

# COMMUNITY ACTION

SUB-REGIONAL NEWSLETTER  
OF GEF - SGP IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN



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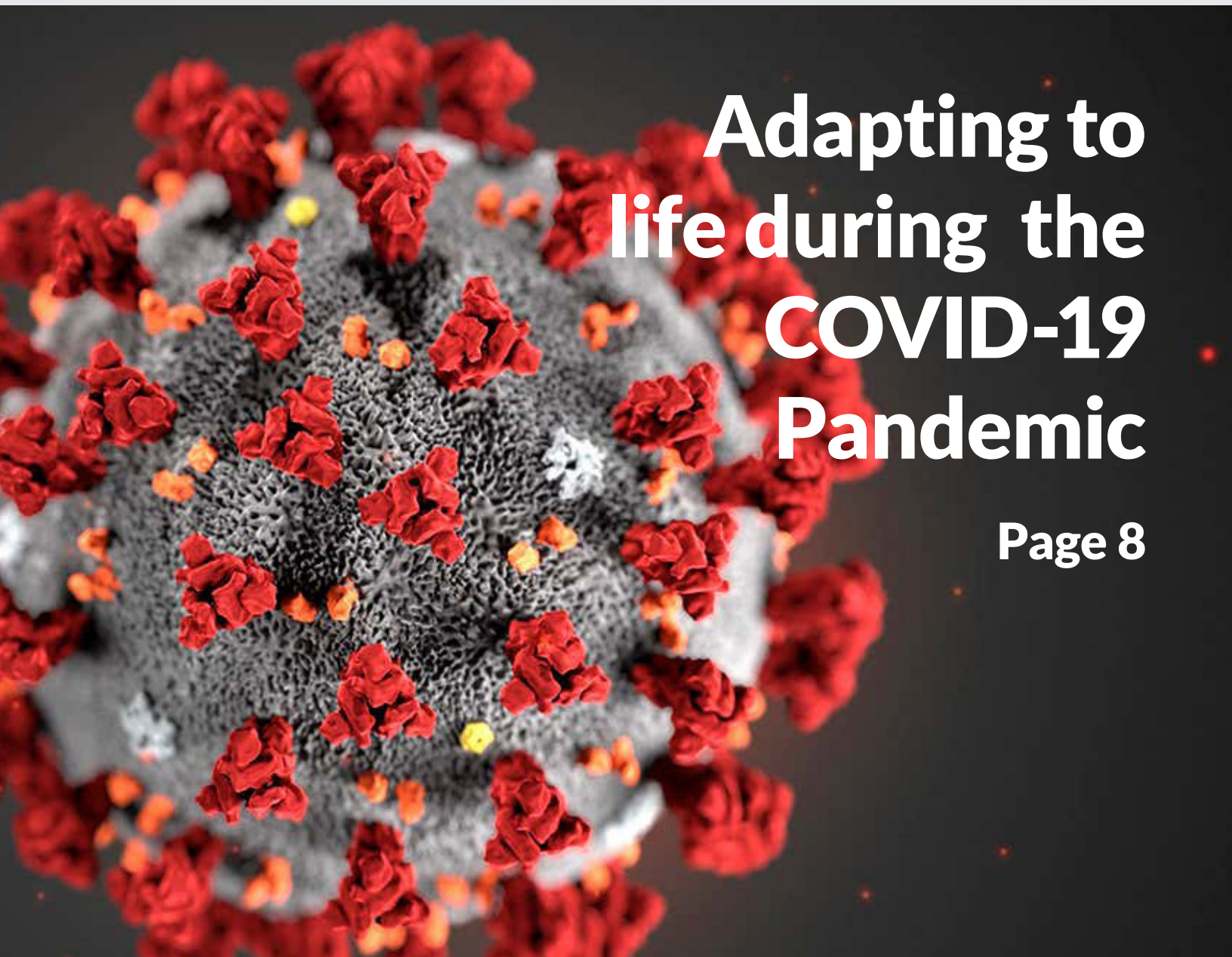
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## Editor's Note

Dear Readers and Colleagues,

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the new GEF-SGP sub-regional newsletter, Community Action. The objective of this quarterly publication is to highlight the exciting work of the Small Grants Programme throughout the Caribbean Sub-Region, as well as the professional milestones of the amazing regional team.

