



Citizen Education Manual

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Citizen Education Manual

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“The principal objective of the political system of the state is to establish an inclusionary democracy by providing increasing opportunities for the participation of citizens, and their organizations, in the management and decision-making processes of the State, with particular emphasis on those areas of decision-making that directly affect their well-being.”

*Article 13, Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana
Chapter II, Principles and Bases of the Political, Economic and Social System*

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WE, THE GUYANESE PEOPLE, Proud heirs of the indomitable will of our forebears, in a spirit of reconciliation and cooperation, proclaim this Constitution, in order to:

Safeguard and build on the rich heritage, won through tireless struggle, bequeathed us by our forebears;

Affirm our sovereignty, our independence and our indissolubility;

Forge a system of governance that promotes concerted effort and broad-based participation in national decision-making in order to develop a viable economy and a harmonious community based on democratic values, social justice, fundamental human rights, and the rule of law;

Celebrate our cultural and racial diversity and strengthen our unity by eliminating any and every form of discrimination;

Value the special place in our nation of the Indigenous Peoples and recognize their right as citizens to land and security and to the promulgation of policies for their communities;

Acknowledge 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, recognizes 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 on our institutions and be a part of the context of our basic law;

Demonstrate our commitment to protect our natural environment and endowment;

Create a republican community practically aware that the finances, industry, communications, education, business and technology of the world are global factors affecting all, in which all must engage, and from which all must benefit;

As citizens of Guyana, we adopt these fundamental laws and make provision for their amendment to reflect changes in our society, inspired by our collective quest for a perfect nation, whose characteristics include the commitments, concepts, and other principles proclaimed in this preamble.

May God protect our people.

[from the Preamble, Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana]

*Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action –
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.*

[Prayer of the Parliament of Guyana, from Gitanjali, Rabindranath Tagore]

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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*“Education is ... the main way to help human beings achieve their highest potential.
Education, therefore, should be able to provide citizens
with the necessary knowledge, skills and values to be happy and productive in their lives.
They should love their country
and respect the diversity of its ethnic, religious and political backgrounds.
They should adhere to democracy, justice, peace and accountability.”*

from the Mission Statement, Ministry of Education, Guyana

Acknowledgements & Expectations

This manual on Civic Education has been commissioned by the Guyana Democratic Consolidation and Conflict Resolution (GDCCR) Project, a joint initiative of the Government of Guyana and the United States of America. The project is designed to help in the consolidation of democracy in Guyana mainly through increasing citizens' participation in policy making, improving transparency and accountability in governance and reducing vulnerability to ethnic and political conflict.

This manual, as well as the workshops it will be used to facilitate, forms part of the Civic Education component of the programme. It is intended for use in schools and by Civil Society Organizations. There are fifteen (15) interactive, participatory and behaviour change oriented exercises designed for a three-day (9 am to 5 pm) workshop for 15 to 20 persons. However, each exercise may be used effectively by itself.

It would be great to have a dedicated corps of inspired and inspiring trainers to facilitate these sessions. But even without this, the content, process and supplementary readings can transform even persons new to facilitation work who really want to make a difference in our country. Facilitators of civic education should see themselves as examples of the kind of leadership needed in all our clubs, organizations and communities.

*... inspirational leadership offers a steady focus
on the reality of the challenge to be faced.
It develops sensible policies designed with everyone's best interests in mind.
It insists on engaging everyone's thinking on every issue,
on championing the leadership of others,
on the empowerment of each person, and
on the strength of the resources to hand.
Inspirational leadership points the way ahead,
while pacing in step with others and knowing what's possible when.
Without abdicating responsibility for taking decisions,
this kind of leadership works through consultation for consent,
even when complete agreement cannot be reached on the best way forward.
People who lead in this way assume full accountability,
within and beyond their immediate constituency.*

On Watch: Views from the Lighthouse, Christopher Spence

Teachers who are formally trained, and informally trained facilitators, should of course read the entire manual before beginning to use it so that they can become familiar and comfortable with its scope, procedures and expectations. But this alone will be insufficient, because as inspirational leaders, we wish them to undertake a line by line, word by word, study of the readings included in the opening pages and body of this text, beginning with Article 13 of our Constitution.

*Inspirational leadership ... means giving up our fear,
identifying our particular sphere of influence,
and coming forward to offer leadership in our own distinctive way.*

*It will mean making sure that our leadership is never competitive or isolated,
but nurtured and expanded by the most intelligent support every step of the way.
It will mean relaxing enough to feel the beat of nature's pulse,
to spot and tend the shoots of organic growth sprouting all round us.
And most important, it (inspirational leadership)
will mean daring to infuse our leadership, not with vanity, the addictive need for control,
but with the inspiration we draw from staying in touch with our hopes and dreams,
with our most cherished vision for the world.
With out feet on the ground, we must remember to look up at the stars.*

On Watch: Views from the Lighthouse, Christopher Spence

Employed in this manner, the manual will facilitate essential capacity building for facilitators and participants. John Paul Lederach gives us a great definition that facilitators ought to share and discuss with participants: “*Capacity* is understanding, ability and discipline. It suggests skill and will, and involves both practice and attitude.”

Opportunities for thinking and reflection are also built into each exercise. For the three-day workshop, we recommend beginning each new day with participants sharing their reflections; that is, anything significant connected to the work of the previous day that they were *thinking, feeling, or said or did* during the time away from the workshop. This not only bridges the overnight period but gives valuable insight into how the content and methodology are being processed, shared and utilised. It also allows for the discipline involved in respecting time by beginning at the agreed hour, while awaiting the arrival of latecomers, before tackling new material. In our experience, the reflection time is usually so enthralling that persons who miss it feel a sense of deprivation.

And as we are on the subject of discipline and time, we recommend appointing a timekeeper to alert the facilitator and group when the time is nigh for breaks, returning to sessions from small group work or after refreshment, and closure at the end of the day. It is as important to begin on time, as it is to end on time, but there can be some flexibility with internal session times. Encourage all participants to take responsibility for agenda monitoring, to ensure that what is required to be done, is done. This is, of course, a key element of time management.

Many Guyanese come from spiritual traditions they hold dear, and most feel a sense of something vital missing when special gatherings end without some form of faith-based closure. The Christian blessings that are normally invoked, though well meaning, act to marginalise other ways of praying and being. We therefore suggest closing each workshop day with the national song, “Hymn for Guyana’s Children.” All should rise up and sing with happy tears/and bless the land that gave you birth/and vow to serve her through the years.’

We invite you to use the readings and quotations (in whole or in part) included in the manual for reflection as ice breakers, warm-ups, attention-expanding and -deepening, because ...

*Reflecting, we may choose not to judge.
Reflecting, we may choose not to speak,
Reflecting, we may deepen our listening.
Reflecting, we may remember how to endure our own uncertainty.
Reflecting, we may choose to speak lovingly, rather than bitterly.
Reflecting, we may remember that not reacting can also be an action.
Reflecting, we may allow ourselves to be surprised.*

Forgiveness and Other Acts of Love, Stephanie Dowrick

This manual is faithful to, and constructed on, the principles of participatory learning and representation. Each exercise builds the capacity of each participant to present and re-present himself or herself. Exercises also provide for participants to work in small groups and practise representing the views of the group to others. The learning principles we have been guided by are based on active, rather than passive, participation; beginning with, and building on learners' experience; using repetition of ideas and techniques to help learning; and employing methods that individuals and groups can use in their personal and group lives.

Participation cannot be left to chance. It must be systematically organised. Consequently, in addition to the step-by-step guidance provided, we very strongly recommend that facilitators sit, rather than stand; speak conversationally, rather than lecture; and work in a circle configuration to help create a democratic environment. This is especially important given that this manual will be used in schools where the usual arrangement of classroom furniture and expectations of student behaviour by teachers act to discourage the frank expression of views, interaction and participation that are key to building and consolidating democracy. Unfortunately, authoritarian, undemocratic, unrepresentative, uncivil, and unemancipated pedagogy characterise virtually all of formal education in Guyana, except perhaps at the nursery level. No wonder our governance and democratic practices are so bad! The key features of participatory training are as follows:

1. It is participant-centered. It is specific to the learning needs of the learner.
2. The learning focuses not only on knowledge, but also on awareness and skill. The combined focus on these three elements makes the learning complete, critical and useful.
3. Experiential learning is crucial to participatory training. Learning is derived from the experiences of the participants.
4. Participatory training requires a learning environment where participants and their experiences are valued and participants feel psychologically secure and safe to unlearn, try new ideas and share their experiences.
5. When participation is valued, participants develop their own norms and values and take responsibility for their own learning.
6. Since ensuring participation and building a safe environment are key requirements of participatory training, the role of trainers becomes very crucial. The trainer not

only believes in the participatory techniques, but needs to demonstrate it, as a way of life.

