



Tourism Master Plan for Hopkins, Belize

FOREWORD

The IICA Office in Belize wishes to thank the following persons for their kind support and assistance during our visits to Hopkins:

- Members of the BTIA Chapter – *Rob Pronk, Andrew Usher, Tony Marsico, Juanita Castillo, Luis Eck*
- Hopkins Village Council - *Francis Lewis, Gregory Castillo*
- Hopkins Garifuna Council – *Alberto Nunez*
- Hopkins Farmers Cooperative – *Joe Nunez, Mario Augustine, Santos Gonzalez, Frederick Casimiro Jr., Anthony Morales*
- Clergy - *Rev. Rudolph Coleman and Pastor Edwin Castillo*
- Sandy Beach Women’s Co-op - *Joan Castillo, Marlene Castillo, Joycelyn Nunez, Marjorie Casimiro*
- Youth Group - *Ashford Miranda and Ted McKay*
- Holy Family RC School – *Wayne Casimiro (Principal); Lorna Williams (Asst. Teacher); Hilaria Ramos (Teacher); Clyde Martinez (Teacher);*
- Palmetto Grove – *Greg Duke*
- Jungle Jeanies – *Jeanies Barkman*
- Hopkins Inn - *Eugene Martinez*

We look forward to working as a team with the community of Hopkins to realize the vision of this Master Plan, and the dreams and aspirations of the people of Hopkins Village.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hopkins Chapter of the Belize Tourism Association (BTIA) requested the assistance of the IICA Office in Belize with the development and preparation of a Tourism Master Plan for Hopkins. In response to this request, the IICA Representative in Belize, Dr. Gabriel Rodriguez Marques and the IICA Hemispheric Specialist in Agrotourism, Ena Harvey, undertook a situational analysis of Hopkins from December 1-5, 2009 with a view to developing a sustainable tourism strategy based on the identified needs and future vision of the community in Hopkins.

It is absolutely critical that the Master Plan is:

- Community Based
- A team effort
- Centered on small, practical feasible projects to create employment and new tourism products and services in the community

The document is divided into two sections. Section 1 provides the situational analysis of Hopkins with respect to the tourism potential of Hopkins in terms of existing tourism products and services; existing infrastructure; quality of the workforce; and capacity of key community stakeholder groups and organisations. The major constraints to sustainable tourism development are identified.

Section 2 details the vision, proposed strategy and plans for addressing the identified constraints and supporting investment and entrepreneurial development within the Hopkins community.

Five themes, each with specific objectives and activities are proposed. They are:

Theme I: Coordination, partnerships and community engagement

Major Objective:

To create buy-in and sustainability for the implementation of the Tourism Plan through sensitization and empowerment of community stakeholders

Activities

1. Establishment of a formal community management group with representation from key stakeholders

2. Establishment of a network of partners (government, NGOs, international technical assistance and financing agencies)
3. Sensitization of community members

Theme II: Infrastructure and environment

Major Objective:

To provide access and a clean and attractive destination that emphasizes environmental responsibility and security

1. Roads programme – surfacing and drainage
2. Lighting and Signage
3. Parks and recreational areas and village beautification
4. Garbage disposal and recycling
5. Modernisation of police station and security and fire services
6. Strengthening of basic health care services

Theme III: Investment and Small Business Development

Major Objective:

To stimulate entrepreneurship and create employment opportunities, particularly for women and youth in the village

1. Preparation of small, viable projects in agricultural production and trade of fresh produce, meat, seafood, nursery stocks, landscaping plants, and compost materials
2. Preparation of a project to create commercial products based on the culinary traditions of the Garifuna
3. Preparation of a project to create craft and soft furnishings for hotels and cabanas (cushions, curtains, bed linens) using Garifuna designs and themes

Theme IV: Human Resource Development

Major Objective:

To enhance the skills pool within the community of Hopkins in areas relevant to new businesses linking agriculture with tourism

1. Youth apprenticeship scheme with farmers
2. Youth leaders in tourism – programme with school
3. Training programmes for health care workers and gym trainers

4. Managerial and Hospitality training and certification
5. Creation of a cadre of community environmental stewards (land and sea)

Theme V: Developing and marketing a Hopkins-style visitor experience

Major Objective:

To develop and promote product/service packages, with branding based on Garifuna heritage and the coastal culture of Hopkins

1. Upgrading and “packaging” of existing Garifuna-based tourism offerings within the community

Activities are proposed under each objective with lead agencies identified for each activity and timelines for implementation defined.

SECTION 1

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR CONSTRAINTS

INTRODUCTION

The Hopkins Chapter of the Belize Tourism Association (BTIA) requested the assistance of the IICA Office in Belize with the development and preparation of a Tourism Master Plan for Hopkins. In response to this request, the IICA Representative in Belize, Dr. Gabriel Rodriguez Marques and the IICA Hemispheric Specialist in Agrotourism, Ena Harvey, undertook a situational analysis of Hopkins from December 1-5, 2009 with a view to developing a sustainable tourism strategy based on the identified needs and future vision of the community in Hopkins. The visit was hosted by the BTIA Hopkins Chapter

Location of Hopkins

Hopkins is a Garifuna village on the coast of the Stann Creek District in Belize about 50 miles south of Belize City. The village is separated into two parts; the Northside (Baila) and the Southside (False Sittee). Hopkins is surrounded by the Maya Mountains and the Cockscomb Range inland, and the Caribbean Sea on its shore.



GIS Images of Hopkins showing the overall location and the detail of the Village

Hopkins has been described by some as a quiet back-water, "halfway between Paradise and poverty". *With beautiful coconut palms lining the shore, frigate birds majestically patrolling overhead and strong winds and waves coming ashore in the tropical temperatures - it seemed that we had found another little piece of paradise!*

The village was created in 1942 to replace the village of Newtown, which was devastated by a hurricane further up the coast. It is a small but vibrant community of approximately 1,500 villagers. The people live mostly by farming and fishing, and more recently many have found work in the growing tourist industry. The residents are known for their friendliness and genuine hospitality, and Hopkins was recently voted "The Friendliest Village in Belize" by Belize First Magazine.



