

Government of Belize

Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Enterprise
Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations

Inter-American Development Bank



IDB (BL-L1041) - Sustainable and Inclusive Belize

Sociocultural Analysis and Indigenous Peoples Plan

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Acronyms

CCJ	Caribbean Court of Justice
ESPS	Environmental and Social Performance Standards
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GBV	Gender-based violence
GOB	Government of Belize
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
IACHR	Inter-American Court for Human Rights
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IP	Indigenous Peoples
IPP	Indigenous Peoples Plan
MAFSE	Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprise
MFB	Market Food Basket
MLA	Maya Leaders Alliance
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
NGC	National Garifuna Council
SCA	Sociocultural Analysis
SIB	Statistical Institute of Belize
SLF	Sustainable Livelihoods Framework
TAA	Toledo Alcaldes Association
TCGA	Toledo Cacao Growers Association
UK-DFID	UK-Department for International Development

Introduction

The Government of Belize (GOB), with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), has endeavored on a “Sustainable and Inclusive Belize” project to improve incomes and promote sustainable livelihoods in the agriculture and tourism sectors of Belize. Specifically, the project seeks to improve individual farmer entrepreneurs and micro, small and medium enterprises’ (MSMEs) competitiveness, climate resilience, and environmental sustainability within the two sectors. Beneficiaries of the project are expected to comprise vulnerable groups, namely indigenous peoples (Maya and Garifuna), afro-descendants (Creole and Garifuna), women, youth, and migrants.

To this end, GOB/IDB has contracted a Social Consultant to 1) conduct a sociocultural assessment (SCA) of vulnerable populations (indigenous peoples, afro-descendants, women, youth, and migrants), who are the proposed beneficiaries of the project; 2) determine potential risks and impacts to vulnerable groups, and propose mitigating methods that are in keeping with the bank’s Environmental and Social Policy Framework (ESPF), including ESPF 7, which seeks to integrate and safeguard the interests of Indigenous Peoples; 3) develop an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP), to ensure that the bank’s ESPF 7 standards are applied; and 4) support the first round of meaningful consultations with leaders and representatives of beneficiaries.

This Sociocultural analysis then, seeks to illuminate the situation of vulnerable groups within Belize, including Indigenous Peoples (IPs), particularly the Mopan and Kekchi Mayas and the Garifuna, within the two southern districts of Stann Creek and Toledo where the level of sociocultural and economic vulnerabilities is most prevalent. An analysis of the project’s proposed activities for risks and impacts based on the vulnerabilities of each group will be elaborated. Finally, recommendations are made for culturally sensitive consultation with communities. Consultations are carried out to formally introduce the proposed project to its beneficiaries and to get feedback as to the appropriateness of the activities, the possible impacts and their planned mitigation strategies.

Project Objectives

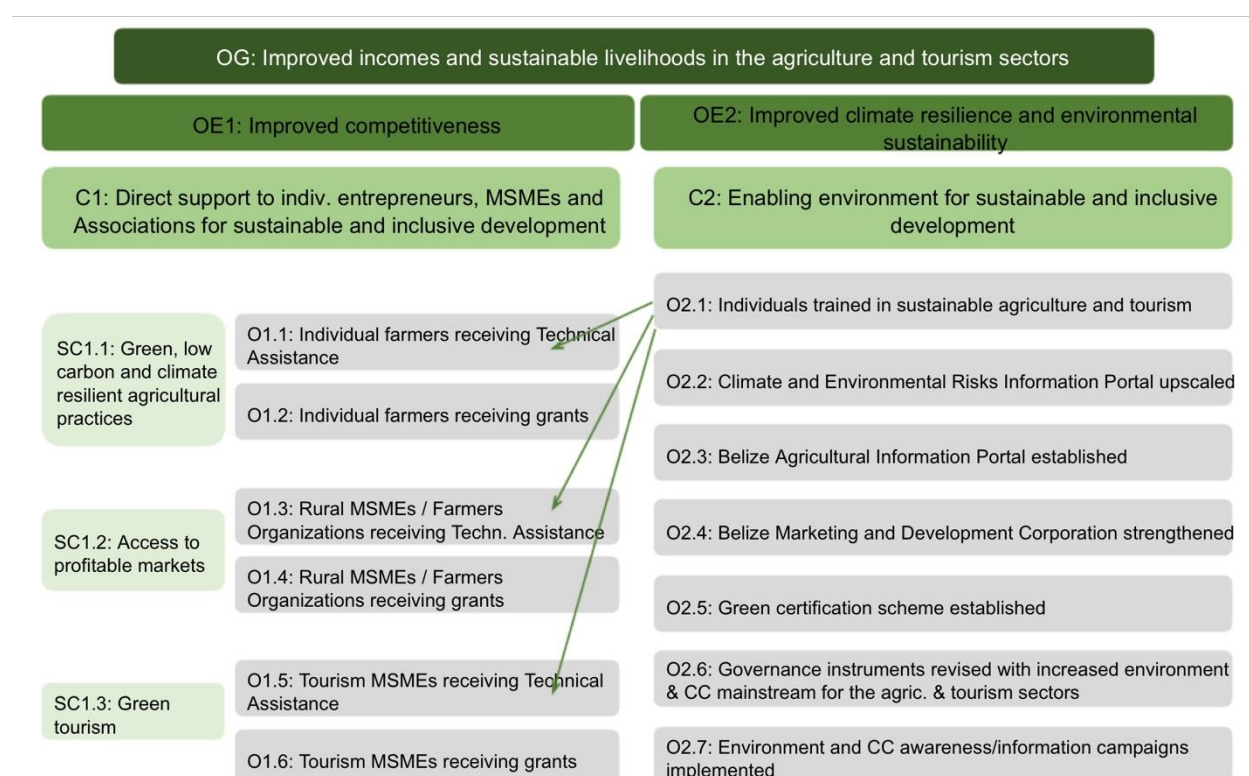
The project’s main objective is to maintain and create adequate jobs, as well as to improve incomes in the Agriculture and Tourism sectors prioritizing vulnerable populations such as indigenous peoples, afro-descendants, migrants, women, and youth. The operation seeks to improve MSMEs profitability, climate resilience/decarbonization, environmental sustainability and access to markets by providing non-reimbursable financial support as well as technical assistance and training.

Component 1 – will finance direct support to MSMEs and cooperatives to increase quantity and quality (meeting higher technical, social, climate and environmental standards) of goods produced and services provided in the selected sectors; the creation of added value; and

reduction of losses and of costs of production. Support, that may be provided to groups (associations, cooperatives) or individual MSMEs, will include: (i) training and technical assistance in topics such as formalization/registration of enterprises, general management, preparation of business plans, linkages with financial institutions and markets, and technical production aspects; and (ii) non-reimbursable financial support to finance or co-finance investments. The component will also consider the design and implementation of a digital information and process management system to ensure transparency, equity, and accountability in public resources.

