

Participatory research in the Caribbean: Principles, practice, problems and potential

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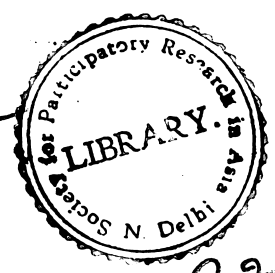
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**PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH IN THE CARIBBEAN:
PRINCIPLES, PRACTICE, PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL**

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**Issues and Cases of the
Caribbean Participatory Research Network, 1984-85**

Edited by

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INTRODUCTION

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH IN THE CARIBBEAN PRINCIPLES, PROBLEMS AND PROJECTIONS

By: Dr Claudia Harvey
Regional Coordinator
Caribbean Participatory
Research Network

Introduction: A simple definition of research is that it is a systematic means of seeking information, explanation (cause and effect) and understanding of a complexity of factors. Any form of research, however, derives from a particular tradition - a body of theory and a methodology developed over time. Each discipline is marked by particular assumptions, concepts, questions, methods and explanations which distinguish it from other disciplines. The assumptions derive from the particular perspective or view of the world held by the adherents to that particular discipline. The concepts are the specialized language used within the discipline to ask questions for which answers are sought using particular processes, principles and procedures. These assumptions, concepts and methods shape the kinds of questions asked and the explanations provided.

Within particular disciplines, however, there can be a divergence of perspectives. In the study of society for example, it is possible to distinguish between research that is "social scientific" and that which is "social". While the perspectives are not mutually exclusive, they have different emphasis. To a large extent, social scientific research aims at contributing to a body of scientific knowledge, while social research aims directly at addressing and solving social problems. While social scientific information can be used in problem solving, in itself it does not offer solutions.

Hills (1978) captures this view nicely. She suggests:

the knowledge of disciplines (eg social sciences) is organised around cognitive problems and in terms of theoretical systems
... the knowledge of an applied profession (eg. adult education) must be reorganised in terms of relevance to its (practical) goals. (p. 2-3) (*inclusions mine*)

It is in this general context that one can best view participatory research (PR) - attempts to engage members of communities in identifying problems and methods, in data collection, analysis and presentation and eventually engagement in the resultant action derived from such research activities. Community members are engaged in development efforts from the identification of the problem through to the design, implementation and evaluation of action. There is some debate in the field as to the extent to which participatory research is research and the extent to which it is action. Protagonists on one side argue that participatory research by its very nature is somewhat unsystematic and therefore the data obtained is subjective, unreliable and therefore not "real research". Protagonists on the other side argue that much of the emphasis on reliability in the traditional research mode results in information that is invalid and irrelevant for problem-solving. (see for example Pat Ellis, p.30 of this Report)

Therefore there needs to be an approach to research that is directly relevant to community action.

It seems useful, therefore, in the attempt to elucidate participatory research for Caribbean purposes, to distinguish between traditional social scientific research and participatory research, not to condemn one and praise the other, but to indicate essential ways in which they differ, and ways in which both can be used to address realities in a developing region. However, the focus will be on participatory research, its strengths and /on constraints; rather than perceiving participatory research itself as a panacea for all the ills of under-development. For, if the truth is accepted there is no panacea, but rather a variety of alternatives to explore in unravelling the causes of under-development, proposing and attempting solutions and monitoring these solutions for possible drawbacks.

In this paper, then, there is a comparison of traditional and participatory approaches to research attempting a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the different modes. Examples are drawn from the cases and proposal presented in this Report to illustrate the points. There is, also, a discussion of some of the dilemmas of participatory research, and of the difficulty of maintaining a Caribbean Participatory Research Network. Even as the difficulties are noted, however, the case is made for the necessity of a research based approach to education and development in the region and the viability of a participatory approach to such research. The possible role of a Caribbean Participatory Research Network in maintaining such an approach is then discussed.

COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL AND PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES TO RESEARCH

The basic assumption of social scientific research is that there are social laws to be discovered and that investigations must be conducted with a maximum of objectivity in order to discover these laws. In social research, on the other hand, the assumption is that while there are recurrent patterns and structural forms that may help shape human interaction, social conditions are variable and all social life is value laden. As a consequence, social research must be value laden, social researchers note that any attempt at "objectivity" in fact springs from a particular value position that is normally consistent with the social perspective of dominant groups.

All three reports in this selection spring from a stated value position. Brown notes that:

RPCDC recognised that projects to follow the needs assessment phase would require the collective planning and energy of the community residents, it therefore seemed essential to begin any process with community input and direction. (p.12)
(emphasis mine)

Ellis comments that there was a decision to:

focus on the concerns of rural women and to facilitate and ensure their full participation in every phase (p.30)
(emphasis mine)

Renard argues:

an understanding of the way the resources were historically used will indeed be valuable, since it will provide insight to such interaction in the future. (p 42); (*emphasis mine*)

The stated value position in all cases informs the very conception of the work. (*emphasis mine*)

In terms of the process of the research, arising from the social scientific perspective is the view that if there are social laws discoverable by objective means, then the instruments of research must be carefully designed to arrive at these laws, and must have some universality of application. Hence there is an overriding concern in social scientific research with the reliability of measurement instruments to ensure replicability. If such replicability is the aim, then again there follows directly the need for expert researchers, inducted not only into the techniques of research, but into the body of theory which informs the research. Social science research thus; depends on a trained corps of experts whose very training in the assumptions, concepts, techniques and modes of explanation of particular disciplines can set them apart from "lay" members of the community.

Social researchers are apt to believe that the results of social scientific research derived from a core of theory and learnt techniques may tend to be more the artifacts of a particular discipline than they are reflections of reality. Such social researchers, therefore, insist on methodologies steeped in the reality of communities, since such research addresses value laden problems in need of solution. They consider practical experience to be a critical component of the nexus of factors needed to address such problems. Far from depending solely on the trained body of experts, therefore, these researchers see the need for community members to be researchers themselves.

Note that in the three cases in the Report Brown attributes the "staying power" of the participants to the sense of ownership they experienced through involvement in the needs assessment. She exults that the substantive issue - the plight of children had become the subject of 377 conversations in ten days. The "consciousness raising" activity that might have been necessary with an expert team resulted "naturally" from the process of community involvement in the research. (see p.20) Ellis shows how the process of research led community members of Rose Hall "on their own initiative" to undertake a community survey (see P.36). Renard proposes the engagement of students, teachers and parents in her school history project. Once again, then, the roles of researcher and "lay" person become interchangeable - although in all three projects facilitators trained in research are available for consultation - this approach is distinct from social scientific mode where researchers obtain information from community members, but the latter do not assume the role of researchers. Both Brown and Ellis note, not only the ideological advantage of such an approach,

but the practical advantage. Research that could normally take years was completed in a matter of months, the results were verified as valid and presented in a form immediately accessible to community members.

In terms of the products of research, social scientific modes are intended for sharing with the community of experts via papers, conferences and other such forums. The intent of these presentations tend to be for further analyses, discussion and verification. Taken to its extreme, such an approach to research can foster an elitism of the experts and a view of members of communities as subjects/objects - rich data for research but essentially reactive and unable to appreciate the results of research activity.

In the second type of research, however, the results are intended for community use. They are consciously and overtly intended for problem resolution and therefore the research is both to be created and used by the community. Such a conception permeates all three cases under study. Social science researchers may tend to feel that such a commitment to engagement in the research in essence renders it less valid for objective, scientific purposes.

In summary, then, one may juxtapose the essentials of the two approaches in tabular form as follows:

Table 1

A comparison of Social Scientific and Social Research: "Ideal Types"

<u>Factors</u>	<u>Social Scientific Research</u>	<u>Social Research</u>
Assumptions	Universal laws to be discovered to explain reality.	Universal patterns exist but social conditions are variable and each social situation is unique.
Concepts	Objectivity/Reliability/Validity Researcher/Subject dichotomy Value free/Universal	Relevance/Importance/Feasibility Researchers and community members are joint Participants Value laden/Culturally Relevant
Questions	What are the causes of x, y, z? What variables contribute to the phenomenon? Where do other instances of it exist?	What are the causes of x.y.z? What are the implications for social life? How maximise the positive and minimise/eliminate the negative?
Method	Objective, reliable instruments; measurable indicators; experiments/surveys	Culture based data-gathering techniques
Explanation	Cause and Effect Relationships	Cause and Effect Relationships Solutions.

<u>Factors</u>	<u>Social Scientific Research</u>	<u>Social Research</u>
Implications of Research Mode	Can produce data to contribute to an established body of knowledge. Can lend "rigour" May, however, be abstracted from reality and usually can only be amendable for practical use after considerable interpretation and adaptation.	Can produce data immediately accessible for community use. Because of community involvement, can be readily acceptable by community. Frequently less accepted by the academic community as adding to a body of scientific knowledge.

The foregoing sections deliberately focus on the extreme ends of the continuum of social scientific to social research in order to illustrate the essential essence of the two approaches to research on society. Research as actually conducted, however, tends to fall within the two extremes on the continuum with participatory research tending to be closer to the social research end of the continuum. More and more social scientists are beginning to note contradictions in the traditional mode and consequently, they, too, are moving towards "the social end" of the continuum.

Despite the differences, there is some common ground between the two approaches. Both assume that research must be systematic; both agree that research must have valid referents in reality. Additionally, both argue that there must be some level of external validity, that is, individuals other than the researcher(s) must be able to follow the process of the research (if not replicate it) and determine that the explanations are justifiable. In participatory research, one must be able to determine that the information is accurate, the conclusions valid and the recommendations feasible.

Note for example that Brown appends the data sheet (p.26) and in community meeting both Brown and Ellis addressed the question of the "truth" of the data collected.

Despite this common ground, there are some on-going problematic issues in participatory research. Some of these issues stem from the attempt to validate this mode vis-a-vis traditional research, some stem from the sensitive nature of the activity and others are day-to-day practical issues.

Issues in Participatory Research in the Caribbean

Practical issues include the credibility of the research and the level of acceptability of the results at academic, community and policy levels. Renard, for example, has had some difficulty in having her project validated as examinable because of policy issues related to public examinations. In Ellis' case, even though the research clearly indicated the need for school facilities, obtaining the facilities proved difficult. The issue of acceptability relates both to the nature of the research and to the usual

difficulty of having any kind of research findings applied to practice. It is related, too, to the persistent problem of changing established policy.

The time consuming nature and financial cost of participatory research are both sometimes seen as constraints. Again, however, both Brown and Ellis indicate that it was less time consuming and expensive in terms of material costs, because of the high level of community participation. In addition, the participation brought gains in terms of community commitment.

This commitment raises a concern identified by Brown. She noted the attrition rate of her participants (admittedly small) when it was realised that the project could not provide employment (p.19). Community expectations in terms of solving immediate practical problems can place strains on fledgling attempts at addressing long term developmental issues through systematic research and planning.

