Youth and Citizens' Participation Program (YCP)

RFA Reference Number: RFA – 1 – YCP

Final Report on Project Activities

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Submitted to: Counterpart International
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List of Acronyms

AI	Appreciative Inquiry
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GNYC	Guyana National Youth Council
H&S	Help and Shelter
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex
LGE	Local Government Elections
NDC	Neighborhood Democratic Councils
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OD	Organizational Development
PMEP	Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
TOT	Training of Trainers
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
YCP	Youth and Citizens' Participation project
FGD	Focus Group Discussions

I.   Executive Summary

Purpose of this report

The final report of the Help & Shelter partner, in the final phase of the YCP project is to capture the projected outcomes of the project implementation strategy which were rolled out in conformity with its specific objectives, over the 3 month period of the project, via rigorous and time bound action all of the milestones and were met, though in some circumstances there was need for strategies to be re-crafted and responsive to unforeseen and externally driven situations. However there are valuable and significant lessons learned in hindsight. Key aspects would augur well for future projects of this nature such as.

- Community action has to be planned in conjunction with sensitivity to sometimes changing community dynamics
- Community respect for implementing agency is tantamount to for creating community buy-in and building consensus
- Sometimes persons want to be connected but not always are able to be present
- New experiences are always an opening for softening up hard-nosed opinions, especially from persons of influence at the community level.
- Social focused re-structuring is always subject to the tools made available to the beneficiaries and how they are able to own them.
- A project of this nature requires prudent follow up post exit as opportunities for other project will evolve

Final report goals

- Review and validate the milestones and success of the project.
- Confirm performance and achievements of objectives
- Identify project highlights and best practices for future projects.

In the process of discussions and interactive activities the participants who represented a cross section of the communities, were encouraged to review the practices which reinforced social exclusion and to work and promote the concepts which embrace participation especially that of youth and women.
In the context of community cohesion participants were also given the opportunity to brainstorm a community –based project which can seed the atmosphere of inclusivity and participation.

Project Background Summary

The whole concept behind this project was to reverse the impact of alienation and disconnection which has become a common feature in 5 communities where there are identifiable differences, and no effort to bridge the gaps. Through dialogue, social inclusion, public education, sports, social media, skills exchange and other cohesion driven activities, sought to deliver a strategic programme for impact especially among youth and women.

To deliver a successful Action in the target communities, there were specific objective set out.

- To identify, through consultations with communities, the strategies and tactful use of communicative mediums for strengthening community cohesion.
- To scale up the capacity of community-based stakeholders to respond to, and mitigate core social issues which contribute to social discord.

- To manage and utilize material and human resources to deliver programmes which raise awareness and promote community cohesion and safe environment for women and youth.
- To Offer counseling support and psychosocial services for the target communities where persons have been negatively impacted by social diversion, violence and discord.
- To establish and strengthen core community groups via training, sensitization programmes and sporting activities which galvanizes strong citizens actions and advocacy for community integration and peace.

By promoting engagements for persons within the community setting at their various points of interest, and creating social bridges where they can expand their knowledge base and review the benefits of Cohesion and recognize common practices, the project will nullify the possibility of conflict and provide opportunities for increased social integration. Also built into this innovative proposal is the sustainability aspect of the project, which will utilize skills present in the communities and to be transferred to the youths by persons they are familiar with, thus creating an environment of mentorship. Sustainability of the project will further be strengthened through the capacity building training for the community's core groups who will continue the action post project end date.

Other proposed benefits of the project were:

- Youth to benefit from skills exchange training and creative arts,

- women and youth expanding their knowledge of various topic areas related to Social cohesion

- Building self-esteem and conflict mediation skills

- Community using media to create change

- Learning and proposing the management and sustainability of cohesion initiatives.

- Newsletters drafting and publishing

   Inter-community sports engagement and mural creation

- Opening of doors for and participation at all levels of community life

The project action also set out to give communities from different regions an opportunity to exchange views and strategies for building stronger community networks, and bridges among those who share common spaces, resources and assets.

