



Saint Lucia National Conservation Fund

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Major Project to boost Coral Reef Systems and Marine Biodiversity along the North West Coast

The Saint Lucia National Conservation Fund (SLUNCF), with funds provided by the Tourism Enhancement Fund (TEF), is sponsoring a project that was conceptualized and is now being implemented by the St. Lucia Divers Association-Anbaglo.

This one-year project aims to build local capacity in coral gardening and scuba diving; establish artificial reefs and undertake coral restoration at selected sites.

Scuba Diving Training

The capacity-building component of the project aims to provide a cohort of young people training in scuba coral gardening methodologies. The training will be up to the level of PADI Rescue Diver certification with the assistance of the Perry Institute of Marine Science.



The first phase of this component kicked off on 30th March 2021 when 10 candidates convened at Pigeon Island to complete a swim and tread assessment as well as to participate in scuba diving trials. Sandals Resorts provided the equipment and dive



boat to make the experience complete.



Creation of Artificial Reefs

The project hopes to contribute to marine biodiversity and health through the creation of artificial reefs and execute a coral gardening and restoration program.

The creation of artificial reefs will be facilitated by the sinking of four vessels at designated sites along the northwest coast including Cutty Cove off of Rodney Bay.

SINKING OF FOUR VESSELS

Over time, the sunken vessels will become habitats for various marine species. To date, two vessels have already found their new home on the seabed with the remaining pair soon to follow. The vessels were acquired from the IGY Marina which also provided storage and assistance with the cleaning (scrapping) and launching of the vessels.

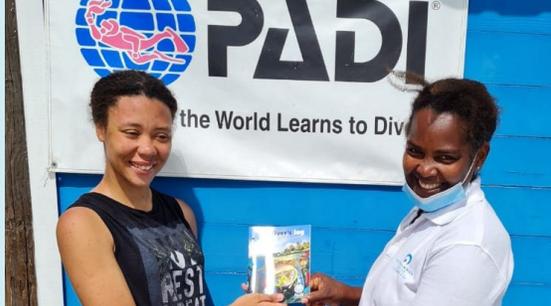


CORAL RESTORATION

Coral restoration activities will be initiated through the establishment of coral farms and populating these farms with healthy coral specimens or fragments harvested from other sites. To support the cultivation of corals, training will be provided to locals in the establishing of the coral farms, collection of healthy coral fragments; population coral trees; maintenance, and when the time comes, they will learn the out-planting procedures. This training will be incorporated in certification as PADI Coral Reef Rescue Divers mentioned earlier.



SCUBA DIVER EDUCATION



Let's hear from Kyarah Lawrence Dive Student:

" Hi there, my name is Kyarah Lawrence, I am 19 years old, curious about everything and love the outdoors, especially the water. People say that the residents of Bexon are natural-born swimmers or... and I quote "they like water" ... Because the area is flood-prone and I guess it is true about me (LOL). I go to the beach six times a month, that's how much I love the water. I found out about the program through my mother. She usually sends me stuff about youth development, courses, and so on. She knows that I am obsessed with water so she told me that I should apply.

On my very first dive, I will admit, I was extremely paranoid, afraid, and thinking to myself "why can't I breathe, I can't hold my breath for so long, am I going to die?" It got so bad that I needed help from two instructors to help calm me down, but when I got the hang of it, I did not want to get out of the water. Right now, I'm more in love with the water than I was before because of this new experience. I am really glad that I applied, got accepted, and have completed the open water course and I am very excited and looking forward to the next step.

I really want to thank the St. Lucia Divers Association who played a huge role and will continue, in my brain. Their members conducting the training are volunteering their time and I will be forever grateful for them. I also am so grateful to PADI for providing me and my fellow colleagues with this opportunity."

Biodiversity Corner



Saint Lucia Racer Snake

Scientific Name:
Erythrolamprus Ornatus,

Local Name:
Kouwéss

This snake is the world's rarest snake with less than 100 individuals left in the wild. It is endemic to Saint Lucia and can only be found on the offshore island of Maria Major (a 12-hectare island in the south). This species feeds on lizards and frogs. It grows to a length of 3 feet, brown in color and is non-venomous. Currently it is listed as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List (<https://rb.gy/8q96hu>).

