Analysis of Volunteering in Guyana and Feasibility of Establishing a Guyana Volunteerism Support Platform

Dr. Eva Zaleski, National Volunteering Advisor
Mr. Rawle Small, Research Assistant

Sponsored by:

Ministry of Culture Youth & Sport

Consultative Group members:

- **Geraldine Maison-Halls, Guyana Community-Based Rehabilitation**
- **Goldie Scott, Volunteer Youth Corps**
- **Dr Ramesh Chander Sharma, Institute of Distance & Continuing Education, University of Guyana**
- **Murray Greenidge, Ministry of Education**

- **Ronald Harsawack**
- **Marlyn Ramjeet-Samad**
- **Tara Persaud, VSO Guyana**
- **Megumi Ito, United Nations Volunteers**
- **Carl Brandon, Ministry of Culture, Youth & Sport**

Validation Workshop Objectives

- Share and validate Study findings
- Foster engagement, ownership and collaboration among organizations and with the Consultative Group
- Devise Next Steps for moving ahead

PROBLEM ANALYSIS VS. STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACHES

**Problem solving
(deficit-based change)**

**Appreciative inquiry
(strength-based innovation)**

**"Felt Need"
Identify problem**

**"Valuing the best of what is"
Appreciate**

Conduct root cause analysis

Imagine (What might be)

Analyze Possible Solutions

**Dialogue and design
(What should be)**

**Develop action plan
(Treatment)**

Create (What will be)

**Basic assumption:
Problem to be solved**

**Basic assumption:
What we focus on becomes
our reality**

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY CYCLE

Discovery

Recognizing past achievements & learning from experience

Dream

Envisioning our shared future

Design

Planning together enabling conditions to realize the dream

Destiny

Doing, implementing, actualizing

Green land of Guyana, our heroes of yore
Both bondsmen and free, laid their bones on your shore…
Great land of Guyana, diverse through our strains
We are born of their sacrifice, heirs of their pains,
And ours is the glory, their eyes did not see-
One land of six peoples, united and free.
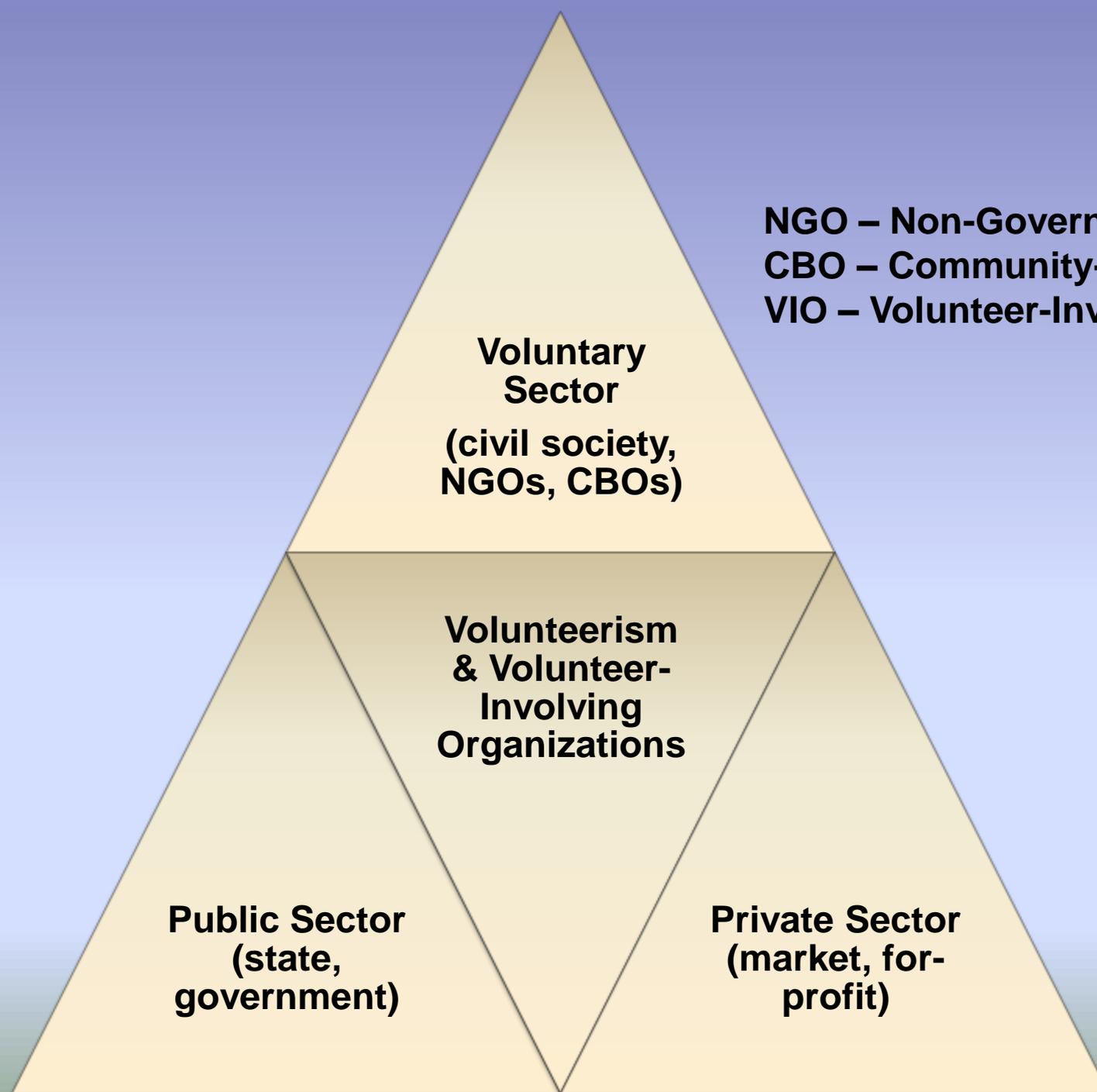
Guyana Volunteerism Support Platform

