



THE NATIONAL
FOREST PROGRAMME
FACILITY



Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)

Forest and Livelihoods Exchange Visit on tools and methods for the sustainable use of forest products and services

*October 20-21, 2010
Matura, Trinidad*

1. Background

This exchange visit is part of a regional programme on Forests and Livelihoods currently being conducted in Barbados, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Christopher (St. Kitts) & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, and Trinidad & Tobago under CANARI's **Forests and Livelihoods Programme**. This programme seeks to enhance the contribution of forest goods and ecological services to sustainable livelihoods of the rural poor in the islands of the Caribbean. The programme encompasses research and analysis as well as building capacity at local, national and regional level for equitable participation and effective collaboration of stakeholders in the management of forest resources.

The exchange visit was conducted in partnership with the National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme (NRWRP) of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

2. Funding

The exchange visit was funded by a grant to CANARI from the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) under its National Forest Programme Facility (NFPF) for a regional project "**Participatory Forest Management: Improving policy and institutional capacity for development**" being conducted in the following countries: Barbados, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Christopher (St. Kitts) & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, and Trinidad & Tobago.

3. Participants

The participants of the workshop were mostly supervisors of projects of the NRWRP. There were 38 participants from the 56 community projects in the country. On the first day, there were 24 persons and on the second day there were 14 persons. The

NRWRP Project Coordinator, Dr. George Mason, was present on both days. The list of participants is attached as Appendix 1.



Photo1: Dr. George Mason welcoming participants on the first day of the workshop

4. Purpose/Goal/Objectives

The overall purpose of the exchange visit was to contribute to the overall objective of the regional project ***to identify, promote, and build capacity for institutional arrangements which optimise the socio-economic contribution of forest resources to the rural poor of the insular Caribbean.***

The goal of the exchange visit was to build the capacity of the NRWRP groups for participatory forest management that enhances the contribution of forests to sustainable livelihoods derived from the use of forest products and services.

The objectives of the exchange visit were to:

1. Build understanding and appreciation of how forests can benefit livelihoods;
2. Provide lessons on institutional arrangements (policies, practices, legislation, structures, approaches, etc.) that optimise the socio-economic benefits to rural poor from the sustainable use of forest products and services;
3. Provide examples of practical efforts to enhance benefits to the rural poor derived from the entrepreneurship opportunities from the use of forest products and services;
4. Build or enhance relationships among NRWRP groups and other key stakeholders.

5. Key Outcomes

Through the exchange visit:

- Participants enhanced their practical understanding of how they can use the opportunities presented through participation in the NRWRP to benefit their livelihoods;
- NRWRP community group supervisors or their representatives were able to speak directly with the Project Coordinator and the staff at the NRWRP secretariat to clarify a number of operational issues which adversely impacted the outputs of the programme;
- NRWRP groups were able to share practical lessons on institutional arrangements that were specific to the programme;
- Relationships among the NRWRP community groups and the Project Coordinator and the staff at the secretariat were enhanced through the facilitated exchange of ideas and issues;
- Project Coordinator and the staff at the NRWRP secretariat were provided with recommendations for the programme from the perspective of the workers in the field.

6. Methods

Due to the number of participants there were two separate workshops over a two day period with the same agenda. The workshops were highly interactive with extensive sharing of participants' experiences and knowledge. A wide variety of facilitation techniques were used – whole group discussions, brainstorming, small group work, individual reflection, guided facilitation, round robin, and group presentations. The facilitation techniques were modelled as potential tools for participants to apply in organisational development processes for their community groups.

The draft agenda is attached as Appendix 2. The presentations are in Appendix 3.

7. Findings and lessons

7.1 Overview of the NRWRP

The NRWRP is a project of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. Under this programme, there are 56 community projects nationally of which three are in Tobago. The programme is expected to run for a period of 10 years with the objective to replant over 33,000 acres of denuded lands and to empower communities to actively manage forest on which they depend on for their livelihoods.

The initiative focuses on contracting people from rural communities to replant trees and targets the unemployed and single mothers. Training is provided to members of newly contracted community groups (the "groups"). Community organisations from rural communities are contracted to manage NRWRP projects and supervise the teams of

workers. The programme is managed by a Coordinator, technical and clerical staff in a secretariat.

The programme aims to provide a unique vehicle for creating meaningful long-term part-time employment while at the same time addressing the issue of conservation and the wise use and protection of the natural forest. It attempts to empower communities to care for their own environment and become guardians of the forest on which they depend for a livelihood. The programme also aims to provide an opportunity for the identification and development of entrepreneurial activities by community members, for example in the area of ecotourism.

