

Placing the Commons at the Heart of Community Development: Three Case Studies of Community Enterprise in Caribbean Islands

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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 (e.g. policies, capacities, knowledge systems, organisational structures and processes) that may be required, in the context of the insular Caribbean, for these initiatives to flourish.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Linking common property and sustainable development*

The dominant discourse on development in the Caribbean does not assign a significant role to common property resources and to the 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 these resources 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), a regional non-

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governmental research and advocacy organisation 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), has been at the forefront of efforts aimed at understanding, validating and promoting positive and productive relationships between commons, people and development processes.

Over the years, 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* (McIntosh and Leotaud 2007) And *Forests and Livelihoods* projects (<http://www.canari.org/subject.html#forestry>) , and has studied and documented past, current and emerging systems (see for example Berkes and Smith 1995, Geoghegan and Smith 1998, Renard 2000, Smith and Koester 2003, Lum Lock and Geoghegan 2006, McIntosh and Leotaud 2007). Several of these projects and case studies include a dimension of enterprise development, but this dimension had never been documented and systematically analysed. This paper thus represents the first attempt to describe the relationship between community-based enterprise and common property resources in this region and context, and should be seen as a platform for further debate, research and analysis.

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 of the countries of the insular Caribbean, 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 organisations, either *de facto* or *de jure*.

In this paper, 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-Hunte 2007).

This paper further sees enterprise as one component of more complex systems, and recognises the need to adopt ‘a livelihood approach’ to development and resource management, an approach that 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 recognises that human systems and communities are built and depend on ecological, economic, social and cultural assets that must be protected and enhanced. It puts people and their formal and informal institutions – rather than things and governments – at the centre of the development process. It seeks to capitalise on existing strengths and to build resilience, it accepts that change is an inherent part of the development process, it acknowledges the differences that exist within a given group – according to sex, age, culture –

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 *Historical factors*

An examination of the relationship between commons, enterprise and livelihoods needs to be placed against the background of the main historical factors that have shaped that relationship. Of course, even in a small region such as the insular Caribbean, the situation and conditions vary greatly between countries and ecosystems, but it remains possible to identify a number of key factors that are common to most of the islands and territories.

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, for example when estates were no longer profitable and suitable for monoculture, or on the fringe of these estates where slaves (and plantation workers after the abolition of slavery in the mid-19th century) were allowed to use land for subsistence farming, charcoal production and other uses. In such systems, only the very marginal lands were available for private initiative and uses, often under collective systems of management; these were the hills and the steep slopes that were considered unsuitable for agriculture by the land owners, the forested margins of agricultural estates or the coastal wetlands and drylands.

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 – as in many other societies throughout the world – 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 to build economy and 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 the island of Saint Lucia in 1996 (Dujon 1997). Family lands constitute a form of communal ownership among members of a family and, as such, present a number of advantages, allowing 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 as well as a number of 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 family land tenure offers 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.

It is primarily for the reasons mentioned above that large areas are not currently in production and are not supporting any form of enterprise. This problem can be attributed, in part, to property regimes, and to the fact that the status of undivided family lands often prevents owners from developing and using the land as collateral for capital formation. Consequently, important common property resources, such as the forests, are not directly available to the poor, although they offer potential for sustainable economic activities and for a greater contribution to local livelihoods.

2.2 *Environmental conditions*

There are also environmental factors that 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, there are close links between ecosystems, and impacts of activities taking place in one part of the island are often felt in surrounding ecosystems, creating what is often referred to as a “ridge-to-reef” system. Natural ecosystems are small, and they 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.

2.3 *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 of the land, because it belongs and has always belonged to the ‘master’, or to 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 half 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 business 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 labourers⁴, with limited opportunity for an entrepreneurial approach to farming. Most Caribbean communities therefore currently lack adequate and sufficient skills, institutions, systems and other capacities needed to stimulate and support small and medium size business, especially in marketing.

2.4 Economic factors

The economies of the Caribbean islands are shaped and structured in ways that do not favour the development of small independent enterprises. These economies have been shaped and remain 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, and at times in opposition to, the dominant system.

