



THE SECRETARIAT

"Giving Hope to People Living with HIV Through Dedicated Service"

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2017: A YEAR IN REVIEW

JAN-MAR



BFLA Back to School Mobile Clinic

On Saturday January 14th, 2017 the Belize Family Life Association held their semi-annual Back to School Mobile Clinic on Albert Street in Belize City. The clinic targeted young people between the ages of 4 and 19 years old and aimed to provide head-to-toe examination, including dental screening, as well as deworming services, free of cost. BFLA also offered services for adults, mainly blood pressure, glucose and HIV testing.

The Belize Kidney Association also assisted in the event by providing free kidney function testing. In total 50 children received their check-ups, we also did 20 HIV Tests and 136 other services. BFLA would like to thank The Belize Kidney Association, Belize Cancer Society, Dr. Donair, Dr. Flores, Youth Advocacy Movement, Brodies, Belize City Council, Belize Traffic Dept., Love Foundation, Nurses and all who came by to access services.



BFLA NHI Kiddie's Corner Upgrade

In commemoration of Child Stimulation Month in March, The BFLA NHI Clinic unveiled their Kiddies' Corner for their young clients to enjoy, on Thursday March 23rd. Small picnic tables and a stuff animal zoo were installed in the waiting area and the children were treated to story time and colouring sessions by BFLA staff members. BFLA would like to thank Mr. Gentle and Ms. Sharmane Garbutt-Garcia for their hard work and The Love Foundation for their donation of stuffed animals.





The National AIDS Commission, in collaboration with Hand in Hand Ministries collaborated on a major event “Unite for the Children” an HIV/AIDS fundraising event that featured musical entertainment by local popular steel bands; Pantempters and Pandemonium.



The event, which was held at the BFLA Headquarters’ compound in Belize City on Friday February 24th, 2017 from 7:00 pm to midnight, was designed to assist Hand-In-Hand Ministries with their ongoing programs to provide critical

services to HIV infected and affected children of Belize.



The NAC and Hand-In-Hand Ministries would like to thank everyone who participated and assisted in the planning and development of the event and its success.

“Empowering Women in a Changing World: Planet 50:50 by 2030!”



Women’s Month was observed this year under the theme, “*Empowering Women in a Changing World: Planet 50:50 by 2030!*” In commemoration of Women’s Month, several activities were implemented country wide by the Women’s Department and other partner agencies/ departments. Some activities were ongoing for the entire month of March namely:

- Special 15% discount that was offered to all Women
- Free Aerobics Classes
- Luk Ya 8, Women in Art Expo and Marketplace

Other activities held during the month included:

- Women’s Economic Empowerment Fair and Women in Art showcasing women artists
- Women’s Empowerment Seminar for Police Officers (country wide)
- “Plotting the Way forward: A critical look at the Women’s Movement and Gender Based Violence” organized by PETAL and POWA
- Women’s Month Girl’s Rally
- Women’s Health Care VIA Screening Services
- Collet Community Bike Rally
- Women’s Session for Ministry of Defense Female Staff



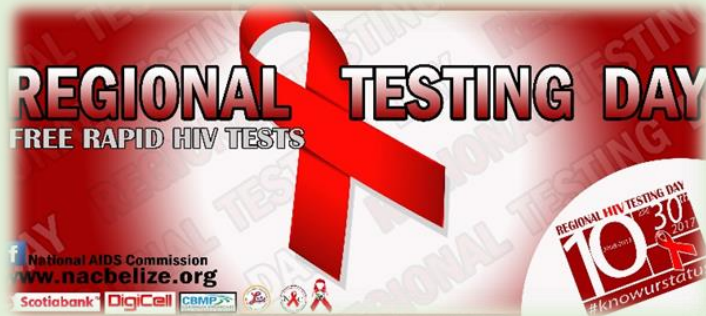
This year, there were several Women Awards held along with the Outstanding Awards that honors women contributing to their communities' development. These were held in Benque, Punta Gorda and Dangriga organized by Benque House of Culture, Punta Gorda Town Council and Dangriga Town Council respectfully. Women's Department and the Office of the Special Envoy for Women and Children coordinated the 12th Annual Outstanding Women's Awards Ceremony which was held at Biltmore Plaza on March 29, 2017 to close this month's activities.

A total of twenty women were honored by the Women's Department and other agencies. The Women's department would like to thank all agencies and organizations who organized any activities to celebrate and honor women for their contribution.



APR –JUN

REGIONAL TESTING DAY 2017



Over the last 6 years, Belize has participated in the Caribbean Regional Testing Day initiative led by the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP). In 2017, the region celebrated the 10th anniversary of Regional HIV Testing Day (RTD), with a goal of reaching 100,000 people tested throughout the Caribbean over the 10 years of the initiative. RTD has, to date, tested some 90,807 people and we are on track to meet

the UNAIDS targets which lead to ending AIDS by 2030.



The NAC, as a part of this Public Private Partnership; in collaboration with Scotiabank, the Ministry of Health (MOH) and Belize Telemedia Ltd. once more

proudly join PANCAP and twenty other countries in our region to celebrate Regional Testing Day (RTD) on Friday, June 30th, 2016; under the theme: #knowurstatus! This year we expanded the reach of the program by utilizing the following eight testing sites: San Pedro Town (Central Park), Corozal Town (Central Park), Orange Walk Town (Central Park), Belmopan City (Scotiabank Parking), San Ignacio Town (Welcome Center), Dangriga Town (Courts parking Lot), Punta Gorda Town (Central Park) and Belize City (Scotiabank Regent St. Parking Lot).

Besides targeting the eight above mentioned sites on June 30th for all day testing, the NAC and in collaboration with MOH engaged the Police Department, Coast Guard and Fire Departments nationwide in our regionally

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recognized and awarded best-practice “On-site Testing Program”. This program, which ran from May 19th to June 26th, was designed to take the testing directly to these organizations and accommodate their busy schedules.



In light of all this, Belize has been and continues to be a lead entity in the region in the promotion and implementation of this event. Nationwide 32,635 HIV tests were done in 2016, with the general scale up in services, and a reduction in the total number of new infections; Belize has seen an HIV prevalence rate of 1.2%, the lowest in years.



