

Reports of networking and mentoring

2014

CARIBBEAN NATURAL
RESOURCES INSTITUTE
(CANARI) – Report - Meeting
on Marketing Natural
Resource Based Enterprises

Akosua Dardaine Edwards

**[REPORT ON MEETING –
MARKETING NATURAL
RESOURCE BASED SMALL
ENTERPRISES]**

This report gives a brief outline of the discussions and findings of the meeting held in February at the Brasso Seco Visitor Facility hosted by CANARI

Introduction

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) has initiated a project that seeks to influence policy and practice to support the development of rural livelihoods in Trinidad and Tobago based on the sustainable use of natural resources to contribute to poverty reduction and rural development. This project is funded by the JB Fernandes Memorial Trust I. This is the third phase of the project that aims to test a tool that will assist actors in rural communities to develop small enterprises based on the sustainable use of natural resources.

The overall objective of the current phase of the project is to influence policy and practice to support the development of rural livelihoods in Trinidad and Tobago based on the sustainable use of natural resources to contribute to poverty reduction and rural development.

Throughout the various stages of the project the participants have been able to identify their natural resources and the products and enterprises that can be developed based on the sustainable use of those resources. They have assessed the feasibility of those enterprises and have linked with agencies that can support the development of those enterprises. Some of the groups participating in the project have also been able to develop business plans. Some of the groups involved have successfully launched small enterprises while some have not. This workshop forms part of this phase which allows groups to discuss the challenges and lessons learnt on marketing their small enterprises or groups.

Participants

Seven groups participated in the meeting, additionally there were representatives from the Ministry of Community Development, Community Development Fund (CDF) and the Inter-American Institute for Agriculture (IICA) were also present and participated in the question and answer sessions. (See Appendix 1)

Method

The meeting was held at the Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee Facility on February 14th 2014, and allowed for active participation by all attendants. The meeting was informal and relaxed by intention to permit open and detailed discussion of the challenges that the participants currently face in marketing their products and services.

The meeting commenced with all participants identifying all the resources that they currently possess, whether in use or not, that would allow for the promotion and development of a sustainable enterprise. The intention of this approach was to put the participants' in a mode of creation, of thinking to "use what they have to create what they want" rather than focusing on what is missing and make a plan to work towards acquiring what they need.

The basics of marketing were also touched on and the spotlight placed on using social media and branding to highlight the groups' products and services. A few group exercises such as the Attention, Interest, Desire and Action (AIDA) technique, listing the challenges of Natural Product Marketing and the ten most effective marketing tactics for natural products were conducted on developing and formulating marketing programmes. Each group also drew their value chain for their existing processes or intended upcoming ones. The session closed off with a question and answer session on the challenges of marketing and the running of a business.

Key findings

- All participating groups identified the challenges associated with taking their project forward to implementation stage with a strong focus on the lack of marketing capacity and resources.
- Many of the groups boast of products or services which can translate into a sustainable enterprise.
- There is need for a structured approach to measuring targets.
- In areas like Brasso Seco, there is little or no access to the Internet which makes social media marketing a challenge.
- Some groups such as BEAT and BAPA are uncertain of the products and services to market and sell.
- A couple of organisations currently have not articulated and agreed to a clear and compelling vision and as such it is difficult to move forward to the marketing stage

Findings and results

Group	Challenges	Suggested Solutions
<p>1. Aripo Youth Development Organisation (AYDO)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Significant reduction in group members since inception. The membership now stands at 16 which is over 50% less than at inception. 2. Limited human resources for carrying out tours and related activities due to the reduction in the membership since inception. 3. No official documents or permission for the use of the Leroy Clarke Estate. Word of mouth seemed to be sufficient for the members and there is no urgency in getting any formal documents and therefore not a top priority. 4. There are many areas that can generate revenue, however a formalised set of areas for consistent revenue generation have not yet been agreed upon (hikes, tours, sale of agricultural products). 5. No formal price list for current tours and therefore this was done on a mainly ad hoc basis. 6. Limited capacity – Keeping financial records, product development, branding, leadership and marketing, many of the members have little or no work experience or leadership experience thus making it more challenging to run an organisation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The current tours to be standardised – it is recommended that a price list and package is done and formalised immediately to ensure standardisation of tour packages. 2. Steps put in place to obtain formal permission to use the Leroy Clarke Estate, the group is being urged to meet with Mr. Clarke and his representatives at his earliest convenience to formalise the use of the Estate for tours and other related activities. 3. Training in financial records management and social media marketing. 4. The business plan must now be used and followed. It gives a guide on the different revenue streams and ways to achieve them and the relevant and appropriate road map. 5. The use of a mentor and continued training and development can assist the group in gaining the necessary skills and capacity. 6. The use of social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) in the interim to promote the tours. For the use of social media there may need to be some training involved. 7. Setting up of a website to highlight the group and its

Group	Challenges	Suggested Solutions
<p>2. Blanchisseuse Environmental Art Trust (BEAT)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conflicting vision of the members on what services and products to market and sell. Some members want to focus on art, others on sea moss related activities and others are not entirely sure. 2. No set and defined strategy agreed on the way forward. Some members want to focus on the proposed heritage centre and others want to focus on art and the sale of art 3. No physical space agreed upon to sell products that are ready for market such as the colouring books, t-shirts, cups and bags. 4. Dwindling membership base therefore lack of human resources to carry out activities within the group 	<p>activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A firm decision to be made by the executive on the products and services to be marketed and sold and the vision of the organisation. 2. Training on social media and traditional marketing methods 3. A temporary physical place chosen for group activities. The members of the group suggested the use of Ms Arveon Debisette’s home as a base to sell and market their products.* 4. Arrangements to be made to get the books in local book stores and tourist destinations such as the cruise ship complex 5. Relook at group’s strategy on the way forward. 6. This group has to basically go back to the drawing board and decide how and if they want to move forward. <p>*Following this meeting, it was decided that this place was unsuitable due to its location. Another location was identified within the community but again, there was no corporation from the owner and had to be changed. At this time, the group have decided to relook at its vision and all sales and marketing of products within the community will be on hold until further notice.</p>

Group	Challenges	Suggested Solutions
<p>3. Speyside Eco-Marine Park Rangers (SEMPR)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No formal agreement made with boat owners for tours which may reduce the operational and cost to customer of the tours. Within the group there are members who own boats and this can be made available however this has not been done to date 2. No dedicated office or space from which to work from. Presently the members work out of their homes and if and when needed either meet at homes or look for a common space within the community to have workshops and meetings. 3. Many of the leadership and Executive decisions and roles are left to one person. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start a small advertising and marketing drive in the area by erecting signs and linking with existing tour guides and groups* 2. Updating the websites, Facebook page, setting up Twitter and Instagram accounts with direct links to all three – a member can update these periodically with a one day training in social media marketing 3. Look for a temporary place to allow for meetings and customer interface until a permanent place is established 4. Make immediate use of the business plan as a road map 5. Membership to get more involved and active in training and leadership roles. 6. Providing a mentor to guide the group in running an effective business. <p>*Since the inception of these meetings, the group has completed its brochures and will pilot one tour over the weekend of the 18th April at the Speyside Music Festival which brings quite a number of tourists to the area.</p>
<p>4. Brasso Seco Morne La Croix Farmers' Association (BSMLCFA)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The main challenge is that the group had no specific product, or had not decided on what specific product or service to market. The options being put forward for choice are cocoa and coffee. *Note that due to a change in 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group to decide what is the vision, product/service to be produced, marketed and sold

Group	Challenges	Suggested Solutions
	<p>membership and vision, the original ideas of the group to focus on organic farming has been subsequently revised to focus on the specific areas of cocoa and coffee (production of high grade organic cocoa and coffee)</p>	
<p>5. Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee (BSTAC)</p>	<p>1. Limited resources to meet the demands for their products such as the ground cocoa and coffee, which includes production and marketing resources</p>	<p>1. Increase the capacity (human and technical) of production of cocoa and coffee to meet the demand and also to increase revenue</p>
<p>6. Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association (BFMLA)</p>	<p>1. No product or service yet to bring to the market – still working on the completion of the smoke house facility.</p>	<p>1. Group to decide what is the vision, product/service to be produced, marketed and sold</p> <p>2. Aggressive marketing to be done on the imminent conclusion of the smokehouse</p> <p>3. Group to use the smokehouse product as a way to generate revenue through the sale of the product in at least one shop/facility outside of the community.</p> <p>Since the inception of the training, a date of 24th April 2014 has been set for the completion of the smokehouse which also involves a market survey to be completed. Additionally the criteria for membership of the group has also been reviewed to ensure that there are active members recruited within the community</p>
<p>7. Blanchisseuse</p>	<p>1. No product or service finalised.</p>	<p>1. Group to decide what is</p>

Group	Challenges	Suggested Solutions
Aquaculture and Producers' Association (BAPA)	<p>The group is still formalising the training for the aquaculture and thinking about agriculture as a complementary activity to the aquaculture (products such as corn, celery, chive and local seasonings)</p> <p>2. Limited consistency of members' participation in group activities – the representative kept insisting that the members are not committed due to the lack of immediate funds or employment.</p>	<p>the vision, product/service to be produced, marketed and sold</p> <p>2. Group to start its activities when vision has been decided</p> <p>*The group has had numerous training and capacity building activities; the group also has land available to it and has to commence its activities!</p> <p>*Since the inception of the meetings the group has commenced agricultural production on a small scale- seasonings have been planted as well as corn. This is expected to be ready for harvest in December 2014 The main challenge with this group is the lack of will by its members mainly due to the fact that the cash effect is not immediate</p>

NOTE: The challenges put forward at the meeting, although not specifically about marketing, all have a direct and indirect impact on the groups' abilities to market and sell their products. Groups such as BEAT, BSMLSFA and BAPA who are still in the formative stages of deciding what product or service to market or have not decided on a specific product have challenges which may hinder or delay the process of selling, marketing and branding.

Next steps

- Follow up meetings with groups to determine other challenges and resources available
- Mentors for the groups, particularly for those who are ready and willing to move forward, that is, those with a clear vision and product and service.

