

# **GUYANA EDUCATION ACCESS PROJECT**

## **GUYANA EDUCATION ACCESS PROJECT**

### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

### **STRATEGY AND TRAINING**

### **REPORT**

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Part One - 25 September to 9 October, 1999  
Part Two - 29 October to 13 November, 1999

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AE	Adult Education
AEA	Adult Education Association
CDF	Community Development Facilitator
CfBT	Centre for British Teachers
CPCE	Cyril Potter College of Education
CRs	Community Researchers
CTA	Community, Teachers' Association
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CWO	Child Welfare Officer
DFID	Department for International Development
EAF	Education Access Fund
FREED	Friends Educational, Economic and Environmental Development
GEAP	Guyana Education Access Project
HOD	Head of Department
IDCE	Industrial Development College of Education
IT	Information Technology
LTI	Linden Training Institute
MoE	Ministry of Education
MSSI	Managing Social Sensitive Issues
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NSC	New Silver City
PA	Participatory Appraisal
PATH	Parents as Teachers at Home
PC	Pastoral Care
PCT	Pastoral Care Teachers
PLA	Participatory Learning in Action
PSCL	Parents in Support of Children's Learning
PTA	Parent Teachers Association
RA	Regional Adviser
RDC	Regional Development Commission
SSEE	Secondary School Entrance Examination
SWO	School Welfare Officer
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents the findings of Part One and Part Two of a four-week consultancy to conduct a survey and provide training to support the development of a community involvement strategy. During the first part of the consultancy the first draft of the Community Participation Strategies were developed in both Linden and Corriverton with as wide a range of stakeholders as possible. The strategies addressed the need to involve more parents of both genders to visit and support schools and their PTAs and to support their children's learning; the need for schools to reach out more to parents; the need for teachers to improve home school links; the need for communities, and businesses in communities, to support schools; the need for schools to relate more closely to the community; and the need to find a way of including more marginalised groups. During Part Two of the consultancy the strategies were refined also with stakeholders. These strategies should be treated as working documents for those involved and should be further refined as necessary.

Part One of the consultancy provided an opportunity to identify training needs of teachers, PTAs, the Community Researchers, NGOs and other community groups and individuals in relation to community participation and community development. Part Two consisted almost entirely of a series of workshops to meet these identified needs. During Part Two a workshop was also held for representatives of other Regions to introduce them to GEAP and specifically to the Community Involvement component.

The consultancy mechanisms for accessing the Education Access Fund were discussed and taken forward. In addition a wide range of stakeholders were introduced to the GEAP programme and were provided with the opportunity to identify constraints to access in their particular area, as well as strategies for addressing the constraints.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: PART ONE (25 September to 9 October)**

1. Civil society is not yet as developed in Corriverton as in Linden, yet this consultancy revealed that there is significant community activity and organisation in the area. This potential is unable to be maximised in support of the project due to the continued absence of a community development facilitator. The heterogeneous composition of the communities and the challenge of dealing with ribbon development add to the complexity. It is therefore recommended that two CDFs are employed in this project area. It is also recommended that at least one facilitator is Guyanese and that at least one is female (see para 1.2.2).
2. In addition it is recommended that one facilitator is able to work with teachers/schools on providing and improving pastoral care and guidance (see para 1.2.2).
3. It is recommended that, as part of their induction, the community development facilitators spend a period of time with Yvonne Joseph (VSO) both in Linden and in Corriverton (see para. 1.2.2).
4. It is recommended that CDFs encourage schools to develop their own community involvement strategies (see para 1.4.1).
5. In order to establish the extent of civil society organisation, it is recommended that a community group/resource mapping and profiling exercise be undertaken. This is particularly important in the Corriverton area, where it could be conducted by a consultant before the appointment of a CDF (see para 1.5.2).
6. It is recommended that the above exercise is followed by the development of community group networks and support mechanisms (see para 1.5.2).
7. Careful thought needs to be given to the extent to which the project is able to address the access issues of the more remote riverain communities in the project areas (see para. 1.6).
8. There is a need for the two teams of community researchers to meet and to visit each other's project areas. It is therefore recommended that the possibility of providing training for both teams in Corriverton be explored for implementation on the consultant's return. This would need to be followed by some reciprocal activity (see para 1.8).
9. There has been much discussion about community use of school resources. It is anticipated that the computer labs will be completed early in the new year. It is recommended that adult / community classes are piloted using these facilities to explore some of the management/supervision issues (see para.1.9).
10. To contribute to the reduction in school absenteeism and dropout and to improve home school liaison, there is a great need for:
  - Child Welfare Officers in both regions
  - Clarity in relation to the role of Child Welfare Officers
  - Additional modes of home/school liaison (see para.1.10).

