NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY 2015 OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

Foreword

Brigadier David Granger
President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana

Foreword

Minister of Education
Honourable Dr. Rupert Roopnarine

Message from the Minister
Within the Ministry of Education

Minister within the
Ministry of Education

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the team of consultants, especially the lead consultant, Ms. Esther McIntosh who has facilitated the consultations, analysed the data, and work assiduously to bring this Policy to consummation.

Sincere thanks to the plethora of youth organisations, educators, employers, trade unionists, religious leaders, and other civil society actors who have contributed to the analysis and supported the data collection that have informed this Policy. Your experience working with youth across Guyana has helped to ensure that the Policy builds on existing local expertise and experiences.

The successful completion of this National Youth Policy 2015 would not have been possible without the technical and financial support of the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Population Fund. Thank you for your support of youth development efforts in Guyana and for partnering to develop a happy, strong, skilled and safe youth population. Thanks also to the Caribbean Community Secretariat, especially the Youth Development Programme, your support and involvement have contributed significantly to the process of bringing this policy to fruition.

Above all, heartfelt thanks to the thousands of Guyanese youth in all ten (10) regions of Guyana who have participated in the consultative exercises held to inform this Policy. Gratitude is extended to the many advisors who gave of their time and expertise during the consultations. Thank you for honestly and openly sharing your experiences, offering your expertise, and partnering with the Government of Guyana and other stakeholders in crafting the strategic direction for youth engagement and development in Guyana. Your continued participation in the delivery of this Policy will be critical to the achievement of the ideals expounded herein.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Acronyms & Abbreviations

CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCYD	CARICOM Commission on Youth Development
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSME	CARICOM Single Market and Economy
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CVQ	Caribbean Vocational Qualification
CYDAP	CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan
CYDGs	CARICOM Youth Development Goals
GoG	Government of Guyana
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IGOs	Inter-Governmental Organisations
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NVTP	National Volunteer Teacher's Programme
NVP	National Volunteer Platform
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RSYD	Regional Strategy for Youth Development
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
Tech-Voc	Technical and Vocational
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
ADF	Amerindian Development Fund
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBO	Community Based Organization

CCYD	CARICOM Commission on Youth Development
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CEBO	Creativity for Employment and Business Opportunity
CROC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSME	Caribbean Single Market Economy
CVQ	Caribbean Vocational Qualification
CYDAP	CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan
CYP	Commonwealth Youth Programme
EBP	Evidence Based Policy
ECD	Early Childhood Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
DYCS	Department of Culture, Youth and Sport
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GoG	Government of Guyana
GTI	Guyana Technical Institute
GYBT	Guyana Youth Business Trust
HIV	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IMAI	Integrated Management of Adolescent Illness
LCDS	Low Carbon Development Strategy
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoAA	Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
MICS	Multiple Indicator Child Survey
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCD	National Commission on Disability
NDC	Neighbourhood Democratic Council
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

NOC	New Opportunity Corps
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OSY	Out of School Youth
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PYARG	President's Youth Award: Republic of Guyana
PYD	Positive Youth Development
RDC	Regional Democratic Council
SASOD	Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SKYE	Skills and Knowledge for Youth Empowerment
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TOT	Training of Trainers
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWI	University of the West Indies
VSP	Volunteer Support Platform
WADNET	Women Across Differences Network
WPAY	World Programme of Action for Youth
YEST	Youth Entrepreneurial Skills Training Program

Glossary

Entrepreneurship— For the purpose of this report, entrepreneurship will be defined as the process of recognising the most feasible business opportunity, acquiring the needed resources (capital, human, technological 'know-hows', equipment and machinery) and utilising the opportunity to ensure the business' successful start-up and continued operation.

Life Skills— For the purpose of this Policy, life skills will be defined as the personal attributes that are required or desirable to enable a person to participate fully in society and to be able to interact effectively with other persons and society at large.

Youth Development— For the purpose of this Policy, youth development will be defined as the advancement and empowerment of youth in the political, social, cultural and economic spheres with the aim of placing them at the centre of Guyana's development.

Youth Empowerment— For the purpose of this Policy, youth empowerment is defined as the attitudinal, structural and cultural process through which young people obtain the ability, the mechanisms and power to influence, and or, make and implement decisions in their own lives and in the life of the wider society.

At Risk Youth— For the purpose of this Policy, at-risk youth is defined as young people who are vulnerable and are less likely to successfully transition to a self- sustaining and viable adulthood.

Vulnerable— For the purpose of this Policy, vulnerable is defined as being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either emotionally, physically and or psychologically due to one's prevailing environment, social and/or family condition.

Disadvantaged— For the purpose of this Policy, disadvantaged is defined as being in a significantly less favourable position when compared to persons of the same standing and calibre.

Marginalised— For the purpose of this Policy, marginalised is defined as the treatment of a person, group or concept as insignificant and there is the tendency to make them peripheral or sometimes exclude them from processes they are entitled to participate in.

Youth in contact with the law — For the purpose of this Policy, youth in contact with the law is defined as anyone between the ages of fourteen (14) and thirty-five (35) inclusive, who has to engage the law and law enforcement agencies.

Youth in conflict with the law — For the purpose of this Policy, youth in conflict with the law is defined as anyone between the ages of fourteen (14) and thirty-five (35) inclusive, who has been accused of, or has committed a crime and is liable to face legal consequences.

Informal education— For the purpose of this Policy, informal education is defined as learning that occurs from one's experience and involvement outside of the formal education system.

1. Preface

Guyana's National Youth Policy 2015, outlines the Government of Guyana's agenda and its priorities for all young people under the age of thirty-five (35). It represents a stated commitment to improve the situation of young people in Guyana in a manner that is empowering, inclusive and sustained.

The policy is rooted in the Constitution of Guyana, which acknowledges:

> "The aspirations of our young people who, in their own words, have declared that the future of Guyana belongs to its young people, who aspire to live in a safe society which respects their dignity, protects their rights, recognises their potential, listens to their voices, provides opportunities, ensures a healthy environment and encourages people of all races to live in harmony and peace and affirm that their declaration will be binding to our institutions and be a part of the context of our basic law". (PREAMBLE, 26)

The policy is centred on a framework of five strategic areas:

1. Improve the social, emotional and cultural skills of young people
2. Produce productive and enterprising youth workforce
3. Develop quality education and market oriented skills
4. Encourage leadership, participation and representation
5. Promote good health, security and safety

The Government recognises the importance of seizing current opportunities, harnessing the favourable demographic dividend of youth in Guyana, and increasing youth participation in the economy if it is to successfully diversify the economy, reduce poverty, address youth crime, and retain its youth population, including its best and brightest young people. It also understands its shared responsibility to advance youth development in partnership with youth themselves, the private sector and civil society.

This Policy therefore elaborates the efforts to be undertaken by the Government of Guyana through 2020 to advance youth empowerment and development. It will pave the way for the development and implementation of a National Youth Empowerment Action Plan (NYEAP) that supports focussed and strategic youth development. The National Youth Policy 2015 is thus one step in the Government of Guyana's efforts to enhance the lives of Guyanese youth and to organise the work of community, national, regional and international bodies seeking to support the advancement of youth identity, livelihood, employment, participation, representation, and well-being in Guyana.

The **National Youth Policy of Guyana 2015** is the final result of a number of research studies and consultations with youth, designed by youth for youth, and to guarantee that Guyana's young people are partners, beneficiaries and advocates of the policies and approaches expounded herein.