Catching Up With Our Grantees

Iyanola Crossing by Inphinity

The Dennery village sits midway along the east coast and probably has one of the most amazing visitor stops/lookouts along the Atlantic side of fair Helen. This fishing village is also home to St Lucia's largest lizard, the endemic St Lucia Iguana.

It is for this reason that the St Lucia National Conservation Fund with funding from the Tourism Enhancement Fund agreed to support efforts by community-based organization InPhinity to raise awareness and attitudes of drivers especially toward the plight of our iguana especially.



With colorful murals, billboards, signage, community engagement, art competitions, school engagements, stakeholder support, and engagement, InPhinity expects that there will be a significant increase in sensitivities for all who traverse the busy “Micoud Highway”.

Many stakeholders including the Government of Saint Lucia through the Dennery South Constituency Council have rallied to support this cause. The local government-managed “La Pointe Layby” which is home to local vendors' booths at the northern entrance to the Dennery village will be renamed Iyanola Crossing. The buildings have already received a facelift (see pics) by local artists from the community.



Sir Arthur Lewis Community College Building Local Capacity

After receiving a diverse and much-needed suite of environmental monitoring equipment through funds made available under the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) partnership agreement with the SLUNCF, the SALCC environment science department has now transitioned to the next phase of the project which entails training students on how to use the equipment effectively. During organized field trips to various ecologically critical and sensitive sites, the students get the opportunity to use the monitoring equipment to gather biophysical data for later analysis.



These field trips, though fun, have the added benefit of allowing these budding scientists to discover unfamiliar but important aspects of our natural landscape. Moreover, these practical exercises will contribute significantly to students' SBA requirements. According to Dr. Marie Louise Felix, environmental science lecturer, and project coordinator, these out-of-classroom experiences have been a huge motivating factor for students. Dr. Felix has also confirmed that in the near future the College will be partnering with at least two local agencies to collaborate on projects that will provide the opportunity for students to refine their skills even further as environment monitors. Stay tuned.

Meet Our Board Directors



Kerry Joseph - Mathew

Kerry E. Joseph currently serves as the Deputy Chief Economist (National Development Unit) in the Department of Economic Development. She is an Economist by profession and obtained her Master's Degree in Economics from the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad.

She is an Economist by profession and obtained her Master's Degree in Economics from the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad.

She also holds a Post Graduate Certificate with Merit in Project Planning, Appraisal, and Management from the University of Bradford. In her current capacity, she is responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of the Public Sector Portfolio of projects in collaboration with the line Agencies and Donor Organisations.

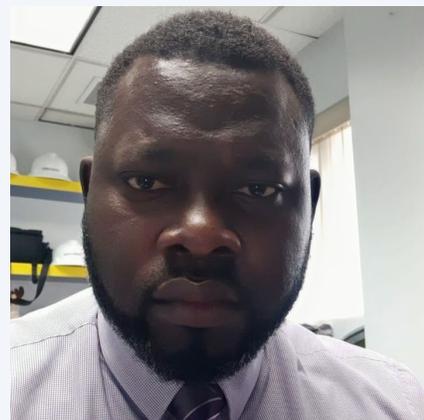
In her previous capacity as a health Planner, she was responsible for coordinating the implementation of health sector reform activities including the development of the Health Sector Policy, the Model of Care, and the development of the Essential Packages of Services in preparation for the roll-out of Universal Health Coverage

She has a passion for improving the lives of the poor, vulnerable, youth, and the elderly with a keen interest in the social sector and disaster risk management

Peter Lewis, who has been a member of the Saint Lucia Workers' Credit Union for the past 23 years, currently sits as President of the Credit Union League and has held the position of Treasurer from 2006 to 2010. Having served on the Saint Lucia Cooperative League as Treasurer, he was nominated to serve on the Board of Directors as Treasurer of the Saint Lucia National Conservation Fund.

Mr. Lewis experience spans in the areas of financial management, governance and administration, and communications. Mr. Lewis is currently working as Communications Officer on the Island's Port Authority. An avid fan of local calypso and drama who has participated in both areas extensively over many years

Peter Lewis



SLUNCF Webinar Series

As we endeavor to provide every opportunity for learning and to change minds and hearts, look out for our upcoming Webinar Series which highlights and explores Saint Lucia Biodiversity and national conservation efforts.

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