



India-UN Development
Partnership Fund 



United Nations
Office for South-South Cooperation

INDIA-UN DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP FUND

YEAR-IN REVIEW
NOVEMBER 2023



CREDITS

This publication was produced by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) in consultation with the Board of Directors of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund and the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, with contributions from United Nations agencies and partners participating in the implementation of India-UN Development Partnership Fund project activities.

This year-in-review report provides an edited compilation of the human-interest stories that were digitally distributed in the India-UN Development Partnership Fund quarterly newsletter. Those communications pieces feature the direct-impact, people-centred, grass-roots activities of the Fund in action or after their completion, along with the testimonials of partners working with the Fund or benefiting from those initiatives.

As Fund Manager and Secretariat of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, UNOSSC is pleased to present this year-in-review report. Heartfelt thanks and appreciation are expressed to all partners that continue to support, advance and collaborate in making this portfolio a great success.

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Producers

Ines Tofalo, Jeanne Finestone, and Gentiana Xhavara

Reviewers

Xiaojun Grace Wang and Mithre Sandrasagra

Copy editor

Barbara Brewka

Design

Paolo Ciampagna

Photography credits

ComSec, ILO, PAHO, UNCDF, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS, WHO

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FOREWORD

South-South cooperation thrives on the principles of solidarity, parity, mutual respect and shared progress. It acknowledges that every country, irrespective of its economic standing, possesses distinctive insights, wisdom and capabilities to contribute. These contributions are most meaningful when rooted in common contexts or challenges, aligned with shared human development aspirations.

India has emerged as a champion and active participant in South-South cooperation. It has also established itself as a major proponent and embracer of multilateralism, with very active participation across the activities and bodies of the United Nations system. Central to India's philosophy is the concept of "vasudhaiva kutumbakam", which envisions the world as one interconnected family. The India-UN Development Partnership Fund, a \$150 million financial mechanism, champions innovative, Southern-driven, demand-responsive and transformative sustainable development initiatives across the developing world. Remarkably, within just six years, the Fund has cultivated a portfolio of 76 development projects, collaborating with 54 developing countries through 13 United Nations entities. It is one among numerous initiatives undertaken by India for fellow developing countries, serving as a beacon of hope in the collective pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals. It is administered by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation as the global and United Nations system-wide promoter, enabler and facilitator of South-South cooperation.

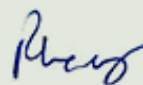
Indigenously incubated and implemented poverty-alleviation policies, strategies and programmes have successfully lifted up millions of people from the depths of extreme poverty. However, recent years have witnessed setbacks to these hard-won achievements, compounded by ongoing challenges spanning health, peace, climate and prosperity. In this context, South-South cooperation stands uniquely poised to enhance the quality of lives and livelihoods. Experience also attests to the fact that effective poverty eradication policies and strategies transcend various Sustainable Development Goals, exerting significant influence on the broader objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Consequently, these Southern solutions hold promise in ameliorating the conditions of the 1.1 billion individuals, constituting 18 per

cent of the global population, who still endure extreme poverty.

The programmes supported by the India-UN Development Partnership Fund and their impact encompass diverse endeavours. These range from fostering more inclusive societies through the promotion of agricultural modernization in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and bridging financial accessibility gaps in Malawi to bolstering women's participation in governance in Micronesia. They extend to fortifying economies by enhancing preparedness for climatic and emergency shocks in the Republic of Moldova, restoring vital public infrastructure in Mozambique, and implementing climate adaptation and mitigation safeguards. The programmes also include the integration of environmental sustainability measures into public and private insurance schemes in Fiji and the incorporation of clean energy and resilient climate monitoring measures in Gabon.

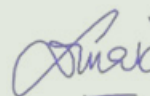
These instances are but a glimpse of the inventive South-South cooperation programmes that have showcased their contributions to advancing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and other development objectives, some of which you will discover in the following sections. They also contribute to the response to the United Nations Secretary-General's call during the 2023 SDG Summit to "invest in development at scale like never before".

As we collectively advance towards a more sustainable and equitable world, let us derive inspiration from the India-UN Development Partnership Fund. Let us persevere in our collaborative efforts to forge a brighter future for all.



H.E. Mrs. Ruchira Kamboj

Permanent Representative of India
to the United Nations



Ms. Dima Al-Khatib

Director, United Nations Office
for South-South Cooperation

INDIA-UN DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP FUND

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The India-UN Development Partnership Fund is governed by a Board of Directors that approves proposals, provides overall direction to the facility, and reviews progress on the implementation of projects and activities.

The Board is comprised of H.E. Mrs Yojna Patel, Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations in New York; H.E. Mr. Srinivas Gotru, Joint Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Division of the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi; and Ms. Dima Al-Khatib, Director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation. The Board of Directors of the India-UN Fund Commonwealth Window also includes H.E. Mr. Cosmos Richardson, Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia to the United Nations in New York.



H.E. Mrs Yojna Patel
Deputy Permanent
Representative of India to the
United Nations in New York



H.E. Mr. Srinivas Gotru
Joint Secretary of the United
Nations Economic and Social
Division of the Ministry of
External Affairs in New Delhi



Ms. Dima Al-Khatib
Director of the United Nations
Office for South-South
Cooperation



**H.E. Mr. Cosmos
Richardson**
Permanent Representative
of Saint Lucia to the United
Nations in New York



António Guterres

UN Secretary-General

“We are at a critical halfway point on the pathway to the 2030 Agenda. Assessments show that without urgent action, the world will not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by the 2030 target date.

South-South cooperation is among the most important and fastest-growing forms of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. While it does not replace or reduce the responsibilities of the Global North, South-South cooperation can be instrumental in mobilizing the innovations and resources needed to accelerate progress towards the SDGs and get us back on track.

I commend the India-UN Development Partnership Fund for its long and deep commitment to South-South cooperation.”



Mr. Achim Steiner

Administrator, United Nations Development Programme

“In 2022, the India-UN Development Partnership Fund continued to galvanize SDG progress with an emphasis on least developed countries and small island developing States. UNDP has been proud to implement a range of projects as part of the Fund, everything from using solar pumping technology to allow some 40,000 people to gain improved access to water in Haiti to restoring health facilities in Mozambique that will benefit 5,000 vulnerable people. The Fund is a vivid demonstration of the ‘multiplier effect’ of South-South cooperation – allowing countries to pool their unique knowledge and experience to achieve much more collectively than they could individually.”



H.E. Mr. Fatumanava-o-Upolu III Pa'olelei Luteru

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of the Independent State of Samoa to the United Nations, Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States

“The climate crisis is putting in jeopardy many of the development gains that have been achieved, especially for small island developing States and more so for members of vulnerable groups including youth and women. Overwhelming public debt burdens, conflict and lingering socioeconomic stagnation compound this already daunting outlook. Investments in South-South cooperation, such as those by the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, support these vulnerable countries to enhance resilience-building and prepare countries against future shocks, eradicate poverty, address loss and damage, mobilize resources and promote transfer of adaptation technologies to address these crises that are affecting developing countries most adversely.”

ABOUT

THE INDIA-UN DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP FUND

The India-UN Development Partnership Fund (India-UN Fund or the Fund) promotes shared prosperity in the Global South. Jointly with the multilateral system, it contributes to developing countries' initiatives towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Established in 2017, the \$150 million Fund is supported and led by the Government of India, managed by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, and implemented in collaboration with the United Nations system and partnering Governments. It supports Southern-owned and -led, demand-driven and transformational sustainable development projects across the developing world, with a focus on least developed countries and small island developing States.

The India-UN Fund is a notable example of South-South cooperation undertaken jointly with the multilateral system and that also has the ambition to strengthen international solidarity and multilateralism to address development challenges common across the human endeavour. Its thematic reach spans all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with several initiatives addressing multiple Goals. The Fund has a strong focus on many of the global issues of the day, addressed through approaches that are the most relevant to the context of developing countries. These include topical issues such as climate resilience, environmental sustainability, renewable energy, gender equality, health and pandemic recovery, education and skills, livelihoods, infrastructure, water and sanitation, agricultural development and digital inclusion.

Commonwealth Window

The Commonwealth Window of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund aims to catalyse the achievement of the SDGs in the developing countries of the Commonwealth of Nations, a voluntary association of independent and equal sovereign States comprised mainly of former territories of the British Empire, including India.

The countries supported by this Commonwealth Window are in various parts of the world and include some of the most vulnerable member States of the Commonwealth. Technical and sustainable development and collective national development efforts among Commonwealth countries are particularly pertinent and beneficial, given these countries' shared history, mutual respect, common values, and similar institutional, technical and practical instruments that continue to guide and influence their political, regulatory and cultural lives.

The Commonwealth Window supports demand-driven, country-owned and transformational sustainable development projects. Since its establishment, the dedicated \$50 million fund has supported over 36 projects in 28 countries.



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INDIA-UN DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP FUND

IMPACT ACROSS THE WORLD

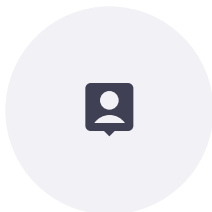
The India-UN Development Partnership Fund responds directly to the national priorities and development objectives of its partner countries, contributing financial resources and technical knowledge.



\$150 million
pledged

\$74.55 million
contributed
to date

\$59 million
allocated



54 Countries

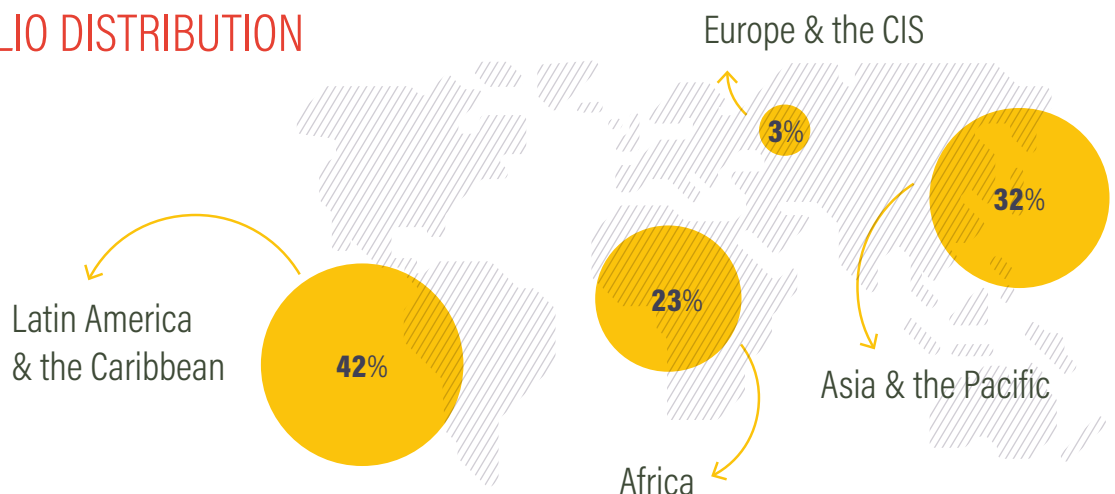
76 projects supported
37 projects completed
31 under implementation



Partnering with

29 small island developing States
18 least developed countries
11 landlocked developing countries

PROJECT PORTFOLIO DISTRIBUTION



SDGs MOST DIRECTLY ADVANCED BY PROJECTS



GUIDING PRINCIPLES



INDIA-UN FUND

GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Enabling the United Nations System South-South Action

UNOSSC is the United Nations system-wide coordinator and facilitator of South-South cooperation. It supports multilateral South-South policymaking processes; strengthens capacities of Member States to initiate, manage and implement South-South cooperation; and facilitates partner-led and -funded programmes. UNOSSC manages and serves as the Board of Directors Secretariat for the India-UN Fund as well as for other South-South cooperation funds.

Twelve UN agencies, funds and programmes partner with India-UN Fund projects, designing and implementing its projects. Through this unique partnership with the UN system, the Government of India is able to leverage the comparative advantages of the UN, particularly its worldwide presence and its wealth of normative, thematic and programmatic expertise. Through this partnership, the Fund is pleased to also support the multilateral system, its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and shared commitments and instruments to leave no one behind.

UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



International
Labour
Organization



Pan American
Health
Organization



Impact
Capital
for
Development



unicef
for every child





Social Innovation Hubs for Laboral Insertion and Early Childhood Women's Care

PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA

Implementing Partners

Ministry of Planning;

Association of Women Councillors;

UNDP

Project Budget

US\$1,000,000

Duration

2020-2022

Early childhood care centres in Bolivia's Tarija markets are helping to empower women vendors and educate their children



Not so long ago, it was common for the market women of Tarija, in the southern region of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, to have their young children with them while working, exposing them to unnecessary risks and unacceptable conditions. Indeed, many generations of Tarija's women vendors have grown up in this reality.

This situation is changing, however, with many vulnerable women, including those working in the capital's main markets, finding new opportunities for professional growth and personal empowerment. These changes are the result of an alliance between the Autonomous Municipal Government of Tarija and UNDP, with the financial support of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund.

I have been working in this market for more than 45 years and I have never seen facilities like these. Now we feel calmer and ready to work without fearing that something may happen to our little children.

Ms. Ruth Alarcón

one of the most senior vendors in the Central Market

Long the dream of generations of mothers, two important markets now have a suitable and safe area for their young children during working hours. These early-childhood day-care centres offer specialized educators and the equipment needed to provide early childhood care and age-appropriate education to approximately 170 children every day. What was initially met with distrust has turned into expectation and hope.

"We never had such an area; in the past, I had to be in the booth with my youngest daughter or, if possible, ask my older children to look after her at home. Now I am calm, I am able to sell my products, and from time to time, I can come to this care centre to see how she is doing," explains Mrs. Gabriela Mesa, accompanied by her husband Rubén, both market vendors.

"I have been working in this market for more than 45 years and I have never seen facilities like these. Now we feel calmer and ready to work without fearing that something may happen to our little children," said Ms. Ruth Alarcón, one of the most senior vendors in the Central Market.

But it's not just the children who are gaining from the partnership. The women have the opportunity to enhance their own knowledge and obtain higher incomes as part of an unprecedented alliance between the Ministry of Education through the José



©UNDP

Manuel Belgrano Centre for Adult Education (CEA Belgrano) and UNDP. CEA Belgrano has expanded its academic offering and incorporated new specialties, including preschool education for childcare, gerontological nursing, and care for people with disabilities. More than 400 people are participating in these training courses.

“In the past, we were only offered technical courses, but these new areas sparked the interest of many people,” said Mr. Ramiro Fernández Peralta, CEA Belgrano’s head teacher. This interest has also helped

©UNDP



Ms. Luciana Mermet, UNDP’s Resident Representative (second from left) and Mr. Ramiro Fernández Peralta, CEA Belgrano’s head teacher (centre) at the ribbon cutting. ©UNDP

to close the labour-market gender gap, especially during the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which had a disproportionate impact on women.

“Women are the ones who lost their jobs and faced a decrease in their economic incomes. What’s more, they are the ones with a greater burden in all care-related tasks,” said Ms. Luciana Mermet, UNDP Resident Representative. “We hope that these centres will help to improve the conditions of all market vendors,” she added.

Women are the ones who lost their jobs and faced a decrease in their economic incomes. What’s more, they are the ones with a greater burden in all care-related tasks.

Ms. Luciana Mermet
UNDP Resident Representative



Solar-powered Refrigeration Systems

MARSHALL ISLANDS

Implementing Partners

**Mili Atoll (local) government;
UNOPS**

Project Budget

US\$712,391

Duration

2020-2022

Solar-powered freezer chests improve food security in the Marshall Islands



Spread out over 29 coral atolls and five islands scattered across 2.13 million km² in the central Pacific Ocean, the people of the Marshall Islands face many of the same – as well as numerous unique – challenges of other small island developing countries. These include water shortages, limited availability of transportation, relatively poor soil that limits agricultural activities and diminishing returns from coral-reef-based shore fisheries.

Being able to freeze food will allow households to bridge the gaps between fluctuations in food production and fisheries more easily. By being able to store food for longer periods of time, families can not only effectively plan and ration food consumption and resources but will also be able to reduce the time, money and energy that were traditionally spent on longer and more frequent food purchasing trips.

Ms. Samina Kadwani

UNOPS Director for the Pacific, Thailand, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea

Many of these challenges are now further exacerbated by climate change, which is driving accelerated sea-level rise, salinization of soil and contamination of limited ground water. Furthermore, the Marshall Islands rapid population growth and the contamination of their natural environment are increasing the pressure on subsistence farming and fishing. Urbanization is placing stress on land and water and increasing the demand for housing, classrooms, energy and waste management. Among the most vulnerable island clusters is Mili Atoll, 93 miles southeast of the country's capital and largest city and home to 1,500 people. Mili Atoll is seeing the rise in food insecurity as an increasingly prominent hardship.

In partnership with the Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Utilities, and with funding from the India-UN Fund, UNOPS has delivered and installed 120 solar-powered freezer chests in 100 households across Mili Atoll. Addressing the growing food insecurity of the region is the principal goal of the project. These sustainable, environmentally friendly freezers will enable local communities to freeze food obtained from subsistence farming and fishing and store it for longer periods.

“Being able to freeze food will allow households to bridge the gaps between fluctuations in food production and fisheries more easily. By being able to store food for longer periods of time, families can not only effectively plan and ration food consumption and resources but will also be able to reduce the time, money and energy that were traditionally spent on longer and more frequent food purchasing trips,” said Ms. Samina Kadwani, UNOPS Director for the Pacific, Thailand, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

Having chest freezers that are solar-powered will enable communities to circumvent the particularly high fuel costs of remote atolls while at the same time ensuring a more regular and sustainable source of energy. The project also provided training in the installation and maintenance of the solar-powered systems to ensure that communities gain the technical knowledge necessary for servicing their equipment.

In addition to further strengthening food security, the project provided six units of farm tractors, two pickup trucks and five generators aimed at improving agricultural productivity and food quality from subsistence farming.

In addition to freezers, UNOPS procured farm tractors, pickup trucks, and generators to improve food security and agricultural productivity. ©UNOPS

Generators being delivered. ©UNOPS



Solar freezers. ©UNOPS





Strengthening Clinical Management of COVID-19 Patients and Reducing Risk of COVID-19 Transmission among Health Workers in Belize

BELIZE

Implementing Partners

**Ministry of Health and Wellness;
Ministry of Foreign Trade and Immigration;
PAHO**

Project Budget

US\$1,000,000

Duration

2021-2023

The Government of India donates over \$520,000 in medical equipment for strengthening the capacity of Belize's health system



As health systems continue to adapt and cope with the pressure caused by the COVID-19 crisis, the pandemic has shown the importance of strengthening response capacity during emergencies. In recognizing the vital role that access to proper medical equipment plays, the Government of India has donated over US\$520,000 worth of medical equipment to nine health facilities throughout the country.

Through a collaboration among the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration (MoFAFTI) and the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoHW) and with funding support from the Government of India, this significant donation will assist in the continuity of essential health services while simultaneously managing COVID-19 case surges.

"The outputs of this grant have not only contributed to the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic but contribute to the strengthening of the health systems and services in Belize", said Dr. Noreen Jack, PAHO Representative in Belize.

This multisectoral collaboration was facilitated through the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, a dedicated facility within the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation. The Government of India

approved this US\$1 million fund for Belize to target three main objectives:

- strengthen the response capacity of the health system to COVID-19 through the provision of key medical equipment;
- improve accessibility to local health-care services in support of COVID-19 recovery through the provision of a medical waste incinerator for a new health facility in Caye Caulker Village; and
- increase awareness of the prevention, response and recovery from COVID-19 among vulnerable urban and rural populations in Belize.

"The handover event is a prime example of how South-South cooperation supports the achievement of the United Nations COVID-19 Socio-economic Response and Recovery Plan (SERP) for Belize. The project on 'strengthening clinical management of COVID-19 patients and reducing of risk of COVID-19 transmission among health workers in Belize', for which we are here today, is a direct intervention that responds to pillar 1 on protecting health services and systems during the COVID-19 crisis," said Ms. Birgit Gerstenberg, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Belize and El Salvador.

The much-needed medical equipment included two medical waste management autoclaves, two biomedical waste transport trolleys, 20 patient monitors, 10 delivery beds, 46 electric patient beds, 15 incubators, 7 ECG machines, 12 transfer stretchers with emergency carts and 10 suction machines. With guidance from MoHW, Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital, Northern Regional Hospital, Western Regional Hospital, Southern Regional Hospital, Corozal Community Hospital, San Ignacio Community Hospital, Punta Gorda Community Hospital, Independence Polyclinic and San Pedro Polyclinic were the nine facilities selected to receive the donated equipment. Additionally, an incinerator valued at US\$85,381.41 is currently being procured for the Caye Caulker Health Centre. The incinerator is expected to be delivered later this year.

The outputs of this grant have not only contributed to the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic but contribute to the strengthening of the health systems and services in Belize.

Dr. Noreen Jack
PAHO Representative in Belize

“Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has opened our eyes as to how vulnerable we can be in regard to national capability to protect ourselves against pandemics,” said Dr. Jorge Polanco, Director of Hospital Services and Allied Health of MoHW. “I must recognize the efforts of our international partners – PAHO, UNICEF and UNDP – as well as local partner the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in utilizing strategic means of their organizations to ensure that Belize gets the required equipment. I want to thank the Government of India for the generous support in times of economic struggle, as we maintain the efforts in controlling the COVID-19 pandemic. It will continue to require the collaboration of all our national, regional and international partners.”

As Belize continues to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, collaborations through such mechanisms as the India-UN Development Partnership Fund will help to strengthen Belize’s health system to combat current health emergencies and prepare the health system to respond to new and emerging diseases efficiently and effectively.

“We need strengthened global cooperation. We need to forge shared values, common interests and, very importantly, enlightened leadership,” said H.E. Ms. Amalia Mai, Chief Executive Officer of MoFAFTI. “The Ministry – and by extension the Government – is committed to these interests. We look forward to fostering our common understanding and expanding the positive impact for all Belizeans.”

Awareness campaign materials keep the public informed. ©PAHO



Project partners with new patient monitors. ©PAHO





Assistance for COVID-19 Response

KIRIBATI

Implementing Partners

**Risk Communication and Community
Engagement Committee;
UNICEF**

Project Budget

US\$1,000,000

Duration

2021-2022

In Kiribati, technical support and equipment saved lives in the wake of COVID-19



More than a year after COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic, the remote Pacific Ocean country of Kiribati was one of the very few countries that had zero confirmed cases of the virus. Its remoteness and the speed with which it was able to shut its borders were major contributing factors, as they were for other Oceania countries. But dodging an early catastrophe did not mean that the Government didn't need to take the necessary measures to protect this small island nation.

When we found out that COVID-19 was being transmitted in the community, we were taken by surprise! But we were fully ready to respond to the outbreak because of the technical support and supplies we'd received.

Ms. Katerine Tebwaki

a frontline health worker in Kiribati

In early 2021, in partnership with UNICEF and with the financial support of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, the Risk Communication and Community Engagement Committee (RCCEC) was formed to lead the country's preparedness activities. The RCCEC mandate was to ensure that enhanced risk communication and community engagement mechanisms were established to effectively communicate and engage with vulnerable and at-risk populations as well as with the general population.



Health-care worker. ©UNICEF

Among the key activities undertaken were training of health workers on an effective COVID-19 response as well as continuity of essential health services. The project developed and distributed information and education materials through print, radio, songs and drama. Health-care workers made home visits and led community dialogues on detecting and treating COVID-19, and they engaged with religious leaders, Island Councils and non-governmental organizations.

