



REVIEW OF SOCIAL POLICY (2005-2010)
AND
DRAFT POLICY NOTE (2010 – 2015)

ASSESSMENT REPORT OF SOCIAL POLICY 2005-2010
SURINAME

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ASSESSMENT REPORT

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List of Acronyms

| | | | |
|---------|--|--------|---|
| AIDS | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome | MOF | Ministry of Finance |
| AKB | Child Allowance | NARG | National Advisory Council on Policy Regarding Persons with Disabilities |
| AMW | General Social Work Service | NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| AMZ | General Social Care Sub-Directorate | PIU | Program Implementation Unit |
| AOV | General Old Age | PLOS | Planning Office Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation |
| ASUV | General Social Security Payments | PMT | Proxy Means Test |
| CBO | Community Based Organization | PPU | Program Preparation Unit |
| CCT | Conditional Cash Transfers | PWD | People with Disabilities |
| CEDAW | Convention Against Discrimination of Women | R&P | Research and Planning |
| CRC | Convention for the Rights of Children | ROGB | Ministry of Spatial Planning, Land and Forrestr |
| DVL | SoZaVo Information Service | SBEC | Sozavo Foundation of Day Care Centers |
| FB | Financial Assistance | SIS | SoZaVo Information System |
| GBS | General Bureau of Statistics | SMART | Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound |
| GH | Health Card | SoZa | Directorate of Social Affairs |
| GOB | Land Development Company | SoZaVo | Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing |
| HBS | Household Budgetary Survey | SRD | Surinam Dollar |
| HH | Households | SSN | Social Safety Net |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Disease | TC | Technical Cooperation |
| ID B | Inter-American Development Bank | TJG | The Foundation Training Projects for Young People with Disabilities |
| LISP II | Low Income Shelter Program, Phase 2 | UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| LISP | Low Income Shelter Program | UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| LMISP | Low to Medium Income Shelter Program | UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation | UvS | University of Suriname |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goals | | |
| MDP | Multiannual Development Plan | | |
| MHP | Multiannual Housing Program | | |
| MICS | Multiple Indicators Cluster | | |
| MOE | Ministry of Education | | |

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This review was undertaken based on the documents presented to the consultant by SoZaVo itself being received from both the Directorate of Social Affairs and the Directorate of Housing as well as those uncovered independently by the consultant. Many of these documents, from both sources, needed to be translated for use and for both the identification and provision of these documents and the translation of part or all of many of them we would like to greatly thank SoZaVo. A two week field study was also undertaken by the consultants who were received by a tireless and patient counterpart team that aided us in any way possible to better understand the workings of the Ministry and to arrange for the many interviews and workshops and capacity building exercises held during that two week period, for this and more this team and their collaborators cannot be praised enough. Participation in these activities by a large number of members of the two Directorates was greatly appreciated and we can only hope that the participants learned as much as we did as it was thanks to their eager participation that many ideas and clarifications came. Finally we would like to thank the different individuals in and out of SoZaVo who spent their valuable time to be interviewed, often at the last minute and sometimes more than once, without whose input this study would not be possible. Finally, we respectfully thank the Director of Social Affairs, the Director of Housing and the Minister of SoZaVo for their time, participation and for facilitating this endeavor.

1 Executive Summary

The following document, Review of Social Policy (2006 – 2010) Assessment Report compiled by ESD Consulting and requested by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing of Suriname (SoZaVo) aims to review the social policy documents made available and the implementation of these policy documents over the period 2005 – 2010, which regards policy for low income families, people with disabilities, children and youth, elderly as well the housing policy and based on this assessment to propose new policies for the period 2010 – 2015 that take into consideration policy priorities of the new government.

The study begins with a brief presentation of the general background of the country of Suriname and presents the economic reality and the situation of poverty and the different goals that the government has to improve the lives of those suffering from it. The different goals related to poverty reduction, health care, housing and the general welfare situation directed at targeted populations including those temporarily or structurally unable to generate their own income, the elderly, disabled, youth, starter and single parent families are all presented here.

The actual analysis begins with a comprehensive review and presentation of the mandates given SoZaVo and broken down between its two sub-directorates, the Directorate of Social Affairs and the Directorate of Housing. In regard to the Directorate of Social Affairs the following mandates are reviewed and evaluated: general welfare, social work and social care, especially in connection with targeting population of social policies; the definition of the most vulnerable and most needy population groups targeted as beneficiaries of programs and finally the extent of SoZaVo's responsibilities as Ministry in charge of ensuring overall provision of social services in Surinam. The Directorate of Housing mandates are presented and reviewed along the following lines: the provision of housing, to serve as knowledge coordinator for shelter and related fields; the promotion of credit for housing; managing and providing public housing and the formulation and implementation of public housing policy.

The bulk of the assessment focuses on the formulation, design and implementation of policies to reach SoZaVo's above stated goals. The assessment contends that the ability to formulate good policies is to a large extent determined by the availability of statistical data and analysis and thus the reality on the ground in Suriname in this regard is reviewed. The potential for the use of the data available and the technical and functional ability of the Ministry to take advantage of this information for policy formulation are evaluated. At this time, preliminary observations and recommendations for the future aimed at improving both of these elements of policy formulation are presented. The second determinate proposed as critical to policy formulation is the consensus building process. Given the different approaches to policy design adopted by each of the two sub-Directorates the consensus building approach is looked at for social services and housing separately. In regard to social services an analysis of the participatory exercises conducted for each different area of intervention are presented and the results evaluated. For housing policy, the three main levels of consensus building undertaken in policy design are reviewed, that of inter-ministerial collaboration,

collaboration with the private sector and international donors and financial institution and finally consensus building for policy formulation among the stake holders and beneficiaries.

Policy design in both the Directorate of Social Affairs and the Directorate of Housing are next presented, evaluated and critiqued and general observations and recommendations are made. Four key areas are looked at from the point of view of both social affairs and housing: the approach to policy design, policy objectives, the targeting of the benefiting population and the overall policy implementation strategy.

The approach to policy design in both Directorates is looked at from the point of view of its adherence to international Treaties and Conventions; the adoption of social welfare vs. Human development approaches; in the explicit understanding of factors and obstacles hampering children, youth, women, elderly, or poor households development and wellbeing; the Human rights based approach for poverty reduction; the generation of income, infrastructure, and the comprehensive plan for meeting the Millennium Development Goals; and finally the adoption of Sector wide approach towards achieving policy goals and commitments as opposed to the adoption of an institutional approach.

Policy objectives are reviewed on the premise that any policy should begin by a declaration of the main policy objectives to be obtained at the end of the policy implementation period and that these objectives should be expressed in terms of measurable goals which actually reflect outcomes of goods and services provided to the target population. In this sense, policy objectives are looked at in both the provision of social services and the provision of adequate housing by reviewing the main policy documents where the objectives of the Ministry's actions are delineated including, among others, the Government's 2006 – 2010 Multiannual Development Plan, SoZaVo's 2006 - 2010 Policy Note and the Directorate of Housing's 2006 – 2010 Multiannual Housing Plan. Furthermore these objectives are looked at from the point of view of specific, measurable objectives, as well as, sector wide substantive objectives to facilitate monitoring and evaluation.

The target populations for social and housing policies consist of all the individuals for whom the policies are intended to effect. The respective areas of action are identified and criteria for participation reviewed for each target group evaluated. In this assessment the target populations as defined by the various official documents that give SoZaVo its mandates are presented and the different methods that these populations are identified are discussed, reviewed and critiqued. Finally, general recommendations are made to offer insight into how the identification and inclusion of the whole of the target population into the programs undertaken by SoZaVo could be improved.

The implementation strategy for social services as well as housing is next presented. Firstly, the strategies employed to attain SoZaVo's stated goals are put forth and reviewed in accordance with the Multiannual Development Plan and the Policy Note that frame the Ministry's actions during the 2006 – 2010 assessment period. The main goals expressed in these documents such as developing better targeting mechanisms, streamlining and integration of services, expanding partnerships with public and private institutions, helping beneficiaries and their social groups to empower themselves through collective action, better organize the housing sector, increase the social services and housing provided and the overall strengthening of the

Ministry. The many different programs undertaken by SoZaVo are also presented in this section and their effectiveness is assessed, strengths identified and weaknesses revealed.

Following the review of policy development, design and implementation at SoZaVo institutional implementation is addressed in this assessment. Here the consultant concentrates on institutional implementation addressing its major components such as the effectiveness SoZaVo has had during the period studied in setting policy objectives and goals, developing strategies, outlining the implementation arrangements and allocating resources to achieve those goals, the compliance of budgets and the effectiveness of using them as planning tools. This analysis is based on a review of the Multiyear Development Plan, the Policy Notes, any yearly plans found, budgets and work plans. Following the presentation of the different aspects of institutional planning uncovered an assessment of its effectiveness is undertaken and observations and recommendations for the future are provided.

Monitoring and evaluation systems put in place at SoZaVo to gauge its success in reaching its goals are next identified, methodologies reviewed and the institutional performance of both the Directorate of Social Affairs and that of Housing are analyzed. SoZaVo is instructed to monitor and evaluate its actions regularly in both the Multiannual Development Plan of the Government and expresses its desire to do so in its own Policy Note of the same period. Both ongoing, self monitoring and independent evaluations are called for on a regular basis. The institutional success attained by SoZaVo and the methodologies and tools used are presented and evaluated in this section and an overall assessment of the process that was used between 2006 and 2010 is offered. Finally the question of accountability is addressed on its different levels; internal, political and public accountability are all addressed in this section. Each is explained and the overall effectiveness of each are reviewed and evaluated with an eye towards improvement in the future.

A brief summary of the different observations made in accordance with the various areas addressed in the Policy Review Framework serve as part of the conclusions presented at the end of the Assessment Report. In addition, conclusions related to both the successful implementation of the mandated and stated goals of SoZaVo according to the direction it received from the Government in the 2006 – 2010 Multiannual Development Plan and as it was adopted by SoZaVo in its 2006 – 2010 Policy Note. Finally the success that SoZaVo has had during the period under review in meeting the international agreements of the Government of Suriname related to social well being and inclusion as well as its contribution to helping the country achieve the Millennium Development Goals round out the section of general conclusions of this assessment.

2 Introduction

According to its Vision and Mission the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing – SoZaVo, is the major agency of the Government of Suriname engaged in the provision of selected social services to the population of Suriname irrespective of gender, age, ethnicity or geographical location. It is expected to have a reach that is universal to all those who are vulnerable or potentially vulnerable in the context of economic and social changes that the society and nation are subject to. In theory, the social service delivery system that the Ministry seeks to implement should be organized such that the vulnerable in each age cohort (from womb to tomb) can have access to the required resources –preventive, developmental, supportive or remedial – as necessary

The Ministry has been involved in the review of its operations over the last few years. Assessments conducted by several institutions in cooperation with the Ministry have addressed the challenges involved in reaching to its clients and have confirmed the existence of institutional weaknesses. Kairi Consultants Limited conducted a capacity assessment of the Ministry and developed a comprehensive Capacity Strengthening Plan to help the Ministry address its institutional weaknesses. Among others, the assessment revealed a requirement for updating capacity by means of developing an “integrated policy framework for human and social development”. In order to build the Ministry’s capacity to deliver efficient and effective services to its target groups the first priority intervention area that required assistance was the Review of social policy 2005 – 2010 and draft policy note 2010 – 2015 for the Ministry. Such an assistance should ideally come at an exceptional timing since Suriname had recently inaugurated a new government in August 2010. The technical assistance would be an opportunity to contribute to the reflection on the social policy objectives and strategies based on previous experience, present challenges and political expectations.

In November 2010 The Ministry with the assistance of UNDP selected ESD-International Consulting to perform such a review. ESD offered in reviewing and updating Social Policies for Suriname to introduce and share with the Ministry the latest findings and approaches to social development proposed by the Research Institute for Social Development of the United Nations (UNRISD). The assessment of social policy was conducted from three perspectives: the scope and approach to the social policy; the quality of the policy design and formulation process; and an assessment of the policy implementation. Results from all of them should then inform the drafting of the new social policy for 2010-2015

To adequately inform the process evaluation of the Social policy 2005 -2010, ESD resorted to qualitative evaluation methods such as in-depth interviews, participatory workshops, consultative methods, focus groups, and discourse analysis. ESD mainly profited from secondary information provided by the Ministry or gathered on the field such as policy documents, independent research, assessments of results and other in-depth studies provided by the Ministry on specific topics.

To organize the collection and analysis of information process ESD shared with SoZaVo a Policy Review Framework that guided the process and helped in gathering the most relevant information and sources, to make sure all aspects of the policy evaluation were covered.

3 Background Information

Suriname became a republic in 1975 following its independence from the Netherlands. It is a diverse society with various ethnic groups and languages with a population of nearly one-half million on a large and diverse land area where, however, some 80% of the population lives in or near the capital city Paramaribo.ⁱ Both its recent colonial past and the geographic distribution of its population in three distinct areas- the capital area, the coastal region and the interior - deeply mark its social and economic development.ⁱⁱ This being said, on the surface, Suriname is a country that has had some spectacular successes in reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Nearly complete eradication of the endemic problem of malaria in the country is just one of its best known triumphs.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Multiannual Development Plan of the Republic of Suriname clearly indicates that adherence to the MDGs and other international agreements represent a guiding force behind the Government's aspirations for development.^{iv} In fact, the multi-annual development plan 2006-2011 identifies four pillars of national development: governance/democracy, the rule of law and security; economic development; social and human development; and equitable distribution of wealth.^v

Through reviewing the different MDGs and how they are translated into national policy we can see that SoZaVo is given the following responsibilities in the 2006 -2011 Multiannual Development Plan towards this aim:

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>POVERTY REDUCTION:</p> <p>Promotion of well-being of vulnerable groups, Increase of access to land and housing</p> | <p>WELFARE STIMULATION:</p> <p>Practical and sustainable improvement of services, aid, care and financial benefits towards persons and households that are temporarily or structurally not able to generate their own</p> |
| <p>HEALTH CARE:</p> <p>Work out general health insurance ¹ Guarantee financial accessibility to health care for socially underprivileged persons</p> | <p>Income, Institutional strengthening SOZAVO, Improvement of health insurance scheme for the poor and needy, Improvement of care for senior citizens, Improvement of care of persons with a disability, Improvement of facilities for children in need of protection, Rationalization subsidy policy of social institutions</p> |
| <p>HOUSING:</p> <p>Implementation of programs for low income groups, Increase of executive capacity building sector, Adjustment of spatial planning for the benefit of house building,</p> | <p>YOUTH:</p> <p>Delinquency, More education of young people and more training possibilities for unemployed young people Reduction of the number of dropouts, teenage pregnancies and juvenile</p> |

¹ Multipurpose Development Plan 2006 – 2011. Pg. 163. Activities Matrix for Health Care, Sub-objective 1. Basic Health Care for Every Citizen, Measure 1.: Work out general health insurance. Indicator: General Health Insurance operational in 2008. Ministry/Authority-VGZ / FIN / SOZAVO. Page 163

The Government of Suriname is optimistic about reaching the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and with reason. SoZaVo's above "to do" list, while challenging, appears to be well under way and moving them in the right direction.^{vi} However, it would appear that there may still be some elements within the Ministry's organizational and methodological make-up that adversely affect policy formation and implementation and may hinder it in achieving these goals.

4 Institutional Mandates

As established in the State Decree #50 of October 10, 1991 concerning the establishment and remit of departments of general administration, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing is responsible for caring for the general welfare, in particular social care for senior citizens, persons with disabilities children and youth and the poor as well as, general social work and community development. Ensuring social services, social security and access to adequate housing are also part of the duties of the ministry.²

The precedent mandates of SoZaVo are performed through two Directorates – the Directorate of Social Affairs and the Directorate of Housing - responsible for the following specific tasks:

Directorate of Social Affairs:

1. The general welfare, in particular the social care of elderly, people with disabilities, the youth, among others the care for the youth that is under supervision of the State;
2. The general social work;
3. The monitoring over orphanages, boarding homes and other similar social institutions;
4. The general social community work among others by enhancing indirect actions related to the improvement of the living and social climate;
5. The social security system, in collaboration with other relevant Ministries, as well as social provisions and the social security;

Directorate of Housing:

1. The stimulation of the housing;
2. The stimulation of the credit system for social housing, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance;
3. The management and the allocation of public houses.

As established in the Social Policy Note 2006-2011, the Ministry's particular understanding of its current relevant role is translated into its Vision as being generally responsible for establishing a social and just society with equal rights and opportunities for all, in particular the financially weak and other vulnerable groups, with the aim to reduce poverty and welfare limitation circumstances. In keeping with this Vision, the

² Social Policy Note 2006-2011, Translation of The task description of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing

Ministry seeks to implement a social well-being program with the aim of responding to the needs of low-income and other vulnerable groups, but also take measures and provide conditions so that these groups have opportunities to develop (empowerment). According to these mandates the prime target groups of the Ministry are: low-income groups, elderly, children/youth and people with disabilities.

4.1.1 Assessment of the concerned Directorate of Social Affairs mandates:

Social care provided by the ministry is expressed through tangible and intangible services that focus on specific groups in society which, according to their circumstances, require the necessary support. Tangible services include the provision of financial services to eligible individuals, groups of persons or institutions. The intangible assistance consists mainly of supervision and support of communities (through community work) and other specific groups such as families, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and children. Facilitation of social services also takes place through the supply of staff.³

Implementation of such programs has faced limitations arising from the institutional mandates such as:

1. **Lack of qualification of SoZaVo's particular responsibilities in regard to General welfare: Social Work and Social Care mandates, especially in connection with targeting population of social policies**

The first difficulty about the existing legal mandates is the **lack of qualification of SoZaVo's specific responsibilities under the "General Welfare – social care & social work" mandate**, and of the practical implications it entails in terms of target populations. As has been reported previously, a **constant tension between the universal attention to citizen's rights** (such as an Old Age Pension or a Basic Health Insurance) **and the pro-poor focus of social policies**, has traditionally been behind most of the policy decision making processes of SoZaVo.

