Analysis of Volunteering in Guyana

and

Guyana Volunteerism Support Platform Feasibility Study

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August 2010
Executive Summary

Volunteer-involving organizations in Guyana have a wealth of experience based on grassroots learning, community mobilization, and a long history and tradition of collective action under difficult circumstances. Resistance to slavery and exploitative labour practices, the village movement, the women's movement, self-help and cooperativism are essential elements that demonstrate the heroic qualities and admirable achievements of Guyanese voluntary action up to the present day. This Report, sponsored by VSO Guyana, United Nations Volunteers programme, and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, examines homegrown volunteerism in Guyana and the feasibility of enhancing its impact through a volunteerism support platform.

While volunteerism is fundamental to and sustains the Voluntary Sector, it also reaches into Public and Private Sectors. In a truly enabling environment, relationships are built on collaboration and respect among all three sectors.

To develop an understanding of volunteerism in Guyana, mapping of civil society and volunteer-involving organizations (VIOs) penetrated deeply into the grassroots and extensively into the regions of Guyana. VIOs define themselves on the basis of mission, values, goals and objectives, issues addressed or beneficiaries reached. At the national level, they work across a range of thematic sectors including Education, Youth, Children, Disability, Health, HIV/AIDS, Livelihoods, Social welfare, and Disaster preparedness. Regional and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a key role in bringing social services to communities and enabling regional participation in national development.

Faith-based organizations and networks reach into communities throughout Guyana, and their members form a pool of volunteers whose personal commitment is based on spiritual and religious values.

Social enterprises operate in a transitional area between voluntary and private sectors, combining market transactions with social goals. They include regional women’s and community development groups that focus on income-generation projects, and business ventures by NGOs to support programs or cover operating expenses.

In the public sector, several Government Ministries (e.g. Ministries of Health, Education and Amerindian Affairs), stand out for their engagement with voluntary sector organizations or their implementation of volunteer programs.

Youth-oriented VIOs include informal community, sports or faith-based, youth and children’s groups led by adults, groups initiated by and led by youth, and national NGOs with professional staff to implement projects and manage youth volunteers. The updating of Guyana’s National Youth Policy and Action Plan presents a timely opportunity to move ahead on national youth initiatives, including volunteerism.

For operational purposes VIOs mainly define volunteers using administrative or procedural criteria that distinguish them from staff. However, nearly half of VIOs based their definition on the volunteer’s motivation and willingness, a view that corresponds more closely with that of volunteers themselves. In informal community groups, people’s volunteer activities blend into their daily lives, spiritual beliefs, and their sense of belonging and social connectedness. In structured VIOs, the most committed volunteers are often motivated by a life-changing experience connected with volunteerism. The personal growth, leadership skills and broadening experiences of volunteerism make a lasting impact on the lives of volunteers and their capacity to give.
VIOs in sports, education, HIV/AIDS and health, identified young adults about 20-35 years of age as their main volunteers. Among these, gender ratios varied from 100% female to equal numbers of male and female volunteers. Male volunteers are more likely to be involved in HIV/AIDS programs and sports. Older volunteers, including retirees, are prominent in programs requiring experience and life skills, e.g. parenting, domestic violence and child protection. Older volunteers are dominantly female, reaching levels of 95% or more among seniors. Volunteers overwhelmingly reported that they had no personal experience of gender impacts on volunteering, suggesting that gender disparities are due to societal and social structures rather than overt discrimination.

Virtually all VIOs develop their volunteers through training, including courses, internships, work experience, field visits, mentoring, upgrading and special trainings. Some VIOs have an agreement with the Institute of Distance and Continuing Education (IDCE) for certification of courses. Others send volunteers to outside agencies for certified training. Volunteers are involved in strategic, organizational and project planning, stakeholder meetings and decision-making. Volunteers can become voting members of VIOs, or elect a representative to the Board of Directors. Semi-autonomous volunteer groups raise funds and maintain a bank account to support their expenses and plan activities that supplement or extend funded programs. Some VIOs invest in the next generation of volunteers by sponsoring an affiliated youth group.

There are no standard stipends and livings allowances for volunteers in Guyana. These vary considerably depending on the organization and sector. VIOs in Guyana show considerable creativity in handling volunteer support within their means and capacity. Challenges of determining appropriate stipend levels are mainly treated on a case by case basis in compliance with organizational policy, the skill-level, commitment required of the volunteer and the demands of the position. In most cases, the stipend covers expenses incurred in volunteering. Several VIOs use their discretion to pay or adjust levels based on the need of the particular volunteer.

Given the growth rate of the labour force and the high percentage of youth therein, volunteering is sometimes seen as a means of a livelihood strategy, in conflict with internationally accepted definitions of volunteering. VIOs in Guyana should be wary of introducing distortions in which volunteering is more lucrative than regular employment. Alternative approaches to volunteer support include payments on placement completion, in-kind support, accreditation of volunteer training and experience, and preferred admittance to institutions of higher learning.

Voluntary sector organizations and VIOs make significant contributions to development, including to all the UN Millennium Development Goals and Guyana’s National Development Goals. They focus primarily on delivering non-technical social services, including training in vocational, livelihood and life skills, literacy, school support, income-generation projects, and meeting the needs of the homeless, the hungry and the impoverished. Many VIOs, including the larger and more structured of regional organizations, are involved in HIV/AIDS programs, reflecting an emphasis by donor agencies and government. NGOs are recognized to be the main providers of non-clinical HIV/AIDS services, working in awareness, prevention, peer education, and supporting orphans and vulnerable children. HIV/AIDS initiatives extend into prevention of mother-to-child transmission, nutrition, and TB referrals. Our pilot estimate of volunteer hours found that local volunteers attached to 20 Guyanese VIOs, at an absolute minimum, contribute more than 8000 volunteer hours/week, equivalent to more than 200 full-time workers.
Best Practices in volunteerism include sustained collaboration between Government, NGOs, and donor agencies which has led to well supported inclusive national strategies and action plans, for example to address HIV/AIDS. Networking among NGOs is fostered by democratic governance structures in ‘umbrella’ associations, and by continuous consultation and communication among member organizations and with the executive. Allowing time and space for organizations to learn to work together and evolve into a group is critical in building relationships based on shared values, common interests and respect, and generating member ownership of associations. Key factors that promote organizational connectivity include shared values, vision and objectives; sectoral or thematic interests, target groups, geographic proximity especially for regional organizations, community and regional outreach, personal contacts (e.g. shared board members and volunteers), and opportunities to increase impact and effectiveness. Connectivity is reinforced by collective planning, collaboration, inclusive training opportunities, advocacy and by benefits derived from networking, such as increased funding, credibility and stature, access to resources, technical skills and capacity development.

At an organizational level, Best Practices in governance and management includes volunteer management systems, clear policies and procedures, and good management of partnerships and donor relations. In volunteer management, Best Practices includes motivating and developing volunteers through participation in planning and decision making, delegating responsibilities, and promoting self-managed volunteer support groups that also ease staff work loads. Among faith-based organizations in particular, integration of moral, ethical, civic and social values cultivates the spirit of volunteerism. Faith-based organizations increasingly recognize the need to operate in a secular framework in order to achieve inclusive program results.

Many VIOs find inherent contradictions between being donor-driven and pursuing their organizational vision and mission. Those that see their vision in terms of societal or social transformation feel limited by project cycles. The constant pressure to generate projects, proposals and reports to ensure funding continuity makes it difficult to improve strategic planning and volunteer management. Donor focus and pressures also emerged as a challenge to networking, collaboration and organizational connectivity. Lack of personnel, time and funds allocated to development of relationships and networking leads NGOs into a narrow focus on primary program and project interests. VIOs depend on a relatively small number of volunteers and feel the impact of migration, as well as the socioeconomic barriers to recruiting and retaining volunteers.

Several significant achievements in support infrastructure for volunteerism are encouraging for future initiatives. The NGO Coordinating Committee (NCC) with 18 member NGOs across five administrative regions has been a key participant in Guyana’s HIV and AIDS Strategy. Now in the process of redefining itself and opening its membership to NGOs across a spectrum of social, health and economic issues, NCC could evolve into a credible NGO support and advocacy platform. The Council of Organizations for Persons with Disabilities started as an organizing team for International Day for Disabled Persons. Now with 23 member organizations, it is a respected voice in the disability sector. In the regions, networks of CBOs or communities, including Amerindian villages, have allowed local residents to participate in decisions on development.

Guyana does not have a legislative framework or national strategy for volunteerism. Voluntary sector organizations register under an assortment of outmoded or unsuited legislation including; the Companies Act, the Friendly Societies Act, and the Co-
operative Societies Act, or special Parliamentary Acts. In addition, numerous NGOs and CBOs register informally with a Government Ministry. Taxation legislation allows companies, but not individuals, to deduct charitable donations from income tax. However the legal status of charitable organizations is unclear.

The 1992 Charter of Civil Society for CARICOM was signed by Guyana and other Caribbean states, but has not been adopted as national legislation. The Caribbean Policy Development Centre is promoting the NGO Act of Belize 2000 as model legislation to harmonize laws within CARICOM states and the status of NGOs as social partners with government. Some Caribbean states have drafted NGO legislation based on the Belize Act, but to date none has been passed.

Government-led initiatives in volunteerism require extensive engagement with civil society, and many aspects of national programs worldwide rely on cooperative agreements rather than legislation. Many countries have adopted policy or legislation which, at a minimum, aims to promote volunteerism and regulate or advise on responsibilities and relationships of volunteers and VIOs. In countries with an independent cohesive civil society, NGO associations facilitate partnership development and contributions to public policy dialogue, and raise the profile of voluntary organizations with government, business and the general public. In Portugal, since the fall of an authoritarian regime, a revitalized civil society created an environment in which NGO-led initiatives have been matched by government, and volunteerism is integrated into national strategies. In Canada, the Secretariat of the Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks, housed at a university, combines independent research with the practical experience and applied needs of NGOs.

Many countries have a National Youth Service Policy or include implementation of national youth service in their National Youth Policy. Youth service programs, by taking a strength-based approach, enable youth to address development priorities. Youth service policies under the purview of Education Ministries incorporate volunteer service into school curriculum. Those under Youth Ministries implement volunteer schemes through community organizations, or build capacity and coordinate youth sector NGOs to develop youth service programs. Programs are designed as pre-emptive interventions with at-risk youth, or provide personal development, life skills, job training and work experience. In South Africa, a holistic approach to “NEET” youths, i.e. “not in education, employment or training”, promotes cooperation across education and youth ministries and NGOs. In Pakistan, a youth-led NGO, Youth Engagement Services (YES) Network Pakistan, supports autonomous local Youth Service Networks. Consultations with youth, including in Guyana, have generally conveyed youth interest in structured service.

Volunteerism occurs in a dynamic spectrum that extends from spontaneous individual acts of caring and sharing into linkages that take personal effort into collective endeavour and increasing degrees of organizational structure and planned strategies. The informal unstructured grassroots are essential to sustaining the more structured and formal forms of volunteerism. For the many informal groups and CBOs their immediate need is for strengthened thematic, local or regional support networks. National policy needs to nurture the roots, not burden them with unrealistic demands.

Volunteerism has made and continues to make immeasurable contributions to Guyana’s development, nationally, regionally and in communities. But there is a definite opinion among volunteer-involving organizations in Guyana that volunteerism could be more effective, access greater potential, and increase its impact and influence on development strategies by “moving to a higher level”. With respect to the concept of a
Guyana Volunteerism Support Platform, three Dreams emerged: Shared ethical values, Nation-building, and Recognition and equal opportunity in volunteerism. These are aspirations around which dialogue and pilot projects can continue.

Highlights of specific conclusions and recommendations of this Study include the following.

- Any initiative toward a national volunteerism support platform should support and build on the ‘homegrown success stories’ by involving the existing associations of organizations, coalitions and networks.

- The upcoming International Year of Volunteers (IYV) + 10 is an opportunity to bring NGOs and VIOs together, including in regional consultations and planning committees. National and regional committees should be encouraged to act as prototypes for volunteerism support platforms beyond IYV + 10. Planning should go beyond promotional activities to include substantive projects or programs that would show tangible results.

- Several convergent international, Caribbean and national initiatives present excellent prospects for the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport (MCYS) to advance the Youth Agenda and play a pivotal role in enhancing collaboration among youth organizations, including NGOs. An International Year of Youth (IYY) and IYV + 10 Conference of youth-oriented NGOs, VIOs and relevant Ministries could promote dialogue on National Youth Policy and Action Plans, and collaborative approaches to youth volunteerism and a youth service platform. Such a platform should include all ten administrative regions and give all youth equal opportunities for exchanges within Guyana that would foster appreciation of the cultural, ethnic, geographic and natural diversity that Guyana encompasses. For long-term efficacy, the MCYS should consider forming a Youth Sector Development Unit to engage with youth NGOs and VIOs, looking to the Health Sector Development Unit for lessons learned.

- The University of Guyana and other tertiary institutions, and their student societies, should be consulted to encourage their interest and explore possible roles relating to a volunteer service platform and/or a unit for research and instruction.

- The voices of volunteers should be heard. While volunteers are recognized and rewarded for their contributions, their voices are seldom heard beyond the VIOs that they are directly involved with.

- The absence of coherent NGO legislation and clear legal and financial frameworks for charitable status are barriers to the advancement of civil society organizations. Voluntary compliance with regulatory requirements would be improved through tax incentives for registered charitable organizations. The preparation and upkeep by the Registrars of a publicly available NGO directory would also motivate registration. Improvements to taxation structures including personal tax deductions for donations to registered charities could be a step toward reducing NGO dependency on donor agencies.

Moving ahead toward a support platform should take an iterative step-wise approach, learning by doing, designed with periodic accomplishments or milestones to maintain and build enthusiasm and commitment. It should focus on strengths and accomplishments, building ownership and empowerment to unequivocally realize the statement “Guyana lends itself to volunteerism”.
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Numerous groups are organized around members who play a dual role as volunteers and beneficiaries, offering mutual support and benefit. Additional volunteers may support the membership, for example, by serving on the board or executive, or through offering skills training or counselling. Examples include several organizations for disabled people and their families, including Guyana Association for the Visually Impaired, Guyana Society for the Blind, and Ruimveldt Parent Support Group.

In addition, many community development CBOs and women’s groups are involved in self-help as part of their activities. Self-help and mutual aid is also practiced in less structured traditional ways, for example organized through church groups or, through Village Councils in indigenous communities.

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Disclaimer
This Study was sponsored by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) Guyana, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme in Guyana, and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport (MCYS). The findings contained in this report reflect the views of stakeholders consulted during research, including but not limited to the analysis of the authors and input of contributing (sponsoring) organizations.

Acknowledgements
The authors extend their thanks and appreciation to the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Dr. Frank Anthony; the Permanent Secretary, Alfred King; the Director of Youth, Carl Brandon, and to the staff of the Ministry who welcomed and supported us.

We would particularly like to recognize the Minister, Permanent Secretary, Director of Youth and senior managers at the Ministry for sharing their experience and perspectives, while supporting the Study to proceed with the independence necessary for a broad impartial sampling of the diverse viewpoints within Guyanese civil society. This foresight and openness enhanced the credibility of the Study and is a step toward fostering a collaborative and enabling environment for volunteerism.

Eva Zaleski conducted the Study as a VSO Guyana volunteer, and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport was responsible for her accommodation and stipend. Rawle Small was a national UN Volunteer, and his volunteer living allowance was provided by the UNV programme. The Ministry provided office facilities and logistical support for the Study.

Heartfelt thanks are due to Tara Persaud, VSO National Volunteering Programme Manager, and Megumi Ito, UNV Programme Officer, for their stimulating discussions and ongoing commitment and assistance.

The authors would also especially like to acknowledge the members of the Consultative Group for contributing their valuable expertise, observations and guidance throughout, and their willingness to take the Study recommendations forward into Next Steps.

This Study belongs to the many people who took the time to share their personal and organizational experiences, and their understanding of civil society, volunteerism and volunteer-involving organizations in Guyana. We were privileged to hear their descriptions of caring and sharing, giving back, nation building, working together, and their passion and motivation. We hope that this Study Report does justice to their efforts and accomplishments, and contributes to realizing their dreams for the future.
Acronyms

ADRA – Adventist Development Relief Agency
BGLU – British Guiana Labour Union
CBO – Community-based organization
CBR – Community Based Rehabilitation Programme
CESO – Canadian Executive Service Overseas
CIDA – Canadian International Development Agency
CIOG – Central Islamic Organization of Guyana
CPCE – Cyril Potter College of Education
CPDC – Caribbean Policy Development Centre
CSO – Civil society organization
FITUG – Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana
GHARP – Guyana HIV/AIDS Reduction and Prevention Project
GHRA – Guyana Human Rights Association
GNS – Guyana National Service
GRCS – Guyana Red Cross Society
GRPA – Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association
GTUC – Guyana Trades Union Congress
GVC – Guyana Volunteer Consultancy
HIV/AIDS – Human immunodeficiency virus/Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
HS – Help and Shelter
ICC CWC – International Cricket Council Cricket World Cup
IDB – Inter-American Development Bank
IDCE – Institute of Distance and Continuing Education
ILO – International Labour Organization
IMPACT – Implementing AIDS Prevention and Care project
IVD – International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development
IYV – International Year of Volunteers
IYY – International Year of Youth
MDG – Millennium Development Goals
MAA – Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
MCYS – Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport
NCC – NGO Coordinating Committee or Network for Community Commitment
NDC – Neighbourhood Democratic Council
NDG – National Development Goal
NGO – Non-governmental organization
NRDDB – North Rupununi District Development Board
OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PNC – People’s National Congress
PPP – People’s Progressive Party
PRSP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTA – Parent Teacher Association
PTFA – Parent-Teacher-Friend Association
PYARG – President’s Youth Award – Republic of Guyana
RDCC – Regional Democratic Council
SDNP – Sustainable Development Network Program
TB – Tuberculosis
TUC – Trades Union Council
UN – United Nations
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund
UNV – United Nations Volunteers
USAID – United States Agency for International Development
VAT – Value-Added Tax
VIO – Volunteer-involving Organization
VMS – Volunteer-Management System
VSO – Voluntary Service Overseas
VYC – Volunteer Youth Corps
WAB – Women’s Affairs Bureau
YCG – Youth Challenge Guyana
YWCA – Young Women’s Christian Association
1. Introduction

“Guyana lends itself to volunteerism”. This statement is among the most positive that we heard during the course of this Study. We also heard about the challenges of adapting to the changing environment and expectations, and what many saw as the declining spirit of volunteerism. How can these diametrically opposed perspectives coexist? How can one country of relatively small population of less one million generate such contradictory views?

One aspect of the situation that became clear during this Study is that many people devote themselves to caring, sharing and meeting needs in their communities. But they don’t recognize their own individual and collective achievements, and have difficulty in dreaming about their vision for the future. People do get great satisfaction out of the contributions that they make, and the sense of empowerment they generate. But continually immersed as they are in the immediacy of their situation, they seldom see the accumulated successes that add up to long term progress. Perhaps because of this, people are not accustomed to allowing space for unconstrained dreams and hopes.

It is also apparent that volunteerism and volunteer-involving organizations in Guyana have many successes and a wealth of experience based on grassroots learning, community mobilization, and a long history and tradition of collective action under difficult circumstances. Guyana’s situation has been and is difficult, making the successes and accomplishments all the more admirable. It is clear that Guyanese are the most resilient and committed of people. Even those who have migrated continue to give. How can we free the positive perspectives, the capacity to dream and to realize dreams by building on the strengths and assets of volunteerism in Guyana?

In order to do justice to volunteerism in Guyana, recognition and understanding should be firmly rooted in the fascinating and troubled history of this wonderfully diverse land. Volunteerism is not new, even though we may now be clumsily applying this terminology retroactively to times and places when people were less concerned with jargon. In effect, we are ‘rebasing’ volunteerism. Nevertheless, Guyana has strong traditions of communal living and action for collective benefit that expresses the social and spiritual values on which just, fair and inclusive societies are built.

1.1 Origin of the Study

Since the United Nations declaration of 2001 as International Year of Volunteers (IYV), the contributions of volunteerism to Guyana’s development have grown and been increasingly recognized. The Government of Guyana supports several UN Resolutions on IYV. Through collaboration between Government, national and international NGOs and other Volunteer-Involving Organizations (VIOs), a National Coordinating Committee plans public events celebrating International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development (IVD) annually on December 5. Next year, 2011, will be the tenth anniversary of the 2001 International Year of Volunteers and, it is to be hoped, a special year to recognize the achievements of volunteers and VIOs in Guyana.

This Study was conceived in 2009 when the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) Guyana, and the Ministry of Culture,
Youth and Sport (MCYS) came together to explore their options and opportunities for increasing support to volunteerism as undertaken by Guyanese organizations and Guyanese volunteers in Guyana. Each of these organizations has a long standing commitment and active interest in volunteerism that they wished to take further. The resulting tripartite partnership undertook to sponsor an independent Study aimed at better understanding volunteerism in Guyana, its contributions to development, and the potential for enhancing its impact and effectiveness. The Study was launched at a public Roundtable Discussion on the occasion of International Volunteers Day in 2009.

1.2 The Consultative Group

The intention was to ground the Study in non-partisan local guidance and local ownership. Hence a Consultative Group was established as early as possible. To ensure inclusiveness and transparency, the Call for Applications was advertised in the media. In addition to guiding and overseeing the research, the Terms of Reference call on the Consultative Group to “Develop a plan on the way forward based on the recommendations of the research”.

The Consultative Group comprises:
- Geraldine Maison Halls (Guyana Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme) and Goldie Luanna Scott (Volunteer Youth Corps) representing national NGOs,
- Dr. Ramesh Sharma (Institute of Distance and Continuing Education, University of Guyana) from academia,
- Murray Greenidge, Ronald Harsawack and Marlyn Ramjeet-Samad, bringing their personal expertise,
- Carl Brandon (Director of Youth, MCYS), Megumi Ito (Programme Officer, UNV programme) and Taramattie Persaud (Programme Manager - National Volunteering, VSO Guyana) representing the sponsoring organizations.

1.3 Sponsoring Organizations

1.3.1 Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport was formed in 1998 through the amalgamation of the Department of Culture and Sports from the Ministry of Education and the Department of Youth from the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security. All three of the Ministry’s areas of oversight depend in some way on volunteer activity and volunteer-involving organizations. The Ministry recently commenced implementation of a new framework National Sports Plan that takes a long term holistic view, investing in sports to improve the health and wellbeing of all Guyanese.

The Ministry is the main Government agency responsible for advancing the youth development agenda. It is mandated to ensure that every young person in Guyana has the opportunity to obtain the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for his/her personal development, as well as ensuring that everyone, with specific focus on youth, has access to cultural and sporting experiences.

MISSION - YOUTH

To ensure that young Guyanese are empowered through interactive programmes designed to enhance skills and development abilities so that they can make meaningful contributions to National development, and to promote the development of a skilled cadre of young Guyanese.

The key responsibilities of the Ministry as they relate to youth are:
- The development and modification of policies relating to the development and empowerment of youth.
• The encouragement of youth development through vocational and other skills areas and improved access to opportunities to find sustainable options in life.
• The encouragement of the spirit of patriotism and comradeship among youth through the observance or celebration of historical and other events.
• The strengthening of co-ordination among relevant agencies and facilitation of further collaboration between public and private sector, NGOs and communities.

1.3.2 United Nations Volunteers programme

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling development challenges, and it can transform the pace and nature of development. Volunteerism benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, and by purposefully creating opportunities for participation. UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for recognition of volunteers, working with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing an increasing number and diversity of volunteers, including experienced UN Volunteers, throughout the world. UNV embraces volunteerism as universal and inclusive, and recognizes volunteerism in its diversity as well as the values that sustain it: free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity.

At the heart of Volunteerism are the ideals of service and solidarity and the belief that together we can make the world a better place.

Kofi Annan, past UN Secretary-General

Since the UNV programme was established in Guyana in 1985, approximately 400 national and international UN Volunteers worked closely with Government, other UN agencies, NGOs and private cooperates in all areas of human development, with a focus more recently on HIV/AIDS and youth empowerment.

1.3.3 VSO Guyana

VSO Guyana is a Country Programme Office of VSO International, a development organization that works mainly through volunteer professionals to address poverty and disadvantage in the developing world. VSO sends highly skilled and experienced volunteers from VSO recruitment bases in Canada, India, Ireland, Kenya, the Netherlands, the Philippines, and the United Kingdom. VSO takes a rights-based and participatory approach to development, working with both rights-holders and duty-bearers.

VSO International’s Aim in National Volunteering

To support government and non-state partners to enable all citizens to participate in, and be given formal recognition for, the development of their own communities through volunteering, improving the quality of life for poor and marginalised groups, especially women.

Through its country program offices, VSO has considerable experience working with governments and non-state actors in supporting national volunteering initiatives. For example, in Nigeria, VSO works with the Nigerian National Volunteer Service to mobilize retired professionals for socioeconomic development goals and supports the Greater Involvement in Volunteering Effort or GIVE network, a coalition of some 25 Nigerian NGOs, in designing volunteering policies and procedures.
VSO Guyana, in its partnerships with local organizations, consults with disadvantaged and marginalized people to ensure that they are fully engaged and empowered in addressing their needs. VSO Guyana works in four thematic program areas: Education, Disability, Secure Livelihoods, and National Volunteering. National Volunteering initiatives include a partnership with Youth Challenge Guyana (YCG) and the Ministry of Education to implement the National Volunteer Teacher Programme.

1.4 Study Parameters

1.4.1 Objectives and Scope

The sponsoring partners, based on their networking with Guyanese organizations, identified a need felt among VIOs for improved support of volunteer activities and strengthened capacity for volunteer management. Many organizations in Guyana, including national and regional NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) integrate volunteering into their projects and programs. While they have acquired considerable expertise in working with and mobilizing volunteers, opportunities to share successes, experiences, Best Practices and ideas are few. Hence, the sponsors proposed this Study to analyze the feasibility of initiating a volunteerism support platform, the expected roles and functions of which would be determined through participatory research examining VIOs’ strengths and assets, challenges and needs.

Among the first challenges encountered was the devising of a suitable name that would encourage dialogue around the concept of a platform. The Terms of Reference described it as ‘National Volunteer Coordination Platform’, a name that raised preconceived notions about intention and ownership. The Study found that the most acceptable name, most likely to generate constructive dialogue, is ‘Guyana Volunteerism Support Platform’. Throughout this Report, we apply this name to the platform concept.

