

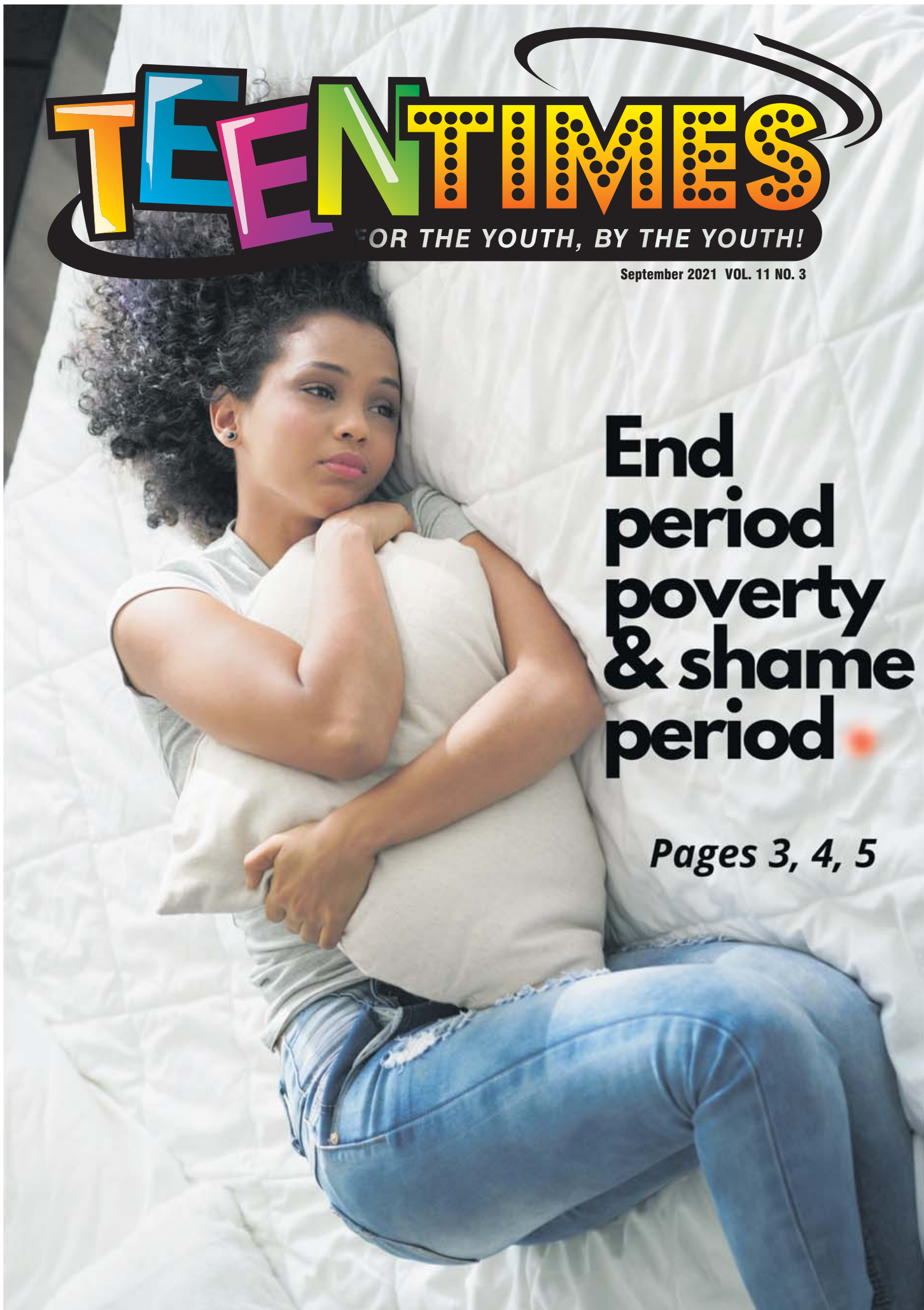
TEENTIMES

FOR THE YOUTH, BY THE YOUTH!

September 2021 VOL. 11 NO. 3

**End
period
poverty
& shame
period**

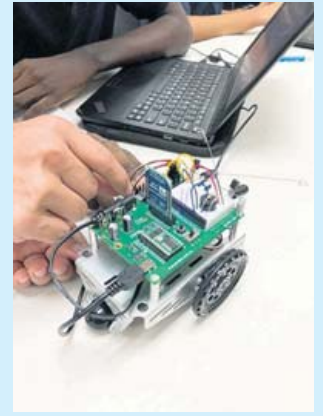
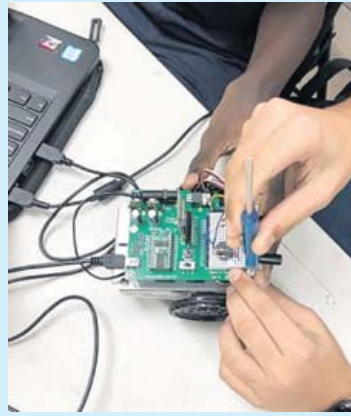
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Computer Science Robotics at LU

BY PRERNA RAMCHANDANI

This school year, Learning Unlimited has launched its first-ever Computer Science Robotics Class during the seventh period. The class allows students to engage their tactical and team-building skills as they try to build and program their robots!



St. Maarten Academy 'Entrep Friday'

BY EVELYNE ILCEUS

St. Maarten Academy (Academic) had its first "Entrep Friday" on Friday, September 6.

Acting Principal Kim Lucas-Felix and Vice Principal Joanna Trim proposed the idea of "Entrep Friday" to the Business Studies Department head Maura Bute Urbain and her team, Ms. Adecia Rutherford and Mrs. Cameka Brown Henry-Ranger. The intent behind this project is to help students develop business awareness and show them the connection between intellect and the labour market.

