

10 YOUTH-LED PROJECTS

2021



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FOREWORD



Ashit Gungah
Executive Director

Young people are a limitless source of innovative energy, and engaging them now will inspire a generation of lifelong changemakers. From the beginning, the National Productivity and competitiveness council (NPCC) has pursued a positive approach to youth development through the National Leadership Engine (NLE) project. Through this approach, we have to ensure that young people develop the skills, values and attitudes they need to succeed today, tomorrow and beyond. It also recognises that young people are not problems to be solved, but problem solvers themselves. Youth are assets to the Mauritian community and active agents of change who can contribute through their energy, idealism and insights to a community's growth and progress. They are not merely passive recipients of programmes and support.

Through the ten case studies highlighted in this report, we can observe the thought patterns, the tools and techniques that the different teams applied and the abilities they developed to see opportunities, which at a first glance, were only problems. This report also serves as an inspiration for other young people to emerge who want to bring positive contributions in their local communities.

We hope that this publication will inspire policymakers, business leaders, and youth programme practitioners to learn more about "what works" in the area of youth engagement, and the critical role youth wants to play in developing the Mauritian society. We hope it will also strengthen the case for not only recognising the enormous talents, assets, and contributions of young people, but also ensuring them greater opportunities to make a difference in their communities and beyond.

This project will not have been possible without the support and collaboration of the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation, trainers and co-trainers. I wish to express my appreciation to them for being by our side and to believe in the spirit of leadership and youth empowerment.



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INTRODUCTION

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As Mauritius strives to become a highly developed economy, the need for a pipeline of leaders at all levels is being felt increasingly. In this bid, the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC) has been implementing the National Leadership Engine (NLE) project since 2019. The objective of this project is to develop youth capabilities with a special focus on honing their leadership potential.

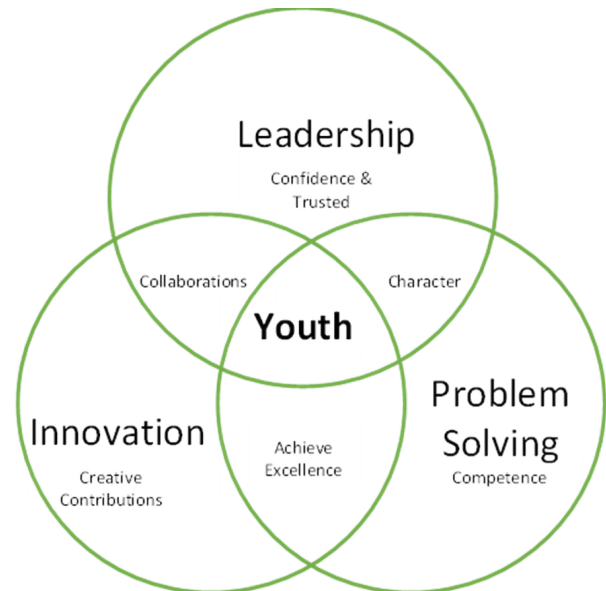
NLE Project Methodology

The NLE project was implemented under the following rigorous methodology:



Benefits for participants

The NLE targets young Mauritians to develop 21st century skills highlighted in the leadership framework as illustrated below.



Our youth will be empowered with trusted leadership skills and confidence, allowing character development through competence in problem solving. Excellence can be achieved through the creative contribution and innovation by our youth by collaborating with others. The leadership pipeline developed through this project is expected to have an impact on socio-economic challenges such as decrease in unemployment through entrepreneurship, promotion of adult literacy, better health, reduction in teenage pregnancy and poverty among others. (Extract from NLE Trainer's Manual, 2020).

The third edition of the NLE project saw the participation of 350 young leaders who successfully implemented 52 projects. This document presents the ten projects which were short-listed at regional level.

They are as follows:

- Algoplastik- From Seaweed To Spoons from Montagne Blanche Youth Centre
- Coconut Tree And Its Bio Products from Rivière du Rempart Youth Centre
- Humanimal – The Voice Of The Voiceless from Pamplémousses Youth Centre
- Mother Earth Conscious (Mec) - Innovative Filtration Nets from Souillac Youth Centre
- Nou Lavenir from Bambous Youth Centre
- Pa Zet Nanien from Mahebourg Youth Centre
- Please Disturb from Floreal Youth Centre
- Seed Of Hope from Port-Louis Youth Centre
- Smarthands – Bringing Nature Closer to you from Ebene Youth Centre
- Trash To Treasure from Barkly Youth Centre



