



**SGP** The GEF  
Small Grants  
Programme

**25**  
YEARS



**OAS** | More rights  
for more people

The initiative which took place in Barbuda from August 1 and ended August 10, had the theme “Peace in the Storm “ and was based on Matthew Chapter 14, verse 27, “ Take heart it is I do not be afraid”. The children were able to apply biblical values and principles to their real life experiences from Hurricane Irma and other storms faced by them which includes bullying, conflicts in the home, adjustments of living in a shelter, losing everything, feelings of sadness and the memories that constantly keep flashing back. This event was to set the correct attitudes and behaviors for their pathway going forward where life choices and decisions has to be made for spiritual activities, homework, projects activities and home chores all of which will play a role in their future outcomes.

This was one of the first events bringing the children of Barbuda together since returning to the island. It was a collaboration between the Pentecostal Church, Samaritan Purse and Ruth Spencer representing the MEPA Trust of Antigua, the GEF/SGP, and the OAS Reef Fix project activities aimed at youth stewards and their involvement in keeping Barbuda clean. It was directed by Ms. Charlene Harris, Principal of the Holy Trinity School and the other committed and dedicated teachers on the island.

The Rules for the initiative was set by the children and included :no fighting, no eating and drinking in the church, respect others, no swearing,, listening while others are speaking, hands and feet to yourself , following instructions and not telling lies.

There was over 90 children present from 4 yrs. to 18 yrs. including special needs children to build their social skills and foster togetherness. They participated in a multiplicity of activities which included music and singing, art

work craft making, plastic bottle pick up from around the environs of the church, sharing of environmental information to include current ongoing threats facing the island from fast and slow onsets especially with sea level rise since the island is below sea level and what this means when the school, the airport, the hospital and other key infrastructure are located on the coast. Some of the other activities included reciting bible verses, engaging in bible games and quizzes, sports, health and wellness activities. The idea of Stewardship is a way of life which the youths committed themselves to that ties into what the bible says “we are to maintain our environment, our surroundings in which we live-to dress it and protect it. This is our mandate from the Holy Scriptures.

The 4 bags of beach waste collected included among the plastic bottles, 6 turtle shell backs, sail making fabric, aluminum can and slippers. The bottles will be used to decorate the fences of the church painted with the name of the church painted on the bottles and the turtle shells made into some art form

I had several in addition opportunities to present to the youth group and Pastor Nigel Harris of the Pentecostal church asked me to share and I appealed to a mixed congregation of about 100 worshipers in the Sunday morning worship service to support the ongoing cleanup efforts. I also gave an overview of the Waste Management issues facing a small island like Barbuda with no waste separation facilities, everything going to the landfill dump, covered and buried and in the process different forms and types of hazardous materials are leached into our soils, our waterways and with Barbuda so dependent on well water, the possibility of harm to human health and the environment must be avoided. The disintegrated materials affects the soil, air, water impacting the health leading to polluted natural resources that we all depend upon. The linkages were clearly shown of how land based sources of pollution affects our marine assets which for Barbuda represents the first line of defense.

Our governments have signed on to various international conventions dealing with chemicals, pollutants, ewaste, pesticides and mercury and the regulations must be enforced. Island issues and problem requires collective actions from all of us, we are all responsible and we all need to change our attitudes and behaviors.

Plans-beach waste valuables collected on 4<sup>th</sup> august-6 turtle shell backs, sail making fabric.

Children picked up 3 bags of waste mostly plastic bottles and aluminum cans. The bottles will be used to decorate the fences of the church panted with the name of the church painted on the boltless.-the pilot area for the initiation of the stewardship project and plans to create an area for vegetable and flowers.

All committed to the principles of being a steward and those going back over to Antigua inquired if they can be allowed to come over for the monthly session.

Charlene is working to get a group registered to be able to carry on the initiative outside of the school sessions