

CARIBBEAN YOUTH ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

Principles and Key Elements for the Promotion of Conservation and for the Protection of Human and Natural Resources in the Caribbean by the Youth Sector

The principles and key elements for the conservation and protection of human and natural resources in the Caribbean, by its youth, are the foundation of strategies for the implementation and promotion of functional cooperation among youth organisations in the Caribbean region which focus on environment and development issues. In this context “environment” is interpreted in its broadest sense and “functional cooperation” is considered as the movement of ideas and resources among groups in order to achieve common goals which benefit both youth and the region. The “common goal” being the promotion of meaningful youth involvement in the conservation and protection of resources through education for awareness, integration and community action.

In the Caribbean a functional cooperative approach is required for the following reasons:

- In general, financial resources accessible to the youth sector are limited in their availability and are uneven in their distribution on national, regional and sub-regional levels.
- Governmental youth policy is often deficient and does not support the proficient functioning of many local and regional youth movements.
- There is need to engender solidarity among the youth of the Caribbean, since their problems are similar and can be more effectively addressed from the broader regional perspective.
- An assemblage of “like-minded” youth organizations would lead to increased bargaining power, a strengthened lobbying position and improved representation in regional and international fora.

Implementation of the functional cooperation approach must of necessity embrace the following principals and elements in all its aspects.

- Recognition of the difficulties faced by youth of the Caribbean in terms of their own persona, social and economic development.
- Recognition of the need to protect and preserve the environment and to the fact that the youth will be responsible for carrying on the processes.
- Recognition of the specific problems of Caribbean territories while being cognisant of the common problems faced by the region and the need to find and effect common solutions.

- Attempts to facilitate the re-orientation of traditional concepts about the environment to reflect the need to preserve environmental integrity.
- Encouragement for the development of a pro-active mind-set rather than a reactive one in efforts to minimise environmental degradation.
- Encouragement of full community interaction in all aspects of environmental management throughout the Caribbean region.
- Attempts to fashion the attitudes and behaviour of youth to reflect the importance of their roles in environmental management.
- Aspirations to influence the media into recognising and emphasizing the positive roles youth play and the growing efforts of young people in their own development.
- Agitation for the rights of children and for the rights of indigenous peoples of the Caribbean to be recognised returned and respected.
- Creation of mechanisms to facilitate dynamic intra-regional linkages and identification of emerging areas of common interest.
- Provision of persuasive evidence that environmental health and well-being is a function of a multiple of factors (i.e. human, social, cultural, economic).
- Development of adequate economic incentives to promote environmental management concepts among Caribbean youth.
- Advocation for the development of appropriate legislation to deal swiftly and firmly with those perpetuating environmental degradation.
- Emphasis on the need for the youth of the Caribbean to lose their fear of challenging the status quo and actively agitating for positive change.