7. Participatory training not only helps in developing critical understanding, but also appropriates the relevant and useful knowledge of the dominant system.
8. Facilitating styles can be interactive, inclusive, intrusive, and interpretative. The mix of different styles is helpful in a mix of learning goals, differential trainer personalities, and various stages of group development.

Binoy Acharya & Shalini Verma

We learn to govern by governing. Encourage participants who have no organisational home to join or start clubs, associations, groups (singing, sports, environment, drama, arts, civic) and put democracy and good governance to work all over this land.

Finally, instead of awarding certificates for workshop graduates to hang on a wall or bury in a drawer, why not present a copy of the manual to each participant – and have each person come up with a plan, under the agenda head “Next Steps,” to employ it. “To teach is to learn twice.”

*Insight is crucial to change.
But insight alone is not enough.
It takes will and effort.
[How People Change, Allen Wheelis]*

One love, and respect

*Bonita Harris,
October 2007,
Georgetown,
Guyana*

Suggested Agenda for Three-day Civic Education Workshop

Day 1

- Registration: Name, age, gender, school (level or form), organisation or workplace and position (Note: “housework” is work), and contact information
- Decision on Breaks, Appointment of Time Keeper, Assigning of Responsibility for Agenda Monitoring
- Exercises 1 to 6
- Reflection on, saying, and singing of “Hymn for Guyana’s Children”

Day 2

- Reflections: Share anything significant you were thinking, feeling, said, or did – that was connected to the work of the previous day – during the period away from the workshop
- Exercises 7 to 11
- “Hymn for Guyana’s Children”

Day 3

- Reflections: Share anything significant you were thinking, feeling, said, or did – that was connected to the work of the previous day – during the period away from the workshop
- Exercises 12 to 15
- Evaluation [written and/or oral]
 - What were your expectations?
 - How would you rate the workshop content? [Assign a grade from A to F]
 - How would you rate the workshop methodology? [Assign a grade from A to F]
 - What did you enjoy most?
 - What did you not enjoy?
 - What will you do with what you have learned? With whom? By when?
 - What recommendations do you have?
- Next Steps
- Closing Remarks
- “Hymn for Guyana’s Children”

*Learning is not just learning things, but learning the meaning of things.
Learning is learning to think. Learning should lead to change.
If there is no change, there is no learning.*

John Dewey, educator, 1859-1952

Exercise 1: BEING A CITIZEN

Specific Objective: To engage each participant in thinking and talking about what *being a citizen* means

What to do

1. Share the name and objective of this exercise with the group.
2. Ask each participant to spend a couple of minutes thinking about this question: **“What does being a citizen mean to you?”** Explain that this is not a question that has a right or wrong answer.
3. Ask each person to jot down two or three key words “on being a citizen.” Explain that writing helps us to “see” what we are thinking and will help persons to remember what they were thinking while they are listening to the thoughts of others.
4. Have each participant take turns telling the rest of the group what being a citizen means to him or her.
5. After everyone has had a turn to talk, you should give your views on what being a citizen means to you.
6. Now ask the group to think about this question: **“What does being a citizen of Guyana mean to you?”** Allow a few minutes for thinking.
7. Have each participant take turns answering this question.
8. After everyone (including yourself) has had a chance to respond to the question, put the following discussion questions, one at a time, for persons to consider and share their views:
 - a. Is the first question (at #2) really different from the second question (at #6)?
 - b. Is being a citizen of Guyana different from citizenship of Jamaica, Barbados, or Trinidad; USA, Canada or United Kingdom; South Africa, India, or Australia? Why?
9. Share Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (agreed to by this and other governments) in the box below to extend and deepen the discussion. (See Notes following Exercise #4)
10. Close with each participant thinking about and answering these questions:
 - a. What did you learn about yourself while considering the two questions (#2 & #6)?
 - b. What did you learn about the group from their responses to the two questions?
 - c. What new information did you get about being a citizen from this exercise?

*“Every citizen shall have the right and opportunity ...
To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;
To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall
be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot,
guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors;
(c) To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country.”*

Article 25, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Exercise 2: Understanding “Rights”

Specific Objective: To ensure that each participant is clear on the meaning of the term “rights”

What to do

1. Organise participants in pairs and have them discuss their rights for a few minutes.
2. Ask one person from each pair to share some of what came up during the discussion.
3. Summarise (that is, pull together in a few short comments) what you think you heard on “rights” from the group as a whole.
4. Now have pairs sitting nearby come together to make small groups of four. Have each group write a definition (their understanding) of the word “rights.”
5. After each group reports, use the questions below and the notes that follow to facilitate an interactive discussion on understanding rights. Always give participants a chance to think and air their opinions before *you* give your views or answers.
 - a. Where do you think your human rights come from? [from being human]
 - b. What do civil rights have to do with you? [these are rights that all citizens have]
 - c. Who is a citizen? [a person owing loyalty to and entitled by birth or naturalisation to the protection of a country]
 - d. What is a “fundamental” right? [a basic, essential, or necessary right of a citizen]
 - e. Where can you find a list of your fundamental rights? [the Constitution]
 - f. What is the Constitution? [the highest law that governs the country]
 - g. What is a “moral” right? Why are rights essential? Why are rights necessary?
6. Close this exercise with participants taking turns saying what they are thinking and feeling about (a) rights in general and (b) their rights in particular.

Rights

- that which is morally and ethically proper, just or good
- a just moral or legal claim (for example, the right to vote)

Moral (as an adjective)

- concerned with the principles of right and wrong in connection with human action or character
- teaching or exhibiting (showing) rightness or goodness of character and behaviour conforming to standards of what is right or just in behaviour; virtuous – for example, a moral decision
- arising from conscience or the sense of right and wrong – for example, a moral obligation
psychological rather than physical or concrete in effect – for example, a moral victory

Morals (as a noun)

- principles or habits of the things that constitute right or wrong conduct

Ethics

- referring to good and right conduct
- the specific moral obligations of, and choices to be made by, the individual in relation to others
- rules and standards governing conduct, for example, how teachers, leaders or doctors should behave

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.
Margaret Mead*

Exercise 3: Rights in Theory, Rights in Reality

Specific Objective: To enable each participant to understand the factors restricting people's enjoyment of their human rights

What to do

1. Do not disclose the name or purpose of the exercise. Assign one identity per person:
20-year-old canecutter at LBI estate ... Rosehall bank manager ... Minibus conductor ... Catholic priest ... President of the Lions Club ... Rastafari Maths teacher at School of the Nations Rastafari farmer ... Commissioner of Police ... Homeless Amerindian male ... Head of a Muslim organisation ... Female commercial sex worker on the Corentyne ... Owner of Bartica business Nursery school teacher in Stanleytown ... HIV+ 16-year-old NOC girl ... 20-year-old post girl Head of USAID, Guyana ... 15-year-old Wai Wai girl in south Guyana ... 10-year-old Buxton boy 10-year-old Annandale boy ... Toshao (indigenous village leader)... QC Head ... 18-year-old Brazilian girl at hinterland mining site ... Mayor of Georgetown ... Single mom of five children ... Female security guard ... HIV orphan ... Amerindian logger ... Primary school age daughter of Chinese

restaurant owner ... Policewoman not in uniform ...90-year-old Enmore grandmother ... Drug lord big businessman ...Remand prisoner, Georgetown jail ... Permanent Secretary

2. Have people line up shoulder to shoulder – with their basic human rights intact.
3. Then have persons close their eyes and imagine what life would be like in reality with the new identity. After a couple of minutes, tell the group to open their eyes.
4. Read the statements below one by one. Say: Take one step forward if it is true for you or one step backward if it isn't true – for the person whose identity you now have.
 - a. I read the newspaper every day.
 - b. I know how to read and write English well.
 - c. I know how to calculate – add, subtract, multiply, and divide – without a calculator.
 - d. When I'm sick, I can easily get good care.
 - e. I have access to a good supply of clean water, for drinking and other uses.
 - f. I have a job for which I am well qualified, with reasonable pay.
 - g. I have a bank account.
 - h. I have good support from family and friends.
 - i. I'm not likely to be discriminated against.
 - j. I have electricity where I live.
 - k. I have influence over those in power where I live and do my work.
 - l. I am not likely to be sexually harassed or raped.
 - m. I am not likely to be picked up by the police.
 - n. I can afford to take a holiday at least once a year.
 - o. I know my human rights and will take effective action if they are violated.
 - p. I'm looking forward to a good future.
5. Have participants in the forward positions stay in place but turn and face the others. Ask everyone to think about the distance they have traveled – forward and backward.
6. Have persons say what they think and feel about where they, and others, are.
7. Have the group return to the circle, and say
 - a. what they think the exercise was about, and
 - b. what he/she can do to make human rights a reality in Guyana.