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
CBO – Community-Based Organization
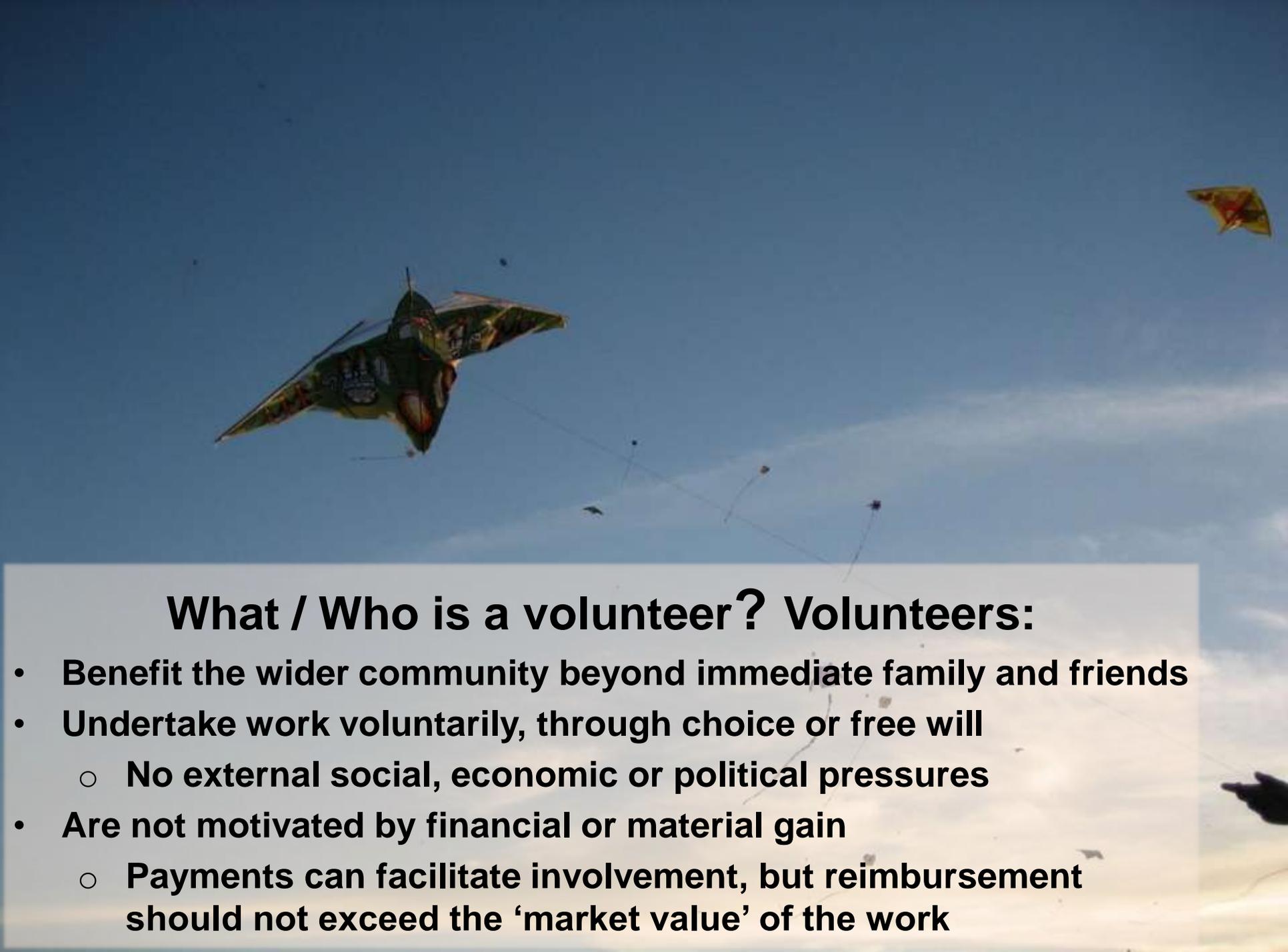VIO – Volunteer-Involving Organization

Voluntary Sector
(civil society, NGOs, CBOs)

Volunteerism & Volunteer-Involving Organizations

Public Sector (state, government)

Private Sector (market, for-profit)

What / Who is a volunteer? Volunteers:

- **Benefit the wider community beyond immediate family and friends**
- **Undertake work voluntarily, through choice or free will**
  - **No external social, economic or political pressures**
- **Are not motivated by financial or material gain**
  - **Payments can facilitate involvement, but reimbursement should not exceed the 'market value' of the work**

Volunteer Motivations in the Words of Volunteers:

- *"To know at the end of the day that whatever we do helps someone in need…we are our brother's keeper"*
- *"A lifestyle that we're involved in every day, doing your best in your own community"*
- *"Coming together you can do it yourself"*
- *"I love to help and can't stand injustice, so I try do my part"*