Component 2 – policy and institutional strengthening will support the delivery of public services to: (i) improve market intelligence and linkages, (ii) improve access to information; (iii) mainstream climate change resilience and mitigation and environmental sustainability in the selected priority sectors.

Figure 1: Structure of IDB BL-L1041 project



Source: Le Pommellec, M. (2022, May). Sustainable and inclusive Belize (BL-L1041): Special Mission (May 31-June 2, 2022). Inter-American Development Bank.

Project Activities

The following is an elaboration of agricultural activities under sub-components 1.1 and 1.2, as well as output 2.1. This section focuses specifically on agriculture as the activities in this area have a greater propensity to risks and impacts.

Component 1: Direct support to individual entrepreneurs, MSMEs and associations for sustainable and inclusive development

- **Sub-component 1.1:** Green, low carbon and climate resilient agricultural technology and practices.
 - This sub-component is geared towards individual farmers, with the following project eligibility criteria:
 1. Be a registered farmer¹
 - Requirements to register are as follows:
 - Be a legitimate farmer²
 - Be a legal resident of Belize (citizen or permanent resident)³
 - Be of minimum working age (14 years old)⁴
 2. Farm on an acreage >0.5 and less than <20
 3. Possess secure land tenure⁵
 4. Unregistered farmers must be willing to register and formalize their status if they want to participate.
 - **Output 1.1:** Individual farmers will receive technical assistance (TA)
 1. In the first instance, farmers will receive the necessary TA to develop a farm plan. This farm plan is designed to assist the farmer to begin looking at his/her farm as a business, and more importantly to be able to make strategic decisions about their farm. The farm plan is also a criterion for receiving the grant (Output 1.2). The farm plan will contain:
 - a diagnosis
 - activities to be implemented based on the productive vocation, needs and cultural considerations of the farmer
 - a financial analysis
 - a capacity building plan
 - an access to markets plan, and
 - a financing strategy.

¹ Registration provides a farmer with a Farmer ID and results in the farmer's farm data being managed in the Belize Agriculture Information Management System (BAIMS) of the MAFSE.

² This is sometimes construed as having at least 0.5 acres or 30% of income coming from farming, however the system makes accommodation for those people who are wholly subsistence farmers or those farmers who are producing on less than 0.5 acres, i.e., in their backyard, such as women rearing chickens and ducks, individuals who are planting herbs, or those who have vertical gardens.

³ Note that officers of the MAFSE may state that they accept a Cedula as proof of legal residence, however a cedula is not a valid form of identification in Belize.

⁴ The Belize Labour Act, CAP. 297 (Rev. ed. 2011) describes a child as anyone under the age of 14 years and a young person as anyone who is 14 to 17 years old. Regarding minimum working age, the Act prohibits the employment of a child under 12 years and defines the working conditions and hours for older children (12-14) and young persons (14-17). Also see ILO Minimum Age Convention No. 138 (1973), Article 2.4, which grants special dispensation to developing countries such as Belize, i.e. allowing for a minimum working age of 14 years rather than 15 years.

⁵ The project requires that the determination of who can use what resources (e.g. land, water, trees) for how long and under what conditions (FAO 2002) is well defined, either legally or customarily in the case of indigenous communal land rights.

2. In addition, farmers will be receiving TA in the form of regular consultation visits by service providers with agricultural technical capacity over a period of three years. During this period, farmers will be encouraged to also participate in Farmer Field Schools.⁶
- **Output 1.2:** Individual farmers will receive grants
 1. Farmers who participate in the project will also receive a grant, specifically a voucher⁷, to invest in any of the following predefined categories that are consistent with the objective of sub-component 1.1, i.e., green, low carbon and climate resilient agricultural technologies, and that support the “next step” of their strategic plan that had evolved out of the process of developing their farm plan. The grant will require beneficiaries to contribute a counterpart sum of 15% cash or kind. Investment categories include:
 - Climate resilient technologies and practices, greenhouses, and equipment
 - Good environmental practices
 - Storage facilities
 - Drainage on individual farms
 - **Sub-component 1.2:** Access to profitable markets.
 - This sub-component is geared towards farmers’ organizations and Individual MSMEs.
 - Eligibility criteria for farmers’ organizations are as follows:
 1. Be a registered farmer organization
 - General requirements to register a farmers’ organization (co-operative society)⁸ are as follows:
 - Must be a group of at least 10 members, that has as its object the promotion of the economic interests of its members in accordance with co-operative principles, or be a society established with the object of facilitating the operations of such a society as above.
 - Members must be:
 - At least 18 years of age
 - Resident within or in occupation of land within the society’s area of operation as described by the by-laws of the society.
 2. Possess secure land tenure

⁶ According to GFRAS (2022), Farmer Field Schools “is a group-based adult learning approach that teaches farmers how to experiment and solve problems independently.”

⁷ Vouchers will only be redeemable at agricultural input providers who agree to be a part of the program, and only for a range of preselected technologies carried by these providers that support the objective of sub-component 1.1

⁸ To participate in the project, Farmers’ organizations would need to be registered as a co-operative under the Co-operative Societies Act, CAP. 313 (Rev. ed. 2011).

3. Unregistered farmer organizations must be willing to register and formalize their status if they want to participate.
- Eligibility criteria for Individual MSMEs are as follows:
 1. Be a registered MSME⁹
 2. Have no more than 4 full time employees, including the owner manager¹⁰
 - **Output 1.3:** Rural MSMEs and farmer organizations will receive technical assistance
 1. Like individual farmers, rural MSMEs and farmer organizations will receive TA to develop a business plan as a precondition to receiving the grant.
 2. Rural MSMEs and farmer organizations will also have the benefit of regular consultative visits, over a period of three years, that will provide the technical support to effectively manage their chosen grant investment and enhance the sustainability of their enterprise or organization.
 - **Output 1.4:** Rural MSMEs and farmer organizations will receive grants
 1. Grants to farmers organizations will support the following investment categories:
 - Climate resilient technologies and practices, greenhouses, and equipment
 - Collective storage, sorting, cooling, and packaging facilities
 2. Grants to individual MSMEs will support the following investment categories:
 - Climate proofing infrastructure
 - Storage facilities
 3. Grants to farmer organizations will require a counterpart contribution of 15% cash or kind, whereas for individual MSMEs the contribution is 20% cash or kind.
 - Of note is that the project is allowing for non-exclusive support, i.e., an individual farmer can benefit from the individual production support (sub-component 1.1) and from the collective market support (sub-component 1.2).

Component 2: Enabling environment for sustainable and inclusive development

- **Output 2.1:** Individuals trained in sustainable agriculture...

