



Guyanese-American  
Business & Professional Council

Future Generations  
Graduate School



# GUYANA COMMUNITY SCHOLARS INITIATIVE

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# Future Generations Graduate School

## MASTER'S DEGREE IN APPLIED COMMUNITY CHANGE AND CONSERVATION

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### MISSION

To teach and enable a process of equitable community change that integrates environmental conservation with development

### PROGRAM SUMMARY

This two-year program, accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, uses a distinct pedagogy of community-based learning that allows students to remain in their home countries and continue serving their communities. This Master's Degree program:

- Blends interactive online coursework with four field residentials (one-month per term) and a practicum project in each student's community
- Enrolls diverse cohorts of students from around the world with wide-ranging backgrounds to promote cross-cultural learning across development sectors
- Builds comprehensive knowledge and skills in such areas as primary health, conservation, social change, peace building, leadership and management

### STUDENTS AND ALUMNI

Alumni and students have represented civil society organizations, governments, and communities from 26 countries. The Future Generations Graduate School recruits and enrolls students who demonstrate a strong commitment to community-based change and who directly serve communities in their day-to-day work.

### ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND & SENIOR MANAGEMENT

The Future Generations Graduate School ([www.future.edu](http://www.future.edu)) is a 501(c)3 non-profit institution of higher education accredited by the United States Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The Graduate School was founded in 2003 as the educational arm of Future Generations ([www.future.org](http://www.future.org)) to build local capacity worldwide.

President, Jason Calder, brings more than 18 years experience in facilitating country development strategies and peace building initiatives. Dean, Dr. Mike Rechlin, has practiced sustainable forestry and protected area management for 30 years and brings significant experience in academic leadership.

Future Generations 14 faculty members and lecturers combine a range of academic backgrounds and field experiences with a focus on applying knowledge for social change. An Alumni Director of Continuing Education coordinates ongoing learning and networking opportunities among graduates.



[www.future.edu](http://www.future.edu)



# GUYANA COMMUNITY SCHOLARS INITIATIVE

The Guyana Community Scholars Initiative was established by Future Generations and launched in partnership with the Guyanese And American Business And Professional Council (GABPC) in 2009. This strategic partnership, based on a history of Graduate School collaboration to bring forward the peace building successes of Guyana, supports graduate education for Guyana's community change agents.

To support Guyanese students enrolled in Future Generations MA in Applied Community Change and Conservation, this fund has raised \$40,000 and with your support seeks to match these contributions by September 30, 2011.

Guyana has enormous environmental and cultural assets, including one of the world's largest intact tropical forests. Our students work to strengthen communities, improve health, and link conservation with sustainable livelihoods in their day-to-day work as the staff of non-profit organizations, government agencies, and village councils.

Your support of the Guyana Community Scholars Fund will build long-term local capacity that leads to sustainable community-level outcomes in the areas of peace building, health, women's empowerment, and community development integrated with nature conservation.

## **TO DONATE AND HAVE YOUR GIFT MATCHED, CONTACT:**

Wariko Waita

Director of Development and Partnerships

Future Generations Graduate School

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We thank the following for their support: Anonymous, Jason Calder, Hanna Feinberg, Seafreight Agencies USA Inc., and Mings Products and Services, Ltd.

# MEET OUR STUDENTS

## GUYANA LEADERS IN COMMUNITY CHANGE & CONSERVATION



Name	Location	Organization	Profession & Service	Practicum Research Topic
Shellon Eversley	Georgetown	Agape Network, Inc.	Coordinator for Home Based Care of Ophans and Vulnerable Children	Urban poverty, breaking cycle of dependency, HIVAIDS
Travis Eversley	Buxton & Annandale	Partners for Peace and Development	Trustee and volunteer	Urban poverty, youth work, peace building
Suzanne McRae-Monroe	Kanashen	Conservation International	Grants Coordinator	Partnerships among indigenous communities, non-government organizations, and government for protected areas management
Jackie Robertson-Wilson	Mahdia	Ministry of Labor	Probation and Social Services Officer	Mining community dynamics, empowerment, adult education.
Rohan Sagar	Georgetown	Ministry of Education	National Music Coordinator	Racial tension, empowerment through affirmation of ethnic identity and values, peace building
Goldie Scott	Georgetown	Volunteer Youth Corps	Chief Executive Officer	Empowerment of youth, urban poverty, micro business
Bertie Xavier	Essequibo, Rupununi, Region # 9	Bina Hill Institute and Toshoa (village captain) of Wowetta Village	U.N. Forum on Indigenous Issues; Secretary of the North Rupununi District Development Board	Indigenous empowerment in local planning



