



On the tracks of Colin Hudson

About an eco-pioneer, sustainability challenges and a new project of hope in Barbados.

Observations by Benjamin Brockhaus

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Observations by Benjamin Brockhaus

Written on basis of a two-week research in Barbados.

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1 The story about the spirit of a real eco-champion

“If we are really lucky, in our entire lifetime we may be fortunate to meet one great person. For me, I have no doubt, that person would be Colin Hudson.”

Adrian Loveridge, Former Director of Barbados Tourism Authority

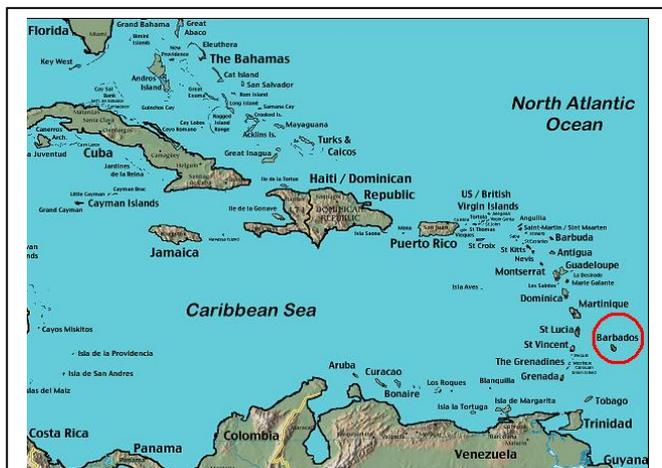
Our story starts in Plumpton, Sussex, England at the 15th of January in 1938, when John Colin Hudson was born. His parents both were deeply involved in the field of human land use and agriculture: His mother was a trained dairy farmer (milk-farming) and his father was a well-known professor of horticulture. So we can assume, that Colin grew up in a close relationship between the practical needs of cultivating nature and the theoretical inputs from natural science. He graduated from school and high school with best marks, which gave him the opportunity to study at the University of Cambridge for Natural Science Tripos BA in botany, zoology and organic chemistry, as well as a diploma in agriculture. During his studies, Colin was researching about farming techniques on the Caribbean islands.

It was in 1961, shortly after he finished his diploma, that the freshly baked agronomist was waiting at a barber's shop flicking through the magazines. In an obsolete magazine, he discovered a job advertisement: The Irrigation unit of the Department of Agriculture of the British colonial administration in Barbados was looking for an agricultural scientist for a research project connected to sugarcane cultivation. Immediately this job advertisement took his attention and although it was outdated for over a year, Colin picked up the phone the same day and asked if the job was still vacant. As the clocks may appear to tick a little bit slower on the Caribbean islands it happened that the job offer was still vacant – and Colin being the only applicant to respond in two years of advertising.

So, in August 1961, the young Colin Hudson became a scientific assistant of the Barbadian (locals say “Bajan”) agro-industry on the Caribbean island Barbados.

Colin was gifted with a bright mind, great memory and a broad sense of entrepreneurial ingenuity. He was full of infinite energy, thirst for knowledge and zest for action. It took not long until his research for the Ministry of Agriculture provided him insights, which nearly no one was thinking of, at that time:

He arrived a few years before Barbados gained its independence from Britain (1966). In those years the sugar cane industry was still flourishing and Barbadian society was (still) in proper production and tourism was a steadily increasing part of the economy. And although most of the severe ecological and



Barbados is a sovereign island nation in the Lesser Antilles in the Caribbean and a British Commonwealth realm. Palm-lined dream beaches surrounded by a coral reef in which sea turtles frolic. With about 286,000 inhabitants (2018) on only 430km² (an area half the size of Berlin) Barbados is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Its political, cultural and economic history is dominated by the British colonization, slavery (including trade) and the production of sugar cane and its derivatives (sugar, rum, etc.).

economic problems, which are now visible all over the island (see chapter 3), were not part of the public debate, Colin already foresaw those challenges coming. He quickly recognized both, the upcoming economic and environmental challenges of the island - and the (maybe too) important economic role of the sugar cane industry. This made him look for diversification possibilities for farming. When labour shortages and cane fires became the sugar-industry's main problem, Colin discovered an innovative talent for agricultural engineering and in conjunction with farmers, local engineers and F.W. McConnel LTD he started to develop field machinery to solve these problems.

During those times, as an external student of the University of the West Indies' St. Augustine campus Colin wrote his PhD thesis about "The ability of Soil Water", which he passed as fresh baked Doctor in 1967. When his three-year contract at the ministry of agriculture ended, the agriculture-authorities wanted him to continue his work. Together with Colin they founded a special research institute in 1979, the "Carib Agro Industries Ltd." and set him in charge, giving him some employees. In the following two decades, Colin improved lots of equipment for growing, harvesting and processing crops by inventing new mechanisms or processing-parts: Colin is recognized to be the inventor of a cane reaping aid which is internationally known as "the Carib cane harvester" – which revolutionized the possibilities in green cane harvesting, making it much easier and more effective. The machine was subsequently sold into many sugar cane producing countries, and copied in India. There is a promotional video, from the 1970s, portraying Colin's invention: <http://tinyurl.com/carib-cane-harvester> His cane harvester, appeared on one of the postage stamps, commemorating the 25th anniversary of Barbados' Independence in 1991.



Colin Hudson with photovoltaic panel in Future Centre's garden. Photo: Daily Nation Publishing Ltd.

But Colin was driven more by ideas and visions than by money or material incentives. Although he registered 25 international patents, he did that not for his profit, and shared the success with his colleagues. He was rather looking for human- and environmentally friendly farming tools and methods... not for the big cash.

“In a developing country [like Barbados had been at that time], a man of Colin’s stature normally has a posh middle- or upper-class lifestyle. Instead, those who visited him or his projects, discovered a humble Caucasian, who lives on the compound and, more often than not, was covered in dirt from doing what many would consider to be menial tasks around the grounds. Colin did not see the menial tasks, he did not see the social class. What he saw, was the need for man to live a happy but sustainable lifestyle.” Terry Ally, Journalist

In the 70s and 80s - when Colin worked for the Carib Agro Industries - he gathered a tremendous knowledge about Barbados, its geography, geology, ecology, society and culture. Although Colin was not born Bajan, his love for Barbados was infinite.

“Colin’s knowledge of Barbados, both the broad sweeping understanding and the tiny scientific or historical details, was second to none.” Colin Fraser, a friend of Colin and former President of the National Trust

Colin read a lot – Newspapers, magazines, books – he collected maps, weather-data, pictures and all kinds of information about Barbados that he could reach. And he took notes – lots of handwritten notes. His almost full data-collection can be found in form of his (predominantly handwritten) records, which today fill three ceiling-height racks in the National Archives of Barbados: All files and records from Colin’s house and office were donated to the National Archives by his son Chris. Since 2004 they remain there, more or less untouched and still not digitized nor even completely listed. It was Benjamin Brockhaus, in March 2018, who was the first person allowed to take a glance into the files. Some of the information used in this article is based on the insights I was able to collect during the half-hour I was allowed to spend in the Archives.



Benjamin Brockhaus investigating the Hudson files in the National Archives, March 2018

However, not all of Dr. Hudson’s inventions were high-tech mechanized equipment. To the average Barbadian of his generation, his fame came from his innovative methods of small-scale backyard agriculture and his lifestyle-motto **“reduce, reuse & recycle”**:

Colin saw a huge threat to Barbados’ environment in the massive increase of vehicles on the roads, which means more vehicle tyres being sent to the garbage-dumping landfills. Of course, the tyres are not biodegradable and are therefore an environmental nuisance. Colin’s solution for this was using discarded tyres for gardening: He piled up three tyres and filled them with rich soil. By this he constructed tyre-gardens, which permitted a pesticide-free approach to the problems of discarded tyres and dwindling land space. This gave motivation to many, to restart with gardening.

Colin used waste for “mulching”: He covered the soil in his gardens with plastic waste, to create a shady and humid micro-atmosphere in the top soil layer. And he mixed the second soil-layer with the leftovers from sugar-cane industry to create a fertile humus-layer under the coverage. Besides that,

you could find upturned recycled pet bottles, filled with water and placed beside plants to provide local trickle irrigation. Furthermore, Colin planted trees in circles around large heaps of rotting vegetation, which provided the humus and nutrients for rapid growth. Colin even reused household garbage e.g. in his “Kitchen Composter”, which was built of old tyres.

The remains of Colin’s impressive tyre gardens can still be found around the former Future Centre in Edgehill, St. Thomas.

Colin was a man who lived following the motto **“practice what you preach”**. He always stated that sustainable forms of living are not so difficult, as many people think: He advised everyone to do gardening, composting and processing the home grown vegetables and fruits. “Every little bit helps,” he avowed in an interview 1994. **“We can each make a difference.”**

Friends and former Volunteers told me, that Colin had a huge power of inspiration: When he flashed his smile and seemed so enthusiastic about what he did, he made other people enthusiastic and included them (with their own ideas) in his universal vision of making Barbados a role model of sustainable development.

Perhaps the most prominent feature of Colin Hudson’s personality was his enthusiasm, which must have been highly infectious: “His optimism and enthusiasm and downright bounce-back ability were contagious.” Some of his former colleagues wrote about him.

“I remember touring the Future Centre Trust with Colin as the excited guide. Emphasising the importance of things natural, he suddenly stops, plucks a bit of lemongrass from the garden and chews it. “Hey, try this ... see how pleasant,” he says sharing little sprigs to everybody. Soon everybody was chewing on lemon grass and giving ummms and ooohs... Next thing I remember Colin inviting me to his restaurant at the Future Centre. On the meatless menu was an array of locally grown foodstuff. At the end of my tasty meal, I asked for the bill. “Oh, it’s not like that” Colin said with that soft, endearing voice, “ there is no bill as such; you just pay what you think it’s (the food) worth or what you can afford.” [Roxanne Gibbs \(a former editor of the Daily Nation\) Written in a tribute to Colin \(Feb. 26. 2004\):](#)

With such novel ideas he practiced solidarity-based economic concepts almost 30 years before they become popular in industrialized countries (e.g. as Community Supported Agriculture, at the moment).

In an article, written by the Daily-Nation’s journalist Terry Ally, who was supporting the Future Centre with many articles, I found the following passage:

“What did Colin love apart from his family?

He loved the unspoiled countryside, walking, music, good company, fair dealing, well-informed debate, good toys and a good book.

What did Colin hate the most?

