Policy Forum Guyana

THE "LITTA REPORTA" LAUNCH

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Introduction

Guyana suffers from a longstanding problem of waste collection and disposal, leading to frequent garbage overflows in urban areas and severe environmental contamination at dumpsites in Georgetown and around the country, the accumulation large amounts of waste are known to produce pungent odors, create a breeding ground for rats and flies which are well known pathogen carriers etc. This can then lead to outbreaks in diseases, harm to aquatic ecosystems and over all detriments to the Environment.

Georgetown can sometimes be described as the "garbage city" and continues to be regularly plagued by garbage woes. A 2013 article in the Guyana Chronicle stated that over the past few years, solid waste management in the city has deteriorated, to the point where almost every street is lined with waste and their corners decorated with a garbage heap, which has proven particularly problematic in times of flood. In several districts, "waste is not collected, forcing residents to burn or bury it, or dump it in vacant lots, along roadsides, and in drainage canals, leading among others to the pollution of groundwater through leaching.

There seem to be multiple possible explanations for this situation: the general inefficiency of collection services, possibly corrupt practices, the indifference of the private sector and households when it comes to littering. Cévon's and Puran, the two largest contracted collectors but they are no match to litter-bugs. It is truly the cultural practices of the Guyanese people and lack of enforcement from the law.

In spite of this, Green Technology has revolutionized the way we see the world, such as tracking Storms, rainfall and other natural and manmade disasters can be tracked using real time technology and provide satellite imagery, the "Litta-Reporta" application stands as a testament that Guyana is at the forefront of such technology which will be utilized to track areas that are prone to dumping and provide solutions.

Application Description

The "Litta-Reporta" application was developed by Software Developer, 20-year-old Maryam Bacchus, who has been described as having a "passion for environmental sustainability". She then partnered with founder of Cassini Technologies, to help develop the software that can address littering of public spaces, clogged drains which can has implication on marine life, ecosystems, human and animal life and over all contribute to climate change. "Litta -Report" is an application that gives you data pertaining to areas around Guyana that are prone to dumping; This Application is being funded by the Inter-American Development Bank which allows the app to be freely downloaded from the Google Play store or Apple Store which simply means it requires no subscription fee. It's a two-part reporting application that bridges the communication gap between persons affected by garbage pollution and authorities and organizations that do so much to try and remedy those issues, Miss Baccus mentioned that even though she would like to add a feature that gives the description of the type of Garbage such as house-hold waste, industrial waste etc. It would need several data entries to help identify the type uploaded, she said that she is hopeful that in the future the app would become that advanced.

Benefits of the Application

Environmental Awareness:

By visualizing data on garbage accumulation, the application can raise awareness among citizens about the extent of the waste problem. Information on pollution hotspots can prompt individuals to adopt more sustainable waste management practices.

Policy and Planning:

Governments and municipalities can use the data to inform waste management policies and urban planning. City planners can strategize waste collection routes and optimize disposal infrastructure based on real-time data.

Resource Allocation:

The application's data can assist in allocating resources effectively for waste management.

Municipalities can prioritize areas with higher waste generation for increased collection services or targeted cleanup campaigns.

Community Engagement:

Engage the community in clean-up initiatives and community-driven environmental projects.

Encourage citizens to participate in local clean-up events based on the data gathered. Additionally, the application can be used to disseminate educational content on proper waste disposal and recycling practices while empowering communities with knowledge to reduce waste and adopt sustainable habits.

Monitoring Progress:

Track changes in garbage levels over time to measure the effectiveness of waste management programs, evaluate the impact of environmental initiatives and adjust strategies based on real-time data.

Public-Private Partnerships:

Facilitate collaborations between the public and private sectors for more effective waste management solution whilst encourage businesses to adopt environmentally friendly practices based on data insights.

Research and Analysis:

Researchers and environmental organizations can utilize the data for studies on waste patterns, contributing to a better understanding of environmental challenges.

Data-driven insights can inform academic research and guide policy recommendations.

Emergency Response:

In the event of environmental emergencies such as illegal dumping or hazardous waste spills, the application can facilitate quick response and coordination.

Authorities can use the app to address urgent situations promptly.

Incentivizing Behavior Change:

The application can introduce gamification or reward systems to incentivize responsible waste disposal behaviors.

