Opening the Doors to Change

Domestic Violence in Belize: A Case Study

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Anna looked at her phone and recognized the number immediately. Lily, the caller, was a long time client of Mary Open Doors (MOD), the domestic violence (DV) shelter that Anna heads as CEO. Lily's ex-husband had been hitting her, off and on, for their ten years of marriage. Two years ago, she summoned enough courage to leave with her three young children. On that day, when Lily took the critical first step toward leading a violence free life, Anna met Lily and her children on the doorstep of Mary Open Doors, the only DV shelter in the region.

Anna flashed back to that memory for an instant before answering Lily's call. She knew better than to hope Lily was calling just to tell Anna about how well the kids are doing in school or that Lily's job is going well, but she hoped anyway – sometimes that hope is the only thing that keeps Anna going. Unfortunately, reality stepped in all too quickly. As soon as she answered the call, Anna would learn that recently Lily's ex-husband had started coming around her apartment and threatening her in front of the children.

"Hello Lily," Anna said, "Are you ok?"

"Anna, we need a place to stay. I'm terrified of my ex-husband. Can you help us?" pleaded Lily.

Anna immediately felt a heavy sense of dread fill her. The non-governmental organization she started nearly three years before in February of 2008 with a mission of improving the well-being of and empowerment for women was not just a statement, but also Anna's compass in everything she strived for in her work on DV issues. Anna, the Board, a string of volunteers and the one MOD staff person had been operating on meager resources since then with no significant sources of funding on the horizon. This dread Anna was feeling grew from the sad fact that Lily was once again in need of help from Mary Open Doors after having taken slow but steady strides toward rebuilding her life over the last two years, and because Anna knew that the shelter was in no position to provide the help Lily and her children so desperately needed. The questions that hounded Anna everyday as she strove to build MOD into a solid, stable and sustainable part of the Cayo community rang loudly in her ears that day as she listened to Lily asking for her help; the one that resounded the loudest was simply, "How will we make it?"

Macro analysis of Belize

In order to get a firm grasp on the situation surrounding organizations like Mary Open Doors, one must first understand the country of Belize as a whole, including its culture, governmental structure and national challenges. Slightly larger than Massachusetts, Belize is the second smallest and least populated country in Central America, with a population of approximately 307,899 and a population growth rate of 2.154%, measured in 2010.[1] With such a small population and geographic footprint, it is not incorrect to characterize Belize as a place where everyone knows everyone. In the wider world there is the saying that people are separated by only six degrees. In Belize, it is more appropriate to say one or two degrees. This is intensified by the fact that most people live their entire lives in the district or region in which they are born. When a

[1] "Background Note: Belize," US Department of State, accessed December 7, 2010, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1955.htm.

Belizean woman is trying to escape a violent environment, it is virtually impossible to melt into the background of a large city and disappear or move to a part of the country where no one knows her or the violent background she is trying to leave behind.

Belize is home to various ethnic groups including Creoles, who constitute approximately 40% of the population, East Indians, Arabs, Chinese, Mennonites, and Mayans. Belize was once the center of the Mayan civilization, which flourished in the region between 1500 BC and 200 AD and left a lasting flavor in the country's culture with a unique blend of ideals and traditions that each group brings to the table.[2] Mexican and Guatemalan influences spill over the borders adding both cuisine and customs to the already rich fabric of Belizean cultural traditions. Religion remains an important pillar of Belizean life with Roman Catholicism being the most prevalent; at approximately 70% of the population. The education system of Belize needs significant improvement but does provide children with the skills and tools they need to stay on par with international standards.

The country's literacy rate is currently 76.5%;[3] and most children complete only 9 years of schooling, most of which occur at the primary level, ranking them 74th out of the 171 nations equipped with proper data.[4] Yet, there is a vacuum when it comes to sexual health education. As can be seen in many countries that do not address sexually transmitted diseases, reproductive issues, or birth control, and where pre-marital sex is prevalent, Belizean women are often ill-informed and relegated to an inferior position in romantic and marital relationships. One of a host of negative consequence of this arises when violence becomes part of the equation; women are frequently un-empowered to leave. A UNICEF study released in 2008 reported that only 40% of women in Belize ages 15-24 were found to have comprehensive knowledge about HIV/AIDS, including methods of transmission and prevention.[5] In efforts to combat the growing numbers of HIV/AIDS, the Belizean Ministry of Health with support from the Global Fund Project established health information systems, education and awareness raising programs and antiretroviral programs. Embedded in these programs are culturally appropriate lessons on communication, conflict management and parenting skills. It is hoped that overtime this will improve the status of women in domestic relationships in Belize.

