

## Testimonial: Millie Milton



My name is Millie Milton, I am a trans activist and I advocate for the rights and wellbeing of trans people in Guyana. My expertise lies in effectively providing coordination and provision of support services. I have spent the past 10 years working to ensure that the design and delivery of capacity-building initiatives are user-friendly and of a high standard. I was the Vice-Chair of the Guyana Global Fund Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM), a member of the UNAIDS Programme

Coordinating Board and I am currently a Board member of IRGT.

I work for an organization called *Proud To Be Trans*. Our aim is to advocate for the human rights and dignity of, and promote respect and acceptance for, transgender Guyanese. We also work for the elimination of all violence, prejudice and discrimination directed against us. We work in partnership with other human rights groups, and through such collaborations a greater understanding of our shared struggles has been achieved. We are building strategic and sustainable alliances with stakeholders on trans issues and we will be scaling up support for trans women, mobilising funds to address our health and human rights.

Through the GATE CRG-SI project, I have been involved with Guyana Trans United (GTU) in conducting a needs assessment with members of the transgender community in Guyana. We found that our community had little knowledge of the Global Fund processes, limiting our participation in the CCM. With the assistance of GATE, we successfully applied for Technical Assistance (TA) grant from the Global Fund for the meaningful involvement of the Guyanese trans community in Global Fund processes. As a result, 50 trans people from 4 administrative regions of Guyana became meaningful involved in Global Fund Processes and we submitted recommendations for trans-specific programs to be included in the Global Fund proposal.

My involvement in GATE's CRG-SI project enabled me to build upon my desire to change the way society thinks about trans people by increasing my capacity and helping me to find ways to heighten my activism for the trans community. It has strengthened my engagement in the Global Fund processes, which has resulted in trans needs being highlighted at a national level, with cross cutting interventions to address stigma against trans persons in Guyana. In November 2018, the Guyana Cross-Dressing Law was struck down by the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) after years of lobbying from the trans community.

I am empowering my community so that we can make informed decisions about our health and other aspects of our livelihood. We are in discussion with the Ministry of Infrastructure for discrimination-free access to public transportation; this process started in 2017 when I was kicked off a mini bus because of my gender identity and visibility. My plan for the future is to use what I have learned to influence the Attorney General to include Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in the Guyana Discrimination Act of 1997. This will be an entry point to push for name and gender marker changes. My aim is for all HIV+ trans people to have access to viral-suppression healthcare and treatment. I am also partnering with other Civil Society Organisations to influence the private and public sectors to employ us so that we can unleash our potential and excel in our role as citizens of our country.

DATE: 26 January 2020

ACTIVITY: TRANSIT Smart Guide Workshop, Mexico City