⁹ Criteria for registering a MSME with Beltraide to be provided in final report.

¹⁰ This is the suggested composition for a Micro Enterprise in Belize. See Seepersaud, M. M. (2012, March). *Belize MSME Policy and Strategy Report*. Belize: Beltraide.

- Regarding this output, the project envisions creating a Skills Development Ecosystem where agro-entrepreneurial and technical farming capacities will be developed and sustained within the country. The project is partnering with tertiary institutions and other training service providers, such as the Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (BELTRAIDE) to provide recent university graduates with the wherewithal to 1) guide and assist farmers and farm organizations/MSMEs with completing their farm/business plans; 2) facilitate the first Farmer Field Schools while simultaneously training local farmers to eventually conduct these schools within their own communities; and 3) support a range of training courses that will be part of a Sustainable Agriculture Training Program.
- Farmers who participate in the Sustainable Agriculture Training Program will be certified and are expected to become lead farmers within their communities. Each training program will last six months. It is expected that 120 farmers will be trained at the end of the duration of the project (three years), of which 40% will be women and youth.

Regulatory Framework (Indigenous Peoples)

National Legislation

Belize does not have any legislation specific to the protection or any other kind of treatment of indigenous peoples. The preamble of the Constitution of Belize, however does make mention of indigenous peoples in requiring that “policies of state protect the identity, dignity and social and cultural values of Belizeans, including Belize’s indigenous peoples.”¹¹ Further to this, indigenous peoples in Belize do not enjoy any separate legal rights and protections outside of the traditional fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual (section 3) and protection from discrimination (section 16) on the grounds of race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed or sex, which every Belizean enjoys.¹²

International Treaties, Declarations and Conventions

Belize has not signed nor ratified the landmark International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169, which specifically recognizes and provides substantial protections for indigenous peoples. It has however, signed but not ratified the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. While the country seems to have taken a very cautious stance towards defining indigenous peoples and singling them out for special treatment, perhaps because of the very multi-ethnic, multicultural nature of the country, the State has nonetheless demonstrated its commitment to the indigenous Garifuna and Maya peoples by promoting initiatives that respect their distinct rights.

¹¹ Government of Belize. (2012). Belize Constitution chapter 4, preamble

¹² Belize Constitution 2012, s 3, s 16

Rights Recognized by the Courts

In April 2015, the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), Belize's highest appellate court, recognized the customary land rights of some 38 Kekchi and Mopan Maya indigenous communities of southern Belize. The court indicated that the lands that the Maya peoples had customarily used and occupied in southern Belize constituted property equal in legitimacy to any other form of property under the laws of Belize (Howard, 2015). The CCJ further, required that the Government of Belize, demarcate and register Maya village lands and also issued an order that it cease and desist from any further interference, destruction or use of the land without the Maya peoples Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

The government had in 1997 declared a large area of Maya ancestral lands in southern Belize, the Sarstoon-Temash National Park, a reserve and had subsequently used its authority over the park to grant concessions for logging, oil exploration and other developments, without the consultation and approval of the Maya peoples. This affected the Maya's customary land and natural resource use, essentially displacing them from the area of the park. In 1998, the Maya communities petitioned the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) seeking recognition of their customary land rights. The IACHR recommended in 2004 that this be done. In 2007, two Maya communities then filed a claim against the Government of Belize (GOB) to also recognize their customary land rights. They won this case; however, the GOB only recognized these rights for the two communities that had won the case. The Maya communities then filed a second suit to have the court declare that customary land rights existed for all communities in Toledo. The Mayas were also successful in this case. Both parties ended up filing an appeal with the CCJ, however the government subsequently withdrew its appeal. The effect was that the government now recognized customary land tenure for all communities in Toledo (Morrison, 2017). Both parties also agreed to undertake several initiatives codified in the Consent Order (see Consent Order (Brochure)).

IDB Environmental and Social Performance Standard 7 (Indigenous Peoples)

The IDB's ESPS 7 "recognizes that Indigenous Peoples, as distinct social and cultural peoples, are often among the most marginalized and vulnerable segments of the population. In many cases, their economic, social, and legal status limits their capacity to defend their rights to, and interest in, lands and natural and cultural resources, and may restrict their ability to participate in and benefit from development that is in accordance with their worldview" (IDB, 2020, p. 85). Considering this situation the IDB endeavors to foster projects that will a) support the development with identity of Indigenous Peoples which, simply put, means fostering the development of indigenous peoples with their identity intact, and b) safeguard Indigenous Peoples and their rights.

Objectives of ESPS 7

The specific objectives of ESPS 7, are as follows:

- To ensure that the development process fosters full respect for the human rights, collective rights, dignity, aspirations, culture, and natural resource-based livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples.
- To anticipate and avoid adverse impacts of project on communities of Indigenous Peoples, or when avoidance is not possible, to minimize and/or compensate for such impacts.
- To promote sustainable development benefits and opportunities for Indigenous People in a culturally appropriate manner.
- To establish and maintain an ongoing relationship based on Informed Consultation and Participation (ICP) in a culturally appropriate manner with the Indigenous Peoples affected by a project throughout the project's life cycle.
- To ensure the FPIC of the project-affected communities of Indigenous People when the circumstances described in the ESPS are present.

Additional Applicable Legislation and Policies

Framework	Brief Description	Area or Issue Covered
Institutional		
Ministry of Human Development, Families, and Indigenous People's Affairs	The MHDFIPA is responsible for the development of the Belizean people, enabling them to realize their full potential and play meaningful roles in their communities. The Department of Human Services promotes, develops, and coordinates programs that will help citizens to become self-sufficient. The Woman and Family Support Department's goal is to promote gender equality and equity by facilitating economic development and empowerment of women, minimizing the incidence of gender violence, and advocating for gender sensitive policies, plans, programs, and projects.	Gender policy (2013) provides information on appropriate gender measures towards mainstreaming gender within the project.
Village Councils	All village councils comprise a chairperson and six councilors. Each council is tasked with the good governance and improvement of the village and the enforcement of the provisions of the Belize Village Councils Act, CAP 88 (Rev. Ed. 2003) and any laws relating to it. Duties include the registration of births and deaths, recommendations for the appointment of Justices of the Peace and the care and maintenance of public property as well as the property of the council.	Oversees the smooth running of the village. To be consulted before any engagement with communities.
Alcalde System	Inferior Courts Act, CAP 94 (Rev. ed. 2011) This Act addresses the Alcalde Jurisdiction, including the constitution and jurisdiction of court and the appointment of alcalde and deputy alcalde	Addresses the jurisdiction of the Alcalde. Alcaldes have judicial duties and also the authority to manage community lands, call for group cleaning of the village, and determine who can live in the village.
Legal		

