

In The *Spotlight*

Caribbean



**Spotlight
Initiative**

*To eliminate violence
against women and girls*

Dec. 2021



INSTITUTIONS

PREVENTION

DATA

WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS



NO!



Editor's Note

As yearend approaches, it is with great pleasure to share with you the second edition of the In the Spotlight – Caribbean newsletter.

The messages from three of the Heads of UN agencies involved in the Caribbean Regional Spotlight Initiative are encouraging, as we work together to end the scourge that is violence against women and girls. Starting on Page 3 you can learn more about UNICEF's, UNDP's and UNFPA's Spotlight programmes.

In this issue, you also get to meet the Regional Coordinators from the Recipient UN Organisations, who are at the forefront of coordinating the work of the four Pillars of the Regional Programme (Pages 6 and 7). This issue also spotlights four of our sister programmes - Grenada, Guyana, and Jamaica.

And finally, it is noteworthy to talk about the cover illustration created for the Caribbean Regional Spotlight Initiative by a Barbadian graphic artist – Christopher Blades. The illustration was born out of a persona, Paula, developed during the Key Messages workshop held in September 2021.

Paula lives on an island in the Caribbean where she works tirelessly on Women's Rights. She is an avid runner and a mother of three. As an advocate, Paula has made a significant contribution to the struggle and effort to make the Caribbean a safe place to live. She is passionate about life and a go-getter, yet focused on her family.

The scene in the illustration shows Paula jogging through a park. It's 2024, and Paula runs a 5K every day, passing through the park on her way back home. Paula has done a lot in the past three years to ensure that her island home and the society in which she and her family lives, is safe and secure. Not only is her island safe, but all across the Caribbean is now safe, after the successful implementation of the Spotlight Initiative.

Over the next several months you will be seeing and hearing more about Paula's journey.



Jean Gough – Regional Director, UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

Girl-focused, Intergenerational Approaches to EVAWG

UNICEF is proud to be a part of the European Union-United Nations Spotlight Initiative to end all forms of Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG). In the Caribbean, the Initiative represents an unprecedented effort to invest in SDG 5 – and particularly the elimination of all forms of VAWG.

The study, **Girls' Rights for an Equal Future: Renewing Commitments in Latin America and the Caribbean** (UNICEF 2021), on adolescent girls in Latin America and the Caribbean, found 80% of all cases of sexual violence are committed against adolescent girls, and the majority of cases of VAWG are from those closest to them.

This means that home is not a safe place for many women and girls. We also know that women who experienced violence as girls are more likely to experience violence as adults; girls and boys who grow up seeing mothers or stepmothers abused by their partners also tend to grow up believing that violence is an acceptable part of a romantic relationship. Finally, when violence against women is present in the home, violence against girls and boys (such as corporal punishment) is most likely also tolerated and happening¹.

These facts mean those working to end VAWG in the Caribbean need to understand violence as intergenerational, a cycle we can break. Some of our prevention strategies are on education, positive parenting, girls' empowerment, and working with men and

boys, especially through, and in, the media. These areas focus on the root causes of violence, such as deep-seated norms about girls and boys, and addressing the life-long impacts violence has on women and girls.

While all adolescents may experience violence, being a girl presents unique vulnerabilities and different experiences of violence; being a girl from an indigenous group or other ethnic background can increase these vulnerabilities. Being a girl can mean that adult services are not appropriate for her, or that she cannot access them because of her age. Being a girl can mean that her voice is not heard, or believed, when she seeks help or protection. Gender and adult-centric norms can mean that being a girl means having to accept violence as her unavoidable fate, but we know this is not true; violence is preventable, and Spotlight can help.

UNICEF values Spotlight to EVAWG. It requires work from all sectors, in particular education. We are working with education actors to ensure that school systems promote gender equality in both teaching practices and curricula. We are working with youth networks, women's groups and adolescent girls and boys to strengthen girls' agency and participation in the creation of solutions for a gender equal and non-violent Caribbean. We are working with our partners to analyze how media and marketing campaigns can change the way we depict women and girls, boys and men to break the cycle of violence and inequality. We are working with other UN agencies and regional institutions to make sure that the seeds Spotlight plants, will flourish for generations to come.

