

### RAISE YOUR VOICE SAINT LUCIA INC

ANNUAL REPORT

PERIOD January to December 31st, 2019

The mission of Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia Inc is to provide quality, compassionate and nonjudgmental services in a manner that fosters self-respect and independence in persons experiencing gender based violence, and to lead the struggle to end domestic violence through advocacy and community education. If we were to sum up this report in a single word, it would be "overwhelming". After seven years of providing services and support to women and children who are victims of gender based violence and lack of access to justice we are going into 2020 focused on strengthening and refining our impact.

We are embarking on a significant shift in our residential services to ensure equal access for survivors of all genders ( We are developing an economic empowerment program to support survivors as they pursue their employment, educational and financial goals to remain safe long-term.

We are demanding improvements on how the country's health, human services and justice systems responds to gender based violence

We are building an organizational culture committed to justice for both clients and their families

*And, we* will be *engaging with our data at a deeper level* by conducting critical studies *to enhance our services and inform our decision-making* 

Through each of these priorities, we are striving to achieve greater levels of excellence, strength and sustainability.

But we could not do any of it without YOU, our valued supporters and partners. Thank you for standing with us as we gain ground for survivors of gender based violence.

Advocating Every Day,

This year we deepened our approach to service delivery and prevention, investing in more comprehensive and long-term supports, while also filling critical gaps for vulnerable populations all with the goal of equipping survivors to sustain their independence from abuse. We served a total of 1608+ persons in 2019.

#### One Thousand One Hundred & Sixteen (1,116) persons

were helped by connecting them to counselors to create safety plans and connect with local resources such as the Vulnerable Persons Unit, Family Court, Lawyers, Doctors, Social Workers, etc



#### 71 people

who called us and were at highest risk of being killed by an abusive partner received early intervention through our close working relationship with the Commissioner Of Police and received safe haven at our safe spaces

#### 70 individuals (including first responders)

were trained in domestic violence dynamics and effective interventions with the generous support of Outright Action International. I I households totaling 42 people Received rental support to ensure they were not homeless or returned to a volatile domestic violence situation



300 **children** received educational support through scholarships, backpacks and school supplies

#### 13 people

received legal aid, including attorney representation, court advocacy



#### II **special needs children** Benefited from disposable diapers, wipes, nonperishable food items, etc.

**16 people** were served through representation to the Family Court for protection orders



# **STORIES:**

My dad was arrested that night after a huge fight between him and my mom that ended with my 8-year-old brother, Dillon, throwing himself inbetween the two of them. I was so young that I honestly don't remember any other situations like this between my parents, but it was clear to me in that moment that this was not the first time. It was obvious that my mom had gone to great lengths to keep this secret from Dillon and me, so that we never felt different from other families.

My dad never spent another night in our house, because my mom made the tough decision of raising my brother and I on her own. It would have been easy for my mom to not talk about what had happened or just move on, but this was not something she wanted our family to forget about. She made sure that we were aware of the effects of domestic violence. She never wanted me to think a relationship like that is normal.

My childhood experience is the reason that I've kept a heightened awareness during my teenage years to the prevalence of domestic violence. As I get to know someone I could potentially date, I look for characteristics such as trust, healthy boundaries and respect.

I want my friends and classmates to know how easy it can be to fall into abusive relationships. I want them to know about the resources available to them if they do find themselves in a bad situation or know somebody that is. And most of all, I want them to understand what a healthy relationship is, so they can be safe and happy. We must interrupt the cycle of domestic violence with education. (Volunteer)

Since our beginning seven years ago, Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia has made it a priority to not only advocate for women and children but to provide safe spaces, emergency shelter services to survivors of gender based violence and persons who identify as members of the LGBTQI Community and their children. We are excited to announce that in early 2020, we will be opening our doors to welcome all at our new offices donated by a founding member and current Director, an initial grant by AmeriCares funded the initial construction of the main building at a cost of \$25,000 Eastern Caribbean Dollars, additional funds are required to complete the outstanding construction works.

