

A Qualitative Assessment of the Integrated Forestry Management and Development
Programme in St. Vincent

A Report prepared for the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute

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Introduction

This report is part of a participatory review of the Integrated Forestry Management Development Programme (IFMDP). It details findings from a rapid qualitative assessment aimed at obtaining stakeholders' perspectives on the IFMDP's progress in meeting its objectives and addressing issues identified in a previous assessment conducted in 2006 (John 2006).

IFMDP goals include: raising Vincentians' awareness of the importance of the country's forests to the nation's development, maintaining forest cover for soil and water conservation, bringing forest users directly into forest management and conservation, and addressing threats to rural livelihoods as a consequence of global economic change through the sustainable use of forest resources (Fitzgerald, May, 2009). The emphasis of this assessment is on these latter two goals, developing a collaborative forest management programme that addresses current nonsustainable uses of the forest while at the same time facilitating livelihood opportunities for forest users. To achieve these the IFMDP includes an Alternative Community Livelihood project (ACLIP) that works with forest user groups (FUGs) to identify and develop viable economic alternatives to current forest livelihoods that drive deforestation, and in particular, marijuana cultivation.

The consensus on the part of everyone I talked to is that the IFMDP has fallen short in achieving these goals. This report examines why this is the case through in depth interviews with several IFMDP stakeholders. A theme that runs through these interviews is that stakeholders representing distinct interests may have interpreted or understood the IFMDP's purpose and goals differently and these differences may have interfered with the programme's progress. It does not appear that the participatory or collaborative assumptions behind the programme have been realized or embraced by all stakeholders. Although this is discouraging, it is not entirely surprising considering the complex environmental, economic and social context in which this programme was implemented and the distinctions in social and cultural capital between stakeholders. This assessment contextualizes the IFMDP, and details these differences. It reports on the status of specific programme objectives including raising Vincentian's awareness of the importance of the country's forest, progress in facilitating alternative livelihoods, and developing an integrated forestry management process.

Background

In the 1990s, St. Vincent's export oriented banana industry, the nation's largest employer, began to contract as a result of neoliberal trade reforms that gradually eliminated the island's preferential access to the European market. As a consequence, many farmers abandoned banana farming and opportunities for work in the banana industry became scarce (Cottle et al., 2002). Farming other crops was and continues to be constrained by overseas competition and a lack of support. Likewise, opportunities for employment in other economic sectors were limited. Together, these conditions accelerated an already established pattern of marijuana cultivation that had been engaged in by some as early as the late 1970s and early 1980s. By 2002 it was estimated that more than 1500 farmers were growing marijuana on more than 3000 acres of forest and that the environmental consequences were significant including the loss of forest cover, soil loss and siltation as well as threats to the water supply from the use of chemicals and human settlement. The FAO estimated that in 1993 approximately 37% of St. Vincent was covered in forest, and that two years later this total had declined to just over 28% of the island's surface; by 2000, the area covered by forest had been reduced to little more than 15% (GOSVG 2002).

Attempts to address deforestation through legislation, law enforcement and eradication of marijuana have been ineffective. In 2002, the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines initiated the IFMDP as an innovative alternative that could help to stem the unsustainable use of the nation's forest and preserve its watersheds while at the same time encouraging the development of alternative livelihoods for some forest users (John 2006). The programme was based on the assumption that preserving the forest depended in part on bringing forest users into forest management and assisting them in developing sustainable, alternative livelihoods.

Methods

Semi-structured interviews based on question guides developed in collaboration with CANARI staff were conducted with IFMDP staff and stakeholders. These included the director of the Programme Management Unit (PMU), the IFMDP community liaison, a group of Forestry rangers, representatives of the country's two utilities companies (VINLEC and CWSA), and members of the two Forest users groups or FUGs (Protectors

of the Environment and Friends of the Environment). Interviews were also conducted with individuals who were knowledgeable of the IFMDP because of their past involvement with it and their participation in other community-based livelihoods programmes.

Question guides (appendix A) varied depending on the stakeholder being interviewed but common themes were discussed with all participants. These included perceptions about the programme's purpose, its status – including specific milestones reached, and lessons to be learned from the programme.

Some interviews were recorded using a voice recorder and transcribed but most were recorded with hand written notes. The transcriptions and notes were coded for themes that are summarized in this report.