- Accountability sessions at each meeting- this is a process which focuses on giving the members tasks and holding them accountable for it being done by a set time determined and set by them. The other group members are accountability partners who support and ensure that they carry out their set tasks. The tasks are then reported at the following meeting session.

Conclusion

Many of the challenges reported, go way beyond the marketing scope, however they were brought up at this meeting and gave an overview of the challenges and other areas which may need a focus on capacity building.

Akosua Dardaine Edwards



Fernandes Rural Livelihoods project
Brasso Seco Visitor's Facility, Brasso Seco
14th February 2014

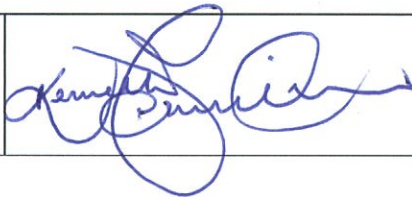
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**Fernandes Rural Livelihoods project
Brasso Seco Visitor's Facility, Brasso Seco
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Fernandes Rural Livelihoods project
Brasso Seco Visitor's Facility, Brasso Seco
14th February 2014

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Appendix 2 – Resources identified by participants that can be used to enhance their product/service

<i>Name of Group</i>	<i>Resource Identified</i>
1. Aripo Youth Development Organisation (AYDO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tours to highest peaks in Trinidad, Aripo Caves and the other natural rivers and trails within the area • Access to land to cultivate cocoa • Leroy Clarke’s Estate (one of the country’s most renowned and internationally acclaimed artist)
2. Blanchisseuse Environmental and Art Trust (BEAT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local art and artists • Colouring books • Land and access to labour • Business plan and related training
3. Speyside Eco Marine Park Rangers (SEMPR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to reefs in Speyside, Little Tobago, Dive Masters, local forests and eco sites
4. Brasso Seco Morne La Croix Farmers’ Association (BSMLCFA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cocoa • Land • Training in other products • Tree seedlings • Citrus seedlings
5. Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee (BSTAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packaged cocoa and coffee and related by products(ice cream) already being sold • 35 workers • Hiking trails • Other food for sale (pastelles, sugar cane etc) • Visitor Facility
6. Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association (BFMLA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed fisherfolk • Seasonal fish • Access to Land to complete Smokehouse

7. Blanchisseuse Aquaculture and Producers Association
(BAPA)

- Access to land for agriculture and aquaculture
- Labour from the area

Appendix 3

Challenges for Natural Product Marketing for Community Groups and Small Enterprises

- 1. Pricing – the issues between “natural” and “organic”, many find it difficult to justify the higher prices for these products**
- 2. Budget Limitations – Community Groups have limited budgets**
- 3. Lack of Experiences in marketing these products**
- 4. Understanding who the customer is**
- 5. Rapid growth and demand – unable to keep pace with it**

Most effective marketing tactics for natural products

- 1. Websites**
- 2. Facebook**
- 3. TV**
- 4. Email Advertising**
- 5. Print Advertising (brochures, flyers)**
- 6. Event Marketing**
- 7. Buzz Marketing**
- 8. Search Engine Optimisation**

2014

CARIBBEAN NATURAL
RESOURCES INSTITUTE
(CANARI) – Report - Meeting
on Team Building for Group
Management of Small
Enterprises

Akosua Dardaine Edwards

**[REPORT ON MEETING –
TEAM BUILDING FOR GROUP
MANAGEMENT OF SMALL
ENTERPRISES]**

This report gives a brief outline of the discussions and findings of the meeting held in March at the Aripo Catholic School hosted by CANARI

Introduction

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) has initiated a project that seeks to influence policy and practice to support the development of rural livelihoods in Trinidad and Tobago based on the sustainable use of natural resources to contribute to poverty reduction and rural development. This project is funded by the JB Fernandes Memorial Trust I. This is the third phase of the project that aims to test a tool that will assist actors in rural communities to develop small enterprises based on the sustainable use of natural resources.

The overall objective of the current phase of the project is to influence policy and practice to support the development of rural livelihoods in Trinidad and Tobago based on the sustainable use of natural resources to contribute to poverty reduction and rural development.

Throughout the various stages of the project the participants have been able to identify their natural resources and the products and enterprises that can be developed based on the sustainable use of those resources. They have assessed the feasibility of those enterprises and have linked with agencies that can support the development of those enterprises. Some of the groups participating in the project have also been able to develop business plans. Some of the groups involved have successfully launched small enterprises while some have not. This workshop forms part of this phase which allows groups to discuss the challenges and lessons learnt on team building for group management of small enterprises.

Participants

Seven groups participated in the meeting (See Appendix 1).

Method

The meeting was held at the Aripo Catholic School and allowed for active participation by all attendants. The meeting was informal and relaxed by intention to permit open and detailed discussion of the challenges that the participants currently face in building and managing an effective team.

The meeting commenced with an exercise which was designed to test the communication process amongst members within the group. Groups were divided into pairs and sat with their backs to each other. One person was given a picture of a shape (rectangle, circle etc) and the other person given a piece of paper and marker. The person with the shape gave verbal instructions to their partner on how to draw the shape without actually saying what the shape is. After they compared the shape with the drawings, the following questions were then considered:

- How well did the first person describe the shape?
- How well did the second person interpret the instructions?
- Were there any problems with both sending and receiving parts of the communication process?

Groups were asked to identify the issues that they are facing in building and sustaining a well functioning team. Groups were also introduced to the ten qualities of an effective team player and they were asked to identify whether their members and executives possess any of these qualities.

Effective qualities of an entrepreneur were also discussed.

Key findings

- Participants discussed the need to relook at their bylaws and membership guidelines
- Members of the meeting were happy to learn about the qualities of an effective team.
- Members felt the need to now focus on reintroducing its members to its overall vision.
- There are a number groups and not teams!

Findings and results

Group	Challenges	Suggested Solutions
1. Aripo Youth Development Organisation (AYDO)	1. Reduction in the number of group members since inception leaves the bulk of tasks to a small number of	1. A recruitment drive to attract new members to the team. 2. Partnerships

Group	Challenges	Suggested Solutions
	<p>individuals some of who may not have either the time or the capacity.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Limited human resources for carrying out tours and related activities due to the reduction in the membership since inception. 3. Communication within group members limited to only telephone due to limited access to the Internet and becomes a challenge due to either lack of phone credit or coverage 	<p>developed with other groups involved in the project to share ideas, provide support and form strategic links.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Measures put in place to pay for phone credit out of proceeds of tours, communication with authorities on the status of improved Internet access within the community. 4. Capacity building and training on governance and leadership of CBO's. 4. Revisit group's bylaws to determine or include provisions for non active members.
<p>2. Blanchisseuse Environmental Art Trust (BEAT)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consistently losing members who either form other groups within the community or move to other parts of the country 2. Quite a few non active members 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clear and compelling vision to be articulated among members on a consistent basis. 2. Relook at constitution to make provisions for non active members. Recruit new members.

Group	Challenges	Suggested Solutions
3. Speyside Eco- Marine Park Rangers (SEMPR)	1. There are only a small group, usually of the same members that carry out the group's activities and attend the training sessions.	1. Executive members to relook at team set up and dynamics. The executive team should be more accountable to ensure that members are kept up to date. This can include periodic reporting informally to them.
4. Brasso Seco Morne La Croix Farmers' Association (BBMLCFA)	1. Team members at times lack commitment and will. 2. Core group carrying out activities due to the lack of commitment on members' part.	1. Elections to be held to determine new executive (to be held on April 14 th 2014) 2. New criteria for group membership
5. Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee (BSTAC)	1. Many activities are voluntary and therefore may be delayed in favour of higher priority commitments and activities that earn immediate income.	1. Increase revenue streams to at least pay a stipend to ensure further commitment to tasks.
6. Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association (BFMLA)	1. Fisherfolk not attending meetings or getting actively involved in the creation of the smokehouse facility.	1. Smokehouse facility to continue with executive finding creative ways to communicate the process and progress conclusion of the

Group	Challenges	Suggested Solutions
		smokehouse.
7. Blanchisseuse Aquaculture and Producers' Association (BAPA)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Core group of members who remain active. 2. Due to limited funds, members are requested to carry out tasks on a voluntary basis, some of them are not economically placed to do this and therefore many of the activities needed to move the projects forward are delayed or stalled. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to use the core members to build up activities of the group rather than relying on recruiting members who are inactive. Once this is done revenue will start coming in and other members can be paid a stipend. 2. Relook constitution to determine qualities and characteristics of group members recruited.

Next steps

- Follow up meetings with groups to determine other challenges and resources available
- Mentors for the groups, particularly for those who are ready and willing to move forward, that is, those with a clear vision and product and service.

Conclusion

Building a new team is usually a challenge; it becomes even more challenging when little or no criteria is put in place to determine the character and characteristics of the individuals that ought to be chosen to be included in the team or executive. The main challenges of the members put forward include the lack of support and commitment of a number of members and how their

existing constitution or group bylaws will allow for recruitment and change of non- functioning or members who lack commitment.

Akosua Dardaine Edwards



Fernandes 3 Team Building
Heights of Aripo Primary R.C School
8th March 2014

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Fernandes 3 Team Building
Heights of Aripo Primary R.C School
8th March 2014

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Appendix 2: Challenges in building and maintaining effective teams

<i>Name of Group</i>	<i>Key challenges in building and maintaining an effective team</i>
1. Aripo Youth Development Organisation (AYDO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and retention of active team members • Limited leadership skills within group
2. Blanchisseuse Environmental and Art Trust (BEAT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of group members
3. Speyside Eco Marine Park Rangers (SEMPR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core group of members who carry out both activities and attend training
4. Brasso Seco Morne La Croix Farmers' Association (BSMLCFA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and retention of active team members
5. Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee (BSTAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the demand for their products and services members are asked to provide voluntary service, time and economic status may not permit and delay activities
6. Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association (BFMLA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fisherfolk do not attend meetings
7. Blanchisseuse Aquaculture and Producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members prefer payment for activities

<i>Name of Group</i>	<i>Key challenges in building and maintaining an effective team</i>
Association (BAPA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retention of active members

2014

CARIBBEAN NATURAL
RESOURCES INSTITUTE
(CANARI) – Report - Meeting
on Financial Management for
Small Enterprises

Akosua Dardaine Edwards

**[REPORT ON MEETING –
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
FOR SMALL ENTERPRISES]**

This report gives a brief outline of the discussions and findings of the meeting held in March at the Speyside Facility hosted by CANARI

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The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) has initiated a project that seeks to influence policy and practice to support the development of rural livelihoods in Trinidad and Tobago based on the sustainable use of natural resources to contribute to poverty reduction and rural development. This project is funded by the JB Fernandes Memorial Trust I. This is the third phase of the project that aims to test a tool that will assist actors in rural communities to develop small enterprises based on the sustainable use of natural resources.

