The Role of Training in the Development of Amerindian Communities in Guyana: A Qualitative Case Study

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The Role of Training in the Development of Amerindian Communities in Guyana:
A Qualitative Case Study

A Dissertation Presented
by
LAUREEN ADELE PIERRE

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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College of Education
The Role of Training in the Development of Amerindian Communities in Guyana:  
A Qualitative Case Study

A Dissertation Presented

By

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my late father Frederick William Pierre, who provided my earliest lessons on community development, and my mother Elizabeth for her unceasing love and support.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge and thank the Amerindian Village Council and members of the “Village” for allowing me to engage in research among them. I am immensely grateful to all of the study participants for the trust they placed in me as they shared their experiences and reflections during interviews and group discussions. I have made every effort to protect individual and collective identities.

I am also extremely thankful to the staff at the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, the National Agriculture Research and Extension Institute, and the Environmental Protection Agency in Guyana for assisting me with matters related to research protocols, and access to documents. I also wish to acknowledge Mr. Colin Belfield who served as a co-collector for this study. I thank Colin for his guidance and suggestions regarding the logistical aspects of the fieldwork, for his diligence and time spent assisting me in the field.

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Finally, I wish to record my appreciation for the support and encouragement that my family offered throughout the course of my study. I will remain forever indebted to my husband, David Perry, for the many sacrifices he made during the course of my study. I am also extremely grateful to my son, Renaldo Pierre and his wife Janeen Hicks Pierre for offering me a sanctuary during the final stages of my writing, and for my granddaughters, Layla and Angelina, for accompanying me through that time.
ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF TRAINING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMERINDIAN COMMUNITIES IN GUYANA: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

SEPTEMBER 2016

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Training is widely used in the field of international and community development as a capacity-building strategy, but evaluations of its impact on individuals and communities raise concerns about the effectiveness of training. Scholars and program planners also question the appropriateness of training in non-western contexts as a tool aligned with dominant development approaches. These concerns are pivotal to current development efforts among indigenous peoples.

This dissertation explored the role of training in community development among Guyana’s indigenous peoples, the Amerindians, addressing the question: What role has training played in development initiatives that have taken place in one particular Amerindian community? Using a case study approach, I investigated three community-based projects in an Amerindian village. Specifically, the goal was to collect information about project trainees’ views of their training experience, evidence of trainees’ new
knowledge and skills, ways that trainees utilized new knowledge and skills, and the influence of training on both individual and community initiatives.

I collected data from relevant documents, face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions, and personal observations. The interviews and focus group discussions involved project trainees, representatives from external agencies, local project organizers, and members of the community who were actively involved in community development activities. For data analysis, I used a framework that considered training in relation to development paradigms and approaches, material advancement, capacity building, opportunities and vulnerabilities, and the individual and the community. I was also guided by the premise that there is a connection between development approach and capacity building as a result of training.

A key finding of the study was that, while training was essential to augmenting and strengthening capacities of trainees to meet specific project goals, challenges to project sustainability and concurrent weakening of certain traditional values, practices, and support systems significantly limited project outcomes and gains. The case study highlights factors that contributed to community project leaders employing certain development approaches and strategies, as well as issues associated with undertaking community-based entrepreneurial activities. The study offers recommendations that may guide future development plans in this village and may be relevant to other indigenous communities.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Training is widely used in the field of development as a key strategy for building capacity (Chambers, 2005; Eade, 1997; Craig, 2010). It serves as a primary means of transferring and strengthening skills and knowledge for enhancing individual and organizational capacity (Fitzgerald, 1992; Morgan, 2006). Evaluations of its impact on individuals and communities raise concerns about the effectiveness of training. One concern is that development approaches that underpin capacity-building interventions have implications for development strategies, especially in settings such as indigenous communities (see for example Abdullah & Young, 2010; Ife, 2010). A fundamental argument in this regard is that training that is associated with a top-down approach to capacity building tends to focus on deficits and filling gaps in local knowledge and skills, whereas training that occurs in the context of a bottom-up approach reinforces assets such as existing local skills and knowledge and fosters the concept of sustainable development (Fanany, Fanany & Kenny, 2010; Ife, 2010; Kenny & Clarke, 2010). These are important considerations for Guyana’s indigenous peoples, the Amerindians, as training linked to community development interventions have become common.

Amerindian communities in Guyana face a range of challenges including poverty, legal ownership and demarcation of communal lands, limited employment opportunities, severely restricted local cash economies, restricted access to credit and markets, difficulty accessing social services, and lack of infrastructure (Social Impact
Amelioration Program (SIMAP), n.d.; Government of Guyana, 2011; Indigenous Peoples Commission (IPC), 2012; Bynoe, 2009; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2010; UNDP, 2011; Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MoAA) Website; Colchester & La Rose, 2010). In recent years, several Amerindian communities have engaged with government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to undertake projects aimed at addressing many of these challenges (Social Impact Amelioration Program (SIMAP), n.d.; Bartlett, 2005; Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MoAA) Website; Colchester & La Rose, 2010). In some instances, the need for training Amerindians has related directly to the implementation of development projects that require individuals, groups and institutions to acquire or augment specific skills and knowledge, or to strengthen capacity (Forte, 1995; Renshaw, 2001; Colchester & La Rose, 2010; SIMAP, n.d.). Amerindian communities that focus on promoting sustainable development practices have also identified training as a tool for boosting their capabilities to control and manage their local resources (Griffiths & Anselmo, 2010; Iwokrama Community Development, n.d.; Wihak, 2009). A broad government program that seeks to bolster the development of several Amerindian communities within a framework of mitigating climate change, has recommended training and capacity building in the areas of local village governance and sustainable economic activities (UNDP, n.d.). While there continues to be a reliance on training to address various needs in Amerindian communities, there is little attention given to critically examining the role that training plays in the broader development process of these communities.
Reports published during the 1990s describe the upsurge in development activities aimed largely at addressing poverty within Amerindian villages, and point to the emergence of training as a component of development projects during this period (CARICAD, 1995; Forte, 1993; Forte, 1995). Subsequent documents and various public sources concerning either development aid, government sponsored development programs, or research on Amerindian issues also mention of the use of training in relation to Amerindian development projects. (Bartlett, 2005; Colchester & La Rose, 2010; Griffiths & Anselmo, 2010; Radzick, 2006; Iwokrama Community Development; MoAA Website). These sources, however, provide limited insight into the use of training in specific communities. Consequently, we know little about the contexts in which training has occurred in Amerindian communities, how community members have viewed the training experience, whether the trainings have been effective in helping participants gain new knowledge and skills, how new knowledge and skills have been utilized, or how training influences individual and collective initiative in the community setting. An investigation of these issues can enrich understandings and broaden perspectives about training in the context of development processes in the wider Amerindian population.

Development experts have raised several issues and concerns about training as a development strategy (see for example, IEG, 2008; Pearson, 2011; Ife, 2010; Kenny & Clarke, 2010). One concern is that for many years actors in the field of international development have equated training with capacity building (Eade, 2007; Morgan, 2006; Kenny & Clarke, 2010). Various authors who address this concern argue strongly that
capacity development is more than training; that among other things, capacity building is closely linked to principles of transformation, local control and ownership, and sustainability (Pearson, 2011; Taylor & Clarke, 2008; Fanany, Fanany & Kenny, 2010; Evans, Ahmed, et al., 2004). Some development experts maintain that training plays an important but limited role in development, and that other strategies such as mentorship and social networking are also critical to capacity building (Ife, 2010; Fanany, Fanany & Kenny, 2010). Significantly, authors who focus on development issues in non-Western contexts advance the view that underlying assumptions and approaches that guide development efforts influence training and other development strategies (Abdullah & Young, 2010; Ife, 2010; Loomis, 2000; Connors, 2010). These and similar concerns remain largely unexplored with regard to the context of training activities that have accompanied development initiatives in Amerindian communities in Guyana.

Since the 1980s, there has been an increase in the promotion and use of training by development actors worldwide as the concept of development leading to economic growth expanded to include notions of capacity building and sustainability (Chambers, 2005; Craig, 2010; Fanany, Fanany, & Kenny, 2010). While there is a growing body of research on the subject of capacity building (see for example Eade, 1997; Mc Ginty, 2003, Morgan, 2006, Kenny & Clarke, 2010), the international donor community has signaled that in general, there is a lack of available data on training, and has underscored the importance of investigating the efficacy of training (Berlin Statement, 2008; IEG, 2008; Pearson, 2011; Yocarini, 2007).
This qualitative case study explores the role of training in community development projects that have taken place in a specific Amerindian village in Guyana. The study examines ways in which individuals have experienced and utilized their training experience. The findings of the research are likely to contribute to local knowledge concerning the process and practice of development. I pursued the research as a scholarly inquiry into the ways in which training influences community development among Amerindians. The study may serve as a resource for policymakers, development practitioners, and trainers in their program planning activities, as well as in considering practical approaches to long-range community development strategies and processes among the broader Amerindian population of Guyana.

**Background and Context**

Development work in Amerindian communities in Guyana has attracted a fair amount of attention over the years, more so as poverty issues began to shape the direction of international development work. *Amerindian* is the umbrella term for the nine indigenous peoples who currently live within the borders of Guyana: the Arawak, Akawaio, Arekuna, Carib, Makushi, Patamona, Wai Wai, Wapishana, and Warau. Altogether, Amerindians constitute approximately 9.2% of Guyana’s population of 751,223 persons (Bureau of Statistics, Guyana, 2007). The organized village is an important socio-political unit among present-day Amerindians (Riviere, 1984; Colchester et al., 2002). Combined, these organized villages, as well as less structured communities where Amerindians reside, number approximately 210 (IPC, 2012; MoAA Website). The
majority of these communities are located in the distant interior of Guyana where, despite the implementation of several development programs, three out of four persons are poor (UNDP Report 2010; UNDP, 2011; IPC, 2012).

Government reports from around the mid-twentieth century, for example, detail the deplorable social and economic conditions of communities and offered several recommendations for redressing the situation (Peberdy, 1948; British Guiana, 1948). Around that time, the emphasis was on formal education and vocational training that would prepare Amerindians to acquire knowledge and skills in areas such as teaching and health care, or to be equipped to work in industrial and commercial activities that were available outside Amerindian communities (British Guiana, 1948). This trend continued for many years as subsequent government policy and programs promoted education and training as a key strategy for integrating Amerindians into the dominant Guyanese society (Government of Guyana, 1970, Sanders 1987b). More recently, the focus has shifted somewhat from integrating Amerindians to improving the social and economic conditions of Amerindian communities as well as the broader issue of developing Guyana’s hinterland (National Development Strategy, 1996; Bulkan & Bulkan, 2006; Colchester & La Rose). Significantly, Amerindian communities continue to give priority to education and training as a part of their own development agenda, especially in those instances when communities focus on developing their human resources and strengthening their local institutions (Government of Guyana, n.d.; UNDP, 2011; IPC, 2012).
Several cultural characteristics serve to differentiate the general Amerindian population from the rest of the Guyanese community (Carrico, 2007; Bulkan & Bulkan, 2006). In the first instance, Amerindians are Amazonian peoples, hence many Amerindian communities today reflect variations of Amazonian traditions associated with activities such as hunting, fishing, subsistence farming practices, and social customs (Riviere, 1984; Carrico, 2007; Colchester & La Rose, 2010). In the past, the thrust of development plans that the government advocated focused on encouraging Amerindians to change some of their traditional customs and practices, some Amerindian communities have become more assertive about pursuing development activities that are rooted in their traditions and customs (Iwokrama Community Development, n.d.; David et al., 2006). Some development programs that specifically target the Amerindian population recognize the important role of these characteristics in development activities (see for example SIMAP, n.d., UNDP, 2010).

In Guyana, several institutions have responsibility for various aspects of the development of Amerindian communities. At the village level, the Amerindian Village Council (AVC) is in charge of the administration and development of the village. The Amerindian Act, 2006 guides AVCs, and they function in Amerindian villages that are legally constituted under this Act. The AVC is made up of a Toshao (village leader) and councilors. The AVC is elected every two years. Among the many responsibilities of the AVC is that of safeguarding traditional knowledge and cultural traditions and ensuring that land and resources that belong to the community are utilized in a sustainable manner (Amerindian Act, 2006).
Another institution that focuses on development of Amerindian communities is the National Toshaos Council (NTC). The NTC is elected by Toshaos every two years (Government of Guyana, 2012). The NTC looks at development issues that affect Amerindian communities in a general way. These include health, education, water and infrastructure (see for example Annex 2, IPC, 2012; Government of Guyana, 2012).

Another recent institution that addresses Amerindian development is the Indigenous Peoples Commission (IPC). The National Assembly of Guyana appointed the IPC in 2010. In its recent strategic plan for the period 2012-2016, the IPC identified the need for capacity building for Amerindians generally as well as for the IPC as an institution (IPC, 2012).

At the level of national government, the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs has responsibility for all matters relating to Amerindians, including Amerindian development (MoAA Website). Amerindian development is an umbrella term for strategies and programs that aim to improve the overall condition of Amerindian communities. At the time that I conducted research for this dissertation, this Ministry was called the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MoAA). The MoAA provided funding to Amerindian communities for socio-economic development projects through its Presidential Grants scheme (Colchester & La Rose, 2010; MoAA Website). In addition, the MoAA was overseeing pilot projects in fifteen Amerindian communities as part of a National Secure Livelihood Programme (NSLP). These communities focus on developing agriculture and aquaculture projects. The MoAA had a Projects Unit that was responsible for managing projects (MoAAs Website), and had implemented a cadre of
workers who were designated as Community Development Officers (CDOs). CDOs worked directly with Amerindian communities (Ministry of Amerindian Affairs Website).

The Government of Guyana has also identified training and capacity building for Amerindian communities as components of a Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) (UNDP, March 3 2012). The LCDS is intended to be a national strategy and it is linked to the United Nations collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) (Office of the President, 2010). The Government of Guyana has an agreement through the LCDS to provide carbon credits to Norway (Low Carbon Development (LCDS) Website). The LCDS requires a shift in the way natural resources are managed, conserved, and utilized for all Guyanese (LCDS Website). This means that Amerindians are finding it necessary to rethink how they utilize their resources. Amerindian communities can decide whether or not to participate in the LCDS. Regardless of their decision, however, Amerindian communities remain the largest beneficiary of funds accrued under the LCDS (Office of the President). The LCDS identified the following areas for training and capacity building in Amerindian communities: governance, economic, livelihood and income earning activities (UNDP, n.d.). An Amerindian Development Fund (ADF) has been established specifically to channel LCDS monies for these activities. To date, funding has been approved for two specific projects: (1) Village Economy Development, and (2) Amerindian Land Titling and Demarcation (GRIF Website). These recent plans suggest that the LCDS is likely to play a key role in shaping Amerindian development.
Statement of the Problem

The recent emergence of training in the context of the development of Amerindian communities coincided with a decided shift in government policy to directly address the socio-economic conditions of the Amerindian population (see CARICAD, 1995; Forte, 1995; Government of Guyana, 2001). Government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international donors have played key roles in recent efforts to address poverty-related issues and in assisting Amerindians in the process of developing their communities (CARICAD, 1995; Forte, 1993; Forte, 1995; Draft National Development Strategy (NDS), 1996; Colchester & La Rose, 2010). Research investigations conducted during the 1990s showed that in the process, these entities supported a range of projects, including income-generating activities such as farming and handicraft production, the cultural revival of music and dance, public health education, and infrastructure projects (CARICAD, 1995; Forte, 1993; Forte, 1995). The literature also suggests that around that time Amerindian communities were ill prepared for managing their resources as well as dealing with the range of challenges and demands brought on by this wave of development initiatives (CARICAD, 1995; Forte, 1993; Forte, 1995; Government of Guyana, 1996). Increasingly, various development actors employed structured training events as a component of development projects aimed at building capacity among Amerindian communities, their leaders, and their organizations (Renshaw, 2001; Government of Guyana, 2001; UNDP 2004).

Training occupies a prominent place in the development arena. In general, the international donor community regards both education and training as investments in
people (Eade, 1997). Theoretically, effective training should allow participants to make use of the knowledge and skills they have gained (Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh, & Vidal, 2001; Eade, 1997; Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), 2008; Yocarini, 2007).

Development practice has played a key role in reinforcing the link between training and capacity building (Eade, 2007; Chambers, 2005; Craig, 2010). Some scholars, however, claim that while capacity building itself is a significant driver of development, training plays a limited role in development initiatives with a capacity building focus; that training serves mainly as a means of transferring skills and knowledge to individuals (Chambers, 2005; Ife, 2010). Kenny and Clarke (2010) make an even broader claim that calls into question the very need for training in some situations: that, in some communities, the problem is not a lack of capacity that hinders development, but “structural, political and resource impediments” (p. 8). While several authors maintain that capacity-building interventions, including training, can yield benefits for both the individual and the community (Fanany et al., 2010; Millar & Kilpatrick, 2005; Walingo, 2006), others assert that the longer-term benefits of training for participants largely depend on other changes occurring within the respective organizations or communities where training is used as a capacity-building strategy (Kenny & Clarke, 2010; Eade, 1997; DFID, June 2010). Additionally, some scholars question the application of dominant Western development paradigms and approaches such as capacity building in non-Western contexts (Abdullah & Young, 2010; Ife 2010; Loomis, 2000; Tauli-Corpuz, 2010a). This conflict of paradigms is an ongoing concern for indigenous peoples themselves and has generated considerable debate among indigenous peoples and
agencies at the international level (see, for example, Corpuz, 2010; United Nations PFII/2010/EGM).

Development activities that entail capacity building at the community level often fall under the rubric of community development (Hunt, 2005). In Amerindian communities, community development projects have included, but are not limited to, conservation, tourism, and livelihood or income-generating initiatives (Bartlett, 2005; Colchester, La Rose, & James, 2002; Dilly, 2003; Griffiths & Anselmo, 2010; MoAA Website). Over the years, training has become integral to many community development projects that involve Amerindians as either individuals, groups, or the broader community. The problem is that while training continues apace in Amerindian communities, we know little about the contexts, outcomes, impacts, and perceptions about training in these communities where training has occurred.

**Dissertation Outline**

Chapter 1 provides the general background and context of the study. I discuss some of the issues related to training that are pivotal to this inquiry. I also state the problem that the study addresses, and present my rationale for pursuing the investigation.

Chapter 2 discusses a range of issues related to training and outlines the conceptual framework for the study. In this chapter, I review literature mainly from the fields of international development, community development, and recent publications
that deal with issues concerning indigenous peoples. The conceptual framework of the study follows the literature review.

Chapter 3 sets out the research design and methodology for the study. I describe the research process and ethics that this research involved.

Chapter 4 describes the research setting and provides an overview of the project based primarily on documents and reports.

Chapter 5 presents analysis and general findings of the inquiry in two sections. The first section begins with a discussion of findings for each of the three projects that I investigated using the five research questions that guided the study. Next, I highlight key features of the context within which the projects occurred and identify the role that trained played in each project. The second section examines the role of training in relation to the other five, development (paradigms and approaches), development and material advancement, capacity building, opportunities and vulnerabilities, and the individual and the community. This section focuses on the complexities associated with community development in the Village. The section ends with a discussion of key findings that emerged from interview data.

Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation with a discussion of key findings and conclusions drawn from the research, and recommendations concerning training for the village where the research was undertaken. The chapter ends with suggestions for further research.
Purpose of the Study

Training is an important feature of development initiatives in Amerindian communities. There is, however, a dearth of research data concerning the role of training in Amerindian community development. The purpose of this study is threefold: (1) to investigate the contexts in which training has played a role in development initiatives in a particular Amerindian community, (2) to inquire into the ways in which training was obtained, and how individuals utilized new knowledge and skills, and (3) to describe and analyze how training experiences have influenced both individual and collective initiative. I pursued this inquiry in order to learn about and analyze the specific factors, issues, and circumstances that obtain in one particular Amerindian village with respect to training and its role in the community’s development process. Such information can guide future efforts to help Amerindian communities with training that can better prepare them to face current and future threats to their wellbeing.

Rationale of the Study

There are two reasons why I undertook this inquiry. The first and primary reason is to improve the quality of training offered to Amerindian communities. In my work as a development practitioner, I have come to recognize that in-depth research that focuses on development activities and processes can inform development practice. Research is lacking in the area of training associated with community development in Amerindian communities. This is true, despite the fact that the general literature on development shows that for some time training has served as a key strategy for development
initiatives and programs involving capacity building at the individual, organizational, and collective levels (Clarke, 2010; DFID, June, 2010; Eade, 1997; Hunt, 2005). This investigation of the role of training in community development utilizes three key considerations of training as a capacity-building strategy that surface in the literature: (1) training design and approaches should be relevant and should meet the expressed needs of the beneficiaries, (2) training should provide skills and knowledge to the individual, and (3) effective training enables trainees to contribute to their organization and their community (Eade, 1997; IEG, 2008; Taylor & Clarke, 2008). Hence, my hope is that this research will assist in uncovering issues that have implications for development practitioners, development agencies, and other actors who work with Amerindian communities in Guyana.

The second reason for pursuing this research is to gain a better understanding of training that occurs in development initiatives. The impetus for pursuing this area of research stems from the current widespread view among scholars that the concept of development, approaches to development, and the means of achieving development are all highly contested and should be subject to critical inquiry (Arce, 2003; Cornwall, 2007; Tauli-Corpuz, 2010a, Escobar, 1995; Kenny & Clarke, 2010). An important and related consideration is the perspective voiced by indigenous peoples at international forums, and shared by some scholars, that development approaches originating within the dominant Western paradigm do not align well with worldviews and processes that are typical of indigenous peoples (Abdullah & Young, 2010; Loomis, 2000; Tauli-Corpuz, 2010a; United Nations PFII/2010/EGM). Specifically, the concept of capacity building is
part of the jargon of Western development approaches associated with Western managerial and organizational practices, linear processes, and the like, and that capacity building may be understood differently in different cultural contexts (Ife, 2010; Fanany et al., 2010). This study recognizes the importance of critically examining these and similar perspectives on development at the level of the community. It is designed to find out how trainees view, experience, and utilize skills and knowledge that they have gained through project-related training, and the ways in which training influences both individual and community initiatives. The analysis of the data generated from this inquiry should prove especially useful to community leaders, development practitioners, and policy makers who are concerned about the relevance and appropriateness of development approaches and strategies generally, and for Amerindian communities in particular.

A related concern is that far more research on capacity building interventions such as training has been undertaken from the perspective of Western stakeholders than “from the perspective of the people whose capacities are meant to be ‘built’ ” (Fanany et al., 2010, pp. 160-161). Thus, there is merit in obtaining and analyzing the perspectives of the latter. This study places emphasis on conducting face-to-face interviews with individuals who live in an organized village and who have participated in training activities.

Finally, recent reports and studies point to the lack of current data related to training and underscore the importance of understanding the role of training within specific contexts where development initiatives occur (Abdullah & Young, 2010; Berlin
Statement, 2008; Fanany et al., 2010; IEG, 2008; Pearson, 2011; Yocarini, 2007). The research study presented here, while exploratory in nature, will capture and analyze current perceptions and recent experiences of training in an Amerindian village that is actively pursuing development activities.

**Significance of the Study**

This study might prove significant in several ways. First, this study is likely to highlight emerging trends involving training among the Amerindian population in Guyana. Available literature shows that Amerindians participate in a broad range of training. This includes training programs on tourism and conservation offered by the Iwokrama International Center for Rainforest Conservation and Development (IIC) (Iwokrama Training, n. d.; Kalamandeen, 2003), and leadership training offered by the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MoAA; Radzik, 2006, November 1). In addition, Amerindian activist organizations have provided a range of training courses with an emphasis on rights advocacy for indigenous peoples (Riley, c 2004). Moreover, Amerindians themselves are becoming more directly involved in designing and delivering training. This is evident in the work of the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB), which has undertaken to provide leadership training programs for Amerindians. Several Macushi villages initiated the NRDDB, and it promotes cultural affirmation, capacity building, leadership skills and other concerns through its training programs (Bartlett, 2005; Iwokrama Community Development, n.d.; Radzik, 2006). While this study focuses on training that is linked directly to community
development projects, the research required consideration of training that study participants would have encountered elsewhere.

Secondly, because scholars usually discuss training in very general ways, it is difficult to find studies that provide in-depth analysis of the role training has in fact played both at individual and collective levels. This study, though limited to a single community, will provide insights into the general role of training activities in these two spheres.

Thirdly, this study may contribute to the small but growing body of literature on indigenous peoples and development across the globe. This body of literature reflects the fact that some scholars, agencies, advocacy groups, and indigenous peoples themselves have questioned aspects of Western approaches to development when applied to indigenous cultures (see Andolina, Radcliffe & Laurie, 2005; Simpson, 2004; Tauli-Corpuz, Enkiwe-Abayo, & de Chavez, 2010). Writers have discussed the application of such concepts as culture and identity, spirituality, and sustainability in development approaches by and among indigenous peoples (Partridge, Uquillas, & Johns, 1996). Editors Tauli-Corpuz, Enkiwe-Abayo, and de Chavez’s (2010) publication represents recent efforts by both indigenous and non-indigenous authors to present an alternative paradigm anchored in rights-based development. The concept of the pursuit of development with a rights-based agenda was brought sharply into focus with the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which has adopted by the United Nations in 2007 (UNDRIP, 2007). The UNDRIP has given further impetus to
indigenous communities, governments, and donor agencies to critically review
development practices. The government of Guyana has endorsed the UNDRIP.

Fourth, the findings of this study may add to local knowledge concerning
development practices and processes. This is very likely since adult Amerindians who
participated in community projects formed the core, though not the only, data source.
In-depth interviews with both individuals and focus groups yielded a rich source of data
that reflects the thinking of Amerindians who are either involved with or are directly
affected by development initiatives that have taken place in their village.

In sum, this study may constitute a scholarly inquiry into the manner in which
training generally influences community development among Amerindians. It may prove
useful to policy makers, development practitioners, and trainers who work with
communities, as well as to local Amerindian leaders in their approaches to long-range
community development processes. In a more general way, the findings may enrich
understanding and broaden perspectives about the role of training in development
initiatives.

**Research Questions**

Conceptually, this study is framed within the broad understanding that training is
an important aspect of community development programs and activities, especially
when they are designed within the framework of a capacity building approach to
development. However, this study is also grounded in the recognition that controversy
surrounds the terms “development” and “capacity building”, and that development
approaches and strategies are in need of critical examination (Escobar, 1995; Kenny & Clarke, 2010; Peet & Hartwick, 1999; Tauli-Corpuz, 2010). These considerations undergird the overarching research question: *What role has training played in the development initiatives that have taken place in one particular Amerindian community?*

In order to fully explore the dynamics of the training in the development process of the community, this study focuses on training as experienced and utilized by the individuals who have participated in project-related training. The study addresses the following five research questions:

1. How was training obtained?
2. What evidence is there that participants gained new knowledge and skills?
3. How have individuals and/or the community utilized new knowledge and skills?
4. How have training experiences influenced individual and collective initiative?
5. What factors supported or hindered the application of training knowledge and skills?

These research questions form the basis of the inquiry.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual and Definitional Issues of Training

The literature on training as capacity building in the context of Amerindian communities is quite limited. Moreover, while the body of literature on training in areas such as human resource development and education is extensive, the literature pertaining to training in the context of development activities is generally sparse (Nelson, 2006; Pearson, 2010; World Bank’s Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), 2008). This literature review draws on a range of sources including recent reports and documents, research publications, and scholarly works primarily in the fields of international development and community development. It also includes sources culled from the fields of education and management.

The review focuses on definitional and conceptual issues related to training, the role of training in the wider context of development, training in relation to capacity building and approaches to development generally, and with specific reference to indigenous communities, as well as training outcomes within development initiatives. This review highlights paradigmatic, pedagogical, cultural, and other issues that are relevant to research in an Amerindian setting.
Definitions and Concepts

Definitional and conceptual issues surround the concept of training. The international donor community recently acknowledged this issue and has called specifically for a re-conceptualization of the term ‘training’ in the context of capacity development (IEG, 2008; Berlin Statement, 2008; Yocarini, 2007; Pearson, 2011). Pearson (2011), who recently reviewed literature on training and learning in the context of capacity development, offered the following concise summary of the problem:

“Traditionally training has not been defined, designed or evaluated within the context of comprehensive CD [capacity development] and thus a number of the problems with training reflect similar problems with the design and implementation of TC [technical cooperation]” (p. 12).

Literature from across several fields of study confirms that there have been many attempts to define training and its function, that there are multiple definitions of training, and furthermore, that definitions of training can be expansive and contextual. For example, writing from a management perspective, Fitzgerald (1992), provided a three point definition of training: “the acquisition of knowledge and skills for present tasks” [and] “a tool to help individuals contribute to the organization and be successful in their current positions [and] a means to an end” (p. 81). In a more recent study, Somsasundaram and Egan (2004) conducted a search using the terms training and development and training in their effort to clarify the meaning of training in the area of human resource development in the workplace. They compiled a list of 35 definitions of training from some 147 sources that were published during the period 1961-2002.
These authors identified four major elements that were common across these various definitions: 1) develop or gain knowledge; (2) develop or gain skills; (3) improve performance; and (4) improve organizational efficiency (p. 585). Similarly, Tight (2002), who examined the term 'training' within the context of adult education, identified definitions that together describe the function of training as being related to tasks as well as behaviors (p. 20).

Part of the difficulty in defining the term *training* lies in the fact that it is linked to a number of related concepts such as *education* and *learning*. The literature shows that *education, training, and learning* are overlapping terms, and that scholars and the general public alike hold varying perspectives regarding them. For example, Tight (2002) highlighted a research study in Britain that found among other things, that members of the public felt that *education* is linked to schools, *training* is related to work, and *learning* is associated with notions of discovery and enjoyment (see Tight p. 22).

