

**Country for the project**

Grenada, West Indies

Degree programme

Design and Product Realisation

Bachelor's thesis about biogas production from algae in Grenada

Before departure

I wanted to study abroad to learn more about working in other cultures and to better understand different parts of the world. I heard about Field Studies from friends who started looking around, and I became interested and found an advertisement for this project on the "KTH exjobbportal". Multiple students from KTH had previously worked with the same company and conducted projects in Grenada, so I read their travel reports and looked at their projects to prepare for my field study.

I didn't have many expectations about the country, as I hadn't heard about Grenada before. The combination of being a "developing country" and having a large tourism economy with tourists expecting luxury felt very interesting to explore. I was excited to be there for a long time and visit the country outside the "tourist bubble".

In terms of actual preparations, there wasn't much to do. The official language was English, which made it easy to communicate with everyone. No visa was needed. Vaccinations were not mandatory, but I took the recommended ones, Hepatitis A and B and Typhoid.

Upon arrival

We arrived on March 20th and returned home on May 22nd. We started our project with literature studies before we traveled and continued with literature studies and site visits during our stay in Grenada.

Everyone has been very helpful, from the moment we arrived until the end of our stay, and we received a very warm welcome when we arrived. Although there was no official reception for us, everyone we interacted with was very welcoming. The person we rented the house from drove us around the local area and gave us tips and recommendations. We were invited to a welcome dinner by our contact person and others involved in the project. They also spent an entire day with us, showing us around the island, pointing out relevant sites for the project, and introducing us to their contacts.

Financials

We managed to find affordable accommodation, but aside from that, everything was generally more expensive than in Sweden. Food was significantly pricier than I had anticipated. The high costs were due to Grenada being a remote island with high import taxes and limited local production. To keep costs down, we cooked a lot at home and chose foods that locals commonly eat. For example, a chocolate bar could cost 70 SEK, while bananas are cheaper than in Sweden. Getting around the country was generally easy and cheap, as a bus ride cost 8 SEK.

I saved some money before the trip to have more freedom and to be able to do a lot of sightseeing. I enjoy sightseeing and eating out, so I spent a bit of money. However, I could have managed with only student loans and Field Studies Funds.

Accommodation

Because we were working with a company that had KTH students in Grenada before, everything with our accommodation went very smoothly. The company recommended a place where past students had stayed, which made us feel secure. Six people from KTH went this year, so we contacted each other during the booking process and chose to book accommodation together. It was a lot of fun traveling and living together, and it also made our accommodation very affordable. The house was well-located, close to a grocery store and the sea, and was quite clean so we were comfortable.



Project

Our project involved designing a combined heat and power plant and a biogas plant that breaks down Sargassum algae. To accomplish this, we conducted literature studies and visited existing biogas facilities on the island. We greatly benefited from the fact that students from KTH had been in Grenada before and from the company we worked with, as they had already established many contacts. We did not present our results locally but instead presented them to the company we were working with. We also shared information about the project with multiple locals. For example, we were invited to a cocktail party by one of our contacts where we mingled and talked about our work. Everyone was very interested to hear about our findings, which was fun.



Left picture is the beach at the eastern side of the island, showing the Sargassum Algae. The right picture is a small-scale biogas plant.

Country

Grenada is a very beautiful country located in the Caribbean. There are many small houses, beautiful beaches, and large rainforests. The country is very small and has about 100,000 inhabitants. The

weather is consistently warm, with temperatures around 30 degrees Celsius day and night. We visited during the dry season, so we didn't encounter much rain.

I experienced the culture very positively. Everyone was friendly and very willing to help, greet, and chat. The pace was generally much slower and more relaxed than in Sweden which was noticeable in service and just in the general view of life. At the same time as the pace was slow, it was very lively and noisy. There were a lot of cars and restaurants playing loud music. Buses drove very fast and didn't run on a schedule.

Some aspects were unfamiliar to us, coming from Sweden. Stores sometimes lacked certain items, and during the drought, the water supply was occasionally turned off. It was important to keep water in the freezer and to be prepared for times when flushing and showering weren't possible. Even when water was available, the pressure was often very low.



Leisure and social activities

What I enjoyed most about staying in the same place for so long was that we got to see beyond the typical tourist experience. We were put in many situations and met people we wouldn't have encountered otherwise. We were treated differently and more warmly than tourists who came on cruise ships and stayed for just a day.

We lived right by the beach, spending almost every day there. We also did several hikes, visited waterfalls, and checked out lookout points. We ate at various restaurants to try local foods. Some locals we met showed us how to cook Oil down, the country's national dish, which was fun to learn.

The country is called the Spice Island, and we got to see how many plants grow, including ginger, vanilla, and nutmeg. We also went to a reggae festival, a food festival, and even did limbo on the beach. We also rented a boat for 5 nights to be able to go around and see some islands nearby. There we got to see beautiful environments and snorkel with sea turtles.



Sustainability

I found it more challenging to live sustainably in Grenada than in Sweden. In Sweden, you can choose locally grown and organic products, but this option wasn't available in Grenada. Vegetarian options were also limited and often expensive. In restaurants, if you ordered vegetarian, they would just remove the meat. Additionally, there was no waste sorting, so everything went into the same garbage bag. However, being forced to conserve water and wear the same clothes repeatedly has developed and improved my sustainable mindset.

Other recommendations and observations

I deeply recommend Field Studies! Field Studies is a fantastic opportunity to apply the knowledge you have gained during your studies, to see other cultures, and a unique chance to spend a longer period in a low and middle-income country.