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Participants

Seven groups participated in the meeting (See Appendix 1).

Method

The meeting was held in Speyside, Tobago and allowed for active participation by all attendants. The session was packed with activities to allow for members to learn via doing. The meeting commenced with an overview of bookkeeping basics. The participants were then provided with an opportunity to complete an annual cash flow forecast for a group providing sales to the wider

community. The session ended with a discussion on the five keys to financial success for small enterprises. These included:

- Know your revenue by product and client
- Know your expenses (fixed and variable)
- Know what you need from your business- work smart rather than just hard
- Know your top three business goals
- Know your vision

Key Findings

- Members are familiar with the basics of bookkeeping
- Members are less familiar with cash flow forecasting and budgeting
- Few groups have audited financials but all have some form of record keeping and accountability in place
- Cash flow reports do not form part of many of the group’s reporting process, bank account balance reporting, profit and loss statements and accounting for grant funds form part of many of the group’s reporting cycle.
- Pricing and costing is a challenge for many groups

Findings and Results

Group	Challenges	Suggested Solutions
1. Aripo Youth Development Organisation (AYDO)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setting prices and costing services 2. Little or limited use of cash flow budgets and cash flow forecasts. 3. Limited bookkeeping and financial training received. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capacity building and training on price setting and costing and book keeping. 2. Use of cash flow reporting (template was forwarded to group after meeting)
2. Blanchisseuse Environmenta I Art Trust (BEAT)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Little or limited use of cash flow budgets and cash flow forecasts 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of cash flow reporting (template was forwarded to group after meeting)

Group	Challenges	Suggested Solutions
3. Speyside Eco-Marine Park Rangers (SEMPR)	1. Little or limited use of cash flow budgets and cash flow forecasts	1. Use of cash flow reporting (template was forwarded to group after meeting)
4. Brasso Seco Morne La Croix Farmers' Association (BSMLCFA)	1. No product or service yet so limited use of financial records to record revenue and costs 2. Lack of capacity for pricing and costing products and services.	1. Capacity building on (a) pricing and costing of products and services; (b) cash flow forecasting and budgeting; and, (c) financial reports.
5. Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee (BSTAC)	1. Limited use of cash flow budgets and forecasts for reporting and monitoring.	1. Use of cash flow reports (template given to group after meeting)
6. Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association (BFMLA)	1. Limited use of cash flow budgets and forecasts for reporting and monitoring	1. Use of cash flow reports (template given to group after meeting)
7. Blanchisseuse Aquaculture and Producers' Association (BAPA)	1. The group has recently begun putting things in place for building up their revenue streams with products and therefore have only grant funds to account for. Their challenge arises from the pricing and costing of these imminent products that will be sold in the	1. Capacity building on price setting, costing and cash flow reporting.

Group	Challenges	Suggested Solutions
	future.	

Next steps

- Send off cash flow template to all groups
- Monitor through mentors the method of financial reporting
- Capacity building on pricing, costing and cash flow reporting.

Conclusion

The groups have a great start on financial reporting due to the measure of responsibility put in place for accounting for grant funds however, the accounting for grant funds is separate and apart from measuring the performance of the groups businesses. For a proper overview of how a business is run it is recommended that members focus on financial reporting tools that will allow them to determine how the business is performing and to allow them to make strategic and operational decisions.

Akosua Dardaine Edwards



Fernandes 3 – Financial Management
'Y Zone' Centre – Speyside, Tobago
26th March 2014

NAME	ORGANISATION	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	EMAIL ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
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Treverlon Baptiste	Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association	Lp#208 Paria Main Road Blanchisseuse	868 322 6282	tbaptiste24@gmail.com	
Evon Ramoo	Aripo Youth Development Organisation	Heights of Aripo Via Arima	868 367 0688		
Janelle Martinez	Aripo Youth Development Organisation	Heights of Aripo Via Arima	868 376 9136		
Arveon Debisette	Blanchisseuse Aquaculture and Producers Association	Paria Main Road Blanchisseuse	868 769 4752/ 476 3096	arveondebisette2000@yahoo.com	
Susan Suchit	Brasso Seco Morne LaCroix Farmers' Association	School Street Brasso Seco	508 768-7987		
Alicia Madoo	B.S.T.A.C.	Brasso Seco	713 7380		



**Fernandes 3 – Financial Management
'Y Zone' Centre – Speyside, Tobago
26th March 2014**

Winston Maraj	Brasso Seco Morne LaCroix Farmers' Association	School Street Brasso Seco	868 715 9039	—	Winston Maraj
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Joslyn Lee Quay	Blanchisseuse Environmental and Art Trust	Upper Village Blanchisseuse	868 374 7520	joslee_56@outlook.com	Joslyn Lee Quay
Ken Fournillier	Blanchisseuse Environmental and Art Trust	Upper Village Blanchisseuse	868 687 8039	kfour32@hotmail.com	Ken Fournillier
Jace Bishop	speyside Eco MARINE Park Rangers	windward main road Speyside	344-2259	Jace.Bishop@dot-mail.com	Jace Bishop

Report on training session with community groups on establishing an effective Quality Management System for a small enterprise

Prepared by

Arnold Babwah

March 15th, 2014

Trinidad & Tobago

1 Introduction

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is managing a project that seeks to help four rural communities in Trinidad and Tobago to use natural resources sustainably to develop small enterprises. CANARI is working with eight (8) groups from four (4) rural communities. This is being funded by the JB Fernandes Memorial Trust I. The project has allowed the groups to identify the natural resources in their communities; assess feasibility of businesses based on the sustainable use of those natural resources; develop business plans (some of the groups). The groups are engaged in developing different products and services including cocoa and coffee products, ecotourism, agrotourism, aquaculture and fish processing to name a few. The aim of this phase of the project is for the groups to work together to come up with solutions for the challenges associated with different aspects of their businesses. One of those is quality of their products that are for sale.

2 Objectives

The objectives of the training session were as follows:

1. To obtain feedback from the participants on their current Quality Management Systems for their enterprises.
2. To provide guidelines to participants for establishing an effective Quality Management System for a small enterprise.

3 Participants

12 persons from seven community groups participated in the meeting. The list of participants is shown in Appendix 1.

4 Method

This training session was held in the community of Blanchisseuse at the Blanchisseuse Primary School on March 13th, 2013 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The objectives of the training session were as follows:

1. To obtain feedback from the participants on their current Quality Management Systems for their enterprises.
2. To provide guidelines to participants for establishing an effective Quality Management System for a small enterprise.

The training session was divided into three segments as follows:

The first segment enabled the groups to share information on their current status and experiences in developing quality systems for their enterprises.

The second segment focused on outlining the key steps to develop a quality management system for a small enterprise. Some of the sub topics dealt with in this segment were:

- definition of quality;
- benefits of producing a high quality product or service;
- factors that impact on producing a quality product/ service;
- definition and explanation of a Quality Management System;
- highlights of ISO 9001;
- developing a quality policy and quality objectives;

- steps in developing a Quality Management System and a supporting manual;
- and, how a Quality Management System is relevant to eco and agro Tourism.

The third segment was a practical component where the participants practiced the steps in developing a manual for a Quality Management System for a small enterprise. A PowerPoint Presentation was utilized to capture the participants' attention; other training tools such as group discussions/presentations, flip chart notes and suitable props were employed to enhance the delivery process. The 12 participants were divided into four groups with three persons each in group. Each group chose a business activity and the four business activities chosen were as follows: eco tourism, agrotourism, fish processing and manufacturing pepper sauce.

5 Findings

Based on the discussions in the first segment of the programme it was evident that the participants had a fair understanding of quality but more in terms of the end product and not so much on the holistic and systematic approach needed to produce a quality end product or service. The Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee which has been in existence for over thirteen (13) years had implemented some basic elements of quality in the form of trained Guides and seeking informal feedback from clients at the end of their tour. One encouraging aspect was that the groups were collaborating with a recognized developmental institution relevant to their activity. The following table shows the groups' perceptions on quality and the institutions they are collaborating with to improve their overall operations.

Table 1: Groups' perceptions on quality control and institutions from which technical assistance is being sought

No.	Name of Group	Feedback
1.	Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association	This group thought of quality more as a final product and not so much as a system which has to be designed and implemented to ensure production of a high quality final product. However, they are currently seeking assistance from the Fisheries Division and the Institute of Marine Affairs for training in product development and sustainable fishing methods.
2.	Aripo Youth Development Organisation	This group's perception of quality was offering a good service so that satisfied customers would tell other potential clients of their experience. They need to design a system to ensure consistency in quality service. They intend to seek further assistance from the Trinidad & Tobago Tourism Development Company for overall development.
3.	Blanchisseuse Aquaculture and Producers Association	This group's objective is to produce high quality agricultural crops and they are seeking guidance from the Ministry of Food Production and Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). The facilitator also suggested that they liaise with the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Company Ltd. (NAMDEVCO) which is a certifying body.

4.	Brasso Seco Morne LaCroix Farmers' Association	This group stated that monitoring and evaluation are necessary to achieve a quality final product. They are currently liaising with the Ministry of Food Production and the National Agricultural Marketing and Development Company Ltd. (NAMDEVCO) to assist the farmers.
5.	Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee	This group which has been in existence for over 10 years and have already implemented some quality control measures such as seeking feedback from customers on their tour experience and also had a suggestion box. From the workshop they recognized the importance of developing a quality system to ensure consistency in producing a high quality of service.
6.	Blanchisseuse Environmental and Art Trust	This group did not express any views on quality. Their major challenge is obtaining a suitable parcel of land for establishing a museum and Art Trust for Blanchisseuse.
7.	Speyside Eco Marine Park Rangers	This group's representative perceived quality as offering a good service. His group has not focused much on designing a system to ensure consistency in quality service. The group has been collaborating with YTEPP to ensure that their tour guides are well equipped to offer a good quality service.

