



THE NATIONAL  
FOREST PROGRAMME  
**FACILITY**



**CARIBBEAN NATURAL RESOURCES INSTITUTE (CANARI)**

## **Partners of the Environment: Developing alternative livelihoods for the Chateaubelair community**

*A mini-case study produced by CANARI based on analysis conducted by the Forests and Livelihoods Action Learning Group during their field visit to St. Vincent in August 2008*

### **1. PARTNERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT, CHATEAUBELAIR, ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

*Visited during the third ALG, August 2008*

#### **1.1 Background**

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| <b>Location</b>                      | Chateaubelair, St Vincent, is a small rural community located in the north of the island  |
| <b>Type of forest</b>                | Tropical rainforest – This is a climax community. This type of community is described by the forest occurring in areas of high rainfall, experiencing over 100mm of rainfall per month with very short dry periods. They occupy small areas between 300 m and 500m in elevation, mainly in the middle to upper watershed basins of the Colonarie, Cumberland and Buccament valleys. The canopy dominants include <i>Prestoea montana</i> (on the windward side only), <i>Dacryodes excelsa</i> , Lauraceae species, <i>Meliosina herbertii</i> , <i>Micropholis chrysophylloides</i> and <i>Sloanea caribaea</i> . <sup>1</sup> |
| <b>Who are the key stakeholders?</b> | Key stakeholders included (in no particular order):<br><ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Integrated Forest Management and Development Programme (IFMDP), a government programme</li> <li>2. Partners of the Environment, a community based organisation (CBO) in Chateaubelair</li> <li>3. Members of the Chateaubelair community</li> <li>4. Forestry Department</li> <li>5. Other government agencies including security forces and community development</li> </ol>  |

<sup>1</sup> Taken from The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of St. Vincent and the Grenadines  
<http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/vc/vc-nbsap-01-en.pdf>

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| <p><b>Description of the initiative</b></p>  | <p>The IFMDP of the Forestry Department was established by the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 2003 to address the widespread illegal farming of marijuana in the upper watersheds of St. Vincent which results in negative ecological and social impacts. The IFMDP promotes the establishment of CBOs called Forest User Groups. It was working with Partners of the Environment in Chateaubelair to find livelihood replacement(s) for the income derived from farming marijuana and so transition the farmers into deriving legal income. The high risk of marijuana farming provides an incentive to some farmers to explore alternative crops, but finding alternatives which will provide an equitable value is challenging.<sup>2</sup> Ideas put forward for potential alternative livelihoods include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of non-timber forest produce for craft</li> <li>• The production of charcoal from the thinnings from forest plantations and charcoal production woodlots</li> <li>• Ecotourism activities of the forest environment</li> <li>• The use of plants for medicine and herbal drinks</li> <li>• The bottling of spring water</li> <li>• Other crops, including agroforestry initiatives</li> <li>• Wildlife farming<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Brief background/ context of wider community</b><br/>(e.g. population, economic activities, livelihoods issues/ context)</p> | <p>The collapse of the banana industry in the mid 1990s due to the loss of preferential trade status from Europe resulted in economic stagnation and little opportunity for employment particularly in rural communities. This has led to many entering the illegal and risky business of marijuana cultivation. Marijuana is a crop with large potential returns for farmers but it is high risk because of praedial larceny and exploitation by those who dominate the trade. The sector has developed into an underground economy which has led to entire communities being developed, some actually located within the forest reserves.</p> <p>Marijuana has made an important economic contribution at the national and local levels in St. Vincent. It is estimated that illegal marijuana sales and exports account for close to a fifth of St. Vincent's gross domestic product. The access to this income from marijuana is said to have facilitated home construction, secondary school education, and greater supplies of food (in impoverished rural areas such as Chateaubelair. However, it has introduced several social problems and is considered to be a serious risk to national security and has been a source of strain in relations between St. Vincent and neighbouring islands.<sup>4</sup></p> <p>There is no local government functioning in St Vincent (for more than 20 years) therefore governmental services have to be accessed from the central government which is located on the southern tip of the island. There is also an absence of banks and other kinds of services in rural areas.</p> <p>Chateaubelair is one of the poorest communities in St Vincent and marijuana farming is taking place in the upper watershed. The area, like much of St. Vincent, is politically divided, so much so that politics has affected the work of civil society groups such as Partners of the Environment. There is high crime in the area.</p> <p>The polluted river was in the past a common shared resource but became highly polluted due to dumping of household and other garbage. High nutrient levels led to proliferation of the growth of elephant grass and other plants, choking up the riverbed and sides and slowing flow. Residents note that there is not a regular garbage collection service in Chateaubelair.</p> |

<sup>2</sup> Fitzgerald Providence, Manager IFMDP, personal communication.

