



HELP & SHELTER



ANNUAL REPORT 2012

HOMESTRETCH AVENUE, GEORGETOWN, GUYANA, S. AMERICA

TEL: +592 225 4731; 227 3454; 227 8353 FAX: +592 227 8353

EMAIL: hands@networksgy.com WEBSITE: <http://www.hands.org.gy>

INTRODUCTION

Help & Shelter is a non-governmental organisation established in November 1994 to address all forms of violence, but especially domestic and sexual violence and child abuse, with the aim of creating a society where attitudes towards violence and the use of violence are transformed. Our Mission, Goals, Objectives and Areas of Action are set out in our Governance, Policies & Procedures Manual, which is available on our website at <http://www.hands.org.gy/governancemanual>.

We are a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. The members in annual general meeting elect the board of directors, which is responsible for policy and overall management and supervision, and day-to-day operations are carried out by a combination of paid staff and project personnel and volunteers (who may be, but are not necessarily, members of the company).

Help & Shelter is acknowledged as a leader in the fight against violence in Guyana and in 2011 was awarded a Medal of Service in recognition of its work.

In addition to the provision of counselling, shelter and other support to victims of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse and our public education work, we advocate for relevant legislative changes, including reform of sexual offences legislation and the abolition of corporal punishment. We contributed to the crafting of the National Domestic Violence Policy and are represented on the Sex Offences Task Force, the Domestic Violence Oversight Committee and the National Task Force to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

This report is intentionally concise. Project agreements and reports, statistics, media statements and a wealth of other relevant information are available on our website - <http://www.hands.org.gy/>.

OUR PEOPLE

Our Members & Volunteers

Membership of Help & Shelter the company is not mandatory for volunteers, but in September 2012, new by-laws were adopted (and confirmed at the annual general meeting held on 17 November 2012) which provide that volunteers who have been active with us for at least 6 months and who have signed on to both our Policy on Sensitive and Other Issues and Child Protection Policy will automatically become members unless they elect not to, as a result of which over 30 volunteers became members on 1 October 2012.

At the same time as providing for automatic membership subject to eligibility, the new by-laws provide that the directors may resolve to terminate a person's membership if s/he has failed to play an active role for 6 months, and on 1 October 2012 the directors resolved that the membership of over 40 members, many of whom had been inactive for a long number of years, be terminated. In the event of former members again becoming active, the by-laws provide for restoration to the register of members.

The purpose of the changes was to promote a greater connection between the people actually working with Help & Shelter and membership - and hence control - of the company.

During 2012, our volunteers continued to provide sterling assistance with public education work and to hold fundraisers to help cover the cost of their work. They also began to play a much more active role in relation to the shelter, with regular visits to interact with residents, and in August 2012 the shelter committee was expanded to include an additional four volunteers. A four day orientation programme for new volunteers was held in August 2012.

Our Staff & Project Personnel

Thanks to continued government support, we were able to retain the services of our shelter staff.

In 2012 we continued the practice begun in 2010 of making up fees for core personnel from our own funds.

As in previous years, many paid staff and project personnel continued to provide additional voluntary services during the year.

The new by-laws also provide for eligible paid staff and project personnel to be automatically admitted to membership and none of them elected not become a member.

Our Board

Danuta Radzik resigned from the board in March 2012 and Michelle Low in May. Gaitrie Shivsankar, who had been alternate for the volunteer representatives, was appointed a substantive director in May.

At the 2010 annual general meeting held on 17 November 2012, all outgoing officers and members of the board were re-elected.

A list of those who contributed to our work during 2012 is at Appendix I.

OUR WORK

During 2012, Help & Shelter's principal activities continued to be the provision of counselling and referral and advocacy services, public education, networking and advocacy and the maintenance of the shelter. As in 2011, non-shelter work was only partially covered by project funding, as a result of which the organisation's own funds were again used to make up the shortfall in core personnel fees.

Community-Based Child Protection Project – 19/10/10-31/3/12 Funded by the EU & Help & Shelter

The general objective of the project was to develop the human rights agenda in Guyana as it relates to children by using a rights-based approach to strengthen child protection systems, policies and mechanisms to provide services for children whose rights have been violated.

