



THE NATIONAL
FOREST PROGRAMME
FACILITY



Forests and Livelihoods Exchange Visit on entrepreneurship opportunities from the sustainable use of natural resource based products and services



November 23, 2010

Speyside Community Centre

Speyside, Tobago

1 Background

This exchange visit is part of a regional programme on Forests and Livelihoods currently being conducted in Barbados, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Christopher (St. Kitts) & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, and Trinidad & Tobago under CANARI's **Forests and Livelihoods Programme**.

CANARI's **Forests and Livelihoods Programme** seeks to enhance the contribution of forest goods and ecological services to sustainable livelihoods of the rural poor in the islands of the Caribbean. The programme encompasses research and analysis as well as building capacity at local, national and regional levels for equitable participation and effective collaboration of stakeholders in the management of forest resources.

CANARI co-hosted the panel discussion with the Speyside Eco Marine Park Rangers (SEMPR). The SEMPR is a volunteer group that seeks to support sustainable livelihoods for the Speyside community.

2 Goal/ Objectives

The overall goal of this exchange visit was to build the capacity of community based organisations (CBOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for participatory forest management that enhances the contribution of forests to sustainable livelihoods derived from the entrepreneurship opportunities from the use of forest products and services.

The main objective of the exchange visits is to identify, promote, and build capacity for institutional arrangements which optimise the socio-economic contribution of forest resources to the rural poor of the insular Caribbean.

The main objectives of the exchange visit to Speyside were as follows:

- (a) build understanding and appreciation of how natural resources can benefit livelihoods;
- (b) provide practical examples of small businesses based on the sustainable use of natural resources and lessons learnt; and
- (c) build or enhance relationships among the Speyside community and key successful entrepreneurs.

3 Funding

These visits are being funded by a grant under the **National Forest Programme Facility (NFPPF)** of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO).



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4 Participants

The 16 participants all came from Speyside and included members the SEMPR, caterers, village council members and small business owners (see Appendix 1 for the list of participants).

5 Methods

The workshop was very interactive and used a panel discussion approach to share experiences in the development small businesses based on the use of natural resources. The panellists and participants engaged in lively discussions that analysed the opportunities and challenges involved in managing small businesses. The agenda is shown in Appendix 2.

6 Background on panellists

6.1 Fondes Amandes Community Reforestation Project (FACRP)

Akilah Jaramogi explained that the FACRP is a suburban project that encourages the reforestation of the St. Ann's watershed, Trinidad. The FACRP includes several community businesses based on the conservation of the forest, including: an organic nursery that produces indigenous trees; an animal husbandry initiative; and eco-tourism. The manure produced from the animal husbandry is used as fertiliser in the organic nursery and is also sold. The FACRP hosts an eco-camp each year from July to August as part of its educational package. FACRP also earns revenue from eco-tours throughout the year. The project has reforested the hillside and has protected the watershed from major forest fires.



6.2 Akilah's Jewellery

Akilah Jaramogi is also the sole proprietor of Akilah's Jewellery that uses raw material from the forest (e.g. seeds, nuts, wood, etc.) to create jewellery for sale on local and international markets. She employs community members to collect and sell her items. Ms. Jaramogi explained that this is a separate venture from the community businesses. She has worked with others in the region to develop trade shows to showcase their jewellery.

6.3 Nature Seekers

Nature Seekers is a community organisation based in Matura, Trinidad that is involved in the protection of the leatherback turtle since 1990. Dennis Sammy explained that the organisation faced many challenges but survived by developing skills to resolve those problems. The organisation now has 105 volunteers and staff members that are paid monthly. Nature Seekers has been able to acquire an office, a conference facility and a vehicle despite their humble beginnings.

Nature Seekers began by focusing on seasonal tours to view nesting leatherback turtles. It developed year-round financial sustainability by engaging in other eco-tourism ventures such as

hiking and the development and management of the Salybia Recreation and Water Sports Centre in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism. The organisation is hoping to develop a community kitchen at the Centre to sell local food.

