

**Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan
for Saint Lucia**

***Views from the field:*
a report on meetings
of development practitioners**

Ministry of Social Transformation, Culture and Local Government
Castries, Saint Lucia
December 2002

This report was prepared by Yves Renard, facilitation and management services, on behalf of the Ministry of Social Transformation, Culture and Local Government, with support from the Social Development Unit of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, as part of a process to develop an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan and a National Social Development Policy for Saint Lucia. Funding for this process is being provided by UNDP and UNICEF through the OECS/UNDP project CAR/99/002 and an OECS/UNICEF project.

© Government of Saint Lucia, 2002

Citation: GOSL. 2002. Views from the field: a report on meetings of development practitioners. Ministry of Social Transformation, Culture and Local Government, Castries, Saint Lucia. 18 pp.

Background

The Government of Saint Lucia has recently embarked on the formulation of an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan (IPRSAP). The purpose of the exercise is to provide a comprehensive framework to guide the design and implementation of programmes aimed at reducing poverty and sustaining social development in the country. The Ministry of Social Transformation, Culture and Local Government is responsible for leading and facilitating this process, under the auspices of a Technical Working Group chaired by the Project Manager of the Basic Needs Trust Fund Project. A Consultant has been recruited to provide technical inputs into the process.

Over the past two months, a number of activities have been carried out, to assess the current status of poverty in the country, to determine its causes as well as its impacts on various sectors and communities, and to evaluate current institutional arrangements and capacities. One of these activities has involved a series of five meetings with development practitioners in five geographic locations, followed by a workshop among Community Development Officers and other extension personnel involved in poverty reduction initiatives. The idea of holding these meetings came from a discussion among these officers, when it was recognized that this overall IPRSAP process could not practically involve direct consultation of all stakeholders, but that people involved in development work at the community level were in a good position to describe and interpret issues, needs and possible solutions.

The purpose of these meetings was therefore to contribute to the description and analysis of the current situation of poverty and of current efforts at poverty reduction, by:

- Identifying and comparing the status, causes and impacts of poverty.
- Sharing and documenting experiences in poverty reduction.
- Describing and analyzing current institutional arrangements.
- Identifying issues and constraints that limit the effectiveness of poverty reduction initiatives.
- Formulating recommendations regarding institutional arrangements, strategies and programmes.

Process

The five locations were selected in order to provide a diversity of situations and contexts. The meetings were organised and convened by Community Development Officers.

Location	Date, time and venue	Persons responsible
Anse La Raye and Canaries	Tuesday 22 October, 10:00am to 12:30pm, Anse La Raye Community Centre	Convener: Urania Joseph Facilitator: Mathias Burt
Castries and Gros Islet	Thursday 24 October, 9:30am to 12:30am, Office Shop Conference Centre, Castries	Convener: Fortuna Belrose Facilitator: Jatho Mahal
Choiseul	Wednesday 23 October, 5:00pm to 7:30pm, La Fargue Community Centre, Choiseul	Convener and Facilitator: Mac Arthur Phillip
Mabouya Valley	Monday 28 October, 9:00am to 12:00pm, Mothers and Fathers Building, La Resource	Convener: Faustinus Faisal Facilitators: Faustinus Faisal and Perpetua James
Vieux Fort	Tuesday 29 October, 9:00am to 1:00pm, Town Hall, Vieux Fort	Convener and Facilitator: Augustus Cadet

The meetings followed the following format:

- Description of the IPRSAP process.
- Provision of and agreement on a definition of poverty.
- Identification of the status, causes and impacts of poverty. Types of poverty? Examples? Causes? Trends over the past five years? Impacts on people and community?
- Sharing of experiences in poverty reduction. What works? What does not work? What are the factors of mobility into and out of poverty?
- Description of current institutional arrangements. Who does what? What are the capacities, strengths and weaknesses of the main institutional actors? What are the main linkages between these actors?
- Identification of the issues and constraints that limit the effectiveness of poverty reduction initiatives.
- Formulation of recommendations regarding institutional arrangements, strategies and programmes.

Following these meetings, a workshop was held in Vieux Fort on 30 October, for the purpose of reviewing the conclusions of the five meetings and synthesizing key conclusions. This meeting was attended by Community Development Officers and other personnel of the Ministry of Social Transformation, Culture and Local Government, including representatives of the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF). It was chaired by the Ministry's Permanent Secretary, who expressed her gratitude to the Officers who competently and effectively organised these highly productive sessions.

Results and conclusions

The meetings reached a number of general and specific conclusions, as presented in the five tables below. The *main points, issues and conclusions* (first row in each table) were formulated at the final workshop on 30 October.

The meetings first discussed the definition of poverty, and generally agreed that poverty is a situation where the basic needs (of individuals, households and communities) are not met, where there is a lack of information and knowledge, where people do not have adequate access to social services, where social capital is weak, and where there is a lack of spirituality, dignity and self worth. The meetings further noted that conditions and criteria of poverty would be determined by specific situations, with notable differences between urban and rural settings.

