Guidance on Supporting Processes of Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification
Guidance on Supporting Processes of Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification

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Report prepared as part of the Future of Reefs in a Changing Environment Project

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<table>
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<td><strong>Participants</strong></td>
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<td>Alston Flemming</td>
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<td>Kareem Sabir</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Stephen Willoughby</td>
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<td><strong>Facilitation Team</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Francesca Booker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Rohan Ford</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Johanna Forster</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>David Gill</td>
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<td>Selina Stead</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Philip Townsley</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Rachel Turner</td>
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1. INTRODUCTION

This document is an output of research conducted under the EU-funded Future of Reefs in a Changing Environment (FORCE) project. It distils some of the key lessons generated by research carried out by this project into the livelihoods of people in the Caribbean who depend on coral reefs for all or part of their livelihoods.

The guidance provided in this document is intended to assist people working in coastal communities around the Caribbean to adopt more effective approaches in their work with those communities to improve their livelihoods and to make their livelihoods more sustainable in the face of change. People working with community-based organisations, NGO staff working in the field or designing interventions, government agencies responsible for community development in these areas, or conservation agencies trying to combine better management of coral reef areas with the well-being and development of local communities, may all find this guidance of use.

This guidance has been prepared by IMM Ltd., a UK-based consultancy group which has been engaged in the research into livelihoods and reefs carried out under the FORCE project, in close collaboration with colleagues from the University of the West Indies and Newcastle University in the UK. The work of a wide range of collaborators has contributed to this guidance material, including the valuable insights provided by key informants and respondents in the four Caribbean countries where the research was conducted - Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis, Honduras and Belize - and the participants at a regional workshop held in Barbados to review some of the key research findings and reflect on wider experiences of support to livelihood change in the region. Details of these collaborators are provided in the acknowledgements.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

2.1 Changing livelihoods of reef users

Coral reefs have always played an important part in people’s livelihoods in many parts of the Caribbean. They provide an important source of food both for home consumption, or for sale in local and international markets. They are an important focus for the growing tourism industry around the Caribbean: they attract tourists who dive and snorkel in order to view fish and corals; they play an important role in generating and maintaining the sandy beaches that draw tourists from all over the world to the region. They are also critical for protecting the coastlines of islands from erosion by wind and waves, and they are important for dissipating the destructive force of the hurricanes that regularly affect the region. Reefs can also play a cultural role, helping to define the identity of communities that depend on them and creating cultural spaces for communal life.

The ways in which people use coral reefs in the Caribbean have always been dynamic, responding to changing conditions, both on the reefs and in the communities that make use of them. Fishing for different species of fish has often been associated with particular seasons and weather conditions. The amount of fishing or collection of reef resources carried out by people has often changed in response to changing coastal populations, economic circumstances and market pressures on land; leading in many locations to declines in coral reef-associated fisheries. The volume and type of tourism making use of reef areas has also been subject to changes - in fashion, in investment, and in the economic circumstances of the people who visit the region.
However, particularly now, there are also longer-term, and potentially more worrying changes taking place. Climate change and its effects in terms of ocean warming, acidification and sea-level rise, as well as the frequency and severity of extreme climate events, are affecting the health of coral reefs and their capacity to maintain the important services that they provide to the people who depend on them. The pace of economic and infrastructure development, particularly in coastal areas, has often led to permanent damage to reefs and made them more vulnerable to decline and degradation. The direct exploitation of reef resources and of surrounding marine and coastal areas has also increasingly put pressure on the capacity of reef ecosystems to continue to function and provide services in a sustainable way, both to people and to the marine ecosystem.

These longer-term changes are progressively altering the coral reef ecosystems and the wider environment in which Caribbean reef users operate. Seasonal patterns of abundance of different species that fishers in the region depend on are changing; the frequency and intensity of weather events such as hurricanes is changing; ocean warming is affecting the health of coral reefs and their capacity to recover from shocks is declining, leading to degradation of the reef environment.

People who depend on coral reefs for their livelihoods are being forced to adapt to take account both of these changes in coral reefs, and in the increasingly dynamic economic, social and cultural environment. This adaptation can take many forms, including: adjusting what they already do by using better technology, changing where they do it, or doing more of it to achieve comparable or improved results (livelihood enhancement); doing additional things to make up for declining results from what they normally do, such as adding new technologies, new activities or targeting new resources (livelihood diversification); or shifting over to doing completely new things or radically altering their livelihood strategies away from what they normally have done (livelihood change).

How people adapt their livelihoods reflects the particular nature of the resources they depend on, the societies they live in, the social, cultural, economic and political environment in which they live and the assets that they have at their disposal. The focus of this document is on the particular factors that affect livelihood change for people in the Caribbean who depend on coral reefs for all or part of their livelihoods, and in particular on how they can best be supported and given greater capacity to adapt their livelihoods to the changes they are facing now and those expected in the future. Understanding how this support can be provided most effectively is important not just because of the changes and threats faced by the coral reefs, but also because efforts to protect coral reefs also tend to force people who depend on them to adapt to different patterns of access.

### 2.2 The FORCE Project

The Future of Reefs in a Changing Environment (FORCE) project aims to contribute to understanding the issues facing coral reef management in the context of climate change and its current and future impacts on coral reefs in the region. The findings generated by the research will contribute to the development of ecosystem approaches to the management of coral reefs.

The project is being implemented by multi-disciplinary collaborative teams of regional and international researchers from the Caribbean, Europe, North America and Australia.

The project has four key objectives:

1. To understand the threats to coral reefs and coastal communities in the Caribbean;
2. To understand how effective coral reef management has been in the past;
3. To develop new ways to address these threats and support coastal communities;
4. To share the findings with people in the Caribbean.

The work undertaken by the project includes a wide range of research activities focused on the biological, ecological, social, economic and governance aspects of coral reefs and their management in the Caribbean.

2.3 FORCE Project Research on Livelihoods

This set of guidance focuses on the work carried out by two of the components of the FORCE project:

- The analysis of governance issues relating to coral reef management in the Caribbean (Work Package 1);
- Research into the livelihoods of people depending on coral reefs in the Caribbean (Work Package 2).

These two parts of the research have been carried out by a team of researchers from the University of the West Indies (UWI) in Barbados, the Newcastle University (UNEW) in the UK and Integrated Marine Management Ltd. (IMM), a consultancy company based in the UK. This part of the FORCE research undertook field studies in 4 locations in the Caribbean: Barbados, Honduras, St. Kitts and Nevis, and in Belize, and analysis of the findings of this field work was combined with wide-ranging studies of the literature on coral-reef governance and coral-reef related livelihoods.

Work Package 2 was designed and co-ordinated by IMM Ltd, Exeter, UK. It focused on looking at the livelihoods of reef-dependent people in the Caribbean by exploring:

- The different ways in which people depend on and make use of coral reefs;
- How the services provided by coral reefs to people are changing and how those changes are affecting people and their livelihoods;
- How people are responding to these changes and the different strategies for adaptation that people are undertaking in the face of changes in coral reefs and their access to coral reef services.

The research into livelihoods and livelihood change looked at a range of people in reef-adjacent communities in Barbados, Honduras, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Belize, and explored with them their experiences relating to livelihood change, particularly in relation to coral reef use. In each of these four countries, two coastal communities were selected for the research on livelihoods. These sites were selected to encompass diversity between reef-user communities within each country, paying particular attention different patterns of dependence on reef resources. Communities were broadly differentiated, based on secondary data and initial scoping studies, according to their relative dependence on fisheries, tourism, and the combination of the two.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 3: Summary of study sites and reef-use characteristics</th>
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<td><strong>Country</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
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<td>St.Kitts and Nevis</td>
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<td>Honduras</td>
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Within each of these sites, the research team carried out an initial scoping activity to determine site boundaries and broadly identify the typologies of households within the community. An initial series of short, opportunistic interviews and participant observations were used to understand the differences between households, the range of livelihoods activities undertaken and begin sorting different individuals and groups within the communities according to:

- their relative well-being - well-off, average, poor;
- their relative dependence on coral reef resources – high, medium, low.

Progressively, the researchers attempted to characterise (whether by ethnic group, gender, age, location, key livelihood activities or any other criteria that were discovered to be relevant) the groups of households or individuals falling within these different categories. The target sample of 20 households for in-depth household interviews was then identified from across this range, attempting, as far as possible, to talk to households coming from all of these different categories and covering the diversity of key characteristics identified in each community.

Discussions were held with individuals and households in order to understand how they are coping and responding to changes in coral reefs. Participants in the research included fishers (full-time, part-time, occasional or recreational), people involved in tourism (dive operators, tour guides, and providers of tourism services), and others not directly involved in reef use but living in nearby areas (including those consuming reef products, participating in economic activities dependent on the reef, or affected in some way by the conditions of local reefs.) Throughout these discussions, attention was paid to exploring how people’s use of coral reefs, and their responses to changes in those reefs, might be linked to the wider social and economic environment in which they live, or to different forms of support they might have received in order to cope with change.

Further discussions were held with key informants who have been involved in programmes aimed at supporting livelihood change, either as members of beneficiary groups or through working with implementing agencies involved in these programmes. These discussions aimed to understand what factors may have contributed to such programmes being effective or otherwise.

Field research was followed-up by a workshop which brought together a range of people from around the Caribbean region who are involved in working on livelihood change, both in reef-dependent communities and in wider society, to discuss their experience and to reflect on the findings emerging from the FORCE research in the field. These included officers from local government agencies, credit and micro-enterprise support organisations, international and national NGOs, and community-based organisations.

For both the research on livelihood change carried out in the field, and the meetings with key informants and workshop participants, a range of frameworks were used to help structure discussions and the analysis of the outputs of those discussions. Based on the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA), a Caribbean Coral Reef Livelihoods Framework was developed to provide a means of understanding the different dimensions of people’s livelihoods that needed to be explored in order to develop as complete an appreciation as possible of livelihood complexity among coral-reef users.

To specifically analyse the process of livelihood change, researchers drew on experience from research in coral-reef dependent communities, both in the Caribbean and in Asia and Africa, which led to the development of a framework for Sustainable Livelihood Enhancement and Development (SLED). This framework, which is described in more detail in Annex 1, provided a means of exploring different phases in the process of livelihood change and adaptation. The key phases defined in the SLED framework (Discovery, Dreaming, Direction and Doing) represent a highly idealised model which rarely corresponds to how, in
practice, people or organisations approach the process of livelihood change. Discussions in the field were therefore guided by a checklist of key issues and areas of concern relating to livelihoods and livelihood change, with the responses provided by respondents subsequently being analysed in terms of the SLED phases. During the regional workshop, these four phases and the findings emerging from the field interviews were discussed more explicitly in terms of the four SLED phases, which for this purpose, were interpreted as follows:

- **Discovery**: Those elements in discussions that referred to the identification of a need for livelihood change were taken as part of the Discovery phase. For local people this might have been the understanding of changing conditions which led them to feel a need to seek out other livelihood options. For outside agencies it was taken to refer to the phase in their operations when they were making initial contact with the community, learning about local conditions and establishing a working relationship with those they hoped to engage with.