2. Project Highlights Best Practices

- Help and Shelter has been involved in core areas which address violence against women and children and advocacy for laws and policies which protect for the abused and victimized. Adding social Cohesion to the agenda in the community-based intervention strategies has scaled up the nature of the fundamental work-ethic of the organization.

- Help and Shelter being one of YCP project implementing partners has now consolidated their role as an organization has a water-shed role of building the capacity of communities to respond to challenges and issues which stymie social justice and participation.

- The innovative and multi-pronged approach to the community mapping and consensus building which was part of the project commencement strategy was very fundamental to the final activities which culminated in some very outstanding proposals from the groups in the target communities who benefited relevant areas of capacity building and empowerment and self-assessment.

- Flexibility and consistent feedback in the implementation process helped to minimize negative results even when dates and times for project activities had to be rescheduled. This has always been a principled approach when working in communities.

- Transferring knowledge and providing tools for cascading the valuable concepts within the pervading community phenomena has always been a skill- set of H & S and this enabled the project team to be trained and then present the materials for the community to take ownership for sharing and exploring among the extended community.

- The participatory environments set up in the Cohesion dialogue session has been extensively referred to by participants as a fresh and innovative approach which has impacted the way they view their community and their individual roles based on the process of inclusion.

- At every Cohesion dialogue participants were asked to indemnify someone who was not present and whom they felt needed to be included. This was then used as an opportunity to encourage persons to go and engage those who were not present, just to keep them "connected" and thus strengthening the access of all to be included in the process.

- The extensive training workshops and TOT in partnership with the other project implementation team also helped to create a network for skill exchange at the level of implementation and an expansion of the platform of a facilitation in all the relevant topics and tools for community cohesion and mediation interventions

3.   Project Final Synopsis

The project cycle of activities accomplished over the period proposed was rolled out in the following sequence:

Main theme: "Women & Youth Taking charge of their lives and building united Communities"

1) Community Mapping & Interviews-Understanding the issues
2) Community Cohesion Dialogue - Getting involved in the Talk & the Tools- the Nuts & Bolts
3) Community Mural - Making a Mark together - Feeling & Seeing how it works
4) Skill Exchange - Empower & Generate
5) Media Training - Social reach for linking voices
6) Capacity Building - getting tools to deal with the issues
7) Proposal Writing Training – Building Business & Entrepreneurial capacity
8) Newsletter - Telling you about me (community
9) The success stories -I am the story I want to tell

4. Project Performance

4.1 Project objectives:

- To develop through consultation a comprehensive strategy to deliver community cohesion for five communities
- To identify, implement or scale up activities which will ensure effective and coordinated action to deliver community cohesion within the identified communities
- To ensure available resources to deliver identified cohesion activities
- To establish community core groups to provide leadership in the arena of citizen's action and community cohesion

4.2 Success Criteria Performance:

No.	Objectives	Activity / Outputs	Achievements	%
1	• To develop through consultation a comprehensive strategy to deliver community cohesion for five communities	• Mapping to identify cohesion initiatives, resources and challenges within the communities which included formal and informal Interviews, community walk about and house to house survey • Conduct one focus group discussion with primary beneficiaries • Coordinate roundtables with relevant community stakeholders to give feedback on survey	**Mapping, House to house surveys, interviews, Focus Group Discussions, Round table sessions in 5 communities.** **270 persons directly engaged**	100 %
2	• To identify, implement or scale up activities which will ensure effective and coordinated action to deliver community cohesion within the identified communities	• Conduct capacity training for implementing organization • Conduct 10 cohesion sensitization sessions, two per community	**Help & Shelter Staff and Volunteers Trained** **12 staff / 4 Volunteers engaged** **TOT, Peace Building, Advocacy & Media, Mediation, Appreciative Inquiry, Social Cohesion, Restorative Circle.** **120 persons directly engaged (5 communities)**	100% 100 %

