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CARIBBEAN RESEARCH PROGRAMME CHAIR ASSIGNED TO FRANCIO GUADELOUPE

FORMER University of St. Martin (USM) president Dr. Francio Guadeloupe has become one of the two recipients of the Dutch Research Council (NWO) grants assigned to the Caribbean part of the Dutch Kingdom and will serve as research programme chair, based at USM for the next five years. The announcement was made on Thursday, 7 January by Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science Ms. Ingrid van Engelshoven at the annual four-country consultation meetings for the Dutch Caribbean.

The research programme, entitled Islanders at the Helm, will bring together researchers and societal partners to combine technical, traditional and contemporary knowledge practices to co-cre-



FORMER University of St. Martin (USM) president Dr. Francio Guadeloupe

ate sustainable and inclusive strategies for social adaptation to climatic challenges. In parallel, a trans-Atlantic academic platform and regional expertise centre will be developed fostering

research-based education for Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Martin. Together with programme co-chair, archaeologist Dr. Corinne Hofman of Leiden Universi-

ty, Guadeloupe will manage 3,5 million euros destined to climate resiliency research in the humanities, social and natural sciences. The expertise centre will hold base at the University of St.

Martin, University of Aruba and University of Curaçao. These regional institutions of higher learning will hereby receive support with the arrival of PhD researchers, post-doc researchers and visiting scholars from -or intrinsically engaged with the Caribbean.

In a celebratory note sent to USM on Thursday, Guadeloupe stated that "the NWO programme that he will be chairing is about "us.... when many sons and daughters and grandchildren with roots on our six islands lead successful lives in the Netherlands, one cannot be surprised by this showing of genuine solidarity from across the Atlantic.

"This project is about NWO truly investing in research

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CARIBBEAN RESEARCH PROGRAMME CHAIR: ... FROM PG 2

that benefits our islands. Climate change is real. We know this from Irma and the rise of the frequency of hurricanes in our region. We know this from the heavy rainfall and droughts on the ABC islands. We know this from the rise in earthquakes and now a volcano waking up in the wider Caribbean. There is absolutely no time to waste on cooperating Kingdom-wide, even if some of us rightly attend to the colonial past. That righteous attention must not deter us from recognising that by paying their taxes, the hard-working Caribbean diaspora in the Netherlands have partially contributed to the funding of this programme”,

said Guadeloupe, who also recognised the hard work of those who inside NWO pushed for a fair distribution of funds among kingdom partners. Guadeloupe expressed his satisfaction with the NWO decision, saying that it is time we strengthen the 3 vital steps many on the six islands are taking. First, to foster more collaboration among that which we used to call the Dutch Antillean countries. Second, for the Dutch Antillean countries to intensify our working relationships with the rest of the Caribbean basin. Third, for the Antilles to work constructively with the Netherlands. “Islanders at the Helm means that

islanders become authors of their sustainable future and the reinvention of the Dutch Kingdom”, he said. A total of 7 million euros has been awarded to two projects within the NWO programme Caribbean Research: a multidisciplinary approach, of which the other 3,5 million will be assigned to research in ocean pollution and coral reef health. This is the first time that NWO has funded programmes of this size in the Caribbean. For the Islanders at the Helm programme, much emphasis will be placed on local, traditional and technical knowledge practices in the broadest sense, and how these inform policy

options for sustainable development of the islands. Climate change challenges which are found in architecture, water and waste management, agriculture and business will be met with the ancestral awareness through archaeology, resiliency through the arts and humanities, technical innovations in water management and agriculture, and policies that can be designed through community engagement. On his own behalf, USM President Dr. Antonio Carmona Báez, who will also be serving as one of the principal investigators of the research programme, made public his remarks on the momentous occasion.

“This is the most significant thing that has ever happened to USM, we can now become a full-fledged developmental university sponsoring research-based teaching that is essential to the sustainable progress of our Caribbean people. Together with other institutions of higher education in our region and our brothers and sisters in the diaspora, we can move forward by putting knowledge at the service of our islands. By co-creating solutions with historians, artists, archaeologists, anthropologists, urban engineers, farmers and students we can start to build that sustainable future looking inside and around us. No

longer will research agendas be dictated from abroad and from now on the results of research that is conducted in our region will serve the people of the six Caribbean islands. This is about emancipation and empowerment.”, Carmona said. The programme proposal, developed over a period of 9 months was said to be successful due to the community outreach and the methods of receiving input from stakeholders. Researchers hailing from the Netherlands and the Caribbean will assist the universities of the region in building their capacity in data collection, teaching and harnessing local talent.



USM INTERN EVALUATES AGRICULTURE FOR SCHOOL CURRICULA



By Dr Antonio Carmona Beaz

AFTER TWO full years of restoring its academic programming and securing accreditation for its degree programmes, following Hurricane Irma, the University of St. Martin (USM) finally opened its doors to student internships from abroad to help push research in the community. The first student intern arrived in September from the Netherlands to start a study on the feasibility of inserting agroecology and nutrition into Sint Maarten's system of education.

Daughter of the soil Lynn Martina returned to the island from Europe for a four-month stay to work with USM and ECO Sint Maarten Agriculture Research and Development Centre, in hopes of designing a draft national plan for the schools with the help of school boards, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, teachers and local farmers.

Lynn Martina (23) is a graduate of Milton Peters College who, after completing her HAVO-level stud-

ies, lived and worked in France and the Netherlands in order to get job experience before commencing her tertiary educational trajectory. Currently, she is completing her Bachelor of Science in Applied Biology at the HAS Hogeschool of Den Bosch in Brabant, the Netherlands. Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, Martina had plans of going to Peru to conduct field work with spider monkeys in the South American country's Amazon forest. However, after seeing the impact of the pandemic upon her native land, she thought it might be time to come back and contribute.

