

THE SECRETARIAT



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

JUL- SEPT 2018

The National AIDS Commission launches HIV Services App

Since 2014 the National AIDS Commission (NAC) has been utilizing very innovative, creative and imaginative means to directly engage and reach the varying populations we serve. Throughout the past five years the NAC has reinvented its public private partnerships, develop and redesign its public image, recreate it communication and programs strategies and have made a consorted effort toward full inclusion of all populations represented in the response.



In 2016 the NAC in collaboration with CODE-IT launched its first app, Infections. This was a gaming app that was designed to engage the user in a fun and interactive gaming experience while imparting key knowledge about HIV/AIDS. This app was a pioneering effort and was recognized as one of the most innovative communication strategy in the region. Infection is

available for FREE at the Google Play store.

In light of the success of Infection, the NAC then listen to the responses of the general public and then aligned it with our national mandate-access to HIV services for all- and decided to address another of the pressing issues facing the nation in relation to HIV services...readily available knowledge. The NAC realize that one of the key issues hindering our ability to reach our 90-90-90 targets has been the access to services; and one of the key reasons for not accessing services in Belize is lack of knowledge. Knowledge about where to go, what services the facilities offer and ultimately how to find the facilities.



Staying with the motive to bring innovation to the HIV/AIDS/TB response, the NAC in collaboration with LXJ Code Belize developed and design Belize's first HIV services App. This app is a readily available source of information on all the major HIV service facilities in the country. It provides the user with real-time data on the nearest health facility, what services they offer, location, links the user to the service providers' Facebook and website for more information and provides timely updates on upcoming events from varying partner agencies within the response. The NAC Health Services App is truly a gateway that shows the link between innovation and necessity.

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On Friday September 28th the NAC officially launched the Services App and it was available on both IOS and Android platforms. We take this opportunity to invite everyone to download the app and continue to seek healthy choices and proper health seeking behaviors in aspects of your life.

Report BELIZE YU VOICE MATA

UNICEF and Partners Launch U-Report Belize “Amplifying Young Voices in Safe Spaces”

Belize City, Belize, 1st October, 2018...

UNICEF Belize and key partner National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC) launched U-Report in Belize on Friday, September 28th with an I AM Belize U-Report Rally and Concert at the BTL Park. The theme for the launch **“Amplifying Young Voices in Safe Spaces”** emphasized the importance youth voices and the need for safe spaces allowing young people to come together, hang out, get information and as well as freely express themselves through music, drama and to share their own experiences and views on national social issues.



U-Report is a free online messaging tool that employs various social media platforms to engage youths, maintaining anonymity, confidentiality and credibility; designed to engage young people. The platform now allows for the discussion of issues such as poverty, climate change and emergencies, violence and conflict as well as economic inequality among other priority issues affecting the country and registers the results of polls instantaneously. The utility of the platform will allow organizations in decision making and advocacy management positions to engage young persons, field their views,

collecting that information in a disaggregated manner and inform policy making and programme design addressing the needs of young people.

In Belize, the management of the platform employs a multi-partner approach that as well includes Ministry of Labour and Local Government via the Sustainable Child Friendly Municipality Initiative; Department of Youth Services of the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture, Digi – Belize Telemedia Limited and SMART Belize.



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Today, there are 493 U-Reporter members with an almost even male/female representation. U-Reporters are spread nationally across the country. To participate in U-Report you must register by sending the word JOIN via a message to the U-Report Belize Messenger account. To learn more, visit the U-Report webpage: <http://belize.ureport.in/>



TWO YOUNG BELIZEANS IN PERU!

From July 31st to August 4th 2018 two young Belizeans attended the Youth Now! Youth Leadership Camp in Lima Peru. The two youth leaders, Shayanne Dena (UNFPA Youth Advisory Group) and Dominique Noralez (BFLA Youth Advocacy Movement), were chosen to be two of the 50 participants from over 1000 applications from across Latin America and Caribbean. The camp focused on political advocacy in relation to population development.



