

# **Strengthening the Regional response to S&D Programming :**

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**Update on the Status of Stigma and Discrimination  
among key community groups in Belize 2011 .**

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# Overview

- SCOR-B Process
- Key stigma indicators, fear, shame and blame
- PLHIV reported experiences and internal stigma
- MSM reported experiences and internal stigma
- Attitudes of gatekeepers, e.g. FBOs , police
- Knowledge and respect for Human rights
- Trans phobia - experiences and attitudes
- Looking forward - Recommendations

# SCOR-B overview

- Stigma community Response - Baseline (SCOR-B)
- Operational research tool to quantitatively and qualitatively measure Stigma levels and experiences and Human rights knowledge in specific target groups (MSM, PLHIV, youth, trans, SW, FBO, Police, immigration, HCW, migrants)
- Not all groups were targeted in Belize
- To inform targeted community-based approaches to S& D reduction and promotion of human rights
- Focus on measuring baseline in groups to be exposed to interventions.
- Tool can be scaled up to use in national survey

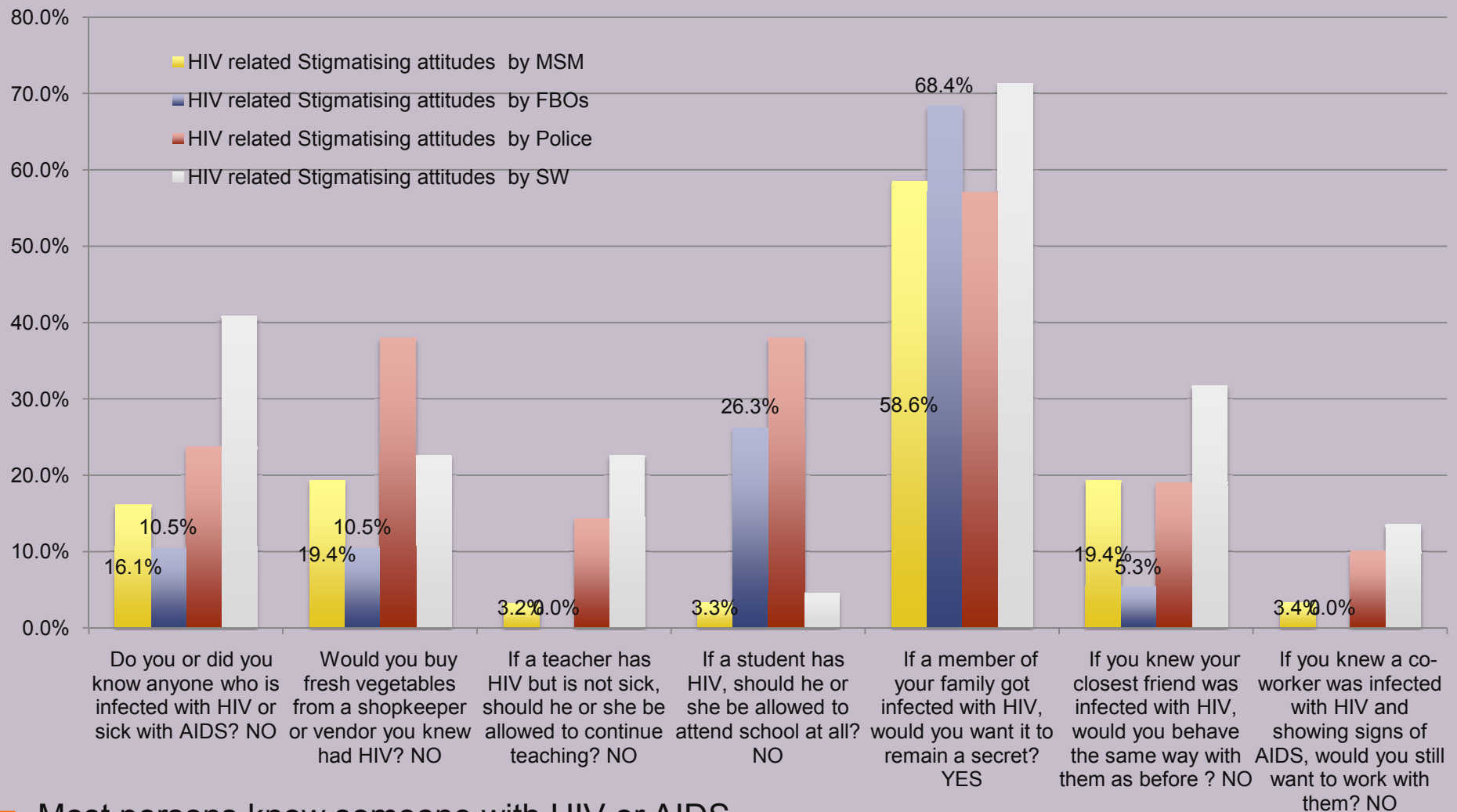
# Fear of HIV contagion

## - MSM, FBO, Police

### **Do you have a lot of fear, a little fear or no fear in the following?**

- Hug a person with HIV
  - Share a drinking glass with a person with HIV
  - Work next to a person with HIV
  - Work next to a person showing signs of AIDS
  - Care for a person with HIV in your household or in your care at work
- 
- 48.4% of MSM reported fear re; one or more of the above
  - 95.4% of police reported fear re; one or more of the above
  - 58% of FBOs members (group leaders, etc) reported fear re; one or more of the above
  - 41% of Sex workers reported fear re; one or more of the above