- **Dreaming**: Where people had thought about what it was they wanted to achieve through their process of livelihood change, either in terms of the precise benefits that they hoped to generate or the conditions that they aspired to in the future, this was taken to refer to what the framework calls the Dreaming phase. In practice, it was seen that this longer term vision was something that both local people and outside organisations rarely articulate clearly.

- **Direction**: The process of planning new livelihood activities, thinking through different options, making choices about how to implement new activities and how to obtain the skills, finance, market linkages and technical knowledge to make them work was regarded as part of the Direction phase. In many cases in the field, this part of the process of livelihood change was the part to which people and agencies generally devoted most time and attention.

- **Doing**: The actual implementation of new livelihood activities and all the processes involved in supporting that implementation were thought of as part of the Doing phase. This included the provision of on-going technical support to activities, marketing activities, monitoring results and evaluating impacts, where this was actually done.

Some of the key learning that was generated about livelihood change, both from the field research undertaken by the FORCE project and through the discussions at the regional workshop on Sustainable Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification held in Barbados on 9th-10th May, 2013, is presented below using this framework. Illustrative stories and cases encountered both during the field work and during the workshop are used to illustrate some of this key learning. Where case studies of individuals encountered during the field work are used, the names of respondents have been changed to respect their privacy.
3. LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE FORCE RESEARCH

3.1 Discovery

Understanding the different dimensions of people’s existing livelihoods is important

The different factors that influence what people do and how they create a livelihood for themselves and their families are diverse and complex. The FORCE research into livelihoods highlighted just how true this is for reef users in the Caribbean.

These factors vary from place to place, and may even be different for different people within the same household, but some of the key dimensions of people’s livelihoods that are important to understand include:

- **Seasonal change** - reef users’ livelihoods are constantly adapting to a variety of seasonal changes ranging from changes in the availability of reef resources that they exploit, changes in the weather that affect their access to different resources, to seasonal patterns of tourist arrivals and alternative income sources. Box 1 illustrates an example of one household’s responses to seasonal factors from St.Kitt’s and Nevis.

**Box 1: Responding to seasonal changes in St.Kitts and Nevis**

Brett, now nearing his 60s, was born and raised in Dieppe Bay, St Kitts. After working in various hotels, Brett decided to turn to fishing and to “tap into these resources that mother nature provide”. He began spear fishing and collecting whelks and conchs from the reefs, and setting fish traps that his father made for him. Now he and his family combine fishing activities with handicraft vending to tourists at the craft market. Brett was also able to obtain five acres of land where he farms peanuts and bananas, and produces charcoal for cooking. More recently he has set up a small shop and eatery. With contacts in the hotel industry, Brett also occasionally guides tourists around St. Kitts. Different household members contribute in different ways to these activities. During the slow tourist season, during calm weather, Brett’s wife helps him to harvest whelks, while his son catches fish for the family’s shop and for sale, and helps with work in the shop when weather prevents him from fishing. When the peanut harvest arrives, the whole family helps to sort nuts from the farm.

Brett recognises the seasonal importance of the reef as a fishing ground during the months when there is bad weather and providing an opportunity to catch whelks and trap fish during the slow tourist season. He emphasised that the diversity of activities which support his livelihood provide a way of coping with seasonality: “Because a lot of this is seasonal and you know we’re on the Atlantic side so you find the water would be very rough for many weeks so when you can’t attend to the sea, you attend to the farm, you do a little craft in between, you juggle the different chores to suit. ….. So I think it’s a package actually because when it’s the tourist season things are happening quite good. When it’s fishing season things are happening quite good… the farm produces a lot from time to time”.

*Source: WP2 In-depth household interview, Dieppe Bay; 24/02/2012 & 11/04/2012*

- **The wider economic and political environment** - the opportunities, and obstacles, created by the prevailing economic and political context within which reef users’ operate can play an important role in influencing people’s decisions about livelihood activities. The growth of opportunities created by the expansion of tourism throughout the Caribbean is one particularly important example of this and many reef users have responded by adapting their livelihoods to take
advantage of these new opportunities (see Box 2). Similarly, the changing political situation can influence the livelihood options available to people (see Box 3).

- **Tradition and culture** - people's livelihoods are also influenced by longstanding traditions, particularly of use of reef resources. While the development of opportunities in the services sector and, particularly, in tourism, have inevitably encouraged more and more people to shift the focus of their livelihoods away from fishing, a significant number of people still continue to fish, either for all or part of their livelihoods, or for recreational purposes, because of their traditional links to the sea. In Box 4, several cases from Belize illustrate how these strong links to the sea persist even when other options might be available.

Reef users' existing capacity to adapt to change needs to be recognised

Among the key lessons learnt from the FORCE livelihoods research was the extent to which people using reefs in the Caribbean already adapt to a changing environment. This capacity to constantly adapt is often key to people’s survival in a highly dynamic environment. Recognising this capacity, and valuing people’s inherent adaptability is likely to be a key part of any programme of support to livelihood change.

These adaptations in people’s livelihoods have many dimensions, ranging from seasonal variations in the availability of different resources, to adaptation to a changing political and economic environment, or to responses to the hurricanes that regularly affect some areas in the region (Box 5).

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**Box 2: Taking advantage of new opportunities in tourism in Honduras**

For many households on Utila in Honduras, the growing tourism economy represents an increasingly important part of their livelihood. Different households have taken up opportunities in tourism in different ways. Access to financial capital is clearly important in developing tourism related enterprises. For some households, these finances come from savings, from work overseas, or through support from family members. For others, bank loans have played an important part, while other households have been able to access small grants made available from the Ministry of Tourism.

Source: WP2 In-depth household interviews, East Harbour, July & August 2011

**Box 3: Adapting to political change in Honduras**

On the island of Utila in Honduras, the unexpected political coup in 2009 reduced tourist arrivals with serious consequences for tourism dependent livelihoods. Such was the case of Fawn’s husband, who having faced declining catches as a fisherman on Utila Cayes had abandoned fishing to work as a boat captain at a hotel on Utila. This change had improved the household’s income. However, it was not to last for long, as following the 2009 coup he lost his job at the hotel and was forced to return to fishing.

Source: WP2 In-depth household interview, Utila Cayes; 21/07/2011

**Box 4: The tradition of fishing in Belize**

In Placencia, a community where tourism has become the dominant economic activity over past decades, fishing still seems to fulfil an important social and recreational role. Nate, a sixteen year old fisher, noted that "...when we were small, fishing is what we do for fun...". André, a plumber by trade, says that he goes out to sea “... on the weekends... most of the time I’m on recreation if I’m out there, for fun. I take out the family to one of the inner cayes or... sometimes go trolling with friends...". He also fishes from the shore with his son during vacation time. People’s attachment to fishing was also mentioned by Anton who described how he was taught to fish by his grandfather and began fulltime fishing as soon as he completed primary school at the age of fourteen. For him: "...fishing is in our blood".

A young Garifuna fisher in Hopkins said that fishing is “... what we were taught from ever since we were little kids growing up... so it’s something that’s natural in us...It’s all I have ever known, that’s what I’m good at...".

Source: WP2 In-depth household interviews, Placencia; June & August 2012.
Importance of recognising and building on people's existing strengths

A further lesson that emerged from the FORCE research was the importance of fully understanding people's existing strengths and capacities before attempting to intervene to support livelihood change. If new ideas for livelihood change build on these existing strengths, the sustainability of these ideas once they are put into practice is likely to be far stronger. They can make use of people's often strong traditional knowledge and skill-base; they can be rooted in a greater sense of ownership among those involved as they do not represent completely "alien" ideas brought in from outside. In this way, people's confidence in undertaking new activities will be higher because they already command at least some of the capacity required to carry them out; people's buy-in to new activities is liable to be far stronger as at least some of the skills involved in implementing them are already recognised.

The case in Box 6 from Belize illustrates how building on existing skills can encourage people's confidence and create greater ownership of new livelihood activities. Also important in this case was the fact that the original ideas for new livelihood options came from the people concerned themselves and was not introduced by outsiders as a completely new idea. Outside assistance came in the form of a grant which enabled fisher cooperative members to take up an activity that they themselves had identified as being potentially appropriate for them.

**Box 6: Developing people's knowledge of seaweed collection in Belize**

Jim, a fisher from Placencia explained that he is involved in establishing a seaweed farming project alongside the Placencia Fisherman's Cooperative and with a small grant from the United Nations Development Programme. He reported that through this project “… we are checking out the feasibility for alternative source of income for fisherman…”. Jim noted that the project will “… mean I have less impact on the reef yeah, ‘cause if I have another source of income then I don’t have to be like scurrying on the reef for a lobster…”. The idea for seaweed farming came from his family “… because my family used to harvest the seaweed way back…”. He reported that there are around ten people involved in the seaweed farming and that their “… plan [is] to start harvest in August, I think that’s when we’ll start to see if there is any economical benefits…”. He underlined that “… I think it’s gonna be good … it’s a definite seller… you can use it to put in soup, in gravy or in milkshake …”.

The group of fishers have been using a process of trial and error to establish their seaweed farm. Jim acknowledged that the group have learnt a lot including to “… try to utilise nets over the seed so that whatever grows outside the net we can harvest whatever stays in there is our seed stock…”. Jim added that in the future the project plans to expand to include sea cucumber and conch “… because these three animals use the same area and they have symbiotic relation, they don’t eat each other…. “.

Source: WP2 Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification Interviews, 11/06/2012
Time frames involved in bringing about livelihood change

A theme that frequently emerged, particularly in discussions with key informants and workshop participants involved in implementing livelihood support programmes, regarded the need to allow relatively long time frames in order to bring about sustainable livelihood change. This time is required in order to develop relationships of trust between facilitators and local people, to properly think through different livelihood alternatives and then learn what is required in order to put them into practice.

Box 7 illustrates experience from Belize from one organisation that has already developed a process when they initiate work with communities which they regarded as essential in creating a basis of learning, understanding and trust between them and their target communities before starting to discuss specific activities and interventions.