Over a two (2) years period 2013 to 2014, more than three thousand (3,000) youth were engaged through regional consultations, and in 2014, through a National Youth Forum. In 2015, fifty-two (52) youth organisations across Guyana participated in a survey and key stakeholder interviews to support the collection of data on issues affecting youth, identify entry points for youth development, and elaborate on existing youth development opportunities. The data gathered was analysed and published in the **Situational Analysis of Youth in Guyana 2015** and led to the development of a draft policy. This draft policy was shared and discussed with youth and other key stakeholders at a two (2) day Working Session held on July 3rd - 4th, 2015 at the Arthur Chung International Convention Centre. The feedback gathered through this exercise was compiled and is incorporated in this National Youth Policy document.

The Government of Guyana recognises that the development of youth is a process beginning from early childhood to adulthood. In addition, there is increased recognition that the first few years of a child's life is a particular sensitive period in the process of their development, laying

the foundation for childhood and beyond for cognitive functioning; behavioural, social, and self-regulatory capacities and physical health.

The definition for youth will tend to vary from country to country. Given that reality, for statistical purposes, the Government of Guyana defines youth as persons between the ages of fourteen (14) to thirty-five (35) years of age, inclusive. This Policy uses the terms youth and young people interchangeably

While youth is categorised as the fourteen (14) to thirty five (35) years, the Government of Guyana recognises persons between ten (10) to fourteen (14) years of age as pre-adolescent and is cognisant of the unique challenges and vulnerabilities they face. As the immediate forerunners of youth, their needs and challenges have also informed the youth development policies that follow and will be catered for in the NYEAP.

2. Contextual Framework

2.1 Situational Analysis

Children and youth make up the majority of Guyana's population. Sixty eight percent (68.8%) of the population is age 35 or younger. However, to date, the age structure of the population does not significantly impact the development approaches adopted, and programmes implemented in Guyana. The result is a development agenda that does not adequately incorporate or address the needs and challenges of the largest demographic component of the population and that exacerbates social and economic inequity.

In fact, even though Guyana has recorded positive economic growth for the past five (5) years, this has provided little opportunity for youth advancement and development. Many young people lack the skills and experience demanded by the job market; have limited access to information to allow for their active involvement in the creation and provision of demanded goods and services; and are unemployed and underutilised in the development process.

Moreover, poverty reduction and livelihood creation initiatives seldom specifically target youth, especially disadvantaged youth like those outside of the formal education system, youth in conflict with the law, differently-abled and indigenous youth.

Youth unemployment according to the Caribbean Development Bank May 2015 report entitled "Youth are our Future: The Imperative of Youth Unemployment for Sustainable Development" is "hovering around forty percent (40%)". In light of the large youth demographic and the growing economy in Guyana, this underscores the need for greater focus on the socio-economic realities of the local and regional economies. The issues of poverty, migration and the exclusion of youth in the articulation of youth development strategies also need to be in focus. It also highlights the need for a comprehensive approach that incorporates and addresses youth needs and challenges in setting development priorities and targets, and reinforces the need for a vibrant and expanding youth entrepreneurship sector.

The youth entrepreneurship sector is in an embryonic state, currently lacks enabling legislation, and has limited access to financial products and credit schemes for youth businesses. There is also limited access to business development services, business incubator and start-up support. Support programmes, like those provided by the Guyana Youth Business Trust and EMPRETEC are needed to promote youth employment. Furthermore, there still remains significant stigma attached to entrepreneurship and self-employment—the result of a cultural phenomenon that supports the preparation of youth for employment instead of youth who can create employment, innovate and support economic development. This is exacerbated by poor life and communication skills, an alarmingly low functional literacy rate and disconnect between research and industry innovation.

The education system, has remained stagnant, is not responsive to the market, fails to equip youth with the skills and knowledge demanded by local and regional economies and does not enable them to create self-employment. The limited achievements made in the sector are enjoyed by a select few, with the majority significantly underperforming in key subjects (like Mathematics, English, Science, Technology and Foreign Languages).

Disadvantaged youth, particularly those in hinterland areas, continue to have limited access to quality education. In addition, despite significant technological advancement, the education system has not adequately incorporated Information Communication Technology (ICT) in its curriculum. The curriculum has also continuously failed to address the differing needs of boys and girls. There is also the problem of a high drop-out rate in schools.

Technical and vocational training has the potential to be a transformative force in the education, employment and empowerment of youth, but is affected by several constraints including resources and reach. There are few nationally and regionally accredited training programmes available, and fewer Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that offer these programmes in remote and underserved communities across Guyana.

Guyanese youth are also disproportionally affected by social problems (including suicide, mental health and teenage pregnancy) and have limited access to youth-friendly health information and spaces, particularly sexual and reproductive health services and comprehensive sexuality education. In this context, the Policy will also be informed by the CARICOM Integrated Strategic Framework (2015-2020) on Adolescent Pregnancy Reduction. Factors such as poverty and the absence of sufficient social safety nets, threaten to reduce the most productive segment of the Guyanese population and perpetuate intergenerational disadvantage and inequality.

One of the greatest challenge to youth development is weak youth representation and participation in the decision-making process and the lack of deliberate strategies, opportunities and quotas that facilitate their inclusion. This is closely rivalled by the existence of youth crime due to high unemployment, poverty and a perceived lack of opportunity. Males are disproportionally affected by, and are perpetrators of youth crime, are more susceptible to drug-related gang activity, and are more likely to be in conflict with the law.

Young women, on the other hand, are more vulnerable to social forces, like sexual and physical abuse and trafficking in persons, and are more likely to be in contact with the law as victims of crime rather than as perpetrators.

Other vulnerable groups, like those discriminated against based on their sexual orientation and gender identity, differently-abled and hinterland youth, have traditionally been underserved by Government and owe most of the advancement experienced to the efforts of NGOs, Inter-Governmental Organisations (IGOs) Development Partners, and CSOs that have advocated for their rights and provided them with services.

Finally, there is no framework or guidelines for coordination and collaboration at the national and regional levels among government and non-government partners. Collaboration and coordination tend to be limited to specific initiatives. Youth development has been disjointed and sub-optimal.

2.2 Existing Youth Development Actors and Programmes

A number of community, local, national, regional and international stakeholders support Guyana's youth development efforts.