As outlined in the Terms of Reference, the research explores the roots of volunteerism in Guyana and provides a situational assessment. It shows the contribution of volunteerism to social development goals, while providing a portrait of volunteering across the full demographic spectrum from senior citizens to youth, women and men, and across the regions. While in-depth research in all Guyana was beyond our scope, all the regions were consulted even if indirectly through contacts with key persons or review of past research. The Study is a step in a process toward recognizing the social, economic and cultural contributions of volunteerism in Guyanese communities, and toward identifying further opportunities. The analysis of volunteering contributions to national development strategies can be used to further harness the social capital of volunteerism for pro-poor development.

The research was also intended to investigate best practices of collaborative volunteer programming between government and non-governmental VIOs, emphasizing opportunities to strengthen trust-based relations, and enhance VIOs’ status as social partners with Government. It was envisaged as a first step towards enabling evidence-based development of volunteer infrastructure through the joint efforts of government and non-governmental VIOs.

The Study focused on volunteerism in civil society and government. However, it was also decided to extend the Terms of Reference to include a brief exploratory research (conducted by Mr. Rawle Small) into private sector involvement in volunteerism.

The research was also intended to investigate best practices of collaborative volunteer programming between government and non-governmental VIOs, emphasizing opportunities to strengthen trust-based relations, and enhance VIOs’ status as social partners with Government. It was envisaged as a first step towards enabling evidence-based development of volunteer infrastructure through the joint efforts of government and non-governmental VIOs.

The workplan entailed four months of research which culminated in a Focus Group Workshop involving about 20 major VIOs in Georgetown. The Consultative Group gave input on a draft report, which was followed by a Validation Workshop to which some 80 national and regional organizations were invited. This final report incorporates findings from the Validation Workshop, particularly in Conclusions and Recommendations.
1.4.2 Research Sources and Methods
The research depended on the following main sources of information.
- Updating of previous research and renewing contacts established during previous research in 2006.
- Numerous interviews, emails and phone conversations with resource persons;
  - representing NGOs and CBOs or knowledgeable about civil society and volunteerism;
  - representing or knowledgeable about relevant government policy, regulations, services, or volunteering-involving programs and initiatives.
- Focus Group Sessions with volunteers and persons representing organizations.
- Surveys of volunteers involved with particular organizations.
- Community visits - One of the most effective ways of probing grassroots volunteering was to walk around a community asking people what they do, what goes on, and who they would recommend as someone to talk to, and then following up on their suggestions.
- Documents, websites or databases from other agencies, mostly accessed through the internet. These sources are cited in this report and listed as references, together with their internet URL at the time of the Study.

1.4.3 Strength-based Approaches
The Study made use of strengths-based approaches adapted from the principles of Appreciative Inquiry, to the extent possible while fulfilling the Terms of Reference. Conventional participatory approaches to development typically focus on problems, needs and gaps, a negative emphasis on deficiencies that tends to be disempowering and discouraging for the communities involved. Problem-based approaches build dependency on external interventions and, hence, discourage local ownership and sustainability.

Comparison of Problem-Solving Approaches and Appreciative Inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem solving (deficit-based change)</th>
<th>Appreciative inquiry (strength-based innovation)</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Felt Need” Identify problem</td>
<td>“Valuing the best of what is” Appreciate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct root cause analysis</td>
<td>Imagine (What might be)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze Possible Solutions</td>
<td>Dialogue and design (What should be)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop action plan (Treatment)</td>
<td>Create (What will be)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic assumption: Problem to be solved</td>
<td>Basic assumption: What we focus on becomes our reality</td>
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Strength-based methods emphasize accomplishments, dreams and goals, and so the process of investigation already works toward generating shared vision, enthusiasm,
and an enabling environment. The basic assumption in strengths-based approaches is that what we focus on, in fact, becomes our reality.

The Appreciative Inquiry cycle is initiated by ‘Discovery’ which, in the context of this Study, entailed research into the historical and cultural roots of volunteerism in Guyana, situational assessment and organizational mapping. The point behind this kind of retrospective analysis is to recognize and appreciate past achievements within the context in which they occurred, and to enable learning from that experience. The ‘Dream’ phase encompasses imagining what we would like to see, an unconstrained envisioning of the future. During the Study we invited participants to let go of perceived limitations to move to a higher level...to dream. ‘Design’ can be thought of as a collective planning exercise to define the key enabling conditions needed to realize dreams. With respect to the Study, this addressed the questions; what should a platform look like, what should it do? ‘Destiny’ is the doing or implementation, captured by recommendations for next steps.

2. Defining Volunteerism

2.1 Volunteering
Volunteering is a powerful social act that expresses sympathetic human values of caring and compassion, and builds relationships between people. It is voluntary, done without coercion. It requires action, not an abstraction or idea. It is built on and builds a social connection, not for profit in the narrow monetary or material sense. The primary motivation is the desire for change for the better, guided by caring and compassion, extending into society beyond the volunteer and their family.

UNV defines that Volunteerism is an expression of people’s willingness and capacity to freely help others and improve their society. In most cultures voluntary action, under its many names, guises and dimensions, is deeply embedded in long-established traditions of sharing. It brings significant benefits to individuals and communities by addressing specific needs and by helping to nurture and sustain a rich social texture and a strong sense of mutual trust and cohesion. Both of these are essential for a society’s stability.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies adds that volunteering is, “Motivated by the free will of the person volunteering, and not by a desire for material or financial gain or by external social, economic or political pressure”. It is, “Intended to benefit vulnerable people and their communities...”. The implications of economic pressure are particularly relevant in the case of people burdened by poverty and disadvantage. The Federation also emphasizes that volunteers, “are not paid for their knowledge or their time; there is no paycheque relationship with them. They are rather motivated from within.”
Volunteering is concisely defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as, “activities or work that some people willingly do without pay to promote a cause or help someone outside of their household or immediate family.” The ILO limits monetary compensation for volunteers to what can be considered as not “significant”. This allows reimbursement of expenses, symbolic compensation, and stipends to cover the volunteer’s living expenses. The amount of a stipend should not be contingent on the market value of the volunteer’s work, nor its quality, quantity or outcome.

These definitions align concepts of volunteerism with modern preoccupations with individualism and individual effort, entrepreneurship and cash-based economies, and distinguish voluntary work from salaried employment. However, it is generally accepted that the roots of voluntary activity lie in community values, self-help, and in communal endeavours for collective benefit, as practiced in traditional societies and at grassroots level. In traditional practice, volunteerism is a lifestyle. Despite the challenges involved in framing concepts of volunteerism for present-day societies, volunteerism is unique in that its objectives and benefits are social, and its values are spiritual and humanitarian. It is a reaffirmation of humans as social beings belonging to humankind.

### 2.2 Volunteer-Involving Organizations

Society comprises three main sectors or arenas of operation, the Voluntary Sector or civil society, the Public Sector or government, and the Private Sector encompassing for-profit market-oriented activity. Voluntary Sector or civil society organizations (CSOs) include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), labour unions, social movements, indigenous people's organizations, sports clubs, and all other non-state groups that are not motivated by profit. It is through associations of this kind that individual volunteer efforts become a collective movement with the critical mass and capacity to bring about societal change.

While volunteerism is fundamental to and sustains the Voluntary Sector, it can also reach into the Public and Private Sectors in so far as government agencies and for-profit businesses also implement volunteer programs. Hence, in principle, volunteer-involving organizations can be found in all three sectors of society and, in a truly enabling environment, relationships are built on collaboration and respect among all three sectors. In fact, the boundaries and concerns of volunteerism have many transitional areas. In the course of this Study, it became clear that enabling volunteerism cannot be separated from enabling the Voluntary Sector in general. Governments play a vital role in fostering a national environment that supports and promotes civil society engagement and voluntary
action by citizens. Similarly, Private Sector organizations are increasingly aware of their social responsibilities as corporate citizens, and the opportunities presented through involvement in volunteerism and partnership with civil society organizations.

3. Civil Society and the Roots of Volunteerism in Guyana

Civil society and volunteerism in Guyana have been uniquely shaped by the traditions, cultures and historical experience of Guyanese people. Guyanese civil society evolved in a historical context charged by conflicts, tensions and collective resistance against violations of freedom and dignity. This complexity and rich diversity spans indigenous inhabitants, slaves and masters, indentured and free labour, colonizers and Guyanese nationalists. Understanding this background is essential to appreciating the heroic and admirable qualities of Guyanese achievements up to the present day. It is encapsulated in the National Anthem which speaks of strains and sacrifice, bondsmen and free, and the six peoples, the cultural mix that features prominently in Mashramani celebrations on Republic Day.

3.1 Indigenous Traditions

Indigenous peoples in Guyana have a long tradition of communal living, including collective land-use and participation in community labour. The word ‘Mashramani’ is itself derived from an indigenous Arawak term for a celebration after the successful completion of communal work. The existence of special terms for communal work sessions, “matriman” in Arawak, “mayu” in Makushi, and “kayape” in Wapishana, shows the depth and breadth of this tradition. Voluntary collective approaches to community betterment still continue in many hinterland villages.

3.2 Resistance by the Enslaved

Africans who were brought to the Americas as slaves came with their own traditions of communal effort. Adapted to the new conditions, mutual aid and solidarity manifested as a group response to the cruel and adverse conditions of the plantation economy. The 1763 Berbice uprising against the Dutch led by Cuffy (or Kofi) can be regarded as early documented evidence of collective resistance. Slaves who escaped the suppression of the rebellion, as well as many who continued to flee the plantations in subsequent years, would have joined existing hinterland maroon communities, or founded new ones. By 1795, there were at least eight self-sufficient independent maroon communities in the hinterland of Demerara, with others in Berbice. In addition to organizing to supply their needs, these communities exercised constant vigilance to avoid detection and attack.

Under British rule in 1823, rumours of anticipated emancipation gave impetus to one of the largest rebellions in the Caribbean region, involving upwards of 10000 slaves along the East Coast Demerara. The size of the uprising is an indication of the extent of the communication network that linked the enslaved across numerous plantations.

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Green land of Guyana, our heroes of yore
Both bondsmen and free, laid their bones on your shore...
Great land of Guyana, diverse though our strains
We are born of their sacrifice, heirs of their pains,
And ours is the glory, their eyes did not see-
One land of six peoples, united and free.

National Anthem
Apart from outright rebellion, collective resistance was practiced in the form of work slowdowns and feigned inability to understand instructions, effectively passive strike actions that were misconstrued as ‘malingering’ and ‘stupidity’ by the plantocracy. The ethnic tensions that Guyana is gradually transcending have their roots in the colonial era and the manipulation of peoples of different ethnic and racial backgrounds. For example, the Dutch authorities made use of alliances with various Amerindian groups to hunt escaped slaves, a policy that was adopted by the British when the region changed hands.

3.3 Emancipation and The Village Movement
The abolition of slavery in 1834 was a partial victory that initiated further struggles for social justice. Freedom was subject to an ‘apprenticeship’ that required emancipated slaves to continue to reside and work on plantations for an additional four years, during which they were paid only for ‘overtime’ hours in excess of a basic working week. In contrast, planters were paid compensation for their loss of ‘property’. Planters also took measures to ensure a surplus of labour that would allow them to pay very low wages. Sugar plantations commenced recruiting labour from external sources including the West Indies and Europe, and instituted a system of indentured labour with workers brought mainly from India, as well as lesser numbers from Portugal, China, and Africa. The latter included Africans who were unable or unwilling to return to their homes after their release from apprehended slave ships. In a form of early labour movement, skilled and experienced free Africans banded together into task gangs that increased their power to negotiate their terms of work.

The ‘village movement’ by emancipated slaves was another expression of collective response to injustice. After emancipation, planters took measures to ensure that freed Africans would continue to depend on plantation wages. These included the rental or sale of small 1/3 to 1/2 acre lots on plantation front lands (e.g. Queenstown, Essequibo in 1839 was the first of these ‘proprietary villages’), purposely too small to support a household through farming. In addition, legislation set a minimum size on sales of public land and raised the price, in an effort to put land beyond the reach of freed slaves. Former slaves pooled resources to purchase land, resulting in numerous Afro-Guyanese communities that were, in effect, cooperatives for the ownership and productive use of land. The first of these, a collective purchase by 83 former slaves and labourers in 1839, led to the founding of Victoria. This was soon followed by collective purchases in Beterverwagting, Buxton, Friendship, Plaisance, Peter’s Hall, Farm and Garden of Eden in Region 4; Golden Grove, St. John and Providence in Region 5; Fyrish, Cumberland, Springlands and Skeldon in Region 6, and Danielstown and Bush Lot in Region 2. By 1852, 25 villages had been established by Africans.

As in traditional societies reliant on self-help and mutual aid, villagers developed systems of communal labour, community organization and self-government that were independent of the colonial structures. Management committees consisted of village leaders whose authority relied on voluntary support by residents willing to undertake work critical to the operation of the village. The villages were remarkably egalitarian with equal rights and responsibilities for all, reportedly including the right to vote shared by both men and women.

However, in the absence of public works, villagers struggled to maintain the necessary drainage and irrigation systems. They had put essentially all of their savings into the purchase of land and had no funds to invest in necessary upgrades or maintenance. Planters, in contrast, could afford to maintain their own seawalls and dams.
or abandon parts of their land if maintenance became expensive, even if this increased the vulnerability of adjacent villages.

In the 1850s, communal villages were subject to increasing control and partitioning by colonial authorities. The collection of taxes increased the pressure to return to wage labour on sugar plantations. But the taxes collected were directed mainly toward the interests of planters, maintaining roads and sea defences that served sugar plantations and contributing to the costs of importing indentured labourers.

3.4 Indentured Labour
The period of government controlled immigrant labour and indentured labour in the then British Guiana saw indentured workers from India, China, Portugal and Africa working on the various plantations in colony. The first indentured labourers from India arrived in 1838, the same year that saw the expiry of ‘apprenticeship’. The first arrivals were treated so poorly that recruitment was suspended for some six years. Immigration resumed under somewhat improved conditions, continuing until 1917 when it finally ended due to pressure from the Indian Government.

Despite the improvements, the number of strikes and infractions by indentured labourers indicates the difficulty of the conditions, as well as the development of collective response. For example in 1872, disputes at Leonora and Devonshire Castle estates (West Coast Demerara) ended with the killing of 5 indentured labourers. From 1895 until 1904, there were between three and twenty-five recorded strikes annually on sugar plantations, including 6 persons killed at Non Pareil (East Coast Demerara). Up to about 1940, some 600 strikes resulted in the deaths of some 50 labourers.

In an effort to induce Indian labourers to stay in the colony on the expiry of their contract, the colonial authorities introduced schemes for subsidized settlement, including land for those who agreed to waive their right to repatriation. These arrangements commonly involved the preparation of abandoned plantation lands or public lands for settlement (e.g. Huist T’Dieren, Essequibo in 1881; and Whim, lower Corentyne; Maria’s Pleasure, Wakenaam and Bush Lot, West Coast Berbice in 1899). However, planter influence on the colonial government once again aimed to ensure that the plots granted to labourers were too small to occupy all of their time, and too small to support a household. Indian immigrants also made group purchases (e.g. Palmyra and Canefield, Berbice), or moved into unsettled areas.

The circumstances around the introduction of indentured labour were geared to cause lasting tensions and conflicts between Afro-Guyanese and Indo-Guyanese. Awareness of this background is essential to developing an empathetic understanding of the ethnic sensitivities that are a continuous undercurrent in Guyanese society today. The intention was to place different ethnic groups in competition for wage employment on sugar plantations, and to depress the wages paid. In addition, indentured labourers were viewed, and viewed themselves, as temporary migrants who would return to India. Afro-Guyanese viewed themselves as natives, given their longstanding presence in the region and the paucity of indigenous Amerindians in coastal areas. Only in 1905 were Indian settlements moved from the authority of the Immigration Department to the Central Board of Health and Local Government Board, along with Creole villages. The government assistance given to Indian settlement also contrasted strongly with the barriers that emancipated Afro-Guyanese had to overcome. These real grievances became intertwined with existing racist views.

With the acquiescence of the colonial authorities, Indian immigrants tended not to participate in the education system, which was controlled by Christian denominational schools. Employment in the education system and public service was closed to Indians.
unless they converted to Christianity. In contrast, Afro-Guyanese had already largely adopted Christianity and viewed education as a means to free themselves or their children from plantation employment. This contributed to the ethnic separation of workers as Indo-Guyanese tended to remain in agriculture, while Afro-Guyanese moved into public service including as school teachers, as police and in the army. They also became independent artisans and craftsmen, forming a growing urban middle class, or moved to the interior to become miners.

The patterns of settlement isolated the different ethnic groups and resulted in ethnically homogeneous villages. The small plots available for houses, gardens and farms ensured continued dependence on plantation wages, even while the cane sugar industry was suffering from international economic depressions and pressure from sugar beets. Planters generally allowed estate lands to fall into disuse and disrepair rather than diversifying agriculture into other crops, or diversifying the economy into other sectors. It was not until the decline of the sugar industry reached a crisis in the 1880-90s that small farmers were encouraged to increase the scale of rice production, eventually allowing the export of excess production.

### 3.5 Friendly Societies, Labour Movements and Unions

Organization of labour in Guyana can be traced to strikes and disturbances on sugar plantations, and the developing awareness of political and labour rights, including among Creole urban and industrial workers. As early as 1842, the British Guiana African Association was formed to represent the interests of Creole civil servants who were being unfairly treated in comparison to their white counterparts. Ten years later, it was followed by the Teachers’ Benevolent Society with functions akin to those of artisans’ guilds.

The establishment of Friendly Societies by working people was particularly prominent after about 1880, mainly to provide for the needs of members suffering from sickness or bereavement. However, in 1888, the Teachers’ Mutual Improvement Society undertook to negotiate wages and conditions of work, as did the Guianese Patriotic Club and the Mechanics Union, both formed in 1890. Many of these early labour organizations were involved in strike action, for example during protests in 1890 against the high cost of living and low wages.

In rural areas numerous farmers’ and fishermen’s associations were established to represent workers outside of the plantation labour force. In 1898, farmers’ associations or agricultural improvement societies formed in Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice to advocate for technical and financial support and sponsor agricultural fairs. The need for rural credit was met by the formation of Cooperative Credit Banks. By 1918, 26 Cooperative Banks served some 5800 shareholders, mainly farmers, hucksters, coconut-oil producers and small businessmen.

In 1905 urban and rural workers joined forces for the first time. Workers at Plantation Ruimveldt joined striking stevedores led by H.N. Critchlow in a general strike referred to as the Ruimveldt riot. Suppression by the colonial authorities resulted in 7 persons killed. Critchlow subsequently founded the first trade union, the British Guiana Labour Union (BGLU), in 1919. The BGLU was also a Friendly and Burial Society and involved itself in broader social issues affecting the poor, for example operating a soup kitchen and advocating for rent restrictions. Critchlow’s influence continued to increase during a period of extensive post-World War I labour unrest. In 1924, Indo-Guyanese sugar workers from East Bank Demerara marched to join Afro-Guyanese urban strikers led by Critchlow. Police intercepted the marchers at Ruimveldt and, in the ensuing disturbance, 13 workers were killed. In 1939 during the Leonora Strike at West Coast Demerara, Indo-Guyanese
field workers were joined by Afro-Guyanese factory workers. Four workers were killed, including one woman.

In general in the Caribbean region, labour movements were stimulated by poverty, exploitive labour practices, and collective resistance to the collusion among colonial authorities and plantation interests. Hence, with the rise of independence movements, labour organizations inevitably tended to align with political organizations\textsuperscript{39}. In Guyana there was an additional ethnic dimension. Afro-Guyanese dominated the public service and industrial unions, as well as the police and army. Rural Indo-Guyanese sugar workers and farmers dominated agricultural unions and associations.

In the tense negotiations leading to independence, unions were drawn into ethnically charged political manoeuvring and subject to international interference. The Guyana Agricultural and General Workers Union and the Guyana Rice Producers' Association became associated with the People's Progressive Party (PPP). The Trades Union Council (TUC) comprising some 18 labour unions initially supported the ethnically plural PPP but, after the fragmentation of the PPP, became affiliated with the People's National Congress (PNC) party. Against the background of the Cold War, American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) money was funnelled through anti-Communist American unions to TUC member unions in Guyana to support a general strike that led to the downfall of the PPP transitional government\textsuperscript{40}. After independence was achieved in 1966 under the government of Prime Minister Forbes Burnham, economic collapse and state repression once again led sugar and bauxite workers to act together in strikes from 1977-79\textsuperscript{41}.

Trade unionism in Guyana has not produced a framework of unification nor cooperation although there continue to be calls by unions for strengthened partnerships. The major unions including the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana (FITUG), Guyana Trades Union Congress (GTUC), the Public Service Union (PSU), the Guyana Agricultural Workers' Union and the Guyana Teacher's Union (GTU) all function with government recognition and legislative authority but reflect a splintered labour union community. This division, while not critical does not serve the best interests of workers in Guyana and often place unions in disadvantageous positions when they have to negotiate with government, private and foreign resident organizations.

3.6 Women's Movements

The West Central African areas from which Africans were taken included matriarchal societies in which women had prominent roles\textsuperscript{42}, and this was likely a factor in the egalitarian character of the village movement. However, women of both African and Indian origin were involved in collective action. Women participated in resisting enslavement. About 30% of deserters from plantations were women and, in 1833 at Plantation Hampton Court (Essequibo), 60 women went on strike together\textsuperscript{43}. Similarly, after initial gender imbalances among Indian indentured labourers were somewhat reduced, about 30-35% of field workers were female, including women who led strikes and disturbances. In 1905, nearly 40% of those convicted after the Ruimveldt riots were women\textsuperscript{44}.

Structured women's organizations originated with upper class colonial women concerned with religious, charitable and social activities\textsuperscript{45}. Their interest in social welfare exposed them to the conditions of workers' families. The eventual emergence of a Creole 'coloured' middle class increased the ethnic diversity of people with the means to involve themselves in outreach relating to social concerns. But many women's faith-based organizations were divided by ethnicity, such as the Ladies of Charity (Portuguese) and Chrysanthemum Workers (Chinese) formed in 1890\textsuperscript{46}. Other social organizations were branches or affiliates of British organizations (e.g. YWCA (British) in 1906, Girl Guide Movement in 1924), or were established by the wives of colonial officials (Infant Welfare
and Maternity League, Gentlewomen’s Relief Association, Baby Saving League, British Guiana United Home Industries, Self-help Association from 1906-1914). By cultivating women’s development they laid a foundation for the emergence of groups like the Working Women’s Guild and the British Guianese Women Social Workers in the 1930s.

The success of women’s organizations in advancing education eventually contributed to organizations that spanned racial and social divisions, as in the Women’s League of Social Services formed in 1940. The League fostered women’s groups and the development of political awareness and leadership among women. In 1943 the Guyana Federation of Women’s Institutes was established to “bring rural and urban women together to acquire skills which will help them in their homes and communities.” It also promoted women’s development and engagement with government and at national and international levels. In 1946, the Women’s Political and Economic Organization was formed. The grouping would eventually become the forerunner to the Women’s Progressive Organization (WPO) later formed in 1953.

The Guyana Federation of Women’s Institutes, together with the Women’s Revolutionary Socialist Movement, and Conference on the Affairs and Status of Women in Guyana were instrumental in the establishment of the Women’s Affairs Bureau (WAB) in 1981. WAB was given the mandate to act as a focal point within government for information and resources relevant to women’s rights and advancement.

### 3.7 The Cooperative Republic of Guyana

In 1970, four years after gaining independence, Guyana formally became The Cooperative Republic of Guyana in official recognition of the major role that cooperative socialism and self-help were intended to play in building the nation. Cooperatives were established across the country, some of which are still active. Self-help was promoted, particularly in the building of infrastructure. Festival City in southern Georgetown, built for the first Carifesta in 1972, is still regarded with pride by residents and others. It was facilitated by the Ministry of Housing and guided by a local steering committee and task-specific subcommittees (e.g. construction, child care, meals and beverages). The scheme already in progress was adopted by Carifesta organizers to provide visitors with a self-contained, fully serviced, residential village. The houses were subsequently sold at reduced prices or through hire-purchase arrangements. State-supported self-help also enabled the construction of transportation infrastructure, for example the Itaballi-Puruni – Kurupung road and the road to connect Mahdia with Rupununi cattle trail, built by local and Caribbean volunteers. Self-help still continues as a strong tradition, especially in rural areas.

While self-help and cooperative socialism contributed to building the nation, in the interval between independence until the 1990s, the electoral process was subverted into a means of maintaining power. Increasingly heavy-handed Government control effectively prevented the formation and functioning of independent civil society organizations. Despite the high ideals, numerous state-founded cooperatives functioned on conventional commercial principles. The Guyana National Service (GNS), which operated from 1974-1999, was established in this contentious environment. The GNS aimed to orient participants toward national objectives and patriotism, and it was envisioned as a reserve for the Guyana Defence Force.

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One one duty build dam.
Hand wash hand, make hand come clean.

Traditional proverb

GNS was meant to instil values, teamwork, patriotism, sense of service and nation building, in contrast to the present day when young people view education as training so they can go to the highest bidder.

Major-General (retired) Joseph Singh
during a time of active territorial disputes with Venezuela and Suriname. It became a paramilitary organization with several corps catering for children (Young Brigade) and youth (National Cadets, Pioneer Corps), as well as for engineers and other specialists (Special Service Corps).

The GNS had both voluntary and compulsory components. In 1975, free university education became conditional on 12-18 months of assigned labour in rural and hinterland areas. Likewise, teachers and nurses had compulsory service requirements. It also provided technical and vocational training, and had a Culture Corps intended to bridge the ethnic divide through music and culture.

The GNS still elicits polarized assessments of its intentions and value, including accusations that it was a tool for ethnic discrimination and political repression. But it also had successes. The Pioneer Corps had annual intakes of 1500-2000 youth, and applications exceeded intake capacity.

The GNS was demilitarized and the technical and vocational training aspects were transferred to the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports in 2000, where they evolved into youth training programs.