Voluntary Sector Contributions to Development Goals

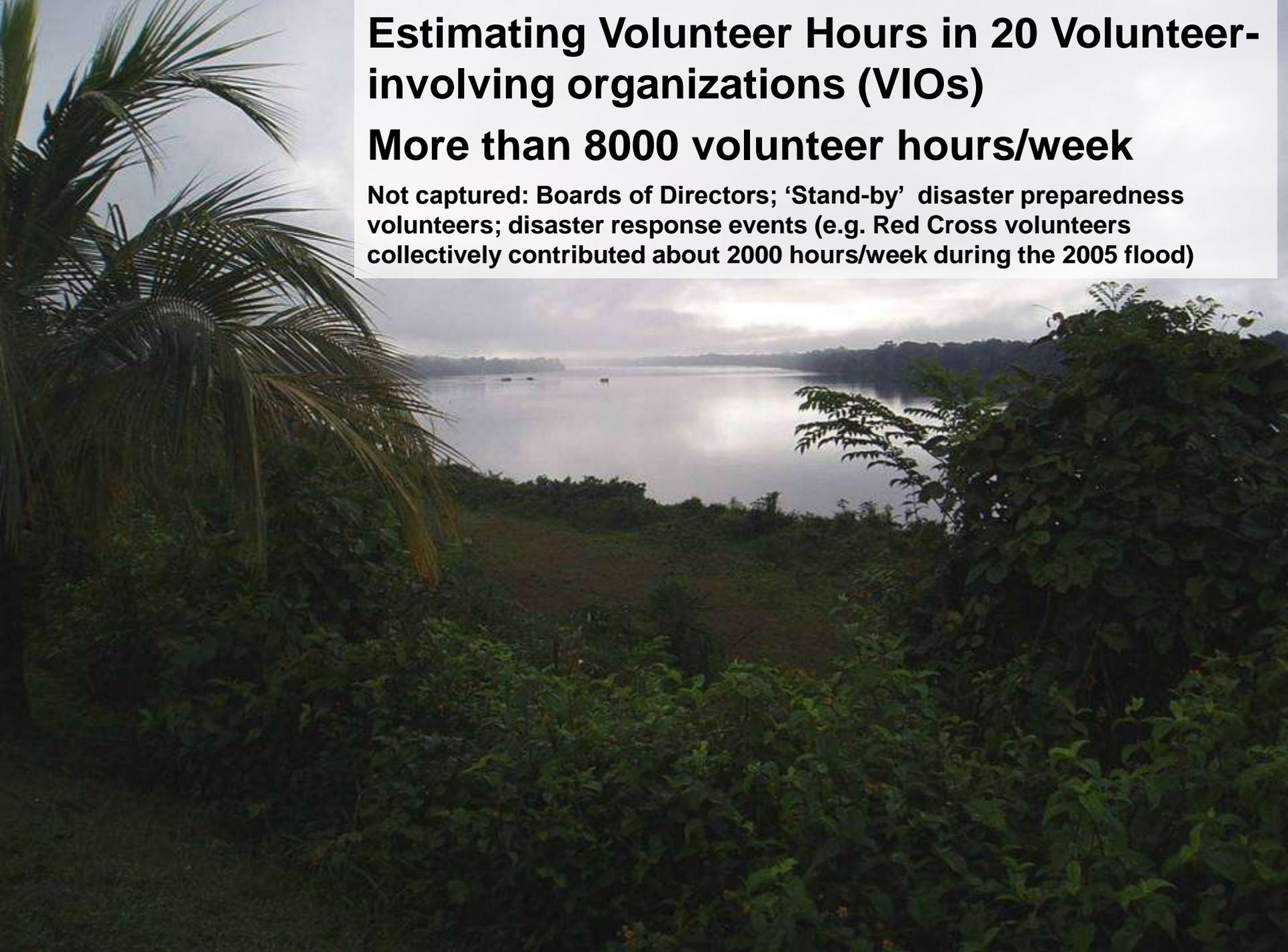| UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	Number of NGOs	
	Greater Georgetown Area (n=72)	Regional (n=38)
Goal 1: Target 1 - Eradicate extreme poverty	22	18
Goal 1: Target 2 - Eradicate extreme hunger	15	10
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education	20	19
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	30	19
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality	7	5
Goal 5: Improve maternal health	12	8
Goal 6: Target 1 - Combat HIV/AIDS	27	15
Goal 6: Target 2 - Combat malaria and other diseases	6	5
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	19	6
Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development	33	7

Voluntary Sector Contributions to Development Goals

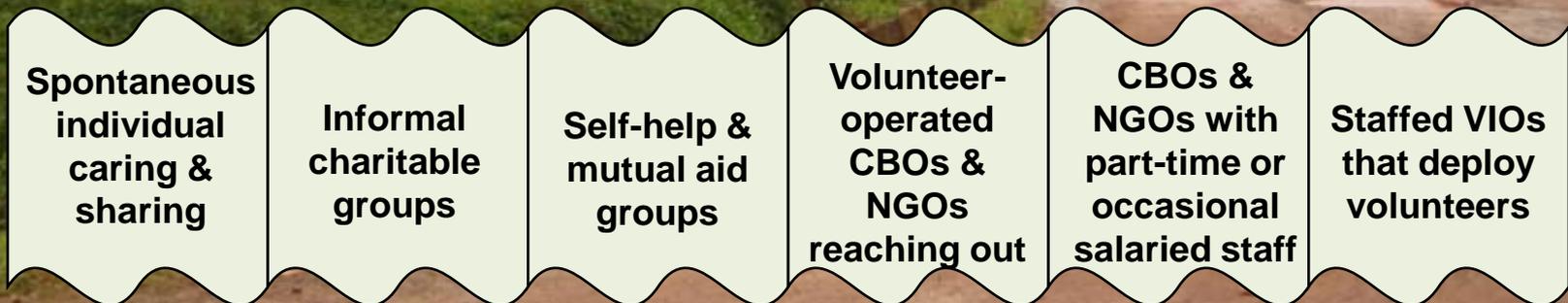| National Development Goals (NDGs)	Number of NGOs	
	Greater Georgetown Area (n=72)	Regional (n=38)
1) Job-generating economic growth	16	14
2) Stronger institutions and better governance	16	7
3) Investment in human capital, with emphasis on basic education and primary health	32	13
4) Physical infrastructure: safe water, sanitation services, roads, drainage, irrigation, housing	12	10
5) Improved social safety nets	30	17
6) Special intervention programs to address regional pockets of poverty	12	6

Estimating Volunteer Hours in 20 Volunteer-involving organizations (VIOs)

More than 8000 volunteer hours/week

Not captured: Boards of Directors; 'Stand-by' disaster preparedness volunteers; disaster response events (e.g. Red Cross volunteers collectively contributed about 2000 hours/week during the 2005 flood)

Continuum from Prosocial Relationships to Structured Volunteerism

| Spontaneous individual caring & sharing | Informal charitable groups | Self-help & mutual aid groups | Volunteer-operated CBOs & NGOs reaching out | CBOs & NGOs with part-time or occasional salaried staff | Staffed VIOs that deploy volunteers |

increasingly formal organizational structures →

We need a national body that looks out for the interests of the nation, beyond partisan, parochial, organizational, sectoral and other petty differences, sharing, visioning, and crossing boundaries.