Another of the issues facing participatory research on both a day-to-day and more long term basis is the technical one. Conducting research does require some learnt skills to ensure validity of the data, comprehensiveness of the search, accuracy of analysis and appropriateness of interpretation. Most projects therefore require both "expert " and community involvement. Yet there tends to be on the part of the experts, almost an apologetic stance about their acquired knowledge and skills and a tension between giving way to community persuasion on the one hand, and insisting on some of the traditional rigour of the research on the other. But, because the experts were most often "schooled" in the traditional modes, the need to maintain systematic approaches is still seen and community members are often sent for training or training workshops are conducted, thus creating another level of expertise distinct from "lay" community members. (In this instance see Brown p.22 and Ellis p.33).

One suspects that this tension can best be faced if the need for specialization in any endeavour is recognised and researchers can see themselves as community members with one area of specialization, while other members have other areas of specialization. The expertise can then be applied without the need for apology or guilt. It is recognised, however, that this is difficult in a situation where educational attainment (and research expertise reflects a relatively high level of educational attainment) is a major indicator of social division. It is in this context too that the researcher has to exercise special care that this perceived measure of greater social worth, does not lead to a violation of community trust. All research endeavour runs the risk of further exposing a community to exploitation and joint involvement runs an even greater risk of such exposure, given the high level of mutual trust that is required,

By its very nature, then, participatory research places researcher and other community participants at risk. This is a constraint that must be squarely addressed by and among those committed to this approach to research and development.

Another area of tension is that between the traditional detached role of the researcher and the participatory researchers' commitment to social action.

Jan de Vries (1982) notes:

Participatory research as such is a scientific methodological affair ... field workers are mainly interested in areas of developmental work ... educational aspects related to that project. Only in the last instance they seem to be willing to listen to and talk about research methodology ... I think although I am a methodologist, a theoretician - they are right. (*emphasis mine*)

There seems here to be seen an essential conflict between or at best a difference of emphasis in participatory research and developmental work, with the latter being identified as being more important. Concern also touches the fact that participatory research having become accepted by traditional organisations could now serve the interests of these organisations. De Vries suggests instead of a Participatory Research Network "A Network of People's Education" in which sections could concentrate on research.

It seems that our interests need not be either social scientific (research) or social (developmental work; education). As adult educators we need to operate in a problem posing/problem solving mode that leads us to ask appropriate questions, seek appropriate answers and discern the inevitable problems lodged within the answers. The need exists for us to work with other community members in this questioning of social organisation. There is no doubt that information about how others operate and a body of learnt theory is often of invaluable assistance (if not absolutely necessary) to such a questioning stance. One needs it seems not to operate continuously at either end of the continuum of research, but to have the tools to operate at various points of the continuum as deemed necessary by the particular social context and the particular task at hand. Thus while one recognises the complete validity and necessity of community involvement and the use of techniques like role play and community meetings for data gathering and presentation, this does not exclude the use of more traditional methods like structured interviews and questionnaires. The question is less what technique is used once its appropriate to the task, but what purpose the research serves. It seems that the purpose of development is best served by the appropriate use of all available technologies - intellectual and material.

This leads to the issue of theoretical perspectives. There is some debate about whether the issue of development should be tackled at the micro community level or the macro structural/societal level. Writers on political economy suggest the latter, lest the issue of development be seen in an ahistorical perspective. (see Filson (1982) and Filson and Green (1982)). By its very nature, however, participatory research and action tends to operate on the micro community level. Hence, there is the fear that by

ignoring the macro structural/societal issues, participatory research can hinder rather than help the cause of development. (De Vries, 1982; Filson and Green, 1982).

This again suggests an either/or syndrome. It seems that an approach recognising the unique social frame of the particular community/territory as it operates with regional and international structural forms is yet another challenge facing participatory researchers. For, as Brown (p.11) notes, the struggle is not to benefit single communities, or a few individuals within communities, but the total developmental effort. Yet, this effort can hardly be addressed at a general macro level, while ignoring specific, immediate community needs.

Concluding Comments

In presenting the introduction to this Report, the attempt has been made to clarify the difference between social scientific as against social research in an effort to locate participatory research within a certain tradition. In so doing, one noted some tensions and contradictions in the field. Addressing these dilemmas is a real need in the Caribbean, where in a number of areas such dialogue is just starting and in others it is not even recognised as legitimate.

Hills (1978) writing on educational administration, notes that there are inevitable dilemmas in any practical field which sees the need to be informed by theoretical constructs and research findings but where the *raison d'etre* is in the realm of the practical. She notes that in such a situation, it is necessary to have a commitment to a particular value position that defines the desirable state. However, a precondition of determining the desirable state and so informing the value commitment is the need for empirical, significant knowledge to inform rational judgements.

Consequently, she sees the need for the knowledge of practitioners to define the types of problems in the field and accustomed ways of resolving these problems. Additionally, she sees the need for knowledge from the relevant disciplinary sciences and arts to further inform the choices and provide more encompassing frames of analysis. This relates then to all three aspects of the *problematique* raised earlier. There is need for:

- 1) expert and "lay" perspectives
- 2) scientific bases of research as well as community participation;
and
- 3) community focus as well as wider theoretical frames.

All must operate within a value orientation towards authentic development.

In adult education in the Caribbean, it seems that the argument for participatory research is well established - both in terms of principles and of practice as outlined in the cases. The critical question is not social scientific or social research, not research or action and not universal

frames or micro-community action. It seems that we need to operate at various points of the continuum determining at each point which particular mode is most relevant in a particular place and at a particular time.

It seems, further that the role of the Caribbean Participatory Research Network (CPRN) is to help in determining resolutions to the later questions. By providing a forum for dialogue and a resource bank of information, participatory researchers and other adult educators can together work out ways of addressing these central questions, confronting a problematic reality and addressing the issue of authentic development. It is to this effort, that this report is dedicated.

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PARTICIPATORY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

IN A RURAL FAMILY COOPERATIVES PROJECT IN JAMAICA¹

by: Ms Janet Brown
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INTRODUCTION

The Regional Pre-School Child Development Centre, U.W.I. has undertaken a research/demonstration project for 1984 - 86 which addresses the needs of young rural children. The resources which are available in urban settings for children, such as primary health care centres and preschool and day care centres, are rarely as accessible to rural communities. Therefore a broader and more experimental approach to address these needs seemed called for. The premises underlying the project are the following:

1. That families living at subsistence level remote from public services raise children who are developmentally at risk - in areas of physical health and growth, social and emotional health, educational achievement.
2. That the needs of children at risk cannot be separated from the economic exigencies of their parents and of their communities.
3. That effective intervention to improve the chances for healthy development of children at risk must address the economic needs of the of the whole family along with other needs.
4. That forms of cooperative organization provide the most economical and replicable approach to combining economic and human development goals.

It seems essential to first get a clear picture of the status of children in 1984 in a rural community sufficiently typical for the Caribbean to be more broadly applicable in its implications than for Jamaica alone. The area of St Catherine chosen is one which is accessible to Kingston (an hour and a quarter by car), but more isolated from Kingston than mere distance would suggest. There are no large farms in the area, no light or heavy industries, no major employer of local labour. It is an inland, mountainous area and its residents live largely by subsistence farming and marketing in Old Harbour and Spanish Town, distances of 12 - 15 miles from the community's centre. This much was known, but details on the status of the area's children could only be surmised.

¹ A video tape of experiences on this project is being prepared. Contact the author at the Regional Pre-School Child Development Centre, U.W.I., Mona, Kingston 7, Jamaica, W.I. for further information.

A successful participatory process of local needs assessment used in the St Vincent community of Rose Hall inspired RPCDC to design its own process to involve the target community in assessing the status of their children. The Rose Hall pilot project (of the Women and Development Unit of the U.W.I. Department of Extra-Mural Studies) began in 1980 with the objective of facilitating more active and direct participation of women in rural development. An initial three-week participatory training workshop set a framework for community needs analysis and problem-solving which is used to the present. This framework uses a planned selection of structured and creative activities by the leader/trainer (such as role plays, photo-discussions, simulation games, etc.) to take trainees through the following steps:

1. They identify the concepts and issues that the activity has highlighted;
2. They analyse these concepts;
3. They reflect on their actions and reactions during the activity;
4. They explore the implications for future action.¹

The forms of participatory problem-solving which were developed by the Rose Hall leadership varied. The one inspiring this project of needs assessment was a community survey conducted by villagers themselves to find out what others in the community wanted/needed in an adult education/skills training programme. A rich offering of community training programmes using largely local resources followed this survey.

Materials from the Participatory Research Network of the International Council on Adult Education were also helpful in framing an approach to the process of needs assessment.

THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

In approaching this project, RPCDC recognized that projects to follow the needs assessment phase would require collective planning and energy of the community residents. It therefore seemed essential to begin any process with community input and direction.

The assessment process developed for this project in St Catherine, Jamaica, involved the following steps.

1. RECRUITMENT

A small group of women in Brown's Hall (already known to RPCDC staff) were asked to recruit men and women from the three adjacent communities - Brown's Hall, St Faith's and Marlie Hill who could conduct local interviews. A target of 30-35 was hoped

¹ Pat Ellis, in "Equipping Women for Fuller Participation in the Process of Rural Development: An Example of Community-Based Participatory Training from St Vincent, West Indies," 1984.

for. Recruits were to meet on March 6, 1984, at a Marlie Hill location.

2. INTRODUCTORY MEETING

On March 6th over 70 persons came, some recruited, others out of interest, curiosity, or hope for employment. Facilitators for this meeting and the balance of the needs assessment process were RPCDC Social Worker Mrs Janet Brown (project coordinator), Research Fellow Dr Leahcim Semaj, and field assistant, Mrs Marcia Stewart.

Warm-up games were used to help participants relax and to help facilitators get acquainted. The first was a ball-toss "ring-game" in which the name of the person intended to catch the ball has to be called. The second game was a simulated mini-bus ride in which volunteer drivers would "drive" their bus-load (of arm-to-wrist-linked "passengers") around the yard. Passengers dissatisfied with the driver's style would take the driver's place. (A simple game to comment on the possibility of anyone being a "leader" and on the variety of leadership "styles"). The third game asked persons to choose a partner they didn't know well, get to know a few things about that person, including their skills, then introduce him/her to the rest of the group.

These warm-ups served to briefly profile each participant to the others as well as introduce from the outset a very different approach to the traditional meeting with outside or local leaders. The games brought laughter, both at themselves and at the outsiders who could be "silly" enough to play children's games. Initial shyness and reticence were considerably reduced by these warm-up activities.

The facilitators then briefly introduced the purpose of this gathering, explained the University's interest - through RPCDC - in research about how communities can improve life for their children. RPCDC would be willing to assist groups wanting to first find out much more about what families and children most need and what activities the community would see as desirable and possible. It was to talk about HOW to find out this information that this meeting was called.

The group was then sub-divided into three groups, each with a staff facilitator. Each group was given a question to discuss:

1. What skills do people have in my community?
2. How do hard times affect young children in my community?
3. Would people in my community put money and/or labour together to start up a business or community project?

