



JEFFREY TOWN FARMERS ASSOCIATION

Jamaica



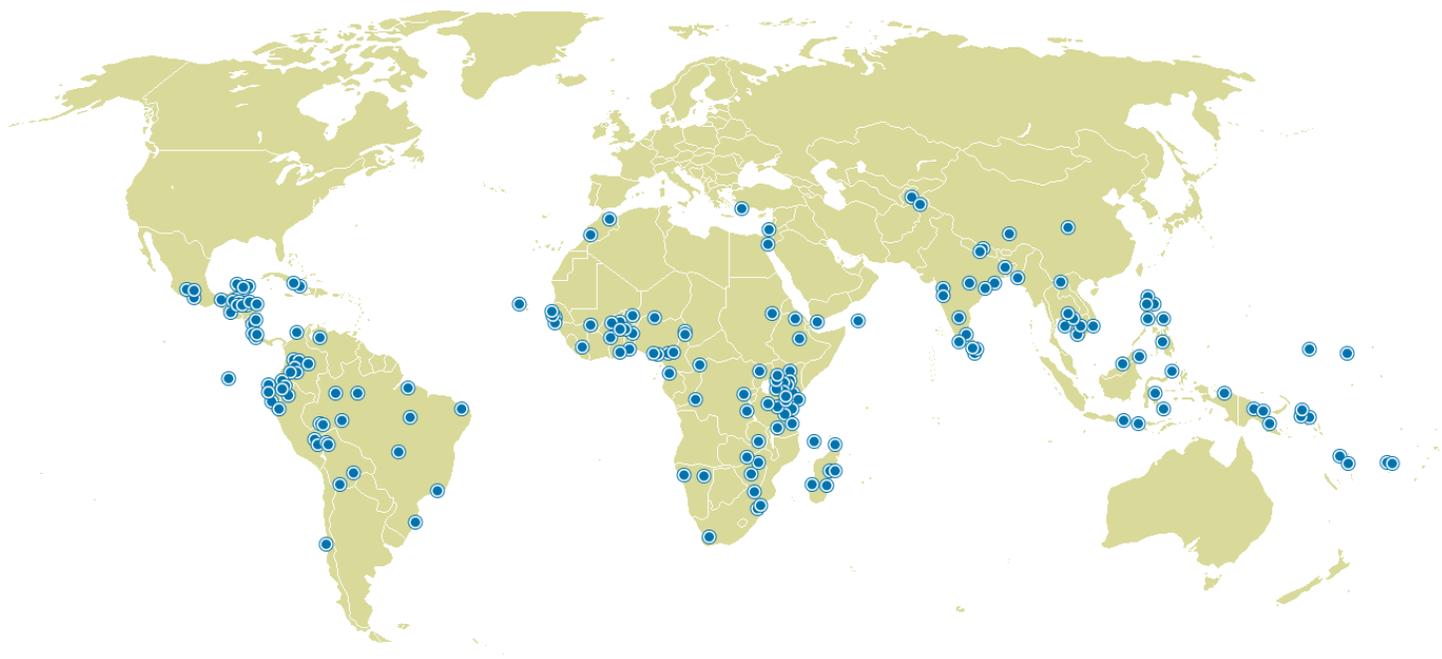
Equator Initiative Case Studies

Local sustainable development solutions for people, nature, and resilient communities

UNDP EQUATOR INITIATIVE CASE STUDY SERIES

Local and indigenous communities across the world are advancing innovative sustainable development solutions that work for people and for nature. Few publications or case studies tell the full story of how such initiatives evolve, the breadth of their impacts, or how they change over time. Fewer still have undertaken to tell these stories with community practitioners themselves guiding the narrative.

The following case study is one in a growing series that details the work of Equator Prize winners – vetted and peer-reviewed best practices in community-based environmental conservation and sustainable livelihoods. These cases are intended to inspire the policy dialogue needed to take local success to scale, to improve the global knowledge base on local environment and development solutions, and to serve as models for replication. Case studies are best viewed and understood with reference to *'The Power of Local Action: Lessons from 10 Years of the Equator Prize'*, a compendium of lessons learned and policy guidance that draws from the case material.



Click on the map to visit the Equator Initiative's searchable case study database, where you can find more Equator Prize winner case studies.

Editors

Editor-in-Chief: Joseph Corcoran
Contributing Editors: Eva Gurria, Anwar Jawhar, Martin Sommerschuh

Contributing Writers

Elle Chang, Joseph Corcoran, David Godfrey, Eva Gurria, Anwar Jawhar, Alex McCrum, John Mulqueen, Lorena de la Parra, Alejandra Pero, Elizabeth Shaw, Martin Sommerschuh, Christalyn Steers, Joshua Voges

Design

Kimberly Koserowski

Acknowledgements

The Equator Initiative acknowledges with gratitude the Jeffrey Town Farmers Association, in particular the guidance and input of Ivy Gordon, Wordsworth Gordon, the Executive Committee and members of Jeffrey Town Farmers. All photo credits courtesy of Jeffrey Town Farmers Association. Maps courtesy of CIA World Factbook and Wikipedia.