Of note is that Belize also launched a social media campaign utilizing local celebrities, partners, media personalities and community activists to engage in a simple but effective message...”Get Tested, Know Your Status!”

RTD 2017 STATISTICS: 1316 Tests

San Pedro Town: 41 Corozal Town: 55 Orange Walk Town: 178 Belize City: 171
Belmopan City: 122 San Ignacio Town: 168 Dangriga Town: 162
Punta Gorda Town: 65 On-site Testing Totals: 532

Regional Testing Day is a Caribbean initiative spearheaded under the guidance of the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP) with key sponsorship from Scotiabank and support from the Caribbean Media Broadcast Partnership on HIV/AIDS (CMBP). This year Belize recognizes Regional Testing Day under the theme: RU + UR- #knowurstatus!

THE NATIONAL AIDS COMMISSION RECEIVES INNOVATIVE OUTREACH AWARD

The National AIDS Commission and Executive Director Enrique Romero were presented with the 10th Anniversary Regional Testing Day Innovative Outreach Award during the Regional Testing Day Awards Ceremony and Media Launch on Friday May 26th, 2017 at the Hilton Barbados Resort in Bridgetown Barbados.

LIVE UP: The Caribbean Media Alliance presented awards to 21 individuals and 12 organizations as part of its continued promotion of its unique media brand, addressing HIV and issues of human rights and social justice in the Caribbean. The awardees hail from: St. Lucia, Jamaica, Belize, Haiti, Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Kitts-Nevis, Dominica and the British Virgin Islands.

The NAC would like to thank all its partners and stakeholders for their tireless dedication and work over the years. Without you this would not be possible.



Launch of Children's Agenda 2017-2030

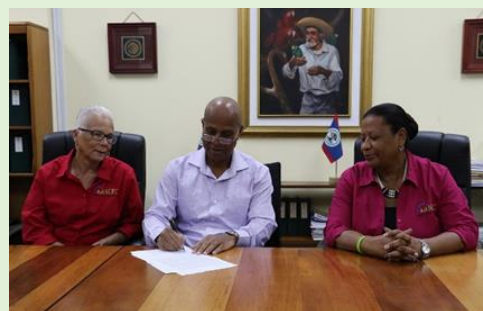
"If we don't stand up for children... then we don't stand up for much" – Marian W. Edelman.



This quote is a reflection of the National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC) continued commitment to creating a Belize where children and adolescents can grow, play, be safe, participate and become productive citizens. Thus, the bi-partisan signing of the new Children's Agenda 2017 – 2030 on May 15th was among the final steps leading up to the official launch. NCFC realizes that LIFE is a right of every child, not a special privilege for some. Hence, the 8th day of June 2017 is living testament of Belize's commitment to the

realization of international instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC); and the advancement of all children regardless of their age, ethnicity, religion and gender. This new agenda is a results framework that looks at the development of children and adolescents aged 0-19 over the next fourteen (14) years.

It focuses on the role of families and family-oriented policies in promoting education, safety, economic opportunity, and overall well-being of their members. In particular, the agenda is to raise awareness of the role of families in promoting early childhood education and lifelong learning opportunities for children and adolescents. This will be achieved through a strategic action plan that includes six (6) transformational goals and five (5) outcomes; with the overarching goal of having a community that is connected, respected and contributing positively to the development of all human beings.



The Children's Agenda 2017-2030 is grounded in the determination to make Belize the best place in which a child can grow. It reflects the firm belief and commitment to the fact that there is no alternative but to invest in an enabling environment which supports the fulfilment of children rights. Therefore, the embedded vision throughout this agenda is to have a nation where the rights of all children are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and they are supported to realize their maximum potential.

NCFC takes this opportunity to extend its gratitude and appreciation to all stakeholders, especially the children and adolescences who played an integral part in the process and completion of the Children's Agenda 2017-2030. We also take this opportune time to call on all stakeholders to commit to the values, principles and actions for a coordinated fulfilment of the goals and outcomes to make Belize the best place to raise a child.



MINISTER OF JUSTICE, JAMAICA, CALLS ON PARLIAMENTARIANS TO BE ADVOCATES FOR ENDING AIDS.

- Emphasized role of Faith Leaders and Political Leaders in supporting HIV+ People

The Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP) Regional Parliamentarians Forum, 30 - 31 May, Kingston, Jamaica, commenced with a stirring keynote address by the Hon. Delroy Chuck, Minister of Justice, Jamaica.



Minister Chuck addressed the need for parliamentarians to engage in more advocacy for People Living With and Affected by HIV and AIDS at the policymaking level.

‘We, the parliamentarians need to act as advocates for people affected by HIV’, stated Minister Chuck, ‘we need to engage with all stakeholders, including the faith-based organizations to rethink some of the beliefs that isolate the key populations which are most affected by HIV transmission. We, the parliamentarians have an obligation to lead the way in protecting the weak and vulnerable’.

The Jamaican Minister of Justice underscored the high prevalence of HIV transmission among men who have sex with men (MSM), ‘the high prevalence of HIV among this key population is very alarming and we must rethink how we deal with this key population. The continued spread of HIV within any population is a threat to public health. We must be cognizant of this and take urgent action. Parliaments must prioritise reducing stigma and discrimination toward people most vulnerable to HIV transmission’.

Minister Chuck emphasized the role of the faith-based community and urged the MPs and other stakeholders present to embrace the power of the religious community and utilize their influence to reach weak and vulnerable communities. *‘We must not underestimate the influence of faith leaders; this can be a powerful tool for ending HIV and AIDS. We, the parliamentarians can take the lead and join forces with key stakeholders to support people living with HIV and advocate for policies which seek to reduce HIV transmission and end deaths from AIDS’.*

The Minister’s keynote address formed a significant segment of the opening ceremony of the PANCAP Regional Parliamentarians Forum, which is a platform for parliamentarians from across the Region to discuss their involvement in ending HIV and AIDS. Government ministers and members of the opposition participated.

Selected key population leaders from the Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition (CVC), Caribbean Forum for Liberation and Acceptance of Genders and Sexualities (CariFLAGS), Caribbean Sex Work Coalition (CSWC), the Caribbean Network of People Living with HIV (CRN+) and UN partners also attended the Forum.

