

Chapter 8: Guyana

Una M. Paul, Milton Bernard, Reuben Dash & Evelyn Hamilton

Population (1988): 756,000

Population Growth Rate (1980-88): 0.8% per annum

Land Area: 214,970 square kilometres

Capital: Georgetown

GNP per Capita (1988): US\$390

Year of Independence: 1966

Primary School Enrolment Rate (1988): 100%

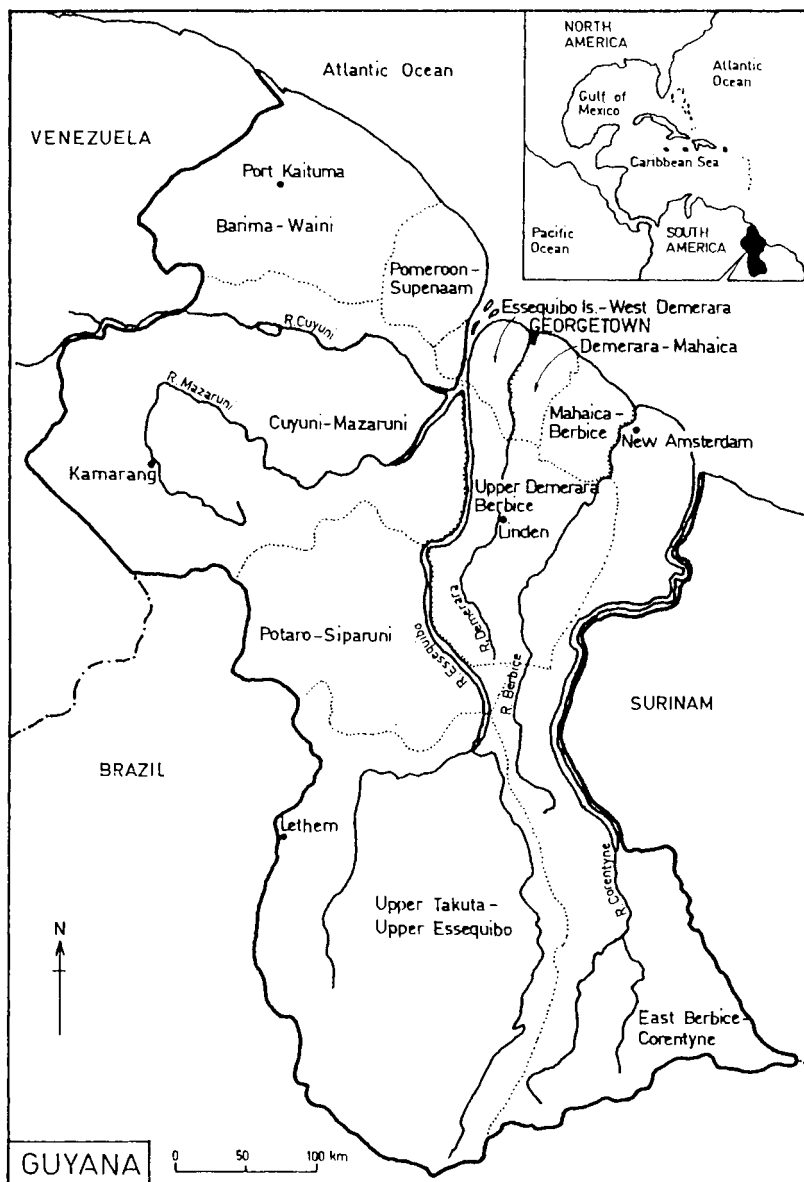
Human Development Index (1987): 0.808

Guyana forms part of the northern Guiana shield, which extends from Suriname through Guyana to the eastern portion of Venezuela. The landscape is dominated by an extensive network of rivers which gives its name to the region. Guiana comes from an Amerindian word meaning 'land of many waters.'

The country was originally inhabited by various Amerindian tribes, and archaeological evidence has dated settlements to ancient times. Many European explorers visited this part of South America during the 16th and 17th centuries. However the first Europeans to colonise the Guianas were the Dutch, who came in the early 16th century and brought African slaves to work on the plantations.

During the late 18th and early 19th centuries the territory changed hands many times according to the vicissitudes of European geopolitics. In 1780 the British captured the territory, but three years later were expelled by the French. In 1796 parts of the territory were again surrendered to the British, but in 1802 these parts were returned to the Dutch. Finally, in 1814 the three main sections of the territory were ceded to Great Britain. They were later united as British Guiana.

The colony at this time specialised in the production of cane sugar and cotton using black slave labour. With the abolition of slavery in 1833, the African slaves established themselves as peasant farmers on government land and abandoned the sugar estates. In an unsuccessful



attempt to solve the ensuing labour shortage, the colonists imported first Chinese and Portuguese Madeiran and later Indian indentured labourers. Descendants of the Indian labourers now form about 51 per cent of the total population. Descendants of the Africans form about 38 per cent, while the remainder are mainly descendants of the Chinese, Europeans and Amerindians.

Guyana's official language is English, and although the country is situated on the South American coast, it has much closer political and cultural ties with other English-speaking Caribbean countries than with its Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking neighbours. The main religions are Christianity, Hinduism and Islam, though Guyana is officially a secular state. The population growth rate declined from over 3.0 per cent in 1960 to about 0.8 per cent in the 1980s. This reflected a high level of emigration and a fall in the birth rate.