## Negative attitudes towards PLHIV

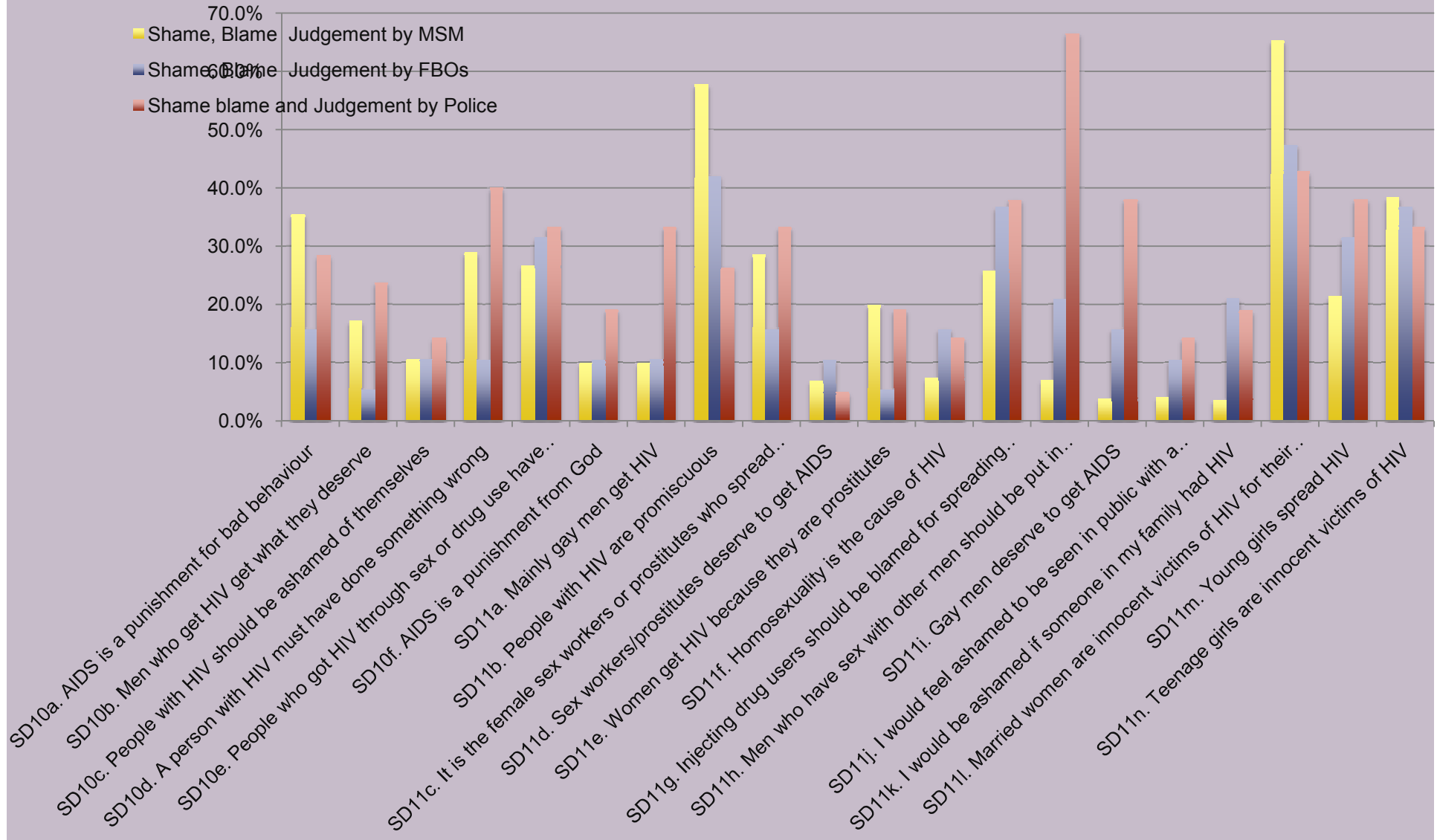


- ❑ Most persons know someone with HIV or AIDS
- ❑ Negative attitudes are on the decline. Police, FBOs and SW demonstrated relatively higher levels than MSM
- ❑ Negative attitudes appear to be associated with fear of transmission or with shame of being associated with HIV
- ❑ Concern: More than 25% of police and FBOs believe a PLHIV should not attend school

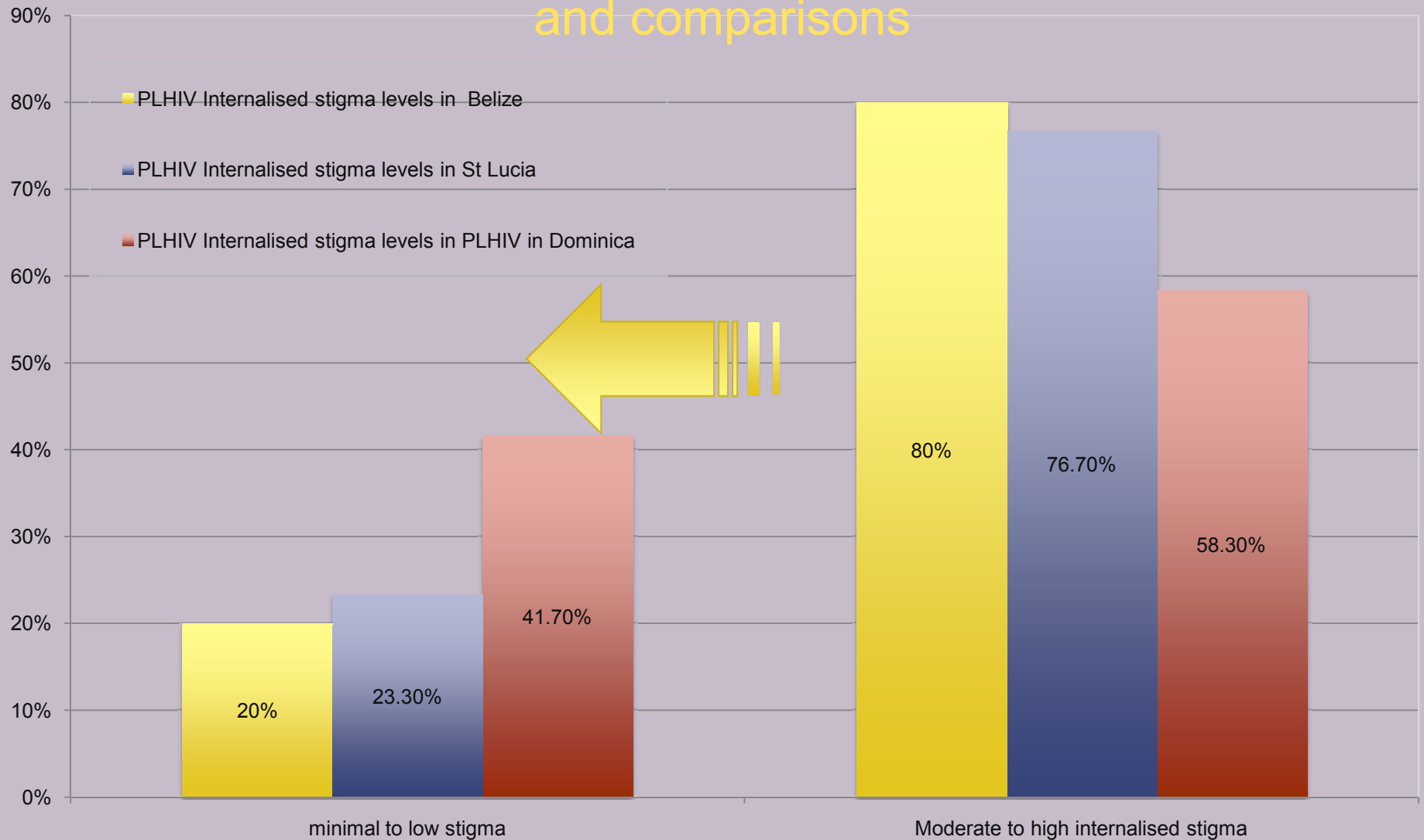
## Shame, blame and judgement of PLHIV by PLHIV, MSM, FBOs, Police

- 71% of MSM held one or more strong views about persons responsible for HIV
- 68.5% of FBOs members held one or more strong views about person responsible for HIV
- Police expressed high levels of belief that people with HIV have done bad
- Over 60% felt that MSM should be jailed for spreading HIV
- Over one quarter of all groups believed that people who got HIV through sex or drug use had gotten what they deserved