"Having been in lockdown, I found the opportunity to think about what I really want to do with my life. No one knows what is going to happen from here to next year, so I decided to come back for a spell, to see what I can do for my own country. It's been a while and I really value this opportunity to get to know Sint Maarten again", said Martina.

HAS Hogeschool and USM arranged

the internship upon official agreement, ensuring that the work Lynn Martina does in Sint Maarten corresponds to the requisites for the completion of her studies.

"I am very excited about this chance to make a significant contribution. I'm in love with the idea of making an impact in children's lives and influencing education. I can apply what I have learned so far in the Netherlands to Sint Maarten. Imagine, such important topics as agriculture,

nutrition and education. Now more than ever, the time is now."

The student worked with USM science instructor of biology and agroecology Tanisha Guy and ECO Sint Maarten founder Mr. Denicio Wyatte, a long-time advocate for community centered agriculture and education. Furthermore, Martina met with government officials, volunteers of the Netherlands Red Cross, teachers and school board representatives to get a feel of what project are already in mo-

tion.

She discovered that there were earlier attempts at inserting agriculture into the public school curriculum. Prior to Hurricane Irma, for instance, Mr. Joslin Richardson designed a six-year curriculum plan for elementary schools, whereby every school would host a garden or set of garden beds for the youth to work with hands on. Upon her return to St. Martin, Martina also recognised the presence of the Netherlands Red Cross who

were already building kitchen gardens for select schools.

An updated assessment and draft plan for inserting agriculture into both elementary and secondary schools, based on a feasibility study, was completed in December and will be presented to the public in February 2021. USM hopes to create more on-island internships possibilities in the coming year, especially for those St. Martin students studying abroad and who might want to spend a summer or semester back home.

"What we hope to encourage is a culture of giving back to the community through research and hands-on projects.

It is an opportunity for young St. Martiners to spend time at home and apply what they have learned so far.

By putting college and university students to work in key areas of interest, we are sharing knowledge and building bridges to allow for brain gain instead of brain drain. USM decided to start with looking at agriculture" said USM President Dr. Antonio Carmona Báez.

RECOVERY, DEVELOPMENT AND THE PANDEMIC ON ST. MARTIN

By Dr. Antonio Carmona Báez

LOOKING at 2020 in retrospect, the pandemic can be regarded as a great interruption to our daily lives, and long and short-term planning. Although not equitably, COVID-19 has affected the lives of most people and most societies, not to mention the global economy. Trips were cancelled and jobs were lost; neighbors, friends and family got ill, with just over 2 million Covid-19 related deaths worldwide. Between Marigot and Philipsburg, the death toll, up to 30 December, was 39 out of a total of 2,429 cases island-wide. Schools closed, reopened and reclosed again and again in attempts to simulate a functioning public school system, and many students lost contact with their teachers.

According to the Netherlands Red Cross, more than 10,000 individuals in Sint Maarten are dependent on food packages. If these figures are reliable, then hunger came to the doorsteps of 1 out of 4 residents in the southside of the island, many of which were stranded undocumented workers not able to return to their respective homes. Due to the economic impact, the pandemic also rocked the Kingdom of the Netherlands politically, and brought the government of Sint Maarten, together with those of Curaçao and Aruba, to its knees. In order to receive help from the Dutch government, the island-states were forced to implement stringent conditions, including reducing the income and work benefits of civil servants.



Locals embrace the culture of St Maarten during the ECO Learning program in collaboration with CDFHA and SG!

Once again, we as a society are urged to face our own vulnerabilities and forced to look for alternatives that would speak to the sense of helplessness. The most recent drastic experience prior to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus was Hurricane Irma in 2017; there also we were obliged to rethink our collective lifestyle as we went into the long haul of recovery. But in a sense, the pandemic was worse than the hurricane. After a hurricane, a country can rebuild the necessary infrastructure

a functioning society requires, in time and according to the pace of the economy. With this pandemic, our tourism dependent economy fell flat on its face and we haven't yet even recovered from the hurricane. It is one thing to practice patience while infrastructure is being rebuilt in order to accommodate expected tourists. Waiting for the economies of North America and Europe to recover and the vaccines to be implemented en masse, is something else. There are no guarantees. Throughout 2020 Cultural Xpression has taken note and reported on the varying community responses to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the island of St. Martin. The pandemic has also been described as a portal, or opportunity, to break with our unsustainable past and truly embark upon a journey toward economic diversification. Similarly, the prospects and longing for food security seem to have been reactivated with the building of kitchen gardens in communities and schools, and a larger interest in small scale agricultural production. Throughout the last year, the exchange of seeds, seedlings and plants became commonplace in social media. Despite the fact that the island's large supermarkets continued to operate as usual, the impetus for public dialogue about food security was never lost. On the contrary, even government and large land owners started turning their eyes to the ground and to the possibilities of economic diver-

sification through all the products and services that sustainable agriculture can offer. All of a sudden, we started listening more carefully to those who worked the land and those who promoted agriculture on the island. The knowledge that those close to the land were sharing all along, gained in value because of the pandemic.

Similarly, in education, efforts were made to rethink our food systems and nutrition. Continuing to educate the population about agroecology, the University of St. Martin (USM) continued to work with Eco Sint Maarten Agriculture Research and Development in designing tailor-made curricula for different sectors of society. Together with the Red Cross and other local foundations, a feasibility study was conducted to understand what is needed in order to re-insert agriculture and nutrition into elementary and secondary school curricula. Furthermore, the Government of Sint Maarten Department of Community Development, Family and Humanitarian Affairs collaborated with Spaceless Gardens in offering the general public 6 and 8-week courses on climate change challenges, plant and soil science, and agribusiness.

