

GEF SGP Trinidad and Tobago

Issue 5 (Apr-June 2021)

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Welcome to Trinbago Talk!

The latest news on GEF SGP in sweet T&T



Picture 1: Kadeen and Akeel Khalif-Ali, 13 year old twins from Naparima boys College plant a coconut tree in an upcycled plant pot which contains 2,000 drinking water bottles ground into chips and used as aggregate.

In this quarter, we share the exciting news of the successes of our past and current grantees. This edition also highlights our work in supporting other UN and Government agencies in achieving national and international objectives. Also read about our exciting upcycling event, which was well received by the participating partners. Happy Reading!

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THIS QUARTER'S TOP STORIES

GEF SGP grantees win EMA Green Leaf Awards

CSO-Government Partner to commemorate Earth Day

GEF SGP TT participates in the National Food Dialogue

World Environment Day!

GEF SGP grantees win EMA Green Leaf Awards

Yay! Three GEF SGP recent grantees were recognized during the Green Leaf Awards, which are the highest award provided by our local Environmental Management Authority (EMA).

The grantees are:

1. Cashew Gardens (Merit Award and People's Choice Award)
2. Restore a Sense of I Can (Merit Award)
3. IAMovement (Green Leaf Award)

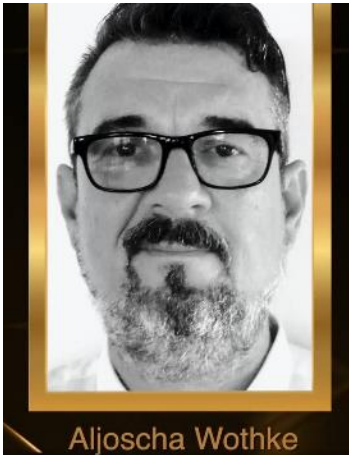
The event took place virtually on the 22nd April 2021, in commemoration of Earth Day. According to the Honourable Camille Robinson-Regis, Minister of Planning and Development, the awards were a celebration of the “contributions of those citizens, NGOs and other bodies who have tirelessly continued the fight for the protection and preservation of the environment.” She also urged the winners to continue their good work, and pledged support from the Government in doing so.



Pictures 2-4 (left to right) Ms. Roslyn George, President of the Cashew Gardens Community Council; Mr. Randall Sinanan, Director of Restore A Sense of I Can and Mr. Jonathan Barcant, Managing Director of IAMovement

Also mentioned and honoured at this event was former NSC member Dennis Sammy and Aljoscha Wothke, President and Founder of Environmental Research Institute of Charlotteville (ERIC), a former grantee. These two distinguished gentlemen were also recognized as Environmental Achievers by the EMA.

GEF SGP would also like to thank and commend the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and especially, the Management and Staff of the Environmental Management Authority for recognizing community efforts in environmental work. GEF SGP would like to congratulate all of the winners!



Aljoscha Wothke



Picture 5: Aljoscha Wothke, President, Environmental Research Institute Charlotteville (ERIC).

Picture 6: Dennis Sammy, Vice President of Future Fishers and former NSC member.

CSO-Government Partner to commemorate Earth Day



On the 10th April 2021, Moruga Hillrice Organic Producers (MHOP), Flying Tree Environmental Management (FTEM), The Adopt A River Programme (Water Resources Agency, WASA), GEF SGP and Councillor Joseph Lorant, Moruga Electoral District partnered to complete a beach clean and plastic sequestration demonstration on Moruga Beach.

Following local Government COVID-19 regulations, participants first conducted a clean-up of the beach and surrounding areas. The collected garbage was then ground using

equipment provided by Flying Tree Environmental Management.

Picture 7: Mr. Joseph Lorant, Councillor for Moruga; Mr. Mark Forgenie, Vice President, MHOP, Mrs. Audra Francis-Lewis, Outreach Officer, Adopt A River Programme; Mr. Juan Andrade, Managing Director, FTEM; Ms. Kelisha Ray, Outreach Assistant, Adopt A River Programme; Mr. Godfrey Boodoo, Director, FTEM and Dr. Sharda Mahabir, National Coordinator, GEF SGP.

Mr. Juan Andrade, Managing Director, FTEM spoke to the participants on plastic pollution and the use of concrete sequestration to remove and prevent plastic pollution from the environment. Scientists have already proven that plastics work well as an aggregate with concrete and hence, concrete sequestration potentially can result in permanent sequestration of plastics.