Jonathan Veitch, UNICEF Resident Representative and a healthcare worker with new equipment. ©UNICEF



The financial support of the India-UN Fund ensured that the Government was able to procure and distribute medical equipment to 34 health facilities across the country. A cold-chain and vaccine logistics gap analysis was conducted in early 2022, resulting in the procurement of essential cold-chain equipment. Additionally, the project secured 10 solar direct-drive refrigerators and 30 on-grid electric refrigerator/freezers. The project was able to procure water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) kits, water purification tablets and water containers to ensure safe WASH practices to help to support infection prevention and control. In addition, waste management supplies for health-care facilities, including trolleys for medical waste, paper towels and bleach, ensured adequate sanitization.

“When we found out that COVID-19 was being transmitted in the community, we were taken by surprise!” said Ms. Katerine Tebwaki, a frontline health worker in Kiribati. “But we were fully ready to respond to the outbreak because of the technical support and supplies we’d received.”

By project’s end, more than 16,300 people aged 12 and over had been vaccinated. In addition, the project was instrumental in the planning, procurement and setting up of a Health Emergency Operations Centre as well as the provision of key WASH supplies.



Health-care worker. ©UNICEF



©UNICEF



Extension of Access and Coverage in Maternal and Child Health Care to Dispersed Rural Areas, Indigenous Communities and Border Territories of the Paraguayan Chaco

PARAGUAY

Implementing Partners
**Ministry of Health;
PAHO**

Project Budget
US\$1,499,000

Duration
2022-ongoing

Increasing health-care access for rural and Indigenous women and children in Paraguay's remote Chaco region



The South American Chaco, a vast 1,280,000 km² territory shared by Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Paraguay, is one of South America's last agricultural frontiers. A semi-arid region, it has a low population density and one of the highest rates of deforestation in the world. The 20 per cent of the region that lies within Paraguay's borders faces a variety of challenges. The population is dispersed throughout the territory in small settlements on the banks of rivers. Road access and communications are challenging, especially in times of floods or extreme drought. For decades, the economic model, which is focused on the extraction industry, agricultural expansion and mining development, has had serious negative impacts on its natural assets and Indigenous territories and communities, particularly impacting women. These issues further exacerbate the region's limited access to health-care services.

In early 2023, the Ministry of Health partnered with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to launch a comprehensive effort to increase both access and coverage of maternal and child health in the region's dispersed rural areas, Indigenous communities and border areas. Funded by the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, the project contributes directly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, ensuring good health and well-being, specifically in the areas of maternal, neonatal and child health. The project will run through 2024.

It is an ambitious effort in reach and scope. The project is designed to reach 64,305 inhabitants including 93 Indigenous communities and is focused on four key areas: providing maternal and child health-care services for those in dispersed rural, Indigenous and border areas; reducing maternal and child mortality; enabling safe water systems, basic sanitation and hygiene in health-care service centres; and coordinating with Indigenous communities and cross-border informal health networks that participate actively in health care with intersectoral and intercultural approaches.



Dialogue with
Indigenous
communities.
©PAHO

In addition to providing equipment, furniture and basic supplies to the first level of care for health-care centres and service providers, the project also includes capacity-building activities in remote areas to strengthen the informal health networks that actively participate in enabling access to women's and children's health care in Indigenous and cross-border communities.

South-South cooperation plays an important role in both development and implementation. The project is guided by successful practices from the PAHO-implemented initiative, Towards Universal Health for the Population of the South American Chaco, a South-South cooperation initiative involving Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay, which brought to the forefront local practices on adequate, culturally appropriate care for obstetric and pediatric emergencies and health services for women and children.

The project also incorporates successful PAHO methodology that enables intercultural exchanges between groups or individuals and trained health personnel in order to improve access to health services and build culturally aligned health practices. An emphasis is placed on solving previously raised problems to enable access to care as well as following suitable medical protocols and their causes, with a strong focus on mutual understanding.

Health provider at a remote location in Chaco. ©PAHO



By safeguarding and integrating ancestral Indigenous practices such as adapting delivery rooms for horizontal birthing (i.e., sitting, squatting or standing) as opposed to Western-oriented vertical birthing as well as reproductive health practices, these projects are providing alternatives. They also strengthen the capacities of health-care teams at hospitals and family health units on code red (with obstetric risk factors) in Indigenous communities. Moreover, they improve health services networks for referral/counter-referral and epidemiological surveillance of maternal mortality.

The sharing of information on epidemiological surveillance will enable joint actions to control diseases with epidemic potential such as COVID-19, dengue and other arboviruses. The project will ensure an intercultural approach, strengthening the dialogue between health personnel and Indigenous populations on health issues, such as access to safe water, in health services.

Virgen de Fatima Health Centre. ©PAHO





Assistance for COVID-19 Response

TONGA

Implementing Partners
**Government of Tonga;
WHO**

Project Budget
US\$1,018,844

Duration
2021-2022

A relatively easy COVID-19 pandemic helped Tonga to prepare for the next health disaster



In March of 2020, the world turned upside down. Across the globe, COVID-19 forced closures at borders, businesses and schools. Hospitals were overwhelmed. Governments scrambled to develop socially and economically balanced policies. And pharmaceutical companies worked round the clock to develop testing modalities and vaccines.

Hand-over of beds, mattresses and linens. Tonga MoH CEO Dr. Siale Akauola (right) and the WHO Tonga Country Liaison Officer, Dr Yutarō Setoya. ©WHO

In the small island nation of Tonga, however, while most of the world struggled with the pandemic, strict border measures coupled with a 90+ per cent primary-series vaccine rate meant that the country was able to stave off its first community transmission

until 1 February 2022, almost two years after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the pandemic. Yet rather than resting on the relative calm that the Government policies had helped to create, the Tonga Ministry of Health used that extraordinary grace period to ensure that, when the disease finally did arrive in the 170+ island archipelago, the country would be ready.

With the support of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund and in partnership with WHO, the Government implemented a three-pronged containment plan to strengthen its capacity for quarantine and/or isolation in multiple health facilities in Tonga. The project included mechanisms to strengthen (a) infection prevention and control, case management, testing and dead body management; (b) the cold chain for vaccine delivery; and (c) the capacity of the health information system for better data collection, analysis and reporting of COVID-19 cases and registration of COVID-19 vaccinations.

As the project implementer, WHO procured and donated essential items from hospital beds, mattresses and sheets to professional washing machines, from portable IV stands to wheelchairs – all to strengthen isolation and quarantine capacity.





Tonga Ministry of Health CEO Dr. Siale 'Akau'ola (1st from left), High Commissioner of India P.S. ©WHO

In an example of South-South knowledge-sharing, the project took a cue from neighbouring Fiji, which had been quickly overwhelmed once community transmission had occurred and sought to strengthen its laboratory capacity. Among other things, that included the acquisition of GeneXpert. This rapid diagnostic testing machine, originally developed to detect the presence of tuberculosis, returns coronavirus results in roughly 45 minutes, requires less expertise than standard rapid testing mechanisms, and is generally more cost-effective than the alternatives.

Donated technological equipment, including laptops and tablets, was instrumental in strengthening the capacity of vaccine command centres to collect, analyse and report vaccine-coverage data and helped to improve the efficiency of decision-making. It also supported individual health centres to utilize the newly introduced electronic medical-record system as well as their capacity for disease surveillance.

Ongoing detailed discussions with the Ministry of Health helped to ensure that any planned procurement was not duplicated with the WHO donations and was consistent with the Ministry needs. It also aimed for the sustainable development of Tonga's health system capacity to respond to future communicable disease outbreaks.

By the end of the project in December 2022, there had been no COVID-19 outbreaks in the country but with the support of the project, Tonga is well-positioned to not only deal with ongoing routine health challenges but also any potential return of COVID-19 or even a future respiratory disease pandemic. While testing averages 40 per week, during the February–March



©WHO

2023 influenza outbreak, the average doubled to 90 per week. In the event of an outbreak, the Ministry of Health is equipped to handle approximately 500 tests per day.

Overall, through the support of the India-UN Fund and WHO, the overall health system is stronger than at the start of the pandemic and well-positioned to address future health challenges. These are significant benefits for the people of Tonga.



Mount Horne Child Development Centre

GRENADA

Implementing Partners

Government of Grenada

UNICEF

Project Budget

US\$300,000

Duration

2018–2019

Early childhood education is the foundation for improved learning in Grenada



What was once an old, dilapidated building in a rural village in Grenada has become a beacon for early childhood development on the eastern Caribbean island. The Mount Horne Child Development Centre opened its doors in early 2020 to provide structured day-care services for children in the Mount Horne and surrounding communities in the rural parish of St. Andrew.

With funding from the India-UN Development Partnership Fund and technical support from the Government of Grenada and UNICEF, the Child Development Centre was designed to provide care, protection and educational services to infants and toddlers from low-income families.

Teaching early reading skills.
©UNICEF



Now, three years from the opening of the Centre and as the island emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Minister for Social and Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs, Hon. Philip Telesford, explained that the integrated early childhood approach at Mount Horne, which focuses on nurturing care, is now being replicated throughout the island. Acknowledging that, in some instances, the quality of early childhood services was below par, the Minister thanked UNICEF and the Fund for supporting the Government's vision. "We have ensured that all of the necessary elements for quality early childhood development are involved in the process so that our children have the best opportunities that are available to them at the earliest stage of their development," said Minister Telesford. "This particular model will be used as a patent for early childhood development centres throughout Grenada. That particular centre [Mount Horne] is therefore of paramount importance to the Government," he added.

Minister Telesford also promised to strengthen legislation to ensure that the standards used at national centres such as the one at Mount Horne are enforced in the private day-care system.

Acting Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs, Ms. Veronica Charles, stated that the Mount



Playtime at Mount Horne Child Development Centre. ©UNICEF

Horne Child Development Centre continued to be important for rural women who are working and/or pursuing higher education. She added that “We’ve had the challenge where many women were unable to go out and earn a decent living because of childcare issues. Now they can put their babies and children in a place that is safe and go out and earn a living.”

The senior public officer outlined a vision for early childhood development that values every child as important and provides nurturing environments that can result in a life that adds value to society.

“What we are realizing is that children who attended the Child Development Centre do better when they transition to preschool because they are better grounded at the Child Development Centre as opposed to a [traditional] day-care centre. The community embraced it; they are making use of the Centre and taking care of the Centre because it is their own,” said Ms. Charles.

We’ve had the challenge where many women were unable to go out and earn a decent living because of childcare issues. Now they can put their babies and children in a place that is safe and go out and earn a living.

Ms. Veronica Charle

Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Social and Community Development, Housing and Gender Affairs



“We stimulate them; we encourage the developmental aspects of their life such as their cognitive development, their communication, their gross motor skills and their fine motor skills,” said Kathy Julien Ramsey, the Centre’s Supervisor, while also stressing the importance of maintaining a ratio of no more than five toddlers per caregiver and three to one for infants. This has led to demonstrable changes in the children.

“I have seen tremendous growth in my daughter. She has transformed from being a shy to a very expressive little girl. The care and attention shown by the employees at the Mount Horne Child Development Centre have helped her to be more expressive. When I am at work, I am at ease,” the young mother concluded.

The Centre before reconstruction. ©UNICEF





Strengthening Institutional Capacities for Successful Integration of Children with Disabilities into the Education System

NICARAGUA

Implementing Partners

**Ministry of Education;
National Autonomous University of Nicaragua;
UNICEF**

Project Budget

US\$1,000,000

Duration

2020-ongoing

Including children with disabilities in Nicaragua's schools improves education for all



More than 15 per cent of the Nicaraguan population suffers from some form of disability. While the causes vary, the principal reasons include deficiencies in perinatal care as well as limited medical resources for pre- and post-natal care. The impact on school-age children is often devastating, with either a shortage or no availability of education or therapeutic options.

The public education system of Nicaragua has traditionally provided education services to children with disabilities in specialized institutions. Over the years, efforts have been made to integrate both classrooms and schools; teachers have been provided with basic knowledge and tools; and some good

practices have been developed. However, these efforts have been sporadic, and there is a mindset within the school community that for children with disabilities to be academically successful, they should be part of a segregated education system.

In recent years, though, there has been a concerted effort on the part of the Ministry of Education and the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua to change this dynamic.