The focus of the Forum was a discussion on the targets of the Political Declaration of June 2016 and the implications for parliaments in the Caribbean. Parliamentarians established the foundations for increased

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engagement with national parliaments and national Parliamentary Committees on Health/Social Protection and on Justice especially in countries such as Belize, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, which have higher HIV prevalence rates.

The Forum, which is funded by the Global Fund and facilitated by the PANCAP Coordinating Unit and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), formed part of a wider intervention programme created by PANCAP within its **Justice For All (JFA) Roadmap**. It is expected that the discussions between regional parliamentarians, civil society representatives and other stakeholders will result in the formation of strategic steps, which can be implemented by parliamentarians to increase advocacy for People Living With, and Affected by HIV at the highest level.

UN Secretary-General Special Envoy for HIV in the Caribbean & PANCAP Director visit Belize

Dr. Edward Greene, United Nations Secretary-General Special Envoy for HIV in the Caribbean and Mr. Dereck Springer, Director of the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP) meeting with Mrs Laura Longworth (Chairperson, NAC) to engage in high level discussion with policy makers, Faith-Based organizations and the Civil Society Organizations around the principles of the PANCAP Justice for All Programme (JFA), and the 2016 UN High Level Political Declaration.



The current JFA Roadmap includes the UNAIDS 90-90-90 treatment target to help end the AIDS epidemic. Contained in 15 actionable recommendations which fall under five major areas:

- Focusing on family life and those in need.
 - Identifying strategies for prevention, including sexual and reproductive health and rights and age-appropriate sexual education.
 - Highlighting the need for access to treatment and to affordable medicine as a human right.
- Emphasizing women's and girls' empowerment, including reducing gender based violence.
 - Eliminating AIDS-related stigma and discrimination including modifying punitive laws.

Dr Greene also used this opportunity to discuss the 'Every Caribbean Woman Every Caribbean Child Initiative' (ECWECC) - the regionally specific program of work that emerged directly from the United Nations Secretary-General's Every Woman Every Child flagship program. ECWECC aims to enhance the health, wellbeing and empowerment of women, girls and adolescents through:



- Eliminating gender-based violence.
- Reducing the rates of teenage pregnancies.
- Preventing cervical cancer.
- Reducing people trafficking, with special reference to girls.
- Making the Caribbean the first region in the world to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV.



Launching of Daring and Innovative Ad.

The NAC in collaboration with Scotiabank, Belize Telemedia Ltd and The Love Foundation, launched a daring and innovative HIV awareness and testing advertisement on June 15th, 2017.

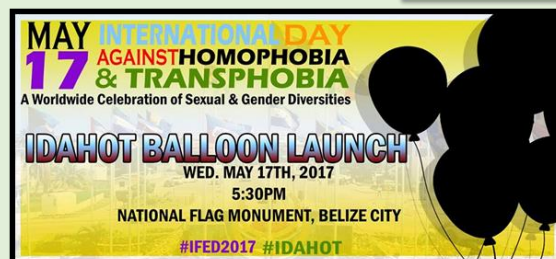
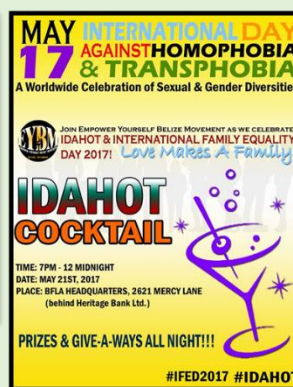
The ad is a cheeky look at the taboos that still exist within the Belizean society in relation to sex, sexual behaviours and HIV/AIDS transmission. Ultimately the ad is a positive reminder that we must all get tested regularly, know our status and be honest with ourselves and our partners in order to have lasting relationships.

The ad gained an immediate following on Facebook and went viral within the first two hours of being posted. “The Wedding Conundrum” ad was aired on the major local TV stations leading up to RTD 2017 and the NAC intends to continue airing it throughout the year as the message is universal and relevant. The ad can be found on the NAC Facebook page as well as our website (www.nacbelize.org).

The NAC would like to thank all its partners and sponsors who made this ad a reality and the social media followers who made it a hit. A messages resonate with the audience we hope to create the behaviour change needed to affect the change we need in our country. Continue looking forward to more dynamic, hard-hitting, creative and relevant messaging from the NAC as we continue to response to HIV/AIDS in Belize.



POSTER POSTS:



JUL –SEPT

The NAC does Capacity Building Work Sessions with Key Affected Populations

In July the National AIDS Commission and the Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition (CVC) partnered on several key and dynamic trainings designed to empower and strengthen Civil Society Organizations (CSO), NGO's and key populations within the HIV/AIDS response in Belize. These sessions were done in Belize City and in Dangriga Town, which are considered the high burden areas. The main objectives of the sessions were:

- To have greater support and involvement of the CSO's in HIV/AIDS response
- To strengthen linkages between the communities and the health care systems
- To identify barriers, gaps, areas of synergy, and future action that will assist in reaching the 90-90-90 targets



The sessions entitled: ***“Reaching the 90-90-90 targets in the Caribbean through Local Authority and Civil Society Partnerships”***, were facilitated by Dr. Carolyn Gomes, Executive Director of CVC and her co-facilitator Ms. Kandasi Levermore, Executive Director of Jamaica AIDS Support for Life (JASL). These were completed in Belize City on July 18th-19th and in Dangriga Town on July 20th -21st and focused primarily on how to achieve access to the treatment targets for the Caribbean and provided an in-depth overview of the HIV/AIDS situation within the Caribbean and Latin America as well as exploring the concept of the 90-90-90 targets and the ambitious treatment target needed in order to reach it by 2020.



In her discussion, Dr. Gomes spoke to the fact that in 2015, donors provided governments with \$7.53 billion US dollars for HIV Programs, a 13% decline in funding since 2014 due to competing priorities, humanitarian emergencies, refugee crises, and fiscal austerity among other factors. As funding gaps threaten to derail the response to HIV patients, countries will increasingly need to fill gaps and find more efficient and cost effective ways to fund their response. A survey of HIV focused organizations, conducted by UNAIDS in 2012 and 2013, revealed that majority of the survey respondents reported experiencing decreases in funds for HIV and human rights related work.