Some scholars are critical of the conceptual distinction that is sometimes made between education and training (see for example Gough, 2001; Holst, 2009), but Tight (2002) suggests that when such a distinction is made, education tends to be regarded as “broad based knowledge” (p. 12), while training is seen as “narrow, skill-based and specific” (p. 12). Meanwhile, Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner (2007), whose expertise span the field of adult education in both Western and non-Western cultures assert that “Learning defies easy definition and theorizing” (p. 275). These authors consider learning to be a process, one that “brings together cognitive, emotional and environmental influences and experiences for acquiring, enhancing, or making changes
in one’s knowledge, skills, values, and worldviews” (p. 9). Recently, Wignaraja (2008), who wrote from an international development perspective, offered yet another way of looking at these terms. This author linked education, training, and learning specifically to knowledge as stated in the following:

*Education is commonly associated with the transfer of knowledge in a formal setting (a school, a university), over a longer period of time, that helps lay the foundation for further training and learning. Training, in comparison, tends to focus more on the transfer of specific skills in response to ad hoc needs, can also be informal, and is generally of a shorter-term nature. Learning is not a time-bound process, but a journey that can span a life-time. It builds on the knowledge and skills acquired through education and training and it combines it with the experiences in using them.* (Wignaraja, 2008, p. 18)

Thus, knowledge is a key term, but not without controversy. There is a debate surrounding the distinction between ‘Western’ and ‘indigenous’ knowledge or “knowledges“. (Agrawal, 2004; Barnhardt & Kwagley, 2005; Briggs & Sharp, 2004; Simpson, 2004). In recent years, indigenous peoples have advocated that special recognition be accorded to ‘indigenous’ or traditional knowledge since it is directly associated with their language, identity and ways of knowing, and it is central to current thinking about development that seeks to further indigenous people’s right to self-determination (see, for example Corpuz, 2010; “Human development and indigenous peoples”, 2010, January 11). International development agencies such as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) have also begun to stress that development agendas should include indigenous or local knowledge (see Gorjestani, 2000; Partridge et al., 1996; United Nations Environmental Programme Website). Among the thorny issues
that indigenous peoples face are what constitutes ‘indigenous’ knowledge, who owns this knowledge, and how ‘indigenous’ knowledge should be used to solve local problems in sustainable and holistic ways (Barbira-Freedman, Stobart, & Howard, 2002; Barndhart & Kwagley, 2005; Briggs & Sharp, 2004). For individuals who work with indigenous communities, one challenge is how to effectively include and utilize indigenous knowledge in shaping the development agenda and processes.

Another distinction is between traditional training and training informed by critical pedagogy. Scholars who see change and transformation as important dimensions of training are especially critical of traditional training or training that is linked to vocational instruction and human resource development in organizations. Kaplan (2010), who wrote from a development perspective, saw this kind of training as being limited to the “growth and extension of individual skills, abilities, and competencies” (p. 519). Similarly, Brown and Duguid (1991), who wrote from an organizational perspective, describe this didactic form of training as “the transmission of explicit, abstract knowledge from the head of someone who knows to the head of someone who does not....The setting for learning is simply assumed not to matter” (p. 47). Other authors equate traditional training with what Freire labeled the “banking concept to education” (Ife, 2010, p. 77; see also Jarvis, 2010; Pearson, 2011; Kenny & Clarke, 2010). In this scenario, teachers are experts who provide knowledge and skills and learning is rendered as passive (see for example Holst, 2009; Ife, 2010; Kenny & Clarke, 2010). Critics of this approach advocate the use of critical pedagogy and active learning processes that are modeled along the lines of reflection, dialog, problem-posing, and
discovery (see for example Foley, 2001; Ife, 2010; Ledwith with Campling, 2005; Miller, 2010). In recognition of these and other issues related to training and capacity building, the OECD donors group recommended that “... the definition of training should be expanded beyond the classroom to include means such as eLearning, mentoring, coaching, and secondments, peer exchanges and experience-based learning methods” (Berlin Statement, 2008, p. 2).

In sum, the literature confirms that one of the difficulties of conducting research related to training in the context of development is that there is no single definition of training. Instead, there are multiple interpretations of what constitutes training, depending on context. Thus, it is important to examine current understandings and practices in relation to a specific context.

Training in the Context of Development

Although training has either been embedded in, or has served as an adjunct to, development programs, the role of training has shifted along with changes in approaches to international development and, more recently, donor agencies have begun to identify issues related to training. A glance at training in this wider context provides a useful background to issues concerning training associated with development.

The use of training in international development goes back to the 1960s, a period of decolonization when the focus of development moved away from welfare approaches and towards technical assistance and the strengthening of government
institutions (Eade, 1997; Chambers, 2005; Connors, 2007; Craig, 2007; Kenny & Clarke, 2010; Morgan, 2006). Chambers (2005) points to the link between international aid and training during this period: “courses for training were in vogue” (p.48) for the purpose of meeting a perceived need for skills and experience. In the 1980s there was a resurgence of attention to training that coincided with a shift to a people-centered or capacity building approach to development (Eade, 1997; Craig, 2010; Kenny & Clarke, 2010).

Controversy surrounds the evolution of the role of training with respect to capacity building. While capacity building was initially synonymous with training, it was later expanded to include notions of participation and sustainability for people and organizations, as the approach to development became more people-centered (Chambers, 2005; Craig, 2007; Eade, 1997; Kenny, 2002). McGinty (2002) paints a similar picture, stating that capacity building was originally used as a strategy to implement state plans, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) included this strategy at the level of communities (pp. 69-70). Morgan (2006), however, asserts that “’capacity as training’ has a long-standing history and is still a widely-held view both in IDAs [International Development Agencies] and in country governments” (p. 4).

Over the years, international aid agencies such as the World Bank and OECD have expended considerable financial resources on training (see for example Pearson, 2011; IEG, 2008). It is only relatively recently, however, that the international development community has given attention to analyzing training activities and outcomes. Nelson (2006), who wrote from a World Bank perspective, attributed the lack
of data on training and development, including cost-benefit analyses, to
“methodological and data problems” (p. 1).

Two recent reports from within the international donor community have
highlighted specific concerns about training. The first was an independent evaluation of
World Bank investment in training conducted by the Independent Evaluation Group
(IEG), and the second was produced by a meeting of representatives from the
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) donor network
specifically to address training, which has come to be known as ‘the Berlin Statement’.
The IEG report (2008) on the evaluation exercise involved 37 World Bank training
programs, of which 29 involved projects based in four countries and eight were initiative
programs in three countries. It focused on the efficacy of training individuals in the
context of capacity building in the projects. A key finding of the report was that while
training resulted in individual participant learning and behavior change, similar benefits
for their institutions and organizations occurred only half the time. The report identified
two factors that contributed to less effective training: (1) flawed training design, and (2)
insufficient attention to the organizational and institutional context in which the training
occurred. According to this report, the relevance and adequacy of training designs and
the environment in which training takes place are two critical factors that determine
training outcomes (IEG, 2008).

The Berlin Statement (2008), issued at the end of an OECD meeting, specifically
endorsed the view that training should remain central to capacity development efforts.
As mentioned earlier, however, this statement also called for reconceptualizing the
term *training*. The meeting identified a number of areas of training as requiring further consideration, including the need to move beyond individual learning to address organizational and institutional culture and thinking, the need to expand the definition of training to include other *learning practices*, the need for general guidelines, and the certification of training programs (Berlin Statement, 2008, pp. 2-5). The issues that were raised in both the IEG report and the Berlin Statement underscore the need for and relevance of research addressing key areas of training.

**Training and Capacity Building**

In the literature on development, training is most often described as a capacity building strategy. The lingering debate among scholars centers on whether or not training is synonymous with capacity building. Other important considerations concerning the role of training in the development field involve both the challenges posed by the complexities associated with the concept of capacity building, and by various understandings about ways in which the concept of capacity building has been influenced. The debate concerning training raises the issues of whether training is synonymous with capacity building or if capacity building is limited to training. The gist of the argument is that capacity building has specific approaches, strategies, and methodologies such as training, which are used for the purpose of improving the performance of individuals, groups, and organizations to carry out particular functions (see, for example, Fanany et al., 2010, p. 158). Scholars on the other side of the debate assert that capacity building is more than training, and they identify capacity building as
“...human resource development, the process of equipping individuals with the understanding, skills and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively” (Evans, Myers & Ilfeld, 2002 quoted in Evans, Ahmed et al., 2004, p. 107). More recently, Pearson (2011) stated that this “practice of equating training with CD [capacity development] is unhelpful because training is just one approach that can contribute to learning, and there are other approaches that can have much greater impact in many circumstances” (p. 13).

Arguments related to whether training or any other strategy is used to support capacity building components of a community project hinge partly on how capacity building is understood and applied. Fanany, Fanany, and Kenny (2010) draw attention to this issue in their discussion of capacity building and its complexities. These development experts propose that capacity building can be understood in terms of five dimensions: specific development approaches, capacity building methodologies or strategies such as training, the purposes of capacity building and the object of capacity building, and the approach to capacity building (pp. 157-160). In elaborating on this perspective, these authors point to various ways in which these dimensions may intersect and influence each other. A focal point in their discussions is that there is a connection between development approaches that guide capacity-building endeavors and capacity building strategies such as training. Among the issues that these authors raise is that the approach to a project, whether top down or bottom up may influence in a practical way, even the choice of strategy that is used for capacity building. Based on the authors’ arguments, when a top down approach is applied, project providers
exercise control over all stages of a project including identifying needs, deciding how needs are addressed, and a tendency to rely on external experts. On the other hand, a bottom-up approach allows for members of communities to participate in all stages of a project, including identifying capacity building strategies and determining whether external assistance is needed.

The term *capacity* can vary according to specific contexts. For example, Baser and Morgan (2008) define capacity in the organizational context as “...that emergent combination of individual competencies, collective capabilities, assets and relationships that enables a human system to create value” (quoted in Ortiz & Taylor, 2009, p. 17). Miller (2010), who focuses on community development, describes capacity as: “people rising above a certain situation, of meeting the challenge often against the odds, in ways that are inspirational, and in so doing demonstrating perhaps unexpectedly personal qualities that were previously invisible, submerged or repressed...” (p. 31). Contextual differences notwithstanding, the question that arises is, *capacity to do what?*

The term *capacity building* is problematic in other ways as well. In some instances scholars describe capacity building as an umbrella term for a range of activities, as having multiple meanings, as a challenging and vague term, and as not being restricted to one set of goals (Horton, et al., 2003; Ortiz & Taylor, 2009; Clarke, 2010; Fanany et al., 2010). The British Government’s Fund for International Development (DFID), has underscored some of the difficulties associated with these several traits of capacity building while simultaneously highlighting the importance of
the interplay between the individual and the collective as an important dimension of this term:

*capacity building is a complex notion - it involves individual and organisational learning, is inevitably long term, and should be demand driven. If successful it contributes to sustainable social and economic development* (DFID, June 2010, p. 3).

A major challenge that the term *capacity building* poses is that it has been closely linked to, or has been used interchangeably with, other terminology, such as *community development, community capacity building, and capacity development*. A complicating factor here is that these terms can each have their own meanings, even as they convey some common elements of capacity building. For example, collective action, ownership, and sustainability are key elements of both *community development* and *community capacity building* (Craig, 2007; Kenny & Clarke, 2010), while one notable characteristic of *capacity development* is that it emphasizes that needs should be identified and met locally (Fanany et al., p. 160).

Terminology can also reflect subtle but important shifts in thinking about elements that are integral to one or more of these concepts. For example, Laverack (2006) states that “community capacity, like community development describes a process that increases the assets and attributes that a community is able to draw upon to improve their lives” (p. 278), but then recognizes the definition of *community capacity building* as “‘the increase in community groups’ abilities to define, evaluate, analyse and act on health (or any other) concerns of importance to their members’” (p. 278). Fanany et al., (2010), point to another challenge: that capacity building can be
understood differently in different cultural contexts. Citing their research on capacity building in Indonesia, these authors found that *capacity-building* was a borrowed term with different nuances of meaning:

"Indeed, there is an important disjunction between the Western focus on capacity building as training to improve the administrative structures, business practices, operating procedures and management processes of an organization and the Indonesian notion of capacity building as a means by which individuals who are part of an organization or agency can improve their abilities and personal qualifications, either as personal benefit or to assist them to act for ‘a cause’ or as an advocate for others. (Fanany, et al., 2010, p. 175)"

The concept of *capacity building* is influenced by historical ideas or paradigms that may or may not align with the views and practices of indigenous peoples. For instance, Eade (1997) attributes current capacity building thinking of concepts such as participation, empowerment, and civil society to Freirean influences - ‘conscientisation’ or the 'awareness-creation' approach to adult literacy. Other authors argue that the concept of capacity building reflects the influence of North American and European, even neo-liberal, ways of thinking. Performance management, organizational development, political economy, institutional economics and sociology are among the related terms that some authors identify (see for example Morgan, 2006; Kenny & Clarke, 2010). Capacity building activities that occur within the context of community development can also be influenced by, or focus on, a human rights agenda (Kenny & Clarke, 2010). The latter is especially pertinent to current development initiatives among indigenous peoples since the UNDRIP (Article 23) locates development within a rights-based agenda: “Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop
priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development.” However, in their research related to capacity building among indigenous peoples in Australia, Abdullah and Young (2010) found that indigenous peoples were offered few opportunities to select appropriate strategies or to direct how they are managed, and that outsiders controlled the design and implementation of these strategies. It appears, therefore, that research related to the role of training in situations involving indigenous peoples must be clear about delineating the nature of capacity building interventions and the strategies in use.

**Training in Relation to Development Paradigms and Approaches**

Apprehensions about the appropriateness of development approaches, strategies, and practices that are used at in international and community development are generally linked to broader concerns about the dominance and influence of the Western world on economics, peoples and cultures, and social structures (Kenny, Fanany & Rahayu, 2013; Corpuz, 2010). In the literature on development, the terms ‘dominant’ development’ paradigm and ‘western’ development paradigm are used interchangeably to cover a broad range of concepts including notions of modernization, democracy, economic growth, capitalism, and globalization (Kenny, et al., 2013; Tauli-Corpuz, 2010b). Economic progress, competitiveness, individualism, linearity in thinking, an emphasis on material progress and similar concepts that have come to be associated with the Western development model have come under much criticism and has contributed to alternative development approaches and practices that are often
founded on non-western worldviews (Pieterse, 1999; Schurrman, 2000; Kothari, Demaria, & Acosta, 2014; Ife 2010). Overlap may exist in what at first appears to be dichotomous paradigms. Pieterse (1999) points out, for example, that alternative development focuses on being “participatory and people centered” (p. 343) and that the dominant development paradigm is moving towards a more people centered approach as well.

Indigenous peoples perceive the ‘western’ development paradigm as having played in role in the destruction of indigenous ways of life over centuries. They also perceive it as a failure, pointing to global economic, environmental and other crises as evidence of this (United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, n.d., pp. 1-2). Research indicates that indigenous peoples are increasingly promoting development approaches that are more in consonance with a holistic worldview, and that emphasize cultural values such as collectivity, well-being and respect for nature and the environment (Loomis, 2000; Peredo & McClean, 2013; Taylor 2008; Tauli-Corpuz, 2010b; United Nations, 2009; Ife, 2010). These approaches avoid concepts and values such as competitiveness, measurement of performance and targets, individualism, linear processes, and management that various authors identify as mainstream development approaches (Ife 2010; Miller, 2010; Fanany et al., 2010). A recent publication issued by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations (2009) listed the following approaches that Indigenous Peoples promote, and which they identify as being different from the dominant development paradigm: “self-determined
development, life projects, development with identity, autonomous development and ethno-development” (p. 64).

In the debate on ‘westernization’ Kenny, Fanany and Rahayu (2013) point out that it is important to consider that commonalities and differences exist among cultures and that the exchange of ideas occurs between and among them. These authors discuss findings of their research that investigated 27 grass roots organizations involved in community development in Indonesia. Kenny et al. (2013) categorized these organizations either as faith-based (Muslim), or as village co-operatives, and although these organizations received various forms of financial assistance, they were not dependent on external funding. These authors found that these organizations selected and employed varying degrees of ‘Western’ approaches in their work but concluded that this did not equate to the ‘westernization’ of organizations or their practice. One of the authors’ main conclusion, below, underlines the importance of ownership and control of projects, the role of community support to the process of community development, as well as the agency of trainees as one factor that should not be overlooked in project outcomes:

…it is not a matter of whether or not the approaches, processes or practices of development are derived from the so-called west or from local traditional values and norms. The most important issue is whether activities are owned, supported and, as far as possible, controlled by the people whose everyday lives are affected. Indeed, what is revealed most strongly is the agency of the participants in the groups, who pick and choose their activities, processes and practices within an Indonesian context and an existing value system. That is, they are pragmatic in what they do (Kenny et al., 2013, p. 293).
A similar and related question that surfaces in the literature concerning the role of training in development is whether training can favor, and therefore reinforce, a specific development approach (Ife, 2010; Kenny & Clarke, 2010). In recent years, the terms “development” and “development approaches” have come under scrutiny from indigenous peoples themselves in international forums. For example, one claim is that “mainstream development is regarded as one of the root causes of their [indigenous peoples] problems” (Tauli-Corpuz, 2010, p. 514). Development approaches that are ‘bottom-up’ and holistic, that valorize people’s knowledge and skills, or that embrace the concept of sustainability and similar principles are more consistent with development approaches that indigenous peoples would like to pursue (see Abdullah & Young, 2010; Corpuz, 2010; Tauli-Corpuz, 2010b). Available literature on Guyana shows that in some communities Amerindians are re-examining development that reflects these principles, and some are pursuing projects that incorporate these principles (see Griffiths & Anslemo, 2010; Radzik, 2006; MoAA Website).

Discussions concerning the potential of capacity building projects assume either a deficit-based or an asset-based approach to development. These discussions illustrate how scholars perceive training as playing a role in furthering certain development approaches. A deficit approach to development is one that responds to an identified absence of capacity, or is oriented at looking at problems and finding solutions (Craig, 2010). This approach is usually associated with projects aimed at alleviating poverty. Critics point out that it is also a top-down approach, associated with externally influenced projects (Abdullah & Young, 2010; Fanany et al., 2010; Connors, 2010).
Criticism of the deficit approach targets assumptions about training in this approach: (1) the use of training is a solution or as a way of rectifying a situation where there is an externally perceived lack of specific skills and knowledge (Hunt, 2005; Ife, 2010), (2) training is regarded as an intervention for filling gaps, and (3) training operates in a managerial context (Ife, 2010). Kenny and Clarke (2010) suggest that this ‘deficit’ orientation is a significant weakness of capacity building programs; “It prompts the question of whose capacity it really is that needs ‘building’” (p. 9). By contrast, a bottom up or 'asset-based approach' is presented as one rooted in the process of communities actively identifying their assets, needs, and goals, and where, for example, the existing traditional skills or knowledge of an organization or a community are perceived as strengths and valued and utilized (Abdullah & Young, 2010; Hunt, 2005; Mathie, & Cunningham, 2003; Simpson, Wood & Daws, 2003). It appears, therefore, that projects that are anchored in an asset-based approach are more likely to identify and build on local knowledge and skills than projects that are characterized by a deficit approach.

Similar concerns are raised with regard to another debate on capacity development being either a means or an end (Connors, 2010; Fanany et al., 2010; Eade, 1997). One side of this debate is that capacity building as a means seeks to solve problems, and as a consequence, it is linked to improvement and performance (Morgan, 2006, p. 5). The other side of the debate is that when capacity building or capacity development is seen as an end, it is regarded as a holistic process leading to sustainability, and gives people control over their lives (Ife, 2010; Fanany et al., 2010). It is noteworthy, however, that even as the latter debate has proceeded, the United
Nations Development Programme (1997) avoided the dichotomy and described capacity
development as both a means and an end for sustainable human development, adding
further, that “…it [capacity development] empowers people to realize their potential
and better use their capabilities, and assures ownership and sustainability of
development programmes” (p. 12). Deciphering the role of training in specific contexts
can therefore prove challenging if the approach to development is not clearly
articulated at the start of a project.

Another issue about the role of training concerns the effectiveness of training in
furthering the ideals of capacity building as a people-centered approach to
development. In practical terms, a people-centered approach is about individuals,
organizations, and communities taking control of decisions and resources (Eade, 1997;
Bowen, 2005). As Kenny and Clarke (2010) point out, however, “capacity building is
premised on a social ontology in which agency trumps structure” (p. 8). Hence, a
common criticism is that capacity building places emphasis on the individual rather than
on the organization or the community (Eade, 1997; Kenny & Clarke, 2010). In this
respect, Taylor and Clarke (2008) discussed capacity building at the organizational level
and pointed out that: “An increase in individual capacities often fails to translate into
increased project or organizational capacity” (p. 19). They also acknowledge the paucity
of research on the subject as they conveyed in the following statement: “The linkage
between capacity development at the individual level and at the organisational level is
often assumed, rather than explored in detail” (p. 19). However, they highlighted the
IG (2008) report previously mentioned in this literature review, as one study that did explore this link.

**Capacity Building, Training, and Indigenous Communities**

Studies and reports that address issues of development and indigenous peoples point out areas of disjuncture and intersection between mainstream development strategies and ways in which indigenous peoples proceed with the task of developing their communities (see for example, Adler, 2012; Goodfellow-Baikie & English, 2006; Scarlato, 2013; Taylor, 2008; Prout, 2012; Patrinos & Skoufias, 2007; Corpuz, 2010; Uquillas & Van Nieuwkoop, 2003). The authors often attribute specific historical, economic and cultural factors that play a role in the way indigenous peoples currently conceptualize development approaches. In some instances, these authors address some of the practical issues that are part of the reality that “Indigenous peoples already have the ability to walk in both worlds” (Abdullah & Young, 2010).

Against this backdrop, the literature suggests that concepts such as ‘self-determined development’ and ‘development with identity’ that are part of the development lexicon can have a bearing on the way in which capacity building is perceived and used in indigenous communities. Although these concepts are largely untested (Patrinos & Skoufias, 2007), they convey fundamental principles and values that indigenous peoples have identified as relevant to assisting them in managing in their development (Tauli-Corpuz, 2010b; Uquillas & Van Nieuwkoop, 2003). For example, Patrinos and Skoufias (2007) explain:
Development with identity includes the strengthening of indigenous peoples’ capacities, harmony with the environment, sound management of resources, exercise of authority, and respect for rights. It includes the mainstreaming of indigenous issues, while giving them more authority; and in accordance with their own worldview and governance structures. It also includes a focus on the social capital of indigenous peoples, as well as titling of lands (including communal indigenous lands), and access to financial and credit markets through technical assistance. (p. 7)

In those instances where indigenous peoples are deliberately fashioning development approaches along these lines, one trend is to eschew the use of mainstream development concepts such as ‘capacity building’ and ‘sustainable development’. Adler (2012), who conducted a study of six grassroots organizations that focused on sustainable livelihoods among selected indigenous communities in Mexico, identified alternative concepts that were used in that setting. These organizations had chosen to frame their mission using the following terms: “new forms of living, restoring food security via creating an internal market and community autonomy and indigenous knowledge” (p. 246).

Studies by Peredo and McLean (2013) in the Andean region, and Giovanninni (2015) in Mexico, also highlight the importance of recognizing ways in which cultural values and social and economic norms can influence activities by indigenous peoples in the area of economic development. These authors drew attention to the emerging role of entrepreneurship in indigenous peoples. Peredo and McLean (2013) argued that indigenous peoples’ perceptions of local needs, assets, poverty and wealth in shape their efforts in economic development. These authors noted that a key characteristic of ‘indigenous development’ is the emphasis on the collective rather than the individual.
Research findings by Peredo and McLean (2013) and Giovannini (2015) help to explain some of the components of ‘indigenous development’, and add perspective to the spirited debate concerning the implications of the use of dominant Western paradigms and concepts in non-Western contexts. Giovannini (2015) in his research on 16 community enterprises, focused on identifying the needs of the communities. Giovannini categorized these needs as cultural, social, economic, political and environmental with economic. While the communities saw their most crucial needs as economic needs, Giovannini found that the motives for engaging in entrepreneurial activities went beyond addressing material needs. Peredo and McLean (2013) describe similar findings. They point out that among other things, entrepreneurship can be linked intentionally to social goals. The findings by Giovannini (2015) and Peredo and McLean (2013) suggest that certain values that indigenous communities hold may differ considerably from the mainstream economic paradigm where, for example, the relationships between the individual, market incentives, and “material advancement” (Rodrik, 2000, p. 222) are prominent features.

Recent reports concerning the work of international development agencies with indigenous communities, however, indicate that ‘western’ development concepts such as capacity building are being employed within alternative development frameworks. The controversial international issue of climate change is one area where capacity building is promoted as a being vital to the survival of communities. International agencies generally identify indigenous peoples as being among the most vulnerable group, proposing that there is a strong link between poverty and the effects of climate
change, and that it is important for vulnerable communities to acquire or strengthen ‘adaptive capacities’ in order to respond to risk and disaster and risk (Hallegatte et al., 2014; Miller, Yoon, & Yu, 2013). In this context three broad factors emerge in the literature: (1) high levels of poverty in indigenous communities, (2) the deep connection between indigenous peoples’ lives and nature makes them highly vulnerable to climate change, and (3) indigenous communities also possess capacities and life ways that have made them resilient (Haalboome & Natcher, 2012; Hall & Patrinos, 2010; Duchicela, Svend, Uquillas Lukic, & Sirker, 2015).

Recent World Bank-funded projects in selected indigenous communities across the globe addressed some of these factors (Patrinos & Skoufias, 2007; Duchicela et al., 2015). A case study report on some of these projects provided examples where training and other capacity building strategies were employed in projects that focused on areas of major concern to indigenous peoples, such as economic development and sustainability, land rights and environmental stewardship, and institutional strengthening (Duchicela et al., 2015). In general, the projects sought to reinforce cultural traditions and ways of being and promoted the strengthening of social capital and the use of the sustainable livelihoods approach.

The concept of social capital and the sustainable livelihoods approach are especially relevant to the discussion of a bottom-up approach to capacity building. Skoufias, Lunde and Patrinos (2010) explain that in the development arena social capital is viewed as “one of the few productive capitals that poor people have in abundance” (pp. 49-50) and that it can play a role in entrepreneurial and livelihood activities.
According to Woolcock and Narayan (2002) “social capital refers to the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively” (p. 226). The two components of social capital that are commonly discussed in development literature are ‘bonding’ and ‘bridging’ capital (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; Abdullah & Young). Various authors identify strong kin-based relationships, modes of reciprocity, collective management of resources, and respect for traditional knowledge among the examples of ‘bonding’ social capital common in indigenous communities (Uquillas & Nieuwkoop, 2003; Abdullah & Young, 2010). On the other hand ‘bridging social capital’ is often much weaker in indigenous communities (Patrinos & Skoufias, 2007; Abdullah & Young, 2010). ‘Bridging’ social capital essentially refers to ties beyond the family or community (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003).

The sustainable livelihoods approach is especially useful in highlighting the possibilities as well as the limitations of the use of capacity building in community-driven projects that take place in indigenous communities. In the first instance, it is important to acknowledge that this approach essentially requires communities to rely on local capacities to plan, mobilize and manage their resources. As Brocklesby and Fisher (2003) explain, “sustainable livelihoods approaches typify a shift in development practice from needs-based, resource-centred solutions to a focus on people and their capacity to initiate and sustain positive change” (p. 187). Secondly, the ‘asset-vulnerability’ relationship that is key to this approach addresses the importance for communities to utilize local assets as well as to take into account factors that could undermine the sustainability of locally generated projects. In the sustainable livelihoods
approach, ‘local assets’ or ‘capital’ covers a broad spectrum: human, social, natural, physical, and financial (Cannon, Twigg, & Rowell, 2003). The term vulnerability on the other hand, is used in slightly different ways across disciplines and contexts (see for example Alwang, 2012; Cannon et al., 2003). The following definition conveys the essence and the broad spectrum of that the term vulnerability: “Vulnerability means a defencelessness, insecurity and exposure to risk, shocks and stress, and not simply a lack or a want.” (Ludi and Bird, 2007b, p. 2).

The applicability of the ‘asset-vulnerability’ link to development endeavors in indigenous communities is underlined in a study that investigated the economic opportunities available to indigenous populations in Latin America. Patrinos and Skoufias (2007) who conducted this study found that in the poor indigenous communities that they studied, “Low assets not only reduce the ability to generate income, they also hinder the capacity to insure against shocks, thus increasing vulnerability. This is especially true when coupled with missing credit and insurance markets” (p. v). A recent report based on the pilot phase of a project that was conducted in 27 Amerindian communities in the context of climate change, contained similar findings (UNDP, 2014). The project was executed under Guyana’s Low Carbon Development Strategy and aimed at developing village economies. This report listed several factors that impeded project outcomes, including the absence of market intelligence, technical and ‘soft skills’ associated with successful business, few economic opportunities, and adverse weather (UNDP, 2014). The implication is that indigenous communities that are undertaking community-driven projects are likely to encounter
challenges and barriers that can limit or significantly jeopardize potential capacity building and overall project gains.

Several authors, nonetheless, underscore the point that the use of development strategies that originate within the dominant development paradigm can potentially contribute to eroding critical social capital in communities (Godoy et al., 2005; Fanany et al, 2010). Fananay et al (2010) provide the example from development work in Indonesia where project participants perceived capacity-building interventions used by Western agencies to strengthen organizations as a means of enhancing personal empowerment and advancement. Among other things, these authors explained that Indonesians saw training that occurred in the context of sustaining organizations as merely having individual benefits and that this perception negatively affected capacity-building programs for institutional development. In cultural settings where collectivity is highly valued, maintaining the balance between the individual is important (Adler, 2012). Similarly, concerns arise in relation to Indigenous Peoples’ interaction with the market economy. One perception is that type of economic activities that lead to empowerment of the individual in ways that could threaten norms of reciprocity and cooperation and weakens social capital but on the whole the evidence remains contradictory (Godroy et al., 2005; Scarlato, 2013).

