

Charting Our Future Together



What Is NALC?

The National Assessment of Living Conditions (NALC) is a study about the social and economic situation in the three islands. The study will identify immediate needs as well as underlying factors that may lead to poverty.

The primary goals are to identify policies, action plans and projects to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life across all levels of society.

NALC is gathering information directly from communities as well as from government and non-government and community-based organisations.

Who Are the People Behind the Study?

NALC is directed by a local National Assessment Team (NAT) comprising civil servants, representatives of non-government and community-based organizations, and the public at large. It was initiated by the Ministry of Health and Human Services and, with robust support from other ministries, NALC has been embraced by most government departments.

Training and technical expertise is provided by a Caribbean-based team of consultants (KAIRI Consultants Ltd.) funded by the Caribbean Development Bank. The large local training aspect reduces costs and ensures that Cayman is able to carry out future surveys.



The Leader of Government Business, the Hon D. Kurt Tibbetts, JP

Reduction of poverty means enhanced freedom for our people. And freedom ensures participation in national decision-making.



The Minister of Health and Human Services, the Hon. Anthony S. Eden, OBE, JP

It will enable government to better plan strategies to improve the welfare of all our residents.



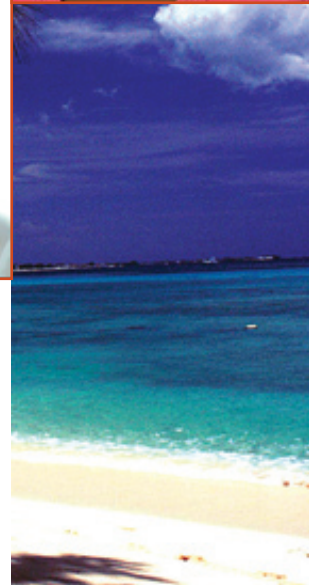
Mrs. Deanna Look Loy, NALC Sub-committee chair

It is important to hear from everybody, because the programmes coming out of NALC will affect everybody.



Mrs. Mary-Lee Rowlandson, community worker and CASA past president

This initiative will help to pinpoint areas where we can do better or differently to ensure that these islands continue on their successful track.



How Is NALC Different from Other Projects?

- People from among all communities have been trained to gather information from their own areas. This will ensure that they communicate well and understand fully what they are told.
- NALC involves many different methods of gathering information, ensuring a fuller picture of the social and economic situation of people.
- Programmes that come out of NALC will address root causes of poverty, prevent poverty or its escalation, and raise standards of living.

NALC's Markers for Success

- Broad involvement of government agencies, which will mean wide support for the plans and programmes that come out of the study.
- Opportunities for the public to have a say in defining needs and offering feedback, ensuring that data are accurate and represent the people's views.
- NALC data will enable Cayman's economy to be compared regionally. Were the Cayman Islands to suffer any future disasters, the government will be better equipped to make a case for international assistance.

How Will Information Be Gathered?

There are a number of exercises involved in this study.

The following have already taken place:

1. A series of interviews with institutions and organizations involved in addressing community needs.
2. Training of facilitators for the institutional study and the Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA).

The following are scheduled for early 2007:

1. A survey of households selected at random from ALL levels of society in ALL districts of Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. The objective is to get a slice of all residents in Caymanian society. Trained enumerators will visit households in the sample and interview them to complete a questionnaire, in what is referred to as a "Survey of Living Conditions". There will be some questions for the household as a unit and others for individual spenders.
2. This same sample of persons will be guided in recording their actual spending over a two-week period. They will be asked to keep their receipts and, at the end of each day, note purchases and costs, in what is referred to as the "Household Budget Survey". One diary will be provided for recording all spending among persons in the household.

On completion of each questionnaire and the two-week recording period, householders will be presented a modest gift as a token of appreciation.

3. Certain communities will be selected to relate in PPA group discussions their experiences and needs, and possible solutions to their problems. There will also be individual interviews.

4. The study will also review the economy as a whole, including government spending and how it relates to short-term alleviation of poverty and long-term enablement of the people.



Facilitators and NAT Committee members in Cayman Brac training for the Participatory Poverty Assessment.



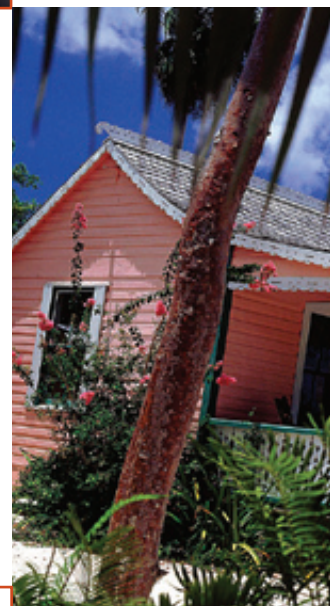
Ms Maria Zingapan, Director, Economics and Statistics Office

The Survey of Living Conditions and Household Budget Survey will be rich sources of information, useful not only for the Government agencies but for the private sector as well.



Mrs. Shirline Henriques, Director, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and Registrar, Health Practice Council.

The study will help NGOs achieve a better grasp of community needs. It will provide a database with information based on which we can identify and prioritise help.



The Rev. Nicholas Sykes, Pastor of the St. Albans Anglican Church, and representative of the Ministers' Association

This study is potentially a good resource to churches, and churches are a great resource for communities.



