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THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

St. Augustine

**CENTRE FOR GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT
STUDIES**

With the support of the

CIDA Gender Equity Fund & ISLE

REPORT

Conference to Present Research Findings

“Building Gender Approaches Towards

Sustainable Livelihoods:

The Nariva Swamp: A Gendered Case Study”

December 8-9, 2000

The Institute of International Relations Conference Room, UWI, St. Augustine



Opening Ceremony

Left-Right: Ms. Denise Noel -de Bique – Gender Fund Coordinator;
Prof. Baldwin Mootoo – PVC Research –UWI;
Prof. Elizabeth Thomas-Hope – UWI ISLE Coordinator;
Dr. Grace Sirju-Charran – Project Coordinator



Ms. Denise Noel- de Bique
CIDA -CARICOM Gender Fund Coordinator

**Building Gender Approaches Towards Sustainable Livelihood:
A Case Study of the Nariva Swamp**

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Introduction and Background to the Conference

The Centre for Gender and Development Studies at the University of the West Indies as part of its research effort developed an ambitious project two years ago to investigate the relationships between the Nariva Swamp communities and their biophysical environment from a gender perspective. This innovative project entitled “The Nariva Swamp: A Gendered Case Study” was funded by the CIDA Gender Equity Fund, with some support from the Island Sustainability Livelihood and Equity (ISLE) programme of the Lester Pearson Institute at Dalhousie University. The goals of the project were to: (i) empower the communities that surround the swamp; (ii) generate research data which incorporates a gender analysis and is derived from an interdisciplinary frame and (iii) examine the scientific approach to research and to explore the means and possibilities of incorporating social, historical, political and economic concerns into its research frame.

The project focused primarily on two communities in the Nariva Swamp; Kernahan and Cascadoux, and followed three thematic areas: (i) gender analysis of natural resource use and management and the implications for sustainability; (ii) socio-cultural, economic and gender analysis of the Nariva communities and their relationship to the ecosystem and (iii) gender analysis of state policy and governance in the nariva swamp over the 20th century. Participatory and ethnographic methodologies, as well as the use of secondary data and action research methodologies were used to explore these themes.

The conference to present the findings of this research project took place 8-9 December 2000 at the International Relations Seminar Room, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus. The aims of this conference were:

- To present the research findings to a wide range of stakeholders and interested persons;
- To reflect on the interdisciplinary and participatory research methodologies used in the research process
- To generate feed back from relevant researchers, community members and policy makers on the research findings
- To explore the implications of this study for further research, teaching and action

Day 1 – Friday 8th Dec. 2000

Opening Ceremony

The conference opened with a small ceremony chaired by Dr. Grace Sirju-Charran, project coordinator. Present at the head table were Professor Elizabeth Thomas-Hope, University of the West Indies (Mona Campus) coordinator of the Island Sustainability Livelihood and Equity (ISLE) programme at the UWI, Professor Baldwin Mootoo, Pro-Vice Chancellor of Research at UWI, Ms. Denise Noel-DeBique, coordinator of the CIDA Gender Equity Fund for Trinidad and Tobago and Dr. Rhoda Reddock, Head of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, who administered the project.

In her opening remarks, Dr. Sirju-Charran introduced the project, identifying it as innovative, new and different, since the effort was geared at gendering the data, using participatory research methods and an inter-disciplinary approach. This methodology meant that the community had a central role in the collection of the data. These methodologies and approaches were used to examine three major domains in the swamp: socio-economic and cultural, ecological/biodiversity and power structures, governance and politics.

Dr. Rhoda Reddock in her welcome address thanked those in attendance for making the time to participate in the conference and extended a special welcome to persons new to the Centre. She described the Centre as a teaching, research and outreach unit of the UWI and as relatively new, being only 6 years old. Equipped with limited resources the “Centre’s mission is: to question historically accepted theories and explanations about society and human behaviour; to seek an understanding of the world which takes women, their lives and achievements into account and to identify the origins of power differences between men and women and the division of human characteristics along gender lines”. The project fell within the gender, science and technology and gender and the environment research theme of the Centre.

The Nariva project presented the Centre with one of its first opportunities to investigate these issues in a research setting. This opportunity was made possible through the Centre’s involvement with the Island, Sustainability, Livelihood and Equity (ISLE) project, which is an inter university collaborative project bringing together Island Universities in the Philippines, Indonesia, Canada and the West Indies. The project sought to enhance knowledge relating to the unique opportunities and challenges of sustainable development facing Island States.

The first ISLE gender workshop was held in January 1997 at the St. Augustine Campus of the UWI. At this meeting participants were introduced via a field visit to the Nariva Swamp and two of its surrounding communities, Plum Mitan and Kernahan, where they were familiarised with a contested eco-system where all the issues of sustainability, livelihood and equity came together. At that time the Swamp was at the centre of conflict among environmentalists, large rice farmers, community members and the Government. Dr. Reddock acknowledged the contribution of Professor Peter Bacon, foremost scholar on wetlands in the region, in facilitating the Centre’s initial contact with the communities of the Nariva swamp.

The warm reception given to the visitors by the women and men of the communities through craft exhibitions, provision of refreshments and lunch and guided tours meant

that a relationship was developing that could be sustained through the exploration of these issues in this contested site.

She recounted the preparatory research initiatives in the area, starting in January/February of 1998 when the Centre conducted a pilot research study using participatory research methodology in the Kernahan and Cacadox Communities. This preliminary study was aimed at (a) gaining a better understanding of the field (b) re-establishing contact with the community and (c) identifying practical needs to be considered in defining the research project. The findings of this study were presented at a Workshop entitled “The Nariva Swamp-A Gendered Case Study in Wetland Resource Management” at the St. Augustine campus of the UWI in February 1998.

This workshop brought together major stakeholders (academics researching on Nariva, community members, research students, large rice farmers etc.). She acknowledged that this workshop enabled the Centre to gain information on other research initiatives in the area which was helpful in shaping the Centre’s research effort and to benefit from the experience of other researchers in the area.

This detailed background according to Dr. Reddock showed that a number of initiatives took place in preparation for this research project. She informed the audience that this particular project, which began in April/May 1999, had three main components:

- A gendered analysis of natural resource use in the swamp and its impact on sustainability;
- A gender analysis of state policy and governance related to the swamp which had two parts, a history of state governance and policy over this century and a look at community governance in Kernahan and Cascadox and its relationship to the eco-system and
- A socio-cultural, economic and gender analysis of the communities which included an exploration of traditional and indigenous ecological knowledge.

She briefly mentioned the aims of the project, the contributing donors, the main one being the CIDA Gender Equity fund, with some funding provided by ISLE. In developing the participatory approach, the case studies of other ISLE projects were of great help¹. She then listed the preparatory research training given to the multi-disciplinary research team in gender analysis and infield training workshops in participatory research methods facilitated by Jessica Dator of the Philippines.

She described the project as being challenging and innovative since such interdisciplinary research was new to the project coordinators, who came from natural sciences and social sciences background respectively. This led to constant debates and conflict, which may have been at times confusing for the research team. This meant that strategies had to be changed and adapted to the realities of the situation. But through it all commitment to the project and to environmental research that took people into account was sustained.

