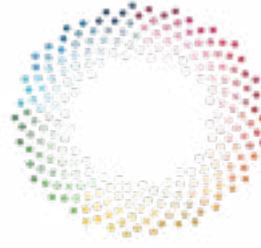


In the *Spotlight* Caribbean



**Spotlight
Initiative**
*To eliminate violence
against women and girls*



Caribbean CSOs Gather

Editor's Note

I am delighted to bring you this quarter's newsletter.

The hectic pace of implementation continued over the August and September period, with two major civil society organisations (CSOs) events taking place in August. Members of the Civil Society Regional Reference Group met face-to-face for the first time in retreat in Kingston, Jamaica, and the inaugural Caribbean CSO Retreat brought 24 CSOs together to discuss ending violence against women and girls. The articles about both events start on Page 3.

On Pages 10 and 11, you can read how UNDP and the University of the West Indies, Mona have collaborated to deliver training across the region to build the capacity of gender bureaus in several CARICOM countries, including Belize and Haiti. You can read more about the work done to build strategies to address the intersection between Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Women's Economic Empowerment.

Meet PCI Media's Bennet Charles on Page 12 and 13,

a male gender champion, to learn more about his commitment to ending VAWG and FV.

Spotlight Guyana has delivered several programmes to ensure essential services are readily available for GBV victims. Read more about services like the iMatter.gy app on Pages 14 and 15.

Education has a key role to play in the prevention of Family Violence and CARICOM's Programme Manager, Education lays out how this can be done on Pages 16 and 17.

Pillar 5 (Data) led by UN Women continues to train data experts in the regions and you can read all about that body of work on Page 18.

There is also the Spotlight on Nadella Oya's Create Future Good organisation, a recipient of a Spotlight Initiative small grant under Pillar 6 led by UN Women. On Page 20, there is more information on how this CSO works with children in Trinidad and Tobago.

I hope you enjoy this issue as much as we enjoyed producing it for you!



Members of the Civil Society Regional Reference Group (CSRRG) and team members of the Spotlight Initiative Caribbean Regional Programme project management Unit after three days of sessions.

CSRRG met to talk Spotlight

In August, the Spotlight Initiative Caribbean Regional Civil Society Regional Reference Group (CSRRG) gathered in Kingston, Jamaica for the first time to take stock of its work and map a way forward for the duration of the Programme, which is focused on eliminating violence against women and girls.

Civil society is a key tenet of the Spotlight Initiative and thrives to work closely with women's movements and relevant human rights-based civil society organisations (CSOs) in a mutually-supportive and reinforcing way, deploying and building upon their vast knowledge and experience, developed at global, regional, national and community levels.

The CSRRG was established as an institutional mechanism to harness civil society expertise, and has a dual responsibility — as advisors to the Regional Programme and as advocates and partners for the realisation of its objectives.

Having worked virtually for 18 months, it was the first time

the Group, with members from Dominica, Guadeloupe, Guyana, and Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago were able to meet face-to-face since its establishment. It was against this background that the three-day retreat was held to provide an opportunity for eight of the 10 active members of group to better acquaint themselves with their role, and for members to meet, connect, and review the work of the CSRRG. This included updating the annual work plan and to enhance teamwork among members and stakeholders.

Tonni Ann Brodber, Representative, UN Women Multi-Country Office - Caribbean, underscored the importance of civil society reference groups during the Retreat's opening session stating, "CSRRGs and CSNRGs are a natural conduit between CSO movements, communities and the Spotlight programme. We will continue to rely on you to be the ears and eyes of communities so that we are as responsive to the needs, especially of those most left behind in our quest for gender equality and a violence-free society."

Regis Chapman, the World Food Programme Representative & Country Director for Barbados and Eastern Caribbean



CSRRG Chair, Terry Ince and Caribbean Regional Spotlight Coordinator, Loveness Nyakujarah meet with officials from Eve for Life, a beneficiary of Spotlight.



and who was speaking virtually and on behalf of the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Didier Trebucq applauded the CSRRG members for “volunteering and giving your time and resources selflessly to advance Spotlight goals”. He also thanked Miriana Arias, Programme Manager, European Union Delegation to Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean States, the OECS and CARICOM, who also attended the opening session virtually, for being a trusted partner in addressing VAWG and FV in the Caribbean.

The members of the regional reference group welcomed the opening session panel discussion themed: **Enhancing Civil Society Engagement with Spotlight in the Caribbean**, which was moderated by Tania Chambers, a legal consultant and governance strategist.

The activity was significant as it provided an opportunity for representatives from the CSRRG, as well as members of the CSNRGs from the six National Spotlight Programmes to connect, collaborate, create synergies and share knowledge and experiences with regional partners and other stakeholders within the Spotlight Programme.

Nikita Mohammed who is the Programme Coordinator for Spotlight Initiative Trinidad and Tobago, Myriam Narcisse a member of the Spotlight Initiative Haiti CSNRG, and Terry Ince, Chair, Caribbean Regional CSRRG were the panellists and shared their experiences and offered some insights on how to enhance collaboration.

The remainder of the Day 1 sessions included a **Review of Annual Work Plan and Achievements, Programmes Priorities up to end of Phase I, and Review of CSO Engagement with Spotlight Regional Projects including CSO Contributions and Leadership**. The final session of Day 1 was **Recommendations for Effective Engagement – Confirming CSRRG Members’ Pillar Support**.

