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Photo: Rotary Club of Central POS - Model UN School Garden Project



GEF SGP Trinidad and Tobago Small Grants, Big Impacts

December 2015
E-Newsletter

COMMUNITY ACTION, GLOBAL IMPACT

Newsletter No. 7

Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

Thank you for subscribing to our newsletter! This is the 7th issue since our last Newsletter in March 2015, and we've have many exciting activities and successful projects to share with you. The year 2015 has been a significant and ground-breaking year for the United Nations, and we here at GEF SGP participated in many local, regional and international activities over the past few months. As the year closes, there will be many changes in 2016 as we adopt our new GEF SGP T&T Country Programme Strategy, align to the recently adopted UN Sustainable Development Goals, and look forward to the implementation of COP 21 Climate Change agreements. We also hosted a very successful Knowledge Fair 2015, launched Sustain T&T's GEF SGP film "A Better Place," and facilitated CSO- State Agency dialogues together with the IMA on the topic of Sargassum. As usual our work will never be possible without out committed grantee partners and stakeholders who continuously strive to make a difference within their communities through their work.

We invite you to share in our experiences and successes, as we wish you and your family, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE

- 1** GEF SGP at a Glance...
- 2** Grantee Stories
- 5** GEF SGP Updates- Knowledge Fair 2015, CPS, Sargassum
- 9** Global to Local Topics – COP21, SDGs
- 11** Awards & Recognition

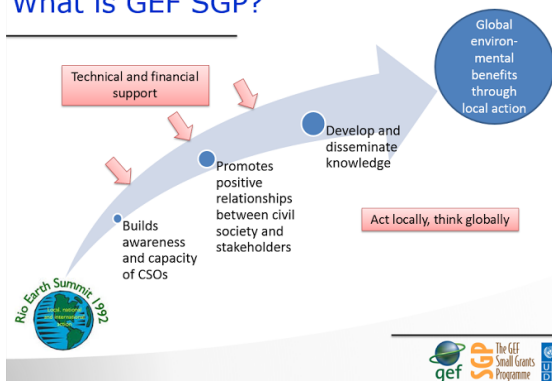
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About the GEF SGP

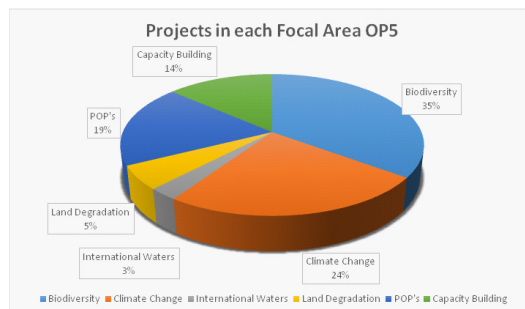
Established globally in 1992, the year of the Rio Earth Summit, the GEF Small Grants Programme embodies the very essence of sustainable development by 'thinking globally acting locally.' SGP is implemented in over 125 countries and recognizes that environmental degradation such as the destruction of ecosystems and the species that depend upon them, increasing levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, pollution in all its forms, land degradation and the spread of persistent organic pollutants are life-threatening challenges that endanger us all. However, poor and vulnerable communities –SGP's primary stakeholders- are most at risk because they depend on access to natural resources for their livelihoods and often live in fragile ecosystems. These environmental challenges also represent opportunities for civil society to use their traditional knowledge, become engaged, and develop their capacity to make a difference and drive sustainable development.

What is GEF SGP?



If you are a civil society organisation like a NGO, CBO, village council, academic or activist group planning a project that falls within our Strategic Initiatives, you may be eligible for a grant of up to US\$50,000. There is also a planning grant of up to US\$5,000 to be able to further refine your project as well before the full proposal/grant stage.

Read more on our website: <https://sgp.undp.org>
And Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/GEFSGPTT>



Facts and Figures

Operational Phase 5 (OP5), 2011-2015 has been the most successful Operational Phase to date:

- Currently 28 active projects but a total of 40 projects in OP5
- A total of 11 Projects in OP5 successfully completed.
- OP5 (June 2011-December 2015) Grant Allocation was USD \$1,880,000.00 and a total of USD\$1,727,067.23 was programmes (91% Grant Commitment)
- Funded a total of over 100 projects (1995 - 2015).
- Allocation for grants since inception in 1995 USD \$3,830,000.