This event, which will be held monthly, allows students to gain entrepreneurial skills through selling products such as medicinal herbs and other plants, handmade jewellery, origami bookmarks, candy bags and ice pops. First form students, for example, took part in selling hair products for natural hair.

The student who made the most profit, along with the most creative students, will be rewarded with a prize during general assemblies.



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Name: Yuleissy Sanchez

Age: 17

School: Charlotte Brookson Academy

What is the artwork about?

This artwork is about a gnome from gravity falls.

What/who inspired you to create this artwork?

The inspiration behind creating this beautiful work of art would be the cartoon show called "Gravity Falls." I am pleasantly surprised by the mystery and adventure packed moments that this shows entails. It's so fascinating to see how inspired a person can feel by the mystery that this world has.



Name: Mary Jean Acevedo

Age: 16

School: Charlotte Brookson Academy

What is the artwork about?

This artwork is about body positivity.

What/who inspired you to create this artwork?

Seeing a similar art piece on "Pinterest" urged me to create a version of my own.



TEEN TIMES KICKS OFF PROJECT TO SUPPLY SCHOOLS WITH PANTRIES OF FREE FEMALE SANITARY PRODUCTS

~ PARTNERS WITH PRIME DISTRIBUTORS, KOOYMAN NIPA ~

On Saturday, September 18, Teen Times kicked off its pilot project to provide high schools on St. Maarten with a mini pantry filled with female sanitary and hygiene products. Sundial School was chosen for the project which is being supported by Prime Distributors, Kooyman and students of the NIPA General Property Maintenance Course.

The project is part of the group's campaign to combat "Period Poverty" on St. Maarten, by having government pass legislation mandating free access to sanitary hygiene products in public spaces, including schools (see related story). Period Poverty is defined as inadequate access to menstrual hygiene tools and education, including but not limited to sanitary products.

Teen Times explained that on St. Maarten, when less fortunate youth are mentioned, rarely is the problem of health and hygiene included in this context. "As Teen Times, we can attest to the vast number of teenage girls primarily, but boys as well, who do not have access to sanitary hygiene products on a regular basis. These products are costly and parents are sometimes forced to

choose between hygiene and putting food on the table.

"We believe in the world-wide movement that is making access to sanitary products free in certain public locations, in particular schools. We have seen young women use crude creations to replace sanitary pads and even re-using pads because sadly, they have no choice. We can no longer sit by and not try to remedy this issue, at least while they are in school," Teen Times Coordinator Nichele Abreu-Smith said, adding that products for male students will also be added.

The initiative calls for the provision of small pantries filled with free female and male sanitary products in secondary schools. Once in place, the schools will provide these products only in cases of need to students in school. Sundial received the first pantry on Saturday. The material to construct the unit was supplied by Kooyman, with the students of the NIPA General Property Maintenance Course building it. Prime Distributors provided all of the products.

Sundial School Director Mireille Regales-Peterson was on hand to receive the pantry and products. She said the school tries to pro-

vide sanitary products to those in need in school, but budget limitations affect what they can do. She acknowledged that the stigma around menstruation is very real among female students, who are sometimes very timid or ashamed to ask for a sanitary product. She thanked Teen Times and its partners in the endeavour, which she said will go a long way and is very necessary.

Prime Distributor's Brand Manager for the "Always" and "Gillette" line of products, Renata Richardson-Drijvers described the project as vital and perfect in-line with the community initiatives the brands want to support. She said an entire program has been created around the project to ensure that the brands can maintain the provision of the products. "We are proud to be part of this project and look forward to supporting additional pantries in other schools as well," she said.

Kooyman's Commercial Officer Evencia Carty-Seabrookes said: "The team at Kooyman was on board from the moment this initiative was brought to our attention. Each year, we reserve donation funds for poverty alleviation projects and have intensified our efforts since the start of the



COVID pandemic. We are truly grateful for our partnership with NIPA which has helped us realize this donation, and we look forward to maintain our support towards this cause."

Abreu-Smith explained that Sundial School will be the pilot of the project for this school year, after which it will be evaluated before moving to set up pantries in the other schools.

"Access to menstrual products should be a right, and feeling clean, confident, and

capable during one's period is a necessity. We can all work toward menstrual equity, and the opportunities are boundless. Whether it's advocating for free products in our schools, like Teen Times is doing, or spreading period positivity on social media, every action has a ripple effect. We believe that menstrual equity can only be achieved when period products are accessible, safe, and destigmatized. Girls should not be ashamed of their period. So that conversation has to start as well," Abreu-Smith said.



Teen Times members with the mini pantry donated by Kooyman and NIPA, sanitary products donated by Prime Distributors, with Prime Distributor's Brand Manager Renata Richardson-Drijvers (front left in white) and Sundial School Director Mireille Regales-Peterson (centre rear-right).

Teen Times submits legislation proposal to MP Romou to end “Period Poverty”

The young writers of Teen Times have submitted a proposal for legislation that would mandate schools and other public spaces to provide free female sanitary products. The proposal follows a global movement to end what is known as “Period Poverty” and is Teen Times’ second legislation proposal presented this year to Parliament through a Member of Parliament.

Teen Times Coordinator Nichele Abreu-Smith presented the document on behalf of her group to MP Angelique Romou, who is the Chairlady of Parliament’s Committee for Youth, Education, Culture and Sports. “We recognize that this issue might fall under the committee of health, but we trust that MP Romou, who has a proven record of caring about the wellbeing of young people and young women, can guide it for discussion through the proper channels,” Abreu-Smith said.

Period poverty is defined as inadequate access to menstrual hygiene tools and education, including but not limited to sanitary products. It is well established that meeting one’s basic needs – food, water, shelter – is the necessary foundation for health and well-being. Menstrual hygiene is also considered a basic need. “By addressing period poverty head on, one day, when a student asks for help, we may be able to offer a concrete solution. And perhaps, one day, our students may not even need to ask at all,” Abreu-Smith said.