# Shame, blame Judgement



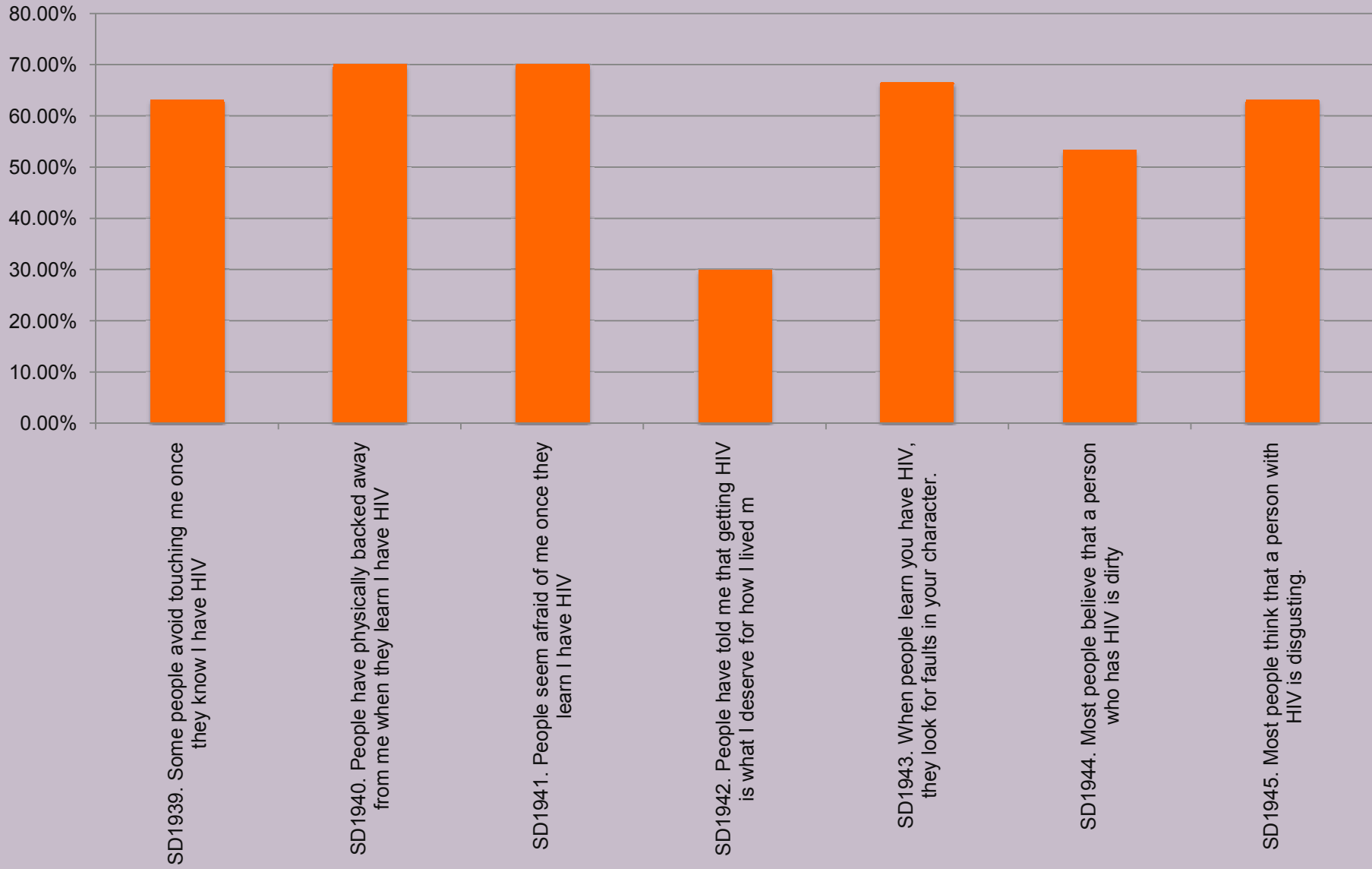
# Internalised stigma levels in PLHIV in Belize and comparisons



There are greater levels of internalised stigma among PLHIV in Belize compared with others in the region. A Shift from high to low /minimal internalise stigma is required in order to promote QoL, Uptake of health and social services and social and economic participation of PLHIV



# Internalised stigma questions



# Disclosed to .....

□ Rejection by these 'trusted' persons after disclosure fuels self-stigma in PLHIV

