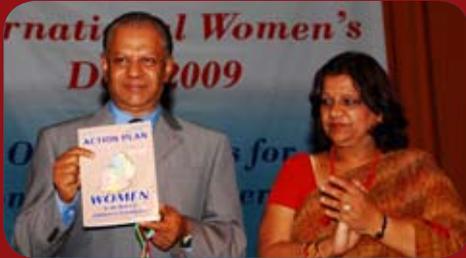


WOMEN AT THE HEART OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A Grassroots' Empowerment Initiative



The Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare with the consultancy support of the NPCC has set up Participatory Advisory Committees (PACs) in each women centre. This grassroots' empowerment initiative places "Women at the Heart of Community Development". The PACs' Action Plan was launched by the Prime Minister, Hon. Dr Navin Ramgoolam on the 8th March 2009, coinciding with the International Women's Day. For Hon. Minister Mrs Indraneesee, "The Action Plan is the result of a systematic and coherent empowerment process that has enabled all the stakeholders to perceive themselves as powerful agents for improved livelihoods". She further adds that "this grassroots' initiative has paved the way for the opening up of a whole range of opportunities that will push women forward in their quest for active participation in the social, economic and political development of the country".

The NPCC played a key supportive role in this initiative by providing consultancy support to the Ministry. The enthusiasm, willingness and readiness shown by all PACs to respond to the challenges were very palpable during all working sessions held. The PACs have demonstrated potential to change the way we look at developmental pathways by focusing on "small" things that can have huge impact when aggregated. Leadership for driving this project was demonstrated through the commitment to support the PACs in their initiatives at the highest level of the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare and its Gender Unit. This commitment is a key factor for driving and sustaining the programme. The same level of commitment was seen by the Presidents of almost all PACs. From the experience gained, strong social capital developed by the PACs can be a critical factor in driving development initiatives at grassroots' level.

Mauritian Companies adopt Japanese Management Improvement Techniques



After World War II, the Japanese manufacturing industries had to reinvent themselves to develop quality products at competitive prices. They adopted kaizen, a philosophy that focuses on continual improvement. When applied to the workplace, kaizen activities continually improve all functions of a business, from manufacturing to management and from the CEO to the assembly line workers. One of the most renowned practitioners of kaizen is the Toyota Production System where all line personnel are expected to stop their moving production line in case of any abnormality and, along with their supervisor, suggest an improvement to resolve the abnormality which may initiate a kaizen.

With all the experience accumulated over five decades in applying kaizen in different work environment, the Japanese Government, through its Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, declared at the Asian-African Summit held in Bandung, Indonesia in April 2005 that Japan wanted to share with Africa the knowledge garnered through Asia's movement towards higher productivity. This is how since 2006, the Japan Productivity Centre for Socio-Economic Development (JPC-SED) has been implementing the Technical Cooperation Project on Productivity Improvement to African Nations in collaboration with the Pan-African Productivity Association (PAPA). One of the components of the project is to showcase Model

Companies successfully applying Japanese management techniques like 5S and kaizen for enterprise productivity improvement.

During 2008, the five Mauritian selected companies, namely Cim Leasing Ltd., Food & Allied Industries Ltd., Laiterie de Curepipe Ltd., Mauritius Post Ltd. and Precigraph Ltd., were regularly visited by two JPC-SED consultants, Messrs. Nakai and Hiratsuka, who provided assistance in the implementation and follow-up of the application of the Japanese productivity improvement techniques and by the NPCC staff who provided training, facilitation, assistance, advice and developed the training manuals.

Each of the companies had specific objectives for the project. These objectives include:

- increase of sales by 40%
- increase in production from 28,000 chicken / day to 32,000 chicken / day
- enhance cost effectiveness of operations
- improve customer service and delivery
- increase employee satisfaction
- develop new business areas
- expand the business to become an international / regional player
- increase profit
- introduce gainsharing to improve the standard of living of employees

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“Japanese management practices succeed simply because they are good management practices. This success has little to do with cultural factors. And the lack of cultural bias means that these practices can be – and are – just as successfully employed elsewhere.”

