



# **Towards a National Development Plan Process in Curacao**

## Conditions and Opportunities for Democratic Dialogue

*UNDP Curacao*  
*Scoping Mission Report*  
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The present report reflects the views of the external consultant contracted from UNDP's Democratic Dialogue Network to design and implement this assessment mission: Philip Thomas, co-author of the book [Democratic Dialogue – A Handbook for Practitioners](#), with support from Dr. Jesse Sostrin.

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## Background and Purpose

Among the major challenges that Curacao faces is the need to establish a National Development Plan that reflects the environmental, economic, social, and political realities of Curacao as a new autonomous country within the current global environment.

To support these efforts, UNDP Curacao is currently executing the *Inclusive Development* project. Within this project, there are four output areas, including: National Development Plan, Social-Economic Data, Social Cohesion, and Donor Mobilization. A UNDP scoping mission was conducted from October 10 – 17 to assess current conditions and opportunities for implementing a variety of Democratic Dialogue (DD) approaches to: 1) facilitate the development of a National Development Plan and its adoption by the broader society; and 2) to strengthen a culture and practice of democratic governance.

With respect to the National Development Plan, the recently published TAC report on *Strategies for Sustainable Economic Development in Curacao* discusses the major challenges around the execution of development plans in Curacao. One of the major concerns highlighted by the study, which was also validated by all stakeholders during the scoping mission, is the lack of continuity in development plans and the inability to implement them.

“There is consensus among the population that maintaining the status quo is not an option. Economic policy, governance, laws, regulations and institutions must be reformed. There are too many internal and external factors which have a strong impact on Curacao, which must be proactively addressed in order to avoid the country’s irreversible marginalization.”

- TAC Report, 2013

**Rather than the need to identify (once again) key development priorities and “what” the country needs to do, it has been the “how,” or more specifically the “inability to implement” that is the most widely recognized obstacle to development. In concrete terms, it is the difficulty among stakeholders to align around shared priorities and to coordinate actions required to implement many of the strategies and initiatives required by existing plans that were established over the past couple of years.**

**The purpose of this scoping mission was to assess the readiness for using targeted small and large-scale DD interventions to assist with the refinement of a clearer national development agenda, along with the alignment and collaboration required to implement it.**

The rationale for this assessment was drawn from the fact that many countries facing similar challenges and opportunities have successfully used a spectrum of DD approaches in ways that carefully link development issues and align thinking, strategy, and action as it relates to short, medium, and long-term national goals.

## Assessment Approach and Assumptions

From prior projects in similar contexts, the UNDP recognizes that the appropriateness and ultimate effectiveness of inclusive and participatory DD processes depend in large part upon two critical conditions:

1. All stakeholders must view the process as open and trustworthy. This requires clarity about the purpose of the process as well as transparency and inclusiveness in key decisions about the process design.
2. There must be a reasonably high likelihood that the process will produce credible concrete outcomes, clear agreements owned by the relevant stakeholders, a concrete plan of action, and the capacities (will and skill) required for effective implementation.

Rather than assuming these conditions to be present, UNDP chose to conduct this assessment to determine not only the level of credible interest in and opportunities for cross-sectoral engagement processes, but also the extent to which these two conditions for success exist now or can be feasibly put into place to ensure the effective implementation of outcomes that DD produces. This scoping mission consisted of the following activities:

- Individual and focus group interviews with selected stakeholders including top leadership in Government, as well as individuals from civil society and the private sector (See Annex 1 for list of stakeholders consulted).
- A two-day training workshop offered to a group of community members interested in serving as dialogue practitioners and individuals working within the Government. The purpose of this workshop was to broaden participants' understanding of DD, present a sample of innovative methods and processes, and to strengthen skills that are necessary for effective facilitation of dialogue processes.
- A half-day workshop for high-level Government officials to raise awareness about the importance of DD and to promote a shared understanding of the purpose of DD, including ways it can be used to strengthen democratic culture and practice.

The rationale for these activities in the scoping mission was based on three important goals:

1. To gain an adequate understanding of the current context. By gathering information and identifying the different perspectives that exist in Curacao (i.e. how individuals and groups name and frame key issues, perspectives on the challenges and barriers that must be addressed in order to move forward with an effective development agenda, etc.);
2. To begin to engage stakeholders in a process of critical reflection on the different assumptions and perspectives they hold, which is an important condition for creating interest in and openness to the possibility of dialogue. In other words, the stakeholder conversations were as much about beginning a dialogue through mutual exploration and reflection as they were about gathering important data; and
3. To begin creating the conditions for ownership of potential dialogue by including stakeholders in conversations focused on developing shared understanding around the purpose, expectations, and conditions they feel would be necessary for a process to be credible and useful.

DD processes have greater effectiveness when they are designed with careful consideration around the four fundamentals presented below. Our conversations with stakeholders focused on exploring each of these dimensions.

1. **Action Matters:** To avoid becoming stuck in what others have coined as “NATO” (No Action, Talk Only) DD processes must be designed in a way that produce clear results through coordinated action. Our inquiry focused on understanding the primary barriers to inaction.

2. **Thinking Matters:** The quality and effectiveness of actions depend on the quality of thinking that defines those actions taken. Effective action requires stakeholders to make visible and examine the assumptions they hold – their mental maps—that shape how they understand the issues they must address and what is required to achieve the changes they hope to bring about. An important task of DD is to create a larger frame that allows stakeholders to bring their different perspectives and analyses together in a way that leads to a common understanding of shared issues and what is required to address them effectively. Our conversations with stakeholders aimed to identify important differences in perspectives and the assumptions people hold as well as to use our conversations as a first step to enable stakeholders to critically reflect on their own assumptions and perspectives.
3. **Relationships Matter:** It is not enough to simply create space for greater inclusion and participation. DD focuses on creating the conditions for achieving a *higher quality* of participation and interaction, which is difficult in contexts characterized by high levels of mistrust and confrontational ways of interacting together. DD is effective when it is leveraged to transform patterns of confrontation into patterns of collaboration, even when substantive differences continue to exist. Throughout our conversations we explored some of the patterns of interaction that directly relate to and sustain the widely disdained patterns of inaction.
4. **Process Matters:** Whether and how stakeholders engage in DD depends on the extent to which the process itself is perceived as credible and legitimate. How the process is designed (the approach and methodologies used) and unfolds over time are key considerations in establishing perceptions of credibility and legitimacy. In contexts of significant mistrust, DD must offer a process in which participants can place their trust in the process itself and feel relatively safe and confident that the process will benefit, not harm them.

