as industry grants enabling environment grants, and training grants) to improve the economic conditions of creatives and to stimulate sustainable growth of



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the CCI in the region. Other activities included in the project are: generating a Consolidated Regional Master Plan for the implementation and sustainable development of CCIs in the region; establishing a Caribbean Creative Content Hub to generate content and increase the productivity of CCIs; facilitating enterprise acceleration and entrepreneurial training; and fostering a strong cooperation framework. The project was launched virtually on 21 April 2022, and grant calls were also released.



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Selected Views and Sentiments of Key Delegates at the Launch of the Project ‘Creative Caribbean: An Ecosystem of ‘Play’ for Growth and Development’



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During his keynote address at the launch event, Dr Armstrong Alexis, Deputy Secretary-General, CARICOM Secretariat, noted, "Culture provides a unique contemporary context to advance us towards sustainable outcomes." He further explained that "the development and advancement of the creative industry must be treated as a central pillar to national development and should serve as a critical component of addressing youth participation in the Caribbean."

Saadia Sanchez-Vegas, Director and Representative of the Cluster Office, highlighted that this project and its ethos of nurturing what is believed to be two of humanity's most valuable resources, culture and creativity, is crucial in empowering communities to meaningfully partake in sustainable development.

"It is hard to overstate the importance of culture in facilitating economic growth and dialogue," noted Fredrik Ekfeldt, Deputy Head of Mission, Delegation of the European Union to Jamaica, Belize, The Bahamas, Turks and Caicos and The Cayman Islands. "We are moving the needle forward: allowing cultural actors to make the way for themselves. Culture is not just entertainment: it is at the centre of our societies."

The University of the West Indies, represented by Ms Debbie Emandie on behalf of Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice-Chancellor, emphasised that culture is a language that everyone understands. Indeed, "our commonalities intertwine into a tapestry of one people bringing together our differing cultures...into a system to advance our developmental agenda."

The Transcultura Programme

Launched in January 2020 and due to end in November 2023, Transcultura: integrating Cuba, the Caribbean, and the European Union through Culture and Creativity is a large-scale UNESCO initiative, financed by the European Union, to harness diversity and build bridges between people and cultures from different linguistic areas. This four-year programme seeks to deepen integration and strengthen people-to-people cooperation and exchange between Cuba, the Caribbean region, and the European Union by strengthening the professionalisation of the cultural and creative sectors and generating new opportunities for socio-economic development and cultural cooperation in the Caribbean and between the region and the European Union.

Transcultura is targeted at 17 Caribbean countries: Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Monserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. It is being implemented by the UNESCO Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean (Cuba), in close cooperation with the Cluster Office (Jamaica), the UNESCO Port-au-Prince Office (Haiti), and the UNESCO Liaison Office in Brussels (Belgium).

By the end of the 2020–2021 biennium three studies were executed, including a Situational Analysis of the Cultural and Creative Industries in the Member States of CARICOM, CARIFORUM, Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), and a Desk Review of Existing Grant Schemes, Incubators, Accelerators and Scholarship Programmes in the Caribbean Relevant to Cultural and Creative Industry Professionals.

With regard to capacity building, several activities are in the process of being implemented, including: 10 two-week online courses, delivered by the International

Film and Television School of San Antonio de Los Baños (EICTV), based in Cuba; two five-week online courses on grant proposal writing skills, delivered by the company Adapt for Arts; 11 six-week courses to foster cultural entrepreneurship among young cultural and creative professionals from the Caribbean, delivered in partnership with UWI. Additionally, Transcultura launched the platform, Innovative Cultural Training for the Caribbean, along with the first of six Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Five of the available courses will offer knowledge or technical skills for CCIs, heritage restoration and sustainable tourism management.

Several joint actions and twinning initiatives for cultural exchange and cooperation have been executed, such as two Resiliart debates in 2020, one to commemorate the International Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, and a second to explore the far-reaching impact of COVID-19 on artists in the region. Both seek to provide solutions to strengthen the resilience of the creative sector. In December 2020, two events were also held, Connecting the Cultural and Creative Sector in the Caribbean with Global Markets: The Asian Connection, and Connecting the Cultural and Creative Sector in the Caribbean with Global Markets-the European Union Connection, with the purpose of facilitating a productive exchange of ideas and experiences, online business-to-business (B2B) training, and market development opportunities for Caribbean artists.

Further, The Caribbean Jazz Connection was held as part of the 2021 celebration of International Jazz Day. It comprised an online concert and creative exchange on 30 April 2021, which was a joint effort with the Cuban National Centre for Popular Music and the renowned Jazz Plaza Festival, and was followed by 13,714 people worldwide. A second online concert and creative exchange, involving seven bands and 39 musicians from six English-speaking Caribbean, were organised in cooperation with the Haiti Jazz Foundation.

“We need to encourage countries to ensure artistes can access global markets and be fairly remunerated for their work. We need to promote cultural exchanges between Caribbean artistes and international markets to promote Caribbean cultural goods, establish an inter-regional knowledge exchange and build on lessons learnt from other regions.”