Exercise 4: Rights Role Plays

Specific Objective: To give participants an opportunity to demonstrate and observe human rights violations and propose remedies

What to do

1. Tell participants the name and objective of this exercise.
2. Organise your group into pairs. If you have an odd number, one group can have three members.
3. Have each small group select one human right and decide on a one-minute role play that demonstrates the right being violated. Allow about 5 minutes to prepare.
4. Have each small group take turns presenting its *rights role-play*.
5. Tell the other participants to observe carefully to understand *what* is happening, *why*, *who* is affected, and *what* can be done.
6. After each presentation invite the audience to say:
 - a. What human right the pair had in mind?
 - b. What were some of the reasons that led to (or factors involved in) the violation?
 - c. What effects the violation can have on the person, family, community, country?
 - d. What remedial action (sometimes called ‘redress’) can be taken?
7. It is important to allow participants to select rights violation role-plays that come out of their own experiences. But it will also be useful to dramatise rights violations that are related to, or caused or influenced by, specific factors, such as age, gender, ethnicity, community location, religion or faith-base, health, disability, education, and social class. So do another round of role-plays and analysis as at Steps 2 to 5.
8. Have each person take turns saying which violation affected her or him most deeply.
9. Organise small-group discussions and reports on how the military culture (police and army) can influence their sense of their rights and the rights of ordinary citizens.
10. Share and discuss the information below. Close with each person saying one thing he or she will do to improve the human rights situation in Guyana.

The primary responsibility for realising all human rights lies with government: the government is called the ‘duty-bearer’ and individuals are ‘rights-holders.’ As such, the government has to maintain certain standards ... to allow individuals to ... exercise their human rights in the country in which they live.

At the same time, each individual also carries the responsibility not to infringe on another person’s human rights. ... human rights may be classified as civil, political, economic, social and cultural. No category is more important than the other – all rights are inherent, universal, indivisible and interdependent and all must be realised for a person to be a whole citizen. For example, if a person has the right to vote, but does not have enough food to survive, he/she may not be physically capable of voting. ...

Human rights violations are different from crimes. Human rights violations are by definition committed by the State or by agents of the State, whilst individuals commit crimes. At times, however, certain individual

acts may constitute human rights violations if the State is responsible for allowing a climate of impunity to persist where violations can continue without punishment ... as in the case of domestic violence, where a perpetrator of domestic violence is allowed to continue the abuse because the victim does not have access to the criminal justice system, or because the police or judges do not take domestic violence cases seriously.

UNDP/CYP/RDC Region #4 Youth Leaders Workshop Report, April/March 2005

Notes & More Rights Work

If you wish to spend additional time understanding and discussing rights, put the question in the box below for participants to work on – in pairs or small groups of three or four.

What are some of the fundamental rights of citizens listed and protected under the Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana?

1. Have each small group list at least 10 rights. (Targets help to stimulate effort.)
2. While participants are making their Reports on Rights, place ticks next to those rights mentioned more than once. This will let you know the best known rights.
3. Add rights not mentioned from the list below.
4. For each right, have participants give their views on why it is fundamental, that is, basic, essential and necessary.
5. For Step #6, you will need to allow about 20/25 minutes for small group discussion.
6. Assign one right per group to discuss the social, economic, political, cultural, educational, religious, health-related, age, gender, ethnic and geographical factors that can work to (a) deprive citizens of that right; (b) help ensure citizens enjoy that right.
7. After each ‘rights’ report, invite feedback and other views from other participants.
 - a. Protection of right to life (Article 138)
 - b. Protection of right to personal liberty (Article 139)
 - c. Protection from slavery and forced labour (Article 140)
 - d. Protection from inhuman treatment (Article 141)
 - e. Protection from deprivation of property (Article 142)
 - f. Protection against arbitrary search or entry (Article 143)
 - g. Provisions to secure right to protection of law (Article 144)
 - h. Protection of freedom of conscience (Article 145)
 - i. Protection of freedom of expression (Article 146)
 - j. Protection of freedom of assembly, association and demonstration (Article 147)
 - k. Protection of freedom of movement (Article 148)

-
- l. Protection from discrimination on the grounds of race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed, age, disability, marital status, sex, gender, language, birth social class, pregnancy, religion, conscience, belief or culture (Article 149)
 - m. Right to work (Article 149A)
 - n. Right to pension and gratuity (Article 149B)
 - o. Right to participate in decision-making process of the State (Article 149C)
 - p. Equality of persons before the law (Article 149D)
 - q. Equality of status for persons born in or out of wedlock (Article 149E)
 - r. Equality for women (Article 149F)
 - s. Indigenous people's rights (Article 149 G)
 - t. Right to free education (Article 149H)
 - u. Right to establish private schools (Article 149I)
 - v. Right to environment not harmful to health or well being (Article 149J)
 - w. Protection of human rights (Article 154A)

**CONSTITUTION OF THE COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA
TITLE 1A PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

154A (1) Subject to paragraphs (3) and (6), every person, as contemplated by the respective international treaties set out in the Fourth Schedule to which Guyana has acceded, is entitled to the human rights enshrined in the said international treaties, * and such rights shall be respected and upheld by the executive, legislature, judiciary and all organs and agencies of Government and, where applicable to them, by all natural and legal persons and shall be enforceable in the manner hereinafter prescribed.

PARAGRAPH (3) The State shall, having regard to the socio-cultural level of development of the society, take reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of the rights provided for in paragraph (1)

PARAGRAPH (6) The State may divest itself or otherwise limit the extent of its obligation under any of the treaties listed in the Fourth Schedule, provided that two-thirds of the elected members of the National Assembly have voted in favour of such divestment or limitation.

[NOTE: The Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana was enacted on 20th February 1980 and amended 12th August 2003. See below for International Treaties (a *treaty* is a formal agreement) signed by the Government of Guyana and listed in the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution of Guyana. A *convention* is a formal agreement between nations. A *covenant* is a binding agreement.]

List of International Human Rights Treaties Protected by Our Constitution

1. Convention on the Rights of the Child
2. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
3. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
4. Convention Against Torture and Other Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
5. Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
6. Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
7. Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women

What is a constitution?

- A constitution is the written document that sets out the rules and principles a government must follow. It is the most fundamental – or supreme – law of the land and no other law may differ from it.
- The constitution describes what kind of government the country will have, how it is to be formed, how it will be elected, and how it will function.
- The constitution also states the rights all citizens should enjoy, and outlines the powers and structure of government best suited to implementing those rights.

from We the People ... Forum on Constitutional Reform 1998

*Tout moun se moun.
Every human being is a human being.
[Haitian Proverb]*

Exercise 5: Understanding “Responsibility”

Specific Objective: To deepen each participant’s idea of responsibility

What to do

1. Share the name and objective of this exercise with participants.
2. Organise your group into pairs or threes. Have each small group discuss the meaning of the word *responsibility* and list other words that are connected to responsibility.
3. Have each small group report on its findings. After the first group has shared, the other groups should not repeat points already made, but add new points or ideas.
4. Assign one word or idea from the list below to each small group. Have the groups discuss (10 minutes) how it relates to *responsibility* and report to the larger group.
 - a. Accountability
 - b. Obligation

-
- c. Duty
 - d. Being answerable to
 - e. Being answerable for
 - f. Decision-making and accepting the consequences of decisions we make
 - g. Making choices and accepting the consequences of the choices we make
 - h. Action
5. While the small groups are working, facilitators should re-read readings on the following page to deepen the discussion. Depending on the group you are working with and the facilities available, you may wish to circulate copies of this page for participants – to expand their own understandings of responsibility.
 6. Write the word *responsibility* and under it, the words *response* and *ability*.
 7. Ask persons to think about and share their views on (a) how they use their ability to act or not act in response to others, to situations, and to the actions of others; and (b) how their responses are connected to their new understanding of responsibility.
 8. Now put these two questions to the group and have participants think about and share their responses with the whole group.
 - a. To whom am I responsible?
 - b. For what am I responsible?
 9. Here are some additional questions for participants' reflection and response:
 - a. What are my responsibilities to my self?
 - b. What are my responsibilities to my family?
 - c. What are my responsibilities to my community?
 - d. What are my responsibilities to my country?
 - e. What are my responsibilities to the earth, this planet created for the well being of human and other beings?

