



Building Resilience & Ending Vulnerabilities in SIDS

Joint Programme 2022 Annual Progress Report

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Cover Page

UNCT/MCO: Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis

Reporting Period: 1 January - 31 December 2022

JP title: Resilient Caribbean: Engaging & Training Youth, Strengthening Integrated SP Sector Delivery

Stakeholder partner: National Government; Sub-national Governments; Civil

Society Organizations; Social Security Institutions, OECS Commission;

Thematic SDG Areas: Decent jobs & universal social protection; Digital transformation; Transforming education;

PUNOs: UNICEF, ILO, UNESCO, WFP

Total estimated expenditures: US\$ 256,545.0

Total estimated commitments (including expenditures): US\$ 445,152.0

Gender Marker: Gender-sensitive (for example, the JP acknowledged and aimed to address gender to enhance the policy/programme, such as undertaking gender analysis to ensure policies/programmes do no harm)

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Executive Summary

The Joint Programme in Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis and the larger Eastern Caribbean through the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission has been successful in supporting governments to put key mechanisms in place at policy and programmatic levels. More specifically, the JP has facilitated the implementation of key interventions that contributed to the enhancement of social protection programmes' design and implementation, strengthen systems building, support access of workers in the informal economy to a package of incentives that facilitates their access to social security coverage and empower youth to enter the labour market through access to entrepreneurship and skills development. By doing so, the Joint Programme (JP) effectively contributed to the implementation of the UN MSDCF outcomes 1 on access and completion of quality education with skills to advance to employment and outcome 4 on equitable access and utilization of universal, quality and shock responsive social protection. Even though elections and subsequent changes in governments in two out of the four target countries significantly delayed implementation, the implementation rate at the end of Year 1 was 41 % (Total estimated commitments, including expenditures). As part of its first results on social protection, the JP effectively contributed to improve implementation of social assistance in the British Virgin Islands (BVI) and Anguilla through effective technical support, and improvement of institutional capacities of 43 staff in social assistance delivery and development packages of incentives that facilitate access of informal economy workers to social security coverage. The digitalization process of social protection data systems in Anguilla and the BVI, based on thorough end-to-end processes reviews of programmes and the implementation of an interim streamlined digital solution in the BVI, are already making programmes more effective and accountable. Key consultative processes have been put in place and innovative tools have been used (U-Report, Rapid Pro) to engage rights-holders in the design and implementation of interventions and to ensure better accountability to beneficiaries. While implementing planned activities, the JP showed its agility by effectively supporting the social protection reform that was triggered in the BVI by the Commission of Inquiry

at both policy and programmatic level. This was done by supporting the Government to prepare a draft plan for Cabinet alongside basic instructions for legislative drafting to reform the social assistance benefit system, and supporting the improvement of the flagship social assistance programme that the reform is based on. The reform supports the reallocation of funding previously used for discretionary grants to implement social assistance programmes that more effectively reach the poor and vulnerable. The plan also leads to efficiency gains through the centralization of the administration of institutional grants and improvement of programmes implementation through technical support provided by the JP. Regarding its second result on youth engagement and training, 1,219 young people from across the subregion completed the nine self-improvement learning modules identified by the youth themselves, which covered areas such as building resumes, preparation for interviews and grooming to enhance school leavers' ability to successfully enter the job market. In Grenada, the capacity of 22 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) educators in digital competencies and inclusive learning was strengthened and all preparatory activities were successfully implemented which will enable the capacity strengthening in 2023 of community youth leaders in entrepreneurship skills and post-secondary youths on digital and entrepreneurial skills.

