

**UNIFEM  
Help & Shelter**

**Report for period July to December 2008**

**Strengthening Policy Frameworks and Social Services, Public Education & Advocacy to  
Reduce Gender-Based Violence**

**A. 2<sup>nd</sup> Narrative Report (July to December 2008)**

**1. Project Objectives.**

- a. The enactment and implementation of new sexual offences legislation.
- b. Amendment of and substantial improvements in the effective implementation of the Domestic Violence Act by convene consultations and developing and piloting a protocol for police and front line workers.
- c. Train and sensitize police officers better enable them to implement the DVA and sexual offences legislation and assist their communities in the prevention of gender-based violence.
- d. To increase awareness of frontline and community workers to gender-based and domestic violence.
- e. Raising awareness and knowledge about DVA and new sexual offences legislation among the Guyanese population, especially those most at risk of gender-based violence.
- f. Enhance legal services at Help & Shelter for survivors of gender-based violence.

**2. Description of project activities undertaken during the reporting period.**

The following activities were conducted during the reporting period and these are;

- Public education sessions at 2 main TV and radio stations
- Sessions at the health centres
- Work done with NGO's, the private sector and other agencies
- Regional workshops
- Work done in the schools

**The public education outreach activities for the month of July** continued at two television stations and these are channels 102 and 11 the National Communication Network, the states own TV station. Both stations have a wide coverage throughout Guyana. The public education officer was able to appear 3 times on the program that discussed women's issues, drug abuse and its effects on the family; Trauma and substance abuse and Trauma caused by DV and HIV/AIDS. On channel 11, the states own TV station, the public education officer was given the privilege to appear on the Breakfast Show to discuss issues on Gender-Based violence and related topics.

**Work done at thirteen health centres** in Regions 3 and 4 for the month of July where awareness sessions lasting for 1 ½ hours on topic areas such as the following were conducted;

- ❖ The services of Help & Shelter
- ❖ Substance abuse and the family
- ❖ Wife abuse
- ❖ Rape
- ❖ Child abuse and alternatives to corporal punishment
- ❖ The Domestic Violence Act
- ❖ Child neglect

❖ Child sexual abuse

A total of three hundred and forty-seven (347) women and eighty-three (83) men between the ages of nineteen (19) to fifty-five and over (55+) benefited from these awareness sessions. In addition Help & shelter's brochures and leaflets were also distributed.

Public education awareness sessions were conducted in collaboration with **NGO's /other agencies and Regional workshop** during the month of July and these are as follows;

- A 2 days workshop with frontline workers at Fort Wellington Region 5. Topics discussed included Self; Gender; domestic violence; the domestic Violence Act; Child Abuse, the New Sexual Offences Act. There were 23 participants in attendance including 19 female and 4 male between the ages of 16 to 45.
- The services of Help & shelter were discussed at the Moruca family day in Region 1 with 72 female and 34 male between the ages of 13 to 55+ for a period of 6 hours.
- A house to house activity was conducted in Yarrow Dam and Albouystown areas in collaboration with UNFPA Community Outreach Program. Sexual and reproductive health was discussed with families.
- A four hours session was conducted in collaboration with GRPA and UNFPA on Gender and Males with 32 male and 2 female.
- **Work with the private sector** continued in the month of July with staff at Sterling Products from 3 awareness sessions on Self, Gender and Substance Abuse and its effects on the family. A total of 4 female and 28 male employees benefited from these sessions which lasted for 2 to 3 ½ hours.

