

Red Thread inks grant pact with Japan

..... for solar energy, expansion of centre

Red Thread signed a contract with the Japanese Embassy yesterday for grant assistance which will fund several projects at its South Georgetown office including expansion works and the installation of an alternative source of energy.



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Expansion boost: Karen DeSouza of Red Thread (left) signs the contract with Second Secretary of the Japanese Embassy, Mariko Chiba yesterday at the organisation's Princes and Adelaide streets office.

Red Thread will receive US\$73,634 for the projects outlined in its proposal to the embassy. The local non-governmental organization had submitted its proposal to the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects Programme.

Specifically, the grant will fund the installation of solar panels; an expansion project at the office and the construction of a paal-off (revetment) in the Princes Street canal bordering the centre. The organisation said the extension will provide additional space for its remedial classes for children in reading and basic computer skills; more room for its library and available sleeping accommodation for out-of-town women who are part of its network.

Coordinator at Red Thread, Karen DeSouza, pointed out that the organisation caters for around 120 children on weekly basis, including children from the Drop-in-Centre, who are in need of remedial work and assistance with school projects. She said the organisation has opened its doors to women and children in the community, but space has always been an issue.

DeSouza said the grant is critical to Red Thread's existing work as well as future projects.

She said more meeting space for networking and speak-outs had been an issue since the building was acquired. "We worked hard to purchase this building and when we did so many other things still needed to be done; we can get them done now," she emphasized.

The grant which Red Thread received was designed to assist NGOs with development-type projects and it was offered to the local organisation to help it reduce the vulnerability of women and children at the community level.

Mariko Chiba, Second Secretary of the Japanese Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago, yesterday underscored the importance of funding projects like the one Red Thread proposed. She said the Japanese government supports projects which are aimed at responding to specific needs in the area of human security, as well as addressing deficiencies in this area. According to her, the Japanese government considers human security a critical element of its foreign policy.

Chiba said Guyana and Japan have strong bilateral relations dating back years, noting that the contract signing with Red Thread underlined the relationship not only through inter-governmental interaction, but also through cooperative efforts at the community-based, and grassroots level.

Red Thread has focused its services on violence perpetrated against women and children in addition to advocating for the recognition of unwaged caring work. The priority the organisation is now working on includes access to clean, affordable potable water and affordable electricity for women across the country.

DeSouza used the forum yesterday to “set the record straight” on the organisation’s work. She said misconceptions are still being peddled out there, particularly in some hinterland communities about Red Thread being affiliated to a particular political party. “Some of our founding members were WPA, but we have a sole focus and that is on protecting the rights of women and children.” According to DeSouza, the organisation is answerable to “no one”, but to the people it serves.

Posted By [Stabroek staff](#) On March 20, 2010