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<tr>
<th>Box 7: TNC experience in the Discovery Phase</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Belize uses a process of Conservation Action Planning involving a series of stakeholder meetings and facilitated workshops which are used to develop their plans for activities on the ground. Among the key features of this process are:</td>
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<td>• The timeframe – the process takes at least 6 months of intensive work;</td>
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<td>• The process produces a document that is incorporated into the yearly work plans and budgets of the different organisations involved</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Stakeholder involvement is key – “everyone is sitting at the table. we get the best results when we have good stakeholder representation across the sectors”;</td>
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<td>• Different stakeholder groups are talked to separately as well as being involved in wider workshops;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• This approach has been used widely around the world.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source: Discussions during Workshop on Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification, Barbados: 9th May, 2013</td>
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Need to involve local people from the beginning

Participants in key informant discussions and in the regional workshop conducted as part of the FORCE research emphasised repeatedly how full engagement with local people from the very start of the process of facilitating livelihood change was critical. Box 8 illustrates, from the point of view of local people themselves, how outside agencies too often approach the process of livelihood change with a paternalistic attitude and perceive their role as being one of "helping" people to bring about change.

Finding innovative ways of engaging with local people can also be critical. The cases in Box 9 show the importance of taking time to simply talk and interact with the community, or ways of engaging with them that are locally appropriate can make an important contribution to levels of participation and trust between community members and facilitators, whether they are from within the community or from outside.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 8: Taking control of processes of livelihood change in Belize</th>
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<tr>
<td>In discussing how processes of livelihood change are often approached by development agencies, a participant from a community-based organisation in Belize at the FORCE Workshop on Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification described the prevailing attitude among outside agencies: “...people often say ‘oh these poor people, we have to come in and save them’. We’re not objects. We are finding ways of understanding what is happening to us, we have solutions – for example the foundation I have set up is to teach, inform and inspire people. Imagine you are a native but you are talked about but not at the table. Why aren’t people like me in a position to create solutions?.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: Discussions during Workshop on Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification, Barbados: 9th May, 2013</td>
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Importance of getting local leaders engaged

The role of local leadership in mobilising public involvement and creating a more positive environment for creative thinking about livelihood change was a recurring theme in the discussions held during the research. This might mean working with informal or religious leaders in the community who command the respect of people and are regarded as leaders of change, as well as political or administrative figures who might have more formal roles. The case from St. Kitts and Nevis in Box 10 illustrates this.

Box 9: Experience from St. Lucia and Belize in engaging with local communities

A participant from the Workshop on Sustainable Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification talked about her experience as a researcher in St. Lucia where she spent her first period in the field not worrying about doing interviews or asking specific questions but simply immersing herself in typical community activities, such as going to the market, attended karaoke and going to cock fights. This allowed local people first to learn about her, to the point where they felt comfortable with her and were convinced that she was genuinely interested in what they did. Only then did she start talking to people about her research. “In the ‘Discovery’ stage sometimes you have to sit back, learn about the culture and be humble.”

In Belize, as a means of engaging people who were proving not very supportive of initiatives being planned by a local community-based organisation, a barbecue on the beach was organised for people in the community and this proved to be an effective way of engaging people and gaining their support and interest rather than holding more formal meetings.

Source: Discussions during Workshop on Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification, Barbados: 9th May, 2013

Box 10: Getting local leaders on board in St. Kitts and Nevis

Experience by the Community Development Department on Nevis has shown that working closely with local leadership is a key to working successfully within any community. This might mean ensuring that formal leaders within the community are well-informed of what is going on and are seen to be supportive and in agreement with the process of community mobilisation. But it can also mean talking with informal leaders, such as the leaders of church groups, local activists, elder members of the community, or simply people whose opinions are widely respected and whose examples are likely to be followed by others. When they are identified with care, these figures can become champions for the process of livelihood change and focal points who can facilitate the process of initial contact with community members and acceptance of outside facilitators. During discussions with Community Development Officers on Nevis, the important role that these local leaders can play in communicating effectively with people in terms that they respond to and understand was also emphasised.

Source: Discussions during Workshop on Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification, Barbados: 9th May, 2013

3.2 Dreaming

Livelihood change is generally approached from a relatively short-term perspective with the focus on developing specific activities - having a longer-term vision for the future is important

In initiatives to support livelihood change, the emphasis from the agencies involved is often on the implementation of specific activities that will produce "visible" results as soon as possible. This often leads to a failure to keep the goal of the process - supporting people to develop better livelihoods - in focus. Taking time to support people in thinking through what they are trying to achieve and take a longer-term perspective when approaching livelihood change is therefore important. It helps people to understand that there may be different ways of achieving the same end results and that they need to make choices about how to achieve those results.
Adopting this more long-term perspective can help the people involved to see the specific livelihood activities that they eventually end-up implementing as a means to an end, rather than an end in themselves. If one activity proves to be unsuccessful, they can go back and think about other possible alternative options that might help them to achieve the same end. This capacity to adapt what they do will often be the key to long-term sustainability of livelihood change, as no one livelihood option is likely to remain viable indefinitely.

**Having a broader vision of what a community, group of people or organisation are trying to achieve creates a stronger incentive for sustained involvement**

Where processes of livelihood change are approached with a broader objective in mind, it can help to create a basis for engagement that is more sustainable in the long-term. In Belize, where a community-based organisation was working on encouraging livelihood diversification as part of a broader programme of valuing local cultural resources and strengthening people’s sense of their cultural identity, this context was recognised as contributing to people’s sense of participation and ownership of the whole process. The lack of success in one specific activity did not mean that the process was abandoned and alternative activities were identified which could contribute to achieving the overall goal of strengthening people’s engagement in the community’s long-term development.

**Exposing people to positive experience of livelihood change**

While experience with this element in facilitating livelihood change was generally limited in the study sites, participants in the regional workshop emphasised how encouraging people to think creatively about their future aspirations could contribute to adopting a more positive attitude to livelihood change. The importance of creating opportunities for people to be exposed to new possibilities and ideas as part of this was also recognised.

The case in Box 11 illustrates how important giving people access to positive experience can be in encouraging the development of a vision for the future.

**Box 11: Encouraging positive thinking in Barbados**

During the workshop on Sustainable Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification, a participant from Barbados commented that there is often a tendency to reflect on past negative experience and this can block people developing a more positive attitude to possible future change. In the town of Oistins in Barbados, a popular area for both tourists and locals well-known for its handicraft market and outdoor restaurants, local people were considering instituting guided walking tours around the community for visiting tourists. Initial resistance to the idea was overcome in part by getting local people to see what had been done along similar lines in other communities on the island and recognising that Oistins actually had considerably more potential compared to other places where such tours had already been organised successfully. Being shown concrete examples of successful change was identified as important.

*Source: Discussions during Workshop on Sustainable Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification, Barbados: 9th May, 2013*

### 3.3 Direction

The process of planning and implementing new livelihood activities is what agencies generally do best - but sustainability depends on the groundwork done during the previous stages of Discovery and Dreaming.

Agencies involved in supporting livelihood change generally tend to jump straight to the identification and planning of specific new livelihood activities. Often these are activities that outside agencies have identified as having potential or which have been seen to be successful in other places. However, if they have not
spent time to learn about local conditions in detail, and, most importantly, if they have not given local people the chance to think through their own livelihoods and what sort of changes they want to bring about, the chances of success are limited.

Thinking about specific options for livelihood change needs to be rooted in a good understanding of what people already do, what they are good at, and what they aspire to for the future. Particularly if local people are to take full ownership of the process of changing their own livelihoods, they need to identify the need for new types of activity themselves based on their own analysis. Only then should they think about what sort of activities might be appropriate for them and how they might be implemented. This is the point at which new ideas can be effectively introduced by outside agencies as long as they match the existing capacity of local people and fit in with their livelihood priorities.

**Identifying options for livelihood change needs to be an iterative process**

Identifying specific actions to bring about livelihood change is not a "one-off" event - it needs to be an iterative process where different options are identified, explored and their real potential analysed in detail. The example in Box 12 from St. Kitts and Nevis highlights some of the challenges involved in getting people to think through what is likely to be appropriate for them and giving them the chance to think through different alternatives in order to identify livelihood options that match their capacity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 12: Supporting livelihood change in St. Kitts and Nevis</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Community Development Department on Nevis helps community members to identify and develop the skills they need for economic or personal development. Through community councils, town hall meetings and needs assessments they get people’s input about the sort of areas of support they are interested in which enables them to create a list of priorities, for example of the types of training that people think might be most useful. During the training, they always try to provide participants with hands-on experience, for example for those following an electrical course, they pair participants with a company so they can get experience and potentially a job – this provides motivation. One obstacle can be that people are afraid of the unknown, and they don’t like to take risks if they are not sure that it will lead to economic development in the longer term. People are not always optimistic and getting them to think more positively can be a challenge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source: Focus Group Discussion: Nevis Community Development Department, Charlestown: 24th March, 2012</td>
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</table>

Enhancing or diversifying livelihoods often requires new skills and knowledge that some people may not have access to

Lack of appropriate skills and knowledge is often an important obstacle for people in addressing positive livelihood change. Coastal communities, where people have often traditionally focused on activities that make use of marine resources, often have relatively limited access to education and not all their skills are readily transferrable to new types of livelihood activity. The disadvantages that they face are illustrated by the difficulties that they often have in taking up new types of activities related to tourism that require skills and knowledge that they lack.

**Capacity-building plays an important role, but it needs to be supported by other forms of support to enable people to use new skills and knowledge**

Agencies supporting livelihood change often focus on providing new skills and knowledge to people through training, but then fail to help them in gaining access to the other types of support that people will often need in order to take up a new activity. Gaining access to finance is often key if people want to invest
in a new activity, but all too often capacity-building and training is not well-linked with appropriate credit or finance in order to make full use of that new capacity. The case in Box 13 from Honduras illustrates how providing training without this type of support can often mean that people never have the opportunity to actually put their training into practice.

Experiences like this highlight how important it is to understand local conditions fully before initiating any initiative to promote livelihood change, as the factors that influence whether an activity is likely to be viable in the long-term or not can be complex.

**Marketing is often a problem and is not addressed very effectively by many initiatives**

Although many efforts to support livelihood change focus on helping people to produce new goods and services, the marketing aspects of these new activities is often not addressed very effectively. Detailed analysis of the market for new goods and services is rarely carried out and, perhaps more importantly, the local people involved in new activities are rarely given the opportunity to learn themselves how to understand and engage with new marketing opportunities.

