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Academy sets out to train Caribbean climate activists

THURSDAY, 22 AUGUST 2013 21:59



KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent--A Caribbean-based institute has set off a promotional drive to recruit and train climate activists from around the region. Carol Ann English, Marketing Consultant of the St. Vincent-headquartered Richmond Vale Academy (RVA), explained on Monday that the institute wants to train international climate activists and make individuals region-wide more environmentally aware.

She said the Academy wants Caribbean people to be more conscious of the effects of global

warming and climate change. At the courses "ordinary" people are trained to become climate activists, who can spearhead possible ways to deal with the effects of these phenomena. "We also focus on the need to sustain the environment and its natural resources. Our programme is focused on a clean, sustainable environment," she said. The first advertisement inviting environmentally conscious people from St. Maarten to take part in the programme ran in The Daily Herald on Friday.

The Academy has had students from Europe, Asia, North America, South America and Africa, a few from St. Vincent and some from Guyana. "We are now seeking to have more students from the Caribbean, since a sustainable environment is everyone's business," said English.

The Climate Compliance Conference is one of the Academy's two main programmes; students graduate with a certificate from the one- or six-month course. The courses are practical; students become involved in various projects including community clean-up activities and efforts aimed at raising environmental awareness. They also manage environmental clubs, hold talks in schools and communities to raise awareness, learn how to do organic farming and produce bio-gas, and they appear in the Academy's TV programme "Keeping North Leeward Clean."

"Our initial [idea-Ed.] was to focus on St. Vincent and make our island climate compliant, but we are now taking our actions across the region, through education and awareness, as it turns out that more and more people are becoming aware that a sustainable environment is everyone's business," said English.

With that she was borrowing from the Academy's Website, which says that "never before has there been such consensus that global warming and climate change are real and that actions by man are causing the earth systems to collapse." The Academy's programme is intended for ordinary people to take concrete climate-compatible actions and at the same time establish knowledge for others globally to follow.

English said students must have a passion for the environment and preserving natural resources. "Scholarships are available on a case by case basis," she said, extending an invitation to students region-wide to enrol in the programme and become climate activists.

For more information on Richmond Vale, visit www.richmondvale.org .

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