

“Strengthening Capacity in the Compilation of Statistics and Indicators for Conference Follow-up in the CARICOM Region”

Overview of the Project

The project, jointly carried out by UNSD and CARICOM, covers the areas of social/gender and environment statistics with a supporting component of information technology.

Objectives

- strengthen the capacity of national and regional statistical offices to collect and analyze statistical information;
- establish a network of experts to improve intra-regional cooperation.

Activities

- needs assessment (1999)
- Workshop on Environment Statistics (Belize, 2000)
- Workshop on Social/Gender Statistics (Jamaica, 2000)
- Advanced Access Training Workshop (Barbados, 2001)
- Advanced training for trainers on database design/management (Barbados, 2002)
- provision of computer equipment and in-country training on various topics related to IT
- Expert Group Meeting on the Compilation and Presentation of Statistics in the Caribbean Community: Social/Gender and Environment Statistics (Grenada, 2001)
- study tours/attachment programmes
- consultancy and advisory services
- recruitment of temporary personnel (one statistician and one IT expert stationed at CARICOM headquarters)
- participation in the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians meetings.

Outputs

- increased capabilities in information technology
- regional lists of indicators developed at the Workshops
- *The CARICOM Environment in Figures 2002* (published)
- “Women and Men in the Caribbean Community: Facts and Figures, 1980-2001” (forthcoming)
- national level workshops or seminars and increased inter-agency collaboration
- national statistical compendia
- establishment of an Advisory Group in 2001 comprising directors of selected national statistical offices
- finalization of the list of social/gender statistics and indicators, including some of the indicators that underpin the Millennium Development Goals
- formulation of an overall strategy and implementation schedule for the compilation of social/gender statistics
- transformation of the UNSD/CARICOM Project into a Programme.

Lessons Learned

- regional and national institutional capacity building was fundamental to Project implementation.
- a bottom-up approach to Project implementation was instrumental for full participation in activities/outputs.
- there is a wealth of information available at national and regional level.
- collaboration was a key factor during the Project and regional and international institutions provided resource persons to the Workshops and Expert Group Meetings.
- continued communication with regional and international institutions was essential to enhance coordination of activities and to minimize duplication of various on-going capacity-building efforts.
- the advantages of building the Project on an initial needs assessment were clear since the Project activities were seen to be timely for the region.
- it was useful to work with a regional institution such as CARICOM that works directly with the countries, both in getting the programme institutionalised and in getting countries to adopt the Project activities.
- the setting up of the Advisory Group has also been effective in ensuring sustainability of these areas of statistics in the region.
- the preparation of joint country papers was a very useful exercise.

Priority Next Steps

- the role of the national statistical offices as focal points for social/gender and environment statistics needs to be strengthened;
- coordination between regional and international organizations needs to be improved;
- a regional programme with an overall strategy and implementation schedule for the compilation of environment statistics should be formulated;
- a regional core set of environmental statistics and indicators should be determined;
- more methodological guidance needs to be instituted in Member States;
- training and technical assistance need to be increased and sustained, noting that study tours and intra-regional cooperation have been very promising mechanisms;
- national social/gender and environment statistics compendia should continue to be published on a regular basis;
- support should also be provided for development of social/gender and environment statistics units at the CARICOM Secretariat which can act as repositories for these statistics once compiled at the national level.