

HELP & SHELTER



PROPOSAL

FOR

USE OF GRANT FUNDS OF G\$1,500,000 FROM THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION

HELP & SHELTER
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1. Introduction to Help & Shelter

Help & Shelter is a non-governmental organisation formed as a response to the high incidence of violence, alcoholism and poverty in Guyana, the increase in family instability and the lack of support for victims wishing to leave abusive situations and/or in need of counseling and crisis services.

Help & Shelter was registered as a non-for-profit company in November 1994 and the organisation was formally launched on 26 November 1995 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women).

The crisis service became operational in January 1996 in an office kindly provided by the Georgetown (now Guyana) Legal Aid Clinic. It relocated on 1 March 1997 to the bottom flat of a building in Ministry of Labour Compound on Homestretch Avenue, Georgetown, provided courtesy of the government.

The shelter for abused women and their children was built in 1999 with funding provided by the Basic Needs Trust Fund on land donated by the government. First opened in November 2000, the shelter had to be shut for 3 months in 2003 and from February 2004 to March 2006 due to the lack of funds. The re-opening on 7 March 2006 was made possible through an arrangement with the government for the shelter to be used as both a place of safety for victims of domestic violence and as a temporary home for female and under-14 male victims of trafficking in persons.

Help & Shelter has become a recognised leader in the fight against violence in Guyana, particularly in the areas of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse and have a strong reputation for efficient management of and accountability for all funds received. We have received a national award (Medal of Service) in this year's national honours list. Although based in Georgetown, we are a national organisation in view of the extent of our outreach work and networking.

Since the crisis service opened, we have provided counselling and other support to over 9,000 clients, 86% of whom have been female and most them victims of physical violence. Through the counselling process, our clients are empowered to develop the necessary coping skills and build their confidence and self esteem so that they can rebuild their lives free from violence and the threat of violence.

In our public education work, we raise awareness of the issues of violence with a view to bringing about changes in attitudes and behaviours. Since November 1995, have directly reached over 30,000 people and tens of thousands more indirectly through our leaflets, posters and radio and television public service announcements.

Information about and past and current work, including annual reports and audited accounts, is available on our website – <http://www.hands.org.gy>.

A board of directors elected annually by the members (currently 11 female; 1 male) manages the affairs of Help & Shelter. Our current company membership stands at 69 and we have approximately 60 active volunteers (who may or may not be members of the company) (over 90% women in each case).

Our Philosophy

We believe -

- That the culture of tolerance of violence must and can be changed through education
- That everyone is a unique and valuable person
- That everyone has the right to the power to take control of their own life
- In the equal rights of all human beings
- That no one has the right to be violent to another human being

Our Mission

Our mission is to contribute to bringing about a society where attitudes to the use of violence and practices of violence have been transformed.

Our Goals

1. To work to build respect for the rights of women, children, youth and men to live free of violence and threat of violence.
2. To assist women, children, youth and men to develop alternative ways of handling power and resolving conflict.
3. To widen options for victims of domestic violence.
4. To establish a resource base to ensure the sustainability of Help & Shelter.

Our Objectives

For Goal 1: To actively foster a high level of awareness among all sectors, both governmental and non-governmental, about the prevalence, causes and costs of violence, including violence in the home and in other personal relations, and about alternatives to the use of violence.

For Goal 2: To provide progressively enhanced counselling for women, children, youth and men who are the victims or perpetrators of violence.

For Goal 3: (1) To provide temporary (6 months) shelter for abused women and their children, with training that can develop psychological and practical skills needed for increased self-sufficiency.
(2) To contribute to improved legal recourse for victims of domestic, sexual and child abuse.

For Goal 4: (1) To work towards the economic self-support of the shelter.
(2) To develop and implement a well-articulated fundraising plan.

Ongoing Major Activities

- (i) Public education, advocacy and networking with like-minded individuals and groups, including men, youth and children/children's advocates organizing against violence;
- (ii) Provision of counseling services, including a 24-hour crisis hotline;
- (iii) Running the shelter for abused women
- (iv) Lobbying for the strengthening of the relevant laws and implementation mechanisms where necessary; and
- (v) Fundraising

Experience

Help & Shelter has considerable experience in working to combat violence. Past and current projects include:

- (1) A project aimed at intensifying efforts directed at the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act through financing from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through the Gender Equality fund (CIDA-GEF).
- (2) The training of counselors, police and magistrates with specific reference to advocacy for the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) supported by UNICEF and CIDA-GEF.
- (3) Public education/advocacy outreach project- supported by CIDA and which resulted in increased awareness of family violence as a problem and the demand for the services offered at Help & Shelter
- (4) UNICEF Peace Education Pilot Project in 3 communities- Beterverwagting, Lodge and Covent Garden, from July 03 to August 29, 2004. As one of the coordinating agents Help & Shelter was responsible for targeting Frontline Workers (police officers, teachers, nurses, social and agricultural workers), the health clinics and the religious groups in the aforementioned communities.
- (5) Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Project for the implementation of Help & Shelter's integrated programme for addressing domestic violence through advocacy, crisis counseling, court support, research, analysis and public education from November 01, 2004 to April 2006.
- (6) Training and Advocacy on HIV/AIDS and Domestic Violence Project funded by USAID/GHARP.
- (7) Increasing awareness of domestic violence and child abuse with health workers funded by the Canada Fund; 1 year from March 2007.
- (8) Public education regional outreach program with forms 4 students funded by the British High Commission; April 2007 to July 2008.
- (9) Reducing gender-based violence within selected communities pilot project funded by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); 6 months from October 2007.

- (10) Increasing awareness of domestic violence and child abuse with health workers; Canada Fund; 1 year from March 2007.
- (11) USAID/Guyana HIV/AIDS Reduction & Prevention Project (GHARP) II October 2008 to 30 September 2009 (Provide one-to-one educational information on HIV; Conduct in-School and Out of School program at 3 identified schools and 3 identified communities in Region 3 & 4).
- (12) Pickney Project – in collaboration with EveryChild Guyana, to promote community based child protection in Sophia (Sept 2007-March 2010).
- (13) UNIFEM-funded gender-based violence reduction project (strengthening existing laws, development of protocols and public awareness); December 2007-December 2009.
- (14) Gender-based violence reduction capacity building project in 4 communities funded by World Women's Day of Prayer German Committee; 3 years from April 2008.
- (15) CIDA-GEP Counselling Training, Capacity Building with 2 NGOs & expansion of counselling; 15/7/09 to 31/5/10
- (16) UNFPA-funded community-based gender-based violence project (capacity building with the community); from January 2010
- (17) USAID/Guyana HIV/AIDS Reduction & Prevention Project (GHARP II) 1 October 2009 to 30 September 2010; Prevention-Other on Gender Issues
- (18) EU-funded child protection project in 4 communities; 15 months from October 2010
- (19) EU-funded counselling project: 3 years from July 2011

Project agreements, reports etc. are available on our website at <http://www.hands.org.gy/>

1. General Background and Present Situation

The context/rational of the proposed project is the continuing – indeed apparently increasing – high level of violence, particularly gender-based violence, that permeates Guyana at all socio-economic levels and among all ethnic groups.

Although a Domestic Violence Act was passed in 1996 and a National Policy on Domestic Violence adopted in 2008, domestic violence continues to be a leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15-44. Domestic violence is mostly perpetrated by male partners or spouses towards women and is still all too often regarded as a cultural norm. A large number of children are also directly and indirectly exposed to and affected by domestic violence in the home. This leads to the perpetuation of a cycle of abuse where children exposed to violence in the home are at far greater risk to themselves becoming perpetrators of abuse or victims of abuse as adults.

A 2005 Guyana Human Rights Association study on sexual violence in the criminal justice system in Guyana found that only 1% of rapes reported to the police resulted in convictions. This study also found that in 2007 92% of sexual assault victims were female, of whom 69% were girls aged 16 and younger. A new Sexual Offences Act was passed in 2010 but it is too early in its implementation stages to assess its effectiveness.

There have been three main studies conducted on violence against women in Guyana. The first study, by Seeprasad & Danna (1989), found that 2 out of 3 women in Guyana had been beaten at least once by their husband or partner. The second, conducted by Red Thread in 2000 found that 1 out of every 3 women experienced some type of physical abuse with 21% of women in current relationships and 42% in previous relationships experiencing physical abuse by husbands or partners. The third study, by Roxanne Myers (commissioned by the Ministry of Human Services & Social Security with assistance from UNFPA) in 2010, found that:

‘Within the survey sample population a prevalence of 61% of women or 3 in every 5 women reported lifetime experience with physical violence by an intimate partner, and close to 36% of women or nearly 2 in every 5 women reported current experience of one or more acts of physical violence within the past 12 months. The highest proportion of women (29%) who experienced current gender-based violence also had these incidences occur *many times* or more than five times within the past year. Responses to incidences of violence

for women, who **ever** experienced physical violence revealed that nearly 40% of women were affected *many times*.⁴

Additionally a small KAP survey conducted by Help & Shelter in the community of Hague, WCD, in 2008 showed that among the 42 women and 11 men interviewed, 50% of women and 18% of men had experienced physical abuse and 45% of women and 22% of men experienced emotional abuse in current relationships.