¹ PAHO/WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women (2021). Intersections between Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children. Publication forthcoming.; PAHO/WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women (2020). Technical Note: Interrelation between violence against women and violence against girls and boys, Technical-Note-Interrelation-between-violence-against-women-and-violence-against-boys-and-girls.pdf (unicef.org)



José Cruz-Osorio - Manager of the Regional Hub for Latin America and the Caribbean, UNDP

Strengthening Regional Institutions and Data to EVAWG

In the Caribbean, the Spotlight Initiative partnership has shown the importance of joint efforts and combined technical capabilities to advance gender equality and eliminate Violence against Women and Girls and Family Violence (VAWG/FV).

Among the core UN agencies, UNDP utilizes its combined expertise in crime, security and access to justice and its linkages with Gender-based Violence to lead Pillar 2 on Strengthening the Capacities of Regional Institutions to effectively respond to VAWG/FV. Under Pillar 5, UNDP supports the production of regionally-owned data to strengthen evidence-based policies and programming on VAWG/FV as well as raise awareness about the issue.

Human Rights Violations

VAWG is one of the gravest human rights violations impacting millions of women and girls worldwide. It is a manifestation of deeply-rooted gender inequalities that take many forms in both domestic and public spheres and affects women and girls of all ages and all walks of life. VAWG operates on a continuum and becomes aggravated during times of institutional and social crises and natural disasters. Therefore, addressing this scourge requires a comprehensive and intersectional approach that considers the context and population of the Caribbean region.

While there have been efforts in the

formulation of policies and legislation to address VAWG/FV, progress has remained slow and uneven. It is increasingly clear that the elimination of VAWG in the Caribbean is intrinsically connected to the transformation of harmful gender norms, particularly in a time of crisis.

A region prone to a wide range of natural disasters, the Spotlight Initiative interventions in the Caribbean has adapted its support to reflect this reality. We know that VAWG was an issue long before the pandemic, but UNDP efforts also needs to tackle the COVID-19-related rise in GBV, in addition to existing needs of women and girls. These realities are compelling us to approach the Programme in a more flexible way with partners and to provide a model for future initiatives. Through the Spotlight Initiative, UNDP focuses on addressing institutional gaps with regards to gender and the integration of VAWG/FV, using a combination of development and disaster management approaches.

In collaboration with CARICOM and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the Institute of Gender and Development Studies (IGDS), UNDP ensures regional institutions have robust data, standards, and processes that are coordinated and efficient in serving survivors of violence. We hope that our efforts will show how we can work together towards a common goal, with a targeted investment in ending VAWG/FV in the Caribbean.



Alison Drayton - Director and Representative United Nation Population Fund Caribbean

Impact of the Spotlight Initiative on the Caribbean

The Spotlight Initiative is an unprecedented global, targeted effort to end all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) as a precondition and driver for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recognising that there are layers of marginalization and intersecting vulnerabilities, the Initiative is guided by the core principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - **Leaving No One Behind.**

In the Caribbean, the Spotlight Initiative has added value and contributed to the scale, sustainability, visibility, lessons learnt and replication of programming throughout the region. The Programme has emphasized working with and fostering coordination between Regional Institutions, Member States and regional advocacy with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) networks, for a collaborative and comprehensive approach to ending VAWG.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is spearheading several initiatives under the Spotlight to address some key Sexual and Reproductive Health and Gender-based Violence challenges. Two such initiatives are Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) In and Out of School and the Caribbean Observatory on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

CSE In and Out of School is an essential part of UNFPA's Strategic Plan, which puts adolescents and youth front and center. CSE

provides young people with age-appropriate and phased education on human rights, gender equality, relationships, reproduction, sexual behaviours, risks and prevention of ill health. CSE also allows for the opportunity to present sexuality using a positive approach that emphasizes values such as respect, inclusion, non-discrimination, equality, empathy, responsibility and reciprocity. When delivered well, CSE empowers young people to make informed decisions about relationships and sexuality and navigate a world where gender-based violence, gender inequality, early and unintended pregnancies, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections still pose serious risks to their health and well-being.

Similarly, the Caribbean Observatory on SRHR will also contribute to supporting the SRHR of the region's population through social monitoring and advocacy. The Observatory will continuously engage CSOs, supporting them with evidence-based materials to inform their policy and legislative reform interventions and will serve as an advocacy platform to push for social norm changes across the Caribbean.

CSE In and Out of School and the Caribbean Observatory on SRHR are but two of the initiatives within the Regional Spotlight Programme.

Full implementation of the Programme will bring about a transformative difference in the lives of all women and girls with significant, concerted and comprehensive investment in gender equality and ending violence.



Noha Saad-

UNDP Spotlight Coordinator and Gender Specialist.

Noha Saad is the Gender Specialist and Spotlight Initiative Coordinator with the UNDP Multi-Country Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean.

