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<b>Sector Name:</b>	Natural and Technological Risks.
<b>Sub-sector Name:</b>	Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation, and Management
<b>Objective:</b>	To reduce disaster risk by increasing the disaster management capacity of vulnerable communities in Jamaica, St. Lucia, Grenada, and the Dominican Republic.

## **Introduction**

This is the Final Report for the CRS “Youth Emergency Action Committees (YEAC) II: Empowering Youth in the Caribbean for Community Disaster Risk Reduction” project implemented with the St. Patrick’s Foundation in Jamaica, Caritas Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic, and Caritas Antilles in St. Lucia and Grenada. This report covers activities from September 1, 2011 to September 30, 2013.

### **A. Background**

Catholic Relief Services, with support from USAID/OFDA and in partnership with Caritas and the St. Patrick’s Foundation, is implementing the Youth Emergency Action Committees (YEAC) II project in vulnerable communities in Jamaica, St. Lucia, Grenada, and the Dominican Republic.

This project is based and builds on the experiences and successes of the Community Risk Reduction through Youth Emergency Action Committees in Urban Neighborhoods of Kingston, Jamaica project (YEAC, 2009-2011). Project activities include the formation and strengthening of YEACs in the target communities; engaging youth as leaders in a process of community risk reduction; training community members in Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation, and Management (DPMM); developing community hazard risk reduction plans and selecting, planning, and implementing hazard risk mitigation activities.

### **B. Summary and Highlights**

Over the course of the last two years, CRS and its partners have learned so much both about the challenges of the day to day implementation and management of a multi-country initiative, as well as the capacity and motivation of communities in the Caribbean to confront their readiness to respond to disasters. As has been well documented through the regular quarterly reports, the management of the project has had a lot of challenges, though ultimately, after extending the deadline for an additional 6 months, the project was able to overcome its early struggles and meet its targets.

Across the four target countries of Jamaica (Jam), St. Lucia (SLC), Grenada (GR), and the Dominican Republic (DR), the start-up activities proved to be more time-consuming than originally envisaged which ultimately impacted the implementation work plan. In the first year, CRS and partners recruited, hired, and trained project staff, completed the baseline survey, designed the tools for implementation and monitoring and evaluation and spent significant time sensitizing local communities and key representatives from relevant organizations such as the national disaster management agencies and national Red Cross. In Jamaica, Grenada, and the Dominican Republic, partners were able to spread the word about the project’s aims, objectives, and activities, recruit an initial cadre of youth, and hold the first training camp and trainings in basic Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

As this project was an expansion of the work of CRS and its partner in Jamaica, new YEACs were formed in the Dominican Republic, St. Lucia, and Grenada. Trainings throughout the project period in DRR and teamwork were undertaken, as well as refresher courses in Kingston, Jamaica aimed at strengthening and deepening their knowledge for future use in training their fellow community members. In the latter part of the project, there was an

emphasis on community sensitization efforts and strengthening of relationships with their local disaster management network and other relevant stakeholders. Additionally, a consultant was engaged to document the CRS YEAC methodology and training guide for future replication and sectorial sharing. The final version of the guide (in Spanish and English) is re-attached for your reference: “This is my Barrio! Youth in Action: A Guide for Involving Young People in Addressing Disaster Reduction in Their Communities”.

One of the greatest accomplishments of the project is that the youth continue to forge relationships and meet regularly. They are energetic, committed and have a growing knowledge both of their communities and DRR. We recognize that many of our participants are unemployed and may opt to spend their time trying to find a means to take care of their needs. The YEAC activities can be very time consuming and the immediate benefits may not always be very apparent. Despite the fact that this often impacts attendance and participation in project activities, in all four countries, partners report a core group of youth that remain consistently committed to the YEACS and their mission. Local implementing partners continue to grow in their capacities to coordinate with key stakeholders and to improve their overall management of the activities despite the specific challenges of working with the target group of vulnerable youth. Given all of the challenges in implementing on the islands, CRS recognizes that with very little time left, there is much work to be done but is confident that with the most recent partner staff changes and project progress, the value of the project is not to be denied and will finish with great success.

### C. Report on Advances Toward Indicators and Targets

Indicator	Project Target		Accomplishments		% of target reached		Explanation
	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	
1. Number of people benefitting from reduced risk.	Jam - 9,180	Jam- 94,839	10471	94,839	114%	100%	The outcomes in St. Lucia did not ultimately match the original expectation for a variety of reasons. Although their did not officially hit their targets for indirect beneficiaries, due to the coverage by local media of the project activities, we estimate the people better informed about DRR and emergency response is significantly higher.
	SLC – 1,245	SLC- 8,185	457	2,946	36%	36%	
	GR - 465	GR - 1,650	1854	1,650	399%	100%	
	DR – 1,860	DR - 6,500	3,056	6,500	164%	100%	
	Total Direct - 13,050	Total Indirect – 111,174	15,838	105,935	121%	95%	
2. Number of YEACs formed or strengthened.	Jam – 8		10		125%		
	SLC – 2		3		150%		