PARVATI GIRLS' HINDU COLLEGE

Educating Children about Climate Change One Game at a Time.

BY: KAVITA SAMAROO



Kavita Samaroo - Project Coordinator
presenting at the Launch
of the game CLIMAQUEST®

Exactly two years from the signing of the MOA with GEF SGP UNDP, Parvati Girls' Hindu College officially launched CLIMAQUEST®. The launch of this edu-tainment game took place on November 17th 2015 at Naparima Bowl to a packed audience which included distinguished guests such as the UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Richard Blewitt and chairman of the Environmental Commission, Mr. Chateram Sinanan.

The CLIMAQUEST® game is a copyrighted and trademarked game of the school developed by four teachers, Kavita Samaroo, Babeeta Rampersad, Sherrie Seegobin and Susan Maharaj. The game aims to share information on the causes, effects and solutions to climate change as it pertains to Small Island Developing States. Within the game it also promotes the use of alternative energy, recycling, sustainable development and environmental conservation. It utilises local references to places and culture and has other local features such as a Hurricane Bacchanal and Sou Sou. Before the final game was manufactured, the prototype game was tested in various schools throughout Trinidad and Tobago. The game received positive reviews with both teachers and students. Students especially, varying in ages and forms, has praised the game as an exciting and innovating way to learn. CLIMAQUEST® also comes with supporting material in the form of electronic lesson plans in various subject areas to help educators utilise it as a teaching tool.

Parvati Girls' Hindu College and the CLIMAQUEST® team, truly believes that this game can effect positive changes in the attitudes of young persons towards the environment and thus tackle climate change through education.

Currently, the game is available in Charran's Bookstores, Keith Khan Books Etc. Ltd, Pepper House and directly from the school. CLIMAQUEST® is the perfect gift for a child or family this Christmas as it gives players the tools to tackle climate change and create a better future through increased knowledge and awareness.



Teachers and students of Parvati Girls'
Hindu College with the
newly launched game, CLIMAQUEST®

Contact for CLIMAQUEST® at Parvati Girls' Hindu College:
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Students at Pointe-a-Pierre Special School during a workshop geared towards children with disabilities learning about preparing and effectively responding in the event of an emergency/hazard through the use of alternative teaching methods (puppet show).



DIGICEL Trinidad and Tobago Foundation

Preparing You! - 'Disaster Preparedness Workshops for those with persons with Special Needs.'

BY ANDREW FRECTION

In July this year, the GEF SGP UNDP partnered with Digicel Foundation to implement a Community Based Adaptation pilot project called; 'Preparing You'. The initiative which was launched on July 8th, is well on the way to successfully achieving its intended goals. 'Preparing you' is A Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Evacuation Pilot Project for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities in Trinidad. The goal of this project is to expose persons with special needs and their caregivers to disaster preparedness and emergency evacuation strategies through a series of sensitization workshops. The project targets 5 schools in the South Western region of Trinidad that has been identified as areas that are vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change.

Vulnerability Reduction Assessments (VRAs), a Teacher Training Workshop and Student Training Sessions were some of the activities that have been conducted thus far. The VRA exercise provided an opportunity for each School to determine their level of preparedness for the occurrence of a range of disasters. After identifying areas where adaptation was needed, the thirty (30) Teachers including School Supervisors from the Ministry of Education and Fire Prevention Officers from the TT Fire Service came together at the Teacher Training Workshops

to discuss a range of strategies for improvement. This process was guided by Disaster Management Officers from the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM). The students were then trained in hazard identification and response. Alternative teaching techniques and therapy based methods were used in this phase and included the use of puppet shows, to convey ideologies of Climate Change and methods of adaptation to its negative effects. The Trinidad and Tobago Fire Services also completed Safety inspections and assessments of the schools' premises. The results of these assessments will be used to upgrade the disaster preparedness equipment of the five schools involved in this project.