Two members of CSRRG - Renata Chuck-A-Sang and CSRRG Vice-Chair Dr. Quacy Grant, both from Guyana, along with two officers from the Spotlight Caribbean Regional Programme Management Unit join Joyce Hewett of Woman Inc. during the visit to the organisation.

Photos Credit: Shawn Barnes



CSRRG Vice-Chair Dr. Quacy Grant addressing the CSRRG Retreat.



CSRRG member Yvonne Barrow of Guyana listening attentively during one of the Retreat sessions.



CSRRG Chair, Terry Ince

On Day 2, the participants visited two CSOs that have benefited from the Spotlight Initiative Jamaica - Woman Inc. and Eve for Life. The CSRRG appreciated learning of the transformative work being done by the two organisations. With support from Spotlight Initiative Jamaica, and in partnership with UNAIDS and UNFPA, Eve for Life was able to launch the HOPE app, which puts gender-based violence (GBV) facts in users’ hands. It raises awareness and provides guidance to tackle GBV among vulnerable groups.

Woman Inc., established in 1984, is a private, voluntary, non-profit, non-governmental organisation. Its work is inspired by the creative energies of women and allies that are dedicated to providing assistance to victims of rape, incest, domestic crisis, sexual harassment at the workplace, human trafficking, and domestic violence has also benefitted from small grants through Spotlight Initiative Jamaica.

CSRRG received capacity building in participatory monitoring and evaluation approaches facilitated by the Spotlight regional monitoring and evaluation officer, Tracy Phillips. They now have capacity to develop a CSO scorecard to rate the performance of duty-bearers and partners of the Regional Programme.

Ince reiterated that this in-person meeting was vital and overdue and will go a long way in fulfilling the CSRRG mandate due to the trust and comradeship built during the retreat, which also gave an opportunity to the Programme Management Unit to interact with the CSRRG Members.

CSOs form Caribbean Gender Alliance

Several Caribbean civil society organisations (CSOs) have come together to form the Caribbean Gender Alliance, which is a regional partnership of organisations working to promote healthy gender relations across the Caribbean. The objectives of the Alliance are to implement gender transformative initiatives with women, men, girls and boys; support the implementation of Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) and similar curricula across the Caribbean; advocate for gender-sensitive policies and practices; and promote opportunities for local and regional collaboration among CSOs.

This follows the inaugural Caribbean CSO Retreat, facilitated by UN Women Multi-Country Office (MCO) – Caribbean under Pillar 6 of the Spotlight Initiative Caribbean Regional programme, which brought together 24 CSOs from across the Caribbean. The Retreat held from 7-13 August 2022 focused on alliance-building, movement strategising and targeted capacity building.

Akilah Dorris, UN Women Spotlight Initiative Caribbean Regional Coordinator stated, “civil society leadership and advocacy are critical and necessary tenets for movement building in the Caribbean. We were able to convene in this space because of the incredible commitment and work of the many feminist/women’s organisations who continue to ensure that women’s rights issues remain on the political and legislative agenda.

“Their efforts to ensure the delivery of quality multisectoral services to the most vulnerable and marginalised, do not go unrecognised. We are happy to have been associated with such an historic event and we are confident that the Caribbean Feminist Chapter, when formed, will be catalytic and transformational in advancing the sustainable development agenda in our region”.

Many CSOs provide services and engage in advocacy to end family violence (FV) and gender-based violence (GBV) and have contributed to the development of policies and legal frameworks to address the scourge.

However, during the design phase of the Spotlight Initiative Caribbean Regional Programme, it was noted that there is no formal network of Non-Governmental Organisations that focuses on GBV. To close this gap, there was a general consensus that the region would benefit from establishing an umbrella regional network of women’s rights groups and CSOs to support a coordinated approach to ongoing feminist movement building for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

It is against this background that the



Representatives of CSOs from across the Caribbean with members of the UN Women MCO – Caribbean gathered for a group shot after a week of fellowship and dialogue at the Caribbean CSO Retreat. (Photo Credit: UN Women/Dorian Clarke)

Caribbean CSO Retreat was conceptualised to start the groundwork for the establishment of such a network.

A selection committee reviewed Expressions of Interests and chose participants based on a set criteria. There was an effort to ensure that youth-led networks and CSOs participated as they are the “life-blood” of the women’s movement. Participants came from Antigua, The Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States.

CSOs helped to shape the Retreat’s agenda by completing a survey during the planning stages of the event. It was important for organisers that participants played a major role in shaping the topics covered during the Retreat.

Over the five-day event, participants heard from veterans and champions of movement-building in the Caribbean during a moderated panel discussion. Panellists shared insights of what worked and lessons that can be applied to reinvigorate the movement. Other sessions focussed on a shared understanding of violence against women in the region, strategies to address VAWG, resource mobilisation, proposal writing, advocacy, and a briefing on the Spotlight

Initiative Caribbean Regional programme.

In a follow-up engagement with the CSOs they felt better equipped to move the Caribbean Women’s Movement forward. Sixteen of the 20 organisations that attended have also formed a collaboration called the EVAWG Partnership to advance tools for every person in the Caribbean to use to end VAWG. These 16 CSOs are supported by 45 more from Trinidad and Tobago, 10 private sector organisations and six media houses.

Nadella Oya of Create Future Good, civil society activist and Retreat participant shared that “this was achieved because UN Women MCO – Caribbean campaigned to get us in the same room. [This] helped us to discover each other in a way that we were fired up to continue the work, amp up the momentum of the Women’s Movement regionally.”