Hopkins is located within a “catchment” of some of the most popular tourism attractions. The barrier reef is just thirty minutes away by boat, with even closer spots for snorkeling, fishing and diving. Glover’s Atoll is directly east of Hopkins. Thirty minutes in the opposite direction are options of moderate to strenuous hikes on jungle trails, waterfalls, and the only Jaguar Preserve in the world. The Village is accessible by road, by airplane and by boat. There are several flights a day from Belize City to Dangriga, and resorts in Hopkins can arrange road transfers from Dangriga.

Within the past year, however, there has been a steady increase in the construction of expensive new homes, condos and resorts from Hopkins Bay to Sittee Point, and up the Sittee River, construction is booming. New builders are moving to the area from Europe, the US and Canada and the quality of construction is evident. Despite all of these developments, however, there is little evidence of investment in the village in basic infrastructure and services (roads, drainage, lighting, signage, recreational areas, health care, education, security, fire and emergency services), management of wetlands and coastal zones, garbage disposal or environmental protection. The incidence of Chronic Non-Communicable Disease (CNCDS), particularly among women, and the low levels of indigenous food production point to unhealthy lifestyles, and weak economic linkages along the tourism value chain in terms of the availability of fresh local food for the community as well as for the growing tourist population. All of the above lead to the very real possibility in the near term, the community of Hopkins could become isolated and not benefit significantly from the tourism and housing developments in the village.



Images of Hopkins Beach at sunrise

EXISTING TOURISM PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN HOPKINS



Draft Map of Hopkins

There are approximately ninety (90) tourism-based businesses in Hopkins, ranging from all-inclusive hotel and villa properties, to beach cabanas, small bars, restaurants, gift shops and rental services. The BTIA Hopkins Chapter has drafted a map of Hopkins (Figure --) showing the location of these businesses.

A brief description of some of the major offerings is given below:

Tourism Information Centre

The entrance to Hopkins features a Tourism Information Centre on which is displayed an assortment of posters and billboards advertising the various products and services for visitors to Hopkins. Although trained guides are assigned to work at the Centre, it is not manned on a regular basis. Near the entrance to the village is the office of the Village Council which is shared with the BTIA. A small beautification project was undertaken by the BTIA in the yard of the building.



Tourist Information Centre and Beautification Project at Entrance to Hopkins



Garifuna Park at entrance to Hopkins

The entrance to the village also celebrates Hopkins as the youngest Garifuna village. In Maude Park, there is a plaque to Martina Vincente, mother to 85% of the population of Hopkins; a statue of Marcella Lewis Taburuga (poet, writer and composer) and a plaque with the names of the first people who lived in the village in 1937. Hopkins is also the birthplace of some famous Garifuna authors including Walagate Marcela and Fuluri Ledasago (Flower in the Sun).

Accommodation in Hopkins



Jaguar Reef Lodge

Sittee Point, Stann Creek District; tel. 501- 520-7040, or 800-289-5756 in the U.S. and Canada, fax 501-520-7091; e-mail jaguarreef@starband.net, www.jaguarreef.com

Well-run and well-marketed, Jaguar Reef is situated on about 300 acres with 1,000 feet of beachfront. The Canadian-owned resort has duplex cottages in an arc behind the main lodge building (rebuilt after a fire in early 2003) which houses the beachfront restaurant, bar, gift shop and front desk. Suite units (also rebuilt after the fire) are in a newer building near the swimming pool. Jaguar Reef runs a variety of tours, both on land and sea. Rates: US\$160 to \$220 double, Mid-December – through April, US\$130 to \$170 rest of the year. Suites, US\$2240 to \$315 in-season, US\$180 to \$265 off. Rates are plus 19% for tax and service. Packages and specials are available. The full meal plan is US\$48, or \$29 for dinner only. Package plans are available.

Hamanasi Adventure & Dive Resort

Sittee Point, Stann Creek District (P.O. Box 265, Dangriga); tel. 501-520-7073 or in U.S. 877-552-3483; www.hamanasi.com.



Opened in late 2000, Hamanasi quickly became one of the top beach resorts in southern Belize. On about 17 acres with 400 feet of beach frontage, the resort is south of Hopkins village, about 500 feet north of Jaguar Reef. There are four types of accommodations — regular rooms in the main building, luxury and family beachfront suites in a separate set of buildings and “tree houses” (actually just raised units set in the trees in the back). Hamanasi’s dive operation provides full diving services, with several dive boats, including a 43-footer with twin 350-horsepower diesels. A two-tank dive on the reef, about 30 minutes out, is US\$110, and a three-tan, full-day dive trip to Turneffe or Glover’s atoll is US\$180. Rates: US\$275 to \$350 in-season, US\$180 to \$260 off. Rates include continental breakfast, tax and service charge. The hotel’s restaurant is very good, with a fixed-price dinner at US\$35.

Belizean Dreams

Hopkins; tel. 501-523-7272 or 800-456-7150; www.belizeandreams.com



This condo colony just north of Jaguar Reef is among the most upscale accommodation choices on the Southern Coast. All villas have exactly the same floor plans and furnishings, but some are directly on the beach, and the others have sea views. The units can be reserved as a complete villa, or choose a single bedroom or two-bedroom suite. The bedrooms have vaulted ceilings with exposed beams and four-poster king beds. The same developer has built a group of new, similar condos called Hopkins Bay, at the north end of Hopkins village. Rates: US\$225 to \$500 in high season, US\$165 to \$375 in summer.