A common understanding is that while the Old Age Pension Fund for the elderly and the Universal Health Insurance are in theory defined as part of the social security system; other social policies addressed to the most vulnerable and poor are usually labeled as social protection and social care programs. Yet SoZaVo's responsibilities in these areas are further entangled by the underlying assumption - both culturally and in the bureaucracy - that providing equal rights and opportunities for all, automatically means access to public resources for all.⁴

³ Social Policy Note 2006-2011

⁴ Most social protection Ministries elsewhere are charged with the design, implementation and supervision of Universal Pensions Systems for the elderly and the disabled, and the devising and implementation of a Universal Health Insurance to cover basic health attention and catastrophic chronic diseases. While in most developed first world countries, and particularly those with a more welfare state, the cost of such systems is financed by public resources, it must be acknowledged that the majority of formal economic activities and individuals support the system through a high tax burden on tax payers. Among developing countries, characterized by a high proportion of informal economic activities, a more common design and funding of these universal pension and health systems is based on individual contributions throughout their lifetimes. In the case of the Universal Pension, Individuals are entitled to a pension proportional to their level of contributions. While in the case of the health insurance, basically the level of expected services maybe the same for all individuals, but some cross-subsidies systems may be internally implemented since individuals contribute

Consequently, and not surprisingly, SoZaVo has been implementing distinctive programs addressed to different target groups using confusing eligibility criteria which end up in overlapping and duplication of efforts, often times in leakage or identification errors, and a waste of resources in practical terms. More importantly, such dispersion of resources and efforts greatly reduces the potential for developmental impacts. The potential for clashing into other ministries responsibilities (i.e. health, education, labour, regional development, etc.) arising from such a broad definition of mandates is also problematic.

There is need for further elaboration and evolution of the particular mandates of SoZaVo, and most importantly for definitions that particularly describe the government understanding of the:

General Welfare, Social Care, Social Security, Social Protection, and Social work responsibilities of SoZaVo.

2. Need for a more inclusive definition of the most vulnerable and most needy population groups targeted as beneficiaries of programs

A second general difficulty regarding mandates arises from the attempt to make an exhaustive enumeration of vulnerable groups by particularly pointing out the elderly, people with disabilities and the youth at risk as vulnerable groups. Yet for such a list to be complete it would be necessary to add children, women heads of households, poor households, etc. and perhaps other definitions of disadvantaged groups as have been spelled out in international conventions and treaties such as the MDGs or the Convention for the Rights of Children (CRC), the Convention against Discrimination for Women (CEDAW), Convention for People with Disabilities, people suffering from HIV/AIDS, pregnant women, etc. which will make it an endless list.

according to their economic possibilities. On the other hand, as part of their social protection mandates, Ministries are also in charge of Social Safety Nets designed to target the poorest and assist them either through temporary support, as they are expected to exit the system at some point; or providing permanent support for those who can't have access to the Pension System because they are poor and suffer from a permanent limiting condition that hampers their ability to generate income and provide for themselves.

In the case of Suriname where high levels of informality are reportedly predominant with at least 50% of economic activities not officially in the tax or private pension systems⁴ ("Institutional and Organization SSN Assessment" - Observatorio Social, May 6, 2006), it would be financially very challenging and unsustainable to cover universal rights out of current public resources contributed only by a small proportion of the formally employed population and corporations paying taxes to support the system. Although we didn't have access to a readily available copy of the current comprehensive government budget and we couldn't establish the contribution from these sources in the overall government income, it was learned that tax contributions from individuals are merged with other government resources in a general basket fund and then allocated to the different ministries and sectors. According to Ayala the distribution of Surinamese budget 2005-2006 reports that the social sector (namely SoZaVo's programs) received 16,34% of the total expenditure, which for the most part were spent through the current account with no resources to the developmental account, yet no amounts are available. A very important discussion is pending about the proceeds and destination of the sizeable royalties that the government receives out of the exploitation of the country's minerals wealth in Bauxite, Gold, Oil, etc. and how these resources are allocated to the developmental priorities of the country.

The government must embark on a comprehensive effort to first encourage formal employment and income generating activities, and secondly to design a more equitable system of contributions to the Pension and Universal Health Systems among economic agents being formal or informal that share the burden.

A more comprehensive and useful definition of vulnerable target groups relevant for policy design should go hand in hand with the definition of mandates and the recognition of specific needs and rights of each target group. For instance, the universal right for a financial entitlement for the elderly and the people with disabilities, which cannot provide for themselves, should call for the design of an overall Social Security System with an Old Age or Disability Pension Program that benefits all individuals under those categories regardless of their poverty status. The financing scheme though, not necessarily or exclusively involves public resources, but also individual contributions that can be clearly traced. Yet it should be the responsibility of SoZaVo to ensure an adequate and feasible design and to control implementation of such a system.

A different set of target groups of policies comprise those who should benefit from what could be labeled the social protection and social care programs. The social protection programs should be addressed to those population groups which have fallen into poverty situations further compounded by disadvantaged situations namely: poor households with women heads of households, children/youth, and/or people with disabilities. In this case the first vulnerability trace indicator would be the poverty status and then the disadvantaged situation of the household.

Finally the social care programs should be intended for individuals in need of specialized attention and care because of a particular critical situation, i.e. youth or children victims of domestic violence; neglected children, elderly or disable persons; individuals with behavioral problems, etc.. In this case the government provides social care either at home (with supervised assistance) or at specialized centers conducted by specially trained professionals.

3. Mandates don't elaborate on the extension of SoZaVo's responsibilities as Ministry in charge of ensuring overall provision of social services in Surinam

In the absence of a regulation that describes the scope of responsibilities of a Ministry and the approach of the state to service delivery, the performance of SoZaVo as Ministry in practice is a resulting mix of weak policy making, confusing policy implementation with direct hands-on delivery of services, eventual oversight of private providers and limited Monitoring and Evaluation.

SoZaVo's call to become the key agency involved in ensuring the delivery of social services on behalf of the government was actually acknowledged in the current vision and principles of the Social Policy Note 2006-2010. However the remit of SoZaVo is circumscribed by the administrative structures established by the government in fulfilling its responsibilities to the population. Thus there are areas that relate to social services and social development that lie outside SoZaVo's responsibilities. It is expected though that through collaboration with state and non-state actors the population will be better served. As a major Ministry involved in social services and development, SoZaVo can be considered as to have an observational role in these other areas, outside of its official remit.⁵

⁵SoZaVo- Comprehensive Capacity Strengthening Plan and Strategic Framework- Final Report". Kairi Consultants limited, May 2010.

As a ministry SoZaVo should become more concerned with performing those roles that contribute to enhance its ability to formulate and monitor social policy implementation, for example through the implementation of strong information and reporting systems, and much less effort should be devoted to directly being a service provider. Rather, SoZaVo should adopt a more focused mandate as policy maker and policy facilitator devoted to creating a more enabling environment by way of adequate regulations, coordinating interventions, financial incentives, supervision and oversight and institutional strengthening initiatives that encourage the private sector, NGOs and CBOs to participate in the implementation of social policies and the delivery of social services to the most vulnerable in Surinam.

4.1.2 Assessment of the concerned Directorate of Housing mandates:

In the **Government Declaration 2005 -2010**, the Government considered the guarantee of social security, including housing and utilities, as principles of social policy. One of these functions is that the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing will focus on the welfare of the Surinamese, in particular, the welfare of the less affluent and vulnerable persons.⁶

It should be mentioned that in clarifying its mandate, **SoZaVo's Policy Note 2006-2011** states that the Directorate of Housing will act as policy and knowledge coordinator for shelter and related fields. The Directorate will therefore not normally be responsible for operational issues, except to the extent that third parties do not select and implement urgently needed actions. The Directorate therefore shall be limited to mainly concentrating on strategic and policy aspects of housing policy. Additionally, this same Policy Note reaffirms the **Multiannual Development Plan of 2006** statement that SoZaVo is "entirely responsible for the formulation and implementation of public housing policy" in Suriname. Furthermore **Article 48 of the Constitution of Suriname** states that the country must have a *National Housing Plan* and that it be enforced to the benefit of the needy. In agreement with its role of concentrating on strategic and policy aspects of housing, SoZaVo has the responsibility to write, update, promote and coordinate this Plan. In sum, the Government, through SoZaVo, has the duty and priority to take all measures appropriate in order to guarantee housing for the lowest income groups and other needy sectors of society.

The above are clear, valid and important mandates that need to be given paramount attention by the Directorate of Housing if it hopes to better comply with its stated responsibilities and contribute to improve the housing, social and economic situation of the poor in Suriname. However, the potential for losing sight of its Overall Mandate may in part be due to the unclear nature of how it is broken down. As part of its mandate, SoZaVo has been assigned the tasks of the promotion of housing; the promotion of credit for housing; and the management and allocation of public housing.

The first of these tasks "Promote housing" remains unclear and ill-defined since it could be interpreted either as concerned with the overall housing sector in Suriname, or exclusively as facilitating access to housing for the poor. Such a diffuse task may explain the relative failure of the corresponding programs in reaching its target group. To a large degree, the Ministry has approached this task through providing plots and offering

⁶ Policy Note 2006 -2011

subsidies to improve or build housing and through actively seeking and promoting International organizations and private sector participation in devising and executing comprehensive housing programs. However most of the programs implemented have mainly aided the middle and lower middle income earners attain housing. SoZaVo must be clearer in targeting its mandated group, the least affluent and needy and assure that the programs working in social housing in the country develop programs and systems for targeting and implementing programs that reach this group. In fact, from all available evidence, the design and oversight of housing programs is largely left to the different executing agencies with limited inputs and control from SoZaVo that can better focus these actions.

When looking at SoZaVo's mandated Task 2; "the promotion of credit for housing" we can observe great success in stimulating the private sector banks, construction industry and the Central Bank, in collaboration with other ministries, in greatly easing the requirements for attaining loans for housing through lowering mortgage interest rates. While all facilities are in place, again they do not reach the target population but instead help the middle and lower middle classes indicating either poor program design or just a lack of adequate direction from the Ministry to ensure compliance with its mandate to serve the disenfranchised. Be it the financial incentives of the LISP program or the mortgage schemes facilitated by the Central and other banks, the results have to an unacceptable extent missed the needs of the least fortunate.

Task 3, "managing and proving public housing" consists in the construction and management of rental housing intended for the very lowest income groups. Yet its implementation has been problematic as the target population does not seem to benefit most here. Clear eligibility criteria and procedures for participation are spelled out yet not enforced. This could be due to lax oversight, political patronage or poorly executed screening processes. Regardless, it has led to an unwieldy public housing sector with unqualified participants receiving the subsidies and benefits. The eligible poor for whom this task is undertaken are often excluded from participation because of "leakage" to unqualified beneficiaries who do receive the housing but often do not pay rent. Needless to say, this directly leads to budget constraints preventing financial sustainability which eventually questions the validity of the program as a whole. More importantly, the premise behind providing subsidized public rental housing should be a temporary solution in most cases. With the exception of those recipients that, due to some factor that prohibits them from physically or otherwise participating in the workplace, these reduced price rental units need to be part of a solution that, in collaboration with other programs implemented by the Directorate of Social Affairs, enables participants to exit the social safety net and graduate to providing for themselves. Yet this possibility is not made clear in SoZaVo's mandate nor has it been included in the policies it generates.⁷

⁷ It is generally accepted that subsidized rental units should be temporary solutions for those who have fallen through the cracks of society and need time, counseling, loans, or social services and training to re-enter the workplace and again assume their role as independent active member of society. Needless to say, there will always be members of society that do to no fault of their own will require social assistance programs such as reduced rent housing due to some physical or other impediment to their earning a decent living. The Directorate of Housing and the Housing Foundation that manages these units need develop a scheme to promote human

Finally, SoZaVo mandate stated in the Policy Note of 2006 as being “entirely responsible for the formulation and implementation of public housing policy” is called into question with the various Ministries influencing in this area and covering certain aspects of social housing such as provision of plots, infrastructure and availability of loans. For example, the Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of National Resources, Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Spatial Planning and even the Central Bank all play different and at times overlapping roles. This division of competencies demands clear division of responsibilities, sharing of information between Ministries, and close collaboration if the country’s housing situation is to be improved. Such a model fits into the concept of adopting a sector wide approach to solving the housing deficit problem in Suriname. It should be noted that an Inter-ministerial Task force was created consisting of the **Ministries of Finance, Natural Resources, Public Works**, Spatial Planning, Land and Forreest Management and **Regional Development that was** coordinated by SoZaVo to implement collaboration of ministries on particular programs and projects. Although the initiative has had little success, it could be resumed to improve the efficiency of the government as whole in dealing with the housing sector or SoZaVo, or another Ministry, should assume a coordinating role.

One opportunity for a potential area to collaborate and reinforce the Ministry’s mandates could be the LISP program where much coordination is needed to resolve the problem of the inability of people without building plots to participate in the program and have access to credit for housing. Here, the Ministry of Spatial Planning could provide the lots, while SoZaVo secures the resources for subsidies (housing allowances), and the Central Bank gives incentives to commercial banks that will deliver the loans to beneficiaries.

5 Policy Formulation process

The quality and relevance of policies depends greatly on factors such as: availability of background information and analysis, local capacities to interpret, analyze and translate such background information into relevant assessments for adjusting policy objectives and intervention strategies; and on the inclusive participation of government and non-government stakeholders and of the beneficiaries in the policy decision making process.

5.1 Availability of Statistical Data and Analysis

Any policy formulation process must first rely on the availability of relevant and updated information and statistics that feed into the analysis of the current situation, i.e. of the poorest and the vulnerable in the case of social and housing policies. Reliable, current and verified information is crucial to intelligent policy formulation, design, implementation and the identification of target groups. Such statistics and analysis

development and employment opportunities for those that need it. It would be recommendable and practical that this be undertaken in close collaboration with the Directorate of Social Affairs which has access to such programs and services.

should provide insight in the nature and extent of poverty in Surinam as the basis for the design of the intervention strategies. In this regard, following recommendations of the Policy Note 2006-2011, the Ministry has sought to forge collaboration with the General Bureau of statistics (GBS), other relevant ministries such as the Ministries of Health and Education, the planning institute (formerly a part of the Ministry of Planning), other private organizations active in the social welfare system and with multilateral organizations. In fact, there have been some advances in statistical data gathering through the General Bureau of Statistics and with support of multilateral agencies such as the IDB, UNICEF and others.

5.1.1 Assessment of situation

The main spatial survey that yields MDG data in Suriname is the Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS), led by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the GBS, and funded jointly by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Government of Suriname, the UNFPA and other partners. The MICS, which is well-funded, covers the entire country, and allows for disaggregation by area (urban coastal; rural coastal; interior), was last realized in 2006. A more current MICS has been executed in 2010 and the report will be due by end of 2011 which can be taken advantage of in the future.

The Suriname MICS-2006 was a nationally representative survey of households, women aged 15 – 49 and children, based on the results obtained from 5,746 responding households out of a total of 6,536 sampled households. The main objectives of the survey were: (a) to provide up-to-date information for assessing the mid-decade situation of women and children in Suriname, (b) to provide high quality data needed for monitoring progress towards goals established by the Millennium Summit of 2000, the World Summit for Children in 2002, and other internationally agreed upon goals, as a basis for further action and (c) to contribute to the improvement of data and monitoring systems in Suriname and to strengthen technical expertise in the design, implementation and analysis of such systems.⁸ The MICS produced important information regarding: nutrition, child health, environment, reproductive health, child development, education, child protection, HIV/AIDS, sexual behavior, and orphaned and vulnerable children.

In 2007/2008 the GBS conducted the second Household Budgetary Survey (HBS) with a sample of 3,324 households with a representation from 6 districts. The interior districts of Brokopondo and Sipaliwini were not represented in the sample. The data of the HBS can provide information on the percentage of population that could be considered poor using the standard methodology for the generation of poverty analyses. Moreover there is considerable information that allows for the arraying of population according to expenditure and/or income for the development of quintile distributions, which permit for examination of living standards⁹. Also, if properly disaggregated, it could yield much relevant information on the housing situation such as size of household, number of dependents, number of persons per bedroom, access to potable water and the type and characteristics of dwellings. Even though all these data on poverty, housing

⁸ MICS 2006 Report- Summary of Findings

⁹ Kairi page 13

and on the quintile distributions are useful information in the monitoring of living conditions and in the design of government social and housing policies, no evidence was found by the ESD consulting team on the results and analysis of this survey being used by SoZaVo in the design or evaluation of policies.

In July-November 2007, the IDB carried out a household survey specifically designed to develop a Proxy Means Test (PMT) formula overcoming the weaknesses of the GBS 2002 Household Survey by having a database with the adequate household survey information. The PMT is an alternative method to estimate household income, welfare or need using correlated household and individual characteristics. The sample size, with 1,445 households, used the same stratification used in the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2000 divided into three strata: (a) urban, (b) rural and (c) interior. 8 of the 10 districts in Suriname can be classified exclusively into either one of the sample strata. However, two districts, Nickerie and Commewijne, were divided in part urban and part rural for sample design purposes. In August 2008, the consulting firm Bitran & Associates completed the analysis of the IDB household survey and published their results in the report “Development of a Proxy Means Test (PMT) for targeting the poor in Suriname”. The consultants used the data to develop a PMT formula that provides an alternative to the measure of needs when income data can be reliable; a formula which can also be used to target beneficiaries of housing or social safety net programs.