11. In all project activities relating to community involvement and access improvement, thought needs to be given to sustainability. Action and decisions should be taken based upon their potential for supporting and strengthening activities to ensure sustainability (see para 1.11).
12. It is recommended that time be taken by the consultant on her return to develop/finalise the Community Involvement Strategies (see para. 1.12.1).
13. It is recommended that Yvonne Joseph (VSO) and Janice Jackson (Consultant) are involved as much as possible in activities in Part Two of this consultancy (see para. 1.12.2).
14. Training provided by the consultant on her return should include the following:
  - Interpersonal skills (including listening skills), conflict management, further PLA, as supported community action;
  - developing civil society and strengthening CSOs; managing the Education Access Fund; proposal writing;
  - supporting others in the development of proposals; trainer training (see para 1.12.2).
15. Before the training, persons should be identified as future trainers and would therefore participate in the training with that perspective (see para 1.12.3).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS: PART TWO (29 October to 13 November, 1999)**

It is recommended that:

1. The Corriverton Adviser urgently follows up the possibility of employing Savitri Ramdas as one of the two CDFs in Corriverton, even if this is initially on a temporary basis (see para. 2.2.1).
2. In the absence of the second CDF in Corriverton, Janice Jackson be employed to provide some support and guidance for the new CDF (see para. 2.2.1).
3. In Corriverton further steps be taken to create links with Guysuco, especially with the Community Development Officer (see para.2.2.2).
4. Also in Corriverton close links be established and maintained with the Town Council Community Sports and Culture Officer (see para.2.2.3).
5. Opportunities be sought to bring the two community research teams together in the future (see para. 2.3.1).
6. Janice Jackson be employed at regular intervals to provide ongoing development for the two research teams (see para. 2.3.1).
7. In Linden, the relationship between GEAP and FREED be carefully delineated (see para. 2.3.2).
8. Consideration be given to making an agreement between GEAP (Linden) and FREED in relation to the Education Access fund. This could take the form of a call-down contract for \$x per year for services provided (see para. 2.3.3).
9. Community researchers be employed to conduct mapping/profiling and networking of community groups (see para. 2.3.5).
10. Community researchers be provided with additional training before most of the activities they undertake in future (see para. 2.3.5 and Appendix 18).
11. Further gender training be provided for community researchers in the near future (see para. 2.4 and para. 2.8.3).
12. Discussions be held and decisions taken at regional and national level about the management and operation of the EAF (see para 2.5.1).
13. Unsuccessful bidders to the EAF be given brief, written feedback on why they were unsuccessful (see para. 2.5.1).
14. Issues relating to the EAF be taken to the next Project Steering Committee on 2 December (see para. 2.5.2).
15. The community participation strategies are not necessarily the final versions and that further refinements are made with stakeholders in the two project areas (see para. 3).



16. GEAP publicity material be produced for different stake-holder groups (see para. 4).
17. The community researchers assist in the development of a regular GEAP newsletter in each project area (see para. 4).
18. In future, holding workshops at the weekends be avoided to ensure that no participants are prevented from attending on religious grounds (see para. 2.8.1).
19. Any future replication workshops involve the same participants wherever possible (see para. 2.8.1).
20. A workshop on advanced PLA be held early in 2000 in order that the researchers are better able to support communities, particularly those which are more marginalised and disadvantaged (see para. 2.8.2).
21. The development of individual school community involvement strategies be followed up by project personnel in Corriverton (see para. 2.8.3).
22. There has been much discussion about community use of school resources. It is anticipated that the computer labs will be completed early in the new year. It is recommended that adult and community classes are piloted using these facilities to explore some of the management/supervision issues (see Section One: para.1.9).

## **1. PART ONE OF CONSULTANCY (25 September to 9 October, 1999)**

### **Introduction**

This interim report presents the initial findings from the first part of a four week consultancy to conduct a survey and provide training to support the development of a community involvement strategy. This first part of the consultancy included visits to Linden and Corriverton to conduct a survey into constraints to access and to begin the development of the community participation strategic plan. To achieve this a wide range of stakeholders was consulted ranging from school personnel to existing Community-Based Organisations (CBOs). Detailed Terms of reference can be found at Appendix 1. The consultant's itinerary can be found at Appendix 2.

### **1.1 Conduct of Consultancy**

1.1.1 In this consultancy care was taken to ensure that the strategy took account of and built upon existing and previous work, and that the strategy was developed in a participatory manner and would therefore be grounded/owned by the people living and working in the project areas. This was more difficult to achieve in Corriverton because of the current lack of a Community Development Facilitator (CDF) and a Child Welfare Officer (CWO). In Linden the consultant was able to work closely with Yvonne Joseph, the VSO Community Development Facilitator. In Corriverton she was accompanied by both Yvonne Joseph and Janice Jackson.

1.1.2 In both project areas visits were made to schools and interviews held with key stakeholders. A full list of those consulted can be found at Appendix 21. However, because of the different circumstances, the general approach was different in the two pilot areas. Many community links had already been developed in Linden and, as a result, it was possible to conduct some group workshops such as with the school nominated pastoral care teachers, NGOs/CBOs and parents. This increased the number of people consulted and provided an opportunity for group discussion/exploration and shared ownership. An initial workshop was held with the community researchers, and subsequently the researchers assisted in the facilitation of other workshops. PLA-like tools were used in the workshops. The visit culminated in an opportunity to share the draft Community Involvement Strategy with the VSOs and the Community Researchers. This enabled a wide range of additions and amendments to be made to the plan and for those other than the CDF to take responsibility for some of the activities. It particularly forged stronger working links between the CDF and the VSO (Guidance) and VSO (Industrial Arts).

