
LA COURVILLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN



HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Nestled deep within the Micoud district on St. Lucia's east coast, is the small lush green rural community of La Courville. This settlement is surrounded by its neighbours, Dugard, Ti Rocher, Paix Bouche and Desruisseaux, with Micoud Village a five minute drive away. The nearest town is Vieux-Fort in the south, about eight miles away.

The community boasts of natural resources such as the rivers, ravines and springs serving both as a water source and recreational spot. Residents are privileged to hear and see the chirping sounds of birds, and look forward on afternoons to the flight overhead of four of St. Lucia's national bird the *Amazona Versicolour* or the St. Lucian parrot. They fly directly over La Courville from Des Quartier, Soufriere on the west coast, in search of food in La Courville's abundant forest.

At the time when sugar cane was king in St. Lucia, La Courville was part of the French-owned Moreau Estate. There were at least two sugar mills in the area and many came to





this sugar plantation to earn their living and created this settlement. The name La Courville, being of French origin, is translated to mean “The City Court or Yard”.



In the early 1950’s to 1960’s, the only means of gaining access to the community of La Courville was via a dirt track, and there were very few settlers. However, today the community can be reached via three tarmac roads. Diverting from the main Castries – Vieux Fort highway La Courville is accessible via the Ti Rocher road, which is located on the right of the intersection, or the Dugard road to the left. Motorists and bus drivers make greater use of the Ti Rocher road to enter the community because it is properly maintained. On the other hand, the Dugard road is seldom used by motorist because it is in a great state of disrepair. Members of the community have access to public transportation although there is near unavailability of services during evening time and on Sundays.



DEMOGRAPHY AND LIVING CONDITIONS



According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, there are 310 persons residing in La Courville, 154 of which are female and 156 of which are males. This is equivalent to an estimated increase of 19.6% of the population of 2001.



The average household size in this community is approximately 2.90 persons (Census 2010). About 65% of households are headed by both men and women, while 30% are headed by single women. On the other hand, 1% of households are headed by men only, with the remaining 2% of households being headed by widows.



The ethnic grouping of La Courville comprises about 97% Afro-Caribbean, while the remaining 3% accounts for *Douglas*, persons of a mixture of Afro-Caribbean and East Indian parentage.



Approximately 80% of household in the area are the extended family while the remaining 20% are nuclear. 99% of residents are of African descent while 1% is of Indian descent. Six main

families dominate in the area namely Randolp, Houry, Wilton, Xavier, Ismond and Bravilles.



Most houses are traditionally wooden. However, as families realise more income, the outer materials for homes change to part wood and concrete, and then eventually to concrete. Approximately 5% of homes are concrete structures in the community.



Majority of the houses in La Courville are wooden structures, and account for 60% of houses. While 37% are built in wall, the remaining 3% comprises both wood and wall. The residents reported that most owners of wall houses were either returned migrants on retirement, or famers who built their houses during the 'banana boom' period. Most wall and mixed structures appear to be well maintained. Conversely, the majority of the wooden structures appear to be in a deplorable condition.



The community of La Courville first received pipe-borne water during the mid 1980's. Today, almost all the houses have pipe line connections, however, only a few are being provided with tap water. According to residents, the Water and Sewerage





Company (WASCO) has discontinued supplying pipe water to most residents owing to high unsettled bills amounting to thousands of dollars, which residents have been unable to pay. The rivers and ravines are being utilized by the members of the La Courville community to bathe and do their washing. Members of the community also enjoy access to drinking water from two springs, namely “*Tou Michael*” and “*Tou Pohtoh*”. There is also a third spring, “*Shous Ma Doyle*”, which is no longer being used by members of the community. Rain water is harvested for drinking purposes and has been the main source of drinking water after Hurricane Tomas in October 2010.

Despite the fact that about 55% of households have flush toilets in La Courville, some from that group make use of pit latrines also. This is because most of them have been disconnected from the public water system lines. Forty percent (40%) of households have pit latrines only, while approximately 5% have neither pit latrines nor flush toilets. It was reported by members that those individuals dispose of their waste in the nearby bushes, river or ravines.



Garbage is collected twice weekly on scheduled routes by the St Lucia Solid Waste Management Authority. There are no communal waste bins within the community so residents are expected to store their garbage in private bags or bins. On collection days, garbage is placed at the roadside to be picked up by government trucks. The annual clean-up campaign held during the months of October or November among community members, contributes to a cleaner and safer environment in La Courville. Residents have access to electricity, water, telephone and cable television services.



Common medical conditions affecting residents of La Courville include diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, and cancer. Many persons, particularly older residents, have been diagnosed with some form of chronic disease, especially diabetes and hypertension, which is life threatening.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Primary school education is accessed at the Ti-Rocher Combined School which is roughly four kilometres away, as well as the Micoud Infant and Micoud Primary School which is approximately six kilometres away. Even though access to





secondary schools throughout the island is based on performance at the Common Entrance Examinations, the closest secondary schools to the community would be Micoud, Anse Ger and Vieux-Fort Secondary schools.

Residents use services at the Ti-Rocher Health Centre or the Micoud Health Centre. The community Health Aides at the Ti Rocher Health Centre makes routine visits to the community.



Facilities for sports in the community are lacking. A playing field in upper La Courville is in need of upgrading to provide a recreational space for local youth. The nearest playing field for the community is at Beauchamp which is approximately five kilometers away based on access route. There is a small multi- purpose court at Beauchamp and this too is in need of work to repair the facility and improve the surroundings.