Table 1: Status, causes and impacts of poverty	
Main points, issues and conclusions	<p>Poverty issues are complex, and they need creative, multi-sectoral approaches that bring all actors on board</p> <p>Poverty is the product a cyclical process, and it generally impossible to distinguish causes from symptoms</p> <p>Poverty issues are linked to culture, attitudes, mindsets and lifestyles. Main factors include: greed; fear of taking risks; reluctance to change; laziness; religion; prejudice based on age, sex, race, culture, language or religion; dependency; and substance abuse</p> <p>Poverty is partly the result of patterns of consumption, themselves created by historical factors and by new cultural influences</p> <p>Poverty is also linked to a weakening of social capital</p> <p>International trade regimes and other global forces are incompatible with the needs and conditions of small developing states: globalisation; trade barriers; limited capacity to respond; lack of resilience; limited resources; high import bills; unemployment</p>

Table 1: Status, causes and impacts of poverty	
	<p>The social and economic system is based on inequality, and is resistant to change</p> <p>There is a piecemeal approach to development planning, and a lack of commitment to implementation</p> <p>Population issues are important factors: population growth, health issues, teenage pregnancies, disabilities, incest</p> <p>Political divisiveness and political interference in development processes are among the causes of poverty</p> <p>Environmental degradation is both a cause and a symptom of poverty</p> <p>The education system is not relevant to the country's needs</p> <p>There is a lack of respect for others, for the law and for authority, as reflected in corruption and dishonesty</p>
Anse La Raye and Canaries	<p>Poverty issues are linked to culture, attitudes and mindsets. Cultural change is inevitable, but some changes are negative, often provoked by cultural influences from outside. There is now too much individualism and not enough attention is being given to long-term needs. Work ethics and attitudes towards work do not help people to take care of their needs</p> <p>Environmental problems often affect poor people, for example with erosion, often caused by selfish and irresponsible farming practices</p> <p>Consumption patterns contribute to poverty. People do not value local products sufficiently</p> <p>There has been a weakening of social capital, there is insufficient social cohesion, and many community organisations are weak (example of youth and sporting organisations in Canaries)</p> <p>This weakening of social capital is due, in part, to the migration of youth leaders out of the communities</p> <p>Some people who live in poverty do not do enough to help change their situation</p> <p>Age is a major factor, older persons are particularly affected, there is need to understand their needs better. Their rights are not respected, some of the essential health services they need are not available in the community (example of the laboratory for blood tests), and the funding some of them receive from Public Assistance is insufficient</p> <p>Housing needs are critical, and are not being met</p> <p>The population is in transition, there are more older persons, but the society is not equipped to support them, and some of the traditional support systems are no longer functioning</p> <p>Some of the sources of finance that was available before (funding agencies and remittances) is no longer available, at least not in the same amounts</p> <p>Changes in the banana industry have affected many people</p> <p>People, especially farmers, do not have the skills required to adapt to change and to get involved in other sectors</p>
Castries and Gros Islet	<p>There exist both poverty and extreme poverty (extreme cases are qualitatively different, self-perpetuating, requiring sustained support)</p> <p>The main manifestation of poverty is at the domestic level, when people cannot sustain the needs of the family</p> <p>Unemployment is a major cause of poverty</p> <p>Inequity and greed (capitalism) are key causes of poverty, and this inequitable system is resisting change</p> <p>The lack of information and knowledge, the lack of education (in the broad sense of the term) and illiteracy are both causes and symptoms of poverty</p> <p>Poor people and households have inadequate access to social services, e.g. water and sanitation</p> <p>Weak cultural identity is another manifestation of poverty</p>

Table 1: Status, causes and impacts of poverty

	<p>There is a vicious cycle of poverty, whereby attitudes, resistance to change and the fear of taking risks are perpetuating and reproducing situations of poverty</p> <p>Many people and households mismanage resources, and this can cause poverty</p> <p>There is institutionalised poverty, as many institutions are not capable of handling poverty issues</p> <p>Poverty is a mindset, it grows out of the inability of individuals, households and communities to organise towards sustainable solutions, to make suitable choices, and to move away from the dominant culture of dependency</p> <p>Lifestyles, including substance abuse, are responsible for many cases of poverty</p> <p>Poverty is also caused by the behaviour of consumers, and by high levels of consumption, but without information, with decisions that are not well informed, e.g. food, relationships to banks, poor quality products, foreign products perceived as better than local products</p> <p>Religion is at times perpetuating a culture of poverty, for example allowing people to have too many children, or encouraging passive acceptance of deprivation</p> <p>Poverty can also be spiritual, and there is a loss of spirituality in society</p> <p>Criminality is growing as a result of poverty. There is an increase in delinquency among young people, closely tied to an increase in abdication of (parental) responsibility, when parents, especially poor women in female headed households, are overwhelmed by the responsibility of raising children</p> <p>There is a strong culture of corruption in society, and money that could be used for development is channelled into other directions</p> <p>Political power is too concentrated, and is often abused</p> <p>Laws are not effectively enforced, and this can be responsible for the growth of poverty</p> <p>Squatting issues are acute, politicians too often encourage people to squat, there is not enough political will to resolve issues, and there is insufficient enforcement of the laws</p> <p>There is insufficient commitment to deal with poverty issues at all levels</p> <p>External factors, especially international trade regimes in the context of globalisation, are responsible for underdevelopment and poverty, and impact on our ability to preserve national identity</p> <p>The growth of poverty is responsible for moral degradation, poor self-esteem, social disintegration, malnutrition, migration and brain drain, the proliferation of slums and ghettos, the development of prostitution, the expansion of illegal businesses, and mental illnesses, depression and stress</p> <p>Environmental degradation is a product of poverty, and affects poor people most directly (water supply, sanitation, waste management)</p>
Choiseul	<p>Population growth is one of the roots of poverty in the country</p> <p>Trade barriers and changes in the global economy are responsible for the country's economic marginalisation</p> <p>Because of the lack of opportunities for employment and income generation, many people migrate to town, there is a brain drain and a consequent loss of leadership</p> <p>Inequity is a cause of poverty, as resources are distributed unevenly</p> <p>Yet, when resources are available, they are not always used wisely; some people live above their means, do not allocate resources properly, do not</p>

