



SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE BELIZE

2021: A Year in Review



MESSAGE FROM THE UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR, BIRGIT GERSTENBERG

The Spotlight Initiative in Belize has made great strides toward eliminating family violence which includes violence against women and girls. While we recognize there is still much more to do, as we approach the New Year, we take this moment to review some of the many highlights and accomplishments of the programme thus far.

We also note our partnership with the Government of Belize, The European Union, Civil Society Organizations, Civil Society National Reference Group (CSNRG), and Recipient United Nations Organizations (RUNOs) – UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF – with the support of UN Associate Agencies – UN Women, ILO, IOM, PAHO/WHO, UNHCR, and OCHCR.



AMBASSADOR MARIANNE VAN STEEN,
HEAD OF DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO JAMAICA, BELIZE, THE BAHAMAS AND TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS



HON. DOLORES BALDERAMOS GARCIA,
MINISTER OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, FAMILIES & INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' AFFAIRS



MS. MELISSA ZUNIGA,
PRESIDENT OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY NATIONAL REFERENCE GROUP (CSNRG)

“ The European Union, through funding provided to the UN implemented Spotlight Initiative has already started to reach victims in Belize through the provision of shelters and services aimed at healing the hurt experienced by these victims of GBV. We are committed to working in partnership with the UN, the Government of Belize and the relevant CSO partners

Launch of 16 Days of Activism

“ The measure of any country is how we treat our women, girls and the most vulnerable. If there is any form of violence against women, our shoulders must be put to the wheel to make sure that we eliminate this terrible scourge.

High-level Meeting with Government of Belize

“ The COVID-19 pandemic has not only shown the world, but also the CSNRG that, as community based leaders, advocates and influencers, we are able to still carry out the very important work we do, as we work with the marginalized, the vulnerable and the indigenous communities.

Official Handover of ICT Equipment to CSNRG

High-Level Engagements

National Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee



European Union Ambassador Site Visit to Mobile Women's Centers



High-level Meeting with Government of Belize



Accomplishments in 2021

The Spotlight Initiative is guided by the Theory of Change which is geared to impact all Belizean women and girls, particularly the most vulnerable, to live a life free of violence and harmful practices. Below are the results for the programme's six outcomes areas in 2021:

Laws and Policies

Legislative and policy frameworks in line with international human rights standards are key to addressing challenges and gaps to get closer to eliminating Family Violence in Belize. In 2021, the Spotlight Initiative supported the **completion of the National Gender Policy, and the National Gender-Based Violence Plan was revised and costed with the M&E framework** to increase accountability. Additionally, **consultations were held to strengthen legislation**, reaching 320 survivors of gender-based violence and 120 stakeholders from 30 communities in Belize. Moreover, a **Joint Sexual Violence Prevention and Response (JSVPR) Programme for all security forces in Belize** was reviewed and endorsed, which included an education and awareness campaign. **The Cyber Crime Legislation is being amended** to recognize that sexual offences, particularly involving children, are neither reported immediately nor with sufficient particularity, leading to an amendment to the indictment rules permitting cases to be prosecuted as a 'continuing offence.' In addition, current legislation was reviewed to improve the current criminal code which will **operationalize the sexual offender's registry**.



Institutional Strengthening

The Spotlight Initiative builds the capacities of institutions to plan, fund, and deliver programmes that prevent and respond to family violence. In 2021, **a training manual for court officials was developed and mentorship for magistrates complemented capacity development training by 25 court officials and 27 magistrates**. Additionally, to engage the public and private sector institutions, **a Gender Equality and Diversity Seal, promoting zero tolerance to VAWG**, was developed, and a partnership was established with the National Women's Commission for its roll-out. Furthermore, **a Gender Transformative Programming Training** engaged approximately 20 government and civil society focal points aligned to key essential service sectors in Belize.



Prevention

The Spotlight Initiative aims to change inequitable gender norms, attitudes and behaviours at community and individual levels to prevent violence against women and girls, including family violence. In 2021, this outcome was achieved through **training in Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE)** in which 65 Community-level peer educators were trained and **reached 257 out of school children**. Approximately, **1183 teachers and local management at primary and secondary school levels were trained** to prevent, identify and respond to family violence. **Community-based programmes reached 5644 people** and focused on empowerment, protection, and prevention of family violence. **Parenting sessions impacted 1896 parents in 94 communities** with information and violence prevention strategies. Moreover, **1396 faith-based leaders, civil society organizations, community leaders, teachers, and parents were trained on family violence prevention utilizing Family Violence Toolkit developed in Belize**. **Trained Women Community Mobilizers empowered and reached 162 women and girls in violent situations**; referring them to services including protection, legal support and accompaniment, mental health, and psychosocial support. **Training was provided to couples, including adolescents in formal and informal unions, including sessions on family violence, healthy relationships, and managing conflicts**. Lastly, **350 men engaged in addressing gender norms and 6500 people were reached through public awareness campaigns**.



Data

The Spotlight Initiative is improving data and evidence in line with international standards to inform laws, policies and programmes. The **Baseline Study was completed and publicly launched in 2021**. Additionally, the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs is **strengthening FamCare to function as a harmonized data management system** capturing GBV data from initial report to case closure. **The Judiciary benefited from an IT System upgrade** to increase access to justice to the most vulnerable, including better networking, hardware, and an **upgrade to the Case Management System** which allows for better and faster management of processes and application of family court matters.

Essential Services

Women and Girls who experience violence use available, accessible, and quality essential services. The Spotlight Initiative in Belize **trained 80 stakeholders in 2021 on the Essential Service Package**, a tool identifying essential services to be provided to women and girls who have experienced gender-based violence. Additionally, **multi-sectoral protocols on gender-based violence developed with regional and national inputs**, and the technical **design for the establishment of sexual and domestic violence unit within the Police Department** was completed along with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). **Twelve Mobile Women's Centers delivered countrywide reaching approximately 1000 women and girls** inclusive of marginalized sub-populations. **GBV service access was also expanded in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic** through the provision of an emergency hotline, support for household equipment and supplies, PPEs for the continued operation of established shelters, and the establishment of temporary shelters. Other expanded services included access to E-Counseling and psychosocial support, and SRH/Family Planning Mobiles Outreach in rural communities including the safe referral of persons at-risk/survivors of GBV.



Women's Movements and Civil Society

Women's Rights Groups and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) more effectively advanced progress on gender equality and women's empowerment and ending violence against women and girls. In 2021, the Spotlight Initiative **engaged 2 CSO networks**: Belize National Indigenous Council (BENIC) and Go Belize. Additionally, the programme **supported the institutional strengthening of the Human Rights Commission of Belize** and worked on **capacity building of NGOs/CSOs and Community Women's Group in 10 Urban and Rural Communities** in a partnership agreement with the Belize Association of Planners. **A capacity building training on Human Rights for CSNRG, CSOs, women's movements and feminist organizations was conducted** in partnership with OHCHR. CSO dialogues started for the development of an **Engagement Strategy for Civil Society and Women's Movement on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment**. Lastly, **181 teachers were trained** to deliver psychosocial support from which **272 adults and 27 children benefited from psychosocial support**.

Launch of 16 Days of Activism

- [Remarks by Birgit Gerstenberg, UN Resident Coordinator, El Salvador and Belize](#)
- [Remarks by Ambassador Marianne Van Steen, Head of Delegation of the European Union to Jamaica, Belize, the Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands](#)
- [Watch the entire launch HERE!](#)
- [Panel Discussion on Engaging Men and Boys](#)
- [#WithHer Talk](#) hosted by Miss Universe Belize, Iris Salguero

What's Next...

In future newsletters, we will continue to highlight emerging results, examples of best practices, as well as give voice to civil society. The Spotlight Initiative Belize will transition into Phase 2 during the first quarter of 2022 and you can also look forward to the 2021 Annual Report.

Follow Us!



**Note that the results highlighted in the newsletter are captured as a summary and may differ within the 2021 Annual Report, as data and results are being validated during the first quarter of 2022.*



Relay for Change: Mentoring Youths to Prevent Violence in Belize

Preventing violence against women and girls will require a generation of men and boys who believe, model and promote gender equality in all places and spaces.

Meet three men in Belize who are opting in to promote positive masculinity. By participating in Spotlight Initiative-supported #EngagingMenandBoys sessions, these men are learning more about emotional wellbeing, balance and their critical roles as mentors for the next generation boys and men.

[READ MORE HERE....](#)

CSNRG & CSO Engagement



CSNRG Retreat 2021



POWA Site Visit

The WithHer Fund supports

HAVEN HOUSE Belize

The only shelter in Belize City for women and children experiencing domestic violence. Give to show you are #WithHer.

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