

St. Kitts and Nevis: Small Island Voice Report, June, 2005 to February 2006

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The SIV National Coordinating Committee conducted a series of activities in 2005, and specifically within the period, June 2005 to February 2006 that speaks to the contract in question. However, all activities executed in 2005 were related to this same contract, because of the delay of the transfer of funds. This contract was also amended to extend it to close at the end of February 2006, instead of November 2005.

Report for the Public Relations and Display Board Sub-Committee

In 2005 the Public Relations/Media Sub-Committee of Small Islands Voice, commenced with Chairperson Alecia Daniel Blake and members; Constance Richardson and Novelette Morton- Hanley – Larry Vaughn was later added to the membership. In August of the same year it was decided to merge the sub-committee with the Display Board Sub-committee and Kate Orchard joined the above-mentioned members.

The work of the sub-committee consisted of the writing of news items among other things, which were then distributed to the local media and dispersed on the Internet. This served to keep the general public informed of the activities of SIV and encourage its representatives to air their views on the issues as well.

In January an interview was conducted upon the return of SIV Essay winners, Kennedy Pemberton and Fadil Imo, who had returned from attending the youth component of the Sustainable Development Summit, which was held in Mauritius. A news item was done on their report.

February, March and April also saw the publication of news items concerning a candlelight vigil conducted by the “Conch Shells” in memory/empathy with tsunami victims, the visit of Regional SIV Coordinator Dr. Gillian Cambers and the featuring of SIV (St. Kitts Chapter) in the UNESCO publications ‘The Word on the Street,’ ‘Voices in a Changing World’ and ‘Island Communities in Action.’

May, June and July saw the publicizing of information specific to SIV noting concerns about negative environmental issues relating to development at South Friars Bay which was disturbing turtle nesting, a collaborative display board exhibit between SIV and the St. Christopher Heritage Society; showing the green areas of Basseterre through the years; the induction of new SIV members and the redefining of SIV goals at the sustainable development meeting held in Bequia, St. Vincent. **In June, 2005 also saw the production of a SIV video documentary chronicling the initiative from conception to present.** As well as several opinion spots about the hurricanes, in comparison to the tsunami and issues pertaining to the closure of the sugar industry.

August saw the newly merged committee (Public Relations and Display Board) creating a display of the new developments of St. Kitts as well as the post sugar industry possibilities. This display was featured at the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association Conference, which was held at the St. Kitts Marriot Resort and the Caribbean Week of Agriculture Trade Show on the grounds of the Historic Fort Thomas Hotel. December news items featured the Secretary General's encouragement of members to assess the past year and come up with creative ideas for the New Year's programme of activities.

In June a display was set up, in conjunction with the St. Christopher Heritage Society, for World Environment Day on the theme – Green Cities; Plan for the Planet. This was exhibited in the archway of the Old Treasury building in central Basseterre for a week and then at the national Commission Office.

In September, with the help of Constance Richardson, Novelette Morton-Hanley and Pierre Liburd a display was set up for 5 days at the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association Conference and Trade Show at the Marriott Hotel. The theme was Tourism Development and the display was attached to the tour desk, where conference delegates could sign up for various tours around the island. Pierre Liburd made a 3D map of the island as part of this display.

In October, an adapted version of the Tourism Development theme was displayed at the Agricultural Exhibition held on the Grounds of the Fort Thomas Hotel over a 2 day period. Despite heavy rain, a large number of school children and other participants visited the display.

A pre-UNESCO Director General's visit news item, outlining His Excellency Koichiro Matsuura's proposed activities during his visit to the Federation, was also published.

December saw the coordination and putting on of an SIV Carnival Troupe on January 02 (Carnival Parade Day). The activity was a collaborative effort between SIV, the Ministry of Health's Parks and Beaches Unit and the Solid Waste Management Corporation (SWMC).

SWMC provided a garbage truck and workers while SIV and "Back Chat" members decorated the garbage truck and a pick-up truck and used the cleaning tools loaned from Parks and Beaches. The SIV troupe followed behind the last carnival troupe and collected the debris left behind by the spectators and performers. Although there was a limited turnout by SIV members, from all reports the activity attained the goal of creating environmental awareness of Carnival spectators and participants as highlighted by the theme: "Small Islands Voice and SWMC in the Carnival Mix, Promoting a new 'Clean Up' Culture for 2006."

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Report from Education Sub-Committee

A series of activities were planned and executed by the Back Chat Group. During early meetings, the group prepared a timeline as to the how to successful execute all its activities. With such a planned timeline the group launched it activities in full starting with its environmental challenge

The environmental Challenge

In Term Two of the school year, each participating school was given the task of engaging in an environmental exercise. The group was expected to use their school AWalk-A-Thon (an environmental walk taken each year, during March and April, by the schools in the Federation) to conduct this activity. The Convent High School, Basseterre High School and Washington Archibald High School conducted this activity successfully. The Convent High School and the Basseterre High School both used students along the walk-route as garbage collector. The Washington Archibald High School used its students as messengers that informed the students as they returned from the walk.

