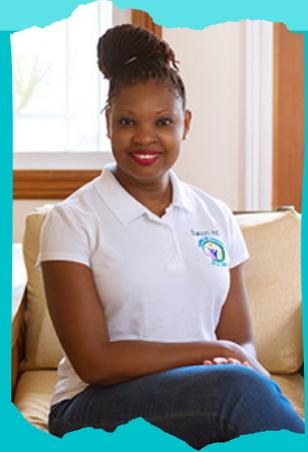


Blossom Inc.

Hope Through Child Advocacy

A message from our Managing Director.....



Ayo Dalgety-Dean, Founder & Managing Director

In 2021, I made this promise:

"To ensure that self-care becomes embedded in Blossom's culture in 2022!"

I want to take a moment to discuss the vital importance of self-care when working with victims of sexual and gender-based violence. As professionals in this field, we are constantly exposed to stories of trauma and suffering, which can take a toll on our mental, physical, and emotional well-being. It is essential that we prioritize our own self-care to ensure that we continue to provide compassionate and effective care for those we serve.

As I intentionally set about to embed self-care into Blossom's culture, it was important for me to understand that self-care looks different for everyone. It was important to find what works best for us:

- *Self – Care Retreat: Team Blossom finally being able to go on our much sought-after Staff Mental Health Retreat that was facilitated by a professional coach.*
- *Self-Care Fridays: Once a month on a Friday afternoon which encouraged staff to: Step away from work to recharge and regroup: Sip and paint sessions, pampering sessions, board and card games afternoon, dance competitions. Staff engaged in activities that brought them joy and relaxation.*

Connect with colleagues – be tapping into their supportive network of colleagues who understand the challenges of this work was incredibly helpful.

- *Therapy: Seek professional support by having a therapist on retainer for staff that wanted this support.*

Practice self-compassion by being kind to ourselves and recognising that this work can be emotionally challenging and allowing ourselves to feel our feelings without judgment.

We began to embrace that taking care of ourselves is not selfish; it is necessary for our well-being and the well-being of those we serve. By prioritizing our own self-care, we were better equipped to provide compassionate care and support to victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

To our funders: Government of Guyana, UNICEF, UNHCR, PADF, IOM, European Union, Emerge BPO, British High Commission, Digicel, The Bag Ladies, and all others, you made it possible for us to increase our reach and provide holistic services to our clients. We were able to take services to our most vulnerable children & families in extremely hard to reach areas. Our directors, staff and I thank you for the support.

7

Child Advocacy
Centres &
Extended Services

37

Trained
Professionals

Interventions and Preventions



Multidisciplinary Team



Forensic Interviewing



**Therapy Services –
Trauma Focused-
Cognitive
Behavioral Therapy**



Victim & Court Support Services



**Education &
Awareness
Outreaches**



Migrant Support Services

Child Advocacy Centres

Brian's life changed after the age of 10; his mother and father separated and soon after his mother died. His dad struggled to keep a steady job which created financial difficulties.

At the age of 13, Brian thought he would help his dad out by finding a job so that he could contribute financially to the household. An older man offered Brian a job and food to eat. Unknowingly to Brian, the man was grooming him for sexual favours. Brian was raped by this older man. He was brought to Blossom Inc. by the Childcare & Protection Agency for a forensic interview. He felt ashamed, scared, and shy while sharing his story with the forensic interviewer, and even took several breaks because it hurt to relive that moment in his life. The medical examination carried out on Brian confirmed what he shared in the forensic interview.

Brian then graduated from a full cycle of Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioural therapy at Blossom Inc. giving him the coping skills he needed to deal with his trauma. This has led him to return to school. But after some time, Brian had to return to therapy because he regressed due to discrimination from his community, school, and home. He needed new skills to navigate through that stage of his life. The therapist helped Brian to develop healthy coping skills.

Brian's case was then called to court, he was overjoyed but scared to testify against his abuser. Blossom Inc. Victim Support Advocate prepared Brian to testify in court, which he did, and his abuser was sentenced to 15 years. Today, Brian had graduated from high school, he is a mechanic and continues to support his family financially.

Forensic interviews are conducted on victims who may have experienced or witnessed acts of sexual violence and exploitation.

721

637 Forensic interviews were conducted with children who are victims of child abuse.

55 Extended/further forensic interviews were conducted.

7 Forensic interviews were conducted with 'special victims' who suffered from sexual violence and exploitation.

22 Forensic interviews were conducted with migrant children who are victims of child abuse.

Children and families who are affected by trauma are referred to Blossom Inc. for therapy services.

389

383 Referrals were received from the Childcare & Protection Agency for therapy services.

6 Referrals were received from the Department of Juvenile Justice.

668 Emergency In-Person sessions were provided to children and families.

107 Therapy sessions were provided to 9 youth offenders at the Juvenile Holding Centre.

252 Weekly Tele-psychosocial support sessions were done with children and their families.

153

153 children & families were provided with court support at the Magistrate & Sexual Offences (High) Court.

33 convictions in relation to cases tried at the Sexual Offences Court.