**For the month of August 2008** similar work as mentioned above continued with the same target groups.

- The TV audience looking at channel 102 would have been able to view 5 sessions where our public education officer had discussed topics on child abuse, child Sexual Abuse, the direct effects of substance abuse on incidents of child Abuse in the home, the services available at Help & Shelter for Child Sexual Abuse victims and their families. Help & Shelter received 26 hotline calls and 2 persons came in the office to access the services. A 1 ½ hour's program on Domestic Violence was aired on radio between the hours of 8 to 8:30 am.
- **At the 6 health centres** reached in Regions 3 and 4 awareness sessions were conducted on topic areas; Child Sexual Abuse, Domestic Violence, the Domestic Violence Act, the services of Help & Shelter, child Abuse-positive discipline and Gender. The total number of persons who benefited from these sessions was 114 female and 19 male between the ages of 19 to 55. The sessions when evaluated were rated as very good.
- **Work done with NGO's/agencies /Regional workshops** for the month of August 2008 comprised of an orientation with 10 new Help & Shelter volunteers including 7 female and 3 male between the ages of 19 to 35. A 1 day workshop on Gender-Based Violence for men from various organizations was conducted in collaboration with GRPA and UNFPA. A total of 27 men had benefited from the topics such as; Self, Gender Roles and Expectations, the Male Pressure Pot and Anger Management.
- A one hour session was also conducted with 15 male of the Junior Elite Programme, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport.

**For the month of September 2008** public education activities and awareness sessions continued as planned with the identified target group according to our work-plan and these are as follows;

- The public education outreach activities on channel 102 and the radio station for the month were conducted with topic areas on child Neglect, DV and Substance Abuse, Rape and Sexual Assault.
- **Six health centres** were visited for the month of September five of these in Region 4 and one in Region 3. During these visits awareness sessions lasting between 1 to 1 ½ hours were done on topic areas such as; Child Sexual Abuse, alternatives to Corporal Punishment, Domestic Violence, and the Domestic Violence Act. A total of 98 women and 11 male between the ages of 19 to 55+ benefited from the visits. A 2 hours awareness session on domestic Violence and its effects and the Domestic violence Act was conducted with the members of the Guyana Nurses Association with 39 female nurses.
- **Schools**- a total of 3 schools, two on the West Coast of Demerara and one in the Georgetown were visited for the month of September 2008. A total of 613 students, 412 female and 201 male, parents and teachers benefited from awareness sessions on child Sexual Abuse, child Abuse, domestic Violence, Self and Substance Abuse.
- **NGO's / Agencies / Regional Workshop** – during this month Help & shelter public education officers facilitated 3 awareness sessions with eleven inmates, six at the female rehab centre and 5 at the male rehab centre. A 1 hour session on DV and its effects on children were conducted with the inmates at both centres. In addition to this Help & Shelter public education officers took part in a rally to mark Child Protection Week, organized by the Ministry of Human Services, EveryChild Guyana, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Health, and Artistes and Direct Support. Officers met and interacted with over 800 persons who were present at the rally.
- **The Private Sector business**- a total of 2 female and 7 male who are employees of Sterling Products Limited had benefited from an awareness session on DV and Substance Abuse which lasted for 2 ½ hours.

**For the month of October 2008** public education officers continued work with the regular target groups in conjunction with the work-plan and relevant topics were discussed as several persons were able to benefit from the awareness sessions.

- **The TV and Radio stations**- our outreach public education activities continued at channel 102 in Georgetown. Topics discussed were substance Abuse re- Females and Males, Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence, children and Anger Management, Drugs and its effect on families.
- **Work at the health centres** continued during the month with 4 visits by our public education officers who conducted awareness sessions lasting between 1 to 1 ½ hours on topics such as Rape and Sexual assault and the Cycle of violence. A total of 86 women and 3 men between the ages of 19 to 55+ benefited from these sessions.
- **Schools** –a total of 5 schools and 1 technical college in Region 4 were visited for the month of October. A total of 310 students, 118 female and 192 male benefited from the awareness sessions on Me and my Body, Gender, Self and Sexuality, Child Abuse, Our bodies are Private and Gender-Based violence and Men. A total of 256 parents, teachers and members of PTA's also benefited from the awareness sessions on topics such as; alternative to corporal Punishment, DV, child Abuse, Neglect and Effects on Children and the Services of Help & Shelter. Of these 239 were female and 17 male.
- **NGO's /Agencies / Regional workshop**-a 3 hours awareness session was conducted with 10 female and 7 male members of the East Ruimveldt Policing Group on the topic Youth, Gender and Crime.
- Three sessions were conducted at the female rehab centre on DV and its effect on children, Entrapment and its effect on children. Two sessions were conducted at the male rehab centre on DV, Profile of the Male Perpetrator, DV and Substance Abuse.