Table 1: Status, causes and impacts of poverty

	<p>budget, and do not use some of the resources at their disposal</p> <p>People are too dependent on government, and the political culture is encouraging and nurturing this dependency</p> <p>Fishermen constitute a very dependent group</p> <p>There has been an increase in the number of needy persons in the community in recent years, especially among the elderly, who are the most vulnerable people in society</p> <p>The rights of older persons are often not respected, for example in the public transportation system</p> <p>Illnesses and the constraints to accessing health services and medication are among the main causes of poverty, particularly among the elderly</p> <p>Water supply is generally not adequate, and there are serious health issues associated with poor water supply</p> <p>Generally, the capacity of government to provide social services is weakening, while the demand for such services is increasing</p>
<p>Mabouya Valley</p>	<p>Unemployment and the lack of economic opportunities are major issues</p> <p>The country imports too much, and it consumes too much. Consumption patterns are often unhealthy, and bad for the economy. Many health problems are caused by poor nutrition and bad eating habits. Cases of malnutrition appear to be on the increase</p> <p>Poverty is also the result of mindset and attitudes. The country needs to set national priorities and to look critically at activities that are anti-development and cause additional poverty</p> <p>Dishonesty and corruption are prevalent, there is not enough accountability, and people involved in dishonest practices go unpunished</p> <p>One must distinguish between the situations of extreme poverty (i.e. where people cannot help themselves and need assistance) and the poverty that can be alleviated through employment, production and investments</p> <p>The elderly, children of poor households, and people with disabilities are the most vulnerable. Long-term illnesses affect older people and can create situations of extreme poverty</p> <p>The institutions traditionally responsible for supporting the elderly (family and community) are getting weaker. Older persons are often left to caretakers, when relatives could and should be more involved</p> <p>People suffer from the distance of health services</p> <p>Health problems and the inability of poor households to address them affect the ability of poor children to learn and develop themselves</p> <p>The lack of empowerment, low levels of literacy and the culture of dependency are root causes of poverty</p> <p>The Valley is highly dependent on employment generated from outside the area, and is the victim of global factors. But companies do not pay workers adequately, and they are usually not competitive on the global market. Consequently, the manufacturing sector is not successful (experience of Belle Fashions)</p> <p>The issue of productivity also applies to farm labour</p> <p>Work ethics are generally poor, and this contributes to low competitiveness</p> <p>Small businesses are affected by the loss of purchasing power within the community, yet the commercial banks are not willing to reschedule loans and assist their clients</p> <p>People who have not had access to education have special difficulties to move from agriculture to other sectors</p> <p>Poor infrastructure (e.g. roads) is a cause and a symptom of poverty</p> <p>Political divisions are tearing up communities, and these divisions are encouraged by politicians</p>

Table 1: Status, causes and impacts of poverty	
Vieux Fort	<p>The social and spiritual dimensions are important, both as causes and as symptoms of poverty</p> <p>Poverty is a state of mind</p> <p>Poverty can be relative or absolute. Absolute poverty is the inability to meet one's basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, education, health, water and sanitation, social relations, and dignity</p> <p>There is a direct link between mental wellness / illness and poverty, but mental health issues are not receiving sufficient attention</p> <p>Consumption patterns are partly responsible for poverty</p> <p>There is an increase in substance abuse, and this both a cause and a symptom of poverty. Substance abuse has placed many people in poverty</p> <p>Elderly persons are particularly affected, and society is not equipped to deal with the difficulties involved in caring for older persons. At the same time, there is the perception that it is not good to place elderly persons in special homes, but it is likely that they will receive better care in these institutions than at their homes</p> <p>People, especially older persons, suffer from the distance of health services</p> <p>The Vieux Fort community presents the peculiarity of responding very poorly to development and training initiatives and opportunities. There is a strong dependency syndrome, and people do not participate. This is seen as the result of the patterns of development that have prevailed in the area. Historically, Vieux Fortians have never owned the resources of the community, and have been dependent on sugar factories, the US air base or tourism development to support them. More recently, infrastructural projects have continued this trend, with the fishing port that has separated the town from its waterfront and has eliminated important social networks, with the airport that has divided the community into two but has not brought direct benefits to Vieux Fortians, and with Club Med that, contrary to its predecessor Halcyon Days Hotel, has restricted access to important coastal areas</p> <p>In Vieux Fort, apathy is both a cause and a consequence of poverty, and of the lack of participation in development</p> <p>The resources available for development, and particularly the land, have been mismanaged, local people have not had enough opportunities to benefit from these resources, and there is a lack of community participation ("even our place names are given by outsiders")</p> <p>Generally, people are not part of the development process</p>

Table 2: Selected experiences in poverty reduction	
Main points, issues and conclusions	<p>The informal sector is growing and requires organisational support to focus activities in order to forge a culture of enterprise</p> <p>The micro-business sector requires equity and grant financing from within the community, as well as constant support and monitoring, for example through Credit Unions</p> <p>The participatory approaches of agencies such as the Mabouya Valley Development Programme (MVDP) have provided benefits to the community</p> <p>Equity in education arrangements will foster change, in particular in new technologies such as computer use and communications. The programmes of the National Enrichment and Learning Programme (NELP) and the National Skills Development Centre (NSDC) are critical and should be broadened</p> <p>Communities need advocacy support and advice on opportunities for land</p>