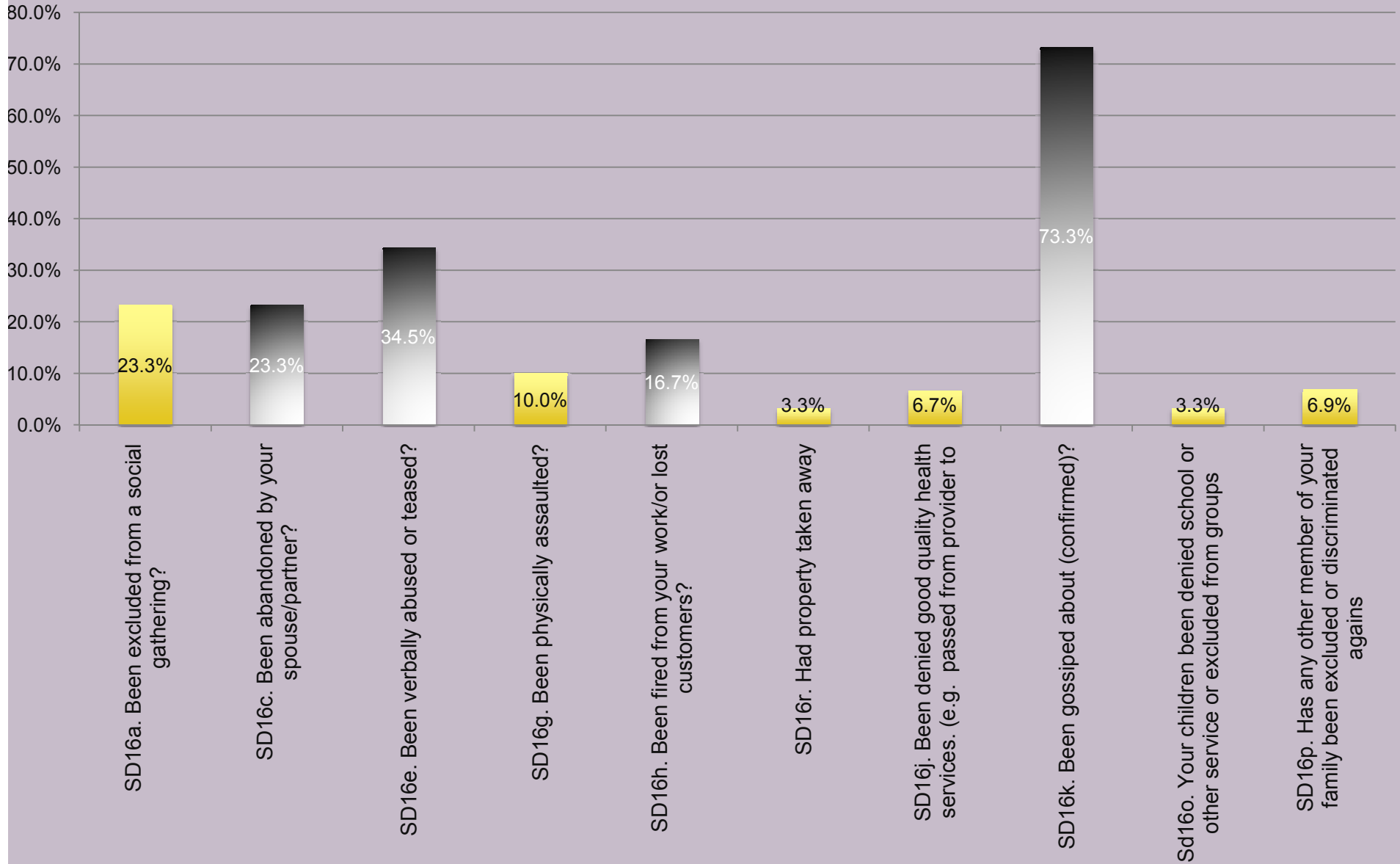


# Who stigmatises

- PLHIV disclose to those they trust first
- As such, those who stigmatize them first and then disclose their status to others are those they trust first
- This experience promotes their self stigmatisation, shame and forces them into isolation to prevent betrayal from other less trusted sources

*“My sister in law goes around saying I have HIV and it impacts me negatively. I want to keep my status a secret or I want to choose who will know I am living with the disease”*

## Stigma enacted towards PLHIV in Belize



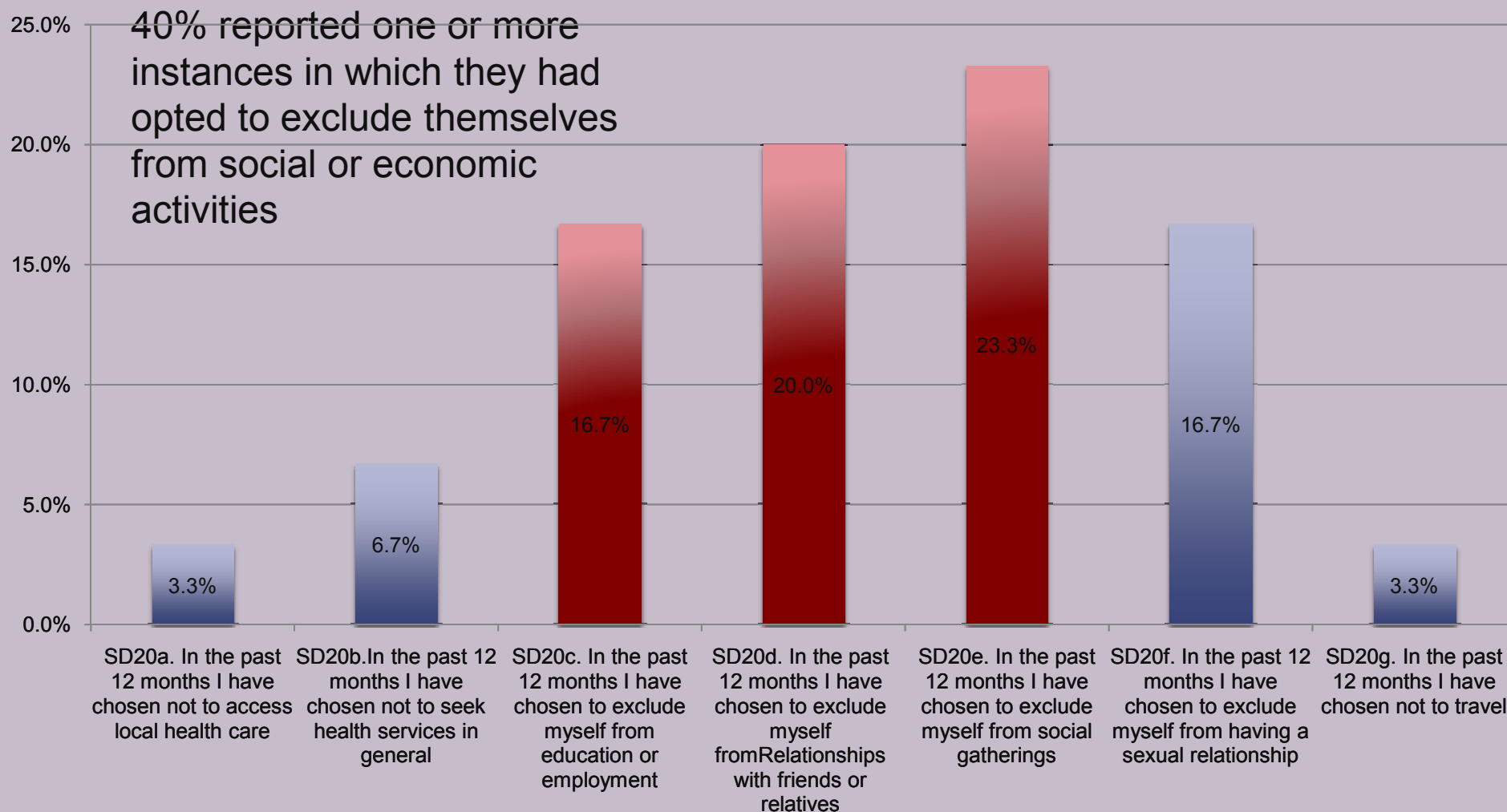
# Enacted Stigma

- *My daughter was being teased in school, she was ashamed and did not want to go back.. She was told that she shouldn't act like she's better than people because her mother has AIDS. I went to the school and complained to the Principal and didn't get a response. I went to everyone and nothing was done at the school. Things got worst and my daughter has not been to school for a month. I filed a report with the police and I feel better that the matter is in their hands.*