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BARKLEY YOUTH CENTRE

TRASH TO TREASURE

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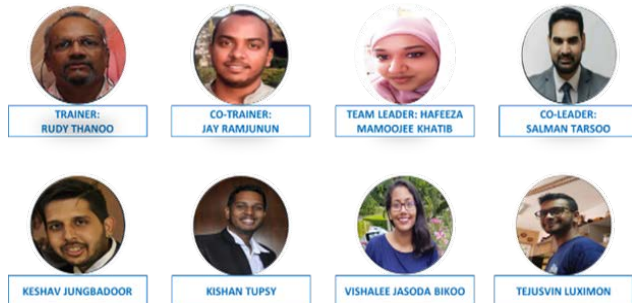


BARKLY YOUTH CENTRE

TRASH TO TREASURE

Introduction

Upcycling is simply about taking wastes, old objects including furniture, and adding one's own creativity and craft to make it something new, unique and beautiful. However, with that art also comes the focus on sustainable use of goods by recycling them instead of putting them away as wastes. There are so many different ways that one can reuse things that, at a first glance, seem completely useless. Young people, who represent a majority of the population in most developing countries, are today visibly contributing as innovators, entrepreneurs and political actors to drive global movements for upcycling, recycling and reuse of waste materials in order to preserve our one and only planet, the Earth.



The Team

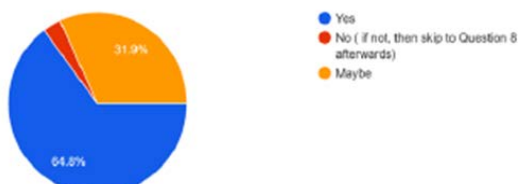
Decided to be part of the movement for a greener earth, a group of youngsters from Barkly Youth Centre advocated for upcycling, i.e. the transformation of industrial textile wastes into fabric handicrafts.

"In this project, we want to collect textile wastes and train the community to produce and market the fabrics made out of such waste. This will eventually reduce pollution and create employment. Through this initiative, we are also hoping to boost the local handicraft industry in Mauritius."

The methodology applied

To get deeper reflection and to share ideas, the team met regularly and used the SCAMPER method to browse and trigger the thought process of their fellow members. To know if the general public will be willing to buy upcycled materials from textile wastes, an online survey was launched and 91 responses were collected. It was understood that people were enthusiast about buying products that could otherwise damage the environment – some 65% of respondents were of this opinion.

3.If those textile waste are to be upcycled to other products, would you be interested in purchasing it?
91 responses



Project implementation and benefits reached

The textile wastes were collected from CDL Knits Ltd which voluntarily agreed to be part of such an initiative. To craft the wastes into marketable products, the team embarked the Women Centre of Mangalkhan where seven women entrepreneurs were provided training on making products such as rug mats, flower pots and bags. A pricing system was tagged to each product with a minimum profit margin. Social media was used to inform a wider audience about the range of products and colours. The team was proud to close the month with a sale of 100 rug mats. It was even more comforting helping the seven women entrepreneurs reaching a profit of Rs 2500 each. To ensure continuity in the initiative, the team joined hands with stakeholders like ECOSHOP, ISEE and VR Agency.



"I wish to thank the NPCC for coming up with such a great programme. To have an idea is one thing but to be given the means to make it happen is another. My team and I have witnessed how our project is making a difference in people's lives and in protecting our environment. I wish to care more and to make the project live to more and better milestones. The future will surely tell how NLE is marking the lives of the Mauritian youth."