Noha has over 10 years' experience in Gender, Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) and Women, Peace and Security. In her different capacities, she supported endeavours with Egypt, the Middle East and the North African Region, the Caribbean Region and at the global level.

Her global level work included providing technical support to regional and country offices on design and implementation of EVAW programmes. She also led and managed a multi-million-dollar programme on EVAW in Egypt. Noha provided technical advice to national and regional partners on strategies and legislations to end Gender-based Violence and worked on advocacy campaigns aiming at changing social norms. Noha holds a master's in development studies from the American University in Cairo and is currently pursuing her second master's in Conflict Studies with St. Paul University, Canada.

Debbie Gray

UNICEF Regional Spotlight Coordinator

Debbie Gray is the Regional Coordinator on the Caribbean Regional Spotlight Initiative with UNICEF. Debbie is an expert on gender issues in development. She has dedicated nearly two decades to promoting a gender perspective into the public sector at regional, national and local levels.

A former Senior Policy Analyst at the Department for Women and Gender Equality Canada, she led a review of the government's gender mainstreaming strategy bringing greater attention to the dynamic, complex and diverse understanding of gender, its intersections and mutually constitutive natures.

With the United Nations, Debbie has worked on gender disparities in health, including coordinating a national prevalence survey on Intimate Partner Violence. She has supported global guidance and standard setting processes promoting gender equality with a focus on women and adolescent girls. She has also supported gender-based violence prevention policies and programmes in multiple countries and regions. At the grassroots levels, she has worked with Oxfam and other organizations concerned with equality and inclusivity.



Nicolette Odella Henry-

UNFPA Comprehensive Sexuality Education Consultant

Nicolette Odella Henry has a long and distinguished public service career, serving as a politician, public health expert and senior professional. During the past two plus decades Nicolette has held a range of positions working as a Senior Public Health Specialist, International Consultant, Government Minister and Army Officer.

Nicolette is a Pharmacist, and a Doctoral Scholar in Public Health. She holds a Doctorate of Philosophy, a Master of Public Health and a Post Graduate Diploma in Public Health. Currently Nicolette provides technical and coordinating support to the Caribbean Regional Spotlight programme in the area of Comprehensive Sexuality Education.

Prior to this consultancy, Nicolette served as Guyana's Minister of Education and was humbled to have led several paradigm shifting initiatives to assist in advancing Guyana's Education Sector including: an emergency intervention to address teaching and learning outcomes in mathematics at primary level, reintegration of teenage mothers, curriculum reform and strengthening of psychosocial support and school health for learners. As chair of the Global Fund Grants for both Guyana and the Caribbean, Nicolette has advocated and promoted local, regional and international collaborations and approaches in an effort to achieving the SDGs.



Je'nille Maraj

Planning and Coordination Specialist

Je'nille Maraj is a Planning and Coordination Specialist with the UN Women Multi-Country Office Caribbean, providing support to UN Women's work in Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Curacao and St. Marteen.

She is also the focal point for the Multi-Country Office on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, and UN Women's focal point for the Spotlight Initiative in the Caribbean.

Girls at RISK



Child marriage – any formal marriage or informal union between a child below the age 18 years and an adult – according to international law, is a violation of human rights that disproportionately affects girls.

Child marriage and early unions often compromises a girl's development by resulting in early pregnancy and social isolation, interrupting her schooling, limiting her opportunities for career and vocational advancement and placing her at increased risk of domestic violence. While the prevalence of child marriage and early unions has decreased worldwide, the same cannot be said for the Caribbean.

Although recent, comparable and context-specific data is scarce, the number of young women who were married or in union before the age of 18 has remained the same over the past two decades, with exceptions in only a few countries. UNICEF data confirms that not only has there been little to no reduction in over 25 years, most of the cases are non-matrimonial unions.

Yet not all of these unions are the same.

In the non-Spanish speaking Caribbean, the practice is often described as “visiting relations” and may not always imply co-habitation. For example, in some contexts, girls may be subjected to sex-for-goods practices with adult men in order to secure school fees/supplies or other basic goods for their families (housing, food, etc.).

It remains unclear if the causes and consequences – even the strategies to eliminate such practices – are the same as for traditional child marriages or early unions. What is clear, however, is that while the roots of the harmful practice vary across countries and cultures, it occurs as a product of household dynamics and economic insecurity, in which Family Violence (FV) and unequal gender norms place girls at higher risk.

