

GAIA MICROGRANTS PROGRAMME

FINAL REPORT FOR PHASE 4

April-December 2017



Participants of "Mangroves for Java" project, GREAT Indonesia

About GAIA MicroGrants

GAIA MicroGrants 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 57 grassroots projects were supported through the programme, out of which nine were implemented in 2017.

The 4th phase of GAIA MicroGrants took place between April and December 2017. The purpose of this report is to summarize main facts and learning points defined throughout 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. All supported projects should fit one of the two funding windows:

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 rain patterns, intensifying storms and increasing likelihood of extreme weather events.

If those threats are identified in time, local communities can undertake efforts to better prepare for the climate of the future. We can plant trees to prevent coastal erosion or improve local micro-climate. Young people can get involved in adaptation projects and spread the word in their communities through educational activities. Workcamps can target communities experiencing climate change impacts and help locals prepare for the new normal. At SCI we believe that volunteers can play an important role in this process.

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.

Application management

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. Eleven submitted applications were evaluated by the Selection Team according to universal criteria. Assessment provided by each member of the Selection Team was recorded using an online document accessible to all team members.

Assessment criteria followed by the selection team

Applications were evaluated according to the following criteria:

- 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 "Live Differently" helping at an ecological farm, Zavod Voluntariat Slovenia

Successful implementation of 9 projects with total budget of €3,532

During the 4th phase of GAIA MicroGrants 11 project applications were submitted for assessment by SCI branches and partners. Ten project proposals were approved, out of which nine 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 €3,532 was awarded to the nine projects, out of which six were implemented by SCI branches and partners in the South and three by European branches.

List of implemented projects

*Supporting
Frontline
Communities In
Preparation For
Climate Change*

- Mangroves for Java, GREAT Indonesia (P)*
- Teenage Eco Messengers, SCI Sri Lanka (B)*
- Sustainable Future for Our Valley, SCI Italy (B)
- Seminar of GOAL 2017, SCI Bangladesh (B)

*Making Our
Food Systems
More
Sustainable*

- Community Permacultural Gardening Project, SAVWA South Africa(P)
- Batuloceng Food Garden, GREAT Indonesia (P)
- Make and Take Your Own Compost, SCI Hungary (B)
- Organic Farming for Sustainable Living, SCI Malaysia (B)
- Live Differently, Zavod Voluntariat Slovenia (B)

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

*Reasons for not
approving some
of the
submitted
applications*

The vast majority of projects submitted for consideration of the Selection Team were approved for funding. In most cases the Selection Team requested additional information in order to ensure that the team organizing the project considered all essential elements of project planning and follow up. In one case this additional inquiry was completed over Skype. The reason projects were not supported were logistical - dates kept being pushed back, until they were not covered by the time limitations of the GAIA MicroGrants Programme.

*Special priority
given to
applicants from
the South*

In the three most recent phases, GAIA MicroGrants Programme managed to put special emphasis on supporting applications from SCI's Southern branches and partners (six out of nine successful projects in phase 4). There are many inspiring and influential projects taking place in areas of the world that are on the frontlines of climate change impacts.

It is also interesting to note that projects taking place in Europe (where SCI has the strongest presence in the Global North) to a large extent focus on much needed educational activities and experiencing alternative lifestyles. In the South more emphasis is usually put on hands-on experience, where strong educational element is always present in the background.



Participants of "Organic Farming for Sustainable Living" project in a nursery, SCI Malaysia

2. Programme outcomes and management

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 more present in SCI organizational awareness. Activists and branches are becoming more aware of their impact on climate change. One example is the Travel Policy introduced by the organizers of the PATH project. Through it, project participants were encouraged to estimate the carbon footprint of their travels and consider ways of offsetting them (one of the suggested ways was making a donation towards GAIA MicroGrants Programme). While this strategy does not eliminate the negative impact of traveling, it was successful in spreading awareness of it among participants of SCI projects.

Project statistic

Over the past 4 years we saw almost 60 projects implemented by SCI activists on 4 continents. The 4th phase of the programme provided support to 9 projects in 8 countries. Six of the projects were organized by SCI activists in the Global South.

Six projects were organized as workcamps with three more as trainings/workshops. All relied on local volunteer support with five projects specifically incorporating international volunteers in their efforts. Every project had an educational component and all but one 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 varied from project to project but included learning about earthworm composting, planting trees, and reviving traditional planting methods. You can find project summaries below.