To aid discussion the facilitator in each group asked:

1. What information would we need to answer this question?
2. In what ways could we get this information?

3. What problems might we face in getting this information?
4. What recommendations does this group make about getting this information?

The summary of one group's discussion is appended (Appendix I, p.23) to illustrate content and flavour of the process. All three group discussions were lively, and the information gathered in each was shared at the end with all participants. The Consensus of recommendations was that a community survey to be conducted by residents would be used to obtain most information; this could be supplemented by additional interviews of persons in key sectors (e.g. school principals, nurses, etc.). All persons interested in serving as interviewers were asked to attend a second meeting on March 13th.

3. DEVELOPING A QUESTIONNAIRE

Over sixty (60) attended the second meeting. In this session, participants discussed the kinds of questions they could ask to get desired information. Questions were suggested and revised, and some were then discarded, as local interviewers felt people should not be asked questions that "everyone knew already." The recording of some questions and sensitive areas for interviewing were also discussed. For example, to obtain a measure of child nutrition for the area, it was finally decided to ask what the interviewees had given their children THE DAY BEFORE for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The answers were later assessed by the coders for nutritional deficiencies. Results of this exercise with participants became the questionnaire format. A summary of responses to this questionnaire is appended (Appendix II, p.25).

4. TRAINING INTERVIEWERS

At the third session at least fifty (50) attended; all had previously participated. All participants were divided into dyads and in front of all others, interviewed their partner with the questionnaire they had collectively developed. Group encouragement and criticism helped ensure that the questions were understood and that they would be asked and explained in a clear and comfortable manner. Only five persons of the fifty who practiced were eliminated at the end of this exercise. Each of the 45 selected were given two interviews to conduct and complete. As a pilot test these were collected and analyzed for problems before the next meeting. A local coordinator was selected for each community to head the interview teams.

5. ASSIGNING INTERVIEWS

At the fourth session on March 27th all forty-five (45) recruits attended. At this meeting participants discussed any problems or confusion they had in conducting the sample interviews, and small changes were agreed upon. Each community team then met with its coordinator to work out interview assignments. St Faith's and Marlie Hill teams assigned ten interviews to each of ten interviewers. Brown's Hall, however, had too many interviewers for ten

each. On their own the team agreed that rather than drop anyone, some would work together, especially those from the same family. Interviewers were paid \$4.00 per interview on completion.

6. COMPILING RESULTS

All interviews were completed and collected for tabulating in ten days as planned (377 in all). On that day the three community coordinators were taught to code and tabulate the responses for their respective communities.

7. DISCUSSING THE EXPERIENCE

On April 10th, forty-two (42) of the forty-five (45) interviewers came to a meeting called to discuss the experience and hear the results. It was proposed that persons interviewed would want and were entitled to hear the purposes and results of the survey, and so participants agreed to plan meetings for their wider communities to present the findings. In discussing their interviewing experiences, the following seemed significant:

- a. Almost all enjoyed the experience of interviewing.
- b. Some faced resistance from interviewees but found they could "jolly them around."
- c. Several were told they were given information "only because it's you"; the group as a whole believed they got more cooperation than "outsiders" could have.
- d. Several thought some persons interviewed exaggerated their economic distress in hope of "getting something out of it"; this was not held to be true for most respondents however.

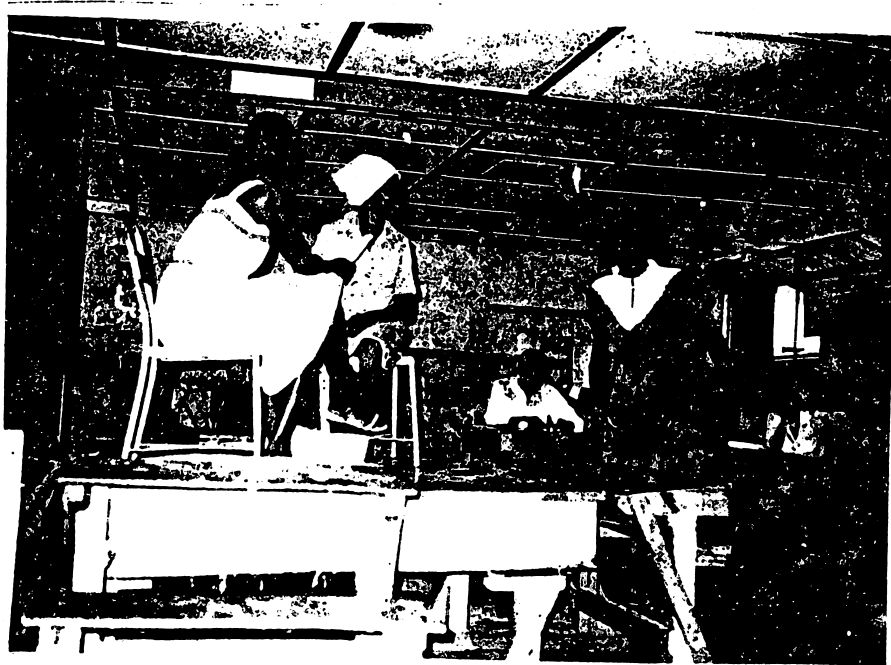
The three community groups then met to plan the time and venue of their respective community reporting meetings. Sunday afternoons in April and May were chosen as most convenient. The coordinators were to confirm the local venues and word-of-mouth publicity was to begin. Posters and local notices would be made at the next meeting to finalize plans for the presentations to the communities.

At the final planning meeting on April 17th, the turnout was gratifying; eight (8) from the Marlie Hill ten, six (6) from St Faith's ten, and twenty (20) from Brown's Hall twenty-five (25) attended this planning meeting. Each group chaired by its coordinator was encouraged to include skits and other lively means to present aspects of the interviewing experience in an interesting way.

8. REPORTING TO THE COMMUNITY

The single most satisfying fact of the three community meetings was that the three interview teams took full responsibility for calling, planning and organizing the events. All three meetings took the shape of "concerts", a comfortable and familiar format, and involved

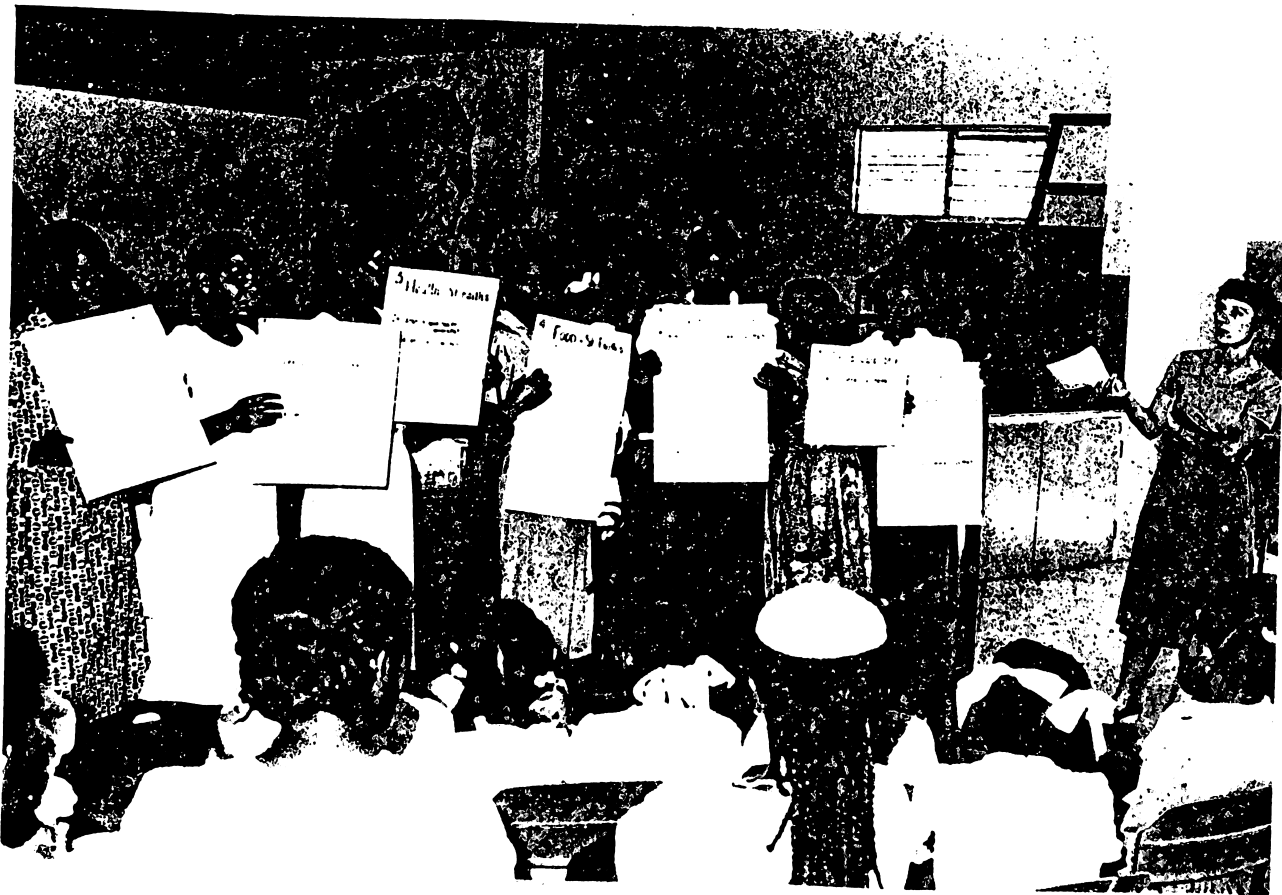
several meetings and rehearsals of groups on their own in preparation. Each group selected a local "notable" as chair-person and outlined a full hour of activity including skits, songs, and recitations. The quality and spirit of the selections were high. Brown's Hall and Marlie Hill groups arranged for sound systems and small "bands" which accompanied the songs. In one of the skits an interviewer is constantly interrupted in her interview by an interfering neighbour who gives "the real story" in graphic detail. In another, the wives of two neighbouring couples discuss



how hard it is to grow enough on their own. The interviewer comes and plants the idea of working together with others to increase income. The women discuss this with their at-first reluctant menfolk and in the end the four pledged to work together for collective benefit. These "concerts" served to remind that drama is a natural medium of cultural expression; participants too shy to speak up in planning meetings were transformed in skits to lively dramatists. The effectiveness of this local communication tool cannot be underestimated.

Early introductions of RPCDC staff dispelled any curiosity about our presence and/or affiliations, particularly political. (Political polarization in Jamaica has made "politics" a very real problem in community development). RPCDC performed four tasks for these meetings:

- a. RPCDC provided simple refreshments which were served by the interviewers at the end of the meetings.
- b. Staff brought books, crayons, paper and some play things for young children to use to demonstrate the importance of meeting needs of youngsters at adult functions.
- c. Staff prepared simplified poster summaries of the survey findings in each community. The interview team presented these and staff briefly assisted in interpreting them.



In contrast to the dramatized skits developed by participants, this presentation of printed facts and percentages, however simplified, did not bring this material to life effectively.