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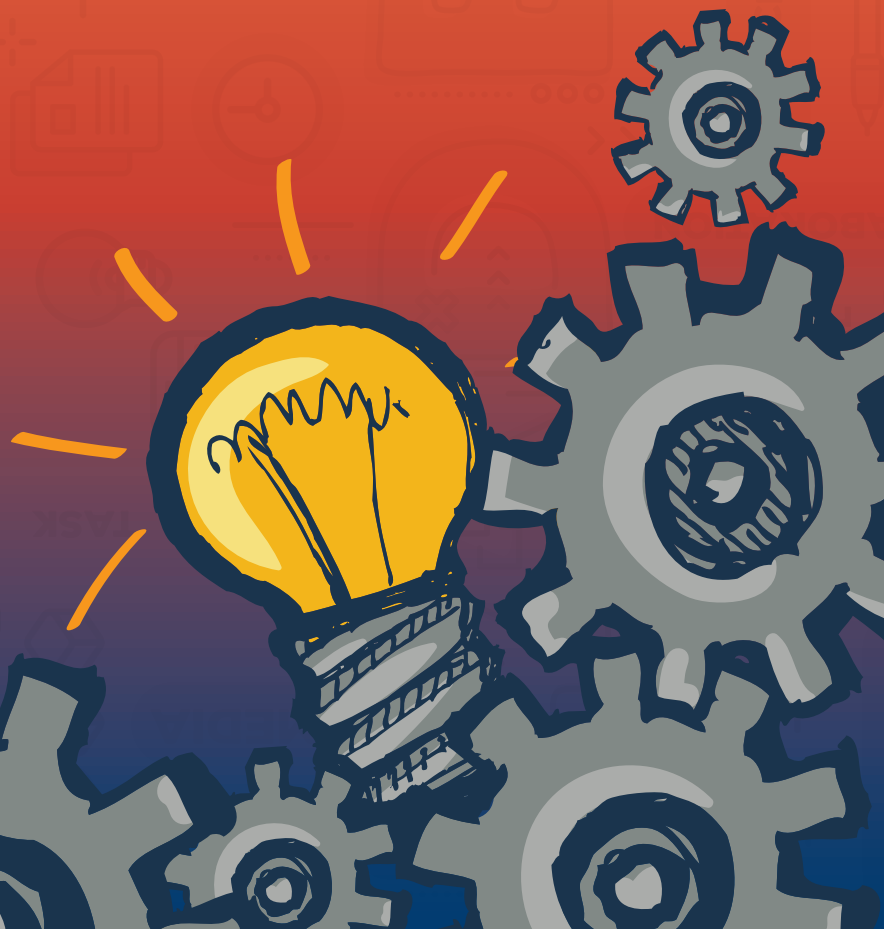
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EBENE YOUTH CENTRE

SMARTHANDS – BRINGING NATURE CLOSER TO YOU

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EBÈNE YOUTH CENTRE

SMARTHANDS – BRINGING NATURE CLOSER TO YOU

Introduction

All too often, technology is seen as being in opposition to nature. In fact, technology has given us a clearer understanding of climate change and alternative energy sources. In some circles, technology is even helping people to reconnect with nature, fuelling a new desire to get outside and contemplate nature’s amazing diversity. Recent developments in technology like Virtual Reality (VR) and immersive 360 degrees videos are helping us interact with nature like never before. Youth of the present generation are contributing actively into bringing VR closer to people.



The Team

Inspired by the numerous possibilities with VR, the team from Ebène Youth Centre came up with an innovative project idea to experience nature through technology.

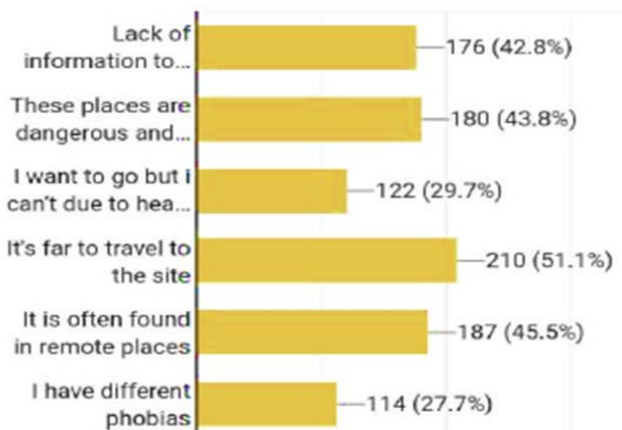
“Our project is very simple. You just download the SmartHands application, launch it and you insert your smartphone in the VR headset provided, that’s it! You can now enjoy immersive 360 degrees videos of local nature spots at the comfort of your home.”

The methodology applied

The team met regularly and engaged in brainstorming sessions to answer questions such as why people would not want to visit nature spots, who will benefit from such an application and what materials may be needed to produce the VR headsets. The team drew their problem tree and eventually their objective tree to plan their way ahead.

They also launched a national survey to gauge the interests and opinions of people with regards to nature and the use of technology. A total of 411 individuals responded.

According to the survey, the majority of respondents do not go to nature reserves, climb mountains or to botanical gardens as the spots are too remote. Some stated that they have phobias/health issues, while others responded that they do not have enough information about nature sites.



Project implementation and benefits

The implementation started with the designing and coding of the mobile application with five screens, namely, (1) Home page where immersive videos are posted (2) About us (3) Discover Mauritius (4) Join us (5) Communicate with us



It continued with the designing and moulding of the VR headset. As raw materials, the team had recourse to cardboard box trashes.



The project was presented to the public at Phoenix Mall and the response was astounding. The Mauritius Wildlife Foundation and NGO Kotpiaie were also roped in to sustain the project.