2020 has been named by some as the "Year of the Virus". Indeed, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the sub-region, since the very first confirmed case on March 13, 2020. In this issue, we not only take a look at the pandemic, but also at some of the COVID-19 success stories within the sub-regional community. Additionally, I am delighted to share with you the new "Project Spotlight" section, which provides brief snapshots of some of the ongoing projects in each country.

Also, allow me to officially offer congratulations and best wishes to our new Antigua and Barbuda National Coordinator, Ms Natalya Lawrence. Welcome to the team! You can learn more about Natalya in our "Welcome Aboard" section.

Finally, I wish to say thank you to all of the SGP colleagues for your contribution to this newsletter and I look forward to publishing even more about the important projects and community work that you do throughout the sub-region in the future.

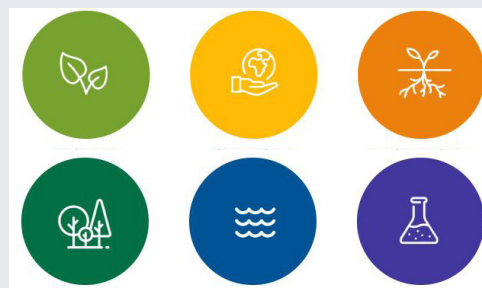
**Kerron Hamblin**  
Sub-Regional Junior Programme Officer  
GEF-Small Grants Programme

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Rear Cover: Map of the Caribbean      © Wikipedia Commons

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## About GEF SGP



### Mission & History

The GEF Small Grants Programme was established in 1992 and embodies the very essence of sustainable development by "thinking globally acting locally". The Programme provides financial and technical support to projects that conserve and restore the natural environment, while enhancing livelihoods and well-being.

Through grants, the Small Grants Programme provides up to \$50,000 US directly to local communities including indigenous people, community-based organisations and other non-governmental groups for projects in Biodiversity, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, Land Degradation and Sustainable Forest Management, International Waters and Chemicals.

The Programme is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and executed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

### SGP in the Caribbean Sub-Region

The Sub-Region is comprised of the following countries:

Antigua & Barbuda  
Barbados  
Dominica  
Grenada  
St. Kitts & Nevis  
St. Lucia  
St. Vincent & the Grenadines



## Foreword

Dear Readers and Colleagues,

2020 marked the beginning of a Decade of Action towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), however 2020 has not been without its challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic is indeed one of the greatest global challenges that humanity has faced in recent times; the consequences of which are still unclear but may have lasting effects for generations. The context for global development has fundamentally changed. Throughout the Caribbean, with restriction of movement and reductions in commercial air travel, the vulnerability of small island developing states (SIDS) economies has been brought further into focus. COVID has forced governments to rethink models for economic development, while causing us all to adopt new ways of navigating our day to day lives.

However, it is not all doom and gloom. While the crisis has forced minimal activity in many areas around the globe, the impacts of reduced energy usage and travel, for example, have shown some benefits to the environment. Cancelled conferences, festivals, concerts and other public events have diminished interest in travel. As such, aviation emissions – which accounted for 2.4% of global CO<sup>2</sup> emissions in 2018, according to the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI) – have dropped significantly. Also, with fewer persons commuting globally, the planet is expected to see its first fall in global emissions since the 2008-2009 financial crisis.

UNDP, through its integrated approach to the COVID crisis, has been working alongside its sister agencies, country partners and civil society to ensure gender equality is at the heart of our COVID-19 priorities and service delivery. UNDP is already working to understand the social, economic and political impacts of the crisis, and to find ways to mitigate them with sustainable, resilient and rights-based solutions crafted with the public and private sectors. This leverages our capacity on innovation, digital solutions, social protection systems, response to increased gender-based violence, emergency job creation and economic restoration.

