

## Jamaica

### Jamaica Rural Economy and Ecosystems Adapting to Climate cHange (Ja REEACH)



ACDI/VOCA received a four-year, \$12 million award from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Jamaica to implement a two-phased program; the Marketing and Agriculture for Jamaican Improved Competitiveness (MAJIC) project transitioned in 2012 to become the Jamaica Rural Economy and Ecosystems Adapting to Climate cHange (Ja REEACH) project.

The MAJIC program originally focused on transforming Jamaica's agriculture sector into a market-driven, competitive industry. In response to Jamaica's high vulnerability to climate change, the program focus was revised, and an additional year was added to respond to the impacts of global climate change on Jamaica's natural resources, habitants, and livelihoods through Ja REEACH.

#### Climate-Smart Approaches to Protect Lives and Livelihoods

The Ja REEACH project goal is to protect rural lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems in targeted Jamaican communities affected by climate change through interventions that drive adaptation and build resilience. Ja REEACH activities are organized into two objectives:

1. Improve the adaptive capacity of Jamaican partners and institutions to promote livelihoods and natural systems that are resilient to climate change and its impacts
2. Strengthen local and national institutions to support the processes of adaptation and sustainability

In Jamaica, the impact of climate change is manifested in challenges such as drought, flooding, and increased incidence of stronger hurricanes. These challenges are exacerbated by environmental degradation issues such as soil erosion, watershed degradation, and deforestation.

#### Training for Climate Change Resiliency

To encourage resilience-building actions at the local level, Ja REEACH works with communities through four core training and assistance programs.



# Project Profile

- » **Climate-Smart Farmer Field Schools (CS FFS)** use the farmer field school extension method to equip farmers with the practical skills needed to integrate resilience-building best practices that protect the farmers' livelihood and food security. These climate-smart best practices include a range of cultural best practices such as pruning, height and shade management, and integrated pest management.

The application of new technologies is taught in CS FFS, where farmers gain skills in water harvesting, conservation strategies, installation of irrigation systems, planting drought resistant crops, and changing the time when they plant their crops to match varying rainfall patterns.

- » The **Agroforestry Farmer Field School (AFFS)** program integrates trees within the agricultural production system to take advantage of their economic, climate change adaptation, and mitigation benefits to the farmer and the environment. The agroforestry program teaches farmers how to plant trees within the farming systems using techniques such as diagnosis, design, and agroforestry ecosystem analysis to determine the required density and most appropriate tree species.

The fruit or timber trees planted not only provide food and additional incomes but also address critical land degradation issues, which lead to natural disasters and extreme weather events such as hurricanes and extended rainfalls. Extreme and more intense rainfalls are often seen as a result of changing climate, but the roots of the trees help to hold the soil together, and thus help to prevent and minimise landslides and soil erosion.

- » The **Communities Engaged to Drive Adaptation Responses (CEDAR)** program takes communities through a participatory process of learning about climate change and its impacts at the local level. This information is then used by the community to identify adaptation strategies and possible climate action projects that can be used to improve their overall resilience.

These action projects are summarized in

a community action plan and presented to technical stakeholders for additional guidance and implementation support. Resilience-building action projects include drainage improvements, reforestation and afforestation projects, artificial slope stabilization, and water harvesting projects.

- » The **Climate Change Action Training (CCAT)** program works with Jamaican youth age 14–28 to build awareness, create leadership, and spur action for climate change. Upon completion of the training program, youth are empowered as Climate Change Action Agents (CCAA). The 16-module, 32-hour CCAT curriculum provides a comprehensive introduction to key climate change concepts, strategies, and information. It also engages the trainees with their community and provides them with a wide range of leadership development skills.

Each site-specific intervention is informed by vulnerability and climate risk analyses that evaluate vulnerability, exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity. Ja REEACH has applied an integrated approach, which recognizes that climate change poses both economic and social problems. The project has worked with beneficiaries and the broader community of stakeholders, including value chain members, partners, and policymakers.

## Empowering Vulnerable Populations

The project is allowing traditionally marginalized groups and vulnerable populations—including single women-households and youth—to be included and represented as both stakeholders and program participants. ACDI/VOCA is working with partners, at the national and local levels, to transfer capacity and develop tools that will promote continued use of the project mechanisms through training of trainers and direct institutional support.

*For more information visit [acdivoca.org](http://acdivoca.org).*

*Updated: 8/14*