### WHY WE FIGHT

- For inclusivity, gender equality, nondiscrimination and respect of human rights of women, children and LGBTQI;
- To offer rehabilitative services to men who are perpetrators of gender based violence so perpetrators will not just move on to another relationship and continue the cycle of violence;
- To increase number of beds in our safe spaces so no gender based violence victims is turned away;
- To be the provider of choice for support services to gender based violence survivors;
- To advocate for change within the justice, social services, educational and public health systems to better serve gender based violence victims

We understand that this change is significant, and we are implementing it with care and intention. We are also ensuring it is guided and informed by survivors' voices. We are thrilled to expand our continuum of care for survivors of domestic violence by integrating economic empowerment resources into our work. Economic empowerment is critical to survivors' ability to sustain their independence from domestic violence long-term, and is the key to accessing safe and stable housing.

We have applied for a seed funding for this strategic plan priority from three potential donors.

Through this program we will partner with clients to accomplish their individual economic empowerment goals, while strengthening a cohort of local workforce development providers to more effectively respond to their unique needs.

## How do we do it?

#### STEPS TO ASSISTING OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE VICTIMS

#### As of February 2016

#### This document supersedes the previous rehabilitation protocols used from 2012.

#### Step 1

Receive Call from

- Victim
- Police
- Other

#### Step 2

- Arrange initial debriefing session
- Fill out intake form
- Refer to external services (Police, Hospital, Family Court)
- Refer to internal services (Counseling, Safe House, Welfare, Legal Aid, etc)

#### Step 3

#### If client is referred for external services

- Victim's Aid must accompany client
- Victim's Aid will prepare a field report on all events
- Client referred back for internal services
- Client needs were met and the file is closed

#### Step 4

#### If Client is referred for internal services

- Client is referred to senior social worker for evaluation
- A case management plan is prepared
- Client is briefed on internal processes and procedures
- Clients must agree to be part of internal case management protocols
- Confidential family members are invited to participate in a debriefing session

#### If Client who does not need to be in safe house

- Record court dates or any follow up meeting
- Arrange Legal Aid
- Victims Aid to attend all meeting or court hearings
- Update clients file after each activity
- Ensure Clients is assigned to a Counselor if necessary
- Field Social Worker to follow up with home visits to ensure wellbeing and safety

#### Step 6

#### If Client needs to be in a safe house

- Arrange transfer to safe house (security protocol must be followed)
- Brief client on safe house protocol
- Families and close friends will be updated
- Clients phone must be taken away and kept in storage

#### Step 7

#### **Clients in Safe House**

- Client attends individual counseling sessions twice per week as per counselor schedule in house
- Client attends group counseling session once per week as per counselor schedule off site
- Client attends human rights & capacity building training once per week off site
- Clients evaluation and progress is recorded each week by in-house social worker and counselor

#### Step 8

#### **Clients with Children in Safe House**

- Nurse/doctor must evaluate minor within 48 hrs.
- Social Worker & Counselor to prepare case management plan for minor
- Report on progress must be submitted weekly
- Start counseling session along with mother at week 4
- Arrange lesson plan for students under 5
- Arrange for school attendance for children over 5

#### Step 8a

#### Evaluation of clients and their children

- Client evaluated to assess progress
- Child evaluated to assess progress
- If progress is advanced refer client to empowerment training
- If progress is not satisfactory refer client to further counseling and case management

#### Step 9

#### **Transition & Reintegration**

- Clients are to be evaluated and recommended for transition from safe house back to community
- Clients must display an eagerness and willingness to transition from safe house
- Field Social Workers must do a visit to the proposed residence
- A report on the conditions for the proposed residence must be prepared
- An exit and safety plan must be prepared and discussed with client
- Job interviews must be arranged
- Social Worker and/or Counselor must pay weekly, bi weekly and monthly visits to clients
- Update reports must be prepared on clients who has exited the program and safe house

#### **Health Check**

#### How are clients who have graduated from our program?

- Call up
- Check up
- Invite over to volunteer at fundraising and other activities
- Checkup with employer and coworkers to see how clients are coping
- Offer support and assistance