The experiences with PANCAP Round 9 Grant work with CSOs shows that there is a need for greater prioritization of key interventions that are evidence based and target individuals at highest risk, as well as the need for early and wide dissemination of findings and frank discussion of epidemiological data. NGOs and other implementers need to be provided with guidance on the focus their programs need to take as well as build local authority and civil society partnerships for greater success.

Dr. Gomes and Ms. Levermore spoke to hope and a stronger collaborative impact within the response in order to reach our collective national and regional goals. With regards to the CSOs and government, there needs to be a strengthening of the dialogue between them in order to have more partnerships and collaboration between all parties.



Newly Elected GO-Belize Board of Directors engage in 2-Day Workshop

The GO-Belize Alumni Association was established in March of 2011 in an effort to contribute meaningfully to: the increase in knowledge of sexual reproductive health, leadership skills building and promotion of environmental issues, affecting Belizean youth in order to stimulate positive behavior change and communication in an atmosphere of fellowship. In February 2017 GO-Belize elected a new Board of Directors.

In part with the aforementioned, GO-Belize Board of Directors met for a 2-Day workshop in Belmopan City from September 2-3, 2017 to synergize efforts in ***“Re-designing and Enhancing Strategies to decrease HIV/AIDS/TB.”*** As a result, GO-Belize revised and updated its Strategic Plan and Operational plan with a latter Communication plan thereafter, that will serve in guiding the organization’s work from 2017-2020 contributing to the National Response of HIV/AIDS/TB. A response plan was also developed after the revision of an External M&E results, which was done by PHI’s M&E Consultant, PhD Julie Solomon, in 2016.



From left to right: Kelsie Ciego, Marla Magaña, Errol Longsworth, Adir Chan, Nekeisha Lima, Alisha Solis Osvaldo Cantun, Elmer Cornejo

Getting serious about Service Providers and HIV/AIDS/TB Barriers



In 2017, Belize still ranks 1st and 3rd in Latin America and the Caribbean respectively in highest prevalence of HIV, which is foremost related to Tuberculosis (TB), according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

To alleviate the present situation, GO-Belize Alumni Association, as a non-profit, focused on Youth Leadership and Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights, sees the need of interjecting in capacity building for service providers who would include but is not limited to; Police Officers, Community rehabilitation officers, Youth Officers and social workers, to understand the “how” of responding to Belizean youth. From September 2-3, 2017, GO-Belize held a 2-Day training/workshop with the aforementioned service providers with the intent of ***“Redesigning and Enhancing Strategies to decrease HIV/AIDS/TB barriers”***. The workshop was also used as a way to define legal barriers of at risk populations, identify ways of addressing stigma and discrimination and identifying ways of networking to build capacity amongst the departments present.

GO-Belize Outreach to MSM Population

A recent report published by the Ministry of Health on tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), indicates that HIV has become a concentrated epidemic among men who have sex with other men (MSM). A Behavioral Surveillance Survey conducted in 2012, reveals that a little under fourteen percent, or the equivalent of fourteen male homosexuals to every one hundred persons in that category, was infected with the virus. The study was carried out using two at-risk groups, including female sex workers and men who have sex with other men. By comparison, the prevalence rate among prostitutes, is significantly lower than that of male homosexuals.



In consequence, GO-Belize sees the need of empowering young men who have sex with men, on the risk and barriers that affect personal health including legal barriers that may result from improper sexual practices. In light of this, GO-Belize gathered a group of young MSMs at Hode's Place in San Ignacio, Cayo, for a 2-Day workshop from August 19-20, 2017. During the 2-Day workshop, participants were presented on life experiences MSMs face as Belizeans with the primary intent of educating them on Stigma/Discrimination on HIV/AIDS/TB and its Prevention and Barriers, and lastly but equally important, the need of understanding legal barriers affecting at risk populations as the LGBTQI community.

Each participant developed a personal communication plan at the end of day two. One particular plan was the sensitizing of other young MSMs to be cognizant that UNIBAM has two in country lawyers employed to attend the legal needs of MSMs as the need arises over the next couple of years.

World Youth Conference Belize 2017

The World Youth Conference 2017 (WYC'17) will convene 200-250 national, regional and international youth leaders under the theme: "**Globally Running to 2030, Becoming Sustainably Strong**". To bring the voice of youth into a transnational deliberation on how to make the post-2015 development agenda a reality, WYC' 17 will convene a Youth Conference on November 6th – 9th, 2017 in the Central American and Caribbean nation of Belize. The Conference will be organized by the Department of Youth Services in collaboration with The Ministry of Education, Youth Sports and Culture and the Government of Belize. WYC2017 is a timely response stemming from dialogue out of the global and international commitments that have been made, such as the:



- The World Youth Conference 2016- New Delhi, India
- CHOGM Youth Forum 2015- St. Paul's Bay, Malta
- 9th UNESCO Youth Forum 2015- Paris, France

- World Youth Conference 2014- Colombo, Sri Lanka

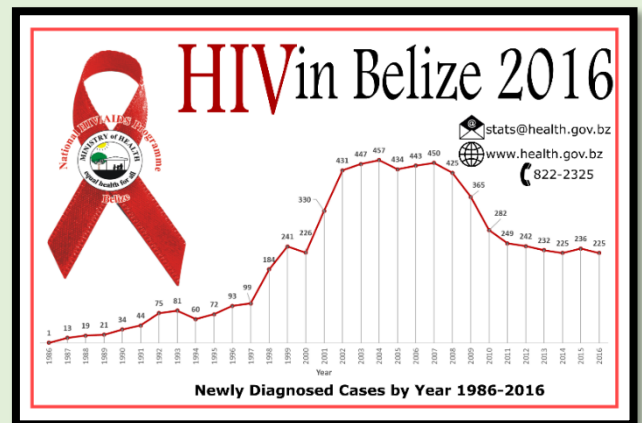
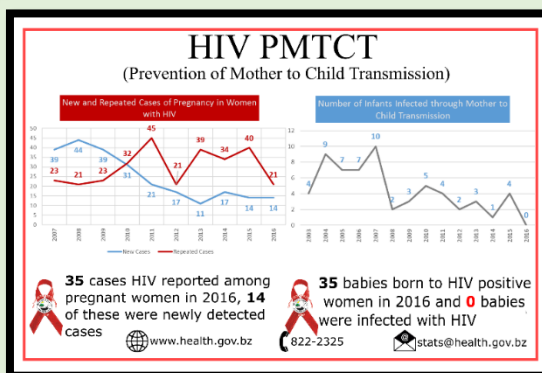
The Conference seeks to affirm the promotion of meaningful participation, the realization of rights and the integral development of young people represents some of the biggest challenges that need to be tackled along with the priority areas of the United Nations World Program of Action for Youth (WPAY). Additionally, to recognize the active role that young people are playing in social mobilizations in many regions of the world and their willingness to assume responsibilities in the economic, social and political agendas in their countries and regions.