While the Government of Guyana recognises and embraces its responsibility to support youth development, it also understands that it cannot advance the youth development agenda on its own and therefore recognises the role and importance of the other actors. The buy-in and continued support of these stakeholders are key to the success of the youth development movement. The youth actors are depicted below.
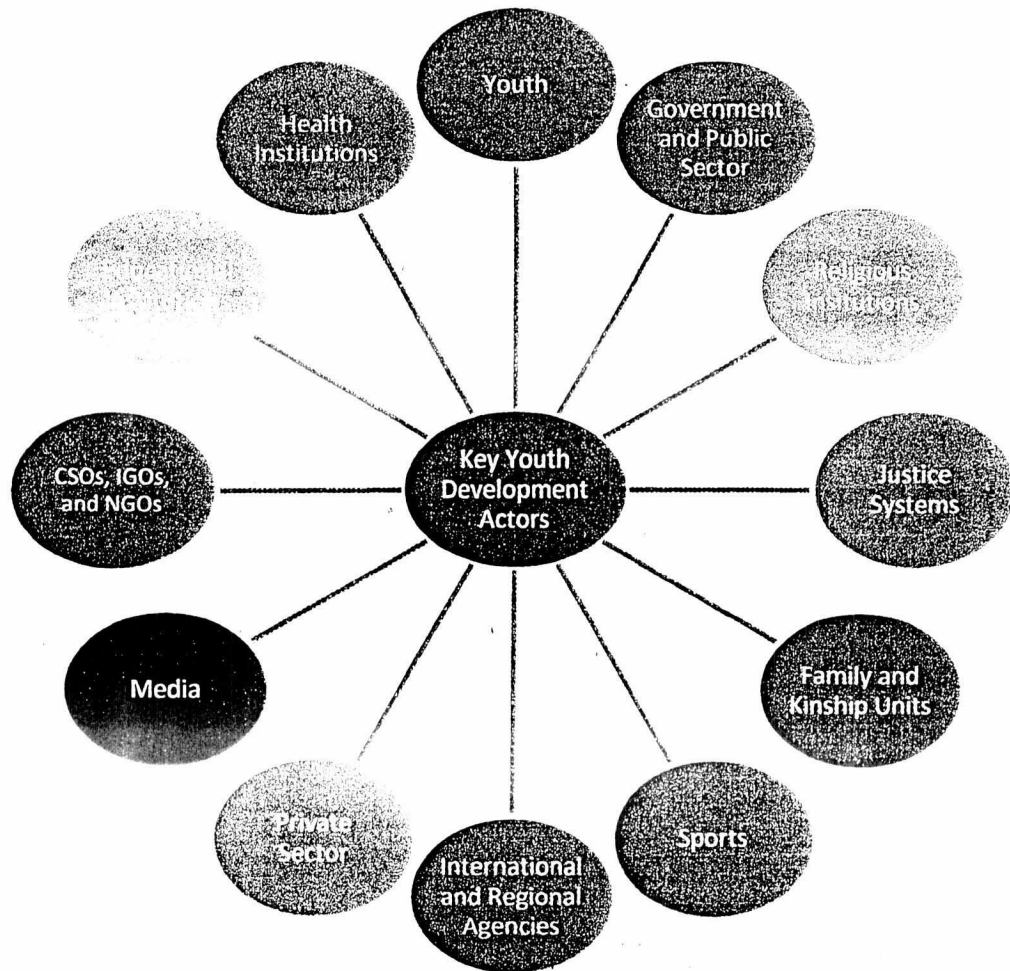
Figure 1: Key Youth Development Actors

2.3 Alignment with CARICOM Youth Framework

As the 2001 - 2009 Regional Strategy for Youth Development (RSYD) drew to an end, CARICOM governments commissioned an analysis of the opportunities and challenges facing youth in the Caribbean. The report, produced by the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development and entitled **Eye on the Future: Investing in Youth NOW for Tomorrow's Community,** underscored rising youth crime, unemployment, social exclusion and the increasing vulnerability of Caribbean youth. It also identified the need to increase youth entrepreneurship, employment and engagement as pressing priorities to help regional youth adapt to, and take advantage of the opportunities generated by regional integration efforts, globalisation and technological advances.

This report resulted in the elaboration of the **Declaration of Paramaribo on the Future of Youth in the Caribbean Community** which was adopted by Regional Heads in 2010. The Declaration underscored CARICOM governments' commitment to harness the unique perspective, creativity, and energy of young people to advance societal change and generate technological innovation and economic development[1], and paved the way for the articulation of CARICOM Youth Development Goals (YDGs).

The **Caribbean Community Youth Development Action Plan** was thereafter developed as the mechanism through which to deliver on and achieve the YDGs[2]:

- Enhance the quality of life and livelihood opportunities for all adolescents and youth.
- Enable the creation of protective environments to foster resilience and ensure adolescent and youth safety and security.
- Improve the health and holistic wellbeing of adolescents and youth.
- Enhance the development and appreciation of Caribbean culture and identity and commitment to regional integration.
- Create the policy and institutional environment and mechanisms to support effective national and regional implementation of the CYDAP.
- Ensure and enhance youth participation at all levels of decision making, programme implementation and oversight.

Guyana is committed to Caribbean regional integration. Consequently, these goals have been factored into the discussion on the way forward for the Guyanese youth. The ensuing strategic framework for youth development therefore aligns with the needs, priorities and agreed approaches of CARICOM. It also incorporates Guyana's commitments under the UN Conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to the achievement of the goals being elaborated in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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[1] Pg. 1, Declaration of Paramaribo on the Future of Youth in the Caribbean Community.
[2] Pg 13 - 14, CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan

3. Vision for Guyanese Youth

3.1 Youth Vision for Guyanese Youth

During the consultations undertaken to develop this Policy, youth were encouraged to develop a vision statement for the Guyana they desire. The vision of Guyanese youth for the youth of Guyana is as follows:

> A nation where all young people are safe, healthy and included in a society in which they have access to equal opportunities, participate in public life and are empowered to meaningfully contribute to Guyana's sustainable, national development.

3.2 GoG Vision for Guyanese Youth

The Government of Guyana (GoG)—is committed to transforming and empowering youth through this Policy and its concomitant programmes, projects and activities. In fact, youth development has been identified as one of the top national development priorities in Guyana. The GoG will endeavour to retain its youth population, including its best and brightest young people, provide an enabling environment for youth development and advancement, and partner with youth as transformative agents of social, political and economic change. The GoG vision for the youth of Guyana is as follows:

> A nation in which young people are united, educated, trained, safe, happy, healthy and integrally involved in the decision-making processes, while enjoying equality of opportunity and equal access to the resources of our country and are politically, economically and socially empowered.

3.3 Attributes a Guyanese Youth Should Aspire to Acquire

The GoG in consultation with the Guyanese youth has identified a number of attributes that Guyanese youth should aspire to acquire. These attributes have been identified based on GoG's vision for youth and the desires youth have articulated for themselves. The GoG is cognisant that youth are diverse and will therefore tend to have, and aspire to have different attributes. Consequently, the Government is aware that no one individual will be able to acquire all of the attributes listed below.

This youth policy and the programmes and initiatives that will follow are geared to developing youths that:

- Are aware of themselves, know and exhibit self-worth;
- Are patriotic and actively involved in the development of Guyana;
- Value themselves as a resource for community and national development;
- Have good deportment, a positive attitude, integrity and good habits;
- Are imbued with the spirit and practice of volunteerism;
- Possess strong leadership qualities;
- Are knowledgeable of country;
- Are well read, well-rounded and involved in social activities;
- Are creative, industrious, skilled, ambitious and qualified to fulfil career and vocational aspirations while enjoying their youth;
- Are financially literate, have an entrepreneurial spirit, not averse to risk taking and are willing to explore new and innovative avenues to develop self and country;
- Are technologically savvy;
- Are team players who understand and embrace cultural differences, accept the diversity of Guyanese society, recognise the importance of compromise, are tolerant and respectful of others;
- Are promoters of national unity;
- Are responsible and reliable to benefit nation, community and self;
- Are assertive and determined to persevere in a competitive environment;

- Believe in, and practice good governance;

- Are articulate, with excellent interpersonal, communication and networking skills;

- Are appreciative of, and seek to be involved in sport, culture and the arts;

- Are initiators of ideas and projects that will redound to the benefit of nation, community and self; and,

- Care for the environment and promote sustainable development.

