

**JOINT PROJECT PROPOSAL, TRUST FUND IN SUPPORT OF ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
September 30, 2004**

INTRODUCTION

This proposal is a joint submission by Help and Shelter and Red Thread. Help and Shelter will be legally responsible for overall administration and implementation of the project. It will be fund administrator, with sole responsibility for financial administration and reporting. Red Thread will be largely responsible for project implementation.

1. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

a) Help and Shelter

Name of organization: Help and Shelter.

Postal Address: Help and Shelter, Ministry of Housing Annex, Homestretch Avenue,
Georgetown, Guyana

Telephone: 592 225 4731 592 227 8353

Email: hands@sdnp.org.gy

Fax: 592 227 8353

Primary contact person: Josephine Whitehead

Information on legal status: Registered in November, 1995 as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status.

Goal and mandate of organization: To contribute to bringing about a society where attitudes to the use of violence (sexual, physical, or psychological) have been transformed. The goals of the institutions are:

- i) To work to build respect for the rights of women, children, youth and men to live free of violence and the threat of violence.
- ii) To assist women, children, youth and men to develop alternative ways of handling power and resolving conflicts.
- iii) To widen options for victims of domestic violence.
- iv) To establish a resource base to ensure the sustainability of Help and Shelter

Ongoing major activities: Counselling & in-court support of victims of domestic violence & sexual abuse; public education (including community outreach) & advocacy; training & upgrading of volunteers; networking; provision of shelter for abused women & their children (latter subject to funding)

Qualifications of key personnel to implement project:

(i) For Fund administration, financial implementation and reporting: (i) Josephine Whitehead, treasurer since H&S established (also treasurer of Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic since 1994 and of Guyana Marine Turtle Conservation Society since 2002; past treasurer of National Sports Commission & Guyana Squash Rackets Association), will supervise fund administration, financial implementation and reporting. (ii) Margaret Kertzious, H&S Crisis Service Coordinator since November 2001. Has experience in administering Gender Equity Fund, UNICEF, BCCP and UNIFEM projects. (iii) Roxanne de Florimonte, H&S accounts technician (inter alia) since 1998. Has training in and experience with accounting software; has been responsible for accounts for Gender Equity Fund, UNICEF, BCCP and UNIFEM projects.

ii) For Advocacy: Vidyaratha Kissoon has been working as part of Help & Shelter's public education and advocacy team which consists of women and men from diverse backgrounds. He

has trained other advocates who have worked with different groups throughout Guyana. Some of the men trained are part of the Men of Purpose group which is the primary advocacy group of/for men against violence.

(ii) *For Counselling & Court Support, and Research:* Help & Shelter has a team of counsellors & court support workers who would be available to provide support to the survivors who come forward. Help & Shelter networks with other groups which provide frontline support. Some H&S members have also worked as part of a UNICEF research programme on children and violence.

Total annual budget of the organization: Approximately G\$11 million (approximately US\$55,000)

b) Red Thread

Name of organization: Red Thread

Postal Address: Crossroads Women's Centre, 72 Princess & Adelaide Sts., Georgetown, Guyana

Telephone: 592 227 7010 592 223 6254

Email: thread@sdnp.org.gy

Primary contact person: Karen de Souza, Coordinator

Information on legal status: Our application for registration as a friendly society is being processed (We postponed registration since our formation in 1986 to support our call for the introduction of NGO legislation).

Goal and mandate of organization: Red Thread is a women's organization with a core of 9 full-time women who receive small or no stipends and a close network of 13 women in Guyana, and a wider network of 25-30 women in Guyana and overseas, mainly in the Guyanese diaspora, whose mission is: To enable Guyanese women to organize to change our conditions, beginning with the interests of the poorest women.

In pursuit of this mandate our strategies are:

- 1) Provision of community services.
- 2) Provision of support for women and children who are victims of violence, especially for child victims of rape/incest: this support includes counseling, legal and medical assistance, referrals, research and public advocacy.
- 3) Active support for groups and actions of women who are organizing in their own defence as grassroots women.
- 4) In the process of working with separate groups, development of a clear and shared framework for building a network of women that crosses race/ethnic/party divides.
- 4) Strong advocacy on issues related to sustainable development in Guyana and the region: two of the major planks of this work are advocating/campaigning for debt cancellation and protection of the environment.