Alexander Isaacs
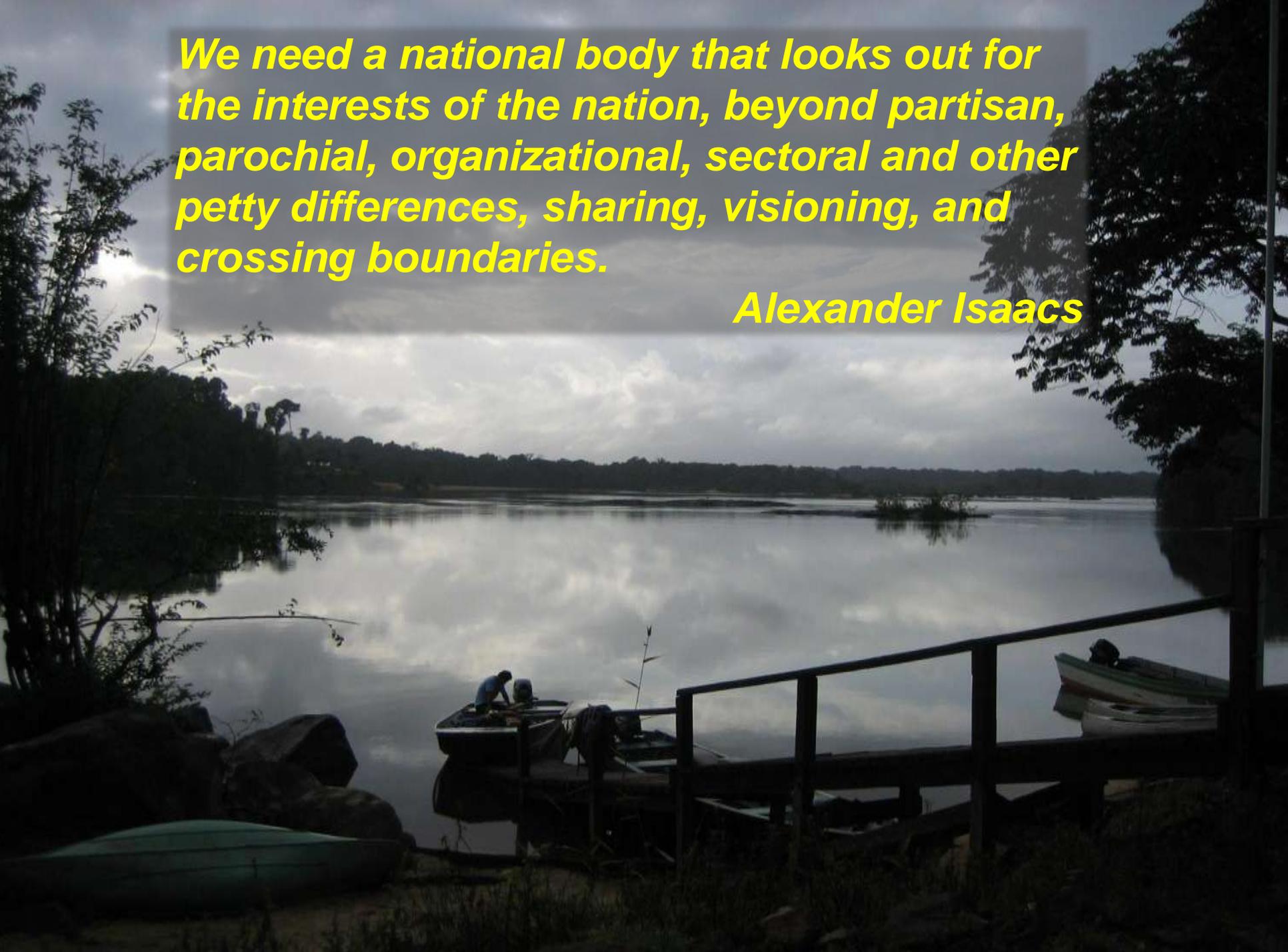
Dreams for a Platform

Shared ethical values

- a principled approach in a national environment that fosters and re-enforces ethical behaviour in organizations and individuals

Nation-building

-working and networking together for the social and economic health of the nation

Recognition and equal opportunity in volunteerism

- everyone can volunteer regardless of their station, and all are respected simply for being volunteers

Defining enabling features:

- Volunteer-enabling support structure, including a volunteer registry
- Expand volunteer engagement, and bring volunteerism into national youth policy
- Enable participation of hinterland residents as volunteers
- Coordinate training and development of volunteers, and accrediting of volunteer experience
- Enable to access to and sharing of physical, financial, human, technical resources for organizations and communities

Defining enabling features:

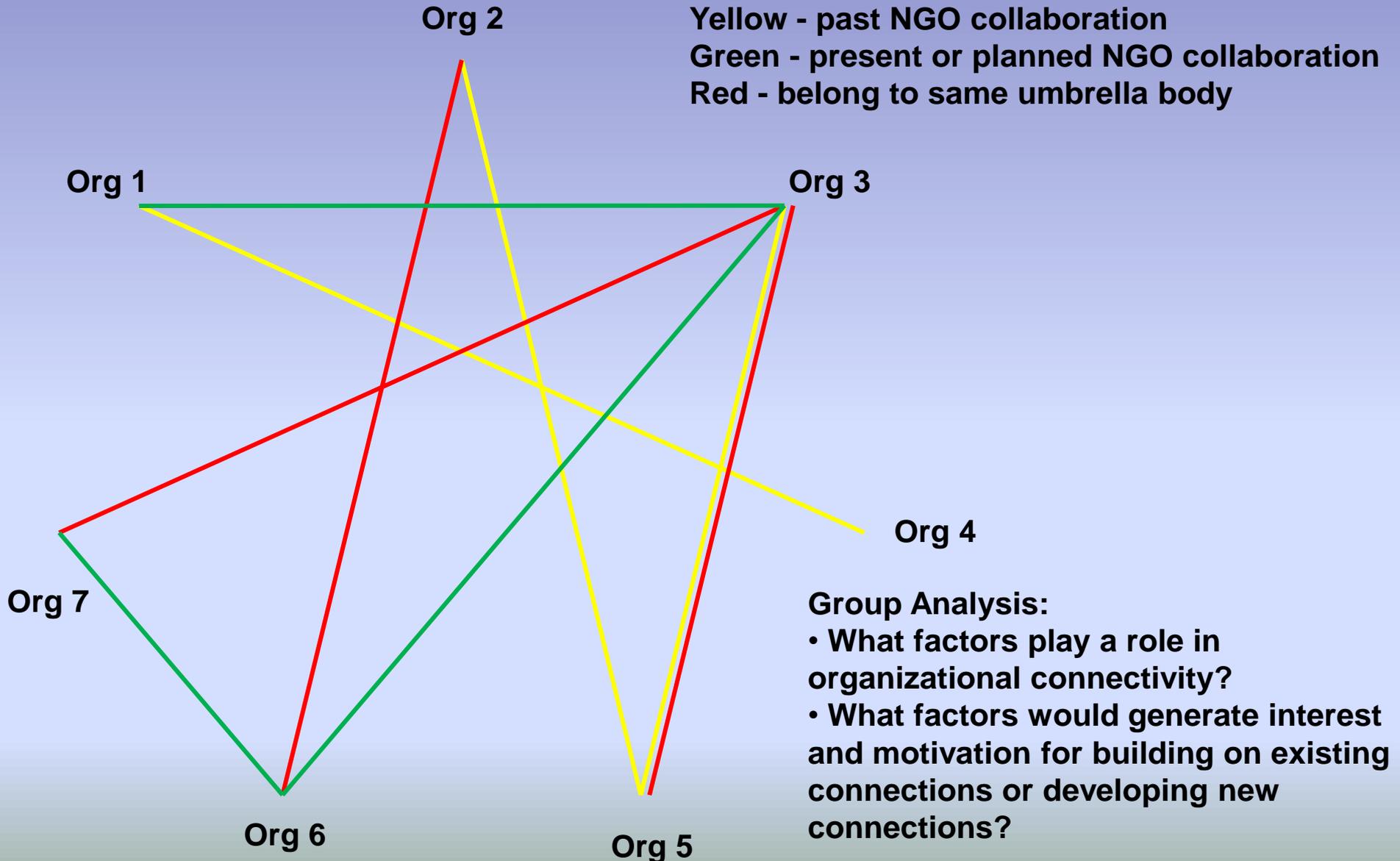- Address the underlying causes of poverty

- A voice for honest nonpartisan appraisal and advocacy

- Influential with Government and donors

- NGO resource, research, information, documentation and development centre

- NGO coordination centre, including strategic and program planning

- Advisory not regulatory, descriptive not prescriptive, facilitative not limiting

Comments or Questions?

Relationship Strings – Organizational Connectivity

Org 2

Org 1

Org 3

Org 4

Org 7

Org 6

Org 5

Yellow - past NGO collaboration
Green - present or planned NGO collaboration
Red - belong to same umbrella body

Group Analysis:
• What factors play a role in organizational connectivity?
• What factors would generate interest and motivation for building on existing connections or developing new connections?
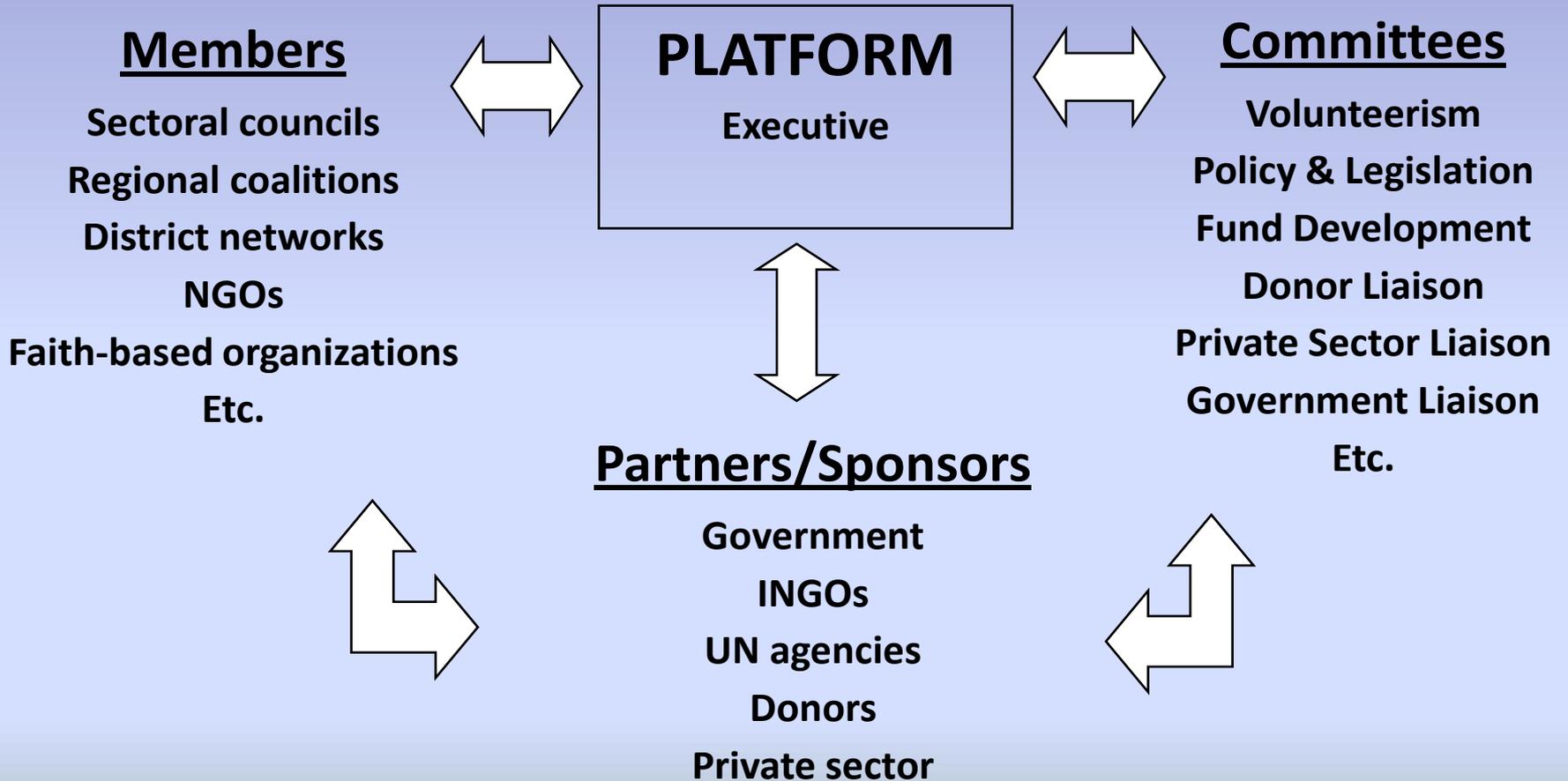
Homegrown Success Stories to Learn From and Build On - Invited Speakers