Constitution of Belize, CAP 4 (2012) - Preamble - s 3, s 16	The preamble of the Constitution of Belize, addresses indigenous peoples in requiring that "policies of state protect the identity, dignity and social and cultural values of Belizeans, including Belize's indigenous peoples." The Constitution guarantees all Belizeans the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual (section 3) and protection from discrimination (section 16) on the grounds of race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed or sex.	Protection for indigenous peoples, also relates to the protection of human rights for all people.
Protection against Sexual Harassment Act, CAP. 107 (Rev. ed. 2011)	This Act provides for the protection against sexual harassment which include sexual jokes, offensive phone calls, pornographic photos; sexual propositions; touching in a sexual way; remarks or insinuations about a person's private or sex life; obscene gestures; demanding sexual attention with threats or rewards; explicit offers of money in exchange for sexual attention; or withholding promotions or raises until an employee submits to sexual advances. ¹³	Prohibits sexual harassment among project workers and within communities
Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2013	This Act prohibits and prescribes punishment for Trafficking in Persons, which is described as the "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a person by means of threat or use of force or other means of coercion, or abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or abuse of a position of vulnerability, or by the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control of or over another person, for the purpose of exploitation" (TIPS Act, 2013, p. 10).	Prohibits the trafficking in persons
International Labour Organization Conventions Act, CAP 304.01 (Rev. ed. 2011)	This Act brings all International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions signed and ratified into domestic law.	Relates to worker labour and working conditions and includes Occupational Health and Safety.
Belize Labour Act, Cap. 297 (Rev. ed. 2011)	protects the rights of workers eligible for employment and details the composition of the Labour Department and its role in the enforcement of labour legislation through labour inspection, labour advisory board	addresses forced labour and employment of women and children
Co-operative Societies Act, CAP. 313 (Rev. ed 2011)	This Act makes provisions for the registration of co-operatives. It sets forth the criteria for membership. It provides for the division of profits among members, the vesting of authority, the election of a committee, and makes other provisions that are necessary for the smooth running of a co-operative.	This Act applies to the constitution and operation of the project beneficiaries that are farmers organizations.
Policy		
<i>Government of Belize</i>		
Belize National Cultural Policy 2016-2026	A framework to protect archeological and colonial landmarks, recognize national heroes, celebrate national festivals, and promote Belize's rich cultural and creative industries nationally, regionally, and internationally.	Relates to the preservation of cultural artifacts and might include such actions as conducting an Archeological Impact Assessment and protocols for chance finds.
National Gender Policy	The Constitution of Belize and several other International Conventions, to which Belize is a signatory, undergird the Belize Gender Policy. The Constitution	Prioritizes the employment and equitable treatment of women in the project.

¹³ Women's Department. (n.d.). *Sexual harassment in the workplace*. Belize: Women's Department

	<p>of Belize guarantees gender equality for all its citizens and provides them protection from discrimination on the grounds of race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed, or sex.¹⁴ These Constitutional provisions along with those from the International Conventions provide a number of key guiding principles that ultimately are enshrined in the below Gender Policy Vision. There are currently five priority areas in the Gender Policy framework of Belize – Health, Education and Skills Training, Wealth and Employment Generation, Violence Producing Conditions, and Power and Decision-making.</p>	
National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan for Belize 2030	<p>A development plan for Belize's tourism industry, focusing particularly on the eco-tourism market, to position the country as a regional leader in the industry. The plan conceptually categorizes Belize's tourism product into 6 areas, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural • Nature-based • Sun and beach • Cruise • Nautical • Leisure and entertainment 	
Belize Horizon 2030	<p>A broad overarching policy framework to direct all programs and initiatives in Belize. Based on comprehensive consultations with citizens, this document elaborates a vision for how Belizeans would like to see Belize by the year 2030. There are four grand themes to support this vision. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic governance for effective public administration and sustainable development • Education for development • Economic resilience • Healthy citizens and a healthy environment which are foundational to realising the other themes. 	
<i>International</i>		
International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions	<p>The following are ILO Conventions that have been ratified by Belize:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forced Labor Convention, 1930 (No. 29) • Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87) • Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining convention, 1949 (No. 98) • Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) • Abolition of Forced Labor Convention, 1957 (No. 105) 	Covers the labour rights of workers

¹⁴ Belize Constitution 2012, preamble, s 3, s 16

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) • Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) (Minimum age specified: 14 years) • Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, 1999 (No. 182) • Labor Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) • Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921 (No. 14) • Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation) Convention, 1925 (No. 19) • Minimum Wage-fixing Machinery Convention, 1928 (No. 26) • Workmen's Compensation (Occupational Diseases) Convention (Revised), 1934 (No. 42) • Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948 (No. 89) • Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95) • Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) • Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115) • Paid Educational Leave Convention, 1974 (No. 140) • Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154) • Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) • Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) • Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) (Period of maternity leave: 14 weeks) • Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 	
United Nations (UN) Conventions	<p>The following are UN Conventions that have been ratified by Belize:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charter of the United Nations • Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) • Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women • International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) • International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) • International Convention on the Protection of the Right of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW) 	Covers the human rights of all people

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) • Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (CRC-OP-SC) • Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) 	
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Sociocultural Analysis of Vulnerable Groups

Methodology

This report draws on the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)¹⁵ as an analytical tool to better understand the dynamics of vulnerable peoples as it relates to their livelihoods. The SLF is particularly useful for social analysis as it “helps to organize the various factors which constrain or provide opportunities and show how these relate to each other” (UK-DFID, 1999, p. 7). Further, the SLF operates on several core principles that are seminal to developing a solid analysis of the realities of vulnerable groups. The core principles of the SLF are as follows:

People-centered – the SLF seeks to understand the individual from their perspectives first.

Holistic – it provides a manageable way to think about livelihoods and how the various influencing factors interact to increase or decrease vulnerable peoples’ livelihood outcomes.

Dynamic – the framework allows for the analysis to evolve and deepen as more information become available throughout the course of a project.

Builds on strengths – rather than cast vulnerable peoples as helpless victims, the analyst together with the vulnerable person looks at the strengths she brings to her life situation and how the intervention can support those.

Macro-micro links – the framework analyzes how macro level policies, institutions and processes create or mitigate vulnerabilities and/or influence the asset base of poor people. So, the focus is not only on what vulnerable people are doing right or wrong but also on how local, national, regional, and global macro decisions affect the livelihood situation of individuals.

