

GAIA MICROGRANTS PROGRAMME

FINAL REPORT FOR PHASE 3

May-November 2016



Participants of "Right to Adequate Shelter and Proper Nutrition" project, SVI Mauritius

About GAIA MicroGrants

The programme provides financial support of up to 500 € to SCI activists implementing projects on climate justice and sustainable living. The main goal of the programme is to increase the awareness of these topics among SCI activists and to increase the number of SCI grassroots projects making an impact on sustainability and climate protection. So far 48 grassroots projects were supported through the programme.

The 3rd phase of GAIA MicroGrants took place between April and November 2016. The purpose of this report is to summarize main facts and learning points defined through that time. GAIA MicroGrants is run for and by SCI activists and volunteers. It is designed to be an opportunity to learn through practice and keeping track of the main conclusions is an element of this process - both for the activists implementing the projects and those running the programme itself.

1. Overview of GAIA MicroGrants Programme implementation

The application process was open to all SCI branches, partners, working groups and activists. The two funding windows were:

Funding windows and their relevance to SCI's mission and work

SUPPORTING FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES IN PREPARATION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is already impacting the lives of millions of people through changing monsoon patterns and droughts affecting agriculture and water availability on one side, and heavy storms and floods destroying shelters and livelihoods of communities on the other side. There are many things local communities can do to better prepare for a changing climate and we believe that SCI volunteers can play an important role in helping them.

MAKING OUR FOOD SYSTEMS MORE SUSTAINABLE

The world population continues to grow, available land is limited, soil is being degraded and communities around the world are experiencing food shortages or inequality of food distribution. Our agricultural and food system is a major source of greenhouse gases and at the same time it is being heavily impacted by climate change. Working with those challenges is a source of solutions to the root causes: food waste can be reduced both in farming and by end consumers, new farming methods can be applied to protect the soil and improve agricultural techniques, food can be grown locally by the communities themselves (this includes urban farming!), water can be better harvested to avoid wasting it. Again, we believe there is a huge opportunity for SCI volunteers to get involved.

All submitted projects that fit at least one of the funding windows were assessed by the Selection Team consisting of volunteers with previous experience in implementation of projects supported by GAIA MicroGrants. Applications were evaluated according to the following criteria:

Assessment criteria followed by the selection team

- Compliance with at least one of the funding areas;
- Contribution to building awareness about sustainable living and/or climate justice issues;
- Efforts to reduce negative environmental impact of the project logistics (avoid using non-renewable resources, buying a lot of new, single-use equipment, printing disposable fliers); and
- Practical benefits for local community.



Participants of "Permacultural Project" are clearing the garden, SAVWA South Africa

Successful implementation of 8 projects with the total budget of 3365 €

During the 3rd phase of GAIA MicroGrants 15 project applications were submitted for assessment by SCI branches and partners. Nine project proposals were approved, out of which eight successfully implemented the project activities and submitted all documents required for reporting. All applications were assessed by the GAIA MicroGrants Selection Team according to specific criteria. The total sum of 3365 € was awarded to the eight projects, out of which six were implemented by SCI branches and partners in the South and two by European branch and partner organizations.

List of implemented projects

Making Our Food Systems More Sustainable

- Permacultural Gardening Project, SAVWA South Africa (P)*
- No to food waste!, ESTYES Estonia (P)
- Right to adequate shelter and proper nutrition, SVI Mauritius (B)*
- Weekend Workcamp in an Inclusive Community Garden, SCI Germany (B)
- Peace through environmental protection, SCI Sri Lanka (B)

Supporting Frontline Communities In Preparation For Climate Change

- Workcamp with river erosion affected community, SCI Bangladesh (B)
- reACTION FOR CLIME, VWAN Nigeria (B)
- Local Youth Group Initiative for planting trees and climate awareness, SCI India (B)

** P - SCI partner, B - SCI branch*

Reasons for not approving some of the submitted applications

Some of the reasons for which project proposals were not successful are: not fitting in the thematic areas of the programme (e.g. project focusing on nature conservation without clear link with issues of climate change causes or impacts), unclear description of the project concept, lack of sufficient time for the Selection Team to acquire additional information and assess the project before the starting date, lack of clearly defined follow up plans in case of projects taking place cyclically.

Measures to support applicants in improving their proposals

It is worth noting that in most cases, even if the initial project application was not clear or lacked basic information, the Selection Team members formulated additional questions and tried to work with the applicants to improve it. It was often a successful and applications were clarified. Also in one case this process led to an organization deciding that they need to better prepare the project background before implementing the activities. In every case this process was meant to facilitate a learning experience for applicants, supporting deeper reflection on project goals and design.