<sup>3</sup> From: <http://gov.vc/Govt/Government/Executive/Ministries/Agriculture&Fisheries/Forestry/forestry.asp?z=502&a=3603>

<sup>4</sup> From John, Lyndon (2006) From Growing Ganja to Planting Trees: Stimulating legal livelihoods and watershed management in Saint Vincent through payments from public utilities. Who Pays for Water Project Document No. 4. CANARI, Laventille.

## 1.2 Description of the forest management arrangements

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| <p>What are the objectives / broad goals of the arrangement / any collaborative management initiatives?</p>   | <p>The IFMDP had its overall programme objective as: "The sustainable management of forest resources thereby ensuring protection of the nation's water supplies, eco tourism potential and bio-diversity, whilst at the same time, protecting the livelihood of other forest users". The Alternative Community Livelihoods Programme component served as a poverty reduction component through which the IFMDP worked with Forest User Groups to identify and develop viable economic alternatives to marijuana farming while they help restore the watersheds.</p>   |
| <p>Policies and laws</p>  | <p><u>Laws</u><br/>           Forest and Resource Conservation Act No. 47 of 1992<br/>           Wildlife Protection Act No. 16 of 1987</p> <p><u>Policies</u><br/>           Integrated Forest Management and Development Programme</p>  |
| <p>Relationships between organisations (formal/informal)</p>  | <p>The relationship between Partners of the Environment and the IFMDP appeared to be good. There was an assigned Forestry Liaison Officer who is a former marijuana farmer and who is well networked with marijuana farmers. He served to promote IFMDP, foster the development of Forest User Groups, and gather data on the status of watersheds.</p> <p>Partners of the Environment also had relationships with other government agencies.</p>   |
| <p>Institutional and organisational structures</p>  | <p>The Forestry Liaison Officer was part of the Programme Management Unit of the IFMDP and this was an important link between Forest User Groups such as Partners of the Environment and the IFMDP. However, the Forest User Groups were not represented on the IFMDP Steering Committee, which they raised as an issue.</p>  |
| <p>Agreed practices and processes</p>   | <p>In practice, the Forestry Liaison Officer felt that he was more a part of the Forest User Groups and less a government employee.</p>   |
| <p>What is the degree and type of participation / perception(s) of key stakeholders of current type and degree of participation (see Appendix 1) and what changes have occurred since inception (speed/direction of change)</p> | <p>IFMDP and Partners of the Environment were working together to push forward the case for support in changing the livelihoods of the marijuana farmers. There was no formal agreement giving Partners of the Environment rights or responsibilities for management but there was dialogue and an avenue for the CBO's ideas to be heard in decision-making. The type of participation achieved would seem to be characterised as <b>Participation for material incentives</b> and/or <b>Functional participation</b>.</p> <p>Since the initiative started, Partners of the Environment built its capacity (see Section 1.4 on increase in livelihood assets). They were getting additional financial and technical support, building relationships both within the community and with external partners, and gaining respect as a valid community development organisation. This was helping them work towards being a stronger partner to government and leading on initiatives to develop alternative livelihoods in Chateaubelair, which was moving the arrangement slowly towards <b>Self-mobilisation</b>.</p> |