Another problem of growing significance in Belize, aside from sexual health issues, is an increasing crime rate and its relationship to the South American drug trade. Despite statistical evidence that the crime rate has dropped in recent years, many Belizean residents feel crime has reached epidemic proportions. There is some legitimacy to these sentiments as the more than 100 murders in Belize in 2010 put Belize near the top of worldwide statistics for murders per 100,000 people.[6] Belize remains a developing country in terms of its educational standards, health service delivery, industries, and crime prevention.

A relatively newly independent country, Belize only gained full independence from Britain on September 21, 1981. Regionally, it is one of the 15 members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), whose primary purposes are to promote economic integration and cooperation among its members, to ensure that the benefits of integration are equitably shared, and to coordinate

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[2] "Belize Culture," Maps of World.com, accessed December 7, 2010, http://www.mapsofworld.com/belize/culture/.
[3] "Doing Business in Belize: 2010 Country Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies," Embassy of the United States, accessed December 6, 2010, http://belize.usembassy.gov/media/pdf/country-commercial-guide2010.pdf.
[4] "Belize: Education," NationMaster.com, accessed March 28, 2011, http://www.nationmaster.com/country/bh-belize/edu-education
[5] "Belize: Statistics," UNICEF, accessed December 7, 2010, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/belize_statistics.html...
[6] Lan Sluder, December 1, 2010 comment on crime rate, "MURDER TOTAL FOR YEAR TOPS 100," Belize First Blog, December 1, 2010, http://www.belizefirst.com/BelizeNews2010.htm.

foreign policy.[7] While Belize maintains diplomatic relations with Taiwan, Russia, United Kingdom and the United States among others, the country has engaged in an ongoing border dispute with Guatemala for over 150 years which has yet to be resolved.[8] Despite its challenges, the political environment of Belize is considered to be stable with peaceful elections happening regularly and changes in power taking place smoothly. Belize's governmental structure is that of a parliamentary democracy, meaning that the party with the greatest representation in the parliament forms the government. Further demonstrations of the unequal footing of women in Belizean society are that women's suffrage did not occur until 1954 and currently, no women serve in the House of Representatives.[9]

The Belizean economy relies largely on tourism, the country's number one foreign exchange earner, bringing in over $275 million in 2008. Other significant industries include sugar, petroleum, citrus, banana, marine products, and papaya. The GDP is composed, by sector, of 54.1% services, 29% agriculture, and 16.9% industry. Between 1999 and 2007 GDP growth averaged almost 4%, with the discovery of oil in 2006 playing a significant role in boosting growth even more.[10] Major concerns regarding the economy continue to be a sizable trade deficit, unsustainable foreign debt and high unemployment. In addition, about 33.5% of the Belizean population lives below the poverty line. The unemployment rate hovers around 12.9%.[11] The labor force is approximately 122,300 strong, but with deficiencies in skilled and technical labor of all types.[12] Lack of capacity to remedy these and the other issues detailed above are results of the Government of Belize (GOB) struggling with fairly underdeveloped institutions, inefficiency, and a poorly trained, under-resourced workforce. The inferior status of women in the country remains relatively stagnant as gender equity issues fall very low on the list of issues to be addressed by the male dominated decision-makers in the country.