Training Outcomes within Development Initiatives

Few research studies focus on outcomes of training as part of capacity building programs that are undertaken at the level of the community (Gordon and Chadwick,
The main reason, it would appear, is that capacity building and community development are complex processes and consequently it is difficult to attribute changes in outcome or longer-term impact to a single intervention (Yocarini, 2007; Ortiz & Taylor, 2009). The discussion of four selected articles that follows highlights ways in which researchers have used various study designs and analytic frameworks to examine training outcomes in projects.

Millar and Kilpatrick (2005), the authors of the first article in this review, examined the role that training played in projects undertaken in three marginalized communities in Tasmania. Using ethnographic research methodology these authors studied the experiences of project participants. Specifically, they examined “the experiences of a number of new students or trainees, and the partnerships and collaborations which evolved between community development programmes, community members and groups, and educational and training organisations” (p. 18). The authors found evidence that training can have positive outcomes for both individuals who participated in project-related training and for the wider community in which they lived. Essentially, the projects that Millar and Kilpatrick (2005) investigated focused on enhancing opportunities for community members in communities characterized by socio-economic issues such as poverty, high unemployment and welfare dependence. The goal of fostering a leadership process based on collaboration was central to the community projects that were investigated. Overall, the project strategies were based on a social capital approach that guided the Australian focus of a “whole of community” (p. 21) approach to community development. Millar and
Kilpatrick (2005) pointed out that the ‘whole of community’ approach “requires communities to have the skills and understanding to take on responsibilities for their own outcomes” (p. 19). Following this approach, the projects identified educational and training needs, using partnerships with institutions and community groups to foster re-engagement with learning among project participants. Training and learning opportunities were important features of the leadership component of the projects.

Notions relating capacity building and community development informed Millar and Kilpatrick’s (2005) approach to their research of the projects. The authors posited, for example, that “Learning activities can build community capacity in a number of ways. As skill and knowledge are acquired, the individual’s self-efficacy, self-esteem and self-confidence are increased, and the individual’s job-readiness is improved” (pp. 19-20). The two researchers used data that a research organization at the University of Tasmania had collected during a qualitative research activity on the projects in three communities. The research organization had used ethnographic methodologies including interviews and observation to gather data. The pool of interview participants for the research project included project participants, project leaders and individuals who had had contact with the projects. The researchers extracted specific data related to themes of leadership process and re-engagement with learning from this database.

In their examination of the data on the projects, Millar and Kilpatrick (2005) identified several positive outcomes in the three communities where the projects were implemented. For example, they found that in one community volunteers had established a program of activities for children. This activity appeared to have motivated
volunteers to participate in initial training activities were that related to this children’s program and which the project offered. Additionally, project volunteers had opportunities for informal learning as they engaged in teamwork, conflict resolution strategies and grievance procedures during the project. Further, a number of the volunteers, the majority of whom were women, went on to enroll in a certificate course on Community Services that had secondary school equivalency.

The main focus of the project in the second community was on the family. In this community young mothers participated in a special “Return to Study” program in order to upgrade their literacy and life skills. In the third community, the focus was on computer training classes at the school for single parents on welfare benefits. These were all structured courses that resulted from partnering and collaboration within educational and other community organizations, and courses that project participants engaged in as part of collaborative leadership process. Based on these various levels of engagement in project activities by community members, Millar and Kilpatrick (2005) concluded that external interventions can have positive outcomes for communities.

The study by Millar and Kilpatrick (2005) is especially relevant to research endeavors that seek to examine ways in which training can influence outcomes for individuals. They found, for example, that project participants reported having increased confidence and self-esteem as a result of their training and that some participants were also motivated to continue on the educational path. Others still were motivated to seek employment. Millar and Kilpatrick acknowledged that while the outcomes in education and training in study were not numerically great, that it could be symbolically important.
A crucial point that the researchers emphasized was that the evidence showed that development projects that involved training stimulated re-engagement with learning. They also drew attention to the report of project participants of one community, that they had developed group solidarity. The researchers regarded this outcome as an important element in building the social capital of the community. Another recent qualitative study that involved analysis of training in a community project was conducted in the United States of America by a team of four researchers (Emery et al., 2007). The study examined the community impacts of a leadership program two decades after the initial training occurred. The program, Tomorrow's Leaders Today (TLT). The TLT program started in the state of Iowa, 1987. The research study involved 13 TLT participants, including three women, who participated in the program in 1987. According to the researchers, the study set out to “test the hypothesis that the increase in individual capacity gained through the leadership development program yielded significant increases in the community’s capacity to create and manage positive change processes as measured by increases in community capitals” (p. 61).

An important feature of the TLT program in Iowa was that it was designed as an action-learning, action research” (p. 61) program for social change. Action learning and action research are noted for being especially participatory in nature and are associated with transformational learning (Stringer, 2007). The TLT focused on preparing emerging leaders to work in small clusters or neighborhoods. Multi community and intercommunity cooperation were key to the objectives of the TLT. To this end, training provided by the TLT centered on subjects and skills related to nurturing effective
leadership. The program included topics such as strategic planning and how to conduct meetings, personality types and values. In addition, participants were involved in activities that aimed to “expand their bridging social capital and networking opportunities” (Emery et al., 2007, p. 61) and on developing collective leadership. The program required communities to apply as a group, to undertake training together, and to set their own goals. The research study was conducted in one of the 21 clusters that participated in the TLT program. This cluster comprised six communities.

In their approach to studying the TLT, the team of researchers used a “Community Capital Framework (CCF)” in order to define the impacts of the leadership program on community capacity. According to these researchers, the CCF is a tool that can be used to analyze community resources and activities from a systems perspective. The CCF proposes that community can possess capital in the following forms: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial and built (Emery, 2006). The researchers were especially interested in focusing on strengths of the projects and for this reason they found Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to be appropriate for their study. They used AI to develop open-ended questions that aimed to steer study participants to discuss the strengths and positive aspects of their individual and community experience. In other words, during the interviews the study participants focused on what worked (Emery et al., 2007). The researchers used themes to code the data, and they also used the qualitative data analysis software, NVivo. The CCF was critical to facilitating the researchers’ analysis of the data. They used the CCF to map leadership activities to
outcomes and impacts in the community and to link individual activity to community change.

Some of the findings of this study centered on ways in which the leadership training offered by the TLT bolstered capacity at the individual level. For example, the researchers reported that some study participants described that following the training they were able to undertake successful single purpose efforts such as putting a new roof on the library or raising money for Boy Scouts. The researchers also found that the data provided strong evidence that the study participants contributed greatly to specific projects and that the community benefited from these projects in terms of increased community-wide human capital, by improving health, education, and access to resources with particular attention to youth. The researchers were careful, however, to draw attention to a challenge they encountered during the data collection phase of their research. They reported that study participants had difficulty responding to questions regarding the difference that the TLT had made to the community. They went on to state that “The impact of the training on the communities in which they lived was only visible when individual and TLT activities were linked to specific community capitals” (p.62). The researchers therefore placed much emphasis on the effectiveness of the mapping technique in helping to make these links. They constructed a table that illustrated how they used the mapping technique to facilitate inquiry into training outcomes that extended beyond the individual sphere.

In another study, researchers also found compelling evidence that training can play a key capacity-building role and lead to positive impacts at the individual, group
and community levels. In this instance, a team of four researchers used case study research to investigate how the School and Community Health Project (SCHP) community development in Nepal empowered rural women (Acharya, Yoshini, Jimba, & Wakai, 2007). According to Cornwall (2007) the term *empowerment* is often portrayed as an aspect of capacity building but it has an “expansive semantic range” (p. 472). In this study, the researchers used ‘empowerment’ to mean “a multidimensional and interlinked process of change in power relations to expand individual choices and capacities for self-reliance”.

The SCHP was sponsored by the Government of Nepal, (HMG/N), Japan Medical Association (JMA), and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The researchers investigated the SCHP that was implemented in Kavrepalanchowk district, a rural area in Nepal. This district comprised 15 administrative units or village development committees (VDC) where the estimated population in 1997 was 45,000. At the start of the project, in 1992, the focus of the SCHP in the Kavrepalanchowk district was on improving overall conditions of the inhabitants. To this end, the project initially concentrated on health, economic, and educational activities. After 1995, however, the emphasis of the project was on community development activities that revolved around two components: adult literacy and women’s self-help groups. The case study of SCHP focused on these two project components. The SCHP had conducted both basic literacy and post-literacy classes that women attended. The activities of the self-help groups included small-scale savings and credit groups and kitchen garden and these activities were linked to the post-literacy classes.
In studying the impact of the SCHP, the researchers sourced data concerning the adult literacy program, small-scale savings and credit group activities including kitchen gardening activities from data gathered during two data gathering exercises. The first set of data was collected in 1997 as baseline data for the project. The second set of data was gathered in 2000, during a mid-term evaluation survey. While the baseline survey covered twenty-eight target communities, the mid-term evaluation only covered three community projects. Based on the description provided by the researchers, a wide range of data gathering methods had been used to collect data at both the baseline and mid-term evaluation.

One strong point of this study is that the researchers were able to employ a range of qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods. For example, in order to assess impact of the project activities, the team conducted a longitudinal evaluation of the SCHP using quantitative data that were available to them. In some instances, they verified qualitative and quantitative data using a correlation matrix. The researchers gave much emphasis to triangulation when they analyzed the qualitative data. Further, in analyzing data related to the literacy program, the researchers employed three theoretical approaches that have strong links to participatory approaches to adult literacy: progressive education, humanistic education, and critical pedagogy.

A noteworthy finding of the study was that women's participation increased in all the components of the SCHP. With respect to the literacy intervention, the data analysis pointed to relatively significant increase in the literacy rate in the communities during the years 1996-2000. The researchers reported that the literacy rate increased
from approximately 10% to 50% among female adults 15 years and older, and from 26% to 37% in people six years and older. Based on their statistical analysis, the researchers found that the literacy intervention resulted in closing the gender gap in the three communities. Importantly, the researchers identified this shift in pedagogical approach from a humanistic to a critical pedagogy one as the main factor that led to self-help group activities and women managing their own activities. More generally, the impact of the literacy classes was also seen in the attention that was given to, and the valuing of health related information by community members.

This study is especially useful in terms of illustrating the key role that the literacy training played as a pre-requisite to social and economic activities. The researchers described the literacy programs as having “provided a good impulse to the participants in expanding their activities for both saving-credit and kitchen activities...” (Acharya et al. 2007, p. 44). They also drew attention to their finding concerning the role of group savings and credit program and described them as “the driving force to help illiterate rural women start small-scale economic activities that are effective in absorbing the female workforce in these communities” (p. 34). This study highlighted two other related outcomes: (1) there was an increase in the funds of the self-help groups in every community and some measure of success with investment venture, and (2) while some participants were cultivating gardens before joining the project, that over time every participant had a garden.

The research study on the SCHP illustrates how a case study approach can be used to effectively examine projects that take place in communities and moreso, to
analyze outcomes that relate to components of projects that involve training. The rich
data sources that were available to the researchers contributed largely to the
researchers’ ability to undertake very detailed analysis in this study and ultimately to
lend a great deal of credibility to the findings. Apart from achieving planned outcomes
for project participants, training activities can lead to spillover effects in the wider
community. The final study that this literature reviewed underscores this point. This
study was conducted by Walingo (2006) among several communities participated in a
Livestock Development Project (LDP) in Kenya. The LDP involved communities of Winam
Division in Nyanza Province, and Emuhaya and Sabatia Divisions in the Western Province
of Kenya. As part of the operation of the LDP in these communities, women’s groups
were specially targeted to participate in a cow-from-cow rotation scheme (CFCRS) that
allowed women to obtain calf heifers through a loan system. In order to be loaned a calf
heifer, women had to meet specific criteria including education. The beneficiaries of the
CFCRS received trained in dairy farming before receiving a cow.

Walingo (2006) argued that in addition to literacy programs, specific project
educational components were effective for poverty alleviation programs in Kenya. The
study aimed, therefore, to establish the effect of the level of educational background on
performance in dairy projects. The study explored the kinds of benefits that accrue from
the agricultural projects and the kinds of additional support that was necessary to
maximize projects of this nature. Hence, the study included a focus on training
outcomes associated with the CFCRS component of the LDP.
In undertaking this study, the researcher used a cross-sectional study design. The study sample was 300. Study participants were both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the LDP. They were randomly selected from a list of names of persons. To be included in the sample, beneficiaries had to have been project members for no less than three years. Interviewing was the study’s main data collection method. The interview schedule focused on household size and composition, occupation and employment, and other specific parameters. In order to analyze the data generated from these interviews, the researcher used statistical data analysis techniques including scoring, and mean and standard deviation. In addition to gathering quantitative data, the researcher collected qualitative data through focus group discussions and other participatory methods.

The study results showed that beneficiaries of poverty-reduction schemes required specialized training. Additionally, the research established that on the whole community members who did not participate in the specialized training actually acquired dairy management skills. This, the researchers claimed was a result of community members who were not project participants engaging in observing the project beneficiaries who had gained these skills directly from training.

Walingo’s study did not provide a comprehensive description of the training component of the projects. Despite this limitation, the findings of the study underscore the fact that research on the role of training in development is likely to unearth findings involving positive spillover effects from project-related training.

**Summary:** The four studies provide examples of positive outcomes associated with training connected to development initiatives in communities. These outcomes
occurred at the individual and group levels, as well in the wider community. A significant characteristic of these studies is that they are all relatively recent research endeavors that investigated projects that involved capacity building and training. Collectively, the studies demonstrate that it is feasible to conduct research related on the intersections between capacity building and training in a range of community scenarios.

The four selected studies showcase ways that researchers have employed various research approaches and methods for gathering research data. Significantly, each study was conducted within various time frames after projects have been implemented. On the whole, these studies offer useful insights into the value, scope and challenges of engaging in research on training that relates to development projects in communities.

**Conclusion:** The literature reviewed confirms that training plays a vital role in furthering development. It also highlights several issues that concern the concept of training, including the need to re-examine and re-conceptualize the purpose of training in the context of development and the manner in which it is employed. Further, the literature reviewed underscored the fact that in general, there is a lack of research on training in the context of development. With respect to research on training, this review found that scholars have given greater attention to training in relation to development organizations at the international level and far less attention to training that takes place at the community level.

Several significant issues that are critical to investigating the role of training in development have become clear in this review. One issue is the existence of multiple
definitions for training. This has implications not only for what constitutes training, but also for the implementation and analysis of projects that have a training component. Similarly, the diverse usage of the term capacity building and the challenges associated with the concept are problematic and may determine how training is understood and utilized by project stakeholders, including trainees. Hence, it is important for the researcher to determine how these and similar terms are understood and used by all stakeholders in the community where research is being conducted.

Other considerations that emerge within the literature, and that appear to be especially critical to the present research study are (1) the importance of understanding the relevance of contextual influences in which capacity building initiatives take place; (2) the interplay between the individual and the collective that is central to the concept of capacity building; and (3) that capacity building strategies and processes such as training can potentially influence spheres of activities at individual, organizational and the collective levels and can do so in several ways. An important message here for the researcher is the need to exercise caution when attributing the influences of training, since contextual factors play a significant role in both specific circumstances and project outcomes.

This literature review included a focus on four studies of development initiatives that involved training linked to capacity building. These studies served to illustrate a variety of ways in which training that occurred within a range of community settings had positive outcomes for individuals, groups and communities. The studies also exemplified ways in which researchers could employ several research methods and strategies in
order to investigate the role of training as a capacity building strategy in various settings.

Finally, the literature underscores the fact that training and development are not neutral concepts. In some instances, discussion revolved around paradigmatic and pedagogical issues and concerns about training and development. Importantly, the literature indicated that scholars have raised questions about the implications of the use of development concepts and practices that are rooted in Western approaches and their use in development initiatives undertaken among indigenous peoples. This literature review highlighted issues related to the efforts of indigenous peoples to define and pursue development paths that reflect their own values and identity. These issues and concerns are central to research that investigates training in relation to development initiatives among the Amerindians of Guyana.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study derives primarily from discussions among development experts concerning ways in which capacity building is understood and applied in the development sphere. A common premise in these discussions is that capacity building encompasses more than the provision of skills and knowledge for individuals and groups, and that training is but one of several capacity building strategies. A fundamental concern regarding the use of capacity building strategies in the context of community development is whether the problem being addressed
involves simply a lack of capacity or whether there are other impediments to
development as well (Kenny & Clarke, 2010).

Some development experts contend that the assumptions and approaches upon
which capacity building programs are predicated can influence the role of training (Ife,
2010; Kenny & Clarke, 2010). A related claim is that training plays a role in advancing
development approaches (Fanany et al, 2010; Ife, 2010; Craig, 2010). Moreover, some
authors question the use of concepts such as capacity building that are derived and
employed within the dominant development paradigm and their suitability when
applied in non-Western contexts such as indigenous communities (Abdullah & Young,
2010; Ife 2010; Loomis, 2000; Tauli-Corpuz, 2010b). These issues are central to this
study which investigates the role of training in the development initiatives that have
taken place in one particular Amerindian community. They give rise to the theory that
there is a connection between development approach and capacity building as a result
of training.

The components of the conceptual framework for this study reflect key issues
concerning capacity building and development in general as well as recent themes that
have emerged from studies that pertain to development in indigenous communities.
The components are (1) development (paradigms and approaches), (2) development
and material advancement, (3) capacity building, (4) opportunities and vulnerabilities,
and (5) the individual and the community. I took into account the view that terms and
concepts used in the development sphere may vary in definition and usage (Cornwall,
2007; Fanany et al., 2010). I provide a visual representation of the relationship of these terms to training and in figure 1, and I elaborate on these terms.

![Conceptual Framework](image)

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

**Development (paradigms and approaches):** The literature on development indicates that development approaches and strategies originating within the dominant or western perspective may differ significantly from the conceptual perspective and worldviews of indigenous peoples. Some of the characteristics that distinguish indigenous peoples’ thinking about development from the dominant development paradigm involve principles of self-determination and development, and a more holistic worldview (United Nations, 2009). These views mesh with cultural values and norms related to notions of collectivity, reciprocity, respect for nature and the environment, and collective wellbeing (Giovannini, 2015; Loomis, 2000; Peredo and McClean, 2013; Tauli-Corpuz, 2010b; Ife, 2010). The dominant development paradigm, on the other hand, favors among other things, competitiveness, individualism, top-down
management, and linear processes (Ife 2010; Miller, 2010; Loomis, 2000; Tauli-Corpuz, 2010b).

The difference in typology of **deficit-driven** and **asset-driven approaches** is commonly used to identify methodologies used in capacity building programs (Kenny & Clark, 2010). One way in which various authors differentiate between these two approaches is to equate the deficit-driven approach with a top-down approach to capacity building and identify the asset-driven approach as a bottom-up approach to capacity building. Importantly, development projects can be either deficit-driven, or asset-driven, or can utilize combinations of these approaches (Fanany et al., 2010; Connors, 2010). The deficit-driven approach is oriented toward identifying deficits in capacities within a group or a community, utilizing strategies to fill perceived gaps or deficiencies, and promoting reliance on external support (Kenny & Clarke, 2010; Fanany et al., 2010). Some critics associate training with a deficit-approach and underscore the rather limited nature of capacity building that occurs in projects that are designed within this framework (Ife, 2010). On the other hand, the asset-driven approach centers on identifying and reinforcing existing capacities, encourages local ownership and control of projects, and promotes the concept of sustainability (Simpson et al., 2003; Abdullah & Young, 2010; Connors, 2010). In this context, training has the potential to assist in facilitating capacity building that is more transformative in nature (Fanany et al., 2010; Ife, 2010; Craig, 2010).

**Development and material advancement:** Development interventions in indigenous communities have for some time focused mainly on addressing poverty
related issues through improving social and economic conditions and services and increasing access to material goods (Miller et al., 2013; Patrinos & Skoufias, 2007). Studies show, however, that indigenous peoples’ understanding of the concept ‘development’ can extend beyond material needs to a more holistic approach of collective well-being (Giovannini, 2015; Peredo & McLean, 2013; Tauli-Corpuz, 2010b).

In recognition of the various tensions embedded in the broad use of the term ‘development’, I appropriated the term ‘material advancement’ from current discourse on economics (see Das, 2011; Rodrik, 2000; Patnaik, 2011) to specifically describe activities that concern the material needs and wants (including income, goods, and services) in the community where I conducted research for this study.

**Capacity building:** In the context of community development, the term capacity building is often associated with the process of providing skills and knowledge for individuals and collectives. Self-determination, transformation and sustainability are significant issues in building programs (Fanany et al. 2010). This study proceeds from the view that capacities exist within indigenous groups and communities, but that factors both within and beyond the community can precipitate the need to augment local knowledge and capacities.

**Opportunities and vulnerabilities:** Various factors serve to limit opportunities for indigenous peoples to pursue community-based development and increase the vulnerabilities to which they might be exposed (Patrinos & Skoufias, 2007; Hallegatte et al., 2014; Miller, et al., 2013). In this study, ‘opportunities’ refers to those favorable conditions and options that emerged for the community to engage in projects that
include training components. In defining the term ‘vulnerability’, I drew on the broad
definition provided by Ludi and Bird (2007) that emphasizes ‘defencelessness, insecurity
and exposure to risk, shocks and stress”. The combined use of ‘opportunities’ and
‘vulnerabilities’ offered scope for me to explore issues related to capacity building both
within the projects and in relation to the wider community.

**The individual and the community**: One of the criticisms of capacity building,
both as a concept and in practice, is that there is a tendency to focus more on the
individual than on the collective (Eade, 1997; Kenny & Clarke, 2010). This criticism has
ramifications for capacity-building strategies in the context of indigenous communities
where much importance is attached to the role of the collective (Peredo & Mc Lean,
2013; Giovannini, 2015; Patrinos & Skoufias, 2007). This study, therefore, examined the
role of project-related training at the levels of the individual, group and community.
CHAPTER 3

STUDY DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODS

Research Approach

This qualitative research study is exploratory in nature. According to Hennink (2007), exploratory research is used “when little is known about the research issue” (p. 16). This approach is appropriate for this study since a review of recent literature indicates that research on issues related to training in the context of development is limited. The qualitative approach allowed me to uncover the dynamics of training and to explore the complexities that emerge in the experiences of individuals who have participated in training activities in a particular cultural environment. Rossman and Rallis (2003) are among several authors who maintain that practical data gathering and analytical tools utilized by a qualitative approach that have aided such a process. Following the guidance of these authors, I reviewed documents, including newspaper articles, conducted multiple in-depth interviews, and employed techniques of analysis that allowed me to identify underlying issues and patterns that emerged from the data. I conducted a significant part of the data gathering process in the village setting, using face-to-face interviews with participants in three projects targeted by the study. Focus group discussions included other members of the village, and these discussions provided additional insights into the issues that this study addresses.
Authorities on the subject of research approaches and methods portray qualitative research as a systematic inquiry requiring a conceptual framework while at the same time offering the researcher some degree of flexibility in conducting fieldwork (Creswell, 2007, Stake, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Rossman & Rallis (2003). For this study, such flexibility was necessary. While conducting fieldwork, I had to adapt to the activities of the community. I found that there was a great deal of mobility among members of the Village. Study participants were constantly on the move whether it was at their farms, fishing, or simply away from the Village. Additionally, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the institution that oversees academic research in Guyana, required that I engage a “co-collector” while I conducted my fieldwork. The EPA determined the daily rate for the stipend that I paid the co-collector. During my first meeting with the Village Council we discussed the need for a co-collector. The Council subsequently appointed one of its Community Support Officer (CSO) to serve in this capacity. Prior to beginning fieldwork activities, I conducted an orientation session with him. As part of this orientation I explained the nature of my research, reviewed the informed consent forms, and we discussed ethical issues involved in the data collection process. Initially, the co-collector served as a guide, introducing me to potential project participants and members of the community in general. He was especially helpful in assisting me with the task of scheduling field visits, offered practical suggestions for accomplishing goals that I set for each of field visit, and kept me informed about upcoming village activities. The co-collector also served as an essential liaison between myself and the Toshao and Village Council and study participants. Working with the co-
collector necessitated a fair amount of flexibility on my part, especially since he had to attend to his daily CSO duties.

I utilized the case study approach as a strategy. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), “case study as a strategy is usually espoused when focusing on society, culture, group program or an organization (p. 93).” Experts on the subject of research describe the case study as inherently serving to delimit physical and other boundaries (Yin, 2008; Stake, 2005). A case study was ideal in this regard, since Amerindians form a distinct subset of the population in Guyana, yet are not a homogenous group and live in communities dispersed throughout Guyana (National Development Strategy (NDS), 1996, p. 3). This in turn made it necessary for me to limit research activity to one specific locale.

Another consideration in the use of the case study as a strategy was that some authors stress that research investigations involving capacity building activities, such as training, should be contextualized (Fanany, et al., 2010; Ortiz & Taylor, 2009). Authors Ortiz and Taylor (2009), who addressed issues related to evaluating capacity building endeavors, have provided useful guidance on this matter: when analyzing the complexities of capacity-building efforts, it is important to understand the intentions of these efforts, which must be done by looking at the specific interventions and contexts in which these interventions occur. Although this study was not designed to serve as an evaluation of projects, the thrust of this recommendation aligns well with my choice to use a case study approach, especially since the study involved close examination of specific projects that have taken place in a single community.
**Research Site**

For my research, I selected a coastal Amerindian village that has rich experience in community development. Recent projects include income-generating enterprises involving agricultural production and processing, tourism, local medicinal knowledge, a transportation service, a housing project, a cultural development project, and activities that focused on youth. In this study, I referred to the site as the ‘Village’.

In my former position at the Amerindian Research Unit at the University of Guyana, I had opportunities to engage with this Village on several levels. On one occasion, I was part of a team that conducted a project evaluation exercise in that Village. In July 2009, I conducted a small study on leadership that included this village. That research activity allowed me to gain some insights into the development projects and issues in that Village.

**Project Selection**

Gaining insights into issues related to the process of selecting the three projects for this study was a crucial part of my preparation for fieldwork. Hence, I engaged in discussions with two members of the Village Council, a former staff member of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), personnel at the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MoAA), and key Villagers. Some of these discussions were informal but overall they served as a useful means for obtaining background information about community development activities in the Village and ways in which
external agencies interfaced with the Village and among them. All of these discussions were at various locations outside of the Village.

Identifying criteria for investigating training activities was necessary for defining boundaries for the projects I included for this study. My perusal of literature on training led me to recognize that characteristics such as content, goals, and the mode of delivery of training were important elements of training. To this end, I followed criteria identified by the IEG (2008) in their evaluation of training associated with projects funded by the World Bank. During the process of identifying and selecting projects, I used the following criteria as a guide: training activities: (1) had specific learning objectives,(2) were scheduled activities that occurred in settings other than where the knowledge was to be applied, (meaning, for example, not training activities that take place on the job), and (3) were conducted by lecturers, trainers, or facilitators (p. 5).

The goal of my first visit to meet with the Village Council was to clarify the purpose of my study as stated in my earlier written communication with that body. At that meeting, and based on further explanation concerning the study, the Village Council identified a few projects they felt would fit well with my interests. The Council also indicated their own interest in research related to two specific projects, namely the Organic Pineapple Project and the Village Park Project. My earlier research in the Village had led me to consider both of those projects as possibilities. My final decision about the three projects followed two subsequent visits to the Village that allowed me to have informal discussions with key members of the Village. My final decision was based on insights gained from discussions with staff members who had worked with projects in
that community while working with the IICA and the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MoAA).

Between field visits and discussions, I perused documents to gain other perspectives about development projects in the Village. These activities allowed me to learn about the Village and assisted me with the process of identifying potential study participants. It is important to note that the Village Council did not attempt to influence my preliminary investigations or my final decisions in any way. In fact, the Village Council heard about my final decisions at a community-wide meeting that the Village Council had called to discuss community matters. I had asked the Village Council for a few moments to address the gathering so that I could tell them about the purpose of the study and the nature of my fieldwork. This meeting occurred shortly before I embarked on identifying and interviewing study participants.

The projects that I selected are identified by the following pseudonyms in this dissertation: (1) the Organic Pineapple Project, (2) the Fish Farming Project, and (3) the Village Park Project. These three projects were all considered community development initiatives that local groups planned and implemented. The Village Council ran the Organic Pineapple Project, while a group of women who formed a Women’s Development Group planned and implemented the Fish Farming Project and the Village Park Project. Significantly, all three projects combined characteristics that allowed them each to fall within the spectrum of both a bottom-up and a top-down approach to development.
**Study Participants**

In proposing a maximum of three projects for this study, I anticipated that the sample pool of study participants for the study was likely to be fairly small. My years of interaction with Amerindian communities allowed me to recognize the trend wherein only a few community members actively serve in groups. One consequence is that these few members are likely to be involved in the same development projects in the community. I employed purposeful sampling for participants for both the face-to-face interviews and focus groups because I was interested in participants who could provide rich data and contribute to providing a holistic picture of the issues that this study addresses. Several authors on research design highlight the usefulness of purposeful or purposive sampling in obtaining study participants in instances where research investigations require data for specific purposes (see for example Creswell, 2007; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Gal, Gal & Borg, 2007).

I identified four categories of participants who, in a broad sense, represent the various project ‘stakeholder’ groups. Table 1 identifies these categories as: (1) project trainees; (2) project staff; (3) local project representatives, and (4) community members. Table 1 also indicates the specific criteria for each the respective categories: individuals who have received training, individuals who have been directly involved with the project at either the level of an external agency or as part of a local group, or individuals who have been involved in other community activities, either as village councilors or as community members.
While non-Village members were critical to this case study, the primary participants were adult members of the Village. Applying a criterion strategy in the participant selection process required first creating a list of potential study participants. The preliminary list that I prepared was based on my discussion with members of the Village during the early field trips. This list evolved over time as I applied the various criteria to identify participants for each of the four categories in Table 1. Some of the individuals I approached as potential participants declined, claiming shyness or lack of recall. Availability of individuals during the interview phase in the Village also played a role in determining the final size and characteristics of the study sample.