7.2 Community expectations of the NRWRP

Community groups involved in the NRWRP had a variety of expectations about what the programme would focus on and what benefits it would offer.

Community groups initially thought that they would play a major role in protection, rehabilitation and reforestation of forest. However, this is not being done for all of the NRWRP projects across different communities.



Photo 2: Participants in small group discussion during the workshop.

Expected benefits to forests and the environment identified included:

- Encouraging wildlife to return to areas where the reforestation activities were taking place by planting more fruit trees.
- Preventing slash and burn agriculture and reducing illegal logging and bush fires in the areas they were working.

Expected benefits to community members included:

- Developing their knowledge and skills in forestry. Areas specifically identified were wetland reforestation and managing dams.
- Developing organisational and management skills.
- Acquiring new skills from which they could obtain jobs and provide better income for their families as well as to expand the benefits of the programme to the community. For example, building knowledge about indigenous plants that could be used in community tourism ventures.

7.3 Participant analysis of improvements in livelihood assets as a result of the NRWRP

CANARI's concept of livelihoods is drawn from the DFID livelihoods¹ framework (Department for International Development, 1999) that defines types of livelihoods assets. The political capital and cultural capital were added as distinct from social capital, as these were felt to be of paramount importance in Caribbean islands. The framework is based on the idea that human well-being is determined by the extent to which individuals and households have access to a range of types of "assets", which are usually defined as:

- *Human assets:* education, skills, talents, health
- *Financial assets:* income, savings and access to credit
- *Social assets:* family, community and wider social networks
- *Physical assets:* standard of housing, access to transportation, etc.
- *Political assets:* access to and influence over decision-making processes
- *Natural assets:* ownership or access to natural resources, including land, and ecosystem services

Participants analysis of improvements in livelihood assets as a result of the NRWRP is presented below.

Natural assets:

- Since the start of the programme, the community projects have accomplished quite a lot in the re-planting of denuded lands. For some projects, over 300 to 400 acres of land have been replanted. This is on 50 acres a year basis per project.
- Some projects have been responsible for clearing waterways and hence have reduced flooding.
- Other projects have started nurseries and agro-forestry ventures.



Photo 3 : Participants in small group discussion during the workshop.

¹ The research adopted the livelihoods definition by Chambers & Conway (1992, p. 7-8) that: "a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the long and short term."

Human assets:

Improved skills and knowledge were reported with examples given including:

- Many of the groups developed a better appreciation and understanding of the need to maintain proper safety in the work place.
- There were two groups that indicated that one of their workers used the programme to fund their efforts to access tertiary level courses.
- Participants reported that they have a better understanding of the importance of forests and how forests could benefit them through the many livelihood opportunities that can be derived from using forests.
- Some groups created additional opportunities by getting training from the Ministry of Community Development, Central Bank National Financial Literacy Programme, Forestry Division and first aid and safety from the private sector.
- Training in the areas of communication skills and anger management from various state agencies.
- Some groups have taken the responsibility to develop educational activities that would enhance community awareness on the use of the forest.
- Other groups have taken the opportunity to develop other activities to expand the social services they provide such as childrens' Christmas treat and hampers for the community.
- Some persons who seemed have shown little promise of growth and no interest in the project at the beginning have shown vast improvement in their attitude towards the programme.
- With the support of the NRWPR, there were many groups that reported that they became stronger and had improved ability to attract other funding.
- One of the community groups took the initiative to develop an automatic electronic pay sheet system for completing the relevant documents on the project. This system can be offered to the other groups.

Social assets:

- Groups reported increased networking and better relationships with key government agencies to develop projects and to get support for events and activities. For example, groups said that they had better relationships with Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and Ministry of Public Utilities This made it easier for them to provide the resources for community services, for example hampers after disasters.
- Some groups reported that their activities contributed to creating better relationships among residents of the communities and fostered camaraderie and togetherness among the group. This contributed to improvements in the general working attitude of most workers. People interacted more and learned to deal with individuals on a daily basis by learning to listen and make positive decisions.
- Groups reported that community members working as supervisors in the NRWPR had increased prominence and respect in the community.

Financial assets:

- Small business opportunities were stimulated as many groups related that because of the operation of the NRWRP in their area several small businesses operators were benefiting. This included food and beverage vendors and taxis.
- Improved financial credibility of members was also reported as many of the groups heralded the benefits of joining the Agri-Cola Credit Union, which included having savings and accessing loans. However, there were many groups that had not promoted this opportunity to their workers.



