



UNIVERSITY of STRATHCLYDE
CENTRE FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL LAW
AND GOVERNANCE



UNIVERSITY
of Prince Edward
ISLAND



COVID-19 Island Insights Series

No. 3, November 2020

Grenada

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The COVID-19 Island Insights Series is an initiative spearheaded by the Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law & Governance (SCELG) and the Institute of Island Studies (IIS) at the University of Prince Edward Island in collaboration with Island Innovation. The initiative brings together critical assessments of how specific islands around the world have performed during the COVID-19 pandemic and the extent to which their recovery plans can promote resilience and sustainability in the long term.

For more information on SCELG see
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Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Marti-
nique

Population: 113, 094 (July 2020 est.)¹

Size: 344 sq. km.²

In addition to the island of Grenada,
the tri-island state of Grenada
includes two smaller islands –
Carriacou and Petite Martinique.
The population and size include all
three islands.

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COVID-19 data and timeline

Number of cases 29 [0.026% of the pop-
ulation vs 0.01% in the Caribbean re-
gion]³

Number of fatalities 0 [0% of cases]⁴

Schools closed on 16 March 2020; reo-
pened in 7 September (schools operate
with various approaches, including
blended learning, shifts, to reduce ca-
pacity for face-to-face sessions)

Travel restrictions enacted on 22 March
and lifted on 1 August 2020, with a col-
our coded system based on risk level of
source⁵ countries, to commercial and
charter air traffic.



GRENADA⁶

¹ Data source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gj.html>

² Data source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gj.html>

³Data source: <https://covid19.gov.gd/>

⁴ Ibid

⁵ <https://covid19.gov.gd/travel/>

⁶ Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gj.html>

COVID-19 on Grenada

On 22 March 2020, Grenada closed its borders to air and sea commercial traffic, on the same day that the first imported case of COVID-19 was announced. In a preemptive move, the Government of Grenada closed all schools on 16 March, while introducing other measures, such as 'social distancing', a term the Prime Minister referred to as being new⁷. The St. George's University, one of the largest private employers on the island, asked its 'international students' to return home during that same period⁸ and all hotels began to shut down (impacts to be discussed in the next section), while the general population struggled to adhere to the voluntary calls for social distancing and best public hygiene practices. The plea by the authorities, seemed to have fallen on deaf ears, resulting in a 21-day limited state of emergency being imposed on the country. Limited access to food, medical and other essential services was allowed between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.⁹ Unfortunately, the number of cases of COVID-19 continued to rise, with more imported cases identified, with some traceable to patient zero. This led to the imposition of a 24-hour/7-day mandatory curfew which began on 30 March, 2020 and was eventually extended to 20 April, 2020. All these mitigation measures were supported by the Emergency Powers (COVID-19) (NO 2), Statutory Rules and Orders # 16 (SRO 16) 2020 promulgated on Monday, 30 March, 2020; and was updated on a weekly basis.

As of 1 November, 2020, Grenada reported twenty-nine (29) cases of COVID19 infections, with twenty-seven (27) recoveries and no fatalities. International travel recommenced on August 1, 2020 with a limited number of charter and commercial flights. Source countries were zoned based on risk levels. Passengers traveling from low risk counties require a negative PCR test taken within 7-days of arriving into

Grenada, with no quarantine restrictions on arrivals, while those from high-risk countries are required to be quarantined for 4-days. Residents with a negative PCR test taken on the fourth day will be allowed to enter the community, while visitors may choose to test and if tested negative can enter the community. Hotels can apply to reopen under strict guidelines. In the meantime, the 'limited state of emergency' is still in effect, with no curfew, but citizens are required to wear face coverings when outside their places of residence, which is enforced when entering public and private spaces and on public transportation. Mass gatherings are restricted in numbers, especially at funerals and weddings. Schools and churches have reopened, with schools operating under shift systems and blended learning. Grenada is open once again for business but, as with many places, it looks a bit different as social distancing and face coverings are imposed and policed.

Key socioeconomic pressures in Grenada during COVID-19

At the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially during the three weeks of the 24/7 curfew, the socioeconomic challenges escalated. One of the greatest impacts was the loss of jobs, mainly in the tourism sector, with many negative spin-off effects on support services such transportation, agriculture and construction. Another key impact was the closure of the St. George's University (SGU). An International Monetary Fund (IMF) report noted: "...plummeting hotel occupancy rates, mounting request for moratoria on debt servicing, dwindling constructing and investment activity and other sharp adverse ripple effects of the outbreak across all economic sectors"¹⁰. Moreover, the report projected a decline in tourism exports (such as revenues from internal purchases) of

⁷ <https://www.nowgrenada.com/2020/03/prime-ministers-address-on-covid-19/>

⁸ <https://www.nowgrenada.com/2020/03/st-georges-university-follows-guidance-to-stem-the-spread-of-covid-19/>

⁹ <https://www.nowgrenada.com/2020/03/announcement-of-limited-state-of-emergency/>

¹⁰ <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2020/05/13/Grenada-Request-for-Disbursement-Under-the-Rapid-Credit-Facility-Press-Release-Staff-Report-49412>

about 50% year-on-year in 2020, exacerbated by the closure of the SGU, with an overall decline in economic growth of approximately -9.2% in 2020¹¹. In August 2020, the Government of Grenada revised its revenue collection downward, projecting a decline of approximately 40% due to COVID-19¹².

