



THE

COMMUNITY LANTERN



**Chemical Free
Alternative to Food
Production for
Home Gardeners**

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National Coordinator's Message

It is a great pleasure to present to you our first publication of our newsletter The Community Lantern! Our newsletter will focus on the interventions made by local CSO's as they tackle environmental problems whilst creating sustainable solutions. Journey with us as we highlight projects implemented across our 32 islands state and shine the spotlight on our community Champions and local groups that so willingly take up the challenge of achieving the sustainable development goals through community action, innovation, sustainable livelihoods, and environmentally –sound initiatives.

In 2020, we were faced with the impacts of the novel corona virus and as we grappled with the uncertainties of the impacts that it would have on the implementation of our country programme, we quickly adapted and were able to persevere and overcame the many challenges that were faced. Just when we thought that we could handle the difficulties of covid 19, Mother Nature reminded us that she was still in charge as our country was plunged into darkness when our volcano La Soufriere erupted on April 9th, 2021, even as we were still struggling with covid 19 with increased cases and deaths.

The entire country was covered in mountains of ash and so were many of our projects that are located in the red and orange zones, closest to the volcano. This caused further delays to projects implementation as survival mode kicked in as many grantees were displaced. Many are still in the process of cleaning and trying to rebuild even now, seven months later. To say that the last two years have been trying for the SGP would be an understatement. However, as a Phoenix rises from the ashes, so shall St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

On behalf of the SGP team, I take this opportunity to extend heartfelt thanks and congratulations to our grantees who rose to the occasion, never giving up but instead finding new ways to get things done. To all our past and current grantees, we say thanks for your commitment and efforts in transforming our communities. As we prepare to face this New Year, we do so with much hope, determination and purpose to continue our work with the community stalwarts who work diligently to preserve our environment and who make it their life's work and legacy, which they will leave behind. "The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit" –Nelson Henderson.

To our National Steering Committee, I could not do my job without your continued support and I say thank you for your dedication and service to the programme and our country. Many thanks to all contributors to the newsletter. Special thanks to Kerron Hamblin for willingly accepting the task of editing and designing our newsletter. We hope that it would be a joy to read and that it will ignite a passion in all to become stewards of the environment. We look forward to a brighter future as we transform our Communities, one CSO at a time. Local Action. Global Impact.

Tasheka Haynes-Bobb
National Coordinator

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



NSC Chairman's Message

Dear Readers and Colleagues,

During the last year, it has been a distinct pleasure serving on the Committee with such esteemed members and the country Coordinator. This experience has been very rewarding with the rich discussions generated and the various field visits made to the various project sites.

In the first few months of the year, seminars were conducted to adequately prepare potential applicants for the application process. The interest shown was overwhelming. This intervention provided an excellent platform for the submission of some very interesting projects, to the extent that it was an almost excruciating task to eliminate any one application due to the limited 'pot' of funds.

Key to the approval of projects is impact on livelihoods and sustainability. We are therefore very elated to have seen the successful completion of a wide range of such projects, which have and will continue to contribute immensely to improving the health of the environment in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. While some projects were completed, others were unfortunately impacted negatively by the eruption of the La Soufriere volcano and the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused significant delays. It is our desire to continue to work with these stakeholders to address these challenges.

I would like to thank the members of the committed for their dedication, hard work and support during my tenure. Additionally, I wish to thank the stakeholders for their resilience and cooperative spirit during the year, especially under the challenging circumstances. To the recipient, it is your persistency and commitment to these projects, which give us the inspiration to work harder to serve you.

