

Stories of European cooperation

The Outermost Regions



Introduction

Six cooperation programmes allow the EU outermost regions to cooperate in their geographic area with each other and with their neighbours during the 2014-2020 programming period: three in the Caribbean - Latin America area, one in the Atlantic Ocean, off West Africa and two in the Indian Ocean.

These programmes contribute to scaling up outermost regions' co-operation with their neighbourhood as one of the priorities for action set out in the 2017 Commission communication on 'a stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the outermost regions'. The Communication underlines that promoting regional cooperation and deepening relations between the outermost regions, neighbouring countries and regional organisations is an essential pillar of the EU strategy for the outermost regions.

Since the 2000s and the third generation of Interreg programmes, the territorial cooperation programmes have been firmly geared towards integrating the French, Portuguese and Spanish outermost regions into their regional environment. The Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal adopted by the Commission on May 2018 aims at strengthening synergies between the European Regional Development Fund and the European Union's external policies funds and represents a fundamental legal step towards achieving this ambition.

Less well known but equally important, the Interreg Volunteers initiative (IVY) that DG REGIO manages through the Association of European Border Regions is one of the tools that aims at facilitating cooperation between the outermost regions and their neighbours. IVY enables young Europeans to work with Interreg programmes' managing authority or Interreg projects to carry out communication missions with a view to increasing the visibility of concrete EU supported actions. 25 young volunteers out of over 450 participating in IVY have so far been deployed in the outermost regions.

This publication displays the variety of domains in which the IVY may contribute to a reinforcement of the outermost regions regional integration: natural and cultural heritage (IHOI, PAREO), economic diversification (RECAVACA), enhancing regional trade (TEECA), education and training (ELAN)... A perfect timing when 2020 marks 30 years of 'Interreg', a year explicitly focused on three main topics: neighbours, green and youth.

Enjoy the reading and discovery!



Pierre-Emmanuel Leclerc
Maritime and Outermost Regions
Cooperation - DG REGIO

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Contact:
kelly.zielniewski@interact-eu.net