A strategy promoting the development of small business and entrepreneurial endeavors is pervasive in literature produced not only by the Ministry of Trade but also the Belizean Chamber of Commerce and Industry. There appear to be several programs supporting small and medium sized enterprises in capacity building, access to capital and various tax incentives, such as import/export tax relief, etc.[13] Unfortunately, the private sector remains a heavily male dominated arena, and few of these programs directly benefit budding women entrepreneurs. What is more, there is virtually no penetration of these small business development programs to women seeking to improve their livelihoods after escaping domestic violence. A 2009 estimate of Belize's GDP was $2.575 billion, which ranks it as 181 out of the approximately 195 countries in the world.[14] Exports in 2009 totaled $381.9 million while imports totaled $620.6 million in the same year. Debt currently sits at

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[7] Oscar Ramjeet "CARICOM countries will speak with one voice in meetings with US and Canadian leaders". Caribbean Net News, accessed December 7, 2010. http://www.caribbeannetnews.com/news-15757--63-63--.html.

[8] Arlenie Perez, Chuang Chin-Ta, and Farok Afero, "Belize-Guatemala territorial dispute and its implications for conservation," Tropical Conservation Science Vol.2(1):11-24, 2009, accessed December 7, 2010, http://tropicalconservationscience.mongabay.com/content/v2/09-03-23_perez_et_al_11-24.pdf.

[9] Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership. Accessed March 24, 2011. http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/Belize_Parliament.htm.

[10] "[10] "[10] "Central America and the Caribbean > > > Belize > Economy," Nation Master.com, accessed December 8, 2010, > Economy," Nation Master.com, accessed December 8, 2010, > Economy," Nation Master.com, accessed December 8, 2010, http://www.nationmaster.com/country/bh-belize/eco-economy...

[11] "Belize," Global Finance, accessed December 8, 2010, [11] "Belize," Global Finance, accessed December 8, 2010, http://www.gfmag.com/gdp-data-country-reports/317-belize-gdp-country-report.html...

[12] United States Central Intelligence Agency. World Factbook: Belize. 2010. Accessed December 14, 2010. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bh.html

[13] Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry Website. Accessed December 16, 2010. http://www.belize.org/bcci/

[14] "The World Factbook: Belize," Central Intelligence Agency, accessed December 8, 2010, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bh.html.

about $954.1 billion. The economy of Belize has historically never been strong. These issues are often magnified because of the country's small size.

Gender Issues in Belize

The National Gender-based Violence Plan of Action for Belize defines gender-based violence as, "Violence that is directed mainly toward women because they are women or that affects women disproportionately." In recent decades there has been positive momentum in nations around the world to proactively collect data on gender-based violence, enact legislative reforms aimed at stopping the cycle of violence, and provide support services.[15] Yet, much remains to be done, and Belize is no exception. In 2009, under its "Strengthening State Accountability and Community Action for Ending Gender-Based Violence in the Caribbean," The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) partnered with the Women's Department within the Government of Belize to assess the current status of gender-based violence in the country and develop a three year Plan of Action. In efforts to develop a relevant plan of action specific to the particular needs of the ethnic diversity and low population density in the small, Central American country that is Belize, the National Women's Commission produced the National Gender Policy: Situation Analysis of Gender Issues in Belize.[16] The picture these two documents paint of the status of women in Belize is bleak, but with rays of light and growing reason for hope. Approximately 50% of Belize's small population is women with approximately half of the female population living in rural areas and half in urban or semi-urban areas.[17] The research reiterated the need to continue to prioritize five areas of special need for gender-based issues. These include: health, wealth and employment creation, education and skills training, violence producing conditions and women in power and decision-making.[18] (See below for detailed actions under each arena.)

Policy Priorities	**Areas in Need of Attention**
Health	*Investing in primary health care programs *Integrating sexual and reproductive health as a national development priority as well as expanding injury prevention and treatment services geared to the special needs of women, men and children *Creating a comprehensive mental health package of services delivered at the local level *Expanding preventive health education services *Increasing access to health care for rural communities *Increasing male access to sexual and productive health and primary health care services
Education and Skills Training	*Elimination of gender-based discrimination at all levels of the education system *Building opportunities for lifelong learning that is holistic, gender responsive, integrated and geared towards sustainable national development *Increasing support for "second chance" programs for boys and girls who drop out of school and developing incentives for them to stay in school *Using formal and informal education to transform gender relations with the family, the community and in society

[15] page 2
[16] National Gender-Based Action Plan page 3
[17] National Gender-Based Situation Analysis, page 9
[18] Page 6

