



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, WEST INDIES

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

The UWI Signs MOU for Regional Research on Work/Life Balance and Ageing Populations

ST. AUGUSTINE, Trinidad and Tobago. 30/01/2017 - The University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus (The UWI) and the Societe D'economie Mixte D'amenagement De La Ville Du Lamentin/Company of Mixed Economy of Management (SEMAVIL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for research collaboration Tuesday 17 January, at the Office of the Campus Principal.

The Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) and the Social Work Unit, Department of Behavioural Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences, The UWI, are undertaking the study with SEMAVIL, entitled *Work/Life Balance and Ageing: How to Develop a Sustainable Business Model for Social and Homecare for Better Ageing* – a related and aligned component to the existing UWI/RDI project. Principal investigators on the project are Dr Cheryl-Ann Boodram, for The UWI and Mr Emmanuel Joseph for SEMAVIL.

This partnership expands the Research and Development Impact Fund (RDIF) sponsored research project, *Work/Life Balance and Ageing Populations: Studying the Productivity and Wellbeing of Working Men and Women in Trinidad* – a joint project of the IGDS and the Social Work Unit, Department of Behavioural Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences, St Augustine Campus, spearheaded Professor Patricia Mohammed of The UWI. It also links directly to initiatives by the French government to deal with the growing problem of ageing in urban planning and development.

The UWI and SEMAVIL both stand to benefit from this collaboration. Professor Mohammed sees this three-year partnership with SEMAVIL as a natural but critical outgrowth of the RDIF-funded research project which will advance the work of the local research team into concrete interventions locally and regionally, creating an impact on new vulnerabilities being faced by different sections of our populations.

More on the Research

Consistent with the long-term aims of the current UWI/RDI project, Dr Cheryl-Ann Boodram of the Social Work Unit who co-leads this project successfully negotiated a funding partnership expanding the RDI project regionally and internationally with SEMAVIL, led by General Manager, Max Tanic. The agreement has been finalised in collaboration with Project Manager of SEMAVIL, Emmanuel Joseph. A few key outcomes expected from this new collaboration are (i) a typology of the (ageing) population, needs and habits; (ii) observation and measurement of the current homecare system, (SWOT); (iii) ageing and mobility mapping; and (iv) organisation of a prevention network to monitor and anticipate shift of situation to dependency.

The aim of the RDIF-funded project is to accelerate changes in attitudes and practices within institutions and in the wider society so that policies and innovations in flexi-time work, housing for



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the aged, health care facilities and pension plans may relieve the stresses that this new demographic reality has already presented in the society. It represents an interdisciplinary investigation, incorporating social work and gender theory, into this under-researched area which has become more critical due to an increasingly and rapidly ageing Caribbean.

The project interprets work/life balance as the maintenance of supportive and healthy work and family environments which enables employees to balance work and personal responsibilities. Further, Trinidad & Tobago is characterised as being at an advanced stage of demographic transition with the number of ageing persons over 60 expected to be double that of the working and youthful populations by 2035. The project examines the experiences of selected groups and individuals about work/life balance and the problems posed by the lengthier expectation of life of populations, the burdens placed on the care economy and the challenges faced by the aged themselves as they struggle to live creative and fulfilled lives in the face of increasing health challenges and isolation.

About SEMAVIL

SEMAVIL is the development company responsible for urban planning, social housing, public equipment and economic innovation for the city of Lamentin, Martinique, since 1991, and is committed to promoting and supporting better ageing through improved and expanded health and social care services. SEMAVIL is committed to investigating the phenomenon of ageing towards the development of relevant services and products to offer 360° care system; shares common goals with our RDIF-funded Work/Life Balance research project, and is collaborating with The UWI to ultimately create interventions which will improve the quality of life for our ageing populations regionally. Their investment in building a social and sharing economy means that their focus on engaging individuals, transmitting knowledge and empowerment through work shifts the driving concept from ‘what are we doing for the elderly’ to ‘what are they able to do for us and for themselves.’

End

About The UWI

Since its inception in 1948, The University of the West Indies (The UWI) has evolved from a fledgling college in Jamaica with 33 students to a full-fledged, regional University with well over 40,000 students. Today, UWI is the largest, most longstanding higher education provider in the Commonwealth Caribbean, with four campuses in [Barbados](#), [Jamaica](#), [Trinidad and Tobago](#), and the [Open Campus](#). The UWI has faculty and students from more than 40 countries and collaborative links with 160 universities globally; it offers undergraduate and postgraduate degree options in Food & Agriculture, Engineering, Humanities & Education, Law, Medical Sciences, Science and Technology and Social Sciences. UWI's seven priority focal areas are linked closely to the priorities identified by CARICOM and take into account such over-arching areas of concern to the region as environmental issues, health and wellness, gender equity and the critical importance of innovation. Website: www.uwi.edu

(Please note that the proper name of the university is The University of the West Indies, inclusive of the “The”, hence The UWI.)