Fieldnotes and interviews were analyzed for themes related to the programme's progress. Most themes came directly from the questions listed in the question guide. Additional themes emerged from the interviews.

Fieldwork was conducted between December 13 and 22, 2010, a schedule that was logistically challenging because of the impending Christmas holiday and a national election that took place on December 13. The following day was declared a national holiday.

Findings

The consensus on the part of everyone I talked to is that the IFMDP has fallen short of meeting its objectives. The programme has not led to the development of any sustained alternative livelihoods and there is scant evidence that it has encouraged farmers to abandon marijuana cultivation. Equally important, the programme has not developed a functioning integrated forestry management process. It does not appear that the participatory or collaborative assumptions behind the programme have been realized or embraced by all stakeholders. Although this is discouraging, it may not be unexpected considering the complex environmental, economic and social context in which this programme was implemented.

The larger context: structural economic change and marginalisation

Perhaps the most significant reason for the programme's limited progress is due to the apparent disconnect between the extent of agricultural-led deforestation, the structural conditions that encourage it and the limited scope and resources of the IFMDP. The use of forest resources for non-sustainable activities, and most importantly, the intensive cultivation of marijuana, is pervasive and driven in part by structural changes in the nation's economy. Trade liberalization has drastically curtailed export agriculture and made it difficult for farmers to compete against imported food, employment opportunities are limited and emigration to Europe and North America has become increasingly restricted. Supporting agricultural alternatives does not seem to be a government priority. These conditions have left many young Vencentians with few options.

Although marijuana cultivation is fraught with risks, it has provided an important source of income for significant numbers of rural and urban households. As a representative of one of the nation's utilities and a stakeholder in the IFMDP commented, "There is nothing else. They don't grow banana. They don't grow vegetables. Those days are gone. When you see them, what do you say to them? What do you do if you are the government? What percentage of people are you going to lock up? It's not an easy thing."

As this quote implies, there isn't any reliable, large-scale source of employment in the nation's formal economy capable of absorbing the numbers of Vencentians requiring work. The informal economy, and in this case, growing an illicit crop is, for some, the best hope of making a living. It is within this context that the IFMDP must be viewed.

Key indicators of the programme's status

- The Forestry User Groups (FUGs)
 - There is no alternative livelihood project currently in place for either FUG.
 - Some members of both forest user groups are cultivating marijuana. Some had stopped but recently started cultivating again.
 - Some members have left the groups and membership has not increased.
 - No capacity building exercises were mentioned.

- Livelihood activities proposed by the Friends of the Environment in Chateaubelair remain stalled. Little, if any progress has been made.
- Building has begun on the packaging and storage facility for the Keepers of the Environment charcoal project in Greggs.
- Temporary work on watershed reforestation has provided income for members of both FUGs.
- Community meetings that include other IFMDP stakeholders appear almost nonexistent.
- Some additional sources of funding have been approved and in some cases allocated for FUG projects. In some cases funding seems to be constrained by bureaucratic hurdles and lack of follow through.
- The FUGS have recently had some involvement with the Environmental Watershed Project, another effort aimed at rural livelihoods.
- The Programme Management Unit (PMU)
 - The programme manager has assumed increasing responsibilities within Forestry and appears to have limited support for IFMDP tasks.
 - There seems to be a lack of integration and communication between the PMU and Forestry.
 - The working relationship between the programme director and community liaison is strained by different interpretations of the liaison's role and responsibility.
- Forestry
 - There are different degrees of buy in among Forestry personnel.
 - Some forestry personnel feel excluded from the IFMDP.
 - Forestry personnel were not clear on what their role is vis a vis the IFMDP.
 - Foresters have not benefitted from capacity building exercises.

- Foresters identified the watershed reforestation projects as an IFMDP accomplishment.
- The Programme Steering Committee (PSC)
 - The PSC has not attracted new stakeholders.
 - No representative of either FUG are on the steering committee.
 - Stakeholders appear to have waning degrees of commitment to the programme.
 - The PSC does not appear to be providing overall direction for the program

The current status of marijuana cultivation

One interviewee believed that marijuana cultivation was not expanding and had perhaps decreased due in part to the danger in trafficking the crop between islands. Several other interviewees disagreed with this view arguing instead that there may be as many as 3000 marijuana growers in St. Vincent. They commented that neither Vincy Pac nor Hurricane Tomas in 2010 had done much to deter marijuana cultivation. Instead, they contended that crop losses from these events created scarcity and increased the price for marijuana, thus encouraging an even greater commitment to its cultivation. Foresters underlined their assessment of whether marijuana cultivation had increased by pointing out their office window to visible marijuana fields on Mt. St. Andrews. When asked about marijuana cultivation on the Leeward side of Soufriere they explained that they do not patrol that area. As one commented, “We don’t go there. It’s out of our league.”

