



Junior Scientists Learn More About Territory's Environment

February 16, 2009

The Department of Youth Affairs and Sports (DYAS) through its Junior Scientists Programme is raising awareness among the Territory's youth about the number of natural resources available in the Virgin Islands (UK).

Assistant Director of Youth Affairs Mrs. Persia Tobin-Evelyn said in a Government Information Service Radio Report that the programme is open to secondary school students in forms two to four. She explained that one of the objectives is to involve the students in using scientific methods to study the Territory's natural environment.

"As a department our mandate is to involve young people in collective and holistic development and this is just one of the avenues that we are utilising to help our young people become more proactive in their communities," Mrs. Tobin-Evelyn said.

She added that if young people are involved in caring and taking ownership in their communities, the Virgin Islands will greatly benefit from the programme. "The BVI will benefit because we will have young people looking out for what is theirs and we can guarantee that if our young people stay involved in environmental outreach the Territory will remain Nature's Little Secret," she said.

Junior Scientists Programme Coordinator Mr. Japhet Gordon echoed the importance of youth participation in the programme. "Very often our young people feel that they do not have a voice in decision making and through this programme they will be in a better position, not to just repeat what others have said, but be able to speak from experience and make informed inputs and decisions," he said.

Additionally, the programme aims at assisting the participants in applying their findings and knowledge to the wise management and enhancement of the Territory's resources and help combat negative practices as it relates to the natural environment.

The junior scientists are actively involved in environmental activities during their Christmas, Easter and summer breaks. These activities are designed to help them learn, understand and preserve the natural environment of which they are a part. The programme began in 2004 with a maximum of six participants who would interact with visiting international scientists on Guana Island. Currently, the programme has an enrollment of 17 participants.

On Tuesday, February 17 the public will have the opportunity to hear more about the Junior Scientists Programme on Public Eye which is aired live on radio station ZBVI at 7:00 p.m. For more information about the programme, persons can contact the DYAS via email at dyas@gov.vg or at 494-6860.

The Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, which comes under the Ministry of Education and Culture, was launched in May, 2004. One of the goals of the department is to establish a highly participative organisation that will utilise the knowledge, interests and efforts of key groups to ensure that the department consistently meets its stakeholders' needs.