It also looks at identifying courses of priority action as agreed upon during the deliberations of the Ministers responsible for youth, young people, representatives of Governments, youth-led organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other development partners, in the process of mainstreaming youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The four thematic areas for the Conference discussion include Climate Change and Environmental Action, Economic Empowerment, Well-being/ Humanity and Social Justice and Equity.

Registration for the conference closes on July 31st 2017 and interested persons can email us at wycbze2017@gmail.com, visit our website at <https://www.wyc2017.com/>, like us on Facebook at World Youth Conference Belize 2017 <https://www.facebook.com/wycbze2017/> or check the Instagram page out at handle @wycbze2017.



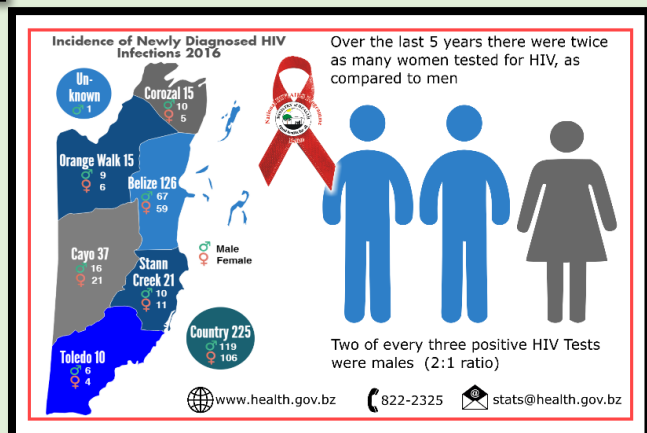
MINISTRY OF HEALTH HIV DATA PAGE:



BELIZE HIV QUICK FACTS

- 225** new infections reported Jan-Dec 2016
- 104** persons died of HIV related conditions in 2016
- An estimated **3,665** living with HIV
- 1,353** HIV infected persons are receiving anti-retroviral drugs at December 2016
- 32,635** HIV tests in 2016 with a 0.7% positivity rate
- 36** cases of TB/HIV coinfection in 2016

stats@health.gov.bz





CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE: ENDING AIDS BY 2030

The Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP) relaunched its Champions for Change Initiative originally inaugurated in 2004 but which has been in abeyance since 2008. This event took the form of a Forum comprising of a cross section of partners around the theme “**Champions for Change: Ending AIDS by 2030**”. The Forum was held in Georgetown, Guyana on

12-13 September 2017.

The objectives of the Forum were to:

- a) Establish the criteria for designating Champions for Change, their mandates and catalytic roles for fast tracking the end of AIDS;
- b) Align the expected contributions of the Champions for Change with international and regional commitments. These include the UN High Level Meeting Political Declaration (June 2016); the Caribbean Cooperation in Health IV (2016) and the PANCAP Justice for All roadmap (2015/2016) and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals;
- c) Assess the impact of new programme directions for overcoming barriers to ending AIDS identified by major international and collaborating agencies, especially the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) and The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- d) Take into consideration the recommendations from the recent PANCAP consultations of Faith Leaders (February 2017), National AIDS Programme Managers and Key Partners (March 2017), Youth (April 2017), Parliamentarians (May 2017), and other related fora such as the Caribbean First Ladies/Spouses (February 2017) championing the “*Every Caribbean Woman Every Caribbean Child Commitment*”.

The National AIDS Commission would like to take this opportunity to recognize Mrs. Laura Tucker-Longworth, Chair of the NAC, for her dedication to the work and receiving the assignation of PANCAP “**Champion For Change**”.





Climate Comic Contest

Exciting news! In the lead up to the 23rd Conference of the Parties (COP23) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), join us for our global **Climate Comic Contest** - inspiring children and youth to take climate action through creativity!

Call for Submissions

October 5-22 - Launched at ComicCon NY

UNICEF is asking young people, up to 25 years old, to come up with an original superhero that's fighting climate change - for a chance to develop and publish their own comic. Submissions will be received through our [campaign website](#).

Global Online Vote - November 6-17 (during COP23)

Through a selection process, creative editors at UNICEF NYHQ and our partner Comics Uniting Nations, will select up to 25 entries from all over the world. The top submissions will be featured on the campaign website where people have the opportunity to vote for their favorite climate comic hero. In parallel, a UNICEF delegation will be at COP23, highlighting the creative work with governments and partners. The winner will be announced at the end of November 2017.

The winner will then work with a comic artist and the professional team at Comics Uniting Nations to develop their very own comic with the superhero they created - hooray!

Comic Launch

April 22, 2018 - Earth Day

The launch of the comic will be April 22, Earth Day. On this day and during other key moments throughout the year, the comic book will be promoted and disseminated worldwide through a series of digital activations and at key climate events such as COP24 and Climate Week during UNGA.



- **A climate comic hero workshop with children and youth between September 18 and October 22. (date to be announced for Belize)**

Key dates for your calendar:

October 5 - October 22: Contest opens for submissions

November 6-17 during COP23: Global Online vote opens using a voting gallery in a microsite.

April 22, Earth Day: Comic launch, showcase finalist and link to published comic.

Dr. Carissa F. Etienne re-elected for second term as PAHO Director



In Washington, D.C., September 27, 2017 (PAHO/WHO) - Dr. Carissa F. Etienne was re-elected for a second five-year term as Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) by the Member States of the organization.