As we deepen and grow our services, it's crucial that we also invests in internal resources—particularly in developing our team members and strengthening how we evaluate and learn from our outcomes

# 2019 Movement Building!

#### January 2019

Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia Inc was among the nonprofit organizations in the region that was selected to participate in the launch of the Livity Project funded by the European Union and hosted in Barbados The LIVITY Project is a four-year, seven-country partnership of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies: Nita Barrow Unit (IGDS: NBU) at The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, the Barbados Council for the Disabled (BCD) and the Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality (ECADE), which is an umbrella Lesbian Gav Bisexual Transgender and Intersex civil society organization headquartered in St Lucia. The LIVITY project targets Barbados, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Lucia. The objective of this initiative is to meaningfully address marginalisation, discrimination and exclusion of persons with disabilities, LGBTI Caribbean citizens, women, girls, youth and the elderly in national and regional decision-making processes through enhancing CSO capacity and participation. There are six core activities for the LIVITY project. These are: a CSO Incubator, Coalition-Building Groundings, a Leadership Academy focused on the production and dissemination of new knowledge, an annual Policy and Forum Street Art Festival. а

Under the LIVITY Leadership Academy, research will be conducted to produce two case studies on Civil Society Organization challenges to be used in capacity building for CSOs

#### March/April 2019

Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia and a number of other Caribbean NGO's was hosted by Outright Action International in Trinidad & Tobago to undergo security training and to conceptualized a regional project

"Frontline Alliance: Caribbean Partnerships Against Gender Based Violence."

The project aims to improving the barriers accessing justice and support for women and LGBTIQ people who experience gender-based violence (GBV).

Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia Participated in the launch of the CSO's component of the Equality & Justice Alliance Project in St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

The Equality & Justice Alliance's program will provide support to countries that are seeking to address this systemic discrimination by working with a range of stakeholders to secure the rights of women and girls and LGBT people. The programs will Support Commonwealth civil society organisations to work intersectionally and conduct advocacy to engage with the legislative and policy process;

Convene a series of regional dialogues to build a better understanding of international standards and best practice, strengthen policy exchanges between civil society, officials and experts and to highlight the benefits of legal reform;

Provide a range of legal and policy research tools and technical legal assistance and expertise to Commonwealth governments seeking to reform discriminatory laws, combat violence against women and girls, eliminate hate crimes and increase access to justice.

Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia Inc participated in The High-Level Dialogue in Saint Lucia which brought together more than thirty parliamentary, government, civil society and youth champions from across the Commonwealth Caribbean to exchange knowledge of their work advancing equality across the region. Participants discussed in plenary and in national break-out groups the key opportunities and challenges in the Caribbean to advance equality before the law, and how this could be achieved. Regional experts presented case studies to the group on the following topics:

• The reform of Belize's sexual offences legislation, presented by former Belize Minister and former Ambassador of Children, Gender and HIV/AIDS, Dolores Balderamos-García

- The journey to safe, legal, accessible abortion in the Caribbean, presented by academic, poet and activist Taitu Heron
- Engagement with youth to advance legislative reform, presented by Alicia Wallace, Director of Equality Bahamas

Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia Participated in a training opportunity in St. Kitts in UN Mechanisms which included:

- 🕹 Advocacy Goals
- 🖊 Human Rights Literacy
- 🖊 Overview of United Nations
- 4 Universal Periodic Review (UPR)
- 🖊 Sharing Good Practices
- ↓ UPR team competition
- 🖊 Recap of Human Rights Mechanisms
- 🖊 UN Treaty Bodies
- 🖊 Writing a UPR report
- Special Procedures
- 🖊 Inter-American Human Rights system
- 4 United Nations Development Program
- ↓ Different mechanisms exercise
- Coalition building
- Making a statement
- ✤ Engagement with stakeholders

#### <u>May 2019</u>

Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia Inc and United & Strong Launched Outright Action International joint Caribbean project entitled "Frontline Alliance: Caribbean Partnerships Against Gender Based Violence".