Teen Times outlines in its proposal that when menstruators resort to unhygienic alternatives, they are vulnerable to harmful physical and mental outcomes. Products like rags, paper towels, and reused pads put menstruators at a heightened risk for urogenital infections, such as urinary tract infections and bacterial vaginosis. These products are also associated with outcomes such as skin irritation, vaginal itching, and white or green discharge. Further, the emotional toll accompanying lack of access is related to poor mental health outcomes, such as elevated anxiety and depression.

“Period poverty especially prevents low-income menstruators from bleeding with dignity. The reason this public health crisis is yet to be addressed is largely due to stigma. Stigma associates menstruation with uncleanness and disgust, instead of recognizing it as biologically healthy and normal. The shame associated with periods prevents people from talking about it, which in turn averts dialogues about access to



Teen Times Coordinator Nichele Abreu-Smith (right) and other Teen Times members present the Period Poverty legislation proposal to MP Angelique Romou on Saturday.

products and even the ingredients in pads and tampons,” Abreu-Smith said.

“We believe that the Parliament of St. Maarten should pass legislation to allow anyone who needs period/sanitary products to get them free of charge in public spaces. Additionally, the legislation would require menstrual hygiene products and select male hygiene products to be available in educational environments,” Abreu-Smith said.

Teen Times explains that the Period Products Legislation should aim to tackle three main issues:

- Period poverty
- Period stigma
- The effects of periods on education

“While period poverty is the focus, period stigma has also been highlighted as a key issue, particularly for young girls. Research has shown that a large percentage of girls, ages 14-21, are embarrassed by their periods, while even more have admitted that they have felt embarrassed buying sanitary products. The impact of periods on education is also an area for concern. Our research found that 49% of girls have missed an entire day of school because of their period and lack of enough products at that moment,” Abreu-Smith said.

She added that besides the immediate priority of the schools, the legislation could also establish a right for everyone who needs to use period products in St. Maarten, to be able to obtain them free of charge. The

proposal states that there are several global examples that the Parliament of St. Maarten can follow. They set out the key requirements for a universal period products scheme in order to make this right effective. This is in effect a framework provision, with much of the detail to be set out by the government in regulations at a later date.

MP Romou congratulated the group on its initiative and assured them that she will table the proposal in the next scheduled meeting of the committee and thereafter push it while it is at the executive level as well. She said the issue of Period Poverty has been on her radar since she also has conversations with young women about not being ashamed of their period, which is a natural cleansing process.

The “Period Poverty” legislation proposal is Teen Times’ second legislation proposal presented this year to Parliament through a Member of Parliament, the first being the proposal to include substantive St. Maarten history in the school curriculum, which was presented to the Party for Progress faction; and faction leader Melissa Gumbs has already booked it for handling in MP Romou’s committee. It should be noted that Teen Times also recently re-submitted its 2013 report on Youth Delinquency to the Ministry of Justice to be included in the recent symposium on the same subject.



Ending period poverty is within sight for these young people

BY TEEN VOGUE/MEGAN MCGIBNEY

When Sophie Draluck read about Ugandan schoolgirls missing school because they lacked access to period products, she got upset and began researching. She learned that the consequences of lacking menstrual products are much more far-reaching than she previously thought.

“I found that period poverty, or the lack of access to period products ... it’s everywhere.”

Everywhere included Highland Park, Illinois, her hometown. Realizing that her neighbours and schoolmates could be experiencing period poverty, she reached out to the local food pantry to find out whether tampons and pads were needed. Those products, she was told, were among the most highly requested, but the least donated. She then learned other pantries nearby were also in need of menstrual products – so began Cycle Forward, Sophie’s non-profit dedicated to combating period poverty, by donating menstrual products to local organizations for distribution.

Like Sophie, Brooke and Breanna Bennett had a similar realization about period poverty in their hometown. In July 2019, for their 12th birthday, the twins asked not for presents but for donations to raise money to buy period products in their city of Montgomery, Alabama. They were inspired by their mother, who worked at an all-girls’ school. She would tell them how widespread it was for the girls to use things like socks and toilet paper because they could not afford period products.

With that initiative, Women in Training was born. Over a year later, the twins, now 13 years old, donate about 300 products per month in Alabama cities, and State Representative Rolanda Hollis even proposed a bill that will allow those who qualify for free lunch to get free products at school.

“One in five girls experience period poverty,” says Breanna. “I would say, especially here in Alabama, our public school systems are really bad. A lot of them don’t give out the supplies needed to these girls for free. [They charge] \$8.00 a pack. And that’s what we want to change.”

According to the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Nursing, two-thirds of low-income women were unable to purchase period products in previous years, while one-fifth struggle to buy these products each month. There is also the “tampon tax” in which 35 states tax menstrual items at a mean of 7.41%. Those using government assistance cannot purchase tampons, pads or other items under the rules of the program.

With this ongoing pandemic,



Brooke says the issue has worsened, and it’s harder for many to access period products.

Anisha Abraham, a high school senior in Palm Harbor, Florida, was appalled when she read a Thinx survey that reported that 80% of girls knew or has known someone who missed school because of period poverty.

“I didn’t just find it unfortunate,” she says. “I found it unacceptable.”

Anisha began to look into the barriers, including the tampon tax and SNAP benefits. She also began to see how such conditions set people up to be less considerate of menstrual hygiene and health – for example, her aunt died from uterine cancer that the family feels wasn’t detected early enough because pain is normalized for those who menstruate.

With that, Anisha created Pink Power Project this past June, and has donated more than 1,000 products to three local non-profits in her county. She also blogs about menstruation to

de-stigmatize the biological process.

“It’s not just about handing out things,” she explains. “It’s more about supporting women and empowering them in not feeling shame and indignity in not having access to menstrual products, and not feeling comfortable with their whole body.”