Foresters believed that some farmers were aware of the environmental costs of farming in the forest but they did not think that this awareness necessarily translated into farmers employing more sustainable practices. One commented that when confronted by foresters farmers simply shift their garden somewhere further up the mountain. Another forester commented, “Marijuana farmers appreciate and understand what we’re telling them but it comes down to bread and butter.”

Members of both forest user groups, the Keepers of the Environment and Friends of the Environment, reported that some of their members had returned to farming marijuana.

Stakeholders expressed conflicting expectations for the programme

Discussions with various stakeholders suggest that they have different expectations for the IFMDP or at least different priorities in terms of their expectations. They also believed that other stakeholders' expectations were different than theirs. This was apparent in terms of expectations regarding programme accomplishments, alternative livelihoods and participatory processes.

Only the foresters and the PMU manager seemed to identify integrated forestry management as an expectation. FUG members' expectations were focused on achieving meaningful progress on various projects but foresters identified this as an important expectation as well.

As John identified in his 2006 report the utility companies wanted to see improvements to watershed management by the Forest User Groups as a condition of their "payment for environmental services." This was reiterated in my discussions with the utility company representatives. They wanted to see measurable, concrete results and were disappointed that there were none. They seemed less cognizant of or concerned about developing participatory processes, and it wasn't clear what, if any expectations they had regarding the development of longer-term livelihood projects.

An issue that seemed to underlie some interviews was the question of what constitutes an alternative livelihood and what the role of the IFMDP is in developing alternative livelihoods. The PMU manager and forest rangers felt that FUG members had significantly different expectations regarding the programme's role in delivering alternative livelihoods. They expressed concern that marijuana farmers, and specifically, members of the FUGs believed that the IFMDP would provide alternative livelihoods if they abandoned marijuana cultivation. As a forester commented, "they're under the impression that forestry was going to give them a fish rather than teach them to fish." However, the PMU manager and foresters expressed some sympathy for farmers suggesting that realistically the only way to get men to abandon marijuana cultivation would be through the creation of viable, sustainable alternatives.

These differences in expectations suggest that the programme stakeholders have different perceptions about the programmes's objectives and the assumptions those

objectives are based on. These differences were also expressed in how stakeholders perceived their role and responsibilities.

There is confusion about stakeholders' roles and responsibilities

As implied by differences in stakeholder expectations, there is also confusion regarding different stakeholders' and staff members' roles and responsibilities. Interviews with VINLEC and CWSA representatives as well as other stakeholders suggests that the two utilities see their role and responsibility primarily in terms of the government mandate that they fund 40% of the programme as 'payment for environmental services.' While representatives of both utilities acknowledged their responsibility in maintaining the forest and contributing to the programme both expressed reservations about how their contribution was used. They expressed the concern that their investment might only be supporting administrative salaries since they were unaware of any concrete results.

Neither utility seemed to have embraced or engaged in the participatory process underlying the programme. Neither utility regularly sends representatives to steering committee or community meetings, and other stakeholders were quick to point out that the utilities determined which watersheds would be targeted for reforestation without consultation with other stakeholders. One of the utilities had tried withholding payments to the IFMDP in order to send a message that they wanted to see results.

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Foresters expressed frustration regarding their relationship to the IFMDP. They explained that their role and responsibilities to the programme had never been fully explained and discussed. Foresters indicated that there was some confusion regarding their role as forestry enforcement officers and the expectation that they should also be working with marijuana farmers on alternative livelihoods projects.