4 Not guilty verdicts in relation to cases tried at Magistrate & the Sexual Offences Court.

4 hung verdicts in relation to cases tried at the Sexual Offences Court.

10 cases were dismissed at Magistrate & Sexual Offences (High) Court.

Training & Education Awareness Outreaches

As Blossom Inc. continues to advocate and respond to child sexual abuse in Guyana, it was critical for us to remember that communities must not be left out because they are key allies in responding and preventing child sexual abuse in Guyana.



44

Training & Education awareness outreaches conducted in 40 communities in Regions 1, 2, 4, 7, 8 & 10.

1916

Youths, community leaders, parents, teachers & community members from Regions 1, 2, 4, 7, 8 & 10 were trained & sensitized in GBV, CSA, SRHR, CSE, Good Enough Parenting & Life Skills.



192

Trained in Sexual Reproductive Health (SRHR)/Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)

104

Trained in Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

1443

Trained & sensitized in Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

135

Trained in Good Enough Parenting (GEP)

42

Trained in Life Skills

Migrant & Host Community Services

Elena witnessed the murder of her mother. Elena was distraught! She was in complete agony and despair, She cried for hours, having nervous tremors, and kept asking, "why her mother died?". Anyone who looked at Elena could see the trauma in her eyes.

Elena acted brave; she did not shy away from sharing what she had witnessed to the police with the help of Blossom's Refugee/Migrant Social Worker through a forensic interview.

After the forensic interview, Elena received psychosocial support from Blossom's Refugee/Migrant Social Worker and was placed into protective custody the next day. While in protective custody, Elena received specialised mental health therapy from Blossom's Psychologist. Elena experienced Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and insomnia after the murder of her mother.

Elena's story did not end there! Blossom Inc. continued to support Elena through collaboration and was able to find her a new home with a foster family who gave her the support she needed while caring for her well-being.

Elena has shown great psychological resilience; and is now in a better mental state.

She has bonded with her foster family, started a new school, fostering new friendships, and is hopeful about the future.

3,874

Migrants were reached and benefited from psychosocial support migrant services.

Maria walked into Blossom Inc. feeling powerless, hopeless, and confused. Over the last seven years, she had experienced abuse at the hands of her partner. She was beaten and raped several times, even contracting sexual transmitted diseases.

At Blossom Inc. Maria was able to access specialised mental health therapy by the Psychologist which helped her to develop healthy coping habits to process the traumatic effects of gender-based violence.

Maria has tagged therapy as "life-changing". She has reported that therapy has helped her to have a new outlook on life. She no longer feels alone because she has strengthened her support system by reconnecting with her family and friends. Therapy has helped Maria to understand the cycle of abuse and how to walk away from unhealthy relationships.

Today, Maria has walked away from her abusive partner, started a small/micro business and is thriving, having regained control over her life, while using the positive coping skills she has learnt over the years.



Migrant & Host Community Services Cont'd

Psychosocial Support

Services

583

Persons
benefitted from
Case
management

704

Specialized
Mental Health
Therapy
Sessions

1599

In-Psychosocial
Support sessions
conducted

119

Training & Education
outreaches were conducted
in Regions 1,2,7, & 8 in 50
communities.

1303

Tele-
Psychosocial
Support
sessions
conducted

278

Persons
benefitted from
Emergency
Shelter &
Accommodation

145

Children
supported to
Access
Education

2,633

Migrants reached through
outreaches.

277

Persons
supported to
Access
Immigration
services

154

Documents
Translated

509

Hospital
Support
Services
provided

88

Trained in
Good Enough
Parenting (GEP)

65

Trained in
Foster/Alternative
Care

2500

Persons
benefitted
from the WASH

25

Birth
Registrations

120

Outbound
Referrals

384

Trained in
Child Sexual
Abuse (CSA)

6

Foster/Kinship
Placements

24

persons
supported
into Job

18

Persons
benefitted
Disability
support

100

Trained in Sexual
Reproductive
health & Rights
(SRHR)



Training & Staff Development



10 new staff completed the mandatory training in “Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy”.

13 staff participated in the refresher training in “Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy”.

7 staff completed the Forensic Interview of children training.

23 Staff received “Child Protection Case management for front Liners” training led by UNICEF & American University of Beirut.

All staff participated in the E-Course - “Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse” led by UNICEF.

31 first responders attended and participated in the “Child Advocacy Centre” training conducted by Blossom Inc. in partnership with UNHCR.

99% Staff completed their yearly target of 20 hours of continuous professional development.

Blossom Inc.'s mission is to respond, deliver and promote effective interventions and education services to children and families affected by sexual violence and exploitation.

To our funders: You made it possible for us to increase our reach and provide holistic services to our clients. We were able to take services to our most vulnerable children & families in extremely hard to reach areas. Our directors, staff and I thank you for the support.

Ministry of Human Services & Social Security – MHSSS

United Nations International Children’s Emergency Funds – UNICEF

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee – UNHCR

Pan American Development Foundation – PADF

International Organization for Migration – IOM

British High Commission – BHC

United Nations Population Fund - UNFPA

Ministry of Home Affairs

Emerge BPO

Digicel Guyana

Private Sector

European Union – EU

The Bag Ladies

**Thank
you!**