Suggested Citation

United Nations Development Programme. 2015. *Jeffrey Town Farmers Association, Jamaica*. Equator Initiative Case Study Series. New York, NY.

JEFFREY TOWN FARMERS ASSOCIATION

Jamaica

PROJECT SUMMARY

Developed in response to land degradation, natural disasters, and irregular water supply, Jeffrey Town Farmers' Association employs a multi-media approach to inform and educate farming communities on alternative energy options, sustainable agriculture techniques and disaster risk reduction. The association focuses on pineapple farming, water harvesting, and reforestation. Fruit-bearing trees are prioritized in land restoration efforts to ensure food security.

Community incomes have improved through a range of alternative livelihoods activities that include livestock rearing, fruit cultivation, and agro-forestry. Pineapple plants have been used to stabilize hillsides that were previously susceptible to landslides, which caused environmental and economic damage to local communities. Demonstration plots are used for farmer training activities, particularly around drought-resistant crops. Solar street lights have been introduced in four communities and a new health facility was built to meet local medical needs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background and Context	4
Key Activities and Innovations	8
Environmental Impacts	11
Socio-economic Impacts	12
Integration of Benefits	12
Policy Impacts	12
Sustainability	13
Gender	13
Replication	13
Partners	13

KEY FACTS

EQUATOR PRIZE WINNER: 2014

FOUNDED: 1991

LOCATION: St. Mary, Northeastern Jamaica

BENEFICIARIES: The community of Jeffrey Town

AREA OF FOCUS: Disaster risk reduction and organic farming



Background and Context



Vulnerability to natural disasters

Jamaica has been increasingly vulnerable to natural disasters in recent years, which has had serious environmental, social and economic implications for the people of the country. This vulnerability may be among the greatest challenges to the attainment of sustainable development. The island is prone to tropical cyclones (storms and hurricanes), which give rise to flooding and storm surges that devastate local economies, particularly those that depend on natural resource management. The hurricanes of 1951 (Charlie), 1963 (Flora), 1988 (Gilbert), 2004 (Ivan), 2005 (Emily and Charley) and 2007 (Dean) are among the many examples of the severe damage and loss of life caused by natural disasters in Jamaica.

Landslides are an additional, related challenge. They tend to be concentrated in the hilly, mountainous areas of the country or along steep slopes. St. Mary – where Jeffrey Town Farmers is located – has the highest number of recorded landslides (550 events) in the country, followed by Portland (460 events) and St. Catherine (410 events). The National Works Agency (NWA) – responsible for building and maintaining road networks and flood control systems in Jamaica – notes that the cost of landslide recovery efforts has been increasing and that since 2001 the cost associated with mitigation and response (clearing landslide debris and constructing retaining walls) has averaged between JA\$230 and JA\$400 million per year.

Challenges around natural disasters in Jamaica have been further compounded by high rates of poverty, the location of human settlements in areas of high risk, environmental degradation (which undermines the security and stability of ecosystems), and all-too-common instances of poorly constructed infrastructure and housing.

Jeffrey Town: Geography, landscape, and the local economy

Jeffrey Town is a rural community composed primarily of farmers. It is located in the northeastern portion of Jamaica in Western St. Mary. Its bordering districts include Gayle, Guys Hill, Retirement, Halifax,

Lucky Hill, Maiden Hall, Pembroke Hall, Wallingford and Decoy. It is 15 miles in any direction from each of the nearest neighboring towns, and forty-five miles from the capital Kingston.

At an elevation of 1,700 feet, Jeffrey Town is considered “deep rural”. The environmental geography varies from gentle to rapid sloped terrains. The high altitude creates a climate that makes possible the growth of a variety of crops and fruit trees. The area is situated at the watershed of two main rivers: the Rio Nuevo and White River. The landscape is characterized by springs and tributaries and the soil type is primarily clay. There is an abundance of biodiversity, including a range of birds, butterflies, turtles, lizards, frogs, toads, river fish, shrimp, and crayfish.



Farmers in the community cultivate a wide variety of crops, including breadfruit, lettuce, apples, bananas, tangerines, coconuts, peppers, and Irish potatoes. Local surveys consistently reveal a high demand for markets to sell produce. Local farmers also consistently refer to a lack of access to grants and loans as a key impediment to improving farming practices or opening small businesses. Outside of farming, job opportunities are extremely limited, and the seasonal nature of farming causes average income levels to vary considerably.