Also challenging was the identification of funding for the project. Even though it was environmental research the issue of gender and the environment was neither understood nor accepted by many. It was felt by some that issues of social analysis should be kept apart from scientific analysis. In this respect, Dr. Reddock publicly thanked Ms. Denise Noel-DeBique of the CIDA Gender Equity Fund for placing that confidence in the Centre when others wondered and questioned. Even the research team faced the challenge of working as a multi-disciplinary team and of using gender as a tool of analysis in environmental research

She ended her address by describing the entire project as a learning experience, from which she hoped others would benefit. In addition to this workshop, she informed the audience that a smaller one-day Policy Round Table would be held the following week to present the research findings to persons in government, international organisations and other policy implementing agencies in order to explore policy implications. She once

¹ But the ISLE Case Studies only focused on 1 of the three components examined in the UWI project.

again thanked everyone for attending on behalf of the team and the staff of the centre and looked forward to their interaction over the next one and a half days.

Professor Baldwin Mootoo, Pro-Vice Chancellor of Research, UWI, in his short remark welcomed everyone on behalf of the University, acknowledging the support provided by the Canadians: CIDA, the High Commission, ISLE and the Lester Pearson Institute at Dalhousie University. He expressed his particular interest in the project having been part of its launch two and a half years ago, where he commented on the mix of disciplines involved in the research, which included gender analysis, social science, anthropology and pure sciences.

He speculated that the researchers would have many exciting things to report from their activities in the swamp and was sure that they would reveal many new ideas and discoveries. He hoped that in the course of their research the team also gained insight into the universal themes of poverty alleviation, empowerment, relationship of man to his environment and sustainability. He informed the audience that the methodology used had already spawned another Inter-University collaborative project entitled “ The Impact of Globalisation and Diasporic Movement on the Environment and People’s Changing Relationship to the land”. He commented that the study site chosen is interesting ecologically, demographically and historically and is ideal for such a multi-faceted study.

He added that the study embodied so much of what should be part of the research thrust of the University; its multi-disciplinary nature, international appeal, strong indigenous element, environmental sustainability and cultural and social relevance. In closing he quoted V.S. Naipaul and reiterated his belief that the project was unique, wished the gathering successful deliberations and looked forward to the report of the findings of this conference which was of international appeal and the meeting with the policy makers and importantly to the next stage of the project.

Ms. Denise Noel-DeBique in her address conveyed greetings to the audience on behalf of the Canadian High Commission, especially the High Commissioner who was unable to

attend and from the CIDA Gender Equity Fund, which she described as a regional initiative with country roots. The Fund was established in 1996 and got going in Guyana, Suriname, Barbados, the OECS, Jamaica, Belize and Trinidad & Tobago in 1997. The amount of the fund at that time was 1 million, and has increased to 6 million as it enters its second phase for the next 4 years. The increase she owed to the success of the former projects that were funded in the first phase

She publicly stated how pleased she was to be associated with this project and recounted how difficult and exciting it was to convince the donors that this project was worth funding. The initiatives was supported by over \$50,000Ca which she believed was well spent and well managed, since the project was so new and innovative. The project proved to be quite challenging since it sought to bring the very political issue of gender and the environment into a contested area. For the Gender Equity Fund the project was unique in trying to create new knowledge for Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean and probably the world.

She felt that Caribbean people must consider the issue of gender and the environment and added that most Caribbean projects fail to have a gender strategy, where gender is hardly ever seen as a problem. For this reason it was very important for the Fund to work with the Centre to ensure that the project got funded and that linkages with regional and extra-regional institutions were established. Here she cited the participation of the researchers at a CANARI workshop, which brought together policy makers looking at natural resource management and implications of this study for other environmental projects to come on stream in Jamaica and the Amazon.

This project gave the Fund a unique ability to partner with the academic community, private/public policy makers and the community. She thanked the researchers for their sustained interest and their questioning along the way. The participatory nature of the research meant that the researchers were very concerned with the lives of the people whom they lived close to during their study immersion. She complemented ISLE for the training they provided in the research methodology and added that the Fund looks

forward to supporting continued work in the area. She conveyed thanks to all and wished everyone successful deliberations.

Professor Elizabeth Thomas-Hope in her address expressed her great pleasure to be present in Trinidad and at the Conference and brought greetings from her colleagues at the Mona Campus of UWI, particularly those who were intricately involved with ISLE but were unable to attend. In her capacity as Professor of Environmental Management, the ISLE programme had been relevant in its multi-disciplinary thrust and focus, which is critical as an underpinning of environmental management. She expressed her views that the people who use and impact upon the environment is the group to be managed and not the environment itself.

She proceeded to explain how the ISLE project related to some of the major aspects of this project. ISLE began in 1995 with a multi-national and multi-disciplinary team. She recalled the first major ISLE workshop, held in the Philippines, where it was advocated that gender should be a major part and thrust of the ISLE project. She was pleased that currently many embrace the view that gender must be part of the organising principle of the different kinds of research being pursued.

One of the major advantages of the CIDA funded ISLE project was that researchers could talk across international boundaries and perspectives of the environment and gender. Gender became the foundation of the Equity component of the ISLE project. Additionally, the issue of Governance was determined important enough to be added to the Project. The core of the Island, Sustainability, Livelihood, Equity and Governance project drove the conceptualisation of these issues with gender being an integral and organising principle.

She highlighted the many achievements and themes of the ISLE project which included work on island health systems, island food systems, marine affairs, issues of waste management, integrated island management, focus on approaches to teaching and research etc. The ISLE project was very pleased that the NARIVA case study has brought

forward a substantial piece of research. She congratulated the Centre and the University for carrying forward the initiative that began with ISLE, the research team for their dynamic and enthusiastic involvement and the community for being part of the programme.

Mrs. Chandra Jonas from the community made brief remarks. She congratulated the researchers, expressing her pride on being part of the research project and noting her new awareness of her importance in protecting the swamp. She expressed her gratitude to the team recognising their impact on the people and children of the community, which she hoped would lead to greater protection and recognition of the Nariva Swamp.

Session 1: Gender Analysis of Natural Resource Use in Kernahan and Cascadoux

Presenter: Sharda Durbal

Ms. Durbal began her presentation by stating the objective of the study, which was “to conduct a participatory and gendered analysis, to learn about the relationship between and within human communities and the resources of Kernahan and Cacadoux”. She then explained the aims of the study, which were to learn more about these communities and the lives and activities of men and women and how men and women utilise the resources of the swamp, particularly how this has affected the biophysical nature of the area.

As a foundation for her findings she defined the terms, ‘empowerment’ and ‘capacity building’, before launching into a discourse on the methodology used Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). She described PRA as a structured methodology that sees community participation in research as being fundamental. She listed the techniques and tools of PRA, alluding to its benefits and drawbacks as a research methodology. She saw its major benefit as being people-centred.

Ms. Durbal proceeded to provide the audience with a very detailed description of the area under investigation, explaining its geography, biodiversity, vegetation and soil type with

the use of detailed maps. She then briefly described the techniques utilised in the collection of the data, as being both quantitative and qualitative but grounded in ethnography. She defined ethnography and listed the quantitative and qualitative tools used in the study.

She went on to present an historical overview of the communities, revealing that the first settlers were male, who entered the area in the 1940's. Women settled in the community between the 1940's and 1960's. As part of the methodology the community was asked to draw maps depicting the area in different eras. These maps revealed that men's and women's concerns over time varied. Men's maps highlighted vegetation while women's maps highlighted people.