The sample size that I had proposed for the study was a minimum of 30 persons and a maximum of 45. This included a maximum of 21 individual interviews and three focus groups totaling between 12-24 persons. The final study sample was 24 persons: 20 from the Village, and four non-Village participants. The four non-Village participants all belong to the category labeled ‘Project Staff’ in Table 1.

Of the 20 study participants from the Village, 11 participated in the individual face-to-face interviews; 13 people altogether participated across the three focus groups. However, four persons who participated in individual face-to-face interviews also participated in the focus groups. The overlap also extended to representation of members of the Village involved in the three projects in this study.

Of the 11 study participants from the Village with whom I conducted face-to-face interviews, 10 had received training related to one or more of the three projects. In
other words, of the 11 study participants with whom I conducted face-to-face interviews, only one had not participated in training related to the three projects.

I conducted face-to-face interviews with seven persons who I identified as ‘Project Trainees’ in Table 1. For these study participants I specifically conducted the interviews using the interview guide entitled ‘Questions for Project Trainees’ (see appendix B). There was, however, significant overlap of project representation in this category. Of this number, five persons received training with the Organic Pineapple Project. Three of the five persons received training with this project only. The other two persons each received training with both the Fish Farming Project and the Village Park Project. A total of four persons received training with the Village Park Project and of this number, only one person had participated in training with this project only. For the Fish Farming Project, a total of three persons received training, two of whom had also each received training with the both Organic Pineapple Project, and the Village Park Project, while the third received training only with the Fish Farming Project.

Similarly, of the five persons who were interviewed for the category ‘Local Project Representatives’, four participants had received training associated with the Organic Pineapple Project, and two of the four had also received training connected to the Village Park Project. Meanwhile, the profiles of those who participated in the focus groups showed that two persons had participated in individual face-to-face interviews. These two participants had each had received training linked to the Organic Pineapple Project, and one of the two had also received training with the Village Park Project.
Fourteen of the 20 study participants from the Village were female. These study participants were between 19-69 years of age. The four non-Village members were all male and were between 45-63 years of age.

Of the 10 study participants who received project-related training, and with whom I conducted face-to-face interviews, seven were aged between 59-69 years, while the other three were between 35-46 years. Of these 10 study participants, six reported having received basic primary education while four had obtained some form of post-primary education.

**Data Gathering Methods**

During a three-month period, I gathered data both inside and outside the Village. During that time, I employed four data gathering methods:

1. **A review of reports and documents** concerning the three projects and related village activities;
2. Face-to-face in-depth interviews with individuals who have received project-related training, project personnel (from external agencies), and local project representatives (from the village);
3. **Focus group discussions** involving a cross section of members of the Village who were knowledgeable about the three projects and/or were involved with other community development projects;
4. **Field observations** that focus on documenting ways in which participants who have received training as part of the three projects participate in the development activities of the community.

**Review of Documents**

The review of documents during the three months supplemented earlier efforts during preparation of the research proposal. I gained a broad understanding of recent development activities that had taken place in the Village from the earlier examination of reports and newspaper articles. During the three-month data-gathering period, however, I sourced documents from the personal files of study participants and from selected institutions. Documents that were unearthed during this period included an assortment of training agenda from training events that study participants had attended over time, training handouts, samples of farmers’ activity forms related to the organic certification process, and reports by individuals and agencies who had been involved in various activities the Village. The document search also included online reports of government agencies and non-governmental agencies.

Overall, the available documentation concerning the three projects was limited. One of the non-governmental agencies that had worked with the Village over several years provided access to a collection of its own reports as well as a broad range of literature in its library. A few government agencies associated with one of the projects provided related files. In one instance, records for one of the projects had been archived and transferred elsewhere. Despite several attempts, the researcher was unable to find
these records. Access to records from the Village Council also proved challenging. In this case, it appeared that files related to projects were probably in the possession of individuals in the village. Similarly, the researcher requested but did not gain access to records held by the company that had purchased pineapples from the Village. Despite much persistence, the researcher was unable to procure documents that might have enriched this study.

**Interviews**

Face-to-face in-depth interviews were key to this study. The process leading up to each interview involved an initial meeting with the potential study participant. In the Village this meant that I visited the participant in their homes, explained the purpose of my study and why I was seeking an interview and what the process entailed. When a participant indicated his or her willingness to proceed, I then provided that individual with a copy of the letter of consent, read and explained the content of that document with the individual. Having agreed to a time and place of the interview, I left the copy of the consent form with study participants and asked that they read it before I returned. Prior to the interview, I reviewed the form with each person before obtaining his or her signature. In several instances, the co-collector accompanied me on several of the early visits and observed the manner in which I conducted this process. The co-collector played a supportive role in arrangements associated with the interview process. In several instances he was present when I reviewed the consent forms with study participants. Unfortunately, his duties as a CSO often limited these opportunities. After I
had completed all of my interviews, the co-collector assisted me with distributing sealed envelopes containing thank-you letters that I prepared for each study participants, as well as a photocopy of his or her signed consent forms.

The process for those interviews that I conducted outside of the Village was similar. In two instances it was essential that I make official contact with the institution where the study participants were employed. In the other instances this was not necessary. In all cases, however, I ensured that study participants had both independently read the consent forms and had reviewed them with me before they signed the document. Following each interview, I provided each participant with a photocopy of the signed consent form.

I used an audio recorder to record all the face-to-face interviews as well as the focus group discussions. Altogether, I conducted fifteen face-to-face in-depth interviews across three categories of study participants. The first category comprised seven individuals who have participated in training activities for the three projects. The second category of interviewees consisted of one project staff from each of the three projects. I conducted four interviews in this category: one representative from each of three agencies involved with the implementation of the projects, and an independent trainer who had been contracted to conduct training on tour guiding. Four local project representatives formed the third category of study participants. Two were representatives from the Village Council and two represented the Women’s Development Group. The distribution of face-to-face-interviews is contained in Table 1.
Table 1: Interviews Conducted for Three Community Development Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Projects</th>
<th>Category of study participants</th>
<th>Form of data collection</th>
<th>Estimated Number of Interviews/Discussions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Project trainees - individuals who participated in training activities related to the 3 projects</td>
<td>Face-to-face interviews</td>
<td>7 Individual interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project staff (external) - representatives of aid agencies for 3 projects - independent trainers</td>
<td>Face-to-face interviews</td>
<td>4 Individual interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local project representatives - representatives of the village group that implemented the three projects</td>
<td>Face-to-face interviews</td>
<td>4 Individual interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community members - members of the three selected projects - members of the Amerindian Village Council - other members of the village who are involved in community activities</td>
<td>Focus group discussions</td>
<td>3 Discussions Total No. of persons = 13 (1 group of 5 persons) (2 groups of 4 persons each)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total number of interviews/discussions = 18

The interview guides for these interviews were designed to gain insights into the experiences and perspectives of each study participant. Interview guides for the face-to-face interviews are included with this proposal in Appendix A. The researcher found the interview guides to be useful and they allowed for flexibility as I probed with key questions. The open-ended manner of asking questions in the interview created opportunities for study participants to relax and reflect as they responded to questions.
In some instances, however, study participants often struggled to recall precise details of some training events. Interviews lasted between approximately forty minutes to an hour.

**Focus Group Discussions**

I conducted three focus group discussions. Focus groups can be especially useful in extending the range of available views on the subject under investigation (Hennink, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In this instance, I was especially interested in gaining additional information and perspectives about training-related issues as well as the broader context in which the three development projects were undertaken. Interview guides for these focus groups are included in Appendix B. All focus group discussions took place privately in a Village meeting hall.

Guidance on the size of focus groups varies among research experts (see for example Silverman, 2011; and Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The focus groups in this study were small and the composition of the groups is reflected in Table 1. One focus group comprised four persons who were participants in the three projects. Another focus group consisted of four members of the Amerindian Village Council and a Community Support Officer (CSO) who was attached to the Village Council. The third group was made up of community members who were involved mainly in the spheres of health and sports in the community. Data from the focus group discussions ultimately enriched the entire body of data that I gathered for this study. This was especially true for the mixed grouped of community members whose ages ranged between 19-25 years, and
who had not been directly involved in any of the projects. The youth drew attention to issues concerning the projects and community development in the Village that might otherwise have escaped the attention of the researcher.

Field Observations

Several authors convey the usefulness of field notes (see for example, Silverman, 2011; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). During my data gathering process, I kept a notebook with jottings on my observations on daily basis. Later, I amplified these notes, providing better sequence of thought and documenting specific details. My observations and notes on attendance at a community or a farmers meeting, a community celebration and similar events, were especially helpful in informing my understanding of Village life and issues that pertained to this study.

Data Analysis Procedures

I followed conventional qualitative procedures and methods for analysis of the data that I gathered from the various documents, interviews, and observations. My document search yielded only a few reports that directly referenced the three projects or provided insights into the research setting. Where available, I relied on project documents as the main source for details concerning the purpose, activities and outcomes of the projects. Interview data, therefore, greatly assisted me in developing a comprehensive picture and narrative of the training components of the projects. This was especially true for the Fish Farming Project since project documents were
unavailable. In Chapter 4, I describe the research setting, identify the main threads of development efforts and training that the community had experienced prior to pursuing community-based initiatives as exemplified by the three projects that this study investigated. I provide an overview of the three projects, highlighting key features that relate to the conceptual framework that guides this study.

Initially I listened to each interview shortly after it was recorded with a view to discerning commonalities in themes and perspectives as well as differences. This activity assisted in my early efforts to create a composite profile of each of the three projects while I was engaged in fieldwork. I used a word processor for transcribing each interview. As I completed transcribing each transcript I created a profile of the study participant. The profiles mainly captured participant’s training experiences and their association and involvement with different projects. Eventually I sorted these profiles into the four categories of study participants: project trainees, project staff, local project representatives, and community members.

During the first reading of transcripts, I used highlighter pens to indicate initial categories and themes based on the literature as well as those that arose naturally from each interview. I used the highlighted words and phrases to prepare short handwritten notes about key categories and elements contained in each transcript. I also developed a template for facilitating data analysis of each project. I created the template using the five research questions to identify the starting categories for data analysis: delivery of training, evidence of new knowledge and skills, application of training, training outcomes (individual, group, community), and supports and hindrances. Several
interview questions were linked directly to these five research questions. I designed the template to accommodate coding based on the responses of each of the five questions and to do so for each of the four categories of study participants. In this way, my analysis of issues took into consideration multiple perspectives simultaneously.

As a first step in organizing the data, I reviewed and arranged transcripts based on study participants’ responses to the five research questions. The follow-up step combined sorting and pasting key phrases and words from each transcript under preliminary themes. Working with digital documents allowed for ease of cutting, pasting and sorting data, as well as in reviewing and re-organizing data. The next step that advanced the process of analysis involved isolating interview data by project. This proved to be challenging and time consuming in those instances where study participants were involved in more than one project or played several roles in the projects or in the Village.

I engaged in another round of coding for the purpose of generating additional themes and concepts from the interview data. Since I was investigating three projects, I treated each one as a separate unit for analysis. I started with a select set of categories drawn mainly from the literature and which were linked to the conceptual framework:

- **Development (paradigms and approaches):** mainstream, indigenous, asset/deficit riven, and a combination of development approaches (asset and deficit driven).

- **Capacity building:** context, purpose of capacity building, relevance of skills/knowledge, empowerment.
• **Development and material advancement:** needs and wants, local values.

• **Opportunities and vulnerabilities:** assets (land, labor & local knowledge), role of external agency, supports and hindrances, risks/hazards/insecurities/shocks.

• **The individual and the community:** role of the individual, individual goals, group goals, role of community.

I systematically reviewed all transcripts to identify responses that related directly to each of the three projects and then to identify emerging categories and themes at a more general level. Reviewing the transcripts for the latter especially assisted me in my task of identifying common as well as anomalous themes that arose in the individual interviews and focus group discussions. By engaging with the data in this manner, I was able to balance deductive analysis for which I used selected categories from the literature that I reviewed for this study, and inductive analysis whereby I unearthed categories and identified themes directly from primary interviews. At this stage, I created a separate document that captured study participants’ perspectives on concepts and issues related to the development of the Village.

During this phase, I hand coded data. I also placed emphasis on continuous triangulation and corroboration of data that I gathered from various sources, and assessed the objectivity of the various sources of data. These measures were intended to lend credibility to the case study (Stake, 2005). As a final step in this process, I assembled codes under key themes and dominant patterns on flip chart paper. I created flip charts for each project. When I concluded this process, I updated the profile document of each project. I also used a separate flip chart for representing key aspects
and issues of perspectives and concerns about broader development matters that concerned the village.

All of these steps assisted me in processing, formulating, and presenting my analysis and interpretation of the data for this dissertation. The overall analysis of the data benefited from the combined approach of coding data using key categories drawn from the literature and identifying those that emerged directly from the data. This was another way in which I tried to consciously maintain a balance between deductive and inductive analysis. My reading and coding activities took into account study participants' use of their everyday vernacular to convey their ideas and perspectives.

Ultimately, the data analysis exercise had two dimensions. The first dimension centered mainly on surfacing the intersections between the development approach (deficit-driven or asset-driven) of each of the three projects, capacity building and project-related training. The main themes and findings are presented in the first section of Chapter 5. I use the five research questions of the study to structure the analysis for each project. The second dimension of the data analysis process involved close examination of the context in which training as a capacity building strategy occurred. In this regard, the study placed much value on the perspectives of the study participants as they described their use and understanding of development concepts, and the issues they felt contributed to the general conditions in the Village. I discuss the key themes and findings of this aspect of the data analysis in the second section of Chapter 5 using the components of the conceptual framework: development (paradigms and approaches), development and material advancement, capacity building, opportunities
and vulnerabilities, and the individual and the community.

**Role of the Researcher**

I conducted this research study in a Village where, as a long-time researcher among Amerindians in Guyana, I had a fair amount of interaction with the community in the past. Also, this was one of three communities in which I conducted research on leadership in July 2009. My past involvement with this community assisted me in conceptualizing the study and prepared me for negotiating the practical aspects of the fieldwork. These aspects of my experience combined with the fact that I am an Amerindian, allowed me to bring to this research endeavor a keen awareness of various cultural and other nuances that exist within Amerindian communities.

Rossman and Rallis (2003), underscore the importance of trustworthiness and transparency in ethical research. On the one hand, my previous work in the field may have fostered a sense of trust concerning the purpose of my current research activity. I found this to be true in some instances when it allowed for easy rapport between the study participants and myself. On the other hand, I understood the ethical necessity of maintaining appropriate boundaries between the researcher and study participants in such circumstances. To this end, I ensured that I clarified my role as a researcher to the study participants. The presence of a local collaborator also helped me to observe rigorous research ethics.

In acknowledging my familiarity with the Village as well as my ‘insider’ understanding of Amerindian ways of being and doing, I addressed the fact that in my
role as researcher there was some intersection of the emic (insider) and etic (outsider) perspectives (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) that may have influenced aspects of this study. I believe that the research design and methods that I used for this study, however, assisted in ensuring that I placed emphasis on what emerged directly from the interviews, thereby indicating my sensitivity to the emic. For example, as I analyzed data obtained from several categories of study participants, I paid attention to the broad range of perceptions that I encountered and relied on them to corroborate some aspects of the data. In addition, the qualitative nature of this study affords me the opportunity to explore categories and themes from within these data. Rossman and Rallis (2003) describe this type of inductive analytic strategy as having the potential to reveal the emic. From the data that I gathered, I uncovered some important trends and issues that I had not anticipated. The discussion in the second section of Chapter 5 reflects my efforts at objectively learning from the study data. This, I believe, was one way of demonstrating the extent to which I tried to bring a measure of professionalism to my role as researcher.

**Ethical Considerations**

This research study was conducted in keeping with the requirements of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, as well as the following institutions in Guyana: the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, and the laws governing Amerindian Village Councils. The EPA is the body that grants permission for all research conducted in Guyana, while the
Ministry of Amerindian Affairs approved research to be conducted in Amerindian communities.

The study involved data collection using interviews. Two key ethical issues were the manner in which participant consent was obtained and, secondly, the anonymity of data. I attended to these matters in the informed consent forms that I prepared and used.

Data that I collected contained a rich assortment of narratives that enriched my understanding of life and interactions of the community where I conducted fieldwork. Several characteristics of the study site, including its small population, the social structure and relationships of the community, suggested that I exercise caution in the use of study data that I gathered. Consequently, to protect the identity of each of my study participants and other members of this specific community, I excluded personal information and certain details that may have strengthened some aspects of the data analysis and study findings.

One common criticism of research investigations is that the communities in which they are conducted often never learn about the research findings. The guidelines of both the EPA and the Amerindian Act that governs Amerindian Village Councils require that researchers make final research findings available to the community in which research is undertaken.

Prior to completing this dissertation, I presented preliminary findings of this study to villagers at meeting that the Village Toshao organized. With the aid of flip charts, I outlined the purpose of the study, the research questions that the study
addressed, aspects of my fieldwork and ways in which I approached analysis of the data. I shared key findings in relation to each of the three projects and summary findings. While the gathering was small, there were representatives of the Village Council and the Women’s Development Group, as well as study participants present who represented each of the projects. The feedback from this gathering suggested that those gathered found that the research findings were important for the community, especially in assisting the community to consider factors that play a role in shaping future community development activities in the Village.

Two comments from the group pointed to shortcomings of this case study and a possible area for future research. One comment was that the community could benefit from having a graph showing pineapple production over the years. As part of my response to the first comment, I shared that limited access to data was one of the challenges that I faced as the study investigator; that the Company probably has production data for pineapple but that the Company had not responded to my request to look at files related to the organic Pineapple Project. The other comment reflected the profound realization on the part of the Villagers who attended the meeting that this study underscored the fact that community development activities in the Village were driven by women. I consider that in depth research related to the role of women in the Village is likely to prove useful, but that this was beyond the scope of this case study.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited in at least two ways. Firstly, the focus of the investigation
and the research findings are limited to a single Amerindian community. Currently there are approximately 210 Amerindian communities scattered across Guyana. Moreover, because this is a case study, the findings will not be open to generalization. Secondly, the data collection for the study relates directly to three specific projects that have already taken place in the village. These projects had links to other projects. The research investigation did not explore the links, so it is possible that this study did not benefit from data related to those projects.
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH SETTING AND THEMES

Arawak families originally inhabited the Village here I conducted research. It is situated in relatively close proximity to two other coastal Amerindian communities and a nearby town. The inhabitants of rural villages in that part of coastal Guyana are, in general, a mixture of ethnic groups. The geographic location of the Village allows the residents to have relatively easy access to some of the regional government institutions, commercial activities and other services. The Village has legal title to its traditional lands and manages its affairs within the framework of the Amerindian Act, 2006.

In recent years, there has been a steady flow of development-related projects in the Village. A number of reports document villagers’ participation in training linked to projects implemented in the community (NARI, 2003; Das, 2006; Chesney, 2007; IICA, July, 2008). Several of these projects focused on utilizing the natural resources of the village for economic gain and for improving general living conditions (NARI, 2003; Das, 2006; Chesney, 2007; IICA, July, 2008; Das, 2006; Harvey, 2011).

In this chapter, I discuss the general context in which development projects occurred in the Village. I have relied on data that I gathered mainly from published and unpublished reports and studies, as well as newspaper articles, to assist me in constructing a broad picture and to highlight aspects of the development process and projects that have taken place in the village over approximately 15 years. I begin by providing an overview of the Village. Following this, I identify some of the main project-
related training activities that have taken place within the Village in recent years. In the final section of the chapter, I outline the three projects that I investigated, namely: the Organic Pineapple Project, the Fish Farming Project, and the Village Park Project.

**Overview of the Village**

The Amerindian village that this study focused on is relatively small. One demographic profile of the Village shows the population figure being a little greater than 670. By comparison, a recent report gives a range for the population of Amerindian villages in Guyana as 150-5000 persons (UNDP, 2014). There are close to 135 households in the Village (MoAA, 2012) the majority of which are located in clusters scattered across the village. Several of these clusters represent places where some of the earliest families settled. A number of small dwellings that are situated in one of the more densely populated section of the village were recently constructed as part of a housing project that allowed small family units to relocate and occupy dwellings. This recent project received special external funding facilitated mainly by Food for the Poor, an organization that has sponsored similar projects for vulnerable groups in some parts of Guyana (Stabroek News, 2010, June 16).

The Amerindian way of life that once defined the community is fast disappearing. A recent project aimed at promoting the sustainable development of Arawak culture in this Village partly reflects the community’s effort to preserve the Arawak language and traditional knowledge, skills, arts and crafts. This project received funding from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) (Kaieteur News, 2010,
October 13). The community has a culture group that has given much attention to Amerindian dance. The dance troupe is made up mainly of young people who perform both traditional and specially choreographed contemporary Amerindian dances.

At the time that I conducted the fieldwork for this study, the Amerindian Village Council that serves as the governing institution was elected in 2012. A male Toshao headed the council, but his predecessor was a woman who had served for eighteen years. Stipulations regarding the elections of a Toshao had rendered the woman ineligible for contesting that position in 2012 since villagers could not nominate a person who had served as Toshao for two consecutive terms immediately prior to elections (see Amerindian Act 2006, Section 71). The village council itself comprised two female and six male councilors. Council members had designated spheres of responsibility, such as youth and sports, and water. One of the female councilor served as the deputy Toshao. During the period when I conducted fieldwork in the village, the Deputy Toshao was performing the duties of clerk/secretary as well as that of treasurer of the Council. The Council also employed her as an attendant or “checker” at the community’s tollgate. The building that served as the village office was located at the tollgate. Tollgate attendants worked out of that office. Approximately six youth served as Community Support Officers (CSOs) for the village. The Village Council supervised the CSOs and they received a stipend from the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs. The position of CSO was a newly created service path that the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs initiated.
Farming and logging constitute the backbone of the village economy. The existence of both farmers’ and loggers’ associations (MoAA, 2012) underscores the importance that villagers attach to these activities. Traditionally, families engaged in subsistence farming for household needs. For several generations, villagers used the slash and burn method as they cultivated pineapple for sale at nearby coastal markets (Das, 2006; Bynoe, 2014). “Slash and burn” refers to the practice of clearing forest and burning the vegetation (see Elias, McKey, Panaud, Ansett & Robert, 2001; Bynoe, 2009).

Poor white sand soil and leaf cutting Acoushi ant (*Atta sp.*) infestations are two of the main factors that have severely affected yields and, in general, have deterred farmers from engaging in extensive cash crop farming (IICA, December, 1995). The combination of slash and burn farming practice and years of logging has contributed to significant deforestation on village land (Bynoe, 2014).

The menfolk of the village find employment through logging activities within the village and on logging concessions outside of the village (IICA, December, 1995). Income earning activities such as logging and gold mining contribute to the trend of men (and more recently women as well) leaving the village for extended periods of time (Bynoe, 2014). Prolonged absence of men from the village has largely resulted in women playing a greater role in the home, farm and village life. A private tourist resort, built on lands leased from the village offers limited employment to villagers.

Partly in an attempt to reverse the trend of outward migration associated with employment, the village has been actively seeking alternative income-producing activities located within the village. To this end, the Village Council pursued and
supported tourism and agriculture possibilities. A recent survey, for example, mentioned small-scale commercial pineapple farming with a value-added component, honey production, aquaculture, and a Village Park as projects that have taken place in the community (Bynoe, 2014). A women’s group has undertaken projects within the agro-tourism framework (IICA, August, 2007). A few women recently formed a small business group for the purpose of rearing and selling chickens (Bynoe, 2014). The Village Council has also upgraded infrastructure at the community’s lakeside beach.

There are basic health and education services in the Village. A nurse/midwife and community health worker (CHW) staffs a small community health post. Both nursery and primary levels of education are available within the village, but secondary level education is not. After completing grade six, children must travel to secondary schools located in the town or villages nearby. At the time that I was conducting field research for this study, there were, altogether, three trained and one untrained teacher in the Village. One of the trained teachers also holds a Bachelor’s Degree. All the teachers are members of the Village. The current Parent Teachers Association of the village is active.

Village infrastructure includes a multi-purpose hall, a community center, a community kitchen, a village store, a pineapple factory, and a playfield (MoAA, 2012). One of the more significant developments for the village is access to electricity for a significant number of households. There has also been an increase in the number of households that receive piped water from a single well. In general, however, villagers continue to rely on rain, a lake, and a nearby canal as their main sources of water.
Reliable transportation and adequate maintenance of community trails and the access road that leads to the nearby town are especially important for students and persons who commute to work outside of the village, and for persons who are engaged in commerce. The Council runs a bus service for the village using the two minibuses that it owns. A few villagers have their own private cars, minibus, or motorcycles. The community owns a tractor and trailer and a truck, all of which the Council makes available for community work and for private hire.

Religious worship and sports are integral to village life. Three different Christian denominations have erected churches for their followers, and Sunday is the main day of worship. The village sports club caters mainly to youth. The club has a vibrant cricket team and a football team. The Village Council provides support for sports, and the teams compete at regional tournaments and beyond. It is also the Council that organizes the main cultural activities within the village.

Training and Community Development in the Village Setting

The link of training to projects in the village gained traction around the mid-1990s when an indigenous organization, the Region 2 Coordinating Committee (R2CC) for Amerindian Development, was active in several coastal Amerindian villages. The R2CC embarked on supporting the development process in those Amerindian communities that fell within its purview (IICA, December 1995). The R2CC received support from the funding agency, FUTURES, and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA, December, 1995).
Largely through the efforts of the R2CC, some members of the village were able to participate in training activities that covered important aspects of community development. In 1994, based on a proposal from the R2CC, FUTURES fund provided financial assistance for a project entitled “Strengthening of Amerindian skills in community development”. (IICA, December, 1995). A successful post-training output resulted from a proposal that the village developed. The aim of the project was “To promote sustainable development in selected Amerindian Communities by cultivating the capacity to identify projects, formulate, manage, monitor and evaluate sustainable community development activities and projects” (IICA, December, 1995). The project targeted nine Amerindian villages, including the village that this study focuses on. The IICA played a lead role in implementing the project.

Training in participatory approaches to project identification and planning was one of several activities in which members of the village participated during the life of the IICA/ FUTURE/R2CC project (Pierre & Francois, 1997). An evaluation of this project reported that some villagers also received training in the areas of small business management, agroforestry, farming techniques, group formation dynamics, and organization and project formulation, while two persons attended session at the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI) as part of a plan to cultivate and export pineapple (Pierre & Francois, 1997). The evaluation report mentioned the installation of a number of standpipes that allowed residents in one section of the village to receive running water as a successful post-training output (Pierre & Francois, 1997). The report also identified three other post-training outputs: (1) a chicken rearing venture by two
youth (which failed), (2) a thriving personal business, and (3) a Village Council focus on promoting tourism (Pierre & Francois, 1997).

A report (Forte, 2000) of a needs assessment survey related to local governance provides some general insights into the development situation in three Amerindian villages, including the village that this study investigated. Forte (2000), was critical of the role of development aid in the communities. According to the report, projects focused on initiatives for skills transfer and income generation activities in the three communities, but the communities may not have derived much benefit from them (Forte, 2000). Forte referred to “the wreckage of failed projects” (p. 25) that he found in these villages. While recognizing that these projects included local, natural, and human resource development, Forte (2000) found “a depressingly small minority of projects in which local people have translated known potential into sustained successful production” (p. 25):

low community capacity to respond to community problems and achieve social consensus has caused and is causing impediments to progress in these villages...At the same time there is low capacity in these populations to deal with conceptual learning through conceptual training methods; as a consequence of material and educational poverty most individuals are preoccupied at a basic subsistence level. Essential training in practical measures for improving governance must be integrated with skills training relevant to real and immediate concerns of livelihood. Opportunities for such linkages can be found in the need for groups to learn how to interact freely and collaborate on management issues vital to the new projects now being promoted for economic development in those very localities. (Forte 2000, p. 1)

In addition to this 20-year old training project, diversification into agriculture and tourism has become key to the economic development plans of the Village. In this
regard, it would appear that a rural development agency (RDA) has played a key role in furthering thinking and supporting community initiatives along these lines (IICA, July, 2008). Aquaculture, hydroponics, and nature and village tourism are among the more recent projects that the RDA supported in the village (IICA, July, 2008; Bynoe, 2014; Guyana Chronicle, 2013, August 14).

Promotion of Guyana’s Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) has also begun to influence the village perceptions about development projects. Under the LCDS, forest dependent peoples must give attention to forest preservation and develop sustainable livelihoods along that line (UNDP, n.d.). A 2012 proposal that the village prepared for accessing funding from the Amerindian Development Fund (ADF) provides an example of a community project that was designed along the lines of the LCDS. The project seeks to increase farmers’ income through the cultivation of non-traditional crops over a five-year period (MoAA, 2012). The project proposed training for the purpose of building the capacity of villagers in the areas of management, business, and cash crop farming (MoAA, 2012).

**Overview of Selected Projects**

The three projects that I investigated for this study are designated in this dissertation as (1) the Organic Pineapple Project, (2) the Fish Farming Project, and (3) the Village Park Project. The Village Council held responsibility for implementing the Organic Pineapple Project. The Fish Farming Project and the Village Park Projects were planned and implemented by the Women’s Development Group.
These projects were located within the Village. It is important to point out that while the Village Council has oversight of all development projects that take place within its jurisdiction, the Women’s Development Group was legally registered as an independent organization, managed its own affairs, and held its own bank account. Coincidentally, the Toshao who headed the Village Council when these projects were planned and implemented also served as the chairman of the Women’s Development Group.

The Organic Pineapple Project

The Organic Pineapple Project emerged as a result of the Village Council’s response to an offer by a company to purchase and export bottled organic pineapple chunks. The business venture represented the first attempt by the village to be involved in small-scale agriculture for the ultimate purpose of fulfilling an overseas market. It was also the first time that the Village Council partnered with an international business entity. The company, on the other hand, was locally registered and was already involved in harvesting, canning and exporting an edible forest product found elsewhere in Guyana. In this study I refer to this company as the ‘Company’.