School Visits

Exchange visits were done between the Convent High School and the Basseterre High School. The schools were able to sensitize the students as to the issues confronting small Islands States and were also able to engage the students in active discussion as to recommendation on how to deal with these issues. Other participating school, like the Lynn Jeffers School in Nevis, also conducted visits to school and conducted similar exercises. The Lynn Jeffers School was able to distribute their prepared pamphlet called The Endangered Environment of Nevis to the students. Visits were also made to the Primary School on St. Kitts.

The Back Chat Group also sought to get the message out via the use of the media.

Radio and Television Program

A series of radio programs were planned but did not materialized. Talks were held with media houses such as WINN FM to host an ongoing program but this did not come to fruition. However, the coordinators sought other avenues and were successful in hosting two radio talk program on ZIZ. Tivanna Wharton, a Back Chat Member from the Basseterre High School, spearheaded a group of students on a Radio Talk Program on ZIZ Radio. The group informed the public of the works of the Back Chat group and invited young persons of the Federation to take an active roll in the sustaining of its environment. The SIV Committee saw it fit to use the Back Chat group in preparing a series of opinion flick that was aired on ZIZ Television. The flick ran for two months, from October to November 2005.

Back Chat Survey

After some lengthy discussion amongst students and Coordinators, the group felt that the opinion spots, produced by the SIV committee in collaboration with the Back Chat Group, was very informative and should act as our survey report. The opinion spots focused on issues such as the closing of the sugar industry, the disaster caused by a Tsunami and what will be its impact if one was to hit St. Kitts, and also the issue of tourist in light of the closure of the sugar industry. The students were able to speak freely on theses issues and offer recommendations on these issues.

The most interesting activities that the students seem to be pleased about were the field trips.

Field Trips

A series of field trips were conducted. As per the contract with UNESCO, three (3) field trips were to be conducted. However, the group was successful in eclipsing that mark and conducted over five (5) field trips. One very important trip was that to Nags Head on St. Kitts. During the visit, the students learned that the Nags Head area was once a striving slave village.

Another visit was that to Friars Bay to engage in a beach clean up. The students of Lynn Jeffers School on Nevis also visited a popular beach in Nevis to watch the nesting of turtles. This was a very important undertaking for the group since they learned for the first time, that St. Kitts and Nevis is one of the few nesting ground for the leatherback turtle, an endangered species. A small field trip was done where the students got the chance to visit the UNESCO Head Office on St. Kitts and then were able to conduct a candlelight visual for the victims of the Tsunami.

Our series of field trip climaxed on Nevis, where all the students and coordinators got a chance to meet each other. Mr. Byron, UNESCO operations personnel in Nevis, was instrumental in organizing the visit. The group met at the Nevis Ministry of Education Building, had brief interactions and then toured the island of Nevis. As one student remarked, "we should do this more often"

The Big Trip as we have dubbed it is our planned field trip to the island of Montserrat. All the necessary plans were put in place but were halted due to matters beyond the control of the Back Chat Group. However, the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis has since intervened and the trip which was scheduled for December 2005 will take place from 5th to 7th March 2006. The trip to Montserrat will be a very interesting and informative one. Here student will espouse the views of the Back Chat Group to students on Montserrat and also get a first hand account as to the destruction the volcano has done to Montserrat.

The Newsletter

The Back Chat Group set out to produce two newsletters. Only one newsletter was produced up to this time, and was displayed during the visit of the Director General of UNESCO to the Federation. Efforts are being made to complete the second newsletter.

Other Activities

Working with limited resources and funds, the group was able to participate in other activities not contracted for. These included only helping to organize/decorate a carnival float, hosting a ceremony for the visit of the Director General of UNESCO, and participating in the Internet forum on a bi-weekly basis.

The group has laid the foundation on which other students, who will join the group later, must build on. We cannot allow the efforts of the group to wither on a vine; we must continue to give support, financial and other wise, to this important group of young persons. It is through the efforts of the National Commission and UNESCO head office that these students will continue to give a Voice.

Conclusion

It is our intention in St. Kitts and Nevis to continue leading the way in executing the activities of the Small Islands Voice project. There are some exciting ideas that will be pursued with in the new work plan that will be submitted shortly, which intend to take the project to yet another level. We hope that some of the many pieces of information, which include: **voices of persons giving an opinion; the video documentary; photos of the various activities, news items and the newsletters**, would eventually end up on the global web -site and the frequently published brochures.