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The Grand Turk Community Agriculture Project: *A Prescription for Capacity*

Gender and Social Integration Analysis

Grand Turk Solar Desalination Greenhouse Project Viability Study:

prepared by

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submitted to

Canadian International Development Agency

and

The Community of Grand Turk, Turks and Caicos Islands

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report presents the results of the Gender and Social Integration Analysis (Components 6 and 7) of the Grand Turk Solar Desalination Greenhouse Viability Study.

Its findings are based on conversations held with members of the Grand Turk and Providenciales communities during the fall of 2002.

This community faces many complex issues, but early on in the discussions, several points hit home:

- A Grand Turk family of four (two children and two adults both employed full time at minimum wage) spends 58 cents of every dollar of their income on food.
- Despite the amount spent on food, Turks and Caicos islanders suffer from very poor nutrition. A diet far too high in fat, sugar and salt and far too low in vegetables and fibre has made heart disease, stroke, hypertension, diabetes and cancer the leading causes of death in the country.
- One out of three Grand Turk residents lives below the poverty line. For people of colour, poverty strikes without reference to gender or nationality, but childhood poverty is endemic: 41% of the country's poor are under the age of 15, half the poor are under the age of 25.
- Finding ways to address the disillusionment of youth is a priority for the community.

It is the conclusion of the gender and social analysis that the proposed Grand Turk Greenhouse will have a positive impact on women in the community.

It is the conclusion of the social analysis that the provision of fresh, local fruits and vegetables; the creation of 10+ well paid, skilled jobs and the production of fresh water surplus to the demands of the facility that will be available, in one form or another, to the community will have a positive impact on the social needs of the community.

But the needs of the community are so pressing and the potential of the project so strong, the challenge that clearly emerged from discussion with the community was: "is there a way to deliver more benefits to the community in a sustainable way that complements and does not impede the priorities of the private sector entity?"

Birthing from discussion with the community, the social integration prescription recommended in this Report would create "CAP" – A Community Agriculture Project situated adjacent to but separate from the Grand Turk Solar Desalination Greenhouse and administered by a non-profit community partnership between the Community College, the Queen's Prison and the Ministry of Education.

The role of the new facility would be to create an operational, youth-driven model for urban agriculture, community education and micro-enterprise support.

Based on a highly successful, soil-based, raised-bed Cuban urban model, the facility would train and employ young people from the community college (a certificate and diploma program in urban agriculture under a new sustainable communities curriculum), offer opportunities for householder extension education (raised-bed home vegetable gardens) and support micro-enterprise (community kitchen, community assisted agriculture).

CAP's objectives would be to increase the supply of locally produced, healthy food, to create high quality jobs for youth, to change consumer attitudes through consumer and early childhood education, and to create the opportunity for food-based, part-time, micro-enterprise.

Most of the products produced by the new facility will be different than those produced in the specialty greenhouse. Rather than competing with the Grand Turk Greenhouse, the Community Agriculture Project would complement it, creating a sense of excitement around the production of local food and driving demand for local produce.

On the premise that best community partners will be those who have the greatest stake in its success, the Community College, the Queen's Prison and the Ministry of Education received support from the community as initial community partners.

CAP Partnership support would allow the Turks and Caicos Community College to pursue a new curriculum option: urban agriculture. The addition of an urban agriculture program would be consistent with the College's plans to revitalize an agricultural campus on North Caicos. Curriculum costs could likely attract international funding support.

The Queen's Prison, adjacent to and just south of the Crisson Plantation, would benefit from partnership with CAP because it could transfer the technical and practical knowledge gained through its participation in the Project to its own prison farm, improving in-house food production capacity and the quality of its inmate training program. Moving to a raised-bed food production system that is micro-drip irrigated with fresh water piped in from the adjacent Grand Turk Greenhouse would dramatically increase production from its prison garden.

The Ministry of Education, represented by the heads of the Ministry's Gender Desk and Youth Desk, brings government's education mandate to the table.

The intended outcomes of the social integration prescription (Grand Turk Community Agriculture Project) are consistent with the stated public policy objectives of the Turks and Caicos Government as set forth in A Food and Nutrition Policy and Plan of Action for the Turks and Caicos Islands (1997)

If it proceeds, the community-corporate partnership model created by CAP and the Grand Turk Greenhouse will "raise the bar in CSR" (corporate social responsibility), setting a fine and sustainable example for other private sector players and other communities. Because of this, it should be worthy of international sustainable development funding.

