

EDUCATION

of the
North-east Tobago UNESCO
Man and the Biosphere Reserve
Management Plan

SUMMARY SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

There are several private pre-schools; however, they hardly involve pedagogic elements that deal with the experience of nature; cultural heritage aspects are better represented.

At the primary schools (12) environmental issues are integrated into several curricula. At secondary schools (2), there is explicit attention to fundamental ecological principles, human population and the environment, sustainable use of natural resources, agriculture, energy, and pollution. CSOs are delivering environmental and cultural awareness, training and education programmes to students and adults on a regular basis; some are organised in environmental clubs. There are no tertiary educational facilities in NE Tobago.

Extracurricular educational and recreational activities are very scarce, difficult to reach, and intermittent.

This results in a serious "brain-drain" situation caused by young adults seeking education and entertainment in south-west Tobago, Trinidad and, if affordable, outside of the country. For those having received higher education, finding employment opportunities in the NETMABR can be challenging and accordingly there is little incentive to return home and contribute to sustainable development.

HIGH LEVEL GOAL

Residents, especially the youth, of NE Tobago are aware of the principles and benefits of the UNESCO MaB programme and have the knowledge and skills to use those to their and common benefit while contributing to the achievement of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in NE Tobago and beyond.

PRIORITY NEEDS

- The educational aspects of the MaB programme are intelligibly included into all curricula, welcomed by educators and not adding to their workload;
- young persons are actively participating in all aspects of the NETMABR via extracurricular activities and representation on the TOBIMA;
- sustainable employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for residents, especially the youth in the NETMABR; and
- sustainable and regenerative practises are included in all vocational training courses on subjects that are related to the use of ecosystem services.

STRATEGIES

- Establish stakeholder collaboration to include education on the MaB programme on all educational levels;
- consolidate the environmental and cultural educational programmes in the NETMABR in order to avoid duplications;
- youth communication and exchange programmes within MaB networks;
- turn brain-drain into brain-circulation by making NE Tobago attractive for studying, residing, and working;
- create a job centre unit in the TOBIMA; and
- align the OJT-Programme with NETMABR ecopreneural initiatives.

KEY PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

Facilitate:

- educational exchange and twinning programmes with the IBERO MAB Network and the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves;
- visiting educational organisations to include interaction with students in NE Tobago schools in their itinerary;
- a NETMABR job- and ecopreneural centre;
- the upgrading of educational curricula in collaboration with stakeholders (especially THTI), revise on a regular basis; and
- an annual meeting between CSOs, educational institutions and governmental agencies to align and seek support for curricular and extra-curricular activities in relation to the natural and cultural heritage of NE Tobago.