6.4 Talented Woodworking

Curtis Winchester is the sole proprietor of Talented Woodworking that is located in Canaan/ Bon Accord, Tobago. He explained that he started out in one of the government's development programmes but improved his skills by reading and attending trade shows. The recent increase in demand for construction joinery (windows, doors, etc.) opened new markets for woodworking on the island. Curtis Winchester has also mentored many others who are now successful joiners. He stressed that determination is important for success in small businesses.

7 Discussion points

Several major points emerged from the discussions. These included sources of funding, networking and the importance of organisational planning.

7.1 Funding

Participants were concerned about access to the Green Fund. One of the panellists explained that Tobago cannot access the Green Fund at present because the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) (which has the responsibility for community development in Tobago) is not authorised to administer grants under the Green Fund under the current laws governing the use of the Green Fund. This needs to be amended before Tobago groups can access the money. Farley Augustine (a member of the SEMPR) further explained

that under the Green Fund, a group must be registered with the Ministry of Community Development, which does not exist in Tobago.

Banks and credit unions have been successful sources of funds for the panellists.

7.2 Networking

The panellists stressed the importance of networking to create opportunities for the development of small businesses. Akilah Jaramogi said that through networking she found markets for Akilah's Jewellery She found that through partnerships with others, jewellers in the



Picture 3 Akilah Jaramogi responding to a question from the audience

Source: Keith Gibson, Ph.D. Candidate

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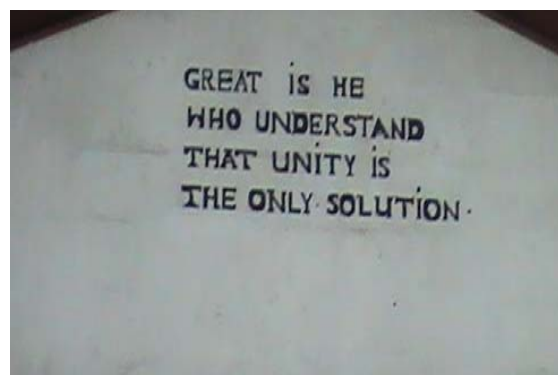
region were able to host trade shows that opened markets for their products. Dennis Sammy noted in his introduction the partnership between Nature Seekers and the Ministry of Tourism that has resulted in the CBO managing the Salybia Recreation and Watersports Centre at the Salybia beach facility. However, the participants believed that it would be difficult to form partnerships in Speyside because of the general independence of the people and the lack of trust for others within Tobago.

7.3 Markets

A participant commented that it was difficult to compete with foreigners who have ready sources of funds and better access to markets because of their connections to their own countries. Akilah Jaramogi believed that Speyside needed to repackage the products and services that are available in the community. Products and services can be advertised in other ways to attract customers. For example Cheryl's Cleaning Services (a new business in Speyside) for example can become Cheryl's Janitorial Services and compete with other established firms.

7.4 Organisational planning

All the panellists spoke of the need for organisational planning, especially the importance of having a clearly defined business plan and a vision and mission for their organisation. It was also important that the businesses and groups take "baby steps" to achieve their goals, and plan achievements that want to achieve each month. As the organisation and businesses grow stronger, they will find themselves planning for the year.



Picture 4 Sign on the wall of the Speyside Community Centre talking of the importance of unity

7.5 Other points

Unity

Dennis Sammy stressed the importance of unity in development of any small business or organisation. He said that it was easier for the funding organisations and governments to listen to a group than an individual. Although the participants believed that there was a general inability to trust others, Dennis Sammy pointed to the sign above the stage in the community centre and said that the community seemed to understand the importance of unity in principle

Factors of production

In answering another question about capital, Dennis Sammy responded that there are other factors that affect the development of businesses. He explained that the four factors of production were land, labour, capital and management. Capital (funding) was only one.