Editorial Team:
Kelly Zielniewski, Laura Belenguer,
Kevin Fulcher

Graphic Design:
Gestión Gráfica
www.gestiongrafica.net

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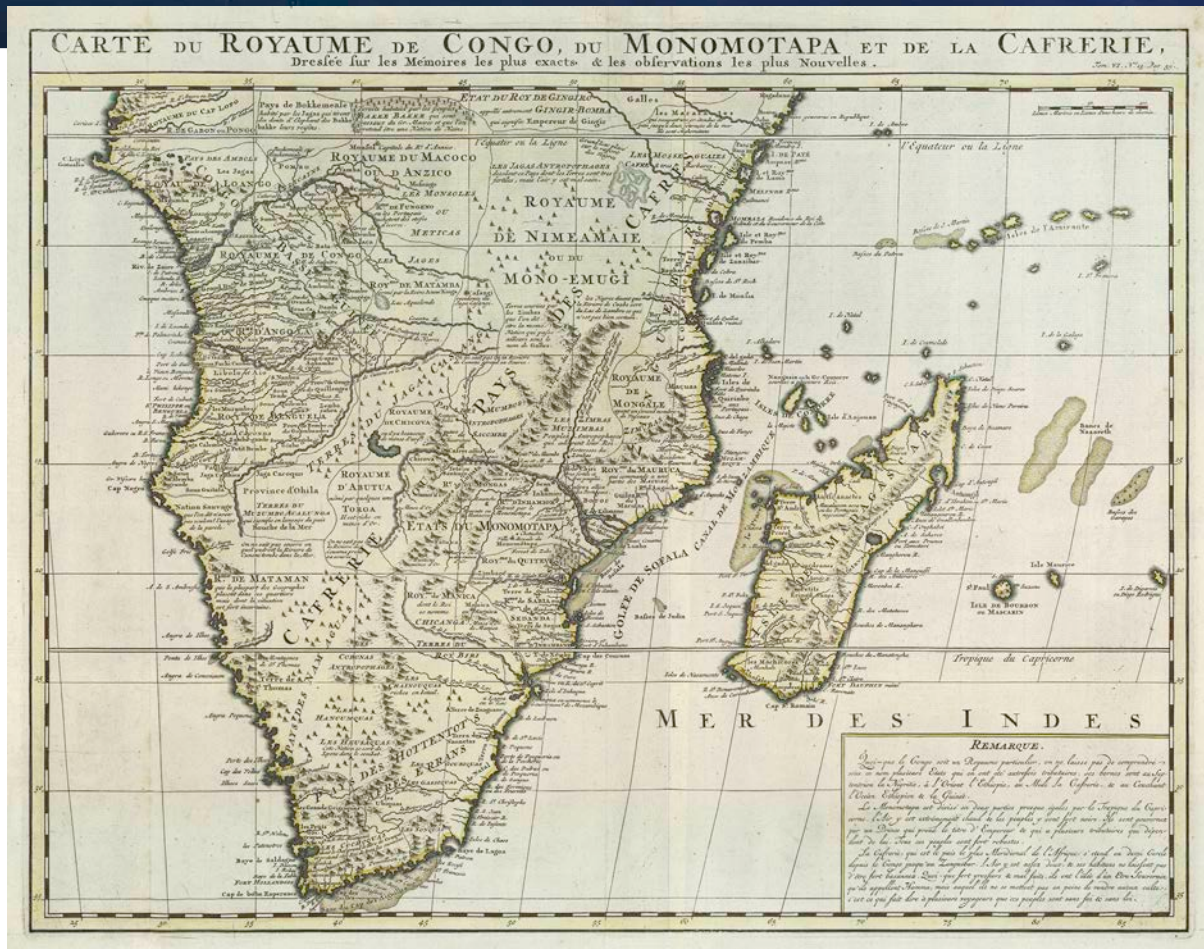
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IHOI: Enhancing the iconographic heritage of the indian ocean



Map of the Kingdom of Congo, of Monomotapa and of the Kaffria, drawn on the most accurate Memoires and the latest observations. Henri Abraham Chatelain (1684-1743). 1718 -1720, Maps.

By Lucas Parmentier

Cooperation between Reunion Island, the Indian Ocean countries, and Europe is very active but we are not necessarily aware of it. Maybe because it is not highlighted enough. I am an IVY volunteer, currently working at the Historical Images Library of the Indian Ocean (Iconothèque Historique de l'Océan Indien - IHOI) which is based in Saint-Denis in the Reunion Island, France.

The IHOI was created in 2011 with the overall mission to contribute to the safeguarding and promotion of the iconographic heritage of the Indian Ocean. To do so, a bank of old images on the history of the different territories that surround and make up the Indian Ocean was created. Many documents such as engravings, paintings, or photographs are collected and made available online. Digitalizing and broadcasting those images enable us to show and to communicate on the existing legacy and historical heritage. The IHOI is the one responsible for digitalizing all those historical documents and promoting them via their website, social media, and throughout numerous exhibitions and public presentations.

Since 2017, the IHOI has also been leading a project to enhance the iconographic heritage in the Indian Ocean by creating a network of professionals in that field and by allowing an exchange of practices, methods, and iconographic collections that are available. This project is supported by the Interreg V Indian Ocean programme. Seychelles, Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mayotte, and Mozambique are some of the partners involved.

Bringing people together to make the iconographic heritage bigger

Now that the project exists, there is a better coordination with sharing important existing images in a more dynamic way between partners around the Indian Ocean. The IHOI also provides more services with the benefits of cooperation being clearly seen. For instance, the IHOI team had the opportunity to travel to Madagascar and Mauritius to train people and to provide conferences. In 2018, Mayotte led a big communication operation after uploading about 300 images on the IHOI website. A few months



Mr Richon, curator at the Blue Penny Museum, Mauritius.

later, the keyword 'Mayotte' was on the top of the search on the IHOI website.

