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Living Conditions in Antigua and Barbuda: Poverty in a Services Economy in Transition

Volume II Voices of the Poor

Prepared by Kairi Consultants in Collaboration with the
National Assessment Team of Antigua and Barbuda

**Living Conditions in Antigua and Barbuda:
Poverty in a Services Economy in Transition**

Volume II – Voices of the Poor

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THE CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Submitted by:

KAIRI CONSULTANTS LIMITED

14 Cochrane Street, Tunapuna, Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies

Tel: 868 663 2677; Fax: 868 663 1442

Website: www.kairi.com

In Association with:

THE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT TEAM OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

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CHAPTER 1: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs) are now seen as an essential component of any research intended to determine the type and level of poverty and deprivation in a country. The PPA conducted in Antigua and Barbuda strengthened the poverty assessment process by broadening stakeholder involvement, generating a large amount of qualitative data to complement the quantitative data produced by the combined Survey of Living Conditions/Household Budgetary Survey (SLC/HBS), enriching the analysis, and deepening understanding of poverty from the perspective of the poor.

It provided opportunities for individuals and groups in the communities selected for study to articulate and share their perceptions and experience of poverty and deprivation, to reflect on and analyse the conditions under which they live, to identify the strategies that they use to sustain their livelihoods, and to articulate their concerns, needs and priorities. It also provided insights into the effects and impact of poverty on poor individuals, households and groups living in the twelve communities studied.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE PPA

THE GENERAL OBJECTIVES WERE TO:

1. Generate a variety of data, but especially qualitative data, at the micro level on the type, nature and distribution of poverty and deprivation in the twelve selected poor communities selected for study.
2. Give deeper meaning to the quantitative data generated by the SLC/HBS and to the data collected in the Institutional Assessment.

More specifically the Assessment was meant to:

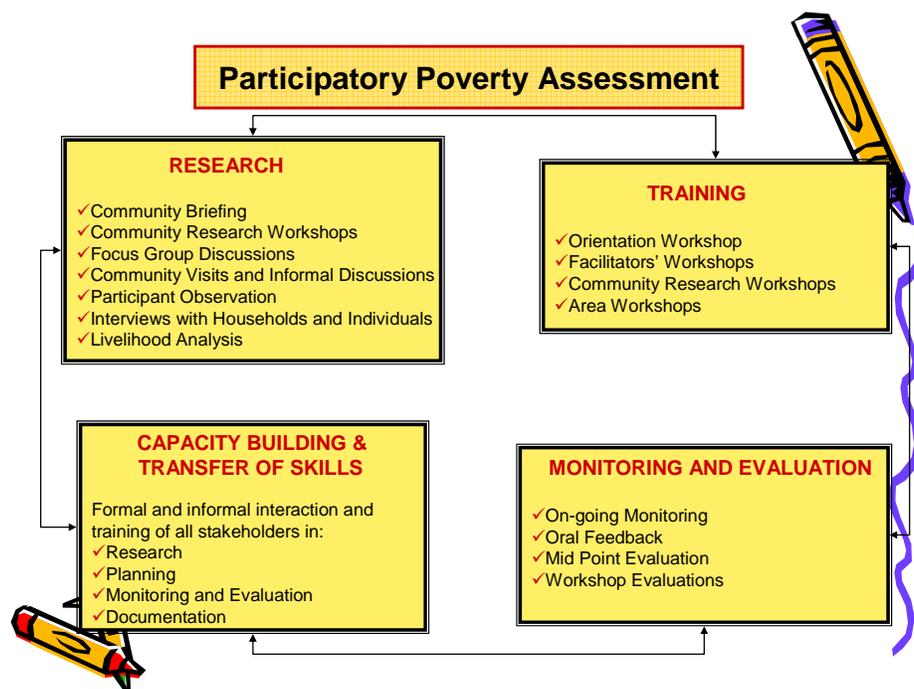
1. Collect concrete and specific data on living conditions in selected poor communities in order to produce a multi-dimensional view of poverty and deprivation, its distribution, and the factors that contribute its existence.
2. Increase understanding of poverty and deprivation based on the experience and from the perspective of individuals, of households, and of different groups in these communities.
3. Identify the vulnerability and risks faced by poor individuals and households as they strive to sustain their livelihoods.
4. Identify assets and resources, including natural resources, to which poor individuals, households and groups have access.
5. Obtain information from individuals, groups and households about:

- a. The initiatives that they take to sustain their livelihoods.
 - b. The public services and facilities available to them and the constraints and obstacles that they encounter in their attempts to access these.
 - c. Their concerns, needs and priorities, and
 - d. The interventions and actions that in their view are needed in order to improve their living conditions and to alleviate and reduce poverty and deprivation in their communities.
6. To generate data that can be used to formulate pro-poor poverty reduction policies that are informed by the voices of the poor.

1.3 COMPONENTS OF THE PPA

The PPA was comprised of four components, in each of which a number of separate but related activities were undertaken. Figure 1.1 shows the key components and activities undertaken as part of the PPA.

Figure 1.1: Key Components and Activities Undertaken



1.3.1 RESEARCH

The research component was undertaken to:

1. Generate specific and concrete qualitative as well as some quantitative data on living conditions in the selected poor communities.
2. Obtain information from individuals, households and groups in the communities on their perceptions, experience, views, and opinions about poverty and deprivation.
3. Identify factors that contribute to poverty and deprivation in these communities

In order to achieve these objectives documentary and field research were undertaken. Among the documents reviewed and whose content was analysed were some of the international literature on PPAs, and policy documents and reports on poverty research and poverty reduction initiatives in the Region. The field research yielded a large quantity of empirical data which were obtained through observation, interviews, focus group discussions, environmental assessments, and community workshops.

1.3.2 TRAINING

Effective use of Participatory Research Methods to conduct Participatory Poverty Assessments depends on the availability of individuals who are knowledgeable about and understand the philosophy and principles of Participatory Methodologies, who have some degree of skill in using participatory research methods and techniques, and who can operate as members of a team.

In order to ensure that all of the stakeholders, and especially the Field Research Facilitators were well prepared and equipped to undertake and successfully complete the PPA, training was an important and on-going activity. A Participatory Training Methodology was used to conduct a series of training workshops the first of which was an initial three day workshop. This workshop was designed to expose stakeholders to the philosophy and principles of the Participatory Methodology and to provide opportunities for them to practice and to gain hands-on experience in using Participatory Research methods and techniques.

Based on feedback about the difficulties that the Research Facilitators were experiencing in mobilizing the communities, a Refresher Workshop was organized to assess progress and to identify the challenges and problems being faced, to explore possible solutions, to make changes as necessary and to agree on intervention strategies. However, because several individuals from the original group dropped out, only twelve of the initial group participated in this Refresher Workshop. In addition, in order to have the required number of Field Research Facilitators, an additional eight persons also had to be trained. Only eight of the Research Facilitators participated in the final evaluation workshop.

Community residents also participated in the community workshops in which they became involved in a number of training activities designed to help them to acquire skills in using various research methods and techniques to generate information about themselves and their communities, to analyse and interpret this information, and to use it to produce a realistic picture of living conditions and life in their communities.

1.3.3 CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRANSFER OF SKILLS

An important goal of the Assessment of Living Conditions was to transfer skills and to build the capacity of institutions, organisations, groups and individuals so that they would be able to undertake PPAs in the future.

Within the PPA, directly through training workshops and indirectly through informal interaction and communication, deliberate attempts were made to transfer knowledge and to help the Field Research Facilitators as well as to other stakeholders, including individuals from organizations represented on the PPA Sub-Committee, to acquire the specific skills needed to carryout a PPA. While several individuals did benefit from training and exposure to new approaches, methods and processes, there is little evidence to show whether and in what ways the capacity of institutions and organisations has been improved.

The absence of a well functioning and effective Community Development Division in the Ministry of Social Transformation was a critical factor in determining the capacity of the Ministry to undertake a PPA. However, inclusion of four members of staff from this Division in the second “initial” training workshop provided opportunities for them to be exposed to and gain skills in mobilizing communities and this should increase the department’s capacity somewhat.

1.3.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation were ongoing throughout. The Coordinator monitored progress of the field work on a weekly basis through contact with the Field Research Facilitators, and the Consultants also monitored progress through their contact with the Coordinator and with the Research Facilitators. In addition, the Consultants made several visits to each of the communities, interacted with community members, conducted interviews with heads of households and community leaders and were present at some of the community workshops.

Prior to the final evaluation workshop Field Research Facilitators were asked to complete a questionnaire designed to encourage reflection on the PPA its outcomes, effect and impact, as well as on their experience of being involved in the process. They then participated in a one and a half day evaluation workshop in which they identified specific outcomes, discussed the effect and impact that the PPA has had on them, on other individuals, groups and communities, and they identified some of the lessons they had learnt.

1.4 METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

The Participatory Research Approach and Methodology was used to engage residents in the twelve selected communities, the Research Facilitators, members of the National Assistance Team (NAT), and the Consultants in the activities that were undertaken in the PPA. Teams of Field Research Facilitators and some members of the NAT were trained in the use of the participatory research methods and techniques that were used to collect and generate large amounts of mostly qualitative data.

Using a participatory, experiential learning model, a number of training workshops were conducted to engage some members of the NAT and the Field Research Facilitators in a process of reflection and analysis of their perceptions and experience of poverty and deprivation, to expose them to the theory and practice of participatory research, and to allow them to participate in practical, hands-on exercises through which they obtained and sharpened their skills in using a variety of data collecting instruments.

Workshops conducted in all of the communities served as a mechanism to obtain specific information from community residents about life in their communities. In addition participation in these workshops exposed residents to training in the use of participatory research methods and techniques, and provided opportunities for them to acquire skills in data collection, analysis and interpretation of the information that they provided about their communities.

Participatory research methods and techniques, including some innovative and creative tools, were used to ensure active participation of community residents in providing and generating empirical qualitative as well as quantitative data about their communities. Face-to-face interaction and on-going dialogue with the key informants was also a key element of the data collection process.

1.5 THE KEY INFORMANTS

Information was collected from communities, households, groups and individuals.

1.5.1 THE COMMUNITIES

Data from the last census, information from key government ministries and NGOs working in the communities, and from written reports and other documents were used to identify communities in which the PPA was to be carried out. A list of characteristics and criteria was then developed and a purposive sampling technique used to ensure that the twelve communities selected were representative in terms of location, demography, social milieu, and economic activity, as well as in the distribution and various types and degree of poverty and deprivation in the country. Initially Cedar Grove was one of the twelve selected but later

because of problems encountered with mobilizing residents, and in response to a request to include the community of Clare Hall, work in the former ceased and the PPA activities were implemented in the latter.

Documents, informal discussion with government officials and representatives of NGOs, and observation forms completed by the Research facilitators provided a great deal of information about the communities selected for study. While all of the communities do exhibit some degree of poverty and deprivation, and do share a number of characteristics, they are not homogeneous and they therefore do not experience or feel the effects of these phenomena in the same way.

Workshops were held in eleven of the communities and in many were conducted on different evenings, so that not all of the same persons participated in all of the activities. In all a total of two hundred and forty three (243) persons participated in the workshops, and in every community more women than men participated. The community workshops served as mechanisms to obtain specific information from community residents about life in their communities, and they provided opportunities for them to acquire skills in data collection, analysis and interpretation of the information that they had provided about their communities.

1.5.2 THE HOUSEHOLDS

Because poverty and deprivation are felt most keenly in households, information was collected from three to five households in each of the twelve communities. Using a set of specific criteria, Field Research Facilitators used a combination of random and purposive sampling to identify poor households, and participants in the community workshops used a Wealth Ranking Indicators Matrix to identify households that were experiencing different levels of poverty.

In selecting the households to be interviewed, care was taken to include households of different types and that displayed different levels of poverty. A structured interview schedule was used to conduct an extensive interview with the head of household or other responsible adult in nuclear households, extended family households, multi-generational households, single parent female-headed and single parent male headed households, single person households and sibling households, in very poor and poor households and in a few better off ones. Interviews were conducted with heads of forty six (46) households.

The interviews yielded information about household members and their living conditions, about household assets and resources, about the household economy, and about household needs. They also provided information about and insights into people's perceptions and experiences of poverty and deprivation, identified factors that contribute to the conditions within which they were living, and indicated support networks and strategies that members of the household used to survive and sustain their livelihoods. In addition, they provided

information on social and gender relations, and on the gender division of labour within the households.

1.5.3 GROUPS

Poverty and deprivation do not mean the same thing to everyone and they affect different groups in different ways. In order to capture the differences in perceptions, experience and impact of poverty, and to identify the specific concerns, needs and priorities of different groups, including the most vulnerable, focus group discussions were conducted separately with men, with women, with unemployed persons, with elderly persons and with young people under 25 years of age.

No discussions were held with persons with disabilities, but discussions were held with young people in eleven communities and nearly two hundred and fifty (244) young men and young women participated. One hundred and ten women in ten communities and 101 men in nine communities participated in the discussions. One hundred and seven elderly persons, 77 women and 30 men in nine communities also participated in the discussions, but only 74 unemployed persons in eight communities did so.

During the focus group discussions each group defined and articulated their experience of poverty and deprivation, shared information about the survival strategies they used to sustain their livelihoods, and identified their particular concerns, needs and priorities. As a result, there emerged various perspectives and attitudes to, and a better understanding of the experience of poverty and of its effect and impact on people of different ages, sex, education status, and level of education.

1.5.4 INDIVIDUALS

In depth interviews were conducted and information collected from a number of individuals in each of the communities. A set of criteria were developed and used as the basis for a purposive sampling technique to select individuals who were experiencing extreme poverty. Among those selected were the hidden poor, the destitute, and elderly persons living in poverty. Interviews were also conducted with twelve community leaders/individuals with influence in each community and who were identified by the Field Research Facilitators.

1.6 THE DESIGN OF THE PPA

The PPA was designed to focus on and identify factors that contribute to and/or perpetuate the existence of poverty and to examine key issues that emerge as a consequence of poverty and deprivation. Among these were:

1. Economic and Social Deprivation:
2. Vulnerability:

3. Availability of Assets and Access to Resources, Facilities and Support Services, including Public Services:
4. The Environment:
5. Government and Civil Society Interventions:
6. Gender

The data obtained from residents on these issues provide us with deeper insights and a better understanding of how they contribute to poverty and deprivation and why initiatives to alleviate poverty must not only take them into consideration but must take steps to ensure that they are addressed.

1.7 MANAGING AND IMPLEMENTING THE PPA

The PPA was also designed to facilitate and ensure the active participation of key stakeholders, including residents in poor communities, representatives of government institutions and of NGOs, researchers and consultants, in the various research activities outlined above. Stakeholders worked as a team whose members were responsible for managing the PPA and for coordinating, conducting and monitoring specific activities. The Team included:

- Members of the NAT Sub-Committee responsible for the PPA.
- Research Facilitators who were responsible for collecting and accurately recording the information provided by community residents and whose role was critical in ensuring that the data were of the required amount and quality.
- Community residents who participated in focus group discussions and community workshops and provided information to questions during interviews
- The Consultants.

The PPA was conducted over a period of ten months and in each community activities were carried a team of two Field Research Facilitators who acted alternately as facilitators and recorders. The majority of the Research Facilitators were unfamiliar with the communities, had limited knowledge of them, and no relationship with community residents. In addition, because they also had little or no experience in working in communities, they were faced with several challenges and found it difficult to mobilize and convince community residents of the importance of participating actively in the various activities and of providing the required information.

At the same time, while there was some attempt by the Ministry of Social Transformation to inform the public about the activity via the media, this strategy did not always have the required and expected outcome or impact. Consequently, in several of the communities the response was poor and residents were reluctant to become involved. As a result other strategies for intervening into communities had to be tried, and Research Facilitators was exposed to these in a Workshop on Intervention Strategies.

In order to help the Research Facilitators to gain some legitimacy and credibility with community residents, several strategies were discussed and agreed on during this workshop. Among these were identification and use of community leaders and leaders of community groups, Parliamentary Representatives, nurses, pastors and teachers. In addition the health centres and churches were given information about the PPA and asked to share this information with their clients and congregations. While these strategies did contribute to some positive outcomes, many of the Research Facilitators were still faced with challenges and problems that prevented them from conducting all of the PPA activities in all of the communities.

1.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Face-to-face interaction and on-going dialogue with the key informants was a key element of the data collection process, and various methods and techniques were used to ensure the active involvement of all stakeholders in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data.

Triangulation ensured the use of a number of different data collection methods and techniques to obtain and check information from several different sources, to gain multiple perspectives of the experience and impact of poverty and deprivation and to make comparisons, for example between urban and rural poverty. Data were obtained from observation, during, interviews, and in focus group discussions. A large amount of information was also generated by community residents in the community workshops as they participated in interactive exercises, in community resource mapping and wealth ranking, and in the use of creative tools to assess poverty, deprivation, sense of well being and the quality of life in their communities.

The large amount of qualitative data which was generated was analysed at various levels and by various members of the Research Team. While the Consultants were mainly responsible for this, community residents who participated in the community workshops did analyse and interpret the information that they provided.

Several methods and techniques were used to analyse the data that were collected. Among these were collective analysis and reflection, content analysis, causal analysis, needs analysis, trend analysis, gender analysis and comparative analysis. Subjecting the data to such rigorous analyses has helped to verify and validate their objectivity, reliability, and credibility and to ensure that they provide a sound basis for targeting beneficiaries for future poverty alleviation and reduction policies and programmes.

CHAPTER 2: THE VOICES OF THE COMMUNITIES

The information provided in this section of the report has emerged out of the actual lived experiences of people whose lives are characterized by poverty. Their life stories give their perspective on poverty, and they describe their reality of being poor and of growing up and living in poor households and in poor communities. During the PPA people were given several opportunities to voice their feelings, views and opinions, to discuss their problems and concerns, to identify their survival and coping strategies, and to articulate their needs. Their voices not only ring true but they provide insights into the underlying causes and factors that determine and perpetuate their impoverished circumstances, and they increase our understanding of their struggle to survive in spite of their feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness.

The data are therefore valid and reliable and they must be used as the basis for developing poverty alleviation and reduction programmes which, if they are to improve living conditions in poor communities must not be merely generic, but must be targeted to respond to and meet the specific and particular needs of poor individuals, households, groups and communities.

2.1 THE COMMUNITIES

Of the twelve communities selected for study, three were urban, two were semi urban, and seven were rural.

Table 2.1: Communities by Type and Population

COMMUNITIES	POPULATION		URBAN	SEMI-URBAN	RURAL
	M	F			
Barbuda-Codrington	645	631	*		
Bendals	91	72			*
Clare Hall	109	129		*	
Ebenezer	186	151			*
Grays Farm	369	341	*		
John Hughes	359	366			*
Liberta	NA	NA			*
Pigotts	54	47			*
Potters	218	252		*	
Point	160	171	*		
Urlings	140	121			*
Wilikies	358	358			*

2.1.1 THE URBAN COMMUNITIES

Grays Farm and Point are urban communities in the capital city of St Johns. The former is an inland community but the latter stretches from the coastline inland is prone to flooding and drainage is a problem. Both of these communities display characteristics of ghetto life including poor housing, small dwellings in need of repair, and overcrowding, and in Point there is evidence of squatting. Several residents do own their houses and the land on which they stand, but many others, especially immigrants, rent land.

While the main roads in Point are fairly good there exists a network of narrow unpaved alleyways in which there are small and sometimes dilapidated one or two room houses with little space between them. Most of the houses do not have electricity or running water, and while a few may have outdoor toilets, several have no toilet at all. The public bathroom is therefore used by many of the residents.

As in Point, the original residents in Grays Farm do own their house and land and while some houses do have indoor toilets, many still use pit latrines or pails. The roads in Gray's Farm have deteriorated and are in poor condition, there are few road signs and drainage is a problem. Electricity and water are available but not all residents can afford the high utility bills.

Unemployment, especially among the youth, is very high in both communities, and many of those who are employed work for very low wages that are insufficient to meet their needs. These working poor are faced with several challenges, and are obliged to take several risks in order to sustain their livelihoods. Although in both of these communities high levels of unemployment contribute to significantly high levels of poverty, a low standard of living and a poor quality of life, there are a few areas in Grays Farm that can be described as better off. In these areas the housing stock is in good condition with household amenities, the physical infrastructure is better and residents appear to enjoy a higher standard of living and a better quality of life than their neighbours in the "ghetto" who participated in the PPA activities.

In both of these communities several of the original residents have migrated overseas and some would like to move to "a better community". However there are large numbers of young people and in Point some families have lived in the community for three generations. Over time internal and external migration have contributed to shifts in the composition of the population in both communities in which there are growing numbers of a Spanish population from Santo Domingo. Several residents in Grays Farm were of the view that the existence of non nationals from other Caribbean countries had contributed to over population, was putting pressure on the housing stock, was responsible for the increase in the number of unemployed persons and in crime, was influencing the way of life in the community, and was resulting in cultural changes in the life of the community.

The existence of several social problems including substance abuse, crime and violence, has also resulted in these communities being stigmatized. However several residents were of the view that while some crimes were committed by community members, people from outside or new entrants into their communities are also committing crimes and contributing to giving their communities a bad name. The existence of gangs in Point is said to attract young people, especially young men, from other communities and to contribute to the high level of crime. In both communities drug pushers are visible, and violence, including domestic violence and crime are causes for concern. Domestic violence, prostitution, and teenage pregnancy are also prevalent in Grays Farm and the latter is seen to be “the everyday norm”. On the other hand in Point delinquency among children including frequent absence from school is also a matter of concern.

While there are a few social services available in these communities, residents have to go outside of their communities to access others. Fortunately because of their proximity to the town this is not too difficult. In both communities there are a few NGOs and CBOs that organize programmes to assist residents, but participation in these is not very high.