**Work done for the month of November 2008** continued at TV and Radio stations and topics discussed were the DVA, Parents, their roles in children's lives, Sexual Abuse, HIV/AIDS, Substance Abuse, the Effects of DV in society and the Services of Help & Shelter.

- **Two (2) health centres** were target for the month where awareness sessions were conducted with 132 women and 5 men on topics such as DV entrapment, How to make a safe plan re DV, child Abuse, Choosing a life partner and Choices.
- **Public education awareness sessions were conducted in five schools** for this month and a total of 584 students/pupils including 280 female and 304 male from community high and the primary level benefited from topics such as Self, Sexuality, Gender, Every One Has a Body, Bodies are Private, Forms of Child Abuse, Child Sexual Abuse, Understanding Self, and the Services of Help & Shelter. Also, a total of 121 parents, teachers and members of the PTA benefited from awareness sessions on Forms of Child Sexual Abuse and the Services of Help & Shelter. Among the participants were 111 female and 10 male.
- **NGO's/Agencies/Regional Workshops** – during the month of November Help & Shelter's public education officers conducted awareness sessions at the male and female prison in New Amsterdam, Berbice, the Timehri Prison, with the Family Support Group, the Female Rehab Centre, Golden Grove Baptist Church and with members of the Mother's Union. A total of 125 female and 64 male benefited from these awareness sessions.
- **Private Sector/businesses** – awareness sessions on Effects of Substance Abuse on the Family were conducted with staff of the sterling Products Limited with 6 male and 3 female between the ages of 19 to 35 that lasted for 3 hours.
- **Activities for IDAVAW-** Help & Shelter had planned and organized a Walk-a-ton on Sunday 23 November 2008 from 6 am in the National Park. Due to heavy rainfall during the early hours in the morning and during the walk 18 persons including volunteers and staff took part in the activity. A banner "say no To Gender-Based Violence" was done for this activity and the printing of donation sheets. Ansa Mcal Trading provided jerseys for the participants of this activity. TV and Radio programmes were conducted during the period. Also the full time public education officer re-painted the sign on the seawall, "Stop Abuse Now, The Power of Change Is In Your Hands" Help & Shelter also participated in the activities planned and organized by the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security.

**The development of the Protocol – this activity is being done by the legal consultant with assistance from staff and other stakeholders such as the Police and the Ministry of Human Services & Social Security. The process is a frustrating one since we took nearly 1 year before we could have attracted the audience of the police.**

**December 2008** – project activities done during this month involved meetings with volunteers who are working on the project; reviewing and planning for 2009, since the schools would have closed for 2 weeks and the preparation for the festive season would have caused a lull of work in several areas and agencies.

**3. Problems/constraints/difficulties experienced (e.g. objectives, target, funds, management, budget status or timing). Explain how these were resolved.**

The progress of the development of the Protocol was hindered by the involvement of the police and the time line as to how early we had asked for their involvement. Due to the crime rate and the 2 massacres the police were "in-line" and so we were unable to meet with them at the time we had made our request. It was only recently that the legal consultant and I were successful in having an audience with the Deputy Commissioner.

**4. Project Impact: success stories and achievements.**

**(a) How did the project improve participants' ability to take advantage of new opportunities?**

The topic areas that were discussed during the awareness sessions would have caused participants to make positive choices in relation to their cases and the whole issue of domestic and Gender-Based violence. Participants are given the opportunity to seek help from the services of Help & Shelter which include counseling both one-on-one and the hotline, court support, legal advice and referrals. Victims and their children of abuse would have also used the option of removing from the abusive environment to become residents at our Shelter during the period. The issue of filing for a protection order under the Domestic Violence Act was also an option for victims who did not know their rights under the DVA. As a matter of fact most victims do not know of the DVA and during their attendance and interaction at these sessions they are made aware of their benefits under the Act.

