

International Journal of the Commons
Vol. 4, no 1 February 2010, pp. 160–182
Publisher: Igitur, Utrecht Publishing & Archiving Services for IASC
URL:<http://www.thecommonsjournal.org>
URN:NBN:NL:UI:10-1-100207
Copyright: content is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License
ISSN:1875-0281

Placing the commons at the heart of community development: three case studies of community enterprise in Caribbean Islands

Sarah McIntosh
Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI),
sarah@canari.org

Yves Renard
Independent Consultant and Associate of Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI),
yr@candw.lc

Abstract: This paper examines experiences in developing, supporting and sustaining community-based enterprises that are based on the use of forest, coastal and marine resources in the insular Caribbean, with a focus on the eastern Caribbean, and draws lessons from that experience. The three cases reviewed include community-based enterprises involved in forest conservation, turtle protection, tour guiding and fisheries. Other experiences are also used to inform the lessons and conclusions of the paper. The paper first identifies some of the cultural, social or economic factors that have favoured or hindered the development of these enterprises, highlighting the conditions that are specific to Caribbean societies, where the majority of the people have throughout history been denied access to valuable natural resources, where production is largely driven by external markets, and where there is not a long tradition of community natural resource management. It then examines the extent to which the economic success of individual business ventures contributes to or hinders the achievement of the broader community social, political, cultural and environmental goals. On the basis of these analyses, the paper proposes a number of enabling conditions that may be required, in the context of the insular Caribbean, for these initiatives to flourish.

Keywords: Caribbean, commons, community-based enterprises, fisheries, forests, tourism, turtles

Acknowledgements: The authors would like to thank all those who contributed directly or indirectly to the paper: particularly, Akilah and Kembah

Jaramogi of Fondes Amandes; Dennis Sammy and Susan Lakan-Baptiste of Nature Seekers for their inputs to the case studies of their projects; and to the community leaders and members in Anse La Raye, Saint Lucia and Gouyave, Grenada, who have spearheaded the design and establishment of Fish Festivals. We are also grateful to Nicole Leotaud of CANARI for her inputs and review of the paper.

1. Introduction

1.1. Linking common property and sustainable development

The dominant discourse on development in the Caribbean, with its focus on the formal economy (agriculture for export, tourism, mining, manufacturing), does not assign a significant role to common property natural resources and to the traditional uses and users of these resources, which are seen as marginal and contributing very little to social and economic development. In recent times, however, there has been a new understanding and growing recognition of the role that resources such as forests and coastal ecosystems have played in the past, of the benefits they currently bring to national economies and local communities, and of the potential they offer. The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) is a regional non-governmental research and advocacy organization dedicated to the equitable participation and effective collaboration of Caribbean communities and institutions in managing the use of natural resources critical to development in the insular Caribbean (CANARI 2005). CANARI has been at the forefront of efforts aimed at understanding, validating and promoting positive and productive relationships between commons, people and development processes in the Caribbean.

Over its 25-year history, CANARI has piloted a number of innovative projects aimed at exploring new ways of managing common property resources, for example, the *People and the Sea* (CANARI 2003), *Who Pays for Water* and *Forests and Livelihoods* projects (see <http://www.canari.org>). The Institute has also studied and documented past, current and emerging production systems based on the use of common property resources (Berkes and Smith 1995; Geoghegan and Smith 1998; Smith and Koester 2003; Lum Lock and Geoghegan 2006). Some of these projects and case studies included a dimension of enterprise development, but this dimension has never previously been documented and systematically analysed.

This paper starts by outlining the Caribbean context for management of common property resources, then analyses the relationship between community-based enterprise, common property resources and livelihood benefits in three examples. It concludes by distilling some lessons learned and outlining the institutional and governance arrangements that appear to optimize livelihood benefits, and by suggesting further areas of research. The paper is based on the presentation made at the IASC 2008 Conference, which includes a more detailed analysis of the lessons learned in each case study.

1.2. Definitions

In this paper, we define ‘common property resources’ as resources for which some, but not necessarily all, of the property rights (i.e. rights of access, use, exclusion and regulation, as well as the right to transfer any of these rights) are held in common by several persons or groups of persons. In the context of most Caribbean islands, these are resources that are legally owned by the State or by private or corporate bodies, and for which some of the property rights have been, or could be, held by or transferred to communities or community organizations, either *de facto* or *de jure*.

We also use a definition of ‘enterprise’ that includes both the ‘businesses’ that have been set up primarily with a profit motive and ‘social enterprises’ which are set up to provide social (or environmental) dividends to community members (Berkes and Davidson-Hunt 2007).

This paper sees enterprise as one component of more complex production systems, and recognizes the need to adopt ‘a livelihood approach’ to development and resource management. This approach is concerned with the well-being of individuals, families, households and communities as a key goal of development and as a major indicator of progress. It recognizes that human systems and communities are built and depend on ecological, economic, physical, social/political and cultural assets that must be protected and enhanced. It puts people and their formal and informal institutions at the centre of the development process. It seeks to capitalize on existing strengths and to build the resilience of natural and human systems, it accepts that change is an inherent part of the development process, it acknowledges the differences that exist within a given social group, and it aims at understanding and improving the links and coherence between local (households and communities), national (public policy, governments) and global institutions, from the bottom up.

2. The context

2.1. Geographical context

The insular Caribbean is defined as the islands of the Greater and Lesser Antilles as well as Trinidad and the Bahamas as shown on Map 1 above. This region includes 14 island nations, five overseas territories of the United Kingdom, two overseas *départements* of France, two self-governing units of the Netherlands, one territory of the United States, and the U.S.-associated Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The case studies are all drawn from the Lesser Antilles (or Windward Islands) plus Trinidad and Tobago, as shown on the enlarged section of Map 1.

2.2. Historical factors

Although situations and conditions vary greatly between countries and ecosystems, even in a small region such as the insular Caribbean, certain key factors are common to most of the islands and territories.



Map 1: Islands of the Caribbean with enlarged section showing the sub-region in which the case studies are situated, downloaded from www.paradise-islands.org on 15 May 2009.

