

GAIA MICROGRANTS PROGRAMME

FINAL REPORT FOR PHASE 5

May 2018-January 2019



Participants of "Awareness of Global Warming Amongst Children" project, SCI India

About GAIA MicroGrants

GAIA MicroGrants Programme encourages SCI activists to promote climate justice and sustainable living (through deeds and words). It does so by providing grants of up to 500€ for organizing grassroots activities and by highlighting examples of model projects. These have to be in line with SCI Mission and guided by SCI core values: Volunteering, Non-Violence, Respect for Human Rights, International Solidarity, Respect for the Environment, Inclusion, Empowerment and Cooperation. So far 69 grassroots projects were supported through the programme, out of which twelve were implemented in 2018.

The 5th phase of GAIA MicroGrants took place between May 2018 and January 2019. 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 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

General information

During the 5th phase of GAIA MicroGrants 14 project applications were submitted by SCI branches and partners for assessment. Twelve project proposals were approved and successfully implemented. The application process was open to SCI branches, partners, working groups and contacts.¹

Fourteen submitted applications were evaluated by the Selection Team according to assessment 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

In order to be successful, project proposal had to:

- Contain a completed application form and fit one of the two funding areas:
 - *Supporting frontline communities in preparation for climate change;*
 - *Making our food systems more sustainable.*²
- Combine action and education on sustainable living and/or climate justice.
- Provide practical benefits to the local community.
- Have a plan for follow up activities.



Participants of “Awareness of Global Warming Among Children” project during tree planting action, SCI India

¹ Contact organizations were considered eligible if they were vouched for by a branch or working group.

² These funding areas and their relevance to SCI’s mission were explained in detail in the Final Report for Phase 4, which can be downloaded from SCI’s web page. Even more elaborate information is provided in GAIA MicroGrants supporting documents: “*Supporting local communities in adaptation to climate change impacts*” and “*What it means that a food system is sustainable*” (also available for downloading from SCI’s web page).

As in the past three phases, 75% of available funding was designated for projects organized by SCI branches and partners in the Global South. Out of twelve implemented projects, eight were organized by SCI branches and partners in the South and four by European branches.

Reasons for not approving two projects

One of the projects which was not assessed positively failed to provide answers to clarifying questions sent by the Programme Coordinator. The other project did not fit either of the two funding windows.



Participants of "Garden To Bee" project building pollinator hotels, PVN Albania

List of implemented projects

Supporting Frontline Communities In Preparation For Climate Change

- **Awareness of Global Warming Amongst Children, SCI India**

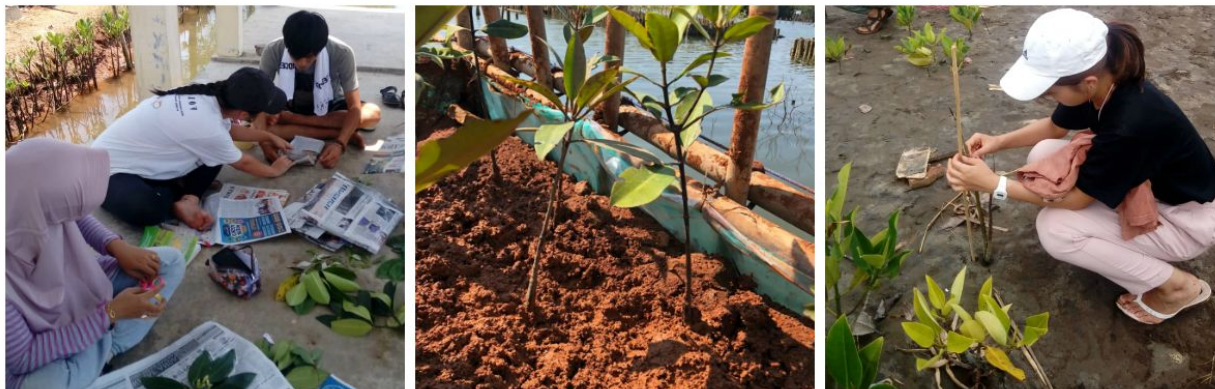
Activists in SCI India organized a field trip and workshops with children from a local orphanage and encourage them to become climate protectors.

