

ISLANDS IN A SEA OF CHANGE

**UNESCO's Intersectoral
Platform for SIDS**



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization





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SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS) TODAY FACE UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGES. IN A GLOBALIZED AND INTERCONNECTED WORLD SUBJECT TO CHANGING CLIMATIC CONDITIONS, SMALL ISLANDS ARE PARTICULARLY AT RISK – WHETHER FROM INCREASINGLY UNPREDICTABLE AND SEVERE WEATHER, THE PROSPECT OF RISING SEA LEVELS, OR THEIR GEOGRAPHICAL ISOLATION AND ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY.

HOWEVER, SMALL ISLAND SOCIETIES HAVE A RECORD OF THRIVING IN CHALLENGING TIMES, INVENTING AND REFINING NEW AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT, SOCIETAL MOBILIZATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADAPTATION.

THIS BOOKLET HIGHLIGHTS SOME OF THE MANY UNESCO ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED ON THE SIDS INTERSECTORAL PLATFORM. MORE AND MORE INTERDISCIPLINARY IN NATURE, DRAWING ON EXPERTISE IN BOTH UNESCO HEADQUARTERS AND FIELD OFFICES, UNESCO’S SUPPORT TO ITS SIDS MEMBER COUNTRIES STRIVES TO MATCH THE INVENTIVENESS AND DETERMINATION OF ISLAND SOCIETIES THEMSELVES.





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Intersectoral Platform for SIDS

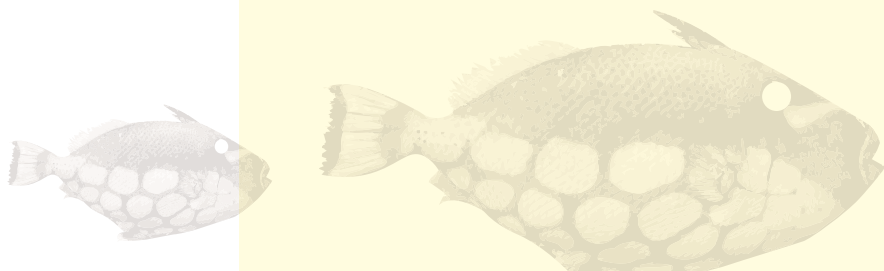
Intersectoral Platforms are an innovative modality through which UNESCO reinforces collaboration amongst its five programme sectors: Education, Natural Sciences, Social & Human Sciences, Culture, and Communication & Information. Many of today's complex challenges call for such an intersectoral response – one of UNESCO's primary comparative advantages in the multilateral arena. The platforms define joint strategies and establish operational teams with complementary expertise that work across various Sectors and, most importantly, in various regions and countries of the world.

UNESCO's house-wide contribution to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States is mobilized through the SIDS Platform. The SIDS Platform pursues an integrated approach to sustainable island living and development, emphasizing interregional linkages and cooperation. Reflecting the priority status assigned to SIDS in UNESCO's current medium-term strategy, the SIDS Platform is geographical in nature, allowing it to interact with other platforms focusing on specific themes, such as, for example, climate change and education for sustainable development.

The SIDS Platform ensures that UNESCO's unique interdisciplinary expertise – in natural and social sciences; climate change; education for sustainable development; natural, cultural and intangible heritage; the articulation of scientific and indigenous knowledge; and knowledge management and information for decision-making – is productively used in addressing the multiplicity of challenges facing SIDS.

A dedicated website is regularly updated, reflecting UNESCO-wide activities and events contributing to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

www.unesco.org/en/sids



CLIMATE CHANGE

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‘PEOPLE ON THE MOVE’ IN PACIFIC ISLANDS

A pattern of climate-related environmental change – rising temperatures, extreme high tides, as well as an increase in the severity of tropical storms – is emerging in the Pacific. Many Pacific islanders live on low-lying atolls, some of which are already experiencing environmental changes that threaten health, food security and habitability. Populations living in large river deltas and coastal regions, in other words most of the Pacific outside the highlands of Papua New Guinea – could be severely affected by sea level rise. Communities are responding by moving: some island people have already relocated.