In the upcoming months, the information gathered from the respective schools will be forwarded to the ODPM for the development of a Special Needs Population database. Additionally, the schools will be outfitted with new disaster mitigation equipment and emergency evacuation drills will be conducted to test their ability to respond to disasters.

The 5 partner schools are; Rio Claro Learning and Development Centre, Pointe-a-Pierre Special School, Servol Happy Venture, Lady Hochoy Penal and Lady Hochoy Gasparillo.



SUSTAIN T&T

Green Screen GEF Community Outreach

Green Screen - The Environmental Film Series was created by Sustain T&T, an environmental and sustainability educational non-profit organisation, to bring environmental awareness to the public through the medium of film. The 2015 theme for Green Screen is 'Together' which highlights the importance of partnerships, collaboration, networking and working towards a common cause.

A Better Place tells the inspirational stories of five environmental projects in T&T. These projects, all funded by the Global Environment Fund (GEF) Small Grants Programme, show the commitment and dedication of diverse groups working from where they are to make T&T a better place. These SGP grantee partners include:

- The UWI Chemistry Department
- The Environmental Research Institute Charlotteville
- The National Centre for Persons with Disabilities
- Nature Seekers
- Parvati Girls' Hindu College.



A Better Place Project Poster

The film highlights the personal stories of these five groups, making waves in their communities, and beyond. The Film is directed by award winning Director Miquel Galofre and produced by Sustain T&T's Carver Bacchus. It also features the work of local artists and musicians such as Freetown Collective, Black Loyalty, Gillian Moor, Solman and Ruth Osman.

The Media Launch for Green Screen which showcased the main attraction, the GEF SGP film 'A Better Place', occurred on the 16th October 2015 at the residence of the German Ambassador (Green Screen Partner). At the launch the preview of the film was screened as well as a 'behind the scenes' short video. The premiere of Sustain T&T's feature documentary 'A Better Place', took place on November 2nd at the Digicel IMAX. The film has also received additional screening times at the Digicel IMAX and has been screened to a number of secondary schools.



Members of Sustain T&T and T&T Rocks

To learn more visit: <http://abetterplacefilm.com/>

GEF SGP's Country Programme Strategy (CPS) Consultations 2015

The GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP), completed the preparation of our Country Programme Strategy (CPS) for GEF's 6th Operational Phase (OP6) of funding. The CPS is a strategic document which helps countries outline the expected development results to be achieved through the implementation of the SGP Programme.

The objective of OP6 is "to support the creation of global environmental benefits and the safeguarding of the global environment through community and local solutions that complement and add value to national and global level action". The development of this CPS required multi-stakeholder consultations to achieve broad consensus on the country programme approach for the next four years. These consultations were conducted with a range of organisations such as current Grantees, Non-Grantee Environmental Groups, Private Sector, Government Agencies, Bilateral and Multilateral Organisations, Embassies, National Steering Committee and a session was also held with Tobago Stakeholders comprised of mixed groups. These consultations were held over the period 12th – 27th August, 2015. The consultations were extremely significant, and many stakeholders were of the view that the new CPS focused on important Initiatives that addressed major environmental, economic and social issues in Trinidad and Tobago.

Seven (7) Strategic Initiatives

1. Community landscape/seascape conservation	2. Climate smart innovative agro-ecology	3. Low carbon energy access co-benefits	4. Local to global chemical management coalitions
5. CSO – government dialogue policy and planning dialogue platforms			
6. Promoting social inclusion			
7. Global reach for citizen practice based knowledge programme			



PHOTO SOURCE: GORGEE ELLIOTT

INITIATIVES WITH MANDATORY CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

As we move into a new phase of funding from the 5th Operational Phase (OP5) to OP6 there is a shift from the previous six GEF Focal Areas to seven more specific Strategic Initiatives with mandatory cross-cutting themes (which should be included in every funded project).

The seven Strategic Initiatives are:

1. Community landscape/seascape conservation
2. Climate smart innovative agro-ecology
3. Low carbon energy access co-benefits
4. Local global chemical management coalitions

Cross-cutting themes:

5. CSO – Government dialogue policy and planning dialogue platforms
6. Promoting Social Inclusion
7. Global reach for citizen practice based knowledge programme

With this change, the new CPS aligns Trinidad and Tobago country goals to that of the international framework, so that funding is utilised in the most effective way through GEF SGP grant projects.