Another concrete mission led by the IHOI was the creation of a partnership with the Blue Penny Museum (BPM) of Mauritius. Mr. Richon, a curator in charge of a series of exhibitions at the BPM, explained how relationships between Mauritius and the Reunion Island were non-existent until they joined the IHOI, and how they benefitted from that cooperation and network: necessary equipment was provided, professionals were allowed to travel to Mauritius to teach people how to use the equipment. *'The broadcasting of Historical images has a very important social value. In the case of Mauritius, our people do appreciate to discover more pictures of their past. But we didn't really have the means or the knowledge required to be able to digitize pictures ourselves. This wouldn't have been possible without European financial support and the IHOI initiative'*, said Mr. Richon who wishes for more cooperation in the future.

The work done by the IHOI in terms of networking, collection, and publication of images is quite significant but there is still a lot to do. One of its current objectives is to digitalize and to broadcast more than 3,000 images by the end of the year. That is a huge job!

As soon as I joined that project, I had to understand how the huge machine they are in is working , and I had to enter their fast routine. It was like trying to jump in a train rolling at full speed. Indeed, I was not very familiar at that stage with the procedures and the techniques they used, even though I had some professional experience in that domain.

Among other things, I was taught how to digitize books and documents and how to catalogue and index the pictures before uploading them on the website. I have also worked on one of their mobile application databases. This is a very valuable, professional experience for me since my position requires close contact and work with every department of the organization (i.e. finance, management, communication, data analysis, etc.). I am enjoying the experience and it is the kind of job I wanted to have.

More information:

https://www.ihoi.org/app/photopro.sk/ihoi_icono/home?&lang=eng



Digitalisation of a book for the IHOI.



Lucas Parmentier

- Age: 24
- Nationality: French
- Region where you are doing the IVY volunteering activity: Reunion Island, France
- Write 3 words that define 'European cooperation' for you: Dynamic, organized, efficient



Boosting cocoa production and marketing in Guadeloupe and Haiti

By Simon Tavernier

I started my IVY experience in February 2020 by joining the Association Guadeloupe Equitable et Durable (AGED), which seeks to promote sustainable development and fair trade within the Caribbean Region, in particular in Guadeloupe. The idea is to support local artisans and small producers and to ease access to the international market.

Cocoa, a high-value product

Agriculture is the first economic sector in Haiti and Guadeloupe. Most of the agricultural area is devoted to export crops such as sugar cane and bananas, both in crisis. In Guadeloupe, cocoa production was affected by the crisis too. The annual production went from 2000 tons to approximately 2 tons of cocoa per year in a century. The situation is different in Haiti; cocoa is the third exportation product. The production potential is significant (around 5000 tons per year) but Haiti is particularly affected by poverty.

Still, the situation of the cocoa industry is almost similar for both islands. The production amount is

low compared to other producing countries. Access to foreign markets is limited and the organisation of the cocoa sector is not optimal.

A cooperation project to strengthen economic diversification

In that particular context, the RECAVACA project (Caribbean Network for Cocoa Development) aims at strengthening the economic diversification of Haiti and Guadeloupe through the transfer of knowledge and the marketing of innovative products made with high-end, local, organic and, fair trade cocoa. This is the main project which AGED is participating in. It started in October 2017 and it is financed by the Interreg Caribbean cooperation programme. This is also the project I dedicated most of my time to during my IVY experience.

The first issue the project has been dealing with is the plantation of cocoa trees to extend the cultivated areas and to replace older trees with new ones. The second one is about the recognition of the two islands as producing

territories of fine and aromatic cocoa. In practical terms, this means that the cocoa varieties have to be selected for their organoleptic proprieties and the cocoa must have specific characteristics typicality of those island terroirs.



RECAVACA is articulated around three main type of activities:

- Training programmes to reinforce the Haitian and Guadeloupean producers competences (e.g. cultivation techniques and cocoa processing techniques, from bean to bar).
- Studies to help characterise the cocoa genetics from Guadeloupe and Haiti so that producers can select plants for its potential. The 'Criollo' variety is the most sought after by chocolate makers for its qualities. In that sense, a transformation workshop was set up and a group of women were put into place to focus on the implementation of a high-end cocoa market.