- d. Finally, RPCDC staff led brief closing discussions about the cooperative project ideas suggested by those interviewed.

In all three community meetings the interest and enthusiasm of the interview teams were caught by others, and volunteers to work on project planning groups were readily obtained (over seventy-five (75) names in total from the three communities). Also in each, volunteers agreed to act as contact persons with RPCDC and as convenors of initial planning meetings.



Summarized Results of Community Meeting Discussions

	Adults Attending	Planning Volunteers	Project Ideas
1. St Faith's	30 - 35	15	Raising chickens, Sewing, handicrafts
2. Brown's Hall	70 - 80	25	Raising chickens, baking, wood- work, early crops
3. Marlie Hill	70 - 80	35	Pickling, preserving, dressmaking, chicken, pigs, goats, Basic School

These community meetings were the "official" end of this project's Needs Assessment Phase. The role of the RPCDC in the future was made clear at all three meetings:

1. RPCDC will NOT bring jobs or projects to the community.
2. If community groups wish to develop projects, and demonstrate a commitment of ideas, time and energy to planning them, RPCDC will assist these groups in seeking financial and/or technical assistance to realize the projects.
3. RPCDC is concerned that benefits to families are passed on to as many children as possible; therefore cooperative projects with several participating families will be encouraged over projects which would benefit only one or two families.

All three communities' planning groups were left to meet on their own at least once to assess their own resources of money, time, land, space, ideas. When they felt ready, they were to cable RPCDC to attend their next planning meeting. This strategy was to underscore the importance of keeping the projects-planning process in the hands of the project participants.

REFLECTIONS ON THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT PHASE

As in any community endeavour, phase I had some problems. The first was adapting to the surprise turnout at the first and subsequent meetings where twice the anticipated number came. In a poor community of high unemployment the word passes quickly that interviewers are being recruited. The attrition from over seventy (70) to fifty (50) serious candidates is primarily attributed to (a) the clear message at the outset that no jobs were being offered and only a small amount of money would be paid per interview; and (b) the level of literacy required by the questionnaire. The size of the local space available and the importance of participation by all in the process. However, yard space, floor space, and patience were called on to adapt the process to the numbers rather than the other way around.

Simple refreshments were provided as the sessions usually ran from 10 am. to 1.30 pm., and most participants had to walk from one to three miles to

attend. On one occasion the group proposed cooked food; it was agreed that RPCDC would bring chicken but all the rest would have to be organized and provided by participants. Participants did not follow through, however, and it was decided that such an expectation was too early and unrealistic for this group. Simple "dry" refreshments remained the fare provided for other meetings. Similar efforts later when small groups had become more cohesive proved more successful.

The questionnaire did not cover all information that could have been obtained and the wording of some questions produced some ambivalent responses. However, its value lay in the fact that it was not only developed, implemented and tabulated by residents but its purpose was fully understood. Ownership of the processes and projects are critical to their survival and self-sufficiency.

The gains of this five-month experience, on the other hand, well outweighed problems for both facilitators and participants. These gains are summarized:

1. Forty-five persons gained and/or practiced interviewing skills, learned something collectively about their communities, and made a small amount of money.
2. Participants also had a good time. There were social benefits in the exercises and planning activities which drew out the contributions of all. There was the psychological benefit in being selected as an interviewer.
3. The participation of almost all forty-five (45) interviewers in the planning and implementing of the community reporting meetings indicated that the process had become more than a hope for quick income. Participants at this stage were beginning to feel real ownership and pride in the needs assessment experience. This ownership, it is believed by the facilitators, is the primary factor in the staying power of these participants in the later stages of project development.
4. The facilitators gained a considerable amount of community information in a very short time; and it is likely more reliable information than if obtained by outsiders. The process also meant that the idea of working together for collective community benefit and the concern for the plight of children were the subject of neighbours' conversations with 377 other neighbours within ten (10) days - and at very low cost as well!
5. The facilitators also gained the confidence of significant segments of three (3) communities, first through the training activities which used and built on the contributions of participants, and secondly through being brought to the wider community in meetings organized by the participant planning groups. It will be recalled also that even the initial recruiting of interested interviewers was done by a small group of Brown's Hall women, not by the "outsiders".

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT PHASE

In the eight months since the conclusion of Phase I, the following developments have occurred in this three-community project:

1. The Grace Kennedy Foundation, which funded the costs of the Needs Assessment phase of this project provided a second grant of almost \$J15,000 to serve as bridge funds during the project development phase.
2. The Jamaican programme of CANSAVE became a project partner in July. CANSAVE began its Jamaican programme in 1967 in Brown's Hall; as the agency is shifting from child sponsorship to community development efforts, joining RPCDC in this project seemed a most appropriate collaboration. The CANSAVE director Jennifer Brownell assists as facilitator and has committed funds to access technical resources and to support projects for a three-year period.
3. Therefore with some short and long-term funds assured, a "projects-development phase" began. Groups in the three communities met on their own to further plan their project ideas; technical advice was obtained on some of the ideas; community meetings were held to nominate project and non-project persons to a six-day workshop.
4. The six-day workshop involved twelve (12) persons from each community; almost all attended daily. The main objectives of the workshop were to decide on viable and affordable projects on which to start, and to establish a structure for the three communities' groups to inter-relate. These objectives were achieved through participatory problem-solving exercises which drew the ideas and solutions from participants themselves.
5. A "research group" of three volunteers from each community was formed to extend the information base about the conditions of families. This was seen as important to the facilitating agencies in order to be able to eventually measure impact of programmes on these conditions and to the local researchers' understanding of the needs of families as a basis for organizing the most beneficial projects. As in the needs assessment, the group designed its own tools of information gathering and felt proud of their effort and new skills.
6. As for the project planning groups, as of the end of January 1985:
 - a. St Faith's has a group of twelve (12) men and women who cultivate two plots of several crops together. They have had some successes some failures, and are committed to making their investment pay off. A second project idea is in the discussion stage.
 - b. Brown's Hall has a baking group of seven women who sell primarily to the school children and the nearby neighbourhood. They plan to expand their capacity and therefore their incomes. A community meeting will soon call for those interested in a second project.

- c. Marlie Hill has a group of nineteen (19) men and women who decided to bake at first, then eventually divide into several projects as profitability would allow. This group first voiced the need for a basic school in the area, and undertook to gain community support to help build it. The members eventually shouldered most of the task themselves, as help from the community was slower to come than hoped. They in fact had to vote to postpone the baking project (which was beginning to earn them some money) in order to complete the school with voluntary effort. The school term began in September 1984 in borrowed space in a church. The building was completed before year-end and officially opened with fifty-seven (57) children enrolled on January 20th, 1985. The group was able to obtain donations of much of the materials to build; the balance required came from the Grace Kennedy funds and CANSAVE. In all, the school cost under J\$8,000 (under US\$2,000). The group is presently planning to subdivide into baking and pig-rearing groups, and is interested in forming a drama group.
7. A discussion of the processes of assisting the development of these groups is beyond the scope of this paper. Three reflections however, would perhaps be worthy of note:
 - a. A local leader of the Marlie Hill group was chosen as an on-site project "coordinator" by the three community project groups when CANSAVE proposed the post as a six-month experiment. He receives a weekly honorarium for the post. He works to link the efforts of the three communities as well as links the groups to the Kingston-based facilitators, and has thus reduced the need for visits from Kingston.
 - b. Working in three communities simultaneously has had the effect of providing opportunities for the three groups to learn from each other. Each group has had different growing pains, different rates of growth and success. Evidence so far suggests this inter-group learning has strengthened the overall project.
 - c. Two field assistants, trained grass-roots workers "from town", have been used effectively on this project. One woman from the Marlie Hill group is also being sponsored by CANSAVE at UWI's Social Welfare Training Centre course in social work on the understanding that she will bring her training back home. The development of strong local leadership is essential to successful project independence and will be a major aspect of all training workshops. The field assistants have served as models in this regard.

The rural family cooperatives project illustrates that participatory research and action can be effective. It has in the communities under study led to small scale economic projects, the establishment of a basic school and to the research training of some community members. These gains derived from communal problem-posing and problem-solving activity.

Appendix I

Summary of Group One discussion on: "How do hard times affect young children in this community?"

NOTE: Participation was initially slow - only one or two "leaders" offering ideas, but participation gradually widened until most in the group were talking. Almost all of the items below were offered spontaneously by participants, sparked by questions from the facilitator.

Above question was posted. Discussion was then drawn on the three (3) following questions:

QUESTION 1

What information would you need to answer this question (e.g. "if you were a Star reporter and came into your community knowing nothing")

ANSWER

WORK & INCOME

Whether people are working class
Do they have jobs? Who has jobs (age, men, women etc.)
Do people help each other out when there is no work?
How much they earn (you can usually ask this if they know why)

HEALTH

Is there a clinic? A doctor?
How staffed? (B.H. has one nurse, two health aides, no doctor. Closest doctor is in Old Harbour)
How equipped? condition of equipment
Medicine supply, given free? (Claim sometimes not enough staff for immunization, etc. and too costly)
Dentist? Clinic?
How far to go to doctor? Specialist?

SCHOOLING

Is there a basic school? How many primaries?
How far do children have to walk?
How many teachers? Aides? What is their training?
Do they serve food? (B.H. - "very little", 30¢ per day)
What is served?
How many children per teacher?
Any books (B.H. "No, have to buy everything.")
What is school's equipment? State of it?
Cleanliness of classrooms, grounds.

NUTRITION

What kinds of food do children get? ("porridge and soup")
What is grown? What is bought?
What shortages are there?
Are goods overpriced?

CHILD IN THE FAMILY

How much family breakdown? (Hard times bring stress..)
(Single parents; fathers not pulling weight)
Degree of parents caring for children ("some don't
care even with money")
Parental examples ("indecent language, etc.)
Type of home training, discipline
Think there is little physical or sexual abuse of
children, but would be best to know for sure
Number of children in the family

QUESTION 2

What are ways you could get this information?

ANSWER

Go to the school, interview teachers, headmistress, children.
Go to clinic, interview staff and people who use clinic.
Go house to house (questionnaire) - need to explain why.
Church meetings.

(Few other groups: farmers group not very active; "meets now and
again"; Youth Club functioning but not too strongly in Brown's
Hall)

Police: "they don't know anything!!" "Start out okay, then spend rest
of time in rum bar.."

QUESTION 3

What problems you might face in getting this information?

ANSWER

Some ("the illiterate", "the ignorant") would say "mind your own
business"

"Some poor people are too proud", (don't want help)
Personal feelings between people could get in the way.
("I could talk to this one but not that one")

NOTE

1. Generally there was agreement that most people would cooperate with the info-gathering especially if politics is not involved and the purpose fully explained. By mid-way in the discussion, there was general agreement that they themselves could find out this information and could get it more easily than could outsiders.
2. There was some debate as to whether interviewers from one community should interview in their own or another community. Most agreed that they should work in own community with some individual assignments from outside if for personal reasons this was seen as necessary.