This collaboration and movement building will be underpinned by a statement of principles that is being drafted drawing from inputs from the Caribbean CSO Retreat. Ultimately, it is anticipated that this will form the nucleus of a “Caribbean Charter” that will guide the cooperation of members of the regional network.



Some of the Retreat participants working together on an exercise. Photos Credit: UN Women/Dorian Clarke

Caribbean Women's Movement in the Spotlight

The inaugural Caribbean CSO Retreat convened from August 7 to 13, 2022 in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

The Retreat was designed to support the building of a Caribbean network of civil society organisations (CSOs) to eliminate violence against women and girls (EVAWG). It was hosted by the UN Women MCO - Caribbean.

During the five-day event, CSOs shared organisational profiles and experiences, knowledge on best practices, built camaraderie, and started dialogue on building a Caribbean Feminist Movement for GEWE and EVAWG. The focus on movement-building created space for networking, alliance-building, and collective care for the CARICOM Feminist Movement.

The Retreat offered an opportunity for CSO

representatives to strengthen regional networks, enhance their capacities in understanding and responding to EVAWG, resource mobilisation, proposal writing, and advocacy strategies.

A CSO representative led a presentation to ground colleagues in their commitment to self-care and movement care, and participants were offered a free afternoon during the week. After a rigorous week of work, participants bade each other farewell at a Closing Networking Party.

Since the retreat, several CSOs have convened an online forum for further discussion and action. UN Women MCO - Caribbean is committed to expanding the online space for CSOs/NGOs to continue to dialogue.



Participants listening attentively to Loveness Nyakujarah (with mic), Spotlight Initiative Caribbean Regional Coordinator in a session about the Spotlight Initiative.



Jumoke Patrick from Jamaica Network of Seropositives showing off his artistic skills during one of the first sessions of the Retreat.

Photos Credit: UN Women/Dorian Clarke



Alshadane Wright (left) showing her drawing skills to Nadella Oya during a session where participants worked in pairs drawing and describing how they saw their partners.



Rosemarie Ramitt and Narifa Gannie from the Guyana Council of Organisations for Persons with Disabilities



Ellen Shiell from Bermuda's Centre Against Abuse addressing the Retreat as (from left) Dmitri Nicholson (Youth Challenge Guyana), Vanya David (Dominica National Council of Women), and Alexandrina Wong (Women Against Rape Inc.) listen closely.

GBV and WEE in focus at Haiti training workshop

In a collaboration between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the University of West Indies (UWI) - Mona Campus, Jamaica, a training session was held in Haiti on strengthening the institutional capacity of the Ministry on the Status and Rights of Women (MCFDF) on building strategies to address the intersection between gender-based violence (GBV) and women's economic empowerment (WEE).

This training session was the last in a series of workshops that were held with gender/women's bureaus in Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Barbados, Jamaica, and Grenada.

Fifteen representatives from the MCFDF attended the training, which included interactive activities that addressed the historical and contemporary socio-economic contexts for women's work in the Caribbean and exploring strategies to strengthen the gender bureau's capacity to address correlations between GBV and women's economic empowerment.

The training programme was based on a gap assessment that was completed by the UWI to assess the competencies of Gender Bureaus in the six mentioned Caribbean countries with regards to gender, WEE and Violence against Women (VAW) and Family Violence (FV).

Further, a curriculum has been developed and will be finalised following feedback from the series of training sessions on Support to National Gender/Women's Bureaus in Women's Economic Empowerment. The curriculum will be validated and published by UNDP later in 2022.

This activity comes within a broader UNDP strategy in promoting strong women/gender bureaus in the

Caribbean and advancing best practice models for prevention and response through the Spotlight Initiative Caribbean Regional Programme.

Specifically, this activity comes under Pillar 2, which aims to support regional systems and institutions to fund and deliver evidence-based programmes that prevent and respond to VAWG, including FV.

Engaging men in the conversation on gender is one of UNDP's priorities in the Spotlight Initiative's different interventions.



IGDS, UWI training women's bureaus in 5 CARICOM Member States

The Institute of Gender and Development Studies Regional Coordinating Office - UWI, St. Augustine was contracted by UNDP to offer training to strengthen women's bureaus in Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Barbados, Jamaica, Grenada and Haiti.

The programme, based on needs identified by representatives of the targeted regional machineries, is specifically aimed at expanding the capacity of targeted participants to make the connection between a reduction in VAWG and WEE, and to design and implement appropriate interventions.

The project, which was initiated last October, will be undergirded by a Participatory Action Research (PAR) Methodology (Velasco 2019) that is aligned with the feminist principle of facilitators' bonding and empathising with research subjects. This is aimed at affirming their epistemic authority and guaranteeing their ownership of any transformative change processes that may be proposed as a result of the collaboration.

To this end, the project surveyed 75 participants from the five of the targeted countries to gather data for a Training Needs Analysis (TNA). The first of the two-day online training programmes took place on May 25-26, 2022 and comprised sessions on: **Gender, Gender-based Violence and Women's Economic Status in the Caribbean; Indigenous and Contemporary Women's Economic Empowerment Initiatives.**

There will also be a presentation of the draft WEE manual and feedback; and networking and sharing of best practices. The programme, presented to some 30 participants from Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago was greeted with enthusiasm and positive feedback. The second session with participants from Belize and Guyana was held 28 and 29 June. The outstanding elements of the project – completion of training delivery, post-workshop assessment, revision of the WEE Manual based on feedback received during the training sessions and the Final Report - were projected to be completed by August 2022.