### 3.8 The Legacy of the Culture of Resistance

It is an interesting question how Guyana’s troubled history and culture of resistance continues to influence the structure of civil society. Many civil society groups have tended to ‘look after their own’, based on ethnic or religious affiliations and as a consequence of settlement patterns that isolated groups from each other. While many civil society organizations (CSOs) have achieved recognition for their success in advancing Guyana’s social development goals, others are beset by the ethnic, religious, social and political divisions that are found in Guyanese society. CSOs can become dysfunctional or fracture into splinter groups as a result of these divisions, as well as interpersonal conflicts and perceived competition. They are also challenged by the high emigration rates of the most skilled and educated elements of the population.

In 2001, a CIDA-commissioned study, Guyana Civil Society Review, observed that civil society had been undergoing “resuscitation and revival” over the past decade, and the renewal process is continuing. Since the 1990’s, a diverse range of CSOs arose, assisted by several programs supported by international donors (e.g. Carter Center, CIDA, USAID, DFID, UNDP, IDB). The disastrous flood of 2005 was a seminal event that united the country in a humanitarian effort. Among individuals and organizations alike, participation in the response stimulated longer term commitment to social development. The 2006 national election was the first in recent years to be held in a peaceful and orderly atmosphere, free of violence and intimidation, another hopeful sign of social progress.

In the course of this Study, our most experienced and senior respondents, the experts and elders of Guyanese civil society, directed us to resistance to slavery and exploitative labour practices, the village movement, the women’s movement, self-help and cooperativism as historical examples critical to understanding the roots of voluntary association and action. These are the legacy from which Guyanese society has arisen. The best aspects of ‘the culture of resistance’, including a sense of fairness, justice, empowerment, and collective benefit, will be the key to adapting volunteerism to Guyana’s present-day realities.

Promoting National Self Reliance has come full circle with the emphasis on food security “Grow More Food Campaign”, use of appropriate technology; encouraging a revival of the spirit of volunteerism.

Major-General (retired) Joseph Singh
4. Types and Features of Voluntary/volunteering Organizations in Guyana

It is impossible to isolate volunteerism and volunteer-involving organizations from NGOs, FBOs and CBOs, given the spectrum of organizations and operations within civil society and the varied depth and breadth of volunteer roles. In addition, some government agencies implement volunteering programs which are also considered below. Volunteer-involving organizations (VIOs) generally define themselves on the basis of mission, values, goals and objectives, issues addressed or beneficiaries reached. In fact, from an organizational perspective, volunteering can be considered as a human resource or staffing issue, or just one of many operational tools or methods. It is seldom treated as an end in itself, more often as a means to an end.

It is equally difficult to neatly categorize civil society organizations (CSOs), given their diversity and multidimensional character. For example, an organization can be an NGO, FBO and CBO, as well as a self-help group active in community development and advocacy, all at the same time without contradictions.

The survey presented here, based on a sampling of CSOs and VIOs in Guyana, gives examples of the most prominent types of organizations that were consulted directly or indirectly during the course of the research. CSOs are broadly grouped according to scale of operations, main goals and methodology, with many overlaps and ambiguities.

4.1 National Development NGOs

National NGOs have programs that extend throughout Guyana, although the challenges of reaching all the administrative regions may limit operations. They work in a broad range of thematic sectors, including Education, Youth, Children, Disability, Health, HIV/AIDS, Livelihoods, Social welfare, Disaster preparedness, and Infrastructure, either focusing within a sector or working across sectors.

The Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA) and Guyana Red Cross Society (GRCS) have international parent organizations. GRCS is unique in that it functions under the permanent legal mandate of the International Committee of the Red Cross for humanitarian and relief operations. The GRCS has undertaken programs in integrated management of childhood illnesses and violence prevention. Both ADRA and GRCS have extensive regional networks of on-call skilled and professional volunteers as part of their disaster preparedness programs in which they cooperate with the Civil Defence Commission and National Disaster Plan. Both agencies are involved in the health sector, including in regional infrastructure projects relating to water and sanitation.

ADRA is a secular arm of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, a connection that gives it a deep reach into communities throughout Guyana. It has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Health under which it provides medical services with Guyana Adventist Medical Aviation Service in regions 2, 7, 8, 9 and the Upper Berbice area of Region 10, and with Wings for Humanity in Region 1. It also supports a variety of community-based projects in cooperation with local Adventist Church groups.

Guyana Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme (CBR) evolved from a local pilot on the East Bank Demerara in 1986 to a national program with a presence in eight of the ten administrative regions (see Case Study for details). Over the years, CBR has trained more than a thousand volunteers, and counts some 250 active volunteers. It has worked closely with Rehabilitation Services, Ministry of Health, and Special Education Needs, Ministry of Education, as well as the National Commission on Disability. CBR focuses on making support and services accessible to persons with disabilities and their families where it is needed, in their communities.
Help and Shelter (HS) and Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association (GRPA) work with both professional clinical staff and volunteers. HS addresses domestic violence and other gender issues through advocacy, help-line crisis service and face-to-face counselling, a women’s shelter, public education, and training ‘front-line workers’, for example police, health care workers, and teachers. A major challenge is attracting volunteers with the level of maturity, strength and confidence required to deal with sensitive and distressing issues. GRPA provides sexual and reproductive health services and counselling, promotes responsible behaviour in sexual and family relationships, as well as providing clinical services, including gynaecological services and HIV voluntary counselling and testing.

Phoenix Recovery Program, based in Mon Repos, East Coast Demerara, works with substance abusers from all regions and operates a rehabilitation facility for women. It cooperates with the Adolescent Unit of the Ministry of Health to educate school children on substance abuse and treatment.

Adult Education Association offers remedial and vocational education, including to school leavers and at-risk youth.

The Guyana Book Foundation promotes literacy and reading throughout Guyana. It specializes in supporting school and community libraries and literacy programs, supplying teaching materials to education institution, working with teachers, CBOs, and the Ministry of Education.

Habitat for Humanity Guyana Inc. focuses on building fully serviced low-cost homes for persons who would not otherwise be able to afford good housing. Labour is contributed by beneficiaries, and Habitat mobilizes additional volunteer labour through cooperative arrangements, mainly with youth groups and private sector organizations.

4.2 Regional and Local Development NGOs

Regional and local development NGOs play a critical role in bringing social services to communities, building local capacity, and empowerment, and enabling regional participation in national development. While they have geographic focus, their operations may spread into two or more adjacent regions.

Artistes in Direct Support (AIDS) and Lifeline Counselling Services, based in Georgetown, Hope for All in Region 2, Comforting Hearts, FACT, and United Bricklayers in Region 6, Hope Foundation in Region 7, and Linden Care Foundation in Region 10, focus on HIV/AIDS, including public education, voluntary counselling and testing, and support for persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families or caregivers. These organizations, and many others, are part of the NGO Coordinating Committee (NCC) in partnership with government agencies and USAID / GHARP II (see Support Infrastructure for NGOs).

Numerous other NGOs and CBOs are involved in violence prevention, HIV/AIDS education, community betterment, basic education, literacy, numeracy, vocational, business and other skills training as a means to personal development, self sufficiency and income generation. For example in Region 3, Nirvana Humanitarian Society operates a Learning Resource Centre which offers life skills and vocational training. Den Amstel Residents for Change work to prevent domestic violence and child abuse, as well as in income generation.

Women Across Differences works with women and adolescents in communities along the East Coast Demerara focusing on advocacy, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, counselling, violence prevention, skills training, as well as offering meals for single teenage mothers.
St. Francis Community Developers in Region 6 was initiated as a youth group in 1986, and launched its more comprehensive form in 2003. Its well resourced facilities include testing and counselling services for HIV/AIDS, a resource centre and library, child-friendly space, and a restaurant and dining area that double as a meeting venue. Also in Region 6, Roadside Baptist Church Skills Training Centre Inc. has a training facility with a library, computer laboratory, classrooms, kitchen and dining area. It offers a variety of training courses, in addition to HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention programs, and feeding programs for seniors and vulnerable children.

In Region 10, the Linden Salvation Council addresses community development and advocacy, as well as livelihoods, housing and charitable donations. Several organizations work in the disability sector, including LINSEED, Wismar Baptist Sign Language Group, and Linden Centre for Persons with Disabilities.

4.3 Advocacy NGOs

With increasing recognition of the efficacy of empowerment and rights-based approaches, many organizations include advocacy in their activities, for example disabled people’s organizations and those working in areas of child protection and domestic violence. For some organizations human rights advocacy and promotion has been a long term focus.

The Men Empowerment Network (MEN) was formed in 2009 as a social network to give a cohesive voice to various concerns expressed by men across Guyana. Although the main focus of the group has been to prevent, reduce and eradicate domestic violence in all its forms, the group is guided by the principle of human rights equality and equity. Since its inception, the network lobbied government to establish a Men’s Affairs Bureau similar to the Women’s Affairs Bureau situated in the Ministry of Human Service. In 2010 this goal materialized and the bureau now serves as the institutionalized public agency responsible for addressing various concerns affecting and expressed by men in Guyana.

Guyana Human Rights Association (GHRA) was formed in 1979, during the repressive years of the Burnham government, with the participation of trade unions, professional organizations, various ethnic groups, and churches. Since then, GHRA has pressed for due process and respect of human rights in a decidedly outspoken and non-partisan manner. GHRA has addressed police brutality, extrajudicial killings, child protection, citizenship education, sexual abuse and women’s rights, and GHRA reports are used by Amnesty International in their Annual Reports on Human Rights.

The Women’s Progressive Organization (WPO) as previously noted on page 13, is another human rights group with a political heritage and a focus on the rights and empowerment of Guyanese women. The WPO coordinates and facilitates a number of community-based initiatives aimed at empowering women through life skill, economic and political participation. The group has membership on several national committees including the National Domestic Violence Committee and is involved in a number of policy and program planning entities. Although its mandate has progressed since its creation, the WPO’s core mandate of strengthening the social, economic, academic and public participation of Guyanese women continues to guide their advocacy of women rights and empowerment.

Similar to the WPO, the Red Thread Women’s Development Organisation, formed in 1986 started out as the Women’s arm of the Working People Alliance (WPA) but now consider themselves an independent organisation. Their goals are explicitly defined in terms of women’s empowerment and social justice. It confronts political, economic and structural issues that reinforce disparity, and seeks to address the underlying causes of poverty. Red Thread has been involved in advocacy and research on child abuse, domestic violence, trafficking in persons, and valuing women’s unpaid work. Red Thread
serves on the National Task Force on the Elimination of Violence against Women contributing to the new 'Sexual Offences Bill'. They coordinate the Guyana component of the Global Women’s Strike, part of an international network campaigning for the reallocation of military budgets toward social needs and to compensate women for domestic and community work.

Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination focuses on the prevention of gender-based violence and the rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) persons. This organization is the only such organization in Guyana that provides a cohesive public voice and programmatic approach to advocacy of the LGBT community of Guyana.

Several organizations focus on cultural advocacy on behalf of various cultural groups that make-up Guyana. In addition to addressing specific cultural concerns, organizations such as the Amerindian People's Association, the African Cultural and Development Association and the Indian Arrival Committee also partake in cultural events to educate Guyanese and showcase the vast cultural heritage of Guyana.

### 4.4 Self-Help or Mutual Aid Groups

Numerous groups are organized around members who play a dual role as volunteers and beneficiaries, offering mutual support and benefit. Additional volunteers may support the membership, for example, by serving on the board or executive, or through offering skills training or counseling. Examples include several organizations for disabled people and their families, including Guyana Association for the Visually Impaired, Guyana Society for the Blind, and Ruimveldt Parent Support Group.

In addition, many community development CBOs and women’s groups are involved in self-help as part of their activities. Self-help and mutual aid is also practiced in less structured traditional ways, for example organized through church groups or, through Village Councils in indigenous communities.

### 4.5 Social Enterprises

Social enterprises encompass several types of organizations and activities of particular relevance to Guyana and other developing countries. In general, social enterprises are involved in market transactions, but they have social goals and, often, social ownership.

Guyana Volunteer Consultancy (GVC) could be considered to be a social enterprise in that it focuses on social development objectives while operating on cost recovery principles, including rental income from its assets. It was modeled on and established by Canadian Executive Service Overseas (CESO) in 1993. The original focus was on small to medium sized private sector businesses, subsequently expanded to include NGOs. GVC mobilizes volunteers from its professional members for organizational and community capacity building. Its dual roles in volunteering and consultancy make GVC the only organization of its kind in Guyana.

Social enterprises include income-generation ventures that aim to create livelihood opportunities, either for others or for group members. For example many regional women’s and community development groups focus on small income generation projects, including skills training and the acquisition of equipment or facilities. Finances come from a combination of income generation, local fundraising and donor funding. The groups also respond to a broad range of social and humanitarian needs in their communities, especially among the most vulnerable or disadvantaged. They adopt issues and undertake projects as they seem relevant, while maintaining the ongoing concern with livelihood and
income generation. Examples of women’s CBOs in Region 1 include Hosororo Blue Flames Women’s Group and Kamwatta Ladies Backdam Group, as well as numerous others. In Region 2, they include Pomona Women and Youth Reaching Out, Vilvoorden Women’s Group, Airy Hall Development Group, and Pomeroon Women’s Group. In Region 9, they include Rupununi Weavers’ Association, Helping Hands Women’s Group, and the Aranaputa Processors’ Friendly Society.

Social enterprises encompass income-generation ventures by NGOs to support programs or cover operating expenses. For example, Beacon Foundation supports its activities through its snackette business. The national Mothers’ Union operates a mobile snackette. In Region 5, branches of the West Coast Berbice Mothers’ Union generate a fund through taking turns in rearing chickens. The profits are used for a monthly breakfast for up to 100 pensioners. Social enterprises also operate by adjusting the fee for the goods or services they provide based on the client’s need and ability to pay. In effect, those who are able to pay the full fee subsidize those who can’t, for example as in services offered by Eureka Health and Wellness Centre in Linden and Phoenix Recovery Program.

Guyana Amazon Tropical Birds Society, based in Georgetown, operates as a social enterprise by encouraging an interest in birdlife among local youth, and turning their interest into a livelihood opportunity through field experience as guides and support persons for bird-watching tours.

In addition, virtually every hinterland community and many coastal communities have farmers’ groups, livestock associations, fishermen’s groups, or tourism groups, as the case may be.

4.6 Professional Associations

Several professional associations implement development programs or projects through the volunteer contributions of their professional members.

The Guyana Association of Professional Social Workers involves 35 members in volunteer programs in regions 2, 4, 5, 6 and 10. While promoting the professional development of its members, it also effectively doubles as an NGO addressing social issues in areas of family counselling and domestic violence prevention.

The Guyana Association of Women Lawyers focuses on legal concerns relevant to women and children. It educates people about their rights, provides legal services, and transcribes legislation and other legal documents into ‘plain English’ accessible to the general public.

4.7 Service Clubs

Rotary Clubs and Lions Clubs are active in Guyana and belong to regional Caribbean and international networks. Rotary Clubs have about 230 members in six active clubs, in addition to two affiliated Inner Wheel Clubs (for women), and sponsored Roteract (18-30 yrs) and Interact (12-18 yrs) Clubs. Within the values and general guidelines of the international organization, clubs decide on their own initiatives, mainly within their own regions.

Lions Clubs, celebrating their 50th anniversary in Guyana in 2010, are generally known for supporting vision care and disaster relief, but they also focus on youth programs and work with the hearing impaired. About 155 members belong to six active clubs, and sponsor additional Leo Clubs (12-28 yrs). Local Lions Clubs have supported health care outreach, infrastructure and equipment needs for hospitals and schools, and sponsored events such as camps or sports days for disabled children. The Bartica Lions Club is involved in an annual comprehensive medical outreach (tropical diseases, family planning, Pap tests, electrocardiogram and ultrasound) reaching 3000-4000 people in three weeks.
throughout Region 7 in partnership with Ve’ahavta and with the cooperation of the Ministry of Health and Regional Health Services.

In addition to the activities of individual clubs, partnering on joint initiatives such as collaborative support to the publishing of the Guyana Law Reports by the Ministry of Legal Affairs also provide service opportunities.

4.8 Faith-based Groups

The largest single religious group in Guyana is Hindu, representing 28% of the population, followed by Pentecostal (17%), Roman Catholic (8%), Anglican (7%), Muslim (7%) and Seventh Day Adventist (5%). National faith-based networks reach into communities throughout Guyana and faith-based groups play a large role in civil society at a grassroots level. Virtually every religious institution has women’s, men’s, youth and/or children’s groups. Members form a pool of volunteers that can be called on as needed and whose personal commitment is based on spiritual and religious values. Values of caring and sharing are instilled through community work, and activities often merge into faith studies and evangelism. Informal women’s groups are typically involved in sharing skills and in charitable work to meet immediate needs in the community.

Some faith institutions manage structured social development programs that use specifically trained volunteers. For example Varqa Foundation (Bahá’í) implements the On the Wings of Words and Youth Can Move the World programs. Both programs emphasize spiritual and civic values, and take a ‘catalyst’ approach to community betterment. On the Wings of Words offers workshops to any persons interested in teaching literacy either informally, for example within their own family, or by forming a literacy group which can be registered with Varqa and continue to receive support. Youth Can Move the World trains youth as ‘community animators’ to educate their peers in HIV/AIDS awareness and gender issues.

The Mothers’ Union of the Anglican Diocese of Guyana has 1574 members in 87 branches in ten regions. Branches demonstrate a remarkable commitment to participation and representation. Those in remote areas may save money all year to send their representative(s) to the Annual General Meeting. Mothers’ Union implements a secular parenting program that reaches eight of the ten regions.

Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha is a faith-based network of eight branches (praants) and more than 120 affiliated Mandirs extending across regions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. While Dharmic Sabha focuses on religious and cultural activities, it has increasingly moved into social welfare and development, in part stimulated by the 2005 flood. The women’s arm, Mahila Mandalee, has advanced development and skills training for Hindu women since 1971. It also implemented an HIV/AIDS education and awareness program, and counselling and substance abuse programs. The youth arms of Dharmic Sabha, Dharmic Naujawaan and Golden Om Dharmic Youth Organization (Berbice) are involved in social and community projects, including HIV and child abuse awareness, sports, and helping the elderly.

The Central Islamic Organization of Guyana (CIOG), formed in 1979 through the amalgamation of partisan precursor organizations, represents some 130 Mosques throughout all the regions. The women’s arm of CIOG, formed in 1992, evolved into the National Committee of Sisters’ Affairs with representatives from all the regional executives. Within the last few years, Sisters’ Affairs activities have started to extend beyond the Moslem community, for example in projects addressing nutrition and infant mortality, and in skills training for women.
Dharmic Sabha, National Committee of Sisters Affairs, and Christian organizations are involved in a tripartite proposal, Religious Organizations Against Domestic Violence, initiating social collaboration among the three faiths at community level.

4.9 Alumni Associations and PTAs

Many secondary schools and tertiary educational institutions have Alumni or Old Students’ Associations that support their schools in some way. Notable among these is Bishop’s High School Old Students’ Association which, in 2002, piloted a mentoring program that matched former and current students, especially targeting at-risk children. In 2005, the pilot expanded into a collaborative initiative with the Tutorial High School Alumni Association. Mentoring guidelines and other resources were made available to other schools and on a website.

Alumni Associations are typically involved in fundraising to support the resource and infrastructure needs of their schools. Many support School Boards, including through alumni who serve on the Board. For example, the St Rose’s High School Alumni and School Board cooperate in an interesting merger of Board and alumni roles and activities. Queen’s College Old Students’ Association uses Facebook as a communication tool to facilitate discussions between the Association and current students.

In the view of some members, Alumni Associations are more sustainable than PTAs, as parents lose interest when their children leave school. Many local Alumni Associations maintain strong links with diaspora chapters, and some diaspora chapters are more active than their local counterparts.

Every primary and secondary school in Guyana should have a Parent-Teacher (PTA), Community-Teacher (CTA), or Parent-Teacher-Friend (PTFA) Association organized by the Head Teacher. Their primarily function is as a forum for discussion of school and curriculum matters, and to encourage parental involvement in the education of their children. In the case of secondary schools, PTAs should be represented on the School Board. In practice, many PTAs are preoccupied with gathering resources for the basic functioning of schools, for example making sure that there are sufficient materials for administering examinations. They are also tasked with fundraising for infrastructure and other needs. For example, St. Anthony’s PTA in Bartica raised the stipend for a teacher replacement on two occasions, recruiting local volunteers to fill in. However, even PTAs with active executives are challenged to sustain parent engagement after the first meeting. Typically, it is the parents of ‘problem’ children who don’t attend and, when they do attend, may have difficulty in expressing their needs and concerns, particularly during a meeting.

4.10 Events-Management Organizations

Volunteerism to support large events gained a high profile in Guyana with the ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007 matches at the newly built National Stadium. A Local Organizing Committee was responsible for managing the event under the auspices of the West Indies Cricket Board. The advertisements for volunteers attracted more than 1000 applications, far more than the 348 available volunteer positions. After the Volunteer Coordinators made their selection, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport formed a supplementary Guyana Volunteer Program using the remaining applicants to provide peripheral support in Georgetown and area.

The Carifesta X Guyana 2008 Volunteer Programme was initiated by contacting volunteers from the 2007 Guyana Volunteer Programme. A thorough and thoughtful report by the Volunteer Coordinator documents the lessons learned and presents valuable recommendations for future national volunteerism coordination efforts. In addition to capturing operational issues that inevitably emerged during Carifesta X and ICC Cricket
World Cup West Indies 2007, the report presents the views of volunteers themselves. This is an indication that Guyana values and is cognizant of its heritage of volunteerism and the role strengthened volunteerism programmes and policies can play in the country’s development.

ICC World Twenty20 West Indies 2010 was managed by a temporary company formed specifically for the event and registered in St. Lucia. The Volunteer Program was managed by experienced professionals who successfully recalled 157 trained volunteers from the Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007 event.

4.11 Government Initiatives and Collaborations

Several Government Ministries exemplify constructive engagement with voluntary sector organizations or their own implementation of volunteer-involving programs.

The Health Sector Development Unit and National HIV/AIDS Programme in the Ministry of Health, with the support of donor agencies, have put a major effort into fostering cooperation with civil society organizations, including NGOs, in order to implement a comprehensive multisectoral response to HIV/AIDS. (See also Support Infrastructure for NGOs.)

In Region 1, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs National Hinterland Secure Livelihoods Programme, in partnership with VSO Guyana, is training young community volunteers in agricultural livelihoods with an emphasis on high value crops. The participants will be able to develop enterprises that support their families while transferring knowledge and skills to the community.

The Ministry of Education has implemented several strategies to strengthen the education sector through parental and community involvement. These have included School Improvement Advisory Committees comprising key stakeholders such as parents, school staff, students, community members and the Educational Officer. The Ministry designated a National PTA Coordinator to support PTAs by identifying models of good practice and increasing parental involvement in education management. In 2009, together with partner agencies, the Ministry supported a pilot project to improve the functioning of PTAs in six primary schools in Region 6 and develop a Good Practice Guide and Toolkit for PTAs throughout Guyana. One aspect of the pilot was the introduction of parenting seminars, and training in participatory methods for Welfare Officers.

The Ministry of Education is promoting the formation of regional or subregional PTA umbrella groups, as a means for PTAs to support each other and represent their concerns collectively to Regional Education Officers. A subregional organization of PTAs in Region 3 represents PTAs of nursery, primary and secondary schools, as well as School Boards, and collaborates with Regional Education and Welfare departments in school assessments, and in accessing material and financial support. A subregional organization in Region 10 refers parents to opportunities for improving parenting and academic skills. However, in districts which do not yet have such a body, those who serve on PTA committees are apprehensive about possible further demands on their time when they already struggle to meet basic school needs.

The Ministry of Education, in partnership with VSO Guyana, has launched a pilot Volunteer Mentoring Programme in 10 secondary schools in the Greater Georgetown area, drawing on the example of the Bishop’s High School Old Students’ Association program. The Volunteer Mentoring Programme aims to foster positive values, attitudes and behaviours among students, develop positive goals and vision, and reduce school violence. The Ministry is also collaborating with Youth Challenge Guyana and VSO Guyana in the National Volunteer Teachers Programme (see Youth and Youth Groups).
From 2002-2008, the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security implemented a Volunteer Social Workers Programme in regions 2, 4, 5, 6 and 10. Community-based volunteers were trained in a range of topics including conflict resolution, family development, and drug abuse. Subsequent evaluation\textsuperscript{71} suggested considerable success in addressing social issues such as alcohol abuse, absence of children from school, juvenile delinquency, domestic violence, and child neglect and abuse. Although the program has not been continued, at least some trained volunteers continue to use their skills to support their communities and relate informally with Welfare Officers.

4.12 Participation and Self-Governance Entities

Local government and self-governance bodies represent opportunities for direct participation by community residents in planning, decision-making and development. The effectiveness of local government depends on the willingness of elected and appointed persons to volunteer their time, with or without stipends to facilitate their activities. Examples include Amerindian Village Councils and Toshaos elected to govern, manage and represent their communities. The elected Toshaos from 97 communities form the National Toshaos’ Council, which elects a 20-member executive body with representation from all the administrative regions.

In Region 9, the North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB) comprises 16 indigenous communities that came together to participate in a self-development organization\textsuperscript{72}. (See also Support Infrastructure for NGOs.) Other district development organizations in Region 9 are evolving modeled on NRDDB, for example South Central People’s Development Association and Association of Deep South Wapichan Communities.

The Ministry of Education has been moving toward local management of schools through School Boards of Governors\textsuperscript{73}, beginning with 33 secondary schools and technical institutes now managed by 32 School Boards supported by a School Board Secretariat. Board positions are voluntary, although members can vote to pay themselves a stipend provided that they supply the monies through their own fundraising activities.

Service on the many public boards, national commissions, and committees is also on a volunteer basis. A small sampling of these could include, for example, the National Commission on Disabilities and Civil Defence Commission, Regional Women’s Affairs Committees, sectoral and other regional committees, Central and Regional Committees for Mashramani and other events.

4.13 Youth and Youth Groups

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport (MCYS) partners with more than 50 youth and sports groups that register with the Ministry as youth or sports organizations through its Department of Youth or National Sports Commission respectively. A few of the sports organizations registered with the Ministry include the Guyana Cricket Board, the Guyana Amateur Swimming Association and the Guyana Special Olympics Association.