Members of the village were involved in cultivating pineapples and providing employment for the processing plant set up in the village. The village was the main supplier of pineapples to the factory, although two other neighboring Amerindian communities were involved on a smaller scale. One report shows that in 2006, of the 56 organic pineapple farmers in the three communities, 42 were women (Das, 2006). I did
not extend my investigation to the processing and marketing aspects of the project since these were managed directly by the Company.

In this study, I identify the Research Institute (RI) and the Rural Development Agency (RDA) as two agencies that provided direct assistance to the Organic Pineapple Project. Documentation of the work of these two agencies with the Organic Pineapple Project is sparse; the RI focused on research on pineapple cultivation and on training farmers for the purpose of ensuring that the project qualified and maintained organic certification. The Organic Pineapple Project dovetailed well with the general research, training and extension goals of the RI. Key areas of the RI’s scientific investigations in relation to the Organic Pineapple Project included demonstration plots in organic pineapple germ plasm (NARI, 2002), trials pertaining to soil enrichment, and research on pest control methods for organic pineapple cultivation (NARI, 2006). These activities were conducted in the Village. The establishment of the organic pineapple germplasm plot in the Village in 2002 (NARI, 2002) appears to mark one of the early activities on the part of the RI.

Channeling technical support to farmers and rural communities were important aspects the RDA work. The Organic Pineapple Project offered an opportunity for the RDA to engage with the Village along these lines and in this way complemented and supported the work of the RI. The RDA secured international funding and implemented a project designed to serve the Village and two nearby Amerindian communities over a three-year period (IICA, July, 2008). The RDA’s work within the village and in the surrounding Amerindian communities that it served included collaboration with other
agencies to provide workshops, training and support aimed at strengthening capacity in areas such as project identification, project planning, and organizational and group development (IICA, July, 2007).

With the help of volunteers, the RDA carried out experiments and conducted training activities for pineapple farmers. RDA coordinated interventions focused mainly on improving soil quality, maintaining plant health, and ways of meeting the demand for plantlets as the acreage of pineapple farms increased (Das, 2006; IICA, July, 2007). The RDA also provided staff who prepared farmers for the mandatory inspection for organic certification (IICA, July, 2007). The RDA also introduced a revolving loan scheme for farmers, and it would appear that some pineapple farmers may have accessed small loans from this scheme (IICA, July, 2008).

External support was also forthcoming for the project. For example, the Canadian High Commission provided initial funding for the establishment of the pineapple processing plant. The USAID Partners of America Program (POA) allowed volunteers to offer technical assistance to the pineapple farmers. For several years, the Company and other agencies contributed to the cost of annual certification for the project (IICA, August, 2007).

It is unclear when training for the pineapple farmers started but one report mentioned that, during the months of May and October of 2003, the RI conducted training on “Principles & Practices of Organic Agriculture” and “Organic Pineapple Products,” respectively (NARI, 2003, p. 19). This appeared to be the first in a series of one-day events (NARI, 2003) that staff of the RI conducted. I was unable to obtain
copies of training agenda, but available training material which some pineapple farmers 
still had in their possession at the time of this study showed that training activities 
focused on farming practices and protocols intended to assist farmers and the overall 
project to conform with the standards of the international organic certification 
institution. Preparation of farmland, guidelines for plant health, soil fertility, and soil 
conservation were other main areas of training. All training activities took place in the 
Village. Farmers had not previously engaged in organic farming, but they brought a 
storehouse of knowledge and years of experience about the ecology and planting 
pineapples. The RI did not prepare written evaluations of these training activities. 

The research and demonstration activities related to organic pineapple farming 
that the RI conducted were associated with knowledge areas that were relevant to the 
pineapple farmers. For example, NARI (2006) stated that the RI had responded to the 
request of organic farmers of three neighboring villages for assistance in the area of soil 
management and enrichment of the poor sandy soils in order to increase pineapple 
production. To this end, the RI established a trial which was conducted in the Village 
compared the efficacy of compost, animal and poultry manure, and bio-fertilizer. The RI 
also set up a trial to study the effects of inter-cropping on pest infestation and 
conducted research on bio-pesticides for controlling the mealy bug (*Dysmicoccus 
brevipes*) and ants. Both of these activities were conducted in the Village. (NARI, 2006). 

The process for annual international organic certification involved an internal 
inspection of farms as well as a visit by an international inspector. Each farmer, 
therefore, was required to receive training on record keeping and farm management
principles that were specific to the certification process. The project also required that annual training on organic farming be held for persons who were involved in organic pineapple farming (Chesney & Ifill, 2008). The Organic Pineapple Project first gained international certification in May 2003 (NARI, 2003).

The critical role of the Village Council in this business venture, and the level of farmer contribution and involvement, were consistent with the bottom-up approach to development. Moreover, the village provided land and labor, and the farmers offered local knowledge about the soil and the farming of pineapples. Institutions that provided technical and other support saw their role as support for farmers to reach productivity goals and to be compliant with the required organic standards (IICA, March, 2007; IICA, Year in Review, 2008). The RDA described the approach of the international agency that funded the RDA’s activities over the three-year period as ‘bottom up’ (ICCA, Year in Review, 2008).

Farmer participation in the project was voluntary. Participation, however, entailed applying to the Village Council and then signing an agreement with the Company. The agreement stipulated that the pineapple farmers could sell only to the Company, and at fixed price. Pineapple is a seasonal crop, and farmers harvested pineapples twice a year. The harvest of 2007-2008 was the most bountiful as farmers delivered over 4000 pineapples per day (IICA, July, 2008). This number exceeded the daily processing capacity of the factory, which was estimated at 2500 (IICA, July, 2008). The factory operated only during harvest time and offered employment to more than 30 persons (Guyana Chronicle, 2010, June 9).
The business model that the Company pursued in relation to the project had implications for the evolution of the project. For example, while the processing facility was located in the Village, the Village Council had no direct control of the processing and marketing component of the business venture. This arrangement restricted the Village Council and the farmers to learning opportunities and experiences only for growing and harvesting pineapple for an overseas market. The Village Council and the farmers were not involved in negotiating the marketing of the value added product or in matters related to managing the financial aspects of the business. In the long run, this limitation was to influence the life of the project in significant ways.

Problems developed in the business relationship between the Village council and the Company reaching its nadir in 2014 when the pineapple factory failed to open. As the relationship deteriorated, both the Village Council and the Company resorted to the media, making claims and counter claims concerning what each regarded were the challenges and shortcomings of the project business arrangement (Guyana Chronicle, 2014, October 29; Stabroek News, 2014, October 30).

The Fish Farming Project

A small aquaculture venture was one of the projects that the Women’s Development Group in the Village undertook. The project received initial funding from the Poor Rural Communities Support Services Project (PRCSSP) (Stabroek News, 2003, October 2). The PRCSSP was a joint project between the Government of Guyana (GoG), the International Food and Agricultural Agency (IFAD) and the Caribbean Development
Bank (CDB)) that operated within the framework of poverty alleviation (Forte, 2000; (Stabroek News, 2003, October 2). For several years, the PRCSSP targeted specific categories of the poor, such as rural and Amerindian communities (Forde, n.d.). The PRCSSP had a regional office located in the town close to the Village.

The Women’s Development Group conceptualized the Fish Farming Project as an income generation project. The PRCSSP supported projects with this focus. For example, two other women’s groups in nearby Amerindian communities received funding from the PRCSSP around the same time. One was a project for rearing ducks while the other was an agro-processing project (Stabroek News, 2003, October 2). Group input was an important aspect of the PRCSSP’s decision-making process that led to the program’s support for projects (Forte, 2000). This meant that the Women’s Development Group would have had discussions and come to an agreement about the type of project that they proposed to the PRCSSP. In other words, the PRCSSP helped to nurture the development of the project along the lines of a bottom up approach.

Aquaculture was a relatively novel activity for Guyanese at that time (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United National (FAO) website; Geer, n.d.), and more so for Amerindians whose traditional fishing methods to obtain from the lakes and canals near their village did not include aquaculture. Government and lending agencies promoted the farming of Tilapia as a viable commercial activity (Geer, n.d.; The National Aquaculture Association of Guyana, October, 2008). Although the Village was unfamiliar with Tilapia and with managing fish farms, the Women’s Development Group planned to
raise two species of Tilapia—Red and Silver. The PRCSSP supported their venture and supplied the fingerlings and food for the fish.

Only members of the Women’s Development Group attended training activities for the fish-farming project. Training was limited to two one-day visits to existing fish farms for some members of the Women’s Development Group. The training participants also visited a government-owned aquaculture fish station located in the nearby town. This station produced fingerlings for sale (PRSP, 2005). The PRCSSP also arranged post-training support for the Women’s Development Group by way of visits to the fishponds by fisheries officers from government agencies.

Prior to the fish farm venture, Forte (2000) had observed that, while the PRCSSP focused on promoting skills and knowledge building for project beneficiaries, PRCSSP coordinators “were aware that organizational skills necessary for the successful operation of the groups are often deficient but it is difficult to provide training in areas not directly included in the technical aspects of the project ...” (p. 28). It would appear that this observation remained applicable to the fish farm project.

The Women’s Development Group constructed four ponds on village land and close to a nearby canal. The PRCSSP financed the construction of the first pond, and the others were financed partly through additional funding procured from the Small Grants Project of the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI). The CFNI focuses on improving the nutritional status of the Caribbean population (Caribbean Community Secretariat website). It is essentially an agency of the Pan American Health
Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO). The RDA administered the CFNI grant for the Women’s Development Group (IICA, 2006).

The women’s decision to increase the number of ponds suggests that they were confident that the training had provided them with the necessary capabilities and knowledge to engage in aquaculture. Details about the aquaculture project in the village remain obscure, but the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA, March, 2007) reported that in 2006 the Women’s Development Group had “commenced marketing their catch” (p. 16). The fieldwork for this study, however, found that after an initial small catch, the project came to an abrupt end when fish disappeared from the ponds and the ponds flooded.

The Village Park Project

In April, 2008, a village park was opened in the Village (IICA, 2008), managed by the Women’s Development Group, and situated on 20 acres of land in the village (Guyana Chronicle, 2009, April 8). Plans for the development of the park centered on the preservation of traditional knowledge about the forest, preservation of medicinal plants and trees, nature conservation, and income generation (Guyana Chronicle, 2009, April 8). This study focused on the early development phase of the park.

The concept of the Village Park as a project emerged out of the involvement of a sub-group of the Women’s Development Group in the cultivation of organic pineapple. The sub-group comprised four women who embarked on cultivating a single pineapple farm of approximately eight acres. In the process of clearing the land for farming, the
women recognized the potential for a nature trail in the area in which they were working. The Women’s Development Group nurtured this initial idea and spearheaded the development of the Village Park as a tourism product.

The RDA played a major role in the early development of the Village Park Project. It supported the women in site preparation, constructed a *benab* (a thatch roof building), and assisted with proposal writing for funding (IICA, July, 2008). The RDA also contributed to improving the kitchen and food and the health standards (IICA, July, 2008). The Guyana Micro-Projects Programme (GMPP) channeled monies from the European Union for the creation of the nature trail (IICA Year in Review, 2008).

The Women’s Development Group relied on older members of the village to assist their members in learning about, and naming the trees and plants in the Park. For this aspect of the project, the women mainly engaged in informal conversations with village elders. This sharing of time-honored knowledge about the medicinal and other uses of trees and plants in the Village Park was an educational process for the women.

Tour guiding was the critical area in which the Women’s Development Group sought training. While a few members of the village had acquired some knowledge and experience as tour guides through being employed by a private resort near the village, members of the Women’s Development Group had not. To this end, the group organized a one-day training activity that focused specifically on preparing the women to serve as tour guides. The event took place in the Village, and all members of the Women’s Development Group attended. This was the only training event the Group organized that directly concerned the Village Park.
The Women’s Development Group recruited a professional tour guide to facilitate the training activity. The facilitator was an Amerindian who was employed by a tourism company. The main training session took place in one of the community buildings. The facilitator engaged the trainees in both theoretical and practical aspects of tour guiding during that session. He shared concepts and ideas about tour guiding and demonstrated techniques. The training activity also included a tour guiding exercise that took place along a section of the village and within the park. In this exercise, trainees conducted short tours for a group of villagers who played the role of tourists. Through this exercise, the facilitator was able to gauge the potential of the trainees to serve as tour guides and to offer feedback.

Two of the trainees subsequently participated in a one-day tour of a resort situated in another Amerindian community. This immersion activity was essentially an additional dimension to the tour guide training that the women had previously attended. In this follow-up activity, the two trainees experienced a tour guide service as a tourist.

By including tours to organic pineapple farms as part of the tour package that the Women’s Development Group offered (IICA website. Guyana-Success story), the Village Park came to represent one way in which the Village forged the link between agriculture and tourism. The signature mark of the Village Park, however, was the educational opportunities it provided for sharing local knowledge about the forest with tourists. One tourist report captured the Village Park experience as follows:
A day-long excursion in the park includes a trek along a five-foot-wide trail hewn out of the jungle by the women themselves, and edu-tainment on over 300 species of trees. Plants have been identified and labeled using both the Amerindian and English names to enlighten visitors about how they are used for various purposes such as herbal medicines and natural remedies...” (Harvey, April, 2011, p. 2).

The project showed several signs of promise as an economic venture. The nearby privately owned tourist resort promoted the tours to the Village Park to its guests (IICA website. Guyana – Success story), thereby assisting the Women’s Development Group in the marketing aspect of the project. In describing activities of the Village Park in 2008, one report noted: “Students from across the Caribbean have already visited, and this has served as a catalyst for other study visits” (IICA Year in Review, 2008). The following year, a newspaper article highlighted the potential of the Village Park, and mentioned that the Women’s Development Group had created an herbal garden and had established a business venture using medicinal plants (Guyana Chronicle, 2009, April 8). By 2012, however, the Village Park was on the decline. Staff from one of the external agencies who visited the Village Park pointed to the state of disrepair and termite infestation of the Park’s infrastructure (ICCA, Monday, May 14, 2012).

**Summary of the Three Projects**

The three projects represented ways in which village leadership sought to address several of the socio-economic challenges facing the community. The Amerindian village where the three projects were undertaken was characterized by subsistence farming, employment in the extractive industries beyond the Village, and
reliance on external development interventions. The physical location of the Village allowed for varying levels of interaction with the mainstream Guyanese population. Against this backdrop, the leaders within the village pursued the goal of generating income through community-based projects. Theoretically, projects that were asset based and involved the use of local assets in the form of natural and human resources from within the village appeared to have greater potential for sustainability. However, the projects were marred by several obstacles that contributed to mixed outcomes.

Previous studies and reports on the Village showed that the projects were initiated around the same time that the leadership of the community sought to manage resources, generate income, and revive and preserve cultural traditions. Despite these intentions, the development paradigm of these projects was primarily mainstream. Project owners harnessed various elements of indigenous culture and local knowledge and wove these strands into the design of the projects that ultimately aimed to fulfill mainstream markets. Project planners designed the project Organic Pineapple and Village Park projects in particular around the use of community assets in the form of land and labor, local and cultural knowledge of farming practice, ecology, and medicinal plants and herbs. The reports and documents that this study reviewed, however, contained no mention of a decision by the project planners to incorporate either indigenous development concepts or values in the way they managed and implemented projects.

The three projects embodied both the asset-driven and deficit-driven approaches to development but each project emerged within an asset-driven
framework: one project was led by the Village Council while the other two were managed by the Women’s Development Group. These village-based organizations explored avenues for individuals to either engage in or to support projects that used local assets. Local assets were limited, however, and this led these local bodies to either seek external funding sources or technical support. These actions typify a deficit-driven dimension of the projects and had repercussions for the life of the respective projects, especially when funding either decreased or was not forthcoming. In the case of the Organic Pineapple Project, these factors were compounded by a business arrangement that fell apart. The consequences of this action were largely associated with vulnerabilities of the projects, but issues pertaining to the functioning of the community also affected aspects of the projects.

Overall, the projects complemented each other even as they each represented specific ways in which the community’s vision of diversifying its agricultural base and developing the village as a tourist destination could be realized. Traditional pineapple farming was boosted not only by the organic label but also by the value added component of bottling pineapple chunks. The Village Park Project brought together both agriculture and tourism while simultaneously showcasing nature and indigenous knowledge. In this context, training came to play an important role in furthering project goals. Project leaders identified the need for training to augment and strengthen existing capacities and, where necessary, to provide new knowledge and skills.

Training activities were intended to enhance individual capacity in specific areas. In general, training was project-specific, and women were the main recipients. In the
case of the Pineapple Project, training for farmers aimed at expanding and enhancing traditional pineapple farming practices for the purpose of international organic certification of the final export product. On the other hand, fish farming was essentially a new activity. Training in aquaculture for the Women’s Development Group centered specifically on gearing the women for engaging in the non-traditional economic activity of rearing fish in ponds. The Village Park, which was initially shaped by a vision of preserving both nature and indigenous knowledge, included training that the project owners sought for tour guiding.

Training allowed individuals to play a critical role in community-based entrepreneurial ventures. Despite the community-based nature of the Projects, however, external and internal factors had implications for project outcomes. In the next chapter, I consider more closely the role of training in light of the factors and issues concerning the three projects that emerged from interview data I gathered and analyzed.
CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In this chapter I discuss the main findings of my investigation with respect to the research question: What role has training played in the development initiatives that have taken place in one particular Amerindian community? These findings emerge primarily from interview data gathered during fieldwork. I also rely on data obtained from documents related to the three projects — the Organic Pineapple Project, the Fish Farming Project, and the Village Park Project — and on my personal observations in the field.

I present findings of this study and discuss themes and issues in two sections. In the first, ‘Projects: Themes and Issues’, I discuss the research findings as they relate to each of three projects using the five research questions that guided the study. I follow with a discussion of key characteristics that emerged from interview data concerning the prevailing context within which the projects were initiated and implemented.

The second section, entitled ‘The Role of Training’ presents analysis of interviews based on my examination of the role of training in relation to the other five components of the conceptual framework:

- development (paradigms and approaches),
- development and material advancement,
- capacity building,
- opportunities and vulnerabilities, and
• the individual and the community

This section focuses on training in relation to the complexities of the community development process in the Village. I conclude the section with a summary discussion of the key findings that emerged from the data analysis.

It is important to recall here that the five components with which the conceptual framework is constructed are drawn from a broad range of studies referenced in the literature review. Study data that I analyzed within this framework are primarily the perceptions of study participants, the majority of whom are from the village. I shared preliminary findings of the study at a gathering in the Village. Based on the overall response of those gathered, I concluded that the research findings may serve to inform their thinking about community development in the Village.

Projects: Themes and Issues

In this section, I present the findings drawn from data contained in the face-to-face interviews with project trainees and local project representatives of the Village, project staff representing external agencies, as well as focus group discussion with members of the Village. I arranged this section by project — the Organic Pineapple Project, the Fish Farming Project, and the Village Park Project — according to the five research questions:

1. How was training obtained?

2. What evidence is there that participants gained new knowledge and skills?
3. How have individuals and/or the community utilized new knowledge and
   skills?
4. How have training experiences influenced individual and collective initiative?
5. What factors supported or hindered the application of training knowledge
   and skills?

The discussion that follows at the end of the section summarizes the main
characteristics of the projects and highlights the role that training played within the
context of the community development process in the Village.

**The Organic Pineapple Project**

The role of training in the Organic Pineapple Project was indispensable to the
process of Villagers making the shift from growing pineapples under subsistence
agricultural conditions to commercial farming. This Organic Pineapple Project itself
represented a major transition in another way. It included constructing a factory with a
processing plant to bottle pineapple chunks for export. The factory was located in the
Village and offered seasonal and limited employment to Villagers. Study participants
described factory employment in terms of the new opportunity it offered for income
earning in the Village. While this study did not investigate training related to the work in
the pineapple factory, interview data suggested that but that workers acquired new
skills sets through on-the-job training.

**How was training obtained?** The emergence of a collaborative business venture
between the Village Council and the Company prompted plans for offering training in
organic farming practices related to pineapples. In this business venture, farmers would supply organically farmed pineapples to the Company. The Company would process the organically grown pineapple, bottle pineapple chunks in the Village, and export the product overseas as organically grown. This required obtaining organic certification from an internationally recognized body was essential. The Organic Pineapple Project sought certification from ECOCERT SA, an international certification institution for organic products (NARI, 2003, p. 6).

The Project requested assistance from the Research Institute (RI) to prepare farmers in the Village to cultivate pineapple for the organic market. Desmond, who served as one of staff at the RI at that time, clarified that the request originated jointly from the Village Council and the Company:

> The request came from both parties ... Both of them recognized [the RI] for its technical expertise and the capacity to assist with some of the field challenges that they were experiencing ....The interventions were funded by [the RI’s] budget in terms of paying salaries, and also out of the budget of the Village Council.

The RI was a recognized research institution. It was also the agency that held official responsibility for organic certification in Guyana (NARI, 2003, p. 6). The RI, therefore, was instrumental in providing the required training to farmers so that the Project could attain certification by ECOCERT. A Rural Development Agency (RDA) also played a significant supportive role in training and assisting farmers in their efforts to attain and maintain organic farming practices and to improve farm management and productivity (IICA, March 2007; IICA, July 2007).
Export of an organic product held much economic potential for the Village. In addition to boosting agriculture, the plan to set up the pineapple processing facility in the village signaled a new avenue for employment within the Village. The Village Council used their community meetings to inform the community about the project and encouraged farmers to participate. Susan, who has served as a Village Councilor for several years, explained the process:

Nobody was pressured into it .... We have our meetings. Community meetings. We make our normal announcement. Who [is] interested in doing farming. We’re gonna have a meeting. You can come out. You are free to participate. This is what is going to start in the community. We are going to have a project coming on line. We are going to deal with organic pineapple. You are free to come and be a part of it. Start farming. You know, you started to encourage people... The people who were interested are the people who eventually became the farmers.

Ultimately, participation in the Organic Pineapple Project was voluntary. Farmer participation, however, entailed compliance with the practices and protocol that were consistent with ECOCERT’s standards. Thus, it was both necessary and compulsory for potential organic pineapple farmers to attend training on how to cultivate and harvest pineapples. Farmers who practiced organic farming became members of a Farmers’ Association that emerged as the pineapple enterprise expanded. This association comprised organic pineapple farmers of three Amerindian villages that were located in close proximity to each other. Lorna, who served in a leadership position in the Village during that period, explained the central role of training to Project:

we had at that time 28 farmers. 28 persons were farming ... and they showed an interest. And so ... the need wasn’t there for farmers to be funded but to actually fund the processing facility, and for us to be trained
it came to a point, once you want to be part of the Farmers’ Association and you want to sell your pineapples to the processing facility ... You had no choice. You either go to the training or you will have to go to the [local] market ... We were very strict.

Interviews with representatives of external agencies suggest that their agencies recognized and validated farmers’ knowledge of the local ecology and farming practices that had been honed and passed down through generations. The presence and involvement of external agencies suggest that these agencies were convinced of the necessity to train and support farmers in specific areas of farming knowledge and practices including protocols required for ensuring that, ultimately, the bottled pineapple chunks could be sold on the international market.

Prior to the introduction of the concept of organic farming, villagers had not expressed the need for organized training in farming pineapple. In general, study participants who responded to questions about the Organic Pineapple Project explained that farming practices were passed down through generations. Annabell, one of the village leaders, articulated a common view held by study participants concerning general pineapple farming practices in the Village: “you find that from birth, you grow up finding the older ones doing that [farming pineapples].” A few of the pineapple farmers that I interviewed for this study had previously attended training and workshops on various other topics, but they had not been exposed to learning experiences that dealt with farm management, record keeping, pest control or organic agricultural practices.
The RI and the RDA were the main agencies that offered training on organic farming, and they recruited their training facilitators from among professionals outside of the Village. Over the years, training facilitators used several techniques as they worked with the farmers on the Organic Pineapple Project. This was reflected in the study participants’ choice of words to describe a mix of training activities that they attended: group discussion, classroom, little groups, handouts, practical, and demonstrations. Brother, who had been exposed to training activities in spheres other than agriculture, recalled:

_They came in and they just talk to us. Different ones, you know. On different aspects of the farming...they just come and talk to us in a classroom setting. Big groups and things ... I think one or two times they break us up in little groups to have little talks about certain issues ... they take us to the farm. Sometimes we go to the farm and they, they demonstrate to us how the things must be done and so. They take us to the farm many times._

Overall, however, my interviews with representatives of agencies and trainees suggested that training events essentially favored a participatory approach. In some instances training led to farmers and the trainers engaging in lively exchanges around the dynamic between ‘local’ and ‘scientific’ knowledge and practices. Hibero, one of the older and longstanding female pineapple farmers, captured this exchange of knowledge in her description of training activities that she attended. She referred to training as “a dialog”, adding: “Because you learn from me and I learn from you. That kind of a dialog training.”

Desmond, one of the main trainers from the RI, explained that, even though the institution recognized the necessity of finding ways to assist pineapple farmers to
change certain field practices, the trainers respected the knowledge base of the
farmers:

In terms of knowledge, the farmers were very knowledgeable about shifting
cultivation, and slash and burn method of land clearing, and knowing how to
select land for farming. For that particular type of farming that was totally
dependent on natural systems, natural cycles. Very knowledgeable about that.
Very knowledgeable about pineapple itself, in terms of its biology, agronomy, of
matching the needs of uh producing a pineapple fruit with the capacity of the
land to produce. They, they actually were able to, to do that, even without
scientific training.

According to Desmond, training sessions were “very interactive”. He added,
however, that “The older famers ... they were more interested in sharing their
information, their knowledge about how farming should go ...”

Training facilitators were also conscious of the fact that the farmers were
primarily older adults who, in the main, possessed only a primary level of education.

Desmond described three strategies that the trainers used in their attempt to address
the challenge of providing effective training for this group of learners:

we were able to break down information in a way that made it more, you ...
digestable...we found that they were...more reluctant to write anything which
sort of showed up maybe their lack of literacy skills...and so they preferred to
listen...so we had to change focus from voluminous material into short verse and
to just focus on one or two topics. No more...the Toshao of the community of the
village, helped with ensuring that the pace of the training was at the right rate to
ensure that farmers [were] really absorbing the information.

Several of the trainees reported that training activities encompassed both
theoretical and practical sessions and that they found this approach helpful. The
following excerpt taken from my interview with Desmond provides some insight into
how the trainers combined these sessions and afforded opportunities for farmer’s participation in the learning process:

We used the community center for the training....and then we went to the field to reinforce what we did in the room. So we would go to the field to have a look at selection of the right forest to clear. You know we look for things like, is it low bush [or] high bush. The higher the bush, the more bio mass and therefore more fertilizer when you burn that biomass.... More fertilizer in the ash... We look for absence for Acoushi ants nest because that was the main pest problem.

What evidence is there that participants gained new knowledge and skills?:

The most substantial evidence that farmers had gained and utilized farming knowledge and skills was the Projects’ acquisition of international certification in 2003 by the project (NARI, 2003). Pineapple farmers that I interviewed for this study stressed that farm management and record keeping were two areas of training for special attention. Maintaining soil fertility was another area critical to organic certification (Chesney, 2008). One implication of the latter was that while traditionally the pineapple farmers practiced slash and burn agriculture which depended on a fallow period of twelve or more years, the longer term needs of the Project required farmers to explore alternative methods for soil fertilization and for reducing the fallow period (Das, 2006). Cultivating acacia (Acacia mangium) was one of the methods that the Project promoted for reducing the time that fields should remain under fallow. Acacia plants are used for improving soil fertility and shortening the fallow period. Similarly, and in keeping with the need to avoid the use of chemicals, farmers received training in methods of composting for soil enrichment. The Project arranged for farmer training in these areas.
To a large extent, farmers gained and made efforts to apply new knowledge, but experienced challenges. In some instances, individual farmers could not overcome specific obstacles, and therefore they did not persist in applying some of the skills that they were exposed to in training. Martha was one of the farmers who planted some acacia trees, but did not practice composting. She related her situation, pointing out some practical and financial issues:

> Well some of the things that we were taught, I mean especially adding things back to the soil. All like the compost heap, we would have. And the manure. The chicken manure or whatever. But then there was a cost to that...To get those things in. And if you were working on a two-acre plot, you had to employ people to do that. Which is a cost added there. So because of that we did not follow through with, you know, bringing in chicken manure, and even mulching.

Record keeping required farmers to indicate when they engaged in activities such as burning, planting, pest management, intercropping, and harvesting on each farm plot and on a monthly basis. Farmers received specially designed activity sheets on which they recorded information. Lorna, who was one of four women farmers who jointly cultivated an eight-acre pineapple farm, alluded to the fact that traditional village farming practice did not include record keeping. She hinted at initial resistance to the record keeping aspect of training activities, and to the motivating factors for forging ahead with keeping records. While chuckling as she reflected on the process, Lorna commented on nuances associated with farmers gaining and applying new knowledge and skills:

> Now we were all farmers. However, I would want to make a point now. We farmed in any order, anyhow. But with organic farming you keep records, you keep current. You must have records. Record keeping. As you would know how
difficult it is for Amerindian people, local people to keep records (chuckle) .... And it is not easy introducing this record keeping to each farmer. You must have a note-book. You must have a book. You must record your activities ....: At first some farmers say they don’t think they can handle it. But what was good about handling those records was looking down the line seeing this business grow. I think everybody start thinking business-like now. If I am going to farm two acres of farm. I am going to reap so much. I am going to sell, and this is income. And I think this is where the motivation came. Because what we had was a ready market in the village.

Brother, who cultivated approximately four acres of pineapples, echoed these similar views and sentiments. He regarded farm management as a novel concept and described his own experience with record keeping:

*We work just like, we farm like that. We don’t keep record of nothing. How much farm we got, how big, ,, what you planting, what you do, how much you sell... [It was] something new. We had to have our records up to date. We had to have it.*

Compliance was one of the recurring issues that farmers raised about their involvement in the Organic Pineapple Project. Although they mentioned compliance in relation to several of the prescribed regulations, they particularly noted its importance to record keeping. The main reason was that record keeping was central to the annual internal inspection process. Martha echoed the general sentiments of the farmers on this issue:

*It was good. I had...to keep records. ...It’s a lot. It’s a lot....Well we want to go into the organic [farming] so we had to comply with it.*

Overall, farmers understood that failure to keep individual records could result in jeopardizing the entire Organic Pineapple Project.