### 1.3 Enabling and disabling factors that shaped the arrangement

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| <p><b>External forces that have influenced the management arrangements and the way that benefits are allocated among beneficiaries</b> (e.g. markets/trade regimes external donors funding priorities)</p>   | <p>The marijuana trade continued to be lucrative in the Caribbean, and as noted previously was a major force encouraging rural communities in St. Vincent to continue to illegally farm marijuana. This was probably hindering the development of the management arrangement under the IFMDP.</p> <p>Funding from external donors was also significant. Partners of the Environment received a small but catalytic grant from CANARI for a FAO-funded Action Learning Project (ALP) which aimed to support CBOs with the development of sustainable forest-based livelihoods. This was extremely important in building the capacity of the group.</p>   |
| <p><b>National/local/internal environment that enabled and shaped the initiative and influenced the way that benefits are allocated among beneficiaries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- policies or laws</li> <li>- roles played by key individuals</li> <li>- skills</li> <li>- technical help</li> <li>- funding</li> <li>- political support</li> <li>- equitable participation</li> </ul>   | <p>Ecosystem services that generate water resources need to be protected in St Vincent for use in electricity generation and for potable consumption. The needs of the utility companies prompted the formation of IFMDP and its mandate to move marijuana farmers into legal activities to protect the watersheds. This was a priority for the government and provided a source of funding for the work with communities as the utility companies were mandated by Cabinet to contribute funding to the IFMDP.</p> <p>Political partisanship was strong in St. Vincent and political divisiveness in the community created problems for the group which was condemned for wanting to work in a bi-partisan fashion.</p> <p>Fitzgerald Providence, the Head of the IFMDP, played a critical role in supporting the development of arrangement. His involvement as a member of CANARI's <i>Action Learning Group on Markers for Watershed Services and Improved Livelihoods</i> and the subsequent <i>Forests and Livelihoods Action Learning Group</i> exposed him to approaches and tools that he integrated into the work of the IFMDP.</p> <p>Calder Williams, the President of Partners of the Environment, and Junior "Spirit" Cottle, the IFMDP Forestry Liaison Officer, are both well known community activists who played key roles in the development of the arrangement.</p> <p>The CANARI ALP also included the support of a dedicated mentor, Andrew Simmons, who advised on project implementation. He also provided broader guidance to the group through its development over the year, drawing from his experience with the JEMS Progressive Community Organisation.</p> |
| <p><b>Capacities: (<i>internal capacities of partners in the arrangement</i>)</b> What world view/culture, skills and knowledge, structure, adaptive strategies, relationships/linkages, material/financial resources do the partners have that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enable the arrangement?</li> <li>• enable negotiation of their role in the arrangement?</li> <li>• enable their securing benefits from the arrangement?</li> </ul> | <p><u>World view/culture:</u> Key individuals in the process (see above) had a world view that strongly supports participation of CBOs in natural resource management. The development of the IFMDP by the government was a bold move to tackle a complex socio-ecological issue and reflects a world view that values communities as part of the solution. These were essential in contributing to enabling the arrangement.</p> <p><u>Skills and knowledge:</u> The IFMDP's skills in facilitating participatory processes and their capacity of members of Partners of the Environment to effectively articulate their needs and wants to get their voice heard contributed to enabling the arrangement. Skills in conflict management was identified as a capacity need by the IFMDP. Partners of the Environment identified the need to improve their literacy, technical, record-keeping and communication skills.</p>  |

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| <p>Are the existing capacities being effectively leveraged?</p> <p>Are key capacities lacking or weak?</p> | <p><u>Structure:</u> Partners of the Environment is an established organisation with structures for internal governance that enabled the arrangement. The need for Forest User Groups to be part of the IFMDP Steering Committee was identified.</p> <p><u>Adaptive strategies:</u> The IFMDP was adapted as a result of lessons coming out of CANARI's Action Learning Groups and this contributed to enabling the arrangement. The IFMDP requested assistance from CANARI to conduct a participatory evaluation of the programme, which can help to inform further work.</p> <p><u>Relationships/ linkages:</u> Fitzgerald Providence had links to CANARI and the <i>Forests and Livelihoods Action Learning Group</i> which includes key regional and national stakeholders (e.g. FAO and heads of forestry departments in other islands). Partners of the Environment had links to other Forest User Groups in St. Vincent and CANARI. The visit by CANARI's Forests and Livelihoods Action Learning Group was seen by Partners of the Environment as an important event where their work was recognised by regional stakeholders as well as key decision makers in government (the Head of the Forestry Division as well as the Acting Chief Agricultural Officer and the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries attended the field trip). The mentoring relationship was important, and this needs to be continued and strengthened. The relationship with CANARI can also be further leveraged by Partners of the Environment to put them in contact with CBOs and other stakeholders around the region engaged in similar work.</p> <p><u>Material/ financial resources:</u> Although some resources were provided by utility companies through the IFMDP and other small grants (e.g. the CANARI ALP), there is need for additional funding support for this arrangement to develop, including to provide office and meeting space, a computer, and a phone for Partners of the Environment. They developed a proposal for funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP) to implement a mauby agroforestry project. But this project is delayed until they have access to land. This is a key need, and Partners of the Environment applied to the government for land but has this has not yet been granted.</p> |
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## 1.4 Livelihood benefits and costs from the initiative

