Community Needs Assessment Report

A socioeconomic needs assessment was conducted for the Residents of Tiger Bay to identify the strengths and weaknesses, resource availabilities and vulnerabilities within the community. The conduct of the assessment was premised on providing a framework for the proposal that will demonstrate the concept of Adaptive reuse for a section of the Cumingsburg ward. The assessment identified evidence-based services and solutions aimed at providing socio-economic support to the residents while building a more sustainable and resilient community. Hence, the subsequent proposal will reflect and in-cooperating the needs of the residents, especially the vulnerable groups (the elderly, women and children), based on this analysis of data collected from the community needs assessment survey conducted.

The socio-economic needs assessment conducted for the study area sought to ascertain information on the following demographics profile, economic condition, sanitation, education and community development priorities etc. Hence, the survey asked several pertinent questions.

Demographic profile

The gender distribution of the responding household heads is shown in Figure --.

Data collected concerning the household heads of residents in the Tiger Bay community revealed a (75 percent) majority of the households were headed by females. Further, of these respondents only (2 percent) indicated they were divorced. The remaining (73 percent) indicated they were single by choice. Additionally, of the (25 percent) households headed by males only (5 percent) were legally married, the remaining (20 percent) cohabit. The apparent low percentage of male-headed households in the study area suggests a reason for the economic deprivation evident in the study area. According to Nickanor (2014), urban poverty is linked to inequitable access of women to formal employment. Further, when comparing male-headed households to that of female, female-headed households are characterised as poorer. As their survival and that of their family depends on the ability of the informal economy to meet their basic needs (UN-HABITAT 2008-2009 report).

Age distribution data collected from the heads of households showed only (5 percent) of the sampled population had obtained the pensionable age. However, (95 percent) of the respondents fell within the economically viable age range of 18 to 60 years. (54 percent) of the respondents were of African descent, representing a majority of the sample. Persons of Mixed-Race accounted for (32 percent), while East Indians represented (7 percent) Amerindians (2 percent) and Portuguese (2 percent). Available historic data on rural to urban migration in Guyana, support this finding and account for the rural poor in Guyana migrating to urban areas in search of better standards of living. Further, according to Gampat (2002), more Afro-Guyanese gravitated to urban Georgetown. Thus accounting for the high presence of poor Afro-Guyanese in squatter settlements around Georgetown and the study area. This was evident from the data collected in the Tiger Bay community as (57 percent) of the respondents were of African descent and (32 percent) indicating they are mixed but have African heritage.

Income distribution

The monthly household income of the responding household heads is shown in Figure ----.

Data collected showed a (46%) majority of the households represented, have at their disposal between $51,000 and $70,000 as their total monthly household income. (37 percent) of the respondents indicated that their total monthly household income was below $50,000. In light of the November 13, 2019 announcement made by the government of Guyana that effective January 1, 2020, the new minimum wage would be $70,000. A total of (83% percent) of the household heads sampled in the community of Tiger Bay were sustaining themselves and family with less than the minimum wage for a public servant in Guyana. Further, when asked about their perceived welfare status and standard of living (78% percent) of the respondents stated they were poor. Thus the data collected suggested that residents in the tiger bay community do not have enough money at their disposal, to allow them to purchase basic goods and services needed to survive. This view is supported by the World Bank (2000) report that identified the relationship low household income have on poverty and people's inability to meet their basic needs.

Source of income

To ascertain how the (66 percent) of the respondents outside of the formal employment sector supported themselves and their families. Data collected from the unemployed household heads revealed they sustained their household with funds from the following sources. (31 percent) depend on remittances, (38 percent) non-registered businesses, (13 percent) noted government assistance and (100 percent) of the respondents indicated in addition to the other sources, they also depend on 'Other' family support.

Education and Employment

As it pertains to education data collected indicated that all of the household heads sampled noted they attended secondary school, while none of them acquired a tertiary level education. However, (90 percent) of the residents who attended secondary school, noted they dropped out at some point. While (5 percent) indicated they completed their secondary level education, the remaining (5 percent) noted they acquired some post-secondary education.

Residents were asked about their employment status, data collected indicated (39 percent) of the respondents were unemployed, (34 percent) were formally employed and (27 percent) had informal employments. The findings suggest a reason for the high levels of unemployment in the community, as one's educational achievements would have an impact on employability and even the job type. This view is supported by Millenky (2016) who posited 'high school dropouts face higher rates of unemployment and poverty'.

On the other hand (100 percent) of the self-employed respondents indicated, their source of income comes from non-registered businesses, of which only (9 percent) indicated they do not depend on their family for other forms of support. (27 percent) of the self-employed respondents receives remittances while only (6 percent) have access to government assistance. Notably, (0 percent) or none of the self-employed residents received funding from a legally registered business. Implying there is need to create employment opportunities for the residents in the community of tiger bay, given that (90 percent) of the sampled population were identified as been within the working-age (18- 55 years).

Training

Wallenborn 2009 posited that 'vocational education can serve to promote social stability and sustainable economic and social development'. Hence, residents were asked about their technical and vocational training opportunities. While (80 percent) of the household heads never attended any technical or skills training program, only (20 percent) indicated they had vocational training. According to the CARICOM Secretariat's Human Resource Development Programme Manager Dr Laurette Bristol, 'Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) can be used as a mechanism to reduce poverty as such training are vital for economic and social development. This view was also supported by CARICOM's TVET Council Chairman Mr Clinton Williams, who posited that technical and vocational training is a vital socio-economic intervention that can alleviate poverty and even prevent crime. (Williams, 2019; Bristol, 2019, as cited in Rooplall, 2019)

To this end, household heads were then asked to identify two (2) vocational training programs they would be interested in if provided with an opportunity.

