

PROJECT DESCRIPTION ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION BY
HELP & SHELTER
TO
WORLD DAY OF PRAYER GERMAN COMMITTEE
FOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROJECT

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 service.

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 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 of Guyana 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, sexual and child abuse and although based in Georgetown is a national organisation in view of the extent of its outreach work and networking.

A board of directors elected annually by the members (currently 9 female; 1 male) manages the affairs of Help & Shelter. Our current company membership stands at approximately 30 and we have approximately 60 active volunteers (who may or may not be members of the company) (over 90% women in each case).

We currently employ 12 females and 4 males.

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.

Help & Shelter includes sexual, physical and psychological abuse in its definition of violence.

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

Prior Work on the Issue covered in the Proposal

Help & Shelter has considerable experience in working on the issue covered in the proposal, including;

- (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 has 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.

2. General Background and Present Situation

Gender-based violence, particularly domestic violence, is widespread in Guyanese society at all socio-economic levels and among all ethnic groups.

This violence is still generally accepted as a way of life in the Guyanese society. With the increase in emigration, family support has decreased and this, combined with the lack of affordable housing and financial independence, restricts a victim's ability to leave an abusive situation.

Although few statistics on the cost of domestic violence are available in Guyana, international research indicates that it has a high cost for the victim and that this in turn has high social and economic costs for families, orphans and vulnerable children, communities and workplaces and ultimately the state. Locally, data gathered by H & S indicates that **6200 women** as compared to **1015 men** accessed our services during the period November 25, 1995 to July 31, 2007. Our child abuse cumulative data shows that for the same period **874 children** were abused, of which **432 have been reportedly been raped and 283 sexually assaulted.**

Efforts to eradicate this 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.

A heavy demand is made for the services of Help & Shelter, both by direct daily physical contact with the Georgetown-based office and by hotline reports emanating from all ten administrative regions. Against this background, there is a clear need to penetrate the identified 4 pilot communities to 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 gender-based violence in the context of sexual and reproductive health.

Help and Shelter has organised several initiatives, including public awareness announcements, awareness workshops, counselling, shelter and public education) with the intent to reduce and eliminate violence within the domestic sphere.

Help and Shelter in collaboration with WDPGC will target four communities in an effort to address the issues at the level of the community, family, and religious institutions etc.

3. Relationship of the Project to the Christian Church

The project would involve working with Christian Church organisations in the identified communities, along with other stakeholders.

4. Objectives of the Project

The overall long term objective of the project is to educate and empower women and girls, boys and men to adopt peaceful and non-violent means for resolving conflicts in their lives. It is anticipated that through a community based driven process, awareness about gender violence and its root causes will be developed in communities along with local initiatives for resolving such issues through the transfer of skills and appropriate training initiatives. Through these community based initiatives the level of awareness of gender base violence and violence perpetrated towards women and girls in particular will decrease and options for the pursuit of a peaceful life free of violence and abuse will become a distinct reality.

The short term objective of the project is to significantly increase the level of awareness and thereby reduce the high incidence of violence against women, girls and children in general, through public education and advocacy initiatives applied for direct sensitization in four communities within two administrative regions in Guyana.

5. Co-operation with other organisations

Our community-based approach recognises churches and other religious organisations as part of the process of community awareness, sensitisation and the development of local community initiatives.

6. Project Planning

Our planning committee comprises a team of directors and staff who meet fortnightly to review the progress of activities under existing projects and plan new projects. The team is made up of six females and three males.

The intended beneficiaries (persons living in the identified communities) have not been involved in the initial planning process.