- **Leon Walcott, Council of Organizations for Persons with Disabilities**

- **Goldie Scott, NGO Coordinating Committee (NCC)**

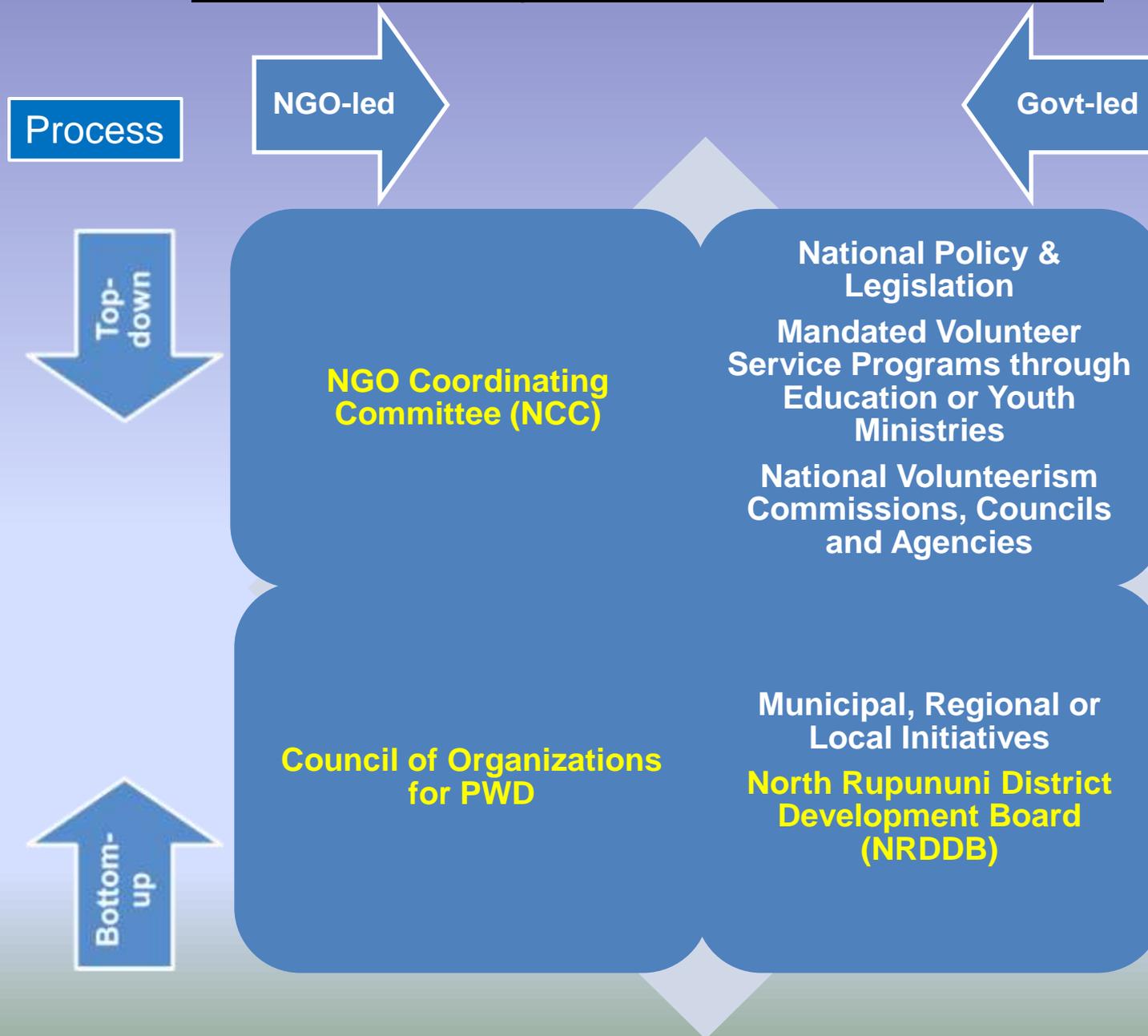- **Michael Williams, North Rupununi District Development Board**

Discussion Questions:
- **What lessons are there in these experiences that would be useful in trying to create a Volunteerism Platform in Guyana?**
- **How can a Volunteerism Platform build on or complement existing social Infrastructure (for example the 3 organizations profiled)?**

Possible Organizational Structure

PLATFORM
Executive

Members
Sectoral councils
Regional coalitions
District networks
NGOs
Faith-based organizations
Etc.

Committees
Volunteerism
Policy & Legislation
Fund Development
Donor Liaison
Private Sector Liaison
Government Liaison
Etc.