We recognize the fact that many St. Martiners depend on tourism and we pray that employment and security will soon return to those affected families. Simultaneously, we hope that this spirit of engagement in a collective rethinking on what our island needs to reduce our climate and pandemic related vulnerabilities, will not be lost.

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ECO LEARNING WITH SG AND CDFHA

THE ECO LEARNING program in collaboration with CDSFA in its first official full run was a great success and was completed on Jan 18, 2019.

From Nov 9, 2020 to Jan 18, 2021, the program executed 8 weeks of building community awareness in the field of Agriculture and Agro-Ecology. The sessions offered a visual and practical learning experience that have proven to harvest positive results amongst participating target groups.

The ECO -Learning program was focused on combining face-to-face visual learning, lectures and practical sessions on various topics relating to home gardening, community \ self development and Agri-Business.

Thus far, participants learned about the struggles of climate change, the importance of seed germination, plant science, layers of the soil, soil types, plant-production systems, plant care and maintenance, history of agriculture on sxm, agri-business, nutrition and the culinary art of harvesting while understanding the necessity to create resilient and sustainable communities.

The program officially offered 40 slots for participants and targeted the most venerable and unem-



Group C Members on seed germination during the ECO Learning Program 2020-2021

ployed community members. A few adjustments were made by SG based on positive advise towards this direction to implement none venerable members to also join the group. This approach was implemented to strengthen the network between both groups with hopes that the result will grow into a positive collaborative effort between the none venerable being able to assist the venerable.

This network effort was achieved, and now will be able to allow the community to assist the community in need during times government assistance may be limited... This also

contributes to recognizing the importance of SGD #17 - Building Partnerships for goals. Which in the end will compliment all SDG's 1-16 toward sustainable eco-development.

Registration was accumulated between CDFHA, Spaceless Garden's online portal (stmaartenagriculture.com) and Community Help Desks for interested person to sign up for the program.

To this day we have received a total of 80 registries between CDFHA and Spaceless Gardens while interested persons continue to register via online to be placed in the next upcoming ECO Learning

program that will become available over the next few weeks.

A number of assessments were made to evaluate the participants, their skills, interest and objective towards understanding the best approach toward keeping the enthusiasm of the participants alive..

The 40 participants were separated in 4 groups (A-D) of 10 and took part in the sessions 4 times a week from 9am to 10am. Out of 40 registered participants there were 34 active participants that add up to a positive 89% attendance rate during this first attempt .

By collaborative group efforts participating members germinated over 250+ seedlings ranging from Golden Zucchini, Spicy Salad Mix and Arugula. Some participants took a few home to add to their garden and the rest remained at the center to further be cultivated for group members to enjoy at the end of the 8 Weeks.

Bridging the gap between the venerable and non venerable was a very important factor to be addressed with a focus on SDG #17. The emphasis remains on SDG #1 & #2 as mentioned was a very important void to fill which yield great results thus far as we able to see the interest of the none

venerable reach out to show support toward the efforts and ideas of the venerable members in the groups.

Due to lack of understanding what may transpire after the 8 weeks, Spaceless Gardens decided to be a bit proactive by engaging in a number of discussions with participating members based on further volunteer, collaborative and supportive effort amounts SG, ECO SXM, CDFHA and the participating community at large.

This sparked a few very interesting discussions as to how best we may be able to accomplish getting things of the ground collectively . Interested Participants that would like to see the program can grow further beyond the scheduled 8 weeks expressed that before they engage in further activity in their own communities, they would first like to strengthen their knowledge and experience by collaborating with SG and ECO SXM on a number of activities at the center during and post the ECO Learning program.

Group members started to discuss a number of topics based on helping the center reach its goals by volunteering their time, skills and resources. In return to help them gain the

necessary expertise and confidence to move on to bigger community projects in the future..

Spaceless Gardens supported this effort and started to organize the groups in separate chats to encourage more dialog amounts group members focused on the goals they would like to accomplish in collaboration with SG and ECO SXM. To make this a reality, we do also look forward to the collaborative effort and support of CDFHA.

On Dec 13, 2020 Minister of Public Health, Social Affairs and Labor VSA Richard Panneflek, CDFHA Department head Ms Chamtele Greoneveldt and supportive staff member Mr Riegnald Arrindell visited during weeks 5 history session and expressed their positive feedback on the progress of the programme.

A meeting conducted on Dec 14, 2020 between President of the USM, Dr Antonio Carmona Beaz, Management of Red Cross Mr Martin Daclas and Mr Denicio Wyatte of SG at The Agricultural Research and Development Center, focused on strengthening partnerships for goals. The discussion focused on further collaborative efforts such as support from the Red Cross towards further development of the center that may complement and strengthen the goals of the Red Cross and USM. Spaceless Gardens also highlighted the importance of the necessity for all parties to join together to meet the common goal of making agriculture a sustainable reality. This includes the collaborative efforts of CDFHA as well.

Communication was established between SG and CDFHA to express the interest of Red Cross also supporting the effort of the ECO Learning Program and future Skill Enhancement Programs in collaboration with CDFHA and Spaceless Gardens.



Group B Members get thier hands dirty during the ECO Learning Program 2020-2021

THE FARMERS SEE: PIGEON PEAS

HEALTH BENEFITS & FACTS AND OF THE PIGEON PEA



By health benefitstimes.com
PIGEON peas facts and health benefits

The pigeon peas (Cajanus cajan), alternatively known as Angola Pea, Gungo Pea, Congo-Pea, Pigeon-Pea, No Eye Pea, Red Gram, Yel-

low Dhal, Puerto Rico Pea, is a plant species in the legume family of the widely cultivated genus Cajanus Adans. Four varieties of pigeon peas are: tree types, tall varieties, dwarf varieties and smaller bushes. Pi-

geon peas are one of the most important food legume crops which grow in the tropical and subtropical climates. It is a drought tolerant and warm weather crop.