There is a community centre, the venue for several events including parties, pageants and other local gatherings. It is a designated emergency shelter but due to its dilapidated state is not used as such. The community seems disenfranchised with the halt of work of its Multi-purpose Court. The Ti Rocher Multi Purpose Centre is the closest location for recreational activities which is almost 3 km away. Residents





feel that moving to other areas for meetings and events takes away from feeling that it is truly a La Courville activity.

There are two churches in La Courville, a newly built structure by the Pentecostal faith, which is not yet in operation and the La Courville Evangelical church located in the east of the community. The Roman Catholic congregation worships in nearby Ti Rocher and Micoud Village.



ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND LIVELIHOOD

Agriculture is the bedrock economic activity in the community, propped by construction, tourism and the service industries. Like most communities on the island, La Courville has made the transition from sugar cane to bananas and has diversified by producing a variety of agricultural crops. The farming of bananas, copra, fruits and vegetables, and the informal construction industry provide most of the jobs for the people. For the men, the main economic activities include small-scale farming and construction work.



La Courville serves as its own bread-basket with all the fruit and vegetables consumed there grown by the residents within the community itself. The majority of residents subsist on the





market gardening system, with small backyard gardens or small farms nearby, a source of pride for them. The residents also sell their produce in Micoud, Ti Rocher and other communities, thereby earning an income for their families.



On banana harvesting days, some farmers hire a few young men and women within the community. Residents reported that less people are involved in farming these days, since the passage of Hurricane Tomas in October 2010, have left many farmers of La Courville with very little or no income for their family.



Many residents are engaged in animal husbandry. Located on the northern side of the community are two pig pens owned by Mr. Doyle and Mr. Randolph. A sheep farm owned by Mr. Ambrose and two duck farms owned by Mr. Camille the east, Mr. Biscett respectively.



Construction is becoming a major income earner among the young men in the community. They are skilled as masons, carpenters, painters and labourers. They all proudly stated that they are equipped with computer skills and are





interested in skills training so that they can enhance their chances of getting good jobs once the economy improves. Many of them hope to become self-employed in the future to guard against lay-offs and outright loss of jobs.



The majority of the women are engaged in farming whether on the banana plantations or in cottage industries and small scale farming such as the production of fruits and vegetables, they are also engaged in vending. Most women have expressed interest in being trained in diverse areas such as, cake decorating, hairdressing, and seamstress. The women view skills training as an opportunity to a better financial future.



Residents have found work in the tourism and manufacturing industry, as well as the public service sector. They are employed as Policemen, Firemen, Health care workers and teachers in the public sector. It is a source of pride that La Courville has produced a few teachers for the nearby Micoud Secondary School. Those who work in Castries, either opt to travel daily or rent houses there, but return to their homes in La Courville on weekends.





At least seven residents are self-employed in the transportation sector, while an additional seven are involved in the retail sector being self-employed in the three grocery shops in La Courville. Other small enterprises to generate income in the community include, include rum shops, mechanic shops, joinery, bakery and an agro processor.



Some residents claimed that their favorite pastime for making money is cock-fighting, in which they indulge on Thursday nights and Sunday afternoons at two venues in La Courville. Although not supported by the faith based groups, “cock fighting” appears to be a big thing in this community.



Residents and visitors from all over, come to bet their monies on the rooster of their choice.

Members reported that no acts of violence have occurred at this event and consider this activity as supporting livelihood in the community.



Despite these measured economic activities in the community, residents agree that unemployment is by far the key social issue facing the community with the youth and adult women most affected. It is estimated that 40% of the





youth is underemployed and unemployed, while 50% of the women need work. Both groups say they are actively looking for work.



There is a high rate of unemployment among the women of La Courville, so most mothers are able to stay home and take care of their children. However, in cases where a short term job is available, they have the privilege of leaving the young child with relatives and friends, thus limiting any restrictions to employment opportunities owing to childcare.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY LIFE



La Courville is governed by the Micoud South District Council which represents local government in the area. However, the community boasts a Development Committee which comprises six executive members. The La Courville Youth Oriented and the Young Generation are two youth groups which have become inactive in the community but are working towards reviving their membership. The local Fair Trade Group which is made up of banana farmers is also another organization in the community.





Despite the fact that unemployment is a big issue between the young men and women of La Courville, they keep themselves occupied by carrying out their daily routines. There is a strong spirit of togetherness among the young men. Some of the greatest advantages of living in the community of La Courville are the strong family support and togetherness among members, a safe environment, a sense of kindness and trust. In addition, there is a high level of community spirit; patterns of shared help and support, proximity to relatives and friends. The community has a low crime rate complemented by many outdoor activities and social events in La Courville from playing football to the River Bash, and talent pageants.

COMMUNITY INTERVENTIONS

Residents of La Courville take pride in maintaining and keeping their environment clean. One of their many efforts is their yearly clean-up campaign, which is being organized by the youth. The most successful clean up exercise was the Gwan Koudmein, which was sponsored by the St. Lucia Social Development Fund (SSDF) in October 2010. Members of the community turned out in large numbers to





help clean up the community and clear a playing area, which is now used by the young men for playing football, and hosting their “Woolay-lah-bah” event.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES & PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS

1. Completion of multipurpose court
2. Construction of Human Resource Centre
3. Creation of park around the Boabab tree in Plannard
4. Rehabilitation of community playing field
5. Rehabilitation of community pre-school
6. Rehabilitation of drainage along the main Plannard to La Courville Road
7. Rehabilitation of La Courville Community Centre



IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN

The La Courville Development Committee will be responsible for the operation of this plan.