In May 2009, the Asia-Pacific Migration Research Network, with the support of the UNESCO Apia Office and the University of the South Pacific, hosted the Pacific’s first workshop on climate change-related migration. The workshop identified several key areas for further research and policy development. The discussion centered on basic questions such as why people move – or alternatively, why they stay – as well as on how they access land in new places, how they are received, and the social implications of migration on Pacific island societies.

Contributed by SHS, Apia Office

Intersectoral Platform to Address Climate Change

The Climate Change Platform supports the implementation of UNESCO’s Strategy for an effective response to climate change, drawing upon all of the Organization’s fields of competence. The Strategy recognizes that an integrated approach to climate change is essential to address the range of environmental, economic, social, cultural, educational, informational, gender, attitudinal and behavioral issues involved.

The platform brings together over 40 ongoing climate-related activities across all UNESCO sectors, with particular emphasis on contributions to the global knowledge base on climate change. In recognition of their heightened vulnerability, the Climate Change Platform pays special attention to SIDS, in close collaboration with the SIDS Intersectoral Platform.

CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION

The UNESCO International Seminar on Climate Change Education was held in July 2009 in Paris, with financial support from the Government of Denmark. It focused on the role of education in addressing climate change with particular emphasis on the challenges faced by SIDS. The recommendations of the Seminar will form an important contribution towards the development of UNESCO action on climate change and climate change education.

Contributed by the Intersectoral Platforms on Climate Change, ESD and SIDS

ON THE FRONTLINES OF CLIMATE CHANGE – A GLOBAL FORUM

Small island, indigenous and other vulnerable communities have remained on the sidelines of global climate change debates. To bridge this gap, UNESCO launched the Climate Frontlines Forum in June 2008. Running in English, French and Spanish, this Internet-based Forum promotes the sharing and exchange of community-level observations, concerns and innovations with respect to climate change: impacts, opportunities and adaptation. The Forum is a joint effort of UNESCO and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In addition to online discussions to which participants from small island, rural and indigenous communities contribute, the Forum is currently funding, with assistance from the Government of Denmark, community-level small-scale projects on climate change impacts and adaptation.

www.climatefrontlines.org

Contributed by SC/PSD/SII

TELLING THE CLIMATE CHANGE STORY: MEDIA IN THE PACIFIC

UNESCO works with Pacific media organizations to increase the quality, frequency, and permanence of reporting on key sustainable development issues, including climate change. Recent and ongoing activities include the organization of several regional training sessions at which Pacific journalists receive updates from Pacific scientists on regional and international climate change activities, as well as intensive media training to adapt data and stories to Pacific audiences.

Contributed by CI, Apia Office



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VALUING HERITAGE AND KNOWLEDGE



RECOGNIZING WORLD HERITAGE IN ISLANDS

The World Heritage Programme for SIDS coordinates the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy within the context of the World Heritage Convention, with assistance from a number of donors. As of 2009, all but a handful of SIDS have ratified the Convention. The number of SIDS properties inscribed on the World Heritage list continues to increase, with four new sites admitted in 2008 – Historic Centre of Camaguey (Cuba), Le Morne Cultural Landscape (Mauritius), Kuk Early Agricultural Site (Papua New Guinea), and Chief Roi Mata's Domain (Vanuatu). Cidade Velha (Cape Verde) was inscribed in 2009.

Targeted World Heritage programmes have been established in both the Caribbean and Pacific SIDS in order to assist member states in their work with the Convention. The Caribbean Capacity-Building Programme Manual was finalized in 2008 and consists of training modules on the implementation of the Convention as well as on tourism, risk preparedness, cultural landscapes and historic cities. A range of capacity development and awareness raising activities were also undertaken in the African SIDS.