|   | <b>Benefits</b><br>To whom?<br>Are the poorest benefitting?<br>Was the allocation of the benefits equitable, e.g. proportionate to the rights, responsibilities and interests?<br>Was the allocation of benefits transparent?<br>Are there identifiable elites?<br>Are some people marginalised?   | <b>Costs</b><br>To whom?<br>Are these intended (i.e. meeting stated objectives) or unintended? | <b>Potential benefits</b><br>Are there potential benefits that have not yet accrued?   | <b>Trade-offs</b><br>Have there been trade-offs between the different assets?<br>Between different beneficiaries?<br>Have these trade-offs been negotiated. If so, how and by whom?<br>If not, how was it decided? | <b>Sustainability</b><br>Are the livelihoods sustainable (e.g. resilient to stresses and shocks, not dependent on external support, do not compromise the productivity of the resource base, do not undermine the livelihoods of others)? |
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| <b>Human</b><br>(e.g. education, skills, knowledge, health)                           | Health benefits from improved water quality in the river, with a return of "tri tri" fish that were commonly caught for consumption by the community. Also cutting of grass along and in river resulted in reduction of rats and mosquito populations.<br><br>Increased awareness of residents of Chateaubelair community about environmental conservation and sustainable livelihoods.<br><br>Partners of the Environment developed the confidence and competency to lobby the Minister and other governmental officials. | Potential burnout of key individuals in Partners of the Environment and IFMDP.                 | Increased skills and knowledge of members of Partners of the Environment is expected but was not reported.   | None reported.   | The shared and well articulated vision contributes to sustainable livelihoods. However, the group is very dependent at this time on mentoring and leadership by key individuals.  |
| <b>Social</b><br>(e.g. family, community and wider social networks and relationships) | Partners of the Environment has earned respect and trust and built their reputation by turning talk into action in their community and by being advocates for change on behalf of their community.<br><br>Increased support from residents of the Chateaubelair community who assisted with the river cleanup and planting and who were able to once again use the river.<br><br>Bringing persons from different political parties to work together.   | None reported.   | Partners of the Environment's way of working – a mix of action and advocacy – is a good model that other CBOs can use to build their profile and respectability. Their story can inspire other CBOs in the region.<br><br>Potential increase in social assets if marijuana farmers can switch to a legal source of income. | None reported.   | Built trust, reputation and respect will contribute to sustainability.  |
| <b>Physical</b><br>(e.g. standard of and access to infrastructure, transport)         | None reported.   | None reported.   | Partners of the Environment's advocacy role can potentially improve physical assets in Chateaubelair.  | None reported.   | None reported.  |
| <b>Natural</b><br>(ownership of or access)  | River quality improved.  | None reported.   | Improved watershed health if people are able to switch   | Potential trade-off between improved natural assets and reduced financial  | Improved natural assets will contribute to sustainability.  |

|  | <b>Benefits</b><br>To whom?<br>Are the poorest benefitting?<br>Was the allocation of the benefits equitable, e.g. proportionate to the rights, responsibilities and interests?<br>Was the allocation of benefits transparent?<br>Are there identifiable elites?<br>Are some people marginalised? | <b>Costs</b><br>To whom?<br>Are these intended (i.e. meeting stated objectives) or unintended?                        | <b>Potential benefits</b><br>Are there potential benefits that have not yet accrued?   | <b>Trade-offs</b><br>Have there been trade-offs between the different assets?<br>Between different beneficiaries?<br>Have these trade-offs been negotiated. If so, how and by whom?<br>If not, how was it decided? | <b>Sustainability</b><br>Are the livelihoods sustainable (e.g. resilient to stresses and shocks, not dependent on external support, do not compromise the productivity of the resource base, do not undermine the livelihoods of others)? |
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| to healthy natural resources, including land and ecosystem services)         | Beach cleaned up.  |   | from marijuana farming to sustainable agroforestry.  | assets if alternative livelihoods do not provide the same level of economic return as marijuana. Stakeholders are aware of and working on this issue.  |   |
| <b>Political</b><br>(access to and influence over decision-making processes) | The reputation and confidence of Partners of the Environment and the publicising of their efforts gave them more voice in dealing with the government.   | Perceptions about the partisan affiliation of key individuals affects the how CBOs affiliated with him are perceived. | None reported.   | If increasing political assets is perceived in a partisan manner it may threaten social and other assets.  | Local government has not existed for over 20 years; this has social and financial implications for rural communities, far removed from the centre of government in the capital city.  |
| <b>Financial</b>   | Partners of the Environment has been able to access grants.<br><br>IFMDP was funded by the utility companies.  | Partners of the Environment may not have access to credit as a CBO.   | Partners of the Environment has the potential to access further funding through their activities, for example from UNDP GEF SGP. | None reported.   | Resources need to be effectively used to meet the needs of the community.   |