Responsible

Liable to be called to account for something

Being the cause or source of something – for example, 'Viruses are responsible for some diseases.'

Dependable, reliable, trustworthy

Involving important duties or obligations – for example, 'She has a responsible job.'

Readings on Responsibility

... we are concerned not only with the way responsibility itself may be understood as a primary aspect of the moral life, but with how it may express itself in love, honesty, and citizenship.

The process of decision-making involves the recognition of those to whom we are responsible, and the sorting out of the things for which we are responsible.

I have responsibilities to myself to maintain my sense of moral identity and integrity; I have responsibilities to my neighbour to seek to meet his needs; I have responsibilities to God that I must acknowledge if I am a religious person.

Choices ... become crucial when tension between these increases: between responsibility to God and humanity on the one hand, and the state on the other; between responsibility to parents and what they value on the one hand, and a strong sense of independence and integrity around different values on the other. Choices also involve reflection about what I am responsible for. ... To choose to be responsible for one thing often excludes the possibility of being responsible for another; to choose to meet the needs of one neighbour often requires that the needs of another are not met ... sometimes our responsibility for the needs of a distant neighbour requires neglect of the near one.

Responsible persons are those who can be trusted to fulfill duties creatively, exploiting the possibilities that are given to them; they are worthy of our trust. They can be expected to keep their commitments and fulfill their obligations unless there is a just cause, a higher obligation, that requires them to violate that trust.

... to be responsible is to accept obligations that one has by virtue of his commitments, his role in society, his power and authority. Whether one does or does not fulfill these obligations is a point on which we are judged by others and by ourselves.

... the capacity to respond is central to the understanding of the moral life.

Fundamental to the notion of action as part of responsibility is the conception of persons who have the capacity (freedom) to govern their responses to what occurs to them, and to give direction to the responses they in turn make.

Responsibility is not mere compliance with rigid sets of patterns in life on every occasion; in many situations one can and ought to respond creatively, altering the course of events, reforming the institutional patterns within which one lives, elevating a relationship to a different plane, transforming the modes and qualities of life of which one is a part. Part of our humanity is to be creatively involved in our responses to things around us, to seek to bring into being a good that does not now exist in actuality.

Reflection on responsibility ... moves between the inward look – where we examine ourselves – and the outward survey – where we attempt to appreciate the possibilities open to us within the limits of time and place in which we live.

from On Being Responsible, Issues in Personal Ethics, James M Gustafson and James T Laney, editors

Exercise 6: On Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens

Specific Objective: To engage all participants in thinking and talking about their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and as human beings

What to do

1. Organise participants into small groups of three.
2. Have half of the small groups (the trios) discuss and list the rights of citizens.
3. Have the other half discuss and list the responsibilities of citizens.

-
- a. Before the small groups begin to work, have them appoint one member as their representative. That person's responsibility will be to record all the ideas of the small group and represent the small group's ideas to the larger group.
 - b. Tell the small groups they have 15 minutes to complete the assignment.
 4. Call time at 15 minutes and ask the representatives to take turns reporting on the ideas from their groups. Begin with the rights groups first.
 5. Ask for a Volunteer Monitor from the responsibilities group to
 - a. note the ideas of the rights groups and
 - b. say what rights were listed, what rights came up more than once, and how many times those rights were mentioned
 6. Then have the responsibilities group represent their lists.
 7. Ask someone from the "rights" section to volunteer to monitor the "responsibilities" presentations in the way described at Step # 5.
 8. When both "rights" and "responsibilities" groups have had their say, ask the two monitors from the opposing side, to present their summaries.
 9. Tell the group to monitor the monitors. In other words, they should be listening carefully to the summaries to ensure that their views were fairly represented.
 10. Use the following questions to stimulate some group discussion:
 - a. How did rights compare with responsibilities? Did rights balance responsibilities?
 - b. Should there be a balance? If yes, why? If no, why?
 - c. What are legal rights and legal responsibilities? What are moral rights and moral responsibilities? Are they both important? Why?
 - d. What other rights do we have as human beings and citizens?
 11. After the general discussion, go around the group systematically and have each person think about and complete the following statements:
 - a. My most important right as a human being is ...
 - b. My most important responsibility as a human being is ...
 - c. My most important right as a citizen is ... because ...
 - d. My most important responsibility as a citizen is ... because ...
 12. Draw the group's attention to the quotation on the last page of the manual. Have them share their feelings on it. "Reciprocity" is about obligations on both sides.
 13. Have each participant say how his or her thinking about the rights and responsibilities of citizens have been affected by this exercise.
 14. Close with each participant describing one behaviour change he or she will make as a result of this exercise. (It should be something the person is not now doing.)

Exercise 7: Talking the Talk & Walking the Walk

Specific Objective: To engage participants in examining how they measure up with respect to some basic values, attitudes and behaviours of good citizens

What to do

1. Do *not* give the name or objective of this exercise at this time. Do this at the end.
2. Organise participants into approximately three equal parts. Give each of the three groups one of the following labels: *Values, Attitudes, Behaviours*.
3. Have each small group stand together in a circle to discuss and explain the word they have been assigned. They should think of examples to help others understand it.
4. Each of the three groups (*values, attitudes, and behaviours*) must appoint a spokesperson to speak on its behalf. Allow about 5 to 7 minutes for this activity.
5. Beginning with the *Values* group, have the spokesperson report. Follow with the *Attitudes* group. End with the *Behaviours* group. Make sure they give examples.
6. Ask participants to think about and explain:
 - a. Why each of the words (*values, attitudes, behaviours*) were considered separately
 - b. Why *values* were followed by *attitudes*, and why *behaviours* was last.
7. Share the definitions below and see how they compare with what the groups said.

Values

What we think, consider or believe to be worthy, worthwhile, good, or have a high opinion of.

Attitudes

State of mind or feeling with regard to persons, places, things, etc.

Those beliefs and opinions that tend to make us behave in certain ways.

Behaviors

The actions, reactions, and conduct of persons generally and in certain circumstances

1. Select a few items from the list below that you consider appropriate. Tell participants to rate each from *1* to *10*, as you call it out. Ten represents the highest value and one the lowest value.

Justice ... Truth ... Fairness ... Kindness ... Responsibility ... Honesty ... Work ... Knowledge Rule of Law ... Property ... Cleanliness ... Education ... Experience ... Safety ... Dignity ... Health ... Peace ... Land ... Water ... Food ... Life ... Time ... Faith ... Love ... Self Respect ... Respect for children ... Respect for elders ... Respect for women ... Respect for differences ... Respect for persons with disabilities ... Respect for the environment ... Respect for the road

and other road users ... Respect for ancestral culture ... Respect for the culture of others

2. Have participants take turns sharing (a) the value they assigned to each value item and (b) saying how the value they gave to each item corresponds to their behaviours in each area. For example, if a person gives justice a 9 or 10, that person should be able to list many things he or she actually does to uphold justice.
3. Give the name and objective of the exercise – and have participants say what they thought of it, and one behavioural change they will undertake as a result.

Exercise 8: A Lesson from Muhammad Ali

Specific Objective: To challenge participants to learn and practise tolerance

What to do

1. Tell participants the name of the exercise, but not the objective. Ask persons to guess what Muhammad Ali might be able to teach people.
2. After a few different responses read aloud these words from the famous boxer. Read it slowly a few times to make sure everyone gets it. Then write it for all to see.