2.5 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:

- there is a generally accepted view, in all sectors of society, that common property resources are to be managed by the State, and there are very few challenges to this view;
- there is a similarly 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);
- the agencies that are responsible for common property resource management in these countries (notably the fisheries and forestry administrations) do not have expertise and often lack interest in business aspects, and are therefore not equipped to assist and promote enterprise development;

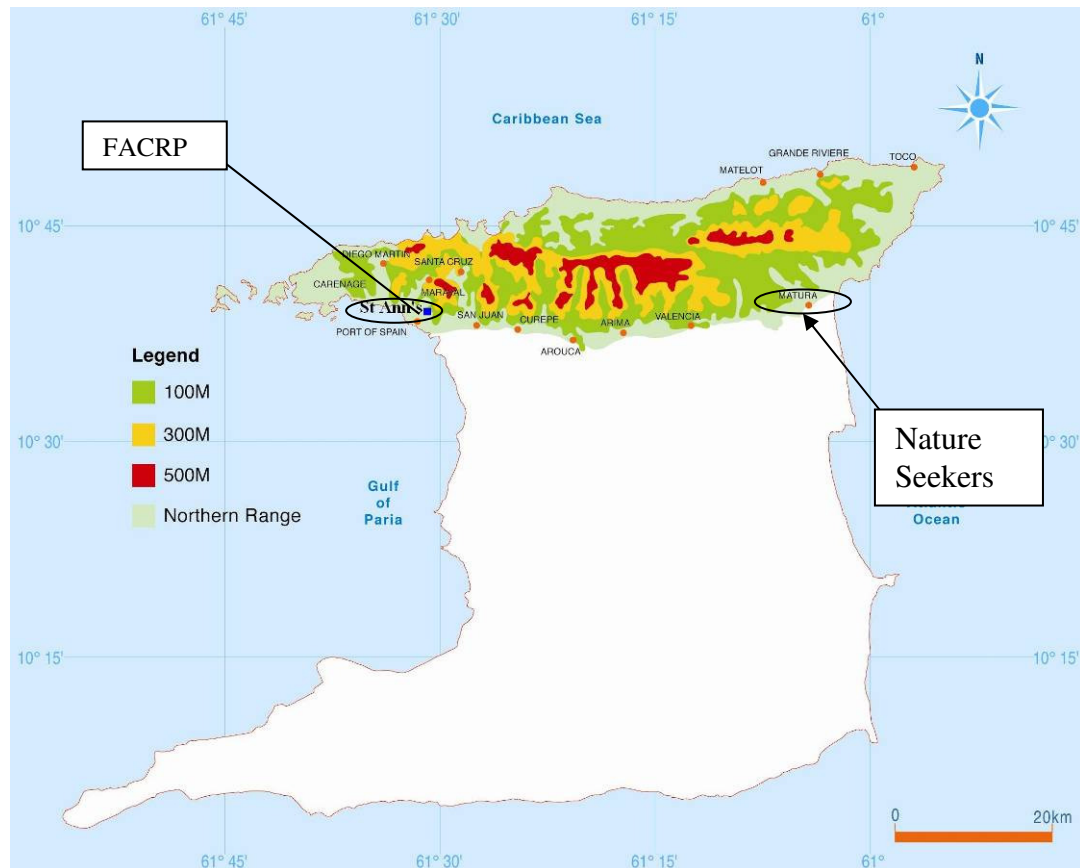
⁴ With the exception to some extent of Trinidad and Tobago, where many rural people are employed in government unemployment relief programmes or directly or indirectly in the dominant oil and gas industry.

- the linkages between economic development policy (including policy governing business development and poverty reduction strategies) and natural resource policy are weak. Natural resource policy is 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 organisations at the community level;
- there is very 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 and encouraged in 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 described earlier, 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 STUDY OF FONDES AMANDES, TRINIDAD

3.1 Overview

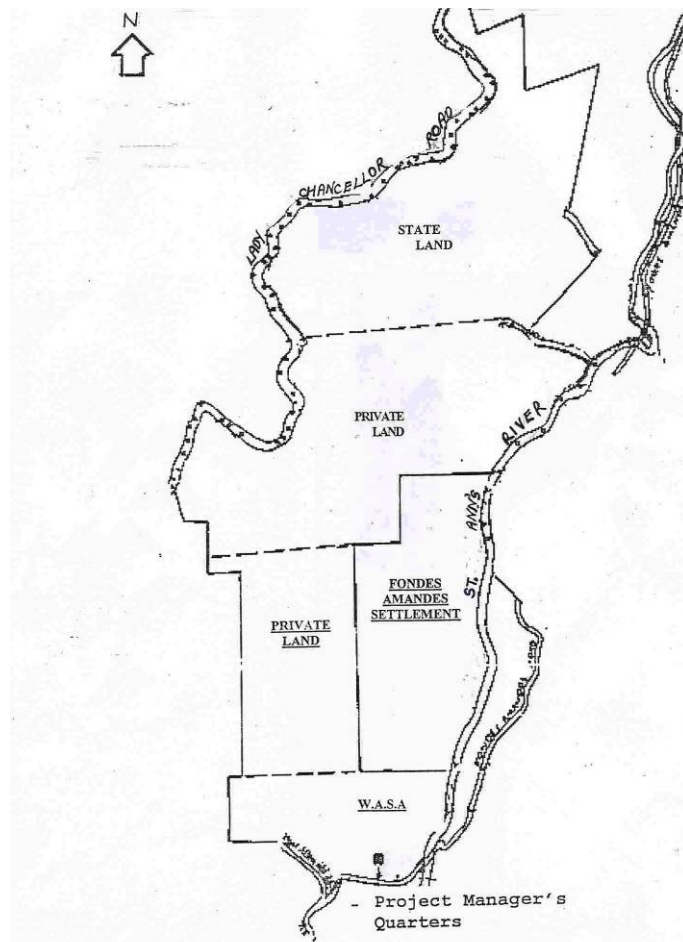
Fondes Amandes is a small hillside community situated close to St Anns, a middle class residential suburb of the capital of Trinidad, Port of Spain. It is located in the foothills of the western Northern Range and adjacent to an important reservoir serving metropolitan Port of Spain (See Map 1).