Colin hated seeing this marvellous little country called Barbados losing its integrity and changing form the unique treasure he found 36 years ago to mediocrity, where hard work and trust-worthiness are increasingly scarce commodities, where a once-beautiful countryside and shoreline are being ravaged and where power and competence are daily becoming more disconnected.”

It could happen that in the middle of his presentations he suddenly jumps up – and offers a drink to everybody: You could choose then between ginger beer, mauby or a self-grown

“Russian tea”. For sure, the drinks would get served by Colin in used Sunflower margarine containers. He would explain then, that he hopes, that guests would not mind, but he didn’t use glasses. He recycled his containers and used them for the drinks or soup.” Terry Ally

Andrew Simpson, a former recycling-entrepreneur who changed his business to photovoltaics, told me about Colin:

“Colin was my role model and mentor. And he had a way to bring people into his vision. So, Colin impacted many people. Maybe this is the reason, why nearly all former Volunteers and friends still keep his stuff.” Andrew Simpson

And that’s true: Everybody I talked to, has at least a warm collection of memories – and most of them as well collected articles, photos, brochures and magazines about Colin Hudson and the golden times of the Future Centre Trust. Colin is still in their mind – still present – and everybody loved to tell me about him. Colin’s old friends and colleagues keep his heritage – his spiritual legacy – in their memories, in files, and even in storage: In Andrew’s storage are still many parts of the former FCT exhibitions stored – maybe waiting for another chance of revival?

When I talked to **Norma Shorey-Bryan** and **Jules Vastert**, who had been very close and long-lasting volunteers at the Future Centre I found proof of a deep and long-lasting humility around Colin’s legacy:

“I have such strong memories about Colin,” said Norma, who brought a pile of pictures and old files to our meeting, “he was full of boundless energy – unstoppable.”

The former volunteers told me, that Colin always wanted to reconnect people with nature. He wanted to recreate harmony between humans and nature. So, for example, he arranged moonlight-picnics at Bottom Bay (in the south-east of Barbados). These very nice events followed Colin’s openhearted and easy-going principle of “whoever comes, comes”. He would organise a bonfire and everybody brought some food for the picnic. *“Many of us stayed overnight at the full moon-lighted beach. This showed his very deep connection with nature.”* Norma told me.

“He was very sociable – nearly everybody liked him, apart from the factory-men he fought in his campaigns. Of course, some people started to exploit his goodness – coming to his events, without contributing. Of course he was aware of that (as he was very clever) – but he didn’t mind, as long as it served the reason of bringing people together” Norma said.

“You could sit with Colin and listen to him for hours. He was a forward thinking person,” Norma remembered. *“Sometimes I think, Colin was too early, a man ahead of his time...he pointed out so many business-opportunities, but was not heard. Barbados was not ready for such a green champion. For*



Benjamin Brockhaus and Norma Shorey-Bryan, former FCT-Volunteer



hat and loose shirts (often with environmental demands on it)

example, in 1998 it happened that the very well known environmentalist David Suzuki came to Barbados, and spoke at a conference. In the audience were many Ministers from the government. They listened to Suzuki and were cheering in the end. Nevertheless, they were fully unaware, that they have a champion of the same kind like Suzuki at their own island. They cheered to Suzuki– but never listened to Colin Hudson. Suzuki said nothing, what Colin was not preaching for years already.”

Colin worked almost 16 hours every day. He spent his days writing concepts, thinking of ideas, inventing, constructing or digging the weed in the garden. The Future Centre became Colin’s heartbeat, and he had totally immersed himself in creating and maintaining it – a job, that often entailed 20-hour workdays.

“If I didn’t enjoy it, it would be stressful” Colin said during an interview, published by Terry Alley in the middle of the 90s.

Norma remembered: *“Any free minute he had, he worked in the tire-garden, wearing his huge white hat, planting, weeding. What he harvested from the horticultural sites, he gave away to anyone. He wouldn’t have bought vegetables. He followed the principle: “**you can eat, what you produce!**”*



Colin and his soul-mate Maureen working in the medical herb garden. Photo: PWC Magazine

Colin lived a modern patchwork-family life full of dynamic relationships. Still in the UK Colin married Jenny Trapnell. Although their marriage did not last when Colin moved to Barbados, it gave life to two children: Christopher and Stella. At Barbados, Colin met Greta Ward. Greta brought three more kids into the family and together they brought up their five teenagers. Friends say, that it could have been, that he sometimes was so deeply involved in his work and passion about conservation of nature and sustainable development, that he may have missed family-life.

In the 90s, when the kids were out of school the relationship with Greta ended. In the late 90s, Colin fell in love with Maureen (Mo) Watson. Mo was a strong, natural and clever Bajan woman who later lived on the Future Centre Trust’s property, in Edgehill, St. Thomas. She supported Colin and the Future Centre in many ways – but loved to keep a possibility for her privacy and her solitude.

Colin was a man of a modern but deep universal spirituality – he did not stick to a specific religion or one specific god – but always knew about a deeper and universal interconnection of all things. In his obituary, he wrote: “I believe deeply in a web of life and the wonder of information with surrounds and supports us all.” With friends, partners and colleagues, he practiced meditation. Former volunteers told me about common meditation sessions in the garden of the future centre – about moonlight retreats at the oceans. In an interview, Colin stated: “I am fascinated with the word ‘enthusiasm’. It’s a Greek word, meaning ‘in God’. The Greeks must have recognised, that the enthusiast must have been tapping into God in some extra way.”

And Colin loved arts: He played the guitar, loved music, and colourful painting and beautiful handwritings: The walls of his house were fully covered with wise sayings in beautiful colorful handwriting and large paintings directly on the stucco.



Jules Vastert (Dutch Sailor, who was one of the main volunteers of the Future Centre in the 90s) with Dr. John Colin Hudson.

Colin loved sports and nearly every kind of movement like cycling, swimming or canoeing. The former volunteers told me, that Colin used to spend only four hours sleeping during the night, but overhauled the sleep deficit by taking three to four 15-minute povernaps during a day. Colin was a cyclist, a runner and a very passionate hiker: Several times a week, he explored the island on his hikes – early in the morning – or in the moonlight.

Later, more and more people joined Colin during these hikes – and the foundation was laid for the weekly Sunday-morning-hikes, which still take place every Sunday morning at 6 am (today hosted by the National Trust and the Barbados Hiking Association).

During his lifetime Colin was leading more than 1000 Sunday-morning “Stop & ‘n Stare” hikes for the National Trust. During these hikes he used to carry the “A – Z of Barbadian Heritage”, and quote or sometimes read bits of it to authenticate the so interesting stories he told during the stops. And always

he had his own uncanny sources of other facts, the evidence or the truth behind the the legend or the explanation for the riddle.

2 The Future Centre Trust

2.1 The golden times of Barbados' "initiative of hope"

As Colin had become quite popular with his passion for protection of Barbados' Environment and its people, Dame Nita Barrow (Governor of Barbados) invited Colin to organize an exhibition about environmental issues to accompany the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island States (SIDS) which took place at Barbados in 1994.

He designed the concept of a "Village of Hope" - a large-scale exhibition of nearly 300 exhibits, in which environmental problems "Horrors" were contrasted with examples of ecologically responsible ways of living and farming ("Hopes").

This exhibition was a great success: Colin and his colleagues dealt with over 3.000 exhibitors, 300 exhibits, and 45.000 paying visitors – the largest exhibition ever mounted in Barbados. Approximately half of each of those figures represented children's involvement. The object of each exhibit was to define the "problem "

After this success, the same Governor asked Colin to continue this work. The idea was to install a permanent exhibition. Even the sugar industry understood the importance of Colin's work and gave him, as a start, time, the housing and a secretary to continue this important task.

Later, in 1995, the financial help of the Dieter Mennekes Fund made it possible for Colin Hudson to be able to resign from the agricultural industry and dedicate his work fully to the environmental issues. It would become the basis for the foundation of the "Future Centre Trust" – Barbados' first environmental NGO.

In the mid-90s, a huge plantation house with a 4 acre garden in Edgehill became available and the Future Centre was able to lease this – giving space to a permanent exhibition with several rooms representing different topics concerning environmental issues. Many of the exhibits from the Village of Hope were re-used.

The rooms where designed and painted very colourfully and with much love for details by a local and foreign artists.



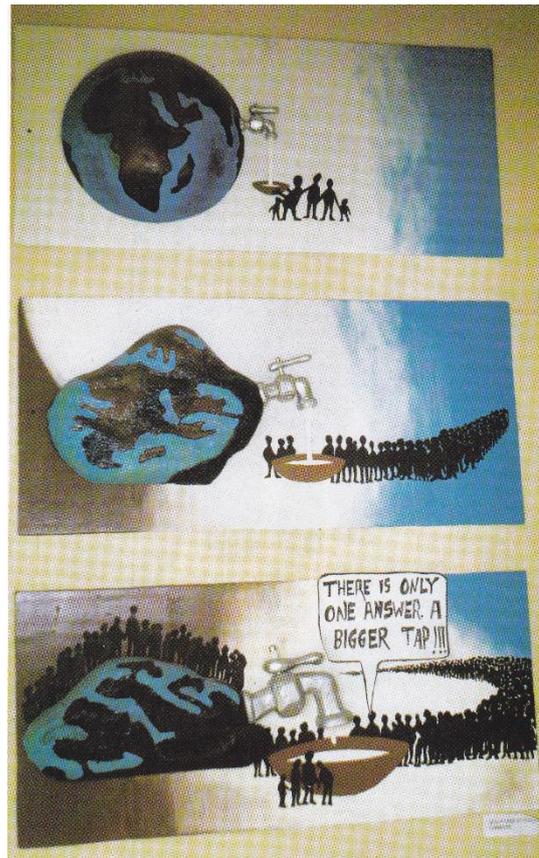
The garden was a flourishing demonstration of horticulture and permaculture. With over 7.000 discarded tyres being used in its gardens (veggies, herbs and medicinal), the Future Centre had the largest known tyre-garden in the world. There was an organic restaurant, where visitors could enjoy the pure taste of nature.

Sometimes the volunteers cooked the meals using Barbados' first professional solar oven.