Youth organizations registered with the Ministry can be found in all regions of Guyana, examples include the Mabaruma Heritage Committee located in region 1, the Caribbean Youth Environment Network located in region 4 and the Georgetown/Parika Sparkling Dance and Youth Group located in region 3. Youth involvement in management, promotion and organizational as well as programme development play an instrumental role in promoting the primary activities and strategic objectives of these groups.
In many ways the challenges affecting youth cut across all of the societal issues that concern the voluntary, public and private sectors in Guyana. In 1994 Guyana set in place its most recent Youth Policy with the objectives of fostering unity and patriotism by encouraging youth participation in social, economic and cultural life. It defined youth to be 14 to 25 years old, although in practice related programs extend this to 30 years (e.g. National Youth Parliament). The National Youth Commission was established in 2002 to advise the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport and oversee development, implementation and monitoring of schemes for youth development. All youth organizations were to be under its purview. The Youth Policy is again under review with the intention of formulating a new updated Policy and Action Plan, providing an excellent opportunity to move ahead on national youth initiatives, including volunteerism.

Youth groups are prominent among volunteer-involving organizations in Guyana. They include numerous relatively informal community, sports or faith-based youth and children’s groups led by adults, groups initiated by and led by youth, and national NGOs with professional staff to implement projects and manage youth volunteers. Groups for junior youth and children focus on prosocial and experiential learning, as well as instilling civic and spiritual values of caring and community service.

Youth and children are attracted by interesting and fun activities, such as sports and trips, as well the opportunity to make and be with friends. While many of the attractions of groups for older youth are similar, they are also concerned with personal development, livelihoods and advancement opportunities. They are involved in broader societal issues, prominent among which are HIV/AIDS, sexual behaviour and health, leadership and skills training, youth entrepreneurship, ethnic relations, and community service. Methodologies include training, mentoring, volunteer opportunities such as peer education and counselling, and creation of youth-friendly space for socializing, informal discussions, and housing resources.

The Scouts Association of Guyana is co-educational and open to children and youth 7-19 years old. Scout activities are mainly outdoor-based skills training and community service as a means for personal development and building values while having fun. The Scouts Association functions entirely through volunteers, at present with some 60 adult leaders and trainers and 500 children and youth, with further growth challenged by the need to attract and retain adult volunteers. The Scouts Association is in the process of establishing a Secretariat to expand and improve services.

Youth Challenge Guyana (YCG) was formally established in 1990 to recruit Guyanese youth for community development projects in collaboration with Youth Challenge International in Guyana. YCG evolved into an independent NGO active in youth skills and leadership development, women’s empowerment, HIV/AIDS education, literacy and youth health education encompassing TB, malaria and substance abuse. YCG works in all of the hinterland regions, including through the National Volunteer Teacher Programme in partnership with Ministry of Education and VSO Guyana.

Volunteer Youth Corps (VYC) (see Case Study) evolved from a ‘work-study’ hospital visiting program in 1996 to a community-based NGO with a national reach. VYC partners with local, regional and international private and public sector organizations to implement programs that respond to various social issues particularly in the areas of health, education, youth empowerment through mentoring, entrepreneurial skills training and HIV/AIDS, peer counselling and including workplace support.

President’s Youth Award Republic of Guyana (PYARG) was introduced to Guyana in 1998, adopted from the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Programme to fulfill a
recommendation of the National Youth Policy. PYARG is a semi-autonomous NGO whose patron is the President of Guyana. The organization is housed and sponsored through the MCYS. The program is structured according to three levels, bronze, silver and gold, requiring progressively more commitment, skills training and personal development. Each award category serves as an incentive for PYARG volunteers and is a testimony of their commitment and dedication to volunteering for Guyana’s development. The work of PYARG is principled on civic engagement and community service which extends to eight of the ten administrative regions of Guyana. Volunteers are typically community-based adult volunteers, however older more mature youths are often recruited to serve in various resource capacities. Due to its organizational relationship with a government the publicity around PYARG tends to be politicized. Although the work of PYARG is national in scope, its annual budget allocation does not allow accommodation of the total number of community-service demands it attracts. This too also creates the public perception that PYARG is unable to adequately fulfill its high expectations in various regions and communities. The organization is cognizant of these and other challenges and is keen on strengthening its organizations and service delivery capacities as it continues to provide an invaluable service to all Guyanese.

Guybernet, coordinated and led by youth, specializes in information technology, community service, and dialogue on local, national and international topical issues. Guybernet is currently rehabilitating its organizations structure and strengthening its core focus. Young Voices Guyana, formed in 2008 by and for young persons with disabilities, focuses on advocacy and personal development.

In addition, numerous NGOs and CBOs have youth wings or affiliated youth groups, an effective way of nurturing and mentoring youth volunteers, including in organizational leadership and management. For example, Guyana Red Cross Society, Pomona Women and Youth Reaching Out, and Hope for All have youth groups, as do Rotary and Lions Club. Youth Advocacy Movement, established and funded by Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association, operates a Youth Centre catering for youth sexual and reproductive health and counselling. Youth Advocacy Movement also provides Family Life Education for youth groups and other interested organizations.

5. Volunteers in Guyana

5.1 Operational Definitions of Volunteering

VIOs were asked how they define ‘volunteer’ for the purposes of their operations, or their ‘Operational Definition of Volunteering’. Nearly half of the responses were based on the motivation and willingness of the volunteer.

Operational Definitions of Volunteering based on Motivation and Willingness:

- Volunteers are people who willingly applied [to the NGO] without expectation of pay.
- Persons who provide their services free of any form of remuneration or financial incentives.
- Those with willingness and desire to give selfless service for the betterment of their community.
- Doing work without expectation of payment, operating from a clear framework about intentions.
- They love what they're doing from the heart. [Their] passion and motivation is often based on personal experience. They come in and ask what needs doing.
More commonly, the responses entailed an administrative or procedural definition of volunteering, in some cases through comparisons to staff contracts and recruitment procedures. In most cases, administrative definitions were based on tasks, roles or job categories considered appropriate for volunteers.

Several VIOs cited the commitments entailed in an employee-employer relationship in their operational definition of volunteers. They consider staff to be permanent personnel for whom the organization facilitates employee benefits such as National Insurance Scheme payments. But other organizations keep staff, including senior managers and executives, on fixed term contracts that don’t entail additional benefits and obligations on the part of the employer.

Distinctions between VIO staff and volunteers often have transitional areas which tend to depend on the availability of funding or funded projects. Many staff persons start as volunteers. Volunteers are sometimes considered as a recruitment pool to fill staff vacancies, and a volunteer position may be used as a probationary or internship period for employment. Volunteers may convert to being paid staff for the duration of a funded project and, at the close of the project, may return to volunteering. At the same time, staff may also volunteer additional time with their employing NGO.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational Definitions of Volunteering based on Administrative Criteria:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 12 job categories for volunteers, e.g. ushers, ticket attendants, hosting, crowd management. Others are paid, e.g. accreditation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Task-based: cooking, home visits and support, taking children to clinics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deliver training and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Volunteers do the regional and hands-on work...each region has a volunteer coordinator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unpaid labour including by beneficiaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Members are volunteers and participate in short-term projects or events, or up to six months to a year in community work. Staff bring skills that fill the criteria of an advertised job description.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The organization looks for skills and time commitment in volunteers. Staff are permanent and work daily.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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5.2 Who are Volunteers?

By far the bulk of volunteering is undertaken in communities informally and with minimal organizational structure. This includes numerous faith-based women’s, men’s, and youth and children’s groups centred around churches, mosques and mandirs, as well as numerous community-based groups and sports clubs. People may not think of themselves as volunteers. They simply participate in the social life and well-being of their community. They “do stuff”, “give back” or “emulate Jesus”. At the grassroots level, volunteerism blends into people’s daily lives, spiritual beliefs and personal relationships, and their sense of belonging and social connectedness.

In order to get a picture of volunteers involved with more structured organizations, VIOs were asked to estimate basic demographic information about their volunteers (median age range, gender, highest level of education completed, and occupations).

Some general trends emerge from the information given. Many organizations that do not specifically target youth identified young adults, about 20-35 years of age, as their main group of volunteers. These organizations work in the sectors of sports, education (literacy), HIV/AIDS and health (home nursing). Gender ratios vary from 100% female to
equal numbers of male and female volunteers, and it seems that males are more active in HIV/AIDS programs.

Age information for 880 volunteers who applied to the ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007 indicates that more than half of the volunteers (530) were under the age of 30 years, and 36% (316) were 18-23 years of age. The opportunity to volunteer with the ICC CWC 2007 event in Guyana was clearly attractive to young people.

Older volunteers, including retirees, are prominent in organizations and programs that require considerable experience and life skills. For example, volunteers associated with the Mothers’ Union Parenting Programme and Help and Shelter are mainly 30 years of age or older, in part because they are invited or selected based on their maturity and qualifications. Seniors are prominently involved in delivering services to other seniors. For example, Archers and Byers Senior Citizens’ Homes are operated by Boards and management mainly composed of seniors.

In terms of income level, the information suggests that many low to middle income people volunteer, including many who are unemployed, students, retired or not wage-earners. Among professionals, teachers, health professionals, and social workers stand out for their involvement in volunteering.

5.3 Gender

With a few exceptions, volunteering is dominated by women. Women are the main caregivers for disabled persons, and they are disproportionately represented among the volunteers of NGOs and CBOs that focus on social issues. About 90% of volunteers with Help and Shelter, Mothers’ Union Parenting Program and CBR are women. School-based mentoring programs typically have difficulty in attracting sufficient numbers of male volunteers to match with boys on the waiting list, particularly important for boys from female-headed households. Service clubs tend to have more nearly equal numbers of men and women and, at the same time, they draw larger numbers of professional, well educated and wealthy members.

Women are the mainstay of community-based voluntary activities, community development groups and other CBOs and FBOs. While some members of women’s groups are childless or single parents, most have spouses who typically support or participate in the group’s activities. Belonging to a women’s group is already in a sense an ‘empowerment filter’ because women whose spouses are domineering or violent are typically prevented or afraid of joining.

About 75% of the applicants to the ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007 volunteer program were female. The ICC World Twenty20 West Indies 2010 event recalled 157 volunteers in nearly equal numbers of males and females. The basic demographic information available in the events databases was supplemented by a written survey given to ICC World Twenty20 West Indies 2010 volunteers. The responses suggest that, in this group, women tend to be more engaged in volunteer activities than men, especially with NGOs and FBOs. There was no significant difference in employment status between men and women, or those who indicated extensive volunteer activity and those who didn’t.
Interestingly, when volunteers with Help and Shelter and ICC World Twenty20 West Indies 2010 were asked if they had any personal experience of gender impact on volunteering, both groups overwhelmingly answered no, suggesting that gender disparity among volunteers is not related to overt discrimination.

Gender disparity increases with the age cohort of volunteers, possibly in part due to the greater involvement of men in the formal workforce and, in the senior cohort, the tendency for women to outlive men. Among groups that specifically target youth, gender ratios vary from about 30% to 65% male, with the highest percentage of males in the National Hinterland Secure Livelihoods Programme of the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs. Seniors’ groups are typically 95% or more female.

When one male parenting facilitator with Mothers’ Union found difficulty in attracting men, he took his parenting course to locations where sizeable groups of men from various cultural backgrounds would often socialize. At these locations he found the men to be quite receptive. Eventually the course ‘graduated’ to the ‘bottom house’ of a few interested men who opened their homes to provide a reliable venue for continued learning. The point is that the facilitator was able to engage men quite successfully by taking the course to the men, into venues in which they felt comfortable.

A UNICEF-funded parent education project that aims to increase the engagement of fathers with their children uses male facilitators in men-only sessions, and seeks to address issues that interest men, for example men’s health, fathering, conflict resolution and family relationships. Men are encouraged to bring their friends to PTA meetings, as a strategy for increasing their comfort level and attendance.

These experiences extend into community men’s groups. Men themselves feel the need to develop something attractive to men, and “get men to meet at a different level”.

### 5.4 Recruitment and Matching of Volunteers

Five recurring volunteer recruitment themes emerged during this study. These are:
- **Media advertising and posters** - media advertising and posters are commonly used to call for applications. Posters are particularly practical in hinterland communities. Some VIOs, for example CBR, leave pamphlets at strategic locations, for example, RDC offices, health centres and churches.
- **Informal passive recruitment** - is common through word of mouth and invitations that active volunteers give to friends and contacts, or during outreach, church or community activities. High profile organizations feel no need to recruit as they are continuously approached by prospective volunteers, for example Guyana Red Cross Society.
- **Workshops and training initiatives** - organizations that offer courses, trainings or workshops might use these as an opportunity to invite participants to apply or register as volunteers, for example Varqa Foundation and St. John Association. They might also
direct invitations to the strongest participants, effectively using the training as a prescreening opportunity. Interestingly, after Red Thread workshops, some participants simply identify themselves with Red Thread without any formal connection.

- **Cohort and sector targeted** - depending on program needs, organizations will target their promotions to particular venues, for example, seeking volunteers in schools, businesses, or tertiary institutions.
- **Experience and skills focused** - for programs requiring a particular set of skills, qualifications and or maturity, organizations ask for recommendations from their local contacts or from community leaders. For example, Mothers’ Union Parenting Programme works through the recommendations of Selection Committees, or church and community leaders. Similarly, national organizations will use their regional networks to recruit volunteers to implement local programming.

Volunteers are matched to roles on the basis of interests, experience, skills, qualifications, and location, and in more structured programs, on the basis of identified needs. The application process generally includes a form and a personal interview, on which basis the prospective volunteer is assigned. The ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007 volunteer program included a brief public presentation as part of their screening and matching process. In some cases, the process is informal, with the volunteer spending some time in the office forming relationships, familiarizing themselves with operations and their own level of comfort, and identifying their niche.

### 5.5 Development of Volunteers

Virtually all organizations develop volunteers through training, but this can take many different forms, including formal training, internships, work experience, field visits, mentoring and support visits, and opportunities for upgrading seminars and special trainings. At Red Thread for example, the stimulating work environment encourages engagement and analysis, and tasks are used as informal training opportunities. CBR and Varqa Foundation have an accreditation agreement with Institute of Distance and Continuing Education (IDCE) for certification on successful completion of courses. Volunteers also receive specialized training with the support of external partners including IDCE, USAID, and the American University of Peace Studies. Some internationally affiliated organizations, such as St. John Association and Guyana Red Cross Society, are able to grant their own recognized certification in their areas of expertise.

Donor-sponsored overseas or regional Caribbean trainings and conferences can be used both as a reward for committed volunteers, and a means of further development.

Volunteers are also developed through involvement in strategic, organizational and project planning; staff, stakeholder and donor meetings; monitoring and evaluation; planning and implementing activities, and decision-making. Volunteers can become voting members in some organizations (e.g. VYC, CBR), or elect a representative to the Board of Directors (e.g. HS). Volunteers are encouraged to bring forward their ideas and initiatives. Roadside Baptists Centre delegates volunteers to represent the organization in consultations and networking, and report back.

Interesting and challenging travel and volunteer roles motivate volunteers and expose them to new learning experiences. In addition, the sponsoring of affiliated youth groups or youth arms is an investment in the next generation of volunteers, including leaders for the voluntary sector and beyond.
5.6 Support to Volunteers

5.6.4 Stipends, Living Allowances and In-Kind Support

Stipends and living allowances are one of the most contentious recurring themes in volunteerism, and VIOs in Guyana show considerable creative variety in handling volunteer support within their means and capacity. Direct comparisons between organizations are difficult, as many factors need to be taken into account, for example organizational policy guidelines, partnership agreements, full-time versus part-time work, treatment of expenses incurred, and in-kind support. In some cases, travel and other expenses are covered separately from the stipend; in other cases, expenses are intended to be paid out of the stipend. Volunteers may also fund their own activities, and some would consider this to be the ‘true’ definition of volunteering.

In current practice among structured VIOs in Guyana, full-time volunteers are generally given a stipend or living allowance, especially those volunteers who relocate to undertake a placement away from their home community. Examples of support for full-time volunteers include the following.

- Volunteer teachers (unqualified) with YCG / Ministry of Education / VSO, National Volunteer Teacher Programme are given $37000/month living allowance with accommodation and expenses for travel to the placement location provided. An additional $2000/month is banked and paid out to the volunteer on completion the ten month term. The Programme also has an understanding with the Cyril Potter College of Education whereby volunteer experience is credited during the application procedure.
- Community-based youth (15-24 years old) volunteers with Ministry of Amerindian Affairs / VSO, National Hinterland Secure Livelihoods Programme are given $10000/month allowance with work-related travel expenses provided and $1000 per diem for community visits requiring overnight stays. Their involvement in agricultural livelihood projects enables them to generate additional income, and $20000/month is banked and paid out to the volunteer on completion their two year term.
- A long-term self-taught volunteer Chief Librarian with a regional NGO is given a stipend of $30000/month.
- 24-hour on-call emergency Hot Line volunteers with a national NGO receive a stipend of $25000/month.
- Long-term full-time volunteers with a national NGO receive a stipend of $40000/month with work-related travel expenses provided.
- Community-based youth (18-25 years old) field workers recruited as national UN Volunteers receive a monthly living allowance of about $93000/month with assignment-related expenses provided, as well as life, health and disability insurance, and health insurance for up to three dependents.
- National UN Volunteer Specialists (minimum age 25 years, bachelor degree and minimum 5 years of professional work experience) receive a monthly living allowance of about $120000/month which is intended to cover basic monthly living expenses including accommodation, utilities and family support, with assignment-related expenses provided, life, health and disability insurance, health insurance for up to three dependants, and resettlement allowance of about $120000/year for satisfactory service.

Part-time volunteers undertake a great variety of roles and time commitments. Of the 18 organizations for which we have detailed information about their management of part-time volunteers, ten support some of their volunteers through a stipend.

Whether volunteers are supported by stipends is determined by several different factors such as the funding situation, the volunteer’s level of commitment, and the demands of the position. Some organizations may give stipends for trainers, educators, or coordinators (e.g. literacy educators, first-aid trainers), for roles requiring travel, or for night
work (e.g. sex worker outreach). Peer educators with more casual self-managed roles and ‘stand-by’ volunteers for disaster preparedness may receive stipends for training expenses.

Stipend amounts vary greatly. Even within the same organization, stipends may be weighted to account for the time and travel requirements of different volunteer roles (e.g. regional coordinators compared to community-based volunteers). In most cases, the stipend is meant to cover expenses incurred in volunteering, with the possibility of some small excess as ‘appreciation’. Examples of stipends reported were:

- $15000-35000/month for regional coordinators, depending on travel required which they were expected to pay from the stipend;
- $15000/month for about 10 hours/week of teaching;
- $1000 per one-hour session of teaching;
- $23000/month for 8-9 hours/week of home-based care requiring travelling;
- $16000/month for night workers putting in approximately 25 hours/week; and
- $2000/day for professional volunteers as an out-of-town per diem with travel expenses covered.

Several NGOs specified that payment of stipends and expenses depends on the availability of funding, and others use their discretion to pay or adjust levels based on the need of the particular volunteer. In some organizations, a volunteers’ group organizes fundraising events to support volunteer expenses. The volunteers’ group maintains its own bank account, with financial oversight and management assistance from a staff accountant.

In-kind forms of support include refreshments, meals, transportation, donations of clothing or other materials when available, and manuals or training materials. T-shirts, hats or uniforms identifying the organization or program are popular with volunteers, and good for public relations and publicity. They can also facilitate the volunteer’s work by enhancing their credibility and professional appearance, for example in outreach and peer education targeting at-risk or vulnerable populations in their communities or places of work (e.g. commercial sex workers).

### 5.6.5 Volunteer Stipends in the Context of the Labour Situation

The labour situation (i.e. primarily standard wage adequate employment levels) in Guyana causes a dilemma in the determination of appropriate levels for volunteer stipends, particularly in the case of full-time volunteers. For example, the UNV monthly living allowance of $93000 for full-time national volunteers (field worker) is based on assessment of the costs of food, accommodation, transportation and other basic contextual factors with the consideration that the volunteer should not be under pressure to pursue other livelihood activities so that their volunteer engagement is compromised. Hence, this level of payment could be regarded a baseline for a living wage all things being equal.

Another aspect to the dilemma is that in the current labour situation multiple livelihood strategies for some income brackets have become mainstream resulting in greater demands for volunteer stipends and living allowances.

For many people, regular well paid employment is a goal and source of status, so that the term ‘volunteer’ can be disparaging in the sense of someone who hasn’t been able to find paid work, or an unemployed or underemployed person with time on their hands. One of the incentives for volunteering is the opportunity to acquire work experience that can be cited on a resume and used to find paid employment. Particularly among youth, the ‘outstanding volunteer’ who merits recognition might be the one who has managed to find a paid job as a result of their volunteer experience.79
5.7 Recognition and Reward

The most usual way of recognizing volunteers is through the presentation of awards for ‘Most Outstanding Volunteer’, and certificates, plaques or tokens of appreciation or for years of service. The ceremony might be timed to coincide with International Volunteers Day or some other significant date, for example World Red Cross Day or World First Aid Day, or a Graduation ceremony for completion of trainings. Apart from annual events, informal social gatherings are popular. Some organizations award T-shirts to their volunteers or in-kind contributions from businesses or overseas donations. Community and faith-based groups in particular like to recognize their volunteers through an in-kind material reward.

Two organizations specified rewarding their volunteers through providing good references. But it is likely that this practice is more common. Interesting unusual rewards included highlighting a volunteer in a newsletter or on Facebook, or through a media interview. Particular merit and commitment was also recognized by inviting volunteer participation in a special project, or an overseas training opportunity.

5.8 Motivations

There is a dichotomy in volunteer motivations that has its origin in the difficult economic situation in Guyana, particularly as it affects youth. Many VIO staff observed that many ‘volunteers’ or would-be ‘volunteers’ are motivated by stipends, and that some look for the best stipend. We often heard some variation of the comment that “the spirit of volunteerism is dead in Guyana” and that “volunteers look for stipends”. In an interesting twist, some volunteers who have benefited from volunteerism and consider themselves to be “paying back” insist that they not be called ‘volunteers’ as the term has become associated with expectations of stipends.
In general when we asked volunteers directly about their motivations, the responses were idealistic and inspiring. The most committed of volunteers are often motivated by a life-changing experience connected with volunteerism. In many cases, volunteers started as beneficiaries. For example, women who were helped to extricate themselves from abusive relationships may volunteer in domestic violence programs. Persons living with HIV/AIDS who have experienced the care and concern of volunteers may become HIV/AIDS volunteers themselves. Persons with disabilities move on to support other persons with disabilities and their families.

Young persons who have the opportunity to be involved in volunteer exchanges go on to treat volunteerism and community work as a lifelong pursuit. The personal growth, leadership skills and broadening experiences of volunteerism make a lasting impact on the lives of volunteers and their capacity to give.

6. Contributions to Development

6.1 Contributions to Millennium & National Development Goals

Investigation of the development contributions of the Voluntary and Nonprofit Sector was structured around the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and additional National Development Goals (NDGs) based on Guyana’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)\(^a\). Organizations were asked to identify which goals they contributed to and to give examples of how\(^b\). In Georgetown, 72 NGOs (including old students’ associations, service clubs and professional associations) and FBOs responded. We were also able to gather information for an additional 39 organizations in all ten administrative regions. The MDGs and NDGs share common elements and, hence, in the following section contributions are discussed thematically rather than in strictly numerical order.

NGOs that identified themselves as contributing to MDG #1 (Target 1) generally did so on the basis of vocational skills or livelihoods training programs. In contrast, FBOs involved in MDG #1 more often cited charitable donations, or sheltering the homeless. NGOs and FBOs that contributed to MDG #1 (Target 2) did so primarily through feeding programs or charitable donations. In general, seemingly neither NGOs nor FBOs have the capacity to address underlying causes of poverty and hunger, except in the form of social research and advocacy, or through targeting impoverished hinterland or coastal communities (NDG #6), or vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities or single parents. Some regional NGOs are involved in agricultural or livestock-rearing projects to generate income.

Organizations contributing to MDG #2 are involved in children’s literacy programs, volunteer teaching programs, supporting orphans and vulnerable children, or direct support to schools, parents or teachers. Among these, the work of numerous Parent-Teacher, Community-Teacher, or Parent-Teacher-Friend Associations for primary schools should be noted, although they were not explored in detail for this Study and are not included in the table below. Interestingly, projects and programs that target youth and adult literacy and numeracy found it difficult to locate their efforts in the MDG/NDG framework except, possibly, as NDG #3, ‘investment in human capital’. Numerous Georgetown-based organizations (32/72), and some in the regions (14/39) responded positively to NDG #3, usually based on provision of skills training or mentoring to beneficiaries. In fact, it is likely that most organizations contribute to this goal in that virtually all provide training and growth opportunities for their volunteers. However, old students’ and alumni associations, as well as School Boards (presently limited to secondary schools) recorded many of their contributions under NDG #4, ‘infrastructure’. Other contributions to NDG #4 include service clubs involved in the provision of potable water.
Contributions to MDG #3 (30/72 and 20/39) were mainly related to prevention of gender-based or domestic violence, but also to reproductive health, empowerment, skills training, and the adoption of gender equality as a core value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)</th>
<th>Number of NGOs</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgetown (n=72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1: Target 1 - Eradicate extreme poverty</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1: Target 2 - Eradicate extreme hunger</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4: Reduce child mortality</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5: Improve maternal health</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 6: Target 1 - Combat HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 6: Target 2 - Combat malaria and other diseases</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of organizations (27/72 and 16/39) involved in MDG #6 (Target 1), ‘HIV/AIDS’, reflects emphasis placed on this sector by donor agencies and government. HIV/AIDS also tends to be the focus of larger, more structured, regionally based organizations. Most organizations work in areas of awareness, prevention, peer education, and supporting orphans and vulnerable children. In fact, all respondents to the National Composite Index survey in reference to the Guyana HIV and AIDS Strategy reported that NGOs are main providers of non-clinical services. In general, only a few organizations undertake activities that require professional and technical qualifications, such as Voluntary Counselling and Testing, and treatment. This is also illustrated by the relative paucity of organizations contributing to MDGs #4, #5, and #6 (Target 2). Those that do address these particular MDGs generally do so through initiatives under their HIV/AIDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NGO Contributions to National Development Goals (NDGs)</th>
<th>Number of NGOs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgetown (n=72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1: Job-generating economic growth</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 2: Stronger institutions and better governance</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3: Investment in human capital, with emphasis on basic education and primary health</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4: Physical infrastructure: safe water, sanitation services, roads, drainage, irrigation, housing</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5: Improved social safety nets</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 6: Special intervention programs to address regional pockets of poverty</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
programming, for example prevention of mother-to-child transmission, nutrition, and TB referrals.