Despite their successes, these young women have faced some difficulties, particularly when it comes to some people still seeing menstruation as taboo.

“[Some] older women are uncomfortable with the word ‘period,’ and wish we would use polite euphemisms like ‘the particulars of a woman,’ or ‘that special time,’ or even ‘menstruation,’” says Breanna.

Although Anisha had the support of her friends and family, she hesitated putting herself out there at first.

“I feared being labelled ‘the period girl’ in my social circles, especially because I knew there was a lot of

stigma surrounding menstruation, women’s health, and period poverty,” she says.

This has taught Anisha not to worry about what others think because the taboo of menstruation makes it harder to fight against period poverty.

With all the experiences these girls have gone through, what do they have to say to other girls who want to help their community, particularly with period poverty?

“If you want to do something for your community,” says Brooke; “then go ahead and do it, because it will really benefit other people.”

Sophie says it is all right to start small, and to find someone who can guide you.”

“Consider finding a mentor,” she says; “if they can help you get into the right mind frame to do this kind of work. Work on establishing a team, establishing partnerships – they can possibly direct you to new ones.”

Breanna says a little effort is all that is needed.

“Even if you’re posting a social media post,” she says. “Or talking to other people about it, and seeing what you guys can do as a community. We girls just need to come together and solve period poverty.”

How to help

Once you have the idea and the gumption, you too can help people gain access to menstrual products. There are a few practicalities you’ll need to consider when starting a period poverty organization. Anisha says the best way to get started is through social media.

“Create a brand that goes along with your group or organization,” she says. “Pick a title, pick an Instagram handle, have channels of communications that people can use to reach you.”

As your work grows, you might consider turning your efforts into a 501c3 charitable organization.

“I would say the real benefit from that is the tax exemption which will reach larger donors,” Sophie says, explaining that some larger donors would lose interest because they would not receive tax exemptions. “We really didn’t want to miss out on those opportunities, so we thought it would be in the best interest for Cycle Forward to seek that status.”

However, establishing a non-profit is not a must to help combat period poverty. Even running a drive at school or partnering with a local food pantry is a way to get started, Sophie says.



Periods are nothing to be ashamed of. They’re natural. And period products should be natural, too. Easy delivers 100% organic tampons and pads right to your door, because periods should be easier. Learn more at easyperson.ca

easy.

GOT TAMPONS? SHE DOESN'T.

Period Poverty

The inability to access sanitary items due to social or financial circumstances is a growing problem. We intend to follow the worldwide movement to get legislation that mandates free sanitary products in the restrooms of our high schools and institutions of tertiary education on St. Maarten.



END PERIOD POVERTY.

BRING YOUR SMILES TO 'INSPIRED SELFIE'

BY CECILLY NICHOLAS

Run by Edgardo and Lucrecia Lynch, "Inspired Selfie" is St. Maarten's first and only innovative and interactive photo museum. Providing various back-grounds to choose from, this creative museum is the perfect spot to take your next viral worthy picture! It is a lovely experience for all ages, as you will see from the interview I conducted with one of the founders.

1. What was your inspiration to come up with that type of business?

We realized the concept of a selfie museum was not available in the Caribbean. We knew people in St. Maarten were looking for new experiences and felt this would be a great opportunity. Many people do not know what we do. We offer the opportunity to take selfies or photographs with your cell phone or personal camera for 45-minute sessions. The cost is free for ages 0-3, \$20 for ages 4-11, and \$28 for ages 12 and up. We also offer the opportunity to book our space for private events. Although we have an in-house photographer, clients are welcome to bring their own photographer. We are closed on Monday. Opening hours are 11:00am-7:00pm Tuesday – Saturday and 1:00pm-5:00pm on Sunday. Our last booking is one hour before closing time.

2. What age range is your main clientele (the younger generation, middle generation, or older generation)?

Since we cater to ages 0-99, we welcome all ages. However, the average age seems to be 19-45 years of age.

3. How did you come up with the different background ideas?

We shared our vision with our master artist, Lucinda Audain. She was instrumental in the design and coordinating with various artists on the island.



4. Do you plan to change the back-grounds frequently?

Although we have not allotted specific times to change our back-grounds, it is our intention. We have a few seasonal rooms and plan to update those rooms for Christmas, Easter, etc.

5. What makes Inspired Selfie so unique?

Inspired Selfie is unique because the concept is new to St. Maarten as well as the Caribbean. Our visitors have been intrigued by the original artwork as well as the amount of fun they have had taking pictures with family and friends. It is not a place; it is an experience.



6. Are young, local artists involved in the creation of the different backgrounds?

Our youngest artist Sara Thomasia, age 16, was awesome. She created a cartoon backdrop and hand-designed it with coloured pencil. She worked evenings and weekends and attended her last year of school full-time concurrently.

7. What are your future plans for the business?

We aspire to open various locations on different islands. We are also looking to partner with tourism, and cruise associations.

We endeavour to purchase a bus to provide transportation for our consumers. Eventually, we desire to establish a franchise.

8. Does Inspired Selfie have any up-coming events catering to the younger generation?

We are proud to have a safe space where teens can socialize and have fun. On Friday, September 10, we held our first "Teen Night". It consisted of two 45-minute sessions for \$15 per teen (a discounted rate of \$13 per person ages 13-18). The first session started at 6:00pm and the second session at 7:00pm.

9. Are there any future plans that will allow young, local artists to showcase their talents at the selfie museum?

As we continue to evolve and update our backdrops, we welcome new artists of all ages.

10. How long did the preparations take before opening the business?

From the conception of the idea to the grand opening, it took four months. We had a goal of six months; however, we exceeded our own expectations.

11. What challenges have been caused by the pandemic?

The pandemic has caused us to have limited clients due to the need to socially distance. People are sometimes afraid to come to businesses for fear of catching Covid. The cruise lines are not operating at full capacity and tourism is not at its peak. We are, however, observing Covid-19 precautions. Perseverance will allow us to overcome these obstacles.