Marcus Richards
Chairman
National Steering Committee

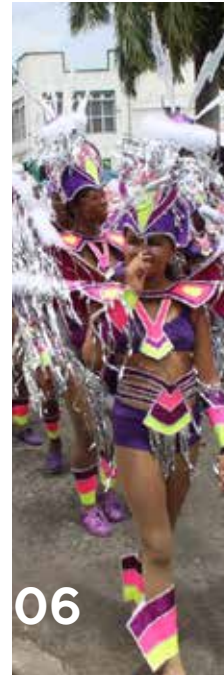
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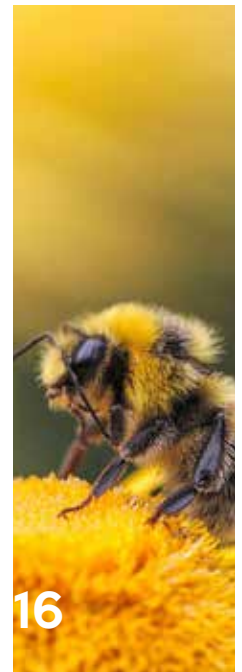
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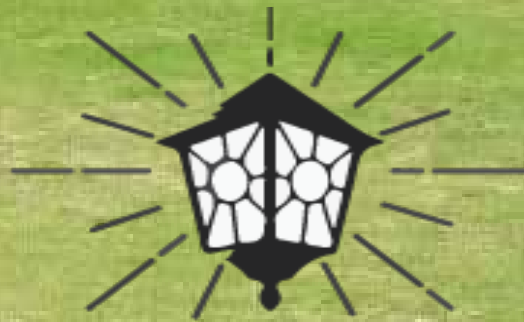
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THE COMMUNITY LANTERN



Climate Change through the Arts - “The Evolution”

The issues of climate change continue to affect our small island developing states and local NGOs in St. Vincent and the Grenadines continue to develop innovative and creative ways to sensitize communities on how to reduce the impacts that it may have. However, one local NGO, Blondie Bird and Friends, decided it was time to get more inventive with delivering the message of climate change. To ensure that their idea received full support and influence, the group tapped into the resources of the GEF Small Grants Programme to help propel their plans to use the creative arts medium to spread the message about climate change at one of St. Vincent and the Grenadines’ major annual cultural event – Vincy Mas. In 2019, the group used the integration of culture and environmental activism to deliver the message about climate change by creatively designing carnival costumes to depict the effects of climate change and ways to mitigate its impacts.

Hundreds of carnival lovers paraded the streets of capital Kingstown adorned in these colourful costumes and brought climate change awareness to life in this artistic initiative. The group also took their efforts to four (4) rural communities in exciting and informative rallies which engaged the children and the not-so-agile adults. The NGOs hard work and creativity were not slighted by the judges who awarded them 3rd place that year.







Madeira Valley Forest Park

A scenic journey along the Windward Highway on the Eastern coast 40 minutes from our Capital Kingstown on the mainland, and a mere 15 minutes from the Argyle International Airport will lead you to the Madeira Valley Forest Park in Bridgetown/Biabou - a beautiful park and nature trail over three levels.

Madeira Valley is a secluded landscape and Agro Forest located on the Massey Estate - and this NGO was established to maintain the forest species of the coastal dry forest of the lower Massey Valley, as well as showcase the rich agricultural, economic, and cultural heritage of the community.

The park is undergoing crucial and long term development work and has had important links with and received financial assistance through funding from GEF for the Pilot Phase 1 in 2018 - 2019 and again in May 2020 to July 2021 with Phase 2 of \$US 50,000 for each phase to the tune of \$US100,000 - and is now in the process of awaiting funding for phase 3 - to include work on the Agro - Forest Museum and Cultural Orientation Centre - a project which is now coming along by leaps and

bounds but has been seriously hindered by the Soufriere volcano eruption of 9th April 2021 as well as the more recent Hurricane Elsa on 2nd July this year, which caused significant damage to plants and trees. Noteworthy is an historical and original stonework which has been incorporated into the design of the building.

Although the building is far from complete it was decided to make the 'trail' available to the public due to overwhelming public interest. Hundreds of visitors have had the opportunity for relaxation, reflection and rejuvenation at the space - with its chirping birds, and natural beauty including a waterfall.







Vertiver Planting for Sustainable Livelihoods & Land Conservation

One of our local NGO Hand2Earth's (H2E) slogans is "soil-centred livelihoods" reflecting the organisation's focus on building sustainable communities through an intrinsic relationship with the flora, fauna and natural heritage of our islands. Working on the premise that soil quality is fundamental to biodiversity and by extension our own health, this project works with participants planting and propagating the deep-rooted vetiver grass for slope stabilisation, prevention of topsoil runoff, soil regeneration, natural pest control and groundwater retention. The project employs the leaves of the vetiver plant as natural fertiliser, and as a rapidly renewable resource for hand-craft production.

In 2018, H2E established a vetiver nursery site in Penniston integrating conservation education with prisoner rehabilitation. Beneficiaries were participants in the sustainable livelihoods vetiver grass

craft training (Grow in Time) program that started in SVGs prisons in 2015. This UNDP GEF SGP funded project expands the effective engagement with prisoners, addressing land conservation through demonstration of sustainable farming systems to assist prisoners and ex-offenders to become productive community members and take part in the urgent movement towards building climate change resilience and food security.