Over the past several years there has been an upsurge in the number of women killed as a result of domestic violence incidents in Guyana. Police figures recently released indicate that 23 murders between 1 November 2010 and 31 October 2011 were 'domestic related' and that there has been a 21% increase in domestic related murders.

Child abuse is also widespread in Guyana; almost all children are exposed to some form of physical abuse either in the home or at school. A UNICEF/MLHSS/Red Thread study conducted in 2004/2005 among 4,000 children aged 3-17 yrs in all 10 administrative Regions of Guyana found that 87% of children interviewed had received some sort of physical punishment in the home, 41% had experienced intimidation and 14% reported being denigrated. Additionally, 28% of in-school youth and 48% of out-of-school youth were assessed as being inadequately supervised at home. In schools, 37% of children reported being verbally abused, 18% threatened and 32% actually hurt by peers. Sexual abuse is also prevalent and goes mostly unreported due to problems of inadequate legislation, poor services and a reluctance to report to authorities. It is estimated that in Guyana 8-10% of girls and 2-5% of boys are sexually abused. According to a World Bank Study on Caribbean Youth Development, which included Guyana, sexual and physical abuse, substance abuse, adolescent pregnancies, early sexual initiation and other risky behaviours are on the increase.

Efforts to eradicate gender-based violence need to be enforced by wider action to eliminate inequality between men and women in order to ensure equal participation in the developmental process within the family and society at large.

Against this background, there is a clear need for Help & Shelter to continue its work towards encouraging women and girls, boys and men to adopt a peaceful and healthy lifestyle through stimulating their awareness of the means of communicating in a non-violent way and of the issues that relate to domestic and sexual violence and child abuse.

Our ability to do our work is dependent on a combination of government support, project funding, fundraising activities (scavenger hunts, tea parties, dinners etc.) and donations in cash or kind from commercial enterprises and individuals. Government support includes free use of the premises that house our crisis service, donation of the land on which the shelter was built (with a government-supported grant) and an annual subvention, which now covers most of the shelter operating costs.

Until 2 years ago, we were able to cover most of the expenses of our core services through donor-funded projects, but then suffered severe reverses.

In September 2009, our counselling funding was substantially cut at very short notice and the remainder terminated at the end of 2010. We were fortunate to obtain counselling services support from the Canada Fund, UNICEF and the British High Commission, which helped to offset some of the expenses, but a considerable proportion of our own resources was expended to cover the remainder and in May 2011 we were constrained to cut our counsellors and public education officer's time in half in order to conserve dwindling resources.

Following a successful proposal to the EU, a 3 year counselling-based project started in July. The project requires 17% cash co-funding and the budget limit did not enable us to include the usual percentage for administration to help to cover our light bills, phone bills etc. We have however been able to find this year's co-funding contribution thanks to donations and support from the Canada Fund

With regard to our public education, despite untiring efforts, we have so far been unsuccessful with efforts to obtaining project funding but in July 2011 received a donation of US\$10,000 from Avon Foundation to enable us to continue some level of public education for 9 months from August 2011. We propose to apply for Australian government funding through their Direct Aid Programme and to answer IDB's current call for proposals, which we hope will be successful by the time to Avon Foundation support comes to an end.

In addition to the public education work being carried out with Avon Foundation support, we would like to be able to re-contract the part-time services of 2 persons who worked with us on our successful World Women's Day of Prayer German Committee-funded community-based project (see <http://www.hands.org.gy/node/88>). They would resume their work in the communities of Good Hope on East Coast Demerara and Kaneville on East Bank Demerara and as part of their work, will distribute leaflets and posters on a wide range of violence-related topics.

We have a portfolio of radio and TV PSAs, which were developed under past projects, but have not had any project funding for their broadcast for some time and finding sponsors has proved difficult. Although expensive, broadcast of PSAs is one of the most effective ways of reaching people so that they are aware of the services we offer.

It is important that the environment for both clients and personnel at the shelter and crisis service be as comfortable and pleasant as possible. Annual government budgetary support covers most of our shelter operation costs but does not stretch to the purchase of much needed furniture or repairs/refurbishment and we similarly have no provision for repairs/refurbishment to the crisis service.

3. Proposal for the use of grant funds of \$1.5m

We therefore propose that the grant funds be used for the following:

1. The purchase of immediately-needed items for the shelter

While our annual subvention from the government covers most of the shelter operating expenses, it does not stretch to the purchase of much needed furniture, repairs/refurbishment or replenishment of items such as towels and bed linen, and our financial situation is such that we simply cannot afford to expend our own funds on what is needed. Where possible, we obtain donations of furniture and supplies from the private sector or kind individuals, but it would be of great assistance if we were able to carry out the repairs and purchase the items listed in the attached budget.

