



At the Water's Edge (AWE): *Coastal Resilience in Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines*

Nature holds some of the world's best and most practical solutions to climate change, solutions that keep nature and people healthy, safe, and secure.

The goal of this project is to demonstrate that governments and communities of small island states can enhance their resilience to climate change by protecting, restoring and effectively managing their marine and coastal ecosystems and strengthening local capacity for adaptation.

Across the islands of the Eastern Caribbean, climate change already places intense pressure on human livelihoods and coastal and marine resources. Small island states contribute very little to global climate change in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. Yet, these nations are the most vulnerable to the impacts from climate change due to their high coastal population densities, limited land space, geographic isolation, scarce freshwater supplies and significant dependence on tourism and fisheries. These islands now face significant threats from increases in severe storm events, flooding, coastal erosion, drought, salt-water intrusion of coastal aquifers, and bleaching of coral reefs.

As island nations respond to climate change, a range of engineered solutions (e.g. constructing sea walls, levees, dams and river bank hardening) are being utilized. Although traditional infrastructure is sometimes necessary, it is costly and often destroys natural systems that island residents rely upon for basic services and quality of life, such as food, coastal protection, recreation, water security and livelihoods.

Ecosystem-based adaptation (EBA) to climate change is a holistic response based on the premise that by protecting, restoring and maintaining natural ecosystems, we can reduce the scale and scope of climate change impacts.

The Nature Conservancy is working at sites around the world to illustrate that such “ecosystem-based approaches” can be positive solutions for climate change adaptation. In the Eastern Caribbean, we have worked with the government and people of Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines for more than a decade, helping strengthen national parks and protected area systems and develop sustainable finance and human capacity for effective environmental management. The AWE project will build on these experiences and partnerships to develop, test and implement EBA. These countries are well-situated to pilot innovative, EBA climate change solutions due in part to strong government leadership in climate adaptation, and high density of population, infrastructure and tourism facilities in low-lying coastal zones.

Now is the time to design and implement EBA solutions that integrate nature's infrastructure – mangroves, forests, wetlands, coral reefs – with socio-economic needs.

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The Nature
Conservancy 
Protecting nature. Preserving life.™

At the Waters Edge (AWE): The Project

The focus of this five year project is:

1.To help communities assess their social, ecological and economic risks from sea level rise and storms to make important coastal planning and management decisions.

2.To build local capacity and leadership that empowers communities to address climate change impacts.

3.To work with vulnerable communities and key stakeholders to design and implement a suite of innovative community-based conservation projects demonstrating EBA solutions to climate change.

4.To identify key indicators for success and integrate monitoring and evaluation frameworks into each EBA demonstration project.

5.To share lessons learned on the Grenadine Bank with local, regional and global decision makers.

The expected outcomes include:

1.Local communities, NGOs and government agencies with sufficient information and capacity to assess social, ecological and economic risks from climate change.

2.A network of ten or more highly-skilled leaders providing expertise and guiding ecosystem-based adaptation efforts beyond the life of the project.

3.At least three projects implemented demonstrating ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change.

4.A user-friendly evaluation methodology incorporating ecological and socio-economic indicators for all demonstration projects.

5.A robust network sharing key information on community led climate adaptation projects for small island states.



Community outreach event in Grenada focusing on the vulnerability of coastal communities to climate change hazards.

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Saint Vincent & the Grenadines