

Children Advisory Body Municipality

Background

Belize, like other member states of the Caribbean, is currently experiencing the largest cohort of 15-24 year olds in its history; half of the Caribbean population is under the age of 25. While this generation of young people face many challenges and risks that impact directly on their physical, emotional and mental health and well-being there are enormous opportunities and benefits that could accrue to Belize, and the region by investing in young people.

This generation will enter into the working world in a context where they outnumber the dependent populations thus creating a window of opportunity for a demographic bonus.

Therefore, the challenge to the Municipality and to the Government - to Governments and the development agencies that work with them - is to ensure that policies and programmes are responsive to the needs and rights of young people. Youth participation is an effective way to ensure youth voices in policies and programmes

The CAB is a group young people, in particular those who are vulnerable and live in extremely difficult circumstances. The group provides a youth consultative space for reviewing Municipal Plans.

The **purpose** of the CAB is:

- To facilitate open dialogue and exchange among youth and between The Assessment Panel so that CAB can provide advise and recommendations on the diverse range of youth issues and strategic opportunities and actions to address them.
- To approve Municipalities Child Friendly Budget during the budget preparation cycle

Scope of Work is:

- Bring a youth perspective on issues affecting youth in Municipalities youth so as to ensure that their rights and needs are acknowledged and promoted within the Municipal Plans
- Facilitate knowledge-sharing about best practices and lessons learned for agenda of young people's rights, gender equality and sexual and reproductive health within the Municipal Plan
- Improve young people's understanding of the principles and Municipal Plans to improve the lives of young people;
- Strengthen the skills of young people (especially vulnerable and disadvantaged young people) in areas that include leadership, decision-making, communication, problem-solving and advocacy, thereby facilitating their effective participation in Municipal Developmental processes.
- Budget Review and approval by young people for each municipality

The **expected results** from the Children Advisory Body are:

- Overall improvement in the youth-friendliness and responsiveness of Child Friendly Municipalities
- Improved capacity and confidence of young people, especially the most vulnerable, to participate in Municipal Development Process

Membership & Voting

The CAB is comprised of 9 young people (one from each municipality). Young people must be members of existing organizations, community groups, which are active within the respective municipalities. Young people will apply to participate on the Body and will be selected by an existing Young People Policy Body (such as UNFPA's YAG, or Department of Youth Services Advisors).

Each young person is able to vote, however voting rights constitutes active participation in at least 5 of the 7 yearly meetings.

Each member can only participate in the CAB for 3 years, the last six months would be set aside to 'train' and 'orient' the new CAB membership for the following 3 years.