



BUILDING CIVIL SOCIETY CAPACITY FOR CONSERVATION IN THE CARIBBEAN UK OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

REPORT ON SARAH McINTOSH'S VISIT TO ANGUILLA 11 and 12 October, 2009

1. Purpose of the visit

- To launch the regional Darwin initiative project *Building civil society capacity for conservation in the UK Overseas Territories* to a wider range of stakeholders, since only the Anguilla National Trust (ANT) and, to some extent, the Anguilla Renewable Energy Office (AREO), had previously been engaged in direct discussions;
- To identify a potential second Anguillan civil society organisation to partner with ANT in the regional Action Research and Learning Group;
- To identify what are currently the main priorities in terms of biodiversity conservation in Anguilla and who are the key stakeholders, with a particular focus on those from civil society;
- To identify the key capacities that civil society needs to be effective in biodiversity conservation in Anguilla, which capacities it already has and which need enhancing or building;
- To discuss how government agencies can improve the enabling environment and form effective partnerships with civil society organisations;
- To determine how the project can best support civil society capacity building in Anguilla and, in particular, to discuss with ANT and the partner organisation (if identified during the visit) the specific areas of capacity building they would like to see included in the project.
- Where possible, to provide advice on other possible sources of capacity building/funding/peer exchange on areas of capacity building that this project would not address.

2. Methodology

- Feedback from ANT during the project proposal development phase on its key needs and discussions at the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum meeting in Grand Cayman in June 2009;
- Informal discussions prior to the visit with the Director of ANT, Farah Mukhida, and, opportunistically¹, with the Director of the Environment, Karim Hodge, to better understand the context for civil society involvement in biodiversity conservation in Anguilla. This included the provision by the ANT Director of copies of the new Anguilla National Trust Act and the previous (2005-2008) and current (2008-2011) ANT strategic plans, which were reviewed.
- Stakeholder meeting on 11 October (see Agenda at Appendix 1 and Section 3.1 for more details on the approach and outcomes)
- Informal and structured discussions with ANT staff throughout the visit;
- Structured discussion with three members of ANT's Council;

¹ After the OECS Technical Advisory Committee meeting in Dominica 8-9 October 2009.

- Meeting with the Director of Fisheries, James Gumbs.

3. Results

All the identified objectives were fully or partially achieved thanks in large measure to the excellent organisation and participation of the ANT staff, particularly in mobilising participants for the stakeholder workshop. The workshop was proved very productive thanks to the active and informed participation of all those who attended.

3.1. Stakeholder meeting

Participants

Seventeen persons (see participant list at Appendix 2) attended the stakeholder meeting, eight representing civil society organisations (CSOs), one from a private sector association, and eight representing government agencies or departments. However, several of the government employees, including the Director of Environment, have been staff or interns in CSOs and/or now play key roles as advisors to or Board members of CSOs. This ‘cross-fertilisation’ seems to have resulted in (or is perhaps a reflection of) frequent and fairly open and amicable dialogue between the two sectors, including formulation of a new Anguilla National Trust Act 2008 and the suggestion that ANT should at some point in the future play a formal role in (co-) managing national parks. It would be useful to discuss the lessons learned from the Anguilla experience in more depth in an Action Learning Group meeting.

Introductions/statement of organisational needs

Participants were asked to introduce themselves and respond – as specifically as possible - to the question ‘*What is the most important thing my organisation needs in the next 12 months to play an effective role in biodiversity conservation?*’. There was a fair degree of commonality with the following emerging as the major priorities (and needs) for civil society organisations:

- To raise their profiles in order to facilitate more effective fundraising, membership campaigns and advocacy (money, more staff or volunteers, diversified fundraising skills);
- To communicate effectively with and get the support of key policy and decision-makers, including land owners (communication and advocacy skills; case studies of good practice from other parts of the region, e.g. Bermuda conservation easements);
- To break out of the vicious cycle of not having enough staff, which leads to insufficient time for the proposal writing/fundraising that could secure the necessary additional staff/volunteers.