- **Producing Compost Using Organic Waste for Adaptation to Climate Change Impacts, SCI Sri Lanka**

SCI volunteers, along with school children and their families learned about climate change and what each one of us can do to protect the climate. As practical aspect they started composting in a local food garden.

- **Mangrove to Stop Climate Change, GREAT Indonesia**

Another year in a row volunteers in Indonesia planted thousands of mangrove trees to restore marine ecosystems and protect coastal communities from impacts of erosion which is intensified by climate change.



Participants of "Mangrove to Stop Climate Change" project planting trees, GREAT Indonesia

*Making Our
Food Systems
More
Sustainable*

- **Water Harvesting Project, SAVWA South Africa**

Participants learned to construct water efficient irrigation systems in their backyard gardens - an essential improvement in a drought ridden area.

- **Garden to Bee, PVN Albania**

Youth constructed special houses for pollinators and learned about their role in the food- and ecosystem and threats posed to bees by pesticides and climate change.

- **Seeds of Future in the Alps, SCI Italy**

Volunteers strived to safeguard local land and ecosystems in two Italian valleys through promotion of ecotourism and food sovereignty.

- **Backyard Gardening for Sustainable Nutrition and Food Sovereignty, SURCOD Malawi (SCI contact)**

Organizers of the project aim to empower rural communities and support them in becoming self-sustained through creation of year-round backyard gardens.

- **From Food Waste to Taste, Zavod Voluntariat Slovenia**

Participants harvested tomatoes and other fruit that would have otherwise gone to waste and made salsa, which was then donated to local charitable organizations.

- **Workcamp With River Erosion Affected Community, SCI Bangladesh**

Volunteers participating in this project planted trees alongside with the locals to provide better protection against river flooding more often due to climate change.

- **Planting Edible Forest, GAIA Kosovo**

A newly established permacultural village in Kosovo expanded its diversity by starting a forest-style food garden.

- **Community Green Roof, SCI India**

Inhabitants of three orphanages and three elderly person homes participated in creating food gardens on the roofs of their institutions, helping them to achieve more independence from charitable donations.

- **Computer Lab Project, SAVWA South Africa**

Volunteers from SAVWA Have been working to promote backyard gardening in the outskirts of Pretoria for year. Through this project they started an information center for experienced and prospective farmers.

Overlaps between funding windows

In Phase 5 the number of projects in the two funding windows was not as balanced as in the past phases. This is because the programme team saw many projects that fit both funding categories at the same time. They remained assigned to the funding window indicated by the project organizers, but as a result division of funds between the two funding windows was less strict than in the past.



Participants of "From Food Waste to Taste" harvesting tomatoes and cooking salsa, Zavod Voluntariat (SCI Slovenia)

2. Programme outcomes and management

Application management All incoming applications were handled by a team of four volunteers (three members of the Selection Team and one Programme Coordinator). The programme is designed by SCI activists for SCI activists and is meant to accommodate applicants without prior experience in applying for funds and provide them with a learning opportunity. This is why, if any information in the application was missing, the programme team asked additional questions. The aim was always to make sure that the team organizing the project considered all essential elements of project planning and follow up. Additional questions sent to applicants were defined in email exchanges or during Skype calls by the Selection Team members and then forwarded to the applicant by the Programme Coordinator.

Project statistic Over the past 5 years the team saw 69 projects implemented by SCI activists on 4 continents. The 5th phase of the programme provided support to 12 projects in 10 countries: Albania, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kosovo, Malawi, Slovenia, South Africa, Sri Lanka.

Popularity of food sovereignty Phase 5 saw an increased diversity in topics of submitted applications, ranging from pollinators protection and combating food waste, to innovative water harvesting and mitigation of coastal or erosion. Still, activities related to food sovereignty and various aspects of gardening remain the most popular and increase in their creativity.



Participants of the "Planting an Edible Forest in Kosovo" at work, GAIA Kosovo

Participation of children and youth An aspect that was evaluated as crucial and motivating by several of the project teams (SCI India, SAVWA South Africa, PVN Albania, SCI Sri Lanka, SCI Bangladesh) was participation of children and youth in the activities. In some cases they were directly targeted by the project activities (by holding them in schools or orphanages), but in others young people joined general activities. Their presence was often seen as energizing and giving a new meaning to other project participants or organizers themselves.