Located at #55 Welfare Road, Cole Bay, across from Tropicana Casino, Inspired Selfie is St. Maarten's only innovative and interactive photo palace paradise. Bring your family, smiles, and friends for a 45-minute selfie adventure that's bound to be fun.



Youth Delinquency Causes & Solutions

In 2013, Teen Times presented the following information to the government in the form of a report. We wanted to make our contribution to the problem of youth delinquency. Eight years later, and the problem persists today. Why? We explain below.

One cannot over-emphasize the critical role the early years play in shaping the rest of a person's life. Possible explanations of how minor youthful delinquency leads to chronic offending have been extensively discussed. Once ensnared in the justice system, many young people continue a bleak life that is characterized by school dropout, dearth of employment skills, and a lack of other pro-social skills essential to living a crime-free life.

The family environment during one's formative years plays a key role in shaping the person's various future outcomes. Children, who grow up in a nurturing and caring family, forming secure relationships with adults, are equipped with healthy emotional management and other pro-social skills, benefiting them for the rest of their life. On the other hand, youths raised in unstable, abusive family environments tend to have poor problem-solving skills and behavioural problems.

In addition, offenders with a history of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) – for example, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, and emotional, physical neglect – are found to be more difficult to rehabilitate. Parents, and in many cases mothers, are usually the first and only persons a child can rely on. Given the degree of intimate dependence of the child on his or her parents, it would be equally detrimental if such an intimate relationship is hampered. The negative impacts of harsh parenting

and neglectful parenting practices also have been extensively acknowledged.

Poverty & Social Issues

Historically, delinquency studies have focused on later adolescence, the time when delinquency usually peaks. However, *Teen Times* has observed that youth, who are referred to law enforcement for their first delinquency offense before age 13, are far more likely to become chronic offenders. But why?

Poverty or challenging economic situations are reoccurring factors in juvenile delinquency that is progressively getting worse in St. Maarten. Youth living in poverty are pressured to survive in tough circumstances on an island that lacks resources such as job opportunities, social programs, financial support and proper mental health services. The lack of resources impedes these youth from becoming successful in a society that favours those with money. Those without money are more likely led down a path of crime.

Lack of family resources has negatively impacted the wellbeing of youth. Families experiencing hardships are forced to carry the burden without help and sometimes even place some of that weight on these adolescents. Dealing with many of these burdens in hostile and unsafe environments leads to complex trauma in developing brains. Complex trauma stunts the normal development of a child's brain which may lead to learning hardships and mental health complications. Not being in the right state of mind can lead a youth to commit unlawful actions. Due to trauma, a youth is more likely to experience hardships. Unable to fully process a scenario or situation, a youth might act deviant.

Poor education plays the greatest



part in juvenile delinquency for youth who are placed in poverty. Education is critical in light of the fact that it structures youth to learn the contrast between rights and wrong and clarifies the results of taking part in unlawful actions. The educational system that is placed for low socioeconomic families means that the students who are placed into these schools are not receiving the same opportunities as to the privileged. Not having the proper resources in the educational system can affect a student who wishes to exceed in academics.

Poverty continues to produce many factors that affect our society. Factors such as inequality, dysfunctional families and lack of proper education all connect and become leading factors in juvenile delinquency. Poverty and juvenile delinquency are connected in that youth, who live within poverty, have a higher chance of becoming delinquents who resort to crime. Poverty does not provide a path of success for youth and unless the government addresses this issue through addressing the cost of living on St.

Maarten, short term contacts etc., youth delinquency will be stuck in a vicious cycle.

Risk and Protective Factors

There are identified risk factors that increase a juvenile's likelihood to engage in delinquent behaviour, although there is no single risk factor that is determinative. To counteract these risk factors, protective factors have also been identified to minimize a juvenile's likelihood to engage in delinquent behaviour.

The four areas of risks are the individual, the family, peers, and school or community. Individual risk factors include early antisocial behaviour, poor cognitive development, hyperactivity and emotional factors, such as mental health challenges. Family risk factors include poverty, maltreatment, family violence, divorce, parental psychopathology, familial antisocial behaviours, teenage parenthood, single parent family

continued on pg. 9



and large family size.

Peer factors of association with deviant peers and peer rejection are identified as risk factors. School and community risk factors include failure to bond to school, poor academic performance, low academic aspirations, neighbourhood disadvantage, disorganized neighbourhoods, concentration of delinquent peer groups, and access to weapons. Many of these risk factors overlap. In some cases, the existence of one risk factor contributes to the existence of another or others.

Protective factors, such as positive school attendance, positive social orientation and the ability to discuss problems with parents, are generally a buffer to minimize or moderate the effect of risk factors and their ability to bring about delinquent behaviour.

Cost Benefit of Prevention

Policymakers must consider the cost, as well as the effectiveness, of prevention and intervention programs to address juvenile crime. Today's long-term investments in prevention can help to reduce crime and public spending well into the future. Efforts to address truancy (a big problem), for example, represent the interest of policymakers in ensuring children stay in school and receive an adequate education and stay out of trouble.

Based on research, *Teen Times* recommends the following strategies as effective in reducing truancy:

- School-community collaboration
- Safe learning environments
- Family engagement
- Early childhood education
- Early literacy development
- Mentoring/tutoring
- After-school opportunities
- Professional development
- Active learning
- Educational technology
- Career and technical education

Recommendations

The most effective way to prevent juvenile delinquency has indisputably been to assist children and their families early on. There are not enough programs on St. Maarten that attempt early intervention, and there isn't enough government funding for community initiatives that would allow independent groups to tackle the problem in new ways. The most effective programs for juvenile delinquency prevention share the following key components:

•Education

The so called "Model Programs" is known to have assisted families and children by providing them with information. Some programs inform parents on how to raise healthy children; some teach children about the effects of drugs, gangs, sex, and weapons; and others aim to express to youth the innate worth they and all others have. All of these programs provide youths with the awareness

that their actions have consequences. This is particularly important in an era where youth are barraged with sexual and violent images. Educational programs have the underlying intent of encouraging hope and opening up opportunities for young people.