"Next steps" include the following:

1. Confirm "green light" with private sector partners.
2. Confirm community partners.
3. Identify budget required to construct and operate the Community Agriculture Project.
4. Investigate organizational and structural options under which the Community Agriculture Project could be created.
5. Prepare a discussion document for the community explaining the Community Agriculture Project (CAP).
6. Hold community workshop(s) to measure and secure community support (buy-in, which is essential).
7. Develop a strategic plan to implement the community vision for CAP: the Grand Turk Community Agriculture Project.
8. Explore fundraising and financing options.
9. Liaise with Cuba re training opportunities.
10. Organize a delegation of Grand Turk partners and other key stakeholders to tour Cuba's soil-bound, raised bed urban agriculture model.
11. Engage the youth voice early on in the communication of the nutrition message to the community.

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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This report and its annexes present the results of the social and gender analysis component of the Grand Turk Solar Desalination Greenhouse Project. The analysis was conducted by Canadian Agrologist and resource economist Wendy Holm, P.Ag. during the six-week period September 16 through October 31, 2002 through funding provided by the Industrial Cooperation Program of the Canadian International Development Agency.

This report explores the way in which the proposed facility can respond to social and gender issues within the community to maximize corporate social responsibility.

Many voices contributed to the analysis presented in this Report. For that reason, it is being distributed both to CIDA and to the community of Grand Turk, which has the greatest stake in it's outcomes and with whom the ownership of it's ideas, it's processes and it's potential ultimately rests.

THE PROJECT

The Grand Turk Solar Desalination Greenhouse (Water+Food) produces water through condensation. Associated with the project is a greenhouse structure to produce hydroponic crops. The facility will produce 5 to 10 times the water needed for its own use. The Canadian partner is Batavia Greenhouse (British Columbia). The Grand Turk partner is Columbus Foods.

CIDA'S ROLE IN THIS RESEARCH

The viability study for this Project has been undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency. In return, the Government of Canada expects the proposed project to be a "good corporate citizen", meeting or exceeding high performance standards with respect to environment, social and gender equity issues and overall corporate social responsibility.

CIDA's Mandate

In her preamble to CIDA's Policy Statement on Strengthening Aid Effectiveness (September 2002), the Honourable Susan Whelan, Minister for International Cooperation, restated CIDA's commitment to four social development priorities: health and nutrition, basic education, HIV/AIDS and protecting children. The Minister identified the promotion of gender equality as an integral component of each and placed added emphasis on rural development and agriculture "not just for food security, but as an engine for economic growth."

According to Minister Whelan, balanced approaches which address political, economic, social and institutional sustainability are needed, as are local ownership of process through strong partnerships and a results-based approach focused on "getting the governance right", the proper sequencing of reforms, building capacity to ensure sustainability and engaging civil society. Principles guiding CIDA's efforts will be the leadership role host countries take in their own development and greater coordination with other donors.

CIDA's Commitment to Gender Equity and Social Integration

As recipients of CIDA INC project viability funding, the proponents of the Grand Turk Solar Desalination Greenhouse were required to undertake gender equity and social integration analysis, report out on the results and integrate the findings into a gender equity plan and a social integration prescription.

Gender Analysis

Research in Canada has shown that when employees are made to feel welcome and are treated fairly in an organization, productivity increases, while absenteeism and staff turnover decrease. Treating employees with consideration and dignity will enhance their job satisfaction and increase their motivation. (CIDA)

CIDA's commitment to support projects and activities that bring benefits to both women and men, and that promote sustainable development, is reflected in the 1995 Women in Development and gender equity policy, the goal of which is *full participation of women as equal partners in the sustainable development of their societies...* CIDA INC expects that private sector initiatives will: a) promote the elimination of discriminatory barriers against women; b) improve the economic situation of women (through creation of employment opportunities; delivery of education and training and improvement of the work environment to reflect the needs of women), c) respect the labour regulations of the host country; d) respect provisions for improving the status of women; and e) adhere to gender equity guidelines of international financial institutions if they provide project funding.

Gender impact analysis assesses the current situation of women and identifies opportunities to bring about positive change for women toward the goal of gender equity. It includes an assessment of women are in the economy and in a particular sector and where available female labour can be located, including:

- a. potential for employment and training,
- b. steps that will be taken to improve the workplace environment for employees, particularly women;
- c. where women are placed in the company (numbers and position), salary scales;
- d. turnover rates;
- e. male and female employment by occupation, promotion, salaries, and so on.