The project's official launch took place on Thursday 9th May,

2019 at the Ministry of Social Justice - Conference Room, 4th

Floor Greaham Louisy Administrative Building, Waterfront,

Castries. Representatives from civil society and governmental agencies were in attendance.

The first state of the project "Train the Trainers" took place on August 5-6, 2019, facilitated by Outright Action International Caribbean Advisor Neish McLean and Caribbean Researcher Kennedy Carillo at the Coco Palm Resorts.

#### <u>June 2019</u>

In June 2019 Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia participated in the Women's Voice & Leadership Convening June 24th - 25th 2019, St. John's, Antigua this convening - Women's Voice & Leadership (Caribbean) is a five year initiative for the region supported by the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada (GAC) to strengthen women's organizations and movements in about 30 countries around the world. In the Caribbean, the initiative is being implemented alongside women's rights organizations by The MATCH International Women's Fund (The MATCH Fund), Canada's sole global fund for women, girls, and trans\* people, in partnership with the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice (Astraea), the only philanthropic organization working exclusively to advance LBTIQ human rights around the world. The two organizations share a rich history — one deeply embedded in feminist and human rights movements the world over. For forty years, both organizations have been exclusively investing in grassroots organizations advancing their own solutions to improve women's human rights in their own contexts.

Investment in local women's rights organizations (WROs) is critical to changing the systems, norms, attitudes and behaviours that harm women and hold them back. For this reason, WVL (Caribbean) will directly support the capacity, leadership and agendas of the women who belong to the very communities most affected by discrimination, poverty and violence in the Caribbean — investing in their feminist strategies and priorities for change and the strengthening of the women's movement as a whole. The aim of the WVL (Caribbean) program is to match the efforts and innovation happening at the grassroots with the resources required to sustain and scale the work. In the spirit of collective ownership and shared building, The MATCH Fund and Astraea hosted this 2-day consultation with approximately 30 partners and representatives from women's organizations and LBTIQ groups from around the region to develop and expand the thinking around the program, including how the WVL (Caribbean) program can respond to the priorities of groups in the region.

The convening explored:

- Women's Rights Organizations & LBTIQ Funding Needs and Priorities in the Region;
- Initial priorities and geographic mandate with a focus on strategic advocacy opportunities;
- Grantmaking, capacity-building, and other programmatic and thematic approaches;
- Grant management and capacity across organizations, countries and thematic areas; Challenges for advancing women's rights across the Region;
- Values and principles and opportunities for Feminist Movement Building;
- The feasibility of a longer-term funding mechanism

#### <u>August 2019</u>

Engaging Key Service Providers in Combatting Gender-based Violence against Women and LGBTQI Persons in the Caribbean - a project funding by Ourtright Action International, collaboration between United & Strong and Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia Inc, hosted the "Train the Trainers" portion of the project on August 5-6<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Participants came from keys social services agencies, civil society organizations and other agencies working with marginalized populations. The contents of the training are as follows.

# Unit 1: Understanding SOGI – Sexual Orientation vs Gender Identity

Activity 1.1 What is SOGI? Activity 1.2 SOGI and International Human Rights

#### Activity 1.4 SOGI and the GBV gender dynamics

#### Unit 2 : GBV and LGBTQI Political & Legal Environment

Activity 2.1 The situation of LGBTQI persons in the Caribbean

Activity 2.2 Situation of GBV in the Caribbean

Activity 2.3 GBV Policies and Protocols in 4 Countries

### **Unit 3: Exploring Values and Attitudes**

Activity 3.1 Values – The Sources and Origens Activity 3.2 Reflecting on Attitudes towards Diversity Activity 2.3 Stigma and Discrimination – the Social Phenomenon

Unit 4: Human Rights- Based Advocacy and Action

Activity 4.1 What are human rights?
Activity 4.2 The Human Rights of Women and LGBTQI Vulnerable to GBV
Activity 4.3 What is GBV and LGBTQI Advocacy?
Activity 4.4. Who is an Advocate? Am I a GBV Advocate?
Activity 4.5. Time for Advocacy...Time for Action...Time for Change!

