



Preventing Gender-based Violence Effectively with Multidisciplinary and Integrated Services

Key Lessons
from the Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic Experience, Grenada



Gender-based violence (GBV) and in particular, violence against women and girls, is one of the most common forms of insecurity facing citizens in the Caribbean. Yet, Caribbean countries dispose of insufficient response mechanisms to counteract GBV. This Policy Brief promotes the Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic (LACC) in Grenada as a good-practice example of providing GBV services in the Caribbean Region. It offers 13 recommendations for replicating this successful model.

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According to a World Health Organisation (WHO) analysis, one in three women world-wide will experience violence.¹ The significance of this fact is recognised in Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) where States commit to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking, sexual and other types of exploitation. Gender-based violence (GBV), and in particular violence against women and girls, is one of the most common forms of insecurity facing citizens in the Caribbean. As per the 2016 Country Gender Assessment (CGA) Synthesis Report of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB),² GBV is endemic among the researched countries³.

The discourse about GBV in the Caribbean has increased over the last years. Recent public debates show the prevalence of sexual and domestic violence as well as sexual harassment in Caribbean societies.⁴ Responses have been varied. One example is #Lifeinleggings which is a Facebook and Twitter campaign, launched in 2016. It gives Caribbean women the space to share their stories to raise awareness about the high degree of sexual harassment in the Caribbean culture.⁵ More prominent in the international debate is #MeToo which raises awareness about sexual assault and harassment.

Besides these public debates, statistics are rare. Police reports only show the tip of the iceberg due to widespread under-reporting and, as stated in the CGA Synthesis report for the researched countries, due to insufficient response mechanisms to counteract GBV. Among these are inadequate police response, reporting, and investigation; lack of shelters and victim support services (counselling, psychosocial services); lack of trained medical professionals and adequate (forensic) tools and no or limited legal aid.

The Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic (LACC) in Grenada is a good practice example in the Region which deserves replication. Over the period 2016 to 2018, LACC was the beneficiary of a technical assistance grant from the CDB to strengthen its capacity to provide psychosocial and psycho-educational programming, and public education to address GBV. The grant also required that a robust evaluation of these GBV services be undertaken. The evaluation attests the effectiveness of LACC GBV services and gives insights on success factors and challenges. One limitation of the evaluation is that it does not consider longitudinal data to measure the long-term impact on the clients of LACC. This will be one of 13 recommendations made in this Policy Brief for replicating this successful model.

¹ WHO, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, South African Medical Research Council (2013). Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, p.2. For individual country information, see The World's Women 2015, Trends and Statistics, Chapter 6, Violence against Women, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015 - See more at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures#sthash.vWmsXt8b.dpuf>

² The CGA Synthesis Report was elaborated by Rawwida Baksh and Associates with support from CDB.

³ Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Dominica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines

⁴ <https://www.kaieteurnews.com/2017/09/04/domestic-violence-becoming-a-norm-in-society/> , <https://www.barbadostoday.bb/2017/08/12/gender-based-violence-still-prevalent-in-barbados/>

<http://torontocaribbean.com/sexual-violence-in-the-caribbean-trampling-the-normalized-phenomenon/>

⁵ <https://protestwithcolorsblog.wordpress.com/category/photography/>

<https://globalvoices.org/2016/12/02/caribbean-women-take-their-power-back-by-sharing-stories-of-sexual-abuse-via-the-lifeinleggings-hashtag/>

The Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic (LACC)

LACC is delivered through the Grenada Community Development Agency (GRENCODA), an NGO, and, has been in existence since 1987. LACC is a multidisciplinary clinic, which offers a wide range of services. It is the only service provider of its kind in Grenada. It deals with the challenges confronting the most vulnerable members of Grenadian society, particularly impoverished women and their children. Although the Clinic offers assistance to clients with a wide range of legal, social and psychological issues, GBV is one of the more prevalent issues requiring their services.