- Entrepreneurship initiatives to support the creation of processing and marketing structures, for raw and finished products, in Guadeloupe and Haiti. These marketing approaches will become part of a strategy for a more social and solidarity economy, and for fairer trade.



Young cocoa plants in the nursery (approximately 2 months).

Upcoming actions

- Carrying on with the seedlings of cocoa in the nursery.
- Grafting plants to create a collection of various cocoa trees with the support of Centre for International Development), - the purpose being to preserve the diversity and the specific characteristics of the Guadeloupean cocoa trees.
- Setting up a network of producers and create a mutual aid movement between them.

In the near future, work will continue as a similar project will be set up building on what has already been achieved, and with the integration of vanilla and coffee production since they are experiencing similar difficulties.

Interreg
Caraïbes
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My experience was wonderful and rewarding: I discovered a new region between land and sea I learnt a lot about tropical crops and cocoa as I was in charge of the cocoa nursery. That allowed me to gain technical skills in plant production like the grafting process. I also learnt a lot about the different steps of cocoa transformation. That was

important for me as I want to specialize in that field. And I am now convinced of the importance and benefits of cooperation, in particular for a small territory like Guadeloupe.

More information: <https://recavaca.com/>



Very beautiful cocoa tree. The pods have a nice coloring.



Grafting training with a nurseryman.



Criollo variety pod.



Simon Tavernier

- Age: 24
- Nationality: French
- Region where you are doing the IVY volunteering activity: Guadeloupe (French West Indies)
- Write 3 words that define 'European cooperation' for you: Diversity, cohesion, sharing.

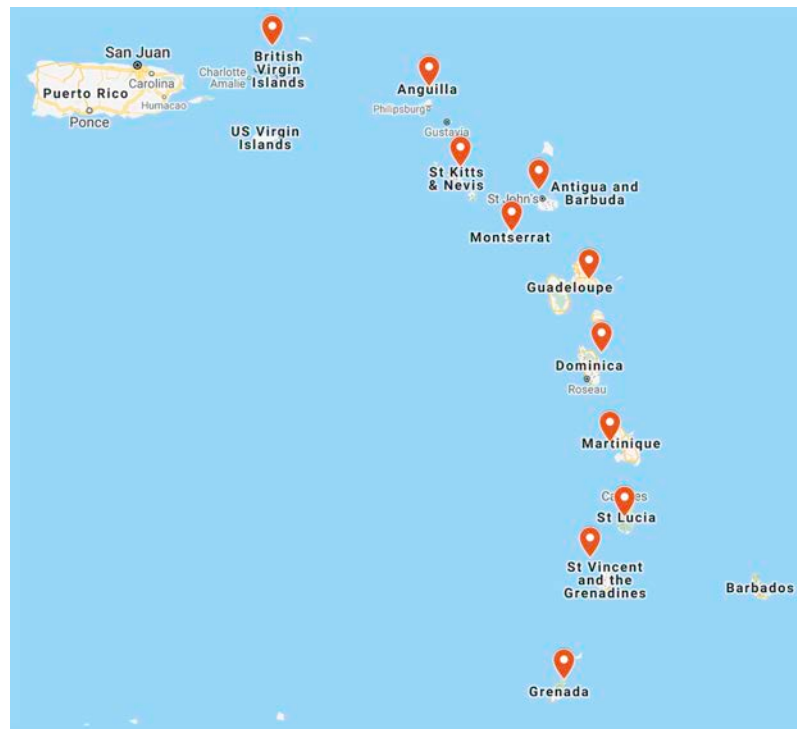
TEECA: More sustainable trade relations between the Caribbean islands

By Prisca Razafimaharavo

Before my IVY experience in Martinique, I had never set foot in the Caribbean and, although I knew that there were French, Dutch, British, and independent islands, I never imagined the important role the European Union played in this region.