1.1.3 In Corriverton more individual and group interviews were held and these were followed up by a stakeholder workshop on the final day. Two of the community researchers accompanied the consultancy team on their visits and a group meeting was held with most of the researchers towards the end of the visit. The presence of Janice Jackson, who had previously worked in the project area, greatly facilitated the making of contacts and locating community groups. Yvonne Joseph was able to share ideas and experiences from Linden.

## **1.2 Community Development Facilitators**

1.2.1 The work of the Community Development Facilitator in Linden is progressing well. She has created many links with community groups and has begun providing support for some of these. She now has the additional linkages into schools with the work of VSO (Guidance). However, her work would be further strengthened and sustainability increased with closer links with the School Welfare Officer (SWO). There is a great need for clarity about the role of the SWO. During the consultations it was suggested that some parents or other community members could receive training (including counselling skills) and take on the role of home-school liaison officers. This may be the way forward in both areas.

1.2.2 Whilst civil society is not yet as developed in Corriverton as in Linden, there is significant community activity and organisation in the area. This potential is unable to be maximised in support of the project due to the continued absence of a Community Development Facilitator. This has presented many constraints for this project output in this district. In addition the geography and ribbon development pattern of the area and the heterogeneous composition of the communities create further challenges. To take compensatory measures to address these constraints, it is recommended that two CDFs are employed in this project area. Understanding the complex make-up of the community would be facilitated if at least one CDF was Guyanese. The position and condition of women in these areas creates additional constraints, therefore it is also recommended that at least one CDF is female. In Linden, the presence of a VSO who, although originally appointed for IT, has additional experience in guidance and pastoral care is proving invaluable in terms of supporting schools in the development of pastoral care systems and parent education programmes. This has highlighted the need for such a person in Corriverton. If possible one of the CDFs should also have this expertise. It is recommended that the CDFs should spend time with Yvonne Joseph in Linden and in Corriverton as part of their induction process.

## **1.3 Constraints to access**

Consultations and workshops began with an identification of the constraints to access. Whilst these produced few surprises and have been identified by previous project activities, they did form the basis for the beginning of the strategy. A list of many of the constraints identified can be found at Appendix 22. Some important points worthy of note are as follows:

- The lack of books was of great concern in both areas but appeared to be critical in Corriverton.
- The high cost of education and low family income (especially where there was a single care-giver) was the major constraint for most people.
- In Corriverton there were many opportunities to make ‘quick money’. In addition there were more opportunities and necessity to help parents with their business.
- Teenage pregnancy was a concern in both areas but Corriverton had the additional problem of early marriage.
- The dangers/problems of tapir transport was high on the agenda in Corriverton.
- Lack of relevant, useful curriculum and teachers’ negative attitude to pupils was identified by many pupils and parents.
- The problem of lack of access for some more isolated communities such as Orealla and Siparuta (see 1.6.1).

All of these have been addressed in the draft community involvement strategies. In addition some of these important issues are discussed below.

## **1.4 School Community Involvement Strategies**

1.4.1 This consultancy focused on the development of Community Involvement Strategies for each pilot district. As schools become more involved in the generation of ideas for strengthening school-community links, it is recommended that each school develops its own Community Involvement Strategy. This would create more energy and impetus to carry out activities.

## **1.5 Mapping of CBOs**

1.5.1 There is a wide range of CBOs operating in both pilot areas. The capacity enhancement of these organisations and the strengthening of the links between them is important to school development, both directly and indirectly: directly so that these organisations are better able to support schools, and indirectly so that, as community development is progressed, there is a better chance that job opportunities will be created in the neighbourhood for school leavers.

1.5.2 To begin this capacity enhancement and strengthening process, it is recommended that a mapping and profiling exercise is undertaken in each area to identify the different types of groups, their purpose and location, resources and existing capacity. This could then be followed by the development of networks and support mechanisms. In Corriverton this activity could be undertaken by a consultant or the Community Researchers in preparation for the appointment of the CDFs.

## **1.6 Remote Communities**

1.6.1 There is a need for the project to clarify the extent to which it is able to address access problems for the children of more remote communities such as Orealla and Siparuta. Some of the children from these villages who are resident in the Corriverton hostel described how their older siblings had passed the SSEE but were unable to attend secondary school because of lack of finance at that time. It was also reported that some children from Moleson Creek, as old as ten years, had enrolled at Crabwood Creek Primary this year, as this was the first time they had been able to overcome the constraints of distance/ cost/transport. Addressing these problems will provide examples for transferability throughout much of rural Guyana, however, resources may not be available to seriously address the constraints directly through this project. It is recommended that GEAP supported community action/PLA is undertaken to help these communities address their problems for themselves and to seek support from whatever sources are available.

## **1.7 Gender Issues**

Many of the constraints to access are related to a combination of factors including gender attitudes. This is particularly evident in Corriverton where education for girls tends to be valued less than boys. In both areas girls are more likely to achieve in school than boys and boys are more likely to drop out because of lack of interest or opportunity to make 'quick money'. It is recommended that all training provided in the project includes gender issues.

## **1.8 Research Teams**

To strengthen and deepen their understanding of the project and the range of challenges involved, there is a need for the Community Research Teams from the two project areas to meet each other and to visit each other's districts. This is also important for sharing experience and providing mutual support. It is therefore recommended that in the training element of this consultancy an arrangement is made for some researchers to accompany the consultant to the other project area. There they could work with the consultant and develop their training skills.

