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Blue Guide | Community of practice

Newsletter #2

COP26

Coming on the heels of this summer's bombshell IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), described by some as a "[Code Red for Humanity](#)", this year's [COP26](#) was arguably the most significant global gathering of policymakers on the climate emergency since the Paris Agreement was signed at COP21 in 2015. That historic treaty set out ambitious goals for addressing the climate crisis. Five years later, leaders at COP26 were urging countries to reaffirm their commitment by 'ratcheting-up' the speed and scale of their emissions cuts.

After two weeks of discussions, presentations, attempted derailments, wrangling and behind-the-scenes dealings, The Nature Conservancy's Director of International Climate Policy, John Verdieck, commented: "Six years ago, the world came together in Paris to declare a shared intent to keep global warming below +2°C, and – if possible – to restrict temperature rise to +1.5°C. The plaudits for this historic agreement were justified at the time — but building that framework was just the start. Despite the various pledges and initiatives revealed in Glasgow, it's still unclear whether the +1.5°C goal is now within reach."

As Paris was an aspirational target, COP26 was a goal setting process. Now it is all about actual

tangible action and accountability in order that the goals be met. "Analysis of these latest commitments by the respected [Climate Action Tracker](#) (CAT) and [International Energy Agency](#) (IEA) project that the fresh pledges made over the past fortnight have the potential to reduce global warming..."

These commitments are still not enough to keep temperatures from increasing above 1.5°C.

"Perhaps the best news out of Glasgow was the focus and attention paid to the role that nature – and the rights of Indigenous communities whose lands play host to so much of the world's remaining wildlife habitat – can play in addressing the interconnected climate and biodiversity emergencies."

"Nature was on the agenda at COP26 like never before. Unlocking the potential of forests, farms, and wetlands to deliver up to a third of the emissions reductions needed by 2030 must be prioritized", Verdieck said.

While there were many interesting areas covered in COP26, in the end it will be the actions taken by individuals, communities and countries collectively that will make the difference.



Caribbean news

Following on from the Caribbean ToT in March 2021, we caught up with **Candice Ramkissoon**, Technical Officer at the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI).

Q1. What was the key take away for you from the ToT earlier in the year?

The workshop was important in enhancing knowledge and learning about various options for NbS in relation to DRR, with the key take away from CANARI's perspective being the need to get this into the hands of civil society organizations (CSO) working on the ground so that capacity for implementing these types of solutions is built and remains within communities.

The workshop was comprehensive and useful for helping CANARI with relevant knowledge, resources and Information to prepare six partner CSOs in Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica under a current [project](#), to work on NbS in their target communities.

Under the Inter-American Foundation funded "CSOs for Disaster Resilience" project, implemented from 2019 to 2022, we have been building technical and organisational capacity of six partner CSOs to deliver integrated community-based and ecosystem-based DRR (CBDRR/Eco-DRR) solutions, inclusive of technical training and provision of small grants to implement pilot practical action projects.

Q2. Can you share some information about the follow-up training you conducted, for example, who were the trainers and who were the participants, how many days?

Following the ToT workshop in March 2021, CANARI was able to utilise the learning to prepare for technical training planned under the CSOs for Disaster Resilience project.

In June 2021, CANARI conducted a three-day regional training workshop for technical capacity building of partner CSOs in the three target countries and other CSOs operating across the Eastern Caribbean and wider region to apply integrated CBDRR and Eco-DRR, and to prepare partner CSOs to pilot CBDRR and Eco-DRR projects in the target communities.

In order to enhance knowledge mobilisation and partnerships for integrated CBDRR and Eco-DRR in the region, CANARI also invited mentors and other local actors working on climate and disaster resilience in the project countries. There was a lot of interest with a total of 92 participants from across the region attending (including CSO participants, representatives from Red Cross National Societies and disaster offices in the project countries) as well as 6 CANARI team members.

The training workshop was held virtually using Zoom over June 8-9th 2021, with half-day field visits organised for participants in Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada and Dominica on June 10th 2021, to see NbS in practice and enhance practical learning.

CANARI led the training sessions with the support of invited technical experts and practitioners working on CBDRR and Eco-DRR in the region – including representatives from the IFRC Caribbean, The Nature Conservancy and CSOs as well as [Sustainable Grenadines](#) and [IAMovement](#), who shared practical experiences and examples of their work applying CBDRR and Eco-DRR tools and approaches in the region, as well as tips, insights and lessons learned to give participants a good sense of what is involved in realistically planning and implementing this type of work.