Annual Progress

Overall JP self-assessment of 2022 progress:

Satisfactory (majority of annual expected results achieved; 1 to 3 months delay in implementation)

Overall progress against 3 key results

JP Result 1 - Improving social assistance sector performance and reach, as well as enhancing and expanding contributory social protection:

- Policy and programmatic support was provided in the BVI to accelerate the ongoing social protection reform following the release of the 2022 Commission of Inquiry report. Effective support was provided to the Government to prepare a plan to reform Social Assistance, inclusive of the removal of discretionary grants and making the system more accountable, efficient and inclusive. Technical support was provided to support the implementation of the reform plan which proposed a new universal child grant, disability grant, unemployment benefit, social pension, and an increase in minimum wage. Legislative instructions were also drafted and will be finalized in 2023. A temporary grievance tool was implemented to improve accountability to affected populations. Technical support was also provided to review the benefits packages, eligibility criteria and develop of SOPs for the enhancement and delivery of the PAP.

- In Anguilla and the BVI, progress was made in strengthening social protection Info Mgmt. Systems. A twin track approach was used in the BVI through an interim streamlined system, while setting the base for a more comprehensive IMS. In Anguilla, support was provided to develop an IMS that can respond to country-specific data needs along programmatic cycles and pays explicit attention to the most vulnerable and allows integration with broader information ecosystems. A programmatic review of the main programmes that will use the IT solutions and an environmental analysis were effectively conducted.

- 15 key stakeholders from national social security boards from Anguilla, the BVI and Grenada were trained on the extension of social protection to workers in the informal economy, with a view to ensuring adequate social protection for workers in all types of employment. Strategic action plans for each country were successfully developed and their implementation will be supported in 2023.

- National stakeholders from Anguilla, the BVI and the OECS, received training through a tailored course on Public Finance Management. The course focused on financing social protection in the post-covid era, to support evidence generation to advocate for greater and better public investments in social protection.

- The U-Report youth-centered messaging tool, was effectively leveraged to develop polls with the U-Report OECS Youth Steering Committee to sensitize and increase the youth understanding on social protection and collect their feedback on social protection policies being developed.

JP Result 2 - youth empowerment to enable their effective labor market entry:

- In Grenada, the capacity of 22 TVET educators in digital competencies and inclusive learning was strengthened through a 6-week programme with engagement of Blackboard Academy (a training service provider in digital teaching and learning).

- A 3-day in-person train the trainer programme in entrepreneurial competencies for community youths was designed and developed as the initial phase of the capacity strengthening of 50 community youth leaders. Additionally, an Entrepreneurial Starter Pack was developed which will serve as a key learning resource for participants. The training is scheduled for February 2023.

- Stakeholder consultations were held in October 2022 to determine the requisite digital skill areas to be employed in engaging youths. Key partnerships with the private sector were established with IBM and CISCO identified for providing online digital skills training to youths in 2023.

- Through the efforts of the OECS Commission, 1,219 young people from across the subregion completed the 9 self-improvement learning modules which were launched in the last quarter of 2022. The modules were designed to enhance school leavers' ability to successfully enter the job market and were chosen based on the major responses from a U-Report poll.

SDG Acceleration progress towards the SDGs, focusing on the main SDG targets

Through its first year of implementation, the Joint Programme accelerated progress towards the achievement of the SDG targets 1.3, 4.4 and 8.3, based on its contribution to reducing household poverty and vulnerability through improved social assistance sector performance and reach, as well as enhancing and expanding social security systems, supporting youth empowerment and training and the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation. The following outlines how this was achieved:

- In the BVI -
 - o The removal of discretionary grants, and the effective recertification and transition of 143 households into the Public Assistance Programme (out of 363 households previously benefitting the discretionary grant) were executed through a transparent and more accountable system, following clear eligibility criteria and established procedures. This represents a 150% increase in the caseload of the country's social assistance programme;
 - o Recommendations to reform the social assistance system in the BVI were undertaken, proposing the establishment of key programmes which secure protection aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion across the life cycle (key components of a nationally-defined social protection floor).
- In Anguilla and the BVI, the review of business processes of their main social assistance programmes was undertaken, allowing a more efficient and reliable implementation, and more effective support to the 650 beneficiaries covered by these programmes.
- In Anguilla, the BVI and Grenada, the capacity-building of 15 key stakeholders from national social security boards was undertaken to increase their ability to offer social protection support to workers in the informal sector and "new" forms of work, with a view to promote universal coverage of social protection systems that are financed in a sustainable and equitable way through a combination of contributions and taxes.
- In Grenada, the entrepreneurial starter kit was developed, which is a key resource to advance targets 4.4 and 8.3, in order to facilitate relevant skills for job creation and entrepreneurship - specifically, competencies needed to develop and assess viable business ideas, develop business plans, marketing and business pitches and strengthen leadership, communication and problem-solving skills. It will become available in 2023 through the TVET resource and made accessible to the 20,000 entrepreneurs identified in the country.
- 1219 young people from across the subregion were provided with critical skills to support their entry to the labour market through the completion of nine self-improvement learning modules through U-report, including how to build resumes, prepare for interviews and steps to launching a business.

Constraints that were encountered and any adjustments that were made to strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of the JP and the coherence and coordination of UN system support.

- In the BVI, there were a number of political challenges (high-level arrests, a Commission of Inquiry report, etc.) in Q2 of 2022, which resulted in an additional focus on streamlining and reforming social assistance, and further strengthening the rationale and need for the previously planned work on accountability and transparency of the design and delivery of social assistance. This required flexible responsiveness from UN agencies to navigate the new political context, and to fast-track and/or adapt some activities to ensure they would timely contribute to the emerging priorities, at both policy and programmatic levels, requiring for instance to fast-track the development of a streamlined digital MIS underpinned by clear Standard Operating Procedures.

- The elections in two of the four target countries with changes in Governments that subsequently followed, significantly delayed activities in Saint Kitts and Nevis and Grenada and required the JP to be reintroduced to the newly elected Government and activities in the areas of TVET and social protection to be adjusted to be in line with the vision of the new Government, which was done successfully during the last quarter of 2022.

- Regarding youth empowerment, while it was initially planned for the OECS to design a platform to build the capacity of young people, a decision was made to use the existing skills-building section of the U-Report platform which was being rolled out and garner significant sign-ups in the region. This opened the courses to a wider cross section of the youth population as it utilized a popular messaging platform. Nevertheless, efforts will have to be made to ensure that young people who are not digitally connected are able to access the courses, which will be a key focus of the JP in 2023.

- The support provided through the JP on the digitalization of the social protection information systems in Anguilla and the BVI in 2022 highlighted the importance that for clear business processes along each of the delivery systems operations (e.g. targeting, registration and enrollment, payment, grievance mechanisms etc.) to be defined, with potential changes needed to ensure an optimized implementation of social assistance programmes with the digitized solution. The practical experiences with the streamlined system in the BVI are supporting government ownership and sustainability.

- As highlighted in the 6-month progress update, The complexity of the joint programme (four PUNOs, four countries, with more than one ministry involved in each country) makes coordination a challenge.

- Internally, operational issues delayed the hiring of key staff to support the implementation of key interventions.

Next steps, scaling and sustainability [up to half a page]

2023 will be focusing on achieving key results in the area of social protection and youth empowerment and training and the establishment of linkages between the two, building on the groundwork done and achievements already attained in 2022:

In the area of social protection:

- At policy level, in the BVI, Grenada and Saint Kitts and Nevis, the JP will support the development and adoption of costed social protection policies and action plans - with consultations of the youth. The JP will further support the review of existing social protection legal frameworks and make recommendations for further improvement where needed. This will support the permanence of the social protection initiatives and define the next steps following the completion of the JP. In the BVI, support will be provided to implement the ongoing reform.

