



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

REPORT ON NICOLE LEOTAUD'S VISIT TO MONTSERRAT 8 - 11 December, 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 Montserrat National Trust (MNT) and, to some extent, the Montserrat Small Business Association and the Department of Environment, had previously been engaged in direct discussions;
- To identify what are currently the main priorities in terms of biodiversity conservation in Montserrat 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 Montserrat, 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 Montserrat and, in particular, to discuss with the Montserrat National Trust (MNT) and the Montserrat Small Business Association (MSBA) 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 MNT 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;
- Review of documents relevant to understanding the context for civil society involvement in biodiversity conservation in Montserrat – including the Participation Strategy of the Department of Environment (DOE), the draft Environmental Management Bill, notes from a needs assessment conducted with the MNT Board in 2008;
- Informal and structured discussions with three MNT staff members throughout the visit and in particular on 10 and 11 December;
- Structured discussion with four members of MNT's Board;
- Structured discussion with two members of the Board of the MSBA;
- Meetings with the Director of the DOE, Gerard Grey; the Minister of Education (and recently Chair of the MNT Board), Colin Riley; the Minister of Agriculture, Joseph Farrell;

- Stakeholder meeting on 9 December (see Agenda at Appendix 1 and Section 3.1 for more details on the approach and outcomes).

3. Results

All the identified objectives were fully or partially achieved thanks in large measure to the excellent organisation and participation of the MNT staff with support from the DOE, particularly in mobilising participants for the stakeholder workshop and arranging individual meetings.

3.1 Stakeholder workshop: Montserrat National Stakeholder Meeting, Montserrat National Trust (MNT), Olveston, 9 December 2009

3.1.1 Participants

Twenty persons (see participant list at Appendix 2) attended the stakeholder meeting:

- the Executive Director, two staff members of the MNT (one of whom is also a member of another CSO), and one Board member;
- the President of the MSBA;
- three representing other civil society organisations (CSOs),
- one from a private business;
- one representative of the media (who is also a member of a two CSOs);
- six representing government agencies (five from the DOE, several of whom are also members of CSOs),
- two students from the Community College active in conducting environmental projects;
- two secondary school students who are active in their student councils and clubs.

Several of the participants are, or have been, members of multiple CSOs and/or staff in government agencies, including the President of the MSBA who is a past Minister of Agriculture and the Director of the DOE who is a past President of the MNT. 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 extensive collaboration for participatory management planning for the Centre Hills and development of environmental management legislation (currently in the final drafting stages) and the suggestion that MNT could at some point in the future play a formal role in (co-) managing national parks.

3.1.2 Introductions/statement of organisational needs

After a welcome from the Executive Director of the MNT and a prayer, 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]

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

After an overview of the project, it was noted that a detailed analyses of key stakeholders had been done in Montserrat under the Centre Hills project and as part of the Participation Strategy of the DoE. Therefore this exercise would focus on analysis of power relations. The facilitator from CANARI introduced the concept of positioning stakeholders within a power triangle to indicate their relative levels of power in making decisions about biodiversity conservation in Montserrat. The apex of the triangle was the area of highest power and the base the area of lowest power.

The led to a very interesting discussion to identify and position key stakeholders and the resulting power triangle is shown below. This illustrates several key points made by stakeholders:

- The agency responsible for biodiversity conservation in Montserrat (the DoE) is not at the top of the decision-making process, and could be / is over-ridden by other stakeholders.
- Stakeholders with responsibility for broader economic development (the Montserrat Development Corporation [MDC]) and agencies with political power (e.g. the Foreign and Commonwealth Office [FCO]) and/or economic power (e.g. the Department for International Development [DFID]) had the highest decision making power.
- Civil society organisations in Montserrat have some say in the decision-making process, with the MNT and the media being the most significant of these.
- International civil society organisations (e.g. Kew, RSPB) have a bigger say in the decision-making process than civil society organisations in Montserrat.
- Community-based organisations and resource user groups have the lowest ability to participate in decision-making about biodiversity conservation in Montserrat.