Discussion topics included: Promotion and defense of human rights, sexual and reproductive rights, the right to education, and the rights of persons with disabilities, LGBTI people, indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, children and adolescents, and people living with HIV, Activism in civil society and political advocacy activities, social auditing in favor of rights, governance, democratization, student leadership, peace, conflict resolution and defense of secularism, Promotion of gender equality, women's empowerment and prevention of social and gender violence, Participation in the Population and Development agenda, including the Montevideo Consensus, the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, local community development, defense of the territory, social cohesion, environment and recovery of the community social fabric, Prevention of adolescent pregnancy, child marriage and early union, Communication for development, the creation of public opinion through blogs, opinion columns, radio, art for development, cultural management, community living culture and sports.



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Outside of the training, the two Belizeans also got the opportunity to attend the *3rd Regional Conference on Population* convened by ECLAC. This conference serves as a space for governments to present their achievements made in relation to the Montevideo Consensus. This conference ended on August 9th 2018. It is interesting to note that Belize did not present our national report but representation included Mrs. Joan Burke Skeen as Civil Society Representative under the International Planned Parenthood Federation for the Belize Family Life Association and Mr. Mark Antrobus as Government Representative from the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation.



CONDOM SQUAD HIT THE PAVEMENT ON CARNIVAL DAY

The Youth Advocacy Movement, Belize's longest running youth-led organization, hosted its carnival day condom distribution activity. The event was a part of the BFLA/YAM

'Keeping it Sexy and Safe' initiative and took place on the September 8th, 2018 on the route of the Carnival Road March in Belize City principal streets. This time of year Belizeans, specifically young people engage in festive activities that include consuming large volumes of alcohol which may lead to risky sexual behavior. Risky sexual behavior that may cause young people to contract and spread HIV along with other STDs and even unwanted pregnancies.

The activity included the distribution of condoms but also the dissemination of information to the public both in person and via social media platforms like Facebook. The activity leads straight into the launching of season 13 of the TV/Radio/Internet Media show, Bigg Chatz so do look out for it in October 2018! Yammies hope to extend the activity to pre-carnival mass camps in 2019.



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National Council on Ageing Recognizes International Day of Older Persons



October 1st is observed as International Day of Older Persons. In observation of this day the National Council on Ageing is hosting its annual Conference on Ageing on October 4th, 2018 at the Best Western Biltmore Plaza under the theme: *Financial Planning for Retirement*. In 2010 Help Age International estimated that over 65% of all older Persons in Belize did not have access to a pension. Financial security and financial resilience remains a challenge for older persons across the country. In an effort to safe guard the financial security of future Belizeans this year's conference will focus on:

- Educating key stakeholders on the importance of preparing for retirement
- Provide information regarding financial planning and how to adequately plan for retirement in the existing Belizean Economy.
- Discuss the benefits of pension provision for employees.
- Provide information to promote independent retirement planning through long term savings options.
- Provide an overview of the existing Pensions Act and its impact on Belizean employers and employees.

Post conference will focus on additional public education and awareness activities to encourage Belizeans to assess their own retirement readiness.



Adolescents Counseling Services Workshop

A three day workshop was held in July for our teenagers who are HIV positive. On the first day of the workshop, the children learn to socialize, integrate and gained trust and support among their peers. By the end of the third day, they became comfortable with their surroundings and created a bond with each other. The second day was a collaboration day of



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education and re-entry work with the counselor and nurses, where they were able to be open and test their knowledge on HIV as well as ask common social questions that are associated with this illness. The children were able to have their questions answered and discussions took place in a closed, interactive and respectful space. The third day focused on continuing the bond amongst the adolescents for the purpose of creating a support system beyond the confinements of this program. The bonding continued with a retreat at BACAB eco-park. Reviews from the adolescents were overall positive and open to the concept of continued counseling in the near future.

This three day workshop was facilitated by both our nurses and Ms. Jessica McFadzean B.A (intern) Doctoral student of the combined Counseling & School Psychology Program – University of Buffalo, Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology.