Interviews with both the programme manager and the community liaison indicate that they perceive the role of the community liaison differently. The community liaison sees himself as working for the forest user groups while the programme manager and other members of the PSC perceive him as a Forestry employee. As such, he is perceived as

putting the interests of marijuana farmers above Forestry's. From the community liaison's perspective, he is in an untenable situation. He does not believe the PMU director and Forestry personnel understand the sensitive and potentially tenuous nature of his position. He was hired because of his experience with the marijuana economy and because he has the social capital to work closely with marijuana growers. As a result, he has the trust of many farmers and is able to mobilize them for the programme.

The community liaison also complained that there is little follow through or commitment on the part of Forestry. As an example, he explained that Forestry personnel do not come to forest user group community meetings. "They always have an excuse."

The PMU director expressed concern that the community liaison was taking too much of the lead in his work with the FUGs, particularly with the Keepers of the Environment in Greggs. As a consequence, the emergence of community leaders was being held back. He suggested that the community liaison should be more involved in cultivating leadership than leading. In response to this critique the community liaison resigned from membership in the Greggs group. Another concern was that the community liaison was, to some extent, benefiting personally from his position at the expense of the programme.

Both the PMU director and Forestry personnel were concerned that members of the two FUGs might not be getting accurate information because of differences between the community liaison and director and their lack of on-going communication.

Interviews with members of the FUGs suggest that the community liaison is someone they count on for assistance. A member of the Greggs group explained how the community liaison had helped during the group's formation by helping with paperwork and building morale. He mentioned that the community liaison acts as a "filter" since the group has no representation on the Programme Steering Committee. He said group members were comfortable relating to him. He mentioned that group members are shy and that they depend to some degree on the community liaison to speak for them. Likewise, a member of the Friends of the Environment felt that the community liaison had tried his best and that he had been particularly helpful in getting the group registered with the government and drafting a constitution. Another member of the same FUG wasn't certain the community liaison was still involved in the IFMDP.

Unfortunately, as a result of these differences there is almost no communication between the IFMDP director and the community liaison. It is beyond the limits of this assessment to examine this situation in detail, but it would be disingenuous to blame it for the shortcomings of the IFMDP. It seems more likely, that this issue is symptomatic of more fundamental issues identified in this report including the enormity of the problem the IFMDP is charged with addressing, the disconnect between the programme's participatory rhetoric and the exclusion of FUG members from the Programme Steering Committee, the lack of tangible benefits, and the lack of any capacity building training, and specifically training on community-based resource management and community organizing.

Dissimilarities in expectations, and confusion about roles and responsibilities suggest that distinctions in cultural, social, political and economic capital also affected stakeholders' ability to work together as an integrated program. These differences were manifested by significant discrepancies in power and authority. Examples include the exclusion of FUG members from the steering community, the FUG member's mention that FUG members are "shy," and differences in how the community liaison and the programme manager interpreted the community liaison's role and responsibilities. Given the variations in power and authority among stakeholders, differences in expectations and confusion regarding roles and responsibilities could be expected.

There have been few tangible benefits

It was acknowledged by everyone interviewed that the programme had not resulted in tangible outcomes or benefits. Representatives of both utility companies expressed disappointment that there had been no concrete results. As one explained, "When you invest in a project and don't see anything coming from it, it is disappointing." A forester expressed a similar view: "If you're looking for a success story, it was not a success story. In order to get something to work, you need to see something, you need to see tangible results and it has not borne fruit." Marijuana cultivation in the forest has not decreased, marijuana farmers have not abandoned their holdings to develop alternative livelihood strategies and members of the two user groups have not achieved any sustained income from their involvement with the programme.

None of the projects proposed by the Keepers of the Environment or the Friends of the Environment are operational, and with the exception of a few short-lived income-

generating projects, no group members are earning income from programme initiatives. The exceptions have been the selling of charcoal for a brief period and a landscaping contract for the Fisheries Complex in downtown Kingstown by members of the Keepers of the Environment, and a few opportunities for members of both FUGs to work for Forestry on thinning or reforestation projects.

Proposed alternative livelihood projects have been marred by numerous false starts and delays. Several of these incidents seem to lack sufficient explanation, a shortcoming that does not fit with the programme's participatory rhetoric. The two user groups have waited months, if not years, for seemingly simple agreements from government including "letters of comfort" that would provide a kind of understanding necessary to allow a project to move forward. The Friends of the Environment have been waiting for such an agreement so that they can use a partial of government controlled land. The Keepers of the Environment finally received a letter allowing them to build a charcoal packaging plant after their parliamentary representative interceded on their behalf. Opportunities for supplementary funding have been similarly derailed by inaction and lack of support.