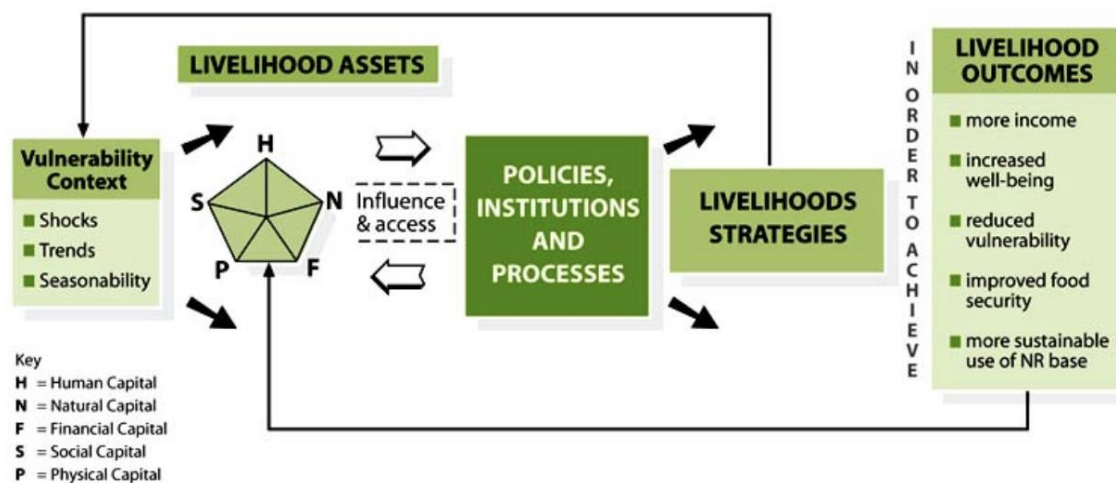
Sustainable – the object of the process is to provide the support to vulnerable peoples needed for them to permanently build on their strengths so that they can sustain their livelihood outcomes.

¹⁵ The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework was developed by the UK Department for International Development in the late 1990s, drawing partly on the experiences of organizations such as CARE, Oxfam UK and the UNDP. Amartya Sen’s work on famine in India is also seminal to the framework causing a shift from a focus on the financial aspects to poverty only, to understanding that poverty is in fact multidimensional and always changing (Lewins, 2004).

Description of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

There are five key sections in the SLF (Figure 2), including the Vulnerability Context (Risks); Livelihood Assets; Policies, Institutions and Processes (PIPs); Livelihood Strategies; and Livelihood Outcomes. The Vulnerability Context is concerned with how Trends (population, resources, economics, politics and technology), Shocks (human health, natural disasters, economic, conflict and animal health) and Seasonal fluctuations (of prices, production, health and employment opportunities) affect the livelihood of individuals or groups. The Livelihood Assets section assesses 5 different types of assets (human, natural/agricultural, financial, physical, and social) available to individuals. The strength of an individual's asset portfolio is directly correlated to their resilience. The greater access an individual has to the various types of assets the more opportunities they have to achieve their livelihood outcomes and the more resilient they are to shocks, trends and seasonal fluctuations or PIPs that might impact them. PIPs address the structures (public and private sector) and processes (policy, legislative, institutions, culture and power relations) that impact all individuals. Structures, particularly governance structures are important to make processes function, while processes determine the way structures and individuals operate and interact. However, "one of the main problems faced by the poor is that the processes that frame their livelihoods systematically restrict them and their opportunities for advancement" (DFID, 1999, p. 33). Individuals usually resort to a number of strategies including natural resource based, non-natural resource based, migration and social protection programs to achieve a favorable livelihood outcome. Finally, contrary to dominant thinking, vulnerable individuals seek several livelihood outcomes including more income, increased well-being, reduced vulnerability, improved food security and more sustainable use of natural resource base.

Figure 2: Sustainable Livelihood Framework



Source: FAO (n.d.) "Local institutions, social capital and sustainable livelihoods"

Vulnerability (Risk) context of Belize

The vulnerability context encompasses a number of risk areas that can severely impact the livelihood situation of individuals and groups plunging them into immediate poverty especially if they do not have sufficient capital in their asset portfolios to overcome whatever devastation they are met with.

The risk areas that are considered in the SLF include weather-related shocks and natural calamities; pest and disease epidemics that can affect both human lives and agricultural enterprises; economic shocks which can affect prices, markets and employment; civil strife; seasonal stress that have implication for food security; environmental stress such as land degradation, soil erosion, pollution and climate change; idiosyncratic shocks, including illness or death in a family, job loss, theft of property and violence; and finally, structural vulnerability which refers to the lack of voice or power to make claims.

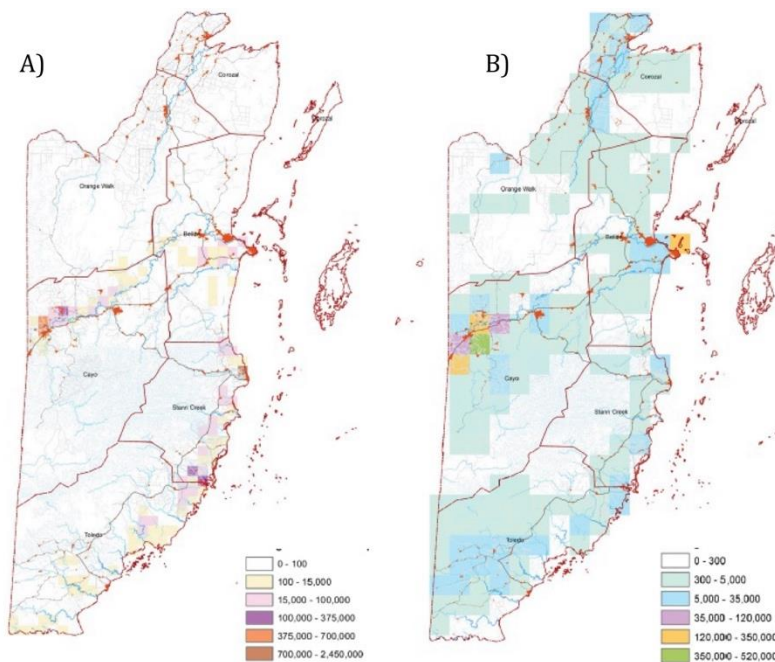
The section below outlines some of the larger risks within the context of Belize.

Weather-related shocks and natural calamities

Belize is prone to a number of weather-related shocks and natural calamities including drought, hurricanes, floods and wildfires. In terms of climate vulnerability, Belize ranks 26th out of 181 countries in the Global Climate Risk Index (CRI).¹⁶ It is projected that temperatures will increase by 1°C over the next decade and almost 5°C by the end of the century. Meanwhile, overall rainfall will decrease by about 4 mm/day by mid-century, however, increases in intense precipitation events is likely. These changes in weather will lead to more droughts or floods, that apart from destroying crops, will exacerbate soil erosion, increase incidence of pests and diseases, and create conditions for rotting of crops in the field and in storage (GCF, 2019). According to CIAT (2018), “At any given time, up to US\$1.25 million of agricultural production is exposed to risk of floods, and up to US\$520,000 is exposed to risk of drought” in Belize (p. 16).