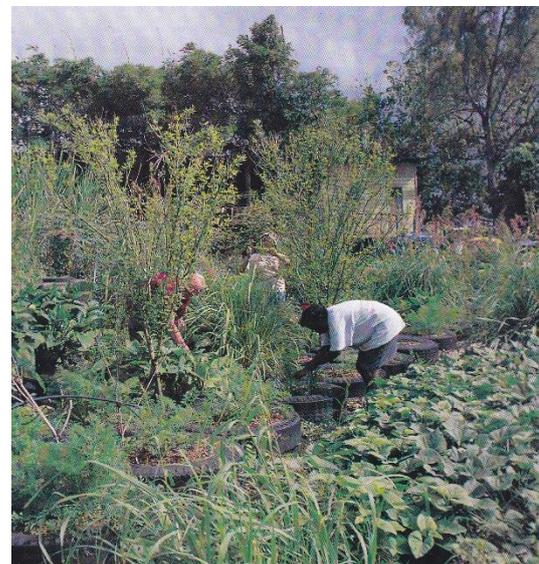
The core values of the future centre organization

, identified during a team retreat in 1999, had been:

- Integrity and Trustworthiness
- Empowerment
- Fairness and transparency.
- Respect
- Happiness – Love – Fun – among staff and volunteers.
- Excellence in accomplishments that are effective and practical.
- Living the message – leading by example.
- Communication – effective two way process.
- Earning our way.
- Inclusivity – involving all committed persons.
- Ingenuity – creative solutions to problems.
- Inspirational actions.
- Belief in the sacredness of the environment (planet earth).
- A commitment to posterity by ensuring appropriate documentation.
- Sustainability



Example of an exhibit from the Future Centre



The tyre gardens Colin designed around the Future Centre, were (with over 7000 tyres) the biggest in the world



Future Centre's volunteers with Heijmerik Gijbbers in front of the solar oven

All the work was made by volunteers and Colin: The team consisted of interns, up to 10 full-time volunteers, and hundreds of temporary volunteers during different projects like “cleaning Barbados” (a huge garbage-collecting event).

In the late 90s the Future Centre even opened a Biodiesel-station: Every week some volunteers collected the used fry-oil at different hotels and they processed Biodiesel from it, selling it at the Future Centre.

More and more (also important) people from Barbados got involved. The Future Centre organization had a strong local network to the media and civil society. Their events were well recognised and highly appreciated by most people.

During those years Colin Hudson never stopped offering the Sunday morning hikes. And it was this passion for being in close touch with nature while hiking, which brought Colin Hudson together with many people – including one of his most important supporters and friends: Dieter Mennekes – who was the financial power behind the rise of the Future Centre.

2.2 Dieter Mennekes - the Future Centre's most important supporter

In 1983 the German entrepreneur, tech-engineer and avid windsurfer Dieter Mennekes read about the Bajan "island in the sun" being one of the best spots for windsurfing globally. Already during his first visit, the mid-forty Dieter, who always had a strong and warm connection to nature, fell in love with Barbados' beauty and diversity. In the following years he became used to spending three months a year at beautiful Barbados. In 1993 Dieter had the fortune to be able to purchase a beautiful and tastefully furnished coral stone beachfront house called "Sunset" in Inchcape, Silver Sands, at the south coast of the island. Dieter spent his days windsurfing, snorkelling, swimming, and hiking.

So it happened, that in 1995, Dieter Mennekes and his family joined one of the Sunday-morning hikes. This was when he met Colin Hudson for the first time: It was raining, at that early morning - but Colin, who never worried about the weather - led the hiking-group on to the top of Mount Stinkeroo, the huge pile of rubbish (which is still outgrowing for the last 50 years). Everybody was covered with mud when Colin started to explain about the recycling-problems of Barbados.

By Colin's tremendous environmental-knowledge and his infectious enthusiasm, Dieter became immediately fascinated. The blessing of Dieter's nature being that of a man of quick and radical decisions, it did not take him long to decide to support Colin as much as possible.

Recalling his first meeting with Colin, Dieter said: "I was on a hike at six o'clock in the morning. I was there on a garbage dump in rain with Colin Hudson and he told us about Barbados, and I was fascinated. So I thought: This guy (who was at that time working 80 per cent for the sugar industry and 20 per cent for environmental protection) should be working 100 per cent for environmental protection. And that's what we achieved."

Although Dieter offered him PhD-suitable salary, Colin only took the half of it and used the other half



Colin Hudson and Dieter Mennekes with Future Centre's volunteers: In the middle the FCT's mascot "Sly Mongoose", with Jules Vastert on the left, and Norma Shorey-Bryan on the right side.

for the Future Centre Trust project. Over the years Dieter donated over 150.000 USD to Colin Hudson and the Future Centre Trust.

Dieter did not stop his Donations although he got robbed in Barbados of the amount of 50.000 USD.

The friendship and sympathy between Colin and Dieter was mutual: "Whenever you visited Colin you took so much more away when you left him," Dieter said.

And Colin stated in an article, that the German "Naturschutzzentrum" at the island of Sylt, which he

got to know when he visited Dieter Mennekes in Germany, inspired the type of exhibition he established at the Future Centre.



Gathering of Future Centre Trusts volunteers and donors. Photo: Daily Nation Publishing Ltd.

In 2002 the Landkreis Olpe (where Dieter comes from) considered to award Dieter, and asked Colin in an email for his opinion, if Dieter would deserve such a gratification. Colin answered:

“Dieter is a truly wonderful man who has helped Barbados in several important ways. He richly deserves the Award. His most important help was to support the development of the Barbados Future Centre with approx. US\$ 125.000. This money was used to pay workers, artists and materials for the permaculture garden and the exhibits. The chief beneficiary was myself – Dieter saw the importance of supporting an individual who, because of his innovation, was not always enjoyed by those who did not want to see change!! This is very important – many “catalysts of change” are suppressed by “starvation”. [...] For the same reason Dieter started his Foundation to support promising young German environmentalists. [...] Also in Barbados, Dieter has bought a piece of land on the South Coast in order to PROTECT IT FROM “DEVELOPMENT”. I am currently helping him to encourage the natural vegetation to regenerate this piece of land.

Then of course you know about his campaign against smoking, and his work in preserving Forests in Germany, especially the wonderful scheme for part of the Brandenburg Forest.”

The outstanding role of Dieter in the rise of the Future Centre Trust was mentioned during every tour through the Future Centre exhibition. Colin named the central room of the Building the Dieter Mennekes room. The voluntary guides explained to every group the following:

“We pass now into the Dieter Mennekes Room. Dieter is the largest benefactor so far of the Future Centre and without his help neither you nor I would be standing here. He is a German industrialist and sold his share in a factory which makes high quality electrical plugs and spends much of his wealth in promoting sustainable development. Two of his other beneficiaries are a 400 hectares of forest in central Germany, where he is encouraging the return of threatened or extinct species and a small Future Centre in the island of Sylt in North Germany. Quite a lot of our ideas are derived from that example.”



Local Newspapers reported about Dieter Mennekes' support several times

2.3 The fall of the Future Centre

But the flourishing times of the Future Centre did not last. Today, only remains of the bright shining organisation can be found at Edgehill. The remains of the Biodiesel production had become a stinky environmental pollution. The house is badly run down and the roof fully rotten.



The Future Centre property today: Top left: The remains of the biodiesel-production. Top right: the remains of the solar oven; the pendant was stolen Bottom row: Glances into the run-down house and overgrown entrance.

When Future Centre Trust grew, the load of work was not possible to be done only by the highly committed volunteers alone. So, in the end of the 90s, the board decided to employ some administrative staff. But this opened up a challenge, that brought the golden times of the Future Centre Trust to an unexpected end: up to then the volunteers were more or less an agile organisation, working on same eye level, always ready for doing 60-hours per week, spontaneous weekend- or overnight-actions for the on-going campaigns. The new employees were not able to integrate in the flexible structure: They were working Monday to Friday from 9-to-4 – but not beyond.

This created a two-camp atmosphere at the FCT. In one camp the paid administrative staff and on the other hand the volunteers including Colin. But Colin also was the main revenue source; he was the one bringing in sponsors and volunteers. But in the new two-camp situation, when he needed money for projects, he had to apply for it by the administrative forces. This was a difficult process and was not always successful.

The FCT Organisation did not overcome these social challenges. The frontiers became harder. In the end staff members started to intrigue against Colin Hudson, who felt obstructed and saw the

organisation going in the wrong direction. Although firing some of the destructive staff-members could have brought a tipping point, it did not happen.

By the end of 1999, Colin was so deeply hurt and saddened by those people deliberately undermining him and his vision, that he broke up with the Future Centre Trust. Only a short time later, also Jules Vastert (who had been the most involved project-manager, campaigner and event-coordinator of FCT for many years – fully voluntarily) experienced intrigues and felt forced to leave the organization.

Together with his partner Mo, Colin opened up a new NGO – which he called “Treading Lightly”- continuing his campaigns and supervising-approaches promoting a lifestyle of a low ecological footprint in the building next to the FCT (Little Edgehill). His son Chris, who allowed him to live and work there, bought this building.

But Colin was the one who always raised the enthusiasm, inspiration and financial funds for the mission of Future Centre Trust. Dieter Mennekes for example, was touched by Colin Hudson in person – and wanted to support this genius man. When Colin left the organisation, the FCT starved of the lack of funds.

There have been attempts to reunite both organizations in the early 2000s (proof of that can be found in files, which ex-FCT board-member Norma Shorey-Brian still has) but the flow of the ninety’s did not come up again. For sure Colin’s worsening health-condition and his sudden death in 2004 hindered a new revival of the FCT.

So the FCT organisation fell into a depression. The permanent exhibition at the Future Centre at Edgehill closed. House and garden were left as they were – only the exhibits were taken out. Only the beautiful wall paintings in the empty house and signs advertising the former biodiesel-production¹ at the street still reminds one of the golden times of former FCT. But whoever crosses the fully overgrown garden and enters the rotten building will see the deterioration.

¹ Actually: What has been a project of best intention for the environment became a big pollution: The Backyard of the former FCT is full of not emptied cans of plant-oil, out of which FCT produced biodiesel. The area should get cleaned up, as it’s a real mess.

2.4 New rise and future potential of FCT

But around 2010, under the lead of Vivienne-Anne Gittens (Former Director of the Nation Publishing Ltd.), who was always a close friend to the Future Centre, the organization restarted taking on some of the most important campaigns from the 90s and early 2000's. The office was established next to the old Future Centre in Little Edgehill, the home of Colin's former organization "Treading Lightly".

New volunteers came in – and by hard work and fundraising efforts, the Future Centre was able to employ new staff. Initiatives like a business-consultant program, called "Green Business Barbados" became established, where advice about sustainable development is given to local enterprises. The well-attended garbage collecting events "Cleaning-up Barbados" take place every year. The tree-planting project was re-established, where (powered by donations) alongside roads trees are planted & maintained. Today you will find many roads around Barbados, which have been "greened" by the Future Centre Trust over the years.