## Findings

The following findings represent the primary themes that we identified as most relevant when considering conditions for using DD approaches and their potential to move Curacao forward in the development and implementation of a National Development Plan process.<sup>1</sup> As mentioned previously, comprehensive assessments regarding substantive development priorities already exist. The themes identified here are limited in scope to the key issues and barriers that together contribute to the recurring pattern of inaction where priorities are identified and plans are developed but ultimately are not implemented in a sustained way that produces real change.

### Consensus on the need for change and the “Wall of Willingness”

All stakeholders consulted (inside and outside of Government) were quick to recognize the need for action and change; namely that things cannot remain the same if Curacao is to thrive as a viable and successful nation. This shared awareness of the need for change can be a valuable impetus and driver for engaging stakeholders at all levels in change processes using DD approaches. Many stakeholders went on to express a willingness to engage and collaborate and to do what is necessary to achieve

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<sup>1</sup> Our interviews and focus groups with Government were somewhat limited therefore a full generalization is difficult. However, the identified themes were so consistently reinforced throughout our interactions that they offer a solid starting point for analysis.

change. However, one group referred to this vocal support as nothing more than a “wall of willingness,” describing a common pattern of people expressing willingness and commitment but then not following through.

The mismatch between what people say and what people do is a contributing factor to the resistance of some to believe in the usefulness of dialogue to bring about the necessary shifts that can result in authentic collaborative efforts to bring about change. This relates to the issues of dialogue fatigue and accountability mentioned below.

## Information, planning, and public engagement

Many agreed that adequate analysis identifying clear development priorities already exists (e.g. the TAC report, Transparency International report, etc.). The more commonly perceived problem was not the absence of plans, but the political unwillingness or leadership-driven inability to implement the plans. However, upon further reflection, many acknowledged that being clear on “what” the development priorities are does not equate to having clarity on “how” to effectively address them. Having analysis is not the same as having clear and shared plans and knowing who has responsibility for what. Many of those consulted recognized that if clear plans do exist, they are not familiar with them. This suggests a fundamental lack of alignment around the core priorities, strategies, and tactics necessary to achieve critical initiatives.

### ***A Core Finding***

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Regarding the different analyses that have been documented in various reports, some stakeholders commented on their frustration that this information is not readily accessible. They either did not know about these reports, or have not known how to gain access to them. Access to this information and effective strategies for public education to promote awareness and understanding of development priorities within the broader society is often a vital first step in bringing about behavioral and cultural changes that development ultimately requires. Even the TAC Report makes this point clear in stating, “full absorption of this Report by all relevant public and private stakeholders is a pre-condition for its long term success.”

## Culture of fear, distrust and divided relationships

The recent process of establishing autonomy resulted in painful divisions at the family, community, and national levels. These divided relationships continue to fuel what many have described as “a culture of fear and distrust.” Specifically, politics in Curacao are characterized by patterns of confrontation, antagonism, and deep distrust in others’ intentions – the very patterns that block collaboration, innovation, and the kind of effective and sustained action Curacao requires to address the social and economic challenges it faces.

It is interesting to note that many of those interviewed suggested that conflicts and differences between the political parties, which are a recognized factor contributing to political instability and ineffective governance, are not primarily ideological. Power struggles and self-interest – exacerbated by this deep

distrust – results in the inability to manage conflict constructively and work together productively (even when differences exist) to implement effective policies and services for the common good.

This culture of fear and distrust is equally present within the civil service, impeding its overall effectiveness as well. ***Civil servants express fear to speak authentically or share information due to uncertain political allegiances.*** Political instability and the high-turnover in political leadership mentioned below have reinforced this fear and a general unwillingness to fully own problems and assume responsibility for making difficult decisions that are politically costly.

Strengthening democratic governance and increasing capacities within Curacao for navigating complex development challenges will require developing and prioritizing processes for building trust, improving relationships, and achieving greater political stability.

## Political Instability and the Leadership Treadmill

Political instability is another factor contributing to generally perceived ineffectiveness of Government to produce and enact policy. The degree of instability is marked by the fact that in the past year there have been four different Prime Ministers. In the past three years there have been 30 Ministers appointed, five different Ministers of Education alone have been appointed in the same time period. In many cases, as new leaders assume their positions, there is recognized pattern of discarding work from previous leadership and replacing it with different agendas and plans as a way of asserting one's leadership. While not uncommon within a new administration, this pattern of perpetual “start-overs” occurs at every level of government and at frequencies that subject even short-term goals to risk of abandonment.

The extremely high turnover among elected and appointed leaders drives instability at every level and reinforces deeply felt frustrations due to the inability to implement and sustain strategies anchored in longer-term priorities.

Political instability is likely both a cause and a symptom of the fragile coalitions that political parties have been forced to establish in order to assume and maintain power. Decisions and appointments are made to keep these coalitions together, which further entrenches the pattern. This situation has resulted in what many have referred to as a culture of “political point scoring” where decisions made are based on political positioning rather than national interest.

## Leadership Styles

While all perceive a sense of urgency for action, differences exist in terms of what kind of leadership is required to achieve effective results. Some believe that what is most necessary is more directive leadership where authorities assume responsibility, make the necessary decisions, and implement them to avoid “wasting valuable time” in further consultations and prolonged planning processes. Others believe leaders would be more effective if stakeholders were meaningfully engaged in the planning in order to produce the ownership required for sustaining strategies and actions that often transcend the current period of any Government.

We talked with some top-level decision-makers who believed their role was to think for the people and act on behalf of the people, and that in so doing, success would be measured in the accomplishments of this directive approach to leadership. The advantage of this style is the ability to do things more quickly and possibly more efficiently. The tradeoff may be that decisions made by a few, without engaging diverse perspectives, risk not being the best or most appropriate decisions and the likelihood that future authorities may own and sustain them is further decreased.