The economy depends heavily on sugar, bauxite and rice. While it is widely acknowledged that the country is endowed with extensive minerals and forests, these resources remain largely unexplored because of lack of infrastructure. Since the 1970s the country has experienced prolonged and serious economic difficulty. This started with the sharp increase in oil prices, and was exacerbated by a fall in the prices of key exports. Guyana's per capita income is now among the lowest of the countries of the Western Hemisphere.

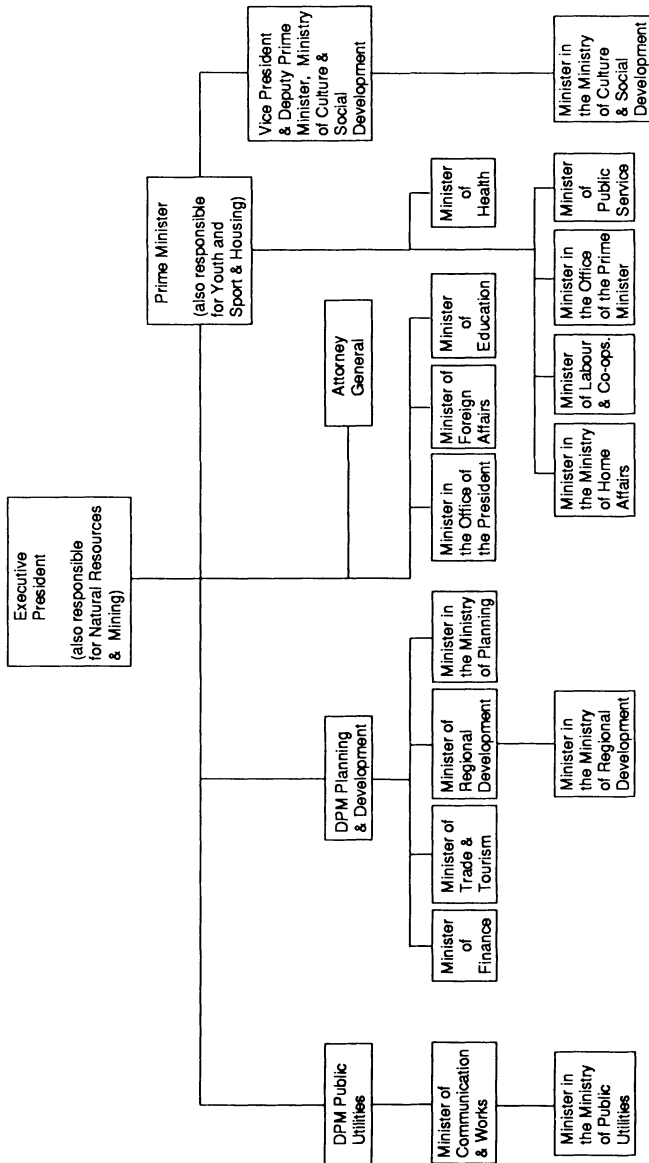
1. Political and Administrative Framework

Guyana gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1966, and now has a parliamentary government headed by an Executive President. The 65 members of the National Assembly are elected on a system of proportional representation.

The President and Prime Minister, and the Vice-President and Deputy Prime Ministers, are responsible for broad areas of policy and for clusters of related Ministries (Figure 8.1). The structure of each cluster varies with the expertise and work load of the various political leaders, and with the perceived importance of the particular sectors. For example a Deputy Prime Ministership for Public Utilities was recently created to deal with the rehabilitation of national infrastructure. The initiative pulled together a cluster of related ministries, public companies and nationalised corporations.

Ministers are chosen by the President from the leading political figures in Parliament, but also include an unspecified number of non-elected Ministers generally recruited from the professions and the public service. Non-elected Ministers have full executive authority with-

Figure 8.1: The Ministerial Structure, Guyana (1989)



in their departments, but are not allowed to vote in Parliament even though they may participate fully in all other Parliamentary business.

Education was originally placed in a cluster termed Social Infrastructure, but was moved after some years to a cluster termed Social Development in which it was the pre-eminent area of ministerial responsibility. Education is currently in the cluster led by the President himself, reflecting its high political priority. Ministers of Education have been at various times political appointments from the ranks of government Members of Parliament or non-elected technocrats.

There is a tendency in Guyana to create new ministries and to restructure the shape of government in response to the exigencies of political life and perceptions of priority. However, this has only affected education in so far as its linkages are concerned. At various times culture, youth and information have been appended to education. At the time of writing education has a single department Ministry, though it includes responsibility for child and welfare matters.

The ethnic, religious and ideological configuration of Guyana requires ministerial appointments to represent a careful blend of the racial and ideological elements in the People's National Congress, the ruling party since Independence. Ministers of Education have come from all the elements and configurations of this complexity. Since education provides a route to employment and professional enhancement, it is also important in Guyana that political appointments to the Ministry should be of people whose political records do not threaten other communities.

At the regional level education is the responsibility of the Regional Democratic Councils and their Chairmen, who supervise Regional Education Officers and teachers. These regional officers come within the political supervision of a Minister of Regional Development who, through his Permanent Secretary and secretariat, controls the budget, maintenance and construction. However, the Ministry of Education remains responsible for policy, instructional and curriculum matters. The Teaching Service Commission and the Ministry of Education are in charge of permanent appointments and personnel policy.