– Saadia Sanchez-Vegas, PhD

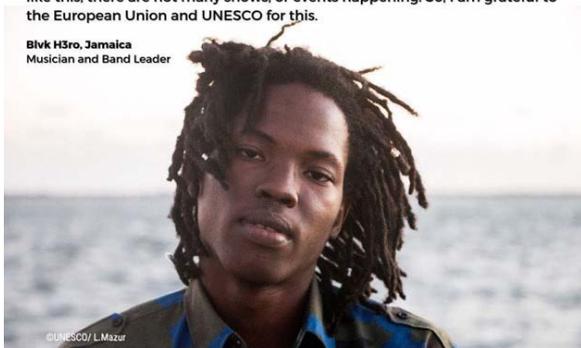
Director and Representative

UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean

“

I really feel that this initiative from the UNESCO Transcultura Programme and WOMEX will allow me to showcase my talents and skills and the team that I have put together to a broadest sphere of people, like different movers and shakers in the [musical] industry. For me it is a tremendous feeling. It is an honour. It is a privilege. And the reason I say privilege is because, in a time like this, there are not many shows, or events happening. So, I am grateful to the European Union and UNESCO for this.

Blvk H3ro, Jamaica
Musician and Band Leader



© UNESCO / L.Mazar





Additionally, Transcultura launched an initiative to sponsor applications by, and the participation of, Caribbean musicians in the World Music Expo (WOMEX). The call ensured the highest participation ever of the region’s artists, with groups from seven countries (Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago) submitting proposals. A Jamaican group, Blvk H3ro, a reggae soul band, was selected by the WOMEX jury to participate in the 2021 edition of the event, which was held in Porto, Portugal, in October 2021.

Transcultura also contributed to the launch of UN Women’s new Global Black Women Programme, which was aimed at strengthening women- and youth-owned businesses in the CCIs in the Caribbean subregion, Latin America, and Africa. In particular, a panel discussion ‘Ain’t I a Woman? Black Women,

Creativity and Development’, was held on 26 July 2021 in partnership with UN Women. The discussion highlighted the important role of women of African descent, and their significant contribution to sustainable development through cultural exchanges, knowledge sharing, and movement-building.

In support of UN Women’s exhibition featuring women artists of African descent, *A Force for Change*

UN Women, UNESCO and NYU Africa House present a discussion:

“Ain’t I a Woman? Black Women, Creativity and Development”



Sungi Mlengeya, *Up*, 2020, Acrylic on Canvas, 40 x 130cm



© UN Women / Sungi Mlengeya

Following this, on May 2022, UNESCO and UN Women organised the event ‘Mobilising women’s creativity for sustainable development and cultural policies in the Caribbean’, designed to identify women-led innovative measures and proposals that can contribute to informing gender-responsive public policies. The policies have three main strategic areas of action: women training and capacity development; bridging the gender divide in the digital environment; and the participation of women in cultural life.

With the purpose of strengthening a diverse cultural and creative ecosystem by fostering and supporting entrepreneurship through knowledge transfer and networking between cultural and creative professionals and practitioners from the Caribbean and Europe, Transcultura hosted in June 2022 the event, IncYOUTHbator: boosting youth's creative potential for a sustainable future. The event gathered young creatives from the Caribbean at an early stage of their entrepreneurship endeavours, who had the opportunity to connect, create synergies, receive mentoring, and exchange knowledge in a peer-to-peer approach, while interacting with recognised entrepreneurs from the region, thus promoting an interconnected and thriving cultural and creative ecosystem.

As of May 2022, the capacity-building activities and joint actions for cultural exchange and cooperation carried out under the Programme have benefitted a total of 1,357 beneficiaries, 644 from the English-speaking Caribbean, 55% of which are women.

Looking Ahead: Biennium 2022—2023

Cultural Policies

Traditional approaches to cultural policy development in the Caribbean are being mediated by global trends that are re-shaping the ways of life of citizens, as well as the mechanisms they employ to produce and distribute cultural goods and services. The role of new communication and media technologies, AI, climate change, and the fragmentation of regional alliances are just some of the trends that will have a lasting impact on the role of cultural policies in framing Caribbean development.

In addition to these new developments, cultural policies in the Caribbean region must also still wrestle

with traditional challenges, such as meeting the needs of all citizens, promoting diversity, enabling and defining excellence in the cultural realm, and formulating strategies that will ensure the retention of indigenous cultural expressions in the face of the globalised trade of cultural goods and services.

Of significance is that culture policies with a focus on CCIs must reinforce the transversal nature of culture as, invariably, implementation of activities related to the development of this sector cut across several government sectors and require serious inter-sectoral cooperation. For example, concerning the copyright industries, there is a connection between copyright, intellectual property, and related rights, and the ministry responsible for legal affairs, or industry and commerce. Additionally, the promotion and organisation of festivals and carnivals, which are extremely popular in the Caribbean, may need to include ministries responsible for tourism, economic affairs, transportation, security, telecommunications, media and broadcasting, local government, and community development.

The UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies, Mondiacult 2022, will be convened by the UNESCO Director-General and hosted by the Government of Mexico from 28–30 September 2022. The World Conference will provide new momentum for the global policy dialogue on culture for sustainable development, spearheaded by UNESCO in line with its cultural mandate to advance the free exchange of ideas and knowledge by encouraging cooperation among countries as enshrined in its Constitution.

From December 2021 to February 2022, five regional consultations were organised in the run-up to Mondiacult 2022. They helped stakeholders to identify specific priorities of each region that require stronger policy investment, to better harness the contribution of culture across the public policy spectrum, as well as to address the most pressing challenges of sustainable development. Regional consultations on Mondiacult 2022 played a critical role in three key areas. First, to map current trends pertaining to cultural policies, notably in the context of the post-pandemic recovery strategies. Second, to identify key areas for

the adaptation of the cultural sector to address current challenges, and finally, to identify specific priorities that require urgent attention and policy investment, with a view to formulating some recommendations stemming from this regional dialogue.



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Culture and Disaster Resilience

Although the Caribbean region's culture sector emphasises the deep connections that exist between its people and their natural and cultural environment, their traditional knowledge, and the creativity that fosters social cohesion and plays a significant role in development processes, it should be noted that the culture sector is not integrated into the disaster risk preparedness and response strategies and plans at the national or the subregional level.

In addition to causing an enormous loss of life, hurricanes have a devastating impact on the region's culture sector. The impact includes the total or partial destruction of cultural assets, the inability of the affected populations to access and benefit from their cultural resources, the disruption of ICH, endangered traditional knowledge and practices, and the loss of livelihoods and economic opportunities associated with cultural industries, including tourism.

The Cluster Office, in partnership with CARICOM and CDEMA, will continue to build awareness and foster synergies between policies and practices for the protection of culture from the effects of disasters

through capacity building, awareness-raising and advocacy. The partnership also aims to identify ways in which workflows for risk reduction, emergency preparedness and response for the culture sector can be incorporated within the national/local DRR and emergency management.

Boosting Potential of Creative Sector

UNESCO, through its flagship programme, Transcultura, and the joint project Creative Caribbean: An Ecosystem of 'Play' for Growth and Development, implemented in partnership with CARICOM and the UWI, aim to strengthen a vibrant cultural and creative sector in the Caribbean through a multi-layered and multi-stakeholder approach. The approach has a strong focus on capacity building and cultural exchange, which have been conceived as mechanisms to generate new socioeconomic opportunities for artists and creative professionals. Opportunities that can be leveraged include expanding existing markets, enhancing the production of globally competitive goods and services, as well as creating and consolidating synergies and networks between institutions and professionals in the cultural and creative field.

The two ground-breaking initiatives are, in many ways, complementary, although contributing to one overall objective, which is the strengthening of the cultural and creative sector in the Caribbean. Transcultura forges activities aimed at connecting the Caribbean with the European Union culturally, socially, and economically. It is an aspect that widens and amplifies the geographical scope of the programme, when compared with Project Creative Caribbean, and is paving the way for innovative North-South-South cooperation frameworks. On another hand, Project Creative Caribbean's main beneficiaries comprise a broad range of actors (spanning from individuals to government institutions in the culture and creative sector) that are mainly addressed through a series of grant schemes, which are not being offered under the Transcultura Programme.





COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

**“Artificial intelligence calls on us to rethink our humanity
and what it means to be human.”**

- Audrey Azoulay
UNESCO Director-General

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

The UNESCO Communication and Information sector is committed to supporting Cluster Countries, in upholding freedom of expression, media development, digital transformation and innovation, knowledge-based societies, and the role of information and communication technologies in the future of education. In the 2020–2021 biennium, emergency and disaster situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the eruption of the La Soufrière volcano in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines were pronounced. The Cluster Office thus developed effective media responses, including online media, for these situations, whilst also facilitating knowledge sharing and capacity development activities for media professionals.

Second, efforts were made to increase awareness and promote the development of ethical AI policies, plans, programmes, and systems, through the Caribbean Artificial Intelligence Initiative, jointly implemented in an intersectoral collaboration with the SHS Sector. Third, the Cluster Office supported the preservation and digitalisation of documentary heritage and other important collections, and the keeping of DRR plans updated and operational in archives, libraries, and other memory institutions. Fourth, there were activities to foster the implementation of the UNESCO Open Educational Resources (OER) Recommendation in Cluster Countries, and finally, efforts were made to strengthen the media policy framework in the Caribbean region.

Responding to COVID-19



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Contending with 'Fake News' and Disinformation

In the era of social media, misinformation and disinformation have been on the rise and became even more prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic. But during health crises, the lack of swift responses to counter unverified news about symptoms, modes of transmission, treatments, vaccines, etc., can be life-threatening for the public, and widen mistrust between citizens and the institutions that are supposed to protect them.

