

CReW's Lines

Newsletter of the Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management

Vol. 3, Issue 3

September 2014

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Engaging the Media for Change!

Lessons from GEF CReW's Media KAPS

Journalism can have a significant influence on the public's environmental literacy. According to the Project for Improved Environmental Coverage (PIEC) which conducted a study in the United States of America in 2013, several studies have shown that the public wants better and more environmental news.

The PIEC looked at the environmental coverage in the mainstream media in the USA in 2013 and found that entertainment and crime garnered 20 and 60 times more coverage respectively than the environment. This was despite the fact that there are now more resources available on environmental topics from more diverse sources, such as academic institutions, science-based research organizations, environmental news services and projects, than ever before.

Several KAPS regarding the environment have been conducted in the Caribbean in the past

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Stakeholders Weigh-in on Wastewater Management in Guyana



Emil McGarrell, PS, Ministry of Housing and Water addresses participants at Opening

On July 17th, Guyana's Ministry of Housing and Water (MHW), hosted and chaired a Stakeholder's Workshop on Wastewater Management in Guyana. MHW has oversight over Guyana Water Incorporated (GWI) which is directly responsible for the provision of water and safety of sewerage systems for improved health and sustainable develop-

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19 November is World Toilet Day!

World Toilet Day has been marked by international and civil society organizations all over the world for many years. In 2013 the United Nations General Assembly formally recognized it as an official UN day and requested UN-Water, in consultation with relevant entities of the United Nations system and in collaboration with Governments and relevant stakeholders, to facilitate the implementation of World Toilet Day in the context of **Sanitation for All**.

The objective of this initiative is to make sanitation for all a global development priority



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decade by various environmental projects. They have found that radio and television, in particular, are the main sources from which the public obtain information about the environment or environmental issues. Newspapers are also significant sources but remain less important than radio and television.

The media is sometimes accused of being inaccurate, sensationalist, not correcting mistakes, having a short attention-span and not covering all important issues. Yet journalists face many challenges in covering environmental issues. The purpose of a KAPS of the media conducted by the GEF CReW Project in 2013 was to explore the knowledge, attitudes and practices of the media in the region to wastewater management, and to better understand how the media in the region values, perceives, and behaves in relation to wastewater and the environment in general.

Approach and Methodology

The GEF CReW Project hosted two regional media sensitization workshops on wastewater for journalists between November 2013 and July 2014. The first was for journalists from its English-speaking countries and Suriname (referred to as the Caribbean journalists) that took place in Georgetown, Guyana in November 2013. The second was for journalists from its Spanish-speaking countries (referred to as the Central American journalists) that took place in Ciudad del Saber, Panama in July 2014. A total of 42 journalists and media personnel participated in these workshops which aimed primarily to deepen the knowledge and expertise of environmental journalists on wastewater issues and management in the Wider Caribbean Region. This is part of the Project's effort to increase media coverage about wastewater and related issues.

Journalists complete KAPS, Caribbean Workshop, November 2014



At both workshops a KAPS questionnaire was distributed and completed by participants before presentations and discussions began. This was meant to ensure that knowledge and attitudes

were not influenced by the new knowledge that they were about to be exposed to. The survey used both a quantitative and qualitative approach. The questionnaire contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions. It included questions that were designed to capture information on the respondents' knowledge, attitudes and practices with respect to wastewater and environmental issues in general.

In addition to completing the questionnaire, both workshops included facilitated sessions designed to obtain additional feedback

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Stakeholder working group



ment in the country.

The Workshop aimed to present the preliminary findings of a Situational Analysis on Wastewater Management in Guyana and to identify and discuss actions for improved wastewater management.

Guyana became a signatory to the Cartagena Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment within the Wider Caribbean Region and all of its Protocols in 2010. Under the Protocol governing pollution from land-based sources (LBS Protocol), effluent discharged into the Atlantic Ocean through the internal drainage canals is required to meet certain minimum environmental standards.

Based on the capacity needs indicated by the Government of Guyana (GoG) and noted in a wastewater management Baseline Assessment Study conducted for the country in 2012, the GEF CReW Project and UNEP CAR/RCU are supporting the Government of Guyana by providing funds to support capacity building activities for wastewater management. Knowledge gained will assist the GoG in implementing and operating appropriate wastewater management technologies given the local context.

The Workshop aimed to obtain stakeholders' feedback so that the Situational Analysis could be finalized. Among key agencies and institutions participating were:

- Ministry of Housing and Water
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Ministry of Health
- Sterling Products
- Banks DIH Limited
- Georgetown Chamber of Commerce
- University of Guyana
- Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board

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from the participants with the aim of improving the project's effectiveness in providing them with useful resources and assistance. Some of the questions posed to the participants in these sessions were useful in corroborating some of the information reported in the KAPS.