The primary factor is the land tenure system, a legacy of the colonial era, with most of the land owned and managed by a few large land owners or by the State. Historically, therefore, only the marginal lands and resources were available to small-scale private ownership and use, often under collective systems of management. Such land included estates that were no longer profitable and suitable for monoculture, or areas on the fringe of these estates which slaves (and plantation workers after the abolition of slavery in the mid-19th century) were allowed to use for subsistence farming, charcoal production and other uses.

Uses of common property resources in the Caribbean must therefore be seen in the context of the relationship between these resources and the dominant plantation system. The commons were a free space liberated from the rules of the oppressive dominant system, and the uses of common property resources often represented – and still represent today – forms of economic and cultural resistance to the plantation system, and ways for communities to build economic and social resilience.

Among the legacies of history, it is also important to consider the special case of ‘family lands’, a very common regime of land tenure in the Caribbean which,

for example, represented 45.90% of parcels and 29.76% of total agricultural area in Saint Lucia in 1996 (Dujon 1997). Family lands constitute a form of communal ownership among members of a family that allows a number of heirs to have access to land, providing security to all co-owners while retaining flexibility in land use, and providing a buffer and some non-monetary welfare benefits that would otherwise not be available to the weakest and poorest among the heirs. Family land tenure in the Caribbean is an institution (Besson and Momsen 1987) to which people are consciously and unconsciously attached. While offering some benefits, it also creates constraints and problems, particularly in cases of disputes, or when land is needed as collateral for access to credit. In this sense, family land tenure is often perceived by governments and financial institutions as an obstacle to social mobility, economic empowerment and business development in rural areas.

Mainly for the reasons cited above, large areas of land are not currently in production or supporting any form of enterprise. Consequently, important common property resources, such as forests and wetlands, are not directly available to the poor, although they offer potential for sustainable economic activities and for a greater contribution to local livelihoods.

2.3. Environmental conditions

Environmental factors also contribute to determining the type and extent of use of common property natural resources in support of enterprise and livelihoods. In small islands, ecosystems are by definition small and closely linked, and impacts of activities taking place in one part of the island are often felt in surrounding ecosystems. Natural ecosystems are also fragile and vulnerable, especially in a region that is prone to extreme weather systems. The use of common property resources in support of livelihoods and community-based production is therefore determined, to some extent, by these factors of size, fragility, vulnerability and change.

2.4. Social and cultural factors

As a consequence of the historical factors briefly described above, Caribbean societies and communities have a somewhat ambiguous relationship with the land and the landscape. On the one hand, there is a weak sense of collective ownership of and entitlement to the landscape and the land, because they belong and have always belonged to the 'master', or the State. At the same time, a very strong cultural and social value is attached to private land ownership, as an expression of identity, autonomy and personal achievement, precisely because the dominant system has historically denied the right to property.

While this pattern can be found throughout the region, there are very significant exceptions, beginning with communities that are predominantly of Indian descent (about 40% of the population of Trinidad), where there is a much stronger value attached to land and to collective use of resources. On the other hand, there is considerable ambivalence in rural Trinidad among those of African descent about financial success, which is often equated with 'master' behaviour and putting the

individual good above that the community. Mention should also be made of the Rastafarian community, which has, for ideological reasons, developed a very special relationship with natural resources and a special interest in businesses based on sustainable uses.

Because the rural economy was built on the plantation system, in modern times the majority of people in agricultural areas are working as farm labourers¹, with limited opportunity for an entrepreneurial approach to farming. Many Caribbean communities, especially in areas where monoculture remains dominant, therefore currently lack adequate and sufficient skills, institutions, systems and other capacities needed to stimulate and support small- and medium-size business, and to market their products.

2.5. Economic factors

The economies of Caribbean islands are structured in ways that do not favour the development of small independent enterprises, having been shaped, and remaining driven, by large-scale production for export markets (agriculture, mining, energy production) and by the delivery of services to external clientele (tourism, banking). This leaves little space for small-scale and independent entrepreneurship, which therefore often happens independently of, and at times in opposition to, the dominant system.

2.6. Policy and institutional factors

There are a number of formal and informal policy considerations that must be taken into account when trying to understand the context within which community-based enterprise takes place in the Caribbean. These can be summarised as follows:

- a generally accepted view, in all sectors of society, that common property resources, especially the forests, the sea and the rivers, are to be managed by the State, and there are very few challenges to this view;
- a dominant perception, within society and within the public sector agencies responsible for natural resource management, that small scale users of natural assets (farmers, hunters, fishers, craft producers) are largely responsible for environmental degradation. The dominant and most common approach adopted by natural resource management agencies is therefore to exclude people (and the uses that people make, or could make, of these resources);
- most of the agencies that are responsible for common property resources in these countries (notably the fisheries and forestry administrations) have a strong management capacity, but they do not have expertise and often lack

¹ With the exception to some extent of Trinidad and Tobago, where many rural people are employed in government unemployment relief programmes or directly or indirectly in the dominant oil and gas industry.

interest in business aspects, and are therefore not equipped to assist and promote enterprise development. At the same time, the agencies responsible for economic development, in government, in business and in civil society, typically know very little about natural resource management and have limited linkages with natural resource management institutions;

- the linkages between economic development policy (including policy governing business development and poverty reduction strategies) and natural resource policy are weak. Development policy favours large-scale development and pays little attention to natural resource management. Natural resource policy is typically geared towards conservation and the maintenance of ecosystem services, not towards small- and medium-size enterprise and poverty reduction, and there is no explicit policy guidance on the relationship between key natural resources (including forests, beaches, rivers, marine areas and wildlife) and business development;
- with a few exceptions, countries in the region have weak systems of local governance, with Local Government Agencies (when they exist) usually lacking authority and resources, with no established system of coordination among institutional actors at the local level, and with weak civil society organizations at the community level;
- there is little land use planning to define optimal use and guide land and resource management decisions, save for development control procedures. Most countries do not have national land use plans and strategies, and there are only a small number of local land use plans in specific areas. There is therefore no guidance on the type of business and development activity that is suited for specific areas;
- when dealing with matters of property rights, the State and its agencies tend to avoid explicit policy directions and to leave their options open, resulting in a decision-making process that deals with situations on a case by case basis and that is susceptible to a number of undesirable influences. Indeed, decisions regarding the use of land and other resources are very often *ad hoc* decisions, that are strongly influenced by local political considerations and are often made outside established systems and procedures;
- because of the dominant resource tenure and management regimes, there is no tradition of devolution, and the instruments that would be needed to establish and support entrepreneurship based on the use of common property natural resources are therefore lacking and need to be invented, tested and then propagated (e.g. co-management agreements and concessions to entrepreneurs);
- the capacity of public sector, private sector and civil society institutions to provide technical assistance to micro-business is generally weak. Much money and effort has been spent on micro-business in the region in the past two decades, with significant involvement by bi-lateral and multi-lateral development partners, but very little, if any, consideration has been given to non-traditional sectors and to activities such as natural resource-based enterprise.