She then presented a map of resource use in the communities, explaining its use among the sexes, where it was revealed that men produce the high value cash crops while women are responsible for the low value cash crops. She highlighted gender differentiations that occurred in the control of resources, division of labour (men prepare land and spray while women plant and maintain crops), space/livelihood (the forest is a male domain and the home is a female domain) and livestock rearing (women take care of small livestock while men take care of larger animals like cattle).

She stressed the need for gender sensitivity of ongoing programmes in the area, highlighting a duck-rearing training programme in the community, where men receive the training but women do the actual work. She then looked at cascadox and conch catching in the area, which was defined as being primarily a male activity, with males being responsible for its marketing.

She believed that there is a need to develop and build on the intrinsic skills of the area and mentioned the budding eco-tourism group in the community. She felt it interesting that many of the project related activities in the area were male-dominated but because of the demands on the male's time, i.e. his livelihood function, females had to get involved. This actually created an opportunity for female involvement.

Ms. Durbal then looked at the problems in the Swamp stressing the need for training and education as a possible means to solving them. She provided a list of the key problems in the community as indicated by the community members and the solutions that they themselves suggested would alleviate these problems.

She ended her presentation by stating her recommendations. These were collaboration of stakeholders, training and education (literacy, wetland importance, sustainable agricultural practices and development of eco groups in the area) and the creation of a database of all research done in the area.

Discussion:

The discussion began with Professor Oatham commending the appropriateness of the use of PRA in this study. He questioned the terms natural resources and agricultural resources and asked the presenter for some clarification and to relate this to conservation of the natural bio-system in the swamp.

The Nariva Eco Tours (NET) and Nariva Environmental Watch Society (NEWS) then explained their roles and functions in the community. Professor Cropper commented that the gender analysis in the presentation came across as men versus women and wondered whether any collaboration existed. Ms. Durbal informed him that collaboration occurred in NEWS and to some extent in the households.

Dr. Brinsley Samaroo attempted to provide reasons for the gender relations in the area. He believed that the people in the area being Indians and Hindus come from a very patriarchal society, where women look to the male for leadership and guidance. He added that Indian males are proud and persevere to preserve their leadership. Additionally, the community can be described as a frontier society, where frequent land disputes will arise, therefore males are more prone to violent preservation of their land than females.

Mr. Hanuman, the agricultural extension officer for the area provided an update on the activities in the area particularly those related to the presentation, land distribution, the duck rearing project as well as his views and opinions as it related to these. He felt that the area needed an implementation plan. Mr. Broadbridge followed giving his views and opinions of the area mainly as it related to his private tour guide business.

Professor Ann Denis in referring to the point about males being unable to attend and participate in meetings and projects felt that this should not be seen as a problem, but should be seen as an opportunity for females to earn a livelihood. Ms. Durbal agreed and added that many women participate in the environmental groups in the community, but it would be more beneficial if more of the older males got involved with these groups, since they have greater knowledge of the swamp.

Ms. Sylvia Kacal commended the team for their dedication, knowledge and top-class handling of the research and added that she was already able to feed off their research for a study she was doing in the area. She advised that training, collaboration and networking are what is necessary to develop the eco-tourism thrust in the community. She felt it was a pity that the study could not have been extended for a another year, since the communities have undergone a very dynamic year, with the introduction of electricity and the legalisation of land tenure, which was sure to effect some changes on resource use, agricultural practices, etc. as time progressed.

She however, wondered if there existed any noticeable age differentiation in the attitude to natural resource use across the generations in the community. Ms. Durbal replied that there was a definite age difference in how the environment was perceived. She stated that the older men in the village have a greater concern for the environment, since they knew it in its pristine state. However, the youth are now emerging as a force determined to preserve the environment.

Ms. DeBique reiterated the need for training, collaboration and networking as advanced by Ms. Kacal. She particularly stressed the need for collaboration and networking as

being necessary for the empowerment of the community. Ms. Durbal assured her that the team had effected some networking by facilitating talks and visits from UNDP, EMA etc, which have yielded future projects and activities in the area. She added, however, that the community is tired of being researched and that future projects should concentrate on capacity building and training.

Mr. Cropper expressed his concerns about the increased pressure on the environment with the introduction of electricity and developmental projects to the area. He hoped that some sort of regulatory control of resource use would be built into the leases that are to be distributed to the residents.

Session 2: Gender Analysis of State Policy and Governance

Presenter: Rishi Basdeo

Mr. Basdeo began his presentation by explaining that this section of the study had two components: An historical overview of state policy and governance and a look at community level governance and issues in Kernahan and Cascadou. His presentation was concerned with the latter.

He listed the objectives of this component as understanding the culture of governance, identifying stakeholders and their roles and examining possible community participation and co-management of natural resources. These were looked at in the context of male and female relationships and how they fit into the dynamics of the community.

He proceeded to define the key terms of governance and social capital as used in his study. He briefly outlined the methodology used, which ranged from PRA methods, to semi-structured interviews to oral testimonies. With the use of diagrams he explained community influence and decision-making. In looking at decision-making at the household level, he revealed that the most important mechanism in decision-making is

directly related to male and female roles. In multiple households, however, decisions were related primarily to access to and control of shared resources.

With respect to groups and governance, Mr. Basdeo added that there existed in the community external and internal groups, which were either formal or informal, with all impacting on community dynamics. He saw the Village Council as the most important formal internal group impacting on the community and as such spent some time delving into its history, politics and governance. He stressed that no female would contest the post of president and vice-president in the council since it contradicted accepted social and community norms. They would however, contest posts such as education officer and treasurer.

The religious groups in the community, according to the presenter exerted strong social influence as it related to female and male roles and abilities to participate in the affairs of the community. He identified the religious groups in the area, their hierarchical structures, sex composition and community influences. Interestingly, he revealed that the churches were externally driven by males but internally organised by women.

He listed the formal and informal groups in the community saying that the formal groups that were externally driven are mostly dormant, except for the environmental ones, which were active. He described the informal groups as being either economic or social/recreational. He also listed the informal and formal external groups in the area, drawing reference to the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD) whose project had gone a step further, targeting personal development and interaction among community members.

In his research, Mr. Basdeo found that a link existed between internal groups and social space with certain gender differences occurring. Female participation is more or less restricted to religious groups and other social events, such as weddings. He discussed the leadership issues in the community showing that the groups were primarily male controlled and that influence and power were not equally weighted between the sexes. He

also added that the larger farmers in the communities have more power and influence since they have larger incomes and are able to employ members of the community.

He listed the priorities of the community as indicated by them and the factors that may affect co-management in the community. He ended his presentation by stating that there exists a low level of community participation and gave reasons for this, the most important being that projects were externally developed and imposed upon the community.

Discussion:

Rosdiani Rachim an Indonesian scholar with the ISLE project remarked that the findings presented were quite interesting, especially the revelation that women are involved at top levels in the churches in the community. Mr. Cropper questioned whether the findings were discussed with the community before being presented and if PRA techniques were used to rank the groups and show the overlaps and where influences are of different groups on different issues. This he believed would inform external agencies on which groups they should approach for certain issues.

Dr. Carol James of UNDP projected the view that the reasons presented for the low level of participation in the community were valid but should not be seen as negatives, which she felt was the way it was conveyed in the presentation. She stressed, the need to recognize that some of these reasons are necessary to effect intervention in certain communities, and that conflicts may arise, but these should be left to the community to resolve.

