



The SECRETARIAT e-newsletter

“Giving hope to people living with HIV through dedicated service.”

JAN – DEC 2016

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2016: A YEAR IN REVIEW

JAN-MAR:

THE NATIONAL AIDS COMMISSION LAUNCHES GAMING APP, INFECTION

On Thursday March 17th, 2016 the National AIDS Commission launched its educational and interactive gaming app (Infection) for Android devices on Google Play. As one of the flagship programs of the NAC since 2014, the NAC Gaming App has been a vision of skill and concept design put to its fullest form. In 2014 the NAC launched the Nationwide “App Gaming Competition” which was the initial competition designed to gain national support and interest on the development of the app.

The winner of the competition was a game called “*Infection*” which was designed and developed by the CODE IT Developmental Club from Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College (CEMJC) in Corozal. This team of young developers took the concepts and ideas of the program and merged it into an intense and diverse gaming concept and design.

The app in no way intends to trivialize the realities and impact of HIV and AIDS on the national and global stages but rather it presents circumstances that put to the test reasoning and decision making skills. It complements national efforts designed to prevent new infections, encourage testing and compliance, and making services readily available to those who need them.

It is our hope at the NAC, to continue to find creative and dynamic ways to engage and involve all populations and sectors of the society on the issues of HIV/AIDS and its effect on our society. As we continue to serve Belize we also keep in mind that HIV/AIDS is a global epidemic and we most all play our part in the global fight.



Download **INFECTION** FREE
Through the Google Play Store.
Search: **Infection Belize**,
download and enjoy!

National Youth Council Elections



On Friday February 19, 2016 rallies were held in each district to launch the National Youth Council Elections. After a short parade through the main streets, candidates gave short presentations on why they are most suitable to be elected. On Monday February 29, five YAM Members contested in the Belize National Youth Council elections. A total of 431 delegates came out to cast their votes on behalf of their respective youth groups from across the country. This resulted in all five members elected: *Ms Dominique Noralez from Belize City—Vice President, Ms Joslin Alvarez from Orange Walk—Vice President, Mr Jamall Swaso—President, Mr Dewayne Don Neal—Public Relations and Ms Antonette Nunez—Treasurer all from Dangriga.*

The Youth council is responsible for ensuring that the voices of youth are heard as well as to lobby and influence policy decisions made by the Cabinet and the House of Representatives.

The Belize Family Life Association would like to congratulate our YAM Members for taking on this challenge and for their successful election, we would also like to extend our appreciation to those who voted and supported the campaigns in any way. Thank you again!

USAID | PASCA LMG Shares Methodology for Developing HIV Workplace Policies

Belize City, Belize, 22 March 2016 – USAID | PASCA LMG facilitated a training workshop for the Ministry of Labour at the Radisson Fort George Hotel in Belize City. In attendance were the Labour Commissioner as well as labour and employment officers of 10 stations or branches across the country of Belize.

Besides introducing participants to the UNAIDS 90-90-90 target in her opening address, Chairperson of the National AIDS Commission, Mrs Laura Longworth, reminded participants of horizontal violence in the workplace. She then emphasized national and international legal references to the right to work citing recent cases of wrongful termination that have reinforced workers' rights against stigma and discrimination in Belize. Diego Grajelez of The Collaborative Network of Persons Living With HIV in Belize (CNET+) focused his presentation on stigma and discrimination, primarily on how perceptions of gatekeepers such as public officers affect their work with the general public.



Aniki Palacio, HIV Focal Point in the Ministry of Labour, then gave a history of HIV Workplace policies leading to the training session facilitated by USAID | PASCA LMG's Country Representative, Dr. Peitra Arana. At the end of the session, participants received an assignment as well as the methodology for developing HIV Workplace policies in their receptive jurisdictions. It is hoped that a follow-up workshop next month will further enable participants to build capacity for creating HIV Workplace policies, ensuring sustainability of an initiative to which USAID | PASCA LMG has been providing technical assistance for the past four years.

PANCAP Partners Commit to High Impact Cost Effective Interventions for Sustaining HIV Response

Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP) partners committed to implementing high impact cost effective interventions to sustain national and regional responses. This commitment was made at the Fourth Annual Meeting of National AIDS Programme Managers and Key Partners, which concluded today, 17th March 2016 in Trinidad and Tobago.

The meeting's participants were challenged to identify the national and regional guiding policies and actions needed to sustain an effective HIV response. They were also challenged to fast track the end of the AIDS epidemic by 2030, notwithstanding the current global economic environment and declining donor funds for HIV.

The economic implications of sustaining Care and Treatment for All and access to affordable medicines and commodities were discussed. Strategies for operationalising new approaches for HIV prevention and treatment at the national level were agreed, and the need for the integration of HIV into health systems was reaffirmed. The cross-cutting role of civil society in the response to HIV, including service delivery and advocacy, was also reaffirmed.

Partners reiterated and agreed that the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and congenital Syphilis was within the Caribbean's reach. Cuba was validated in 2015 as the first country in the world to achieve this target and 17 other countries in the region are working towards validation in 2016.

The outcomes of the meeting are:

- **New 2015 WHO guidelines for the use of antiretroviral drugs for the treatment and prevention of HIV disseminated, and challenges and opportunities for their implementation identified;**
- **Strategies, based on cost analysis, for the sustainability of "care and treatment for all" in the Caribbean defined;**
- **Integration and alignment of the Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission strategy with other key services to ensure sustainability of gains discussed; and**
- **PAHO Action Plan for the Control of HIV/STI 2016-2021 and the Caribbean Cooperation in Health (CCH) IV revised.**

PANCAP collaborated with the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Caribbean Office and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to convene the meeting.