Wealth and Employment Generation	*Eliminating discrimination against women and men workers, including workers in the informal sectors *Expanding social safety nets for vulnerable women, men and children *Creating greater equity in child maintenance provisions *Increasing women's access to land, credit and business development *Creating gender equity in labor force participation and employment *Mainstreaming gender into disaster management programs
Violence Producing Conditions	*Establishing family support systems that transform gender relations *Expanding and strengthening child protection programs *Creating psycho-social support mechanisms and resources for survivors of gender-based violence *Building institutional capacity to address gender based violence, crime and guarantee access to justice
Power and Decision-Making	*Increasing women's participation in decision-making positions *Build institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming of all relevant policies, strategies and plans of action *Implement gender budgeting across the public sector and across civil society organizations

Though the GOB has committed to providing sexual and reproductive health information to men, women and adolescents, with only one primary care health nurse for every 5,000 Belizeans and even fewer gynecologists, this commitment is difficult to realize. A recent survey of teens found that nearly 50% of Belizean girls are having their first sexual encounters between the ages 15-17. To put this into context, approximately only 13% of American girls are reported to have had sex by age 15.[19] According to the same report quoted in the Situation Analysis, approximately 77% of male adolescents had sexual intercourse for the first time between the same ages. Despite seeing a decline in the 1990's, teen pregnancy rates are still very high in the country.[20] "Consultations on the National Gender Policy call for strategies that guarantee children's access to sexual and reproductive health information as a basic human right. Proponents of children's rights point out a need to also strengthen the Health and Family Life Curriculum and Life Skills Education programs delivered at the primary and secondary school levels as this aspect of prevention is key to preventing teenage pregnancy and STI/HIV transmission among adolescents."[21]

An in-depth Study on Violence Against Women which was performed by the United Nations Secretary General identified multiple ways in which state efforts had fallen short over previous years, many of which are relevant to the situation in Belize, including:

1. Failure to implement laws effectively and gaps in the justice system that allows violence against women to persist.
2. Insufficient support measures in place for women victims of violence. Support measures, including access to services such as shelters and legal, medical and psychological support, are often inadequate and lack consistent funding and monitoring.
3. Lack of systematic and reliable data on violence against women and a lack of information to assess the measures taken to address violence against women and to evaluate their impact.

[19] "Facts on American Teens' Sexual and Reproductive Health", Guttmacher Institute, January 2011, http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/FB-ATSRH.html
[20] Situation Analysis page 15
[21] Situation Analysis page 15

4. Discriminatory traditions, customs and stereotypes keep women in subordinate positions and place them at risk for violence. Awareness rising, education and training on violence against women remain inadequate.[22]

The results of this study provided irrefutable evidence that certain issues continued to significantly limit progress in decreasing gender-based violence in Belize. Following the study of Violence Against Women, the National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action was developed to guide work relating to its title covering 2007-2009. It was also widely recognized that a more coordinated effort was desperately needed in the development and implementation of a more effective approach to ending gender-based violence. As previously mentioned, the Women's Department in conjunction with UNIFEM, undertook the project of strengthening the previous Plan and a new 3-year (2010-2013) Plan of Action was set into motion. The Plan includes four specific goals as well as subsequent objectives as shown in Annex 1. These goals and objectives are then separated by sector such as the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Health so that each knows and understands what their specific role and duties are in the overall Plan of Action.[23] (See Annex 2). Since reaching each goal will undoubtedly take more than the three years that the Plan covers, each objective has been designed as specific steps towards their fulfillment. To date, however, "There has been no known evaluation undertaken on the Plan's effectiveness or progress in implementation." [24]

Domestic Violence Policy in Belize

The GOB revised its Domestic Violence Act in 2000 to establish a Domestic Violence Unit in the Police Department, but the state still falls far short of adequately protecting victims of gender-based violence. Many Belizean cultural traditions are discriminatory against women and serve to keep them in subordinate positions in society. The government's lackadaisical approach to implement or strengthen laws to protect women against domestic violence is unfortunately compounded by its lack of adequate provision for women's support services, including shelters, legal, medical and psychological support.[25] Exacerbated by inadequate data on gender-based violence – a situation not unique to Belize in this historically underreported arena – programs and funding to help end the cycles of violence are severely lacking, for which Mary Open Doors is a case in point. The struggles they are facing are not superficial; the shortcomings of the Belizean government have played a significant role in not only holding organizations like MOD back but more importantly from restricting their ability to become an effective resource for the women of Belize in the future.

