



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

GUYANA

SUCCESS STORY

Youth Rally around Free Trade Deal

Teaching youth about economics and free trade



Photo: USAID

A high school student presents his arguments at Queen's College, Georgetown during a debate aimed at raising youth awareness of the Caribbean's new single market.

USAID teamed up with local partners to make sure that young Guyanese were aware of the importance of the newly launched Single Market and Economy in Caribbean countries.

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Few topics may seem as uninteresting to Caribbean teenagers as market economics, yet few are likely to be as critical to their future. This is why USAID helped sponsor a month-long educational campaign in Guyana in February 2006 that aimed to educate young Guyanese about an important step the Caribbean community had taken: the launching of a single market.

Countries belonging to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) agreed to remove trade barriers with the goal of spurring economic development for decades to come. CARICOM represents independent English-speaking Caribbean islands, as well as Suriname and Haiti. Launched in January 2006, the idea behind the CARICOM Single Market and Economy is to create a market community where goods, services, capital and even labor are able to move from country to country without trade barriers. The market is expected to provide more career and business opportunities throughout the region.

The single market, dubbed "the economic future of the region," will have a special impact upon the lives of young people in countries like Guyana. Recognizing its importance, USAID teamed up with local partners, including Caribbean Vizion, a group of young Caribbean performers, to make sure that young people in Guyana become aware of these developments. The Public Education Initiative targeted primarily youth, but it brought together Guyanese of all ages during the month-long initiative. Activities included competitions—debates, essays, and scrabble—as well as educational forums, events, and concerts. To make sure that even the youngest Guyanese understood the impact of the market, USAID sponsored a musical called "The Single Market Shop" that explained the concept of the single market while entertaining young viewers. Over 3,000 students attended performances throughout the country.

These events were the first of their kind in the Caribbean Community, setting an example for others to follow. In fact, the CARICOM Secretariat was so impressed with the show, that they are exploring the possibility of exporting the initiative to other member states.