

ANSE LA RAYE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Community Background

Anse La Raye Village is a small, fishing settlement on the west coast of the island and is located approximately 10 miles from the city of Castries. The village is named after the flying or manta ray fish which was very common in the village's bay. It is surrounded by lush green fertile valleys and estates with neighboring communities and residential areas which include:

AU JERRE	MILLET-CAICO
AU TABOR	MILLET-CAICO-ENBAR PWIN
AU TABOR HILL	MILLET-TETE CHEMIN
BOIS DEN	MILLET-VENUS
BOIS D INDE	MORNE CISEAUX
CHAMPEN ESTATE	MORNE D'OR
DURANDEAU	ROSEAU VALLEY
INVORGOIL ESTATE	ST LAWRENCE
JACMEL	ST LAWRENCE ESTATE
JEAN BAPTISTE	VANARD
LA TREILLE	VANARD-LA TREILLE
MAIN ROAD	VENUS
MASSACRE	ANSE LA RAYE VILLAGE
MILLET	

Sea swells and storm surges have devastating effects on the coastal village as it is located beneath sea level and therefore vulnerable to flooding. This was evident in the near devastation of the village during Tropical Storm Debbie in 1993 which prompted the relocation of several residents and initiated a major flood mitigation project.



The natural physical features:

- Land
- River
- Caribbean Sea
- Waterfalls
- Bathing pools
- Scenic areas
- mangroves

Historical and man-made attractions

- La sikwi sugar mill
- Plantation estates
- French architecture
- Houses and buildings over one hundred years

The road network to the capital city is relatively well-maintained and a regular bus system exists during the hours of 5am- 7pm from Monday to Saturday.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY LIFE

Anse La Raye village is small and densely populated and was estimated in 2010 at 713 residents, 370 of which are male and 343 of which are female. There are approximately 272 households and an average household size of 2.63 persons (Population and Housing Census, 2010).

Approximately 90 per cent of the population are of Afro-Caribbean descent and the village can be characterised as a



youthful generation along with two significant age cohorts which are namely the older generation (65 and over) and child population (under 15 years). The adult population is noticeable shrinking in the village and this has been attributed to migration.

Anse la Raye residents described themselves as courteous, helpful people who look after each other especially during times of crisis. They boast of a strong community spirit and a relaxing place with a rich history and scenic views that both locals and visitors can explore.

The settlement provides essential educational services including:

- Preschool
- Infant and Primary school
- Technical and Vocational education through the Centre for Adolescent Rehabilitation Education (CARE).

There is no secondary school located in Anse La Raye, however, schools are easily accessible in Castries which is approximately a 15 minutes drive.

The establishment of a library and Information Technology Centre are a sound indication that residents are given opportunities to improve educational standards and to bridge the technological divide.

Accessibility to primary health care is mainly through the Community Health Centers of Anse la Raye Village and Jacmel. These have played a central role in the provision of health services for several decades. Other public services include a post office and a police station.



All the major amenities of water and sanitation are available including:

- Public laundry
- Standpipes

Residents especially from the village have identified deplorable housing infrastructure and inadequate sanitation facilities as persistent and significant challenges. This is evident in that most households from the village must use public toilets, baths and laundry.

Accessibility to water, electricity and telecommunications has facilitated the growing developmental needs of residents.

The community enjoys a range of recreational activities through the use of the playing field and playing courts where netball and basketball are regularly played. In addition, there is a steel pan room which gives them an opportunity to learn steel band music.

A relatively small number of groups and organizations which are community based exist and provide networks of mutual trust and support. These groups are the

- District Council
- UK Committee
- Football Clubs
- Youth on Fire
- Vendors Association
- Cecilian Rays
- Mothers and Fathers Group



The most well-known of the groups is the Cecilian Rays which has acclaimed national prominence with various renditions while the members of the Vendor's Association are instrumental in making the Friday Fish Festival a vital weekly livelihood activity which benefits many households.

Residents are mainly affiliated to the Christian denominations of Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, Baptist and Pentecostal.

Economic Well Being

The region of Anse La Raye boasts of fertile agricultural lands and agricultural activities. The former sugar and banana plantations of St. Lawrence, Champagne and Invorgol Estates are some of the reminders of a thriving community in the 1970s and 'the hub of activities' for the surrounding communities. These estates or plantations once provided a means of livelihood through the commercial farming of sugar, bananas, cocoa, plantains, root crops and vegetables.

Anse la Raye village is generally described as a fishing settlement and is well known for the smaller variety of fishes such as jacks, sardines, balawoo and keelewoo. Although the fishing infrastructure is relatively under-developed, the existence of a jetty and the waterfront accommodation for fishermen's gear (boats, nets and fishing equipment) signals the continued role of this economic activity in the lives of residents.