*“The tolerance and understanding necessary to heal
must come from each and every one of us, arising out of our everyday conduct until decency reaches a
flood tide.”
Muhammad Ali*

3. Have participants discuss in pairs or threes (a) what they think is the meaning of the word *tolerance* and (b) some real-life examples of individuals or groups or communities showing tolerance in an attempt to *heal*. Allow about 10 minutes.
4. After each small group has reported on their discussions, examine together the meaning of tolerance. Deepen the discussion with ideas from the following page.
5. Explain to participants that the words whole, holy, health, healthy, and heal are all derived from the same Germanic word. Hallow as in the prayer “hallowed be thy Name,” essentially means holy.
6. The questions below will help to facilitate participants’ understanding of tolerance, understanding, and healing. Assign questions to small groups for discussing and reporting. Allow other participants to give their ideas after small groups report.
 - a. What are some intolerant behaviours in families, communities, and in this country?
 - b. What conflicts in your family (or in families you know) need healing?
 - c. What situations in your (class, school, organisation, or workplace) need healing?

- d. What situations in your community or another community or between two communities need healing? [Remind participants that a community can refer to a village, a section of town or city, ethnic, or religious or sports community.]
 - e. Why it is our everyday conduct that gives rise to tolerance and understanding?
 - f. Why do you think Ali uses the image of flooding?
 - g. If there is violence in a community or between communities, what would healing mean and what would it take to bring healing to the community or communities?
 - h. During the Great Flood in Guyana in 2005, what types of *everyday conduct* (negative or bad behaviours) caused divisions and conflicts? What other acts of *everyday decency* (positive or good behaviours) brought people together?
 - i. What divisions in our country need healing?
 - j. What are some things we need to show tolerance of and understand – in families, communities, and country – in order to bring about healing?
7. Have small groups make and share lists of decent behaviours, everyday acts of decency for schools, friends, community, and country.
 8. Close with each participant committing to begin to do one specific decent everyday act and report back by the next day on (a) how it felt, and (b) how it was received.

Reading on Tolerance

TOLERANCE is an act of love, a commitment to the belief that none of us has a life more precious than another's, and a vital articulation of our common humanity. To learn the value of tolerance, one does not give up making judgements about what is right or wrong; about what will bring happiness or take it away. The practice of tolerance does not mean condoning behaviour that robs other people of their freedom or their happiness. On the contrary. It frees us to be very clear indeed about what we must be aware of within ourselves and what we are powerful enough to be aware of in others. Tolerance simply says (or not so simply says): these actions are human actions. They belong within the realm of human experience. They are committed by members of the human family. And I am part of that family also. ...

TOLERANCE ... means listening with your mouth closed when others accuse you of something. It means hesitating long and hard before you assign fault. It means owning up to your own divisive thinking. ... It means checking out your simplistic assumptions against the complex realities. It means acknowledging the differences of opinions, needs, wishes, desires that exist within your own mind – and recognising how these mirror the conflicts that you may despise that exist outside yourself. ...

TOLERANCE may arise quite naturally in some people, but for most of us, it develops out of an everyday series of humbling experiences that demonstrates to us that, for all our longings to be different, 'special,' or unsullied by the defects we so clearly see in others, we are in fact much more like other people than we are unlike them. ...

It is often within the hothouse of our own family circle that we exhibit our own most intolerable behaviours, and weigh up whether we can accept the intolerable judgements or behaviours of others ...

[Forgiveness and Other Acts of Love, Stephanie Dowrick]

The person who will be the most effective in his strivings toward social justice is the one who is most critical of himself, who takes care to differentiate his own flaws and to take responsibility for them before he goes out to correct his neighbour's. He will make his impact more effective by setting an example than by bludgeoning his opponent into submission. The person who commits himself to a life of continuous confrontation with the unconscious within himself will also confront the unknown in the world at large with an open mind, and what is more, with a heart of wisdom.

[Boundaries of the Soul, June Singer]

TOLERANCE

*“A way of thinking and feeling
– but most importantly, of acting –
that gives us peace in our individuality, respect for those unlike us,
the wisdom to discern humane values and the courage to act upon them.”
[www.teachingtolerance.org]*

Exercise 9: Understanding Governance

Specific Objective: To ensure that participants understand governance

What to do

1. Have participants write or say the first thing that comes to mind when they think of the word *government*. After listening to and noting all the ideas flowing from this brainstorming activity, explain that:
 - a. This exercise will be examining governance and that this is about how peoples' lives in a particular place are governed, in other words, the quality of government that people get.
 - b. “To govern” means to control, manage, direct, or regulate.
2. Organise participants into small groups of three or four and have them discuss (allow 7 to 10 minutes) this question: How are your homes (or home affairs) governed?
3. Ask for show of hands to indicate whether any of the following came up:
 - a. Rules
 - b. Needs
 - c. Values
 - d. Rights

- e. Culture
- f. Power
- g. Authority
- h. Fairness
- i. Care and Protection
- j. Development

Write the 10 points.

4. Have participants say (a) what they think about each of the 10 concepts you raised, and (b) what additional issues were raised in the small group discussions – and whether they can be connected to any of your 10 points.
5. Tell participants that you will now be considering governance at the national level. Explain that when we examine governance, we usually consider these three ideas:
 - a. Structure (the laws, rules, regulations, and understandings that provide the foundation or basis of governance)
 - b. Process (how governance decisions are made and how accountable for decisions)
 - c. Purpose (the main goals, aims, objectives, reasons or intentions of governance)
6. Have participants return to their small groups to identify those things that constitute; that is, make up, the structure of governance in Guyana. Remind participants of the meaning of the word *structure* in this context. Tell the group to reflect on how their own lives (as family members, students, employees, citizens) are structured – by and on laws, rules, traditions, duties, responsibilities, and so on, not, for example, on wood or concrete.
7. Allow about 10 to 15 minutes for this activity, and have one person give the report from each small group. (See the notes that follow on the structure, purpose, and process of governance.) Add, clarify, and discuss points made and not made.
8. Repeat process at Steps #6 and #7 for the purpose of governance.
9. Have small groups discuss the process of governance (how decisions are made) at the (1) national, (2) regional, and (3) local levels and grade each level A through F.
10. Excellent governance [A]; Good governance [B]; Fair governance [C];
11. Poor governance [D]; No Governance [F]
12. Take reports on discussions, grades, and justifications of grades. Use “governance process” notes to extend and deepen participants’ understanding.
13. Close with participants saying their most important new insight on “governance.”

Notes on Governance

(1) Structure of Governance, Guyana

1. Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana
2. Legislation: Laws made by Parliament, in keeping with the Constitution, rules, regulations; [For the indigenous people of Guyana, the Amerindian Act is the next highest law of the land, second only to the Constitution]
3. Common Law: That part of our legal system, developed over the years, which is based on the principles of fairness and justice
4. Policies, procedures, resolutions passed by formal meetings, decisions of meetings
5. National and community needs, values, traditional and other rights
6. Way of life, customs, and cultural heritage – indigenous and other communities

(2) Process of Governance: National, Regional & Local levels

This refers to how government – at the national, regional, municipality, and village council levels – makes decisions and are accountable and responsible to people for decisions made.

The four key principles* for assessing or evaluating the process of governance:

[Note: a *principle* is a moral standard for personal and/or group behaviour]

- **Accountability:** This is about being answerable, responsible to another body. Accountability helps to prevent the abuse of power by persons who hold positions of trust and authority. When power and authority are exercised outside the law and in violation of community values and traditions, this is an abuse of power.
 - “Management accountability” is about being responsible for the day-to-day management of the resources and assets of the nation, region or community
 - “Political accountability” is about being responsible for providing “good governance” and ensuring the well being of the country, region, or community
- **Transparency:** This is the process by which government makes, keeps, and explains records on its conduct of the business of the nation, region, or community. A transparent government is open to question, gives answers, and provides evidence to the nation, region, or community that it is acting legally and in the best interest of the nation, region, or community.
- **Disclosure:** This is the process by which government makes information available to the public on plans, spending, contracts, initiatives, operations, performance, and other national, regional, or community issues [*disclose* means to open up or make known]

- **Redress:** The means to correct, compensate, or get satisfaction for wrong done. Governance at the national, regional, and community levels must have a system in place that citizens can access to get redress, ensure fairness and justice.