Key Findings of the Media KAPS:

- Of those surveyed, more of the Central American journalists had focused on environmental coverage previously than was the case among their Caribbean counterparts who were more often generalists with some experience in environmental coverage.
- A relatively low percentage of respondents (36% and 30%) recognized that untreated wastewater is a threat to every sector named. This is indicative of poor awareness of linkages and of how pervasive the negative effects of poor wastewater management are.
- In both groups, perceptions of levels of wastewater treatment existing in their countries were close to reality (that is: between 5% and 30%)
- Significantly, very few respondents thought that the media is regularly a source of information about wastewater issues.
- Both Caribbean and Central American journalists expressed positive attitudes towards wanting to learn more and understand environmental and wastewater issues better.
- The vast majority of the Caribbean journalists (93%) and all of the Central American journalists felt that they had a role in shaping and/or changing people's perception of wastewater.
- The majority (57%) of journalists in both groups reported that they occasionally write about environmental and wastewater management issues. More of the Central American journalists (36% vs. 28.5%) reported that they write about these issues frequently.
- In looking for stories they consider human interest, public good and educational value ahead of revelation and sensationalism.
- Interviews are the preferred sources of information and the internet, institutional and project reports as well as scientific reports were also most desirable.
- There was general agreement on the greatest barriers to effective media coverage: Lack of information that is easily understood by the public; a general lack of information; lack of interest and support by media houses and editors, and; lack of clear

Jamaica's new environmental regulations spur training for water and wastewater operators

Jamaica's Natural Resources Conservation (Wastewater and Sludge) Regulations were signed by Robert Pickersgill, Minister of Water, Climate Change and the Environment, on April 24, 2013, and became effective immediately.

According to the National Environment Planning Agency (NEPA), these new regulations have bolstered their ability to demand greater accountability from owners and operators of wastewater treatment plants in ensuring that the prescribed standards are met.

Under the regulations, existing and new operators of facilities that generate sludge and discharge treated (sewage) effluent and trade effluent to the environment will require new licences under three possible categories:

- Construction of a new wastewater treatment plant or reconstruction (rehabilitation and or upgrade) of an existing treatment plant;
- The operation of a wastewater treatment plant; and
- The discharge of treated sewage and sludge effluent into the environment.

The fees applicable under the regulations are dependent on the source of the discharge and the nature of the activity. They are based on an internationally acceptable formula, which takes into consideration the level of impact a plant's wastewater and sludge effluent has on the environment, and applies discounts for good discharge practices that create benefits.

Since the new regulations came into effect, NEPA has held workshops in the parishes of Kingston, Clarendon, St James and St. Ann to sensitize stakeholders to the new regulations. Stakeholders

Longville WWTP in Clarendon, Jamaica, is one of 13 plants being upgraded by the NWC in the First Generation of Projects under GEF CReW. Operators will need training.



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Central American journalists at GEF CREW's 2nd Regional Media Wastewater Workshop discuss:

“How can we Transform Environmental Science, Management and Activism into Compelling and Useful Journalism?”



GEF CREW jointly with the Global Water Partnership— Central America, organized a two-day regional sensitization workshop on wastewater for 19 regional journalists and media practitioners on 21–22 July in Ciudad del Saber, Panama. It was attended by journalists from the Project's four Spanish-speaking countries: Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama. In addition El Salvador and Nicaragua, both of which work with GWP—Central America, were also represented.

The Opening Ceremony was chaired by Alfredo Coello-Vazquez, Acting Project Coordinator (left).

Gustavo Martinez, Wastewater Specialist, representing the IDB; Charles Davies, Programme Officer, representing UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean; Yamil Sanchez, Panama's National Focal Point for GEF CREW; and Alfredo Coello (l to r), in addition to Jose Fabrega, representing GWP-Central America and Donna Henry-Hernandez, representing UNEP CAR RCU, all welcomed and introduced the media to the issues.



A series of presentations on the State of the Marine Environment, the Status of the LBS Protocol, Regional Sanitation Policy, Water in the Future Development Agenda, Water Reuse and LatinoSan, were made by regional experts. This was followed by a facilitated session in which the journalists were divided into two groups according to gender (an even split!) to discuss the challenges which they face in writing about environmental issues and how they can be overcome.

Both groups held very vibrant discussions. Here the ladies focus on solutions.