The whole purpose of the PMT formula was to apply it to SoZaVo’s list of beneficiaries to screen the eligible beneficiaries on the basis of their poverty status. To do that SoZaVo began implementation of the SoZaVo Information System (SIS) system – an automated central database of all beneficiaries of the services provided by SoZaVo. The project began in 2004 in collaboration with the Ministry of Health to identify and input information of beneficiaries of the Health Card. The whole project was designed and implemented with technical assistance provided by the IDB through the consulting firm Bitran&Associates. Between 2006 and 2007 information was collected for all the beneficiaries of SoZaVo’s services through the application of a scorecard or “intake form questionnaire” that social workers in field offices would apply to the eligible beneficiaries. The questionnaire requests information about characteristics of the households, the individuals, and on their dwellings and assets. The PMT formula was tested in 2009 with a sample pilot of beneficiaries that screened them based on a definition of a poverty line which defines Poor Households (category A) as those living on income below SRD40 per month and Near Poor (Category B), as those living on a monthly income between SRD 40 – 80. The results of the application of the PMT to the sample of beneficiaries prove the capacity of the formula to adequately predict income levels based on household information and characteristics. It showed results highly correlated to the income situation of households. The next step was to scale up the application of the PMT formula to the whole database containing nearly 50.000 beneficiaries. At the end of 2009 the Permanent Secretary of Social Affairs submitted the proposal to the Ministry of Planning to seek funding from the Dutch Government to gradually start implementing the PMT, yet it was left on suspension.

In February 2009 the consultants Bitran&Associates presented the report “Living Conditions and Social Assistance in Suriname” containing the results of the analysis of the household survey carried out by the Inter American Development Bank (IDB) in the context of the development of a Proxy Means Test (PMT) in

2007. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing (SoZaVo) and the IDB requested a complete statistical review of the information contained in the survey dataset, focusing on household living conditions and the assessment of social protection programs delivery. The report covers different topics, including poverty, demographics, health, education, housing, labor, income, social assistance and household perceptions. Furthermore, and especially relevant given that a census will be held soon in Suriname, different questions can be asked of the entire population of interest to SoZaVo. What's more, as part of the Census exercise, a sample group could be used to respond to a long-format census form to provide in-depth information related to all of the different social and housing information that the Ministry would like to use to target their client population and to aid in the development of policy.

5.1.2 Potential for use in policy design

In spite of all the important efforts mentioned above, there are still many shortcomings and difficulties in regard to the use and application of statistics and data for policy design, to name a few:

- There is not an official and common understanding of poverty or statistical methods to measure it in Suriname. Approaches range from the UNDP multidimensional poverty approach - underlying the MDGs - which goes beyond the Human Development Index, or the income approach based on Household Budget Surveys, to the Proxy Means Test as a practical approach to estimate income based on household characteristics.
- The most critical point is the definition of a cut off line of poverty which will define the extent of poverty in Suriname and the target population of social services. Options are to establish a poverty line based on the cost of a basket of basic goods (Some SRD353 according to GBS in 2007, or preferably a more current data available from GBS) which may only be relevant for the coastal areas involved in a market economy, but not in the interior where poverty may be perceived as the lack of services or in kind goods; Using the more absolute UNDP definition of poverty line based on people living under one dollar per day; Or an approach based on the income distribution by percentiles which may establish the poorest 2 or 3 deciles as the target population of government social services for example. A practical solution would be to separate the definition of the poverty line which defines the extent of poverty in Surinam from the definition of target groups for social services which could be targeted only to the poorest of the poor.
- Politicians as well as high officials have been reluctant or hesitant to come to terms with this important decision about the poverty line and the target population of government services, because of the potential political implications. Such a definition will force the targeting of social services to exclude some previously eligible beneficiaries on the basis of reasons different from their poverty status. Other sensitive implication might be the expected definition of a Minimum Wage correlated with a minimum income to survive. Yet a definition on the poverty line and/or the target population will greatly improve efficiency and impact of social policies and the debate must come to terms
- On a second level the capacity shortcomings of the planning and policy units within Ministries and more specifically within SoZaVo, hinder their ability to manage and analyze statistics, to use them in understanding the problems affecting the poor in Surinam, and to translate them into policy objectives

and goals that can be measured, monitored and evaluated, which will ultimately feed into the design and adjustments of policy¹⁰. It should be noted for example that most analytical reports regarding poverty and living conditions have been conducted by external consultants.

- Particular attention should be paid to the lack of qualified trained personnel at the Directorate of Housing that are capable of unpacking and effectively processing information and analysis useful for policy design and targeting purposes. While some personnel have been hired in recent years at the Directorate of Housing it apparently remains insufficient and furthermore, no specialized staff has been brought on at the Housing Research and Planning Department. This is partially the reason behind the expressed need for the proposed Research Department within the Directorate of Housing or the opportunity to expand the mandates of the existing Research and Planning Unit within the Directorate of Social Affairs to incorporate housing data.
- Furthermore there is an unfortunate and avoidable lack of exchange of information and cross-referencing of data between the two Directorates within the Ministry. The Directorate of Housing admits for instance not having yet utilized housing related information contained in the study of the Proxy Means Test and the resulting analysis of living conditions. These facts significantly hinder the development of relevant policies based on the actual housing deficit of population target groups, and miss valuable opportunities for synergies between social and housing programs to achieve more developmental impacts.
- Establishing realistic and measurable policy goals that can be monitored is an inherent trace of a good policy design. Yet in the case of housing, the lack of use of reliable and updated data and statistics, for example, a baseline measure of deficits, makes the achievement of a policy goal such as the 4,4% annual decrease in the housing shortage established in the MDP and the Policy Notes of 2006-2011, all but meaningless.
- A last concern regards to the lack of a quantitative statistics culture or lack of use of fact-based evidence in analysis and decision making within the country in general. This can be partially explained by the continued slow progress in production of statistics, but also due to the lack of publications or accessibility to data. As Vanus James reported the “lack of access to raw data is related to the privacy requirements of

¹⁰ More specifically, to bring relevant staff up to the level required for high-quality inter-institutional collaboration involving the GBS, according to recommendations from the Vanus James report on Development of Statistics in Surinam it would be necessary to provide more advanced training for relevant staff of the data-producing units, in: Basic statistics; Validation of data using measures of reliability and validity; Questionnaire preparation and the creation of standard forms to be used for application & standard work procedures; Advanced statistics for designing data collection data processing and analysis; Database construction and management, especially with SQL Server; Basic Microsoft programs (Word, Excel, Access); Defining indicators for social programs run by SoZaVo; Poverty measurement – strengthen collaboration with ABS to gather information on access to social programs using the tool of HBS or possibilities to execute LSMS (Living Standards and Measurement Survey) on a continual basis; Poverty mapping but taking into consideration the divisions used by all actors, e.g. Civil Registry, SoZaVo, Police etc; Assessing housing quality and need, such as through the preparation of a valid housing quality index.

the law, the need for high statistical response rates, the lack of strong methods for data anonymization, and the absence of specific 'public interest tests and laws' defining what should be made available, when, and how". At the same time, from a development standpoint, inadequate data access in a national statistical system limits scientific research and independent analysis of the data to reveal new insights or existing quality issues.

5.1.3 Recommendations for the future

- All the information that could be extracted from the above documents and reports could feed into the design of Social Policies for the period 2010 – 2015, for example, to establish measurable indicators of policy objectives. Yet there is much debate pending to reconcile many of the findings particularly regarding the nature and extent of poverty in Suriname. Understanding the conditioning factors that determine poverty in Suriname is the basis for establishing relevant social policies for poverty alleviation.
- The GBS has indicated its willingness to work with SoZaVo to assure that its targeting and research needs are met in future data collection exercises. Looking to the future, the upcoming Census is a new opportunity since Ministries are encouraged to make suggestions as to the questions asked in the census. This represents an opportunity for the two Directorates to suggest the questions that will provide them with the most enlightening information to aid them in policy design. While for practical reasons only a small number of questions will be included in the general census form, an in-depth study conducted simultaneously through a smaller yet representative sample of respondents within the same census¹¹, could be agreed with the GBS.
- Regardless of where the raw data comes from (GBS, IDB, the Census or a Proxy Means Test) in the end it will be up to SoZaVo to maintain up-to-date, quality information on the different social and housing statistics and indicators relevant to monitor implementation and achievement of policies and to effectively carry out its mandates. Any relevant data or statistics that SoZaVo has access to or may soon obtain will quickly be rendered useless for policy formation unless a system is established to continually update, analyze and put in context the raw data, to identify new trends and to cross reference this information between the two Directorates of Social Affairs and Housing, and with other Ministries and relevant partners.

¹¹It should be noted that providing extremely long, complicated and cumbersome questionnaires to all the participants of a census has proven to be counterproductive in most cases in many countries. Participants either refuse to comply with the census or answer without the necessary reflection that can provide indispensable data to the government in terms of planning. The answer that has worked best in many countries has been to have a two or more tiered process that requires the population at large to answer a relatively simple, straightforward questionnaire which gives concrete, basic data on the size and housing conditions of the population as a whole. Secondly, a much smaller, yet statistically representative population is interviewed for a long-form census questionnaire to which the interviewees agree to dedicate a couple of hours. This format can provide much more detailed information on the many different aspects that may help in providing the necessary statistics and data used in policy formation. This method is often considered more statistically accurate since it may involve a larger population group than a normal survey because it counts on the financial and human resources of the government's census process as well as the authority that a census implies to encourage participation.

5.2 Consensus building process

To generate commitment and ownership of policy objectives and implementation it is important to involve all stakeholders in the assessments and the decision making processes of policies and programs. Participatory evaluation assessments and policy design discussions should be inclusive enough to incorporate the views of all stakeholders, public, private and non-governmental, and more importantly the views of beneficiaries. The variety of tools that allow incorporation of the views and participation of stakeholders and beneficiaries ranges from simple surveys, to hearings and consultations, focus groups, to actual participatory planning exercises in the decision making process.

5.2.1 Consensus Building in social policies

The last reported quasi-participatory exercise of such nature was the “Report of a Qualitative Study on Perspectives of Beneficiaries and Non-Beneficiaries on SSN Services and Potential of Community Based Interventions” conducted by Julia Terborg in 2005. The researched population was composed of a group of 100 respondents in Paramaribo and Wanica, which varied by sex, neighborhood, age, ethnicity and beneficiary status. In depth interviews were combined with a two-page standard questionnaire to collect basic social-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

The main results of the study showed that:

- The vast majority of respondents didn’t have any experience with the ‘cash payment’ service, as the main service received is the health card. These cash payments services were generally perceived as ‘not worth the efforts’ and ‘unrealistic” since they do not cover the cost of items they are intended for.
- There was an overall agreement that access to basic healthcare should be guaranteed for everyone, regardless of income
- There was a clear awareness of the right of every citizen to basic services and of the role of the government as the primary responsible actor in caring for the poor
- There was great disagreement with the ‘income’ criteria of SoZa. The amounts that are currently used to determine ‘poverty status’, respectively 40 Srd and 80 Srd per month, are in practice equal with ‘no income’. The overall opinion is that SoZa shouldn’t look at whether people have an income or not, but rather whether the income is below the poverty line.
- Most respondents expressed dissatisfaction with current application procedures, and attitudes of SoZa service providers
- The main services identified to be part of a safety net package are: cash money, a regular job, housing, a piece of land, food packages and school supplies
- Most respondents were of the opinion that services are not always rationalized and universally accessible; they relate level of access and quality of services to ethnic/political influences.
- There was overall agreement that ‘non-poor’ are included in the beneficiaries of SoZa. These ‘non – poor’ persons are mainly described as (small) entrepreneurs (small shop owners, taxi drivers, bus drivers etc.)

- The family network is the main survival structure poor people use. Support of family is the main external source of shelter, food, cash money, care for children and elderly, healthcare, employment etc
- Community participation of respondents is low. The vast majority of respondents is not participating in community organization. Main reasons are the absence of community organizations and/or the lack of interest in participating due to the lack of direct material benefits.
- The opinions on self reliance were two-fold. On one hand, respondents expressed the need of self reliance as a main strategy in coming out of poverty. In this regard people thought mainly of micro-entrepreneur activities. The government should support these self subsistence activities by providing support in the form of credit facilities (soft loans), land, training, agricultural commodities, etc. On the other hand, it was stressed that for some basic items, in particular healthcare, adequate housing and children's education, poor people should always receive government's support, as it would be difficult to impossible for most poor people to pay for these services.
- Very vulnerable groups are single mothers with care for children and other family members, and senior citizens/elderly. These groups, in particular, expressed their high dependency on support of others in their struggle for survival. Most single mothers with care for others expressed a desperate attitude and perceived their situation as unbearable. Most of them are confronted with all kind of psychical and mental health problems.

Even though this study was conducted in 2005 and many officials in SoZaVo back up its results, it seems they were only marginally included in the design of the Policy Note 2006-2011. For instance in some of the principles of the policy such as:

- "Developing a uniform transparent allocation criteria for granting social benefits", which may reflect the beneficiaries concern on a universal and rational accessibility of all beneficiaries, free from the ethnic/political influences affecting discriminatory levels of access and quality of services; and from the perceived inclusion of non-poor among beneficiaries
- The "Integration and coordination of all public services such as study allowance, school transport", in other words, mainly the financial assistance services, perhaps partially connected to the perception that cash payment services being dispersed are not worth the effort, and the expectation for higher relevant transfer amounts.
- The acknowledgement for the need for "Strengthening community work with the aim to promote, encourage and support development of the environment and living environment at the neighborhood level" may also be traced back to the evidence of too little community participation in local development affairs.

Aside from the above mentioned study there is no evidence of other participatory exercises that may have contributed in the design of Social Policies for 2006-2010

It should be noted though that SoZaVo has lead interesting participatory exercises in the formulation of Policy Plan Documents for particular vulnerable groups such as the Policy Plan for Children with strong support of UNICEF, and the Policy Plan for Persons with Disabilities greatly conducted by the National Advisory Council on Policy regarding persons with Disabilities (NARG). Such examples could be replicated in

regard to tailoring social policies intended for low-income households, or women or, as was lately learned, also regarding the Elderly.

Particular attention should be put into organizing participatory exercises for the final preparation of the Social Policy Note 2010-2015. To make the process inclusive enough to win the buy-in of different stakeholders it is recommended to carry out different workshops and focus groups addressed to each type of stakeholders. For instance focus groups with political leaders and members of parliament to sensitize them on the needs for adjustments in regulations; Workshops with local community groups including beneficiaries, for instance at district levels to collect their views and particular difficulties in accessing SoZaVo social services, and their suggestions on how to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

5.2.2 Consensus Building in Housing Policies.

There are different levels of consensus that SoZaVo pursues when promoting social housing policy that need be reviewed; within SoZaVo itself between the Directorate of Housing and that of Social Affairs, at the governmental level, with other ministries and politicians; at the international level, with bi-lateral donors and international organizations and financing agencies; and at the national level with the private sector and the non-governmental; and finally at the local level with beneficiaries or their CBO representatives.

Both the Directorate of Housing and the Directorate of Social Affairs play important roles in serving the poor in need of adequate housing. Given the overlap of serving the same client base, a much closer working relationship needs to be developed between the two Directorates. To begin with the incorporation of information that can be used for targeting the lowest income groups can be enhanced through a better sharing of the SIS and all relevant overlapping information between the two Directorates. Beneficiaries of Cash Transfers, Old Age Pension, and Disability Payments are potentially excellent indicators of who the Directorate of Housing should be reaching with their different programs. Likewise, the beneficiaries of these housing programs can also help the Directorate of Social Affairs identify and qualify the population it needs to target with other social services. In general terms, the targeting mechanism used by both Directorates could be helped by taking advantage of all the information on its different clients obtained by both sub-Directorates and all the departments in SoZaVo that provide services and aid the poor to better determine who in Suriname are the least affluent and most needy to complement better national statistics and other targeting mechanisms such as a PMT Survey.

At the governmental level we see that various different Ministries play a role in low-income housing policy formulation and implementation. This on the surface would seem to indicate a broad based sector-wide approach as opposed to an institutional one, key to long term development. In fact, the various different Ministries (Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of National Resources, Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Spatial Planning as well as the Central Bank) do cooperate to a large extent to promote social housing as required by their complimentary mandates that require consensus between them.

Nonetheless, there seems to be some degree of a competitive relationship between the five or so Ministries struggling for individual credit recognition instead of the collaboration and consensus building necessary for timely and efficient delivery of housing to the target groups that should be the norm within a sector-wide framework. A seemingly disorganized and loose policy design and implementation by each Ministry leads to overlap, duplication of actions and wasting of resources in more than just the social housing sector. For example, where social housing is concerned, we see how SoZaVo, acting on its own, goes well beyond its expressly stated mandate to be responsible for the design and implementation of social housing policy for the least affluent, and branches into promoting the building of housing as an strategy to stimulating the overall economy through supporting the construction industry. Such activities leave SoZaVo without defense when other Ministries decide to overstep their mandates and undertake social housing policies on their own or even with international donors in disregard of SoZaVo's coordinating role. As far as SoZaVo's response to this problem, a two-pronged approach could be implemented to generate more consensus building among the Ministries they commonly deal with; first by reaching out to amenable Ministries with mutual interests to begin a consensus building process to tackle shared objectives; and secondly, by reaffirming its national mandate on social housing policy through promoting a National Housing Policy, endorsed and adhered to by all under the guidance of SoZaVo.