¹⁶ <https://germanwatch.org/de/download/16411.pdf>

Figure 3: A) Economic exposure to floods (US\$); B) Economic exposure to droughts (US\$)



Source: CIAT; World Bank. 2018

Hurricanes are perhaps the biggest threat to the country of Belize, as it is in the most active hurricane area of the world (Table 1). The World Bank estimates that Belize experiences a major storm on average every three years (GFDRR, 2010). The average death toll per hurricane is 168 people, with an additional 52 injured.

Table 1: Main hurricanes affecting Belize, 1931 - present

Year	Date	Name	Location	Max. Sustained Winds (MPH)	S-S Scale	Estimated Surge (m/ft)
1931	10 September	Storm 5	Belize City & Orange Walk	130	3	3.05/10
1934	5-8 June	Storm 2	Belize City	-	TS	2.59/8
1941	28 September	Storm 4		75	TS	
1942	27 August	Storm 4		85	1	
1942	9 November	Storm 10		80	1	
1943	22 October	Storm 10		-	-	
1945	4 October	Storm 10		70	1	
1955	27 September	Janet	Corozal Town	175	5	2.44/8
1960	15 July	Abby		70	TS	
1961	24 July	Anna		70	TS	
1961	31 October	Hattie	Belize City	180	5	3.17/10
1969	3 September	Francelia		95	1	
1971	10 September	Edith		90	1	
1971	20 November	Laura		60	TS	
1974	1 September	Carmen		130	3	
1974	19 September	Fifi	South of Placencia	95	2	3.7/12
1978	18 September	Greta	Dangriga Town	115	3	1.8-2.1/6-7

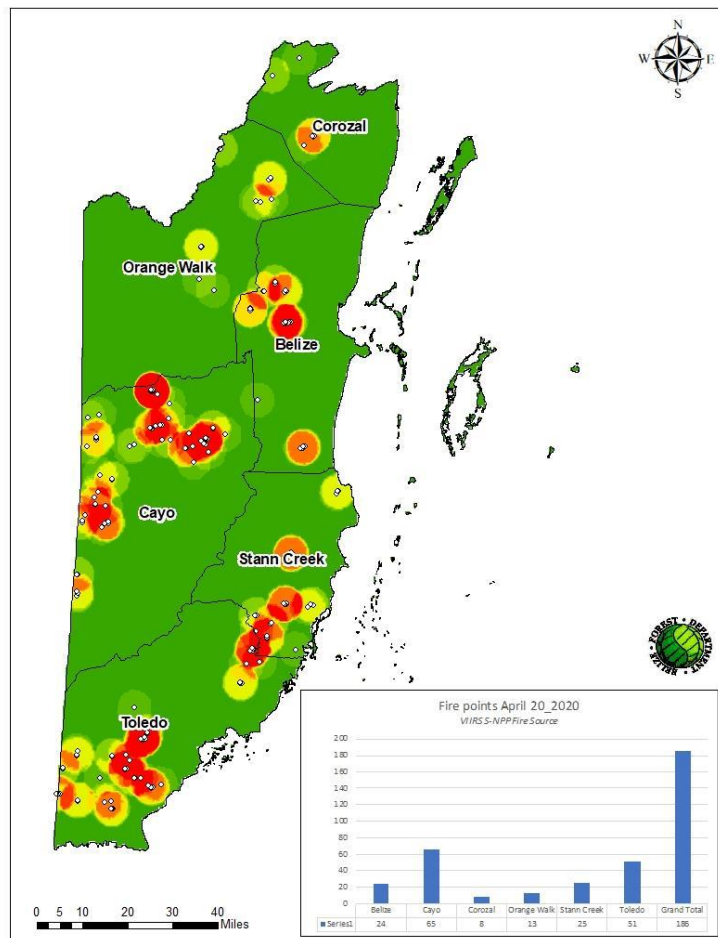
1998	22 Oct. – 9 Nov.	Mitch		155	4	
2000	28 Sept. – 6 Oct.	Keith	Caye Chapel, Caye Caulker & San Pedro	120	3	1.2/3.94
2001	14 August	Chantal		70	-	
2001	9 October	Iris	Placencia	145	4	4.6/15.1
2007	21 August	Dean		165	5	
2008	1 June	Arthur		40	TS	
2008	10-16 October	TD 16		-	TS	
2010	26 June	Alex		40	TS	
2010	15 September	Karl		-	TS	
2010	25 September	Matthew		-	TS	
2010	24 October	Richard	Gales Point	90	1	0.91-1.52/3-5
2011	20 August	Harvey		65	TS	
2012	8 August	Ernesto		85	1	
2016	3-4 August	Earl	Northern Lagoon	80	1	1.83-2.7/6-9
2020	3 September	Nana	Sittee River	61	1	
2020	4-6 November	Eta	Bluefield, Nicaragua	140	5	Significant because it caused heaving flooding in Belize (approx. 45-50 ft above flood stage in Roaring Creek village)
2020	16-24 November	Iota	Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua	160	5	Significant because it caused heaving flooding in Belize (approx. 20-24 ft in San Ignacio Town)

Source: Elaborated from ESCI, Disaster Risk and Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment for Belize City (2017), and Ramon Frutos (2019, 2022).

Hurricanes also cause an estimated annual loss of US \$5.5 million to Belize's economy through wind damage and floods that destroy homes, infrastructure, industry, agriculture, and the fragile marine ecosystem. Hurricane Keith, in 2000, caused damage amounting to 45% (1999 figures) of the country's GDP (GFDRR, 2010).

Finally, the country experiences several wildfire events each year, mostly triggered by mishaps during traditional slash-and-burn/milpa farming activities and exacerbated by annual mini droughts. These wildfires can be devastating to crops, wildlife, and property. Additionally, they are "one of the drivers of deforestation and degradation in Belize" (Belize National Climate Change Office, 2020).

Figure 4: High density fire points, April 2020



Source: Belize National Climate Change Office. April, 2020.

Pest and disease epidemics

There are a number of plant pests and diseases that exist in Belize for example fruit flies, Huanglongbing (citrus greening), Kudzu bug that affect bean crops, and the potato Zebra chip virus that can be devastating to crops. In terms of animal health, disease that exist in the region and can affect animals and livestock in Belize, include Classical Swine Fever, Avian Influenza, Foot and Mouth Disease, Vesicular Stomatitis Antrax, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, and Newcastle disease (USDA, n.d.).