The Ministry of Regional Development has a generalist focus which cannot have the same framework as the specialist subject ministries. Consultation and resolution of conflict are thus very important aspects of the work of the Ministry of Education and its relationship with the Ministry of Regional Development.

2. The Education System

Despite the many problems facing the education system, most children between the ages of four and 14 receive some type of schooling. Education is provided at all levels from nursery to university. In addition, adult education is offered by the Adult Education Association (AEA) and by the Institute of Adult & Continuing Education (IACE) of the University of Guyana.

Pupils start primary education at the age of five years and nine months, and continue for six years. Education at this level is compulsory. In 1988 there were 118,000 primary school pupils. At the end of the primary cycle, all pupils are eligible to write the Secondary Schools Entrance Examination, which allocates them to various types of secondary programme according to their performance.

Secondary education is offered in the secondary departments of primary schools, in community high schools, and in general secondary schools. In 1988 there were 72,100 secondary students. The secondary departments of primary schools, together with the community high schools, provide academic and prevocational training. Students are given training in arts, natural science, social science, and industrial arts & crafts. The general secondary schools have a more academic curriculum, at the end of which students write the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) examinations and the General Certificate of Education (London) Ordinary Level examination (GCE 'O' Level). Outstanding students are selected to study for the GCE Advanced Level examination.

Technical and vocational training is offered in two technical institutes, an industrial training centre, two schools of home economics, and a school of agriculture. These institutions cover a wide range of courses and levels.

Guyana also has a teacher training programme, which has several strands. In-service training is of two years' duration for nursery and primary teachers, while pre-service training lasts two years for primary teachers and three years for secondary teachers. Advanced professional training is provided in the Faculty of Education at the University of Guyana. In-service programmes are supplemented by on-the-job training via workshops and seminars sponsored by the support units of the Ministry of Education. The National Centre for Educational Resource Development (NCERD) is responsible for all in-service teacher education programmes.

Over the past two decades the priorities of the Ministry of Education have focused on equality of access and a reduction of the cost of education to the users. The present Education Policy stresses the need to:

- carry out an intensive and major overhaul of the managerial practices within the system;
- maintain and intensify emphasis on equality of access to education;
- review the curriculum in all major disciplines for all levels, and where necessary publish teacher guides and student materials; and
- overhaul the approach to the management of human resources.

Since 1976, education has been provided free of charge from nursery to university level. As part of this policy the government has also provided basic textbooks and other learning materials for nursery, primary and secondary levels. However, the proportion of the budget devoted to education fell from 9.8 per cent in 1985 to 4.1 per cent in 1989. This decline reflected an increase in other areas of government expenditure, the removal of the Department of Social Development & Culture into a separate ministry, and reduction in the number of capital investment projects.

3. The Ministry of Education

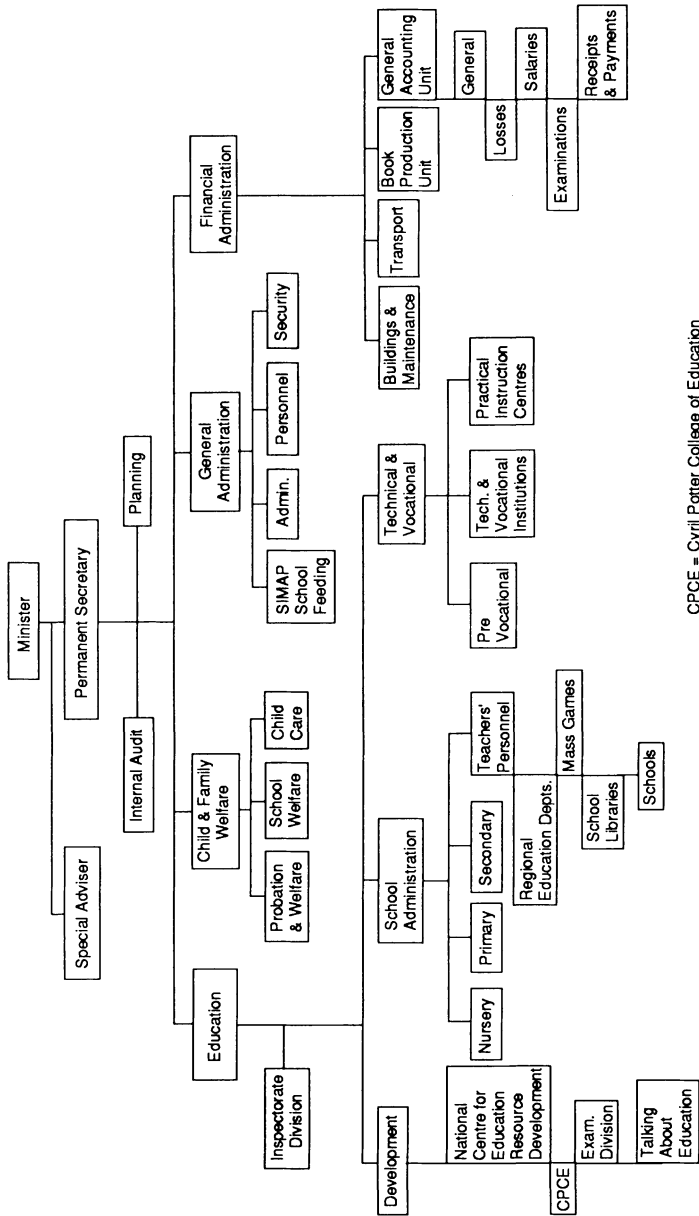
(a) Organisation

The Ministry of Education was restructured in 1989 as a result of re-assignment and the addition of responsibilities. The new structure is shown in Figure 8.2, which shows four main divisions entitled Education, Child & Family Welfare, General Administration, and Financial Administration.

