Building capacity for participatory forest management for good governance in the Caribbean region

Case study

Building capacity of Organje Hill Development Organization (OHDO)

Yoland London, Patricia Fraser and Anthony Simon

June 27, 20
1. BACKGROUND

The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) has been funded by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization under its Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Support Programme for African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP-FLEGT Programme) to implement a project. The purpose of the project is to strengthen existing strategies to improve forest law compliance and governance by building the capacity of forest managers in at least six small island developing states in the Caribbean region to facilitate effective participatory management of forests through training, mentoring, development of a tool kit, and documenting and communicating illustrative case studies.

The objectives of the project include the provision of an opportunity for forest managers in the region to share experiences and lessons learned on approaches to facilitating participatory forest governance and case studies of the application of participatory forest law compliance and governance and communicate lessons learned to stakeholders in the project countries.

Three persons from St. Vincent and the Grenadines among other islands were selected by CANARI to be part of this project and in April 2011 a workshop was held in Jamaica it was titled “Building capacity for participatory forest management for good governance in the Caribbean region”. In order to meet the objectives of this project, forest managers in the region who attended that workshop have been asked to facilitate a workshop in participatory forests management and document the process and outcome.

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines team initially choose the Georgetown Craft makers Association to work with as the group was currently involved in craft making and was about to receive some FAO Project funds to further advance the association’s work. Our plans for working with this group had to be changed due to the April 2011 floods which affected the Georgetown community very badly. Additionally the transferred of the FAO funds from the group to another also contributed to the decision of working with another group. The new group identified was the Orange Hill Development Organisation (OHDO)

2. WHAT WERE YOU TRYING TO ACHIEVE

OBJECTIVES:
1. To pass on knowledge to the members of the Orange Hill Development Organisation using tools from the tool kit that was developed that deals with participatory Community Forestry;

2. To encourage the application of tools in facilitating participatory management.
GROUP BACKGROUND

Orange Hill Development Organization is located on the North Easterly side of the Island St. Vincent and the Grenadines in a Village called new Orange Hill. Orange Hill is approximately twenty five (25) miles outside the Capital Kingstown and about two (2) miles from the second town Georgetown in the parish of Charlotte. New orange Hill emerged from Old Orange Hill when residents felt that the old location was unsuitable for residential development and land became available at the new Orange Hill location.

This group has been around for the past nine years and operated with a Management Committee to implement work on behalf of the wider community. Although they have been involved in some small projects the capacity of the group is limited and recently they have moved to another step in reorganizing themselves, which also led to the group being registered.

The group has access to a building which is state owned. It is being used by the group as their regular meeting place, and also the base for two of the groups small projects; plantain chip production, this provides employment for four daily paid (4) women from the community, and a CORICS which provides Information Technology services to the community and also offers computer training to the community residents. Both projects emerged as a result of a poverty assessment project which UNDP implement that shows Orange Hill as one of the communities with the highest level of poverty. The Objective of these project is to provide livelihood opportunities to members of the community in an attempt to reduce the poverty among the residents.

HOW DID YOU DO IT?

The team met with members of the orange Hill group on Thursday 30th June 2011 to discuss the possibility of working with them on this initiative from the CANARI workshop. Mobilization for this first meeting was done face to face where Pat Fraser, one of our team members visited the group members to inform them and also made visits to remind them of the meeting.

The initial meeting was held and the members of OHDO expressed their willingness to work with us on this project. At the end of the meeting a number of decisions were made, a date and time was set for the first workshop, and the tools to be implemented were identified.

TOOLS

The tools that were used were; who is a Stakeholder? Indentifying key stakeholders and Stakeholder Analysis. Additional Information was given to the group using the concept sheet on what is participation? It was felt that there was the general willingness of group members to
executive project activities but they needed to take ownership of their resources, we felt that, if they understood better who they work with (stakeholders) and their role as a community organization that will assist them greater in executing their role more effectively within the community.

Four sessions were held on 8\textsuperscript{th} 12\textsuperscript{th}, 19\textsuperscript{th} and 26\textsuperscript{th} July respectfully at the Orange Hill Development Organisation Building. Each commencing at 5.00 pm.

The first session was facilitated by Ms Patricia Fraser and dealt with “what is participation”? Ms. Fraser welcomed participants to the session and introduced the team members present and the workshop and its objective. She then allowed participants to introduce themselves. Immediately after participants contributed and agreed to the following ground rules;

**GROUND RULES FOR THE SESSIONS:**

- Put all cell phones on vibrate
- Be punctual for sessions
- Speak one person at a time
- Ask for excuse when leaving the sessions

In her presentation participants were asked to state what they understand by the work participation? They mentioned the following: contribute, talk, interact, and take-part.

She gave a definition that participation is the act of sharing in the activities/events of a group and to do this effectively you must be involved.

Reference were made and highlighted to the participants on this topic from the manual and this discussion was put in the context of the building that we were using for the training sessions. The following Questions were asked by the facilitator to make sure the participants understand the topic.

- Who were involved in discussions for the building?
• Who contribute towards the building project?
• How did the community get involved?

She explained that in doing all that came out of the questions asked people’s participation were very useful in making the projects a reality.

Why do people participate? The following came out -:

• To learn from one another
• To build a support network
• To help to make our families and communities stronger.

The guiding principles of participation were briefly explained to the participants and the types of participation which is very useful for decision making for the group.