**SCOR-B PLHIV participant**

# Self exclusion as a result of stigma

## Levels of self-exclusion from social and economically productive activities

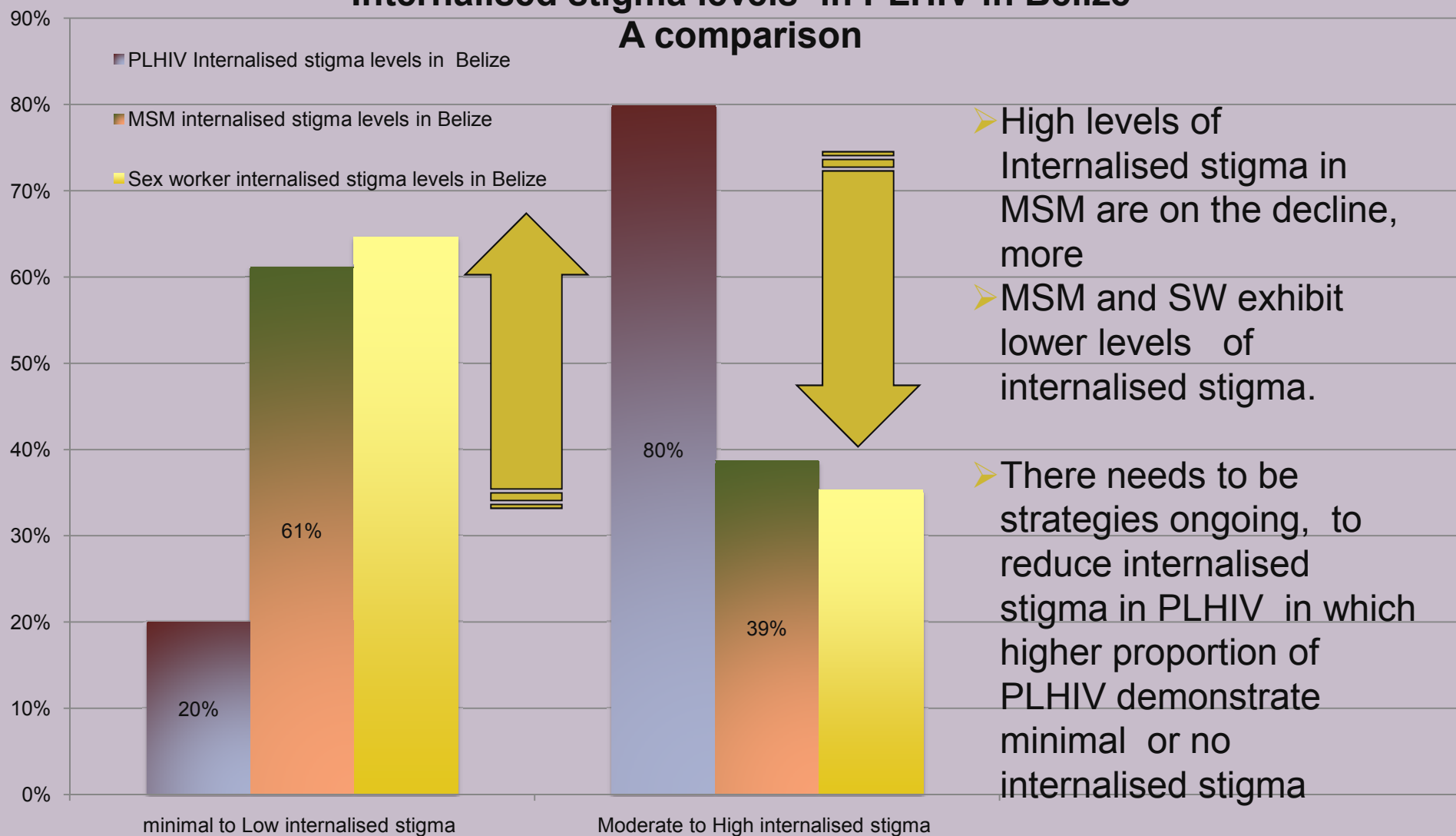


# Access to service

- Overall 67% of PLHIV were satisfied with service received by HCWs, 23% were not and 10% were not sure.
- However, 20% had travelled abroad to seek health care rather than disclose to a local HCW and to avoid seeing people they knew
  - 10% avoided services altogether
  - 10% paid for services
- 13% were denied treatment and surgery e.g. hysterectomy
- 17% were required to take HIV test prior to surgical interventions

# Internalised stigma levels in PLHIV in Belize

## A comparison



- High levels of Internalised stigma in MSM are on the decline, more
- MSM and SW exhibit lower levels of internalised stigma.

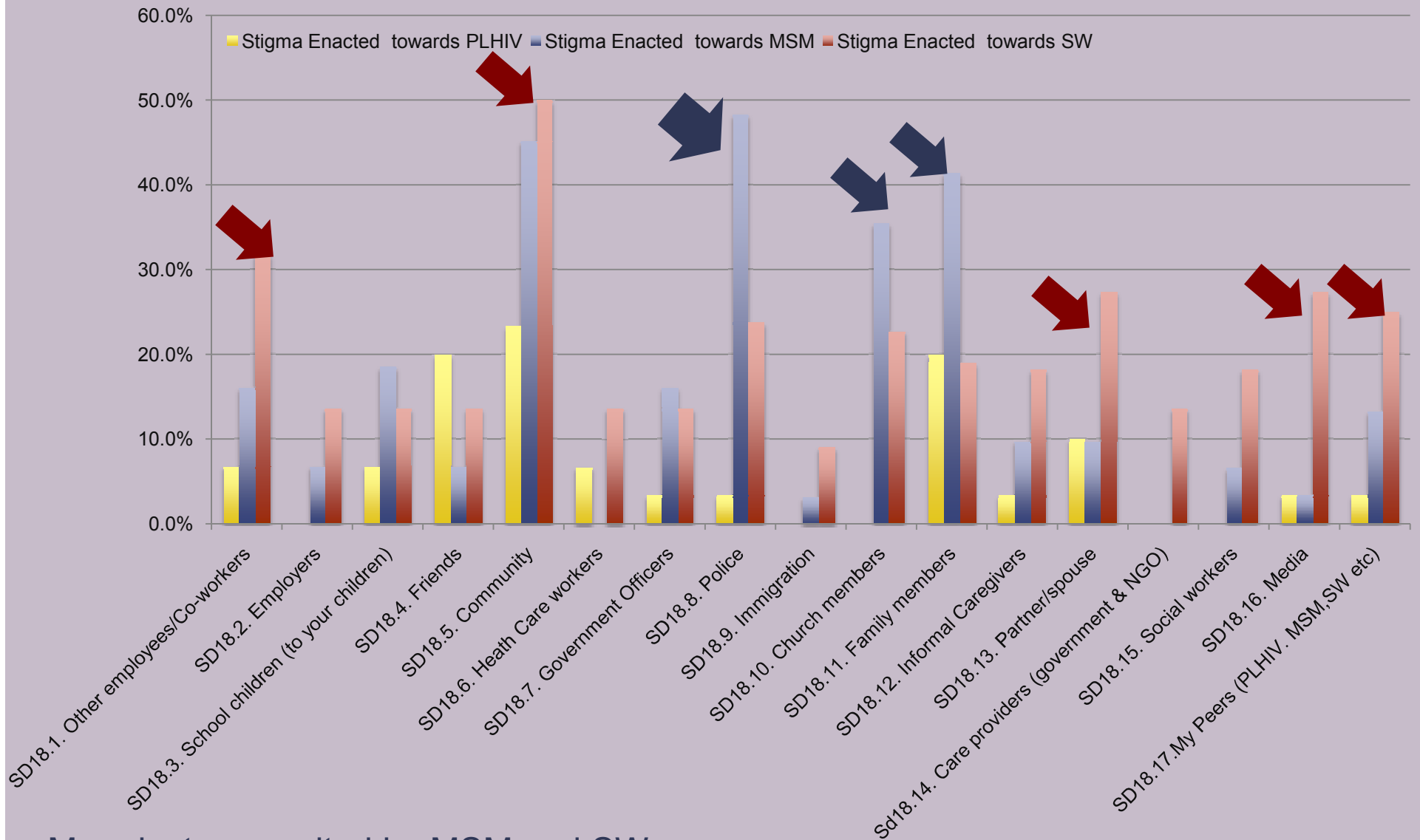
- There needs to be strategies ongoing, to reduce internalised stigma in PLHIV in which higher proportion of PLHIV demonstrate minimal or no internalised stigma