## **1.9 Management of Community use of School Resources**

Throughout the visit there has been much discussion about community use of school resources, particularly when, through GEAP, the schools are better resourced. Managing such a programme will provide many challenges. It is anticipated that the computer labs will be completed early in the new year. It is recommended that adult community classes are piloted using these facilities to explore some of the management/supervision issues.

## **1.10 Attendance at School**

The reduction of many other forms of constraint to access would be reduced by some official form of home/school liaison such as a child or school welfare officer. To contribute to the reduction in school absenteeism and dropout and to improve home school liaison, there is a great need for:

- Child Welfare Officers in both regions
- Clarity in relation to the role of Child Welfare Officers
- Additional modes of home/school liaison such as volunteer PTA members.

## **1.11 Sustainability**

In all project activities relating to community involvement and access improvement, thought needs to be given to sustainability. Resource intensive activities are unlikely to be sustainable and transferable. Action and decisions should be taken based upon their potential for supporting and strengthening activities to ensure sustainability.

## **1.12 Next Steps**

1.12.1 Before the consultant's next visit the draft Strategies will be fed back to those involved in the development of the strategies so that they can make suggestions for amendments and additions. The strategies can then be finalised during the consultant's next visit. In Linden the feedback will be undertaken by Yvonne Joseph. In Corriverton it is suggested that Savitri Ramdas and Beverley Daniels, the Community Researchers who accompanied the consultancy team during the visit, be employed for a total of one week to undertake this task. During her next visit it is recommended that the consultant should develop/finalise the Community Involvement Strategies.

1.12.2 The team of Janice Jackson, Yvonne Joseph and the consultant worked very effectively during Phase One. It is therefore recommended that all three team members are involved as much as possible in activities in Part Two of this consultancy. The content of the training to be delivered in Phase Two of this consultancy is still to be decided by those on the ground. However, two essential topics which will be covered are listening skills and gender. Other topics could include interpersonal skills (including listening skills), conflict management, further PLA, PLA as supported community action; developing civil society and strengthening CSOs; managing the Education Access Fund; proposal writing; supporting others in the development of proposals; trainer training.

1.12.3 Before the training part of the consultancy it would be helpful if persons (such as some of the community researchers) are identified as future trainers and are informed of this in advance. As a result they will be able to participate in the training with that particular perspective.

## **2. PART TWO OF CONSULTANCY (29 October to 13 November)**

### **Introduction**

This second part of the consultancy was to further develop the strategy and to provide training relating to community development and participation in order to support the strategy. Detailed Terms of Reference can be found at Appendix 1. The two visits were separated by a period of three weeks and events moved on during this period. In addition many of the recommendations from Part One were taken up in Part Two.

### **2.1 Conduct of Consultancy**

2.1.1 The second part of the consultancy consisted of a variety of workshops to support the community participation strategy. An initial four days in Linden consisted of one day workshops for the community researchers, parent representatives from PTAs, NGOs and Pastoral Care teachers. This was followed by a two day 'replication' workshop in Georgetown for representatives from each of the non-GEAP regions. The final week in Corriverton included a follow-up Community Participation Strategy development workshop to which those who attended the previous design workshop were recalled; a workshop with principals and students to begin the development of the individual school community participation strategies; a development workshop for the community researchers and a community development workshop for community based organisations (A timetable can be found at Appendix 3).

### **2.2 Corriverton Community Development**

#### 2.2.1 The Community Development Facilitators

The ground is now fertile for the community participation strategies to move ahead in Corriverton. However, the continued absence of a CDF is a great constraint. The Community Researcher, Savitri Ramdas, is very committed and is the natural leader of the research team. She is confident and has many skills which make her an effective community worker. She now has sufficient time for a full-time job. **It is therefore recommended that the Corriverton Adviser urgently follows up the possibility of employing Savitri Ramdas as one of the two CDFs in Corriverton even if this is initially a temporary arrangement.** Savitri will need additional support in the early stages of her employment. In the absence of the second CDF in Corriverton, **it is recommended that Janice Jackson is employed to provide some support and guidance for the new CDF.**

#### 2.2.2 Key Links

During the conduct of both parts of this consultancy, valuable liaison has taken place with the Guysuco Community Development Officer in Corriverton. Guysuco is a valuable resource in the community and has the potential to be a strong supporter of the community participation strategy. **It is therefore recommended that further steps are taken to create links with Guysuco, especially with the Community Development Officer.**

During Part Two of the consultancy, contact was made with the Town Council Community Sports and Culture Officer who was very keen to be more involved in community development initiatives especially in relation to education. **It is also recommended that links are maintained with this officer.**

## **2.3 Community Researchers**

### 2.3.1 The Teams

This consultancy has provided an opportunity for further development and personal growth for the community researchers. Early training in both weeks provided an opportunity to consider and practice facilitation skills. Emphasis was placed on skills such as effective listening and communication.

The two week period was originally planned to enable Corriverton researchers to visit Linden in Week One; for representatives for both groups to attend the Georgetown workshop; and for Linden Researchers to visit Corriverton in Week Two. Because of various commitments, it was not possible for Corriverton researchers to visit Linden, however, both attended the Georgetown Workshop and six of the Linden team visited Corriverton in Week Two.