In order to combat the scourge of fake news and disinformation in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, journalists from all over the Caribbean participated in the training course, Contending with 'Fake News' and Disinformation in the Caribbean during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The two-day course was organised by UWI Open Campus Saint Kitts and Nevis, and the Saint Kitts and Nevis National Commission for UNESCO, in collaboration with the Cluster Office,

and with the support of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).

Thanks to resources, such as the UNESCO's publication, Journalism 'Fake News' & Disinformation, the training helped journalists to better understand how to develop strategies for dealing with disinformation during the pandemic. Additionally, local trainers, such as Wesley Gibbings, founder of the Association for the Caribbean Media Workers (ACMW), and Kiran Maharaj, Director of the Media Institute of the Caribbean (MIC), provided solutions and insights, as well as prompted brainstorming and interaction via question-and-answer segments.

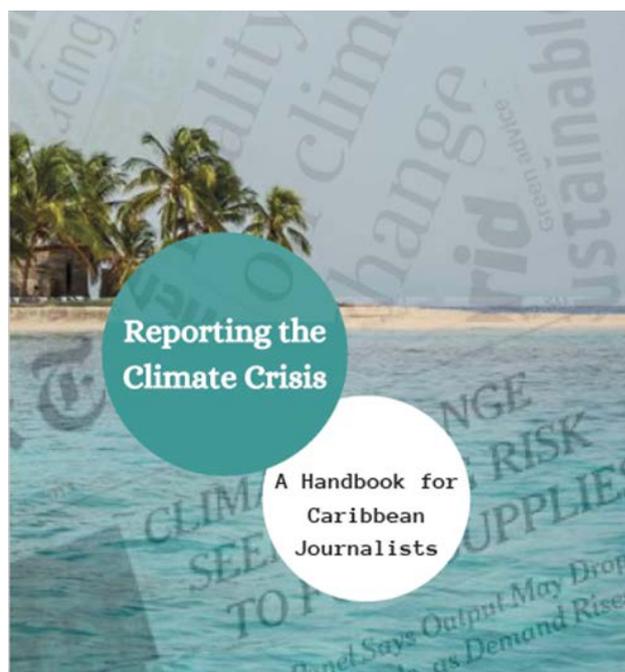
The key message was that in times of global crises like the COVID 19 pandemic, the whole world depends on independent quality journalism that can save lives. Therefore, the protection of journalism and independent media is more important than ever, and the training of journalists must be ensured to counter misinformation and ensure quality reporting.

Reporting on COVID-19 in the Caribbean:

UNESCO, together with the MIC, organised a three-day webinar series on Reporting on COVID-19 in the Caribbean on 7, 13 and 20 October 2020. Almost 100 journalists from 12 countries in the English and Dutch Caribbean subregion attended to learn journalistic best practices for reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic. Guidance was provided on how to collect data and information in developing investigative stories, including the value of strong verification processes. Mobile journalistic solutions for developing COVID-19 stories were also explored, with a focus on the best use of readily available resources, covering a variety of technological platforms.

La Soufrière Volcanic Eruption in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Media, including broadcast, community, and online media, have a critical role to play before, during and after a potential natural hazard. They provide relevant and accurate information that help people to understand their circumstances and make informed decisions that can save lives. The Cluster Office has been implementing the project, Digitalisation of the National Archive Records, in partnership with the National Commission for UNESCO, the National Archive and the Public Library of Saint Vincent and The Grenadines, and within the framework of the priorities of UNESCO Memory of the World Programme. Technical advice, capacity development and financial assistance have been provided for restoring and preserving historical documents, through digitalising records, preparing emergency plans and training staff.



Design by Catherina Schönhammer

Building Resilience among Caribbean Journalists in the Age of Climate Change

The handbook, Reporting the Global Climate Crisis – A Guide for Caribbean Journalists, was conceptualised with the purpose of improving the quality and quantity of climate change media coverage across the Caribbean, by equipping journalists with the necessary information on climate change in the subregion, and proposing possible strategies to convey the magnitude of the problem based on the needs of the Caribbean audience. The project to produce the handbook commenced with the constitution of an editorial group and an initial team of experts, who conducted a workshop with twelve Eastern Caribbean journalists, on 19 July 2019, in St John's, Antigua and Barbuda.

This workshop, plus a second one, which was held in Guyana, from 11–12 October 2019, were organised by the Cluster Office, in partnership with the ACMW.

The publication of the handbook is a concrete contribution to the UNESCO Strategy for Action on Climate Change, by developing and implementing communication and climate change public awareness programmes and policies, and by promoting interdisciplinary climate knowledge and scientific cooperation for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Caribbean Artificial Intelligence Initiative

The first phase of the UNESCO Caribbean Artificial Intelligence Initiative, an intersectoral activity between the Science and Human Science (SHS) and the Communication and Information (CI) Sectors, which was previously outlined, included a series of subregional online activities that were instrumental in raising awareness of the opportunities and challenges brought about by AI in the region, and in exploring the potential of this emerging technology to achieve the SDGs. A critical output from these events was the draft Caribbean Artificial Intelligence Policy Roadmap, which includes recommendations to support the formulation of AI strategies and policies in Cluster Countries.