Directive leadership and leadership that values greater inclusion and consultation are both valid and effective approaches to leadership, depending on the goals and context in which they are carried out. Effective leadership requires the ability to mindfully and explicitly choose which style is most appropriate on any given issue rather than simply relying on one default style. One clear leadership growth opportunity is to provide development frameworks that allow people to recognize which combination of values, methods, and skills is the most useful at a given moment in order to lead on across a continuum of approaches that uses the strengths of both engagement and decisive, executive action when effective.

Without this leadership capacity building, there is a continued risk that the perceived sense of urgency for quick actions and results will reinforce a style of leadership that minimizes the need for real dialogue in favor of unilateral action on issues where sustained change will be unlikely without broader ownership among those affected.

## Decision-making & Accountability

Authentic democratic dialogue processes are inherently open-ended processes where outcomes cannot be predetermined, but must emerge as the result of collective exploration, analysis, and deliberation. The value of these processes ultimately depends on the ability to translate agreements into action. One challenge we perceive in Curacao is the fact that political decision-making is concentrated in the top leadership of political parties. In many conversations the phrase “the Big Four” surfaced, referring to the four leaders of the current political parties of the governing coalition. Regardless of the political parties in power at any given time, most people we spoke with said that power primarily resides in the party leaders and decisions are made with very little real accountability with their constituencies, and even less with the general public. In a context of such concentrated power and limited accountability, DD processes are likely to be counter-productive unless those in power directly own the need for such processes and are willing to create mechanisms for accountability to monitor and ensure agreements are translated into action.

## Capacity Gaps

There is a need for both individual and institutional (systemic) capacity building to strengthen the effectiveness of Government at all levels. Much of the current leadership and civil service work force have struggled to adequately make the shift in both understanding and approach required to fully transition from the previous form of Government (two levels) to current form established through autonomy (a single level). This is understandable given the recent transition to autonomy. However, gaps in capacity have also been exacerbated by many of the issues already mentioned. For instance, the many leadership transitions have also resulted in significant turnover within the civil service, as well as the inability to retain top local talent that would rather commute to other islands than work at home nation-building in Curacao.

There is also a commonly shared perception that many civil servants were promoted or placed in the Government despite their lack the appropriate technical expertise and professional skills required for their roles. This has resulted in feelings of disempowerment and low performance within the current civil service and in a widespread lack of confidence from those outside of the Government.

A product of the fragile, often contentious coalitions that make decisions based on political positioning is weak communication and coordination across Ministries. While each Ministry is concerned for its own success, there is limited capacity for effectively planning across Ministries. When this happens, the whole is often less than the sum of the parts. Many referred to five seemingly similar or overlapping



plans (the National Development Plan, Long Term Economic Strategy (LTES, implementation of TAC-report), the Curacao Sustainable Development Potential (*Martina-plan*), the Master Plan (ministry of Policy, Planning and Services) and last but not least the Nation-Building Taskforce) as examples creating a perception of an apparent lack of coordination across Ministries. DD approaches can be a useful means for building greater alignment within and across Ministries if top leadership recognizes this as an important and necessary step in achieving greater effectiveness and outwardly projecting a unified Government functioning as “one voice.”

## Economic & Social Council of Curacao and Kolaborativo

During the scoping mission there was no clear expression of need or interest in focusing DD efforts specifically around economic and labor-related policy issues. We did meet with Kolaborativo established in 2004 as a tripartite structure patterned on the ILO protocol that constitutes the mechanism to bring together in dialogue Government, Business and Labor. Currently, while Business and Labor participate, the Government has not chosen to participate. In addition to this mechanism, the Economic and Social Council of Curacao (ESCC) has been created as the main advisory body on social and economic issues. The ESCC is a continuation of the Economic and Social Council of the Netherlands Antilles but is now limited to the island of Curacao, after the constitutional restructuring within the Dutch Kingdom. In 2010 the ESCC was legally reinforced as the mechanism from which the Government is more or less obliged to seek advice on social economic issues.

While we did meet with Kolaborativo, we did not meet with the ESCC and have only limited information concerning its structure and mandate. From in our conversations, there seems to be confusion and ambiguity concerning the respective roles of Kolaborativa and the ESCC. We understand the ESCC to be established by law as an advisory council that includes business, labor as well as other social sectors, whereas Kolaborativo maintains the more traditional tripartite structure of Government, Business, and Labor. If either is to be taken up in Government and viewed as important mechanism of dialogue, collaboration and policy formation, there seems to be a need for more carefully distinguishing roles and functions of both.

## Dialogue Fatigue

Finally, it is important to mention the dialogue fatigue that currently exists in Curacao. As mentioned earlier, nearly all those consulted showed Initial resistance to the idea of dialogue, when dialogue is misperceived as simply “more talk.” Many resonated with the previously mentioned term “NATO” (No Action, Talk Only) insisting that what Curacao most needs now is action, not “more talk.” However, upon further reflection, most shifted their opinion upon making the distinction between “talk” (processes where people come together to simply download and insist upon their preconceived ideas and solutions while not listening to others) and “dialogue” (where the aim is to think and listen together across different perspectives with the goal of reaching shared understanding and making wiser decisions). While there is recognition that nobody needs more talk, most agreed on the need for higher quality of open and transparent conversations that: 1) enable more critical thinking and common understanding; 2) promote shared ownership; and 3) begin to shift patterns of interaction and transform relationships. Moving forward with plans and actions without this quality of conversation that can enable greater coordination and ownership is likely to deliver limited results.

## Recommendations

This section presents a set of targeted recommendations for consideration based on the findings presented above. Any decision about subsequent action to take must be made with careful consideration of the following factors that will enhance Government support for DD.