3. Case studies

Three case studies are presented here, on the basis of a review of literature, field observations and interviews with key informants. The cases were selected in order to cover as wide a range of resources and sectors as possible, keeping in mind the fact that examples of enterprises based on the use of common property resources are few in this region. CANARI was not the manager or lead facilitator of the process in any of these cases, but it contributed to the development and strengthening of these experiences in various ways, especially through capacity-building. The information collected for the case studies is not always directly comparable since the actors involved kept widely differing records, particularly in terms of documenting expenses (including in-kind contributions of time) and revenue.

3.1. Fondes Amandes, Trinidad

3.1.1. Overview

Fondes Amandes is a small hillside community situated close to St. Ann's, a middle class residential suburb of the capital of Trinidad, Port of Spain. It is located in the foothills of the western Northern Range and adjacent to an important reservoir serving metropolitan Port of Spain (See Map 2).

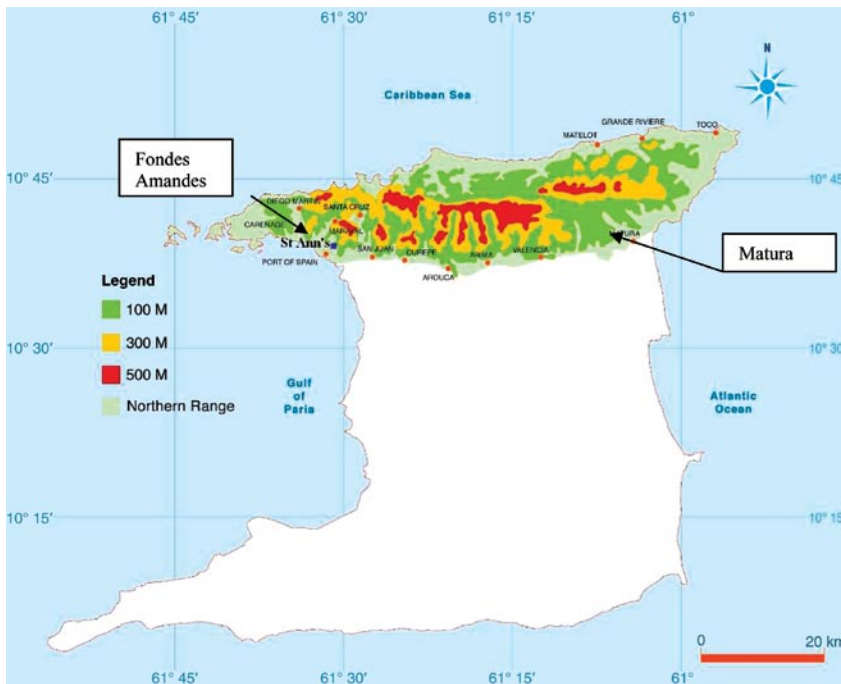
The community comprises mainly informal settlers and is based in and around a privately-owned former cocoa estate, which was abandoned by its owner in the 1960s, a period when the oil industry and government programmes started to compete for the agricultural labour force. The land tenure of the area is mixed (see Map 2), with the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) having acquired some of the land to protect the reservoir. The population is small (see Box 1) and there have historically been few opportunities for employment within the community.

This case study focuses primarily on the Fondes Amandes Community Reforestation Project (FACRP), an initiative of the informal settlers who moved to the area in the 1970s and 1980s to live and farm. Many of them were Rastafarians with strong values regarding the conservation and sustainable use of the land.

3.1.2. Genesis of the Fondes Amandes Community Reforestation Project

In the early years, the settlers experienced frequent destruction of their crops by bush fires in the dry season, which also threatened to destroy their homes. This in turn caused soil erosion, heavy siltation of the rivers and water works, and flooding of the residential areas in the foothills during the rainy season. Drawing on knowledge gained from a period of employment in the Forestry Division, one family of Rastafarians, the Jaramogis, started to intercrop trees in an attempt to halt this cycle, and encouraged others to do so.

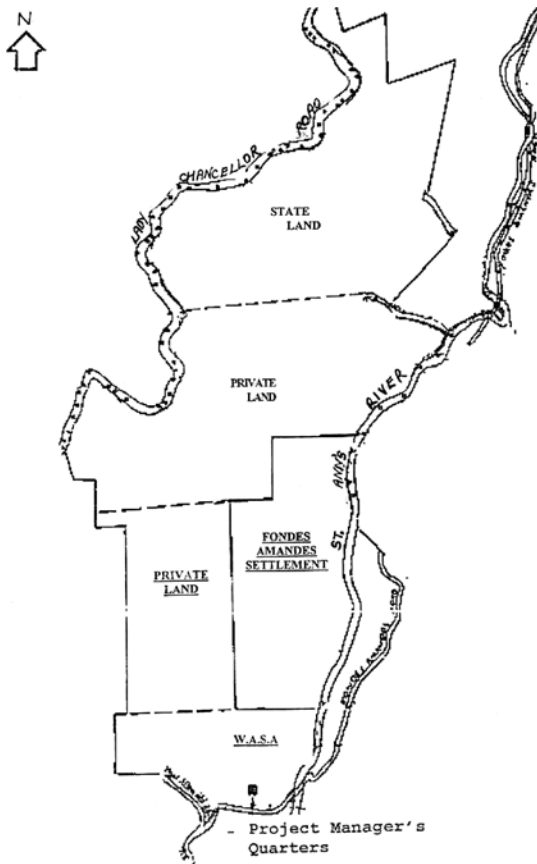
These efforts coalesced into a fledgling community forestry and livelihood enhancement initiative. The group was guided initially by the Rastafarian philosophy and strong leadership of Tacuma Jaramogi. The vision for the community was discussed at informal get-togethers and evening drumming



Map 2: Map of Trinidad highlighting the location of the case studies 3.1 and 3.2 (Source: www.mapscd.com/trindadyobago_illustrator.html, with St. Ann's added to the map by the Forestry Division).