Child marriage and early unions vary across the Caribbean, from below 10% in Jamaica to

Child Marriage, Early Unions Increases Risks for Domestic Violence

over 30% in Belize and Suriname. Only eight Caribbean countries have data on the harmful practice; and this data ranges from 2011 to 2018.

In the most recent MICS in Belize, the variable ‘visiting relations’ was included, prompting a spike in prevalence and a national response plan by the Belizean government and partners. At 36%, Suriname has the highest prevalence in the non-Spanish speaking Caribbean, on par with the highest in all of Latin America and the Caribbean – Dominican Republic, from the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. In all Caribbean countries with available data, the trends seem to be higher for girls married or in union before the age of 18, as opposed to before the age of 15.

Despite varying prevalence, national and regional dialogues on the causes, consequences and manifestations of early unions on adolescent girls in the Caribbean have been largely absent since its inclusion within the 2030 Agenda.

Through the Caribbean Regional Spotlight Initiative, UNICEF and the Institute for Gender and Development Studies, the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus is embarking on an ambitious study to

While the prevalence of **Child Marriage and Early Unions** has decreased **Worldwide**



The same cannot be said for the **Caribbean.**

map available data, understand practices and generate dialogue among adolescent girls, feminists, community leaders and government representatives on the strategies required for a Caribbean response to FV and its linkages to harmful practices for girls – whether cohabitational or not.

For all **Women & Girls** to live a life **Free from VIOLENCE**



#SpotlightEndViolence





Isiuwa Iyahun - UN Women Programme Specialist, serves as focal point for Spotlight Initiative activities to achieve coherence in data collection, production, data sharing and analysis of VAWG administrative data.
UN Women Photo/
Sharon Carter-Burke

Fighting VAWG with a **Data-Driven Approach**

“Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking, sexual and other types of exploitation.”

This is one of the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5.2) that has been referenced by the media, academia, and policy-makers alike. This target is almost always accompanied by the indicator of “nearly 736 million women globally, or one in three, have been subjected to physical violence, sexual violence or both by a husband or intimate partner, or sexual violence by a non-partner, at least once in their lifetime from 15 years of age.”

Though this statistic represents a global crisis, there is also the equally frightening reality where it does not give the full picture, since this data is not systematically collected nor produced in a manner to fully understand Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) in all its forms. This lack of data leads to misguided policy measures or unintended impacts that further reinforce gender bias and stereotyping. Assessing progress toward achieving SDG 5, and how this progress (or lack thereof) differentially affects men, women, boys, and girls, requires more in-depth, national and regional data and gender statistics.

Jamaica is one of five CARICOM Member States that has national prevalence data to measure progress on SDG Target 5.2 (the others are Belize, Grenada, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago) by identifying types and incidences of gender-based violence (GBV), and the indirect effects on women’s health. Jamaica is also receiving support from the Spotlight Initiative to advance the rights of women and girls to live free from violence.

According to the Women’s Health Survey -Jamaica (2016), before the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 40% of women experienced some form of violence in a relationship specifically, physical, sexual, emotional and economic. This data shows that the prevalence, (i.e. the population at risk), of violence against women (VAW) is widespread. Complementing this prevalence data, is administrative data, which is required to map the journey that victims/survivors take for services and support and the response given to perpetrators by authorities. Both

prevalence and administrative data together, allow us to have a 360 view of the experiences of VAWG.

In a UN Women Background Paper, **A Synthesis Of Evidence On The Collection And Use Of Administrative Data on Violence Against Women**, administrative data is defined as “any data generated through routine operations. They are generally drawn from service-based records or from the internal administrative processes of an organization.”

Recognizing the dire need for coherence in VAWG data collection, production, sharing and analysis, among key data producers in the national statistical system, specifically in the health, police and social services sectors, the Spotlight Initiative in Jamaica is seeking to bring all the elements together. Organized jointly by the Spotlight Initiative Taskforce – the United Nations System in Jamaica and the European Union - in collaboration with data consultants reThink Social Development Limited (reThink), hosted three training workshops under Pillar 5 – Data Availability and Utilisation for these stakeholders where regional and international experts shared information on good practices in VAWG administrative data management, guidelines and strategic approaches to contribute to the overall improvement of VAWG data as part of the National Statistical System.

Juncal Plazaola Castano, Policy Specialist on VAW data at UN Women Headquarters explained that while administrative data does not replace the need for prevalence data to get an estimate of the magnitude of VAW, administrative data was nonetheless essential to combatting this global challenge.

Castano explained: “Administrative data is required for monitoring service use and demand, evaluating policy implementation and service quality and finally to assess service capacity, resource allocation and costing.”