In 2020, in partnership with UNICEF and with the financial support of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, the Ministry rolled out the country's first master's degree in disability, with an emphasis on inclusive education. The first cohort of the two-year programme includes 37 teachers, school directors and pedagogical advisers from 15 schools, who are acquiring the tools needed to apply the inclusive educational model, which recognizes the different needs of each child. This is a major step forward. However, it will take years for this nascent effort to achieve the scale needed to reach all schools, and therefore all children, across the country.



Students welcome and support their new classmate in their prototype inclusive school in the municipality of Chinandega, Nicaragua. ©UNICEF



A prototype inclusive school in the municipality of Acoyapa in Nicaragua. ©UNICEF

So, in 2021, the partners launched a complementary programme designed to strengthen the institutional ability to successfully integrate children with disabilities at the school level. The programme goal is to equip the Ministry of Education with a comprehensive approach to establishing inclusive schools, one that includes the tools, resources and technology needed for all children, regardless of their specific learning needs or styles, to interact together and learn from one another's potential and capabilities.

The Ministry of Education and the teachers have fully embraced the programme, now in its second year, and are looking at ways to expand the initial components and add new ones. These include teacher training; accessible infrastructure; the production of accessible learning materials and the use of technology for inclusivity; and communication of social and behavioural change.

The spirit of South-South cooperation has played an important role in providing the materials needed to succeed. Paraguay, which is ahead of Nicaragua in the production of digital and accessible textbooks, has been sharing its experiences and best practices in the production of a prototype programme and field testing. Brazil, Jamaica and Uruguay are also working on digitally accessible textbooks, and periodic virtual meetings are organized for all parties to share their developments and learn from one another's experiences.



Group work in social sciences at a prototype school of inclusion in the municipality of Somoto. ©UNICEF

Probably the most innovative area of the programme has been the development of digital and accessible textbooks and other learning materials. To this end, the initiative brings together knowledge of pedagogy, editing, technology and disabilities to create a digital application designed to serve all learning needs and styles. In a post-COVID-19 context, having access to such technology will ensure that the country, including its education system, is better prepared to serve all students, especially those with disabilities, more effectively.



Strengthening the Gender Machinery of the Federated States of Micronesia

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

Implementing Partners

**Department of Health and Social Affairs;
UNDP**

Project Budget

US\$1,000,000

Duration

2020-ongoing

Gender Equality and Basketball in the Federated States of Micronesia



From a policy perspective, the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia is committed to ensuring gender parity. Recent efforts have included the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2004 and the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration in 2012. Furthermore, the Government endorsed its National Gender Policy in 2018, and provisions in the constitutions at both the national and state levels do not discriminate along gender lines. However, while policy has been robust, progress has been slow, with a lack of resources and capacity cited as the two principal challenges.

The impact is hard to miss. To date, the Federated States of Micronesia has the unfortunate distinction of never having had a woman serve in either its national parliament or congress. Very few women serve in leadership and decision-making positions at the local, state or national level. And social norms are such that women and girls are often confined to their homes, with a majority spending their time caring for and nurturing their families, principally providing domestic and unpaid care work. In a country where roughly 50 per cent of the population (50,000) is female, this imbalance makes it extremely difficult for women and girls to become equal partners with men and is stymying the Government efforts to achieve the SDGs aligned with its national development plans.

In 2020, the Government, in partnership with UNDP, launched a new initiative to advance women's economic empowerment and improve access to modern technologies. With the support of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, the project focused on three core pillars: engaging women, girls and key partners in efforts concerning gender-related policy advocacy; income generation; and access to necessary small-scale infrastructure.

In this latter area, the project is working with traditional community leaders in four states, with a focus on improving women and girls' access to and control over clean water and sanitation services, which, according to WHO, are two of the leading causes of mortality among children under five. Despite fairly steady declines over the past few decades, the country's childhood mortality rate has remained stubbornly high and, at 22 per thousand births, is among the highest in the Pacific Island Countries and Territories.

At the policy level, key activities include the embedding of gender specialists within the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs to ensure mainstreaming within national and sector-based plans and new gender-equality policies and legislation to address sexual harassment in the workplace. In 2022, the National Gender Commission held its first meeting, with a second meeting to follow later in 2023. In



March Madness
Tournament Awards
Ceremony. ©UNDP

addition, *Where We Stand*, a publication looking at the country's gender statistics, is soon to be released.

An upcoming Women's Mock Congress will help to build capacity and skills by encouraging the interest of women and girls in running for political office. In addition, 18 women and girls, two representing each of the four states as well as two at the national level, will participate in the Women's Voices platform as part of the Commission on the Status of Women.

In an effort to strengthen community-based income generation and needed sanitation initiatives, the project is also supporting the procurement and construction of an ecological purification system as well as training at least 15 households in targeted communities in related income-generation and livelihood activities.

For all the seriousness of the project, it has not been without fun. In an effort to foster both gender equality and national pride, the project supported the Scholastic Gender Equality Games for Youth, more popularly known as the March Madness Tournament.

By providing the same opportunities to women and men and ensuring no one is left behind in our activities, a sustainable and inclusive path of development can be achieved.

Mr. Kevin Petrini

UNDP Deputy Resident Representative and Country Manager for Micronesia



Between 1 March and 18 April 2022, 15 basketball teams (the country's most popular sport), six comprised of girls and nine of boys, competed in an intermural competition.

"By providing the same opportunities to women and men and ensuring no one is left behind in our activities, a sustainable and inclusive path of development can be achieved," said Mr. Kevin Petrini, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative and Country Manager for Micronesia.

The significance of gender parity is of tremendous importance to the young women. According to Ms. Sylvileen Tom, voted the Most Valuable Player in the female division games, "Gender equality is when people of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities – equality for all women, men, trans and gender-diverse people and families. It impacts people of all ages and backgrounds."

Importantly, the message resonated with the boys as well. "Maybe one day as time goes by, we can become great leaders, standing up and fighting for gender equality. Basketball is not just an ordinary game; it helps us build relationships with one another," said JT "Oppa" Mingil, the boy's division MVP. "The March Madness Tournament is not only about playing together on the court but the connection that it makes between the players and our community," he added.



Mobilization and Valuation of Surface Water in the Village of Niangdo

BURKINA FASO

Implementing Partners

**Ministry of the Environment, Green Economy and Climate Change;
UNDP**

Project Budget

US\$1,000,000

Duration

2020-ongoing

A community's effort brings water and jobs to Burkina Faso's Poa commune



After more than four decades, the dream of a dam to serve the 50,000 people of Burkina Faso's Poa commune is finally becoming a reality.

The West African country is landlocked and historically has struggled with unpredictable rainfall, a challenge that has only been exacerbated by the climate crisis. The mobilization of water resources and their development are central to ensuring food security and combating extreme poverty.

©UNDP



The Niangdo dam was born of the commitment and determination of the sons and daughters of the commune, and it was as a result of their advocacy that the project launched in 2020 as a partnership of the Government and UNDP, with the support of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund. "This dam has long been desired. Our grandparents had even started digging with their bare hands. I am very happy to see the realization of this jewel and especially very proud to participate in the realization of the work," said mason Mr. Augustin Somanda.

It's more than just water that the project is bringing to the community, however; it has also brought jobs. "My main activity is masonry, which I have been doing for years in the commune. When the company informed me that it would give preference to local labour, I was doubly delighted because I would be able to contribute to the realization of the dam so dreamed of in the village in addition to having paid work," says Augustin, a local son now serving as the project's chief mason, managing a team of three masons and six labourers. "I was recruited for the construction of the site's living quarters, in particular the shed and the wire fence, before working as a chief mason for the construction of the dry riprap to protect the dam's embankment," he added.

Along with the jobs, the community has experienced a welcome economic vitality. Restaurants run by women have been strengthened, not to mention the small traders and the mobilization of the village's idle youth.

"With the amount I have been able to get now, about 500,000 CFA francs (US\$850), thanks to the work, I have been able to pay for the school fees of my four children. I have also bought goats for breeding. By the end of the project, I plan to start selling cereals with the savings and to produce vegetables," says Augustin.

For the community, the collective will to see the dam built serves as a beautiful example of solidarity and social cohesion with the leadership of the communal authorities.

"We see the benefits that dams have brought to communities in other communes of the region and elsewhere in the country. I am convinced, like everyone else in this village, of the benefits that this dam will bring to the locality," says Augustin. "Already the fact that we find ourselves around this construction site with enthusiasm really augurs a bright future for us while founding a lot of hope for the development of the perimeter for agricultural production. I would like to say "thank you" to UNDP, India and the Government, and to all those who have contributed to making our dream a reality. Thank you also to all those who will contribute to help us achieve the development of the perimeter for the benefit of the entire region and our children."

Work in progress on the Niangdo Dam Project. ©UNDP



©UNDP

With the amount I have been able to get now, about 500,000 CFA francs (US\$850), thanks to the work, I have been able to pay for the school fees of my four children. I have also bought goats for breeding. By the end of the project, I plan to start selling cereals with the savings and to produce vegetable.

Mr. Augustin Somanda
Mason



Improving Access to Water through the Installation of Solar Pumping Systems

HAITI

Implementing Partners
**Ministry of Environment;
UNDP**

Project Budget
US\$1,000,000

Duration
2020-2023

Rural communities in Haiti gain access to water through solar water pumps



Access to water remains one of the main development challenges in Haiti, where only 12 per cent of the population of 11 million have access to drinking water in their homes, particularly in rural areas and poor neighbourhoods where vulnerable groups such as women, children and the elderly are most affected.

After a 7.2 magnitude earthquake rattled Haiti in August 2021, the challenge became even more critical as more than 80 aqueducts and water systems in the southern region of the island alone were destroyed. This meant that 60 per cent of families in the area no longer had access to drinking water.

In response to these challenges, the Ministry of the Environment, in partnership with UNDP and with the support of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, launched a major initiative to improve access to water through the installation of solar pumps. The project sought to provide access to safe drinking water for 40,000 people, over half of whom are women and girls in the rural areas of Aquin and Baconnois, through the installation of eight solar photovoltaic-based water pumping systems aimed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. More than 20 women and men in these communities will receive vocational training on the operation and maintenance of the systems.

Despite the challenges caused by the earthquake, the COVID-19 pandemic and a rapidly deteriorating security situation where gang violence and road blockages cause major disruptions and standstills in Haiti, the project made important progress. The drilling of eight wells and the transportation of materials to the sites have been successfully completed. The new pumps will provide access to water and irrigation capacity to agricultural lands. Attention is being paid to the engagement of women, youth and people with disabilities in the social management of water, particularly in the project areas that currently have no basic access to clean water and clean sanitation facilities.

Mr. Odny Pierre-Louis, a beneficiary deeply involved in the implementation of the project and a member of the managing committee of the solar pumping systems, said that the project will have a big impact on the community. "Since Aquin is an arid area, the solar pumping systems will improve the lives of the entire population through food production. Don't forget that water is life; that's the reason for saying that," Odny stated.

To ensure its sustainability, the India-UN Development Partnership Fund-supported project has adopted two key approaches. First, from the beginning, the project ensured the involvement and engagement of all stakeholders, especially people who would



Community members enjoying clean water.
©UNDP

be operating the technology and were involved in planning and implementation. That swiftly led to the ownership of the project by local communities, particularly the women selected for training and their families and friends. Second, training women in the installation and maintenance of solar-powered pumping systems ensures that their knowledge and empowerment will be sustained over years and generations, with women training other women and sharing their expertise and achievements.

Lessons from the project are being shared on an ongoing basis. In March 2022, an exchange forum offered local and national actors the opportunity to discuss the importance of groundwater management and use, and the challenges that they are facing. It has been recognized as a good practice by the scientific and social participants at the workshops.

In addition, in June 2022, discussions on the challenges and opportunities of green energy for Haiti and the expected outputs of the project for rural communities in the country were held during a symposium bringing together the private sector, the public sector and contributing partners. The project has been mentioned as an excellent and concrete example of how to put into action the water-energy-food security nexus.