What Type of Information Will Be Collected?

The studies involving households and community groups will focus mainly on the ability of households to meet expenses, based on spending during the previous 12 months.

Studies will also assess basic household amenities, as well as access to, and utilization of, education, health, and social welfare services, other government resources, as well as non-government and community-based and business resources.



Mrs. Diane Montoya, Chief Officer, Ministry of Health and Human Services

NALC is an important part of the process of beginning a dialogue on social issues impacting all residents.

Facilitators and NAT Committee members on completion of December's training for the Participatory Poverty Assessment.



How Will this Benefit People in the Long Run?

• Improvements in service delivery

Government and non-governmental agencies will better identify communities' needs and focus their efforts on those most in need.

The study will also assess access or identify blocks to educational and health services, among others.

• Information for consumers as well as business

Consumers as well as businesses will have solid data on how money is spent, raising awareness of how people prioritise and budget, while commerce can factor this information into business planning.

People may learn from others more workable approaches. They may also derive a greater sense of support from within their communities during and after group meetings. Further community meetings will provide feedback, enabling members to expand or clarify information.

The survey of households will facilitate an updated "basket" of household expenditure items, replacing the 1991 version currently used for determining the cost of living index (CPI).

• Sound data for policy and programme development

Once it identifies widely felt needs, government can invest resources in response – whether by providing more information, establishing support programmes or through funding. This will empower those who have been traditionally unable to access the various resources because of environmental or personal blocks to success.

In this way, agencies can give a helping hand to raise standards of living.

• External consultancy benefits Cayman

The consultants, who have carried out studies elsewhere, will standardize results to facilitate regional comparisons. This will support government's and other organisations' efforts to secure technical assistance or funding, particularly after a disaster.

Specialist Training for Facilitators

All facilitators live in the Cayman Islands and have strong connections to their communities. Training, by the KAIRI consultants, ensures that they have the skills to perform to the highest professional standards.

Selection and training of survey enumerators

Most enumerators for the household survey have long years of experience from previous Economics and Statistics Office (ESO) surveys.

Training for the study includes scheduling and conducting interviews for completion of the questionnaire, and how to guide those recording their spending.

Selection and training of PPA facilitators

Practising or retired professionals in a range of fields involving high levels of empathy or interaction with people serve as facilitators for the PPA. They were chosen on the basis of their familiarity with, and knowledge of, relevant districts/communities, as well as their community interest, caring and leadership abilities.

They were assessed as being accepting, respectful and able to keep confidences. Previous experience in similar roles was among key selection criteria. PPA facilitators were specially trained over a full week.

**Ms Adrienne Webb,
Lawyer**

The study will help the government find out where they need to focus.



**Miss Ginger Solomon,
Bodden Town church
worker**

As a country, firstly we need to know where we are, then we need to know why we are here, and we need to know where we are going. Finally, we need to know when we have arrived at the place we are going to.



What Have Been Some Outcomes for Other Regional Territories?

Almost all regional countries, including the other British Overseas Territories, have implemented similar studies.

Among countries that have received support from the Caribbean Development Bank and have had success with this study are St. Lucia, Belize, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, Turks and Caicos, Grenada, Antigua, British Virgin Islands, and Anguilla.

Jamaica now conducts such a survey annually, and a few countries are now contemplating conducting them at three- to five-year intervals. Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana have had surveys more intermittently. Trinidad and Tobago is currently engaged in the conduct of a survey.

The results of the studies have been used by governments in a number of ways:

- **Targeting Poverty:** Governments and their development partners have been able to target the poor and vulnerable in the most effective ways, achieving maximum thrust in poverty reduction or eradication.

- **Economic and Social Policy Planning:** Most governments use the data to secure financing from the international community, either by way of loans or grants. These, along with the mobilisation of domestic resources, have allowed governments to support medium- and longer-term actions to bring about change.

The Jamaican experience illustrates how the government and civil society have been able to lessen poverty by a range of targeted measures, such that, even in the face of economic reverses, the country has been able to reduce poverty levels.

- **Poverty Monitoring:** By monitoring changes among persons at the lower end of the economic and social pyramid, countries are able to inform themselves on how well they are performing in reducing or eliminating poverty.

How Will Confidentiality Be Protected?

As practised in the Labor Force Surveys conducted regularly by the Economics and Statistics Office (ESO), confidentiality is top priority. Data will be handled with regard to strict confidentiality rules, as defined by the Statistics Law (1996 Revision).

Accordingly, facilitators must pledge to protect the privacy of all participants by signing an oath of secrecy. Copies of the Law and the signed oaths or affirmation will be made available to the selected households.

Handling of the data

All information from the Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) group discussions will be handed over to the consultants. All data gathered from the household survey will be processed by trained staff of the ESO under the guidance of the consultants, who will code the data to protect anonymity.

Results from both studies will be tabulated without reference to any particular household or household address, producing statistics on the state of living conditions of the population as a whole.



Members of the cross-ministerial National Assessment Team captured in this photo following the launching meeting of NALC in October 2006.

To access informational materials on the study – Chief Information Officer, Ms Patricia Ebanks, 244-1755.

For general information – Coordinator for NAT/Cabinet Policy Analyst, Mr. Samuel Rose, 244-2206.