We can observe a significant level of consensus building in policy formulation when it comes to the housing policies that SoZaVo implements with international donors and with the private sector where most stakeholders are involved to a certain extent in policy design, implementation and evaluation. When formulating and designing policies, key stakeholders are consulted and actively involved in design: SoZaVo, donors, private sector banks and construction companies and NGOs. Given the degree of autonomy allowed to these different actors in designing, implementing and evaluating their projects, exactly how the consultation process is undertaken varies slightly by type of program and type of sponsor: International donor, International Organization, Private sector or the Government. Moreover, even within these different groupings, each program interprets the form of consultation that it deems will best serve its particular interests.

Notwithstanding it is noticeable that the degree of collaboration is generally broad and ostensibly includes all relevant stakeholders. The Government of Suriname actively participates in the preparatory phase of the program design and presents a national consensus to the executing agencies of the program. This consensus is usually reached through the formation of a Program Preparation Unit (PPU) often established through SoZaVo which has extensive working sessions with relevant stakeholders such as financial institutions, different Governmental Agencies and Ministries, NGOs, and representatives of the construction industry and suppliers of building materials. The results of these consensus building exercises are presented to the executing agencies that incorporate them when preparing and designing the programs, to tailor them to the reality on the ground in Suriname. Two important common features need be noted however: first, the donor or private sector actor, and not SoZaVo, are taking the lead in developing the policies, including the level of consensus building to be undertaken; and secondly, that a key stakeholder- namely the beneficiaries or their CBO representatives- are nearly always excluded from the design process.

In general terms the process by which the country as a whole promotes a consensus among most key stakeholders is practical and effective. International donors and funding agencies are presented with a consolidated view of the reality on the ground that their programs need to confront in order to be successful. Even though the ad hoc method adopted by the Government is much more agile when dealing with many different programs and executing agencies, there should be some reflection on the ways to capitalize experiences and lessons learned from individual programs, for instance regarding their consensus building formats, to translate them into realistic policy guidelines. Furthermore, the recommendations that come out of these processes are more likely to be accepted as their own and more easily adopted as a general norm.

On the other hand, with the government not customarily consulting the beneficiaries many problems are sure to arise. This willful lack of gathering information puts the policy and the programs at risk of being irrelevant, unfeasible or unpopular with the very people they are targeted to aid. The beneficiaries to a large extent are the best, and at times only stakeholders who can provide actual factual information on the ground. They could inform about the necessities of the target population, the feasibility of a proposed program; and the general acceptance, willingness and potential ownership of a policy in the targeted community. The lack of interest shown by the community and the participating banks in the LMISP most likely could have been avoided had consultations been held at the community level where the pre-existing personal debt, lack of building lots and ready cash could have been pointed out and accounted for during the policy design phase.

The lack of collaboration between ministries has been both problematic and well known for some time. To this end the 2006 Policy Note calls for the establishment of a Public Task Force to bring together representatives of the five ministries considered to be most necessary for coordinating and implementing social policy to coordinate joint actions. The Task force included representatives from the following Ministries:

- Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing,
- Ministry of Public Works,
- Ministry of National Resources,
- Ministry of Regional Development,
- Ministry of Spatial Planning, Land and Forest Management (ROGB)

The task force was organized with two bodies, a political one with representation of all the relevant Ministers coordinated by SoZaVo's, Minister and a more technical forum with representation by the relevant Directors within the Ministries which was coordinated by the Director of Housing from SoZaVo. The goal was to attempt to resolve conflicts among Ministries and promote cooperation through the official forum of Directors, if this failed, the issue was then passed to the Ministerial body. Furthermore this task force was empowered with a team of consultants and experts to help the Task force which would eventually be absorbed into the task force as capacity building improved its functioning.

In 2009 an inter-ministerial Seminar was celebrated that was aimed at consensus building to avoid conflict among Ministries and the promotion of a united front on social housing issues within the government. During

this two day seminar, the decision was made that the Public Task Force recommended in the Multiannual Housing Plan (MHP) of 2006 – 2011 had not functioned and either an alternative method for collaboration would have to be devised or decision making power would have to be concentrated in one Ministry.

6 Policy Design

6.1 Policy Approach

6.1.1 Approach to Social Policies

Assessment of the policy approach to social policy relates to the conceptual foundations and beliefs of government on how to tackle the deep causes of social problems. Evidence of this thinking will be found in policy documents which will make reference to : the adherence to international Treaties and Conventions; the adoption of social welfare vs. Human development approaches; in the explicit understanding of factors and obstacles hampering children, youth, women, elderly, or poor households development & wellbeing ; the Human rights based approach for poverty reduction (vs. Income, infrastructure, comprehensive MDGs); the adoption of Sector wide approach towards policy goals & commitments vs. institutional.

Policy intentions of the Suriname government are formulated in various policy documents such as the Government Policy Declaration; the Multiannual Development Plan; and the Sector Policy Notes that each ministry prepares based on the Government policy priorities. In reviewing the pertinent documents for the period 2005-2011 the following statements reveal and assess the Government approach and priorities in regard to the overall development strategy, the poverty reduction strategy and the social policies.

1. Predominance of a human rights approach connected to the Millennium Development Goals and the traditional concept of universal basic social security for every citizen

In the **Multiyear Development Plan 2006 – 2011** the sustainable development vision is based on principles such as: a **Human Rights Approach** – meaning the fairness and the enjoyment of human rights as a focal point and the guarantee of a decent existence for every person; **The Millennium Development Goals** that give direction to the implementation of the development strategy keeping in mind at all times that the MDG's are linked and cannot be achieved separately; and the **Guaranteeing of Basic Social Security** (safety and legal certainty, education, health care and housing) for each citizen.

2. Acknowledgement of the multidimensional factors determining poverty and the need for a social security system targeted to protect the poor and vulnerable groups

“The objective of the program for poverty reduction is to **eliminate the structural factors** that create and maintain poverty and poverty-related phenomena through four main strategies”, the first one of them being: - “A program for **rationalization of the existing social security system** so that only families that are actually underprivileged are protected against consequences experienced from a chronic inability to generate sufficient income. This group includes people with a disabilities, vulnerable senior citizens, children living

under difficult conditions, homeless people, the chronically ill, and families that are temporarily earning insufficient income.”

3. Prevalence of the Social Assistance approach as a temporary yet indefinite support; in spite of recognizing the need for a more human development approach

According to the Multiyear Development Plan, the Government social policy with regard “to welfare stimulation, **consists of support programs** for persons and households that, because of circumstances of a temporary or structural nature, are not able to generate (sufficient) income to deal with social and economic risks”.

The Policy Note 2006-2011 in fact proposed a human development strategy to encourage exiting of the system and self reliance of beneficiaries at some point based on implementation of Conditional Cash Transfers. It stressed “the goal to develop development programs aimed at breaking the poverty cycle and to support people to get out of the dependency”. For instance through: “Conditioning of the facilities eg. parents are supported only if their children regularly visit the school, medical cardholders are required to monthly doctor visits”; and “measurements supporting the development opportunities of the less vigorous and other vulnerable groups”. Yet no clear responsibilities were assigned within SoZaVo to reach this goal.

4. Current social policy approach is mainly an institutional sector approach as opposed to a poverty alleviation sector-wide approach:

In spite of recognizing the need to develop policy aimed at reducing poverty through the creation of an adequate social welfare program in consultation with other actors - while recognizing sector plans with regard to health, education, housing, legal protection and security-, institutional inertia has prevented so far adequate practical cooperation among ministries and other non-government actors in the design and implementation of a coherent poverty alleviation program.

Lack of strong shared policy objectives and strategies for poverty alleviation open the way for potential clashing among Ministries, duplication of efforts, neglected policy issues, and a waste of government resources. As an example Programs that are administered by different ministries and serve the same general target group, yet have separate targeting procedures. Beneficiaries are also required to apply for each program, leading to Inefficient use of human and financial capital.

Other proof of the “institutional” approach to social policies is the emphasis placed by the Multiyear Development Plan on the responsibilities of SoZaVo and the need for a social welfare reform at the core, albeit important, mainly based on organizational reforms such as:

- Organizational strengthening of SoZaVo in the short-term in the area of policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Implementation of the project SOZAVO INFORMATION SYSTEM (SIS) to provide insight in the characteristics of the client database and to enable the Ministry to monitor the allocation and implementation (payment) process.

- Adjusted standards and criteria for allocating social provisions: instead of income standards, proxy means will be applied, a score card stating indicators with regard to the living conditions of the applicant.
- Streamlining and integrating small programs where possible so that they complement each other for greater results, to increase the effectiveness of the poverty policy.

5. Adoption, within the Social policy of SoZaVo, of international commitments such as the CRC, CEDAW and the Madrid Plan for Elderly and the Convention for Persons with Disabilities, has been through the development in most cases of Categorical Policy Plans regarding particularly vulnerable groups yet with no integration among them.

Concrete examples mentioned in the Policy Note 2006-2011 are: Policy Plan for Children 2002 – 2006, Policy document for persons with disabilities 2005 – 2009. Yet in the case of CEDAW and the social policies to women in distress this responsibility falls within the remit of the Ministry of Home Affairs and their gender office, which developed the Integral Gender Action Plan 2006 – 2010. Another strategy connected with international commitments is the National Strategy Plan for the multisectoral response to HIV/AIDS, also outside SoZaVo’s mandates.

6. A rapid and marginal mention on participation of private initiatives and non-participation of Community Based Organizations in the implementation approach.

According to the Policy Note 2006-2011, “[...] where necessary (SoZaVo) will provide advice to organizations and agencies that are committed to the welfare of the society. This will lead to a structural form of policy support, not least in light of policy intention to gradually reduce public involvement in the policy implementation”.

7. In general the Social Policy Note 2006-2011 ignores the potential for synergies between social services, categorical services and housing services, and among vulnerable groups and the community at large, in the delivery of services and the implementation of development strategies.

6.1.2 Approach to Housing Policy

Suriname’s policy approach to social housing is above all else rooted in the Article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which understands housing as a basic social right. This at first led the government to implement various construction programs that provided subsidized rental units to the very poor and to build houses that it essentially sold to the middle or lower middle income earner at a reduced cost. In the Government Policy Statement of 1992 however, individuals and groups were urged to take more control of their housing problems and become less dependent on government assistance. Beginning in the late 90’s this policy continued to evolve and in 2006 SoZaVo’s Policy Note definitively adopting the Ministry’s plan for the phasing out the building of housing and embracing the role of promoting the private and NGO sector to provide social housing through the facilitating of financial incentives and providing building lots and other incentives which remains SoZaVo’s housing policy today.¹²

¹² Partnership in Social Housing? Marlon Keneth Powell, 2010

In general terms, the social housing approach adopted by SoZaVo is in accordance with how the United Nations sees a successful policy for medium and long term poverty eradication. Specifically, SoZaVo's current approach is to implement policies that promote human development over social assistance programs; follow a sector-wide approach rather than an institutional one; and follow a human rights approach that takes into consideration the needs of all disenfranchised and at risk groups.

Promoting a human development approach is undertaken by SoZaVo through its decision to move away from constructing housing and toward empowering the population to access credit to build their own. This reflects the commonly held belief that pro-poor policies must empower the target groups to move out of poverty toward self-sufficiency. While various Ministry's deal with social housing issues through different mandates showing a governmental sector-wide approach to the housing shortage, the competition and near breakdown in the responsibilities and mandates of the different Ministries is certainly not beneficial. By including the objective of promoting human rights through housing policy SoZaVo has respected International Agreements and incorporated them as much as possible into their policy design. The rights of groups protected in such agreements as the CRC, CEDAW, and Agreement on PWD and the Madrid Declaration on the Elderly are mentioned in the criteria for targeting beneficiaries. Similarly, the Millennium Development Goals are often used as the targets and goals by which the successes of policies are judged.

In general, the approach to policy design today is that SoZaVo stops providing social housing outright and instead promotes and facilitates the actions of independent and autonomous international and private sector providers of social housing creating a stronger, more dynamic and efficient housing sector that at the same time enables beneficiaries to become more self-reliant and to eventually exit the social services network through providing them with access to credit to buy their own homes as opposed to receiving them from the government.¹³ In this approach, social assistance programs are seen as a temporary safety net to keep people from falling unconditionally into poverty with no exit strategy. At the same time it is necessary to consider that certain individuals will need public assistance, including subsidized housing, for most, if not their entire lives due to physical or other impediments that make it difficult for them to provide for themselves financially.

¹³ The above policy approach need to be framed within the so called policy principals as detailed by the Ministry in its 2006 Policy note:

"The principles for housing policy by the Ministry of SOZAVO for the policy period 2005 -2010a re as follows: 1. investing in housing is inextricably linked to promoting sustainable human development. 2. The housing problem is a socio-economic problem; available resources will be allocated in such a way as best to make sure the housing need is met. 3. To be able to solve the housing problem requires a combination of measures. Besides the actual construction of new housing, it is necessary to rationalize the land allocation policy, adjustment of credit, preservation of the housing stock, promotion / access to private housing and the adaptation of relevant legislation- 4.In terms of effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of housing policies must outline ministerial powers and responsibilities as far as possible in official legislation"

6.2 Policy Objectives

6.2.1 Social Policy Objectives

The quality of a policy design can be directly linked to meeting the central evaluation requirements, namely: that the outcomes are clear, specific and measurable (“What gets measured gets done”); that the interventions, and the target population, are clear and identifiable; and that an appropriate monitoring and evaluation system was in place and implemented.

Any Social Policy would therefore begin by a declaration of the main policy objectives to be obtained at the end of the policy implementation period. Objectives should be expressed in terms of measurable goals which actually reflect outcomes of services in the target population. In other words indicators that measure the effects of services when reaching the target population, and the degree of use and quality of services by beneficiaries.

After the main Policy objective is spelled out, the hierarchy matrix of objectives then requires the enumeration of specific goals. Usually these specific objectives/goals are the constituent parts of the overall Policy Objective and they in turn are the commanding objectives of specific programs. They all should be defined in terms of outcomes i.e. the effects on the beneficiary population of programs. On a third level are the outputs indicators which refer to the particular services provided by an institution or group of implementing institutions of the policy. These institutional output objectives become operational plans when they are broken down into the individual objectives of the internal executing units in charge of contributing their inputs to secure the service.

In examining the Multiyear development Plan and the Social Policy Note 2006 – 2011 the following issues are the most outstanding regarding policy objectives.

1. The main policy documents (Multiyear Development Plan and the Social Policy 2006-2011) lack clear, relevant and measurable policy objectives and goals, and absence of a baseline.

This could be partially explained by the lack of reliable statistics and measures on the extent and nature of poverty which would unveil the baseline situation; maybe due to the long pending definitions about poverty lines and target population of social policies; or because it was the first time that the Government implemented a new planning framework requiring clear definition of objectives.

For the most part, the policy matrixes in the Multiyear Development Plan make a remarkable effort to reflect objectives and indicators, but mostly they only reflect indicators of activities or indicators of outputs at best. Some good attempts to establish relevant output indicators in the Activities Matrixes of the Multiyear Development Plan for the Welfare Stimulation chapter were:

General objective: Guarantee the basic securities to persons and households that are temporarily or structurally not able to generate their own income

Sub objective 1: Practical and sustainable improvement of services, aid, care and financial benefits towards persons and households that are temporarily or structurally not able to generate their own income.

Indicators:

- a. Increase of the degree of cover of poor people with at least 50% in 5 years
- b. Within 5 years, rationalization criteria for allocation of care package

Yet the indicators are still too vague to actually be measurable since they lack precise definitions and measures for each of the variables. For instance Indicator A requires definition on how to measure “cover”, or definition and measure of the number of “poor”. The lack of a baseline measure of the indicator makes the goal of increase by 50% meaningless. Indicator B seemingly reflects an indicator of output “check-off” or a measure of the end of and activity, yet it lacks qualifications such as “drafted” or “approved” or “fully in operation”.

We are unaware if there was a more detailed elaboration of the matrixes of objectives and whether a matrix for monitoring and evaluation with verification sources and means was actually established. But according to information learned from planning officials it wasn’t applied to evaluate the MDP 2006-2011.

2. The social policy Note 2006 – 2011 exhibits an unclear mix of institutional objectives and diffuse policy objectives

The Social Policy Note 2006-2011 for the most part lacks quantitative measures of goals. Objectives are expressed as general intentions with no baseline or goal measure. For instance “The objective of the policy for children and youth is to encourage and promote a balanced and harmonious growth and development in all areas of life and relationships under the subsequent phases”. An excellent statement yet lacking the concrete definitions of a goal clearly spelling out what has to be accomplished during the planning period and how will it be measured.

There is not an overall Policy objective from which all other specific objectives of programs can be connected to. In fact, there is a complete void between the principles (policy approach) of the Social Policy and the institutional objectives of Directorates and Divisions. The rest of the objectives within the Policy Note refer mainly to the mandates or responsibilities of the particular Directorates or Divisions, making it all the more difficult to distinguish between policy objectives, and institutional objectives and mandates.

A particular note should be devoted to the efforts of developing specific Policies for each of the categorical groups of Children/Youth and of Persons with Disabilities and Elderly however. They have a more clear definition of their target groups and a coherent set of actions yet not prioritized. They also contain commendable objectives yet lacking quantitative and measurable goals

3. “Measurable program objectives not included in work plan to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of project outputs”

As the Kari report also found in their capacity assessment, for implementation of the very broad social policy objectives, SoZaVo produced work plans within each unit with some indicators under each major program. But these only reflect indicators of activities and major milestones such as approval of legislation, etc. but they miss the connection with higher indicators of outputs of services or much less of outcomes.

