



PR#378-22

PRESS RELEASE

Vanilla Cultivation Pilot Project Closes

Belmopan. December 21, 2022.

The Ministry of Investment held the closing ceremony for Belize's Vanilla Cultivation Pilot Project at the Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College (CEMJC) in the Corozal District.

In attendance were Mr. Lincoln Blake, Director of the Investment Policy & Compliance Unit in the Ministry of Investment; Mrs. Thea Garcia, President of the National Women's Commission; Mr. Hugo Gonzalez, Dean of CEMJC; and Mr. Salucio Chiac, course instructor.

The main objective of the project was to provide hands-on training for women and young persons in the propagation and establishment of vanilla vines. This included floral biology, hand pollination, harvesting and curing of vanilla. With this new knowledge, women in the area will be able to supply vanilla beans from their backyards and forested areas to buyers who pay over US\$200 per kg of the cured product.

The project consisted of eight practical sessions. A total of 29 participants completed the training and were given starter packages to establish their vanilla plots. This cohort of trainees included students and teachers from CEMJC as well as women currently engaged in the sugarcane industry.

The ministry partnered with the National Women's Commission, Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College, BELTRAIDE, the Belize Cooperatives Department, the Resilient Rural Belize Programme, and Belize Agroforestry Development Services Ltd. The ministry extends its appreciation to all partners for assisting in successfully executing this first-of-its-kind project. The aim is to implement similar projects in other districts.

Ends

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