YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROJECT - RESTORE BELIZE

Mentorship Programme (/programmes/mentorship-programme)

Context: RESTORE Belize focuses on the root causes of crime, addressing areas such as education, parenting skills, mental health, and conflict mediation to ultimately contribute to a culture of peace. Its main education initiatives are the I AM BELIZE Scholarship Programme (/programmes/i-am-belize-scholarship-programme), which aims to increase secondary school completion rates among the most vulnerable populations by providing holistic high school scholarships, and the Metamorphosis Programme (/programmes/metamorphosis-project), which aims to strengthen communities in Belize City by fostering resiliency in young people and to provide adults with the knowledge and skills they need to be effective parents.

In 2012, RESTORE Belize identified Mentorship as a useful intervention to support students still struggling in the above education programmes. The Mentorship program, therefore, does not stand alone; it is a sub-program of the I AM BELIZE Scholarship Program, and the Metamorphosis Programme.

Selecting Mentors: The success of the program is primarily dependent on the pool of Mentors who are assessed on a case by case basis. Potential Mentors are recommended to RESTORE Belize and must complete an application form before being interviewed. Those selected are stable professionals who can fully commit to the programme and will tenaciously work on developing a relationship with their mentee.

Identifying Mentees: Mentees are identified from its pool of scholarship students. Those who most need additional support and guidance in their academic careers, professional development, and interpersonal relationships are chosen and matched with appropriate mentors.

Pairing Mentors and Mentees: Mentees are matched with Mentors of the same sex whose strengths complement their weaknesses. Ideally, Mentors and Mentees will share similar interests and personality traits. The formal relationship lasts for two years or until the child graduates high school.
Monitor and Evaluation: Mentors are assessed monthly or, in stronger relationships, quarterly through a standardized questionnaire. Questions assess frequency and nature of contact/meetings, mentee's wellbeing, mentor's involvement with the child's school, mentee's goals, follow ups, and experiences with the parent/guardian.

Mentees are also assessed but with less frequency. They are interviewed in person by RESTORE Belize using a standardized questionnaire aimed at recording the impact of the programme on the child. Mentee's grades are also monitored and recorded, and mentors are updated frequently.

Mentees' parents and guardians are also contacted regularly to ensure that the needs of the mentee are being met and that they are still on board with the programme.

Mentorship Socials: RESTORE Belize hosts events and activities to promote the relationship between Mentors and Mentees and to observe how they interact with each other and other mentorship groups. Pictures of the last Mentorship Social can be accessed at the Gallery here (/gallery/image-gallery/mentorship-social).

Beat A Pan, NOT A Man (/programmes/beat-a-pan-not-a-man)

Background: The Steel Pan Project was started as a 2013 initiative between RESTORE Belize and NICH with generous funding from UNICEF. It uses the steel pan as a tool for social outreach with free lessons offered to children and youths from socially vulnerable populations in their community.

Within a year of the project's inception, the students who showed a high degree of skill, discipline, and dedication joined a few long-time pannists in the creation of the Pandemonium Steel Band whose tag line is “Beat A Pan, NOT A Man.”
Pandemonium Steel Band: The group has since made a name for itself as vivacious, enthusiastic, and skilled, with its members having a fresh take on steel pan music. Over 50 students have benefited from this programme, and Pandemonium is featured annually at Pan Yaad in September, their Christmas Concert in December, the Street Arts Festival in February, and the Jazz Fest in June among other smaller events.
Practice Sessions: The group is divided into junior and senior sections, and members meet two to three times a week for practice. While the students are taught how to read, play, and perform music, life skills and child protection sessions are also included with support of their parents.

Project Aims: This project is in line with each partners’ mission of empowerment. NICH’s Institute of Creative Arts aims to be the catalyst for creative, artistic and professional excellence in Belize. In fulfillment of this mission NICH provides musical education and artistic leadership to the Pandemonium Steel Band.
Its partner in this programme, RESTORE Belize provides logistic support and coordination as it is mandated to promote greater collaboration between agencies and to mobilize resources to contribute to a culture of peace through multi-sectoral and citizen-centered action.

UNICEF advocates for the protection of children’s rights to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. This steel pan project does exactly that by providing students with a positive after-school activity that gives them the opportunity to reach their musical potential.