6.2.2 Housing Policy Objectives

While specific policy objectives are stated in the 2006 MDP such as reducing the level of people without access to adequate housing or increasing the number of lots available to them, the percentage increase of housing for the poor being built or improved are to a large extent not well defined in the sense that they lack serious statistical support for both targeting objectives and have no baseline reference for comparison between the stated objectives and the actual change effected making them difficult if not impossible to measure in any meaningful way. On the other hand, in the 2006 -2011 MDP and the 2006 Policy Note, the government recognizes that in order to improve the housing situation in Suriname certain core issues within the Ministry and the housing sector at large need be addressed in important and substantive ways. While the first, specific numerical set of goals will be outlined below, it is the second empirical set that best helps to illuminate the Ministry’s success in achieving its objectives.

Specific Measurable Objectives

Regarding specific the MDP states the in the first place SoZaVo is called upon to address housing problem of social target groups in a structural fashion and to promote the implementation of programs for low income groups. This goal is to be measured with the following indicators: that social housing is sufficiently facilitated by the ministry to reach demand to the level that a drop in number of persons in underprivileged situations seeking housing drops approximately 4% per year between 2006 an 2011. An overall increase in the housing sector regarding both building of new houses and housing improvements of existing ones. Specifically it is called for the increase of the executive capacity building sector to at least 4,300 houses, including those built by the open housing market sector, of which 2,300 will be for the lower and middle income groups and 2000 built on the open market. It also calls for the facilitating the financing for the benefit of building new houses with loans to be increased by 500 facilitated loans for housing per year. In regard to the problem of the lack of land for hosing, spatial planning for the benefit of houses building is a priority and readjusted toward the housing sector. It is proposed that this can be measured by providing sufficient land for housing, specifically at least 8,300 building lots made available in the period 2006 – 2010.¹⁴

The MHP of the same year however offers a different set of specific objectives as detailed in the 2006 Policy Note. The MPH recognizes the current amount of housing available in the country does not adequately

¹⁴ MDP, 2006 -2011, pg 182

respond to the housing shortage and proposes the construction and improvement in the following fashion between 2006 and 2011 through its different programs such as LISP and 7% mortgage program: 3000 new houses built and 4000 improved.¹⁵ Due to the insufficient data to compare these figures to any verifiable base line or any real definition of the housing shortage, as well as, the disparity between the different set of building objectives not to mention the incomparability between them due to varying definitions of housing it would seem not only difficult to gauge the Ministry's success in reaching its specific goals but irrelevant given the impossibility of determining its effect on reducing the actual housing deficit making the process futile.

Sector-wide Substantive Objectives:

Apart from unquantifiable, specific objectives redacted above, the 2006 -2011 MDP indicates sector-wide areas that need be addressed in order to successfully implement a housing strategy that can benefit the population of Suriname through improving the agility of the housing sector in general and SoZaVo specifically to better respond to their needs. Four main problems facing SoZaVo in relation to the successful implementation of its housing policies are outlined: the availability of financial resources and the access to financing, the availability of building land, the organization of the sector and the increase of the efficiency and effectiveness within the sector. It goes on to indicate four sub-programs to address these issues: a transitional arrangement, institutionalization and education, land Development Company and a housing program. Furthermore it is conceded that for the realization of both sets of objectives certain aspects of the reality of the housing sector need to be taken into account.

In order to obtain its objectives it need be understood that SoZaVo in assuming a coordinating, evaluating and promotional role for the actions to address the housing deficit efforts are required from both the state and non-state actors. The division of responsibilities is thus defined: SoZaVo will assume the role of directing, facilitating and stimulating the international and private sector to participate in the provision of social housing. SoZaVo will avoid as when possible fulfilling an executing or implementing role in the implementation of the MHP unless no other actor is willing to respond to a critical need. The execution or implementing of the housing policy is largely left to non-governmental actors and society itself.

The form of policy execution is not based on a hierarchical coordination structure but a horizontal one where the separate administrative competencies and autonomy of the stakeholders, projects clients and owners are recognized and accepted. A main objective of using this organizational structure is to facilitate self-guiding and ownership of the network of the MPH stakeholders as well as promote individual responsibility, competence and capacity building of the stakeholders and beneficiaries. Another objective is of this organizational approach is that through putting the building of social housing in the hands of the private sector the relatively high multiplier of the housing sector will act as an important stimulus to the overall economy and contribute to the generation of employment and reduction of poverty. However, this type of system could result in the loss of direct control by SoZaVo over the programs that are implemented to help

¹⁵ MPH 2005 – 2010, Policy Note, 2006

reach its objectives in line with its mandates. Independent financial schemes may lose sight of the Ministries Mandate to serve the least affluent and needy without the proper oversight, monitoring and evaluation.

6.3 Target Population

6.3.1 Target population of Social Policies

The target population of a social policy consists of all individuals whom the whole policy is intending to effect and produce improvements in their wellbeing.

According to the Vision in the Policy Note 2006-2011 the target groups of the social policy are “especially the less affluent people and the vulnerable groups with the aim of reducing poverty and elimination of welfare constraints”. Such broad definitions have been translated into the eligibility criteria for each of the SoZaVo Programs yet without clear-cut definitions and common understanding of the required characteristics of potential beneficiaries. Much has been said on these flaws that allow room for interpretation or even manipulation and the need to focus on the “objectively identified” poor and vulnerable while at the same time strictly enforcing the eligibility criteria.

Following are the definitions of target groups of each of SoZaVo Programs and a discussion on the factual problems of application on the ground based on the assessments made by Francisco Ayala in 2009 and Observatorio Social in 2005:

Table 1: Target Population and Beneficiaries of Social Policies

| PROGRAM | TARGET GROUP | ELEGIBILITY CRITERIA | Estimated # of Beneficiaries (2007) |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| General Old Age Pension (AOV) | Individuals over 60 years | Surinamese Citizens, and foreign-born residents who have contributed to the Old Age Pension Fund for at least 10 years | 37.700 |
| Health Card (GH) | Members of poor households without any other health insurance | <i>Type A - Poor</i> (can have access to financial assistance programs too): Individuals with a self-reported HH monthly income of less than SRD40. <i>Type B - Near Poor</i> : individuals of HH with self-reported income between SRD40-80 | Type A: 52.332 ind. 26.700 HH ¹⁶ Type B: 114.017 ind. 40.859 HH |
| Financial Assistance (FB) and Alivio | Adults (Aged 17-60) with incomes less than SRD40 | People who hold Health Card Type A. And persons with Disabilities including Drug Addicts and HIV/AIDs victims? | 14.095 |
| School Supplies | Children in school from households below poverty line | Parents with an enrollment certificate of children from School Director. Must be Health card holders | 6.666 |
| Child Allowance (AKB) | Children in poverty risk | Unemployed parents of Children under 18. ID cards, birth certificates of children and prove of unemployment or of lack of children coverage from employer. | 21.415 |
| Food for Kids | Children between 6-12 | Registered in the SBEC's Day Care Centers; Poor families with nutritional needs; Schools for selected students | 1130 |
| School Fees | Students in High School or College from low income Households | Low-income HH (Less than SRD12500/month that do not pay taxes); School enrollment and in good standing academically | 650 |
| Institutional Subsidies | NGOs providing social services | On request according to analysis of financial need | |
| Immaterial services | Any one in need | Self selection. On first come first served basis | |
| Ashiana House for the Elderly | Homeless or abandoned Elderly | Waiting list | 325 |
| Community work | Local Communities | Communities within the reach of the Community Work Division | Communities in A Paramaribo, Commowenji, Wanika, and Para up to Benasdrorp |

¹⁶ (SIS Project- March 2009. The numbers have been steadily decreasing since June 2008)

General Old Age Pension: The target group is clear and in fact the Old Age Pension is a universal pension fund. The Fund is a common basket made up of contributions from individuals through a payroll tax (4%), but mainly by government budget that subsidizes the Fund. It is clear that in a country with such high levels of informal employment the needs will always and increasingly outweigh the Fund resources from contributions thus threatening its feasibility and relevance. However in this section the argument that should be made refers to the issue of who should be benefiting from these government subsidies. According to Ayala 65% of recipients get the payments in their bank account which suggests most beneficiaries are not poor. Also questionable is the issue of cross-subsidies since every beneficiary collects the same amount regardless of how much he/she has contributed to the Fund during the productive life cycle. These situations raise serious horizontal and vertical equity issues, which should be carefully considered in the long awaited and announced reform for a real Universal Age Pension to every resident in Surinam, yet on more equitable basis.

Health Card (GH): The first difficulty about the target population of this program is the same definition of a household. In a country where poor families depend on the support of other family members to survive, it would be difficult to draw the line between one household to another. Therefore careful consideration should be paid to come up with a practical definition of a “household”, yet inclusive enough to allow for emerging forms of family such as single parents households, extended families, families with dependents with disabilities or elderly, etc. The second major difficulty of this program target group is the self-reported income criteria used in defining Poor or Near Poor. Regardless of the social workers household visits to check where informality is the norm it will be nearly impossible to establish an objective measurement of average income per household. On the other hand, as already mentioned, beneficiaries have expressed that the existing income threshold means no income at all and that a more realistic criteria should focus on the insufficiency of income and the need for a subsidy to at least reach the minimum to survive (the Poverty Line). On the other hand “doctors and medical professionals at overworked clinics and health facilities complained that many patients with a health card were not, in their opinion, needy or vulnerable and should have been paying for their care”¹⁷. Much debate has gone on around the need for an objective measure of the levels of need and poverty of households. Studies, seminars and workshops have repeatedly recognized the Proxy Means Test as the most suitable targeting tool in a country with no reliable income information and high informal employment levels. The time must come to make a decision and adopt an objective and indisputable measure such as the PMT that can also be gradually enhanced and tuned to the availability of regular reliable statistics. The tool will allow for a more objective identification of the poor and needy yet the definition of the cut-off point of poverty that sets the limit of beneficiaries of services is in essence a political decision that should be based in the availability of resources and the priority that should be given to the poorest among the poor.

Financial Assistance and Alivio: Since the same definition of the Health Card target population applies for this program, the same difficulties apply too. Nonetheless a particular difficulty arises in the case of the vulnerable and the disable. While it is true they should be entitled to health care because of the catastrophic

¹⁷ Ayala Report – “Conditional Cash Transfers Design Proposal”

implications of diseases and the inability to generate income for themselves, yet there should be a clear division between the concept of health care and the concept of a financial assistance for life which will in fact become a type of Pension. Indeed this should also be grounds to consider on the one hand, the inclusion of persons with disabilities within the long expected Pension Reform of course minding the necessary actuarial calculations; and on the other, permanent disabilities care and chronic diseases treatments of high cost are sensitive social and individual risks that to which all Surinamese are now exposed since private health insurance do not cover them either. Therefore careful consideration should be given to these matters as part of the analysis and design of a Universal Health Insurance System in Surinam.

School Supplies: Difficulties in the targeting of population in this program again arise from the lack of a clear definition and measures of poverty in Surinam and on the delimitation of a household. Also problematic is the fact that Schools are playing a very marginal supportive role in the process of verifying registration in the schools, or in recommending the most needy or vulnerable for the program; or to verify that the transfer is used correctly.¹⁸ Furthermore besides the request for a certificate of enrollment only provided on annual basis, there is not any other monitoring on the actual attendance of children to school. In practical terms this material - and now monetary - allowance conforms a supplementary financial assistance to families that apply for the program.

Child allowance: The Ministry of Finance performs the screening of children, in theory against the birth date registration database, and awards eligibility for renewable periods of 5 years, or before, if children reach 18 or parents get employed. Yet administrators cannot verify in practice changes in labor status of parents and eligibility criteria do not regard household income status. Given the high levels of informality and the control weaknesses of the system, this program would be bound to become a universal and permanent allowance. In practice however because of the small amounts transferred and since applications can only be submitted through the SoZaVo ASUV division offices only existing in Paramaribo and Nickerie, the program has major accessibility bottlenecks and applicants are very few. On top of this, there is no guarantee that those awarded are really the neediest or their children are in critical situation or at risk of poverty.

Food for Kids: the design of this material allowance providing in-kind meals to children has created many administration and maintenance problems. Compounded with lack of adequate budgets to cover the demands of the program, it has in practice almost disappeared. The targeting mechanisms are not working for poor families or school students with nutritional problems, except in the case of the 15 day care centers administered or coordinated by SoZaVo's SBEC Foundation by the government.

School Fees: This is a program run by the Ministry of Education yet is considered a part of the Social Safety Net. The target group of this program is low-income families as determined by the Ministry of Education based on proof of either: that parent or guardian receive less than SRD12,500, or do not pay taxes (certified by Tax office); or have a health card. The targeting issue here regards to the conflicting definition of the

¹⁸ Ibidem.

needy population between SoZaVo and the MOE. The wide distance between the definition of poor population by SoZaVo -as those with under SRD40 a month- compared to the definition of low-income families- as those with under SRD12500- from MOE means in fact a dispersion of public resources and missing opportunities for synergies and developmental impacts within the target population through combining efforts from two sectors.

Institutional Subsidies & Ashiana House: Even though the target population of “this” program is expressed in terms of needy institutions it should be noted that the main target population is those individuals they assist through their care centers. It is assumed that beneficiaries’ population is by definition the neediest and more vulnerable, yet this could be also examined in further detail.

Community work: is a program that should cover all communities throughout the country yet because of financial and material constraints it is in practice delivered to communities within the limited reach of the MOW team office in Paramaribo. Because of the importance of community work to prevent most social risks a decentralization strategy in collaboration with other divisions, and Ministries, should be devised to better reach communities in every District.

In sum there are many different and sometimes conflicting approaches among programs and even among ministries, to defining the target population of their services. This is also an indication of the difficulty in defining the overall target population of the social policy, which in turn limits and prevents the possibility of measuring or even accomplishing overall developmental impacts. Resources are scattered among different groups of beneficiaries, there are not economies of scale in the targeting process since each program has and performs its own procedures for selection of beneficiaries and do not execute any cross reference; and there is no way to track leakage of resources from identification errors in the selection of beneficiaries because of very loose, unrealistic or unverifiable eligibility criteria.

An additional point should be made about the issue of establishing target populations which are beyond the physical reach or the available resources of the institution. It appears that because of financial constraints sometimes eligibility criteria and operational procedures are designed to discourage beneficiaries and reduce the pressures on programs. This might explain for example why the number of Health Card holders has been steadily diminishing since 2008, or why some programs such as the Food for kids or the AKB have been phasing out or rendering themselves irrelevant. Asking about transparency of services and conditions, some officials expressed concern about advertising services and conditions of programs through the media because of the overwhelming demands it will raise. Such alarm reflects the unpreparedness of the institution and its means to actually be able to perform the policy objectives. This in turn calls the attention on the overall policy implementation strategy on one hand, but also on the real commitment of government beyond the political decisions to secure adequate financing to SoZaVo and to the programs it executes.

As Ayala in fact quotes:

Statistics on coverage and targeting of services are unknown except for the Health Card program that reaches one fourth of total population, most of which are poor. Current targeting policy is costly (e.g. targeting activities

employs one third of total SoZaVo payroll), although SoZaVo is moving towards proxy-means measurement of poverty. Most of in-kind services for categorical groups (elderly, youth, and children) lack transparent criteria for the allocation of resources, leading to a waste of resources and to lack of accountability.

6.3.2 Target Population of Housing Policy

Suriname considers adequate housing to be a basic human right and in this sense SoZaVo and the Directorate of Housing exist to serve everyone in Suriname that requires aid in accessing housing regardless of their income, economic situation or geographic location. Coincidentally, the majority of the programs implemented under the coordination of SoZaVo appear to benefit middle income groups that are financially independent and located in the urban or coastal areas.¹⁹ The overall mandate and stated objectives of SoZaVo according to the MDP and its own Policy notes indicate that it is to provide access to housing to the least affluent and most needy sectors of society throughout the country. In accordance, the ministry identifies the following sub-groups within the poor as its chief target population to whom it will provide housing:

- Elderly (senior citizens);
- People with disabilities;
- Families with disabled members;
- Single head of household families: (single mother / single father)
- Low income groups (socially disadvantaged)
- Young families (the so-called "starters families")
- Middle and senior management²⁰

Regarding the ability of the Ministry to identify these groups within the poorest sectors of society we need to determine if the targeting mechanism or mechanisms employed by the Ministry are not identifying the proper target group, if there is a disconnect between targeting and distribution of services or if the problem lies with the enforcement of the eligibility criteria for the participation in the services that SoZaVo offers. While we have seen that many of the programs facilitated by SoZaVo have serving the less affluent and needy as their goal different problems exist that cause this goal to be elusive.²¹ Due to the decentralized and autonomous nature of the individual programs put forth by the Ministry the answer to the above question would appear to be all of the above, as different programs have different weaknesses.

The first issue that must be addressed is the quality of the different systems employed to identify the target groups for the different programs that assist in providing access to housing. The most important element to any targeting system is the reliability, relevancy and up to date nature of the data on which it is based. As has been discussed at length earlier, this represents a grave problem in Suriname. Data must be gathered that is specific to the housing sector as well as on income in order to properly target the low-income and needy

¹⁹ Second Low Income Shelter Program Proposal, IDB

²⁰ Policy Note 2006

²¹ Partnership is Social Housing? Marlon Powell, 2010

population in need of housing. A good start would be to develop an agreed upon definition of poor in Suriname that is based on either a more realistic income level than 40 SRD or preferably on a survey (PMT for example) that can gauge a potential beneficiary's need on his or her real purchasing power regardless of where their income may come from (formal or informal employment). Only then can target groups be reliably identified and other mitigating factors such as single parent household, disability, age, etc., be considered

The Social Housing Foundation is the entity within SoZaVo that targets the lowest income groups and provides them with rental and lease to own housing at reduced cost. Eligibility criteria have duly been established to select those who can access the public and rent subsidized housing it has to offer. However, these guidelines are either poorly formulated or more likely poorly enforced as many of those accepted into the program must wait years for housing or in fact may never get off the waiting list.²² This however does not only have to do with an insufficient number of units at the disposal of the Foundation. It would seem poor policy design with inconsistent targeting or leakage and political influence lead to an informal road to receiving the housing offered by the Foundation. Faced with this reality, we must assume that the targeting mechanism's main weakness lay not with the identification of the target groups but more likely with the enforcement of the criteria and by not actually using the target group identified when distributing housing.