In order to make things very digestible for the audience, and considering the time available for training, CANARI didn't use every aspect of the Blue Guide or Solution Finder but adapted the information accordingly and provided these as resources to be referenced.

Applicable elements of the training and Blue Guide were highlighted, such as the 8 stages to consider when designing effective DRR projects using NbS. Particularly critical steps were emphasized, including those related to assessing the community context, community engagement and participation, screening for appropriate solutions, engaging technical expertise, and incorporating livelihood and gender considerations. The training sessions also drew on the specific examples of both coastal/marine and land-based NbS shared in the Blue Guide, given pre-identified needs by CSOs to learn more on the

Antigua training participants on field visit to view ecosystem restorations.

Photo: N. Lawrence



types of NbS, how to select appropriate solutions for their context and what the benefits are. Interestingly, many CSOs are already doing this work in their organizations but not recognizing the link to resilience or DRR.

Q3. What were the key outcomes you observed from the training? Any specific recommendations for other trainers?

After CANARI's own experience conducting training of CSOs, it was apparent from feedback and participant evaluations that the most useful aspect was the sharing of relevant examples/case studies of work being done, lessons and tips by others with good practical experience implementing NbS, which enabled participants to get a realistic sense of the key considerations for implementing NbS at the community level.

It is recommended that this approach be incorporated in other trainings. In addition, from a trainer's perspective, it is important to know the target audience and the roles they may play in implementing NbS in order to effectively tailor training content. CANARI was able to utilize its own technical expertise and in-depth experience working with CSOs in the Caribbean region to adapt relevant training content/approach for CSOs.

Post training, CANARI was able to see aspects of the training come to life in working with CSOs to develop project proposals focused on using NbS - in particular, the importance of engaging technical experts to support effective design and implementation of NbS was continuously highlighted.

Though it has been time consuming, as part of the proposal development process, we are trying to be very proactive and encourage and support partner CSOs to engage relevant local technical experts e.g., national disaster offices, or forestry departments to ensure projects are technically sound. In some cases, this has led to re-shaping of initial project ideas by CSOs. In addition, experiences by partner CSOs engaging their target communities has shown that efforts will be required to continue to raise awareness and buy-in at community level for NbS.

Thus far, two proposals have been developed by CSOs in Dominica - these are focused on riverbank and hillside reforestation/restoration to reduce impacts from flooding and landslides. The projects also aim to integrate complementary aspects focused on enhancing community livelihoods e.g. exploring use of vetiver from restoration activities for crafts, or strengthening local disaster committees to enhance institutional

capacity for DRR at community level. Four additional proposals are in development by CSOs in Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda, with current ideas focused on coastal vegetation replanting and mangrove restoration to enhance coastal protection, and establishment of urban micro-forests to help reduce impacts from heatwaves and flooding.

Q4. What future plans do you have around NbS in the Caribbean?

CANARI's work, particularly under our Resilience Programme will seek to continue building capacity of CSOs and importantly supporting practical actions by helping channel funds to civil society and local communities for delivering/implementing NbS. The lessons from current projects will be used to enhance and improve future efforts in this area and provide a foundation from which we can scale up action.

We are also committed to building/contributing to a community of practice on CBDRR/Eco-DRR in the region, and are expanding efforts on this under the current CSOs for Disaster Resilience project. We are exploring opportunities for continued dialogue and learning on what 'resilience' means in the Caribbean context, importance of NbS and role of civil society, including through establishment of learning networks and knowledge sharing/exchange with other actors in the region on this topic. In addition, we will continue to document learning and best practice cases, especially to highlight civil society stories and contributions.

Q5. Who do you see as the key partners going forward in terms of NbS?

Regionally, the IFRC Caribbean and CDEMA (Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency) are very engaged and interested in community resilience on the whole and are supporting and promoting NbS and capacity building of CSOs in this area, including through participation on CANARI's project steering committee for the CSOs for Disaster Resilience project.

The IFRC Caribbean in particular has been building a lot of experience through initiatives such as the Resilience Islands project, developing useful tools such as the

Grenada training participants viewing mangrove restoration.

Photo: G.Thomas



Roadmap to Resilience and supporting knowledge sharing including in the recent training by presenting on work they have been doing in the region. We must also continue to advocate for CSOs as partners and build their capacity as key implementers of locally-led action and adaptation on the ground. There are already some strong CSOs working on NbS in the region such as Sustainable Grenadines and IAMovement.

Q6. Can you foresee any positive outcomes for the Caribbean/globally following on from the upcoming COP26?

COP26 represents a critical moment to ensure the pledge of US\$100 billion per year to developing countries to support climate change adaptation and mitigation is fulfilled, and to highlight pathways for channeling this finance to address the needs of the most vulnerable communities and wider civil society in Caribbean SIDS and globally.