- *Co-design and shared ownership:* During the scoping mission, a number of different issues were considered as potential opportunities for applying DD. While some recommendations are made below, it is important to recognize that once a decision is made on moving forward, identifying and including the range of affected stakeholders in the design of the process around the chosen issue will be important for building a sense of legitimacy and shared ownership in the process.
- *The importance of showing early results:* In many cases, dialogue processes take time and cannot be rushed, especially when one of purposes is to strengthen relationships and transform destructive patterns of interaction. At the same time, given the level of dialogue fatigue that exists in Curacao and the lack of confidence in the capacity of the Government to deliver, there will be little tolerance for extended processes of dialogue without beginning to see concrete tangible results. Therefore, issues should be selected where a process can be designed in a way that offers opportunities for showing quick results without sacrificing the need for maintaining a longer-term perspective.
- *The importance of language:* DD refers to engagement processes that help stakeholders think and act together more effectively. The language of “dialogue” may not be the most appropriate. In other contexts, shifting the language to “strategic planning” or “national conversation” has been useful in avoiding the baggage that often comes with the word “dialogue.”
- *The dual aim of producing clear results and strengthening both culture and practice of democratic governance:* Ultimately, one hopes the work of the UNDP helps the Government not only to advance on a specific goals and issues of local concern, but to do so in a way that also leaves behind increased capacity in Government and strengthens a culture and practice of democratic governance. This longer-range view on infrastructure building is a critical component of any action plan.
- *The Principle of “Do No Harm” and the importance of minimum conditions:* The suite of recommendations that are selected for implementation must be designed with safeguards to avoid an inadvertent exacerbation of the tensions and challenges already present. The minimum conditions for this requirement include: full context of the scope and clear decision-making prior to commitment, a conceptual agreement for implementation of whatever comes out of the DD process, and broad-based participation and commitment to engage in the process from diverse stakeholders.

## National Development Plan – “Critical Choices Curacao”

The Prime Minister expressed a strong interest – accompanied with sense of urgency – in having the UNDP effectively design and support a process for developing a National Development Plan (NDP) for Curacao. This is one of the four output areas mentioned in the UNDP *Inclusive Development* project. We understand the overall aim of a NDP for Curacao is to: 1) identify clear goals and strategies for social and economic development and environmental sustainability; and 2) to establish enduring institutional processes within and across government ministries and the wider stakeholder community for their achievement. As a clear and credible plan for moving the country forward, the NDP becomes an

important reference point for the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress with regards to the implementation of strategies and achievement of goals both UNDP output areas above.

To this end, we offer a clear set of recommendations for: 1) developing a NDP; 2) promoting its ownership within Government; 3) monitoring and supporting its implementation through a “Group of Champions”; and 3) broadening its adoption and ownership throughout society through processes of public engagement.

### 1. Developing the NDP - Branded as “Critical Choices Curacao” (CCC):

In the case of Curacao, there have already been a number of comprehensive assessments carried out, some of which have been based on broad stakeholder engagement. These efforts have identified and documented key social, economic, and environmental issues and priority areas.<sup>2</sup> Given the current level of dialogue and consultation fatigue, further consultation with the aim of identifying challenges and priorities would likely be counter-productive. At this point, the UNDP can play a pivotal role in the process of integrating these existing assessments and plans into a “NDP” that could be creatively framed as “Critical Choices Curacao” (CCC). The next steps to achieve this include:

- Contract with a team of NDP-experts to produce a draft document based on current planning and assessment reports. **It is important to underline that this step of hiring experts and producing a draft CCC-document is currently not part of the 3-year UNDP-programme on Curacao, where it was assumed that a NDP already existed. If this CCC-document is branded a priority, decisionmakers would have to allocate additional resources (funding, staff) to conduct this part of the process.**

In this, it will be important to work with the Head of the Policy Coordination Unit of the Ministry of General Affairs who is currently working with all Ministries to articulate the current Plan of Government. These efforts could likely result in producing 80% of the NDP/CCC with some work still remaining to bring the draft to completion.

- Facilitate day-long working sessions in each Ministry to close the information gaps and finalize the NDP draft. These workshops would also offer the opportunity to promote greater engagement within each Ministry and greater clarity and alignment across the different Ministries.
- Transform the working draft of NDP into a creative presentation (booklet, multimedia presentation) that makes this plan readily accessible and understandable as a useful tool for public dissemination and engagement (see recommendations below).
- An important part of this process will involve working with the Ministry of Economic Affairs to further clarify distinctions between the NDP and the Long Term Economic Strategy (LTES). More conversation is needed to clarify the purpose and expected outcomes of these two initiatives and ensure tight alignment between them.

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<sup>2</sup> We are more familiar with the TAC Report which offers a comprehensive treatment of economic develop and the Transparency International Report which addresses issues of corruption and institutional integrity. We are unclear as to whether issues of social (and environmental) development have been adequate taken up through other processes and reports. If not, this may be a significant gap that may require some consultation to adequately identify key issues and priorities.

## 2. Owning the NDP/CCC - Senior Leadership Retreat

While the NDP document is a clearly defined priority, it is understood that the capacity to own the accountability for achieving the plan's priorities, and subsequently establishing alignment on those priorities, is critical. The following action steps will combine to establish an agreed upon purpose that can sustain "One Voice, One Government" and preserve alignment during implementation:

- Convene a senior leadership retreat among the high-level ministers that focuses on improving relationship, strengthening alignment, and building confidence by projecting outwardly an image of *One Government/One Voice*.
- Use a framework in the design of the retreat that is intended to establish a dialogic space that produces more open, honest exchanges of perspectives and priorities, shared understanding, and clear alignment on policy priorities and actions. This shared agreement on the "how" establishes a precedent of working effectively on other issues and it de-politicizes the mandate to take on large initiatives that require commitments beyond a given governing coalition's leadership.
- Develop clear communication/messaging strategies for building credibility and promoting the NDP in society through public education and engagement.

## 3. Curacao Speaks: Difficult Decisions, Bright Future! – Promoting Adoption and Ownership of NDP/CCC through Innovative Public Engagement

In the interest of promoting broad adoption and ownership of the NDP/CCC, we recommend that a series of civic engagement activities are initiated countrywide, each of which draw on relevant DD approaches. Effective public dissemination and education is an important step in making sure the NDP/CCC becomes a source for inspiration and influence at all levels of society, as opposed to being shelved and forgotten.