In the last 12 months more than **1 in every 10** women and girls aged 15-49 were subjected to sexual and/or physical violence by an intimate partner.

UN Women/UN DESA, Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Equality 2022

5 GENDER EQUALITY United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs UN WOMEN



GBV is a men's issue

Bennett Charles, an ally for gender equality, is often asked why he focuses on violence against women and girls (VAWG) when violence victims are predominantly men and boys in the Caribbean. His response? “I believe that you don't have to be of the people, to be for the people.”

In the end, it is up to all of us to end discrimination and VAWG.

Men and boys experience many forms of violence, but unfortunately discriminatory social structures perpetuate and maintain gender inequalities that feed VAWG.

Bennet's VAWG advocacy efforts began during his time as a secondary school-teacher. That's when he saw the vulnerabilities and inequalities that girls in his classroom experienced, from sexual and physical to emotional violence.

The Caribbean stands out as one of the most violent regions, with some of the highest homicide rates. But when taking a closer look at the data, we see men are mostly killed in gang-related violence or random crime, while women experience violence largely by their intimate partners.

Women and girls suffer disproportionately from intimate partner violence and sexual violence and may be repeatedly victimised, or severely traumatised. Prevention requires an approach that recognises those differences.

In recent years, there has been great emphasis on the importance of working with men and boys to address harmful masculinities that promote and enable gender inequality and, by extension, VAWG.

Bennet believes that men and boys have a critical role to play to promote and build gender equality. He acknowledges that men and boys have a lot of privilege and influence that can also support healthy relationships and help rethink what it means to be a man or a boy. Ending VAWG is going to take all of us. The focus is not only on the individual but also on the systemic forms of violence

in a society that condones and accepts it. With 20 years of experience working with communities affected by GBV, Bennett knows this all too well.

Recalling his experience while working for the only LGBT+ organisation in St. Lucia, Bennet understands that working with men and boys must also happen across intersecting levels. VAWG intersects, compounds and is layered – it is impossible to isolate it from racism, colonisation, transphobia, homophobia, ableism, ageism and classism.

For Charles, Caribbean men and boys must be seen as not just part of the problem, but also integral to the solution on ending VAWG.

He says, “men must hold a level of responsibility, as patriarchal systems and men themselves are the primary perpetrators and enablers of VAWG and barriers to achieving an equal society and gender justice for all.”

He adds that as a father, “I have made it my duty to help shape the thinking of my children and facilitate a thinking that is more inclusive with a recognition of peoples' rights no matter their [sex] and [gender identity].”

Bennet Charles is Communications Officer in PCI Media's Caribbean Office, a key partner with UNICEF as part of the Spotlight Initiative Caribbean Regional Programme. He is the Caribbean lead on the Spotlight #PlayYourPart Communications Campaign to promote a Social Behaviour Change approach in ending VAWG in the Caribbean.

The campaign held a soft launch in Guyana in November 2022. The official launch will be in early 2023.

In every society, people need essential public and private services as they go about everyday life. Yet, vulnerable populations are known to experience minimal access to such services, making it critical that systems and initiatives are put in place to allow equal access for vulnerable groups to ease their circumstances. Further, lack of access to sufficient data can pose challenges in allowing decision-makers to understand the impact of certain issues affecting populations.

Institutions services, data, strengthened

iMatter.gy App

Through the Spotlight Initiative, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supported the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security (MoHSSS) to develop an online platform called iMatter.gy. Recognising the importance of the safety of GBV survivors and persons at risk of GBV, **iMatter Gender-Based Violence App** provides an additional option for those seeking support.

The app serves as a central portal for members of the public, providing current information on GBV essential services, laws and policies, information, and resources on various

forms of GBV in Guyana, as well as linkage to the national 914 GBV Hotline service. The app provides access to a GBV easy communication tools and early warning systems to protect individuals from GBV.

The app is available for free download in the Google Play store and the Apple App store, and is also constantly updated by the MoHSSS to provide accurate information.

Legal Pro Bono 500 Initiative

Five hundred GBV survivors per year are expected to benefit from the Legal Pro Bono 500 Initiative, which was launched by the MoHSSS

For those affected by Gender-based Violence (GBV), access to health, social services, police and justice are a priority and ensuring reliable and timely data is essential to informing evidence-based decision-making. Under Spotlight Initiative Guyana, several programmes have been implemented to ensure essential services are readily available for GBV victims. Efforts have also been made to give attention to initiatives that tackle GBV at an institutional level in an effort to address attitudinal and policy change.



His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana (centre); Hon. Dr. Vindhya Persaud, Minister of Human Services and Social Security (fourth from left); Fernando Ponz Cantó, former EU Ambassador (second from left); Mikiko Tanaka, former UN Resident Coordinator (first from left); and Adler Bynoe, UNFPA Liaison Officer (fifth from left) at the launch of the **iMatter Gender-Based Violence App**. (Photo courtesy of the Department of Public Information Guyana)



(From left) Fernando Ponz Cantó, former Ambassador of the European Union to Guyana; Yeşim Oruç, United Nations Resident Coordinator; Hon. Dr. Vindhya Persaud, Minister of Human Services and Social Security; Shanielle Hussain-Outar, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Human Services and Social Security; Pauline Chase, President of the Guyana Bar Association; and Adler Bynoe, Liaison Officer, UNFPA at the launch of the Legal Pro Bono 500 Initiative.