The community has nine different churches and a school made of interlinked portable buildings. In a 2011 census, the population was recorded as 2,982, 47 percent of which are women. The same census data shows unemployment numbers at a staggering 33 percent for those of working age (that is, between 15 and 65). Of those that are gainfully employed, 42.2 percent are engaged in agriculture. There is a high incidence of single-parent families and 40 percent youth unemployment. Families are close-knit, with most living on family-owned lands that have been passed down through generations of farmers. These lands, however, are often not supported by legal paperwork, leaving farming families vulnerable to expulsion. Younger members of the community also suffer from a lack of land and resource access. Insecurity of land tenure has led to uncertainty, which in turn has limited long-term investments in the land.

Smallholder farming predominates in an area known as the 'banana belt'. (Bananas grow and thrive in the hot, damp climate.) Historically, farmers in the region have cultivated a range of crops specifically for

export markets, notably bananas, coconut, cocoa, sugar cane, citrus and pimento. Today, few-to-no farmers export bananas, and there are limited markets for cocoa and coconuts. Domestic citrus crops have been devastated by tristeza disease, a virus that preys on citrus trees and renders them unproductive. At the same time, local sugar factories have closed, as the market for sugar cane has become saturated. These and other changes in local conditions and international markets have affected local agricultural patterns, with many farmers opting for cash crops and vegetables with shorter planting cycles. Many of these changes have resulted in greater vulnerability, short-sighted land use choices, and insecurity for local farmers.

The evolution of a farmers' movement

Jeffrey Town Farmers evolved to address a very specific problem: a lack of opportunity for local farmers to earn a decent living from conventional crops. At the same time, many farmers had become dependent on approaches that were degrading the environment. Slash-and-burn farming was common in the region, leading to deforestation and exhausted land. Land degradation led to soil erosion, which led to greater susceptibility to land slides. With no community platform to discuss preventative measures and effective responses to increased vulnerability – and with many houses built in precarious places, with little thought for water runoff or flood risk – local farmers were often devastated by natural disasters, leaving them in states of social and economic disrepair. Poverty and vulnerability also had the effect of spurring out-migration from rural areas to urban centers.



This was particularly problematic in Jeffrey Town, built on sloping terrain and therefore prone to landslides, especially during periods of intense rain. The landslides occur when the soil on the slopes becomes saturated and flows downhill. During tropical storms or hurricane events, the crops on the slopes also suffer damage from strong winds. Low-lying areas of the community are often particularly hard-hit, leading to loss of crops and damage to infrastructure. To illustrate, the table below provides a summary of climatic events over the past decade that have affected Jeffrey Town.

As with many community-based groups, Jeffrey Town Farmers started small. The organization was founded by three individuals who shared a desire to address the plight of farming communities in Jamaica since the downturn in the banana sector. The triumvirate decided to undertake a public relations campaign that would mobilize local farmers into a movement for greater empowerment and more dependable, sustainable livelihoods. Quite quickly, weekly meetings that had once attracted only a handful of committed people

started to turn out seventy farmers at a time. For the next several years, the group continued to grow and to operate as a cross between technical self-help group and social club.

Among their first joint actions as an association, the group agreed to market their goods collectively (to help establish fair prices) and to lobby the government for assistance under the shared interest of equitable, sustainable small-scale agriculture that would benefit local farmers. Early on, the group connected to the UNDP LIFE initiative, which coordinated community stakeholder meetings and produced a local water project that would become the first official initiative of Jeffrey Town Farmers. LIFE provided two industrial water pumps, while the government agreed to purchase, deliver and install water pipes that would ensure the distribution of water resources. The initiative used voluntary labour to lay 3.5 miles of four-inch cast-iron pipe throughout the community. This project was instrumental in galvanizing the support, momentum, and social capital needed to launch Jeffrey Town Farmers.

Table 5: Past climatic events that affected Jeffrey Town

Year	Hazard	Impact	Community Coping Mechanisms
2004	Hurricane Ivan	Roofs blown off, houses damaged due to fallen trees, loss of electricity, food spoilage, blocked roads.	Chicken farmers used traditional methods to preserve meat (e.g. corning) and gave produce away to persons in shelters rather than have it spoil. Power saw operators assisted in clearing roads.
2005	Drought	Farmer's contracts were lost or almost lost due to an inability to meet quotas.	
2007	Hurricane Dean	Loss of crops, loss of electricity, fallen trees and blocked roads.	Farmers replanted crop; generators used.
2008	Tropical Storm Gustav	Loss of crops, loss of electricity, fallen trees and blocked roads.	Farmers replanted crop; generators used.
2010	Tropical Storm Nicole	Loss of crops and fruit trees, landslides, loss of electricity for almost 1 week.	Kerosene lamps, flashlights were used. People charged their phones at Jet FM, using solar energy, at a cost of JA\$ 100 (about US\$ 1).
2012	Hurricane Sandy	Mostly wind damages, fruit crops damaged, fallen trees, blocked roads, houses damaged.	Disaster preparedness group cleared roads in less than 2 hours, residents were assisted with repairs (some still not complete), crops replanted.