Design by UNESCO / Clementina Villarreal

Assessment of Media Viability in Jamaica

As a pilot project for UNESCO, and with financing from IPDC, the MIC conducted a Media Viability Indicators Study on Jamaica to identify challenges and to make recommendations for media viability. The study, which used UNESCO's draft indicators for media viability, should also provide insight into key aspects of media viability in Jamaica, plus a set of actionable but realistic recommendations. The study was launched through the Virtual Stakeholder Meeting, that took place on 2 June 2022.

Enhancing Media and Information Literacy in the Caribbean

Caribbean SIDS Consultative Meeting on Media and Information Literacy Curriculum and Global Standards Guidelines

The main objective of the consultative meeting was to integrate the perspectives of Cluster Countries in the revised UNESCO Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Curriculum for Teachers and in the Draft Global Standards for MIL Curricula Guidelines. Thirty Caribbean policymakers responsible for curricula development and MIL-related programmes, education planners, educators, MIL experts and practitioners, as well as information and media professionals, students and young leaders, attended that meeting.

Media Contribution to Diversity and Inclusion in and through Media

In the effort to eliminate barriers and construct an inclusive environment grounded on human rights, the Cluster Office, through its SHS and CI Sectors, and in collaboration with UWICDS, have developed a training series on Understanding and Meaningfully Including Persons with Disabilities in Society. The series was targeted at journalists, media practitioners, journalism students and youth, and had more than 70 participants. It sought to promote the participation, inclusion, and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean and to ensure that these individuals are meaningfully included in their society. Partnership with the ACMW.

Fostering the Implementation of the UNESCO OER Recommendation

On 9 December 2021, the Cluster Office invited Cluster Countries to discuss the implementation of the UNESCO Recommendation on OER and issues related to OER in the region. At the online meeting, participants discussed the steps necessary to advance implementation of the Recommendation by: sharing knowledge and information on the activities and progress of the OER Recommendation at the global level; presenting the activities proposed for the Caribbean subregion; and discussing strategies that could be implemented to ensure the success of the initiative.



Online training for **media practitioners**

SEPTEMBER 2021

Design by UNESCO / Clementina Villarroel

Social Media Policy Framework

A Social Media Policy Framework: Enhancing media services in the public's interest in the Caribbean was launched on 1 April 2021, which was the culmination of a project by the Caribbean Broadcasting Union (CBU). The project received financial support from the IPDC and sought to provide a policy framework for all CBU member stations to draft their respective social media policies. These policies should guide media entities and their staff on, among other things, how to gather, engage with and utilise information from digital media (including social media platforms) and in turn, repurpose and disseminate that information.



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International Days Related CI's Mandate Commemorated

World Radio Day – 13 February

On the occasion of World Radio Day 2021 (WRD 2021), the Cluster Office called on national, local and community radio stations to celebrate this event's 10th anniversary and the more than 110 years of radio. A radio spot was produced and was distributed widely through UNESCO's radio network on that year's theme, *New World, New Radio: Evolution, Innovation, Connection*, which highlighted how this medium is part of humanity's history, by following the various developments in our society and how radio adapted its services.

World Press Freedom Day 3 May

For World Press Freedom Day in 2020, more than 60 journalists, media owners, academics, civil society

actors, media regulators and state institutions from all over the Caribbean participated in a roundtable to discuss the status of access to information in the region, and in a panel discussion to reflect on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Caribbean media landscape. The event, which was held under the theme, *Virtual Dialogue on Media Capture: Rethinking the Media Landscape in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States* as relates to COVID-19, focused on the threat of media capture by commercial and state entities in the context of the pandemic, and in relation to issues, such as self-censorship, the limits of state regulation and media concentration in the subregion.

International Day for Universal Access to Information – 27 September

Under the theme *Saving Lives, Building Trust, Bringing Hope*, the International Day for Universal Access

to Information (IDUAI) in 2020, commemorated by UNESCO on 28 September, focused on the right to information in times of crisis and on the advantages of having constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information to save lives, build trust and help in the formulation of sustainable policies through and beyond the COVID-19 crisis. This online conference was organised in collaboration with the Kule Institute for Advanced Studies (KIAS) at the University of Alberta, Canada, and the International Centre for Information Ethics (ICIE), the under the auspices of the Cluster Office and the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa, Harare, Zimbabwe. Further, and in observance of the IDUAI 2020, the UNESCO IFAP Working Group on Information Accessibility (WGIA), hosted a global online event on Inclusive AI with topics addressing information accessibility. The event provided a platform for open discourse involving participants from academia, civil society, private sector and government.