Beaches and Dreams Seafront Inn and Barracuda Bar & Grill. Sittee Point, tel./fax 501-523-7259; www.beachesanddreams.com



New owners Tony and Angela Marsico traded running a restaurant in Alaska for operating a beachside inn and restaurant in Belize. They've spruced up the inn's two octagonal cottages, each with two rooms with vaulted ceilings and rattan furniture. They've also turned the restaurant into one of the best eateries on the southern coast, with delicious dishes like fig-stuffed pork chops (US\$18) and Gibnut gumbo (US\$16). Rates US\$120, plus 9% hotel tax.

Hopkins Inn

Hopkins (P.O. Box 121, Dangriga); tel./fax 501-523-7013, or tel./fax in the U.S. 907-683-2518; www.hopkinsinn.com.

Attractive cabañas on the beach, each with full bath, fridge, fan and private verandah with sea views. The hotel is run by Greg and Rita Duke, who are knowledgeable about the area. Rates US\$50 to \$75 double, including continental breakfast, plus tax.

Jungle Jeanies, Hopkins; tel./fax 501-523-7047.

This group of wood cabanas on stilts is on 2 acres of beachfront shaded by coconut palms. You can rent kayaks and windsurfers, or just relax in a hammock. You can also pitch your tent for US\$7 per person. "Jungle Jeanie" Barkman and husband "Jungle John" are Canadians who have lived in Belize for years. Rates around US\$30 double.

Tipple Tree Beya Inn, Hopkins (P.O. Box 206, Dangriga); tel./fax 501-520-7006;

www.tippletree.com. If you're looking for an inexpensive little place on the beach, this is a great choice. The hotel is popular, so reserve in advance. Rates range from US\$30 to \$50 double, plus tax.

Palmento Grove

Uwahnne / Wilfred / Eugene Martinez

P.O.Box 120, Dangriga Town, Stann Creek District

<http://palmentogrovehopkins.com>

palmentogrove@gmail.com

++(501)523-7311/661-6039

++(501) 523-7312



Palmento Grove is an eco-cultural resort situated in a secluded lagoon setting in Hopkins Village. It offers Garifuna Culture, live drumming, singing, and ecotourism adventure tours.

There also exist several community-based guesthouses and cabanas, as shown in the photographs below. These are owned and managed by villagers and offer authentic, indigenous tourism experiences.



Many of these accommodations would benefit from physical upgrading to meet tourism standards, and owners/managers would also benefit from training in small business management and hospitality training.



Sampling of Community-Based Accommodation Offering in Hopkins

Cultural Events, Sites and Attractions

National Garifuna Day, November 19

On May 18th, 2001 the Garifuna Language, Dance and Music was proclaimed a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization). Hopkins is a center of Garifuna cultural life, and only in Hopkins are young children still learning Garifuna as their first language.

National Garifuna Day typically includes the reenactment of the Garinagu landing on the beach, celebration of a Thanksgiving Mass in Garifuna; an Awards ceremony; all-day drumming and cooking and sharing of traditional Garifuna cuisine, all accompanied by songs, dances and a parade.

Songs and Dances

Garifuna music encompasses what is known as Uremu song: voices with drums and other instruments, inseparable from dance. The only word in the Garifuna language for music refers exclusively to European instrumental music such as Quadrilles danced with violins and flutes.

A typical musical presentation comprises the following items:

1. “Welcome to the Party” sometimes known by its first line, “From Corozal to Toledo,” is the first of a medley of songs. Towards the end each musician’s name is introduced and chanted in turn by the rest of the ensemble.
2. John Canoe (Wanaragüa) is a dance that tells the story of how Garífuna women, dressed in men's clothing, defeated a force of European soldiers at a time when their menfolk were afraid to go into battle. Male dancers honor the women's bravery by donning female attire, while the Europeans are represented by dancers wearing white costumes and masks. The dance is mostly performed around the Christmas period culminating on January 6th (Dia de los Reyes).

The dancers wear a pink wire mesh mask, extravagant headgear, and knee rattles along with raggedy clothing and lead the musicians with a lumbering gait. This is the only time that dancers lead the musicians; generally the drummers take charge of stirring up the crowd of

dancers.

3. Paranda is both the name of a rhythmic pattern for dancing and also a genre of solo song, usually accompanied by guitar. The song style originated when the Garifuna first encountered Spanish music after their arrival in Honduras, and the art of the Parandero is now hanging on by a thread. Paranda melodies are often incorporated into dance music too. A dance may end up using a string of composed songs of the leader's choosing, hence the Parandas recorded here are identified by their first song. Parandas are danced with the arms respectfully behind one's back, guaranteeing a grope-free social interaction.

Paranda: Malati Isien (Worthless Love) was composed by the legendary Gabaga Williams, now in his 80s. This is perhaps the most well-known Garifuna composition. Later in the sequence of Paranda songs comes another famous song, Naguya Nei (I am Moving On) by the equally treasured Paul Nabor.

Garifuna culture despises gossip and confrontational conflict so sometimes arguments are sublimated in the form of a song. Thus a family's squabble or late rent payment may be enshrined for generations.

4. Gunjai is another dance rhythm (not unlike the African Samba) and it demands especially fancy footwork of the dancers.
5. In Garifuna history, the Spaniards, who attempted to take the Garifuna's land and property, humiliated Garifuna women by describing them as unfit to serve in any capacity, sexual or otherwise. In retaliation, Garifuna women developed the Chumba dance to demonstrate that not only were they talented individuals but also sexually attractive people.
6. Combination Dance features several Punta rhythms in succession (alternating with Hugu Hugu rhythms in contrasting triple meter) going ever faster and higher to energize the dance floor. This is a circle dance with unison (rather than call-response) singing and may be a secular version of the religious ancestor dance.
7. Paranda: Arabo. The lyrics of this Paranda begin: "Grab your machete, hold on to your sister, and let's go to the farm."

