



WORK/LIFE BALANCE AND AGEING NEWSLETTER

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This issue serves as a synopsis of project activities from December 2015 to September 2016.

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First advisors meeting, September 2016

The Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) and the Social Work Unit, Department of Behavioural Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences is currently engaged in a three-year project entitled: *Work/Life Balance and Ageing in Trinidad: Studying the Productivity and Wellbeing of Working Men and Women*, funded by the Research Development Impact Fund of The University of the West Indies.

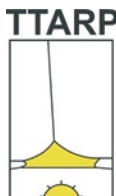
At present, the project is in its second phase, data collection. Data was

collected from talking circles, journaling and interviews. Secondary data was also collected. Data analysis is ongoing and will be carried out in greater detail when the data collection is completed. Further information can be found on page two.

Several opportunities have arisen to engage in outreach activities as well as to present at various conferences. During this time a logo for the Work/Life Balance project was also developed.



PARTNERS UPDATE



DATA COLLECTION

The data collection began in December of 2015 and utilised a number of methods to ensure triangulation in the project.

Three talking circles were held during the period December 2015 to May 2016 with Dr. Angelique Nixon and Renee Cozier conducting the sessions. The first talking circle was held on December 5, 2015, the second and final circles on May 14 and May 21, 2016. Immediately after the talking circles, the team conducted in-depth interviews with selected persons to explore some of the themes that were raised.

In-depth interviews were also held with experts in care work, psychology and government personnel. Additional interviews will be conducted to ensure that



Talking circles conducted by Dr. Angelique Nixon.

the project has a holistic understanding of ageing.

To get a qualitative perspective of the working population and how they manage day-to-day work responsibilities, caring for dependents as well as family life and the home, persons were

invited to journal for 4-6 weeks, documenting their daily activities.

Secondary data collection is ongoing and involves a review of scholarly literature, and reports from international agencies and local, regional and international research projects.

LOGO AND WEBSITE LAUNCH

A logo designed to capture the dynamism of Trinidadian "Work/Life Balance and Ageing" was developed through consultation with our stakeholders and informed by early data collection. .

On March 31st 2016 the project's logo and website were officially launched at the SALISES conference room, The UWI, St. Augustine. Patricia Mohammed, Lead Researcher and Professor of Gender and Cultural Studies spoke to the significance of the logo.

"The arms spread open in a circular motion embrace different levels or different layers and signify both protector and provider. The

circularity signals that the balancing act is cyclical rather than horizontal like a seesaw" (Mohammed 2016).

Through data collection we have learnt that balance varies with each person based on their experiences of work and life. Taking into consideration local culture surrounding family life and structure, it was imperative that the definition be inclusive of varying family types and also that the concept of work was not limited to work done outside the home.

"The semicircles formed by the arms with gaps represent different kinds of institutional arrangements" (Mohammed 2016). The logo can also be perceived as someone juggling



balls and, metaphorically, juggling life.

The blue signifies hope while the purple is respect and the size and color differences of arms and heads represent age and gender differences.

We are grateful to Marlene Roberts, creative director of THINK Creative Strategies Limited who was instrumental in the logo design, and Christopher Thomas of Campus IT who built the project website and ensured it was ready to launch.

Web link for launch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZoK8ykW_FjU

<http://sta.uwi.edu/rdifund/projects/worklifebalance/index.php>

Professor Mohammed presenting at the Equal Opportunity Commission forum
"Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination in Budgeting"



Renee Cozier and Samantha Mendoza at the Conference on Social Work Education and Social Development: Promoting the Dignity and Work of People

CONFERENCES

Most recently the project participated in the EOC forum "Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination in Budgeting, which was held on Friday 23rd September 2016 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Port of Spain. Professor Mohammed and Dr. Cheryl-Ann Boodram were the presenters bringing to light the demographics of the current and future ageing populations and also the public and private initiatives in place to support this growing group.

A 30-minute feature of the forum was produced and later aired on CCNTV6 on 28th September 2016.

In celebration of their 25-year silver jubilee, the Social Work Unit of The UWI, St Augustine held an International Social Work Conference and Poster Exposition from March 16-17th 2016. With ageing as one of the sub-themes of the conference, Renée Cozier from the IGDS and Samantha Mendoza from the Social Work Unit each presented papers. Professor Paula Morgan and Ms. Cozier co-authored "Unsilencing Dementia: Living, Working and Ageing with Dignity", which Ms. Cozier presented. Ms. Mendoza delivered a paper on ageing from

the perspective of women living with HIV.