Testimonial of Team Leader

“Technology is everywhere. If wrongly used, it can be damaging. However, it can turn out to be very beneficial when used productively. My team and I focused on nature. During my research, I went through an article which highlighted that nature videos played in prisons drastically reduce violence amongst inmates, suggesting nature’s relaxing influence translated through screens. I believe that this project has all its potential to reach out to all Mauritians. I wish to thank NPCC and I am personally honoured to be part of the NLE programme.”



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MONTAGNE BLANCHE YOUTH CENTRE

Algoplastik- From Seaweed to Spoons

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MONTAGNE BLANCHE YOUTH CENTRE

ALGOPLASTIK- FROM SEAWEED TO SPOONS

Introduction

Plastic pollution has been adversely affecting our oceans and landfills causing Greenhouse gas emissions on a global scale since decades. It has affected the lives of both humans and animals. To counter these effects, young people are on the look-out for ways and means to advocate for the adoption of environmentally friendly practices and policies.

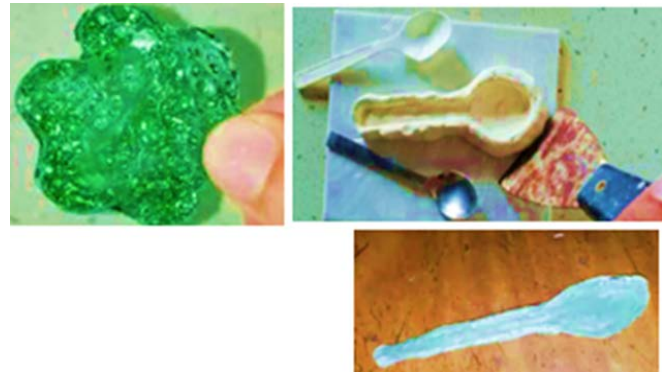


The Team

Fully aware of the environmental challenges of living in a small island, mostly related to climate change, a group of four Mauritian youngsters felt driven to join the global movement for a 'no plastic planet'. The group, which calls both itself and its project 'Algoplastik', intends to engineer a new, algae-based plastic that is 100% sustainable and biodegradable.

The methodology applied

The team conducted an online survey to find the true cause of plastic pollution in Mauritius. 76% of respondents acknowledged that single use plastic is the main contributor to plastic pollution and another 72% believed that biodegradable plastic is the solution. The young leaders also initiated an empathy map to visualise and capture behaviours and attitudes towards plastic pollution. The team considered preliminary data to discuss about different starch-based materials to create the biodegradable plastic prototype, for instance, banana peels, tapioca, egg shells, peanut shells and algae. The choice finally came on overgrown marine algae which is commonly found in the Mauritian lagoon and affects coral reefs if over-present.



Project implementation

The team took up the challenge and implemented the project in the following phases (1) collection of algae from selected public beaches for instance, Belle Mare and Palmar (2) processing of the algae (3) product testing and identification of product lifetime (4) mould making (5) marketing and sensitisation.

Benefits and results achieved

The team showcased encouraging results with the production of algae based spoons and other items. They devised marketing strategies and awareness campaigns. They also conducted promotional activities at Flacq Coeur de Ville. Their initiative was welcome by key stakeholders, e.g. the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping, Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms and the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation.

Testimonials of Team Leader

"A break free from plastic is possible. We are particularly happy and thrilled to be part of a movement for a safer planet. Although our product is just a prototype, it has yet created so much interest. We believe that Mauritians will change their behaviour and contribute towards a more sustainable Mauritius."





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RIVIÈRE DU REMPART YOUTH CENTRE

COCONUT TREE AND ITS BIO PRODUCTS

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RIVIÈRE DU REMPART YOUTH CENTRE

COCONUT TREE AND ITS BIO PRODUCTS

Introduction

Young people across the globe are making significant effort to address issues in areas such as the environment, health, human rights, job creation, community infrastructure. Today, their creative efforts have turned them into sustainable development innovators who contribute massively towards achieving SDGs goals.



The Team

The Coco World Team from Rivière du Rempart is an example of a Mauritian youth led eco-project. According to the team, there was a better way of reusing coconut fibres

readily available across the island. The idea was to convert this agricultural waste, of little or no value, into a valuable commodity which is also environmentally safe.



"We took up the challenge to create 100% biodegradable and eco-friendly products in four categories (i) coconut broom (ii) compost (iii) coconut straws and (iv)coconut fibre bags with a zero return on waste to the environment."

The methodology applied

The Team wanted to know how the Mauritian population would respond to products made of coconut fibres. They initiated an online survey and the results were predictive. 80% of respondents never heard of products made from different parts of coconut trees and a further 64% indicated that they will either throw or burn wastes coming from coconut trees. The team resorted to the construction of a problem tree during brainstorming sessions and at the end of a week, they ended up with a series of issues/problems. For instance, coconut fibres have accumulated on landfills, coconut wastes are burnt to ashes and there is no awareness on how coconut wastes can be used in households.