## 1.5 Lessons learned

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| How effective are the arrangements in achieving the stated objectives (socio-economic benefits or other benefits)? | A full and participatory evaluation of the livelihood impacts of the arrangement needs to be done. While some benefits have been identified (e.g. improvement in human, social, political and natural assets), a viable alternative to marijuana cultivation has not yet been found and therefore the stated objectives have not yet been achieved. The capacity of the community has been built so that they can play a part in this process, but more technical assistance, mentoring, and political support (including with the provision of legal access to land) is needed. |
| Is there a relationship between different levels/types of participation and the level of benefits?                 | There is as yet no evidence that the engagement of the community by the IFMDP has resulted in more livelihood benefits but it may still be too early to say, especially as Partners of the Environment plays a bigger role in directing the initiatives.   |

## 1.6 Recommendations

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| Recommendations from stakeholders on how the institutional arrangement, external or internal forces or capacities could be changed to improve livelihood benefits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing technical assistance for a feasibility study of options presented by IFMDP (listed above) and options presented at the ALG (e.g. subsidised agriculture, vanilla cultivation, wild meat production, goat cheese production, sport, music, and community based tourism/agrotourism).</li> <li>• Enhancing communication and public relations about the success of the arrangement, including via written case studies and participatory video.</li> <li>• Sharing lessons derived from mentoring in the ALP.</li> <li>• Enhancing partnerships between Partners of the Environment and other (non-IFMDP) government agencies.</li> <li>• Enhancing relationships, communication and collaboration between Partners of the Environment and other CBOs in the region.</li> <li>• Training forestry officers in community forestry and facilitation of participatory processes.</li> <li>• Education and training (including literacy education) for members of Partners of the Environment and the wider community.</li> <li>• Including a representative of the Forest User Groups on the IFMDP Steering Committee.</li> </ul> |
| How benefits could be measured on a consistent basis  | A baseline study is needed, followed by systematic collection and recording of relevant data on evolution of the arrangement and livelihood changes, including income generated and extent to which profits are redistributed into community assets.  |



#### APPENDIX 1: TYPES OF PARTICIPATION<sup>5</sup>

| Type                                     | Characteristics  |
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| 1. Manipulative participation            | Participation is simply a pretence, with 'people's representatives on official boards but who are unelected and have no power  |
| 2. Passive participation                 | People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project management without any listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals   |
| 3. Participation by consultation         | People participate by being consulted or answering questions. External agents define problems and information gathering processes, and so control analysis. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views   |
| 4. Participation for material incentives | People participate by contributing resources, for example labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. [People] ... are involved in neither experimentation nor the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end  |
| 5. Functional participation              | Participation is seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to mete predetermined objectives related to the project. Such involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision-making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external agents. At worst, local people may still only be co-opted to serve external goals   |
| 6. Interactive participation             | People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just the means to achieve project goals. The process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured learning processes. As groups take control over local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have a stake in maintaining structures and practices |
| 7. Self-mobilisation                     | People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Self-mobilisation can spread if governments and NGOs provide an enabling framework of support. Such self-initiated mobilisation may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power.   |

<sup>5</sup> From Bass, S., Dalal-Clayton, B. and Pretty, J. (1995) Participation in Strategies for Sustainable Development International Institute for Environment and Development. Environmental Planning Issues No. 7