(Photo courtesy of the Department of Public Information)

in partnership with the Guyana Bar Association and UNFPA, through the Spotlight Programme. This initiative sees a commitment by the members of the Guyana Bar Association to provide pro-bono legal services to further strengthen access to justice for GBV survivors who may have otherwise been unable to obtain legal assistance.

It also provides opportunities for all sizes of law firms in Guyana to participate in pro-bono work, thereby improving social cohesion, cultivating a pro-bono culture across the profession, and helping to break the cycle of GBV in Guyana.

GBV Course Launched

Tackling GBV from an institutional level – a course on GBV will be facilitated at the University of Guyana (UG) with the introduction of **Resilience against and Disruption of Gender-Based Violence**. The 13-week course is an elective offered fully online and developed by UG in collaboration with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) under the Spotlight Initiative.

The course aims to raise awareness of GBV with a focus on causes, consequences, intervention methods and social change. Emphasis will be placed on the relationship between GBV and gender power relations, gender roles and norms, as well as how socioeconomic, cultural and religious factors impact the causes and consequences of GBV.

Partnerships

Achieving a society free of violence can only be possible when everyone is involved in addressing it. UN Women,

through implementing partner Merundoi Inc., collaborated with the Guyana Cricket Board and the Guyana Football Federation to develop a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy that is geared to establish a framework to keep sports organisations and, by extension, communities safe from violence, harassment, exclusion and other human rights violations.

Enhancing Data Availability and Capacities for Evidence-based Decision-making

Under the Spotlight Initiative, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) trained 122 participants from across varying agencies and ministries, including Human Services and Social Security, Health, Education, Home Affairs, Legal Affairs, Governance and Parliamentary Affairs, Guyana Police Force, the Judiciary, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Regional Administrations, and Amerindian Village Councils (Regions 1 and 7) and CSOs in GBV data collection, analysis and use.

UNDP also conducted a qualitative analysis on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). The experiences of underrepresented survivors, including Indigenous Women and Girls and sex workers from Regions 1 and 7 were documented. This analysis complemented the 2018 Guyana Women’s Health and Life Experiences Survey. The different forms of violence against women and girls, coping strategies, availability and access to essential services were examined. The recommendations will allow for an evidence-based approach to decision making on policies, plans and programmes for the elimination of VAWG.

Education sector key to FV fight

Impacting at least one in three in the Caribbean, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is the most pervasive gender-based discrimination and human rights violation. Gender stereotypes, perceived gender roles and social norms that drive not only the violence but the acceptability of violence are formed early; and upheld by systems and structures that reinforce these inequalities. These inequalities intersect with other important risks and drivers related to access to resources and experiences of violence and abuse in childhood.

Furthermore, violence against women and violence against children (VAC) are likely to co-exist within the same families and in the same household, at the same time, with girls being particularly exposed to sexual violence and often slipping through the cracks in both prevention and response actions. Recent studies also reveal that children (girls and boys) experience violence across all stages of childhood, in diverse settings, and often at the hands of individuals with whom they interact on a daily basis.

Comprehensive FV Prevention

Comprehensive Family Violence (FV) prevention efforts that engage a wide range of people early on are critical ways to confront this violence. Schools, educators, parents, young people and communities can serve as key entry points to reach diverse groups through influential streams and engage people where they live, work and come together. Education is a powerful tool for the prevention of violence, especially when combined with other strategies, such as gender responsive curriculum and pedagogical practices, and community mobilisation and awareness raising.

“The education sector plays a significant protective role in the lives of children, girls, and youth. For many, schools are the only safe place they know and for others still, teachers are their beacons of hope. It is critical that as we seek to reduce and prevent violence against women, girls, and children that the education sector be included as a key actor within the Caribbean Essential Services Package. Let us provide services for safety, care and empowerment through authentic partnerships focused on the holistic well-being of the child, woman, and girl in the



community.” - **Dr. Laurette Bristol, Programme Manager, Human Resource Development - CARICOM Secretariat**

Through the Caribbean Regional Spotlight Initiative, UNICEF is working with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, through the leadership of Dr. Laurette Bristol, Programme Manager, to establish standards for the education sector in the support of the essential services for women and girls and children subject to violence in the Caribbean.

The programme will also develop a whole of education sector approach to prevent and respond to VAWG, which is based on a regional guidance that includes tailored strategies, a set of minimum standards, gender responsive curriculum and pedagogical practices, and a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure their effectiveness.

A Developed Evidence Base

Building on the evidence-base that has been developed which shows that VAC can be prevented, the Spotlight Initiative Caribbean Regional Programme has identified key areas from the institutional to the community levels to support the following implementing measures :

- Create safe, sustainable and nurturing family environments, and provide specialised help and support for families at risk of violence;
- Modify unsafe environments through physical changes;
- Reduce risk factors in public spaces (e.g., schools, places where young people gather) to reduce the threat of violence;
- Address gender inequities in relationships, the home, school, the workplace etc.;
- Change the cultural attitudes and practices that support the use of violence;
- Ensure legal frameworks prohibit all forms of violence against children;
- Provide access to quality response services for children affected by violence;
- Eliminate the cultural, social, and economic inequalities that contribute to violence, close the wealth gap, and ensure equitable access to goods, services and

opportunities; and

- Coordinate the actions of the multiple sectors that have a role to play in preventing and responding to violence against children.