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry leads the Management Team, which is responsible among other tasks for formulation, co-ordination and implementation of plans. The Permanent Secretary is assisted by two Deputy Permanent Secretaries, one Education Planning Officer and one Field Auditor. The Deputy Permanent Secretary (Administration) supervises all personnel matters, general administration services, security, and the Social Impact Amelioration Programme (SIMAP). The Deputy Permanent Secretary (Finance) oversees all matters related to finance, materials, distribution, stock control, transport, buildings, and maintenance. The Education Planning Officer heads the Planning Unit and is responsible for education plans, research and evaluation. Finally, the Field Auditor heads the Internal Audit Section and ensures that accounting systems are in place.

In the Education Division, the Chief Education Officer (CEO) has

Figure 8.2: The Ministry of Education, Guyana (1989)



CPE = Cyril Potter College of Education
SIMAP = Social Impact Amelioration Programme

overall responsibility for professional matters throughout the system. He is assisted by three Deputy Chief Education Officers (DCEOs). The DCEO (Development) is responsible for the Cyril Potter College of Education and the National Centre for Educational Resource Development, and for examinations and educational innovation. The DCEO (Administration) oversees management of the school system, and supervises the Assistant Chief Education Officers (ACEOs) responsible for nursery, primary and secondary schools. The DCEO (Technical) is in charge of prevocational, vocational and technical education. Finally, the Education Division also contains the Inspectorate. It is headed by an ACEO (Inspections), who is accountable to the Chief Education Officer.

The Child & Family Welfare Division is responsible for mobilising and utilising the social work resources of the Ministry of Education within an integrated framework. It aims to foster a process of personal development and education for vulnerable children, and to ensure their participation in lives which are meaningful and valuable. The Division, which is coordinated by an Administrative Head, comprises three services each of which is controlled by a chief officer. These components are:

- the Probation & Welfare Service, which places special emphasis on cases where family relationships cause problems;
- the School Welfare Service, which concentrates on problems of school attendance; and
- the Child Care Service, which focuses on children needing care and protection, and on substance abuse.

(b) Centralisation/Decentralisation

As noted above, some of the authority which formerly resided at the central Ministry has been transferred to Regional Democratic Councils and their Regional Education Departments. The main objectives of regionalisation were to promote involvement of communities in the management of education, and to allow educational institutions to respond more positively and rapidly to the needs of communities. The country has 11 Regional Education Departments of varying sizes. Table 8.1 indicates the number of supervisory officers attached to each Department.

Table 8.1: Supervisory Officers in Regional Education Departments, Guyana (1989)

Region	Regional Education Officer	Education Officer	Education Supervisor	Schools Welfare Officer	Total
Barima-Waini	1	-	3	1	5
Pomeroon-Supenaam	1	2	5	1	9
Essequibo Is.-West Demerara	1	3	4	2	10
Demerara-Mahaica	1	2	5	2	10
Mahaica-Berbice	1	2	3	1	7
East Berbice-Corentyne	1	3	6	3	13
Cuyuni-Mazaruni	1	1	2	2	6
Potaro-Siparuni	1	1	1	1	4
Upper Takuta-Upper Essequibo	1	1	2	1	5
Upper Demerara-Berbice	1	2	2	2	7
Georgetown	1	3	5	3	12

In the regionalised system, the central Ministry retains responsibility for overall educational policies, and coordinates, monitors and evaluates the provision of educational services. This is achieved through consultation, advice, training, and supervision. The Ministry also remains responsible for examinations, curriculum, teacher training, educational planning, and macro-level research.

On the other hand the Regional Administrations are responsible for implementation of policies laid out by the Ministry, delivery of education in the regions, and provision of facilities. The staff of the regions include Regional Education Officers, Education Officers, Education Supervisors, and Schools Welfare Officers.

The Regional Education Officers (REOs) are members of the Education & Training Sub-Committees of the Regional Democratic Councils, and are responsible to the Councils for education in their regions. This includes responsibility for:

- * identifying the educational needs of the region and, in consultation with the Regional Democratic Council, preparing and presenting plans to meet those needs;
- * identifying resources available within the region, and devising strategies to mobilise them;
- * implementing the plans, and ensuring that mechanisms are put into operation to monitor their execution;
- * promoting collaboration and cooperation with relevant agencies and institutions; and
- * preparing annual reports for submission to the Regional Democratic Council and the central Ministry.

Regions are required to provide and maintain school buildings including housing for teachers, and to secure land for school farms and playing fields. They must also provide transportation within the region for educational personnel, facilitate payment of teachers' salaries through regional sub-treasuries or other agencies, organise distribution of materials, maintain records on schools and teachers, and appoint certain categories of teachers.

In order to give substance to regionalisation, some of the statutory powers of the Chief Education Officer have been delegated to the Regional Education Officers. These include authority to:

- * open or close schools;
- * grant leave of absence to teachers;
- * transfer teachers within the region;
- * prepare annual confidential reports,
- * grant approval for exclusion of pupils from schools, and
- * ensure the inspection of schools.

Monthly meetings of all Regional Education Officers and Senior Professional Officers of the central Ministry allow for dissemination of information and for reporting and feedback. These meetings have greatly reduced the problems which would otherwise have arisen.