Picture 8: President of Moruga Hillrice Organic Producers (MHOP), Ms. Shemarah Tajudeen collecting garbage on the Moruga Beach. Picture 9: Participants grinding the collected plastics using FTEM's equipment.



Picture 10: Ground dirty, waste plastic found on beach
 Picture 11: Participants shovelling the concrete and plastic mix from the ransom into the paver mould.
 Picture 12: An example of the completed product. Picture 13: Bench and pot donated by FTEM and now on Moruga Beach.

Following his talk, Mr. Andrade, assisted by Mr. Godfrey Boodoo, Director, FTEM, proceeded to mix the concrete using the plastics and cast a plastic paver, as a demonstration of the ease at which used, dirty plastics can be upcycling to value-added products.

FTEM also donated one (1) bench and plant pot to the Moruga Beach Facility on this day. The benches contain approximately 10,000 drinking water (PET plastic) bottles, whilst the plant pots contain approximately 2,000. A coconut tree was planted in the pot, which would serve as a nursery for young trees to be planted on the beach. The event was thoroughly enjoyed by all!

GEF SGP TT participates in the National Food Dialogue

In September 2021, The Secretary General of United Nations, Antonio Guterres, convened the United Nations global summit on food systems as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs by 2030. The summit involved three sets of dialogues to solicit responses from all stakeholders in the food systems at the national, regional and international levels. The objective of the local food summit dialogues was to create a space for coordinated actions and trade-offs between and among stakeholders to formulate pathways to access safe and nutritious food; healthy diets and sustainable consumption patterns; biodiversity conservation and sustainable production; sustainable livelihoods and equity; and building resilience to vulnerability and climate change that will contribute to achieving the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

The Trinidad and Tobago National Dialogue was led by the government with stakeholders supported by the UN Country Team led by the UN Resident Coordinator and Resident Representative. The local dialogue took place on the 16th June 2021, as a virtual event. Speakers included Dr. Shakuntala Harraksingh, 2021 Laureate World Food Prize; Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, Senator The Honorable Mr. Clarence Rambharat and United Nations Resident Coordinator, Ms. Marina Walter.



Picture 13: Flyer for the Food Summit which was widely shared on social media.

GEF SGP's National Coordinator supported this event in two ways: firstly, she completed television interviews to drum up national participation for the event. She also acted as moderator for one of the four breakout sessions for the dialogue. The breakout groups consisted of farmers, educators, home gardeners, Ministry officials, University staff and other interested persons. The discussion was extremely lively and in-debt and despite the limited time, all the groups were able to provide excellent feedback and suggestions in terms of addressing many of the issues plaguing the agricultural sector locally.

Recommendations and feedback were submitted to the Food and Agriculture Organization, coordinators for the event. These were then collated into a paper, which would feed into the international dialogue in September.

GEF SGP was pleased to have facilitated the event and continues to work with its local partners to support the development of sustainable agricultural practices locally.

World Environment Day!

GEF SGP supported the Resident Coordinator's Office in the commemoration of World Environment Day with the television and radio interviews with grantees. The theme for World Environment Day 2021 was Ecosystem Rehabilitation and in recognition of this, two grantees were interviewed on national media; they were Volunteer Centre of Trinidad and Tobago (VCTT) and Central Pathfinders Environmental Foundation (CPEF).

In these interviews, the grantees highlighted their work, how they were contributing towards the achievement of national environmental objectives and how the United National Development Programme (UNDP) played an integral role in making this happen.

The National Coordinator also contributed a newspaper article on waste management, encouraging citizens to practice better personal waste management in order to reduce pollution locally.

https://trinidadexpress.com/opinion/columnists/bring-back-the-old-time-waste-disposal/article_99c739c4-e5c3-11eb-b970-a7600bde8354.html

The celebration of World Environment Day is not only important as an international event but it also marks the 26th year of GEF SGP in Trinidad and Tobago. It is for this reason as well that we highlight our grantees, to whom we are grateful for their commitment and hard work in addressing key environmental priorities locally. Thank you T&T!



During this period, April to June, the country was placed in a state of emergency and lockdown. Life came almost to a stand still. Drafting this newsletter was a pleasure because it brought me joy and excitement during a dreary period in this lockdown. I hope this edition brings you as much positivity and promise as it did me.