In 2009, the National Women's Commission, housed in the Ministry of Human Development commissioned the National Gender Policy: Situation Analysis of Gender Issues in Belize to augment and update the original National Gender Policy drafted in 2002. Of note is that Belize is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Convention on Population and Development (ICDP), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), numerous ILO Conventions as well as other related social and economic commitments.[26] Despite the many challenges, there is a small cadre of agencies working on these issues. To date, most of these organizations have been donor

[22] The National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action page 2
[23] Page 12
[24] Page 12
[25] 2010 The National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action. Page 2
[26] 2010 National Gender Policy: Situation Analysis of Gender Issues in Belize, Page 9

agency supported, but the hope is that the Government of Belize will take a more active role in providing adequate funding for support services and more vigorously enforcing relevant legislation that will serve to protect women and, importantly, change the historical position of women in Belizean society.

Structural Overview

The staff of Mary Open Doors currently consists of Anna Silva as CEO and Stacy Rodriguez as Executive Assistant, both of whom are dedicated to helping victims of gender-based violence. Anna is a survivor of domestic violence, and Stacy, under the mentorship of Anna, is finding and developing her passion in the area of women's issues. Both are extremely committed to the success of MOD and are far from giving up. Anna spends a majority of her time working directly with clients as well as fundraising and attempting to energize and organize the board. Stacy provides pivotal administrative support in a number of ways including data collection and input, utilizing social media outlets such as Facebook to raise awareness of MOD and maintain communications with supporters, and maintains the volunteer program for both recruited as well as walk-in volunteers. Both Anna and Stacy work tirelessly in their efforts to combat domestic violence, but these efforts cannot be sustained without adequate support from the board, funding and significant organizational strengthening of Mary Open Doors.

Mary Open Door Profile: Challenges and Potential

Anna, a survivor of domestic violence, knows well the terror of repeatedly being beaten by the person who promised to love and cherish her. After suffering under the oppressive hands of a husband who hit her when his anger at being perpetually underemployed, short on cash, and generally unable to support his family would overcome him. Leaving more out of concern for her children's safety than her own, it was only after she had painstakingly rebuilt her life that Anna realized she didn't deserve to pay the price for his anger; that she had the right to live a life free from violence. When Anna left her husband, she went to a friend's house; a friend who patiently supported her financially and emotionally as Anna healed. Eventually, Anna found work, a place to live and the self-esteem that had for so long eluded her. Almost a decade later, long standing on her own two feet, raising her daughters as a single and strong mother, Anna knew she had to do something for women who suffered under domestic violence, but didn't have a friend or family to turn to for support. It was then that Anna founded Mary Open Doors.

Anna's passion for the work of Mary Open Doors combined with her unparalleled abilities to 'make things happen' in the form of obtaining donated goods, services and other needed support from members of the Cayo community have enabled the nascent NGO to accomplish a great deal with scant resources since its inception in early 2008. MOD has been able to provide housing, DV education and life skills training to almost every woman and child who has stepped foot on their premises. Anna achieved a lot of this on her own with irregular help from board members and volunteers, until late in 2009 when Stacy, an extremely bright and capable young woman, came on board as an Executive Assistant who works for low wages because she too believes in the mission of Mary Open Doors. As ready, willing, and able as Stacy is, her ability to substantively contribute to MOD is somewhat stunted by her inexperience, but even more so by Anna's poor administrative management skills. Anna readily admits she is a poor communicator, bad at delegating then following up on tasks, is inconsistent in implementing policies and procedures, and unknowledgeable about important organizational logistics such as accounting and data management. She knows logically that Stacy can better handle many of these issues, but has a hard time handing them off to her. And when she does delegate to Stacy, she often provides inadequate

instructions and timelines or sets impractical expectations, leading to dissatisfaction for both of them. Passion and ingenuity are only going to get her and MOD so far. Things have to change and change soon.

