



**STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE JOSEPH HEW,
MINISTER FOR COMMERCE, PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE**

**TO THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS**

National Community Enhancement (NiCE) Summer Project 2019

Mr. Speaker,

Honourable Members,

I want to provide members of this Honourable House with an update on the National Community Enhancement (NiCE) summer project, which commenced July 08 and ended last Friday, July 19.

During the course of the two-week programme, four hundred and eight-six **(486)** unemployed Caymanians and spouses of Caymanians were engaged in full time paid employment.

Mr. Speaker, of the four hundred and eighty-six **(486)** NiCE participants this summer, the breakdown by districts was:

Districts	Participants
George Town	186
West Bay	138
Bodden Town	76
North Side	48
East End	38

There were:

- Two Hundred and Ten **(210)** participants - Age 18 to 35;
- Two Hundred and Fourteen **(214)** participants- Age 36 to 60; and
- Sixty Two **(62)** participants - Over age 61.

Further **Mr. Speaker**, two hundred and ninety-six **(296)** males and one hundred and ninety **(190)** females formed this summer's cohort.

This year, we emphasised to participants the importance of registering with Workforce Opportunities Residency Cayman and taking advantage of the services, and training and development programmes offered as another step toward gaining full-time employment.

Projects completed by NiCE crews in all districts included the clearing of shoulder verges and vegetation along main and side roads, cleaning of parks and cemeteries, and general roadside litter collection. There was also the cleaning of beaches and clearing of beach access.

Some highlights in the Eastern districts were cleaning of the Old Man Bay Cemetery, eight beach accesses and clearing of the main roads throughout the districts.

At the landfill, crews chipped and sprayed equipment and trucks as part of the Department of Environmental Health's (DEH) rust prevention programme. They were also responsible for the running

and installation of a new water supply line to replace the initial line which was damaged due to heavy traffic in the area where it was originally located.

Also, the manual support provided by the NiCE participants at the landfill assisted DEH to clear the backlog of processing recyclables.

Mr. Speaker, this year, in addition to cleaning and beautifying specified areas across the country, special focus was placed on the clearing of areas heavily affected by sargassum. These included South Sound, Boat Launch and Boardwalk areas, the Frank Sound Boat Launch Ramp and Coe Wood Beach in Bodden Town.

Over the period of the NiCE project, the crew cleared up over two hundred **(200)** tonnes of sargassum.

Mr. Speaker, while the crews were able to clear and maintain the beaches free of sargassum on some occasions, we recognise that this is an ongoing situation that will require continuous effort.

Consequently, the Ministry of CPI has decided to extend the NiCE programme for a further two-weeks as part of a pilot programme which will involve a small crew with additional equipment. This approach will assist us to better assess the resources required to manage the problem.

The Caribbean region and indeed the Cayman Islands have seen a significant increase in sargassum influxes. And in light of this situation, there is a need for proactive and collaborative approach as there is no simple solution to the management of this occurrence.

Mr. Speaker, Cabinet directed that we form a Task Force to develop a National Sargassum Plan. The Task Force, led by the Ministry of Commerce, Planning and Infrastructure, is working closely with the Ministry of Health, Environment, Culture and Housing; Ministry of Tourism and Transport; Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Land; and several other departments and agencies to address this growing phenomenon.

The Task Force is currently gathering and reviewing information from across the region and elsewhere, establishing regional partnerships to share best practices and identifying strategies to manage the sargassum.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I wish to express my gratitude to persons within the Ministries, departments and agencies who worked to deliver the 2019 NiCE summer project – (Ministry of Health, Environment, Culture and Housing; Ministry of Employment and Border Control; Ministry of Finance; Public Works Department; National Roads Authority; Department of Environmental Health; the Royal Cayman Islands Police; Health Services Authority; Workforce, Opportunities, Residency, Cayman; Government Information Services and the Portfolio of the Civil Service).

Also, the Justice of the Peace Association and the Royal Bank of Canada for their continued assistance to the programme.

And, of course, I am thankful to all the participants who contributed to the success of this summer project.

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Honourable Joseph Hew
Minister of Commerce, Planning and Infrastructure
25th July 2019