8. Punta, the most popular of Belizean dance rhythms, has some affinity with the Afro-Caribbean Soca and Merengue dance rhythms. The Punta is distinctive, partly because of the construction of the drums that feature buzzing snares (made from fishing line) peculiar to the Garifuna sound.

Garifuna celebrations are held at several venues in the village, including the centre shown below.



There is potential for development of the playground shown above for cultural events.

The Lebeha Drumming Center



“Lebeha” means “the end” in the Garifuna language. The Centre was started in 2002 by drummer Jabbar Lambey and Canadian Dorothy Pettersen. It is not a therapeutic drum circle, it is not the more commercial Punta Rock style (exemplified by stars such as Pen Cayetano and Andy Palacio), and none of the kids is forced to practice.

The drums are made by Austin Rodriguez of nearby Dangriga from mahogany or mayflower wood with deerskin hides. They are tuned by ropes on the sides and are then placed in the sun. The *Primero* drum is also called the male drum because it has been birthed from inside the larger female, carved from the same log. The *Primero* drummer and lead singer, or *Gayusa*, directs the musical changes, shows the greatest virtuosity, and calls the songs for the others' response. The drums are played by hand and the trick is to be able to play fast while keeping the tone strong.

The *shakas* contain seeds from a fruit tree inside a calabash gourd, and the turtle shells are exactly that, strapped around the player's neck. There are no guitarists at Lebeha although guitars are often used in this style of music.

Shopping and Services

Several small shops, eateries and businesses exist in Hopkins. The main ones are described below:

17 (north) Gifts from the Sea Herve and Kathy Cormier 523-7262 Handmade gifts and gifts from the sea	3 (north) Shop & Save Supermarket	3 (north) Mark's Bike Repair Sales and Service
202 (south) Tribal Arts Studio Damasco Ramos + Donna Marshall 523 7200 donnamarshall@belizemail.net	88 (north) Hopkins Store	312 (south) Tina's Bikes for Rent
324 (south) Kulcha Gift Shop Coreen Casimiro 665-8368	181 (south) Dong Lee Supermarket	400 (south) Maggie's Bikes for Rent
114 (north) Jaspar's Jewelry	91 (north) True North Dive and Snorkel	T-shirts a specialty - Painting on every type of fabric+wood
64 (north) Castillo's Grocery	91 (north) Mark Enterprise	146 (south) Massage
111 (south) Yan Yan Shop	100 (south) Goodvibes Gift Shop	78 (south) Hopkins CD and DVD
	114 (south) Smoothie	100(south) Miller's Arts and Crafts
	124 (south) Hopkins Butane Service	200 (south) Gas + Air
		50 (west) Hopkins Gas Station

147 (north) Hopkins
Sanitation Service

196(north) McLisa's
Laundry Service

107 (south) F & J
Fruits + Vegetables





IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

MAJOR CONSTRAINT #1

INFRASTRUCTURE AND DRAINAGE

Access, Infrastructure and Drainage

“we had to travel across gravel roads that were very rough from the 'washboard' effect of the various wheels that had rolled across them..... “ the final 1.4 mile section connecting Hopkins to the Hummingbird Highway. This is a low-lying marshy area near the coast that obviously has had problems in the past during the rainy season when water levels are high. The vehicles really rattled and shook on these roads no matter what speed we went.”



Un-paved and flooded roads in Hopkins.

The entrance into Hopkins from the Hummingbird Highway, as well as the roads within the village are in need of grading, drainage and surfacing. Heavy rainfall often results in ponding of water for weeks, which in turn leads to mosquito breeding and the risk of dengue fever infection in the community. Pedestrian pavements also need to be constructed and proper signage and lighting are needed throughout the village. Options for the use of solar energy lighting and other “green” fixtures should be considered from the outset.

Sanitation and Environment

MAJOR CONSTRAINT #2
SANITATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT



Garbage dumped along the roads

There is no reliable garbage collection service and residents dump garbage on the sides of roads. Apart from being unsightly, the garbage dumps represent health hazards and breeding grounds for vermin and stray animals. There is ample opportunity for the separation and recycling of garbage, and for the creation of businesses in composting and recycling.

Degradation of village roads and increasing levels of dust are also the result of increased traffic from heavy trucks associated with the increase in construction activity. An increase in respiratory problems and in the incidence of dengue and malaria, have been reported. In addition, wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas are under threat of disappearance because of new construction activity along the coast.

MAJOR CONSTRAINT #3

HEALTH AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Health Services

Hopkins is in dire need of resident medical doctors and dentists. There is no hospital, and health services are provided by Equity House, **125/126 Main Street, Hopkins Village, Belize 501-523-7275.**



This non profit organization is run by Judith Krieg, R.N. Richard Krieg, Ph.D.. It has as its mission:

To improve the health and well being of individuals, families and our communities through innovation and the pursuit of excellence.

Described as a small clinic (covering approximately 620 sq ft) with a big heart and a huge impact, the clinic currently has one treatment room and hopes to establish a 12-bed hospital with pharmacy, laboratory, radiology, vision and dental services. Some 300+ patients (mostly children) are treated monthly at a low cost or for free. Care provided includes emergency baby deliveries; coughs, colds, flu; scorpion, jelly fish stings; diabetes and hypertension; HIV/AIDS testing and counseling; and community outreach. Diving injuries (including the “bends”), near drownings and stab wounds are also treated.

The Clinic works with the Lions Club for issues related to vision and with Rotary International for heart murmurs. Other partners include Friends of Pediatrics and interval International (Rochester University) Telemed Unit. They also link with Belize Emergency Respiratory Team (BERT) for paramedic medical services. There is a desperate need for dentists and donation of equipment for a mobile care clinic. There is also no X-ray or radiology service, nor are there facilities for annual physical or checks for vision or dental check ups.

MAJOR CONSTRAINT #4

SECURITY SERVICES

Security Services

The Police Force in Hopkins comprises two new young Officers and a Special Constable, mr. Francis Zuniga Snr.