Farmers also contend with wildlife such as wild pigs (peccari), quash and gibbon eating their crops. Farmers have indicated that this has increased in recent years due to changes in weather pattern that has affected these animals' native sources of food. Livestock farmers who have gradually increase their grazing acreages now need to contend with predators such as the jaguar whose natural hunting area is decreasing.

Finally, individuals are also susceptible to diseases and epidemics themselves. For example, as of June 9, 2022, there were 60,694 confirmed cases of the Covid-19 epidemic, with 678 deaths in Belize (SIB, 2022).

Economic shocks

Currently, Belize is experiencing major inflation due mostly to global economic contractions as a result of the worldwide lockdowns during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Consumer Price Index for May 2022 shows that the prices of consumer goods rose by 6.6% as compared to the previous year. Areas most affected are fuel, transport services, food, and Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) used for cooking. Fuels and LPG experience a change of over 25% from the previous year, while some foodstuff such as cabbage and vegetable oil rose by over 75 % and 40%, respectively.

Asset portfolio of vulnerable groups in Belize

As mentioned above the assets section assesses five different types of assets (human, natural/agricultural, financial, physical, and social) available to individuals. The strength of an individual's asset portfolio is directly correlated to their resilience. The greater access an individual has to the various types of assets the more opportunities they have to achieve their livelihood outcomes and the more resilient they are to shocks, trends and seasonal fluctuations or PIPs that might impact them.

Indigenous Peoples

According to the IDB, indigenous peoples "refer to distinct social and cultural peoples possessing some of the following characteristics in varying degrees:

- Self-identification as members of a distinct indigenous cultural group and recognition of this identity by others.
- Collective attachment to geographically distinct habitats or ancestral territories in the project area and to the natural resources in these habitats and territories.
- Customary cultural, economic, social, or political laws and institutions that are separate from those of the mainstream society or culture.
- A distinct language or dialect, often different from the official language or languages of the country or region in which they reside.

In Belize, two groups fit that criterion. They are the indigenous Maya and Garifuna peoples.

There are three groups of Maya in Belize, the Mopan, Kekchi, and Yucatec. The Mopan and Kekchi are mostly located in the south of Belize, (Stann Creek and Toledo districts) while the Yucatec Mayas inhabit mostly the northern part of the country. One Mopan Maya community, San Antonio, is in the Cayo district (Western Belize). The Yucatec Mayas have become

modernized however and have mostly integrated into other multiethnic and multicultural communities of Belize therefore, this report will only focus on the Kekchi and Mopan Maya.

The Mopan and Kekchi Mayas are from the same family – both descendants of the Manche Chol Maya who had inhabited most of Mesoamerica, including parts of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. During the time of the Spanish conquest in the late 1500s, the Mopan Maya were living in “parts of central Belize and the adjacent Peten in Guatemala” (Shoman, 1994, p. 105). According to Shoman, by late 17th century they had been pacified and converted by the Spanish, and then were later driven out of what is now Belize by the British colonizers (18th – 19th centuries). The Mopan Maya returned to Belize around 1886 to escape forced labor and taxation in Guatemala. They settled in Pueblo Viejo, Toledo.

Shoman, quoting Wilk, says “the Kekchi of southern Belize are a small splinter group from a much larger population whose homeland is the dissected plateaus and rugged mountains of the Alta Verapaz Department of Guatemala” (p. 104). During the Spanish conquest, they were proselytized by Dominican priests and forced to live in congested villages. This led to high death tolls from diseases. After Guatemala gained its independence the Kekchi were further dispossessed of their lands and forced into debt peonage by wealthy coffee barons. Between 1881 and 1890, many began fleeing into Belize.

The Garifuna are a people of African, Arawak and Taino ancestry who were exiled by the British from the island of St. Vincent to the Island of Roatan in Honduras. Due to unfavorable conditions in Roatan, many Garifuna had left for Trujillo on the mainland. By 1832 however, they fled Trujillo for Belize after backing the losing side of revolt in Honduras (Shoman, 1994). The Garifuna settled in various areas along the coast of southern Belize forming the communities of Dangriga and Hopkins in the Stann Creek district and Seine Bight and Barranco in the Toledo district, among others than no longer exist today.

Geographical distribution

Today there are about 53 Maya communities in the south. While many have both groups of Maya people living in them, 36 communities are predominantly Kekchi and 14 are predominantly Mopan. The composition of the other three communities could not be ascertained for this report. In 2020 there were a total of 41,528 Maya living in Belize, comprising 11.3% of the total population of the country (Statistical Institute of Belize [SIB], 2020). At the last census, about 56% of Mayas identified as Kekchi and 37% as Mopan. Seventy-three percent of Kekchi Maya live in the Toledo district, 9% in the Cayo district and a little less than 9% in the Stann Creek district. The remaining 9% can be found dispersed throughout the country. Similarly, the majority of Mopan Maya (41%) live in the Toledo district. Another 30% live in the Stann Creek district, while 18% live in the Cayo district.

The Garifuna people are the predominant ethnic group in the six communities of Dangriga, Hopkins, Seine Bight, Georgetown, Punta Gorda and Barranco. However, like the Maya many Garifuna people are scattered throughout the country after having migrated from their

traditional lands in search of better economic opportunities, mostly in urban areas. There were 28,093 Garifuna in Belize in 2020, accounting for 6.1% of the population. The majority of Garifuna live in the Stann Creek district (27.5%), while 6.4% live in the Belize district and another 6.1% in the Toledo district.

Demographics

There are slightly more Kekchi males than Kekchi females (1:0.99 M/F ratio), whereas in the Mopan community the reverse is true with a male to female ratio of 1:1.02. Approximately 73% of the Kekchi population and 69% of the Mopan population is below the age of 30 years, while 3.5% and 5% of Kekchi and Mopan respectively, is over 60 years.

There are more Garifuna women (15,248) than Garifuna men (12,846), making the sex ratio 1:1.19. Seventy-eight percent of Garifuna are under the age of 30, while 6% are over 60 years.

Literacy rate

Kekchi and Mopan Mayas have some of the lowest literacy rates in the country. Persons who have completed at least the standard five level of primary school (US grade 7) are considered literate. Kekchi Mayas have the second lowest adult literacy rate among all ethnic groups in the country (65.1%), with the rate of literacy for males being 67.1% and females 63%. While the literacy rate among youths have increased, it is still the second lowest rate in the country after the literacy rate of the Mennonites. And here too, the literacy rate of females is slightly lower than that of males. The trend for the Mopan Mayas is similar, except that they have the third lowest literacy rates in the country, both for adults and youth.

The Garifuna have some of the highest literacy rates in the country both for adults (94.4%) and youth (96.4%). Literacy rate for Garifuna females is higher than that of males. The literacy rate for adult women is 95.1% and for men 93.5%, whereas for girls it is 97.1% and boys 95.6%.

