



Ms. Eden Augustus PhD Public Health

Biography

Research Associate (ICoFaN), U.W.I. General Postgraduate Scholar

Ms. Eden Augustus is a national of Trinidad and Tobago. She is currently a doctoral candidate within the Faculty of Medical Sciences, at the University of the West Indies (U.W.I), Cave Hill Campus. She is the project coordinator of the Caribbean section of the Intervention Co-creation to Improve Community-based Food Production and Household Nutrition in Small Island Developing States (ICOFAN) project (a project that focuses on promoting the consumption of local nutritious foods in SVG, Fiji and Haiti, which her PhD is independently embedded in). Ms. Augustus has a diverse food and nutrition background, having obtained a Master in Public Health (Distinction) in 2019, a BSc. in Human Nutrition and Dietetics (First Class Honours) in 2018, and associate degrees in both Culinary Science and Culinary Arts. Ms. Augustus is a Healthy Caribbean Coalition Youth Advocate as well as a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholar. Her research interests include nutritional and infectious disease epidemiology.

Examining factors impacting local food production and food security in St Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) – a Small Island Developing State (SIDS)

PhD Public Health: Ms. Eden Augustus

Abstract

Consistent access to safe and nutritious food among Small Island Developing States (SIDS) has been distorted by unemployment and poverty, leading to food insecurity. This is further compounded by developmental trajectories such as urbanisation and modernity which impact on previously vibrant agricultural systems towards decreasing agricultural production. In addition to economic challenges, geographic isolation and environmental issues such as natural disasters brought on by climate change as well as limited natural resources have led to an increased reliance on food imports. Recently, SIDS have been faced with another major challenge threatening food security - the COVID-19 pandemic and its sequelae impact on health and the economy. To control transmission rates, non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) including curfews, closure of borders and institutions have been employed, deepening the vulnerability of small-scale food producers.

To address the overall local food production and food security issues, an ecologic community back yard gardening initiative using organic practices has been identified as a point of intervention by evidence review and group model building sessions. Here we examine potential barriers to the intervention including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent La Soufrière volcanic eruption on food production and food security in a community project in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Data has been collected using a mixed method design through case studies and a quantitative cross-sectional survey. The case studies will be analysed within a thematic framework and associations will be tested through linear and logistic regressions.

Keywords: COVID-19; La Soufrière volcanic eruption; Food Security; Backyard Gardening