Analysis of Volunteering in Guyana and Feasibility of Establishing a Guyana Volunteerism Support Platform

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Sponsored by:
UN Volunteers
Ministry of Culture Youth & Sport
VSO
Consultative Group members:

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- Ronald Harsawack
- Marlyn Ramjeet-Samad
- Tara Persaud, VSO Guyana
- Megumi Ito, United Nations Volunteers
- Carl Brandon, Ministry of Culture, Youth & Sport
Validation Workshop Objectives

- Share and validate Study findings
- Foster engagement, ownership and collaboration among organizations and with the Consultative Group
- Devise Next Steps for moving ahead
Problem solving (deficit-based change)

“Felt Need”
Identify problem

Conduct root cause analysis

Analyze Possible Solutions

Develop action plan (Treatment)

Basic assumption: Problem to be solved

Appreciative inquiry (strength-based innovation)

“Valuing the best of what is”

Appreciate

Imagine (What might be)

Dialogue and design (What should be)

Create (What will be)

Basic assumption: What we focus on becomes our reality
APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY CYCLE

Discovery
Recognizing past achievements & learning from experience

Dream
Envisioning our shared future

Design
Planning together enabling conditions to realize the dream

Destiny
Doing, implementing, actualizing
Green land of Guyana, our heroes of yore
Both bondsmen and free, laid their bones on your shore…
Great land of Guyana, diverse through 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.
Guyana Volunteerism Support Platform
Voluntary Sector (civil society, NGOs, CBOs)

Volunteerism & Volunteer-Involving Organizations

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
CBO – Community-Based Organization
VIO – Volunteer-Involving Organization

Public Sector (state, government)

Private Sector (market, for-profit)
What / Who is a volunteer? Volunteers:

• Benefit the wider community beyond immediate family and friends
• Undertake work voluntarily, through choice or free will
  o No external social, economic or political pressures
• Are not motivated by financial or material gain
  o Payments can facilitate involvement, but reimbursement should not exceed the ‘market value’ of the work
Volunteer Motivations in the Words of Volunteers:

- “To know at the end of the day that whatever we do helps someone in need...we are our brother’s keeper”
- “A lifestyle that we’re involved in every day, doing your best in your own community”
- “Coming together you can do it yourself”
- “I love to help and can't stand injustice, so I try do my part”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)</th>
<th>Greater Georgetown Area (n=72)</th>
<th>Regional (n=38)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 1: Target 1 - Eradicate extreme poverty</td>
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<td>Goal 1: Target 2 - Eradicate extreme hunger</td>
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<td>Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education</td>
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<td>Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women</td>
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<td>Goal 4: Reduce child mortality</td>
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<td>Goal 5: Improve maternal health</td>
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<td>Goal 6: Target 1 - Combat HIV/AIDS</td>
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<td>Goal 6: Target 2 - Combat malaria and other diseases</td>
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<td>Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability</td>
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<td>Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development</td>
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<td>National Development Goals (NDGs)</td>
<td>Number of NGOs</td>
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<td>1) Job-generating economic growth</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>2) Stronger institutions and better governance</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>3) Investment in human capital, with emphasis on basic education and primary health</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>4) Physical infrastructure: safe water, sanitation services, roads, drainage, irrigation, housing</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>5) Improved social safety nets</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>6) Special intervention programs to address regional pockets of poverty</td>
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Estimating Volunteer Hours in 20 Volunteer-involved organizations (VIOs)

More than 8000 volunteer hours/week

Not captured: Boards of Directors; ‘Stand-by’ disaster preparedness volunteers; disaster response events (e.g. Red Cross volunteers collectively contributed about 2000 hours/week during the 2005 flood)
Continuum from Prosocial Relationships to Structured Volunteerism

- Spontaneous individual caring & sharing
- Informal charitable groups
- Self-help & mutual aid groups
- Volunteer-operated CBOs & NGOs reaching out
- CBOs & NGOs with part-time or occasional salaried staff
- Staffed VIOs that deploy volunteers

Increasingly formal organizational structures
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.

Alexander Isaacs
Dreams for a Platform

Shared ethical values
- a principled approach in a national environment that fosters and re-enforces ethical behaviour in organizations and individuals

Recognition and equal opportunity in volunteerism
- everyone can volunteer regardless of their station, and all are respected simply for being volunteers

Nation-building
- working and networking together for the social and economic health of the nation
Defining enabling features:

- Volunteer-enabling support structure, including a volunteer registry
- Expand volunteer engagement, and bring volunteerism into national youth policy
- Enable participation of hinterland residents as volunteers
- Coordinate training and development of volunteers, and accrediting of volunteer experience
- Enable to access to and sharing of physical, financial, human, technical resources for organizations and communities
Defining enabling features:

• Address the underlying causes of poverty
• A voice for honest nonpartisan appraisal and advocacy
• Influential with Government and donors
• NGO resource, research, information, documentation and development centre
• NGO coordination centre, including strategic and program planning
• Advisory not regulatory, descriptive not prescriptive, facilitative not limiting
Comments or Questions?
Relationship Strings – Organizational Connectivity

Group Analysis:
- What factors play a role in organizational connectivity?
- What factors would generate interest and motivation for building on existing connections or developing new connections?
Homegrown Success Stories to Learn From and Build On - Invited Speakers

- Leon Walcott, Council of Organizations for Persons with Disabilities
- Goldie Scott, NGO Coordinating Committee (NCC)
- Michael Williams, North Rupununi District Development Board

Discussion Questions:
- What lessons are there in these experiences that would be useful in trying to create a Volunteerism Platform in Guyana?
- How can a Volunteerism Platform build on or complement existing social Infrastructure (for example the 3 organizations profiled)?
Possible Organizational Structure

Members
- Sectoral councils
- Regional coalitions
- District networks
- NGOs
- Faith-based organizations
- Etc.

PLATFORM
- Executive

Partners/Sponsors
- Government
- INGOs
- UN agencies
- Donors
- Private sector

Committees
- Volunteerism
- Policy & Legislation
- Fund Development
- Donor Liaison
- Private Sector Liaison
- Government Liaison
- Etc.
Models from Guyana and other Jurisdictions

Process

NGO-led

Govt-led

Top-down

Bottom-up

NGO Coordinating Committee (NCC)

National Policy & Legislation
Mandated Volunteer Service Programs through Education or Youth Ministries
National Volunteerism Commissions, Councils and Agencies

Council of Organizations for PWD

Municipal, Regional or Local Initiatives
North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB)

Models from Guyana and other Jurisdictions
Models from Canada

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

Voluntary Sector Initiative

Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks (Canada)
Centre for Voluntary Sector Research & Development, Carlton University & University of Ottawa
Volunteer Canada

NGO-led

Govt-led

Process

Top-down

Bottom-up
Model from Portugal

National Council for the Promotion of Volunteerism (1999)

Portuguese Social Platform for NGOs for Development (1985)


Process

GOV-LED

Top-down

Bottom-up
Discussion

Key Questions:
• How can these models be adapted to Guyana?
• What factors could facilitate or hinder these processes?
• How can these processes be adapted to Guyana?
Next Steps – Stepping Stones to a Platform

DREAMS

ENABLING FEATURES

Next steps

Next steps

Next steps

Next steps

Next steps

Next steps

Next steps

First steps

First steps
“Hand wash hand, make hand come clean.”

– Guyanese proverb