The major focus of the new Future Centre lies in Education for Sustainable Development for young people. FCTs staff and volunteers cooperate closely with several schools, to bring environmental education into classrooms. This is a huge and very important task – and would need far more staff, than is actually available.

Presently the Future Centre Trust is led by Vivian-Anne Gittens (voluntarily director), Anne Harding (organization-management) and Megan (project-management). They have a list with more than 20 on-going projects – all facing the sustainable development of Barbados. They do their best – to continue Colin's heritage. And they can still build on to the remarkable network of the Future Centre, which had grown in the golden times led by Colin Hudson.

Although it isn't anymore such a huge project, like it had been in the late 90s, the Future Centre has still an appreciable potential and plays a vital role in the sustainable development movement of Barbados. This potential could regrow on the basis of new resources:

During my stay in March 2018, I gave advice to the managing team of the Centre to invite sustainability students from abroad as interns volunteering at the Future Centre for several months. This would mean the allocation of high competences and the start of a recent international network: Every former volunteer and intern, would take home the spirit of the Future Centre, and could spread the word to support the Barbadian transformation towards sustainability.

Another advice I gave to the Future Centre staff was to think over fundraising-mechanisms, which would generate profit by small donations given by tourists, who would be glad to help Barbados protect its environment. Some restaurants (like the famous Indian restaurant "Apsara Samutra" in St. Lawrence Gap) already provide this: They add an amount of e.g. 5 BBD-\$ to each bill, and donate the money every month to a decent social- or environmental project. Besides restaurants and hotels, also tour-providers (like bus, sailing or water sports-operators) could become partners for both fundraising and environmental education of tourists, by telling the story of "Plastic Ocean" or the dying coral reefs to the visitors, and giving them the chance to understand and donate.

Another very important step would be a close inter-linkage with the other Bajan "projects of hope", especially the one, which is introduced in the end of this article. A joint venture of the Bajan new generation of environmental projects could unfold new potentials. Maybe all sustainability-related actors of Barbados could sit together and form a new "Alliance of Sustainability" – an umbrella organization for the great sustainability-transformation of Barbados. Together they could raise a loud voice – design influential campaigns, build strong cooperation with the government and oppose those who still don't care about the environment.

3 Barbados – a Paradise in trouble

Today Barbados is listed as the 53rd richest country in the world in terms of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and has a quite broad mixture of branches. Especially tourism brings in much foreign money – provides many jobs – and could (!) create a good national income. On tourism websites is stated, that Barbados has a moderately high standard of living. This appears to be true, as long as you stay in the south western parishes. But when you leave the rich surroundings you will discover quickly, that there are a high number of households still below basic levels of adequate supply. A common picture are shanties covered with corrugated metal sheets surrounded by rundown gardens filled with litter, while directly on the opposite side of the road you'll find very nice villas whose rents only millionaires can afford. So far, this picture tells the story about an existing wealth, which is highly exclusive for a small minority of inhabitants or rich tourists. The confusion enlarges, when you recognise, that in front of many of the small huts you will find a new car or even a huge SUV parked: First impressions of a bipolar culture, which can be experienced all over the country.

3.1 Energy usage and production

I saw the local power supply stations, where 90% of Barbados' electricity is still produced by the use of (imported) fossil fuels. Only around 10% of the local used energy comes from renewable resources, although wind and sun are plentiful in Barbados.

Facing climate change would need another strategy. Especially a country like Barbados, which is highly affected by the human-caused sea level rising, should consider serious strategies to take part in the energy revolution. But the present trends point into the other direction: Still all over the island the new-acquisition of electric air conditioners outnumber the installation of renewable energy supplies – although they are available, and even a compensation for feeding the grid by solar-power is paid. And although there are solar driven air conditioners available – former FCT volunteer and Entrepreneur Andrew Simpson is still the only pioneer using this new technology at his office in St. Thomas.

3.2 Sewage water problem

It was during the mid-march weeks of my research stay, when the UK's Daily Telegraph published an Article about Barbados: This article reports what I experienced during my stay: Stinking sewage water comes up from the drains in the community of Hastings – which is one of the tourism centres of the island, where the coast is lined with superior hotels and yacht clubs. The Telegraph's resident Journalist Julia Bradshaw headlined the article with "The stench of economic decay overwhelming Barbados" and describes: "A foul effluvium bubbles up from the manhole covers and rainwater drains in the streets, pours into the roads and pavements, and out on to the island's pristine beaches 24 hours a day. The smell of human excrement is sometimes unbearable."

I spent two weeks in Hastings, and saw manhole covers lifted. I saw some of them fixed and closed, but new one lifted up by the stinking water just around the next corner. The international newspapers tell, that in reaction to the (potentially infectious) sewage running down the streets American, Canadian, German and British foreign offices, have already put up advisory health warnings for tourists going to Barbados.

3.3 Garbage, littering and recycling

As soon as I left the always well-cleaned beaches of the main tourist areas, I found litter and garbage all around: street-benches, gardens, and woods covered with plastic (especially bags and bottles) and all other kinds of litter. I saw old rotten cars; dumped in the backyards, overgrown for years. I saw broken televisions in the green lands, shipwrecks between the coast-rocks, cans and construction-

waste in parks and even in the few nature reserves. I saw lots of plastic bags on the ocean floor. When I went snorkelling in Carlisle Bay I even saw a Green turtle eating a plastic bag (it may have contained fish, which the tour-providers use to attract the turtles for their tourists. I saw several turtles, which seemed to be fed up (not only by fish).

And I saw the islands main garbage-hill, which locals call “Mount Stinkeroo”. This garbage-dump is growing since over forty years and gives proof of the absence of a well-maintained recycling system. I heard scandalous stories, about plans of a former government, to open a new dumping area, closer to the city, in an area, prone to landslides and where the soil is highly permeable and polluted run-outs of the dump would have possibly contaminated ecosystems or even drinking water. With a huge campaign, where Colin Hudson took a big part in, this has been prevented. And I heard stories about different attempts – some driven by private companies, such as those of Andrew Simpson – building up recycling systems, but failed to upscale their business. And although there are still several of those companies in practice – they can’t handle the whole islands problem. Their business is totally depending on prices in the global market of re-usable materials.

A project that aims to get the littering along the streets under control is called “Adopt-A-KM”. The project gives companies the possibility to rent advertising roadside billboards. The money for the ad is used for the cleaning and greening of the roadsides. It has been the Future Centre Trust who co-developed this program and planted the first trees along one of the major highways. Approaches like this can be a model for the very small roadside areas of the most used highways – but have no chance to get the littering problem of the whole island under control – because they cure a very local symptom, but not the cultural roots of the behaviour of too many people throwing their rubbish anywhere.

An overall recycling system hasn’t been established yet. This means: Too little of the present garbage reaches the recycling companies – while far too much garbage is produced.

And although in the last two decades the Future Centre Trust succeeded with some of the Supermarkets, introducing a per-bag-fee to reduce the plastic-bag usage, others, like “Massy” are still used to pack all the shopping in plastic bags. They even employ people for this continuous environmental pollution. This is a dark shining example of a fully unsustainable practice:

- ➔ Ecologically destructive: A majority of the thin bags (made from fossil oil) end up in (marine) ecosystems, where they cause severe damages to organisms and biodiversity.
- ➔ Economical nonsense: The usage of plastic bags, and the employment of wrap-up staff just causes unnecessary costs, which could be saved e.g. for more ecological practices.
- ➔ Socially and culturally misleading: Shops who continue the standard usage of plastic-bag, just miss the potential they have to take over responsibility for general environmental education: Continuing the practice pretends that there would not be a problem with using plastic bags. The whole system (including government, shops and producers) are missing their responsibility in educating customers about the environmental impact. It means, to continue the story of unawareness about the fact, that earth’s social, ecological and economical systems give proof that a “going on as ever” is NO OPTION any more.

3.4 Drinking water problem

The sewage-water-management-problem already gives us a smell of the deep-rooted infrastructural problems which can be experienced all over the island: But it is just the same with some of the drinking water pipes: In some parishes they are heavily over aged and I saw freshwater pipe bursts in several parishes. Locals told me a story about the authorities starting to repair a pipe-burst, which appeared

in the beginning of a street. When they fixed the first hole, the same pipe burst just a few meters down the road. It took several years, until the road works moved down the road - repairing one burst after the other, just to move to the next. The gravity of the situation becomes clear when you add the information, that drinking water is a very scarce resource at Barbados – and strongly endangered by contamination due to the on-going pollution.

3.5 Street maintenance

Further, I drove streets not only covered with stinking sewage water but dangerously perforated by potholes and overgrown from the roadsides. They are mostly lacking of pavements (sidewalks). Streets, which are in daily use by thousands of cars, are obviously badly (or not) maintained. It seems, that there is very little, or even none road-maintenance taking place in some areas. You can see, that the government patches some holes, but always too late. However, a full reconstruction of the top layers of some roads would be the only measure to become master of the situation. I asked myself, if this lack of maintenance can only be the matter of a national lack of money?

3.6 Landslides, slipping slopes and erosion

And worse: I saw several remains of landslides that destroyed roads, houses and infrastructure. For sure, slipping slopes are mainly caused by the local geology: coral- and limestone are highly sensitive for degradation and erosion. But modern geo-engineering methodologies could help stabilize the slopes: For example on the eastside of the island you will find gabions, marked as “soil conservation units”, which are put close to roads and brooks to stop the soil erosion caused by running water. But are not broadly applied to many of the remaining risk areas.

3.7 Uncultivated land and lack of future orientated agriculture

When you travel to the east coast of the Island, you will find huge areas of former agricultural used land, which is obviously not in use anymore. The soils are fertile here, and could provide food for thousands of people. But over the last decades the fields were left unused and became densely overgrown and transformed in to bushes... Agricultural land left behind as a sleeping potential. Locals told me, that this has three reasons:

1. After the end of the colonization, international markets saw a reducing demand for Barbadian sugar cane. Many farmers were no longer able to afford a sufficient lifestyle by selling their sugar cane. Instead of switching to other crops and practicing subsistent farming, they just stopped practicing agriculture and moved to town, to look for jobs in other industries.
2. Some roads were destroyed by landslides, cutting off some rural regions, making it difficult for the locals to access the public infrastructure (e.g. children could not access schools anymore).
3. There is still a widespread prejudice, which has (understandably) grown out of the slavery-history: Some people still believe that working on fields would be “third-class work”. Those people experience working at the farms as a socio-cultural degradation.