Red Thread's principal beneficiaries are women and children across race/ethnicity, especially those who live in poverty.

Ongoing major activities:

Community services: Women's Centre; children's reading/literacy classes; children's computer classes; and a children's library. These are provided free of charge. Funding for the classes and library is by the Guyana Book Foundation/CODE, Canada.

Support for victims of violence: Red Thread has provided leadership for 18 years to make visible women's experiences, including as victims of violence and organizers against it. Ongoing

activities include counseling, accompanying child victims to court, organizing legal and medical assistance, making referrals, including for more specialized counseling from Help and Shelter, conducting research and public advocacy. We began with a focus on victims of domestic violence (prior work included countrywide workshops & a radio serial (funded by CAFRA); research (funded by IDB); production and use of a popular guide to the Domestic Violence Act and community-based education for women on the law (funded by CIDA Gender Equality Fund) - but have expanded to address issues of victims of all forms of violence (we have just completed a UNICEF contract to counsel children interviewed on the effects of all types of violence on children; a CIDA GEF-funded time use survey (the first in Guyana) as a tool for the grassroots women of all races to recognize the value of their own and other women's unwaged work in ensuring their families' survival, including against violence; and research into trafficking contracted by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) at the request of the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security).

Support for women organizing in their own defence: We are working with (1) sex workers interested in forming an organization; (2) women in G+, an organization of people with HIV/AIDS; and (3) mothers whose children have died in road accidents campaigning for safer roads. In addition we are administering Global Fund grants to small and relatively inexperienced women's groups.

Development of a framework for networking across race/ethnic lines: This is an active component of all our work.

Advocacy on sustainable development issues: We coordinate the Global Women's Strike in Guyana whose platform includes several relevant issues including debt cancellation and measures to reduce women's burden of work (accessible clean water, healthcare, transport, literacy, non-polluting energy and technology, and protection from violence & persecution).

Overall co-ordination and secretarial support: Andaiye, with relevant trained members of Red Thread

Qualifications of key personnel to implement project

We list individual qualifications below but it should be noted that all Red Thread work is done in consultation with the core and when appropriate with the wider network.

Interviewing/collection of information: Red Thread multi-racial popular education and research team. This is a group of working class women with formal education up to primary and secondary school level, who were trained by Sistren, Jamaica in a one-year project in 1988 (SISTREN obtained the funding) and by Dr. Linda Peake, Yorke University, Toronto in a project spanning 6 years beginning in 1993. The funding was from CIDA country funds. The team's experience includes the design and conduct of the workshops and research, and the writing and production of the radio serial and DVA Guide outlined above. Their work is coordinated on the ground by Karen de Souza, a graduate of the University of Guyana, who also was trained by SISTREN and Dr. Peake.

Multi-media documentation: (i) Karen de Souza is a photographer who has conducted regional workshops on using photography in community work (funded by the University of Guelph) and camera and dark room skills (funded by CAFRA). She has received a Commonwealth award for her work, which has been published in BWIA magazine, several Guyana government publications and a book by Drs Alissa Trotz and Linda Peake. (ii) Andaiye is a graduate of the University of the West Indies who has written a weekly column for women for a newspaper in Guyana (Stabroek News); published several articles, monographs and book chapters on women and gender; edited work by authors including Walter Rodney; and co-edited a collection of speeches by George Lamming. (iii) Danuta Radzik is an artist who supervised women's production of embroidery depicting their experience and environment from 1988-mid 1990s as part of a Red Thread programme.

For advocacy and publicity: Red Thread has 18 years experience in advocacy locally and in the region. As an NGO member, Andaiye was a member of the Guyana government delegation at the Beijing conference and, in partnership with the International Women Count Network, spearheaded Caribbean government advocacy to win language on counting unwaged work.