**Box 13: Problems in making full use of training in Utila, Honduras**

In Utila, further education provided by a national trade school, INFOP, aimed to help people to diversify their livelihoods. The local municipality engaged INFOP to provide a series of skills training, ranging from carpentry to sewing, wine and vinegar making and baking. Following successful completion of a course, participants would receive a national trade certificate and equipment to start up new activities. However, long-term success of this initiative has been variable. Uptake of skills to improve or start a business has not been as widespread as hoped. Participants of a wine and vinegar course on Utila, for example, commented that while some had applied new skills in existing restaurant jobs, most participants had not succeeded in starting a new business because of difficulties in organising themselves as a group to reduce the high transportation costs of supplies. A baking course on Utila Cays, which provided participants with new stoves and baking equipment, had not always succeeded in helping participants start or develop business ventures. Participants learnt new Spanish style baking recipes and techniques, and received a new stove, but there had been little emphasis on providing the skills they might need to start a new business, or further training or finances to support this. While one participant had been able to establish a home-baking business, for some other participants “nothing has changed since the course” and, for one, the new stove had remained in storage since the training. Restricted space on Utila Cays was also identified as a constraint. As one participant put it “…the thing is with the Cays is that it’s really small. There is nowhere to build. If you can’t do it in your own backyard you can’t do it. There’s no room for new businesses”. Such experiences point to the challenges associated with supporting livelihood change.

*Source: WP2 Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification Focus Group; East Harbour, 03/08/2011; Utila Cays 01/08/2011*

In some cases, organisations promoting livelihood diversification may take on a marketing role themselves in order to support activities that they have promoted - for example, NGOs may provide marketing outlets for handicrafts made by local groups. However, the long-term sustainability of such solutions is doubtful and much more attention needs to be paid to how people can be supported to deal with the market and link their new activities to new market outlets.

**Access to sustainable finance is a widespread issue - many initiatives provide grants, but these do not necessarily provide the on-going access to financial support required for a new business**

Many livelihood support initiatives use grant funds to provide initial capital for new activities and businesses. This can be an important first step in helping people to take up new opportunities, but it is often limited in scope and does not constitute a substitute for sustainable access to bank loans and credit institutions which are often critical for the continuing functioning of a new business and to make the further investments often required to maintain competitiveness and take advantage of new opportunities as they arise.
The case from Honduras in Box 14 illustrates both the importance of small grants and the limitations that people developing new businesses often face.

### 3.4 Doing

**On-going access to support for livelihood change is often needed.**

Even when people successfully initiate new livelihood activities, they often lack access to the sort of support they need to continually adapt what they are doing to changing circumstances and new opportunities. In part, this can be because support to livelihoods change often comes in the form of projects which have a limited time span and a limited budget that has to be spent within a clearly defined period, whereas the process of livelihood change is often long-term and requires flexible support.

This emphasises how important it is for support to livelihood change to be embedded in local institutions and agencies that will remain in place after the end of specific projects or initiatives from outside agencies. Making an effort to involve government agencies and local NGOs, and strengthen their capacity to provide this kind of on-going support, can be important.

**Monitoring and evaluation of livelihood initiatives is important - monitoring needs to be done by the people directly concerned and made appropriate to their needs**

A large proportion of initiatives to support livelihood change only monitor the way in which agencies' money is being spent and whether activities happen on time. They very rarely take the time to understand what sort of impacts their interventions are having on people's livelihoods, and final evaluations are only occasionally carried out.

One issue is that the real impacts of livelihood interventions are often only visible long after a project has been completed and there is rarely the chance of carrying out evaluations of impacts once an agency has completed an intervention.

Efforts to get local people to monitor their own activities and learn how to use information about progress to improve what they do can help to establish mechanisms that will enable outside agencies to also understand what sort of impacts they are having simply by tapping into information that people are already collecting. This means that monitoring and evaluation approaches need to be made appropriate to local people's capacity to use them and not be too intrusive or demanding in terms of the data they generate.

**Continuous mentoring and support is important**

Experience from Barbados in mentoring young entrepreneurs highlighted the importance of building the confidence of people undertaking a process of livelihood change (Box 15). People attempting to take up new livelihood activities often need to be introduced to new ways of operating, new markets and new sources of support. Their efforts to change can be stimulated and sustained if they are constantly being

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**Box 14: Access to financing for livelihood change Honduras**

In recognition of the growing opportunities to expand tourism related enterprises on Utila, the Ministry of Tourism has made use of Inter-American Development Bank funds to provide training and small grants for existing micro-enterprises to develop and expand. In East Harbour, Karl, owner of a small restaurant, has been the recipient of two such programmes of support; claiming “...they have tried to help Utila become an attraction for tourists ... they help my business because they think it can attract tourists...”

Another local entrepreneur working in tourism described how his business had been supported by a number of bank loans but generally that he could only access small short-term loans which required him to make an immediate profit and put up everything he owned as collateral. This constrained his capacity to make longer-term investments in his business.

Source: WP2 In-depth household interviews, East Harbour, July & August 2011.
exposed to new ideas and new experiences. Having individuals or organisations that can provide this sort of mentoring can play a key role in maintaining people's commitment and engagement.

Box 15: Mentoring young entrepreneurs in Barbados

The Barbados Youth Business Trust (BYBT) support entrepreneurs by providing business mentors from the wider community who give up their time as volunteers, provide networking opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs and training. These mentors work closely with young business people to help them gradually develop and refine their ideas and their visions for what they would like to achieve and how to achieve it. The final decision of what is needed is up to the person/entrepreneur – it is their business – and they need to be involved right from the beginning in developing their own business ideas, understanding the requirements of donors who might be providing them with support, and seeing if they can be meshed with their own needs. So the mentors need to listen, first of all, to the needs of entrepreneurs. The BYBT had an entrepreneur who came to them who was making jewellery from coral washed up on the beach. Through selling the jewellery she was also educating people about the reef, its function and the importance of protecting it. She was previously employed in other work but had a passion for starting her own business. Also she grew up by the sea and her family were involved in fishing so she was utilising the knowledge from her family. Sharing her knowledge with others had the potential to help to sustain the reef. BYBT helped to assess the viability of her business, the materials she was using, the brand and markets, training and support system that was in place or was needed. The final decision of what is needed is up to the person/entrepreneur – it is their business.

Source: Discussions during Workshop on Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification, Barbados: 9th May, 2013
4. GUIDANCE ON LIVELIHOOD CHANGE

Based on the findings of the field research and discussions from the Workshop on Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification, held on the 9th May 2013 in Barbados, as well as on broader global experience of programmes of support to livelihood change, some key guidance is presented below. This guidance aims to provide some essential points that agencies or individuals involved in such programmes need to keep in mind when designing and implementing their interventions.

4.1 The Discovery Phase

- **Allow enough time and resources for the process of initial engagement**

How the initial contact between outside facilitators and the community is handled, the approaches used in engaging with local people and learning from them about their livelihoods are of key importance in determining the later outcomes of whatever livelihood change activities might be taken up with them.

The importance of creativity in finding appropriate means of engaging with people and learning from them cannot be overemphasised. Allowing adequate time to become familiar with the community, building relationships of trust and confidence before intervening, learning from local people about what they do and valuing their local knowledge, being systematic in engaging with different groups within the community, ensuring that relationships with local leaders and institutions are established and maintained - all of these require prior preparation and care once the process has been initiated.

Outside facilitators should approach the process of learning about the community with an open mind and make no assumptions about what is or is not important. Allowing time to simply observe and listen to what is going on in the community and immersing themselves as much as possible in the local environment can help to understand local priorities which may be very different from those of outside agencies.

The time allowed by agencies for this period of learning is often far too short as the emphasis tends to be on intervening as soon as possible so that the available resources can be disbursed quickly. These artificially short timeframes are often imposed by donor demands for quick action. But both planners and donors need to understand how important it is to create space for this joint learning about the complexities of people's livelihoods, and to build a relationship with people before introducing new livelihood ideas.

This requirement for adequate time for proper learning at the start of any initiative needs to be recognised not as a “luxury” but as an essential requirement if subsequent initiatives are to succeed. The ultimate sustainability of the ideas for livelihood change that eventually emerge may well depend on this process being handled properly.

- **Establish a process of joint learning involving both outside facilitators and local people**

Most agencies involved in supporting livelihood change carry out some kind of preliminary study which aims to understand better what people do as part of their livelihoods, perhaps to establish a baseline of current conditions against which future changes can be monitored. In particular, these preliminary studies or research often focus on identifying problems and issues. The emphasis also tends to be on enabling outside facilitators to learn as much as possible so that they can design appropriate interventions or projects.
A key element that is often missing at this preliminary stage is the need to establish a process of joint learning involving both outside facilitators and local people. While outside facilitators need to learn more about local conditions, it is more important still for local people themselves to be facilitated in understanding their own livelihoods in new ways and seeing where changes might be necessary or desirable.

- **Build adaptive capacity to address future change**

The changes that are affecting communities in the Caribbean at present are likely to continue into the future. Being able to incorporate continuous change into livelihood strategies will require becoming more adaptive and will be more effective than just attempting to resolve current issues. This means building people's capacity to analyse current change, recognise the need for change in their livelihoods, assessing different options for change and making informed choices about which of those options are likely to be most appropriate for them.

- **Allow time to establish trust in the community**

The initial process of discovery and learning should not be limited to activities that focus on collecting or extracting data, but need to include, particularly at the beginning, time to simply observe and listen to what is going on, immersed as much as possible in the local environment. The learning process, for outside facilitators, needs to be carried out with an open mind and with no assumptions about what is, or is not, important.

- **Adopt a positive approach while exploring what people already do**

Usually, when outside agencies are making contact with local communities, the emphasis in discussion tends to be on what is wrong with people's current situation. It is important to shift this emphasis to focus more on what is right about what people do – what are their strengths, capacities, skills and knowledge that can support the change process in positive ways. It is through helping people to understand these strengths, and appreciate them, that the basis for future change is established.

During the initial learning process with any group of people, issues and problems are likely to emerge as well, but it is of fundamental importance that the relationship established between outside facilitators and local people during this initial engagement should be positive and that outsiders do not present themselves as those who have come to “solve your problems”.

- **Build local people's self-esteem**

Part of the "positive" approach described above should include encouraging local people to “tell their stories”, and appreciating the achievements that they describe in those stories (however small they may be) and the skills and capacities that they demonstrate, and so building people's self-esteem and confidence. This is a critical part of enabling people to then undertake a process of livelihood change where they will be taking the lead (as opposed to simply be recipients of outside help) and be empowered to bring about change themselves, rather than relying purely on outside help.

- **Take time to understand and value local and traditional knowledge**

As part of the joint learning process, local and traditional knowledge needs to be understood, valued and incorporated into people’s overall understanding of local livelihoods. This will help to build self-confidence
and self-esteem among local people who see their knowledge and experience being appreciated, and is also likely to contribute important insights into local conditions and how people adapt to those conditions.