SELF WORTH Are aware of themselves, know and exhibit self-worth	Are patriotic and actively involved in the development of Guyana	Value themselves as a resource of community and national development
Have good deportment, a positive attitude, integrity and good habits	**VOLUNTEER** Are imbued with the spirit and practice of volunteerism	Possess strong leadership qualities
Are knowledgeable of country	Are well read, well-rounded and involved in social activities	Are creative, industrious, skilled, ambitious and qualified to fulfil career and vocational aspirations while enjoying their youth
STARTING BUSINESS Are financially literate, have an entrepreneurial spirit, not adverse to risk taking and are willing to explore new and innovative avenues to develop self and country	Are technologically savvy	Are team players who understand and embrace cultural differences, accept the diversity of Guyanese society, recognise the importance of compromise, are tolerant and respectful of others

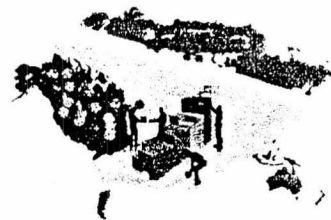|		
Are promoters of national unity	Are responsible and reliable to benefit nation, community and self	Are assertive and determined to persevere in a competitive environment
Believe in, and practice good governance	Are articulate, with excellent inter-personal, communication and net-working skills	Are appreciative of, and seek to be involved in sport, culture and the arts
Are initiators of ideas and projects that will redound to the benefit of nation, community and self		Care for the environment and promote sustainable development

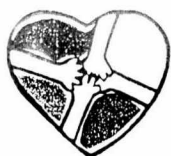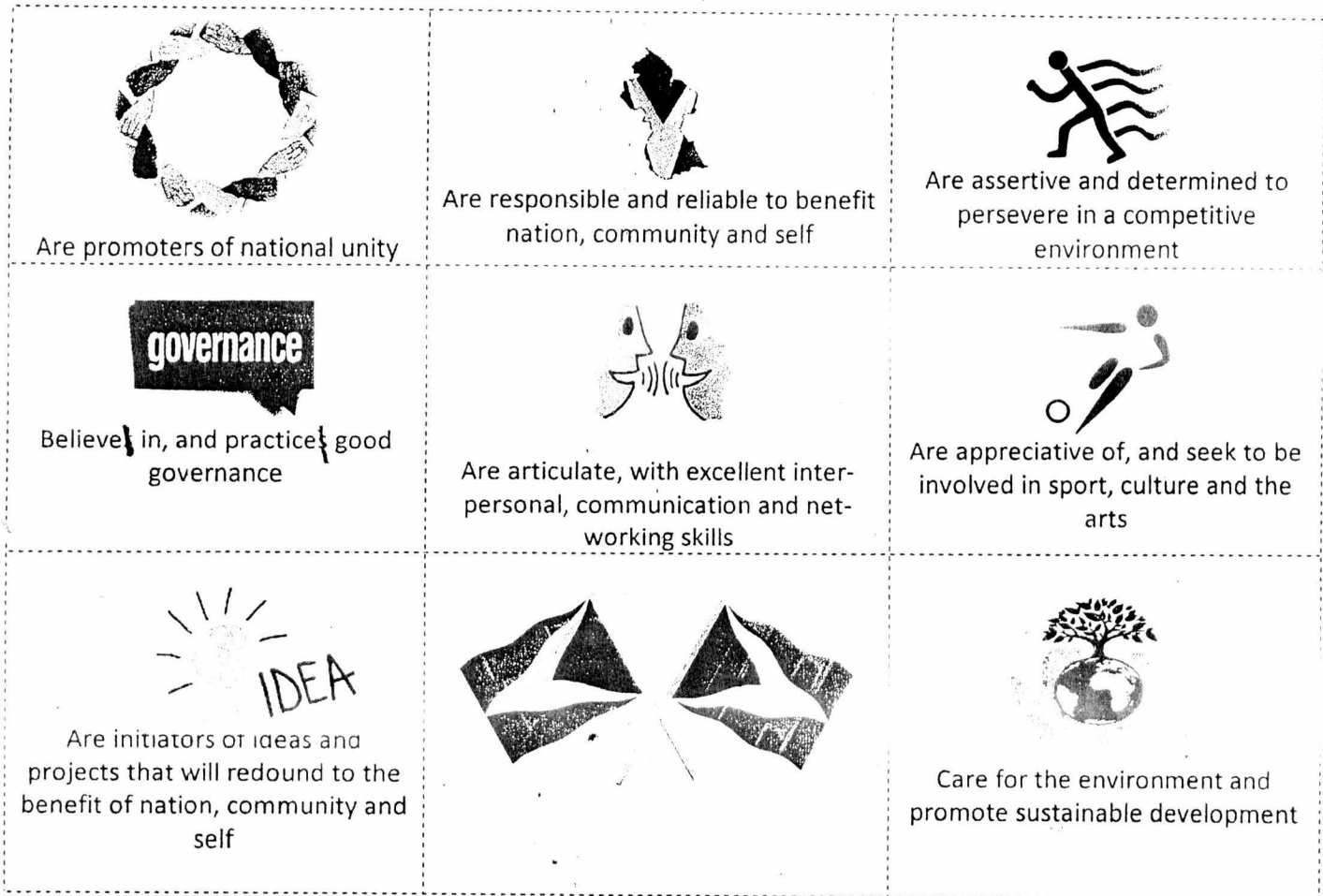Fig 2. Graphical Representation of the Attributes of a Guyanese Youth

4. Principles to Govern Youth Development in Guyana

The principles that follow inform this National Youth Policy and will guide the work to realise the youth development goals articulated herein:

4.1 Principle 1: Adopt a Rights-Based Approach

Efforts to advance youth development will be based on a rights-based approach that places young people at the centre of youth development, promotes and respects youth rights, encourages youth participation and youth empowerment, does not discriminate but addresses the specific needs of vulnerable groups, and supports accountability to all youth actors and citizens.

4.2 Principle 2: Adopt an Asset-Based Approach

The Government of Guyana recognises youth as mentors and innovators, enablers of development, assets and partners in development, capable developmental actors, major players and agents of societal change and poverty reduction, and the future of Guyanese society.

4.3 Principle 3: Ensure Equity

Youth, like all Guyanese, have the right to be free and to work; to own private property and lead private enterprise; to have access to quality health care, education and housing; and to have equality of opportunity irrespective of age, race, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

4.4 Principle 4: Advance Youth and Gender Mainstreaming

Exposure to gender equity from an early age is essential to effect a greater role and respect for women and female youth in Guyanese society. This is especially important in promoting awareness of the critical role that women and girls play in a country's development.

However, the importance of men and boys in the context of gender equality and gender based violence must be addressed. The Government of Guyana will thus endeavour to mainstream youth and gender in its development plans and approaches, and advocate for its inclusion in the work of all relevant stakeholders. This will be achieved through the enforcement of all laws and regulations that protect youth and women's rights. In addition, there will be the introduction of youth development and gender perspectives to the work and in the budgets of all relevant agencies, and the creation of mechanisms for youth and women's participation in decision-making at all levels.

4.5 Principle 5: Adopt an Evidenced-Based Decision-Making Approach

Resources will be allocated to systematically collect and analyse data to inform the design and implementation of youth development programmes and build the body of available knowledge on youth affairs in Guyana. Youth development programmes will also be monitored consistently and impact assessments undertaken to determine whether the models that have been tried have generated the desired results and to track progress made in youth development.

4.6 Principle 6: Develop an Enabling Environment

The Government of Guyana will endeavour to create and support an enabling environment for youth development. This necessitates a growing economy, expanded social services, safety nets, stable political and social conditions; increased access to knowledge and skills, and the needed political will to ensure that resources are provided and the legal and administrative frameworks are in place to support and promote youth empowerment.