Despite the importance of the fishing sector to the village, fishers mentioned a number of difficulties related to the profession. Some of them included:

- Depletion in the stock of fish as a result of tourist-based water activities.
- Pollution from the quarry and agricultural and solid waste discharges.
- The use of inappropriate fishing gear, especially small meshes, poisons and the harvesting of young lobsters, have also contributed to the exhausted stock of fish.

Apart from fishing, subsistence farming still plays a vital role in maintaining livelihoods as few farmers from Millet and Roseau cultivate and produce both short and long term crops and vegetables in this community even with the decline in commercial agriculture.

Anse la Raye has recently forayed into the country's booming tourism industry. There is an increasing reliance on tourism as a lucrative market, marking a transformation from the heavy dependence of fishing and agriculture to tourism based initiatives.

One distinct initiative which marks this transformation process is the Anse la Raye Friday Fish Fry. This is a street fair where a variety of sea foods; sourced from local fishermen are prepared in various forms such as bar-b-que, steamed and fried. The activity has contributed significantly to sustaining families in the community.



The Friday Fish Fry performs a meaningful role in the emerging tourism activities of the Village with food preparations, outdoor dining and ‘blasting music’ of different genres from competing vendors. The Friday activity is seen to have a number of spin offs with the committee standardizing the activity, a market for the fish caught, young men and women vending while locals and visitors enjoy exceptional local cuisine.

The street fair has thrust Anse La Raye into the spotlight locally and internationally as an ideal Friday night ‘lime” for sea cuisine for St. Lucians and visitors.

Another important economic activity in the community is vending. On every day except Sunday, vendors sell their goods, both agricultural and craft; line the streets to sell their wares to locals and tourists alike.

A small number of tourist attractions such as the safari tour of ‘La Sikwi Sugar Mill’ on the Invorgol Estate, viewing or bathing in the waterfalls and a visit to the Vendors’ Arcade on Front Street in the village make up part of the visitor experience.

Notwithstanding these dominant means of livelihood, a community profile has revealed that the major economic challenge faced by men and women in Anse la Raye is unemployment. In fact, unemployment among young people is exceptionally high despite the availability of numerous skills training programmes in sewing, cake making and decorating for the young women especially, and in construction for the young men. While men are mainly self-employed in agriculture and fishing most women are vendors.



The increased attention and exposure that the village has received as a tourist destination, has highlighted a number of deficiencies in the village's level of preparedness for large scale touristic activity. However, residents remain committed to work hard for improvement in economic well being.

Overcoming Poverty and Vulnerability

Over the past decade, two major Poverty Assessment Reports (CDB 1996 and 2006) identified Anse La Raye as one the poorest communities on the island.

The last Poverty Assessment Study (2006) revealed 39.6 per cent of poor households, 5.3 per cent indigent and 26.1 per cent vulnerable within the Anse la Raye and Canaries district.

Household economies and livelihoods are classified as being 'fragile' and consisted of persons who are either unemployed, working part-time or in seasonal jobs, or working in low-skilled, low-paying jobs which were insufficient to meet daily needs and pay bills.

The forms of struggle among households identified by the 2006 assessment were:

- Small scale farming for domestic consumption;
- Inconsistent and unreliable contributions from absent fathers;
- Self employed activities such as small shops, crafts, etc.
 - Occasional remittances of money and gifts in the form of barrels;



- Neighbourhood informal support and helps;
- Gifts from churches and charitable organisations;
- Small pensions and social assistance/welfare;
- Stringent budgetary measures balancing the urgency of priorities over needs; and
- Migration to the towns, city and overseas.

Residents express that with the abundance of resources in the Anse la Raye region such as marine based resources, fertile lands; youthful population among others can eradicate the scourge of poverty through the creation of employment like a factory or hotel within the community.

Community Priorities

The community responded positively to the Special Framework of Assistance (2006) program and listed numerous initiatives which would help with the development of the community, thus creating the change needed for a better society. They are as follows:

- Employment (factory)
- Repair to the playing field
- Repair to the multipurpose court
- Workshop on soft skills and issues of drugs and teenage pregnancy
- Roads
- Recreations Parks
- Human Resource Development Centre
- Training in skills
- Agricultural program in School



- Gas station
- Credit Facility
- Housing
- Craft arcade
- Transport available at nights and weekend

THE ROAD AHEAD

To achieve the aspirations of the community, partnerships with groups and organizations must be strengthened. The West Coast Credit Union has begun preparation to establish a much needed credit facility in the Anse la Raye region for provision of financial services.

The Village Council is already engaged in discussion with the Office of Private Sector Relations (OPSR) and Sequa on other development projects within the community. All development initiatives should realize the aspirations of the community in:

- Generating employment opportunities especially for young people
- Promoting safety and security within the community
- Increasing the ability to secure loans and promote thrift
- Ensuring the social and economic infrastructure meet the needs of residents
- Engaging residents in to participate in decision-making for the community



- Protecting the environment through land and water conservation, reduce waste recycle and preserve biodiversity.

Implementation of the Plan