- **Work at different levels**

  During this initial process of engaging with communities and learning about local conditions, facilitators need to work at several levels.

  - In the surrounding area, whether defined as an administrative unit, or a specific geographical area, it is important to make contact with key institutions, agencies, organisations, informal institutions and individuals who are either knowledgeable about local conditions or are likely to influence what happens at the community level.

  - In the community at large, facilitators need to identify and understand the resources that the community has, the institutions that support it and the trends and changes that have affected the community (e.g. migration, new road etc.). This is essential in order to place what they learn from individuals and households in context and understand how they fit into wider processes affecting the community as a whole. It will also be important to understand the diversity of different people present in the community so that facilitators can be sure that they engage with as wide a range of people as possible. This should take account of the different social and ethnic groups present in the community, the different livelihood strategies people engage in, and the relative levels of well-being, poverty or social marginalisation of different groups.

  - At the household and individual level, facilitators need to develop as in-depth an understanding as possible of the different elements in the livelihoods of people in the community concerned. This needs to explore the different activities that different people within households are involved in (e.g. paying particular attention to the roles of women as opposed to men, and the young and old as opposed to adults), how households have adapted to changes in the past, how they deal with seasonal changes, what sources of support they draw on (including family, friends, institutions, informal networks, etc.), what sort of outcomes people achieve and what the aspirations for the future are. It is important in these discussions with individuals and households that they also are given the opportunity to analyse their livelihoods in new ways and appreciate the value of what they already know and do.

- **Use a diverse range of facilitation tools (but remember that they are just tools)**

  Participatory research tools, such as participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools and techniques for carrying out participatory research, can be particularly useful during this initial phase of engagement. However, care should be taken not to overemphasise the importance of the outputs of these tools – activities such as resource mapping, seasonal calendars, matrices to analysis different activities and transect walks can be very useful if they become effective tools for local people to analyse for themselves what they do and communicate their knowledge. But the facilitators of the process should remember that the objective of the exercise is the knowledge it generates, both for them as facilitators and for local people - the objective is not to produce that knowledge in a specific format such as a sketch map or a nice-looking diagram. Often, a well-planned and conducted semi-structured interview, which becomes a relaxed and stimulating discussion between local people and outside facilitators, will be the single most effective tool for encouraging effective learning by all involved.
• **Engage with the diversity of people in the community**

Facilitators need to engage with as diverse a range as possible of different households and individuals that “represent” groups with distinct characteristics. Particular attention needs to be paid to identifying the poorer and more vulnerable groups in the community, which, depending on the setting, might include women, the aged, youth, the disabled or people belonging to marginalised social or ethnic groups. Often engaging effectively with these groups takes more time and more effort but their involvement is essential.

• **Build effective communication at an early stage**

The communication process during this learning phase needs to be two-way, between facilitators and the agencies they work with, and local people. Finding a “common language” and effective means of communication between local people and outside facilitators will often require time and patience. Facilitators need to be constantly paying attention to how they are communicating with people, the language they are using and how people understand the messages that they deliver.

Much more attention also needs to be paid to ensuring that local people have means of communicating their concerns to outside agencies. This can include formal mechanisms, like regular meetings or feedback, as well as more informal processes where local people can communicate their concerns and priorities, as well as their own perceptions of what is being done and the results that are being achieved.

The basis for this two-way communication, which is likely to be important throughout the process of any intervention, needs to be laid during this first phase when outside agencies and local people come into contact and the mode of communication between them is established.

• **Identify and mobilise support from local leaders and champions**

For outside facilitators to be accepted within the community and by local people, the role of local leaders, whether formal or informal, will often be critical. Where they understand the process that facilitators are trying to initiate and are committed to it themselves, they may also be able to mobilise initial participation by people to take part in the process of joint learning undertaken during this first phase of work. Understanding the dynamics of power surrounding local leaders is also important – different parts of the same community may have very different forms of leadership. Where leaders are also innovators they can stimulate innovation throughout the rest of the community as well.

### 4.2 The Dreaming Phase

• **Create time and space to allow people to think through their aspirations for the future**

The importance of taking time to work with people to develop strong visions for the future cannot be over-emphasised. This helps people to see their livelihoods in a longer-term perspective and think more constructively about livelihood change. This can play an important role in ensuring that they identify (during the next phase) options for change that are coherent, based on their existing strengths and experience, and inherently more sustainable, rather than simply picking random options offered by outside agencies.

In some cultures and with some groups of people, the idea of sitting down and thinking freely about the conditions that you aspire to in the future, what you would like to achieve and experience over the next 10 or 20 years, might come quite naturally. But in other places and cultures, people may initially be reluctant.
Especially among poorer people, the idea of thinking further into the future than a few days or weeks may be unfamiliar. A considerable amount of facilitation and encouragement will often be required.

This process of visioning future change and the conditions that people aspire to makes a key contribution to the livelihood change process. It can be difficult to encourage people to “dream” creatively about the future simply because they have never had the opportunity to do this before. In this regard, the level of stimulus that people have received at an early age to think positively and creatively about the future is likely to be important and the type of education that people have had may play a role as well. Where people have been encouraged to think critically and express their hopes and aspirations for the future, this process will be more familiar and less challenging.

- **Encourage different groups of people to develop diverse visions**

Different people will have different visions and this diversity in their visions should be encouraged. A common mistake in visioning is to immediately aim at producing a "community" vision, or some kind of common vision among a large group of people. This tends to lead to "visions" that hide the diversity that inevitably exists within any group of people. Farmers and fishers, women and men, old people and young people, the poor and the wealthy, shop-keepers, hotel workers, fish processors and dive operators are all likely to have different visions of what they would like to achieve in the future and this diversity needs to be captured. After people have developed these diverse visions, the process of seeking common elements can begin.

- **Be aware of the potential for conflict, and convergence – visioning needs to be done by groups who are likely to have at least some key elements of their vision in common**

The process of developing a vision during the Dreaming Phase needs to be carried out with groups of people who have at least some interests and aspirations in common. Within any group, there will be some variations and individual aspirations not necessarily shared by others, but careful work during the learning phase should allow people who are likely to have certain core values and aspirations in common to be identified. This can help to deal with the risk of conflicting at this stage.

- **Pay careful attention to the approach used to facilitate this visioning**

The approach used when facilitating people to develop a vision for the future will clearly be of considerable importance. Finding ways of exposing people to the experience of others, either through visits or meetings, might help to stimulate the visioning process and catalyse more creative thinking among people who are reluctant to think about future positive change.

- **Encourage people to link their visions for the future to what they already do and their existing strengths**

The emphasis at this stage should be on encouraging people to develop visions that are linked with their existing strengths and capacities.

These visions should:

- be as inclusive as possible, creating space for individual aspirations, as well as possibilities for common interest groups and areas of consensus for the future for the whole community
- include both short-term goals (that can be achieved quickly to build the confidence and capacity of the people involved), as well as longer-term aspirations
• be grounded in people’s existing capacities, skills and knowledge and build upon them
• be challenging and aspirational, but also realistic and achievable

Key questions that facilitators might pose during this phase include:

• What would you like the group or community to be like in 5 years?
• Describe the conditions you would find if the community achieved that condition that you aspire to?
• How would it feel?
• What would you see?

• Get people to share and respect each other’s visions, and identify those elements that require collective action to be achieved

Once common-interest groups have thought about their aspirations for the future, it is important that they have the chance to learn from the visions that other people in the same community have developed. This can help to give them new ideas for themselves and, perhaps most importantly, identify common aspirations that may become the basis for action by the wider community. Reflection on the similarities (and differences) between the different visions of different groups of people in a community can help to build community spirit and respect for the different needs of different people.

• Introduce new ideas where appropriate in order to make people’s aspirations more challenging

While the emphasis will be on grounding people’s visions for the future and for livelihood change in their existing strengths and capacities, there will also be scope for introducing new ideas. Participants often need to be encouraged at this stage to broaden the scope of their vision for the future through introducing them to what other communities or groups in similar conditions have done. They also often need to be encouraged to develop visions that encompass, not just ‘activities’ such as income-generation, but also their social and economic relationships, their ability to influence the process of change and their capacity to adapt in the future.

• Close mentoring and facilitation in helping people to develop challenging, but achievable, visions for the future may be required.

Visions need to be “holistic” in the sense that they should both address the basic needs of community members or the groups concerned, as well as being concerned with wider issues and broader changes in people’s conditions and situations. Achieving this balance is important because people’s visions also need to include elements that can be addressed in the short-term through immediate action, as this can play an important role in catalysing people and helping them to gain confidence that they can achieve their aspirations. The identification of some action that people can carry out immediately is a common strategy in the visioning process, as it creates momentum and builds cohesion within the group involved.

• Involve local leaders in catalysing the process of developing visions for the future

If local leaders commit to the idea of developing a vision (for the community, for groups, or for themselves) others may be more likely to follow. Their involvement early on so that they understand what is being attempted and have bought into the process is likely to be important.
4.3 The Direction Phase

**Encourage people to think of different ways in which they can achieve the end results that they aspire to**

It is important to encourage people to recognize that there are likely to be several different pathways that they can pursue in order to achieve their visions. A key part of building capacity among people to make better, more informed choices about livelihood change is to enable them to identify, compare, analyze and select those different pathways. These pathways can be thought of as alternative “strategies” for achieving a vision. Once a choice has been made about which pathway to pursue, then the specific activities that might be carried out by people in order to travel along that pathway can be thought through. Even then, it is important to realize that there may be more than one option for the specific activities that different people or groups might develop – whether they be new income-generating activities, or new forms of organization, or new types of collective action. Each of these options needs to be scoped out in detail before definitive choices are made and detailed planning of how to actually do those activities is carried out.

**Encourage local people to take the lead as much as possible**

Outside agencies supporting the process of livelihood change will often tend to “take over” this process rather than supporting local people to do it themselves. Particularly when it comes to scoping out activities, it is all too easy to assume that local people do not have the skills, or will take too long to do it, and “experts” are called in to do it for them. This will often result in local people who have never had the chance to really understand what it is that determines whether a livelihood activity is likely to be viable, feasible and sustainable or not. As a result, when project support is withdrawn, or when circumstances change and their new activity faces problems or obstacles, they do not necessarily know what it is they should be looking at in order to identify or overcome the problem. Where outsiders take the lead, unsustainability often ends up being built into the activity because they have not empowered local people to take the lead themselves.

**Be creative in thinking of ways in which local people can be encouraged to do the analysis required at this stage**

A key challenge during this phase of analyzing options and determining which options are most appropriate is to find appropriate ways in which local people can be encouraged and supported to carry out the analysis required to really understand what will make a new livelihood activity sustainable or otherwise.