The vision of Jeffrey Town Farmers began to coalesce in 2002 when the group was formally registered as an institution, technically a "limited liability development company". The mission: to (i) harness all available assistance for community development, using agriculture as the platform; and (ii) sustainably develop human and physical resources to create opportunities and achieve social and economic stability for all residents of Jeffrey Town, particularly women and youth. Most recently, the organization set out five short-term objectives:

1. Operate a multimedia center to benefit local farmers and facilitate access to cutting edge information on sustainable agricultural practices. The organization maintains a training center for this purpose, with a 1,100 square foot room on the ground floor

of the facility for agro-processing and 400 square feet in the basement for community storage.

2. Incorporating eco- and ethno-tourism into the local economy, for the benefit of local farmers. Plans are in place to have a tour that includes demonstration plots, an orientation of the local radio station, and other points of environmental and cultural interest along the White River.
3. Upgrade the infrastructure of the local radio station – a primary communications channel through which information on sustainable, organic farming is disseminated to local farmers. The group is working to establish a more stable signal that can more reliably

reach the most remote areas of the hilly terrain and the many target communities between Jeffrey Town and the North Coast.

4. Continue work on disaster risk reduction and mitigation strategies such as terracing, building gabion walls (retaining walls made of stacked stone-filled gabions tied together with wire), and planting trees to secure soil and reduce land degradation. As a complementary activity, additional radio programming will be undertaken to specifically address educational needs around disaster risk reduction and the particular threats of living and farming in hilly terrain.

In general, the group wants to make Jeffrey Town a model community in Jamaica, advancing models of sustainability, equality and alternative agricultural livelihood strategies. The intention is to be a “guiding light” for other communities, and a best practice in community- and farmer-driven development.

Governance and institutional structure

Jeffrey Town Farmers has no paid staff – the entire organization is operated on a voluntary basis. Activity leads are funded on a proj-

ect-by-project basis, and priority for these positions is given to volunteers that have been the most active and have the most relevant expertise to the specific challenge at hand. The group is governed by a five-person Board of Directors and an eight-person Executive Committee, which directs program planning and project implementation. The organization maintains lead positions for administrative work, two vice presidents, a public relations officer, and other positions that take advantage of members who have expertise in areas of relevance to the organization. Jeffrey Town Farmers is membership-based. Each member has one vote in electing the Board of Directors and Executive Committee. In addition to contributing members, there are “associates” who participate in meetings and activities, but who do not pay the (nominal) annual fee that members do and, by extension, are not able to vote on organization priorities and leadership. Meetings are held monthly and are open to the public as a way of ensuring transparency and promoting inclusion. Radio programming is used to inform the wider public and those unable to make meetings of development priorities and proposed activities. The organization also publishes a monthly newsletter, as well as frequent posts through social media.



“The environment is our living space and as farmers our work space too. If we cannot protect and care for it, we are actively participating in the degradation of our own existence.”

Key Activities and Innovations



Jeffrey Town Farmers work falls into five interrelated categories: (i) disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation; (ii) ecoagriculture; (iii) income generation and value-added secondary processing; (iv) youth engagement and radio broadcasting; and, (v) community infrastructure.

Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation

Disaster risk reduction is at the very core of Jeffrey Town Farmers work. The organization has undertaken a range of activities to reduce local vulnerability to natural disasters and to mitigate the negative affects of climate change. Below are some examples of work in this area.

- *Capacity building and disaster management plans:* The group has developed disaster management plans that guide mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts for residents in the event of emergencies, including those due to natural disasters. Plans contain information on risks, vulnerable areas in the community, standard emergency and evacuation procedures, shelters, and contact information for emergency personnel. The community also has a first response team which assists in restoring the community to its usual operations after a hazard event e.g. clearing blocked roads.
- *Vegetative barriers:* Farmers have been trained to plant trees and vegetation on slopes that are prone to landslides. Vegetative barriers are used to reduce debris flow down the slopes during heavy rainfall. The barriers reduce erosion and stabilize the slopes. Crops used as vegetative barriers include pineapple, sugar cane, 'cuscus grass', and fruit trees.
- *Culverts, terracing, and check dams:* Culverts and check dams (constructed across waterways to counteract erosion by reducing water flow velocity) have been installed to control the movement of water along hillsides and slopes. They help reduce the risk of erosion and landslides after rainfall and flooding events. The check dam also assists in filtering out debris carried by

floodwater as it moves downhill. Farmers are supported to practice terracing on slopes and in the construction of trenches and waterways.