Table 2: Selected experiences in poverty reduction	
	<p>ownership and access, and on strategies to optimise land use</p> <p>Markets are critical to the success of businesses and production in all sectors</p> <p>There is need to recognise, support and strengthen the organisations that are catering to the needs of older persons in communities</p> <p>Activities in health and family planning are essential and must be sustained and broadened</p> <p>The availability and accessibility of services and information are critical factors in poverty reduction efforts</p>
Anse La Raye and Canaries	<p>In spite of difficult conditions, the experiences in tour guiding and soap production in Canaries (both supported by SLREP) have been sustained and have brought benefits to the community</p> <p>In recognition of the importance of the issue, PRF has allocated small amounts to housing projects (in spite of the reluctance of funding agencies) -- noting the issue of the ownership of private houses that are built or repaired with public funds</p> <p>Older persons are receiving help from caretakers and members of Club 60</p> <p>Importance of remittances from UK relatives (primarily in Anse La Raye, but also in Canaries)</p>
Castries and Gros Islet	<p>There has been a tremendous increase in efforts towards poverty reduction in recent years, but these efforts do not reach the people who really need it, benefits are not reaching the poor to the fullest extent</p> <p>There has been a significant reduction in teenage pregnancies over the past few years, thanks to family planning, giving choices to people (sterilisation possible from age 30), and educating both men and women</p> <p>Adoptions provide an important mechanism to cope with poverty. There are approximately 30 legal adoptions per year, usually by relatives who live outside, and who adopt from poor relatives</p>
Choiseul	<p>BNTF has been involved in the major Delcer Water Improvement Programme, is collaborating with NSDC in providing skills training at La Fargue, and is expecting new proposals from communities</p> <p>PRF is open and flexible in its approach. Community contracting is a positive development. PRF provides training in order for the community to manage projects, and uses this to build local capacity</p> <p>PRF is supporting the establishment of computer labs at Choiseul and Piaye</p> <p>Club 60s play an important role in supporting older persons</p>
Mabouya Valley	<p>The Mabouya Valley and Dennery are involved in a number of economic development activities (e.g. ecotourism, fish processing)</p> <p>The School Feeding Programme of the Ministry of Education provides a critical service to poor families</p> <p>Schools are developing strategic plans. One of the schools in the area is using this to establish partnerships between the school, parents, and the wider community</p> <p>The La Ressource Combined School also initiated, several years ago, an adult literacy programme</p>
Vieux Fort	<p>Popular coping mechanisms include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The growth of the informal sector, with people displaying creativity and ingenuity, in both legal (vending, catering) and illegal (gambling, drug trade) activities ○ Migration ○ Keeping children out of school to participate in economic activities ○ Remittances from relatives (cash and barrels) ○ Religion ○ Substance abuse

Table 3: Current institutional arrangements	
Main points, issues and conclusions	<p>The Ministry of Social Transformation has a central role to play in poverty reduction and social development</p> <p>There is a very wide range of initiatives and institutions involved in poverty reduction at this time, but there is insufficient coordination among these</p> <p>Religious institutions provide important material as well as psychological support</p> <p>The Credit Union movement is a major actor in poverty reduction and development in the country</p> <p>Day Care Services and Pre-Schools are critical. While the original intention of these institutions was to assist working mothers, the importance of early childhood education in personal, social and economic development is now recognised</p> <p>There is need to assess the significance of the recent emergence of strong informal institutions that are usually, but not exclusively, involved in illegal activities</p> <p>District Representatives play an important role, but this role is not defined, and is not properly articulated with that of other institutions</p>
Anse La Raye and Canaries	<p>Role of SLREP, and its positive impact in Canaries</p> <p>Role of BNTF</p> <p>Role of PRF</p> <p>Role of the Ministry of Social Transformation</p> <p>Role of Club 60 in helping older persons</p> <p>Role of voluntary caretakers, who help a number of older persons, outside of institutions</p>
Castries and Gros Islet	<p>The School Feeding Programme is currently available in primary schools, will be extended to secondary schools, as it is considered essential to make access to education more equitable</p> <p>Book Bursaries are also made available, with current rethinking towards a book rental scheme</p> <p>Health and Family Life education are now important parts of the curriculum</p> <p>Funding is allocated to schools for school-specific projects</p> <p>PROUD is addressing squatting and land issues, and benefits from political support</p>
Choiseul	<p>BNTF, PRF and SLREP are active in the community</p> <p>Some people feel that SLREP has not been as effective as initially expected, that the original promises have not materialised</p> <p>One of the areas on which SLREP has focused its work is the search for and opening of markets for rural products</p> <p>The District Representative plays an important supporting role</p>
Mabouya Valley	<p>BNTF and PRF are active in the community</p> <p>Most PRF projects in the Valley seek to create short-term employment in communities affected by changes in the banana industry (with funding from the EU/SFA)</p> <p>PRF involves the community in the implementation and management of projects</p> <p>The Mabouya Valley Development Programme has been involved in a wide range of activities related to poverty reduction, economic development, and social work. Because of the length of its involvement, it has many useful lessons to offer</p> <p>Development Committees also play an important role</p>