But where to begin? The Board of Directors, to whom Anna should be able to turn, is a group of six people who care about helping the women and children victims of domestic violence in the Cayo district, but have little understanding of their roles and responsibilities as board members and even less time to fulfill them. Admittedly, when she recruited them in early 2008, Anna didn't really understand the functions of a non-profit board when she recruited the members of the board. Equally problematic is her own weakness in communicating clearly and consistently with board members about their duties and the needs of MOD. The fact that the board had not met in the nearly three years of operations was certainly extreme and absolutely impeding the ability of MOD to function successfully. She respects and likes everyone each of the board members, all of who are leaders in the community, but had doubts about their abilities or commitments to ever becoming a strong and positive force for Mary Open Doors.

Despite these significant hurdles, there are strong indicators that Mary Open Doors has the potential and motivation to become a game changer in the fight to end domestic violence in Belize. As a small town, the people of San Ignacio are intensely inter-connected in terms of relationships and knowledge of each other's existence and undertakings; Mary Open Doors is case-in-point. Various tourist-focused establishments throughout the town have allowed Mary Open Doors to install donation collection boxes bringing in small sums of money during the tourist season. This along with the in-kind donations Anna is able to procure on a regular basis illustrates what one community member said about Mary Open Doors, "I'm so thankful they are here. I wish we didn't need Anna or her organization, but we do and I'm thankful for them."[27] Mary Open Doors has also been fortunate to receive donations of time, effort, and space from some high-end tourist locales such as Ka'ana, a five-star resort just outside the city, including room to hold a fundraising event and its January 2011 board meeting, with promises of continued support in the future.

Anna knows critical changes need to occur to ensure the long-term sustainability of the shelter. As far as Anna is concerned, any one, or even a few of the challenges facing MOD would be manageable, but aggregated all together with no attainable solutions in sight made her question the sustainability of the organization. This is the overarching question under which everything else fell. Despite the frustrations of working with an inactive Board, her own administrative leadership shortcomings, a dearth of funding, and the lack of a strategic plan for Mary Open Doors, Anna knows that the organization must succeed. Lily and women in similar dire situations are depending on it.

Potential Outreach and Networking Opportunities

Among this growing network of non-governmental organizations focused on women's issues is the first domestic violence shelter in the country, Haven House (HH). Established in 1993, Haven House could conceivably serve in a mentor role to Mary Open Doors as it has survived many of the struggles Anna, the staff and volunteers at MOD face today. HH is located in Belize City, the most densely populated and crime riddled region of the country, the small, but successful DV shelter has its hands full helping women and children in the immediate area while the rest of the country remains sorely underserved. The Executive Director of HH welcomed the addition of Mary Open Doors to the struggle of providing safety for victims of domestic violence in Belize. While MOD works to establish itself and grow into a stable and sustainable refuge for women in the Cayo

[27] Interview, local community member. January 12, 2011.

district, HH continues to take in women from the area when MOD is unable to accommodate them in times of need.

Haven House is part of The Women's Issues Network of Belize (WIN Belize), a network of organizations with a special interest in women's issues and a commitment to the improvement of social and economic opportunities for women and their families in Belize.[28] WIN Belize has been fighting for women's equality since 1993. As a network, WIN Belize's purpose is to provide leadership by empowering and strengthening its member agencies. It develops linkages among organizations to promote the development of women. WIN Belize facilitates the sharing of knowledge, skills and resources and advocates for improving the quality of life of women and their families in Belize. The Secretariat coordinates and facilitates the activities of the network providing logistical support, promotes and fundraises for the network. While individual Member Agencies actively participate in and commit to the network, share information with member agencies and the Secretariat and collaborate with other member agencies on common areas of work."[28] Though WIN Belize had organizational challenges in the early years of its existence, according to network members, it has made great strides in playing an effective coordinator role since 2009.[29]

