



# NEWSLETTER

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## Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo's visit to the Co-operative Republic of Guyana



IDPADA-G's Executive team and senior members with President Nana Akufo-Addo



Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo is escorted by IDPADA-G's Chairman Vincent Alexander (right) and Foreign Affairs Minister, Dr. Karen Cummings (left)



IDPADA-G was pleased to contribute to making the recent visit of Ghanaian President Akufo-Addo to Guyana 2019 memorable and valuable for our community. IDPADA-G sponsored nation-wide coverage of the visit from the President's arrival to his departure. Chairman Vincent Alexander was accorded the privilege of escorting President Akufo-Addo as he lay a wreath to honour Guyana's national hero, Kofi, at the 1763 Monument in the Square of the Revolution. As they toured the monument, President Akufo-Addo remarked that, "a national hero of Guyana with the name Kofi, an Akan name, clearly demonstrates the strong links between Guyana and Ghana."

The visiting Ghanaian President also laid a wreath at the Non-Aligned Movement Monument where there is a bust of Ghana's first Prime Minister and President and co-founder of the Non-Aligned Movement, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.

IDPADA-G executives, Chairman Mr. Vincent Alexander, CEO Ms. Olive Sampson and elected Coordinating Council members held a meeting with the Ghanaian President and invited the Ghana Day Organization and the Pan African Movement to participate. Topics discussed included the development of having closer ties between Guyana and Ghana through educational and cultural exchanges for African Guyanese students, academics, scientists, artists, musicians, dancers and business people.

IDPADA-G took advantage of this visit to inform educators and students about Ghana and the Akan contribution to our history by preparing educational resources presented to the Ministry of Education. The IDPADA-G's teaching materials were distributed to the teachers and students who welcomed the President at the 1763 Monument with shouts of Akwaaba (Welcome)!



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# IDPADA-G YOUTH COMMITTEE LAUNCHES OUTREACH TO INCARCERATED YOUTH



Attendees during the education forum at the New Amsterdam Prison, Berbice

ON Tuesday 11th June 2019, the IDPADA-G Youth committee commenced their first Legal Minds Initiative (LMI) Outreach, by educating more than forty prisoners housed at the New Amsterdam Prison on the Prison Act. The Youth Committee's Legal Minds Initiative focuses on empowering their peers through knowledge of the laws of Guyana and their rights and responsibilities as citizens of our nation. The Act emphasises a prisoner's human rights and legal protections during detainment and/or incarceration. The forum presented an opportunity for the participants to ask pressing questions and to elicit responses from presenters.

Some of the questions included concerns about the quality of meals served to the incarcerated; the need for affordable legal aid and quality representation; the independence of the Bar Association and Legal Aid; access to adequate medical care while incarcerated; and opportunities for rehabilitation and counselling to help them prepare to re-enter society.

The Committee laid out the history of law enforcement in Guyana and underscored how slavery, indentureship, colonialism and independence shaped the law enforcement system that exists today. Further they stressed that the Human Rights Act applies to all citizens including prisoners. The Committee reassured the participants that even while incarcerated, they are still protected by law against cruel or inhumane and degrading treatment and discrimination and that there is recourse in the event of breaches of these human rights.

The participants were extremely grateful for the visit and the information provided. In closing, the presenters encouraged the attendees to stay positive and to continue to read and research lingering questions and, as far as possible, to develop marketable skills. To underscore the importance of education, even while incarcerated, IDPADA-G Youth committee shared a clip from the movie, Malcom X, which depicted how Malcom X used education to change the trajectory of his life even while in the prison system. As the visit closed, all recited Malcom X's mantra: "Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today."



Members of the IDPADAG's Youth Committee

# Farmers' forum to boost African Descent member participation



Attendees during the Farmers' Forum

IDPADA-G sponsored a farmers' forum as part of its initiative to support African Guyanese farmers and to strengthen their role in the agriculture sector. Attendees were all farmers applying to IDPADA-G for proposal writing and grant assistance. They were enlightened by the presentations and appreciated the opportunity to network among themselves and with the specialists on the panel.