7. Planned Activities

- Identifying community facilitators in each of the 4 communities who will coordinate community based activities and initiatives
- Meetings with key members of the 4 communities including community leaders and community organizations including religious organizations to views problems and possible solutions to gender based violence in their respective communities
- Working with identified members in the communities to mobilize and conduct an assessment of the situation in relation to gender based violence among women and girls, boys and men, including the cultural aspects of the issues
- Gathering information about the communities' traditions and values to facilitate the involvement of members of the communities
- The formation of a steering committee involving and made up of all the other organizations in the communities, the churches, schools, health centres and NDC's (local neighbourhood governing bodies) including youth groups to come up with a planned programme of activities for addressing the local community problem of gender based violence. This steering committee will oversee the implementation together with the community facilitator
- Forming pressure groups to advocate and lobby for changes in the communities
- Community workshops on gender-based violence including child abuse to raise awareness with different sectors of the community
- Training of peer educators to advocate and raise awareness about gender-based violence including child abuse among community members
- Basic training in counseling skill for those community members interested in assisting members in the process of resolving personal gender-based violence issues, empowerment and behavioural change (this would be unpaid work and persons trained would not be considered professional counsellors)
- Networking with other NGOs and agencies in the delivery of services and skills training to the 4 communities so as to increase capacity building in communities
- Monitoring and evaluation of all community-based activities and training
- Targeting men-abusers and men who are willing to be advocates to work towards the elimination of the common cause of gender-based violence
- Generally, empowering women and girls to consolidate their social, psychological and economic standing through net working and referrals activities
- Using banners to advertise the project in each community.

8. Beneficiaries

The project will be implemented in four identified communities as follows:

1. Den-Amstel - Region Three
2. Good-Hope – Region Four
3. Kaneville (squatting area) - Region Four
4. Covent Garden - Region Four

The residents of Den-Amstel are of predominantly Afro-Guyanese origin while the residents Covent Garden and Good-Hope are of predominantly Indo-Guyanese origin. The residents of Kaneville are of mixed Guyanese origin.

All four communities function under Local Democratic Organs that are decision making bodies which relate to and operate under the ambit of the Central Government. The cultural dynamics are largely dependent on socialisation processes and the economic situations of persons within the communities varies according to their means of income.

In Kaneville and Den-Amstel income earners are mainly public servants and farmers and in Covent Garden and Good-Hope mainly cane harvesters and farmers.

The project is intended to target some 1000 women and 500 men who would be direct beneficiaries and who would share the information from the training with other members of the communities.

9. Project Duration

It is anticipated that the project would be implemented from January 2008 to December 2010.

During the first year initial ground work in the identified communities will be followed by actual work with the communities. During the second and third years of the project activities similar to those executed during the first will be carried out, with the intention of assessing the impact of the project work on behavioural change with respect to gender-based violence. The intention is for people in the communities to communicate and interact with each other, particularly in their homes, in a non violent way.

10. Project Implementation

Overall responsibility for the management of the project will be vested in the board of Help & Shelter. Help & Shelter will be responsible for:

- Planning project activities
- Disbursement of funds and accountability
- Initiating and consolidating partnerships with other organisations for the project to succeed
- Monitoring and evaluation of outcomes

The Project Co-ordinator will be responsible for managing the implementation of the project activities subject to the direction of the board.

Other project team members will community coordinators and volunteers who will facilitate the training and other activities.

11. Evaluation

The execution of project activities will be done in accordance with a project implementation schedule defining the specific time frame for each activity. These activities will be monitored on a continual basis by the Project Coordinator and the M & E consultant to ensure that the project is on track. In this way, the progress made towards achieving the results of the project will be effectively measured. In addition, evaluation or the measuring of the extent to which the results have been achieved will be carried out at the end of each activity. Relevant evaluation tools such as questionnaires will be developed and applied for all of the project activities. Other appropriate M & E tools will also be used from time to time.

12. Expected Difficulties

It is predicted that no major difficulty or constraint with the capability of affecting the implementation of the project will arise. The management of the proposed project is, however, quite capable of responding adequately to possible challenges that can have the potential to interfere with the timely scheduling and execution of required project activities.

13. Project Budget

Please see the attached budget.

14. Other contributions

We have not approached any other donors for financial assistance to execute this project.

15. Connection to WDP

Our connection with WDP was initiated by Rev. Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth, Executive Secretary, Church Renewal, Justice & Partnership, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, following which we received an invitation to submit a proposal.

In July 2007 we met with a group from WDP at our Crisis Centre.