



Overview of BAP's Urban Biodiversity Project!



by [Belize Association of Planners](#) on February 28th, 2022

Background

Urban biodiversity is critically important to climate change mitigation and adaptation in cities, as they improve the health and well-being of their residents, reduce energy consumption and vulnerabilities to disasters, provide ecosystem services, and are sinks to greenhouse gasses. Notwithstanding its importance, this is often discounted in the discourse for national and local

policies; despite that, Belize is urbanizing with 57 % of its population residing near the coast where the impact of climate change will be most felt. Consequently, there is an urgent need to increase awareness of the role of urban biodiversity to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Already, climate induced extreme weather is causing significant loss of property, livelihoods and well-being, wiping out development gains and compromising Belize's ability to achieve its development goals. Expected to worsen, this will undoubtedly exacerbate the stresses already placed on urban ecosystems. Two key aspects of urban biodiversity critical for policy are the quality and extent of urban ecosystems and the provision of green infrastructure.

Review of the Urban Biodiversity Project

On August 20, 2021, the Belize Association of Planners (BAP) signed a Grant Agreement with the British High Commission, Belmopan for a project titled "The Urban Biodiversity Project". It was geared towards "Enhancing community knowledge of the role of urban biodiversity in mitigating and adapting to Climate Change". This project was developed in partnership with a group of residents of an area defined as "Between the Canals" and is an action of a Community Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan developed in partnership with the group.

The Urban Biodiversity project has helped in improving the knowledge of the community of the role of urban biodiversity in mitigating and adapting to climate change through training interactive workshops that comprised of presentations and field mapping of green spaces, ecological corridors and waterways to establish biodiversity levels; designing and implementing a biodiversity project to increase biodiversity levels in the community; producing and disseminating 2022 community calendars on urban biodiversity climate action. As it related to the media production, there was the producing and disseminating of a video short on traditional and social media on the learning experiences of the project. BAP also ensured that there was the producing and disseminating of a policy brief on exploring the nexus of urban biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation and inner-city communities for replication in Belize City and other municipalities, and for national upscaling.

Components of the Project

- **Capacity Building Training**

Through a workshop conducted in partnership with Belize Audubon Society, in the person of Ms. Dareece Chuc, Environmental Education and Communications Director, participants engaged in a dynamic and interactive introduction to the topic of urban biodiversity.

Community residents demonstrated great interest and expressed pride in their newly acquired knowledge about climate change mitigation and adaptation good practices with an emphasis on urban biodiversity and enjoyed the interactive presentations and field mapping of green spaces, ecological corridors, and waterways which will contribute to enhance their community's sustainability and resilience.

- **Green Space Upgrading**

A central aspect of the Urban Biodiversity project is geared towards creating green spaces for the community known as, "Between the Canals". Residents of the community passionately worked cohesively with the Belize Association of Planners (BAP) to create green spaces within their community.

It is imperative to note that there is a lack of access to safe open and green spaces in certain communities in Belize City. Thus, green spaces like this provide recreational areas for residents and help to enhance the beauty and environmental quality of neighborhoods. Green spaces in urban areas also improve the overall health and well-being of its residents.

With the noble assistance of Mr. Eldwin Lewis from the Go Green Eat Clean Belize, community members enthusiastically joined forces to install cement flora benches and crafted colorful tire planters in an under-utilized public space with the goal of promoting urban biodiversity in their environments.



THIS Month's
TOP STORIES



2022 Central American Water Bird Census

The annual Central American Water Bird Census (CAWC) kicked off 24th January, 2022 with a Bird ID training for the team at Sarteneja Alliance for Conservation and Development (SACD) followed by day 1 of field work with the water bird census. The training focused on water bird identification. This consisted of theory and practical exercises with the group practicing during the CAWC of the Corozal Bay area wetlands. There were 4 males and 3 females who participated in the sessions which were carried out by the trainer, Roni Martinez and Belize Audubon Society's Research and Monitoring Officer Kevin Tsao. (Data sourced from Belize Audubon Society, 2022)



Phone: 501 670 0227

Email: info@belizeplanners.org

Web: <https://www.belizeplanners.org>

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