Specifically, the project aimed to promote children's safety in four communities (Hague and Zeelugt in Region 3 and Sophia and Good Hope in Region 4) through community-based actions to improve the lives of children who have experienced abuse and violence, and through prevention education. Project activities involved parents, and service providers from the education, health, judicial, and social service sectors and other relevant groups such as faith based organisations, with the aim of increasing awareness and changing attitudes and behaviour.

Project activities under the extension granted by the EU continued until the end of March 2012 and a roundtable was held to share the knowledge gained during the project so as to stimulate similar types of community-based actions across Guyana. Project reports, including the report on the survey conducted August to October 2011, are available on the website at <http://www.hands.org.gy/childprotectionproject>.

The project was successful in fuelling the communities' interest in child protection and bringing about a community endorsement of child protection and abuse education. It also served as a catalyst to galvanise medium and long term support for child wellbeing within the communities while creating links with external agencies that offer relevant services. Stakeholders in the communities became more conversant with the fundamental rights of the child and their concomitant effect on the safety of the family unit. The project was also instrumental in stimulating an evidenced-based model of parenting that challenged the culturally entrenched views of the use of corporal and punitive forms of child discipline.

Help & Shelter's 10% co-funding requirement was met thanks to donations, including substantial contributions from the US-registered charitable organisation Concerned Citizens Against Domestic Abuse (<http://www.ccadac.com/>) but Help & Shelter sustained a substantial net loss on the project due to the application of the EU's exchange rate conditions.

Promotion of Human Rights of Victims of Domestic & Sexual Violence and Child Abuse Project – 24/6/11-23/6/14

Funded by the EU & Help & Shelter

The overall objective of this 3 year €119,782 project is to improve the lives of women, children and men who are experiencing domestic and sexual violence and child abuse, and the specific objectives are the provision of services to victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse and advances in implementation of the National Domestic Violence Policy.

The main activities of the project are:

1. Provision of free face-to-face and hotline counselling to victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse.
2. Delivery of free comprehensive court support services to survivors/victims of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse.
3. Provision of free advocacy and advisory counselling and referral services to victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse.
4. Advocacy for advances in implementation of the National Domestic Violence Policy.

The intended results of the project are:

1. 2,175 victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse are provided with free face-to-face and hotline counselling.
2. Free comprehensive court support services are delivered to 150 survivors/victims of violence.
3. Free advocacy and advisory counselling and referral services are provided to 450 survivors/victims of violence.
4. Advances in the implementation of the National Domestic Violence Policy.

Project activities continued to proceed largely on target but again apart from with respect to advances in implementation of the National Domestic Violence Policy, as the oversight committee, which is the government-controlled mechanism through which we advocate for such advances failed to hold regular meetings.

An independent evaluation of the project was conducted at the instance of the EU in May and the project was the only one in Guyana awarded an A for efficiency of implementation.

The project documents and reports are available on our website at <http://www.hands.org.gy/humanrightsproject>

Help & Shelter's 2011-2012 co-funding was provided through fundraising events, by donations and through the support of Concerned Citizens Against Domestic Abuse and the Government of Canada through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives. The 2012-2013 co-funding was provided entirely by the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office through the British High Commissioner to Guyana.

Public Education Support from the Avon Foundation for Women 1/7/11-30/4/12

Public education work funded by the grant of US\$10,000 continued until the end of April 2012.

As a result of the Avon Foundation's generosity, we were able to increase awareness of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse at national and community levels, directly engaging with 2,202 people and indirectly reaching thousands more. We were also able to produce two new leaflets and posters

The reports, leaflets, posters and other documents are available on our website at <http://www.hands.org.gy/avon>.

Community-Based Public Education Support

Funded by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs represented by the British High Commissioner to Guyana

The funds of \$1.5m received at the end of 2011 enabled the carrying out of urgent repairs and purchase of items of furniture and equipment for the crisis service and shelter, and during the first four and a half months of the year, the continuation of community-based public education work and limited broadcast of our PSAs.