Addressing the root causes and mitigating the risk factors of VAWG and VAC is at the heart of prevention work and must take a multi-sectoral approach to reach individuals, communities, and institutions in coordinated ways so that they are mutually reinforcing. The education sector is key to complement the health, justice, police, and social services to prevent and respond to VAWG and VAC in the Caribbean.

By providing access and/or referrals to survivor-centred services, such as immediate and long-term healthcare, counselling, timely police response, access to justice, as well as safe accommodation and shelter, the education sector can promote a rights-based approach, the empowerment of women and girls and children to seek help and support, and accountability for perpetrators.

The aim is to work together, family (at home) and peers (at school) within a community, as part of the wider society to transform harmful gender norms and attitudes that perpetuate VAWG, improve the ethos of the school, and promote healthy, equitable and non-violent relationships for girls, children, young people, and all members of the school and community.



Data experts better equipped to capture VAWG stats

by Sharon Carter-Burke

Through the Spotlight Initiative Caribbean Regional Programme, a regional pool of CARICOM data experts will lead on collecting statistics on Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) in the Caribbean and ensuring that this data can be used to guide legislative changes and policies for preventing and responding to VAWG.

Significantly, they will do so in a way that does no further harm to victims of this form of violence.

Based on the VAWG prevalence surveys conducted in five Caribbean territories, prior to COVID-19 approximately 40% of women in the Caribbean experienced some form of violence in a relationship. This data can be found on the UN Women and Caribbean Development Bank [Caribbean Women Count Data Hub](#) for Jamaica, Grenada, Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

The COVID-19 effect of stay-at-home orders, increased mental, financial and physical strains, and limited access to informal support networks (family or friends) saw women being trapped at home with their abusers and Domestic Violence reports to the police spiking as high as 149% in one country in June 2020 compared to June 2019.

Workshops were held on improving the collection of and anonymising VAWG data. Recent training also looked at minimum standards, ethical guidelines and protocols for the management of VAWG data including sharing such information within the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the wider CARICOM. Regional statistical officers, gender bureau staff, the women's movement are all an integral part of the statistics system in



Isiuwa Iyahan - Deputy Representative, UN Women MCO - Caribbean

the Caribbean including regional institutions like CARICOM and OECS.

Prevalence of the different forms of intimate partner violence (IPV) and non-partner sexual violence is captured through the customised CARICOM Survey Model for measuring Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). While administrative data reflects only what is recorded by an agency interacting with a victim/survivors or perpetrator of GBV, of which VAWG is a type of this broader category of violence.

The workshops are being coordinated by UN Women Regional Spotlight Pillar 5 implementing partner reThink Social Development Limited, a policy research consulting firm.

Carol Watson Williams is the Principal Consultant and was also the National Coordinator for the Women's Health Survey, Jamaica. She explained that civil society organisations are on the ground directly interacting with women through the services they provide. Data user-producer dialogues held



Carol Watson Williams
Principal Consultant - ReThink

in Jamaica, offered an opportunity to review their intake forms, which are an important data collection tool, which is the basis to elevate their capacity to be fully integrated into the data system.

Watson Williams further explained that the process undergone in Jamaica and currently ongoing at regional level, provides a tested and validated process that other countries can adapt and has been included in the [global guidance that UN Women recently launched](#). "We have developed a template other countries can build on as they seek to establish a VAWG administrative data collection system," Watson Williams added.

UN Women MCO - Caribbean in collaboration with the CARICOM Regional Statistics Programme is leading on this work. UN Women's Deputy Representative Isiuwa Iyahan noting that UN Women leads Pillar 5 on Data of the Spotlight Initiative, stressed that particularly in our small island developing states, careful management of VAWG data is a priority.

Iyahan added that under the Spotlight Programme there was, therefore, an intentional focus on strengthening and broadening skillsets for the production, management, dissemination and utilisation of VAWG prevalence and administrative data. She explained:

1. It is important the region has a critical mass of

experts qualified to collect and analyse data to measure the prevalence of VAWG.

2. It is equally important that expertise in the management of VAWG administrative data be expanded.

3. The numbers are important, but so are the voices and perspective of survivors and all others affected by VAWG and research expertise in this area of qualitative VAWG data collection has been further strengthened.

4. The capacity to collect and analyse all these forms of data to inform policy, research, and programming at the regional and country levels is important, but in order for this to be the case, our experts had to be able to effectively disseminate and utilise this information. The UN Women official highlighted that statistical data control safeguards the privacy of, for example, respondents and household members by taking steps to minimise the risk of these persons being identified. She shared three principles around ethical collection and management of data:

1. Principle 6 of the UN Fundamental Principles of Statistics is clear. Individual data collected by statistical agencies for statistical compilation, are to be strictly confidential and used exclusively for statistical purposes.

2. Principle 4 of the UN Fundamental Principles of Statistics is also clear: Statistical Confidentiality. The national statistical institute and the other members of the national statistical system shall guarantee the protection and confidentiality of the information used to produce official statistics and shall refrain from identifying the sources.