- MSM and SW portray less self stigma than PLHIV ,
- Due to the ongoing support and advocacy groups?
- Demonstrate less guilt and shame related to their sexual orientation or their profession and resulting marginalisation
- MSM are more likely to be discriminated against by gatekeepers , police, immigration, FBOs, employers than PLHIV
- PLHIV are more likely be discriminated against by family and friends than MSM
- Both are discriminated against by the community at large

# **Attitudes towards MSM, SW and PLHIV**

# Who stigmatises PLHIV and MSM (Discrimination)



- More instances cited by MSM and SW.
- SW experience most stigma from police, media, community, peers, coworkers, spouses
- MSM experience most stigma from police, community church members and family

## *How have these ( S &D) experiences affected or changed your life in any way?*

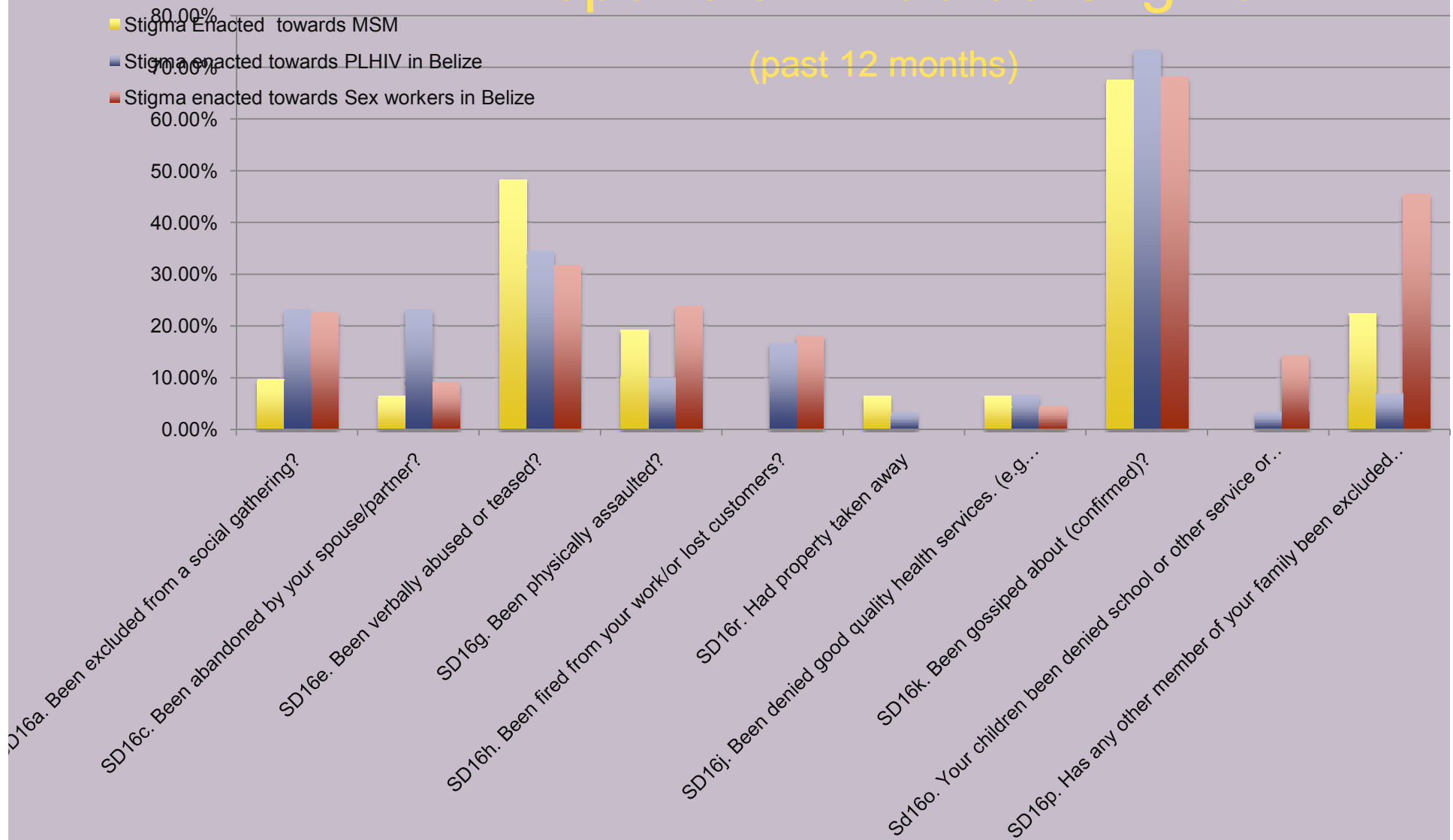
- *Doesn't bother me at all, I am what I am only God can judge me - MSM*
- *I want to achieve things but can not because of HIV. However my life has changed dramatically, I have been empowered, stronger and I have been going to workshop to make myself stronger.*
- *When they call you names, especially when they call you "batty man" or "tight brief" you feel like you want to kill yourself. MSM*
- *"For me I really do not feel anyway... once your family accept it .. I do not give a damn, my family know about me so once I get the support from my family which is what I need ...I am good to go." transgendered female*

**INTERNALISED STIGMA**

- Stigma towards MSM is more “open” than that towards PLHIV (the “2<sup>nd</sup> wave of stigma”) and may be a direct response by gate-keepers to MSM empowerment and their greater visibility in public places
- Whereas, as fear of HIV contagion reduces among general population, reports of HIV related enacted stigma is lessening.
- However, self - stigma, as a result of shame , blame and judgement still remain with PLHIV and hinders their social and economic participation , promotes adverse health outcomes and other negative impacts affecting QoL

# Reports of Enacted Stigma

(past 12 months)