•Recreation

It goes without saying that this is a major problem on St. Maarten. There is literally nothing for teens to do. One of the immediate benefits of recreational activities is that they fill unsupervised after-school hours. Recreation programs allow youths to connect with other adults and children in the community. Such positive friendships may assist children in later years. Youth programs are designed to fit the personalities and skills of different children and may include sports, dancing, music, drama, bowling, art, and other activities.

•Community Involvement

Scouts, church youth groups, and volunteer groups all involve youth within a community. Involvement in community groups provide youth with an opportunity to interact in a safe social environment. The government can do more to assist these groups in promoting their activities island wide and perhaps provide small subsidies.

•Prevention Programs within the juvenile justice system

The government has to ensure that a young person entering the island's Juvenile Justice System (which also needs further developing) has the opportunity to receive intervention assistance. In the care of the country, a young person may receive drug rehabilitation assistance, counselling, and educational opportunities. The success of the system is measured by how well it prepares youth to re-enter the community without committing further crimes. Optimally, all juvenile facilities would catch youths up on their education, provide them with job training, give them the experi-



ence of living in a safe, stable environment, and provide them with assistance to break harmful habits.

Conclusion

It is clear that delinquency is an enormous problem in the society. Juvenile delinquency is caused by a number of factors that include peer influence, influence by the family of the juvenile and other related factors like low self-esteem and trauma.

The effects of delinquency are far-reaching and they therefore affect the community, victims of the delinquent, the society as a whole, and even the delinquents themselves. It is therefore vital that this issue is addressed with a view of reducing the rates of offense and re-offense.

A number of interventions can be used to prevent, and reduce delinquency and recidivism. These interventions can be implemented in the family, at school, or even in correctional facilities. School and family-level interventions are mainly aimed at preventing recidivism, while the interventions implemented at correctional facilities are aimed at reducing recidivism.

It is thus vital that these interventions are taken seriously, in order to reduce the number of delinquents in the society. This will in turn reduce the number of delinquency victims, the number of affected families, and the amount that the government will spend in resources for law enforcement and correctional services. This will therefore lead to a better society.





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Interview with the Leo Club

BY CHANTALIA VAN HEYNEGEN

From this article, you will gain information about the Leo Club and will get feedback from the members about their Leo Club experiences. The Alpha Leo Club of St. Maarten began on April 16, 1983, under the leadership of Past District Governor Lion Wally Havertong, PMJE, who is credited with starting this organization in St. Maarten.

Interview with Alpha Leo Club President Perna Ramchandani

What is the Leo Club?

Leo stands for Leadership, Experience, Opportunity; it gives the youth an opportunity to help people in need. We focus on projects that impact many people.

What are your plans for the Alpha Leo Club this year?

A few years ago, there was a decline in new members. This year, we are focusing on membership and recruiting new members to continue what we've been doing for the past years.

What made you decide to join the Leo Club?

I joined back in 2018 with my sister, who knew a classmate who attended the club. My sister and I joined in mid-August. We got to do a thesis in December, and from there, we saw that this club has good intentions for our community so I decided to stay. I then went on to become board director to secretary from last year to this year.

What incentives would you give to teens/organizations to consider the Leo club?



To all the teens out there, our club is here to help; we are not here to do anything wrong. We give community service hours to students who actually put their effort into the projects, along with having loads of fun! There are students from different schools that come together as one to complete projects, which turn out to be worthwhile experiences and memories for life.

What upcoming projects does the Leo Club have and what should the public look out for?

The first project we will be tackling is our membership drive, which is when we will

be going around and visiting six schools in the span of three days, to explain what our club is about as we try to recruit new members. We are also going to be on the radio station to spread our message followed by a thesis. In December, we will have a few raffles in between to help with fund raising.

Can you name the top three schools the club would be visiting for your recruitment drive?

St. Dominic, Mac High and CIA.

If anyone wishes to join the Leo Club Alpha, what can they do or who can they

reach out to?

We have a Facebook and Instagram account where interested persons can send us a direct message. We then message them back with further questions and from there; they will be called to be a bystander at one of our meetings. If things work out, their journey in the club begins.

What encouragement can you give to anyone out there who's considering joining the Leo Club?

Just be yourself and have fun while helping the community. It's never too late to join this community service club which will definitely benefit the world, especially now.

Interview with Alpha Leo Club Vice President Aryan Notani

Why did you join the Leo Club and what is your experience thus far?

I joined around September in 2015, through a classmate who attends the club. I had a lot of fun while building new friendships and experiences from helping in the community.

Interview with various members of the Leo Club

Why did you join the Leo Club and what is your experience thus far?

Student 1: I joined along with the Vice President back in 2015. I made a lot of connections along the way and got to make a difference in my community while I was having fun. These are just some of the plus points.

Student 2: I joined the Leo Club because I didn't want to be the student that just attended school and did academics; I wanted to be involved in other projects and accomplish amazing things wherever possible.

Student 3: I joined the Leo Club because of my father. Being the president and seeing all the things he has done for the community inspired me in many ways to do the same.



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

LET OFF STEAM IN A HEALTHY WAY

Mental health awareness on our island is surrounded by a stigmatic denial of its effects on the youth. Too often is it apparent that the teens on our island disregard their own mental health because it just isn't taken as seriously as physical health. This stigma makes it harder for our teens to receive the treatment they need for their struggles. Now is especially bad as the virus has added additional pressure to students, as they have to complete the laborious task of catching up on work that quarantine may have hindered. Throughout this feature, I want to bring light to how mental health issues are usually dealt with and the stigma surrounding them, in an attempt to debunk myths and hopefully encourage the youth to self-reflect on their possible concerns in a healthier way.



