



Rural Ecotourism Assessment Program (REAP)

*A Guide to Community Assessment of Ecotourism
As a Tool for Sustainable Development*

Gail Y. B. Lash and Alison D. Austin

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	5
Executive Summary	8
Abbreviations and Acronyms	10
1. Purpose Of REAP	11
2. Overview Of Community Ecotourism	11
3. Community Assessment Models And Procedures	12
3.1 Pro-Poor Tourism.....	14
3.2 Tourism in Technical Co-operation (TC)	15
3.3 Montana State University Extension Service	15
3.4 Conservation NGOs	16
4. Considering REAP.....	17
4.1 Descriptions Of Scenarios Where REAP Can Be Applied	17
4.1.1 The Belizean REAP study	18
4.1.2 Rural USA community	19
4.1.3 Amazon community.....	19
4.1.4 Pacific island community.....	19
4.1.5 South African community.....	19
4.2 Descriptions Of Partnerships Needed For Use Of REAP	20
4.2.1 Conservation/NGO Model.....	21
4.2.2 Government Agency/Industry Association Model	22
5. The Reap Model Process, Timeline, And Benefits.....	23
5.1 Phase One: Preliminary Research.....	25
5.1.1 Literature review	25
5.1.2 Market data review	26
5.1.3 Community selection process	30
5.1.4 Survey tools	30
5.1.5 Target groups	31
5.2 Phase Two: Data Collection.....	32
5.2.1 Meetings.....	32
5.2.2 Select communities	32
5.2.3 Select informants	33
5.2.4 Training of assistants	33
5.2.5 Other components of data collection	34
5.3 Phase Three: Data Analysis	35
5.3.1 Organization of data.....	35
5.3.2 Analysis tools.....	35
5.4 Phase Four: Data Report/Presentation	36
5.4.1 Data consolidation	36
5.4.2 Data presentation	37

5.5 Phase Five: Final Report.....	37
6. Case Studies.....	38
6.1 Belize, Central America	38
6.2 Methods.....	41
6.2.1 Project Coordination and Timeline.....	41
6.2.2 Target groups	41
6.2.3 Selected communities and Informants.....	42
6.2.4 Data presentation	43
6.3 Village Summaries.....	45
6.3.1 Placencia Village	46
6.3.2 Seine Bight Village.....	48
6.3.3 Hopkins Village	50
6.4 SWOTs.....	53
6.4.1 Discussion of Community Attitudes: Strengths.....	54
6.4.2 Discussion of Community Attitudes: Weaknesses	56
6.4.3 Discussion of Community Attitudes: Opportunities.....	57
6.4.4 Discussion of Community Attitudes: Threats.....	59
6.5 Community Recommendations for Improvements.....	59
6.5.1 Placencia Village	60
6.5.2 Seine Bight Village.....	61
6.5.3 Hopkins Village	62
6.6 Lessons Learned from Local Businesses	63
6.6.1 Placencia Village	63
6.6.2 Seine Bight Village.....	63
6.6.3 Hopkins Village	63
6.7 Placencia/Seine Bight/Hopkins Comparisons.....	63
6.7.1 Placencia and Seine Bight Villages	63
6.7.2 Hopkins Village	65
6.8 Regional Connections	65
6.9 Case Study Conclusions.....	66
7. Acknowledgements.....	71
8. Author Biographies.....	72
9. Bibliography	73

Appendices

Appendix A – Community Key Informant Interview Form	79
Appendix B – Community Individual Interview Form	81
Appendix C – Community Focus Group Interview Form	83
Appendix D – Community Score Sheet.....	84
Appendix E – Expertise Needed For Community Researchers	86

List of Tables

Table 1	Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)	13
Table 2	Example Community Scenarios to Use REAP Model Process	18
Table 3	REAP Model Process Action Steps	23
Table 4	Ecotourism Traveler Profiles	26
Table 5	Ecotourist Activity Preferences	28
Table 6	Village Strengths	53
Table 7	Village Weaknesses	54
Table 8	Village Opportunities	56
Table 9	Village Threats	58
Table 10	Village Quotes	59
Table 11	Toledo SWOT	66

List of Figures

Figure A	Conservation/NGO Model	21
Figure B	Government Agency/Industry Association Model	22
Figure C	Map of Belize	40
Figure D	Village Priorities and Statistics	52

FOREWORD

By Megan Epler Wood

Communities have been impacted by tourism development since the earliest ships, airplanes and busses brought inquisitive visitors to the doorsteps of local peoples. As the international tourism economy began to reach extraordinary new heights in the 1980s and 1990s, fueled by low cost air travel, there was a growing body of evidence that tourism development causes heavy cultural and environmental impacts. Communities that did not develop a means to oversee or regulate tourism development, often felt they had lost the ability to determine the fate of their own peoples, neighborhoods, towns, and cities, and this led to a growing set of cultural impacts, socio-economic inequities, and environmental problems worldwide.

Ecotourism was launched as a philosophy in the late 1980s to generate positive benefits for environmental conservation initiatives and provide sustainable development for local people. In the 1990s, The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) made it a priority to establish guidelines for nature tour operators (Lindberg and Hawkins 1993), marine ecotourism (Halpenny 2002), and ecolodges (Mehta *et. al.* 2002), and to establish a methodology for developing community based ecotourism. The creation of this methodology, called the Rural Ecotourism Assessment Program (REAP), was funded by the Summit Foundation and tested in the country of Belize in 2000.

Early model initiatives to involve local communities in tourism development and offset damage to fragile natural environments were exemplified by the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) which was launched in 1986. According to the ACAP website (2003),

“since the first trekker came to the Annapurna area in 1957, the natural and cultural features of ACAP have made it the most popular tourist destination in Nepal, drawing more than 60 % of the country's total trekkers. ACAP follows the grassroots philosophy of maximum peoples' participation, sustainability, and its role as a catalyst (facilitator) whereby the local people are involved in all aspects of the conservation and development processes, both as principal actors and prime beneficiaries.”

This highly successful initiative gave local residents in the Annapurna region a full say in the development of their region and, through an entrance fee system, a viable source of revenue to develop a whole range of sustainable development programs. This project successfully demonstrated that local people could indeed improve their region's sustainability using tourism dollars.

Since ACAP's success, there was a an array of new community ecotourism projects, funded in the late 1980s and 1990s by development agencies and implemented by non-governmental conservation organizations (NGOs), that sought to achieve similar goals. But results were often far less positive. In 2001, World Wildlife Fund International published guidelines for community based ecotourism, due to the fact that “many small-

scale community-based initiatives have been set up which have failed owing to a lack of market assessment, organization, quality, and promotion.” (WWF 2001)

The United Nations named 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism (IYE), and as a result a wide variety of preparatory meetings were held on ecotourism worldwide. Community based ecotourism was one of the topics that drew the most attention and debate during this process. The Southeast Asia region held an official UN preparatory meeting solely on the topic of community-based ecotourism for the IYE, which discussed in detail the “search for appropriate models” (REST 2002). Community based ecotourism, according to the meeting summary, must improve community economic status; include participatory decision making; provide an alternate economy to more destructive practices; build knowledge, awareness and understanding of people outside communities; and result in exchange of knowledge between tourists and the community. It was noted that there is a need for community based ecotourism networks, information centers, marketing cooperatives, funds, and policy participation from government leaders.

These conclusions were mirrored at IYE preparatory meetings around the world. As stated at the World Summit on Ecotourism held in Quebec in 2002, by the Southeast Asia preparatory meeting representatives, “to guard gains of community based ecotourism, it is crucial that communities become empowered for self-determined development, for responsible stewardship of natural resources, and beneficial partnerships with regional stakeholders.” (Flores and Sipaseuth 2002).

Self-determination is an ambitious goal for communities in rural areas around the world. Developing countries are under many pressures due to globalization that go far beyond the problem of uncontrolled tourism development. To make matters worse, most rural areas lack legal controls such as zoning or land use planning laws. Frequently municipal governments have almost no power of decision-making and little has been done on the national policy landscape in most countries to regulate tourism, particularly in rural areas. Governments often seek large scale solutions to their economic problems, and large scale tourism development can help countries diversify national economies, attract foreign exchange, and replace failing export industries. But grand solutions from national governments rarely incorporate genuine local community input. As Flores and Sipaseuth point out (2002), “poor planning and a lack of community involvement have led to adverse consequences.”

In the current climate of 2003, where continued security concerns have caused a sustained downturn in international departure numbers since September 11, 2001; ecotourism development seems a risky bet for struggling local communities. The risk factor argues for a diversified development strategy and more effective methodologies for developing community-based ecotourism. The World Wildlife Fund guidelines for community ecotourism development suggest the following strategy inputs as a basis for local community decision-making:

- ❖ Careful consultation on attitudes and awareness
- ❖ Comprehensive market assessment
- ❖ Assessment of natural and cultural heritage for sensitivities and constraints.

(WWF 2001)

The Rural Ecotourism Assessment Program (REAP) was developed precisely for the above reasons, to help the communities themselves assess their own attitudes, awareness, sensitivities and constraints and develop a clear market assessment. REAP seeks to help communities to develop their own strategies for sustainable ecotourism development within the framework of a viable market plan. The REAP methodology was piloted in three communities in Belize in order to find the strengths and weaknesses of this methodology and fine tune it according to local community needs. This document summarizes the methodology based on the experience of researchers Lash and Austin, and it delivers the results of the case studies they undertook in Belize.

Lash and Austin delivered the community results to the residents of the three Belizean communities they worked with 6 months after their visit. During the presentations, it was clear that the communities were not only pleased to hear and comment on the results, they felt the results were representative. There was empowerment and energy in these meetings, and most importantly community representatives seemed to better understand how to move forward and work towards being the self-determining force in tourism development in their communities.

Such a tool will be valuable to other communities. The strengths and weaknesses of REAP as a methodology are now available for review by a general audience with the publication of this document, and for the benefit of community projects around the world.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ecotourism, as both an industry and a philosophy, focuses on conserving natural resources and enhancing the welfare of local communities through sustainable development. An integral part of ecotourism development philosophy is ensuring the spread of benefits to local community members. Equally important is the assurance that these ecotourism developments, in and by communities, are linked to strong existing or potential tourism markets.

Rural communities are often targeted for ecotourism development because they contain the abundant natural, cultural, and human resources used to create marketable ecotourism attractions. The Rural Ecotourism Assessment Program (REAP) was developed as an in-depth analysis of how to work with communities to assess procedures for developing ecotourism that will be market based and socially and environmentally constructive for local people.

The basis behind REAP is that for a community-based ecotourism or CBE enterprise to be successful, it must do three things:

- 1) understand and meet the social and cultural needs of the community,
- 2) realistically deliver a long-term, quality ecotourism product, and
- 3) make specific efforts to connect these products to international and local markets.

Results from REAP allow communities and development partners to know when and where to efficiently allocate funding resources in tandem with community-identified needs and tourism demands.

Written for both development personnel and community members, this REAP guide provides an assessment tool which can be used in multiple natural settings and cultures. It takes into account the nature of site-specific needs, and makes use of local expertise and existing political and social structures.

The REAP model addresses two major areas: marketability of product and community assets and abilities. Based on the premise of partnering communities, conservation NGOs, private sector, and development agencies, *Sections 1-4* of this guide take the reader through the purpose of REAP, an examination of other existing models and procedures, and various example scenarios of where REAP can be applied. *Section 5* details the **REAP Model**, with a step-by-step process of how one would go about using this model in practical application.

The REAP model uses two teams of researchers, a Community Team and a Market Team, to complete a five-phase assessment process, over a period of several months. The end results of the REAP process are community-approved prioritized action plans based on local assets, needs, concerns, markets, and linked to regional and national trends.

Section 6 is a pilot **Case Study** of the application of the REAP model in three rural, coastal communities (Hopkins, Seine Bight, and Placencia) in Belize, Central America.

Using key informant interviews, target interviews, and focal group meetings, the case findings from the Community Team are presented in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) format for clarity and use. Collaboration with the Market Team is essential to linking community products to overall national and international markets. However, this pilot study report does not contain Belize market data. Community action plans/next steps were identified for the three Belizean villages, and are presented here.

Challenges for these coastal communities include integrating foreign-owned resorts and local businesses on a level playing field. Although foreign tourism interests continue to draw a large segment of the tourism market, local community-based businesses struggle to compete because of a lack of financial resources and international tourism training and exposure.

The natural beauty of the environment and humbleness of the people are the strengths and the attraction of these communities. Even after the devastation of the hurricane in 2001, these coastal communities had the fortitude to rebuild so that visitors could continue to enjoy the simple Belizean lifestyle. These people embrace a passionate determination to create and control their future.

REAP is an excellent tool for assessing community tourism needs, so that specific funding can be sought. However, it does not provide the resources for implementing those needs. It is rare that small communities have the ability to produce a market analysis of their community's strengths and weaknesses. Conducting REAP allows the community to have available information that speaks to their being a viable community-based tourism enterprise. Any successful business enterprise requires a market analysis. REAP is that market analysis for a community-based organization. By having this REAP tool, communities are more marketable for funding.

We look forward to others using this REAP tool as an approach to assist communities in their efforts to create socially sustainable and market-based community ecotourism developments.

ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

ALOP	Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción
ANDA	Association of National Development Agencies
APMR	Association of Preservation of Monkey River
BAS	Belize Audubon Society
BDF	Belize Defense Force
BEST	Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology
BETA	Belize Ecotourism Association
BITI	Belize Indigenous Training Institute
BTB	Belize Tourism Board
BTIA	Belize Tourism Industry Association
CARD	Community-Initiated Agriculture And Rural Development Project
CARDI	Caribbean Research & Development Institute
CARIPEDA	Caribbean People's Development Agency
CBE	Community-Based Ecotourism
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CI	Conservation International
ESTAP	Environmental & Social Technical Assistance Project = SDP
FLAC	Friends of Laughingbird Cay
GEF	Global Environmental Fund
GOB	Government of Belize
HFP	Help For Progress Ltd.
HK	Hopkins Village
ICAE	International Council for Adult Education
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
KCB	K'ekehi Council of Belize
LBC	Laughingbird Cay
MR	Monkey River Village
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
PA	Protected Area
PACT	Protected Areas Conservation Trust
PDC	Product Development Committee
PL	Placencia Village
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PTA	Parents Teacher Association
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SATIIM	Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management
SB	Seine Bight Village
SDP	Southern Development Project
SPEAR	Society for the Promotion of Education and Research
TEA	Toledo Ecotourism Association
TGA	Tour Guide Association
TIDE	Toledo Institute for Development and the Environment
TIES	The International Ecotourism Society
TMCC	Toledo Mayan Cultural Council
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VC	Village Council
WB	Water Board
WIN	Women's Issues Network of Belize
WWF	World Wildlife Fund for Nature

1. PURPOSE OF REAP

REAP was designed as a new model to assist rural communities in assessing their collective strong points and needs, to identify priority areas for economic development, and to align these developments with the regional, national, and international tourism marketplace. This tool combines current data about natural resources, community leadership structure and community infrastructure with tangible information about which type of tourists would come to these rural communities and what they are looking for.

REAP is one of the first feasibility tools created for small, rural communities interested in ecotourism. It is designed to be applied before a project is initiated by communities in partnership with the many stakeholders interested in launching community based ecotourism, particularly development agencies and NGOs. It requires careful and consistent data collection and analysis of both community and market data. It offers an analysis process for residents and their partners to make sound business decisions within the current development and market context they are working within. It provides the community with data that can be clearly understood at the local level.

REAP takes into consideration the views of a wide range of citizens from different points of reference, and consolidates the information into a format that is easy to understand, and prioritizes the information for the benefit of the people in the community.

Because the REAP Model is new and was created while simultaneously being tested in the case study of Belize, researchers were challenged with performing dual processes - creating and presenting both 1) the model and 2) data from the case study.

REAP objectives are to assess 1) community attitudes towards conservation and how ecotourism compares with all other development options at the community level, and 2) community readiness in terms of leadership, local organizational skills, hospitality, guiding and infrastructure, and 3) community linkages to in-country ecotourism market demand and supply.

2. OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY ECOTOURISM

Although many rural communities throughout the world have welcomed ecotourism and hundreds of such projects have received support from environmental NGO's, the impacts of this global effort have been mixed and the overall result is still being debated.

According to Megan Epler Wood, "In Ecuador alone, there are dozens of community ecotourism ventures that are presently not attracting enough business to offer a viable, sustainable development alternative to their communities. The terrible truth is that although the majority of these communities are choosing ecotourism over other forms of development, the viability of their choice may not be supported by the existing interest in the marketplace." (Epler Wood 1998:28). Her detailed study of numerous communities in Ecuador and broader global experience with ecotourism concluded, "In Latin America, it is highly questionable if more funding should go to community ecotourism without a

macroanalysis of the market for community ecotourism. No such study has ever been performed and nothing definitive is known about what types of tourists visit community based ecotourism projects." (Epler Wood 1998:29).

There is international debate about how much community involvement is required for a project to qualify as a community based ecotourism project. Within the REAP project itself there was disagreement between researchers on how community based ecotourism is defined and how it should be researched. This hindered the project from attaining one of its goals, which was to merge the community and market data in a manner that would allow both data sets to be integrated and smoothly applied at the local level. But this problem could be easily avoided in future by establishing a project definition for community-based ecotourism.

TIES defined ecotourism in 1990 and in publications thereafter, via a process of consensus building, as "Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people" (Lindberg and Hawkins 1993:8).

Generally TIES used a process of discussion in stakeholder meetings to come to conclusions on appropriate definitions, guidelines, and principles within the field of ecotourism. This was the best means for an international non-profit to achieve consensus in its work in an emerging field. Under the presidency of Megan Epler Wood, TIES sought to build consensus around a definition for community based ecotourism that was based on the practical experience of those working in the field. In the TIES publication, "Ecotourism: Principles, Practices, and Policies (Epler Wood 2002), it is defined as follows:

"Community based ecotourism (CBE) implies that the community has substantial control and involvement in the ecotourism project, and that the majority of benefits remain in the community. Three main types of CBE enterprises have been identified. The purest model suggests that the community owns and manages the enterprise. All community members are employed by the project using a rotation system, and profits are allocated to community projects. The second type of CBE enterprise involves family or group initiatives within communities. This is based on voluntary participation. The third type of CBE is a joint venture between a community, or family and an outside business partner."

This definition provides REAP researchers with a flexible set of scenarios to use in the research process, but could easily be narrowed down to one project definition by the lead investigators for future REAP investigations.

3. COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT MODELS AND PROCEDURES

Involvement by community residents is critical when starting or promoting conservation initiatives, such as ecotourism. It is well-documented by numerous studies that, without community support, conservation of natural areas and wild places is hindered and made into a contentious process. (Maikhuri, *et.al.* 2000, IUCN/UNEP/WWF 1991, Ascher 1995, Hart and Castro 2000, Wells and Brandon 1992). It is the aim of ecotourism to improve the lives of the local residents and conserve local natural resources and wild places.

In developing the REAP tool as a unique process, researchers reviewed current methods for assessing community attitudes and readiness for ecotourism. These included examining literature on procedures used in other disciplines, such as community forestry, agroforestry, agriculture, natural resource management. The research team also interviewed representatives of international NGOs and reviewed documents of government agencies (Fisher 1995, Götmark, *et. al.* 2000, Kraft and Penberthy 2000). Most of the procedures investigated employ *qualitative* methods of inquiry, involving some form of Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) or Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodology (Chambers 1994; Table 1).

Table 1. Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)
Since the 1980s, RRA, and more recently PRA, have come into their own recognition as rigorous appraisal techniques, approved by both academics and agencies (Chambers 1995). They have been used in many different rural contexts - community forestry, irrigation rights, agriculture, ecotourism, land use and tenure, and more. Developed as a tool to provide timely, accurate, and less-costly information than the prevalent "rural development tourism" method - "the brief rural visit by the urban-based professional" - RRA and its descendent, PRA, offer a middle-of-the-road alternative between "quick and dirty" and "long and accurate" methodologies (Chambers 1995:521).
<p>RRA and PRA are both about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ "Optimizing tradeoffs... It relates the costs of collection and learning to tradeoffs between the quantity, relevance, timeliness, truth, and actual beneficial use of information, ❖ Offsetting biases... The principle here is bias reversal, deliberate action to gain an unhurried, balanced, and representative view - to see and learn about what is usually out of sight or not mentioned, ❖ Triangulating ... means using more than one method or source (often three) for the same information," [including sampling people from a wide range of opinions on a subject, using more than one researcher with different backgrounds, and using different research methods], ❖ Learning directly from and with rural people, and ❖ Learning rapidly and progressively...-- [employing] conscious exploration; making judgments and decisions about what to do next on the basis of what has been discovered so far, not according to a blueprint, but as an adaptive learning process" (Chambers 1995:522-523).
PRA increases the participation of rural people by including them in determining the methods, questions, analysis, and use of the data, where local people, not outsiders, are owners of the process and information.

The method used in REAP incorporates elements of both RRA and PRA, as detailed in Section 5, REAP Model Process, Timeline, and Benefits. REAP employs community participation, and it can be initiated by the community and/or by outside interests. REAP is a tool for international application, and can be used with any culture, geographical location, political structure, and level of ecotourism activity. However, it must be tailored to each country and culture and to each site. This is the beauty of qualitative methods; they are flexible and all-encompassing. "Because each qualitative study is

unique, the analytical approach used will be unique. Because qualitative inquiry depends, at every stage, on the skills, training, insights, and capabilities of the researcher, qualitative analysis ultimately depends on the analytical intellect and style of the analyst. The human factor is the great strength and the fundamental weakness of qualitative inquiry and analysis" (Patton 1990:372).

In examining published and unpublished techniques of assessing communities for ecotourism viability, several approaches emerged, which we would like to highlight here. Each in its own way has developed procedures to address what a community (or multiple communities) requires to identify, evaluate, and implement successful community-based ecotourism (CBE) operations. A short discussion on these foundation methodologies will help the reader to understand the evolution of REAP. Five ways of examining CBE issues are summarized here.

3.1 Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT)

Pro-poor tourism was initiated to bring to the forefront of the development arena a realization, and a methodology, that tourism can be used to specifically benefit the ‘poor’ – those in poverty. Impacts of various tourism initiatives on the poor are assessed, with the goal of poverty reduction, promoting transparent and shared information.

“Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) is tourism that results in increased net benefits for poor people. PPT is not a specific product or niche sector but an approach to tourism development and management. It enhances the linkages between tourism businesses and poor people, so that tourism's contribution to poverty reduction is increased and poor people are able to participate more effectively in product development” (PPT 2003).

The principles of PPT are to not only bring increased net benefits to the poor, but also to support infrastructure development of the tourism industry as a whole, in order to sustain PPT strategies. PPT can be aimed at all tourism markets, not just ecotourism or community-based tourism (CBT). It draws from other disciplines as examples of how to benefit the poor, and encourages realism of expectations in planning and development.

It is a method and a mindset that can be implemented in a variety of tourism projects. However, PPT focuses mainly on the South, where most poor people live.

A forerunner of PPT is Sustainable Livelihoods (SL). SL is a strategy that is particularly interested in eliminating poverty, and involving poor people, as well as the more affluent, in their assessments. SL framework assesses the impacts of tourism on 1) household assets, 2) other household activities, 3) household goals, and on people's capacity to influence external policies (Ashley 2000:13).

A list and thorough discussion of the negative and positive impacts of tourism on these areas (and their sub-areas) are presented. Ashley discusses these issues in regard to several Namibian case studies, and how people can use these data to create SLs. Results showed a wide range of indirect impacts and a wide range of benefits on livelihoods

which needed to be considered. Ultimately, this approach is about creating a greater "understanding of why local residents have particular concerns and recognition of the value of systems that incorporate local views into planning decisions" (Ashley 2000:29).

3.2 Tourism in Technical Co-operation (TC).

The German Development Cooperation (GTZ) has produced a tourism guide to assist rural development personnel in evaluating the potential of sustainable tourism to support biodiversity preservation and research (Steck, *et. al.* 1999).

TC advocates the use of Rapid Appraisal (RA) to develop a pre-feasibility-analysis, "to appraise the feasibility, justifiability and sensibility of tourism as a project component" (*ibid.*:39). They examine who stakeholders are, including suppliers and consumers, what effects tourism has on income and jobs, and look at the different kinds of tourism in rural areas. Key questions asked in the RA revolve around goals and interests, feasibility, compatibility, and benefits (*ibid.*:39). The document contains lists of useful questions to consider and include in studies.

After conducting and consolidating a RA, the TC project then conducts an in-depth feasibility study to determine "options for action in the shape of scenarios," "capacities of the target groups and the other stakeholders," options to partner with technical and financial personnel, and how to pass on the project to a "co-operative or implementing organization" (*ibid.*:55).

TC examines: 1) when and how communities need to be involved in these processes, 2) whether tourism is compatible with cultural or social traditions, 3) benefits for stakeholders, 4) how the project supports nature conservation, 5) its influence on policy, and 6) looks at the regional rural development, training, and private sector co-operation (*ibid.*: 76-97).

This TC guide is excellent at illustrating (literally and figuratively) the various connections that not only different disciplines may play in the role of assessing and developing rural tourism, but also in providing evocative questions for participatory groups to consider when examining these issues. They continually refer back to previous chapters and evaluations, showing how important an iterative process can be.

3.3 Montana State University Extension Service.

Community Tourism Assessment Handbook by the Montana State University, in conjunction with Oregon State University, has developed a "self-administering" program for communities to take a good look at themselves and decide "Is tourism for us?" (Brass 1997). This is a highly useful document, because it lays out nine steps for a rural community to weigh the costs (social, economic, and environmental) and benefits (same) of potential tourism ventures.

These nine steps are to be completed in an eight-month period. They are: 1) Community Organization - requires a team of community volunteers to create a Committee to carry out this eight-month process; 2) Current Visitor and Economic Profile - assess what is there now and its impacts on residents; 3) Resident Attitude Survey - what people think of tourism; 4) Visioning and Goal Setting - Where does the community want to go in future? 5) Tourism Marketing Basics, studying current market trends and what the community has to offer; 6) Attraction and Facility Inventory - all attractions and tourism facilities are rated to understand what tourists want; 7) Potential Project Identification - where the community identifies short- and long-term projects; 8) Initial Project Scoping - where a task force creates a description of each priority project; and 9) Impact Analysis - to predict economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits.

3.4 Conservation NGOs

International conservation organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Conservation International (CI), are frequently in the position to use CBE as a method for preserving wildlife and wild lands. TNC's mission is "to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive" (TNC 2001a). CI's mission is to "conserve the Earth's living natural heritage, our global biodiversity, and to demonstrate that human societies are able to live harmoniously with nature" (CI 2001).

CI works in areas to conserve wildlife and habitat, and if a community is located near a protected area (PA) or some threatened species, then CI will get involved in the community to minimize the impacts on local people, and improve land-use practices (Sweeting, *et.al.* 1998-99).

CI's ecotourism programs are successful links to communities due to their trained field staff, who continually dialogue with the community, and understand expectations from the beginning, and change as necessary. When field staff do an ecotourism assessment, they also do an implementation plan. Elements of PRA/RRA are used as assessment tools, and SWOT analysis is one tool used (*pers. comm.*, Steve Edwards of CI, January 2001).

TNC's procedures for assessing whether a community should be involved in ecotourism falls under their Site Conservation Planning (SCP) process and is done by field staff living in the communities long-term (TNC 2001b). The SCP methodology involves a systematic approach to prioritize opportunities and abate threats linked to the "focal biodiversity target." The six core elements of this SCP framework are 1) conservation targets, 2) the human context, 3) stresses to the target, 4) sources generating the stress, 5) strategies to abate the stress, and 6) measures of strategy success. Within the human context, information on the local economy, social structure, and the community's use of and attitudes towards the natural resources and conservation targets are critical for developing conservation strategies within the community and to gain local support (TNC 2001b).

These five techniques are presently the most relevant rural tourism appraisal approaches located in the literature and among organizations which are presently implementing ecotourism as a sustainable development tool in the field.

4. CONSIDERING REAP

4.1 Description Of Scenarios Where Reap Can Be Applied

The REAP process may be applied in a variety of rural community settings, of various sizes, locations, with connections to local natural resources. How does one determine what kinds of situations would be appropriate for use of a REAP process? The criteria listed below in Table 2 provide a framework to assess the components possessed by a community, and to determine, based on the community's makeup, whether the community would benefit from ecotourism, utilizing the REAP tool.

This study was a pilot of the REAP model. The following community criteria (Table 2) were applied in this pilot. These criteria can be used to rate community readiness for ecotourism (see Appendix D), and to assess if REAP would be potentially beneficial for a selected community.

- ❖ Accessibility to airports – distance from community to local, regional, or national airport
- ❖ Accessibility to roads and waterways – distance from community to major roads, river or sea
- ❖ Existing tourism – amount of tourism as an established industry in the community site
- ❖ # of arrivals – amount of tourists coming to the community
- ❖ Geographic location – geographic location of community (coastal, mountain, rainforest, etc.)
- ❖ Dependence on natural resources – community's historical connection to or dependence on land or water
- ❖ Dependence on biodiversity – community's historical connection to or dependence on a large variety of plants and animals
- ❖ Cultural distinction – amount of distinct culture exhibited by community members: festivals, arts, and customs
- ❖ Population – size of community, by number of residents
- ❖ Average income – average income earned by community residents
- ❖ Local employment options – number of businesses in the community hiring local workers
- ❖ Ethnic diversity – number of different cultures in the community
- ❖ % Ethnicity in nation – the percentage of the population of this ethnic group compared to the total population of the nation. This is used to determine if the culture in the community is the same as a high % of the nation's population – its dominant culture, or it is a low % of the nation's population – minority culture.

Presented here, as generic examples, are five scenarios that illustrate good candidates for use of the REAP process (Brass 1997; Epler Wood, 1998).

Key for this chart ranges from High to Low compliance with the category.

Community Criteria	1. Belize	2. Rural USA	3. Amazon	4. Pacific Island	5. South Africa
Accessibility to airports	high: international and regional	medium: regional	low: local and jungle airport	medium: local and regional	high: international and regional
Accessibility to roads and waterways	medium: main hwy	high: state/county roads	medium: river access	medium: ferries, boats, and ships	high: regional
Existing tourism	high	medium	medium	high	high
# of arrivals	medium	medium	low	medium	high
Geographic location	coastal	all	interior rainforest	coastal, mountains	interior
Natural Resources as attractions	high: ridge to reef	high: ridge to ocean	high: tropical forests, river	high: island biodiversity	high: ridge to ocean
Dependence on natural resources	high: farming & fishing	high: mining, timber	high: hunting, gathering	high: farming & fishing	high: farming
Dependence on biodiversity	high	low	high	medium	low
Cultural distinction	high	high	high	high	high
Population	low: 600-1700	low	low	low	low
Average income	low	low	low	low	low
Local employment options	low	low	low	low	low
Ethnic diversity	high	low	low	medium	medium
% Ethnicity in nation	low	high or low	high	high	high

4.1.1 The Belizean REAP study

Belize has one international and several regional airports. The three villages studied (Placencia, Seine Bight, and Hopkins) are fairly accessible by being near a main highway and/or by having their own small airport. There is a relatively well-established tourism industry and a growing number of arrivals. All three communities are rural farming and fishing villages on the coast, with a high dependence on the natural resources. There are many wild lands and natural resources used as natural attractions, resulting in well-established tourism. Belize is a multi-cultural country, with Garifuna, Creole, Mayan, and Caucasian peoples in the three villages studied. Income is low, with local employment options better in Placencia, low in Seine Bight, low in Hopkins. Village populations range between 600 to 1700 people.

4.1.2 Rural USA community

Most rural communities in the USA that would benefit from REAP are those that are in economic decline or transition, based on their high dependence on extraction of natural resources, such as mining, grazing or timber. However, they still have a high amount of natural resources available as tourism attractions. Local employment options would typically be low. These communities tend to be distant from major metropolitan areas, but easily accessible by state/county roads. They have medium tourism to date, and may or may not be close to established tourism areas. Most businesses would be home-based, and general average income is low. These communities would be trying to maintain some kind of traditional culture/values in the face of future large development. Ethnic diversity is low, but the percentage of ethnicity compared to nation could be high or low, depending on whether these are mainstream or indigenous communities.

4.1.3 Amazon community

These communities are located in remote jungle areas, accessible only to a jungle airport usually by hours of travel by boat. There is a moderate amount of existing tourism as a jungle industry, but visitation is low. These communities are highly dependent on natural resources and biodiversity, with many natural resources as attractions. Their distinct cultural values are high, and these communities are usually in transition from a hunting/gathering society (non-cash economy) to a more Northern economic system, with growing cash needs. Most people are not employed, per se, and average income is low. The ethnic diversity in these communities is low, but the percentage of the population of this ethnic group in the nation may be high.

4.1.4 Pacific island community

These communities would have medium accessibility to a gateway and be only accessible by a small airport or ship. Tourism is well-established in these islands, due to the abundance of natural resources as tourism attractions, and as a result, the number of tourists is growing. Communities are coastal or mountainous, and as fishing or agricultural communities, they would be highly dependent on natural resources, with a medium dependence on biodiversity. Cultural values are high, income is low, with economic options low. Ethnic diversity is medium, however, as most of these local ethnic groups are in control of the government, the ethnic percentage in the population is high.

4.1.5 South African community

These are rural farming communities, with a high dependence on natural resources, but low dependence on biodiversity. Accessibility to major airports is high, and to roads is high. There is a high amount of existing tourism, due to the high amount of natural resource diversity, with a well-established number of arrivals. Cultural values are high, population is low, employment options are low, and average income is low. The ethnic

diversity in a village is medium, but the percentage of this ethnic group in the nation is high.

4.2 Description Of Partnerships Needed For Use Of Reap

The REAP Model depends on partnerships. The partnership organizations should bring to the table the following qualities, as well as employ individuals with the expertise and experiences listed above for community researchers.

- ❖ management capabilities
- ❖ national, state, or region-based
- ❖ conservation expertise/experience
- ❖ ecotourism expertise/experience
- ❖ fiscal responsibility
- ❖ paid staff available with expertise
- ❖ community expertise/experience

If the funding institution/organization/agency does not have available in its staff all the above qualities, then it should partner with a national or state institution which has complementary qualities.

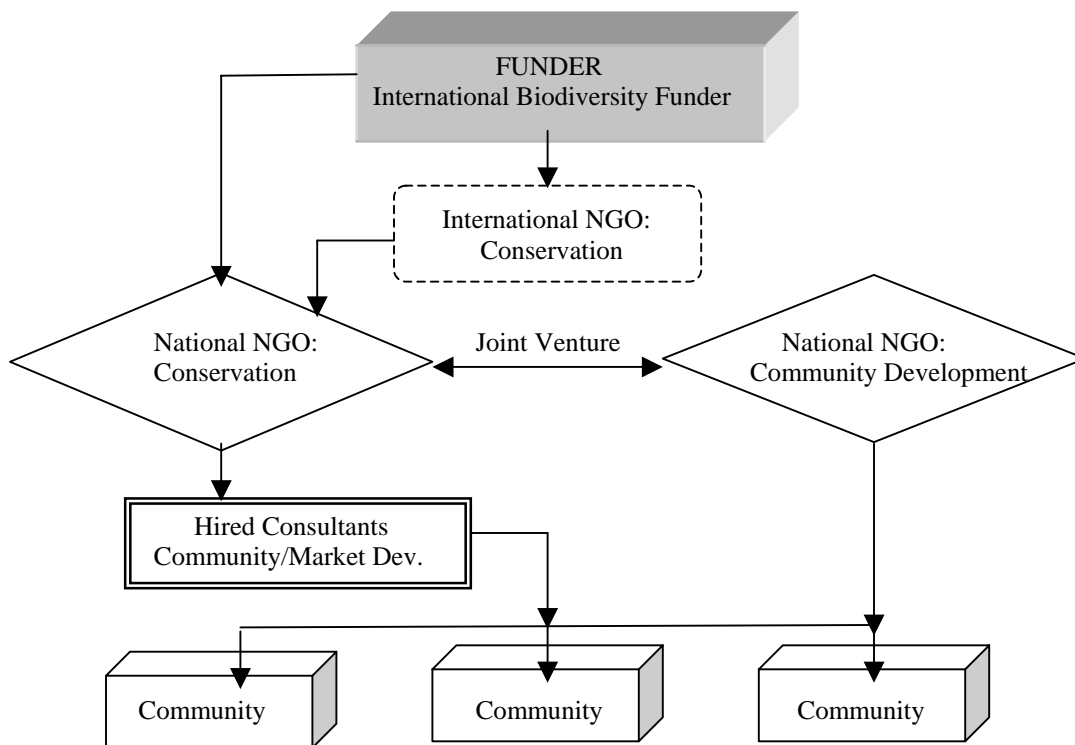
The following are two types of partnership scenarios for the REAP model based on existing field models:

4.2.1 Conservation/NGO Model

In this scenario, the project money comes from an International Biodiversity Funder. . This funder may partner with an international conservation NGO. The local partner is a national conservation NGO, which has expertise in local conservation issues, but may or may not have expertise in community development or community-based ecotourism.