Representative, UN Women Multi-Country Office – Caribbean, Tonni Brodber also

● **Continued on Page 11**

UNDP SHINES LIGHT ON ITS Work



Noha Saad - UNDP Spotlight Coordinator and Gender Specialist.

U NDP continues to increase the visibility of the Spotlight Initiative Regional Programme in the Caribbean and raise awareness of the work being done by the Programme to end Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) and Family Violence (FV) with government, civil society, academia, and other UN agencies.

UNDP Spotlight Coordinator, and Gender Specialist Noha Saad presented at the Caribbean United against GBV Virtual Summit held in July 2021, organised by the Centro de Orientación e Investigación Integral (COIN), with the purpose of exchanging knowledge and experiences on ending GBV in the Caribbean especially from legal and policy perspectives.

The presentation provided an overview of the Regional Programme and focused on UNDP activities, under Pillar 2 that are focused on strengthening the capacity of regional institutions to end VAWG and FV, and activities under Pillar 5, which focus on the production of regional-level knowledge and data on VAWG/FV and violence against the LGBT community.

It was attended by members of Civil Society, members of academia, and UN and donor agencies. UNDP was part of the panel discussion **GBV, VAW or IFV? Why Wording Matters**, which explored different types of GBV and the importance of producing evidence to address GBV through policies, laws and programmes.

Continued from Page 9

highlighted the value of administrative data (also known as service capacity data) for the Caribbean in measuring the culture of VAWG.

In her opening remarks, Brodber explained: “Collecting the data is critical in seeing the full picture. No longer should the refrain be that the Caribbean and Jamaica suffers from data deficit disorder when it comes to gender equality and women’s empowerment. In this data driven global environment, the national statistical system needs continuous access to accurate data to support governance and quality essential services for the elimination of VAWG.”

Measuring VAWG is a sensitive endeavour under any circumstance, especially during a pandemic; however, administrative data does have far-reaching impact on the lives of women, men, girls, and boys across the Caribbean region.

Resident Coordinator of United Nations Jamaica, Dr. Garry Conille stated that though the Spotlight Initiative was not the only solution seeking to eliminate VAWG, this joint programme had clear roles, which are and will contribute to deliberate steps towards achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment in Jamaica.



Carol Watson Williams - reThink Social Development Limited, the principal consultant under pillar 5, facilitates a session with civil society organisations on VAWG administrative data management.

Dr. Conille said: “The quality of data we collect and the standards with which they are collected, have significant impact, first on the lives of individuals and influencing their experience and then further impact to the body of work that expands understanding and the development of sound policies and laws.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

30% of women over the age of 15 have experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner in their lifetime



Mainstreaming Gender in Health Sector



by Cynthia Pitter

Despite the best efforts, the incidence of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) continues to skyrocket across the globe, including Jamaica.

Partly to be blamed is the dark legacy of our colonisers' brutality deeply-embedded in our culture, which continues to drive our beliefs and attitudes, motivating acts of violence. Many have theorized that social tolerance to violence very often starts from childhood, misuse of corporal punishment, early exposure to violence in the family or through the media. Legislative progress has been made, but VAWG remains widespread and widely accepted in Jamaica as indicated in the 2016 Women's Health Survey.

According to the Survey, among the women surveyed was wide acceptance that a 'proper man' should be rough. It further states that 28% of women and girls consulted have experienced physical or sexual violence.

To reverse this trend, we need to collectively contribute to a society where VAWG is recognised as a human rights violation; based on power imbalance among the sexes and gender inequality. Mainstreaming gender, in particular VAWG, has gathered momentum over the last two decades with initiatives focusing on policy reforms, prevention, protection and legislation for sustainable change. Prioritizing VAWG is indeed integral to the region's commitment to the 1995 Beijing Platform Call for Action and central to Jamaica achieving its maternal health and gender Sustainable Development Goals.

VAWG has strong implications on survivors' physical and mental health, and on the control over their health, especially sexual and reproductive health. In 2013, the World Health Organization estimated that globally, 42% of women who had experienced physical or sexual violence at the hand of a partner had experienced injuries as a result. From the mental health point of view, many consequences have also been studied, as an example, women experiencing intimate partner violence were twice as likely to experience depression and it is quite common among survivors to develop hypertension and cardiovascular disease and somatoform disorders such as irritable bowel, chronic pain, chronic pelvic pain.