Special priority given to applicants from the South

Six out of 8 successful projects were submitted by the Southern branches and partners. GAIA MicroGrants Programme prioritizes applications from the Global South, because climate change impacts are experienced there first. It is urgent to prepare communities for changes in their lifestyles and extreme weather that they might experience, but at the same time seed funding is more difficult to access than in Europe. With GAIA Microgrants we want to provide a drop in the sea of necessary action and make it easier for activists from the Global South to take initiative.



Participants of “River erosion affected community” project planting trees, SCI Bangladesh

2. Programme outcomes

Role of GAIA MicroGrants in SCI's efforts for climate justice and sustainable living

Since the beginning of the Climate for Peace Programme (formerly Create a Climate for Peace Campaign) sustainable living and climate justice became an integral part of SCI. Activists and branches are becoming more aware of the issues and ways in which they can make a positive contribution to climate protection.

Sustainable living and climate justice are also integral part of SCI's perspective and strategy:

- Climate for Peace Programme is featured in SCI's main web page;
- Climate for Peace workcamps have their specific tag in the Online Placement System; and
- Goals of Climate for Peace are encrypted in SCI's strategic plan 2015-2018 (Strategic Objective 1.4: To make the world more socially, ecologically and economically sustainable).

Documents like the *Climate for Peace Toolkit* and *Climate for Peace Workcamp Guidelines* provide practical ideas on how to turn ideas into action and GAIA MicroGrants Programme encourages taking action by providing access to financial resources.

Project statistics SCI needs to maintain and even increase members' involvement in the climate justice movement, as climate change poses more and more threats to the culture of peace (for more information see "Climate for Peace Position Paper"). GAIA MicroGrants Programme is a tool for stimulating this involvement. Over the past 3 years we saw almost 50 projects implemented by SCI activists on 4 continents.

The 3rd phase of the programme provided support to 8 projects in 8 countries. Six of the projects were organized by SCI activists in the Global South.

Six projects were organized as workcamps, some with local volunteers (3) and others with international volunteers (3). The remaining two projects were workshops that also incorporated practical, hands on work. All of the supported activities were focused around forestry or gardening - some from the perspective of food sovereignty and avoiding food waste, others with stronger link to preventing climate change impacts. Activities came in many different forms, including a bicycle tour. You can find project summaries below.

In total the projects have directly reached just under 400 people, with a much larger number of community members positively impacted or informed indirectly.

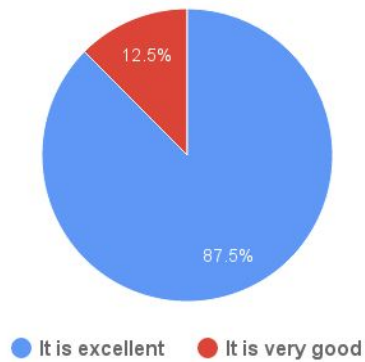
*Good practices
in project
planning and
implementation
defined by the
Selection Team*

- Start with a simple idea, where the goal of the project can be clearly explained (like tree planting action, which brings people closer to nature).
- Focus on providing added value to the local community targeted in the project (like consulting the locals when defining project goals).
- Combine practical work with educational aspects (like work and study parts in a workcamp).
- Define a clear link between the project idea and the funding windows of the programme (like working in a forest garden, because such ecosystems contribute to easing climate change impacts on humans).
- Have an idea of what will happen to the project results once the project activities are over (like having a team consisting of local youth and adults, who will tend the community garden).

Ensuring that projects have a lasting impact and increase awareness of communities remains a permanent challenge for GAIA MicroGrants.

Feedback from the Beneficiaries of GAIA MicroGrants

What is your general opinion about GAIA MicroGrants?



Seven out of eight projects funded by GAIA MicroGrants would have been impossible to implement without GAIA MicroGrants support. In most cases (5 of 8 applications) participants applied for GAIA MicroGrants because they didn't know of another funding opportunity.

Also in 5 out of 8 cases activists from the applying branch became interested in the issues of climate justice and sustainable lifestyle because of the funding opportunity provided by GAIA MicroGrants. This fact is in line with the goal of the funding programme.

Opinions about the support received from the side of the programme team as well as the accessibility of the application and reporting process were very positive (all ranking "very good" and "excellent").

All of the applicants are "absolutely certain" or "certain" that they will remain involved in the issues of climate justice and sustainable lifestyle and that they apply for GAIA MicroGrants again in the future.