4.7 Principle 7: Advance Good Governance

The Government of Guyana will adopt a multi-stakeholder, multi-disciplinary and integrated approach to youth development. A key component of this approach will be the formation of an Inter-Ministerial Committee to facilitate government coordination on youth development and ensure maximisation of resources.
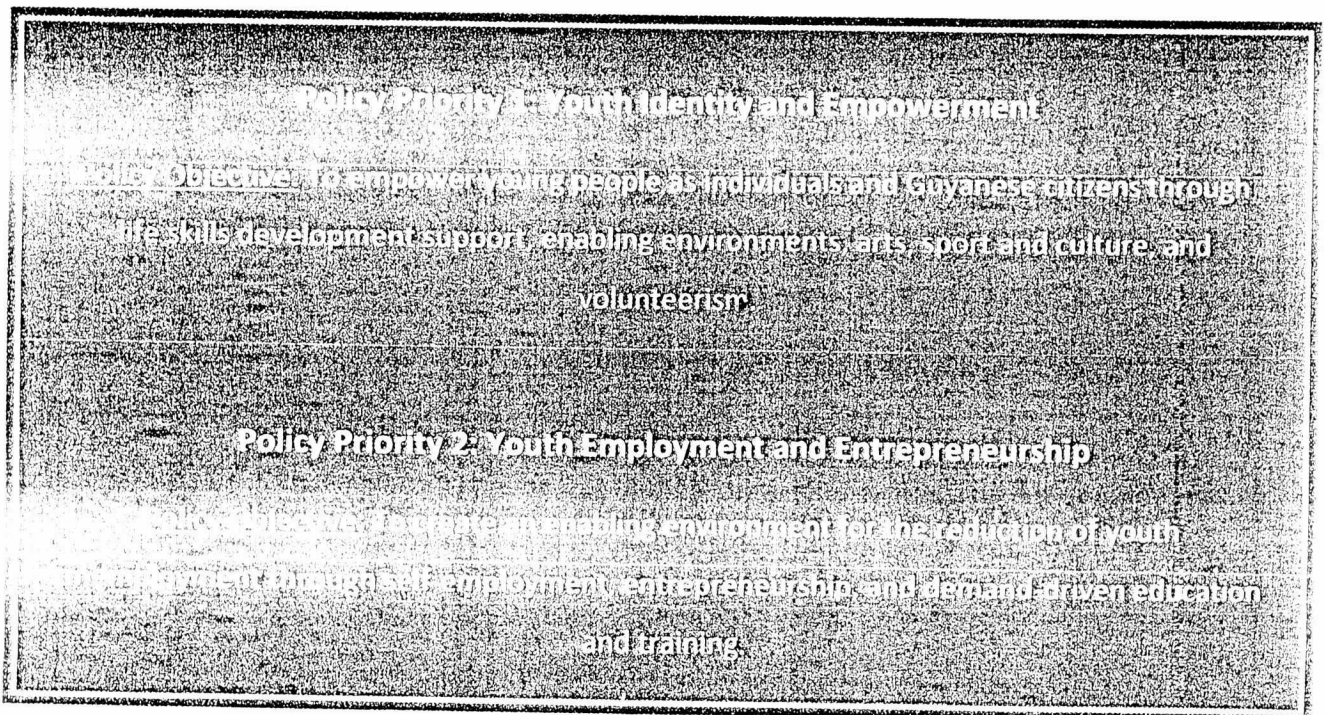
Moreover, the Government of Guyana subscribes to the tenets of good governance (transparency and accountability, representation and participation, efficiency and effectiveness, rule of law, equity and equality). Good governance will be respected and exercised in all youth development programmes, plans and activities.

5. Youth Development Policy Priorities

The analysis of the situation of Guyanese youth and the output of the youth consultations undertaken underscored the need to address the following areas as key components of the youth development agenda:

- Identity
- Empowerment
- Education
- Skills Development
- Employment
- Entrepreneurship
- Safety, health and well-being
- Political Participation
- Representation

Guyana's national youth development policy priorities are thus:

Policy Priority 1: Youth Identity and Empowerment

Policy Objective: To empower young people as individuals and Guyanese citizens through life skills development support, enabling environments, arts, sport and culture, and volunteerism.

Policy Priority 2: Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship

Policy Objective: To create an enabling environment for the reduction of youth unemployment, skills, employment, entrepreneurship and demand driven education and training.

Policy Priority 3: Education and Market Driven Skills Development

Policy Objective: To develop an effective and dynamic national system of formal and informal education, that is accessible by all young people, that ensures functional literacy and equips youth with the skills demanded by the market and needed to overcome their challenges.

Policy Priority 4: Youth Leadership, Participation and Representation

Policy Objective: To ensure that young people are respected and become active participants and representatives in decision making at the village, neighbourhood, regional, national and international policy levels.

Policy Priority 5: Youth Safety, Health and Well-Being

Policy Objective: To strengthen social support systems for youth and improve conditions for their safety, health and well-being.

The situational analysis and international best practice also underscore the need to prioritise and target vulnerable and disadvantaged youth, including:

- Female youth, particularly indigenous youth and differently-abled females, as Guyana has the second highest teen pregnancy rate in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC);
- Male youth, who are predominantly left behind in, or drop out of the formal educational system are more likely to be in conflict with the law and/or imprisoned;
- Socially and economically disadvantaged youth, particularly those from single-parent households, sex workers, drug and alcohol abusers, and youth who have been abused and/or trafficked;

- Hinterland youth who have traditionally had less access to quality education and training, limited employment opportunities, and little representation and participation in decision-making at the village, neighbourhood, regional, national and international levels;
- Youth living with disabilities and chronic and terminal diseases; and,
- Youth who suffer from social and moral stigma and discrimination due to their sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Government of Guyana therefore commits to:

- Develop strategies and programmes to increase the participation of disabled youth in mainstream living;
- Raise awareness of, and ensuring compliance with regional and international conventions and articles that advance and protect youth rights and to which Guyana is a signatory;
- Scale-up community-based initiatives that effectively support vulnerable youth;
- Develop targeted economic and social policies for vulnerable and disadvantaged youth;
- Reform the education system to ensure that the curricula address the differing needs of boys and girls, and provide adult literacy and remedial programmes for those who need them;
- Prioritise and address gender-based and intimate-partner violence which hinder social mobility and deter young women and men from achieving their full potential; and,
- Set an example and lead efforts to include vulnerable and disadvantaged youth in all youth development decisions, plans and programmes.

6. Priority 1: Youth Identity and Empowerment

All young people must have the social (e.g.: self-awareness, discipline, interpersonal skills), cognitive (e.g.: analytical, problem solving, planning) and moral (e.g.: honesty, self-control, personal responsibility) competencies to function in society. These competencies are necessary to successfully navigate complex and potentially harmful situations, environments and practices that result in crime, teenage pregnancy, drug use, and other social ills.

Youth must thus be provided the opportunity to realise their individuality and identity, contribute to their communities, have high self-esteem, a sense of purpose, realise their potential, and become well-rounded. These competencies are especially relevant among vulnerable and disadvantaged youth, like young women and girls, youth at risk, the differently-abled, youth who are discriminated against because of their sexual orientation and gender identity, and youth in contact or conflict with the law.

> Policy Objective: To empower young people as individuals and Guyanese citizens through life skills development support, supportive environments, arts, sport and culture, and volunteerism.

6.1 Life Skills Development

Life skills are personal attributes that enable a person to interact effectively with other persons and society at large. They are important for the autonomy and development of Guyana's youth. The Government of Guyana will thus:

- ❧ Promote the incorporation of life skills development in all programmes that target pre-adolescent (10 - 14 years old), adolescent (15 - 19 years old), and young adult (20 - 35 years old) youth.

- Expand life skills development training and support in the education system through programmes such as Health and Family Life Education (HFLE)[3] in schools, the Scouts and Girl Guides, and Tech-Voc. centres.

- Support civil society organisations and the private sector with the integration of life skill development in on-the-job training, apprenticeship and out-of-school youth engagement programmes.