Participants included National AIDS Programme Managers from 18 countries, selected Chief Medical Officers, development, regional and civil society partners.

PANCAP is a Caribbean regional partnership of governments, regional civil society organisations, regional institutions and organisations, bilateral and multilateral agencies and contributing development partners. Established on 14 February 2001, PANCAP provides a structured and unified approach to the Caribbean's response to the HIV epidemic, coordinates the response through the Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework on HIV and AIDS (CRSF) to maximise efficient use of resources and increase impact, mobilise resources and the build capacity of partners.

“Latin America & The Caribbean Risk Forum: Effective Risk Management for Sustainable Transitions from Global Fund-Financed Programs”

Belize was represented at the Risk Management Forum for Principal and Sub Recipients of the Global Fund by Mr Enrique Romero (NAC) and Ms Erika Castellanos (CNET+). The forum was held TRYP- Wyndham Hotel in Panama City, Panama from March 21-22, 2016.

The forum was an initiative of The Developing Country NGO Constituency (DCNGO), with technical and funding support from The Global Fund, German BACKUP Initiative (GIZ), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF). The Global Fund and its partners value collaboration with Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and National AIDS Programmes (NAP), who are instrumental in the design, development and implementation and monitoring and evaluation of Global Fund and other external donor programmes. In order to help CSOs and NAPs continue their successes and strengthen their capacity in this regard, the Risk Management Forum provided a unique opportunity to share effective risk prevention and risk management strategies to improve the efficacy of programmes and efficiency in Grant management where sustainability and transitioning are key factors.



The objectives of the Implementers Risk Management Forum were to:

Dialogue on Global Fund sustainability and transition policy and its integration with risk management;

Prioritize risk factors associated with sustainability and transition from Global Fund financed programs in Latin America & the Caribbean (LAC);

Share current approaches and good practices among LAC implementers (particularly civil society), Global Fund Secretariat and partners to mitigate sustainability-related risk factors;

Discuss alignment opportunities across partners’ sustainability plans and strategies.

The forum was opened to select Implementers and included constituents from country-level and LAC regional civil society organizations as well as people living with HIV (PLHIV) and key affected and vulnerable populations, all with varying expertise in the response to AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

FAREWELL TO A COLLEAGUE, FRIEND AND MENTOR....



We bid goodbye to our dear colleague and friend Asad Julian Magaña, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer for the Global Fund Round 9 HIV Project managed by UNDP Belize. Asad took office on 01 April 2011 up to March 31, 2016.

Prior to this Asad served as Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist for the Belize Rural Development Programme (BRDP) funded by the European Union (2006-2008), and before he held the post of Rural Financial Expert with the Community-Initiation Agriculture Rural Development Project (CARD) funded by CDB and IFAD (2001-2005). Asad also worked for 10 years at the Development Finance Corporation (1991-2001) holding various positions in Belmopan, Punta Gorda Town, Corozal Town and Belize City Offices.

Asad holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Agriculture from El Zamorano University, from Honduras and pursued an MSc. In International Development and Project Management from Lund University in Sweden.

Asad departs to hold Office at the Caribbean Development Bank in Barbados as their Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist for the Community Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (CDRRF) in the Environmental Sustainability Unit of the Projects Department. You will be missed. Thanks for your service.

APR - JUN:



The National AIDS Commission in collaboration with the Ministry of Health joined 18 other countries in the region in observing the 9th Annual *Regional Testing Day on June 24th, 2016* by implementing specific HIV testing activities countrywide from 9am to 3pm at the following location: **Belize City: Scotiabank Albert Street branch; San Ignacio Town: Welcome Center; Dangriga Town: Courts Parking Lot. and at specific locations countrywide.**



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: *Increasing Testing to Create Change!*

RTD 2016 stats: 1235 tests

Belize City: 322; Corozal Town: 134; Dangriga Town: 142; Orange Walk Town: 232; San Ignacio Town: 280; Punta Gorda Town: 21; and Belmopan City: 104

This is Belize's 5th year as a part of the program and with the National response of ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2030; Regional Testing Day promoted a scale up approach HIV testing efforts in keeping with the objectives of the National Strategic Plan.

Besides targeting the three above mentioned sites on June 24th, 2016 for all day testing, activities around the topic of HIV started in mid-May with a variation of events including: educational sessions, media interactions, health fairs, free On-site HIV Testing at work sites around the country and a dynamic social media campaign.

Belize has been a lead entity in the region in the promotion of this event and we continue with renewed efforts given that in 2015 there were 3275 living with HIV/AIDS in Belize. 31,346 HIV tests done were done in 2015, a general scale up in services, and a reduction in the total number of new infections which has led to an HIV prevalence rate of 1.2%, the lowest in years.

France Pledges €1.08 Billion to Global Fund

The Government of France announced that they will contribute €1.08 billion to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria for the three-year period beginning in 2017, demonstrating strong leadership in global health.

France is the second leading donor to the Global Fund, and has consistently played a pioneering role in scientific research, promoting human rights and serving people affected by HIV. The new pledge, which represents a sustained commitment of France's previous support, represents a significant contribution to the Global Fund's three-year replenishment.

France has contributed more than €3.8 billion to the Global Fund since it was established in 2002 to accelerate the end of the epidemics.