Dr. Reddock asked what were the implications of the power larger crop farmer possess on the sustainability of the ecosystem in the area, since it was revealed that they exert a greater influence on the community, because of their larger income. She also wanted to know if there existed any issues related to governance that may hinge upon the differences between the two communities.

In responding to the questions and comments, Mr. Basdeo said that the team did have a “data give back” session with the community, where they discussed their findings with the residents. He agreed with Dr. James about her views on participation in the community and apologised for these coming across as negatives in the presentation. He added that there is a need for selective participation but that external groups should consult with all groups when planning their intervention. He commented that if larger farmers are given more power, as a result of more persons in the community depending upon them for employment, this may translate to them clearing more borderline land to plant, which can adversely affect the sustainability of the eco-system. He believed that there are implications for sustainability based on the changing social status in the community.

Session 3: Reflections on the Use of Interdisciplinary and Participatory Research Methodologies in Environmental Research

Presenter: Dr. Grace Sirju-Charran

Dr. Sirju-Charran began her presentation by discussing interdisciplinary research and speculated whether different disciplines influenced the way in which data is collected. She felt that the challenge facing such research efforts was to determine how the boundaries could be broken down as one strives to bridge the gap in such research. She felt that having the different disciplines working together is very useful and wondered how and who can pull the pieces of research together if the different backgrounds worked separately. She cited examples within the project of differences due to the different backgrounds, beliefs and perceptions of issues.

She then looked at participatory methodologies, giving a brief history of PRA as a research methodology. She saw PRA’s major advantage as being a research tool, which, through its techniques can empower the community, since they actually participate in the research effort. She stressed that ideally, the methodology should make the community members cognizant of their resources and environment so that they can discern their own

problems and provide solutions to these. However, she stressed that most of the time this does not occur.

She proceeded to explain this using the Nariva case, where most of the projects are externally driven, which leads one to question whether the community can make decisions on its own without external intervention. She said that it is necessary to recognise that almost everything happening in the community is influenced by global forces (international politics and international political economy and ecology). She added that PRA may empower the community by giving them a voice, but we need to determine to what extent these voices, especially those of women, are heard, especially in a patriarchal society.

She also critiqued the PRA methodology by saying that PRA does not take into account conflicts within the community and how they can be resolved. She brought up the issue of acceptance of data generated from PRA research and felt that PRA can be used to complement scientific research. She added that it was necessary to get the community perception and knowledge of what is happening in their community before the problem can be looked at scientifically.

Discussion:

Dr. Greirson from the Chemistry Department at UWI asked whether PRA was a scientific method of research. Dr. Reddock responded, adding that social scientists had a broader view of scientific methods than natural scientists. PRA as a scientific method, she said was one of their great unresolved debates. Rosdiani Rachim believed that PRA was scientific, even though it was geared at community-based research and questioned the ownership of such research.

Dr. Samaroo in his contribution commented that an enormous amount of research has been and is being done in both communities, stressing that the community is “fed-up” and tired of being researched, while widespread poverty and lack of infrastructure exists

in the area. He also touched on the issue of the alternative economy² in the area and wondered why nothing was said on the issue. Omitting to mention this meant that only a partial view of the communities is being presented.

Mr. Cropper added that PRA is just a research tool not a magic wand, which can be used to penetrate an area while empowering the community by providing them with information about their community. The discussions by which this information is gained can also lead to a greater self-confidence within the community about its relations and interactions. This can give the community confidence to address its own issues as well as those external to it.

Dr. Sirju-Charran in her response believed that a study using PRA to define poverty in the country and the community is needed in the area. She added that the team did try to use a PRA technique to carry out a wealth ranking exercise in the community, but it did not get very far, since the residents were averse to revealing their financial situations. The reason for this closed response could be linked to people's participation in the alternative economy. Conversely, this same wealth ranking exercise was done in a community in Indonesia, with absolutely no problems.

She felt that the members of the community were positive about the research and the researchers and added that she intends to make a copy of the research available to the community when it was completed. Finally, she aired the view that participatory methods can be used to enhance scientific methods, citing possible examples where this can occur.

Dr. Reddock informed the gathering that there was another study done as part of the governance component. This was done by Cheryl Lans, who is not in Trinidad presently, and took into account state policy in relation to Nariva over the century. The methodology used in this component consisted of interviews with governments, former members of governments, functionaries and examining pieces of legislations and other documents.

² Marijuana Production

Day 2 – Saturday 9th Dec. 2000

Session 4: Socio-economic Cultural and Gender Analysis of the Communities of Kernahan and Cascadoux.

Presenters: Nicola Cross and Gabrielle Hosein.

Ms. Hosein began the presentation by stating her hopes that the study would inform future researchers and NGO's wishing to undertake development efforts about certain ethical issues that arose during the project in Nariva. In this regard she hoped that future intervention would be more participatory and empowering. She proceeded to provide a brief summary of the research project, which basically examined the relationship of people and the environment, focusing on three areas: sustainability, livelihood and equity.

She advised the audience that data falling under four domains would be briefly highlighted and connection occurring between the four domains would be noted. Specific focus was paid to social, cultural and economic aspects of the data. She then gave a brief outline of their intended presentation, in which a summary of the data in the four domains, the methodology, stories of their experiences and an assessment of the lessons gleaned would be presented.

The domains focused on four areas: Livelihood and Occupation, Livelihood and Social Capital, Gendered Power Relations and Indigenous Knowledge. Under the first domain, the focus was on youth aspiration, where it was revealed that in Kernahan, a gap existed between what the youths aspire to and what they thought were achievable. While in Cascadoux, youths worked assiduously towards achieving their aspirations with the support of older residents and parents. Teenagers in both villages were less focused on their future in comparison to their older peers.

The findings also showed that middle and upper income families want their children to be educated and that young women aspire to marry out of the community while young men

don't mind marrying within the community. There were only two girls in each community over 18 who weren't married and 14 males of the same age group who were not.

The issues under domain 2 looked at networks and social capital. Ms. Hosein pointed out that networks were used by women for assistance with their practical needs, such as childcare. Men however, used their networks for leisure and production. She felt that networks were also important for older villagers who could not support themselves. She stressed that children legitimise women's leisure time and alluded to the fact that neighbourhood networks enabled women to deal with isolation, oppression, violence and unsatisfactory marriages.

The inequity that exists at the household level limits the occurrence of women's networks. Their domestic responsibilities and insubordination limit their participation in social activities, however, they do negotiate their networks. Wealthier villagers depend less on networks and dominate them, where they do participate. Ms. Hosein found that lack of simple infrastructure, such as phones, hampered the building of networks with external groups and persons.

In looking at gendered power relations, Ms. Hosein remarked that women's lack of mobility impairs their access to information and leisure. She explained that there was a great difference in gendered power relations between the two communities, where women in Cascadoux are more involved in decision-making and earn independent livelihoods, this may also be affected by race and cultural issues, since it was found that 'dougla' and Afro Trinidadian women who were more represented in Cascadoux were more independent. She felt that such power relations affected women's space and their ability to use it. However, she added that women do negotiate power relations in the household, however, final decision-making is restricted to the male. She felt strongly that women's networks can be used as a means of transferring environmental knowledge and that religious and cultural beliefs perpetrate the male as the head of the household.