The topic on Self would have also dealt with the participants self esteem and their understanding of how important this aspect would reflect on the decisions they would make. The socialization of male and female as it relates to Gender had certainly improved participants understanding of the nature of this process and the implications of the effects as to how parents would nurture their children as to the way a boy is supposed to act as against the girl child. Participants understood the dynamics associated to the culture of this violence and were encouraged to start dealing with the situations in their homes.

**(b) Did it bring about systemic change that will increase participants' choices or promote their empowerment?**

Yes, it definitely did. During one of the awareness sessions conducted at Herstelling Health Centre the topic focused on choosing a Life Partner. Participants were asked to examine their own expectations of a life partner and their partner's expectation of them and what persons looked for in a relationship. This activity allowed participants to reflect on areas of their own relationship with their spouses and what they can do to improve on these and so reduce/eliminate the cause of conflict and abuse within the home and in general their relationships.

At another awareness session the facilitator focused on the issue of Entrapment and creating a Safety Plan which resulted in an interactive discussion that revealed that several women, while at the clinic, would receive calls from their partners every 15 minutes to enquire about their position. During the discussion participants shared issues such as their partners demanding to keep their personal and important documents such as ID cards, bank cards and birth certificates. Few of the women shared their experience of having to access permission from their spouses before leaving the home. After these discussions participants were fully aware of their situation and were encouraged to seek the services of Help & Shelter. Our records have showed that participants and their friends and other family members came into the office to seek resolution to some of their problems after these sessions.

Our evaluation also reveals that the majority of women are being empowered and the men are left behind and in these situations the women are the ones who would walk away or the ones who make the decision to leave especially when they would have gained economic independence.

**(c) How did the Trust Fund grant help in building the executing agency's capacity to monitor the project and empower the project participants?**

Part of the management team includes an evaluation officer whose task is to monitor project activities and to evaluate all reports and evaluation forms completed by participants and facilitators. The feedback forms would reflect if a particular topic is in demand for more discussion and this would serve as a guide line for the officers to plan for additional sessions with a particular target group. It should also be noted that the client's intake and hotline forms do reflect as to the source of activity that they would have heard about Help & Shelter and this had shown that a large percentage of our clientele sought the services after a TV, Radio or awareness session. An evaluation report is done on a monthly basis outlying all project activities

under this Trust Fund Grant; also an updated monthly financial statement that is being prepared for the purpose of planning and board meetings.

**(d) Did the project offer opportunities to link with work in other communities/countries and promote internal, cross-regional information sharing and collaboration?**

In terms of the project activities which have caused our organization to link with other stakeholders at the community and national level, we are now in a position where demands are placed on us to expand our counseling services to other Regions especially the outlying communities. Help & Shelter had over the years, gained recognition in the court system and so our court support counselors are able to give moral support to victims both women and children who have been abused. At the national level Help & Shelter work in close collaboration with the line Ministries, the main one being the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security in terms of addressing the implementation and amending relevant laws on Domestic Violence, Trafficking in Persons and HIV/AIDS. The lobbying and advocating on the issue of Children's Rights is also a concern to us.

**(e) What were the outputs produced (positive/negative/neutral).**

After each public awareness session the officer will ask participants to do an evaluation on the sessions and the results show that the majority of the ratings were between Excellent, Very Good and Good.

The negative outputs were that most times when University students and reporters are doing research on domestic violence the question of the how effective the Domestic Violence Act is? Does it work? Is being asked. Our answer would be in some instance yes, and this depends on the intervention of the police and the judicial system. The Act is stating that a police officer, social worker and other persons could assist in the filling out of the protection order form, but the reality is that the magistrate or judge would rule that a lawyer is the more appropriate person to conduct this activity, thus the referral to the Legal Aid Clinic. Another negative output is that most times the victim is not fully ready to pursue the issue of filing for a protection order and in most case would ask the police officer to warn the perpetrator. This action would allow for the cycle of abuse to continue.

**(f) What are the proposed follow-up activities and recommendations for the remaining project implementation period?**

**Please see attached work plan.**

## **B. Financial Report**

**Here is a breakdown of the expenditure on project activities for the reporting period.**

Please see the attached financial statement.