Beached Sargassum at Matura Beach 2015. Staff from Nature Seekers assist a leatherback turtle to return to the sea.

The Development of a Sargassum Response Plan for Trinidad & Tobago – Stakeholder Consultation Meeting 2015

The Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP) implemented at UNDP and the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) has begun the facilitation of a series of key Stakeholder consultation meetings to expedite an effective way forward in dealing with the Sargassum crisis that is affecting many coastal communities nationwide.

GEF SGP is convening, on behalf of the IMA, a platform for dialogue among various Stakeholders. These sessions aim to facilitate discussions on the possible development of a National Sargassum Response Plan and an Emergency Agency/Committee. This requires multi-stakeholder consultations to achieve a broad consensus on the ideas geared to accomplishing this task in an effective and time efficient manner. Some of

the key goals in managing the issue at hand are public awareness, efficient knowledge exchange, collaboration among the various agencies and sectors, and research and development of Sargassum products.

On the 16th October 2015, an initial meeting was held with Government Agencies and Academic Institutions at the UN House in Port of Spain. Subsequently, on the 3rd of November 2015 civil society organisations came together to brainstorm on possible solutions to the problem. Some of the major points to note out of these meetings include:

- The 2015 Sargassum events were as a result of the warmer ocean temperatures, higher nutrient levels and ocean current circulation patterns.
- Sargassum masses are in fact living ecosystems and are significantly important to many marine species. Sargassum, when beached on shore can also contribute beach stability and reduce coastal erosion. These factors must be carefully considered when developing a response plan.
- The use of heavy machinery and equipment along beaches to assist with removal and clean-up of Sargassum severely affects beach dynamics and results in the removal of a large amount of sand from the beaches. Hand removal, although time



Sargassum at Speyside, Tobago in August 2015.

consuming and labour intensive, is always the best option.

- Local coastal and fishing communities are significantly affected by Sargassum events as it results in loss of livelihoods and other economic constraints. For future Sargassum events, fishermen can be employed to remove beached seaweed, or in other capacities, to compensate for loss of livelihood at this time.
- More research is required regarding the uses of Sargassum and also a more collaborated effort between research institutions to limit duplication.
- There is also a need for increased public awareness on matters concerning Sargassum.

These discussions enabled organisations to share lessons learnt make recommendations, and discuss best practices regarding Sargassum events. It was also agreed that an Early Warning System should be developed to help track and monitor future Sargassum events. Another important highlight of the meeting was the identification of the IMA as the focal agency to spearhead the Response Committee and Development of the Plan. GEF SGP in collaboration with the IMA will continue to facilitate

meetings with other various stakeholders to strive for a way forward.

There are many other agencies also working on the Sargassum matter. The Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) hosted a Symposium entitled 'Challenges, Dialogue and Cooperation towards the Sustainability of the Caribbean Sea'. The symposium took place at the Radisson Hotel, Trinidad and Tobago on the 23-24th November, 2015. Represented at the Symposium were a wide range of regional experts from eighteen (18) ACS member states and many other regional

programmes and projects. Day 1 of the symposium featured presentations on 'Facing the Threat of Sargassum Seaweed' and input from participating organisations and territories on challenges faced in their varying countries. It also provided an opportunity for lessons learnt and best practices to be discussed among participants. These contributions were then used to develop a Communication entitled 'Main Conclusion of the I Symposium', which

gave participants a breakdown of the most relevant results and recommendations advocated by the various contributors.

Agreed that
an Early
Warning System
should be
developed



THE KNOWLEDGE FAIR 2015

IGNITING GLOBAL ENVIROMINDS

Transforming Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow

IGNITING GLOBAL ENVIROMINDS – Transforming Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow

The GEF SGP Knowledge Fair 2015, 'Igniting Global Envirominds' – Transforming Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow', took place on the 28-29th May, 2015 at the Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business. The Fair encompassed two days of optimistic opportunities being created in a space geared towards civil society interaction with and among other Organisations to drive innovation for a more sustainable future.