Domain 4 dealt with indigenous knowledge. Ms Hosein expressed her view that the technological changes that were pervading the communities may affect people's aspirations and lifestyles. She found that indigenous knowledge about plants and the environment was more significant to elders' worldview and that younger persons possessed less knowledge about indigenous practices and beliefs. She found it interesting that although most of the residents in both communities have converted to Christianity, they have maintained traditional Hindu practices and added that their Christian beliefs have re-inforced traditional household roles. Finally, she added that legal ownership of the land brought about a different sense or feeling of ownership.

Ms. Cross continued with the presentation by describing the methodology used in this phase of the study reiterating the use of PRA, which she added, was based on the ECOGEN manual. She mentioned some difficulties encountered, listed the PRA techniques used and defined their use of the term empowerment. She explained their use of a multi-method and multi-disciplinary approach citing the qualitative approach as yielding rich and diverse data that gave depth to the study far beyond what was expected. She stressed how useful the infield training workshops were in preparing them for the research study.

She proceeded to discuss the particular techniques citing examples to illustrate their use. Direct observations, participant observation and long conversations were used in the initial stages, which allowed the researchers to get a feel for the community, to introduce themselves and negotiate trust. She stressed that in using structured and semi-structured interviews the team was very cautious to interview the sexes separately so as not to have the female response biased by the presence of the male. She added that group workshops and activities, observing/assisting residents with their daily chores, photo essays and ethnographic journals and interviews with external stakeholders were also used.

Ms. Hosein proceeded to present a short case study of an occurrence during the research period to illustrate how the villagers' perception of the research and the researchers can

affect the fieldwork phase. She revealed that where trust existed, information flowed, where there was no trust, the researchers were completely shut out.

Ms. Cross in her reflexive look at the study defined action research and explained how the team negotiated trust. She discussed the reciprocity and emotive feelings of the research, as well as the issues with which the team struggled during the fieldwork phase. Such issues basically questioned the empowerment component of the study, i.e. how was the team helping the development process of the community and its' people. The team learned that empowerment was hard, confusing, incremental and non-linear and felt their greatest impact was opening the minds of the youth. She felt that the community should be involved with projects from the inception and that projects should be tangible.

Discussion:

Mr. Khan an environmental activist commended the researchers for the good job, and informed them that the issues they faced about questioning their contribution to the development process in the community is not unique and that in planning research it is necessary to adopt a philosophical base concerning these ethical issues.

Mr. Cropper asked for clarification of the study objectives and time lines with respect to the final report, he also reiterated the issue of ownership of the research. Mr. Manwarring, co-ordinator of the government funded study that yielded a management plan for Nariva commented on the growth he witnessed in the researchers and in the community as a result of intervention efforts. He touched on many of the issues raised expressing his view that these were national issues that no one person can rectify. He recommended that the community be given the chance to host an audience such as the one present, where the problems and issues can be discussed within their natural environment.

Ms. Kacal raised the issues of rural communities like Kernahan and Cascadoux being used as 'foot wars' in political patronage over time and Nariva becoming a National Park. She sought clarification on the empowerment component, which was provided by Dr.

Reddock. Ms. Hosein also advised the gathering that a policy workshop is carded for the following week, where these issues and other problems would be highlighted to policy makers, additionally, the team did have a “data-give back” session with the community in order to validate the study. Ms. Durbal added that the present workshop was originally scheduled to be held in the village.

Dr. Sirju-Charran alluded to the dilemma faced by the project co-ordinators and the team in terms of the research being action oriented and empowering. Dr. Reddock added that there was certainly a divergent view in the way the co-ordinators and the research team saw empowerment. She added that empowerment of the community was considered to be an action component of the project. A very lively discussion ensued on the topic of empowerment and how it can be measured.

Ms. DeBique felt the team did well, she added that the project had output indicators which were achieved and that the team is now trying to establish impact indicators which were not part of the project. She added the entire team had gone the extra mile in the project and should recognize when to stop.

Community Presentation

Videsh Ramdhar, a young community member began by commending the researchers for the wonderful job they did, through which the residents were able to learn more about themselves, their environment and how to interact in different fora. He reiterated the view of Mr. Manwarring that a workshop like this should be held in the community in order to elicit greater participation from the villagers so that the majority view and opinion can be ascertained. He ended by asking why was their community selected for the research.

Session 5: Panel Discussion on the Implications of Research Findings for Research, Implementation and Methodologies in Environmental Work

Panellists: Dr. Asad Mohammed, Dr. Carlisle Pemberton, Ms. Denise Noel DeBique, Dr. David Dolly, Mr. Mitchell Rostant and Ms. Celia Motie.

Mr. Rostant on behalf of the Cacasdoux community expressed his gratitude to the research team for making their village known, he felt however, that a lot more is needed, especially for the youth. He touched on the issue of the alternative economy, acknowledging, however, that its occurrence was not widespread and highlighted some of the problems in the area. He expressed his view that projects dealing with wetlands would be welcomed in the area and stressed that as a farmer, he did not realise the extent of the damages farming caused to the Wetland. He added that the research benefited him by raising his awareness of the value of the Nariva wetland, on a personal level the researchers assisted his daughter in preparing for her exams, at which she was successful. He ended by saying that the Nariva wetland benefits the entire world.

Dr. Asad Mohammed looked at the research concerns in the context of physical and land use planning as it relates to environmental research. He looked at state land management and general land management, commenting that they were controlled by two different policy institutions in government. He stressed the need for broader land use tools for such areas and cited the fact that the land use planning process had in many situations actually slowed down development because of environmental concerns especially around wetlands and the lack of and inadequacies of laws to deal with such problems.

It is difficult to determine “one best” use for a piece of land, as a result conflicts will arise among the proponents of the different land uses. In the end power relations and conflict resolution are what determines land use. He focused on the role of the different stakeholders in the development of the area and the immense coastal erosion. He also mentioned the enormous role the community can play in accelerating the development of their area.

Dr. Pemberton began by listing some of the studies his department has done and is planning to do in the area, one being the launch of an eco-tourism project. He thought the presentation was very interesting and aired his particular concerns with the issues of

domestic violence and networking. He added that PRA could yield a lot of data that other methods may sidestep and felt that networking can lead to economic activities. He also touched on intellectual property rights of the indigenous knowledge and enterprise selection, in light of trade liberalisation.

Ms. DeBique outlined the categories of the Gender Equity Fund that the project fits into and discussed the two main points with which the project dealt: empowerment of people and the capacity of people to decide what they want. She then briefly discussed how the Fund operates and raised some concerns and struggles experienced during the project and now that it is over, such as who designed the project and were the beneficiaries part of the design. She speculated on the lack of operation of the management team for the project and ramifications of this.

She felt the project had a lot of unplanned results, many of which were positive and that the researchers found it difficult to measure whether they had effected empowerment in the community. Indicators to measure this would be useful. She attempted to allay some of the anxieties of the team with respect to the empowerment issue and assured the audience that the \$50,000 Cd was a good investment of funds. She ended by highlighting some of the gaps in the presentations.

Dr. David Dolly felt that the research found two very resilient communities from which a lot of intelligence was gained. The team also built on existing information on the communities by using newer more participatory methodologies and he believed that there exists an excellent database for the area. He touched on the changes occurring, stressing his view that the conflicts were still unresolved, these he felt should be resolved by the community. He also brought up the issue of conflicts that may have been created in the community by the research effort. He ended by affirming his view that implementation should be left to the community to do what it wants, however, he believed that implementation might still have to be negotiated.