**How have individuals and/or the community utilized new knowledge and skills?** The Organic Pineapple Project was successful at obtaining organic certification
for several years, and this achievement attested to the fact that farmers put into
practice knowledge and skills that they received through training. The internal
inspection process substantiated the status of farmers’ adherence to the specific
guidelines and farming practices that were crucial to maintaining the organic pineapple
label in the international market. Beyond this, and as one of the study participants who
played a major role in training activities pointed out, training allowed farmers to gain a
better understanding of the ecosystem in which they worked.

On the whole, the farmers operated on a small scale but as they gained
confidence with implementing organic farming practices, they increased the size of their
farms modestly. Dolly explained how she increased her farming area: “I used to farm
like sometimes an acre, three quarter acre. But then I started growing two acres.”
Likewise, Martha described how she and others expanded farm acreage:

*Before I used to do about half acre. And then after I did an acre and then
increased it to two acres. And then we were advised or encouraged to go for even
bigger acreage. So some people went four acres at one time. So it all depends on
how much you can handle.*

Over a period of time, the Organic Pineapple Project witnessed steady growth in
pineapple production. IICA (July 2008), reported an increase between 2002 and 2006,
from “13 metric tonnes to more than 100 metric tonnes” (p. 5). During the life of the
project, however, there was at least one instance when the pineapple crop was severely
affected by the El Nino phenomenon (Guyana Chronicle, 2010, June 9; De Mendonca,
2013).
There were other areas of knowledge and skills that were shared through training but which farmers opted not to use. The double row planting method which allowed for greater moisture retention was a case in point. Mark, a rural development specialist, shared his observation that pineapple farmers continued planting in single rows instead of following the double row method. Another example was farmers’ lack of readiness to engage in using compost or in planting acacia.

**How have training experiences influenced individual and collective initiative?:**

While the Village gained a reputation for pioneering organic farming and exporting an organic product, the project remained an activity that was pursued solely by individual farmers. Interviews that I conducted also confirmed that organic pineapple farming remained predominantly a women’s activity. The majority of the study participants, including those who participated in focus group discussions, acknowledged with some regret that it was mainly older women who were involved in the project; that young men and young women did not indicate any interest in farming organic pineapples. Several of the study participants shared Desmond’s view that young people were simply “not interested” in pineapple farming.

The only example of a collective endeavor that could be traced directly to the influence of training on organic pineapple farming was the group of four women who decided to support each other to cultivate a single eight-acre plot of pineapples. This cooperative effort started after the women had acquired the necessary knowledge and skills through the project and had farmed their own individual plots. The four women were also members of the Women’s Development Group. Lorna explained that the idea
for cultivating the eight acres grew out a discussion in this group concerning ways of creating income while waiting for the pineapple harvest:

So a group of women, ten women to be exact, we sat down and start thinking. We were all farmers. So we started thinking what it was we could add to, or to create a package, that while we were waiting our pineapples we could still have an income elsewhere. And his is how the whole idea was born. So first we decide- that look we are going to do that something that we call agro-tourism ... And to do that first of all we have to farm in one area. Because before that we used to farm here there and everywhere.

What factors supported or hindered the application of training knowledge and skills?: Institutions and agencies provided much support to individuals with respect to the application of knowledge and skills gained through training. Farmers and local project members identified the Village Council, the Company and the RDA. One area in which the Village Council gave practical assistance was in arranging for farmers to use the community tractor and trailer for a small fee to transport pineapples and planting materials. Pineapple farmers in this study spoke appreciatively about this form of support as the excerpts from two different interviews indicate:

Well the kind of support we got is that community has a tractor and trailer ... And so when it was time to cut our suckers to move to the other plot, the other farm... We got it to use ..... Despite that we had to pay a little ... But we couldn’t fetch that amount of suckers if we had to. So we got the tractor to fetch our suckers.

The village council was really helpful to us... in getting plants and so, you know, for us. And transportation and things like those. From the field to the factory and so. And selecting plants. If you had to fetch plants. They fetch it for you and so ...They provided the transportation...but you had to pay.

Two practical and interrelated factors motivated farmers to maintain and even extend farmland. The first factor was as an assured market located within the Village.
Pineapple farmers and representatives of the Village Council that I interviewed explained that this meant that farmers did not have to negotiate and compete for sales outside the community. The second factor that pineapple farmers identified was that the arrangements by the Village Council for delivering the pineapples from farm to factory relieved farmers of the logistical challenges posed by marketing their produce at the coastal market.

Pineapple farmers who participated in this study also valued technical support offered by the RI and the RDA, even though the farmers did not always follow all the suggestions that these agencies offered. Some farmers noted that family members provided labor on the pineapple farms. Others spoke about peer support among farmers. Pineapple farmers informally shared information and farming experiences and even helped each other in practical ways. The solidarity displayed by the four women who worked cooperatively exemplified one manner in which women supported each other.

The relative success of the Organic Pineapple Project served to belie the many challenges that farmers experienced over the years as they attempted to put training concepts and skills into use. Farmers, for example, struggled to earn money during the two-year waiting period between planting and harvesting pineapple harvest. They came to rely on cash crops during the wait time. While they acknowledged that the RI and the RDA provided valuable technical advice and support concerning cash crops, the farmers complained about Acoushi ants. These ants often destroyed vine crops such as pumpkin,
watermelon and squash that farmers planted as part of an inter-cropping system that was encouraged on the pineapple farms. Martha related her frustration:

Well, one of the challenges is that because you were not [allowed] to use any insecticide you could not have gotten any...vine crops because of the Acoushi ants...Because they tell you can't use these things [chemicals]. And therefore when you plant, then the Acoushi ants just destroy it and you have nothing to get ... Nobody had an answer for that problem .... It was our problem

The ineffectiveness of technical assistance in relation to Acoushi ant control took a toll on the pineapple farmers. Susan, one of the representatives of the Village Council, summed up the extent of the problem as follows:

To me, sometimes the women would get frustrated. Because remember you looking for your cash drop in between. After two long years you got to wait to get a crop ... You want some money ... So if your little cash crop [is] eaten out (destroyed by acoushi), you don’t have any other means and some people would get frustrated. I feel maybe that is why most of the people came out of the farming. Because they say it is way too long waiting for a crop.

From the farmers’ perspective, research and experiments that the agencies undertook within the village were not always successful. Consequently, the farmers did not always feel motivated to adopt new farming methods and practices that could positively influence the Organic Pineapple Project. During a focus group discussion comprising women farmers, I asked the group to reflect and comment on the helpfulness of training in alternative farming practices. They described their apprehension about the outcome of some of the new ideas, such as mulching, that the agriculture experts shared during training about preparing the land for planting. One of
the women provided the following account of a trial that the women felt proved the efficacy of the traditional “slash and burn” practice:

*In some ways. It was just, well, a head knowledge ... And when you sort of compare it with the experience you have on the ground then you know certain things don’t work. Because one time they [the RI] demonstrated a plot that they just cut and remove the bush. They didn’t burn it. And they were encouraging us to do the same. But from experience we knew it wouldn’t work. But they went and they cleared an acre and spent quite a lot of money on that ... And then [the] next acre ... they burn as how we would do it. And the one that they didn’t burn, they didn’t get anything from that ... The one .... that they burn they got pines [pineapples]. The challenge was getting farmers on board. More farmers. And then the challenge got greater when some farmers say ‘oh this is hard work’, and they start dropping out.*

A lack of adequate and sustained technical support from external agencies also hindered the pineapple farmers from more readily engaging in activities for which they had received training. Speaking from the perspective of the agency that initiated training on enriching farm soils, Desmond made the following observations about the farmers’ lack of response:

*Once they were going to go beyond a few acres per household, then they needed to have labor-saving technologies... The adoption of technology was very low because they felt that, this was not going to work... in their view. It was an extra step. And we needed some more time to demonstrate the effectiveness of it..., so initially we were not successful there so that intervention [mulch machine] was discontinued. And so they just kept clearing new land simply because they didn’t want to go afoul of the regulation that you couldn’t burn the same plot twice.*

Various factors combined to discourage farmers from utilizing certain knowledge and skills gained from training. Cultivating organic pineapple and maintaining the farms was labor intensive. Changing farming practice to increase productivity required additional labor and money on the part of the farmers. It would appear that these
factors were significant hurdles to overcome and they affected the sustainability of the project as Lorna indicated:

_The challenge was getting farmers on board. More farmers. And then the challenge got greater when some farmers say 'oh this is hard work', and they start dropping out._

Purchase price of the pineapple was another factor. Most of the pineapple farmers felt that, in order for farmers to invest financially or otherwise, the Company would have had to pay a higher price for the pineapples. When changing weather patterns caused poor harvests, or when there was a bountiful harvest and the factory could not purchase all of the pineapples, the farmers suffered considerable losses. The eventual closure of the pineapple factory and the uncertainties regarding the future of the project was yet another disincentive for pineapple farmers to continue to farm organic pineapples. In a letter to the press, the Company claimed, among other things, that the pineapple farmers had failed to meet the required quota, that the number of pineapples sold to the pineapple factory allowed for only 26,828 jars while the annual market potential for the business was 500,000 jars of pineapple (“Organic pineapple from Guyana no longer available,” 2014). Lorna shared a similar view:

_The market was available. Even in our peak when we were 70 farmers. When we overflowed the processing facility... we could not meet the demand of the market._

Without a market for organic pineapples, farmers resorted to selling their pineapples to the local markets as they had done for years prior to the project. This step
would mean abandoning the principles and practices for organic certification for which the pineapple farmers had received training.

**Fish Farming Project**

For the Women’s Development Group, venturing into aquaculture was an opportunity to engage in a small business that would allow the group to earn money. The women also felt that aquaculture could help to advance their vision and efforts in the sphere of agro-tourism. Members of the Women’s Development Group that I interviewed painted the scenario wherein they had prepared themselves for showcasing pineapple farms as part of their tourism package and had developed a vision for the Village Park. They reported that they decided to pursue aquaculture as they were developing the Village Park. The women linked the idea of fish farms to tourism activities in the village, but they also intended to market fish both inside and outside of the Village. Lorna described some of the ideas that the Women’s Development Group considered in relation to aquaculture:

*We could have stood up and said everything about our [pineapple] farm. So we looked at what else could we do. That’s when the idea of the fish farm ...To complement that farm. What we had in mind [was] if we added fishing, and if we can get people come, we would allow them to fish in our pond, we can cook the fish for them and so they can relax...We were looking at if a housewife would want to have some fish she must be able to come out by the fish pond area and buy two pounds of fish or a pound of fish whatever, at any time of the day. That is what we were looking at. We were looking at if guests come... and they don’t have anything to do and they want to come and fish for fun, or fish and we can prepare it. That is what we were looking at.*
Aquaculture had never been practiced in the Village. Consequently, the role of project-related was to introduce fish farming techniques to members of Women’s Development Group. The Group recognized that they lacked both the knowledge and skills required for raising tilapia, the species of fish that they planned to farm. Lorna explained that villagers were adept at catching fish “out in the wilds” but knew nothing about fish farming. In describing this dilemma, Pinky, a member of the Women’s Development Group said: “we did not know anything about tilapia. [Not] even what it looked like. At least I didn’t know until I saw it … So we had to get, we had to get training.” The women decided that they needed training in aquaculture.

The fish farm concept was rooted in a bottom-up approach by the Women’s Development Project, and the members of this group exercised a great deal of agency in their affairs. It was the Women’s Development Project that approached the Poor Rural Communities Support Services Project (PRCSSP) for assistance with the fish farm project. Andrew, who worked in a senior position with the PRCSSP, recalled that the Group asked “if we can help them out with a fish project. They [were] looking at tilapia.” He explained that support from the PRCSSP was restricted to payment for the construction of a fishpond, supplying fingerlings and food for the fish, and arranging for project participants to attend short training events. In general, PRCSSP staff were available to provide support for all the groups that the PRCSSP funded.

**How was training obtained?:** Training in aquaculture took the form of field trips to locations outside of the Village. Andrew recalled that training for the Women’s Development Group took the form of one-day visits to private fishponds. The PRCSSP
arranged these visits but the Women’s Development Group decided which of their members would participate. Pinky explained that, in the end, personal desire and availability were factors that played a role in determining who went on the field trips:

“Who would desire to go and train ....Time had a lot to do with it, too.”

Two field trips allowed the trainees to observe aspects of rearing tilapia. On these trips, they had the opportunity to ask questions about feeding and caring for tilapia and about other matters concerning rearing fish in ponds. Mary, one of the women who participated in the field trips and who played a key role in maintaining the fishponds, spoke in positive terms about the field trips:

Well, I learn about the fishes, you know. Because we never see tilapia. We never involve with that kind of fish... it was good. ...You know how much months or how much weeks it was. And so. So, we, we learn. At least I learn from that.

Visits to the fishponds in the Village by Fisheries Officers from the Ministry of Agriculture supplemented the field trips. Andrew explained that, while the field trips offered practical training, the Fisheries Officers provided more theoretical information and advice about fish when they visited the Fish Farming Project:

The Fisheries Officer who would go there ever so often to speak to them...And would advise them. Well what type of fish, how much amount of feed, in terms of well, when they started they had to use organic matter to put in the pond, ...the organisms ...that the fish would eat ...to get them growing

Personnel from the PRCSSP accompanied the Fisheries Officers during their visits to the fishpond in the Village. Andrew recalled that the women asked a lot of questions during these visits.
What evidence is there that participants gained new knowledge and skills?:

The trainees for the fish farm project demonstrated that they were able to effectively use the knowledge they gained from the training. One of the trainees, Nikki, related how the women put into practice what the owner at one of the other fish farms had shown them: “We went out and we get some idea so, what he was doing so that we come back, and you know, do the same thing...we had enough knowledge and skills.”

The first fishpond served as a trial and others followed. All of the women in the Group worked on the ponds and received hands-on training from those who had gone on field trips. They successfully harvested and sold the fish among themselves. “They were capable”, Andrew remarked as he summed up the trainees’ performance following the brief training that the PRCSSP sponsored. With financial support from the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI), the Women’s Development Group was able to build five ponds. The PRCSSP provided fingerlings for the second pond. The Women’s Development Group also attempted to raise hassar (Hoplosternum littorale), another species of fish.

How have individuals and/or the community utilized new knowledge and skills?: The women who had received training in aquaculture did not have the opportunity to utilize their knowledge and skills much beyond the trial phase of the project. There were three reasons for this. The first reason, and one that members of Women’s Development Group identified, was the mysterious disappearance of fish. Andrew recalled that at the time the Women’s Development Group reported the disappearance of the fish, they provided no clear explanation as to why this was
happening. The second and more significant reason was flooding of the fish ponds as a result of the overtopping of a nearby canal. The ponds had not been constructed sufficiently to withstand flooding. The third reason was financial constraints. The Women’s Development Group did not have the money to resuscitate the project following the flooding.

It would appear that the termination of the aquaculture project resulted in feelings of disappointment among the members of the Women’s Development Group. While the women continued to engage in other projects, they abandoned the fish ponds. Nikki conveyed the flow of events:

*the fishes got away. The rain flood ... the place. The water ran over and that was it.... After the fishes get away we did not get enough, you know, get back money... to do anything more. So it just break us down. So we just left it."

**How have training experiences influenced individual and collective initiative?**

No group or member of the Village attempted to pursue aquaculture after the ponds flooded. The interviews that I conducted on this project suggest that fish farming was mainly confined to the Women’s Development Group. Few of the other participants in this study had either visited the fishponds or knew of the activities of the Women’s Development Group in relation to fish farming.

**What factors supported or hindered the application of training knowledge and skills?:** The PRCSSP and the CFNI provided valuable support for the Fish Farming Project, especially in terms of digging the ponds. The Women’s Development Group also acknowledged support from a nearby fish farm run by the Ministry of Agriculture. Lorna
singled out the support that that entity provided: “The fishery place out there...We got very good support.”

At the village level, the project received little support. The individuals that I interviewed felt that, overall, community support was absent, that the community “did not help us with anything. They just left us like that.” There was, however, mention of support from a few men in the Village. A few male volunteers from the Village also gave direct assistance with feeding the fish and maintaining the ponds. Two of the men were closely related to one of the women who had obtained training in aquaculture.

Training for the Fish Farming Project was limited to raising and harvesting the fish. In this regard, the women had demonstrated their capacity to cope with these activities and were supported in their efforts to expand the project. Members of the Women’s Development Group therefore, felt strongly that the main challenges they faced were inadequate technical knowledge about the construction of the ponds and lack of funding to support the project after the flood. Lorna considered that these challenges ultimately contributed to the failure of the project:

**The Village Park Project**

The Village Park was a constantly evolving project that the Women’s Development Group spearheaded. The Group felt that with eco-tourism as the main thrust of the project, they could find creative ways to use physical communal assets, retain aspects of traditional knowledge and traditions that the Village was rapidly losing. Moreover, the members of the Group, saw that the project as a business, and one from
which they could derive income, particularly in the longer term. Against this
background, the role of training was to complement ongoing efforts by the Women’s
Development Group to prepare them launch and sustain the Village Park as tourism
product.

How was training obtained?: The Women’s Development Group itself identified
and sought training in the area of tour guiding. With the Village Park as the centerpiece
of the Group’s tourism product, there was an opportunity for visitors to enjoy nature:
learn about birds, trees and medicinal plants; partake of indigenous foods and beverage;
tour organic pineapple farms; and gain insights into aspects of Amerindian culture. The
Women’s Development Group determined specifically that they needed a cadre of tour
guides for the Village Park.

Training for tour guides was the only training that the Women’s Development
Group arranged in relation to the Village Park Project. Interview data and reports
collected for this study suggest that it is likely that by the time the Women’s
Development Group began work on the Village Park, several members of the Village
would have previously attended tourism related workshops and training events that
were organized by the RDA and other agencies (IICA, March, 2007; Harvey, 2011). Some
members of the Women’s Development Group confirmed that they had attended
several of these events. Lorna, who was instrumental in shaping the vision of the Village
Park, explained that the Group recognized that they needed training in “actually
delivering how you deal with guests, how you deal with people.” Roger, the professional
tour guide who was contracted to facilitate the training, explained how he understood his task:

For me to show them and provide a service but in a more structured way. So they asked for basic techniques in tour guiding .... So the challenge was to go into the community and in a span of about six hours or so, to impart some knowledge on basic tour guiding techniques

The Women’s Development organized the tour guide training as an activity for the entire ten-member women’s group, although a few other members of the community also attended. Training took place in the Village. The more theoretical aspect of the training was conducted in a meeting room. This was followed by a practical role-play activity, which allowed the trainees to conduct a small group of villagers through the village and in the Village Park. The facilitator provided the trainees with feedback on the role play.

The Women’s Development Group engaged the services of a trainer who was an Amerindian and whose experience included conducting tours involving Amerindian communities. Roger recalled that he focused mainly on two aspects of tour guiding: (1) presentation, that is, the use of body language, and (2) commentary, or how information is communicated during the tour. During the training, Roger highlighted knowledge areas that he identified as relevant to the context of the Village and the Village Park:

The flora and fauna knowledge, a little bit about the culture. Because it was a culture product that they were trying to develop then...Specifically the Arawak culture...a little bit about the history of the village .... some of the social aspects and the economic activities of the village. So we focused a little bit on that.
One of the main features of the Village Park was showcasing indigenous knowledge. Members of the Women’s Development Group supplemented their individual knowledge by sharing with each other, and by learning informally from village elders about trees and medicinal plants. Roger agreed that the trainees possessed local knowledge and that this influenced his training activities:

They were receptive. They were like ripe and ready to learn. (chuckle) And they were like grasping at everything. And as I mentioned before, because they were a little bit more vocal and expressive, it was easy. And they had the local knowledge already...So it [was] just a matter of allowing them to be familiar now with the scientific name of the birds, plants and animals. And you could not have gone into depth because there is so much.

The facilitator placed emphasis on the practical aspects of tour guiding. Salome remembered the role-play exercise:

We had to walk around the Village Park and we had to explain and tell about the trees and all different things in the Park and so. We had to tell them.

The tour guide training was the first time the Women’s Development Group was participating in such an exercise. Reflecting on this experience, Lorna commented lightheartedly “it went well for some but some really stumbled (chuckle).” Roger recalled that, as part of the feedback to him, the trainees expressed the desire for more in-depth training. Shortly after the training event, two of the trainees were afforded the opportunity to have additional learning experiences as they participated as tourists during a tour to another Amerindian Village.

What evidence is there that participants gained new knowledge and skills?:

Following the opening of the Village Park in 2008, tour guides provided services to a
small but steady flow of visitors who toured the Park. The Women’s Development Group linked the Village Park tours to the nearby resort, and guests from the resort accounted for some of the visitors (IICA, July 2008). The Village Park was also part of a wider tourism experience that several nearby communities networked to promote (Harvey, 2011). This strategy presented opportunities for the trainees to offer tour guide services to groups as large as 30 people (IICA, July 2008). In response to the question concerning how many times fairly large groups visited the Village Park, Pinky, one of the tour guides, estimated that: “maybe about ten times we had people going in there,... Come to the resort and then go there ....” When asked what she did in relation to tour guiding, Salome responded:

*People used to come from the UG [the University of Guyana]. And all the fellows ... [those who were] learning about the butterfly. Well we had to go one by one and we had to walk them around like the Village park .... And then they would ask questions, you know ... And we had to tell them.*

Not everyone who participated in the training on tour guiding served as tour guides for the Village Park. One way in which training assisted the Women’s Development Group was in the area of streamlining their individual responsibilities. In a post-training activity, the ten women reviewed the tour guide training that they attended, assessed their individual capabilities, and aligned their roles and responsibilities in relation to various needs for offering the Village Park as a tourism project. Lorna described some of the Group’s consultation on these matters:

*Everyone was happy with the training. But in the group, a few of them knew that here, they said they said it openly, that, that I cannot do that. Meaning I cannot lead a group and tell them about this. I cannot do that. I prefer to prepare the*
meals or do something like that... we realized now in our group, we had people who could be tour guides. People who could not be tour guides, but can be cooks—because, prepare the meals. And so we realized that there... In that training setting now. We realized definitely we have some women in our group, who—don’t put them, don’t put them to lead any. No. No. No. Let them go to the kitchen. Let them make the drink. Let them prepare the food.

How have individuals and/or the community utilized new knowledge and skills?: Except for conducting tours organized for the Village Park, trainees did not use the knowledge and skills they may have gained during the one-day training. The Women’s Development Group continued to pursue small business ventures that they promoted as part their effort to diversify their tour offerings. These small business activities included an herb garden that they created within the park, and beekeeping (Village Park Brochure). The Group, however, was unable to sustain the Village Park project due to theft of property from within the Park, destruction of trees and plants by vandalism, and deterioration of infrastructure, including the kitchen and a wooden walkway.

How have training experiences influenced individual and collective initiative?

Apart from the specific tours that the Women’s Group conducted in the Village Park, no other individual or group activity emerged that could be associated with the tour guiding training. Rather, evidence from the interview data indicated that, shortly thereafter, there was a waning of commitment to push the tourism agenda in the village as a whole. Mark remarked, for example, that the RDA had procured promotional signs for the Village, but that for years the Village neglected to display the signs. There were
no new tourist ventures that required tour guides after the experiment with the Village Park.

The loss of momentum in tourism coincided with the departure of the leader of the group from the village. Members of the Women’s Development Group and others, recognized that the Group began to suffer from a lack of leadership. Individuals, however, remained willing to share their knowledge and experience gained in the area of tourism. At one community meeting that I attended, the villagers discussed a proposal from the Toshao to build a guesthouse. Susan, a member of the Women’s Development Group, referred to this proposal as she reflected on the benefits of training:

_I think we benefitted (chuckle). And we can benefit some more.’ Cause if we are going [into] tourism we have certain ideas. Some of us have certain ideas in what to do. And, for instance, if we’re having guests or we are planning to have our guest house soon—which is part of tourism, we have people in the village that would handle that._

**What factors supported or hindered the application of training knowledge and skills?** The bond and trust that the members of the Women’s Development Group enjoyed as a body was a strong form of support for the trainees. Members of the Group maintained that the ten women had worked to cut the trails for the Village Park. They managed the various sources of funding as well as the buildings, bridge and other infrastructure for the Park. The interviews revealed that their solidarity continued as they planned and organized themselves for conducting tours. When tours were scheduled, some members of the Group concentrated on preparing food and beverage
while others served as tour guides. Nikki, who served as tour guide, felt that there was good teamwork: “Some doing tour guiding ... and then some, some in the kitchen. Because we used to prepare like indigenous food and ... Everybody that came there enjoyed it and they liked.

The Women’s Development Group received assistance that boosted their pride and confidence in the work they were doing. With help from the USAID-sponsored Farmer-to-Farmer volunteers, the Women’s Development Group attracted a significant sum of money from the European Union (Partners of the Americas, n. d). One of the activities this funding covered was the preparation of a promotional brochure identifying the attractions and tours that the Village Park offered. Subsequently, the Women’s Development Group benefited from another grant for establishing apiaries. This included training. The women included visits to the apiaries in their tour package. The RDA and the Village Council also assisted the women with improving the Park’s infrastructure and their activities related to agro-tourism (IICA, July, 2007; IICA, July, 2008). Members of the Women’s Development Group appreciated that a nearby tourist resort promoted tours to the Village Park. All of these activities contributed to the development of the Village Park as a tourism product and helped to expand the range of opportunities for the women to provide tour guide services.

The Women’s Development Group felt that, on the whole, they received little support from members of the Village. Some of the Group described the negativity of some community perceptions of the concept of the Village Park. When asked about community support, Lorna commented: “the community, some members of the
community thought we were crazy. What are they doing in that bush? That is what they were saying.” Vandalism of infrastructure, theft of items from the kitchen, and the destruction of trees and plants was perhaps the most troubling factor that deterred the women from further utilizing the knowledge and skills with which they had equipped themselves. Several of the study participants reported that members of their own village may have committed these acts. Pinky offered her view on what took place:

Well, the Village Park, they eventually went in and they stole the...medicine and started to cut down the trees, and so in that we couldn’t continue.

A report of an external agency (IICA, May 14, 2012), painted a dismal picture of the Village Park around May 2012. One agency representative described a similar picture, while at the same time attributing the situation to the Women’s Development Group lack of capacity:

I visited the ... Village park initially....it was beautiful. You could have seen it was a beautiful idea. But apparently because there was a lack of institutional capacity...And so ... that park has gone into a state of disrepair, as it were...

Some members of the Women’s Development Group admitted that the Group was unable to sustain its activities. They provided some reasons. Lorna considered the issue of leadership:

I think the lack, the point of depending on a particular leader is not good enough. And I think this is where the weakness lies .... As I said, it was a very dynamic group. We had an interest ...and everyone was happy to do what they were doing. .But the minute the leader stepped out ... that is what went wrong. And I think it is really sad to see what we had, how hard we worked to achieve it. And we did it .... And we reached that level ... And then one person became too busy. Everyone relaxed.
Other members identified age as being a challenge. Pinky, for example, acknowledged the aging process and how this was compounded by the distance from the Village to the Village Park:

*Old age. Most of the women, most of the women they got older (chuckle). Like myself. And it was far to go and some people complained that they are getting older. I think that’s kind of the challenges.*

Members also felt that there was a lack of tourists and that this factor partly contributed to the demise of the Village Park. Dolly spoke to this issue:

*That was ...a good spot. But then again...you couldn’t find people every day there. Especially tourism. You couldn’t find tourists going in there every day. And for somebody to stay there alone to keep that, it could not work out.*

The challenges appeared to have remained insurmountable. With the closure of the Village Park and a fairly dormant Women’s Development Group, the tour guides became inactive.

**Discussion**

**Context:** The availability of training for adult Amerindians in this Village occurred within the broad context of community development initiatives that focused on income generation. The three projects revolved around the principle of utilizing and managing local assets for economic gain. The pursuit of community-based economic activities along these lines by indigenous communities worldwide is becoming more common as communities seek solutions to their social and economic conditions through
development processes that they own and control (see Giovanni, 2015; Peredo & McLean, 2013; Duchicela et al.; UNDP, 2014).

For this Village, the three projects represented pioneering efforts in market-based enterprises. Entrepreneurial activities can cover a broad spectrum and occur in different ways (Patrinos & Skoufias, 2007; Peredo & McLean, 2013). In this Village, while the projects were community-based, and they all received varying degrees of external financial support, there were a few differences among them. One difference was that the Organic Pineapple Project was a business involving the Village Council and an external business partner, while the Fish Farming Project and Village Park Project were managed solely by the Women’s Development Group.

Another difference was in the area of training. The Women’s Group organized training almost exclusively for their members and decided on the manner in which they used training. On the other hand, training related to the Organic Pineapple Project targeted those community members who indicated that they wanted to farm and supply organic pineapples to the Company. Training specifically aimed at assisting farmers to meet the requirements for marketing pineapple chunks using a certified international organic label. Participation in this project was open to the entire community. While enrollment as an organic pineapple farmer was voluntary, it was dependent on training and on adherence to prescribed protocols designed to meet international standards. The projects also handled finances differently. The organic pineapple farmers managed their own farms and received the proceeds from the sale of the pineapples directly, and made individual decisions about their money. On the other
hand, the Women’s Development Group worked closely together and supported each other. They managed their projects as micro-enterprises, and made group decisions concerning the proceeds from the projects.

Project leaders also recognized existing knowledge and capacities that they could draw on in order to meet project goals, but identified specific knowledge and skills areas that they lacked that were essential to their plans. Study participants who were members of the Village confirmed that, whether it was in making the shift from subsistence farming to supplying pineapples for an international organic market, engaging in aquaculture, or developing nature-based and cultural tourism, these projects presented new learning challenges. They explained that there were several aspects of the projects for which they had either limited or no experience or knowledge. Project-related training aimed to address some of those specific needs and added to the range of training activities that had previously taken place in the Village over several years.