History

It was domesti-

cated in India 3,500 years ago. The seeds are used as grains in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It was grown for thousands of years in India. Around 2,000 BC, pigeon pea was developed in East Africa which was then brought to the America. Today pigeon pea is grown widely throughout the world in tropical and subtropical regions.

Plant

It is an erect, glandular-pubescent, short-lived and perennial shrub. The plant grows up to 1-2 m high with tetrach taproots. The erect and ribbed stem is 15 cm in diameter. Leaves are trifoliolate, alternate in dark green color above and silvery underneath. The plant yields yellow to red flowers which is 1.2 cm - 1.7 cm in diameter that turns into fruit as seed pods. The pods are linear-oblong, green or red, 2-13 cm long and 0.5-1.7 cm wide. Each pod contains about nine seeds which is subglobose - ellipsoid or squarish in shape having 5 mm as a diameter. The seeds are white, cream, brown, purplish to black in color.

Nutritional Value

The serving size of one cup which measures 153 grams provides 43 mg of

Vitamin C, 0.536 mg of Vitamin B1, 153 µg of Vitamin B9, 2.4 mg of iron, 0.69 mg of manganese, 181 mg of phosphorus, 29.82 gram of Carbohydrate, 3.294 mg of Vitamin B3 and others. The pigeon peas are rich in proteins, minerals, vitamins and lipids.

Health Benefits of Pigeon peas

Pigeon peas are an excellent source of magnesium, phosphorus, calcium and potassium. Besides, it contains fewer amounts of copper, zinc and magnesium. It provides an adequate amount of iron and selenium. The flattened shape pods hold a substantial place among pulses in India. The seeds vary in shape, size and color. It is round or oval in white, brown, red, greyish or purplish with a white hylum.

Few well-known advantages of Pigeon Peas are listed below:

1. Maintains blood pressure

Potassium is the key mineral which is found in pigeon peas that acts as a vasodilator, reduces the blood constriction and also reduces blood pressure. Those who suffer from hypertension should add pigeon peas to the daily diet because they are highly prone to the cardiovascular dis-

ease.

2. Assist in growth

Pigeon peas are also loaded with high protein content which is required for the growth and development. It is essential for the formation of cells, tissues, muscles and bones. It also assists in the healing process and cell regeneration in the body. One cup of cooked pigeon peas possesses 11 grams of protein.

3. Prevent anemia

Folate is found in adequate amount in pigeon peas which helps to prevent anemia and neural tube defects in unborn which is caused due to the deficiency of folate. The intake of single cup of pigeon peas provides about 110% of the daily recommended vitamins.

4. Anti-inflammatory properties

The seeds, leaves and peas of pigeon peas are used to treat inflammation due to the presence of organic compounds. The mashed pigeon peas paste is used as a treatment for piles which is known as hemorrhoids.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

HEALTH BENEFITS OF PIGEON PEAS...FROM PG 7

5. Helps in losing weight

Pigeon peas possess low amount of calories, cholesterol and saturated fats which makes it healthy. The presence of dietary fiber keeps full for a long period of time, increase metabolism rate and reduces the possibilities of weight gain. The nutrients found in pigeon peas converts into the usable energy than to store as a fat.

6. Boost energy

Vitamin B is also present in pigeon peas. Riboflavin and Niacin enhance the carbohydrate metabolism, prevent in fat storage and boost energy levels. It is suitable for the people living in arid climates, physical work that reduces the energy quickly.

7. Aids immunity

To maintain the nutrients, raw is bet-



ter because 25% of nutrients are lost when cooked. The uncooked peas help to enhance the immune system. Vitamin C promotes the white blood cells production and acts as an antioxidant that promotes in overall wellness as well as strong immunity.

8. Healthy heart

Pigeon peas contain dietary fiber, potassium and low cholesterol which help to maintain the healthy heart. Potassium lowers the strain on heart by reducing the blood pressure.

Dietary fiber maintains cholesterol balance and prevents atherosclerosis.

9. Digestive health

Pigeon peas are rich in dietary fiber which is essential for maintaining the digestive health. Fiber adds bulk to the stool and enhances the bowel movements by reducing the strain as well as inflammation. It reduces the constipation, cramping, bloating and diarrhea. Fiber enhances the efficiency of nutrient absorption.

Traditional uses

- In Ayurveda, it is used as a vulnerary that heals wounds and sores.

- It is also used as an astringent that is used to stop bleeding.

- It is also used to cure lung and chest disease.

- It is used to eliminate the internal parasitic worms.

- In Nigeria, the leaves are used to treat.

- In Panamanian folk medicine, it is used as a treatment for diabetes.

- It helps to cure jaundice, cough and bronchitis.

- In Malay traditional medicine, leaves decoction helps to treat coughs, abdominal troubles and diarrhea.

- The juice extracted from leaves is helpful for earache and sores.

- In Java, the pulped leaves are used as a treatment for herpes, sores and itches.

- In China, the roots are used as a sedative, expectorant, anthelmintic and vulnerary.

- The roots are used to treat throat inflammation, diarrhea and chlorosis.

- A poultice is used to lessen swellings.

- In Philippines, a decoction made from leaves is useful for diarrhea, cough and abdominal pains.

How to Eat

- In India, pigeon pea is used as dhal.

- In other parts of Asia, seeds are used to make tempeh or tofu.

- In Africa, dried seeds are used in sauces to accompany rice, cassava and yam.

- The immature seeds and pods are consumed fresh or added in soups as vegetables.