Ministers of Health at the 29th Pan American Sanitary Conference voted unanimously to re-elect Dr. Etienne. Her candidacy, which was not contested, was submitted by the Government of Dominica, her native country. She will assume her second term as Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, PAHO's Secretariat, on February 1, 2018.

In her acceptance speech, Dr. Etienne cited her “commitment to deliver to all of our peoples, from all walks of society, a long and productive life, with quality care into our senior years; access to quality health services without fear of impoverishment; access to medicines and vaccines that we can afford, including effective antibiotics; freedom from preventable diseases, with reduced exposure to disease vectors.”

She said access to sexual and reproductive health services; to healthy, nutritious food; and to clean water and adequate sanitation were important, along with safe refuge and adequate health care in the face of disasters and health emergencies.

During her tenures at WHO and PAHO, Dr. Etienne has led efforts to promote universal health coverage and renew primary health care to strengthen health systems to be more integrated and to function better. She has also spearheaded policy directions for reducing health inequalities and advancing health for all through universal coverage, people-centered care, the integration of health into broader public policies, and inclusive and participatory health leadership.

She has been heavily involved in the struggle to help countries reduce the growing burden of non-communicable diseases through efforts to combat obesity and curb the tobacco epidemic. She has also supported expansion of immunization programs in the Americas, and earlier this month accepted the Measles and Rubella Initiative Champion Award for PAHO's work to eliminate measles and rubella from the Americas.

Dr. Etienne produced the World Health Report on “Health Systems Financing: The Path to Universal Coverage,” which was recognized worldwide for its agenda for action by all countries to reach universal coverage and improve health outcomes. She also chaired the International Health Partnership (IHP+) initiative, which seeks to commit partners to work together and put into practice international principles for effective aid and development cooperation in the health sector.



NOTE: Belize was elected to serve on the Executive Committee of PAHO, a position that had not been held since 1994 and the period is for 3 years. Minister Marin has committed to ensuring we are meaningfully represented in the process going forward as we now start our term in this committee.



EMPOWER YOURSELF BELIZE MOVEMENT: ACTIVITY UPDATE

1. LGBTIQ document replacement project funded by UNDP supports 100 LGBTIQ person in acquiring much needed personal documents: such as birth certificate, police records and social society card. This is in an effort to assist the LGBTIQ population in accessing services. This program also helps the Trans-gender population to do deep poling services in order to facilitate the name changing process.

2. With funding from COC Netherlands and UNDP, EBYM facilitated a workshop on the Belize’s Labour Laws as it relates to the LGBTIQ community and how the laws affect them as an employee and what part of the labour law protects them as a LGBTIQ individual.



3. Empower Yourself Belize Movement Executive Director Mr. Kendale Trapp attended the first even LGBTIQ Leadership Academy under the theme: “Building Leaders from the Inside out.”, with representation from Belize, Guyana, Suriname, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, and Dominican Republic.

4. With funding from COC Netherlands and UNDP, EBYM conducted a workshop on the benefits of social security and applying for a social security card. EBYM will also be in consultation with the Social Security Board to review the policies and give recommendation on how to include LGBTIQ couples to benefit from the Social Security scheme by accessing survival benefits as a same sex couples and paying into the scheme. This workshop also included a Human Rights aspect where the LGBTIQ community further reviewed the Human Rights violations as it related to their specific issues.



SOCIAL SECURITY CARD APPLICATION & REPLACEMENT

Empower Yourself Belize Movement is providing assistance with Social Security Card application and replacement for lost/damaged cards for LGBTIQ individuals.

SERVICES INCLUDE

1. Fees to cover application/replacement cost for Social Security ID card
2. Fees to cover supporting documents

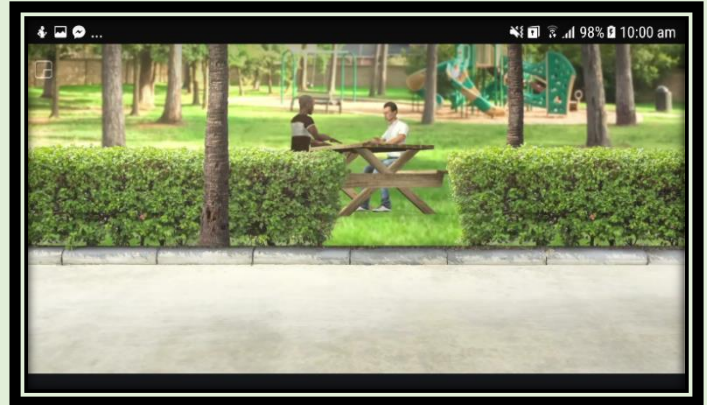
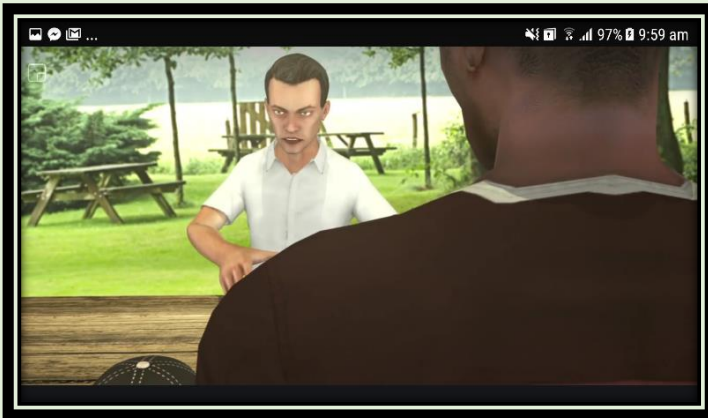
If you or someone you know is in need of this service please text your FULL NAME and number to 604-1911 to start the process



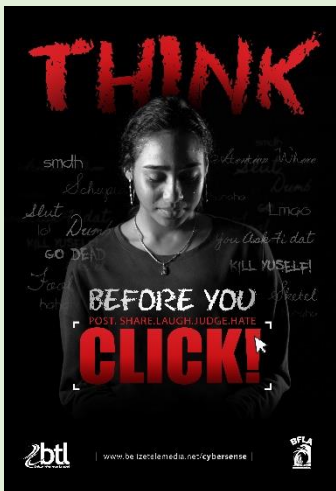
The National AIDS Commission Launches its TB/HIV Co-Infection Awareness Campaign

Starting October 2nd, 2017; the NAC in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, and The Ministry of Health, will launch an innovative TB/HIV Co-Infection Awareness radio campaign. This campaign will target the general public through a radio ad done in the Creole, Spanish, English and Garifuna languages for a period of eighteen months.