Psycho-educational Programming: LACC delivers psycho-educational programming geared at responding to GBV. These programmes have an annual enrolment of approximately 75 persons and include:

- i. The Changes Programme – a group counselling programme for women designed to provide them with information and skills to break the cycle of violence for themselves and their children. It is an 11-week process-oriented, voluntary and co-facilitator-led programme for women who are victims of intimate partner violence.
- ii. The Man to Man Programme – a court-mandated violence intervention and group counselling programme for men, that teaches concepts and techniques to replace violence, and control abusive behaviour. It emphasises respect, open communication and healthy and equitable relationships. The programme entails a 16-week curriculum offered in a small-group setting by specially trained facilitators. It aims to convey to participants that GBV is grounded in gender inequality, is unacceptable, and can be prevented through personal responsibility; and
- iii. The ALTERNATIVES Programme – a programme catering to young men who come into conflict with the law while attending school, or young males who are 18 years old or younger and who are out of school. It was first introduced in 2008 and was offered to the Courts in 2010 and became court-mandated from that year. It is a 12-week intervention. It is generally court-mandated; however, young males can be referred to the programme before their behaviour reaches the level of court involvement. The programme has been designed to develop in these young men a positive sense of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management. This initiative aims at eradicating GBV by acknowledging that men who are violent towards their partners were often at risk of being violent in their youth, and that early intervention can serve as preventative action.

Broad-Based Psychosocial Services: LACC delivers broad-based psychosocial services, including counselling, mediation and psychological support, to victims of domestic violence, child abuse, family violence, rape and other sexual offenses. Staff specialised in victim trauma recovery for sexual assault victims is indispensable for delivering those services. An estimated 54 percent of the over 1,400 clients (750 clients) that seek services from LACC on an annual basis are seeking non-legal services, usually of a psychosocial or mediation nature.

Public Education: LACC delivers public education and awareness work aimed at preventing GBV. Sensitisation workshops create the space for dialogue and information sharing about GBV, including topics such as rights, access to services, root causes, and safety nets. These workshops are offered to a wide cross section of the society, targeting men, women, boys and girls. Sessions accommodate from 30 to 50 persons.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPLICATING THE LACC EXPERIENCE

1 Combining legal advice with psychosocial and educational support and public education under one roof

Effective violence prevention needs a multi-faceted and multi-sectoral approach.⁶ The fusion of legal, psychosocial and psycho-educational services and public education is effective as it first represents a holistic approach to the prevention of GBV. Second, it facilitates better coordination of the interventions that victims of violence need.

The fusion of the services implies that providers of those interventions should be housed in the same building—as the experience of the LACC model shows. This encourages the general coordination of responses.

2 Serving a diverse clientele for widespread impact

Services should be accessible to all members of society, from every geographic location. This coverage allows for widespread impact. LACC services an average of 1,400 clients per year. Persons living in lower income households and women are disproportionately represented among the clients; however, there is some degree of diversity in LACC's clientele for two reasons. Firstly, women, men and children from every parish of the country access the organisation's services. Secondly, GBV perpetrators and victims come from all segments of Grenadian society.

3 Choosing the right institutional arrangements: Non-governmental status with diverse funding sources

LACC has over 30 years of experience in the area of GBV, and credits its success in part to its NGO status. LACC is less bureaucratic than Government agencies, thus allowing for a greater degree of efficiency and flexibility in operations, staffing and programming. The NGO status helps to secure funding from multiple sources and to be more grounded with the general public. Contributions from the State amount to approximately 40 percent of the total budget.

4 Cooperating with other national agencies to provide holistic services to victims and perpetrators

The list of services that might potentially come into play for victims, perpetrators and their families is a long one, including not only legal services but also psychosocial and psycho-educational services; medical services; social support services (welfare and other social benefits); housing assistance; safe houses or shelters; educational or vocational support; and law enforcement services.

A strong nexus to the Court and State's justice sector, including the Police, lawyers, prosecutors, magistrates and judges is extremely supportive of victim's access to justice. It serves as a constant reminder that the right to live free of violence is a human rights issue, deserving of the full protection of the law. This should incorporate engaging with the Courts in applications for civil remedies like Protection Orders and supporting victims in accessing criminal redress for rape or other sexual offences. It should also include maintaining a physical presence in the Court during assigned Family and Juvenile Court days and providing social inquiry reports as requested by judicial officers.