Ms. Celia Motie, a member of the community voiced her opinion that their communities have a lot to offer. She thanked the researchers and expressed her pleasure at being able to attend this conference and make a contribution. She spoke briefly about the two Pentecostal churches in the community. She touched on the existence of the alternative economy, which had dwindled, in part due to the church's influences.

Responses:

Final responses echoed the need for consensus, community based research, discussions and consultations, and insights into the future processes and avenues to be pursued by the Centre and the team. Dr. Reddock informed the audience that the Centre planned to hold a policy workshop the following week, produce proceedings of this conference, a composite report of the study, individual component reports and later on a video to be used for teaching purposes. She stressed however that they are yet to discern other practical follow-ups.

Closing Ceremony

Dr. Reddock in her closing remarks thanked everyone for attending, especially the community for making the time to be present on both days. She expressed her gratitude to the researchers for their time, skills, enthusiasm and emotion, she felt it was a difficult project, which entailed many struggles, but through it all they persevered. She also commended them for the work they did in the community. She extended thanks to her staff, the persons chairing sessions, panellists, the School of Education, Mr. Bruce Paddington, the Campus IT services, the Institute of International Relations and all the participants.

The ceremony ended with presentations being made to the researchers, the community members and Ms. Denise Noel-DeBique.

Workshop Evaluation

Participants' Responses

Participants were asked to complete an evaluation form which was used to gauge the impact of the workshop to the participants and the community members of Kernahan and Cascadoux. The evaluation was analysed from two perspectives that of the community members and that of the other participants, with nine and twelve completed respectively.

Most of the participants agreed that the workshop sessions would assist them in realising their research and other interests since it provided them with a greater understanding of the research methodologies used and would assist them in selecting research methods. Additionally some felt the sessions gave them useful data and information on the communities that they can now use in formulating policies and other initiatives in the area.

Most of the participants (5) felt that the fourth session was the most useful, since it included more of the community voice, brought the project together in a cohesive manner, revealed key issues and were more relevant to their particular interests. Four persons felt that session 1 was the most useful as it was the most data intensive, provided a useful background to the project and set the tone for the entire conference. One person thought that session 2 was useful in providing strategic information towards his or her own interests.

Conversely, most of the participants (6) believed that none of the sessions could be described as being least useful. They felt that all were useful and contributed towards the success on the conference. Two persons felt that session 2 was the least useful since the presentation style distracted from the quality of the work. One participant thought that session 3 was the least useful and three persons did not comment.

In determining the important lessons learnt participants expressed the following:

- The need to respect a community and not change it
- Participation and dialogue is the way forward
- Community development is still possible regardless of the constraints existing in the environment
- The need for reciprocity between research and the community
- Multi-disciplinary research reaps a great number of rewards
- Research informs reality
- Ethical issues must be taken into consideration in any research effort

Participants identified that areas of eco-tourism, environmental conservation, equity, inclusion of the corporate sector, outreach programmes, governance, community dynamics and networking as those that need greater development for collaboration in the future. Eight persons felt that the workshop was very useful in developing collaborative networks for future research projects. Three felt it was somewhat useful while two persons did not respond.

Eight persons believed that the Project's objectives were adequately met while three felt it was met to some extent. One person did not respond. Recommendations for future research projects of this type included focusing more on tangible objectives, greater gender analysis and more work on the reasons for in and out migration with respect to the communities.

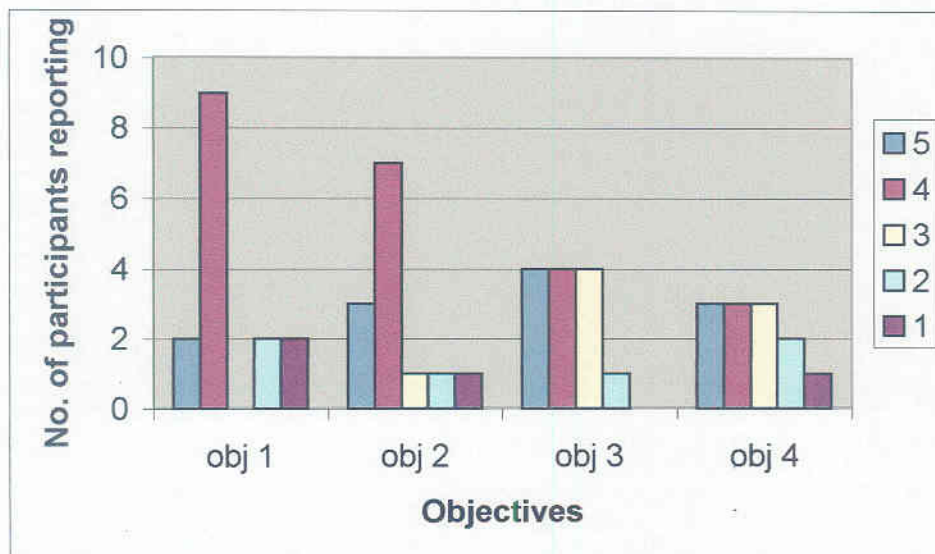
Participants commented that the project was a special one that involved a lot of effort and time for which the team must be congratulated. They felt the information presented was very useful and timely. Others expressed their pleasure at witnessing the presence and participation of the community members. Some thought that such research enterprise should be offered as a paid service to the corporate sector.

Diagram 1 below shows participants' rating of the extent to which they think the objectives of the workshop was met. A five-point scale was used with 1 being least adequately met and 5 being most adequately met. The Workshop's objectives were:

1. To present the research findings to a wide range of stakeholders and interested persons;
2. To reflect on the interdisciplinary and participatory research methodologies used in the research process
3. To generate feed back from relevant researchers, community members and policy makers on the research findings
4. To explore the implications of this study for further research, teaching and action

The diagram below revealed that most persons (9) felt that objective 1 somewhat adequately met, while only two felt it was most adequately met. Four persons thought that objective 3 was most adequately met while seven thought objective 2 was somewhat adequately met. Overall, most felt that the objectives of the workshop were somewhat adequately met.

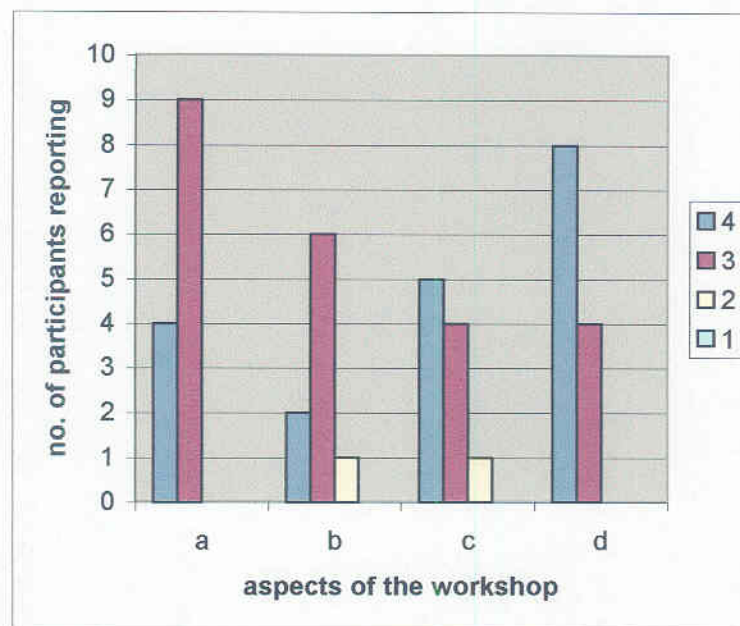
Diagram 1: Extent to which objectives of the workshop were met