The Keepers of the Environment in Greggs initiated two separate projects: the pavement project, a proposed forest hiking trail for tourists, and a charcoal making enterprise intended to sell packaged charcoal to supermarkets and possibly for export. Although progress was made on both of these efforts neither of them was operational in late 2010. Of the two, the charcoal making enterprise had made the most progress. By late 2010 a subcontractor was building the foundation for the charcoal packaging and storage facility.

The pavement project was viewed as an opportunity to bring the benefits of ecotourism to the Greggs community. Local men had begun building the trail and had been trained as tour guides. However, according to members of the group, work was suddenly stopped and although no reason was given, members believe it was due to a change in heart by Forestry.

The Friends of the Environment, the Chateaubelair forest users group, has experienced fewer direct improvements or steps toward livelihood alternatives than the group in Greggs. For several years the Friends of the Environment group has been trying to get land from the government for a Colubrina tree plantation for Mauby. Members completed a feasibility study had been completed and a project proposal was written and

approved. Sometime after this members learned that the government was considering using the land for a quarry instead. At the time of this assessment the group was attempting to secure funds for a river clean up including a stipend for participants. Members were concerned that an outside NGO had become involved and that they had lost control of the project.

Interviewees suggested that the Friends of the Environment have suffered in part because North Leeward has been neglected for years and because of the political affiliation of some group members.

The lack of tangible benefits appears to have directly impacted FUG membership and encouraged men to continue or return to marijuana farming. As one FUG member explained, "A lot of guys not coming. They used to get a little something from Forestry for working but now they're in the hills."

There is some evidence that members of both FUGs may get additional support for projects through their involvement with community efforts outside the IFMDP. In Greggs, some members are involved in a project sponsored by the Environmental Watershed Project to revive the manufacture of products made from bamboo and some are involved in organizing the community's sports teams.

Proposed alternative livelihoods projects are inadequate given the scope of the problem

Stakeholders seemed to acknowledge that it would take more than the proposed alternative livelihoods projects to get farmers to abandon marijuana. Foresters felt that although they had made progress in interacting with farmers, there was little to sustain farmers' interests. They believed that the programme could only work with the creation of viable alternative incomes. They did not seem to think charcoal making or other proposed projects were sufficient. Other stakeholders made similar comments. The PMU manager stressed the need for sustainable livelihood alternatives and the CWSA representative said that the alternatives must be credible and suggested the government needed to make a more determined commitment to the programme.

The sense that there has been a lack of commitment to the programme on the part of the government was mentioned or alluded to in several interviews. Interviewees

suggested that the IFMDP, and in particular, the alternative livelihoods component of the program, was unsuccessful because it was never adequately funded.

Interviewees indicated the need for government to become more involved in the IFMDP both with funding the ACLP but also in providing a strategy for addressing the problems the IFMDP has assumed. It is unclear how the programme fits into the government's overall strategy for protecting the nation's watersheds and increasing employment opportunities for Vencentians. Several informants commented on the need for developing other agricultural crops and securing markets for farmers. However, others suggested that agriculture no longer appeared to be a central part of the government's development plans.

In spite of its participatory rhetoric, the programme remains top down

Members of the FUGs have not been included on the IFMDP Steering committee. This issue was identified in John's 2006 report and it has not changed. When asked about it, interviewees representing both FUGs stated that the PSC does not involve them. After seven years, this omission seems to defy the participatory premise on which the project is based. Community members cannot be expected to take a leading role if they are excluded from participating in the project's governing body.

From the FUGs perspective the programme lacks transparency. For example, FUG members could only guess at why various initiatives like the pavement and mauby projects were abandoned. This seems due to their exclusion from the PSC and a lack of on-going communication between the FUGs and PMU. FUG members indicated that other stakeholders and the PMU director rarely if ever come to their community meetings. It seems likely that this problem is exacerbated by the lack of communication between the community liaison and the PMU.

The programme seems to have lost momentum

As indicated above, there seem to be few opportunities for stakeholders to meet. The December workshop on participatory planning and management was poorly attended by some key stakeholders, most notably the utility companies and forest user groups; only one community member attended. Most participants were government employees. Members of the Friends of the Environment did not go because there was no stipend or reimbursement for transportation from North Leeward.