To commemorate IDUAI in 2021, which coincided with Right To Know Week in Jamaica, 'A Conversation' was held with Hon. Robert Morgan, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Education Youth and Information, on the importance of access to information laws, and the implementation needed to build institutions for the public good and for sustainable development.

MIL Week 2021, 24-31 October 2021

The Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO hosted a virtual panel discussion on the topic Tackling Jamaica's Media and Information Literacy Deficit with the participation of the Cluster Office. The webinar was intended to be a forward-looking event, discussing the progress made in MIL, and the changes that are required to ensure Jamaica's survival in the emerging digital media economy. Procedures, policies and actions that should be taken to ensure inclusivity, safety and security within the digital media ecosystem, were also discussed.

Looking Ahead: Biennium 2022—2023

Facing the 2022-2023 biennium, the Cluster Office will build on the work and achievements from previous years. In responding to the needs of Cluster Countries, it will focus on further supporting media viability and media response to emergency situations; implementing MIL initiatives; advancing OER policies; promoting inclusive digital transformation; acquiring digital skills; developing AI normative framework; and strengthening the Memory of the World Programme in the Caribbean.

Media Viability and Media Response to Emergency and Disaster Situations.

This action addresses the recommendations provided by the Media Viability Research conducted in Jamaica in 2021 and reported in March 2022. Together with the stakeholders that contributed to the research, a team will develop a plan of action to overcome the gaps highlighted through the study. Efforts will also be made to explore the interest of other Cluster Countries to implement measures to support media viability in the subregion.

Additionally, and in response to the special tensions that natural events put on SIDS, particularly as a risk to their communities and population, media in the Caribbean should be ready to disseminate knowledge and information on these issues and be available to increase awareness about the challenges raised by the impact of climate change on SIDS. This activity builds the capacity of media professionals and will focus on partnering with communication education institutions in Cluster Countries to include in their journalism programmes issues related to the reporting on hurricanes and other natural hazards.

Media and Information Literacy

The activities in this area will support the development and implementation of MIL policies, capacity-building strategies, initiatives and plans. In the first instance, comprehensive mapping to inform the policy development process in Cluster Countries will be conducted. It is anticipated that following the mapping exercise, a policy framework for MIL and digital competencies that considers the needs and particular circumstances of Cluster Countries will be developed. Support will be provided for the development of national MIL policies in collaboration with key government ministries and other stakeholders, who must own the process.

In collaboration with CARICOM Task Force for Digital Skills, the CARICOM-UNESCO Consultation/ Workshop with Senior Officials on Championing Digital Skills for CARICOM Citizens will take place on 28 June 2022. The Workshop supports SDGs 4, 8, 9 and 17 and will emphasise how innovation, digital government, and digital transformation are driving 'the future of work' trends, and the need for digital skills and competencies across government and citizens. The overall purpose of the initiative jointly organized by the CARICOM Secretariat and the Cluster Office is to raise awareness and foster cooperation and collaboration between ICT and Education Officials on a Digital skills Strategy for CARICOM.

Open Educational Resources

OERs pave the way for universal access to high-quality education by allowing the free use, adaptation and distribution of teaching, learning or research materials. The adoption of the UNESCO General Conference of the OER Recommendation is an opportunity to mainstream OER practices into the policies and strategies of governments around the world and in particular, in Cluster Countries.

Enhancing the capacity of government officials, policymakers, and practitioners to harness OER practices



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effectively to improve both access to knowledge and learning outcomes will continue to be a priority for the Cluster Office during 2022–2023. Similarly, promoting the implementation of the OER Recommendation and taking steps to operationalise and integrate it into educational policy frameworks, is also part of this priority.

In a follow-up to the OER Meeting in the Caribbean, on 9 December 2021, and to respond to the needs of the Caribbean subregion, a three-tiered process to: identify needs, address advocacy and capacity building; and respond to policy development needs related to four areas of action of the OER Recommendation has been proposed for implementation throughout 2022–2023. The UNESCO office in Havana and the Cluster Office promote implementation of the UNESCO OER Recommendation at the national level.

This work also contributes to UNESCO's intersectoral platform for SIDS, which mobilises UNESCO's house-wide contribution to SIDS through an integrated approach for sustainable island living and development, emphasising interregional linkages and cooperation.



PUBLIC INFORMATION

The visibility and awareness of the mandate and work of UNESCO are strengthened among its regional partners and other important stakeholders relevant to the Office's mandate, including government representatives, researchers, donors, implementing partners, academia, the public, internally, and among the UN system in the region of twenty Small Island Developing States in the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean.

The Cluster Office's public information objective

The dissemination of information that is relevant, accurate and timely, is crucial for stakeholders to limit the influence of disinformation and misinformation that are increasingly prevalent, and to be in a position to make informed decisions. It is through this lens that the information shared by UNESCO is especially powerful, cognisant of the depth and breadth of the organisation's mandate, and correspondingly the impact on lives, on livelihoods, and on the planet.