(3) Purpose of Governance: National, Regional, and Local levels

- To protect the resources of the people (land; water; minerals; infrastructure such as bridges, public buildings, roads; finances and other national, regional, and local assets)
- To improve the well being of people in the nation, region, and local community

Exercise 10: Power, Trust, and Authority

Specific Objective: To engage each participant in examining how personal accountability applies in his or her life

What to do

1. Have participants work in pairs or threes to review the meaning of the term *accountability* with examples from their own lives.
2. After about 5 minutes, have one representative from each small group explain the word with examples they discussed.
3. Check “notes” on accountability to add important points not mentioned.
4. Go around the group systematically, and have participants say what positions of *power*, *trust*, and *authority* they hold in the family and community.
 - a. Explain that even children have some power, over younger or other children in the home, extended family, school, and community, and therefore hold positions of trust and authority; and that a variety of circumstances often find children burdened or entrusted with power, trust, and authority.
5. Have all participants close their eyes for 3 minutes and reflect on times in their lives when they have had power, trust, or authority, and how they used or abused it.
6. Call time after 3 minutes and have participants open their eyes.
7. Organise participants into pairs and have them share with their partners what came up during their silent reflection time. Allow about 7 to 10 minutes.
8. Now organise participants into larger groups (about 5 persons) and have them create a list of ways that
 - a. Children can practise management accountability in the family; in other words, take responsibility for the day-to-day management of the family’s resources and assets (property). [UNICEF defines a child as anyone under the age of 18]
 - b. Adults can practise management accountability and political accountability in the family (in other words, take responsibility for “good governance” in the family and ensure the well being of the family)

-
9. After the reports, point out that when we put the accountability principle to work in our personal lives and practise personal accountability (and everything that goes with it), we are more likely to be accountable as community, regional, and national leaders.
 10. Ask all participants who hold formal or informal positions of power, trust, and authority in any community, regional or national body, group or organisation, to say:
 - a. Where they are located and what positions they hold;
 - b. What grade (A, B,C,D, or F) they think their community would give them for accountability, and why;
 - c. What grade(A, B,C,D, or F) they would give themselves, and why.
 11. Organise participants in pairs to discuss and report on what they think transparency, disclosure, and redress mean in governance, with examples. Add ideas from notes.
 12. Have Step #10 contributors say what they do to ensure transparency, disclosure and redress in their governance practice. Have others say how these principles can apply at the personal or family level. Close exercise by repeating advice at Step #9.

Exercise 11: Nominating Representatives for Merundoi

Specific Objective: To have participants engage the nomination process

What to do

1. Ask a few persons who have heard episodes of the Merundoi radio serial explain what it is about. Use the Notes following this exercise to supply additional information and the “behaviour change” objective of the radio drama.
2. Explain that for the purposes of this exercise, all participants will be residents of Merundoi village preparing to nominate representatives to the Merundoi Community Council: (1) MCC Chairperson; (1) MCC Secretary; (1) MCC Treasurer; (3) MCC Committee Members – six (6) positions in all. See council definition below.
3. Explain that the word *nominate* means to name. The *seconder* would be the person who supports or seconds the nomination made. Beginning with the chairperson ...
 - a. Write the names of the persons nominated. Next to each nomination, write the names of the persons making and seconding the nomination.
 - b. Encourage multiple nominations. Do not allow the nomination process to be closed off too quickly. See Facilitator Notes.
 - c. Hold all comments on and questions about the process—yours and those of participants—until all the nominations for the six positions have been made.

4. When all nominations have been made, ask participants to examine the names recorded – the nominees, and persons making and seconding the nominations. Ask:
 - a. Did anyone nominated for one of the three top positions, nominate or second someone else for the same position? [Does this mean that they did not consider themselves suitable candidates?]
 - b. Did anyone nominate or second more than one candidate for the same top position? [What does this say about their first nominee?]
 - c. Did anyone who declined a serious nomination show respect by offering serious reasons for not accepting the nomination? [What is the result when good candidates who are nominated refuse to serve?]
 - d. What are the qualities and skills of the persons nominated? What qualities and skills should chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and committee members have? What is the difference between a quality and a skill? [These questions should first be put to each person making and seconding nominations; and then to the persons accepting nomination.]
 - e. What do you think of the saying, “People get the government they deserve”?
5. Close with participants saying what they learned from the MCC nomination process and what they now know of some of the reasons behind poor governance.

council
an assembly of persons called together for consultation, deliberation, or discussion;
a body of people elected or appointed to serve in an administrative,
legislative, or advisory capacity
Students’ Dictionary, Houghton Mifflin

Selecting Good Representatives

“Merundoi” is an Akawaio word meaning *hope, strength, stamina, energy* and the name of an imaginary village community in Guyana about 15 miles from Georgetown. It is also the name of a very good radio serial drama launched in October 2006 “to show role models changing their behaviour.” Interested participants may wish to form a *Merundoi Players* group:

- to re-enact these dramas in schools and communities
- to encourage and reinforce attention to the drama
- to endorse and support the goals and behaviours of specific characters
- to provide opportunities for discussion of new social and behavioural norms
- to link people to community services
- to advocate for other community-level changes

In so doing, participants can engage in the work of good citizenship, ensure that the work of writing the dramatic script does not go to waste, develop their own dramatic abilities, discover unused talents in their communities, and have fun. It should not be too difficult

to get some financial support in the community, and when appropriate pass a collection box for donations to help cover basic expenses.

Copies of the script may be obtained from the Health & Family Life Education (HFLE) division of the Ministry of Education or the Merundoi Project supported by USAID.

Facilitating the Nomination Process

1. After one or two nominations, often someone will rush to ‘beg to close nominations.’ Use this opportunity to point out that this practice restricts the democratic process.
 - a. Point out that elections are too important to be hurried. Everyone who wishes to participate should be given ample time to consider, name and support the naming of persons they believe would make good leaders and good representatives.
 - b. You are likely to get persons nominating or seconding two or more persons for the same position. Sometimes persons who are nominated will actually nominate or second others for the very position for which they have been named. At this point, say nothing and discourage attempts by others to address this common practice.
2. When you get to Step #4 of the Exercise, go through each name systematically.
 - a. Identify, focus on and mark names appearing more than once for a particular post.
 - b. Point out that when we name—*nominate*, and support the naming—*second the nomination* of a person for a particular position, it means the following:
 - i. that we have taken careful account (remind participants about accountability) of the work, qualities, knowledge, skills, and experience that the position requires [Note: Spend time developing each of the five areas.]
 - ii. that we have identified the person most suited for the position from among all of the possible candidates
 - iii. that the person who is best suited for the position is willing and available (for example, a person about to migrate cannot be considered “available”)
 - c. Point out that when a person accepts nomination, he or she has also considered the work the position calls for, as well as the qualities, knowledge, skills, and experience, and has accepted that, compared with the other possible candidates, he or she is indeed the best person for the position.
 - d. Point out that a good way of differentiating between qualities and skills is this: *Qualities* have to do with character, who we are; for example, X is decent, honest, fair, just, generous. *Skills* have to do with abilities, what we can do well; for example Y is good at writing notes, organising people, keeping accounts in order. Skills can be taught and learned. An honest person elected to the post of treasurer may have the ability to learn how to keep accurate books. It would be better, if there are not more suitable candidates, to nominate an honest and accountable person with basic calculation skills, instead of someone who is a qualified accountant, but who is known to be dishonest.

3. See below for qualifications nominees should have for each position:

Chairperson

The chairperson is the Chief Representative of the Council (or any group or organisation). The main work of this person is to chair, convene, and preside over meetings; coordinate, speak on behalf of, represent, administer, and lead the work of the council. These verbs, action words—*chair, convene, preside, coordinate, speak, represent, administer, lead*—have given rise to the different names by which those who do government work are called: for example, *chairperson, convenor, president, coordinator, spokesperson, administrator, leader*. Our indigenous communities use the term *toshao* (pronounced ‘tou-chau’) for their leaders and “chiefs.”