Box 1. Fondes Amandes demographic profile.

- 37 families, 167 person of which:
 - over 60 years old: 17 persons
 - 25–60 years: 53 persons of which 60% female
 - 12–25 years: 48 persons of which 75% male
 - Under 12 years: 49 children
 - Most adult residents self-employed parlour owners, craftsmen (masons, electricians and carpenters), domestics and gardeners. No salaried workers
 - Only domestic and gardening work available in immediate area so most people working outside the area
- (2003 figures, population estimated to have grown slightly, through family expansion rather than new settlers)
- Most households have electricity and, since 2006, pipe-borne water, resulting in growing number of households with inside toilets and showers; formerly had to go over a mile for water
 - The land tenure of the informal settlers has still not been regularised although this was recommended in the 2000 Draft Greater Port Of Spain Local Area Plan (UDECOTT 2000)



Map 3: Ownership pattern of the Fondes Amandes Development (Source: Eden Shand).

sessions and was rooted in the strong conviction that the enterprise could and should simultaneously address conservation and livelihoods objectives, with a particular focus on reducing the high levels of unemployment and addressing the fact that most people had to seek work outside the immediate area (Akilah Jaramogi, pers. comm).

By the late 1980s, the group's work had had an appreciable effect on the watershed in terms of reduced fires, soil erosion and flooding. The settlers were nevertheless threatened with eviction by WASA. At this point, they appealed to their Member of Parliament, a trained forester, who intervened on their behalf and persuaded WASA to formally recognise the contribution of the group's efforts to the improvement of the St. Ann's water supply. In 1991, WASA's Chairman gave verbal consent for the group to use WASA lands for their tree planting activities and sealed the agreement with the symbolic planting of a tree (James 2003; Lum Lock and Geoghegan 2006).

3.1.3. Current status of the institution

In 1999, FACRP registered formally as a group with the Ministry of Community Development to facilitate access to grant funding. In 2006, at the urging of its donors and supporters, it adopted a formal constitution and Board of Directors that includes a number of members from outside the community to assure the range of skills required. However, the group still depends heavily on the strong leadership of one of its founder members, Akilah Jaramogi, and increasingly also her daughter, Kemba (Lum Lock and Geoghegan 2006; CANARI 2008a,b), and a continuing strong tradition of volunteerism to supplement grants and revenue-generating activities. The current membership of the group stands at about 18, with around 40 people getting regular employment and more on an occasional basis (e.g. food preparation and drumming).

The institution has evolved over time to include the following actors and roles:

- WASA has given verbal consent to use of its land, though not a formalised arrangement;
- Forestry Division, the formal manager of the other State land, provides technical support and subvention for fire wardens;
- Tropical Releaf Foundation, an NGO created by the former Member of Parliament, initially provided technical support and assistance with funding proposals (and has now launched a wider programme of community-based reforestation projects drawing on the Fondes Amandes experience);
- National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme (NRWRP) granted FACRP a reforestation project in 2006 which employs 35 persons;
- Supporters, such as donor agencies, companies, other NGOs and individuals provide technical and financial support and participate in the annual “gayap”² held in honour of Tacuma Jaramogi who died in 1994.

The private land owners play little role in the institution except through their tacit acceptance of the *status quo*.

3.1.4. Livelihood benefits

FACRP is now involved in or has stimulated a range of enterprises, including an organic nursery and organic agriculture, tour guiding, catering, landscaping and garden maintenance services, composting and recycling, and a variety of educational programmes. Akila Jaramogi also runs a thriving independent jewellery-making business, using seeds from the trees planted on the hillside. Table 1 below outlines the improvements to community livelihoods as a result of FACRP activities.

² A Trinidadian term for events in which community members and other volunteers get together voluntarily to carry out group activities that are beyond the ability of individuals or families.

Table 1: Positive impacts on livelihood assets in Fondes Amandes (Sources: James 2003; Lum Lock and Geoghegan 2006; CANARI 2008a and b; Jaramogi pers. comm.).

Asset	Benefits
Natural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undisturbed, though not formally sanctioned, access to land for housing, agriculture and extraction of forest products. • 1700 trees planted, of which 1500 have survived. • Area free of fires since 1997. • Improved water supply and quality from reservoir. • Community composting and recycling.
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FACRP employs around 40 people (full-time) and has an annual operating budget of ~US\$75,000) • Management fee for NRWRP: 20% of actual salaries. • Revenue from food sales, rental of facility etc.
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to pipe-borne water (negotiated by FACRP). • Offices, nursery and other enterprise-related structures. • Tools, office equipment, computers.
Human	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community capacities built in many areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – fire prevention/fire fighting; – tour guiding; – organic gardening; – community recycling/composting; – community-based tourism; – craft and cottage industries; and – music and cultural arts. • Group capacity built in NGO management.
Social political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced risk of being removed from land as a result of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support from the formal management agencies; • strong network of influential supporters; • support from all political administrations.

3.2. Matura, Trinidad

3.2.1. Overview

Matura is a small coastal village in north-east Trinidad (see Map 2) on the edge of the Matura Forest Reserve and adjoining the Matura National Park, which has 9000 hectares of moist forest and a number of rare or endangered species. The village has a population of about 1600 and residents have historically depended on subsistence agriculture, hunting and fishing plus a few government jobs for their livelihoods or else left the village to work elsewhere.

This case study focuses on Nature Seekers, a community-based organization that has developed a thriving enterprise based initially on marine turtle conservation, research and tourism but recently expanded to include reforestation activities, forest-based tours and a plan for an organic agro-forestry initiative.

3.2.2. Genesis of Nature Seekers

In the 1970s and 1980s, the local community hunted nesting adult marine turtles on Matura beach, either for food or for sale (the “wild meat”, eggs, shells and

purportedly aphrodisiac drinks and powders were all highly prized and could generate significant income). Occasionally turtles were slaughtered or maimed to use their blood to attract sharks (Sammy and Superville 2007).