Photo 4 and 5: Participants presenting small group reports.

7.3 Challenges

Challenges internal to the programme identified were:

- The programme does not support workers having paid sick leave, casual leave and paid vacation. This is despite the fact that some workers are on the programme for the past 6 to 7 years. The secretariat of the programme contends that the reforestation work is 5 hours a day and does not represent a full time job of 8 hours to which this benefit is afforded.
- The project is in its seventh year and to date there is no contract between the government and the groups. The lack of a formal agreement has made it difficult for groups to invest in other initiatives, since getting financing is difficult without a contract to substantiate the agreement to provide this service to the government.
- From the inception of the programme salaries have been consistently late.

- The inability of the NRWRP to supply plants to the projects has limited the success of the project in communities. Most of the plants used were wildings which have a higher death rate than propagated trees. As such, there was a high percentage of plant replacements. This is compounded by the fact that the plants are supplied too close to the dry season and this weakened the chances of survival. When seedlings were given by the NRWRP it was normally mainly one or two species. This can lead to the development of monocultures. In some cases, these were foreign woody species and not plants indigenous to the area.
- Many of the groups expressed the need to motivate members of groups to work and to look at the bigger picture and not only at the pay check. However, this was even more difficult when wages are consistently late and there are limited opportunities for training in leadership and management.
- The expansion of the programme each year into another 50 acres was beginning to be a burden on many of the projects. The maintenance of the previously planted acreage by cutting and clearing trails, cleaning lines and replacing plants was getting more difficult. For example some groups for 2010 planted their 50 acres and were also cleaning 300 acres of trails and lines and replacing plants. And for 2011, there will be an additional 50 acres of trail and 50 acres further into the forest. This means groups will have longer, and in some cases more difficult, terrain to traverse to work. The larger the area of land gets under each project the greater the challenge is in preventing or controlling fires. The spread of the team over the entire area is going to weaken the fire-watch results or impact.
- NRWRP had not committed to regularly facilitating a forum for the communication of issues, challenges and opportunities to and from community groups. Basically every community NRWRP project was inventing its own process.
- Although NRWRP has promoted the development of agro-forestry there was no real support and guidance in the development of this component of the project.

External challenges included:

- Some groups complained about people deliberately sabotaging plots by cutting down the trees and setting fires in areas where the project is being implemented.

7.4 Lessons learned

1. When groups create partnerships, more opportunities and benefits befall communities especially in the area of education and training.
2. In order to truly understand and appreciate the value and benefits of the reforestation programme, involvement and education of the community is necessary.
3. The forest can be an important resource for sustainable livelihood activities.

8. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made by participants for improvements needed from the NRWRP and from the community groups contracted to manage community projects.

For the NRWRP:

1. Improve the supply of plants to the individual projects by having the contractor set up their own small nursery. This should be part of the NRWRP work plan. This is likely to cost much less and have greater impact in the long run. Appropriate cutbacks on the work plan are necessary for this to be successful. This will help ensure a variety of plant species to avoid monoculture and potential development of invasive species.
2. Provide additional technical support for selection and planting of species in different soils and sites.
3. Standardise the data sheet used to collect daily information on individual projects so it can be of greater use to the projects and the NRWRP secretariat.
4. Make the paysheet software available to all projects as it will improve the quality, accuracy and speed of the pay sheet submission. This will assist in facilitating timely payment.
5. Since more time is needed to manage the expanding acreage, extend the working hours to facilitate the continuous increase in the work load.
6. In light of the number of bush fires and extent of flooding, extend the term of the programme beyond 10 years.
7. Institute vacation and sick leave for all workers.
8. Review remuneration during fire watch since workers work over Saturday and Sunday.
9. Conduct more visits to provide advice and moral support and to increase understanding of the situation in the field. Visit at random times so that high quality is maintained.
10. Establish continuous training in forestry for the participants in the project from the community.
11. Make annual reports of the programme available to the groups in a manner they can understand so they can appreciate the big picture or at the very least know what is going on with the programme.

For the community groups involved:

1. Develop a promotion/education programme to sensitise their communities about the reforestation efforts.
2. Develop better mechanisms to facilitate equity and transparency in decision making.
3. Use a small percentage of the contractors fee from the programme to initiate livelihood opportunities.
4. Recommend a training programme for identifying venomous snakes and have the antidote available for groups.

Joint actions:

1. Strengthen networking among community groups and other key government services (for example the Fire Service Department, Forestry Division, Game Warden and Environmental Management Authority) to exchange information and ideas and to gain knowledge and skills.