Organizations that identified contributions to MDG #7 were mainly involved in community clean up activities or raising environmental awareness, including around the Low Carbon Development Strategy. A few groups are promoting ‘thinking green’ in their own behaviours, for example by using dishes and cutlery at functions, rather than disposable wares. The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs National Hinterland Secure Livelihoods Programme promotes integrated organic farming and multiple crops, rather than slash-and-burn agriculture. It should also be noted that our sampling of organizations missed numerous youth and children’s environmental or wildlife clubs that focus on teaching young people an appreciation of nature in Guyana, including birds, wildlife, flora and the biodiversity of the natural environment.

Out of 72 national and Georgetown-based NGOs, the greatest number (33/72) responded positively to MDG #8, based on their international affiliations, or relations with international agencies or diaspora contacts. Considerably fewer regional organizations (8/39) identified international links.

Many organizations (30/71 and 18/39) identified with NDG #5, ‘social safety nets’, given their focus on vulnerable persons and meeting the immediate needs of the impoverished or disadvantaged. This is also an area of particular concern for numerous informal unstructured community and faith-based groups who ‘share and care’ out of compassion.

6.2 Piloting Measurement of Volunteer Hours

To further explore the contributions of volunteerism to social development goals, we undertook a pilot investigation to measure volunteer hours.

Twenty VIOs, including VIOs based in regions 2, 4, 6 and 7, estimated the hours that their local volunteers contribute to projects or programs, and periodic events. Given the Study’s focus on national volunteerism, the hours of international volunteers were not included. Estimates were arrived at by counting (or approximating) the number of volunteers attached to each activity or program, and the average number of hours worked per volunteer. For periodic events, the number of participating volunteers was multiplied by the duration and frequency of the event. The total volunteer hours were normalized to a weekly basis. The subtotals for events and programs or activities were added to determine the approximate total collective hours/week for the organization.

The 20 organizations together account for more than 8000 volunteer hours/week, the equivalent of more than 200 full-time workers. The volunteer hours of national UN Volunteer working with Voluntary, Public (Government) and Private (Chambers of Commerce) Sector organizations in regions 4, 6 and 10 under the Enhanced Public Trust, Security and Inclusion (EPTSI) Project bring the total volunteer hours to nearly 10000 hours/week, or nearly 250 full-time workers.
The results of this exercise should be viewed with caution and interpreted in the spirit intended, as a pilot and an opportunity for learning. It was difficult to ensure systematic and uniform reporting for various reasons.

- Even in the 20 VIOs considered, some categories of volunteers were omitted, either because their time was too difficult to approximate, or because it wasn’t clear to what extent they should be considered volunteers. For example, the Disaster Preparedness programs of GRCS and ADRA maintain numerous volunteers on a ‘stand-by’ roster. To illustrate the significance of ‘stand-by’ volunteers, Red Cross volunteer hours of during the floods of 2005 were roughly estimated at 12000 hours, or 2000 hours/week sustained over a 6-week period. Blood donors were also omitted from the Red Cross volunteer hours. Several organizations have affiliated Seniors’ Groups or Clubs that meet primarily as social and mutual support groups. Their time was not counted, but it should be.
- The volunteer time of Boards of Directors was not included in most cases. However, for Operational or Executive Boards, and quasi-boards such as Advisory Committees, this approach was less tenable. In retrospect, an attempt should have been made to explicitly estimate Board hours.
- The exercise was undertaken quite informally by simply asking organizations to provide estimates. However, VIOs should consider implementing a routine system for recording volunteer numbers and hours, if they don’t already do this. Perhaps recording volunteer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Number of Volunteers (estimated)</th>
<th>Collective hours/week (estimated)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mothers’ Union, Diocese of Guyana - Parenting Program</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varqa Foundation</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Amerindian Affairs - National Hinterland Secure Livelihoods Programme (Region 1)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventist Development &amp; Relief Agency (ADRA)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comforting Hearts (Region 6)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACT - Family Awareness Consciousness Together (Region 6)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Programme</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana Red Cross Society (GRCS)</td>
<td>&gt; 40</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana Volunteer Consultancy (GVC)</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitat for Humanity Guyana</td>
<td>30/month</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help and Shelter</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope for All (Region 2)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope Foundation (Region 7)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Thread Women’s Development Organization</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roadside Baptist Church Skills Training Centre</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John Association of Guyana</td>
<td>75-80</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Bricklayers (Region 6)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Youth Corps (VYC)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Challenge Guyana (YCG)</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>2330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President’s Youth Award Republic of Guyana (PYARG)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>8156</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNV Enhanced Public Trust, Security and Inclusion Project</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>9956</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
hours should be considered as a component of accountability, analogous to financial accountability and with figures publicly available. It could certainly contribute to recognizing and valuing volunteers and crediting their time, especially in recording volunteer hours as work or practicum experience.

- It was difficult to capture the volunteer hours involved in occasional or annual events, for example related to fundraising, promotion, recognition or advocacy. In general, these were summed for the year, and then divided by 44 weeks to make some allowance for customary holidays and leave.
- Double-counting of hours needs to be avoided in the case of VIOs that make use of volunteers mobilized by other entities (e.g. Habitat for Humanity).

While these 20 organizations accumulate an impressive number of the weekly volunteer hours, this is quite clearly a miniscule fraction of the total hours that are given by all the CBOs, FBOs and informal unstructured groups at grassroots level. Taking Bartica as an example, three women have gotten together to form ‘Golden Girls’ and collectively devote some 37.5 hours/week to feed about 30 school children. The 13 members of the School Board, who look after the Three-Mile and Bartica Secondary Schools, collectively volunteer about 10 hours/week. Seven women and three men from the Baptist Church together spend some 15 hours/week with out-of-town students who reside at the Secondary School dormitory. Another six men spend an average of about 4.5 hours/week visiting prison inmates. This already amounts to an additional 67 volunteer hours/week for Bartica alone, and we lack estimates for the Parent-Teacher Associations, the 31 members of a very active Lions Club, and the numerous other faith-based and community groups.

7. Best Practices, Challenges, Case Studies and Support Infrastructure

NGOs and VIOs identified many common themes in Best Practices and challenges at various levels ranging from organizational networking to internal organizational functioning, to working with volunteers. The dynamic processes involved in the development of Best Practices and in overcoming challenges are further illustrated in organizational Case Studies, and in the evolution of support infrastructure in the form of councils, committees and other associations of organizations.

7.1 Best Practices

Best Practices relating to networking and cooperation among NGOs include a focus on democratic governance, consultation and continuous ongoing communication. Structured member-based bodies emphasized that they are careful to consult with all member organizations, not just those represented on the executive. They move ahead once agreement is reached, working as much as possible toward consensus. The processes of evolution and decision-making are critical to generating ownership and inclusion, allowing the time and space needed for organizations to come together and build relationships based on shared values, common interests and respect.

The HIV/AIDS and health sectors stand out for the level of sustained cooperation and collaboration achieved among Government, NGOs and CSOs, and donor agencies. The strategies and experiences within these sectors undoubtedly contain valuable learning and models that could be adapted to other situations.

Many respondents cited organizational Best Practices relating to governance structures and management. It is crucial to have the right people on the Board of Directors, committed key stakeholders who understand the organization and work as a team. Almost
all organizations that implement donor-funded programs use some form of results-based management and monitoring and evaluation system. They maintain financial accounts to accepted standards, have their books audited, and submit reports as required. Good volunteer-management systems (VMS), clear policies (e.g. Confidentiality Policy, Code of Conduct, Volunteer Policy) and processes, and managing donor relations were also identified as Best Practices.

Diaspora engagement and private sector partnerships are sources of funding and volunteers for some organizations. Examples include the work of the Guyana Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GBCHA), Linden Fund, VYC HIV/AIDS workplace services and partnerships between several private sector organizations and the Ministry of Labour in areas of promoting empowerment, equality and social responsibility.

A particular niche is filled by regional organizations that take HIV/AIDS and health services to vulnerable populations in remote areas, for example Hope Foundation in Region 7 and Hope for All in Region 2. Other organizations have developed particular expertise and local knowledge for grassroots organizing and empowerment.

Empowerment was prominent among the diverse examples of Best Practices in motivating, developing and working with volunteers. Beneficiaries can be transformed into volunteers through empowering them to give; and beneficiaries, as in the CBR experience, can be the most effective of volunteers. This is a basic principle of peer education. Volunteers can also be empowered, for example through personal and skills development. Some organizations recruit volunteers from their own regions or communities, and upgrade their qualifications.

Many volunteers are motivated by opportunities to participate in planning and decision-making, by undertaking responsibilities, and through freedom and encouragement to be creative. Volunteer Support Groups benefit both the volunteers and the organization. The Volunteer Group practices some degree of self-management, coordination and peer support that can ease the staff work load. They look after volunteer interests, for example through fundraising and maintaining their own volunteer account. Oversight from the organizational accountant helps to ensure good financial management. In the case of Help and Shelter, the Volunteer Group elects a representative to the Board, and prepares a workplan to complement and extend the reach of donor-funded programs.

In the situation of volunteers attached to a program or project with a fixed lifespan, some VIOs have a closure plan in place right from the start, for example completion payments made to volunteers who finish the YCG / Ministry of Education – National Volunteer Teacher Programme or Ministry of Amerindian Affairs – National Hinterland Secure Livelihoods Programme. As mentioned previously, volunteer teachers have been given preferential access to the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE). In the first year of the National Volunteer Teacher Programme, of 11 volunteers who started, 8 finished their placements, 4 applied to CPCE, and 3 were admitted.

Of organizations that offer certification for volunteer trainings, CBR and Varqa Foundation stand out in having negotiated course accreditation with IDCE, University of Guyana. A one-year practicum as a volunteer is attached to the certification for CBR training, to deter those who might come only for the training and certificate. St. John Association prides itself on maintaining its high training standards and internationally recognized certification.

NGOs that sponsor a semi-autonomous Youth Club or Branch use this as means of mentoring and developing youth, including in leadership and organizational skills. It also allows the organization to foster a pool of new volunteers and potential successors. Youth are attracted by an open door policy that welcomes all comers. YCG attracts youth through its ‘spicy’ and professionally relevant volunteer experiences and makes good use of networking to maintain contact with past volunteers.
The programs of many FBOs are premised in personal spiritual development and community transformation, but operate in an inclusive non-denominational or secular framework. They incorporate moral and ethical values, as well as civic and social values, for example good citizenship, sense of community, and volunteering ethos, in an approach that cultivates the spirit of volunteerism.

7.2 Challenges

While organizations cited their sound management practices and compliance with donor requirements, strategic planning is a challenge, in part relating to constant financial pressures. Many organizations find inherent contradictions between being donor-driven and pursuing their organizational vision and mission. Organizations that see their vision in terms of societal or social transformation feel that their goals are subordinated to a project cycle. Interestingly NGOs are also criticized by external stakeholders for their ‘donor-driven’ mentality. Organizations that struggle to support themselves feel that secure core funding would enable better strategic planning and volunteer management. They are under constant pressure to generate projects, proposals and reports to ensure funding continuity. In order to move ahead and improve their effectiveness, some organizations would like to devise a business plan, own their own building and engage more full-time professional staff.

Funding pressures also emerged as a challenge to networking, collaboration and organizational connectivity. The lack of funds, personnel and time explicitly allocated to developing relationships and networking leads NGOs to limit themselves to their primary program and project interests. Especially for regional groups, travel costs involved in networking can be prohibitive. The absence of a national agency and national strategy makes it difficult to overcome narrow thinking. Representatives of organizations were criticized for uncooperative attitudes, unwillingness to share information, and a tendency to see themselves as competing for spheres of influence and limited resources, including volunteers.

Respondents gave many examples of the challenges to sustaining volunteerism, including funding for volunteer expenses and stipends. Many VIOs treat volunteer support as a discretionary item, paid when funds allow or based on the volunteer’s need. High expectations are placed on the relatively small number of persons who volunteer, and skilled committed volunteers commonly undertake multiple engagements. In many cases, groups or organizations are too dependent on a single leader or a few active volunteers, and vulnerable to migration out of the community or out of the country. Volunteers and community groups in areas with many itinerant workers and severe social problems feel particularly challenged to foster engagement and positive change.

Volunteer efforts are not well supported. Volunteer contributions are not well appreciated or recognized, and volunteers and VIOs may be blamed for problems that they are unable to address, for example as we heard from School Boards and PTAs.

Engaging new sources of volunteers is a challenge, including the elderly and youth. Many respondents cited the difficulty in attracting youth for sustained volunteering commitments, or the poor quality of education and lack of skills that limits their capacity. For sensitive work, being able to adequately screen volunteers is an additional constraint.

Volunteers and VIOs have to contend with socioeconomic barriers. Those who are unemployed cannot afford any additional expense that might be incurred in volunteering. Persons with regular employment have little time to volunteer. At the same time,
organizations may be dependent on volunteer professionals to deliver services. Some respondents expressed a sense of injustice or unfairness regarding disparities and expectations around volunteering, for example the comment that “volunteerism is promoted by people with very handsome stipends”.

There are also socioeconomic disparities and disparities in opportunities between Georgetown and the regions, and between coastal and hinterland regions. Residents of hinterland regions often identify volunteerism with international volunteers, based on their experience. They feel they are recipients of, rather than participants in, volunteer initiatives. At the same time, it is difficult for national NGOs to garner resources for hinterland programs. Many national NGOs are not able to reach hinterland regions, and many regional programs are largely confined to one or a few population centres.

7.3 Case Study – Guyana Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme

Guyana Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme (CBR) – Hopeful Steps was initiated following ten pilot projects worldwide by the World Health Organization (WHO). The project in Guyana, while modeled on the WHO pilots, proved to be much more effective. It gained recognition as an innovative approach to dealing with issues of disability and disadvantage in the context of a developing country with limited financial resources.

The CBR project in Guyana was piloted from 1986-88, coordinated by Dr. Brian O'Toole and Ms. Geraldine Maison-Halls, with the collaboration of government ministries, community groups and the University of Guyana. CBR started work with children with disabilities on the East Bank Demerara. Over the next decade it grew to a regional program involving about 200 people. It made novel use of participatory methods and community consultation in project design and application.

The pilot project established the efficacy of recruiting and training community volunteers to provide support for disabled persons in their community. More than that, it demonstrated the commitment of the community-based volunteers.

“...volunteers soon became deeply involved in the project and were eager to meet together to discuss their anxieties, doubts and to share their successes. A sense of belonging soon emerged and the volunteers came to regard the project as their own.”

The CBR experience and the strategies that arose from it were a prototype of sustainable and participatory development approaches, for example: consult communities, build relationships, nurture the family’s and the community’s capacity to cope, and community ownership. The emphasis was, and is, on “enabling communities to help themselves”. Personal development empowered ‘beneficiaries’ and enabled them to transition into roles as volunteers and agents in the further growth and evolution of the CBR Programme.

The CBR Programme expanded in the coastal areas of Guyana and, subsequently, to the indigenous communities of the Rupununi region. It achieved a high level of engagement and sustained commitment from volunteers, with retention rates that exceeded 95% over 2 years, and rates of 30% over 3 years.
In the Rupununi region, CBR evolved a broad-based holistic approach that recognized the need to address the development of all children, especially during early childhood. It respected traditional societal structures by involving community leaders on CBR teams, which eventually evolved into Village Health Assemblies with elected representatives. To address the link between disability and poverty, CBR initiated a microcredit scheme to allow members access to start-up money for income-generation projects.

It was the community-based groups that came together and decided on the need for a National CBR Committee based in Georgetown. CBR extended its focus to include all persons with disabilities, whether children or adult. The first group of rehabilitation assistants trained by the Ministry of Health included CBR volunteers. CBR supported the establishment of the National Commission on Disability (NCD) in 1997. Through its regional network, CBR collaborated with NCD for conducting the first national survey on disability issues which stimulated and informed drafting of a Disability Act, passed by Parliament in 2010.

In addition to successes, CBR faced many challenges over time, for example, in leadership and government responsiveness, in sustaining funding, volunteer numbers and interest, and in the reduction of community teams that made it difficult to maintain activities. CBR now has a presence in eight of the ten administrative regions of Guyana.

Assessment of the impact of 20 years of CBR work in Guyana estimated that CBR has directly benefited about 5000 to 6000 persons with disabilities and their families. Empowerment was assessed as the area of greatest impact, in particular in countering isolation, giving opportunities to interact with others, and developing a sense of self-worth and rights.

From the perspective of mobilizing volunteers and voluntary service, the CBR model demonstrates many key lessons.

- A holistic approach responsive and relevant to community needs and aspirations, and respectful of local culture and traditions.
- Participatory processes that foster engagement and ownership.
- The use of community teams, building on existing expertise, leadership and ‘social capital’ already within the community.
- Empowerment and demystifying technical knowledge, in part through a cross-cutting approach with training designed to be accessible and appropriate for non-professionals.
- Cooperation with and support of public servants and existing government services.
- Enabling volunteers through training, ongoing support, and recognition.
- A rights-based approach to disadvantage.

CBR volunteers are fundamental to CBR’s ability to form alliances with other community organizations and the private sector, and to reach disabled persons and their families in their own homes and their own communities. Disabled persons are among the...
most powerful and passionate of the volunteers, particularly in outreach. Recently a volunteer, herself visually impaired, has been working hard (so far unsuccessfully) to help an isolated 20-year-old blind young man venture out of the house and develop skills for independence. CBR has proven to be a life-changing experience for many volunteers, whether disabled or not.

7.4 Case Study – Volunteer Youth Corps

Young persons in Guyana play a vital role in volunteerism and are involved in all levels of volunteerism support including planning, implementation and evaluation. Through their involvement, youth are exposed to additional opportunities and gain technical and social skills. The MCYS and organizations like Volunteer Youth Corps (VYC) provide short and long-term volunteer opportunities for youth volunteerism but also realize these experiences as learning opportunities and occasions for youth to contribute to Guyana’s social development. Although this case study highlights the work of VYC, it reflects a wider experience and engagement of many other similar organisations in Guyana whose objectives are primarily pursued through a mix of: (1) community outreach interventions, (2) in-house and public capacity-building and (3) multi-sector partnerships.

In 1996, a number of factors converged leading to the inception of VYC. The Minister of Health at the time, Gail Teixeira, was keen to introduce the concept of young hospital-support volunteers like ‘candy-stripers’ to Guyana. With the simultaneous dismantling of the Guyana National Service, it may be that there was a recognized need to facilitate other forms of youth service. The name itself, Volunteer Youth Corps, is reminiscent of the various corps of the GNS. However, VYC rapidly evolved into an independent youth organization led by young people with a sense of higher purpose and a passion for giving service. Maintaining good relations with the Ministry of Health while remaining neutral allowed for broad diverse participation.

VYC started at Georgetown Public Hospital as an informal group of about 9 enthusiastic work-study students, most of whom had recently finished their CXC examinations. They invited others to join until within two years the numbers grew to more than 150, including many 17-18 year old nursing students who wanted practical experience, and other young people who were thinking of becoming nurses. Over the years, about 500 young people participated, many of whom went on to become medical professionals.

VYC was a personal growth experience with lasting impact on the lives of many of the young volunteers. The hands-on work was exciting and motivating. The organization was shaped and owned by young people, and that determined the level of continued youth involvement. They were empowered by rising to challenges in an environment of mutual support and encouragement. They learned from each other and grew up in the organization. It created a sense of community and belonging, becoming like a youth club, so that volunteers were spending all their time making plans and socializing at VYC, sometimes causing concern to their parents.

I worked at the GUM [Genito Urinary Medicine] clinic at Georgetown Hospital with HIV positive people…I cried so much. VYC don’t stop you once they see you have the potential, it’s what I admire about VYC. I went on to home-based care working closely with people who are HIV positive. If you don’t go into the field, you can never know what’s going on with these people.

VYC member

We had absolutely no source of support. It was purely altruistic to the point that people were taking their own resources even if they didn’t have…It made us strong too.

VYC member
There was no stipend; rather, participants typically contributed their own resources. Whatever they had was shared among the group. They started small scale fundraising like bake sales to which family members contributed time and materials. So in addition to totally engaging the young participants, VYC also mobilized the support of families, a support that continues until now. VYC rewarded volunteers through trainings and opportunities to challenge themselves and realize their full potential.

At the outset, VYC volunteers were about 60% female, 40% male, but over time this changed to about 80% female, 20% male. Like most social service NGOs, VYC had difficulty recruiting and retaining men.

While the young volunteers developed and learned, the organization developed and learned from them. Personal transformation nurtured the evolution of the organization and brought it new skills. Interestingly, as the first members matured and the scope of their interests and concerns changed, they also influenced VYC to undertake broader engagements beyond the initial supporting roles in the health sector. The health sector work led to involvement in HIV/AIDS issues. Concerns about income generation and unemployment led to programs in youth entrepreneurship and an on-line job bank. Interest in mentoring and children led to the Big Brothers, Big Sisters Program. The difficult realities in seeking funding led to diversification into diaspora and private sector engagement, including through offering HIV/AIDS training and outreach to businesses. VYC also went through the classic phases of organizational development; forming, storming and norming. They realized they could do better projects in more areas by becoming more structured based on their own exposure and experience. In early days, one mechanism that significantly supported VYC was capacity development and mentoring through Guyana Volunteer Consultancy. This shaped the first peer education work, guided the first proposal writing, and introduced SWOT analysis and strategic planning.

VYC evolved from an informal group of young volunteers, to a structured volunteer-involving organization with varied sources of funding, including international donor agencies. There is still a strong emphasis on developing youth as volunteers. Prospective volunteers are asked what they bring to the organization and where they see themselves in a couple of years. An initial three months of volunteering is used as a probationary period before assuming the rights and responsibilities of a full voting member. Aging members can continue as Ex-officio members, or serve as volunteers with the organization or its Board.

From the perspective of VYC founders and long-term members, there is a strong sense of the distance between altruistic volunteerism and structured, incentive-driven approaches. Some consider that monies from international organizations threaten the altruistic aspects of volunteering. In HIV/AIDS programs in particular, stipends became a large expenditure reaching levels equivalent to a basic salary. Other programs suffered through not being able to compete in paying stipends to volunteers. Stipends created an elite coming for money and looking to play a narrow volunteering role with a narrowly defined job description. The view is that not many people now come to volunteering without asking for money.

As with many NGOs, donor funding and donor agendas also threatened to divert VYC away from its
own vision and into a donor view of programming. It was easy to become confined by a contract with specific deliverables, specific results, arrived at through a specific arrangement, with people focused on delivering this particular funded program to the exclusion of everything else. More time had to be spent on managing and accounting for the time of volunteers who were being given money. Managing became a greater focus than implementing. Volunteer programs outside the HIV sector were neglected. Fundraising and allotting volunteer time to other programs became difficult.

At the same time, increased donor funding and requirements also had a positive influence in bringing structure, technical depth and more careful thought into programming, as well as clarity on how to be effective. Volunteers were exposed to training and new knowledge. NGOs were able to achieve a level of cohesion that enabled them to design the response to HIV/AIDS in Guyana. But in the absence of any existing Guyanese agency, whether state or NGO, able to provide capacity-building expertise, support was dependent on donor resources.

The question now is, how do VYC and other NGOs figure out a way to be sustainable and maintain a level of buoyancy through raising their own indigenous resources? How do they once again become more mission-driven rather than project-driven, so that initiatives are owned and driven by the NGO for its intended beneficiaries?

On the collective level, the current lack of unity in the NGO community, fragmentation and competition interfere with coordination and collaboration. VYC feels the need for domestic NGOs to come together as a group to strengthen their ability to negotiate with international donors and to influence government. In VYC there is a feeling that the organization would have much to share in a national platform, for example if there was a mechanism for mentoring up-and-coming organizations. Rather than have new organizations go through the same issues and challenges, VYC founders would like to offer their experiences and expertise in organizational development.

### 7.5 Support Infrastructure for NGOs

While support infrastructure specifically promoting volunteerism in Guyana is relatively immature, there are several encouraging developments in the establishment of entities that promote NGO cooperation and collaboration, including with Government. The Government itself, in particular agencies involved in crafting the Guyana HIV and AIDS Strategy, 2007-2011, has achieved notable progress in designing a response to HIV/AIDS with ‘full and active participation’ of civil society, including NGOs\(^90\). In this context, CSOs have been recognized as strengthening policy development and contributing to commitment among political leaders. These are key achievements that should be examined to allow learning and replication in other sectors and to strengthen relationships between CSOs and Government in general.

A key participant in many of Guyana’s response to strengthen its capacity to reduce the prevalence and impact of HIV/AIDS is the **NGO Coordinating Committee (NCC).** The NCC comprises 18 member NGOs across 5 regions of Guyana and was originally formed in 2000 as a steering committee for the Implementing AIDS Prevention and Care (IMPACT) Project.\(^91\) The steering committee included six NGOs, the National AIDS Programme Secretariat, USAID, Peace Corps and the UNAIDS theme group and met monthly to coordinate project work, identify capacity-building needs, and monitor the project. The chair position rotated among the NGO members. Subcommittees and working
groups addressed specific areas, including development of operational guidelines, policies and procedures.

The inception process of the NCC can be thought of as top-down, but with ongoing capacity-building, technical and financial support it evolved into an independent member-driven NGO coalition. The NCC is a case in which long-term donor commitment and funding specifically directed toward networking fostered the development of a thriving partnership between many NGOs working in the area of HIV/AIDS reduction.

The NCC is in the process of regularizing its status by registering as a nonprofit company. While it formed to facilitate the NGO response to HIV/AIDS, the decision has been made to open its membership to other NGOs across a comprehensive spectrum of social, health and economic issues, and to seek a broader basis of funding. To reflect this evolution, it has changed its name to Network for Community Commitment. With redefinition and continued growth, NCC could evolve into an inclusive NGO support and advocacy platform. While this concept has elicited interest in the general NGO community, it seems that NCC has some distance to go to shed its image as an HIV/AIDS sector-specific association.

A number of networks or ‘umbrella’ bodies are active within the disability sector. The recently formed Council of Organizations for Persons with Disabilities arose through a bottom-up process that started with an organizing team with representatives from nine organizations planning International Day for Disabled Persons. The ‘day’ expanded into a week of activities. The team found that they worked so well together that they decided to continue meeting twice monthly. Workshops, training and activity funding from VSO Guyana facilitated their evolution into the Council with 23 member organizations. Member organizations include CBR, and the National Disabled People’s Network comprising Regional Networks of persons with disabilities in regions, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Council elections were first held in May 2009, followed by consultations to develop a Constitution. Among its advocacy activities, the Council gives input and collaborates with the National Commission on Disabilities.