Please emphasise that as “chief representative,” the Chairperson is not the Council, not the boss, not even the chief, but is the main representative of the Council, and should:

- Have good communication skills
- Be able to inspire and get people to work well together
- Be able to manage conflict
- Know that it is impossible to please all the people all the time
- Have the ability to be firm and fair
- Be reasonable, respectful and have self-control
- Know her or his strengths and weaknesses
- Not use her/his position to promote her/his self-interest or family’s interest
- Be willing to share responsibilities
- Be well informed on a wide range of matters
- Keep in mind and be guided by the council’s mission, goals, objectives and plans
- Lead by example and know that the council’s business is the community’s business
- Presiding over meetings is an important part of the Chairperson’s work, so she/he should call meetings to order on time; manage meeting time well; close at the agreed time
- Not force her/his views on the meeting
- Ensure that members stick to the point under discussion
- Ensure the full participation of all members
- Ensure that all the facts are known and understood before decisions are taken
- Ensure that decisions are taken; and that everyone is clear on What is to be done, by Whom, by When

Secretary

A Secretary, also a key representative, spokesperson, and leader, should

-
- Have excellent communication skills
 - Work closely with the Chairperson to plan and manage council and community meetings and the work of the council and the community
 - Make, keep, and present accurate records of meetings and council business
 - Send and receive correspondence
 - Bring all correspondence to the attention of the council
 - Recommend and take initiative on actions where necessary, according to principles and guidelines decided on by the council
 - Be able to work with minimum supervision
 - Have good knowledge of the mission, goals, objectives and work plan of the council
 - Remember – even while being confidential – that the business of the council is, in effect, the business of the community

Treasurer

The Treasurer, an important trustee and leader, should

- Have financial integrity and the strength of character to resist situations and persons who might try to tempt him or her to take advantage of the position of trust
- Have good accounting skills
- Understand that the council's money is really the community's money

The main responsibilities of the Treasurer are the following:

- Deposit money collected into the council's bank account
- Keep cash-in-hand and bank book safely
- Keep accounts and accurate records of all money received and paid out by the council
- Secure all bills, receipts, and financial records; and maintain records in a state that may be inspected by community members or audited at any time
- Present and explain regular financial statements to the council
- Collect bills for all items purchased, collect all money intended for the council, and issue receipts for all money received
- Ensure the wise, just, and legitimate use of council and community resources

Committee Members

These elected representatives should also be considered part of the leadership of the council. They too should be selected from among persons who have leadership qualities, knowledge, skills, and experience—and the time to do the work required. It can also be a way of giving persons without leadership experience a chance to get such experience. Committee members should also be seen as filling gaps in the leadership, for example

with respect to gender, age, ethnicity, qualities, specific skills or experience, geographical or faith base, knowledge, or educational background and so on.

The main responsibilities of Committee Members are to

- Ensure that top council leaders are effectively serving and representing the community
- Ensure that the council operates according to the rule of law and regulations
- Improve their representation and leadership skills
- Assist the leadership in the work of leadership and representation
- Take an active part in the planning and work of the council
- Be accountable and insist on accountability by colleagues
- Pay close attention to the financial affairs of the council
- Keep close to the community and represent community concerns faithfully
- Help develop community leaders and identify community members with leadership qualities and skills for work on special committees and sub-committees

Note: Remember to focus on qualities and skills when nominating and electing leaders. Leadership is essentially about service, representation, and work. It is not about position seeking, role playing or office holding. If you have to choose between qualities and skills, aim for qualities and train for the skills needed.

DEMOCRACY

“Government by the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives”

“a nation or social unit with this form of government”

“Social and political equality and respect for the individual within the community”

[Students’ Dictionary, Houghton Mifflin]

ELECTION to the work of representation and leadership is serious business

An election is not a lottery.

An election is not a prize-giving, reward or award ceremony.

An election is not about re-paying debts to friends and associates.

An election is not about being nice to people who are nice to you.

An election is not about putting members of your family or tribe on top.

*ELECTIONS are how people can ensure good governance
by choosing good representatives who will be accountable.*

*ELECTIONS are how we can work to bring about social and political equality,
and respect for the individual within the community.*

*ELECTIONS are how we can ensure that government
acts in a lawful, not lawless, manner.*

*When we treat ELECTIONS seriously,
the rule of law, democracy and good governance become possible.*

Exercise 12: Electing Representatives for Merundoi

Specific Objective: To engage participants in simulated elections of representatives with the necessary quality and skills to manage their affairs

What to do

1. If the nomination process at Exercise 11 was flawed, you will need to do it again.
2. Have participants appoint a “Chief Elections Officer” to be responsible for conducting the elections.
3. Tell participants that they will be voting by a **show of hands**.
4. Have the Chief Elections Officer conduct the nomination, voting, counting and results declaration process for each of the six MCC positions: *chairperson*, *secretary*, *treasurer*, and *three committee members*. Results should be posted for all to see.
5. Now ask the Chief Elections Officer to repeat the election, but this time by **secret ballot**. [You will need to prepare enough slips of paper (ballot papers) beforehand for the group. If you have a group of 20, you will need $6 \times 20 = 120$ slips.]
6. If there are three nominees for the chairperson position, number them #1, #2, and #3. Tell the electors (that is, the participants) that if they wish to vote for the first nominee: write the number 1; the second nominee: write the number 2, and so on. This will ensure the secrecy of the ballot, since no one will be able to identify who voted for whom by the handwriting. This method also makes participation easier for persons without formal education.
7. After the secret ballot elections, the Chief Elections Officer *and* observers or scrutineers (candidates’ supporters who will guarantee fairness) should begin counting the votes.
8. While the counting is going on, ask those persons who were nominated to prepare a two-minute speech to the group to say what they will do if elected.
9. After nominees give their short talks, ask the Chief Elections Officer to announce the results of the secret ballot election. Here are questions for discussion:
 - a. Did the results of the first election differ from that of the second? Why?
 - b. Did the Chief Elections Officer vote in both elections? Why? [Note: He or she is a citizen and resident of the community and entitled to vote. This is one reason why voting should be secret, so that persons can exercise their rights without compromising the fairness or the appearance of fairness of the process.]
 - c. Did each nominee get at least three votes—from the persons who nominated and seconded, and his or her own vote? What does it mean when persons nominate or second nominations do not vote for their nominee? What does it mean when persons accept nominations for a position and do not vote for themselves?
 - d. Did candidates consult with persons who nominated or supported their nomination in preparing their talks? Why would this have been good?

- e. Did people wish they had heard the speeches before they voted? Why? How important is a candidate's character compared to a good speech by a candidate?
10. Close with each person saying (a) what was the most important lesson he or she learned and (b) what he or she will do with this new knowledge.

Exercise 13: Getting Good Governance

Specific Objective: To deepen each participant's understanding of good governance and democracy

What to do

1. For this exercise, and for the democratic practice participants should be doing after this workshop, you will need beforehand to prepare copies of the four-page notes following Exercise #11 [if you do not have manuals for each person]
2. Before you circulate the handouts, organise participants into pairs.
 - a. Have half the group discuss in pairs what they think "good governance" means.
 - b. Have the other half discuss in pairs what they think "democracy" means.
3. After about 5 minutes, have one representative from each pair report.
 - a. After all the "good governance" and "democracy" pairs have reported, add points overlooked from the notes and definitions provided.
4. Distribute handouts or direct participants to the specific pages in the manual.
5. Organise participants into four groups. Assign one of the three top representatives (Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer)—one to each of three groups, and all three (3) Committee Members to the fourth group. Groups should be about equal in size.
6. Allow about 30 minutes for each group to read, study and compare the qualifications listed in the Notes with those of each of their elected representatives. Explain that this is an exercise in reflection, evaluation and self-evaluation – to see how electors (the persons electing the representatives) and the elected representatives measure up to the standards expected.
 - a. Each small group should carefully consider each qualification, examine whether the elected representative 'qualifies' and prepare to report on
 - i. what they discovered – about themselves (as the electorate) and the elected representative, and
 - ii. what, can and should be done about what they have discovered
7. Take reports from each group, ensuring that each point under the leadership and representation requirements was given due consideration. This is also an exercise in accountability! Resist attempts to cut corners, cover up, brush aside, or sweep things under the carpet!

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8. Tell participants the name and specific objective of this exercise, and have each person think about and take turns saying how his or her understanding of good governance and democracy has been deepened as a result of this exercise.
 9. Refer participants to the definition of democracy and the statements that follow it. Get feedback from participants on their thinking and feelings.
 10. Close the exercise with each participant reflecting on, and saying, one concrete action, she or he will do to contribute towards good governance and democracy.

Remember that the word represent means to “re-present,” that is, “to present again that which has been presented before.”