Appendix II

SUMMARY OF CODED RESPONSES

NAME OF COMMUNITY:	<u>No. of interviews*</u>	<u>%</u>	*19 B.H. & 21 M.H. were overlooked by keypuncher. Percentages would not be changed significantly if included.	
	Brown's Hall	206		48
	St Faith's	120		28
	Marlie Hill	103		24
		<u>429</u>		

1. How many children do you have to care for?

2. What are their ages and sex? (How many boys and girls)?

	<u>PRESCHOOL (0-5)</u>	<u>SCHOOLAGE (6-11)</u>
Brown's Hall	144	141
St Faith's	89	76
Marlie Hill	67	81
	<u>300</u>	<u>298</u>

3. How many are attending school?

4. Do your children usually attend school every day, Monday to Friday?

(Yes) B.H. 61%	(No) B.H. 6%	(Sometimes) B.H. 33%
S.F. 60%	S.F. 9%	S.F. 31%
M.H. 51%	M.H. 17%	M.H. 32%

5. If no or sometimes. How often do they usually attend?

	<u>3 Days</u>	<u>4 Days</u>
B.H.	53%	41%
S.F.	34%	53%
M.H.	42%	34%

Why?

	<u>Financial Reasons</u>	<u>Other (Sickness, help w/work)</u>
B.H.	82%	18%
S.F.	83%	17%
M.H.	77%	23%

6. Do your children have uniforms?

(Yes) B.H.	76%
S.F.	70%
M.H.	82%

7. Do they have school books?
(Yes) B.H. 43%
S.F. 61%
M.H. 45%
8. What about their health, are your children in good health?
(Yes) B.H. 67%
S.F. 74%
M.H. 66%
9. Have any of them been sick in the past month?
(Yes) B.H. 64%
S.F. 68%
M.H. 61%
10. Colds?
(Yes) B.H. 59%
S.F. 73%
M.H. 66%
11. Running Belly?
(Yes) B.H. 18%
S.F. 31%
M.H. 13%
12. Fever?
(Yes) B.H. 39%
S.F. 59%
M.H. 40%
13. Do you usually have money to pay for the drugs prescribed?
(if not free?)
(Yes) B.H. 40%
S.F. 43%
M.H. 49%
14. Do you use only home remedies?
(Yes) B.H. 56%
S.F. 38%
M.H. 60%
15. What did your children eat yesterday?

Breakfast	Balanced	Low Protein	Low Min. & Vitamins	Starch only
B.H.	24%	18%	23%	35%
S.F.	27%	30%	30%	13%
M.H.	10%	22%	18%	50%

16. Is this what they usually eat?

(Yes) B.H. 14%
S.F. 31%
M.H. 16%

17. How long have they lived in this community?

Most: all their lives.

18. Are you employed?

(Yes) B.H. 4%
S.F. 9%
M.H. 4%

19. If no- How long since you have not been employed?

Most: never worked.

20. What is your source of financial assistance?

	<u>PARENT</u>	<u>SPOUSE</u>	<u>RELATIVES</u>	<u>CHILD</u>	<u>OTHER</u>	<u>COMBINATION</u>
B.H.	10%	42%	11%	7%	17%	12%
S.F.	3	26	11	3	36	22
M.H.	9	29	3	9	36	14
Average	7%	34%	10%	6%	27%	16%

(includes self-help responses)

21. Do you pay?

(Yes) B.H. 16%
S.F. 10%
M.H. 16%

22. Does your family grow enough food for the house?

(Yes) B.H. 53%
S.F. 71%
M.H. 58%

23. Does your family grow food for the market?

(Yes) B.H. 23%
S.F. 40%
M.H. 26%

24. If no - why not?

	<u>Not enough Money</u>	<u>Not enough Land</u>	<u>Not enough Help</u>
B.H.	7%	42%	30%
S.F.	26%	31%	9%
M.H.	7%	27%	21%

25. Who cares for your children when you are not at home?

	<u>Grandparents</u>	<u>Brother/Sister</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Friends</u>	<u>Father</u>
B.H.	34%	19%	23%	14%	8%
S.F.	40%	22%	15%	6%	14%
M.H.	31%	22%	12%	18%	13%

26. What skills or trade do you have?

	<u>Farming</u>	<u>Sewing</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Cooking</u>	<u>Combination</u>
B.H.	2%	29%	42%	12%	11%
S.F.	13%	24%	23%	21%	18%
M.H.	6%	14%	20%	2%	55%

27. What kind of things are you interested in doing?

	<u>Farming</u>	<u>Nothing</u>	<u>Sewing</u>	<u>Buy/Sell</u>	<u>Raise Animals</u>	<u>Cook Bake</u>	<u>Comb/Other</u>
B.H.	4%	11%	23%	15%	7%	10%	31%
S.F.	18%	3%	15%	20%	7%	17%	20%
M.H.	16%	7%	16%	12%	19%	3%	28%

28. Do you think you could get your family to pool together to earn more?

(Yes) B.H. 43%
S.F. 50%
M.H. 61%

29. What would you want to do?

	<u>Chicken</u>	<u>Hgl/Business</u>	<u>No Idea</u>	<u>Livestock</u>	<u>Bake</u>	<u>Farm</u>
B.H.	42%	22%	18%	11%	1%	5%
S.F.	35%	14%	4%	10%	4%	23%
M.H.	39%	13%	0%	27%	7%	13%

30. Could you get your neighbours to join together to get a job done or to earn some money?

(Yes) B.H. 17%
S.F. 24%
M.H. 27%

31. If yes - what would you do?

	<u>Chicken</u>	<u>Farming</u>	<u>No Resp</u>
B.H.	43%	27%	30
S.F.	33%	33%	10
M.H.	39%	23%	13
Others			<u>8</u>
			61

Appendix III

COMMUNITY INTERVIEWERS

BROWN'S HALL

Joyce Bryan
Maxine Campbell
Jacqueline Douglas
Veron Douglas
Louise Downie
Marva Downie
Rudyard Harris
Janette Harris
Angella Hayles
Claudette Hulcome
Albert Knight
Junior Knight
Mavis Knight
Claris McDonald
Ivylena McDonald
Iona Morgan
Jean Roofe
Esmie Smith
Louise Smith
Olive Weir
Sylvia Weir

ST. FAITH'S

Lillian Christian
Euphemia Dawkins
Winfield Ewers
Sharon Fuller
Delroy Henry
Annette McDonald
Joan Scott
Gwendolyn Skinner
Valerie Thompson
Merlyn Wright

MARLIE HILL

Nellie Francis
Olga Francis
Phyllis Hayles
Violet Johnson
Angella Laing
Cleveland McCalla
Yvonne Thomas
Stanley Thomas
Lydia Walker
Howard Wright

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
IN ROSE HALL, ST VINCENT, WEST INDIES.

By: Patricia Ellis
formerly of the Women and Development Unit, UWI, Cave Hill, Barbados.

INTRODUCTION

In the Caribbean as elsewhere in developing countries, rural development plans and policies have often been informed by perspectives and based on decisions of persons who lack the knowledge, perceptions and insights of people who live in and experience the realities of small rural communities. Consequently, many of the rural development plans, projects and programmes have been unsuccessful. They have not brought about the desired changes nor resulted in the hoped for benefits, largely because they have not addressed the needs and interests of the rural population nor sought to involve them in every phase of the development process.

There is now a growing awareness and recognition that rural people must be involved in determining their own future, in identifying and articulating their needs and problems, and in exploring possible solutions and various courses of action to bring about change in their situation. More attention is therefore being paid to promoting their participation in the development process. However the effective use of strategies and methods to facilitate this have been relatively few and generally isolated. In most cases too, successful attempts have resulted from local initiatives in (micro) community projects rather than from national (macro) programmes.

A METHODOLOGY FOR PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

In 1980 The Women and Development Unit (WAND) of the Extra-Mural Department UWI, Cave Hill, Barbados, implemented a Pilot Project for the Integration of Women in Rural Development in Rose Hall. The Project funded for two and a half years was coordinated by WAND¹, but it was administered by a Community Working Group. This Group made up of representatives of various community groups chose one of its members, a female farmer, to be the Community Facilitator and to be responsible for the overall coordination of project activities as they develop. As each new project activity is agreed upon, The Working Group selects a subcommittee to be responsible for its planning and implementation.

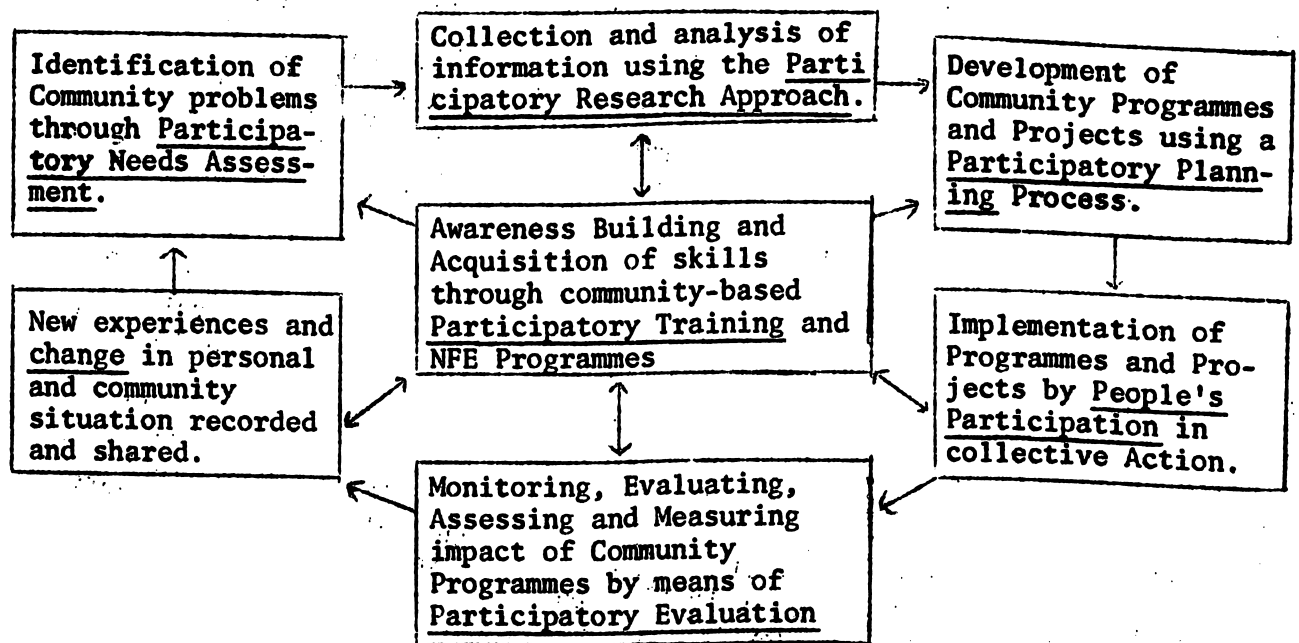
Within the Pilot Project WAND used a participatory methodology to focus on the concerns of rural women and to facilitate and ensure their full participation in every phase of a process of integrated rural development.

