

PRESS RELEASE

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ABSTEP STARTS ITS THIRD CYCLE OF THE TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua January 17, 2017—The Antigua and Barbuda Skills Training and Empowerment Programme (ABSTEP), a skills development intervention, held its beneficiary orientation on January 12, 2017 to mark the official start of the third cycle of its Temporary Employment Programme. Under the programme, individuals between the ages of 17-50 years will engage in hands-on work with community-based organizations.

More than 50 beneficiaries received job placements with the Barnes Hill Community Group, Another Chance Ministries-- a faith-based organization, the Antigua and Barbuda Waste Recycling Centre, and the Freetown Community Group.

Beneficiaries attached to the Barnes Hill Community Group will help restore and renovate a centuries-old reservoir to serve as an alternate water source for the community. They will assist the Barnes Hill Community Group in developing a recreational park around the reservoir, which has been designated a heritage site. The Barnes Hill sub-project aims at improving the quality of life for members of the community and creating an enjoyable environment for visitors alike.

Under Another Chance Ministries' sub-project, 15 beneficiaries will learn about environmental protection and electronic waste management. The sub-project is designed to reduce the dumping of electronic waste in the nation's landfills.

Another 15 beneficiaries will work at the Antigua and Barbuda Waste Recycling Centre to minimize bulk waste in Antigua and Barbuda and divert non-biodegradable materials from the landfills through effective recycling.

Other ABSTEP beneficiaries will assist the Freetown Community Group in creating a Community Peace Park -- a green space that will enhance and sustain the viability of community life in Freetown.

In the meantime, a fifth sub-project aimed at revitalizing the Victoria Park Botanical Gardens to make it a more usable space, particularly for persons with special needs, started November last year. The Department of the Environment, which manages the park, is undertaking that sub-project in collaboration with the Victory Centre, a school that caters to differently-abled children. Under this sub-project, beneficiaries are learning about greenhouse and nursery management, landscape management, and recreational park maintenance.

ABSTEP is a government programme offering temporary work and training opportunities to legal residents of Antigua and Barbuda. The programme is administered by the Labour Department through its One Stop Employment Centre. ABSTEP is designed to help individuals obtain and maintain full-time employment. The programme is a component of the Public and Social Sector Transformation Project, which is financed by the World Bank.