In recognition of this problem, the turtle nesting beaches in Matura were declared a Prohibited Area in 1990 under the Forest Act, with access restricted every year from 1st March to 31st August. Formal responsibility for management of marine turtles falls under the Wildlife Department of the Forestry Division. The then Head of the Wildlife Section, Dr Carol James, recognised that protecting the seven-mile long beach without the buy-in of the villagers would be impossible and convened a series of meetings with the community (James and Fournillier 1993; Onwuka 2005).

This initiative stimulated the formation of Nature Seekers, initially a tightly-knit group of villagers, many of them from the same extended family. This marked the first real co-management partnership in Trinidad between a community-based enterprise and a government management agency. In spite of considerable opposition and scepticism from some members of the community (Onwuka 2005), the enterprise has succeeded in reducing turtle slaughter from an estimated 30% of nesting turtles to zero. In the absence of a legislative basis for a formal co-management agreement, the key elements of the arrangement are negotiated annually (permitting arrangements, turtle protection warden fees, tour guide fees). Villagers are entitled to free annual permits but few of them take this up (Sammy pers. comm.). Although the general consensus now is that “Nature Seekers has put Matura on the map” and has generated employment opportunities for community members, some people still perceive that the benefits of Nature Seekers’ activities do not accrue widely enough to the community (Onwuka 2005).

3.2.3. Current status of the enterprise

The governance structure of Nature Seekers has evolved over time to adapt to changing needs and in response to several self-initiated but independently-facilitated strategic planning processes (Lum Lock et al. 2005). It is now registered as a non-profit company, currently with the governance structure and employees as shown in Figure 1 below.

Nature Seekers currently employs about 40 persons and has expanded its activities beyond the turtle protection, research and tour guiding to include part-ownership of a guesthouse, including catering services; reforestation, fire prevention and tour guiding; provision of community education; and consultancy services.

3.2.4. Current status of the institution

The wider institution has also evolved and now includes the following key actors:

- Wildlife Section of the Forestry Division (management agency for the wildlife on the beach, technical assistance, funding for turtle protection staff, issues permits for access to the beach);

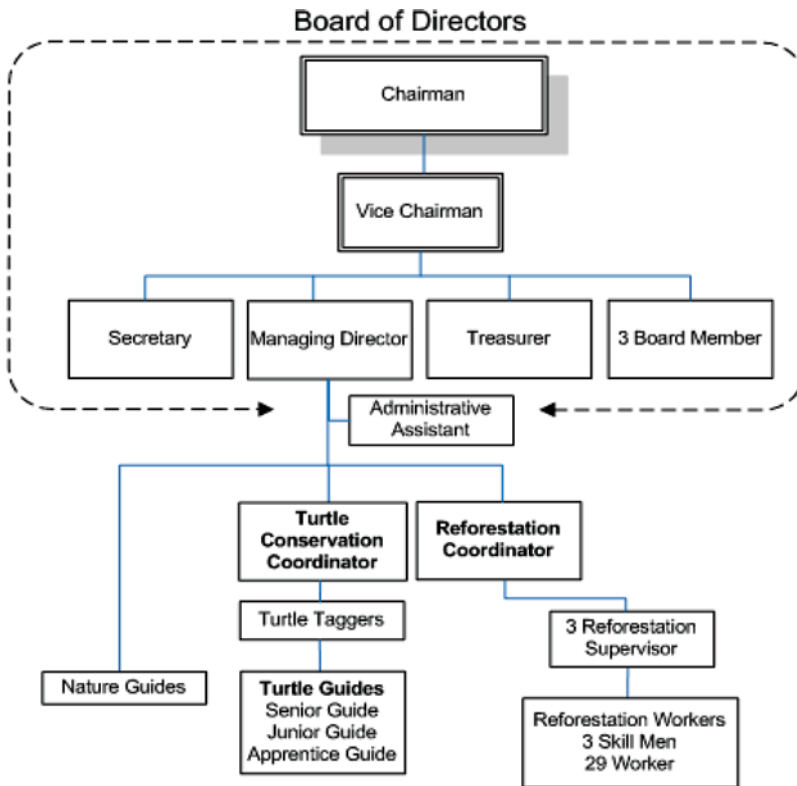


Figure 1: Nature Seekers governance structure (Source: Nature Seekers).

- Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (researchers, technical assistance, some funding);
- Earthwatch: 50–60 paying ‘volunteer tourists’ per season;
- National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme: which granted Nature Seekers a reforestation project in 2006 which employs 35 persons;
- Supporters, such as donor agencies, companies, other NGOs and individuals, who provide technical and financial support and participate in the annual beach clean up and sand turtle competition;
- Turtle Village Trust: an initiative catalyzed by Nature Seekers and involving three other community-based organizations involved in turtle protection, to develop a TT\$12 million (US\$2 million) business plan for the area, in collaboration with the Forestry Division and the multinational BHP Billiton.

3.2.5. Livelihood benefits

Nature Seekers is now involved in or has stimulated a range of enterprises, including turtle and forest tour guiding, guesthouse, research tourism, catering, and a variety of educational and community outreach programmes. Table 2 below

Table 2: Positive impacts on livelihood assets in Matura (Sources: Lum Lock et al. 2005; Nature Seekers' website; Sammy and Lakhan pers. comms; CANARI 2008b).

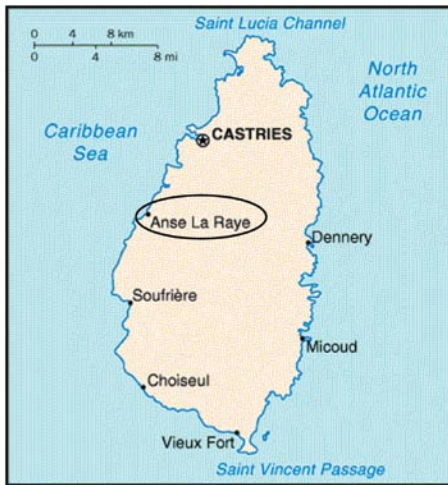
Asset	Benefits
Natural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 100 acres of reforested land, including intercropping with fruit trees. • Increased population of nesting turtles. • Access to land for turtle tour visitor centre. • 5 acres of state land for agro-forestry (applied for). • 8 acres of land leased for organic farming
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual revenue of about TT\$600,000, (£60,000): derived from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – annual government subvention; – grants; – turtle tours: 9909 tours in 2006 with fees ranging from about US\$0.75–15.00; – forest-based tours; – Earthwatch volunteers; – 30% share of revenue from guesthouse; – reforestation management fee; – consultancy services; – sale of craft/souvenirs. • Small indirect impact on bar and shop sales in village.
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office building and equipment. • Stake in guesthouse. • Turtle tour visitor centre (leased). • Vehicles. • Tools and equipment for turtle research and reforestation.
Human	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group capacity built in many areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – turtle protection/research; – tour guiding; – community-based tourism; – leadership; – strategic planning and visioning; – NGO management; – forestry; – fire prevention; – agro-forestry.
Social political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support from the formal management agency. ▪ Strong network of influential supporters. ▪ Support from all political administrations, (in spite of Chairperson having been at one time publicly affiliated with the current opposition party).