Application and Evaluation tools

All projects were submitted using an application form available for download through SCI website. Successful applicants were provided with 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 the 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.

Supporting documents

In an effort to support project organizers in developing their ideas, the GAIA MicroGrants team developed a series of supporting documents, that were made available through SCI's web page and promoted through various communication channels. In some cases links to specific documents were shared with applicants as part of feedback to their initial applications.

- ["Tips submitting a quality application to GAIA MicroGrants"](#) - developed based on past experiences of the Selection Team members, this document provides four simple pieces of advice for Applicants;
- ["Supporting local communities in adaptation to climate change impacts"](#) - for those looking to understand the concept of climate change adaptation better and learn what possible projects, this document gathers information in an approachable format;

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- [“What it means that a food system is sustainable”](#) - document provides a wider context, project examples and ideas linked to “Making Our Food Systems More Sustainable” funding window;
 - [“How to lower the environmental impact of your GAIA MicroGrants project”](#) - again rooted in experiences and inputs gathered by the Selection Team over several years, the role of this document is to inspire project organizers to consider environmentally friendly solutions that they can apply in their projects;
 - [“How to take good photos of your project and the volunteers”](#) - because photos are one of the most effective ways to convey the atmosphere and content of each projects, this document collects some practical advice based of previous project examples.

*Topics for
ongoing and
future
consideration*

During this phase the project team gave a considerable amount of thought to requesting a working group status for the GAIA MicroGrants team. However in the end it was determined that the team needs to expand and gain more financial sustainability before taking on the additional obligations that come along with acquiring a working group status. It would be beneficial in terms of having a stronger voice in SCI forum, but more preparations are necessary.

One of the key needs and expectations defined by the team members is a need for more opportunities for in-person meetings and training. This is understandable, especially because since its beginning, GAIA MicroGrants Programme has been facilitated fully online. Time availability of team members and cost of such meetings remains a challenge, but such meetings would most probably help improve the dynamics and quality of the programme management.

Another need that remains strong over the years is better communication and promotion of the projects supported by GAIA MicroGrants. For now the main hope is that soon one of the team members can move into a role focused solely on these tasks.



Participants of the "Community Permacultural Gardening Project" at work, SAVWA South Africa

3. Programme Governance

*Composition
of the
Programme
Team*

The programme was facilitated by a group of six 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 - Lea Cikos
- Selection Team - Albina Fatkhutdinova, Silva Huda, Amelie Jacquet
- SCI IEC Liaison - Jackie Purves
- Review coordinator - Ivo Knoepfel

The Selection Team remained the same as in the previous phase in an effort to provide continuity and maintain high standard in development of this young and volunteer dependant programme.

*Terms of
Reference*

All roles are performed on voluntary basis. Terms of Reference for the roles of Selection Team members and Programme Facilitator remained unchanged since the 2nd phase and were defined in separate documents.

*Internal
communica-
tion*

The whole team met via Skype approximately once every other month, except for the final two months, when personal changes led to more erratic communication. The Selection Team held monthly Skype meetings with participation of the Programme Facilitator.

4. Use of Funds

Overview of Programme finances

The nine implemented projects were supported with €3,532. Terra21 Foundation matched financial contribution from SCI 3:1, which adds to €2,650. Ivo Knoepfel from Terra 21 Foundation remained in contact with the project team and provided feedback to inspire further developments. Administrative costs were covered from SCI's internal funds.

5. Summary of Projects

Mangroves for Java - GREAT Indonesia



Mangroves are crucial in protecting the coastal areas from erosion and the settlements nearby from flooding. That is why GREAT Indonesia organized a program called “Mangroves for Java”, which aimed to raise the awareness of volunteers and local people in Pekalongan coastal area, in Central Java, on the role of mangroves in mitigating the effects of climate change. The program took place from July 20 until August 2 and was implemented in Pekalongan mangrove park area and Jeruksari village. The volunteers harvested mangrove fruits (propagule) and seeded them in polybags. They planted 2600 mangroves and even learned how to make mangrove syrup. The syrup they produced they sold it so that they could raise the funds available for buying mangrove trees. Moreover, the participants did a cleanup action on the beach and in the village. In order to have a more sustainable impact, the volunteers visited SPM IT Assalaam Pekalongan where they had an awareness raising session on garbage management and invited the students to write their pledges for stopping climate change. This project was made possible through the active participation of 5 international volunteers and 20 local volunteers.