Objectives for the future development of the Programme:

- *promotion,*
- *networking,*
- *fundraising;*

From the feedback received from the beneficiaries and the members of the Selection Team it is very clear that the programme team should put more effort in increasing the visibility of the supported projects (through SCI communication channels, in international SCI meetings as well as amongst other organizations).

The other area of increased focus should involve creating networking opportunities amongst the organizers of project supported by GAIA MicroGrants, which could also serve as a platform for peer-to-peer support. Finally there is a necessity to mobilise more diverse sources of financing, as for the past 3 years the Programme depended heavily of financial contribution made by Terra21 Foundation.



Participant of the “Right to adequate shelter and proper nutrition” starting a garden in the backyard of a local house, SVI Mauritius

3. Promotion and communication tools

It is crucial for accomplishing the goal of the programme to make it visible across the movement - both in terms of promoting the opportunity (as this way we communicate the importance of climate justice and sustainable lifestyle to SCI as a movement), as well as implemented projects (through which we disseminate knowledge about existing solutions, which are within reach of SCI activists).

Communication channels used to distribute information about the Programme:

- Permanent presence of the programme in SCI’s website (special tab under Climate for Peace campaign).
- Direct messages to SCI staff and volunteers, who were involved in the Climate for Peace campaign and to beneficiaries of the previous 2 phases of the programme.

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- Information about the new phase being open for applicants sent directly to SCI Announce mailing list.
 - Distributing hard and digital copies of the “Climate for Peace: Inspirations” booklet (summing up past projects implemented through GAIA MicroGrants) through SCI web page, social media and newsletters (mainly the weekly “Climate for Peace Newsletter”).
 - Thematic articles on SCI web page (in the section “Latest News”), E-Zine as well as in the social media.
 - Distributing basic informational materials about the programme goals and outcomes during International Committee Meeting.

4. Application Management

Project assessment procedure

All 15 applications were evaluated by the Selection Team according to the criteria listed in section 1 of this report. Assessment provided by each member of the Selection Team was recorded using an online document accessible to all team members. If the application fit at least one of the funding windows, but was missing some information necessary for informed evaluation, the Selection Team members discussed clarifying questions in an email exchange or during a Skype conversation.

The Programme Facilitator communicated with the applicants until the final assessment was made. If the project was approved, one of the Selection Team members volunteered to be a contact person and took over all communication with the applicant.

Application and Evaluation tools

All projects were submitted using an application form available for download through SCI website. Successful applicants were provided with the Beneficiary Guide, a document which explains the few formalities necessary to prepare information for evaluation of the project. Project organizers are required to confirm that they have read and agree with those requirements. No other formalities are necessary to confirm the funding. The basic document used to evaluate the project is the Evaluation Form.

Both Application and Evaluation Form were updated per recommendations of the Selection Team members. The goal was to simplify them and request information in a way that provides useful

reflection for the project organizers and key information to the GAIA Microgrants team.
All documents are stored in a designated group on SCI's Members Area.



Participants of "reACTION FOR Clime" by VWAN Nigeria with the tree saplings

5. Programme Governance

Composition of the Programme Team

The programme was facilitated by a group of 6 people and followed by a representative of SCI's International Executive Committee (IEC). The roles were as following:

- Programme Facilitator, Selection Team alternate Member - Marta Sykut
- SCI International Secretariat (SCI IS) representative - Sara Turra
- Selection Team - Albina Fatkhutdinova, Silva Huda, Amelie Jacquet
- SCI IEC liaison - Ernest Kovač
- Review coordinator - Ivo Knoepfel

Selection Team members were chosen based on their motivation letters. Priority was given to applicants with previous experience in implementing projects with support of GAIA MicroGrants.

Terms of Reference All roles are performed on voluntary basis. Programme Facilitator is the only member of the team remunerated for their work. Terms of Reference for the roles of Selection Team members and Programme Facilitator remained unchanged from the 2nd phase and were defined in separate documents.

Inside communication The whole team met via Skype approximately once every other month. Selection Team held monthly Skype meetings with participation of the Programme Facilitator.

Cooperation with other seed funds in SCI In 2016 two new seed funds were started in SCI (Disaster Relief Fund and Refugee Fund). Both based their terms of reference and structure of GAIA MicroGrants. Designated members of each fund are in touch regarding further cooperation and consistent communication.

6. Use of Funds

Overview of Programme finances The eight implemented projects were supported with 3365 €. Additionally the programme facilitator received 600 € remuneration for overseeing the programme. All programme funds were donated by Terra21 Foundation, which also remained in permanent contact with the project team and provides feedback to inspire further developments. Administrative costs were covered from SCI's internal funds.

Diversifying the funds In the future phases it is necessary to diversify sources of financing, with SCI internal funds as the first potential contributor to GAIA MicroGrants fund.