Data collected showed (7 percent) of the respondents were interested in Computer related studies. (17 percent) technical training (electrical, welding, plumbing etc.) with 71 percent been males. Additionally, 33 percent of the male household heads indicated they were interested in construction. (34 percent) of the respondents indicated they had an interest in Remedial classes. All of whom were females, of which (71 percent) were below the age of thirty (30).

The area of training in which most of the residents showed interest in was Hospitality related studies which accounted for (53 percent). of these respondents (59 percent) were either self-employed or unemployed. (43 percent) of the respondents noted they were interested in Business development studies, with (72 percent) of them been self-employed or unemployed. Further, (17 percent) of the residents said they were not interested in any technical or vocational training. However, it was noted (86 percent) of those respondents who expressed non- interest in technical and vocational training were self-employed and earning more than 70,000 per month.

Housing and household assets

(75 percent) of the household heads interviewed noted they lived in the community all their lives. Notably, the oldest respondent whose age range is between 61-70 years old, indicated she was born and grew up in the Tiger Bay community. The remaining (25 percent) resided in the community between 8 and 27 years.

When asked about their current housing status (78 percent) of the residents noted they are squatting, (15 percent) of them said they are currently renting their apartment. The remaining (16 percent) indicated they had ownership.

Residents were then asked how they felt about living in the community. Data collected showed that (15 percent) of the household heads expressed they liked living in Tiger bay, (83 percent) of these respondents were between the ages of 20-30 years old and would have all resided in the community all their lives. Siekkinen (2013) provided an explanation to support this finding. He posited that young people foster an attachment to the area in which they reside due to their

family and roots. On the contrary, (24 percent) of the household heads interviewed said they disliked living in the community, but they had no other choice, a (61 percent) majority of the respondents were indecisive. Residents' dislike of their community can be attributed to the conditions under which they live and to the stigma attached to living in an informal settlement or slum. Karn (2003) and Parkinson (2007) highlighted some of these factors, noting residents of informal settlements are vulnerable to risks associated with inadequate water supply, high incidence of crime, unhygienic environmental conditions, improper sanitation and poor living conditions.

As it pertains to household assets only (15 percent) of the residence sampled had amenities such as computers, fridge/freezer, chair set, microwave etc. Further assessment of the data collected indicated that those homes had a total monthly household income of more than $70.000.00 seventy thousand dollars. The remaining (85 percent) of the households had only basic amenities like bed and stove.

Household heads were asked about any form of transportation they or someone else in their household owns. Data collected indicated not of the sampled residents owned a car/van, a bus or a truck. Nonetheless, (78 percent) of the households owned no form of transportation. (17 percent) of the households had bicycles, while only (5 percent) indicated ownership of a motorbike. When the household heads were asked about their access to financial lending agencies, all of the respondents stated they have no access to any financial lending agency (for purposes of saving or borrowing). When asked why (78 percent) of the residents noted they were denied these service mainly due to their current land tenure situation and informal nature of their business.

The findings suggest that a large portion of the Tiger Bay community do not have a high spending/purchasing power or even access to financing.

ARP possibilities and Community development prioritisation

Residents were asked if they agreed with the statement that they are several abandoned and derelict buildings in the community. All (100 percent) of the respondents indicated they agreed with the statement. They were then asked about their thoughts on the transformation of these building to productive community use, through the Adaptive Reuse strategy. All (100 percent) of the respondents expressed that such building transformation would be beneficial to the residents of the Tiger Bay community.

To determine the community's developmental priorities residents were asked to rank developmental initiatives using a scale from 1 to 5 (with 1- Low and 5- High). The aim was to have residents identify socio-economic developmental priorities for the Cumingsburg district/ward. The community developmental initiatives were grouped into five (5) areas of focus namely: improved access to jobs through manufacturing/retailing and business services; designate areas for green open spaces and recreational activities; improved access to affordable housing with proper sanitation and necessary utility services; facilitate and promote entrepreneurship through skills and vocational training opportunities; and stimulating investment in river-front economic activities that can also promote tourism.

Data collected revealed (45 percent) of the respondents' ranked improved access to jobs

through manufacturing/retailing and business services at (3) three. While (38 percent) ranked this initiative at (4) four, only (17 percent) of the respondents ranked jobs creation through manufacturing/retailing and business opportunities as 'High' priority for community development. As it pertained to designating areas within the community for recreational activities (85 percent) of the household heads ranked this initiative as (5) five indicating 'High' priority. The remaining (15 percent) of the respondents ranked the initiative with numbers (3&4) three and four. All of the respondents (100 percent) viewed improved access to affordable housing with proper sanitation and necessary utility services as a top, priority, this initiative was ranked number (5) indicating 'High' priority.

As it pertained to facilitating and promoting entrepreneurship through skill and vocational training opportunities the majority of the respondents ranked this initiative with number three (3). Only (15 percent) of the household heads saw this initiative as having 'High' priority.

When the household heads were asked to priorities the stimulating of investment in river-front economic activities for the promotion of tourism, (65 percent) of the respondents identified number four (4), while the remaining (35 percent) places 'High' priority on this developmental initiative. Findings suggest the residents of Tiger Bay saw improved access to affordable housing with proper sanitation and necessary utility services as a critical community developmental initiative. A reason is provided by Ali and Tarique (2019), who described the state of housing in informal settlements as very vulnerable when considering residents' access to safe drinking water, the availability of electricity and drainage facility.

Additionally, most residents classified the need for designate areas for green open spaces and recreational activities as a community developmental priority. Tiger Bay residents also placed a high priority on river-front development as a mean of fostering social and economic stability for the community. Due to the community's proximity to the Demerara River and Guyana's prospects giving the booming oil and gas sector, such developmental initiative can benefit both the resident and visitors.