**Documentation:** In 2015, UNICEF featured the Steel Pan Project in a comprehensive documentary which can be accessed here (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJUIDpc61Gc&t=3s). In 2018, the Government Press Office did an updated feature on the band, its members, and its progress. This mini documentary can be accessed here. (https://www.facebook.com/GOBPressOffice/videos/1662218860480277/UzpfSTQ0Mjk4OTExNTczODg0ODoxODcxNjk5NjQ2MjAxMTE0/)

**Conflict Mediation Training Programme (http://restorebelize.gov.bz)**

**Context:** The lack of conflict resolution skills in a generally pervasive culture of violence is a root cause of crime in Belize. RESTORE Belize is addressing this through its Conflict Mediation Programme which aims to promote a culture of peace by providing citizens with tools and services for non-violent conflict resolution and creative problem solving through mediation training. On a national level, RESTORE Belize has been collaborating with the judiciary as a member of the National Mediation Committee, providing technical support in this movement toward peace.
Background & Funding: The training programme was first implemented in 2012 in direct response to a recognized need for increased technical capacity in Belize for alternative dispute resolution. It started as a partnership between RESTORE Belize and the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) within the US Department of State.

This work was expanded from 2012 to 2015 with funding from the US Embassy to train 120 mediators country wide. RESTORE Belize then leveraged funding in 2016 and 2017 for court-connected family mediation through the Youth Violence Prevention Programme (PreJuve) and in 2018 is partnering with the Youth and Community Transformation Project (YCT) to conduct conflict mediation trainings.
Goals: The primary goals of the conflict mediation programme are to strengthen Belize’s national capacity to manage conflict peacefully and to create a group of trained conflict mediators who work directly with vulnerable communities to resolve disputes.

Conflict mediation training provides communities with essential skills such as anger management, conflict de-escalation, respectful communication, and creative problem-solving skills.

Target Domains: The target domains are school communities, correction and detention facilities for juveniles and adults, community-based organizations, and neighborhood communities including gangs and families.
Mediators have been selected from a diverse group of professionals who represent government agencies, police leaders, school staff, and community organizations working with youth from socially vulnerable neighborhoods. Individuals have also been chosen based on previous experience as trainers, natural mediation capabilities and a strong commitment to community-building and peace. The training has focused heavily on communication, conflict resolution and facilitation skills for high tension scenarios.

**Activities:** Specific activities conducted under the conflict mediation programme are:

**Mediation training workshops** for staff of institutions that work directly with youth populations, such as the National Youth Cadet Service Corps, Belize City High Schools, Community Policing Unit, Belize Central Prison (including Wagner’s Youth Facility), Conscious Youth Development Programme, the Youth Hostel, Youth For the Future, and community activists.

175 Belizeans have been trained through this programme since it began in 2012 with 41 of those participants trained in the first half of 2018. After completing three successful supervised mediations they will be certified as mediators under RESTORE Belize's programme.
The first 2018 cohort comprised 19 participants including social workers, police and youth officers. In the second cohort of the year, 21 participants from Maud Williams High School and 1 social worker from RESTORE Belize were trained. A full description of the 2018 trainings can be accessed here (/blog/13-blog/73-mediation-for-peace).

**Peer mediation programmes** in Southside Belize City High Schools and a youth detention centre. Although some high schools in Belize already have peer counseling programmes, these peer mediation training sessions enhance the efficacy of the peer counselling program by providing additional conflict resolution tools to the peer counselors.

This utilizes the increased capacity of conflict mediators under the Mediation Training Workshops who then will be able to train and guide peer helpers and prefects in peer mediation.

**Court Connected Family Mediation** as an amicable alternative to litigation that helps to de-clog the system. This programme is a collaborative effort between RESTORE Belize, UWI Open Campus Belize, the Supreme Court, and the UNDP/SICA PreJuve Project (/programmes/youth-violence-prevention-project) and has strong implications for the justice system in Belize since a mediated solution, unlike one imposed by the Court is likely to be more meaningful to the parties. This is because parties take ownership of the process and outcome, so the commitment to abide by the terms of a mediated settlement is generally higher.
In late 2016, 15 participants were trained and later sworn-in in 2017. At the end of that same year, 18 more participants were trained and sworn-in at the start of 2018. Participants were selected country-wide and are already working as court-appointed family mediators. The introduction of court-connected mediation into the Family Court promotes a culture of peace and allows for the efficient resolution of family disputes which affect children, adolescents and youth. More information on the trainings can be found here (/resources/latest-news/13-blog/66-go-forth-and-mediate).

If you are interested in finding out more about this programme and how you or your agency can participate, contact us (/staff).