outlines the improvements to community livelihoods as a result of Nature Seekers' activities.

3.3. Fish Festivals in Grenada and Saint Lucia

3.3.1. Overview

The focus of this case study is on “Fish Festivals” in two communities, Anse La Raye in Saint Lucia and Gouyave in Grenada (see Maps 4 and 5). Both are coastal communities, where fishing is an important economic activity, with several types of fisheries (pelagic, reef fisheries, other small scale coastal fisheries such as



Map 4: Saint Lucia (Source: <http://geography.about.com/library/cia/blcstlucia.htm>)



Map 5: Grenada (Source: <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/namerica/caribb/lcolor/gdcolor.htm>)

shell collection or nets). Gouyave, which is considered the “fishing capital of Grenada”, has a population of ~8500. Anse La Raye has a more mixed economy and a population of ~2000.

There has been a significant expansion of the fisheries sector and increases in fish catch in Gouyave in recent years, thanks largely to a number of public sector investments and fisheries development projects (starting during the revolutionary period of the early 1980s, with assistance from Cuba, and followed by a Japanese-funded project). This has resulted in increases in catch beyond the local marketing capacity (Finisterre 2007). The catch is marketed locally and through local exporters in Grenada. There is currently no local processing or packaging of fish. In the case of Anse La Raye, marketing is done primarily through the Fish Marketing Corporation, a national body with its main facility located in the capital Castries.

As in all coastal ecosystems of the eastern Caribbean, there has been a severe reduction in fish stocks and higher costs of production (particularly fuel), resulting in reduced catches and productivity. Generally, the fisheries sector is not considered sustainable and could not become sustainable without a significant reduction in or reallocation of the fishing effort. The situation is probably more acute in Anse La Raye because of its higher dependency on reef and beach seine fisheries whereas Gouyave is more dependent on offshore pelagic resources.

Agriculture is also an important sector in both communities, with medium-size estates (nutmeg and to a lesser extent banana in Gouyave; banana in Anse La Raye) and small scale farming supporting subsistence production. The recent decline of the agricultural sector, due primarily to loss of preferential access for

bananas on the European market, has resulted in increased poverty and higher dependency on marine and coastal systems to support livelihoods. In Grenada, Hurricane Ivan caused huge devastation in 2004, including devastation of the nutmeg and fishing industries.

3.3.2. Description and genesis of the “Fish Festivals”

Both events are weekly street festivals designed as a seafood dining experience in a village setting, with cultural entertainment. The aim is to attract both local residents and tourists from throughout the island and to use the event to generate individual business opportunities, primarily in food and beverage, but also in transportation and in arts and crafts. Both are managed according to collective rules and standards, with a joint system for management, enforcement of rules, conflict resolution, and marketing.

The Anse La Raye event was initiated in 1999 when the Prime Minister of Saint Lucia promoted the concept of a seafood festival, later named “Seafood Friday”. The idea was inspired by the experience of the Fish Fry in Oistins, Barbados, and sought to bring touristic development to the village and community of Anse La Raye. Following a visit to Barbados by three fishers and the District Representative, a project was formulated and the Anse La Raye Village Council sought assistance from the Saint Lucia Heritage Tourism Programme (SLHTP, a project funded by the European Union and the Government of Saint Lucia) to develop the site and product. The SLHTP provided support to this project from its inception, with financial and technical assistance, including the conduct of initial studies, the preparation of a development plan for the waterfront, and the construction of some of the vending booths.

The event was launched on the last Friday of July 2000, and has been running since on a weekly basis (except for occasional interruptions due to bad weather conditions or other exceptional factors). The Village Council is no longer involved, so the event is now coordinated by the Anse La Raye Seafood Friday Committee, an informal body bringing together the vendors and the other main actors.

Gouyave has a long tradition of celebrating St. Peter and St. Paul Fishers’ Feast on 29th June, known locally as “Fisherman’s Birthday”, with a street festival that attracts large numbers of people from other communities. The idea of building on this to host a weekly festival had been mooted and discussed by local community leaders for some time but, ironically, it was the advent of Hurricane Ivan that finally created the opportunity. Under the reconstruction efforts, international assistance was provided under the USAID-funded Grenada Business and Agriculture Revitalization Project (GBAR) which focused on agriculture, tourism, fisheries and micro-business.

The GBAR project provided technical and financial assistance for training of vendors and other local small-scale business operators, for participatory planning process to design the festival, for a visit to Anse La Raye, and for the purchase of some of the equipment needed for start-up. In designing the event, the emphasis was on creating new business opportunities for poverty reduction and

socio-economic development. The consensus was that the event should provide opportunities for socializing and a local cultural experience with a focus on quality and uniqueness and creation of a “village atmosphere”, without the loud music that typically accompanies Caribbean ‘fetes’ (large, often outdoor, parties).

The event was launched on 24 June 2005 and has been running ever since (with occasional interruptions as in the case of Anse La Raye).

CANARI was not directly involved in these two processes, but they both drew directly from the experience of the Saint Lucia Heritage Tourism Programme itself (Renard 2001), largely inspired by CANARI’s earlier work aimed at defining the main elements of heritage tourism (Geoghegan 1997).

3.3.3. Livelihood benefits

Both “Fish Festivals” generate significant revenue for the vendors as well as stimulating a multiplier effect which benefits other entrepreneurs such as farmers, fishers, taxi drivers, craft producers and bar staff. They have also contributed to improvements to other community assets.