		• Conduct and supervise skills training in three communities in computer studies, music and Food Preparation	**Computer, Music and Food Preparation skills in 3 communities.** **40 students engaged (3 communities)**	100 %
3	• To ensure available resources to deliver identified cohesion activities	• Conduct 2-day capacity building workshops for each community on core issues affecting the communities • Develop and publish community newsletter • Conduct community social media action campaign • Organize and promote one (1) inter – community cohesive youth activity • Conduct one (1) day micro grants training for community based action groups in developing and managing micro grant projects.	**5 communities involved 22 persons engaged** **5 Newsletters drafted** **5 community stakeholders – 23 persons engaged** **5 Communities involved – 275 persons engaged** **5 communities involved – 14 persons engaged**	100 %
4	• To establish community core groups to provide leadership in the arena of citizen's action and community cohesion	• Build five (5) community murals (one per community) • Review community micro-grant proposals and put forward recommendations to Counterpart for funding	**5 for each community murals created** **5 Micro-grant Proposals drafted and submitted**	100 % 100 %
5	•	• Psychosocial officers provide counseling support for project beneficiaries in the communities	**5 communities receive psychosocial support** (see table below)	100 %

Counsellors M&E Report

YCP H&S Counterpart Int. - Counselling Data

A total of 29 person, 15 females and 14 males, from project communities, benefitted from face to face counselling from H&S counsellors

Client age groups

6-11 years	10-19 years	20-35 years	36-50 years	51+ years
12 clients	7 clients	2 clients	3 clients	5 clients

Communities where clients resided

Good Hope	Sophia/Georgetown	Uitvlugt/Stewartville/Tuschen/Zeelugt	Bell West
8 clients	13 clients	5 clients	Nil

Adults: Forms/types of abuse/violence experienced by clients

Domestic Violence (verbal/psychological/physical/emotional	Financial Issues	Interpersonal issues	Property Issues
8 cases	5 cases	2 cases	1 case

Children/Youth: Forms/types of abuse or behavioural problems

Child Abuse (psychological/physical/verbal/neglect/	Behavioural Problems
10 cases	6 cases

5   Milestone Deliverables Performance

No	Milestone	Deliverable	In time	Challenges
1	Signed Agreement	FAA agreement signed between H&S and Counterpart Int.	Yes	
2	a. 5 focus group discussion held b. c. Round table session with stakeholders d. Social Media Campaign launched	Venue documentation, agenda, participants list, photos, summary of activities and evaluation forms and Report. Draft Media Strategy shared	Late Rescheduled Yes	Due to the community calendar and availability of persons for activities the community mapping, FGDs, and house to house surveys were conducted as an integrated activity. Roundtable sessions were used to report back to the communities on the results of the survey and FGD, so it was rescheduled.
3	a. Community mapping exercise and consultations b. Monthly progamme report	Mapping session agenda and materials, participants list, photos, and evaluation forms and analysis of each community, Report documenting all the activities undertaken during the month of August.	Partially supplied Late	Due to the mapping being done as an integrated activity with the FGDs and the house to house interviews the analysis took longer than expected as I all activities were being run simultaneously in all the communities, and some were subject to rescheduling
4	a. Community sensitization sessions conducted in 5 communities	Venue documentation, agenda, participants list, photos, summary of activities and completed evaluation forms and Agenda for skills exchange	Late	Here again, meeting the timely deadlines posed a challenge due to time to prepare the evaluation assessments and

			training and detailed analysis of the first session of each shared with Counterpart. Int.		providing the scanned copies of the evaluation forms.
	b.	Skill exchange programmes conducted in 3 communities		Provided in total , but late	
5	a.	Micro-grant training workshop for communities	Agreement with technical specialist, agenda, participants list, photos, workshop materials and evaluation forms submitted to Counterpart Int.	*Yes*	Community groups having some issues providing timely content for the newsletter.
	b.	2-day capacity building workshop for communities	Agreement with technical specialist, agenda, participants list, photos, workshop materials and evaluation forms submitted to Counterpart Int.	Yes	
	c.	Micro-grant proposal writing workshop and drafting of proposals for social cohesion project.	Proposals drafted and submitted to Counterpart Int. Written feedback from H&S submitted	Yes	
	d.	Newsletter drafted by communities	Newsletter drafts submitted to Counterpart	Yes	
6	a.	Social Cohesion sporting activity for all 5 communities	Copies of participants list, photos of completed murals, promotional materials for social cohesion activity	Yes	OD final document has been referred for Local consultative process as time did not permit for completion of a final SP document as envisaged during H&S self-assessment engagement , supported by Counterpart
	b.	Recipient develops strategic plan as part of organizational development activities.	Electronic copy of Recipient's functional strategic planning document and action plan submitted to Counterpart.	No	
	c.	Final Report with success story	Final report an success story submitted to Counterpart Int.	Yes	