The documents and reports are available on our website at <http://www.hands.org.gy/british2012>.

Advancement of Gender Equality and Reproductive Rights

Funded by UNFPA

Help & Shelter was pleased to again partner with UNFPA in the second half of 2012.

Activities consisted of:

1. Conducting sensitization sessions in identified workplaces to enhance knowledge about gender equality and reproductive rights, the Domestic Violence Act and the negative impact of gender-based violence, and
2. Expanding community-based initiatives in family planning to support cross-cutting issues of gender and gender-based violence and community education

The Annual Work Plans and reports are on our website at <http://www.hands.org.gy/unfpagenderequality>.

Enhancing awareness of gender-based violence and its effects through community-based awareness work Funded by USAID

On 26 September 2012 Help & Shelter signed a G\$5,981,053 sub-agreement with USAID's contractor, CSDS, to do implement a 10 month gender-based violence awareness project in two communities in Region 3, namely Stewartville and Uitvlugt.

The project objectives are:

- To increase knowledge and understanding of gender-based violence and the relationships between boys and girls, men and women, placing emphasis on male norms and behaviours
- To raise awareness of the relevant legislation and the roles and functions of existing agencies working towards the reduction of GBV
- To identify the linkages between GBV and HIV/AIDS and the effect of GBV on the spread of HIV/AIDS
- To encourage beneficiaries to adapt to non-violent behaviour and to encourage peaceful means of resolving conflicts and stimulating healthy life styles
- To build the capacity of students, teachers, PTA members and community leaders to raise awareness of and respond to GBV and to advocate for GBV prevention within their respective organisations and peer groups, thereby leading to the sustainability of GBV prevention and alleviation activities
- To introduce age-appropriate and culturally sensitive training and education materials

Project implementation began in October 2012 and will continue until the end of July 2013. The proposal and reports are on our website at <http://www.hands.org.gy/gbvawareness>.

Production of Documentary on Domestic Violence 6/11/12-10/12/12

Funded by UN Women Micro-Grant Facility

In September 2012 Help & Shelter was invited to submit a proposal to UN Women for activities related to the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (25 November to 10 December 2012) for consideration under their micro-grant facility, with grants of \$5,000 each to be awarded to the 5 most innovative proposals based on a competitive review.

Help & Shelter's to produce Guyana's first documentary on domestic violence was successful and the agreement was signed in early November 2012 and work immediately began to capture the stories of women murdered by their abusers and survivors of abuse by interviewing survivors and families and members of their communities.

The main goal of the documentary is to demonstrate that domestic violence not only affects the victims and their immediate households but also their extended families and communities and to illustrate that domestic violence is not only a "man and wife" problem, which is a common misconception in Guyana, but that it also has a major impact on communities and society as a whole.

The proposal and agreement are on our website at <http://www.hands.org.gy/documentary>.

The Shelter

During 2012, the shelter provided a place of safety to 103 abused/trafficked women and their children and at risk children referred to us by the Childcare and Protection Agency., bringing the total number sheltered since we re-opened in March 2006 to 796.

The government continued to be the main source of funding for the operation of the shelter, providing a subvention of \$10m.

A number of private enterprises continued to make regular donations of foodstuffs and other supplies and periodic donations of clothing, toys and other items were also received, together with some monetary donations.

In October, Pat Noel, who had been shelter manager since May 2007, resigned with effect from the end of the year, but very kindly agreed to hold over if necessary pending the appointment of a successor.

Our shelter intake data and manual are available on our website at <http://www.hands.org.gy/shelter>.

OUR STATISTICS

Monthly and cumulative statistics were compiled and posted on the website throughout the year at <http://www.hands.org.gy/statistics>.

During 2012, we provided face-to-face counselling services to 436 new clients (402 adults, 34 children), court support counselling services to 43 new clients (adults), received 294 hotline calls and directly reached 2,297 people through our education and awareness work, bringing our cumulative figures from November 1995, when the crisis service opened, to 31 December 2012 to 10,071 face-to-face counselling clients, 453 court support clients, 4,209 hotline calls, 1,493 non-client referrals and 42,762 persons directly reached through public education and awareness work.