Citizens may be motivated to reduce littering and participate in clean-up efforts.
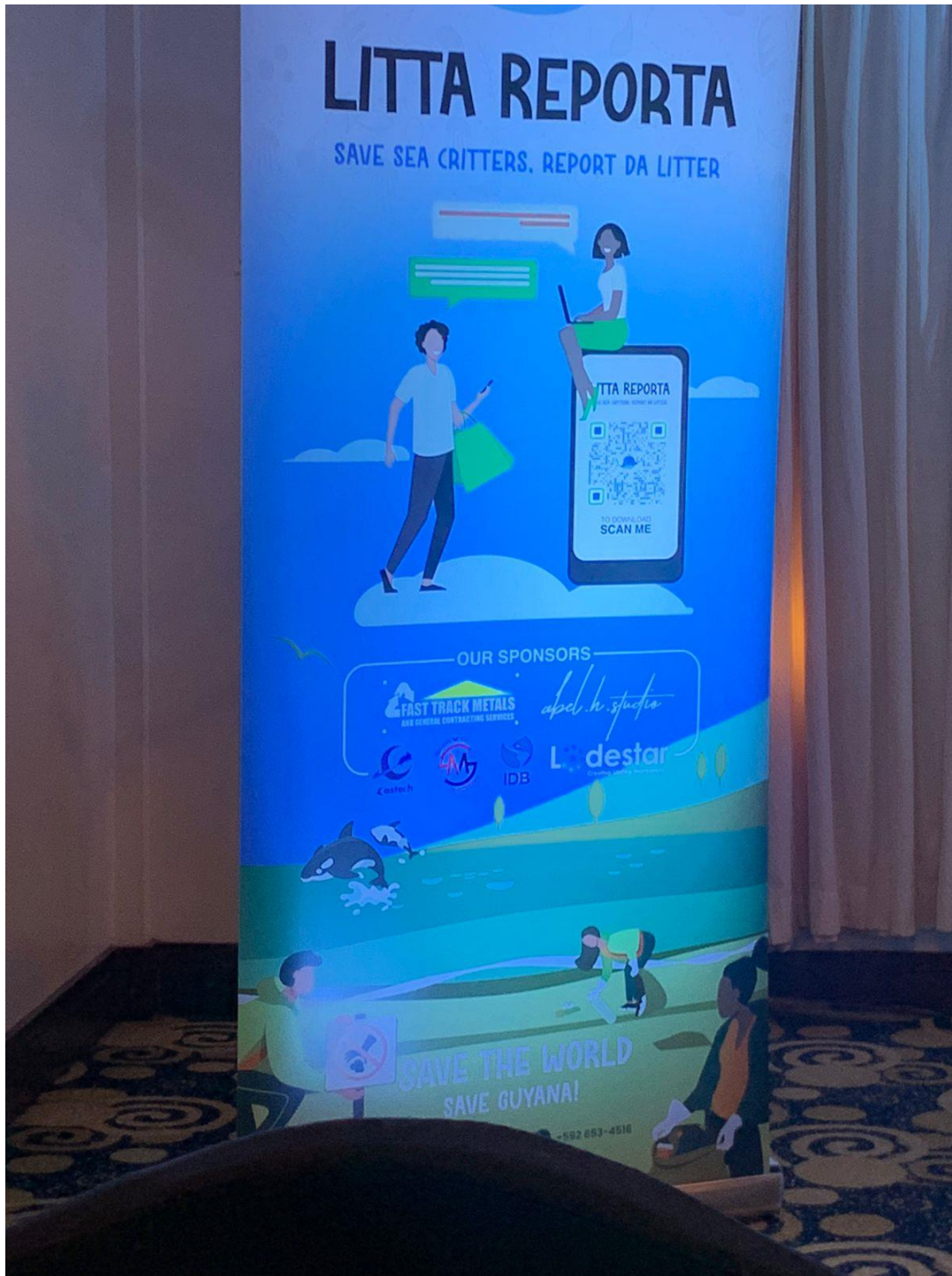
Conclusion

Despite the common practice of poor garbage disposal among the Guyanese populus, brilliant minds such as miss Maryam Bacchus are living the words of Mahatma Gandhi "be the change you wish to see in the world". The "Litta-reporta" application allows users across Guyana to upload images of garbage dumps and areas that are frequently littered and provide a system to swiftly collect the garbage and dispose of it in a humane manner. The application can introduce gamification or reward systems to incentivize responsible waste disposal behaviors, citizens may be motivated to reduce littering and participate in clean-up efforts additionally, it can be useful for awareness campaigns, research and monitoring

The picture from the left Jasmine Crawford Policy Forum Guyana's 1.5 Lifestyle, Kenisha Primo the President of the Eco-trust and other member of the Eco-trust society.

The picture above shows the infographic for the "Litta-Reporta" launch and a barcode that can be scanned for persons to download the app.

The Picture on the left shows our 1.5° Lifestyle project coordinator with the Country Representative of the Inter-American Development Bank IDB miss Lorena Solórzano Salazar, while the picture on the right shows Miss Bibi Kateem doing the introduction for Miss Baccus at the Launch.

The picture above shows some of Garbage Hotspots in Guyana that were highlighted by the application.

Miss Kenisha Primo giving a brief talk on the importance of proper garbage disposal.

The founder of "Litta-Reporta" miss Maryam Bacchus and Miss Lorena Solorzano (country representative of the Inter-American development bank) doing the unveiling of the barcode for the application.