The project is also facilitating a South-South partnership between the Indian firm Shakti Pumps and Haitian technicians. The local partner firm implementing the project has created an effective knowledge-transfer channel by which local technicians are acquiring skills for modelling and then replicating the solar water pumping project. Additionally, the participation of the project in the organization of the regional fair on water

and sanitation and the symposium on green energy contributed to promoting the impact of the existing cooperation between India and Haiti.

“The sharing of experiences among peers living similar realities will promote the acceptance and appropriation of new concepts and tools for international development. The solar water pumping project that we are implementing in Haiti is an example of the mutual solidarity between Haiti and India which UNDP has been proud to facilitate and implement. We hope that the results of this pilot initiative in the areas of agriculture and sanitation will also have a positive impact on other development areas, including poverty reduction, environment and gender equality.”

By the end of the project, the partners had installed eight solar photovoltaic-based water pumping systems, generating nearly 400 kilowatts of green energy and improving access for 40,000 inhabitants in the project communities. In addition, it facilitated training in water management in times of disaster and emergency response for 18 people and reached about 100 people through presentations and public-awareness campaigns and participation in a regional fair on water and sanitation.

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Six Improved Village Hydraulic Systems in the District of Bamako and Surroundings, Sikasso and Segou

MALI

Implementing Partners

**National Directorate of Hydraulics;
UNDP**

Project Budget

US\$500,000

Duration

2018-2020

Solar-pumped water distribution points ease domestic work in Dialakorodji



Dialakorodji, a northern suburb of Mali's capital, Bamako, is known for its dynamic population, its cultural diversity where old traditions are maintained, and its growing urban development. As a result of the latter and of rapidly moving climate change, Dialakorodji is struggling with access to water.

In an effort to expand and ease access to water in the area, the National Directorate of Hydraulics, in partnership with UNDP and with financial support from the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, launched a borehole construction project which was completed three years ago and delivered 18 boreholes. Water is pumped via a solar-powered hydraulic system and is distributed through a faucet rather than the manual pumps that were previously available in the area. The hydraulic system is managed by the local Kouna Wolo Ton Association of Dialakorodji.

Thanks to the borehole, we no longer have to spend our days fetching water.

Mariam

a member of the Kouna Wolo Ton Association.

Improvements were swift and had a multiplier effect. The initial construction supported by the India-UN Fund has led to a multiplication of water points and the construction of several personal boreholes facilitating access to water for the inhabitants. The Association has also received technical advice on regular maintenance of the borehole equipment to ensure its durability and profitability. A recent post-project completion survey confirmed that the structures produced by the project were working well and were appreciated by local communities.

"This project was perfectly in line with national hydraulics policy insofar as our strategies support projects in areas such as Dialakorodji, where the need is greatest," said Mr. Abdoulaye Tangara, Deputy National Director of Hydraulics. "At the time this project was carried out, the inhabitants were suffering enormously because of the water problem. This kind of initiative is salutary, as it was initially designed for a population of 1,000 to 1,500 but this project has been able to benefit more than 2,000 people today."

"Since the creation of our Association three years ago, this project has been one of our major achievements, bringing about a positive change within our community. We're very proud of it," said Mrs. Awa Diarra, President of the Kouna Wolo Ton Association in Dialakorodji. "It should be noted that this borehole has



Dialakorodji's solar-powered pump. ©UNDP

brought us a great deal of relief since its installation. We are no longer faced with the difficulties of accessing drinking water."

"Thanks to the borehole, we no longer have to spend our days fetching water," says Mariam, a member of the Kouna Wolo Ton Association. "We also have access to drinking water. The only problem we face at the moment is the poor management of our land. Here, the division of land is a task for men alone. Women's opinions are of little importance. We don't want to deal with this inequality anymore; we're advocating change."

Overall, the project has made a significant, positive impact on the lives of the people of Dialakorodji by demonstrating the importance of international cooperation, community mobilization and regular infrastructure maintenance in ensuring the long-term success of such projects.



Fresh water being delivered in Dialakorodji. ©UNDP





Solar Home Stand-alone Systems for Funaota, Nukufetau

TUVALU

Implementing Partners

**Ministry of Public Utilities and Infrastructure;
Tuvalu Electricity Corporation;
UNDP**

Project Budget

US\$213,151

Duration

2019-2022

Solar home stand-alone systems for Funaota, Nukufetau



Covering little more than 26 kilometres (10 square miles) in Oceania, the volcanic archipelago of Tuvalu is comprised of a scattering of low-lying atolls where the highest elevation is a mere 4.6 metres (15 ft.). Given the scarcity of above-sea-level land, predictions are that this, the world's fourth-smallest country, will likely be the first to be totally submerged because of climate change. While the country's 11,390 people emit nearly negligible carbon emissions, Tuvalu takes the threat of being devoured by the surrounding ocean, indeed the climate crisis in general, quite seriously. The country is thus eager to lead by example by further reducing its greenhouse gas outputs and promoting renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies.

Photovoltaic solar-based systems and a telecommunication system. ©UNDP

Working in partnership with the Ministry of Public Utilities and Infrastructure and the Tuvalu Electricity Corporation (TEC), and with the financial support of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, the project provided reliable, high-quality and environmentally friendly power to Funaota Islet, located at the northernmost point of the Nukufetau Atoll, eight miles from the country's main settlement and accessible only by boat. There, the project set up photovoltaic solar-based systems and a telecommunication system to connect the Funaota and Savave Islets. It also established sufficient local capacity to operate and maintain photovoltaic solar home systems.

According to project partner TEC, the system saves about 14 kg of carbon dioxide yearly from the 7 kW systems. With the installation, the nearly 600 residents of Funaota Islet now have access to reliable and environmentally friendly electricity.

Subsequent technical assessment observations, testing, analysis and interviews, also supported by the project, concluded that the systems had been installed in accordance with the best industry practices, off-grid design guidelines and applicable standards.



The three installed stand-alone solar home systems, installed at the Community Leader's house and the dormitory, the coconut-oil processing building and the piggery, include a total of 26 photovoltaic panels, 36 batteries, 3 gensets (the equipment that drives a generator), 4 inverters and 4 charge controls. In addition, the project provided the very high frequency (VHF) radio, powered by photovoltaic solar-based systems, facilitating communication between the islands of Savave and Funaota.

To help to manage and maintain the machinery, the project also included the training of three Tuvalu Electricity Corporation staff members and provided guidance to 20 local people including the village leader. Furthermore, in the spirit of South-South

cooperation, the systems were installed by Fiji-based contractor CBS Power Solutions, and the project's experience and results are available for other similar projects through the articles published in two Pacific newsletters: *Newsletter of the Sustainable Energy Industry Association of the Pacific Islands* and *PPA*, a *Pacific Power Association* publication.



Photovoltaic solar-based systems and a telecommunication system. ©UNDP



Upgrading Saint Lucia's Capacity to Provide Impactful Vocational Training for Marginalized Youth

SAINT LUCIA

Implementing Partners

**Ministry of Finance;
Ministry of Education;
ILO;**

**Centre for Adolescent Renewal
and Education (C.A.R.E.)**

Project Budget

US\$1,061,601

Duration

2019-ongoing

New facility to provide vocational training programmes to marginalized youth in Saint Lucia - opening in 2023



Youth unemployment in the eastern Caribbean country of Saint Lucia is staggeringly high, with more than one-third of youth ages 15 to 29 without jobs and actively seeking employment. Equipping marginalized youth with practical skills will contribute to reducing unemployment significantly as well as generate a more skilled workforce to support the country's economic growth.

With the support of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education are partnering with ILO on the construction of a new facility dedicated to improving the employability of marginalized youth through vocational training. Located in the Cul de Sac district of Castries, the facility will be managed by the Centre for Adolescent Renewal and Education (C.A.R.E.), a local NGO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.

"My administration is committed to providing more opportunities for our youth to create sustainable livelihoods and to become global citizens," said H.E. Hon. Philip Joseph Pierre, Prime Minister, who also serves as the Minister of Finance.

"A project that has been long in the works is now coming into fruition," said Ms. Karlene Mason, C.A.R.E. Executive Director. "Look at what we can do for young people and for older ones as well because the intention is that we will be able to provide opportunities for those parents and others in the community who have not been able to receive skilled technical vocational training, so that they, too, can benefit from our facilities," she added.

As part of the project, a training-of-trainers (ToT) workshop was organized in 2021 to strengthen and upgrade local capacity by providing entrepreneurship education to the staff of the main project partners, the Ministry of Education and C.A.R.E. Given that ILO was, in parallel, supporting national stakeholders in Jamaica on a similar project, a joint learning activity enabled members from both countries to simultaneously attend the training activities. Using the ILO Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) training package, the sessions provided trainers with insights about entrepreneurship education and hands-on teaching materials used to conduct capacity-building activities. Responding to national stakeholders' requests, the focus of the training was on how to adapt the SIYB programme to the local context and how to effectively maintain students' motivation.

As a result of the ToT, the trainers proposed a curriculum tailored to trainers from middle-income developing countries of the Global South dealing with similar challenges in terms of business ecosystems and institutional capacities to support micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Direct engagement with educational and business development institutions was welcomed by all parties since it fostered productive exchanges based on their different end-users, students or entrepreneurs starting or expanding their businesses.

The majority of the 24 participants were teachers from vocational and secondary education institutions in Saint Lucia. In addition, three teachers employed by the Saint Lucia NGO C.A.R.E and three staff members from the Jamaica Business Development Corporation participated.

Project site pre-construction. ©ILO



In the context of South-South cooperation, a virtual community of practice was established to carry the learning beyond the conclusion of the training sessions to become the basis for future communications, enabling horizontal exchanges of knowledge, experiences and practical advice between countries, institutions and the highly engaged community of trainees.

My administration is committed to providing more opportunities for our youth to create sustainable livelihoods and to become global citizens.

H.E. Hon. Philip Joseph Pierre
Prime Minister

Sod-turning ceremony held in July 2022. ©ILO





Resilient Restoration of Pivotal Public Infrastructure for the Recovery and Sustainable Development of Mozambique Post-Cyclones Idai and Kenneth

MOZAMBIQUE

Implementing Partners

**Mozambique Recovery Facility;
UNDP**

Project Budget

US\$1,000,000

Duration

2021-ongoing

Combined resources are driving early recovery and building resilience in Mozambique



In 2019, Mozambique was hit by two powerful tropical cyclones. First, Cyclone Idai made landfall in March, followed barely one month later by the more powerful Kenneth, the strongest cyclone ever seen in the country's recorded history. Winds reached as much as 220 km per hour and heavy rains dumped more than 200 mm in 24 hours, leaving loss of life and large-scale destruction of assets and infrastructure in their wake.

The toll was devastating. Entire swathes of crops were damaged (nearly 500,000 hectares), and there was severe loss of livestock, exacerbating food insecurity across the area. Many families were separated as they fled the rising flood waters, while others were trapped on high ground, rooves and trees, unable to access basic goods and services for days. Tens of thousands of people were displaced, many having to flee with nothing as the waters rose rapidly.

©UNDP



UNDP and the Government established the Mozambique Recovery Facility, a five-year programme supported by several Governments, which takes an innovative, integrated approach to balancing early recovery and resilience-building. Focused on three core pillars – livelihoods and women's economic empowerment; housing and community infrastructure; and institutional strengthening of the cabinet for reconstruction after cyclones – UNDP is attempting to enable the restoration of livelihoods while at the same time building community resilience against future disasters through resilient infrastructure restoration to enable basic service delivery and ensuring that gender equality and women's empowerment are adequately addressed.

The India-UN Fund contribution has focused on its activities under pillar two, the rehabilitation of the Macomia District Health Centre Complex, which includes a maternity ward, public toilet and sanitation facilities, and four staff residences (two each for nurses and for doctors). Specialized facilities include an ophthalmology ward, a tuberculosis and leprosy building, and a mother's waiting room. The project is also covering the construction of a solar-pump water system and the provision of hospital supplies and equipment.