Participants were asked to assess the different aspects of the workshop that were presented over the two days using a 4 point scale, with 1 being poor and 4 being very good. The different aspects of the workshop assessed were:

- a. Presentations and discussions on the theme Gender Analysis of Natural Resource Use in Kernahan and Cascadoux
- b. Presentations and discussions on the theme Gender Analysis of State Policy and Governance
- c. Presentations and discussions on the Reflections on the Use of Inter-disciplinary and Participatory Methodologies in Environmental resources
- d. Presentation and discussions on the theme Socio-economic, Cultural and Gender analysis

Diagram 2: Participants rating of different aspects of the workshop

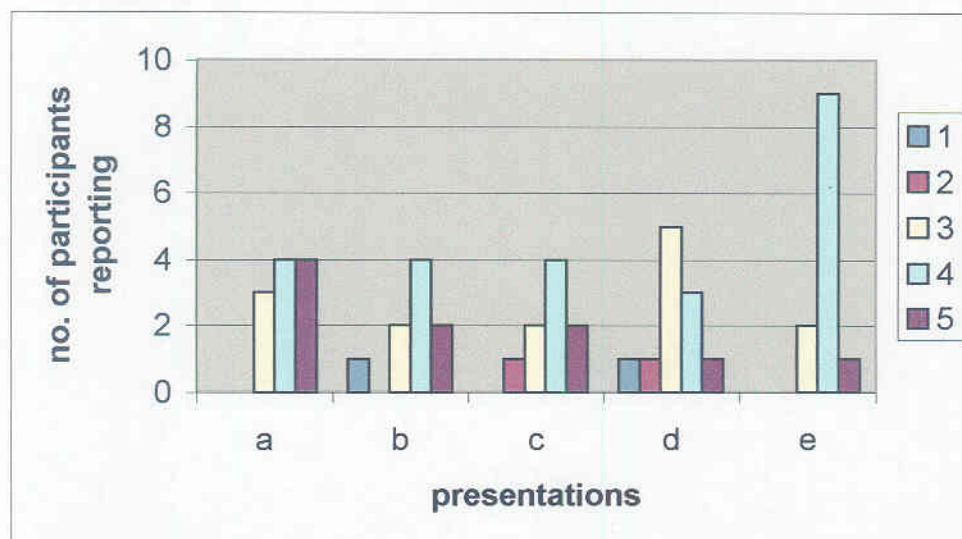


Nine persons thought that aspect (a) was good while four felt it was very good. Six persons felt that aspect (b) was good while two felt it was very good. Five thought aspect (c) was very good and four thought it was good. The majority of the participants (8) felt that aspect (d) was very good while four thought it was good.

Participants were asked to rate the adequacy of the time allotted for the different presentations of the workshop using a 5 point scale, where 1 was least adequate and 5 was most adequate. The different presentations were:

- a. Gender Analysis of Natural Resource use in Kernahan and Cascadoux
- b. Gender Analysis of State Policy and Governance
- c. Reflections on the use of Interdisciplinary and Participatory Resource Methodologies in Environmental Research
- d. Implications of Research Findings for Research Implementation of Methodologies in environmental work
- e. Socio-cultural economic and gender analysis of the communities of Kernahan and Cascadoux

Diagram 3: Participants' ratings of adequacy of time allotted per presentation



Community Participants' Responses

Most of the community members felt that the workshop sessions assisted them to become more self confident and reliant. They felt that the sessions showcased their community and adequately portrayed what was occurring there, to the point where they able to gain a better understanding of their community.

Five of the community members felt that all the sessions were useful, since they all provided a lot of information. Three thought session 4 was the most useful since it threw more light on their community and showed them that a lot of work is needed socially and economically for the development of the area. One person felt that session 2 was the most useful since it involved discussion on the two Pentecostal churches in the area.

Conversely, two of the community participants believed that none of the sessions could be described as being least useful. One person felt that session 2 was the least useful since their personal interest did not lie in understanding the male and female dynamics in the villages as it related to how things were controlled. Six persons did not respond

In determining the important lessons learned community participants expressed the following:

- Culture is hard to change
- That the environment must be protected
- The importance of working towards a goal

Community Participants identified those areas of education of the youth, infrastructure, small business and agriculture development and the impact of different interventions as those that need greater development for collaboration in the future. Five persons did not respond. Three persons felt that the workshop was very useful in developing collaborative networks for future research projects while six persons did not respond.

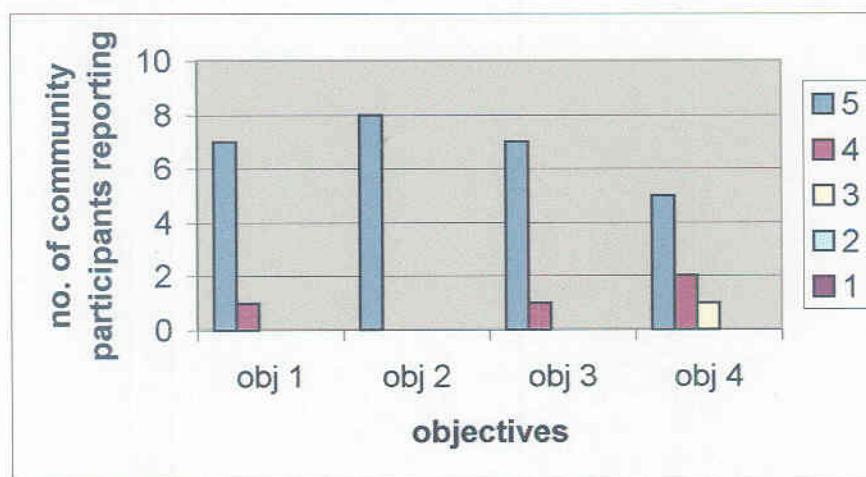
One person believed that the Project's objectives were adequately met while three felt it was not met. Five persons did not respond. Recommendations for future research projects of this type included spending more time in the community and continuance along this particular focus. Five persons did not respond. Community Participants felt that the research project was great and thanked the researchers for their wonderful job.

Diagram 4 below shows community participants' rating of the extent to which they think the objectives of the workshop was met. A five-point scale was used with 1 being least adequately met and 5 being most adequately met. The Workshop's objectives were:

1. To present the research findings to a wide range of stakeholders and interested persons;
2. To reflect on the interdisciplinary and participatory research methodologies used in the research process
3. To generate feed back from relevant researchers, community members and policy makers on the research findings
4. To explore the implications of this study for further research, teaching and action

The diagram below revealed that most persons (7) felt that objective 1 was most adequately met, while only eight felt objective 2 was most adequately met. Seven persons thought that objective 3 was most adequately met while five thought objective 4 was most adequately met. Overall, the community members felt that all four objectives were of the workshop were most adequately met.

