Climate Kids Adventures: The Story Of How We Made Climate Change Cool

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**About Climate Kids Adventures**
The Climate Kids Adventures Book Series, is a project by the UNDP under the ICCAS Project. The inspiration for this project stems from a desire to engage young children on climate change, adaptation, and risk reduction by communicating in a fun and understandable way the causes, impacts and measures we can all take to adapt to its effects. The book series features two books “Hurry, Hurry It’s A Hurricane” and “Hike to Camp Cool” for distribution among grade two students, and an interactive mobile application based on the two books. It’s our belief that educating children on climate change awareness from a young age (between 5 to 7 years old) is necessary in order to empower knowledgeable and conscientious adults. According to Eldris.org “Research is now suggesting that children are effective risk communicators and agents of social change within their households and their immediate communities.”

**Our Adventure**
From the beginning of our adventure we realized that in order to better write a children’s book about climate change, we needed to understand how much our young audience understood the topic. We went out exploring the beautiful islands of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique conducting a survey to collect data on students understanding of climate change.

However, like all great adventures we did run into obstacles at the beginning. Our initial project name needed to be changed from Caribbean Climate Kids Series to the now awesome name of Climate Kids
Adventures. As well having to change one of the book ideas, “Hot Head Jenny, a story about Kick ‘em Jenny” and come up with a new one because it did not have a strong enough climate change link. We decided on a new story that spoke to our past experience with Hurricane Ivan and Emily and came up with “Hurry, Hurry it’s a Hurricane!”.

The delay in okaying the new project name and story coupled with the waiting to get the okay from the Ministry of Education kept us at the starting line for 3 months. Conducting the survey was done during a period of two (2) and half months. Our pollsters had the opportunity of interacting with the best of our island’s young and brightest students and teachers. During that time, we saw the interest and energy for the students and teachers had in learning more about global warming and what we can do to prepare writing the upcoming books.

“…I thought that getting the children involved in the whole idea of climate change. One of the reasons being they are smaller and their actions would have a longer lasting impact on what we do.” – Principal of Primary School visited

Our research study was conducted as a part of the monitoring and evaluation component, to determine the degree of awareness and understanding children between the ages of 5 and 11 years old have of climate change, and whether age or location had an impact on the degree of knowledge of climate change among children between the above-mentioned age range.

The study was done through a survey questionnaire, which was conducted in a total of 72 primary schools, representing 95% of all active primary schools within Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. A total of 1,019 surveys were successfully completed.

Pollsters conducting survey with primary students

The survey, acted as a template to the whole projects development. It gave us an idea as to what was known and what information needed to be added to help expand knowledge about climate change. The findings of the survey are in the infographic below.
Now, with our survey data collected and the approval of the book concepts for “Hike To Camp Cool” our climate change awareness story and “Hurry, Hurry It’s A Hurricane” a story about disaster risk reduction it was “Kirani Speed Time”!

Once both book scripts were drafted and submitted for review, we started the process of bringing our Climate Kids to life with the illustration process. Our passion in writing the stories was shared in the same process in designing our characters. Keep it simple, fun, and make it cool.

We learned during this phase of the project that conceptualizing earlier, in terms of the design aspect such as having concepts for characters and other brand design elements done earlier would have helped in completing the project a bit earlier. The early design elements would have also have helped with marketing the book and apps before they were fully completed. As well as getting people excited and knowledgeable about the project during the development phase.
(Renae Baptiste) and the rest of ICCAS team we were able to get the books ready for print and the app development.

The app development phase was expedited due to the upcoming book launch. Finding a development environment that allowed an agnostic approach to deploy to both the iOS and Android app stores was vital. We ended up going with Adobe Animate, which provided the possibility to write our code and animate our characters with the time restraints.

Unfortunately, certain app stores like Apple’s App Store having criteria for what they consider an app prevent some mobile apps from being displayed in specific stores (ie. App Store Mobile App vs iBook Store). We ended up having to come up with a contingency to having other mediums to being able to distribute the books effectively on mobile devices. Accepting this realization early on ensured that we multiple mediums developed, such as iBook versions, PDF for download and an interactive desktop version of the apps were developed for showcasing purposes.

We would have loved to have spent more time improving the apps and other digital versions of the book. We believe in technology and would like to see the mobile app version become more interactive to make learning about climate change fun and informative.

We also looked into the idea of incorporating a VR component in the app to showcase different areas at risk on the island of Grenada so children can experience the effect of climate change without being there.

We have just completed the distribution of books to all primary schools in Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Though, the reception of the books were very well received we did encounter challenges. The difficulty of contacting a few schools and fitting the distribution time with their schedule was unexpected. We did also have trouble finding certain school which slowed down our planned distribution time. To mitigate the issue, we started setting periods in the day when we would arrive to distribute the books.

We also ran into a setback with the first estimated quantity of books printed. We had expected to distribute 2000 books but ended up having to print an additional 2400 to meet the demand of our climate kids.
It has been a happy and welcomed surprise to how the books have become so popular among kids and adults.

Some students receiving Climate Kids Adventures books

The project has been featured locally on the evening news programs, newspapers and internationally. The Climate Kids Adventure: Hurry, Hurry It’s A Hurricane has been selected to be the “Story Gala Theme” for the upcoming Grenada Community Library fundraiser.

As we conclude our story, we have reflected over the fact that we did not anticipate how challenging it would be pulling the right team together to pull this off. We took for granted that the vision of the project could be absorbed by each team member seamlessly. At times that was not the case, and so we had to make adjustments.

If we had to do this over again we would have spent more time using the books as a catalyst to teach students about climate change while developing a conscious culture about the environmental protection and how they can actively contribute to developing resilient communities. We would have also organized a few events that would have encouraged further discussions about the impact climate change has on Grenada and our people. Nevertheless, we believe we were able to meet our object by make climate change topic that is cool to learn. So be a Climate Kid. Be cool!