Roberto Herrscher, Senior Journalist, gave a very thought-provoking presentation on 'How Can We Transform Environmental Science, Management and Activism into Compelling and Useful Journalism— Questions and Answers for the 21st Century.'

His passionate presentation evoked very positive responses and a great deal of discussion from the journalists.





(Left) Laura McQuiddy-Gomez of Voces Nuestras, Costa Rica, participates in her group's discussion.

(Right) Francisco Angulo Zamora of Programa Estado de la Nación, Costa Rica, and Jose Gonzalez-Cancinos of Nuestro Diario, Guatemala, present their group's conclusions and recommendations.



Roberto Herrscher begins a working session on story ideas and development with the journalists. They subsequently broke into smaller working groups to explore agreed themes.



The Proyecto Saneamiento de la Ciudad y la Bahía de Panamá, which was opened in May 2013 and serves 30 per cent of the population of Panama City was visited on the second day of the Workshop (below). All components of the system were introduced in a comprehensive presentation that preceded a tour of the wastewater treatment plant.



(l to r)
Margarita Figueroa, GWP-Central America's Communications Officer, Laura McQuiddy-Gomez, Roberto Herrscher and Nelson Rodriguez of Nicaragua, celebrate the end of an illuminating Workshop.



The GEF CREW Project wishes to thank GWP Central America and Panama's Dirección de la Calidad Ambiental of the Autoridad Nacional del Ambiental, as well as all experts who so graciously shared their knowledge and experience!



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from hotels, industrial facilities, schools and government entities have attended.

The new regulations require plant operators, upon application for licences to operate plants and dispose of effluent, to prepare and submit audits of their present operations accompanied by compliance plans detailing the steps and timelines of plans to arrive at full compliance. Plants are now expected to be equipped with flow measuring devices (meters), which will be inspected to assess level of discharge.

One of the consequences of the new regulations is greater demand for training in wastewater operation to enable compliance. From 3 June to 24 July 2014, the University of Technology offered the first in a series of short certification courses for water and wastewater operators. The course covers the requirements for operator licensing under the new regulations and was developed in partnership with the National Water Commission (NWC) and the GEF CREW Project.

There were 26 participants from both public and private sectors in the first course which covered:

- Plant Health and Safety
- Wastewater Public Health and Environment
- Environmental Engineering and Science
- Wastewater and Biosolids Reuse
- Water, Wastewater and Sludge Treatment Systems
- Plant Preventative Maintenance

In addition to ensuring that wastewater treatment facilities conform to international standards and hence reduce the pollution of the local marine environment, the new legislation is meant to facilitate Jamaica's ratification of the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities under the Cartagena Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region.



The Shewsbury Wastewater Treatment Plant in Westmoreland, Jamaica, is one of thirteen facilities to be upgraded under GEF CREW. It will need an additional module to ensure that effluent standards are met consistently. Training for operators will be needed.



Sanitation is a good economic investment

If we seem to be a bit toilet obsessed in this issue, it's because we want to bring attention to the fact that having access to a toilet makes all the difference to an individual's quality of life and that while just about everyone reading this probably takes access to a toilet for granted, there are many who do not have this necessity.

The following is excerpted from a Fact Sheet prepared by the Water and Sanitation Programme which focuses on:

Why sanitation makes economic sense

UN Water's Sanitation Drive to 2015 calls on all countries to increase investments, while better targeting funding to meet Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target 7c—to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to basic sanitation. For both social and economic development, sanitation is an excellent economic investment, yielding an average return of US \$5.50 for every dollar invested.

- Toilets increase national gross domestic product (GDP)
- Toilets represent a business opportunity
- Toilets reduce health costs
- Toilets make education go further
- Toilets protect water—clean water generates wealth.





Interviews are preferred sources of information for journalists.

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messages.

Knowledge gained from the survey will help the GEF CRW Project to develop better resources and messages for regional media as well as inform the development of the GEF CRW replication strategy and future wastewater projects.

Perhaps the findings of the KAPS which have the greatest implications for our approach to the media are:

- **Members of the regional media often have poor awareness of linkages and of the pervasiveness of negative effects of poor wastewater management** even though they are generally aware that the majority of wastewater receives no treatment at all. They also recognize that the media is not a regular source of information about these issues but believe they have an important role to play in shaping or changing the way people perceive wastewater. This willingness is a good start in our interaction with them but we need to be prepared to support them and to ourselves follow-up in order to assure better coverage.
- **Environmental news is not a priority for media outlets**, as confirmed by the experiences of these journalists. This means that if environmental projects and programmes want to reach their audiences, more creative and collaborative approaches are needed, particularly in approaching editors and decision makers in the media. Relying on the automatic dissemination of media releases by media houses “for the public good” is inadequate if we want our messages to go further.
- **Journalists are most interested in stories which are of human interest, focus on public good and are of educational value.** Environmental and wastewater issues, which affect everyone, have all of these qualities. We need to begin framing our issues from the perspectives of ordinary people in order to help journalists identify story angles that will get their audiences’ attention.