- Support awareness and sensitisation campaigns on the importance and necessity of life skills development.

- Support families to teach and demonstrate life skills in the home.

6.2 Supportive Environment

To develop a true Guyanese identity, youth must be aware of, understand and appreciate Guyana's history and diversity, and develop a sense of unity, pride and belonging within and across communities. The Government of Guyana thus commits to:

- Lead efforts to celebrate the unique cultural diversity of the Guyanese society.

- Encourage the development of programmes and activities which promote multiculturalism and cross-cultural exchanges through camps, school trips, observance activities and cross-regional exchange programmes.

- Promote harmonious coexistence and social cohesion among persons of differing racial, ethnic, religious, social, political and cultural backgrounds.

- Give greater consideration to cultural differences, values and practices in the development of school curricula and the design and implementation of government programmes and activities.

It is recognised that youth develop in a number of interrelated spheres, including the family, community, and peer groups. There is therefore need to create an enabling environment for the social and emotional development of youth, that includes the creation of youth-friendly spaces and the presence of warm and supportive adults who are responsive to the needs of

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[3] See School Health, Nutrition, HIV&AIDS Policy [2009]

young people. This is especially true for vulnerable and disadvantaged youth and those from single-family and jobless households.

Additionally, youth routinely engage with adults in public spaces, (including local parks, workplaces, churches and schools) while they commute to school, work and recreational activities. This necessitates that adults support the creation of a conducive environment for youth engagement and development. The Government of Guyana will thus:

- Promote youth-adult relationships that foster greater understanding and exchange.
- Encourage and support youth mentoring programmes, such as Big Brother-Big Sister of Guyana;
- Raise awareness on youth rights, the laws and regulations that protect youth, and the importance of safe and nurturing environments.
- Encourage programmes, projects and activities which promote family and instil family values.
- Create safe recreational and other youth-friendly spaces within communities that allow for youth and adult/community interaction.
- Formulate new and enforce existing laws prohibiting the sale of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs.
- Support mechanisms which deepen youth links to adults and communities, such as Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and community-based programmes.

6.3 Arts & Culture

Young people require opportunities and spaces to develop an appreciation of and foster their contribution to the arts and, by extension, the broad development of culture in Guyana. Local arts and culture must be cultivated through public, civil society and private initiatives, and greater emphasis must be placed on fostering differing expressions of culture, both traditional and contemporary, through the visual and performing arts, dance, poetry, music, literature, media and folklore.

To support youth development and empowerment through arts and culture, the Government of Guyana will:

- Support the integration of arts and culture across sectors, including in rehabilitative therapy, health promotion and within the formal education system at all levels (early childhood education through tertiary).

- Provide greater guidance to youth actors on entry points for using arts and culture as a mechanism to increase youth self-expression.

- Increase awareness and foster an appreciation of the variety of Guyanese languages.

- Establish community-based centres to decentralise access to Guyanese art and experiences of culture, including increasing the number of community-based ethno-museums and art/craft galleries.

- Encourage the creation of opportunities for young people to have greater access to culturally-significant spaces, like national parks, museums, galleries and cultural centres.

- Create opportunities, through private and public sector grants and facilities, to strengthen local arts and cultural development among young artistes.

- Support the expansion of mentoring and coaching programmes for nascent artistes.

- Create special awards and recognition programme for young people who make significant contributions to local arts and cultural sector.

- Create a vibrant leisure industry where youth can enjoy a comfortable livelihood.

6.4 Sport

The GoG recognises that sport contributes to social cohesion, improve health and wellness, increases pride in country and community, generates economic benefits and contributes to the development of stronger communities. The government therefore recognises the important role that sport plays in the development of society in general and youths in particular. It is therefore necessary that there is collaboration between the government, the private sector, sport organisations and the youths involved in sport to ensure an efficient and effective sport system that delivers quality sports men and women and sport activities.

To promote youth involvement in sport the GoG will:

- Ensure young people have the right to be involved in sport.
- Commit to the enhanced participation of young people in sport.
- Commit to creating an enabling environment to ensure excellence in sport.
- Use sport as a tool for social development and social cohesion.
- Enhance young people's capacity to obtain better training and access to quality facilities and equipment

6.5 Volunteerism

Volunteerism provides a plethora of opportunities for personal development and is a useful mechanism for self-exploration and self-discovery. It provides opportunities to give back to the community through service to others, engenders responsibility and compassion, boosts the confidence of the volunteer, and encourages critical thinking and problem-solving of key local challenges. The Government of Guyana will therefore:

- Encourage the promotion and integration of volunteerism across all sectors.
- Integrate volunteerism into school curricula and mainstream volunteerism into public and social life.
- Introduce mechanisms to recognise informal and traditional forms of self-help within communities (like "*kayap*," and "*mɑtriman*" in indigenous communities).
- Support the expansion of Volunteerism to all regions of Guyana.
- Introduce national volunteer programmes, such as the National Volunteer Teacher's Programme, in core sectors like health and economic development.
- Recognise Volunteer hours as work experience

7. Priority 2: Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship

One area of lagging performance is youth employment. Youth Unemployment is hovering around forty percent (40%) and youth entrepreneurship is widely considered to be low and unsupported by adequate business development support. Key inputs such as incubators, skills and access to credit are inadequate.

The Government of Guyana is committed to adapting a multi-pronged, integrated strategy towards boosting economic and livelihood outcomes for young people. This involves:

- Creating an enabling environment for youth employment and entrepreneurship;
- Strengthening vocational training and entrepreneurial services to address youth unemployment;
- Improving mechanisms for coordination on youth employment, innovation and entrepreneurship issues among government, private sector, civil society and donor agencies; and,
- Promoting better working conditions for youth, particularly in the informal business sectors.

Apart from the foregoing, there is need for clear policy guidelines on boosting economic and livelihood outcomes for young people. The policy guidelines that follow are informed by the CARICOM Youth Development Goal on education and economic empowerment—"Enhance the quality of life and livelihood opportunities for all adolescents and youth"—and by policy recommendations from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) 2015 study, "**Youth are the Future: The Imperative for Youth Employment for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean**".

> **Policy Objective:** To create an enabling environment for the reduction of youth unemployment through self-employment, entrepreneurship, and demand-driven education and training.

7.1 Governance mechanisms to reduce unemployment

- In collaboration with youth, private sector, civil society and other development actors, articulate a clear strategy and implementation framework to address youth unemployment.
- Establish a multi-stakeholder, youth-driven committee to oversee poverty reduction for youth through employment and entrepreneurship at the community, regional and national levels.

- Define clear roles for non-governmental bodies such as the private sector and civil society groups in unemployment reduction.

- Foster greater and deeper partnerships and linkages among government, training institutions, private sector, civil society and other development actors.

- Support youth representation and participation on the boards of economic agencies and other institutions.

7.2 Employment

- Increase awareness of and demand for National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) certification among private sector companies, and encourage the standardising and accredited certifying of on-the-job training in both the private and public sectors.

- Actively support the incorporation of internships, apprenticeships and other forms of applied learning in the secondary, tertiary and vocational curricula.

- Support the strengthening of physical and creation of virtual networks for the sharing and dissemination of information on employment opportunities within Guyana and across the Caribbean.

- Lead the charge to professionalise volunteer work to support youth entry into the formal job market.

- Introduce targeted programmes and incentives to promote the development of internship and apprenticeship programmes, and the hiring of unemployed and under employed groups including young women, indigenous peoples, hinterland youth, and differently-abled and out-of-school youth.

- Provide incentives to attract youth to emerging sectors (including the oil and gas, creative, energy, technology, sustainable agriculture and agro-processing industries) and create opportunities to support their engagement beyond the entry level.