The project engages a team of former prisoners who graduated from handcraft training and workshops on entrepreneurship and land conservation whilst in prison. Seven ex-prisoners work in setting up a demonstration farm site and a vetiver craft workshop as part of an alternative and/ or subsistent livelihood for them. The team is growing as it engages at-risk youth and other ex-offenders in an effective intervention to the path of crime and recurrent

imprisonment. The project will also provide entrepreneurship training to prisoners and ex-offenders, as well as skills training to female prisoners. The project is designed and coordinated by Hand2Earth founder, Vonnice Roudette who states "This project has grown organically, widening its scope, and our team is dedicated to creating outcomes that benefit community and natural heritage while creating alternative livelihoods and food security. One of our main objectives is to deliver sustainable livelihoods' skills', entrepreneurship training and sustainability education to those at risk of social marginalization and economic dislocation. The ultimate aim is to create safer, productive communities that are climate change resilient.





Home Gardeners Learn Healthy, Chemical-Free Alternative to Food Production

Like most people in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Altrice Lampkin grew up in a household where farming was part of their culture. In Spring Village, her parents grew root crops while her in-laws, in Barrouallie, where she now lives, plant peas and sorrel. The farming that Lampkin knew was, “... when the plants get to a certain stage, you apply the chemical fertiliser”.

However, some time ago, she visited a friend and saw a different type of farming. It was a relatively small backyard garden in which a wide variety of fruits and vegetables were being grown. Further, it was quite obvious that her friend's farming included a lot of natural fertiliser, such as grass cuttings. Lampkin learned that her friend's garden was part of the home garden project executed by Richmond Vale Academy (RVA) through grant funding from the GEF Small Grants Programme. She, too, applied and was successful. The programme focused on permaculture -- a way of ecological — organic — sustainable farming.

“With this, it has no chemical. It is just the

material from the bananas, grass and that kind of stuff,” Lampkin beams as she points to her garden. “I think this way is better because it is healthier; no chemicals at all.” Lampkin's backyard garden is planted with lettuce, chives, bok choy, bean, avocado, sage, dill, tomatoes, pineapples, sugarcane, saffron, and ginger. She had never thought it possible to grow so many things in such a small space. Lampkin is one of fifteen (15) Barrouallie farmers who have successfully applied for participation in the project.

Towards the end of 2019, RVA received a US\$30,000 grant from the GEF Small Grants Programme to create 15 home gardens in Barrouallie. Danail Petrov, the Programme Coordinator, says that the home garden project aims to reverse the heavy dependence on chemicals that has characterised agriculture over the last 80 years or so. “Instead of being farmers, we are chemists. We have lost our connection with the ground and with nature and we just learn how to solve ‘problems’ through chemicals,” he explains.

Under the project, participants learn

how to use plants as fertilisers and pesticides as well as for weed control. They learn how various natural elements come together to produce healthy, nutritious food, which do not deplete the soil. “The idea is to mimic the natural environment,” Petrov says.

The Richmond Vale Academy has been a key organization in the drive for organic home gardening and have completed more than one hundred home gardens in the villages of Fitz Hughes, Chateaubelair, Petit Bordel, Rose Bank, Troumaca, Rose Hall, Wallilabou, Barrouaille, Buccament and Fancy.





Creating Sustainable Livelihoods

One of the more experienced NGOs in the Southern Grenadine island of Union Island, Sustainable Grenadines Inc. (SUSGREN) has dedicated its efforts to creating sustainable livelihoods for community residents on that island as well as Mayreau. Working along with the Mayreau Explorers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Ltd, a group of dedicated individuals engaged in the farming of dried seamoss (*Gracilaria* spp. and *Eucheuma* spp.), SusGren has contributed to the group's development and expansion of their local business ventures of producing ice cream made from the locally grown and harvested seamoss. The NGO's investment in the group includes the provision of an ice-cream maker, materials to expand their vertical seamoss system, support for training in ice-cream making and materials for drying tables.