Masaaki Imai,
founder of Kaizen Institute





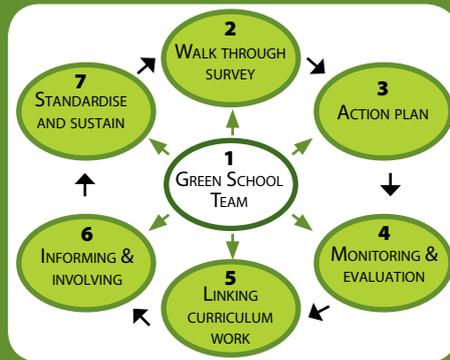
The Green School Project flies high



The Green School Project was launched on 29th January 2009 by Hon. Dr Vasant Bunwaree, Minister of Education, Culture & Human Resources, Hon. Lormus Bundhoo, Minister of Environment & National Development Unit, and Dr Krisnalall Coonjan, Executive Director of the National Productivity & Competitiveness Council (NPCC). The aim of the Green School Project (GSP) is to promote and acknowledge long-term, school initiatives towards environmental protection through increased awareness and understanding of environmental issues. It uses learning by doing approach to help students understand the importance of caring for the resources in the environment. So far, 85 schools - 59 state colleges and 26 private schools - have registered for the first edition of the project.

To disseminate information to users, the NPCC is using the e-learning platform Moodle. The platform accompanies users and guides the school through the necessary steps towards the implementation of the project. It contains a forum and a blog to share information / experience on-line allowing schools to network and find solutions to their problems. Each week, the web site of the NPCC is also regularly updated with tips and actions for the current period.

The schools have to go through a step-by-step approach based on the PDCA Cycle.



Each school would set up a Green School Team (GST) that would be responsible to implement the Green School Project (GSP). The Green School Team may include:

- Students (representatives of different age groups from the whole school)
- Teaching Staff
- Non-Teaching Staff
- Parents
- Representatives of enterprises

The GST starts by assessing the current school situation in terms of resource management and is responsible for building an action plan for the year. The action plan is then tested on a pilot basis and the proposed measures evaluated and amended when necessary. The actions are then replicated throughout the whole school informing and involving the maximum number of students.

Some of the topics being addressed under the GSP are efficient water utilisation, energy conservation, waste management, and healthy eating, aiming at reducing cost of operation of schools and at the same time creating a more healthy school atmosphere. In the long run some schools like the Royal College of Port Louis also propose to gradually extend the initiatives to their nearby community.

The NPCC has been conducting sensitization sessions at the Gaetan Raynal State Secondary School and at Ebène State Secondary School (Boys) to motivate the students to participate in the project. Schools have well embarked on the project and regular contact is kept via mail with rectors and facilitators of the project. Mr Azad Mudhoo, facilitator at the Universal College reacts:



Mauritian Companies adopt Japanese Management Improvement Techniques

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An evaluation mission comprising of Mr Yasuhiko Inoue and Ms Mariko Kamiuchi from JPC-SED visited Mauritius on 24th and 25th February 2009 to assess the results of the project. They visited the companies and attended a seminar where the model companies showcased their experience and their achievements in implementing Kaizen and other Japanese productivity improvement techniques to the local business community. The Japanese delegation was impressed with the increase in turnover, the job organisation improvement, the process improvement, the reduction of operational costs and the development of new business activities that the project has been able to deliver. During their stay, the two Japanese visitors also had discussions with Hon. Dr Rashid Beebeejaun, Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Renewable Energy and Public Utilities, Hon. Mr Dharambeer Gokhool, Minister of Industry, Science and Research, and Hon. Mr Jean-François Chamiere, Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment. 



TRAINING MANUALS AVAILABLE AT THE NPCC

ENTERPRISES WISHING TO INTRODUCE KAIZEN ACTIVITIES INTO THEIR OPERATIONS ARE WELCOME TO CONTACT :

NPCC at natpro@intnet.mu or call 467 7700

“ I am pleased to inform you that our GSP team have gone a rather long way through the project. We have given a serious consideration to the various facets of the project, viz. meeting for a better and greener school environment, minimization of MUDA and identification of hazards at school. The hazards have been sorted out, pollution at school minimised and a series of implementation have been made. A proper record of all our actions is carefully jotted down in the portfolio that I received from your team, or rather from OUR National GSP team a couple of weeks ago... ” 

Civic Action Teams:



Preparing Our Children for Future Development

The Civic Action Team (CAT) Convention for the education sector is this year entering its eighth edition, has 106 schools in 2009 with more primary schools being interested in the project.

CATs has created greater awareness for quality in schools. In their quest for growth, schools should adopt intergrated approach while providing opportunities for its teachers and pupils to participate in continuous improvement activities and recognize their respective contributions.

CATs are groups from the schools performing voluntarily quality improvement activities. Each team carries its activity continuously and thereby gathers tremendous knowledge, skills and experience in diagnosing, analyzing and finding solutions to their school related problems.

Training is essential to inculcate quality awareness amongst the teachers and students. In February, training sessions were organized in the four zones with the help of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources and in Rodrigues at the Human Resource Centre. The problem solving and presentation techniques taught to the students and teachers is systematic: each team identifying a problem, analysing it and then proposing solutions.