Action steps include:

- Developing and publishing a concise and effective "Participant Guide"<sup>3</sup> for dissemination along with a companion platform that uses relevant forms of online and social media to ensure state-of-the-art approaches to public engagement and broad inclusion of youth.
- Train and equip DD practitioners to facilitate meetings at the community level, as well as possibly offering training for trainers to help scale this work and build capacity for doing similar approaches on other social issues.
- Using the "Participant Guide" as the focal point, design and facilitate a range of "Community Conversations" that engage individuals and stakeholder groups on the issues they care about most.
- With data collected from the "Community Conversations," design and catalyze a "National Conversation" that blends face-to-face dialogue with a representative sample of Curacao, as well as the latest engagement technologies (i.e. keypad polling, networked tablets, etc.) that

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<sup>3</sup> Participant Guides refer to creative and easily accessible, understandable material that allow citizens at all levels begin to understand and grapple with important decisions society as a whole need to make. These can take the form of multimedia, newspaper inserts, short illustrated booklets, etc.

enable rapid iteration of priorities. (See “From Community Conversations to a National Conversation” recommended below).

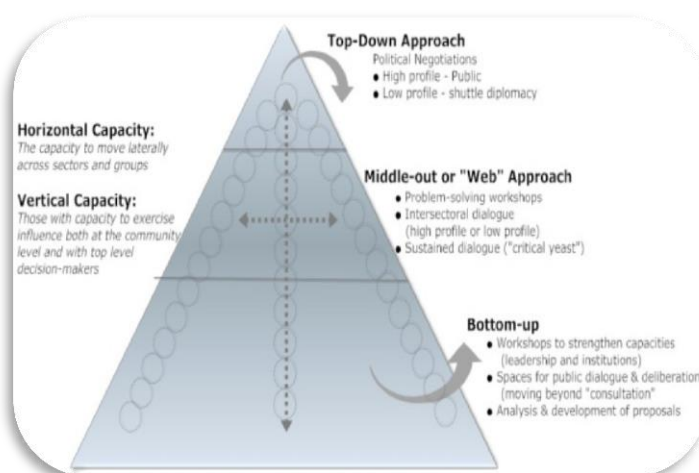
#### 4. Innovative Monitoring Mechanism: CCC Group of Champions

To extend the buy-in, ownership, and reach of the NDP/CCC we recommend convening a *Group of Champions* linked to the NDP, branded here as “Critical Choices Curacao”. The goal would be to convene a group of 8-12 broadly respected individuals (champions) that could collectively reflect a diverse constituency that balances political, economic, social, and industry perspectives. This group would not be endowed with any formal authority. Rather, its influence would come through the informal authority that comes from being a respected and credible group committed to championing the future of Curacao. This group would meet every two – three months to review progress made on goals, share perspectives, and reflect on around critical events and dynamics influencing Curacao’s capacity to move forward. They would issue press releases that aim to inspire by celebrating advances made as well as promote continued accountability among all stakeholders and the broader society for goals established.

While transitions may occur in Government, this group would be sustained over time, helping to monitor and promote continuity in priorities and plans established in the NDP. This could be one strategy for mitigating the effects of political instability and beginning to promote greater public scrutiny and accountability for decisions and actions taken.

One possibility would be to build on the momentum established through the recent conference *Curacao Speaks: Difficult Decisions/Bright Future* and establish a “group of champions” linked to this initiative and branded with a mandate such as “difficult decisions/bright future,” which succinctly communicates hope and the importance of learning how to make difficult decisions to secure a bright future. Some action steps to convene this group includes the following:

- Identify a group of individuals who, because of who they are and how they are socially positioned (their credibility and network of relationships) in society, have vertical and horizontal capacity. *Vertical capacity* refers to the ability to access and relate to top decision-makers as well as access and relate to community members at the local level. Horizontal capacity refers to the ability to move horizontally across sectors and groupings in order to establish relationships with peers in these sectors and groups.



- Engage these individuals and explore their interest in participating in a two-day retreat in which the NDP/CCC would be presented, reactions and perspectives would be shared, and the idea of creating a group of champions would be presented and explored. Participation in this retreat would not mean a commitment to be part of a group of champions. Rather, it is an opportunity to explore the possible usefulness of such a group, how it could be conceived, and who might then have interest in following up with the idea.

It is recognized this recommendation, if poorly conceived and executed, could potentially reproduce the same perception of “committees that talk and send press releases” but fail to have meaningful influence on action. Despite this risk, it is important to consider the recommendation for the potential benefit it provides, namely a semi-independent group of leaders who are capable of influencing public opinion and the priorities of leaders based on a long-term view of Curacao’s needs.

## **From Community Conversations to a National Conversation: Large-Scale Innovative Approach to Public Engagement**

Collectively, the mix of “Community Conversations” and “National Conversation” enable Curacao to engage a significant number of citizens in the combination of processes. The results of these efforts include: 1) “socializing the findings” of the NDP report; using this wider context and education to assess public perception about the current state and future priorities of Curacao three years after independence, and to leverage the technology beyond just information sharing to produce powerful results that elected leaders can use to refine priorities and absorb as a mandate for governance.

The specific recommendations include the following:

- Arrange for a delegation of project team members to travel to New York in order to observe an example of a large scale deliberation method that is specifically designed to “capture the collective voices of citizens” in order to inform the governance and policy development of elected leaders;
- Develop an accessible “Participant Guide” based on the key elements of the NDP;
- Following the TAC Report recommendation, which calls for full assimilation of report throughout society, prioritize the strategic role of engagement to inform citizens of key issues and empower transparent communication;
- Design a series of both small neighborhood and large-scale “Community Conversations” to educate and inform citizens’ on the key elements of the NDP and to discuss values, perspectives on issues, priorities, and trade-offs they consider relevant;
- Design and facilitate a “National Conversation” that aggregates the data collected during the early dialogue and deliberation events and to consolidate public opinion into a powerful report that can be used by elected leaders. This will include the following efforts:
  - Recruiting demographically representative people to improve credibility within the process;
  - Designing highly interactive and participatory meetings that produce fast, aggregated results to influence decision makers;
  - Creating safe space with volunteer table facilitators and neutral materials to ensure civil dialogue and balanced outcomes; and
  - Engaging the “hard to reach” stakeholders and communities in a variety of approaches to inform and raise the level of thinking and participation of individuals in society.