Stress reduction

Stress accumulates like air in a balloon, growing and growing unless you release it, until it's all forcefully pushed before the balloon pops. As cliché as it may seem, actually discussing your emotions with a person you trust can allow for catharsis in the face of misfortune. There exists the stigma that emotions are for the weak, and that expressing any emotions makes men weak. Many times, even more emotionally accepting men may view their crying peers as inferior in some way. The solution is to actively fight against your inherent biases and the pre-established, dominant cultural standards set. If you're faced with a stressful situation, you shouldn't feel ashamed to vent to someone you trust, whether that is a family member, a friend, or a partner, as long as they're okay with it anyway.

It may seem like you're being a nuisance to the person you vent

to, so here are a few tips to help you let off some steam in a healthy way:

1. Ask for permission.

It's important to make sure the person you want to talk to is actually willing to help you, since they might themselves be emotionally unable to help because of their own troubles.

2. Talk to someone you fully trust.

If you want to talk about events in your personal life, then it goes without saying that you should be sharing that information with trustworthy people.

3. Make sure you know what you want from the conversation.

Be transparent about what you want from the interaction. For example, do you want advice or do you just want to vent? This helps with being satisfied with and understanding the results of the conversation.

4. Choose a communication medium.

Depending on your own preference, it might be easier to talk over



the phone, or in person, or even over text. There are benefits to each of these, and there really is no correct answer. There is, however, one very wrong answer: a public social media account. It's important to remember that the internet is forever, and that posting something concerning could negatively affect you in the long term!

5. Try to take action.

While getting your troubles out is important, working, and acting on possible solutions to those problems play an even bigger role. This isn't to imply that solutions always exist, but to say that you should at least attempt to find ones for situations that can be solved.



A GLIMPSE INTO OUR FUTURE

BY LAVISHA DADLANI

When we think of the future, our minds instantly create imagery of the amazing technological advancements such as flying cars and robots that we imagine will be created. But when it comes to future jobs, we may go blank. What will the work industry look like in the next 15 years perhaps? What will humans have to excel in, to be able to earn a livelihood?

This article is sure to give you a glimpse of what working in our future world may look like.

Taking care of our environment and growing plants is generally easy at present. As the population grows, it is said that we will begin to see more buildings than trees. In this situation, it will be the job of an **"urban farmer"** to grow crops in non-traditional places like rooftops, in ways never used before.

While we do our best to keep our surroundings clean, it is quite common to find litter lying around streets, beaches and parks. With the skills of a **"trash architect"**, these pieces of trash will be transformed into amazing monuments, structures and touristic attractions.

Acquiring minerals and metals like bauxite, diamonds and manganese by mining from the earth can be a strenuous job, but imagine having to be in a zero gravity environment and doing the same task. Leave it to the **"asteroid miners"** to collect other precious metals like platinum and rhodium contained in asteroids for special purposes.

If a pipe at home bursts, your first instinct would be to call a plumber. In the future, people will first call the **"3D printer handyman"**, who will quickly 3D print a replica of your pipe rather than having to go to the store for a new one.

We all know that we are bound to leave this earth one day no matter how old we are; but in the future, the impossible may become possible! A **"life extension technician"** will be able to prolong lives, causing us to surpass current-day lifespans and live up to 200+ years!

Taking a peek at what the working life of the future will look like in the next 25 years is sure to have broadened your mindset towards professions and the skills needed to take on these jobs. As time progresses and technology advances, we will keep changing the way we think, do and understand the world. Thus, we should always have an open mind to new opportunities, and who knows, maybe you might become the first unique professional in your field!



Feature



Know your world

By Saphira Cantave



What happened in Haiti — and where it goes from here

When Haiti's late President Jovenel Moïse was sworn into office, he promised to break Haiti's cycle of corruption and violence. In doing so, he swore to create a better life and country for the people. He kept his word by building hospitals, ensuring that most citizens had access to electricity, among other accomplishments. But in July 2018, when the government announced that subsidies would be eliminated, this triggered a flurry of protests. The country's worst civil strike began and protesting groups demanded that the President resign over false allegations. From then on, the country's major concerns were corruption, the rise of gang violence and the war between protesters and the police.

President Moïse had been ruling by decree for over a year when his opponents claimed his term had ended in February 2021. Moïse stated, however, that he had the legal right to remain in office until 2022. In the months that followed, protesters resorted to the streets demanding that Moïse be removed. As a result, armed gangs ruled the streets of Haiti, kidnapping children and pastors during church services. Poverty and hunger levels skyrocketed, as the government was accused of living a life of luxury while failing to meet the basic needs of the people.

On July 7, the world woke up to the dreadful news of the execution of Haiti's President.



Moïse was found lying in his room while the First Lady was in critical condition due to being shot. It was later found out that 26 Columbians and two Haitian-Americans were assailants in this attack. While Haitians mourned the death of their leader, the country's political instability worsened. One of Haiti's most notorious gang leaders declared that his men would take to the streets to protest against police and the opposition for "conspiring" with the assailants of the assassination.



Gang violence escalated in the country's capital, Port-au-Prince. Consequently, Claude Joseph, Haiti's interim Prime Minister, and his cabinet of ministers declared Haiti to be in a "state of siege" (when government restricts the movement of people in a country). Later that month, Haiti wished Moïse a fond farewell as he was laid to rest. As the Haitian government continued conducting an international investigation into Moïse's death, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit southwestern Haiti around 8:30 in the morning. The earthquake left more than 2,000 dead, over 12,200 injured, 137,000 households affected and hundreds missing.

