Enviro News

Seychelles' Environmental Education Newsletter

Small Islands Voice Youth Forum

Small Islands Voices is an inter-regional initiative to amplify the voice of people on environmental - development issues organised by UNESCO. Young islanders play an important role in this project.

A trial young Internet-based forum has started involving five islands: St. Vincent and Grenadines (Caribbean); Seychelles; Palau and Cook (Pacific). It provides an exciting opportunity for schools in small islands to link with others to exchange their views and knowledge about island living.

The activity will focus on 13-15 year old and they will work on five themes: advantages and disadvantages of living in on islands; life after school ; drug and alcohol use among youth; sports and recreation; and the future for these islands.

Each theme has been allocated to a particular island, and participants will prepare a 500-700 word text on that theme and post it on the forum. Students from the other islands involved in the project will then post responses to that article.

After sending a circular memo to all secondary schools, Anse Royale secondary school promptly responded and was eventually selected to participate in the project. Students and teacher from the school will work on the project as part of their English class activity and work closely with their IT teacher to coordinate the activity on internet. Students from that school are actually preparing their article on the theme '*Life after school in my island*' and will be posted on the internet from 23rd - 27th September. Throughout the year they will also have to respond to other articles sent by the other islands participating in the project.

On 16th September, students from Bequia Community High School (Grenadines), sent their essay about (dis)avantages of living in a small island, stating that they are well known for fishing, boating racing and whale catching. As a very small island everyone knows each other. There is very little development there and most of their economy revenue depends on tourism and fishing. Some disadvantages they stated are unemployment as school leavers usually end up in fishing or tourism industry, and their dependence on imported products. They feel that there should be proper health care and better waste disposal, and more organised police force and coastguards.

Anse Royale students were swift to response. They stated stating that one of their disadvantages is being far away from other countries. It was interesting to see that they wrote, "*..we disagree with you when you say that you catch whales...In Seychelles, we are very aware of our environment. We try to protect it as much as we can. Even if we are a tourist destination, the government has made it their duty to watch the impact it can have on our environment...Turtle meat was a delicacy at some stage in the past. We have never tasted it. The killing of turtles for its meat and shells has been banned. Whatever whales we have in our waters are protected rather than killed. We do not wish to offend you, but we feel that such species should be protected. We should not destroy our natural environment just to keep up traditions.*"

Regarding their response on the issue of culture the students stated that one advantage of being a Seychellois is living in a real multicultural society, and that "*we only hear about the issue of races on television*".

It is interesting to see how our young Seychellois are becoming more environmentally - conscious and publicly expressing their concern in saving our natural species. The two students, Tyra Faure and Juliette Elizabeth, who wrote the article on behalf of the school, need our praise for their interesting and well written article.