

Dominica Cadet Corp Program - A Way Forward

by

[Gabriel Christian](#)

Objective of the Cadet Corp:

To develop qualities of, discipline, equity, reason, faith, democracy, civic duty, leadership, courage, secular outlook, spirit of adventure, sportsmanship comradeship, respectful appreciation of the history of Dominica, its people and the importance of its national independence. In addition, the program intends to impart a zealous spirit of initiative and "can do attitudes" and ideals of selfless service amongst youth to make them useful and loyal citizens of the Commonwealth of Dominica. The Corp, by its program, will create a resource of organised, trained and motivated youth to provide leadership and assistance in all walks of life, including the security forces and always be available for service of the nation in all walks of life. Each Cadet will be dedicated to strengthening of the fabric of discipline at all schools of which they are part and at which they are expected to provide exemplary leadership. Every serious country maintains a platform for the systematic diffusion of service to country principles among youth, and the Cadet program intends to achieve that aim. In addition the Cadet will note, that Dominica is a strategically located island, prized and jealously watched by many. Thus the Cadet Corp's objective must be to build a robust patriotic spirit among our youth, as every self respecting people, no matter how small, must maintain the means of self defense at all times in a manner within their means.

Also, the Cadets would be the personnel backbone of the country's disaster relief efforts, in the event of a hurricane, volcano or other such disaster. If, God forbid, Dominicans would have to relocate from our beloved land in the event of a disaster (our neighboring island of Montserrat comes to mind here) then the Corp would be essential to the maintenance of law and order, orderly re-creation of state structures, maintenance of our national ethos and identity be it in Africa or in whatever national territory our people would then find themselves. Such strategic planning must be part of the intellectual dispensation for every Cadet, teaching the need to be mindful of all eventualities.

Adventure:

Adventure activities aimed to develop special qualities of courage, leadership, sportsmanship, spirit of camaraderie, team work and self confidence among Cadets are to be promoted. Some of these activities would be: mapreading, swimming, athletics, soccer, cricket, basketball, volleyball, sharpshooting, hiking, mountaineering, scuba diving, water skiing, sailing, kayaking, yatching, sailing and bicycle expeditions.

Purpose:

The purpose of these activities are to make every Cadet a nation builder, while making them sensitive to the needs and problems of the under privileged and contribute meaningfully toward enriching community life. Some of the major activities to sensitizing Cadets to service to their fellow man are: blood donations, programs which spur adult literacy, anti-domestic violence, anti-HIV/sexual-promiscuity, anti-drug, anti-

street gang and similar efforts, sign construction, work in retirement homes and hospitals, beautification campaigns (hibiscus, poinsetta, flamboyant trees etc.) construction of roads, bridges, sanitation, development of idle lands, environmental protection, water catchment management, afforestation, targeted propagation of selected fruit and other valuable trees etc.

Of special note, under this heading, is the need to foster a new attitude amongst our youth. In so doing the Corp must foster the need for timeliness, duty, loyalty and the spirit of "Can-Do!" Too often our youth have been condemned by a false ceiling of mediocrity imposed by historical conditioning which perceive Dominica's salvation as coming from without and not within. Such a "Can Do" spirit if carried into private enterprise and government will, finally, unleash the full potential of our people. It is a spirit which will spur individual initiative, while building the means to organize collective effort. Further, the Corp's teaching programs must avoid political tribalism and promote a more tolerant culture among our young with regard to differences over political party or ideology. The mission of teaching young people civic involvement will fail, if the Corp does not stand as a resilient non-partisan entity focused on the preservation of our national independence, nation-state, and the humanity of all Dominicans, be they of African, Carib, European or other ethnicity. Self hate and disrespect for the abilities of fellow Dominicans due to ethnic, color and class prejudices are current inhibitors which thwart efforts at national development. Such must be actively discouraged so that Cadets can rise to their fullest potential in service to their country and thus be the best exemplars of courtesy, self respect and inclusion for the common good.

A Paid Commandant and Core Staff:

The Cadet Corp Commandant must be employed and paid as such. This initiative is too crucial to national development to treat it as a part time endeavor. Despite much disappointment and delay over the years, Capt. Francis Richards has stayed true to his patriotic bearings and worked hard to rebuild the Corp over twenty one (21) years of effort. He was ably assisted by others. He is now commandant. However, without a full-time salaried position it is doubtful that he, or any other serious person, can be encouraged to invest the time and effort such a program entails. I believe the investment in such a position would go a long way in realizing the real hope which reside in the program. A core staff, some of it part time or voluntary, would be needed to assist the commandant. Independence Day Camps.

While held in the Summer the Cadet Camps should be called Independence Day Camps where the principles of individual and collective leadership, enterprise, self reliance and civic responsibility are taught. The reason for calling the camps "Independence Day Camps" reside in the need to inculcate national pride in our youth. The youth are Dominica's best guarantors of independence and we must strive to foster the concept that every day is independence day when we act to build a robust society fit to take its place among the family of nations.

