

Advocacy and Social mobilisation: During the first nine months of xchange, the Core Group of five Xchangers (who participated in the Leadership Workshop), with technical assistance from UNICEF, implemented an awareness programme aimed at introducing and taking the initiative forward in Guyana. This included.

- **Development of a campaign to encourage youth participation under the theme “Unite Against Violence – Xchange It begins with You”**
- **Encouraging the participation of local artistes and entertainers as role models in the fight against violence and educate parents and other care givers in non-violent means of communicating with and disciplining children**
- **A series of “Children’s Road March” against violence in primary schools**

XChange Launch:

Following an intense public awareness campaign, Xchange was launched in Guyana on July 22nd 2005 with a mini exposition and children’s concert, featuring Machel Montano and the Xtatik Band, local Soca and Calypso monarchs, and many other local artistes and musical bands. With technical support from UNICEF, the core group of xchangers, Government and NGO partners managed the two-fold event. The main feature of the exposition was an educational pathway which featured a life sized maze offering varying experiences in life, depending on the choices made and paths taken. Interactive, educational games coupled with information booths, puppetry, origami and other participatory sessions contributed to a successful event.



Over 6,000 children, young people and adults (including H.E. President Bharrat Jagdeo - 3rd left) attended the concert most of whom took the exchange pledge and received the token white arm band.

Xchange was also launched in Shulinab Village, a remote hinterland community in region 9, with over 165 young residents pledging to live positive lives and reduce violence in their community. So far 26 persons have pledged to be come exchangers and to assist in formulating programmes and activities at the community level in that region. In July, 2006 an additional 97 young people from across the entire country participated in the first National Youth Training workshop under the theme “Towards the Establishment of Learning Communities”. The workshop was aimed at empowering youth to develop learning communities through education, skills training and culturally creative initiatives. The young people participated in capacity building sessions which exposed them to various interventions and strategies necessary for youth empowerment and participation in community building. The resulting expanded Core Group of eight Xchangers has since met at a one day Training of Trainers Session and is now collaborating with the Youth Service Department of the Ministry of Culture and UNICEF to ensure the scaling up of community based and national interventions aimed at creating learning communities and reducing violence in the country.

Overall the total number of pledged exchangers in Guyana is now 3,388.



Xchangers celebrate their “new, positive lifestyle” after taking the Pledge..



Young people along with personnel from the Ministry, Commonwealth Youth Programme and UNICEF, discussing the launch of the first Learning Community in Region 5, scheduled for end of September 2006.

XChange Follow Up Activities:

The core group will continue to work with main partners, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports to scale up community based interventions aimed at creating learning communities and reducing violence in the community, schools and homes. Planned activities for 2006 include the development of two youth centered learning communities in collaboration with the President’s Youth Award Programme (PRYAG) and a series of “Xchanging Interventions” at school levels using sports, music and drama as entry points for establishing “Violence Free Zones” in schools.

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