Guyana Forum for Lifelong Learning (GFL) is a spokesbody for organizations and individuals involved in adult and non-formal education, including literacy programs.

The Guyana National Faith and HIV Coalition, initiated in December 2008, has 42 member organizations encompassing Hindu, Christian, Muslim, Bahá’í and Rastafarian faiths. It is in the process of registering as a nonprofit organization. The Coalition started with one-time activities, and has now recognized the need to articulate an overall mission and move ahead with strategic planning. The Coalition intends to address the social context of HIV/AIDS through broader programming involving parenting, family issues, and life skills.

Possibly the most comprehensive volunteer networks are those within faith-based organizations that connect national or central religious organizations with community churches, mandirs and mosques. As already discussed, several faith-based organizations make use of faith networks in the implementation of social development programs. Joint programs and coalitions of faith organizations have focused on issues, for example domestic violence. At community level especially, faith coalitions that focus on a cross-cutting concerns have much potential to strengthen social cohesion.

In some regions or districts, regional networks of CBOs or communities have proven to be powerful way of increasing collective voice and strength, and bringing attention and resources for local development initiatives. The Friends of St. Francis comprises the leaders of some 23 CBOs and NGOs forming a network that extends across Region 6 and into Region 5. Friends of St. Francis collectively implement numerous community development initiatives including day cares and children’s feeding programs, rehabilitation of sports facilities, literacy programs, HIV/AIDS programs, and livelihoods initiatives. They
are major partners of the UNV - EPTSI project that supports 11 young volunteers drawn from local communities.

The **North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB)** in Region 9 represents 16 indigenous communities in an interesting hybrid organization that blends local government structures into an umbrella NGO that advances district development. Incorporated as a Board under the Trust Act in 2001, NRDDB is in the process of registering as an NGO. The Board consists of the elected Toshaos of district villages and, hence, unlike most NGOs, NRDDB is a democratic representative body answerable to a constituency. At the same time unlike a District Council under the Amerindian Act, NRDDB is an independent civil society organization. NRDDB has been involved in district and community initiatives that span education, health and livelihoods, and it partners with Government Ministries, Iwokrama International Centre for Rainforest Conservation and Development, and other entities. Many of its undertakings are social enterprises that seek to ensure the livelihoods of communities and community members. NRDDB’s initiatives and partnerships to create educational (e.g. Bina Hill Institute) and economic opportunities for youth have had a major impact on reducing the migration of young people. Whereas formerly youths 14-25 years of age tended to leave, this has become less common.

Voluntarism and communal endeavour are a traditional way of life in Region 9 communities and, hence, not easy to define in current conventional terms. For example, Surama Village pioneered community-based tourism in which all community members can participate. At district level, communities cooperate in complementary tourism activities in a way that allows them to share, rather than compete for, the livelihood benefits.

The **Linden Fund Program** is a local support organization that focuses on assisting NGOs, CBOs and self-help groups in Region 10. It is the local affiliate of Linden Fund which is registered internationally. Activities supported by Linden Fund target health, education and economic challenges affecting vulnerable groups in Region 10. In addition to its focus on health, education and economic programmes, the Linden Fund also mobilises support for annual events such as the Linden Town Day which brings together communities from the entire region 10 to celebrate the cultural heritage and development of their communities.

**NGO Forum** although currently dormant is a notable initiative because the group attempted to build on the cohesiveness of the community-based and non-governmental sector by promoting partnerships, collaboration and the concept of a NGO representative body. Some of its objectives were to promote dialogue between government and civil society, partake in public policy matters such as the drafting of NGO legislation and to facilitate capacity building for NGOs and community organizations. Many of the files of this initiative are currently housed in office space at the Guyana Red Cross Society.

While not a focus of this Study, international agencies and skilled international volunteers have played a significant role in building the capacity of national NGOs and VIOs, and supporting social infrastructure. The examples above of successful NGO and community associations have generally benefited from international involvement, perhaps most importantly in brokering engagement and cooperation between Government agencies, donors and NGOs. At the same time some NGOs feel that, too often, international consultants are hired to do work that could be done by qualified Guyanese.

At the Validation Workshop for this Study, we asked ‘What factors play a role in organizational connectivity?’ Participants focused on commonalities among organizations, including values, vision and objectives; sectoral or thematic interests, target groups, geographic proximity especially for regional organizations, community and regional outreach, and individual contacts, for example shared board members and volunteers. Factors that reinforce connectivity included collective planning of programs or projects, collaboration, inclusive training opportunities, advocacy roles and obvious benefits, such
as funding, increased credibility and stature, and access to resources, technical skills and capacity development. When asked, 'What would generate interest in cultivating additional relationships?' the responses emphasized ways and means of increasing impact and effectiveness. They cited opportunities to tap into established networks, address social issues, move to higher levels of engagement and share information, as well as becoming involved in joint planning frameworks and receiving invitations to participate in critical discussions about policies and strategies.

8. Registration and Legislation

Creating an enabling legal environment for the establishment of NGOs is paramount to the further development of volunteerism.

Volunteerism and Legislation: A Guidance Note, Joint project of International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies, Inter-Parliamentary Union & UNV, 2004

8.1 Registration

In Guyana, the existing legislation pertaining to registration of voluntary organizations includes; the Companies Act, the Friendly Societies Act, and the Co-operative Societies Act, or registration by special Parliamentary Acts. Most legally registered NGOs have done so under the Friendly Societies Act or the Companies Act, in approximately equal numbers. In addition, numerous NGOs and CBOs are listed or informally registered with a relevant Government Line Ministry, for example sports and youth clubs with the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, agricultural groups with the Ministry of Agriculture, and women’s groups with the Women’s Affairs Bureau. This form of registration seems not to be governed by any legislation or policy defining its parameters.

Companies register with the Deeds Registry Authority under the Ministry of Legal Affairs. Until 1991, the ‘Company Limited by Guarantee’ section of the Companies Act allowed for not-for-profit companies with a charitable or quasi-charitable character. This was eliminated in 1991, leaving the ‘Company Limited by Shares’ as the only corporate form. Hence, there are no legal provisions that specifically recognize the unique features of not-for-profit as compared to for-profit companies. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some not-for-profit companies have registered with specially drafted by-laws.

Matters pertaining to organizations registered under the Friendly Societies Act lie under the purview of the Registrar of Friendly Societies, who is also the Chief Cooperatives Officer, Ministry of Labour. According to Minister Nadir, at present some 1054 NGOs are registered under the Friendly Societies Act, about 635 of which are considered to be functioning. Groups (of seven or more persons) can register under one of four categories in the Act: Friendly Society, Benevolent Society, Working Men’s Club, or Specially Authorized Society. The Act also allows for the registration of semiautonomous branches under a central organization. The Act is primarily designed to facilitate the legal registration of charitable or mutual benefit and relief organizations (particularly as regards sickness or mortality among the members), rather than NGOs that work programmatically to address the needs of external beneficiaries. Under ‘Specially Authorized Society’, the Minister is able to extend ‘the powers and facilities’ of the Act. The Minister can also exempt any Society from the payment of income tax.

The Act gives the Registrar and the Minister considerable discretionary powers. The Registrar can consider whether the application reflects the “intentions and objects” of those intending to form the society, and call a meeting with the named persons to determine that the objects of the society can be met. The Registrar has the authority to refuse to register a society, and any appeal is directed to the Minister.
8.2 Tax Legislation

Until 1992, individuals and companies were treated equally under the Income Tax Act regarding the eligibility of donations as deductions from taxable income. In that year, progressive income tax based on annual income was replaced by a single flat tax rate of 33 1/3% on income above a base threshold value ($420000 annually in 2010). The change in taxation policy for individuals did away with personal allowances, deductions for dependents, and deductions for donations\(^97\). The Income Tax Act still allows tax deductions for donations made by companies to ‘an ecclesiastical, charitable or educational institution, organization or endowment of a public character’\(^98\). However, charitable organizations are not legally defined\(^99\), except in the preamble to more recent legislation. For example, in the Value-Added Tax Act\(^100\) the definition of a “charity” specifies (among its criteria) a “not for gain” association, including religious institutions, charitable organizations, or any other entity, incorporated or not, that is not intended to profit any member or shareholder and is required to use any assets or income solely to further its aims and objects.

Value-added tax (VAT) was introduced in 2007 on goods and services at a rate of 16%, with certain exemptions and zero-rated basic needs\(^101\). The case is made that the new VAT and Excise Tax stimulated inflation and increased the cost of living\(^102\), including operational costs for NGOs.

8.3 Labour Legislation

In lieu of a national minimum wage for private sector employment, the Labour Act gives the Minister the authority to determine minimum wages, normal hours of work, and overtime rates for any occupations as the Minister deems advisable\(^103\). Public sector wages are governed by collective agreements negotiated with relevant unions.

8.4 Issues and Implications

There is no specific legislation or policy to address or enable the use of volunteers, and it seems that this should be preceded by revised legislation on the nonprofit and NGO sector in general. The absence of an NGO representative body makes individual NGOs vulnerable and leaves the voluntary sector without a unified credible voice on legislative and regulatory measures\(^104\). However, some civil society representatives expressed apprehension that an NGO ‘umbrella’ body could be a means to control the voluntary sector, or that it could be infiltrated by partisan interests.

A recent public communication conveyed by the government of Guyana indicated that it is interested in working with the NGO sector to standardize improved fiscal and operational practices in the interest of beneficiaries.\(^105\) Within the context of this Study, it was not possible to investigate the financial management practices of NGOs, nor was this within our mandate or expertise. Nevertheless, instances of alleged malpractice were described to us. In one case, the Board of Directors was not being given access to organizational financial statements, seemingly in collusion with some board members. In another case, donated materials intended for distribution amongst beneficiaries were showing up for sale in shop. Both the NGO community and government are keen on eradicating the causes and instances of these negative experiences. However, in the present situation of perceived relationship strains between the government and NGO sector it is clear that compromise, common ground and non-partisan are essential elements of the way forward. For example while the proposed NGO legislation is viewed by government as a means to strengthen the effectiveness of the NGO sector by standardising and regulating certain practices, many NGOs see the legislation as an
attempt by government to control and infiltrate their organizations through the establishment of regulatory mechanisms and procedures. If such legislation is to have any merit its objectives, intent as well its proposed mechanisms must be a shared pursuit that confirms to regional and international best practices.

Volunteerism is recognized as a labour issue within the context of the Decent Work Agenda of the International Labour Organization (ILO)\(^\text{106}\). One of the objectives of volunteerism policy or legislation is to exempt VIOs from some areas of labour legislation, for example minimum wages, to ensure that the protection given to workers by labour laws does not impose unnecessary and excessive burdens on VIOs\(^\text{107}\). However, Guyana does not have national minimum wage legislation, and much of the wage scale that applies to full-time public service employees\(^\text{108}\) is too low to sustain a household\(^\text{109}\). For those with family abroad, low wages are generally propped up by remittances. For example, more than 65% of public servants report supplementing their salaries with support from relatives abroad\(^\text{110}\). In urban and urbanized areas, many persons with full-time salaried work hold more than one job or try to supplement their income through other activities. For example, more than half of the minibus drivers and conductors in Georgetown are also engaged in other activities through the day, including other employment that could be their main source of income\(^\text{111}\). Salary increases and improved benefits may have alleviated the situation somewhat, but basic wages are still very low\(^\text{112}\). By 2007, only a handful of the poverty reduction indicators in the 2001 PRSP were met\(^\text{113}\).

Incentives for volunteers, in particular living allowances, need to be carefully evaluated in the context of wage levels for salaried work to avoid introducing distortions in which volunteering is more lucrative than regular employment\(^\text{114}\). At the same time, it is extremely challenging to find the appropriate balance between fair reimbursement of living expenses for full-time volunteers and the general situation in which salaries fall short of a living wage.

9. A Broader Perspective

9.1 Caribbean View

Guyana is unique in that, geographically, it lies in the South American continent while, in terms of colonial and post-colonial history and culture, it is an integral part of the Caribbean region, in particular, the former British Caribbean colonies. Guyana was instrumental in the founding of CARICOM, and it hosts both the CARICOM Secretariat and the CARIFORUM Secretariat (Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific States).

Many or most of the development challenges that Guyana faces are common to the Caribbean region and best understood in that context. Guyana is generally considered together with the ‘Small Island Developing States’ of the Caribbean and, interestingly, it has many geographic and socioeconomic features in common with true island states. These similarities include:

- A narrow economic base,
- Economic dependence on larger countries for markets and investment,
- Physical isolation and long transport distances to external markets,
- Difficult land transportation with a limited road network,
- Skills capacity gap due to small population and migration,
- Vulnerability to climatic events.

Ongoing migration and diaspora issues have stimulated initiatives at the Caribbean regional level. The Caribbean region in general has a net-migration rate (normalized emigrants minus immigrants) among the highest in the world, having lost 10–40% of its labour force to OECD countries\(^\text{116}\). Guyana is just the most extreme example in the region.
In addition to migration to OECD countries, Guyana has long supplied the Caribbean region with medical and education professionals. For example, the Health Service in St. Lucia is largely staffed by Guyanese and, in some hospitals, 40% of doctors were trained at the University of Guyana Medical School\textsuperscript{117}. Hence, the advent of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy is viewed with some alarm, for example by business owners who see themselves at a competitive disadvantage\textsuperscript{118}.

While one of the goals of CARICOM has been increased harmonization to facilitate cooperation and increase regional opportunities for its peoples, to date there is no agreed-on regional definition for youth. Member States also have a variety of parameters relating to the age of majority, marriage, voting, consumption of alcohol and other legal milestones that mark the assumption of adult rights and responsibilities.

9.2 NGO Legislation in the Caribbean Region

Civil society relationships to government are addressed in the 1992 Charter of Civil Society for CARICOM\textsuperscript{119}, which was signed by Guyana and other Caribbean states in 1997\textsuperscript{120}. However, despite the original intent, no state has passed the Charter as national legislation.

The Caribbean Community Council for Human and Social Development is promoting the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda to guide labour policy in the context of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. In moving toward harmonizing legislation, the Council for Human and Social Development emphasizes the ‘well being of workers and their families’ as a contribution to social justice, peace and poverty alleviation. The adoption of new labour standards, including in the areas of occupational safety, health, environment, and minimum wages, is seen as an incentive for increasing confidence and participation in the formal labour market\textsuperscript{121}. This is an area of particular relevance to Guyana in view of the disengagement of many workers from the formal economy.

Caribbean regional civil society interests are the purview of the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC), a coalition of Caribbean NGOs. CPDC is promoting the NGO Act of Belize 2000\textsuperscript{122} as model legislation, and as a means to harmonize laws within CARICOM states so that NGOs would function under a common legal framework regularizing their status as social partners with government. The Belize Act unifies NGO registration under a provision for ‘Company Limited by Guarantee’ in the Companies Act. Other salient features include grounding in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and recognition that NGOs are independent of Government and work to advance ‘sustainable human development’. The unique nonprofit character of NGOs is recognized through provisions for income tax exemptions for NGOs, and tax deductions for personal and business donations to NGOs. Relations with Government are managed through a ministry focal point which is given the responsibility of maintaining an NGO directory. There are no restrictions as to the number of members, unlike the Guyana Friendly Societies Act which requires a minimum of seven members. The NGO Act of Belize provides for judicial appeal in the case of disagreements, in contrast to Guyana where appeals are made to the responsible Minister.

St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and St. Kitts have drafted NGO legislation similar to the Belize Act, with technical support from the CARICOM Secretariat, and a similar Bill was presented to Parliament in Barbados in 2006\textsuperscript{123}. However, thus far legislation has not been passed in any of these states.
9.3 Models and Examples of Volunteerism Platforms

9.3.1 Government-led Initiatives

Many countries, including those in the Latin American and Caribbean region\textsuperscript{124}, have formalized volunteerism through policy or legislation which, in some cases, also mandates the establishment of some form of national mechanism for volunteering. At a minimum, legislation typically aims to promote volunteerism, as well as to regulate or advise on responsibilities and relationships of volunteers and VIOs, including regarding appropriate roles and liabilities. For example, the “Ley del Voluntariado Social”\textsuperscript{125} passed in Nicaragua in 2005 contains the sections: General provisions, The Volunteer, Measures to promote voluntary service, and Relations between the Volunteer and the Organization in which he/she participates. Legislation is also a means for mandating programs for technical assistance and capacity building for VIOs, and mobilizing, training and recognizing volunteers.

The Brazilian model of Comunidade Solidaria is an excellent example of collaboration between the voluntary sector, government of Brazil and the country’s private sector. Its formation paved the way for the establishment of national councils or systems to coordinate and network local volunteer effort which in turn, facilitated the establishment of a national volunteer program delivered through local volunteer centres. The “Comunidade Solidaria” Council\textsuperscript{126} was created to fulfill five objectives: (1) improve training for volunteers, (2) direct resources to the poorest regions, (3) bring together private and public sectors to increase resources for the social sector, (4) decentralize and increase community participation to sustain volunteerism, and (5) monitor and evaluate volunteer programs to facilitate replication. Representatives of Comunidade Solidaria consisted of government officials and ministers, members of civil society, University level professors and students, leaders of NGOs, the private sector and cultural ambassadors. The idea was to strengthen existing communication channels between the state and society as well as to establish more relevant and responsive communication mechanisms, social sector and community-based programmes and policies. To achieve this the group worked on 3 fronts: (1) promotion of public dialogue where social issues and possible responses were presented not represented, (2) strengthening civil society and (3) the development of innovative programs.

The principal founder of Comunidade Solidaria, Ruth Cardoso is quoted as saying, “offering public services is the obligation of the state, but working towards decreasing inequality is a task for the whole society.”\textsuperscript{127} Thus years after Comunidade Solidaria grew less relevant, volunteerism in Brazil continued to flourish with the development of new volunteerism networks, strengthening of existing platforms and innovative programmes such as the local Volunteer to Volunteer (V2V) program, service-based virtual network of private, public and social sector partnership for volunteerism and development.

It may well be advantageous in the context of existing scattered partnerships between the state, private sector, international organizations and NGOs in Guyana to draw on the lessons learned from Comunidade Solidaria. There are many strong historical and contemporary partnerships, including cooperatives and increasingly popular public-private partnerships that could greatly enhance the impact of volunteerism, the delivery of community service and social sector programs and resources devoted to social development.

Nicaragua and Peru established National Commissions comprising representatives from government and civil society organizations, the latter including groups such as the Red Cross, Scout Association, Firefighters, and University Councils, among others. In addition to promoting volunteerism, the Commissions are tasked with coordinating state
and civil society volunteerism initiatives and, in the case of Peru, coordinating the actions of national, regional and municipal governments.

In some cases (e.g. Argentina, Nicaragua, Peru), legislation requires VIOs to record volunteer activity as a contribution to national measurement of volunteering. In Peru, volunteer service is to be recorded in a National Registry with the intention of awarding certification for services offered.

In the Philippines, volunteerism is extensively institutionalized, including under Republic Act No. 9418, "An Act Institutionalizing a Strategy for Rural Development, Strengthening Volunteerism and for Other Purposes". The Act gives the government a broad mandate to develop volunteer infrastructure, and establish a system of national registration and networking to improve coordination of volunteers and volunteer service organizations, including both national and international VIOs. It also integrates volunteerism into the education curriculum. The Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency, a government agency, sets policies and guidelines, and coordinates a national volunteer service program. It promotes volunteerism, provides technical services and develops the capacity of volunteers and VIOs, and administers funding to a national network of volunteer organizations. It also coordinates volunteer programs including Volunteers for Information and Development Assistance, a platform for local Filipino volunteers, and Bayanihang Bayan Volunteer Program for Government Service, which involves youths, professionals, retirees and overseas Filipinos in the delivery of government programs.

While the examples above focus on legislated or Government-led initiatives, a major lesson drawn from a comparative analysis conducted for the Inter-American Development Bank is that "Engagement with civil society is key in the overall design of a national volunteer program." and that "The principles of the program should be embodied in the very process that creates it." The study also points out that many aspects of national programs are not legislated, but rely on cooperative agreements and collaborative initiatives for their success.

### 9.3.2 NGO-led Initiatives

NGOs have formed voluntary associations that play a variety of roles. Portugal presents an interesting example in which initial NGO-led initiatives have been matched by government initiatives. Portuguese civil society has been in a process of revitalization since the 1974 fall of a dictatorial authoritarian regime. The formation of nonprofit organizations is governed by an assortment of laws that is not conducive to the development of the voluntary sector. Nevertheless, the Portuguese Social Platform for NGOs for Development was established in 1985 and serves as a link between NGOs, government and other organizations. In 1998 the Ministry of Labour and Solidarity (Ministerio do Trabalho e da Solidaridade) issued legislation that defines a framework for volunteerism including promotion, general principles, rights and duties of volunteers, and relations between volunteers and VIOs. In 2001, the National Council for the Promotion of Volunteerism (Conselho Nacional para a Promocao do Voluntariado) was established with representation from the state and NGOs. The 2003-2005 - National Plan for Inclusion included the creation of local volunteer banks countrywide as a goal under the promotion of volunteerism. This was pursued in partnership with the National Council and local authorities and, in some cases, with NGOs. Local volunteer banks were designed as an interface between prospective volunteers and entities that host volunteers. The volunteer banks raise awareness of volunteering, maintain a database of volunteers, and contribute to training and qualification of volunteers.
The Uganda National NGO Forum, formed 1997, has more than 400 members including national and international NGOs, district NGOs and CBOs, and networks and umbrella groups. It enables NGOs to contribute to public policy dialogue through advocacy, networking, partnership development and information exchange, and plays an active role in research and voicing NGO concerns about the restrictive legislative and regulatory framework. It hosts several broad-based donor-supported initiatives (e.g. EU Civil Society Capacity Building Program, National Districts Network Support Program). The main funding is from donors and international NGOs, including administrative overheads from hosted programs.

In Canada, Chambers of Voluntary Organizations or other types of consortia are prominent in many municipalities and regions. They strengthen member organizations and the voluntary sector as a whole by building capacity and providing leadership on broader issues that impact their members. Chambers facilitate networking among members as well as with external stakeholders. They play an important role in conducting research, raising the profile of voluntary organizations with government, business and the general public, and bringing a credible and cohesive voice to public policy dialogue. Local Chambers have a national reach through their membership in the Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks, which functions through a Secretariat housed at the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development of the University of Ottawa and Carleton University. This relationship benefits from the creative synergies generated through combining independent university-based research with the practical experience and applied needs of NGOs and VIOs. Voluntary sector umbrella organizations were instrumental in the convening of the Voluntary Sector Initiative, a collaboration with the Government of Canada to explore common concerns.

Volunteer Canada, an association of volunteers and volunteer-involving organizations, works with a network of community-based volunteer centres, and focuses on issues of direct relevance to mobilizing volunteers. Volunteerism per se in Canada is not governed by any specific legislation. However, the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement, developed by Volunteer Canada, provides a guide for involving volunteers in organizational governance, leadership and service delivery. It outlines values, principles, and standards for volunteer practices and management.

9.3.3 Youth Service Platforms
Youth service programs have been called “one of the few proven and effective strategies for empowering young people to address key issues that affect them”, issues that include inadequate education and life skills, unemployment and work insecurity, violence and crime, risky behaviors, and exclusion. By taking a strength-based approach, rather than treating youth as program beneficiaries, service programs enable youth to be involved in addressing development priorities in and beyond their communities.

Many countries have a specific National Youth Service Policy or include implementation of national youth service as part of their National Youth Policy. As summarized by Innovations in Civic Participation, the most effective policies:

- Provide a framework for design and implementation of effective youth service programs;
- Define the purpose and role of young people’s involvement in community service;
- Foster relationships and partnerships with civil society and private sector organizations interested in pro-social youth development through service;
- Reach segments of society most in need through national, inclusive youth service initiatives;
- Provide financial resources to youth service programs;
- Provide incentives to youth to participate;
- Provide a legal framework to safeguard youth volunteers and organizations;
- Provide training to support organizations in reaching their objectives; and
- Bring societal benefits through programs that support social, economic, and democratic development.

A 2006 scan of Latin American and Caribbean countries found that National Youth Service Policies were commonly legislated through education or youth ministries mandated to devise or promote programs for youth service. Education-based policies tend to be based on requirements for community or social service, or ‘service-learning’, as part of school curriculum. For example, secondary school students in the Dominican Republic complete 60 hours of service annually and, in Honduras, 100 hours of service. The service programs are normally implemented by school teachers as part of their usual responsibilities. At the tertiary level, university students in Mexico, Venezuela and Honduras are required to perform service and, in some cases, choose to support their activities through their own fundraising.

Youth service policies under the purview of a Youth Ministry have a greater range of variety. For example, some policies mandate the creation and support of youth volunteer schemes implemented by local community organizations (e.g. Barbados, Chile). Other policies are directed at building organizational capacity and coordinating the activities of youth-sector organizations, including NGOs, to promote development of youth service programs (e.g. Bolivia).

Some service programs were designed as a pre-emptive intervention with at-risk and marginalized youth. For example, the Civilian Conservation Corps Programme of Trinidad & Tobago, modeled on Guyana National Service, specifically targets youth who lack academic or vocational qualifications and work experience, or are considered at-risk for criminal involvement. The Barbados Youth Service provides job training and work experience over a one year period. Interestingly, review of the Barbados program in 2010 recommended decentralisation to improve community access, and transformation to an inclusive National Youth Service that would remove any stigma associated with a perceived focus on marginalized youth. The Minister responsible is also reportedly contemplating making youth service mandatory.

An obvious limitation of strictly education-based approaches is that they tend not to provide for out-of-school youth. At the same time, policies that explicitly or implicitly target at-risk youth may be negatively viewed, as in the case of Barbados. In South Africa, public education systems are taking a more holistic view that encompasses “NEET” youths, i.e. those “not in education, employment or training”, a perspective that has the advantage of establishing common ground among ministries responsible for education and youth, as well as NGOs in these sectors.

Pakistan has taken an innovative approach by supporting a youth-led NGO, Youth Engagement Services (YES) Network Pakistan, under the auspices of the Pakistan National Youth Service Program. The YES Network nurtures and supports local Youth Service Networks and youth social entrepreneurs, targeting low-income communities. Incentives include trainings, tools, financial resources, recognition, and connections for future advancement. Each local network undertakes to contribute 30 hours or more per week collectively for one year, and is encouraged to generate funds by charging nominal service fees. Each network elects its own leaders, and designs, implements and monitors its service projects, while the YES Network ensures coordination and linkages with local public and private sector organizations.