Table 3. Impacts on livelihood assets in Gouyave and Anse La Raye (Sources: Wave Communications 2000; Pantin et al. 2004; Wyatt and Jules no date).

Asset	Benefits
Natural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assessment of impact of festivals on local fish resources, but observations suggest an increase in catches, with positive short-term economic impacts but potentially negative environmental impacts, in Anse La Raye. • Improved waste management in both villages.
Financial	<p>Gouyave:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007 estimated annual revenue of US\$251,000 going directly to 15 vendors. With multiplier effect, it is estimated that over US\$410,000 is being generated annually in the community through the event. • Net profit to vendors after management fees and purchases US\$101,000 (Finisterre 2007). <p>Anse La Raye (ALR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tangible economic benefits to women (in 2004, 72% of ALR vendors were women, who are often single heads of households (61%), and to unskilled persons (83% only primary education). For most of them it is the primary source of income (83% of ALR vendors in 2004). • Multiplier effect generates benefits to local suppliers, especially fishers and farmers (vendors in ALR in 2004 indicating that they spent an average of US\$130.00 per week on food items), but also bus and taxi drivers, craft producers, cultural performers and others.
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vending booths (ALR) and tents (Gouyave). • Toilets (ALR). • Equipment.
Human	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills built or enhanced in areas such as food and beverage, micro-enterprise. • Standards developed.
Social political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social impacts also significant in terms of community pride and identity, validation of cultural traditions and skills, social cohesion.

4. Lessons learned and conclusions

4.1. Understanding, realizing and optimizing the benefits of the commons

These case studies indicate that significant direct or indirect financial, social and environmental benefits can be generated, particularly if linked to existing (usually multiple) livelihood strategies. This suggests that the discourse on “alternatives”, which is often heard from (usually external) conservation organizations, may not be the most appropriate or effective approach. Users of common property resources – just like academics or NGO activists – do not easily enter into completely new areas of enterprise or activity, but find it easier to expand and modify their existing livelihood strategies to diversify and increase their income, build resilience and explore new opportunities.

The studies also indicate that financial benefits accrue more quickly where existing assets are used (Pearce 2008), where revenue generation and added value to the existing product or economic activity are the primary drivers (e.g. Fish Festivals or the event organized with sea urchin products as part of the *People and the Sea* project, CANARI 2003), and when existing skills are used and enhanced. Intermediaries with technical skills or political power can also play a significant role in accelerating enterprise development and increasing support for the initiative. However, even in instances where social or environmental concerns are the initial driver (e.g. Nature Seekers and Fondes Amandes), the financial rewards can become significant both for the NGO and others in the community, and may prove over the long-term less susceptible to external shocks as a result of the greater diversity of revenue-generating activities. Moreover, conservation-driven enterprises can build the capacity of poor people to address their livelihood concerns by building natural, social, political, human (and sometimes physical) assets. These multiple assets serve to improve the community’s resilience and reduce its vulnerability to external shocks (such as changes in governments or development pressures) and the danger of benefits being captured by more powerful “external” stakeholders.

On the other hand, increased economic and business opportunities may actually result in the adoption of more unsustainable resource use practices. While there are no data to test this hypothesis, it is very likely that changes in markets and opportunities in Anse La Raye have resulted in increased pressure on the natural resource base.

In another well-documented case from the eastern Caribbean, the Mankòtè mangrove in Saint Lucia (Geoghegan and Smith 1998; John 2005), improved conditions of access and increases in the availability of wood resources as a result of effective co-management have resulted in new pressures (harvesting of poles for construction) on a resource that was traditionally used for charcoal.

The case studies also indicate that community enterprises may intentionally or inadvertently exclude the poorest because of their lack of capacity and weak asset base, unless the rights and capacity of the poor are protected or deliberately built in (as was the case with Nature Seekers’ selection of their reforestation workers). There is a tendency to work with and support the “more successful” (e.g. in

Gouyave) at the expense of the poor and weak, which may in part be driven by the need to meet donor goals within unrealistically short project time frames. Institutional vigilance and deliberate efforts and policies to include and to reach the poorest and marginalized in the community are therefore needed.

Finally, where the commons offer benefits that can be seasonal (e.g. tourism, sea turtle research) or even occasional, community-based management can establish systems that allow local entrepreneurs to take advantage of these opportunities when they present themselves.

4.1.1. Establishing suitable governance arrangements

While the case studies indicate that the manner in which rights and responsibilities are shared between the community (acting collectively), individual entrepreneurs, and other actors will be determined by the specific situation and cannot be prescribed, they nevertheless suggest a number of guidelines and principles:

- to be effective and equitable, a management arrangement to govern enterprise development based on the use of common property resources is likely to require a division of responsibility between the formal management agency, the community and individual entrepreneurs;
- the roles and responsibilities of the community are likely to include the definition and enforcement of rules to govern resource use, the management of a common business product and brand;
- on the other hand, the roles and responsibilities of individual entrepreneurs are likely to include maximizing their individual returns and adherence to rules and standards;
- for a common property regime to remain effective and compatible with private enterprise, there will need to be clear rewards and benefits to be gained from cooperation and collective action among entrepreneurs;
- in most instances, there will be a role for state agencies to play, at least to sanction policy and rules, but also to assist in enforcement and to provide technical assistance;
- all actors should be involved in monitoring and evaluation of outcomes and adaptive management to address the findings.

Much of the commons in the Caribbean is owned and/or managed by the State so involvement and buy-in of relevant government agencies is critical. However, formal agreements may be less important than built trust and mutual respect (CANARI 2008a,b). Nevertheless, formal contracts are valuable, not only as legally binding instruments for co-management and security of land tenure and access to resources, but also because they clarify roles and responsibilities.

Moreover, since communities are not homogeneous, it is essential that the lead organization(s) engage in participatory processes, both at the outset and on an ongoing basis, to ensure community support and participation in benefits. Independent facilitation can be particularly valuable at times of actual or

potential conflict (e.g. Nature Seekers' strategic planning) or in the initial stages of establishing management structures, rules and standards (e.g. planning for Gouyave Fish Friday).