Codrington, the capital of Barbuda is the other “urban” community and is significantly different from Point and Grays Farm. Although it is centre of activity, it is more rural in appearance. Its infrastructure is not well developed and its roads are unpaved, but there is a health centre, two day care centres and a primary and secondary school. Land is free for housing and agriculture, but because it is communal land, it cannot be used as collateral for bank loans or mortgages. Consequently while most residents appear to own their own homes, others are struggling to save towards this. In many cases there is a well in the back yard but there were complaints about the brackish taste of the water. In other cases cisterns are used to collect water and while piped water is also available some people cannot afford to pay for the connection. Garbage collection is irregular, there are pools of stagnant water in which bush mosquitoes breed, and stray animals are destructive and seen to be a nuisance.

As a result of migration in the 50s, 60s, and 70s, the population was depleted and is now static. However, most people were of the view that the majority of the population was better off because those who are not employed by the Council are self-employed, unemployment is not seen as a major problem, and several families receive remittances from relatives abroad on a regular basis. However some of the residents were of the view that the community spirit has declined and that people are out of touch with each other.

The economy had changed over the last twenty years and it is believed that it is stunted because economic growth is very slow. Fishing, especially for lobsters, provides employment for some and during the season can earn them as much as \$1,000.00 per week. Introduction of sand mining and export of sand to other islands in the Eastern Caribbean contributes to the economy.

However this activity has resulted in degradation of the environment and depletion of natural resources including the destruction of the underground fresh water, flooding, and disappearance of flora and fauna. On the other hand, attempts have been made to develop a tourist industry, especially to attract tourists to visit the Frigate Bird Sanctuary, and hotels have been constructed. Tourism is therefore also contributing to the economy.

There are few social problems in Barbuda, but alcoholism is prevalent among young and old males and females. It is alleged that as much as 3,000 bottles of beer can be consumed in one night at the weekend and many blamed this on the absence of recreational facilities. Peddling and use of drugs are on the increase but prostitution is seen to be an activity in which mostly foreigners are involved.

2.1.2 THE SEMI-URBAN COMMUNITIES

Clare Hall and Potters are both in close proximity to St John's and their infra structure is fairly well developed. Though the cost of utilities is high these are available and several houses have electricity, water and telephones. There are also stand pipes on some streets but in Clare Hall the location of several houses off the main line means that these do not have access to public water. Although public and private transport is readily available, some of the roads in Clare Hall are in poor condition and there are many abandoned houses and vehicles which are inhabited by vagrants and drug dealers. While most of the houses are in reasonable condition there are some in Potters that are small, are without the basic amenities and are overcrowded. In Clare Hall land was sold to private developers and most of it is privately owned, but little infrastructure was put in place and there are pockets of squatters existing on government land in slum conditions.

Previously in Potters land for housing was small in size, but this is not now the case. However there was a concern that larger lots had not been obtained by residents but by outsiders. In neither community is there land for agriculture nor for grazing of animals and the feeling is that in a short time both of these communities will become fully urbanized. The communities are well served by schools and residents have access to other services from communities nearby, but absence of a community centre and recreational facilities were seen as problems. In both communities there is a health clinic and schools, and churches in Potters provide assistance to the needy. Project Hope has recently set up an office in Clare Hall to assist with social problems and there are also several groups operating in the community.

There are a significant number of young people in both communities and migration has led to shifts in the composition of the population. In both communities there has been an influx of non-Antiguans and at the same time, because of the increase in crime and drugs, some residents

who were born in the communities have moved out. Relationships between youth and elderly persons are characterized by lack of respect of the former for the latter.

Unemployment is high in both communities and under-employment is also a problem as many of the working poor find it difficult to sustain their livelihoods. People in Potters live very private lives and many prefer to suffer in silence. As a result several, especially the youth, have turned to drugs as a source of income and/or to escape from their problems. Alcoholism, use of drugs, violence and crime are present in both communities as is indiscipline and delinquency which according to some, result from lack of parental supervision and because some parents condone such behaviour. Petty theft is also common among young people in both communities and abusive behaviour and gangs are now problems in Clare Hall. Prostitution and teenage pregnancy are also prevalent.

Because of past supernatural activities, Potters is known as “the jumbie community” and unlike in Clare Hall there is no active political group in the community. In Clare Hall involvement in political activity is high and residents blame the government and the political parties for their feelings that the community is “sitting on a time bomb waiting to explode”.

In both of these communities residents were skeptical about the research and because of undelivered promises from their parliamentary representatives, felt that nothing was going to change. They had no confidence that anything would happen and felt that they were wasting their time.

2.1.3 THE RURAL COMMUNITIES

Except for Urlings and Wilikies which are coastal communities, the other rural communities are all inland. In many of these communities while utilities and transportation were available, residents were concerned about the high cost of utilities and the poor state of the roads. Residents in John Hughes felt attention needed to be paid to the roads and drains.

“The deplorable conditions of the roads and drains require immediate attention.”

Residents in Bendals pointed out that the poor condition of the roads was the result of the use of heavy trucks by the quarry and of neglect and lack of proper maintenance. The Fines Well is located in the community, and while it supplies most of the country’s drinking water and serves the water treatment plant, residents were concerned about the quality of water that they get. They said that while water is available either within households or from public standpipes, the quality was poor and because it could affect their health they used it mainly for domestic purposes and relied heavily on the rain and the well for most of their water.

"The water is very salty and brown"

"There is too much chlorine in it, it is unbearable to drink"

"Every time I drink the water I feel sick, I have to make sure that sure to buy a bottle and keep in case the tank run dry."

In most of the rural communities there is a primary or secondary school or both, and daycare centres and preschools are also available. In Ebenezer, although there is a library and computers, because of politics, residents cannot use these. In most of the communities residents also have access to a health clinic either in their communities or in communities nearby and there is a day care centre for the elderly in Ebenezer, a basketball court in Bendals and football and cricket fields in Ebenezer. The Government facility for delinquent boys is located in the Wilikies community.

On the whole, housing is adequate and in most of the communities several of the residents owned their own houses. However, in some communities there are houses that need repairs and in others, for example in Bendals and Piggots there is some evidence of overcrowding and of small houses with few amenities but with large families.

In these rural communities land is available for housing, for agriculture and for grazing of animals. Many residents own land and in some cases - for example in Ebenezer - land is owned by the original residents and in Piggots family land has been passed on from generation to generation. However while land in Ebenezer is available for agriculture and grazing, the land in Wilikies though available for grazing, is not suitable for agriculture. Although Bendals is an agricultural community, there is also a large quarry in the community and that as well as the agricultural land is controlled by the central government.

In most of the communities relationships are said to be good. Ebenezer is a close knit community, in Wilikies there is a strong community spirit and in Piggots most residents are related. However in Urlings while the community is still close knit, the village system is said to have broken down and interaction declined. This is also the case in Bendals where it is blamed on the presence of non-nationals. However in most other cases it has been blamed on cultural penetration via the TV.

Although in most of the communities crime was said to be low there was concern about the increase in the use of drugs, mainly marijuana. There was also concern about the level of indiscipline among the youth, and in Bendals about young people 'liming' on the block after school. In Bendals and Piggots, there is some evidence of child neglect and child abuse. In Wilikies, gambling and the existence of gangs were seen as problems and in Urlings alcoholism. In most of the communities, domestic violence was said to be either limited or nonexistent.

While many residents in these rural communities were of the view that poverty was not a big problem, in some communities it was said to be hidden and in others, like Wilikies there are several individuals who in order to meet their basic needs are employed in two jobs.

2.2 LIFE AND LIVING CONDITIONS IN THE COMMUNITIES

2.2.1 THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION

Although in the urban communities, because of the proximity of business, the potential to earn an income may be higher than in rural communities residents in Grays Farm complained about the lack of job opportunities. In Barbuda, unemployment is not a problem and several individuals are employed by the Council and a number of others are involved in fishing for lobsters and conch. There, fishing is the mainstay of the economy and many individuals are engaged in this industry

“Lobsters and conchs are there for the taking.”

On the other hand while Point is a coastal community in which the fisheries complex is situated, not many of the residents, including unemployed youth, in this community are interested or involved in the fishing industry.

Except in Wilikies where some of the residents are employed in the hotel, in most of the communities residents seek employment or are employed outside of their communities either in the construction industry, in government offices or in the private sector. In other communities some residents are entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, hairdressers, mechanics, and owners of micro businesses; and others work in the informal sector.

However while many people are employed, some only had part time jobs and were finding it difficult to survive.

“Several people are struggling to provide for their families.”

In addition the wages of some individuals are so low that many are forced to hold two or more jobs in order to meet their basic needs. This has contributed to the existence of the “working poor” and to situations in which some people have to do two or more jobs to increase their income. This is the case in Clare Hall where some people do farming to supplement their income. In Barbuda several people are living from pay cheque to pay cheque and in Urlings and John Hughes, low income earners are unable to cope with the high cost of living, including the high cost of utilities, and many are therefore unable to pay their bills.

“The cost of living too high and wages too low”

"We can't afford to pay the bills."

"The salary so small we can't afford to save anything."

"The money you get goes back into food and bills."

In many of the rural communities unemployment was said to be low but there was still a concern about the high levels of unemployment among young people, especially among males and this was said to be responsible for the latter turning to crime and to the drug trade as sources of income.

"There are too many unemployed young people."

"Some young people who cannot get work may turn to crime and drugs for their income."

In those communities in which unemployment is high, for example in Point and Grays Farm, concern was expressed about the lack of job opportunities and about the fact that the stigma attached to these communities made it difficult for residents to obtain employment.

The link between education and employment was recognized by many and lack of certificates and skills along with laziness, were seen as contributing to unemployment.

"Employment requirements are higher: you have to have certificates to get a job."

"Young people drop out of school without certificates or skills but they want to pick and choose jobs."

"Young people can get work but they lazy."

In several of the communities remittances from relatives abroad were contributing to the household economies and in others, for example Bendals residents contributed to "box/su su" on a regular basis. Access to credit is in theory available but the need for collateral prevents some from accessing it. However, some people saw credit from the shop as necessary in order to feed their families and to get the things that they needed.

The only credit that we can consider easy is the mega man and Courts."

On the other hand, some were of the view that credit contributed to and perpetuated poverty because:

"Credit is easy to get but it keeps you in poverty because you pay more when you credit."

"You will always be owing somebody."

2.2.2 THE SOCIAL DIMENSION

In a few of the communities, residents were of the view that when compared to other communities there were few social problems in theirs.

2.2.2.1 Alcoholism and Use of Illegal Drugs

However, in many of the communities, unemployment was seen to have contributed to many of the social problems that existed, including crime, the use and trading of illegal drugs, mainly marijuana, and to alcoholism. The latter was especially serious in Barbuda where not only older individuals but young men and even young girls are consuming large amounts of alcohol. Several people there were of the view that alcoholism not only is contributing to an increase in violence, but to men neglecting their families.

“Alcohol is causing too much fighting and cutting up at the weekends.”

“Too much alcohol is consumed in the village, especially among young men.”

Many therefore felt that the amount of alcohol coming into the island should be controlled.

In other communities, for example in Point, Potters and Clare Hall, concern was expressed about the increase in the sale and use of illegal drugs and about the existence of “drug houses”. In Bendals residents pointed out that:

“Illegal drugs were never a big thing in the community, but today nearly everyone is trying drugs to get rich,”

But in Point people were of the view that drugs have contributed to the increase in crime.

“People steal to support their drug habit.”

2.2.2.2 Crime and Violence

In all of the communities there was a concern about the increase in crime and in violence. Residents in Grays Farm felt that unemployment had contributed to the high level of crime in the community. However, they were quick to point out that not all of the crimes in the area were committed by members of the community.

“Sometimes individuals come into the area and commit crime and when they are caught because the crime was committed here it is assumed that the person is from here.”

At the same time, some of the residents in Gray's Farm were of the view that new residents to the area may commit crimes in other communities and when/if this happens, because of people's perception and the stigma attached to their community, the residents as well as the community was blamed for the crime. The increase of violence, especially among young people, is also seen as serious problem in other communities. For example in Wilikies and Clare Hall the existence of gangs and gang violence were seen as contributing to this problem.

2.2.2.3 Gender Issues

Teenage pregnancies, prostitution, treatment of women and domestic violence and poor parenting are phenomena that emerge from gender relations, the relationships between males and females. According to residents of Grays Farm these problems are all present in the community.

"Teenage pregnancy is high. Young girls go out to get money to make ends meet and they get pregnant."

"Houses of prostitution exist and the government needs to shut them down."

"Grays Farm is well known for domestic violence in all of its aspects."

"There are a lot of rapes in Grays Farm."

It was felt that lack of money in the home and frustration contributed to domestic violence. But when some women expressed their dislike for how women are treated, one of the men was of the view that:

"Women sometimes bring it on themselves because of their attitudes."

On the other hand, others thought that the way in which women were treated has changed and that women are rejecting violence and abuse because:

"Women are becoming more aware of their rights."

"Men have more respect for women now than before."

"Men are being forced to move away from wanting to control women."

Some of these gender issues were also present in other communities. For example women in Point were being abused, there was prostitution in Clare Hall, and there was little respect for women in Potters. In Ebenezer teenage pregnancy was a matter of concern and there were instances of domestic violence and of physical and sexual abuse of women. However in Bendals while treatment of women was said to be bad and domestic violence a problem, there was a feeling that fear of AIDS had caused men to limit the number of partners that they had.

"Before man had more than one woman and was proud of it but AIDS make men cool down so they only have one woman at a time now"

But men in John Hughes were of the view that gender relations were good because:

"We Treat women well"

A related problem identified by residents in Bendals was the number of boys and girls liming on the block, and the potential for risky sexual behaviours. .

"We have to be concerned about the liming because the same boys will date our daughters and may give them babies. We also have to look at AIDS."

2.2.2.4 Indiscipline, Delinquency and Treatment of Children

Residents in several of the communities commented on the level of indiscipline, especially in children and among young people.

In Clare Hall and Barbuda, the increase in the number of working mothers and lack of supervision were seen as a contributing factor to child neglect.

"Children are left to their own devices. They are out of control."

"Children are left to make their own decisions."

In Barbuda it was felt that men who do not look after their children and the presence of multiple fathers in some households were also responsible for some of the problems of delinquency, indiscipline and maltreatment of children.

Questionable values, poor parenting skills, breakdown of family life, lack of supervision and discipline in the home, and lack of respect for older people were all seen as contributing to the high level of indiscipline in society, especially among the youth.

"Family life was better ten years ago, but today families do not have that kind of unity and love."

However in some communities, for example in Bendals, it was said that the family unit has remained strong because of the values of community members and of the role that the church plays in the life of family members.

Residents in Grays Farm identified poor parenting as a factor that contributed to child neglect, indiscipline and delinquency. They were of the view that:

"Parents should be educated on how to deal with their children."

"We need adult education programmes to teach parents better parenting skills."

They were also very concerned about the attitudes of teachers in the school towards children from the community. According to them the former constantly abuse the latter and made derogatory comments like:

"You are stupid and you will come out just like the others in the neighbourhood."

There was a feeling that such behaviour and comments are having a negative impact on the children and on their attitudes towards school and that from an early age they could become drop out and become involved in illegal activities, and therefore perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

Several persons in other communities also pointed to the vulnerability of children in poor communities and about the negative effects that poverty can have on them. Among these are hunger and malnutrition, poor health, inability to concentrate on their school work, learning disabilities, school drop outs and inability to obtain educational qualifications. In addition some of these children may be left unsupervised and be susceptible to sexual exploitation, may have to beg, and may become involved in illegal activities at an early age. They are therefore unable to enjoy their childhood and because of limited opportunities their futures are jeopardized.

It was pointed out that because today people are more aware of rights issues, child abuse and maltreatment of children cannot be kept secret or hidden. Consequently treatment of children should be investigated and steps taken to improve it.

2.2.2.5 Education

In all communities residents acknowledged the importance of education, especially for obtaining a job. However, many residents in the communities studied had only a primary education had either dropped out of school before completing their education, or had not obtained any qualifications or certificates.

Residents in some communities, for example in Bendals, John Hughes and Point, were of the view that:

"Young people are dropping out of school without a basic education and no skills."

"Long ago they never ask you for school paper before you get the work, but now you have to come from a university before you can get certain kinds of jobs."

"There is a need to increase the level of education so as to get better jobs and to increase income."

“Unskilled people have little opportunity to do anything and they feel marginalized.”

At the same time the majority of people recognized that there are now more opportunities for accessing formal education, and they were eager for their children to get a good education.

“The opportunities are better now, more institutions are available, the teachers are more qualified and you can choose what you want to do.”

In some communities like Point, drop out rates, especially among males, were high, and in others performance was low. For example residents in Barbuda were concerned about the number of young people who although they attended school every day are functionally illiterate.

“Many young people are unable to read and write even although their parents send them to school every day.”

In all of the communities not only was there concern about low performance, but residents all pointed out that this often resulted from poor health, poor nutrition, hunger and learning disabilities in children whose parents were poor and could not afford the basic necessities, including sufficient food, for their children. People in all communities were convinced that:

“When children are hungry they can’t concentrate or learn.”

“They can’t learn on a hungry belly.”

At the same time most of the residents in Bendals were concerned about the change in school hours from 9.00am to 3.00pm to 8.30am to 1.00pm. Apparently this change was done to accommodate working hours of the quarry. However, it was felt that the new hours were having a negative effect on the children and would eventually have a negative impact on the whole community.

“The community is likely to change and suffer from social problems like teenage pregnancy, more selling of drugs and serious drug use and more crime.”

While the level of literacy was seen to be fairly high, because of the new hours for the primary school, performance and examination results are low. Consequently only a few students are attending secondary school or tertiary institutions.

“Students could continue to get poor results.”

It also was pointed out since most parents were working, many children were unsupervised after school, and that they were just liming or becoming involved in activities that could have serious consequences.

“After school you can see little boys going to catch fish.”

“Children could become involved in illegal activities.”

Residents in Porters pointed out that although opportunities for education had improved there was too much violence in schools.

“The high level of violence in school is on teachers as well as on students.”

The increase of violence in school is also a matter of national concern and is seen as one that needs immediate attention.

Acquisition of high quality education is not only important for obtaining gainful employment but also for personal growth and development. When children are deprived of this for what ever reason, and they see that school drop outs appear to get a lucrative income from illegal activities, some of them may begin to question whether it is worth while staying in school and may also decide to drop out. This not only limits their life chances, but is partly responsible for the high numbers of under-educated, idle, unemployed young people in the country as well as for the numbers involved in illegal activities.

On the other hand, the low level of participation of adults in any continuing education activities is also reason for concern. While in most of the communities there are few opportunities for adults to participate in formal or non-formal education programmes, in the few communities where these do exist, participation is very low. While there may be still a lingering belief that education means schooling and that it is an activity mainly for children, residents in Grays Farm pointed out that adults were so busy working in two jobs or doing odds jobs to provide for themselves and their families that they had no time to participate in educational activities.

2.2.2.6 Health

Good health is a prerequisite for enjoying a sense of well being and a good quality of life. However people living in poor communities are often in poor health and poverty was said to contribute to poor health. It was also felt that people need to be educated about the importance of healthy living. Information collected from community residents indicate that several residents in all of the communities were suffering from life style diseases including diabetes, hypertension and obesity, and that this was the case even with some younger people. Many of these diseases are associated with poor diet and in several cases it was reported that because of lack money poor individuals could not afford and were unable to eat balanced meals.

However, while poor nutrition was said to be common among children in some of the communities and this was seen as contributing to their poor health, it was pointed out that most, if not all children were immunized. At the same time, residents in Bendals felt that the shift from home grown, properly prepared food to fast foods was contributing to poor nutrition.

In Bendals too residents were concerned about the amount of dust being generated by the quarry and its effect on their health. According to them, it has contributed to an increase in respiratory diseases, especially among children.

"The dust already cause some small children to have shortness of breath."

"When the quarry working at full speed me and me people have to left the village. We just can't take the dust."

Another contributing factor to poor health identified was the inability of poor individuals to access good quality health care. It was pointed out that in many cases such persons could not afford to go to private doctors or to buy medication, and that while public health clinics may be available some people may either not be able to access the services or the services may not be of an acceptable quality.

In some communities, for example in Urlings, breast and ovarian cancer were problems as were cataract and blindness, and in Clare Hall mental health was identified as a problem. Residents in Urlings were also concerned about the quality of the ambulance service which according to them in cases of emergencies takes too long to respond, and in some cases have had fatal consequences.

"An ambulance should be based in or near to the community so that in case of an emergency it can respond faster."

"Persons have died before the ambulance arrived. They could reach the hospital and it was not a major illness, if they had seen a doctor earlier they could have made it."

"When my mother was sick the ambulance stay so long to come that when we reach the hospital the doctor ask why we didn't bring her sooner."

In most of the communities HIV/AIDS was seen as

"A Private thing and people don't talk about it."

Information on it was therefore not readily available. However in Clare Hall HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections, teenage pregnancy, prostitution and illicit sex were identified as health problems.

Poor sanitation, irresponsible disposal of garbage and poor draining systems were also seen as threats to good health.

“People throw their garbage in the streets and then the dogs pull it all over the place. We want the government to do something about it, it can make you sick.”

“The dumping area is too close to the community. It attracts flies, rats and dogs and can lead to disease.”

2.2.2.7 Facilities and Services

While facilities and services may be available, the extent to which residents can access and/or afford them is determined by factors such as distance, hours and time of delivery, the cost and the quality of the services being provided, and the attitude of the providers.

Some of the communities are well provided with facilities and services that are easily available to residents. Electricity water and telephones, including cell phones are available but not necessarily affordable. In several communities, including Point there are several houses without electricity or water, in Ebenezer residents were of the view that the cost of utilities is too high for low income persons, and in Wilikies it was felt that there needs to be some improvement in the provision of utilities.

In most of the communities water is available in stand pipes and in Wilikies and John Hughes there are reservoirs that act as back ups. Many houses therefore do access to water, either from stand pipes or from pipes inside or in their yards. However this is not the case in Point and some residents in Urlings identified the need for a steady flow of water. Residents in Urlings complained about the quality of the water which they said was not good for drinking and which they used mainly for domestic purposes.