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Facilitating Sessions – Important Information for Trainers Appendix 2: Training sessions Agendas Appendix 3: SOGI Terminology

#### September 2019

Following our Equality & Justice Alliance Meeting in St. Vincent in March 2019 and as planned, together with the Working Group Leads, the second EJA-supported follow-up meeting, *Caribbean Regional Workshop: Strengthening Intersectional Advocacy Strategies on Abortion, Mental Health and Anti-Discrimination was held on* 11-13 September in Grenada.

#### Purpose of the Meeting

The Regional Workshop is currently being conceptualised together with the Working Group leads: (i). Abortion - Taitu Heron, WAND; (ii). Anti-Discrimination - Kenita Placide, ECADE; and (iii). Mental Health - Hazel Da Breo, Sweet Water Foundation. We aim to conceptualise this workshop so that it builds on our dialogue in March 2019 and takes stock of progress made since the meeting in formulating advocacy plans to develop and strengthen laws and policies in the selected thematic areas: (i). Abortion; (ii). Anti-Discrimination; and (iii). Mental Health. In particular, the workshop will support in building the knowledge and skills of participants around laws and policies in the selected thematic areas in learning and sharing forum supported by local experts and facilitators.

#### Workshop (working) Objectives

Please find below working objectives for the workshop meeting. Should you have any feedback on these and/or would like to discuss/support in conceptualising the workshop and/or /facilitating sessions during the workshop, please do let me know.

**1.** To introduce and apply basic common constitutional and international legal principles pertaining to women's and girls' rights and LGBT+ rights in the context of selected thematic areas: (i). Abortion; (ii). Anti-Discrimination; (iii). Mental Health

**2.** To build knowledge of the legislative reform process within the OECS and as it specifically relates to the thematic areas

**3.** To take stock of progress made so far in developing advocacy plans in each of the thematic areas and develop ways forward in implementing these, including, ways of working

#### October 2019

The Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality (ECADE), WE-Change and TransWave Jamaica accepted our application to attend the 7th annual Caribbean Women and Sexual Diversity Conference (CWSDC) which was held in Jamaica from October 4 - 8, 2019.

The theme for the conference "Building Sustainable Feminist Movements – Caribbean LBT women advocating for and creating change".

The 2019 CWSDC is being hosted with a view to:

- Create sustainable feminist organisational models based on the best practices of individuals and organisations within the Caribbean region.
- Highlight the importance of spiritual activism, self-care and restoration as LBT+ activists in our core planning
- Increase the visibility and impact of young feminist activism within and across women's rights movements
- Enhance the capacity of activists to practice proper financial management towards the sustainability of their organisations

#### November 2019

Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia and Americares has established a Medicine and Medical Supplies Program from 2015 to date approximately 26 Million Dollars' worth of Medicines and Medical Supplies has been donated to the public health system including specialized medicines and supplies such as rape kits, STD drugs and pre and post-partum medicines to ensure new born health. In November Americares dispatched two associates to St. Lucia to review the program from November 11<sup>th</sup> – 16, 2019.

#### **Trip Objectives**

- 1. Meet with St. Jude Hospital & the Ministry of Health Officials
- 2. Shipment Review
- 3. Re-establish Primary Contact At St. Jude Hospital
- 4. Discuss Access to Medicines Refresher
- 5. ICA Foundation IUDs donation
- 6. Meet with Central Procurement Unit of the Ministry of Health
- 7. Address any questions and collect feedback
- 8. Discuss Distribution Reports
- 9. Visits to Sub recipient Facilities
- 10. Meeting with St. Jude Hospital
- 11. Discuss possible expansion of the program to include rehabilitative works on key public health institutions.