There is also a visual 3D video ad that will be aired on social media and on the NAC website



OCT – DEC



BTL & BFLA LAUNCHES CYBERSENSE COMPETITION

#TeamBTL has collaborated with Belize Family Life Association to create awareness on cyber-bullying. The cybersense "think before you click" competition has two categories and is opened to individuals attending primary, secondary and tertiary institutions.

Winners will receive:

Category 1 - 10" Tablet plus \$500 cash (Ages 12-17)

Category 2 - Laptop plus \$1000 cash (Ages 18-25)

Deadline December 13, 2017

Check out the video or visit www.belizetelemedia.net/cybersense for more details.

#thinkbeforeyouclick #cybersense #Belize

<https://www.facebook.com/BelizeTelemedia/videos/1568746856514999/>

<https://www.facebook.com/BelizeTelemedia/videos/1581863195203365/>

Kindly share with your contacts and anyone who might be interested!!



Visit us @: www.nacbelize.org or like us on Facebook at National AIDS Commission

Global Fund Appoints Peter Sands as Executive Director

GENEVA – The Board of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria appointed a new Executive Director: Peter Sands, a former Chief Executive of Standard Chartered Bank who after a distinguished career in banking immersed himself in a range of global public health projects.

Sands, who is currently Chairman of the World Bank’s International Working Group on Financing Pandemic Preparedness, is also a research fellow at the Harvard Global Health Institute and the Mossavar Rahmani Center for Business and Government at Harvard’s Kennedy School, where he works on research projects in global health and financial regulation.



“Peter Sands brings exceptional management and finance experience, and a heart for global health,” said Aida Kurtović, Board Chair of the Global Fund. “At a time when we face complex challenges, his ability to mobilize resources while managing transformational change is exactly what we need. We expect him to take the Global Fund to the next level.”

Sands served as Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered PLC from 2006 to 2015, having joined the bank in 2002 as Group Finance Director. Under his leadership, Standard Chartered successfully navigated the turbulence of the global financial crisis in 2007-2009, continuing to support clients and counterparties throughout the worst of the financial stresses and without drawing on government support of any kind.

Sands led Standard Chartered’s transformation into one of the world’s leading international banks, reinforcing its focus on emerging markets and driving the development of world-class product, risk management and technology capabilities, underpinned by a highly collaborative culture. During Sands’ tenure as CEO, Standard Chartered focused its corporate responsibility initiatives on health issues, including avoidable blindness, AIDS and malaria. Sands served on the board of the Global Business Coalition on AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and was Lead Non-Executive Director on the board of the United Kingdom’s Department of Health.

After stepping down from the bank in 2015, Sands deployed his skills and experience in international finance on global health. Sands served as Chairman of the U.S. National Academy of Medicine’s Commission on a Global Health Risk Framework for the Future, which published the influential report on pandemics entitled *The Neglected Dimension of Global Security: a Framework to Counter Infectious Disease Outbreaks*. Sands is also serving on the U.S. National Academy of Science’s Forum on Microbial Threats and Committee on Ensuring Access to Affordable Drugs. Sands has published articles on global health and epidemics in various peer-reviewed journals.

“I am deeply honoured to join this extraordinary partnership,” Sands said. “Infectious diseases today represent one of the most serious risks facing humankind. If we work together to mobilize funds, build strong health systems and establish effective community responses we will be able to end epidemics, promote prosperity and increase our global health security.”

Born in the United Kingdom, Sands was educated in Malaysia, the UK, Canada and the U.S. He began his career in the UK's Foreign Office and then joined McKinsey & Company, where he worked for 13 years in the London office, advising clients in the financial services and telecommunications sectors.

Sands graduated from Brasenose College, Oxford University with a First Class degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics. He also received a Master's in Public Administration from Harvard University, where he was a Harkness Fellow.

As new Executive Director, Sands will oversee and guide the implementation of the Global Fund's 2017-2022 strategy, designed to maximize impact against HIV, TB and malaria and build resilient and sustainable systems for health.

The Global Fund is a 21st-century partnership organization designed to accelerate the end of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria as epidemics. Founded in 2002, the Global Fund is a partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector and people affected by the diseases.

The Global Fund raises and invests nearly US\$4 billion a year to support programs run by local experts in countries and communities most in need. The Global Fund has been consistently rated as one of the most effective and transparent organizations in the development sector.

EmPOWER Girls: before, during and after crises



Statement of UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Natalia Kanem
for the International Day of the Girl Child
11 October 2017

Girls today enjoy better life prospects than previous generations in many ways. Prosperity and nutrition are improving, child marriage and teenage pregnancy are declining, and female educational attainment and participation in the labour force are on the rise. However, these advances are far from universal and are increasingly tenuous in many parts of the world. The poorest—particularly girls—are often left behind, their rights undermined.

They get less education, have fewer opportunities and are more likely to take jobs that pay less and involve more risk than girls who are economically better off. In addition to the social forces against them, girls continue to face high levels of gender-based violence, unwanted pregnancies, and unsafe deliveries. One in four girls will be married before she is 18, and one in five adolescent girls aged 15-19 will give birth.

And because of entrenched gender inequalities, disasters and conflict can make a bad situation even worse for girls. They and their families, struggling to survive, are left with few choices, leaving girls even more vulnerable to child marriage, sexual- and gender-based violence, including trafficking, rape and sexual slavery. They are faced with the cruel reality of heightened risks to their sexual and reproductive health and diminished access to critical health care.

Despite these challenges, many girls manage to play a critical role in their homes and communities, even in crises. They are often the first responders who care for their families and establish networks that produce the

social capital and resilience communities need to survive. Protecting and promoting their rights, health, and well-being is therefore an essential element of crisis preparedness, effective response and recovery.

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, works towards ensuring that girls are healthy, empowered and, thus, more resilient in the face of crises and in the rebuilding of their societies. UNFPA supports the development of more inclusive health, education, and empowerment programmes that are age- and gender-responsive, often girl-led, and enhance the voices of girls at the community level.