The Fair provided GEF SGP grantee partners with networking opportunities to showcase their projects and share lessons learnt and best practices at the community level. CSOs, the public and private sectors and the general public learnt through presentations from local, regional and international speakers about social entrepreneurship frameworks, and environmental innovations at the community level. This event also provided participants with successful examples of CSOs that were able to transform their non-profit organisation to social enterprises.

Many schools throughout Trinidad and Tobago also participated by visiting booths and interacting with the displays and personnel from each organisation. There was a specially designated area for participating schools called the "Green Screen Room". Here, students and teachers viewed films with a focus on pressing environmental topics, and also received a career talks from organisations such as The WASA 'Adopt A River' Programme, IMA and 'Office R Us'. In addition, there were other interesting aspects to the Fair including workshops for CSOs, a green market selling homemade, hand crafted local products, an ethical/green fashion runway, unique local entertainment and many other activities that depicted the dedication of the "Envirominds" within our communities.



Students of Parvati Girls' Hindu College participating at the Asa Wright Booth



Participants partaking at a Workshop



Transitioning from the MDGs to the SDGs

BY THE UNDP T&T

The year 2015 is a significant year as the global development community transitions from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At the 70th United Nations General Assembly, states adopted the Sustainable Development Goals which would frame the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The MDGs, comprising 8 goals, formed the development agenda from 2000 to 2015. Though much has been achieved, its success eluded many persons, particularly with respect to poverty. By looking at Goal #1 (to end all poverty) through the lens of income, the rigidity of the measure does not fully capture the various deprivations experienced by poor people. There is a large number of persons across the globe who are living in poverty or are vulnerable to poverty and this was not captured by the MDGs. Furthermore, the MDGs, as they were simply expressed, did not capture other dimensions of progress or well-being which were necessary to improving the quality of life of persons around the world.

This realisation has pushed the international community to reframe the Post-2015 Development Agenda to a more people-centred, human rights oriented agenda. In this regard, there are six (6) main elements of the SDGs: people, dignity, prosperity, planet, justice and partnership. While respecting the dignity of the human person and the

need to strive for prosperity, the global community working in partnership with governments, local development stakeholders and financial institutions, will achieve human development and justice without destroying the planet. The SDGs comprise 17 goals and 169 targets which is a huge mandate that would require national governments to establish their own priorities i.e. localise the SDGs. Localisation is "...the process of defining, implementing and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving global, national and subnational sustainable development targets." It is essential that this process is inclusive and participatory, involving grassroots activists, youth, senior citizens, the private sector and all other development stakeholders. Apart from being inclusive, the process would also involve the national community developing clear, universal, disaggregated indicators to measure its success in the implementation of these goals. Some of the challenges to localization include lack of leadership and ownership; paucity of data and lack of institutional capacity to collect and analyse data; financing development; and lack of good governance.

UNDP Trinidad and Tobago looks forward to working with its partners in Government, Civil Society and the private sector, to assist Trinidad and Tobago in localizing the SDGs and achieving prosperity and justice for its people.





POStoParis Climate March

BY: JONATHAN BARCANT,
CO-FOUNDER & DIRECTOR, IAMOVEMENT

This year, leaders and key representatives from over 190 countries met in Paris for the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21), including our own from Trinidad & Tobago. There is finally worldwide agreement in the scientific, government and private communities that global warming is reality, where the average temperature increase over the last 30 years is agreed to be 0.8°C, and that we are on track for a rise of 3°C or more if we don't change our modus operandi. And so among the deciding parties at COP 21 there is no longer debate that significant action must be taken as soon as possible to avoid the worsening of serious climate crises which we are already seeing, such as hotter temperatures, droughts, unpredictable weather events and rising sea levels.