Activities such as the mural creation was completed very early in the schedule of activities. This was due to some prudent decision making by the project admin staff ns responsive to the need of the community, who engaged the mural creation as an activity which provided them with an opportunity to signal their complicit desire to actively pursue social cohesion in their communities by this gesture.

6   Financial Management of Project

The FAA system of financial disbursement of project funds, though new to Help & Shelter provided an opportunity for prudent management of funds for the scope of project activities even though several tranches for disbursement were delayed due to late reporting on the deliverables which in most cases were subject to community-based dynamics.

Responsive monitoring and procedural adjustments were employed to reduce the gaps caused by readjusted Milestone and scheduled deliverable dates.

7   Success Story

Help and Shelter was pleased to be awarded the grant to implement a Social cohesion Project as part of the 2nd Phase of the YCP, funded by Counterpart Int. The project provided an opportunity for an organization with over 2 decades of experience in community-based work and advocacy for the vulnerable and abused, to expand the scope of its intervention to address a critical phenomenon which has notably impacted most communities across the national landscape.

The intense training and TOT sessions which the staff and Volunteers were exposed to, set the stage for the launching of this water-shed project in 5 communities, spanning 2 regions. The training provided Project staff with new skills and fresh perspective. It also galvanized the team for a strategic and innovative approach to a social-focused intervention, which would test the very fabric of traditional and cemented community practices and responses to social integration.

Even against this back-drop the project team was able to skillfully build consensus for the project action by allowing the community to take ownership of the process.

Initial engagements included community mapping, house to house visits, formal and informal interviews, and walk abouts. From these initial engagements, the most common thread of conversations were about community pride, participation, and youth and women empowerment.

The Social Cohesion dialogue session provided an opportunity for the community to explore core issues while being given tools to assess, analyze and respond based on their knowledge of the salient underpinnings which sustain a cohesive environment.

The new skills which were acquired as a result of the capacity building session revived all of the community stakeholders resolve to build bridges, connections and networks in support of participatory initiatives. Both youths and women formed the largest percentage of participation.

The successful outcomes from this community-based intervention for building cohesive communities was impacting across the spectrum of all its specific components. This was evident when in one session a participant had indicated that she wanted to know if her participation in the sessions would affect her political affiliation. When she was told it would not, this participant displayed an unmatched attention to the topics introduced and was very interactive. When it was time for feedback the participant revealed that she was raised a Hindu and was very devout but the dialogue session brought her to a state of comfort as she had been noticing her children were more inclined to the Christian practice and way of life . She further posited that she was now in a position to be less judgmental and tolerant instead of excluding them based on their belief.

The Restorative Circle engagement was identifiably the most influential and it created the environment for the community to self-assess. Two communities were able to decide what would be their micro-grant proposal based on what was discussed in the restorative circle which provide every voice to be heard. During the presentation on Appreciative Inquiry in the community of Good Hope, the participants discovered that among them was one of the oldest residents who had an institutional knowledge of the community's history and many stories which chronicled the developmental stages of the community. One of the cross-cutting experiences in the delivery of the social cohesion dialogue session content was the production of posters in groups and this also paralleled the mural painting and branding which provided a practical experience in a cohesive activity.

Feedback from all 5 target communities have revealed that had they not gotten involved in the YCP, their ideas of what Social Cohesion meant would have been subject to its common interpretation as a political slogan. They instead, now view Social Cohesion as the nuts and bolts building stronger and empowered communities, where participation creates the environment for positive changes and reduction of conflicts. The question upon their lips is when it will continue, the time was too short.

Attachments: Community Newsletters