A brief discussion was done where participants looked at the way the entire community participated in the different activities of the group in the past and stated success stories of active participation.

IDENTIFYING WHO IS A STAKEHOLDER:

This session was done by Ms. Yoland London. Participants were asked what is the first word that came to mind when they hear the term “stakeholder?” This was done in a round robin format, where each participant was given an opportunity to share. The responses varied and included;

• Owner
• House keeper
• Partnership
• Membership
• Manager

Two definitions were then provided by the facilitator. They read;

1. Stakeholders are individuals, groups and organisations that are involved or may be affected by a change in the condition governing the management and use of a Resource, Space or Sector.
2. People who have rights to and responsibility for and interest in a resource or space.

To further expand on point number two, Yoland outlined that Stakeholders have responsibility for a resource if;

• They undertake any action that change the nature of it and if
• They derive economic benefit or well being from it.

They have an interest in it if;
• They derive enjoyment from it and if
• They are involved in activities linked to it

To ensure that the participants grasp the whole concept of stakeholders they were placed in two working groups and were instructed to look at “Savanah”, a forest reserve adjacent their community and identify its stakeholders. The results were given in the form of presentation they were;

**Group One**
- Government/Forestry Department
- Hunters
- Farmers
- Community

**Group Two**
- Forestry Department
- Farmers (legal and Illegal)
- Charcoal providers
- Paddock owners

**Key Stakeholders**
To identify key stakeholders, participants were asked to look at the Plantain chips project, and identify the most important players, they provided a listing of all stakeholders from which they were to identify the key ones. They worked in the two groups to come up with the key ones, they were told to bore in mind the key ones would be the ones with most interest in, rights to and responsibility for, those with the highest stake.

Their responses were as follows;
1. Farmers (Project buy plantains from Farmers)
2. Supermarkets (Project sells chips to supermarket)
3. Community workers (Four members of the community fry chips)
4. National Sports Council (Gave group permission to Build kitchen)
5. OHDO (Manages the project)

**STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS:**

Mr. Anthony Simeon presented this session. He gave participants a hand out then introduced the topic. He then noted to participants that once they have identified the stakeholders the next step in the planning process is to analyse their interest. By understanding the rights, responsibilities
interest perspective of and power relationships between stakeholders you can better facilitate their involvement in a participatory process.

He further stated what is stakeholder analysis:- It is a technique you can use to identify and assess the importance of key people, groups of people, or institutions that may significantly influence the success of your activity or project. You can use this technique along with your team members.

**Why use it?** – Identify people, groups and institutions that will influence your initiative (either positively or negatively)
Anticipate the kind of influence, positive or negative these groups will have on your initiative
Develop strategies to get the most effective support possible for your initiative and reduce obstacles to successful implementation of your programme.

**When to use it?**
Conduct a stakeholder analysis in the early stages of planning your programme.

**How to use it?**
This discussion with participants allowed them to brainstorm and to look at potential stakeholders and the interest these stakeholders will have in your particular project.

In summary stakeholder analysis involves:

- Identifying what questions about the stakeholders need to be analysed (e.g. interest, roles, responsibility, power, relationships how they use the resource, what would be the impact on them of change in management.)

- Determining who the analysis would be conducted – who would be involved? Will it be participatory? How will the information be collected? What are the potential sources of information?

- Collecting and validating the information for each stakeholder.

- Organising the information in a format that is clear and understandable by stakeholders.

- Constantly review the stakeholder analysis as the situation changes.
• Analyse their purpose, focus, interest and mission highly relevant to the management of the project/group

• Examine their capacity and scope to be involved

• Decide what information about the stakeholders you need to analyse and the existing and potential sources of conflict.

EVALUATION:

An oral evaluation was done where each participants was asked to give a brief feedback on their participation in the Training, specifically to outlined if the information was relevant, and has helped to build their capacities in any way.

The general response was that the session was informative, educational and interested.

The training that the group received fit into the bigger picture of what they are doing because they now understand better who their stakeholders are, and have now agreed to include them in their planning and decision making processes. Prior to the training, the group members made most the decisions regarding the operation of the group, they way funds are expended etc, now their awareness have been built they are willing now to collaborate and include their stakeholders in their operations, this indeed will assist in limiting some of the challenges identified such as” low marketing skills, and little financial management skills”. Members of the community can now be drafted in to assist in these areas.

KEY LESSONS LEARNT BY FACILITATORS

• Be prepared to improvise, change course

• Be open

• Do not take people for granted

• Do not go in with preconceived ideas
COST AND CHALLENGES

- Material cost
- Refreshments
- Transportation
- Difficulty meeting (Team)
- Difficulty meeting with group
- Group was discouraged (FAO project)

VOTE OF THANKS

After the final session was completed the president of the group Mr. Adam Bilingy gave an official vote of thanks to the team for choosing the Orange Hill Development Organisation (OHDO) to work along with this small project and stated that the group looks forward for continued collaboration with the team in the future.

Ms. Patricia Fraser also thank the members of the group on behalf of the team for allowing them to share what they would of learnt from the “Participatory forest management for good governance in the Caribbean region” held in Jamaica earlier this year. She also encouraged members of the group to continue to use the information from the training session to enhance future development of the group and the wider community. And also to make every effort to encourage a participatory approach to activities, project etc, that the group becomes involved in.

WAY FORWARD

We hope to continue working with the group. One activity that was discussed and we hope to assist them with is the development of a management plan for the group.