Maybe it is the huge lack of white-men working on farms, which hinders the transformation of this prejudice. And maybe there is a lack of public prestige for anyone who practices farming or gardening. I think, Barbados lacks role models like Colin Hudson – who just prove, that doing the garden and digging the weed is a very modern, and future-orientated lifestyle.

Although further challenges could be listed, I want to conclude this part of the story with a solution-orientated approach, looking into the socio-cultural, political and economic roots of the problems at a deeper level.

3.8 The roots of Barbados' sustainability-challenges

When I talked to locals about the roots of the obvious challenges, I heard, that Barbados suffers from a very conservative way of thinking – and a great fear of changes. I was told, that this conservatism relies on the history, where not many changes had taken place. The United Kingdom only had colonized Barbados. I heard sentences like: “People will not change, until it hurts enough” – and felt strongly reminded to similar issues in Germany. In Barbados this mood grew in the 1980s, when economic development still was good. In that time, some Bajan circles started considering Barbados as “the cream of the Caribbean” and developed a sense of entitlement. But since the 90s Barbados would have missed development and would lack investments in innovations and stimulation of new ideas. I was told, that too many people just follow the mainstream – too many people are direct employees of the government – and too many are afraid of making a mistake: “When I just sit here – I can’t make a mistake”.

After several discussions with the locals I spoke to, I was able to identify two main fixing-points, where the sustainability challenges, could be addressed. In both cases, it can only be done, by an alliance of both: the whole Bajan nation – and their elected government:

3.9 We need a “do-better-government”

Many people told me, that Barbados' economy and infrastructure suffered from several bad governments already for decades. It is clear, that there are some good attempts, but more could be done.

The last 8 years the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) was in power. This government created a tremendous national debt by printing money, loaning money and spending continuously far more than the country could afford. And, as far as I heard, they still do this and despite huge tax raisings for the people, the balance is still very negative. International advisers advise to look for help from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). However, so far the current government declined to do so.

And I heard worse: local administrations have been and are still infected by corruption. Some locals describe the government's behaviour with terms like “complacency” and “lethargy”. I heard stories of politicians and authorities, who care more for their own career, than for the well being of the island and its people. This is not only recognised by the locals: UK's Daily Telegraph wrote: “The sewage problem is a symptom of the incompetence and perceived corruption of the current administration, which Barbadians have dubbed the ‘do-little government’.”

A survey, done in the parish of St. John and published in the national newspaper “Sunday” at March, 18th of 2018, shows, that 71% of the residents say, that “Barbados is on the wrong track” and the majority is “not satisfied” by the work of the former government. The same survey shows, that the “major concern” of 48% of the residents still is “survival and cost of living”. No wonder, that infrastructural, educational, health- and environmental concerns have very low priority, when a huge part of the society is still fighting for satisfying basic needs.

We could leave it now by blaming the national authorities for their inability – but I think, the governing corruption and complacency is also a matter of the culture which has grown from the socio-cultural history of Barbados and from international trends within the total population.

It's clear: Barbados urgently needs a courageous and innovative-thinking government, which is really dedicated to the islands nature and its people and honestly strive to improve ecological and social well being for all.

3.10 We need a cultural shift: transforming the unsustainable “non-culture”

I think it’s just clear, that a nation with a history of colonization, slavery and a broad mix of ethos needs a long time to find its personal unified culture, which works for all people – and which works for all for the long-term. And I think it’s just clear, that an island, which is highly influenced by western culture and international tourism like Barbados, has especially hard times, to establish a sustainable and prosperous way of living, without repeating those (disastrous) mistakes, which had been made in the process of bringing wealth to the western industrialized countries.

But, from another point of view – Barbados has the potential to perform better, yes, even becoming a sustainability pioneer of the Caribbean – and this only by copying the most innovative and sustainable concepts, policies and strategies, which have already been developed and proven in terms of practicability by other countries:

From other (still called “developing”) countries we hear about path making models for sustainable development: For example, Bhutan is internationally recognised for the world’s best well being policy. No other “poor” country has such a high satisfaction among its residents. So why not put some efforts into analysing which parts of their policy could be copied to Barbados?

Another example would be Ruanda: This country is famous for its world’s best environmental legislation... No country has such a future-orientated environmental-, forestry and agricultural policy – it serves the country, the nature and will secure and increase the national wealth for the long term. Again, why don’t we take what’s already there, and proven to be sustainable – meaning the best decision in social, ecological AND ECONOMICAL terms - for the long run?!

Further, coming back to the high level of plastic-littering: There are several very (!) successful German companies (e.g. DM Drogeriemarkt or Alnatura-Superbiomarkets) who already established path making strategies substituting plastic-bags fully by those made out of recycled fabric, which is again 100% recyclable. And: People love it: those companies had been voted as “the most favoured” brands in Germany... even more favoured than Porsche or Volkswagen.

And it’s the same in other areas, where plastic or other non-sustainable resources have been usually used, that today consistency-concepts like “cradle-to-cradle” are spreading the European markets. There are alternative eco-friendly products, materials and processing technologies for nearly everything already. And those companies who decide to use those offers, experience fast-growing market-shares, as more and more people understand to change to more eco-friendly products.

Companies as well as governments can decide today: do they want to belong to the pioneers establishing path-changing policies to support sustainability – or do they want to belong to those, who go with those technologies whose days are counted already, because of the end of fossil fuel resources, the growing instability of capital-markets and so on.

Barbados could still become a pioneer amongst its neighbours by switching nationally to sustainability-based policies and economies.

Nevertheless, the before described trends point not in sustainable directions. In the mainstream of the population, we have to witness a flourishing “non-culture” that sprawls fully into the wrong direction:

- Into an increasing dependency from import
- Into increasing disparities between poor and rich.
- Degrading infrastructure

We find a highly vulnerable economy, which is highly dependent on external supplies – where very few (foreign) companies earn a lot – and many locals still struggle satisfying their basic needs.

I can imagine that one reason can be found in what we call the “cultural imperialism”. This process describes the involuntary or at least unconscious import of western capitalistic manners into a foreign culture: The narratives of western countries (USA, Canada, Europe etc.) pretend that well-being is created by things like fast-food, digitization of life, 40-hour jobs and superficial status symbols to be shown off via social media. No wonder: Our western televisions spread this misleading story about well-being and happiness every day. This superficial western stereotype, pretended to be the favourable one, mated with the historical Barbadian struggle to overcome the realms of slavery and colonization. A young culture looking to “come up”, taking in these promising stereotypes, trying to imitate western “prosperity”. On the background of the Barbadian history, this created a bipolar culture where today many individuals struggle to live a “Barbadian dream”, although they do not have sufficient funds. More specific: Many Barbadians try (or at least pretend) to live the stereotype of a western upper class lifestyle - although the local political and economic system can provide such (unsustainable over-) abundance to only a very few.

These cultural processes cut off many of the local traditions and hinder sustainable culture which really could provide a far better way of living for many: On an island like Barbados, blessed with fruitful soils and fertile weather-conditions the story of a subsistent life, eating self-grown fruits and crops (which are very satisfying and healthy) must not be a utopia. However, instead of re-cultivating the fertile soils, the majority of Barbadians moved into the urban surroundings and took underpaid jobs and started buying the imported food. I found it remarkable, that the fruits and veggies sold in supermarkets are often imported products and highly overpriced – while the unhealthy fat- and sugar-food is affordable. This goes along with the high presence of fast-food restaurants all over the south western districts. The most unhealthy and unstainable parts of the western culture are promoted as the “hip” and desirable one (I was happy that, at the local fish- and fruit-markets, the prices for local foods are still affordable). While more and more Bajans get overweight (a recent study mentioned that Barbados was number 8 on the list of most obese countries in the world), the gym-culture seems to flourish. But my impression was, that many of those people who go to the gym, don’t do it, because of health reasons, but because of ‘showing off’ their highly trained muscles. And still: For most of the people, the gym is not affordable!

I experienced a “non-culture”, which includes a widespread favour of “showing-off” superficial status symbols like cars, smartphones, tattoos, jewellery or highly uplifted bodies.

This leads me to the point: The only process, that can help Barbados to transform into a sustainable society of long lasting wealth on behalf of the island and its people would **be an universal mind shift**: A broad cultural change - a basic shift of attitudes and behaviour. For sure, this can only be achieved by long-term education-strategies reaching out to everybody and all generations. And for sure this change concerns not only Barbados, but nearly every country on this planet.

3.11 A national campaign for Education for Sustainable Development

Therefore, like many other countries on earth, Barbados needs a national campaign for Education for Sustainable Development, as defined and promoted by the United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Such a campaign must reach out into schools, businesses, touristic centres, churches and public institutions – it must affect the full society. It has to be a campaign of the highest national priority. And even then, it will take generations until the transformation succeeds,

because cultural habits of a nation transform very slowly. Maybe it is necessary, that people recognise that the future of the national livelihood depends on the success of such a sustainability campaign.

For sure: These are high demands – especially in times, where the majority of the Bajans don't care enough about the environment and the government has a lack of funds. But if the awareness rises in the population – sooner or later the government will need to follow the demands. (We saw that e.g. in Germany after the Fukushima incident, when the public call for ending nuclear power, was too strong to be neglected anymore).

Until then, pioneers like Future Centre Trust and other stakeholders should continue focussing on raising awareness and increasing the civic environmental movement. And for that, in my opinion, it is the best way to show bright shining examples of how nice it can be to “walk the green way”: I think, at this time, Barbados urgently needs strong role models promoting modern sustainable ways of lifestyle; pioneers of change, proving that holistically sustainable approaches are possible and well being and wealth in the long-term can be achieved.

Barbados's environment and culture is aching for new projects of hope, which prove in practice, that a different way of doing business, agriculture, education and even governance is possible.

And here – the story of Colin Hudson points out – that Barbados has a bright shining hero on whose spiritual heritage the nation can build its transformation.

“If there is a true concern about the environment in Barbados, it's foundation is built by Colin Hudson. In the current eco-movement Colin's spirit is still simmering”

Norma Shorey-Bryan (former FCT-Volunteer)

4 Memorial – the spiritual heritage of Colin Hudson

For his inventions and genius Colin was a highly requested speaker at international Conference. In the beginning of the 2000s he travelled to Pakistan, to advise the local agricultural industry.