FUG members indicated that other stakeholders almost never attend their community meetings. A member of a FUG said that VINLEC and CWSA never participate. “We never see them.” The IFMDP programme manager was a more regular attendee during the initial stages of the programme but rarely attends meetings now. A member of one of the FUGs believed he simply had too many other responsibilities.

There has been a lack of capacity building

IFMDP stakeholders, including representatives of the utilities, the forestry department and FUGs all mentioned the need for capacity building. Clearly, as evidenced by the comments of VINLEC and CWSA representatives as well as by other stakeholders, the country’s utilities remain somewhat skeptical about the programme’s objectives and likelihood of achieving them. It is not clear whether they have bought into the assumptions behind the IFMDP. This suggests the need for training on participatory management processes - alternatives to top down management and demonstrations of community-based alternatives. The director of VINLEC’s travel to Costa Rica to observe how participatory approaches to forest management work there was an example of stakeholder training on participatory processes. Another is a FUG member’s participation in the Forest and Livelihoods workshop in Trinidad in May, 2009.

As John identified in his 2006 report, the FUGs required capacity building in practical skills directly related to their alternative livelihoods projects (chainsaw handling, nursery management, kiln production of charcoal etc). In interviews conducted for this assessment members of forest user groups expressed interest in getting practical skills in mobilizing their communities and developing alternative livelihoods. They mentioned the need for expertise in book keeping, record keeping and proposal writing as well as training in developing leadership skills, community mobilisation and group dynamics.

Foresters complained that they had not received any capacity building training. They, along with the FUG representatives, were the only stakeholders who expressed a need for capacity building around participatory processes. They explained their need for training on the assumptions behind integrated forestry management as well as training on working with community groups. They described the frustration of working under contradictory mandates. On the one hand being expected to enforce laws protecting the forest, and on the other working with people who are breaking those laws. As a forester commented, “Because here we are, we’re managing resources but we’re expected now

to change people's minds about how they're doing this thing. It's a participatory thing. So we need to be geared towards that. So we need training in those things."

The programme has not been marketed to the public

Stakeholders agreed that the IFMDP and its message about the importance of the nation's forest had not been sufficiently been adequately promoted. A forester commented that "the educational component, getting the programme out to the community and making people aware of it wasn't done. People don't know about it." He suggested that educational efforts should not be limited to marijuana farmers but should "get everyone involved, educate people so they pressure these guys, not just forestry." A stakeholder from a utility company expressed the need to get the story out as well, letting people know what they're getting for their investment, "People have to see it. People who are struggling have to see how this project benefits them."

Institutional arrangements

As implied and described throughout this discussion, the IFMDP has yet to achieve its goal of integrated management. This is evidenced by the absence of a clear process for accomplishing programme objectives and bringing programme projects to fruition. The status quo is unworkable. Informal arrangements have not benefited the FUGs. They require the security of more formal arrangements to move forward. These would demonstrate a commitment on the part of the government and other stakeholders.

Summary and Recommendations

1. It seems the programme was asked to do too much. Developing an integrated programme of forest management and facilitating livelihood alternatives for forest users, and specifically a growing population of marijuana farmers, is an enormous challenge that is structural in origin and of such magnitude that it requires a concerted, multi-faceted effort. The IFMDP should be but one facet of that response.
2. Developing a collaborative forestry management plan that integrates diverse stakeholders, ties resource users' livelihoods to watershed protection and mandates water-using utilities to support the development of these alternative livelihoods represents a major change from the way forests are typically

managed. It also represents an enormous challenge. Clearly such an effort requires that stakeholders involved understand the assumptions on which this model is based and dedicate themselves to achieving it. Given the differences IFMDP stakeholders expressed regarding programme expectations, roles and responsibilities it does not appear that such a shared understanding and sense of purpose exists.

The IFMDP Participatory Evaluation Workshop held 29 November - 01 December, 2010 was a useful step in addressing differences among stakeholders and in promoting a shared understanding of a participatory an integrated management plan.