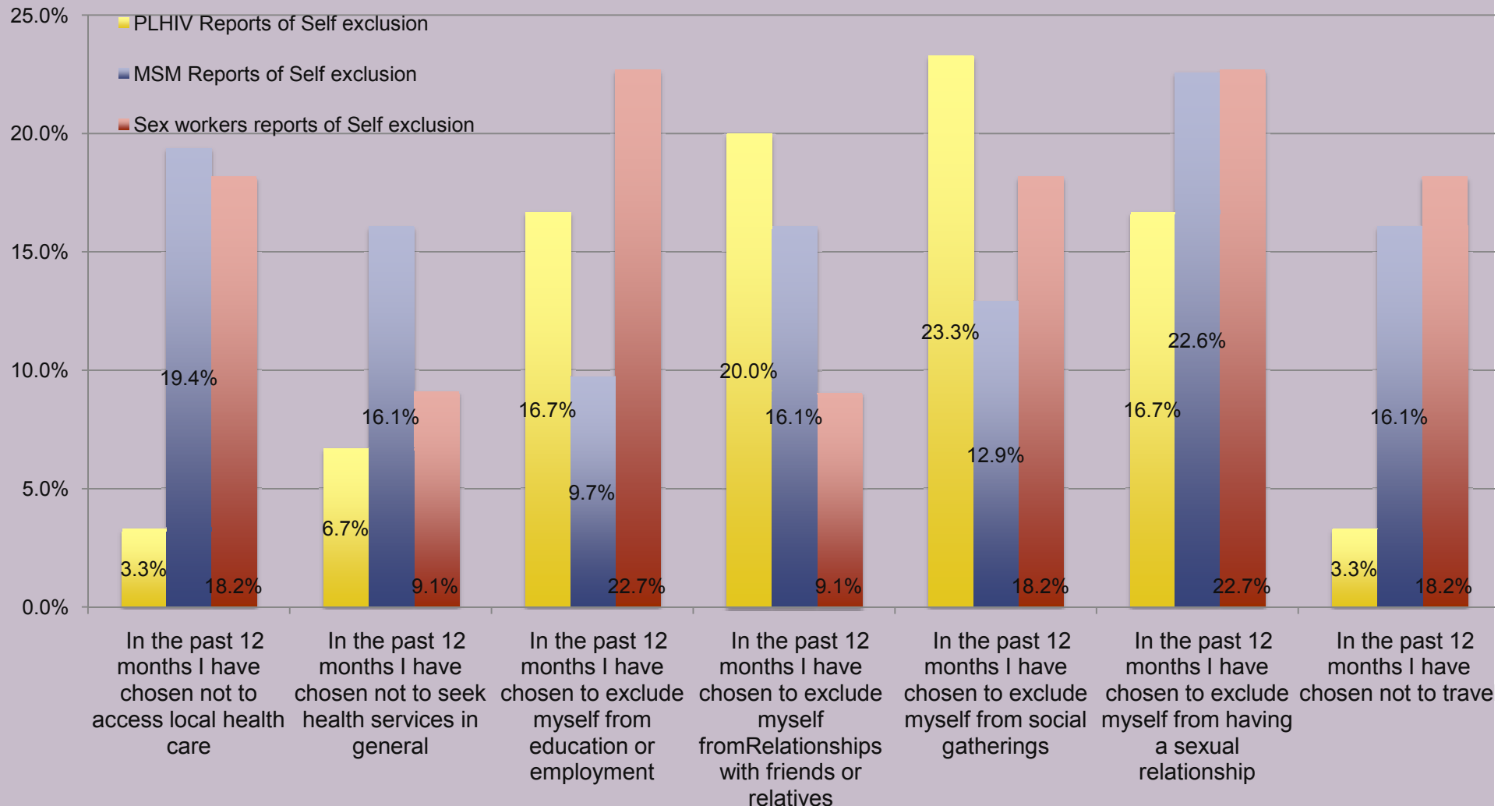


- SW are victims of violence, rejection by family and social exclusion
- PLHIV have been, abused verbally and socially excluded
- MSM are victims of violence and rejection by family
- Being gossiped about is reported across all three groups

- *Once when I was walking to school there were a group of persons and they all jumped on me and started hurting me. After that I was so afraid to walk in my own hometown. **MSM, SCOR-B participant Belize***
- *It depends on where you live, because in here it more open. Here you can dance like a queen if you want but you will not do that in the city because you will get shot.*

# Self-exclusion of PLHIV, SW & MSM

- MSM are more likely to exclude themselves for Health care and travel and sexual relationships than PLHIV, and report greater stigma at these two access points.
- 41% of SW, 40% of PLHIV and 52% of MSM report at least one type of self exclusion from social or economic activities and relationships as a result of discrimination experiences





# Family rejection hits hardest

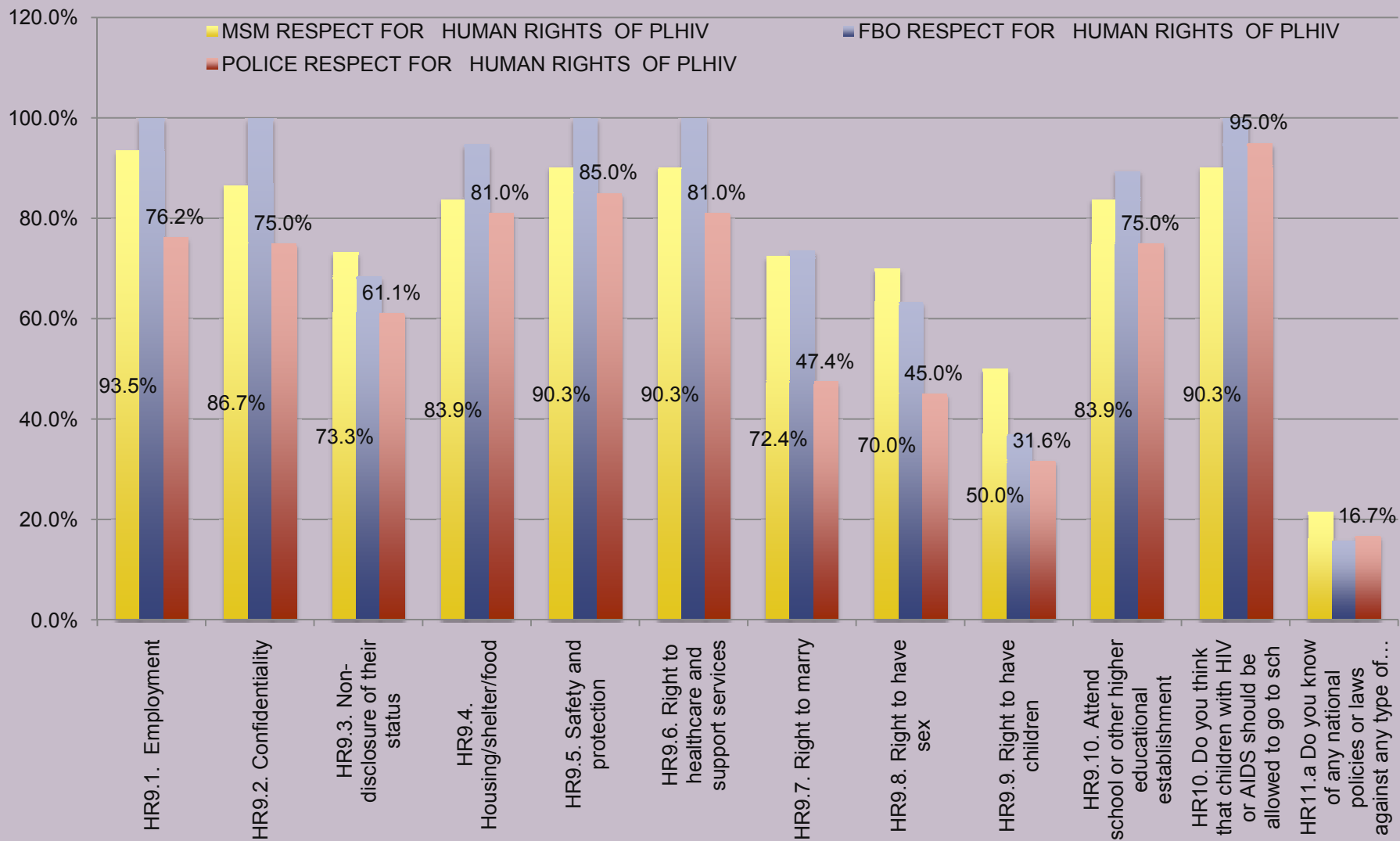
- My dad discriminated against me and I cut him out of my life for 5 years. Then he called me and he wanted to be back in my life. MSM
- *My aunt told me she was ashamed of what I am and that I shouldn't be close to her family because I will infect her family... but then one day she came back and said she was sorry. MSM*
- *I blame my parents and I blame society for all the hurt I have experienced as a gay man.*