2. Continue to build new partnerships for capacity development of the workers and the community.
3. Develop criteria for performance of workers to ensure and manage output.

9. Conclusion

Participants in the workshop generally felt that the NRWRP is beneficial to communities all over the country. Some environmental and social benefits were reported and areas for improvement identified.

With the implementation of the recommendations made at the workshop, the communities will be in a better position to capitalise on opportunities for improved livelihoods and wider benefits to the communities. This will contribute to sustainability of the results of the programme after it is completed.

Ongoing sharing of experiences and participatory evaluation of the programme can contribute to continuous learning and improve the reforestation and livelihood outcomes of the NRWRP.

Appendix 1 – Participant List

	NAME	ORGANISATION	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
1	Nigel Collingwood	Tunapuna Environment Community Group	710-7472	-
2	Marlene Hamilton Jackson	Pierre Phillip Community	723-1716	-
3	Reekam Manickchand	RioClaro Environmental Community Group	644-0882	-
4	Mavis Kanslal	Felicity church of the Nazarene	781-9027	-
5	Molly Bellasario	Moolchan Trace Village Council	395-0705	
6	Suzzette Springer	Lisas Gardens Village Council	794-0871	-
7	Roger Gopaul	Green Acres Community Group / Fyzabad	330-2897 649-9116	-
8	Moses Benjamin	Almond Court Action Group	381-2456	-
9	Alison Ballantyne	Woman on Vision Group Pleasant Park	797-9083	-
10	Anthony Morales	Biche Sports Club	393-8138	-
11	Beaumont Quintin	Sangre Grande Imporvement For Better Living	770-9474	-
12	Taslina Mohammed	RioClaro Unemployment Association	792-9186 644-2629	-
13	Russel Nelson	Self Help Community Group	709-0125	-
14	Shameel Rahim	Union Community Group	303-8522	-
15	Siewchand Barban	Penal Environmental Wetlands Organisation	469-5893 647-5375	-
16	Winston Arnold	Maitagual Unified Community Development Petit Bourge San Juan	674-5673 395-8527	mucd_nrwp@yahoo.com arston_GJ@yahoo.com

	NAME	ORGANISATION	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
1	Christine Alexander	Coromandel Development Group	393-9157 299-2847 / 690-0387	-
2	Joseph Cardinal	Sennam Community Council	387-3574 / 377-0140	-
3	Hanifa Rahim	Bank Village Social Welfare Com. Org.	673-7893/734-0702	hanifa.rahim@yahoo.com
4	Cheryl Jordan	La Fillette Reafforestation Group La Fillette Village	361-9372	-
5	Terrill Hernandez	Maturita Village Council	337-6150	-
6	John Campbell	Ground Cover Alive Palmiste Park	716-1178	-
7	Cristo Adonis	Santa Rosa Carib Community	796-6328 / 367-8121	-
8	Roy Ottley	Cocorite Vision 20/20 Enhancement Committee	721-9564	-
9	Sherryann Bailey	Mafeking Riverside Development Authority	684-990	-
10	Felix De Ramos	Brasso Seco T.A.C.	484-9206	-
11	Jude Neckles	Kernahan Improvement Committee	377-7529	-
12	Frankie Joseph	Maracas Valley Council	390-3474	-
13	Almarie Dardaine	N.A.C.O.I.B.O.T.T. Maloney	705-3350	-
14	Esbert Briggs	Green ways Enhancement Programm Group on SanFernando Hill	757-7407	-
15	Richard Villafana	MSI Matura	335-1419	-
16	Samuel Sandy	Carenage Community Blse		
17	Dain Kent	Speyside Village Council	767-5345	dhandyman@hotmail
18	Ragmoonana n Balkharan	N.E.T. Nariva Enviornmental Trust	620-1065	
19	Len Peters	Grande Riviere Tourism Development Organisation	359-2478	-

20	Pearl Davis	Belle Garden Enhances	760-6645	shadidavis@live.com
21	Hazelann Nancoo	Upper Eldorado Village Council	315-9397	tristcaferguson@yahoo.com
22	Delmond Edwards	Argyle village Environmental Protection Group	359-5040	delmondedward@live.com
23	Sylvia Nelson	Lauo Office South	765-4010 / 221-4010	n_sylvia@hotmail.com
24	Desmond E. Baxter	C.C.L.O.	681-4364 / 636-2282	jadebb3@yahoo.com

Appendix 2 – Agenda



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Forests and Livelihoods Exchange Visit on Tools and methods for the Sustainable Use of Forest Products and Services 20th and 21st October, 2010