Coordinating Council member, Dr. Norman Ng-A-Qui opened the Forum by explaining the rationale for the Forum and noted that, in addition to improving farming techniques the discussion should also focus on the importance of the preparation of the financial documents including project budgets required to access grants and other capital.

Panelist and active local government member, Oswald Quamina discussed entrepreneurship, costing, and investments, funding and record keeping with participants – help-

ing them see ways in which to grow their farm businesses.

Participants interested in the livestock industry, heard from Selwyn Anthony about the recent changes and global trends in that sector. He laid out the regulations and procedures to which farmers must adhere and discussed the impact of price competition from imports, how to access export markets in the face of saturation of the local markets and above all, the keys to success.

Benjamin Frank, representing the National Research and Extension Institute (NAREI) presented information on successful farming practices, including facts about the three major soil types found in Guyana and the importance of soil testing, the advantages and disadvantages of burning, the importance of composting, the use of artificial fertilizers and subsistence farming against commercial farming,

The group had the opportunity to dis-

cuss the process for organizing groups and the co-op registration process with Nekisha Williams, Department of Cooperatives. Ms. Williams answered questions and shared examples of the items that Cooperatives are successfully producing in Guyana. She reminded the group that cooperatives are enshrined in Guyana's constitution as the third pillar of our democracy with special rights and privileges.

Kelvin Craig- Coordinator for Partners of the America's Guyana, discussed the importance of marketing and promotion with this group of farmers and explained the difference between marketing and selling. The discussion also turned to the need for value added products and food processing as a viable option. Mr. Craig implored forum participants to engage and train young men and women as farmers to ensure the continuity of this important sector.

IDPADA-G looks forward to organizing similar training opportunities in the future.



# Village Movement Symposium



**I**N celebration of Guyana's fifty-third (53rd) Independence Anniversary, IDPADA-G hosted a special symposium on Guyana's celebrated Village Movement and the current state of these historic communities.

The symposium was held at the Guyana Industrial Training Centre (GITC) on May 19, 2019 and addressed problems that first arose as a consequence of emancipated Africans' purchase of plantation Northbrook et al; a problem that has persisted to the current era with the emergence of Neighbourhood Democratic Councils.

From 1839 to 1848, Africans acquired over forty-one plantations but their efforts to establish effective local control were thwarted by the colonial leadership. For almost 200 years, the villages and their free-hold lands have been managed under various imposed systems that have eroded the quest for freedom symbolized by the acquisition of these lands. Imported local government systems distorted the natural

villages and took control of the free-hold lands intended for communal village use. Over time, villagers were deprived of their ancestral lands and now see those lands under the direct control of foreign entities (NDCs) that disregard their interests in and claim to the land.

It is recognised that no special attention has been paid to past issues faced by African Guyanese and their rights to the land that they once worked and proudly paid for after emancipation. Instead, since acquisition of these lands, recurring actions by local and national authorities have served to systematically deprive descendants of these lands that are critical to the existence of African Guyanese as a viable ethnic group.

In organizing the much-needed seminar, IDPADA-G brought together expertise from the fields of local government, economics, and legal affairs while seeking to engage the broader African Guyanese community in the struggle for an acceptable solution. Panelists included

University of Guyana Professor of History, Dr. Melissa Ifill, Guyana Reparations Committee Chairman Eric Phillips, and Economist Jason Fraser. Ms. Marjorie McCaskey, Member, People of African Descent Farmers Association, moderated the discussion. IDPADA-G's Chairman, Vincent Alexander gave the opening address noting that people of African descent in Guyana face many problems, but identified the issue of land ownership and control as being a central matter.

Further he pointed out that "IDPADA-G identified from the very inception that this (land control) is one of the major problems facing people of African descent in Guyana and if we are truly to have a decade that seeks to bring recognition, justice, and development to people of African descent, that has to be one of the central problems that has to be addressed."

Work on this issue continues as IDPADA-G engages affected communities over the coming months.