

THE WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH



YOUTH FOR ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY
~ Authors : SJCSF ASPnet Club ~

Carnival as a Festival of Peace



St. Joseph's Convent, San Fernando – a proud UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) institution – is delighted to present our Whole School Approach initiative: Carnival as a Festival of Peace. This transformative project embraced Trinidad's vibrant carnival tradition as a vehicle for cultural pride, creative expression, environmental responsibility, and global citizenship. Students, teachers, parents, and community members united to design and produce traditional carnival characters using upcycled and recycled materials, demonstrating that celebration and sustainability can walk hand in hand.

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VISUAL ARTS DEPARTMENT

- ★ Designed and coordinated the overall aesthetic vision of the project, drawing from traditional Trinidadian carnival character archetypes such as the Minstrel, Fancy Indian, Bat, Midnight Robber, and Sailor.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE / STEM DEPARTMENT

- ★ Anchored the sustainability dimension of the project, educating students on the environmental impact of fast fashion and disposable costume culture.

SOCIAL STUDIES & HISTORY DEPARTMENT

- ★ Delivered research-based lessons on the African, East Indian, European, and indigenous roots of Trinidad's carnival tradition.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS DEPARTMENT

- ★ Challenged students to research and write profiles for each traditional carnival character, exploring origins, symbolism, and cultural relevance.

MUSIC & PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT

- ★ Choreographed a cultural showcase in which students paraded in their handcrafted costumes to traditional and contemporary calypso, soca, and steelpan music.

MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT

- ★ Integrated the project into geometry and measurement lessons – students calculated fabric dimensions, material quantities, and costume proportions.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) DEPARTMENT

- ★ Documented the project through photography, videography, and digital storytelling, creating a multimedia archive for the school and broader ASPnet community.

GUIDANCE & COUNSELLING / PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

- ★ Facilitated reflection circles and dialogue sessions on themes of identity, belonging, tolerance, and peace – values at the heart of carnival.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION & PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

- ★ Provided logistical coordination – allocating resources, scheduling workshops, and liaising with school leadership, The PTA, community partners and sponsors.

RESULTS & IMPACT WITHIN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

- Students developed a deeper pride in and understanding of Trinidad's multicultural carnival heritage.
- Confidence, creativity, and public speaking skills were visibly strengthened through the showcase performance.
- The project fostered inclusion – students with different abilities, backgrounds, and interests all found a meaningful role in the process.

WITHIN THE WIDER COMMUNITY

- The final showcase was opened to parents, guardians, community members, and local stakeholders, drawing significant attendance and positive media coverage.
- The project sparked community conversations about the cultural value of traditional carnival characters at risk of being overshadowed by commercialised costume culture.
- Local artisans and mas makers were invited to share their expertise, strengthening school-community bonds and preserving intergenerational knowledge.
- The environmental messaging resonated beyond the school gates, with families reporting changed recycling habits at home.
- The project was documented and shared across the UNESCO ASPnet network, positioning St. Joseph's Convent as a model of culturally grounded, sustainability-focused education.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

This project directly supports the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development across multiple goals:

- SDG 4 - **Quality Education**: Delivered inclusive, experiential, interdisciplinary learning that developed knowledge, skills, and values for sustainable development and global citizenship (Target 4.7).
- SDG 10 - **Reduced Inequalities**: Actively promoted inclusion, ensuring all students regardless of background or ability could participate fully and be celebrated.
- SDG 11 - **Sustainable Cities and Communities**: Highlighted the importance of cultural heritage and inclusive community participation in building cohesive, peaceful societies (Target 11.4).
- SDG 12 - **Responsible Consumption and Production**: Demonstrated through upcycling and recycling how communities can reduce waste, challenge throwaway culture, and create beauty from discarded materials (Target 12.5).
- SDG 13 - **Climate Action**: Raised students' environmental awareness and promoted practical action to reduce material waste and carbon footprint.
- SDG 16 - **Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**: Embedded the values of peace, tolerance, non-violence, and cultural respect at the very heart of the project's theme – Carnival as a Festival of Peace (Target 16.7).
- SDG 17 - **Partnerships for the Goals**: Built meaningful partnerships between the school, families, community artisans, local organisations, and the UNESCO ASPnet global network.