7. Summary of Projects

Supporting Frontline Communities In Preparation For Climate Change

reACTION FOR CLIME - Voluntary Workcamp Association Nigeria The community of Permaculture Forest Garden in Gberefu is located between the Atlantic and the Lagos Lagoon and its members are already experiencing climate change impacts: unbearable afternoon heat, frequent ocean surge, coastal erosion, depletion of fish stock. A group of international volunteers gathered there to support the locals in adapting to the changing living conditions. They built a compost toilet, a raised bed for a vegetable garden, started a seed bank, started over 200 seeds of 15 different tree species in the nursery and planted seedlings to serve as a live fence. Through study part participants learned more about climate justice, permaculture and sustainability.

"It was important for the little community living in the Permaculture Forest Garden, because the volunteers brought ideas to the project and energy to participate in the work which can be really demanding", says Femi, the project organizer. The local community not only learned about the importance of preventing deforestation, but at the same time got involved in the tree planting action, which proved, that everyone can be a part of the solution.

Just as one of the participants said: *"Climate change isn't only about reducing carbon emissions, it's also about adaptation, because the impacts will become worse in the future, even if we stop our emissions right away. It is important to act to reach both climate adaptation and mitigation objectives."* This project managed to put both of these concepts into action.

Workcamp with river erosion affected community - SCI Bangladesh The community in Char Janajat (Kaorakandi), Bangladesh is especially affected by river erosion, which is becoming more intense due to climate change (as the river carries more water and experiences higher tides). The aim of the camp was to build awareness about climate change impact and help the community to develop capacity to adapt. Participants supported a tree planting action (because trees can strengthen river banks and help stop the flood of water) and helped an affected family to strengthen their household. They have also repaired an earth road and cleaned debris from flooding. Study part focused on climate change and involved local communities, students and teachers.

Through this project the community improved its capacity to cope with natural disasters such as floods, cyclone and river erosion.

The workcamp was part of a campaign aiming to plant 160 million trees all over Bangladesh (one per each citizen of the country). The local branch is planning to organize more projects with the community of Char Janajat in 2017.

Local youth group initiative for a Community Garden - SCI India

"We believe that when the youth comes together for a common cause, change is inevitable. Our team arises from the simple idea that planting a tree is the easiest and most meaningful way the youth can make a difference for the Earth", says one of SCI India's activists. Over 50 local children got involved in a two-day long action planting almost 550 trees (such as coconut palm, pencil tree, Ashok tree and others). The project was organized on the premises of St. Pius Church campus in Madukkarai, Coimbatore, South India. Some 100 adults joined the children to listen to talks about climate protection, during which a retired local teacher explained the benefits of tree planting (such as creating a better microclimate, protection of soil, growing fruit for food and contribution to mental wellbeing) and an environmental activists shared her knowledge about dangers of climate change and how tree planting can contribute to combating them. The action was a great success and gave the locals appetite for more.

Children committed to water the plants and the local self-government promised to deliver water and natural fertilizer to help the trees thrive. Local youth want to stay active and are hoping that soon they will be able to hold their planning meetings in the shade of the trees which they have planted.

Making Our Food Systems More Sustainable

Permaculture Gardening Project - South African Voluntary Workcamp Association, South Africa

South African Voluntary Workcamp Association can see the potential that gardening has in empowering young people. Especially those who are unemployed can provide at least part of their food by growing it themselves.

This time SAVWA targeted mostly single, unemployed women, but ended up also involving men, who were in need of such skills. During a five day workshop participants learned the basics of gardening, skills and knowledge which they can implement in the backyards of Pretoria, especially because they also received starting plants for their gardens.

Organizers gained support of the Ministry of Agriculture. *"It's not done until we complete all the work",* said Norman, one of the project

participants and there is still more that can be done on the issue of food access for underprivileged communities. SAVWA activists are hoping that in the future local municipality will allow them to use empty lots to develop the project concept. They are planning to focus more on water conservation methods in 2017.

No to food waste! - EstYES Estonia

Do you know what percentage of manmade greenhouse gases come from production, transportation, storage and preparation of food that never gets eaten? 5, 7 or 10%? The answer is 10%! This and many other surprising facts were shared with the international participants of youth camps in Estonia.

Volunteers of EstYES delivered interactive workshops about food waste and ways of preventing it. Apart from the quiz, they also had a very practical exercise of designing dishes that can be prepared with leftover food, which really triggered their creativity and was a perfect illustration of the workshop's goal. Young participants got really engaged in the topic. *"By the end of each workshop we could see that fire in their eyes. Probably because they didn't actually expect that such topic, quite boring-looking on paper, could be so interesting and fascinating in practice, if you look at it in a different way and deal with it interactively"*, said Irina, the project organizer.