He came back, with some kind of heavy virus, which was not curable by means of his own medical knowledge, although it could have been addressed medically had he taken it seriously.

In the last few months of his life despite being in poor health, he was continuing his work with his new NGO “Treading Lightly”. Moreover, for sure – he would never miss a Sunday-morning hike. So, it happened, that Colin died on Sunday morning, the 22nd of February 2004, while preparing for a hike of an unexpected heart attack at home. A memorial picture is still hanging in his house, which serves today as office of the FCT.

Although most people never associated Colin with death, because of his titanic enthusiasm, Colin himself was keenly aware of his mortality. Already in the year 2000 he wrote the first draft of his own obituary, dreaming, that it would be sometime around 2034, when he would have been 96 years old – at least.

Only shortly before his death, Colin drafted a first version of his holographic will. Here he declared:

“I have had a rich and rewarding life. All focus should be on celebration and thanks. I believe deeply and sincerely in a web of life and the wonder of information that surrounds and supports us all. Try to use the burial to help all those present to catch a sense of the awe and majesty, which is my privilege to feel. [...] If anyone feels, that they want a ‘memorial’ they must, as individuals or groups, pledge to carry out something that they know I would have liked to do, given more time. An exhibit? Planting trees? Helping someone or something? A piece of art? Donations to a cause?”



Dieter Mennekes giving his speech in front of the coffin of Colin Hudson at his “green funeral”

Colin was bid farewell during a “green funeral” at Farley Hill National Park at February the 28th of 2004. It took place under the cover of trees and the watchful eyes of Mother Nature, which Hudson loved so much and worked non-stop to protect and preserve. Some Hundreds of people joined the green funeral – state ministers, professors and international guests included. Colin was later cremated and his ashes were subsequently taken to Welchman Hall Gully, one of Colin’s favourite natural locations.

It was Dieter Mennekes, who gave one of the most touching memorial speeches at the funeral. Giving praise to over a 1000 hikes Hudson led during the last decades, Dieter said, that he believes, that Colin would now – after his death –lead the hikes for the angels in heaven, telling them about the beauty of nature, like he did it for many years in Barbados.

Later, Colin’s closest hiking-friends raised a quite touching monument: They took his original hiking boots, poured them in copper and put them on top of a memorial between beautiful bamboo plants in the beautiful sanctuary of Welchman Hall Gully. In the picture below, Dieter Mennekes points to the plaque above the boots which bears the inscription: “A RARE GEM”. Colin’s ashes lie behind the plaque. Although one of the coppered-shoes was stolen over the time, the place still has a peaceful atmosphere. I am sure, that a part of Colin’s spirit still hikes up and down the woods of Welchman Hall Gully.



In 2008, as a tribute to Colin Hudson, Dieter Mennekes made a huge donation to the protection of the green oasis and nature reserve Welchman Hall Gully. He donated 15.000 USD to empower the opening of an environmental-education centre, devoted to teaching young people about biodiversity, the sciences, natural and cultural heritage and environmental preservation.

In the days after Colin Hudson’s death, many people wrote obituaries about him:

“That was Colin Hudson, an environmentalist and scientist of the biggest order A man who has been called so many things – visionary, genius, unorthodox, creative, innovative, passionate. His genius led him to ideas that no one else thought about, or even if they thought about them, they would be too inhibited to implement them.” [Roxanne Gibbs](#) (editor of Daily Nation Newspaper) wrote in her obituary (feb. 26. 2004):

“Colin was a man blessed with an infectious enthusiasm and total commitment to his cause and his love- Barbados and our total environment. [...] Colin crusaded to preserve Barbados from bad buildings and bulldozers. This aggressive, life-long fervour to fight the transformation of our beautiful gem into a haphazard mosaic of concrete and wasteland and rab land followed naturally from the depth of his love for the country, and his almost childish rapture for the wonders of nature. [...] Colin had the ingenuity for saving, recycling and re-using. He must have

convinced most of his friends, of the wisdom of composting organic matter, and the stupidity of not composting.” Henry Fraser (former President of the National trust, in a memorial, in the Sunday Sun at Feb 29. 2004:

No wonder, that this great man has been awarded, among many, an MBE, Guinness Award for Scientific Achievements (1982), the National Industrial Award for Excellence (1987), the FAO World Food Day Medal (1990), the Governor-General’s Award for Environmental Achievements (1992), and the Gold Crown of Merit (1995).

When I reflect about Colin after my research, I would say that he was a man of honour like David Suzuki who won the “Alternative Nobel”. This is why I think he would have deserved to be awarded with a Right Livelihood Award as well. And I am sure, he would have been, had he lived longer.

5 A new project of hope for Barbados

Barbados’ environment and society needs a new way of thinking and acting. A new spirit, which harmonizes human lifestyles with the needs of climate and the environment, integrating the interests of future generations:

“We do not inherit the earth from our fathers... We borrow it from our children.” Colin Hudson chose this quotation by David Brower, to be the leading one, when he published the first brochure, describing the objectives of the Future Centre Trust.

Barbados’ first pioneer of this spirit already left us in 2004. But now – ½ a generation later – there is a new possibility, making Barbados a role model for sustainable development: And again the story starts with the journey of a man: It’s the story of Barbados’ native, and well-known rally-driver Paul “de Surfer” Bourne.



Paul Bourne - Barbados' first biodynamic farmer

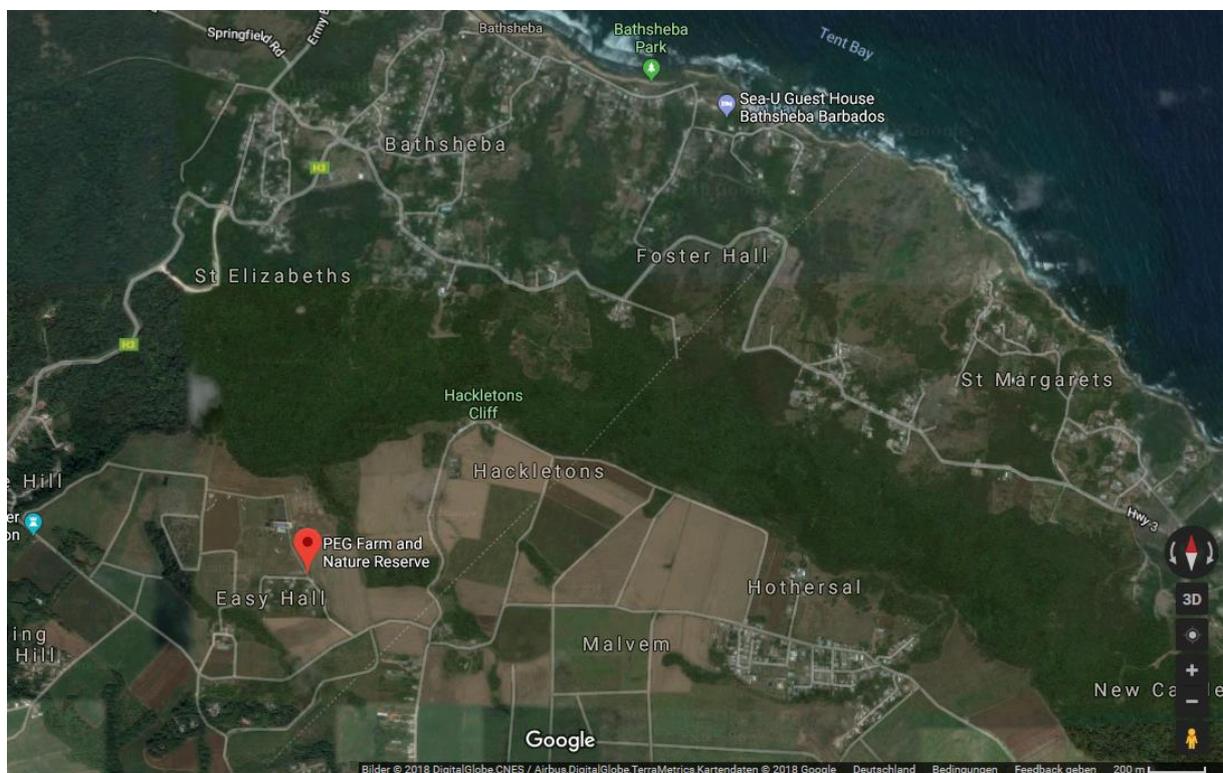
His journey began with the challenge of overcoming thirty years of chronic back pain. In his quest for healing, Paul Bourne eventually met Paul Chek, a Holistic Health Practitioner, while attending a conference in Canada. Soon after meeting, they began their work together to reveal the cause of Paul's pain at the Chek Institute in California. They discovered that Paul's high-stress lifestyle combined with a nutrient-poor diet were the root of his back problems. A complete change in lifestyle was necessary to begin the healing process. Paul needed nutritious and delicious food, a tranquil natural setting, and specific corrective exercises. He began his search for the ideal location on the island of Barbados where these components could come together. The seed had been germinated and the awakening was complete.

After a little research, it became clear that healthy wholesome food was very scarce in Barbados. There were little grass-fed organic meats free of antibiotics and other chemicals on the island. What is available of those products is

produced and sold on a family scale. Similarly, there is little vegetable production without pesticides and artificial fertilizers. Most of the food available was imported and highly refined "factory food." The need for a change in agricultural and distribution methods was clear to Paul and others if Barbados were to regenerate its landscape and health of its people. After attending the Eco Farm Conference in California in January 2013, Paul made contact with several key people who are experts in their respective fields. He met people from the movement of Biodynamic Agriculture (Demeter), which was founded by the Austrian philosopher and anthroposophist Rudolf Steiner in 1924. He met grass-fed dairy farmers, and experts in free range animal husbandry. Meeting these role models set the stage and gave Paul the inspirations to pursue his healing farm institute, PEG.

Rudolf Steiner's approach of Biodynamic Agriculture (better known under the trademark "Demeter") has become a worldwide agriculture movement that focuses on restoring the Earth's capacity to heal and regenerate. This philosophy united biological/ ecological balancing, cosmic factors, and the evolution of human consciousness to create advanced insights for a new chemistry and direction for how to work with planetary rhythms, which even today are considered ahead of their time. This work gives a never-ending story of inspiration for those seeking to understand how to work with the land in a more sacred way. Steiner's student and collaborator Ehrenfried Pfeiffer said it best in his articles on agriculture: *"Rudolf Steiner's practical way of working did not proceed from preconceived abstract dogma, but always dealt with the concrete given facts of the situation. There was such germinal potency in his Agriculture course (also known as the Spiritual Foundations for the renewal of Agriculture) that a few sentences or short paragraph often sufficed to create the foundation for farmers, scientists or artist's whole life's work. Only now does the total picture of the new impulse given by RS to agriculture stand clearly before us, even though we still have far to go to exhaust all its possibilities. Every day brings new experience and opens new perspectives"*.