Exercise 14: Money Matters

Specific Objective: To increase each participant’s awareness of the responsibility of a treasurer or persons entrusted with community resources

What to do

1. Do not tell participants the name or specific objective of this exercise.
2. Distribute blank slips of paper to each participant.
3. Have them tear their slips in half, so that they have two pieces each.
4. Give them this scenario, with instructions:
 - a. A Merundoi citizen in good standing, and highly respected, has an urgent financial need in connection with her disabled child.
 - b. She has approached the Treasurer of the Merundoi Community Council (MCC) to borrow G\$1000 from Council funds. Should the Treasurer lend her the money?
 - i. If you think the Treasurer should, write yes (or put a tick meaning yes, if your group has several persons with weak writing skills)
 - ii. If you think the Treasurers should not, write no (or zero)
 - iii. If you are not sure what the Treasurer should do, write maybe, depends or don’t know (or for those with writing challenges, a dash [--])
5. Have participants fold and hand up their slips of paper.
6. Have two persons count and present the findings of the ballot to the whole group.
7. While the counting is going on,
 - a. Explain that a *ballot* is a paper on which people write to cast or register their votes for a person, or to express their opinions on an issue. People can also give their opinions by a show of hands or by speaking out.
 - b. Explain that the Treasurer cannot give or lend the Council’s money to anyone for any purpose. It is not the Treasurer’s money. The only correct answer is no.
 - c. When the findings have been presented and commented on, the “maybe and depends” persons can, if they wish, explain what they had in mind.

8. Repeat the activity with participants using the second slip.
 - a. This time, say that the MCC Chairperson has approached the Treasurer for a loan of G\$1000 from Council funds. Should the Treasurer lend the money?
 - b. They should write yes, no, or don't know as at Step #4.
9. Have ballots collected and counted as before. During the counting process, explain again that the Treasurer may not lend or give Council money to anyone, including the Chairperson. In fact, the Chairperson should be setting a good example to the Council and the community by not asking or taking. The only correct answer is no.
 - a. If the Treasurer feels the need to help, he or she must use his or her own funds, not the MCC funds. Or the Council may set up a special 'hardship' fund with specific guidelines on how it may be accessed. Also explain that money allocated to purchase a tractor may not, for example, be used to pay rent.
10. Close the session with participants sharing examples of misuse/abuse of community or organisational resources and identifying steps or remedies that can be taken. Review the key principles of accountability, transparency, disclosure, and redress.

Exercise 15: Doing Something about Things and the Things that Bother Us

Specific Objective: To engage participants in identifying issues that concern them and planning action to bring about positive change

What to do

1. Draw a line along one side of the room, or use tape, or simply indicate a space.
2. At one end of the stretch of space, write or put up a sign marked *Very Concerned* and at the other end, place another sign marked *Not Concerned*.
3. Tell participants that you will be listing some issues. Persons should position themselves along the line (or spectrum) to indicate their feelings about the issue.
4. After persons have taken up their positions, stop to allow the persons grouped at either end to state their views and select a representative to speak on their behalf.
 - a. Depending on how many persons are in the middle ground, they can either represent themselves or select someone to represent their views.
5. Here is a starting list. Feel free to add other issues, orr organise participants, working in pairs or threes, to come up with their own issues. The number of issues you select for use will depend on the time available.

flooding ... transportation ... electricity ... housing ... street lighting ... drugs
 alcohol ... HIV/AIDS ... rape ... violence against children ... police ...
 crime...community roads ... traffic lights ... education ... elections ... racial
 discrimination recreation and sport facilities for men/boys ... women/girls ... for
 disabled persons

-
6. Now have participants select, by a show of hands, one issue for action where the majority (any number over half) were “Very concerned.” They should then form an Action Group to do something about the issue.
 7. Have the Action Group (a) elect a Chairperson (to lead and chair the meeting) and a Secretary (to assist the Chairperson and make a record of the decisions of the group) and (b) hold a planning meeting to come up with an Action Plan for the issue.
 - a. Explain that an Action Plan should indicate Who will do what by when. Write these headings on the board or Flip Chart and give reminders as necessary.
 - b. Depending on the size of the group, the response to the issues and the interest, there can be two issues selected, two Action Groups formed, and two meetings
 - c. Remind participants to consult their notes and think about the quality of representation persons have been giving before choosing their representatives
 8. Tell participants that they have one hour to elect their representatives and conduct their planning meetings. They should come up with at least three action plans.
 9. While the Action Group or Action Groups are working
 - a. Observe and make notes on the selection and meeting process for discussion later
 10. Have Action Group, through its Secretary, (a) present action plans, and (b) indicate follow-up arrangements to carry through plans after the training.
 11. Facilitate an evaluation of the meeting using your notes and the notes that follow.
 12. Give thanks and praises. Close by drawing attention to Article #13 of our constitution and urging participants to continue their good governance and democracy work.

Notes on Meeting Effectiveness

A meeting is effective when ...

1. The chairperson conducts it in a sensible, sensitive and efficient manner
2. It is well planned, enjoyable and productive
3. It is necessary, its purpose is clear, its agenda is known and accepted by those present
4. Everyone who should be present, is present
5. Persons are able to get and give information
6. Everyone participates, every contribution is made respectfully and treated with respect
7. The physical, psychological, and emotional environment is helpful
8. Records of decisions are made that state who will do what, by when
9. Persons commit themselves to do what they say they will do in a timely manner

10. It begins and ends on time, and has good time management of the time available
11. Persons look forward to meetings knowing that decisions taken will be implemented
12. It is meeting the vision, goals, objectives of the concerned community

A meeting is not effective when ...

1. The chairperson is weak and indecisive
2. Everyone present does not take responsibility for the effectiveness of the meeting
3. There is bad planning or no planning
4. Too many persons are present or too few persons are present
5. The purpose of the meeting is unclear and the agenda is not known beforehand
6. There is unnecessary discussion
7. Ideas put on the table are not heard or ignored
8. One or two persons are allowed to take over the meeting
9. “Benchwarmers” sit through the meeting without making any contribution
10. Participation is not organised (Note: Point out the different ways that participation was organised in this session, or workshop, which was really a series of meetings.)
11. Negativity is allowed to dominate.
12. There is no commitment to the vision, goals and objectives of the concerned community.

Writing *minutes* or making record of meetings

Minutes are the record of a meeting. The secretary or the person making a record of the meeting can use the 5Ws & 1H method for deciding what should be recorded:

- Who—name of the group or organisation holding the meeting; names of persons present at the meeting; names of persons not present and/or excused; names of persons who have been assigned meeting or group/organisational tasks
- Where—meeting venue and location
- When—meeting date, starting and ending times of the meeting
- Why—reason for, or goal, objective or purpose of the meeting
- What—agenda items, what the meeting discussed, what items not covered, what decisions taken, what plans for decision implementation: who, to do what, by when
- How—decision making process, for example: vote, consensus, decision of chair

On Power, Virtue & Civility

*The gods become active
when communities dig deep into themselves
for powers to support them when they arrive.
[Resurrection at Sorrow Hill, Wilson Harris]*

*Until one is committed, there is a hesitancy,
the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness.
Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth,
the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans:
that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too.
All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred.
A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favour
all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance,
which no person could have dreamed would have come their way.
Whatever you can do or dream you can do, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin now.
[Goethe]*

*Cultivate virtue in your own person,
And it becomes a genuine part of you.
Cultivate it in the family,
And it will abide.
Cultivate it in the community,
And it will live and grow.
Cultivate it in the state,
And it will flourish abundantly.
Cultivate it in the world,
And it will become universal.
[Tao Teh Ching]*

*Civility is beauty of behaviour.
It requires for its perfection
patience, self control, and an environment of leisure.
For genuine courtesy is a creation ...
It is a harmonious blending of voice,
gesture and movement, words and action,
in which generosity of conduct is expressed.
[Creative Unity, Rabindranath Tagore]*

Hymn for Guyana's Children

*With humble hearts and heads bowed down
In thanks for each new day of toil
We kneel before thine altar, Lord
The children of Guyana's soil*

*Great is the task that Thou hast given
Thy will to show; Thy truth to find;
To teach ourselves that we are one
In thy great universal mind*

*But not in vain we'll strive to build
A new Guyana great and free,*

*A land of glory and of hope,
A land of love and unity*

*O children of Guyana rise
Rise up and sing with happy tears
And bless the land that gave you birth
And vow to serve her through the years.
[Valerie Rodway]*

*“The essence of loyalty ... is reciprocity.
A citizen owes allegiance to the state in exchange for protection,
for the state’s allegiance to and duty toward the individual.
That is an implicit social contract.”
[Word of Honor, Nelson DeMille]*

Article 13

[CONSTITUTION OF THE COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA]

“The principal objective of the political system of the state
is to establish an inclusionary democracy
by providing increasing opportunities for
the participation of citizens,
and their organisations
in the management and decision-making processes of the State,
with particular emphasis on those areas of decision-making
that directly affect their well-being.”

[Chapter II, Principles and Bases of the Political, Economic and Social System]

USAID GUYANA DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION
(GDCCR) PROJECT – OCTOBER 2007