Project implementation

The team engaged in a long journey of trials and errors before concluding a prototype in each category. The manufacturing steps included the collection of coconut leaves and fibres, cutting, sorting, sterilisation, gluing, twisting and drying of the final product.

Benefits and results achieved



The results were solid and tangible. The Team produced a reliable coconut fibre bag that has the following features: tough and durable, easy to clean, resistant to moisture among others. The compost was also tested among planters in the region of Rivière du Rempart. The project allowed the creation of employment for housewives.

In order to ensure sustainability of the project and to continue creating awareness about products made from coconut parts, the Team joined hands with A Greener Environment (AGE), a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), planters and housewives.



Testimonials of Team Leader

"Our vision is a society of zero wastes. It is possible if we believe, try, create and adapt. The Mauritian society can do it. It requires effort and willingness. Every step on the way brings us closer to the SDGs goals."



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PAMPLEMOUSSES YOUTH CENTRE

HUMANIMAL - THE VOICE OF THE VOICELESS

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PAMPLEMOUSSES YOUTH CENTRE

HUMANIMAL – THE VOICE OF THE VOICELESS

Introduction

Animals have accompanied humans for thousands of years, with a strong bond forged between them. The World Organization for Animal Health states that an animal is in a good state of welfare if it is healthy, comfortable, well-nourished, safe, able to express innate behaviour, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear and distress. Good animal welfare requires disease prevention and veterinary treatment, appropriate shelter, management, nutrition, humane handling and humane slaughter/killing. Today, youth are collectively showing heightened level of concern with regards to animal wellbeing. For instance, providing shelter and food for stray dogs, designing adoption plans for abandoned cats on the street among others.



The Team

PAWS (2022) established that there was a total of 350,000 stray dogs in Mauritius that can result in an increasing number of animal cruelty cases. The consequent rise of treatment costs, inadequately trained personnel, lack of specific technology and a lack of community awareness are also heavily weighted on the scale. Moved by such situations, a group of Mauritian youth has taken the initiative towards animal care through their project Humanimal.

"Inspired to make the most out of the NLE project, we made the first ever first-aid training on animals, the first ever photoshoot with stray animals, the first ever stray-animal magazine, the first ever stray animal food package, the first ever animal database with emergency numbers and the first ever HUMANIMAL first-aid box"

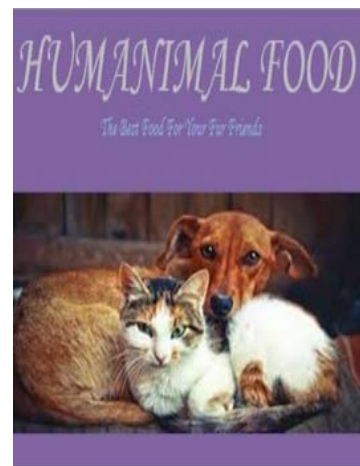
The methodology applied

To visually plan their tasks, the Team adopted the process mapping strategy. They started with an online survey to gauge the interests of inhabitants in the area. They found out that 90% of the people will be willing to help stray dogs in the area, 65% would like to participate in events that Humanimal will organize and 100% agree that animal life is as important as human life. The survey findings validated their project and gave the green light to start planning for implementation.

Project implementation and benefits

The team conducted an intense social media campaign posting texts and drawings. The idea was to raise awareness on animal welfare among the general public. To make things better, the team engaged in a first aid training for animals that captured the attention of 50 families. Humanimals made way for a well-designed foster programme for stray animals and, to their joy, 17 dogs and 6 cats were successfully adopted. To make the project sustainability, the team created 5 'cells' in 5 different villages (Ilot, Triolet, Morcellement St André, Calebasses and Petite Julie) where stray animals could be temporarily adopted and looked after before being handed over to a permanent guardian.

The Team sought the involvement of major stakeholders including the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the National Youth Councils and the Ministry of Labour to make the project successful.



Testimonials of Team Leader

"A lot is being done in areas such as the environment and technology, but nobody is showing interest to develop projects that will solve one of the alarming problems in Mauritius, i.e. stray animals. The time to act is now and I am happy that the NLE project provided us with the right platform and tools to promote HUMANIMAL."