¹The author was Programme Coordinator of WAND and coordinated the project from September 1980 - August 1983.

The use of this methodology was based on a belief that women/people can and should decide on and direct the course of their own development. Its underlying philosophy of self-definition and critical analysis of self and situation, (can) lead to a heightened awareness, a new sense of self and community, and a willingness to confront reality and act to bring about desired personal and social change.

Through the application of this methodology, the people of Rose Hall had been enabled to participate fully in every and all aspects of planning, implementation and evaluation of project activities. It has unleashed their skills and empowered them to take control of and direct the development of their community. Within this process research has played a significant role in providing them with the necessary relevant information on which to build successful community based programmes and projects.

The Participatory Methodology:
A Strategy For Increasing People's Participation
in The Development Process



LOCATION

Rose Hall is a small rural village on the Leeward side of St Vincent. Situated 1,232 ft above sea level at the foot of the volcano La Soufriere, it is approximately 23 miles from Kingstown the capital. The majority of its population (1,500) is engaged in agriculture and related activities. The farmers of Rose Hall produce the bulk of carrots for domestic use and export, as well as yams, eddoes and ginger. Like other small farmers in the region they experience problems with marketing their produce and suffer loss of income because of overproduction, surplus, spoilage and wastage.

Opportunities for non-agricultural employment are virtually non-existent and unemployment is very high specially among the youth. The majority of the people in Rose Hall has had some type of formal education at primary level and community members are actively involved in organised community groups. The women of Rose Hall are very active in agriculture and other income earning activities as well as in social activities in church and community groups. They have a history of strong and dynamic leadership and have been at the forefront of initiatives and have spearheaded the recent thrust for the development of their community and the improvement of the quality of life for all its members.

RESEARCH AND PEOPLE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Prior to the Pilot Project; like many others in rural communities in the region, the people of Rose Hall had little knowledge or understanding of research except as "objects of research." In this role they had responded to the numerous questions of "outside" researchers and had given information on practically every aspect of their lives without knowing how the information would be used and without hearing anything about it or having access to it after having given it.

However from the early stages of the Project, they began to realize how important it was for them to have a certain amount of relevant and accurate information if they wanted to identify community problems and understand the causes, and if they wanted to plan and implement successful activities and to attempt to arrive at solutions.

Just as professional researchers have been trained in the development and use of research techniques for academic purposes, so too can/must community people be trained to develop and use research techniques for practical purposes to bring about change in their social situation.

TRAINING RURAL PEOPLE TO DO RESEARCH

The Pilot Project began with a three week Training Workshop on Participatory Approaches to Community Needs Assessment, Programme Planning and Evaluation. The workshop took place in Rose Hall and although only six (6) members of the working group were chosen to attend full time, the entire community was involved in various ways in the exercise. Within the workshop, participants were exposed to a number of concepts, techniques and skills that could be used to collect, analyse and use data about themselves and their community. These included interviewing, types of questions and questioning strategies, group discussion, problem identification and problem-solving techniques, role play, story telling etc. They were able to practice these, acquire some skill in their use through planned field activities in the community. They first decided on what information they wanted, how they would get it and then on how and when they would use it. They also experimented with various ways and methods of analysing, interpreting and presenting the information to the wider community. Throughout they were exposed to and involved in a process of on-going participatory planning and evaluation.

Since emphasis was not only placed on the importance of involving community members in these processes, but on how to facilitate their participation; the six (6) participants continued to use the method and skills learnt in the weekly meetings of the working group. As the group discussed and identified community problems, the skills were transferred to other members, and as the size of this group increased (originally 16 now approx. 36) more people have been exposed to the concepts and techniques of research. Consequently a large number of community members now understand and accept that research is an important activity, and a useful tool which they can use to achieve their goals.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS IN ROSE HALL

Research informs every community activity-project/programme. Since the initial workshop has been initiated by community members themselves, they have continued to use the techniques learnt to conduct research activities that have provided information on which to build successful programmes. They have adopted a systematic approach to research which is consistently followed before any project/programme is implemented.

The Participatory Research Process: Used by the People of Rose Hall, St Vincent

- P
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1
- .Identification and discussion of problem by community/group members.
 - .Agreement on information needed by small/working group.
 - .Agreement on design and development of research instruments.
 - .Collection of data by selected community/group members/researchers.

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2
- .Preliminary data analysis by small group/researchers.
 - .Interpretation of data by larger group/working group.
 - .Sharing results of research with community in mass meeting.
 - .Community consensus on action to be taken.

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3
- .Development of action plans/programme planning by small group.
 - .Implementation of programmes and projects.

- P
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E
4
- .Evaluation of programmes and projects by small (interested groups) and by entire community.

In this process certain features stood out:

1. The problem to be researched is identified by community members themselves.
2. The information needed to work on solutions is discussed and agreed upon by the Working Group.
3. The most appropriate and effective ways of getting information from each source is agreed upon.
4. Research instruments are designed by community members themselves. (The working group or small group appointed by it) These are simple direct, uncomplicated, specific and short; so that they don't take a lot of time to be administered.
5. The research is usually carried out by a team rather than one person and the entire community can be covered within a week or two.
6. Information is generated first from within the community itself.
7. Where necessary sources outside of the community are tapped for additional relevant information.
8. Analysis and interpretation is carried out collectively and quickly leads to consensus.
9. Results are presented to the entire country in large (mass) community meetings where they are discussed. Decisions on relevant action are taken and a mandate given to the working group to implement the decision.
10. The entire research process is controlled by community members.

SOME EXAMPLES OF PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The Oral History Project

During the initial workshop, participants went out into the community to collect information which they could use to develop a community profile and to give "A look at life in Rose Hall". This along with role play, poetry and drawings provided not only a picture of the past but the present and gave insights into the lives of residents which located present situations within a historical perspective and provided valuable clues for formulating plans for the future.

Rooted in the knowledge and experience of community members this small but significant beginning of recreation of the history of Rose Hall has formed the basis of a much larger and more complex research project on "The History of Women's Organisations and Strategies in a Historical Perspective." This international project coordinated by the Institute of Social Hague is being conducted in various regions in the world. The History of Rose Hall is one of the three projects in the Caribbean. Like the others it focuses on the part played by women in the organisation and development of the community.

The draft proposal for this project was first presented to the community in a large community meeting by a "professional researcher" from WAND. It was discussed by members and they agreed on what aspects of life should be emphasized and examined, and on what research methods should be used for collecting and disseminating the findings. They also explored possibilities for using the information generated in the country adult education programme.

The working group selected a young woman to conduct the research. With the support of the professional researcher she has gained additional skills in the use and application of more sophisticated research methods like histories and group interviewing. Throughout there has been continuous interaction, joint enquiry and dialogue between them and community members.

This project is nearing its completion and plans are in progress for producing a variety of material to present the findings.

THE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Early in the life of the project, the working group identified the need for an adult education programme to increase the level of literacy of community members as one way to begin to tackle some of the personal and community problems. To find out the view of the rest of the community on this idea the group on its own initiative planned and carried out a community survey. They decided that three questions would provide them with the information they needed.

1. Did community members see the need for such a programme?
2. Would they be willing to participate in such a programme if one were organised?
3. What should be taught in such a programme?

Between them in one week they had put these three questions to over sixty percent (60%) of the population i.e. virtually every adult. They then discussed the answers at their next weekly meeting and decided that the country should be told the results of the survey. Using the information from the survey, they developed two role plays and presented these at a community meeting the following week. The issues raised were discussed by those present at the meeting and it was agreed that the working group should go ahead and plan an adult education programme.

A sub-committee - The Adult Education Committee was formed and given responsibility for implementing the programme. With the assistance of the Project Coordinator this committee organised a one day seminar on "The Meaning of Adult Education." In spite of the fact that this seminar took place on a Tuesday, it was attended by approximately sixty (60) persons all of whom said that it was important enough for them to leave their domestic and agricultural duties to participate. By the end of the day the participants had developed the objectives of their adult education programme and agreed on the content areas of agricultural information and have management as vehicles for improving the level of literacy among community members. The programme implemented in October 1981 has continued up to the present time with classes being held thrice weekly.

THE PRE-SCHOOL PROJECT

As the problems of adequate nutrition and desirable child care practices were discussed in the home management classes in the adult education programme, the need for a preschool was identified. The working group appointed a preschool committee to look into this area.

The committee conducted a number of research activities before planning the project. These included:

1. A survey to determine the number of children under five (5) in the country.
2. Interviews with parents to collect baseline data on these children, and to get their view on the idea of setting up a preschool.
3. Interviews and meetings with relevant persons to identify available resources.
4. Letters and meetings with government and non-government agencies and personnel to request advice and technical assistance in planning for and setting up the preschool.

Information collected was reported regularly to the working group and discussed in community meetings called for the purpose. It was also used to develop short and long term plans for the establishment of a permanent preschool in the country.

As a result two young women received training (six months) scholarships in preschool education from CANSAVE in St Vincent. A proposal for equipment was submitted to an international funding agency and the group received money to equip the school. The long term plan to build a community centre to house the preschool and other community activities was submitted to the government. The latter has provided material and with the free labour of community members the centre is well on its way to completion.

In the meantime, the committee had approached the Headmaster of the primary school - the only one in the community - for permission to start the nursery class in one of the empty classrooms. At first he refused, but after a series of community meetings in which members stressed that the school building should be used to serve the needs of the community, that the head teacher had no right to deny them the use, and that they intended to start the nursery class in the school until the centre was built. Faced with this kind of community pressure the head teacher agreed and the class was started.

PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION

In March 1983 the working group decided that although mechanisms for on-going evaluation had been built into the Pilot Project from the beginning they wanted to conduct a more "structured and formal" evaluation of more project activities. Their objectives were:

1. To assess the impact of project activities on individuals and on the community as a whole.

2. To help participants to develop skill and gain experience in planning and carrying out an evaluation and in interpreting and using evaluation results.

In addition to members of the working group a number of other persons - some who had answered questionnaires and some who had not - participated in the workshops. All participants were involved in the working activities, as they:

1. reviewed the questions that had been asked. Vis-avis the information that was wanted. Ambiguities, misunderstanding of certain words and phrases, misinterpretations and gaps were all identified and discussed in relation to the information given in some of the answers.
2. identified and examined the variety of methods that had been used to evaluate project activity on an ongoing basis during the first two years.
3. identified and agreed upon indications of success and impact, and distinguished:
 - a. those related to tangible outputs e.g. no. of specific activities and no. of persons participating
 - b. those related to intangible outcomes e.g. attitudinal and behavioural change over time as evidenced by - quality as against quantity of participation, increase confidence levels etc.
4. Analysed, interpreted and presented other data from the completed questionnaires. In three groups various tools of analysis were identified and discussed, e.g. the use of simple statistics for presentation of quantitative data, the use of opinion statements for qualitative data and to provide deeper perception/ insights into social benefits derived from participation in project activities.
5. Drew conclusions and agreed on tentative areas of action and future planning. The results of this evaluation exercise as those of all other research activities were subsequently presented to the wider community at a community meeting and 'new' project activities decided upon.