There was more diversity in government perspectives with the following priorities and needs identified:

- “Regional oneness” that would increase political will and, as a result, the resources needed for effective biodiversity conservation [Environment]
- Improved relations with fishers (need for more trained staff) [Fisheries]
- Full complement of staff [Agriculture]
- Partnerships with other agencies [Disaster Management]

Identification of key biodiversity stakeholders and their power in decision-making

After an overview of the project, participants were encouraged to reflect on who are the key stakeholders in biodiversity conservation in Anguilla using a series of pictures depicting different aspects of biodiversity use and conservation. Since it was recognised that in many instances, such as ecosystem services, everyone is a stakeholder, certain criteria were used to determine those who are key – for example, persons or organisations:

- with formal or informal rights or responsibilities;

- whose livelihoods depend significantly on the use of the resource;
- whose activities would be significantly affected by a change in management regime;
- whose activities have a significant positive or negative impact on biodiversity;
- who are currently excluded from decision-making and/or not receiving benefits but would like to.

These key stakeholders were then inserted into a decision-making pyramid (see Figure 1 overleaf) to assess who currently has high, medium and low power and therefore what might be the most critical intervention points in terms of policy influence and capacity building. This exercise highlighted the overall relative weakness of civil society in decision-making and policy influence. However, the groups whose mandate is primarily social development were deemed to have a greater influence than those focusing specifically on environmental issues as a result of the respective importance accorded to these sectors by government and the wider society.

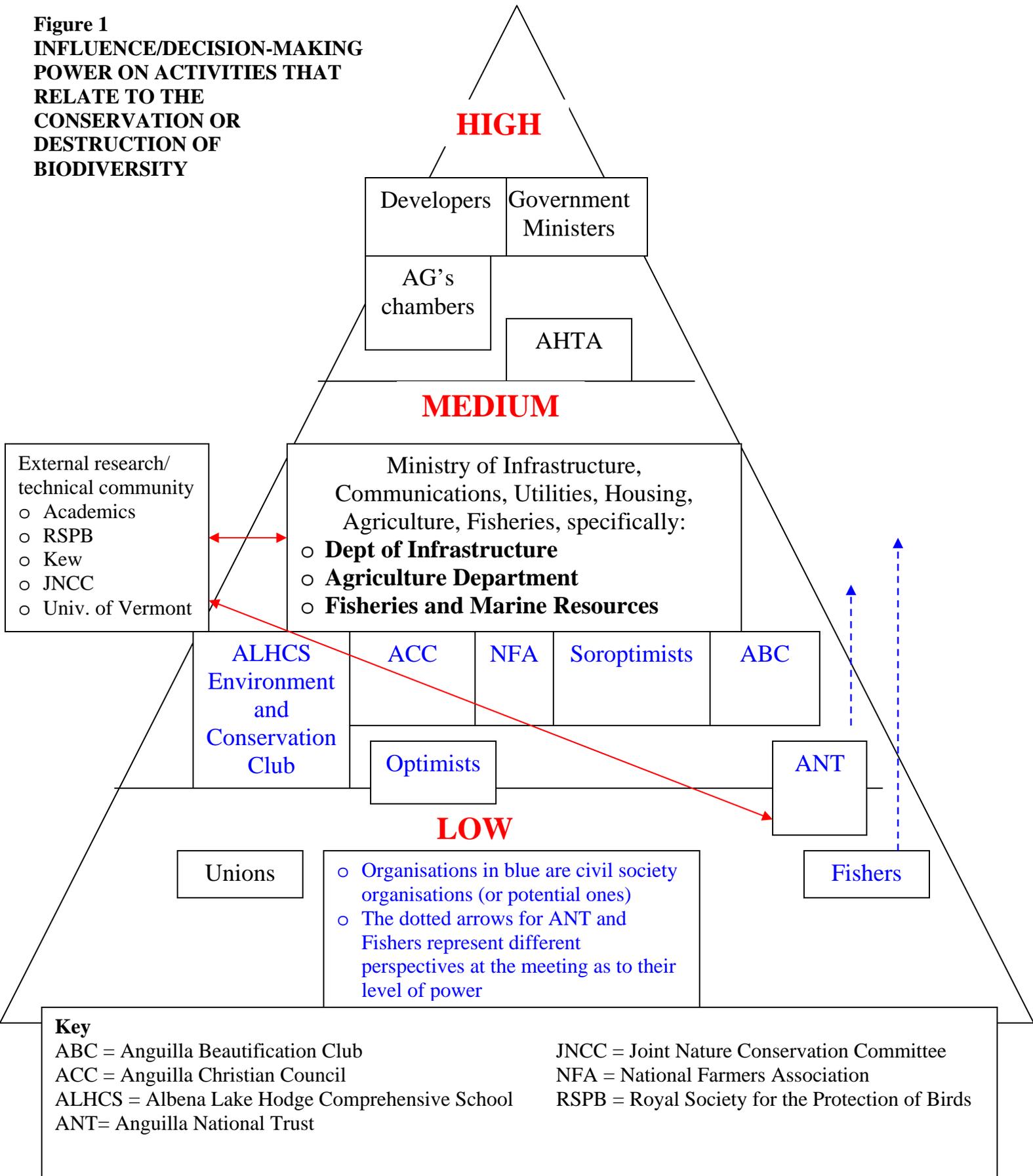
The facilitator suggested that the pyramid seemed to validate the focus on communications and capacity building but that consideration might be given to placing greater emphasis on trying to influence and communicate effectively with the high-power individuals and organisations, rather than focusing primarily on public education and awareness. Similarly, building the capacity of the low and medium CSOs to advocate effectively, as well as capitalising on the high-power individuals associated with some of their Boards (e.g. for fundraising), could start to move them up the power pyramid and increase their effectiveness in biodiversity conservation.