(c) Styles of Decision-Making

The nature of the political culture in Guyana, as well as the fact that the same political party has been in office since 1966, has eroded the traditional relationship between public servants and politicians. Several ministers indeed are more experienced in public administration than the public servants who advise them. Thus the decision-making system in the Ministry may be more accurately determined by the style of the Minister than by the size of the Ministry.

Generally speaking, Ministers of Education have been of two types. On the one hand are those who are ideologically strong and adopt a reductionist approach by emphasising a clear and limited set of priorities. On the other hand are technocrat Ministers recruited from the education profession, who tend to emphasise more complex analytic procedures and a more diffuse set of goals. With Ministers of the former type, public servants are expected merely to carry out given instructions. In the latter mode there is more opportunity for collective decision-making, and it is assumed that the information and perceptions emerging from such interaction will form part of the eventual policy of

the Ministry.

The present Minister of Education was recruited from the University via the public service. He has adopted a dual role, i.e. as spokesman for the system and as a technical manager. This creates some difficulties since the flow from the Minister's office may include technical directives which subvert the role of the technician at the upper and middle levels of the system. On the other hand, it blurs the distinction between professional and political decision-making.

4. Specialisation and Generalisation

During the 1970s, specialist supervisory officers were appointed to oversee the work of secondary school teachers. The subjects covered by these Specialist Education Officers were English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies (including History and Geography), Modern Languages, Industrial Arts, Home Economics, and Agricultural Science.

With the advent of regionalisation and its own supervisory structure, it was found impracticable to employ Specialist Education Officers for all these subjects in all regions. The officers were therefore required to become generalists and to supervise the entire programme from nursery to secondary levels.

However, in recent years an effort has been made in regions where the number and availability of supervisory personnel allow to give officers with the necessary orientation separate responsibility for specific levels. The system now evolving requires Regional Education Officers to have responsibility for all educational activities in their regions, but for Education Officers and Education Supervisors to have more specialised responsibility at nursery, primary or secondary levels for the implementation of programmes and activities in:

- the curriculum process,
- school organisation,
- physical facilities and equipment,
- school environment,
- student welfare, truancy and absenteeism,
- discipline and school tone,
- co-curricular activities, clubs and societies,
- school-community relations, and
- record-keeping.

The central Ministry also has officers who specialise in specific levels. In particular, separate Assistant Chief Education Officers have overall

responsibility respectively for nursery, primary and secondary schools across the regions.

Where specialist supervisory officers do not exist, Subject Committees have been established in each region for developmental work on each subject area. Subject Committees are made up of experienced teachers from clusters of schools. Committees for all subject areas in the curriculum have been established. The number of such committees in particular regions for given subjects depends on the number of clusters needed to service all the schools.

The Subject Committees focus on the appropriateness of subject objectives, content, teaching strategies, materials and evaluation procedures. Representatives are expected to share the findings of the Committees with school colleagues. Regional Subject Committees group representatives of the various Subject Committees within each region. Representatives of Regional Subject Committees form National Subject Committees for most subject areas. The National Subject Committees feed information to the centre, and make recommendations about the total curriculum.

The school Inspectors are also concerned with specialist subject areas. The Regional Supervisory Personnel mostly focus on the day-to-day implementation of school programmes, while the Inspectorate is more concerned with the extent to which the programmes and activities planned have been successfully implemented. The Inspectorate analyses and reports on the reasons for success or failure. The team is concerned with both formative and summative evaluation, and with recommendations for appropriate remedial action. The Inspectorate is also concerned with student performance at the various levels of the school system in relation to regional and national norms. The Inspectorate has subject specialists for each of the core curriculum areas, i.e. Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, as well as specialists in school organisation and management. The support units, located at the centre and concerned with the developmental aspects of the work of the Ministry of Education, are also specialised. These units include:

- the Education Planning Unit,
- the Teacher Training Institution,
- the Curriculum Development Unit,
- the Test Development Unit,
- the Learning Resource Centre,
- the Broadcasts to Schools Unit, and
- the Materials Production Unit.

The last five units are grouped within the National Centre for Educational Resource Development, which has a Director responsible for overall coordination. This grouping therefore permits collaboration and corroboration of efforts. The staff of these units are expected to have relevant specialised training.

Specialisation is also evident at the tertiary level. Institutions operating at this level include the Carnegie School of Home Economics, the Georgetown and New Amsterdam Technical Institutes, the Guyana Industrial Training Center, the Guyana School of Agriculture, and the University of Guyana. The School of Agriculture and the University are autonomous, but the other four are supervised by the Deputy Chief Education Officer (DCEO) with responsibility for technical and vocational education.

The DCEO (Administration) is responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the school system and the immediate supervision of the professional work of the Regional Education Officers. The DCEO (Development) has supervisory responsibility for the functioning of the development units, including the Teacher Training Institution. The Chief Education Officer oversees the activities of the three DCEOs.

Another support unit of the Ministry of Education is the Division of Child & Family Welfare, which has already been described. While the components of this Division are specialised, the key officers have a common background, and all have qualifications in Social Work. The activities of the components overlap, and joint programmes promote inter-relationships.

In summary, the officers who are immediately responsible for supervising the day-to-day work in schools, namely the Regional Supervisors, are generalists responsible for all aspects of the school programmes. However, most other officers in the support units of the Ministry are specialists. Systems exist to allow for the proper integration and coordination of activities and to facilitate collaboration in the implementation of programmes.