With such investments in the Mayreau Explorers, SusGren has to ensure the safekeeping of the equipment and

supplies. Therefore, with a grant from the GEF Small Grants Programme, the NGO constructed a facility so that the group can process the seamoss and other valued added products and act as a point of sales as they continue to develop their business. On July 16, 2021, a handing over ceremony was held at the Combination Café on Mayreau where the Mayreau Explorers officially received the keys to commence operations. The facility, which stands on just over 1000 square feet, houses a storage, processing and drying room along with an office space.



The Honey Hut! A Home for Bees on Union Island

This multipurpose facility is the newest addition to the Ashton Lagoon Trail and serves as part of efforts to further develop the honey industry in the Grenadines. Tuesday, November 17th, 2020 was a momentous occasion for residents of Union Island following the unveiling of the Honey Production Facility and Flow Hives System.

Attendees were given a full tour of the facility and also had the opportunity to sample the exotic mangrove honey, which is 100% organic. The construction of the honey facility is a scaled-up activity from a previous GEF SGP project entitled “Building Benefit for Nature and People: Strengthening NGOs for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods”. One of the activities of that project was to

construct two bird watching towers at Ashton Lagoon on Union Island. With this present project, SusGren converted the first level of the first tower into the Honey Production Facility, while keeping the top level for continued bird watching and monitoring. The photos below show the transformation.



Photo 1- Before construction



Photo 2 – During construction



Photo 3 – After construction

OP7 Projects Under Implementation



Scale-up the Seamos Industry in St. Vincent and the Grenadines through training and Value-added products

Implementing Organisation:
Sustainable Grenadines Inc
(SUSGREN)

Objectives:

1. To conduct national training sessions for seamos growers (new and existing farmers) throughout SVG within the first year of the project.
2. Implement a small grants programme for seamos growers (existing and new) by the end of project implementation.

Project Total: USD \$50,000



Growth and Sustainability of Beekeeping in SVG

Implementing Organisation:
SVG Beekeepers Association Inc.

Objectives:

1. To increase honey production to at least 2100 gallons per year within the next 2 and half years.
2. Increase the production of domesticated hives by 700 hives within 2 and half years
3. Produce sufficient queens that will satisfy the demand for beekeepers
4. Enhance the capacity of the SVGBA to conduct its operations,
5. Improve the current for honey production standards and invest in the bottling and labelling of at least 6 honey products on the market.



Project Total: USD \$50,000



Strengthening conservation and building community value of natural resources, through Ashton water catchment refurbishment, establishment of a community park and increasing capacity for protection of the Union Island gecko

Implementing Organisation:
Union Island Environmental Attackers

Objectives:

1. To provide alternative sources of water by refurbishment of the Ashton catchment and pipe work improve access of water for the community by December 2021.
2. To increase public awareness and education through the establishment of the community park in recognition of the Cultural Folks Law and history of Union Island by December 2021.
3. To build capacity for the rangers to highlight the importance of the Union Island Gecko, its forest habitat and their preservation by 2022.

Project Total: USD \$100,000

Highlighting symbols of National heritage and Strengthening Community Support Systems

Implementing Organisation:
The University of the West Indies Open Campus

Objectives:

1. To identify and highlight at least two major symbols and artefacts of value and national significance
2. To restore architecture of national heritage within the grounds of the Open Campus
3. To commission and erect a sculpture in recognition of the cotton industry and workers at the cotton ginnery.
4. To promote heritage and cultural development through the strengthening of at least 4 targeted CBOs/NGOs
5. To promote and expose the artistic elements of culture through the staging of major public literary events.

Project Total: USD \$74,140



Meet the National Steering Committee

The SGP National Steering Committee (NSC) serves as the main decision-making body of the Small Grants Programme at the country level, and provides overall oversight, guidance, and direction to the Country Programme.



Marcus Richards

Born in 1969, Marcus Richards' early education was received at the Union Methodist in the rural community of New Grounds and Peter's Ville primary school in Kingstown. Later he attended the St. Vincent Boys Grammar School. Post-secondary education began at the Eastern Caribbean Institute for Agriculture and Forestry in Trinidad and Tobago. Later studies at the first degree and postgraduate levels were completed at the Agricultural University of Havana, in the Republic of Cuba.

In late 1989, he joined the Ministry of Agriculture after a short three months stint with the Geddes Grant group of companies. Currently as the Senior Agricultural Officer, he heads the Extension and Advisory Services Division (EASD), in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Industry and Labour, where he has developed and promote training relative to sustainable livelihoods, sustainable land and environmental management, water harvesting initiatives and support to farmer's Cooperatives for greater level of productivity and efficiency.