- At programmatic/ administrative level, the JP will continue its support for the improvement of data systems. Building on end-to-end process reviews and the implementation of a streamlined system in the BVI which was done in 2022. The JP will focus, in Anguilla and the BVI, on the development of comprehensive MIS to support the implementation of their flagship social assistance programmes, while supporting data collection/ production for social security institutions and interoperability between systems (where needed) in these two countries as well as Grenada. This is expected to support efficient and reliable implementation of programmes, as well as to enhance transparency and good governance of social protection systems. In the meantime, the JP will continue to provide technical assistance to support more effective implementation programmes. The social protection toolkit that aims to support technical staff to implement their programmes will be developed with the OECS. In Saint Kitts and Nevis, technical assistance will be provided to support the revamping of their flagship social assistance programme, with the introduction of case management and opportunities for graduation, including for the youth. In order to support the extension of social protection to the informal economy workers, the JP will support the implementation of the strategic action plans designed by the social security institutions during the September training, with focus groups consultations with the target group of workers identified. Stakeholders besides the social security boards and ministries, such as the organizations of workers and employers, other group of informal workers, and civil society, will be of extreme importance to ensure buy-in and sustainability of the packages developed.

- The JP will deliver capacity building/ training (through formal and on-the job training) and promote of exchanges between the target countries and other countries/territories in the Eastern Caribbean on shock responsive social protection so that they can mutually benefit and learn from their experiences, (both successes and failures). The training methodology builds on the unique experiences of Caribbean states, using inter-active methods and real-world scenarios.

In the area of youth empowerment and training:

- In Grenada, the capacity strengthening of TVET teachers as well as the Train-the-trainer model which has been built as a sustainability mechanism will be delivered to facilitate the scaling up of the engagement to the current targeted post-secondary youth. Further engagement and use of the model post the JP implementation period will be discussed. Teachers and community youth leaders who have been trained will support the implementation of the digital and entrepreneurial training for youth, particularly youths in need of additional learning support/ mentoring. Additionally, the learning resource (entrepreneurial starter pack) will be used in 2023 and will be a resource used for scale-up post 2023.

- At the OECS level outreach will continue with Ministries of Education to support the certification of the youth self-improvement courses.

Programmatic Survey

Total number of people benefited from the JP in 2022: 1950

Percentage (%) of women benefited among the total number:

Percentage (%) of children & youth (0-24 years of age) benefited among the total number:

Percentage (%) of older persons (age 60 and above) benefited among the total number:

Percentage (%) of persons with disabilities benefited among the total number:

Explain how people benefited from the joint programme.

People benefitted from the Joint Programme at 3 different levels:

- 1) Social assistance beneficiaries benefitted directly from the technical assistance provided through the Joint Programme that contributed to make the assistance they receive more effective. The youth whose skills were upscaled through the self-improvement learning modules on U-report platform also directly benefitted from the Joint Programme (a total of 1885 people).
- 2) A range of stakeholders at all levels (Permanent secretaries, technical staff, TVET educators, social workers, community youth leaders) from Ministries in charge of social protection, youth development and training as well as social security institutions directly benefitted from the JP by strengthening their capacity to design, implement and finance social protection programmes that more effectively and efficiently contribute to reduce poverty and vulnerability and TVET programmes that more effectively train and empower youth to facilitate their entry in the labor market. The capacity development opportunities have been designed in such a way to be repeated over time through training of trainers and to allow for the new knowledge gained to be applied through specialized coaching sessions and the development of action plans.
- 3) The improvement of the design and implementation of target countries' flagship social assistance programmes, the development of new training programmes that are relevant to a just transition, the development of new packages of protection for informal economy workers, together with the JP support to the shift towards more rights-based social protection legal and policy frameworks are expected to positively impact indirectly a larger number of people as follows: workers from the informal economy from Anguilla, Grenada and the BVI, 20,000 youth in Grenada that will be able to access to the TVET programmes being developed, as well as the population of the BVI and Saint Kitts and Nevis (75,000) that will be able to demand for social protection thanks to the rights based policy and legal frameworks being supported by the JP [not counted in the total].