Accordingly, health facilities are often the first point of contact for survivors. This is why it is very important for health providers on the frontline to be adequately prepared to provide proper care and safe referrals to survivors. A proper and immediate response can be very important to prevent violence from escalating to femicides or suicide attempts among survivors. Mainstreaming gender in the education of healthcare providers can contribute to reversing the negative attitudes and tolerance to violence in society.

Social accountability

All training institutions design core curricula and orient their training environment to build professional competence and technical skills, to produce "good" professionals that are fit-for-purpose. Social accountability asks: "To what extent is the institution addressing priority health needs?" To achieve social accountability it is imperative that we strengthen the partnership between the training institution, the community, civil society and the health sector.

It is imperative that stakeholders contribute to this partnership, make a difference on priority issues and help to promote meaningful change. This requires an appreciation of the underlying social and structural determinants that provide the framework for positive health outcomes, of which gender plays a critical role. We are preparing students to meet the health care needs of the population, but the outcomes and desired impact are not always achieved at a population level despite this best intent. The priority health concerns to be addressed as we train future practitioners should mirror the needs of the wider health system.

These priorities therefore should be identified jointly by governments, healthcare organizations, health professionals, and key stakeholders including the public. The curricula in a socially accountable school must therefore be adaptable and responsive if true impact is to be achieved.

FMS and its partner organizations will be better able to mount a meaningful and relevant response to one of the debilitating health issues of our society, estimated recently to have a direct impact on some 28% of women in Jamaica. This is an important advancement as we move to become socially accountable to our students and more so to the broader population that these health teams will ultimately serve.

■ **Cynthia Pitter is a Lecturer of Nursing at the University of the West Indies (UWI), Faculty of Medical Sciences, the UWI School of Nursing, Mona.**

Healthcare providers see the effects of VAWG at the acute stage, and witness the chronic, long-lasting, often inter-generational, impact on those directly affected. However, lack of adequate preparation to identify and respond to abuse can do more harm than good; jeopardizing the survivor's safety. Strengthening the preparedness of our health professionals to respond in a timely and appropriate manner in any setting – from the primary or community level through to tertiary prevention in a hospital – is vital. At the UWI Mona, the Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS) leads in preparing healthcare professionals.

What does quality mean when training health professionals to deliver care? Over time the concept of quality has evolved from one that focused almost exclusively on the training of practitioners in using the biomedical model with emphasis on technical skills. Today, greater focus is on the relevance of graduates being a key component of positive health outcomes. In this regard, the service provided by the FMS and its graduates in addressing the needs of individual patients and the population subgroups is accepted as an essential value that contributes to quality of care.

In this vein, UWI Mona's FMS is collaborating with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO), to implement a vital component of the Spotlight Initiative. Funded by the European Union and the United Nations, Spotlight is a combined effort of global and local agencies to address VAWG. Spotlight is providing the FMS with the unique opportunity to address FV by reviewing its current curriculum and the development of new material to build the skills of health professionals to better address three priority areas: child sexual abuse, IPV and discrimination against vulnerable groups. Discrimination is a factor that very often leads to violence. This consideration and acceptance are supported by the WHO and the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates, with social accountability as its framework.

CSOs welcome

Launch of Observatory

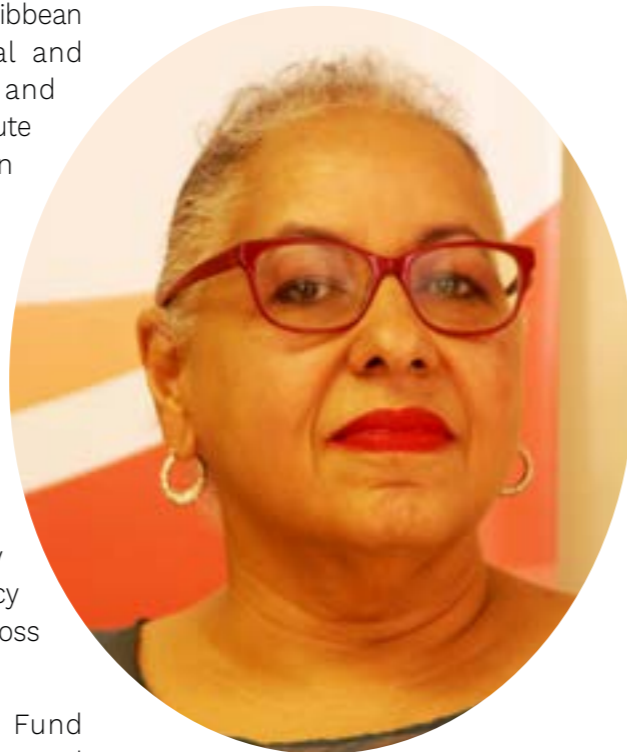
The recently-launched Caribbean Observatory on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) will contribute to regional cooperation to prevent and respond to Family Violence (FV) and will advocate for strengthened policy and programmatic linkages between FV and SRHR.