Some communities are well served with transportation but in Urlings the bus service is said to be very bad, the residents in Bendals would like the hours of the bus service to be extended beyond 7.00 or 8.00 pm, and in Grays Farm it was felt that there is a need for a system to transport the elderly to the clinic. In Ebenezer, Clare Hall and some of the other communities residents complained about the poor condition of the roads and the conditions of drains.

“The roads are too narrow.”

“We need proper roads and drainage in this community.”

“We need road signs and street lights.”

Most communities are well served with schools and most children have access to day care centres, preschools, primary and secondary schools located either in their communities or in others nearby.

In Clare Hall there is the mental hospital and a home for the elderly and in Wilikies there are also day care facilities for the elderly, a correctional centre for delinquent boys, and a police station. However, the latter is without a working vehicle. Residents in Point were concerned about the absence of a police service in their community.

In many of the communities, residents have access to health care through health clinics either in the community or in communities nearby. There is no health centre in Point and residents in Grays Farm were of the view that:

“Although the health structure was poor, the clinic is a positive thing because people, especially pregnant mothers and the elderly can still go and receive medical attention free.”

In several communities residents expressed concern about the quality of the service being offered and they saw the need for improvement. This was especially so in the case of the health services about which several residents in Wilikies and Bendals were concerned.

“The clinic needs to be refurbished or rebuilt with facilities for a pharmacy.”

“There should be a doctor in the clinic every day.”

“There is need for a doctor to be resident in the community. The hospital is far and this would be of great assistance, especially in cases of emergency.”

In Bendals in addition to concerns about the state of the clinic, residents were also concerned about the hours at which it was opened, 8.00am to 1.00pm. They felt that because of this and the absence of a doctor on a daily basis,

“The clinic cannot provide services to meet the needs especially of children, pregnant mothers and the elderly.

“A doctor should be on call at all times and a residence should be provided for him/her.”

There is no clinic in Urlings and in Liberta there was neither a nurse nor doctor resident in the community.

As was the case in Grays Farm absence of recreational facilities is often cited as one of the factors that contribute to delinquency among the youth.

“Young people need more ways to focus their energy.”

“They need a community centre with activities and that is open to the public at all times and not just to a small cross section of people.”

A similar view was expressed by residents in Wilikies.

“We need a community centre for the young people to occupy their time.”

In Liberta and Clare Hall there is a basket ball court but the playing field in the former was damaged by the hurricane and was never repaired. And while there is a playing field in John Hughes the residents felt that there was a need for a recreational centre for the elderly.

2.2.2.8 The Environment

The physical environment within which poor people live has an impact on their lives. The environment can provide them with natural resources that they can use as the basis for economic activity, for food security and to sustain their livelihoods. However, except in the few communities in which fishing is a major activity, natural resources are not the basis for economic activity or a significant source of income for many people.

In all of the communities though, residents are aware that environmental conditions can be a threat to their health and well being and to their security and their safety, and they identified several factors that contribute to environmental degradation. Among these were littering and improper disposal of garbage and faeces, pollution of the sea and water sources, deforestation, charcoal burning and burning of rubbish, excessive amounts of dust, use of pesticides and other chemicals, overgrown areas, and the existence of abandoned and derelict houses and vehicles.

Except for Barbuda, Liberta, Urlings, and Bendals, other communities have few natural resources on which residents can depend to sustain their livelihoods. However the poor condition of their physical environments is a threat to residents' health. In the urban communities there is a lack of physical space leading to overcrowding, poor drainage and flooding, poor sanitation and inadequate storage of food, littering and improper garbage disposal, absence of and poor condition of toilet facilities, and disposal of feces in the sea and surrounding areas. Stray dogs, flies, rats and mosquitoes are also prevalent in some communities. All of these conditions have contributed to the creation of an unhealthy physical environment that creates risks and poses threats to residents' health.

In Barbuda a significant number of residents depend on natural resources, the sea, the bird sanctuary, the land and the sand, for an income. However residents are aware that sand mining, while providing a lucrative income for some, is contributing to severe degradation of the environment, to deforestation and destruction of fauna. They are therefore concerned that

because parts of Barbuda are below sea level, sand mining is changing the structure of the island.

In Wilikies and Clare Hall, the existence of abandoned buildings, derelict vehicles and overgrown areas were identified as problems. Residents in John Hughes felt that the rainforest needs to be better preserved, and in some communities, roaming animals were also seen as a problem.

In Bendals among the environmental problems identified were pollution caused by disposal of litter that ends up in the stream, smoke from burning of rubbish and charcoal, and the dust from the quarry. While residents acknowledged that the quarry is a source of income, they also saw it as an environmental hazard.

“Don’t talk about dust when the quarry working.”

“All over does turn brown, nothing green no more and when it dry, it worst”

The dust from the quarry has not only affected the vegetation which now looks wilted with grey leaves, but it has also contributed to a decrease in the bird population. Indiscriminate cutting down of trees and burning of charcoal, the use of chemical pesticides were also identified as actions that resulted in environmental degradation.

All of the communities have experienced hurricanes and felt their negative effects, including storm surges and flooding of low lying areas. Consequently several homes now have shutters. However, houses located in high risk areas, houses that are not insured and those that are not sturdy are the ones whose owners feel the negative effects most keenly.

Flooding is a problem in Point, Grays Farm, Bendals, Urlings and Piggots and while poor drainage is responsible for this situation, in Piggots the existence of swamp lands is also a contributing factor.

“The drains are not deep enough and they are blocked with debris so whenever it rains, there is flooding.”

“We have a little farm and garden but when a heavy rain falls its floods and everything gets covered in water.”

While residents in many of the communities seemed to be aware of environmental issues, there is still a need for programmes to increase this awareness and understanding about how their own practices and actions contribute to degradation of the environment.

2.2.3 THE POLITICAL DIMENSION

Citizens' participation in political activity and good governance are factors that affect community life and living. In two of the communities there are no political groups and little emphasis is placed on political activity. However, in most of the others there are active political groups representing the two main political parties. In some communities, political activity is confined to election time and voting, and while in a few communities support for a particular party can divide the community and result in tension but in others this is not the case.

"There is a high level of participation in political activity by supporters of both parties."

"When it is election time we do what we have to do, after that we are finished with politics."

"There is a strong political climate here and it can become tense and explosive at times."

In terms of governance, residents in several communities were not satisfied with their representation and complained either that they seldom saw their Parliamentary Representative, that their community was being neglected, or that the government was not doing enough to ensure that the community was provided with proper infrastructure, with enough jobs, or with development programmes.

"Because Grays Farm is known as the ghetto, political leaders don't pay much attention only when it is election time."

"We need more assistance from the government."

"We are being used as political pawns."

"We are being neglected by our parliamentary representative"

Most of the residents were also of the view that government was not playing the role that it should to ensure the development of their communities and to provide adequate assistance to those in need, especially to the vulnerable groups including children, the youth and the elderly.

2.3 DEFINITION, PERCEPTION, CAUSES AND IMPACT OF POVERTY AND DEPRIVATION

All of those who participated in the various activities of the PPA agreed that poverty is the inability of individuals to meet their basic needs. However in defining deprivation several participants in some of the community workshops were of the view that

"Deprivation is the failure of leaders to provide for their community what other communities have."

"The lack of political will to ensure that community members have the basic needs and are comfortable."

They therefore blamed political leaders and government and felt that they had contributed to poverty because their neglect of the communities and their failure to provide proper infrastructure, facilities and services, and programmes that would enable people to meet their basic needs.

In the Community Workshops residents had opportunities to reflect on life and living conditions, to discuss the existence, types and levels of poverty in their communities and to identify the factors that contributed to it. In all of the communities there was a great deal of discussion about whether the community was poor or not, and in some of the communities residents were reluctant to admit that their communities were poor or that poverty existed in their communities.

"Poverty does not exist in Bendals."

"No poverty here."

"Extreme poverty does not exist here in Wilikies, the community spirit makes up for what is lacking."

In cases where residents did admit that there was poverty in the community, they said that the poverty was relative rather than absolute. For example in Potters those who participated in the workshop felt that while there are no visible signs of persons who are destitute, several persons could be identified as being relatively poor because their income was less than their expenses.

"While there are persons experiencing some level of poverty, there is no one in the community who is in absolute poverty."

"There may be pockets of poverty but on a very small scale."

"There a large number of persons who are relatively poor."

In comparing themselves and their communities to others residents in some of the communities felt that they were better off than many.

"While there maybe some poverty, we are still better off, we can satisfy our basic needs."

"Although things are bad they could be a lot worse"

"There is some poverty but we are not the worst."

"Everyone has a roof over their heads and most people eat two or three meals a day."

Workshop participants in some communities did identify a few cases of private poverty.

"Some people are struggling to meet their basic needs and to provide for their families."

"There is a lady living in severe poverty. Her house has no roof."

"There are persons who only eat when food is available and sometimes they do not eat everyday."

However in all of the communities residents were concerned about public poverty; including poor infrastructure, lack of well functioning public facilities and poor social services.

"The roads are bad, they need fixing."

"We need street lights"

"Utilities are too high, low income persons can't meet the expenses."

"Medical facilities are inadequate."

"Poor drainage is a problem."

In Barbuda participants in the workshop did not readily accept that poverty existed there. According to them, they have natural resources; the sea as the basis of economic activity, access to free land, and full ownership of housing without the burden of mortgages, very little ill health and

"No one goes to bed without a meal."

However one community leader, a teacher, did say that there are significant levels of poverty and that this can be seen by the number of children who are neglected, and who suffer from poor nutrition.

In two communities mention was made of emotional and psychological poverty and these were seen as factors the contributed to and perpetuated poverty.

"The people's minds are closed to upliftment, they do not have an open mind, if you try to start something to develop them you practically have to beg them to participate."

"Poor attitudes."

Unwillingness to accept that poverty exists or that they are poor may be linked to the label and/or the stigma attached to being identified as and being called poor.

"There is a false notion and perception of poverty."

"Nothing good comes from this area."

"Poverty is a private matter and such individuals should be targeted on a one to one basis."

But the perception of residents in many of the communities are at odds with information based on the Research Facilitators' observation of various aspects of living conditions and quality of life in the communities and on the residents' own admission of serious social problems and poor infrastructure.

Unlike their counterparts in the rural communities, residents in the urban and semi-urban communities were more willing to admit that their communities were poor and that poverty was high.

"Yes there is poverty in this community."

"Poverty is very high here."

"In Clare Hall there are significant levels of poverty."

They however tended to blame its existence on migration and on an influx of "outsiders" either individuals from other communities or people from other Caribbean countries.

"A large number of the residents are not born in Potters."

"Because here is known as the ghetto it attracts all kinds of non-nationals."

"The influences of Caribbean nationals are responsible for overcrowding, for poor housing and for the dumping of garbage."

"There are several non-nationals here."

"The arrival of CARICOM nationals seeking better opportunities contributes to poor living conditions because it is difficult for them to get employment."

Residents in all of the communities agreed that lack of jobs and of opportunities to earn an income was one of the main causes of private poverty. Other causes identified were lack of and low levels of education, few skills, and lack of self esteem. Some were also of the view that laziness and lack of motivation also caused some persons to be poor. They also agreed that poverty can cause people to commit crime and to become involved in illegal activities.

"No money or access to an income so they may have to beg or steal."

"Unemployment is high and the youth get involved in selling and consuming drugs."

"Unemployed persons feel marginalized because they have no skills and no opportunities to do anything."

"Unemployment is high among males."

"Training is critical to deter poverty."

"Jobs are there but the youth too lazy."

"Laziness contributes to poor living conditions."

In some cases, it was pointed out that even when people are employed, wages are so low that they are insufficient to meet basic needs. Some of these working poor therefore may have to work at two or more jobs to supplement their incomes, and some may receive assistance from relatives.

"They are many persons in the community who cannot find employment in the formal sector, they work in the informal sector and at odd jobs."

"Although employed most families live from pay cheque to pay cheque."

"Most people are surviving on minimum wages."

"Some people have more than one job."

"Some people may get help from family and friends."

The experience of being poor and the effect of living in a poor community create feelings of helplessness, frustration and powerlessness, stress, anger, dependency, and shame in many people, and there was general agreement among residents that children, the elderly and women who were single parents were most affected by poverty.

"The children go hungry."

"The majority of children cannot finish school so they have no academic qualifications."

"Children have to stay home to help so they miss school."

"Children are open to exploitation."

"It affects women who are single parents most because they have to sell their bodies to provide for the children."

"Women have multiple pregnancies from different men."

"Elderly persons are dependent on their children, but sometimes the children turn their backs."

At the same time, it was recognized that although men may not talk about it poverty also has a negative effect on them.

"They are affected emotionally, they feel let down and no good, like a failure."

Residents were not only aware and concerned about how poverty affects individuals but about its effect on relationships in the family and in the community.

"It causes conflict, quarrelling and fighting."

"It can break up families."

"It causes jealousy among neighbours."

"This community is close knit so poverty impacts on one group its effects are felt by other groups in the community."

2.4 SENSE OF WELL BEING AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Appreciation of and sensitivity to the sense of well being and quality of life that people enjoy depend on a holistic view of their situation and on an understanding of the many factors that determine the conditions under which they live. During the community workshops residents developed graphs on the Wheel of Well Being (Figure 2.1) that showed the physical and material, the economic, the social, and the spiritual, emotional and psychological aspects of well being, and they completed the Quality Of Life Index (Figure 2.2) to assess the quality of life that they enjoyed. In-depth and wide ranging discussions characterized these activities and revealed that while the physical and material needs of residents in many of the communities were being met, in others, especially in the urban communities, many residents did not have adequate shelter and/or sufficient food.

The level of economic well being was graphically reflected in the graphs on the Wheels of Well Being and in the completed Quality of Life Indices (Figures 2.3 and 2.4 respectively). In five of the of the communities while employment was rated as high and job opportunities were rated as being fairly high, residents were still concerned about the high unemployment among young people. In six of the communities, unemployment was rated as high, job opportunities was rated low and these were seen as factors that were affecting residents' ability to enjoy an acceptable quality of life. The inability to earn an income and limited access to financial resources means that many of the residents in these communities experience difficulty in meeting their basic needs and in sustaining their livelihoods.

The social milieu in which people live and interact has a significant impact on their sense of well being. The data show that in many of the communities the social fabric of the communities is characterized by several social problems. The graphs in the section on social well being on the Wheels, are indications of residents' views about the some of the factors that contribute to the low levels of social wellbeing in some of the communities. Among these the quality of family life was rated high in five communities, relationships between different groups was said to be good in most and in only two communities was treatment of women given a low rating. While data from other sources show that there has been a general increase in crime, the graphs reveal that only in four of the communities did residents rate crime as being high. However in some of the communities in which it was rated as low, residents in their discussions did identify robbery, theft, and stealing and in others they expressed concern about the fact that crime was increasing and in a few cases residents said that they did not feel safe in their homes.

Having good health and some level of formal education can enable individuals to enjoy a good standard of living and feel a sense of well being. Data on the Wheels and QOL Indices suggest that residents in about half of the communities believe that they are in good health and that some residents in all of the communities do have an average level of education. However in

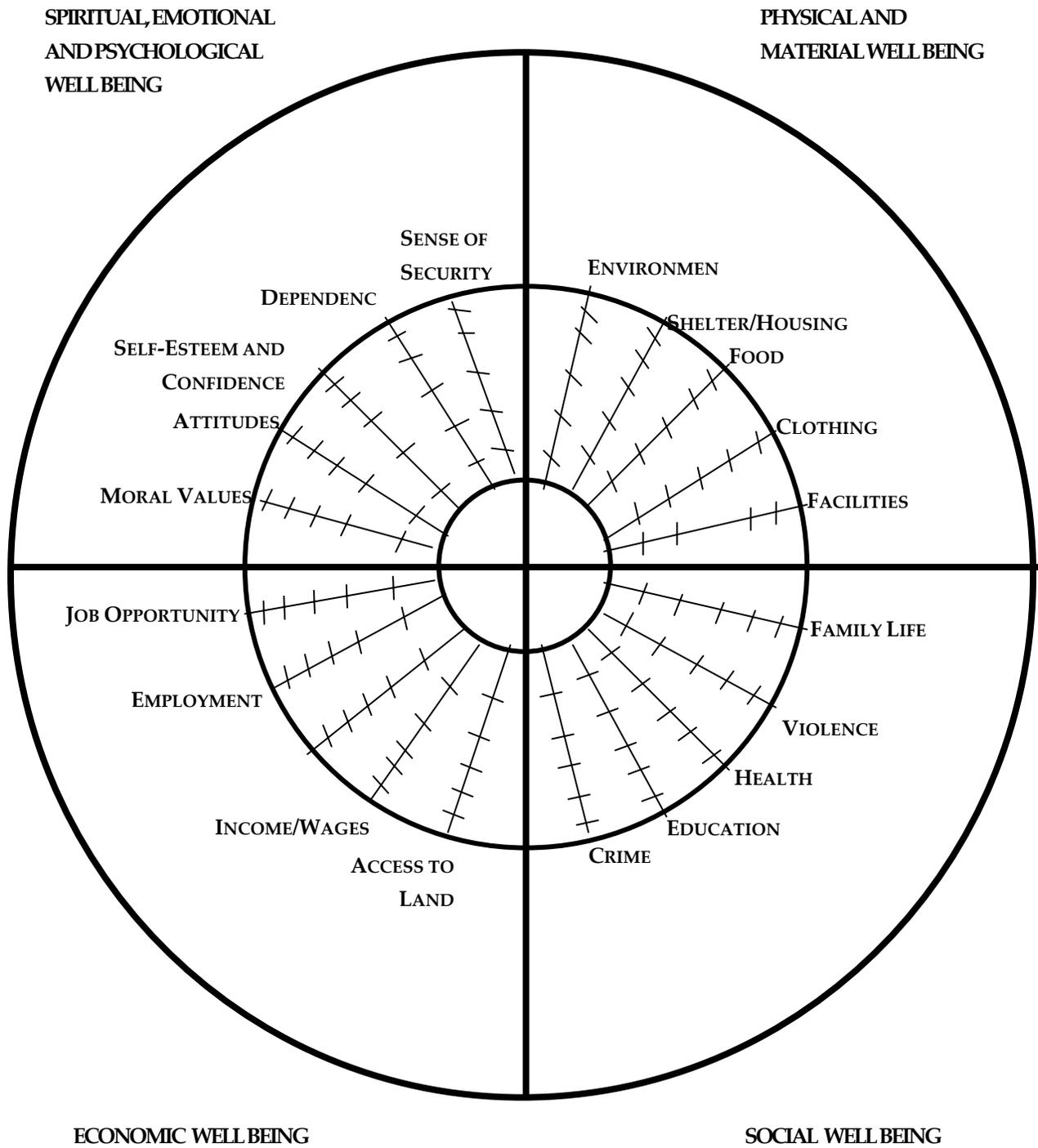
their discussions they expressed concern about the number of young people without marketable skills and in the Quality of Life Index they indicated that in practically all of the communities, participation in adult and continuing education was very low. Consequently while acknowledging the importance of education for securing a job and for personal growth and development, and the availability and accessibility of educational opportunities, it would appear that a significant number of people are not making use of such opportunities.

While spiritual, emotional and psychological well being play an important part in how individuals feel about themselves and about the society and community in which they live, these are aspects that are often ignored. If people don't feel good about themselves, if they feel that they are not worth anything, that nobody cares about them and if they have negative feelings about where and how they are living, then they will have a low sense of well being. At the same time if they feel threatened and insecure this also determines their sense of well being and the quality of their lives. So that in communities with high level of crime, residents' sense of security was rated low.

During the workshops there was a lot of discussion on moral values and attitudes and on the levels of dependency displayed by individuals in the communities. The graphs plotted in this section of the Wheels show that in six of the communities, values, attitudes and confidence were rated low while dependency was rated high. During the discussions that followed the residents realized that questionable values and poor attitudes could contribute to high levels of dependency and to the creation of situations that prevent individuals from achieving their goals and from moving out of poverty. At the same time in some communities where residents admitted that there was poverty, they still felt that self esteem and self confidence were high.

"Even though people in Grays Farm are poor they think very highly of themselves. They don't people to look down on them and they don't like to get handouts from persons other than their family."