- *Rainwater harvesting:* Rainwater is collected at the household level for domestic purposes and through open-air tanks for irrigation purposes. Roof water is captured in tanks, with pits built to capture excess water if the tanks overflow. Benefits include less water and debris flowing downhill and a mechanism to address limited access to water in the community. Jeffrey Town Farmers has also installed springheads that allow water to be pumped to a central location, thereby making it accessible to all community members.
- *Hurricane straps:* The rainwater-harvesting project also includes the retrofitting of roofs with hurricane straps. These straps reduce the likelihood of roofs being blown off when there are strong winds from hurricanes and tropical storms, a major problem in the community.



- *Communications system:* The group has implemented an information dissemination system which is used to inform residents of approaching disasters as well as other community emergencies. The system consists of a siren erected at the Jeffrey Town Farmers community building which sends out warnings to residents. Information is also broadcast via the community radio station.
- *Reforestation:* Jeffrey Town Farmers practice both reforestation and afforestation. Tree cover serves to soften the impact of raindrops on the ground, thereby reducing any soil erosion that results from intense rain periods. The trees roots also bind the soil, which improves land integrity and protects against landslides.
- *Solar power:* Solar and wind energy generate about 80 percent of the power supplied to the Jeffrey Town Farmers building. This renewable energy initiative is seen as an important disaster risk reduction activity, as in most cases communities are without electricity several days or weeks after a hurricane event. This allows the organization to host recovery activities immediately after a natural disaster or community emergency, despite not being at full capacity.

Ecoagriculture and land restoration

The main goal of Jeffrey Town Farmers is to improve the lives of local farmers through better land husbandry, more sustainable farming practices, and responsible, long-term management of natural resources. The organization provides a range of training and services to local farmers in organic farming, land restoration, composting, chicken farming, and more.

The group has built six separate gabion walls and several stone check dams. The objective is to improve land stability, soil integrity, and water control. In this same vein, pineapple planting has been strategically undertaken on five key hillsides that have been historically susceptible to soil erosion and landslides.

Fruit trees have also been planted on 30 acres of land, more than 50 percent of which is breadfruit, an important staple of local diets. Jeffrey Town Farmers plants both Ma'afala breadfruit (a new variety to Jamaica) and a local yellow heart variety. These varieties are planted in equal numbers to maintain ecological balance. The Ma'afala breadfruit has qualities that make it attractive to farmers; it bears fruit in less than three years, gives fruit all year round, lives for as much as 50 years, and produces high-quality flour. Local roadsides have also been prioritized for tree planting, with more than 1,000 trees planted to stabilize the soil.

Extensive training has been provided to the community on organic farming practices, with the majority of activities revolving around a demonstration/learning plot. In an effort to diversify livelihoods, Jeffrey Town Farmers has also introduced beekeeping. Crop selection and diversification has been pursued with climate-related challenges in mind. In many cases, climate adaptation strategies have been explored in a way that improves local wellbeing. Volunteers have been mobilized to drain three ponds on the Wallingford hillside and cleared gullies and drains to reduce the potential for flooding on farmland. A community outpost is maintained to make compost for use in the demonstration plot and serve as an organic green house where strawberries are grown.

Income generation and value-added secondary processing

Jeffrey Town Farmers undertake a range of value-added processing activities. The main focus of this area of work, however, is diversifying and stabilizing the incomes of local women. One such project has involved chicken rearing, where community members (mostly women) have started chicken farms and been provided with funds to maintain, repair and reinforce chicken coops. A common farm building provides space for women to refrigerate and store chicken products. These services are offered at a minimal cost, so the farm building is financially viable.

Beyond chicken rearing, value-added processing focuses on coconuts, strawberries and breadfruit. Jeffrey Town Farmers have successfully reintroduced stagga, a traditional culinary preparation of coconut, into local markets. Farmers have also been supported to make seasonal strawberry preserves and jerk seasoning, all of which are taken to market. A series of breadfruit items have been marketed locally and overseas, sold at the annual Breadfruit Festival and as part of a gluten-free muffin mix that uses breadfruit flour and is being marketed in US markets with the support of the Trees That Feed Foundation.

Community radio and youth engagement

Job opportunities for young people are limited in the St. Mary region, creating cycles of out-migration, crime and a general lack of productivity from youth. As such, Jeffrey Town Farmers targets young people in its programming and activities, working with them to introduce alternative livelihood strategies and train them in organic farming techniques. Currently, more than 50 percent of Jeffrey Town Farmer members are youths.