Coming from an island myself, I was very eager to discover a place that had similarities with my home island of Reunion in the Indian ocean. Martinique and Reunion are both French Outermost regions which are small parts of the European Union, very far away from the continent. Growing up in an outermost region is a very interesting way to develop multiple facets of one's identity as an islander who is culturally bound to one's region but also as a French citizen and lastly as a European.

With this in mind, I embarked on the IVY adventure with motivation and enthusiasm because I wanted to learn more about the context of cooperation in the Caribbean. And I soon discovered that just like in Reunion island, cooperation has its very own sets of challenges in Martinique too.



The OECS is an eleven-member grouping of islands spread across the Eastern Caribbean.

About the TEECA project

I joined the Trade Enhancement for Eastern Caribbean (TEECA) project led by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Martinique, along with the Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) based in St Lucia and the Caribbean Export Development Agency in Barbados.

This project intends to bring more sustainable and inclusive trade relations in the eastern Caribbean area since, although the islands are geographically very close, the exchanges remain scarce and regional integration is still a work in progress. This is particularly visible in the intra-regional trade where Caribbean companies tend to turn to bigger markets

such as the United States or Europe rather than their close neighbours. And whilst there is a desire to export regionally, companies often face barriers such as a lack of understanding the dynamics of the market, the nature and types of players involved, and the number of domestic regulations and local policies.

So, the TEECA beneficiaries are 29 entrepreneurs wanting to develop regionally but with limited export experience from Martinique and the OECS islands in five main sectors: manufacturing: agro-processing, Information and Communication Technology, music, fashion, and green industries. They benefit from a two-year individual and group coaching program tailored for each sector to ensure their products and services are export ready.

What does TEECA offer?

- Better market intelligence thanks to market studies
- Export strategies via capacity-building training
- Better knowledge of funding for Caribbean SMEs with the creation of a funding booklet
- Technical support to create innovative products and services
- French and English language courses
- Participation in international and local events



Business Retreat TEECA: First TEECA seminar in Martinique with the TEECA Team and all 29 beneficiaries, the first event held in 2018 to launch the program.

TEECA promotional material.



Cooperation and partnership at the core of TEECA's actions

The business immersion is a major component of the individual assistance provided for the beneficiaries. First, each company must define its target market in the Caribbean in order to prospect for potential partners and develop its export strategy accordingly. The TEECA team will then organize the trip while the international advisor reaches out for the prospects, arranges the meetings and assists the companies their preparation. To complete their business immersion each company must travel to their target territory and meet their prospects accompanied by a TEECA advisor. Those intense days represent a unique opportunity for the entrepreneurs to reach as many prospects as possible and to connect with fellow Caribbean businesses.

Thanks to one-on-one meetings, the TEECA beneficiaries can better understand their target market and therefore adapt their offers and services. The business immersions are intended to lead to new partnerships for example with contract signatures, order placements, but also to create synergies between the beneficiaries from different territories.

“In the end, it is not just about business, it is about creating intercultural exchanges so that Caribbeans from different islands can get to know each other.”

The first Caribbean Music Camp successfully completed

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SCCMfP84ovU>

As a project partner, I got involved in the first edition of a Caribbean songwriting camp in Martinique where I had the opportunity to spend 5 full days with the TEECA beneficiaries from the music industry as well as artists and producers from Martinique, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and international producers from the UK and the USA.



The TEECA and OECS delegation from the ICT sector participated in the Tech Beach Retreat in Jamaica.



TEECA beneficiaries from the Agro-processing sector during a collective trip in Guadeloupe.



TEECA beneficiaries from the Green business sector attended the Caribbean Renewable Energy Forum in Miami, accompanied by Ms. Laurence Douet, TEECA international business development officer.

This songwriting camp was a unique opportunity for music professionals to enhance collaboration by joining forces in creating songs that celebrate how diverse and rich Caribbean music is.