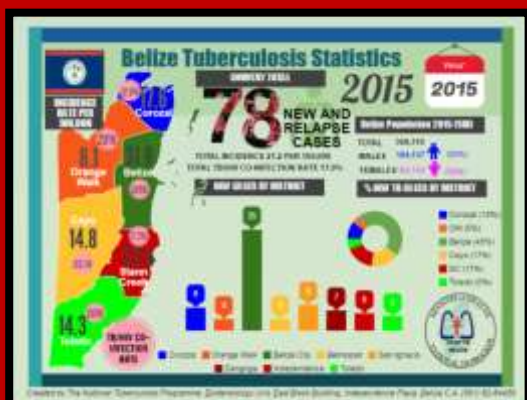
Every three years, the Global Fund works with donors like France to raise funds to continue the work to fight AIDS, TB and malaria, and to build resilient and sustainable systems for health. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada announced in May that Canada will host this year's Replenishment Conference in Montreal on 16 September 2016. The Global Fund partnership set a goal for raising US\$13 billion to be invested during the three-year period that begins in 2017.

Based on partner estimates, a US\$13 billion contribution would save up to 8 million lives through programs supported by the Global Fund, avert up to 300 million new infections across the three diseases and lead to broad economic gains of up to US\$290 billion over the coming years and decades.



The BLACK March: LGBT Prospective

BELIZE TUBERCULOSIS



STATISTICS 2015

The **BLACK** march, became a symbol of opportunity and a short term public relations investment, masking the substantive needs to strengthen our citizens concerns about inadequate accessible redress mechanisms. The lack of state system response to legal marginalisation of its LGBT citizens has helped to amplify the social effects of state systems policing the bodies of its citizens.



The **BLACK** march or *Be Loving And Cease Killing* was organized at NAPA on March 17th, 2016 in Belize City. For the first time, we had, Tikkun Olam, a sex worker advocacy organization, along with three LGBT led community-based groups and organizations: Our

Circle, EYBM, BYEC & UniBAM made their presence felt, as all recognize that crime is about citizenry that unites us in our concern about personal security. Crime stats from 2000-2015 shows: 1553 murders, cumulatively over 15 years while there were 672 rapes and 7,541 robberies. The data reveal that violence is a loose social tool that forces people into a state of alert or psychological guard.

When state system inadequate investments in promoting jobs for its citizens take place, it must be noted, that women who voluntarily seek sex work are arbitrarily penalized for their work ethic, use of resources earned from sex work by banks, custody rights of children and along with their children in school. The result, is that economic independence is delegitimised or discouraged in a way that forces these women to carry the burden alone in giving life to their aspirations. The L.G.B.T socio-economic concerns are inter-related as well, as family, job security, access to education and custody issues are equally marginalized or excluded by current laws that do not acknowledge the current dignity and economic safety-net concerns of couples and individuals alike.



In **Be Loving And Cease Killing**, we would hope that the slogan is about hearts and minds, about human capacity to find peace, understanding and stability in an exclusionary legal environment. We united in the basic premise of the **BLACK March**, we hope, that its core value of Love can be reciprocated. The proof, will be in the practice and social actions that are yet to come.



UNDP-Global Fund (GF) New Funding Model HIV/AIDS and TB Grant 2016-18

The Ministry of Economic Development, on behalf of the country of Belize, was granted US\$3.4 million for HIV/AIDS and TB prevention and mitigation by the Global Fund for 2016-18. This is the first GF grant to include TB interventions to lessen the incidences of all forms of TB and TB-HIV co-infections in key populations. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was again selected to serve as Principal Recipient (PR) under this new funding model grant. Although a new project cycle, the grant is considered transitional, since stakeholders will build efficiently and sustainably upon previously identified good practices in-country and the Latin American and Caribbean regions.

Under this grant, UNDP is handing over to the Ministry essential health equipment, including: two project vehicles for monitoring of TB activities and community outreach; 25 bicycles for community health workers servicing HIV and TB patients in local communities across the country; laptops; Gene Xpert machinery; lab equipment and other health products and consumables.

Remaining funds will be used to strengthen national health systems through infrastructural development and multi-level capacity building for healthcare workers. In addition to health systems strengthening, the grant seeks to promote human rights for all, particularly among key populations most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and TB. Implementing partners include Ministry of Health, Belize Family Life Association (BFLA), Hand in Hand Ministries (HnH) and Productive Organization for Women in Action (POWA). Together, these organizations will work in Belize City, Cayo and Stann Creek, the three districts with heaviest burden of HIV/AIDS and TB in Belize.



UNDP Belize continues its mandate to promote human and national development for all and stands firmly by its commitment to **“Empowered Lives. Resilient Nations.”** The GF grant in Belize will provide life-saving and life-changing assistance to those affected and infected by HIV/AIDS and TB in Belize.



BFLA Receives Donation of a Mobile Trailer

On Thursday
September 8th

2016, The Belize Family Life Association received the keys to a trailer home that was donated to the organization by Mr. and Mrs. Dave Smith. The 20 foot camper will be used for mobile outreaches particularly for Pap Smears and other services in rural areas and for outreaches where a private room is unavailable. A handing over ceremony was held at the BFLA Headquarters in Belize City, where staff and other guests were invited to take a tour of the trailer. The Belize Family life Association is very appreciative and would once again like to express sincere gratitude to the Smith Family for their outstanding donation.



Hand-In-Hand Ministries: Progress on the Fowler Community Center

Constructing a building of this magnitude always comes with issues!! Whether it be time frame, financial, weather etc. The FCC is no different, and God has been good to us through the many people that cross our path and give us their support. In spite of the many challenges we face, we continue to make head way.