BY ALLRECIPES
Recipe by: Mary

VEGATERIAN AND VEGAN RECIPES RUSSIAN BLACK BREAD



I have been looking for a good Russian Black Bread recipe. This one is the closest I have come. The vinegar adds a bit of a bite, but believe me, with cheese it is marvelous. - Mary

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups water
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 2 1/2 cups bread flour
- 1 cup rye flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons margarine
- 2 tablespoons dark corn syrup
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon instant coffee granules
- 1 tablespoon caraway seed
- 1/4 teaspoon fennel seed (Optional)
- 2 teaspoons active dry yeast

Prep 10m | Blend 2m |
Ready In 12m

DIRECTIONS

Step 1

Place ingredients into the bread machine in order suggested by the manufacturer.

Step 2

Use the whole wheat, regular crust setting.

Step 3

After the baking cycle ends, remove bread from pan, place on a cake rack, and allow to cool for 1 hour before slicing.

To make this recipe in a stand mixer, combine all of the ingredients except the softened butter in the mixing bowl. Mix on low speed using the dough hook, scraping the dough down occasionally, for 10 minutes. Add the softened butter and mix for an additional 5 minutes. Transfer the dough to a greased bowl, cover it with plastic wrap and a kitchen towel, and allow it to rise until doubled, about 1 hour.

Grease two 9x5-inch loaf pans. Deflate the dough and turn it out onto a lightly floured surface. Divide the dough in half. Flatten the dough pieces into rectangles, pressing down with your hands to pop any air bubbles. Fold the dough into thirds, rolling it slightly under your palms to form a loaf, and pinch the seam to seal. Place the loaves into the loaf pans, seam-side down, cover with a floured kitchen towel, and allow it to rise again until doubled, about 30 minutes. Bake the loaves in a preheated 400 degree oven (200 degrees C) until the crust is dark and the bottom of the loaf sounds hollow when tapped, 25 to 30 minutes. Remove the bread from the pan and cool on a wire rack.

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Opinion Matters

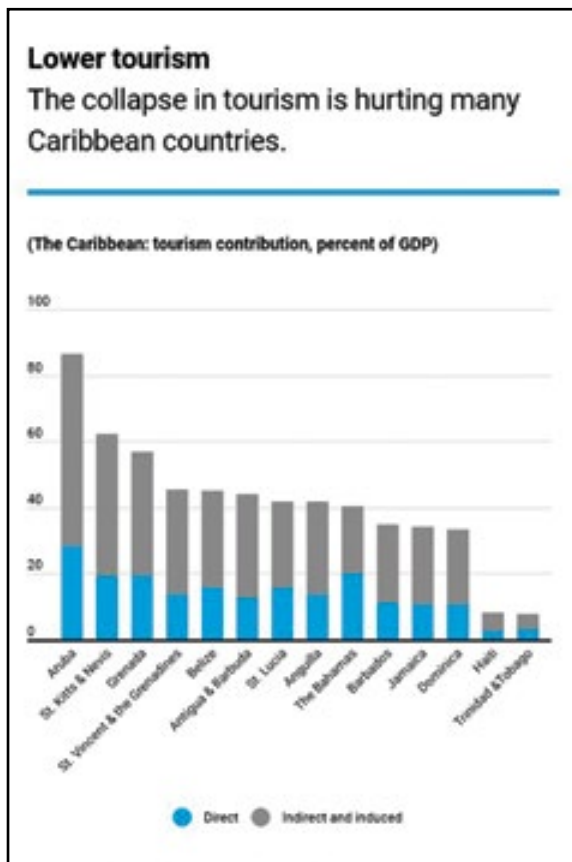
COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE CARIBBEAN: NAVIGATING UNCHARTED WATERS P2 (FROM APRIL 2020)

By Krishna Srinivasan, Sònia Muñoz, and Varapat Chensavadijai for blog.img.org

GIVEN THIS, directing resources within the available policy space toward individuals and businesses most affected by the pandemic will be critical to protect livelihoods and enable a recovery.

Most countries have already announced fiscal packages that include additional health spending; temporary cash transfers for displaced workers; credit support to small and medium-sized firms and affected sectors such as tourism, transport, and agriculture; expansion of social safety net programs for vulnerable groups (e.g., food and income support); reduction or deferral of some taxes and electricity tariffs; and tax and custom duty waivers on essential food and hygiene product imports.

Where feasible, central banks and regulators should play a complementary role to support economic activity. Central banks in the ECCU, Aruba, Barbados, Belize, Haiti, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago have reduced policy rates and/or reserve requirements, or provided liquidity assistance through other facilities. Banks and other lending institutions have offered short-term payment deferrals and interest rate reductions on mortgages and



loans, and waived late fees and charges to eligible customers.

But further fiscal, monetary and credit-easing measures will likely be needed depending on the effectiveness of containment measures and how the demand for tourism recovers.

To safeguard financial stability, supervisors should intensify monitoring and increase the reporting frequency of financial institutions. For Caribbean countries an important consideration will be to identify financial sector risks, including exposures to tourism-related activities, and conduct stress testing.

Stepping up IMF support

The IMF is actively engaging Caribbean countries to offer policy advice and assistance, especially to those with press-

ing financing needs to cope with the pandemic.

As IMF Managing Director Georgieva recently outlined, the IMF is ready to deploy financial resources quickly. For instance, requests for the Rapid Credit Facility by Haiti, Dominica, Grenada, and St. Lucia have already been approved, while emergency assistance for three additional Caribbean countries, including Jamaica, will be considered by the IMF's Executive Board in the coming weeks. Barbados has also requested an augmentation of its existing Extended Fund Facility.

The doubling of the IMF's emergency financing capacity means that up to US\$2.5 billion could be made available immediately to the Caribbean region.

In addition, other

recent reforms allow immediate debt service relief to low-income countries, such as Haiti, affected by the crisis, thereby creating space for spending on urgent

health needs.