Radio programming has proven to be particularly effective as a mechanism for engaging youth. More than 50 young people have been trained to carry out the majority of work needed to operate the community radio station. Importantly, youth also help curate radio programming, which covers topics as diverse as organic agriculture, climate change, and other relevant social issues. The Commonwealth of Learning and the Caribbean Institute of Media and Communication have been important partners in this work. Training courses focus on content, technical skills, and developing an appreciation for the power of the medium. As part of its emphasis on youth, the group employs a participatory approach, where members of the community are invited to get involved in the radio programming and content development. The intention, and ultimately what has been created, is a true voice of and for local people.

Beginning in 2009, programming began to focus on issues of disaster risk reduction and climate change. The first climate change series was an information-packed ten-part radio program, covering the global nature of the program by discussing how it manifests locally. The series covered wider issues of hurricanes, floods, drought, conservation, pollution and more. The format included: a narrator, a "fact file" (or four-minute inset covering the most interesting and relevant facts); a "voice of the people question", where actual questions from local community members were fielded; a discourse segment, with an interview of experts on the issue, varying from international authorities to local people with first-hand knowledge; a drama written as an independent feature with a set of characters in a fictional community called Jet Town (named after the radio station); and relevant music.



The climate change series was catalytic for the station, allowing them to move on and tackle issues such as HIV/AIDS, child abuse, maternal health, and human trafficking through subsequent programming. In addition, the station has created an annual environmental education and awareness series that works to highlight and explain the actions being taken by Jeffrey Town Farmers in conservation, organic farming, and sustainable livelihoods.

A home base for local farmers

Jeffrey Town Farmers has met an important need in the community by providing a “home base” where farmers and young people can

meet to discuss common challenges and opportunities, to collectively process value-added products, and to operate a community radio station that programs on topics of high relevance to the local population. The physical space has been realized in stages, beginning with 400 square feet in 2006, then expanding by 1,100 square feet in 2008, and adding a final 400 square feet in 2013. The space houses the community radio station, a multimedia center/internet café, a lab for value-added secondary processing, and storage and refrigeration facilities for local chicken farmers. It is also used on an ongoing basis for farmer meetings, community dialogues, and training. The building is powered by alternative energy, currently a hybrid system that uses both solar power and batteries.

“We want our government to recognize groups like ours for the work they do, use the achievements as a model for others to follow, and support the process of development for other groups across the country on a non-partisan basis so that each can make a contribution to their local community.”

Impacts



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Jamaica is ranked 5th globally for endemic plant species. There are more than 800 flowering plant species, over 500 species of land snails, more than 50 species of amphibians and reptiles, five bat species, 28 bird species, and 19 butterfly species that are endemic to the island. It is also rich in animal species diversity, with the highest number of bird species (290 recorded – 25 endemic) of any Caribbean island. Over 30% of Jamaica's land area is classified as forest. Forest types include lower montane mist, montane mist, dry limestone, wet limestone, mangrove, woodland, herbaceous swamp and marsh forest. Jamaica's ecosystems are under stress from human influences including habitat/ecosystem conversion and degradation, unsustainable harvesting of some species, pollution and the spread of invasive alien species. Additionally, tropical cyclones, sea level rise and global warming are major drivers of ecosystem change.

The agricultural sector is particularly sensitive to climatic hazards. The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) notes that during the period 1973-2003 the agricultural sector suffered losses amounting to 27.8 million USD because of severe weather events. The primary climatic hazards for Jamaica are floods and drought occurrences and tropical systems including hurricanes. Climate change is projected to cause more extreme weather events including stronger hurricanes. Likely impacts on the agricultural sector include damage to assets including livestock, crops and infrastructure. The impact of storms is especially severe for standing export crops like bananas, coffee and sugar cane.

The increase in drought conditions projected under climate change will impact the local water supply, which is heavily dependent on rainfall. Longer periods of drought will therefore result in higher water and production costs, which will in turn affect the quantity and variety of agricultural produce available for consumption. Long periods of drought may also lead to large-scale losses of cattle and lower reproduction rates among livestock. The risk of degradation and reduced productivity of the soil also increases under drought conditions.

Jeffrey Town Farmers is working through local land managers to advance a conservation agenda that is restoring degraded landscapes. Farming communities in the area were facing the interrelated challenges of topsoil loss, landslides, flooding and water damage. One response has been a tree-planting campaign – with fruit-bearing trees – to stabilize the soil. More than 37 acres of trees have been planted, in addition to other large areas of hillside converted to more environmentally tenable systems including terracing, gabions, and check dams. Jeffrey Town Farmers has twice been recognized (in 2010 and 2012) as the best environmental community in Jamaica. This recognition comes from a multi-faceted approach to conservation and ecosystem restoration as a pathway to sustainable livelihoods.



SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Since 1988, Jeffrey Town Farmers has supported a local maternity clinic, providing grounds upkeep, minor repairs where needed, and building a bathroom facility. Perhaps more important than these contributions was the group's advocacy work on behalf of the clinic; when it was under threat of being closed down, the organization banded together to lobby not only for the clinic to be kept open, but for expansion in services. In response, the local government helped to build a new and improved maternal health clinic in 2010. A similar lobbying effort resulted in the construction of a local pre-school.

The organization has also been a learning center for the community in terms of information technology. Since 2007, the group has offered IT training to anyone interested in learning new skills, and provided more structured classes to local youth. These activities have complemented and served to improve both radio programming and the reach of the organization's public relations campaigns. Interest from the community in information technology has also positioned Jeffrey Town Farmers to address the endemic problem of adult illiteracy.

Agricultural diversification has come through planting fruit-bearing trees like breadfruit. The group also maintains a greenhouse where they grow strawberries and other food crops (such as starch tubers). Chicken litter from chicken farming operations is used to reduce the cost of soil improvements. The group acts a hub for collective marketing activities, to provide a channel for local farmers to get their crops to market and establish fair prices. A relationship has been forged with the rural agricultural agency, which notifies the organization when specific crops are in demand. This arrangement has proven effective for turmeric, breadfruit, potatoes and more.

INTEGRATION OF BENEFITS

Jeffrey Town has become a model of local sustainability. The following are some of the most noteworthy achievements in meeting the needs of local wellbeing while also ensuring stewardship of the local environment:

- Six gabion walls have been built for land security, ten check dams to slow the flow of rain runoff down hillsides, and extensive terracing with pineapple trees to hold the topsoil and produce an alternative source of income.
- The planting of more than thirty acres of fruit trees to improve land stability and food security, as well as more than 1,000 trees (variety: Pride of Barbados) planted uniformly on two miles of roadside.
- Solar street lights set up in four locations to improve security at night and promote alternative energy.
- A revolving group of youth being exposed to radio production and multimedia.
- Water harvesting activities, providing local access to treated water at two key locations in the community, thereby supplementing the unreliable national supplier and providing local farmers with a source of irrigation water.



- Lobbied for construction of a brand new clinic and basic school.
- A community radio station run by people from the community, making programs relevant to the rural lifestyle and on community-based adaptation to climate change.
- Training in chicken farming, with farmer access to storage facilities.
- Value added coconut products, as well as a community line of small-batch jams, pickles and jerk seasoning.

The group has undertaken a number of actions on disaster risk reduction that have become national best practices, informing policy-making at all levels, including instituting no-build zones to ensure the integrity and restoration of local ecosystems. Support has been provided to local farmers to retrofit building roofs with hurricane straps and conform to building codes that acknowledge the surrounding environment.

POLICY IMPACTS

Jeffrey Town Farmers have built up a great deal of credibly locally and nationally. They have a clear track record of achievement, as well as a reputation for integrity, inclusion, and being nonpartisan.

Policy achievements include (i) ensuring that previously uncovered farmers have insurance to cover variability in rainfall in a given season; (ii) contributing to the 2030 Vision in Jamaica; and (iii) facilitating multi-stakeholder consultations on community tourism. The organization also contributed to the Green Paper (1/2013) on the Climate Change Policy Framework, working in consultation with researchers at UWI Mona, and bringing their story to the national workshop, Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction Practices. Importantly, this process resulted in a recommendation to more fully include community groups in national disaster management strategies, particularly as related to early warning systems, incorporating volunteer-led programs into national efforts, disseminating best farming practices, and developing disaster plans for all communities. Delegates from Jeffrey Town Farmers have participated in events of the Planning Institute of Jamaica and the Jamaican Climate 2012 deliberations.

Sustainability and Replication



SUSTAINABILITY

Volunteerism is the backbone of Jeffrey Town Farmers. It has been an enormous source of pride and has helped to create a feeling of shared investment in the organization and the community. It has also created an atmosphere of trust and made possible the articulation and pursuit of common goals and objectives. All action derives from community interest and community will. It is the shared ownership of the organization that creates social capital and which enables long-term sustainability. The organization has invested heavily in youth engagement and training, which is paying dividends. Young people in the community have responded in turn by investing substantial time and energy into volunteer hours, outreach and more. Youth leaders are responsible for succession planning to ensure a replenishment of committed and capable leadership.

Financial sustainability has been an issue for Jeffrey Town Farmers since it was founded, limiting its rate of growth and the scope of its activities. The group has relied on in-kind contributions and small grants from its partners. Revenue streams are generated from radio advertising, renting out rooms in the multi-media center to online workers, and the occasional leasing of the production area/demonstration plots for agro-processing. The legal constitution of the community company stipulates that all proceeds from sales or other revenues be reinvested into the community. The organization has plans to establish an education fund to ensure long-term investment in local youth and sustainability activities.

GENDER

Training has been provided to women in value-added processing and in parts of the agricultural sector that are predominated by women. Women are given equal access to all benefits accruing from the organization and have assumed leadership roles across all levels of the group, including in education campaigns related to HIV, maternal health, population health, and parenting. Importantly, women have also led on the most successful of Jeffrey Town activi-

ties: pineapple planting and terracing. Water harvesting activities have benefited the entire community, but meant the most to local women, who no longer have to expend time and energy walking to the river to wash clothes or to collect water. Chicken farming has provided women with an alternative source of income. They support each other in all aspects of the work, from slaughter to cleaning and storage. Women have also been particularly active in management. The Board of Directors is 60 percent women and the Executive Community 75 percent women.

REPLICATION

Jeffrey Town has become a model for other communities and government agencies in Jamaica, both in the areas of disaster risk reduction and sustainable agriculture. Knowledge and learning exchanges have been carried out with the Windsor Castle Farmers, Derry Youth Club, and Carron Hall JAS Group. Representatives from the organization regularly present at workshops, outlining the challenges and achievements of the group, and how their lessons can be transferred to other communities. Several of Jeffrey Town's executive members serve on the boards of national development organizations, providing an outlet for their best practices to reach all corners of Jamaica. Among the organizations that have engaged in peer-to-peer learning with Jeffrey Town Farmers are Beeston Spring Westmoreland, Glengoff St. Catherine, Annotto Bay Community Development and Environment Group St. Mary, Westphalia St. Andrew and Trinityville CDC St. Thomas.

PARTNERS

- Caribbean Institute of Media and Communication (media training)
- Commonwealth of Learning ('healthy communities' radio programming)
- Digicel Foundation (Health Centre Funding)

- Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (grant funding)
- European Union Banana Support Programme (grant funding)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (organic farming training and green house)
- Global Environment Facility – Small Grants Programme (grant funding and mentoring)
- Grace Kennedy Foundation (programme support for literacy)
- ICT4D Jamaica (provision of equipment and training in ICT)
- Inter-American Foundation (grant funding through Life Ltd, former UNDP LIFE)
- Jamaica Agricultural Society (national farming agency of which Jeffrey Town Farmers is a member)
- Jamaica National Foundation (provided the original donation used to build the first part of Jeffrey Town Farmers’ building, in conjunction with funds from the Inter-American Foundation)
- Jamaica Organic Agriculture Movement (membership)
- Jamaica Protected Area Trust (grant funding for tree planting in 2012)
- Jamaica Social Investment Fund (building of the new basic school)
- Local Initiative Facility for the Environment, formerly UNDP (original supporter of Jeffrey Town in cash and in capacity building 1993-96 and again 2002-6)
- The Canada Fund (grant funding)
- The Chase Fund (new clinic)
- Trees That Feed Foundation (partners in tree planting, particularly breadfruit and the Ma’afala variety, and promoting breadfruit flour)
- UNESCO (radio equipment)
- University of Technology Jamaica (student visits and studies)

Government partners:

- Rural Agricultural Development Agency: An area representative assists Jeffrey Town Farmers with training and matters related to farming. The agency has a home economics department that has supported with product development.
- Social Development Commission: With a mandate to help communities meet their own development objectives, this agency supports Jeffrey Town through an area representative who liaises with government agencies and other parts of the SDC to facilitate requested assistance.
- Jamaica Cultural Development Agency: This agency helped with staging of the breadfruit festival.





“Our advice to other communities would be to choose a goal that is viable and makes sense for the local population, whether that is public education, awareness building or public works. Run your organization in a democratic and transparent way. Include youth members, give them support and exposure to capacity building so that the work can continue. Keep good records and take pictures of all activities. Maintain your integrity.”

FURTHER REFERENCE

- Jeffrey Town Farmers profile page on http://www.equatorinitiative.org/index.php?option=com_winners&view=winner_detail&id=210&Itemid=683&lang=en
- Jeffrey Town Farmers Facebook page on <https://www.facebook.com/Jeffreytownfarmers>
- Gordon, I. 2013. *The Jeffrey Town Model for Community Development*. Paper presented at the Seventh Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF7). Download [here](#).

Click the thumbnails below to read more case studies like this:



Equator Initiative
Sustainable Development Cluster
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
304 East 45th Street, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10017
Tel: +1 646 781-4023
www.equatorinitiative.org

EQUATOR  INITIATIVE

UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in 177 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

The Equator Initiative brings together the United Nations, governments, civil society, businesses and grassroots organizations to recognize and advance local sustainable development solutions for people, nature and resilient communities.

©2015 by Equator Initiative
All rights reserved



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.