**Peace in the Parks (/programmes/peace-in-the-parks)**

**Aims:** Established in 2011, RESTORE Belize's Peace in the Parks Programme aims to promote a culture of peace by increasing the social participation of urban youth and providing community-based opportunities for creative cultural expression and child-friendly recreational activities.

**Funding:** RESTORE Belize was granted funding under UNESCO’s Participation Programme in 2014 and 2015 on the national level. These funded family days to promote peace, literacy initiatives through read in the parks and reading competitions, and street theatre as a medium for social transformation. At the regional level, the UNESCO Kingston Cluster expanded on the idea of social transformation through culture by funding theatre workshops which resulted in the creation and production of plays reflecting issues experienced by socially vulnerable Belizean youth. In 2018, The Embassy of the Republic of China (Taiwan) sponsored park activities, held in response to an escalation in Belize City crime. The aim was to encourage community healing and community building in vulnerable neighborhoods to create a lasting culture of...
Objectives: The objectives of the programme are to reduce gang activity during peak crime times, creating safe spaces for children, reclaiming public spaces for communities, promoting Belizean culture, and increasing families’ access to services. Below is a breakdown of activities and events under the programme.

Reclaiming Public Spaces: RESTORE Belize has supported renovation of small neighborhood parks to provide safe child-friendly areas for children to play. Specifically, the Wilton Cumberbatch Family Recreation Park has been renovated to provide a recreational space for residents of the Yabra community to hang out, play, and have neighborhood activities and games.

Theatre: The programme partnered with Youth Transformation through the Arts (YATA) in 2014 and 2015 in the development and performance of street theatre. It allowed youth to explore critical themes in the definition of gender roles, relationships, and sex partners to help them understand and navigate their environment. Two plays were produced and performed country-wide: “Sleepless Girls”, which addresses social issues faced by high-school aged girls, and “Nowhere to Fly” which provides an insight into the gang culture and social pressures which disproportionately affect boys. A documentary featuring these activities can be accessed here. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qqXZRzMZ51c)
Literacy: RESTORE Belize partnered with the Ministry of Education and the National Library Service to host "Read in the Parks" events which engage primary school aged children to promote literacy and cultivate a love of reading. One event which has become a staple in Belize City primary schools is the “Read-A-Thon” which has since evolved into annual inter-school competitions through which primary schools are provided with well-stocked libraries which students must use to participate. In 2018, the competition started to incorporate an essay component for older children. See coverage of our latest event on our blog here (/resources/latest-news/13-blog/70-readathon-essay-awards).
Park events also included Read-Alouds which featured special guest readers who can serve as role-models to the children, and dramatizations of popular children's literature, performed by the National Library Service.

**Family Days:** In 2018 RESTORE Belize supported three family day events with funding from the Embassy of the Republic of China Taiwan. The first was in partnership with YATA in their “Walls Down” event. It was a Fun Day for the children of the Faber’s Road area. A portion of the street located in a Belize City “hotspot” was blocked off and transformed into a safe space for children to play. Children were also interviewed with consent from their parents. They expressed their feelings and experiences with violent crime in their neighborhoods, and the footage was broadcasted in an awareness campaign (accessible here) (https://www.facebook.com/restorebelize/videos/1753800697991010/).
A second event was held in July under the theme “A Belize That is Safe for Children”. RESTORE Belize partnered with a mix of public and private entities including the Special Envoy for Women and Children, Youth Advocacy Through the Arts, Ignite Ltd., BTL, BEL, and the Belize Family Life Association to bring play, sports, services, performances, and consultations to children and their families in the Yabra area.
At the start of September, a “Back to School Fun Day” was held in collaboration with local community leader G. Michael Reid at the Charlie Burton Park, the renovation of which he sponsored. Children were provided with haircuts and hair braiding, back to school giveaways, food, music, and play.

Take a look at our blog for a full breakdown (/blog/13-blog/74-a-belize-that-is-safe-for-children) of this year’s Peace in the Parks events.

**Youth Violence Prevention Project (PreJuve) (/programmes/youth-violence-prevention-project)**

**Project Description:** In 2015 Belize signed on to the PreJuve Regional Project, also known as the Youth Violence Prevention Project, which seeks to contribute to the improvement of citizen security within the Central American region by reducing factors associated with insecurity and violence in SICA countries. This comprehensive security and violence prevention project is funded by UNDP and the Spanish government and is entering its final phase.

**Aims:** The project prioritizes the following within SICA’s Central American Security Strategy:

1. **Support the formulation of a comprehensive citizen security policy for Belize,** ensuring linkages between this national policy and regional priorities.

