

Annual Technical Report

2021



**Ministry Of Human Development,
*Families & Indigenous Peoples' Affairs***

Table of Contents



**Ministry Of Human Development,
Families & Indigenous Peoples' Affairs**

	1
Message of the Minister	3
Executive Summary	6
Introduction	8
1. Overview of the Ministry of Human Development Families & Indigenous Peoples' Affairs	9
2. OVERVIEW AND MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MINISTRY BY PROGRAM	4
2.1. Department of Human Services (DHS)	4
2.2. Women and Family Support Department	8
2.3. Community Rehabilitation Department	13
2.4. Inspectorate Unit of Social Service Institutions	16
2.5. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons (ATIPS) Council	19
2.6. Policy and Planning Unit	23
2.7. Indigenous Peoples' Affairs	27
3. STAFFING AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	34
4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	36
Annex 1: Draft MHDFIPA Strategic Objectives	37
Annex 2: Organizational Structure of MHDFIPA	42
Annex 3: List of professional and Technical Staff	43

Message of the Minister

As the Covid 19 pandemic ravaged through our country for the second year in 2021, the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs saw more men, women, children, elderly, disabled, and families fall into vulnerability and poverty, with accompanying increases in reported cases of child abuse, gender based and family violence. The loss of gainful employment resulted in a further social breakdown as many families struggled to provide the basic survival needs of food and shelter.



The Ministry continued to operate in emergency response mode, having refocused its energies to providing emergency response and support to families via food assistance and conditional cash transfer programs such as the Belize Conditional Cash Transfer Program of the Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC)- Social Protection of the Climate Resilient Infrastructure Project (BCRIP), among others. The social workers also contended with increasing caseloads as cases of family violence continued to rise. The pandemic brought into sharp focus not only the need to build the country's human capital, especially those populations which are left behind, but also highlighted the weaknesses in the social protection system to respond to these populations in our communities.

Nonetheless, the hard work and accomplishments continued throughout the Ministry, as we also set our sights on addressing significant policy, legislative and administrative changes. Significant among the accomplishments in 2021 was the Repeal of the Certified Institutions Act and Section 14 of the Juvenile Offenders Act, where significant amendments to remove status offenses for children were achieved. This is an important step towards compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as we now ensure that the institutionalization of children is a last resort and that parents are more involved in interventions.

The Disability Desk housed in the Women and Families Support Department continues to make strides in support to our disabled clients. In 2021 through the efforts of this newly established desk, all municipalities have named a councilor whose portfolio includes responsibility for disability and NEMO has established the National Special Needs and Disability Committee to address emergency matters with disabled persons. A first of its kind virtual National Disability Conference was held virtually under the theme "Powered by Inclusion! Am I in Your Village?" and saw a total of 180 participants, demonstrating the desire of disabled persons to be seen and heard, and the interest of communities, organizations and individuals to provide support.

Through the various Departments of this Ministry, we are working earnestly to strengthen the policies, programs, legislations and institutions to improve service delivery and to effectively achieve the empowerment of the Belizean families. With increased and improved coordination, collaboration and cohesiveness with other social protection ministries and partners, we look forward positively to 2022 as we prepare for building a strong Social Protection Strategy which will be a critical constituent of individual empowerment and overall national development.

Honorable Dolores Balderamos-Garcia
Minister
Ministry of Human Development, Families, and
Indigenous Peoples' Affairs

Abbreviations

ASA	Advisory Service and Analytics
ATIPS	Anti-Trafficking in Persons Council
BCCAT	Belize COVID-19 Cash Assistance program
BCG	Belize Coast Guard
BCRP	Belize Climate Resilient Infrastructure Project
BDF	Belize Defence Force
BOOST	Building Opportunities for Our Social Transformation
CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
CCEDM	Canada-CARICOM Expert Deployment Mechanism
CCJ	Caribbean Court of Justice
CDO	Community Development Officer
CERC	Contingent Emergency Response Component
CE&EMT	Chief Executive and Executive Management Team
CESO	Canadian Executive Service Organization
COMPAR	Community and Parenting Empowerment Program
CPSS	Child Placement and Specialized Services
CPS	Child Protection Services
CRD	Community Rehabilitation Department
DHS	Department of Human Services
ECD	Early Childhood Development
FSS	Family Support Services
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
GoB	Government of Belize
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO	International Labour Organization
INTERPOL	International Police
IPA	Indigenous Peoples' Affairs
ISSI	Inspector of Social Services Institutions
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JCCU	Job Classification and Compensation Unit
JCS	Julian Cho Societies
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MHDFIPA	Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs
MLA	Maya Leaders Alliance
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NGC	National Garifuna Council
NEMO	National Emergency Management Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPRM	Permanency Planning Review Meetings
PPU	Policy and Planning Unit
RCFC	Residential Care Facilities for Children
RCP	Rovers Caregiver Program

SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPF	Social Protection Floor
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats Analysis
TAA	Toledo Alcaldes Association
TMWC	Toledo Maya Women's Council
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WDO	Women's Development Officer
WEP	Women Entrepreneurship Program
WFP	World Food Program
WFSD	Women and Family Support Department
YES	Youth Enhancement Services

Executive Summary

Belize is at a crucial juncture in its development. It is a country in transition – restructuring its governance systems, managing its internal changes, and charting a new path for its development and its people. It is doing this against the backdrop of a global pandemic, growing inequalities, economic stagnation and increased social uncertainty in an ever global, fast paced, and technological world. Though previously underutilized, Belize’s social sector, that is the sector of governance that addresses the development of Belize’s human capital, the protection of its poor and vulnerable and the investments therein, represents a key driver for economic growth, social transformation, and the country’s advancement.

These are all urgent imperatives for the country. This new administration, guided by Plan Belize, has positioned the Ministry of Human Development, Families, and Indigenous People’s Affairs (MHDFIPA) as a central actor to achieving these imperatives. Accordingly, the MHDFIPA has engaged in result-oriented initiatives and strategies that is enabling a more responsive, measured, and effective ministry capable of making distinctive and sustained impacts that not only aids in Belize’s development, but also ensures every Belizean, particularly those considered poor, vulnerable, and marginalized, is able to participate and benefit meaningfully.

This 2021 Annual Technical Report constitute the building blocks towards strengthening the Ministry’s systems and capacities, investing in its people, enhancing its operational environments to enable socio-economic improvements, growing, and diversifying its funding, deepening its stakeholders’ and partners’ confidence, and improving its innovative abilities. It provides an overview of the progress the MHDFIPA has proactively made in its commitment to Plan Belize, through its three strategic priorities – (i) Policy and Service Delivery, (ii) Human Resource Management, and (iii) Communication and Knowledge Management. In doing so, it provides an essential contribution to the monitoring framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

What follows summarizes four important strategies the MHDFIPA utilized in 2021 in pursuit of realizing its objectives as articulated in Plan Belize and in its 2030 Agenda agreement.

Incorporating the Family, Diverse Abilities, and Indigenous Peoples at the core of MHDFIPA

Plan Belize centers strong families as the foundation to Belize’s development and guaranteed inclusion of those with diverse abilities and of Belize’s indigenous peoples – two groups who are often excluded from participating in or benefiting from Belize’s development. The MHDFIPA, as the new name identifies, restructured its operations and mandate to include Belize’s first Disability Office, and Indigenous People’s Commission. It also expanded its programmatic approaches to service provision through the family, which, then, has begun the process of not just protecting vulnerable groups, but also supporting and safeguarding the family. These offices and modifications have brought transformative changes in the way the Government, inter-alia the MHDFIPA, engage with these groups across its policies, laws, programmatic work, and operations.

Refocusing: A People-Centered Approach to Recovery

Covid exposed deep-seated inequalities, increased poverty, vulnerabilities and crime, and significant gaps in social protection coverage of most Belizeans. This was the socio-economic context in 2021. From the MHDFIPA view, ensuring a human-centered recovery and response was contingent on equitable and inclusive access to resources and opportunities. MHDFIPA marshalled social protection as a front-line response to protect the country's social stability. It also extended coverage to unprotected groups, improved case management, increased benefit levels or introduced new benefits, introduced new programs, adapted administrative and delivery mechanisms, and mobilized additional financial resources. There was also a particular focus on empowering vulnerable groups through skills training and providing greater access to MSME opportunities. This strategy was able to establish synergies that enhanced the Ministry's operational functionalities and promoted broad based economic and social inclusion, employment, and protection of Belizeans.

Strengthened Collaboration and Coordination to Enhance MHDFIPA's Efficiency and Impact

Partnerships with other ministries, international organizations, and local actors within the development space were crucial this year. It was an engine of growth, innovation, resources, and job creation, which served as a strong advocate for policy reforms, a vehicle for investments and resource injection, and a driver for good governance, knowledge sharing, and operational efficiencies. This year, MHDFIPA focused specifically on exploiting the comparative advantages of these organization and for creating a more conducive environment for greater partnerships and involvement into Belize's social sector. The MHDFIPA's emphasis was placed on co-financing opportunities, technical assistance, policy reforms and integrated approaches to institutional development for greater service delivery, management, and resource allocation.

Investing in MHDFIPA's Human Resource

Considering the scale, challenges and demands of the Ministry, particularly with the advent of covid-19, one of the central focuses of MHDFIPA in 2021 was that of its assessment of its institutional arrangements and capacities. Covid 19 revealed a myriad of weaknesses, gaps, and inefficiencies both at the Ministry level and at the service level with regards to its policy and administrative functions. As a result, roles and responsibilities across the Ministry are now being restructured, enhanced, and created to strengthen the Ministry across its various levels; and capacities, both at the national and local level, are being upskilled, specialized, and recruited, including utilizing its partnerships for technical assistance. These has facilitated the Ministry's rapid response to clients' needs, enhances the MHDFIPA's functionalities and provides additional tools for Ministry-wide staff engagement for robust knowledge base and culture of learning.

Through these strategies, this report will highlight how the MHDFIPA, despite its national mandate, is becoming nimble enough to effectively support its beneficiaries and clients and protect Belize's most vulnerable populations.

Introduction

1. Overview of the Ministry of Human Development Families & Indigenous Peoples' Affairs

Ministry's Vision Statement

The Ministry of Human Development, Families & Indigenous Peoples' Affairs (MHDFIPA) is the lead entity of the Government of Belize in the development of people, enabling them to realize their full potential and play a meaningful role in their communities.

Ministry's Mission Statement

To facilitate policy development and to implement programs that promote social justice and equity, build strong families and communities to be self-sufficient and productive, in collaboration with all relevant partners.

Principles

- Social justice
- Family preservation
- Non-discrimination
- Participation
- Dignity and worth of all
- Resilience
- Empowerment
- Inclusiveness

Core Values

- Client-centered
- Competence
- Compassion
- Empathy
- Importance of human relationships
- Integrity
- Confidentiality
- Commitment
- Equality
- Staff wellbeing

National acts and policies that also serve as provisions to guide and regulate the work of the MHDFIPA are:

1. Social Services Agency Act Chapter 45 (R.E. 2000)
2. Families and Children Act (Chapter 173) (R.E. 2000) (Showing the Law as at 31st December, 2000)
3. Penal System Reform, (Alternative Sentences Act) Chapter 102:01 R.E. 2011
4. Juvenile Offenders Act, Chapter 119 R.E. 2000
5. Domestic Violence Act, Chapter 178, R.E. 2000
6. Protection Against Sexual Harassment Act, Chapter 107, R.E. 2000
7. Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act, No. 2 Of 2012
8. The Criminal Code, Chapter 101, R.E. 2011
9. The National Gender Policy, 2002
10. National Gender-based Violence Action Plan 2010-2013
11. Belize National Youth Development Policy, 2012
12. National Children's Agenda, 2017-2030
13. The Education Act, Chapter 36 (R.E. 2000)

Serving as both a regulatory and implementing body of core social services that directly supports individuals and families, the MHDFIPA is guided by the national strategies as identified in **#planBelize 2021-2025**, the Government's official strategic document, covering six strategic goals, from which we can derive these guiding principles for our Ministry:

1. Every Belizean should have **an opportunity to go to school and be educated and trained** with relevant skills. Personal success starts with a good education.
2. Every Belizean should have **access to adequate healthcare including timely access to quality primary healthcare**. Everyone must be healthy to produce and fend for oneself and family.
3. Every Belizean should **have access to a piece of land**. With land, one immediately has a valuable base to create opportunities for empowerment and personal growth. Every Belizean in rural areas needs lands to be productive, feed the family, and generate income.
4. Every Belizean should **have access to employment**. A job is a driving force for personal growth and development and a basis for developing self-esteem and promoting human dignity.
5. Every Belizean should **have access to decent housing**. A home breeds stability, family and love, and is essential for nurturing and developing our children.
6. Embark on a **“big push” approach for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME)**, family farming, women and youth, and marketing of products to stimulate activity in rural areas.

7. The increasing gaps in income and productivity within urban and rural communities will be addressed through **well-coordinated programs of investment, skills enhancement and enterprise development** specifically targeted to the pockets of poverty and unemployment.

Additionally, the Ministry endeavors that Belize follows several international agreements, treaties, and conventions which the country has signed and ratified, the primary ones being UN Human Rights Treaties that set the rights for families, women, children, and indigenous people as outlined below.

1. Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990
2. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1990
3. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2011
4. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2015
5. International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, 2001
6. United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 2001
7. Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1986
8. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2003
9. International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, 1996
10. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), 2007

Belize adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to eradicate poverty in all forms and dimensions. The MHDFIPA strategy encompasses the Government of Belize's commitment to reducing vulnerabilities and promoting socio-economic resilience which reflects the goals of sustainable development goals (SDGs), specifically:

SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms.

SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; and

SDG 16: Promote peaceful inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

2. OVERVIEW AND MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MINISTRY BY PROGRAM

2.1. Department of Human Services (DHS)

Description

The DHS has specialized program divisions, each performing distinct functions and delivering distinct services, namely, Child Protection Services (CPS), Child Placement and Specialized Services (CPSS) and Community and Parenting Empowerment Program (COMPAR).

The goal of *CPS* is to protect children from physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation; it focuses and conducts investigations on the reported abuse and neglect of children under 18. Services are provided to alleviate family disfunction, including family preservation services to high-risk families. Casework responsibilities extend to families of children in the care and custody of the Department, aiming in the first instance to reunify children with their families, to ensure a permanent home for all children with relatives or, as a last resort, recommend placement in adoptive homes (via referral to CPSS Division).

The primary responsibility of the *CPSS* is the placement of children into substitute care, or for the placement of children into a permanent adoptive home. CPSS is also responsible for assisting the CPS division with permanency planning including preparing the home of relatives for children who will be placed on a temporary or permanent basis, and in the placement of children in an institution. This division is responsible for the recruitment, licensing, monitoring, and retention of all substitute care providers, regardless of the category, and for casework services in all adoption cases to include independent adoptions. Court-ordered services and requests for international casework services also fall under the casework jurisdiction of this division. Children can come into care for various reasons. These include physical or sexual abuse, abandonment, neglect, or children being left as orphans.

The *COMPAR* effectively combines community mobilization and parenting education through the training of village and community leaders and parents of children. COMPAR seeks to empower and equip parents and communities with the knowledge and skills necessary to take responsibility for the care, protection, survival, and optimum development of their children, as well as the provision of services to meet basic human rights for adults and children. In addition, COMPAR offers general education and referral services for children with special needs (e.g., children with disabilities; children and families infected or affected by HIV and AIDS).

Main Achievements of Department of Human Services

Child Protection Services

- To increase the number of social workers in the CPS Unit countrywide, three new CPS social workers were employed to work with and respond to the vulnerable population of children who fall victim of child abuse.

- To Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of case management, we were able to identify gaps and bottlenecks to plan forward.
- To align the CPS within the Ministry, we standardize the reporting mechanism. HDC's were redistricted and tasks were synchronized (editing of reports, obtaining court transcripts and other documents, timely supervision, and field supervision).

Child Placement and Specialized Services (CPSS)

- To increase the number of foster parents countrywide, the Department activated the foster care campaign and employed a foster care recruitment social worker. A desk review was conducted to identify prospective foster parents. As a result, there is an increase in interest to foster by members of the public.
- To ensure that children in residential facilities have the experience of bonding with a family during the holidays, the program recruited foster parents for respite care and conducted home assessments on prospective foster parents. Children were then matched with applicants and were able to have a relaxed Christmas holiday in a family setting. This reduced the number of children in residential facilities during the holiday and allowed them to develop a bond with a family and know that people care for them. Some 49 Children spent the Christmas break with a family away from the facility, 3 children were matched for long-term fostering and 1 child was matched for adoption.
- In sharing the joy of Christmas, the program distributed Christmas gifts to foster families and foster children. Social workers were able to connect with foster parents, families and children in foster care. The children and foster families felt appreciated. A total of 73 children and 36 foster parents received Christmas gifts. During this time, it was discovered that some children were not with relative foster parent but had moved to other relatives.

Institutions and Alternative Care

- With support from UNICEF for implementation of Migrant Shelter, the Department renovated, furnished, and equipped space to house migrant males and unaccompanied male minors who entered the country. The shelter can temporarily accommodate up to 12 migrant clients, while permanency plans are developed for the minors where necessary.
- There was ongoing maintenance of residential care facilities. Contractors were hired per facility to upgrade and provide much needed maintenance. Ongoing maintenance of 5 residential care facilities (2- elderly care, 3-minors care). In total 77 minors and adult residents enjoyed improved home environments and amenities.
- In-house cake decorating classes were offered to minors in three residential facilities. The 24 residents were taught basics of cake making and decorating. They demonstrated that are open to learn and even offered suggestions for future topics they would like covered such as making ice cream. This should be an annual event for residents, thereby supporting their development of skills once they leave the facilities.

- The Department maintained contact with current TIPS victims and provided ongoing psychosocial support in preparation for their criminal case and post case. Twenty-five minor and adult clients accessed the services of the counselor within the past year. Two cases were successfully prosecuted at Supreme Court, and one conviction obtained with 2 persons being imprisoned. Despite all the intervention and court preparation, the Department does not have control over the justice system and the outcome of criminal cases.
- The Social Investment Fund completed the first round of consultation and bidding for the new Dorothy Menzies Child Care Center which will be built in Belmopan. The Caribbean Development Bank cleared the bidding and preparation of the land for construction. Once completed, the new DMCCC will have a capacity of 24 residents and will be a safer location during hurricanes.

Community and Parenting Empowerment Program (COMPAR)

- There were 93 Parenting Workshops carried out by the COMPAR. These training sessions were on the use of The Art of Parenting Guide. Two parent educators were hired and there was a total of six parent educators. The training sessions/workshops took the form of both in person and WhatsApp, because of the restrictions of the pandemic. A total of 373 parents from all six districts benefited, being 38 males and 335 females.
- Child stimulation through the Roving Caregivers Program continued. New children from Toledo and southside Belize City were recruited in the program in 2021. Two new Roving Caregivers came on board, one each in Blue Creek and San Felipe respectively. There was a total of 192 beneficiaries from the program: 57 in Belize City and 135 in Toledo.
- UNICEF supported the acquisition of Care for Child Development counseling and Early Childhood Development Kits. Four CCD trainers were also retained to conduct training with parents. The kits were distributed to 314 families throughout the country, including to parents with disabled children, flood victims and those in the RCP. CCD training was targeted at these 314 parents, 42 of whom were male and 272 were female.

Lessons Learned

- Consistency and continuity are needed to enhance the relationship between clients and social workers for better results.
- The recruitment of foster parents needs to be active throughout the year. It is important to follow up with applicants through the website as they are valuable to the recruitment process. It is important to allow children to bond with families even through a pandemic. Respite foster parents should be screened thoroughly.
- Continue building relationship and increase networking to identify resources for clients
- Continuous maintenance and upgrades are necessary for our facilities as these spaces are home to the residents. The Department should strive to have welcoming and homely atmosphere.

- The pandemic forced the Department to utilize virtual means of communication for trainings and consultations with parents. However, the sessions are much more effective in person.
- It was determined that the Parenting Guide needs updating and restructuring. Some parents need to attend counseling before they attend the parenting program to cope and understand. There needs to be a targeted plan to engage more men in parenting programs and trainings.

Future Priorities and Plans

- Develop a comprehensive and realistic work plan for 2022 which will cover the following:
 - Develop an orientation/training manual for the Department with a training team, review and update supervision format and procedural manual, revise and update the Art of Parenting Manual
 - Minimize the caseload to a manageable number for a timely response and to eliminate breaches.
 - Assign an officer to respond to applications from the website, ensure that the website is active and request assistance from IT to maintain the webpage.
 - Ensure that the children who are in residential facilities can have a break with a family during Easter, Summer, and Christmas break. Continue to recruit foster families.
 - Ensure that social workers maintain contact with wards of state in foster care.
 - In the future, ensure maintenance are done in a timely manner to minimize degrading of facilities
 - Continue Parent Educator Training of Trainers and expand parent educator program to Belmopan and Stann Creek.
 - Expand the RCP to Corozal and redesign the RCP in Belize City for better impact and effectiveness.

2.2. Women and Family Support Department

Description

The Women and Family Support Department (WFSD) serves as an entry point for all individuals and families requesting services from the Department, creating an integrative system of care designed to protect the rights of adults, the rights of children, the rights of families and, persons with disabilities by offering a full range of programs and support services through its three units: (1) Family Support Services Unit, (2) Gender Services Unit and (3) Disability Desk.

Through initial intake and a holistic family assessment, early identification of high-risk families is prioritized to prevent further penetration into the child welfare system and gender-based violence sphere. Services such as Case Management, Advocacy, Information & Referral, Family Support Services, Adult Services, Support for Gender-based Violence Issues, Shelter Protection, Court advocacy, Economic Empowerment, Outreach, Personal Development, Support to Women's Groups, Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, and Skill Training are provided to adults, the elderly, and children with disabilities, women, the homeless, families, and communities through a wide array of programs such as:

- Public Assistance
- BOOST
- BOOST+
- Adult Services
- Gender Integration
- Gender-Based Violence Services
- Economic Empowerment
- Disability Services.



Main Achievements of the Women and Families Support Department

Family Support Services Unit

Public Assistance Program

The main objective of the Public Assistance Program as a social protection strategy of the Ministry/GOB is to prevent further crisis and re-establish normalcy for those who find themselves in crisis/unfavorable circumstances caused by the onset of a personal shock, and to establish normalcy for those who require emergency and/or longer-term assistance to stabilize.

In 2021 a total of 2,229 intakes were received countrywide for public assistance (this includes case management). Of the total requests received, a total of 2,088 assistance were approved amounting to an investment in families of \$435,185.26.

BOOST Program

The objectives of the BOOST Program are as follows:

BOOST Objectives		
Education	Health Care	Double Dividend
Increase school attendance and transition (Primary→ Secondary)	Increase primary health care users	Small but consistent transfer of cash to households
Reduce dropout rates	Increase immunization rates and ante-natal visits	Long term investment in human capital, which aim is to break the cycle of poverty

Below are the results achieved in 2021

- A total of 451 students graduated from Std. IV
- A total of 503 Standard VI students transitioned to High School
- A total of 117 children transitioned to pre-school
- A total of 3,260 students promoted to a higher level

BOOST+

The objectives of the BOOST+ Program are i) to develop family's skills and knowledge, ii) to build on strengths, and link persons to community resources and iii) to help the family achieve their dreams & goals. This is done through individualize case management response.

Below are the results of the BOOST+ Program achieved in 2021

- A total of 85 BOOST+ Households graduated from the program
- A total of 56 BOOST+ Households completing Job Readiness Program
- A total of 31 Individuals enrolled in Business Mentoring iv. A total of 12 Individuals gained direct employment
- A total of 15 individuals were successful in entrepreneurship venture

Gender Services Unit

Gender-based Violence Services

A total of 110 DV cases were reported to the Department (Urban) ii. A total of 107 DV cases reported to the Department (Rural) iii. Of the reported urban cases, a total of 87 were enrolled for case management iv. Of the reported rural cases, a total of 70 were enrolled for case management v. A total of seventeen (17) advocates were recruited and trained countrywide

Economic Empowerment

A total of 68 intakes were received for Labour Activation/Employment services (Urban) A total of 22 intakes were received for Labour Activation/Employment Services (Rural). Of the total requests received for the urban areas, 54 were enrolled for case management. Of the total requests received for the rural areas, 18 were enrolled for case management.

Twenty individuals were incorporated into Labour Department's Employment Service System (ESS) while 230 persons benefitted from skills training in various areas. A total of 14 persons were assisted with direct employment/labour insertion and 29 individuals received grant funding to aid their small business. Two women's groups were supported through a consultancy with group development and 2 others were supported with funding for income generation.



Disability Desk

- All municipalities have named a councilor whose portfolio includes responsibility for disability
- Establishment of the National Special Needs and Disability Committee as a subcommittee of NEMO
- Development of training modules for “Priority Arrangement with the Transportation System” in collaboration with BAPDA, Belize Disable People’s Forum, National Council of Aging, and the Department of Transport
- Establishment of the Sign Language and Interpreters Course
- Establishment of partnership with regional and global organizations, included in the Caribbean Disable Leaders Group, International Disability Alliance and membership in the CBR Global network
- Capacity Building with NGO stakeholder organizations BAPDA and Special Olympics Belize
- A total of 157 persons participated in a disability sensitization training conducted countrywide
- A total of 180 persons participated in a National Disability Conference held virtually under the theme “Powered by Inclusion! Am I in Your Village?”



Lessons Learned

Gender-based Violence Services

- The number of reported cases to the Department is still small in comparison to the overall number of cases reported by the Belize Crime Observatory ii. The margin of difference in enrolled cases vs reported cases is higher for rural areas iii. Access to services is a challenge in rural areas

Public Assistance Program

- The assessment and response to Family Support Cases need to be strengthened.
- There is need for a more collaborative effort amongst partners providing services to older persons.
- There exists a gap in response to cases involving persons with mental illness.
- The limitation of one vehicle and one driver assigned to the Department poses a challenge for timely response and effective case management.
- The onset of the pandemic has seen a rise in cases as well as an increase in the complexity of cases.
- Limited staff to meet the demand poses a challenge for effective case management and response.

BOOST

- With support, children's maximum attendance and participation in school can be achieved. The objective of BOOST which is to increase school attendance and transition was achieved but the lack of condition monitoring poses some challenge to track beneficiaries. The lack of a systematic way to track beneficiaries not subject to conditions (e.g., older persons) also poses a challenge.

BOOST+

- The provision of individual case management and activities provided by the BOOST+ program proved successful in engaging families and meeting their needs.

Future Priorities and Plans

Gender-based Violence Services

- To engage in a public education campaign to bring awareness to the services offered by the department ii. Expansion of Gender Advocate Program in Rural Areas

Public Assistance Programme

- Future plans in relation to the public assistance program include developing and implementing a standardized framework for response to Family Support Cases, ensuring that Family Support Cases are highlighted in First 48 hours training, working closely with the National Council on Aging (NCA) to revive the Coordinating Mechanism for response to older persons, improved coordination with Ministry of Health to better manage cases with Mental Illness, requesting additional vehicle(s) and increasing staff within the Department to improve on service delivery and acquiring capacity building opportunities to equip staff to better handle complex cases.

BOOST

- The department will work towards improving case management response to BOOST households as well as developing a more proactive approach to case management. Re-classification of Households to explore BOOST expansion will be carried out along with the re-establishment of conditionality monitoring. We will be re-visiting the monitoring of Health condition since covid pandemic has subsided a bit. An increase in the financial amount of the transfer to older persons will be implemented and there will be continued collaboration with NGO/CSO for monitoring of older persons who are beneficiaries of BOOST.

BOOST+

- The BOOST+ program has proven to be a beneficial initiative for the families involved. It is a program worth the cost and effort to expand but will require additional financial and human resources to implement. The program forms part of the larger national social protection response and contributes to strengthening of families.

2.3. Community Rehabilitation Department

Description

The Community Rehabilitation Department (CRD) is responsible for the development and implementation of prevention, diversion, and rehabilitation programs targeting at-risk youth, first-time juvenile offenders, children (persons under age 18) who come in conflict with the law, and their families. CRD encompasses four units, namely:

1. Court and Case Management
2. Community Counselling Center
3. Youth Hostel
4. The Hub

Main Achievements of Community Rehabilitation Department

Technical Administration

- Passage of Legal Reform – Legal Reform - Repeal of Certified Institutions Act and Section 14 of the Juvenile Offenders Act. Significant amendments to remove status offenses for children were achieved. This is an important step towards compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These amendments now ensure that institutionalization of children is a last resort and that parents are more involved in interventions.

Court & Case Management Services

Core Functions:

- Protect the rights of children who come in conflict with the law – daily presence at police stations and courts
- Conduct individual and family assessments to prepare Social Inquiry Reports for the Courts
- Case Management Services – coordinating interventions and linking clients to appropriate services
- Monitor Alternative Sentencing Orders – Community Service, Probation etc.
- Access to Public Assistance - Educational, rent and food assistance etc.
- Aftercare Services (Youth Hostel & Wagner's Youth Facility)

Achievements:

- Approximately 548 juvenile offenders and adolescents at risk from across the country were enrolled in case management and psychosocial support services through the Department.
- Belize City services were restructured to have specialized units to strengthen case management services for prevention and high-risk cases.



- Diversion Program was expanded to offer services in Belmopan and San Pedro. Diversion services in Belize City, Dangriga and San Ignacio/Santa Elena continued with 111 minors successfully diverted from the Juvenile Justice System.
- Under the Department's Youth Employability Enhancement Program (YEEP), and with support from UNDP, 15 adolescents from Belize City successfully completed skills training in the areas of yard maintenance, hair braiding and barbering.
- 97 clients receiving case management services also received educational assistance.



Counseling Services

The Community Counseling Center provides professional, trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, age-appropriate, caring and quality counseling services to clients within a compassionate and supportive environment. The Center offers FREE counseling services to the community. Individual, Couples, Family and Group Counseling sessions are available.

Counseling services were provided to 416 beneficiaries through the Community Counseling Center in 2021.

The Hub Resource and Community Center

The main objective of The Hub is to be a safe space for children, adolescents, and their families to be positively engaged through the delivery of various educational, developmental, psycho-social, sporting, cultural and recreational activities.

- Approximately 242 children and adolescents were actively engaged in various educational, sporting, developmental, and recreational activities at the Center.
- Rising Stars Summer Blast – in partnership with the Belize City Council, the Belize Family Life Association, BK Foundation, Mr. Kernell Parks, and Drums not Guns, 72 children and adolescents between the ages of 7-17 years participated in life skills, drumming, fine arts, basketball, volleyball and football.
- Christmas Program - 60 Belize City males between the ages of 12- 18 years of age actively participated in 3-on-3 basketball Tournament
- Launch of the Greenhouse Project was done in partnership with the Belize Red Cross and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Youth Hostel

- In partnership with the Office of the Special Envoy for Family Development, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and support from the Embassy of Taiwan, skills-training programs have resumed, and residents benefited from Arts and Craft supplies, reading materials for Book Club, and Sewing and Cooking skills training. Efforts are always ongoing to keep residents positively engaged in developmental activities.
- Major renovations to the facility to include:

- Painting of the interior of all buildings
- Renovation of the bathroom in the female dormitory
- Electrical and plumbing repairs
- Repairs to the fence and renovation of the gate to the main entrance
- Repairs to the security camera system in the administrative building

Lessons Learned

- The issue of data collection and being able to trust that the data is reliable was a challenge. Data is critical in making planning and monitoring and evaluation of programs and services. Efforts need to be made from earlier on to ensure that data collection mechanisms are strengthened and consistently utilized. FAMCare urgently needs to be updated.
- Maintaining partnerships must be a consistent and deliberate activity, especially given the challenge of competing demands and the human resource gaps that the Department is currently facing.
- We now know the value of virtual platforms and that so much can be done with the technology we have at our disposal if we remain open to using these tools.
- Visibility in the community is just as important as focusing on service delivery. Highlighting the work and achievements of the Department, especially in a social media era, has become so important. Because we have not focused on publicizing the work, people are not aware of the good work that is being done and are left to make their own assumptions. We need to change and direct the narrative. A dedicated person is required to focus and sustain actions in this area.

Future Priorities/Plan

- Development of a new strategic plan for the department, followed by operations plans for each of the Department's respective units.
- Strengthen Data Collection - Build in routine measures to collect data. Attention will also be given to revising and updating the FAMCare platform to be able to capture and report the data in the most useful way.
- Continue with Juvenile Justice Legal Reform – revision of the Juvenile Offenders Act to clearly indicate the treatment of juveniles throughout the justice system, improve parental involvement and accountability and address mental health treatment and services for this population.
- Scaling-Up of Prevention Programs and Activities offered at The Hub
- Launch of Pilot Parenting Support Group in Belize City
- Continued strengthening of case management services through full implementation of the evidence-based tools to support case management with juveniles who come in conflict with the law.

2.4. Inspectorate Unit of Social Service Institutions

Description

Responsibility for the licensing, registration and regulation of care facilities for children and adults is vested with the Inspector of Social Services Institutions (ISSI) as stipulated under the Social Services Agencies Act. Through this function, the ISSI ensures agency compliance with minimum operating standards as prescribed by law. Understanding that 'quality improvement of service' is continuous and cannot be pursued by mere enforcement; but rather by stakeholder agencies themselves embracing a Quality Improvement approach, the ISSI works closely in partnership via a participatory and capacity enhancement modality to better guarantee positive outcomes.

The Objectives of the Inspector of the ISSI are to:

- Register and license new daycares and residential care facilities for children (RCFC) in Belize.
- Regulate the 16 licensed daycares and 9 licensed RCFC to ensure high-quality care and services are provided to the Belizean children.
- Furnish quality inspection reports to Proprietors after the completion of monitoring and comprehensive inspections.
- Investigate and report on complaints and take follow-up action where there is evidence of non-compliance with regulations.
- Strengthen and Chair all Permanency Planning Review Meetings with the relevant stakeholders to ensure clients' successful transition out of state care.

Main Achievements of the ISSI

1. MHDFIPA daycare and RCFC web interface is updated to include newly licensed daycares and RCFC.
2. The Residential Care Facility dashboard is utilized by the 9 residential care facilities managers to provide real-time client updates to the caseworkers.
3. The RCFC Self-Assessment tool is utilized by the 9 residential care facilities managers to self-rate their facility as a component of the inspection process on a biennial basis. The RCFC Self-Assessment tool is in FAMCare, the Ministry's case management system.
4. Daycare self-assessment tool was uploaded on the KOBO toolbox, software for collecting and managing data in challenging environments. It is utilized by the 15 licensed daycare proprietors to self-rate their facility as a component of the inspection process on a biennial basis.
5. Complaints and allegations regarding non-compliance with regulations are investigated and recommendations are issued for compliance.
6. An improved multi-agency approach to inspection and furnishing of timely quality inspection reports to daycare proprietors and residential care facility managers for compliance to the various regulations.
7. A Permanency Planning Review Meeting schedule was established for key stakeholders to identify and discuss the long-term care plans for children in RCFC.

8. Permanency Planning Review Meeting commenced.
9. Ministry through the ISSI has partnered with Autism Belize to carry out a series of early childhood development training for daycare providers. A total of 9 sessions will be completed.

Inspections: A total of 19 inspections were completed within the period May 2021-May 2022. Of the 19 inspections completed, 21.1% of the inspections were to facilitate new licenses for two government operated RCFC, the Princess Royal Youth Hostel and Dorothy Menzies Child Care Center, and two renewal licenses for two privately owned RCFC. The chart below highlights that 68.4% of inspections completed were done with the daycare centers, making it the most frequently regulated care facility during this reporting period.

Since the ISSI has no legal authority to regulate adult shelters in Belize, a courtesy inspection was conducted for two emerging adult shelters that will offer residential and empowerment services to victims or suspected victims of human trafficking.

Inspections completed 2021-2022

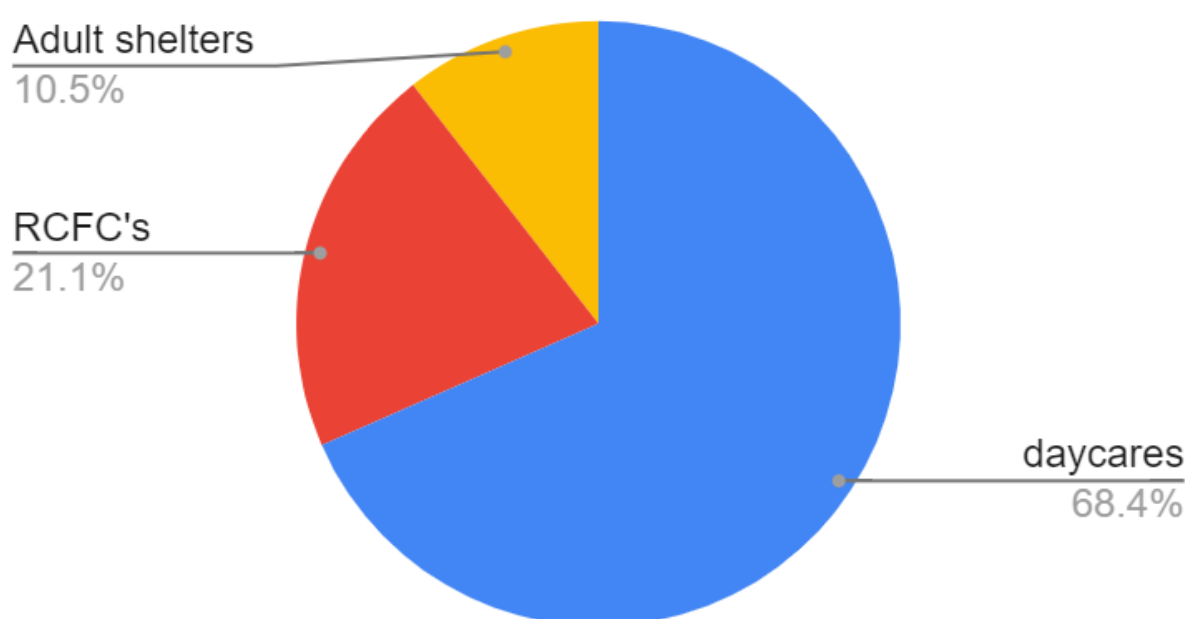


Table 1 shows number of daycare licenses disaggregated by district and license type. During the reporting period, a total of 4 new daycares completed their inspection process which resulted in its licensing and permission to operate within their respective districts. A total of 9 licensed daycares were subjected to an inspection to facilitate its renewal application for licensing to operate. Of the 9 daycares, 8 were from the Belize District and 1 from the Stann Creek district. All 12 daycares have been given permission to operate.

Table 1. **Daycare Licensed by district**

Districts	Type of License	
	New License	Renewal License

Corozal	0	0
Orange Walk	0	0
Belize	2	9
Cayo	1	0
Stann Creek	1	1
Toledo	0	0

Enforcement activity: A total of 10 enforcement activities were completed to support care facilities that met the minimum requirements of the Social Service Regulations with areas of concerns or facilities that failed to meet the minimum requirements but showed the capacity to address the discrepancies.

Investigations: A total of 7 complaints and/or allegations of care facility's non-compliance to the Social Service Regulations were reported during the reported period. The ISSI completed a total of 6 joint investigations with the Department of Human Services and the Women's Family and Support Services to ascertain evidence of non-compliance by the care facilities. The results of the investigation were reported to the relevant stakeholders to implement the necessary recommendations to address the non-compliance found.

FAMCare Training: A total of 5 RCFC were trained on the RCFC dashboard in FAMCare during the reported period. 100% of the RCFC are utilizing the RCFC dashboard to report on clients' progress and utilizing the self-assessment tool to self-appraise their facility during inspections.

Permanency Planning review meetings: A total of 8 permanency planning review meetings were conducted across 8 RCFCs. This means a total of 134 children in residential care facility has a permanency plan being implemented by their assigned social workers.

Baby Steps: Early Intervention Series: A total of 5 early childhood training have been conducted with the 15 licensed daycare facility staff across Belize. This virtual training was conducted through the partnership with Autism Belize.

Lessons Learned

- The Inspector is expected to register, license, and regulate care facilities for the entire country. This places a heavy burden for one officer to perform and deliver effectively, therefore expansion of the ISSI is necessary to meet the demands of existing and emerging care facilities for children and adults and other duties across the country.
- Multi-agency inspections are conducted to renew licenses. Unfortunately, untimely submission of inspection reports by partnering agencies to the ISSI delays the licensing process. The inspection team must be informed and continuously notified of the potential risk of having care facilities operating without a valid license because of agency failure to deliver reports.

- Prior to hiring, there are limited training opportunities for care providers working in the care facilities. The Ministry should partner with NGOs and relevant educational institutions to offer affordable and timely Care Providers training.
- There is generally poor management of the RCFC dashboard on FamCare. ISSI will conduct a monthly revision of the RCFC dashboard and communicate with the relevant placement authorities to update the RCFC dashboard.

Future Priorities and Plans

- Updating of the Social Services Agencies Act and instituting regulations for older persons homes. ISSI will partner with the National Council of Ageing and the Women and Family Support Department to review the draft regulations for older persons homes.
- Strengthening of the partnership between the placement agencies and the RCFCs through the signing of MOU and PPRM protocols. Meeting to be held with the Director of the DHS and the RCFC Directors to discuss and amend the draft MOU between the RCFC and the DHS.
- Establishment of a framework for youth requiring extended state-care services. Review the recommendations from the consultancy on the feasibility of the transitioning-from-state-care services. The Ministry to approve the framework for youth requiring extended state-care services and introduce the framework to the RCFC Directors.
- Expansion of the ISSI. Establish budget for an assistant Inspector to support the ISSI.

2.5. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons (ATIPS) Council

Description

The ATIPS Council was established to coordinate the efforts of the Government of Belize to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and to provide support and protection to victims, with the Chief Executive Officer of the MHDFIPA appointed as Chair. ATIPS operates from a multi-sectoral approach, and is comprised of representatives from the following ministries and agencies:

- MHDFIPA
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration
- Attorney General's Ministry
- Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
- Belize Police Department
- Labour Department
- Immigration Department
- Customs and Excise Department
- Health Department
- Belize Tourism Board (BTB)
- The National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC)
- National Organization for the Prevention of Child abuse and Neglect (NOPCAN), and

- Youth Enhancement Services (YES)

The four main goals of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Council are:

- *Protection*- a comprehensive and integrated system that offers protection and assistance to victims with full respect for their human rights.
- *Prosecution*- the interdiction and successful prosecution of traffickers
- *Prevention*- reduce the vulnerabilities and the demands that foster all forms of trafficking through public education and awareness.
- *Partnership*- forge and maintain relationships with strategic local and international partners to fight against human trafficking in Belize.

Main Achievements of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Council

Training

Trainings were conducted on Investigations; Identification and reporting of Human Trafficking (HT); Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC), Care for Disabled Children; Protocol for Migrant Children; Mandatory Reporting; HT in the Tourism Sector. The various trainings were funded by the GoB; UNODC; UNICEF; the International Organization for Migration (IOM); and the Human Trafficking Institute (HTI).

Organization	# Persons Trained
Municipal Government	11
Police Officers	504
MHD/DHS/Institutional Staff	89
Teachers	600
Church Women's Group	21
MFA	9
BDF and BCG	10
Labour Department	1
NGO	2

Meetings

The ATIPs Council met twice in 2021, in April and in December. A high-level meeting was held in June 2021 to identify key areas of improvement to Human Trafficking response. Key Cabinet ministers along with core council members discussed concerns of the response to human trafficking in Belize. This meeting included the Minister of the MHDFIPA, the Minister of Home Affairs, the CEO for the MHDFIPA, the Director of the DHS, the Director of Public Prosecutions, and the Focal Point for the ATIPs Council.

A Human Trafficking Symposium was held in November. The ATIPS Council hosted and conducted a one-day awareness/training/planning symposium in partnership with HTI, attended by senior representatives of key Government of Belize departments and agencies, with a goal of better understanding the reality of human trafficking in Belize while formulating holistic approaches and specific



actions in the coming calendar year and beyond. Participants were from the Ministry of Human Development, Families, and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs (Minister, Minister of State, CEO, Director of Department of Human Services, Director - Community Rehabilitation Department); Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries (CEO, Commissioner of Police, Representative from the ATIPU); Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government (CEO, Labour Commissioner, Director of Local Government); Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, and Immigration (CEO of Immigration, Director of Immigration); Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP, Prosecutor).

The Council maintained presence within the regional community (both in the Central American and the Caribbean) to ensure synergies of efforts against human trafficking. In particular, the Officer Commanding of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Police Unit attended a workshop on best practices on Human Trafficking, the Council Focal Point attended three (3) meetings held by the Regional Coalition Against Human Trafficking and Human Smuggling as well as the 2nd International Symposium on Human Trafficking and Human Smuggling in Guatemala, among others.

Public Awareness for Human Trafficking in Belize

The Council launched a human trafficking awareness campaign in Belize in partnership with the Love Foundation funded by IOM. On World Day Against Human Trafficking the Council launched an art competition. There were four (4) media appearances on 4 (four) major morning shows in Belize; opened both Instagram and twitter pages; maintained four (4) billboards across country; went live with NGOs to spread awareness for human trafficking.

Other Programs/Projects

- Protocol for Accompanied and Unaccompanied Migrant Children in Belize completed with the support of IOM. Training sessions were also conducted with the key implementing Ministries.
- A dashboard for Human Trafficking was created on the FamCare Data Management System of the MHDFIPA. The intention to improve on human trafficking data

collection, encourage data-driven decision making and create greater accountability of case management. IOM supported this initiative.

- The Council initiated the amendment of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act of 2013 and the Commercial Sexual Exploitation (Prohibition) Act of 2013. The changes being proposed are to align Belize's legislation with international standards and best practices. The law is being refined and made more consistent with similar offences found in other legislation, thereby facilitating easier prosecution of offences.

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Prosecutions

There were 2 arrests (1 Guatemalan female and 1 South African male) and 2 convictions (1 male and 1 female, both Belizeans).

Operations

The Operations Committee of the Council participated in two operations in 2021 to identify and rescue potential Human Trafficking Victims. The relevant committee members also participated in a regional anti-smuggling operation coordinated by INTERPOL.

Lessons Learned

- Consistent and direct communication between partners/stakeholders is necessary and crucial for the implementation of the Council's plans and projects.
- It is necessary to give partners due notice before the start of a project to allow them to incorporate the plans and activities within their respective schedules. The research and design phase of all projects should always be given sufficient room for proper development.
- The issue of human trafficking needs to be treated as an area of priority coordination/collaboration for the core agencies. The upcoming Millennium Corporation Challenge presents an opportunity for this as it is tied to, among other areas, anti-trafficking efforts and results.

Future Priorities and Plans

- A Gap Analysis will be conducted to identify the coordination and implementation gaps within the ATIPs Council and the current operational plans, and to make concrete recommendations for improvement. It will include the creations of a comprehensive and practical National Action Plan to effectively combat human trafficking in Belize, the production of a costed and prioritized list of recommendations on means of improving the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Council, and the creation of a National Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy and Action Plan for the medium to long term which will steer the direction of the ATIPs Council in the Anti-Human Trafficking response in Belize.
- GPS mapping of liquor establishments (bars) in specific areas of the country with a view to identify potential areas where vulnerable populations may be at risk of exploitation and to demonstrate the connection between the economic sector and the exploitation of vulnerable populations.
- Strengthen regional and international cooperation in anti-human trafficking in order to establish regional protocols and adopt/adapt best practices
- Strengthen public awareness and training for public officers, private sector, and the public to increase overall understanding of the nature and consequences of human trafficking for Belize.
- Increase the identification, reporting and prosecution and conviction of human trafficking cases in Belize.

2.6. Policy and Planning Unit

Description

The Policy and Planning Unit provides technical support to the Ministry on government policies and plans, aligning them to the overarching goals and plans of the Government of Belize, and working in partnership with relevant stakeholders in achieving the development indicators for Belize. The unit's roles include:

- Enabling effective management; facilitating decision-makers in determining the Ministry's goals and promoting effective policies to pursue/attain these.
- Producing plans of direct relevance to the Ministry's mission; considering the Ministry's operating environment and the needs created by its unique portfolios
- Identifying, mapping, and steering the Ministry in achieving its mission and supporting the GOB in fulfilling social protection responsibilities.

Main Achievements

Projects

Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC)- Social Protection

The Ministry successfully implemented the **Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC)- Social Protection of the Climate Resilient Infrastructure Project (BCRIP)**. In 2020-2021 the Ministry, including the Policy and Planning Unit were operating in emergency mode to address the increased demand for social assistance due to the socio-economic challenges catalyzed by the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the unit absorbed the role for the implementation of the CERC- Social Protection of the BCRIP during the period March 2020 to August 2021. Under the CERC, the MHDFIPA was allocated BZ\$25,023,047 to vertically and

horizontally expand its cash transfer programs to provide coverage to poor and vulnerable households and households who lost their source of income and livelihoods. In response to this, the Ministry implemented two priority activities under the CERC Social Protection component:

1. Increasing the support to current BOOST beneficiaries
2. Implement a new temporary cash transfer program for poor and vulnerable households not benefiting from any social assistance known as Belize Covid-19 Assistance Program (BCCAT).

The vertical and horizontal expansion of Belize's cash transfer program successfully reached 11% of (23,933 approx.) poor and vulnerable households with a minimum of \$150 monthly payments over a six-month period. The temporary vertical and horizontal expansion of Belize's Cash Transfer program was instrumental in helping households meet their basic needs and re-establish a source of livelihood during the pandemic. Both activities, though successfully implemented, experienced challenges pertaining to efficiency and effectiveness, particularly in the beneficiary selection mechanisms and fund disbursement mechanisms. Overall, the CERC-Social Protection component was considered a success by all stakeholders and donors.

Joint SDG Fund Project

Building a resilient Belize through universal, adaptive, and sustainable social protection Joint SDG fund program was approved. This joint program supports a stronger, coordinated, integrated, shock-responsive, and resilient social protection system in Belize that reaches the most vulnerable, women and children through the development and implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy, inclusive of the Social Protection Floor (SPF), and recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (third cycle, 2018) and other human rights mechanisms to Belize. The main results are centered on two interconnected outcomes, both of which are articulated in Plan Belize and the Government's Medium-Term Development Strategy Priority Areas: Poverty reduction and Economic growth. The total contribution of the project is USD 990,000 contributed by the Joint SDG fund, UNICEF, ILO, and WFP. The program's implementation period is January 2022-December 2024.

Women's Economic Inclusion

The World Bank Women's Economic Inclusion Grant was approved and will support the evaluation, redesign, and expansion of the BOOST+ program and assessment of the Women Entrepreneurship Program. It will contribute to increasing GoB's capacity to design and implement gender-sensitive social protection policies and programs, focused on improving the economic inclusion of women in Belize. The activities will be implemented in response to the identified gender gaps in the country and aim to increase female employment and financial participation. As such, this intervention is gender responsive as the program is designed to address the existing labor market needs of Belizean women. To a smaller extent the program is gender transformative as, in the longer term, programs focusing on female empowerment can have indirect impacts on the larger context, including labor market norms and behavioral aspects surrounding female employment. The proposed Advisory Services and Analytics (ASA) consists of two complementary components:

Component 1: Design and Operational Readiness for BOOST+ expansion and the WEP

Component 2: Knowledge and Evidence for BOOST+ expansion

The project is being implemented by the World Bank in collaboration with the MHDFIPA and includes four main deliverables to be completed between March 2022-2023.




- A Process Evaluation of the BOOST+ pilot
- BOOST+ Program Design Document, including the M&E plan for the BOOST+ expansion,
- A technical note informing the design of the Women Entrepreneurship Program (WEP), and a monitoring and evaluation plan for the program.
- Regional knowledge exchange workshops (2) focusing on the design and experience of the BOOST+ expansion and other similar regional initiatives.

Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO) Partnership

In October 2021, A request was made to the CESO for two volunteers to provide advisory support through the Canada-CARICOM Expert Deployment Mechanism (CCEDM). This request was made through an application submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was successful. Advisors to support the MHDFIPA are sourced in two areas: Grant Proposal Writing and Monitoring and Evaluation. The project commences in April 2022 beginning with Grant Proposal writing technical assistance for Head of Departments and Units within the Ministry.

Draft Strategic Plan

In November 2021 the first draft of the **Ministry's five-year Strategic Plan** was completed. The strategy addresses three strategic priorities of the Ministry which are Policy and Service Delivery, Human Resource Management, and Communication and Knowledge Management. The draft plan is currently being finalized by the PPU before final validation and endorsement by the Ministry. See Annex 1 for breakdown of proposed Objectives, Outcomes, Strategic Actions, and Alignment with Plan Belize.

Policy and Service Delivery	Human Resources Management	Communication and Knowledge Management
		
 Develop, strengthen, and implement legislation and policies that support an enabling environment in which families thrive	 Develop and maintain healthy working relationships and staff well being	 Strengthen channels for internal communication for improved planning, coordination and service delivery and maintain client confidence in the
 Improve quality, effectiveness, and coverage of services to build strong families and communities	 Build capacity of staff at all levels for improved service delivery	 Strengthen channels for internal communication for improved planning, coordination and service delivery and maintain client confidence
 1.3 Develop and strengthen systems and capacities to collect and analyze data and evidence to support decision-making and service delivery	 Adopt sound, desirable organization structure for improved service delivery	 Foster change in knowledge, attitudes/perceptions, and practices to encourage positive actions to build strong family and community

Lessons Learned

- The PPU is a critical arm of the MHDFIPA in its efforts to coordinate social policy and streamline social protection into national development plans. This is the unit which also

liaises regularly with social policy Ministries and the international development /donor communities and partners. However, the Unit is significantly under-resourced and understaffed to meet priority objectives and policy/planning demands. Placement of operational activities such implementation of BCCAT program required full attention from PPU staff, resulting in delays of core PPU functions. A review of the institutional structure of the Ministry is required.

- The COVID pandemic caused a shift of focus away from policy and planning towards emergency response, including within the PPU of MHDFIPA. Instead of a coordinating body, it became an implementer.
- There is a need for more staff qualified in the field of social work, social protection, development studies etc. within the PPU to help bolster and steer the development agenda to include strategies and plans to address the vulnerable who have fallen through the cracks and are left behind.
- The FamCare database managed by PPU staff has some inherent weaknesses that need to be addressed to maximize its effectiveness.

Future Priorities and Plans

- To address institutional challenges being observed and experienced at the PPU, there will be an institutional assessment to determine the optimal structure of the Unit to fulfill its mandate. This will include reviewing current positions and job descriptions, and recommendations for reclassifications and/or new positions and required capacity building.
- An assessment of the FamCare database will also be commissioned.

2.7. Indigenous Peoples' Affairs

Description

The MHDFIPA has been mandated by the GoB to manage all Indigenous Peoples' Affairs and all matters arising out of Indigenous Peoples relations. In furtherance of this, the Ministry established the Indigenous Peoples' Affairs Portfolio and appointed a Commissioner of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs. Through collaboration and coordination with the indigenous Maya and Garifuna leaders and communities, the Commissioner supports the development of policies, protocols, and legislation which seek to protect the rights and promote the development of indigenous peoples. One key function of the Office of IPA is the oversight and implementation of the Caribbean Court of Justice "CCJ" Consent Order of April 2015.

To fulfill this mandate, there have been several consultations with Maya villages, member organizations of the Maya Leaders Alliance "MLA", Garifuna villages, the National Garifuna Council "NGC", and other CSOs. In particular, the mandate to consult with the Maya communities of Toledo District accords with paragraph 3 of the Consent Order, which states as follows:

"In order to achieve the objective of paragraph 2, the Court accepts the undertaking of the Government to, in consultation with the Maya people or their representatives, develop the legislative, administrative and/or other measures necessary to create an effective mechanism to identify and protect the property and other rights arising from Maya customary land tenure, in accordance with Maya customary laws and land tenure practices."

Main Achievements of IPA

Establishment of the IPA Ministerial Committee

A Ministerial Committee was established to support the implementation process. It is envisioned that this Committee will function to ensure that the legislation and administrative measures which will be developed are aligned with the Constitution of Belize, national objectives and international conventions.

The committee consists of the following ministers:

- Minister of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples Affairs
- Minister of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government (*Area Representative for Toledo West*)
- Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development, and Investment (*Area Representative for Toledo East*)
- Attorney General
- Minister of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Mining
- Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management
- Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, and Immigration
-

Additionally, in March 2021 the Prime Minister issued a directive to all Government Ministries and Departments to provide the necessary support and collaboration with the Ministry of Human Development Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs and the Commissioner of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs to fully implement the Consent Order.

Procurement of Technical Expertise

The Ministry has expanded the technical capacity to fulfill its mandate by hiring a local Attorney-at-Law and two international consultants to render assistance and expert advice to the process. These consultants have been engaged in reviewing and providing feedback to critical documents such as the Free, Prior and Informed Consultation Protocol, the Customary Land Tenure Policy, and the 2018 December Agreement.

The consultants are in the process of developing a revised road map which builds on the 2018 December Agreement between the GoB and the Julian Cho Society (JCS) and Toledo Alcaldes Association (TAA). This revised road map will respond to critical gaps which must be addressed to bring GoB into compliance with the CCJ Consent Order. It will also take into consideration the legal implications of the Belizean context. Upon its completion, the road map will be discussed with the Maya communities and the Maya organizations to craft the way forward.

Consultations and Meetings

FPIC Protocol

The Free Prior and Informed Consent Protocol (FPIC) is a critical document for the implementation of the consent order going forward. It will establish the procedures for consultations with communities that Government must adhere to, until such time that the legislative and administrative measures are in place. Several meetings were held to discuss the revision of the existing draft protocol which was developed during the last administration.



The Maya Leaders Alliance was one of the first groups consulted. On March 19, 2021, all members of the MLA, JCS, Kekchi Council of Belize, Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management, Toledo Alcaldes Association (TAA), Toledo Maya Cultural Council, Toledo Maya Women's Council (TMWC), except DAVCO, responded to the Commissioner's invitation to an introductory meeting. The organizations were apprised of the status of the FPIC Protocol, whose

development was initiated under the previous administration. The organizations were asked to further review and provide feedback to the FPIC protocol.

Another consultation meeting was held on April 9, 2021, where several concerns on the FPIC were raised by the TAA and the MLA, including concerns with the constitution of the working group to negotiate the FPIC protocol and the role of the TAA vs the Communities being the first point of contact for consultations. Considering the emerging disagreement on these and other matters, the organizations were invited to submit feedback in writing. Inputs from the various organization were then consolidated into a single document, after which, in conjunction with the Attorney General's Ministry, a draft FPIC Protocol was submitted to Cabinet for approval. After a

series of Cabinet discussions, the FPIC protocol was approved by Cabinet and thereafter disseminated to the Maya organizations for their review and feedback.

Additional consultations were done with the executive bodies/ Board of Directors of the Maya organizations on the latest iteration of the FPIC protocol. Their feedback, along with the input of the consultants, will be incorporated into a further draft for Cabinet's consideration and approval before a final FPIC is submitted to the CCJ by the end of January 2022.

Community Consultations

The Commission has commenced consultations with community leaders in Q'eqchi', Mopan and Garifuna villages of the Toledo District. The purpose of these meetings is to familiarize community leaders with the mandate of the Commissioner, sensitize the communities of their right to, and the process of FPIC and the impending land tenure project, namely delimitation of community boundaries. The table below lists communities that have been consulted to date, all in the Toledo District. The Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs participated in some of these consultations.

Table 2. Communities consulted and dates of consultation in Toledo District

Community	Consultation Date	Community	Consultation Date
San Antonio	1 May 2021	Dolores	9 October 2021
Barranco	2 May 2021	San Marcos	25 October 2021
Midway	8 September 2021	Santa Ana	2 November 2021
Conejo Creek	8 September 2021	Indian Creek	8 November 2021
Crique Sarco	9 September 2021	Aguacate	10 November 2021
Sunday Wood	9 September 2021	Santa Teresa	2 December 2021
San Felipe	23 September 2021	Mabil Ha	2 December 2021
Silver Creek	8 October 2021	Blue Creek	17 December 2021



Land Tenure & Conflicts

The Consent Order provides that,

“The court accepts the undertaking of the government that, until such time as the measures in paragraph 2 are achieved, it shall cease and abstain from any acts, whether by the agents of the government itself or third parties acting with its leave, acquiescence or tolerance, that might adversely affect the value, use or enjoyment of the lands that are used and occupied by the Maya villages, unless such acts are preceded by consultation with them in order to obtain their informed consent, and are in conformity with their hereby recognized property rights and the safeguards of the Belize Constitution. This undertaking includes but is not limited to, abstaining from:

- a) issuing any leases or grants to lands or resources under the National Lands Act or any other Act;*
- b) registering any interest in land;*
- c) issuing or renewing any authorizations for resource exploitation, including concessions, permits or contracts authorizing logging, prospecting or exploration, mining or similar activity under the Forests Act, the Mines and Minerals Act the Petroleum Act or any other Act.”*

Despite this provision, several communities have filed complaints with the Authority under the Dispute Resolution Framework of Government-sanctioned activities occurring on lands where customary rights are claimed. To help address these complaints, the Government established an Inter-Departmental Committee, headed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs and the Commissioner of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs. Through the Departmental Committee, the Ministry and Commissioner functions to:

- a. Support the relevant government agencies to resolve the complaints filed with the Reporting and Dispute Resolution Mechanism Authority.
- b. Ensure relevant government agencies comply with the Consent Order.
- c. Provide technical support to the relevant ministries/departments to address matters that may fall within the scope of the Consent Order.

Following investigations and site visits by the relevant entities and the Commissioner of IPA, the Forest Department and Ministry of Natural Resources issued Cease-and-Desist Orders for activities which were occurring in the villages of Barranco, Crique Sarco, Laguna, Midway, San Marcos and Yemeri Grove.

Indian Creek

The land conflict which has been on-going in the village of Indian Creek is a particularly complex one. This is because the portion of the land which Indian Creek claims as customary land has been held under freehold title by numerous parties, with each titleholder entering different land-use arrangements with Indian Creek. The current freehold title holder has an active presence on the land causing continuous conflicts between Indian Creek villagers and representatives of the third parties. Considering that the implementation process is not at the stage to permanently resolve conflicts that emanate from Maya customary lands overlapping freehold title lands, the GOB has repeatedly sought to engage both parties to agree to an interim arrangement that will safeguard the interests and rights of both parties. Unfortunately, both parties have been engaged in provocative actions, with Indian Creek abandoning the friendly process. It must be recognized, that currently both parties’ rights and interests are protected under the Belize Constitution.

Further, Indian Creek Village has alleged that the Belize Police Department is not protecting their rights. In consequence, the Commissioner’s Office has since conducted two training sessions with the Toledo Formation of the Belize Police Department on the customary practices of the Maya people of Southern Belize, and the Government’s undertaking under the CCJ Consent Order of April 2015. These trainings are designed to create awareness on the part of the Police Officers to respond appropriately to land conflicts caused by third parties or inter-community competing interests.

US Capital Belize Corp.

US Capital Belize Corp., a company duly registered under the laws of the Republic of Panama, made an application to carry out petroleum exploration by way of seismic works in the Toledo District, Belize, including some Maya villages. Between 2018 and 2020, the Government carried out consultations with 10 Maya villages and the village of Barranco to obtain their consent to carry out petroleum exploration and possibly petroleum production; the consents were obtained. However, in 2021 a challenge to the consultations that were undertaken by the Government was filed on behalf of the Maya communities. The Authority found that the consultations did not meet international standards. As such, the Government advised US Capital of the need to re-do the consultations with the respective Maya villages, in accordance with the approved FPIC Protocol.

Barranco and Midway Villages

Being cognizant that the villages of Barranco and Midway have been embattled in a boundary dispute for some time, the Commissioner consulted with the leaders who agreed that they would like to establish dialogue with the view to finding an amicable solution. Consequently, leaders from both villages were invited to a meeting on March 24, 2021, where Midway proposed delimiting the boundaries between the two communities. In a follow-up meeting on June 2, 2021, the village of Barranco indicated that they do not agree to the boundaries proposed by Midway. On 4 September 2021, the Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs and the Commissioner of Indigenous Peoples Affairs held separate consultations with the villages of Barranco and Midway to further hear their concerns; however, the conflict remains unsettled.



Outreach to Garifuna Communities

Hon. Balderamos Garcia, the Minister of MHDFIPA and Commissioner of IPA met with the village councils and NGC branch executive of the following Garifuna villages and towns. The Chief Executive Officer also attended some of the meetings:

- 1) Barranco
- 2) Hopkins
- 3) Seine Bight, and
- 4) Georgetown
- 5) Dangriga, and
- 6) Punta Gorda

The purpose of the meetings was to introduce the mandate of the new Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs to the leaders and to hear what their concerns and issues are.

Other Matters

- The Commissioner intervened on a matter raised by the leadership of Indian Creek Village where they contend that an MOU was entered into by the Village Chairman and the Government of Belize to make village lands available to install a photo voltaic cell to electrify the communities of Indian Creek, Golden Stream and Medina Bank, without the community's expressed authority. The village further contends that the Government did not conduct a proper consultation and as such the Chairman did not have the authority to unilaterally enter an MOU. Moreover, while the village leaders were explicit that the community does desire electricity, they do take issue with some aspects of the implementation process. Further, the community does not feel as if the MOU safeguards their best interests. The Commissioner has indicated his support to the village and pledged assistance in obtaining disclosure of information related to the project
- CCJ Supervisory Hearings took place in the months of January, June, and November for 2021. For each of these hearings a compliance report was developed and submitted to the Honourable Court.

Administrative Matters

- i. In July 2021 the office was relocated to a bigger space on Corner of George Street and Jose Maria Nunez Street. This new office better accommodates staffing needs.
- ii. Two new hires were added to the staff: Ms. Melisha Ack assumed duties as a second-class clerk on August 27, 2021, and Mr. Edward Benguche assumed duties as a driver on September 17, 2021.

Lessons Learned

- There continues to be challenges with some ministries and departments taking steps and actions in the Maya communities which could contravene the Consent Order and often stir unnecessary conflict and complaints to the Ministry and Minister of IPA. Only when opposition or disputes arise from the communities or their leaders to the ministries'/departments' plans does the Ministry of IPA become aware of the situation. Further training and sensitization with government officers is required to alleviate this but requires further investment to implement the sessions in a reasonable amount of time. A directive from Cabinet to all ministries to follow due process and consult the Ministry of IPA for guidance when in doubt can also contribute to more successful coordination and implementation of projects on the ground.
- The IPA portfolio was established to address matters pertaining to all Indigenous Peoples in the country, including the Garifuna and the Yucatec Maya of northern and western Belize. However, the extensive issues, challenges and demands surrounding the Consent Order limit the capacity to give required attention to these other priority matters. The Office of the Commissioner of IPA requires more legal and technical expertise within the office to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Future Priorities and Plans

- ✓ With the support of the Ministry, the Office of the CIPA will continue to revise and update the Roadmap for Consent Order implementation, the Land Tenure Policy and finalize the FPIC for presentation to the CCJ and in fulfillment of the Consent Order.
- ✓ The Office of the CIPA will develop a calendar and budget to lead and coordinate training and sensitization sessions on the FPIC with government agencies.

- ✓ The Office of CIPA plans to increase qualifications and the number of technical personnel to adequately address the issues pertaining to general IPA as well as the CCJ Consent Order.

3. STAFFING AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Administration

Social workers in the MHDFIPA are paid on pay scales 5, 6, and 9. Other ministries, including the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade & Immigration, and the Ministry of Education, have introduced social work jobs beginning at pay scale 16. Pay scale 16 is now the starting point for supervisory officers in the Ministry of Human Development. Despite the disparities in salary, they all conduct comparable work and are more frequently exposed to much more trauma. As a result, over the years MHD social workers move to other Ministries and jobs because of higher remuneration, manageable workload and pressures offered elsewhere. Undoubtedly this impacts the stability and staff retention and comes at a loss to the Ministry.

In the recent past, the Ministry collaborated closely with the Ministry of the Public Service's Job Classification and Compensation Unit (JCCU) to perform a complete assessment of the Ministry's human resources and examine the roles, responsibilities, and demands of technical staff. The JCCU has completed a round two report, which must now be approved by the MHDFIPA. One objective is to standardize positions such as Community Development Officer, Human Development Officer, Community Rehabilitation Officer, Social Mobilizer and Women Development Officer, to be renamed as social workers and aligned on higher pay scales, comparable to other Government social worker posts in other ministries.

Furthermore, the reclassification exercise made recommendations to strengthen the human resource component throughout the Ministry and its Departments, including proposals to increase number of social workers and technical experts in respective departments to meet the demands of the population serviced by the Ministry. Given the current social breakdown, the Ministry's social workers have unachievable caseloads, which could result in poor response to clients. In 2022 the Ministry will finalize the review of the Job Classification Round 2 Report and submit a proposal for a prioritized and phased implementation of the recommendations. There will be financial implications to achieve the desired results.

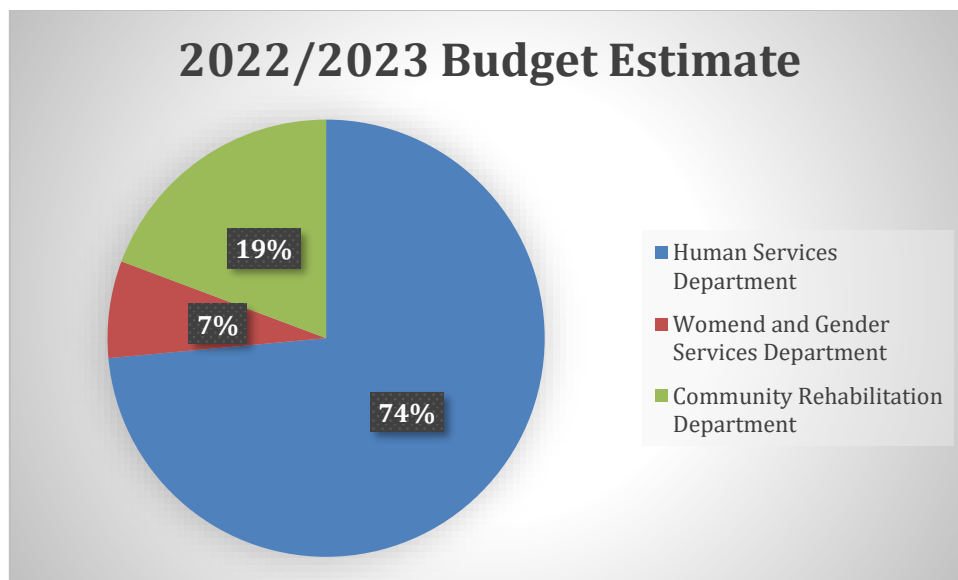
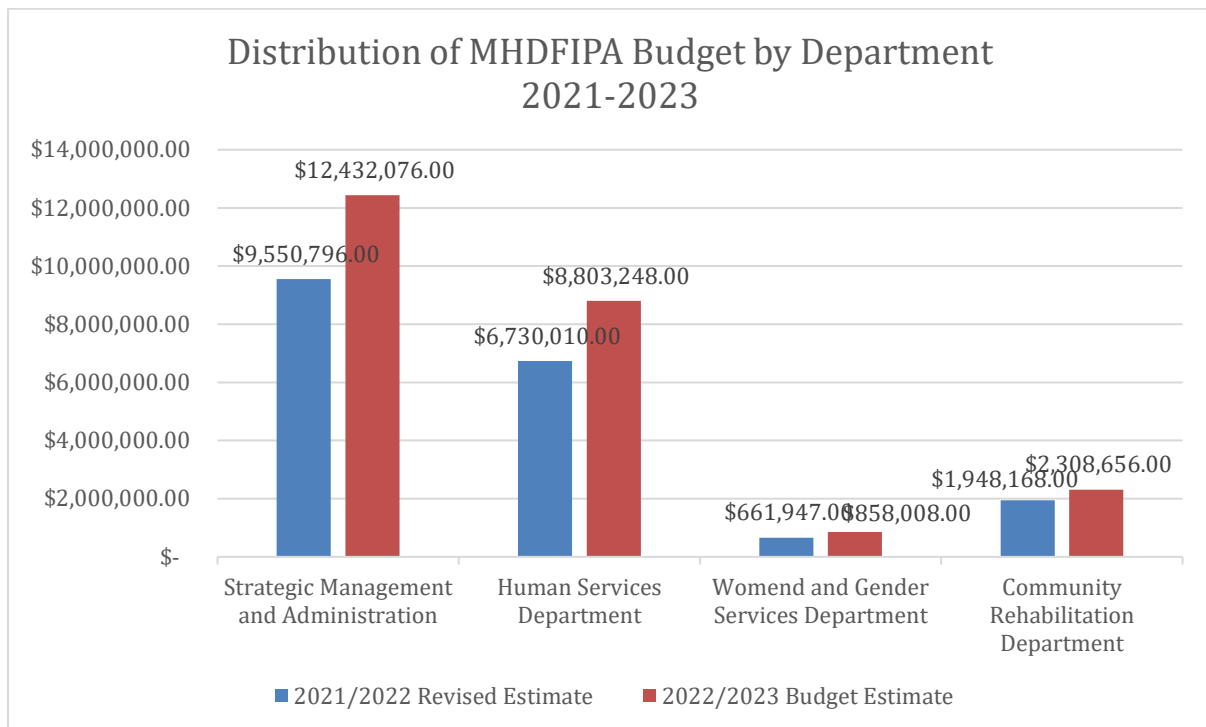
Budgets

There has been an increase in the annual budget from fiscal year 2021/2022 to 2022/2023. However, the increase also reflects in an increase in social assistance which is used to supply food assistance. Of note is the significant disparity in budget assigned to the Women and Family Support Department which encompasses support to women, families, elderly, and disabled persons throughout the country.

Table 3. Distribution of the Budget by Program for 2021/2022 and 2022/2023

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Program	2021/2022 Revised Estimate	2022/2023 Budget Estimate
Strategic Management and Administration	\$9,550,796.00	\$12,432,076.00
Human Services Department	\$6,730,010.00	\$8,803,248.00
Women and Gender Services Department	\$661,947.00	\$858,008.00
Community Rehabilitation Department	\$1,948,168.00	\$2,308,656.00
Total	\$18,890,921.00	\$24,401,988.00



4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2021, poverty reduction was placed prominently at the forefront of the GoB agenda as reflected in #planBelize. The MHDFIPA is a critical agent in this effort and is committed to ensuring that every person has access to relevant social services and building strong families and communities. It continues to adjust and adapt its responses to the needs of the vulnerable population through the work of the departments and units.

Significant effort was placed to address policy and legislative gaps in the provision of social services. The repeal of the Certified Institutions Act and Section 14 of the Juvenile Offenders Act to remove status offenses for children were achieved. This is an important step towards compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These amendments now ensure that institutionalization of children is a last resort and that parents are more involved in interventions.

The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act of 2013 and the Commercial Sexual Exploitation (Prohibition) Act of 2013 are being amended. The changes being made are to align Belize's legislation with international standards and best practices. The law is being made clearer and more consistent with similar offenses found in other laws so that offenses are more prosecutable.

In relation to capacity building and institutional strengthening, efforts were more to renovate existing structures and improve the information systems. The Department of Human Services bid was approved for the construction of a new building for the Dorothy Menzies Child Care Center. Construction is expected to begin soon with the opening of the facility scheduled for 2023. The department also opened a migrant shelter for male migrants and unaccompanied minors who enter the country. This is a new initiative with partnership of UNICEF. In relation to Early Childhood Development, a proposal was submitted to establish an ECD commission. Major renovations to the Youth Hostel were also made to ensure the safety and comfort of children living there.

Moreover, Belize's Management Information System for Human Trafficking was developed with the intention to improve data collection, encourage data-driven decisions-making and create greater accountability of case management.

The CERC-Social protection was successfully implemented and reached around 23,933 poor and vulnerable households with a minimum of \$150 monthly payments over a six-month period. BOOST+ also graduated its 2nd cohort of 85 households who benefited from cash assistance and individual case management to empower families through job readiness, business mentoring, entrepreneurship, and social support. The existing BOOST and public assistance continue to serve clients in need of financial assistance.

In response to the way forward, the Ministry is working towards improving its overall capacity by strengthening policy and service delivery, human resources management, and communications and knowledge management. These strategic areas were identified as having significant gaps in the Ministry. The Ministry is now finalizing its strategic plan to address the gaps to improve and expand its services to the Belize population.

Annex 1: Draft MHDFIPA Strategic Objectives

Strategic Area 1: Policy and Service Delivery

Objectives	Outcomes	Strategic Actions	Alignment with Plan Belize
1.1 Develop, strengthen, and implement legislation and policies that support an enabling environment in which families thrive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework developed for MHDFIPA Strategic Plan 2022 – 2027 2. Social Protection System Strengthened 3. Improved policies that strengthen families in Belize 4. Increased access to services and improved service delivery for persons along the life cycle 5. Women and girls in safe environments that acknowledge their rights and affords them the opportunities to live successful lives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M&E Framework for MHDFIPA Strategic Plan 2022-2027 developed • Social Protection Policy/Strategy developed • Disability Act developed • National Policy for Older Persons revised • NCA Strategic Plan developed • Updated Social Services Act • MOU between DHS and RCFC developed • National Gender Policy (approved and implemented) • Updated Policy and Procedural documents/manuals for Departments • National ECD Policy updated • GBV Action Plan (approved and implemented) • Child Labor Policy developed • Juvenile Justice Reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Strengthen and expand measures to ensure the safety and security of women and girls; → Revise domestic violence legislation with significant penalties and prosecution of these crimes to ensure protection of our women from bullying, revenge, and modern cyber related crimes); → Development, implementation and monitoring of a family strengthening policy
1.2 Improve quality, effectiveness, and coverage of	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased access to quality and effective services that support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BOOST program strengthened • BOOST + Evaluation completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Secure women's access and affordability to proper healthcare services throughout their life cycle

Objectives	Outcomes	Strategic Actions	Alignment with Plan Belize
services to build strong families and communities	<p>strong families and communities in Belize</p> <p>2. Provision of wrap-around services to families meeting the needs of all individuals along the life cycle</p> <p>3. Improved partnership with organizations within Belize's social protection system to provide efficient service to beneficiaries and clients of MHDFIPA along a continuum of care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roving Caregivers Program scaled-up for rollout countrywide • Public Assistance Program • Women Economic Empowerment workplan developed with BELTRAIDE, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise, and Development Finance Corporation (DFC) developed • Family Support Services strengthened • Advocacy for improved access to enhanced services for disabled persons • Child Protection services strengthened • Improved access to support services for migrant families • Improved access to support services for Indigenous peoples • Child Placement & Specialized Services strengthened • Trafficking in Persons Action Plan updated • GBV Surveillance Form and response strengthened • Diversion program strengthened and scaled-up for countrywide roll-out • Counseling Program strengthened and scaled-up for countrywide roll-out • Positive Youth Development programs strengthened at The Hub • Skills training program module developed and implemented at the Princess Royal Youth Hostel 	<p>(girls, adolescents, childbearing, and older women)</p> <p>→ Empower women through creation of economic opportunities</p> <p>→ Achieve gender equality and equity and end discrimination against women and girls</p> <p>→ Strengthen and expand measures to ensure the safety and security of women and girls</p> <p>→ Introduce sentencing guidelines and innovative and appropriate restorative, reparative and rehabilitative penalties to serve as deterrent</p> <p>→ Design programs to expose youth to new creative and technological skills, and opportunities for start-up businesses Reintroduce a new and improved youth hostel program in for at risk youth</p> <p>→ Encourage alternative sentencing to reduce incarceration for certain petty crimes</p>

Objectives	Outcomes	Strategic Actions	Alignment with Plan Belize
			→ Develop access to healthy activities, mentoring programs, counselling services, support groups, spaces for Wellness and self-care groups: AA, Gamblers Anonymous, survivors of domestic abuse, increase public education on special needs and diverse abilities
1.3 Develop and strengthen systems and capacities to collect and analyze data and evidence to support decision-making and service delivery	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved Data Management System with MHDFIPA 2. Repository for Gender-based Violence data for Belize 3. Improved reporting and analysis of data collected by MHDFIPA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAMCare System Strengthened • Human Trafficking Dashboard utilized by partner agencies to strengthen data collection and analysis as it relates to human-trafficking • Gender-based Violence Surveillance System uploaded to FAMCare • Gender-based Violence Surveillance System utilized by partner agencies to strengthen data collection as to relates to violence against women and girls • Improved analysis of data provided from FAMCare • Policy briefs published and disseminated quarterly 	→ Strengthen and expand measures to ensure the safety and security of women and girls

Strategic Area 2: Human Resources Management

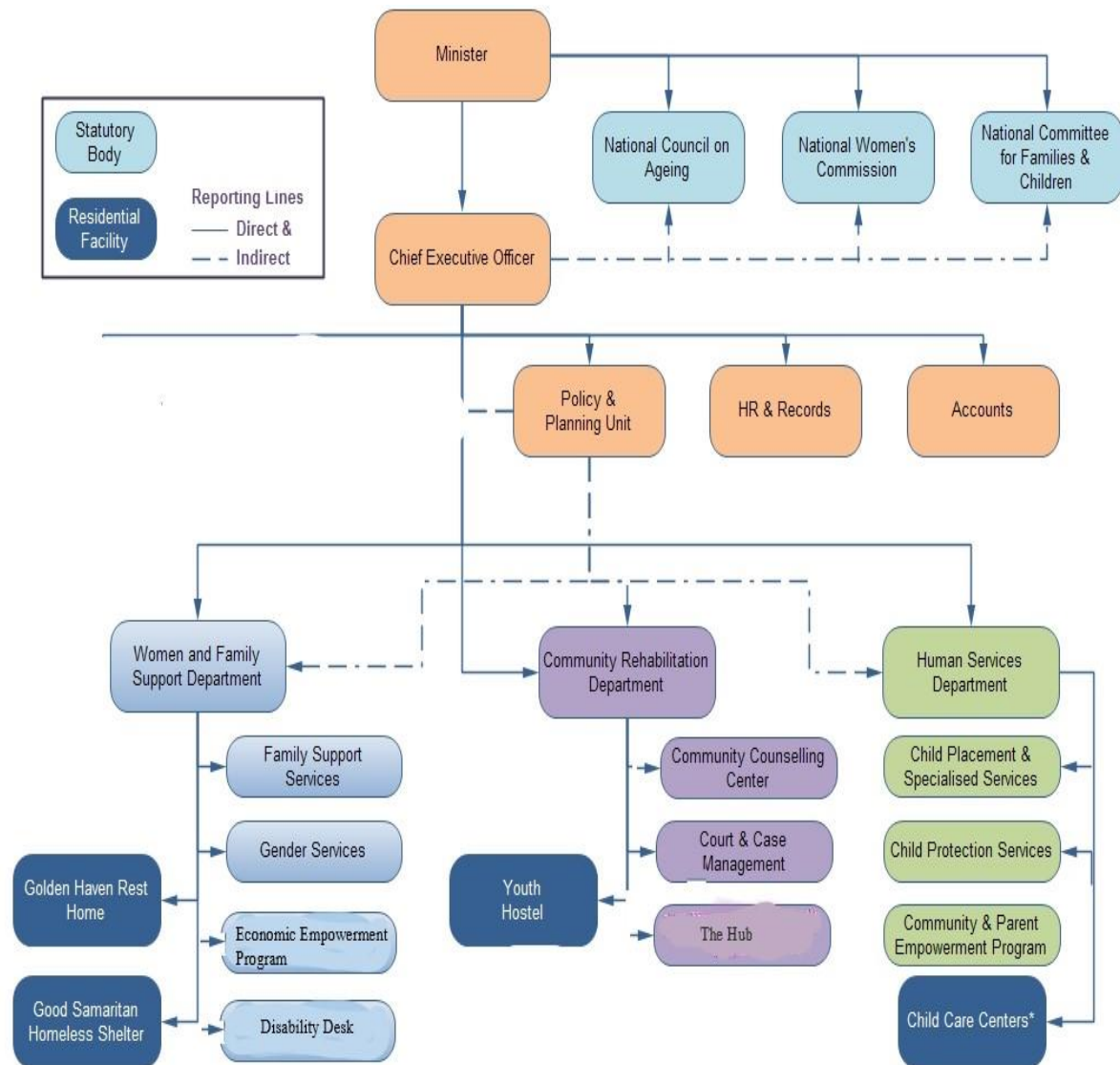
Objectives	Outcomes	Strategic Actions
2.1 Develop and maintain healthy working relationships and staff well being	1. Strengthened Supervision Framework 2. Improved staff well-being/work life balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisory Framework documented and shared internally for validation. • MHDFIPA Wellness Committee costed Action Plan developed.
2.2 Build capacity of staff at all levels for improved service delivery	3. MHDFIPA Capacity Development Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Workforce Strengthening document socialized and validated within the MHDFIPA • Updated training modules developed for MHDFIPA • Updated training modules uploaded on FAMCare University
2.3 Adopt sound, desirable organization structure for improved service delivery	4. MHDFIPA HR Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategy for identifying and filling HR gaps • Reclassification exercise actualized

Strategic Area 3: Communications & Knowledge Management

Objectives	Outcome	Strategic Actions
3.1 Increase visibility of MHDFIPA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved visibility of MHDFIPA 2. MHDFIPA Communication Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Communication plan for MHDFIPA • Promote MHDFIPA as a client-centered, efficient, and service-oriented ministry through television advertisements • Promote MHDFIPA's vision and mission statement in each office countrywide (erect on wall at entrance area in offices) • Erect standardized MHDFIPA signage countrywide • Increase utilization of technology to promote services and access to services on website and social media platforms (website, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) • Develop human interest stories that showcase the impact of MHDFIPA's services and programs on families and communities
3.2 Strengthen channels for internal communication for improved planning, coordination and service delivery and maintain client confidence in the	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ministry and Departmental Management WhatsApp groups Senior Management bi-annual countrywide Tour 3. Annual Staff Retreat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct bi-annual Senior Management Tour to District offices • Establish channels for internal communication /information sharing on FAMCare • Conduct monthly Senior Management Meetings • Conduct monthly Middle Management meetings • Engage staff through annual staff retreat sessions
3.3 Foster change in knowledge, attitudes/perceptions, and practices to encourage positive actions to build strong family and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior Change Communication Strategy as a sub-feature of MHDFIPA Communications Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and disseminate effective behavior change communication products and messages to encourage positive actions by families and communities (parenting, GBV, Juvenile Justice, etc.) • Support implementation of Behavior Change Communication Strategy developed under Spotlight Initiative

Annex 2: Organizational Structure of MHDFIPA

* The A-TIPS Focal Point and the Inspectorate Unit of Social Service Institutions is within the Policy and Planning Unit



*Dorothy Menzies Child Care Centre, Mile 14 Transitional Living Home and Coral Grove Group Home

Annex 3: List of professional and Technical Staff

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