Figure 2.1: The Wheel of Well Being



Key: 1 -5

1 = Lowest (Centre of Wheel)

Figure 2.2: Quality Of Life Index

	Very Low	Low	Average	High	Very High
ECONOMIC					
Employment					
Income/Earnings					
Use of Credit					
Money & Things from Abroad					
Illegal Activities					
SOCIAL SERVICES					
Social Welfare					
Daycare/Pre-schools					
Health Services					
Garbage Disposal					
Care of the Elderly					
Recreational facilities					
PHYSICAL FACILITIES					
Housing					
Water					
Electricity					
Sanitation: Toilets, baths etc					
Roads					
Transportation					
HEALTH AND NUTRITION					
Children's Health					
Teenage Pregnancy					
Mental Health					
Availability of food					
Balanced diet					
EDUCATION					
Literacy					
Primary					
Secondary					
Tertiary/Higher					
Technical/Vocational Training					
Adult/Continuing Education					
PARTICIPATION					
Church					
Community Groups					
Recreation/Leisure Activities					
Political Activity					
Community Programmes/Projects					

Figure 2.3: Gray's Farm Listing of Services

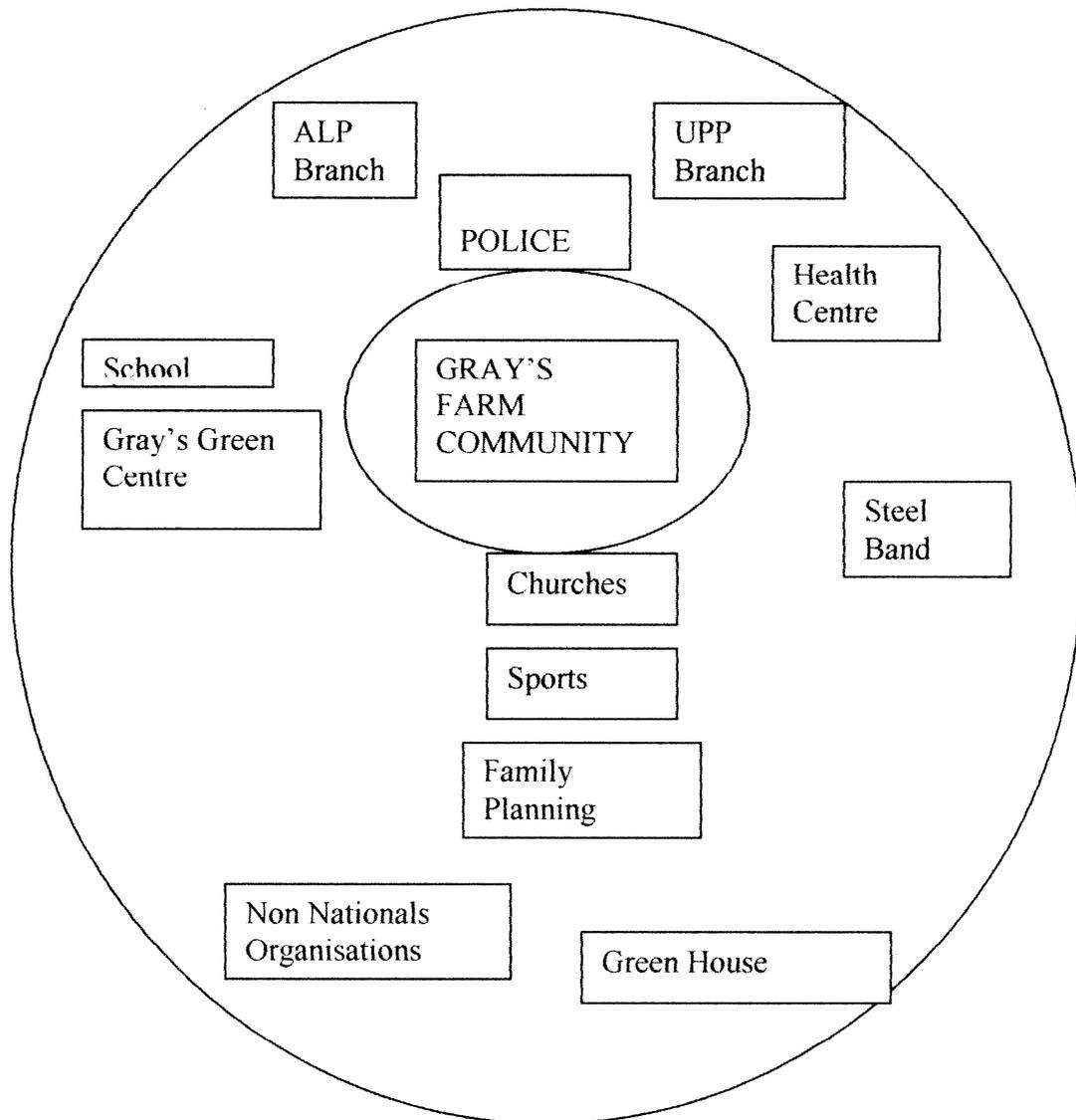
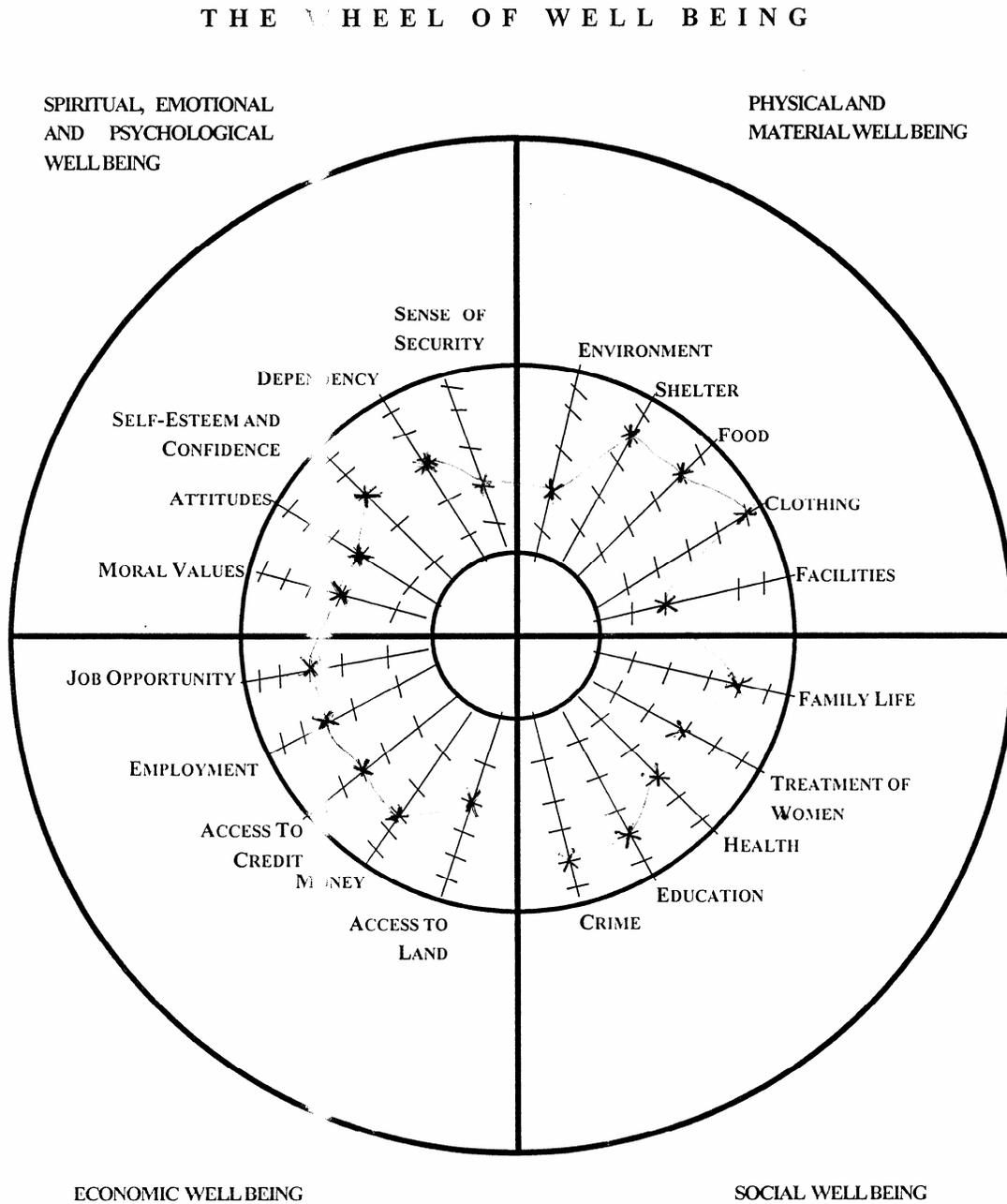


Figure 2.4: Sample Completed Wheel of Well-Being (Grays Farms Community)



Key: 1 -5
1 = Lowest (Centre of Wheel)

2.5 POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Institutions and organizations are vehicles through which resources and services are delivered to community residents. In some of the communities there are institutions and organizations working to improve living conditions and the quality people's lives. Residents identified such institutions and organizations and located them on Venn Diagrams created during the community workshops.

These diagrams show that government institutions are the ones that are most visible in communities and that in every community there was at least one school and in eight there was a health clinic. In several communities apart from the clinic and school there was only one other institution including a recreation facility, a basketball court, a multi purpose court, a computer training centre, an agricultural station or a police station and in two of the communities there was a day care centre. The Venn Diagrams also showed that there are a small number of NGOs among which the churches are most prominent, and that in most of the communities there are no Community Based Organizations.

The data also show that the most visible and important NGOs were churches, that there were churches in every community, that in one of the communities there were as many as seven churches and that there was a Catholic Retreat Centre in one community. Residents said that churches not only provided spiritual guidance but also provided assistance to the needy and were therefore making a difference in poor people's life.

Among the other NGOs identified were sporting clubs, in four communities; a youth club, a steel pan school, a home for the elderly, a fisherman's association, the Optimist Club, Project Hope, and Girl Guides in others. Only in one community was there a CBO but according to residents this was not functioning well.

The government institutions do provide facilities and services, and the NGOs do organize and implement programmes that provide assistance and support to residents and in this sense they do help to alleviate poverty. However in the communities in which poverty was identified it appears that their efforts have not been able to make a significant difference to those who are living in poverty. Nor have they been able to find the "hidden poor" or to improve their living conditions. At the same time while one person did say that a Minister of government did get jobs for some of the drug pushers and got them to stop pushing drugs, residents in all of the communities said that they were not aware of any specific initiatives or programmes that were intended to alleviate or reduce poverty in their communities.

2.5.1 COMMUNITY NEEDS

The communities are not homogeneous and while they do display several similarities, and some common needs, in each there are specific problems and particular needs. Although in all of the communities residents identified several positive features of their communities, they also identified what is needed to improve the quality of their lives and the living conditions in their communities.

Table 2.2: Summary of Communities' Needs

COMMUNITY	NEEDS
Barbuda	Adult Education programmes, better recreation facilities, more activity in agriculture and markets for agricultural produce, technical advice and assistance in constructing safe homes, financial facilities to access credit for home construction
Bendals	Employment opportunities, jobs, financial assistance for the disabled, a place for the elderly, a community centre to conduct classes, a computer centre, a library, an upgraded and well equipped health centre, school hours to be revisited so that children can be in school for longer hours, improved health centre and services
Clare Hall	Education for self development, training facilities, training in money management, training for unemployed youth, a library, job opportunities, employment for women, better roads, repair of existing roads, low income housing, better quality water.
Ebenezar	Adult Education facility for evening classes, better roads, an upgraded health care facility, a community centre, a library, Home Help Aides for the elderly, more regular garbage collection, expansion of the infrastructure.
Grays Farm	Job opportunities, better wages, work for young people, skills training, more education programmes, parent education programmes, transportation to take the elderly to clinic, better roads, a better drainage system, better disposal and collection of garbage, remove/shut down houses of prostitution, building regulations to be observed, improved housing, better sanitation facilities, road signs.
John Hughes	Roads to be fixed, expansion of the infrastructure, better public services, improved community development, special attention to be paid to unemployed youth, more employment for young people, preservation of the rain forest, lower cost of utilities, more land for housing development, recreation centre for the elderly
Liberta	Increase in pension, better facilities at the health clinic, resident doctor and nurse at the clinic, community centre with a library and computers, abolish the education levy
Pigotts	A survey to see the level of unemployment, better, improved roads and drainage system, better street lighting, pharmacy at the health clinic, to see a doctor at the clinic more often, proper playing field at the school, library and more computers in the school, better treatment of children

COMMUNITY	NEEDS
Potters	More job opportunities, government to look at ways to improve the services offered, more help for the elderly, all purpose community training centre, skills training, a regular doctor assigned to the clinic, a hurricane shelter, a sporting facility, repair the basketball court, a fence, lights, benches and toilets for the football field, a community centre, a library, free evening classes, lands and loans for low income earners.
Point	Jobs and job opportunities, better paved roads, a community centre, increase the level of education, reopen the IT centre, a clinic, a school, houses for the homeless, rehabilitation of the drug addicts, a community development programme, more help for the elderly,
Urlings	Gainful employment, a community centre with computers, after school evening activities, an ambulance service and a resident doctor, transportation after 7.00 pm, roads to be fixed, police station, fire station, a facility for elderly people, a sports field and basketball court, a supermarket, lower the cost of living, community programmes and activities, evening classes, upgrade the clinic
Wilikies	Jobs, a training centre, a community centre, fix the roads, development of the infrastructure, street lights, refurbish the clinic and increase the staff and the services offered, a resident doctor, a working vehicle for the police station, free water installation for those who can't afford the installation fees, lower the cost of utilities, rehabilitation of users of drugs and alcohol, counseling for young people, reduction in consumption tax and the cost of living, education about agriculture.

CHAPTER 3: POVERTY AND HOUSEHOLD WELFARE

3.1 TYPES OF HOUSEHOLDS

Interviews were conducted with the head of household or responsible adults in thirty nine households and nine of the interviewees were male.

Eight of the households, contained nuclear families in which common law relationships predominated, and in which most of the parents were between thirty and thirty eight years of age. In two of these households there were eleven people, in one there were nine children, in another there were seven children, and in seven there were children under five years of age.

Six of the households contained multi-generational families that consisted of grand parents their child/children, mostly daughters, and their grandchildren. The youngest grandmother was fifty years old, three of them were over seventy years of age, and one was over eighty. While the average number of persons in these households was six, in one of the households there were sixteen persons and in another there were ten. All of the nine children in these households were under twelve years of age.

Nearly one third of the households contained single parent female-headed families. Eight of the mothers (62%) were between the ages of thirty and thirty nine and two were under thirty. Five of the households contained five children and six contained children under five years of age. Eight households consisted of single elderly persons living alone. Five of these were male, seven of them were over seventy and two over eighty years of age.

There were four households in which there were extended families and only one of these households had less than five persons. Three had between five and ten persons and one had thirteen persons. In one of these households there were seven children and in another six. Three of the households had children under five years, and three had children over twelve years.

Since there is a link between level of education of household head, level of poverty and quality of life, the educational profile of head of household is important. Nearly three quarters (72%) of the household heads interviewed had only a primary education and some of these had not even completed primary school. Just over a quarter had some level of secondary education but only two of the heads had reached form five and only one had obtained some subjects at the CXC examinations. A couple had reached form three and some had dropped out because of financial difficulties or pregnancy. One interviewee said that she had lost interest in school so stopped going.

Just over a quarter of the interviewees (26%) admitted to having problems with reading and writing and a few said that their children were either slow in school and had or were also experiencing problems with reading and writing. The majority of the elderly persons seemed to be functionally illiterate and one said that he had not been to school at all so had no education.

3.2 LEVEL OF POVERTY

Of all the households interviewed 13 percent were very poor, just over half (51%) was poor, and just over a third (36%) was better off. Half of the single person elderly households were poor, and three quarters of the single parent female headed households was very poor or poor. Nuclear families had the largest number of better off households. Poor households existed in all of the communities, but some of those in Point and Grays Farm were among the poorest.

Table 3.1: Households by Level of Poverty

HOUSEHOLDS	VERY POOR	POOR	BETTER OFF	TOTAL
Female headed	2	7	3	12
Male headed	-	-	1	1
Nuclear	-	4	4	8
Multi-generational	1	2	3	6
Extended	1	3	-	4
Single person	1	4	3	8
Total	5	20	14	39

3.3 PERCEPTION, EFFECT AND IMPACT OF POVERTY

It is in households that poverty is experienced and that the effects of private, structural and intergenerational poverty are felt most keenly by members of the household. It is here too that the cycle of poverty is perpetuated and repeated.

Interviewees were very clear about what poverty means.

- "Poverty is when you don't own anything."*
- "When you don't have a meal to give the family."*
- "When you can't give yourself a good meal and can't pay the bills."*
- "Poverty is not having food, clothes or shelter."*
- "Can't afford to get what you want."*
- "No job, no salary so can't help yourself."*
- "When you don't have things for your comfort."*

Just over half of the interviewees (51%) said that they were poor, shared their experience of poverty and gave reasons for being poor.

- "Yes I poor because of the conditions in which I live."*
- "I not living in my own house, I could get kick out anytime."*
- "I poor because I can't have what I supposed to have."*
- "I lack a lot of things."*
- "I have nobody to help me, the children don't help."*
- "I have nothing."*
- "I am poor I don't have a job."*
- "I don't have money to buy the things I need."*
- "The little I get can't do."*
- "I am poor but I am satisfied. Nobody will know things bad."*
- "Things were better when my husband was alive."*

Several of the interviewees said that growing up in a poor family was partly responsible for them and their children being poor.

- "My family was always poor."*
- "I come from a poor family."*
- "My family was poor there were ten children."*
- "The poverty pass down from the older generation."*
- "I poor, raise without a father and my mother treated me bad."*
- "My family was poor we lived on the estate."*

Five of the elderly persons who were interviewed said that they were poor and two of these had disabilities. For these older interviewees lack of a steady income, loneliness, feelings of being abandoned and unwanted, and having no one to care for them have made the experience of poverty painful and distressing.

- "I don't have a job and no income on which to survive."*
- "I have nothing."*
- "There is nobody to help me. The children don't help."*
- "I lack a lot of things but am thankful."*
- "Poverty is bad."*
- "I don't like the life I living, but I can't do better."*

Those interviewees who said that they were not poor not only gave reasons for this, but they often compared themselves to others who in their opinion were poorer. In addition some felt that once they did not have to beg and could help themselves they were not poor.

"I neither poor nor rich"
"There are people poorer than me."
"I not poor, I have a big house and clothes."
"I am not poor in the material sense. I can survive."
"I am not poor I can help myself."
"Not really poor but life is not always easy."
"No I still have something to eat."
"I don't have to beg."

In addition to lack of employment and the absence of financial and other resources, illiteracy and low levels of education, lack of initiative and high dependency on government, lack of choices, and inertia and apathy in spite of available opportunities were seen as causes of poverty. At the same time in some households members displayed symptoms of psychological and emotional poverty. This was especially noticeable among younger members of the household who expressed feelings of powerlessness, appeared to be unmotivated and showed little, if any interest in pursuing or becoming involved in activities that could contribute to their personal development.

"I need someone to take care of me and the kids."
"I have no job, no salary so I can't help myself."
"I don't think I will ever come out of poverty."
"When there is no work it mess up your head."
"I don't know what I want to do."
"I don't take part in anything, I just stay home."

Several interviewees said that they were not satisfied with the quality of their lives.

"The quality low."
"I not living a modern life."
"Life up and down."
"I don't like the conditions in which I living."
"I not satisfied I living bad."
"I don't like the neighbourhood."
"It is not a good life but I trying my best."
"Life is bad."
"It could be better."
"Very bad."
"My life is marred by violence, hunger and deprivation."
"It is not really a good life."

But some others seemed to accept their circumstances and were satisfied with their life and resigned to their fate.

"I satisfied . Where there is life there is hope."

"It not a good life but I satisfied."

"Better can't be done."

"It alright."

"Not of the best but still satisfied."

"I am happy in spite of no money or food."

"I am poor but I am satisfied. Nobody will know things bad."

Most of the interviewees agreed that poverty had a negative effect on members of the household especially on children, elderly persons, and women, as well as on relationships between family members. Many said that poverty affected children most, that insufficient food and poor nourishment not only limited children's physical development, but that because some children often went hungry and could not go to school every day they were unable to learn. In addition because some of them were not getting the medical attention they needed their health was in jeopardy, and others were being neglected and subjected to physical and sexual abuse.

"Children are affected most because they depend on parents for their welfare."

"Poor children have few opportunities."

"Some can't go to school everyday."

"Some children go to school hungry."

"Other children tease them because they are poor."

"At school poor children are left behind and teachers tend not to teach them."

"Some have to beg or steal."

"Some children are being abused physically and sexually"

Women, especially single mothers who were wholly responsible for providing for their children, as well as grandmothers in multi-generational households also felt the negative effects of poverty. Moreover even when the former are employed their wages are not enough to meet the basic needs of the family and some have had to resort to prostitution.

"Too many women underemployed they don't earn enough."

"Some women have to prostitute themselves."

"Women get depressed because they can't provide for their families."

"They have to take five cents and turn it into ten cents."

"Some women get caught in a cycle of unplanned pregnancies for different men."

"Grandmothers are burdened with caring for their children and their daughters' children."

Poverty also affects relationships between family members and in some poor households relations between partners and between parents and children are not harmonious. They were characterized by tension, disagreements and quarrels. Break up of families, domestic violence and abuse of women and children were also said to be common problems in some of the households.

"Poverty breaks up relationships."

"People get frustrated and angry and quarrel with each other."

"Poor communication among family members."

"Everybody looking out for themselves."

At the same time several parents expect their children to take care of them when they get old. However there were cases, especially among elderly men, where this has not happened and some interviewees give the following reasons for this.

"When the man is not there for the children when they are young, the children turn their backs on them when they get old."

"When they grow up they don't want any part of their fathers."

3.4 LIVING CONDITIONS

Families in 46 percent of the households were living in small wooden houses with limited room and more than three quarters of these (78%) was in very poor condition and some lacked basic amenities like indoor pipes, kitchens, toilets and bathrooms. Although a significant number did have pit latrines, in some of the households members disposed of human excreta in the surrounding environment. There was one elderly male interviewee who had no house and was literally living between two sheets of galvanize propped up against someone's fence.

Many of the interviewees said that amenities like good quality running water, electricity, telephone land lines and cell phones, and household appliances were not luxuries but as essentials for enjoying a good standard of living and quality of life. Existence of them in households therefore cannot by themselves be used as one of the indicators of the absence of poverty, and although some or all of these were absent in many of the households, there were present in others and nearly a third (31%) of the interviewees either had land lines or cell phones.

Eighteen, nearly fifty percent (46%) of the households interviewed had electricity and electrical appliances, particularly fridges and TVs, including cable. However in some cases these were not working because interviewees could not afford to pay the electricity bill which according to them was too high and on which they would have to spend most of their money. In many of

the households there were also gas stoves, but either because of inability to afford gas or as a strategy to save, wood and/or charcoal was also being used for cooking by nearly a third (31%) of the households. Twelve of the interviewees either had land lines or cell phones.

3.5 HOUSEHOLD HEADSHIP

Interviewees identified several factors that determine household headship. Among these were earning power, responsibility for the welfare of the family, the traditional role of the male, ownership of the house, absence of an adult male, and responsibility for decision making.

Not only were most of the interviewees female but just over sixty percent (62%) of all households interviewed were headed by women. Women were household heads in 83.3% of the multigenerational households, in 13 percent of the nuclear households and in 38 percent of the single person households. A third of the households were headed by men, and of these five were nuclear households and five single person elderly households.