5. Responsibilities Shared and not Undertaken

Since 1976, with the exception of a few schools which offer secretarial, accountancy and computer training, all education institutions have been under government ownership and control. Participation of communities has been actively encouraged, but there are no private nursery, primary or secondary schools.

In spite of serious shortages of persons with the relevant skills, the Ministry of Education undertakes most planning, monitoring and

management of the system through its own establishment. However, some activities are undertaken by other bodies. For example on-the-job technical training is provided through work-study attachments in public and private firms; and the apprenticeship scheme is run by the Board of Industrial Training, which comes under the Ministry of Labour. The Ministry of Public Service organises overall training in the public service, and administers the Government of Guyana Awards Scheme for undergraduate and short courses. Finally, the National Data Management Authority processes examination results.

Because the government does not have sufficient personnel and facilities for every activity, some tasks are contracted to commercial enterprises. Primary school textbooks, for example, are prepared by the Ministry's Curriculum Development Unit but are printed by commercial enterprises both locally and abroad. At the middle and upper secondary levels demand does not justify printing and publishing for the Guyanese system alone, and books are therefore imported. The Ministry of Education also contracts out the distribution of text and exercise books, and the manufacture and distribution of biscuits for the supplementary school feeding programme.

Finally, many officers in the Ministry of Education share their expertise with other parts of government. Table 8.2 shows the most prominent external boards and committees of which Ministry officers are members. External activities can provide valuable linkages and may widen the perspectives of the officers concerned. However, the activities may also take a great deal of the time of officers who are already hard pressed.

6. The Culture of the Ministry

(a) Interpersonal Relations

Although the Ministry of Education is small by international standards, it is a large by Guyana's standards. The total number of employees, including teachers, exceeds 3,300. This means that there is a greater professional and personal distance between departments and levels than in other parts of the government. Nevertheless, it is true that in a Ministry of this size many professional and administrative officers have long personal contact and intimate knowledge of each others' backgrounds.

This provides an opportunity to ensure that information and the subtle details of policy can be communicated along informal channels. Also, relatively junior functionaries believe themselves entitled to access

Table 8.2: External Roles of Ministry of Education Officers, Guyana

<u>Designation</u>	<u>Activities</u>
Permanent Secretary	- Member, CXC and its Appointments, Finance and Administrative Committees - Member, University of Guyana Council and its Appointment, Finance and General Purposes Committees - Resource Person for CARNEID
Chief Education Officer	- Member, CXC - Member, University of Guyana Council and its Appointment Committee - Member, Guyana Management Institute Board - Member, Teaching Service Commission
DCEO (Development)	- Member of CXC
DCEO (Administration)	- Examiner for English A (CXC) - Member, National Equivalency Board
DCEO (Technical)	- Member, Guyana School of Agriculture Board of Governors
Director of NCERD	- Moderator of English A (CXC) - External Examiner in Linguistics and Faculty of Education Resource Person, University of Guyana - Chairman, UWI Caribbean Lexicography Project Committee
Education Planning Officer	- National Coordinator of CARNEID - Transport Advisory Board
Technical Adviser	- Assistant Examiner, CXC - Councilor, Georgetown Municipality - Second Vice Chairman, Conference on the Affairs & Status of Women of Guyana - Member, Caribbean Association of Home Economics - Member, National Relief Committee - Member, National Library Committee - Member, Agriculture Month Committee - Member, National Nutrition Committee
Head, Division of Child & Family Welfare	- Member, Education Sub-Committee on National Economic - Resource Person, Guyana National Service
Chief Schools Welfare Officer	- Member, Guyana National Council for Drug Education - Member, National Aids Committee - Member, National Rehabilitation & Education Committee, Ministry of Health
Chief Probation & Welfare Officer	- Member, National Coordinating Council on Drug Education
Chief Child Care Officer	- Secretary, National Coordinating Council on Drug Education

to all senior staff. It is not unusual for junior officers to seek redress from the Permanent Secretary or Minister if they believe their points of view have not been given adequate hearing or if they believe that they have information which should reach the top quickly.

Accessibility to top decision-makers is reinforced by the political culture which encourages Ministers in particular to generate and use opportunities for face-to-face contact with workers and the community. However, these networks make it easier to influence decision-makers in dis-information and character assassination. The networks may also lead to confusion when information becomes distorted by extensive informal repetition.

(b) Personal Impact

As in other small organisations, Guyana's Ministry of Education has considerable scope for personal impact. The ideas of the most subordinate officer can be filtered up to the highest level of decision-making, the Senior Policy & Management Group (SPMG), and may be critically examined and refined with a view to possible implementation.

However, these ideas have to be discussed at several levels before being presented to the SPMG. Ideas originating from a teacher or a regional officer would first be discussed among the region's Supervising Officers, and if found to have some merit would be raised at the monthly meetings of the School System Management Committee. The ideas would then be refined and submitted at one of the fortnightly meetings of the Education System Committee. Again, at this level, the ideas would be closely studied for possible modification before being presented to the SPMG.

Of course personal impact can cut both ways. A Supervising Officer with drive, enthusiasm and conscientiousness can motivate subordinates positively; but a lethargic and incompetent officer can have a negative impact. One or two Regional Education Officers may belong to the latter category, resulting in inefficient delivery of education in their regions. It is even possible that one or more of the Regional Education Supervisors may be more interested in the implementation of policies and strategies at the expense of the welfare and morale of teachers.