Some important points to be kept in mind during this phase include:

- the importance of exposing people to the experience of others so that they see concrete examples of how things can be done;
- creating opportunities for discussions with other people carrying out different livelihood activities so that they can talk about their experience, their successes and the challenges they have faced in their own language (rather than in the terms used by “experts”);
- illustrating different options, and helping people to think through their possible outcomes or impacts (for example using participatory scenario analysis);
• encouraging people to prioritise different options in order to come to consensus decisions about what is best for them;

• encouraging people to think through risks and how they can deal with them.

• **Approach this phase as a process – from an initial brainstorming of possibilities to gradually more focused ideas planned out in detail**

Thinking through options for livelihood change and planning how to implement them should not be reduced to one single planning exercise. From their visions, people need to first brainstorm the different options and ways (or strategies) they might use to achieve their visions. Then they can start thinking through in detail how they can put those into action, identifying specific activities, thinking about how those activities would be carried out, what resources are required, what skills and capacities, who would be involved, and how they would actually be implemented.

People will often tend to want to immediately identify specific activities, but they should be encouraged to first of all identify overall strategies and then think about the specific activities that they would carry out to implement it. Again, they should think about activities bearing in mind what they already know, and what the potential difficulties they might encounter with each would be. Careful mentoring/facilitation during this process is likely to be important.

• **Each activity that people identify needs to be thought through ("scoped") in detail in order to determine how feasible and viable it is likely to be.**

Before activities are planned in detail, a process is required in order to determine whether they actually are feasible and whether they will be viable in the long term. This means: looking at the human, physical and financial resources required; assessing what sort of impacts that activity might have on other people, other activities being carried out, and on the environment; looking carefully at the skills and knowledge required and how they can be developed; looking at the market for whatever goods and services are being produced; understanding what sort of competition might be involved and what advantages local people might have in the market; looking at market trends to understand how the market might change in the future; thinking carefully about the roles of the different people who would need to be involved.

• **Deal with potential weaknesses and obstacles after different options have been identified**

In order to maintain the positive energy and momentum that the Dreaming Phase should have created, the discussion of weaknesses and possible obstacles should ideally wait until people have actually thought about what it is they should be doing to achieve their visions. For example, if they have identified as part of their vision, that they would like to see a community where young people are anxious to stay and live rather than migrating elsewhere, they might identify several different strategies for achieving that, such as: 1) creating employment based in the community; 2) strengthening the social life of the community; 3) ensuring that basic goods and services are available in the community; 4) ensuring that young people participate in decision-making in the community. When talking through these different options, that is when the discussion should also think about possible problems, weaknesses, issues, obstacles and barriers to implementing that particular option. People will also need to be reminded to think about the skills, strengths and capacities that they have which can contribute to implementing the different strategies they are considering. And their choices regarding which are most appropriate for them should be based on careful thought about how they can use their strengths and capacity to address problems and obstacles in each strategy.
• **Scenario analysis of different options, involving everyone concerned, can be a powerful tool to help prioritise and select which is most appropriate**

Participatory scenario analysis, where the implications of pursuing different strategies to achieve visions, and selecting one activity over another, are thought through in a transparent and easily understandable way, can be a powerful tool at this stage. Having as much information about the different strategies and activities to feed into this process is also important.

• **Encourage people to take risk into consideration**

During the process of scoping out options, people will often need to be encouraged to think about the risks involved in new activities. Some of these risks they may not be familiar with and facilitators may need to be creative in finding ways of ensuring that people really understand what these risks are and how they might be affected by them.

• **As planning on specific initiatives develops, encourage people to refer back to their vision**

Keeping people “true” to their original vision and the objectives they have set themselves is important. This does not mean that those objectives have to stay unchanged, but if they do change, people need to go back and “re-visit” their vision and adapt it to changing circumstances. The feedback from on-going Discovery Phase activities (learning and observing) is important here.

• **Once more specific activities have been identified, they need to be planned out with goals, objectives and budgets**

Detailed planning is critical, once these other processes have been undertaken. It is not worth planning out an activity in detail only to discover afterwards that it is not really viable. If the preparatory work before hand in assessing feasibility and viability has been done thoroughly, the process of planning out the implementation will, in any case, become much easier.

• **Prioritization can help to build consensus over action**

For achieving consensus over what should be done (particularly where a group of people are involved), a process of prioritization to decide which actions are most important, which need to be done first and what can be implemented later, can be useful. Carried out by local people themselves, supported by the facilitation team, it can make the process of identifying actions transparent and ensure ownership and buy-in by all concerned.

• **Identify what local people can put into actually implementing different activities, then identify where outside support might be required**

As part of the process of identifying what people can do to improve their livelihoods, it is important to think, first of all, about what they can do with their own, existing resources: how can they use their skills and knowledge; what resources can they mobilise; what tools and equipment do they already have or know how to use. Then the gaps can be identified and ideas developed about how to get outside support to fill in those gaps. These might include: new skills and knowledge; equipment and tools; financial inputs; marketing support; support from institutions and agencies that regulate those activities.
4.4 The Doing Phase

- **Ensuring that livelihood change activities actually get implemented depends on the degree of engagement with local people**

If many projects aiming at supporting livelihood change or encouraging people to diversify and enhance their livelihoods remain “on the desk” and never actually get put into action, it is largely because they have been developed with limited involvement of the people directly concerned. So the key to actually doing things during the Doing Phase is to be thorough in engaging with people in the previous three stages of Discovery, Dreaming and Direction. If these have been done well, and sufficient time has been allowed for them to be done with local people taking the lead, then local people themselves should have taken ownership of the initiative and will ensure that it ends up being implemented.

- **Make sure that people will have access to the new knowledge and skills they are likely to require in order to make their new activities work**

Once people begin to implement new livelihood activities, even where these make use of their existing skills and knowledge, they are likely to require capacity-building in some form or another. There may be a need for new technical skills to work with new technology, for greater management capacity, and the ability to monitor the results of new activities. For some people their visions may involve owning and running a small business and business management skills will be essential as well as long-term business development support.

A key role for facilitating agencies is likely to be ensuring that people are able to access these new skills when they are required and building linkages with agencies, organisations or private service providers who can provide them. Where the activities being implemented are productive and involve market engagement, additional support is also often required to help people to understand and deal with the market, identify diverse market options and, on occasions, to organise themselves better to improve their ability to compete and negotiate with other market actors.

- **Monitoring and evaluation is important, but it needs to be appropriate to the needs of people**

The development of appropriate mechanisms for monitoring on-going activities and evaluating their impacts on people, is challenging. Complicated, intrusive procedures that make heavy demands on both facilitating agencies and local people in terms of generating, analysing and interpreting data are unlikely to prove practical or sustainable. However, monitoring procedures can be established that are understood by local people themselves and easy for them to implement, and provide them with data that they need. Monitoring systems need to focus on those criteria that are relevant for the people actually implementing activities and adapt the monitoring requirements of supporting agencies accordingly.

Evaluation of the impacts of livelihood support activities is rarely carried out, not least because there is seldom enough time allowed within the scope of livelihood support projects to actually see the impacts, let alone measure them. Paradoxically, there is increasing demand from donors that agencies implementing livelihoods support activities to “demonstrate impact” although the timeframes within which they are expected to do this are often unrealistic. As a result, “impact” frequently ends up being simply interpreted in terms of money spent and infrastructure or equipment delivered – the actual impacts that this may have had in terms of improving people’s livelihoods are rarely evaluated.
Feedback mechanisms within initiatives need to allow constant learning from experience on the ground and adjustment of the ways in which activities are implemented and supported. These mechanisms can include both formal meetings with the stakeholders involved to review progress, and more informal mechanisms that allow people to reflect on their experience and discuss changes that have taken place. This process should also enable an on-going evaluation of impacts as they develop as well as implementation that adapts to changing circumstances.

- **Besides monitoring what they are doing, people need to know how to use the information that monitoring generates – they need to be able to learn from mistakes!**

The information generated by monitoring of new activities is useless unless people know how to use it and how to adapt what they are doing based on the lessons they learn from experience. So people have to be supported in recognising mistakes and adjusting their actions in order to avoid them in the future. This builds on the self-assessment process that should have been encouraged during the Discovery Phase.

- **Use feedback from experience to make the livelihood change iterative**

The process of livelihood change is continuous. Livelihoods evolve continually in response to changing conditions and people who are being supported to undertake livelihood change need to be encouraged to think about it as an on-going process. If they see that the benefits from one activity they have undertaken are declining, or if they are facing new risks or obstacles which they cannot easily deal with, they may need to go back and analyse what they are doing again (Discovery), think about where they would like to get to in the future based on their new experience (Dreaming), scope out options for change (Direction) and begin new activities or adopt a new strategy for livelihood change (Doing).

- **Create networks to provide on-going support for livelihood change**

The process of promoting livelihood change should emphasise the need for people to mobilise their own capacities and resources in order to take the lead in livelihood change. However, on-going support once they start implementing new ideas is usually important. This can take the form of financial support, to enable new activities to be taken up, seed capital, training and technical support, or help for people to interact with institutions and policy-makers. No single organisation is likely to be able to respond to all the different requirements that processes of livelihood change might generate, which could range from financing arrangements, technical inputs, or capacity building in diverse fields such as business management, group dynamics, leadership, accounting, marketing or information management. The emphasis should therefore be on creating a supportive network of agencies and organisations that can respond to the diverse demands of people and groups involved in livelihood change. Agencies and organisations that can provide the different skills and resources required need to be identified and encouraged to be responsive to demands being generated in the field.

Facilitating agencies, whether they are NGOs or government departments, need to ensure that these networks of government, civil society and private sector actors are in place to support the plans that individuals, groups and communities have developed for sustainable livelihood change.

- **Celebrate successes and make sure that people know about them – this can contribute to changing attitudes and mind-sets in the longer-term**

People’s attitudes are likely to change only once they see tangible benefits arriving from new activities. So it is important that, once benefits start arriving, people know about them and recognise them. They need to be celebrated and communicated.
4.5 Supporting Processes for Livelihood Change

Besides the key phases of the SLED process which have been used to structure this guidance, several critical supporting processes that need to underpin any process of facilitating livelihood change also need to be highlighted. These processes are not limited to any particular phase of the SLED process but require attention throughout.

**Figure 1: Key Supporting Processes for Livelihood Change**

- **Support people to have a voice**

  Both in the Caribbean and worldwide, experience with supporting livelihoods change indicates that when outside agencies make choices for the people directly concerned, the sustainability of new livelihood initiatives tends to be limited. Therefore it is critical that, right from the start, the emphasis of any livelihoods intervention should be on empowering people to make choices for themselves and giving them a voice in influencing their own future. This requires those facilitating the process to be listeners, learners and enablers. In other words, facilitators need to be willing to take a genuinely "facilitating" role rather than seeing themselves as the providers of solutions and knowledge.

