

Reflecting on ten years of CANARI's Climate Change & Disaster Risk Reduction Programme

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(Standing) CANARI Senior Technical Officer, Dr Ainka Granderson, conducting a fisherfolk focus group on climate change impacts in Canaries, Saint Lucia. PHOTO BY CANARI

Climate change and disasters, such as the two unprecedented Category 5 Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, are a critical and ever-increasing challenge for Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Building the resilience of local communities, their livelihoods and the natural ecosystems upon which they depend has therefore become an integral part of CANARI's work.

As we mark ten years of CANARI's [Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Programme](#), it is important to reflect on our achievements and lessons learned.

The Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction programme has evolved from an early focus on communications for advocacy and raising climate change awareness to promoting and facilitating concrete actions by civil society organisations (CSOs), local resource users and small and micro enterprises (SMEs) to build local resilience. This has occurred in parallel with the global shift in the early 2000's from convincing people that climate change is a problem to urgent calls for action as part of the landmark Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development signed in 2015.



Fishing community in Dennery, Saint Lucia affected by sargassum. PHOTO BY CANARI.

CANARI's work has focused on capacity building of stakeholders, particularly the most vulnerable to climate change, to participate effectively in decision making and develop appropriate climate change responses through research, pilot testing and documenting best practices and lessons to scale up impact. The programme has further promoted civil society leadership for climate resilience, recognising their key role in

awareness raising and advocacy, planning and implementing climate change adaptation and mitigation at local to regional levels.

The range of work under the Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Programme has included:



Fisherfolk and other resource users and stakeholders working on climate change and disaster management work together to input their knowledge of areas vulnerable to climate change on a 3D model of Montserrat. PHOTO BY CANARI.

[Caribbean civil society organisations](#) and the [Communicating climate change: A toolbox for local organisations](#) which provide information, tools and case studies on best practices on communicating about climate change, conducting vulnerability assessments, planning and taking practical actions to build climate resilience;

- Design and implementation of community-based and ecosystem-based approaches for climate change and disaster risk reduction with CSOs, local communities and resource users including fisherfolk through for example the:
 - [Climate Change Adaptation in the Fisheries of Anguilla and Montserrat](#) project (2017-2020) which aims to mainstream adaptation into fisheries management in Anguilla and Montserrat using an ecosystem approach to fisheries; and
 - [Climate ACTT: Action by Civil Society in Trinidad and Tobago to build resilience to climate change](#) project (2016-2017) which built the technical and organisational capacity of five beneficiary CSOs to deliver climate change adaptation actions;
- Climate proofing and strengthening community natural resource-based SMEs for sustainable and resilient livelihoods through the:
 - [Powering InnovationS in Civil Society and Enterprises for Sustainability in the Caribbean](#) (PISCES) project (2017-2020) that supports innovative actions by CSOs and SMEs to conserve biodiversity and build resilience to climate change in marine protected areas across 10 Caribbean countries; and
 - [Building Climate-resilient Rural Enterprises in Trinidad and Tobago](#) project (2016-2017) which piloted a 'climate proofing' methodology based on value chain analysis and supported two community organisations to climate proof their enterprises.

- Participatory assessments and research on vulnerability and institutional readiness to address climate change, including the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) such as participatory video and participatory three-dimensional modelling to document and share local and traditional knowledge

- Development and application of a range of innovative tools to build the capacity of CSOs, local communities and resource users, including via CANARI's [Implementing climate change action: A toolkit for](#)

- Participatory development of national climate change policies and plans including:



(Standing) CANARI Senior Technical Officer, Dr Ainka Granderson, speaking at a climate change consultation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, March 2019. PHOTO BY CANARI.

- developing a [Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Implementation Plan for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines](#) under the Regional Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project (2018-2019);

- strengthening [institutional and legal frameworks for environmental management and resilience](#) under the *Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States-Global Climate Change Alliance*

project (2017-2018), including the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Saint Kitts and Nevis and Climate Change legislation for Saint Lucia; and

- developing a Climate Change Policy and Action Plan for Montserrat under the *Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States-Global Climate Change Alliance* project (2015).



Fishing community in Barrouallie, St. Vincent and the Grenadines where CANARI conducted pilot testing of its VCA toolkit in 2018,. PHOTO BY CANARI.

- Strengthening regional and global policy and financing frameworks to build resilience to climate change and disasters, and enable civil society and other stakeholders to have a voice in decision making, through:

- inputs into the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) Regional Climate Change Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy;

- facilitating the development of the [Food and Agriculture Organisation Sub-Regional Strategy for Climate Resilience in the Forestry Sector and Associated Livelihoods in the Caribbean](#) (2017-2018); and
- serving as an accredited observer organisation to the Green Climate Fund.

CANARI has further built trust and partnerships with key stakeholders from academia, government agencies and the private sector involved in climate change and disaster management over the last decade, including a formal memorandum of understanding with the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre and with the Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States Commission, which includes cooperation on areas related to climate change, disaster risk management and capacity building for environmental and social sustainability.

With its technical expertise, experience and strategic partnerships, CANARI is uniquely positioned to play a key role in building the capacity of CSOs, local communities and resource users to achieve impact on the ground and address the critical challenge posed by climate change and related disasters as the Caribbean moves towards a resilient future.