Rehabilitation of both the sanitary and public toilet facilities and especially the maternity building was the project's main priority. Following the cyclones, medical staff were handling pregnancies and related surgeries in the open in unsafe and inadequate facilities and without access to lighting and basic medical care equipment. With their completion, the facilities are now serving 5,000 vulnerable people, with the long-term goal of supporting at least 12,500 people in the surrounding communities. The work of the Fund will continue through 2024 despite the deteriorated

security situation in the Macomia area, where attacks by rebel groups have taken place, rendering timely project operations and completion more challenging.

By combining the resources from several Governments since 2019, the Mozambique Recovery Facility has already supported more than 250,000 people. This has included direct support to vulnerable households, skills and business training, the recovery and reactivation of MSMEs, and housing and infrastructure reconstruction and rehabilitation.

©UNDP





Reducing Adolescent Pregnancy in Guyana

GUYANA

Implementing Partners
Ministry of Public Health;
UNFPA

Project Budget
US\$559,496

Duration
2019-2022

Investment in information and access to family planning proved instrumental in lowering adolescent pregnancies in Guyana



Reducing pregnancy among girls 15 to 19 years of age is essential to achieving SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities). Over the past decade, the Government of Guyana has enacted a series of initiatives that have produced impressive results. A partnership between the Ministry of Public Health and UNFPA, funded by the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, was among the programmes contributing to these changes.

Globally, complications during pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death in girls 15 to 19 years old. Teen moms are more likely to drop out of school, preventing them from realizing their full potential. The babies of adolescent mothers face higher risks of low birth weight, preterm birth and severe neonatal conditions.

At 74 births per 1,000 among girls 15 to 19 years old, Guyana has the highest rate of adolescent pregnancy in the English-speaking Caribbean, a rate well above that of the countries of the Latin America and the Caribbean region, which itself has the second-highest rates globally. The rate is especially high among Indigenous girls as well as among girls from lower wealth and educational backgrounds.

Limited availability and access to quality sexual and reproductive health information, education and services for adolescents are the principal reasons for the high percentage. Furthermore, while government-backed efforts over the past decade have resulted in significant strides in child health and sexual and reproductive health, both maternal and child mortality rates have remained stubbornly high, with both ranked the second-highest in the region.

In 2019, the Ministry and UNFPA launched a comprehensive programme designed to reduce adolescent pregnancies within communities reporting the lowest use of contraceptives. The programme focused on improving access to reproductive health information, products and services, coupled with professional training for health-care providers.

The Ministry and UNFPA worked closely with key partners to develop the programme, which included the adaptation of the WHO global standards for quality health-care services for adolescents to meet Guyana's unique needs. That included collaboration with the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs to ensure the development of a culturally appropriate programme intended to identify and secure access to leaders within the target communities. It also worked with youth-led organizations and directly involved adolescents and youth in the planning,

implementation, monitoring and communicating of the programme. That included engaging men and boys as key change agents.

The project also developed two programme guiding documents, *"The Standards for Quality Health-care Services for Adolescents"* and *"Adolescent Health Service Delivery Guidelines for Health-care Workers"*, both of which were guided by the WHO guidelines and which were subsequently endorsed by the Ministry of Health and approved by the Chief Medical Officer. They have since been incorporated into the *Family Health Manual* of the Ministry of Health, and it is expected that these documents will guide health providers in the provision of adolescent health services.

The main objective of the training was to develop and maintain competent, caring and committed health-service providers who are knowledgeable about adolescent wellness conditions, methods of contraception, and skills to respond to the needs of adolescents.

At the heart of South-South cooperation is the sharing of information and best practices with partner countries in an effort to help each country's progress in its unique development pathways towards shared

goals. To this end, UNFPA presented a case study of the India-UN Fund-sponsored programme at the Second Caribbean Congress on Adolescent and Youth Health in October 2022.

During the three years of the project, more than 4,000 adolescents, 50 community leaders, 55 civil society organizations, 100 teachers, 11 faith-based organizations and 65 health-care providers as well as parents targeted communities and 11 remote communities received family planning information and services through the programme.

In early November 2022, Dr. Ertensia Hamilton, the Minister of Health, announced that the Ministry's combined efforts, including the India-UN Fund-sponsored programme, had contributed to a 6 per cent drop in adolescent pregnancies, from 25 to 19 per cent, over the past 10 years. While there still is a long way to go, this is significant progress, which may build momentum.

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Empowering Women and Youth in Zambia with Increased Access and Usage of Utility and Digital Financial Services

ZAMBIA

Implementing Partners
Ministry of Finance;
UNCDF

Project Budget
US\$600,000

Duration
2021-2022

Zambia's digital transformation will fail without all customers being king



This story was originally published by UNCDF in September 2022. It has been edited and adapted for this publication.

Abigail is 24 years old and living in Chainda, Lusaka, with her parents. She does odd jobs for her income and supports the family by contributing to some of the bills, including electricity. While she uses mobile money to top up her phone credit, Abigail is reluctant to pay for electricity using her phone as she fears she may be overcharged or she may make a mistake and misdirect money. "Agents charge K5 (US\$0.40) to buy electricity. If there are no extra costs, I'd prefer to pay with my mobile money," she said.

Grace is a vegetable vendor and a widow. She has a smartphone but uses cash to pay for her water and electricity because she doesn't know how to make mobile money payments. These are just two examples of customers who are either unaware that they can pay their utility bills using mobile money or do not trust the payment modality. Why is this, especially in a country with a relatively high mobile phone penetration rate of 83 per cent?

To better understand the challenge and come up with a solution, the India-UN Development Partnership Fund supported a partnership between the government and UNCDF to conduct assessments as to the underlying reasons for low uptake and to use that knowledge to develop programmes to increase consumer usage.

According to the Bank of Zambia [FinScope 2020 Survey](#), only 23.6 per cent of the adult population is financially literate. This includes 16.2 per cent of adult females and 21.4 per cent of adults in rural areas. Further, the 2021 FinDex Report indicated that 24 per cent of adults aged 15 years and older owned a financial institution account, which includes mobile money accounts, and of these, only 10 per cent use mobile money or an online service to make payments and purchases.



©UNCDF

A digital payments training session. ©UNCDF



Against these low numbers, a scoping mission by the project indicated that those individuals would use the digital services if (a) they knew about them, and (b) they knew how to make the digital payment. The UNCDF assessment also showed that, to encourage customers such as Abigail and Grace to start using their mobile money wallet for payments, providers needed to direct more effort to educating them directly (not the agents and merchants traditionally responsible for driving usage) to show how to execute transactions and to help them to gain trust in the payment platform. Further, it was vital to train consumers in digital financial literacy.

To accomplish this, UNCDF partnered with Viamo, a global social enterprise specializing in mobile engagement, to provide digital financial literacy training for 30,000 women and youth via interactive voice response (IVR), a WhatsApp chatbot for those who have smartphones.

The project addresses the information and training gap by using mobile-based and in-person training. It leverages a combination of IVR WhatsApp channels and in-person training solutions for customers and staff of utility services.

Operationalization of automated water vending machine. ©UNCDF



More than 34,000 users, 72 per cent of them women and 50 per cent youth, have utilized the digital payments for water and electricity payments, with almost 31,000 users gaining understanding as to why and how to use mobile money to pay for water, electricity and solar power.

The progress of the project is particularly evident in digital infrastructure, digital financial services and digital platforms, while more significant gaps remain in digital skills and digital entrepreneurship. Addressing these gaps, especially the inclusion of last-mile customers, remains a key priority for UNCDF in pursuit of achieving the SDGs. Despite individual efforts from various industry stakeholders, more coordinated and rigorous efforts are needed to boost customer awareness of and literacy in digital financial products.



Biodiversity Business in Biosphere Reserves: A Means to Poverty Reduction, Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development

NIGERIA

Implementing Partners

**Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria;
UNESCO**

Project Budget

US\$999,791

Duration

2023-ongoing

The multiplier effects of South-South cooperation



“South-South cooperation is built on the principles of equality, mutual respect and shared development. It recognizes that every nation, regardless of its economic status, has unique experiences, knowledge and expertise to contribute.”

With these words, H.E. Mrs. Ruchira Komboj, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, captured the very essence of South-South cooperation during her opening remarks at the recently completed twenty-first session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, held from 30 May to 2 June 2023.

Community members gather at the Shere Hills Reserve. ©UNESCO



The rippling effect of knowledge-sharing and mutual support is a foundational element of a new project soon to be launched in Nigeria, where the Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) will implement a series of initiatives contributing to a greener, more sustainable economy. The project will draw on the results of similar projects in neighbouring countries while further contributing to the body of knowledge on biodiversity-friendly businesses in tropical climates. The India-UN Development Partnership Fund is supporting the initiative.

Partners explained that the livelihoods and socioeconomic well-being of Nigeria's rural communities are intricately linked with their natural environment, where communities located in and around forest ecosystems rely mostly on biodiversity and natural resources for their livelihoods. However, they use unsustainable practices, including river chemical fishing and hunting, and clearing portions of the forest for subsistence farming, shelter and cooking. These practices place undue pressure on the ecosystem.



Community members gather at the Shere Hills Reserve. ©UNESCO

Seeking to mitigate this trend, this new project for Nigeria was approved. It builds on the successful results of an India-UN Fund project in the Togo Fazao-Malfakassa National Park, where biodiversity-friendly green-economy activities for families improved knowledge about biodiversity, established new small businesses, enhanced access to markets, and provided comprehensive start-up business-incubation services to support youth- and women-led entrepreneurship. For Nigeria, the project will make context-appropriate changes to the Livelihood Training Manuals and the visibility strategy produced for Togo as well as provide similarly adapted knowledge resources and training design. The project will focus on poverty reduction efforts through the establishment of biodiversity businesses, apiculture, snail rearing, mushroom and fish farming, and other green, sustainable industries. During the two-year project, 900 families (4,500 individuals of whom 40 per cent will be men, 30 per cent women and 30 per cent youth) residing in three biosphere reserve communities will participate.

The project will also help to strengthen biodiversity conservation work in neighbouring countries, tapping into the network of biosphere reserves and experts. It will share knowledge and experience through online meetings as well as training manuals, survey results and other research materials, and it will work with Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone in their efforts to conceptualize similar projects.

With the financial support of the Fund, the Nigeria project aims to not only deliver on its efforts within the country but also provide a replicable, scalable initiative that can be disseminated and adapted to the unique needs of countries in similar ecological and geographical zones through their own poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation efforts.

UNESCO Director General Audrey Azoulay visits Oban Biosphere Reserve. ©UNESCO





Abaco Community Centre/Hurricane Shelter

BAHAMAS

Implementing Partners

**Disaster Reconstruction Authority;
Ministry of Public Works;
UNDP**

Project Budget

US\$1,000,000

Duration

2022-2024

UNDP: Resilience, disaster mitigation more critical than ever



This story was originally published in *The Gleaner* on 3 June 2023. It has been adapted and edited for this publication.

As climate change continues to affect the frequency and intensity of weather events and as demographic patterns shift around the world, the impact of natural disasters will only increase. While no country will be spared, Caribbean States are seven times more likely to be hit by natural disasters and sustain damage to their gross domestic production, six times higher than larger nation states. These challenges make the building of resilience and properly planned disaster mitigation efforts more critical than ever before, according to Ms. Denise Antonio, UNDP Resident Representative for Jamaica, Belize, Bermuda, the

Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands; however, the region is not helpless and can contribute significant solutions to support global mitigation efforts. That was the heart of her message, delivered during the first Resilient Series Fireside Chats for the 2023 Atlantic Hurricane Season held in June. Echoing the message of Mr. Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator, she added that the world has the knowledge, expertise and technology to mitigate those risks through innovation, knowledge-sharing, risk-taking and market transformation.

UNDP has a significant track record of work in climate-resilient regulatory frameworks within the region. With US\$1 million in funding from the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, it is now partnering with the Government of the Bahamas on the construction of a hurricane-resilient shelter on one of the Abaco islands in the northern Bahamas. As a model of climate-resilient construction methods based on build-forward-better standards, that centre will double as a recreational facility and safe space.