In January 2016, Professor Patricia Mohammed and Renée Cozier delivered a paper at the conference hosted by The University of the West Indies Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) entitled "Population Issues and Dynamics in Trinidad and Tobago: Theory, Practice and Policy for Post-2015 Strategic Development Goals". The paper "Literature Insights on Work/Life Balance and Ageing and Significance for Population Dynamics in Trinidad and Tobago", discussed the issues that those involved in labour force dynamics, poverty and ageing need to be concerned about with respect to the changing age structure of Trinidad and Tobago's population.

Dr. Cheryl-Ann Boodram attended the Third Caribbean Conference on Ageing, Elder Abuse and the Right's of the Older Persons which was held in Dominica from November 30th to December 1st 2015. The conference was organised by the Economic Community for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Dominica Council on Ageing in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Services. Papers were presented by representatives of

ECLAC and Caribbean NGOs under the theme 'Building the Framework for a Regional Response to Issues Affecting Older Persons'. Discussions focussed on sensitising persons to the prevalence of abuse of older persons in the region, developing a regional framework for prevention of elder abuse, and supporting the establishment and implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

ECLAC analysed the current situation in the Caribbean with respect to population ageing and the rights of older persons, the progress made in implementing policies for this age group, and made policy recommendations to advance the rights of older persons.

Conferences and Forums 2015-2016

1. EOC National Budgeting Forum
2. International Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development: Promoting the Dignity and Work of People
3. SALISES 2016 Population Issues and Development in Trinidad and Tobago
4. UNECLAC 2015 Conference on Ageing

OUTREACH AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

One key outreach activity for this project has been the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) lecture series. All investigators and research assistants on the project were active in conducting workshops with different departments in the Commission across Trinidad and Tobago. The team has conducted twelve workshops on work/life balance and stress; ten in Trinidad and two in Tobago over the period August to October 2016.

The workshops provided insight into the challenges faced by the working population coping with work/life balance and also presented healthy work/life balance strategies emerging from the research as well as stress relieving strategies to manage work responsibilities and family obligations.

These sessions were approximately two to three hours long and informed employees on the status of the ageing population in Trinidad and Tobago and, by extension, the Caribbean. It further allowed participants to assess their own levels of work/life balance and what the concept means to them.

These workshops were interactive, allowing participants to voice their stressors with work and family life and also the coping strategies and mechanisms that were currently being employed. Reflective of the project's collaboration between the IGDS and the Social Work Unit, there was a segment on self-care and stress triggers that truly aided participants in gaining an understanding of their behaviours.

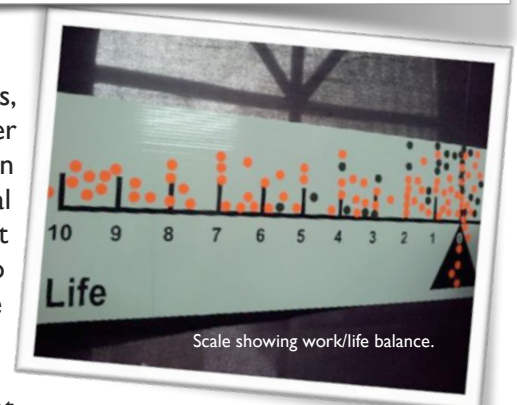


Employees of T&TEC demonstrate their own levels of work/life balance using their bodies.



Work/Life Balance Workshops with staff of the T&TEC.

Prior to the T&TEC lecture series, on May 9th 2016, Renée Cozier delivered a one-hour presentation on work/life balance at a special lunch held by the Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC) to observe Administrative Professional Week..



Scale showing work/life balance.

All these workshops were not only helpful to participants but useful to the team in getting public servants' perspectives on work/life balance. It also served as a pilot of sorts in rolling out workshops on work/life balance to different companies in Trinidad and Tobago.

Finally, visits were made to seven residential facilities in the St. Augustine/Tunapuna vicinity for the purpose of site visits and informing managers about the project laying the ground work for interviews in the future.