The Supervising Officers have an appreciable scope for initiative, within the broad parameters of policy, in their day-to-day functioning. They can interpret policies, introduce their own administrative and supervisory styles, permit experimentation, and create situations that encourage creativity and innovation.

The personnel in support units also enjoy much freedom in their specialised areas of responsibility. Their ideas may also be heard, and they too may influence policy decisions. The ideas of a Test Development Officer or a Curriculum Development Officer, for example, can be channelled to meetings of the SPMG, and these staff also have scope for creativity and innovation.

To limit the dangers of undesirable change, there is a system of monitoring and evaluation at all levels. At the regional level, monthly reports have to be submitted by School Administrators and School Supervisors. In turn, the Regional Education Officers provide monthly reports to the Ministry. In addition, the Assistant Chief Education Officers responsible for nursery, primary and secondary education regularly visit the various regions to monitor the work of the regional personnel. The staff of the Inspectorate also evaluate the programmes of schools.

(c) Absence of Individuals

In all ministries of the public service, senior and middle-level officers are entitled to six weeks' annual leave. During their absence, their subordinates act in their place. The organisation chart of the Ministry of Education (Figure 8.2) shows that there are deputies who can act for senior officers. Officers who are away from their desks for one week or more are supposed to prepare task sheets of work to be performed during their absence. These task sheets are discussed with the relevant officers before being submitted to the Permanent Secretary.

In addition to the Senior Policy-Making & Management Group meetings are monthly reporting sessions on developmental activities. These two systems help generate a team spirit, and familiarise officers with activities and developments.

7. International Linkages

(a) Aid

Interaction with aid donors creates enormous difficulties for the Ministry of Education. First, the preparation of projects can take a great deal of time. Second, the varying data requirements and project formats create the necessity for repetitive work; and third, aid agencies often seek to impose their priorities and values, albeit sometimes unwittingly.

The varying reporting and monitoring formats of the aid agencies,

particularly in circumstances of an already overstretched managerial team in the Ministry, create a counter-productive treadmill in which education managers are so pre-occupied with reporting schedules that they have little time for actual execution. What is even more damaging is that the amount of time spent implementing foreign projects, as opposed to routine and locally-funded activity, is often not commensurate with their importance.

This distortion of managerial time has a cyclical effect since very often it causes deterioration in the basic management of the Ministry, creating the need for more external assistance. The Ministry of Education in Guyana has tackled this problem very directly by establishing clear procedures which protect its senior staff from the pressures of response to external aid agencies. The Ministry also seeks to conduct its business within a framework of broad policies and specific projects which do not discriminate between aid and local programmes, and which do not discriminate between funded programmes and enhancement programmes requiring minimal financial inputs.

(b) Regional Organisations

Although Guyana is a member of many regional organisations, few are important to the work of the Ministry of Education. The notable exceptions are:

- the Caribbean Community & Common Market (CARICOM),
- the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC),
- the Caribbean Network of Educational Innovation for Development (CARNEID), and
- the Caribbean Regional Council for Adult Education (CARCAE).

These bodies provide an input which is especially important because the Ministry of Education and the system as a whole are small. However, they can also make major demands on the time of Ministry personnel.

CARICOM was formed in 1973 as a movement towards unity in the Caribbean. The organisation has a Standing Committee of Ministers of Education, which meets at least once every two years. The CXC is one of the most prominent CARICOM education bodies. Other education activities during the last decade have been mainly directed to improving access to external, regional or national training facilities, promoting the development of training materials for strengthening the information base, and strengthening specialised initiatives. Activities in the second of these areas have provided an important resource base for

Guyana's education system. Over the last five years a regional plan of action has been developed in technical and vocational education. Also, the foundation has been laid for a coordinated regional strategy for teaching Family Life Education in schools; and financial resources are being negotiated to enhance preventive drug education programmes.

Other CARICOM initiatives have included the establishment of the Consortium Graduate School of Social Sciences and the introduction of the Canada/CARICOM Award Scheme. The former provides training in social sciences and research into Caribbean issues; while the Award Scheme caters for training in management, financial administration, public administration, agriculture, industry and tourism.

The CXC prepares examinations for students completing five years of secondary education. CXC examinations have to a large extent replaced the London and Cambridge GCE 'O' Level examinations, and are much more relevant to Caribbean needs. There is general consensus that the CXC has achieved its major objectives.

CARNEID has also become a significant organisation. It assists Caribbean Unesco member states to relate education to national development by strengthening national capacities for innovation, proposing cooperation through exchange, and facilitating understanding of educational change and experimentation. CARNEID's priority areas focus on the contribution of education to work, cultural identity and community identity, and on the planning and management of education.

Finally, CARCAE is a non-government umbrella organisation of institutions from the non-Spanish-speaking Caribbean. It was established in 1978 to promote cooperation among adult education organisations, and to support research and information exchange. The Council has run a three-year certificate course in association with the University of Guyana and the University of the West Indies campus in Trinidad.

(c) Overseas Visitors and Consultants

Despite the shortage of skilled staff in certain areas, the Ministry of Education in Guyana does not rely heavily on overseas visitors or consultants. Most technical assistance has been in the forms of training or collaboration on special tasks outside the routine work programme.