While no single governance template will work for all groups and institutions, points that emerge from these case studies are that:

- a standard non-profit or non-governmental governance structure may not be optimal for business/tourism oriented enterprise (Fish Festivals); a for-profit or cooperative arrangement may be preferable;
- adaptive management and timely recognition that the existing governance arrangement is not working is critical (Nature Seekers and Fondes Amandes);
- close cultural or family bonds may substitute for formal structures in the early stages of enterprise development, particularly if accompanied by clear collective vision (Nature Seekers and Fondes Amandes);
- "outsiders" on boards may be necessary to secure the full range of competencies until community capacity has been built (Fondes Amandes).

4.1.2. Areas for future research in the Caribbean context

CANARI and its partners have identified a number of areas for further research, analysis and discussion that can build on the lessons presented in this paper and help create conditions where common property resources will contribute more directly to community development and poverty reduction, including:

- the application of complex adaptive system theories and network analysis to community enterprises based on common property resources;
- determining what types of institutional arrangements optimize benefits to the poor;
- considering how livelihood benefits can most effectively be measured (e.g. participatory monitoring and evaluation, including outcome mapping);
- understanding how trade-offs between conservation and livelihood benefits are most effectively negotiated.

Literature cited

- Ashley, C., D. Roe, and H. Goodwin. 2001. *Pro-poor Tourism strategies: Making Tourism Work for the Poor*. Nottingham: Russell Press.
- Berkes, F., and A. Smith. 1995. Coastal Marine property Rights: The Second Transformation. In *Philippine Coastal Resources under Stress. Coastal Resources Research Network*, eds. M.A. Junio-Meñez, and G. Newkirk, 103–113. Halifax: Dalhousie University and Diliman City, Philippines: Marine Science Institute, University of the Philippines.
- Berkes, F., and I. Davidson-Hunt. 2007. Communities and Social enterprises in the Age of Globalisation. *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy* 209–221.

- Besson, J., and J. Momsen, eds. 1987. *Land and Development in the Caribbean*. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
- CANARI. 2003. *The Sea is our Garden: A Report on a Study of Institutional and Technical Options for Improving Coastal Livelihoods in Laborie*. Saint Lucia: CANARI.
- CANARI. 2005. Caribbean Natural Resources Institute: Strategic Plan 2006–2010.
- CANARI. 2008a. *Forests and Livelihoods Action Learning Group (ALG): Report of the First Meeting*. Laventille: CANARI.
- CANARI. 2008b. *Community Sustainable Forest Management and Livelihoods Workshop, Matura, 18–20 March 2008*. Laventille: CANARI.
- Dujon, V. 1997. Communal Property and Land Markets: Agricultural Development Policy in St. Lucia. *World Development* 25(9):1529–1540.
- Finisterre, F. 2007. *Assessment of the Social and Economic Impact of the Gouyave Fish Friday Festival*. St. George's: RARE Enterprises/Grenada Conservation Fund.
- Geoghegan, T. 1997. Rural Development through Heritage Tourism: Guidelines for the Caribbean. CANARI Guidelines Series 2.
- Geoghegan, T., and A. Smith. 1998. *Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods: Collaborative Management of the Mankòtè Mangrove*. Vieux Fort: CANARI.
- James, C. 2003. Civil Society Responses to Land Management Dilemmas in a Caribbean Small Island Developing State: Case study of Fondes Amandes Community Reforestation Project, Trinidad. Presented to the Alliance of Small Island States Experts' Meeting on Vulnerability and Resilience in SIDS. 29 September–3 October 2003, Roseau, Dominica.
- James, C., and K. Fournillier. 1993. *Marine Turtle Management in Northeast Trinidad: A Successful Community-based Approach towards Endangered Species Conservation*. Laventille: CANARI.
- John, L. 2005. *The Impact of the Mankòtè Project on Natural Resource Management Policy Development in Saint Lucia*. Laventille: CANARI
- Lum Lock, A., G. Cooper, and S. McIntosh. 2005. *Next Steps for Nature Seekers: Report on an Organisational Evaluation of Nature Seekers Incorporated*. Laventille: CANARI.
- Lum Lock, A., and T. Geoghegan. 2006. *Rewarding Community Efforts to Protect Watersheds: Case Study of Fondes Amandes, St. Ann's*. Laventille: CANARI.
- Nature Seekers website <http://natureseekers.org/about.html>
- Onwuka, O. 2005. "Nature and Heritage Tourism Initiatives in Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica". MSc dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 2005.
- Pantin, D., D. Brown, M. Mycoo, C. Toppin-Allahar, J. Gobin, W. Rennie, and J. Hancock. 2004. *People and the Caribbean Coast: Feasibility of Alternative, Sustainable Coastal Resource-based Enhanced Livelihood Strategies*. St Augustine: Sustainable Economic Development Unit (SEDU), University of the West Indies.

- Pearce, D. 2008. Managing Environmental Wealth for Poverty Reduction: A Review. In *The Role of the Environment in Poverty Alleviation*, eds. P. Galizzi, and A. Herklotz, 30–63. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Renard, Y. 2001. *Practical Strategies for Pro-poor Tourism: A Case Study of the St. Lucia Heritage Tourism Programme*. PPT Working Paper No. 7. Centre for Responsible Tourism, Overseas Development Institute and International Institute for Environment and Development, London.
- Sammy, D., and A. Superville. 2007. “Sea turtle conservation in Matura” (poster presented at the 2007 Sea Turtle Symposium at <http://natureseekers.org/Other%20Attachments/Nature%20Seekers%20Symposium%20Poster%202007.pdf>).
- Smith, A. H., and S. Koester. 2001. *A Description of the Sea Urchin Fishery in Laborie, St. Lucia*. Vieux Fort: CANARI.
- Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago (UDECOTT). 2000. *Draft Greater Port of Spain Local Area Plan* downloaded on 11 November 2008 from <http://www.nalis.gov.tt/plan2.html>.
- Wave Communications. 2000. *Tourism Development Plan for the Anse la Raye Waterfront, Report on Community Survey and Inventory of Attractions*. Castries: Wave Communications, Tourism and Marketing Consultants.
- Wyatt, J., and S. Jules. No date. *Socio-economic Impact Assessment of the Weekly Anse La Raye Seafood Festival*. Unpublished draft.