Table 3: Current institutional arrangements	
	<p>The CARE programme has recently started a skills training programme for young persons</p> <p>The NSDC and NELP also provide skills training</p> <p>Some business people help needy persons and support school feeding programmes</p> <p>There are 67 community-based organisations currently operating in the Valley. This represents an enormous potential for development</p>
Vieux Fort	<p>HelpAge International and the National Council of and for Older Persons are supporting the establishment and operations of Club 60s all around the country</p> <p>The National Council for Persons with Disabilities and its member organisations provide assistance to disabled persons</p> <p>Churches provide spiritual support, social networks and material assistance. For example, the Baptist Church provides financial help to needy persons, and conducts skills training. Catholic nuns and the St. Vincent de Paul Society provide assistance to needy persons. CARE provides training to young adults. Several churches provide day care services that are more affordable than those offered by other institutions</p> <p>The Human Services and Family Affairs Division of the Ministry of Health manages the Public Assistance programme (including the provision of funding for burials). It had a housing programme, but this has been discontinued. It was also responsible for identifying recipients of school bursaries, but this responsibility has recently been transferred to schools and to District Representatives . With support from PRF, it has recently started a programme to provide financial support to poor students</p> <p>The Ministry of Education provides assistance through the bursaries for school books and the school feeding programme</p> <p>The Ministry of Health provides medical services (with exemption of fees for poor persons) and conducts home visits</p> <p>The Ministry of Planning has a facility for duty-free purchases of housing materials by poor persons</p> <p>A few private businesses help poor persons by making charitable donations; some pharmacies also provide medication to older persons at reduced costs</p> <p>Service clubs and specialised community organisations (e.g. Meeting Point Charity Group) provide support to needy persons</p> <p>The Mothers and Fathers Groups support members and provide opportunities for social interaction</p> <p>The Southern Tourism Development Corporation is involved in promoting new economic activities, e.g. Swawé Vyéfò and horseback riding</p> <p>BNTF and PRF provide funding for community projects, primarily infrastructural developments</p> <p>The CDO plays a key role in facilitating communication among development agencies and practitioners</p> <p>There are approximately 50 community-based organisations in Vieux Fort South, but most of them are not properly organised and are not effective</p> <p>There is at least one informal institution, reputedly involved in illegal activities, that is well organised and has a large following. Its success stems from its ability to respond to many of the cultural (identity), social and economic needs of poor young persons</p>

Table 4: Issues and constraints affecting and limiting the impact of poverty reduction initiatives	
Main points, issues and conclusions	<p>There is need for an overall social development policy supported by a clear vision, there is a lack of integrated planning, and the development process is not sufficiently participatory</p> <p>Political interference impacts negatively on development processes, and the role of District Representatives is unclear</p> <p>There are many forces and factors that perpetuate the dominant dependency syndrome</p> <p>Bureaucratic structures and procedures frequently hinder the development process</p> <p>Services and institutions are too centralised</p> <p>Development practitioners do not have sufficient resources to perform effectively</p> <p>There are too many constraints that prevent access to funding for poverty reduction initiatives and development projects</p> <p>There is a frequent lack of a shared vision and a lack of commitment within development agencies. Some practitioners have poor inter-personal skills. Support staff in development agencies are insufficiently trained, and this impacts negatively on programme delivery</p> <p>Many initiatives and efforts are not sustained</p> <p>Many initiatives do not target the people who need them the most, and it is doubtful that the poorest of the poor are reached by these initiatives</p> <p>The traditional approach to micro-business financing through loans is not working effectively</p> <p>There is a lack of empirical studies, there is insufficient work being done to document, analyse and learn from issues and experiences</p> <p>There are land access and other legal issues that affect poverty reduction initiatives, e.g. need to access land for public infrastructure</p> <p>The education system is not sufficiently compatible with poverty reduction requirements</p> <p>Too many initiatives are driven by the policies, needs and views of donor agencies, and their conditionalities are at times contrary to local needs and priorities</p>
Anse La Raye and Canaries	<p>There is insufficient co-ordination and networking among institutions, and there is a lack of integrated planning</p> <p>District Representatives often undermine development work, because they work in isolation from established institutions and are concerned with immediate and visible projects</p> <p>Community Development Officers do not have adequate resources to perform their work effectively</p> <p>The process of poverty reduction and community development work needs to be improved, there is need for better follow-up, for consistency in interventions</p> <p>People and communities have been de-motivated by un-kept promises and by the lack of follow-up to initiatives and interventions</p> <p>Poverty reduction initiatives need to be more pro-active, to target poor sectors and communities more directly</p> <p>Skills training is critical, but it is not sufficient. Successful skills training requires motivation, follow-up, productivity enhancement training, accessibility to training, and start-up funding (interest rates are not favourable to poor entrepreneurs, and limit their capacity to establish small businesses)</p> <p>Skills training focuses on the ability to produce, but management and marketing obstacles prevent people from succeeding in their business ventures</p>

Table 4: Issues and constraints affecting and limiting the impact of poverty reduction initiatives

<p>Castries and Gros Islet</p>	<p>There is insufficient co-ordination among governmental agencies, there is no mechanism for integrated planning of interventions at the local level, and interventions are too scattered</p> <p>There is a lack of commitment and consciousness on the part of individuals and organisations, which is partly responsible for the lack of implementation</p> <p>There is a culture of blaming others, of blaming government for issues and problems that people and organisations could help solve by themselves</p> <p>There is need for more trained and qualified persons to do development work</p> <p>Legal aid is not available, and yet it is badly needed by poor persons</p> <p>Political interference impacts negatively on the quality and viability of interventions and institutions. The agencies that are doing well are those that are the most free from regular political interference</p> <p>There is a breakdown in accountability within many organisations</p> <p>There is a lack of documentation of the experiences and lessons learned in poverty reduction initiatives</p> <p>Hand-outs do not work, empowerment works</p> <p>There are qualified people who can make a substantial contribution to development and poverty reduction, but who cannot get work</p> <p>Projects that fail are those that lack focus, that are not sufficiently targeted (groups, persons, etc.). There is also the belief that problems can be solved with one intervention, but this is not true, and there is need for long-term multi-faceted interventions</p> <p>The top-down approach to development and poverty alleviation does not work, there is need to consult people and involve them in the identification of solutions</p> <p>There are key sustainability issues in small business development, small and micro businesses are under threat</p> <p>Large amounts have been invested in small business development over the past few years, but people have been encouraged not to pay back, they are being told that there is no need to pay as this is <i>lajan gouvèdman</i>. This has resulted in major cash-flow problems at banks and other financial institutions</p> <p>There are not enough support services, there is need to expand social services, to do more social work, to increase social investment by the state</p> <p>Some development agencies are inefficient. There is often a lack of commitment, a lack of follow-up and accountability in public sector interventions</p> <p>Political divisions affect development, and there can be negative attitudes towards government initiatives</p> <p>There are, at times, personality conflicts among development workers that reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of their work</p> <p>Co-operatives are no longer serving poor people, they have moved towards other sectors of society, but there are important economic development initiatives that are supported by co-operatives</p>
<p>Choiseul</p>	<p>There is an overall dependency syndrome, a culture of dependency that prevents people from taking initiatives</p> <p>The Public Assistance that needy persons receive is insufficient (\$60.00 per month)</p> <p>Some people question the real impact of current poverty reduction initiatives (“a footpath cannot reduce somebody’s poverty”)</p> <p>Some of the services are too centralised, and resources are often insufficient. For example, there is only one Medical Social Worker authorised to issue</p>