Equal Rights:

**RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS  
OF PLHIV**

# Respect for human Rights of PLHIV, FBO, police

**DO YOU THINK EVERYONE WHO IS HIV POSITIVE IS ENTITLED TO:**



# Do you think people with HIV have the same rights as people who are not HIV positive

- *Of course yes but I do not think they should be in a leadership role, they should not be the leader of this nation.. I have a problem with that .. they should not be a Prime Minister if they have AIDS.. you should not be a pastor.* Immigration Officer
- *Yes to health, but not to have sex or children.. Maybe they can adopt, but they should not have biological children - MSM*

# Human Rights

**Do you believe that people with HIV should have leadership positions in your FBO?**

- *Yes, they have rights, they are human but as long as they don't cross my path or make advancement towards me - FBO*

- **Do you believe that people living with HIV, should be allowed to be active members in faith based organisations?(in leadership etc)?**
- *“If they are born with it then I have no problem”* FBO member

# Tell me what comes to mind when you think of human rights

- “You have the right to express yourself and to be respected”
- “Free will, choices, you have a right to live, love.”
  - FBO MEMBER
- they only look at the criminal side.. it is not fair for us the police officers... in our job.. people who commit crime get free because of them (HR) we are tied to our hands because when we beat someone.... we get it.. Police
- Human rights should be abolished... or put restrictions.. they should not apply to police. Because of human rights we get in problems...Police

# PLHIV, MSM awareness of Human rights

- 100% had heard of 'human rights'
- 25% of the Declaration of human rights
- Only 13% could cite specific human rights
- Only these persons reported that their rights had ever been denied
- MSM more aware of their rights
- Awareness is centred on the issues experienced by MSM/LGBT
- Less respect for rights of other; e.g PLHIV



**RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS  
OF MSM**

- Do you believe that **homosexuals/men who have sex with men** have the same rights as people who are not homosexual?
- “Yes, they are men humans.”
- *“If they want to be homosexuals, and they want kids, they should know that their relation cannot produce kids, so why do they want to be parents.”*
- “A lot come through the airport with their kids, and I wonder if their kids will become like them, homosexuals.”

■ Immigration Officer

## Should MSM be allowed to raise children?

- “It has to do with ethics, values, morals, that come into play.”
- “They have the right to anything but when it come to exposing to others, who are innocent, they are children if they want to get married that is alright but no kids.”

Immigration officer

- They should not be granted the same rights because they are doing something that is illegal.

Police Officer

## *Do you believe MSM/ homosexuals have the same rights as people who are not MSM?*

- Yes to everything but children – FBO participant
- It is wrong and against the Bible - HCW
- It's their choice because I don't agree (with their lifestyle) doesn't mean they don't have rights
- Yes homosexuals have the same rights but not right to have children and to get married, it is not pleasing to God. Migrant
- When I was small, I was afraid of HIV but the fear is gone.. but when it comes to homosexuality I will never change my mind. Police Officer

# What do you think about MSM/ homosexuals

- *“As long as they do not bring it around me, keep it to themselves” Immigration Officer*
- *I think it should be against the law. We should not allow this to happen in the country. God created man and woman and he did not create create for men to be with men and women to be with women. This is the way I see it but I can not change things. **They should be sent to jail.** Female and female is not bad. But man with man is bad cause they have penetration. Police Officer*

- *Burn them up. We live in a modern society... we better than that man...more intellectual.... It is morally wrong.. a corrupt lifestyle....* Immigration Officer

# Transphobia

# Access to protection, health and social services

- *“Well the place where I live police will make fun of you will not pay attention to us if we go to tell them something ... they will not pay attention...they would do absolutely nothing.”*
- *“Personally I have never gotten discriminated, I am paying for it (health services) at a private clinic.”*



# Experiences of Discrimination towards transgendered

- *“When I was in this bus terminal, there was this guy who shouted at me and he threatened me like he had a gun in his hand like he was pulling the trigger and that made me cry all the way home ..*
- *“Like for me many people will tell me that they are going to kill me, they say you do not deserve to be in this world, you suppose to be burning in hell. I don’t think the regular gay guys will face the same thing that I face”*
- *“I went to the gas station earlier and this guy he recognized me .. and he told the other guys that I am gay ... and he is gay himself...”*

*Do you know of any instances of discrimination (i.e. other than those you experienced personally)?*

- *A trans applied for a job and she went to the job dressing as a woman. She was beaten up and hurt with bottles as soon as she got off the bus. She had to give up her job.*

# What is your opinion on transgendered persons?

- Oh my God that is an abomination... it is repulsive and morally wrong.. you were made in the image of God
  - Immigration officer

## *How has S &D affected your participation in social gatherings*

- *“I had an experience going to church.. I do not go to church anymore.... I praise my God at home, and he provides for me, he gives me health and strength and people use to stare at me and one Sunday it got to me so bad of people staring and I curse them out.....I have not gone back to church.. I praise God at home. My husband and I pray at home and he provides for us .”*
- *transgendered female*

- Do you believe that **transgendered persons** have the same rights as people who are not transgendered?
  - “As human we all have rights, but we must understand that we have guidelines, certain guidelines, with principles and there are things that we have to abide by, and as human beings we need to respect that and we need to respect them all humans and once that is covered then everything will flow: Police officer



# The way forward – reaching beneath the tip of the iceberg

- These findings are just the tip of the iceberg as anecdotal evidence point to the fact that many SW, PLHIV and MSM are underground, still at risk and being violated by services and persons those they trust
- More targeted approach to S&D reduction is required. This is “A building blocks approach”- recently modelled and piloted by the RSDU
- Empowerment of MG is key to creating an effective national response that delivers positive health outcomes and socio-economic gains to society .
- Empowerment should focus on addressing self stigma within the MGs and promoting their ability to make informed life choice, seek and access services and advocate for their rights
- At the same time as empowering marginalised persons, it is **vital** to ensure that enabling environments are developed which first focuses on the gatekeepers and pivotal community groups.
- This is a necessary component, as greater disclosure, openness, services and employment seeking; and advocacy resulting from empowerment can result in “a second wave of S&D” (backlash) from unreached ,under - sensitised gate keeping communities .
- Novel empowerment and communication approaches should target specific issues of stigma and human rights violations raised by the target groups

# Thank you for your attention

**Stigma & Discrimination are slowing down the pace of progress in tackling the epidemic through:**