Table 3.2: Household Headship

Households	Male Head	Female Head	Both
Single Parent Female headed	-	12	-
Single parent male headed	1	-	-
Nuclear	5	1	2
Multi-generational	1	5	-
Extended	1	3	-
Single person	5	3	-
Total	13	24	2

The fact that females are the heads in so many households is an indication that women in the communities studied have the major responsibility for the welfare of families and for meeting their own economic and other needs as well as those of family members. However, the majority of these women although they have children, and sometimes grand children who are dependent on them, are either unemployed or working for very low wages that are insufficient to meet the basic needs of their families. During the interviews such women were especially concerned about their inability to meet even the basic needs of food and shelter for their children.

3.6 HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIES AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

The economies of the households are very fragile and are dependent on the ability of household members to obtain employment that would give them enough money to meet their families' basic needs. In the elderly single person households where individuals are unable to work, they depend on small pensions, welfare, and help from children or other relatives and friends.

In twelve of the households interviewed no one was employed. Eight of these were single person elderly households and four were single parent female headed households.

In fifteen of the households one person was employed, in ten there were two persons employed and in two households more than two persons were employed. Twenty three households, nearly sixty percent (60%) had full time workers; ten, just over a quarter (26%) had part time workers and six had seasonal workers. Nine persons were self employed in vending, hair braiding, fishing, and other odd jobs and for most of them the work was seasonal. While the number of persons employed appears to be high it is important to recognize that the majority were working for low wages and that a number of persons also worked at more than one job so as to generate enough income on which to survive. One third of the households received remittances, money, clothes and gifts, from relatives abroad and depended on these to supplement their income.

In eleven of the households the average weekly income was between \$100.00 and \$200.00, and in nine households with monthly incomes, four earned between \$100.00 and \$500.00, and five over \$600.00. These amounts mask the fact that for self employed and seasonal workers they are only gained in what some interviewees call "a good week". For example one interview in Barbuda said that in a good season, he can make up to \$3,000.00 per week fishing for lobsters.

In some of the households absent fathers did contribute money to the support of their children, but in several cases neither the amount of money nor the frequency of the contributions was consistent or reliable. As a result interviewees admitted that the incomes being earned and the money that was available was insufficient to meet their daily needs and to pay the bills. Most of the available money was spent on food and on electricity and medical bills and often one had to be neglected in order to do the other.

3.6.1 ASSETS AND RESOURCES

Twenty seven families (69%) owned the house in which they lived and nine (23%) were renting. Ten (36%) owned land and fourteen (36%) were renting land.

The possession of household assets can contribute to the standard of living and quality of life and can determine the extent to which poor individuals and poor households can use these to barter or acquire income in times of need or crisis, like ill health.

Information provided by household heads who were interviewed shows that household assets usually consisted of very basic furniture, in some cases a chair, a bed and a table that may be in poor condition. Nearly half (49%) of the female interviewees as against 18 percent of the males owned furniture and household appliances. In some cases appliances were not working either because they had fallen into disrepair or because the electricity had been cut off because the bill had not been paid. Other assets owned included vehicles, domestic animals and jewelry. Some females but no males owned jewelry, but the latter among them owned a fishing boat, vehicles and tools. A small number of the interviewees owned domestic animals.

Households also have access to credit but ability to repay prevents several from making use of this resource. Several interviewees pointed out that while availability of credit was the only thing that allows some to survive, it also contributed to and perpetuated poverty.

Scarce financial resources were the norm in most households and interviewees saw this as a major cause of their poverty and reason for the conditions in which they were living. Lack of and irregular financial support from their children's fathers threatens food security of many households and limits women's ability to provide for and meet the basic needs of their families.

3.6.2 LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

In spite of the hardships experienced by lack of money and access to resources, people in these households survive and they employ various strategies to sustain their livelihoods. Among these are careful budgeting, making do and doing without, dependency on others, begging, crime and drug trafficking, odd jobs, prostitution and faith in God.

"I do what I can, God will do the rest."

"I use what ever I have to make ends meet."

"I make do with what I have."

"I try to survive on it."

"I praise God to be alive"

At the same time neighbours are often willing to help out, especially with food.

"Neighbours are willing to share."

"If I don't have and my neighbour have she will give me some."

A significant number of households rely on remittances and gifts of various kinds to survive and to sustain their livelihoods. Some rely on barrels with clothes, toiletries, foodstuff and other items from abroad and others receive gifts from church and other charitable organizations. Twenty households (37%) received remittances from relatives abroad and at home, but for some, these are not always received on a regular basis. Fourteen of the households receive small amounts of money in the form of social welfare, but only three interviewees said that they received a small amount of pension.

3.7 HOUSEHOLD NEEDS

Poor families are faced with several problems that affect their ability to meet their basic needs and to sustain their livelihoods because availability of much needed resources and access to these resources are determined by external economic and social factors in the wider society. Because often in many of these households no one is employed and because household heads have no regular source of income they are often unable to access resources. Employment, money and food are therefore their most urgent needs. Other needs include adequate housing, support and assistance, and access to facilities and to free and reliable public services.

CHAPTER 4: DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON POVERTY - POPULATION SUB-GROUPS SPEAK OUT

4.1 MEN

Focus group discussions were held with one hundred and five men in ten communities. Forty percent of the men were between the ages of 20 and 45 years of age, just over a quarter were between 46 and 55 years, and sixteen were over sixty five years old. The majority (42%) was single and just over a third (34%) were married. Nearly half (48%) had only a primary education but one third (33%) had some level of secondary education. Twelve had been to university and four had some technical and vocational training. While a small number of the men were unemployed, several others were employed in a variety of jobs. There was an electrical engineer, ten teachers, some fishermen, carpenters, masons, a welder, vendors and taxi drivers. Some of the men worked at as many as three or four jobs.

4.1.1 PERCEPTION, EXPERIENCE AND EFFECT OF POVERTY

While some of the men said that they found it difficult to define poverty, the majority agreed that poverty was the inability to meet daily needs of food, and shelter or to have the resources needed to maintain your family and to live a comfortable life. While they acknowledged that unemployment contributed to poverty, they were also aware that being employed did not always guarantee a life free from poverty.

"I see poverty everyday."

"Poverty is having no money to buy bread."

"Not having food to eat."

"Can't find a loaf of bread or sugar to sweeten tea."

"Poverty is when you down and out."

"Just don't have nothing at all, can't feed yourself."

"Unemployment is high, we want to work, but can't find work."

"You can work everyday and still live in poverty, there is so much to do with the money you have."

"Poverty is living from pay packet to pay packet."

"Poverty has gone beyond the boundary."

Some of the men were aware of the link between education and the ability to obtain a job, and were of the view that dropping out of school limited their ability to obtain better jobs

"Most of us are not equipped for the job market."

"Lack of training tends to keep us in poverty."

"Instead of holding on in school we drop out and settle for a job we are not satisfied with."

Some of the older men identified some positive as well as the negative outcomes of growing up poor.

"Being poor bonded families together."

"It made me work hard so as not to have the same struggles as my parents did."

"It taught me values."

"Poverty held us back from school."

"Older children had to stay home to mind the younger ones."

"We were so poor we went to school without underwear or shoes."

The men recognized that poverty was not only the absence of material things but that there was also spiritual and psychological poverty and that the latter often resulted in low esteem and lack of self confidence.

"There is a general lack of principles."

"Poverty is all in the mind."

"It is a mind set."

Poverty has a negative effect on people".

"Poverty can destroy self confidence."

"When you poor you are below bottom."

"Perception and ignorance are hampering some people."

They also felt that when poverty prevents them from performing the gender roles that the society expected of them as providers, it made them feel inadequate and less than men.

"Can't maintain the woman, the children and pay the rent."

"I have twelve children and I have to try to support them the best way I can."

"Poverty marginalizes men."

"As a man you can't meet the demands."

"If you have a trade you can feed yourself and your family and you can make yourself a man."

They recognized that poverty had a negative effect on family life and on the relationships between family members.

"Family life is important, but poverty affects it."

"Too many absent fathers."

*"Some men do not look after their children."
"Children are hungry so they have to beg or steal"
"Children drop out of school to look for work to help out the family."
"Children are open to sexual abuse."*

as well as on their relationships with their partners and with women on the whole.

*"No woman would want to associate with you if you poor."
"Lack of sex when the relationship ceases."
"Poor communication."*

4.1.2 COPING AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

Men employed a number of strategies to meet their needs and demands and to survive. Among these are: saving, hustling, doing odd jobs, working at more than one job, and trying to live within their means. A few turn to alcohol.

*"The little you get you put some aside for a rainy day."
"I survive by any means as necessary, I do odd jobs, sell herb, go fishing...."
"We help out each other."
"I try to live within my means."
"Work at more than one job."
"Some men turn to alcohol."*

4.1.3 CONCERNS AND NEEDS

The men identified several concerns and needs. Among these were concerns about the quality of family life and relationships, about absent fathers, about men's inability and/or unwillingness to support their children, and about insufficient jobs and income to meet their demands.

They were also concerned about women with large numbers of children that they are unable to maintain, and about young women turning to men for support. But they saw these as the woman's problems rather than as the man's. In addition they were concerned about the number of young males that were dropping out of school and about the high level of unemployment among this group.

In addition to jobs and job creation, the men felt that there was a need for more education on topics like pregnancy and family planning, for counseling, and for people to understand the importance of the "spiritual connect" and to instill high moral standards.

4.1.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR ALLEVIATING POVERTY

Among the suggestions they made for alleviating poverty were

- Provide jobs
- Improve working conditions
- The court should take action against men who are not supporting their children
- Get back to agriculture.
- Develop Community Development Programmes

4.2 WOMEN

Ninety six women from ten communities participated in the focus group discussions. Sixty eight (71%) of these women were of child bearing age, 38 percent of them were married and a twenty four were single parents. Forty seven (49%) of them had only primary education, just over forty percent (42%) had some level of secondary education, and while nineteen had some technical and vocational training, only nine had been to university. Only sixteen of them were unemployed and five of these identified themselves as housewives. Seven of the eighty who were employed were self employed and the rest were employed in a variety of jobs including the civil service, teaching, nursing, sales, receptionist waitress and domestic service.

4.2.1 PERCEPTION, EXPERIENCE AND EFFECT OF POVERTY

Women in some of the communities were of the view that since they were not poor they could not relate to or define poverty. Some others said that there was no poverty in Antigua, because poverty is not visible as in countries like Haiti and Africa.

"Poverty is not in my vocabulary."

"Poverty is not here, if a person is in need they will get help from their neighbours."

"We live in a better day so we can't relate to poverty."

However, the majority agreed that while they may not be poor, there was some level of poverty in the community and that this was evident because there were people who could not meet their basic needs of food, clothes and shelter, and who were struggling to maintain their families. For the women who said that they were poor, poverty meant being deprived of basic needs.

"When you neither have food to eat clothes to wear nor place to live."

"Lots of low income families."

"Not having the basic necessities of life."

"The cost of living too high."

"Having nothing, can't meet your basic needs."

"Not having access to resources."

"When things hard and you have to break one bread for two."

"Hand to mouth and scarcely that."

For many women unemployment, lack of job opportunities and low paying jobs not only keep them in poverty, but limited their ability to provide for their children.

"No jobs."

"Working but can't afford most things."

"If month end was one day more you would die of hunger."

"You work but can barely meet the basic needs."

"Living from pay cheque to pay cheque."

"You have to leave your children to go to work."

"You have to make sacrifices"

As a result, even though a significant number of women were employed, they were among the working poor and because of low wages were finding it difficult to maintain their families as they would like.

"The salary is not able to suffice, it is only sufficient to pay the bills."

"Living hand to mouth."

"Can't provide a proper meal for a day."

"I can only give the child one meal of mainly starchy food."

Several women were of the view that poverty affects women in negative ways, especially women who are single parents and who are solely responsible for the welfare of their children and their families.

"I am a single parent and I have to make sacrifices."

"Women face poverty and deprivation every day"

"Not enough to maintain the family and have to depend on others for help."

"Can't send the children to school."

"As a single mother poverty means that I am unable to meet my demands."

Women shared their experience of being caught in unproductive relationships and of not receiving any financial support from their children's fathers. Some were of the view that while some men wanted to boast about the number of women and children that they had, they either did not feel that it was important to support them or they were afraid of responsibility. Absence of a male in the household and men's inability or unwillingness to support their families and children was seen as a major factor that contributed to women having to live in poverty.

"Women get into unproductive relationships to provide for themselves and their children."

"Some women use their bodies to get what they want for their children."

"Going from man to man just to get some financial support."

"Prostitution is on the increase."

"Some women get caught bad relationships and end up in a cycle of pregnancies"

"A women will get pregnant for one man, he will leave her and does not support the child, she gets pregnant again for another man and hopes that he will stay and be the provider, but he does not and the cycle continues."

"They are many women who do not have a supportive family unit."

"Men not supporting the children."

"My husband's death hit me real hard and I am struggling to make ends meet."

Women expressed concern about some of the negative effects that poverty had on them, their health and self-esteem and their ability to change their situation.

"I always hungry."

"When you are deprived of things it makes you sick."

"Plenty of stress."

"Sometimes you just want to cry because you have nothing."

"Even if you want to do something you do not have the courage."

"Goals cannot materialize."

Women's physical and mental health is also affected by poverty. Early pregnancy, multiple pregnancies, poor diet, inability to access or afford health services, and the stress and anxiety of having sole responsibility for their families all take a toll on their health. While only a few women said that violence and physical abuse of women were present in their communities, several admitted to feeling depressed, stressed, worried, and anxious.

Women were also aware of the effect that poverty had on children.

"Poverty makes some women ill treat their children because the father does not support them."

"People look down on the children because they are poor."

"Children are being left alone when parents go to work and they get involved in all kinds of illicit activities."

"Some children steal because their parents can't provide for them."

"Children have to drop out of school."

"Instead of using the money from the children's father to feed them, some women spend it on themselves or give it to another man."

While in many of the communities there are facilities and resources including health clinics, churches whose services can be obtained free of cost, there was a general feeling that women were not making use of these free resources because of pride.

"Some people too proud, they don't want to use the free resources ."

At the same time women in a few communities like Grays Farm, were of the view that there were no resources in the community,

"There are no facilities or resources in the community."

"We don't have a thing."

and in others it was felt that while facilities and resources were available they were not accessible.

"We don't have medical benefit cards so we can't go to the hospital."

"Although the library is there we have no access to it."

"If you don't have money you can't access some of the resources."

4.2.2 SURVIVAL AND COPING STRATEGIES

Women used several strategies to cope with poverty and to survive. These include, careful budgeting, buying only the essential things, growing fruits and vegetables for domestic consumption, working at more than one job, making do with what they have, depending on men, neighbours and friends, and being satisfied with what they have.

"You buy and put down when you have."

"When I am hungry I cook rice and eat it without relish/ meat."

"Sacrifice and put the children first."

"I try to live within my means and use what I have to provide for the family."

"I use the "hand-me-down method with my two children."

"I grow my own fruits and vegetables."

"Neighbours help out sometimes."

Women in Grays Farm observed that the Spanish speaking women coped differently from their English speaking counterparts and that they were asble to save and "make do" with the little they had.

4.2.3 CONCERNS AND NEEDS

Women are concerned about unemployment, especially among young mothers and young men, about the high cost of living including the cost of utility bills, and about the increase in use of illegal drugs, and in prostitution. They are concerned about their lack of academic qualifications and their inability to make use of job opportunities and to access better paying jobs. They also expressed some concern about delinquency and about the number of children on the street late at night, about the existence of gangs, about the lack of respect that children showed to adults, including their parents, and about the absence of productive activities for children.

Among the things women said that they needed are money and financial support, jobs and opportunities to work for better pay, education programmes including after school programmes for street children, programmes on parenting skills, teenage pregnancies, family planning and budgeting. They also saw the need for a place where single mothers can receive counseling and advice. However women in a few communities were concerned about the lack of confidentiality displayed by nurses at the health clinic and about their business being known by everyone.

A few women said they needed material things like a stove and a bed, but one of the Spanish speaking women said that all she needed was a man with money who could take her away to America and a better life.

4.2.4 SUGGESTIONS FROM ALLEVIATING POVERTY

The women had several suggestions about what should be done to alleviate poverty. Among these were:

- Review payment of income tax
- Abolish the education levy
- More employment opportunities for young people
- More jobs
- Skills training programmes
- Make lands and loans available to low income persons
- Better management of money
- Education is the key
- People should get off their bum and look for work
- Better community spirit
- More support groups, youth clubs etc.
- A programme for alcoholics and on drug abuse
- A feeding programme for children and for the elderly
- More focus on spiritual life
- Put back religious studies in schools.

4.3 YOUTH

In eleven of the communities, two hundred and forty three young people, equal numbers of males and females, participated in the focus group discussions. One hundred and fifty of them (62%) were under nineteen years of age and more than a quarter of them (28%) lived in single parent households. Although seventy three of them had only a primary education, seventy six had some level of secondary education, a few were pursuing tertiary education and a small number had some level of technical and vocational training.

4.3.1 PERCEPTION, EXPERIENCE AND EFFECT OF POVERTY

Young people in a few of the communities were of the view that they were not poor because they had material things like lights and water in their homes and they could help themselves.

"Everyone has lights and water and everyone can send their children to school."

"No we are not poor, we are just in need of more activities for everyone. "

"We have plenty of food in the community."

Many of the young people who participated in the focus group discussions realized that living in poverty meant not having the basic needs of food, clothes and shelter, and having to do without things that they needed or wanted. They said that lack of a job and of money also contributed to poverty because this prevented people from being able to maintain themselves and provide for their families. At the same time some of them were of the view that you have to live in poverty to really understand what it means.

"Poverty is when you feel hungry till you feel to faint."

"When you are homeless."

"You can't afford new clothes or perfumes."

"Unable to have or wear the latest fashions and brand name shoes and clothes."

"Can't go to school."

"Lack of money."

"When you don't have anything and can't maintain yourself"

"You can't know poverty till you live in it."

At the same time while they are aware that unemployment and lack of a job contributes to poverty, some also blamed the government for the level of poverty in their communities.

"My mother looking for a job since 2003."

"Many poor people have no job."

"I am not working right now and it is very hard on me, sometimes I have no food."

"Poverty is when you don't have a job and cannot provide for yourself or your family."

"If you cannot work you cannot support your family."

"The government responsible."

"The government should invest in the infrastructure and this would provide jobs for people."

Young people are aware of the link between education and poverty.

There is a general lack of education in the community. That is why there is poverty and so much violence."

They also realize that being poor can cause them to miss out on education because their parents may not have the money to buy school clothes, books or school supplies or because they have to go to school hungry.

"Because of poverty your education may suffer."

"You can't go to school because you don't have school clothes."

"Your parents can't afford to buy school supplies."

"I can't go to school for days."

"Sometimes we have no food to eat but still go to school."

"When you do not have anything to eat you will not be able to learn."

"Some parents have it very hard they can't afford food or bus money so the children can't go to school."

In addition they realized that drop outs are at a disadvantage and that there should be continuing education programmes.

"Some young people have to sacrifice their education and look for work because they are poor."

"Free night schooling should be provided for adults and youth who have dropped out."

"Children who have to stay home to take care of younger brothers and sisters can attend night school."

"The drop outs can learn a skill and this will help them to find a job and be productive."

A few of the young people said that living in poverty did not have a negative effect on them.

"I don't feel bad about living in poverty because I have high self esteem so if my friends are dressed in the latest styles it doesn't bother me."

However the majority expressed a different point of view. According to them poverty not only affected their self esteem and how they felt about themselves, but it also affected how their peers viewed them and their relationships with the latter.

"Being poor frightens me."

"I feel depressed and stressed."

"I feel funny mixing with the other young people in the community."

"There are times when you feel neglected"

"You are deprived of love and affection."

"Being poor can you can't have things that are popular."

"A poor person feels left out because their friends have more things than them."

"People look down on you."

"People look down on me and try to make me feel less important."

"Some young people look down on their peers because they are not fashionable."

"If you live in poverty you don't want to talk to them because they are dressed better than you."

"I look at the way other people are living and question my parents as to why we are poor."

Poverty can also lead young people to become involved in illegal and criminal activities. Several admitted to using and selling drugs, and to being involved in gangs and crime and saw these activities as providing them with the money they needed to get the things they wanted.

"Some youths turn to a life of crime to buy the latest clothes and shoes."

"Some people who are poor become violent, steal and rob."

"Too much stealing."

"There is too much fighting and cutting up."

Facilities and resources like clubs, recreational facilities, churches, schools, and health clinics are available in many of the communities. However young people mentioned the importance of facilities for continuing education including libraries and facilities through which they can access to information and to communication technologies like the internet and the world wide web.

"Sometimes we have school projects and have to go to the neighbour's house to use the computer."

"I use the internet café to do research for my homework."

"Computers will help to keep us off the street and keep us out of trouble."

4.3.2 SURVIVAL AND COPING STRATEGIES

Some of the young people still live at home with their mothers/parents and don't have to worry, and a few said that they were content with what they had.

"My mother provides me with everything, so I don't have to worry"

While some said they would beg and steal, some said that they washed cars or did other odd jobs and others said that they limited their spending and spent their money wisely.

"I spend what I have wisely."

"I am looking for a part time job."

"After school I work in a job."

"I try to save."

A few said that some of the young men may join gangs and do drugs for the money it brings, and that some of the girls may become involved in the sex trade.

4.3.3 CONCERNS AND NEEDS

Some of the young people were concerned about the number of young men hanging out on the block, about the number of girls dropping out of school and having babies, and about sexual abuse of young people. They were also concerned about the level of crime, the amount of drugs and the police presence in their community.

"People are afraid, thieves break into homes and they can harm you."

"The police are always in this community."

In other communities however because of the high level of drug activity and the prevalence of the use and abuse of drugs, including alcohol, by young people, the youth said that there was need for an increased police presence and that the police should be stricter.

"There is a great deal of drug activity so we need the presence of the police."

"The police should be stricter, change them."

