

15 years after the CRC:



"it begins with you"

“XCHANGE” is building democracy, human security and a network of young social entrepreneurs in the Caribbean and Central America

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN UNICEF- XTATIK-ISLAND*people*

For every child
Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY



FACTS ABOUT VIOLENCE IN CARIBBEAN

- Confrontation between pre-CRC and post-CRC norms, e.g., inability to cope = institutionalize, violence among young people=reduce the age of criminal responsibility, corporal punishment seen as good discipline
- Participation and leadership by young people is new
- Heads of households have migrated, opening risk to child abuse, disintegrated family life and lost of identity
- High unemployment, poverty, migration giving rise to frustration and rage
- Social and gender norms work counter to developmental agenda

Violence is now a norm – affects more than Jamaica!

- **16,271 visits made to island's hospitals by persons under 20 due to violence related injuries (2002 and 2003)**
- **3,639 blunt injuries; 2,368 lacerations; 828 stab sounds; 868 sexual assault; and 169 gun shot wounds**
- **Samms-Vaughn (2004) - study of 1,202 adolescents:**
 - **56.6% of adolescents seen a dead body (not at a funeral)**
 - **26.6% have had a friend or family member murdered**
 - **24.1% adolescents do not feel safe in community**
- **Common sights in communities are:**
 - **Gunmen (35.8%)**
 - **Gangs on streets (31.6%)**
 - **People using drugs (32%)**
 - **People selling drugs (22.3%)**

CAUSES OF VIOLENCE

- High levels of inequality in resource allocation
- Gaps in investment in the adolescents especially age 10-14
- High unemployment and poverty
- Lack of :
 - protective environment at all levels
 - clear Caribbean identity
 - poor parenting skills
 - young people lack necessary life skills
- Disrespect of rights – citizenship
- Existence of arms –corruption-drugs due to weak border control

Xchange is reducing the poverty of opportunities for young people

- Xchange is a movement reaching the most excluded and vulnerable along with their communities and families
- Will empower young leaders in schools and communities with the skills and knowledge to effectively address the issue of violence
- Is being implemented in 7 countries Belize, Haiti, Trinidad, Barbados, Jamaica, Grenada, Guyana with expansion to Central America (Panama, Costa Rica, El Salvador):

Long term objective

- Young people live positive lifestyles as full, contributing citizens in safe, enabling and protective environments

COMPONENTS OF XCHANGE

- Advocacy and social mobilization
- Policy development and legislation
- Partnership building
- Strengthening of Health and Family Life Education in and out of schools
- Upscaling of community-based projects for citizenship, well-being and life satisfaction

ACHIEVEMENTS AND SCENES FROM XCHANGE IN COUNTRIES

PARTNERSHIPS

- 40 Young leaders/mentors trained in transformational leadership, Trinidad – March 2005
- Xchange launched in 6 of 7 countries so far
- Pledges to transform life and join movement
- Over 30 national and regional NGOs joined
- UNIFEM, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNDP joined effort
- YMCA and YWCA joined in efforts locally
- Leadership by reknowned entertainers and private partners
- Incorporates sports for development and TRAFFIC and CONCACAF

Belize State of the Nation Report, September 2005

"We have to intensify our efforts to combat poverty and create more opportunities for our young people in education, skills training and employability. We have to create even more initiatives in sports, art, music, drama and other creative activities for youth participation and involvement. With the support of UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, Youth for the Future and many local NGOS, young Belizeans have now joined the regional Caribbean movement to bring about positive change in their lives. I applaud this initiative and pledge our Government's full support. The media has an important role to play in promoting and advocating this **Xchange movement for upliftment of young people into creating their own nonviolent future.**

Prime Minister Moussa, Belize