In Barbados, through the GEF-Small Grants Programme, one grantee (Dr. Angela Moore) has been particularly innovative in their response to the pandemic, where Sargassum seaweed and Aloe vera were used to create hand sanitisers containing 70-75% alcohol and other sanitizing products. In Petite Martinique, Grenada the necessity to provide their community with fresh produce, due to breakdowns in supply chains from mainland Grenada and neighbouring islands, led the Women of Petite Martinique to build an aquaponics system to grow their own produce. Indeed, these are just some examples of women at the centre of the COVID response efforts, however in charting the way forward, it will require the efforts of us of all.

**Magdy Martinez-Soliman**  
Resident Representative  
UNDP Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean



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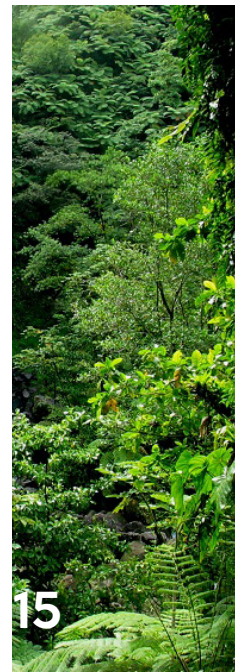
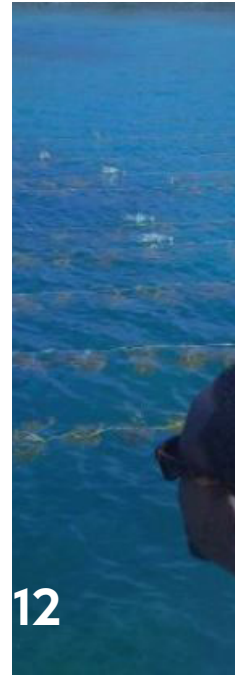
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# COVID-19 SNAPSHOT

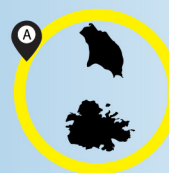
Number of cases of COVID-19 throughout the sub-region by country at a glance\*

\* As of August 5, 2020 at 3PM  
Source: World Health Organisation

 = Total confirmed cases

 = Recovered cases

 = Deaths



## ANTIGUA & BARBUDA



92



75



3



## BARBADOS



133



100



7



## DOMINICA



18



18



0



## GRENADA



24



23



0



## ST KITTS & NEVIS



17



16



0



## ST LUCIA



25



24



0



## ST VINCENT & THE GRENADINES



55



45



5

0



# BEFORE

The Coconut Walk Reforestation Area in 2018



Inset Top: Extensive erosion at the site prior to work beginning  
Inset Bottom: Aerial view of site

# AFTER

The Coconut Walk Reforestation Area in October 2018



Inset Top: Sea grape (*Coccoloba uvifera*) hedges are some of the planted vegetation at the site.  
Inset Bottom: In 2020, the site continues to recover with the growth of grasses, sedges and other vegetation types.



# ON THE WORLD STAGE!

## St. Kitts Strategic Project receives global award

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

– Margaret Mead.

The Nevis Historical and Conservation Society was recently awarded the Energy Globe World Award, today’s most renowned environmental prize for innovative and sustainable solutions to environmental problems, for the GEF-SGP funded project “Combating Land Degradation on the Historic New River and Coconut Walk Coastline”. The project addressed land degradation of the Coconut Walk Bay due to overgrazing by wild donkeys and small ruminants, as well as erosion. Additionally, many coconut trees had disappeared and widely practised farming techniques did not protect the soil.

In response to this, nearly 70,000 m<sup>2</sup> of land was allocated to the Nevis Historical and Conservation Society by the Nevis Island’s Department of Agriculture. Through funding from the Small Grants Programme, the land was then fenced to keep the grazers at bay, while a landscape plan was developed by a professional landscaper. Almost 50,000 m<sup>2</sup> were planted with drought, wind and salt spray resistant plants, which were supported by an irrigation system. The construction of sediment traps and catchments that had previously been eroded by rainfall, particularly those adjacent to the main road were facilitated. These traps aid water retention and vegetation regrowth, providing habitats for insects, lizards and birds. along with their results.

To educate the general public about the importance of the natural environment, public awareness programmes about environmental protection were conducted through a range of media, including social media, radio, TV and flyers.