©UNDP



Constructing hurricane-resilient shelters on the Abaco islands. ©UNDP

The UNDP disaster risk-reduction and recovery team is also working to mainstream disaster risk-reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean. It works with country partners to strengthen national policy, foster greater coherence of disaster risk-reduction and climate adaptation efforts, and strengthen preparedness and recovery measures.

Ms. Antonio said that countries served by the UNDP Multi-Country Office in Jamaica are in an active hurricane corridor and have had to adapt over the years out of necessity. She cited the data in support of that over the decades. "In 2020, there were 416 notable natural disaster events at an estimated cost of over US\$268 billion," Ms. Antonio said. "According to IMF [International Monetary Fund] data, between 1950 and



2016, 324 of the 511 disasters worldwide happened in the Caribbean, killing 250,000 people and affecting more than 24 million through injury and loss of homes and livelihoods."

Ms. Antonio pointed out that, as capacity is developed to withstand and to recover quickly from any crisis, countries in hurricane and cyclone hotspots can secure their development gains and stay the course in lifting the lives and ambitions of their people. "You can count on us to be your agile, responsive partner in our shared quest for a climate-resilient future," she said.

In 2020, there were 416 notable natural disaster events at an estimated cost of over US\$268 billion.

Ms. Denise Antonio

UNDP Resident Representative for Jamaica, Belize, Bermuda, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands



PROTECT, RESTORE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, AND HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS



Biodiversity Business in Fazao-Malfakassa National Park

TOGO

Implementing Partners

Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and Nature Protection; UNESCO

Project Budget

US\$999,508

Duration

2019-2022

Building biodiversity-focused businesses to improve lives and livelihoods in Togo



Biodiversity is under threat across the globe. The causes are many and varied and include population growth and the resulting change in land use as well as the more rapid exploitation of resources such as wood, wildlife, minerals, non-forest timber products and food. The 2022 Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services report notes that a record 1 million animal and plant species are currently under threat of extinction, and logging, mining and coastal development have altered or damaged about 75 per cent of the land-based environment and about 66 per cent of the marine environment. No country is exempt. Smaller developing countries, such as Togo in West Africa, are often challenged to preserve their biodiversity.

As a component of the country's National Development Plan (2012-2022), the Togo Ministry of the Environment, Sustainable Development and Nature Protection, in partnership with UNESCO and with the financial support of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, launched a project to support rural communities in the vicinity of Fazao-Malfakassa National Park, the largest of the country's three national parks. By leveraging the potential of biodiversity-positive businesses, the initiative was designed to reduce poverty and contribute to the local communities' sustainable development.

At the same time, the project would lay the groundwork for establishing a biosphere reserve in the Park, the country's third reserve.

Guided by the goals of SDG 15 (life on land), the project developed biodiversity-friendly green-economy activities for families through improved knowledge about diversity, the establishment of new small businesses, enhanced access to markets, and comprehensive start-up business-incubation services to support youth- and women-led entrepreneurship.



Shea butter collectors with bags of kernels. ©UNESCO



Beekeepers train in the field. ©UNESCO

Training men and women in the successful creation and management of green-economy businesses – shea butter development, beekeeping and breeding of ruminants – was the principal focus. That included training in business-specific processes, accounting and the development of a business plan. Beekeepers learned techniques for placing hives; monitoring; and collecting, processing and storing honey. Hunters from 12 communities learned the rudiments of sheep and goat breeding systems, feeding, reproduction, and monitoring and health management as well as the relationship between livestock, agriculture, hunting and biodiversity conservation. Also, shea butter collectors worked on best practices for collecting, processing and storing shea kernels and stock management for the effective administration of a cooperative society.

The project yielded impressive results. Twenty-eight cooperating societies engaging 610 people (310 women) were formed, and more than 1,600 people from 12 communes bordering the Park were provided training in improving their livelihoods through sustainable, biodiversity-positive small-scale businesses. In addition, a catalogue detailing the Park’s rich biodiversity was created and will be instrumental in establishing the proposed biosphere.

In addition, 184 community members in 10 villages were trained to manage and received 200 beehives and 300 pieces of harvesting and processing equipment. An additional 140 community members in 14 villages received materials for the construction of improved traditional sheepfolds for tending sheep and goats.

A hunter feeding his livestock. ©UNESCO



PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS



Improve Availability of Administrative Data for Tracking Progress of the International Conference on Population and Development Agenda within the Framework of the SDGs

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Implementing Partners

**National Bureau of Statistics;
UNFPA**

Project Budget

US\$550,000

Duration

2019-2022

Statisticians of the Republic of Moldova and India exchanged good practices about carrying out censuses with the support of UNFPA Republic of Moldova



This story originally appeared on the UNFPA website in February 2023. It has been adapted and edited for this publication.

A delegation of the Republic of Moldova, consisting of representatives of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the Electronic Governance Agency, the Ministry of Finance and UNFPA Republic of Moldova undertook a study visit to New Delhi, India, from 1 to 5 August 2022. The study visit, facilitated by UNFPA, aimed at the exchange of experiences and best practices between the authorities of the two countries regarding the organization and conduct of population and housing censuses, including the combined ones that use administrative data registers. The delegates had several bilateral meetings on those subjects.

The list of Indian institutions visited during the mission included the authorities responsible for keeping India's population register and conducting censuses (within the Ministry of Home Affairs), producing official statistics (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation), cooperative relations (Ministry of External Affairs) and the local office of UNFPA in India. The study visit, part of a larger effort to strengthen the data systems of the Government of the Republic of Moldova, was supported by the India-UN Development Partnership Fund.

During the visit, the participants had the opportunity to learn about the good practices in conducting censuses of the host country, some of which can be taken over and implemented in the Republic of Moldova for the next population and housing census to be launched in 2024. Participants studied the application of geospatial technologies, testing the use of nationally available administrative sources, and the use of modern devices such as tablets or mobile phones in the collection of census information, with the installation of the application that ensures the protection of personal data. They also trained in the use of digital software (such as the Census Monitoring System, a census application developed by Indian specialists) that monitors in real time the activity of reviewers in the field, the progress in the collection of census data and their preliminary analysis. Finally, they looked at the involvement of teaching staff from educational institutions (and other categories of specialists) as reviewers in order to ensure enough temporary census personnel to collect data in the established terms and of the necessary quality.

Mr. Igor Condrat, Programme Officer, UNFPA Republic of Moldova, emphasized that "This study visit represents the experience exchange between two developing countries, and, as a result, the working methodologies for the next census in the Republic



of Moldova will be improved. In the next period, the National Bureau of Statistics will strengthen its capacities for the use of statistical data through applying modern statistical methods based on the administrative data. UNFPA will continue to support the country in its efforts to strengthen demographic resilience, based on reliable data.”

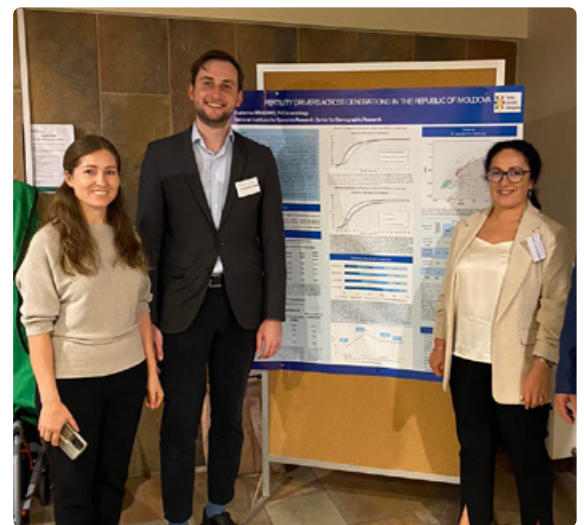
“Promoting South-South cooperation is important, as it represents, in my opinion, an excellent method that gives the chance to exchange knowledge and to identify the solutions and expertise necessary for the good organization of such large-scale processes and events,” added Condrat.

Members of the delegation also became familiar with the 70-year history of the organization of the census in India, a country with long-term experience, having conducted 10 censuses to date, the first in 1948. Also discussed were the particular challenges that India faces in training census takers, since both the training and the information collection process must be carried out in 19 languages.

At the same time, the representatives of India’s National Bureau of Statistics shared their own experiences in conducting censuses and developing the statistical population register. They also looked at the Statistical Population Register, a component of the Demographic and Social Statistics Information System, used for estimating international migration and the usual resident population in the period between censuses.

At the end of the study visit, the members of the Moldovan delegation, including representatives of the Ministry of Finance (as the national authority for coordinating external assistance), the Electronic Governance Agency (responsible for the modernization and digitalization of public services) and the National Bureau of Statistics (as the central authority in the field of statistics), had a meeting with the Joint Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Division, Ministry of External Affairs of India, where they discussed possible future partnerships.

This study visit represents a South-South cooperation activity through which the sharing of experiences between two developing countries was achieved and, as a result, explores possible solutions to overcoming challenges in national census taking. The activity is part of the UNFPA Demographic Resilience Programme, which aims to support countries in the region in developing policies and programmes aimed at the population to respond to demographic changes, strengthen human capital and define a prosperous future.



PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS



Samoa Knowledge Society Initiative

SAMOA

Implementing Partners

Ministry of Communications and Information Technology;
UNDP;
UNESCO

Project Budget

US\$462,985 (UNDP);
US\$537,013 (UNESCO)

Duration

2019-2022

Expanding access to information and digital transformation in Samoa



Access to information is the foundation of equitable development. Information not only empowers people to make decisions but also enables them to exercise their rights, be economically active, learn new skills and hold their governments accountable. For the people of Samoa, access to information is closely connected to freedom of expression; while recognized in Article 13 of the Constitution, however, it has yet to be entirely legislated to become a reality.

In 2022, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology partnered with UNESCO to create the Samoa Knowledge Society Initiative (SKSI), a nationwide effort to support the Government's commitment to safeguarding its citizens' freedom

of expression and access to information. Financial support is provided by the India-UN Development Partnership Fund. "The contribution of the rights to freedom of expression and access to information to good governance requires the willingness of government to be transparent and protect the rights of citizens as well as the ability of citizens to access and use relevant information. It is critical, therefore, that policy priorities and legislative frameworks are put in place for both," said Hon. Toelupe Poumulinuku Onesemo, Minister for Communications and Information Technology.

In the quest to implement statutory guarantees for public access to information, it is important to assist public institutions and public service officials to provide information and meet their obligations to citizens. SKSI foresaw the importance of capacity-building to improve data management and improved information and communications technologies to access information.

Aiming to create capacity in the country to match digital transformation expectations, SKSI was conceived to support access to information, technical skills development, and the creation, use, exchange and preservation of knowledge by using a "lifelong" learning approach.

©UNFPA



The initiative started supporting the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) in the development of a historic Freedom of Access to Information Policy, and Right to Information legislation. Through multi-stakeholder consultation, the initiative obtained feedback from the public and private sectors, and the proposals were sent to the National Policy Coordination Committee (NPCC) for official approval. Once passed into legislation, Samoa will achieve one of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets, SDG 16, Target 10: "Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements."

Obstacles to access to information can undermine the enjoyment of civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights. Speaking on the issue, Ms. Nisha, Director of the Office and UNESCO Representative to the Pacific States, pointed out that "freedom of expression and access to information, coupled with a public service that is committed to citizens' rights, are vital for empowering citizens, in particular those who are poor and socially disempowered, to claim their rights and entitlements."

The contribution of the rights to freedom of expression and access to information to good governance requires the willingness of government to be transparent and protect the rights of citizens as well as the ability of citizens to access and use relevant information. It is critical, therefore, that policy priorities and legislative frameworks are put in place for both.

Hon. Toelupe Poumulinuku Onesemo

Minister for Communications and Information Technology



To advance on that idea, the SKSI project focused on increasing access to information and knowledge for the general public through online and offline knowledge-sharing services. With the support of the National University of Samoa, the project carried out the creation of the Samoa Digital Library (SADIL). Officially launched on 17 January 2022, SADIL was built to give the people of Samoa access to bibliographic and institutional information in English and Samoan.