In the Pacific, four World Heritage nominations were submitted in 2009, while a thematic study – Cultural Landscapes of the Pacific Islands – was conducted by the International Council on Monuments and Sites. Moreover, a feasibility study on the establishment of a Pacific World Heritage Fund was initiated through the UNESCO Apia Office.

Contributed by CLT/WHC

CREOLE WOMEN'S KNOWLEDGE IN THE MASCARENES

Women's knowledge of medicinal plants and traditional medicine in the Mascarenes of the Indian Ocean (Reunion, Mauritius, Rodrigues) is rooted in the elaborate synergies developed amongst African, Chinese, European and Indian knowledge systems and worldviews. These creole medicinal practices that continue to provide for local health needs have been recorded in the framework of the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programme and are soon to be published in a richly illustrated volume.

Contributed by SC/PSD/SII

SHARING ISLAND CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

UNESCO takes an interdisciplinary approach to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in SIDS across the world. A project aimed at safeguarding the *taarab*, a traditional form of Swahili music, was implemented by facilitating exchange visits between musicians from Comoros and Zanzibar (Tanzania), allowing them to share their musical experience and to revitalize their historical cultural relationship. This resulted in a DVD documentary and the building of a school/music center.

In the Pacific, a great number of Melanesian languages are in danger of disappearing due to a gradual decrease in use and the lack of written forms. A project to preserve and revitalize languages without orthographies has been carried out since 1996 in three Melanesian countries (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu). Through the project, students



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KNOWLEDGE SOCIETIES

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION

UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) plays an active role in the development of media in SIDS. IPDC has implemented more than 185 media development projects (116 national projects and 69 regional projects) covering 32 SIDS and amounting to a total of US\$ 3.5 million. Areas addressed by the most recently approved projects include media capacity-building, media technology, community television and radio, participatory video-making, communication arts, radio programme production and scheduling techniques, and prison community television networks.

Contributed by CI

FREE FM: A COMMUNITY MULTIMEDIA CENTRE PROJECT

The FREE (Facilitating Rehabilitation, Education and Entertainment) FM Community Multimedia Centre Action Research Project is a joint initiative of the Jamaican Department of Correctional Services (DCS) and UNESCO. The project has been piloted at Jamaica's Tower Street Adult Correctional Center, a maximum security prison, and was implemented in collaboration with Students Expressing Truth (SET) - an organization involved in prisoner rehabilitation and reintegration.

FREE FM creates a positive interactive multimedia environment throughout the DCS, involving correctional officers, administrators, inmates and families. It functions as a vehicle to advance DCS's Life Skills Programme, providing a significant opportunity for positive change in education and communication within prisons. The programmes are designed and developed to provide education to the inmate population, to share information on events across the penal system, and to create a learning atmosphere that benefits both inmates and staff.

Contributed by CI, Kingston Office

in linguistics and local teachers were trained to conduct field surveys and to analyze the collected linguistic data. Based on the data, teaching materials to be used in schools are being developed.

UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger raises awareness about language endangerment and the need to safeguard the world's linguistic diversity. Its latest edition (2009) lists about 2,500 languages, including more than 200 languages in SIDS. The free Internet-based version of the Atlas is available at: www.unesco.org/culture/en/endangeredlanguages/atlas

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CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



SANDWATCH – CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Sandwatch project provides a framework for children, youth and adults in schools and local communities to work together to critically evaluate the problems and conflicts facing their beach environments. It encourages the development of sustainable approaches to address these challenges, while also stimulating local climate change adaptation measures.

Launched by UNESCO a decade ago, Sandwatch is today active in more than 20 SIDS world-wide, and is coordinated by the non-profit Sandwatch Foundation. With support from the Government of Denmark, a series of training events during 2009 and 2010 are serving to test new climate change-related materials for a revised edition of the Sandwatch Manual. A global Sandwatch database is also under development to allow the data collected by Sandwatch teams around the world to be systematically recorded and shared widely.