#### December 2019

- Outright Action International Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia Inc and United & Strong joint Caribbean project entitled "Frontline Alliance: Caribbean Partnerships Against Gender Based Violence" continued with echo training i.e. persons who were trained in the Train the Trainers workshop in August 2019 trained line staff and other personnel who provides services to gender based violence victims. The training took place December 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4th, 2019 at Pastoral Center.
- Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia provided administrative support to Dr. Lorie K. Suddath to conduct a research project entitled "Gender-based Violence in Saint Lucia: Experiences and Disclosure Patterns". Dr. Sudderth was on island from December 10<sup>th, 2019</sup> to January 11<sup>th, 2020</sup> to test the survey instrument for the substantive research which will begin in May 2020.
- The President of Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia Inc was accepted by OutRight Action International to participate in Advocacy Week in New York from December 3<sup>rd</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> where LGBTIQ activists from around the world participate in high-level meetings and activities at the Headquarters of the United Nations.

The aim of Advocacy Week is three-fold:

- Facilitate the use of the New York based UN system by LGBTIQ activists, with a view to enhancing their networks and identifying new entry points for progressing recognition of the human rights of LGBTIQ people at home.
- Bring together LGBTIQ activists from around the globe and create safe spaces for networking, and the exchange of information and experiences.
- Build the capacity and knowledge of New York-based UN and State representatives about the situations and human rights of LGBTIQ people around the world.

Advocacy Week 2019 kicked off with two days of orientation training on UN Systems and Processes during which activists brainstormed how to effectively use the spaces being created during the week. OutRight Action International set up strategic meetings with diplomatic missions, governments, and individuals, as well as organizing events at the United Nations for activists to take part in and make use of. There were opportunities for to meet key donors and media during Advocacy Week in New York.

Through 2019 we engaged in various forms of media and person to person advocacy on a range of issues affecting women and children including Abortion rights, Mental Health, Anti-Discrimination, Human Rights, Gender Equality, etc.

From September of 2019 we hosted Meetings with:-

- 1. Hierarchy of both political parties
- 2. Management of Ministry of Health
- 3. The Vicar General of the Catholic Church
- 4. Principals Association
- 5. Chief Education Officer

#### At each of these meetings we discussed

1. Lack of teaching materials on comprehensive sexual education

2. Teachers do not receive training in comprehensive sexual education

3. No policy by the Ministry of Education to include comprehensive sexual education in curriculum.

4. Women are hospitalized annually for treatment of complications of unsafe abortion or lack of aftercare

5. Reduction in newborn deaths by meeting the needs for modern

Contraception and maternal and newborn care

6. Removal of the Abortion with conditions in the criminal code and placed in the public health policy section

7. That the Catholic Church reiterates its abortion forgiveness policy which was issues by the Pope

8. Unequal access to abortion services by people with means as opposed to no access by those who does not have means, even though abortion is criminalized.

9. Abortion rights should be aligned with the SDG's, specifically Goals 3, 5 and 10.

10. That lack of access to abortion is determined by men rather than women who have to deal with abortion, pregnancies, rapes, incest, etc.

11. Inclusion of post abortion care at public health facilities

Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia Inc is committed to the highest quality fiscal management, ensuring that all contributions are used with integrity, transparency and for the greatest impact for survivors of gender based violence.

### For the period January – December 2019 we raised a total of USD163,048.32 through Fundraising, Grants and Donations and spent a total of USD 153,506.20 $\,$ -

Rent of Space for Counseling
Rental for Safe Houses (3)
Groceries for Safe Houses
Toiletries & Baby Supplies
Utilities
Training (Clients)
Graduated Clients Check Up Expense
Transportation (Clients)
Support to Special Needs Children (Grocery)
Support to Special Needs Children (Assesments
Stipend to Social Workers & Counsellors
Public Education (PSA's)
Domain Name Renewal & Website Builder
Telephone Expense
Support to the Elderly (Pampers, Wipes, etc)
Legal Aid
Educational Assistance
Stationary & Printing
Medical Assistance (Clients)
Maintenance Safe Houses

**Security Services** 

Support to Marginalized Women

Housing Assistance/Rental Support

**Project Expenses (Grants)** 

**Building Expense** 

Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia is thankful to the many supporters who make our life-saving work possible. Join the Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia by making a planned gift. There is a range of giving options that can be tailored to your specific financial status. Contact our Treasurer Ms. Krysti Henry at 1 (758) 727 9674 to get started.