The “power triangle” for Montserrat reflecting the different abilities of stakeholders to influence decision-making about biodiversity conservation in Montserrat

3.1.4 Priorities for biodiversity conservation

Participants in the workshop identified the following issues as being the priorities for biodiversity conservation in Montserrat:

- Marine environment – livelihoods, fisheries, food
- Management of beaches
- Development – important to protect the environment
- Loose livestock control
- Capacity – knowledge
- Environment is an asset for tourism
- Watershed management
- Positive attitude – education
- Sustainable use of NTFPs – food
- Political support
- Sustainable use
- Beautification

3.1.5 Civil society capacity needs assessment and discussion of enabling environment

Participants then divided into three groups (two civil society and one government) to discuss the questions outlined in the agenda with regard to capacity needs and the enabling environment. This resulted in the feedback given in the table below.

Several key points of interest were highlighted:

- In general, there was consensus that civil society should play key roles in: educating and mobilising the “voiceless” (those with low power) and function as the “voice of the people”; acting as “watchdog” and ensuring accountability; and working in partnership with government.
- Government agencies had higher expectations about the role that civil society could play in biodiversity management in Montserrat, for example highlighting the potential role in co-management of protected areas.
- Key capacity building needed by civil society organisations was identified, including human resources, financial resources, and organisational strengthening.

Government agencies identified specific ways that they can improve the enabling environment for an active and effective role by civil society organisations in biodiversity management in Montserrat as being:

- Providing funding
- Setting the legislative framework
- Providing training
- Formalising relationships between government and civil society (e.g. via MOUs)
- Endorsement by government of civil society groups (e.g. via establishing as statutory bodies)
- Promoting collaboration between government and civil society and among civil society organisations
- Sharing linkages

Participants also discussed how can effective partnerships between government and civil society be built and they identified key strategies as being:

- Knowing each others agenda
- Establishing good communication links
- Representations of government and civil society at local, regional and international fora
- Transparency (trust)

	Group A: Civil society participants	Group B: Civil society participants	Group C: Government representatives
ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educating people. • Lobbying government & representatives of government and the wider public. • Keeping the island beautiful. • Maintaining and sharing values and ideas. • More involvement in community activities to enhance the island. • Encouraging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, awareness and action • Participation practice, partnerships with other groups and government • Outreach programmes • Facilitate change in attitudes, behaviours and way of life • Modelling behaviour (instead of all talk) • Advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education (public) • Advocacy • Resource management – including co-management • Influencing the school curriculum – eg PTA • Monitoring of biodiversity • Volunteers • Funding • Mobilisation of public buy-in

	<p>students participation in environmental issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean up campaigns for villages and beaches. • Beautification of public and private gardens. 		
CAPACITY NEEDED BY CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy for laws and protection of the environment • Empowering Litter Wardens. • Collaboration and partnership with government and other CSO • More CSO representation at a national and local level to discuss biodiversity issues. • Access to funding sources and capital. • Law enforcement. • Equipping CSO with advocacy skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human and financial power • Skilled members with knowledge (for strategic planning), commitment, dedication, willingness to do work • Time and better time management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational skills and structure • Strategy planning • Sound knowledge base • Funds • Means to disseminate – equipment and communication skills • Right influence • Training in monitoring techniques • Access to legal, financial management skills • Technical expertise • Passion and commitment
WHICH CAPACITIES DOES CIVIL SOCIETY HAVE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of speech. • Educating the public on environmental issues. • A larger and visible CSO representation on island. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience doing education and awareness • Links to a variety of agencies (local, regional, etc.) • Members with a variety of strengths • Knowledge of local history and culture • Appreciation of local history and culture 	
WHICH CAPACITIES NEED TO BE BUILT?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More action oriented groups. • Financial incentives for people to be involved in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit more members • Engage more people in education and awareness 	

	biodiversity projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation for loss of farm produce. • Lobbying between farmers, merchants and government. • Marketing skills for selling more local products. • Organising and communication between farmers (a coordinated approach to what is being grown and when to avoid excess.) • Negotiating skills for CS groups to negotiate concession rates from government for activities that promote biodiversity. • A clear and defined structure in place to manage the organisation. 	campaigns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate and collaborate with others on similar projects • Fundraising skills • Proposal writing • More people who are educated and aware of similar projects 	
--	---	---	--