Map 1 Map of the Northern Range showing the location of St Ann's Watershed and Matura (Source www.mapscd.com/trinidadytobago_illustrator.html, with St Ann's added by to the map by the Forestry Division)

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 Company (WASA) having acquired some of the land to protect the reservoir.

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. Some of these settlers had been forced out from a neighbouring community by the legal landowners and many were Rastafarians with strong values regarding the conservation and sustainable use of the land.



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 (Halcrow 2000).

Map 2: Ownership pattern of the Fondes Amandes Development (courtesy Eden Shand)

3.2 Genesis of the Fondes Amandes Community Reforestation Project

In the early stages, 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 rooted initially in the Rastafarian philosophy and the strong leadership of Tacuma Jaramogi. The vision for the community was discussed at informal get-togethers and evening drumming 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 Jamamogi, *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 around the state reservoir for their tree planting activities and sealed the agreement with the symbolic planting of a tree (James 2003, Lum Lock and Geoghegan 2006).

3.3 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 in order 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 (CANARI 2008a and 2008b, Lum Lock and Geoghegan 2006), 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:

- **WASA** which has given verbal consent to use of its land, though not a formalised arrangement
- **Forestry Division**, which is the formal manager of the other State land, provides technical support and subvention for fire wardens
- **Tropical Relief Foundation** which is an NGO created by the former MP. It initially provided direct 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:** which granted FACRP 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 "gayap"⁵ 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*.

⁵ 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.

FACRP is currently involved in or has stimulated the development of the following enterprises:

- **forest fire prevention:** 2 paid fire wardens during dry season.
- **organic agriculture, permaculture and tree planting** on about 80 acres, with a focus on hardwood and fruit trees and those used for craft.
- **Clean Trees Organic Nursery (CTON)** created in 2001 as the for-profit arm of FACRP. It provides a reliable source of organic inputs (plants and seedlings, manure and compost) to the FACRP's reforestation activities as well as to small-scale farmers and other individuals interested in organic methods of farming and agriculture. It also provides landscaping and lawn maintenance services.
- a community-wide **composting and recycling programme**, established by FACRP in collaboration with CTON.
- **Fondes Amandes Community Eco Tours**, launched in 2003, offering tours to schools, but also increasingly to tourists. These tours provide information on the project and its activities and on fire prevention.
- **Education programmes and vacation camps**, including in 2007 an off-site camp at the request of the National Gas Company.
- **Fondes Amandes Community Drumming and Culture Group.**
- **Rental of facilities for events** (e.g. by local embassies).
- **Catering services** for events and tours.
- **Disaster Awareness Caravan:** grant-funded roving education programme, including production of a DVD, alerting other communities to the impacts and prevention fires and floods, with the intention to extend this to discussion of natural disasters.

In addition, Akila Jaramogi runs a thriving independent jewellery-making business, using seeds from the trees planted on the hillside. The jewellery is sold in a number of local hotels as well as throughout the Caribbean region. The funds from this business have enabled her to continue to provide a high level of volunteer input to FACRP at the same time as raising a large family.

3.4 Results and impacts on livelihood assets (source James 2003, Lum Lock and Geoghegan 2006, CANARI 2008a and b, Jaramogi pers comms.)