Officer Jian Young and Officer Kenroy Elijo with their sole means of transport – 2 second-hand bicycles



Hopkins Police Station showing significant structural damage to back staircase and support columns due to the use of sea sand in construction

Although the police station has been condemned, it is still in use by the officers who operate without the basic necessities and who are themselves at risk in the building. There is a crying need for the police station to be repaired or re-built, and for proper outfitting of the station with modern office and communication equipment (both in the station and mobile), as well as holding cells. Officers Young and Elijo ride second-hand bicycles and are severely constrained when having to enter into a chase, or having to restrain a suspect. They are dependent on an unreliable bus service to take prisoners to Dangriga. There is a dire need for modern transportation

provided for the police officers. The two officers are required to be out of the village three times per week for training in Dangriga (30 minutes and 20 miles away) and there is need for more manpower during the day and night.

It is fortunate that Hopkins currently has a low crime rate. Given the rapid increase in tourism and housing developments, coupled with increasing unemployment, there will be a need in the very near future to provide proper security services for both the community and visitors in Hopkins.

There is no fire service. In terms of emergency services, there is NEMO and DEMO in Dangriga. There is no Coast Guard and no radio contact.

The inadequacy of the access into and within the village, poor drainage, lack of lighting and signage, and unsightly piles of garbage are serious constraints to the creation of an attractive tourism product.

MAJOR CONSTRAINT #5

FOOD PRODUCTION AND WATER QUALITY

Food Production

Much of the food that is consumed in Hopkins is produced outside of the community, and is imported from other parts of Belize as well as from Mexico and other countries in Central and North America. The resorts reportedly tend to hire food purveyors and middlemen from outside of the village – even for fresh fish, resulting in very weak linkages with the productive sector.

The Hopkins Farmers Cooperative has 35 members and has been active for the past 2 years. The group receives assistance from the Ministry of Agriculture in Dangriga and from CARDI. Ongoing project initiatives include an irrigation project (for which equipment has been granted through the Agriculture Department); and the production of a natural, healthy cereal product based on cassava, yam, rice, peanuts, dasheen, cocoyam, seaweed, ginger and sesame seed. The cereal has reportedly been formulated at tested at CARIRI (Caribbean Industrial Research Institute) in Trinidad & Tobago as well as in Jamaica, and Mexico. The Co-op believes that

there is a good local market for the product, not only for families, but also for institutional feeding and as a remedy for polio. The product needs packaging, labeling and promotion.

The group is also interested in an ongoing aquaculture project for the production of tilapia being supported by the Hon. Edmund Castro, Minister of State in the Ministry of Works, the Hon. Melvin Hulse, MP for the village, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and the Registrar of Cooperatives. They have requested assistance from IICA with respect to upgrading / expansion of livestock herds (milking and beef cattle, goats, sheep).

There are also a few serious individual entrepreneurs involved in food production, notably Gaspar Martinez and Winston Casimiro, both experienced and well-trained agronomists with some 22+ acres of land between them. The farmers are involved in the production of pigs, chickens (layers), soybeans, corn, sesame, peanuts, and a wide range of some 22 fruit and vegetable crops, including bell peppers, okra, cabbage, cauliflower, zucchini, muskmelon, watermelon, papaya, limes, basic and mint.

The duo is committed to working with youth and schools to demonstrating the “New Agriculture” – high value intensive production of high value crops at competitive prices, and to prove that “*a Garifuna can live off agriculture and can make money*”. Their plans also include the production of local feeds based on corn and soyabean.

With respect to fisheries, it is estimated that up to 1,000lbs (snapper, grouper, lobster and conch) are caught daily. Fishermen complain, however that the resorts bypass them and purchase fish from middlemen who source outside of Hopkins.

Demand for fresh fruits, vegetables, meat and fish

Resorts

The monthly spend on fruits and vegetables at the resorts is estimated at US\$6,500 across the resorts. The table below shows the average weekly purchases (in BZ\$) of fruits and vegetables by the Hamanasi Resort. In addition to this, the hotel purchases approximately BZ\$200/month of speciality items and grows some of its own on property. Parrot Cove purchases in the region of \$1,100 weekly and Beaches and Dreams \$1,500.

Table 1. Weekly spend on Fruits and Vegetables at Hamanasi

	Items	price	weekly amount in lbs	monthly	total	
1	orange	\$12.00	3	12	\$ 36.00	by sack
2	coco	\$ 2.50	18	72	\$ 180.00	by lbs
3	cilantro	\$ 4.50	2	8	\$ 36.00	by lbs
4	watermelon	\$ 0.70	139	556	\$ 389.20	by lbs
5	cucumber	\$ 1.00	20	80	\$ 80.00	by lbs
6	lime	\$ 0.16	150	600	\$ 96.00	by hds
7	papaya	\$ 2.00	8	32	\$ 64.00	by hds
8	banana R	\$ 6.00	1	4	\$ 24.00	by bx
9	lettuce	\$ 4.00	20	80	\$ 320.00	by hds
10	cantaloupe	\$ 1.50	30	120	\$ 180.00	by lbs
11	carrots	\$ 1.50	30	120	\$ 180.00	by lbs
12	apple f	\$ 1.20	24	96	\$ 115.20	
13	tomato	\$ 2.75	80	320	\$ 880.00	
14	ginger	\$ 1.75	3	12	\$ 21.00	
15	String beans	\$ 1.50	3	12	\$ 18.00	by hds
16	celery	\$ 1.25	5	20	\$ 25.00	lbs
17	guava	\$ 1.25	8	32	\$ 40.00	hds
18	sweet pepper	\$ 3.50	32	128	\$ 448.00	
19	Star fruit	\$ 1.50	6	24	\$ 36.00	by lbs
20	grapes	\$ 5.50	8	32	\$ 176.00	
21	sweet potato	\$ 2.00	18	72	\$ 144.00	
22	white cabbage	\$ 1.50	18	72	\$ 108.00	
23	yellow onion	\$ 2.00	30	120	\$ 240.00	
24	spinach	\$ 2.75	8	32	\$ 88.00	by lbs
25	zucchini	\$ 2.75	30	120	\$ 330.00	
26	purple cabbage	\$ 2.00	24	96	\$ 192.00	
27	Purple onion	\$ 2.00	25	100	\$ 200.00	
28	white onion	\$ 2.00	25	100	\$ 200.00	
29	cauliflower	\$ 3.00	25	100	\$ 300.00	by lbs
30	pumpkin	\$ 1.50	7	28	\$ 42.00	
31	radish	\$ 1.50	1	4	\$ 6.00	
32	green onion	\$ 1.50	1	4	\$ 6.00	
33	potatoes	\$75.00	0.5	2	\$ 150.00	
34	cho cho	\$ 2.00	6	24	\$ 48.00	
35	garlic	\$ 1.50	18	72	\$ 108.00	
36	plaintain G	\$ 0.35	38	152	\$ 53.20	pices
37	plaintain R	\$ 0.22	52	208	\$ 45.76	pieces
38	Broccoli	\$ 3.50	10	40	\$ 140.00	
	cilantro	\$ 5.00	3	12	\$ 60.00	
39	eggplant	\$ 1.50	18	72	\$ 108.00	
					\$5,877.36	