- Support evidence-based decision making and curriculum development/review through the collection and utilisation of Labour Market Information;

- Support 'job swaps' at the local, regional and international levels to enhance youth skills and expertise, expose young people to new ideas, and facilitate learning through

the sharing of experiences and talents with persons from different cultural, economic, religious, ethnic, racial and social backgrounds.

❖ Make national youth employment a critical component of the macro-economic framework.

7.3 Work Conditions

❖ Promote, implement and monitor laws, policies and regulations which relate to occupational health and safety across key sectors, including the mining, construction, manufacturing and service industries.

❖ Ensure the strict enforcement of legislation and policy directives that guarantee equal opportunity employment and guard against discrimination based on age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, physical ability, and sexual orientation and gender identity.

❖ Review the minimum wage and benefits provided to young people, and introduce targeted living wage programmes for young women, single parents, and disabled youth.

❖ Honour obligations under International Labour Organisation (ILO) and other national laws and international conventions to facilitate decent work opportunities for young people.

❖ Support the simplification of labour laws and policies so that they are youth-friendly.

❖ Support a national drive to educate youth on their labour rights and responsibilities as set out in existing laws and policies.

7.4 Entrepreneurship

❖ Encourage the adoption of strategies to attract youth in traditional sectors (such as mining, agriculture and construction) through the use of technology, innovation and mechanization.

❖ Create funding opportunities to support the work of young researchers in areas such as technology and applied research.

❖ Support the endowment of youth with better capital resources based on geographic development priorities and available resources.

- Promote and incentivise the mentoring and coaching of young entrepreneurs

- Develop public-private partnerships that foster entrepreneurship and employment (including among the Diaspora in areas such as seed funding and angel investors for youth-owned businesses).

- Promote social entrepreneurship among young people, particularly among marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

- Advocate for the creation of regional marketing and distribution centres and networks, and the introduction of a virtual clearing house that enhances access to Caribbean South American, and other markets.

- Introduce tax relief systems and advocate for affordable insurance products for youth entrepreneurs.

- Introduce youth protection schemes that increase government engagement of youth-owned businesses to at least 10% of annual government expenditure.

- Promote enhanced data availability and sharing for demand-driven business creation.

- Promote innovation and business competitions for youth to generate a critical mass of interest in entrepreneurship.

- Strengthen existing legislation to protect youth innovation and intellectual property rights.

- Support a national effort to simplify and communicate patenting procedures and protections.

- Advocate for the shift to cleaner, cheaper energy options to support the modernisation of the agricultural sector, the development and expansion of the manufacturing sector, and the constraining of a critical entry barrier for youth entrepreneurs.

- Promote the reinvigoration and use of credit unions and cooperatives as alternative sources for low-interest loans for youth.

- Advocate for a review of collateral requirements for loans to youth entrepreneurs, including the introduction and expansion of credit-guarantee and interest-payment-support schemes.

- Support the development and availability of business development and extension services and targeted financial products for youth across Guyana.

- Support the introduction of business incubators for youth-owned businesses in all regions across Guyana.
- Advocate for the provision of special incentives to encourage the development of youth businesses in emerging sectors, including the oil and gas, creative and leisure, green and technology industries.
- Advocate for the streamlining and simplification of the business start-up and tax administration systems.

8. Priority 3: Education and Market-Driven Skills Development

The education system is a vital rite of passage for young people and should be staffed, resourced and required to produce young people who are equipped to realise their full potential. Young people should see the value of pursuing and receiving an education, and should be the strongest advocates for the delivery of quality education from the early childhood education to the tertiary levels across Guyana.

Greater emphasis is therefore needed to encourage innovation, excellence, and critical thinking. The education system must equip youth to seamlessly transition through the various phases of their development; and promote greater equity. Furthermore, to support economic development, concerted effort must be invested in adding value to and upgrading existing sectors (such as agriculture, mining and construction) by increasing demand through early exposure and training in schools.

The Government of Guyana recognises the need to modernise the education system and to increase access across Guyana to address the unique needs of differently-abled, indigenous and other disadvantaged youth, and respond to the differing challenges that boys and girls face in schools. Education reform has thus been identified as a national priority.

> **Policy Objective:** To develop an effective and dynamic national system of formal and informal education, that is accessible by all young people, ensures functional literacy, and equips youth with the skills demanded by the market and needed to overcome life challenges.

8.1 Quality Education & Training[4]

- Improve the physical infrastructure and facilities needed for the delivery of quality education at all levels.

- Develop an incentive scheme for students, teachers, and all educational institutions to achieve better learning outcomes.

- Improve the quality of in-classroom education to reduce the dependence on after-school classes.

- Continue to strengthen the individual capabilities of teachers through training and investment in human resource development.

- Strengthen adult education and literacy opportunities for all youth and at all levels (community, regional and national).

- Regulate and integrate private and public schools at all levels.

- Promote critical thinking, coping skills and the development of problem solving abilities for youth.

- Support research excellence and innovation through, inter alia, the promotion of the STEAM subjects and foreign languages.

- Modernise the delivery of information and support innovative learning techniques through the use of ICT.

- Incorporate soft skills training in the curriculum to help deal with the problems in the classroom and overcome life challenges.

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[4] The policy should be read in conjunction with the National Education Strategy and other relevant policies, including the School Health, Nutrition and HIV&AIDS Policy.

- Improve the enjoyment of school experience through sport, participation in clubs and non-academic activities, and the development of programmes that counter bullying and promote volunteerism.
- Raise the profile and demand for technical and vocational training and entrepreneurship among young people through early exposure in schools.
- Prioritise the implementation of the National Technical Vocational and Educational Training (TVET) Strategy 2013 – 2020.

8.2 Equitable Education

- Create greater opportunities for equal access to educational opportunities by vulnerable, disadvantaged, at risk youth, differently-abled, hinterland and indigenous youth.
- Strengthen education standards and quality of delivery in rural, particularly hinterland, areas.
- Introduce and integrate programmes, such as the Comprehensive Sexuality Education Programme, that improve the capabilities of youth.
- Provide incentive to improve school attendance and outcomes among rural and hinterland youth, with an emphasis on girls, through the introduction of innovative social and economic schemes.
- Develop flexible curricula that factor in the geography, culture and interest of youth across Guyana.
- Support the targeting and inclusion of female and other marginalized youth in training programmes for non-traditional trades and vocations.
- Promote the accreditation of civil society and private sector bodies to deliver TVET training to increase access by youth in rural areas to educational and training opportunities.
- Reorganise the rehabilitative curricula and programmes for vulnerable youths in corrective institutions to enhance self-esteem and self-worth.

8.3 Market-Driven Skills Development

- Adopt a demand-driven approach to school curricula and skills development programmes in education and training institutions.

- Offer incentives to industries and advocate for the use of private-public partnerships to support market-oriented technical and vocational training programmes, with private sector partners providing necessary industry equipment and tools, supporting the construction of laboratories and workshops to industry standards, etc.

- Promote greater participation of private sector companies on the boards of educational institutions at all levels.

- Support the review, revision, and updating of the learning curriculum based on market needs and demands.

- Provide the financial and technical support needed by academic and training institutions to develop and offer new, market-demanded training programmes.

- Develop new curricula and promote career paths in green technologies, STEAM-related fields, and emerging areas such as oil exploration and extraction.

8.4 Career Guidance

- Improve the delivery of career guidance according to international best practices and guided by a national Comprehensive Career Guidance Programme for both in- and out-of-school youth.