OUR FINANCES

Our adherence to high standards of financial transparency and accountability continued throughout 2012.

2012 was another extremely challenging year. In order to keep essential non-shelter services going we continued to expend considerable amounts of our own funds to make up key personnel fees.

In June 2012, we sent out another set of 'begging' letters to private sector enterprises, some of which had made donations in 2011 and again responded positively. We also regularly posted an appeal for donations on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Help-Shelter/146803688773378>, as did the volunteers on their page at <https://www.facebook.com/helpandsheltervolunteers>.

We hoped to host a fundraising dinner in November but this had to be postponed to 2013 for a number of reasons. In August 2012, Grant-A-Dream, an NGO founded by Dominique Dias, the daughter of chairperson Denise Dias, and friends, organised a summer scavenger hunt, barbecue and lime for our benefit, which raised over \$500,000.

In December, we began selling purple bracelets embossed with "A life free from violence is everyone's right" as a combined fund- and awareness-raising venture.

Our 2012 audited financial statements appear in Appendix II.

There were no significant changes in fixed assets during 2012.

Help & Shelter is a company limited by guarantee and did not issue any shares or debentures during the period 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2012.

Help & Shelter extends deepest appreciation to all those who in any way assisted us in our work during 2012.

Appendix I

The following persons contributed to our work as volunteers, staff or project personnel during 2012:

- Anansa Abbensetts
- Martha Ali
- Claudine Alleyne
- Viaola S. Andrews
- Bibi Arjune
- Petal Baboolall
- M. Bacchus
- Angela Benjamin
- Natalya Bobb
- Homer Bowen
- Genevieve Bradford-Paul
- Poshia Bryan
- Elizabeth Carew
- Shivana Chan
- Renita Charles
- Vanessa Collymore
- Diane Daly
- Venus de Freitas
- Niveta Deen
- Denise Dias
- Pamela Evans
- Alex Fraser
- Genevieve Garcia
- Rozana Girdharry
- Karen, Theresa Gomes
- Beverly Gomes-Lovell
- Amanda Gonsalves
- Joy Gravesande
- Patricia Gray
- Tessa Greene
- Sherene Griffith
- Lawrence Hanays
- Melissa Harris
- Jacqueline Hassan
- Julian Haynes
- Isha Husain-Singh
- Linda Hustler
- Carol Innis-Baptiste
- Celestine Juan
- Yvette Joseph
- Fay Karim
- Cheomi Keiler
- Margaret Kertzious
- Vidyaratha Kissoon
- Jenny Lancaster
- Selina Lepps
- Laurel Lester
- Joveita London
- Chabela Lord
- Michelle Low
- Bonita Marissa Lowden
- Kevin Massiah
- Ebeth McIntosh
- Joshua Muridalll
- Pamela Nauth
- Patricia Noel
- Brenda Nurse
- Johnson Olatunji
- Lavern Pinto
- Patricia Plummer
- Yvonne Quintin
- Danuta Radzik
- Manjusha (Cindy) Rahaman
- Seelochnie Rambarran
- Parbattie Ranglall
- Kevin Reddy
- Colleen Roberts
- Paula Sampson
- Susanne Sarrabo
- Nicola Samuels
- Karen Shaw
- Gaitrie Shivsankar
- Rajkuarie Singh
- Mavis Stephen
- Jacqueline Success
- Donna Taylor
- Cleopatra Thomas
- Marva Thomas
- Sandra Thompson
- Josephine Whitehead
- Venus Wickham
- Harriet Wong

The following persons also served as directors during 2012:

- Homer Bowen
- Denise Dias
- Patricia Gray
- Isha Husain-Singh
- Selina Lepps
- Michelle Low
- Pamela Nauth
- Patricia Plummer
- Yvonne Quintin
- Danuta Radzik
- (Cindy) Manjusha Rahaman
- Gaitrie Shivsankar
- Josephine Whitehead