The national NGO may hire community development consultants to perform the REAP or it may undertake the project with another national NGO specializing in community development. This development NGO would then perform REAP in the communities. One project coordinator for the project is important, with duties of overseeing the research teams.

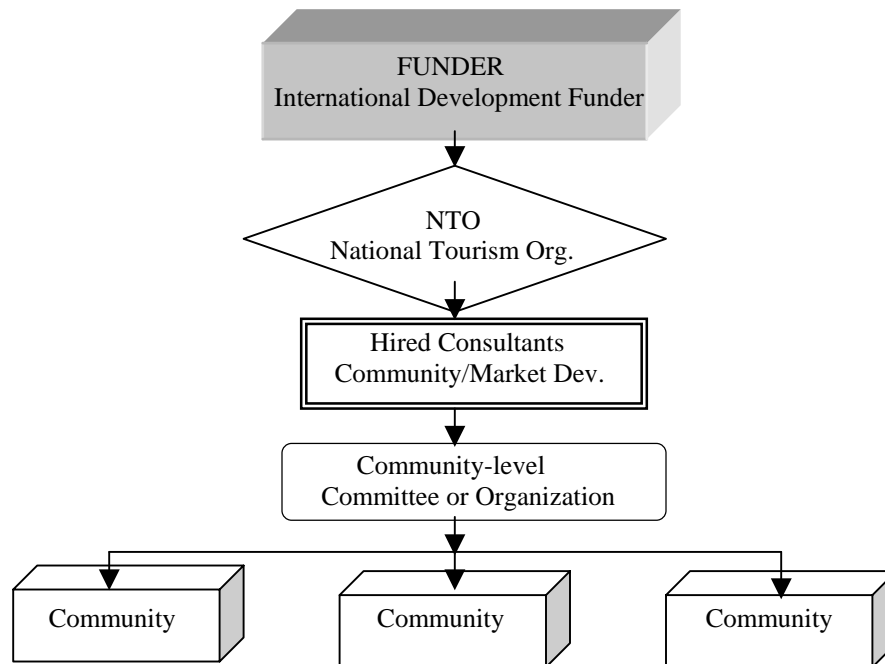
Figure A: Conservation/NGO Model



4.2.2 Government Agency/Industry Association Model

This scenario starts with the project money coming from an international development funder that works with governments. These monies often come as loans. The funder would partner with the National Tourism Organization (NTO). This NTO may hire temporary foreign or local experts in community/rural development, who then partner and interface with a community-level committees or organizations. The community bodies are the executing bodies for long-term implementation of projects to be recommended by REAP. A project coordinator from the NTO and/or Industry Association is important, with duties of overseeing the research teams.

Figure B: Government Agency/Industry Association Model



5. REAP MODEL PROCESS, TIMELINE, AND BENEFITS

The REAP Model Process is generically projected to be completed over a nine-month period. This timeframe, depending on site-specific circumstances, could be shortened or lengthened. Because there are two teams involved in the REAP process, a Community Team and a Market Team, the two team’s timelines are clearly delineated in Table 3 showing how they line-up together over the life of the project. REAP is a five-phase process, and Table 3 provides recommended action steps for each of the five phases. .

It is recommended that the Community Team’s data collection and analysis are completed prior to the Market Team’s data collection, hence the added two-months of preliminary research shown at the beginning of the Market Team process (months 2 and 3). Consequently, the Community Team has a two-month hiatus after Phase Three, while waiting for the Market Team to finish their data analysis, in preparation to collaborate jointly in Phase Four and Phase Five on the Data Presentation and writing of the Guide.

The timeline for the completed REAP project here is suggested to be 9 months. However, this timeframe could be increased or decreased due to local circumstances and the stakeholders involved. A 3 to 4 month condensed version of REAP could be possible, given the right circumstances.

- ❖ PHASE ONE: Preliminary Research,
- ❖ PHASE TWO: Data Collection,
- ❖ PHASE THREE: Data Analysis,
- ❖ PHASE FOUR: Data Report/Presentation, and
- ❖ PHASE FIVE: Final Report.

Table 3. REAP Model Process Action Steps	
COMMUNITY TEAM PROCESS	MARKET TEAM PROCESS
PHASE ONE	PHASE ONE
Month 1: Preliminary Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review community selection criteria • Review literature and tourism collateral material • Identify boundaries for community study • Score communities based on selected criteria • Identify interview procedures and target groups • Identify and develop survey tools 	Month 1: Preliminary Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review national tourism market data • Review literature and tourism collateral material • Wait on selection of community(ies) to proceed further
PHASE TWO	
Month 2: Data Collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together, community and market teams meet with local partners and contacts to stimulate discussion on community selection • Together, community and market teams consolidate input and final community selection • Visit communities and seek their cooperation • Collect data using established methods 	Month 2: Preliminary Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait on community data to proceed further

PHASE THREE	
<p style="text-align: center;">Month 3: Data Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize survey responses/determine categories • Prepare SWOT analysis • Present SWOT & Summary to local communities • Exchange data with marketing team • Build linkages and market connections 	<p style="text-align: center;">Month 3: Preliminary Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and develop survey tools • Train surveyor team members • Wait on community analysis to proceed further
PHASE TWO	
<p style="text-align: center;">Month 4: No Activity – wait on marketing team results</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Month 4 : Data Collection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise survey tools to reflect community SWOT data • Collect data using survey tools for community demand survey national or regional supply survey, national or regional demand survey
PHASE THREE	
<p style="text-align: center;">Month 5: No Activity – wait on marketing team results</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Month 5: Data Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze data
COMMUNITY TEAM PROCESS	MARKET TEAM PROCESS
PHASE FOUR	
<p style="text-align: center;">Month 6: Data Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate SWOT data for formal presentation • Develop formal presentation of results 	<p style="text-align: center;">Month 6: Data Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate data for formal presentation • Develop formal presentation of results
<p style="text-align: center;">Month 7: Data Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together, community and market teams conduct local, national, and international workshops to review data presented and to receive input and recommendations for follow-up (i.e. "next steps/action plans") 	
PHASE FIVE	
<p style="text-align: center;">Months 8: Final Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate workshop responses into final document 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Months 9: Final Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edit final report by Project Coordinator • Publish Final Report 	

Coordination and collaboration of the two teams is necessary for a successful outcome, and the work of the two teams must be coordinated and complimentary.

The main goals of the community research portion of REAP are to assess 1) community attitudes towards conservation, and 2) community readiness for tourism. The main goals of the market research portion of REAP are to assess the marketability of community ecotourism attractions by 1) assessing current tourism demand at both the community and regional/national levels, and 2) identifying future markets of potential community tourism clients and expectations.

When combined, there should emerge a profile of both the community and its potential clients, with ways in which the community can better attract its clients and determine its future.

5.1 Phase One: Preliminary Research

Research Decisions in Preliminary Research:

Choices made during the preliminary research stage should be based on the expertise of the community research team and their understanding of CBE. Once the selection criteria has been established, it is important to review any other information, studies or material available on the area/country of study or other related materials that discusses CBE worldwide. Review of other materials helps to put the proposed work in context. Review of maps and guides helps to provide a sense of place in relationship to the natural resources. An understanding of governmental and ecological boundaries as well as political structure helps to determine where the community and national authorities are. This information is valuable in determining the type of interviewing tools that would be most appropriate.

The first phase allows community and market researchers to familiarize themselves with the country of study (even if they are nationals). Researchers can review national and international documents, publications, and similar studies on tourism and community development that may influence and assist the project, and examine which communities may be good candidates for REAP (if these communities are not identified previously). Additionally, local, regional, and national tourism trends, current market supply and demand for ecotourism, and similar studies on tourism and community markets can be identified and studied. At this stage, survey tools are also developed and target group participants are identified, both from within the community and outside the community. The market tools are developed only after the specific community under study has been identified and confirmed.

5.1.1 Literature review

Focusing on the country and its tourism assets, it is useful to review travel guidebooks, maps, promotional brochures, geographical and political regions, cultural diversity, population centers, and rural economic industries. What are the attractions for ecotourists to this country, and to which areas do they and would they go? Are there communities near protected areas (PA) that are not benefiting from the PA? Are there previous studies in any of these areas that address PA management, ecotourism development, forestry/fishery practices, particularly related to participatory methods (Chambers 1995, Pretty 1994, Steck 1999)? National and regional tourism plans and market analysis are reviewed to gain a sense of national, regional, and local markets and tourist profiles.

5.1.2 Market data review

Ecotourism market research is an evolving field. In the 1990s, many early studies indicated an enormous interest in ecotourism, and this enthusiasm translated into the development of community ecotourism projects that failed due to a lack of genuine market interest. Sample sizes for many studies were often inadequate, and most researchers agree estimates of the market size for ecotourism in the 1990s were higher than what was evidenced in the marketplace. The definition of ecotourism has also varied greatly in each study, making it highly difficult to make comparisons between studies. There has never been an international study devoted to investigating what segment of the market might be interested in a community ecotourism experience. This makes it vitally important to properly investigate, with original research if possible, the market for community based ecotourism projects particularly if a significant development agency investment is to be made. While existing literature is not entirely reliable, there are studies well worth referencing and reviewing before undertaking a REAP study.

Table 4. Ecotourism Traveler Profiles			
	N. American Experienced	Australian	U.K. Experienced
	N= 424		N=379
Household Income	No info	Higher Incomes	13% < 10,000 lbs
			15% 10-15,000
			22% 15-20,000
			17% 20-25,000
			12% 25-30,000
			21% > 30,000
Age	2% 18-24	36% 20-29	7% 17-24
	20% 25-34	23% 30-39	15% 25-34
	28% 35-44	27% 50+	27% 35-44
	28% 45-54		24% 45-54
	23% 55+		18% 55+
Education	82% college graduates	More highly educated	38% first degree
	14% some college		25% secondary education
	4% high school		23% post graduate education
	1% some high school		15% high school
Party Composition	61% couples	30% couples	66% one
	26% families with children	14% family and friends	18% two
	7% alone	45% alone	9% three
			4% four
			3% other
From P.A. Wight, Ecotourists: Not a Homogenous Market Segment			
2001 The Encyclopedia of Ecotourism, CAB International, ed. D.B. Weaver			

Table 4 is drawn from similar more elaborate table created by Pam A. Wight (2001) who carefully analyzed each source of data in her article. Only the more serious experienced ecotourism populations are included in the table presented here, as a way of presenting a pool of data that describes experienced travelers. There is good reason to believe that more experienced travelers may be more open to staying at community facilities. For example, a survey by The Nature Conservancy in the late 1990s (Drumm 2000), showed that the experienced travelers taking part in TNC-organized tours considered “local community benefits” as their second highest priority when taking a tour.

Other important characteristics that came out of Wight’s and other reviews of ecotourism markets are:

Gender: In Australia 55% of ecotourists are women, which Wight reasons could relate to women’s increasing incomes and independence, predicting that this could become a trend worldwide. In North America, the study referenced in Table 4 of experienced ecotourists (HLA/ARA 1994) shows that genders break down by activity, with males partaking of more adventure style activities, females more hiking and interpretive programs. It is interesting to note 70% of the respondents in the TNC study (Drumm 2000) were female. Other studies, such as the large statistically rigorous Cultural Creatives studies of North American populations (Ray and Anderson 2000), which explore the values of their respondents, show that women are 60% of the population that feel ethically motivated to buy social and environmentally responsible products. Given that community ecotourism is a socially responsible product, the female market will be highly important to community facilities. But Wight notes that a key issue for women travelers is a sense of security, which is often achieved through group travel. Community ecotourism facilities, not serviced by tour operators, will have to tailor their facilities to this need, perhaps by providing programs that attract women in groups to explore a variety of social and environmental topics.

Expenditures: There is reason to believe that ecotourists will spend more for a trip, but this relates directly to the distance traveled and the activity offered (e.g. N. American travelers will pay more to go to a Pacific Island to scuba dive than to Yosemite National Park to hike). What Wight concludes is that above all ecotourists are experienced travelers who are paying for quality and personalized service, such as well-trained guides. Community ecotourism offers a bargain experience, often with lower quality service, usually with less-experienced guides, but frequently with very hospitable, personalized service. It will be wise for community facilities to stress their strength -- plenty of warm, personal attention for each guest.

Activities: Activity preferences are very culturally based. In Table 5, taken from Wight (2001), observation of nature with knowledgeable guides appears as the most requested option in the U.K survey, while wildlife viewing for North American is only 15% of the U.S. audience, whom largely opt for active options such as hiking and cycling first. In a recent study of German ecotourists (WTO 2002) researchers estimated that about 1/3 of Germans are keen enough about wildlife watching to choose their travel destination according to what wildlife and nature they will be able to view.

Table 5. Ecotourist Activity Preferences			
	N. American Experienced	Australia nature-based	U.K. frequent ecotourists
	n= 424	International visitors	N= 379
Activity preferences	Hiking 60%	National parks 50%	Educational guided tours 72%
	Rafting 25%	Bushwalking 19%	Admiring nature 72%
	cycling 25%	Scuba/snorkeling 13%	Observing animals 68%
	Camping 21%	Aboriginal studies 11%	Bushwalking 54%
	Wildlife viewing 15%	Outback safari tours 3%	Adventure tours 46%
	Scenery mountain/ocean 13%		Nature photography 45%
	Canoeing 13%		Observing flowers 40%
	Kayaking 13%		Snorkelling 38%
	Local cultures 12%		Birdwatching 35%
			Whale-watching 31%
			Horse-riding 22%
			Scuba-diving 22%

Accommodations: Wight (2001) states that nature-based travelers are 4 times more likely to use “backpacker accommodation or to go camping.” However, luxury comfort levels were requested by over half of North American and U.K ecotravelers, with about one-third suggesting they prefer budget accommodations. In the TNC study (Drumm 2000), over 50% of TNC travelers preferred “rustic” (shared bath no electricity) or “simple” (double rooms, electricity, made beds) accommodations. These statistics indicate an opportunity for simple community-based facilities. What appears to be the case is that a significant portion of ecotourists are willing to travel simply, but only if other needs are well met, such as good quality service, interesting activities, and well-trained guides.

Independent vs. Group Travel: Few studies in the 1990s looked at what percentage of the ecotourism market travels independently. Nearly all studies looked at group tours which gave a skewed impression of the marketplace. Interestingly, Lew (1998) demonstrates that there is a large increase in independent travel in the Asia-Pacific region. In a private study of Belize, over 50% of North Americans were booking independently either by phone or via the Internet (*pers. comm.*, Dr. Vincent Palacio 2001). Lew (1998) predicts that the growing independent market will generate a wide variety of new ecotourism products more suited to independent travelers. Given the ecotourist’s predilection for rustic budget accommodations, and the price advantages of community facilities, this indicates a growing opportunity for community-based ecotourism facilities. Palacio (2001) confirms that after one trip to Belize, experienced travelers are 4 times more likely to consider a community-based facility.

Motivations: No statistically valid studies have ever looked at what motivates ecotourists, and if social responsibility or environmental values are an important criteria when selecting a destination. This lack of values research in the ecotourism field leaves a vast canyon of knowledge to work with when it comes to understanding the motivations of ecotourism travelers. The Cultural Creatives research (Ray and Anderson 2000) gives the most important data available on the values of 50 million Americans, whom they have identified as a U.S. subculture dubbed the Cultural Creatives. This research demonstrates that this subculture agrees most strongly with the following six values/beliefs:

❖ Want to rebuild neighborhoods/communities	92%
❖ Fear violence against women and children	89%
❖ Like what is foreign and exotic	85%
❖ See nature as sacred	85%
❖ Hold general pro-environmental values	82%
❖ Believe in ecological sustainability	82%

This book provides a wealth of information on what motivates this subculture, and it is interesting to note that the authors state that “ecotourism is typical of industries done by Cultural Creatives for Cultural Creatives.” The Cultural Creatives research indicates that community based facilities need to present themselves as safe, community-oriented, with the opportunity for community interactions that will help visitors to better understand traditional culture and sacred understandings of nature.

Future research on community-based ecotourism facilities and projects will be needed to tell community project leaders what segments of the population in global markets are interested in community based ecotourism. The research presented here suggests that the market is real, but still largely unrealized. It is important to note that the Cultural Creatives research strongly states that this subculture is not defined by one demographic profile. They find a sub-culture motivated by environmental and sustainability values, interested in foreign and exotic places, in all age and income groups in the U.S. Early research suggests this sub-culture is across the world – defined largely by a higher level of education and involvement in social, spiritual, or creative work.

Evidence is growing that independent travel in ecotourism is 50% of the market and growing. Independent travelers who visit a destination more than once are much more likely to choose a community facility on return visits. These trends appear to be good for community based facilities. Trends not as favorable for community facilities are the overriding interest in educational programming delivered by highly trained guides with good quality service. Tours tend to fill this need, but it is a well known fact in the trade that few tour operators book community facilities. The reason for this is that small community facilities are less adept at providing consistent quality service, something a tour operator must guarantee.

There are many ways to further investigate how to attract ecotourists to community projects, but the REAP project has sought to set the stage, by creating a methodology that ensures community readiness is there and that market data will support initiatives in future.

5.1.3 Community selection process

Identify governmental (district or states) and ecological (coastal or mountainous) boundaries for the study. Identify and score possible communities for study based on selected criteria below, additionally listing size of community, population, and urban versus rural parameters (Ite 1996). Using preliminary results, rank communities by highest score (Weller and Romney 1988). This ranking provides a basis for discussion with local counterparts about potential community selection (See Score Sheet in Appendix D).

Selection criteria:

- ❖ Degree of community organizational structure (leadership skills, human resources, local NGO's)
- ❖ Proximity to protected area/natural attractions (list of attractions available for day trips)
- ❖ Historical/present dependence of community on protected area resources (primary economic activity or how people earn a living)
- ❖ Degree of existing Ecotourism activity (number of tourism businesses, services and amenities)
- ❖ Accessibility/Transport (physical infrastructure, public facilities)
- ❖ Ethnic Make-up (list of diverse cultures)
- ❖ Location in country (governmental or ecological boundaries)

5.1.4 Survey tools

Examine other surveys to help develop a survey tool (Kempton, *et. al.* 1995, Brass 1997). What are the main objectives? What information are you seeking? What types of questions will get at the core of the information and allow community residents to feel comfortable, open and unthreatened. Develop sample questionnaires (Bernard 1995).