Partners/Sponsors
Government
INGOs
UN agencies
Donors
Private sector

Models from Guyana and other Jurisdictions

Process

NGO-led →

← **Govt-led**

↓ Top-down

↑ Bottom-up

NGO Coordinating Committee (NCC)

National Policy & Legislation

Mandated Volunteer Service Programs through Education or Youth Ministries

National Volunteerism Commissions, Councils and Agencies

Council of Organizations for PWD

Municipal, Regional or Local Initiatives

North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB)

Models from Canada

Process
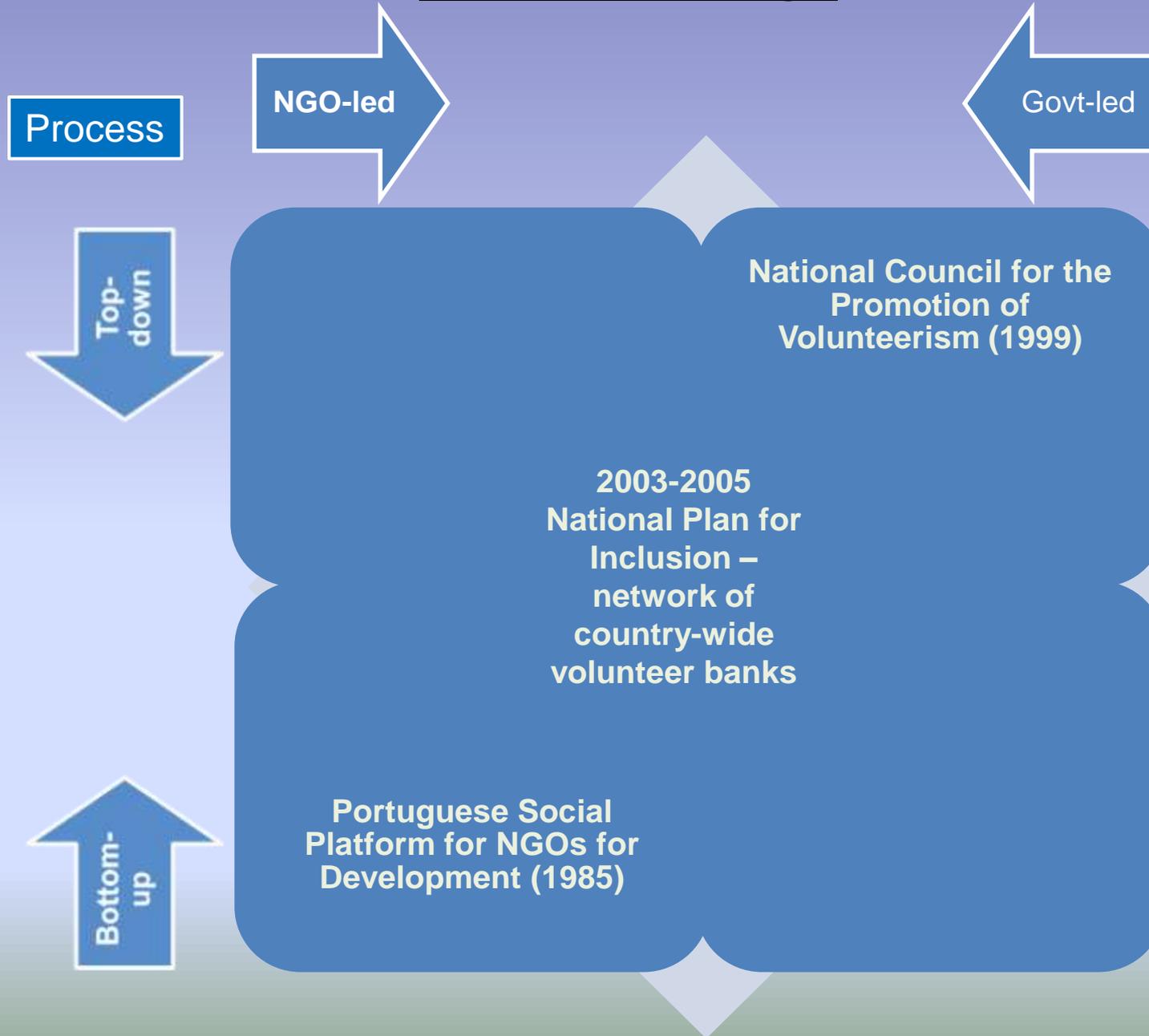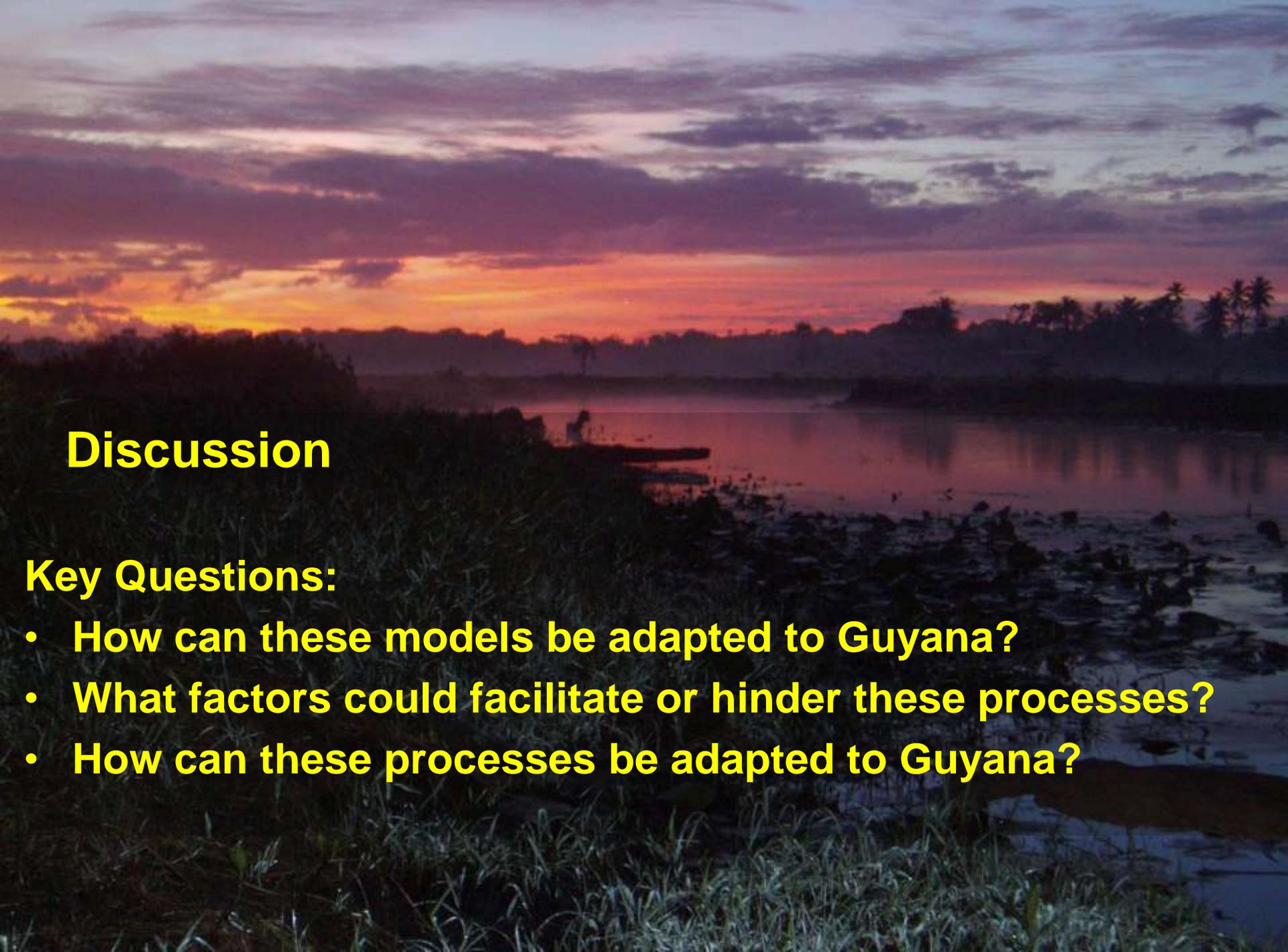
NGO-led