The establishment of a dedicated Liaison Office at the Cluster Office serves to strengthen relations with Cluster Countries, sister agencies, other partners and collaborators, plus the public at large. It also serves as a focal point for their enquiries, and has resulted in several channels of communication being created.

The Importance of National Commissions for UNESCO

UNESCO has a unique relationship with its Member States through the Permanent Delegations to UNESCO and the Network of National Commissions for UNESCO. The National Commissions are national governing bodies established by Member State governments to link their governmental and non-governmental institutions in the fields of education, natural science, social and human sciences, culture and communication and information, to carry out independent programmes and activities at the national level that are fully aligned with UNESCO's mandate.

Regular consultations and collaboration with National Commissions for UNESCO are therefore crucial in building consensus and ensuring that UNESCO's policies and programmatic actions are supported by and consistent with the priorities of Member States.

To this end, an effective partnership with the National Commissions has been critical and has created mechanisms that allow for increased communication, coordination and synergies while building trust between the National Commissions and the Cluster Office and, by extension, the entire organisation.

The Caribbean National Commissions for UNESCO sub-regional Meetings serve to strengthen partnerships with and between National Commissions in the region by providing opportunities to share information, discuss and redefine regional priorities and commit to joint action.

Looking Ahead: Biennium 2022—2023

During her mission to The Commonwealth of The Bahamas, Sadia Sánchez-Vegas, Director and Representative of the UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Hon. Philip Davis where the potential benefits of UNESCO initiatives for The Bahamas were explored with a focus on Education, Climate Change Resilience, Disaster Risk Reduction and Culture.



Missions like the one to The Bahamas are a crucial element for UNESCO to strengthen the close relationship with their Member States and discuss priorities, challenges and identify synergies for action.



Also present during the visit were the Minister of State for Education, Technical and Vocational Training, Hon. Zane Lightbourne; Ambassador for UNESCO, C. V. Hope Strachan; Secretary General for The Bahamas National Commission for UNESCO, Deidre Bevans and Permanent Secretary David Davis, and other executives.

Media and Information Dissemination Channels of the Cluster Office

Caribbean media such as newspapers, television and radio have the means directly reach the local population in each country. The Cluster Office sends press releases and media articles directly to journalists and media houses in the region and uses the support of UN Advocacy and Communication Officers in the UN Resident Coordinator Offices (UN RCOs) located in UNESCO-supported countries as a direct link to local news sources.

Print Publications

Harnessing this relationship with the media of the UN RCO in the region, several news pieces and Opinion-Editorials (Op-Eds) prepared by the Cluster Office have been published on strategic dates and have enjoyed prominent placement on local media platforms across the Caribbean region. Among those was the well-received Op-Ed entitled 'We need culture in times of crisis,' written by Saadia Sanchez-Vegas, Director and Representative of the Cluster Office which was published on 20 May 2021. The Op-Ed highlighted the importance of culture and its role in strengthening resilience during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which was ongoing that the time.

Under the title 'Listening to the voices of indigenous peoples is the only way to protect people and planet,' the Cluster Office invited Nigel Crawhall, Chief of Section from UNESCO's programme on Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS), to prepare an Op-Ed in partnership with UNDP Guyana and in coordination with the UN RCO Guyana, to recognise the rights of and the importance of indigenous knowledge on the occasion of the 2021 World Indigenous Peoples Day. The article was published on

August 9, 2021, in the Guyana Chronicle. Finally, under the theme, Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in COVID-19 World, the Cluster Office joined its sister UN agencies in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean in marking the International Women's Day 2021 in the Caribbean. In the piece, Saadia Sanchez-Vegas shared her perspective on why female leadership is crucial for sustainable development.

"Only an inclusive society that gives everyone, regardless of gender, the opportunity to achieve their goals and develop their full potential will help build sustainable and peaceful communities, leaving no one behind."

– Saadia Sánchez-Vegas, PhD

Director and Representative

UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean

Joint Anniversary Publication with Jamaica

To mark the joint celebrations of the 75th anniversary of UNESCO and the 55th anniversary of the Jamaica National Commission, the Cluster Office and the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO published a newspaper supplement in the Jamaica Observer in December 2021. This joint publication conveyed UNESCO's commitment to support Jamaica's sustainable development and to foster a culture of peace, in the effort of leaving no one behind.

This anniversary supplement highlighted UNESCO's work, in collaboration with the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO and the Government of Jamaica, and included messages from: UNESCO Director General, Audrey Azoulay; the Minister for Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport in Jamaica and the Chairperson of the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO, Hon. Olivia Grange; Assistant-Director General for Priority Africa and External Relations (PAX), Firmin Eduardo Matoko;

Ambassador/Permanent Delegate, Permanent Delegation of Jamaica to UNESCO, Her Excellency Symone Betton Nayo; the Director and Representative, UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean, Saadia Sánchez-Vegas; the Secretary-General, the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO, Everton F. Hannam, other Secretaries-General of National Commissions for UNESCO from the region, and partners. Highlights from the supplement included articles on the regional UNESCO culture programme, Transcultura, the COVID-19 response flagship initiative for education to enhance digital skills for distance learning among teachers, the Caribbean Artificial Intelligence Initiative, UNESCO's Priority Africa, and activities within the Participation Programme.