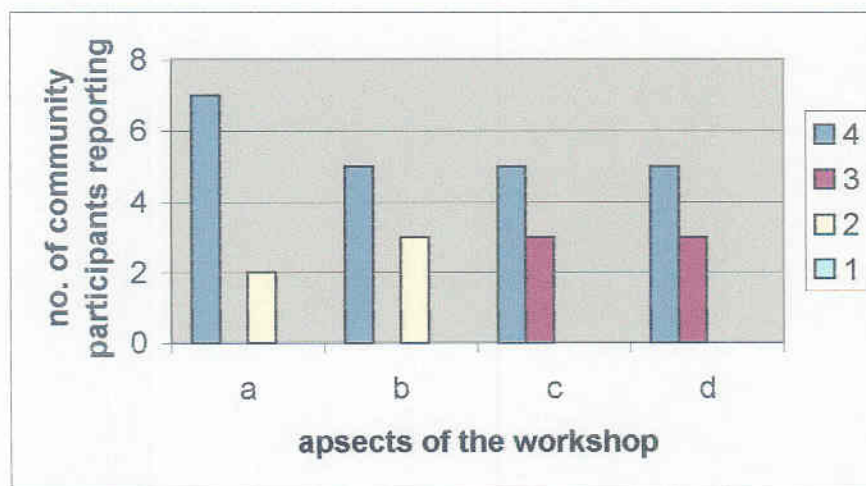
Diagram 4: Community participants' rating of the extent to which objectives of the workshop were met



Community participants were asked to assess the different aspects of the workshop that were presented over the two days using a 4 point scale, with 1 being poor and 4 being very good. The different aspects of the workshop assessed were:

- a. Presentations and discussions on the theme Gender Analysis of Natural Resource Use in Kernahan and Cascadoux
- b. Presentations and discussions on the theme Gender Analysis of State Policy and Governance
- c. Presentations and discussions on the Reflections on the Use of Inter-disciplinary and Participatory Methodologies in Environmental resources
- d. Presentation and discussions on the theme Socio-economic, Cultural and Gender analysis

Diagram 5: Community participants' rating of different aspects of the workshop

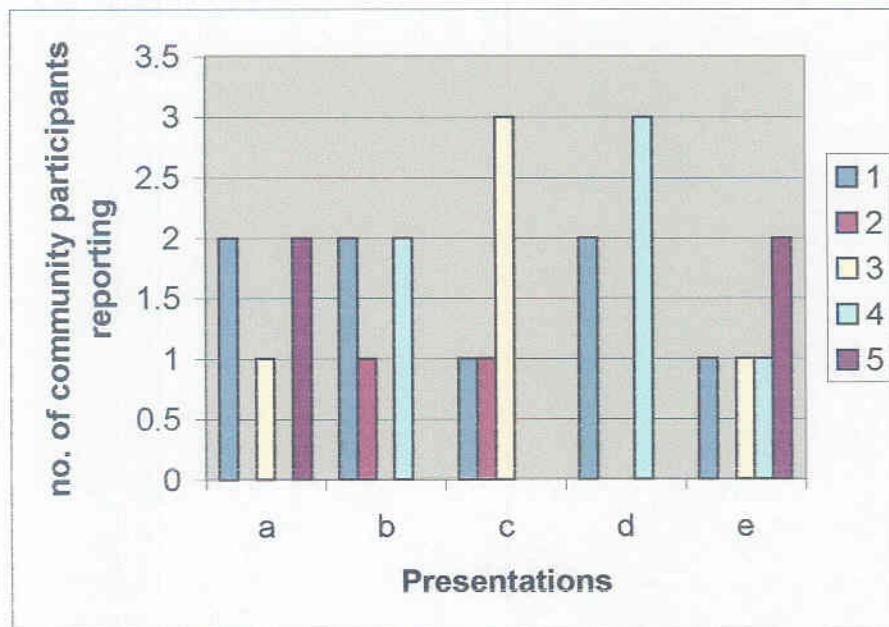


Seven persons thought that aspect (a) was very good while two felt it was very fair. Five persons felt that aspect (b) was very good while three felt it was fair. Five thought aspect (c) was very good and three thought it was good. Five felt that aspect (d) was very good while three persons thought it was good.

Participants were asked to rate the adequacy of the time allotted for the different presentations of the workshop using a 5 point scale, where 1 was least adequate and 5 was most adequate. The different presentations were:

- a. Gender Analysis of Natural Resource Use in Kernahan and Cascadoux
- b. Gender Analysis of State Policy and Governance
- c. Reflections on the use of Interdisciplinary and Participatory Resource Methodologies in Environmental Research
- d. Implications of Research Findings for Research Implementation of Methodologies in environmental work
- e. Socio-economic cultural and gender analysis of the communities of Kernahan and Cascadoux

Diagram 6: Community participants' ratings of adequacy of time allotted per presentation



The University of the West Indies St. Augustine

**The Centre for Gender and Development Studies
in collaboration with CIDA and ISLE**

Conference to Present Research Findings
The Nariva Swamp: A Gender Case Study
8-9 December, 2000

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Appendix 2

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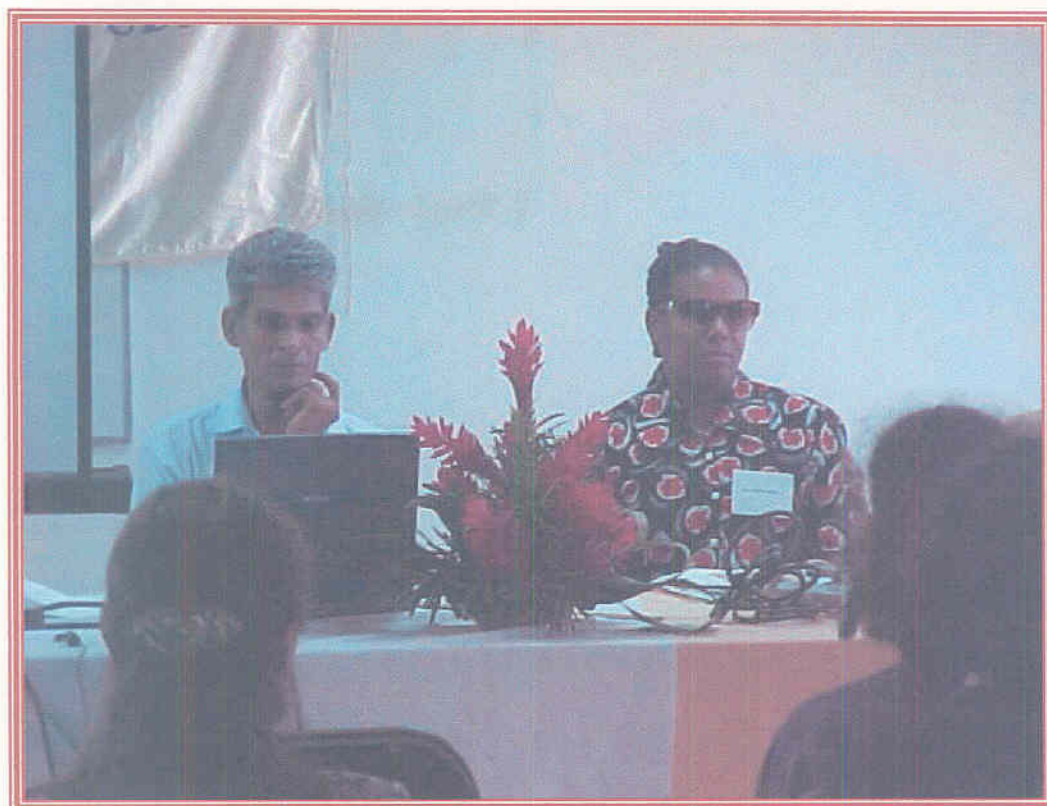
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Susan Jacelon



Participants at the Conference



Cascadoux Resident Mitchell Rostant and Kernahan Resident Celia Motie
at the Closing Panel Discussion