

## LUCELEC Leads Multiple Partner Tree Planting Initiative At Sports Academy

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**Castries, November 13, 2024** – An African Proverb says, “To go fast, go alone. To go far, go together” - a fitting way to encapsulate a tree planting initiative between the St Lucia Electricity Services Limited (LUCELEC) the Ministry of Agriculture, Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN) and the Academy Adventure Plus Environmental Club of the Saint Lucia Sports Academy.

A few weeks ago, these partners came together to plant over 200 trees at the Saint Lucia Sports Academy in Gros-Islet. This was the second phase of a project conceptualized by the school’s Academy Adventure Plus

Environmental Club to instill the values of discipline and leadership in its young male members. Two of them who volunteered on that day said they gained tremendous value from the experience.

“It was a great experience because I learned how to plant trees, I learned the different kinds of trees and it was a great experience because I supported my school environmentally and gave back to my community,” said Johnii Mathurin whose sentiments were echoed by Troy Prospere.

“It was a very great experience; I learned a lot. It helps the people, our school. I learned how to plant fruits and stuff. I planted plantain, sour orange and different kinds of stuff.”

Over 35 LUCELEC team members were joined by family members, totaling 45 volunteers – a record level of company participation. LUCELEC Corporate Communications Assistant Sydel Charles says the activity met multiple company goals.

“LUCELEC as you know is the Power of Caring, it’s part of our Corporate Social Responsibility but we’re also very much into youth and sustainable development so this is just an initiative that combines the two and allowed us to showcase that.”

The volunteers worked with the Ministry of Agriculture to plant plantain, sour orange, soursop, sugar apple, mango and cashew plants. Range Officer Rosemond Justin of the Forestry Department’s Northern Range Unit said the new plants would replace an invasive plant species called leucaena. The crops were also planted to assist in carbon sequestration, the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and to help mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.

“The mangoes will do well to stabilize the slight slope around this area. Because of the spacing mangoes require, we will not plant 2 mangoes [next to each other] – that’s why we spaced them out. And, because the central part is more fertile, the plantain we planted will do better there. We also planted tree crops to border the plantain and protect it from strong winds. They will be the windbreak to protect the plantain plants.”

The CYEN National Coordinator meanwhile – expressed pleasure with the number of young people who participated in the activity.

“It’s a very good thing that through this collaboration, not only did the staff at LUCELEC bring their families, their young kids were also able to participate in this event that can really nurture that sense of returning to the ground, that sustainable way of living and eating and doing it on your own to help support yourself.”

Zaria Gideon, a Lab Technician at the Sports Academy and one of the Coordinators of the Sports Academy’s Adventure Plus Environmental Club, said the Club’s student members will work with the Ministry of Agriculture to maintain the garden.

“We will collaborate with the Forestry Department on maintenance. They’re going to be coming with grass trimmers to maintain the area and our students will be watering the plants in the morning and afternoon. Our students live on campus during the week so it will be feasible to do the watering throughout the week and the rest of our team will be assisting us over the weekend, it’s very feasible and going to happen. We will be able to maintain it and hopefully most of our plants, if not all will survive.”

In addition to learning the value of growing and maintaining a garden, the students of the Saint Lucia Sports Academy will also benefit from using the crops in the school’s feeding programme. LUCELEC has also donated a grass trimmer to the Ministry of Agriculture to be used in its maintenance work at the school.

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