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SOUILLAC YOUTH CENTRE

Mother Earth Conscious (MEC) - Innovative Filtration Nets

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SOUILLAC YOUTH CENTRE

MOTHER EARTH CONSCIOUS (MEC) - INNOVATIVE FILTRATION NETS

Introduction

There is a blue little planet floating in the outer space. It is the 3rd planet from the sun. We call it Mother Earth because like our own mothers, it takes care of us and sustains us. It gives us water to drink, food to eat and air to breathe. Right now, our planet is not doing so well. The world population has boomed and there is an estimated 7.3 billion people living on Earth. With an increasing global population, we need more food and water to survive. We are mining more minerals and fossil fuel. With a change in our lifestyle, we are using more energy but at the same time, producing more trash and creating more pollution. To become better stewards of our fragile world, youth, all over the world are spanning their interests and efforts to collectively create movements that will work towards a healthier planet.



The Team

The 'Mother Earth Conscious' team from Souillac Youth Centre is a vivid example of an ecological project. The Team focused their approach on the disposal of wastes in rivers and lagoons as it has a major impact on the marine livelihood and poses threats to the lives of aquatic animals.

This inevitably led to a decrease in fishermen's catch and in the quality of seafood consumed by the community due to toxins flowing in the aquatic ecosystem. The MEC team came up with an innovative filtration drainage system as a solution to capture wastes in drainage basins, lagoons and rivers before the water reaches the sea.

The methodology applied

The team used a technique known as the PDCA (Plan- Do-Check-Act). They resorted to a street survey in which they interviewed people on accumulation of wastes in drainage systems.

Project implementation and benefits

The project of innovative filtration drainage system was implemented at three sites namely, St Felix, St Martin and La Flora. The project sites were selected based on the following criteria: feasibility, dimension of the drains, water pressure, amount of wastes already present and any side effects such as floods and soil erosion.

The projects largely benefited the fishermen's community, aquatic animals and the marine ecosystem, the tourism sector, and the economy at large.



The wastes collected in the nets were upcycled into useful products.



Testimonials of Team Leader

"Mauritius has an immense beauty and it is one of our greatest assets. The NLE training was an opportunity for me, as a young leader, to realise the importance of its preservation. It also made us realise as a team that youth have the potential to lead and bring change for a better future. The training has had a positive impact on me, as a leader, an activist and a citizen of tomorrow and I am grateful to the NPCC for this opportunity."





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BAMBOUS YOUTH CENTRE

Nou Lavenir

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BAMBOUS YOUTH CENTRE

NOU LAVENIR

Introduction

Over the next decade, the World Bank estimates one billion young people will try to enter the job market, but less than half of them will find formal jobs. This will leave the majority of young people unemployed or experiencing working poverty. The predicted rise in economic inequality and inadequate job opportunities has the potential to negatively impact a generation of young people around the world. According to a 2020 report from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the global youth unemployment rate stands at 13.6%. The contributing factors to this high rate of global youth unemployment are largely due to the lack of job opportunities, but also include barriers to entering the labour market, including limited work experience and lack of skills, and the increasing size of the population itself. Young people are forging ties with their peers to give a boost to the youth movement.



The Team

It is in this spirit that the 'Nou Lavenir' project emerged. *"We cannot always build a future for our youth but we can build our youth for the future – these wise words from the U.S president, Franklin D Roosevelt, could be defined as the starting point of our project. Through Nou Lavenir, we*

have tried to create a bridge for youth aged between 16-25 years old to enter the labour market more smoothly. We also tried to promote entrepreneurship among young people."

The methodology applied

The Team members adopted the Log Frame tool and collectively identified the project's goal as follows: "To decrease the rate of unemployment among youth (16-30 years old) by increasing their prospect for job opportunities". They also identified the activities to implement the project and the outcomes.

Project implementation and benefits reached

The team organised two awareness sessions that was attended by 26 participants from the Mouvement pour le Progres de Roche Bois and young people living in the vicinity of Petite Rivière.



The following topics were covered:

- How to write a CV?
- How to confidently attend a job interview?
- How to become an entrepreneur?

The sessions included board games on entrepreneurship. Participants were grouped in teams of three and, based on scenario information, they had the task to fill the profit and loss statement sheet, and incorporate the company name and other details. The board game devised by the team turned out to be a real success according to the response received in the sessions. At the end of the sessions, the team distributed a CV writing kit to all attendees.



To ensure visibility both locally and internationally, the Team posted online videos on entrepreneurship and published an article in the media on CV writing.



Testimonials of Team Leader

"I am not from the future; I am right here. Youth are to be prepared for the future and I am thrilled to be part of something that is building a better and more aspiring tomorrow. NLE was a great experience for me. It is the first time that I learned about leadership and how I can hone my skills to work out a project like this with my friends and colleagues. I am today more conscious of who I am and how I can be a change agent."



