



**EAG TALK**  
THE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS GROUP

# Adoptacoastline, Keeping Antigua and Barbuda Nice



*Boat Stewards*



*Beach Trash in Antigua and Barbuda (c) Adoptacoastline*

By Natalya Lawrence – National Coordinator, GEF Small Grants Programme – UNDP

There's a blue wave of determination positively impacting over 20 miles of coastline around Antigua and Barbuda. You may have seen the evidence – the newly planted trees, the litter-free beaches, the signature tyre waste receptacles, painted ocean blue, and bearing the charge "Adopt-a-Coastline", an initiative, born out of love for the coastal environment, and the desire to see it thriving and healthy, for the good of people and wildlife.

The Community Coastal Stewardship Project, implemented by Adoptacoastline (Antigua and Barbuda) Inc, aims to "Restore Coastal Ecosystems to Pristine Habitat, Free of Waste". With



*Adoptacoastline Beach Tyre Bin*



*Adoptacoastline Youth Steward from Five Islands FC looking after Deep Bay*

funding of \$49,510 USD from the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme – UNDP (GEF SGP-UNDP), Adoptacoastline is promoting a paradigm shift in our society regarding



*Kahzia Phillip, Old Road Primary School - Adoptacoastline Youth Steward at Carlilse Bay*

coastal waste management.

Through this project, there will be up to 30 bins, across 10 to 15 beaches managed by sports teams, schools, community groups, businesses, yachts, and local and international volunteers. Women, youth, and communities in general, are being rallied to passionately pursue the health of the coastal environment through regular cleanups at specific sites, placement of bins, and awareness building among peers. Communities "adopt" beaches and bays and charge themselves with the responsibility of maintaining clean surroundings. After all, a healthier environment means healthier and happier people!

After a difficult week, I once sought to wind down into the weekend with my family by taking a refreshing dip at a popular beach. Devastated and disgusted are inadequate to describe the emotions experienced upon observing the state of the beach. What should have been a relaxing walk along the shore turned into a horrifying game of dodge the KFC box or dodge the bottle. Garbage covered the entire area hiding the sand. The awkward scene of gentle waves breaking, with plastic



*Youth Stewards Cleaning Coastlines in Antigua and Barbuda (c) Adoptacoastline*



*Johnson's Point bin making*

bottles, baking tins and a whole host of other litter rolling in the surf was the antithesis of what paradise should be. I remembered Naaman in the Bible, and thought I would not be channeling him that day.

This pervasive problem of dirty shorelines is exactly what Adoptacoastline is tackling. Their coastal stewards and volunteers see to it that the beaches are clean, welcoming, and ready to be enjoyed. More importantly,

their actions and engagement support behavioural change needed to make sure that these efforts are maintained into the future. Basically, Adoptacoastline is aiming to have coastal stewardship entrenched in the

minds of the upcoming generation, making it the norm, the way of life.

The benefits of the Community Coastal Stewardship Project are inexhaustible. The project has positive impacts for life on land as well as life under water, helping Antigua and Barbuda to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 14 and 15. The project also supports our country's mission to become a 'Plastic Waste-Free Island', and our aim to reduce or eliminate the presence of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in our natural world. POPs are highly toxic synthetic organic products that do not biodegrade into non-toxic products. They persist in the environment for decades.

With the very simple action of removing litter from the coastline, this project safeguards habitat for myriad species. It creates safe habitats for at least 25 species of birds (migratory and resident), by reducing the accidental ingestion of material, such as plastic, being mistaken for food. Trash on land ends up as trash in the sea, smothering coral and con-

tributing to their death. Removing the trash reduces the encounters of marine life, such as turtles, also ingesting litter as 'food', which may lead to choking, malnutrition, and a host of issues. On land and in the sea, wildlife can become entangled in trash, which may cut off circulation among other issues.

Adoptacoastline continues to diligently pursue pristine coastlines. They have teamed up with two other GEF SGP-supported projects with Good Humans 268 and West Indies Sail Heritage Foundation. Together, they are creating a circular economy, upcycling discarded plastics, fishing nets and other material into useful articles, and recycling. Adoptacoastline is also upscaling its efforts regionally, after winning a competitive award from Inclusive GEF Assembly Challenge Program.

It's sad that we would bite the very hand that feeds us – providing sustainable livelihoods (eg in fisheries, in tourism, in art), food, and respite from the cares of a busy world. If you want to be part of the change, there are simple actions you can



Ki'Niyah McKay Old Road Primary School - Adoptacoastline Youth Steward Carlilse Bay

implement: Practise the four Rs of waste management (reduce, re-use, recycle, refuse), responsibly enjoy the beach and leave it in a clean condition, join clean-up activities

encouraging others to do the same.

We want to effect change and hope that soon, the demand for cleanups will be diminished.

Adoptacoastline & Tree House Beach Club  
 Fort James Beach  
 Bin Making & Clean Up

Saturday 9 March 2024 at 8-10am  
 Meeting Point: The Tree House Beach Club Car Park  
 Enjoy a Cup of Bush Tea & Fungi Fries

Adopt a coastline  
 Pensioners Beach  
 Bin Making & Clean Up

Saturday 2 March 2024  
 at 9am

(Photos courtesy of Adoptacoastline)