The Observatory will improve coverage, access to, and uptake of both sexual and reproductive health and Gender-based Violence (GBV) services, and will also provide timely and independent analysis and advocacy for change of harmful social norms across the Caribbean.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), through the Spotlight Initiative and in collaboration with the Caribbean Family Planning Affiliation and the European Union, launched the Observatory on 30 September 2021.

Director of the UNFPA, Alison Drayton in her opening remarks stated “there is a great need to mainstream Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights while promoting gender equality and non-discrimination, preventing and addressing Gender-based Violence (GBV) and enhancing accountability. Improving the lives of adolescents, youth and women ensures the integration of human rights, gender equality and population dynamics.

“GBV is an abuse of power and a serious violation of human rights. It is closely linked to SRHR and can lead to poor SRH outcomes for women and girls, including unintended pregnancy, unsafe abortions, and transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted



Alison Drayton - Director and Representative United Nations Population Fund Caribbean

infections (STIs). GBV is both a cause and a consequence of limited access to SRHR, and women and girls are more vulnerable when they are denied access to SRH services or face discriminating attitudes on account of factors such as age, diverse gender identity and/or sexual orientation, HIV status, disability and immigration status, among others.”

Luís Maia, Head of Cooperation, Delegation of the European Union to Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean States, the OECS and CARICOM/ CARIFORUM also delivered an address and used the opportunity to reiterate “EU’s strong stand for gender equality and against all forms of gender-based violence. These are key values that are at the core of our work [so] about two years ago the EU embarked, with the UN, on

1 IN 2

WOMEN KILLED WORLDWIDE

WERE KILLED BY THEIR PARTNERS
AND/OR FAMILY MEMBERS*

#SpotlightEndViolence



*IN 2012

a global effort to end violence against women and girls – the Spotlight Initiative.

“Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is probably the most brutal form of gender-based discrimination and a serious concern in the Caribbean, so the EU places a lot of importance to this Initiative. The EU allocated 50 million Euros exclusively for the Caribbean region under the Spotlight Initiative, out of a total of 500 million Euros worldwide. This represents an unprecedented investment in equality and women’s empowerment as pre-conditions and drivers for inclusive and sustainable development.”

The launch, held virtually, was attended by over 150 participants who also heard from Davina Gayle-Williams, SRHR Programme Analyst at UNFPA who shared the vision of the Observatory and Ms. Eugenia Lopez Uribe, Regional Director of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. Terrydale Ince, the Chair of the Caribbean Regional Spotlight Initiative Civil Society Reference Group welcomed the initiative as directed the launch event.

Rev. Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth, Chief Executive Officer of the Caribbean Family Planning Affiliation, which will be hosting the SRHR Observatory explained how they would utilise the organisation’s strong regional presence of 12-island member associations, six associate member associations in the Caribbean, and four partner Family Planning Associations, which are leading SRHR-focused Civil Society Organizations in the Caribbean to ensure success.

The Spotlight Initiative is a global multi-year partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of VAWG. It seeks to ensure that women and girls realise their full potential in a violence-free, gender-responsive and inclusive way.

UNFPA, as the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights agency of the United Nations, is a critical partner in advancing SRHR and is committed to continuously providing support to CFPA and all other partners to ensure that the Caribbean Observatory executes its functions effectively during the Spotlight Initiative and beyond.

Berbice Residents Reaping Benefits

“It was a life **SAVER!**”

This was the expression of a woman in East Berbice–Corentyne (Administrative Region 6) as she praised the help received in navigating Gender-based Violence (GBV) essential services needed from the health, police, justice, and social services sectors.



Jude DaSilva - Programme Manager, CSOs and Human Rights, Delegation of the European Union in Guyana, at a Child Advocacy Centre in Berbice–Corentyne (Region 6).

A single father of three was especially grateful for the counselling support services he received for his family. Another woman added that her participation in counselling sessions helped her to be a better parent to her three children. “The counselling, it is really good...it is better when you have someone you can talk to...,” she said.

Conversations with these beneficiaries, during a recent monitoring mission conducted in October 2021, showed how the Spotlight Initiative has helped with self-empowerment, anger management, emotional intelligence, and their economic empowerment.