3. The Code of Good Practice for Latin America and the Caribbean Principle 3 emphasises that collection of information for the preparation of official statistics must be supported by a clear legal mandate. At the request of the national statistical institutes and members of the national statistical system, the administrations, corporations, households and the public in general may be required by law to provide access to data for the preparation of official statistics or to submit such data, which will be treated as confidential.

Create Future Good



Name: Nadella Oya

Country: Trinidad & Tobago

Civil Society Organisation: Create Future Good (CFG) is a registered non-profit organisation in Trinidad and Tobago with the mission to help children to enjoy their rights through creative interventions, shaping conscious adults who will make a better world. Launched in 2010, our clear focus has been to create massive social impact through positive behaviour change. We use the awareness, advocacy, and activism of children's rights through a variety of interventions (media, art, campaigns) using creative expression and innovative projects and programmes. These interventions are targeted at children and their caregivers with the overarching goal of shaping mindful, conscious, and purposeful adults who in turn "create future good".

We advocate for children's rights using creative media

We build awareness and advocate for children's rights using creative media as forms of communication, expression, and learning. Some of our work has taken the form of workshops, using art to express the messages children have internalised upon completion. We have also engaged schools to produce creative campaigns. We partner with governments, communities, and the private and public sectors to ensure our work is far-reaching and purposeful. You can find out more about this organisation by visiting <https://www.youtube.com/@createfuturegood>

How many years has the organisation been active?: Create Future Good was legally registered as a Non Profit Organisation in Trinidad and Tobago in 2011. However, a few years earlier in 2006, an amazing group of friends rallied together and started the work that would "help children realise their power." And now we are growing into a Social Impact Enterprise.

How did you get involved in the organisation?: I have survived childhood sexual abuse. Over the years, in my work I had always unconsciously given a platform for children to tell their stories. Then there was a period of time that the news was constantly flooded with stories of children being sexually assaulted and murdered.

My friends and I would talk about it. It became overwhelming, hurtful, impossible to ignore. That feeling of overwhelming sorrow one feels at the news of the death of a child, especially at the hands of an adult was just too much. It was more than daunting when we realised that child mistreatment, abuse, and infanticide are not isolated, random occurrences in the country we call home.

When the news of eight-year-old Hope Arismendez's death had circulated it was painful. Some friends again discussed the situation. Still in shock and disbelief, we kept asking the ubiquitous question, "What can we do?" We had children we loved and wanted to protect.

A group of friends decided to do something about that. We engaged children to help figure out the best way to

help other children. And to create ways to make their future lives and families better. That first group of friends had more friends who helped, guided and turned up. And then the friends of those friends got on board. Families,





more children, schools, businesses, and individuals. Now we have a committed people all over the world who band together to help children enjoy their childhood, improve their well-being. We were resolute that the time had come to help children realise their power.

We recognised that too often, the voices of children and young people were silenced from an early age, and without knowledge of their universal rights, they were being left vulnerable to victimisation and abuse from adults.

We knew we had to place children at the centre of the work. By equipping children with skills and giving them the opportunity to communicate positive (and often times difficult) messages to their peers, we believed that we could build an organisation that utilises creativity-based interventions across traditional and online media to promote child rights for all children.

As the founder of Create Future Good, I do not waiver when it comes to the engagement of children leading on the decisions that affect them. Our organisation is strategically designed and run by both children and adults. My role is to facilitate my amazing team in delivering quality and meaningful campaigns and interventions to help children and their families – from making strategic decisions and managing donor funding to facilitating community workshops and engaging children every single day.

When one recognises the culture of violence that sustains child abuse, there must be a radical call to action to promote and protect the rights of all children. And this action must extend beyond individual change to include targeting systems that fail our children and place them at greater risk.

Organisational Achievements:

Our biggest achievement is our youth team. Seeing children and teens develop personally through the work they do with us is the best feeling ever. We have children who started volunteering and working with the organisation regularly to help us develop campaigns, they grew with us over the years and today they work with us part-time as young adults.

Our other major achievement is the impact of our work, over the years we have testimonial evidence of children around the Caribbean using the information they learned in our campaigns to protect themselves and each other from hurt and abuse. That is our purpose. And we will continue doing this for as long as it takes to help children enjoy their rights.

Even though we are still a small team, we have over 100 regular volunteers who have been with us for over 10 years. Our tribe is pretty steady and we enjoy growing with them.

Another meaningful achievement is how we have been able to share our resources and learnings with other organisations. We have been able to assist other CSOs just as we have been assisted by persons from more experienced organisations in our early years. Naturally we started coalition building and collaborating with ease and joy. We are now assisting in launching the Caribbean Coalition on the Rights of a Child (CCROC) and the Caribbean Gender Alliance.

We have won a few awards – those don't define our impact. Our team and family are testimonial to the good work. The children and families benefitting from our work are what we place the most value on.

How did you hear about the Spotlight Initiative Small Grants?: The Spotlight Initiative Small Grant from UN Women came to our attention when a call was circulated in October 2021. We are grateful for the support that the grant offered us.

How will the Spotlight Initiative Small Grant assist the organisation's work? The Small Grant that we were awarded was used for Institutional Strengthening. We were really grateful for the opportunity to use the grant to clear up the backlog of Financials, develop a Strategic Plan,

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan, flesh out

our Policies and Procedures, improve our Marketing and Communications Plan, design a Talent and People strategy suited to our organisation's needs, and improve our operational functions. We even improved our team's ability to work together remotely and in person through a digital platform upgrade.