The following table reveals the results of each group's discussions on developing a manual for a Quality Management System for a small enterprise.

Table 2: Groups' steps to developing a manual for a quality management system for a small enterprise

No.	Group	Description of exercise	Group's discussions & outputs
1.	Dexter Black Treverlon Baptiste Joslyn Lee Quay	Design a Quality Manual for a Smoked Fish Enterprise in Blanchisseuse	<p>Our activities include sourcing of fish, smoking the fish to produce a final product.</p> <p>We will target customers with a desire for traditional smoked fish, local supermarkets & export customers</p> <p>Our objective is to produce a high quality product for the local and export markets.</p> <p>Specific operational tasks include selecting, cleaning, processing, smoking & packaging of smoked fish.</p> <p>Quality Control Steps- Fish placed on ice to maintain quality, stainless steel tables & equipment used for processing, carefully maintained smokehouse, sealed packaging</p>

			room.
2.	Francis Francois Carl Fitzjames Jenessa De Ramos	Design a Quality Manual for an Eco Tourism Enterprise & Cocoa Rehabilitation in Brasso Seco	<p>Our activities include estate maintenance & tours, historical & cultural communication during tours.</p> <p>We will target those people with a strong interest in history & eco-tourism. We want visitors to come to Brasso Seco to experience life as it used to be and to have an authentic and unique experience.</p> <p>Our objective is to provide trained tour guides, safe tours and to ensure the highest standards are met to maintain a clean environment.</p> <p>Specific operational tasks include marketing of our services, using post-harvest technologies and training of our tour guides in the tour and hospitality skills. Specific people will be appointed to tasks based on their skills & experience</p> <p>Quality Control Steps- A committee will be established to be responsible for quality management, there would be a standard process to meet, greet & guide the customer during the tour, there would be a “carrying capacity” standard of a maximum of 10 persons per tour guide, customer tour evaluations would be undertaken to determine the customer experience and to take corrective measures as needed.</p>
3.	Rupert McKenna Janelle Martinez Evon Ramoo	Design a Quality Manual for an Eco Tourism Enterprise (This group had members from organisations based both in Trinidad and Tobago; the data shown is reflective of this)	<p>Our activities include hiking, bird watching, spelunking & SCUBA diving</p> <p>We will target those people who are interested in physical fitness and health and who have a love for the natural habitat.</p> <p>Our objective is to create sustainable employment for at least 20 people in our community.</p> <p>Specific operational tasks include</p>

			<p>registering the tours under the Tourism Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago, advertising the tours on social media, and developing a database of tour pricing and packages.</p> <p>Quality Control Steps – Ten minute customer briefing on tour expectations and safety advice, transportation provided to tour site, persons assigned with the skills required for specific tours example, a bird expert on bird watching tours. This will enhance the quality of the experience.</p>
4.	Winston Maraj Arveon Debisette Susan Suchit	Design a Quality Manual for a Pepper Sauce Manufacturing Enterprise in Brasso Seco	<p>Our activities include the manufacture of high quality hot and spicy varieties of pepper sauce, planting and harvesting of quality produce, developing attractive packaging and labelling for products.</p> <p>We will target grocery stores, local delicacy stalls such as doubles and direct consumers.</p> <p>Our objective is to have a pepper sauce that exceeds the quality and standards of all our competitors in terms of taste and shelf life.</p> <p>Specific operational tasks include seedling selection, good farming practices, traceability system for produce.</p> <p>Quality Control Steps- Inspect product at each stage in the manufacturing process using a set of quality control criteria.</p>

6 Conclusion

From the content of the presentation made by each group, the participants demonstrated that they had acquired a greater awareness of the importance in having an effective Quality Management System, producing a product or service of high quality, a general understanding of the steps required to establish a Quality Management System and incorporating strategies for continuous improvement. The practice session and discussions revealed that the participants are resourceful, committed to their projects, keen to learn and achieve success.

It must also be mentioned that the support provided by CANARI and the Blanchisseuse Primary School contributed significantly to the success of the training session.



Fernandes 3 Team Building
Blanchisseuse Primary School
13th March 2014

NAME	ORGANISATION	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	EMAIL ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
Dexter Black	Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association	Lp#208 Paria Main Road Blanchisseuse	868 312 6814	dexblacks@yahoo.com	
Treverlon Baptiste	Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association	Lp#208 Paria Main Road Blanchisseuse	868 322 6282	tbaptiste24@gmail.com	
Evon Ramoo	Aripo Youth Development Organisation	Heights of Aripo Via Arima	868 367 0688		
Janelle Martinez	Aripo Youth Development Organisation	Heights of Aripo Via Arima	868 376 9136		Evon Ramoo
Arveon Debisette	Blanchisseuse Aquaculture and Producers Association	Paria Main Road Blanchisseuse	868 769 4752/ 476 3096	arveondebisette2000@yahoo.com	
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**Fernandes 3 Team Building
Blanchisseuse Primary School
13th March 2014**

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Carl Fitzjames	Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee	Brasso Seco	868 493 4358	info@brassosecoparia.com	
Rupert McKenna	Speyside Eco Marine Park Rangers	Windward Main Road, Speyside	868 762 2202	rupert.mckenna43@gmail.com	
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JENNESSA DE RAMOS B.S. TAC B.S. V. Council School St, Brasso Seco 868-712-3531

J De Ramos

Developing A Quality System For A Small Enterprise

Facilitator : Arnold Babwah

1

What Is Quality

- The quality of a product may be defined as its ability to fulfill customers' needs and expectations.
- Quality refers to the features and characteristics of a product that meet the needs and expectations of customers.

2

Benefits of Producing High Quality Products

1. Repeat purchases by consumers
2. Favourable reputation for the company in the marketplace
3. Increasing profit

3

Factors That Affect Or Determine A Product's Quality

1. Consumers' Needs And Expectations
2. Statutory Requirements relating to product safety and health hazards (some standards are therefore law)
3. Production Technology
4. Quality of raw materials
5. Competitors' Quality
6. Management's Beliefs And Attitude
7. Staff's training and experience
8. Organisation's Resources
9. Proper documentation on process and standards.

4

Product Design

For a new product, you need to set specifications for the product.

- *Dimensions*, such as length, diameter, thickness or area;
- *Physical properties*, such as weight, volume or strength;
- *Electrical properties*, such as resistance, voltage or current;
- *Appearance*, such as finish, colour or texture;
- *Effects on service*, such as taste, feel, noise level.

5

What is a Quality Management System

- A quality management system (QMS) is a set of policies, processes and procedures required for planning and producing a product or carrying out a service.
- A quality management system is a management technique used to communicate to employees what is required to produce the desired quality of products and services and to influence employee actions to complete tasks according to the quality specifications.

6

Policies, processes & procedures

A **policy** is a principle or rule to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes.

Process is a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end.

Procedure is an established way of doing something

7

Example - Pepsi-cola 's Quality Policy

At every level of Pepsi-Cola Company, we take great care to ensure that the highest standards are met in everything we do. In our products, packaging, marketing and advertising, we strive for excellence because our consumers expect and deserve nothing less. We promise to work toward continuous improvement in all areas of our organization.

At every step of our manufacturing and bottling process, strict quality controls are followed to ensure that Pepsi-Cola products meet the same high standards of quality that consumers have come to expect and value from us. We also follow strict quality control procedures during the manufacturing and filling of our packages. Each bottle and can undergoes a thorough inspection and testing process. Containers are then rinsed and quickly filled through a high-speed, state-of-the-art process that helps prevent any foreign material from entering the product. Additional quality control measures help to ensure the integrity of Pepsi-Cola products throughout the distribution process, from warehouse to store shelf.

8

Manual for a Quality System

1. Who are our customers and what are their needs and expectations regarding this product or service?
2. What are the statutory requirements for this product or service?
3. What is the enterprise's quality policy?
4. What are enterprise's quality objectives?
5. What process will be used to produce this product or carry out this service (need to outline the process and procedure on a step by step basis)?
6. Develop a flow chart for all the processes in a sequential order
7. Who will be responsible for each task? Who will have the overall responsibility for Quality Management.
8. What skills our staff members need in order to produce this product or service?
9. What training is required ?
10. What documents will be kept eg. for traceability; work in progress and final products?
11. What criteria will be used to choose suppliers?
12. How would you ensure continuous improvement in the quality of your product or service.
13. How does the product compare with competitors' products?
14. What quality control measures would be put in place ?

9

Certification

Product certification is the process of certifying that a product has passed performance tests and quality assurance tests.

10

What is ISO 9001?

- [ISO 9001](#) is a quality management system that can be integrated into any business. It is focused on ensuring the business delivers a consistent level of quality to its customers by having well defined and regularly reviewed processes and procedures.

11

Establishing A Quality Management System For A Small Enterprise

1. What Is Quality?

- The quality of a product may be defined as its ability to fulfill customers' needs and expectations.
- Quality refers to the features and characteristics of a product that meet the needs and expectations of customers.

2. Benefits of Producing High Quality Products

- Repeat purchases by consumers
- Favourable reputation for the company in the marketplace
- Increasing profit

3. Factors That Affect Or Determine A Product's Quality

- Consumers' Needs And Expectations
- Statutory Requirements relating to product safety and health hazards (some standards are therefore law)
- Production Technology including processes and procedures
- Quality of raw materials
- Competitors' Quality
- Management's Beliefs And Attitude
- Staff's training and experience
- Organisation's Resources
- Documentation on process and standards. The clearer the specification, the better the possibility of creating quality products.