From creating safe spaces, to providing sexual and reproductive health information and services, to facilitating youth leadership and participation, we and our partners are innovating to reach, engage and empower adolescent girls and to ensure that we respond not just to their needs, but to their aspirations.

As part of UNFPA's transformational goals, we will continue working with our partners to end violence against girls, including child marriage and female genital mutilation. We will work to ensure that all girls, everywhere, enjoy their full spectrum of rights and have the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential.

Today and every day, let us support the power of girls before, during and after crises to build better futures for themselves and their communities.

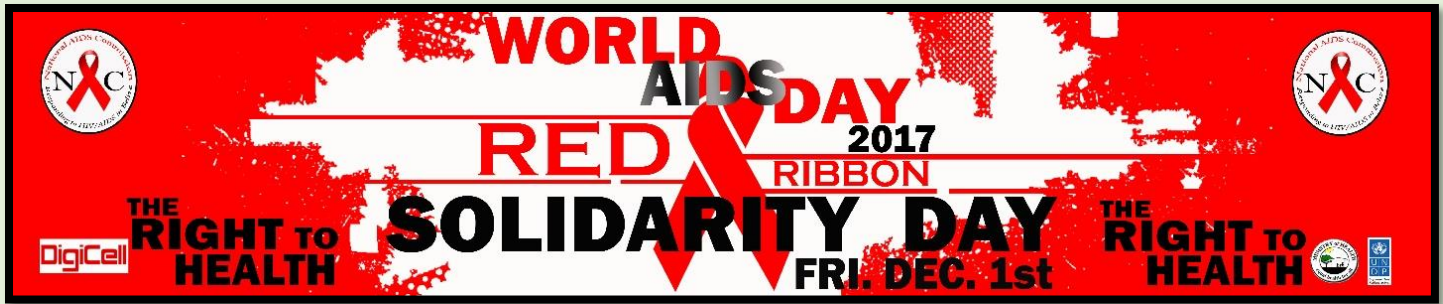
PANCAP CONVENES 27th MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF HON. ROBERT LUKE BROWNE, MINISTER HEALTH, WELLNESS AND THE ENVIRONMENT, ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES



(L-R) Director of PANCAP, Dereck Springer, Chair of the Executive Board of PANCAP, Hon. Robert Luke Browne, Minister of Health, Wellness and the Environment, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Roger McLean of The University of the West Indies and Dr Douglas Slater, Assistant Secretary-General, Human and Social Development, CARICOM Secretariat.

Wednesday, October 11 2017 (PANCAP Coordinating Unit, CARICOM Secretariat): The Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP), the mechanism that provides a structured and unified approach to the Caribbean's response to the HIV epidemic, convened the

27th Meeting of the Executive Board today at the Beachcombers Hotel, St Vincent and the Grenadines. The meeting assessed the Partnership's progress towards the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and Syphilis (EMTCT) and the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets - 90 percent of people living with HIV know they have the virus, 90 percent of those who know they are infected are receiving sustainable antiretroviral treatment and 90 percent of those people on treatment have sustainable suppression of their virus by 2020. The meeting will also reflect on PANCAP's achievements; Sharpest regional reduction in HIV incidence by 48.1%; Decline in AIDS-related deaths by 55%; Antiretroviral coverage increased to 52% from less than 5% of the eligible population in 2001; Virtual elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Continue reading.



WORLD AIDS DAY 2017: RED RIBBON SOLIDARITY DAY

On December 1, 2017, the National AIDS Commission in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, the Ministry of Health and DigiCell commemorated World AIDS Day under the theme: *“The Right To Health”*. There were simultaneous activities held nationwide from 9am to 3pm at the following seven sites: Corozal Community Hospital Compound, Queen Victoria Park in Orange Walk Town, Battlefield Park in Belize City, In front of Scotia Bank in Belmopan City, the Welcome Centre in San Ignacio Town, in front of COURTS in Dangriga Town and the Central park in Punta Gorda Town. San Pedro Town, held their event on Saturday December 2nd at the Central Park.



All sites included a showcase of the collaboration and networking that is evident in responding to HIV/AIDS. This included information booths from various partner agencies, give-a-ways, games, and free HIV testing by the Ministry of Health. This Year the National AIDS Commission honoured HIV service providers and advocates with the first ever *“Narciso Franklin Caliz HIV Unsung Hero Award”* in remembrance of Mr. Narciso Caliz, who was an advocate and active member of the National AIDS

Commission Punta Gorda District Committee. Six well-deserving nominees received awards in the areas of: Civil Society Service Provision, Advocacy, Youth Advocacy and Health Service Provision. This event was one of the highlights of the day and provided a much needed burst of spirit for those who otherwise would go under the radar for their consistent and dynamic work in the field. This year’s awardees were: Mr Kenrick Gonzales (Youth Advocacy Award), Nurse Margaret Bradley (Health Service Provision), Nurse Tomasa Heredia (Health service Provision), Mrs. Adi Cawich (Advocacy), Mr Felix Ayuso (Advocacy), and Hand-In-hand Ministries (CSO service Provision).



As a second major component of this year’s program, the NAC invited five youth artists to create one-of-a-kind pieces of art on-site. The art artists, who were limited to painting a piece surrounding the World AIDS Day theme and only had access to red, black and white paints; painted their pieces live during the ongoing activities. The pieces were donated to partner agencies for permanent display and recognition for the artists. The artists were: **Ms Briheda Haylock, Ms. Kenisha Gooding, Mr. Marvin Vernon, Ms Rosemarie Vergo and Mr. Uriel Cowo.**



This year's World AIDS Day activity was a dynamic all-inclusive program and with the public/private partnership with DigiCell we were able to surpass the national testing numbers and bring a greater social awareness to multiple communities. The success of this activity proves that there is a strong collaboration among partners which has led to a greater sense of public awareness.



The National AIDS Commission, thanks all its partners and the District Committees for their continued support, guidance and dedication in responding to HIV/AIDS in Belize. We realize the challenges and know that without your contributions at all levels we could not accomplish the country's needs.

Keep up the Great work!

We wish you all a Blessed Holiday Season and all the best in 2018!