Several types of interview procedures can be used. a) key informant interviews, b) focal group meetings, c) semi-structured interviews with individuals in involved tourism establishments, d) open village meetings, and e) informal discussions (Bernard 1995, Chambers 1995).

In addition to the community surveys, one or more marketing surveys can be conducted. These are to compliment the community site selected, in order to determine which clients frequent this community, what they are looking for, and how the community could provide those services which would enhance visitor experiences.

Typically, the marketing surveys would include:

- ❖ Community demand survey – this survey would address which tourists are coming to the community under study and why. It catalogs their demands, and assesses whether the community has the resources to provide those demands, and how they can be achieved.
- ❖ Community supply survey – this survey addresses what tour operators, hoteliers, restaurants, etc. are available in the community, and what the ecotourism attractions are in that community. Also, what are competing attractions in the region to the community under study? What are the “official” numbers of beds, etc. in the community and/or region?
- ❖ Regional/National demand survey – this demand survey could be conducted in both high and low season, but perhaps would only need its high season component. National/regional demand surveys can address who comes to the region and why, and if tourists would go to the community under study or not.

Various parts of the surveys are collected by the community research team, and other parts by the marketing team. The data collection is best organized so as to not duplicate interviews with community, industry, and ministerial personnel, but to gather all relevant data from one interview.

5.1.5 Target groups

Identify individuals and target groups, to interview both outside and within the selected community. The target groups listed below are generic. (Australian Heritage Commission 2000, Johnson 1990, Brass 1997, Kempton, *et al.* 1995).

Target Groups outside the community:

- ❖ Government leaders and administrators
- ❖ Government agencies
- ❖ Non-government agencies that work specifically with communities
- ❖ Local funding institutions traditional and non-traditional
- ❖ International funding agencies
- ❖ Tourism Organizations/Associations
- ❖ Managers of key attractions
- ❖ Tour Operators
- ❖ Ecotourists

Target Groups within the community:

- ❖ Tourism organizations/associations
- ❖ Community groups/NGO's
- ❖ Chambers of commerce
- ❖ Local government leaders

- ❖ Education & religious leaders
- ❖ Selected owners/operators of tourism businesses
- ❖ Ecotourists

5.2 Phase Two: Data Collection

Research Decisions Data Collection:

Successful data collection is strongly based on researchers achieving rapport with community members. There must be a buy-in from community members that this information will be of value to them. Much research time is spent getting to know the people in the communities and other organizations that provide services to the community. Creating an on-going dialogue with participants is critical. Expertise of the researchers is important in identifying community leaders and decisions makers.

Data collection involves two parts: first, gathering information and opinions on which communities to study (or on the selected community, if one is already chosen), and second, collecting the actual REAP data in each of those communities. It is recommended that even if the communities of study are known prior to beginning the REAP project, that meetings be held with the various NGO, government, agency, and private sector stakeholders to obtain their input into the project.

5.2.1 Meetings

Getting off on the best foot from the beginning can depend on building relationships with all of the partners involved, especially the local NGO partner. This can be accomplished through preliminary meetings, open communications, exchange of ideas and establishing expectation parameters. With the NGO partners' collaboration, the teams should prepare a list of contacts (NGOs, Government, Development Agencies etc.) for preliminary discussions and introductions. Following the lead of the local partner, meetings should be set up to interact with the list of contacts. Attending these meetings with the local partner can be a good local introduction for the research team

5.2.2 Select communities

After the meetings have concluded, the partners should review, consolidate, evaluate data collected during meetings incorporating local input, and make final selection of communities to study. This process should provide good insight on national and local priorities and areas of support.

Once potential communities have been identified, the research team should make contact with communities by a preliminary visit to explain the study and ask their cooperation to participate.

5.2.3 *Select informants*

Participation by community informants can vary in form and intensity. Steck, *et. al.* (1999:78) illustrate participatory stages ranging from: "1) decisions are made by others, 2) passive reception of benefits, 3) implement plans designed by others, 4) are being surveyed, 5) plan and evaluate their own solutions and implement them, 6) make their own decisions."

Due to the nature of the REAP process, as a combination of RRA and PRA techniques, the amount of participation from stakeholders will vary. If the REAP is initiated by a partner community/national NGOs, then the participatory level of members may be quite high - they may conduct the REAP process totally with in-country and local personnel. Local communities can come together and plan their own "REAP" process, of evaluation, goal setting, marketing and attraction inventory, impact analysis, etc. to arrive at "next steps/action plans," creating a fully participatory model. If the process is initiated more through outside agencies, using consultants, the REAP process could be less participatory. The key to success of REAP is selecting informants who can truly participate by providing quality information, and then for researchers to involve the community in review of project data for accuracy and prioritization.

Once communities have been identified, preliminary research can help to identify and contact persons in community to interview. "Ethnography relies on a few key informants rather than on a representative sample [of the community]. An important questions for ethnography then, is: Are a few informants really capable of providing adequate information about a culture? The answer is: Yes, but it depends on two things: choosing good informants and asking them things they know about. In other words, we must select informants for their competence rather than just for their representativeness" (Bernard 1995:167). Examples of key community informants: local leader, teacher, industry owners, employers, employees, tourism industry owners, politicians.

Using the survey tools, conduct key informant interviews, focal group discussions, informal discussions, and structured interviews targeting private sector and tourism industry participants. The technique of "snowball sampling" (referrals from one contact to another) can be helpful in identifying additional people to participate in interviews (Bernard 1995:97-98).

5.2.4 *Training of assistants*

Data collection can be facilitated by using trained assistants. The training can be relatively simple through brief orientations and role-playing. Assistants can be colleagues, university students, or even youth of community members, depending on the type of information that is to be collected.

For validity, sample and test interviews can be conducted to assure accuracy between researchers. Allow enough time in this process to identify, gather, and train assistants before the beginning date of collection.

5.2.5. Other components of data collection

The timeline for in-community data collection and data analysis should be long enough to get at the core issues expressed by the people and be able to reflect and express a preliminary understanding of the community under study (may be less than two months). Each case is different and the time needed to achieve this understanding will vary. Some considerations include the population of the community, the size (in area, # of house, etc.) of the community, and the number of individuals/focal groups/organizations to be included in the study.

Uncovering information can include many creative methods, but the most fundamental place to begin, while in the community is to identify meetings that are scheduled and seek permission to attend i.e., village council meeting, tour guide association meeting, parent teacher association, planning for community events, etc.

Because the researcher is trying to learn as much as possible in a short period, supportive and collaborative data/materials should be collected wherever possible (Patton 1990). [Do this throughout the study.] Building rapport and getting to know the people means connecting with the activities and issues that are important to them. Choose to stay in local accommodations within the village whenever possible. Use local amenities and services whenever possible. Participate in local events and activities that are taking place. Experience the local attractions and areas that are promoted.

To get a total view when possible, it is also recommended to visit and interview other communities partaking of the same natural resources for economic benefit as the community under study in order to provide perspective and inform your conclusions with comparative/collaborative data.

Once rapport and confidence is established and adequate information is on hand common threads and concerns will emerge. At this time, community comments should be collected. Be certain information and project updates are regularly exchanged with the market team.

5.3 Phase Three: Data Analysis

The moment you cease observing, pack your bags, and leave the field you will get a remarkably clear insight about that one critical activity you should have observed but didn't.

The moment you turn off the tape recorder, say good-bye, and leave the interview, it will become immediately clear to you what perfect question you should have asked to tie the whole thing together but didn't.

*The moment you begin data analysis it will become perfectly clear to you that you're missing the most important pieces of information and that without those pieces of information there is absolutely no hope of making any sense out of what you have.
The complete analysis isn't.*

Analysis finally makes clear to researchers what would have been most important to study, if only they had known beforehand.

Evaluation reports finally make clear to decision makers what they had really wanted to know but couldn't articulate at the time.

Analysis brings moments of terror that there's nothing there and times of exhilaration from the clarity of discovering ultimate truth. In between are long periods of hard work, deep thinking, and weight-lifting volumes of material.

- From Halcolm's Laws of Evaluation Research á la Murphy (Patton 1990:371).

5.3.1 Organization of data

Preliminary analysis of data collected is best done while still in country (Patton 1990). This helps to identify trends, coordinate results from other members of the research team, and collaborate with marketing team. It also provides the opportunity to fill in any blanks, make corrections, collect additional information that may have been overlooked and to provide a summary to the community for their review and comment, increasing the participation by the community and accuracy of the findings. Inputting data into the computer at this time saves a great deal of time.

The tasks include preparing descriptions of informal discussions, and preparing a list of people interviewed, indicating the diversity of community representation and location of interview. Group or categorize responses from interview questions to determine common themes and concerns (Patton, Bernard 1995). Lastly, consolidate data into village summaries or snapshots, for example a) things people need, b) common issues and concerns, utilizing information from all survey tools (see Appendices A, B, and C).

5.3.2 Analysis tools

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis is a “private sector methodology” used in “business planning...public health administration...in health voluntary organizations, academia and professional associations” (McNutt 1991, page 48). SWOT has also been used in PRA and PIP (Participatory Integrated Policy) studies

of community development and consensus-building (Ministerial Conference 2000, Univ. of Illinois 2000).

Research Decisions in Data Analysis:

SWOT was chosen as an assessment tool because information can be quickly converted into a format that it is easily understood by persons at all levels. This quick assessment tool allows researchers to provide a summary of the information gathered while still in the community. The SWOT allows community residents to see a picture of their community at a glance; strengths, areas for improvement, observations that may have been overlooked, inaccurate items, and issues that need to be presented differently as they are politically sensitive.

Prepare a SWOT analysis on each community. Then prepare a presentation of the finding and arrange an informal meeting to share the information with key informants and community persons that participated in the survey. Solicit feedback and comments about what was received to ensure comfort and accuracy. Summarize feedback to be included in draft community summary. It is customary to compensate informants for their time - this can be in the form of a small gift, thank you notes, or a small monetary payment (Bernard 1995). Exchange information and project update with market team.

Other analysis techniques, such as SPSS (Statistical Program for Social Sciences), can be used to analyze market and other quantitative data. We recommend programs like this to be used in tandem with the community SWOTs, to compliment and validate community opinions on what tourists may want and what the community has to offer in the amount of tourism services.

5.4 Phase Four: Data Report/Presentation

The purpose of qualitative inquiry is to produce findings. The process of data collection is not an end in itself. The culminating activities of qualitative inquiry are analysis, interpretation, and presentation of findings (Patton 1990: 371).

5.4.1 Data consolidation

Organizing community summaries and SWOT analysis and provide summaries to a sampling of community participants for comments and corrections.

Simultaneously, identify preliminary marketing connections and exchange SWOT analysis with the marketing team. Convene the community team for 1-2 weeks to prepare the first draft of the REAP Guide. Incorporating community feedback, write: 1) village profiles and community chapter, 2) community process, and 3) marketing connections to communities. Finally, exchange drafts with other REAP team members and revise drafts incorporating REAP team input.

5.4.2 Data presentation

Formal presentations are encouraged to present the whole picture to all stakeholders, combining the results of both the community and market survey. Both teams should prepare visual presentations to compliment survey results. Structured presentations and workshops are suggested for a) community/stakeholders b) NGO/government/development agencies, and c) other funding agencies to get feedback and comments.

Both teams should review workshop input and forward results to participants for additional comments.

5.5 Phase Five: Final Report

In preparing the final report all of the survey data plus comments and community input from the workshops must be incorporated. Collaboration with market team helps to provide a more cohesive and well-rounded document that can have the maximum benefit for stakeholders. Once a final report is completed it is reviewed and edited by the project coordinator.

With final input from the project coordinator, preparation of the final report is complete and published for the benefit of stakeholders and of others who want to REAP.

6. CASE STUDIES

6.1 Belize, Central America

Belize, Central America, was identified as a destination to pilot the REAP process because of its natural & cultural diversity and national focus on ecotourism. Even its tourism leaders say, “Think of Belize as Mother Nature’s largest natural theme park”; “An ecotourism mecca.” Mark Espat, Minister of Tourism, declares, “Belize is more than a destination. It is a culture, a people and a state of mind. Unspoiled, untouched and undiscovered by the traditional tourist. Belize is a special place in Central America that makes time stand still. A serene paradise far from the hectic world, yet only two short hours from the continental United States.” (Destination Belize 2000). The governments appreciation of its natural heritage encouraged them to develop a network of 18 National Parks and Protected Area working collaboratively with the Belize Audubon Society and other NGO’s.

Belize is located south of Yucatan, Mexico, with Guatemala to its west and south. It is home to the largest barrier reef in the Western Hemisphere, making it a prime tourism destination for divers. Formerly British Honduras, Belize received its independence from Great Britain in 1981. It has a parliamentary system of government, and the country is divided into six political districts. From north to south the districts are Corozal, Orange Walk, Belize, Cayo, Stann Creek and Toledo. The northern islands most popular for divers are Ambergris Cay and Cay Caulker.

Its peoples are Creole, Garifuna, Mestizo, European, and Mayan. Only four major highways criss-cross the country, joining north, south, east and west. Its land area is about the size of the US state of Massachusetts (8867 square miles), with a population of 280,000 people at the 2000 census. Sixty-five percent (65%) of its forests remain, with 30% of the population living in Belize City (Cipriani 1998, Mahler and Wotkyns 1991; PFB, *pers com.* 2000). Belmopan, the country's capital city, is carved out of the jungle in the center of Belize, near the Maya Mountain foothills. Unlike the other countries in Central America, English is the official language of the country.

Education is compulsory for children between the ages of 5 and 14. Attendance at primary schools was widespread in 1996, but enrollment of children in secondary school was only 50 percent. Higher education is available through the University College of Belize. The literacy rate of 91 percent is one of the highest in Latin America.

The entire eastern boundary of Belize is along the coast of the Caribbean sea. The coastal strip is swampy with mangroves, salt and freshwater lagoons and sandy beaches. The coastline is protected by an expansive barrier reef, that boasts of being the largest in the western hemisphere. The country is crossed by a number of rivers, the principal waterways are the Belize River; the Río Azul, which forms much of the boundary with Mexico; and the Sarstún River, which forms the southwestern boundary with Guatemala. Then to the south and west rises the forested Maya mountain range. Looking inland from the sea, you can see the transitions from “ridge to reef” (*pers. comm.* Wil Mahea, May 2000).

This diverse and largely unspoiled ecological system of Belize is part of its unique character. Belize is known for its incredible diving, natural beauty, abundant wildlife, quiet ambiance, uncrowded atmosphere, and the fact that it is still largely undeveloped.

Much of the country is covered by dense jungle, nearly 65 percent of the original forest remains and is mostly undisturbed. The rest is farmland, scrub and swamp. The tropical forests provide habitats for a wide range of animals, including jaguar, puma, ocelot, armadillo, tapir and crocodile. The country also harbors the keel-billed toucan, an abundance of macaws, parrots, heron and snowy egret.

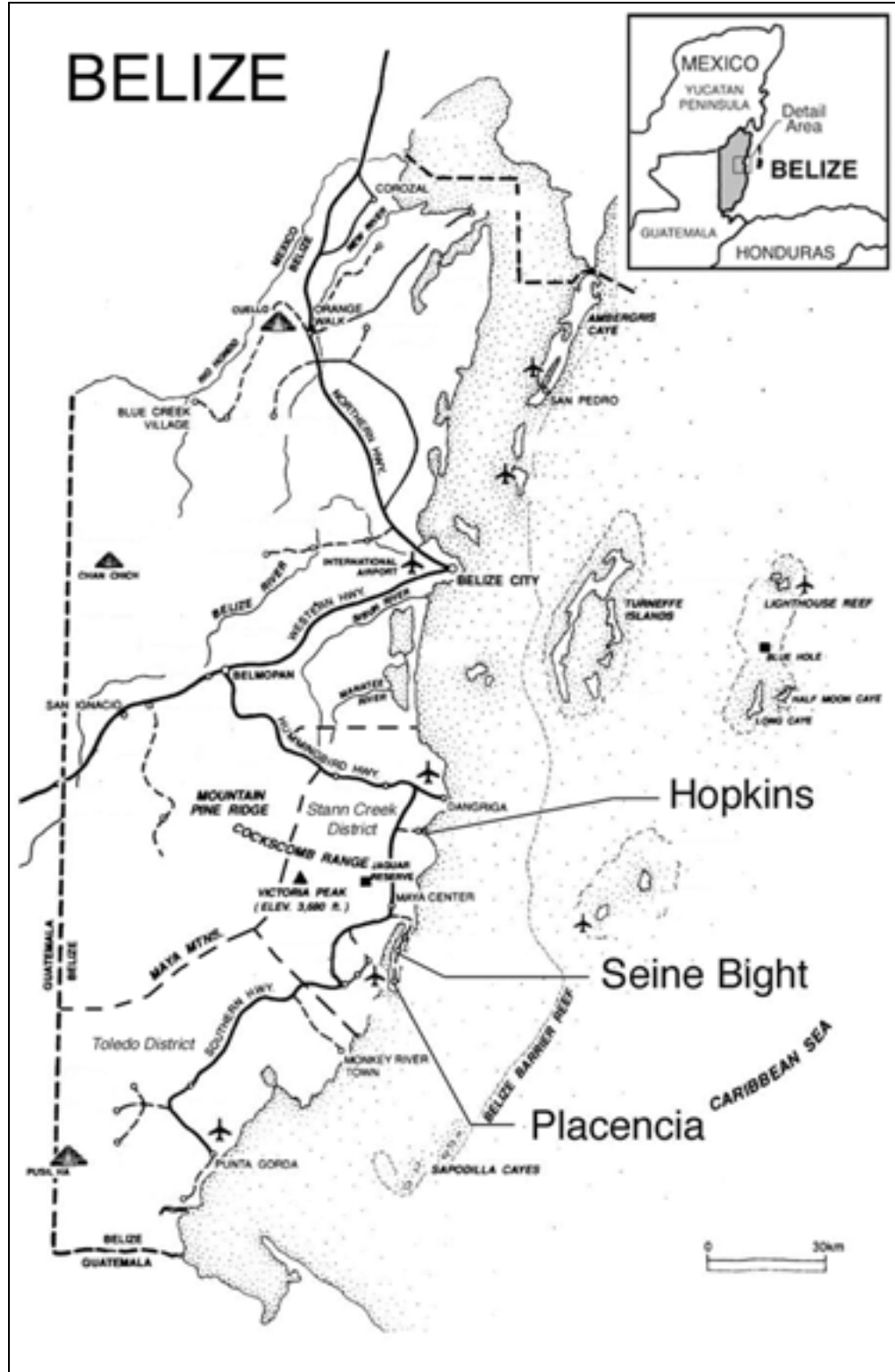
Belize was a part of the great Mayan empire which stretched through Guatemala, southern Mexico and parts of Honduras and El Salvador. Mayan culture, history and ruins are still very evident in Belize and is part of the intrigue and mystic that makes it a tourist attraction.