⁶ The World Health Organisation's first World Report on Violence and Health (2002) states that a multidisciplinary approach is critical for addressing the magnitude of the health and social effects, the risk and protective factors, and the types of prevention efforts that are required to combat GBV.
http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/full_en.pdf?ua=1



In addition, working with entities responsible for social development, governmental and non-governmental, is critical. Examples are Ministries of social development; women's and men's organisations; institutions working on child protection; and alliances with private sector organisations.

5 Partnering with international agencies to secure funding and link to global knowledge programmes

Close cooperation with other agencies and effective partnerships with international agencies have played a significant role in LACC's ability to meet its GBV prevention objectives. These partnerships have contributed to the sustainability of the institution in terms of funding, and to constant programme development, by accessing global knowledge.

Some of the possible key partners are the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), several UN Agencies including the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women); the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the University of the West Indies (UWI); the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS); Global Affairs Canada and more.

The Partnership for Peace Violence Intervention Programme

Partnerships with international organisations have been extremely helpful to LACC and the beneficiaries of its services. For example, LACC played the coordinating role in the regional roll out of the Partnership for Peace (PFP) Violence Intervention Programme. The PFP programme was developed by UN Women, together with a group of regional experts and is a model court-connected violence intervention for men who abuse women. The PFP programme was piloted in Grenada in 2005 and rolled out in several other Caribbean countries including Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Saint Lucia, Trinidad, Jamaica and Belize. Each country has adopted a local name for the programme. In Grenada, it is the Man to Man Programme.

6 Advocating for strong legislative and policy frameworks

A country's legislative and policy landscape impacts the effectiveness and efficiency of the systemic responses to GBV. For example, in Grenada, LACC's ability to respond to cases involving domestic violence, child abuse and sexual offenses is facilitated by relatively progressive national laws and policies.

It is critical that organisations involved in the delivery of GBV services are familiar with the legal and policy conditions and that they advocate for legal reform where this is necessary for the protection and general advancement of their clientele.

Grenada's Laws related to GBV

- A revised and updated Domestic Violence Act was passed in 2010
- A modernised Child Protection Act was also passed in 2010
- Amendments addressing legal provisions relating to sex offenses were made to the Criminal Code of Grenada in 2012
- A National Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Protocol was signed into force in 2011
- A National Child Abuse Protocol was developed in 2013 and subsequently approved by Cabinet



7 Detecting GBV early: the need for rigorous GBV detection procedures and protocols

Early detection and referrals to the appropriate interventions for all clients experiencing violence is critical, and the development of rigorous GBV detection procedures and protocols are important in this regard. Practitioners and professionals in legal aid and psychosocial services should carefully probe for the existence of GBV as an underlying factor when the following needs and concerns are presented.

LEGAL SERVICES	PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Divorces• Property Disputes• Child Support• Custody/Access Disputes• Marital Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stress and Anxiety• Depression• Trauma-Related Disorders• Substance Abuse• Family Problems• Anger Management

8 Taking a strategic approach for engaging communities in public education

Any institution engaging communities in GBV-related public education should take a strategic planning approach targeting the community-based workshops—clarifying the problems and developing strategies to address them. Involving all stakeholders in this process will be important.

Problems can be i) low turnout; ii) disproportionate numbers of male and female attendees⁷; iii) lack of participation by attendees; iv) over participation by other attendees; v) the sharing of inappropriate contributions or anecdotes; and vi) challenges with workshop evaluations.

A strategic planning approach needs to include the following strategies: i) inviting larger numbers than targeted; ii) being aware of the gender composition of the invitees; iii) working with community leaders to mobilise participants; iv) partnering directly with local community groups; v) venue selection and transportation needs; vi) verifying scheduling conflicts with other community events; vii) offering refreshments; and, viii) directing and mediating group dynamics. Engaging schools as major agents of socialisation is critical in preventing GBV from early on.