Sustainable Future for Our Valley - SCI Italy



SCI Italy, together with the local organisation “Amici della Val Codera - Friends of Val Codera ONLUS” organised a workcamp from July 28 to August 6, 2017 in the remote village of Codera, in Rhaetian Alps. The village is reachable only by foot and is 2 hours from the valley and therefore still an unspoilt place. The aim of the workcamp was to rediscover an ancient mountain agricultural tradition and to share personal views about sustainable environmental development. The workcamp involved 9 volunteers from different countries and local inhabitants from Codera. Volunteers worked on various practical tasks together with the villagers including restoration and cleaning of abandoned wild fields, cleaning of ancient local footpaths, and renovation of dry walls. They also helped with gardening and learned how planting traditional plants is very important to restore soil integrity and efficiency and to face climate changes that are causing a lot of problems (including dryness and violent sudden storms) to this precious and fragile ecosystem. Participants also learned a lot through exchanges with the local community (which welcomed an international group of volunteers for the first time) and by visiting the traditional cultural museum.

Teenage Eco Messengers - SCI Sri Lanka



Teenage Eco Messengers - SCI Sri Lanka

The main objective of this project of SCI Sri Lanka was to motivate and empower students (13-16 years old) to act as Teenage Eco Messengers. The tasks of the Teenage Eco Messengers would be to take leadership roles to initiate activities with their schools and to build awareness on climate change among the students. The training program for students consisted of three steps: 1) a one-day workshop to introduce the project and to explain their tasks at school and at home; 2) a workcamp to develop practical skills and to provide the opportunity to try the camping life; and 3) a field visit to a well-maintained Agriculture farm which would widen their awareness on all aspects of agro-farming. The project also provided educational seminars for teachers (more than 30) and parents of the students. A special feature of the project is the systematically designed model home garden with demonstration plots for soil and water conservation, composting methods, medicinal herbs etc. By the end of the project, a pool of 40 Teenage Eco Messengers from seven schools was trained and made ready to spread climate change awareness.

Seminar on GOAL 2017 - SCI Bangladesh



SCI Bangladesh and other like minded organizations as a part of project “GOAL 2016: 160 Million Tree Plantation” have planted approximately 40 million trees all over Bangladesh. To achieve the target of 160 million trees, SCI Bangladesh initiated several seminars and workshops to campaign on the impact of trees in climate change mitigation. The two-day seminar and tree plantation was organized July 28-29, 2017 at Peace Center, Khalia, Rajoir, Madaripur to strengthen the capacity of affected vulnerable community. It also had a positive impact on SCI’s volunteers as well as members of other voluntary organizations on the causes and consequences of climate change and the impact of tree plantation in climate change mitigation. A total of 45 participants took part in the seminar and a large number of children from the community participated in the tree distribution and plantation program. During the discussion, participants presented their thoughts and understanding on the consequences of climate change and impacts of tree plantation in climate change mitigation.

Community Permacultural Gardening Project - South African Voluntary Workcamp Association, South Africa



The project took place in Mabopane, a disadvantaged area in Pretoria, South Africa, from the October 2-15, 2017. It was organised by SAVWA (South Africa Volunteer Work Camp Association) and aimed to encourage young people and households to lower their impact on environment and practise eco-friendly gardening. The idea was also to give them tools and skills to grow their own food and thus to have access to nutritional fresh products at a low cost (most participants were unemployed or low income earners). The project brought together twelve volunteers from the local area (Laudium and Mabopane) and one international volunteer from Taiwan. A few additional people from the local community also took part. The project involved mainly practical activities. Participants worked on preparing the land, planting vegetables and were trained on what to plant and how, and how long it takes until the harvest. All participants got a packet of seeds to take home and plant for themselves after the workcamp. An educational workshop was also organised, which aimed to discuss preparation of meals with vegetables grown in the garden.

