

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 3, 2020  
San Jose Village  
Toledo, Belize



### Green Creek Farmers' Cooperative completes a major milestone—their bridge inauguration

San Jose village is a Maya community in southern Belize, where farmers grouped into the Green Creek Farmers' Cooperative (GCFC), launching a community project entitled: *“Enhancing Capacity of Green Creek Farmers' Cooperative to Manage Community Conserved Area for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods”* in 2019.

The community-based project aims to sustainably develop community resilience towards the impacts of climate change. The project is funded by the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme and through the partnership with Ya'axché, the GCFC was able to establish a nursery, provide capacity building workshops on Geographic Information Systems and mapping, agroecology, road improvement, which also included the construction of a bridge in a flood-prone area to connect the community to the cooperative's conserved area.

On Saturday, August 1, 2020 the bridge was inaugurated bringing children, men and women of San Jose village together in celebration with live traditional marimba music and cultural dancing. The Chairman of GCFC, Mr. Thomas Coh, was ecstatic with the community effort and the support Ya'axché has given to make their project's goal a success.

With a spiritual leader blessing upon the bridge—Ya'axché's Directors, GCFC and the community of San Jose—the ribbon was cut open signifying full public access for the benefit of the community. The bridge provides safe passage to approximately 200 residents of San Jose Village including primary school children and farmers. This creek is a source with open access to the community water system. GCFC continues working towards a resilient and healthy livelihood for the community of San Jose. During harvest seasons, an estimated 500-1000 lbs of vegetables, corn, beans and cacao are transported from the farms in the conserved lands, with the bridge facilitating easier accessibility of San Jose's agroecological products into the markets of larger municipalities.

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples—annually observed on August 9<sup>th</sup>—raises awareness, protecting the rights of the world's indigenous. This event also recognizes the achievements and contributions that indigenous people make to improve world issues such as environmental protection.

Ya'axché expresses high satisfaction to have partnered with the GCFC to support sustainable livelihoods and forest protection in San Jose. Ya'axché has been protecting wild places and empowering communities in southern Belize since 1998.

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