Nearly a year of searching eventually resulted in finding the lands of Easy Hall Plantation in the parish of St. Joseph.



"The 108 acres [40ha], at 1000 feet above sea level, is some of the highest land in Barbados. There is a nearly quarter of a mile stretch of the well-known Hackleton's cliff on the property. This stretch of cliff offers magnificent views over a protected old growth forest all the way down to the beautiful shoreline

of the Atlantic Ocean. "This has led us to many inspired imaginations and has given us the humility necessary to set our intentions for this project. These intentions hope to offer opportunities to explore and develop alternative models for farming and education, to build a nature sanctuary and resort, and to promote social change in our community." [PEG-Website](#)

For four centuries, this land, like most of the agricultural land in Barbados, supported the monoculture of the sugar industry. It was time for transformation and the land was trying to speak to humans but no one was listening...until 2013:

Paul brought different experts from biodynamic farming and permaculture to the property. Their insights and offerings were invaluable and gave the practical steps towards recovering the landscape. Then conversations with the Biodynamics expert Dennis Klocek led to the introduction of his colleague Matias Baker, who had been working in the tropics for many years. So the young Biodynamics consultant Matias visited the land in November 2013 and began implementing the Spiritual Science of Biodynamics, showing how it can be a path of healing for the land and the heart of the community. Finally the land had a vessel through which it could speak and the regenerative work could begin. Matias immediately attached to the vision and together he and Paul continued the transformation. Through his global network, Matias introduced Kirk Gadzia as PEG's Holistic Management and Grazing consultant. His first visit was in January of 2014 and he brought his focus for social, environmental, and economic balance to the project. Again another veil was lifted and the lands message of transformation could be heard even more so. The process was launched and the infant PEG had all the necessary nurturing conditions to thrive and unfold its future task. Since then PEG works to regenerate the Land, with an approach combining Permaculture design, Holistic Management, biological soil fertility management, Keyline inspired design, and Biodynamic Agriculture.

P.E.G. stands for "people – environment – growth" and highlights already the main farm's concept, which consists of four pillars:

1. Farm and Food

"Using the principles of Biodynamics, Permaculture, free-range animal husbandry and Holistic Management, we intend to transform this land and its people from the current state of unbalance that is the result of centuries of exploitation." [PEG-Website](#)

2. Education

"Through events such as conferences, workshops, seminars, and tours we will help bring this incredible network to Barbados and offer educational programs designed to grow awareness of our interdependence with the nature. In time we will have our own educational institution catering to kids, adults, locals, and visitors who are seeking alternative forms of "learning." [PEG-Website](#)

3. Resort and Nature Sanctuary

"We will be constructing aesthetically designed bamboo accommodations ranging from campsites to comfortable rustic cabins to give people the opportunity to stay and experience such a place, where peace and tranquillity prevail and where delicious and nutritious food is available. These spaces and accommodations will be complimented by a spa and wellness centre to cater to the physical and spiritual health of guests and participants." [PEG-Website](#)

4. Community

"This is achieved by building a living/working community that supports individuals through career empowerment, training in self-knowledge and connection to something meaningful. Having each and

every person involved with the project feel inspired and appreciated is an important foundation for manifesting PEG's social vision. In time this will encourage individual motivation and a commitment to the future well being and profitability of the project. This in turn will carry new ideas and culture beyond PEG creating increased potential for social renewal." PEG-Website



For Barbados – and maybe even for the entire Caribbean, PEG as a whole, is truly a unique message for the future.

Already now, lots of chicken, pigs and cow browse in a circular-system at the different meadows. Vegetables, herbs and fruits grow in beautifully designed beds and greenhouses around the farm buildings. The products are sold to local markets.



Members of the PEG-Team in front of the farmhouse

Already 20 employees take care of the farm. Guided tours for children and visitors take place every day – teaching them about the vulnerability and possibilities to take care of nature.



PEG's tour and event manager Georgie Thornton (in front) with children in the fields during an environmental education tour

And this is only the beginning. In the next months, an organic restaurant shall open at the farmhouse. In the next years an eco-resort with bamboo-accommodations shall get constructed at the farm. And Paul is talking to the neighbouring farmers: His vision is to enlarge the farm's concept to an overall area of 300 acres.

It's a great luck, that Paul (who sold his racing car and garage and spent the money for buying and clearing the property) and his family (who were the owners of one of the bigger supermarket-chains of Barbados) have the financial possibilities and strong will to invest sufficient funds into the vision.

When I visited the farm – I was really impressed by the beauty and atmosphere, which I found all around the area. That this is a place, where already now, everybody can experience what it means to care for mother earth and the future: When you come up the driveway to the farm, you will find it bordered by flourishing flowerbeds. At the fields you meet proud and beautiful chicken close together with happy pigs. In a corner you'll find a shelter providing shadow for visitors to rest. When you stand at the cliff, which constrains the upper territory of the farm in the north, you can have a wonderful view over the almost untouched woods that extend down to the shore and the small village of Bathsheba.

I stood there and listened to Paul's vision – I saw the beautiful woods in front of me, had the over 100 acres of biodynamic farm in its growing vitality at my back and imagined Paul's vision of a bamboo-village at my side, where people could combine a sustainable form of living, with environmental education and eco-tourism. I imagined volunteers, interns and scientists from all over the world coming to the farm – for research, education, holidays, recreation or just working at the farm.

I felt touched. I realized, that the PEG-project in its vision – as far as I can judge it for now - is (already) **the brightest shining project of hope for the future development of Barbados**. In that moment, a strong idea came up in my mind:



PEG-farm's property, with Hackleton's cliff and the natural forests in the background. Source: PEG-Website

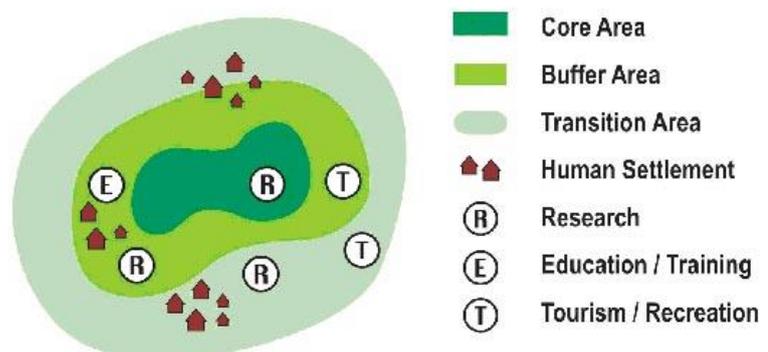
I remembered the structure of the general model for **Biosphere Reserves**, that are promoted by the United Nation's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in the Program "Man and Biosphere" (MAB): Biosphere Reserves are "model regions for sustainable development" where sustainable forms of production and living go along with environmental preservation. Each Biosphere Reserve promotes solutions reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. Biosphere reserves are 'Science for Sustainability support sites' – "special places for testing interdisciplinary approaches to understanding and managing changes and interactions between social and ecological systems, including conflict prevention and management of biodiversity."

I double checked the concept at the [MAB-Website](#) and compared it with what Paul Bourne and Matias Baker told me about their plans for the PEG farm:

The MAB-Program states, that Biosphere reserves have three interrelated zones that aim to fulfil three complementary and mutually reinforcing functions:

1. The core area(s) comprises a strictly protected ecosystem that contributes to the

Structure of a model biosphere reserve.



conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation.

The woods at the bottom of the cliff at PEG-farm would provide a wonderful core-area. Paul told me, that he knows most of the other owners of the forest – and thinks, that it would not be impossible to combine their properties under one umbrella-concept like nature reserve.

2. The buffer zone surrounds or adjoins the core areas, and is used for activities compatible with sound ecological practices that can reinforce scientific research, monitoring, training and education.

The meadows, fields and gullies of the farm would make a perfect buffer zone. Pastoral economy and agroforestry perfectly fit in this concept. Paul said, that he is in good contact with the neighbouring farms and seemed to be optimistic, that some of them as well could be interested in adopting ecological farming concepts.

3. The transition area is the part of the reserve where the greatest activity is allowed, fostering economic and human development that is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable.

The eco-resort, restaurant and visitors-centre, the greenhouses, and employee-housings would belong to such a transition area. Maybe even the surrounded settlements could be included in such a transition area, when residents realize, that this would mean a self-commitment and pledge of the region to transform towards sustainability – which means growing vitality and prosperity on behalf of the regional nature and its inhabitants.

There is no necessity of a minimum size to declare a biosphere reserve, as long as it fulfils these three main targets.

There are already 669 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in 120 countries globally. 129 of them are located in 21 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean – but none at Barbados yet.

The vision of the PEG-farm directly leads into this conclusion: I think it's time to give it a serious try to establish the first Biosphere Reserve at Barbados. Paul and the PEG-farm could be the initiating pioneers in that process.

But of course, this will not be very easy: Declaring a Biosphere Reserve would need a strong and close cooperation between the local proprietors, universities, farmers, enterprises, residents, sustainability-initiatives and - the government. Because: Biosphere reserves have to get nominated by national governments and protected by national law and remain under the sovereign jurisdiction of the states where they are located.

But, if this process is done - their status is internationally recognized as "UNESCO-Biosphere Reserves", more specific by the National Committees of the UNESCOs Program "Man and the Biosphere" (MAB).

This vision raises several questions, and lots of communications have to be done, to transform the vision of a Bajan Biosphere Reserve into reality. First step would be to involve the Barbadian National Committee of the MAB Program (as far as such a Committee exists). The UNESCOs Website states, that the official correspondence address for the Barbadian National Committee of the MAB Program is Dr. Julia Horrocks at the University of the West Indies at the Dept. of Biological and Chemical Sciences². I think she will be an important partner to talk to.