The Annual Camp must:

1. Be funded by Cadets primarily, and Cadet Corp Foundation efforts during the prior year to raise funds. The government's primary responsibility should be to facilitate use of state property, as in vehicles, schools, police barracks, or state land for the site. Government must make an annual sum available for the camps or provide a matching fund. The emphasis on private and/or self funding is recognition of government's budgetary constraints and the need for the Cadet structures to develop creative means of self financing.
2. Be dedicated to the completion of a particular project. I.E. the painting of a school, the planting of trees, the building of a bridge, erection of a bus stop shelter, construction of a forest trail, making of park benches, a public convenience, a micro-hydro dam to produce electricity, installation of a wind turbine to produce energy. The project would then be turned over after, the camp, with the appropriate media recognition and parents in attendance.
3. Be accompanied by basic drill and musketry which are essential to the military discipline of the Cadet program. That should include at least one church parade, route march in which the band will lead the Cadets through the district and onto the nearest playground to provide a display for the residents of that district and show the flag. Such energy and presence builds attraction for the program, encourages the young to enroll, and enhances national cohesion and sense of purpose.
4. Be educational, as in allowing for one or two seminars on Career and Educational for life programs: Cadet auxiliaries or professionals with a skill should participate in a one or two day seminar during the camp at which time a lecture/lectures would be given on computer science, medicine, law, engineering, agriculture, fisheries, the environment or some other area of endeavor which could provide career guidance for the Cadets. A quiz should be given at the conclusion, successful passing of which would be a requisite for receipt of an Independence Day Camp Diploma or Certificate by the Cadet. The seminar series should always be coupled with a Life Education program on: Family life, Budgeting, Religion in a secular society, Business Development, Avoidance of Negative Peer Pressure, Career Choices & Counseling, Family Planning and Reproductive Health with an anti-promiscuity slant, Anti-Drug/Anti-Alcoholism messages etc.
5. Be linked to the uplift of the local community nearest the camp. The village or community nearest to the Cadet Independence Day Camp should be beneficiary of its positive impact. That way the Cadets would be well received in every part of the country as nation builders who would leave behind a newly painted school, park benches, a public toilet or bath, newly planted trees etc. as they smartly march out of camp led by their band.
6. Be representative of the country: In that fashion friendships which unite our people would be spawned in the midst of common effort. In the diaspora, we now face a problem in recruiting young Dominicans who seemed to have been brought up in a time of alienation when the youth and Cadet movement had been allowed to deteriorate. In some foreign cities they have clustered themselves into almost tribal grouplets focused on feting and debauchery in a way which negative serious effort at community development. Some have been deported from the U.S. due to such conduct; something seldom seen in prior times. Too many who came of age during the post independence period are uninterested in Dominica and/or its development.

Many are focused on selfish ends and have a poor sense of national identity or solidarity. It is of note that many of the leaders in the new Diaspora movement had their start as Cadets or in the student and youth movements of earlier times. That such lack of focus on youth development occurred, now accounts for the eruption of drug abuse and gang violence in our beloved country. However, if we are inclusive and ensure Caribs, women, the underprivileged become an integral part of Cadet units all over the island attending the Camps then we will be able to build on national identity and overcome divisions which threaten social peace. Such representation of all sectors of our society in cooperative, unselfish effort, builds virtue and is in keeping with the core Christian beliefs of our society.

The Cadet Corp Passport

A Cadet, after basic training, would be given a Cadet Corp Passport. A Booklet, that passport, along with a photo of the cadet and vital statistics (date of birth, School, Address, SS no., etc.), would include a ten point Cadet Creed: 1. Faith 2. Discipline; 3. Patriotism; 4. Temperance; 5. Justice; 6. Punctuality; 7. Service to the Needy; 8. Self Respect; 9. Reason; 10. Initiative. This outline of the Cadet Creed is a suggestion and may be modified upon review by the Government's Cadet Corp Committee and consultation with stakeholders. The passport would have a page for each Cadet Training Module as described below, which would be stamped upon successful completion. At the end of a Cadet's term of service the Passport booklet would be complete. In that regard, it would represent a proud record of the holder and would be a good indicator of skill level. (and it is suggested here that the Cadets should enroll from age ten to College Level, with Cadet Auxiliaries with a skill or specific contribution being accept from the wider public) upon clearing a criminal background check.

Other Programs:

Dominica Cadet Industries (DCI):

The opportunity currently exist that the Cadet Corp could, within twelve months (12), produce boots similar to that which they wore on parade on November 3, 2001. That offer of foreign/local investment to build a shoe/boot factory in Dominica, has been shared with Prime Minister and Minister of Education. It is up to the Government to respond positively. The boot/shoe factory could be the linchpin of a Dominica Cadet Industries at which the Cadets work after school and acquire industrial knowledge. Further DCI would be an incubator of new talent and innovation in industry which, in partnership with ready, willing and able Dominicans at home and abroad, would provide a major internal economic stimulus. In particular, where the DCI partners with the Dominica Academy of Arts and Sciences (DAAS) to utilize the latest in industrial, scientific and management technique. The Cadets would have to be paid and such would be an incentive for their growth into full-blown entrepreneurs.

[© Gabriel Christian](#): Re-publication with author's permission only