	GR – 1	3	300%
	DR – 4	4	100%
	Total – 15	20	133%
3. Number and Percentage of YEAC members that are women.	Jam–72 of 180 (40%)	74 of 149 (49%)	122%
	SLC– 18 of 45 (40%)	12 of 20 (63%)	158%
	GR– 6 of 15 (40%)	25 of 54 (46%)	400%
	DR– 24 of 60 (40%)	63	263%
	Total– 120 of 300 (40%)	130 of 318 (40%)	100%
4. Number of people trained in disaster preparedness, mitigation, and management.	Jam - 9,180	10,471	114%
	SLC– 1,245	457	36%
	GR– 465	2,205	475%
	DR -1,860	3,056	164%
	Total – 12,750	12,311	96.55%
5. Number and percent of beneficiaries retaining disaster preparedness, mitigation, and management knowledge two months after training.	Jam - 5,508 (60 %)	263	.05%
	SLC– 747 (60%)	0	-
	GR– 279 (60%)	203	73%
	DR– 1,116 (60%)	1,197	107%
	Total– 7,650 (60%)	1,663	22%
6. Number of hazard risk reduction plans, policies or curriculum developed.	2 curriculum 15 plans	11 plans	73%
7. Number of communities adopting hazard mitigation measures.	Jam – 8	4	50%
	SLC– 2	0	-
	GR– 1	0	-
	DR – 4	4	100%
	Total – 15	8	53%

## **D. Report on Advance of Activities**

### **Activity 1: Community Sensitization.**

Throughout the life of the project, partners and the YEACs have engaged in communities through a variety of activities including neighborhood clean-ups, home visits, family fun day activities and other initiatives to promote the work of the project and increase awareness.

Community activities throughout the project drew the interest of local business that helped support some of the initiatives. Businesses that have pledged support to their communities and the project include J. Wray & Nephew, as LIME, REAL VALUE IGA, BOSS FM RADIO and the Caribbean Youth Association among others.

In the second year of implementation, communities were far more aware of the YEACs and their mission. Throughout the year promotional materials were distributed and in the case of Grenada a local billboard was erected to remind the community of the importance of DRR and their role in preparing themselves. In all countries, co-sponsored events with the local Red Cross and other disaster preparedness structures as well as the private sector helped to further raise the profile in the country.

### **Activity 2: Form or Strengthen YEAC Committees.**

The project exceeded the expectations for the development of youth emergency action committees. While the target for all 4 countries was to form or strengthen 15 YEACs, in the end 20 were formed; with Jamaica and Grenada exceeding their targets. Given that in the beginning there were some challenges in recruiting new youth and ensuring consistent participation among the youth volunteers it is a significant accomplishment that the groups meet regularly, make plans for future activities, develop and practice skits for future community sensitization, review training received, and take advantage of this unique social space and community to talk about other issues that they face as youth in vulnerable communities.

Although Jamaica exceeded their target for YEACs, two of the original groups had become rather dysfunctional, requiring the Rangers to be very proactive to re-engage the community in the activities and attract youth back to the group. After much community level lobbying, we are pleased to report that one (Olympic II) of the two struggling YEACs is back to a functioning status while the partner continues to work with the second (Majesty Gardens) still struggling to stay afloat. To date, however, the partner continues to work in the Majesty Garden community in order to ensure that the group functions.

### **Activity 3: Train YEACs -Training of Multipliers.**

Throughout the project, the training events were very well attended for the most part. By the end of the project, 3 of the countries far exceeded their targets for training. St. Lucia struggled to meet its targets for a variety of reasons, including staff turnover and an underestimation by the project of the challenges during the start-up phase. That said, by the latter half of the second year, the St. Lucia project picked up great momentum as it moved into Phase III, though unfortunately, it wasn't enough to fully overcome the challenges in securing community buy-in early on to hit all its targets by the end of Phase II. Despite those challenges in the first year of implementation, the training activities were largely unaffected particularly in Jamaica and the DR. In the second year of implementation, closer work relationships evolved with the local Red Cross chapters and the civil defense units as well as

the respective governments' disaster response agencies. The trainings facilitated by the Red Cross included DRR and team building as well as community preparedness.

**Activity 4: Community “Edutainment” Training Events.**

While youth throughout the project are more cognizant of risks and familiar with pertinent language in relation to disasters, project managers agree that there is value in continuing to strengthen their capacities, both at a technical level and in terms soft skills for community development before they will be ready act as multipliers. Community edutainment events in the second year of implementation strengthened both the technical knowledge and skills for community development and provided a great opportunity for the YEACs to demonstrate their skills and commitment to the communities and peer youth interested in engaging in their communities.