Natural	Financial	Physical	Human	Social and political
<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 an estimated 1500 have survived. • Area free of fires since 1997. • Improved water supply and quality from reservoir. • Community composting and recycling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FACRP currently employs around 40 people on a full-time basis and has an annual operating budget of about TT\$500,000 (approximately £50,000). • Management fee for NRWRP: 20% of actual salaries. • Revenue from food sales, rental of facility etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to pipe-borne water (negotiated by FACRP). • Offices, community shelter, nursery and other structures associated with the businesses. • Tools, office equipment including computers. 	<p>Community capacities built in many areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ fire prevention and fire fighting; ▪ tour guiding; ▪ organic gardening and permaculture; ▪ community recycling and composting; ▪ community-based tourism; ▪ craft and cottage industries; ▪ music and cultural arts. <p>Group capacity built in NGO management.</p>	<p>Reduced risk of being removed from land as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ support from the formal management agencies (WASA and Forestry); ▪ strong network of influential supporters, including donor agencies, embassies, multi-nationals, other NGOs and individuals; ▪ support from all political administrations.

Lessons learned (source James 2003, Lum Lock and Geoghegan 2006, CANARI 2008a and b, Jaramogi pers comms.)

3.5 Enabling conditions	Capacities	Systems and institutions	Process and facilitation
<p>The policy environment was not favourable and to some extent remains so (absence of appropriate land use planning means development on private lands still a threat, uncertainty about regularisation, difficulty of obtaining small business support/loans without land title).</p> <p>Absence of land tenure does not preclude people investing in sustainable land management practices.</p> <p>NRWRP provides the basis for increased and year-round employment but has no in-built sustainability beyond the end of the project, so continuing access to the forest and its products will need to be negotiated.</p>	<p>Value of building on existing skills (agriculture, food preparation, craft)</p> <p>Importance of skills training in establishing the quality and sustainability of the enterprise and building the capacity to manage it. Also builds confidence of key partners.</p> <p>Skills that do not exist in the community may have to be 'imported' while internal capacity is built (e.g. Board members).</p> <p>Funding, mentoring and collective vision needed to assure skills are capitalised on (e.g. craft training has not yet generated business activity except Akilah's personal one).</p>	<p>Political support can be important by speeding up the process and lending credibility.</p> <p>Informal arrangements can substitute for formal agreements may not produce equitable outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FACRP incurred significant costs while the net benefits, particularly in the early stages accrued mainly to others (e.g. 'elite' residents in the foothills who got pipe borne water and fewer floods); ○ the opportunity cost to FACRP members, in terms volunteer time probably outweighs that of the Forestry Division or WASA through their temporary and insecure 'donation' of state land on which there are currently no plans for development. <p>The community's level of risk is very high given its insecure land tenure, although WASA also bears significant risk as it could be difficult to remove the settlers after a certain period of time even if they were no longer fulfilling a watershed protection. role.</p>	<p>Shared cultural or religious beliefs can provide strong basis for development of a community enterprise.</p> <p>However, formal participatory processes may now be needed since:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the number of active Rastafarians in the village has dwindled and range of stakeholders has expanded; ○ the mutual trust is often at the individual rather than organisational or institutional level and therefore fragile; ○ the vision remains one that the community is supportive of rather than being actively engaged in developing. Although everyone is invited to participate in community activities, many people don't bother yet complain when persons from other communities take part.

4 CASE STUDY OF MATURA, TRINIDAD

4.1 Overview

Matura is a small coastal village in north-east Trinidad (See Map 1) on the edge of the Matura Forest Reserve which adjoins the Matura National Park, which has 9000 hectares of moist forest (dominated by *Mora excelsa*, a species native to the southern Caribbean and south America) 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 organisation which 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 agro-forestry initiative.

4.2 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).