CONCLUSION

The above examples of research activity early in the life of the Pilot Project showed the extent to which the people of Rose Hall have accepted research as a necessary and critical part of their efforts to come to terms with their problems and to take action to find effective solutions. In all of their research activity they have systematically applied a participatory methodology which ensures that large numbers of people are involved and that the community members are in control of the research process from problem identification to the use of research data for collective action and social change.

The research process has had a catalytic effect in Rose Hall. It has engendered in community members a more critical awareness and a better understanding of their social reality and of the causes of the problems that

they face. It has led them to constantly question their situation in relation to the wider social reality and natural social problems. More than this, the participatory methodology that they have used in carrying out the research has unlocked the latent potential in each individual, and has provided them with information, skills and confidence to challenge and change rather than to blindly accept initiatives which prevent rather than facilitate their own development and that of their community.

RESEARCH IN THE FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM: A PARTICIPATORY
PROPOSAL FOR THE STUDY OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY IN VIEUX
FORT, ST. LUCIA.

By: Rosamunde Renard
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ST LUCIA

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The Caribbean Examinations Council has incorporated in its approach to the history syllabus, a distinctive "Caribbean focus" - encouraging students not only to study from texts but to uncover for themselves historical information about their local environment.

This paper outlines the participatory approach that two teachers proposed to use to help secondary school students research their own history. A report on the actual process of the project is not yet available but will be reported in a forthcoming report on Participatory Research in the Caribbean. The proposal does indicate, however, that Participatory Research can be effectively used in the Teaching/Learning process in the formal system - as students learn while they actually engage in the process of researching and writing their own history. Additionally, as intended by this proposal, the activity can give students an important perspective revealed from lived experience on the issue of structural and cultural "development"

INTRODUCTION

It was not until the 1760's that the sugar revolution began in St Lucia. Yet, this country never became a large sugar producer. By 1849 only six of the eighty-one sugar plantations had between 100 and 150 acres cultivated in cane while thirty-six had under 50 acres in cane cultivated¹. The number of small proprietors remained, thus, considerable. The free coloureds formed an important part of this socio-economic group. As early as 1787, 1,500 coloureds had 170 of the total 881 holdings or approximately one-seventh of the arable land.²

From its inception, the sugar plantocracy in St Lucia was predominantly French. However, these planters, who had witnessed the social, political and economic upheavals of the French revolution, confronted by growing financial difficulties and a hostile British administration, capitulated around 1830 and their lands were bought over by British born planters.

However, it was not the changeover from a French to a British plantocracy which introduced far-reaching changes into the social and economic structures of St Lucia, but the establishment of the first sugar centrals³. The first central factory was established in Cul de Sac in 1874 and the factory in Vieux Fort was established in the 1880's⁴, in order to increase production efficiency and, thus, arrest the already declining sugar industry.

It is an interesting fact that the small and not so vibrant sugar economy in St Lucia was able to survive the economic disasters of the late nineteenth century while those of neighbouring Dominica and Grenada failed. The centralization and modernisation, to some extent, of St Lucia's sugar industry before the 1884 economic crash was a key factor in its survival. While the favourable topography in the four plains was undeniably responsible in part for the industry's ability to centralize and industrialize, equally so was these planters' close association with their Martiniquan and Guadeloupean counterparts who had established centrals as early as the 1830's. As a result of the factories' establishment, blacks left the isolated plantation communities for the areas surrounding the factories in search of wage labour.

The Vieux-Fort central factory, like the central factories in Dennery and Roseau, was initially owned by the 'St Lucia Usines and Estates Company, an English based company. It was later sold (the exact date is still unknown) to local proprietors including Joseph Duboulay, Henry Belmar and George Barnard. This factory possessed the majority of the land in that area and was the central point of the area's social and economic life. The labourers living in Vieux-Fort proper were much more heavily dependent on the sugar industry than those in the outlying districts as there was little available land in the area itself for peasant or small farming. Moreover, they competed with the Indian immigrants for estate work. Except for fishing, there were few other agricultural or industrial alternatives for this populace. These labourers were, thus, very hard hit by the 1884 economic crash. The tendency of the British Government to discriminate against native creole speaking St Lucians and in favour of English speaking West Indians for jobs in the public service and works had a limiting effect on population movement

to Castries and increased the flow of immigrants who joined the exodus of labourers emigrating in search of employment.

By the end of the 19th century, the factory was already undergoing serious economic difficulties. However, sugar prices soared during the first World War from the pre-war average of approximately 10 pounds per ton to as much as 37 pounds per ton in 1920⁵. By 1921 the price had dropped again and the production of vacuum pan sugar, for instance, decreased from 141, 125 tons in 1920 to 75,304 tons in 1923⁶. In 1939, a Barbadian organisation, the Barbados Settlement Company, bought over the lands and factory of the Vieux-Fort Central Factory, introducing Barbadian immigrant sugar workers into the society and implementing a policy of re-organization and modernisation of the industry. The introduction of these immigrants meant increased job competition for the already distressed Vieux-Fort labourers. The B.S.C. did not, however, seriously disrupt the social, economic and cultural life which the establishment of the central had generated.

But the sugar industry in Vieux-Fort was soon to be totally dismantled with the installation in 1941 of a U.S. Air Base on an area of approximately 1,200 acres, most of which was at that time under sugarcane cultivation. The 'Beanfield' Base remained in full activity until 1949, when an area of approximately 700 acres was released. A part of the Base was reactivated in 1955 but, by 1960, most of the area was returned to the administration of St Lucia.

The installation of this Base introduced rapid changes in the Vieux-Fort area. While it was true, as Father Jesse pointed out,⁷ that Vieux-Fort owes most of its infrastructural equipment to this base, (roads, airport, water supply, harbour, etc.); one should not underestimate its negative impacts. As a result of the Base's installation, the agricultural economy, the ecological balance and the social organisation of the Vieux-Fort area were severely disrupted. In less than two centuries another major "revolution" had occurred.

The impact of these major changes suggest the need for a study of the Sugar Industry in Vieux-Fort. The current study initiated in October 1981, is being carried out under the direction of Rosamunde Renard, working in close co-ordination with Victoria Charles, both History teachers of the Vieux-Fort Senior Secondary School.

It is part of the CXC History Syllabus which states that schools have the option of submitting candidates to a substitute theme. This theme will be presented for examinations in June 1985 and is related to Section A, theme three (3) in the CXC History Syllabus, Sugar and Slavery. However this proposal is by no means confined to the limits of preparation for examinations.

The Project is done in conjunction with an on-going Study of the Conservation and Development Requirements for the South-East Coast of Saint-Lucia,⁸

which is an attempt to integrate research, planning, education and action in the field of resource management. An understanding of the way the resources were historically used will indeed be valuable, since it will provide insight to such interaction in the future.

The project will be influenced by two relatively new concepts, which appear particularly useful in this instance, in order to ensure that the objectives are met.

The project will be guided by concepts and principles of Participatory Research such as:

- the need to base educational and cultural action on issues that are relevant and significant to the community involved;
- the perception of education as a dialogue where all actors are learners and teachers at the same time;
- the understanding that research should be directly useful to the community, especially in providing it with a way to have a critical look at itself, its past, its present and its future;
- the fact that social, economic or technological innovation cannot take place in a meaningful way without the involvement of the community in a process of research and analysis of the factors responsible for the present situation, as well as in the identification of the new needs and directions;
- the recognition of the fact that research, training, education, and action are all parts of the same process, and should therefore be directly related;
- the fact that a broad redistribution of information and perspectives can help to generate initiatives at the local level, without the necessary involvement of administrative or technical machineries.

As far as the identification of the major themes of the project is concerned it appears that the concept of Industrial Heritage could be very helpful: conceived not as a new discipline, but rather as a new approach to the historical development of a people. Centered around the area's most significant human activity, the concept of Industrial Heritage provides an excellent insight into such aspects as:

- formation and justification of the social structure;
- energy and resources;
- technology transfers, local savoir-faire and technical innovation;
- monoculture and dependency;
- local land-use and land ownership patterns;
- the role and nature of the 'peripheric systems.'

However, other areas not directly related to industrial heritage such as labour relations and peripheric economies will also form integral parts of this study.

ORGANISATION OF THEME FOR EXAMINATION PURPOSES

- (i) The theme is divided into six subject areas:
- Location and Layout
 - Sugar-cane cultivation
 - Sugar manufacture
 - Economy
 - Labour relations
 - The Social Groupings
- (ii) Each subject area falls under two chronological periods:
- The sugar plantation (1763 - 1870)
 - The central factory (1870 - 1942)

	Sub. 1	Sub. 2	Sub. 3	Sub. 4	Sub. 5	Sub. 6
1763						
-						
1870						
1870						
-						
1942						

OBJECTIVES

1. The students will be able to recall the information related to the theme "Sugar Industry in Vieux-Fort, St. Lucia" as is noted in the accumulated teaching material.
2. The students will be able to use correctly any new historical terminology encountered in the unit of work.
3. To introduce the themes:
 - Trade Unions in the British Caribbean.
 - Economic Diversification.
4. To assist in the study of certain overview subjects, in particular:
 - The 'Sugar Revolution' and the coming of the Africans.
 - Emancipation and apprenticeship.
 - The establishment of the peasantry.
 - The United States influence in the Caribbean.
 - Social unrest in the 1930's.

5. The students will be able to translate, classify and organize accurately record and analyse oral and archival historical data.
6. To stress on the inter-disciplinary nature of the study. English, Environmental Studies, Geography, History, Mathematics and Sociology are all essential components of the project.
7. To encourage the development among the students and the community of a historical perception, essential for one's positive relation to one's cultural identity.
8. To encourage the awareness of the importance of favourable environmental conditions in the society's development and growth.
9. Reinforce or create, from the basis of a "common past", communication links and positive interchanges between all sectors and age-classes of the society.
10. Identify, study and revalorize traditional and popular savior-faire, especially in the domain of the sugar technology, where workers were able to develop remarkable skills and techniques.
11. Conserve testimonies of the past through collection of oral traditions, artifacts, etc.
12. Provide the basis for formal and non-formal education activities which are fully integrated into local realities.
13. To involve history, geography and social-studies secondary school teachers in the project.
14. To encourage community participation in the research and in its dissemination.
15. To involve the students' parents in the research and in its dissemination.
16. To encourage among students, parents and the Vieux-Fort community the growth of a positive self-esteem.

ACTIVITIES⁹

- Organize a meeting with history, geography and social-studies secondary school teachers to discuss the project. Follow-up sessions.
- Meeting with parents at Belle-Vue estate to discuss project. Follow-up sessions.