Apart from apples, purple cabbage, purple onion, radish and garlic, it is possible to produce all of the remaining 34 items in Hopkins.

All of the resorts feature seafood on their daily menus (including snapper, grouper, and lobster), and there is ample opportunity for linkage with fishermen to supply fresh catches daily. There is reportedly a thriving market also for the sale of live local chickens to Chinese restaurants.

Local Restaurants

Many of the local restaurants offer indigenous Garifuna cuisine (with signature dishes such as bundiga, tapou, darasa, hudutu, sere and sahou) based on fresh fish, bananas, plantains, coconut and root vegetables. The exact quantities of agricultural produce used by local restaurants and eateries is unknown, but there is significant potential for increased production to meet the demands of food security for the community and the growing demand for Garifuna cuisine.

MAJOR CONSTRAINT #6
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

There is an urgent need for sensitization of the community stakeholders in Hopkins with respect to the tourism sector in terms of its potential for development of the village, business opportunities, expectations of the tourist, and the skills required for successful management of the industry.

Several community organizations have been involved over the past 3 - 4 decades in skills development, education and training in Hopkins. These have included the School, Churches, the Garifuna Council, The Village Council, Women and Youth groups, farmers and fishermen.

The Holy Family RC School caters to pre-schoolers from the age of 3 and takes children up to age 15. There are 50 pre-schoolers of a total of 321 children. There is government assistance (\$20) to First and Second Formers, but none to Third Formers. There is a pressing need for the provision of computers and equipment and computer training for both teachers and students.

The high drop-out rates point to the need for the creation of an assistance programme in support of higher education. Options for post-primary education include technical and ecumenical schools, and hospitality training at ITVET.

There is an Environment Club for students in Standards 4 & 5, and a recycling project for papers, plastic bottles and aluminum cans in the Scout Group. There is ample space for the establishment of a School Garden project. Garifuna culture is kept alive through folk groups who drum, sing and tell stories, and the school had a programme in 2008 with Belizean Dreams Resort. There is a small group of 5 mentors who work with the School.

The Roman Catholic and Evangelical Churches are involved in Education, Environmental Responsibility, Health and Self Esteem Development. There is some potential for the development of Religious Tourism particularly as it relates to the Garifuna Thanksgiving Service, Festivals with visiting church groups, and Hopkins-Style wedding ceremonies (with Garifuna songs, dances, drumming and food) and with Garifuna wedding souvenirs for guests.

In the case of the Lemenigi Hopkins Women's Group, there are approximately 20 members ranging in age from 12-25 years old. The Sandy Beach Women's Co-op has been active for the past 23 years and its members have been involved in managing accommodation (cabanas) and foodservice operations offering Garifuna cuisine (Nega Hopkins). When the business was operational, the cabanas housed up to 40 guests and there was a website. The women also received training from ITVET (with EU funding) to strengthen skills in sewing, cake decorating and housekeeping. BEST, Help for Progress and the Cooperative Department, are also active in providing assistance to women's groups in Hopkins.

The Youth Group has recently been assisted with the development of an ICT Centre which provides ICT services (including website development and basic computer skills). There is need for guidance in business management for the project managers.



The BTIA has been active in supporting education and youth projects, and village beautification initiatives. The Chapter needs to embark on a membership drive and to consolidate its work programme for Hopkins. In this context, the BTIA has been leading this initiative to develop and implement the Tourism Master Plan for Hopkins.

The Hopkins Garifuna Council is affiliated to the National Garifuna Council which was established in Belize in 1981 to preserve various aspects of the Garifuna culture including language, music, food, dances, crafts, art and rituals.

The Hopkins Village Council meets regularly with a cross section of the community (approximately 50 persons on average), consisting of policemen, civil servants, fishermen, farmers to discuss various issues affecting the life and development of the community. The work of the Council is divided across seven groupings including, Sports & Youth; Health; Women; and Education. Mr. Lewis is responsible for Fishing and Farmers and Mr. Castillo for infrastructure.

There is a noticeable absence of documentation and strategic planning for follow up on issues. The Council liaises with the ROC of the Ministry of Rural Development, who produces monthly reports, but copies of these reports are not held at the Council. There is a heavy dependence on remittances. There was an expressed need by Council leaders for assistance in accessing resources and fostering entrepreneurship. The Council views tourism positively, but is adamant about promoting nudity on its beaches. A new Village Council will be elected in May 2010.