2. **Support the development and implementation of plans and institutional capacities to improve social violence prevention,** with emphasis on socially vulnerable populations and territories with the highest incidence of crime.

(https://restorebelize.gov.bz) Participation in a regional Innovation Laboratory which seeks to promote the generation, exchange, systemization, and adaptation of creative and innovative approaches to citizen security as an alternative to current approaches and interventions.
PreJuve in Belize: Under this project, Belize has engaged in secondary and tertiary prevention and intervention activities in line with building institutional plans and capacities.

Secondary Prevention: Identifies and addresses the risk factors and early warning signs of the populations of society affected by social, cultural, and environmental factors that predispose them to come into contact with the law.

Two specialized family mediation training courses were offered at the University of West Indies. The first session comprised Belize City participants in 2016, and the second, held in 2017, was expanded to include a pool of professionals all across the country. The participants have been sworn in and are now available as court connected family mediators. Family mediation is sought as a first option in the courts to reduce the overload of cases, resolving them before they are presented to the magistrate. More information on family mediation is available on the Conflict Mediation Programme Page here (/programmes/conflict-mediation-programme) and in the Latest News section of the website here (/resources/latest-news/13-blog/66-go-forth-and-mediate).
RESTORE Belize supported the Conscious Youth Development Programme’s drop-in centre in the first half of 2018 by providing meals to students and funding workshops facilitated by Belize Training and Employment Center (BTEC). Regular visitors to the drop-in centre went on quarterly visits to historical, cultural and educational sites as an incentive to utilize the centre’s services such as help with homework and life skills talks and trainings.

The Department of Youth Services’ (DYS) Mayflower Youth Center has been equipped with online materials and technical support to aid adolescents who have dropped out of high school in earning their degrees. Many students do not otherwise have access to the internet, so they regularly utilize the computers and safe and quiet space at the center to complete their homework. RESTORE Belize hired Mr. Joseph Stamp, founder of Youth Advocacy Through Arts (YATA), to train children in performing arts and hold performances to showcase what the children learned.

**Tertiary Prevention:** Actions emphasize rehabilitation and reintegration of people who have been in contact with the law.

In 2016, Wagner’s Youth Facility (/resources/latest-news/13-blog/62-literacy-for-inmates) began engaging inmates in evening and weekend activities. The project has supported additional staffing and capacity enhancements in the Community Rehabilitation Department. Furthermore, job preparedness skills are being built in Wagner’s Youth Facility through the Belize Training and Employment Center. Residents of the Princess Royal Youth Hostel have been engaging in weekend programming as well.
Peace Education: In 2017 three Belizeans joined professionals from SICA countries to complete an online Peace Education Training Programme through El Salvador. Upon completion of the programme, the newly trained professionals then trained others in their countries. The programme aimed to foster a culture of peace by establishing peace education within workplaces and encouraging knowledge transfer.
Citizen Security Policy & Plan: The PreJuve Project is entering its final phase: the Citizen Security Policy and Plan. A regional consultant group has already conducted interviews with key informants, including unions, CEOs, Opposition members, and government M&E personnel, and a two day consultation was planned for September 2018 to draft a theory of change that describes Belize's path forward in improving citizen security.

The first phase of the PreJuve Regional Project will be completed with a regional workshop in November of 2018. Participating countries will present at the workshop on the progress and achievements made under this project.

LITERACY AND NUMERACY (/PROGRAMMES/LITERACY-AND-NUMERACY)

METAMORPHOSIS PROGRAMME (/PROGRAMMES/METAMORPHOSIS-PROJECT)

EARLY WARNING SYSTEM (/PROGRAMMES/EARLY-WARNING-SYSTEM)

Subcategories
I Am Belize (/programmes/youth-violence-prevention-project/9-programs/i-am-belize)

OUR PROGRAMMES

» Youth Violence Prevention Project (PreJuve) (/programmes/youth-violence-prevention-project)

» Beat A Pan, NOT A Man (/programmes/beat-a-pan-not-a-man)

» Conflict Mediation Training Programme (/programmes/conflict-mediation-programme)
Early Warning System (/programmes/early-warning-system)

I AM BELIZE Scholarship Programme (/programmes/i-am-belize-scholarship-programme)

Literacy and Numeracy (/programmes/literacy-and-numeracy)

Mentorship Programme (/programmes/mentorship-programme)

Metamorphosis Programme (/programmes/metamorphosis-project)

Peace in the Parks (/programmes/peace-in-the-parks)