9 Reviewing and testing methodologies for engaging young men in group processes

Engaging youth, in particular boys and young men, in group processes is not straight forward. In this regard, a thorough review of international good practices and methodologies is warranted. It is important that every effort is made to bring the group to a collective comfort level with each other, thus facilitating a supportive environment.

⁷ In the case of LACC, more females attended the community-based Public Education Workshops than males.

10 Developing guidelines for conflicts of interests

It is important to develop guidelines for conflict of interests which indicate how all members of staff should handle, avoid or resolve any conflict—from a shared position. Conflict of interest can become very complicated and the source of many ethical dilemmas. Agencies that provide services of this nature, in particular in small countries, must be sensitised to the potential of this occurring, and guard against it as vigorously as possible. The scope for conflict of interest in cases involving GBV is wide and can involve the types of scenarios presented below:

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
LACC has been working with a victim of domestic violence; her partner is referred by the Court to the Man to Man Programme. Whilst in the programme he discloses that his partner is abusive of their children and that he wants to file for custody of them. The allegations of abuse are quite severe and ought to be reported to the Child Protection Authority. However, the mother has shared with LACC that the allegations are false and explains that this is just another attempt by her ex-partner to intimidate her.	A father sought LACC's intervention because he wishes to see his child and he alleges that the mother is withholding access. LACC invited the mother to the office and there are several mediation meetings geared at resolving the conflict. The mother agrees to an access schedule, but two weeks later presents at LACC alleging domestic violence and seeking a Protection Order. She explains that she only agreed to the visitation schedule because she did not want to get her child's father angry. However, she alleges that the abuse has got worse and she desperately needs LACC's help.	LACC is representing a woman in a highly-charged divorce after several years of separation from her estranged husband. Their 15-year-old daughter is referred from the school for counselling and during a session discloses that her mother has told her to lie about being abused by her father so that she can get a better chance at getting her "fair share" of the matrimonial assets. She does not want her mother to know that she has shared this info with LACC.

11 Improving institutional performance: Standardisation, strategy and resource mobilisation

To improve institutional performance, it is essential to standardise programmes and to guide staff in conducting programmes. The development of operational and training manuals is therefore crucial. Furthermore, the development of a strategic plan including a resource mobilisation strategy are key to ensuring sustainability.

12 Facilitating longitudinal review by maintaining a confidential long-term database

A database of all clients who have participated in GBV-related psycho-educational and psychosocial programming should be developed and maintained to facilitate a longitudinal review of the effectiveness of GBV programmes. The database should use anonymous identifying information and should, at a minimum, include selected information from intakes, exit interviews, counselling cases, presenting problem, progress toward treatment goals, number of sessions, and termination summaries. The identifying information, which will be needed to conduct long-term follow-ups, must be maintained consistent with confidentiality protocols. Consideration should be given to differential



access to information by various levels of staff.

13 Staying relevant in keeping with societal developments

Going forward, any entity dealing with GBV should reflect on societal developments and adapt its services. Evidence for the Caribbean shows that there continues to be worrying levels of male-on-male violence among young men; there is also a growing trend of young women engaging in deviant behaviour and getting into conflict with the law. Research suggests that involvement in and exposure to violence at an early age may be a strong indicator of individuals being affected by violence into adulthood either as perpetrators or as victims. Future programmes could be designed to deal with victims and perpetrators of male-on-male violence, and young females getting into conflict with the law.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS



COMBINE legal advice with psycho-social and -educational support and public education under one roof

SERVE a diverse clientele for widespread impact

CHOOSE the right institutional arrangements: Non-governmental status with diverse funding sources

COOPERATE with other national agencies to provide holistic services to victims and perpetrators

PARTNER with international agencies to secure funding and link to global knowledge programmes

ADVOCATE for strong legislative and policy frameworks

STAY relevant in keeping with societal developments

FACILITATE longitudinal review by maintaining a confidential long-term database

DETECT GBV early: introduce and implement rigorous GBV detection procedures and protocols

TAKE a strategic approach for engaging communities in public education

REVIEW and test methodologies for engaging young men in group processes

DEVELOP guidelines for conflicts of interests

IMPROVE institutional performance: Standardisation, strategy and resource mobilisation



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