We are also working closely with the World Bank, Caribbean Development Bank, and other regional partners to explore inno-

vative solutions and approaches to assist countries in the Caribbean navigate the challenges and pave the way to economic recovery.

RAS ITAL

NEW YEAR NO FEAR

ITS A NEW YEAR, time for more HOPE and no FEAR.. Rasta say so.



Mi just a gwaan bubble up mi yaba pot with some fresh ital and a watch the world mek a fool a demselves by refusing to intake all a jah clean air by covering up with dem face mask.. Nah sah, mi fi smell mi herb ina mi pot ital a bubble up stright. Mask nah mek it..

Free up yaselves and breath ma people for no one but yaselves can do that.
Love everytime - Ras Ital



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By poets.org
NOT VISTAS,
 but a home-sized
 landscape, be-
 loved rooms stor-
 ied, painted,
 lived.

A farm bought
 with a painting
 and a ten dollar
 personal check.

And almost
 from the begin-
 ning, the inten-
 tion to pass on
 what an artist
 sees, what artists
 make.

A parcel of
 land, a vast leg-
 acy. Admire the
 houses, barns,
 outbuildings, and
 studios, uniformly
 Venetian red.

Respect the
 visible sweat
 work of stones
 laid in walls and
 foundations, ter-
 races and walks.

Admire the
 sunken garden,
 the wildflower
 meadows, the

Weir Farm



MS MARILYN NELSON

path through thick
 woods to the fish-
 ing pond.

Walk through
 the farm envi-
 sioned by artists.
 Admire the home
 artists made. Or
 you can step from
 a museum's pol-
 ished floor across
 a carven, gilded
 threshold into the
 farm reimagined
 in brushstrokes.

From that
 wooden bridge
 over there, hear
 those three wom-
 en's tinkling
 laughter?

Over there the
 other way, see the
 black dog panting
 near the youngish
 man lifting stones
 into a half-built
 wall?

Step out of
 the frame again,
 and be enveloped
 in birdsong and
 dapple. Feel the
 welcome of small
 particulars: the

grove beside that
 boulder, the white
 horse tied in front
 of that barn.

With eyes made
 tender, see those
 elms, from shad-
 ows on the grass
 to the highest
 leaves' shimmer.

With your
 friends, lovers,
 family, stride
 across this chro-
 matic broken
 brushwork.

Sit a minute at
 the granite pic-
 nic table with the
 artist's daughters,
 dressed in sum-
 mer white.

You can daub
 this earth, so lyr-
 ic, so gentle, from
 the limited palette
 of your own love
 right now.

Any place you
 care for can hold
 an easel. Every-
 thing around you
 is beautiful plain
 air. -

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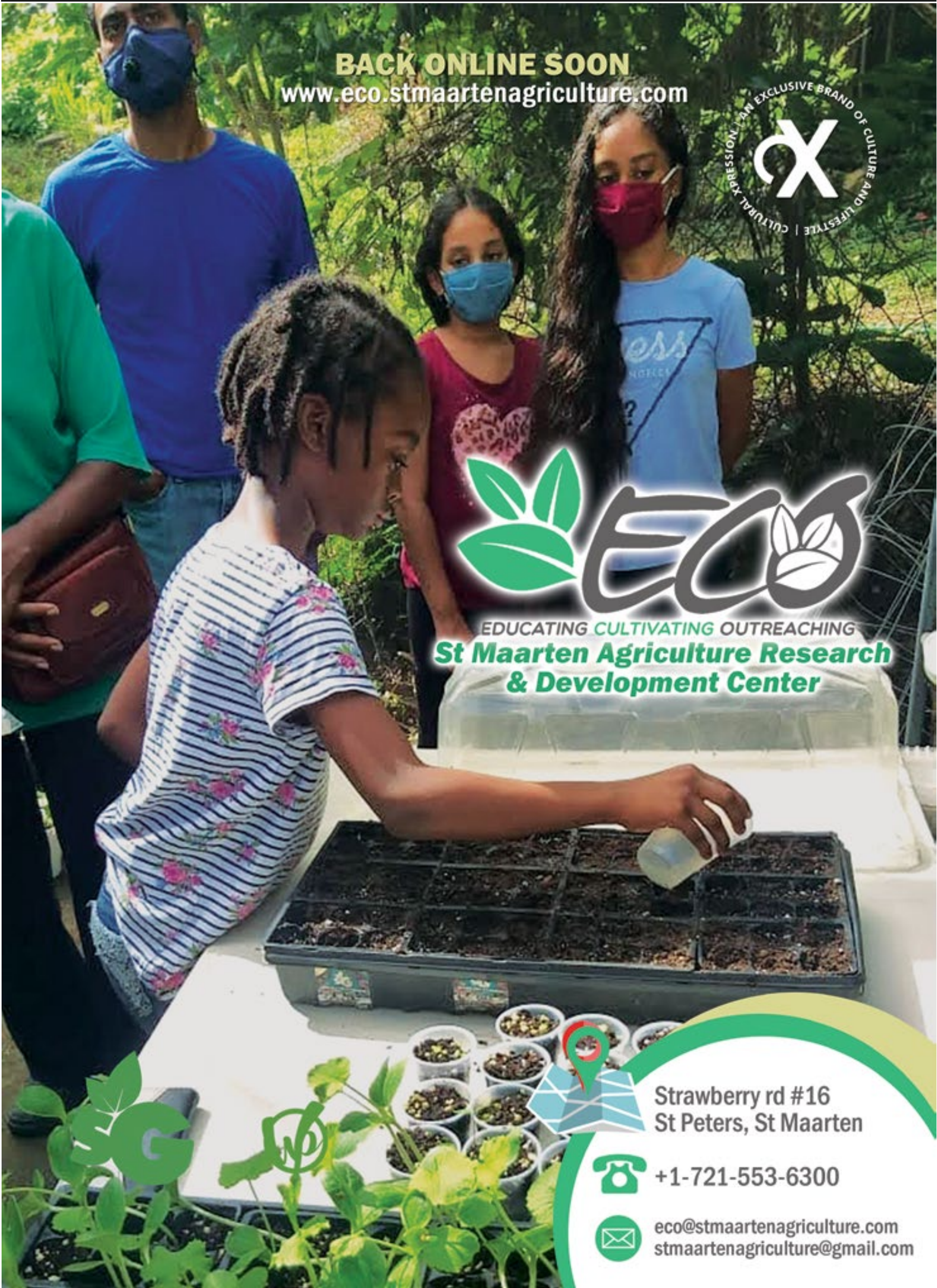
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SPRING BREAK 2021: THIS MIGHT ACTUALLY HAPPEN

CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC TRAVEL PLANS TO GET YOU TO THE CARIBBEAN.

By Klara Glowczewska - www.townandcountrymag.com

DOES SPRING break by the sea—swimming, sand, sundowners—seem to you more a right than a privilege? Aghast at the prospect of being denied it this year? No need for guilt: The desire to get to water—be it ocean, lake, or pool—is in your genes, baby, an urge born of a primordial survival instinct. “All our senses respond positively to water,” says marine biologist Wallace J. Nichols, author of *Blue Mind*, because it’s an evolutionary trigger “telling your brain you’re in the right place.”

The Caribbean, of course, has long been that place. It has been opening slowly to Americans over the last few months, but there is a thicket of Covid-era regulations to consider—not because cases are high but because they’re low, and the islands want to keep it that way. And there are many different governments involved. “Every island is responsible for creating its own reopening plan,” says Lindsey Epperly of Epperly Travel, who specializes in beach destinations worldwide, “and we’re seeing those plans vary pretty dramatically.”

If you want to avoid searching the tourism website of every country/island you’re interested in, one excellent place to look is this beast of an article by Brook Wilkinson, editor at WendyPerrin.com: “The Countries That Have Reopened to U.S.

Travelers With No 14-Day Quarantine and What You’ll Find There.” It is arranged regionally, and Wilkinson updates the information.

And yes, there’s a new wrinkle (in case you missed it): A CDC mandate, effective January 26, requires all international travelers coming into the United States to show proof of a negative Covid-19 test administered within three days prior to their arrival on U.S. soil. Don’t despair—it doesn’t mean you’ll need to ruin your last days on the beach searching for a testing site: Many hotels and resorts in the Caribbean have already started providing on-property testing. Some properties provide this as a complimentary service, others at a cost. “The kinds of tests available at each resort, as well as pricing, is evolving every day,” says Epperly. An excellent single source for updated information is this article in *Travel Weekly*, specifically covering the properties in the Caribbean and Mexico.

That said, here is a sampler of islands we like and places to stay we recommend—all worth the extra steps. Here comes then sun....

St. Bart’s

It is among the most accessible of the islands, requiring just a negative PCR test within 72 hours before your departure flight and a possible health screening upon arrival, but no quarantine. (Stay longer and you’ll need to test again on day 8—no big deal.) “St. Bart’s



Sugar Beach, A Viceroy Resort, on St. Lucia - FOKKEBOK

is 30 percent of our new business,” says Jack Ezon of Embark Beyond. Coincidentally, Le Guanahani, the only full-service resort on the island, is reopening this spring (as a Rosewood) after a three-year renovation. Some suites now have new pools of their own, although the property already offers plenty of seclusion thanks to its location: on a private peninsula, white sand beaches on both sides, the sea breezes doing their salubrious thing. Prefer a standalone place? The villa rental agencies Inspirato and Wimco have partnered with private aviation providers Wheels Up and Tradewind Aviation, respectively, so they can also deliver you to your island home in near isolation.

Antigua

This island, Epperly says, “has been reopening carefully, and some people feel more comfortable with its preflight testing requirement”—not the more usual 72 hours prior to departure from the U.S., but seven days, so there’s less last minute uncertainty about your test results. And

22 staffed residences available for rent (plus the resort’s 28 suites and villas), and it has a farm, a turtle sanctuary, and a dreamy meadow with grazing sheep, which you’re guaranteed to pass often on your golf cart or bike: In true private enclave style, Jumby Bay is carless and keyless.

St. Lucia

Like Antigua, St. Lucia requires a negative PCR Covid-19 test within seven days prior to your day of travel (not three).

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BUSINESS

21 Great Small Business Ideas to Start in 2021

By Max Freedman

Looking for a great business idea? These ideas will help you start and grow a successful business in 2021.

- Many of the best small business ideas for 2021 involve an online business model.

- Choose a business idea that you are knowledgeable and passionate about.

- Before starting a business, determine if there is a demand for what you want to provide.

- This article is for anyone looking for an idea to start a business.

You know you want to start a business, but you're having a tough time articulating your idea. If you want to become an entrepreneur, it's important to start with a great business idea. All you need is a bit of inspira-



tion. It all starts with an idea that has room to grow over time.

If you are thinking of starting a business in 2021, it is critical to take the new normal into account. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed so much about how people consume products and services. While starting a retail business or restaurant might have

been good ideas previously, you might be best served to reconsider those thoughts until you see how the next year plays out. Instead of some more traditional businesses, think about those that can support how people are now living their lives.

This list of business ideas includes 21 great types of busi-

ness to help you find success in 2021 and beyond. If you find an area you want to pursue, be sure to review the steps for how to start your own business.

21 great small business ideas

If you're ready to run your own business, consider any of these great business

ideas.

1. Consultant

If you are knowledgeable and passionate about a specific topic (business, social media, marketing, human resources, leadership, communication, etc.), starting a consultant business can be a lucrative option. You can start your consulting business on your own, then grow your business and hire other consultants over time.