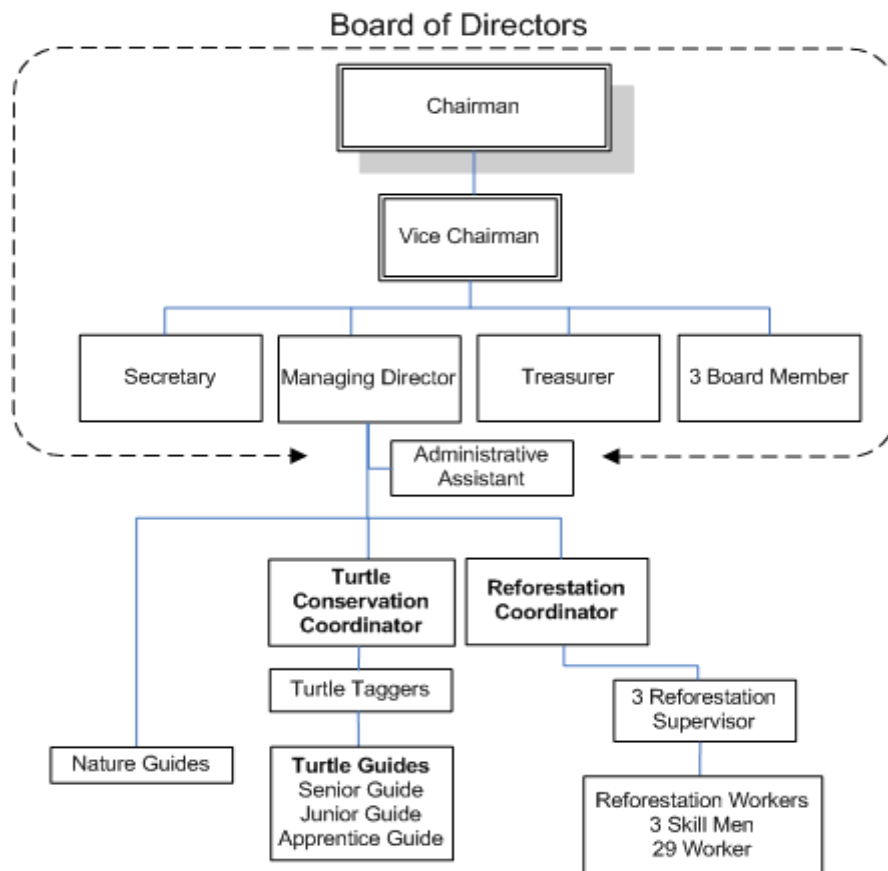
In recognition of this problem, the turtle nesting beaches in Matura were declared a Prohibited Area in 1990, with access restricted every year from 1st March to 31st August. Formal responsibility for management of marine turtles falls under the Wildlife Department of the Forestry Division (at the time under the Ministry of Agriculture and now under the Ministry of Planning, Housing and Environment). 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 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 (under the same restricted conditions) but few of them take it up (Sammy pers.comm.) although the general consensus now is that “Nature Seekers has put Matura on the map” even though some still perceive that the benefits of Nature Seekers’ activities do not accrue widely enough to the community (Onwuka 2005).

4.3 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, Cooper and McIntosh 2005). It is now registered as a non-profit company with the following governance structure and employees:



The wider institution has also evolved and now includes the following key actors in addition to Nature Seekers:

- **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);
- **Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network [WIDECAST]** (researchers, technical assistance, some funding);
- **Earthwatch:** 50-60 paying 'volunteer tourists' per season
- **National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme:** which granted FACRP 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 catalysed by Nature Seekers bringing together three other community-based organisations involved in turtle protection (2 in Trinidad, 1 in Tobago) to develop a TT\$ million (£1.2 million) business plan, in collaboration with the Forestry Division and the multinational

corporation BHP Billiton, for eco-tourism development in north-east Trinidad and south-west Tobago

Nature Seekers has a strategic plan which identifies three focal programme areas: conservation and protection; entrepreneurship; and social and community development as well as an over-arching plan for tourism development in Matura (<http://natureseekers.org/goals.html>). It currently employs about 40 persons and is involved in the following enterprise activities:

- **turtle protection, research and tour guiding;**
- part-ownership of **guesthouse**, including **catering services**
- **reforestation and forest fire prevention**
- **forest-based tours**
- development of an **organic agro-forestry** project (at strategic planning stage)
- a variety of social and educational **community development** activities
- **consultancy services** (e.g. tour guiding, training turtle protection groups in other Caribbean islands)

4.4 Results and impacts on livelihood assets

(Sources: Lum Lock, Cooper and McIntosh 2005, Nature Seekers' website, Sammy and Lakhan pers comms, CANARI 2008b)