For project monitoring, impact assessment, reporting: (i) Andaiye has conducted project evaluations for Guyana Book Foundation/Code and the CIDA Gender Equity Fund. She writes all Red Thread's narrative reports. (ii) Karen de Souza evaluates projects for the Guyana Book Foundation and manages all Red Thread projects. She writes the budgets for Red Thread reports. (iii) Leila Jagdeo is the General Manager of the Guyana Book Foundation where she uses the results-based management approach to manage and monitor projects.

Total annual budget of the organization:

Income for June 2003 – June 2004: GS\$11,919,387.00 (approximately US\$59, 597)

2. CONTEXT/PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

For the last three years and more, beginning approximately in May 2001, the Guyana coastlands where the majority of Guyana's two largest race groups, Indo-Guyanese and Afro-Guyanese, live and work has been experiencing surges of violent conflict. This conflict has many of the characteristics of war, especially in the adjoining villages of the East Coast of Demerara which are the epicentre of the violence, including child soldiers, displaced families and communities fleeing violence, and the use of rape of girls and women as a weapon of war. It is the latest chapter in a five decade-old racial/political conflict between Indo-Guyanese and Afro-Guyanese which has twice erupted into open and prolonged violence, the first being in the early 1960s. While women have been largely unacknowledged targets (not just accidental/incidental victims) in this violence, discussion of the violence is dominated by the issue of race/ethnic insecurity and its connection to the political party divisions between Afro-Guyanese and Indo-Guyanese. These divisions result in elections described as "racial censuses" and governments which are seen as representing one race or the other. In this scenario, the interests of Amerindians are always on the margins of national concern. The present ongoing period of violence involves civilian violence against civilians, civilian violence against the security forces, and security force violence against civilians. It is further complicated by the involvement of narco-industry and other criminal enterprises. The main targets of violence in homes, streets and businesses have been Indo-Guyanese women, children and men while the main targets of extra-judicial killings by death squads have been young Afro-Guyanese men.

Throughout the two and half years, there have been documented reports of Indo-Guyanese girls and women being sexually abused and raped though the numbers are disputed, just as there are documented reports of the rape of Indo-Guyanese girls and women and a few anecdotal reports of rapes of Afro-Guyanese women during the violence of the early 1960s, which have also never been addressed. There have also been reports of women encouraging this use of sexual abuse and violence against other women. In addition, until recently, there was virtually no condemnation of this violence against women and girls except from Indian ethnic organizations (Red Thread being one main exception). Even where cases of sexual abuse and violence against girls and women have been acknowledged and documented by these organizations, they have usually been treated as an issue only of race violence, and not also as an issue of gender violence, that is, violence of a form which typically targets girls and women. Yet the use of rape against girls and women to humiliate and demoralize the "other side" is typical in violent racial, ethnic, tribal and religious conflicts. So is another expression of gender

violence which has emerged more recently in Guyana: as the violence has partly turned inwards, there have been as yet undocumented but credible reports of sexual violence against Afro-Guyanese girls and women in the Afro-Guyanese village out of which many of the assaults on surrounding communities are organized. Again, this is similar to other parts of the world undergoing violent racial, ethnic, tribal and religious conflict: boys and men who dehumanize girls and women of the "other side" are equally capable of and think less of dehumanizing girls and women of their "own side", and women who do not protest against the dehumanization of women of the "other side" reduce their protection against their own dehumanization.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- a. To ensure that there is a public record that provides as full as possible a picture of the extent and nature of sexual abuse and violence against girls and women, both Indo-Guyanese and Afro-Guyanese, in the race/ethnic/political conflict in Guyana.
- b. To bring the issue up from underground and to force it onto the national agenda.
- c. To empower the girls and women who have been victims to see themselves without shame and to find their own ways to demand justice.
- d. To begin to change attitudes in their communities so that the girls and women are seen as victims and not as having brought shame on their families.
- e. To challenge and begin to change the attitudes of women who accept and even encourage sexual abuse and violence against girls and women of the other race.
- f. To take steps towards achieving improved implementation of the DVA as it stands while reviewing its adequacy and campaigning for changes if necessary.
- g. To lay the groundwork for building a network of women from all ethnic communities, supported by men, who will consistently organize in defence of girls and women who are victims of sexual violence in race/ethnic conflict in Guyana.