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- Pan American Health Organisation
- Inter-American Development Bank

Facilitated sessions were used to engage participants in discussions. Three groups identified and discussed major challenges affecting wastewater management in Guyana in terms of: policy, regulations, and institutions. The plenary session which followed the presentation of group recommendations, further discussed and agreed upon a series of six recommendations and the way forward:

1. **The need for an overarching coordinating institution or agency:** to reduce the disconnect in the management of and access to information related to water resources and water quality, overlapping functions and mandate, as well as act as a repository of water quality data; to assist with the implementation of any water and wastewater related policy initiative, and; to coordinate all such initiatives in Guyana.
2. **Onsite management of sewage versus specific sewerage treatment facilities for housing schemes:** this would require effective guidance and planning and that sewerage systems be developed prior to the building of housing schemes and that there be education to increase understanding of wastewater treatment in general and to avoid misuse of the systems put in place.
3. **Converting waste (including sewage) to biogas:** It was noted that while such studies have been conducted in Guyana before, what happens after those studies are completed has not been clear. There is a need for greater sharing and synergy to allow for continuity and to reduce, or prevent, duplication of efforts.
4. **Availability of Data:** The availability and importance of data in order to adequately manage Guyana’s water resources, inclusive of wastewater was stressed. Currently data are collected via various means, including Environmental Impact Assessments, for specific areas, but there is a need for a functioning institution to compile, catalogue and store it so that it is available for use and decision-making.
5. **Changing attitudes and behaviour:** In particular attention needs to be given to connecting lifestyles to impacts on the environment.
6. **Inclusion of all Key Stakeholders:** It was noted that several stakeholders, such as the tourism and agricultural sectors, for whom wastewater management is important, were not represented at the workshop. All key stakeholders need to be consulted.

The existing disconnect between water resources as a whole and wastewater was a recurring theme. To address this, Implementation of the roadmap for the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Plan and resuscitation of the Water Council are considered critical.

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and urge changes in both behaviour and policy on issues ranging from improving water management to ending open defecation.

Today, 2.5 of the world's seven billion people, mostly in rural areas, do not have proper sanitation and 1.1 billion people still defecate in the open. This has significant impacts on human health, dignity and security, the environment, and social and economic development.



World Toilet Day intends to raise awareness of sanitation issues – including hygiene promotion, the provision of basic sanitation services, and sewerage and wastewater treatment and reuse in the context of integrated water management – and make a case for sanitation for all.

It intends to encourage UN Member States and relevant stakeholders, including civil society and non-governmental organizations, to promote behavioural change and the implementation of policies in order to increase access to sanitation among the poor and end the practice of open defecation.

From UN Water's World Toilet Day site:

<http://www.unwater.org/worldtoiletday>

The UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC) Resources

This manual for the implementation of Sanitation Entrepreneur Training aims to provide a comprehensive reference for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluations to business leaders, trainees and trainers in the provision and monitoring of sanitation services. It was developed by a team of facilitators and resource people who have experience in implementing training in provinces across Indonesia between 2008 and 2013.



It is just one of many useful resources published by the Water and Sanitation Programme.

The UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC) publishes Bimonthly Publications Reviews in both English and Spanish. It features the latest publications produced by United Nations agencies and programmes on issues related to water and sanitation.

Publications are freely accessible from the web and are regularly added to the UN Documentation Centre on Water and Sanitation (UNDCWS) <http://www.unwaterlibrary.org/>



GEF CReW Project Background:

The CReW is a four-year project, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It was established in 2011 and will end in July 2015.

It aims:

- To provide sustainable financing for the wastewater sector
- To support policy and legislative reforms, and
- To foster regional dialogue and knowledge exchange amongst key stakeholders in the WCR.

There are thirteen participating countries: Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Panama, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad & Tobago.

The Project Coordination Group (PCG) is based in Jamaica, at the offices of the IDB and at UNEP's Caribbean Regional Coordinating Unit which is Secretariat to the Cartagena Convention (UNEP CAR/RCU).

Please check our website and visit (and like!) our Facebook page: [facebook@gefcrow.org](https://www.facebook.com/gefcrow.org)

Acknowledging the contributions of the Guyana and Jamaica Pilot Project Management Units

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