The exercise also stimulated discussion on the limitations that the government subvention places on ANT's ability to engage in outspoken advocacy or lobbying and the value of partnerships with organisations with fewer constraints. For example Environmental Club had led a successful campaign about sand mining. However, it was also noted that attempts to form a civil society environmental network have failed in the past, though it was not entirely clear whether this is because groups see no benefit in networking, see each other as competitors (particularly for funding), or some combination of the two.

There have historically been few multi-stakeholder bodies dealing with environmental issues but there is now the Energy Committee and the newly-formed Environment Committee. The latter comprises mainly government agencies plus ANT; however, other agencies and organisations were encouraged by the Director of Environment to express an interest if they would like to be represented.

This exercise also highlighted the fact that fishers in Anguilla are not currently formally organised at either the local or the national level and have in the past resisted attempts from the Fisheries Department to do so. Although they have proven quite effective lobbyists when an issue directly affects them, participants felt they could be more effective as a proactive rather than a reactive stakeholder group and that they were unlikely to be able to make this shift without some form of organisation or network. The CANARI facilitator suggested that a member of the newly-created Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations might prove to be a useful intermediary. A meeting was subsequently organised with the Director of Fisheries (see Section 3.4).

Figure 1
INFLUENCE/DECISION-MAKING
POWER ON ACTIVITIES THAT
RELATE TO THE
CONSERVATION OR
DESTRUCTION OF
BIODIVERSITY



Civil society capacity needs assessment and discussion of enabling environment

Participants then divided into two groups to discuss the questions outlined in the agenda with regard to capacity needs and the enabling environment. This resulted in the following feedback.

Group A: Civil society participants

1. ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

- Raising awareness/education/outreach
- Representation of public
- Lobbying/advocacy
- Drive/advise on policy
- Project implementation (including M&E)
- Issue/problem identification
- “Watchdog” role
- Leading by example
- Research

2. CAPACITY NEEDED BY CSOs

- CSOs needs to be organised
- Willingness to partner
- Communication
- Accessing and knowing correct information
- Fundraising (financial resources)
- Training
- Increase male participation
- Human resources – paid and volunteer
- Networking
- Methods/means/mechanism to engage policy makers
- Research facilities/research capacity

3. WHICH CAPACITIES DOES CIVIL SOCIETY HAVE?

- Human resources (but maybe not mobilised yet)
- Supportive media and media relations (radio and print)
- Access to information (e.g. for research)
- Willingness to partner (with all stakeholders)

4. WHICH CAPACITIES NEED TO BE BUILT?

- Fundraising
- Mobilising volunteers
- Networking
- Trained human resources
- Research facility
- Media relationships (TV)
- Methods/means/mechanism to engage policy makers
- Organisational development

Group B: Government representatives

1. ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

- Primary role with relation to education/awareness/empowerment and networking
- Should agitate for advocacy
- Speak as unified group/voice
- Assist with/co-manage sites

2. CAPACITY NEEDED

- Management coordination/leadership skills
- Financial and technical resources
- Speak with one voice
- Provide medium to channel information/issues (union/association)

3. HOW CAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IMPROVE THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT?