Several Government Ministries, international technical assistance and funding agencies, NGOs and charitable institutions have provided assistance to Hopkins in the recent past. The implementation of the Tourism Master Plan would involve the review of ongoing and recent initiatives by all of these players, as well as the creation of a network of partners (including the resident Ambassadors in Belize) who could bring technical assistance cooperation to bear on the activities identified under the five themes of the Plan.

Brief profiles are provided on some of these organizations below:-

Government Organisations

Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

Few years ago the Ministry of Agriculture improved agronomic practices for fruits (soursop, mangos, coconuts and pineapples) for the local tourism industry. Hopkins has been identified to benefit from the use of integrated farming system currently being promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Ministry of Rural Development

Specific interventions took place during the last years, supporting the tourism industry through the women groups and fishermen cooperative.

Ministry of Tourism

The Belize Tourism (BTB) was instituted as to a statutory body via the BTB ACT, Chapter 27f in April of 1990. Its mission is to function as a strategic partnership between Governments of Belize and the tourism private sector to develop, market, and implement programs that will fulfill the emerging needs of local industries and the international tourism market place for the benefit of Belize and Belizeans. Responsibility for policy-making lies with the Ministry of Tourism. It is the BTB's mandate to carry out the policies of the Government and to work closely with other relevant ministries, government departments, non governmental organizations, community - based organizations and the private sector to realize the objectives and goals set out in the revised Tourism Policy of 2005. The Belize Tourism Board is governed by a Board of Directors that are appointed by the Minister of Tourism. The operational management of the organization is coordinated by the Director of Tourism along with the Director of Marketing & Public Relations, Director of Product Development, Director of Finance & Administration and Registrar of Hotels. The management team is supported by a cadre of professionals divided into four functional teams.

National Agencies

At national level ITVET, BEST and National Garifuna Councils, provided training in different skills, micro-credits, cultural and heritage activities.

Technical Assistance Agencies

IICA in collaboration with **CARDI** provided training in improve agronomic practices in fruits and root crops (cocoyam, cassava and ginger).

AOS

Culinary training for chefs in the preparation of cultural dishes.

European Union (EU)

The banana project funded by the EU provided support to different activities with women and youth groups and also for the constructions of the internet café and a community kitchen

SECTION 2
A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLAN FOR HOPKINS

EXPECTATIONS OF THE TOURIST

- Clean attractive environment - accommodation and surroundings
- Interesting experiences (culture, adventure, education)
- Great Tours
- Good food (combination of new and a spin on familiar)

VISION FOR HOPKINS

A Master Plan for Hopkins that is developed, agreed to, approved by and implemented with the total involvement of the community in Hopkins

A plan aimed at realizing the dreams and aspirations of the people and maximising the potential of the village

Key aspects of the Plan are:

- Community Based
- A team effort
- Small, practical feasible projects to create employment and new tourism products and services in the community

ACHIEVING THE VISION

Five themes are identified based on consultations. They are detailed as follows:

Theme I: Coordination, partnerships and community engagement

Major Objective:

To create buy-in and sustainability for the implementation of the Tourism Plan through sensitization and empowerment of community stakeholders

Activities

1. Establishment of a formal community management group with representation from key stakeholders
2. Establishment of a network of partners (government, NGOs, international technical assistance and financing agencies)
3. Sensitization of community members

Theme II: Infrastructure and environment

Major Objective:

To provide access and a clean and attractive destination that emphasizes environmental responsibility and security

1. Roads programme – surfacing and drainage
2. Lighting and Signage
3. Parks and recreational areas and village beautification
4. Garbage disposal and recycling
5. Modernisation of police station and security and fire services
6. Strengthening of basic health care services

Theme III: Investment and Small Business Development

Major Objective:

To stimulate entrepreneurship and create employment opportunities, particularly for women and youth in the village

1. Preparation of small, viable projects in agricultural production and trade of fresh produce, meat, seafood, nursery stocks, landscaping plants, and compost materials
2. Preparation of a project to document the culinary traditions of the Garifuna

3. Preparation of a project to create craft and soft furnishings for hotels and cabanas (cushions, curtains, bed linens) using Garifuna designs and themes

Theme IV: Human Resource Development

Major Objective:

To enhance the skills pool within the community of Hopkins in areas relevant to new businesses linking agriculture with tourism

1. Partnering of Youth with farmers
2. Partnering of Ministry of Tourism and the School
3. Partners for health services
4. Partners for tourism workforce (including managerial, Service excellence and hospitality training)
5. Creation of a cadre of community environmental stewards

Theme V: Developing and marketing a Hopkins-style visitor experience

Major Objective:

To develop and promote product/service packages, with branding based on Garifuna heritage and the coastal culture of Hopkins

1. Upgrading and “packaging” of existing Garifuna-based tourism offerings within the community

Activities are proposed under each objective with lead agencies identified for each activity and timelines for implementation defined.

THEME I: COORDINATION, PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Major Objective:

To create buy-in and sustainability for the implementation of the Tourism Plan through sensitization and empowerment of community stakeholders

ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITY L- Lead P - Participating	MILESTONES
1. Establishment of a formal community management group with representation from key stakeholders	BTIA - L P Village Council Garifuna Council Women Youth	Meeting held to establish and formalise management group by End January 2010
2. Establishment of a network of partners (government, NGOs, international technical assistance and financing agencies)	BTIA and IICA – L Hopkins Community Management Group - P	IICA Representative to invite Resident Ambassadors to Hopkins in February 2010 Technical and financial commitments from partners identified and confirmed by April 2010
3. Sensitization of community members	BTIA and IICA – L Hopkins Community Management Group - P	Community outreach meetings undertaken monthly, beginning February 2009

THEME II: INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Major Objective:

To provide access and a clean and attractive destination that emphasizes environmental responsibility and security

ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITY L- Lead P - Participating	MILESTONES
1. Roads programme: surfacing and drainage	Hopkins Community Management Group – L SIF (CDB Basic Needs Trust Fund) - P Ministry of Tourism (BTB Product Enhancement Programme) – P EU and IDB Infrastructure Programmes - P Ministry of Works - P	
2. Lighting and Signage	Hopkins Community Management Group – L SIF (CDB Basic Needs Trust Fund) - P Ministry of Tourism (BTB Product Enhancement Programme) - P Ministry of Works – P EU and IDB Infrastructure Programmes - P	
3. Parks and recreational areas and village beautification	Hopkins Community Management Group – L SIF (CDB Basic Needs Trust Fund) - P Ministry of Tourism (BTB Product Enhancement Programme) - P Ministry of Works – P EU and IDB Infrastructure Programmes - P	

<p>4. Modernisation of police station and security and fire services</p>	<p>Hopkins Community Management Group – L IICA / MERIDA Project (US) - P CDEMA - P</p>	
<p>5. Garbage disposal and recycling</p>	<p>Hopkins Community Management Group – L Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development – P UNDP Programmes - P</p>	
<p>6. Strengthening of basic health care services</p>	<p>Hopkins Community Management Group – L P Ministry of Health Embassy of Cuba EU and IDB Programmes - P</p>	

THEME III: INVESTMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Major Objective: To stimulate entrepreneurship and create employment opportunities, particularly for women and youth in the village

ACTIVITIES	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY L- Lead P - Participating	MILESTONES
1. Preparation of small, viable projects in agricultural production and trade of fresh produce, meat, seafood, nursery stocks, landscaping plants, and compost materials	Hopkins Community Management Group – L IICA / Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development – P UNDP GEF – P CARDI – P UK Travel Foundation - P	
2. Preparation of a project to produce commercial products based on the culinary traditions of the Garifuna	Hopkins Community Management Group – L IICA / Caribbean Tourism Organisation - P National Garifuna Council – P UNIFEM - P	
3. Preparation of a project to create craft and soft furnishings for hotels and cabanas (cushions, curtains, bed linens) using Garifuna designs and themes	Hopkins Community Management Group – L Belize Hotel Association – P Ministry of Culture (Heritage) - P BELTRAIDE - P Aid For Artisans – P Ministry of Tourism (BTB) - P	

THEME IV: HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Major Objective:

To enhance the skills pool within the community of Hopkins in areas relevant to new businesses linking agriculture with tourism

ACTIVITIES	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY L- Lead P - Participating	MILESTONES
1. Youth apprenticeship scheme with farmers	IICA / Ministry of Agriculture – L Farmers Groups and Entrepreneurs - L Hopkins Community Management Group – P UNDP GEF - P	
2. Youth leaders in tourism – programme with school	Holy Family RC School – L BTIA and Ministry of Tourism & Ministry of Education - L OAS – P CTO - P Hopkins Community Management Group – P	
3. Training programmes for health care workers and gym trainers	Hopkins Community Management Group – L Ministry of Health – P Ambassador Partners – P Equity House – P	

<p>4. Managerial and Hospitality training and certification</p>	<p>Hopkins Community Management Group – L</p> <p>Ministry of Tourism and BTB – P</p> <p>Caribbean Tourism Organisation – P</p> <p>OAS - P</p>	
<p>Creation of a cadre of community environmental stewards (land and sea)</p>	<p>Hopkins Community Management Group – L</p> <p>Ministry of Tourism and BTB – P</p> <p>Ministry of the Environment - P</p> <p>Caribbean Tourism Organisation – P</p> <p>UNDP GEF - P</p>	

THEME V: DEVELOPING AND MARKETING A *HOPKINS-STYLE* VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Major Objective:

To develop and promote product/service packages, with branding based on Garifuna heritage and the coastal culture of Hopkins

ACTIVITIES	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	MILESTONES
1. Upgrading and “packaging” of existing Garifuna-based tourism offerings within the community	Hopkins Community Management Group – L Ministry of Tourism and BTB – P Caribbean Tourism Organisation – P OAS - P	

APPENDIX

Over 950 Residents of Hope Creek Village, Stann Creek Dist, will benefit from new Water System

By Government of Belize Press Office

Posted: Nov 3, 2009 00:56 UTC

BELMOPAN - The new Hope Creek Village Rudimentary Water System in the Stann Creek Walk District, was officially inaugurated on Saturday, 31st October, 2009. The system will benefit approximately 950 residents in 190 households.

The project was implemented by the **Social Investment Fund, a statutory body under the auspices of the Ministry of Economic Development.**

The total cost of the project is \$322,840. Of this amount, \$257,840.00 was a grant from the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF 5), a program promoting poverty reduction through socio-economic initiatives and community empowerment. The Government of Belize contributed \$65,000 in counterpart funding while the community of Hope Creek provided the labour for the trenching and laying of the pipes.

BNTF5 is jointly financed by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and nine beneficiary governments, including Belize.

The Hope Creek RWS is comprised of a 20,000 gallon elevated Ferro-concrete tank, a PVC pipe transmission line and distribution system with water sourced from a deep ground well. The system will provide a supply of quality potable water to the village of Hope Creek.

Prior to the construction of the new system, the village experienced an inadequate supply of potable water, which was supplied through a 2,000 gallon plastic water tank.

Hope Creek Village is located 8.5 miles from Dangriga Town on the Humming Bird Highway. This community was founded 40 years ago by a few families who were employees at the Melinda Forest Station and the Government Agriculture Station. The residents mainly work at the citrus farms, plantations and processing plants, hot pepper processing plants, shrimp farms and the nearby Melinda Forest and Agriculture Stations.

For further information please contact Mr Mike Hernandez Jr., Director of Public Relations, Social Investment Fund at tel: 822-0508/822-0238 or via email at mike.hernandez@sifbelize.org