Some of the furniture items are required to replace ones that are no longer unusable, some to take into account the need for additional furniture due to the increase in residency at the shelter and some to add to the comfort of residents. The water filter is required due to the discoloured water supply.

The shelter has not be painted in- or outside since it was built and is in need of both, in addition to which some of the floors need re-doing. The cost of these works is however beyond the total amount that we understand is available and we are actively seeking assistance for this elsewhere.

2. Repairs/renovation work to the crisis service, office furniture & equipment

We have rent-free use of the crisis service offices but are responsible for repairs and again, our financial situation is such as to preclude expenditure on all but emergencies.

Our office furniture stock is old and two desks are in dire need of replacement.

We only have one laptop, which is also old and does not have a CD-Rom drive, which is required for various activities, including public education. We are also in need of a printer/scanner/copier for use by counselling and public education personnel.

We regard a water cooler as essential for both clients and 'staff'. The cooler that we have does not cool the water. A company (that does not sell coolers) kindly tried to fix it for us free of charge but it malfunctioned only a couple of days after it was returned to us.

3. Re-contracting of community-based public education officers

Our Women's World Day of Prayer German Committee-funded project, which was implemented between April 2008 and March 2011, showed the value of doing intensive work in specific communities.

As a direct result of this work, the community group in Den Amstel was successful in obtaining funding under the UNDP/Government of Guyana EPTSI Project for improving parenting skills and reducing child abuse and neglect in the communities of Den Amstel, Blankenburg and Hague.

We would like to be able to re-contract two of the persons who worked with us on the project to resume work in their communities, where they would continue to raise awareness of the issues of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse through interaction with residents and community-based groups, including faith-based organisations and refer those in need of counselling to the crisis service.

4. Reproduction of leaflets/posters

The distribution of leaflets and posters is an integral part of our public education work. Through them, we seek to both inform the public of our existence and the services we provide and to increase their awareness of and educate them about domestic and sexual violence and child abuse and related topics.

We have a sizeable portfolio of leaflets on and have recently added two news ones on pregnancy and abuse and protection of children.

5. Broadcast of PSAs

As it is impossible for us to directly reach the entire population through our public education work, we need to be able to inform the general public of our existence and the services we provide and to (inasmuch as is possible in 30 or 60 seconds) increase awareness of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse and we have a number of PSAs for radio and television.

The use of 'PSA' is somewhat of a misnomer as none of the television stations are willing to broadcast our PSAs as a public service and finding sponsors is, as indicated above, difficult. The radio stations sometimes air our PSAs for free but not on a regular basis.

We have not had funding for PSA broadcasts for some time and cannot afford to expend our own funds on them, and believe that even limited broadcasting will be of value.

The attached budget sets out our expenditure proposal.

Narrative and financial reports will of course be provided.

4. Results

The results of the application of the grant funds as proposed will be:

1. Enhanced comfort of victims of domestic violence and human trafficking resident at the shelter

We aim to provide our shelter residents with a secure and comfortable environment in which to stay while they are helped to deal with the trauma they have suffered and empowered to rebuild lives free from violence and the threat of violence.

The repairs and acquisition of the items listed in the attached budget will assist us in maintaining the achievement of our aim.

2. Enhanced comfort of crisis service clients and personnel

Again, we aim to provide our counselling clients with a comfortable environment in which to be helped to deal with the trauma they have suffered and empowered to rebuild lives free from violence and the threat of violence.

It is also important to us that our counsellors and other personnel, who work under great strain, have a comfortable working environment.

The repairs and acquisition of the items listed in the attached budget will assist us in maintaining the achievement of our aim.

3. Raised awareness of residents of Good Hope (ECD) and Kaneville (EBD) of the issues of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse

As a result of the work of the public education officers through their interaction with residents and community-based groups, including faith-based organisations, and the distribution of public education

materials, the awareness of the members of the communities of Good Hope and Kaneville will be raised and it is anticipated that as a result of this raised awareness there will be a reduction in violent behaviour.

The public education officers will refer persons in the communities who are in need of counselling and other support services to the crisis service.

4. Raised awareness among the general public of the existence of Help & Shelter and the services we offer, and of the issues of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse

As a result of the broadcast of radio and TV PSAs, members of the general public will be made aware or reminded of our existence and the services available to victims of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse.

It is anticipated that this will in turn result in more people who are in need of counselling, shelter and other support services we provide seeking our assistance and being helped to deal with the trauma they have suffered and empowered to rebuild lives free from violence and the threat of violence.

Submitted 22 November 2011

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