For me this was an extraordinary moment where the concept of cooperation came to life. A successful event is really where the work of the TEECA Team finally pays off. Although the realities are different, what unites the beneficiaries is the desire to tackle their common challenges and to develop their region as One Caribbean. So seeing everybody from different Caribbean islands working together in English, Creole, and a little bit of French is the epitome of cooperation, interculturalism, and cohesion. It was the perfect illustration of what the TEECA project stands for and what every INTERREG project strives for.

More information:

https://www.martinique.cci.fr/programme_teeca.aspx



TEECA Caribbean Music Camp 2: TEECA beneficiaries, Martinican producer, and guest producer from the US working together during a writing session.



TEECA Caribbean Music Camp 1: Fred Jean Baptiste, a TEECA beneficiary from Martinique recording with a young Martinican artist.



TEECA Caribbean Music Camp 3: Mark Cyrus, a TEECA beneficiary from Saint Vincent & the Grenadines.



Prisca Razafimaharavo

- Age: 25
- Nationality: French
- Region where you are doing the IVY volunteering activity: Martinique (France)
- Write 3 words that define 'European cooperation' for you:
Development, Interculturality, Solidarity.

Youngsters at the heart of regional cooperation in the Caribbean

Beneficiaries of the ELAN Immersion Programme (and their buddies from the 'Université des Antilles') and the ELAN Team on a discovering tour of the island of Martinique.

By Cinthia Jeremy

When I first heard about ELAN, (a French acronym which stands for Linguistic Exchanges and Innovative Learning through mobility programme), I was thrilled by how this EU-funded project can reach such a large target group, offering students, teachers, interns and job seekers the possibility to learn a language while developing skills in their field of interest. While integration is both a challenge and opportunity in the Small Islands States of the Caribbean, I was proud to take an active part in the development of exchanges between the French-speaking and English-speaking Caribbean islands seeing the need for such an initiative and the benefits of it.

Most of the time, young people in the Caribbean fly overseas to continue their studies and then stay there to work. This brain drain not only affects the lives of young people but also the economy of their home country. In that context, Ghislaine Moëtüs-Schuller, from the Académie de Martinique (a local school board), proposed to work towards more cooperation between the French-speaking islands of the Caribbean and the

rest of the Caribbean territories in the educative field to promote better use of that unique multicultural environment.

And this is how the ELAN project came up: an obvious and necessary solution to develop long term school partnerships, to encourage linguistic and cultural exchanges between teachers, lecturers, professionals, students, to allow vocational internships abroad, to promote higher education, and to create job opportunities for young people within the Caribbean region.

The story of Chelsea Branford

Chelsea is a young lady whose wish is to work as a biomedical engineer. She applied for the initial ELAN French immersion programme and was sent six months to Martinique alongside eleven other students of the OECS islands of Dominica, Saint Kitts, and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. That stay allowed her to improve her command of the French language and to take the DELF B2 exam, which is necessary to access the University of Antilles

- either in Martinique or in Guadeloupe -, or any other higher education institution in Martinique. Chelsea benefitted from a scholarship of 700 euros per month to help cover monthly expenses, as well as financial aid for travel. That experience will definitely bring her closer to her dream career.

Again, I was glad to be part of a committed team towards the beneficiaries, ensuring that their experience abroad runs smoothly, in a complicated context, and I learned that being driven by passion allows you to be better at what you do. We created new connections within our region. We made young people's professional projects possible. And most importantly, we could see the concrete results of our

commitment each time students or young professionals came back from abroad with their experience and stories to share also with new skill to put on their CV.

ELAN partners:

- The (French) Academy of Martinique and its GIP-FCIP
- The French territory of Martinique
- The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Campus France
- The network of Alliance Française chapters in the Lesser Antilles
- The University of the West Indies
- Quisqueya University
- The State University of Haiti
- The University of the Antilles

"Despite the seeming obstacles which arose due to the Corona Virus Crisis, it was still possible for us to participate in the internships virtually. This professional experience within a Caribbean-based research organisation has permitted me to gain some work experience in a scientific field I never had before."

Chelsea Branford



The ELAN Team: the Project leader, Miss Moetus-Schüller (first on the right); Urdine Darius, project manager (second from the left), and three Interreg volunteers.



