How do you tap into the entrepreneurial spirit of a nation to recover from a hurricane? How do you connect talented professionals with ideas to build back better? And how do you use the collective expertise to come up with solutions for a more resilient future?

Those were the key questions we - the UNDP Centre of Excellence for SIDS based on Aruba - asked ourselves after visiting St. Maarten after the hurricanes. We soon joined forces with like-minded organizations, EY Caribbean, the Dutch Caribbean Chambers of Commerce, 360° Innovation, and Present Your Startup, to organize a unique event: the Build Back Better Week SXM. It became an interactive, inclusive event focused on putting ideas into action. We combined the format of a hackathon, with trade missions from other countries, a youth engagement event and deep-dive expert sessions. The attendance and support of the Prime Minister was the icing on the cake.

The resulting ideas, connections and friendships made, form a great basis for supporting St Maarten in building back better for a more resilient future. Enjoy this overview as we look back and forward to keep the positive momentum going.
Local and international entrepreneurs alike, contributed to an inspiring and fun weekend in which new ideas and concepts were created and presented to build back better for a resilient island future.
To foster connections between local and international entrepreneurs, Present Your Startup together with the Dutch Caribbean Chambers of Commerce organized a day of business networking and matchmaking. The conversations were hard to stop as businesses in renewable energy, sustainable tourism, construction and much more exchanged ideas and opportunities. Surely, this will have sparked initiatives we will hear about in the near future.
To ensure the voices of the next generation - both youth and young professionals - were heard, a session was organized to gather their input for how St. Maarten can build back better. The Minister for Education, Culture, Youth & Sport joined the session and supported the outcomes, such as creating a WEF Global Shapers community in St. Maarten. Also, a Social Contract Commitment (SOCOCO) wall was created on which the NextGen can write how they will contribute to a more resilient future. Be on the alert, as the wall will be placed in a public place soon for all to see.

**21 IDEAS!**

**Sustainable Tourism**
- *The Bini Travel all-inclusive app (#1)* that tourists can sign-up for and wear like a wrist band and get deals with participating businesses like restaurants and retailers all over the island.
- *Flamboyant Beach Resort (#7)* aims to develop a sustainable luxury resort based on pillars of resilience (ie mangroves, dykes, water system), sustainability (ie plastic free, solar powered, zero waste, local food) and community (ie disaster drills), economic development in a sustainable way.
- *Ecotech for Ecotourism (#13)* aims to enhance eco-tourism by empowering local artists and SME’s, use biodegradable products (instead of plastic), launch an i-Beacon app to inform tourists of their surrounding ecosystem, and make businesses eco-compliant and rewarded by an eco-label.
- *ShowMe Caribbean on-location videos (#18)* provides an interactive, internet-based tour using 360 degree imagery to showcase the island and local businesses through virtual reality tours, in combination with video and google street views to inform tourists.

**Renewable Energy**
- *Slow Mill Wave energy (#8)* captures ocean’s energy through an underwater flyer attached to the seabed, thereby lowering...
energy costs and simultaneously protecting the coast and boosting aquafarming economy and fishing.

---3P-Power (#21) focuses on optimizing spaces through a collective impact initiative, for example by modular housing solutions and installing renewable energy systems.

Construction

---*Hive five sustainable housing* (#3) offers self-sustaining, affordable and hurricane-proof units for the local community to live in, together forming a ‘hive’ of multi-functional units.

---*Super House emergency shelters* (#5) are 25 hurricane-proof concrete buildings that provide shelter, water, energy and communications after natural disasters and otherwise function as a community center with a community roof garden.

---*E-hub self-sustaining housing box* (#11) provides housing units that generates its own power, water, connectivity and rental income, thereby providing safety and relief after a hurricane.

---*C-D’Home resilient homes* (#14) offers hurricane shelters by way of dome-shaped multi-purpose, commercial and community shelter inspired by turtle shells in areas that are lacking shelters.

---*DAM better window frames* (#20) offers innovative solutions for construction openings (doors, windows) through wind and waterproof buildings, reduced construction time, and based on traditional skills.

---*RUNNER UP 1 - Philipsburg Cultural Community Center* (#2) to be turned into an iconic building that houses the movement and programs for promoting the arts, social cohesion and economic viability in the center of the capital, and engaging tourists with the cultural heritage of the island.

---*RUNNER UP 2 - The Force social innovation network* (#4) supports and invests in community leaders through capacity building, skills-matching, seed and crowd funding thereby catalyzing job opportunities and economic growth.

---*CITS - Community Innovative Technological Solutions* (#9) aims to bring year-round socio-economical solutions to the community and tourists through entrepreneurship by way of a road show, mobile experience museum, creative entertainment, pop-up markets, information sessions, and related events.

---*RUNNER UP 3 - Maatin* (#19) provides free internet hotspots across the island for tourists and local community to inform them, help them post their experience on social media, to collect data on their movements, provide communication after hurricanes, and to protect the environment.

Environment

---*Algae Harvesting* (#6) aims to use algae micro-organisms in the St.Maarten’s salt pond to produce products (biofuels, cosmetics, food, etc) and become a tourist attraction in collaboration with local universities.

Entrepreneurship

---*Discovery platform for sustainable solutions* (#10) is an online platform that links people with ideas to relevant events, actionable data and people with expertise and resources, thereby moving them from unemployment to self-employment.

---*WINNER - Green Box recycling rewards program* (#12) aims to raise awareness around recycling, and stimulate citizens to recycle waste through an online app and waste pick-up service by which they can earn points that can be redeemed at retailers and restaurants.

---*Solar Flamboyant Park* (#16) is an initiative to recycle waste by turning the existing waste dump into a park for the community including a recycling plant and an arts center.

Disaster management

---*SMX AX disaster response app* (#17) provides an mobile online solution including drones for continuity in communication before, during and after a natural disaster.

---*The Better Bunker Box* (#15) is a concrete bunker that houses a container for critical communication for use directly after a hurricane and for emergency response units to use until regular services return.
A task force consisting of 5 local Build Back Better champions, BBB-liaison coordinator (to connect the initiative with Government, World Bank, UN agencies and other local stakeholders), supported by an advisory group from the organizers UNDP, COE, EY, 360° Innovation

Follow up event planned in eight weeks in St. Maarten.