Govt-led

Top-down

Bottom-up

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

Voluntary Sector Initiative

Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks (Canada)

Centre for Voluntary Sector Research & Development, Carlton University & University of Ottawa

Volunteer Canada

Model from Portugal

Process

NGO-led → ← Govt-led

↓ Top-down

↑ Bottom-up

National Council for the Promotion of Volunteerism (1999)

2003-2005 National Plan for Inclusion – network of country-wide volunteer banks

Portuguese Social Platform for NGOs for Development (1985)
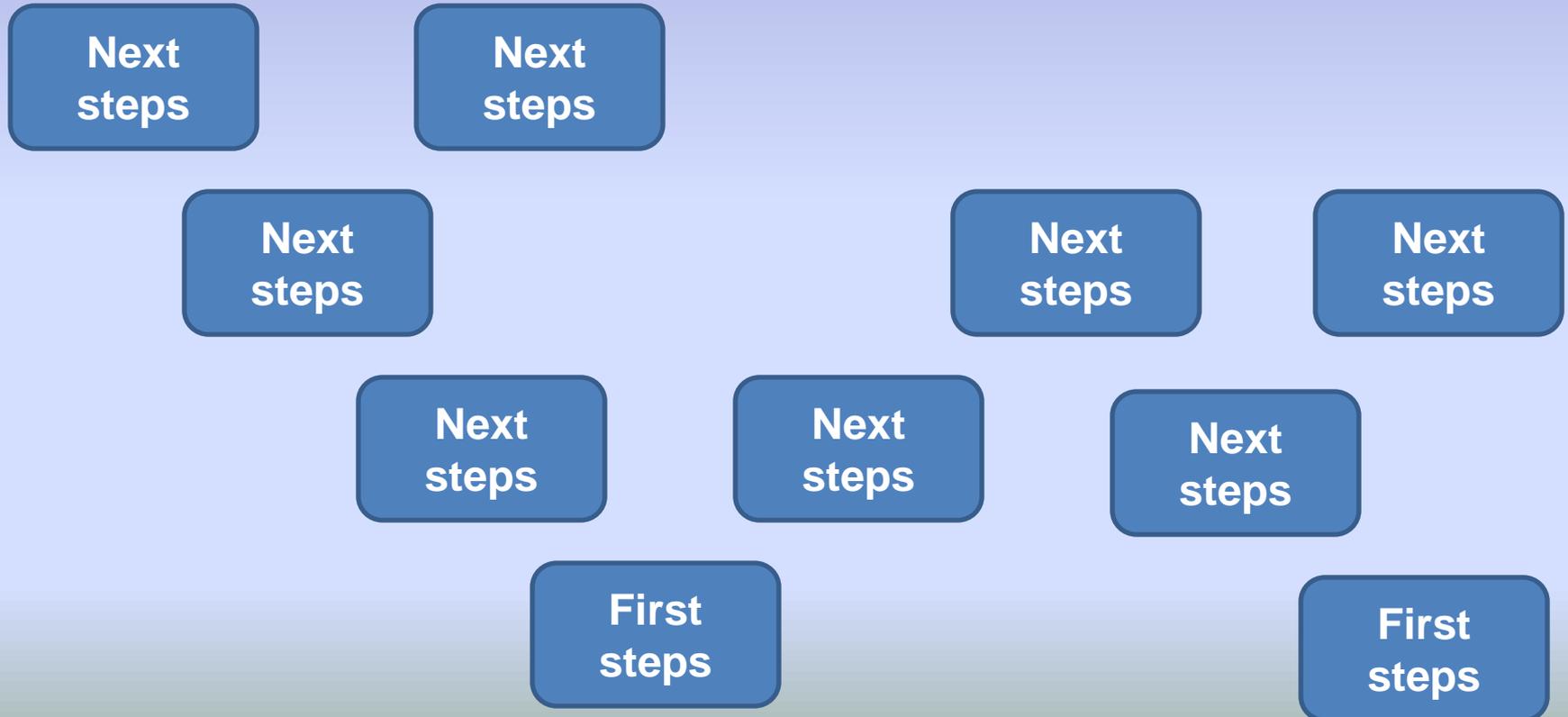
Discussion

Key Questions:
- **How can these models be adapted to Guyana?**
- **What factors could facilitate or hinder these processes?**
- **How can these processes be adapted to Guyana?**

Next Steps – Stepping Stones to a Platform

DREAMS

ENABLING FEATURES

Next steps

Next steps

Next steps

Next steps

Next steps

Next steps

Next steps

Next steps

First steps

First steps

"Hand wash hand, make hand come clean."

– Guyanese proverb