We have since put in place counseling services to benefit of our clientele and Mr. Dominic McDonough will be assisting us with this process in the coming months. Our financial resources remain extremely limited, therefore we are only able to provide limited individualized counseling. We pray that we may be able to secure more funding to allow more services and possible group therapy. At this time we are very grateful to God and those who have assisted in providing this much needed service, however, limited it may be.



COMING SOON!!!
COME OUT AND SUPPORT.

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PANCAP Director and the Inter Religious Organisation of Guyana (IRO) discuss faith leaders' role in ending AIDS

Monday 17 September 2018 (PANCAP Coordinating Unit, CARICOM Secretariat): Director of PANCAP, Dereck Springer recently held discussions with the Inter Religious Organization of Guyana (IRO) on the role of faith leaders in ending AIDS. The Director is advocating for faith leaders to leverage their influence with the communities they serve, youth and vulnerable populations to propagate HIV prevention including testing and other issues related to the achievement of the

90-90-90 Targets¹ and the 2030 goal of ending AIDS.

Present were the Secretary to the IRO, Jennifer Dewar, committee members Pastor Ronald McGarrell of the Family Federation for World Peace and Neil Bacchus of the Muslim Youth League.

The Director explained that PANCAP has been engaging faith leaders since its inception in 2001 in recognition of their reach and influence.

Contributing to the First 90

Referring to the **First 90**, the Director stated that unlike other sectors, faith leaders have tremendous influence with various ethnicities, religions and people of all cultural backgrounds. Hence, faith leaders can provide information to large audiences to make informed decisions about knowing their status. He highlighted that this message aligns with the World AIDS Day 2018 theme, *“Know your status”*, and advised that this would be an ideal opportunity for faith leaders to begin dialogue with their communities on the importance of being tested.

Faith Leaders also critical to the Second 90

“You also have a role to play in relation to the **Second 90** in helping people with treatment adherence,” stated the Director. He illustrated that faith leaders can provide information on nutrition and the importance of remaining on treatment. He highlighted that faith leaders are integral to providing PLHIV with counselling and social support as part of the work they do in providing solace and hope.

He also informed the IRO of the seven Caribbean territories and states that have achieved the dual targets for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and Syphilis and emphasized that faith leaders have a role in encouraging HIV positive pregnant women to remain on treatment to avoid transmission to their babies.

Third 90: Faith leaders' integral to public education on viral suppression

¹ **What are the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) 90-90-90 Targets?**

- By 2020, 90% of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status.
- By 2020, 90% of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy.
- By 2020, 90% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression.

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“Faith leaders are also critical to the achievement of the **Third 90**”, stated Mr. Springer, “you have a captive audience that includes PLHIV and through your messages you can influence them to remain on medication and become virally suppressed”. He explained that faith leaders are critical to providing community-level education on the benefits of PLHIV achieving viral suppression.

Faith leaders can fill the gap left by diminished public education on HIV

The Director further posited that faith leaders could empower their communities with health and family life education especially regarding young people and the issue of sex and sexuality. The PANCAP Director emphasized that in light of reduced public education on HIV prevention, treatment and care, it has become necessary for faith leaders to fill that gap by providing their communities with critical information and guidance on HIV. He urged the IRO to collaborate with PANCAP particularly with regard to reducing stigma and discrimination, which he highlighted as barriers to vulnerable populations accessing HIV prevention and quality health care.

Outcomes and commitments

The IRO committed to discussing the proposed approaches with the wider body. Ms Dewar also proposed utilizing the influence of IRO members on other committees and boards to propagate the messages. She explained that members also serve on such bodies as the National Commission for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases and can utilize these platforms for HIV education. The IRO also committed to exploring the idea of a liaison between the two entities who would work with PANCAP on HIV education initiatives.

Mr. Springer stated that he was encouraged by the enthusiastic response of the IRO and committed to providing resources to reinforce HIV education initiatives by faith leaders through the provision of public awareness materials. At the culmination of the meeting, he stated, “I am pleased that the IRO is willing to explore utilizing their influence for HIV prevention. Indeed, the role of faith leaders is not to be underestimated at this critical juncture of the region’s HIV response”. The initiative forms part of a series of regional engagements by PANCAP with faith leaders under the [Justice for All \(JFA\) programme](#).