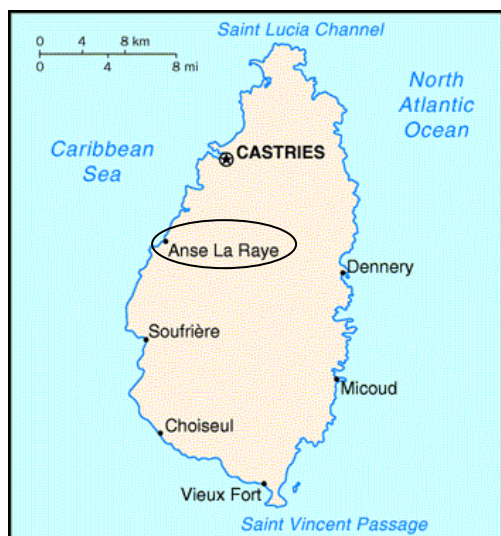
Natural	Financial	Physical	Human	Social and political
<p>Over 100 acres of reforested land, including intercropping with fruit trees (and more will be reforested in future).</p> <p>Increased population of nesting turtles.</p> <p>Access to land for turtle tour visitor centre.</p> <p>5 acres of state land for agro-forestry (applied for).</p>	<p>Annual revenue of about TT\$600.000, (£60,000): derived from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual government subvention; • grants; • turtle tours: fees range from TT\$5.00 (50p) for nationals under 12 to US\$15 (£7.50) for foreign adults. 9909 tours were conducted in 2006; • forest-based tours; • Earthwatch volunteers; • approx 30% share of revenue from guesthouse; • reforestation management fee; • consultancy services; • sale of craft/souvenirs; <p>Small indirect impact on bar and shop sales in village.</p>	<p>Office building.</p> <p>25-30% investment in guesthouse next door.</p> <p>Turtle tour visitor centre at beach (leased).</p> <p>Vehicles.</p> <p>Tools and equipment for turtle research and reforestation.</p>	<p>Group capacity built in many areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ turtle protection and research; ▪ tour guiding; ▪ community-based tourism; ▪ leadership; ▪ strategic planning and visioning; ▪ all aspects of NGO management; ▪ forestry; ▪ fire prevention; ▪ agro-forestry (in train). 	<p>Support from the formal management agency.</p> <p>Strong network of influential supporters including donor agencies, embassies, multi-nationals, researchers other NGOs and foreign and local individuals.</p> <p>Support from all political administrations, e.g. granted NRWRP project under PNM government in spite of Chairperson having been at one time publicly affiliated with the opposition party (as an Alderman with the Regional Council).</p>

4.5 Lessons learned

(Sources: Lum Lock, Cooper and McIntosh 2005, Nature Seekers' website, Sammy and Lakhan pers comms, CANARI 2008b)

Enabling conditions	Capacities	Systems and institutions	Process and facilitation
<p>Forest Act provided the basis for Prohibited Area but none for co-management arrangement, which was driven instead primarily by the vision of the Head of the Wildlife Division.</p> <p>Facilitated by growing concern worldwide about dwindling marine turtle population, particularly leatherbacks.</p> <p>Poor people can be inspired to conserve wildlife even if initially there is little obvious direct benefit to them – Nature Seekers required its members to volunteer for six months before they could be considered for paid work.</p> <p>NRWRP provides the basis for increased and year-round employment but has no in-built sustainability beyond the end of the project, so continuing access to the forest and its products will need to be negotiated.</p>	<p>Relevant skills (e.g. tour guiding, turtle research and protection, NGO management) can be built even when community has no or little prior experience.</p> <p>Newer programmes such as reforestation and catering capitalise on existing skills, so facilitate wider community involvement.</p> <p>Strong and proactive commitment to constant growth in organisational and individual development leads to high level of external respect and willingness to fund/support as well as opportunities for consultancy work.</p> <p>Leadership capacity built in more than one person reduces organisational vulnerability and enables people to pursue higher education and training opportunities (.e.g. Managing Director completing Associate and then full degree in Tourism Management).</p>	<p>Informal arrangements can substitute for formal agreements may not produce equitable outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the opportunity cost to group members in terms of volunteer time in the early years probably outweighed that of the Forestry Division in terms of providing access to the beach and allowing turtle tours; ○ the insecurity of the arrangement, combined with the seasonality of the turtle work, meant people left the programme in search of something more certain. <p>Engaging the poorest and most vulnerable people in the community in the reforestation project necessitated development of new participatory processes (both at the inception and on an ongoing basis) and rules, standards and quality control that had not been necessary before.</p>	<p>Family ties can provide a strong basis for development of a community enterprise in its initial stages but need to be supplemented by formal participatory processes as the institution evolves</p> <p>Value of independently-facilitated strategic planning process, especially at times of internal conflict.</p> <p>In comparison with other groups in the area who tried to meet multiple objectives even with weak capacity, Nature Seekers' unwillingness to be diverted from its core focus (turtle conservation) in early stages, even in the face of community sense of exclusion, has contributed to strong organisational and governance structures and processes that have subsequently enabled the group to extend its activities to reforestation and broader tourism and community development activities</p>

5 FISH FESTIVALS IN GRENADA AND SAINT LUCIA



Map 3 St Lucia

Source <http://geography.about.com/library/cia/blcstlucia.htm>



Map 4 Grenada

Source: <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/namerica/caribb/lqcolor/gdcolor.htm>

5.1 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 3 and 4 above). 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 shell collection or nets). Gouyave, which is considered the “fishing capital of Grenada”, has a population of approximately 8,500. Anse La Raye has a more mixed economy, with proximity to capital Castries, and a population of approximately 2,000 in the village.

