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THE RED CROSS COMMUNITY



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ANTIGUA & BARBUDA RED CROSS VOLUNTEERS PLANT 35,000 SEEDS IN NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVE

On Tuesday 31st March, a team of Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross Society (ABRC) volunteers helped to plant 35,000 seeds as part of a livelihood project collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Farmers Forum.

The Farmers Forum, at the encouragement of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, is aiming to get approximately 7000 of Antigua and Barbuda's households, to produce their own food through a seedling distribution programme, so that the twin island state is able to feed itself in case of food scarcity. This has become a concern in this time of emergency with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Forum, dually headed by ABRC member Adolph Audain and Chairman of the Farmers Association Marvin Joseph, approached the ABRC to lead the construction of a plan which included an online preregistration, sewing of seedlings and a method for safely distributing seedlings to households. The ABRC will also be assisting the Farmers Forum in the distribution phase by building a database of recipients who will be supported with regular advice on how to maintain the crops for sustainability.

Mr. Audain said, "The Farmers Forum is thankful for the assistance of the Red Cross for helping to make this initiative a reality."

"The universal mandate of the Red Cross is to alleviate human suffering and one of the fundamental ways we can do this is by helping to ensure food security. The Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross is happy to be partnering with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda and the Farmers Forum on this livelihoods project and lending our capacity with our volunteers," said ABRC Director-General Loretta Benjamin.

Beginning the process, the team of volunteers, led by Acting Youth and Volunteer Director Francine Carby, planted pumpkin, okra and beans, which should be ready for distribution in about 3 weeks. The process is ongoing with intentions to add other crops, such as sweet potato and cassava to the offering.

Carby said, "We would like to commend Mr and Mrs Audain for the wonderful educational experience we enjoyed... and the pleasure in knowing ABRC is playing an integral part in feeding our nation. We would also like to thank the Volunteers who worked tirelessly to ensure we make a difference."



The ABRC team planted 35,000 (thirty five thousand) seeds altogether. From left to right Volunteer Doniel Anthony, Volunteer Sherilyn Anthony, Board Ordinary Member Dawn Sanassie and Volunteer Kascene Ryan. (Photo by Adolph Audain)



Team Leader Francine Carby (right) and Governing Board Ordinary Member Dawn Sanasie (left) planting seeds (Photo by Loretta Benjamin)



Volunteer Glenneth Oscar-Piper sorting the finished planting trays. (Photo by Loretta Benjamin)



Governing Board Ordinary Member Dawn Sanasie (right) and Volunteer Sherilyn Anthony (left) placing seeds carefully into the trays. (Photo by Loretta Benjamin)