Thanks to Edutainment activities, throughout the 4 countries a much wider audience was reached for messages about disaster risk reduction, although for a variety of reasons it was not possible to fully measure the knowledge through pre-and post-testing at all events. In the end, the post-test, given 2 months after these events showed great retention from a random sampling of community members in particular in Grenada and the DR where their targeted where exceeded. In St. Lucia, regrettably, pre and post testing was not possible in the life of the project making it unclear, ultimately, the rate of retention. Although Jamaica also struggled to meets its overall target for the pre and post testing of knowledge, a random sampling of over 260 attendees showed that more that 75% had retained information three months after the activities.

**Activity 5: Develop or Update and Disseminate Hazard Risk Reduction Plans.**

In Jamaica, the Rangers, in partnership with ODPEM and KSAC, formed seven (7) community disaster risk management (CDRM) groups, restructured an existing group, and completed six (6) plans for the project areas and revised an existing plan. All plans have been printed and bounded for dissemination. The plans along with the VCA reports will be given to the CDRM chairperson to be kept for referencing as is needed. A copy was also done for the Rangers' access and for CRS.

In St Lucia and Grenada, All VCAs were completed for target communities on both islands.

In the Dominican Republic, four (4) previously completed community plans were printed and distributed to key institutions (churches, schools, neighborhood associations, and sports clubs) to share widely among their network and empower residents for its implementation.

**Activity 6: Select and Implement Community Disaster Mitigation Activities.**

Despite best efforts by the partners and YEACs only four community disaster mitigation projects were completed in Jamaica. In Grenada and St Lucia, the activities were thwarted by challenges related to the scale of mitigation activity that the community needed and the allocated budget resulting in a time shortage to for re-design by the communities due to other commitments. These activities may be pursued in Phase III of the YEAC project.

The DR was able to meet its targets in this activity and four activities were implemented in the target communities in the second year of implementation.

## **E. Report on Barriers Encountered**

The great challenges that that project encountered in the start-up phase of the project ultimately affected the end result, making it difficult to hit targets by the end of the project life, particularly in Jamaica, St. Lucia and Grenada, partly due to a lack of the outreach management model and challenges in communication and regular oversight. In addition, significant staff turnover in those three islands in particular made it difficult to ensure a consistent team to work in the communities- so crucial to building the trust to gain the access that this project needed.

It has been widely acknowledged by CRS that the partners in this project, particularly in Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Grenada have limitations in their capacity. Their greatest strength is their commitment to communities they serve but they are often very representative of the occasional instability that is reflected in our target communities. In all three of the above mentioned countries the YEAC project managers have changed more than once. This has caused upheaval among the groups when these staff changes take place in that the partner staff has invested significant time in developing trusting relationships with the youth and the changes result in the need for training new staff and the time lost.

In addition to partner changes, the CRS Program Manager that had been operating out of the Dominican Republic was transferred to Afghanistan in December 2012 so CRS had to engage another management strategy, including the hiring of a staff person operating out of Jamaica, who actually enhanced the oversight and accountability of the partners, resulting in a more effective second year of implementation- though, as mentioned, it was still impossible for the smaller islands to compensate for lost time- though the effort was valiant. CRS spent a significant amount of time working with partners to improve capacity and support in reporting and financial documentation.

At last, in the final months of Phase II, CRS learned that the challenges confronting the partners in Jamaica had come to a head and the St. Patrick's Foundation had decided to discontinue their collaboration with the project and drop the Rangers from the program portfolio. This was a significant blow to the Rangers and CRS worked closely with the Foundation and the youth to design a strategy for ways forward. Ultimately, it was decided that CRS would support the Rangers youth into spinning off into a small local organization after the YEAC II phase completed. It is planned to focus our energy on their registration and intensive organization capacity building over a 6-9<sup>th</sup> month period in the hopes that they will be able to reconnect to the YEAC project in future phases.

### *Challenging Communities*

As mentioned previously and indeed recognized at the design phase of this project, the target communities and their local reality heavily influence the individual successes or challenges of the project in each country. Each one is unique and, as such, has played an important role in the variety of achievements to date. Some of the social challenges like disenfranchisement, low literacy and education rates, high unemployment made the target communities the most vulnerable but also the most challenging to work with, particularly in establishing trust and the initial relationships needed to get community members on board. This, coupled with the managements challenges and staff turnover previously discussed really made for a slow start up of the project that chased CRS and partners throughout the second year. Despite great effort to catch up, several targets were not hit, though by the end of the project, the

momentum was strong and CRS expects it will make for vast improvements in the implementation of the Phase III.

*At-Risk Youth*

Lack of experience of the youth participants in participation in organized activities or groups continues to challenge the project, though the life of the project tremendous improvements have been shown, particularly as we entered year two. It must be noted that when dealing with such a vulnerable community, participation in activities can represent a serious sacrifice as they are often working to contribute to the income of the household. Despite the continuing challenges, CRS has seen individuals among the group really stand out and lead their peers, remaining committed against all odds.