Notably, there was an increase in over 100 percent of the use of services at St. Francis Community Developers, an implementing partner facility, and at the police, hospital, and welfare offices. With support from UNICEF, citizens of this Region have benefited from information shared on radio and television programmes to raise awareness about the available social services support, as well as educate them on GBV.

The programme, with the help of UNFPA also offered support in the operationalization of Region 6’s first Child Advocacy Centres, which provide child-safe and child-friendly spaces for abused children. At the Centres, children share stories and get help to overcome trauma they have experienced.

The Centres were made possible through ChildLink, the NGO implementing partner, in collaboration with the Child Care and Protection Agency within the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security. Overall, over 2000 people have benefitted from psychosocial services since Guyana’s Spotlight Initiative programme began.

In Demerara-Mahaica (Administrative Region 4), residents are more informed about available GBV services. Community volunteers have hosted training sessions and posters, brochures, referral cards, and fliers are available in businesses that serve as locations of information. In addition, 27 people were also trained to recognize, respond to, and refer cases and survivors of GBV and those at risk. These support services were supported by UNFPA through its implementing partner Help and Shelter, as well as the Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association, in association with Women Across Differences and Women’s Refuge.

The Spotlight Initiative in Guyana addresses the root causes of Violence against Women and Girls with an emphasis on Pillar 3 - Prevention. To date, the Programme has seen results under Pillar 3 and Pillar 4 - Services - as the programme is implemented in four of the Guyana’s 10 Administrative regions - 1, 4, 6, and 7.

Spotlight on Orange the World



(From left) Dr. Aloys Kamuragiye - UNICEF Representative, Didier Trebucqn - United Nations Resident Coordinator for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Cynthia Forde - Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs, Elizabeth Riley - Executive Director, CDEMA and Tonni Brodber - UN Women Representative in front of UN House Barbados, lit in orange to mark 16 Days of Activism Against GBV.

The grounds of UN House Barbados aglow in brilliant orange to mark 16 Days of Activism Against GBV.



Guests gather after the Lighting Ceremony to show their support for ending Violence Against Women and Girls and all forms of GBV.



The Spotlight Initiative hashtag #SpotlightEndViolence lit up in the foyer of UN House.

GBV Survivor: I Know I Am Not Alone

by Anika Davis

For many years, Jane*, 44, was happy living with her partner and their two children. Like other families, they had their ups and downs but even during difficult times her partner always put their family first.

A decade into the relationship, things began to change. Jane's partner became aggressive and eventually, verbally and physically abusive. "There were no signs of any turning point, no indication of another partner, no clue of what caused the change in his actions towards me," says Jane.

After a violent incident that led to police involvement, she separated from her partner, however her children also became abusive towards her. The situation escalated, and the adult children were eventually removed from Jane's home.

Jane knew she needed counselling and visited the Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic to understand what services were available to her. Social Services put her in contact with the Sweet Water Foundation, a civil society organization that offers psychological counselling to survivors of violence. These services are much needed in Grenada, where 39 per cent of women experience violence in their lifetime. The organization was recently awarded a grant by the Spotlight Initiative to continue their work to end violence against women and girls.

At Sweet Water, Jane was able to attend counselling sessions and receive professional psychosocial support. She also became part

of a support group of survivors who made her feel safe and took part in therapeutic activities like painting.

"Before, everything would be bottled up because I didn't know how to deal with or react to the abuse. But being a part of the group and hearing others' stories gave me a sense that I am not alone, that I can make it and that people are there to support me through everything," she says.

Jasmin Redhead, an attorney who works with Sweet Water Foundation, explains that the organization offers "a holistic programme that affords survivors the opportunity to be exposed to activities that they would not normally be exposed to, like kayaking, sailing and yoga. These are all activities that strengthen the bond among the support group."

Jane says that she and many of the other women have now become close friends outside of the organization: "We will call each other just to talk and make plans to go out... like a sisterhood," she says.

"If my testimony can help another woman who is suffering in silence then that will empower me even more. When I see women who are experiencing domestic violence, I know what it is like and my heart goes out to them. They need to know that all they need is a bit of support, they don't need to rely on a man for anything," she says.

*** Names have been changed to protect survivor's identity.**



Yoga therapy is one of the many activities survivors of violence can participate in through the Sweet Water Foundation's programme.

Photo: [facebook.com/MySistersKeeperSWF](https://www.facebook.com/MySistersKeeperSWF)



MY BODY
CHOICE

#SpotlightEndViolence





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