A chronic problem across the non-profit arena is securing adequate funding. Though Haven House understands the need for additional domestic violence shelters in the country, they nonetheless worry that Mary Open Doors will be competing for the same donor dollars. With WIN Belize actively advocating for the government and international donor agencies to better fund initiatives to address gender-based violence, the financial pie may be increased, providing enough for both organizations. Another advantage Haven House has over MOD is their substantial history and long list of regular private contributors. Anna has heard of and can't help but be a little bit envious of the successful fundraising dinners, auctions, gala balls that HH has held over the years attracting Belize's elite. Anna's low income, low educational background is not part of that world. Though she would very much like to build a multi-building facility like the one HH has, she has faith that she can help the women in Cayo with a lot fewer resources; she will have to for the time being anyway. Still, Anna must improve the financial situation of Mary Open Doors. The emergency fundraising that has enabled her to help women as the need arose is not sustainable. She needs a plan or MOD will eventually have to close its doors.

Mary Open Doors' Financial Profile

There is currently no financial stability for MOD, as Anna relies heavily on in-kind gifts for financial stability and collects goods and services donations. In a small community such as San Ignacio Anna utilizes friends and family connections to procure everything from toothbrushes to food supplies for clients. MOD has been operating on an extremely modest income since 2008, which has since dwindled even further. Anna herself has not taken a salary in over a year. Mary Open Doors' 2010 Budget describes a tenuous revenue stream, as detailed in its projected income, is $18,000 listed as "possible grants" and $30,160 in fundraising and event money intended to be raised by the largely inactive board (See Annex 3). Even the meager, but crucial $1,200 donated by the St. Martin's Credit Union has since been cut in half, twice, leaving the sum at $300 per year. When it comes to expenses, Anna and her executive assistant don't talk in terms of 'potential amounts', but rather the bare minimum necessary for survival. Although Mary Open Doors is a small NGO, Anna realizes, securing necessary funding to support operations as well as developing a stronger, more active board of directors will be crucial for survival of the organization so that MOD

[28] Women's Issues Network of Belize Website; http://www.winbelize.org/about-win-belize/about-win-belize.html Accessed February 5, 2011 Accessed February 5, 2011 Accessed February 5, 2011

[29] Interviews: UNICEF January 7, 2011; Haven House January 12

can continue helping the women struggling to escape a violent environment and make better lives for themselves and their children.

Looking Forward

As she held the phone to her ear, with a distressed Lily still on the other end in need of help, questions ran through Anna's head like lightning bolts. Would Mary Open Doors be able to carry on the way they had been, with insufficient resources and apathetic board support, to continue helping women like Lily? Is there any hope for Mary Open Doors to become a stable organization or would it simply phase out due to these inadequacies? In what ways might she be able to reach out to others in hopes of garnering further support?

ANNEX 1 The Goals and Objectives for the National Plan of Action

Goal 1: There is zero-tolerance for gender-based violence in Belize.

Objective 1-1: Police response to survivors of gender-based violence is improved. Complaints concerning police response are reduced.

Objective 1-2: Prosecution of acts of gender-based violence is strengthened. Attrition in reported cases that go to trial and result in convictions is reduced by 50%.

Objective 1-3: Survivors of gender-based violence have access to justice, including adequate legal representation.

Goal 2: Survivors of gender-based violence in both urban and rural areas are provided with adequate services and support.

Objective 2-1: All survivors of gender-based violence have access to adequate health services delivered in a supportive, respectful and confidential manner.

Objective 2-2: All survivors of gender-based violence have access to adequate support and advocacy services.

Objective 2-3: All victims of domestic violence in crisis have access to adequate shelter and financial support.

Objective 2-4: Rural women who are victims of gender-based violence have access to justice and support.

Objective 2-5: There is strong cross-sector collaboration in responding to survivors of gender-based violence.

Goal 3: Gender-based violence in Belize is reduced, and ultimately eliminated.

Objective 3-1: Recidivism by perpetrators of gender-based violence is reduced by 30%.

Objective 3-2: There is greater public understanding of the roots of gender-based violence.

Objective 3-3: Men take greater responsibility for understanding the roots of gender- based violence and take action based on that understanding.