# Answering the Call: Civil Society partners respond to COVID-19 in Barbados

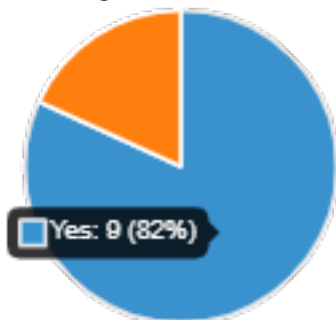
By David Bynoe  
and Karen Harper

COVID-19 crept in with stealth, as a thief in the night and raged pandemonium across the globe. It crossed national borders, international waters and wreaked havoc on the health, wellbeing and socio-economic fabrics of every country in its path. Without discrimination for gender, race, age, socio economic status or geographical location, we all were at risk.

The economic, social and public health implications of this fight have already proven to be catastrophic for most countries. During this trying and difficult period civil society has demonstrated their resilience and the essential nature of their work to uplift and preserve the very fabric of society.

**“82% of grantees impacted negatively by the pandemic”.**

According to our internal survey results on the impact of COVID-19 on our grantees, 82% of grantees indicated that they were impacted negatively by the pandemic as a result of one or more of the following factors; organisation closures; loss



of staff/volunteers; lack of access to public services; cancellation or postponement of activities/events and; limited access to project beneficiaries.

During this unprecedented time, our civil society partners were challenged but still they continued to evolve and remain relevant in the face of COVID 19. This is being achieved through innovation, meaningful partnerships, strategic interventions and scalable initiatives that are helping to flatten the curve by meeting the needs of the most vulnerable while protecting our environment.



One of these organisations is Healing Waters International Ministries (HWIM) which has been developing and manufacturing solutions as a direct response to the pandemic. For them, COVID-19 became an opportunity for the charity to further innovate with the production and testing of their hand sanitizers, organic handwashes and moisturizers following the launch of their 'Go Green with Teens' project launch in November 2019.



**Above:** Dr Angela Moore, President of Healing Waters International Ministries gets some assistance in producing range of products, designed to help Barbadians sanitise themselves and their homes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Left & Below:** The range of sanitising products produced by Healing Waters International Ministries.

The products have been tested and are at the standard suitable for use against COVID-19 containing 70-75% alcohol. In addition, the blue economy project includes local inputs such as Sargassum seaweed and Aloe Vera (*Aloe barbadensis*). Although the project dynamics have changed due to the pandemic and physical distancing, Dr Angela Moore, President of HWIM has been tapping into online communication platforms to maintain contact and interaction with the project's beneficiaries.







**Above & Below:** Biocultural Education and Research Programme harvesting gully root



**Top Right:** Facebook live tour of the medicinal plants museum with grantee, Biocultural Education and Research Programme



**Centre Right:** Facebook live farm tour with grantee, Baird's Village Aquaponics Association



**Above:** Photos from the Facebook live farm tour with grantee, Baird's Village Aquaponic Association.

## Refocusing Programme Delivery

During this period, SGP Barbados also quickly refocused the delivery of our programme as we anticipated the potential delays in implementation. We transitioned from site visits and physical meetings to providing technical and project support via telephone and online communication.

It also meant reimagining the way that we would celebrate 2020 World Environment Day and World Oceans Day as the plans for the much anticipated 2020 Small Island Future Fest halted in March once the pandemic reached our shores. Immediately our vision of a two day street festival transitioned to hosting and co-hosting 20 online sessions including Facebook live tours, ask an expert session via ZOOM and Skype to highlight the work of the grantee network in our local communities. This was a new experience with many learning lessons for our team, however, we embraced the new norm and succeeded! From 2-8 June our week of activities received remarkable online engagement from the grantees and the general public who were able to access our social media to 'contact an expert, go on a tour and celebrate their environment'.





## Welcome aboard!

Natalya Lawrence is the newest addition to the Caribbean GEF SGP team. Hailing from Antigua & Barbuda, Natalya left the world of finance to work in the field of environmental conservation. She led the award-winning Offshore Islands Conservation Programme at the Environmental Awareness Group for ten years where she was always eager to learn and eager to share her knowledge. Under her leadership, the programme enjoyed amazing successes including seeing a dramatic increase in the population of endemic, Critically Endangered Antiguan Racers. She has also made great strides in connecting people to nature through birds.