2. Online reseller

Those passionate about clothing and/or sales may want to consider starting an online reseller business. Although it takes a lot of time and dedication – and an eye for fashion – this is a great idea that you can start as a side hustle and turn into a full-time resale business. You can start

by using online store websites like Poshmark and Mercari to sell your unwanted clothing, eventually expanding to your own resale website.

3. Online teaching

The demand for online education has opened up a wide possibility for entrepreneurs to start their own ventures. Since this is an online business idea, you can choose any subject you are knowledgeable about and teach a course regardless of your location. If you don't have advanced knowledge in any particular subject, you can always consider teaching English as a foreign language online to students overseas.

4. Online bookkeeping

As with education, technology allows many bookkeeping services to be performed online. If you are an accountant or bookkeeper who wants the freedom and autonomy of running your own business....

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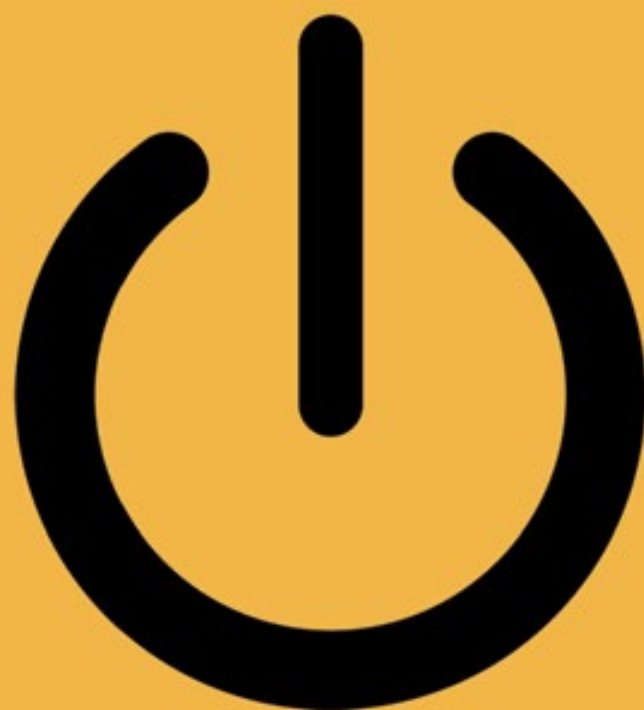
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STAYING ACTIVE WHILE SOCIAL DISTANCING: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

By health.gov

CAN I BE active outside with people who aren't in my household?

It's important that we all do our part to slow the spread of the coronavirus. That means following local, state, and national guidance. Try to limit social interactions when possible and always stay home if you're feeling sick.

The safest way to be active outdoors is to stick with members of your household or go solo.

When you're deciding where to go outside, avoid busy areas that might make it hard for you to keep your distance from others.

If you're meeting up with someone who isn't in your household, make sure to avoid all physical contact and keep at least 6 feet of space between you at all times. And remember, you don't have to meet in person to get active together! Consider others ways to stay connected like talking on the phone while walking.

Is it safe for me to go to a park or a playground?

Be sure to follow local guidance so you know if it's safe to use parks and playgrounds in your community.

Playgrounds

Lots of people use and touch playground equipment, so an empty playground can still be full of germs. CDC recommends that visitors do not use playgrounds, including water playgrounds, within public spaces and parks. There are lots of ways to get active with your kids away from the playground. Consider playing hopscotch or four-square in an open space.

Parks

Parks can help make it easier to keep your distance from others, but not if they're too crowded. Make sure you look for outdoor spaces that make it easy for you to keep your distance from others. Focus on parks that are close to your home, and avoid traveling long distances to visit a park. It's best to prepare in advance, because facilities — like concessions or bathrooms — may be closed to visitors.

Are there physical activities I need to avoid?

You can continue to do many of the activities you love, but you might have to make some adjustments to be safe.

• Do you love group fitness classes? Try stream-



A child plays near a sign advising people that the playground is closed and social distancing is required Thursday, April 9, 2020, in Rutledge, Georgia. CREDIT JOHN BAZEMORE / ASSOCIATED PRESS

ing a group workout online in your home.

• Are you used to lifting weights at a gym and don't have any at home? Get creative! Try lifting canned goods or laundry detergent. Or try some bodyweight exercises — they can help you build strength, just like lifting weights.

• Are team sports your thing? Find an open space to practice your individual skills.

Just be sure to avoid social gatherings, keep your distance from others, and practice good hygiene.

How can I be active without a gym?

There are all kinds of ways to get active at home. Workout videos, dancing, and even active video games are great ways

to get moving. Many gyms and organizations across the country are offering free streaming or on-demand fitness options. This might be the perfect opportunity to try something new!

Household chores and gardening are also good ways to get moving, and a great way to multitask. If you can distance yourself from others outside — and it's allowed under local guidance — take a walk, run, or bike ride in a quiet neighborhood, or hike on a trail away from others.

Where can I find free resources to help me stay active at home?

Without the ability to go to a gym or playground, getting active might feel tougher than normal. Many organizations and agencies on the local, state, and national levels are working hard to support activity in the home during this time.

The Move Your Way Activity Planner is a great way to identify activities you can do at home! Your local parks department or recreation

center website might also have guidance. And you can find plenty of free streaming or on-demand videos to help you maintain or improve your physical and mental health online.

Here are a few resources to jumpstart your new physical activity routine:

Resources for all ages:

• American College of Sports Medicine provides suggested aerobic and strength-training activities

• Cooper Institute has free videos with tips to help you get active on their YouTube channel

• National Center for Health, Physical Activity and Disability features inclusive videos that people with disabilities can do at home

• National Academy of Sports Medicine shares 9 bodyweight exercises you can do without equipment

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