The paramount objective for both types of assistance has been to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry to perform tasks on its own. A significant proportion of external consultants have been overseas-based Guyanese recruited through the United Nations Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programme. In 1988 and 1989, eight TOKTEN consultants assisted the Ministry (Table 8.3).

Table 8.3: Consultants Recruited through the TOKTEN Programme

Number of Persons	Area of Assistance	Duration of Consultancy
2	Development of a medium-term education plan (identification of possible programme areas)	(a) 2 weeks (b) 2 months
1	Workshop for elementary science and 'O' and 'A' Level biology teachers	2 months
1	Training teachers in guidance skills	2 weeks
2	Training teachers in remedial reading skills	2 weeks
1	Help in editing Skill Reinforcement Guides for primary school teachers	3 months
1	Workshop for teacher educators	2 months

The Organization for Cooperation in Overseas Development (OCOD) has also provided valuable assistance. OCOD is Canadian not-for-profit organisation. Personnel recruited by OCOD have worked with Guyanese counterparts on a series of two-week workshops for teachers. Table 8.4 lists the areas and the numbers of participants between 1976 and 1987. There was usually one Canadian and one Guyanese tutor for each subject area. Each batch of teachers usually attended for three successive years to complete their training. However, this programme was gradually phased out as more Guyanese tutors gained the competence to carry out the programmes without external assistance. Some consideration has been given to new areas, e.g. in distance teaching, but this is still in the planning stage.

The Ministry envisages the need for assistance in other areas in the near future. In 1990 the Ministry embarked on a major project in primary education. In order to strengthen the institutional capability of the Ministry a number of consultants may be recruited from overseas. The Ministry is also making formal links with the University of Manchester (UK) and the University of Ohio (USA) to establish a systematic network for exchanges and training.

(d) Management of Information

Linkages with external bodies have created a significant increase in requests for information on the education system. The Education Plan-

Table 8.4: Number of Participants by Subject Area in OCOD Workshops

Subjects	Number of 3 year cycles	Number of participants trained
Educational Administration	3	145
Industrial Arts	4	210
Reading	4	184
Health Education	3	125
Education Technology	2	48
Music Education	3	164
English as a Foreign Language	2	45
Special Education	2	64
Science	2	86
Mathematics (Upper)	2	72
Business Education	2	45
English Language	1	48
Guidance & Counselling	1	40
Technical/Vocational	1	35
Agriculture	1	52
Mathematics (Lower)	1	40
TOTAL		1,403

ning Unit (EPU) collects, tabulates and analyses data from all educational institutions in the country. This unit is also responsible for responding to requests for information from both local and external agencies. The unit has a small statistical section which was computerised in 1988.

While computerisation has allowed the unit to analyse data more quickly, responding to requests is time-consuming and sometimes problematic. Agencies often request analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, and sometimes ask about areas of special interest. This kind of enquiry cannot be dealt with by the non-professional staff of the statistics section. Sometimes even the professional staff of the EPU have to get assistance from outside the unit.

Another problem with some survey questionnaires is that the indicators requested by the agencies are not important in the Guyana education system. For example many questionnaires administered by Unesco request rural-urban comparisons. This type of analysis has little relevance to the Guyana situation. Moreover some agencies request data that are not collected on a regular basis by the unit and which therefore require a special survey.

A very rough analysis suggests that each year about nine person months is spent just on responding to requests from external agencies. In the context of the staff shortage in the unit and in the Ministry as a whole, this means that persons have to work beyond official working

hours to try to satisfy these requests by the suggested deadlines.

However, it must be recognised that the flow of information into the Ministry from international bodies exceeds the flow out of the system. This material is dealt with in different ways. If material is sent to the Ministry it is first seen by the Permanent Secretary who then ensures that it is dispatched to or circulated among particular officers. Reports that have direct implications for the Guyanese education sector may be discussed at specially-arranged meetings.

Some officials have their own links with organisations and receive reports and newsletters directly. There is at the moment no systematic way to deal with this material. It tends to depend on the individual person whether it is circulated to others or simply kept by the officer.

8. Conclusions

With a population of 756,000, Guyana is not among the smallest of the small states. However, it does face the same sorts of issues arising in other small territories. These include skill constraints, which in Guyana's case are exacerbated by emigration, management in a highly personalised environment, and an education system in which external linkages play a prominent role.

Among the important features of Guyana's development during the last two decades has been a major process of regionalisation. Even though the country is relatively small, for developmental and administrative purposes it has been divided into 11 regions (including Georgetown). The regionalisation programme aimed to promote local participation in development and to encourage education and other institutions to be more responsive to local needs. It has had major implications for the Ministry of Education, first because it has created further demands on the small pool of qualified manpower, and second because it has been necessary to work out a new division of labour between the central Ministry and the Regional Development Councils.

As noted above, in the early stages the regionalisation initiative also required many specialists to be redeployed as generalists. In this sense, the programme exacerbated the constraints on specialisation already felt acutely in the small system. However, recent years have brought a partial reversal of this pattern in regions which are large enough and which have suitably qualified personnel. Specialisation has also remained possible in many parts of the central Ministry, most notably in the specialised support units in the NCERD.

As Guyana's local manpower resources have matured, the system has become less dependent on external aid projects and consultants.

However it is very difficult, and perhaps not even desirable, for small systems to be totally self-sufficient. Regional and international bodies help Guyana to tap ideas and expertise from outside the country; and the TOKTEN programme has provided a channel through which Guyana can still make use of the expertise of nationals who are now resident outside the country.