Training in problem solving skills encourages students involvement in the decision making process. It is based on quality tools of data collection, Pareto charts, Ishikawa Diagram etc.

The time frame for the CATs' project is February - August 2009. Regional conventions will be organized in the respective zones and in Rodrigues later in June. The best implemented projects will be showcased at national level and rewarded in August. 

The NPCC kick starts its Team Building exercise...



The NPCC undertook its first team building exercise at the Clavis International School on Tuesday 24th March 2009. More than 70 students, all of year 6 participated in the activity, which was based on both theory and practical sessions to enable the students understand the essence of working in teams.

It started by understanding the feeling of the students – how did they feel before the session started. The students were then separated in groups followed by a

brainstorming session of their understanding of team building and followed by our interpretation. The teams were given two exercises to perform in groups and were asked to write down 2 things that worked and two things that did not work after each exercise which was displayed on a board. Whatever was recorded as 'things that worked' constituted the elements of a good working group and everything gathered as 'things that did not work' were areas requiring improvement to make the groups perform better.

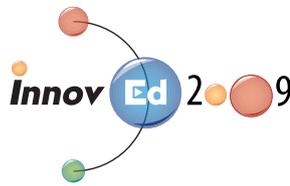
The Tuckman Model was used to explain to the students the various stages of the overall exercise. The model seeks to explain how a team develops over time. Essentially, a group of people working together does not necessarily constitute a team. In order to become a team in the real sense of the word, there must be shared goals, interdependence, commitment and accountability. It starts with the Formation stage where the newly formed group members experience confusion and uncertainty and then they move on to the next stage which is the Storming stage, whereby they experience conflict, competition and strong emotions followed by the Norming stage where the group members unite. This is where understanding comes into play. There is co-operation, acceptance of differences and sharing of information and responsibility. The fourth stage is no other than the Performing stage. The team members are able to fully understand and accept each member's role, they can work independently and there is full co-operation – in essence that is the purpose of the Team Building Exercise which makes the children productive. 

SCHOOL CHILDREN ARE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN TEAM BUILDING EXERCISE. INTERESTED SCHOOLS CAN CONTACT:

NPCC at natpro@intnet.mu or call 467 7700 for information



Grooming innovation in the education sector



The development of a knowledge-based economy coupled with global financial and economical interrogations forces innovation at centre stage. The conditions that will stimulate individuals and enterprises to innovate and take the lead in the next generation of knowledge creation, new technologies, business models and dynamic management systems need to be created. A new relationship among companies, government, educators and workers is needed to assure a 21st century innovation ecosystem that can successfully adapt and compete in the global economy.

The promotion of innovation has always stood high on the agenda of the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC). It is in this spirit that the NPCC is organizing the fifth edition of InnovEd (Innovation for the Education Sector) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources. It is felt that InnovEd, among others will make a useful contribution to the national effort in fostering and stimulating creativity and innovation. There is a strong need to place particular emphasis on encouraging creativity and innovation in the education sector because an innovative society cannot emerge

and become a reality without an education system that encourages critical and creative thinking, risk-taking with an open mind and out-of-the-box thinking.

Within the context of InnovEd, three hundred and fifty-four facilitators from the pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in Mauritius and Rodrigues have been trained for the fifth edition of InnovEd in February / March 2009. The facilitators were provided hands-on experience and training to assist them in implementing creative thinking and problem solving activities in classroom.

Most of the facilitators recognized the importance of teaching innovation and creativity to children. During the training they were challenged to 'think out of the box' and learnt about techniques and tools which can be used to promote innovation and creativity.

Schools are now in the process of implementing the InnovEd project. Teams are expected to come up with innovative projects which will be exhibited during the national exhibition scheduled in May 2009, whereby the best ones will be rewarded. NPCC

“If you always think the way you’ve always thought, you’ll always get what you’ve always got.”

A PRODUCTIVITY ACADEMY FOR CAPACITY BUILDING



Since its inception, the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council has been focusing on sensitisation programmes and training sessions for a wide range of stakeholders from grassroots to corporate sector, both private and public, in order to change the national mindset and to promote the development of a productivity culture.

Over the years, these demand-driven actions as well as the absence of an institution that caters for specific training in the field of productivity in Mauritius have triggered the need to set up a productivity academy that would contribute to build up the human capital that the country requests to enhance productivity.

This assertion has been reinforced by a recent survey conducted among human resource staff of private and public institutions that has revealed that needs exist for training tapping into areas such as balance scorecard, facilitation techniques, kaizen, quality circles, strategic planning etc...

Besides providing training, the other outcome of the productivity academy would be to produce a critical mass of productivity activists, who over the years, will be able to spread the productivity movement in all spheres of Mauritian life and hence contribute to develop a productivity culture. NPCC



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