

## **Transformational Development and the Transformation Mindset – Part 1**

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In this article the perspectives of Economist Dr. Roxanne Brizan – St. Martin on the idea of transformative development is presented. The Government has indicated that it is embarking on a transformational agenda and that all citizens and institutions should be part of the process. Dr. Brizan-St. Martin was invited to address senior managers and other members of staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Forestry, Fisheries and Cooperatives at their retreat which was held under the theme “Transformative Development: Ensuring Food Security and Sustainable Agricultural Development.”

This Part 1 article contextualizes the issue of transformative development whilst Part 2 will address issues of transformational leadership and the transformation mindset.

In contextualizing the issues of food and nutrition security and sustainable agricultural development, it is important to remember our context as a small island developing state; one in which we are faced with many structural vulnerabilities and other challenges including challenges with fiscal space and the need to be efficient in our resource use. As such, each department or division under the Ministry has a responsibility in this agenda of agricultural development, improving food and nutrition security.

When we speak of **sustainable** agricultural development, we are taking it to the realm of generational viability. Therefore, the systems, processes, and plans developed to ensure agricultural development and food and nutrition security should be one in which future generations can benefit. With sustainable agriculture and food and nutrition security, a country’s populace can have more meaningful, happier lives where there is hope for better lives for future generations. This can be achieved by ensuring an enabling environment for good governance, reducing spread of diseases, boosting self-reliance and less dependence on foreign products-just to name a few.

Just to reiterate, the definition of sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

This concept of transformational development is defined:

- i. In Sociology, as the process through which children, families and communities identify and overcome the obstacles that prevent them from living life in all its fullness.
- ii. In the spiritual sense, it speaks to holistic care - meeting community needs holistically. In this spiritual context, of interest is a blog Wycliffe Bible Translators, detailing the five main principles of transformational development:
  - a. Community empowerment and participatory involvement. This means that an outsider should not do for the community what they can do for themselves.

- b. Transformational development is not top down. The community is the one who sets the agenda and identifies the priorities.
- c. Practitioners follow an asset-based approach. Before trying to fix problems, identify and focus on what is already working well.
- d. It is important that both the community and the development organization bring value to the project. Community and development organization should be equal partners, both bringing something valuable to the table.
- e. Communities speak into what needs to be changed and the effectiveness of change. Mindsets!!! Mindsets!!!! Mindsets!!!!

When we combine these principles, we get some sense of what transformative development entails: community, participation, empowerment, self-reliance, resilience, mindset, evaluation, and re-evaluation.

The task before you as you plan and pave the way forward for the Ministry, is a transformational project - one that is substantive in its impact. It will take you through a metamorphosis that changes, on a fundamental level, the way you function on a day-to-day basis. This requires transformational leadership and a transformational mindset.

As senior managers within the Ministry, displaying transformational leadership is critical to the agenda and the achievement of transformational development. What you are striving for is cultural change - encouraging and inspiring each other and by extension the nation to innovate and create change that will be for the benefit of all.

The next article will address the concept of transformational leadership and the transformation mindset.

Knowledge is power and experience is the greatest teacher.

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