Land was needed to provide space for the establishment of offices. Dennis Sammy explained that acquisition of land, especially state lands, was difficult. He pointed out that the SEMPR needed land for the establishment of the information centre that they were planning. It was also necessary to have a plan to deal with labour and management. Nature Seekers wrote an employment plan that defined the hiring practices (e.g. no one outside of Matura would be hired).

Quality products

Both Akilah Jaramogi and Curtis Winchester said that businesses can be more successful if they consistently produced quality products. This was important to keep the customers interested in purchasing their products.

8 Conclusion

The panel discussion was able to meet the stated objectives. The participants all agreed that they were better able to understand the benefits of the natural resources to livelihoods by the examples of successful businesses that were presented during the programme. They were able to meet successful entrepreneurs and develop ideas for current and future endeavours. After listening to the panellists, one participant was motivated to change the name of her business and have it registered.

There was some disagreement on if all lessons would be applicable to the Speyside community. The community strongly disagreed that uniting could make it easier for them to access funding. They believed that Tobagonians were independent by nature and unwilling to trust others.

Both the audience and the panellists agreed that the discussion was useful despite some of the differences of opinion. It is believed that the exercise successfully offered the Speyside community concrete examples and ideas for the development of small businesses based on the sustainable use of natural resources.

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Appendix 1 – List of Participants

Name of participant	Organisation	Tel	Email Address
Sheena Alexander	SEMPR	333 - 9857	
Giselle Alexander	SEMPR	301 – 4913	
Keith Gibson	University of Calgary, Canada	396 – 2472	kwgibson@ucalgary.ca
Jace Bishop	SEMPR	678 – 3284	Jace.Bishop@hotmail.com
Cheryl–Ann Boucher	Cheryl's Cleaning Services	304 – 6637	
Dalia Whiteman-Taylor	SEMPR	330 – 0526	
Brenda Gray	Caterer	680 – 0311	
Trudy–Ann Baptiste	Student, Speyside High School	772 – 1713	chelsychick16@hotmail.com
Jose Andrews	Craftsman	383 – 0960	
Ann–Marie Stewart	Small business owner	785 – 7748; 391 – 4319	
Marie Smedley	Coral Cay Conservation	304 – 1802	trcp@coralcay.org
Farley Augustine	SEMPR	743 – 6706	farley_augustine@hotmail.com farleyaugustine@gmail.com
Meshell Trotman-George	Speyside Village Council	477 – 5621	
Black Pirate	Resident	793 – 9035; 306 – 2038	

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Name of participant	Organisation	Tel	Email Address
Clement McPherson	President – Speyside Village Council	756 – 2379	
Peter Trotman	SEMPR		



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Appendix 2 - Agenda

Caribbean Natural Resources Institute and The Speyside Eco-Marine Park Rangers

Sharing experiences about how to develop small business opportunities from the sustainable use of natural resources in Trinidad and Tobago and lessons on the potential for Speyside in Tobago

Tuesday 23rd November, 2010

5:00 – 8:30 p.m.

AGENDA

Discussion goal

The **goal** of this panel discussion is to motivate the Speyside community to become involved in small businesses that are based on the use of natural resources.

Discussion objectives

The **discussion objectives** are to:

- (a) build understanding and appreciation of how natural resources can benefit livelihoods;
- (b) provide examples of practical small businesses based on the sustainable use of natural resources- and lessons learnt; and
- (c) build or enhance relationships among the Speyside community and key successful entrepreneurs.

5:00 p.m.	Registration, refreshments and informal networking
5:45 p.m.	Welcome by SEMPR representative, Peter Trotman and the moderator – Keisha Sandy, CANARI Introductions Presentations from panellists: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Akilah Jaramogi, Fondes Amandes Community Reforestation Project, St. Ann's, Trinidad 2. Dennis Sammy, Nature Seekers, Matura, Trinidad 3. Curtis Winchester, Talented Woodworking, Canaan, Tobago
6:00 p.m.	Questions and discussion
8:00 p.m.	Summary of key lessons Wrap-up, thanks and close