SKSI also supported the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) in the establishment of the Innovative Lifelong Learning Lab (MILLL) or Soifua A'oa'oina. The lab was officially opened on 30 June 2022 at MESC Headquarters, with the participation of authorities from MESC, the UNESCO Office for the Pacific States, the Consul of India for Samoa, leaders from the education and private sectors, and students. MILLL is an inclusive innovation hub for training and collaboration that draws and identifies talents, mentors and youths, providing accessible learning opportunities to people with disabilities, and pathways and skills required to meet the contemporary and future challenges of Samoa. This lifelong learning lab offers a range of learning opportunities and encourages and facilitates access to information, collaboration and advanced information literacy. Beyond an actual physical lab, MILLL has a virtual branch with open-access courses on digital information literacy.



Samoa Knowledge Society Initiative team. ©UNFPA

With the introduction of the many technologies and opportunities to Samoan citizens, training and capacity-building have been a major focus throughout the SKSI project. The UNESCO Office for the Pacific States engaged many partners to build a solid knowledge base and the sharing of ideas. The Open Education Resource Foundation (OERF) supported MESC in introducing free and open-source software (FOSS) tools. The first round of training to present the MILLL platform included an introduction to the learning management system, an online discussion forum to facilitate communities of practice and a WordPress multisite to host the Open Educational Resources (OER) course content. The learning management system presented a working model for potential replication to support other Pacific small island developing States (SIDS) and countries of the Global South.

Under the SKSI project, UNESCO led the OERF team in conducting training for library services teams in Samoa on open education, open licensing and copyright workshops. With a South-South cooperation vision, the Management Development Institute (MDI) of India conducted a virtual international training workshop on data management at the MESC Lifelong Learning Lab in December 2022. Twenty-six data managers from ten Samoan government ministries, entities and private organizations were trained on how to encourage the curation of data so that it can be accessed and used by people looking for information.

Along the same lines, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) of Samoa led a consultative process to develop a mobile application for farmers to promote and ensure access to information. The AgriTouch app aims to address knowledge gaps identified by farmers in consultations with MAF and SKSI partners in July and October 2021. The app provides farmers with up-to-date information focused on markets, crop management, current projects coordinated by the Ministry, and funding opportunities as well as a tool to track their farms' production and expenses. The first version of the app was available on the Google Play Store (Android) and Apple App Store websites. Local telecommunications vendors Vodafone Samoa and Digicel Samoa offered their customers the app free of charge under their respective networks.

The experience of the SKSI project in Samoa provided opportunities for foresight, feasibility, scaling up and replication in the Asia and the Pacific region, particularly in the context of SIDS-to-SIDS cooperation.

In order to evaluate where the country currently stands and to serve as a benchmark for the future evolution of SKSI in Samoa and the region, a media and information literacy (MIL) assessment was carried out following the UNESCO Global Media and Information Literacy Assessment Framework, followed by several exchange events to engage the partners of the Pacific States. One of these was a SIDS-SIDS exchange led by the University of the South Pacific (USP) Council on 9 November 2022. During the event, representatives of USP presented the SKSI model to country leaders of the region, proposing to replicate it in other SIDS and Pacific countries. Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Kiribati took an interest in knowledge exchange and having similar initiatives take place in those countries.

Before the conclusion of the SKSI project in December 2022, the Government of Samoa took measures to guarantee that the work on freedom of expression and access to information would continue.

Minister of Education,
Sports & Culture Mr.
Seuula Ioane Tuauu.
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MCIT agreed to continue managing the request for information portal to ensure timely dissemination of requested information. MESC will operate the Lifelong Learning Lab with the support of the education sector. Training events will be carried out with the Public Service Committee, with the support of a pool of trainers from key partners from MCIT, MESC, the Office of the Regulator, NUS and professional association representatives. The mobile application for the farmers' associations will now be integrated into

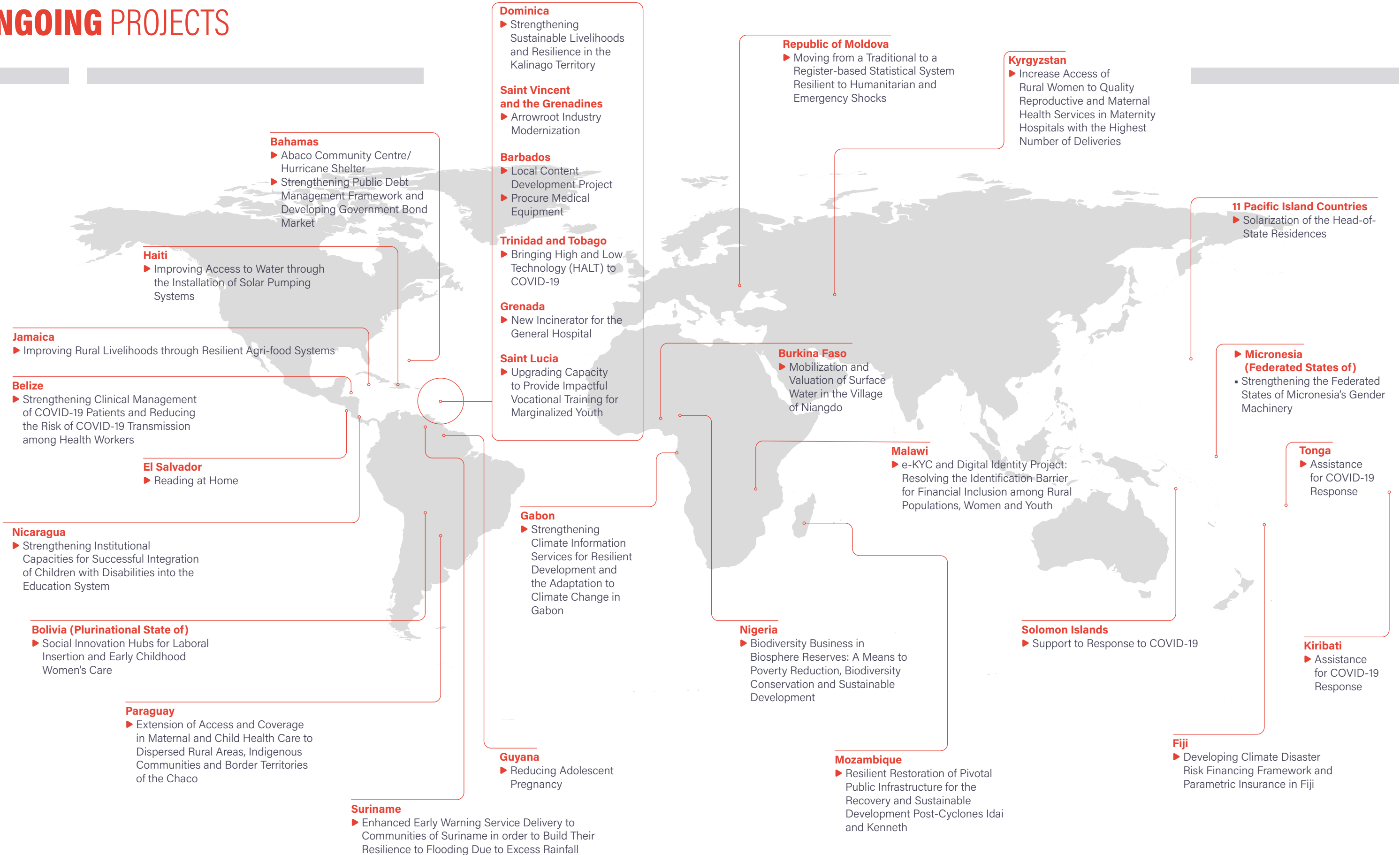
the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries work, and new staff will be incorporated into the team to ensure that the app maintains updated information and is upgraded in the future.

Freedom of expression and access to information, coupled with a public service that is committed to citizens' rights, are vital for empowering citizens, in particular those who are poor and socially disempowered, to claim their rights and entitlements.

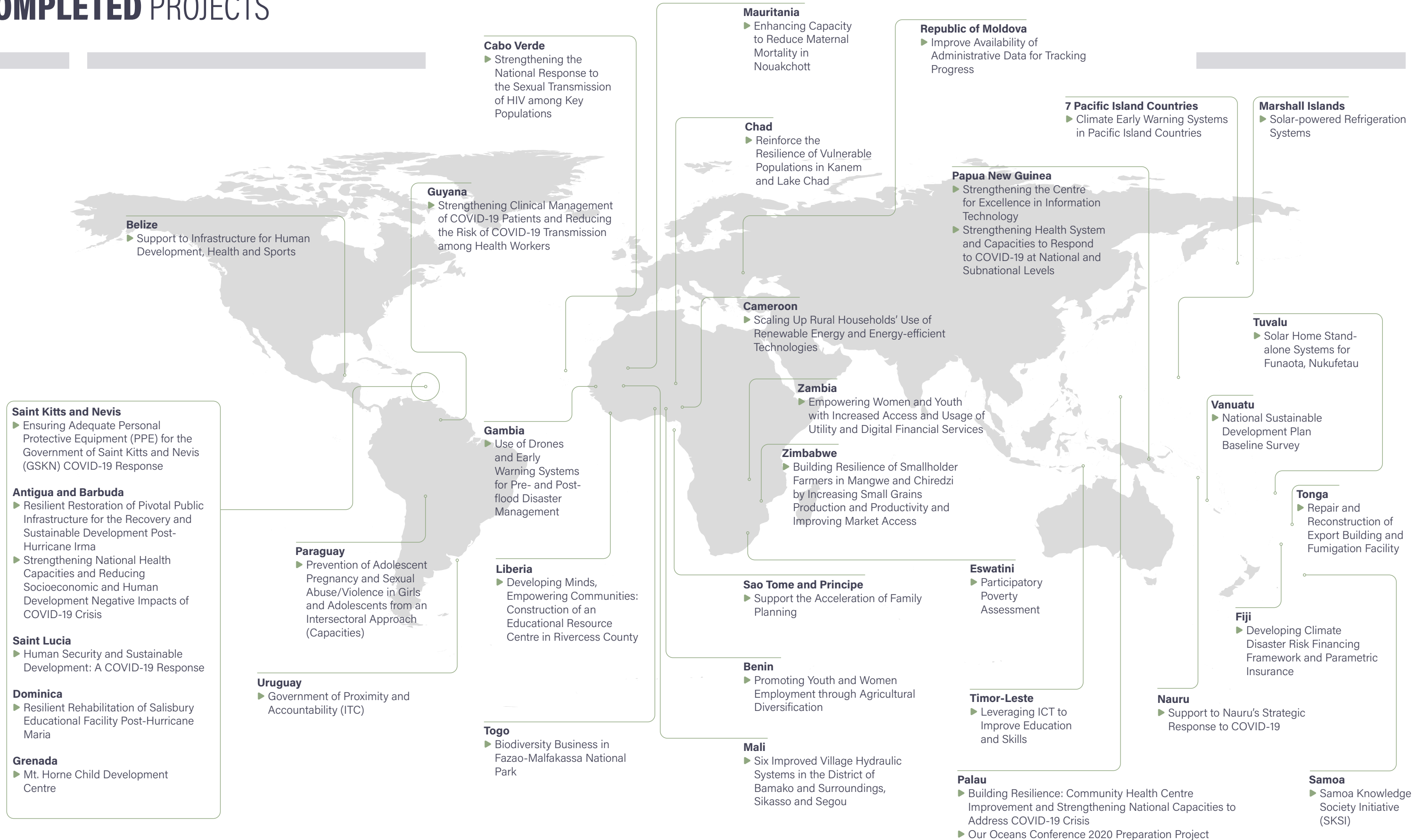
Ms. Nisha

Director of the Office and UNESCO Representative to the Pacific States

ONGOING PROJECTS



COMPLETED PROJECTS



FOR INQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT

Mr. Dinesh Setia

First Secretary

Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations



press.newyorkpmi@mea.gov.in



+1 646 894 3422

Ms. Ines Tofalo

Trust Fund and Project Management Specialist

United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation



ines.tofalo@unOSSC.org



+1 917 902 9395



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