Additionally, Haiti was hit by Tropical Storm Grace on August 16-17, which caused flooding in a number of communities. As the world heard of the devastating news, many countries and various global organizations, including our own friendly island, donated to provide aid to the suffering. Locally, the Haitian Association and other organizations gathered food and clothes from our citizens, and these were sent to Haiti in August. As Haiti tries to get back on its feet, the country's political situation has worsened after Prime Minister Henry fired the public prosecutor after he accused Prime Minister Henry of being involved in the President Moïse's assassination. Haitians continue to endure everyday adversaries like poverty and crime. The hope is that Haiti will experience peace soon.





Know your world

By Diya Sachdev



Blame game begins over turbulent US exit from Afghanistan

The US withdrawal from Afghanistan is definitely a hot topic these days. America's involvement in Afghanistan came to an end amid chaos and tragedy. The United States troops withdrew from Afghanistan on August 30, a day ahead of plan, ending a two-decade presence and handing control back to the Taliban. One estimate is that at least 100,000 individuals were left behind as the last evacuation flight took off.



Why did the United States invade Afghanistan?

The US forces entered Afghanistan as part of the "war on terror" following the 9/11 terror attacks. President George W. Bush had stated weeks after Al Qaeda struck the United States on September 11 that American forces had initiated attacks in Afghanistan against the terrorist organization and Taliban objectives. President Bush claimed that the Taliban, who ruled most of Afghanistan at the time, had refused to hand over Al Qaeda leaders who had planned the attacks from inside the country. He stated that he intended to prosecute Al Qaeda leaders, and said: "Now the Taliban will pay a price... These carefully targeted actions are designed to disrupt the use of Afghanistan as a terrorist base of operations, and to attack the military capability of the Taliban regime."

By December 2001, Al Qaeda's chief, Osama bin Laden, and other top commanders had escaped to Pakistan, a putative American ally. Due to the fact that American forces did not follow them, Pakistan became a safe haven for Taliban fighters, who crossed the border in later years to assault American and Afghan soldiers. Meanwhile inside Afghanistan, American troops deposed the Taliban administration and decimated the Taliban's fighting forces.

What happened to the operation in Afghanistan?

Following the Taliban's defeat, the US and NATO shifted their attention to rebuilding a failed state and establishing a Western-style

democracy, spending billions to rebuild a desperately poor country which had already been ravaged by two decades of war – first under Soviet occupation in the 1980s and then during a civil war. Early on, there were some successes, and a government that is pro-Western was installed. New schools, hospitals, and public buildings were constructed. The Taliban had primarily kept women at home, but now they were going to college, joining the workforce, and participating in Parliament as well as administration. The government was unable to provide its residents' most basic requirements, and its authority often faded outside of major cities. With 8,000 American forces in Afghanistan in 2003, the US began diverting combat resources to the war in Iraq, which began in March of that year.

What happened on the battlefield?

The Taliban improved its fighting skills despite the presence of American and NATO soldiers and air force. President Barack Obama began sending thousands of more troops to Afghanistan in 2009, and by mid-2010, the number had risen to over 100,000. The Taliban, on the other hand, gained in strength, inflicting severe losses on Afghan security forces. In May 2011, Osama bin Laden was killed at a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, where he had been hiding for years near a military training academy, by a US Navy SEAL team.

President Obama said in June that by 2014, he would begin withdrawing American troops home and handing over security respon-

sibilities to the Afghans. President Obama halted significant combat operations on December 31, 2014, after the war reached a stalemate, and shifted his focus to training and aiding Afghan security forces. President Donald J. Trump announced nearly three years later that, despite his first impulse to remove all soldiers, he would continue to fight the war.

Any troop pull-out would be dependent on fighting situations, not fixed timeframes, he said. The Taliban's summer-long military assault had forced numerous surrenders and retreats by besieged Afghan government soldiers before the planned departure in August. In many cases, they surrendered without a struggle, often with the help of Taliban-deployed community leaders. At the same time, civilian deaths reached new highs in the war's two-decade history.

What was the outcome of the US withdrawal?

On August 15, hours after Ashraf Ghani, Afghanistan's president, departed the country, a fierce mid-summer attack brought victory to the Taliban. Taliban leaders occupied the presidential palace, forcing tens of thousands of Afghans to flee across the border. Others flocked to Kabul's international airport, where they joined the stranded foreign citizens and their Afghan supporters.

Days of turmoil at the airport culminated in a suicide bombing on August 26 that claimed the lives of up to 180 people, including 13 American service members. The strike was one of the bloodiest

in the conflict, and the soldiers were the first Americans to die in the nation since February 2020. U.S. military efforts in America's longest war ended in devastating defeat with the fall of the Afghan government after billions were spent in support of it and the Afghan security forces.

President Biden declared in mid-April that all American forces would leave Afghanistan by September 11, claiming that the US had long since completed its objective of denying terrorists a safe haven in the nation. Later, he changed the date to August 31. After nearly two decades of war, President Biden stated that the US military had failed to convert Afghanistan into a modern, stable democracy. "Let me ask those who wanted us to stay: How many more?" the president addressed critics of the pull-out in July. "How many more of America's daughters and sons are you prepared to put your life on the line for?"

To safeguard its embassy in Kabul, the US intended to leave approximately 650 troops behind. However, following the unexpected Taliban victory, the embassy was obliged to shut down quickly and in a panicky manner, with personnel shredding and burning important documents before a temporary compound was built up at Kabul's airport. Dread descended over Kabul and the rest of Afghanistan as Taliban militants took control of the streets.

To find those who had backed the Afghan government or the US operation, Taliban gunmen in Kabul went door-to-door in a few districts. Despite Taliban officials' apparent vows to govern in a more moderate manner, women have faced limitations, and the Taliban have retaliated against certain independent journalists. After saying that "everything did unravel more swiftly than we had anticipated" in an August 16 speech, President Joe Biden reiterated his commitment to ending US military engagement in Afghanistan.



Feature

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