

Negative Unintended Consequences of the GOAL Scholarship on Local Private Tertiary Institutions in Guyana

Dr. Stanley A. V. Paul (Sr.)¹ and Stanley A. V. Paul (Jr.)²

^{1,2}Professor, University of Excellence, Management and Business (U.E.M.B.), Georgetown, GUYANA

¹Corresponding Author: principal@uemb.edu.gy



www.ijrah.com || Vol. 4 No. 3 (2024): May Issue

Date of Submission: 07-05-2024

Date of Acceptance: 15-05-2024

Date of Publication: 21-05-2024

ABSTRACT

The GOAL (Guyana Online Academy of Learning) Scholarship initiative aims to enhance educational accessibility by providing Guyanese students with free tuition at various foreign tertiary institutions. While the program is designed to democratize education and offer valuable opportunities, it has inadvertently created significant challenges for local private tertiary institutions. This article explores these unintended consequences, focusing on the financial and operational impacts on private institutions, and proposes strategies to balance the benefits of the scholarship with the sustainability of the local private education sector.

Keywords- GOAL Scholarship, Guyana Education, Guyana Private Institutions.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Government of Guyana has launched the GOAL Scholarship initiative to provide free tuition to Guyanese students through partnerships with foreign tertiary institutions. While this initiative is commendable for its intention to increase educational opportunities, it has resulted in a competitive imbalance that adversely affects local private tertiary institutions. This article examines the unintended negative consequences of the GOAL Scholarship on these institutions and suggests strategic measures to mitigate these impacts.

II. THE LANDSCAPE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN GUYANA

Guyana's tertiary education sector includes both public and private institutions. With the advent of the GOAL Scholarship, the government funds students to attend foreign universities, creating a de facto monopoly for these institutions. This dynamic puts local private institutions, which rely on tuition fees for their operations, at a significant disadvantage as they cannot

compete with the free education provided by GOAL-funded foreign institutions.

III. NEGATIVE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Financial Viability of Private Institutions:

Local private tertiary institutions in Guyana primarily depend on tuition fees for their operations. The GOAL Scholarship, by offering free education at foreign institutions, has led to a sharp decline in enrollment at local private institutions, threatening their financial sustainability. The reduced revenue from tuition fees affects these institutions' ability to maintain infrastructure, pay staff, and deliver high-quality education.

IV. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The financial strain on local private institutions directly impacts the quality of education they can offer. With fewer resources, these institutions may struggle to attract and retain qualified faculty, invest in necessary educational materials, and upgrade facilities. This

decline in educational quality further exacerbates the challenges faced by private institutions in attracting students.

V. ACCREDITATION AND CREDIBILITY

Financial difficulties also pose a risk to the accreditation status of private institutions. Maintaining accreditation requires adherence to specific standards, which can be challenging without adequate financial resources. Institutions that fail to renew their accreditation may lose credibility, further discouraging potential students from enrolling.

VI. STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

To mitigate the adverse effects of the GOAL Scholarship on local private tertiary institutions, several strategies should be considered:

1. **Financial Support for Private Institutions:** The government should consider providing financial assistance to local private institutions, similar to the funding given to foreign universities through the GOAL program. This support could include subsidies, grants, or low-interest loans to help these institutions cope with reduced enrollment and maintain educational standards.
2. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourage collaborations between local private and foreign institutions. Joint programs, shared facilities, and collaborative research projects can help local institutions benefit from the resources available to their foreign counterparts.
3. **Diversified Funding Models:** Local private institutions should explore alternative funding sources beyond tuition fees. This could involve seeking philanthropic contributions, establishing endowment funds, and

engaging in income-generating activities such as consulting and executive education programs.

4. **Enhanced Marketing and Recruitment:** Local private institutions need to improve their marketing and recruitment strategies to highlight unique offerings, such as specialized programs, smaller class sizes, and personalized education experiences that may not be available at foreign institutions.

5. **Policy Review and Adjustment:** A comprehensive review of the GOAL Scholarship policy is necessary to ensure it does not inadvertently undermine the local private education sector. The government should aim for a balanced approach that promotes educational accessibility without disadvantaging local institutions.

VII. CONCLUSION

While the GOAL Scholarship is a valuable initiative for increasing access to higher education in Guyana, its unintended consequences on local private tertiary institutions must be addressed. By implementing strategic measures to support these institutions, the government can ensure a more balanced and sustainable higher education system that benefits all stakeholders. Maintaining the viability of local private institutions is essential for the overall health and diversity of Guyana's educational landscape.

REFERENCES

- [1] Guyana Online Academy of Learning. (2023). GOAL 2024 Programs (govofguyana.smapply.io).
- [2] Global Partnership for Education (2023). Education in Guyana (globalpartnership.org).
- [3] GOAL. (2022). GOAL's 2022 application process to commence January 17 (goal.edu.gy).