- Education
- Training and enforcement
- All through a collaborative approach

4. HOW CAN EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY BE BUILT?

- Promotion of stakeholder workshops and facilitation of joint projects/programmes
- By providing financial and technical support to specific programmes
- Encouragement of public participation

5. GOVERNMENT CAPACITY NEEDS

- Adequate staffing
- Adequate funding
- Technical facilitator for public participatory process
- Development of human resources

In the initial presentations no mention was made by either group of the role that civil society could play directly in conservation management, which is surprising since there has for some time been a stated intention to have ANT manage or co-manage some protected areas. Following discussion, this was therefore added (in red) to the role of civil society.

Although each group expressed CSO's needs slightly differently, there is a high degree of commonality:

- organisational development/management/leadership;
- fundraising and financial sustainability;
- communications, with a particular emphasis on policy influence;
- development of effective civil society partnerships;
- ability to mobilise more human resources in support of biodiversity conservation.

Government representatives placed greater emphasis on the need for civil society unity and for collaborative, participatory processes. The facilitator suggested that in the long term it would be better to develop the capacity to lead participatory processes within government departments (and CSOs) rather than rely on external facilitators. She noted that CANARI was intending to re-launch its programme of training in participatory tools and methods and was currently in the process of identifying the priorities and funding to provide civil society scholarships, such as those the Commonwealth Foundation had provided in the past. She would advise participants when the new programme was launched.

Setting the workshop findings in the context of Anguilla's actions under the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD).

The Director of the Environment, who acts as the CBD focal point, explained that in 2005 the Convention was extended to Anguilla, subject to it passing the necessary legislation, which was about to happen. This would stimulate new research in areas such as benefit sharing, species assessment and economic valuation. He did not envisage the reporting requirements to be burdensome since they would be done under the existing National Environmental Management Strategy. It would increase rather than reduce the need for active collaboration with civil society since the Department of Environment alone could not achieve all the desired outcomes.

Next steps

1. CANARI will take the findings of the workshop into account in determining
 - a) the focus of the training at the Action Research and Learning Group (ARLG) meetings. There will be also be a strong focus on designing this training in such a way that it can be applied or replicated by ARLG members at the national level for the benefit of the other civil society stakeholders;
 - b) the priorities for its wider training programme
2. The UWI representative mentioned during the meeting that online courses had been offered in NGO management and community journalism but that there had been no enrolments. She would check whether these were still available and circulate information to other participants.
3. Participants suggested that the ALHCS Environement Club might be the most appropriate second ARLG member organisation. This will be discussed by the ANT Council and staff and then with the potential candidate(s), and a recommendation made to CANARI.

4. Conclusions

The visit achieved its objectives and was also useful in terms of getting a better overview of the context for civil society conservation in biodiversity conservation in Anguilla. Both ANT and the Environment Club clearly have much to contribute to the peer learning and exchange process, particularly in the area of youth mobilisation, effective partnerships, public education and outreach, including the use of radio.

APPENDIX 1: WORKSHOP AGENDA



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NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

9 am – 2 pm 12 October 2009

Library, The Valley

1. **Introduction to the project and the workshop** *CANARI*
2. **Anguilla's biodiversity – visioning a sustainable future** *Whole group discussion*
 - What is biodiversity and why is it important?
 - What are the priorities for action in Anguilla?
 - Who are the key stakeholders?
3. **Making the role of civil society more effective** *Small groups*
 - What role should civil society play?
 - What capacity does civil society need to be effective?
 - What capacities does it have now?
 - What capacities need to be built?
 - How can government agencies improve the enabling environment?
 - How can effective partnerships between government and civil society be built?
4. **Presentations and discussion of small group findings** *Small group presenters*
5. **Setting the workshop findings in the context of Anguilla's actions under the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD)** *Karim Hodge, Director of Environment and CBD focal point*
6. **Next steps** *CANARI/ANT*
 - How can the Darwin project contribute to the capacity building?
 - Who/what else can contribute to the capacity building?

APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPANT LIST

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