The other major tools at the disposal of SoZaVo for reaching the poor and assuring that they are adequately housed are the different financial modalities, subsidies and programs to facilitate the access to credit to obtain a mortgage. Here it would appear that there is a problem with tailoring the programs to the stated target groups on one hand and a disconnect between SoZaVo's main target group, the low income sector, and the objectives and clients of the actual programs. The programs aimed at facilitating access to credit have requirements that all but exclude even the near poor let alone the poorest from participation in many cases.²³ The fact that SoZaVo has pursued a policy of providing access to housing through facilitating the role of the private credit sector of the economy (commercial banks) to more easily attend the needs of those excluded from the housing mortgage market means that creditworthy participants are the only beneficiaries of these programs. If the poor have outstanding personal loans, unstable sources of income and very limited access to ready cash to cover their portion of a loan it is doubtful that any amount of subsidies or the provision of building plots will transform them into worthy risks in the eyes of the banks.

²² Interview with Director of Social Housing Foundation

²³ Support to Low Income Shelter Program, Phase II, may, IDB 2008

6.4 Overall Implementation Strategy

6.4.1 Overall Social Policy Strategy

6.4.1.1 Initial Statements on the implementation strategy

Starting with the Multiannual Development Plan the government established 4 implementation strategies and priorities to reach the poor tackling the determining factors of poverty, and to protect the vulnerable against further poverty, namely:

- To rationalize the existing social security system;
- Target only families actually underprivileged and protect them against consequences from a chronic inability to generate sufficient income: (Persons w/disability, vulnerable senior citizens, children living under difficult conditions, homeless people and families that are temporarily earning insufficient income);
- Provide temporary financial assistance to the underprivileged groups who will then have more room to fulfill their immediate consumptive needs, to save and investing in income and capital growth;
- Strengthening cooperation with social groups: involvement and participation of communities including underprivileged groups in socio-economic life;
- And within this scope, the Government will support the positive activities of the private sector and civil society.

In turn the Social Policy Note 2006-2011 emphasized through its principles the following implementation strategies:

- the current package of social services which is available from the Government, should be adapted and integrated through the creation of an adequate social welfare program while recognizing individual sector plans with regard to health, education, housing, legal protection and security
- to develop development programs aimed at breaking the poverty cycle and to support people to get out of the dependency:
- Integration and coordination of all public services such as study allowance, school transport, etc.
- Conditioning of the facilities
- Measurements supporting the development opportunities of less vigorous and other vulnerable groups
- Developing a uniform transparent allocation criteria for granting social benefits
- Strengthening and expanding partnerships with other public and private initiative
- the community work with the aim to promote, encourage and support development of the environment and living environment at the neighborhood level
- Service, help and care must be improved, enhanced, professionalized and decentralized

The above statements indicated the intention of policy makers to implement social policy through an overall strategy characterized by:

- ✓ **Improved targeting systems**

- ✓ **Introduction of a National Conditional Cash Transfers Program** (Streamlining financial assistance services and introducing conditionality that promote developmental behaviors).
- ✓ **Integration and coordination of social services** (Social Protection, health, education, labor, etc) into one adequate social welfare program, indicating the beginning of a sector-wide approach to poverty alleviation.
- ✓ **Expanding partnerships with public and private institutions**, in recognition of the need for a more cooperative approach to tackle the problems of poverty and value of the efforts and resources of private initiatives devoted to social programs.
- ✓ **Community work and community participation in socio-economic life** to empower social groups to develop themselves, and to prevent social risks by way of collective action.

6.4.1.2 Assessment of the implemented strategy

An actual assessment of the implemented strategy of policy and the actions actually followed shows the following main features:

- **An Institutional, and fragmented policy implementation approach**

All the good principles of action initially proposed were forgotten in the second part of the Social Policy Note 2006-2011 when institutional mandates of Directorates and Divisions within SoZaVo were implicitly equated to the objectives of specific programs. Thus the implementation was based almost exclusively on institutional responsibilities of SoZaVo: for the provision of Tangible (Financial) or Intangible Services under the General Social Care Sub-Directorate (AMZ) addressed to the poor and most needy which conform the Social Safety Net; and a set of Categorical Services under the Sub-Directorate of Categorical work with a focus on promoting social welfare for vulnerable groups. Unfortunately enough services provided under one of the sub-Directorates may overlap with services of the other. Such is the case for example of the General Social Work Service (AMW) and the Service Community Development Work (MOW) both under AMZ, providing immaterial assistance to individuals or groups of persons in need of aid; which may overlap at times with the categorical assistance or counseling services provided by the youth service or the child hot line or through the foundations and care centers under the KMW sub directorate.

Furthermore even though SoZaVo has tried to build partnerships with NGOs and private institutions, the experience has been constrained to some extent by the widespread belief that government should hire and pay for services offered by private institutions or NGOs in a form of outsourcing, instead of building actual partnerships to join efforts and resources towards the same ends. SoZaVo has been unable to commit into a deeper public private partnership strategy because of lack of enough resources thus missing opportunities for CBOs, NGOs participating in policy design and implementation. The situation will be further aggravated by the critical financial situation that most social NGOs will face starting in 2011 because of the Dutch Aid resources - which had long supported their activities- now phasing out of the country.

- **Dispersed, overlapping and inefficient social assistance programs.**

After a careful operational assessment of the main social safety net programs Ayala concludes that:

“ ... the existing system is an elaborate array of overlapping services confusing to beneficiaries and many persons who might be eligible are not aware of the existence of programs. Moreover, the benefits provided by current cash transfer programs are so low that the costs of applying for service (including the costs of obtaining all relevant documentation and the costs of transportation to field offices) often outweigh the benefits received. Finally, currently the SSN programs are plagued by weak mechanisms of monitoring and control, are prone to fraud, and lacking in transparency and accountability mechanisms.²⁴

Organizational and delivery structures and administrative processes are other problems with the existing SSN system. In fact, the application and awarding of the social services – Health Card, Financial Assistance, and School Supplies, just to name a few – takes place at two levels: the application is at the level of the field offices and the awarding is at the level of district offices, both offices are supervised by the Division of General Social Welfare, which is the operational unit of the at SoZaVo, and yet the application, screening and targeting processes take place at different places. This absorbs substantial staff and financial resources

In general, we found that current safety net programs are insufficiently linked to behaviors that promote human capital development. Therefore, part of the reform strategy must be to examine feasibility of a conditional cash transfer program in Suriname and opportunities for conditioning the behavior of beneficiaries aimed at human capital development.”

- **Emphasis on institutionalized care as opposed to Home Care or Community Care co-responsibility missing opportunities for CBOs and NGOs participating in policy implementation.**

For the most part the approach to intangible services such as training, counseling and care has been dominated by an institutionalized approach. In other words, the vision, that such services can only be provided within specialized centers or performed by highly trained professionals. The actual truth though is that SoZaVo itself in previous capacity assessments has acknowledged the need for specialized training of its own personnel because of the lack of properly trained professionals coming out of the education system. Nonetheless many countries have shown the potentials within the community to become self providers of many services. In fact the most accessible resources available to the poor to cope with the difficulties of life are usually there within their communities. Therefore with little supervision and guidance those community resources can be empowered by providing capacity building strategies in leadership, organization and basic care and social knowledge to enable them as self providers of some social services but more importantly to be able to prevent most social risks through collective action.

²⁴ *Suriname Social Safety Net Reform Strategy*, The Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing with the assistance of: Lorraine Blank, Ph.D. and Julia Terborg, Ph.D. and with support from the Inter-American Development Bank ATN/SF-9087-SU, March 2007

- **Prevalence of the Social Assistance approach (open-ended transfers no conditionality) in spite of recognizing the need for a more human development approach through Conditional Cash transfers.**

Recommendations and plans have been made since 2001 for streamlining of services (SSN reform, the CCT reform, PMT). Yet they have not been formally approved, and only implemented in a fragmented and piecemeal way which impedes achieving actual results. SoZaVo has a proposal design for the National Conditional Cash Transfer Program which could be implemented with a loan from the IDB. The decision depends on the political will of government to finally back up this proposal and begin serious and detailed design, provide the necessary legal foundations and start a gradual but time bound implementation of the Program.

- **Top-down supply driven approach to service delivery as opposed to the proposed decentralized and close to the community service delivery approach**

To deliver social services SoZaVo has implemented an institutional strategy characterized by a very centralized administration only capable of serving the coastal area and mainly from the central offices or centers concentrated in Paramaribo or in the main Districts along the coast. The services are open to the general public to a make the effort to show up in person for attention, but the services are not actually seeking the potential beneficiaries within the community where the needs are. Consequently most services have very moderate success in comparison to the resources they input plus they are not reaching the intended target population where they are. This top-down supply driven approach hampers the ability of SoZaVo to adjust its services and make them more accessible and tailor made to the actual needs of communities and individuals.

6.4.2 Overall Housing Policy Strategy

In order to reach the objectives set out in the housing policy, SoZaVo established three long-range programs for the housing sector to be initiated according to the 2005-2010 MDP. The implementation strategy that aims to better organize the housing sector and eventually lead to the increase of social housing was based on: The Transitional, or Bridging Arrangement; the Land Development Company; and the Housing Program.²⁵ A fourth program aimed at the reorganization of the housing sector and the strengthening of the Ministry was set through various strategies.

6.4.2.1 The Transitional or Bridging Control Sub-program

The Program was designed as a policy measure for a period of three years with the aim to accelerate the production of mainly cheap housing and give support to finance, building and development of residential plots, thus contributing to cope with the perceived current housing problems, in particular the availability of construction and residential plots, and of financial resources. The program consists of two components that will help SoZaVo reach its objectives: namely the provision of approximately 780 building lots for project development initiatives for self construction aimed at middle and upper level groups to meet immediate

²⁵ MDP 2006 -2011, pg 179

demand; and the creation of a Housing Sector Fund to aid in the financing of projects and the promotion of open market construction. Specific expected results are detailed in the 2006 Policy Note as follows: Initiatives Project (300), Homes for middle and upper level groups (100 lots), Houses to be financed from the fund itself (100 lots) and houses that are built on the open market (280 lots) for a total of 780 houses.

6.4.2.2 The Land Development Company

This strategy represents the core method to achieve the policy objective and includes the establishment of the Land Development Company (GOB) and an operating company. The Operating Company concentrates on housing initiatives that focus on the production of houses for sale, lease or social / rental housing while the Land Development Company (GOB) has the following principal tasks:

- Providing plots (with infrastructure and utilities) for housing construction;
- Functioning as land bank for the reallocation of private plots / property;
- Functioning as land bank for slum clearance or urban renewal;
- Participating in joint ventures with private parties for site development.

While the formation of the Land Development Company was approved by the Board of Ministers in 2009, it was soon determined that the necessary funds to establish and run it properly were not fully available and that funding would have to be guaranteed for its future actions.

6.4.2.3 The Housing Program -MPH

The program was outlined in the Multiannual Housing Plan - MPH as a demand-driven housing program modeled from the LISP, also intended to promote the capacity building of both state and non-state actors within the housing sector. The immediate output of the program consists of facilitating the construction of housing and the development of existing building sites in order to help cover the housing shortage. The MPH aimed at establishing the facilities to stimulate public-private partnerships to improve the nations' quantity and quality of houses and provide through various house building programs for all income categories. The MPH calls for the construction of 3000 new houses and 3000 expanded or renovated houses between 2006 and 2011.

Three main strategies and facilities were envisioned to support building of housing and provision of building lots and one helping to foster an effective and efficient Housing sector. Together, these programs aim to both alleviate the housing shortage through activating the private sector and contribute to the socio-economic development of Suriname, the reduction of poverty and the welfare state.

1. Donor funded Private Housing Construction Programs

Two large scale housing programs were undertaken during the 2005 – 2011, with support from international cooperation: the Low Income Shelter Program and the Suriname – China Cooperation Program.

The Low Income Shelter Plan (LISP) is the largest social housing plan with which SoZaVo is directly involved. The LISP Foundation was created to be the Program Implementation Unit (PIU) which has had the responsibility for all aspects of project execution including interfacing with IDB and disbursement of program

resources. As with other PIUs, the LISP foundation is governed by a Board of Directors headed by a Chairman who is accountable to the Minister of SoZaVo and comprised of 7 representatives of the public and private sector. The program is based on a direct, up-front subsidy to beneficiaries who meet the requirements of the program to build or renovate their houses. Participants must either own a building plot or have 10% of the total cost of the house. Over its 5 years of execution the program has benefited 3,725 households, 1,208 for new housing and 2,517 for housing improvement. Furthermore, both private developers and commercial banks improved their participation in the low income housing market and lowered the cost of direct housing provision. Although a great success, it should be noted that 85% of these units were either in urban or coastal areas and what's more, the clients were overwhelmingly middle or upper-middle income earners. LISP II has taken methods to rectify both these shortcomings which are described below²⁶

Suriname - China Cooperation brought about the Tout Liu Faut housing projects. In the context of cooperation between Suriname and China agreements for cooperation related to social housing for the lower income groups were signed on February 24, 2004 in Beijing, the relevant agreements signed by the cooperating partners cover cooperation aspects between the countries as well as the authorization of the Government of China to the Export and Import Bank of China to finance the proposed projects. These projects consist of both donations by China and Loans from the Bank totaling some US\$16 million. Approximately 5 million in donations were offered along with a 12 million US Dollar loan. The destination of the funds was in general terms to the housing sector in Suriname to promote logistics and procurement for the construction of low cost housing. Specifically, approximately 200 houses have been built with the Chinese funds along with 50 using funds of the Government of Suriname so far with another area and 200 more houses to be developed as well.²⁷

The Low-Medium Income Shelter Plan (LMISP) was established as means of expanding the success of the LISP I Program and is mainly targeted at the population that cannot meet the requirements of either the LISP program or the Central Banks 7% mortgage loan plan. Launched in April of 2009, it is a public –private partnership financed program that enables construction, renovation or expansion of houses through a 6% credit facility.²⁸ The program is administered by the LISP Foundation and is funded for approximately 5 years with the ability to grant low interest loans to approximately 100 houses a year. Funding for the program comes from the Governments Budget, the Housing Sector Fund. However, the LMISP program has had little success with finding eligible borrowers. In its first year of existence the LISP foundation was only able to grant 25 loans out of the over 200 applications received.²⁹ As with the problems facing LMISP, creditworthiness needs to be addressed if this plan is to work through the private sector.

²⁶ Support to Low Income Shelter Program, Phase II, IDB, May 2008

²⁷ Policy Note 2006

²⁸ Social Protection Programs in Suriname, Measures to Combat Poverty, SoZaVo, May 2009 PP Presentation, Workshop Puente in the Caribbean.

²⁹ Partnership in Social Housing? Marlon Powell, 2010

The Upcoming Low Income Shelter Program Phase II (LISP II) has been designed because the success of the LISP program encouraged the Government of Suriname to request assistance for the support of a second phase of the program. The main goals of LISP II are to reach the lowest 4 deciles of the population. This will be achieved though providing upfront subsidies to the 3rd and 4th deciles that, along with their savings will allow beneficiaries to access credit. For the lowest 2 deciles LISP increase the supply of affordable housing solutions by testing housing programs and institutional arrangements to address their housing needs, such as provision of plots at affordable prices located within mixed income developments.³⁰ An effort will be made to introduce the PMT targeting methodology within the same Management Information System of the Project to ensure better screening of beneficiaries and focus in the target population. The goal is to reach the lowest income groups so that all levels of society will have access to adequate shelter as well as to expand the program into the interior and rural areas of the country. These changes seem to be a good way to focus efforts on the poor but we will only know its success when the different “experimental” methods are designed and implemented.

2. Financial facilities for construction and ownership

The objective of the second most types of programs aim to facilitate access to credit to middle income people in Suriname to build and own their own homes. Two main lending schemes have been developed to reduce the cost of mortgages for construction of housing to qualified lot owners.

The Central Banks 7% mortgage loan scheme was developed by the Government of Suriname and the Central Bank along with inputs from the different Ministries that deal with social housing in the country especially that of SoZaVo. In 2004 the Central Bank launched this program as the “General Financing House Construction Modality - Cash Reserve Resources” which allowed commercial banks to use their cash reserve requirements for the construction of houses. The financing modality was meant to promote house construction, renovation and enlargement. The idea behind the plan was to give middle income people in Suriname the opportunity to build and own their own homes while at the same time channeling money to the construction and building material sectors of the economy.³¹ In order to stimulate lending, the commercial banks were instructed to make loans to qualified customers at 7% for a period of up to 25 years as opposed to the market norm of 17% for a period of 15 years. The goal was to increase the number of people with adequate housing by greatly increasing the number of people that could meet the financial requirement of getting a mortgage loan. In order to apply for the loan, applicants need either to own a plot in an area ready for housing or to provide 10% of the projects cost if the title of the plot is a long term title lease or being used for improvements.³² A secondary, yet important goal of the program is to stimulate the overall economy taking advantage of the relatively high economic multiplier effects of the housing sector on the economy at large thus generating employment and, it is hoped, eventually reducing overall poverty. By 2009 some 3,000 people have taken advantage of the this credit program half building new houses and half

³⁰ Low Income Shelter Program, Phase II, Project Document, IDB

³¹ Support to Low Income Shelter Program, Phase II, IDB, May 2008

³² Partnership in Social Housing? Marlon Powell, 2010

improving or expanding existing ones approximately half for the building of new housing and the other for housing expansion, improvements or repairs. It should be noted that this program has largely aided the middle and upper income earners in attaining credit for housing and that taking the design of the program into account, relying on commercial banks granting loans to eligible borrowers, the program does not seem to be appropriate to reaching the lowest or even low-income earners again, due to creditworthiness issues. With the possible exception of government guaranteed loans, no amount of subsidies or free building lots will change this in the eyes of the private banks.