4. Product Specifications : For a new product, you need to set specifications for the product.

- Dimensions, such as length, diameter, thickness or area;
- Physical properties, such as weight, volume or strength;

- Electrical properties, such as resistance, voltage or current;
- Appearance, such as finish, colour or texture;
- Effects on service, such as taste, feel, noise level, impact on the environment

5. What is a Quality Management System

- A quality management system (QMS) is a set of policies, processes and procedures required for planning and producing a product or carrying out a service.
- A quality management system is a management technique used to communicate to employees what is required to produce the desired quality of products and services and to influence employee actions to complete tasks according to the quality specifications.

6. What is ISO 9001?

- ISO 9001 is a quality management system that can be integrated into any business. It is focused on ensuring the business delivers a consistent level of quality to its customers by having well defined and regularly reviewed processes and procedures.

7. Examples of a Quality Policy for Enterprises

- **Pepsi-cola 's Quality Policy :** At every level of Pepsi-Cola Company, we take great care to ensure that the highest standards are met in everything we do. In our products, packaging, marketing and advertising, we strive for excellence because our consumers expect and deserve nothing less. We promise to work toward continuous improvement in all areas of our organization.
- **WLP's Quality Policy :** Watson Label Products is committed to producing high quality products that conform to customer requirements in order to achieve customer satisfaction.

8. Quality Manual for a Small Enterprise

- Who are our customers and what are their needs and expectations regarding this product or service?
- What are the statutory requirements for this product or service?

- What is our quality policy?
- What are our objectives?
- What process are we going to use to produce this product or carry out this service (need to outline the process and procedure on a step by step basis)?
- Develop a flow chart for all the processes in a sequential order
- Who will be responsible for each task? Who will have the overall responsibility for Quality Management?
- What skills our staff members need in order to produce this product or service?
- What training is required ?
- What documents will be kept eg. for traceability; work in progress and final products?
- What criteria will be used to choose suppliers?
- How would you ensure continuous improvement in the quality of your product or service.
- What quality control measures would be put in place ?

Appendix 4: Information provided by the seven groups on their organisations and (potential) enterprises

Name of Organisation: BSMK CFA

What is your project activity? Attempting to lease/rent/own
a parcel of land.

How long have you been producing your product or undertaking your service? _____

Do you keep records? If yes, what type of records do you keep? _____

Can you trace the origin of all the inputs used in producing your product or in undertaking your service (state yes or no)? _____

Do you follow any standards or written procedures at present in producing your product or delivering your service (state yes or no)? _____

What problems do you currently experience in producing your product or undertaking your service? _____

Name of Organisation: BLANCHISSEUSE FISHERFOLK & MARINELIFE ASSOCIATION

What is your project activity? SMOKE FISH

How long have you been producing your product or undertaking your service? _____

DID NOT START PRODUCING

Do you keep records? If yes, what type of records do you keep? _____

NA

Can you trace the origin of all the inputs used in producing your product or in undertaking your service (state yes or no)? _____

NA

Do you follow any standards or written procedures at present in producing your product or delivering your service (state yes or no)? _____

NA

What problems do you currently experience in producing your product or undertaking your service? LACK OF CO-OPERATION AMONG MEMBERS

TO FULFILL MANDATE - UPDATED MET WITH A FEW

MEMBERS WHO EXPRESSED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO

CONTINUE THE PROJECT WITH THE LIMITED MEMBERS

DETAILS TO BE FINALIZED ON NEXT MEETING ON 18/3/14

Name of Organisation: Brasso Seco Paria Tourism Action Committee

What is your project activity? cocoa and coffee
production

How long have you been producing your product or undertaking your service? _____
Two years

Do you keep records? If yes, what type of records do you keep? yes
Amount harvested, by pounds
and finish product

Can you trace the origin of all the inputs used in producing your product or in undertaking your service (state yes or no)? Labels, bags,
storage bins, dry area,

Do you follow any standards or written procedures at present in producing your product or delivering your service (state yes or no)? yes
By picking the mature ones,
fermentation and dry properly.

What problems do you currently experience in producing your product or undertaking your service? Electrical grinding mill, and
man power.

Name of Organisation: Blanchisseuse Aquaculture and Producers Associati

What is your project activity? Aquaculture and Agriculture

How long have you been producing your product or undertaking your service? _____

have not yet started. Attempting to start with interested member.

Do you keep records? If yes, what type of records do you keep? _____

Records of meetings and Financial Records

Can you trace the origin of all the inputs used in producing your product or in undertaking your service (state yes or no)? _____

Do you follow any standards or written procedures at present in producing your product or delivering your service (state yes or no)? _____

What problems do you currently experience in producing your product or undertaking your service? Lack of interest among members.

Name of Organisation: BLASCHISSEUSE ENVIRONMENTAL AND ART TRUST (BEAT)

What is your project activity? Sell - books / Stationery etc. Research.

How long have you been producing your product or undertaking your service? Two years.

Do you keep records? If yes, what type of records do you keep? Minutes / Financial

Can you trace the origin of all the inputs used in producing your product or in undertaking your service (state yes or no)? Yes.

Do you follow any standards or written procedures at present in producing your product or delivering your service (state yes or no)? No

What problems do you currently experience in producing your product or undertaking your service? Venue to display and sell. (This will be resolved)

Name of Organisation: ARIPO YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION

What is your project activity? Rehabilitating cocoa estate
and tours to care and maintain peak

How long have you been producing your product or undertaking your service? _____

1 year now

Do you keep records? If yes, what type of records do you keep? _____

now start so only have records of dates
and equipments received from grants

Can you trace the origin of all the inputs used in producing your product or in undertaking your service (state yes or no)? _____

Yes

Do you follow any standards or written procedures at present in producing your product or delivering your service (state yes or no)? _____

No

What problems do you currently experience in producing your product or undertaking your service? _____

Man power to cleaning estate

Making it happen: Developing sustainable businesses in rural communities in Trinidad and Tobago and improving livelihoods through enterprise development (Phase III)

Mentoring to support the marketing of products and/ or services of:

Aripo Youth Development Organisation

Blanchisseuse Aquaculture and Producers' Association

Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association

Speyside Eco Marine Park Managers



Prepared by:

Arnold Babwah

May 31, 2014

1 Introduction

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is managing a project that seeks to influence policy and practice to support the development of rural livelihoods in Trinidad and Tobago based on the sustainable use of natural resources to contribute to poverty reduction and rural development. This project is funded by the JB Fernandes Memorial Trust I. This is the third phase of a project that is testing a tool that will assist actors in rural communities to develop small enterprises based on the sustainable use of natural resources. The overall objective of the current phase of the project is to influence policy and practice to support the development of rural livelihoods in Trinidad and Tobago based on the sustainable use of natural resources to contribute to poverty reduction and rural development.

Throughout the various stages of the process the participants have been able to identify their natural resources and the products and enterprises that can be developed based on the sustainable use of those resources. They have assessed the feasibility of those enterprises and have linked with agencies that can support the development of those enterprises. Some of the groups participating in the project have also been able to develop business plans.

This phase of the process builds on what has been achieved by seeking to identify outstanding capacity needs, evaluating results and lessons learnt, and documenting the process as a case study. This report presents the results of the mentoring efforts undertaken to help the groups to market their products and services.

2 Objectives

The objective is to support 4 groups to develop their natural resource- based products and services to market them.

3 Participants

The following groups participated in this activity:

- Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association which had 4 participants (3 men and 1 woman),
- Aripo Youth Development Organisation which had 4 participants (3 women and 1 man),
- Blanchisseuse Aquaculture and Producers Association which had 3 participants (3 women)
- Speyside Eco Marine Park Rangers which had 6 participants (3 men and 3 women).

See Appendix 1 for the list of participants.

4 Method

In this phase of the project the Food and Agriculture Organisation's Market Analysis and Development (FAO's MA&D) methodology was utilised to a large extent. The MA&D methodology is a framework for planning tree and forest product-based enterprises but can be applied to any venture which takes into consideration social, cultural and environmental factors in its business model. For this mentoring activity with the groups, the facilitator utilised elements and insights from Phase 2 Tools 1,3,4,15,16,17,19,20,26,27and 28 of FAO's Field Facilitator Guidelines combined with the facilitator's own knowledge and experience.

An initial workshop was held with each group to assess their general progress and identify where they were on the MA&D map. At the start of the workshop an overview of the MA&D methodology was presented to the groups outlining the phases and steps. It was felt that this approach would help the groups to better appreciate the journey of the entrepreneurial process, their progress and what still needs to be undertaken. The characteristics of successful entrepreneurs such as passion for their enterprise, commitment, perseverance, determination, interpersonal and leadership skills were also discussed.

The other component of the workshop was to help each group understand constraints in their markets using a participatory approach and to develop the capacity to overcome these constraints. The latter step involved identifying what information was needed and developing relevant research instruments to collect this information. The following step was to discuss appropriate data collection methods and interview guidelines (i.e. market surveys). Each group also developed a work schedule for undertaking the research.

4.1.1 *Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association*

The main objective of this group is to establish a facility for the production and sale of smoked fish. However, they have not attended any training programmes on producing smoked fish and have not undertaken any market surveys to assess potential demand.

As a result, the consultant advised this group to enrol with the Caribbean Fisheries Training and Development Institute (CFTDI) to attend one of their training programmes on the production of smoked fish. The group developed research instruments for collecting data on market demand from prospective



Photo 1: Members of the BAPA working on their survey instrument.
Photo credit Arnold Babwah. May 2014

buyers and relevant information from institutional stakeholders such as the National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited (NEDCO) for possible loans and the Community Development Fund (CDF) for grant funding. The consultant also discussed the pros and cons of the various data collection methods and tips in conducting an effective interview. The questionnaires used in the market surveys are shown in Appendix 2. The group conducted 15 interviews with prospective buyers / households in the community, four mini marts / shops in the community and two supermarkets in the outskirts of the Blanchisseuse community by May

31, 2014. The members plan to collect more information.

4.1.2 Blanchisseuse Aquaculture and Producers Association

This group developed survey instruments to determine demand from potential buyers in its community and from mini- marts and supermarkets in nearby towns. This is shown in Appendix 3. The group has conducted interviews with 10 prospective buyers in the community and 12 households by May 31, 2014.

4.1.3 Aripo Youth Development Organisation

The facilitator advised this group to conduct a survey within its community to determine the level of expertise that currently exists and to encourage interested persons to join its membership. The group was also advised to conduct research on established eco-tourism tour operators to obtain information and insights on designing tours, pricing and marketing the business. The instruments are shown in Appendix 4.