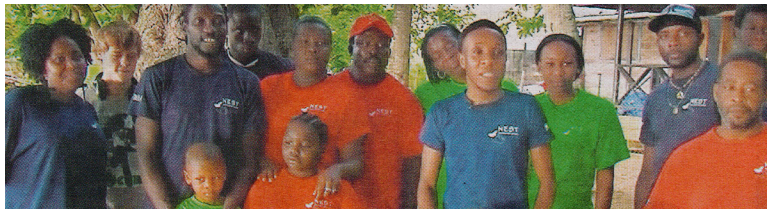
On November 29th 2015, for the second time, the whole world marched together becoming the largest Climate March in history. The first international People's Climate March took place on September 21st 2014 and was also an historical

event, as it was the first global uniting for climate action, and was set to get the world aware and thinking about the critical upcoming COP 21 Paris Summit in 2015. In Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, non-profit organization IAMovement hosted the climate marches in both 2014 and 2015. This year's event on November 29th was officially endorsed by the United Nations in Trinidad & Tobago, the European Union, and the French Embassy, as well as several other key local environmental organizations and public figures, including Archbishop Joseph Harris of Port of Spain.

The POStoParis event in Trinidad & Tobago saw some 500 people come together in the Nelson Mandela Park for an Eco-Village featuring 25 booths, comprising most of the key environmental organizations locally, before marching together alongside almost 800,000 other people in 2300+ events worldwide on the same day. In T&T where our economy is built on fossil fuels we have felt that it isn't our place to talk about climate change. However the march which took place in Port of Spain sought to bring a different message; that rather with the great resources we have been given, not only should we carry the responsibility to pioneer the way in environmental solutions, but in addition that great social and economic benefit come hand-in-hand with "green projects" such as nationwide recycling, national railway systems and renewable energy investment, and these should also be our primary drivers locally for a "move towards green".

These additional benefits include improvement of our sense of care and dignity, quality of life, eco-driven visitor and tourism boosts, large scale job creation, and energy security for our future in the Era after the Oil; showing that "going green" is in no way sacrificing our quality of life; on the contrary, it's raising it up.





NEST Tobago –GEF SGP grantee wins National Youth Award 2015 in the area of Environment

North-East Sea Turtles (NEST), operating out of Charlotteville, is a fairly new organisation formed in 2004 but officially registered in 2008. NEST is a small-scale environmental, community based organisation that aspires to protect the natural environment of the sea turtles in the Northern area of Tobago. The group mission is “to monitor and protect the sea turtles; whilst at the same time striving to encourage the ecological and economic wealth that the turtles bring to the local community”.

In 2012, NEST was given a GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) Grant of US\$ 50,000 for a project proposal “Capacity Development Program 2012: Establishing Sustainable Eco-Tourism for the Charlotteville Community through Sea-Turtle Conservation”. The group deemed sea turtle conservation as a necessity for the area and they were in dire need of funding to assist with their ongoing activities. Through this Grant they participated in various training activities on turtle conservation, community outreach and beach patrols. They’ve achieved many goals along the way including successfully empowering the youth of the area to actively participate in the monitoring and conservation of the sea turtles and their habitats. Also another important goal achieved is the education of the community members about the importance and protection of the sea turtles, thus minimising hunting/poaching of the sea turtles from the community.

NEST, for their outstanding and dedicated work has recently won a National Youth Award (2015) for work in the area of the Environment. This award was bestowed upon the group by The Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development.

For more information on NEST, please visit their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/nesttobago>



Environmental award for NEST Tobago

NORTH-EAST SEA TURTLES (NEST) Tobago is one of our most inspiring natural environment conservation organisations in the community-based group that has faced and overcome many challenges in its rapidly expanding, and its continuous work to protect the sea turtles in the Northern area of Tobago. The group's mission is “to monitor and protect the sea turtles; whilst at the same time striving to encourage the ecological and economic wealth that the turtles bring to the local community”.

The organisation has built a record of successful experiences in young people to overcome the challenges of environmental conservation and to protect the sea turtles in the Northern area of Tobago. This has been achieved through the group's commitment to the protection of the sea turtles, and the group's commitment to the protection of the sea turtles in the Northern area of Tobago.

The group's commitment to the protection of the sea turtles in the Northern area of Tobago has been recognised by the Government of Tobago, who has awarded the group a National Youth Award for its outstanding work in the area of the environment.

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Thank You!

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT BY:
Wespac - Digital Media Development
for GEF SGP Trinidad and Tobago



Merry Christmas