A fun and interactive study part was followed by planting greens like spinach, arugula and parsley, thanks to which participants could connect even better with the effort it takes to actually grow food. Participants of the following camps also looked after greens planted during previous workshops. *"They made the effort, they realized that it takes time and patience to grow something and it means that this food (and any food in general) shouldn't be wasted in the future"*, concludes Irina.

Right to adequate shelter and proper nutrition - SVI Mauritius

An international group of volunteers supported a local family in Curepipe, Mauritius in changing a waste disposal site into a vegetable garden and improving their living conditions. Thanks to the involvement of the local people from the village, the project became an opportunity to educate wider public about the role of proper nutrition.

In the second phase of the projects the international group set out on a bicycle tour in the northern part of the island. On their way they informed people about the project and organize games and workshops about gardening and healthy eating.

"Your vibe attracts your tribe", said one of the volunteers when commenting about how relationships with people are the key to a good life. SVI Mauritius volunteers plan to pay regular visits to the family that

they worked with, to see the development of the seed that they planted through this project.

*Weekend
workcamp in
an inclusive
Community
Garden - SCI
Germany*

The Local SCI Group in Leipzig organized a weekend workcamp together with Transition Coburg. Transition Network is all about bringing together groups of people, who want to make plans and create solutions that will help us move away from the dependency on fossil fuels.

The workcamp took place in an inclusive community garden in Coburg and the goal was to finish a fully accessible composting toilet and build more raised garden beds. Thanks to taking part in the project, participants and members of the local community learned more on the subject of sustainability, particularly sustainability of food systems and solutions such as urban community gardening projects.

Thanks to the workcamp, access to the garden and the usability for people with special needs improved a lot. It also helped to get more beds to grow plants and therefore have more possibilities to grow food. SCI Germany Leipzig is hoping to organize a longer, international workcamp at this location in 2017.

*Peace
through
environmenta
l protection -
SCI Sri Lanka*

The goal of this project was to start an herbal garden and nursery on the premises of Government Regional Hospital in Mampitiya, Sri Lanka. Project participants learned about the health benefits of herbs and can now use plants from the garden for their benefit. Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim communities came together in the project developed in cooperation with the local municipality of Kandy District.

Through the work part participants constructed the garden frame and started initial gardening work. Study part focused on "The Role of Community in Adaptation to Climate Change Crisis" and participants dived into details of the possible practical solutions which could be carried out on individual and collective basis with special reference to health and hygiene. Even the students, who initially knew practically nothing about climate change and seemed uninterested, completely changed their minds after an interactive workshop and a documentary movie screening organized by a long-time SCI Sri Lanka volunteers who today serves as a Research Officer at the Central Agricultural Research Institute of Sri Lanka.

The director of the hospital was quite impressed with the project and said: *"I have never come across an organization like SCI-SL throughout my life. They bring knowledge, people and money, mix up well with the villagers without caring for any social disparities such as class, creed or race and work*

hard in the field, eat simple food prepared by themselves." Both the hospital and SCI Sri Lanka are looking forward to continuing the cooperation.

8. About SCI and Terra21 Foundation

Service Civil International

SCI is a volunteer organisation dedicated to promoting a culture of peace by organising international voluntary projects for people of all ages and backgrounds. The organisation consists of 45 branches and an ever growing number of partner organisations. Living and working together with people of different backgrounds helps volunteers to break down barriers and prejudices. It allows them to experience a world of mutual respect and understanding. In this sense, volunteering can be seen as a way of life - a demonstration of the possible reality of a peaceful and cooperative world.

Since 2013 SCI is running an international Climate for Peace programme (formerly Create a Climate for Peace Campaign), which aims to mainstream awareness and action for climate justice and sustainable lifestyle across all branches, workcamps and other activities organized by SCI. GAIA MicroGrants programme is an essential part of this initiative.

Terra21 Foundation

Terra21 Foundation's mission is to support civil society's role in the following areas:

- Peacebuilding and post-conflict reconciliation (global focus);
- Strengthening local communities' resilience to climate change (focus on South and South-East Asia).

Our partners are typically local organisations (often part of international networks), because Terra21 believes that local organisations are best positioned to develop sustainable solutions to conflict and to the consequences of changing weather patterns. Our mission is to support them by providing funding, strategy development support and showcasing their work to other donors. More information can be found in our [annual reports](#): www.fondateurs.ch/en/foundations/terra21-foundation/.