Goal 4: It is possible to measure both the extent of gender-based violence in Belize and the effectiveness of strategies to respond to it.

Objective 4-1: Systems designed to measure reported cases of gender-based violence capture all reported cases of both domestic violence and sexual offenses.

Objective 4-2: A system to measure the incidence, frequency and severity of gender- based violence is in place.

Objective 4-3: A method to assess the effectiveness of strategies to respond to gender- based violence is in place.

ANNEX 2 The National Plan by Sector

6. The National Plan by Sector

Sector 1: Police and the Ministry of National Security

Goal 1: There is zero-tolerance for gender-based violence in Belize.

Objective 1-1: Police response to survivors of gender-based violence is improved. Complaints concerning police response are reduced.

Indicators (effect): Number of domestic violence and sexual offenses cases reported to the police.
Number of complaints from advocates that minimum policing standards have not been followed.

Activity	Responsible; Others involved	Time Frame	Resources Required		Output Indicator
			Recurrent	Short Term	
1-1-1: Develop and implement a comprehensive internal plan for improving police response to gender-based violence (including, but not restricted to, activities 1-1-2, 1-1-3, 1-1-4, 1-1-5, 1-1-6 and 1-1-7).	Police Department	Plan finalized by December 2010		Technical assistance in development of plan. $5,000	Acceptance of plan at the highest level of the Police Department and Ministry of National Security Number of activities in the plan that are successfully implemented
1-1-2: Review and revise existing police protocols for responding to both domestic violence and sexual offenses.	Police Department	By December 2010			Protocol available Number of police posts actively using protocol
1-1-3: Review, expand and implement police recruit and in-service training programmes on gender awareness and gender-based violence, with particular attention to the effective collection of evidence in these cases.	Police Department	Implement by June 2011	Qualified trainers to deliver training Other training expenses $10,000	Technical assistance in development of expanded training programmes. $5,000	Time allocated to recruit training on gender awareness and gender-based violence Number of in-service trainings, including those for senior officers.

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6. The National Plan by Sector

Sector 1: Police and the Ministry of National Security

Goal 1: There is zero-tolerance for gender-based violence in Belize.

Objective 1-1: Police response to survivors of gender-based violence is improved. Complaints concerning police response are reduced.

Indicators (effect): Number of domestic violence and sexual offenses cases reported to the police.
Number of complaints from advocates that minimum policing standards have not been followed.

Activity	Responsible; Others involved	Time Frame	Resources Required		Output Indicator
			Recurrent	Short Term	
1-1-1: Develop and implement a comprehensive internal plan for improving police response to gender-based violence (including, but not restricted to, activities 1-1-2, 1-1-3, 1-1-4, 1-1-5, 1-1-6 and 1-1-7).	Police Department	Plan finalized by December 2010		Technical assistance in development of plan. $5,000	Acceptance of plan at the highest level of the Police Department and Ministry of National Security Number of activities in the plan that are successfully implemented
1-1-2: Review and revise existing police protocols for responding to both domestic violence and sexual offenses.	Police Department	By December 2010			Protocol available Number of police posts actively using protocol
1-1-3: Review, expand and implement police recruit and in-service training programmes on gender awareness and gender-based violence, with particular attention to the effective collection of evidence in these cases.	Police Department	Implement by June 2011	Qualified trainers to deliver training Other training expenses $10,000	Technical assistance in development of expanded training programmes. $5,000	Time allocated to recruit training on gender awareness and gender-based violence Number of in-service trainings, including those for senior officers.

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Annex 3: Mary Open Doors Budget, 2010

Income	
Kings Ransom Foundation	$24,000
BIWG	$2,400
St. Martins Credit Union	$1,200
Fund Raising and Events (Board)	$30,160
Possible Grants	$18,000
Total	$75,760

Expenses	
Salaries/Stipends*	$29,900
6 months social worker	$8,000
Social Security	$2,160
Food	$12,000
Transportation	$2,400
Medical	$2,000
Repairs	$10,000
Accountant Fees	$1000
Insurance	$400
Supplies	$5000
Equipment	$2900
Unanticipated expenses	$5000
Total	$75760

***NOTE**
CEO has not been paid in 2010