Chelsea Brandford, ELAN beneficiary from St Lucia, receiving her certificate of participation to the ELAN Immersion Programme.



Cinthia Jeremy

- Age: 26
- Nationality: French
- Region where you are doing the IVY volunteering: the Caribbean
- Write 3 words that define 'European cooperation' for you: Partnership, Opportunities, Strength.



PAREO: Protecting coral reef, a child's game



By Pauline Chion-Hock

On April 2020, I started my IVY volunteer assignment on the remote French out-sea department on the Reunion Island. Sometimes idealized, sometimes overlooked, Reunion island is a small part of Europe lost in the Indian Ocean. Distance, however, does not prevent the Interreg Indian Ocean programme from raising the profile of regional cooperation and European values.

There, I was tasked with helping with communication on various projects and the PAREO initiative is one dear to my heart. Promoting projects and communication was no easy task during the lockdown. Yet, the crisis offered a well-deserved rest for our lagoons; and protecting our reefs is what the PAREO project is all about.



The islands of Reunion, Mauritius, and the Seychelles are united by an underwater plateau, the Mascarene Plateau. They are bordered by numerous coral reefs with which Humans have forged many bonds. The PAREO project offers children the opportunity to discover the underwater riches and the different cultures linked to the sea and enables them to look for solutions to protect this precious heritage of ours. Making results of research work and scientific culture available to the public, especially the youngest members of society, is crucial because, despite our efforts, the coral reefs continue to deteriorate, and we need the new generation to promote good practices and perhaps set up new and ambitious projects of their own to preserve marine life.

PAREO in schools

PAREO does a lot with schools in order to achieve this. For example, three pilot classes

from Mauritius, Seychelles, and Reunion are participating in this innovative project. Dozen of interventions are organised throughout the year, in different formats: i.e. exchange with scientists, observation of the coral in its natural environment, film screenings, dialogues and creation with artists, etc. Teachers from other satellite classes also use the project's materials to raise their students' awareness.

'Children are the citizens of tomorrow,' says Lola Massé, in charge of the project at the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development, 'we must make them aware of the degradation of the coral reefs around our islands and encourage new behaviours in them and their families'.

The researchers involved already have good experiences with children since they participated in the creation of the MARECO educational kit resulting from the development



Educational kit to learn about the coral reefs.

of research programmes. This kit aims to convey scientific knowledge about the corals in a fun and educational way. Each class participating in PAREO receives a kit to be explored during the year.

New technology at the heart of the project

Another way to make young citizens aware of the importance and value of the existing natural heritage and learning about coral reefs, is to make them go and see it. PAREO, offers children the opportunity to get out of school to ‘connect’ with the environment on the nearest beach or directly from home with drone shots that allow them to take a bird’s eye view from the watershed to the ocean behind the reef. Classes also have access to 360° videos to view the seabed in different regions.

The project goes even further by offering children the opportunity to take a live dive. A diver equipped with a camera on one side, the children armed with a tablet on the other, can



Children learn about natural heritage by exchanging with scientists.

go together to discover the seabed located a few meters away from where they live. Once they return, the diver answers any question children may have.

How children can influence policymakers

Armed with all this new knowledge, children from all classes can then exchange with others through a common online platform. Each class has a webpage showcasing their activities and a forum allows children from different islands to talk about their initiatives.



Reunion Island.

‘With this game, I became aware of the solutions to protect the corals, and that I could take action as well. It gives me hope and I understand the urge to act’, a young student from Mauritius.