Social Integration Analysis

Canadians take seriously such issues as human rights, labour standards, business ethics and social stewardship. By embracing these values, Canada has earned an international reputation as a fair and democratic society. Canadian corporations doing business abroad serve as ambassadors for these values. One of the mandates of the Industrial Cooperation Program is to promote the projection of Canadian values and Canadian business culture abroad. Canadian corporations doing business abroad that adopt high standards in dealings with employees and clients, the surrounding community and society help to strengthen the business climate. It is true there are profits to be made by adopting the lowest possible labour or community standards, and that adhering to higher standards may mean companies miss out on business opportunities, however in the long run, higher standards are an investment in a corporation's long-term profitability. Simply put: Ethics and pro-social conduct is good for business; responsibility pays.

Social integration analysis assesses the social dimension of the project to ensure that it does not have any adverse affects, identifies measures to mitigate or compensate for any which do occur and outline promising avenues of social development.

Using the conclusions and recommendations from the social analysis, social measures and initiatives are identified which can then form the basis for a social integration plan.

CONSULTANT'S ROLE

My role as an independent Consultant was to go into the community and deliver CIDA's expectations for this project: 1) a gender equity plan that will identify how the new company can best effect positive change for women and b) a social integration prescription reflective both of the needs of the community and the capacity of the Project that raises the bar in corporate social responsibility and supports the sustainability of Grand Turk's communities.

APPROACH

The following approach was taken to fulfill the objectives of this research:

1. Interview members of the community to identify social issues, priorities and drivers for change. What are the concerns of this community? How does change occur? Where are the blockages? What are the concerns of women, youth, the marginalized? Are there common goals within the community and does the community have a sense of this? Where are the drivers of empowerment? Is there the capacity and support to deliver change? Is this consistent with government policy objectives? How can it be supported?
2. Identify, gather and analyse appropriate research material to provide contextual support to the concerns raised by the community.
3. Go back into the community and, through another round of meetings, develop a social integration prescription that addresses the needs of the community and the capacity of the proposed new private-sector partner. (Grand Turk Solar Desalination Greenhouse.)
4. Prepare a Report that documents the results of the analysis and file it with the community and with CIDA.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Thirty-one interviews were conducted; 6 on Providenciales and 25 on Grand Turk, over the course of two separate, one-week visits. A complete list of persons interviewed is presented in ANNEX 1.

A socio-economic scan was undertaken to validate and document the concerns expressed in the interviews, to measure their breadth and severity and to provide the statistical background and policy context in which they can be most effectively addressed. The below-noted references were consulted:

A Food and Nutrition Policy and Plan of Action for the Turks and Caicos Islands, Government of Turks and Caicos Islands with technical support from The Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute and the Pan American Health Organization, February 1997.

Standard of Living Assessment Report on the Turks and Caicos Islands, (Poverty Assessment Report), Kairi Consultants Limited (Trinidad) and National Assessment Team, Turks and Caicos Islands, through funding provided by the Caribbean Development Bank, the Department for International Development (DFID), and the Government of Turks and Caicos Islands.

1990 Census, Government of Turks and Caicos.

KUDOS AND CAVEATS

A debt of gratitude is owed the thirty-one members of the Turks and Caicos community who — with little notice — made time in their busy schedules to meet with me, sometimes more than once, and so eloquently share their priorities and concerns for the future of their community.

We also feel fortunate to have had available the first two reports recently commissioned by the Turks and Caicos government, the thoroughness and professionalism of which lent important strength and credibility to this analysis. Moreover, their existence underscores local government's policy commitment to the areas of nutrition, health and socio-economic sustainability that are the targets of the social integration analysis.

Ideally, both the community of Grand Turk and the Consultant would have had the luxury of a more generous timeframe in which to assess the potential contribution this project can make to social and gender priorities and community "wellness". Unfortunately, this was not possible. Consequently, the findings suffer from inadequate "second-round" discussion with the community. A workshop of discussants (see ANNEX 1) and other interested stakeholders to receive feedback on this Report should appropriately be the "next step" in the process.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

This report is written for two distinct audiences: the community of Grand Turk, for whom the contents of this report will be very familiar, and CIDA INC, for whom it will be all new information. With apologies for overburdening Grand Turk readers of this document, we have opted for a comprehensive report that will provide CIDA and potential funding agencies with a good perspective on the dynamics of the community. The Report is divided into five sections: the first (which you have just completed) provides an overview. The second section presents the results of the socio-economic scan, the third contains the gender analysis and the fourth section presents the social integration prescription. The fifth section presents recommendations for "next steps".