The facilitator collaborated with this group to discuss data collection methods, guidelines for conducting effective interviews and developing research instruments. The facilitator also provided contact information on support institutions such as the Tourism Development Company (TDC) and the Trinidad and Tobago Incoming Tour Operators' Association which set standards to create synergies for tour operators. The TDC collaborates with tourism operators and stakeholders and provides resources to improve standards and quality service delivery in Trinidad and Tobago's tourism sector so that Trinidad and Tobago is recognised as a quality destination with customer service that is world class.

This group has interviewed the Tourism Development Company in May 2014 to identify possible resources for their organisation and two residents from the community with the aim of assessing their desire to become members of their organisation.

4.1.4 Speyside Eco- Marine Park Rangers

A questionnaire was developed by the group in collaboration with the facilitator for collecting information from similar existing enterprises. A similar instrument was developed for potential customers. These are shown in Appendix 5. This group interviewed two tour operators and eight potential clients from the community.

Subsequent to the initial workshop, follow-up discussions were undertaken with the groups by way of weekly telephone calls and face to face conversations during their visit to Nature Seekers on May 9th and 10th.

The groups also undertook visits to successful community based businesses to help them to better understand the characteristics of successful entrepreneurs and the capacities needed to manage a successful community business. In this regard, the Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association visited the Women in Fishing Association (WIFA) in Guayaguayare and all the groups visited Nature Seekers in Matura. The lessons learnt from these visits are included in this report.

5 Findings

From discussions in the aforementioned initial workshop, it was found that each group had existing or prospective products/ services which satisfied the five areas of enterprise development as specified in the MA&D methodology. However, in order for their products /services to achieve long term market

sustainability market surveys were necessary to assess market demand, competition and develop winning strategies as outlined in Phase 2 of the MA&D methodology.

5.1 Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association

This group visited WIFA on May 12th, 2014 and the group indicated that they learnt the following:

1. WIFA has been in existence for six years and they target the members of the community as customers and often rely on them to advertise via positive word of mouth to increase market share.
2. The amount of smoked fish produced is based on orders. Tuna and bonito are used for producing the smoked fish.
3. Initially the members of WIFA operated this business for about four years without anyone being paid a substantial salary and they realised that they needed to diversify in order to be self-sufficient.
4. Some areas of diversification include renting out ice bins to fishermen daily, selling ice, and cleaning and bagging red fish and Zapata.
5. To sell smoked fish a business enterprise needs to have certification from the Ministry of Health and labels must be approved by the Chemistry, Food and Drugs Division.
6. The machinery and equipment used in the smoked fish production are: an ice machine that can hold 363 kg daily, ice chiller, one chest freezer, one walk in freezer, stainless steel tables, knives and hand sealers.
7. WIFA was successful in receiving training from CFTDI and obtaining a building grant to upgrade their facility from the Poverty Reduction Unit of the Ministry of Social Development. In order to apply for grant funds, a group must provide sound information about their activity, accurate costing and achievement milestones. It is also easier to obtain grant funds when the community-based business is registered as a non profit organisation.
8. The Blanchisseuse group found the visit was a tremendous success and the members benefited from the experiences of sharing information and knowledge in a first hand and direct manner with WIFA. It gave the group ideas about diversification of product and the strategy that can be used to approach external funders. The information sharing session was also free flowing and had a high level of dynamics.



Photo 2: Members of BFMLA discussing their marketing strategy. Photo courtesy Arnold Babwah. May 2014.

The Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association has already been registered as a Non Governmental Organisation. The smoked fish initiative is being planned to provide employment, training and revenue generation opportunities for improved livelihoods of members of the Blanchisseuse community.

In order to move forward this group has to undergo formal training in fish processing, complete its market surveys and source adequate funds for establishing the processing facility. Although the team leader is committed to the success of this project, the original team members have not shown that level of initiative and commitment. The leader recently injected new life in this group by attracting more members of the community who are showing an encouraging level of commitment by their participation in group activities.

5.2 *Blanchisseuse Aquaculture and Producers Association*

This group currently comprises four women and two men from the Blanchisseuse community. Its main objective is to cultivate two hectares of organic vegetables and root crops and establish a tilapia farm. The team leader has demonstrated much entrepreneurial spirit by acquiring 2.8 hectares of land from a well-wisher in the Blanchisseuse community who has agreed to sign an agreement to allow the group to use the land free of charge. In addition, the group has commenced organic cultivation of various types of seasoning and cassava on approximately 0.1 hectare of land using their own labour and limited financial resources.

This group has been building its technical capacity by attending training programmes in agricultural production facilitated by the Ministry of Food Production and the Inter American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture (IICA). They have also been liaising with the Community Development Fund for grant funds to purchase an irrigation system and raw materials to increase their acreage under cultivation.

However, they have not done any market research to assess demand, identify the premium market segments for their organic products and assess the level of competition in their target market.

The facilitator collaborated with this group to develop research instruments for collecting data to analyse their target market and develop winning marketing strategies. Guidelines in conducting interviews were also outlined to assist the group in undertaking their market survey. (See Appendix 3 for the market surveys)

The consultant has advised this group to develop in stages and to only expand into tilapia farming when their organic cultivation of crops is well established and financially sustainable. In order to achieve sustainability this group should prepare an enterprise development plan to source funding and provide a strategic direction for the group. They also need to attend formal training in organic farming and collect the relevant market data for developing appropriate strategies and targeting profitable market segments. The Farmers' Training Centre of the Ministry of Food Production at Centeno conducts a short course on organic farming.

In developed countries consumers pay a premium price for organic foods. Farms which produce organic foods in those countries are certified and this provides assurance to consumers. In Trinidad and Tobago there is no organic certification body at present. However, BAPA should seek membership with the Trinidad and Tobago Organic Agricultural Movement as this would provide a measure of credibility for local consumers.

This group is seeking to earn a profit from its operations and the consultant has therefore recommended that the group be registered as a cooperative.



Photo 3: Members of the AYDO discussing the stakeholders who should be visited while conducting the market surveys. Photo courtesy Arnold Babwah. April 2014.

5.3 Aripo Youth Development Organisation

The main objective of this group is to establish an eco-tourism business. The group has obtained verbal permission from the owner of a large estate in Aripo to conduct tours through his land. The main challenge with this group is that the team is not cohesive and easy to mobilise. The group has also been placing priority on projects which emerge at short notice and hence there is need for a clear strategic direction. Recently the group implemented a beautification project sponsored by the Ministry of Community Development and is currently implementing another beautification project sponsored by the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA).

The group has conducted a few eco tours in the past and is aware of the enormous potential of its proposed eco-tourism business because of the community's natural assets, attractive ecosystem and strong growth in the international eco-tourism segment of the tourism industry. However, in order for the group to exploit this opportunity, it needs to develop a more committed and cohesive team, develop an operational plan, collect market information on designing tours and packages, implementing best practices and appropriate marketing strategies to woo potential customers.

This team has to revisit its vision and mission and develop a clear strategic direction for greater focus. The team also needs strengthening with more committed members and cohesiveness. The group's current leader has good ideas but a greater level of entrepreneurial spirit and focus has to be infused in the team to carry this project forward.

5.4 Speyside Eco Marine Park Rangers

The proposed eco-tourism enterprise of Speyside Eco-Marine Park Rangers has tremendous potential because of the area's rain forest, bird sanctuary and the nearby coral reef. Although much support has been provided by CANARI in developing a business plan to provide direction for the group and training provided in tour guiding by YTEPP for members of the group, this project is yet to enter the implementation phase. Several of the major constraints which were stated in the business plan such as leadership, marketing and commitment by team members still exist. The current leader who is well liked by external stakeholders and people in the community has admitted that he has difficulty in mobilising group members to implement this project.

Based on the aforementioned, the facilitator has recommended that the group identifies someone from the community who is interested in the project and has the entrepreneurial skills and drive to lead the group and capitalise on this viable opportunity as outlined in the group's business plan. The group also has to acquire technical and marketing intelligence and therefore the facilitator has advised the group to research other similar tour operators and potential customers (tourists who visit Tobago and locals including people from Trinidad). The research plan also included obtaining information from the Tobago

House of Assembly and the Tourism Development Company to determine what support mechanisms are available for the group's type of enterprise.

In order for this group's enterprise to move forward the team has to be strengthened by attracting committed members and someone who has the entrepreneurial skills and drive to assemble the required resources and motivate the team to implement the project.

6 Major learning points from visit to Nature Seekers

The following learning points were noted from the presentations and discussions involving the Chairman and Manager of Nature Seekers, the facilitators of the CANARI programme and the various group members of the programme.

- Nature Seekers is a community-based conservation organisation formed in 1990 to protect nesting leatherback turtles in Trinidad and Tobago. Its main conservation efforts are based around providing tour guide services to visitors of Matura Beach, tagging turtles for tracking, and patrolling the beach to protect the turtles and their nests. They are also concerned with reforestation and keeping the beach clean.
- Group members must push themselves and talk to others in the field - finding a mentor from early is critical as this person can act as a sounding board for your idea.
- A good leader is essential for mobilising community support especially in the initial stages when there is no money to pay anyone and voluntary support is needed. Nature Seekers' Chairman had these skills and she was able to mobilise much voluntary support from the community.
- Leadership is simply about influencing people. According to John Maxwell, a leader is not about position, positional leadership does not work in volunteer organisations. Leadership is about getting team members to participate. He who thinks he leads, but has no followers is only taking a walk.
- Nature Seekers' start-up phase was rough; there were many poachers who strongly opposed its protection of the leatherback turtles. The journey is a long one to success but can be very rewarding.
- Time management skills are important for group projects. You need to know what you are going to do, who will do it and when it will be done.
- A formal agenda is important when holding meetings to ensure all matters are dealt with and also to keep focus and prevent time wastage.
- A constitution and an organisational structure are important to guide the group operations, develop transparency for stakeholders and provide understanding to the group regarding functions and positions.
- Having a clear vision, mission and objectives can be a key to getting stakeholder support from volunteers and grant funds from institutions.
- Financial accountability is important to build a good image for the community based organisation and access help from donors.
- Involve key stakeholders in policy formulation as this creates a sense of ownership for these policies.
- Acquiring some form of certification for the enterprise gives the impression that quality control measures are in place and this is a major advantage in marketing the organisation. Customers, especially foreigners, feel a sense of assurance.
- Marketing strategies have to be creative and innovative to win customers. Nature Seekers' has found that a dedicated website, social networking and community events are important to connect with customers and the community. Word of mouth from satisfied customers has also provided many new customers.