Table 4: Issues and constraints affecting and limiting the impact of poverty reduction initiatives

	<p>exemption cards, who is based at the Ministry of Health in Castries</p> <p>Some communities, groups and individuals can feel intimidated by the “red tape” involved in accessing funding and technical assistance</p> <p>Poverty reduction and other social development interventions are not always sustained</p> <p>The expansion of productive and income generating activities is constrained by the lack of markets. Marketing is a big issue, and it is linked to the issue of institutional capacity. For craft production, for example, support structures and marketing services are almost non-existent, there is no information system, producers are practically left on their own</p> <p>Interventions are often scattered and insufficiently coordinated. In skills training and human resource development, for example, there is need for a better integration of the work of BNTF, NELP, NRDF, NSDC, PRF and SEDU</p> <p>The role of District Representatives in local development processes is not clear, DRs do not have defined roles, do not have a “set path on which to travel”. In Choiseul, the DR does not get involved in the day-to-day operations and projects of development agencies, but provides support to initiatives when invited to do so</p> <p>External funding agencies are too influential, the conditions they impose are not always suitable, and there is need to channel resources better in order to maximise impacts. In some cases, projects funded by external agencies are not suitable, but policy-makers appear unable to reject or modify them</p>
Mabouya Valley	<p>There is insufficient collaboration among agencies involved in development. Each one works too much in isolation, without sufficient communication and sharing of ideas and resources</p> <p>There is inadequate planning, resulting in a wastage of resources</p> <p>The effectiveness of development agencies and practitioners is further reduced by the confusion in administrative structures, with each agency having a different geography</p> <p>District Representatives often contribute to divisions at the community level. They could play a more positive role, especially with respect to mobilisation, support and policy</p> <p>The education system remains too academic, and does not value technical training sufficiently</p> <p>The Public Assistance that needy persons receive is insufficient</p> <p>Many poor older persons are not receiving any help</p> <p>While the School Feeding Programme is important, it does not yet serve all schools</p> <p>Government priorities are too focused on infrastructure, and not enough on social development</p> <p>There is a direct link between poverty and criminality. The law is not adequately enforced, and this encourages criminality and lawlessness. The Police Force does not have adequate tools and resources to perform its role effectively. (This situation is being addressed, at least in part, for example with the building of new police stations.) Effective law enforcement would be a deterrent to the spread of criminal activity</p>
Vieux Fort	<p>Institutions and support systems are generally weak, several institutions are not performing their roles effectively</p> <p>CDOs are not sufficiently equipped to do their mobilisation work effectively</p> <p>Generally, social development agencies are ill-equipped, and their needs are not given adequate consideration. This suggests that the importance of social work and development is not recognised</p>

Table 4: Issues and constraints affecting and limiting the impact of poverty reduction initiatives	
	<p>Development workers are not sufficiently skilled, they do not have access to the training they need, and personnel are sometimes placed in positions for which they are not qualified</p> <p>The taxation system applied to vendors by the Town Council appears inequitable</p> <p>There is some level of political interference in the establishment of the Public Assistance list, and the list includes some people who do not deserve the assistance</p>

Table 5: Recommendations	
Main points, issues and conclusions	<p>There is need for a clear social development policy framework</p> <p>The poverty reduction strategy that will emerge from this process must be used by policy makers in future decision making processes</p> <p>The strategy must provide for the eventuality of a substantial reduction in or withdrawal of donor funding, and of an increase in interest rates</p> <p>There is need for an integrated approach to development planning and local governance</p> <p>There is need to give autonomy to, and to build the capacity of, community based organisations and committees</p> <p>There is need for improved networking among development practitioners and agencies</p> <p>There is need for a comprehensive national health and welfare plan and system that caters for the need of the poor and the elderly, including mechanisms for insurance, redistribution of income and safety nets</p> <p>There is need for an insurance plan for vulnerable workers (farmers, fishers, factory workers, hotel workers)</p> <p>Education must be geared towards development, self-esteem and growth</p> <p>Social consciousness and volunteerism must be encouraged at all levels</p> <p>Savings must be encouraged, as a mechanism for self-insurance</p>
Anse La Raye and Canaries	<p>Government cannot do all that is needed, everyone has to play a part</p> <p>Mechanisms for institutional co-ordination and networking need to be established and improved, for example with regular meetings of development practitioners in communities. District Representatives must be part and supportive of these mechanisms</p> <p>The processes used by poverty reduction initiatives need to be improved, with a better integration of institutions (as done by PRF, with the transfer of some of the responsibilities in the project cycle to CDOs)</p> <p>Strategies and actions for poverty reduction should be concerned with both short and long term needs</p> <p>Education is key. There is need to increase understanding of poverty, and to tell people how to avoid it. There is also need to educate people about the importance of savings</p> <p>Education needs to lead to cultural change, to a transition towards greater social responsibility. People need to learn that they can do something for themselves, and need to learn how to do it</p> <p>Skills training should be complemented by facilitated access to funding (including lower interest rates) and to means of production. They should correspond to the interests of people, and the demands of the job market. There is need to consult both the trainees and the business sector</p> <p>There is need for caretakers to assist older persons, there is need to train persons so that they can be better caretakers, and there is need for more funding for caretakers and nursing homes</p>