3. Include representatives of the FUGs on the PSC. The PSC should be more inclusive and the PMU more transparent. Members of the FUGs felt excluded; they indicated that there was a lack of transparency and that decisions were top down. Including members of the FUGs on the PSC would be empowering and increase transparency. It might also alleviate some of the tension between the programme manager and community liaison since communication between FUG members and other stakeholders would be more direct.
4. Identify and work toward tangible benefits including more immediate benefits. As several interviewees made clear, it is unrealistic to expect members of the forest user groups to stay committed to the project if they are not realizing any benefits. It would seem to make sense for Forestry to secure funding for reforestation projects and contract with user groups to conduct the work. This could provide some benefit and income while longer-term goals including a sustainable integrated forestry management plan and sustainable livelihoods for forest users are being developed. Tangible benefits for other stakeholders should be included as well. For forestry, this might include additional training as described below.
5. Extend capacity building to include all stakeholders and to include capacity building on participatory processes. Representatives of every stakeholder group identified areas in which they needed additional expertise. In addition to providing valuable and necessary skills, these opportunities would keep people involved. This requires follow through; training should be reinforced with mentorship. It

- seems disingenuous to expect the members of the FUGs to successfully transition from the informal to formal economy without training and mentorship.
6. Develop alternative sources of funding for the ACLP and FUGs. John identified this as a critical need in his report, and it seems that a more concerted effort is necessary to make this happen. Although not entirely clear from my interviews, it appears that in a few cases, opportunities for funding may have been due to a lack of coordination on the part of those involved.
 7. Develop linkages with other similar projects and broaden the opportunities beyond forest-based alternatives. There are other livelihoods projects occurring in St. Vincent. What can be learned from these? What resources can be shared?
 8. In line with #6, work to bring more committed stakeholders to the table. Although identified as a critical need by John in 2006, no new members have joined the IFMDP PSC.
 9. Although seemingly contrary to some of the other lessons, it may be useful to determine to what degree various stakeholders can or want to be involved in the programme. For example, do representatives of VINLEC and CWSA need to be involved in all community-level activities?
 10. Develop a systematic and participatory means for monitoring the programme. There was no attempt to systematically capture baseline data prior to the implementation of the programme. This information could have been useful in measuring the programme's progress. Indicators or measures could have included the overall degree of deforestation as well as in the specific watersheds used for ganja cultivation by members of the FUGs and the two watersheds (Montreal and Colonarie) identified by the utility companies for reforestation. Before and after photographs of the areas would have provided visual evidence of change. Baseline information about the FUGs and members' livelihood strategies as well as some systematic record keeping on the various projects initiated and attempts to secure funding would have been useful for monitoring the project and identifying problems as they emerged.

Discussion

Several of the findings as well as the recommendations reported here were also mentioned in the summary document of the IFMDP Participatory Evaluation Workshop 29 November - 01 December, 2010. The participatory stakeholder identification and analysis process conducted as part of the workshop identified several of similar points including a limited understanding of participatory processes, differences in stakeholders' perceptions regarding the benefits or results of the programme, and differences between stakeholders in terms of authority and power. The workshop also identified capacity building as an issue but only in terms of training in general project management. In interviews conducted after the workshop as part of this assessment foresters and a FUG member identified the need for capacity building in participatory processes as well.

The IFMDP Participatory Evaluation Workshop's recommendations paralleled those mentioned here including: 1) greater inclusion of community groups in programme management – particularly “since they are the one who have a better understanding of what is happening in the field,” 2) an increased emphasis on capacity building including capacity building in participatory processes for all stakeholders and capacity building in particular skill sets for specific stakeholder groups, 3) project development in terms of refining project goals and objectives, more clearly defined roles and responsibilities and collaboration with other programs that could complement the IFMDP programme, 4) more effective communication aimed at raising public awareness of the IFMDP.

Conclusion

Some of the findings identified in this report are discouraging. However, as mentioned previously, they are not surprising. Attempting to develop and implement innovative resource management approaches that integrate disparate stakeholders with significant differences in social, economic and political capital into a shared management system that recognizes the importance of providing livelihood opportunities for resource users is challenging at best. Doing it in the context of St. Vincent's economic transformation and the grassroots response that has followed is even more so. Nevertheless, it is critical for St. Vincent and the wider Caribbean to take on this challenge. Fundamental changes in the global economy and the accelerating affects of climate change require new ideas and efforts that build on the resilience and creativity of the people. As such, the

difficulties in implementing the IFMDP should be seen as lessons that require a continued innovation and negotiation. This is an effort worth the investment.

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