The Georgetown and Corriverton visits facilitated the development of strong bonds between members of the two teams. They now see themselves as one team and have the support and encouragement of each other. It is important to maintain and strengthen this support, **hence it is recommended that opportunities are sought to bring the two teams together in the future.**

The Linden team visiting Corriverton found many differences between the two areas. They felt there were more opportunities for work, particularly casual employment in Corriverton; that it held greater attractions for tourists and that on first sight there was little poverty. However, when they delved deeper they found this was not the case.

Being together appeared to give members from both teams greater confidence. During the final workshop all twelve researchers facilitated one of the sessions and most of them did so with confidence. This was partly a result of their accumulated experience over the two weeks but, to some extent because 'discovering' another similar group of people going through similar experiences, helped build their own self esteem. Those who were previously extremely reticent took the plunge and volunteered to introduce or help facilitate activities and those who previously spoke with quiet, nervous voices developed greater volume and projection. Others, who had previously led sessions with a certain level of confidence, were able to react more flexibly to the needs of the target group and to adapt sessions where necessary.

Both teams have benefited greatly from personal development sessions in these workshops and in those previously conducted by Janice Jackson. **It is therefore recommended that Janice Jackson is employed at regular intervals to provide ongoing development for the two research teams.**



### 2.3.2 Linden

The strength of the Linden team continues to grow. Fourteen members attended the Day One workshop. All but one contributed to at least one of the subsequent workshops. Some team members grew noticeably in confidence and one, on her own initiative, was able to stand up at the end of the Community Development workshop and calmly and loudly thank everyone for her wonderful week in Corriverton. In a group meeting, she also assertively challenged a male team member who was behaving, as she felt, inappropriately and upsetting other team members.

Recently new members have 'joined' the Linden team and participated in workshop activities. This has created some concern amongst team members and there has been confusion over whether joining FREED automatically includes joining the GEAP team and vice versa. **There is a need to clearly define the parameters of the two organisations as the following section outlines.**

### 2.3.3 Separation of GEAP and FREED

The community members trained as researchers in Linden have been involved in several activities organized by GEAP. They have developed their competencies in data collection, the use of PLA techniques and facilitation skills among others. They recognized the value of the team spirit which has been built and are in the process of consolidating into the organization, FREED.

FREED, with its intention of evolving into an NGO which has mass appeal, has expanded its membership beyond the members of the GEAP team. Some new members of FREED have been absorbed into the GEAP team. This has stimulated discussion about the relationship between the two organisations and related issues such as whether inclusion in GEAP activities is automatic for FREED members.

It is suggested that:

- the current GEAP team be maintained as group to satisfy the community participation elements of the project;
- members be informed that they will be involved in activities as needed, with the result that some members may not engage in selected activities; they would, however, be given the opportunity to participate in training offered;
- new members be included only if current members are unable to perform required tasks and that those new members be given an orientation to GEAP, the team's history and their entry be facilitated by the CDF;
- members of FREED who are members of the GEAP team share their knowledge of GEAP and skills learnt with other members as part of the organisation's programme; it must be made clear that membership in FREED is not an entrée to the GEAP team.

**It is also recommended that consideration be given to an agreement being made between GEAP (Linden) and FREED in relation to the Education Access fund. This could take the form of a call-down contract for \$x per year for services provided.**

#### 2.3.4 Corriverton

There is now a Corriverton core team comprising the following six members: Savitri Ramdas, Beverly Daniels, Chanilall Persaud, Sylvie Itwaru, Lyn Stephen-Newland and Georgina Charles. The selection of this team has made an enormous difference in terms of cohesion and motivation. There now appears to be a strong team spirit and identity from a group of people willing to put time and energy into supporting the project.

#### 2.3.5 The Future of the Research Teams

There are many roles other than research which the community researchers could effectively play in support of the project. For example there is a need to conduct mapping and profiling of community groups in both project areas. **It is recommended that the researchers take on this task as their next activity.** In Linden it may be necessary to select a small team for this. This profiling should include a section on community resources, such as venues for meetings (e.g. the Backs Centre in Corriverton) and their hire costs, if any. It should also include a list of key resource persons in the community, such as Pandit Harilall in Corriverton. As a component of this activity, the researchers would be asked to establish or instigate networks of these organisations.

An additional further activity for the researchers is community action PLA in selected poorer communities in both project areas. In this activity, researchers will use PLA to help community members identify constraints to accessing education, and develop and implement their own action plans. The researchers will need additional training for this. Indeed, **it is recommended that researchers are provided with additional training before most of the activities they undertake in future.**

Further activities could include the researchers assisting the CDFs in their community organisation support work and specifically in the development of EAF proposals; and the publication of regular newsletters.

The researchers attending the Corriverton workshops were asked to complete a questionnaire which included suggesting further topics for research and identifying their current training needs. Their responses to these can be found at Appendix 18.

## **2.4 Gender**

As a result of the gender issues in project areas outlined in Part One of this report, it was decided that further training in gender would be given during community researcher workshops and issues of gender and some elements of gender analysis were discussed in the joint researchers workshop in Corriverton. However, greater input on this subject is still needed. **It is essential that further training and opportunities for exploration is provided for the researchers in the near future.** A section (at least a day) on gender analysis could be included in further training in PLA.