The State Mortgage Plan was introduced in April 2009 under by the Ministry of Finance In response to both the success of the Central Banks 7% financing modality and the unfortunate fact that it did little to help the lower income sector in the country attain adequate housing. Loans for new housing and for housing expansion of improvements are directed at the lower income groups at a rate of 5% to make them more affordable. The financing modality for funding this program was to use the profits paid by the Central Bank to the State for the financing of low-interest loans to the poor. The loans are granted from the resources of the Central Bank at a mortgage rate of 9%, 5% of which is covered by the borrower and 4 as an up-front non-recurrent interest subsidy by the Government via the Central Bank. This program employs criteria and eligibility that direct the loans toward lower income or lower-middle income people in need of housing or housing improvement or expansion. The program has had very little effect in the targeted, or for that matter in any, communities. While the program began in 2008 only some 135 loans were made by the end of 2009 most of which were used not to build houses but to buy plots of land.³³ The seemingly lack of interest in the program, based on the assumption that lowering the interest rate would make the loans affordable to the lower income groups, seems to be the result of a weak understanding of the obstacles that prevent the poor from accessing decent housing. A recent evaluation found for instance that the personal debt of the poor, the lack of up-front cash and the lack of owned building plots all have worked against the success of the 5% mortgage financing scheme.

3. Construction of Public Housing

The Housing Foundation which builds, provides lots and manages public rental and lease to own properties is also cited as a contributing force in providing housing. Various other smaller programs are also mentioned in the MDP, the MHP and or the Policy Note that deserve mention.³⁴

Government Programs

The Public Housing Foundation is a public / private foundation that was set up to build and manage public rental / lease-owned houses and apartments in the 1960s. The foundation has to some extent ceased to build new housing due to financial constraints and in response to the re-orientation of the Government away from building public housing. However the Foundation remains the authoritative institution of the Government when it comes to social housing and manages and supports different social housing projects

³³ Partnership for Social Housing? Marlon Powell, 2010

³⁴ SoZaVo Policy note 2006

chiefly through obtaining land. The residents of the public housing sign leases with the Foundation, not the Government, which is responsible for renting the housing, the upkeep of the buildings and the collection of rent. The Foundation was set up by SoZaVo but is autonomous and is run much like a private property management company; in fact, its budget mainly comes from the rents it collects. The distribution of housing to ineligible participants of the social program is the main problem facing the Foundation as this means that rents are not paid. While there are well defined criteria to establish eligibility for public housing political influence is rampant and few who follow the official process and meet the criteria are actually afforded housing.

Apart from providing rental housing to the least affluent it is the Foundations ability to obtain land for building housing that can help SoZaVo meet its objectives. In fact it built some 300 houses during the implementation period of the last MHP. Being in charge of Building and maintain public housing in the country it has the ability to request, purchase and obtain building lots which can be used for the projects it chooses. However, financial constraints limit its actions. In this fashion it permits SoZaVo to implement various small scale housing projects aimed at different target groups. The hope of the Foundation is that he Board of Ministers will allow it to expand its statutes so that it may determine the rental prices of the housing it oversees to rent to the middle class at higher rents. In this way it would be able to become profitable and to build more housing for qualified lowest income earners. It is both debatable whether the Board of Ministers would permit such a change in the Statutes and even so if it would be a successful way of increasing housing for the poor.

Additional Programs

The Affordable Owner-occupied Housing Project was begun in 2007 by the Foundation for Public Housing. The innovative part of this project is that it grants plots of land almost free to the program participants who only have to pay the notary costs for the purchase of the land. These costs however are high in Suriname and represent approximately 10% of the purchase price.³⁵ The houses are built by a construction company selected by the Foundation with financing of commercial banks. An arrangement with the central bank permits the aspirant owners to secure a loan to buy the housing with a combination of their own savings and a mortgage rate of 7%.

The Individual Social House Construction Program – “Housing Allowance” is part of the regular annual program of the SoZaVo to assist the needy and poor in improving their housing conditions. Assistance is given in building materials, labor and training and construction supervision. Funding comes from the national SoZaVo’s regular annual budget. This is an economical way to greatly improve the quality of housing of the lowest income earners in the country and should be expanded. Across the country squatters are building their own houses that may not be up to code however, with training and the provision of materials there housing could be greatly bettered. This, of course, would require either the legalizing of the land tenure on which they have build the structures or provision of nearby, legal building lots.

³⁵ Partnership in Social Housing, Marlon Powell, 2010

The Richelieu Project is another of the social housing projects that SoZaVo counts on to reach its objectives. Richelieu is a pilot housing development project aimed at mixed income groups. It is a public /private partnership initiative that allows individuals to rent or purchase housing within the development. Apart from the obvious infrastructure for water, sanitation, electricity etcetera the housing project offers schools, health facilities, administrative offices, small industries etc.³⁶ The inter-Ministerial Conference recognized the success of this program and called to allow NGOs to develop part of the space with the financing of private banks.³⁷ This type of collaboration between the private sector and NGOs representing the lower income earners instigated by SoZaVo could go a long way in providing shelter for its target group as well as good services and jobs available in this type of community. Furthermore, integrated communities with all types of income earners tend to bring about an environment that facilitates the poor finding ways out of the social safety net and into productive society at large.

6.4.2.4 Program for Restructuring of the Housing Sector and Strengthening of SoZaVo

Related to the restructure and strengthening of the Ministry includes the following different actions to achieve its stated objectives:³⁸

1. Quality Control – Establish and monitor quality standards and guidelines for construction materials. – Guidelines established but enforcement still needs to be arranged and legislated.
2. Housing Management Training – The Housing Directorate will concentrate on strategic aspects of policy for which new staff will be hired and existing trained. – Results unknown.
3. Facilities Management – Purchase and maintenance of equipment.
4. Development of Norms – Measure and formalize independent construction contractors – Results unknown.
5. Information Center – The housing Directorate will serve as a source for the entire government to consult all issues related to housing and urban planning issues. – A more specific mandate and a legislative recognition are needed to fortify the Center as well as sufficient resources to fund its activities and expand its knowledge base and documentation.
6. NGO involvement - As an integral part of social housing, NGOs will be active in Habitat Committee, the Information Center and advocacy and policy support. – The importance of the role of the NGO community was reaffirmed and their contribution recognized in 2009
7. Construction: Practitioners - contribute to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency in the building through technical, managerial and administrative training and alternative building materials and methods – In 2009 this was still considered an important issue that needed to be dealt with.
8. To promote the Managerial and administrative training / retraining of both private and public sector housing management. - Results unknown.

³⁶ Social Protection Programs in Suriname, Measures to Promote Poverty, SoZaVo, May 2009, PP Presentation 'Workshop Puente in the Caribbean: Program launching'

³⁷ Inter-Ministerial Conference Summary, 2009

³⁸ Policy Note, 2006

9. Public Task Force (PTF)– Promote cooperation among Ministries the results of this initiative were considered insufficient and the call was made to either empower it further or to concentrate power of coordination in one Ministry.
10. Habitat Committee – Establish a national Habitat Committee (NHC) to promote sustainable living conditions and adequate housing for all. Results unknown.³⁹

6.4.3 Assessment Results

After reviewing the many different programs and projects that SoZaVo helps to implement to achieve its objectives we can observe a lack of overall planning or direction linking them together toward one common goal. On the other hand, it may be one of the chief strengths is that SoZaVo has is that it is involved in many different types of projects aimed at different target groups. This allows it to both experiment with various ideas, partners and financing mechanisms aimed at distinct sectors of society that it feels may best meet their individual needs. A drawback to this approach that effects the Ministry's ability to reach its objectives is the loss of control experienced by participating in, yet usually not controlling the design, implementation or evaluation of the different programs, making it difficult to steer its actions in any particular direction much less reach its overall objective or following a national housing plan that is aimed at providing adequate shelter for the poor and needy of the country.

As far as reaching its objectives, we see that nearly seven thousand families took advantage or were helped by the various different housing programs available to them. However, nearly all of them benefited the middle, or lower middle income groups. This, given SoZaVo's mandate to help the least affluent and needy gain access to housing is evidence of a clear flaw in policy design, targeting of beneficiaries, participation criteria, development or enforcement or simply a lack of leadership in the part of SoZaVo to assure that the autonomous projects being implemented in its name live up to its mandate to serve the poor. Due to the independent monitoring and design aspects of the programs it is impossible to advise SoZaVo as to which of these shortcomings is the main culprit. The obvious answer however would be SoZaVo exerting more control over the design of the projects in line with both its mandate and a National Housing Policy and furthermore, adapt a clear definition of its target group and enforce a uniform strategy in making sure that they are the chief beneficiaries of the programs implemented in its name.

7 Institutional Implementation

7.1 Operational Planning

Planning is the process of setting policy objectives and goals, developing strategies, outlining the implementation arrangements and allocating resources to achieve those goals. Planning involves looking at a number of different processes:

- Identifying the vision, goals or objectives to be achieved,

³⁹ Inter-ministerial Conference, 2009

- Formulating the strategies needed to achieve the vision and goals,
- Determining and allocating the resources (financial and other) required to achieved the vision and goals,
- Outlining implementation arrangements, which include the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating progress towards achieving the vision, policy objectives and goals.

The planning process should lead to prepare a plan that can be implemented, monitored and evaluated, that translate policy objectives into work plans and budgets with results and performance indicators of outcomes and contribute to build a Results Based Management culture to place the emphasis on development (outputs) rather than organizational (inputs) results.

7.1.1 Social Policy Operational Planning in 2006-2011

Multi-year Development Plan:

The previous Government of Suriname developed the Multi-year development Plan 2006-2011- Strategy for Sustainable Development- that, according to the document, constituted the framework for development in the widest sense of the word. It is a state document, a national guideline for the Government, Private Sector, Non-Governmental Organizations and other Social Actors. The Plan provides insight in the long-range policy

The document is an strategic plan based on policy intentions stated in the policy notes of the 17 Ministries and consultations with the national development partners of the Government (private sector, civil society/NGO's and labor unions) and other relevant social actors

Chapter 5 "Social and Human Development" explain the Government's policy intentions for the period 2006-2011 in this area and describes activities, objectives and indicators that identifies SoZaVo as a Ministry/ authority responsible along with other ministries like Health and Education, and in particular the chapter 5.4 "Improvement of Social Protection" that names SoZaVo as a leading responsible authority. Sub-chapters 5.4.1 "Welfare Stimulation" and 5.4.2 "Housing" reflect the two main areas that the Ministry addresses.

Social Policy Note:

For the purpose of the Multi-year development Plan, SoZaVo developed the Policy Note of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing that shows the Ministry's organization divided in two Directorates, Social Affairs and Housing, and describes for each one policy principles, vision, mission and policy activities, the support or administrative services, the research and planning function and the monitoring and evaluation responsibilities.

SoZaVo's Work Plan Matrixes

During the past 4 years, SoZaVo has worked on two annual work plans initiatives at the matrix level: the Policy Note Activities Matrix 2006 – 2008 and the Work Plans established in 2008. Reviewing the content of the Work Plan matrix in use, it identifies the following key elements:

- Name of the Program,
- mission,

- results description with indicators and meanings of verification,
- description of the activity,
- who is responsible,
- who carries it out,
- the budget allocated for the activity; and
- the quarter of the year where the activity would take place.

7.1.2 Assessment Results:

SoZaVo doesn't have a Comprehensive (strategic) plan

The Ministry didn't produce a comprehensive institutional strategic work plan to develop the Policy Note and the Multiannual Development Plan 2006-2011. The lack of this key document has created disconnection at the strategic level between the Policies, the General /institutional Objectives (mandate, Multiannual Development Plan) with the annual objectives and their respective expected results at the Ministerial level.

The work performed by SoZaVo developing the Policy Note and the content of the policy itself provided the necessary background information to build a robust Comprehensive Strategic Work Plan.

There is no Yearly Operational Plan

SoZaVo doesn't have an Operational Plan that links and develops in detail the strategic objectives established in the Policy Note to the Multi-year development plan.

The result is the lack of background information to support the development of annual objectives and activities and the establishment of appropriate performance /results indicators. There are no Yearly Operational Plans per division as such.

Work plans matrix lack relevant Indicators

The Work Plan constitutes a solid baseline for management control and reflects a positive progress in establishing a results-Based Management approach.

The Work Plan is a natural linking point between the Annual Operational Plan and the Budget

However its output indicators are not connected to institutional /annual objectives and there is an absence of formal monitoring, evaluation and reporting on performance and achievement of results that indicates the status of the implementation of the work plan.

The Work Plan results indicators are not exactly following the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) affecting potential monitoring and evaluation.

7.1.3 Budgeting

The Budget is basically in compliance with the standard practices in financial terms, is program oriented and separates the current and investment expenditure.

It's divided in four titles. Title I refers to Administrative expenditure including payroll, Title II refers to Policy Programs (total 16 programs), Title III the Revenue Budget (non-tax revenue, donors revenue and loans), and Title IV Parastatalen, that group the foundations that are responsible as policy supporting bodies intended to promote the effectiveness and efficiency in policy implementation mostly, like LISP or the Old Age Pension.

The Budget also presents an analysis per program and includes a table that describes the activities, the total budget allocated per activity and the amounts originated in local and /or donor contributions.

There is another table that presents a comparative analysis of the expected policy/program outcomes of the previous year (analysis on what was achieved) and the expected policy program outcomes of the current fiscal year.

Budget process: Every year in May, SoZaVo receives a request form the Ministry of Finance MOF to develop a budget for the upcoming year. The request includes the guidelines for the budget, its formulation process and the maximum amount available to the Ministry.

Several meetings within the Ministry are organized with the Permanent Secretary, the Deputy Directors and members of the Research & Planning (R&P) and Financial Affairs departments. In these meetings, the previous year's budget is evaluated and the available budget allocated by the MOF for SoZaVo is discussed. This budget is then divided among the several sub directorates within the ministry. Sub directorates may submit special requests for the new budget.

All sub directorates use the previous year's budget in combination with current year's activities as the basis for the formulation of the new budget. Representatives of several departments and social services within the sub directorates are involved in the formulation process. Meetings are organized and heads of departments are asked to formulate budgets for their departments. At the end of this process, the Department of Financial Affairs gathers all of the separate budgets and organizes a meeting with the Permanent Secretary and the Deputy Directors to discuss the budgets and to finalize the overall budget. In case of exception more money can be added on the budget.

The budget, as proposed by SoZaVo, contains the finances needed for next year's activities, but also the general policy measures and social services delivered by SoZaVo.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Source: *Institutional and Organizational SSN Assessment report – Observatorio Social.*

7.1.4 Assessment Results

Budget formulation not used as a planning tool

The budget formulation process is not used completely as a planning tool since SoZaVo doesn't have Strategic and /or Operational plans, and there is not a formal annual evaluation report on institutional performance.

As a consequence there is not a clear link between the Budget and the Multiannual Development Plan. Besides the financial aspects, the budget focus is more Activities (outputs) oriented than outcomes or impacts oriented.

Budgetary allocations without inputs from official statistical data

There is no input from official statistical data to be used to budgetary allocations (Kairi Report). It affirms that the delivery systems would be further enhanced if proper budgetary allocations are made based on input from official statistical data.

Unknown cost of services provided

There is still no clear policy or system of costing of services provided per program and its related responsible unit; the evidence suggested that the amount budgeted is inadequate to cover the demand for services. It can therefore be reasonably concluded that policy formulation is not evidence based.⁴¹ The Ministry is also unable to provide an overview of the costs per Department, unit or service.

Budget without performance indicators

The Ministry has not fully developed performance indicators so it is difficult to link the expenditure or revenue in the budget with their respective objective(s), results indicators, activities and the direct person responsible for the program affecting appropriate accountability.

8 Monitoring & Evaluation Systems

8.1 M&E proposed methodology

Monitoring is an ongoing process by which management at the Ministry and other stakeholders obtain regular feedback on the progress being made towards achieving its goals and policy objectives. Monitoring is not only reviewing progress made in implementing actions or activities but also reviewing progress against achieving goals.

⁴¹ Source: Kairi report

On the other hand Evaluation is a rigorous and independent assessment of either completed or ongoing activities to determine the extent to which they are achieving stated policies and objectives and contributing to decision making.

The distinction between the two is that evaluations are done independently to provide managers and staff with an objective assessment of whether or not they are on track. However, the aims of both, monitoring and evaluation are very similar: to provide information that can help inform decisions, improve performance and achieve planned results.

Monitoring the Multi-year Development Plan 2006-2011

Chapter 7 of the Plan describes under “Monitoring the MDP” the basis and strategies to monitor the Plan, taking as a basis planning models, among others, the logical framework, namely: input, output, outcome and impact.

Input: investments, spending, facilities etc.

Output: the services and goods that becomes available from the input

Outcome: to what extent do input + output lead to the achievement of the MDG targets

Impact: to what extent have the standard of living and quality of life improved.

The chapter highlights that monitoring is also a continuous participation process:

“1. The focal points per Ministry and per district are responsible for obtaining feedback from their own Ministry or district and from the organizations with which they cooperate.

2. The focal point(s) of PLOS/Planning Office is (are) responsible for the general coordination of data collection. Missing data is identified here.

3. The Planning Office is responsible for the organization of the general annual evaluation and for the adjustment of the development plan together with the network of focal points.