Sandwatch is a flagship project for the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPNet). ASPNet is a global network of more than 8,500 educational institutions in 178 countries that was founded in 1953. Member institutions include pre-schools, primary, secondary and vocational schools, as well as teacher training institutions.

www.sandwatch.org
Contributed by SC/PSD/SII, ED/BAS/ASP, ED/UNP/DESD

THE UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM OF SMALL ISLAND STATES

The University Consortium of Small Island States (UCSIS) is composed of the Universities of Malta, Mauritius, South Pacific, Virgin Islands and West Indies. Its principal objective is to promote an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) and the Mauritius Strategy. Participating institutions cooperate in order to: (a) develop and implement a graduate programme in SIDS; (b) design training programmes for capacity-building to implement the BPOA and the Mauritius Strategy; (c) develop visions, values and skills required for effective advocacy; and (d) elaborate methods for research programmes. UCSIS convenes a core committee of educators and administrators from participating universities to further develop its substantive and procedural agenda. Since its inception in 2006, UNESCO supports UCSIS through its status as a UNITWIN network.

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ESTABLISHING A UNIVERSITY IN THE SEYCHELLES

At the request of the Ministry of Education in the Seychelles, UNESCO is providing assistance – along with other partners – for the establishment of a university in the Seychelles. The aim is to (a) meet demands for higher education; (b) reverse the trend of secondary school graduates leaving to study abroad; (c) attract students from abroad, especially neighboring islands; (d) expand the current disciplines within post-secondary education to include environmental management; (e) establish a full degree programme for teacher training; and (f) assist in identifying the most appropriate higher education modalities (face-to-face, overseas, distance, franchise, etc.) for the Seychelles. The University of Seychelles will open its doors to students in late 2009, with a formal opening in 2010. An existing post-secondary school is being converted to host the first students of the University of Seychelles, while awaiting the construction of new facilities.

Contributed by ED/HED/RIQ

Intersectoral Platform on Education for Sustainable Development

Education is a key component of the international response to current global challenges. It encourages changes in behavior that are a fundamental requirement for a more sustainable society. UNESCO, as the lead agency for the coordination and mobilization of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), promotes the integration of the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning.

The Intersectoral Platform on Education for Sustainable Development coordinates UNESCO's work in support of DESD, focusing on such areas as policy, capacity development, knowledge enhancement and awareness-raising.

Within ESD, SIDS member states identify those elements that they consider to be of critical significance to their local contexts. For instance, in May 2005, Pacific Ministers of Education identified quality technical and vocational education as critical for increasing economic independence and creating a skilled workforce within a sustainable society. With its holistic approach, DESD is essential for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and also contributes to the objectives of the Mauritius Strategy.

www.unesco.org/education/desd

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

ASSESSING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SIDS

In partnership with regional academic organizations, UNESCO has undertaken two studies to map approaches to sustainable development in the Pacific and the Caribbean. The studies include an outline of Pacific/Caribbean perceptions of sustainable development at local, national and regional levels; an overview of Pacific/Caribbean responses to sustainable development challenges; and an assessment of UNESCO's potential role in addressing these challenges.

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LAND, COASTAL AND MARINE RESOURCES

ISLAND BIOSPHERE RESERVES

In 2006, the UNESCO Jakarta Office, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, and the Jeju Special Self-Governing Provincial Government (Republic of Korea), established a regional initiative of cooperation entitled the "Jeju Initiative". Its aim is to bring together Asia-Pacific countries, including SIDS, to strengthen the role of island and coastal biosphere reserves in mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts, and to promote sustainable development. The Jeju Initiative is working with other such initiatives to build a World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves.