"Drug houses should be removed."

They also expressed concern about the lack of job opportunities and about and felt that there was a need for jobs that paid higher wages, for more and better recreational facilities, and for training and computer centres.

Young people in Clare Hall were concerned about domestic violence and saw the need for more social services. Those in Barbuda were concerned about the effect that alcohol was having on children.

“Fathers spend the money that they should give their children on rum.”

“The children feel neglected.”

4.3.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR ALLEVIATING POVERTY

The youth made several suggestions for alleviating poverty including:

- Creation of a job services centre
- All purpose training centres
- Provide subsidies for people, especially single parents.
- Provide food packages
- Take vagrants off the street and put them in a shelter.
- Take some of the young men off the streets
- More outreach programmes in communities
- A shelter for the homeless
- Rehab centres for drug and alcohol abusers
- Counseling for young people to increase their self esteem
- Introduce agriculture to create work for people

4.4 THE UNEMPLOYED

Sixty three unemployed persons in eight communities participated in the focus group discussions. Twenty nine of these (46%) were between the ages of twenty and thirty five. Nearly a third (30%) were single parents and while nearly forty percent (38%) had only a primary education, fifteen, nearly a quarter (24%) had some level of secondary education. According to the data therefore, there are a significant number of young people and of single parents who are unemployed.

4.4.1 PERCEPTION, EXPERIENCE AND EFFECT OF POVERTY

In a few communities participants, although unemployed did not consider themselves to be poor. However the majority of those who were unemployed recognized that being employed was essential in order to meet basic needs and to provide for their families. They lamented the absence of job opportunities, and they were of the view that their inability to get a job and to earn income had contributed to their being poor.

“People not working.”

“I am willing to work but I cannot get any work.”

"There is no work, there is no money."

"I need a job."

"I can't provide for my two children because I can't work."

"Lack of job opportunities."

"I left school four years ago. I applied to the government for a job and I am still waiting for an answer."

"I can't pay my bills I need a job."

"Not working is the hardest thing I have ever done in my life."

"Many times I am in need of something and I cannot get it because I do not have the money to buy it."

"The hardest thing is when my son wants something and I have to ask my mother or brother to buy it for me."

"I can't buy pampers for the baby, if I get any money I have to pay house rent."

"I don't have a job I have to depend on the children's father."

Several also recognized that of education and academic qualifications are important for obtaining a job and identified the existence of intellectual poverty that is a result of people not learning and developing.

"Persons who are lacking in education find it hard to get jobs."

"Because I didn't go to school everyday people think I can't read so they think hard to give me a job."

"Even though you can do the job, because you don't have papers to show that you are qualified or have a skill, you cannot get certain jobs."

"Thank God for the little education I have if not I may be in gaol today."

"The majority of young men drop out of school, they are uneducated so they can't get work so they are on the block."

"I had a job but I was asked to leave because they said I wasn't qualified for the job."

While education was seen as a key factor in obtaining employment, lack of transportation and low wages and the influx of outsiders and foreigners were also seen as determining people's ability to obtain and keep jobs.

"I had to quit because there was no transportation to get home after work."

"The job was not paying enough so I quit."

"My boyfriend left the job he was doing before because it was not paying enough."

In some communities participants complained about the presence of outsiders and foreigners and said that they contributed to the level of unemployment and poverty in the community.

"Outsiders and foreigners come in and get the jobs, especially with all the construction going on."

"People are taking the foreigners and paying them little or nothing, but we the natives will not take that."

"The foreigners are taking over everything."

At the same time some of the immigrants also find it difficult, if not impossible to obtain jobs.

"I want to work, but my documents were stolen some months ago and I have no papers."

Some participants were of the view that unemployment causes some people to become involved in illegal activities, including crime, violence and drug abuse. Others said that lack of a job and of an income not only affected individuals but that it also affected families and the community as a whole.

"It takes men over the edge."

"I get so depressed all I do is cry."

"Child support is a real challenge."

"My mother had eleven children and no father to help her with us."

"Men do not or cannot support their children."

"Women are abused by their children's father."

"You feel inadequate because you are unable to provide the basic needs of your family."

"Because of unemployment there is too much violence and drug abuse in the community."

"If you have to sell drugs to get by you just sell drugs."

"It is not easy to be poor and hungry, when you have no job or nothing, you think of robbing someone to get food."

4.4.2 SURVIVAL AND COPING STRATEGIES

Many unemployed people survive by any means possible. They do a variety of odd jobs including weeding, cleaning, vending and car washing, many depend on help from others, some beg, and some women may have to sell their bodies to provide for their children.

"You have to hustle, hustle is what you have to do."

"I depend on my boyfriend."

"The baby's father help is irregular so I have to depend on my mother. Sometimes I feel so guilty watching her struggle to pay the bills and buy food."

"My aunt in the US sends me baby clothes."

"Women get involved sexually."

"The mother and children have to sell bottles so as to survive."

4.4.3 CONCERNS AND NEEDS

Unemployed persons are concerned about their survival and how to provide for their families. They were also concerned about the lack of after school activities and about the formation and maintenance of community groups.

Their greatest need is for jobs and for opportunities to obtain or create employment. Some people would also like to start their own small business but they have no capital.

"We need jobs so we can feed our children and send them to school everyday."

"We need gainful employment."

"We have skills but no finance."

"We need help with self employment."

4.4.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR ALLEVIATING POVERTY

Individuals who participated in the discussions made several suggestions for alleviating poverty in their communities. Among these were:

- Government to create employment and provide job opportunities and jobs
- Provide skill training and development
- Educate parents
- Assist small businesses
- Provide community centres equipped with computers

4.5 THE ELDERLY AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

A total of 110 persons in ten communities participated in the discussions. There were several grandmothers and a few individuals with disabilities and/or with children who had disabilities. Two thirds of those who participated were over 65 years of age, some of these were over eighty years of age, and one was ninety years old. The majority, over 80 percent, was women, about 70 percent had only a primary education, and a few of them had no formal education. Several were retired but some of them were still involved in some income generating activity.

4.5.1 PERCEPTION, EXPERIENCE AND EFFECT OF POVERTY

Several elderly persons admitted to being poor and provided reasons for their condition. For some poverty meant not having the basic needs, having no money to buy food or clothes, or to pay bills, some were of the view that poverty was a disgrace and others said it was a plague and one man said that poverty has turned him into a refugee.

"You can hardly afford to go to the shop"
"Cant' get nothing to eat, no food."
"I am so hungry sometimes I feel dizzy."
"I don't know where the next dollar is coming from."
"Being poor was to see my children go to school without anything to eat."
"Me so poor me does wash "quaker bag" and use them to make shirts."
"No proper house."
"For two years I trying to build a bedroom onto the house for my disable daughter."
"The electricity bills too high, we are retired, we can't pay them."
"When you finish paying the bills there is no money left to do anything else."
"Things getting harder everyday."
"I have nothing I am a refugee poverty turned me into one."
"Even your words are poor."

Others said that their age, their inability to work, had contributed to their being poor and now that they live alone there is no one to care for or help them.

"I am eighty five years old and I can't work any more."
"Poverty is when you are not working and you don't have anyone to reach out to you."
"I am not working and I don't have anything."
"There is no one to take care of me or to help me."
"I live alone, I need some one to do things for me and to sleep with me at night."
"Although I live in my own house, I live alone and I have no money so I am poor."
"I have no one to help me do things around the house."
"No one to care for you".
"When you are poor nobody studies you."
"Life is very stressful."

While some elderly persons depend on family members for help some others are either abandoned or ill treated by their families and this was the case for a few who were grandparents.

"I depend on my brothers most of the time."
"Sometimes I get help from family abroad."
"My niece looks after me."
"I have no children so I depend on my nieces and nephews for help, but I wish I didn't have to."
"Look where I living, I have no house. I have children overseas but only one sends a shirt for me sometimes."
"My children overseas don't help."

"The grandchildren don't treat me good, I took care of them when they were small and now they won't even make a cup of tea for me or ask me how I feeling."

"My grand children bring men to sleep in the house. I don't like it. A friend tell me to move out but I have no place to go."

Several reflected on their lives, recounted their experience of always having been poor and the circumstances that led to poverty, and said that poverty was responsible for their condition and the situation in which they were living today

"I lived in poverty at one time. I would have been happy for someone to give me a piece of something, anything."

"My mother did not have it and my father was not around, we had to go to the hills to get tea bush and sell to get money to buy food."

"We had to use white flour to make porridge and eat two roast corn to go to school."

"For me poverty is to work for six years and then sent home without ten cent."

"Since my husband died eighteen years ago I never get nothing from Social Security. I can't understand, my husband used to pay social security and still I am getting nothing."

"Poverty make us what we are today."

"I live in a poor condition with the rest of my family in the same yard and things are bad."

For some being poor had meant that they had not been able to attend school regularly and to get an education.

"Not able to go to school regularly."

"Not able to finish school."

"I hardly know what it is to stay in school for a full week."

"Education was there but only a few could stay in school and receive it, the others had to spend part time in school and the other part in the field with their parents."

A significant number of older persons are not in good health. Elderly women as well as elderly men suffer from diabetes, and hypertension and alcoholism, rheumatism, arthritis and asthma, and eye problems are common. A few men suffer from prostate cancer. While participants in some communities complained about the high cost of health care and the difficulties they experience in accessing health services, in other communities they were loud in their praise of the services being offered by the health care professionals at the health clinics. .

"Right now I am sick, I have a pace maker. I used to get help from the government but not anymore."

"Poverty cause my pressure and sugar to go up."

"I have pain in my legs and trouble with my prostate."

"The clinic is a good distance from my house. I have no transport and I am too weak to walk."

"Sometimes I feel sick but the clinic is too far to walk, so I have to wait for my friend to take me to the doctor."

"I do not go to the clinic because the wait is too long."

"I have to walk from Five Islands to town to get my medication, they should fill prescriptions at the clinic."

"If you are ill you have to wait an entire week to see the doctor."

"I can't complain about health care because the nurses are always at hand to help."

"We are proud of our nurses and doctor."

"The clinic is of benefit to me."

4.5.2 SURVIVAL AND COPING STRATEGIES

While a small number of elderly persons do receive some public assistance and while they agreed that the amounts received was insufficient to buy food and medicine and to pay bills, for some this is their only source of income.

"I get a small change from Social security and \$100.00 every fortnight from the Board of Guardians."

"I get a small pension from social security every month but it only pays some of the bills so I do odd jobs."

"My disable daughter gets some money from the Board of Guardians every month."

"I can barely make ends meet."

"Social security has stopped giving me assistance."

Some receive food stuff and/or cooked meals and other things from different churches, some do odd jobs, and a few do craft and other income generating activities like selling bottles. A small number said that while they had some land, because of ill health and lack of money they were unable to use it to generate any income.

"I go to the market and sell things."

"I pick up empty bottles and sell them."

"I make hats and sell but sale not good."

"On Tuesdays I get a cooked meal from the Moravian Church."

"I depend on my friends to give me things."

A small number said that they coped by praying and trusting in God.

"Whenever I have a need I pray to God and something always come in."

4.5.3 CONCERNS AND NEEDS

In addition to the elderly persons who participated in the focus group discussions, other residents in all of the communities were concerned about the plight of the elderly and of persons with disabilities. The lack of a basic facilities, and a regular and study income, the lack of money, the small amount of money that some elderly persons receive from the government, their inability to have sufficient food or to eat regularly, their health problems, their need to depend on others for their well being, transportation, and the absence of places where they could meet and receive the care that they need are issues that community residents felt needed urgent attention.

"I am concerned about my health."

"If we could get the road fix, the bus could pick up my daughter and take her to the centre for the disabled."

"Elderly people have a lot of problems."

"Social Security is not enough."

"I need money and that's the problem."

"The most thing I need is food."

"If I could get food it would help to make my life better."

"I need running water in my yard so I don't have to go to the standpipe."

4.5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR ALLEVIATING POVERTY

Elderly persons who participated in the focus group discussions were of the view that in order to alleviate poverty the following things should be done.

- Government should help poor people by giving them food and money and by providing them with jobs so they can help themselves
- Increase social security
- Assist parents who have handicapped children
- Provide transportation for elderly people to get to the health clinic and other facilities.
- There should be a resident doctor at the clinic and the clinic should be equipped to test urine and blood
- Carry down the cost of living
- Provide a place for the elderly to go to occupy themselves during the day

CHAPTER 5: IN DEPTH INTERVIEWS - INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES WITH POVERTY

5.1 CASE STUDY 1 - JOHN CARTER

Mr. Carter and his experiences fall into two conceptual categories of importance in the study of poverty. He is an example of the aged poor (77 years of age) and his poverty is intergenerational. His mother was an agricultural labourer who worked on a sugar estate in the east of the country. According to Mr. Carter, "Mi born cum meet dem ah use hoe..mi born cum meet mi ole lady ah work ah estate...so we nuh get much learning cause wi have fi go help she." Mr. Carter's father was a cane cutter. His mother had ten children for his father who then left her and married another woman. Mr. Carter and his nine brothers therefore felt an obligation to assist their mother who struggled to raise her family. He left school at 17 years and worked at the furnace on the estate for 14 years. His mother died when he was 21 years old.

Mr Carter had his first child when he was 19 and four more subsequently (three boys and two girls). He had his last child in 1981. He had each child with a different woman. All of his children went to primary school. Two of his sons live overseas, while one lives in the same neighbourhood as Mr. Carter. This son he, says, would want to provide him with food but has eight children and is not able to do so. The son who lives in Antigua-Barbuda works on a boat. Of his two daughters he says in a completely amoral way, "dem work pon dem back....dem nuh go no wey go work, but walk and look chance every night." In reply to the question of whether or not his daughters have any children he replies, "one have 3 and one have 4, mi naw go tell no lie fi dem." His two sons who live abroad supply him with clothes, but never send money. "Up to last week mi get mi parcel from dem." He stopped worked in 1984 when he was 55 years old. He has lived in the area for 14 years.

Mr. Carter's living conditions are quite appalling. When asked to show us the house where he lives Mr. Carter replies, "What house? Mi caan carry nuhbody deh man!" He continues, "for several years mi ah look one good house fi go ina because up deh nuh good. When rain come mi have fi double up like a leech. It leak, but mi have fi satisfy." The 'house' is a room made of galvanized zinc on the land of a family he has known for some years. They live next door in a small, but sturdy lower middle income house. Mr. Carter's room has just enough space for a bed made of board and sponge. Very little else holds in the space. The dwelling has no light, water, kitchen or toilet. He gets light at night from the street light. He obtains water from the neighbour. He washes for himself at the public standpipe. His mother died and left a house, but it is occupied by an older sibling who is not willing to share it with anyone. Mr. Carter says he has never owned a home for himself because, "mi naw work fi nuh money", an allusion to the fact that all his working life his pay has been small.

Mr. Carter works occasionally by going to sea on a fishing boat. "When me go sea one time me nuh go back again (ie he does not go often)... and mi buy the little food, but that cant serve mi...mi have fi get up a morning time fi mek little tea. Ah three time a day me eat and me have fi tek tablet and so on(reference to his medicine)." All he earns is what he calls, "one days pay" from the fish he sells. When asked if he ever is hungry he replies, well right now me hungry, me run out, mi nuh even have a dollar." This happens to him all the time. Sometimes mi find myself a go two three months without money and me nuh beg no one nutten." So how do you eat? Well mi neighbour, this one here and that one down there and the two Jamaican gal weh live cross this road yah, dem will call me and give mi a food."

Mr. Carter suffers from arthritis in his knees. He gets medical treatment from the government clinic and free medicine in a nearby district. Mr. Carter finds companionship from friends in the community. He has no contact with the mother of children. According to him, "When you hear me lef one woman me lef dem fi good. Nah pass back fi dem way again."

Mr. Carter says he gets no assistance from the govt. No social security. Even though he never contributed he is entitled to some assistance. Mr. Carter does not know this and has never formally applied for social security (though he says that he has asked for assistance from some agency and received none). This is a clear case of a communication gap that frustrates policy intent and implementation. There is also the likelihood that under the previous administration resources earmarked for assistance to the poor would have found its way into the pockets of the non-poor (Govt changed in 2004). Mr. Carter has appealed to his MP for assistance for help with housing after the hurricane destroyed his previous dwelling five years ago. When asked what he thinks about the future and prospects for improvement he says, "God will work it out." He then laments that he is not working and therefore the future is not so bright. His children, but for the ones in USVI, do not help him. Those abroad only send him clothes, to which he says he needs food, "because if mi nuh have food ina mi belly nuh clothes caan stay on mi."

Mr. Carter's experiences and his present condition give exemplification to the situation of the chronic poor when they become elderly. He was the child of poor agricultural labourers. Although he went to school until age 17 he did not acquire any certification or skill that moved him beyond being a labourer. His mother's fertility behaviour (10 children) would have reinforced her material deprivation and lessened her capacity to improve her situation in life.

A lifetime of low income limited his ability to meet his manly responsibilities of caring for family and is quite likely related to the instability that seems to attend his relationship with women. He had five children with five different women none of whom he has managed to maintain a relationship with. According to him, "when yuh hear sey mi lef a woman, mi nuh turn back fi haar way again" (Once I have left a woman, I have no more dealings with her). This position amounts to a defense of ego in the face of the absence of a capacity that is associated

with being a man. This approach to familial relationships can be misread as simple worthlessness and irresponsibility. While this factor cannot be said to be non-existent it should also be recognized that this type of behaviour can also be understood to be an adaptation to resource deprivation and constraint, informed by gender roles and expectations that prevail in the culture.¹ These ways of relating to his families of procreation probably account for the fact that his children provide limited support to him in his time of need.

5.2 CASE STUDY 2 – ERIC SMITH AND SUSAN FRANCIS

Eric Smith and Susan Francis are the principals of a family whose experiences provide an instance of poverty or the threat of it that is brought about due to unexpected economic changes, personal misfortune or seasonal change. They also point to the vulnerability of those families who live ostensibly above the poverty line, but whose stock of physical capital and limited educational assets leaves them exposed to the risk of impoverishment. Susan is 38 years old. She reports that her mother operated a small shop. She grew up with her paternal grandmother. Susan never attended secondary school. She left school at 14 when she became pregnant. She then returned to her mother's home. She knows little of her father. Susan has 11 children. Their ages are 24, 21, 17, 15, 12, 11, 10, 5, 2, 4 months and 4 months (twins).

Her last job was at the Central Marketing Corporation. She worked there for 10 years until two years ago when she was laid off. She has her children for more than one man. Her present house is a modest but sturdy house made from concrete. It rests on land belonging to her mother and was built out of saving from her job and a loan. At present she has no water because it has been disconnected as a result of non-payment of bills. The house has electricity and modern amenities such as radio, T.V. and fridge. The house has 3 bedrooms. At present 10 persons live in it. A second daughter lives in a small house on the same land.

Her common law husband became her only source of income when she lost her job. Susan says of her husband, "he is a fisherman, but at the same time I lose my job he has 97 pots and they thief all. So we had to go and cut wood [to] burn coal and so on. Whatever little come in we had to do with that until when better can be done. He just start to pick back up heself. Whatever money to buy food or pay bill he is the only one that working."

Eric explains that his pots were moved by someone using GPS technology and sunk at new locations and the coordinates recorded. Eric resorted to cutting the wood in the forest and to making and selling coal. Eric says he then got a loan of EC\$12,000 which he used to replace 75

¹ It should also be understood to be one half of a totality in which biology and gender operate within a mold formed by material deprivation. The fact of poverty impels the poor woman into casual into relationships in an attempt to acquire material gain and sustenance. This same poverty constrains the man from meeting his family obligations, undermines the stability of relationship and he moves on. The woman is left with the product of the union, which increases her need for material support and propels her into another relationship.

percent of the pots that he had before. He obtained the loan from the Antigua and Barbuda Development Bank. He used his current wife's house as security for the loan and had to come up with EC\$3,000 in order to secure the loan. Eric works as a captain on someone's boat. The person allows Eric to set his own pots at the same time that he is conducting his business. Eric in turn contributes to the oil and gas need to run the boat. Eric sells his fish in the community in which he lives and carries any excess to the market. The family still feels itself in a precarious position since Eric is still not up to his original number of pots and until the loan is repaid, and "we still on the loan", Susan says. "We still owe NDF and if we don't pay the bank will take this house and sell it with the land. And the land belongs to my mother."

Eric says that he usually brings in 500-700 lbs of fish per week, plus lobsters. This earns him \$5,000 out of which he pays \$200 + for oil and gas. Eric is 45 years old. He has been in fishing for 32 years. He started at age 13 even whilst going to school. He reports that his parents were cultivators. He has 9 brothers and sisters. His family had land, "so we never used to have plenty money, but we used to have food."

Only 2 of his siblings remain in Antigua and Barbuda. They have traveled to places such as St. Croix, Canada and the U.K. He receives no assistance from them. His father is in the U.K. while his mother is in Antigua being taken care of by one of his sisters. For all the income he made Eric did not have any saving when he lost his pots. He has set his pots in a new location and says he "trusts in the Lord" that they won't be stolen again.

Eric has 17 children alive, 2 deceased. He has them with five different women including Susan with whom he has 3. Eric says of his paternal responsibilities, "you still have to give [something] to those outside. Eric is the only source of income in the household. The older children have gone on interviews, but have had no success in obtaining a job. One daughter used to work at a supermarket but was laid off a couple of years ago. She has no certification or training beyond 4th form in secondary school. She has not thought of learning any trade, "I never really give it a thought." She has now been unemployed for 3 years. "Sometimes when I have to wake up every morning and do the same thing over and over it... [gets her down]. If I am to get a job I would go like after working to computer class." She was asked to leave school in 4th form she says because the teachers thought she was not doing enough work. Even in the time when the family had no steady source of income Eric says, "we still eat every night." Everyone had clothes and the children were able to go to school. But it was hard since two of Eric's children were with him at the time. Susan says, that was more mouth to feed. That's why we had to go and cut the wood and then burn the coal. We thank the Lord that even though hard time, real rough, we still make a \$20 today this even serve for tomorrow. We have to wait till somebody say we want one tin of coal and we get that money to send that to school buy things with it. When them going school I have buy breakfast in the morning, but thank the Lord we never go to sleep hungry. Even if we have to...like me and he (Eric) cut short to give the

smaller one and them.. you know when them hungry how it go.” Eric learnt the skill of coal making from his parents. The members of the family assisted in carrying wood, etc to make the coal.