In this Village, training assumed a critical role in providing knowledge and skills to project participants at a time when community leaders pursued new ideas for utilizing available communal resources to address economic challenges. Community leaders believed that it was necessary to add to the existing storehouse of knowledge and skills in the Village in order to operate in mainstream markets and that training was one means of strengthening the capacity of Villagers to effectively participate in projects. Study data contained ample evidence that trainees applied the new knowledge and skills that they gained through training, that overall training contributed to boosting
existing capacity at the individual level. Also, in their reflections on their training experience and on the ways in which each project unfolded, study participants from within the Village described the tangible ways in which training contributed to individuals and families within the Village. I discuss this finding in greater depth in the next section of this chapter as I address key factors and issues that influenced training gains and project outcomes.

The Role of Training

This section examines the role of training in relation to the other five, development (paradigms and approaches), development and material advancement, capacity building, opportunities and vulnerabilities, and the individual and the community. I give special attention to the complexities associated with community development in the Village that surfaced in the data emerged. The section ends with a discussion of key findings that emerged from interview data.

Development (Paradigms and Approaches)

This investigation examined project-related training in a village that has, to a significant degree, took charge of its own community development process. Interview data demonstrated that while all the three projects were asset-driven and locally managed, they were undertaken within the context of the Western development paradigm and in direct response to the external market economy. Study participants agreed that it was the Village Council and the Women’s Development Group who initially decided the manner in which they were going to proceed with projects. No
evidence emerged from data interview to suggest that this decision was imposed on the community, although it is possible that the external agencies and specific business arrangements may have played roles in reinforcing this course of action.

This study also found that project planners made some deliberate efforts to identify and preserve indigenous knowledge and certain cultural traditions. This was especially true for two of the three projects. The Organic Pineapple Project centered on supporting pineapple-farming practices and knowledge of the ecosystem, while training offered new farming methods aimed at increased productivity and sustainable use of farmlands. The Women’s Development Projects promoted the concept of agro-tourism, actively pursued the retention of cultural traditions and knowledge, and aimed to develop, refine, and market a unique and culturally attractive package to tourists. What was noteworthy, however, was that projects did not have specific mechanisms for incorporating or strengthening traditional values, norms or practices that have been found to foster community participation, cohesion, and collective wellbeing, and are also key elements of indigenous approaches to development (Duchiela, Jensby et al., 2015; Adler, 2012; Giovanni, 2015).

In this study, evidence was mixed in relation to the claim that training can reinforce a particular approach (Fanany et al., 2010; Ife, 2010; Craig, 2010). Training addressed the necessities of a business relationship in the ‘Western’ market economy. Based on the reports of study participants, this was accomplished through a range of training activities, including sharing in classroom formats, group discussions, field demonstrations, and, in the case of the Organic Pineapple Project, there was ongoing
post-training support from international volunteers with expertise in agriculture. Participants explained that training activities provided opportunities for them to share their own knowledge and to discuss issues, suggesting that structured training attempted to be fully engaged with traditional knowledge and experience. The evidence showed that, in many respects, project participants adopted certain Western’ management and business practices shared during the training sessions, or blended them with local practices. The Organic Pineapple Project illustrated that trainees complied with farm management practices and protocols consistent with mainstream organizational development approaches paradigm (see Kenny et al., 2013; Fanany, et al., 2010) for which they had received training. The project succeeded in maintaining organic certification for a number of years. Meeting production targets and providing specialized services for tourists were also mainstream development concepts covered by training which study participants incorporated into their projects. The following remark by one study participant concerning the influence of training that was provided for the Organic Pineapple Project conveyed the extent to which some trainees might have been influenced: “I think everybody start thinking business-like now.” However, in the case of the Organic Pineapple Project, farmers individually exercised some degree of agency and resisted adopting certain farming practices and technologies for which they received training. This occurred despite the fact that these practices were linked to higher productivity of pineapple. In the long run, these inconsistencies appeared to have negatively affected the overall supply level of organic pineapple.
Interview data supported the view that the three projects represented ways in which a **combination of asset-driven and deficit-driven** approaches to development can facilitate projects of an economic nature. The data showed that projects were anchored in a **bottom-up** approach with respect to goal identification, general training needs, and use of community assets. The role of the Village Council and the Women’s Development Group as the initiators and implementers of the projects served as evidence that the projects were community-based. Further, land, local knowledge, labor, and a community-owned tractor were community assets that projects utilized. These features are all consistent with an **asset-driven** approach as delineated by various authors (see for example Abdullah & Young, 2010; Hunt, 2005; Simpson et al., 2003).

The data pointed to the limited character of certain community assets as a primary factor that contributed to projects having attributes of a **deficit approach**. The community lacked funds for digging and repairing the fishponds, acquiring fingerlings, for constructing the pineapple factory, erecting buildings at the Village Park, and financing training. Consequently, the Village Council and the Women’s Development Group projects sought to address these issues through external agencies. Some development experts identify external intervention as a fundamental characteristic of a deficit-driven approach to development (Ife, 2010; Abdullah and Young, 2010; Connors, 2010). In the case of the Pineapple Project, the business partner was financially responsible for processing of pineapples and marketing the product, although the processing facility was located in the Village, and villagers were employed in the processing.
My understanding of the role that training played in the three projects was deepened as I analyzed interview data using the theory that **there is a connection between development approach and capacity building as result of training.** It is important to acknowledge here that, since the projects were characterized by aspects of both the asset-driven and the deficit-driven approaches, it is difficult to attribute capacity building to any one specific approach. An example of this challenge was the ambiguity that surfaced concerning the fact that the community requested external assistance with training and that in some instances, support for training was ongoing. Kenny et al. (2013) describe this dilemma best: “… at what point does an external facilitator become an outside ‘expert’ and when does outside expertise slide into ‘top-down’ development?” (p. 289).

The data showed that the Village Council and the Women’s Development Group exercised a great deal of agency in identifying specific training needs and finding the experts and facilitators for training. These were examples of the kinds of action that this study found aligned well with a **bottom-up** approach to development and positively influenced several aspects of training. Through this proactive step, project leaders helped to determine the general focus and delivery of training for adult members of the Village. While study participants drew attention to specific concerns and shortcomings of training and post-training activities, project trainees generally described their learning experiences in favorable terms and explained several ways in which they applied and utilized knowledge and skills gained. Study participants who received training in organic pineapple farming attested to the relevance of the training content and the
opportunities for sharing their own knowledge during training activities. Similarly, study participants who were members of the Women’s Development Group indicated that training together as a group led to constructive group discussions and decisions about the role that each member would play in tours that the Village Park offered. In the case of the Fish Farming Project, trainees who participated in aquaculture endeavors outside of the Village subsequently shared their newly acquired knowledge and skills with other members of their group.

The data also contained descriptions of individual acknowledgements of personal growth and change that fit well with examples in the literature that depict capacity building that occurs within an asset-driven context (see for example Fanany et al., 2010; Ife, 2010; Craig, 2010). For example, study participants who attended training offered by the Organic Pineapple Project described the sense of personal achievement they experienced when they met the required standards for organic certification and the confidence with which they were able to increase the size of their farms. Women who farmed organic pineapple also described feelings of empowerment that accompanied the financial independence resulting from the sale of their produce. Likewise, study participants who attended the tour guide training described a sense of personal pride and empowerment that resulted from tour guiding activities. Their capacity to share information about Amerindian culture and knowledge about local plants and herbs with outsiders was central to these feelings.

Issues of sustainability of the projects appeared to be largely influenced by the deficit-driven approach that marked certain aspects of the projects. In the case of the
Organic Pineapple Project, this issue arose in the context of the business partnership between the Village Council and the Company. As the project unfolded, the Village Council and the farmers were relegated to the role of suppliers of pineapple. They became completely dependent on the Company to purchase the pineapples and to process and market the pineapple chunks, and this undermined their sense of ownership and control of project. In this instance, project gains that were linked to the asset-based approach were mitigated by the breakdown in the business relationship and the loss of the organic pineapple market. The skills that farmers honed over the years became redundant as the market for organic pineapples came to an abrupt end. A similar trend marked the Women’s Development Group’s attempt at aquaculture. Agencies that provided funding for establishing the Fish Farming Project were unable to assist the women to resuscitate the aquaculture venture after the fish ponds were flooded. The premature termination of the Fish Farming Project meant that the women who received training in aquaculture were unable to demonstrate their capacity to generate income from this project.

My analysis of the role of development approaches in relation to training as a capacity-building strategy took into account Connors’ (2010) caution with respect to making distinctions between top-down and bottom-up approaches. Connors, whose expertise spans both international development and community development, argued that: “there are many permutations that can enhance or limit the potential for sustainable outcomes of capacity building projects.” (p. 235). Study data provided evidence that, overall, training effectively contributed to farmers employing farming
practices that led to and maintained organic certification of a pineapple product for an international market, assisted in the creation of a cadre of local tour guides, and allowed a small group of women to demonstrate that they could potentially engage in aquaculture. The asset-driven approach to the projects helped to create a sense of community ownership of the projects that was critical to fostering capacity building at the individual level. This approach also appeared to serve well for the Women’s Development Group, allowing the group to remain unified in their decisions about ways in which they could optimize the knowledge and skills gained through training. Evidence suggested, however, that over the longer term, training related to the three projects did not contribute significantly to strengthening or enhancing capacity beyond the level of the individual. This finding adds another measure of strength to the criticism that, as a concept of western development, capacity building can increase individual capacity but does not necessarily lead to an increase in capacity building at the group or community level (Eade, 1997; Kenny & Clarke, 2010; Taylor & Clarke, 2008).

Finally, the projects experienced several challenges and setbacks that gave rise to concerns about the appropriateness of the use of mainstream development approaches and concepts (Abdullah & Young, 2010; Ife 2010; Loomis, 2000; Tauli-Corpuz, 2010a) in this Village. In viewing the broader community development context, however, this study uncovered other factors that influenced the three projects and training.
Development and Material Advancement

In their discussion of community development practice, Brocklesby & Fisher (2003) point to the importance of factors such as values and aspirations within individual communities, and argue that local ways of doing community development may conflict with established community development practices. As I delved into the nuances of prevailing notions and social dynamics within the Village, I drew on insights gleaned from the responses that study participants provided to a few general questions that I asked concerning the concepts of development, capacity building, training, and issues facing the community.

The training that accompanied the three projects expanded the skills and knowledge base of the trainees but its role in capacity building was rather limited. Since the projects were largely community initiated, it was important that I uncover some of the layers of understanding among study participants about the main concepts that I am addressing in this study. To this end, one of the interview questions was What would you say are some of the existing views held by this community concerning (a) development of the community, (b) training, (c) education, (d) capacity building. I concluded that certain predominant local views and understandings concerning these concepts may have influenced how training was utilized.

On the subject of development, members of the Village Council who participated in this study were confident that the Villagers looked forward to all forms of development within the community. Study participants repeatedly mentioned improved infrastructure, income, and education as either needs or as indicators of development in the Village.
Martha’s response was typical of the response of study participants. While being careful to point out that community members may not all share the same views about how they perceive development, she explained:

Different ones have different views and different expectations ... For instance, ... when they talk of development they talk about number one, they think of better roads where they can get motor car or motor cycle... That is one of the things. Development of the road so that you [are] free to move as you want and one of the thing that they are all stressing on is better education. You encourage people to send their children to school which I think is still a challenge today.

Other study participants identified money as a key element in the development equation. Nikki felt that money ranked as number one in terms of how Villagers perceived development, and pointed out that living comfortably was also important to people:

more money for themselves. That’s the first one ... For the community... ...They want to see people living more comfortable... Living in a better... home.... Because all like long time we had [a] very small house... [It] was smaller than this. Very small house. But now you see the development take place so we get a better house.

Mark, one of the development specialists who was involved in a supportive role with the Village, reiterated this point: “they are seeing development as financially, materially.”

Villagers’ preoccupation with money and material comforts appeared to be a cause of frustration for some study participants. Brother reflected in a somewhat regretful tone: “People only thinking about the material side of life nowadays.” Speaking from the standpoint of a member of the Village Council, Annabell said:
Everybody want to see development but then most people don’t want to get involved in it... some only want to talk about the money part. And though most people would want to have now, money, everybody is just like money, money.

A commonly held view among the study participants was that community members did not place sufficient value on education. While some study participants observed that Villagers are giving more attention to children’s education, some voiced concerns about dropouts, noting the trend where some children do not complete their education at secondary schools. Nikki, for example, stated: “Some people think it is important- some are “just carefree”. Martha echoed this sentiment, saying: ”some really work towards that [education] whereas others, they don’t value education.” There appeared to be a similar attitude towards efforts to develop the human resource base within the community. Annabell, a member of the Village Council, lamented that young people did not take advantage of learning opportunities and that, in her view, the lure of money was a barrier to young men in particular:

We as a Council, ... hold things and tell them. We had so many things about capacity building for young people. We had youth groups where we would do capacity building... get sewing machines, try to get projects to come on stream for the young people, get them involved. They started and they just don’t see. To me they just looking to see especially the boys-we want big money.

Capacity Building

When asked specifically about the concept of capacity building, some study participants considered it simply as the acquisition of new skills and knowledge. Other members of the Village may have found the concept to be rather complicated as
Desmond intimated based on his interaction with pineapple farmers when he served as a training facilitator:

I think by and large they thought that, you know, this would be, something radically new. That we would have to have some exercise, some special, academic ability in order to learn.

Study participants who had leadership experience were more inclined to view capacity building in terms of individuals realizing their own potential. Lorna, a village leader who aggressively pursued training opportunities for members of the community, described the dilemma that she encountered with capacity building:

Capacity building, they associate with... you are teaching them how to do something...we will build your capacity, we will show you how to get this thing done. They don’t think … capacity building is actually me, inside of me thinking differently. I think they are thinking ... capacity building- she is going to tell me how to do this thing now... I want to think that there is some misunderstanding.

While study participants used the terms capacity and capacity building quite freely during the interviews, they did not always identify capacity building as a critical community development issue. Instead, they expressed greater concern for the absence of specific skills in the community and felt that there was a dire need for skills training within the community. Pinky observed, for example: “we hardly find people with skills. I mean the older folks, I think we just have a few people. And some of the older folks they die with their skills.” When asked to identify skills or areas where training was needed, study participants frequently mentioned sewing, tailoring, hairdressing, and cooking. In general, study participants expressed the view that training was essential for preparing individuals to provide services that were not available in the community, but they
stopped short of articulating how trainees could use new knowledge and skills to empower themselves and strengthen their own capacity or groups or entities within the wider community.

Based on the views expressed, members of the Village generally did not link training to capacity building. Study participants acknowledged that various organizations held training activities in the Village over the years, but observed that in general, members of the Village did not attach much importance to attending these events. Annabell described a pattern observed by other study participants as well, whereby men and youth from the Village generally did not attend training: “most times when we have training or you say workshops, or meetings. Most times you would find only the women coming out.

**Training:** The most common view that study participants themselves held concerning training was that it should lead to income. They frequently pointed out that training in the Organic Pineapple project contributed to an increase in the income of farmers over several years. Study participants regarded the improved living conditions of farmers as a laudable project outcome, and this seemed to convince some of the study participants that training could prove advantageous to young people if it addressed their income earning needs. Study participants who served in leadership roles, however, saw that training could assist in strengthening capacity among the youth in the Village. Lorna, for example, who served as a member on the Village council for many years, expressed concerns about the future of Village youth. She also saw training as a capacity building strategy that was necessary for the community and specifically
recommended training in “Youth development. Youth finding themselves.” The following excerpt from Brother on this issue sums up how he, like others, envisaged that training could lead not only to income for youth, but also contribute to their self-development:

*Training can help them to go forward. ... so they need to be trained to do things that would help them to earn money- Well, they, they, one is that they, they think differently. They see the necessity of training. Because you got to have training before you can do certain things, you know. You got to do training.*

**Opportunities and Vulnerabilities**

The three projects I investigated all mirror, to some degree, aspects of other recent development initiatives in Amerindian communities. In a recent study on sustainable livelihoods in Amerindian communities in Guyana, Griffiths and Anselmo (2010) documented various types of community-based arrangements. Their examples included family-based businesses and groups and associations that were involved in economic ventures. These authors also noted “benefit-sharing agreements with conservation organizations and private companies” (p.7). Griffiths and Anselmo highlighted the use and importance of training in providing skills and strengthening capacities in the various projects that fell under these arrangements.

The inability to access credit from financial institutions often limits economic opportunities for Amerindian Villages. Even though legally recognized Amerindian villages hold collective ownership of land and exercise a great deal of control over natural resources that fall within their boundaries, these communal assets cannot be used as collateral at financial institutions (UNDP, 2014). Entrepreneurial activities appear to offer
opportunities for community institutions and groups not only to utilize community assets but to exercise greater influence on various stages of a project (Giovani, 2015), but in some instances these activities require initial financial investment or assistance. This is one reason why Amerindian Villages explore partnerships with private companies or seek funding from government and NGO.

Financial assistance from the Company, government, or NGO sources enabled the Village to undertake the three projects. Funding agencies, however, tend to provide assistance for specific activities; for example, the PRCSSP did not provide assistance when the flood affected the fishponds. In the case of the business arrangement, the Company appeared to gradually reduce financial assistance as the project evolved; for example, it stopped subsidizing payments for the Organic Certification process. These and similar challenges that accompanied the three entrepreneurial activities formed part of the learning process for the Village.

The Village lacked specific technical and business expertise that the projects required. In the case of the Fish Farming Project, individuals who were trained in aquaculture discovered that the lack of technical knowledge regarding construction of more flood resistant ponds led to an unexpected end to the project. In a similar manner, the lack of marketing skills within the Women’s Development Group was a factor that contributed to the demise of the project. Mark, the rural development specialist, remarked: “all the initiatives were good initiatives. But what fell down was the marketing aspect.
In the case of the Organic Pineapple Project, unfamiliarity with the technical aspects of marketing was compounded by trust issues that developed over the price and profit margin of pineapples grown and the product sold in the marketplace. Study participants reported that the Company never provided information concerning prices and markets. Desmond, one of the training facilitators for the Organic Pineapple Projects, explained the issue as follows:

_The farmers didn’t feel as though they were in control of the process...They thought that [the Company] was in control of the process. And that [the Company was] withholding information from them in terms of market price that they were receiving for the pineapples ... And the conversion of the pineapple fruit itself into chunks. They felt that [the Company] was withholding that kind of information. And so they always felt that they were not getting the right price for their pineapples._

Organic pineapple farmers became discouraged by the price the Company paid for pineapples. This was a sore point for the farmers as Martha, one of the pineapple farmers, lamented: “The price of the pineapple, it cannot, cannot pay the farmers”.

Susan, a member of the Village Council observed: “the farmers started to get discouraged...the people who used to buy the produce don’t want to pay the price to farmers.” Moreover, the Village Council appeared to have no influence over the situation, and farmers became uncertain about maintaining organic farming practices in which they had been trained when the Company stopped purchasing pineapples.

The risk involved in an unequal business relationship, and the challenges posed by mainstream market forces are examples of vulnerability to which the Village was exposed. There were also natural disasters that adversely affected the projects. Study
participants who were members of the Women’s Development Group mainly attributed the closure of the Fish Farming Project to a flood that affected the fishponds. Pineapple farmers that I interviewed for this study described loss of income as a result of insects attacking plants that were part of their inter-cropping system. In this regard, the mealy bug and the Acoushi ant were especially destructive. Pineapple harvests were also adversely affected by changing weather patterns that caused drought and excessive rains. During the focus group discussion with women farmers, one participant offered the following recollection of the effects of one episode of heavy rains on pineapple farming:

And one time the rain came down. Terrible. And even some the farms were flooded although it was sand. Especially over the lake...And some of the plants died. The suckers died. And when they, some burst back, the burst back with two head and things like that.

The interplay of factors that propelled the Village towards pursuing the three projects and the forces that worked against them in this process accentuated the essential role that training played, and also the impediments to both training and project outcomes. As part of the community development process, entrepreneurial activities allowed for the use of community assets and for taking advantage of opportunities that offered financial and other forms of external support. Community leaders managed and controlled the projects, and training, provided project participants with certain skills and new knowledge that were necessary for attaining specific project goals. Project participants demonstrated a great deal of commitment and capacity to utilize the training they received within the context of the specific projects. The challenges presented by mainstream business enterprises, along with the community’s lack of capacity to
adequately address specific vulnerabilities, proved to be detrimental to the projects and jeopardized training outcomes both in the short term and beyond. At the point in time when I was conducted fieldwork, neither the community nor individual members had considered ways for building on the strengths and capacities that been enhanced by training.

The Individual and the Community

Current approaches to sustainable development projects in communities call for the presence of a groundswell of support from community members engaged in these projects and increasing the capacity of all levels of the community (Simpson, 2003; Morgan, 2006; Ife, 2010). This approach proved challenging for all three projects, since not all members of the community expressed the need for training or participated in it. However, while the projects lasted, individuals realized benefits, materially or personally, and played a role in community development.

The observation among the study participants was that the training significantly influenced the lives of individuals in some tangible and observable ways. Study participants highlighted the economic empowerment that they witnessed in the lives of the women who farmed organic pineapple. Speaking about the women farmers and how many used their income to enhance their standard of living, Brother observed: “Well they were buying a lot of household things and so forth...And looking after the home.” Women farmers spoke proudly of the financial independence that training and labor yielded. Hibero explained the savings system that women farmers used for monies received as payment for pineapples. She and others said that they saved their pineapple income by
deliberately choosing not to use it for grocery and daily household shopping at the town market and instead either reinvested it in the farm or saved it for purchasing special household items:

*We never used that money to buy goods at the market... We saved that... So that we can go back on the farm... And pay people to help if we have, and use it to buy things for our home.*

During the focus group discussions with women who were involved in farming organic pineapple, participants shared their perspectives on the benefits and effect of training. The four comments below further illustrate the sense of financial independence that women in the community experienced largely as a result learning about and practicing organic farming:

*I was able to build a home of my own.*

*Financially, you know, you saw the benefits of your hard labor. Because your finances were improved. Where you were able to buy certain things that you needed.*

*Well I as a single person ...and when they started first, we were paid at the farm... And you feel so good you coming from the backdam [farming area] with money in your pocket. So it was really a good feel (chuckle)... So we had our own [money]*

*Financially it did help us. And then another thing it helped, let me say the ladies mostly did that. And we the ladies who did the farming, we were happy about holding our own cash... You feel independent.... We were the men.*

In some instances, individuals who received and utilized training displayed some degree of personal empowerment that they manifested through changes in their values and actions. The majority of the trainees I interviewed described ways in which they felt personal development was enhanced. Nikki, who participated in the tour guide training,
had conducted several tours in the Village Park: “Well it do good for me because at least I get the opportunity to meet people and show them our culture.” Salome, a member of the Women’s Development Group, participated in the same training but preferred to assist with the hospitality aspect when tours were being conducted: “the training really give people encouragement... to continue in this women’s group.”

Susan, a member of the Village Council, voiced a view that the women farmers shared. She perceived that those who had participated in training also contributed their services to the community. Her observation of pineapple farmers in particular was that they were: “Enhancing their homes, sending their children to school, getting them educated. Those are the people...You will find those same people willing to come on the village council. Serve and do things for the community.” Pinky shared a similar point of view in relation to the role of training generally in the Village:

*It was very helpful because....some people were shy... And so it brought out bravery for some people who don’t speak much and sometimes some people would speak a little. You had to talk when it comes to your turn to say something..... After that some people indeed they were different. Let me say changed and ... they helped in the community, some people. And you see leadership, a kind of leadership in them.*

While sharing some of the positive ways in which individual lives were enriched, several study participants raised the issue of the spirit of the community, encapsulated in the tradition of communal work that does not involve cash payments. Among Amerindians in Guyana, communal or collective work has been pivotal to undertakings by individuals, families and the community. For example, one study participant acknowledged that a few community members had assisted in preparing new farm
grounds for her family. Members of the Women’s Development Group also referred to
the assistance they received at the fish farm during community workdays. In general,
however, study participants felt that the community was losing this spirit of cooperation
and that community members were becoming more individualistic. Hibero, herself a
former leader in the Village, emphasized the gravity of the situation:

*I don’t know what they think about capacity building you know ‘cause I am
seeing that ... we need to be more ... in a cooperative attitude. That way. We are
not, there. We are too selfish. We [are] too self opinionated. Everybody just self
opinionated.*

Similarly, study participants explained that, while a few members of the Village
have shared skills that they gained through training, this was generally not the norm. As a
community leader, Susan was particularly irked about this. She felt that community
members possessed skills but that “they feel that they should be paid for their skills.”
When this issue surfaced during the focus group discussion with members of the Village
Council, the group confirmed that this was indeed a problem: “We have some capacity.
We have a lot of capacity but is just that the skilled personnel. We have hidden skills.
People don’t want to do volunteer work.”

Fostering rather than depleting community capacity is one of the measures that
actors in community development are cautioned to observe (Simpson et al., 2003). It
would appear that the organic pineapple project may have contributed to some degree
of erosion of the spirit of traditional cooperation in the Village. In the focus group
discussion with pineapple farmers, for example, one study participant raised the point:
“Well I think it would be difficult to go back to tradition where you had your kayap
(traditional cooperative work) because people recognize once you plant so many acres-
they start counting your money...’Cause this is embedded in them. You get so much of
money therefore you have to pay.” One of the implications of this perspective, therefore,
is that boosting the capacity of individuals to improve income levels may have
contributed to further diminishing the strengths the Village.

The data from the Village focus group contained clear illustrations of the
restricted nature of community participation: the wider community either had only heard
about but had never seen the fishponds, nor did they have a clear understanding of the
Village Park Project. Some individual study participants had similarly indicated that while
family members had a general idea of the practices and protocol that pineapple farmers
followed, the involvement of other family members was minimal.

Representatives of external agencies alluded to factors that may play a role in
both community participation in and support for community projects. Desmond, who
focused on training farmers in organic farming practices felt, for example, that there was
“a lack of cohesiveness’ in the Village and that it was “historically fragmented”. Mark, on
the other hand, found that family and kinship ties were still strong and that the
community had demonstrated that it could rally around a specific goal. In his interaction
with the Village as a rural development specialist, Mark commented, however, that this
rallying was goal specific and “everything is in the present” or “What we can get now”.
Speaking from the standpoint of a Village leader, Lorna lamented “They are not looking
down the line”. In other words, the perception exists in some quarters that, at the level
of the individual there is not a long-term vision for the development of the community.
She reported, however, that the Women’s Development Group definitely had a long-term vision in mind when they developed plans for the Village Park, and that the women regarded the project partly as an investment for their own future.

**Discussion**

The findings of this study point to significant ways in which local perceptions concerning development and capacity building, along with certain values and cultural norms were intertwined. Together, these influenced the role of training. First, community members viewed development in several ways. For the most part, they associated development with improved services and amenities for the community. Another commonly held view, however, was that development means opportunities for personal income. In this Village, income-earning opportunities provide individuals and families with the means to obtain goods and services that assist with their material advancement. Studies on indigenous communities that are challenged by material poverty and scarce resources describe a similar emphasis that these communities place on money and other needs (see for example Giovanni, 2015; Vergara & Barton, 2013). This case study found that the need for money was fundamental to the perception among community members that training can play an important role in equipping individuals with knowledge and skills for financial gain. This study also found that individual financial and material needs influenced the participation in projects by villagers, as well as their support for projects. To some extent, successful engagement of the broader community with community-based economic development projects
depends on how these projects compared to wage-earning opportunities outside of the Village.

Second, members of the Village understand the concept of capacity building in multiple ways. Study participants reported that community members reportedly assumed that external intervention was needed for individuals to ‘build’ capacity, while others simply did not see capacity building as a personal goal and did not readily take advantage of community projects that had capacity-building components. Several of the project participants who participated in this study identified the role of training primarily as a means of providing much needed knowledge and skills for the community, and as a pathway to employment and income, but did not directly link training to capacity building. Likewise, some described self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-confidence in terms of benefits that they derived from project-related training but did not specifically identify them with the concept of capacity. Thus, the study found that capacity building was not explicitly stated or addressed by study participants in the context of the three community projects. However, the use of training in the projects suggested that project planners appeared to construe training as a capacity building strategy for attaining specific project goals. These findings resonate with the claim that capacity building has many layers of meaning and that in some contexts, capacity building can be vaguely understood or not articulated (Fanany, et al., 2010).

One factor that played a role in the way training was utilized was an increase in individualism and a weakening of the spirit of cooperation within the Village. Study participants explained that the tradition of reciprocal labor that allowed families and the
Village to work together to accomplish special projects was being replaced by paid labor. This situation is not unique to this Village, as recent studies describe similar trends involving social capital in indigenous communities beyond Guyana (Vergara and Barton, 2013; Godoy, 2005). While it remains unclear about how this phenomenon arose in this Village, interview data suggests that most Villagers no longer see reason to barter labor with those who have a cash income. The study found that, in this Village, the community support system did not fit well with community projects of an entrepreneurial nature. Consequently, training activities and support from external agencies contributed to strengthening the capacity of individuals in the Village, but there was a lack of support for trainees from the Village as a whole. Since supports within the organization or community are vital to sustaining the process of capacity building (Evans, Ahmed, et. al., 2004; Laverack, 2006; Ife, 2010), this trend may well have implications for other community development initiatives.

This study’s findings pertaining to the relationship between training, opportunities, and vulnerabilities highlight other complexities in the community development process. The opportunities that community leaders found favorable for utilizing community assets for economic development projects required either expanding existing local capacities or acquiring new capacities. Training served as a convenient and essential strategy in fulfilling this need. However, while the projects gave attention to strengthening individual capacity through training, at the institutional level project leaders were challenged by the specialized knowledge required to effectively manage projects designed as businesses. Consequently, the risks associated
with business partnering and market forces came to the fore in two of the three projects and resulted in loss of personal income for project participants as projects came to a halt.