- Encourage greater integration of internships and apprenticeships in secondary and tertiary training programmes.

- Strengthen the capacity of training and educational institutions to advise youth on career choices.

- Support the introduction of Career Guidance Counsellors in all secondary schools across Guyana.

- Advocate for the inclusion of social work training in the educator and teacher curricula.

9. Priority 4: Youth Leadership, Participation and Representation

Youth can no longer simply be beneficiaries of development. They must also be partners and leaders in development. Sustainable development will not be achievable otherwise. This is especially true in Guyana where children and youth make up more than two-thirds of the country's population.

Moreover, youth engagement must go beyond token participation in discussions about youth. The unique talents, energies and visions of young people must be more substantively harnessed and used to drive Guyana's development agenda. Young people must therefore lead efforts to develop solutions to issues they face and have leading roles in the social, political and economic realms.

To promote Youth Leadership, Participation and Representation, the Government of Guyana commits to developing a national culture of listening to, and creating meaningful opportunities to involve young people at all levels of decision making in the process to create a better Guyana.

> **Policy Objective:** To ensure that young people are respected and become active participants and representatives in decision-making in the community, national, regional and international policy arenas.

9.1 Youth Leadership

- Create national leadership programmes that allow for the training and development of leadership skills among young people.
- Support capacity building among young people to enable them to better understand local laws and regulation, serve as an oversight to government, and ensure greater accountability at all levels of government through innovative mechanisms.

- Encourage civil society groups and private sector entities to develop and support youth leadership activities and programmes.
- Promote opportunities for experiential learning, such as Children and Youth Parliaments, Young Ambassadors Programmes and Junior Toshao/Village Captain Programmes.
- Support the participation of youth in local private sector bodies and in regional and international caucuses and conventions for youth leaders.
- Introduce an open and transparent process to select youth to participate in regional and international caucuses, conferences and conventions.
- Develop and disseminate national guidelines and curricula on youth leadership development taking into consideration the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nature of Guyanese society.

9.2 Citizenship and Civic Responsibility

- Establish a legal regulatory framework and mechanisms for the creation and registration of youth clubs and societies.
- Encourage new and existing youth organisations to become registered within the national framework established.
- Promote youth-led, community-based organisations and groups, including faith-based organizations, schools, community centres, and businesses.
- Support existing resource persons and institutions with a strong track record to mentor and coach nascent youth organizations.
- Provide opportunities for training, engagement and exchange across youth-focussed and youth-led groups, organizations and agencies.
- Recognise and support established representative institutions or groups of youth.
- Establish a national budget allocation for youth programmes.
- Professionalise youth work and offer recognition for volunteerism.

9.3 Participation and Representation

- Provide clear guidelines for youth involvement and engagement on key policies and decisions that affect them and ensure that these are taken into consideration at the highest level.

- Create mechanisms to provide young people with the opportunity to be better represented and heard in legal proceedings affecting them.

- Adopt affirmative action measures and quotas within bodies (such as national committees, Boards, local bodies and in the National Assembly) to guarantee youth participation.

- Provide training and development opportunities for young people to better understand and devise innovative solutions to the issues affecting their communities.

- Establish a National Youth Leadership Institute.

- Ensure youth representation in parliamentary committees on national issues.

- Create avenues for youth to provide feedback to government, including through the use of modern (social media and online tools) and traditional media, access to state officials' office (established office hours for dealing with the public), call in radio programmes, etc.

- Establish systems to better inform the public of opportunities for youth participation and the output and progress made by youth on national issues.

10. Priority 5: Youth Health Safety and Well-Being

Health, safety and well-being are essential for the holistic development of all young people. The Government of Guyana acknowledges and seeks to build on several of the health-related advances that have been made, and to ensure it meets its commitments under international agreements and conventions.

> **Policy Objective:** To strengthen social support systems for youth and improve conditions for their health, safety and well-being.

10.1 Youth Support Services

- Augment the number of youth-friendly spaces in all communities across Guyana.

- Introduce targeted, youth-friendly mechanisms to better inform youth of available social assistance programmes and opportunities for engagement.

- Facilitate the decentralization of youth-friendly guidance and counselling services on alcohol and drug abuse, suicide, etc.

- Raise awareness and provide information that addresses early marriage, incest and early sexual initiation in a manner that is culturally appropriate and that targets relevant populations.

- Reduce the age at which adolescent youth can legally access age-appropriate health information from age 10 and health services independently from age 16.

- Scale up the establishment of youth health centres and other youth-led mechanisms and spaces to promote physical and mental health among youth.

- Improve the quality of implementation of HFLE, including comprehensive sexual education, for in school and out of school youth.

- Strengthen the capacity of key units such as the HFLE and Adolescent Health Unit to effectively provide services to youth in all ten (10) regions of Guyana.

- Create greater links between schools and other youth-friendly services in the community.

- Formulate and implement a national action plan for teenage pregnancy informed by the **Integrated Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy in the Caribbean.**

- Provide or enhance legally supported interventions to pre-adolescent youth (10 to 14 years) to reduce the likelihood of delinquency and criminality.

10.2 Mental Health and Self-Harm Prevention

- Develop a National Suicide Prevention Programme that involves and targets young people.

- Review current suicide legislation

- Enhance the provision of mental health and self-harm prevention services for youth across Guyana.
- Reduce discrimination against youth who access mental health and self-harm prevention services.
- Create opportunities for Diaspora specialists to support health-related initiatives for youth.

10.3 Safety and Security

- Speedily implement Juvenile Justice Reform and begin use of the Family Court.
- Provide decentralized legal advice and services for young people in conflict with the law.
- Scale-up and strengthen youth-specific outcomes under community-based programmes like the Citizen Security Programme.
- Support the establishment of additional youth-friendly shelters and transition homes for youth who are homeless.
- Review and fully implement the **2010 Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act** *to* ensure all victims and survivors of sexual violence receive justice.
- Enforce the **Persons with Disability Act 2010** as it relates to children, adolescents and youth.
- Improved access to affordable and safe housing for young people.

Conclusion

Poverty is considered to be the number one (1) issue that affects Guyana's advancement. This hindrance has served to exacerbate other ills such as unemployment and illiteracy. It was found that children and youth make up the majority of Guyana's population and they are the ones that are the most affected.

Given this disturbing reality, the GoG has identified youth development as one of the top national development priorities in Guyana. The government along with all the other relevant stakeholders, will endeavour to work assiduously to create an enabling environment for youth development and advancement, and to partner with youth as transformative agents of social, political and economic change. In doing so, they will ensure that all the agreements subscribed to by the government at the regional and international levels, all policy documents and their concomitant programmes, projects and activities will be taken into consideration.

Guyana's National Youth Policy 2015 will serve as a guide to ensure youth are empowered and that there is the reduction of poverty. The Situational Analysis and consultations are the foundation of this policy. The policy has in turn created the framework for the development of a National Youth Empowerment Action Plan (NYEAP). To ensure the effective implementation of this Policy, a five (5) year National Youth Empowerment Action Plan will be formulated and implemented for the period 2016 to 2020.

The NYEAP will have a framework for monitoring and evaluating this Policy. The NYEAP will have programmes and projects with well-defined objectives, timelines and a clear indication of the stakeholders and their role in the implementation process.

The GoG is cognisant that what is relevant today may not be relevant tomorrow and may not In addition, it fully acknowledges that there might be some issues that have not been addressed. In an effort to address the aforementioned, and to enable reflection and insight, assist in the identification of future challenges and assess the effectiveness of the policy in

accomplish the intended results. Consequently, the National Youth Policy will be periodically reviewed and updated within five (5) years or earlier if it becomes necessary.