"As we mark the 75th anniversary of UNESCO and the 55th anniversary of the Jamaica National Commission, we celebrate these initiatives and many others. In the words of Linton Kwesi Johnson, the renowned Jamaican dub poet, "At the end of the day, life's about realizing one's human potential." Working hand in hand with its National Commissions, this is precisely what UNESCO aims to do – for all humankind."

– Audrey Azoulay
UNESCO Director-General

Newsletter

The UNESCO Caribbean Cluster Office Newsletter was launched in December 2020 to inform the public, partners and stakeholders of activities undertaken by the Cluster Office and their impact. This digital information tool has been structured to first highlight special and upcoming events and then present the activities, achievements and news of the five UNESCO programme areas. The newsletter also serves to showcase flagship communication products

such as impact videos. During the 2020–2021 biennium, a total of four newsletters were published. The fifth newsletter, published in January 2022, covered the period from October 2021 to January 2022.



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In July 2019, the Cluster Office launched social media channels on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. As of June 10, 2022, the Cluster Office's Instagram account, @unesco_caribbean, had 3,675 followers and had published 640 Posts. Its Facebook account @unescocaribbean had 3,200 followers, and its Twitter account @CaribbeanUnesco had 1,500 Followers. Finally, the UNESCO Caribbean YouTube account had 444 subscribers and 65 videos.



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Videos

Videos are a multimedia tool to raise awareness of development challenges in Cluster Countries, point towards solutions, promote ideas, and showcase UNESCO's work through compelling stories and narratives, or through synthesising reflections and outcomes. Short videos that have the power to break down complex issues in an understandable manner.

Among the flagship videos produced and published by the Cluster Officer is Caribbean Futures of Education: Re-imagining and re-inventing Education in the Caribbean, which highlighted the key outcomes of the Caribbean Education Policy Dialogues, held from December 2020 until March 2021. The video clip reflected the voices of participants, including Caribbean youth, on how to address the world's major challenges, such as climate change and equitable and inclusive access to quality education – to shape the future of humanity and the planet.

Radio broadcasting is among the oldest form of electronic communication, and pitted against more

modern technologies, it still has incredible reach in Cluster Countries, particularly to share information with the ordinary citizen. In addition to contributing news items, there is scope to implement a broad range of campaigns geared toward sensitising the public at large on UNESCO-related priorities and initiatives.

One of the ways in which radio was used in Cluster Countries was for WRD 2021. UNESCO called on radio stations to celebrate this event's 10th anniversary and the 110 years of radio. WRD 2021's theme, New World, New Radio: Evolution, Innovation, Connection, recalled how this medium is part of humanity's history by following the various developments in our society and how it adapted its services. In the Caribbean, the Cluster Office produced a local version of the UNESCO WRD 2021 broadcast, which included a jingle with female and male Caribbean voices. The jingle was shared with several radio stations in the region and played to celebrate WRD locally.



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Saadia Sánchez-Vegas, PhD
Director and Representative

The UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean Team 2020 - 2021

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ACRONYMS

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ACMW	Association for the Caribbean Media Workers
AHEG	Ad Hoc Expert Group
AYVA	Amplifying Youth Voice and Action to address Citizen Security and Safety
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARIDIMA	Caribbean Risk and Disaster Management Youth Platform
CBU	Caribbean Broadcasting Union
CCI	Cultural and Creative Industry
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CHEN	Caribbean Heritage Emergency Network
Cluster Office	UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean
CNCU	National Commission for UNESCO in Cuba
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
GCED	Global Citizenship Education
GEC	Global Education Commission
HEF	Heritage Emergency Fund
ICDS	International Convention against Doping in Sport
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDGS-RCO	Institute for Gender and Development Studies – Regional Coordination Office
IDUAI	The International Day for Universal Access to Information
IFAP	Information For All Programme
IFCD	International Fund for Cultural Diversity
IPDC	International Programme for the Development of Communication
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MIC	Media Institute of the Caribbean
MIL	Media and Information Literacy

MOE	Ministry of Education
MOW	Memory of the World
OER	Open Educational Resources
PIOJ	Planning institute of Jamaica
QPR	Quadrennial Periodic Report
RCC	Regional Cultural Committee
SALIENT	Saving Lives Entity
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SHS	Social and Human Sciences
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
UN	United Nations
UN RCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator Offices
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO-OREALC	UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIDROIT	International Institute for the Unification of Private Law
UNLIREC	United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean
UNODA	Office for Disarmament Affairs
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UWI	The University of the West Indies
UWICDS	The University of the West Indies Centre for Disability Studies
VWAG	Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls
WRD	World Radio Day
YAR	Youth as Researchers
YPS	Youth, Peace, and Security