The projects also brought attention to the kinds of natural disasters that expose areas of vulnerability for the Village. Drought, excessive rains, floods, and pests all adversely affected pineapple crops while the Fish farming project ended following a flood. The Village was not prepared to independently cope with the impact of these events on the entrepreneurial projects, thus adding credence to the claim that the low level of assets that indigenous communities possess make them more vulnerable to natural and other threats, especially in the area of economic development (Patrinos & Skoufias, 2007). Along with these impediments, the morale of some trainees was further diminished as the Village failed to safeguard essential physical property that the project was unable to replace.
Training has been widely used as a capacity building strategy. Capacity building is often associated with a range of development ideals including transformation, sustainability, and self-determination. This qualitative case study was undertaken in an effort to better understand the role of training within the context of the community development in Amerindian villages in Guyana. The study addressed the research question: *What role has training played in the development initiatives that have taken place in one particular Amerindian community?*

The literature on development points to two ongoing and overlapping discussions that have particular significance to this inquiry: (1) the questioning of the use of dominant development approaches and strategies and their appropriateness in non-western contexts, and (2) current efforts by indigenous peoples to foster development approaches and concepts that are infused with principles, cultural values, and norms that indigenous peoples themselves embrace and articulate. The conceptual framework for this study combined key themes that surfaced in these discussions. The framework allowed for an investigation of *the role of training* in relation to *development (paradigms and approaches), development and material advancement, capacity building, opportunities and vulnerabilities, and the individual and the community. The principle that there is a connection between development approach and capacity*
building as a result of training was also key to considerations regarding training in relation to development paradigms and approaches.

The purpose of the inquiry was to (1) investigate the contexts in which training has played a role in development initiatives in a particular Amerindian community, (2) inquire into the ways in which training was obtained and how new knowledge and skills have been utilized by individuals, and (3) describe and analyze how training experiences have influenced both individual and collective initiative. To this end, the study investigated training pertaining to three community-based projects in an Amerindian village located near Guyana’s coastland. Importantly, these projects occurred at a point in time when leadership of the Village moved in the direction of engaging in community-based economic enterprises instead of relying solely on income from subsistence agriculture or seeking wages earned from jobs in the extractive industries or depending on external development interventions for meeting community needs. The following five questions guided the inquiry:

1. How was training obtained?
2. What evidence is there that participants gained new knowledge and skills?
3. How have individuals and/or the community utilized new knowledge and skills?
4. How have training experiences influenced individual and collective initiative?
5. What factors supported or hindered the application of training knowledge and skills?

The three projects were essentially new ventures for the Village and precipitated the need for enhancing or augmenting the capacities of project participants. The study
found that training was essential to assisting project participants to meet specific project goals, but that issues of sustainability, along with the concurrent weakening of certain traditional values, norms, and support systems, significantly limited potential gains of training.

This chapter presents a summary discussion of key findings and conclusions drawn from the research, starting with the conceptual framework and followed by the study’s five research questions. The study was also undertaken with a view to contributing to improving the quality of training that is offered in Amerindian communities. I offer some recommendations that may be of use in the planning of future community development initiatives in the village where the study was undertaken. These suggestions may inform thinking about training in other settings where Amerindians are considering capacity-building strategies in community development projects. The chapter ends with suggested questions for future research.

**Study Findings**

The conceptual framework facilitated critical engagement with the main research question even as the five guiding research questions probed the data related to each of the three projects in the study. The various intersections of training with the five components of the conceptual framework illustrated the kinds of challenges that indigenous communities face in developing their communities and consequences of the development strategies they employ.
The study found that project leaders intentionally employed a combination of asset-driven and deficit-driven approaches, and that they primarily followed the western development paradigm. In some ways, this posed a challenge for the use of the principle that there is a connection between development approach and capacity building as a result of training, since it was difficult to attribute outcomes definitively to one or the other approach. Following broad criteria provided by development experts, however, I found that the three projects were first initiated using an asset-driven approach, exemplified by project leaders giving priority to utilization and management of communal lands, and planning projects that revolved around traditional knowledge of the environment and cultural traditions. The most prominent example of the deficit-driven approach was reliance on external sources for funding or investment, as well as technical expertise. The entrepreneurial nature of the projects was a contributing factor favoring the dominant development paradigm, because projects depended on significant interaction between the Village and the mainstream market economy. The study did not find evidence that project leaders deliberately incorporated traditional cultural values or practices into the manner in which they implemented projects. The Women’s Development Group worked closely together and relied on traditional knowledge for the Village Park Project, but did not appear to intentionally apply traditional practices in implementing either of their projects. Overall, the evidence showed that even though the projects utilized different configurations of asset-driven approaches and deficit-driven approaches, training worked. This was illustrated by the
fact that trainees used the new gained knowledge and skills that they gained demonstrated the capacity to meet certain project goals.

Similar to the point made by Kenny et al. (2013) concerning the importance of participant agency in community development projects, this study found that the agency of the trainees played a role in the process of capacity building. The Women’s Development Group actively applied their newly gained knowledge of aquaculture and moved quickly to increase the number of fishponds they managed. This Group also determined for themselves how best to utilize tour guide training. In the case of the Organic Pineapple Project, where, following training, project participants adopted certain aspects of ‘western’ agricultural practices with their traditional farming practices and complied with specific protocols in order to meet international organic certification, they also resisted adopting some of the knowledge and skills provided by training. It would appear that, in the latter instance, certain decisions that the pineapple farmers made may have resulted in failure to optimize assets over which they had control. Hence, the findings of this study provided somewhat limited support for the claim that training can reinforce a particular development approach.

A critical finding concerned the extent to which local economic and cultural realities influenced the way training was perceived and utilized in the Village. Interview data suggested that community members had various perceptions about development and capacity building but that the need to earn money was a predominant motivation for engaging in activities associated with development and capacity building. This meant that improved services and amenities signified ‘good development’, but this was
trumped by the individual need for money and for material goods (*material advancement*). Based on the views expressed by study participants, for the majority of Villagers, participation in training hinged on whether or not training would lead to personal income. Study participants felt that this was more evident among young members of the Village who focused on earning ‘fast cash’ through employment outside of the community. In this context, where the focus was on shorter-term financial gains, perceptions about training and capacity building were limited to acquiring personal financial gain.

Weak social capital within the Village emerged as a key factor in the relationship between the *role of training* and the *individual and the community*. Several authors have described cultural norms and practices as representing social capital and as strengths in indigenous communities (Abdullah and Young, 2010). The experience of project participants suggested that the Village had a low level of social capital. They described a lack of support for the projects by the wider membership of the community and identified two reason for this: (1) an increase in individualism that undermined the community spirit of cooperation, and (2) the tradition of reciprocity being replaced by paid labor. One consideration is that community-based projects of an entrepreneurial nature did not fit well with the community support system.

Findings from this study lend support to the views expressed by several authors that indigenous communities generally have few *opportunities* for pursuing economic development activities and that *vulnerabilities* to which these communities might be exposed also affect community development initiatives. When projects encountered
challenges such as natural disasters, market forces, and, in the case of the Organic Pineapple Project, a problematic joint venture partnership, the potential gains of training were severely affected. The incidences of theft and vandalism that the Village Park Project experienced were additional obstacles that project participants were unable to overcome. The role of training as a capacity building strategy was limited to specific aspects of each of the three project. Ultimately, inadequacies in the areas of technical and institutional capacity that contributed to the demise of the projects point to larger issues facing the community.

**How was training obtained?**

This case study illustrates the ways in which a community employed training as part of the community development process in order to undertake new economic activities. Documentation concerning the details of training was sparse, but study participants provided insights into training content and methods and some describe their experiences as trainees. The data pointed to five features that defined the training within the three community-based projects: (1) training needs were identified within the context of an asset-driven approach to the projects, (2) participation in training was voluntary, (3) training was intended to either augment existing local knowledge and skills or in the case of the Fish Farming Project, introduce aquaculture to the community, and (4) training focused specifically on preparing trainees to engage with the mainstream market, and (5) external facilitators and experts provided training.
Training methods varied across the projects as training facilitators and experts addressed specific project needs. For example, the Organic Pineapple Project entailed combining local with new farming practices, farm management and record-keeping procedures. Study participants described training methods that included talks, group discussions and field demonstrations. Trainees recalled training events that included theoretical instruction, group discussion, and practical field demonstrations. Handouts and ongoing support from a Rural Development Agency (RDA) accompanied these activities. The training on tour guiding combined talks by the trainer, and role-play that followed by a feedback session. For both the Organic Pineapple Project and the Village Park Project, the fact that training was conducted mainly in the Village allowed for trainers and trainees to engage in practical demonstrations in the Village setting. Training in aquaculture involved field trips to fish farms that were located outside of the Village and support and monitoring of activities in the Village by aquaculture experts. Trainees also received educational materials.

Trainers and representatives of agencies who assisted with the projects reported that training facilitators made deliberate attempts to allow trainees to share their knowledge and views. Individual interviews and focus group discussions indicated that training activities fostered a great deal of participation and provided opportunities for training participants and facilitators to share knowledge and skills. In general, study participants valued the broad range of training activities in which they were involved in over the years and reported positive learning experiences.
What evidence is there that participants gained new knowledge and skills?
The study found tangible evidence that the trainees gained new knowledge and skills. In addition to personal testimonies contained in the interviews, reports by external agencies and in newspaper articles corroborated some of these gains:

- Training in organic farming practices and protocols helped to equip traditional pineapple growers to pioneer the cultivation and harvesting of pineapples for a value-added product that was marketed and exported internationally with an organically certified label. Inspectors ascertained that farmers generally complied with specific guidelines for organic certification, although they also reported issues of non-compliance or shortcomings. While meeting production targets was an issue, organic pineapple farmers nonetheless, successfully demonstrated their capacity to grow and supply pineapples for over a decade, and reported relatively substantial financial rewards.

- Training in aquaculture supported women with no previous experience in fish farming themselves, to develop capabilities allowing them to demonstrate satisfactorily to the funding agency that they were capable of farming fish. Further, the success of the women’s early efforts to farm fish led to the Women’s Development Group receiving additional financial support from another (external) agency.

- Training in tour guiding assisted the Women’s Development Group, who sought training for their members, to define their individual roles and responsibilities
within the group. Media and other reports highlighted the tours that the
Women’s Development Group conducted over the years

**How have individuals and/or the community utilize new knowledge and skills?**

An important finding of this study was that training contributed significantly to
individuals acquiring and utilizing new knowledge and skills within the context of the
projects, but not beyond. Of the three projects, the Organic Pineapple Project offered
the clearest examples of ways in which individuals utilized new knowledge and skills. All
of the organic pineapple farmers I interviewed stated that over the years they had
extended the acreage of farmland they cultivated. The motivation for pineapple
farming, however, remained personal gain. The only mention of a group effort at
cultivating pineapples was the case of four women who were also members of the
Women’s Development Group. Notably, these women were involved in the Organic
Pineapple Project as individual farmers before they decided to farm pineapples
together.

The two independent projects that the Women’s Development Group managed
represented efforts to use training for the purpose of engaging in micro-enterprise. An
important feature of the Women’s Development Group was that it had a strong group
identity, and the members worked together to support each other. In the case of the
Village Park Project, the entire group participated in training as tour guides but,
following the training group members consulted and agreed on who would serve as tour
guides and the supportive role of other members in relation to conducting tours.
Similarly, a few members of the Group who participated in field trips involving aquaculture provided hands-on training to their peers as they all actively engaged in the Project. Members of the Women’s Development Group also explained that the Group managed the money they earned from projects in a business-like manner. The women paid themselves only after expenses incurred by the project had been covered.

**How have training experiences influenced individual and collective initiative?**

This study found that training played an important role in allowing individuals to participate in new forms of economic activity, but that it did not directly lead to collective initiative outside of the projects as other research studies have found (see Walingo, 2006). Study participants who attended project-related training reported that they had positive training experiences and that training had brought them new understandings, nurtured self-empowerment, and improved their income levels. The projects dovetailed with the community’s vision for development but study participants did not identify any other initiatives, either individual or collective, that emerged directly from the project-related training that this study investigated. Moreover, trainees and community members alike expressed disappointment and even frustration that opportunities for exploring the use of knowledge and skills gained through training disappeared when projects ended.

The effort by four women of the Women’s Development Group who cooperated to cultivate a pineapple farm was the only reported example of a collective initiative connected to project-related trainings. Study participants reported that individual
organic pineapple farmers sometimes received assistance from family members or neighbors but these did not result in joint efforts at farming. To a large extent, therefore, the evidence upholds the view expressed by some authors (see, for example, Eade, 1997; Kenny & Clarke, 2010), that capacity building gains by individuals do not necessarily reach the broader collective

**What factors supported or hindered the application of training knowledge and skills?**

External agencies either donated cash or subsidized expenditures from their own budgets during the life of the Project. External agencies also helped to defray expenses associated with volunteers who provided post-training support to the organic pineapple farmers. A development agency created a revolving loan fund by a making financial assistance available to farmers at a later stage of the Project. Additionally, the Project received financial aid from external agencies and institutions during times of poor harvests and to pay for the organic certification process. These forms of external support helped the project to move forward in a timely manner, but, in the longer term, issues of project sustainability arose. The Women’s Development Group received critical financial and training support during the start-up phases of the Fish Farming Project from external agencies. Study participants did not report any post-training support that directly related to the tour guide training, although other forms of external support helped the physical development of the park to move forward in a timely manner and helped individuals to utilize training.
The lack of support from within the community played a role in the extent to which trainees used new knowledge and skills. Study participants acknowledged that peers and family members provided some measure of support but that support was not generally forthcoming from the wider community. Organic pineapple farmers, for example, could not rely on traditional cooperation to assist with farm work and cited the high cost of farm labor as a deterrent to increasing the size of farms. Similarly, while the members of the Women’s Development Group cooperated among themselves and supported each other, they described the lack of support from the community.

Project sustainability affected the extent to which trainees were able to use newly gained knowledge and skills. Flooding of the fishpond also marked the end of newly trained women using their skills in aquaculture. Likewise, when a decrease in numbers of tourists led to the demise of the Village Park Project, individuals who had received training as tour guides had no other avenues for using their skills. In the case of the Organic Pineapple Project, farmers could continue to use some of the farm practices that they had employed for farming organic pineapple, but they no longer had a market for the product. On the whole, study participants who engaged in training activities conveyed a recognition of strengthened individual capacities, but they were also disheartened when the projects ended and they had no other opportunities to utilize the special knowledge and skills gained.
Recommendations

Amerindian communities presently pursue a range of activities that fall within the sphere of community development. Often, these communities engagement with, and receive support from development actors and agencies outside of the community. Additionally, as the findings of this study showed, cultural factors that are specific to Amerindian communities can influence project outcomes. I offer some general recommendations below with a view to optimizing training and project gains in community development initiatives. The recommendations address the broad areas of policy, project planning and implementation, and community development.

Policy

- Government agencies and donors should consult with local communities in order to determine specific community and economic projects and to utilize local expertise in deciding approaches to training and implementation.
- Government agencies and donors should be clear on the extent to which projects are primarily focused on community development or economic development or some combination thereof. Projects could and should address the extent to which individual or community assets and capacities are being developed.
- There should be stronger emphases on monitoring and evaluation of projects with support for better record-keeping within and across projects.

Project Planning and Implementation

- Training activities should allow training participants to share and discuss local and/or traditional knowledge and practices that relate to topics that the training
is addressing. This is one way in which indigenous peoples can themselves assess all knowledge and practices and decide the manner in which they will be utilized.

• Training that is connected to community development projects should include activities that provide trainees with the opportunity to reflect on, and discuss how they perceive themselves as actors in the development of their community, well as ways in which this can be done. This type of activity could assist in preparing trainees to think about how best to respond to the kinds of supports and challenges that they are likely to encounter.

• Training should include activities that engage training participants in discussing practical and informal ways they can share new knowledge and skills with other members of the community over time.

• Where scientific experiments accompany training, these agencies providing expertise should ensure that trainees have a clear understanding of the purpose and value of those experiments. Lack of information, misinformation, or no information can lead to suspicion instead of knowledge-sharing that could otherwise benefit the community in the longer term.

• Project planners should consider organizing post-training activities that allow trainees to play active roles in facilitating or sharing what they have learned with members of the community.

Community Development

• Local groups that undertake projects should periodically seek training related to organizational capacity building to complement or strengthen their activities.
Valuable human resources can remain untapped when group members who have received training become discouraged and inactive when group’s performance level diminishes or when a leader departs.

- Community leaders should examine ways that the benefits of training and the resources derived from projects can promote collective as well as individual development.

**Further Research**

This case study provides insights into the role of training associated with community development projects in an Amerindian village. Moreover, study findings point to several issues that the Village faced with respect to undertaking projects of an economic nature. Some of these issues have implications for future development practice. Hence, further research that address the questions posed below may yield valuable findings along this line:

- What are the motivations for various types of groups and individuals to engage in community and economic development projects?
- What is the role of community leaders in determining and guiding the development and implementation of community development projects?
- How transferable are the findings from this study to other indigenous communities in Guyana and elsewhere?
- Given that there was compelling evidence that the projects and their impacts were driven by both asset-driven and deficit-driven approaches – do we need to study how the assumptions associated with each approach inform the impact of
such projects? Might there be some useful intersection of those underlying assumptions rather than viewing them as primarily oppositional approaches?

- How can these projects increase economic development and competiveness while contributing to the maintenance of core traditional values and norms?

Additionally, study findings underscore the need to consider issues that appear to have ramification for present day Amerindian communities. First, there is the issue of projects employing different combinations of local knowledge and “western knowledge”, and the potential challenges that can ensue. The example from the Organic Pineapple Project of pineapple farmers choosing not to adopt certain farming practices because they perceived that specific scientific demonstrations linked to training illustrates this point. On the other hand, trainees seamlessly integrated tour guide training for the Village Park Project with the knowledge base that they developed around indigenous knowledge of plants, the ecosystems, and cultural practices. The Fish Farming Project did not last long enough to provide insights into the kinds of challenges that might have accompanied the use of training in aquaculture. The suggestion here is that research of a collaborative nature can involve the communities in addressing the question: How can knowledge sharing and capacity building lead to more positive results in community-based initiatives in Amerindian villages?

Second, study findings suggest that a low level of available social capital in an Amerindian community is likely to adversely community development activities. In this study, study participants drew attention to the lack of community support for trainees. A research question that may prove useful to communities is: What are the valuable
aspects of and information within the social fabric of Amerindian communities that communities can utilize as they formulate development plans for their communities?

Finally, this study highlighted the significant role that women played in the community development process, and the potential for women to organize, exercise agency, and strengthen their capacities. Further research should explore the question: What are the dynamics of women’s involvement in village development?
APPENDIX A

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Questions for Project Trainees: Face-to-Face Interviews

Please provide the following information about yourself: Name/Age/Sex/ Project(s) Affiliation.

6. What project/s have you been involved with in this village?
7. What was the focus of this specific [named] project through which you received training?
8. How did you become involved in this project?
9. What was the level of involvement or support of the local project group, the Village Council, and/or community in the planning and implementation of this project?

The following questions ask about the training event/s in which you participated:
10. (a) What was the focus of the training event? (b) Where did the training take place? (c) What was the duration of the training event? (d) Who designed, conducted or facilitated the training session(s)?
11. How would you describe the training approach or method?
12. How did the trainers/facilitators share skills and knowledge during the training?
13. What prior skills, knowledge, or experience did you have in any aspect of the training?
14. What knowledge and/or skills did you gain from the training?
15. What ideas/knowledge/skills were you personally able to share during the training?
16. In what ways were other trainees able to use or share prior knowledge or skills during the training?
17. Overall, how would you describe your experience during the training?
18. What kinds of opportunities did you have for sharing or utilizing the newly acquired knowledge, and/or skills in the village?
19. What kinds of support or challenges, from either the village or elsewhere, did you experience when you tried to share or utilize the newly acquired knowledge, and/or skills?
20. What else might have assisted you to use the newly acquired knowledge or skills?
21. What are some of the ways in which you benefitted personally from the training?
22. What are some of the ways in which your project/group or the community benefited from or utilized knowledge and skills that you acquired from the training?
23. In what way(s) did the training strengthen or change existing views held by this community concerning development of the community?

General questions
24. What other kinds of training have you participated in? Describe these experiences.
25. Overall, how has training experience(s) influenced your thinking about your involvement in your community?
26. How would you describe the role that training has played in this community?
27. How best might future learning opportunities be offered to members of this community?

Please share anything else that you to concerning training and community development in this village.

Questions for Project Staff: Face-to-face interviews

Please provide the following information about yourself: Name/Age/Sex/Project(s) Affiliation.

1. What project/s have you been involved with in relation to this village?
2. What was your role in this specific [named] project?
3. In what way(s) was this project related to, or complemented other activities in the village?
4. What was the level of support or involvement of the local project group, the Village Council, and/or the community in the planning and implementation of this project?

The following questions ask about the training event/s with which you were involved:
5. (a) What were the aims and objectives of the training event? (b) How were the needs for training identified? (c) How were the trainees identified or selected? (d) Where did the training event take place? (e) What was the duration of the training event? (f) Who designed, conducted or facilitated the training session(s)? (g) Where did the trainers/facilitators come from?
6. How would you describe the training approach or method?
7. How did the trainers/facilitators share skills and knowledge with the participants during the training?
8. What prior skills, knowledge, or experience did the trainees have in any aspect of the training?
9. In what ways were the trainees able to use or share prior knowledge or skills during the training?
10. What specific knowledge or skills did the trainees gain? How did your agency determine this?
11. In what way(s) did the training meet or not meet any of its aims and objectives? Why was this so?
12. What was the overall response of the trainees to the training?
13. In what way(s) did the training strengthen or change existing views held by this community concerning development of the community?
14. What kinds of opportunities did the trainees have for sharing or utilizing their newly acquired knowledge, and/or skills in the project group and the village?
15. What kinds of support or challenges, from either the village or elsewhere, did the trainees encounter when they tried to share or utilize the newly acquired knowledge, and/or skills?
16. What else might have assisted trainees to use their newly acquired knowledge or skills?
17. What are some of the ways in which the trainees, project/group, and the community benefited from or utilized knowledge and skills that the trainees acquired from the training?

General questions
18. What would you say are some of the existing views held by this community concerning (a) development of the community, (b) training?
19. In your view, how do/did members of the village feel about contributing to, or being involved in the overall development of the community, especially in relation to the use of skills and knowledge gained through training?
20. Overall, how would you describe the role that training has played in this village?
21. How best might future learning opportunities be offered to members of this community?

Please share anything else that you to concerning training and community development in this village.

Questions for Local Project Representatives: Face-to-Face Interviews

Please provide the following information about yourself: Name/Age/Sex/ Project(s) Affiliation.

1. What project/s have you been involved with in this village?
2. What was your role in this specific [named] project?
3. In what way/s was this project related to, or complemented other activities in the village?
4. What was the level of support or involvement of the local project group, the Village Council, and/or the community in planning and implementation of this project?

The following questions ask about the training event/s with which you were involved:

5. (a) What was the focus of the training event? (b) How were the needs for training identified? (c) How were the trainees identified or selected? (d) Where did the training event take place? (e) Who designed, conducted or facilitated the training session(s)? (f) Where did the trainers/facilitators come from?
6. How would you describe the training approach or method?
7. How did the trainers/facilitators share skills and knowledge with the participants during the training event/events?
8. What prior skills, knowledge, or experience did the trainees have in relation to the various areas covered by the training area?
9. What specific knowledge or skills did the trainees gain? How did you determine this?
10. What was the overall response of the trainees to the training event?
11. In what way(s) did the training meet or not meet any of its aims and objectives? Why was this so?
12. In what way(s) did the training activity support or not support existing views held by this community concerning development of the community?
13. What kinds of opportunities did the trainees have for sharing or utilizing their newly acquired knowledge, and/or skills in the project group and/or the village?
14. What are some of the ways in which the trainees and/or the project group, or the community benefited from or utilized knowledge and skills that they acquired from the training?
15. What kinds of support or challenges, from either the village or elsewhere, did the trainees experience when they tried to share or utilize knowledge and skills that they acquired during the training?
16. What else might have assisted trainees to use their newly acquired knowledge or skills?

General questions
17. What would you say are some of the existing views held by this community concerning (a) development of the community, (b) training?
18. What are some of the crucial needs or issues in this community?
19. Overall, how would you describe the role that training has played in this community?
20. In your view, how do members of the community’s feel about contributing to, or being involved in the overall development of this community through the use of skills and knowledge gained through training?
21. How best might future learning opportunities be offered to members of this community?

Please share anything else that you to concerning training and community development in this village.

Members of the Three Selected Projects: Focus Group Discussions

Please provide the following information about yourself: Name/Age/Sex/ Project(s) Affiliation.

1. What are some of the main needs or issues in this community?
2. How did these the three [named] projects address any or some of the needs that you identified?
3. How would you describe the involvement of (a) the local project groups, (b) the village Council, and (c) the community, with these three [named] projects?
4. What role did training play in these three [named] projects?
5. In relation to the three [named] projects, how did the trainees utilize their knowledge and skills at the individual, project group, and/or community levels?
6. With respect to the trainees sharing and utilizing their knowledge and skills, what kinds of opportunities and support did they have and what challenges did they face?
7. What are some of the generally held views of this community concerning (a) development of the community, (b) training?
8. (a) In general, what kinds of educational/training/learning activities have been most relevant to the needs of this village? Why do you say this? (b) What types of training has been least relevant to the needs of this village? Why do you say this?
9. How best might future educational/training/learning opportunities be offered to members of this community?

Please share anything else that you to concerning training and community development in this village.

Members of the Amerindian Village Council: Focus Group Discussions

Please provide the following information about yourself: Name/Age/Sex/ Project(s) Affiliation.

1. What are some of the main needs or issues in this community?
2. What needs or issues were each of the three [named] projects intended to address?
3. How would you describe the involvement of (a) the Village Council, and (b) the local projects groups, and (c) the community with these three [named] projects?
4. What role did training play in these three [named] projects?
5. In relation to the three [named] projects, how did the trainees utilize their knowledge and skills at the individual, project group, and/or community levels?
6. With respect to the trainees sharing and utilizing their knowledge and skills, what kinds of opportunities and support did they have and what challenges did they face?
7. What are some of the generally held views of this community concerning (a) development of the community, (b) training?
8. (a) In general, what kinds of educational/training/learning activities have been most relevant to the needs of this village? Why do you say this? (b) What types of training has been least relevant to the needs of this village? Why do you say this?
9. How best might future educational/training/learning opportunities be offered to members of this community?
Please share anything else that you to concerning training and community development in this village.

Other Members of the Village who were Involved in Community Projects: Focus Group Discussions

Please provide the following information about yourself: Name/Age/Sex/ Project(s) Affiliation.

1. What are some of the main needs or issues in this community?
2. How did these the three [named] projects address any or some of the needs that you identified?
3. How would you describe the involvement of the (a) the local project groups, (b) the village Council, and (c) the community, with these three [named] projects?
4. What role did training play in these three [named] projects?
5. In relation to the three [named] projects, how did the trainees utilize their knowledge and skills at the individual, project group, and/or community levels?
6. With respect to the trainees sharing and utilizing their knowledge and skills, what kinds of opportunities and support did they have and what challenges did they face?
7. What are some of the generally held views of this community concerning (a) development of the community, (b) training, and (c) education?
8. (a) In general, what kinds of educational/training/learning activities have been most relevant to the needs of this village? Why do you say this? (b) What types of training has been least relevant to the needs of this village? Why do you say this?
9. How best might future educational/training/learning opportunities be offered to members of this community?

Please share anything else that you to concerning training and community development in this village.
# APPENDIX B

## KEY FINDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Organic Pineapple Project</th>
<th>Fish Farming Project</th>
<th>Village Park Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How was training obtained?</strong></td>
<td>- Identification of training needs: bottom-up and asset-driven</td>
<td>- Identification of training needs: bottom-up and asset-driven,</td>
<td>- Identification of training needs bottom-up and asset-driven,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Project was initiated by the Village Council</td>
<td>- Project was initiated by the Women’s Development Group.</td>
<td>- Project was initiated by the Women’s Development Group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What evidence is there that participants gained new knowledge and skills?</strong></td>
<td>- Trainees followed protocols and farming practices that resulted in pineapple chunks being exported as an organically certified product</td>
<td>- Funding agencies acknowledged that the Women’s Development Group demonstrated the capacity to farm fish</td>
<td>- Guided tour successfully conducted for several years</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>How have individuals and/or the community utilized new knowledge and skills?</strong></td>
<td>- Individuals increased the size of pineapple farms</td>
<td>- Trainees shared their knowledge and skills with other members of the Women’s Development Group</td>
<td>- Each member of the Women’s Development Group played a role in tour guiding activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- A small group of women organized to farm collectively</td>
<td>- The Women’s Development Group increased the number of fishponds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How have training experiences influenced individual and collective initiative?</strong></td>
<td>- The number of individual pineapple farmers increased</td>
<td>- Following flooding of fish ponds, there was no attempt to farm fish either individually or collectively</td>
<td>- Trainees conducted tours exclusively for the Women’s Development Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- A women’s group aimed at increasing pineapple production</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What factors supported or hindered the application of training knowledge and skills?</strong></td>
<td>- Main supports: funding and post-training support from external agencies and the AVC, on-site market and processing plant</td>
<td>- Main supports: funding and support for training from external agencies</td>
<td>- Main supports: strong group identity, pride in culture and local knowledge, external funding, encouragement from the AVC, and favorable tourist market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Main hindrances: knowledge sharing issue, aging of farmers, adverse weather, breakdown in business relationship, loss of market and lack of community support</td>
<td>- Main hindrances: lack of support from the community, flood; and the lack of technical knowledge and finance to continue the project after the fish ponds were damaged</td>
<td>- Main hindrances: decline in tourism market, loss of group leader, lack of community support, and vandalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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‘Village Park’ Brochure.