Table 5: Recommendations	
Castries and Gros Islet	<p>Poverty reduction requires community empowerment and participation</p> <p>There is need for equity, for a system that is more equitable and that guarantees the rights of citizens</p> <p>There is need for improved networking among development agencies and practitioners, and for a mechanism for communication and cooperation among development workers</p> <p>There is need for more systematic parenting, especially for the benefit of single mothers, in order to develop positive attitudes towards parenthood, child-bearing, and family life</p> <p>There is need to promote foster care, to modify current attitudes against foster care</p> <p>There is need to build individual, community and national pride, self-esteem and independence</p> <p>There is need to create pockets of employment in communities</p> <p>There is need to create incentives, and to provide social recognition for work</p> <p>Work ethics should be developed and nurtured from an early stage in life</p> <p>There is need to provide prompt justice, and to increase access to justice through legal education, legal aid, improvements in the justice system, and affordability of legal services. This raises the question of the financing of legal aid: can it come from central government? What should be the role of other agencies such as the Ministry of Social Transformation? (There is a project underway to establish a legal aid system, with CIDA funding.)</p> <p>Education must be relevant to the students and their needs, it must aim at building values, culture and skills</p> <p>There is need to promote volunteerism, to encourage voluntary contributions to community development, and to develop leadership</p> <p>There is need to understand cultural change and to engage society in the definition of culture and identity</p> <p>There is need for greater involvement of civil society in governance and decision making</p> <p>There is need to use media, especially NTN, in communicating issues, informing people on opportunities, and involving people</p> <p>The Ministry of Social Transformation has to play a leadership role in social development and poverty reduction</p>
Choiseul	<p>In the face of globalisation and marginalisation, there is need to internalise development, to decrease dependency and increase self-sufficiency, to reduce the food import bill and substitute imports, and to develop internal markets</p> <p>The development of markets requires that production be organised, that markets be assured for local products, and that institutions and services be integrated to support production</p> <p>Education is key, at all levels, including family life education, parenting, and guidance on how to manage resources</p> <p>Poverty issues and poverty reduction work must be described in a simple language that can be understood by all</p> <p>There is need to empower people, involve people and communities in decision-making, and allow people to help themselves</p> <p>CDOs have a key role to play in building local capacity and helping groups and communities in accessing funding and technical assistance</p> <p>There is need to build community organisations and to give them formal recognition</p> <p>Volunteering is not dying, but times are changing, and there is need to help new forms of volunteerism to develop</p>

Table 5: Recommendations	
Mabouya Valley	<p>There is need for improved collaboration and communication among development agencies and development practitioners, with a clear understanding of roles, working towards a common vision</p> <p>There is need for clearer structures and mechanisms to guide the role of District Representatives in local development processes, in response to the needs and priorities of people</p> <p>There is need for improved planning</p> <p>People need to understand better the causes of poverty and other development issues in the country, and the implications of this reality (globalisation, marginalisation) for their country and community</p> <p>There is need for more systematic explorations of economic development opportunities</p> <p>Community groups have to assume a more effective leadership role. The leadership of community-based organisations needs to be educated and supported. This need applies, in particular, to the Mothers and Fathers Groups</p> <p>Commercial banks need to be more sensitive to poverty and social development issues</p> <p>There is need for more institutions that can provide homes to elderly persons</p>
Vieux Fort	<p>There is need for more popular participation in planning and development processes</p> <p>There is need for more integrated approaches to poverty reduction and social development</p> <p>There is need for a permanent mechanism to support and facilitate collaboration among development practitioners</p> <p>The relationships between issues of substance abuse, violence, criminality and poverty need to be better understood</p> <p>There is need for a review of the Public Assistance programme, to maximise its benefits to poor people and households</p> <p>There is need for clear agreements and contracts to govern the use of facilities and equipment placed at the disposal of poor persons and households by government or by charitable organisations. (The National Council for Persons with Disabilities and Club 60s currently enter into such agreements with beneficiaries of their support.)</p> <p>All efforts should be made to ensure that services provided to poor persons are not demeaning or humiliating, as is too often the case. (Example of the Pauper's Burial and the use of white coffins.)</p>

Appendix: List of participants

Anse La Raye and Canaries

- Josephine Antoine, Canaries Village Council
- Noorani Azeez, National Skills Development Centre
- Brent Berthier, Ministry of Physical Planning
- Mathias Burt, Basic Needs Trust Fund
- Andrew Collymore, Anse La Raye Village Council
- Gregory Deterville, Canaries Tourism Committee
- Aaron Donovan, Millet Community
- Steven Edmunds, National Council for Persons with Disabilities
- Sylvester Joseph, Police Community Relations
- Cheryl Jules, Ministry of Physical Planning
- Elfreda Leonte, Anse La Raye Health Centre
- Laura Mathurin, Canaries Community
- Patrick P. Mathurin, Department of Youth and Sports
- Humilta Modeste, Anse La Raye Club 60
- Lesley Modeste, National Skills Development Centre
- James Perineau, Poverty Reduction Fund
- Petronila Polius, Fisheries Department
- Sylvie Raymond, Forestry Department
- Philip Regis, Millet Community
- Victoria Reid, Anse La Raye UK Committee
- Yves Renard, Consultant
- Joseph Samuel, Anse La Raye Primary School
- Mary Samuel, Anse La Raye Infant School

