The impacts of climate change are felt all over the world; and Grenada is no exception. Changing weather patterns have severely impacted various sectors of the economy; including agriculture. Increased rates in temperature leads to extremely hot dry seasons; while fluctuating rainfall patterns are recorded.

The Crochu Roman Catholic School (Crochu RC) has an active 4H\(^1\) Club with a thriving garden. The club has a membership of 105 students, both boys and girls, and at least 88 students actively engage in the planting of short crops and root vegetables, which is used in the school’s kitchen, whilst the excess crops are sold to the community. Despite the children’s enthusiasm and hard work, water shortage has always been an issue; especially during the dry season. The students had to go around with buckets of water to wet the plants. Before long, another concern emerged; the garden started deteriorating and experienced severe land slippage. Also, since the school is located very close to the road, the garden was subject to Praedial Larceny and stray animals, which ate the crops and ‘soil’ the garden.

In 2014, the school became aware of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Integrated Climate Change Adaptation Strategies (ICCAS) project; that was providing funding to community groups through the Community Climate Change Adaptation Fund (CCCAF) to undertake climate change initiatives. The school quickly took the opportunity and submitted a proposal, which was approved. The project idea was created primarily to increase the availability of water during dry periods. This would be done by storing excess water during the rainy season, which could then be used when the dry season comes around. It would also help to reduce the school’s dependence on treated water. Rainwater harvesting is not a new concept to Grenada, however, it was new to the school environment. It is an innovative approach to storing rainwater for later use. Another component of the project is that of a retaining wall to help prevent rapid soil erosion, along with the fencing of the school garden to deter the occurrence of Praedial Larceny.

Once the project was approved, there were several consultations with various stakeholders from the ministries of works and agriculture; as well as the UNDP ICCAS team. After a tendering process, the project was awarded to a local contractor, and work commenced in July 2016 with the construction of the cistern. The process started off very slowly and was not without challenges. The contractor seemed to have lacked the required skill set for a project of this magnitude. This prompted the need for a Site Clerk to be hired to oversee the construction phase until completion. Too much time and resources were spent on the tank; and as a result, the fencing of the garden could not be accomplished, which was quite

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\(^1\) 4H stands for four H’s: Head, Heart, Health and Hands
disappointing for the students and teachers alike. The students really looked forward to the day when the
garden would be fully protected.

Despite the hiccups, there were some positive outcomes; several things worked out well. Education
sessions about the project and other important issues such as water conservation, climate smart
agriculture and Praedial Larceny were held to sensitize parents, students and the wider community. This
helped to raise awareness of climate change and its impacts on the school environment. It also created
an opportunity for parents, teachers and community members to collaborate towards being stewards of
the school garden. In addition, the installation of a solar pump and drip irrigation system aided in the
watering of the plants. This technique helps to save water and preserve nutrients in the plants as the
water is slowly distributed directly to the roots of the crops. The students are very excited about the
benefits of the project. They no longer have to fetch buckets of water to wet the plants; and this
prompted eagerness to engage more in farming. It is a platform to work with many students to help
develop an appreciation for the agriculture sector from an early age.
What this project has taught us was the need for greater consultation when making important decisions, such as hiring a contractor for major construction work. Further, it is imperative to ensure that work is done according to specification; in terms of engineering plan and design. According to Mrs. AnnBelle Pierre, teacher and 4H leader at Crochu RC School, “this project was one of my dream to developing and improving the school garden. With the club’s drive and motivation, we are appreciative of what we achieved thus far; and we will work to continue farming in a modern way”.

Drip lines installed in the garden  First batch of Cabbage planted in the garden