SCLAN & PANCAP collaborate for “Pressing Forward for the Health and Well-being of Women, Children and Adolescents”

Sub-head: Event focused on the safety, physical and psychological well-being of women, children and adolescents

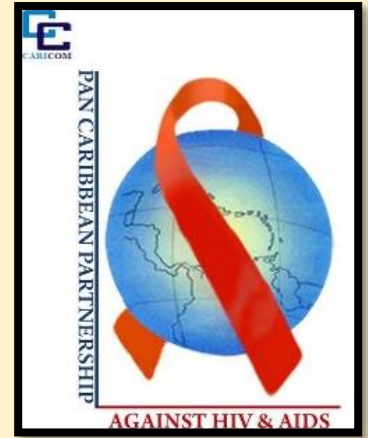
On Monday 24 September 2018 (PANCAP Coordinating Unit, CARICOM Secretariat): The Spouses of CARICOM Leaders Action Network (SCLAN) in collaboration with the Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP) hosted a special forum entitled **“Pressing forward for the health and well-being of women, children and adolescents”** as a side event during the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Monday 24 September 2018. The Forum was designed to increase awareness and to stimulate interest, especially among First Ladies to advocate

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for the development of programs that will support the safety, physical and psychological well-being of women, children and adolescents around the world. The event was chaired by Hon. Kim Simplis Barrow, First Lady of Belize and Chair of SCLAN.

It was intended to bring together First Ladies, Spouses of Heads of Government and UN Representatives to facilitate knowledge exchange, which can contribute positively to progress in key areas such as mental health, the reduction of gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, and HIV and AIDS. This initiative also aimed to build upon the long-term efforts set forth by the global community including former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Every Woman, Every Child Global Movement and the Global Strategy for Women's Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030).

Present were Hon. Dr. Patricia Minnis, First Lady of The Bahamas, Hon. Kim Simplis Barrow, First Lady of Belize and Chair of SCLAN, H.E. Sandra Granger, First Lady of the Republic of Guyana and Vice Chair, SCLAN, H.E. Martine Moise, First Lady of the Republic of Haiti, Hon. Eloise Gonsalves, First Lady of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Ms. Laura Tucker-Longworth, OBE, Speaker of the Belize House of Representatives and PANCAP Champion and Director of PANCAP, Mr. Dereck Springer.



PETAL UPDATES:



BUDDIES

Difficulties and have trained 13 Peer navigators from across support group sessions throughout the the present funding from CVCC in keeping

Fifteen (15) women of all ages and their literacy as a part of for our Peer training program. Participants learned and software and operating systems especially keyboarding. They are now familiar with PowerPoint.

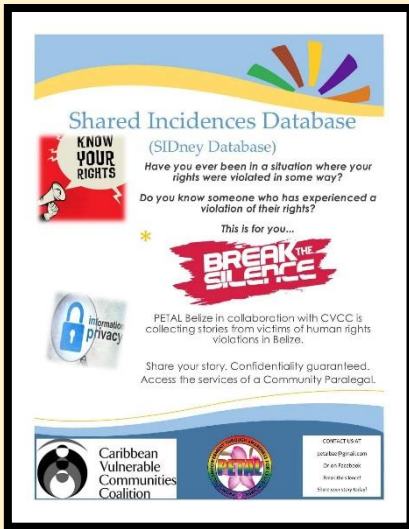
After completing a very informative and in-depth training, the PETAL BUDDIES Peer-to-Peer Navigators are doing their own mini-support group sessions educating their peers about HIV, GBV, and HIV Treatment and Adherence and providing referrals across the country.



(Building Understanding of the Dilemmas in Engaging Services). We the country and will continue to do country until the end of the year under with the 90-90-90 goals.

children were trained in basic computer Empowerment and Life Skills (PELS) practiced the use of computer hardware, by strengthening their skills in popular programs like MS Word and

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As a grantee of CVCC, PETAL has held four (4) mini - sessions informing the country about the use of the SIDney database platform. SID stands for Shared Incidence Database. It is a mechanism/platform designed to log human rights violations. Simone Hill, one of the community paralegals, speaks on Human Rights issues and this ties in with supporting the SIDney database in providing redress and assistance.