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 via the Fish Marketing Corporation in Saint Lucia and locally and through local exporters in Grenada. There is currently no local processing or packaging of fish.

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. The sector is not considered sustainable and could not become sustainable without a significant reduction in 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 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 to the nutmeg and fishing industries.

5.2 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, and with a joint system for management, enforcement of rules, conflict resolution, and marketing (including branding, fundraising and promotion).

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, including the provision of toilet facilities, assistance with traffic management at the waterfront, and overall beautification of the area (Wave Communications 2000). 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 ever 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, 29 June, locally known as “Fisherman’s Birthday”, with a street festival that attracts large numbers of people from other communities on the island. The idea of building on this to host a weekly festival had been mooted and discussed by local community leaders for some time but it was ironically 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 (especially the tents to be used by vendors). 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 socialising 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)

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5.3 Results and impacts on livelihood assets

(Sources: Wave Communications 2000, Pantin *et al.* 2004, Wyatt and Jules no date)

Natural	Financial	Physical	Human	Social and political
<p>No assessment of impact of festivals on local fish resources, but observations suggest an increase in catches, with potentially negative impacts, in Anse La Raye.</p> <p>Improved waste management in both communities.</p>	<p>Gouyave: 2007 estimated annual revenue of XCD 670,000 (£128,000) going directly to 15 vendors. With multiplier effect, it is estimated that over XCD 1.1 million (£210,000) is being generated annually in the community through the event. Vendors' net profit to vendors after management fees and purchases XCD 270,000 (£51,500) (Finisterre 2007).</p> <p>Anse la Raye (ALR) 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).</p> <p>Multiplier effect generates benefits to local suppliers, especially fishers and farmers (vendors in ALR in 2004 indicating that they spent an average of XCD 350.00 per week on food items), but also bus and taxi drivers, craft producers, cultural performers and others</p>	<p>Vending booths (ALR) and tents (Gouyave).</p> <p>Toilets (ALR).</p> <p>Equipment.</p>	<p>Skills built or enhanced in areas such as food and beverage, micro-enterprise.</p> <p>Standards developed.</p>	<p>Social impacts also significant in terms of community pride and identity, validation of cultural traditions and skills, social cohesion.</p>

5.4 Lessons learned

Enabling conditions	Capacities	Systems and institutions	Process and facilitation
<p>Part of the success of these projects is that the business opportunities that they have created could easily fit within the existing livelihood strategies of the participants. In a society where occupational multiplicity is more the norm than the exception, a weekly business opportunity to utilise and enhances local products and local skills is particularly appropriate. Both communities were already visited by tourists, for other reasons (historic and cultural sites and natural attractions), but no linkage between fisheries sector and tourism.</p> <p>The pre-existence of small-scale informal business sector, including local vendors and micro-businesses (food and beverages in particular) has been by SLHTP/GBAR as a critical success factor in launching and sustaining community-based tourism initiatives.</p> <p>The main financial risk (the purchase of the tents and other equipment required to create the product) is shared and is partly sponsored</p>	<p>Importance of skills training in establishing the quality and sustainability of the business product and in building the capacity to manage it</p> <p>Value of building on and enhancing skills and practices already available, in these cases those of the informal vending sector</p>	<p>Need for some arrangement for collective management. Because the business is based on a common property resource, not everything can be left to private enterprise. An institution is needed to facilitate the collective action. In Grenada, this need is met by the Gouyave Fish Friday Company; in ALR, this does not exist yet, and it may be a weakness, as the institutional arrangements are not yet permanent, and are not entirely satisfactory. Attention needs to be given to formalising roles and responsibilities, and to strengthen the various parties involved (e.g. Vendors Association).</p> <p>Local government agencies can play a central facilitating role in community-based business initiatives, in this instance tourism. Early on, efforts were made to establish a new development organisation in Anse La Raye, and this was perceived by some key actors as</p>	<p>Importance of a structured participatory process that develops a vision, negotiates and agrees on objectives, and involves all parties in the design of the business activity</p> <p>Need for activities that are specifically aimed at empowering and guiding the participation of the weaker parties, otherwise there is constant risk of take-over by larger operators and interests</p> <p>Exchanges, field visits and examples are good ways to encourage new business initiatives. By observing the Anse-la-Raye event, organisers of the Gouyave event were able to see for themselves, to interact directly with business operators and to get ideas that they could then adapt and apply to their own situations. The Saint Lucians in turn had been inspired by Oistins in Barbados and other communities in Grenada and beyond are now looking at Gouyave as a model.</p>