Job losses, and the closure of small businesses such as barber shops and hair salons, fishing, agriculture, construction and bars; and the cessation of the private sector-driven public transportation system, resulted in a stark impact on the livelihoods of many of the persons involved in these micro-small-medium enterprises (MSME). To ease the pain the Government initiated an economic support package¹³, including assistance to hundreds of these MSME owners, with subsistence support for three months. Salary support was also provided to the tourism and hospitality sector. Moreover, as fishers were not allowed to ply their trade for a while, fish as a healthy protein faced a temporary shortage; while locally grown fruits and vegetables also went into short supply, as farmers had limited or no access to their farms. Although there was no chronic shortage of food and other basic necessities, the impact on individuals who lost their source of income was profound.

Generally, social life is not the same as before the pandemic, as social activities are restricted by law. This includes parties, mass beach gatherings and other normal social activities. For the first time in many years, Grenada did not have its carnival celebration, which occurs in August of each year. As is the case with many Caribbean islands, Carnival is normally one of Grenada's most popular traditional social activities, bringing with it a spike in social networking and economic activity, contributing to growth. In fact, what appeared to be a 'protest-like' activity occurred on the two scheduled days of carnival

as revelers took to the street, claiming that they 'needed to release the stresses of lockdown'.

Post Covid-19 recovery on Grenada: A different approach

The key approach to Grenada's post COVID-19 recovery is enshrined in the Government's appointment of seven (7) subcommittees as part of the task force for rebuilding Grenada's economy¹⁴:

1. Tourism and citizen by investment (CBI)
2. Construction (private and public)
3. Education services (St. George's University)
4. Micro-small and medium enterprise
5. Agriculture and fisheries
6. Wholesale and retail trading and manufacturing
7. E-commerce/digitization

These committees were tasked with drawing-up sector-related plans for recovery. Although the initial plans delivered to the Prime Minister were not available for public consumption, from observation, the Committees cover the key economic sectors, especially agriculture. In fact, food security has once again been scrutinized under COVID-19, which may have sparked a 'back yard gardening' project by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Climate Smart Agriculture Project. Five hundred beneficiaries, including vulnerable households and home care centres for the aged, benefited from the program.¹⁵

Despite this multi-sectoral approach, tourism seems to be at the forefront of the recovery effort. In this regard, commercial air traffic is

¹¹ Ibid

¹² <https://www.nowgrenada.com/2020/08/government-to-collect-181-million-less-in-revenue-due-to-covid-19/>

¹³ <https://www.nowgrenada.com/2020/03/prime-ministers-national-address-20-march-2020/>

¹⁴ <https://www.nowgrenada.com/2020/04/cabinet-approves-appointment-of-7-sub-committees/>

¹⁵ <https://www.nowgrenada.com/2020/08/extension-as-sistants-training-as-part-of-covid-19-backyard-gardening-initiative/>

slowly increasing; some hotels which can create a 'bubble' are being considered for reopening; and limited cruise activity has been discussed, with the option of having designated beaches for tourists to visit, excluding them from the rest of the public¹⁶. The construction of a number of hotels/beach resorts has (re)started, indicating that stay-over tourism is high on the economic development agenda. Moreover, the SGU is considered as 'educational tourism', contributing significantly to the economic growth and development of the island's economy. There is no wonder then, that a task force has been established to seek out the most efficient, safe and fastest manner to get students back on campus.

On the ground, economic activity outside of tourism seems to be slowly picking up. Many of the micro-small and medium enterprises are reopening. Private buses are plying their trade with maximum load capacities restored, but with restrictions, including regular sanitizing and wearing of face coverings. Restaurants are allowed to serve food indoors; bars are functioning and other key activities are picking up. This multi-sectoral approach is a critical effort by the government to get the economy functioning again, yet the fruits of this labor may not be immediately discernable.

Post Covid-19 recovery and the Sustainable Development Goals

The COVID-19 pandemic occurred at the same time the Government of Grenada launched its National Sustainable Development Plan, 2020-2035 (NSDP), which is tightly coupled to the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, driven by the SDGs¹⁷. The NSDP is implemented through Medium Term Action Plans (MTAPs). The Technical Working Group (TWG), the body responsible for the drafting of the NSDP, agreed that no major revisions of the plan were required; but that some of the priorities in the

NSDP would need to be reset, entailing the fast tracking and/or delaying of some actions. In the MTAP 2020-2022, these priority actions were drafted, vis-à-vis developing a plan for dealing with public health issues and expanding the National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA) to respond to major pandemics¹⁸. These are aligned to SDG 3: health. Grenada is committed to implementing and meeting the SDGs; however, as with many other nations, the global pandemic will pose new challenges in accomplishing these goals.

Useful Sources

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¹⁶ <https://www.nowgrenada.com/2020/10/statement-about-returning-cruise-calls-to-grenada/>

¹⁷ <https://www.nationalplan2030.gd/docs/NSDP20202035.pdf>

¹⁸ Medium Term Action Plan for Grenada 2020-2022



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Suggested citation: J. N. Telesford, *Grenada, COVID-19 Island Insight Series, no 3, November 2020*, University of Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law and Governance, University of Prince Edward Island Institute of Island Studies and Island Innovation.

Published COVID-19 Island Insights Papers

#1. Malta. November 2020

#2. Egadi Islands. November 2020

#3. Grenada. November 2020

#4. Trinidad and Tobago. November 2020



With thanks to the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF), creators of the **COVID-19 Rural Insights Series**, for kindly giving us permission to use "Insights Series" as part of our series name