## **2.5 The Education Access Fund**

### 2.5.1 Operation of the Fund

Through the activities of this consultancy, a great deal of local interest has been generated in the Education Access Fund. Consequently, it is important that the Fund is up and running as soon as possible. The management and operation of the fund has now been settled at local level. This has been fully discussed and commented on by a wide range of stakeholders. **It is recommended that discussions now be held and decisions taken in relation to the EAF at regional and national level.**

The criteria for selection have also been scrutinised and are now being finalised. The criteria will be weighted with a scoring system in order to make selection easier. Selection will be made every three months. Unsuccessful bids may be re-submitted if appropriate with amendment at a later date. **It is recommended that unsuccessful bidders should be given brief, written feedback on why they were unsuccessful.** No one organisation will be eligible to receive more than one award in any year.

### 2.5.2 Institutional Arrangements for Selection of Projects

Proposals to the Education Access Fund should be considered at the regional level as well as centrally. The management team at the local level should comprise representatives from the GEAP, the school, parents, the business community and other sectors of the community. While being diverse, the size of the team should not be unwieldy. It is proposed that the regional management team consist of between seven and nine members, with a quorum of four persons.

The suggested composition of the regional teams is as follows:

#### **Corriverton**

- GEAP Regional Adviser/Counterpart
- CDF
- Headteacher or representative from one Secondary School (position to be rotated)
- Representative from Chamber of Commerce
- Representative from Regional Administration (Sub-region)
- Representative from community organisation (including PTA)
- Guysuco Community Development Officer

## Linden

- GEAP Regional Adviser/Counterpart
- CDF
- Headteacher or representative from 1 Secondary School (position to be rotated)
- Representative from Regional Administration
- Representative from community organisation (including PTA)
- Representative from the Chamber of Industry and Commerce

Where a community researcher has given support to preparation of an application, he/she could be invited to participate.

For further suggestions for committee members see those of community researchers at Appendix 18.

During the first two quarters, the EAF should be used primarily to support activities under the Community Involvement Strategy.

Consideration needs to be given to the management of the fund at National level. The decision about who the national selection committee comprises should take into account the need for effective and efficient meetings to be held quarterly. It should therefore be kept as small as possible but sufficient to ensure a quorum of 4 persons at any time. **It is recommended that this and other issues relating to the implementation of EAF be considered at the Project Steering Group on 2 December.**

### 2.5.3 The Role of the Community Researchers in the EAF

The community researchers should be available to provide assistance to applicants to the EAF. They should also be involved in the monitoring of the projects supported by the EAF. There is a need for GEAP to consider how researchers will be paid for this support with the possibility of it being an amount per proposal. In Linden it could be that FREED is employed on a call-down contract basis for providing both proposal writing and monitoring services. The monitoring of the projects could be undertaken as part of a research project which assesses the progress and level of success of the fund.

### 2.5.4 Suggestions for EAF Projects

During both parts of the consultancy, ideas for possible EAF projects were discussed with a wide range of stakeholders. The most popular suggestions were as follows:

- A feeding programme
- School support trust fund for the poor
- To establish education access funds in each secondary school
- Skills training for out-of-school youth
- Literacy classes for children and parents
- PATH-like programmes
- School uniform programme
- Transportation Pool
- Local libraries

- Education TV programmes
- School furniture making projects
- Research and study centre
- Education enhancing theatre group
- Academic and sports equalising projects
- School beautification projects.

For further ideas for the EAF see community researcher's suggestions at Appendix 18.

## 2.6 The Strategy Development

It had not been possible for personnel in the two pilot areas to gain feedback on, nor make amendments, to the Community Participation Strategies in between consultancy visits. A few amendments were made to the strategy in Linden but the tight workshop timetable prevented any lengthy development activity. In Corriverton a 'recall' stakeholder workshop was held to review the draft and recommendations for amendments were made. The consultants have amended the strategies accordingly. However, **it is recommended that these are not necessarily the final versions and that further refinements are made with stakeholders in the two areas.**

## 2.7 Publicity Materials and Newsletters

The replication workshop highlighted the lack of printed material about the project. Participants unfamiliar with the Project wanted something to take away to help them when debriefing with others. **It is therefore recommended that publicity material is produced for different stake-holder groups.**

In both project areas some community members feel that because there are no visible outward signs as yet, GEAP is not happening. A number of people suggested that more newsletters would keep stakeholders informed of what was going on in the project. **It is recommended that community researchers might assist in the production of these newsletters.**

## 2.8 The Workshops

### 2.8.1 Replication Workshop

This workshop brought together two representatives from each of the regions not involved with the project. Their role was to take back information and ideas to their own region to begin the process of replication or transferability. Eighteen participants attended: two from each of the nine regions. The aim of the two days was to introduce representatives from non-project regions to the GEAP community participation element so that participants might transfer ideas to their own regions. It was intended that by the end of the workshop participants would be able to:

- Identify the role of community development in GEAP
- Recognise the work of community researchers in the project
- Discuss how this work might transfer to their own region
- Begin to explore existing community involvement strategies in their own region.
- Discuss the task set for their return

A full programme for the workshop can be found at Appendix 4

The programme was designed to provide information on GEAP but also to provide participants with experiences which would give them a deeper understanding of the work of the project and particularly the work of the CDF and community researchers. It aimed to provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on their own region; begin to consider how to implement some of the project ideas; and, in addition, for them to present to the group examples of good practice where they were already implementing activities designed to overcome constraints to access and improve the school community partnership.

