

PRESS RELEASE

MERUNDOI RECEIVES GRANT FROM THE CANADA FUND FOR LOCAL INITIATIVES (CFLI) TO SUPPORT ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

Merundoi Incorporated, a Behaviour Change Communication Non-Governmental Organisation, has been awarded a CAD\$25,000 grant under The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives to execute the project titled "*Legal Literacy and Access To Justice to End Gender Based Violence*"

In Guyana, gender equality remains a challenge despite the signing of international conventions such as The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). A 2020 World Bank research states at least one in three Guyanese women reports being a victim of gender-based violence and data from the 2018 Guyana Women's Health and Life Experiences Survey (GWHLES), Qualitative Research Report suggest that women in Guyana are experiencing rates of violence higher than the global average.

Given the data available, it is important that key communities have the skills and capacity to document cases of stigma, discrimination and rights abuses against women and also be able to share and use the information obtained to pursue legal change, policy improvement and the achievement of advocacy goals.

Merundoi's Project is aimed at Strengthening the Capacity and awareness of various stakeholders, including civil society organizations (CSOs), the Guyana Police Force and the general public through legal literacy to respond to incidents of Gender Based Violence and Support Access to Justice for Survivors.

The project is intended to

- Build the capacity of CSOs through legal literacy to respond to incidents of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and support access to justice for survivors.

- Use edutainment/ radio drama to promote gender equality and encourage men and boys to eliminate violence against women and girls;
- Foster a deep understanding of alternative ways to deal with rigid masculinity and violence among men and boys.
- Build the capacity of police officers at the national level on GBV, Documentation of GBV reports and engaging victims of GBV.

This new project was greatly supported by High Commissioner Mark Berman who in his statement said, “Canada has always been a very vocal advocate for Gender Equality and has taken a firm stand against all forms of Gender Based Violence. This project is reflective of our efforts in this area not only in Canada but in our partner countries such as Guyana, where Canada has been proactively involved in collaborating with women’s rights organisations”.

The Project will be completed by February 2022 and will be executed through virtual and in person training sessions with 16 CSOs and 30 ranks of The Guyana Police Force.

It is also expected that the project will have a national impact and reach through incorporation in the dialogue in the *Merundoi* Radio Serial Drama during the weekly airings on The National Communications Network’s national and community stations, 93.1 Real FM and 104.1 Lite FM.

The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) is designed to support small-scale, high-impact projects which align with the Government of Canada’s thematic priority areas for engagement. It is directed at projects conceived and designed predominantly by local partners to support local developmental endeavours.

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