- Presentation of final draft of accumulated teaching material to history secondary school teachers and other interested persons for their evaluation.
- Visits to the 19 estates of the area and outlying districts. See Map page 48.
- Excavation of Belle-Vue estate.
- The Conservation and Interpretation of important or remarkable sites and artefacts.
- Interviews
- Preparation and organization of questionnaires on:
 - a. Particular plantations
 - b. Indian immigrants
 - c. Barbadian immigrants
 - d. Social conditions in the 1930's.
 - e. Cane Cultivation and Sugar Manufacture
 - f. Small cane producers in Banse, Laborie
 - g. St Lucian emigrants to French Guiana, British Guiana, Panama, Cuba and the Dominican Republic
 - h. Important personalities active during the period of the sugar industry
- Discussion on the qualities of a good interviewer.
- Continue archival research in Castries, Barbados and Paris on questions identified in draft.
- Collection of documents, photographs and Bibliography on theme to be deposited at the National Archives and Vieux-Fort Senior Secondary School's library.
- Organization of oral and historical data collected into subjects and periods.
- Detailed sketches, plans (and models?) of all nineteen plantations and of the Vieux-Fort Central Factory.
- Placing of these plans in their environmental context (sea, mountains, Windward, Leeward Coast ...).
- Preparation of land-use maps in Vieux-Fort, 1787, 1848, 1941, 1983. See Map on last page.
- Classes on accumulated teaching material according to subjects and periods.
- Panel discussions accompanied by slide shows:
 - a. Sugar Industry in Vieux-Fort.
 - b. Immigration in Vieux-Fort.
 - c. Impact of the establishment of the American Air Base on Vieux-Fort.
- Exhibitions at Belle-Vue estate.

- Newspaper articles on various aspects of the history of the sugar industry in Vieux-Fort.
- Radio discussions on the same.
- Publication geared
 1. to students
 2. to academics on "The Sugar Industry in Vieux-Fort" and
 3. to the general public
- Video-tape presentations to the Vieux-Fort community on personalities discussing various subjects of the proposed theme.
- Interpretation of photographs and archival documents.
- Training in the use of audio-visual equipment.
- Class discussions with students.

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ Figures taken from Detaille and Jamet, Topographical map of Saint Lucia, (London, John Weale, 1848) See Archives, Castries.
- ² Daniel J. Crowley, Conservatism and change in St Lucia, (XII Congress of Americanists, 1958) p. 707. Copy available at the V.F.S.S.
- ³ This study also includes research on the Peasant Syrup Industry in Vieux-Fort.
- ⁴ The precise date of the Factory's establishment is as yet unknown.
- ⁵ The Sugar Industry of the Caribbean, (Caribbean Commission, Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, Fisheries and Forestry of the Caribbean Research Council. Crop Inquiry series No. 6 Washington DC., 1947) p. 176. Copy obtained from Gregor Williams.
- ⁶ St Lucia Year Book, 1924. Archives, Castries.
- ⁷ Father Charles Jesse and B.H. Easter. A Short History of the Town and District of Vieux-Fort (St Lucia). (Castries, Saint Lucia Archaeological and Historical Society, 1971) p.11.

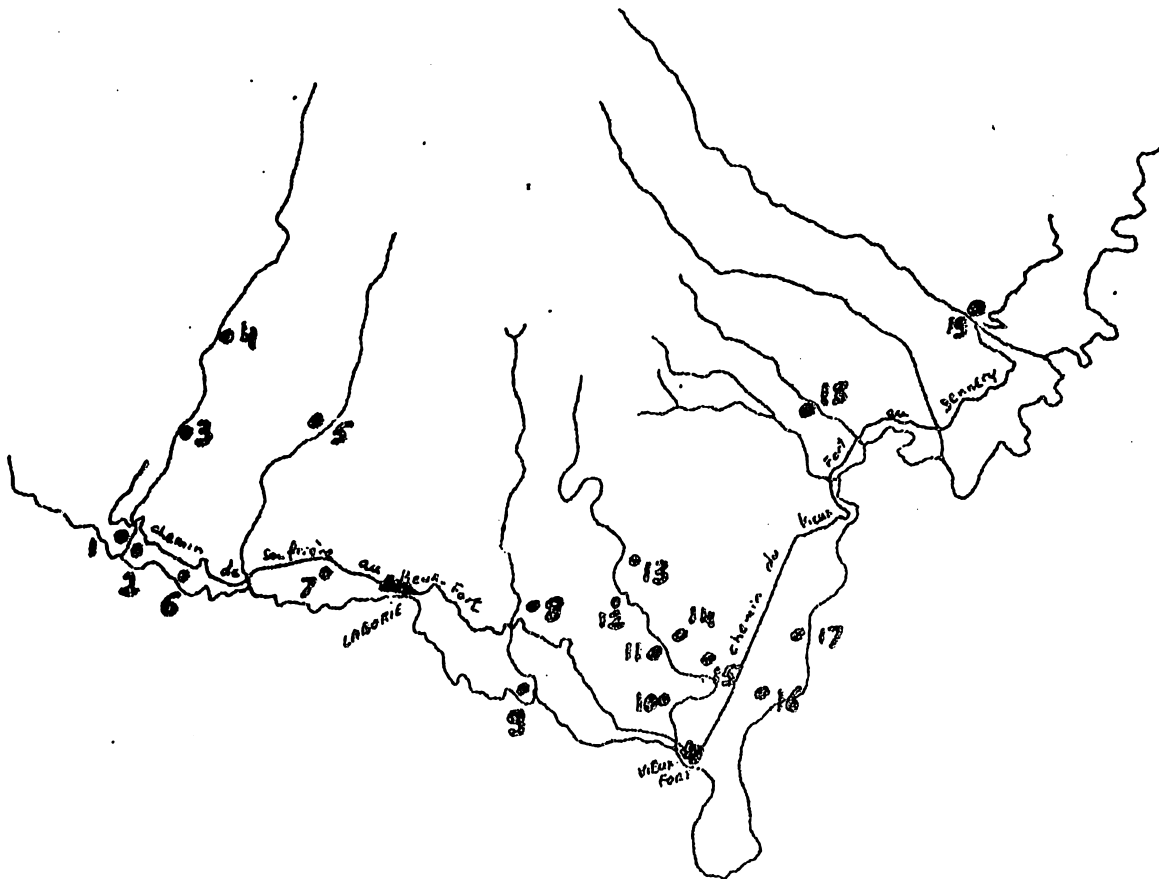
⁸See in particular: *Convergence*, an International Journal of Adult Education. Vol. XIV, No. 3 1981: Participatory Research - Developments and Issues.

⁹The following activities will probably not be completed even over a four to five year period. However, we have tried to reflect upon most of the possible activities which could be done, circumstances permitting.

MAP # 1 :

SUGAR FACTORIES IN THE VIEUX-FORT AREA IN 1847

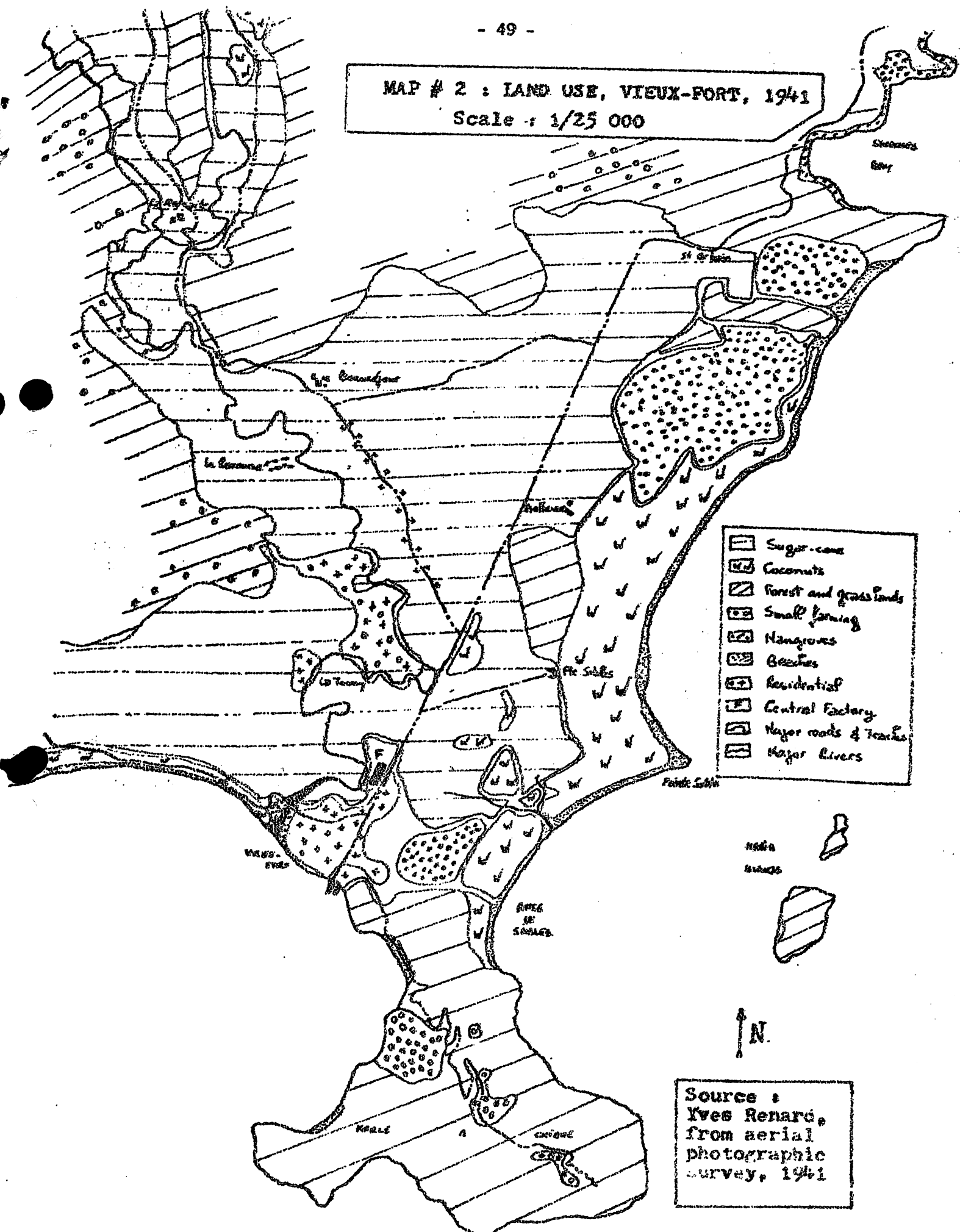
adapted from : Topographical map of Saint-Lucia, by Detaille and Jamet,
London, John Weale Pub., 1848.



- 1 Rivière Dorée
- 2 Desgatières
- 3 Mont Lézard
- 4 Parc
- 5 Beau Séjour
- 6 Balambouche
- 7 Saphir
- 8 Black Bay
- 9 Anse Noir

- 10 Tourny
- 11 Ressource
- 12 Retraite
- 13 Beau Séjour
- 14 Beau Séjour
- 15 Mon Repos
- 16 Pointe Sable
- 17 Belle Vue
- 18 Savanne
- 19 Cannelles

MAP # 2 : LAND USE, VIEUX-FORT, 1941
Scale : 1/25 000



Source :
Yves Renard,
from aerial
photographic
survey, 1941

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