The workshop design provided opportunities for the researchers to gain further experience as facilitators as they introduced and led some of the activities. They also made a presentation of their work and achievements in the two project areas. Wherever possible they were mixed with other participants so that they were able to interact and further participants understanding of the GEAP approach.

All but one participants attended both days. A participant list can be found at Appendix 4. One participant attended the Friday session but was unable to attend on Saturday because she was a Seventh Day Adventist. She did not want to miss anything so was concerned that the workshop had been arranged at this time. **It is recommended that in future wherever possible weekends are avoided to ensure that no participants are prevented from attending on religious grounds.**

During the workshop people were concerned to clarify what their role was in the replication process. They were pleased to be part of the process, however, did not want to find that they did not have an opportunity to continue with this work. **It is therefore recommended that any future replication workshops involve the same participants wherever possible.**

At the end of the workshop, participants were set a task to undertake on their return home. The task involves the profiling of existing community-school liaison activities in two specified areas of their region. The task outline can be found at Appendix 5. As this information will also be useful to GEAP, the participants will be paid a sum of \$5,000 for completing the task.

Feedback from the participants during the review session indicated that they had enjoyed the workshop and gained a great deal from it. They particular liked the informal atmosphere and really appreciated having the community researchers there: *“We are very grateful to the researchers for being here and for their input: we appreciate the high level of self-esteem and confidence they have gained through participation in the project”*.

They felt they learnt a lot about GEAP: *“From the moment we entered the room we had no idea what GEAP was about, but we quickly learnt quite a lot about the objectives of the project and its importance to the Ministry”*.

Recommendations were for more similar workshops, and if possible for them to be held in one of the project areas; to have more handouts; not to hold such a workshop on a Saturday and to provide some background information before attendance.

Full comments from the review can be found at Appendix 7.

## 2.8.2 Linden: Workshop Reports

### **Workshop One : The Community Researchers**

The aim of this workshop was to bring community researchers together:

- to provide an opportunity for researchers to reflect on where they feel they are in relation to PLA in order to form a foundation on which to build;
- to discuss PLA as a community problem solving/community action method;
- to introduce researchers to effective communication (especially listening) and facilitation to further develop their skills in these areas;
- to prepare researchers for assisting in the facilitation of the subsequent workshops

The workshop outline can be found at Appendix 8.

Fourteen researchers participated in the day and involved themselves fully in all activities. A list of participants can be found at Appendix 9. It was hoped that some Corriverton researchers would also attend, but it was not possible on this occasion.

The first session of the day was designed to provide participants with an opportunity to review their participation in GEAP through the use of PLA activities. Time lines were used to review researchers' experiences and learning with the project to date and ranking exercises were used to reflect on the use of different PLA tools. This reflection triggered discussion about participants' concerns about their involvement in the Household Income and Expenditure survey. This took up a lot of time which had been allocated to the following session which was to discuss the use of Participatory Learning in Action as a community action method rather than as an appraisal technique. Unfortunately time was limited for this and there is still a need for this training to occur. Such training requires at least a week-long workshop (or longer) in order to include field work. It is recommended that this workshop is held early in 2000 in order that the researchers are better able to support communities, particularly those which are more marginalised and disadvantaged.

Much of the rest of the day was spent on effective interpersonal communications especially listening skills. There is a need for further such skills practice and this will be followed up in Corriverton.

The final session of the day was a planning session in which researchers were involved with planning the following 3 workshops.

### **Workshop Two: Parent Representatives of PTAs**

The aim of this workshop was to help the parent representatives to gain a broader perspective on the role of the PTA so that they begin to transform their own organisation. The day was designed to provide participants with the opportunity to identify the roles and responsibilities of parents, of teachers and then of PTAs; to describe the culture and structure and operation of their PTA; to consider its potential broader role. The workshop also provided the PTA representatives with an opportunity to learn about the PATH programme and the Education Access Fund. The programme outline can be found at Appendix 10.

Seventeen participants representing nine different schools joined the workshop. A list of workshop participants can be found at Appendix 10.

All those who attended maintained a high level of enthusiasm throughout the workshop. Participants suggested innovative, wide-ranging ideas for the development of their PTAs. They enjoyed hearing about the PATH programme and were very interested in the Education Access Fund. They particularly enjoyed the string exercise and felt they would like many more such workshops.

### **Workshop Three: NGO Representatives**

This day started slowly as participants arrived one at a time. A total of 17 participants from 8 organisations attended the workshop. A participant list can be found at Appendix 13. The aim of the day was for participants to explore the role and operation of their organisation, consider ways of developing the organisation to strengthen support for education and build civil society.

The core topics of the day were how to strengthen organisations, particularly the internal structure, and how to build the community by strengthening the links between organisations. The highlight of the workshop was the teamwork activity after lunch which generated sufficient energy to last through the rest of the day. The workshop outline can be found at Appendix 12.