Outside of work, it comes as no surprise that Natalya is an avid birder. She also enjoys swimming, learning languages, reading, and playing the piano. She lives by the verse, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"*.

As she steps into her new role as the National Coordinator for the Antigua and Barbuda programme, she brings key skills such as project management, outreach, Invasive Alien Species Management, and biodiversity conservation.

We welcome her into the family, as she works with NGOs, CSOs and FBOs towards expanding and scaling up our mission across the Region, and look forward to a successful journey with you!

Welcome to the GEF- SGP family!

## Project Spotlight

*"Teamwork is the secret that makes common people achieve uncommon results"*

- Ifeanyi Enoch Onuoha.

Throughout the sub-region, the Small Grants Programme has been affecting meaningful change at the community level in each of thematic areas of focus, through the hard work and dedication of each country's National Co-ordinator and their teams. "Project Spotlight" seeks to highlight some of the projects, either currently ongoing or recently concluded, in each country within the Sub-Region, along with their results.

In this Project Spotlight, we will look at:

- Pathways to phase down and phase out mercury in Antigua & Barbuda
- Building capacity of local communities to reduce risks and impacts through climate change adaptation in Dominica
- The Introduction of aquaponics for sustainable food crop production by the Women of Madam Pierre, Petite Martinique, Grenada
- Rehabilitation of Mansion Bay to support biodiversity conservation, community use and livelihood development in St. Kitts & Nevis
- Blue growth on the Grenadines through opportunities for sustainable livelihoods in St. Vincent & the Grenadines





# Women in Action in Petite Martinique, Grenada

*By Akeiska Clarke*  
*President of Women in Action*

Petite Martinique is a small arid island with an estimated population of less than 900 people and is a sister island of Grenada. There are no available rivers or streams on the island. Rainfall is limited to a short season which restricts the proper cultivation of crops to supply the small community annually with fresh fruits and vegetables. Residents rely on imports of agricultural products from both mainland Grenada and the neighbouring island of St. Vincent, which was severely affected as a result of COVID-19.

Agriculture on the island faces many challenges; mainly the harsh salty wind of the eastern coast, a very short rainy season and a soil type that provided very little nutrients and moisture. Considering these challenges, the women in the community of Madam Pierre were in search of a way to solve this problem in order to provide a healthy source of fresh available food on their island year-round.

After much research about using various methods of growing food crops, it was discovered that the plants would also have to be protected from local stray ruminants and provided with shade to combat the long, almost drought-like conditions.

In the end, the women's group decided that an aquaponics system, housed inside a greenhouse and powered by solar energy, was the best solution to a complex situation. Over a period of 16 months, with funding from the GEF SGP Programme, the women of Petite Martinique have gone on a mission of learning, adapting



Above: Aquaponics system constructed by the Petite Martinique Women's group.



and implementing their own system. Today they produce lettuce, Pac Cho, peppers, cucumbers and different types of seasonings which they use as part of their food source.

As this became one of the main sources of fresh produce for the island due to Covid-19, the group was unable to meet the demands of the public. This further highlights the need for more intensive use of aquaponics systems.

In the future, the women of Petite Martinique hope to upscale the level of production, so as to be able to efficiently supply all the needs of the people on their island, thus not only providing a reliable source of fresh food but also to be able to generate a sustainable income for the women on their island.





Bird Tower and future honey shop on Union Island



Mayreau seamoss products at the Easterval celebrations

# Diversification Key to Survival

*Livelihood diversification project onstream to address overfishing by providing alternatives for economic opportunity and strengthening fisheries management.*

A local NGO, Sustainable Grenadines Inc. (SusGren), is working with fisherfolk in the Grenadine islands of Union Island, Mayreau and Bequia, to provide supplementary forms of livelihoods through honey production and seamoss farming. Through the strategic grant received from SGP, SusGren is carrying out a project entitled "Blue Growth on the Grenadines through Diversification of Fisherfolk Livelihoods". It aims to support fisherfolk through providing a number of alternative economic opportunities. One such activity is the support of the Union Island Fisherfolk Cooperative (UIFC) in expanding their current bee-keeping operation from 15 to 30 bee hives, which will develop their commercial honey production and generate around \$70,000 EC in sales within the project's lifespan.