The country's modern history really begins when Belize, formerly British Honduras was occupied by the British in 1638-40, with settlements spreading as woodcutting became profitable. The lack of effective government and the safety provided by the many hidden bays and reef, attracted English and Scottish pirates during the 17th century. By the end of the 18th century, Africans were brought in as slaves to cut the mahogany and business in Belize began to boom. Full independence became a reality in September 1981 when British Honduras officially became Belize.

There are six geographic districts that make up Belize. Located in the southern region are the districts of the Stann Creek and Toledo. The southern region is the least visited region of the country, predominately because it has been one of the most difficult to access. Yet it is the region richest in tradition and culture of the Maya and Garifuna people.

All three of the coastal communities under study, Placencia, Seine Bight and Hopkins Villages are located in the Stann Creek district. They all share the same natural resources and attractions. Toledo, the district to the south of Stann Creek is important to the tourism development of the communities studied, because of its attractions and proximity. Toledo is home to the early settlement of Maya who still live the lifestyle of their ancestors as hunters and farmers. A short trip from Stan Creek to Toledo and the traveler has stepped back in time.

Figure C: Map of Belize



6.2 Methods

6.2.1 *Project Coordination and Timeline*

This REAP project was coordinated by The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), in partnership with the Belizean national NGO, Programme for Belize (PFB). As shown in section 4.2, this relationship follows the REAP Conservation/NGO Model (Fig. A), where an international conservation NGO partners with a national conservation NGO, and hires community and market development consultants.

The Project Coordinator, Megan Epler Wood, President of TIES, took on the role of overseeing the project. The local NGO, PFB, provided an in-country coordinator, Dr. Vincent Palacio, who worked along with both the marketing and community research teams. He assisted the teams in setting up key meetings with government officials, NGO leaders and tourism business owners. Dr. Palacio also acted as co-investigator on the market team. PFB also organized local logistics, travel, facilitated meetings, and provided direction on political protocol.

The timeline for this Belize study was 18 months, January 2000 to June 2001, based on the funding grant. Research data were collected during May and June 2000.

Development of the REAP model included the five phases described below, ranging from the project design to publication of the REAP Guide. Hindsight showed us that additional coordination was needed between the marketing and community research teams during the project planning phase prior to beginning any research, as well as throughout the entire process. For example, the marketing team began to conduct its research on market demand prior to community sites being selected, and as a result no visitor survey was carried out at the community level to compliment specific data relevant to the target communities. This missing link was highlighted by both community and NGO audiences during final in-country presentations. It was recognized subsequently by the majority of the REAP team and the project coordinator that the entire study could have been enhanced with localized market research information on tourists preferences in the communities being studied. As a result the REAP methodology, as presented in Table 3, now includes market research at the community level.

6.2.2 *Target groups*

The following are examples of non-community stakeholders interviewed, public and private sector agencies specializing in economic development, social services, agriculture, conservation, trade and tourism: Ministry of Rural Development and Culture, Director of Product Development of BTB, General Manager of Belize Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director of SPEAR, Executive Director of BAS, Executive Director of BTIA, President of BETA, Ministry of Tourism, Information and Youth, Managing Director of BEST, Director of OAS, Executive Director of PACT, Managing Director of TIDE, tour guides at archeological sites, Director of BTB, taxi drivers, Director of Natural Resource Studies at UCB, President of TGA, Mayor of Punta Gorda,

Representative of CARD, Tourism officer for BTB, President of TEA, Project Coordinator of BITI, Peace Corps Director, Ministry of Natural Resources, Natural Resource Manager of IDB, Professor of Archeology of the University of Texas, Manager of the Fallen Stones Butterfly Ranch, Chairman of the GWO, business owner, banana plantation owner.

The following are examples of community stakeholders interviewed: hotel owners, restaurant owners, hotel employees, taxi drivers, ex-patriot residents, resort tourists, backpackers, Chairman of BTIA Environmental Committee, Project Manager of “The Planatation”, fishermen/tour guides, dive shop owners, members of the FLBC, Chairman of Water Board, local artisans and craftsmen, Village Council members, grocery store owners, bar owners, bus drivers, Coast Guard, Women’s Cooperative, Chief Agriculture Officer, members of Flowers of Hopkins, school principals, TNC, members of Garifuna museum group, local dance group, police officer, health worker, bank managers, manager of Visitor Center, clergy, youth and elderly residents.

Target persons to interview were identified in each community using professions as a primary factor, such as local leader, teacher, industry owner, employer, employee, etc. Focal groups were identified, such as the tour guide association (TGA), village council, parent-teacher association, museum committee, FLBC, the Product Development Committee, etc., and meetings were scheduled or opportunistically held with these groups. These unplanned meetings with additional informants can provide richness and insight to the data. (Johnson 1990).

Preliminary discussions were held with the local NGO partner, PFB, upon arrival in-country in order to establish open dialogue, build rapport, and determine expectations. Using PFB’s input, it was important to prepare a list of contacts that included NGOs, government representatives, and other community development agencies in order to be inclusive, have a better understanding of the political climate, and to maximize the participatory approach from a diverse audience. Interviews were held with these non-community stakeholders listed above to garner support for REAP and solicit their input and recommendation on target communities based on established criteria.

After meetings, discussions, and local input, the researchers evaluated the data, consolidated the findings and made final selections of the communities to be studied.

6.2.3 Selected communities and informants

As a result of the multiple meetings, there was a consensus that Placencia Village was the community of choice, primarily because of its rapid growth in tourism and the Belize government’s focus on promoting Placencia as the next “new tourism destination.” Placencia is coastal, has beautiful white sand beaches, easy access to the cayes and interior rainforests.

The second village of choice that emerged was Hopkins Village because this community will be easily accessed with the completed construction of the southern highway. This

village is not yet widely promoted as a tourism destination, but it is a community prepared to embrace tourism as an economic development tool. Like Placencia, Hopkins is a coastal village, with similar natural attractions, and was perceived as being approximately 5 to 10 years behind Placencia in tourism development.

By default, a third village, Seine Bight Village, was chosen for study because it is intricately linked to Placencia by proximity. It is located only 5 miles north of Placencia Village on the narrow strip of Placencia Peninsula, and has the same tourism opportunities as Placencia Village, but has yet to capitalize on them.

These three communities are all located in Stann Creek District and geographically located where they have easy access to both coastal and interior natural resources. The choice of these three communities provided the researchers with the opportunities to survey the diversity of Belize's interior and coastal resources and assess the value of a community that has access to both.

The REAP process suggests preliminary visits to the community, along with informal consultations with the people, are useful. Once the three communities were identified, researchers visited each community to seek participation and cooperation from community residents. This important step in obtaining villager cooperation was conducted in all three villages. Village residents eagerly agreed to participate in the REAP process.

Because of the direct connection between Stann Creek and Toledo Districts with the construction of the southern highway for easier access, and the abundance of natural resources as tourism attractions (hiking, caves, Mayan sites), the researchers decided to visit and interview the Toledo District communities as supportive data.

A total of 70 official interviews were conducted, of which 13 were key informants, 10 were group meetings, and 47 were individual interviews. Fifty-four of the interviews were conducted in the three villages of PL, SB, and HK. For Toledo and other areas, 16 interviews were administered. Some of these individual interviews included more than one person, and all answers were recorded.

The aim of the project was to document the range of issues that were important to people in the villages under study. Following the example of OAS, REAP data were not scored and analyzed as a percentage of numbers of people interviewed (Austin-Greene 1994). Instead, all answers were given equal weight and all were reported.

6.2.4 Data presentation

The SWOT analysis was presented back to the villagers for their feedback. This was followed up by emailing multiple persons in the communities a "hard" copy of the draft of the community data summary for their comments and corrections, as a way of assuring accuracy of the data. Personalized thank-you notes were sent to informants at this point,

as an extension of the participatory process, in order to maintain rapport and show that the time given for interviews was greatly appreciated.

6.3 Village Summaries

Placencia is the oldest continuously inhabited village in Belize. Its residents brag that their small settlement was founded by English buccaneers in the early 1600's. The pirates intermingled with the African slaves, which produced what is known as the Creole people. Today's Creole of Placencia are descendents of the original seven pirate leaders that controlled the waters around Placencia Point. The decedents of those seven families are still the controlling force and elite structure that dominates the village.

Both the villages of Seine Bight and Hopkins share a Garifuna culture, proud history and notable skills as farmers and fisherman. The Garifuna people are the descendants of the Black Carib that came to Belize from Honduras as freed people.

The Garifuna heritage began when shipwrecked slaves from West Africa escaped to the island of St. Vincent in the Grenadines and intermingled with the Carib Indians. Fierce warriors, they remained independent until they where conquered and banished to the Honduran island of Roatan. Over a period of time, small groups of Garifuna traveled up and down the Central American coast establishing settlements in Belize, Guatamala, Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

In 2001, the Garifuna were named a World Heritage culture, a new United Nations designation that recognizes and urges protection for endangered heritages.

Until the mid 1980's the village Seine Bight could only be reached by boat. Smaller and more relaxed in pace than Hopkins, this Garifuna village still enjoys the traditional lifestyle of their ancestors. Seine Bight is the place to go if the traveler wants to hear the rhythm of local "punta" music. Punta is the indigenous music of the Garifuna people.

The village of Hopkins is four miles off of the newly paved southern highway, tucked away on a small bay along the coast. Life in Hopkins is simple and unhurried, people walk everywhere and the entire village is a family atmosphere. There was no electricity or TV there until 1992. Hopkins has long been the beach destination for Belizans on holidays.

Today, village councils and a board of directors that oversees the management of water resources govern these communities. These two groups are the primary leadership for each community and are elected by the residents. The village council chair is equivalent to a mayor and, through the Village Council Act of 2000, has responsibility for conducting council meetings and community decision-making. Other strong community leadership and direction comes from NGO's like FLBC in Placencia and the Garifuna Museum Committee in Hopkins.

Many residents from these communities have migrated to Europe, Canada and the United States. Yet, there are still very strong ties to the communities. Many village residents vacation with relatives in foreign lands, they relocate to work for years and then retire-back home to the tranquility of these communities. Seine Bight in particular, suffers from a” brain drain” and limited economic activity to attract skilled labor. Residents of Hopkins, although a largely educated group, seek employment in the capitol of Belmopan and Belize City.

Maintaining their lifestyle and heritage is very important to these communities, but they also recognize that economic development is the only way the communities will survive. So, they are ready to embrace Community Based Ecotourism as a sustainable approach to their future.

6.3.1 Placencia Village



Photo by Gail Lash

The laid-back small village atmosphere of Placencia is its attraction. Direct contact and interaction with the local people and their lifestyle makes Placencia unique and special. Local residents want the village to stay as it is, only making improvements to the quality, not quantity, of their products. In Placencia, villagers tend to live and work at the same locations, which is often in the center of tourism activity.

Visitors come to experience the slow pace and interact with the local people. They want to snorkel and dive at the cays and have close encounters with the wildlife at the Jaguar Reserve and Monkey River.

The number of visitors and part-time residents has increased and therefore so has development on the peninsula. The 1999-2000 tourist season was a boom for Placencia - it was their largest season ever. For many this was great -- local businesses prospered, the number of foreign businesses increased and local residents saw a tremendous change in their day-to-day living.

Among the community residents, there is strong understanding of the connection between protecting natural resources, tourism development and tourism benefits to the community. They welcome tourism but see the need for slow, controlled development.

Strong community organizational structures, professional skills and labor are readily available within the community.

Challenges that affect this small community include both local perceptions and realities: the perception that the control and regulation of tourism development is out of local hands, that government does not listen to local businesses, that there is a lack of cooperation between foreign-owned resorts and locally-owned businesses, that foreign influence imposes its culture on locals and tourism development, a lack of internal village cooperation, and poor infrastructure to meet the growing tourism needs, as well as an absence of zoning laws and building codes.

PLACENCIA:

S= Placencians have a strong work ethic and want self-sufficiency. There are strong community organizational structures in place as well as professional skills and labor readily available within the community.

W= Infrastructural limitations, e.g. parking, paved roads, narrow sidewalk, public facilities, lighting, police security and 24 hr medical services.

O= To increase the quality and number of locally-owned tourism business and conduct training sessions to improve the understanding of the tourist market and tourist expectations.

T= Increased number of foreign-owned properties and businesses and the perception that foreign resorts are discouraging their guests from patronizing local business.

6.3.2 Seine Bight Village



Photo by Gail Lash

The attraction to Seine Bight is that it is a small coastal village, with a colorful, cultural, musical, party atmosphere. The Garifuna history and culture has taught villagers how to survive and live on the natural resources. Historically, the Garifuna people are different from Creoles as they were never enslaved, but functioned as a free people. Those who remain today in Seine Bight are a free spirited, friendly and hospitable people. They are a very proud people who love the calm, unobtrusive lifestyle they live. It is not uncommon to hear the beat of the traditional drums, African chanting and swift but mellow movements of the punta dance. The charm of the community is the direct interaction with local people, their lifestyle and the traditional Garifuna punta music.

However, as a tourism center, its limitations include: a run down and unkempt village center, garbage and human waste on the beach and lagoon, lack of education/knowledge of human impacts on the sea and lagoon, and a lack of motivation and community initiative to develop the area. Growth is hampered by improper infrastructure, such as: lack of water drainage, no sewage or septic facilities, and local businesses are not visibly strong; their access, signage, product quality and standards are not competitive.

People in Seine Bight want tourism. There is an understanding of tourism benefits, but they lack the appreciation for connections between the environment and tourism, and the links between value for money and meeting tourists' expectations. Seine Bight is five to ten years behind Placencia in infrastructure (both physical and human) development and planning.

The community has the opportunity to 1) develop a community clean-up program that improves the face of the community, 2) revitalize and promote the Garifuna culture and highlight the differences between Placencia and Seine Bight, 3) build on the already existing domestic tourism market.

Threats to these opportunities include 1) a health risk associated with garbage and human waste on the beach and lagoon, 2) foreign investment without community growth and improvements, and 3) local perceptions that foreigners want to eliminate their village.

SEINE BIGHT:

S= Many residents believe that the community benefits through employment, new skills, preservation of culture and enhancing local businesses.

W= Much of the community have no concept of what it takes to create a tourism destination.

O=To build leadership skills, upgrade the quality of skills through education, training and workshops and to recruit professional to return home.

T= The health risk associated with garbage and human waste on the beach and at the lagoon.

6.3.3 Hopkins Village



Photo by Alison Austin

Hopkins, as an attraction, is a small coastal village with a strong cultural ambience. The charm of the community is the direct interaction with local people, and their lifestyle which blends traditional Garifuna language, food, punta music, historic customs, and pride with high educational values, resulting in a professional population. As a community, their strength is being Garifuna, and they want to enhance and promote their culture.

People of Hopkins take pride in the fact that their community has been able to maintain the strongest hold on the Garifuna culture in Belize. Upon entering the village you don't readily see the Garifuna culture, but it takes only minutes before you realize something is different - different from anywhere else in Belize. The language is African and the sense of community strong, even protective. Like most of Belize, the people are warm and hospitable. Nearby natural attractions and resort development adds to Hopkins appeal. But, because it is off of the main highway, it is not easily accessible and has to directly target visitors to the destination.

Although tourism currently impacts Hopkins, it is not yet a tourism village. Nearby resorts hire the majority of their staff from the village, thus providing jobs to the community. There is a fairly large group of trained persons, many who work outside of the community, not totally dependent on tourism. Still, they recognize the benefits of tourism, that Hopkins has much to offer, and that the community needs economic development.

Major bottlenecks to development include the absence of a cohesive vision, community cooperation, and the skills to implement a tourism strategy. However, there is agreement that the focus of the community's tourism product should highlight the Garifuna culture. Members of the community have initiated an NGO charged with economic development, with ecotourism as a major component. Information from REAP affords the community the opportunity to strengthen existing community organizations such as, Flowers of Hopkins, the Tour Guide Association and the Museum Committee as focal points of their tourism development.

Community development needs are many, but infrastructure development hinges on creating zoning laws and building codes, road improvement, better signage at the Southern Highway, a visitor center for information, guidance and direction once visitors are in the village, public restroom facilities/showers at the beach, and taxi service. Also, the opportunity exists to build a cultural center that promotes, shares and preserves Garifuna culture. Other options are to develop tourism activities around the lagoon and create nature trails nearby, train a cadre of young people, use beachfront property to develop a local park, and maximize farming skills to provide food for the local tourism industry.

HOPKINS:

S= There is unanimous agreement that tourism must be developed in Hopkins, that it benefits the community and that the community wants to influence the growth and changes brought on by tourism.

W= Community development is hindered by challenges that discourage community members to work collectively and cooperatively towards a common goal.

O=To build a cultural center that promotes, share and preserves the Garifuna culture

T= Growth happening around the village without the community growing with it.

Figure D: Village Priorities and Statistics



Map of Stann Creek District

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Priorities (Stated by Community)

Hopkins

1. Develop a tourism plan for the village.
2. Implement zoning laws and building codes, to preserve their village atmosphere and retain control of development.
3. Strengthen local organizations/NGO with an interest in developing and investing in tourism.

Seine Bight

1. Clean up their village and beaches.
2. Install household toilets and public bathrooms.
3. Training in tourism, business development, and environment.

Placencia

1. Implement Zoning & Building Codes
2. Tourism Plan for Peninsula
3. Enhance Cross-cultural Communications.

Village Statistics in 2000:	<u>Placencia</u>	<u>Seine Bight</u>	<u>Hopkins</u>
Population	700 60% under 15 years	800 40% under 15 years	1700 40% under 15 years
Septic sewage systems	100%	20%	75%
Electricity	100%	90%	95%
Private telephone	98%	60%	No
Public bathrooms	Yes, by soccer field	Yes, by soccer field	No
Taxi service	Limited	Limited	No
Local airport access	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public Internet Service	Yes, 3	No	No
Garbage disposal	Yes, 3 per week	Yes, 3 per week	Planned
Health Services	Resident Nurse	Resident Nurse	Res. Nurse & Doctor
Hotels: Locally owned	13	2	8
Hotels: Foreign owned	8	12	9
Restaurants	23	11	12
Food stores	3	2	2
Gift Shops	6 + resorts	2 + resorts	1 + resorts

6.4 Village SWOTs

These are items pointed out specifically by the community members from the village interviews.