Participants said that they found the day extremely helpful and enjoyable. They particularly liked the way they were active participants throughout the and they welcomed the opportunity to meet people from other organisations. They agreed that they would like many more such workshops and a stronger network of NGOs.

### **Workshop Four: Pastoral Care Teachers**

This workshop was for the teachers newly nominated as having responsibility for Pastoral Care in their school. As yet there is little clarity about their roles and currently the majority of them teach guidance classes and possibly counsel students. The day was designed to provide them with an opportunity to discuss their roles and responsibilities; explore what a wider pastoral care system might include; and discuss the potential for establishing such a system in their schools. A timetable can be found at Appendix 14. Designing this workshop proved problematic because of the lack of clarity about who the target group was and what their needs might be.

This was a more difficult workshop to facilitate. Participants appeared not to be as interested or committed as those in the previous days workshops. As a result the community researchers were left feeling somewhat deflated after the excitement of previous workshops. However, participant feedback was very positive. They particularly welcomed the opportunity to consider the broadest potential aspects of their roles and stated that they would welcome more similar workshops



### **2.8.3 Corriverton Workshops**

#### **Stakeholder Workshop: Part two**

Participants from the previous stakeholder workshop in October were recalled to this workshop in order that they could review the official typed-up version of the plan they previously developed. 12 of the previous 18 people attended, making a total of 20 with the Community Researchers.

Participants were put into groups and each group reviewed one of the goals and presented their findings to the whole group. During this feedback others were able to make suggestions and contribute to the final output.

Given the short notice the turn-out was impressive. All participants contributed to the discussions and useful suggestions were made. A list of participants can be found at Appendix 15.

#### **Workshop with Headteachers and Students**

This workshop was designed to enable headteachers and students to review the Community Involvement Strategy and suggest ways in which it could be made more relevant to their schools and communities. It also provided an opportunity to discuss the value of individual school strategies in addition to a strategy for the project area. It was attended by nine persons from schools and three researchers. A list of participants can be found at Appendix 16.

Discussions revealed differing approaches to home-school and community-school relations between the schools in Skeldon and Tagore Memorial. In the former, it was evident that levels of parent participation were low, this being expected by the schools' representatives. In the latter, great effort has been made to build a solid relationship between the school and its partners. Sharing of the positive experience of Tagore Memorial and further discussion led to an appreciation of the possibilities for strengthening links between the school and the home.

Suggestions offered immediately for inclusion in the strategy were:

- That the Executive of the PTA and staff visit parents in the community as a means of helping to strengthen the PTA;
- That a gym be established in the community, particularly in the No 63 area.

It was agreed that all three schools would benefit from development of their own Community Involvement Strategy. To move this initiative forward, each participant will examine the draft strategy. Each school will undertake to pursue consultation with students, staff, parents, the business community and other partners to ensure that the views of a wide cross-section are taken into account and that they have a stake in the resulting strategy. The school strategy will inform that of the project. It is recommended that the development of these school community involvement strategies be followed up by Corriverton project personnel.

### **Community Researchers Workshop**

Eleven out of the twelve possible researchers attended this workshop. Unfortunately Chunilall Persaud was unable to attend because of emergency business concerns. The participant list can be found at Appendix 17.

The day began with the Linden researchers giving their feedback on what they had discovered about Corriverton since they arrived. They had accumulated a substantial amount of accurate information in the short time-scale, particularly about employment opportunities and constraints to accessing school.

This was followed by training in communication skills (especially listening) for the Corriverton team while the Linden team discussed the relationship between GEAP and FREED. The Linden Researchers joined Corriverton for a final exercise and assessment of their active listening skills in which the speakers spoke of their experiences and feelings about their participation in GEAP. This exercise revealed evidence of greatly improving listening skills

The post-lunch session was designed to give the researchers an opportunity to explore how they see themselves in relation to GEAP and their own development in the future. To do this they used a 'pathway through life' tool. Most of the completed pathways focused more on the past than on the future. However, they did provide interesting insights into how each member was thinking and feeling at the moment. This exercise also created a space for some members to express honest feelings such as their level of nervousness at facilitating workshops.

The final session was a discussion on gender issues in their work. This was an interesting discussion which revealed a number of deep seated, unexplored assumptions and prejudices on the part of some group members. There is a need for more lengthy, focused training in gender in the future.

During the workshop the researchers completed a questionnaire in which they were asked their views on the regulations and use of the EAF, their ideas for future research and their training needs. The results of this questionnaire can be found at Appendix 18.

### **Community Development Workshop**

This workshop was attended by seventeen participants and eleven community researchers. There were fewer community representatives than was hoped for and more school pupil representatives than expected. However, it resulted in a very varied and dynamic group composition. A full list of participants can be found at Appendix 19.

The aim of this workshop was to help participants explore ways of developing community groups in order to build the capacity of the community and thereby strengthen support for education. Much of the focus was on group formation and maintenance and roles and responsibilities. An outline programme can be found at Appendix 20. There was also an opportunity to explore ideas for the Education Access Fund. They were very interested in the fund and eager for it to be available.

Feedback showed that participants greatly enjoyed the day, felt it was of great benefit and would most certainly welcome more such opportunities.