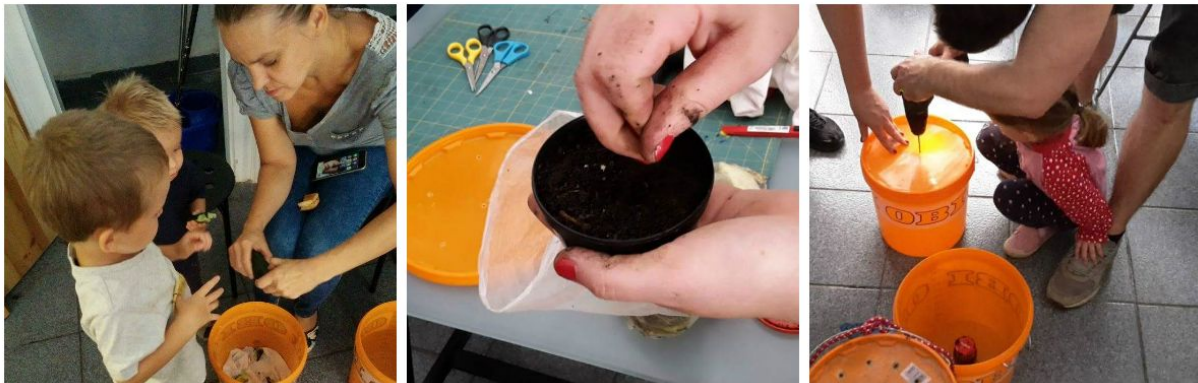
Batuloceng Food Garden - GREAT Indonesia



Batuloceng Food Garden - GREAT Indonesia

Batuloceng Food Garden is a project implemented by the organization GREAT Indonesia during July and August 2017. The aim of the project was to support the local community in the village of Batuloceng to create a garden, accessible to everybody, to grow their own organic food. The organizers were supported by a total of 20 people, including local youth, international volunteers and moms from Batuloceng. The idea behind the project was to create a food system which would help the people to fight food insecurity. This required a project cycle which would ensure a sustainable outcome. First, the participants got a training in July on the topic of “Growing an Organic Garden in Batuloceng village” where they learned how to make organic fertilizer from the local natural resources. Since July, more than 1000 vegetable and herb seeds have been planted by the local people and the international volunteers. After four weeks the participants harvested some of the vegetables and put them into use after getting new cooking skills from the workshop on “Cooking Healthy Food”. Finally, the participants prepared a seed house, where they spread lettuce, pakchoy, kangkung, spinach, naybay, rosemary, basil and tomato seeds for the next farming season. This project is likely to be sustainable due to the ownership of the project by the local people as well as the fact that GREAT Indonesia is planning to continue its voluntary projects in the area.

Make and Take Your Own Compost - Utilapu Hungary



Volunteers from Utilapu (SCI Hungary) organised 4 earthworm composting workshops between May and June 2017. Since materials were leftover, they organised a second round in Autumn. All workshops were held in the heart of Budapest, at the Open Doors office. Each workshop was open to all, and participants could join for a single session and learn about composting, worms, and how to care for them in order to have a good compost but also as living creatures. Dozens of families who were directly involved in the workshops started to compost at home, and thus became more sustainable in their daily lives. They discovered an alternative way to deal with organic waste and therefore to

lower their carbon footprint. The project reached hundreds of people through social networks where it was promoted. One person noted, "If participants take care of the worms well, they will have a longtime relationship with these magnificent creatures".

Organic Farming for Sustainable Living - SCI Malaysia



SCI Malaysia organized a workcamp around the topic of "Organic Farming for Sustainable Living" from April 23-30, 2017. The workcamp took place in cooperation with a local farmer in the area of Cameron Highlands. The aim of the workcamp was to promote a more sustainable living, namely by eating food which is also sustainably produced. The volunteers got the chance to learn more about the benefits of organic food from the environmental and health aspects. They also learned practical skills, such as making compost, preparing herb beds using pallets, planting crops, harvesting and weeding. After the workcamp, many of the volunteers pledged to be vegetarian at least for a week and created a group chat where they can keep in touch with each other, share information and discuss ideas on how to follow-up with similar initiatives.

Live Differently - Zavod Voluntairat Slovenia



Live Differently - Zavod Voluntairat Slovenia

Seven active local and international SCI volunteers had the chance to spend one weekend on a permaculture farm. The project took place in Domačija Pr'Nebavec, where inhabitants have decided to transform an old "traditional farm" into a permaculture one, and to embrace the simplest way of life possible, taking only what is absolutely necessary and trying to live in harmony with nature. Volunteers learned the principles of the community and permaculture basics by helping in cooking, cleaning, weeding, planting and harvesting. Volunteers learned how to produce and use compost, how to make natural soaps, they experienced new ways to save water, and they tried different techniques to reuse waste in order to reduce trash production as much as possible. Additionally, there were two workshops about forest gardening and permaculture history and rules. Participants also learned new recipes to prepare vegan and vegetarian meals and they learned how to produce all the food needed using only products coming from the community itself or from the ecofarms nearby. All participants were pleasantly surprised to realize how easy it is to live differently with much less than we are used to do.

6. 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/.