Prior to heading the EASD, he led the modernization of the Plant protection and Quarantine diagnostic laboratory, where he worked for more than 10 years. During this period, much interest was generated for biological pest management and management of major pest management in St. Vincent and the Grenadines as such a number of publications were published.

It is his aspiration to see farmers improve their livelihoods, especially added value to the raw materials so as to maximize their income.



Rochelle Baptiste

Rochelle Baptiste is a graduate of the University of the West Indies with a Bachelor's Degree in Media and Communication specializing in Public Relations and a Master's Degree in Managing Studies specializing in Human Resource Management.

Over the years, she has been engaged in a number of community organizations and is a founding member of the Owia Sports and Cultural Organisation (OSCO). She considers herself a Community Activist who is passionate about the upliftment of her people.



Deborah Dalrymple

Mrs. Deborah Dalrymple holds a B.A (Hons) in Psychology from York University, Toronto and a master's degree in Social Work (MSW) from the University of Toronto.

She is a Professional Social Worker, previously serving as Director of Marion House, a Social Service Agency for over twenty years.

She is currently Head of the UWI Open Campus, St. Vincent.



Michker N. Edwards

Michker N. Edwards is a Lecturer in the area of Agriculture Science and Entrepreneurship at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College, Division of Technical and Vocational Education (DTVE), where she has pursued her passion for the past 14 years. She is a part-time farmer and an ambitious agripreneur who wishes to contribute holistically to the development of the agricultural sector of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

"It is my [belief] that when the livelihoods of farmers and the youths increases, so does the economy of the country".



L. Fitzgerald Providence

A graduate of the University of New Brunswick, Canada, L. Fitzgerald Providence is trained in Forest Management and wildlife biology.

He is presently the Director of Forestry in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, having served thirty-five years with the institution.



Miriam Roache

Miriam Roache commenced her public service career as a primary school teacher in 1979. In August 2001, she joined the civil service as the Coordinator of the Gender Affairs Division in the Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development, NGO Relations, Family, Gender Affairs and Persons with Disabilities. Mrs. Roache has an impressive record as a volunteer and community worker. She currently serves as President of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Teachers' Cooperative Credit Union.



Simeon Greene

Mr. Simeon Greene holds a BSc. Degree in management and a MSc. Degree in Agriculture and Rural Development. Mr. Greene has served in numerous capacities during his career, including Educator, General Manager of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Banana Growers' Association, Permanent Secretary within the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and Labour, Director and Senior Executive of the Windward Island Banana Industry (both in the UK and the Windward Islands) and Consultant with FAO, Deloitte and Touché and Landell Mills.

Mr. Greene is a strong community activist and works with different community groups to implement projects that aim to develop and enrich communities. Now retired, he serves as an Elder of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and still continues his community work. He has been a member of the National Steering Committee since 2013.

JOIN OUR TEAM!

Support National Development through building up Civil Society Organisations

The GEF Small Grants Programme – St. Vincent & the Grenadines invites suitably qualified persons from non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations to apply to serve on our National Steering Committee.

The position is 100% voluntary and will last for 1 year, but may be extended based on performance and mutual agreement.

The National Steering Committee meets once per quarter, or as needed, to make decisions on proposed projects that contribute to the focus areas listed below:

1. *Community-Based Conservation of Threatened Ecosystems and Invasive Species Management.*
2. *Sustainable Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food Security.*
3. *Low Carbon Energy Access Co-Benefits.*
4. *Local to Global Coalitions for Chemicals and Waste Management.*
5. *CSO-Government-Private Sector Policy and Planning Dialogue Platforms*

The National Steering Committee also evaluates the Country Programme, ensuring that it is aligned to national and international priorities, and Sustainable Development Goals.

Additional responsibilities include supporting a platform that




allows networking and capacity-building among Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), supporting dialogue between CSOs, government and the private sector, and resource mobilization for CSOs.

Persons with experience in any of the aforementioned focus areas are encouraged to apply. Interested persons are asked to submit a one-page document outlining their skills and competencies to meet the requirements of the position.

For more information about the GEF Small Grants Programme or about the Programme's steering committee, please contact:

Tasheka Haynes-Bobb – National Coordinator
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“Look deep into nature, and
then you will understand
everything better.”

— Albert Einstein



SAINT VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

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