Involving experts and officials Another practice that was important to the success of some of the projects (SAVWA South Africa, SCI Sri Lanka, SCI Bangladesh) and organizers being satisfied with the outcome was involvement of external experts on a subject or representatives of local or national governments.

Projects format Eight of the twelve projects were organized in a format of local or international workcamps, sometimes defined as trainings or workshops. All relied on local volunteer work to address local needs. Every project had an educational component and all but one incorporated practical, hands-on work (Computer Lab Project in South Africa was specifically meant to create an information resource for an expanding network of gardens).

Some numbers In total approximately 1200 people were directly involved in the various project activities. Over 15 gardens were established throughout the projects (including one forest garden), and close to 3500 trees were planted. Volunteers canned 50 jars of salsa made with rescued tomatoes and in all cases expressed plans for future involvement with the communities.



Examples of planters and a workshop during the “Backyard Gardening for Sustainable Nutrition and Food Security” project, SURCOD Malawi

Plans and hopes for Phase 6

In Phase 6 of GAIA MicroGrants Programme, that will span out over 2019, the Team is hoping to support at least 10 projects with the total budget of 5000 euro. As always, the hope is to involve branches and partners who have not applied for the funds before. Some of the key strategies of achieving this goal is by making the opportunity visible during all SCI meetings. Because submitted activities are often designed as workcamps, SCI Placement Officers play an important role in broadening the reach in geographical terms.

Increasing visibility of projects

Another goal, always present in the background of the team's work is to increase visibility of the most inspiring project examples. Social media and SCI newsletters already help that happen, but there is still a lot of potential. The team is planning to strongly encourage applicants to submit their projects to the Pierre Ceresole Awards 2019.

Physical Team meeting

Other aspirations include organizing a physical meeting for the team members. The programme team has never met in person before, but there are serious reasons to believe that such meeting could really accelerate the development of the Programme. Hopefully we will also see more collaboration with the other two of SCI's seed funds as well.



Pupils and adults "Producing Compost Using Organic Waste for Adaptation to Climate Change Impacts", SCI Sri Lanka

3. Programme Governance

Composition of the Programme Team

The programme was facilitated by a group of five people. The roles were:

- Programme Facilitator - **Marta Sykut**
- Selection Team - **Silva Huda, Amelie Jaquet, Albina Rybakova**
- Review coordinator - **Ivo Knoepfel**

All activities were followed by a representative of SCI's International Executive Committee - **Jackie Purves** - and a representative of the International Secretariat - **Sara Turra**.

In October 2018 the Team was joined by **Larissa Soledad Fankhauser**, a long-term volunteer at the International Secretariat, who supported the Team in the areas of promotion and fundraising.

Since its beginnings, every year GAIA MicroGrants receives support of SCI's Financial Officer, **Ossi Lemstrom**, who manages the programme's finances and overall financial reporting.

The Selection Team remained the same as in the previous two phases in an effort to provide continuity and maintain high standard in development of this volunteer dependant programme. However the Team is always open to new volunteers.

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 (available for downloading from SCI's Members Area).

Internal communication

The whole Programme Team met via Skype in the beginning and end of the 5th Phase. The Selection Team held monthly Skype meetings with participation of the Programme Facilitator and later on the long-term International Secretariat volunteer. Email exchanges and Google Documents remain the main tools in managing the programme.

Overview of Programme finances

The twelve implemented projects were supported with the total of €5,250. Terra21 Foundation matched financial contribution from SCI 4:1. 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.



Participants of the "Water Harvesting Project" preparing water capture and irrigation system, SAVWA South Africa

4. About SCI and Terra21 Foundation

Service Civil International

SCI's vision is a world of peace; social justice and sustainable development, where all people live together with mutual respect and without recourse to any form of violence to solve conflict. 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 43 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.

GAIA MicroGrants programme is an essential part of SCI's mission, vision and strategy towards achieving them.

Web page:

<https://www.sci.ngo/what-we-do/climate-justice-campaign/new-gaia-microgrants-programme>

E-mail: microgrants@sci.ngo

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 Foundation 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 Terra21 Foundation's annual reports:

www.fondateurs.ch/en/foundations/terra21-foundation/.