The International Training Seminar on Caribbean Biosphere Reserves was co-organized by MAB-Jamaica, the Jamaican National Commission for UNESCO and

YOUTH VISIONING FOR ISLAND LIVING

The Youth Visioning (YV) initiative promotes capacity building and the involvement of youth in the sustainable development of SIDS. Young people articulate how they want their islands to develop in the future and undertake projects that encompass the environment, health, socio-economic and cultural issues. YV was initiated in 2004, and is supported by many organizations at the national, regional and inter-regional level. Since 2006, YV has benefited from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). It sponsors actions that help island youth combat HIV/AIDS. A recent call for proposals from youth led to the granting of support for 11 projects from Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean SIDS. The projects are being implemented and will be completed by November 2009.

www.youthvisioning.org

Contributed by SC/PSD/SII, EDUCAIDS, SHS, Apia, Dakar, Dar es Salaam, Havana and Kingston Offices

UNESCO, in 2009 with financial support from the Government of Spain. The seminar focused on island and coastal biosphere reserves, and was both timely and important for Jamaica, which is currently nominating its first biosphere reserve. The seminar also promoted the creation of networking structures for biosphere reserves in the English-speaking Caribbean. It may open the way to the creation of biosphere reserves in Caribbean countries.

In the Pacific, the Pacific Biosphere Reserve Network (PacMAB) brings together new and emerging biosphere reserves in the small islands of the Pacific for discussion and mutual assistance. PacMAB will hold its third meeting in December 2009 at the East-West Centre, Hawaii Islands, USA.

Contributed by SC/EES, Jakarta and Kingston Offices

FRESHWATER RESOURCES

SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

UNESCO Dar-es-Salaam Office supports training on integrated water resources management in the Indian Ocean SIDS. During a training session (July 2008) in the Seychelles attended by water managers from Mauritius, Madagascar and Seychelles, a number of issues of particular concern to SIDS were raised. While countries like the Seychelles are faced with resource limitations and droughts each year, others have an abundance of water but encounter difficulties with its access or development. Madagascar and Mauritius noted that a lack of proper planning has affected water resources, increasing the costs of providing water. The issue of freshwater pollution was also highlighted.

Contributed by SC/HYD, Dar-es-Salaam Office

NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS

PREPAREDNESS FOR OCEAN-BASED EXTREME EVENTS

In many tsunami-affected countries, one of the main impediments to accurate calculation of tsunami inundation and run-up is the lack of adequate coastal bathymetric (ocean depth) data. This input data is critical for tsunami modeling. Furthermore, bathymetric surveys are expensive and must be continuously updated as bathymetry may be altered by both natural and man-made causes. Embedded within UNESCO-IOC's Integrated Coastal Area Management programme, COAST-MAP-IO is contributing to the development of this capacity in 12 countries including four SIDS – Comoros, Maldives, Mauritius, and the Seychelles.

UNESCO-IOC coordinates the establishment of early warning systems for tsunami and other ocean-related hazards in the Caribbean (CARIBE-EWS). These systems have been under development by countries since 1990. UNESCO-IOC also contributes regularly to regional training courses and events. These are a key component of its continuing support for SIDS coastal and oceans hazards preparedness in the Caribbean region.

Contributed by IOC, Bangkok and Kingston Offices

SIDS Committee of Representatives

The SIDS Committee of Representatives to UNESCO was created by the Organization's SIDS Member States in 2006, with the purpose of strengthening UNESCO's support for - and ensuring more targeted outcomes associated with - the Mauritius Declaration and Strategy. The Committee works closely with the UNESCO Secretariat in order to:

- galvanize the rich information and expertise within UNESCO of relevance to SIDS Member States;
- examine, disseminate and share this information with all relevant stakeholders in islands;
- provide a more informed position on policies and matters relevant to SIDS and UNESCO;
- increase the leveraging position of SIDS to ensure that they speak with one voice across UNESCO on their core concerns.

Contributed by the Mauritius and St. Kitts & Nevis Permanent Delegations to UNESCO

Intersectoral Platform for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

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Participating Sectors: Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture, Communication and Information.

This booklet is a collective effort of colleagues from UNESCO's five programme sectors in Headquarters and Field Offices (Apia, Dakar, Dar-es-Salaam, Doha, Havana, Jakarta, Kingston, Libreville, New Delhi and Port-au-Prince), as well as collaborating institutions and organizations. Thanks are due to all those who have contributed information, ideas, text and graphics.

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