<p>Need for a policy framework that enables collaborative management as well as private enterprise within that framework of collaborative management (see Renard 2004)</p> <p>Experience throughout the world shows that one of the obstacles to the participation of many people and communities, especially the poor, in tourism initiatives is their lack of physical and financial assets Ashley <i>et al.</i> 2001, Renard 2001). These two cases suggest that common property natural resources constitute assets that can be used to the benefit of people and communities;</p> <p>Some success can also be attributed to the favourable policy environment: which existed in both instances, with the initiatives being part of and supported by a national programme and national institutions. In the case of Grenada, a specific piece of legislation was also enacted not long before, which provided some of the tools for community management of the event.</p> <p>○</p>		<p>a precondition for investments in heritage tourism. But everything worked differently, largely because the Village Council had the moral and legal authority to lead the process and to enforce management decisions</p> <p>Intermediary development agencies in civil society also play a critical role in promoting business activity that is based on the use of common property resources, because they can facilitate collective action and decision-making, they can link local actors to national institutions, and they can advocate for policy reform and enforcement. In Grenada, this role was and is performed by a strong and credible NGO, the Grenada Community Development Agency (GRENCODA), which has been part of the process since the beginning and provides the home for the Gouyave Fish Friday Company</p> <p>Political support can be critical to the early success of these initiatives and to the speed at</p>	
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		<p>which they proceed, as demonstrated by the case of Saint Lucia, where the Prime Minister was personally involved in the initial phase. In Grenada, this political legitimacy came from the active involvement of local community leaders</p> <p>Community support is also critical, as the “product” on which the business depends is a public good (a village, local cultural traditions, street cleanliness, hospitable behaviours). This support will be stronger when wider community benefits from the business are significant (improved social services, community pride, occasional business and income generation opportunities)</p> <p>Based on all this, challenging issue of determining what is individual and what is collective, risk of exaggerated dependency of individual entrepreneurs on the institution responsible for coordination and facilitation.</p>	
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6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 *Understanding, realising and optimising 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 organisations, 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

They also indicate that financial benefits seem to accrue more quickly where revenue generation and added value to the existing product is the primary driver (e.g. Fish Festivals, or the event organised with sea urchin products as part of the *People and the Sea* project, see 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, where social or environmental concerns are the initial driver (e.g. Nature Seekers and Fondes Amandes), the financial rewards may eventually exceed those of the other enterprises and be more sustainable 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 vulnerability to external shocks, such as changes in governments, 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 unless the rights and capacity of the poor to take advantage of opportunities are protected or built -in (e.g. NRWRP criteria/the process adopted by Nature Seekers for the 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 timeframes. Institutional vigilance and deliberate efforts and policies to include and to reach the poorest and marginalised in the community are therefore needed

Finally, 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. However, in certain instances, such as the “piscjet” phenomenon (small fish that appear in the inshore area only once or twice a year and can be harvested by anyone with buckets) in Trinidad, long-standing tradition may dictate that the whole community should benefit and that this seasonal “gift from God” should be shared not sold.

6.2 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 (e.g. a state agency) will be determined by the specific situation and cannot be prescribed, they nevertheless suggest a number of guidelines and principles:

- in order 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 maximising their individual returns and adherence to rules and standards;
- 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 Caribbean (as defined in introduction) is owned and/or managed by the State so involvement and buy-in of relevant government agencies is critical. Formal agreements may be less important than built trust and mutual respect (CANARI 2008 a and b). For example, both FACRP and Nature Seekers have flourished while the Warmmae Letang Group in Dominica, with a formal agreement with both the tourism and forestry agencies has not as a result of insufficient relevant capacities and internal conflict (Perry-Fingal, in press) But 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 essential that the lead organisation(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. NS strategic planning) or in the initial stages of establishing management structures, rules and standards (e.g. planning for Gouyave Fish Friday)

As noted above, there is no single governance template that will work for all groups and institutions, but some points that emerge from these case studies are that:

- a standard non-profit or non-governmental governance structure may be not optimal for business/tourism oriented enterprise (Fish Festivals); a for-profit or cooperative arrangement may be preferable;
- adaptive management and recognition that the existing governance arrangement is working may be as important than governance structure itself (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 (e.g. Nature Seekers and Fondes Amandes)
- “outsiders’ on Boards may be necessary to secure full range of competencies until community capacity has been built (Fondes Amandes)

6.3 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;
- what types of institutional arrangements optimise benefits to the poor;
- how livelihood benefits can most effectively be measured (e.g. participatory monitoring and evaluation, including outcome mapping);
- how trade-offs between conservation and livelihood benefits are most effectively negotiated.

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