Priority Cross-cutting Issues

Cross-cutting results/issues

The JP contributed in 2022 to address priorities for the youth, principles of leaving no one behind, human rights and to some extent gender equality in the following ways:

- The Joint Programme seeks to attain results for the youth as an outcome and a cross-cutting issue throughout the JP and through specific interventions targeting the youth. Over the past year, over 1,200 young people from the four target countries and other Eastern Caribbean countries were able to build capacity in soft skills to facilitate their entry into the labour market. In Grenada, a programme to train community youth leaders (CYL) in entrepreneurial competencies was developed and will strengthen the capacity of 50 CYL in 2023. These interventions adopted a human-centered approach by involving the youth in their design;
- Through the technical assistance provided in the area of social protection to improve shock-responsive social assistance delivery (review of eligibility criteria for equitable and transparent consideration of applications, digitalization of social protection data systems) and capacity building to extend social protection to workers in the informal economy, the Joint Programme contributed to ensuring that programmes reduce inequalities and more effectively deliver protection to those most vulnerable, hence contributing to the principles of leaving no one behind. The entrepreneurship trainings purposefully target vulnerable youth;
- The support provided by the JP to strengthen social protection legal frameworks in the BVI in 2022 and that started in Saint Kitts and Nevis toward the end of 2022, are in keeping with a rights-based approach to social protection. The Social Protection legal frameworks contribute to the entitlement to access social protection benefits, ensuring legal coverage, the permanence of these initiatives and giving rights-holders the legal ability to invoke their rights while providing a formal demonstration of the country's intention. In addition, the development of standard operating procedures for key social assistance programmes and the reinforcement of grievance mechanisms for key programmes in the BVI further strengthened a rights-based approach to social protection in implementation by providing better transparency and accountability of the systems in place.

- The digitalization of social protection data systems in Anguilla and the BVI allows gender-sensitive data collection and monitoring as well as increases capacities for gender-responsive analysis in support of gender equality.

How did the JP apply the Gender Marker

The JP is Gender-sensitive (for example, the JP acknowledged and aimed to address gender to enhance the policy/programme, such as undertaking gender analysis to ensure policies/programmes do no harm). N/A;

JP address the below cross-cutting issues and principles of leaving no one behind

Human Rights	Persons with disabilities	Youth	Environmental and social standards
Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Key meetings and events organized in 2022

JP steering committee/ programme board meeting	Strategic partners/ donors event	Kick-off meeting
No, but planned in 2023	No, but planned in 2023	Yes, in 2022

Explanation if you have not held any key meeting/events.

Contribution to enhancing SDG Financing

Drafted a bill, strategy, and/or approved a law increasing the fiscal space for the policy in focus	Produced financing, costing, diagnostic and feasibility analyses as a basis to invest or increase spending on the SDGs	Improved efficiency (cost savings) in the management of programmes/schemes	Improved effectiveness (value for money; i.e. social impact of \$1 spent) of spending	Drafted policies/regulatory frameworks or developed tools to incentivize private sector investment on the SDGs	Structured new financial instruments (public, private or blended) to leverage additional funding
Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No

How JP contributed to enhancing SDG financing

The JP contributed to enhancing SDG financing in the area of social protection in two ways:

(1) In the BVI, the JP successfully supported the Government to prepare a draft plan for Cabinet alongside basic instructions for legislative drafting to reform the social assistance benefit system, following the release of the 2022 Commission of Inquiry (COI). The plan that is guiding the reform supports the reallocation of funding previously used for discretionary grants to implement social assistance programmes that more effectively reach the poor and vulnerable. The plan also leads to efficiency gains through the centralization of the administration of institutional grants and improvement of programmes implementation through technical support provided by the JP.

(2) The digitalization process of social protection data systems in Anguilla and the BVI, based on a thorough end-to-end processes review of the programmes that highlight the main programmatic changes necessary prior to the digitalization process, are generating cost savings in the management of programmes.