Susan is still interested in working. She says she tells people to look out for work for her. “If is even to clean someone’s toilet me wi do it to make two ends meet.” Because everytime they come and cut off the current we in that category. The water come off last year June and up till now we cant get the money to pay for it. And the money that he make the twins alone use up that because I have to buy pampers for them and pampers expensive. You have to buy tin food and is \$20 for one tin, plus to send them to school. When the children are sick they have to have money to carry them to a private doctor, “because sometimes you go to the clinic and the doctor don’t come that day, and you can’t wait because they can’t talk to tell you which part ah hot (is hurting) them. We just trying we best to ask the Lord to don’t make them sick and we don’t have the money”. Last week Sunday the first born twin was ill. Susan says she went to her mother and asked her what to use because the clinic was closed. She recommended children medicine. She had to buy it from her pocket though since her mother’s husband complains that her children are always coming to beg. Susan only has one grandchild, that of her second daughter who lives on the land in a separate house. That daughter she says plats hair now and then. “Otherwise from that she don’t work.” That grandchild lives with his father’s parents.

5.3 CASE STUDY 3 – THE BRYAN FAMILY

The Bryan family consists of five children, a father and a mother. The children are aged 7,6,4,2 and 1. The father, Thomas is 33 years of age. His own father is a native of Montserrat. He is a shoe maker by trade and came to Antigua where he met Mr. Bryan’s mother. In 1988 Mr. Bryan was taken to Montserrat by his father. He reports that this was as a result of him being troublesome and unruly. Mr. Bryan is the only child for his mother. His father he says has 17 children. He was schooled in Montserrat. He attended secondary school, but never took CXC. He was expelled for misbehaviour.

Since returning to Antigua, however Mr. Bryan has done two courses in building technology. He worked in the field of building construction and maintenance for a number of years. Since he moved to his present location the people don’t know him and he has not been able to get any work in this area. In spite of the fact that construction seems to be booming in Antigua Mr. Bryan says he has not been able to obtain employment. Foreign labour, he says has made it that more difficult for him to obtain work in the industry. In two years Mr. Bryan has not worked. “But mi auntie stop abroad and send funds ..mi father auntie. She stop dey and send money fi assist mi with the kids. She used to collect EC\$200 in Montserrat for me as welfare. Me neva collect it so now ah fi she time to do. So she still send it, because she still collect it [in the U.K.]. The other sources of income for the household are his children’s’ mother whom he got a job at a

service station for and savings from past employment. If me feel like do something me go tek a little bit and do weh me ah do. That is just to balance certain things like the bills. Or, maybe if one of me child sick me can deal with that.

“Children expensive every minute them ask fe things, but the most important part is dem need fe have food because clothes is the least because family might pass down the clothes so clothes a nuh the mostest problem ah food is the biggest problem. Mi always buy food every week. everyweek. Because is kids you have to mek sure them always have something to fi dem eat. So what mi do me mek sure mi always buy, not the pack rice as how they will buy it, mi buy by the bulk, because me have five kids so mi have to know how to use mi head and how not to go to shop every minute, because this little money whe you go shop every minute it carry you down. So wha me do now, that’s why me have container, one we hold in sugar, one we have in cornmeal, one will have in oats, one will have in rice. As you can see that deh have in rice. That a one bale a rice full that, a full bag. Mi buy one big bag of flour, one bag. Then me have ground produce.”

The house is on a small piece of land that his children’s grandfather used to cultivate and which Mr. Bryan plants food stuff on. An absence of water constrains him from carrying out his cultivation. He relies on rainfall or sometimes he gets water from the neighbour. The land is situated in a district that is a part of an old sugar estate and the father’s access to the land apparently goes back across the generations. He claims that his family always has an adequate, balanced diet. He has never found himself in a position he says where he has to “knock on somebody’s door and say lord mi no have it.” Furthermore his children keep good health. None of his children have been sick with any major illness. If his children have any sickness, “it depends on whatsoever it may be. Remember you can’t drop the old time remedy, like if them have influenza yu don’t need to run go doctor for influenza you go and get some bush. Everyminute influenza influenza. You have different influenza that really you need to go to the doctor for. But that influenza that travel in the air that pickney always pick up by rain and what not we just go and get little bush and you draw some bitter bush... you mother just give you that and tell you drink that sometime you nuh even want to drink it. But them [his children] get them medicine, them get them tonic them get everything. Them get banana, them get everything. Them get fruits pon a whole, dem no get no sweets. Them live good man.” Three are at school and two at home. “Me keep them back because the money fi pay the daycare it nuh easy because daycare ah tell you 7, 5 3 hundred per term. Dem little money whe me dey go tek fi pay the day care me can hold it back and use it in the right way.”

Mr. Bryan reports that his children go to school everyday and that they are adequately provided with books, lunches and all that is necessary for school. During the conversation the children’s mother cooks a meal of chicken stew for the family’s dinner. The house is a modest

one made of wood. There is a fridge, a small gas stove, a radio, chairs and a table. The toilet is a pit latrine, located outside the house.

He says he attempted to get a job as a security guard, but they insisted that he cut his hair. This he refused on the grounds that it went against his family traditions. His father is Rastafarian and his brothers do not cut their hair. So he did not take that job. He says he has tried to get work in a number of establishments, but has not been successful, "so what am I to do? Ah tief them ah send people fi go thief. But me is a good person with good knowledge, them something cant come inna mi head...dem deh a the devil idle works. Me get up off mi bottom and do hard work. Me dig the ground because me know me have to eat, so me dig the ground. Me plant, put a seed. By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread. From little rain a come and little sun a shine it (the seed) have fi bus (germinate).Mi have corn, peas, pumpkin. So we reap according...the idle guys on the wayside, dem wi send man crazy, but me always have something ah do(doing), something constructive and me a trademan so me cant go mess meself. Me always a work. But since me come a Antigua, people stiff with work (work is hard to come by)." Me get one job just the other day from a ministry fi go up ah the school, ah construction dem was doing, renovating the high school. Me get one little paper from the ministry fe go up deh. Whem me go up deh the man just pick out who he want. The man say (to Bryan) whe you from, you look like a foreigner. Me say me come from Montserrat, but me born yah, me talk me mind me talk truth. Many people born yah and go overseas and when them come back you cant get certain work because them tell you a foreigner you be. The man still no hire me, although me get paper from somebody, the man still no hire me. He hire who he want. Me can't do nutten out of that. Me no fuss, me jus go bout me business, although me get documents. Come back home. By the grace of God a work will come. Something will come out of the pipeline. Something will come. In the meantime when me deh ah me yard sit down, me occupy meself.. ah no hurricane season yet, so me gwan work pon me house. When people see me a do this know them will know say me a carpenter. When me a do whe me ah do them might hear hammer a pound and them might come up and take a little look... them will say the guy look like him good let me give him a job. Me will gwan fix up me house, put in a inside bathroom, because when rain fall outside mucky. Ah me do all the work. The whole structure, a me do it. Me and God. Nobody help me." Bryan explains that he had to build the house that he now occupies in order to honour the notice to move from the previous residence that he occupied. "When me start me no have no level, me no have no tape, but me just ah use me imagination just to get out of people way. Cause ah down deh meh did deh and the people dem say them want them house. So me no fuss, me push and try and get dis yah. When I came here is only tarpaulin the house have on. Ah me and dem three kids here. ...so me come a long way. Me struggle and me still a struggle...water is the essential thing me need up yah. No water, that's the only thing a mash me up, the water. Me have fi use a hose down by the neighbour fe get some water. If no rain no come and me use all ah the water out of the tank, that's it. No water. Me have fe use pipe water fe save the rain water...Light is not a problem. That is official light

from the government. Me use to pay \$50 to a neighbour to get current from a neighbour. But at the end of the day they were not paying their bill and they were still coming for money. I spent 7 months in the dark. So me use that same \$50 to pay the official bill. It might be \$60 sometimes. Just a fridge and a T.V. The light dem nuh on too much. A young man me be, me have fe use me head because me train by old people. Ah old people raisae me up. Jus the other day I was saying ah going to mek a little fowl farm to help kick off a little business.. but through me here bout the disease (bird flu) me say mek me wait. Back wey me come from in Montserrat they have fowl farm, they have rabbit, they have everything where I lived. So everyday I had to get up and look after these animal. Ah the same thing me want fe my children. They would just help with me and we pick up egg and me jus sell two..."

Dinner was being prepared at the time of the interview. It consisted of salt beef, chicken with red peas. Mr. Bryan says he sometimes give his children chicken patties that he buys from the supermarket. He says he also buys sardine... all kinds of different things ...peanut butter..When it comes to fruits they want to go out even at night to pick the bananas...they love a lot of bananas. When his children are sick he says he carries them to the clinic. Two of his children have received all of the checks at the clinic for their age group. One is about to go for her final assessment. Mr. Bryan says he does not intend to have any more children... for now... because "every mouth ah something fe feed. When you want to give one a big portion you have fe cut back to give the other one. Five good enough. Everythng nice. Me nuh have no problem with nutten." He points to two gas containers and indicates that they are back up cylinders and that they are full. "Ah pickney me have so me have fe know what me bout...ah soh me raise up. We have ton load a container round we and all ah dem full up. Wha you teach me that ah wha me do. Even if a jus little flour and water me have fe survive. Me nah go jail fe no stuppiddness. Nobody neve come yah and complain and sey me did and me dat. No police neve come and knock pon me door fe nutten. No police nah come yah. Dem have fe come when me dead (the only occasion on which they will come is when I am dead). Me nuh tief, me honest and me do whe me have fe do. But me a do whe me have to do to make those (his children) survive. Because me come up through a hard way. Me never have no father round me..only certain time. Me come up for 12 years with mother and no father. Me go Montserrat and me father migrate again and left me pon me own and me come up with me auntie.. no father. Him lef me inna one house, one two bedroom house and sent a friend to lock up the house and put me out. So me come through all them little rough thing, me struggle, me knock here .. me go down to me grandfather. Me grandfather say not enough room. So me say wha else fe do. Me sleep inna one old bus, me sleep in mango tree..After a while the Min. of Education say something look wrong, cause them no see no parents. Then they discover that I was on my own, like a chicken just. Me no interfere with no body. Me pick dry nut and sell them. Me dig fence post hole ... all the while a little change me ah mek fe help me self. From there me realize say me have fe stand pon me own cause nothing not easy in the world. From there I left school and started to work on a site. And the teacher come and tell me better me come back to school, cause in the construction

field you have to be able to read and write or else people will rob you. And the woman stood up for about half an hour and talked to me.” The man who he did the odd jobs for also encouraged him to return to school. “ Go back to school. Wash your skin and go back to school.. And I want to see you pass here every morning.” Mr Bryan says he did what the man told him and went back to school. He went to live with his auntie. He swears that he cant this allow this to happen to his children. ..”Me no mek no joke when it come to work me save me money. If me have to save all, me save all, because as long as me eat and me drink me no want nothing. Me save me money. Because me parents always teach me that. Save.

Mrs. Bryan works at a petrol station a couple of miles away. The family faces a dilemma in that Mrs. Bryan works on the evening shift. This means that she has to travel home late at night by herself. She runs the risk of being robbed or assaulted, but Mr. Bryan is not able to meet her because the children are too young to be left by themselves. The family says they have difficulty getting proper babysitters for their children. Mrs. Bryan says that when she leaves work at night she has to stand on the roadside and hold out her hand in an attempt to get a ride home. Just last week she reports that she saw a suspicious looking man with a cutlass walking behind her when she left work.

Mr. Bryan reports that he got the job for his wife even whilst he was working. He did this as insurance against the uncertain job market. Construction, the field he was employed in at the time, he figured to be an uncertain field of employment. Therefore he made sure to get a job for his wife even whilst he was employed. Mrs. Bryan says she is anxious to have the works that her husband is conducting on the house finished. She says the children have enough to eat.

5.4 CASE STUDY 4 – ERROL, PERSON LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS IN ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Some of the salient issues involved in the relationship of HIV and poverty are brought out in the following interview. Some of these are stigmatization, the role of family, labour market issues and access to medical care and treatment.

Errol lives in the small village in which he was born in Antigua in 1970. He was born to agricultural workers/casual labourers. His mother had 9 children (one girl eight boys). She had these children for three different men, Errol’s father and the father of one of her other children. Errol was the fourth child for his mother. He attended primary school and had a shortened stay in secondary school due to economic hardship and material deprivation. Errol’s father worked with the public works department. He migrated to England when Errol was 12 and still remains there. His mother struggled to mind her children as the fathers tended not to provide properly for their children. Of the three, Errol says there was only one that made a good contribution to the family.

Childhood was a struggle. “ I could remember getting up in the morning time, in terms of eating when other families were having a proper breakfast to go to school.. all I end up having was some cornmeal porridge. That’s about it. Come home in the afternoon time eat some white rice... we skipped lunch because our mother was so poor she could not afford that. All of us live in a little one bedroom house.. it was difficult..some had to sleep on the floor...”

Errol left school in second or third form at the age of 16. He started working in a baker’s shop as a handyman. He eventually was able to learn baking. Working was important for him and his family since his contribution was necessary for the support of his younger siblings. He eventually obtained work in the hotel industry as a baker. By then he was 18 or 19 years of age. He had wanted to attend college, but says that, “the little money I was making was just enough to take care of the family.”

His older siblings were not as responsible as he was. In fact one of them had become a drug addict. I was the one that was thinking ahead.

“All the time I would hear my mother say cant buy no bread for you all this morning, or there is no milk to make the porridge, but I am trying ... and I realized the struggle and see the little money she was making at the end of the week as you look it finish and she nuh even get to complete what she had to do. So I had to go with it and help her and then other brothers leave school and start to bring in things and so on.”

Errol has three brothers who are chefs in the tourist industry. One other brother works as a gardener and his sister is a security guard. Yet another brother works in a wholesale establishment.

Errol has four children, three girls and a boy, with two women. His first daughter is 13 years old. His last two children are HIV positive and faced ostracism and ridicule to the point of being expelled from school because of their condition. As he puts it,

“I was facing a situation in my life when people seem to look at me differently. Because of me they sort of shun the kids as well. When they go to school they tell them bad things about their daddy..oh you daddy this and your daddy that. When they come from school they tell me and they (the authorities) say you have to do something about it, you just cant have kids in the school like this and things of that nature. They shift them from school to school. Sometimes they have them out of school for three weeks. Eventually I got them into a school, but it is at a distance. They have to take like two buses to get there. I don’t have a job because as I said I have a condition. Just as how they have been kicked out of school I have been kicked out of jobs..”

He has been out of a job since 2000, six years. He lost his job as a result of a change of ownership of the hotel where he worked. He got a job at an automotive business but lost it after 2 months

when he became ill with HIV and rumours started to circulate about his condition. He then set up his own automotive fixing business. At the time of the interview it was located on the sidewalk outside his home. "I try to make like by going here and there.. sometimes somebody might come and say I want two spark plugs changed.. few little things to keep active. What I [really] do to put food on the table I usually go to different churches and I do presentations to educate youth groups and church in general."

5.4.1 ABOUT THE ILLNESS

"I was not too sure, I suspected something was wrong but eventually I found out I was HIV positive." I wasn't really feeling sick or nothing, I find that sometimes when I get up in the morning I feeling weak. I started losing weight and stuff. People start saying you getting slim. Somebody call the boss and tell him that the guy he have working for him have AIDS. He tell me he cant really have me working among the crew .. he get rid of me. I been home then I get a little job driving I work for two weeks.. when I go in the boss call me .. people see me and when I do end up get employ somewhere they call the boss and tell him that guy you have working with you .. and I get kicked out."

5.4.2 LABOUR MARKET AND AIDS

After four such experiences he became discouraged. "Recently this girl working at a restaurant, she knows me, she call me and say there is an opening there working in the garden. So she tell me to go to the labour department. She call me next day and she say the boss told her that he had a lady working there [who had AIDS] and it caused him to lose business and so he cant have me. He said he cant hire me. The lady in the labour dept when I saw I told her and she said she can understand, but she will see what she can do for me because people in Antigua have a tendency to discriminate. That was last week." The presentations at churches that he does earn him some money, but the occasions are not frequent. Sometimes for three weeks he does not make one. He therefore relies on doing automotive fixing jobs, a trade he learnt by hanging around a friend who had a business.

5.4.3 CONTRACTING THE DISEASE

Errol contracted the illness from the mother of his last two children. He met her through a friend who gave him her picture and told him she was a nice girl and that he should send for her. He sent for her and they started a relationship. She was infected with the disease, but she did not tell him. He recalls seeing a lot of medication and her explanation that she suffered from sickle cell anemia. She conceived two children for him, but each time she was due to deliver she returned to Guyana on the premises of wanting to be with family. Therefore she was never tested and managed to evade detection by the local health care system. The children eventually developed HIV. By this time she had left the country, leaving her children behind with him.

Whilst abroad, Errol says she wrote him and told him that she has AIDS. She returned to Antigua and he managed to trace her to a place where she was employed. Once he found her she left the job and disappeared again.

5.4.4 COPING AS A FAMILY

Errol has sole responsibility for his children, who at present live with him. Because he does not have lunch money and bus fare to give them during the week he lets them stay with a relative of his who has no children of her own. The children's mother is around, someone reported seeing her during the recent carnival. Errol says that because she is on medication she is able to keep active and maintain a regular existence. The children and himself are also on medication. The children are on vaccines that they receive once every two months. He reports that they are doing well. The major problem that faces him is unemployment. This makes him unable to give his children what they need. A lot of people he says offer him help, but they want to take his kids. However he is not in agreement with this. His lack of agreement to the adoption of his children has resulted in the withdrawal of support from at least one person.

His family of socialization regards him as an outcast. When he requested from his mother that she leave a cooked meal for him on a daily basis her response was, "nobody sent you to get AIDS, COME OUT OF MY PLACE!" If she sees him coming she battens down as if a hurricane is approaching. His children are also not welcome in her home. Once when he was hungry he went to her home while she was away and took some food. When she returned and heard what had happened she came to his home and threatened to have the police lock arrest him. His two other children are girls whom he had with different women. One is in Dominica. The other one is 13 years old and she lives in the same district as he does. However her mother and grandmother have told her to avoid her father. If she sees him coming on the same road that she is on she crosses the street.

In the past he has had problems with landlords. One was sympathetic at first then came to the point where he took off the doors and windows to the house and insisted that he and his children move. The house in which he and his children live at present belongs to a distant relative who migrated. Errol has to meet all of the recurrent expenditures associated with the house. Each month he is expected to pay \$300. Recently an agent has started bothering him for more money or that he move. His children's traveling expenses cost him \$200 per week. Local market stuff \$80 per week. In the supermarket the expenditure is \$200+. Then he has to pay light bill of \$60 per month. This he has not paid for 3 months and feels that his light might soon be disconnected. He needs electricity to store his medication.

The mechanic work that he does suffers because he is not able to buy the parts needed to fix the job. He tells the customer to buy the parts before the job is started. The house has no running water. He gets water from a school next door using containers. Errol says his greatest need is employment in a job that he feels relaxed in. "I would like to have a job that I can get up and go to everyday and at the end of the week I know I can cover my bills. That is the thing I am looking for right now. I am a baker, I am a cook, I am a truck driver, any field you put me in." Every two weeks an agency of government gives him \$250. "Sometimes the needs are so great I don't even see it." His vitamins alone cost him \$37 per month. The crème costs \$45 and lasts two weeks between himself and the children.

Errol says, "I bear so much hungry around here, me and the kids. But I am a strong believer in the father and with that he see me through. Some time when the day look alittle down.. something just pick up." He survives on the mechanic jobs that he gets and the presentations that he makes. He says he started the presentations through the assistance of a minister. His messages are well received because he is serious in what he is doing. He makes the young people to understand that having unprotected sex on just one occasion is enough to contract the virus. The congregation makes a contribution maybe of \$300 or so. This money he uses to fill the gaps.

He gets his medication free. He says he planned to commit suicide because the community was so unkind in their treatment of him. However since he started going to church he has moved beyond that negative state of mind. He has gotten a new outlook on life that makes him unafraid and relaxed about what he is doing. His position is now that before the members of the community point fingers at him they should go and check themselves because they might be in a worse position than he is. He recalls being kicked off the bus because a passenger identifies him as HIV positive and the bus driver reacting by telling him that he has to come off because he is not prepared to lose his business for him. He and his children were removed. He says he has been through many things and he is still struggling.

Medication is free and he has to take it twice per day. He has to take vitamins as well but says he does not always have money. He also has to buy a crème for his skin for \$35-\$40, but it lasts no time because bith himself and his children need to use it extensively. Right now he says as a result of not using it recently his whole body is covered with spots. He belongs to an AIDS support group made up of HIV positive persons. In fact he has a funeral to attend this evening since one of the members died recently. Registered cases of AIDS in Antigua he says is 520.

He says right now there is a girl who is chasing him. He makes the point that HIV does not have a face. Even when he tells her that he is ill she does not believe him and is still pursuing him. He feels constrained not to pursue the relationship because he says that would make him untrue to the message he is delivering to the young people.

CHAPTER 6: EMERGING ISSUES IN THE FINDINGS OF THE PPA

6.1 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Analysis of the large amount of data collected in the PPA has revealed a number of key issues that must be addressed in order to improve living conditions of individuals and families living in poverty, to ensure that poverty alleviation and poverty reduction programmes respond to and meet the specific needs of particular groups, and that they result in improvement in the living conditions in poor communities and in the quality of life of residents.

6.1.1 DEMOGRAPHIC ISSUES

In the communities that were studied, people who participated in the various PPA activities raised several issues that drew attention to the composition of the populations in their communities, to the effect that shifts in population has had on living conditions, and that poverty has had on the composition of the populations.

