

GROUP B

**Public Awareness,
communication, access to
information and public
participation**

Group members

Caribbean – Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Antigua & Barbuda, Trinidad & Tobago, Bahamas

Pacific – Kiribati, Tonga, Palau, Solomon Islands

AIMS – Maldives

Organizations – IUCN Fiji, US Peace corps in St. Lucia

Outline

- 1. Level of awareness and understanding of climate change issues and regular surveys.**
- 2. National policies, key projects and messages.**
- 3. Key target groups**
- 4. Key awareness strategies, barriers and solutions**
- 5. Importance of public participation and access to information and what are the next steps.**
- 6. Linking climate change with other environmental issues.**
- 7. Successfulness in reaching out to the media.**

1. Level of awareness and understanding of climate change issues

- There is **general awareness and understanding** of climate change issues across SIDS
 - Familiar with issues of climate change, hurricanes, floods, etc.
- However, with regards to particular issues such as causes and effects of climate changes – **mixed messages**
 - Often climate change linked with ozone layer depletion
 - Do not know what to do...

REASONS...

- A number of awareness campaigns are been carried out by various organizations
 - Government departments, NGOs, GOs...
- Often awareness campaigns involve **too much scientific information**
 - Often leads to mixed messages

RECOMMENDATIONS...

- KAP/B Surveys are important for monitoring level of awareness and understanding

KNOWLEDE > ATTITUDE > BEHAVIOUR

- KAP/B Surveys
 - Better representation of the population important for better effectiveness

- Awareness campaigns and programmes **must be focused and target-oriented**
 - School campaigns may not work for tourism or fisheries sectors
 - Pacific campaigns may not work in the Caribbean
- Scientific knowledge and information needs to be **translated into local languages/settings** for better absorption by the public
- Enhance **collaboration between technical people and communicators** for effective dissemination of information to the public

KEY CHALLENGES...

- **How to measure the level of awareness and understanding?**
- **Is the level of awareness and understanding affecting political agendas?**
- **Is awareness really changing the behavior of the people?**
- **What roles could individuals play to make a difference?**

2. National policies, key projects and messages

- National Development Plan, National Strategic Plan, National Sustainable Development Strategy, Environment Action Plan, Energy Policy, Emission Policy...
 - **Enough policies** at our disposal
 - Need to **translate these policies** into concrete actions and activities
 - Environment needs to be looked at in a **holistic manner**
 - Adaptation and mitigation – **cross cutting**

KEY PROJECTS

- National Communications identify level of greenhouse gas emissions and priority issues
 - Focus our projects on these grounds
 - E.g:- **Clean power generation**
 - Projects should be demonstrable and quantifiable
 - **Alternative energy generation projects**

MESSAGES

- We need to craft our messages very **appropriately**
 - Adaptation – cross cutting issue
- Should **focus** on target groups
 - Transport sector, tourism sector...
- Should be **holistic** to get the support of everyone

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Need to **strengthen our technical and financial capacity** to implement policies in SIDS
- Strengthen **political willingness** to implement policies
- **Unbiased** implementation of policies
- Allocation of **adequate financial resources** for public education and awareness

3. Key target groups

- Other ministries
- Parliamentarians
- Business
- Press and media
- NGOs
- Community groups
- General public
- Academia
- Youth
- Religious leaders
- Politicians
- Etc...

4. Key awareness strategies, barriers and solutions

AWARENESS STRATEGIES


- **Strategies exist in one form or another**
 - Exhibitions in malls to disseminate information (Bahamas)
 - Ecozone (Antigua)
 - Community Action Theaters and Annual Consultation with Parliamentarians (Pacific)
 - Radio Programs, TV Programs, Newspaper, Public Forums, etc (All SIDS)
 - Schools Programs using Speakers (Jamaica)
 - Sustainable Development Consul (Grenada)
 - E-mail list (St. Lucia)

- Celebration of Environment Day, Biodiversity Day, Water Day, Environment Month, Etc ... (All SIDS)
- Eco-Schools Awards and Environmental Awards

- **WAY FORWARD...**

- **Holistic approach** is needed for different target groups
- Should meet **national plans**
- **Demonstrable projects**
 - Solar houses for demonstration

BARRIERS

- **Monitoring and measuring level of implementation - difficult**
 - **Policy-maker support – difficult**
 - **Budgetary constraints**
 - **Policy enforcement**
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SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Monitoring from **baseline** – present day understanding
- Allocation of **adequate funding** for public awareness and education
- **Political will and support** on implementation much needed

5. Importance of public participation and access to information

- Public participation is a **vital** part of the whole process of any environmental issue
- We need to **work together** to have better results
- Access to **free information** absolutely necessary
- Need to specify what is public participation and the level of participation
 - **Public input into government decision making process**
- Access to information on a relevant basis
 - **Do everyone need to know everything?**
- PP is important because it is part of the decision making process that would otherwise **affect their lives**

WAY FORWARD & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Need to develop **appropriate tools and resources** to engage more public participation
- Government offices to have **avenues for accessing information**
 - E.g. Libraries, resources centers, GIS
- More education and public awareness programs are needed for **effective public participation**


6. Focus on Climate Change & linking climate change with other environmental issues

- Climate change is a **survival issue** for SIDS
 - Fragile environments – coral reefs
 - Vulnerable countries – hurricanes, floods, storms
 - Sensitive economies – externally driven
- **Holistic approach** needs to be taken to get the support of the wider
 - Climate change, energy, biodiversity, land degradation, CZM, etc
 - **Green Economy of Barbados**
- **Linking** is necessary from economic and social perspective
 - Climate change affects environment, economy and social lives

HOW ...

- Join of government offices and communicator groups (**Jamaica**)
- National Commission for Protection of the Environment (**NCPE – Maldives**)
- Linking climate change with natural disasters in disaster management plans

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Holistic approach** needed to address environmental issues
 - **Political will and support** needed for the linking process to be effective
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7. Successfulness in reaching out to the media

- **Very successful** in reaching out to the media
 - Lot of environmental issues are often covered in TV, Radio, Newspapers, etc
- Establishing a **good relationship with media** very important
 - Media can make you or break you!
- Establishing **personal relationships with media** would avoid press of wrong information

SUCCESS...

- National media consultation on environment (Dominica)
- Weekly news on current affairs (Kiribati)

However,

Only controversial issues are covered in the media (Grenada)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Need to do **awareness workshops** and consultations with media to regularly update them with various environmental issues
- Need to **train media** personnel on environmental issues
 - Environmental journalists



THANK YOU!