  The process of supporting people to have a voice needs to start right from the beginning where, during initial engagement between outside facilitators and local people, facilitators should listen to what local people have to tell them about what they do, encourage them to tell their stories, value their knowledge and experience, and get them to focus on their strengths and capacities. This is critical in establishing a relationship between outside agencies and the people they work with where it is clear that both have contributions to make.

- **Build confidence and appreciate strengths**

  Enabling people to gain confidence in their own capacity to bring about change, and to recognise that they have strengths and skills that are valuable, is fundamental to any initiative that aims to bring about sustainable livelihood change. Where outside agencies simply provide alternative livelihood solutions, it generally undermines people’s confidence in their own capacities and establishes a relationship in which local people are defined as powerless to make their own choices and unable to find their own solutions. In contrast, where people’s confidence is built and their strengths are appreciated, their capacity to adapt in the future will also be built up. This will create the basis for people to take responsibility for their own livelihoods and for the need for future change in the face of a changing environment.
• **Establishing ownership of the process**

While outside facilitators may play an important role in initiating the process of livelihood change, their goal from the very start should be to establish that, ultimately, ownership of the process must lie with the people directly concerned. Clearly, ownership also means taking responsibility and assuming risks and, on occasions, people may need considerable support before they are prepared to assume those risks. Likewise, agencies supporting a process of livelihood change need to be ready to relinquish control, and this also represents a risk for them. However, it needs to be accepted that this is a fundamental part of the empowerment process that underpins sustainable livelihood change. Where agencies insist on keeping control of activities and resources, and local people are either unwilling or unable to take full responsibility, the chances of long-term success in bringing about positive change will be significantly reduced.

• **Establish systems for joint learning and feedback**

In the guidance above, it has already been mentioned that learning generated during a process of livelihood change needs to be learning both for local people and for outside facilitators. This joint learning process needs to be established early on and can then become the basis for a system of two-way information flow and feedback between the facilitating agency and the people they are working with. If these mechanisms are established and maintained, they can ensure that lessons generated from experience are learned by all concerned and that information needs for monitoring and evaluation purposes are satisfied in a way that is sustainable and valuable for everyone. On-going access to information is often a key part of the process of livelihood change and everyone involved - facilitators, local people undertaking new livelihood activities, local administrators, markets actors, customers - need to be able to access the information they need when they need it, and make proper use of that information.

Effective feedback mechanisms could take the form of regular meetings of all the stakeholders involved, simple monitoring tools the results of which can be widely shared, citizen's juries or feedback groups where the progress of interventions and initiatives are reviewed and evaluated, or any informal mechanisms that bring the different people concerned in an initiative into regular contact to exchange views and information.

• **Build partnerships**

Livelihoods are complex, and livelihood change, in any area or community, is liable to involve many different aspects of the life of individuals, households and communities. For example, a decision to pool resources within the community to build a new classroom for the local school could be an important activity that aims at changing livelihoods of everyone in the community by improving their access to education. Creating a food bank in the community to support poor households during times of difficulty or working with fishing households so that they can diversifying their fishing to be able to fish a wider set of resources throughout the year are all livelihood interventions.

Clearly, no single institution or organisation is likely to be able to provide the sort of support required across all the possible areas of people's livelihoods that they might decide need to be changed. Therefore it is essential that the idea of working in partnership becomes a central theme in any livelihoods initiative. Whatever the nature and area of focus of the agency that takes the lead, they need to be continually seeking out opportunities to link up with other organisations that can provide other skills and types of support so that the network of agencies involved can respond to the diversity of needs that any community or group is likely to identify as areas that require change.
Typically, facilitating agencies tend to focus on supporting livelihoods change only in those areas which they are specialised in and are often unprepared when local people identify other elements as requiring intervention. However, this diversity in the demand for support should be anticipated and prepared for by establishing linkages from the earliest stages of an intervention with other agencies that are likely to be able to play a role. Creating a local or regional level working group at the start of an intervention, where sectors, such as health, environment, public works, micro-finance, community development, education, agriculture, fisheries and livestock, are all involved, can help to ensure that this network of support is in place when it is required.

- **Fostering skills in leadership, innovation and enterprise**

Ensuring that local communities continue to evolve in a positive way, and take a proactive role in thinking about livelihood change in the future, will often depend on effective leadership in those communities, and an environment where innovation and enterprise by local people are encouraged.

Actively building leadership skills, whether in local formal institutions, or among informal leaders, can support this so that those who have the capacity to lead the community and influence people's perceptions are able to take the place of outside agencies in facilitating the process of livelihood change in the future.

Encouraging and rewarding innovative behaviour and enterprise, such as by establishing innovation funds or competitions for new ideas for local development, can have far-reaching impacts. It can create incentives for people who come up with new ideas to make those ideas public and celebrate the value of their ideas.

All of these six supporting processes need to be taken into consideration as an integral part of any livelihood support initiative. If they are thought through from the beginning, and sustained throughout an initiative, they can play an important role in ensuring that the local environment is transformed to one that enables positive livelihood change.
5. A CHECKLIST FOR SUPPORTING LIVELIHOOD CHANGE

This checklist provides a summary of bullet points from the above discussion.

### The Discovery Phase

- Allow enough time and resources for the process of initial engagement
- Establish a process of joint learning involving both outside facilitators and local people
- Build adaptive capacity to address future change
- Allow time to establish trust in the community
- Adopt a positive approach while exploring what people already do
- Build local people's self-esteem
- Take time to understand and value local and traditional knowledge
- Work at different levels (e.g. with households, with common interest groups, with communities, with local government and with higher level agencies, legislators and policy makers)....
- Use a diverse range of facilitation tools (but remember that they are just tools)
- Engage with the diversity of people in the community
- Build effective communication at an early stage
- Identify and mobilise support from local leaders and champions

### The Dreaming Phase

- Create time and space to allow people to think through their aspirations for the future
- Encourage different groups of people to develop diverse visions
- Be aware of the potential for conflict, and convergence – visioning needs to be done by groups who are likely to have at least some key elements of their vision in common
- Pay careful attention to the approach used to facilitate this visioning
- Encourage people to link their visions for the future to what they already do and their existing strengths
- Get people to share and respect each other’s visions, and identify those elements that require collective action to be achieved
- Introduce new ideas where appropriate in order to make people's aspirations more challenging
- Close mentoring and facilitation in helping people to develop challenging, but achievable, visions for the future may be required.
- Expose people to what others have done elsewhere to help to catalyse their thinking about the future
- Involve local leaders in catalysing the process of developing visions for the future
The Direction Phase

- Encourage people to think of different ways in which they can achieve the end results that they aspire to
- Encourage local people to take the lead as much as possible
- Be creative in thinking of ways in which local people can be encouraged to do the analysis required at this stage
- Approach this phase as a process – from an initial brainstorming of possibilities to gradually more focused ideas planned out in detail
- First identify possible ways of achieving people’s visions, then identify the actual activities that could be carried out to put it into action
- Think through in detail (“scope”) each activity which people identify in order to determine how feasible and viable it is likely to be
- Deal with potential weaknesses and obstacles after different options have been identified
- Getting local people to carry out their own analysis (not outside “experts”) is critical
- Scenario analysis of different options, involving everyone concerned, can be a powerful tool to help prioritise and select which is most appropriate
- Encourage people to take risk into consideration
- As planning on specific initiatives develops, encourage people to refer back to their vision
- Once more specific activities have been identified, they need to be planned out with goals, objectives and budgets
- Prioritization can help to build consensus over action
- Identify what local people can put into actually implementing different activities, then identify where outside support might be required

The Doing Phase

- Ensuring that livelihood change activities actually get implemented depends on the degree of engagement with local people
- Make sure that people will have access to the new knowledge and skills they are likely to require in order to make their new activities work
- Monitoring and evaluation is important, but it needs to be appropriate to the needs of people
- Besides monitoring what they are doing, people need to know how to use the information that monitoring generates – they need to be able to learn from mistakes!
- Use feedback from experience to make the livelihood change iterative
- Create networks to provide on-going support for livelihood change
- Celebrate successes and make sure that people know about them – this can contribute to changing attitudes and mind-sets in the longer-term
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<tr>
<th>Supporting Processes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Support people to have a voice</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Building confidence and appreciating strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Building partnerships</td>
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<tr>
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Implementing any livelihoods support programme requires a wide range of skills, methods and techniques. Given the complexity of livelihoods, and the many different dimensions that need to be addressed in encouraging livelihood change, there is no single methodology that can be used to design an intervention and implement it on the ground. Agencies and organisations who are working on supporting livelihood change therefore need to try and take as wide a range of different approaches and methodologies into consideration and use them to create their own approach, bearing in mind the skills and experience that they already have, the characteristics of the resource user groups that they will be working with, and the different partner organisations that are likely to be involved.

**Sustainable Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification**


This output from research conducted in South and South-East Asia reviews global experience in supporting processes of livelihoods enhancement and diversification and draws some key lessons from experience. It is available in pdf format from the documents section at:


This manual was developed based on research with a range of government agencies and NGOs in South and South-East Asia working with coral-reef user communities in the region. It provides detailed guidance on the process of supporting livelihood change which can be adapted and applied more widely.

The manual can be downloaded in pdf format at the following websites:

http://www.imm.uk.com/PS/Main.aspx?projectid=22cbb689-4e26-41f2-9077-48ee89ef4de3 (documents section - high resolution - 2.90 Mb)


A report on research into livelihood diversification in coastal areas of Cambodia which provides an example of how to approach the analysis of processes of livelihood change and highlights many
factors that are of general relevance for people working on livelihood interventions in coastal areas worldwide.

The report is available in pdf format at the following websites:


Facilitating the process of livelihood change


Facilitation skills are key in any process of supporting livelihood change and there are numerous resources available that can help organisations to build their capacity to facilitate effectively. This manual is one resource that provides a particularly complete, in-depth review of the key elements in facilitation and is accompanied by a set of materials and interactive CDs that can be used to develop a complete course in facilitation. It was developed originally in support of community forestry initiatives in South-East Asia but the skills and capacities that it deals with are widely applicable in other settings.