## Capacity Building for Effective Government & Democratic Governance

### Four-Quadrant Perspective on Capacity Building Needs

A number of the issues mentioned in this report indicate a significant need for effective capacity building in all levels of Government in leadership, evidence-based planning, team building and conflict transformation. There is also a clear need for capacity building that focuses on strengthening processes and mechanisms for effective collaboration across Government, civil society and the private sector. We are aware that efforts are currently underway for providing capacity building within the civil service. If the Government expressed interest, the UNDP could be positioned to assist with these efforts to increase capacities required for achieving greater effectiveness in Government, and more broadly, democratic governance.

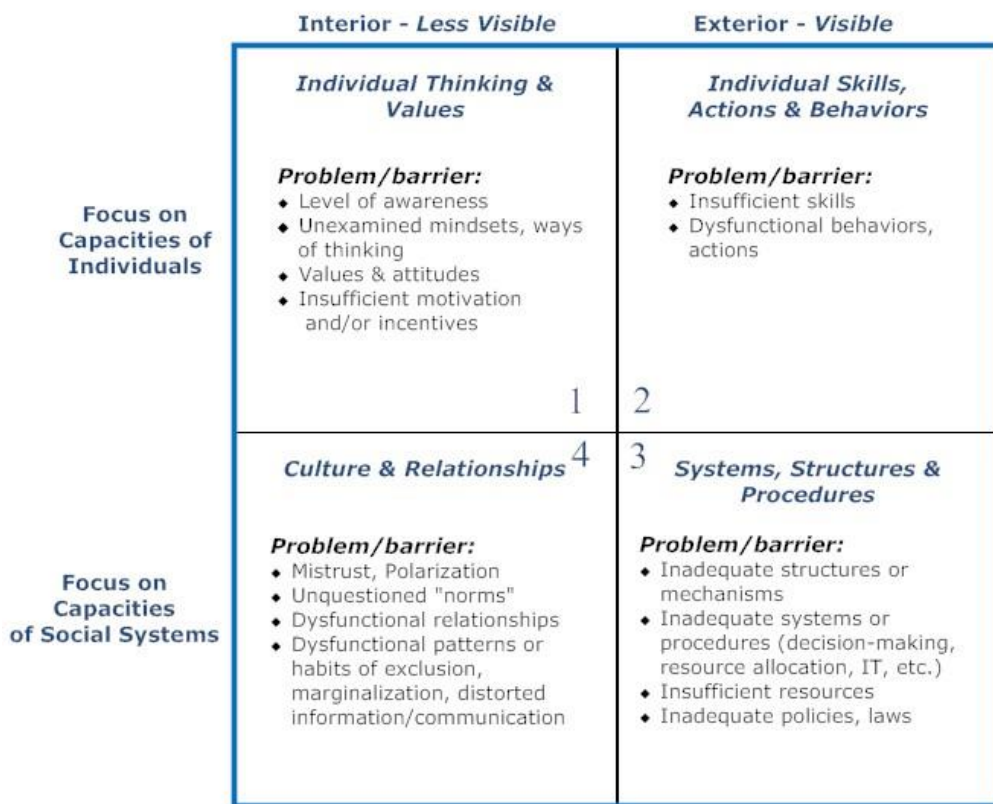
While providing training programs that focus on increasing knowledge and awareness and strengthening *individual* skills and behaviors may be necessary, we believe this will be insufficient for achieving *systemic capacity* required. Many of the issues contributing to current problems of effectiveness in Government are the result of weak or missing capacities not only within individuals but also within other aspects of the broader system. We believe it is important to locate the specific purpose and focus of training within a broader framework of capacity development that identifies four dimensions that influence the level of capacity an institution or initiative may have for achieving its purpose. Consider the following graphic where the vertical axis distinguishes between a focus on the capacities of an individual and the capacities of a social system and the horizontal axis distinguishes between those changes that are internal (subjective and less visible) to the individual or system versus those that are external (objective and more visible). Using these four dimensions can help identify more precisely important leverage points where capacities may be weak or missing<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> From <http://d3associates.net/services-we-offer/training-capacity-development>



### Building Capacities: A Four-Quadrant Perspective



Effective capacity building in this case will require focusing attention on a combination of factors across the different quadrants. For example:

- **Quadrant 1 – individual level/internal:** There is a need to focus on raising awareness, increasing knowledge and making accessible knowledge that has been gathered in various assessments, shifting current mindsets that privilege public (national) interest over self interest.
- **Quadrant 2 – individual level/exterior:** In addition to motivation, awareness, and mindsets, there is a need to strengthen specific skills and reinforce appropriate behaviors and actions. In the scope of this review relevant skills include communication, conflict transformation, as well as skills in the design and facilitation of evidence-based goal setting and planning, consultation processes, dialogue processes, and other civic engagement methodologies. Capacities related to leadership styles and approaches are also very important and addressed separately below.
- **Quadrant 3 – system&group level/internal:** In addition to developing the necessary knowledge, attitudes, motivation and competencies indicated in the upper quadrants, effectiveness within the system will also require strengthening current structures and mechanisms as well as possibly developing new ones. Capacity building here would focus on strengthening the institutional capacities required for effective policy formation, coordinated evidence-based planning across ministries, etc. An example of work in this quadrant would be the need for greater clarity on the structures and terms of reference of Kolaborativo and the

ESCC. Many of the recommendations from the Transparency International report regarding institutional integrity would also fall into this quadrant.

- **Quadrant 4 – system&group level/exterior:** Finally, this quadrant places attention on the different dysfunctional patterns of interaction and divided relationships that are contributing to a culture of fear and distrust. Capacity building efforts needed in this quadrant refer to processes that can transform these patterns of interaction and build trust between individuals and groups and promote a culture where difference and healthy expressions of conflict favor rather than impede effectiveness. Dialogue processes, when done effectively, can contribute significantly to these transformations.