We are now at the stage of pouring the second floor and hopefully with continued support we will be able to at least get the first floor ready to relocate our Preschool, Daycare and Outreach facility for the beginning of 2017. Keep us in mind and help us if you can! We are looking for volunteers during the work week and anyone that is able to assist us financially to complete the building. Our Children need us, and we need your support! Praying God's Blessings be upon you all always!





United Nations High Level Meeting

ON THE FAST TRACK TO ENDING AIDS

Belize was represented at the United Nations High Level Meeting (UNHLM) on HIV/AIDS on June 8-10, by the Chairperson of the National AIDS Commission (NAC) as Head of the Belize Delegation. Other members of the delegation were Ms Erika Castellanos (C-NET+) and Ms Paulette Elrington from the Belize High Commission in New York.

This forum facilitated discussions on funding challenges, and barriers to eliminating HIV/AIDS to include: lack of integration into health systems, difficult access to anti-retroviral medication, the 90-90-90 strategy and its' inherent implications, social exclusion, "bad laws" that support discrimination and lack of support at Ministerial levels in CARICOM countries

Belize with most countries, voted to accept the Political Declaration on ending AIDS by 2030. During remarks from delegates in the General Assembly, which followed the vote to accept the UN Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS/TB, many countries made short comments of reasons why they support the "Declaration." Others declared their country's opposition to language related to sexual and reproductive rights, sexuality education and other issues. Trinidad's Minister of Health, Honorable Terrence Deyalsingh, recorded his country's dissatisfaction with the call to "end child marriages." He declared that Trinidad considers that to be a cultural matter and it is an issue that is still being debated. CARICOM countries should monitor developments on this issue as this position contravenes the Region's commitment to protect children in conformity with the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Ms. Erika Castellanos (CNET+) is a member of the *Communities Delegation to the Board of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB & Malaria*. She participated in the preparatory meetings during the development of language and targets of the Political Declaration. Along with her Global Fund team, she visited various UN Missions to lobby for support of the Declaration. She was eloquent as a speaker/panelist as she addressed the goal of leaving no one behind: *the rights and health of key and vulnerable populations*.

Numerous sessions were held with eminent speakers on key topics during which the audience had an opportunity to respond and/or raise issues related to the topic. A summary of key issues is provided below.

Financing the End of AIDS: The Window of Opportunity

- The world has agreed to end AIDS as a global public health threat by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Increasing investment in the AIDS response needs to be front-loaded to reach US\$ 26.2 billion by 2020 in low-middle income countries.
- Funding commitments have been forthcoming from various countries including Canada. Global health leaders will attend a Global Fund Replenishment conference to be hosted by Canada on September 16, 2016.
- Multiple challenges need to be addressed if ending as a global public health threat is to be achieved.
 - Better allocation of existing resources.
 - More efficient and affordable service delivery and commodity procurement.
 - Integration of HIV services as part of the universal healthcare benefits package.
 - Expanding public-private partnerships
 - Maintaining and growing domestic public development partner financing in transitioning economies.
- Investments must include the building of resilient and sustainable systems for health with sensitivity to gender equality, key populations and human rights.

Getting ahead of the looming treatment crisis: an action agenda for reaching 90-90-90

- Fast tracking the AIDS response will build on opportunities for strong local and national leadership, technological innovations, more efficient services and programs, and clear direction provided by a global agenda for sustainable development.
- The 90-90-90 target means that 90% of people living with HIV know their status, 90% of people living with HIV who know their status are accessing treatment and 90% of people receiving treatment have suppressed viral load. Having a suppressed viral load reduces the risk of transmitting HIV to zero, and facilitates maintenance of a strong immune system to prevent AIDS related morbidity and mortality.
- To achieve the target it is recommended that investments be frontloaded to increase the availability of affordable treatment. Health systems must reorganize and strengthen service delivery mechanisms and sustain commitment to ending the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030. Achieving the 90-90-90 target represents a highly efficient investment portfolio from health, economic and social perspectives.
- The price of first-line medicines has declined since 2000. However, second and third line medications are expensive and threaten the achievement of the 90-90-90 strategies. The availability of generic medication is complicated by Agreements on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

Children, adolescent girls and young women: preventing new HIV infections

- HIV among children, adolescent girls and young women is associated with issues related to economics, sexual and reproductive health, rights and gender equality.
- HIV and national HIV programs need to reach out and jointly plan and put in place structures for co-funding with other sectors to increase secondary and tertiary education, expand social protection programs and update gender policies and laws protecting and promoting the rights of adolescent girls and young women.
- Scale-up comprehensive programs to address HIV prevention and gender-based violence. Adolescent girls and young women must have access to high-quality sexual and reproductive health services, including comprehensive information, male and female condoms and other female-initiated prevention commodities, family planning maternal health services, counseling on sexually transmitted infections and information as needed new technologies such as pre-exposure prophylaxis.
- Engage men and boys in promoting gender equality and preventing gender-based violence.
- Engaging with faith and traditional leaderships to address structural causes of gender inequality to end child and early and forced marriage and eliminating female genital mutilation.



National AIDS Commission Welcomes Section 53 Judgment

The National AIDS Commission (NAC) welcomes the decision delivered by Chief Justice Kenneth Benjamin on August 1, 2016, in which he ordered that *Section 53 of the Criminal Code be amended to include a clause that states that the legislation “shall not apply to consensual sexual acts between adults.”* This constitutes a successful challenge to the constitutionality of the Criminal Code of 1981-Setion 53, which criminalized consensual sexual intercourse between men with punishment of up to ten years of imprisonment.