In the urban communities of Grays Farm and Point, out migration of original residents seeking a better life and migration of non-nationals including some from other CARICOM countries and from Santo Domingo, has changed the composition of the population in these communities. According to residents, this has serious implications and raises several issues including over population, competition for scarce resources, including jobs, increase in crime, and changes in the culture and way of life in the community. Residents in these communities were of the view that steps must be taken to stem the influx of non-national into their communities.

In the semi-urban communities of Clare Hell and Potters, and in Bendals residents also raised the issue of the number of non-Antiguans and the migration of some of the original residents. They saw this change in the composition of the population as being responsible for the erosion and decline of the village system and for the lack of interaction between community residents.

In Barbuda although migration over the years had resulted in a decrease in the population, residents did not see this as an issue.

6.1.2 ECONOMIC ISSUES

All of those who participated in the community workshops and in the focus group discussions, and all of the interviewees in households were adamant that employment and the ability to earn an adequate income were essential for them to be able to enjoy a good standard of living and a

good quality of life. Employment and unemployment were therefore key issues about which they were concerned and which were topics discussed in every community, in every group and in every household.

In most of the communities there are few, if any well organized large scale economic activities that can provide fulltime employment for residents or that can sustain their livelihoods. This is so even in those communities in which there is still some agriculture. Consequently the majority of residents who are in full time employment are involved in economic enterprises outside of their communities either in the public service, the private sector or in the hotel industry. In some communities several residents are involved in the informal economy as part time and seasonal workers or as entrepreneurs engaged in micro businesses, and significant numbers also depend on odd jobs to survive. Some are also engaged in jobs in alternative economies characterized by the existence, acceptance, and dependence on illegal activities like drug trafficking and crime, and the sex trade in which young people and women may be involved. At the same time participants pointed out that because a significant number of those who were employed were in low skilled low paying jobs, several people worked in two and sometimes three jobs in order to earn incomes that were sufficient to meet the needs of their families.

The economies of the majority of households interviewed are fragile with little disposable income most of which is spent on food or used for paying bills. In some of the households only one person was employed, in others one might have been employed part time or seasonally, and from time to time any or all persons in the household might be engaged in a diverse number of income earning activities mostly in the informal economy.

Since level of income is one of the indicators used to measure household poverty all of the participants agreed that there was a need to increase the earned income and the financial resources of households.

The data generated from the various PPA activities show that unemployment is high in the urban and semi-urban communities, lower in the rural communities and practically non-existent in Barbuda. However unemployment, especially among young men, was an issue of grave concern among everyone who participated in the interviews, group discussions and the community workshops.

The participants all agreed that lack of job opportunities and of jobs, incomplete and low levels of education, and residents' lack of marketable skills were factors that prevented them from obtaining jobs and from earning the kind of wages and the incomes that would allow them to adequately support themselves and their families. A few also felt that laziness among young people was also a contributing factor.

As indicated below some economic issues were raised more often by men than by women.

Among those raised by men were: lack of a job and a steady income, unemployment among young men, inability to support family and children, feelings of inadequacy as a man, threats to their image of manhood.

Among those raised most often by women were: unemployment, lack of an income, low paying jobs, lack of financial support from children's fathers, sole responsibility for the welfare of the family, inability to feed their families, and the many sacrifices they have to make in order to survive.

6.1.3 SOCIAL ISSUES

The social fabric of a community determines to a large extent the sense of well being and the quality of life that its residents can enjoy. However, although residents in a few of the communities were of the view that there were few social problems in their communities, in many of the communities residents identified several social problems.

Among these are alcoholism, the existence of drug houses, and the increase and use of illegal drugs, increase in violence and crime, existence of gangs and gang violence. These phenomena are now so common in many communities that their activities are not concealed anymore but are done quite openly. Some people are of the view that unemployment, neglect of their communities by government, and poverty has contributed to the emergence of these phenomena. Several raised issues about the impact of poverty on children, about their vulnerability, about treatment of children, and about their indiscipline.

Levels of education and health provide clues about the quality of life and the wellbeing of individuals, households and communities, and in several of the communities, residents raised education and health issues that need to be addressed.

In terms of the former the data show that people are aware of the important role that education can play in obtaining meaningful and profitable employment and in reducing poverty. While several of the older participants may not have completed school or may have had only a primary education, the latter is now universal, and secondary education is available to many. However many residents were of the view that opportunities for children and adults were insufficient and that participation in continuing education was low. Antigua and Barbuda may therefore have to work more aggressively towards achieving MDG#2.

At the level of the households there were indications of the ways in which lack of education can contribute to the level of poverty being experienced. The majority, over seventy percent, of the household heads had only had primary education, only a quarter had had some level of secondary education, and a similar number were functionally illiterate/had problems with reading and writing. At the same time, children in some of the households were unable to make use of the available opportunities or to access and reap the full benefits of education because of lack of finance, and of their parents' ability to meet the costs of lunch, books, and transportation. In one of the communities residents raised a serious issue about reduced school hours and voiced their concern about the effect on pupils' performance and about the consequences of lack of supervision during the after school hours.

Participants all understood the link between education and the ability to obtain jobs and between low levels of education and education qualifications and high levels of unemployment, and the relationship between this and poverty. They were therefore concerned about the number of children who drop out of school, some boys to lime or to become involved in illegal income earning activities and some girls because of pregnancy.

Good health contributes to a sense of well being and the poor depend heavily on the existence, availability and high quality of public health services. However while such services are widely available in some communities, in others residents were very concerned about the absence of a doctor or nurse on a regular basis, about the inability of some to access available services, and about the quality of the services available. In one of the communities residents identified the link between environmental conditions and poor health including the emergence of respiratory diseases, especially among children. The issue of lifestyle diseases was also raised and there is concern about the prevalence of diseases like diabetes and hypertension in men and in women, of breast and ovarian cancer in women and of prostate cancer in men.

While little concrete information was available on sex related diseases, in one community residents identified HIV/AIDS, STIs, teenage pregnancies, illicit sex, and prostitution as serious health issues that needed to be addressed. This will be important if the country is to achieve MDG#6.

The issue of alcoholism was raised by many, but for the residents in Barbuda this was a matter of very serious concern and some residents were outraged about the large amount of alcohol that was consumed weekly. Several regarded and blamed alcoholism for many of problems faced by families and even children were concerned about the fact that fathers/men were spending money on alcohol that they should be spending on their children/families. In addition some participants pointed out that the high levels of alcohol consumption also contributed to and resulted in violent behaviour, including fighting and domestic violence.

Another issue that was a matter of some concern was the plight and neglect of persons with disabilities. While the data did not identify a large number of persons with disabilities, it did reveal that a few parents, some of whom were quite old and destitute, were responsible for the welfare of children, including adult children with disabilities. In such cases the parents, because of lack of resources, were unable to provide the kind and quality of care that was needed. Participants were therefore very concerned about the neglect of such persons and about the scarcity of resources and facilities that are necessary to enable them to live a meaningful life.

6.1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The physical and social environment in which people live determines, to a large extent, their living conditions, their standard of living, their sense of well being and the quality of life that they can enjoy. Data generated by those who participated in the PPA revealed several environmental issues that they felt needed to be addressed.

In terms of the physical environment issues were raised about littering and unacceptable disposal of garbage and faeces, arrangements for disposal of sewage, poor drainage and flooding, inadequate supply and poor quality water, pollution of the air, sea and water sources, burning of charcoal and rubbish, deforestation, excessive amounts of dust, excessive use of pesticides, overgrown areas, and the existence of derelict houses and vehicles providing habitats for vermin.

Participants also expressed their concern about natural disasters and their effect on the physical environment of their communities, their devastation of natural resources and about the fact that steps were not always taken soon enough to repair damage done by hurricanes.

In terms of the social environment issues like poor housing and overcrowding, especially in urban communities were raised. In addition in all communities, even in those in which participants said there was little crime, there was a general concern about the increase in crime and in illegal activities especially those related to the sale and use of drugs. At the same time issues of poor parenting, of treatment of children, of indiscipline and of the undesirable behaviour and attitudes of young people, were matters of grave concern that residents felt were having a negative impact on the quality of life in their communities.

6.1.5 POLITICAL ISSUES AND ISSUES OF GOVERNANCE

In most of the communities studied participation in political activity was very high and in ten of these (83.33%) there were active political groups. However in several of the communities residents were dissatisfied with the kind and amount of representation that they were receiving from their representatives in parliament as well as with the actions of the political leaders. Some felt that they were being used as political pawns, especially at election time, and others

that they were being neglected by their representatives. According to residents in Grays Farm, even though the Prime Minister is from that community, because of the stigma attached to the community, political leaders paid little, if any attention to them and their needs.

Residents in many of the communities blamed the government for the level of poverty that they were experiencing. They were agreed that lack of political will and failure of political leaders were responsible for government's indifference and neglect of their communities and for its failures to provide facilities and resources and community development programmes, and they saw these as serious issues that needed to be addressed.

6.2 POVERTY AND DEPRIVATION

The data from the PPA reveal the multi-dimensionality and complexity of poverty, the many factors that contribute to it, and its impact on the lives of those who are deprived of the basic necessities of life and are living in poverty. Various types, levels and aspects of poverty exist in the communities that were studied, and several important issues were raised by those who participated.

However, contrary to what several participants believe, the data show that poverty in varying degrees does exist in all of the communities. However, there was a marked variation in people's perception of poverty and of the factors that contributed to this phenomenon. Several of those who participated in the various activities either denied or were reluctant to admit either that they were poor or that their families or their communities were poor. In many cases, when they did admit they placed blame for the existence of poverty on something or someone else, including on the presence of non-nationals or on the government.

The data show that 64.18% of the households interviewed were poor and that poor households existed in all of the communities. It is at the level of the household that the effects of poverty are most keenly felt and the poorest households were those headed by single female parents and those in the urban communities of Grays Farm and Point. Members of these households were not only unable to meet their basic needs, but many of them also lacked financial and material resources, or assets that could be used to improve their situation.

In order for the country to attain the first of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG#1) to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, poverty alleviation programmes must be designed to address the issue of poverty by implementing programmes and activities that are designed to meet the specific needs of the members of these poor households and to improve the conditions under which they live.

At the individual level, an important dimension of poverty is emotional and psychological poverty. Some participants saw poverty as being only in the mind and as the result of a certain mind set, but for some men it had marginalized them, destroyed their self confidence, made them feel inadequate as men, and eroded their masculinity and sense of manhood. Young people identified several issues about which they were concerned. Among these were the effect that poverty had on their mental state and their self esteem, the fact that it can lead to depression, anxiety and stress. They also said that being poor often meant that they were ostracized by their peers and left out of activities.

Women, especially those who were single parents, were concerned about issues relating to their ability to meet the needs of their families. Several shared experiences of the weight of the sole responsibility for caring for their families, of the heavy sacrifices that they were forced to make, and the stress and anxiety they experienced as they struggled to cope. Poverty alleviation initiatives that consider women's practical needs and use these as the basis for their programmes would go a long way towards addressing the issues that contribute to women's emotional and psychological poverty.

The main issue for people who were unemployed was the chance to find gainful employment and to get some kind of job so that they could support themselves and their families. If these issues were to be addressed, then such individuals would enjoy greater peace of mind.

For the elderly the issues that concerned them include the disgrace and shame attached to being poor, their inability to work, loneliness and no one to care, neglect, poor health, and dependency on others for their survival.

The data also show that there is a definite and direct link between private poverty at the individual, household and group level and public poverty at the community level and that this dynamic is also a factor that determines the levels of deprivation that is experienced by residents in a community.

The communities studied were not homogeneous and while they displayed several common characteristics, there were significant differences among and between them in terms of the types, levels and severity of poverty that they displayed. For example while all display some common features there is a stark difference between poverty as it is experienced in the urban and rural communities. Poor housing conditions and overcrowding is one such difference, being more evident in the former. A common feature is the existence of public poverty visible in the poor state of the infrastructure and of the difficulties that some residents, especially the elderly, experience in accessing and benefiting from facilities and public services, even when these are available.

Residents in many of the communities were therefore of the view that neglect of their communities was a factor that contributed to poor living conditions and perpetuated poverty.

6.3 VULNERABILITY

Vulnerability highlights the conditions under which specific groups of people live and identifies the extent to which poor living conditions contribute to deterioration in the quality of people's lives and to their sense of well being. In the process of the PPA residents identified three groups, children, women and the elderly, that in their view were being most adversely affected by poverty and which were therefore vulnerable.

Respondents were of the view that children who live in poor households are especially vulnerable because since they are dependent on adults for their survival, they are at a severe disadvantage. The issue of children's education was raised and many agreed that education was important and that educational opportunities existed for all children, but they were concerned that poor children could not really take advantage of or benefit from these opportunities. Another issue raised was the treatment of children and the abuse to which some were victims. Poverty alleviation initiatives must target and pay special attention to children in poor communities and ensure that they have a chance to develop physically as well as emotionally and intellectually so that they may have a better chance of moving out of poverty.

According to many of those who participated in the various activities of the PPA women, especially those who were single parents and who are totally responsible for the welfare of their families, were also vulnerable. However the data show that the education level of these women is low, that most of them are unemployed and have no access to a regular income, and that the incomes of the few who may be employed are very low. The women said that they face several challenges and take many risks as they struggle to find money to meet the basic needs of household members, and that this increases the possibility of them being exploited. They are responsible for providing child care and care for other family members, for all of the household chores, for transmitting values, for making decisions, and for keeping the family together. These responsibilities and the anxiety and stress that they generate increases women's vulnerability and make it difficult for them and their families to survive and almost impossible for them to move out of poverty.

In order to decrease the vulnerability of poor women poverty alleviation programmes must be aware of gender inequalities, must be sensitive to the gendered nature of poverty, must take women's practical needs into consideration and must provide poor women with the opportunities to obtain the financial and other resources that they need.

The elderly was also identified as being vulnerable. Some of them live in very poor conditions, are in poor health and many cannot access or afford good health care. Some, especially the males, are ignored, neglected and abandoned by children and other relatives. But the data indicated that there is limited number of facilities that provide care for elderly persons. At the same time while some elderly persons do receive public assistance or social welfare the small amount that they receive each month is insufficient to provide even the most basic need of enough food. Consequently many depend on friends and good neighbours for their survival.

Poverty alleviation programmes must therefore begin to pay attention to elderly persons who are living in poverty, all of whom would have contributed to society's development in their younger years, and some of whom have become poor as they aged. Steps must be taken to ensure that as they grow old they can live in comfortable conditions and enjoy a good quality of life.

Many households in poor communities are also vulnerable. They have few assets or resources which can be used to acquire the things that they need to sustain their livelihoods. They also become vulnerable when the main income earner is unemployed or loses their jobs, when they are structural changes in the national economy, or when natural disasters strike. A significant number of the households interviewed displayed these characteristics and in several of the households members talked about the risks that they have to take to survive and about the impact that these had had on them and on the household.

Communities can also be vulnerable. Because some communities do not have the capacity to respond to the threats and shocks that characterize community life and living, their residents are often forced to take risks in order to sustain their livelihoods. Consequently vulnerability of the community increases vulnerability of its residents, contributes to poverty and deprivation, determines the standard of living, the sense of well being and the quality of life that residents can enjoy.

Analysis of the data suggests that the urban communities were especially vulnerable. For while proximity to the town may have certain advantages, including greater access to some facilities and services, their social environments, the many social problems that exist, and the unacceptable living conditions, especially in terms of inadequate housing and overcrowding, increase their vulnerability and puts their residents at risk. In some rural communities lack of facilities and services also contributes to vulnerability.

6.4 LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

Poor people employ a wide variety of diverse and complex strategies to sustain their livelihoods and they rely on several sources to acquire what they need in order to survive. However the data show that different individuals and groups of poor people may employ different coping and survival strategies at different times.

Many people were of the view in order to sustain their livelihoods they needed money and that some kind of permanent employment that paid reasonable wages was necessary. However a number of those who participated were either unemployed or underemployed in low paying jobs whose wages were insufficient to provide them with their basic needs. Several of them therefore were involved in a wide variety of activities from which they might obtain money. Among the issues that emerged out of discussions of this situation was their involvement in risky and illegal activities including involvement in drug trafficking, crime, and the sex trade.

6.5 GENDER

A recognition and understanding of gender issues and their importance in assessing, alleviating and reducing poverty is critical because it will increase the awareness and sensitivity of policy makers and programme planners about the gendered nature of poverty and about links and relationships between gender and poverty. The issue of gender is important because it increases understanding of the different ways in which males and females as separate and distinct groups perceive and experience poverty, how poverty affects them, how it determines how they perform their gender roles, how it influences how they relate to each other, and how it impacts on the quality of their lives and their sense of well being.

Data from the PPA clearly show the gender dimensions of poverty and the relationship between gender and poverty. Focus group discussions conducted separately with males and females revealed that their experience of poverty was different, that poverty affected them differently and that they employ different strategies to sustain their livelihoods. Information collected during the household interviews also shows that poverty can influence gender relations in the household, determine how members perform their gender roles, and how this can contribute to and perpetuate poverty.

Gender socialization and child rearing practices adopted by parents and adults in poor communities mirror those in the wider society and continue to send different but specific and powerful messages to boys and girls about masculinity and femininity, about the roles that males and females are expected to play in the society, and about how males and females are expected to relate to each other.

Some women, admitted that the relationship with their male partners was not harmonious and that it was characterized by disagreement, arguments and conflict. Some men pointed out that lack of and poor communication had contributed to mistrust and to the way that men and women treated each other.

In most of the households interviewed the gender division of labour was along traditional gender lines, so that while many of the interviewees said that boys as well as girls did do some house work, it was the female children and adults that did the bulk of the domestic chores and were responsible for the housework while the males “helped.” At the same time women combined domestic chores, and the major responsibility for care of children, the sick and elderly with paid employment or other income generating activities.

The gender division of labour was also evident in the wider community in the types of work and income generating activities in which males and females were engaged. For example more of the males tended to be involved construction jobs and in drug trafficking and crime and more of the females in domestic service type activities, vending, and involvement in the sex trade. However the data show that while poverty emasculates men and erodes their self esteem and sense of worth, it does not do the same for women, and they suggest that while poverty does affect the self esteem and self confidence of women, its greatest challenge for them seems to be their inability to feed their families.

The levels of unemployment experienced by poor males and females have implications for their ability to provide for their families. Since most poor males either have no regular source of income or if employed are earning low wages, the extent to which they can play their expected gender role of breadwinner and provider is undermined. But in spite of this, many poor women still look for and expect poor men to contribute to the household economy or at least provide them with “child money” to support their children. In several of the focus group discussions women continually referred to men who were not supporting their children and the burden it placed on them as women, and men kept referring to their inability to provide this support and described how it made them feel.

Male support of a household is one indicator that can be used to determine the severity of poverty being faced by household members and this is especially true of households in which there is no adult male, as was the case in several of the households interviewed. However the present of an adult male does not necessarily or automatically translate into support of or contribution to the household. Several women said that men were not supporting their families, and the latter did not only include those who had no source of income but also those who spent their wages on alcohol rather than contributing to the household.

Gender relations are generally based on beliefs about masculinity and femininity and about society's expectations of males and females. Data from household interviews and focus group discussions produced important insights into sex and sexuality, and highlighted a variety of mating patterns which suggest that sex and sexual favours are the basis of many gender relations. Although a few individuals pointed out that the risk of HIV/AIDS is "making men think twice" about having more than one partner, on several occasions the issue of teenage pregnancies, and of prostitution, especially among young girls, was raised.

While abuse of and violence against women are serious crimes, in some households and communities it is still believed to be a family matter, is hidden and not spoken about. Consequently, during discussions while abuse of women and domestic violence were said to be present, people were reluctant to admit or to talk about it.

Because poor men and poor women have different needs, poverty alleviation programmes must take gender differences into consideration and be designed to meet the specific and particular needs of poor males and poor females.

CHAPTER 7: POVERTY ALLEVIATION STRATEGIES

Qualitative data generated and collected during the PPA are important not only for complementing and giving greater understanding to the quantitative data produced by the Survey, but because they highlight the social reality, concerns and needs of poor individuals, households and communities. Along with information obtained from the Institutional Assessment, the PPA provides information about initiatives being undertaken by various organizations to alleviate poverty.

Although many of the persons who provided information in the PPA activities said that there have not been many initiatives taken by the government to address poverty, several did acknowledge that there are several institutions and schemes set up to provide assistance, facilities, services and resources to individuals, households and communities that may need them. However they did agree that it was not always as easy to access or obtain the kind and amount of assistance they needed or would like.

Future initiatives to alleviate poverty should therefore use the data provided by those who participated in the various PPA activities to develop strategies and to design programmes that are intended to meet the specific needs of particular individuals, households, groups and communities. They must also implement the changes required to transform conditions in poor communities and to improve the quality of life and sense of well being of their residents.

7.1 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The data obtained in the PPA not only highlight a number of issues that need to be addressed but they also show that people in poor communities are very clear about what needs to be done to improve their living conditions and to alleviate and reduce poverty. Their suggestions are included in various sections of the report, but in addition to those the following also need to be considered.

- As soon as possible a dynamic and efficient Community Development Department should be created. It must be staffed by Community Development Officers that are well trained in the philosophy and principles of community development and in modern approaches and methodologies of effective community development. This is an urgent need.
- Poverty alleviation initiatives should be implemented through community development programmes that are designed to meet the specific needs of community residents, of poor households and of different groups in the communities.

- The content of skills training and other non-formal education programmes should be designed not only to teach traditional gender specific and entrepreneurial skills, they should also include a component on personal development.
- More assistance, facilities and activities be made available to elderly persons and persons with disabilities.
- Adult and continuing education programmes must include parent education.
- Strategies to ensure that all children can benefit from the educational opportunities that are available.
- Policy makers and programme planners must be exposed to gender training so as to ensure that pro-poor policies and programmes take the gendered nature of poverty into account.