## Leadership Development

Whether it is in the private or public sector, effective leadership is the critical success factor for any institution. The current conditions in Curacao have created an acute need for rapid leadership development. This goes beyond the need for simple “skills training,” and it includes the necessary capacity to conduct systems thinking, culture-change endeavors, and flexible problem-solving in times of crisis, complexity, and rapid change.

It is recommended that current leaders and identified high-potential future leaders gain access to evidence-based coaching programs and resources that are both consistent with DD and that support the UNDP output areas. This would provide the behavioral framework for adapting higher-order competencies among leaders required to lead through challenging times. Specifically, a customized leadership development program that addresses the most prominently identified barriers to change would provide the greatest potential for breaking the gridlock of the barriers. It is recommended that each of the modules in the program address one of the five core issues, for example:

1. Developing the knowledge and skills to effectively strategize, plan, and coordinate large-scale change efforts;
2. Establishing equitable and effective processes and systems for the recruitment, selection, and retention of staff;
3. Establishing a commitment to empowering people in the work-related planning and decision-making that brings their greatest contributions to the forefront;
4. Learning how to avoid short-cuts in thinking that prevent adequate reflection, consideration, and decision-making around critical priorities; and
5. Working to create a culture of learning, on-going performance, and accountability.

By addressing the most urgent challenges of Curacao’s leaders, participation in a program like this includes a critical set of benefits that can deliver a virtuous cycle of improved performance throughout the Government, including:

- *Accomplishing More with Less:* No Ministry is immune to the inverse relationship of shrinking resources and growing expectations. In the face of continuing competition and resource limitations, individuals and teams are increasingly being asked to accomplish more with less. Developing active, high-performing leaders can help Ministries to maximize the resources reflected in their human capital, making it easier to solve the equation of doing more with less.

- *The Multiplication of Benefits with the Integration of New Skills:* As leaders exercise their new competencies and related skills, those abilities naturally tend to proliferate across the Ministry. Leaders that successfully improve their responsiveness to the most challenging issues will inspire others to do the same. As this informal transfer of knowledge/skill influences others throughout the Ministry, the benefits of greater capacity and improved team performance multiply as well.
- *Increased Positive Conflict and Greater Team Cohesion:* The costs of negative, unresolved conflict take a significant toll on the capacity to communicate and collaborate effectively. However, productive conflict that results in increased creativity and greater team cohesion after positive resolution offers a catalyst for change. Leaders that encourage creative dissent (i.e., productive disagreement that results in better decisions, planning, and overall responses to opportunities) push past limited expectations. Because these areas of divergence are substantive, not personality driven, these are often inspiring challenges and they can be framed as a source of positive conflict and a pathway toward greater team cohesion.

### UNDP-programme: strengthening national capacities

Based on the above analysis there are 2 main areas where the UNDP can focus on strengthening national capacities:

- I. Collaborative Leadership (CL)
- II. Practical Project Management (PPM) and Result Based Management (RBM)

In all two areas we recommend including elements regarding so called 'soft' skills such as effective communication & decision-making and conflict management.

### Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative Leadership is a familiar concept within the UNDP and is applied in different countries in different continents, recent examples being Nepal and Kenya. Based on the analysis of the Inception Report and the scope mission, combined with the reflection on the executed trainings (*Report – The potential of Collaborative Leadership, nov 2013*), we perceive that Collaborative Leadership has the potential to address the pressing need for effective collaboration. Addressing alignment issues at three levels: individual, group/organizational and national/policy level.

A choice is made explicitly for relationship development, because of the earlier identified culture of distrust and fear. It is precisely this culture of fear and distrust that was also mentioned by a majority of the young professionals as one of the prime obstacles for effective implementation of plans and policies. By specifically highlighting the need for building healthy relationships, Collaborative Leadership creates a context for individual and collective reflection on the manner individuals relate to one another. However, this relationship building occurs always within the main objective of improving the ability to execute effectively, whilst considering the broader barriers in relation to systems, structures and procedures (Quadrant 4).

The particular concept of collaboration, with its task-oriented nature is balanced by clear process-oriented competences as outlined in the section on the Collaborative Leadership Module (Report

CL, p.7). Collaborative Leadership responds to the capacity building objectives of the UNDP project by focusing on the following target groups and actors:

1. The separate and joint internal capacity building of UNDP staff, Working Groups, project board and other relevant stakeholders within the UNDP project.
2. Capacity building for the successful realisation (and collaborations) of the Project Outputs; National Development Plan, DevInfo, Social Cohesion and Donor Mobilization. Within government as well as private sector, civil society and media.
3. Capacity building of governmental personnel, responding to the low investment in human resources and training budgets

We recommend that the trainings in Collaborative Leadership within the UNDP project have the following approach:

- *Action-oriented.* Both in the delivery of the trainings and the follow-up of the trainings it is important to have a clear emphasis on action (learning by doing). By showing results (quick wins) the trainings will maintain the current ‘momentum’ that the project has created.
- *Sustainable.* The trainings in Collaborative Leadership need to promote the local ownership of the people in Curacao, and thereby ensure the sustainability of any capacity building that takes place. This can be done by truly responding to the (learning) needs of the different target groups and the formation of local trainers equipped to co-facilitate the trainings. Youth Leaders have proven an inspiring agent as local trainers.
- *Holistic approach.* If required trainings in Collaborative Leadership need to be complemented with additional capacity building in *Project Management* or *Result Based Management* which aids in the ability for effective implementation.

### **Practical Project Management and Result Based Management**

In order to further address the ‘ability to execute’ we recommend that Collaborative Leadership goes hand in hand with capacity development in the area of Practical Project Management (PPM) and Result Based Management (RBM). Practical project management refers to the more operational aspects of transforming ideas and plans into concrete results, using modern methodologies like Scrum<sup>5</sup>, a more hands-on approach to project management. This will add to the individual level, as well as strengthening execution ability within and between ministries and on a broader level between government, private sector and civil society.