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MAHEBOURG YOUTH CENTRE

Pa Zet Nanien

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MAHEBOURG YOUTH CENTRE

PA ZET NANIEN

Introduction



Young people have an important role to play in the transition to a circular economy, both acting as a representative of consumers with different and higher expectations than the generations before them regarding sustainability, and as the face of innovative entrepreneurs aware of the limit of the current economic model and ready to rethink

production and consumption habits as they enter the professional world. For example, consumer furore around plastics has sparked a frenzy of activity in this space such as improvements in recycling, inventing compostable alternatives, creating models for monetising and reusing plastic items like cups and bottles, spurring activism, such as the 'plastic attacks' rejecting packaging in-store, and cleaning up existing pollution, as well as a spate of business and government pledges.



The Team

A dedicated and passionate team from Mahebourg Youth Centre decided to contribute their share in the circular economy of Mauritius through the Pa Zet Narien project. "Our solution is simple. We engaged in simple methods to recycle

plastic and glass bottles and tin cans. We promoted composting, exchanged unused products, we grew our own food. We believe that it is important to inculcate the notion of circular economy in the population."

The methodology applied

The team conducted a survey among 820 individuals in the region of Mahebourg. The main objective of the exercise was to prioritise on the category of wastes most prevalent in the region. The following table shows the result of six categories of wastes. A Gantt chart was made to manage the project at different level.

Types of wastes	Number of person out of 820	Percentage (%)
Tires	82	10
Plastic wastes	180	22
Glass bottles	41	5
Metal wastes	115	14
Paper	82	10
Tin and cans	164	20
Food wastes	156	19

Project implementation and benefits reached

The team collected old glass bottles and tyres from Bridgestone, Mahebourg. The glasses were transformed into aquariums, decorative items and tables. Plastic bottles, tins, coconut husks and used tyres were recycled as plants pots and other home/garden adornments.

To sensitise the public on how to upcycle wastes, the team conducted a series of campaigns at Emmanuel Anquetil SSS among students of three age groups. The general public was sensitised on climatic challenges and encouraged to contribute towards sustainable living.

The team built up a network of stakeholders to ensure sustainability of the project, for instance, Grand Port District Council, Rotaract Phoenix, SMEs, Head teacher of Grand Bois Government School, Association pour le Développement durable-DPIN, Union Park Welfare Association, Improchem, Lekip foot at gym 25, New Grove, Citizens Advice Bureau of Midlands, Police Station of Mahebourg and the Fire Rescue team.



To encourage call for action, the team created a mural painting at Grand Bois Government School. Products made from wastes were also donated and some exposed at Aquarelle Textile Industry during their Quality Week.

To attract a wider public, the team was interviewed on Taal FM radio Channel of the MBC.

Testimonial of Team Leader

"I feel it is our moral duty to work towards a cleaner and healthier planet for our children and the generations to come. Action has to be taken now. This project would have never been possible without the NLE programme."



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PORT-LOUIS YOUTH CENTRE

SEED OF HOPE

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PORT-LOUIS YOUTH CENTRE

SEED OF HOPE

Introduction

Our food chain supply is showing weaknesses at a time the world is in a state of confusion and fear. Actually, food security has become a major concern for most nations across the globe. Moreover, the prices of essential commodities have increased significantly. Millions of people are now resorting to home gardening to get fresh vegetables and fruits.



The Team

A group of young people from Port-Louis Youth centre came up with a project "Seed of Hope" to promote agricultural practices among the public. "We aim to empower low-income households in the vicinity of Port Louis so that they can produce their own food. The objective is also to alleviate poverty in the community."

The methodology applied

The team brainstormed on the project idea and worked out a flow chart for data collection regarding potential beneficiaries and choice of sites for gardening. They used interlinked methodologies to devise a plan of action for implementation using the PDCA cycle and Gantt chart. The team learnt to be agile and reshuffle responsibilities as and when required to avoid the Muda of waiting.



Project implementation and benefits

The team identified three different locations to implement the project, namely (1) Vallée Pitot (2) Plaine Verte and (3) Cité Martial. Site visits were conducted June 2021. The appropriate growing technique was adopted for each location respectively.



The project was monitored during site visits every two weeks. A WhatsApp group for the beneficiaries was created to follow the project daily.

The project ended up with 12 backyard gardens. A special attention was given to women. A total of five vegetables was produced from plants provided by Planète Enfants. Some 50 volunteers from the local community were also empowered.

The project registered 763 likes on Facebook. The team networked with stakeholders included Currimjee Jeewanjee & Co Ltd, FAREI and Logidis to promote the project.