The first experimentation of the project was launched during the WIOMSA symposium (Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association), where young Mauritians were

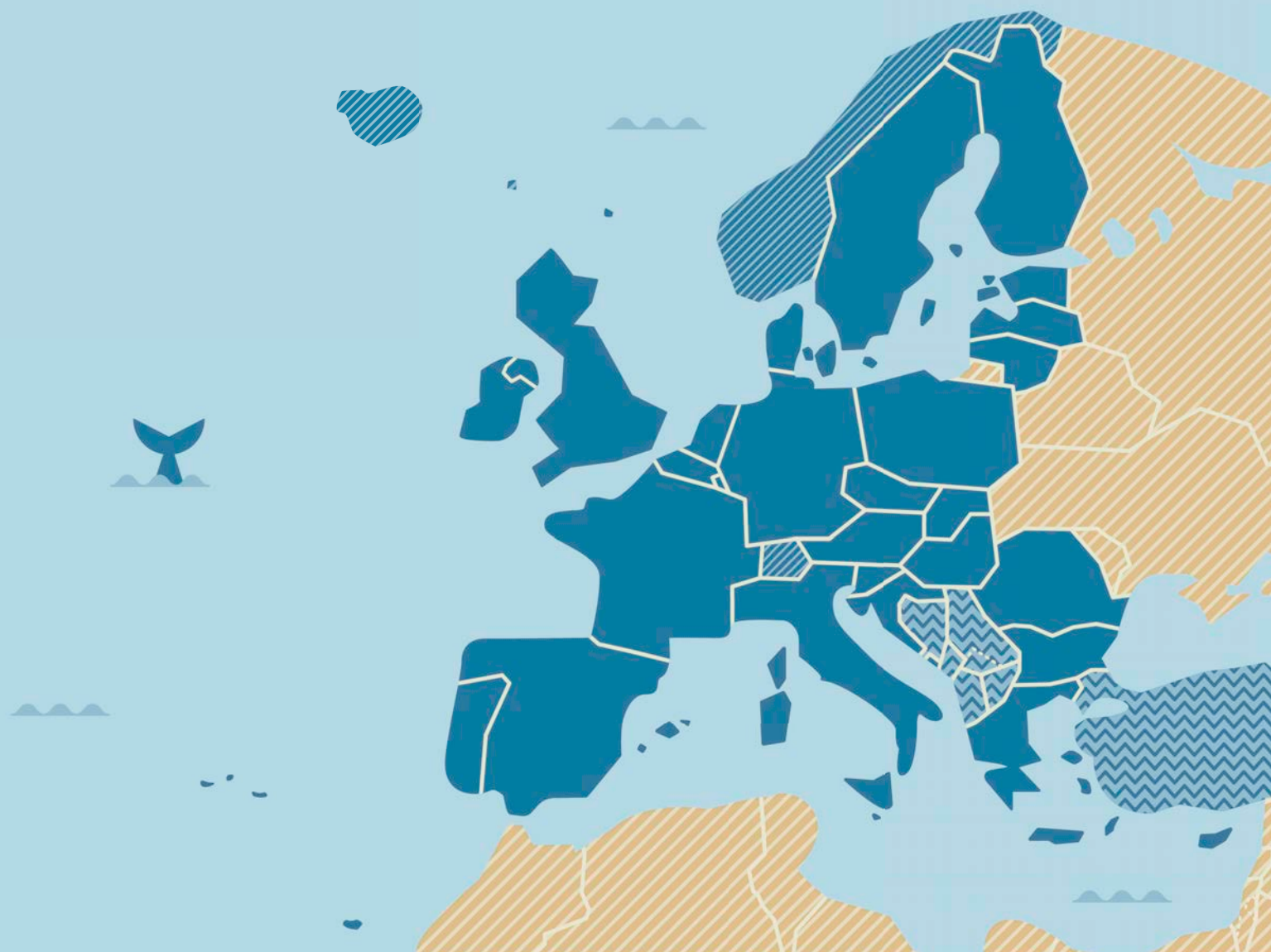
able to be confronted with the challenges the lagoon and its ecosystem faced, before meeting scientists participating in the congress. This ambitious project turned toward society wishes to make children the first ambassadors for the protection of the reef surrounding their islands.

More information: <http://pareo.re/>



Pauline Chion-Hock

- Age: 24
- Nationality: French
- Region where you are doing the IVY volunteering activity: Reunion Island (France)
- Write 3 words that define ‘European cooperation’ for you:
Connection, exchange, unity.



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www.interreg.eu