Result Based Management (RBM) will strengthen the abilities for more evidence-based planning. RBM is a program/project life-cycle approach to improve management effectiveness and accountability by defining realistic expected results and targets, monitoring progress toward the achievement of expected results and targets, integrating lessons learned into management decisions, and reporting on performance. RBM helps to ensure accountability by offering a process and structure to formulate

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<sup>5</sup> Scrum: modern and hands-on method for product development, based on multiple small teams working in an intensive and interdependent manner. Scrum employs real-time decision-making processes based on actual events and information.

results and to manage for their achievement. It focuses time and resources on the achievement of key results in a more sustainable manner.

*By building abilities in both Practical Project Management and Result Based Management the UNDP-project will **catalyze** the current initiative of the **Long Term Economic Strategy (LTES) implementation process**.*

## Strengthening Mechanisms of Tripartite Engagement

If the Government expresses interest in having the UNDP explore opportunities for strengthening the structures and capacities of Kolaborativo and/or the ESCC, this could be taken up in tandem with other DD initiatives that UNDP supports. Specifically, there is a need to establish greater clarity between these two structures in terms of their respective mandates and terms of reference in order to avoid redundancies and maximize synergy. At this time, it is not possible to make more specific recommendations.

## Dealing with the Issue of Excessive Bureaucracy around Permits

In addition to taking a DD approach for establishing and promoting a NDP/CCC as addressed previously, there was some interest and exploration in how DD might also help address more specific issues in Curacao. The issue of permits and the current bureaucracy that is impeding progress on many levels was cited as an important issue, that if effectively addressed through DD, would serve as a positive demonstration of what can be accomplished through effective conversation and collaboration across the different institutions and sectors. While this issue was named as one interesting opportunity for applying DD, it was not possible to explore what this would mean and whom it would involve during the scoping mission. If there is interest in pursuing this option as part of the recommendations the UNDP moves forward, it will be necessary to begin a mapping process to identify more clearly the issues and the set of stakeholders that would have to be involved in designing a DD process for addressing this issue.

## Approximate Timeline for Recommendations

The table below offers very tentative approximations of the timing of each of the different recommendations mentioned above. Whether and how the different recommendations are taken up will depend on the Government showing clear interest and commitment to these initiatives as well as the capacity to follow through. Once given the green light to move forward, further work and conversation will be required to flush out more detailed designs for the chosen initiatives.

|   | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | June | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>National Development Plan/CCC</b>            |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 1. Contract team to draft                       |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 2. Integrate existing docs                      |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 3. Ministry workshops                           |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 4. Senior leadership retreat                    |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 5. Public engagement                            |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| a. Design of materials and event                |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| b. Training of dialogue practitioners           |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| c. Implementation – community forums            |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|   |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <b>Curacao Champions (monitoring mechanism)</b> |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 1. Identify individuals                         |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 2. Design 2-day retreat                         |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 3. Implement 2-day retreat                      |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 4. Follow-up if green light to proceed          |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|   |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <b>Large Scale Deliberation Experiment</b>      |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 1. Learning journey to observe process          |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 2. Decision to proceed / Issue selection        |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 3. Outreach & Preparation                       |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 4. Deliberation event                           |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|   |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| <b>Capacity Building Efforts</b>                |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 1. Identification of interest/opportunity       |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 2. Design of capacity building initiative       |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 3. Implementation                               |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |

## Annex 1: List of Stakeholders Consulted

### Political Party/Parliament

- Mr. Glenn Sulvaran –Fraction leader/Independent in Parliament
- Mr. Gerrit Schotte – Fraction leader MFK/Parliamentarian
- Mrs. Monique Felida – Parliamentarian for MFK
- Mr. Pik Pisas - Parliamentarian for MFK

### Government

- Prime Minister/Minister of Education – Mr. Ivar Asjes (Pueblo Soberano)
- Minister of Infrastructure (VVPR) - Mr. Earl Balborda (Partido Nashonal di Pueblo)
- Minister of Economics (MEO) – Mr. Stanley Palm (PAIS)
- Secretary General of General Affairs – mrs. Stella van Rijn
- Secretary General of Finance – Mr. Ivan Kuster
- Secretary General of Economics (ad-interim)– Mrs. Vanessa Tore
- Secretary General of BPD (ad-interim) – Mrs. Celeste Johannes
- Ministry of Economic Dev. – director policy department Mr. Luelo Girigorie
- Ministry of Economic Dev. – director Economic development & Innovation Division – Mrs. Zulaika Mook
- Policy Department General Affairs – Mrs. Marion Schroen

### Institutions/Organization

- Central Bank of Curacao and St. Maarten – Mr. Emsley Tromp
- SOAB – Mr. Geomaly Martis
- Chamber of Commerce – Mr. John Jacobs & Ivan Moreno
- USONA – Mrs. Paloma Abad

### Kolaboratovo (tripartite)

- Chamber of Commerce – Mr. Billy Jonckheer
- Chamber of Commerce – Mr. Ivan Moreno
- VBC – Mr. Bas Kooyman
- VBC – Mr. Joop Kuster
- Trade Union – Pablo Zimmerman
- SSK – Alcides Cova
- CTGC – Kenneth Valpoort
- Logistic Hub – Mr. Eric Smeulders

### Civil Society

- Amigu di Tera – Mrs. Yvette Raveneau
- Amigu di Tera/Defensa Ambiental – Mr. Lloyd Narain
- Boz di Hubentut/Dedima/Museo Tula – Mrs. Jeanne Henriquez



- Fundashon Nos Tei Pa Otro – Mrs. Conny Duncan
- Unidat di Bario – Mr. Juan Bute
- Aliansa – Mrs. Galya Stroop
- Fundashon Muhe Uniforma I Arma – Mrs. Juriola Poulina Bitorina
- Aliansa – Mrs. Solangela Winklaar
- Aliansa – Mrs. Mavis Frans

**Education Field**

- Inspection of Education – Mrs. Rubya Bitorina (former Minister of Education)
- KPEK – Mr. Errol Cova
- Ministry of Education – Mrs Sahayra Braun Nisbet & Su Girigorie
- Schoolboard VPCO – Mrs. Dorine Lorier
- Public Schoolboard