Testimonials of Team Leader

"This project is close to my heart. Seeing beneficiaries proud of their own harvest was one of the most special moments that my team and I experienced. I realised how easy it is to change the world, one step at a time. When there is a will, there is a way. Thank you NLE for carving out the leader in us."



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FLOREAL YOUTH CENTRE

Please Disturb

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FLOREAL YOUTH CENTRE

PLEASE DISTURB

Introduction

Mental illness is NOT a character flaw but rather an illness like any other. Research shows that when people have better knowledge about different types of mental illness, they are significantly less likely to hold discriminatory views towards those suffering from mental illnesses. Mental health in itself includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It reflects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood through adolescence to adulthood. Statistics showed an alarmingly increasing rate of depression among adolescents between 12 and 17 years old. The number of cases grew by 52% between 2005 and 2017.



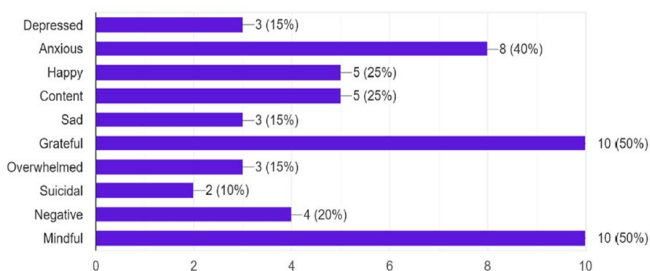
The Team

Today, it can be felt that people are increasingly opening up to discussions regarding mental illness. NGOs and individuals are showing how, through education and awareness, they can make a difference. One such group is the 'Please Disturb' team from Floréal Youth Centre. *"We felt the comfort and passion to encourage people to open up*

about their emotions. The project aims at creating and providing space to people to become aware of their emotions and to equip them with tools to train their minds towards positivity."

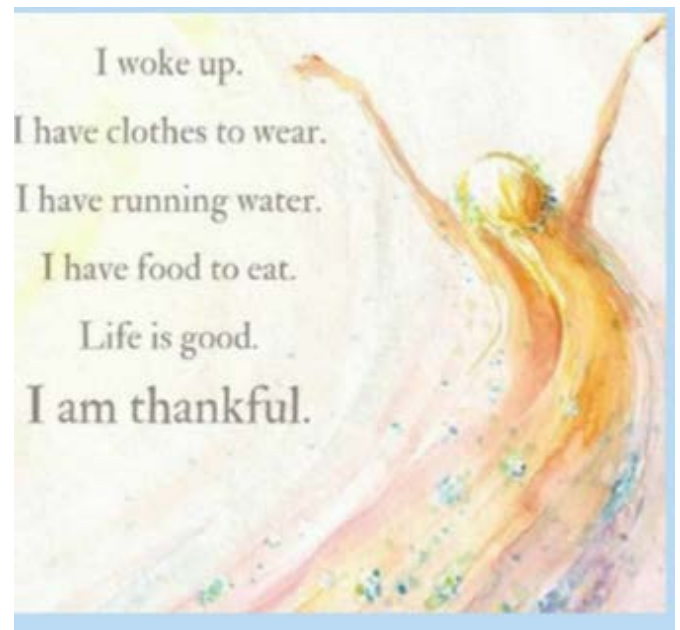
The methodology applied

To reduce the stigma of mental health concerns and encourage help-seeking behaviours, particularly among youth, a survey was conducted by the team to better understand the situation and devise strategies for intervention. Out of 53 key informants participating in the survey, 43% of them felt depressed, anxious, overwhelmed, sad, suicidal or negative. The team was concerned about the figure and devised a mechanism called the empathic circle from which strategies were worked out to implement the project.



Project implementation and benefits

The team launched a website called the Human Library where videos on personal stories and write ups are posted by individuals who overcame failures and struggles. This platform shows people on the verge of depression that they are not alone and they can turn the page and start afresh.



The team created a mobile application with a forum like platform for thematic discussions on emotions as well as personal and social issues. Contents posted on the platform by the team are usually quality assured by mental specialists and are made available in different languages and dialects to reach a greater audience.

As part of the project, the team networked with a group of stakeholders and trained empathy champions to have a listening ear to discern signs of depression and anything related to mental illness.

Testimonial of Team Leader

"I want to dedicate the 'Please Disturb' campaign to people who have and are still experiencing depression. I feel it is high time we avail ourselves to people around us and understand their emotional needs and weaknesses. Mental health is a priority. The 'Please Disturb' campaign will make sure that people who are struggling are listened to. Many times, we turn a blind eye or do not even notice when someone is in pain. This campaign stresses on our responsibility towards people struggling with mental health issues. Thank you to NPCC and NLE for making such a project possible."



National Productivity and Competitiveness Council