In Bahrain, youth policy establishes a National Youth Forum or Council consisting of all youth NGOs as a development partner of Government.
The Portuguese Youth Institute is responsible for designing, implementing and assessing government policy for youth, and promoting the civic and social education of youth. It encourages youth engagement in volunteerism, in part through Youth Service Projects that include support for the elderly, children and sports.

The basic costs of youth service programs are usually funded by governments (e.g. Mexico, Bolivia, Barbados, Costa Rica), in some cases with supplemental program funding from other sources including private sector and international donors\textsuperscript{150}. The greatest challenges to effectiveness are reported to be limited finances and limited reach (geographically and demographically), sustainability, and poor coordination between national and local levels, sometimes exacerbated by partisan political differences. In the Latin American and Caribbean region, collaborative efforts by government, NGOs and youth sector representatives were instrumental in forwarding the creation of successful National Youth Service Policies. Awareness and enthusiasm were heightened by campaigns around Global Youth Service Day, and through the advocacy of leading organizations such as Red Cross, Boy Scouts and faith-based groups.

With increased focus on youth and opportunities for input from youth, youth themselves have played an important role in conveying youth interest in structured service. In this regard it should be noted that in Guyana, the National Youth Conversation hosted by the Ethnic Relations Commission in 2006 with the participation of 250 young people from around the country recommended the reintroduction of national service\textsuperscript{151}. Similarly, the extensive consultations conducted by the EPTSI project highlighted a perceived need and interest in re-establishing some form of national service. Among the recommendations was that the EPTSI project “should collaborate with the Government of Guyana and the other stakeholders … to begin discussions on the introduction of a programme… [that] …may manifest itself in the form of a national youth service”.\textsuperscript{152}

\section*{10. Dreams, Hopes, and Wishes}

In the course of interviews and focus group discussions, we asked people to reflect on a national volunteering support platform or mechanism. How could such an entity serve and to what purpose? What should its roles and functions be? What could it look like? What would motivate their participation, and what would they bring to it?

Considering that we posed the concept with little prior notice, and then asked participants to define and describe it, the responses showed considerable thought and detail. The idea isn’t new, but perhaps we need to seek new ways of moving ahead.

\subsection*{10.1 Envisioning}

Ethical values, inclusiveness, respect, equality, unity, sharing and collective benefit were common threads in the dreams that were envisioned during this

\begin{marginfigure}
\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{dreams.png}
\end{center}
\caption{We need a national body that looks out for the interests of the nation, beyond partisan, parochial, organizational, sectoral and other petty differences, sharing, visioning, and crossing boundaries. \textit{Alexander Isaacs}}
\end{marginfigure}

\noindent\textbf{Dreams for a Platform}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{Shared ethical values -} a principled approach in a national environment that fosters & reinforces ethical behaviour in organizations & individuals
\item \textbf{Nation-building -} working & networking together for the social & economic health of the nation
\item \textbf{Recognition & equal opportunity in volunteerism -} everyone can volunteer regardless of their station, and all are respected simply for being volunteers
\end{itemize}
Study.

A foundation in shared ethical values was expressed as a principled approach in a national environment that fosters and reinforces ethical behaviour in organizations and individuals.

Nation-building was envisaged in terms of a national consensus through working and networking together toward common goals, sharing expertise and information, and contributing to the social and economic health of the nation.

Regarding volunteerism, the dream was for recognition, fairness and equal opportunity, a society in which everyone can volunteer regardless of their station, and all are respected simply for being volunteers, for whatever volunteer contribution they are able to make.

10.2 Enabling

Means and requirements for enabling the realization of dreams for a platform included the following ideas.

- It will be a volunteer-enabling support structure, including a registry and database of volunteers, their profiles and skills. It should be accessible to people interested in volunteering, promote recognition and visibility, and foster transparent genuine service.
- It will expand volunteer engagement, beginning with youth, creating new opportunities, especially for disadvantaged or disaffected youth, widening their experience, learning, and skills. It will bring volunteerism into national youth policy.
- It will coordinate the development of volunteers, in terms of both personal and career development, and it will facilitate needs-based training, access to opportunities and crediting of volunteer experience.
- It will enable participation of hinterland residents as volunteers, including in and beyond their own communities and regions.
- It will enable organizations and communities to access and share resources, including physical, financial, human, technical resources, and coordinate sharing and exchanges of volunteers.
- It will stand for and work toward the improvement of lives at structural levels by addressing the underlying and systemic causes of poverty and disparity.
- It will have the courage to speak out based on honest appraisal and conviction (speak truth to power). It will be critical when necessary, but always fair, honest and non-partisan including in representations to Government. It will work with and encourage Government, for example by giving recognition when merited.
- It will influence Government, including NGO legislation and tax policy, lobby for a national agenda and policy for volunteering, increasing the support for VIOs, and protecting the rights of volunteers.
- It will be an NGO development centre, facilitating and enabling organizational sharing in Best Practices, innovative ideas, models, capacity building and practical experience.
- It will be an NGO resource, information and documentation centre, conducting research and advocacy on topical issues.
- It will be an NGO coordination centre, enabling the NGO community to pool their strengths and cooperate in strategic and program planning, and negotiating with donors.
- It will be advisory not regulatory, descriptive not prescriptive, and it will facilitate rather than limit.
10.3 Roles
Aske d about roles and functions that a platform could fulfill, many responses were framed as examples of activities. The responses can be categorized according to whether they relate mainly to supporting volunteers directly, or to organizations, that is VIOs.

10.3.1 Volunteers
- Matching and deploying skilled volunteers to meet community needs and requests, through arrangements and needs analysis by local or regional Governments (e.g. Village Council, NDC, RDC). In Amerindian communities, the National Toshaos Council could also play a role.
- Supporting regional recruiting bases and outreach.
- Engaging with University of Guyana and other tertiary institutions to recruit skilled volunteers and students.
- Training volunteers (cultural and situational awareness) and sensitizing communities in which they would be placed.
- Supporting schools and PTAs in using local volunteers available on short notice (e.g. to replace an absent teacher).
- Promoting the spirit of volunteerism and volunteerism values, including through civics and ethics programs in schools.

10.3.2 Organizations
- Capacity building for Boards through materials and training in roles, responsibilities, and understanding organizational needs, for example results-based management and monitoring and evaluation.
- Field visits for on-the-ground learning and exchange.
- Sponsoring events (IVD, NGO fairs), including across the country as for International Year of Volunteers (IYV) in 2001 when regional committees were actively supported
- ICT support.
- Diaspora engagement, including for funding.
- Private sector engagement, including volunteer programs and funding.

10.4 Possible Organizational Structure
A possible organizational model arrived at during the Focus Group Workshop allows for membership comprising thematic and regional or district associations, as well as individual NGOs, CBOs and FBOs. An advantage of this model is that it can build on and strengthen the existing support infrastructure. It could facilitate dialogue and participation among existing thematic and regional associations, while encouraging and probing the interest in increased collaboration that could lead to improved linkages in other sectors and regions.

Possible Organizational Structure
11. Conclusions – “Guyana lends itself to Volunteerism”

Volunteerism in Guyana is grounded in social and spiritual values of caring and sharing, and in the culture of resistance that arose in response to Guyana’s difficult historical circumstances. This historical context provides a baseline for comparing what was, what is, and what can be, against which the past accomplishments and future potential of volunteerism and voluntary organizations in Guyana can be appreciated.

Volunteerism is a dynamic spectrum that extends from spontaneous individual acts of caring and sharing into linkages that take personal effort into collective endeavour and increasing degrees of organizational structure and planned strategies. This framework is particularly relevant in considering the traditional roots of volunteerism and its role in creating cohesive communities and societies. Although groups might progress from one stage to another, a healthy modern society needs to have activity throughout the spectrum. While individual volunteers might operate at several levels, they need to be grounded in personal caring and sharing. The informal unstructured grassroots are necessary to sustain the more structured and formal forms of volunteerism. Nurturing the roots allows the tree to flourish.

The Spectrum of Volunteering

**Continuum from Prosocial Relationships to Structured Volunteerism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spontaneous individual caring &amp; sharing</th>
<th>Informal charitable groups</th>
<th>Self-help &amp; mutual aid groups</th>
<th>Volunteer-operated CBOs &amp; NGOs</th>
<th>CBOs &amp; NGOs with part-time or occasional salaried staff</th>
<th>Staffed VIOs with VMS to deploy volunteers</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Increasingly formal organizational structures

This Study pursued two main objectives: building an understanding of the concept of volunteerism in Guyana, and analyzing the feasibility of establishing a volunteerism support platform. The first objective entailed broad mapping of civil society and volunteer-involving organizations, penetrating deeply into the grassroots of ‘the spectrum of volunteering’ and extensively into the regions of Guyana.

For the many informal groups and CBOs that look after the well-being of their neighbours, neighbourhoods and communities, the immediate need is for strengthened thematic, local or regional support networks. An established national platform involved in promoting volunteerism and community service, and offering individual and organizational capacity building and networking opportunities, could support and enhance their efforts. Any mechanism for developing a national platform or national policy needs to nurture the roots, not burden them with unrealistic demands.

Volunteerism has made and continues to make immeasurable contributions to Guyana’s development, nationally, regionally and in communities. VIOs have contributed to all of the Millennium Development Goals and National Development Goals, often reaching into communities and households that would not be reached in any other way. Volunteerism also contributes to the personal and professional development of individual volunteers. At the same time, there is a definite opinion that volunteerism could be more effective, access greater potential, and increase its impact and influence on development strategies and outcomes. Many people articulated this as, “moving to a higher level”.

Our pilot measurement of volunteer hours gave the impressive result of at least 8000 hours/week for just 20 organizations, all of which occupy the most structured part of the
‘spectrum of volunteering’, i.e. staffed VIOs using some form of volunteer-management system (VMS). By far the greatest proportion of volunteer activity occurs in the less formal parts of the spectrum where volunteerism blends into lifestyle. Attempts to quantify volunteerism, especially in economic or monetary terms, risk undervaluing or, worse, trivializing its personal, social and societal impacts. Of more immediate relevance for Guyana is recording volunteer hours in order to formally recognize and accredit the accumulated experience of each volunteer, including for career and educational advancement.

Our research culminated in a Focus Group Workshop conducted with civil society experts and representatives from structured VIOs. The group dynamic was invaluable in generating ideas and engagement in conceptualizing a national support platform. The Three Dreams that emerged for a platform: Shared ethical values, Nation-building, and Recognition and equal opportunity in volunteerism, are aspirations around which dialogue and pilot projects can continue.

The feeling of déjà vu that ‘platforms’ have been tried before and abandoned was also voiced, as was the fear that NGOs and representative bodies can be manipulated by partisan interest groups. However, perhaps the examples of successful support infrastructure in Guyana have been insufficiently recognized. ‘Homegrown success stories’, including those profiled during the Validation Workshop (Council of Organizations for Persons with Disabilities, NGO Coordination Committee, and North Rupununi District Development Board) should continue to inform and build confidence in national and regional infrastructure initiatives. The variety of processes that led to their formation (bottom-up, top-down with donor support, local governments forming a representative NGO) illustrate the diversity of mechanisms that can converge on a national platform that ultimately serves and is sustained by the involvement of member organizations. A platform could aim to build on and strengthen the existing support infrastructure by facilitating dialogue and participation among thematic and regional coalitions, while encouraging increased collaboration and linkages in other sectors and regions.

Among the common elements in the ‘success stories’ are:

- a process of evolution that allowed the development of ownership, leadership and commitment;
- clear common interests and target groups;
- continuous capacity building, technical and financial support from committed international partner agencies willing to invest in networking; and
- a process of learning to work together by doing together that involved a project, an event, or other results-oriented initiatives.

In the inception stage, the process of learning to work together by doing together could be crucial. This approach has several advantages. It can move participants directly toward action and away from what might be viewed as endless discussions. It can be designed as ‘action research’ or a pilot project with achievable milestones or tangible stepwise results. It establishes common interests and short term goals, the achievement of which can generate further enthusiasm and long term commitment and strategies.

The upcoming International Year of Volunteers (IYV) + 10 in 2011, which will be inaugurated on IVD (December 5, 2010), could represent an opportunity for bringing NGOs and VIOs together. Experiences during IYV 2001 should be reviewed for lessons learned. For example, regional consultations and regional volunteer and youth committees ensured that IYV 2001 was inclusive of the regions. Perhaps national and regional committees could be encouraged to act as prototypes for volunteerism support platforms beyond IYV + 10.
Several convergent international, Caribbean and national initiatives present excellent prospects for the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport (MCYS) to advance the Youth Agenda and play a pivotal role in enhancing collaboration among youth organizations, including youth-oriented NGOs. The International Year of Youth (IYY): Dialogue and Mutual Understanding157 (August 12, 2010 to August 12, 2011) under the slogan “Our Year Our Voice” intersects with IYV + 10. CARICOM Heads of Government have pledged support for progress on implementation of a regional youth strategy, including through partnerships with youth NGOs and CBOs158. The MCYS could take the lead in Guyana on an International Year of Youth (IYY) and IYV + 10 Conference of youth-oriented NGOs and VIOs to promote dialogue on National Youth Policy and Action Plans, and collaborative approaches to youth volunteerism and a youth service platform. Such a platform should seek to include all the regions, and give all youth equal opportunities for exchanges within Guyana that would foster appreciation of the cultural, ethnic, geographic and natural diversity that Guyana encompasses. In particular, it could be means for better involvement of hinterland youth in volunteering. It would work directly with youth volunteers giving them valuable and motivating experiences, life and livelihood skills, and imparting prosocial values. For long-term efficacy, the MCYS should consider forming a Youth Sector Development Unit to engage with youth NGOs and VIOs, looking to the Health Sector Development Unit for lessons learned.

University-community partnerships for civic engagement ensure that tertiary institutions have the support of the wider community and that academic curriculum is relevant to society159. The University of Guyana and other tertiary educational institutions were not consulted in the course of this Study (excepting that the Director of IDCE was a member of the Consultative Group), and this gap should be filled in further discussions about a platform. Tertiary institutions already collaborate with VIOs in areas of accreditation and developing and delivering training programs. They and their student associations could potentially be involved in the establishment of a volunteer service platform for youth and skilled volunteers. It is also possible that the Canadian example of an NGO secretariat (Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks) housed within a university research unit (Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development) could be adapted to Guyana. There are precedents for productive collaboration between University of Guyana and civil society interests, for example the Amerindian Research Unit and the Women’s Studies Unit.

The voices of volunteers should be heard. While volunteers are recognized and rewarded for their contributions, their voices are seldom heard beyond the VIOs that they are directly involved with. The most effective way to solicit volunteer perspectives is likely through the volunteer groups or volunteer meetings of VIOs, including youth groups. VIOs should be encouraged to facilitate the formation of volunteer support groups, and these groups should have access to capacity building opportunities.

In the current labour situation volunteer stipends is increasing becoming an alternative livelihood pursuit, in conflict with the internationally accepted definitions of volunteering. There is no easy answer to this dilemma which, in fact, is pervasive in developing countries and could be considered a consequence of global economic policies. Nevertheless, VIOs in Guyana should be wary of introducing potentially damaging distortions in which volunteering is more lucrative than regular employment. Creative alternative approaches to volunteer support include payments on placement completion, accreditation of volunteer training and experience, and preferential admittance for further studies.

Successful Government-led initiatives in volunteerism require extensive engagement with civil society, and many aspects of national programs worldwide rely on cooperative agreements, not legislation on volunteerism. In Guyana, it seems that the absence of
coherent NGO legislation and modernized legal and financial frameworks for charitable status are also challenges to the advancement of civil society organizations. Enabling partnerships not over-burdened by regulation is more likely to produce an environment where the creation of coherent tax incentives for example, is seen as a collective opportunity for stakeholders to improve program and service delivery. Well designed tax incentives for registered charitable organizations would also improve compliance with regulatory requirements and could be a step toward reducing dependency on international donor agencies. The preparation and upkeep by the Registrars of a publicly available NGO directory listing information for registered organizations would further encourage registration.

The best aspects of 'the culture of resistance', including a sense of fairness, justice, empowerment, and collective benefit, will be key to enhancing the contributions of volunteerism to the aspirations of Guyanese people. In the course of this Study, we heard much about interests, wants, roles and needs relating to a support platform, suggesting that a support platform could play a critical role in strengthening civil society and advancing volunteerism. But ‘Who?’ and ‘How?’ continue to be elusive. Moving ahead should take an iterative step-wise approach, learning by doing, designed with periodic accomplishments or milestones to maintain and build enthusiasm and commitment. It should focus on strengths and accomplishments, building ownership and empowerment to unequivocally realize the statement “Guyana lends itself to volunteerism”.
Appendix I. A Situational Analysis: Exploring Private Sector Engagement with Volunteerism in Guyana

By Rawle Small, August 2010

Background

Private sector partnerships with, NGOs and community groups are key sources of empowerment which strengthen the role of volunteerism in community and national development programmes. However the dynamics of these partnerships are largely unstructured and lack guidance from sector specific, multi-sector or national frameworks. Initiatives developed in this context tend to be short-term in focus due to the absence of such policies, strategic approaches and sustainability provisions. This study explores the broad involvement and relationship dynamics of private and voluntary sector partnerships. It also explores how these partnerships impact volunteerism in Guyana and identifies opportunities to strengthen them. With recent socio-economic reforms positioning the private sector as primary catalysts and the experience of the voluntary sector, especially NGOs in strengthening social development, strategic partnerships between the two sectors can contribute significantly to Guyana’s development.

Private sector/NGO partnerships in Guyana are evolving from a milieu of philanthropic engagements that were largely consequences of: (a) the residual colonial heritage of “do good” gestures and (b) a state-controlled economy during early post-independence years in Guyana. The current nascent movement toward strategic and sustainable partnerships is underpinned by recognition of mutual responsibilities and benefits covering environmental, social and national development. Nevertheless, the impact and potential benefits of existing partnerships are limited by inadequate levels of available data and lack of institutional and other long-term support mechanisms.

Sectoral and/or national policies supporting these partnerships, can for example advocate a national volunteerism policy which explicit provides a national framework for collaboration between the government, private and voluntary sectors. Another important step toward a strengthened enabling environment are organizational policies especially at the level of representative organisations within both sectors. Agencies such as the Private Sector Commission and the various regional chambers of commerce in Guyana are strategically placed to develop a framework of partnership or engagement with the voluntary sector as it relates to advancing corporate social responsibility for example. These policies need not be mandatory, as standards and values aspired to, they can serve the function of strengthening the environment in which partnerships develop and flourish. A nurturing and enabling policy infrastructure is important to facilitate private sector engagement with volunteer support networks and platforms that are critical elements of service delivery for NGOs and CBOs.

Partnership at policy and operational levels are also important for the realization of mutual social responsibility goals, objectives and resources. It was noted by some private sector representatives that this requires creative thinking to identify areas of intervention and partnership. For example, opportunities to generate quick win initiatives and foster long term private and voluntary sector relations during the recent CARIFESTA X and International Cricket Council (ICC) World Cup and Twenty/20 tournaments were not taken to scale. While skills and partnerships resulted, a broader vision could have led to the establishment of sustainable mechanisms promoting long-term partnership opportunities targeting critical social issues.
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1. **INTRODUCTION**
Private sector engagement in communities is becoming increasingly important in Guyana. Business organizations are realizing the strategic importance of collaborating with and supporting NGOs and CBOs, and encouraging volunteering among company staff, as a means to developing healthy communities, increasing employee satisfaction, and promoting their businesses. Corporate governance guided by social responsibility policies, and networks to foster partnerships and collaborative action are emerging as key practices in Guyana.

Corporate governance refers to “the practices, principles and values that guide a company and its business every day, at all levels of the organization.” Corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to “the way firms integrate social, environmental and economic concerns into their values, culture, decision-making, strategy and operations in a transparent and accountable manner and thereby establish better practices within the firm, create wealth and improve society.” In Guyana, concepts of corporate social responsibility are recent manifestations of greater emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of private sector organizations in social development. These concepts share the common pursuit of providing valuable support for social interventions and also provide opportunities for staff volunteering and the mobilization of volunteers by NGOs.

1.1 - **Shared Potential: Volunteerism and Social Responsibility**
Significant potential for mutually beneficial collaboration between private sector organizations and NGOs / CBOs lies in recognizing their areas of common interests. For example, some companies are receiving training and technical support for their HIV-AIDS workplace policies and programs through partnerships with NGOs. Company policies benefit from the expertise and experience of NGOs that specialize in HIV-AIDS, and managers have ready access to peer educators able to offer awareness and counselling services to their employees. (See Volunteer Youth Corps (VYC) in sub-section 6.4). The task now is to expand on such precedents by developing a supportive environment that draws on NGO strengths in social and community development, private sector strengths in management, business skills and market acumen, and government roles in creating policy, regulations and responsive public structures.

1.2 - **Scope and Objectives**
This situational analysis examines the characteristics and dynamics of relationships between voluntary and private sector organizations in Guyana. Information was gathered from interviews with private sector representatives, desk review, and online research to explore: (a) current approaches to partnering; (b) typologies of support; (c) mechanisms that foster partnerships and voluntary support; and (d) opportunities for strengthened partnerships and voluntary support. As corollaries of this exploration, it investigates partnership structures, their initiation, management and operationalisation. It seeks to learn from existing relationships and forms of support to identify common ground for strengthened voluntary and private sector partnerships.

2. **ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE: PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN VOLUNTEERISM**
Private sector involvement with non-governmental organizations in Guyana continues to be primarily anchored by charity and sponsorship as methods of “giving back” to communities. These interventions are largely ad hoc and guided by non-binding verbal agreements. Support from corporate governance policies, voluntary codes of conduct and emerging standards of CSR, promoted by the local National Competitiveness Strategy, are facilitating more complex partnerships. Although many relationships are informal, others
are defined by negotiated contracts, couched in programmes and/or facilitated by networks of common interests.

2.1 – Policy Frameworks

Within the private sector, social responsibility policies promoting organizational partnerships between voluntary and private sectors vary significantly in scope, depending on the nature of the business and individual companies. For example, business corporations that are subsidiaries of international or regional parent companies address social responsibility within policies designed by the parent company that guide accountability, oversight and reporting of relevant activities company-wide. To illustrate, Scotia Bank Guyana adheres to the corporate governance and social responsibility policies of the Bank of Nova Scotia headquartered in Canada. Another example is Grace Kennedy Remittance Services (Guyana) whose social interventions and partnerships with NGOs are guided by policies of their parent company in Jamaica. In both cases, the local subsidiary companies support their efforts through local CSR focal points of country teams and representatives and internal reporting mechanisms.

Locally, homegrown corporations tend to have non-binding policies that guide their social responsibility practices. While the policies are limited in scope, customary practices and partnerships with community groups and NGOs indicate that social responsibility is an organizational value, even if unstated. Companies such as Denmor Garments, Mings Products and Services Limited, and ArrowPoint Resort (Roraima Airways Group of Companies) are examples of local organizations without comprehensive social responsibility policies per se, that have nevertheless been internationally recognized and awarded for their support to community development. Other companies such as Beharry and Company Limited and Sterling Products are currently exploring ways to consolidate on-going initiatives and partnerships by integrating their principles and experience of social responsibility into existing or additional policies.

Representative associations of private sector businesses in Guyana also promote social responsibility and partnerships between their members and NGOs. The Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI), the oldest private sector association in Guyana, recently put forth a revised Code of Conduct which outlines the promotion of community development and CSR (Principle 6). However, the GCCI does not have a binding policy or implementation strategy to guide member organizations and document their social responsibility initiatives. Such efforts are advanced through the GCCI’s recently resuscitated Social Development Committee.

The Private Sector Commission (PSC), a national umbrella organization that represents private sector associations, small business organisations and large corporations, advocates social responsibility as a principle of good business practice. While the PSC does not have a documented policy, a focal sub-committee promotes PSC involvement and that of its members in social responsibility initiatives. Local regional business associations, such as the Berbice and Upper Corentyne Chambers of Commerce, although they don’t have CSR policies and committees, are closer to their local communities and engage frequently with community groups and NGOs.

Publicly owned national companies also pursue social responsibility initiatives, for example by integrating socially focused interventions with customer service activities. Guyana Power and Light (GPL) through its “Switch It Off” Campaign sensitized community residents to the importance of energy conservation. The company also launched a massive media campaign to promote safe and sustainable energy consumption. Since the
promotion of a national code of corporate governance is a priority of Guyana’s National Competitiveness Strategy, additional research is warranted to determine the potential synergies between corporate governance and social responsibility practices by national companies. An interesting area of further research could examine how social responsibility practices within the wider private sector could be influenced by the practices of publicly owned national companies.

2.2 – Partnerships

Partnerships between non-governmental and private sector organizations are moving beyond traditional sponsorship/recipient relationships, although this form is still common. Partnerships are being modified in response to contemporary social challenges, innovative collaboration to enhance service delivery and Guyana’s development priorities. A great example of an innovative partnership is the Mentoring Model to Develop Young Entrepreneurs Program coordinated by the Guyana Youth Business Trust (GYBT) and Institute of Private Enterprise Development (IPED). The core objective is to empower youth through entrepreneurship by providing youth-friendly micro credit and business mentoring. GYBT/IPED works with private sector organizations and associations to secure mentors for specified terms and functions.

2.2.1 - Coalitions

A coalition is an association formed by the coming together of persons, groups and/or organizations for shared purposes. For instance, the recently established Guyana Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GBCHA) brings together corporations, small businesses and private sector associations motivated by a common interest to harmonize and enhance the business community’s response to HIV/AIDS. The GBCHA facilitates partnerships between NGOs and businesses and provides cross-sector training, mentoring and information-sharing initiatives. A GBCHA secretariat was recently established to allow a broadened scope that integrates HIV/AIDS with related issues under Healthy Lifestyle Practices. Through its Partnership Matching Initiative, the coalition also invites interested NGOs to submit project proposals and matches these with interested private sector organizations.

In the NGO sector, the National Coordinating Committee (NCC), a coalition of NGOs working to combat HIV/AIDS, also facilitates joint-interventions between public, private, non-governmental, regional and international organizations. The NCC works in close collaboration with the GBCHA and, like the latter, is implementing measures to scale up its services and expand current focal areas of intervention and membership.