We recognize the extraordinary efforts, personal sacrifices, and perseverance of Mr. Caleb Orozco and UNIBAM, which culminated in the landmark decision to amend Section 53 of the Criminal Code. Chief Justice Benjamin agreed that Section 53 violated his right to dignity, privacy, and his rights to sexual expression. Mr. Orozco is a dedicated member of the NAC, and brings his vast expertise to the NAC’s Policy and Legislation Committee. We also acknowledge and congratulate Mr. Orosco’s dynamic legal team, who took the position that Mr. Orozco and members of the LGBT community were being deprived of their right to “equality before the law and equal protection of the law.” His legal team was led by Senior Counsels Lisa Shoman of Belize and Westlin James of the UWI Rights Advocacy Project (U-RAP), and other Belizean and regional attorneys who have been involved this legal challenge since 2010.



The NAC’s National Strategic Plan 2016-2020 highlights the need to narrow the intervention’s focus to Men Who Have Sex with Men. While the overall HIV prevalence in adults has dropped from 2.1% to 1.4%, the population of men who have sex with men is now the group that records by far the highest HIV prevalence rate (13.9%). In 2015, 239 new infections were reported; an increase from 226 in 2014 which highlights the need for urgent tailored interventions in particular for key affected populations and other vulnerable groups and individuals. Criminalization and stigmatization create barriers and restrict access to healthcare services necessary to reduce HIV transmission and treat HIV infections.

The Government of Belize (GOB) received a US\$3.4 million grant from the Global Fund to address HIV/AIDS/TB in Belize. Apart from this, GOB is contributing US\$1.8 million in addition to the projected budget allocations. The investment reflects Government’s desire to achieve the UNAIDS 90/90/90 targets by 2020: *90 percent of persons with HIV will know their status; 90 percent of those diagnosed with HIV will be on treatment; 90 percent of those on treatment will have suppressed viral loads.* Module seven (Removing Legal Barriers), will support the creation of legal and policy frameworks in matters related to human rights of vulnerable groups. Amendment of Section 53 of the Criminal Code will play a significant role for the NAC. It provides additional support and opportunity to achieve national and international targets on HIV/AIDS/TB reduction. The Amendment will also foster the creation of an environment to reduce stigma and discrimination and increase equitable access to healthcare services for key populations and other vulnerable groups in Belize.

“It will be impossible to end the epidemic without bringing HIV treatment to all who need it utilizing a human rights based approach.”

A SNAPSHOT OF THE GLOBAL FUND HIV / TB GRANT 2016-2018

Investing for Impact against TB & HIV in Belize A Global Fund 2016-18 Grant

Project Goals & Objectives

G1: To halt the spread of HIV and HIV/TB co-infections among MSM and other males at risk (sexually active men ages 19-49 years) with a focus on Belize, Stann Creek and Cayo districts.

G2: To effectively detect and cure all forms of TB, MDR-TB, and TB-HIV co-infections.

Obj. 1: To double the rate of MSMs, other males at risk and other vulnerable populations who are tested for HIV and know their status by the end of 2018.

Obj. 2: To increase to 85% the rate of TB patients tested, diagnosed and treated.

PROJECT BUDGET (USD)= 3,451,271.03

YEAR 1 (2016)	YEAR 2 (2017)	YEAR 3 (2018)
1,501,736.71	1,018,504.15	931,030.03

Project Indicators

- Percentage of MSM that have received an HIV test during the reporting period and know their results
- Percentage of other vulnerable populations that have received an HIV test during the reporting period and know their results
- Percentage of adults and children currently receiving antiretroviral therapy among all adults and children living with HIV
- Number of notified cases of all forms of TB - bacteriologically confirmed plus clinically diagnosed, new and relapses
- Percentage of TB cases, all forms, bacteriologically confirmed plus clinically diagnosed, successfully treated (cured plus treatment completed) among all new TB cases registered for treatment during a specified period.
- Percentage of bacteriologically confirmed TB cases successfully treated (cured plus completed treatment) among the bacteriologically confirmed TB cases registered during a specified period.
- Percentage of HIV-positive patients who were assessed for TB in HIV care or other treatment settings.
- MIR TB-1: Percentage of previously treated TB patients receiving MTI (bacteriologically positive cases only).
- MIR TB-2: Number of bacteriologically confirmed, drug resistant TB cases (RR-TB and/or MDR-TB) notified.

SBs and Budgets (YEAR 1)

SBs (Named in the Grant)	Budget (USD) (2016,271,711)
MOH	\$755,987
BFLA	\$38,752
Hand in Hand	\$99,276
UNDP	\$525,726
TBD	\$66,750
OTHER	\$15,245.71

10 Project Modules & Interventions Investing for Impact against TB & HIV in Belize

Module 1:
Prevention programs for MSM and Trans
Budget (USD): Y1=145,254; Y2= 182,276;
Y3= 189,790; Total= 557,328

Intervention 1:
Behaviour change as a part of programs for MSM and TS.
HIV testing & counseling as a part of programs for MSM & TS.
Counseling as a part of programs for MSM & TS.
Other interventions for MSM & TS.

Module 2:
Prevention programs for other vulnerable populations
Budget (USD): Y1= 0; Y2=12,758
Y3= 12,758; Total= 25,515

Intervention 2:
Behaviour change as a part of programs for vulnerable populations.

Module 3:
Treatment, Care and Support
Budget (USD): Y1= 144,291;
Y2= 122,391; Y3= 187,391; Total= 374,073

Intervention 3:
Treatment adherence
Other interventions for treatment

Module 4:
TB Care and Prevention
Budget (USD): Y1= 585,999
Y2= 216,777; Y3= 217,873
Total= 930,649

Intervention 4:
Case detection and diagnosis
Treatment
Community TB care delivery
Engaging all care providers
Key affected population

Module 5:
TB/HIV
Budget (USD): Y1= 8,510; Y2= 2,900
Y3= 2,900; Total= 14,310

Intervention 5:
Engaging all care providers
TB/HIV collaborative interventions

Module 6:
MDR-TB
Budget (USD): Y1= 58,775; Y2= 10,475
Y3= 10,475; Total= 51,275

Intervention 6:
Case detection and diagnosis;
MDR-TB

Module 7:
Removing Legal Barriers to Access
Budget (USD): Y1= 160,598; Y2= 187,640
Y3= 95,696; Total= 363,942

Intervention 7:
Training on rights for officials, health workers and police
Community-based monitoring of legal rights
Policy advocacy on legal rights
Legal and Policy environment assessment and law reform
Other

Module 8:
HIS--Health Information Systems and MDS
Budget (USD): Y1= 285,422;
Y2= 50,218; Y3= 85,589;
Total= 339,149

Intervention 8:
Routine reporting
Analysis, review and transparency
Administrative and finance data sources
Surveys

Module 9:
HIS--Procurement Supply Chain Management
Budget (USD): Y1= 6,250; Y2= 0
Y3= 0; Total= 6,250

Intervention 9:
Operationalization of procurement and supply chain management system

Module 10:
Program Management
Budget (USD): Y1= 296,638;
Y2= 393,062; Y3= 298,639
Total= 988,539

Intervention 10:
Grant management
Policy, planning, coordination and management

The Closing of USAID Combination Prevention Program for HIV and PASMO Belize



On October 5 2016, PASMO Belize and the National AIDS response celebrated 10 years of support for HIV prevention in Belize. This event also marked the end of PASMO Belize's existence within the National AIDS response. While this was a sobering reminder of the effects of depleting resources for HIV prevention, PASMO reflected on its impact within the recent years.

During the period 2010- 2016 PASMO Belize primarily Implemented USAID Combination Prevention Program. The program designed for the following outputs:

Reduce high risk behaviors among key populations and persons living with HIV

- PASMO Belize developed and used evidence-based, interactive social and behavior change methodologies and interventions to map high-risk zones for targeted activities. PASMO Belize also created Mobile outreach teams in close coordination with the Ministry of Health and other NGO partners. They also partnered with the Kolbe Foundation and provided social and behavior change interventions to imprisoned men. They also providing access to HIV testing and counselling and sensitized prison guards and staff on HIV, stigma and discrimination. PASMO collaborated with the Ministry of Health in providing a support group for HIV positive prisoners.
- Piloted an online outreach program, reaching 202 MSM online with prevention messages and referrals to HIV testing and counselling (2014-2016).
- Provided technical support and training to Collaborative Network of People Living with HIV, (C-Net+), Productive Organization for Women in Action, (POWA) and Claret Care.
- Within the past five years PASMO was able to reach 12,868 individuals with behavior change intervention and performed 7,165 HIV test. Within October 2015- August 2016 PASMO Belize performed 596 HIV test with members of the MSM population and assisted 39 positive cases with follow-up care and treatment.

Reduce hostility in social environments related to homophobia, stigma, and discrimination.

- Partnered with Belize Family Life Association and provided training and sensitization of BFLA staff for the provision of HIV testing and counselling services to target populations. PASMO Belize also trained several media and journalist.
- Formation of Generation Zero Movement which advocated for human rights and the effects of Stigma and discrimination via the creation of several interactive and informative events.



Research, monitoring and evaluation to design or adjust program activities.

- PASMO Belize performed several surveys assessing both the impact of the organization and the quality of service provision and products offered in Belize, these included:
 - MAP Studies on condom availability and access.
 - TRaC studies on behaviors, evaluation, and exposure to Program interventions. Populations: female sex workers, men who have sex with men, males at-risk (regional), and persons living with HIV (regional)
 - Qualitative studies
 - Women's views on masculinities.

- Special study on stigma and discrimination “from a discriminator’s approach”
 - Special study on barriers to adherence and condom use among people living with HIV.
 - Risk factors Study.
- Mystery Client Study (Assessing the services provision of health care providers.

The impact that PASMO Belize has had on the HIV/AIDS response cannot be lessened, they have provided the country with great references and insight into the lifestyles, hearts and minds of at risk populations. The organization will be missed but dedication and members of PASMO will continue to make an impact in the National Response to HIV/AIDS and we welcome their work and desire for a creative and innovative national direction. Thank you all....



The Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV & AIDS, PANCAP,

hosted a three-day workshop (November 22 -24) in Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, on Knowledge Synthesis and Best Practices for over forty (40) leaders of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and National AIDS Programme (NAP) Managers in the Caribbean. The Honourable Terrence Deyalsingh, as host Minister of Health, delivered the keynote address in which he stressed the critical importance of leadership and committed his support as a champion for the regional and global agenda for ending AIDS

by the year 2030. He underscored his support for the WHO and UNAIDS initiatives - ‘Treat All’ (‘Test and Start’) and the ‘90-90-90’ targets aimed for the year 2020.

The workshop engaged participants in applying knowledge management tools to HIV programme implementation with particular regard to the ‘Treat All’ and the UNAIDS 90-90-90 goals. The pivotal role that CSOs and NAP Managers play in the HIV response was affirmed. Stronger and more effective collaboration between these two stakeholders was fostered through a series of engaging knowledge management (KM) activities that allowed participants to share their success stories and best practices with each other.

The three outcomes of the workshop were: **a)** renewal of commitment for the integration of CSOs into the national responses **b)** recognition of the comparative advantage of CSOs in reaching key population groups and **c)** improvement of relationships and enhanced collaboration between leaders of CSOs and NAP Managers. It is expected that these three areas of success will result in more effective approaches in advocating for the sustainability of HIV programmes beyond donor funding.



HIV/AIDS: Barriers to Accessing Health Care Services A Public Forum

October 31, 2016—On October 28th, the Belize National AIDS Commission in collaboration with UNAIDS hosted a public forum on the theme “*HIV/AIDS: Barriers to Accessing Healthcare Services*”. Held at the Best Western Belize Biltmore Plaza, the dialogue explored strategies for ensuring that no one is left behind as Belize embarks on a Fast Track strategy to scale up prevention, testing and treatment services as well as eliminate stigma and discrimination.



This commitment is linked with the 2016 Political Declaration to end AIDS, a pledge made by United Nations member states to significantly reduce new infections and AIDS-related deaths while increasing the number of people living with HIV who have an undetectable viral load over the next 14 years. This is aligned to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. At the centre of this approach is new science which shows that early and full treatment can suppress the HIV virus, dramatically improving the health of people living with HIV and reducing the risk that they might pass on the virus. The forum explored various medical, social, legal and programmatic approaches to increasing health service access in Belize.

NAC Chairperson, Laura Longworth, noted that the AIDS response required strong leadership to deal with the human rights issues that are central to addressing the epidemic.

“The epidemic is concentrated in the community of men who have sex with men. We cannot back away from it. We have to deal with it. We have to foster an environment that lowers stigma and discrimination,” Longworth said. “We also need to get sexual and reproductive health education on board for young people. It is their human right.”



Noting that the government is investing an additional US\$1.8 million to achieve the Fast Track treatment targets, Longworth announced a number of innovations meant to increase testing and treatment uptake and address human rights challenges. One is a human rights observatory meant to take and follow-up on complaints from key population communities. The National HIV Testing plan will include a rapid testing strategy that trains non-health workers to administer tests and integrates HIV testing into general health services. Also, the health system will set up a complaints mechanism to address breaches of confidentiality.

Dr. Marvin Manzanero, Director of Health Services at the Ministry of Health, emphasised that men in general required particular attention in Belize. He said that two of three HIV-related deaths in 2015 were among males.

“Males are coming later to the system. They are having a problem accessing services and are presenting when they have reached advanced stages of infection,” he said. “A vast number of men who have HIV have not been tested. When we don’t talk about men we are missing the boat.”

Manzanero shared data pointing to concentrated epidemics among men who have sex with men (13.9%) and male prisoners (4.9%). By contrast, HIV prevalence was 0.9% among sex workers and 0.6% among pregnant women. He said the country was on the verge of eliminating HIV transmission from mothers to children.

Attorney at law Leo Bradley Jr offered clarity on the scope and implications of Section 53 judgment.

“The law was prying into bedrooms. It applied to a wide range of sexual behaviour, lumping sex acts between people, including heterosexuals, together with bestiality and paedophilia,” Bradley explained.

The law was held by the Chief Justice to be inconsistent with the constitution’s rights to dignity, privacy, freedom of expression and equality. Bradley stressed that Section 53 was adjudged to be unconstitutional as it relates to consensual acts between adults in private. He stressed that this change has not affected the constitution or the law’s application to non-consensual sex, public sex acts or sex involving minors.

This forum was a success and provided the stakeholders insight into the scope of work previously undertaken and the path that needs to be mapped out. It also provided a brief window into the knowledge and perspectives of the general public on certain key points of interest that directly affect them. The general attitude is that we should organize more such forums and engage the public more in the national, regional and international discussion on HIV/AIDS.

UNITE FOR THE CHILDREN WORLD AIDS DAY BENEFIT CONCERT



This year, in observation of World AIDS DAY 2016, the National AIDS Commission, in collaboration with Hand in Hand Ministries invited you to “*Unite for the Children*” an HIV/AIDS fundraising event that featured musical entertainment by local popular steel bands and artists. The event which was to be held at the House of Culture in Belize City on Friday November 25th, 2016 from 7:00 pm to midnight *was postponed due to poor weather conditions.*

The event is now scheduled for February 2017. All proceeds from this event will go to Hand in Hand Ministries for the provision of critical services to HIV infected and affected children of Belize. With the public’s help we are hoping to successfully reach our target of **BZD \$30,000.00.**

NOTE: Kindly hold on to your tickets as they will be accepted at the event in February. Kindly stay tuned for updates and promotions of the event time, place and venue. We thank you greatly for your support and understanding!

WORLD AIDS DAY 2016: “HANDS UP FOR #HIVprevention”

In 2015 Belize reported a greater volume of HIV testing done among persons 15 to 39 years. Though there was an increase of HIV testing in both sexes, there was a continued short fall in the program’s established target of increasing HIV testing in the male population, who miss out on life-saving treatment and are more likely to die of HIV-related causes.

A lack of an HIV diagnosis is a major obstacle to achieving UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets which calls on countries to reach the following goals:



- **90% of people living with HIV diagnosed by 2020**
- **90% of diagnosed people on antiretroviral treatment by 2020**
- **90% of people in treatment with fully suppressed viral load by 2020**

If we are to break the cycle of HIV transmission it is of utmost importance to test and link to care young men who are at higher risks of HIV transmission.

The ultimate goal of the HIV program is to have the entire population of HIV infected persons on antiretroviral therapy and virally suppressed as a means of reducing morbidity and mortality as well as a secondary prevention strategy. Data however is showing that HIV positive persons are accessing health care services and testing in the late stages of infection.

World AIDS Day 2016 is being commemorated under the theme: **Hands up for #HIVprevention**. With the stalled decline in new HIV infections among adults, The UNAIDS *Prevention gap report* shows that worldwide an estimated 1.9 million adults have become infected with HIV every year for at least for the past five years and that the number of new HIV infections is rising in some regions. The report shows that HIV prevention efforts must be reinvigorated if the world is to stay on the Fast-Track to ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030.



The “**Hands up for #HIVprevention**” campaign explores the different aspects of HIV prevention and how they relate to specific groups of people, such as adolescent girls and young women, key populations and people living with HIV. The campaign which started in September offered people a space to express their views on what they think needs to be done to strengthen HIV prevention efforts by:

(1) Posting a photograph of a word or short phrase written on the palm of their hand summarizing what we need to strengthen HIV prevention efforts, for example: more condoms, empowerment, inclusion, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), rights for women and girls.

And/or

(2) Posting a short video message (maximum 30 seconds) explaining what in their view needs to be done to reduce new HIV infections in their community

The National AIDS Commission urged everyone to visit our Facebook page and go to the UNAIDS Facebook page and upload your photo/video on the event page specially created for the 2016 World AIDS Day #HIVprevention campaign. Then, share it on your own Facebook wall to help us spread the word.



Around the world, about 34 million people are living with HIV. World AIDS Day is a global initiative to raise awareness, fight prejudice, and improve education about HIV and AIDS. The National AIDS Commission (NAC) has been serving Belize through resource mobilization, research, and a coordinated approach to the HIV/AIDS response Belize since 2002; and while we continue to serve, there is an overwhelming message of hope and life prevalent throughout the response.



Caleb Orozco, David Kato Vision and Voice Award Recipient



An LGBT activist from Belize is the winner of this year's David Kato Vision and Voice Award, in recognition of his successful battle to overturn his country's anti-gay laws.

The David Kato Vision and Voice Award is presented every year in memory of murdered Ugandan LGBT campaigner David Kato.

Mr Kato, a Sexual Minorities Uganda activist, was murdered in 2011 after a local newspaper published his photo in a feature calling for gay men to be executed.

This year, the David Kato Award will be presented to Belizean activist Caleb Orozco on January 26, 2017 in a ceremony at the annual fundraising gala dinner of the Kaleidoscope Trust, which campaigns for equality for LGBT people around the world.

Mr Orozco won from a shortlist of five activists from Iraq, Nigeria, Kenya and Kyrgyzstan. Like David Kato, Orozco remains determined to advocate for Belizeans, his work is not just about ensuring rights enforcement and protection for LGBT citizens, but ensuring that justice is accessible to all Belizeans

Since 2007, as part of a coalition of LGBT Latin American and Caribbean countries, Caleb has been attending the OAS General Assembly; in addition, writing shadow reports for the Universal Periodic Review in 2009 and 2013 along with a report for the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights.

In 2006 Caleb Orozco co-founded Belize's only LGBT-led campaign group, the United Belize Advocacy Movement (UNIBAM), which brought legal action to challenge the country's anti-gay sodomy law.

After a battle spanning several years, the colonial-era law was finally struck down earlier this year, after a ruling from Belize's Supreme Court.

Mr Orozco said: "The award is not about me, but about the aspirations of my community and the sacrifices and support they have shown in overcoming bigotry and taking on our opponents."

"I am hopeful that the awareness of the award will inspire more of my community to be publicly visible and to be proud about who they are. We hope we can inspire other LGBT activists to see that change is possible especially in a difficult political environment."

John Fingleton, Chair of the Board of Trustees at the Kaleidoscope Trust, commented: "Despite great personal hardship and threats to his safety, Caleb has never faltered. He has remained courageous, strong, out and proud throughout his battle for justice and equality."

"Hosting the David Kato Voice and Vision Award Secretariat is one of the concrete ways in which the Kaleidoscope Trust can recognise and support LGBT activists around the world, many of whom are campaigning at great personal risk."

The Supreme Court case, which established a precedent that may help activists fighting sodomy laws in other countries, had the support of the University of the West Indies Rights Advocacy Project, the International Commission of Jurists, the Commonwealth Lawyers' Association and the Human Dignity Trust.

The National AIDS Commission takes this opportunity to congratulate Mr Orozco on his success and recognize that his work, extraordinary efforts, personal sacrifices, and perseverance will also foster the creation of an environment to reduce stigma and discrimination and increase equitable access to healthcare services for key populations and other vulnerable groups in Belize.



**CONGRATUALIONS to
MRS LAURA LONGSWORTH on
her nomination as the SPEAKER
OF THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES**

“A strong woman understands that the gifts such as logic, decisiveness, and strength are just as feminine as intuition and emotional connection. She values and uses all of her gifts.”

—Nancy Rathburn

The National AIDS Commission would like to congratulate Mrs Laura Longsworth, NAC Chairperson, for being the Cabinet’s nominee to serve as Speaker of the House of Representatives. We applaud your ongoing commitment, sacrifice and dedication in serving Belize in all aspects.

CONGRATULATIONS!



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 2017!