In particular, CANARI has been advocating and is hoping for ambitious action and positive outcomes especially regarding unlocking access to climate finance for CSOs and ensuring funds are channelled to the local level - at least 25% of the US\$100 billion pledge must support locally-led adaptation. While outcomes are uncertain, we would love to see some drastic and ambitious contributions from some of the other countries and big emitters that are doing more to fuel climate change than the small islands in the Caribbean.

Q7. Do you have any aspirations for the Caribbean coming out of the COP26 meeting?

That's an interesting question which I have been thinking about. CANARI calls for and hopes that COP26 will result in urgent climate action that ensures just and inclusive outcomes for Caribbean small island states and other vulnerable

developing countries. We want to see ambitious targets and real commitments to tackle the climate crisis from world leaders, corporations and key funding agencies.

CANARI itself has been advocating and trying to mobilise action under some of its current projects, including one focused on climate justice and a GCF-funded project, "Enhancing Caribbean Civil Society's Access and Readiness for Climate Finance".

CANARI will host a side event at the COP26 focused on unlocking finance for climate action, where we will launch a new report highlighting findings from a scoping study on Caribbean civil society's access to finance, key barriers and concrete recommendations for improving access to finance and scaling up locally-led climate action.

New training resources

- ▶ We are excited to announce that the **Blue Guide**, including the training resources, is now available in **Spanish** and **Indonesian**. Check the [NPP website](#) for these new products.
- ▶ **Nature-based Solutions for Disaster and Climate Resilience** Offered by the [SDG Academy](#), this is a self-paced free online course. By the end of this course, you will learn: How to apply nature-based solutions in enhancing resilience to disasters and climate change; How human activities are interlinked with ecological systems and main tools and approaches for applying nature-based solutions to reducing disaster and climate risks; and much more.
- ▶ **IUCN** is launching its **Professional Certificate on Nature-based Solutions**. This programme will provide individuals with IUCN-certified credentials, covering the necessary skills and knowledge to assess and start designing Nature-based Solutions. The 2nd Edition of the Professional Certificate will start on 18 January and close on 1 March 2022 (6 weeks).
- ▶ **UNEP** has a **new Certificate Course on Nature-based Solutions for Disaster and Climate Resilience** that takes 3-6 hours of self-paced learning. The course is offered in English, French, Spanish, Hindi, Arabic, Chinese and Indonesian. End date is 1 December 2021.

Participants presenting results of the training.

Photo: EAG



Other news and resources

The **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** is now embracing nature-based solutions as viable and preferred hazard mitigation solutions. The Nature Conservancy has worked with AECOM, an engineering firm, to develop a new guidebook **"Promoting Nature Based Hazard Mitigation through FEMA Mitigation Grants"**. While this is a USA based program the guidebook has usefulness in examining steps for identification of solutions against risks, quantification of benefits, (the benefit cost ratio) and a selection of case studies.

Finding Bright Spots in the Global Coral Reef Catastrophe. The first-ever **report on the world's coral reefs** presents a grim picture, as losses mount due to global warming. But there are signs of hope — some regions are having coral growth, and researchers found that corals can recover if given a decade of reprieve from hot water.



Examining bleached coral in French Polynesia.
Photo: Alex Rosenfeld

In October **IORA** presented a **webinar on Blue Carbon Finance for coastal resilience development**. You can use the [link](#) to view the presentation slides and the link [here](#) to view the webinar.

The **International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)** has released a **report** on its activities from 2018 - 2021.

Belize just committed to protecting 30 percent of its ocean territory, with the support of the largest debt conversion for ocean conservation to date. just committed to protecting 30 percent of its ocean territory, with the support of the largest debt conversion for ocean conservation to date.

Belize has reaffirmed its environmental leadership by becoming the first country in the Americas to finalize a debt conversion for ocean conservation —and one that represents an impact investment for marine protection that's unprecedented in scale. This commitment will enable Belize to

restructure approximately US\$550 million of external commercial debt—an amount that represents 30 percent of the country's GDP—and reduce the national debt by 12 percent.



Seaweed harvesting in farms off the coast of Placencia Village, Belize. © The Nature Conservancy

Well that is all for this the second Newsletter — if you would like to share some of the work you are doing in NbS for the next newsletter due out in late February please get in touch! Until then, stay safe, stay well and have a wonderful next few months!

Sally and Patrick



Antiguan participants on field visit to view ecosystem restoration in action. Photo: Natalya Lawrence/GEF SGP