In addition to this, SusGren will also work with the UFC and the Mayreau Explorers Cooperative in the marketing of honey and sea moss products at cultural events throughout the country, and the creation of promotional videos for the products, with airing scheduled

on national television. As a component of the marketing outputs, 15 persons will be trained in fundamental marketing and promotions, and improved branding will be developed for honey by-products.

Through the project, there are also plans to develop existing seamoss farming businesses to boost sales of the raw product (dried seamoss) and sea moss rum punch and seamoss ice cream generating approximately \$25,000 EC per annum to a projected \$55,000 EC per annum within the project's lifespan.

The development of a fish storage facility, consisting of two retrofitted shipping containers, is also planned. The facility will reduce spoilage, improve product quality, provide fishers with a cheaper source of ice and assist in the supply of additional markets.



Beehives of the Union Island Fisherfolk Cooperative



Training for Bequia Fishers

## Institutional Strengthening for Bequia Fisherfolk

SusGren is also working on establishing a fisherfolk cooperative in Bequia to enable greater participation in fisheries governance and management.

Institutional strengthening of other Grenadine fisherfolk cooperatives (Union Island Fisherfolk Cooperative, Ashton Multipurpose Cooperative and Mayreau Explorer's) will also be supported through institutional self-assessments, and then the creation and implementation of action plans to address areas of weakness to further support the successful operation of the cooperatives.

*The Blue Growth on the Grenadines project officially began on January 1, 2020 and is expected to close in June 2021.*





## Restoration of Mansion Bay underway

*Environmental Restoration project continues in St Kitts & Nevis.*

Family and friends of Mansion and Christ Church community group in St Kitts & Nevis have been working towards the rehabilitation of Mansion Bay, a well known leisure activity spot for the Nicola Town community. Over time, the bay has been eroded by hurricanes, coconut trees have been uprooted and the pasture has become overgrown. The rehabilitation project seeks to restore the area to its former glory through the replanting of trees and shrubs, such as seaside almond, sea grapes and beach Mahoe. These species will both support soil conservation efforts, as well as providing habitats for native birds and insects.

In addition to the replanting efforts, rocks found along the eroded coastline have been used to create pools to provide safe areas for seabathers, protecting them from strong Atlantic tides. As a part of the transformation, a restaurant with vending booths will be added and the planting of palm, coconut and local fruit trees has already taken place. Community members will also assist in the construction of the benches and huts as part of the development of the picnic areas.







Zero Waste Antigua and Barbuda educate students on phasing out mercury and other toxic metals during the "Cool is Clean" Roadshow.

## Objectives of the Project

- Increase user awareness about the dangers of mercury by users, eg. dentists, boat owners, wholesale distributors of products containing mercury
- Increase public awareness about the dangers of mercury
- Improve compliance of the Antigua & Barbuda Customs Department to monitor & prevent mercury risk products that are imported into the island
- Advance alternatives and solutions to reduce mercury

# Mercury-Free Antigua & Barbuda becoming a reality

*Phasing down and out the use of mercury by between 10 and 20 percent by December 2020 through education, research and policy advancement.*

**Z**ero Waste Antigua and Barbuda (ZWAB) is currently implementing the Pathways to Phase Down and Phase Out Mercury Project funded by GEF/SGP. ZWAB is educating the public on the dangers of mercury through schools, social marketing, social media, and traditional media. The team is working nationally with Antigua and Barbuda's Mercury Focal Point, Dr. Christian and his team at the Ministry of Agriculture, the Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board, and Solid Waste Antigua and Barbuda to define local alternatives for mercury and public education. .

The Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority partnered with ZWAB to implement the Cool is Clean Schools Roadshow. Over 500 students participated in the project. The ZWAB team visited nine primary schools, five in September and four in November 2019 for the purposes of education and awareness raising.





