Environmental science

Waste management interview

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For this assignment we had to interview someone from the Sustainable Development Goals committee. We were able to interview Mr. Andre Marin. He was a member of the commission and worked under the command of Ms. Jocelyne Croes and previous Prime Minister Mike Eman.

The sustainable development goals consist of 17 goals and 169 targets that all United Nations’ member states voted on as being the ideal targets for 2030. The goals are merely to entice countries to do better and more sustainable. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s) are meant to put an end to poverty, inequality, and climate change by 2030.

The interview with Mr. Marin goes as follows.

**Question:**

What are your personal impressions of waste management in Aruba?

**Answer:**

There are numerous types of wastes on Aruba.

Aruba is one of the most successful at water waste management. We will start to use gray water and current architects are being told the benefits of reusing gray water (shower drainage) for example for toilet usage and black water has a near 100% treatment efficiency before it gets put back into the sea. 80% of the Caribbean islands do not even treat their sewage before dumping it into the sea, so we are internationally seen as a success story in this regard. Development waste, as in derelict buildings are torn down and made into cement thanks to the innovative technology of ATCO. This lowers building costs and rids Aruba of one the most bulky forms of waste. This also seen as something of a future technology not seen in other islands, which have derelict and broken down structures littering their islands and cities.

Food waste, due to our reliance on importation a lot of food comes to Aruba already spoiled and though soil can be made from recycled food wastes (or even energy) this is currently not the case, which is a shame and I myself and working on a project with Santa Rosa to deal with this issue.

**Question:**

What are your professional impressions of waste management?

**Answer:**

Despite the plastic ban and due to our relative wealth, Aruba is a consumerist island, which creates a lot of miscellaneous trash. Our Fire pit dump uses technology from a bygone era and it leaches both into the surrounding sea as well as in the air, possibly contributing to asthma and lung cancer in the near vicinity. This is a stain to our island and something we all need to accept blame for. We can all consume less and politics needs to be pulled out of the dump. Eco Gas is aiming to extract chemical and thermal energy-giving gasses from the dump, which aims to contribute to our energy usage (between 2 and 4%), which is something... Officially, the dump is supposed to be closed already... but yeah we all know that that is not the case... Also, as bad as the dump is, it is still preferable than using the wells dotting Aruba. Some of these manmade wells for storing Aruba's agricultural water are so polluted that they cannot even be used, this something that Santa Rosa has been complaining about for years, but they do not have the jurisdiction to enforce anything since the wells are in the public domain.

**Question:**

What is the desired future of waste management in Aruba?

**Answer:**

Desired future? You may need to speak somebody from the current government in this regard; I cannot speak for the new administration.

**Question:**

What are obstacles seen in getting to this desired future scenario?

**Answer:**

Once again, I cannot speak for the new administration.

**Question:**

What is a market for improved waste management in Aruba, who do you think would pay for better waste management in Aruba? For example recycling.

**Answer:**

Not sure, but those of us with at least a university degree (generally speaking) are outraged that there is no recycling and I believe that in some social circles it is almost a taboo subject due to it being so politically charged. If you find an answer to this one, then please let me know. Waste Resource Management, is one the key topics that was identified by a UN specialist team as one of the easy big wins that we can do on the island and recycling came up regularly in conversations with locals and international guests.

**Conclusion**

This interview made emphasis on five questions we asked to Mr. Marin. He was able to provide information on waste management in Aruba, in which we were to see that Aruba, in terms of the different types of waste there is, still is one of the most successful islands in water waste and development waste. However, in other types of waste, there is still much to be done. Despite the plastic ban implemented we still produce a lot of trash and there is not much being done to this regard. For desired future of waste management in Aruba and the obstacles seen, we cannot say much because there is a new administration for this matter and Mr. Marin was not able to give us an answer. The Sustainable Development Goals website provides information on the different goals and targets that the SDG’s are aiming to achieve by 2030. If the aimed goals are achieved, there will be a big leap forward in the way that waste is being managed in Aruba along with many other countries. All in all, we think there is much more to be done, such as implementing new policies and regulations to reduce food waste and to be a less consumerist island in the future.