Category	Placencia (PL)	Seine Bight (SB)	Hopkins (HK)
Marketing	www.placencia.com , Guidebooks	Popular destination for Belizeans, Resort marketing, Guidebooks, Newspaper, Referrals	Popular destination for Belizeans, Safe place
Natural Resources	Ridge to Reef: Beaches, Lagoon, Silk Cay, Gladden Split, Laughingbird Cay, Monkey River Wildlife Sanctuary, Jaguar Reserve.	Ridge to Reef: Beaches, Lagoon, Silk Cay, Gladden Split, Laughingbird Cay, Monkey River Wildlife Sanctuary, Jaguar Reserve.	Ridge to Reef: Beaches, Lagoon, Tobacco Cay, Jaguar Reserve, Mayflower Archeological Site
Internal Organizations	Village Council, TGA, PDC, BTIA, FLBC, Water Board, Fishing Cooperative, Green and Clean Committee, PTA, Anglican Church, Lighthouse Church.	Village Council, TGA, Igermerie Culture Dance Group, National Garifuna Council - Youth Arm (NGC), Hospitality Cooperative, and Water Board	Sandy Beach Women's Coop, Flowers of Hopkins, Museum Committee, Hopkins Business Association, Cereal Farmers Coop, Legemerie Youth Group, Belfuna Women's Group, Catholic Church, Mennonite Church, TGA
External Organizations	TNC, GEF, BTB, UNDP, WWF, BAS, BDF, BEST, TIDE, ESTAP (now SDP), PACT, Ministry of Natural Resources, Fisheries, and Marine Coastal Zone	CARD, WGO	CARD, CARDI, IDB, SPEAR, PACT, and the Taiwanese Agricultural Mission
Cultural Assets		Garifuna culture, Party atmosphere	Strong presence of Garifuna culture, particularly by women
Physical Infrastructure	Airport services, Public bathrooms facilities, Garbage disposal and pickup service, Water, sanitation services, Electricity, Phones, Variety of stores and services, Internet access among most businesses	Airport services, Garbage collection and disposal, Water, Electricity, Telephone, Supermarket	Garbage collection service, Electricity, Cable TV, Water, and Septic systems.
Tourism Amenities	Diving, Small intimate village setting, Laid-back lifestyle, World-known sidewalk through village beachfront, Soft adventure tours, Tourism information center, Internet cafe	Mid to high-end tourism resorts, Small hotels, Restaurants, Gift shops, PL tourism is a benefit	Small intimate village setting, Small hotels, Restaurants, Gift shops
Labor/Skills	Strong work ethic, Professional skills and labor available	Non-skilled labor available	Professional skills and labor available

6.4.1 Discussion of Community Attitudes: Strengths

In Placencia, there is strong understanding of the connection between protecting natural resources, tourism development and tourism benefits to the community, because tourism is the primary source of revenue for this community. The broader community wants protection of the natural resources, specifically reefs, cays, lagoon, manatees and whale sharks. There is also good community participation in organizations established to protect the natural resources. Overall, Placencians have a strong work ethic and want self-sufficiency.

There is a healthy awareness of the negative aspects of tourism, and the impacts on their community. Their greatest fear is growing too fast and an influx of strangers invading their homes, literally – because many live within the center of tourism activity. Crime and safety are important issues, but they have not yet impacted Placencia in a negative way. In fact, the community at-large agrees that Placencia is a safe place for visitors and residents enjoy the security of knowing all their neighbors.

In Seine Bight, many residents believe that the community benefits through employment, new skills, preservation of the culture and enhancing local businesses. Generally speaking, they welcome visitors and want increased tourism development. Locals feel strongly about their privacy and do not want visitors to take pictures, but when photographing people, they think that visitors should ask first. On the surface, it is felt that tourism has more positive than negative impacts. Almost all of the people we spoke with agreed that Seine Bight is a safe place. This culture reflects a time where there is still no need to lock doors. There is little or no reported crime, and some feel that criminal behavior goes unpublished. There is no fear of walking the streets late or alone, because everybody knows everybody.

In Hopkins, there is unanimous agreement that tourism must be developed in Hopkins, that it benefits the community and that the community wants to influence the growth and change of tourism. They want their privacy to be respected, and welcome visitors taking picture, although they should always ask first. Collectively there is an appreciation for the protection of the natural resources and an understanding that the community benefits from this activity. However, there is uncertainty about who in the community should be responsible for monitoring and enforcement of the natural areas.

Category	Placencia	Seine Bight	Hopkins
Marketing		No tourism marketing plan – dependent on resorts to market	No tourism marketing plan
Knowledge of Natural Resource Protection	Need conservation education	Lack of understanding of human impacts on sea and lagoon – need conservation education; Unclear who is responsible for protecting NR	Village not actively involved in NR management; Unclear who is responsible for protecting NR

Knowledge of Tourism	No monitoring of numbers of tourists	No concept of requirements for tourism development, Inability to meet tourist expectations on product and service quality; No monitoring of numbers of tourists	No monitoring of numbers of tourists
Physical Infrastructure	For current and future tourist numbers infrastructure is inadequate. Need: Parking, Roads and sidewalk, Improved lighting, Landscaping and flower beautification, Safety and police patrol, Organized transportation, Structured beach clean up, Public facilities on beach, 24 hour medical services, More electrical power, Better food delivery and distribution	Unkempt village center, Garbage and human wastes are on the beach and lagoon, Lack of water drainage, Approximately 80% of homes have no toilets nor septic facilities, No public bathrooms	Need road improvement, Signage, Visitor center, Public restrooms, Taxi, Public facilities on beach, and Garbage disposal
Tourism Amenities		Lack of motivation to develop area for tourism; Local businesses are not visibly strong; Their access, signage, product quality and standards are not competitive; Village perceived by tourists to be un-safe; Inadequate taxi service, No local dive shops, well-equipped gift shops, nor visitor center	
Labor/Skills	Lack of tourism training in hospitality and business	“Brain-drain” of human resources as many professionals leave the area	Need hospitality, business and leadership training
Internal and External Organizations	Lack of internal village cooperation and village long-term vision, Resentment of success	Lack of internal village cooperation; few active community-based organizations; strained relationships with neighboring village of PL	Lack of internal village cooperation; Lack of leadership in tourism development; No community vision or tourism plan; Resentment of success
Cultural Assets		Garifuna culture not visible to tourists	Garifuna culture not visible to tourists
Lifestyle/ Attitude	Attitude that government does not listen to villagers	Dependency on government to do everything; “Laissez-faire” lifestyle; Lack of responsibility to maintain clean beaches and village center	Lack of respect for business and private property; Youth lack guidance and directions; Elders not consulted
Cross-Cultural Communications	Lack of cooperation and communication between foreign-owned and locally-owned businesses and resorts	Lack of cooperation and communication between foreign-owned and locally-owned businesses and resorts	Lack of cooperation and communication between foreign-owned and locally-owned businesses and resorts
Zoning/ Laws/ Government	Absence of zoning laws and building codes		Absence of zoning laws and building codes

6.4.2 Discussion of Community Attitudes: Weaknesses

According to many locals who witnessed in Dec '99 - Jan-'00 explosion of a “maximum” of visitors that left Placencia with electrical outages, food shortages and the realization that the village is infrastructurally weak, village leadership still does not accurately know how many people the peninsula can hold given its current infrastructure. Other challenges that affect this small community are: the perception that controlling and regulation of tourism development is out of their hands, that government does not listen to local business, an absence of zoning laws and building codes, lack of better cooperation between foreign-owned resorts and locally-owned businesses, a lack of internal village cooperation, and a resentment towards the success of others.

The challenges to developing Seine Bight are many. At the core, there is no general concept of what it takes to create a tourism destination. Although there was an increase in visitation last year, many local businesses did not feel any direct benefits. There are few local tourism businesses with products that cater to tourist expectations. People in Seine Bight want tourism, but don't understand and appreciate the links between value for money and meeting tourists' expectations. There are few active community-based organizations, limited relationships with external organizations, and a strained relationship with the neighboring village of Placencia.

With all of the opportunity and talent in Hopkins, basic community development is hindered by challenges that discourage community members to work collectively and cooperatively towards a common goal. Currently there is a lack of an organizational structure, such as a community based NGO or group in place, to take the lead in tourism development. Even the community highlights a lack of leadership skills as a definite weakness. Subsequently, there is no community vision or plan for how to develop Hopkins' tourism, and no strategy to market its assets.

Youth comprise 40% or more of the population in all three of these villages. In Hopkins, villagers expressed that youth are, “looking and seeking but have no guidance.” Others 20% argued that the wisdom and leadership of the elders is not being tapped – an age-old African tradition. It was also expressed that parents do not take enough responsibility for their children.

Table 8. Village Opportunities

Category	Placencia	Seine Bight	Hopkins
Cultural/Community Pride		On-going community clean-up program; Revitalize and promote Garifuna culture	Planned Garifuna Cultural Center
Natural Resource Education/ Awareness	TNC grant offers FLBC opportunity for institutional strengthening and planned management of NR	TNC grant offers FLBC opportunity for institutional strengthening and planned management of NR	
Cottage Industry Development	Increase quality and number of locally-owned businesses		Increase quality and number of locally-owned businesses;

			Active farming community can supply food for tourism
Partnerships	Strengthen relationships between foreign and local businesses; To improve relationships with Seine Bight	Strengthen relationships between foreign and local businesses; To improve relationships with Placencia	Utilize development agency funding for organizational strengthening and tourism planning
Regional Cooperation/ Learning	Learn from San Pedro's rapid tourism development	Learn from PL success and failures	Learn from PL and others
Local Tourism Development	To develop as a model for CBE in Belize; Organized tourism programs	To capture tourists in route to PL; Garifuna culture offers SB to develop unique destination	Tourism planning, grow slowly and with local control; Develop around lagoon and beachfront with nature trails and local park
Human Resource Training	Train more people; BTB, BTIA tourism industry training	Upgrade leadership skills	Upgrade leadership skills; BTB, BTIA tourism industry training
Zoning/ Laws/ Government	New Village Council (VC) laws give VC right to create zoning ordinances	New Village Council (VC) laws give VC right to create zoning ordinances	New Village Council (VC) laws give VC right to create zoning ordinances

6.4.3 Discussion of Community Attitudes: Opportunities

Planned development for Placencia provides the opportunity to increase the quality and number of locally-owned tourism businesses. People expressed that because the community is small, training sessions for residents to better understand the tourist market and tourists expectations can easily be facilitated. Placencia is also in a position to benefit from organized tourism programs and train a larger human resource pool. Residents shared that sustainable development also provides the opportunity to strengthen local conservation NGO's like FLBC, now that there are resources for offices and the completion of their management plan.

In Seine Bight, with its run down appearance of the community, tourism development brings the opportunity to develop an ongoing community clean-up program to improve the face of the community. This also encourages individuals to become role models by cleaning their own property. Because of its strong Garifuna culture and history, there exist great opportunity to capitalize, revitalize and promote the culture. Marketing the Garifuna culture can highlight the differences between Placencia and Seine Bight and give them there own unique character. There is consensus that protecting the natural resources is important, so tourism development can help to motivate a strong commitment to sustainability through greater education and awareness.

Community residents in Hopkins advocate holding on to land and culture. They want to be in control. Because tourism has not yet taken hold, Hopkins can grow slowly if it is controlled with zoning and building regulations drawn from the experience of Placencia and other Belizean communities. They are positioned to build a cultural center that promotes, shares and preserves the Garifuna culture, develop tourism activities around

the lagoon, create nature trails nearby and use beachfront property to develop a local park.

Table 9. Village Threats			
Category	Placencia	Seine Bight	Hopkins
Tourism Growth	Growing too fast without proper planning – fear of becoming Cancun; MR guides “invade” PL territory	Absent of mutual trust between resident foreigners and locals	Growing without community growth and control; Foreign investors have greater knowledge of tourist expectations
Natural Resources	Non-local boat drivers are threat to wildlife in lagoon (ex. manatees); Pollution to lagoon from shrimp farms and citrus and banana farms	Health risks associated with wastes on the beach and lagoon	
Financial Resources	Unequal access to capital between locals and foreigners; High interest rates and collateral from Belizean banks make it difficult for locals to obtain loans; Property values beyond local capacity to purchase	Unequal access to capital between locals and foreigners; High interest rates and collateral from Belizean banks make it difficult for locals to obtain loans; Property values beyond local capacity to purchase	Unequal access to capital between locals and foreigners; High interest rates and collateral from Belizean banks make it difficult for locals to obtain loans; Property values beyond local capacity to purchase
Tourism Amenities	Increase in visitor numbers without appropriate infrastructures; Competition between foreign and local businesses	Negative perception by visitors of safety and cleanliness of community – so tourists remain at resorts	
Culture	Imposition of foreign culture on locals, and no respect for local culture by tourists; Differences in business cultures between foreigners and locals	Imposition of foreign culture on locals, and no respect for local culture by tourists; Differences in business cultures between foreigners and locals	
Foreign Influences	5000-lot development, “The Plantation” – no village input into housing development; Foreign capture and restraint of tourists causing inability of locals to benefit from tourism; Land scarcity caused by foreign acquisition of property	5000-lot development, “The Plantation” – no village input into housing development; Land scarcity caused by foreign acquisition of property	Land scarcity caused by foreign acquisition of property; Foreign-owned businesses discourage patronage by locals
Government	BTB Hotel bed tax does not come back to locals; Lack of reinvestment makes Belize less competitive on regional and international markets		

6.4.4 Discussion of Community Attitudes: Threats

In all three communities there is a local feeling that foreigners are only there to “rape the area, reap benefits for personal gain, and then sell their business to another foreigner to repeat the process.” The Plantation Development, due to its large scale and to its lack of interface with local villagers, was perceived as being deceptive, and has caused local resentment. In Seine Bight, because foreigners buy up the land, and increase the value of beachfront property, local people perceive that “foreigners want to eliminate their village.”

A prevalent attitude throughout the communities is that foreigners impose their culture on locals and on tourism development. Many believe that visitors have no respect for local culture, (*e.g.*, sex, drugs, nudity, no respect for family). Additionally, the differences in business approaches, and unequal access to capital, between local and foreign investors causes negativity and lack of trust. For example, fences and “no trespassing signs” are perceived by locals as negative and untrustworthy.

As in Seine Bight, Hopkins residents are concerned that tourism will encapsulate the village without community involvement and significant returns. Hopkins villagers perceive that local people will become staff and not owners of tourism businesses. This threat of foreign dominance is evident throughout these communities.

Table 10. Village Quotes:

Small business owner in PL, “There doesn't appear to be a slow season anymore; people are here all the time.”
“Anyone who talk bad about the village (Seine Bight), don't know the village. To know the village is to love the village.”
“If it was not for tourism, Seine Bight village would still be without electricity and piped water. As an expatriate, we are not perceived as part of the village, although we contribute, pay utilities, we could never run for office.”
Youth in Hopkins are “looking and seeking but have no guidance.”

6.5 Community Recommendations for Improvements

During the survey, community residents were asked, “What investments or improvements are needed now? Are there other forms of development besides tourism that you think would benefit the local residents of the area?” The compiled recommendations were grouped into three categories: infrastructure development, organized tourism development, and training.

6.5.1 Placencia Village

Infrastructure Development

- ❖ A toll booth to provide security at the entrance to the peninsula and access to additional revenues.
- ❖ Development of appropriate infrastructure to handle the increase number of tourists coming in from increased marketing.
- ❖ Paved road, widen & extend sidewalk, public bathroom facilities on beach.
- ❖ Develop enforceable zoning laws and building codes e.g., land use, easements, building heights, character, materials, etc.
- ❖ Infrastructure for evening events e.g., lighting and facilities for 200 people on the beach.
- ❖ 24 hour medical services and supplies.
- ❖ Better, bigger school and hurricane shelter.
- ❖ Cable TV channel reserved for local use – Announcements and environmental education programs.
- ❖ More activities for local children.
- ❖ A better working relationship with government and more village council control.

Organized tourism development

- ❖ Provide greater police presence, more enforcement of laws and punishment for criminal behavior, including tour guide infractions.
- ❖ To restructure BTIA fees to be prorated by rates not by rooms.
- ❖ Monitoring of the impacts of tourism development on the natural resources e.g., water quality monitoring.
- ❖ Target the middle-income tourist market.
- ❖ Develop more activities in the village, but not casinos/discos next to residential houses, and market specific activities monthly to encourage visitors year-round, focusing on activities that target the family market.
- ❖ Develop and improve local businesses.
- ❖ Create greater access to capital and knowledge of funding institutions designed to assist small communities.
- ❖ Provide a location to accommodate Mayan vendors.
- ❖ Tourist should respect locals & ask permission to photograph people.
- ❖ Foreigners should be encouraged to come and visit but not to stay and open businesses.

Training needs

- ❖ Hospitality, customer service, tourism awareness, guiding, food handling and restaurant management, fly fishing skills.
- ❖ Small business management, planning, and financial risk taking.
- ❖ Group dynamics, leadership and self-esteem building skills.
- ❖ Professional pride and work ethic, appreciation of success.
- ❖ Environmental/ conservation education.
- ❖ Vocational and technical skills.
- ❖ Parenting and family planning.

Actions For Placencia

- ❖ Initiate a comprehensive and cooperative tourism development plan, not only for Placencia, but also with Seine Bight for the peninsula as a whole.
- ❖ Establish cross-cultural communications to unite foreign/local relations.
- ❖ Implement zoning laws and building codes to protect village aesthetics.
- ❖ Educate the villagers on tourism, business development, and environment.
- ❖ Establish the lagoon as a protected area to control polluting activities.
- ❖ Develop a regional tourism plan for Stann Creek and Toledo districts.

6.5.2 Seine Bight Village

Infrastructure development

- ❖ Quality housing and construction standards and enforceable building codes.
- ❖ More telephone lines, library, post office, water run-off drainage.
- ❖ Toilets in all houses -- sewage system subsidized by government with low monthly payments.
- ❖ Clean-up and re-build dock area to enhance appearance and access to lagoon.
- ❖ Build a seawall to protect beach from erosion.
- ❖ Toll-booth at entrance to peninsula for better controlled security, which can generate income to maintain road and staff.
- ❖ Nice area for a local park for community and visitors.