² Dr Julia Horrocks - University of the West Indies - Dept. Biological and Chemical Sciences
Cave Hill Campus, Bridgetown - Tel: (1.246) 417 4320 - Fax: (1.246) 417 4325 E-mail: horrocks@uwichill.edu.bb
Last update of this page at UNESCO Website was: November 2012

Further, the Barbadian National Commission for UNESCO should get involved in the process. Here the UNESCO Website states, that the Chairperson is Allisandra Cummins at the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation.³

To get things in progress it will need strong arguments and international partners – which could give support and advice for the process and highlight the (inter)national significance of such a project to the Barbadian Government. The good thing is: It will be possible to find such arguments and partners:

1. It was exactly the day after my second visit at the PEG farm, when Jamaica’s Minister Olivia Grange, who also chairs the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO urged the National Commissions for UNESCO across the Caribbean to protect the biodiversity in their respective countries by establishing new Biosphere Reserves:

„According to Minister Grange, “now, more than ever, we must prepare ourselves and take the appropriate steps in the face of climate change, one of the effects of the reduction of biodiversity at an accelerated rate.” The Minister said this was particularly urgent for the Caribbean region which is vulnerable to hurricanes, flooding and earthquakes. As a means of tackling the situation, the Minister called for an acceleration of the programme to establish Biosphere Reserves across the region.” JIS News, March 20th, 2018

2. It happens, that it was Dieter Mennekes, who brought the internationally most successful founder and patron of Biosphere Reserves to Barbados already in 2013: Prof. Em. Dr. Michael Succow.

[Michael Succow](#) is a German biologist and ecologist who is the founder of many National Parks and Biosphere Reserves all over the world. In Germany he is known as the “pontiff of nature conservation” and he was awarded with the “Alternative Nobel Prize” for his commitment to safeguard natural eco-systems and areas of outstanding natural value for future generations.

When I came back to Germany, I immediately called professor Succow, and told him about the idea of a Barbadian Biosphere Reserve: Succow answered, that he would support the plan to establish a

22A. WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2013. MIDWEEK NATION

► THE ENVIRONMENT

Ecologist: Need to protect ecosystem

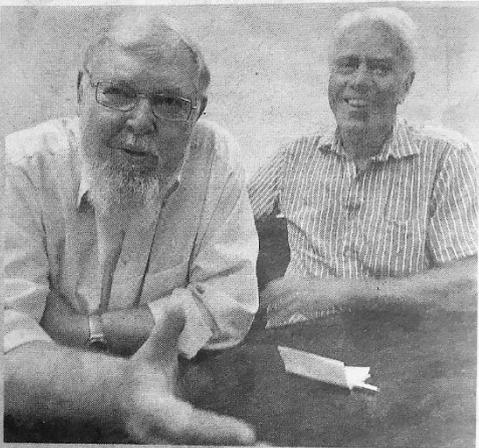
NOTED GERMAN ECOLOGIST and biologist Dr Michael Succow has suggested Barbados should do more to preserve its ecosystems, as well as decrease its dependency on imported oil.

On his first visit to the island, Succow told the MIDWEEK NATION “I think it is necessary to change the energy base; you need organic agriculture and you need a little bit more nature conservation.”

He also believed Barbados had the potential to attract more visitors with an interest in eco-tourism.

Succow said while touring the island he had noticed several tracts of land formerly used for agriculture that were now lying idle but which he thought should be part of a reforestation programme. He observed Barbados was once “a country with a thick layer of good humus”, which had since been eroded, and was now going into the sea.

“To me it is very important that your Government organize a programme to plant trees for the future. You have enough areas to do so. . . . You have a wonderful richness of virgin indigenous trees here,” Succow said.



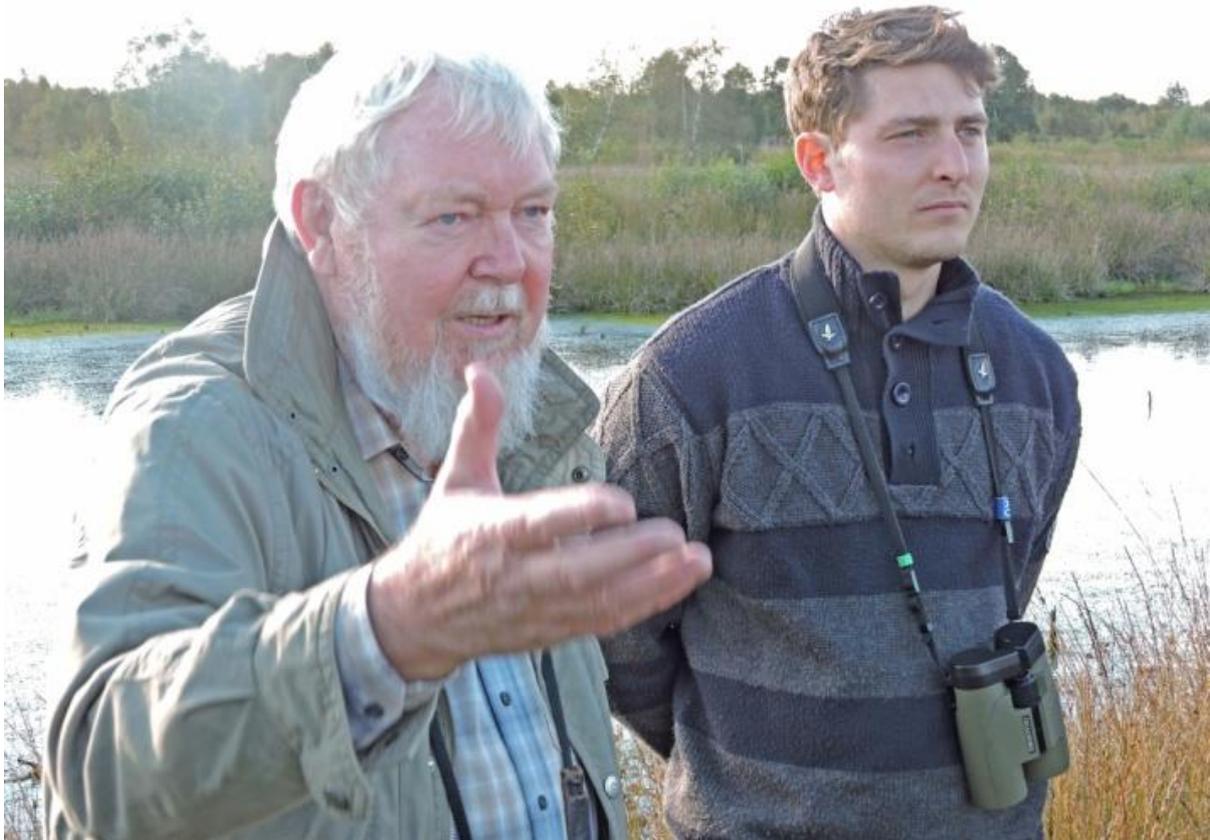
GERMAN ECOLOGIST and biologist Dr Michael Succow discussing Barbados' ecological systems. At right is Dr Dieter Mennekes, a German philanthropist and ecologist. (Picture by Garcine Carter)

Cut-out from a newspaper article, which was published when Michael Succow visited Barbados in 2013

³ Barbados National Commission for UNESCO at Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
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Biosphere Reserve. He showed openness, that some experts from his foundation could give advice in the process. He directly started memorizing, all the different areas of high natural value (gullies, botanic gardens, the north-eastern forests, the northern meadows), which he remembered from his 2013 stay. He said, that all these valuable sites should become parts of a new Biosphere Reserve. He told me, that the new MAB guidelines provide the possibility, that a Biosphere Reserve can also be built as a cluster of isolated areas and must not necessarily be a spatial entity. Succow suggests, that Barbados should reach a total area of 20.000 to 30.000 ha, by combining all sites of high value for ecology and biodiversity, and areas where conservation and sustainable development could go hand in hand. He pointed out, that the existence of sustainable economic entities, is a major requirement for the declaration of a UNESCO MAB Biosphere Reserve – which highlights Pauls approach again.

Dieter Mennekes and Michael Succow both agreed, that it could be a good thing, if Paul Bourne, maybe together with his closest Advisors and (that would be best) even the people from the Barbadian MAB Committee and the national UNESCO Commission could come for a two week visit to Germany to meet Prof. Michael Succow and people from the local Biosphere Reserves and organic farms here. We are very optimistic, that the advice and networks of Michael Succow and his foundation (which is supporting the declaration of biosphere reserves globally) could enrich and accelerate the process to realize the vision. We would be open to arrange some workshops and discussions, and guide them to the German biosphere reserves. Paul and his team could visit other permaculture- and biodynamic farms (which are plenty and very far developed here, as Germany is the cradle of Steiner's biodynamic farming). But anyways, we will be supportive with ideas, contacts and advice.



Prof. em. Dr. Michael Succow and Benjamin Brockhaus 2015 during a field seminary in the swamps of Lower Saxony

6 Conclusion

I saw many sad things happening to the environment of the beautiful Island of Barbados. I met with the people of the Future Centre Trust, and had the impression, that they would need much more resources, to face all those challenges. I nearly became sad and pessimistic about the future of the Barbadian environment. But the days at the PEG farm gave me new hope. The potential of the PEG-project is huge – and it will enlarge, when Paul Bourne and Future Centre trust extend their cooperation – with each other, and with other (also international) people, institutions and experts.

For me it was an honour and very informative, to find out about the story of Colin Hudson and Future Centre Trust. During the different visits I had several times the feeling, that his legacy still has a strong power. His spiritual heritage lives on: In the hearts and memories of his friends (who still go for the Stop-and-Stare-hikes every Wednesday and Sunday in the morning), in the work, lifestyle and biographies of the former FCT-trustees and volunteers (like Andrew Simpson). And of course in the hard working staff of the new Future Centre Trust.

When I drove with Paul over the meadows of PEG farm, I had the strong impression that Colin's spirit is around that place these days. However, I am sure that he totally would have loved to see, what is happening at PEG. And for sure, every initiative struggling for a sustainable development of Barbados has a strong patron in heaven.

This makes me very optimistic, that the last word about Colin Hudson's vision of "making Barbados a role model for sustainable development" is not written yet.

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UNESCO National Commission of Barbados: http://www.unesco.org/nac/index.php?lc=E&rid=247&module=national_commissions

UNESCO MAB National Committee: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/biosphere-reserves/latin-america-and-the-caribbean/barbados/mab-national-committee-barbados/>

8 Thanks

Biggest thanks to Dieter Mennekes – the man who made all this possible.

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- Ann Harding (Future Centre Trust)
- Tony Woods (Close friend of JC Hudson)

I am thankful, for hearing so much about the inspiring biography of a great champion of sustainability.

In memory of John Colin Hudson.

B.B.
May 2018



In Loving Memory
of
John Colin Hudson
Born Jan. 15, 1938 Died Feb. 22, 2004
"A RARE GEM"