3.1.6 Identification of partner organisation for Darwin Action Research and Learning Group (ARLG)

It was noted that the Montserrat Small Business Association had been nominated by the MNT to be the partner organisation involved in this project, and that they had agreed.

3.1.7 Next steps

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 adapted by ARLG members at the national level for the benefit of the other civil society stakeholders;
- b) the priorities for its wider training programme

It was noted that one of the meetings of the ARLG would be held in Montserrat, which would include examining the involvement of civil society in the Centre Hills project. Participants made a strong request that CANARI create opportunities for stakeholders in Montserrat to interact with the ARLG members and be involved in their discussions.

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 Montserrat. Both MNT and the MSBA have critical areas where they need to build the capacity of their organisation, and clearly have much to contribute to the peer learning and exchange process, particularly in the area of effective partnerships, public education and outreach, and advocacy.

APPENDIX 1: AGENDA



Building Civil Society Capacity for Conservation in the Caribbean UK Overseas Territories

Stakeholder workshop

9th December 2009

Montserrat National Trust, Olveston, Montserrat

- | | | |
|----------|--|---|
| 1 | Introduction to the project and the workshop | <i>CANARI</i> |
| 2 | Montserrat's biodiversity – visioning a sustainable future <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What is biodiversity and why is it important?○ What are the priorities for action in Montserrat?○ Who are the key stakeholders? | <i>Whole group discussion</i> |
| 3 | Making the role of civil society more effective <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 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? | <i>Small groups</i> |
| 4 | Presentations of small group discussions | <i>Small group presenters</i> |
| 5 | Setting the workshop findings in the context of Montserrat's actions under the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) | <i>Department of Environment - CBD focal point</i> |
| 6 | Next steps <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What initiatives are going on to build civil society capacity to contribute to biodiversity conservation?○ How can the Darwin project contribute to the capacity building?○ Who/what else can contribute to the capacity building? | <i>CANARI/ Montserrat National Trust/ Montserrat Small Business Association</i> |

APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANT LIST

NAME	ORGANISATION	CONTACT
Tori Greenaway	Student Council Member of the Montserrat Secondary School	tg212@hotmail.com
Marissa Allen	Student of the Montserrat Community College	huggs_ville@hotmail.com
Shennise Roache	Prefect of the Montserrat Secondary School	lilmiznicy@msn.com
Sherylere Dyer	664 (www.664stratlinkup.com)	sheryleredyer@hotmail.com
Margaret Dyer-Howe	Montserrat Small Business Association, President	ash@candw.ms
Catherine M Tuitt	Tuitt Roses Shrubs	roses&shrubs@msn.com
Dwayne Daley	S.D.A. Pathfinders	dwaynedaley@hotmail.com
Ernestive Gorbett	Department of Environment	491 9278
Gerard Gray	Department of Environment, Director	grayg@gov.ms
Stephen Mendes	Department of Environment	mendess@gov.ms
Jerome Meade	Physical Planning Unit	meadecj@gov.ms
Glenford James	Department of Environment	pearlsforashes@hotmail.com
James Boatswain	Department of Environment	boatswainj@gov.ms
Hazel D Riley	S.D.A. Pathfinders	hdriley2003@yahoo.com 493 5001
Sheron C. Burns	Montserrat National Trust / WSG-10	burnss@gov.ms
Rose Willock	ZJB Radio / WSG-10 / MACA	willockr@candw.ms
Eudora Fergus	Montserrat National Trust, Executive Director	mnatrust@candw.ms
Jean White	Montserrat National Trust, WSG-10	mnatrust@candw.ms