- Advertising improves sales of jewellery products during tours.
- Evaluate your product / service on a continuous basis to add value to your offerings.
- Mapping out your operations is a good strategy to identify gaps in quality control.
- There must also be a system to get feedback from customers to improve their experiences. Understanding customers' needs is essential for producing a quality product or service.
- A manual for key operations and activities helps in performing tasks according to set standards and with consistency. This is an essential component in an enterprise's quality management system. Some inconsistencies were observed in one of the enterprise's tour guiding services and it was noted that there was no manual to guide this activity.
- Connecting with other community groups is a valuable way to share experiences and knowledge as well as solve problems.
- Product expansion and diversification can grow your enterprise. For example, Nature Seekers expanded into reforestation and craft projects which have increased the capacity and sustainability of its enterprise. Try to expand into complementary activities. For example, if you are undertaking agriculture then consider investing in agro tourism. However, do not neglect your main activity when expanding.

7 Key lessons

7.1 *FAO MA&D methodology*

- The FAO MA&D methodology was useful because it provided a sequence of systematic steps to ensure that all critical elements are included in order to minimise risks for establishing enterprises by groups in rural communities. The methodology allows facilitators to tweak activities to suit the local situation but it emphasizes that steps must not be skipped to ensure continuity in the process. The methodology also provided a framework for the facilitator to identify gaps in the performance of the groups under his portfolio.
- The initial entrepreneurial identification and assessment in Steps 1 and 2 of the FAO methodology are foundation components. Based on the evaluation of the groups in the current programme closer attention has been placed on these steps to ensure that groups have the necessary entrepreneurial skills and drive to develop a successful business venture. The FAO methodology also has a preference to select groups which have already commenced the venture but did not make this a compulsory requirement. This strategy reduces the risk of failure in the programme but existing groups must also be assessed as not all of them have a good track record. One of the other groups in the Making It Happen Programme, the Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee operated their eco tourism business at a micro level prior to the programme. They were able to utilise the resources provided by the programme and build their capacity to the extent where they are currently operating at a higher level and making a positive impact on their community.
- An accountability mechanism should be embedded within the FAO MA&D in the form of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at the end of each step to measure programme outcomes in a tangible way and ensure that CANARI's precious resources are being leveraged in successful ventures. These KPIs can be used to evaluate the performance of the groups and form the basis of an exit strategy which can be applied at the end of each step especially for steps 1,2 and 3 of Phase 1 in the FAO methodology.

7.2 Other lessons

- From this facilitator's entry into the programme in mid-March 2014 and based on observation and feedback received, the groups were highly motivated by the visits to WIFA and Nature Seekers. These visits provided an opportunity for the groups to interact with their peers and learn from their experiences and challenges in their business enterprises. They were encouraged by the success of these two community based enterprises and felt inspired to achieve the same in their own activities. The groups also benefited from the strategies that WIFA and Nature Seekers learnt in their entrepreneurial journeys such as access to agency funding and training, organizational structures and marketing efforts.
- Other lessons learnt included an understanding of the importance of a quality management system for a business enterprise and the importance of the level of commitment, entrepreneurial drive, leadership, passion and sacrifice to carry the business enterprise forward in a progressive manner.
- It is noted that the business plans were completed for some of the groups but from interaction with those groups it was evident that they were not very familiar with the content and strategies of them. This suggests that there is need for the groups to participate more in the creation of their plans. It was also noted that market surveys were not undertaken prior to the preparation of the business plans which is not recommended under the FAO methodology. This type of research is a standard step in the creation of business plans. The market surveys have another major advantage of allowing the groups to be more immersed in the creation of the EDP and appreciate the strategies developed in the plan.
- The mentoring at the start of the group intervention is important because it would help in building a stronger foundation to undertake the entire entrepreneurial process. Mentors should also assess groups using appropriate KPIs to determine whether a group has the capacity to move on to the next step in the programme or exit at this stage.

8 Conclusion

The *Making It Happen* programme has excellent potential to improve livelihoods in rural communities. Some of the groups have made substantial progress while other groups have not developed the capacity to move forward. The programme can be strengthened by incorporating KPIs to ensure that groups identified at the inception of the programme have the entrepreneurial capacity to succeed in the programme. This is similar to the FAO methodology except that the FAO methodology does that have KPIs for a formal assessment of each group. For groups which do not meet the required performance standards at the performance measurement stages of the programme, the exit strategy should be applied so that the organisation's resources can be channelled in the right direction.

Appendix 1: List of participants

Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association

1. Dexter Black
2. Mary Gould
3. Walt Joseph
4. Anthony Lezama

Blanchisseuse Aquaculture and Producers Association

1. Arveon Debisette
2. Kerrel Debisette
3. Ornella Reyes

Aripo Youth Development Organisation

1. Evon Ramoo
2. Janelle Martinez
3. Elizabeth De Verteuil
4. Nila Ramoo

Speyside Eco Marine Park Rangers

1. Rupert McKenna
2. Jace Bishop
3. Allana Walcott-Bishop
4. Susan Suchit
5. Quincy Fraul
6. Sheena Alexander

Appendix 2: Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association's market survey instruments

Households in the Blanchisseuse community

1. What is your age?: under 20; 20-30; 31-40; 41-50; over 50.
2. Do you like smoked fish? Yes No
3. What type of smoked fish you prefer : Brined; dried; salted non salted?
4. What type of fish you prefer the smoked fish to be made from? : king fish; cavali; tilapia; bonito; other (please state)
5. Where do you purchase smoked fish?
6. What price do you pay?
7. If you do not eat smoked fish regularly, why?
8. Would you purchase smoked fish from the Blanchisseuse Fisherfolk and Marine Life Association?
Yes No

Retail outlets such as mini marts and groceries

1. Do you sell smoked fish? Yes No
2. From whom do you obtain your supply?
3. Are you satisfied with your supplier? Yes No
4. Why?
5. What quantity do you purchase on a weekly basis?
6. What price do you pay?
7. Do you pay your supplier in cash or on credit terms?
8. If you purchase on credit, what are the terms?
9. Would you be interested in purchasing from our enterprise? Yes No

Women in Fishing Association (WIFA) questionnaire

1. Please describe your production process in producing smoked fish?
2. What varieties of fish are used?
3. How do you obtain your supplies?
4. What segments of the market do you target?
5. How does the fluctuation in fish prices affect your final price?
6. What type of packaging is used for selling the smoked fish?
7. What formal training did your group receive?
8. What types of financing your group obtained?
9. What are the regulatory requirements for this business?
10. What quality control measures have you implemented?
11. Is this a viable business?

Appendix 3: Blanchisseuse Aquaculture and Producers Association's market survey instrument

Potential buyers in the community:

1. What is your age?: under 20; 20-30; 31-40; 41-50; over 50.
2. Do you eat vegetables and root crops? Yes No
3. Which specific vegetables and root crops do you eat on a regular basis?
4. How much do you purchase on a weekly basis?
5. Where do you purchase these items ?
6. What prices do you pay for these items?
7. Do you know if the vegetables and root crops that you purchase are organically grown? Yes No
8. Do you have a preference for organically grown foods? Yes No
9. If yes, would you be willing to pay a higher price for organic foods? Yes No
10. If yes, how much more : 10% or less; 20%; 30%; 40%; 50%; Over 50% (please state)?
11. Would you be willing to purchase organic agricultural from an enterprise in your community?

Mini marts and supermarkets in Arima, Santa Cruz and Maraval

1. Do you currently sell organic vegetables and root crops?
2. If yes, what specific produce do you sell?
3. If no, would you be interested in purchasing organically grown vegetables and root crops from our farm?
4. If yes, would you be willing to pay a higher price for organically grown produce?
5. If yes, how much more: 10% or less; 20%; 30%; 40%; 50%; Over 50% (please state)?
6. What quantity would you require on a weekly basis?

Appendix 4: Aripo Youth Development Organisation's survey instruments

Established tour operators

1. How long your tour guide business has been in operation?
2. What special skills are required to operate a successful eco-tourism tour guide business?
3. What specific infrastructure, equipment and technology are applicable to this type of business?
4. What regulatory requirements have to be satisfied?
5. What health and safety practices are essential for this type of business?
6. What type of insurance policy is applicable for this type of business?
7. How would you describe the target market for this business (both locally and internationally)?
8. What marketing strategies can be employed to attract these potential customers locally and internationally?
9. Is there a low period and a peak period for this type of business?
10. What are some of the tours that you offer?
11. Which organisations do you network with locally and internationally?
12. What are some of the benefits of this network?
13. What are the major challenges experienced in this type of business?
14. Could we form an alliance with your business for mutual benefits?
15. What are some of the packages that your business offers to customers?
16. What guidelines should we follow in pricing our tours and packages?
17. What quality control measures should be implemented?
18. What do you consider to be the critical success factors for this type of business?

Assess the manpower resources in the community and to woo interested members of the community to become members of the Aripo Youth Organisation

1. Do you have an interest in developing the Aripo community? Yes No
2. What are the positive things you would like to see in this community?
3. What are your specific skills? Leadership Entrepreneurship Marketing Team player Tour guiding Financial Management Customer service Computer skills Other (please specify)?
4. Do you think that a community-based eco-tourism business would be successful in Aripo? Yes No
5. If yes, why?
6. Are you willing to work with the Aripo Youth Organisation to develop a successful eco-tourism business in the community? Yes No
7. If yes, what role are you willing to play?

