

Towards Universal Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Care: HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support for Youth in Belize



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Outline of Presentation

- ▶ Belize in context
- ▶ Profile of Youth
- ▶ Snapshot of Sexual and Reproductive Health
- ▶ Profile of HIV
- ▶ Sexual and Reproductive Health and Youth
- ▶ Legal and Policy Framework –International and National Perspectives
- ▶ Coordinating, Monitoring and Accountability Mechanisms
- ▶ Organization of SRH Services
- ▶ Interventions (In-school and Unattached Youth)
- ▶ Best Practices
- ▶ Challenges
- ▶ Way Forward

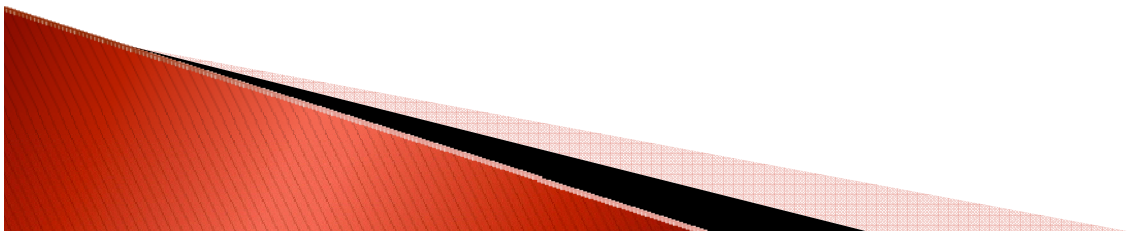


Area: 8,867 sq. miles/22,965 sq.km

Belize in Context

- ▶ Population: 321, 115 (mid-year est. 2011)
- ▶ Pop. Growth Rate: 2.056 % , 2010
- ▶ GDP per capita: US\$4,200 2010

Source: SIB, 2010 Census



Belize in Context

- ▶ Poverty rate: 43%
- ▶ Unemployment Rate: 23.1%
 - Females: 33.1%
 - Males: 16.7%
- ▶ Life expectancy: 72.5 years

Source: SIB, 2010

Youth Profile

Youth in Belize falls within age range 15 – 29

According to 2010 Census – 27% of the population ~ 84,501 are youth

- Females – 13.4%
- Males – 14.1%

Education (Abstract of Education Statistics, MOE 2010-2011)

95 % net primary school enrollment

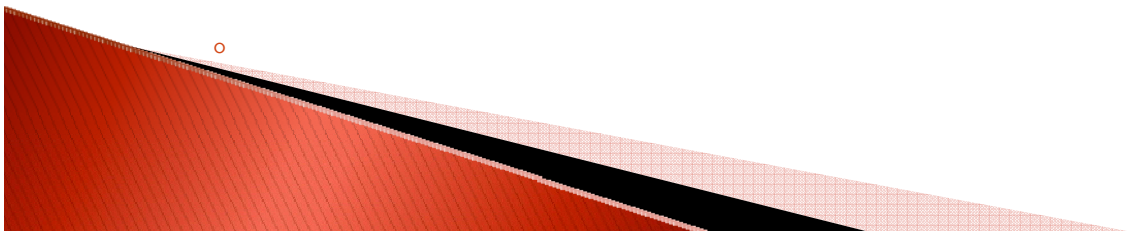
50.2% net secondary school enrollment

Unemployment Rate (Census 2010)

- 14- 19 years – 49.7%
- 20 – 24 years – 28.4%

Crime and Violence (YFF, National Plan of Action 2011)

% criminals convicted in the age range 16-30 years (2008) – 57%



Snapshot

Sexual and Reproductive Health

- ▶ Teen Fertility Rate: 73/1000
- ▶ Adolescent Birth Rate: 64/1000 (15-19 years)
- ▶ Contraceptive Prevalence Rate: 55.2/1000
- ▶ Unmet need for Contraception: 16.2/1000

Source: MICS4, 2011



Snapshot

Sexual and Reproductive Health

- ▶ Decrease in maternal mortality from 134 in 2005 to 0 in 2011 due to implementation of quality improvement initiative under the Safe Motherhood Programme.
- ▶ Improvements in the provision of commodities for reproductive health care in the public health system
- ▶ Improvements in the provision of youth friendly prevention services within Government and Civil Society Organizations.
- ▶ Integration of HFLE into the primary schools curriculum

Situation of HIV and AIDS

- Estimated adult HIV prevalence rate: 2.1%
- HIV prevalence among 15-24 years antenatal clinic attendees 0.81%
- In 2011 newly reported HIV cases 226 (119 males and 107 females) representing a 7.4% decrease when compared to the 244 cases in 2010
- Young people age 15-29 represented 37% of the newly reported HIV cases

Source: Ministry of Health 2011

Situation of HIV and AIDS

- ▶ Public health sector has provision of free ARVs
- ▶ As of end of 2011, a total of 1,358 PLHIV receiving ARVs
- ▶ For 2011 92.2% of pregnant mothers tested for HIV as a part of the PMTCT programme
- ▶ All exposed infants received treatment at delivery and got tested prior to their discharge from the hospital

SRH and Youth

Sexually Transmitted Infections Rate (MOH 2011)

15-19 years ~ 17.2/1000

20-24 years ~ 38.6/1000

25-29 years ~ 43.1/1000

Condom Use

Number of young persons age 15-24 years who reported use of condom at last sex with non-regular sex partner 71.7% (Sexual Behavior Survey, 2009)

LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK INTERNATIONAL

- ▶ Belize Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV and AIDS response is guided by key international commitments such as:
- ▶ International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) – Programme of Action (POA) – 1994
- ▶ Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) –2000
- ▶ Mexico City Declaration 2008 preventing HIV and STI through education (Comprehensive Sexuality education)
- ▶ United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV and AIDS (UNGASS)-2001
- ▶ Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979)

LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK - NATIONAL

- ▶ Public Health Act 2000 (provisions for management of infectious diseases)
- ▶ Domestic Violence Act (2007)
- ▶ Criminal Code (provisions for rape and sexual violence)
- ▶ Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy
- ▶ National HIV Policy
- ▶ National Gender Policy
- ▶ Health Family Life Education Policy
- ▶ HIV Workplace Policy
- ▶ The National SRH Strategic Plan
- ▶ National HIV Strategic Plan
- ▶ Ministry of health National Plan for HIV/STI/TB

Coordinating, Monitoring and Accountability Mechanism

Multi-sectoral bodies were established to coordinate and monitor the national response as it relates to SRH and HIV and AIDS

- ▶ **National AIDS Commission**
- ▶ **National Committees for Families and Children**
- ▶ **National Women's Commission**
- ▶ **National Gender based Violence Committee**
- ▶ **National Sexual and Reproductive Health Committee**

Organization of Services

- ▶ Non-Governmental Facilities:
 - BFLA – an SRH service provider, showed highest levels of SRH and HIV integrated programme planning and management
 - Outreach in rural areas
 - Voluntary testing and Counselling (VCT)
 - Provider-initiated testing and Counselling (PITC)
 - Gender-based Violence Comprehensive Services (GBV)
 - Management of formal referral system to/from other NGOs, MCH Clinics and public hospitals

Organization of Services

- ▶ Public Health Facilities
 - Public health service providers at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels reorienting SRH and HIV services to allow for bi-directional integration
 - Implementation of PMTCT Guidelines
 - HIV services most often integrated into SRH are VCT into Family Planning and PITC and prophylactic treatment into PMTCT
 - Condom distribution integrated into Family Planning and STI services
 - Gender-based Violence integrated into emergency services

Organization of Services

- ▶ Private Health Facilities (User fees)
 - SRH services were being reoriented to include HIV services – informing clients about confidentiality and routine HIV testing
 - Family Planning services
 - Sexually Transmitted Infections
 - PMTCT services

INTERVENTIONS: IN-SCHOOL YOUTH

- Establishment of an Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) unit within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports: Dedicated staff
- Integration of HIV into the HFLE Curricula
- Adaptation of modules and resources
 - “Together We Can”-Red Cross,
 - “You, Your Life, Your Dreams”- (Family Care Int’l, UNFPA, CARICOM)
- Peer Education Programme in Secondary and Tertiary Schools (Facilitate referrals to available services)
- Annual HIV and AIDS prevention training for teachers

INTERVENTIONS: In-School Youth

- Integration of HIV and AIDS prevention into Secondary Schools' Life Skills Programmes (HIV awareness week, Red Ribbon Day)
- Annual HIV Testing Day - University of Belize
- AIDS Link Newsletter – Cornerstone Foundation
- Conflict Resolution and Anger Management Sessions in High-Schools
- Stigma and Discrimination Sessions with High School Students
- Behavioral Change Campaign – targeted messages to delay early sexual activity

INTERVENTIONS: UNATTACHED YOUTH

Violence Reduction and HIV and AIDS Prevention Programmes:

- Establishment of a dedicated Violence Reduction and HIV Unit within the Ministry of Youth
- Establishment of a Conscious Youth Development programme for former and present gang members
- HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment programme within the prison
- HIV and AIDS prevention programme , including the creation of youth friendly spaces, within the male and female youth hostel
- Non-traditional skills training and empowerment for teen mothers and at risk young women

INTERVENTIONS: UNATTACHED YOUTH

Entrepreneurship and HIV and AIDS Prevention

Programme:

- Jewelry and drum making skills and HIV awareness and condom negotiation
- Barber Shop and Beauty Salon Condom Distribution Programme (YWCA)

Low literacy Sexual and Reproductive Health Peer Education Program (Global Fund)

- Peer Education Out-reach Activities
- Use of satellites tables

Mass Media Campaign

- Behavioral Change Campaign for safer sexual practices and partner reduction

Edutainment Program

- Creative Expression and Advocacy Work-shops
- Open Mic - Spoken Word – poetry slams

Best Practices

Sexual and Reproductive health programmes and services:

- HFLE in primary schools
- Out-of –school youth
- Incarcerated youth
- Persons with disabilities
- Indigenous youth

Challenges

- ▶ Promoting the right to health and healthy living including SRH rights for young people
 - Access to services for youth under 18 without parental consent
 - Changing perception of males to improving health seeking behavior
 - Absence of an integrated approach to adolescent health services
 - Comprehensive integration of life skills into secondary schools
 - Leveraging greater allocation of resources for the health sector in rural communities

- ▶ Evidenced-based policy decisions and planning

Way Forward

- ▶ Legal and Policy review and development of a model legislation for adolescent access to SRH and HIV services
- ▶ Greater integration to SRH and HIV into services for men/women across the life cycle
- ▶ Strengthen the continuum of care for HIV
- ▶ Development of HFLE Curriculum for secondary and tertiary schools through the Ministry of Education
- ▶ Advocacy for greater allocation of resources in rural communities
- ▶ National Condom Policy
- ▶ National Youth Policy pending approval
- ▶ Establishment of standards for data management

Thank You