2.2.2 – Networks

Networks are formed in response to a need to share information, skills and resources to the wider community. The Youth Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Network (YES) Guyana is an international programme that is supported by a local and regional network of public, private and non-governmental organizations in support of youth entrepreneurship and employability. Linden Fund Guyana, a regionally based network of diaspora and local partners from the public, private and NGO sectors, undertakes annual community projects with pooled member resources.

Further exploration is needed to determine how networks, particularly as agents of resource and skill mobilization and distribution, can strengthen volunteerism support in Guyana by fostering partnerships between private sector and NGOs. Two good starting
points are: (a) service clubs such as Lions and Rotary since many of their members are also NGO and private sector representatives and (b) the network of HIV/AIDS peer educators within the private and NGO sectors.

2.2.3 - Programmatic Partnerships

Partnerships formed by or in response to a programme consisting of multiple interventions are relatively new and innovative methods of collaboration between voluntary and private sector organizations in Guyana. Through its Power to Make A Difference (PMAD)\textsuperscript{168} Programme, Republic Bank Guyana Limited partners with community groups, NGOs and public agencies to empower vulnerable and at-risk groups through sports, culture, education, community development and poverty reduction. Interventions guided by the themes of the programme are developed in collaboration with partners. The PMAD is a core element of the Bank’s social responsibility mandate and is reviewed and updated every 5 years.

Many of the larger private sector organizations in Guyana receive numerous requests for sponsorships or financial assistance. Contractual agreements based on mutual interest build longer term relationships that ensure the continuity of support and simplify financial and human resource management for both partners. This type of partnership reduces the risks of ad hoc partnering and emphasizes sustainability and accountability through monitoring of results. For example, the partnership between the Aratuk/Santa Mission Village Council and ArrowPoint Resort\textsuperscript{169} ensures employment for villagers, and a supply of willing local staff for the Resort. In addition to recruiting most of its employees from the community, ArrowPoint has adopted the Santa Mission Primary School and supports community-based tourism as well as other community initiatives as outlined in an agreement with the Village Council.

Some companies like Digicel Guyana have established social foundations to coordinate and deliver their social responsibility mandates. The Digicel Foundation\textsuperscript{170} partners with NGOs such as Lifeline Counselling and Hope Foundation to implement various interventions. Scotia Bank Guyana provides a menu of opportunities for NGOs and CBOs to leverage the organization’s services and support through its Bright Futures Program\textsuperscript{171} which emphasizes community development, education, health and entrepreneurial interventions. Programmatic partnering holds much promise for volunteerism. For example, the companies mentioned release staff for community volunteering as an integral feature of their social responsibility programmes.

2.2.4 – Informal Relationships

In the evolving milieu of private sector partnership with NGOs, ad hoc practices such as request-based sponsorship and in-kind or financial donations continue. The support given is often short-term and fragmented although the relationship may continue for many years. For example, for many years Banks DIH Limited has provided NGOs such as Rotary Clubs, Guyana Red Cross Society and Girl Guides with company products, transport and outreach support when requests are submitted. Although ad hoc partnerships may seem conventional or mundane in comparison to programmatic collaboration, they are a simple, accessible and established method of garnering private sector support for social development initiatives.
3. TYPOLOGY OF PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT WITH VOLUNTEERISM

The types of support in private sector/NGO partnerships can be considered in the form of a spectrum. At one end of the spectrum, volunteerism is the focus and prime method of engagement while, at the other end, volunteerism is not considered. Thus many partnerships miss potential opportunities to encourage and increase the involvement of the private sector in volunteerism. Most organizations interviewed lie somewhere in the middle of the spectrum.

3.1 – Policy-based Programs and Initiatives

In 2008 Denmor Garment Manufacturers, a locally owned and operated garment manufacturing company featured as a case study in the annual UNDP Growing Inclusive Markets Report172. The company’s social responsibility interventions are guided by policy-based approaches that range from its hiring practices to the participation of workers in community-based initiatives. For example, more than 90% of the staff at DENMOR are women from low-income rural communities. DENMOR’s recruitment policy explicitly states the company’s responsibility to recruit, train and facilitate the provision of social services and education in areas such as basic literacy and numeracy, personal hygiene, HIV/AIDS, and violence and security. DENMOR’s partners include Guyana HIV/AIDS Reduction Program and Volunteer Youth Corps.

DENMOR exemplifies policy-based interventions and partnerships guided by organizational mandate that are leading movement in Guyana toward more formal social responsibility policies. In most cases, these policies are realized through the development of partnerships and programs. A few other organizations with policies in place include Digicel Guyana, IPED and Scotia Bank Guyana. The latter provides incentives for volunteerism by rewarding staff who accumulate the most volunteer hours annually, as well as bank branches that accumulate the most staff volunteer hours collectively.

3.2 – Planned Charitable Aid and Donations

Traditional philanthropic support in the form of charitable donations is a very relevant and common method of private sector support to voluntary organizations, typically involving the ceremonial handing over of charitable aid and donations to causes, groups and/or organizations. Companies usually budget for annual charitable contributions based on a prior relationship with a voluntary organization, and they actively seek additional charitable opportunities throughout the year. In many instances such as the partnership between Digicel Guyana and Alpha Children’s Home, donations are provided seasonally during holiday periods such as Christmas. Further exploration is warranted to determine how volunteerism can be integrated into relationships based on charitable donations, many of which have endured for decades without major modification.

3.3 – Event-based

Sporting games, mobile health clinics, environmental clean-up drives and awareness and/or fundraising initiatives such as concerts, seminars or themed walk-a-thons are a few types of event-based activities facilitated by voluntary and private sector partnerships in Guyana. Unlike charitable donations, event-based support encompasses preparatory activities as well as the event, and the event itself generally has a social aim. Additionally, events represent public relations opportunities for companies who often provide branded apparel and products for volunteers who, in some cases include their own employees. The recent walk coordinated by Help and Shelter to raise awareness about domestic and gender-based violence is an example of event-based support. Help and Shelter received
in-kind support from Banks DIH and Demerara Distillers Limited (DDL) in the form of beverages and staff participation in the walk.

3.4 – Request-based Support

Each private sector organization interviewed reported receiving daily requests for sponsorship and donations, however very few organizations have standard processes and criteria for allocating resources. Allocations are often made within relevant departmental budgets (e.g. marketing department) with funding decisions taken by department managers, management or executive committees. Requests received range from charitable contributions to more strategic support over a longer period of time. For example, Banks DIH assists groups such as the Rotary Clubs of Guyana and the Guyana Red Cross Society with company products. Through their text messaging services, GT&T and Digicel Guyana give strategic help to voluntary organizations to promote social awareness and receive financial as well as material contributions. Both companies contribute a percentage of the total proceeds of all text messages sent to a number specially designated for the cause and voluntary organization.

Many companies expressed their desire for joint pre-planning between voluntary and private sector organizations, in order to improve their ability to manage requests. This would increase the likelihood of the requesting NGO receiving support that would otherwise be refused due to budgetary or other challenges that occur after a fixed budget has been approved.

4. Mode of Operations

Informal understandings generally operate without structured arrangements such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a contract or a letter of agreement. This practice is consistent with the nascent relationships between private sector/NGO partnerships in Guyana which are rarely governed by structured arrangements. However the growing interest in developing corporate social responsibility policies will likely promote the emergence of coalitions (e.g. GBCHA) and enhance the scope of voluntary and private sector partnering.

Recently, the GBCHA launched a “Partnership Matching Program” to link private sector organizations to NGO proposal submissions that are the most compatible with the core competencies of the company. The GBCHA will facilitate partnership matching and also assist in coordinating a partnership agreement that outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the implementation of the intervention. Another notable example is the partnership between the Guyana Telephone and Telegraph Company Limited (GT&T) and Habitat for Humanity Guyana Limited. Once annually, GT&T provides complete financing to construct a family home. Each partner rates the pool of pre-selected candidates to choose the family that will benefit from the program. In addition to financing the materials and basic furnishings, GT&T provides staff volunteers to supply labour for the initiative.

5. Interest and Motivations

The work of voluntary sector organisations is anchored in empowering individuals, families and communities through advocacy, capacity strengthening and other forms of social support. Private sector organizations on the other hand are primarily concerned with markets and profit, employee welfare and satisfaction, and public image that will support their operations and growth. Both principles are intrinsic to the work of each sector and
reflect the basis of their motivations and interests in social responsibility and cross-sector partnering. Highlighted below are the reflections of some private sector representatives regarding their: (a) motivations, that is, inducements to act and (b) interests in forming partnerships.

**Motivations to Act**
“Enabling business environment”
“Healthy and prosperous communities”
“Strengthen Human Resource Pool”
“Leading priorities”
“Strategic Direction”
“Social Responsibility”
“Increases company visibility”

**Interests in Partnerships**
“Reducing effects of unemployment and idleness such as suicide”
“Capacity development of staff & other groups”
“Collaborating with international donors and local NGOs for development”
“Mutual relationship with communities”
“Commitment to social development”

One representative from a private sector organization succinctly captured the essence of growing private sector involvement in volunteerism and NGOs when he remarked, “**When you have a big arm, you have to hug the community.**”

6. **CONCLUSION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION**

Re-thinking and exploring new opportunities for collaboration between the voluntary and private sectors must consider local experiences of partnering as well as the wider influence of economic and social factors on the nature of partnerships. Emerging concepts such as socially responsible corporate governance and good corporate citizenship are responses to local and international business competitiveness and criticisms of unrestrained profit-motivated operations. Similarly, local emphasis on the application of sustainability principles in the voluntary and private sectors encourage innovation and cross-sector collaboration. The role of international development agencies in fostering partnerships is an opportunity for mutual benefits across both sectors. A case in point is the GBCHA which was established with support from the Guyana HIV/AIDS Reduction Programme I (GHARP I). The GHARP I was a programme of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that initiated a series of voluntary and private sector dialogues and initiatives to reduce, prevent and reverse the many challenges faced by persons living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

6.1 – **Strategic Collaboration**

A number challenges that prevail in private sector/NGO partnerships can be harnessed as opportunities to strengthen the practice of volunteerism while planning and implementing socially responsible interventions. **Open dialogue** within and between both sectors to explore their collective involvement in adapting to new social challenges and operational contexts represents a key step in planning for strengthened relationships outcomes and impacts. In negotiation and dialogue processes, voluntary organizations in particular, should highlight the critical role volunteering plays in service delivery, and seek opportunities for mutual benefits from voluntary initiatives with the private sector.

**Identifying the mutual benefits** of partnering and joint interventions by private and voluntary sector organizations is another means for supporting volunteerism. Many private sector organizations identified their social responsibility priority as contributing to community and societal well-being, an objective fully compatible with NGOs. However
business organizations also seek opportunities to include products, services and employees in supported initiatives. In addition to interest and willingness, developing voluntary and private sector partnerships require enabling mechanisms to support their implementation and sustainability. Since few private sector organizations are aware of the opportunities that would be opened through including volunteerism in their social responsibility plans, joint agreement on enabling mechanisms to promote, support, monitor, report on and recognize voluntary activities is critical. Voluntary organisations should also strengthen how volunteerism is conceptualized and practiced in their organizations and the wider voluntary sector. Scotia Bank Guyana has a comprehensive volunteerism scheme that provides an innovative example of how volunteerism can be integrated in company policies and programmes. The bank encourages staff volunteering with NGOs and community groups through its social policies and initiatives which reward staff as well as the voluntary sector partners. Volunteerism is prioritized, monitored and reported on throughout the year, coordinated locally by focal points and committees in various branches and regions served by Scotia Bank Guyana. The website also documents a number of social responsibility interventions supported by Scotia Bank in other countries.

6.2 – Shared Expectations, Planning and Responsibilities

Sharing information and locating common ground are imperative when establishing partnerships that promote volunteerism. Although many private sector organizations named initiatives that they support, they were uncertain about their content, especially programmes with multiple components and activities. Encouraging private sector involvement starting from the planning phase of social interventions was unanimously recognized as a means to enhance participation and expand and improve the support offered. Shared planning also provides NGOs with strategic opportunities to assist companies to draft and implement their CSR policies and programmes, thus making them more relevant and responsive to social issues. Agreeing on clear and shared responsibilities helps to identify capacity constraints requiring additional partners or modification of activities.

For instance, in developing their social responsibility policy, Sterling Products decided to establish a core value of working with community groups (e.g. women’s groups, youth groups, etc.) in Amerindian communities. The company will pursue this by establishing working relationships with Amerindian Village Councils and reputable specialized groups with a presence in these communities. The decision to move in this direction was prompted by recognition of the company’s capacity limits, and the skills and resources that multiple partnerships can bring to a broader understanding of community interests and participation. Other concepts of multiple partnerships might include public sector entities as well as regional and/or international partners. For example, the GBCHA is a member of the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS and has representation in the Pan Caribbean Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS.

6.3 – Leveraging a Volunteer Support Platform

Partnering with private sector organizations to support volunteerism can also have an impact at national, regional and/or sectoral levels. A Volunteer Support Platform could potentially benefit from the strategic participation of the private sector, that is: (a) to leverage private sector core competencies and skills; (b) to link a support platform with existing and pipelined corporate social responsibility policies, programmes and organizational mechanisms such as those of umbrella private sector organizations; and (c) to allow input and participation around specific activities (e.g. this could be interest or
experience based) during planning and implementation phases to encourage longer term commitment and support.

The volunteer mentorship programmes of IPED-GYBT and VYC are examples of initiatives that could both benefit from and support a volunteerism platform. Through these mentorship schemes skilled and semi-skilled volunteers act as mentors for participating youth. Both organisations expressed challenges in recruiting and retaining volunteers, and indicated that many current volunteers have a long-standing association with the organisation. A volunteerism platform could match qualified volunteers with opportunities appropriate for their skills. For voluntary sector organisations this can mean ready access to skilled prospective volunteers who otherwise may not be aware of their work. For private sector organisations such as IPED-GYBT that are able provide skills training, internships as well as volunteer opportunities, a volunteerism support platform could direct their services to where they are needed.

Moreover, collaboration with companies experienced in providing strategic voluntary support such as Scotia Bank, Sterling Products Limited, IPED and DENMOR Garment Manufacturers as well as networks such as the GBCHA that have interest and/or experience in promoting and practicing volunteerism could yield positive dividends for a platform. The experience of these companies can be used to foster closer links between the voluntary and private sectors. Communication to sensitize, inform and seek input from a broader stakeholder group during pre-planning processes can set the tone for further engagement and generates meaningful actions conducive to a sense of ownership and commitment. This bodes well for sustained involvement and mutually beneficial results.

6.4 – Exploring Social Entrepreneurism

Social entrepreneurism involves the practice of business principles to sustain a socially focused intervention and/or organization. It can include fundraising activities or other types of short and long-term income generating operations to contribute to the operational costs of an NGO. To illustrate, the Beacon Foundation Limited, an NGO providing numerous services to various types of vulnerable groups in Guyana, established its first takeout and dine-in snackette in 1987. The foundation continues to operate this snackette, as well as a catering service. Surpluses are used to implement its school feeding programme, Day Care Centre, Hospice and Medical Services, and numerous free capacity-building programmes. Since 1997, St. Francis Community Developers decided to take its sustainability into its own hands by opening a stationery shop. This initial venture has blossomed into a group of micro enterprises which include a restaurant and catering service, and a beauty products and services outlet. The profits allow St. Francis to offset organizational costs associated with its basic overhead, staff remuneration and in-house as well as external training programmes.

Another innovative practice of social entrepreneurism in Guyana is illustrated by Volunteer Youth Corps (VYC). VYC provides policy development services to companies seeking to establish their HIV/AIDS workplace policies. VYC and partnering companies negotiated payment in the form of short and long-term financial, material and other support for VYC and its programmes. The Business Development Centre developed by VYC in collaboration with Scotia Bank trains young entrepreneurs and provides specialized access to Scotia’s financing services for entrepreneurs. The aforementioned models illustrate voluntary activities by organisations. If taken to scale, social entrepreneurism has potential to support more direct partnerships or volunteer infrastructure such as a platform. In addition to the benefits to private sector
companies by voluntary organisations, NGOs can strengthen their management through skills transferred during partnerships. Partnerships with private sector organizations can include basic business management mentoring or training, thus drawing on core competencies of the private sector.

6.5 - CONCLUDING REMARKS
Volunteerism has long-standing relevance in both private and voluntary sectors. Private sector organizations interviewed emphasized that their executive, management and frontline personnel volunteer in various private sector umbrella and representative associations, service clubs, NGOs and CBOs. NGOs rely on volunteerism to meet organizational and programme objectives, and skilled volunteers are particularly needed. The expertise and experience within private and voluntary sectors are largely complementary and could be harnessed to mutual benefit right from program planning through to implementation. Some potential synergies are general, while others will be best accessed through partnerships and joint programming.

Partnerships between voluntary and private sector organisations can greatly contribute to individual, community and organizational development. When negotiating partnerships between for-profit and nonprofit organizations and planning interventions, due diligence is required ensure that the values and practices of the partners are fully compatible. For example accountability, legitimacy and transparency are integral to productive working relationships. These values are the foundation for good governance, value for resources and appropriate use of resources, including volunteers. Partnerships reflective of these values stimulate public confidence, including among beneficiaries, and can serve as templates for the creation of new collaborative initiatives.
Appendix II. Glossary of Key Terms and Concepts

**Appreciative Inquiry**\(^{178}\) “focuses on a community's achievements rather than its problems, and seeks to go beyond participation to foster inspiration at the grass-roots level. It was developed in the early 1990s by David Cooperrider at Case Western Reserve University primarily to help corporations sharpen their competitive advantage...Appreciative inquiry is a strategy for purposeful change that identifies the best of "what is" to pursue dreams and possibilities of "what could be."”

**Civil society**\(^{176}\) is “the arena – outside of the family, the state, and the market – which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance shared interests”. (This formulation includes non-governmental organisations, private voluntary organisations, peoples’ movements, community-based organisations, trade unions, charities, social and sports clubs, cooperatives, environmental groups, professional associations, consumer organisations, faith-based organisations and the not for profit media, in the definition of civil society.)

**Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)**\(^{177}\) are “non-state actors whose aims are neither to generate profits nor to seek governing power. CSOs unite people to advance shared goals and interests.”

**CSOs**\(^{178}\) comprise “the full range of formal and informal organizations within civil society: NGOs, community based organizations (CBOs), indigenous people’s organizations (IPOs), academia, journalist associations, faith-based organizations, trade unions, and trade associations, for example. Civil society constitutes a third sector, existing alongside and interacting with the state and market.”

**Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)**\(^{179}\) “…tend to emerge out of a need within the community. They are localized and likely to have a limited resource base. CBOs may be created by an individual promoter, arise out of the interest of a number of people or result in response to a particular situation.”

**Decent Work**\(^{180}\) “sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.”

**National Youth Service**\(^{181}\) - “An organized period of substantial youth engagement with contribution to a community, supported or mandated by the national government, with minimal monetary compensation to the participant.”

**National Youth Service Policy (NYSP)**\(^{182}\) - a policy document that defines the service activity implemented in the form of a program. “A Youth Service Policy is created by an organization or agency (normally in the government) for the purpose of involving young people in community service, volunteerism, or service-learning. Youth Service Policies are implemented, or put into action, through community service programs. The exact nature, forms, and purpose of the service vary greatly from policy to policy and country to country.”

**Non-governmental Organization (NGO)**\(^{183}\) is “a non-profit organization, group or institution that operates independently from a Government and has humanitarian or development objectives.”

**Social enterprise**\(^{184}\) refers to “Mission-oriented revenue or job-creating projects undertaken by individual social entrepreneurs, nonprofit organizations, or nonprofits in association with for-profits.”

**Support infrastructure**\(^{185}\) (for civil society).…Federations or umbrella bodies available for civil society, networking and connections among civil society organisations.
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In this context, ‘non-state’ is used rather than ‘civil society’ to encompass private sector partnerships. The term ‘communities’ refers to local, national, regional or even international communities.
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See also Appreciative Inquiry Commons http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro-definition.cfm
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http://www.statisticsguyana.gov.gy/cen02.html
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75 http://www.mcys.gov.gy/pyarg_about.html
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79 Success in finding paid employment was used to support at least one nomination for ‘Outstanding Youth Volunteer’ for International Day of Volunteers.
81 For the most part, the data were not checked for consistency or errors, apart from dialogue and clarification during the interview.
83 Note also that abuses of RBM and M&E came under criticism arising from a broader view that the concepts of development need to be examined and fundamentally changed. In part the contention is that showing narrowly defined results in standard frameworks (e.g. logframe) becomes a priority. The focus on donor agendas and funding creates a power dynamic that erodes self-determination, integrity and volunteer ethos.
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85 Ibid.
86 Towards the New Millennium, Roy McConkey and Brian O’Toole; Chapter 1 in Innovations In Developing Countries For People With Disabilities Op. Cit. http://www.eenet.org.uk/parents/book/editors.doc
88 Part 2 - Country Reports, Community-Based Rehabilitation as we have experienced it...voices of persons with disabilities in Ghana, Guyana and Nepal. World Health Organization & Swedish Organizations of Disabled Persons International Aid Association, 2002.
http://sitesresources.worldbank.org/DISABILITY/Resources/Community-Based-Rehabilitation/Community_Based_Rehabilitation_as_we_have_experienced_it_2.pdf
89 Twenty Years of Community-Based Rehabilitation in Guyana, 1986-2006, An Impact Assessment, by Dr. Sunil Deepak – AIFO, Italy
Note that in the National Composite Index (NCPI) survey, all key respondents agreed that the Government ensured full and active participation in developing the strategy.
fhi.org/NI/rdonelyres/.../IMPACTGuyanaFHIHIEnhv.pdf
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Aggressive laws to be implemented to govern Co-operative and Friendly Societies -Minister Nadir


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Zero-rated materials include basic food items, medical and education services and supplies, electricity,
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An Introduction to Guyana’s Value-Added Tax

VAT was poorly timed – Clive Thomas, Stabroek News, July 2008
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This assessment is based on interviews with knowledgeable persons. It is supported by private statements
from highly placed figures, including in Government, who expressed the opinion that civil society organizations
are too fragmented for meaningful consultation.

Aggressive laws to be implemented to govern Co-operative and Friendly Societies -Minister Nadir

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and Red Crescent Societies, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Volunteers, 2004

The Public Service Salary Scale (2009) is shown below for comparison with living allowances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band (level)</th>
<th>Example Position</th>
<th>Monthly rate (G$)</th>
<th>Band (level)</th>
<th>Example Position</th>
<th>Monthly rate (G$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Office Assistant, Cleaner</td>
<td>31626–36086</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>71021–106469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Driver, Typist Clerk 1</td>
<td>34504–39981</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>Senior Personnel Officer, Chief Accountant</td>
<td>85971–133883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td></td>
<td>37292–43442</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>School Welfare Officer</td>
<td>106319–174035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Accounts Clerk</td>
<td>38997–45597</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>133716–222358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Confidential Secretary</td>
<td>43939–55330</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>164608–289878</td>
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<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td></td>
<td>50578–63735</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>208356–366913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td></td>
<td>58247–86154</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Permanent Secretary</td>
<td>253538–470713</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, 2009 Human Rights Report: Guyana, US Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human
http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/wha/136115.htm

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For example, the 2007 Go-invest Investment Guide gives the following average monthly wages for a variety
of private sector job types (converted to G$). Manufacturing: G$ 29600–32000; Clerical/Secretary: G$ 23000–
35000; Supervisory Personnel: G$ 40000–60000; Entry Level/Middle Management: G$90000–180000.
http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61730.htm

Note that in the current strategy, to improve sustainability of IDB projects, IDB is topping-up the salaries of
the public servants involved.
We heard of an example in which a salaried NGO employee resigned to become a volunteer in the very same position with the same NGO at a stipend that exceeded the salary by some $G25000. We also heard how demotivating it can be for committed professional civil servants to find themselves supervising or working with inexperienced unqualified volunteers whose stipends exceed civil servant salaries. Situations of this kind are also an inducement to secrecy around finances rather than transparency.


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Many of the Latin American and Caribbean examples are drawn from:


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c.e.europa.eu/citizenship/eyv2011/doc/National report PT.pdf


Conselho Nacional para a Promocao do Voluntariado http://www.voluntariado.pt/


http://www.ngoforum.org/


For example, the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

http://www.calgarycvo.org/about-cuvo/what-we-do

Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development http://www.cvsrd.org/eng/home.html

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Volunteer Canada http://volunteer.ca/en/aboutus

Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement


info.worldbank.org/etools/.../library/57509/youthservice.pdf


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http://www.icicp.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/1677

Strategy for Youth Development; and translating regional policy into national policies of organisations/NGOs/CBOs and development agencies; coordinating the implementation of the Regional Strategy for Youth Development; and translating regional policy into national action."

See IYV News – Guyana Update, volumes 1-7 for listings and details of activities.

For comparison note that this mirrors the structure of the Uganda National NGO Forum.

Although the NRDBB representative, Mr. Michael Williams, was prevented from attending by weather

IYV News – Guyana Update, Vol 6, July-August 2001 states: “It is the vision of the Guyana IYV 2001 Committee that these representatives from the district committees would form regional committees, with representation of the National Volunteer Committee, which will be the focal point for volunteer administration and support beyond 2001.”

For details of Scotia Bank’s Corporate Social Responsibility profile go to: scotiabank.com/cda/index/index/0,,LIDen_SID35,00.html

More information about Grace & Staff Community Development Foundation and Grace Kennedy Foundation is available at: www.gracekennedy.com/foundations

To view the case study, visit: www.gsb.tt/case_clearing_house/uploads/Mings.pdf

For more information about Georgetown Chamber of Commerce & Industry go to: www.georgetownchamberofcommerce.org


More information about the work of the GBCHA is available at: www.guybizcoalition.org

To find out more about the PMAD Programme, visit: www.republicguyana.com/company/powertomake.aspx

For social objectives of Roraima Group of Companies, parent company of ArrowPoint Resort:

www.roraimaairways.com/about-us

Detailed information about Digicel Foundation is available at: www.republicguyana.com/company/powertomake.aspx

To learn more about Scotia Bank’s Bright Futures Programme, visit: www.scotiabrightfutures.com

Download the full Case study of DENMOR Garments at: cases.growinginclusivemarkets.com/documents/41

To learn more about this programme visit the website of GBCHA at http://www.guybizcoalition.org/


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