The manual and the associated materials can be obtained by contacting:

RECOFTC - The Center for People and Forests,
P.O. Box 1111,
Kasetsart Post Office,
Bangkok, 10903, Thailand
Phone: (662) 940-5700: Fax: (662) 561-4880, 562-0960
Email: info@recoftc.org
Website: [http://www.recoftc.org/site/The-Art-of-Building-Facilitation-Capacities](http://www.recoftc.org/site/The-Art-of-Building-Facilitation-Capacities)

This resource is highly recommended for any organisation involved in supporting livelihood change. It not provides excellent practical training materials but also helps people to think carefully about the changes in attitudes and approaches to working with communities and groups that are essential if facilitators are to work effectively.


A complete sourcebook for facilitators providing a wide range of tools, techniques and tips for facilitators. Available from:

Kogan Page,
120 Pentonville Road,
London N1 9JN, UK.
Website: [www.kogan-page.co.uk](http://www.kogan-page.co.uk)
Participatory Approaches

Information on a wide range of documents, manuals and resources on participatory approaches to working in the field are available at:

http://www.participatorymethods.org/resource/

http://www.managingforimpact.org/resources-table

Some resources that may be particularly useful include:


CARE has produced many excellent manuals on participatory approaches. This is one of the most recent.


A valuable resource covering a wide range of different aspects of participatory practice. Available on-line at:

https://app.etapenstry.com/cart/IIRR_2/default/category.php?ref=1621.0.125967401 (for purchase in hard copy (US$ 15.00) or for consultation on-line in 5 parts.


This document reviews a range of research tools that can be used to work with coastal, and particularly coral reef-user communities to learn about local conditions and livelihoods.

The document can be downloaded from the following websites:


http://www.socmon.org/publications.aspx (14.6 Mb)

Both the CERMES and the SOCMON websites mentioned above have a range of materials available on-line for addressing issues relating to socio-economic monitoring of coral reef-user communities, including some specifically produced for the Caribbean region.
Appreciative Inquiry - Building Visions for Future Change


A guide to using Appreciative Inquiry (AI), a valuable approach to working with communities and groups, and can be particularly appropriate when working on livelihood change, as it promotes a positive interaction with the community. This approach provides the basis for the SLED approach used as a structure for the FORCE Livelihoods research. This document provides some additional background and describes the key features of AI as well as its application in rural communities in India.

Available on-line at: http://www.iisd.org/ai/myrada.htm (2.5 Mb)

Sustainable Livelihoods Approaches

Sustainable Livelihoods Approaches (SLA) can provide a useful framework for understanding and analysing the complexities of people's livelihoods, both for outside facilitators and for local people. A wide range of resources on SLA are available at:

http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/livelihoods#.Ut_Bx01d5hE

Guidance sheets on the SLA framework prepared by DFID are available at:


Developing Practical Options for Livelihood Change


A manual on how to develop and implement participatory analysis of market chains. This was developed through work with potato producers in Peru, but the techniques discussed are applicable also in other sectors.

This manual can be downloaded in pdf at: http://cipotato.org/publications/pdf/003296.pdf

Practical Action (a UK-based International NGO) has done much work on how to work effectively on improving market conditions for the poor in less-developed countries and in emergency situations. Some of their materials are available at their site on Participatory Market Systems Development (PMSD) at:

http://practicalaction.org/pmsd


The Post-Harvest Livelihoods Analysis Tool (PHLAT), developed during research into linkages between poverty and post-harvest fisheries in Ghana, includes details on how to conduct
participatory market chain analysis through consultations with communities and stakeholder groups. It is available on-line at:

Annex 1

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD ENHANCEMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION (SLED)

The Background of SLED

The SLED approach was developed by IMM Ltd based on research into poverty and livelihood change among coastal communities in Asia and Africa. This research had aimed to understand better why so many interventions intended to support livelihood change in these communities seemed to have had limited success and had generally failed to encourage the development of sustainable livelihood alternatives. It did this first by trying to understand processes of livelihood change and then by working with the partners involved to develop and test a process that might address some of the short-comings of existing approaches.

This research identified how the livelihood interventions promoted by agencies working in coastal areas often tended to be supply-driven and focused on single ‘blueprint’ solutions. They often lacked an understanding of people’s existing livelihoods, and failed to appreciate what it is that helps or inhibits people in bringing about change in their own lives. As a result, many ‘alternative livelihoods’ initiatives promoted, and continue to promote, externally determined livelihood ‘options’ that are poorly adapted to people’s capacities, fail to reflect their real aspirations for the future and do not respond to local conditions or market demand. Not surprisingly, these have often proved to be unsustainable.

Interventions also often place too much emphasis in identifying ‘one-off’ livelihood solutions without building people’s capacity to adapt and undertake further change in the future. In a dynamic and changing environment, any one livelihood option is liable to have a limited lifespan and people need to have the skills and capacity to continually review their options and make informed decisions about how to enhance, diversify or change their livelihoods.

SLED addresses the issues above through an empowering process based on:

- A Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA)
- Appreciative Inquiry (AI).

SLA adopts a participatory, holistic approach to understand the reality and complexity of people’s lives and livelihoods. It comprises a theoretical framework and a set of principles.

AI is a process that focuses on a community’s achievements and abilities rather than its problems and what it lacks, and seeks to build on these positive elements in people’s livelihoods in order to encourage positive change.

The SLED process

The SLED process aims to:

- help people to identify the need for change in their livelihoods in order to achieve better, and more sustainable, livelihood outcomes;

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1 For further information on the background to the SLED approach and related projects, see IMM Ltd’s website: http://www.imm.uk.com/
• support people in understanding and developing viable options for livelihood change;
• and facilitate people in implementing those options, using their own resources and outside support where required.

SLED provides a framework for managing change in people’s livelihoods. It starts from the process of helping people to understand what they are already doing by identifying and valuing the strengths and skills that they already have and the ways in which they might need to change (particularly in the face of changes in their environment, such as climate change, or local economic conditions). It then helps people to develop and focus on what sort of changes are likely to be most appropriate for them and work systematically to plan and implement those ideas, taking into account the many complex factors that might affect the sustainability of what they do in the future.

The SLED approach is structured around distinct phases which are based on the stages of the Appreciative Inquiry approach i.e. Discovery, Dreaming, Direction and Doing. This SLED “Cycle” is outlined in Figure 2.

The terms used define the four phases of the SLED process – Discovery, Dreaming, Direction and Doing – are rather different from the terms that practitioners of development or natural resource management commonly use. Those who work on projects may be more used to thinking in terms of:

• Problem definition through research (Discovery)
• Setting strategic objectives (Dreaming)
• Designing interventions (Direction)
• Implementation, monitoring and evaluation (Doing).

But the new terminology used here is not used simply to be different. While the phases of the SLED process correspond superficially to some of key phases of the traditional Project Cycle, the terms used help to define important differences in the approach used and the quality of what is achieved in each phase of this cycle. This is described in more detail below.

The Discovery Phase is designed to enable both participants (whether they are individuals, households or communities) and outside facilitators to explore and analyse together current conditions and the strengths, potential and complexities of people’s livelihoods. It does this by focusing on people’s strengths and achievements (rather than on problems and failures), so that people identify and appreciate their own potential, think constructively about the need for change in their livelihoods, and shape their aspirations for the future in relation to positive past experience – what they have achieved – rather than dwelling on past failures. Participants are encouraged to think about their ‘best moments’ in the past, when they, or their families or communities were most vibrant and effective. They then seek to identify the unique

Figure 2: The SLED Cycle

![Image of the SLED Cycle diagram]
conditions that made the high points possible, for example leadership, relationships, technologies, values, social capital.

In the **Dreaming Phase**, people challenge their present status by envisioning better futures. They discuss how they can build on the strengths that they have identified during the Discovery Phase to improve the conditions of their group or their community. At this stage, facilitators would encourage different groups of people, who have identified common areas of interest during the Discovery Phase, to sit together and think of their ‘vision’ for the future – the future conditions that they aspire to – and analyse what elements would contribute to that future state, including their own strengths and potential that would be realised, the governance arrangements and institutions that would permit it to happen, the ways in which natural resource use would be managed, and the specific opportunities for livelihood change that would arise. At this stage, different interest groups also need to bring together their visions and look for common ground which can become the basis for a community vision which addresses livelihood change that might require collective action.

In the **Direction Phase** participants create a strategy to turn their visions into reality. Drawing on their enhanced awareness and understanding of their own livelihoods, the context in which they live and work, and how they have met previous challenges (as explored in the Discovery phase), during the Direction Phase participants begin to consider how to build a sustainable future, paying attention to social, economic, institutional and ecological elements. In the SLED process, this includes exploration of how to sustainably manage their natural resources and may, for example, re-define approaches to leadership, governance, participation or capacity building. As they design strategies to achieve their dreams, people discuss how to mobilise both individual and collective action – whether by specific interest groups or by the community as a whole – to achieve their visions. They turn imagination into action by agreeing roles and responsibilities, developing strategies, identifying both how they can contribute to achieving change and what sort of outside support they might require.

The final **Doing Phase** involves putting into action the ideas for the future developed in the Direction Phase. At this stage, local people should be able to lead the process of decision-making about how to implement their ideas, and deciding what sort of outside support they require (such as technical training, credit inputs, etc.) in order to successfully put their ideas into action.

All four phases of the SLED process are underpinned by a series of supporting processes that are on-going throughout. These processes are not ‘optional extras’ but are critical to the overall success of SLED. They reflect some of the key principles of SLA and AI, and are designed to ensure that both facilitators and participants in SLED develop the attitudes, confidence and capacities that are essential if the process is to lead to sustainable, empowering outcomes.

These supporting processes, and the extent to which they are effectively mainstreamed within the SLED process, can also provide an effective yardstick for measuring the quality of the process being implemented and the effectiveness of the facilitation.

The key supporting processes are shown in Figure 3.
Facilitation is key to the SLED process, but, paradoxically, the facilitators’ goal should be to make themselves redundant as quickly as possible. If the facilitation is carried out effectively, it should empower local participants to learn from their own experience, take action on their own initiative and free themselves from dependency on outside help in order to bring about livelihood change. Clearly, some forms of outside support may continue to be important, but the SLED process aims to empower participants to seek out the support that is appropriate for them on their terms.

Several elements are critical in the facilitation process for SLED. These include the following:

- ensuring that the SLED process is inclusive by supporting the poorer and more marginalised community members and dedicating the extra time, resources and encouragement to them to ensure that they take part, contribute and develop vision, strategies and actions that are appropriate to them;
- seeking every opportunity to delegate control of the process to local women and men by handing over the initiative and responsibility for analysis, decision-making and action;
- constantly focusing on capacity-building: helping identify gaps, possible service providers, sources of training and skills;
- building an enabling environment: helping to develop better relationships between communities, service providers and other institutions that affect their livelihoods.

The adaptation and potential application of SLED in the Caribbean was investigated as part of the FORCE research as outlined below.