# Local communities build resilience to climate change

The communities of Giraudel, Eggleston, Belles, Warner, Kalinago Territory and Salisbury in Dominica, are now better equipped with the knowledge of adapting to the impacts of climate change on agriculture and their livelihoods, through grant allocation of the AusAID funded Small Island Developing States - Community Based Adaptation programme (SIDS-CBA). Spearheaded by the Eggleston Heritage Committee, a local community based organisation, capacity in a number of stakeholder groups within the five communities were built through a series of workshops, practical sessions and demonstrations that focused on climate change adaptation, climate smart agriculture techniques, soil conservation, soil management & enrichment, composting, drainage systems, soil erosion reduction and drought management.

Sessions were conducted by experienced and knowledgeable local personnel, including Dr. Davidson Lloyd - soil scientist; Mr. Bernard Nation - Agricultural Engineer; Mrs. Marynese Titre - Nutritionist; Community animator and project leader, Shirley Alexander; experienced farmers and horticulturalists. Knowledge products developed in the workshops, such as "The Guide to Composting and Safe Practices", presentations and videos were disseminated.

As a result of the capacity building project, all communities are practising the techniques that they have learned such as utilising the compost that they produce, planting shrubs for ground cover, tree planting for soil stabilisation and improving drainage along roadsides. The techniques learned also have contributed to the improvement of livelihoods with participants being able to upscale their agricultural production, produce compost for sale, market their produce for sale online, plant trees on their holdings which can earn them money from fruit sales, and providing drainage installation services.



## COVID-19 underscores importance of Project

*Adapted from Annex E - Final Report; Building Capacity of Local Communities to Reduce the Impact of Climate Change (DMA/SIDS-CBA/2019/02)*

COVID-19 brought with it a number of challenges. One such challenge was access to fresh produce due to restrictions on movement. As part of the capacity building project led by the Eggleston Heritage Committee, five local communities in Dominica were taught about the increased use of non-chemical inputs during a series of workshop sessions.

With restrictions on movement on a health conscious population, many persons relied on obtaining fresh local foods within their communities. This in turn has led to an increase in income for small farmers and producers in these communities, and has encouraged community building where interested persons can form themselves into groups to promote their products and invest to increase their production.

This project has added its voice and demonstrated the need for the implementation of the "organic island" policy to support and promote organic farming in Dominica, which has been developed for several years but is yet to be enacted. As more communities embrace these best practices, it is expected that there will be increased buy-in leading to dialogue at the policy making level.



Practical training session on composting.  
Top right: Container and raised bed gardening.



COMMUNITY ACTION is a knowledge product of the  
GEF-SGP Country Programmes in the Eastern Caribbean

“If civilization is to  
survive, it must live on  
the interest, not the  
capital, of nature.”

— Ronald Wright

## CONTACT US

### **Antigua & Barbuda**

Natalya Lawrence

*National Coordinator*

[shawna.lawrence@undp.org](mailto:shawna.lawrence@undp.org)

### **Barbados**

David Bynoe

*National Coordinator*

[david.bynoe@undp.org](mailto:david.bynoe@undp.org)

### **Dominica**

Agnes Esprit

*National Coordinator*

[agnes.esprit@undp.org](mailto:agnes.esprit@undp.org) | [agnese@unops.org](mailto:agnese@unops.org)

### **Grenada**

Kadijah Edwards

*National Coordinator*

[kadijah.edwardsawrence@undp.org](mailto:kadijah.edwardsawrence@undp.org)

### **St Kitts & Nevis**

Ilis Watts

*National Coordinator*

[ilis.watts@undp.org](mailto:ilis.watts@undp.org) | [iliswatts@unops.org](mailto:iliswatts@unops.org)

### **St Lucia**

Giles Romulus

*National Coordinator*

[giles.romulus@undp.org](mailto:giles.romulus@undp.org) | [gilesr@unops.org](mailto:gilesr@unops.org)

### **St Vincent & the Grenadines**

Tasheka Haynes

*National Coordinator*

[tasheka.haynes@undp.org](mailto:tasheka.haynes@undp.org) | [tashekah@unops.org](mailto:tashekah@unops.org)

### **Sub-Regional Junior Programme Officer**

Kerron Hamblin

[kerron.hamblin@undp.org](mailto:kerron.hamblin@undp.org) | [kerronh@unops.org](mailto:kerronh@unops.org)