Castries and Gros Islet

- Anthony Alcide, George Charles Secondary School
- Leroy Ambroise, Department of Fisheries
- Philip Anthony, Department of Youth and Sports
- Hermia Baptiste, Ministry of Physical Development
- Fortuna Belrose, Ministry of Social Transformation
- Cosmas Charles, Environmental Health Department
- Marylene Charles, Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sports
- David Cox, Attorney General's Chambers
- Margaret Deterville, Department of Youth and Sports
- Beverly DuBois, Labour Department
- Jennifer Edgar, National Enrichment and Learning Unit
- Gregory Emmanuel, Royal Saint Lucia Police Force
- Hannah Epiphane, Cooperative Department
- Julie Etienne, Community Health Aide
- Mary Francis, National Centre for Legal Aid and Human Rights
- Joseph George, Ministry of Agriculture
- Lydia Glasgow, Ministry of Communication, Works, Transport and Public Utilities
- Agatha James, Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Youth and Sports
- Hildreth Lewis, Ministry of Physical Development
- Peter Lorde, Ministry of Commerce
- Lorna Lubrun, Extension Officer, Ministry of Agriculture
- Kimberlyn McPhee, Gros Islet Town Council
- Damian Monrose, Consumer Affairs Department
- Francis Raphael, Consumer Affairs Department
- Yves Renard, Consultant
- Marcia St. Ange, Ministry of Health
- Edon St. Croix, Cooperative Department
- Catherine Spooner, PROUD, Ministry of Physical Development

Choiseul

- Callixta Alphonse, Mongouge Club 60
- Virginia Auguste, Roblot Combined School
- Francis Blanchard, Saint Lucia Rural Entreprise Project
- Mathias Burt, Basic Needs Trust Fund
- Jason Charles, La Fargue Development Committee
- Theophila Charles, Belle Vue ????
- David Demacque, Saint Lucia Rural Entreprise Project
- Barbara Donaie, Zion Hill Pentecostal Church
- Clara Edgar, Guiding
- Clara Edwards, Dugard Combined School
- Jennifer Eugene, Mongouge Club 60
- Marsha Flavien, Choiseul Village Council, La Fargue Development Committee and Choiseul Youth and Sports Council
- Marietta Fontenard, Choiseul Primary School
- Velda George, Roblot Combined School
- Tracy Henry, Ministry of Communication, Works, Transport and Public Utilities
- Hon. Ferguson John, District Representative
- Elmira Joseph, La Fargue Development Committee
- Davidson Lionel, Zion Hill Pentecostal Church
- John Mathurin, Riviere Doree Anglican School, Choiseul Cooperative Credit Union and Education Committee District 7
- Maura Minvielle, National Enrichment and Learning Programme
- Peter Minvielle, St. Vincent de Paul Society
- Lucy Nicholas, Choiseul Roman Catholic Church
- MacArthur Phillip, Community Development Officer
- Jocelyn Popo, Delcer Health Centre
- Yves Renard, Consultant
- Delphia Theophane, Choiseul Youth and Sports Council
- Williana St. Rose, Le Savanne Development Committee and Choiseul Village Council

Mabouya Valley

- Evestus Augustin, Mabouya Valley Development Programme
- Isidore Brisefert, Royal Saint Lucia Police Force
- Mathias Burt, Basic Needs Trust Fund
- Blaize Charlery, Ministry of Agriculture – Extension
- Cheryl Eugene, Ministry of Health – Environmental Health
- Faustinus Faisal, Social Transformation Officer
- Ivan Gaspard, Dennery Village Council
- Urban Glace, Mabouya Valley Development Committee
- Sabina Goraxin, Gadette Day Care Centre
- Ester Henry, La Ressource Combined School
- Marcella Hobson, Mabouya Valley Development Committee
- Perpetua James, Ministry of Social Transformation
- Geneta Joseph, La Ressource Day Care
- Father Raymond Laurent, Parish Priest
- Stephanie Louis, Community Health Nurse
- Josephine Mathurin, Mabouya Valley Development Committee
- Lesley Modeste, National Skills Development Centre
- Antonia Norbert, Dennery Day Care
- James Perineau, Poverty Reduction Fund
- Phillip Phillip, Bureau of Health Education, Ministry of Health
- Alfred Prosper, Forestry Department
- Victor Reid, Department of Youth and Sports
- Yves Renard, Consultant

- Mary Stanislas, Community Health Aide
- Wayne Williams, Ministry of Health
- Jim Xavier, Department of Youth and Sports

Vieux Fort

- Ernesto Brown, Vieux Fort Town Council
- Mathias Burt, Basic Needs Trust Fund
- Augustus Cadette, Ministry of Social Transformation
- Petronise Duplessis, Community Health Nurse
- Cheryl Eugene, Ministry of Health – Environmental Health
- Cecilia Francis, Day Care Administrator
- Hygin Johannes, Vieux Fort Council of and for Persons with Disabilities
- Alphonse Joseph, Vieux Fort Primary School
- Jennifer Joseph, Poverty Reduction Fund
- Mary Pierre, HelpAge Saint Lucia National Council for and of Older Persons
- Yves Renard, Consultant
- Benton St. Cyr, Human Services and Family Affairs Division
- Valeriana St. Helen, Department of Youth and Sports
- Sera'el Tafari, Iyanola Council for the Advancement of Rastafari
- Veronica Wilkinson, Community Health Aide