4. Annual evaluation meetings are held with focal points and representatives of civil society, the business community, labor unions and communities to receive feedback on implementation and to exchange ideas about the formulated development vision and on the progress within the field. It is recommended that the annual assessment meetings are supervised by a professional facilitator.

5. Adjustment of the development plan takes place after the annual evaluation with the focal points and the annual evaluation meetings with representatives of the Government, civil society, business community, labor unions and communities.

A network of focal points will be established for the organization and implementation of the participation process. Through this network, continuous feedback will be obtained for the monitoring and adjustment of the development plan. Evaluation meetings are held annually by PLOS/Planning Office with focal points and representatives of civil society, the business community, labor unions and communities to receive feedback on implementation and to exchange ideas on the formulated development vision and on the progress within the field. In these meetings, the results of research with regard to policy evaluations and data related to the indicators formulated in the MDP will also be included. Adjustment of the development plan takes place after the annual evaluation meetings”⁴²

The Policy Note stated that to monitor the implementation of the Policy, it is important that a monitoring mechanism be established within the Ministry. This mechanism will have to prepare assessments and progression, and should identify bottlenecks. The coordination of the monitoring mechanism is the Director of Social Affairs and the Housing Director. Annual evaluations of the implementation of the Policy are part of the monitoring process.

Redirection of policy actions can thus be achieved and adjusting policy actions.

8.2 Assessment Results

No implementation of monitoring mechanism

SoZaVo has not followed the policy note that asked the Ministry to implement a monitoring mechanism and to conduct an annual evaluation related to the implementation of the policy.

Comprehensive M&E system not in place

SoZaVo has not yet developed a comprehensive M&E system and procedures to carry out monitoring activities and to conduct periodic (at least once a year) evaluations at the institutional level and at the programs (units) level, to assess the extent to which expected results stated in the Policy, in the Multi-year Development Plan 2006-2011 and in the Work Plans have been achieved and to produce a written report.

SoZaVo unable to properly assess performance

This situation leads to face severe difficulties to follow up on achievement of results, consideration of relevant risks that may affect objectives achievement and timely implementation of good management practices. It also involves severe difficulty to assess progress made by divisional level and to determine the quality and impact of delivery services.

⁴² Source: Multi-annual Development Plan 2006-2011

External factor: The Ministry has experienced limitations as to the availability of reliable and pertinent statistics, for instance to establish baselines, or related to measures of poverty, the incidence of poverty among vulnerable population groups (Children/youth, elderly, people with disabilities, women heads of households), etc. that prevent management to follow up on the achievement of their expected results.

The Work Plans as they are now don't provide complete information to support a monitoring or evaluation exercise.

Lack of formal and periodic reporting on results

The ministry doesn't report on its performance on regular basis affecting proper accountability

There are not institutional reports on results per program or unit that should be produced and disseminated on a regular basis.

The lack of proper reporting on performance and results leads to missing opportunities to enhance policy design and implementation, to improve program delivery and to strengthen the human resources capacities of the Ministry.

8.3 Institutional Performance

8.3.1 Institutional Performance Directorate of Social Affairs

In spite of the lack of a consistent M&E mechanism in place, capable of producing periodic progress reports with indicators on institutional results or outputs, there are some isolated ad hoc reporting exercises that allow having an overview of SoZaVo's performance in the past government period 2006-2011. An Evaluation report prepared by the Research and Monitoring Unit for the period 2005-2009 recounts the main activities and steps accomplished towards the policy priority areas and objectives of SoZa as outlined in the Policy Note. Following is a synthesis of the Report on most relevant achievements by priority area:

1. GENERAL SOCIAL POLICY

Social Safety Net Project: Preparatory activities for implementation of the SSN reform

Negotiation and execution of the Technical Cooperation Agreement "TC Preparation of a Program for the Institutional Strengthening of Suriname's SSN" on may 29, 2005 between SoZaVo and the IDB, to increase understanding of the social protection program of SoZaVo. Dr. Loraine Blank and local consultant Julia Terborg started in February 2007 with the second part of the TC namely "Social Safety Net (SSN) Reform Strategy".

Technical Cooperation for Capacity Building: In November 2009, Kairi Consultants was attracted by Sozavo in collaboration with the UNDP to develop a Capacity Strengthening Plan for SoZaVo.

General Social Care (AMZ)

Health Care Card Program: Activities towards improved efficiency in the provision and control of use of Health Cards, and in reducing costs of health care:

The BMA division as regularly in charge of the provision of medical care cards has implemented: the automation of the client files; the control of use of medical care cards, particularly checking declarations of hospitals. Control of regular patients and guardrails take place on daily basis; a proposal of the revised criteria for the granting of medical care cards completed in 2009; the basic medical care package for the people without income and with small income was revised in 2010, including kidney dialysis and home care; a new tariff structure for the people without income and with small income with service providers was realized in 2009. An Agreement between SoZaVo and Renal dialysisClinic on February 4, 2010, to meet the high demand of kidney dialysis patients. Agreements with My Lab (November 2006), Health Control (March 2007), Libi Makandra (june 2008) and Huize Evie (october 2010). Agreement between SoZaVo and Stichting Zon Thuiszorg on February 1, 2010 now allows clients to further health care at home instead of enjoying a longer hospital admission.

Material Assistance Services were provided on a regular basis. NO indicators of progress or output results

General Social Security Payments (ASUV): Payments of social security, such as General Child Benefit (AKB) and Financial Assistance (FB) on a regular basis.

School clothing action: People without income receive an allowance which they can purchase 2 uniforms per student, and the people with small income an allowance for 1 uniform.

Immaterial Services, such as family coaching, performed incidental training

The family coaching project aims to place children who have been in an orphanage back to their mothers or parents. Through this project 20 mothers were trained, they started a vocational training, children were placed back with their families, 14 family coaches were trained, as were 4 heads of departments responsible for the immaterial assistance.

2. CATEGORICAL SOCIAL WORK (KMW):

Policy for Senior Citizens – no major progress towards policy objectives.

SoZaVo continued supporting already established care services for the elderly, integration awareness activities (“Bigi Sma Dey” Senior Citizens Day) and payment of the Old Age Pension. The only efforts toward policy objectives were: Draft of the standards for institutional care Act (as part of a general institutional care framework), and Draft and submission on increase in the Old Age Pension to the Board of Ministers⁴³.

Policy for Persons with Disabilities-

⁴³No supporting study on impact or feasibility of the new adjusted AOV was made available

The main efforts towards achievement of policy objective on “integration” were in the area of regulations and the training foundation for young PWD

Drafting of regulations (concept class letter) for physical accessibility in schools to PWD, and the approval in 2009 by the Board of Ministers of the Draft Law “Supply People with Disabilities” (allowance for persons with permanent or temporary disabilities). It remains to be clarified whether the pre-existing financial Allowance for PWD -so far periodically reviewed - will be replaced by the new allowance established by law or not.

The Foundation Training Projects for Young People with Disabilities (TJG) started in October 2007 with wood and metal processing courses at Geversvlijt. The Foundation also looks for opportunities to provide training at Uitvlugt.

Incidental activities (International Congress on PWD and PWD international day celebration) to raise awareness and facilitate productive integration of PWD in society

On October 25, 2007 an international congress “Challenge for All” was held in respect of employment among people with disabilities by the Foundation “De Drie Ankers” in collaboration with “Workability Europe” and other partners. The recommendations should lead to projects increasing employment opportunities for the target group.

Attention to the international day for people with disabilities through television commercials, radio interviews and a speech of the minister.

Prenatal Card introduced for early detection of PWD

In the context of prevention and early identification of disabilities a prenatal check card was introduced and a new consultation bureau file was performed by the Bureau of Public Health Care.

Children and Youth Policy

Significant progress made towards establishing and disseminating regulations on standards for child care institutions

Draft Law for Shelter Organizations was approved by the Board of Ministers and the State Board. The quality standards for childcare were also approved by the Board of Ministers and the State Board.

Within the project “implementation of standards in childcare institutions”: Institutions were invited to register; an agreement was reached with the University of Suriname (UvS) for a study of the standards in 30 to 35 childcare institutions; an assessment matrix for each institution was requested (approximately 50% of the institutions filled the matrix).

Evaluation of the past Action Plan for Children and drafting of the new Action Plan for Children 2009 – 2013 which was presented to the Board of Ministers for approval.

Improved knowledge capacities (information and analysis) relevant for policy formulation and evaluation

Such as publication of MICS 3 report; initiation of MICS 4 investigation in 2010 of the domestic housing and living conditions of children in Suriname.

Realization of a new Situation Assessment and Analysis of Surinamese Children in 2010

Increase in the amount of Child Allowance to SRD3 per kid in 2007⁴⁴.

General Child Benefit (AKB) was adjusted and forwarded to the Board of Ministers for approval in 2007.

Children rights awareness activities (Day of the Rights of the Child)

Annual commemoration of the Day of the Rights of the Child (November 20) through a speech of the minister of Sozavo on the eve of the 20th of November, and producing promotion material.

8.3.2 Institutional Performance Directorate of Housing.

The government's Progress Report on the MDGs outlines the success that SoZaVo has had, and is expected to have, in reaching the MDGs by 2015 but offers little insight as to what policies or institutional arrangements are behind the seeming success in achieving the housing related goals. Moreover in so far as to our knowledge, the Directorate of Housing Affairs in particular lacks the institutional capacities and the factual supports for this statement. It was practically impossible to establish the degree of success in policy implementation, the institutional performance of the Directorate or any indication of progress towards the achievement of the Housing policy objectives.

Unavailability of evaluation reports or studies focused on institutional or policy performance in the Social Housing sector

Monitoring and Evaluation may be the weakest capacity, or at a minimum the least coordinated function that SoZaVo performs related to the implementation of its social housing strategy. The output and success of the Ministry in regard to housing should be a consolidated report of results achieved through the policy programs the Directorate of Housing would implement to monitor policy implementation. Yet we have seen no regular analysis of either the internal functioning of the Directorate of Housing, no annual analysis let alone quarterly reviews of activities, programs or policy implementation specifically. Only exception is the evaluation of the implementation of the Multi-annual Housing Program conducted in 2010 that is said to dealing with all the different areas of policy implementation and proposed programs from 2006, however we were unable to obtain it.

⁴⁴ No supporting study on impact or feasibility of the new adjusted AKB was made available

While other methods such as capacity building workshops and conferences respond to apparent weaknesses the Directorate has identified, the evaluations that justified these activities have not been made available to us. It is worth noting that of the various outside independent consultancies requested by SoZaVo in recent years, very little or no mention of the Directorate of Housing or on SoZaVo's activities related to social housing is made. These consultancies focused almost exclusively on the Directorate of Social Affairs.

Independent implementation strategy of housing programs has led to the loss of control and loose execution

It would appear that the autonomous methods adopted by the Ministry to promote policy design and implementation extend to its own monitoring and evaluation of policy. Due to the amount of independence in implementation and the decentralized strategy for fulfilling its mandates and achieving its objectives, SoZaVo has lost any control or monitoring capacity over programs, leading to a completely loose and uncoordinated execution, and ultimately to the inability of obtaining timely feedback on policy implementation.

Each program Board of Directors, PIU or Foundation in charge of a particular housing program has independently and autonomously implemented its own design for monitoring and evaluation. While they are required to report to SoZaVo on the progress in implementing programs and informing it of the success in achieving set goals, it would appear that no minimum standard M&E system exists for all executing agencies to follow. Each program therefore reports to the Ministry using different guidelines and procedures that the executing agency decides are the most relevant or convenient for the particular project that they are in charge of

Without a minimum reporting format for each program to fulfill in addition to the M&E they decide necessary for their particular program the consolidation of reports by program outputs, targeting or any other indicator will be difficult to make. An uncoordinated reporting system of projects makes any real comparisons rather difficult when trying to measure the relative success of one program to another. As a consequence SoZaVo has little say in the direction a project may be taking or how to improve the rate of success if it is considered insufficient. Furthermore Monitoring and evaluating the impact that programs have in achieving the policy objectives that SoZaVo is trying to implement is thus made more complicated because of the autonomy awarded to the executing agencies.

Therefore the Directorate of Housing should institute a very thorough system for monitoring and evaluating not just the programs that it oversees but how these programs and the Ministry and Directorate of Housing itself are moving forward in achieving agreed upon objectives. A standard set of monitoring tools should be elaborated and enforced to all social housing participating programs in order to best gauge the success of the government in achieving its policy objectives. A standard minimum reporting format would provide SoZaVo with a wealth of information that will enable production of measures and indicators on results, efficiency and progress made towards attaining policy goals. This uniform reporting system would assure that regular reports are submitted to the Ministry and centralized in one place. In this way the Ministries ability to coordinate programs under its watch and align them to the policy objectives, as well as, the Ministry's

capacities to formulate new policies and programs based on accurate, readily available, verifiable and easily referenced standardized data will be greatly enhanced.

9 Accountability

Internal accountability performed through hierarchical structure

The Directorates of Social Affairs and Housing are responsible to the Minister of SoZaVo through its Permanent Secretaries who are ultimately responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of performance of the department under their authority. The Minister in turn is responsible for presenting the success and failures of the different policies it puts forth as well as the programs it oversees at the Political Level.

Political accountability occurs through the Board of Ministers

Due to the sector wide nature of both, the implementation of social policy and of social housing, different Ministries need to be counted on to undertake many of SoZaVo's actions and to obtain collaboration. Therefore explanations and justifications based on the evaluation of different programs have to be necessarily presented and defended politically in the Board of Ministers. The form of political accountability is necessary to obtain the support of individual Ministries collaboration on specific areas of individual programs as well as, in order to approve any significant structural changes, necessary regulation or legislation needed during the exercising of SoZaVo's activities.

Accountability to the public is limited to general information and public relations formats.

Regarding information and dissemination to the public, the Ministry has an Information Service (DVL) that is quite active in this regard. This unit goal is to keep the general public informed of the different policies, programs and policies of the Ministry and to impart any other relevant information they may need. They accomplish this through print, radio and television and other creative methods. The success of this service that began in 2006 led to its institutional strengthening and was stabilized in 2009. Some of the different methods for connecting to the public employed by the DVL include:

- SoZaVo aktueel - The information sheet "SoZaVo aktueel" is produced by DVL. The first edition was published on July 26, 2006, and this information sheet is published monthly with a circulation of 200.
- SoZaVo Informeert - SoZaVo Informeert is an educational video in which policy actions are placed touching the ministry. The first episode was broadcast in January 2008 and is published monthly on various television stations.
- SoZaVoice - Since August 2009 the ministry has its own radio program "SoZaVoice", which can be heard weekly on various radio stations.

No formal periodical reporting to the public is required

Notwithstanding neither the Social Affairs Directorate nor the Housing Directorate are sufficiently using the DVL services to report to the public as to its activities, performance or results of different programs. This is partially due to the low development of regulations regarding access to information rights and on open accountability obligations of government towards its constituents.

Open consultations or public debate on social policies are not encouraged from the Ministry

One key way for SoZaVo as a ministry to strengthen its role within the government is to have an active support group within the general population. More importantly it should foster a national debate on social and housing policies as a way to incorporate the opinions and ideas of its target groups as well as to generate interest, debate and serious analysis of social policies.

Absence of public displays of the right to benefits, the requirements and procedures that beneficiaries can demand or expect at SoZaVo's field or district offices

A minimum accountability measure to empower beneficiaries is the publication of beneficiary's rights, as awarded by law or regulations, at any point of customer attention such as field offices or district offices. The lack of such public information limits transparency in the application and distribution of benefits process. Conversely, adequate and relevant information on beneficiary rights can have a great impact on encouraging social control of benefits when internal controls are not fully working.

10 Conclusions

In regard to the Social Directorate, from what has been reviewed for this study so far, significant weaknesses exist in relation to activities in support of monitoring progress towards achieving the MDGs and implementing the pro-poor policy agenda due to poor data, statistics and limited capacity.^{vii} It should be noted that this is not the exclusive responsibility of SoZaVo and that other governmental bodies need to be studied in this regard especially related to data collection and statistics. On another note, a lack of inter-ministerial cooperation, exchange of information and an apparent lack of coordination on overlapping areas of interest seems to contribute to a less than effective implementation of programs and policies aimed at achieving the MDG as well as other governmental ambitions.

In regard to the Housing Directorate, while different non-traditional financing products in housing bridge the gap that arose from the phased withdrawal of the Government from direct implementation of public housing projects, it would appear that one of the chief sources of housing for low income groups may be falling behind as a result; low cost rental units.^{viii} At this point in our analysis we have found insignificant evidence for guaranteeing a continued supply of this important form of shelter for the poor. Furthermore, as far as we can tell at this point in our analysis, it would appear that the overall beneficiaries of the majority of different housing programs implemented by SoZaVo tended to help the middle or lower middle class whereas the low and indigent populations are unable to avail themselves of the programs for decent housing be it due to personal debt making, low cost credit schemes unrealistic for this sector of society or simply the inability to

meet the basic minimum requirement to participate in the Low Income Shelter Program LISP.^{ix} It should be mentioned however that Phase Two of LISP has taken pains in aiming future efforts specifically at the lowest income population.

It must be noted however that great majority of documents and additional sources consulted thus far clearly show that SoZaVo has successfully and seriously incorporated not only the MDGs but other relevant international agreements into its action plans and has shown great success in moving the country in the right direction. However, the success of the MPH also depended on the political will to adopt the objectives as an integrated part of the government policy making the analysis of the effectiveness of the MPH difficult to determine. At this point in our analysis it seems assured that with some adjustments in organization, communication and policy formation that SoZaVo could soon be on its ways to reaching many of the Millennium Development Goals assigned to them by the government

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