PETAL is hosting the CWSDC 2018 (Caribbean Women Sexuality and Diversity Conference) in October. October 4-8. This year's Theme: ***BUILDING THE CASE:***

Strengthening Caribbean LBT Research for Advocacy.

Please follow the link below that speaks of the UPR and ICCPR for which Belize is to report on in October. PETAL's coordinator, Simone Hill will be representing Belize at the UPR and Caleb Orozco (UNIBAM) will represent Belize at the ICCPR.

<https://www.facebook.com/OpenYourEyesBz/videos/321684221972676/>



Empower Yourself Belize Movement Updates:

SEX, Gender and Sexuality Workshop

Session were held to inform participants of the definition and differences between the concepts of sex, gender and sexuality. Participants were then asked to identify where they got their earliest lessons and messages about gender, sex and sexuality and how this impacted them.



This portion of the workshop ended with participants engaged in a sexuality myths and fact interactive activities.

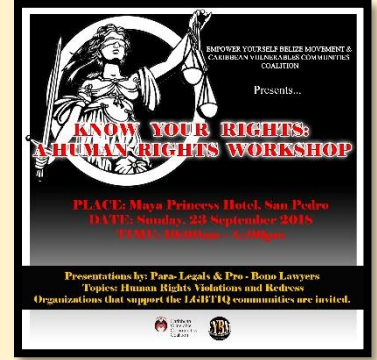


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Human Rights workshop with LGBTI community-

EYBM hosted a workshop at the Maya Princess Hotel in San Pedro on Sunday September 23rd, 2018 for the LGBTI community that focused on primarily on educating and empowering the LGBTI community in San Pedro about their Human Rights and how to address Human Rights violations

The workshop focused on: (1) what is the legal rights and obligations of the LGBTI community; and (2) what the institutional structures of the legal system are.



Stakeholders in Orange Walk Town.

There was a second Human Rights and Belize workshop which was aimed at educating, empowering and introducing Community Paralegal and SID to the key



EYBM celebrated PRIDE 2018

to commemorate the Section 53 ruling and the subsequent strengthening of their advocacy within the varying communities and partnerships.



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National AIDS Commission and the Ministry of Health collaborate on a NAC District Committee skills building training

On Thursday August 23rd, 2018 the NAC held a scheduled District Committee (DC) certified training. The intent of the training was to strengthen the non-Ministry of Health (MOH) members (mostly new members) of the DC in HIV/TB, the Belize Health Information Systems (BHIS) and the policies and procedures of the NAC. The NAC invited two members from each of the seven DC's for a total of fourteen invited members to be a part of the training. This training was vital because it served as the basis for future trainings and overall development of the DC as we continue our revitalization efforts.



The NAC engaged the assistance of the MOH to deliver the HIV/TB & BHIS training components component of the training. As per the agenda, the MOH staff deliver the HIV/TB & BHIS components of the program and engaged the participants in dynamic discussions that allowed the NAC to better gain on-the-ground perspectives on the effectiveness of our program design and how to better implement future programs.



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The National AIDS Commission launches two new dynamic ads...

The National AIDS Commission is proud to launch its Wedding Conundrum 2 HIV Awareness ad. This is a follow-up to Wedding Conundrum 1 and follows the couple at a one-year anniversary party where they received some very important but distressing news.....



The NAC also launched another awareness ad that focused on human rights: "Once Upon a time In Belize...a Human Rights Story." This ad follows the lives of three people who have been discriminated against for various reasons and shows the viewers the linkages between all the individuals as it relates to their Human Rights and HIV violations.....



The national AIDS Commission is proud to continue its legacy and history of redefining the HIV/TB response in Belize and as a forerunner in this response we continue to strive to meet the needs of the country, provide hope and create an enabling environment through dedicated service.

UPCOMING EVENTS: WORLD AIDS DAY 2018..."KNOW YOUR STATUS" – National event to held on Friday November 30th, 2018.

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