Organized tourism development

- ❖ A distinct identity for Seine Bight -- want to market the name "Seine Bight."
- ❖ Web site designed for Seine Bight.
- ❖ Garifuna Cultural Center for cultural activities and performances.
- ❖ More money made available for tourism development.
- ❖ Need more rooms for tourists.
- ❖ Building for Tourist Guide Association/Tourist Information Center.
- ❖ More training for tourism awareness and business opportunities.
- ❖ Visitors to be educated about Garifuna culture.

Training needs

- ❖ What is tourism? – An introduction to the tourism industry, hospitality and tourism opportunities.
- ❖ Training of youth as apprenticeships in tour guiding, storytelling, fly fishing, customer service skills.
- ❖ Fine arts, crafts using natural materials, cooking, sewing.
- ❖ Marketing, sales and presentation skills.
- ❖ Business and financial management.
- ❖ Environmental education and value of natural resources.
- ❖ Complete primary school (all grades).
- ❖ Add standard-6 to the high school in Independence.
- ❖ More activities for children/youth.

Actions For Seine Bight

- ❖ Initiate a comprehensive and cooperative tourism development plan, not only for Seine Bight, but also with Placencia for the peninsula as a whole.
- ❖ Clean up their village and beaches.
- ❖ Install household toilets and public bathrooms.
- ❖ Educate the villagers on tourism, business development, and environment.
- ❖ Nourish leadership skills in the community.
- ❖ Make their Garifuna culture more visible to tourists, with more organized cultural programs and a dedicated Garifuna cultural center.
- ❖ Establish cross-cultural communications to unite foreign/local relations.

6.5.3 Hopkins Village

Infrastructure development

- ❖ Revive fishing cooperative
- ❖ Limit the number of foreign investors allowed to remain and start businesses.

Organized tourism development

- ❖ Develop tourism masterplan – a written report that spells out the things that can help Hopkins become a vibrant tourism destination.
- ❖ Grow slowly and control the development.
- ❖ Museum/cultural site as a community focus.
- ❖ Website for Hopkins.
- ❖ Community workshop on knowledge of tourism opportunities.
- ❖ Want visitors to go home - if they stay, they change the local way of life.

Training needs

- ❖ Museum layout and design.
- ❖ Knowledge of sites and tour guiding.
- ❖ Business and management.
- ❖ Group dynamics, team building and leadership skills.
- ❖ Computer skills.
- ❖ Sales and marketing.
- ❖ Sanitation and hygiene.
- ❖ Hospitality and customer service.
- ❖ Fine arts and presentation.
- ❖ Better primary school.

Actions For Hopkins

- ❖ Develop a tourism plan for the village.
- ❖ Implement zoning laws and building codes, so as to preserve their village atmosphere and to retain control of development.
- ❖ Strengthen local organizations/NGO which has an interest in developing and investing in tourism.
- ❖ Educate the villagers on tourism, business development, and environment.
- ❖ Develop its own website, advertising its guesthouses and activities, and to develop linkages to Belize's country website
- ❖ Clean up garbage in the village.
- ❖ Hopkins needs to make their Garifuna culture more visible to tourists, with more organized cultural programs, a dedicated Garifuna museum and cultural center.
- ❖ Establish cross-cultural communications to unite foreign/local relations.

6.6 Lessons Learned from Local Businesses

6.6.1 Placencia Village

Discussions with selected small business owners focused on lessons learned and advice they would share: start slow and grow gradually, get as much training in business as possible, build strong customer relations, observe what's needed or what people are asking for and try to provide it, change with the changing times as visitors change, prepare business plans and conduct market studies, marketing is important: signs on main road, well-done, visible, colorful and attractive to target walk-ins, the impact of the Internet, support *Placencia Breeze*, repeat business depends on good consistent quality.

6.6.2 Seine Bight Village

Discussions with selected small business owners focused on lessons learned and advice they would share: Be disciplined in your work, work collaboratively, start small and grow, make it simple and functional, everything takes longer and costs more, teach or lead by example, clean and beautify your own property, always provide quality workmanship, be a volunteer, don't judge a book by its cover, desire to be self-employed, cater to the local market as well as visitor market, learn how to get through government structure and bureaucracy, apply the mentor concept – every one teach one.

6.6.3 Hopkins Village

Discussions with selected small business owners focused on lessons learned and advice they would share: People are reluctant to support new initiatives because of failures in past -- we must be better risk takers, Be patient and flexible, Don't expect much and press on, Be a role model and lead by example, Business product needs to stay of consistent quality, always maintain - keep going - we can do it ourselves – stay focused.

6.7 Placencia/Seine Bight/Hopkins Comparisons

6.7.1 Placencia and Seine Bight Villages

Placencia and Seine Bight have much in common: they share the same peninsula; they both have access to, and depend on, the same natural resources nearby which have the potential for tourism development. They are only five miles apart in location, tied together symbiotically by their dependence on each other. They both depend on unpolluted beaches, the wildlife of the lagoon, the use of the Garifuna drumming and dance as a tourist attraction, the same road to get on and off the peninsula. They are both small and distinctly separate communities in mind-set, culture, historical roots, motivation and drive. Yet one has completely embraced tourism and has become a tourism village and the other remains a traditional fishing community, not as motivated by the intrusion of foreign involvement and dollars.

In contrast from Placencia, Seine Bight residents have been slow to embrace tourism due to three factors (Dr. Vincent Palacio, *pers.comm.*, June 2003). First, the Garifuna people are not given the same opportunities and access to resources as the Creole people. Second, the Garifuna have historically not embraced entrepreneurialism, but have largely survived on farming and fishing, using the peasant economy principle. This principle is based on sharing resources, not competition for resources. Third, Garifuna people have a different, lesser value of the natural resources, and only now, due to the growth in tourism, do people understand the value of waterfront property and their coastal community. In both villages, there is a sense of family, community pride, working together in family units, but not as a community as a whole. It is still difficult for villagers to work collectively as a community unit and as multi-community units.

What is happening today?

Tourism in Placencia has taken over the village; it is the primary source of income in the village. There is a natural draw of visitors to Placencia because it is on the point, and due to the layout of houses, there is more open space of palm-tree covered sandy beach for relaxation, peace, and tranquility. There are no roads through the village; instead there is a quaint narrow sidewalk that connects people, places, and activities. The service road runs along the back of the village, away from the center of tourism. This simple infrastructure, along with the low, wooden colorful houses and shops, maintains a pleasant welcoming ambience.

In contrast, the main, dusty road bifurcates the heart of Seine Bight village. That split, in essence, divides the life energy of the people, and is an aversion for visitors. Additionally, Seine Bight is handicapped by having a narrow beach, visually-blocked by derelict-looking houses and businesses.

The distinct differences between the rich, undiluted African culture of Seine Bight and the diving and sidewalk shops of Placencia can be used as a marketing tool for both villages. If Placencians were insightful, they would take advantage of these differences and help Seine Bight to develop its culture as a tourist attraction, sending tourists from Placencia to Seine Bight for authentic cultural activities. Reciprocally, Seine Bight could take advantage of Placencia's beaches and quaint village, and encourage tourists to visit and experience both communities. Placencia wants to remain the quiet place to come and kick-back and relax, with no casinos and loud discos, while Seine Bight, in its natural party-style, is well suited to become the entertainment center, the place to Punta!

Cooperation is pivotal to peninsula success. How can these communities cooperate to ensure success?

The greatest challenge for residents of the SeineBight-Placencia Peninsula is to develop an all-inclusive tourism plan, which not only protects their villages, lifestyle, and natural resources that they now depend on for their livelihood, but also educates all residents as to this plan's importance and strategies, and to accomplish it. This will involve extensive collaboration between not only foreigners and locals, but also between all locals on the

peninsula. This can be accomplished with a spirit of cooperation. Complacency, a tendency to avoid change, and an attitude that expects someone else (government) to do “it” for them, are the greatest enemies of Seine Bight’s future development. On the other hand, Placencia must be more receptive to accepting Seine Bight as a partner in tourism management of the peninsula, and to building on and appreciating their symbiotic relationship. Collaboration, cooperation, and consultation are the keys to residents’ future success for saving these precious communities they know and love.

6.7.2 Hopkins Village

Hopkins shares the same sense of remoteness as the Seine Bight-Placencia Peninsula, but in reality, it has a tremendous advantage by being located only four miles off the Southern Highway. It can easily draw visitors from Dangriga, where the regional airport is located, and become an overnight stop before visitors continue to Toledo District. The palm-tree lined beach of Hopkins has suffered from a disease that has killed almost all its palms, requiring replanting of young, disease-resistant palms. This lack of a mature palm forests, and associated absence of shade, takes away from the natural beauty and discourages visitors to stay and relax on the beach. Senior residents in Hopkins remember when this beautiful beach was very different – and it will be again, in time.

Hopkins’ paved road, which runs through the middle of the village, compliments the clean, orderly design and layout of houses throughout the village, and provides a focal point for locals and visitors to meet and greet.

Hopkins is in the unique position to showcase the culture of the Garifuna people in Belize. Of the five remaining Garifuna communities in Belize, Hopkins prides itself on being the one that has maintained the strongest traditional components and beliefs of their Black Carib ancestry. Everybody in the village can speak Garifuna. “Huduit” is the favorite meal made from conch and coconut milk; drumming is a favorite pastime; building the drums from nearby mahogany trees is an active traditional skill. Among residents, traditional tools are still used today, making it a natural place as a living museum.

6.8 Regional Connections

The three main communities under study, Hopkins, Seine Bight, and Placencia, are intimately interconnected with the natural and human resources of the Toledo District, their neighbor to the south. Not only linked by the soon-to-be-paved Southern Highway, all communities use the same natural and cultural resources to the south as tourism attractions: Mayan villages and archeological sites, caves, rivers, Jaguar Reserve, and more. They are also linked by human resources, sharing guiding and co-management responsibilities of these southern attractions.

Therefore, it was relevant that the Toledo District become an integral part of this study, as an adjacent focus. A shorter time was spent in this District, evaluating the three major components of the area: 1) the Mayan communities, 2) Monkey River Village (MR), and

3) Punta Gorda Town (PG). A regional SWOT analysis was done on the district as a whole, and a summary of that is presented here.

Table 11. Toledo SWOT	
Strengths	
Marketing	NGOs have several web sites to promote villages: Monkey River Village, Mayan TEA, TIDE; Tourist information center
Natural Resources	Ridge to Reef – caves, cayes, mountains, diving
Cultural Assets	Mayan villages, East Indian influences, and Garifuna communities
Internal Organizations	TGA/Monkey River, TGA/Punta Gorda – Fisherman Co-op, APMR, TIDE, SATIIM, Port of Honduras/Payne’s Creek Steering Committee [= reps from: TGA, Fisheries, BTIA, UCB, Town council, Forestry, TIDE, Belize Defense Force, Fisherman Co-op], BTIA, village/town council, TEA, Mayan Farming Cooperative, TMCC; TIDE willing to coordinate tourism plan for region
External Organizations	Fisheries Department, Sapodilla Marine Reserve Advisory Committee, SDP, BDF, Nature’s Way (Chet Schmidt), Plenty (for TEA), Orvis, Trek Force, BEST – trained APMR, Eco-Logic, KCB, Coastal Zone
Weaknesses	
Marketing	No nationally coordinated marketing effort
Physical Infrastructure	Accessibility to Toledo is difficult due to Southern Hwy under construction
Internal/External Organizations	Lack of NGOs working together; Lack of coordination between villages; Lack of regional tourism plan
Opportunities	
Natural Resources Education/Awareness	Tourism development and tours; Mayan Community Conservation Areas (CCAs)
Human Resource Training	Training and HR development to support tourism
Threats	
Tourism Growth	PL guides “invade” Toledo territory
Natural Resources	Destruction of NR by agriculture and aquaculture impacts; Limited government support and enforcement of PAs
Culture	Imposition of foreign culture and development on locals, Little respect for local culture by tourists; Locals want tourists to go home
Foreign Influence	Immigrations of Guatemalans as permanent residents taxing local government services, and encouraging land scarcity

6.9 Case Study Conclusions

Placencia is blessed and cursed with a thriving community-based ecotourism industry, thanks in part to its new web site: www.placencia.com. This point where sand meets sea and lagoon offers numerous natural attractions, from calm, beautiful beaches and a proliferation of protected cays and marine reserves, to the soft adventure of diving with whale sharks or of sliding down waterfalls at Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, with opportunities of seeing monkeys, birds, and perhaps even a jaguar. Mayan communities and archeological sites are also relatively nearby.

Second, only to its great diversity of natural resources is the character and charm of this village seaside oasis. Tranquility and scenic beauty abound, and it is easy for visitors to relax with friends at a locally owned beach bar, restaurant, or guesthouse. Its world-renowned sidewalk guides visitors to gift shops, diving operations, internet services, and village homes.

Placencians recognize the need to protect these unique natural resources and have made great strides in doing so. Villagers have successfully created several local NGOs that now receive funding and are scheduled to manage the majority of marine reserves nearby. The weak link in protection is the lagoon, where an increasing number of shrimp farms and banana plantations dump their wastes into the prime habitat for the endangered manatee. Village committees have plans for making the lagoon into a protected area, but it will be an uphill battle, needing resources and support from government and possibly abroad.

Because Seine Bight is on the same peninsula as Placencia, Seine Bight has a great opportunity available to capture much of the tourist market going to and residing in Placencia. However, Seine Bight is five to ten years behind Placencia in infrastructure (both physical and human) development and planning. Seine Bight has access to all of the scenic and natural beauty of nearby protected areas, both in-land and coastal: the cays and marine reserves, Mayan communities and archeological sites, and the waterfalls and wildlife of Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary. The village provides a quaint, seaside atmosphere, with the potential of becoming a major entertainment center, highlighting its unique and abundant Garifuna cultural drumming, dancing, and food.

Hopkins connects with these tourism desires by offering a great diversity of natural resources, protected areas featuring rainforests, Mayan sites, as well as several cays, with activities, close by. Villagers recognize that their community benefits by helping to protect these resources. Visitors express interests in clean beaches, peaceful rural settings. These are assets that Hopkins has, however, there are still actions locals must take to meet tourist expectations. Hopkins is also the pinnacle place where the Garifuna culture and language is present today for visitors to witness and experience.

The curses which villagers face are that popularity brings associated problems of rapid change. Main problems stem from the foreign emphasis on “bigger is better” and on competition, not cooperation, with villagers (Ferguson 1994; Escobar 1995). Local residents want to implement zoning laws and building codes to avoid becoming as “developed” as San Pedro on Ambergris Cay – they feel they have a different experience to offer tourists visiting the central coasts of Belize, which compliments, not repeats, the experience of the extremely popular San Pedro.

The residents of Placencia Village, Seine Bight Village, and Hopkins Village have all expressed the same fundamental concern regarding ecotourism development, and the future economic and social development of their communities – how to remain a small community in charge of its destiny, while still improving the quality of local life?

This is a question that has inspired many authors to write books on small-scale economics in harmony with the environment (Costanza 1991; Daly 1991; Daly and Cobb 1989; Hawken, et.al. 1999) -- the best known of which is E. F. Shumacher's *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* (1973). Creating a marketable product, at the local level, which can improve the lives of local people and improve the quality of the surrounding natural environment, is what CBE and REAP are about.

Through ecotourism, these communities are looking to advance their economies, their livelihoods, their future. They are finally realizing that their community and its natural and cultural resources provide an attraction that can be marketed nationally and internationally. The problem is: How? Additionally, how do these local products integrate into Belize's national Tourism Strategy Plan?

Although in recent years tourism in Belize has experienced a fluctuation, with tourist arrivals ranging from 100,000 to over 300,000 annually (Blackstone Corporation 1998, BTB 2003). The government recognizes the great future potential for Belize's tourism industry as "a pristine, natural destination that unites culture, ecology, and the development of its people" (Woods 2000) with the latest promotional blitz highlighting the Placencia Peninsula (BTIA 2000). The Belizean government has begun to implement its Tourism Strategy Plan, promoting "for the most part, the 'elite', upper-income segment of the ecotourism and diving markets" (Blackstone Corporation 1998:2-4).

Promotion to the "elite" market will require more 5-star resorts and associated amenities. The success of these developments will also require major capital investments and the courting of foreign dollars. Referring to The Fiscal Incentives Act of 1990, Wilkenson states in the Blackstone report, "Belize has no barriers to foreign investment or to the operation of totally foreign-owned business" (Blackstone Corporation 1998:10). This government policy of encouraging foreign-owned business demonstrates that there is not a strong connection between the government's Tourism Strategy Plan and support for village CBE, which promotes locally-owned businesses. Recent marketing studies help to clarify that there is a market for high, medium and low-end tourism in Belize supported by a wide demographic range of travelers, many of whom are shopping on the Internet, are younger than what has appeared in previous studies and have less interest in up-scale accommodations. This creates an opportunity for the Belizean government to both meet its Tourism Strategy Plan goals and develop small rural communities through community- based ecotourism.

In addition to tourism, these beach-front communities are experiencing a surge in development of residential homes for primarily the US market, as illustrated by the 5000-lot development called "The Plantation" on a 7-mile stretch of beach on the Placencia Peninsula north of Seine Bight (The Plantation 2000). This large-scale development of the peninsula in many ways eclipses the tourism development problems of Placencia and Seine Bight Villages. With a total population of 1500 current residents on the peninsula, The Plantation proposes to add an additional 10,000+ people, over the next 5 years to an area that is only 15 miles long and at maximum one-half mile wide. This increase in

development has already impacted these small communities, as they are priced out of the real estate market and need to secure lands for their children by filling in the shallow areas of the adjacent lagoon for local housing lots.

This lot development has necessitated the cutting of mangrove forests by both community residents and foreign developers along both the lagoon side and the beach side, thus losing the water filtration and erosion benefits provided by these mangrove ecosystems. Because of the cutting, these developments may negatively impact the currently healthy population of manatees in the lagoon (TNC, *pers.comm.*, May 2000). Additionally, The Plantation development has been given approval from the Belize government to cut through the peninsula from lagoon to sea, mixing salt and fresh water, and thereby impacting negatively upon the natural ecosystems and wildlife (Destinations Belize 2003).