So many times CSOs are focussed on projects and we don't have support for our operational needs. This grant allowed us to give the much needed attention to our team's ability to operate more effectively. It was like a lifeline.

What I liked best about this grant process was the time the team took to onboard you in advance of the grant. We knew very clearly what was expected regarding expenditure, documentation, procurement and reporting. Truly, this was the most essential difference to any other agency we have worked with regarding funding. There was constant access to officers and really timely support and response. Our organisation is benefitting in a meaningful way.

With continued support from agencies like UN Women, and the powerful and committed everyday people who have helped us grow, we will continue our work to help children realise their power and enjoy their childhood.



Building a foundation for young people to escape GBV

by Sharon Carter-Burke

The UN Women Foundations Youth Gender-based Violence (GBV) Prevention Programme is one of the activities being implemented with the support of the United Nations, European Union-funded Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls.

6 The Foundations Programme was an eye-opening experience to me. The facilitators spoke on a number of topics surrounding gender and sexual gender-based violence. I felt empowered by the information that was given. It caused me to look at my life, that of my family, the police youth clubs and community at large and I observed the many gender stereotypes slowly being transformed. The information that I was given, I am eager to share to help empower others as I have done in my own life, as I am now an entrepreneur in the agricultural sector, growing and selling plants.

– Sherine Supersad, 18 years

Sherina Supersad and Rondell Constantine are two of over 1,300 young people who went through the UN Women Foundations gender-based violence (GBV) prevention programme for youth and shared on its benefits for them and others.

Foundations is coordinated as one of the activities under the Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls (VAWG). It is being implemented by UN Women Civil Society partner - the Network of Rural Women Producers of Trinidad and Tobago (NRWPTT) in association with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) Youth Clubs network and the TTPS Victim and Witness unit.

Sherina who through Foundations-associated training was also able to expand her knowledge as an entrepreneur said the Programme was particularly rewarding since she was now able to see the endless possibilities before her.

“What stood out as a highlight to me was the unified approach for the dissolution of gender stereotypes. Society still struggles with dealing with gender stereotypes and this Programme has pushed the limitations to these stereotypes. I can be more than a homemaker... Foundations showed me that men and women can both

do anything,” Sherina explained.

Rondell Constantine said he benefitted from the programme; learning that there are many types of violence, such as physical, mental and emotional abuse. He described the striking impact of one of the activities - exploring the harmful cultural gender norms in a popular local song:

“...it talks about young men especially in this society who don't really have an education, they found somebody who they love and they don't have the necessary requirements such as the money to buy food, clothing or shelter, or other necessities for women. It showed that those who don't have any social status would always be looked down upon by those higher than them... As a result of all this I am furthering my education at the moment”

NRWPTT Foundations co-coordinator Curtis Mayers said the group discussions, role-play and facilitator-led training helped participants get a deeper understanding of how gender stereotypes could be harmful to men and women: “One of the achievements that was quite noteworthy, was that they got a better understanding of gender stereotypes and how to treat with those issues and be able to promote



the concept of gender equality... You could feel that they felt more empowered.”

As part of the TTPS Mayaro Police Youth Club, Rondell explained they were able to take their message to the community: “On the 25th of every month, we painted the walls on the Mayaro junction which highlighted the kinds of gender-based violence going on in the community.”

NRWPTT President Gia Gaspard Taylor explained that while Foundations is a youth GBV-prevention programme, the impact of GBV has broader implications for the household and communities. She said there was incest, rape and poverty within the family unit and so there was need to incorporate every member of the family, men, women, boys and girls.

Gaspard-Taylor noted the link between addressing GBV-related trauma and facilitating economic empowerment. “What we also realised having gone through the experience of having members triggered by something said in the training, was that we had to introduce other activities (sic) to promote economic empowerment, so we introduced a farmer-to-farmer programme because some of the parents who were also victims, were unemployed.”

NRWPTT facilitated training with the University of the West Indies (UWI) St Augustine campus, the US-based Purdue University and the Ministry of Agriculture to establish

community gardens among other key outcomes. “We got a lot of donations from the Ministry, seeds, seedlings and plants, and got donations from private sector, So survivors were able to plant, reap and sell their produce and so they were able to earn”, Gaspard-Taylor added.

Mayers explained that the Spotlight-facilitated Foundations training strategically aligned with their work for women to achieve economic empowerment through entrepreneurial action. They would not only see their business as “a hustle” but a long-term sustainable activity, a route by which they could assert themselves and achieve economic independence and move out of situations of GBV.

He added: “This part of the Spotlight Initiative was fortuitous because it fit in so nicely with the work we were already engaged with and afforded us the opportunity to reach out to a wider community to engage other parties and compensate them; it was a real shot in the arm for us. The task is not complete, this is an ongoing process – some of the issues we are treating with, this will be a part of the longitudinal study, this is a phase with this particular segment.”

Both Sherine and Rondell endorsed the programme for their peers with Rondell adding that bullying also needed to be included as a topic: “It taught me, that those who are going through those types of violence, whatever problem, they have, they can overcome it”

Spotlight Initiative Global Learning Symposium



Spotlight Initiative team members from across the globe gather for a group photo at the recently-held Global Learning Symposium in Mexico. It was a fantastic opportunity to meet colleagues face-to-face for the first time after several years of working remotely.



Produced by the Programme Management Unit
Caribbean Regional Spotlight Initiative
Resident Coordinator Office, Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean