



**Spotlight
Initiative**

*To eliminate violence
against women and girls*

BELIZE

Annual Narrative Programme Report

01 January 2022 - 31 December 2022

Initiated by the European Union and the United Nations:



Programme Title & Programme Number

Programme Title: Spotlight Initiative to End Violence Against Women and Girls

MPTF Office Project Reference Number.¹
[00119130](#)

Priority regions/areas/localities for the programme

All six districts of Belize

Recipient Organization(s)

UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA

Key Partners

Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs
Ministry of Health & Wellness
Ministry of National Defense and Border Security
Ministry of Education, Culture, Science & Technology
Attorney General's Ministry
National Women's Commission
National Commission for Families and Children

CSOs and CSO Networks
Civil Society National Reference Group
Academia

UN Agencies/UN Programme Partners:
European Union
UN Women
ILO
PAHO/WHO
UNHCR
OHCHR
IOM

¹ The Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as "Project ID" on the project's factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#).



Programme Cost (US\$)

Total Phase I budget, and (where OSC approved) Phase II budget as per the Spotlight CPD/RPD: **4,369,552 USD**

Phase I and (where OSC approved) Phase II Spotlight funding:² **3,535,714 USD**

Agency Contribution: **833,838 USD**

Spotlight Funding and Agency Contribution by Agency:

Name of RUNO	SPOTLIGHT PHASE I (+ II, WHERE OSC approved) (USD)	UN Agency Contributions (USD)
UNDP	1,268,922	153,791
UNFPA	888,725	263,018
UNICEF	1,378,067	417,029
TOTAL	3,535,714	833,838

TOTAL: 4,369,552

Programme Start and End Dates

Start Date:
(1 January 2020)

End Date:
(31 December 2023)

Report Submitted By:

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² The Spotlight Contribution refers to the amount transferred to the Recipient UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

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ACRONYM LIST

Acronym	Definitions
CSNRG	Civil Society National Reference Group
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
HoA	Heads of Agencies
MHDFIPA	Ministry of Human Development Families and Indigenous People's Affairs
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MNDBS	Ministry of Defence and Border Security
MTA	Mid Term Assessment
NWC	National Women's Commission
NSC	National Steering Committee
OHCHR	Office of the High Commission for Human Rights
RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
RUNOs	Recipient United Nations Organizations
SBCC	Social and Behaviour Change Communication
SI	Spotlight Initiative
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By the end of 2022, Belize had achieved a 94.6% implementation rate and was well positioned to transition to Phase II and ensure an effective closure of Spotlight Initiative by the end of 2023. While only a small percentage of Phase I funding (just over 20%) remained to implement programmes during 2022, RUNOs demonstrated strong commitment to Spotlight Initiative by providing bridge funding to maintain core human resources as well as to support continued programme implementation.

Belize's sustained contribution to the national response to VAWG resulted in its nomination, along with three other countries, globally, for the Office Performance Award. The Office Performance Award recognizes countries who are among the best performing Spotlight Initiative programme globally, receiving the highest possible score in the mid-term assessment.

Strong partnerships with the Government of Belize, at the highest level, the European Union Delegation and CSOs partners, including the CSNRG, continued to be a hallmark of Spotlight Initiative and resulted in the development and approval of Phase II proposal and funding during the last quarter of 2022. The Phase II proposal built on Phase I interventions, lessons learned, promising practices, and key recommendations from the Mid-term Assessment (MTA).

The MTA was completed during the first quarter of 2022 with input from stakeholders at all levels. Some of the key recommendations from the MTA which were addressed during the reporting period and which are prominently featured in Phase II programming, include; a stronger focus on leaving no one behind by improving targeting of marginalized groups including the elderly, people with disabilities, persons identifying as LGBTQ, I+ , migrants, and commercial sex workers, with services and information on preventing and ending GBV, strengthening monitoring and evaluation capacity to more effectively capture results and impact, including impact of Spotlight Initiative on the most marginalized groups, strengthening the capacity of the CSNRG to more effectively support programme implementation and monitoring, improving communication between the EU and RUNOs and increasing visibility of Spotlight Initiative. The latter posed some challenges during the reporting period owing to gaps in resources to support continued engagement of a Communication Officer during the transition from Phase I to Phase II. This post will be filled during the first quarter of 2023. Noteworthy, however, is that the partnership and communication with the EU was significantly strengthened during the reporting period through the presence of resident EU technical personnel who provided strong technical guidance and support throughout the reporting period.

Another important focus during the reporting period was ensuring sustainability of Spotlight Initiative interventions. While the sustainability plan for Phase I focused primarily on activity level sustainability, a strong emphasis during the reporting period was on engaging government and CSOs to identify key actions necessary during the last year of Spotlight's implementation to ensure sustainability. Some key actions undertaken during the reporting period, and which will continue into 2023 include strengthening the National Women's Commission as the lead entity for gender equality and women's empowerment, advocacy and planning meetings with government stakeholders at the policy and decision making as well as the technical level, and engagement of the Civil Society National Reference Group to identify how CSOs can continue be engaged in governance of the national response to VAWG. During the first quarter of 2023, a sustainability plan will be elaborated in partnership with the government, CSNRG and the EU, to include the above-mentioned actions as well as other key actions for sustainability identified during this participatory process.



As Spotlight Initiative transitions to its final year of implementation, the focus is building on key results achieved during the programme, ensuring strong alignment of interventions with the national response, while building individual and institutional capacities to sustain the national response. Some key results during the reporting period that support this focus are captured below.

Under Outcome 1, the process of revising the Domestic Violence Act, the key legislation responding to VAWG was initiated. In order to ensure that the process is informed by recommendations from a wide variety of stakeholders, community-based consultations with a wide cross section of state and non-state actors, including civil society organizations representing vulnerable groups, as well as a wide cross section of community leaders, women and girls, men and boys, including survivors of domestic violence were conducted to generate and document key challenges to effective protection and access to justice under the Domestic Violence Act. Civil society's leadership and participation in this process has been key to ensuring that the voice of survivors and those often left behind are included in the process. Additionally, advocacy continued at the highest level of government for the endorsement of the National Gender Policy, The National Gender Based Violence Action Plan (NGBVAP) and the Social and Behaviour Change Communication Strategy (SBCC) which were developed in 2021. This effort was complemented by sensitization on the NGP through engagement with key groups including faith-based leaders and community groups.

Under Outcome 2, the institutional capacity of the national machinery for gender equality and women's empowerment, the National Women's Commission, which is now established as a statutory body with the legal mandate to coordinate the national response to GEWE, has been strengthened through the participatory development of its strategic plan and capacity building of the commissioners to prevent and respond to VAWG including family violence, including for those groups of women and girls facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

Additionally, Spotlight Initiative has engaged the Women's Parliamentarian Caucus as a key ally in advancing the national response to VAWG. An important next step is the development of a detailed advocacy plan and the identification of, and agreement on key capacity building opportunities with the Women's Parliamentary Caucus.

Under Outcome 3, couched within the implementation of the National Social and Behaviour Change Community Strategy, developed in 2021 and presented to the Minister of Human Development Families and Indigenous People's Affairs for further endorsement by cabinet, Spotlight Initiative continued to implement prevention interventions aimed at increasing knowledge, transforming attitudes and changing behaviours and social norms across all levels of the social ecology. In 2022, Spotlight Initiative interventions targeting prevention of VAWG in home, schools and communities reached over 115,000 men, women, boys and girls.

Through Spotlight Initiative's continued partnership with CSOs over 35,000 women and girls, men and boys regularly attended community programmes promoting gender equitable norms, attitudes, and behaviours, including sessions on family violence. Spotlight Initiative also strengthened awareness of VAWG and increased capacities of over 450 key informal decision makers and decision makers in relevant institutions to advocate for implementation of legislation and policies on VAWG including family violence and for gender-equitable norms, attitudes and behaviours and women and girls' rights.

Spotlight also sustained its efforts to increase knowledge and raise awareness on VAWG through the development of a national campaign and direct and indirect engagement of almost 80,000 men, women, boys and girls in challenging harmful social norms and gender stereotyping, including of women

and girls facing intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination.

Under Outcome 4, Spotlight Initiative support increased the institutional capacity of the Government of Belize, to deliver quality and coordinated essential services to women and girls' survivors of VAWG including family violence through strengthening the Social Services Workforce and advancing the Essential Services Package.

Under Outcome 5, Spotlight Initiative continued to provide technical support to strengthen the country's capacity to collect and report on comprehensive GBV data. The Spotlight Initiative also continued advocacy for increased strengthening the national gender-based violence surveillance system in order to ensure that Belize has a coordinated, comprehensive system for data collection, reporting and case management.

Under outcome 6, 65 Women's rights groups and relevant CSOs, have increased opportunities and support to share knowledge, network, partner and jointly advocate for GEWE and ending VAWG, including family violence, with relevant stakeholders at sub-national, national, regional and global levels.

CONTEXTUAL SHIFTS AND IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

During the reporting period, Spotlight Initiative continued its successful implementation despite some developments within the broader social, political, economic and cultural context. The threat of COVID 19 significantly diminished by the third quarter of 2022. However, the country continued to face challenges in recovering from the severe impact of COVID 19 on all sectors.

Key social services including health, education and GBV services, which were significantly constrained during COVID 19, slowly increased service delivery, with schools opening for full time face to face sessions by the end of the third quarter. However, the impact from the prolonged suspension of routine health and social services such as SRH services, mental health services, GBV case management, referral services, outreach and education created increasing demands on the limited available human resources within those sectors once services were reinstated. This made it extremely challenging for service providers to ensure that services were reinstated to the most vulnerable population who were already experiencing gaps in service delivery even before COVID 19.

Data from the Belize Crime Observatory on GBV demonstrates an increasing upward trend in the number of cases of GBV reported since 2020, from 1848 cases in 2020 to 2,856 reported cases in 2022. While no studies have been conducted to establish COVID 19's contribution to an increase in reported cases of GBV, the data does demonstrate a clear need for increasing service delivery, education and outreach on GBV, particularly to vulnerable women and girls and survivors of GBV.

During the last quarter of 2022, Hurricane Lisa made landfall as a Category One hurricane bringing strong gusty winds, flash floods, and storm surges throughout the entire coast of the country, and especially battering Belize District. The hurricane affected 172,000 people, causing the temporary displacement of at least 5,000 persons who sought refuge in state-managed shelters. In addition to the



economic impact, Hurricane Lisa's devastation resulted in key social services being diverted to support recovery efforts in this area. This significantly impacted efforts to reinstate services post COVID 19 country-wide given the limited human resources available within the social sector.

The implementation of Spotlight Initiative's interventions was minimally affected by Hurricane Lisa as RUNOs had reached over 90% implementation of Phase I. Therefore, while implementation of some interventions targeting the Belize District were delayed, Hurricane Lisa did not have a major impact on Spotlight Initiative's implementation. On the other hand, however, due to the limited resources available at the end of Phase I and the pending approval of Phase II budget, it was not possible to provide major support to the response to Hurricane Lisa.

After contracting significantly in 2020, due to COVID 19, Belize's economy slowly rebounded in 2022. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the rebased national accounts show that, after contracting by 13.4 percent in 2020, real GDP rebounded by 15.2 percent in 2021 and 11.6 percent in the first three quarters of 2022, driven by retail and wholesale trade, tourism, and business process outsourcing. Visitor arrivals reached 74 percent of pre-pandemic levels in 2022 as COVID-19 restrictions eased amid vaccination efforts in Belize and source markets, while the unemployment rate fell from 10.2 percent in 2021 to 5.0 percent in the second half of 2022. Inflation increased to 3.2 percent in 2021 and 6.3 percent in 2022, driven by higher global food and fuel prices despite the fixing of domestic diesel and regular gasoline prices at the pump since April 2022.

The IMF warns, however, that while the risk of an intensification of the pandemic has receded, other risks have become more prominent, including a sharp slowdown in advanced economies and climate-related disasters, which could weaken the recovery of tourism, Belize's major income earner.

Spotlight Initiative continued to receive strong political support from Government of Belize which continuously demonstrated its commitment to the national GBV response through a Domestic Violence Motion supported by the entire Cabinet during the first quarter of 2022. The Motion identified five key action areas for the Cabinet which includes; denouncing and condemning domestic Violence, in all its forms, as a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights, a call for additional resources to further strengthen the interventions, safeguards and public awareness required to effectively address domestic violence in Belize, undertake legislative review aimed at filling gaps and putting in the necessary reforms for the response to domestic violence; as national leaders, takes a zero-tolerance position with regard to domestic violence, prioritizes domestic violence as a national issue of significance. The Spotlight Initiative utilized this important motion as an opportunity to engage key leaders in government in identifying key priorities for inclusion in Phase II proposal development to support the Government of Belize in advancing their commitments to the national response to GBV in line with the Motion.

In addition, the Government of Belize continued to provide strong leadership on the National Steering Committee. Spotlight Initiative was included as a core component of Belize's Medium Term Development Strategy 2022-2025, the national machinery for gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), the National Women's Commission (NWC) was strengthened through the establishment of the NWC as a statutory body with the legal mandate for GEWE, and the Women's Parliamentarian Caucus was established. The latter provides an important high-level space for advocacy on advancing the national response to VAWG. Spotlight Initiative continues to provide strong technical support to the Government of Belize and to the National Women's Commission to support the national GBV response.

At the end of 2022, Spotlight Initiative remained on track with almost 95% of Phase I implemented and with RUNOs providing bridge funding to support implementation of Phase II for the last 2 quarters of 2022 when the no-cost extension period for Phase I ended. Bridge funding provided by RUNOs, pending the finalization and approval of Phase II funding, demonstrated RUNOs commitment to Spotlight

Initiative and was key to sustain Phase I gains and to ensure continued programme implementation.

A sustainability plan, which will be handed over to the NSC at the end of quarter 3, 2023, will be developed in partnership with government and civil society during the first quarter of 2023. However, in anticipation of programme closure at the end of 2023, sustainability was an important focus in designing Spotlight Initiative’s Phase II interventions. Consequently, Phase II interventions ensured close alignment with national response plans, policies and frameworks.

In addition, key Spotlight outcomes have been integrated into the Multi Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 (MSDCF) as well as the RUNOs five-year Country Programme Documents (CPD). In developing the respective agency CPDs, RUNOs ensured that interventions were included to support government and CSOs in the national response to VAWG in strategic areas that were funded by Spotlight. These include legislative reform, institutional strengthening, and strengthening capacity of CSOs to plan and deliver programmes on ending VAWG which will ensure follow up and sustained focus on EVWAG and GEWE. A strong example of this is the current support being provided to the Government of Belize by the World Bank to strengthen the country’s capacity to respond to GBV during emergencies.

Implementation progress by outcome area:

SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE - OUTCOME AREAS	Implementation progress as of 31 Dec 2022,
Outcome 1: Legal and Policy Framework	100%
Outcome 2: Institutions	95%
Outcome 3: Prevention and Norm Change	80%
Outcome 4: Quality Services	100%
Outcome 5: Data	100%
Outcome 6: Women’s Movement	93%
TOTAL	94.6%

**please note that these figures only reflect Phase I budgetary allocation.*

PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE AND COORDINATION

As per the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) developed in 2020, the governance structures and mechanisms established to support effective governance, coordination and oversight of Spotlight Initiative continued to operate effectively in 2022. Strategic leadership by the Resident Coordinator (RC) continued to support the effective implementation of the Spotlight Initiative and coordination of the RUNO Heads of Agencies through bi-monthly meetings to review the progress of implementation and identify areas for action by the HOAs.

Leadership and engagement of the RC and HOAs has supported effective coordination of the Spotlight



Initiative, ensured collective accountability to commitments, facilitated spaces for high-level information exchange to strengthen partnerships and to advocate for advancing key actions to strengthen the national response, as well as improving coordination and collaboration of the UN system internally and externally with the EU and implementing partners. Additionally, leadership from the RC and HOAs supported actions for the accelerated implementation of Spotlight Initiative to ensure timely completion of Phase I.

In addition to the oversight and guidance provided by the RC and HOAs, monthly coordination meetings among RUNOs, at the technical level, continued to provide the space for oversight of the programme, strategic decision making, and decision making regarding budget and financial implementation.

a) National Steering Committee (NSC)

The National Steering Committee continued to function as an effective governance mechanism, ensuring strong ownership and leadership from the government as well as fostering coordination and joint advocacy among the government, UN agencies and the European Union. In keeping with the principle of “leaving no one behind”, civil society’s engagement in the NSC has ensured that the voice of the most vulnerable populations and those most affected by VAWG are represented in key governance and decision-making spaces.

During the reporting period, the composition of the NSC remained the same as reported in previous years. One meeting of the NSC was held in quarter 3 of 2022, to share key Spotlight Initiative results, present Phase II proposal and secure the NSC’s inputs to the proposal as well as to initiative discussions on the sustainability of Spotlight Initiative. The meeting also approved the Annual Report 2021 as well as made recommendations for strengthening CSO engagement in the implementation of Spotlight Initiative.

It is important to note that although only one meeting was held, the NSC remained engaged outside of the formal meeting space. In the first quarter of 2022, the Mid-term Evaluation report was completed through a consultative process which included NSC members. The final report was circulated to NSC for information and action.

b) Civil Society National or Regional Reference Group (CSRNG)

The CSNRG comprises of six (6) members representing women and girls, youth, indigenous groups, LGBTI groups, and sex workers. In keeping with the principle of “leaving no one behind” the CSRNG represents an important space for inclusion of the voice of the most affected groups as well as a platform for advocacy and to hold Spotlight Initiative accountable for advancing its commitments to the national response to VAWG.

During the reporting period, there were only two meetings of the CSNRG and several planned activities under the CSNRG’s work plan was constrained as the CSNRG implemented almost 100% of its Phase I budget by the end of 2021. Consequently, during the Phase I no cost extension, there was no operational budget for the CSNRG. During the two meetings held the CSNRG received a presentation on Phase II proposal, reviewed the MTA recommendations relevant to CSO engagement and identified concrete actions to address these recommendations, discussed priorities for the CSNRG’s workplan during Phase II and discussed strategies for strengthening the CSNRG as well as CSO engagement through joint discussions with the RC, HOAs, RUNOS and the EU.

The CSNRG’s workplan, completed at the end of 2021 will be implemented during Phase II with a small budgetary allocation of 15,000 USD. Key priorities for the CSNRG includes building on its participatory monitoring and evaluation of Spotlight Initiative through updating the CSNRG Score Card, an assess-

ment of the state of play of service delivery and prevention efforts on VAWG to support increased advocacy on EVAWG, and the production of shadow reports for the Universal Periodic Report (UPR). Given, the limited budget available to support implementation of its work plan, the CSNRG will continue to provide leadership and support in the implementation of actions under several Spotlight outcomes such as the revision of the Domestic Violence Act under Outcome 1 and the roll out of the Social and Behaviour Change Campaign (SBCC) on ending violence against women and girls which have their own budgetary allocations.

The CSNRG will also continue to support implementation of activities under Outcome 6. In 2022, the CSNRG supported joint planning and implementation of two CSO Dialogues during the reporting period. Within the context of “leaving no one behind”, the CSO Dialogues provided an important platform for CSOs to share progress and challenges in advancing the national response to VAWG and in reaching the most vulnerable groups with services and information. Inputs from the CSO Dialogues were utilized to draft a CSO Engagement Strategy which will continue to be developed with leadership from the CSNRG and which will guide the engagement and coordination of CSOs beyond Spotlight Initiative.

Additionally, the CSNRG has been engaged in discussions to identify strategies to strengthen its membership in order to position the CSNRG to provide leadership and support for the implementation of actions under outcome 6, geared towards CSO networking and movement building. A strengthened CSNRG can significantly contribute to mobilizing CSOs and providing leadership in advocacy and social accountability. Stronger engagement in the implementation of planned actions under outcome 6 will also strengthen the CSNRG’s position on the NSC as it will allow for the CSNRG to strengthen its advocacy efforts as well as provide evidence base necessary for decision making at the NSC level.

Finally, discussions have commenced on the sustainability of the CSNRG. While these discussions are in the early stages, the CSNRG has expressed an interest in continuing to function in its current role. The CSNRG will be supported by RUNOs and the EU, with guidance from the Spotlight Secretariat, to explore effective approaches to its sustainability.

c) Inter-agency coordination, technical committees and other governance mechanisms

The United Nations Gender and Human Rights Theme Group (UNGHR) continued to be the key inter-agency coordination mechanism providing a space for Spotlight Initiative to foster inter-agency coordination, aligned with UN Reform. This UNGHR provides technical guidance and oversight to ensure that gender and human rights are effectively addressed within the Spotlight Initiative and that the gender and human rights focus of SI is aligned with international standards. The UNGHR also has a strategic role in supporting the implementation of Agenda 2030 and SDGs, as per the areas indicated in the Gender Scorecard, Human Rights-based Approach and Leave No One Behind guidance to Development Cooperation.

As part of the efforts to simplify processes and improve opportunities for civil society and women’s rights movements to access resources and support through the United Nations and other Development Partners, Spotlight Initiative saw an opportunity to support CSOs in meeting the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) mandate. Spotlight Initiative supported the engagement of 10 CSOs, CBOs, and NGO partners to strengthen their policies and practices on PSEA. Path Light Belize as an implementing partner has had experience in successfully developing and customizing all six Core Standards of the PSEA Toolkit developed by UNICEF to support Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP). As such, building on their experience and success, the partner was engaged to provide guided technical training and support from other CSO, CBO and

NGO partners, helping them to adapt, develop and complete PSEA policies, procedures, training, and processes for the population they serve. 95 (8 males, 87 females) representatives of the 10 organizations were trained in PSEA and Sexual Harassment. 10 PSEA Manuals and Policies were developed and institutionalized to protect communities, staff and volunteers and to outline each organization's zero tolerance on PSEA, including consequences for violating the PSEA policy. Organizations engaged represented beneficiaries from key vulnerable populations, including migrant and indigenous women and children, persons with disabilities, LGBTQIA persons, and rural and hard to reach communities.

d) Use of UN Reform inter-agency tools

In line with UN Reform efforts, some aspects of the Business Operations Strategy were implemented by RUNOS. All RUNOs implemented the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) during the reporting period. This included utilization of joint human resources and funds to conduct training for implementing partners to ensure effective utilization of HACT. Where applicable, joint planning and monitoring was also undertaken with implementing partners supported by multiple RUNOs. Additionally, RUNOs continue to engage in cost sharing through the use of joint office spaces while at least two RUNOs utilize joint financial systems.

The UN Partner Portal which represents the efforts of UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP to implement the 2016 World Humanitarian Summits' Grand Bargain commitments to reduce duplication and management costs and enhance partnerships with local and national actors, is also being utilized by RUNOs to create, vet, assess risks, and select partners for programme implementation.

The UN and IASC Implementing Partner Capacity Assessment is a tool used by the UN to assess Implementing Partners' organizational capacities on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). Previously, UN Agencies carried out their own assessment of partners and often partners were subjected to several rounds of assessment depending on the number of UN agencies they were engaged with. To avoid multiple assessments, common partners only need to be assessed by one UN entity and other RUNOs are able to access the information through the UN Partner Portal. By promoting a common UN and IASC capacity assessment, the UN and its implementing partners will benefit from increased transparency and reduced processes.

PROGRAMME PARTNERSHIPS

In 2022, the Spotlight Initiative continued to strengthen partnerships with key government and civil society actors. The Spotlight Initiative continued to engage with six key government entities: The Ministry of Human Development, Families & Indigenous People's Affairs (MHFIPA), the Ministry of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the Ministry of National Defence and Border Security (MNDBS), the National Women's Commission (NWC) and the National Commission for Families and Children (NCFC). These partnerships were critical in securing high-level political buy-in from the government and fostering long-term national ownership of the Spotlight Initiative and EVAWG work more broadly. Partnerships with these key government entities were also important in ensuring the sustainability of Spotlight Initiative activities as actions undertaken sought to build capacity and integrate EVAWG into various national plans, policies and programmes. These partnerships were also critical in strengthening the legal and policy environment for EVAWG as well as strengthening the capacity for prevention and service delivery to ensure that solutions are generated to expand reach to the most marginalized, including in times of emergencies.

Partnerships also continued with 10 Civil Society Organizations. These include the Belize Family Life Association (BFLA), Spouses of CARICOM Leaders Action Network (SCLAN), Child Development Foundation (CDF), Pathlight International, Youth Enhancement Services (YES), Productive Organization for Women in Action (POWA), Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE), GoJoven Belize Alumni Association (GO Belize), the Belize National Indigenous Council (BENIC), and the Belize Association of Planners (BAP). CSOs continued to be key strategic partners in expanding prevention interventions and service delivery to the most affected populations and hardest to reach communities. CSO engagement is also critical for strengthening Belize's network of CSOs to ensure a strong platform for social sector CSOs to coordinate actions, advocate with government, support efforts towards social accountability and actively engage in the national response to VAWG.

Strong partnerships with the Government of Belize, including at the highest level, partnerships with CSOs, particularly at the community level, ongoing engagement with the EU Delegation with avid interest, commitment and support from the EU Ambassador and the technical team, as well as cooperation with other UN agencies, continues to contribute to strong programme implementation, impacting the lives of women and girls, men and boys.

a) Government

The Spotlight Initiative continued to enjoy the highest level of partnership and engagement with the Government of Belize. The Minister of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs (MHDFIPA) continued to co-chair the NSC while the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in that same ministry continued to serve as the Spotlight Initiative Focal Point for the Government. This provided multiple opportunities for high-level engagement, including with the European Union Ambassador, to review the progress of the Spotlight Initiative, identify and address bottlenecks and secure support in advocating with other key government leaders to address these gaps and bottlenecks to advancing Spotlight Initiative activities.

The MHDFIPA also served as an implementing partner. Through this partnership, the social workforce continued to be strengthened to provide high-quality multi-sectoral services for victims (including in times of emergency) through the sustained capacity of service providers. The Ministry's capacity for case management also continued to be strengthened through improvements to FAMCARE, which resulted in better case management, monitoring, data collection and reporting on VAWG. This partnership is key to achieving the principle of "leave no one behind" since the Ministry of Human Development is the lead ministry in the country's response to VAWG and provides strategic leadership to all other government ministries and CSOs.

The National Women's Commission (NWC) falls under the purview of the MHDFIPA and functions as the national machinery for gender equality and women's empowerment. The NWC strategically supports strengthening national policies and national plans of action to advance gender equality and end VAWG; as such, it led the revision and updating of the National Gender Policy and the National Gender Based Violence Action Plan and also assumed ownership for coordinating the implementation of the National Social and Behaviour Change Communication Strategy on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls. The leadership of the NWC in these critical areas demonstrates national ownership and contributes to the sustainability of the national response to VAWG. Continued advocacy is required, at the highest level, to ensure that the national policy, action plan and strategy are endorsed by cabinet.

The Ministry of National Defence and Border Security (MNDBS) continued to support the revision of key legislation related to family violence under Output 1.1. Additionally, the uniformed services under

the Ministries of MNDBS and Home Affairs, namely the Belize Defence Force, Coast Guard, Police Department, and in collaboration with Immigration and Customs Department personnel continued to benefit from improved policies, protocols and procedures that support a zero-tolerance for violence against women in security forces, as well as a complaint and reporting mechanisms available to address discrimination within the security forces. The Joint Sexual Violence Response Programme, which was endorsed at the highest level by the ministers of the Ministry of Defence and Border Security, and the Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries was also launched. The engagement of these ministries was motivated by increased reports of sexual harassment and abuse within the security forces, and the lack of proper protocols and/or response mechanisms to protect and support victims. These allegations of misconduct increased at the onset of the coronavirus pandemic and became a national concern. While the Ministry continues to demonstrate commitment to a zero-tolerance policy for VAWG, a major challenge is ensuring that the existence of dedicated human resource to implement the JSVRP and ensure that it is institutionalized within the sector.

The Ministry of the Attorney General continued to provide leadership in the justice sector, specifically as it relates to strengthening legislation and access to justice. The Attorney General of Belize provided strategic leadership and guidance for legislative reform and continues to be intimately involved in leading Spotlight Initiative activities relevant to her ministry. Partnerships in this area contributed to improving legislative and policy frameworks to address impunity and provided for coordinated action to end violence against women and children. These include amendments to the criminal code to operationalize the sexual offender's registry as well as strengthening the Indictment Rules.

The National Commission for Families and Children (NCFC) is the statutory body with the legal mandate to advocate for and promote the rights of children and families based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The NCFC has been actively engaged in strengthening the evidence based for legislative review of family violence legislation and also continues to function as a key multi-sectoral body that supports a coordinated approach to prevention and service delivery across the life cycle.

Partnership with the Ministry of Health and Wellness continued to be key to strengthening the provision of comprehensive SRH service delivery and information by ensuring that policies and protocols are in place to guarantee non-discriminatory access to services for adolescents, marginalized and vulnerable populations in keeping with the principle of "leaving no one behind." In balancing the response to COVID-19, specifically the roll out of the COVID 19 vaccine, the Ministry of Health has been significantly constrained in its capacity to implement planned activities. However, the Ministry of Health and Wellness endorsed the exploration of viable options in the policy environment for reprogramming of funds which included the establishment of a Disabilities Policy for Belize with the inclusion of SRH and GBV components as well as the revision of the SRH policy to include vulnerable groups (LGBTQI+, youths and marginalized populations). This support by the Ministry expanded partnership with the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs who established a Disability Desk in March 2021. The support from these two Ministries ultimately resulted in the adoption of the Mobile Women's Center with a government led approach to provide SRH services and information and essential services to vulnerable populations and victims of family violence. The Ministry of Health continues to be actively engaged in identifying alternative options for implementation of key actions given the current constraints.

Partnerships with the Ministry of Education to advance Comprehensive Sexuality Education in schools was discontinued in 2022 as shifting priorities in the Ministry of Education resulted in a focus on other priorities. Adolescent girls and boys were reached in out of school setting with CSE. However, effective integration of CSE in the curriculum for in school girls and boys remain at the top of Spotlight Initiative's advocacy agenda.

b) Civil Society

During the reporting period, Spotlight Initiative continued to strengthen partnerships with civil society organizations who consistently maintained a strong track record of reaching the hardest to reach, working with marginalized groups and innovation, in keeping with the principle of “leaving no one behind”. In 2022, seven (7) CSOs supported the implementation of actions under Outcome 3, geared towards the prevention of VAWG, with a strong focus on leaving no one behind while three (3) CSOs supported the strengthening of service delivery (Outcome 4) to reach the most marginalized groups, in the spirit of leaving no one behind, and four (4) CSOs supported activities to strengthen CSOs and autonomous women’s movement (outcome 6).

Under Outcome 3, Productive Organization for Women in Action (POWA), a feminist CSO, Child Development Foundation (CDF), a Faith-Based CSO, Youth Enhancement Services (YES), representing marginalized young girls, Toledo Institute for Environment and Development (TIDE) an environmental CSO, and Spouses of CARICOM Leaders Action Network (SCLAN), a regional CSO were engaged in the implementation of community-based activities focused on empowerment, protection and prevention of family violence. All organizations work across multiple groups of beneficiaries including rural and indigenous women, women and girls with disabilities, LGBTQI populations, men and boys, migrant women and adolescent girls, including those in early marriages and unions, in keeping with the principle of “leaving no one behind”. A key challenge moving forward is ensuring that the CSOs have the necessary resources to sustain programmes initiated under Spotlight Initiative in order to ensure that the impact of these initiatives continue beyond Spotlight.

Under Outcome 6, Spotlight Initiative continued to build on partnerships established in 2020 with 2 CSO networks; Go Belize (representing 7 CSOs) and the Belize National Indigenous Council (BEN-IC), representing 3 indigenous CSOs as well as the Belize Association of Planners (BAP) which has been engaged since 2021. These partnerships were crucial to strengthening networks of CSOs and by extension community-based women’s rights groups, to ensure that the Spotlight Initiative reaches and engages the majority of CSOs and women’s rights groups. Specifically, the umbrella organizations engaged CSOs and organizations representing marginalized groups, including LGBTQI persons and indigenous women and girls, and served as an important platform for mobilizing and strengthening CSOs’ participation across the country. An important next step is ensuring that CSO networks are strengthened, that CSOs develop a joint advocacy agenda, have the capacity to utilize social accountability mechanism and are able to sufficiently organize themselves to have collective representation in national spaces such as the Belize Network of NGO (BNN).

Partnership with the Belize Association of Planners (BAP) supported capacity building of women’s rights groups, CSOs and informal leaders for decision making, networking to mobilize constituents, and advocate for increased accountability as it relates to the national response to family violence.

This capacity strengthening will ensure some sustainability in the interventions beyond the Spotlight Initiative programme cycle and CSOs being able to provide more rounded and holistic service delivery to marginalized populations. Additionally, it provides for strengthened capacity of CSO partners - and among CSO partners and governments - on GBV case management and in the use of the referral process in services at the national and local levels.

c) European Union Delegation

Throughout the process of developing and implementing the Spotlight Initiative, the UN Country Team has been working closely with the EU Delegation under the guidance of the UN Resident Coordinator. Additionally, the EU and UN have jointly advocated with the Government at the highest level to secure political buy-in and support as well as sensitize development partners through their Heads of Missions and technical-level colleagues.

This close collaboration, which started in 2019 with the development of the CPD, continued into 2022 with the EU Delegation being involved in all key elements of the Initiative as follows:

- **Governance Role:** The EU Ambassador has been actively participating in the NSC since its inception and continues to utilize the space to advocate for the advancement of key areas of the national response to VAWG.
- **Technical Role:** The EU Technical Focal Point meets with the Spotlight Initiative technical and coordination team on a monthly basis to review progress on implementation and provide technical guidance. Ten (10) monthly meetings were held in 2022. These technical discussions provide a space for the SI technical and coordination team to update the EU on progress towards implementation and receive feedback and guidance from the EU in various programme areas including strengthening engagement of CSO and the women's movement. The space is also utilized to receive recommendations from the EU on various areas of the SI implementation including providing recommendations on improving programme visibility, revisions and inputs to relevant reports and documents, and identification of areas where the EU can engage in advocacy with the government to advance the SI agenda. As part of its technical role, the EU also provided comprehensive feedback on the MTA Report, highlighting some key recommendations necessary to ensure impact of Spotlight Initiative on intended beneficiaries. Sustained engagement with the EU, at the technical level, has strengthened partnerships and communication on Spotlight Initiative between the EU and the UN.
- **Supporting Advocacy, Communication & Visibility:** The EU Ambassador and team actively participated in a joint dialogue with the UN RC and HOAs during the first quarter of 2022. The dialogue provided a space to identify key areas for joint advocacy, to showcase the impact of Spotlight Initiative and to communicate the EU's Ambassador's continued interest in and commitment to Spotlight Initiative implementation.

The ongoing involvement of the EU in the Spotlight Initiative during the reporting period has served to deepen relations between the EU, the UN, the Government of Belize and CSOs as well as foster a deeper understanding of the situation of VAWG, the existing gaps and challenges and the programming needs for Belize. The lessons learnt and opportunities presented by the Spotlight Initiative can serve to inform the EU's continued engagement and technical cooperation as well as that of Government and CSO partners in Belize beyond the Spotlight Initiative.

d) Cooperation with other UN agencies

Spotlight Initiative continued to partner with Associate Agencies in the implementation of relevant interventions. During the reporting period, Spotlight Initiative engaged UN Women, PAHO/WHO, UNHCR, OHCHR, and IOM as key Associate Agencies. These agencies were jointly engaged in planning and information sharing sessions to ensure a continued collaborative approach to programme implementation during Phase II. In 2023, coordination and technical engagement with Associates Agencies will be strengthened through monthly engagement of AAs in Spotlight Initiative Coordination meetings as well as bilateral technical planning meetings and joint implementation of activities with relevant RUNOs.

Results

CAPTURING BROADER TRANSFORMATIONS ACROSS OUTCOMES

During the reporting period, a major focus of Spotlight Initiative was strategically positioning VAWG on the national political agenda while at the same time strengthening Belize's institutional capacity for policy, advocacy, coordination and monitoring of the national response. The partnerships established with the Women's Political Caucus under outcome 2 and advocacy for the passage of the National Gender Policy, the National Gender Based Violence Action Plan and the Social and Behaviour Change Communication Strategy on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls has resulted in VAWG being identified as a priority area in the government's human rights agenda.

Additionally, strengthening the national machinery for GEWE, under outcome 2, has ensured that the country continues to build institutional capacity and strong leadership to advance the GEWE agenda, including an emphasis on the prevention of VAWG (outcome 3) as well as the implementation of strategic actions to strengthen CSO engagement (outcome 6) in the national response to VAWG as an integral part of the national and district committees for gender and gender-based violence. Strengthening the NWC through support for the implementation of its strategic plan is key for sustainability of Spotlight Initiative as the strategic plan incorporates key interventions in the area of policy, advocacy, institutional strengthening, capacity building, prevention and monitoring and evaluation that were initiated under Spotlight Initiative.

The roll out of the National Social and Behaviour Change Communication Strategy has resulted in a comprehensive approach to prevention, ensuring that the national prevention response is grounded in evidence, utilizes a socio-ecological approach to reach all groups, including vulnerable and marginalized populations and provides important direction for CSOs to engage in the national response. Additionally, the SBCC strategy provides guidelines for key interventions to address knowledge, attitudes and shifts in social and gender norms.

Utilizing a comprehensive approach to VAWG, Spotlight Initiative was able to use existing prevention interventions such as parenting programmes, and education and awareness on family violence in schools and communities, (outcome 3), to integrate service delivery (outcome 4) for almost 28,000 women and girls including survivors of violence, women from rural, migrant and indigenous communities, and adolescent girls as well as build capacity of Women's Advocate (outcome 6) to serve as key resources for VAWG in hardest to reach communities.

CSOs continued to be integral to the effective implementation of Spotlight initiative. The capacity of CSOs to design and implement prevention interventions (outcome 3) was continually strengthened as CSOs were able to effectively reach over 115,000 women, men, girls and boys with prevention interventions. Additionally, under outcome 6, CSOs now have increased capacity to utilize social accountability mechanisms and increased capacity for networking and alliance building. This has resulted in increased networking and coordination among CSOs as evidenced by CSOs active participation in CSO dialogues, participation and leadership in the roll out of the SBCC strategy and campaign, and service delivery (outcome 4).

Finally, the engagement of faith leaders in dialogue on ending VAWG provided an important platform to strengthen partnership with faith leaders, increase their knowledge on gender and transform attitudes which will facilitate meaningful engagement of faith leaders, and by extension the faith community, in the implementation of prevention interventions (outcome 3) as well as provide the necessary support for the passage of key policies and legislation such as the National Gender Policy and the Revised Domestic Violence Act (Outcome 1).

Reporting on the implementation of Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (P-MER)

Participatory monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER) was not systematically planned from the beginning of the Spotlight Initiative. Although monitoring is done periodically, specific tools and processes to engage beneficiaries, before, during and after implementation have not been developed. This continues to be a challenge to the effective implementation of PMER. One key lesson learned is the importance of integrating PMER into planning for all interventions, ensuring that key moments for participation are identified, included, and budgeted in the planned roll out of all interventions.

Despite the absence of a systematic approach to PMER, RUNOs utilized various opportunities to strengthen PMER during programme implementation. COVID-19 provided one opportunity to apply PMER with the engagement of Youth Clubs in Southern Belize. The original intervention sought to use sports as a way to engage men and boys as ‘change agents’ for ending Violence Against Women and Girls. With the restrictions on contact sports, it was necessary to return to the drawing board to design an intervention that would be as impactful as using Sports for Development (S4D). The tool used in this regard was stakeholder analysis. Through focus groups with youth clubs, they discussed possible interventions, solutions, and entry points for engaging youths through the clubs and sharing information on family violence, especially against women and girls. During the implementation of the intervention, Beneficial Assessment were periodically conducted to test the applicability of the interventions and adjust design and methodologies as needed. An example of this, one community with a club of at least 30 adolescent and youth members, requested in-person engagement as there was only one mobile phone in the community to provide internet access. Additionally, service reception was very poor, and participants were not able to follow the sessions.

The PMER process provided adolescents and youth with agency to advocate, design and implement interventions based on the specific needs, capacities, and interest of their peers. The use of PMER tools help to clearly define lessons learned and best practices, engage beneficiaries as stakeholders and provide evidence to support intervention pivots where necessary. However, the application of PMER requires time and resources (human and financial) to be sustained.

“The opportunity to be a youth advocate leader has given her the chance to step out of her shell and gave her a platform to let her voice be heard confidently” Karla Ash

CAPTURING CHANGE AT OUTCOME LEVEL

Outcome 1: Legal and Policy Framework

Key government officials, CSOs and community groups have increased awareness of human rights standards and obligations and their capacities to develop laws and policies that guarantee the ability of women's rights groups, CSOs and women human rights defenders to advance the human rights agenda have been strengthened through participation in the process of revising the Domestic Violence Act, awareness raising and education of the National Security Forces on sexual violence and socializing of the National Gender Policy and the National Gender Based Violence Action Plan among key government officials and Women's Advocates.

Building on a series of stakeholder consultations to assess the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act and forums to increase awareness of the Act, which commenced in 2021, the Spotlight Initiative initiated a process to revise the Domestic Violence Act. The forums and consultations in 2021 identified multiple gaps and challenges with accessing protection and justice under the Domestic Violence Act. Consequently, the Spotlight Initiative, engaged in a process to formally document concrete recommendations for strengthening the Domestic Violence Act to increase protection and access to justice for all survivors of domestic violence, including vulnerable and marginalized groups. The process which commenced during the last quarter of 2022 will continue into 2023, and includes 15 community-based consultations with a wide cross section of state and non-state actors including civil society organizations representing vulnerable groups, as well as a wide cross section of community leaders, women and girls, men and boys, including survivors of domestic violence to generate and document key challenges to effective protection and access to justice under the Domestic Violence Act. Civil society's leadership and participation in this process is key to ensuring that the voice of survivors and those often left behind are included in the process. As such partnership with the CSNRG has been established to support this process.

In addition to the formal documentation of recommendations, an advocacy brief for DV Legislative Reform will be developed to inform the legislative review process. The goal is to have a revised Domestic Violence Act endorsed by Cabinet by the end of 2023 when Spotlight Initiative concludes implementation. Advocacy with government officials, at the highest level, as well as with women parliamentarians has been taking place to ensure high level support and buy-in for the passage of the Revised Domestic Violence Act as well as to ensure sustainability of this initiative since it is likely that some components will require follow up beyond the life span of Spotlight.

During 2022, efforts were focused on institutionalizing the Joint Sexual Violence Response Programme for the three security forces in Belize (Police, Belize Defense Force and Coast Guard) which was developed and implemented in 2021. Although the programme has received buy-in at the highest level, limited resources (human and financial) has delayed the implementation of key structural support mechanisms for the programme. Despite these setbacks, several awareness raising and sensitization sessions have been rolled out across the Security Forces to ensure that gender-transformative attitudes and behaviours are reinforced. Efforts will continue to support the Ministry of Home Affairs to institutionalize this programme which is key to its sustainability.



Another key contribution of Spotlight Initiative to the national response to VAWG, in 2021, was the development of the National Gender Policy and the accompanying National Gender Based Violence Action Plan through a participatory approach. Although widespread support for both documents has been received, lobbying for its endorsement by Cabinet was the main focus in 2022. Under the leadership of the National Women's Commission, the national machinery for GEWE, the National Gender Policy was socialized among a wide cross section of actors including faith-based leaders, women's groups, women's advocate, and government officials. The sessions provided a space to develop understanding of the core components of the policy as well as to raise awareness of the importance of the policy and to advocate for support for its endorsement. Lessons learnt from the process of socializing the National Gender Policy highlighted the need for continued gender education and awareness, including among decision makers and faith leaders, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of gender and human rights and the importance of a gender transformative approach to planning and development.

Outcome 2: Institutions

The institutional capacity of the national machinery for gender equality and women's empowerment, the National Women's Commission, has been strengthened through the participatory development of its strategic plan and capacity building of the commission to prevent and respond to VAWG including family violence, inclusive of groups of women and girls facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

Key to the sustainability of the national response to VAWG is the institutional strengthening of the national coordinating mechanisms leading the response. During the 3rd quarter of 2022, Cabinet endorsed the establishment of the National Women's Commission as a statutory body of the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs. As a statutory body, the NWC is now empowered to legally address gender issues and to coordinate all national efforts relating to gender equality, equity and women's empowerment, inclusive of the country's reporting on global and regional treaties and commitments. This action by Cabinet, which demonstrated the government's commitment to strengthen the national response, was complemented by the Spotlight Initiative's support to the NWC in the development of its five-year strategic plan. The development of the strategic plan was a key step in reorienting the NWC, ensuring a stronger focus on policy, advocacy, coordination and monitoring and evaluation of the national response.

The strategic plan development process included country-wide consultations with key stakeholders from government and civil society organizations as well as women's advocates who participated in sessions to strategically reflect on progress, lessons learnt and challenges towards advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in Belize and to contribute to the establishment of strategic priorities for the NWC over the next 5 years. The thirteen (13) commissioners of the NWC also benefitted from capacity building during the process of the strategy development. This allowed the commissioners, who will play an integral role in policy advocacy and monitoring the national response, to build capacity in GEWE and key advocacy issues.

Additionally, as part of its coordination function, the NWC supported actions to strengthen coordination of the national GBV response including preparedness and response actions for emergency settings. In 2022, the NWC led the process of developing and finalizing an updated GBV Referral Pathway through engagement with the six (6) District Gender and Gender Based Violence Committees to include in their 2022-2023 Workplan. These engagements included three (3) consultation sessions that included capacity building needs for effective implementation of the District Gender and Gender Based Violence Committees in each of the six (6) districts.

In addition to the strengthening of the National Women's Commission, the establishment of the Women's Parliamentarian Caucus, was another key action by the government which demonstrated its commitment to advancing GEWE and which provided Spotlight Initiative with an advantageously positioned platform to champion some of the key legislative and policy level advocacy and actions that seek to address gaps and barriers for women's full participation, including access to key essential services, and economic empowerment.

During the last quarter of 2022, a dialogue was held with the Women's Parliamentarian Caucus, consisting of 10 women representing the House of Representatives, Senate, Area Representatives, and Presiding Officers. The main objectives of this initial engagement were to establish the Women's Parliamentarian Caucus as an ally for change, for Spotlight Initiative and beyond; to examine the policy and legislative landscape for women and children; and to identify opportunities for collaborative advocacy. An important next step is the development of a detailed advocacy plan and the identification of, and agreement on key capacity building opportunities with the Women's Parliamentarian Caucus.

Outcome 3: Prevention and Norm Change

Couched within the implementation of the National Social and Behaviour Change Community Strategy, developed in 2021 and presented to the Minister of Human Development Families and Indigenous People's Affairs for further endorsement by cabinet, Spotlight Initiative continued to implement prevention interventions aimed at increasing knowledge, transforming attitudes and changing behaviours and social norms across all levels of the social ecology. In 2022, Spotlight Initiative interventions targeting prevention of VAWG in home, schools and communities reached over 115,000 men, women, boys and girls.

Through Spotlight Initiative's continued partnership with CSOs over 35,000 women and girls, men and boys regularly attended community programmes promoting gender equitable norms, attitudes, and behaviours, including sessions on family violence.

A total of 18 Community Youth Clubs in Southern Belize continued to provide a safe and accessible community platform to engage and promote gender equitable norms, attitudes, and behaviours. Some 930 women, men, boys, and girls (508 males, 422 females) regularly attended sessions including on topics of gender and gender-based violence, child abuse, human rights and self-esteem. These spaces provided an important opportunity to engage men and boys to critically reflect on gender and gender norms and to transform their attitudes, particularly those within cultural setting with deep seated gender norms. To advance sustainability of Spotlight Initiative these clubs were able to successfully integrate violence prevention, family violence awareness and gender equality within their safe environment and protection of their national heritage interventions. To date, there are 18 environmental clubs from 18 buffer communities, including 4 East Indian Communities, 10 Indigenous Maya Communities, 1 Creole Community, 1 Garinagu Community, and 2 Hispanic Communities.

Additionally, in keeping with the principle of "leaving no one behind", 851 adolescents (594 girls, 257 boys) from schools in migrant communities and from migrant communities were engaged during 2022 to raise awareness on child marriage and early unions and sexual and reproductive health rights as well as provided with opportunities for psychosocial support, and information sharing on how and where to access information related to their migratory status. 203 girls were engaged weekly through the

RISE Girls programme of CDF, an implementing partner. In addition, sessions were set up to provide information to 30 boys on gender norms as well as sexual and reproductive health information. Psychoeducational activities were implemented at the community level for 352 girls and boys to provide a safe space and participatory methodology to share information on family violence, bullying and gender norms that promote abuse and exploitation. These spaces also provided opportunities for partners to assess children as victims of family violence and provide the necessary referral or counselling support as needed. 266 students in schools in migrant communities participated in sensitization sessions on family violence impacts for migrant communities.

In addition to the engagement of men, women, boys and girls through community clubs, schools and communities, Spotlight Initiative continued to engage parents during the 2022 implementation cycle, reaching 33,483 parents and caregivers (6690 males, 26,793 females). The engagement included the continuation of SMS and WhatsApp messages, awareness raising sessions and engagement through various television and social media programmes. Additionally, 104 migrant parents were engaged through community outreach to encourage effective responses to the stressors and shocks that often lead to and/or exacerbate family violence.

Finally, Spotlight Initiative continued to build capacity of Women Community Mobilizers as key resource personnel within hardest to reach communities. Identification and capacity building of Women Community Mobilizers with capacity to identify, support and refer community members, especially women and children, survivors of violence was identified as an emerging promising practice coming out of the first two years of Spotlight Initiative implementation. During this reporting period, efforts to expand this practice continued in an effort to ensure sustained availability of resource personnel in rural communities. 12 women community leaders were identified to engage and support women, especially migrant communities, who are experiencing varying forms of family violence.

Another key prevention intervention was the engagement of key informal decision makers and decision makers in relevant institutions. In 2022, Spotlight Initiative strengthened awareness of VAWG and increased capacities of over 450 key informal decision makers and decision makers in relevant institutions to advocate for implementation of legislation and policies on VAWG including family violence and for gender-equitable norms, attitudes and behaviours and women and girls' rights.

In 2022, the awareness and capacities of some 444 key informal decision makers and decision makers in relevant institutions were strengthened to advocate for implementation of legislation and policies on VAWG including family violence and for gender-equitable norms, attitudes and behaviours, and women and girls' rights. These include 95 (87 females, 8 males) representatives of CSOs, FBOs and CBOs with strengthened capacity in PSEA; 12 (5 females, 7 males) faith leaders engaged in partnership dialogue; and 164 (54 females, 110 males) faith-based leaders, community leaders, civil society organizations, women community leaders participated in capacity building sessions using the Family Violence Toolkit. 173 representatives (11 males, 162 females) of 23 state actors city and town councils) and 66 non-state actors (CSOs, formal and informal women's groups) were engaged in dialogues to discuss social accountability in the response to ending violence against women and girls, including family violence.

Additionally, 12 (5 females, 7 males) faith leaders and faith-based organizations participated in an introductory high-level dialogue to explore partnership in addressing root causes of family violence. The dialogue took on two main objectives: (1) to engage faith leaders in a discussion on family violence including child marriage and early unions; and (2) to build alliance with faith leaders and explore concrete actions that can be taken by faith leaders to bring awareness on both family violence and CMEU. Par-

ticipation was coordinated through the Belize Council of Churches, as well as the National Evangelical Association of Belize. During the dialogue government, churches, RUNOs and the Child Development Foundation¹ presented on the state of the national response from each agency's perspective. The dialogue was extremely fruitful to clarify data, highlight opportunities for synergies, partnerships and scale up of actions. It sparked initial discussions on how Spotlight Initiative and UN can continue to support key actions leveraging the influential position of faith leaders. There were some push backs of certain concepts and differences in ideology such as SRHR, including issues of abortion, and Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). Despite these differences, there has been commitment to continue the discourse and map out what a partnership would look like. A follow-up dialogue is being planned for first quarter in 2023.

In 2022, Spotlight also sustained its efforts to increase knowledge and raise awareness on VAWG through the development of a national campaign and direct and indirect engagement of almost 80,000 men, women, boys and girls in challenging harmful social norms and gender stereotyping, including of women and girls facing intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination.

A national social and behaviour change communication campaign, It Ends with Me, was developed as part of the implementation of the SBCC strategy. Spotlight Initiative partnered with The Belize Family Life Association (BFLA) in partnership with the National Women's Commission (NWC) and National Commission for Families and Children (NCFC), to develop the Social and Behaviour Change Communication Campaign which developed communication assets aimed at shifting social expectations and challenging gender stereotypes that contribute to VAWG by using positive role modeling that positions men and women, boys and girls in transformed gender roles and increase awareness of gender, gender equality and the social and economic benefits of gender equality. The theme of the campaign, It Ends with Me, seeks to address some of the root causes of VAWG by debunking common gender stereotypes in the home, school, community and workplace that contribute to violence against women and girls and are often seen as the "norm".

The campaign assets include the development of 4 PSAs targeting families, schools, workplaces and communities. The PSA targeting families was further translated into two indigenous languages, particularly Garifuna and Maya and adopted to those cultural contexts. In keeping with the principle of "Leave no One Behind", the English version of the families PSA also included sign language interpretation. Other assets include five (5) sets of posters, totaling twenty (20) individual posters in English and Spanish targeting policy/decision makers, families, workplace, communities and schools, 20 social media banners designed based on the posters, and fifteen (15) tiktok videos with a wide range of messages to be rolled out on tiktok and social media platforms.

The development of the communication assets took a robust and comprehensive approach to ensure quality products that address the root cause of GBV and to a great extent, the social norms within the country that continue to propel GBV. Assets were pretested among key groups including rural women's groups, indigenous men, urban and rural youth, gender-based violence committee members which is inclusive of both government and civil society partners. These sessions provided feedback and resulted in revised messaging and presentation of the communication assets. For example, considering the multicultural identity of Belizeans, recommendation was provided for different depictions to be created to highlight more than one ethnic group. Thus, the various iterations of posters depict Mayan, Mestizo,

¹ A Faith-based Organization and Spotlight Initiative Implementing Partner



Creole and Garifuna populations. A launch of these assets is being planned for Q1 2023 that will include a dynamic and comprehensive dissemination framework that will support the rolling out of the assets in communities and on a national scale.

In addition to the development of the Social and Behaviour Change Communication Campaign, Spotlight Initiative directly and indirectly reached 79,747 (43,656 males, 36,091 females) youth and adolescents, faith leaders, and community leaders through supported campaigns to share knowledge and raise awareness on Violence including family violence, CMEU, Human Trafficking.

Youth and adolescent participation are a key element to addressing harmful social norms and intersectionality. Through several engagement with this population during the implementation of the Spotlight Initiative, they were often very vocal in their opinions and experiences with violence. To help to encourage the engagement of youth and adolescents, through the Department of Youth Services, several campaigns were launched during 2022 using the Nex'US and U-Report platforms. The campaigns were on gender-based violence, child marriage and early union, human trafficking, and mental health. A total of 2,059 (600 males, 1459 females) adolescent and youth participated in these campaigns. Further engagement with adolescents and youth who were engaged in these campaigns revealed increased knowledge on gender and gender-based violence, particularly how it is linked to key challenges facing youth, such as intimate partner violence, and mental health issues. Another impact was the level of agency to speak out on these issues, especially in 'adult led' spaces.

Spotlight Initiative also partnered with The Child Development Foundation (CDF) to establish community platforms to promote reflective dialogue on eliminating discriminatory social and gender norms and harmful practices that affect girls and women. A social media campaign on Ending Family Violence and CMEU was launched during the 3rd quarter as part of the commemoration of International Day of the Girl Child. The campaign continued to the end of 2022, capturing key advocacy days including 16 Days of Activism to end Violence Against Women, World Human Rights and World Aids Day and effectively reached 43,702 (30,592 females, 13,110 males) girls, boys, women, men. Another iteration of this campaign was targeted to Faith Leaders and highlighting the role they play in ending family violence reaching 33,140 persons (1,047 females, 22,093 males) with 1,764 post engagements, 72 likes and 15 shares. Additional social media sensitization of family violence during the reporting period engaged 846 persons (288 males, 558 females).

The campaigns have resulted in greater requests for information, reporting (to the CSO), and support to persons who are suspected to be victims or at risk for violence.

Outcome 4: Quality Services

During the reporting period, Spotlight Initiative supported increased the institutional capacity of the Government of Belize, to deliver quality and coordinated essential services to women and girls' survivors of VAWG including family violence through strengthening the Social Services Workforce and advancing the Essential Services Package.

19 training modules were developed and validated for the training of social services workers across the MHDFIPA. The Training of Trainers scheduled for November 2022 was postponed due to the impact of Hurricane Lisa and the Ministry's emergency response role. The training modules covers critical and contextualized social worker practitioners' guidelines, key themes such as monitoring and evaluation, family violence, trauma sensitive response, and self-care. Additionally, the Social Workers Supervision Framework was validated by the Ministry. Following the training re-scheduled for January 2023, the 14 Trainers, which will consist of Directors and Middle Managers of the three service departments, will develop a roll out plan for the implementation of the Supervision Framework as well as the training of frontline social services workers, a total of 80 persons. Noteworthy, the advocacy support of the Spot-

light Initiative RUNOs both collectively and individually, has resulted in a commitment of the ministry to recruit additional social workers across the departments of CRD, DHS, and WFSD².

In 2022, Spotlight Initiative also continued to support the establishment of the national process of defining an essential package of services, including in emergency settings. Building on milestones achieved during 2021, the mapping of state and non-state actors in prevention, service delivery and norm change helped to inform gaps and capacities by sector with recommendations on how a coordinated service delivery approach could be sustained at the national level. Additionally, in 2021 a desk review of all relevant material, documents, policies and plans supported the development of the conceptual framework to assess program readiness which includes accessibility, responsiveness and availability to satisfy the essential services for victims of family violence. In 2022, sector-specific questionnaires and focus group discussion questions were developed based on the Essential Services Package (ESP), a guidance tool developed by the UN system to identify the essential services to be provided to all women and girls who have experienced gender-based violence, including services that should be provided by the health, social services, police, and justice sectors. Despite some challenges in finalizing the process of defining a national ESP for Belize due to limitations of key sector's involvement with the process, the social service module of the ESP has been adopted as part of the required capacity development for social workforce. This is an important indicator of sustainability of the ESP.

This activity will be a strong focus on outcome 4 during Phase II as it provides the key function of enhancing and harmonizing national service delivery as the ESP has become the minimum standards of provision of essential services in practice and policy as it focuses on professionals and officials in all sectors and jurisdiction including police officers, social services, health-care professionals, prosecutors and officers of the judiciary. The ESP responds directly to supporting a survivor-centered approach in which service providers coordinate and harmonize efforts to provide access to appropriate, accessible and good quality services for victims of family violence.

Almost 28,000, women and girls' survivors of violence, including women and girls facing multiple and intersecting forms of violence, have increased knowledge of existing quality essential services and increased knowledge of accompaniment services, 54 women and girls were provided access to accompaniment/support initiatives, including longer-term recovery services and three safe houses have increased capacity to provide support to survivors of violence.

27,805 women and girls have knowledge of existing quality essential services at the national and sub-national levels, including where services were available in their communities. 26,793 mothers received information on the availability of social and child protection services, including mental health and psychosocial support. 12 Women Community Mobilizers in Cayo, Orange Walk, and Corozal Districts received training on family violence, including domestic violence and child protection, and psychosocial support to support women and girls in their communities on issues connected to domestic violence, child abuse and commercial sexual exploitation of children. 1,000 young women and girls received knowledge on essential services and support, including SRH.

Additionally, 54 direct beneficiaries of the Spotlight Initiative Programmes received support and accompaniment to access essential services during 2022. 18 women and children, victims of child abuse, commercial sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and domestic violence, were supported and referred to the Human Services Department. Support was provided for follow-up services for counseling ther-

² Community Rehabilitation Department, Human Services Department, Women and Family Support Department



apy, medical care and rehabilitative services during the investigation period. Two survivors of Human Trafficking were placed in shelters and 15 women survivors of domestic violence who were identified received counseling support and provided with information and assistance to develop safety plans, while 3 women with their children (9) were assisted to safely relocate from domestic violence situations.

Women and girl survivors now have increased access to safe houses through the capacity strengthening of all 3 safe houses in Belize. As part of the support for building capacity of shelters to support women and girls' survivors of violence and their families and ensure they are informed of and can access quality essential services, including longer term recovery services and opportunities Spotlight Initiative supported the development and implementation of the standard operating procedures for the management of safe houses for survivors of family violence. In collaboration with the National Women's Commission, two lead government ministries, the Ministry of Human Development and the Ministry of Health developed the standard operating procedures for the 3 safe houses in Belize: Haven House in Belize District, Mary Open Doors in San Ignacio and House of Dorcas in Corozal. The SOPs include Covid-19 protocols, given the country's recent experiences with COVID-19 and the challenges posed for continuing service delivery for survivors of violence.

The capacity of shelter staff, board members and volunteers were further strengthened through training on the implementation of the SOP and the SOP was adopted and implemented by all three safe houses. Additionally, Spotlight Initiative supported the safe houses with equipment and supplies necessary to successfully implement the SOPS.

Key to the sustainability of the safe houses was the establishment of a private sector partnership to provide long term support to safe houses. At the end of the first quarter of 2022, formal partnerships were established with five (5) private sector entities who pledged to provide continuous support to safe houses. The National Women's Commission will continue to monitor and engage the three safe houses as it relates to the implementation of SOPs and will continue to work with entities who have agreed to support the shelters as well as engage and lobby other businesses across the country for support.

Outcome 5: Data

Spotlight Initiative continued to provide technical support to strengthen the country's capacity to collect and report on comprehensive GBV data. The Spotlight Initiative also continued advocacy for increased strengthening of the national gender-based violence surveillance system in order to ensure that Belize has a coordinate, comprehensive system for data collection, reporting and case management.

Ongoing technical support was provided to the MHDFIPA, a key stakeholder in reporting and case management, to strengthen its internal capacity for data collection, reporting and case management, FAMCARE. During the reporting period, the capacity of 29 staff (26 females and 3 males) of the MHD-FIPA was increased through training on the implementation of the GBV Dashboard which was designed as part of the GBV module in FAMCARE. Strengthening of FAMCARE and the ministry's capacity for data collection, reporting and case management will facilitate the MHDFIPA's leadership and coordination of the national gender-based surveillance system. In 2023, other key sectors including health, the police and e-governance will be engaged in strengthening the GBV surveillance system.

Spotlight Initiative also continued to increase awareness of the situation of VAWG through dissemination of findings from the Spotlight Initiative Baseline Study completed in 2021. User friendly products were developed to socialize and raise awareness of the data and findings from the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice (KAP) survey which formed part of the baseline study. A total of 300 infographics were distributed to key state and non-state actors, including informal decision-makers.

Outcome 6: Women's Movement

65 Women's rights groups and relevant CSOs, have increased opportunities and support to share knowledge, network, partner and jointly advocate for GEWE and ending VAWG, including family violence, with relevant stakeholders at sub-national, national, regional and global levels.

Spotlight Initiative, under Outcome 6, continued to convene opportunities for networking and partnerships, and technical peer to peer support among Civil Society and Women's Groups. Several interventions targeting institutional and organizational capacity strengthening, mapping of groups, and creating spaces for engagement and dialogue were implemented during the year at both national and sub-national levels to ensure a greater reach of movement builders. The main objective was to define an approach to strengthening engagement of civil society to enable their effective contribution to the achievement of the goals of the Spotlight Initiative and other national investment opportunities for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment and ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). This includes supporting the identification of a common objective as an established platform for collective advocacy.

As part of the efforts to strengthen CSO Allyship and Coalition Building during 2022, several dialogue spaces were convened to engage civil society in identifying support and resources, gaps and barriers that hinder the realization of partnership and networking to address GEWE and VAWG. During the last quarter of 2022, the second engagement had as its objectives laying a foundation for the establishment of a platform to build strong coalition around ending violence against women and children and gender equality; and to foster strategic partnerships with existing networks and coalitions to amplify voice. It was important to demonstrate and glean best practices from other factions of the social sector who have been able to successfully form coalition around common ground; The Maya Leaders Alliance, a collective of Mayan communities who partnered to advocate for Land Rights and have successfully advanced both in the national and global arena; and the environmental NGOs who have formed ad hoc coalitions around critical environmental issues such as off-shore drillings, and were instrumental in holding government accountable for the installation of the 13th Senator responsible for Non-governmental Organizations in Belize.

Over 30 CSOs and women's groups were represented at this engagement, the largest number of CSOs engaged at one single event to date. Discussions were advanced around for priority themes, how CSOs with difference can work together to achieve a common goal; what are the opportunities and mechanisms for diverse coalitions, including those representing marginalized populations, to participate in the policy process; identifying CSO leadership to leverage collective bargaining power to build and maintain strong, constructive relationships with relevant policymakers and decisionmakers who have authority and responsibility for policy change; and transparency and accessibility of information shared between and among government departments and civil society groups. These discussions were extremely useful in helping social services CSOs to understand their own context. However, there is need for deeper discussion and coordination to ensure that the desired results are achieved.

In addition to strengthening CSO engagement, the capacity of 35 CSOs and women's groups was strengthened capacities to network, partner and jointly advocate for increased accountability. The 'Urban and Rural Women Rights Ambassadors Project' (URWRAP) was designed to develop and support a cadre of youths, women and civil society leaders to unite across groups and issue lines, to use evidenced based data to anchor women and girls' rights movement and grow their influence to shape policy and budgets at the national and local levels such that their unique challenges can be addressed. The goal is *"to build the Capacity for Women, Youth and Civil Society for Engagement and Self, Community and Organizational Empowerment"*. During 2022, 10 women's groups and 2 CSOs were directly engaged to strengthen the network of state and non-state actors participating in social accountability



and increase the capacity of women and youths to lead social accountability for women and girls' rights. Through this engagement an additional 22 women's groups from neighbouring communities participated in capacity building opportunities that seek to strengthen the network of women's groups with increased access to knowledge on social accountability, networking, and advocacy.

Spotlight Initiative continued to work with the Belize National Indigenous Council (BENIC) to strengthen the institutional capacity of its members (3 CBOs) to function as social accountability channels for indigenous women and girls. This was accomplished through the development of individual and collective strategic plans that ensured a gendered lens to ensuring the rights of indigenous people, including rights to land, political participation, and economic stability. As a network with a mandate for indigenous populations it ensures that even within this group no one is left behind.

Spotlight Initiative continued to support women's rights groups and relevant CSOs to use social accountability mechanisms to support their advocacy and influence on prevention and response to VAWG, including family violence, and GEWE more broadly. Through this initiative the capacity of 89 state and non-state organizations to use social accountability mechanisms while 36 state and non-state organizations have increased capacity for networking and alliance building.

89 state (23) and non-state (66) organizations participated in a series of dialogues across the 6 districts, including the Cayes, to discuss and assess the context of violence against women and girls, particularly access to services and social accountability mechanisms. Organizations developed SWOT analysis for each of the district and these were used to inform the further conversations of wider target communities. Additionally, discussions also sought to highlight the key women and girls' rights issues disaggregated for urban and rural populations. Some of the issues include lack of cohesive response and support, exploitation and abuse, stigma and discriminatory behaviors and attitudes, and fragmented family structures.

Additionally, 42 women and girls, representing communities across the 6 districts, including the Cayes, and rural, indigenous, migrant, trans, LGBTQIA and other vulnerable key populations, participated in learning capsules on networking and alliance building; community profiling and mapping women and girl's rights issues; developing and using products-tools (digital-traditional) for story telling on the impact of violence and conflict, discrimination and deprivation of services and support systems; social accountability tools and budget literacy on women and girls' rights; and NGO management, registration and joining Belize Network of NGOs. A total of 36 state (7) and non-state (29) organizations were represented in these learning capsules. Following these learning capsules, 8 women's groups engaged in north-south peer-to-peer sessions to share experiences, lessons learned, challenges and encourage each other in adopting the knowledge gained through the learning capsules. During the discussion, the women also discussed coordination and movement building, including status of women in Belize, opportunities for collaborations/networking that occurred post learning capsules, and identifying potential CSOs they would like to collaborate with.

In 2023, these women's groups will facilitate community level dialogues to socialize and sensitize on their individual declarations for improving the lives of women and girls, linked to the Belize Constitution and the Human Rights Declaration. Additionally, based on their own community mapping these groups will develop Joint Accountability Action Plans for sustained advocacy and action to ensure the rights of women and girls in Belize.

[Rights Holders \(Spotlight programme "beneficiaries"\)](#)

Indicative numbers	Direct for 2022	Indirect for 2022	Comments / Explanations
Women (18 yrs. and above)	87,733	53,793	Number of women reached with interventions across all 6 outcomes as per narrative
Girls (5-17)	2053	430	Same as above
Men (18 yrs. and above)	42,809	6690	Same as above
Boys (5-17 yrs.)	857	418	Same as above
TOTAL	133,398	61,331	Same as above

CHALLENGES AND MITIGATING MEASURES

Ref #	Challenges	Mitigation Measures
1	Access to Phase II funding: Partnerships, implementation plans for key activities in the Phase II programme cycle and TORs for key staff within the RCO were developed and ready to be rolled out during the 3 rd quarter of 2022. However, the delay in the disbursement of the funds after approval had a significant impact on the start of the implementation cycle, particularly for CSO partners who did not have funds to commence implementation and also resulted in a gap in staffing within the RCO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RUNOs provided some bridge funding to maintain programme staff, support small and institutional activities, including the recruitment of some consultants to establish foundational or first stage of implementation cycle. Technical Coherence Consultant provided coordination support to the RCO to ensure programme continuity.
2	Humanitarian Response: Hurricane Lisa hit Belize in October 2022. Implementing Partners (government and CSOs) prioritized responding to the humanitarian needs both at national and sub-national levels, this impacted both the implementation of activities and funds, as well as responding to the needs of beneficiaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support with the incorporation of family violence as part of the humanitarian response - Scale up awareness raising on PSEA - Adapted to some inflexible changes, such as inability to participate in the social workforce training

CHALLENGES AND MITIGATING MEASURES *cont..*

Ref #	Challenges	Mitigation Measures
3	<p>Sustained Engagement of CSNRG: at its inception in 2020, the CSNRG had 8 elected members. However, this number decreased to 7 in 2021. Although the membership was 7 only 5 active members continued to engage in a sustained manner. The CSNRG continues to be an important part of Spotlight's governance structure and accountability mechanism and therefore active engagement from its full membership is key for action and decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical support provided to the CSNRG to develop its work plan, meeting organized with RC, HOAs, EU, RUNOs and CSNRG to chart the way forward for CSNRG, utilization of guidance notes provided by the Spotlight Secretariat
4	<p>Finalization of the process to define an Essential Service Package was delayed owing to limited engagement of the Health Sector who has been leading the COVID 19 response as well as engaged in the response to Hurricane Lisa. The Health Sector is a key sector in the provision of essential services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expanded consultation necessary using several means of data collection including phone and in-person interviews and focus group sessions to engage the health sector and ensure full engagement of all other key sectors
5	<p>Implementation of the SOP for shelter constrained by inadequate infrastructure, materials and supplies. An assessment of shelter for readiness to respond to COVID 19 and other emergencies highlighted the need for repairs as well as supplies and materials to effectively implement the SOP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support was provided to shelters to enable them to adopt SOPs
6	<p>Comprehensive approach to GBV data collection, reporting and management. At the sector level, there has been delays in the implementation of the GBV FAMCARE Dashboard. As it relates to the implementation of the GBV Surveillance System under outcome 5, guidance is pending from key government entities on key actions required to advance this GBV Surveillance system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the sector level, in person and face to face trainings were done for key personnel and adjustments made to the system after pilot testing - As it relates to the GBV Surveillance System, efforts are being made to engage all key sectors in joint discussions and establishment of a road map to guide the strengthening of the GBV Surveillance System, inclusive of technical support from E-Governance.
7	<p>Delay in mobile application development due to exploring several approaches with sustainability at the focus.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expanded partnerships to ensure the mobile application be created and properly managed

LESSONS LEARNED AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Several key lessons and new opportunities emerged during the reporting period which can contribute to strengthening coordination, engagement of CSOs, including grass roots CSOs, foster increased operational efficiency and advance advocacy on ending VAWG.

One important lesson learned which will be applied for Phase II implementation is the importance of simplifying processes and adopting our approach to facilitate CSOs participation, including grass roots CSOs and community groups in implementation of VAWG interventions. During programme implementation it became clear that not all CSOs had structures or capacity for financial management based on the UN requirements. However, many CSOs that do not meet these requirements are engaged in innovative work targeting hardest to reach communities and vulnerable groups. Through networking, dialogue and coordination with CSOs, CSOs with structures and financial capacities meeting the UN requirements, agreed to serve as lead implementing agencies supporting sub grant to grassroots CSOs while working with those CSOs to strengthen their capacities to receive direct funding. Annual Work Plans for Phase II will reflect this way of working as Spotlight Initiative continues to identify ways to ensure that CSOs are included in implementation.

Another lesson learned is the importance of joint planning and coordination with IPs across RUNOs. While operational procedures across RUNOs pose some restrictions to joint financial disbursements, a key lesson learned through engagement with IPs is that joint planning, monitoring and technical support to IPs, when multiple RUNOs are engaged in the implementation of activities with the same IP, would result in greater efficiency in implementation by IPs and RUNOs. Opportunities will be sought in Phase II to ensure joint planning and coordination where multiple RUNOs are engaged with the same IPs.

A key lesson learned regarding the CSNRG is that the CSNRG, as a model for ensuring participation of CSOs in governance and decision making on ending VAWG, is a critical component of the national response. However, application of such a model must be preceded by a clear understanding of what is needed to ensure that CSNRG operates as a cohesive, well-coordinated, highly functional body that can mobilize other CSOs and represent the collective voices of CSOs.

a) **New Opportunities**

Engagement of the Women Parliamentarian Caucus: Many Commonwealth Parliaments feature a Women Parliamentarian Caucus as a space for women Parliamentarians from different political parties to unite in solidarity in championing and promoting women's empowerment, advocating for policy and legislative priorities for women, strengthening women's voices in Parliaments, encouraging gender perspectives in the day-to-day operations of the Parliament, and raising awareness of the importance of gender equality and inclusion[1]. It was an important and intentional action to engage the Women Parliamentarian Caucus (WPC) as part of the sustainability of legislative and institutional actions and advocacy. The WPC was formed in early 2022 and on the strength of their mission to address issues of gender equality, greater participation in legislative process, and the sensitizing of the work of the National Assembly through a gender lens. As such, are a key advocate in ensuring legislative reform of the DV Act, review and revision of national sector plans to be more gender-response, advocacy for

comprehensive data on GBV, and the inclusion and engagement of civil society actors in the national response mechanism for GEWE. During the course of the phase II implementation cycle, Spotlight Initiative will continue to support the strengthening of the WPC, inclusive of supporting the development of an Advocacy Plan of Action.

An untapped opportunity has been identified to support sustainability of Safe Shelters through collaboration with the private sector. Innovative partnerships with medium small and micro enterprises (MSMEs) and even hotels and resorts has been successful in the past to support the operation of safe shelters as well as other CSOs who have benefited from proceeds of sales of crafts, paintings, local jewelry and other goods in partnership with hotels and resorts. During Phase II Spotlight will partner with safe shelters to explore a plan for concertizing partnerships with the private sector.

Another opportunity that emerged was the partnership with the Ministry of Human Development for the Mobile Women's Center to continue service provision to rural communities. The model for the Mobile Women's Center, implemented since 2020, was CSO led and the initial focus for Phase II was to assess lessons learned and propose a model for sustainable service delivery to rural model based on the experience of implementing the Mobile Women's Center. However, this new opportunity to partner with the government provided the space to design Mobile Women's Center with financial support and service provision from government alongside CSOs and allows for Spotlight Initiative to explore government/CSO partnership in delivery of services to rural women and girls.

INNOVATIVE, PROMISING OR GOOD PRACTICES

No new promising or good practices were developed during the reporting period. However, RUNOs continued to strengthen promising practices that were developed and reported on in the 2021 Annual Report. Please see Annex D of the 2021 Annual Report for information on these practices.

COMMUNICATIONS & VISIBILITY

a) Overview

During the reporting period, the Spotlight Initiative was challenged by the absence of a dedicated Communication Officer as a result of funding gaps during the transition from Phase I to Phase II. This constrained the achievement of results in this area as the Communications and Visibility Plan was not revised and updated during this period. However, RUNOs continued to advance programme related communications and visibility, specifically in support of social and behaviour change on ending VAWG. These actions resulted in achievements under two (2) of the four (4) Spotlight Initiative Communication Objectives. Objectives relevant to the visibility of Spotlight and the communication of results were not realized during the reporting period.

Under Objective #1, raise awareness of violence against women and girls, and its prevalence In Belize, Spotlight Initiative socialized the findings of the Spotlight Initiative Baseline Study among government and CSO actors. A total of 300 state and non-state actors were reached with key information on the findings from the baseline study to support communication, awareness raising, and the design of targeted interventions.

Under Objective #3, provide communications for development support to strengthen Spotlight Initiative's programme design and implementation, key results include the finalization and roll out of the National Social and Behaviour Change Strategy, development of three campaigns on ending violence against women and girls, 2 of which were rolled out in 2022 and the other scheduled for roll out in 2023. Both campaigns reached almost 80,000 men and women, boys and girls.

b) Messages

The SBCC campaign, described below under campaigns, designed [Key Messages](#) targeting a wide range of audiences including families, school communities, and community leaders to challenge social norms. Although the messages will not be disseminated until 2023, messages were well received during the campaign's pretesting phase and endorsed by a wide cross section of stakeholders.

- *Families are stronger when both men and women take responsibility for raising children and managing the household.*
- *Support girls and boys equally to set goals, challenge gender stereotypes and realize their dreams*
- *Support Women to Lead! Women in leadership and decision-making benefits politics, businesses, communities and families*

c) Media and visibility events

Launch of the Joint Sexual Violence Response Programme (JSVRP), February 17, 2022: The Spotlight Initiative in partnership with the Ministries of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries and Ministry of Defence and Border Security launched the JSVRP. The program is aimed at addressing sexual abuse within the country's security forces, including the Belize Police Department, the Belize Defence Force, and the Belize Coast Guard, and was created with the assistance of the Spotlight Initiative in Belize, whose mission is to ensure women enjoy their right to a life free from violence within an inclusive and gender-equitable community. [Joint Sexual Violence Prevention and Response launched in security forces](#)

UN Agencies host joint Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (PSEA) Training, August 18, 2022: The United Nations Country Team facilitated a joint 2022 Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Capacity Development Training for implementing partners (IPs) and vendors. Partners of the UN receive training on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and agree to the shared vision and mission of eliminating all forms of PSEA in their programme and service delivery. Seventy persons attended and the sessions informed on basic concepts of PSEA, strategies to prevent its occurrence and measures to protect the rights of victims. [PSEA Joint UN Training](#)

d) Campaigns

Development of Social and Behaviour Change (SBCC) Campaign on ending Violence Against Women and Girls

In 2020, a Social and Behaviour Change Campaign "It Ends with Me" was developed, targeting policy and decision makers, workplaces, schools, communities and community leaders and families. The objective of the campaign is to shift social expectations and challenge gender stereotypes that



contribute to VAWG by using positive role modeling that positions men and women, boys and girls in transformed gender roles and increase awareness of gender, gender equality and the social and economic benefits of gender equality. It Ends with Me calls for individual and collective commitment to end gender stereotypes that contribute to violence against women and girls (VAWG) by addressing some of the root causes of violence in the home, school, community and workplace that are often seen as the “norm”.

Considerations for Belize’s multi-ethnic society influenced the production of the campaign to ensure the cultural representation is diverse. During the 3rd quarter of 2022, 4 PSAs, 4 posters and 5 tiktok videos were pre-tested during eleven (11) sessions reaching a wide cross-section of over 160 stakeholders. The production firm with support of the IP identified the groups for the pretesting and these groups included male and female youth, men and women located in each of the six (6) districts. In total, 122 participants were female and 39 were male. Of these participants eighteen (18) were Indigenous men (Maya) twenty-four (24) were rural women from rural women’s groups, twelve (12) members of the District Gender and Gender Based Violence Committee and other key stakeholders including participants from both government and civil society partners.

When disaggregating by age, of the persons consulted 10% were 15 to 17 years old, 23% were between the ages 18-25 and 26-35, while 25% were between 36-50 years and 6% of participants were 50 and over, 11% did not indicate their age.

These sessions provided feedback which informed the revised messaging and ultimately the presentation of the communication assets. For instance, while the initial intent was to develop one poster depicting families, considering the multicultural identity of Belizeans, recommendations were provided for different depictions to be created to highlight more than one ethnic group. Thus, the posters targeting families depict Mayan, Mestizo, Creole and Garifuna actors where some of the participants from the pre-testing committed to be actors for the asset’s development.

As a result, the campaign assets include the development of four (4) PSAs targeting families, schools, workplaces and communities. The family’s PSA was further translated into two indigenous languages, particularly Garifuna and Maya and adopted to those cultural contexts. In the backdrop of Leave No One Behind, the English version of the families PSA also includes sign language interpretation. The assets include five (5) sets of posters, totaling twenty (20) individual posters in English and Spanish targeting policy/decision makers, families, workplace, communities and schools. Each of the 20 posters have also been designed into social media banners. Fifteen (15) tiktok videos with a wide range of messages were developed and will be rolled out on tiktok and social media platforms. The Social and Behaviour Communication Campaign will be launched in Q1 2023, and the campaign will be rolled out on a national scale.

Amplify Voice and Agency of Adolescents and youth through the U-Report andNex’US Platforms

Spotlight Initiative supported the launch of a digital interactive campaign with Adolescents and Youths across the country. Using social media tools – WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram, key and provocative messages were shared through social media and adolescents and youths were encouraged to share their views. At the end of each of the rounds, information was shared on the topics to increase their knowledge. The campaigns were on Gender-Based Violence; Child Marriage Early Union; Human Trafficking; and Mental Health. A total of 2,059 (600 males, 1459 females) adolescent and youth participated in these campaigns. There are 7,572 U-Reporters registered in Belize, with 26% ages 15-19, and 45% 20-24.

Dis Da Noh Di Time

The Child Development Launched its campaign, supported by the Spotlight Initiative through social media and popup booths across the country. The campaign aimed at targeting faith leaders, community leaders, CBOs, FBOs, and CSOs, migrant women and children, and other vulnerable and marginalized groups. The focus of the campaign was raising awareness of child marriage and early unions as a form of violence and a violation of rights for girls. It also used its various platforms to highlight the intersectionality of CMEU across the life cycle of a girl and woman. The campaigns started in quarter 1 of 2022 and was boosted throughout the year at strategic *advocacy days*, such as *International Women's Day*, *Human Trafficking Day*, *International Day of the Girl* and during the *16 Days of Activism*. A total of 76,842 (35,203 males, 41,639 females) were reached.

e) Photos:



CSO Dialogue, November 2022



Engagement of Faith Based Leaders, November 2022



Advocacy with the Women's Parliamentarian Caucus



Pretesting of SBCC Campaign Assets

f) Videos:

Please click the link for an [advocacy video](#) produced to promote CSO engagement.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability remained a key focus of Spotlight Initiative as the programme completed Phase I implementation and transitioned to Phase II. Throughout Phase I, efforts towards sustainability were guided by Belize's Acceleration and Sustainability Plan which identified key actions to support sustainability of interventions under each outcome. During the first quarter of 2022, as part of Phase II planning, sustainability was a key criterion for defining the interventions that would form a part of the final Phase of Spotlight. A strong focus on alignment with national priorities, policies, plans and frameworks was maintained and several engagements with government and CSOs ensured that interventions would be led by implementing partners and not by the RUNOS.

During the last quarter of 2022, discussions on sustainability commenced in policy and decision-making spaces such as the NSC to ensure that a strong sustainability plan, guided by the government and CSOs, is in place at the end of Phase II. Some of the key elements of the sustainability plan and Phase II work plan that were agreed on included legislative review, institutionalizing capacity building interventions, resource mobilization for VAWG, strengthening existing structures, data and evidence, CSO engagement and networking, transforming harmful social norms.

During the first quarter of 2022, Spotlight Initiative will develop a Sustainability Plan which will be handed over to the NSC at the end of the third quarter. The sustainability plan will be guided by guidance notes for sustainability provided by Secretariat, stakeholder consultations, guidance from the NSC, and a mapping and alignment of current Spotlight Initiative's interventions to the sector plans, policies, and other frameworks that currently form part of the national response.

The sustainability of the CSNRG will also be a key focus during Phase II and a sustainability plan for the CSNRG, guided by lessons learned, guidance from the Spotlight Secretariat, and examples from other countries, will be developed. During the last quarter of 2022, discussions were held with the CSNRG, RC, HOAs and the EU to identify key priorities for the CSNRG and to explore options for sustainability. While not all members of the CSNRG will continue serving at the end of Spotlight Initiative, it is well recognized that the CSNRG, as a model for CSO governance in the national response to VAWG, is a good practice and efforts will be made to sustain this model. Key to the sustainability of this model is the identification of resources to effectively support the engagement and operations of CSO and to attract a skilled cadre of CSO representatives with avid interest and experience in VAWG.

Key Spotlight outcomes have been integrated into the Multi Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 (MSDCF) as well as the RUNOs five-year Country Programme Documents (CPD). In developing the respective agency five year CPDs, RUNOs ensured that interventions were included to support government and CSOs in the national response to VAWG in strategic areas that were funded by Spotlight. These include legislative reform, institutional strengthening, and strengthening capacity of CSOs to plan and deliver programmes on ending VAWG which will ensure follow up and sustained focus on EVWAG and GEWE. A strong example of this is the current support being provided to the Government of Belize by the World Bank to strengthen the country's capacity to respond to GBV during emergencies. Additionally, Spotlight Initiative has been incorporated into the Government of Belize's Medium Term Development Strategy 2022-2025.

While Spotlight Initiative has not secured any concrete funding commitment besides the above mentioned, a donor dialogue is scheduled for the 2nd quarter of 2023. Additionally, support is consistently

provided to the implementing partners to apply for available funding such as the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women.

As it relates to sustainability of CSOs and Women's Movements, a key action is strengthening the network of CSOs, at the community and national level, to support joint planning, advocacy and use of accountability mechanisms. Efforts initiated during 2022, under Outcome 6, will continue during Phase II and partnership with the Belize Network of NGO (BNN) will be concretized to ensure that social sector CSOs have greater agency and influence in national spaces such as BNN.

NEXT STEPS

As Spotlight Initiative moves into its final year of implementation, an important next step is the implementation of Phase II, ensuring strong emphasis on national ownership and sustainability of Spotlight Initiative achievements within the national response to VAWG. This will require strengthening structures and mechanisms at the national and local to ensure institutional capacity for Spotlight Initiative's Sustainability.

Some specific actions that will be implemented include:

- Development of a closure schedule and exit strategy to ensure effective programme and operational closure
- Development of a Sustainability Plan for Spotlight Initiative.
- Accelerated implementation of Phase II to ensure timely closure at the end of December 2023.
- Implementation of key recommendations from the MTA with an emphasis on improved targeting of marginalized groups, strengthen monitoring and evaluation, including PMER, strengthen CSO engagement and the capacity of the CSNRG.
- Enhance coordination and joint planning among RUNOs in order to facilitate more effective implementation by IPs
- Strengthen partnership with the EU to increase communication and visibility on the impact of Spotlight Initiative.
- Increase advocacy, along with the EU, for sustained investment in the national response to VAWG by engaging the Women's Parliamentarian Caucus, the NSC as well as key policy and decision makers in government.

Key programme interventions under Phase II will include:

- Strengthen key legislation such as the Domestic Violence Act to eliminate gaps in equal access to justice, discriminatory clauses that prevent sustainability plan through a participatory process with government, the EU and CSOs access to justice for vulnerable populations as well as ensure alignment with international standards.
- Increase institutional capacity building and efficient collaboration of government, civil society and women's movements to strategically position themselves for effective and sustainable national and local level response to the demands of breaking the cycle of family violence and GBV against women and girls. This includes integration of gender and GBV into sector plans, key for sustainability of the costed National Gender Based Violence Action Plan that was developed under Phase I.
- Launch and roll out of the Social and Behaviour Change Communication Strategy (SBCC) on Ending VAWG to ensure gender inequitable social norms, attitudes and practices are addressed at all levels of the social ecology (individuals, communities, schools, workplaces, etc.).

- Support government and CSO partners in the finalization and roll out of the Essential Service Package (ESP) to ensure that a minimum package of services is available to women and girls who experience violence and harmful practices to use available, accessible, acceptable, and quality essential services for long term recovery.
- Strengthen Belize's capacity to collect and analyse globally comparable, disaggregated data to inform policy and decision making. To this end, focus will be on supporting key sectors with the implementation of a national multi sectoral GBV surveillance system which will include coordination and harmonized reporting among these sectors.

ANNEXES

[Annex A: Results Framework](#)

[Belize's Results Framework 2022](#)

[Annex B: Risk Management Matrix](#)

[Belize's Risk Management Matrix 2022](#)

[Annex C: CSO Engagement Report](#)

[Belize's CSO Engagement Report](#)

[Annex D: Innovative, Promising or Good Practices Reporting Template-](#)

No innovative, promising or good practice were developed in 2022. However practices identified in [2021 Annual Report](#) continued to be strengthened and roll out.

[Annex E: Annual Work Plan](#)

[Belize's Annual Work Plan](#)



Spotlight Initiative

ANNUAL NARRATIVE PROGRAMME REPORT
2022