Appendix 5: Speyside Eco Marine Park Rangers

Similar existing enterprises

1. How long have you been involved in this business?
2. What specific services do you offer?
3. How do you price your services for individuals and groups?
4. What packages are offered to customers?
5. What are the regulatory requirements that must be satisfied for this business?
6. What health and safety practices have to be implemented for this type of business?
7. Who are the potential customers for this business?
8. What marketing strategies can be employed for this type of business locally and internationally?
9. Do you collaborate with any other businesses, groups or institutions? Yes No
10. If yes, what are the major advantages and benefits of such collaboration?
11. What is the duration of your tours?
12. What are the major expenses in this business?
13. Do you offer a commission for referrals? Yes No
14. If yes, how much?
15. From your experience what are the preferences and also dislikes of your customers?
16. What are the major challenges in this business?
17. What in your opinion are the critical success factors for this business?

Potential customers who visit Tobago

1. Which country are you from?
2. What is your age ? 18-25 26-35 36-40 41-50 51-60 Over 60
3. What is the purpose of your visit to Tobago? Personal Business Beaches Eco tourism
 Cuisine Other (please state)
4. Would you be interested in one or more of the following activities (please tick which ones)? Reef
 Rain Forest Bird Watching Historic Sites Other (please state)
5. What do you expect from this tour?
6. How much are you willing to pay by boat for a 1 to 2 hours tour to 'Little Tobago Bird Sanctuary'?
7. How much are you willing to pay by boat for a tour of the rain forest?
8. How do you choose your place of visit? Social media e.g. Facebook Travel agency Internet search
 Referral Other (please state)

Making it happen: Developing sustainable businesses in rural communities in Trinidad and Tobago and improving livelihoods through enterprise development (Phase III)

**Mentoring to support the marketing of products and/ or services of:
Blanchisseuse Environmental Art Trust
Brasso Seco Morne La Croix Farmers' Association
Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee**



25th May 2014

By Akosua D. Edwards

1 Introduction

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is managing a project that seeks to influence policy and practice to support the development of rural livelihoods in Trinidad and Tobago based on the sustainable use of natural resources to contribute to poverty reduction and rural development. This project is funded by the JB Fernandes Memorial Trust I. This is the third phase of a project that is testing a tool that will assist actors in rural communities to develop small enterprises based on the sustainable use of natural resources. The overall objective of the current phase of the project is to influence policy and practice to support the development of rural livelihoods in Trinidad and Tobago based on the sustainable use of natural resources to contribute to poverty reduction and rural development.

Throughout the various stages of the process the participants have been able to identify their natural resources and the products and services that can be developed based on the sustainable use of those resources. They have assessed the feasibility of those enterprises and have linked with agencies that can support the development of those enterprises. Some of the groups participating in the project have also been able to develop business plans.

This phase builds on what has been achieved by seeking to identify outstanding capacity needs, evaluating results and lessons learnt, and documenting the process as a case study. This report presents the results of the mentoring efforts undertaken to help the groups to market their products and services.

2 Objectives

The objective is to support three groups to develop their natural resource- based products and services to market them.

3 Participants

Three groups participated in the mentoring programme from the following groups:

- The Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee (BSTAC)
- The Brasso Seco Morne La Croix Farmers' Association (BSMLFA)
- Blanchisseuse Environmental Art Trust (BEAT)

A total of 18 persons participated in the activities- eight women and ten men. See Appendix 1 for the list of the group leaders.

4 Method

At the start of the exercise a meeting was held with each group in its community to discuss the methodology of the mentorship process, get familiar with the organisation and address any concerns and questions that they may have. Follow- up meetings were conducted with the groups. Telephone calls and e-mails were used to maintain contact with the groups between meetings. The groups were also given tasks to complete within specific periods so that they can be accountable. This process basically involved each group setting targets, deadlines and goals and reporting on the achievement of the milestones at each meeting session. This process was done to promote ownership of activities and goals.

The groups were introduced to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO's) Market Analysis and Development (MA&D) methodology. It is a methodology that seeks to "improve income generation based on tree and forest products"¹ but is applied in this project to all natural resource based enterprises.

An exchange visit was held at Nature Seekers in Matura Trinidad and Tobago on the 9th and 10th May 2014. The goal of this visit was to expose the groups to a successful community group that has been able to use its natural resources to create a successful business, assist its community and grow as an organisation. Additionally, the visit allowed to groups to ask questions of the key leaders and activists within Nature Seekers, and learn about quality control and marketing.

- Bi-weekly meetings were held with the BSTAC at the Visitor Facility. This group has an Information Officer who receives and replies to emails which worked quite well to keep in constant contact. BSTAC used tools dealing with gathering information on local resources and carrying out surveys in the FAO MA&D methodology to determine what products will be sold at the weekly Green Market.
- Meetings were held at the Brasso Seco Community Centre with the BSMLCFA, with a further one to be held on June 9th 2014. No tools from the FAO MA&D methodology were used for this group at the writing of this report.
- One meeting was held with BEAT at the President's House. Further to this there were a number of telephone calls to discuss a strategy for BEAT's use of a mentor and to choose a product to sell in the short term to allow for business income. This income would facilitate the group achieving its long term objectives. The leadership of the group decided not to use suggested FAO MA&D tools.

5 Findings

5.1 *Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee*

BSTAC was able to:

- Successfully resubmit a proposal to the FAO/CANARI project on the automation of the Cocoa and Coffee process with the goal to purchase equipment to semi-automate the cocoa and coffee processing currently done manually basis.
- Review current marketing and financial processes and make recommendations for their improvement.
- Prepare an annual financial projection for the semi automated production of cocoa and coffee
- Identify three pilot venues to retail the packaged cocoa and coffee beans
- The group decided to participate in the Green Market in Santa Cruz during the month of June 2014 which showcases organic products on a weekly basis. This event has not been completed as at the date of this report. The mentor followed up with telephone calls and e-mails.

5.2 *Brasso Seco Morne La Croix Farmers' Association*

- This organisation has been having some challenges in leadership and on deciding the vision for the group. There have been changes in the group's executive team who has now revised the focus of the association.
- The group decided to grow, sell and market seedlings. On the 9th June 2014 a meeting has been set up for the presentation of the seedlings to the community. The type of seedlings will include local fruits, chive, cocoa, and citrus.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/forestry/enterprises/25492/en/>

5.3 *Blanchisseuse Environmental Art Trust (BEAT)*

- BEAT decided to revert to the production and sale of seamoss products. The group has been dormant for a number of months. Because of the combination of the training meetings held by CANARI and the appointment of a mentor, attempts have been made to kick-start the group by having meetings at the President's House. So far for the period under mentorship there have been two meetings. The group has decided to use seamoss and produce it in raw form, package it and sell it. No MA&D tools were used to come up with this decision, the group presented products made using seamoss and agreed on the way forward based on this. They have also moved ahead with commencement of marketing the product.

6 Key lessons

- Group leaders are critical drivers in moving both the group and the project forward. This has been evident in the interaction with the three groups being mentored. Groups with leaders with a strong delivery of the group's vision seem to be further ahead such as Brasso Seco TAC. This means that the groups whose leaders have articulated the vision clearly and with passion seem to have an easier time getting members to be committed and work the vision.
- Time ought to be spent building capacity of the leader, not just traditional business skills training but leadership, confidence building and team building and dynamics, conducting successful meetings
- Face to face meetings are most useful compared to phone calls or e-mails
- Assigning someone to be responsible for communication is effective
- Mentoring is an ongoing process, the time frame for this mentoring project is recommended to be extended or be done in collaboration with a specific project.
- It has been my experience over the life of the project that the most optimum method of reaching the communities is to visit the district and hold face to face meetings. There are a number of areas that have limited Internet access and limited telephone coverage which makes it a challenge to keep in touch virtually on a consistent basis
- The FAO methodology is a useful tool and can be used for deciding on products, market surveys and information gathering
- In addition to the FAO methodology, it is recommended that it includes building leadership skills and partnerships with other agencies to enhance technical skills.
- It is also recommended to supplement the FAO methodology with an accountability process of setting tasks and having the groups account for it and also relook some of the tasks to tailor for the Caribbean context. This is effective as it promotes responsibility within the group to achieve targets and is a way to move the groups forward incrementally.
- Having meetings held in the communities where the groups are based allows more participants, reduces cost and promotes a feeling of ownership of the programme or training. Once a week check ins via phone is an effective method to supplement the face to face meetings
- Field visits to successful community groups worked well and encouraged members of the community to attend meetings and contribute to the activities.
- Groups having an information officer assigned to respond to emails allowed for quicker communication with both the mentor and members of the community group
- A down to earth approach to training and capacity building where members participated actively in the training.
- A mentor is recommended to be assigned to each group from the inception of the project to assist in guiding and developing capacity along the journey. This will contribute to a more consistent and

measured move towards achieving the goals of the organisation as opposed to a stop and start approach

7 Conclusion

Consulting with a business mentor can be a great way to gain a different, fresh perspective. It is easy to get caught up with your ideas to the point of questioning, confusion or second guessing – and having a sounding board in a business mentor is a great way to work through some of those kinks. Having a mentor provides the participants with a personalised approach. Mentorship is not recommended as a short term strategy and therefore it is recommended to start in the early stages of the project, particularly when it is a group with members with varying perspectives. It has been my experience over the life of the project that the most optimum method of reaching the communities is to visit the district and hold face to face meetings.

Groups with a strong vision and leadership can benefit more from a mentor relationship as they are clear on their goals and objectives and want a guide to assist in achieving them.

Appendix 1: List of participants

Name	Organisation	Address	Tel	E-mail
Susan Suchit	Brasso Seco Morne LaCroix Farmers' Association	School Street Brasso Seco		
Winston Maraj	Brasso Seco Morne LaCroix Farmers' Association	School Street Brasso Seco	868 715 9039	
Francis Francois	Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee	Brasso Seco	868 759 6095	
Carl Fitzjames	Brasso Seco Tourism Action Committee	Brasso Seco	868 493 4358	info@brassosecoparia.com
Joslyn Lee Quay	Blanchisseuse Environmental and Art Trust	Upper Village Blanchisseuse	868 374 7520	joslee_56@outlook.com
Ken Fournillier	Blanchisseuse Environmental and Art Trust	Upper Village Blanchisseuse	868 687 8039	kfour32@hotmail.com