Rapid, large scale development is approved by the Belizean government, as demonstrated by developments like The Plantation and the previously mentioned shrimp farm expansion. These large scale developments can be contrary to the small scale developments that coastal villagers are both used to and want for their future (Interviewee #10, May 2000). As for ecotourism, locals interviewed want to increase development, but at a size and time scale that allows for community input and partnership. The local community residents ask: "What is to become of us?" "How can we keep control of our lives and the development around us? We do not want to become a San Pedro (the main town on Ambergris Cay), and especially not a Cancun!" (Interviewee #9, May 2000).

Two fundamental issues are present in the minds of local residents of these coastal communities, as found from the REAP study. First, is a great concern over the rapid pace in which the economic development of their lands and their society is occurring, and second, is a resentment towards, as they perceive, foreign businesses bringing about this rapid change (Interviewee #26, May 2000). All of the people interviewed in this REAP study expressed a desire for tourism development. So, what's the problem? The problem is that development is moving so fast that each community feels out of control and unprepared. Hence the use of the REAP model tool to identify, consolidate, and prioritize community concerns and to address solutions.

During the researchers' stay in the communities, the REAP process discovered that the predominant feelings, among both foreign and local residents interviewed, were a lack of respect, and a lack of appreciation for each other's cultural differences. Locals felt disrespected, unappreciated, disadvantaged, and forced to play on an "uneven playing field," even at home (Interviewee #46, May, 2000). Foreign residents felt resented for wanting to move in and "improve" the community (Interviewee #48, May, 2000).

These underlying currents of conflict between local and foreign residents are not evident to the casual visitor (Interviewee #47, May, 2000). The villages seem to run smoothly, providing various services for the ecotourist to choose from and to enjoy. From conversations with visitors, REAP researchers found that if visitors perceive deficiencies, these are generally in the quality and type of hospitality services offered (*pers. comm.*

Barbara and Ron tourist, May, 2000), indicating a need for training of locals in hospitality, as well as increased access to capital to make improvements.

Some foreign investors, interviewed during the REAP process, believe that much needed infrastructure, such as electricity, roads, and water systems, has come from the development of their hotels, residential homes, etc., and if not for foreign investment in these areas, these benefits would not exist (Interviewee #40, May, 2000). Whether this is true or not remains to be documented. Overwhelmingly, REAP found that these local communities welcome ecotourism development, and appreciate the benefits that ecotourism brings, but their greatest concern is having control of ecotourism development in their communities, so that locals, not foreigners, own a greater proportion of services and associated benefits.

The conclusions from REAP show that the essence of conflict between foreigners and locals stems from a lack of understanding between these two dominant cultures: Belizean and North American. As discussed in the REAP village summaries, informants see the Belizean way of life is one of trust between businessmen and women - deals are made with hand-shakes, using money saved over a period of time, and usually between relatives (most people being related to each other in these small villages). Informants see the Western way of doing business is one of contracts, using banks, and often between people who are only associated through business, not family. The main difference is one of personal contact and caring between the individuals involved - a "communal versus individual" benefits approach (Interviewee #10, May, 2000).

The REAP process found that, in order to achieve successful CBE ventures in these coastal Belizean communities, a cultural bridge will need to be created. Ray and Anderson have documented that there is an emerging group of people worldwide, called the "Cultural Creatives" who are already spanning this bridge (Ray and Anderson 2000). This emerging group brings to the community development table a desire for regional planning, collaboration, "smart growth," walkable communities, the concept of "voluntary simplicity," and a great desire to honor the natural environment and the wishes of local people (Roark and Marshall 2001; Rutherford 2001; Bullard, *et.al.* 2000; The Brookings Institution 2000; Dominguez and Robin 1992). These new integrated trends in community development, if added to the future agenda of Belizean CBE, can help to span the gap of understanding between Placencia and Seine Bight, Creole and Garifuna, Mayan and Western, Traditional and Modern ways of living. Each stakeholder can obtain a "win-win" at both the village level and in the marketplace.

The Next-steps for these communities are to identify funding sources to assist with training and implementation of the priority actions identified by each community during the REAP process. We hope that in the true spirit of consultation that diverse groups, within communities, as well as those outside communities, will discover common goals and work together to achieve them. We believe that this REAP study has provided them with a vision of common ground.

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8. AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Alison D. Austin, MS



Alison Austin has nearly 20 years experience specializing in sustainable tourism development in rural communities as a tourism communication specialist with the Organization of American States (OAS) and as Vice President of Rainforest Media and Tourism Consulting Inc. During her career, she has lived and worked extensively throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, where she is best known for designing and implementing national environmental and tourism awareness programs.

Her work with rural under-developed communities and non-governmental organizations was to create community development action plans, assist with institutional strengthening, promoting ecotourism and integrating community activities with tourism development projects. Austin has taught Ecotourism Planning and Management for Florida International University, Miami Florida, and is presently the Director of Communications and Community Outreach for the National Audubon Society in their Florida office. Austin has a Bachelor's Degree in Communications/Public Relations and a Masters of Science Degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management. Contact:

aaustin@audubon.org

Gail Y. B. Lash, Ph.D.



Gail Lash, Ph.D. has worked for over twelve years with rural communities assessing social and economic development issues related to community-based ecotourism around parks and protected areas. Her work in Ecuador, Belize, and Indonesia has covered such topics as women's craft groups, landowner rights, local perceptions of benefits from protected areas, guide training, conservation education, and building equitable partnerships. She is Owner of Ursa International, a planning firm that specializes in designing zoological parks worldwide.

She is Coordinator of the "Spirituality in Tourism Network" of the International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT), an Associate with Community Conservation, Inc. (CC), and Healing Clinic Coordinator and teacher for the Horizon Healing Center in Atlanta. Dr. Lash serves on the Board of Directors of The Forest Foundation (TFF), which supports local producer artisan groups in developing countries. Dr. Lash has a Bachelor's Degree in Zoology from Duke University, a Masters of Science Degree in Technology and Science Policy from Georgia Institute of Technology, and a Ph.D. in Forest Resources from the University of Georgia.

Contact: <http://www.ursainternational.org> or <http://www.spiritbear.us>

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Community Key Informant Interview Form

Informant's Name _____ Date _____
 Title/Position _____ Time _____
 Community _____ Interviewer _____

I. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

What is the population of the community?
 What makes this area unique/different/special?
 Do you consider the village and the culture an attraction & why?
 How is the area/attraction marketed to the public?
 Who would you consider are the local leaders in the community? and Why?
 What % of the community have:
 Electricity _____
 Indoor toilets/plumbing _____
 Telephones _____
 Television _____
 What health services are available in the community?
 How is solid waste collected and discarded?
 Are there public bathrooms available for visitors?
 Is there regular bus service?
 Is there a taxi service or car rental?
 What other things are needed in the community?

II. ECOTOURISM BUSINESS INITIATIVES

What tourism businesses are owned by community groups, individuals or foreigners?
 What start-up investments were made?
 Is there an organization that supports business development and tourism growth?
 Were any outside agencies involved in helping ET activities get started? If yes, which ones? How were they involved?

III. COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

Is there a village council? Who are the council members? Who are the officers?
 How often do they meet? Are officers/members paid/volunteer?
 How do they communicate with residents in the community?
 How are community issues raised?
 What skills are available among the local community? ie. plumbing, boat building computer etc.
 What % of people in the community have professional or university training? ie accounting, sales, graphics etc.
 Identify other active community organizations

What are the goals & objectives of this organization?

Who is responsible for hiring, training and paying organization staff/volunteers?

Are training courses offered for Ecotourism related businesses? If yes, what type of training and who offers the training?

Who of your staff has attended training related to tourism?

What types of training would you like to have offered?

How does group communicate with businesses?

Does your community work with a tour operator? If yes which ones?

Does your group work w/ organizations outside of the community? If yes, which ones

How does the group communicate these organizations? Meetings, etc

How is money from tourism being distributed with the community

What would you recommend to improve ET in this community?

Do you have any comments you would like to add?

This form was customized to relate to the individual community leader, resident or business owner.

Appendix B – Community Individual Interview Form

Informant's Name _____ Date _____
 Title/Position _____ Time _____
 Community _____ Interviewer _____

What is the population of the community? % of youth under 21?
 What makes the area unique/Different/Special?

QUESTIONS ABOUT NATURAL RESOURCES:

Do you think that the tapirs/caves/Mayan ruins/coral reefs/jungle should be protected?
 [CHOOSE ONE TO ASK ABOUT]
 Are these resources managed? By whom?
 Is the community involved in the management of these resources?
 Do you think that the community should have more or less involvement in the management of these resources? In what ways?
 Does the community benefit from protecting these resources? How?
 Can you describe any benefits you are personally receiving because these resources are protected?
 Do local people lose any benefits by protecting these resources? What? How?

QUESTIONS ABOUT TOURISM:

Have you visited any other protected areas in Belize? If yes, which ones? If no, why not?
 Do you like people coming to visit your village (PUT NAME HERE) as tourists?
 Does tourism benefit your community? How?
 Does tourism benefit you?
 Have the numbers of tourists visiting your community increased in the last year?
 Are there negative aspects to tourism? (Is there anything bad about tourism) What?
 How do you feel about tourists taking pictures in your village/
 Are there any "rules" or cultural customs that you feel tourists should obey? What are they?

QUESTION ABOUT ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES FOR VISITORS

What attracts tourists now to this area?
 Do you consider the village and culture an attraction?
 How is the area/attraction marketed to the public?
 Do most of the homes or places for tourists' services have electricity?
 What about telephone service? % of places
 Do you think that visitors feel safe walking alone in the community? If not, why not?
 What kinds of first aid services are available in the community?
 What other services are needed in the community to make it more comfortable for residents and visitors?

QUESTION ABOUT INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES

Name/Type of Business

Who are the owners?

How long have you been in business?

What made you start the business and what were your start-up investments?

Did you receive any assistance from outside agencies? What type?

What have you learned and what would you do differently?

How many guests/patrons you average monthly/annually?

What is the average cost of a room/meal/tour?

Number and type of equipment owned (vehicles, boats, bicycles, etc.)

Tour destinations that you service.

How many guests can you serve at a time?

How many employees do you have?

How do you market your product or solicit your clients?

Have you or your staff received any training/ What type?

What types of training would you like to have offered?

Is there an organization that supports business development and tourism growth?

Are there any places in the area where tourists can buy crafts?

Are there any stores in the area where tourists can buy personal goods, such as suntan lotion or snacks? Where? Who owns/manages them?

RECOMMENDATIONS

What would you recommend to others starting an Ecotourism business?

What are your suggestions for future Ecotourism development in this community?

Specifically, what other activities or services can you think of that could be offered on your land or in your village?

Where do you think these activities or services should be located? Who should run them?

What investments or improvements are needed now?

Are there other forms of development besides tourism that you think would benefit the local residents of the area? What are they?

RESPONDENT'S INFORMATION

How old are you?

What was the highest education grade you completed?

What languages do you speak?

Do you belong to any community organizations or cooperative/

Do you own your land? (lease it?)

Who would you consider local leaders?

Who would you suggest that we talk with, who may have a different opinion than your own?

Do you have any comments you would like to add?

Appendix C – Community Focus Group Interview Form

Group Name _____ Date _____
Chairperson/Leader _____ Time _____
Community _____ Interviewer _____

- What are the organizations objectives?
- What is the decision-making process/structure?
- What was the organization started?
- What outside investment were needed?
- What are some of the challenges/problems you encountered starting the business?
- What things are you most proud of?
- What are the most effective methods of communicating to the members and community at-large?
- What services does your group offer?
- Are there dues?
- What shared resources does the group own or lease? (land, building, equipment, etc.)
- How are costs shared? How are resources divided?
- What training, if any is needed?
- What other groups or agencies do you partner with?
- How does your organization contribute to community development?
- What advice would you offer someone wanting to start a co-op or community organization?

Appendix D – Community Score Sheet

Category	Community Name																								
	Sarteneja	Gale Point	Yo Creek	San Lazaro	Trinidad	August Pine	San Felipe	Indian Church	St. Margaret's	San Antonio	Hopkins Village	Maya Center	Placencia	Monkey River	Big Falls	Laguna Village	S. Pedro Colombia	Santa Cruz	Santa Alena	Pueblo Viejo	San Jose	Blue Creek	Barranco	Crique Sarco	
Organizational Structure																									
Community Leader	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Community Council	1	1	1	1	1			1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Group tourism coop.	2	2	2	2	2	2			2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
Group business coop.	2	2	2	2		2	2				2		2	2	2										
Community NGO	2	2	2						2						2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
Non-community NGO	2		2	2	2	2	2	2			2		2	2											
Other	1					1					1			1										1	
Subtotal	11	6	10	10	6	2	7	4	2	6	3	9	4	8	11	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	4	
Natural Attractions																									
Cave	1		1							1	1					1		1	1				1		
Mountains	1				1	1	1		1	1		1						1	1			1	1		
Nat. Parks/Preserve	1	1	1						1	1	1	1	1	1							1	1		1	
Waterfalls	1		1				1		1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
River/Lagoon	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1						1						1		1	
Ocean	1	1									1		1	1										1	
Cayes	1	1											1												
Rainforest	1	1		1					1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Nature Trails	1	1	1	1	1		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Wildlife	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Culture	1							1	1	1	1	1				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Other	1	1						1							1										
Subtotal	12	8	5	4	2	1	4	4	5	9	9	6	7	6	3	5	7	5	6	6	5	7	9	4	5
Connection of Community on Resources																									
Ocean/Fishing	2	2									2		2	2										2	
Rainforest/Farming/ Hunting	2								2	2		2			2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		
Savannah/Farming/ Hunting	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2						2											
Rivers/Fishing/ Transportation	2	2	2	2		2		2						2										2	
Cayes/Fishing/ Transportation	2	2											2												
Other	1																								
Subtotal	11	8	4	4	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	6	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
Existing Ecotourism Activity																									
B&B 1-3	3	3	1	1	1				3					3	1	2					1	1		1	
Homestays	1					1	1	1				1					1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Lodges 1-3	3	3	1			1					3		3				1	1							
Stores/Shops	2	2	2						2	2		2	2		2						2	2			
Restaurants/Bars 1-3	3	3	1	1	1	1					2		3	1	2						1				
Canoeing	1	1	1			1	1	1					1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Organized Tours	2	2	2					2			2		2	2	2		2				2		2	2	
Hiking	1	1								1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Boating	1	1	1					1			1		1	1										1	
Fishing	1	1	1	1		1	1	1			1		1	1										1	
Cave exploration	1		1						1	1						1		1	1				1		
Swimming	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1		1			1		1	1			1	1	1	
Snorkeling/Diving	1	1	1										1												
Birding	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Mayan ruins	1	1						1		1							1	1	1						
Cultural villages	1									1	1	1				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Other	1									1		1						1	1					1	
Subtotal	25	21	13	6	4	2	7	5	9	7	8	12	6	17	9	10	8	10	10	8	5	12	10	11	3

Category	Community Name																								
	Sarteneja	Gale Point	Yo Creek	San Lazaro	Trinidad	August Pine	San Felipe	Indian Church	St. Margaret's	San Antonio	Hopkins Village	Maya Center	Placencia	Monkey River	Big Falls	Laguna Village	S. Pedro Colombia	Santa Cruz	Santa Alena	Pueblo Viejo	San Jose	Blue Creek	Barranco	Crique Sarco	
Infrastructure/Accessibility/Transport																									
Major Highway	3								3		3				3										
Major Roads	2	2	2	2																					
Dirt Road	1				1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Airport	3	3												3											
Wharf	2	2	2								2		2	2											2
Bus Service	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Taxi Service	3	3		3	3	3	3	3	3		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Surrounding Villages	2			2	2	2	2	2	2		2			2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Vicinity of Major City (1hr)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Telephone	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Radiophone	1											1													3
Electricity	3	3	3											3				3							3
Indoor water systems	3	3							3				3			3									
Other	1																								
Listed in Guidebook	3	3	3					3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3									
Listed on Web	3	3	3					3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3										
Listed by Belizean NGO	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Subtotal	41	31	24	18	17	17	17	17	23	18	12	20	21	34	20	22	14	20	14	11	11	11	14	6	3
Ethnic Make-up																									
Creole	1		1						1				1	1											
Mayan	1			1	1	1	1		1	1		1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mestizo	1	1		1			1		1																
Garifuna	1								1		1		1	1											1
Spanish	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1															
European/US	1	1							1				1												
Menonite	1																								
Population < 500	3		3					3				3	3			3			3				3	3	3
Population 501-1000	2				2				2	2	2				2				2		2	2			
Population >1000	1	1		1		1	1	1								1		1							
Total	13	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	8	3	3	4	7	4	2	4	2	3	4	3	3	4	4	4
Geographical Location																									
Corozal	CZ	CZ																							
Orange Walk	OW			OW	OW	OW	OW	OW	OW																
Cayo	CY									CY	CY														
Belize	BZ																								
Stann Creek	SC		SC									SC	SC	SC											
Toledo	TL														TL	TL	TL	TL	TL	TL	TL	TL	TL	TL	TL
TOTAL	113	78	60	45	34	28	42	35	45	50	37	52	44	76	53	47	41	45	41	37	32	41	45	34	21

* low-no info

Based on village summaries in Report by the Ministry of Tourism and the Environment, and BEST 1994.

Appendix E – Expertise Needed For Community Researchers

There are certain qualifications of the community team research individuals which are recommended strongly to be considered and followed. If at all possible, it is highly recommended that at least one of the community researchers be from the country of study or of the same racial/ethnic and cultural make-up as the people under study. It is also recommended that at least one of the researchers be female (Henderson, M. 1994). Additionally, and absolutely necessary, qualifications of the researchers include the following:

- ❖ The ability to interact easily with peoples from different cultures
- ❖ The ability to live in local, rural conditions with the people, without judgment
- ❖ The ability to empathically listen to people, and reflect genuine understanding of the expressed values, concerns and viewpoints
- ❖ The ability to build rapport easily and create an atmosphere of comfort and trust
- ❖ The ability to withhold privileged information, and provide a confidential atmosphere for discussions/interviews, when requested
- ❖ Honesty, forthrightness, integrity and tolerance
- ❖ Previous experience working in small community settings
- ❖ The ability to laugh at oneself, and admit mistakes
- ❖ The ability to work in a team, seeking to understand team members with the same intensity of wanting to understand the people under study
- ❖ Training related to interview data collection and analysis

University training is an asset, but not necessary. What is more critical is that the researcher has community experience and combines the qualities above. If possible, qualified researchers could come from the communities under study.