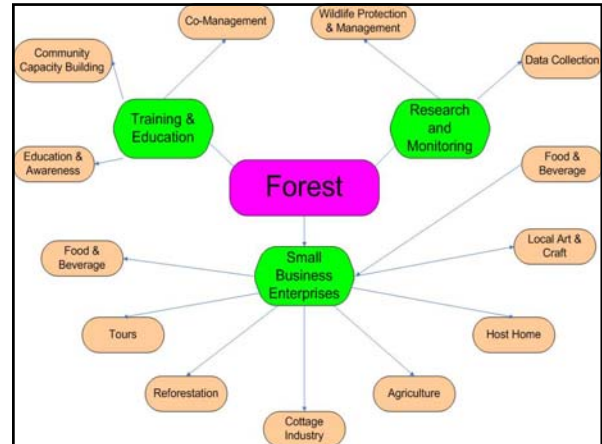
DRAFT AGENDA

8:30 a.m.	Registration
9:00 a.m.	Welcome, introductions, ice breaker, participant expectations, exchange visit overview
	Identifying successes and challenges
	Break
	Presentation on the expected results of NRWRP
	<i>NRWRP representative</i>
	Presentation on tools and methods for sustainable use of forest products and services
	<i>Nature Seekers</i>
	Small Group Work – evaluating and analyzing results
12:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 p.m.	Small Group Work – evaluating and analyzing results (continued)
	Plenary presentation of small group work
	Discussion and distillation of lessons learned & recommendations
4:00 p.m.	Wrap up and close

Appendix 3– Presentations

Forests for Sustainable Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction

Dennis Sammy

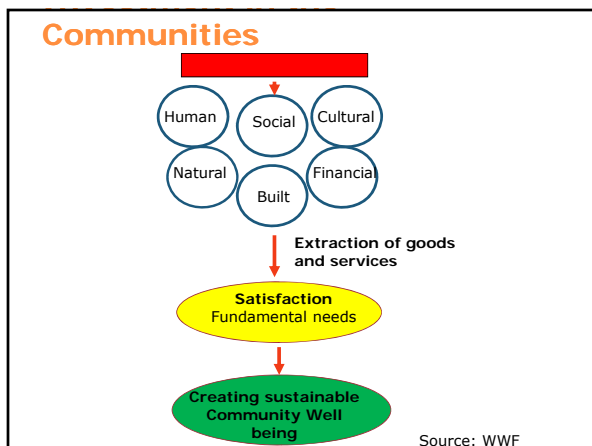



- The largest Mora Forest in T&T
- Rio Saco Waterfall
- Endemic Pawi, Toucans, Orange-winged Parrots, Red Howler Monkey & Marine Turtles
- Salybia River
- Accommodation
- Community Organisation
- Resident willingness to act

Community's Asset

Investment in the Resources

- Over the last 5 years Nature Seekers has reforested :
 - Over 300 acres of land.
 - Over Planted 30,000 seedlings including fruit trees
 - Collected over 110,000 seeds for NRWRP
 - Reducing forest fires
 - Cutting fire trails



Capacity Building

GOVERNANCE SYSTEM IN PLACE

- Bylaws
- Financial Procedures
- Policies
 - Drugs, Alcohol & Tobacco Policy
 - Employment Management Policy
 - Grievance Handling Procedures
 - Code of Conduct
 - Disciplinary Procedures
 - Staff Hiring & Promotion Policy
 - Vehicle Management Policy
 - Contractor Engagement Policy

Record Keeping

NO	NAME	PRELIM	TIME	DATE	AMOUNT OF WORK/Hours
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Supervisor Of The Day

- Capacity Building**
- Financial Software
 - Nine of 10 forms completed in seconds
 - 100% accuracy in financial calculation
 - Greater efficiency & speed in preparing pay sheets
 - Reduction in the cost of preparing sheet

- Capacity Building**
- Education & Awareness
 - Financial Literacy
 - Importance of the Forest
 - First Aid / Safety meeting

- Alternative Livelihood Organic Farm new Project**
- Project development completed
 - problem analysis,
 - needs assessment
 - market analysis
 - stakeholder identification and analysis
 - Seeking funding
 - Tree Nursery

Alternative Livelihood Glass bead project

- Glass is broken and then melted in the



Some Enabling Factors

- Vision & Leadership
- Loyal and committed membership
 - Love /Passion/Commitment
- Transparency & Accountability
- Collective Decision Making
- Networking