# BERTIE XAVIER

## EMPOWERING INDIGENOUS GUYANESE WITH SKILLS FOR CREATING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

Bertie Xavier, a student of the Class of 2011 of the Future Generations Graduate School, has been elected by the United Nations Economic and Social Council as a member of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Bertie Xavier of the Macushi people in Wowetta Village has exhibited a lifelong commitment to sustaining the ecosystems and traditional livelihoods of his homeland in the Rupununi savannah. With a background in forestry, GIS computer mapping, and a degree in Environmental Science from the University of Guyana, Bertie has facilitated numerous projects for monitoring and protecting endangered flora and fauna and educating youth as the acting principal of the Bina Hill Institute.

In 2009, the people of Wowetta, a village of more than 300 people, elected Bertie as their Toshao (village chief). He manages five community economic development projects, including cassava processing, youth carpentry, and solar homes. Bertie also serves as the secretary of the North Rupununi District Development Board.

Bertie enrolled in the Master's Degree program of the Future Generations Graduate School to strengthen his skills in linking community-led development with nature conservation. Bertie believes that the diversity of Wowetta is its great strength, not only its culture, language, wildlife, and non-timber forest resources, but also the diversity of economic activities and community action groups.

*“As a community leader, a lot of things motivate me,” says Bertie. “I think about people’s development first, social development, economic development, and environmental development....People’s involvement in all of these aspects of development is critical; if they are involved we are in a better position to bring about change in people’s lives.”*



## SUZANNE McRAE-MONROE

### LINKING CONSERVATION WITH SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN GUYANA



With Conservation International, Suzanne coordinates grants and technical support for Guyana's first community owned conservation area. Located in Guyana's biologically diverse Rupununi Region (with rare species like the Harpy Eagle and Giant River Otter), Wai-Wai Amerindian communities manage more than 1.5 million acres (625,000 ha) of ancestral lands.

Since 2006 when the Wai-Wai were granted Absolute Title, they have managed their lands by blending traditional approaches with modern concepts of land-use zoning. These achievements are part of a decade-long effort of the Government of Guyana to invest in community-based approaches that protect rainforests as carbon sinks and regulators of climate.

As a student in the Master's Degree program, Suzanne strengthens partnerships with the village of Masakenari, which is undertaking a mid-term evaluation of its five-year management plan. Through her practicum project, Suzanne enables the Wai-Wai to address current challenges and identify new opportunities for linking nature conservation with sustainable income generation.



*"The experience gained through this Master's program," says Suzanne, "equips me to better support communities as they demonstrate that conservation and development are not mutually exclusive but part of a common path that fully incorporates the full value of nature and is beneficial to all of us."*

Suzanne also uses new knowledge and skills to improve her research and grant making strategies. She says that *"the ideas really came together during the field residencies. I saw the power of women's groups improving health and promoting organic farming in Jamkhed, India, and the success of the Adirondack State Park in New York, a great case study in how to link conservation and development."*

# JACQUELINE ROBERTON-WILSON

## GOVERNMENTS SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-POWERED CHANGE IN GUYANA

In a mountainous inner region of Guyana, Jacqueline links government policy with community participation among a diverse community of indigenous people, St. Lucians, Afro- and Indo-Guyanese, and Brazilian miners.

Jacqueline, a Social Services Worker with the Ministry of Labor in Guyana, describes her community of Mahdia as having a high level of dependency on the mining industry. *“This dependency,”* she says, *“has led to many social ills, including child abuse, inequity, substance abuse, trafficking in persons, and domestic violence.”*

As a student in Future Generations Master’s Degree program, Jacqueline’s goal is to activate community participation to create sustainable solutions. She envisions a Guyana where people of all ages and ethnicities are empowered to take ownership of their futures.

She currently facilitates four community groups focused on such issues as domestic violence and child trafficking. Jacqueline encourages collaboration, provides a safe space for dialogue, and trains local leaders in methods to create action plans based on a shared vision.

Jacqueline initiated two of these groups following her participation in the Term I Master’s Degree field residential in India, where she observed the effectiveness of women’s action groups. She returned to Guyana and created “Women on the Move,” which empowers youth, single mothers, and the unemployed with leadership and vocational skills. “Women on the Move” also advocates for children and raises awareness of child trafficking laws.

She works with another group originally named the Fire Disaster Committee (created in response to a 2010 fire that left dozens homeless). Following a Term II U.S. residential course in Leadership and Organizational Dynamics, Jacqueline facilitated leadership workshops and enabled this group to broaden their vision, renaming themselves the Mahdia Development Committee.



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