Schooling

In the Toledo district, much of the population (72%) who are 14 years and older, have completed no more than a primary school level education, whereas 16.1% have completed secondary or above. In the Stann Creek district, a slightly greater proportion of the population has completed more than a primary level education (24.4%).

Language

Maya peoples have to a large extent tried to maintain their linguistic heritage. There has nonetheless still been some erosion. Indeed, the Mopan Maya language is now considered endangered (Menjivar & Salmon, 2018a). This is evidenced by the fact that between the 1980-2010 census, Mopan language speakers decreased by 3.6% to 86% of the Maya population, whereas Kekchi language speakers increased by 6% to 96% of the Maya population (Menjivar &

Salmon, 2018a). The researchers noted that the primary languages spoken in Toledo among the Maya were Mopan, Kekchi, Kriol and English. They assert that young Mopan Mayas were finding increased economic value in learning Kriol especially since it allowed them to easily go into the growing tourism industry. One way the Maya has sought to maintain their linguistic heritage is by developing schools and introducing curriculum that focus on their indigenous language, for example, the Tumul K'in Center of Learning.

The situation for the Garifuna language in Belize is becoming dire. Only 2.9% of the total population speaks Garifuna and only 56% of the Garifuna population. Cultural language loss has been attributed to the large emigration of Garifuna to the United States, also many Garifuna youth, especially young women, believe that they are better served speaking English or Kriol (Menjivar & Salmon, 2018b). It appears that the only community where children still learn Garifuna as their first language is Hopkins (Menjivar & Salmon, 2018b).

Religion

The majority of Maya are Catholic due to the influence of Spanish colonization. Often, Mopan Mayas will fondly tell of the founding of San Antonio, Toledo in which community members had briefly return to their original home in San Luis, Petén, Guatemala to retrieve a statue of San Antonio and church bells, which they installed in the Catholic church they had built in their new home, San Antonio.

Table 2: Religious affiliation in southern Belize

Major Religions	Stann Creek	Toledo
Roman Catholic	41	44
Pentecostal	8.9	10.4
Baptist	5.5	7.9
Anglican	5.0	0.8
Nazarene	3.9	6.2

Source: SIB, 2010

While the Garifuna have engaged many of the mainstream religions, they have also been able to hold on to their traditional religion, which includes “ancestor veneration and possession trances” (Menjivar & Salmon, 2018b, p. 65). The *dügü*, as the ceremony is called, is a curing ritual in which dead ancestors from the past will be transformed from “their malevolent to their beneficent aspect: from *gubida*, associated with the physical decomposition of the grave site, to *áhari*, associated with the air and with the mythico-historical ancestral home” (Foster, 2005, p. 167). As Menjivar & Salmon (2018b) note however, the ritual is slowing going into decline as many Garifuna can no longer afford to host it.

Economic Activities

The indigenous peoples of Belize have all traditionally been farmers. The Maya employ the milpa system or “slash and burn” agriculture. This involves clearing and burning an area of land

and cultivating it for a period of one to three years depending on the natural fertility of the soil (Wainwright, Siguo & Liu, 2013). During this period, farmers will usually plant beans during the rainy season, to replenish the soil (Wainwright, Siguo & Liu, 2013). Once the soil becomes “dead” the farmer will leave the land to fallow (rejuvenate) for a period of 7 – 10 years before returning to it (Binford, 2007). According to Binford (2007) however, increased population pressures could reduce the fallow time. In her research, Binford also noted that the milpa system of agriculture contributes to migration patterns in Maya communities. Often, younger men will leave their community in search of available land for farming. Once good farmland is found, these men would settle the area with their families. Over time new members arrive until there is a small new community.

The Maya are generally subsistence farmers, that is, they typically grow crops such as corn, beans, and squash (for pepitos) or rear pigs for their home consumption and sell their surplus for income. The surplus is usually sold at the farmers’ market in Punta Gorda town or to buying houses at the Jalacte border with Guatemala (J. Tush, personal communication, May 9, 2022). Some Mayas grow additional cash crops such as rice or cacao. Rice can be sold to the rice mill in Big Falls, the Mennonite of Spanish Lookout or Blue Creek, Orange Walk, or the buying houses at Jalacte. Cacao that meets quality standards is usually sold to the Toledo Cacao Growers Association (TCGA) for export to the United Kingdom or the United States of America. Smaller farmers who have a few trees in their yard would sell their cacao to the buying houses. These do not need to meet the strict quality standards of the TCGA.

Of recent, several Maya farmers in what the MAFSE terms the adjacency zone (Machkilha, Graham Creek, San Benito Poite, Jalacte and San Vicente) have begun fattening feeder cattle from Guatemala on their land in Belize. These animals are then sold back into Guatemala.

Many traditional Maya also engage in hunting and the collection of forest products such as the xate palm, leaf for thatch, various seeds, the jippi jappa palm for basket and purse (cux’tal) weaving and slate stones for the carving of souvenirs. The increase of tourism in Toledo has also opened new opportunities for the Mayas. Basket weavers are now selling their crafts at the local Mayan sites such as Lubaantun and Nim Li Punit, while some women even travel as far as Placencia to sell their products. Several women’s groups have also formed with the purpose of catering food to tourists particularly from the cruise ships. Others do overnight hosting. Finally, many Maya men have become tour guides or are providing ecotourism packages.

Finally, as young people increase their education, many are venturing into the wage labor market across the country, including in the hotel industry, the public service and several young men have joined the Belize Defense Force.

According to Roy Cayetano of the National Garifuna Council, the Garifuna people have also been a traditional farming people in which the family works as a productive unit (Personal communication, May 17, 2022). In this unit the men are responsible to provide the protein, usually through hunting, and income from cash crops such as rice, whereas the women are the providers of the family’s energy in the form of carbohydrates. So, women are the ones who

would cultivate tubers such as cassava and yams, as well as other starchy crops such as plantains. They rely on their husbands to clear the land and then along with the children, the women grow and manage the crops.

According to Mr. Cayetano, this structure was disrupted by two policies implemented in the 1960s. The first policy was the change in school summer holiday from May and June to July and August. May and June are planting season and during that time the women would be free to go to the farm, and at the same time they used the opportunity to socialize their children into a relationship with the land. July on the other hand, is the rainy season. By this time, it would have been too late for the women to plant their crops. So eventually over time, families began to move away from the land. Some moved into public service jobs, but many others moved into the field of teaching and dedicated their lives to educating Belizeans throughout the country (Enriquez, 2017).

The second policy that devastated the Garifuna of Barranco in particular, was a decision of the government to change the rice variety being successfully planted by Garifuna men. According to Mr. Cayetano, Barranco was a thriving rice producing village. They were growing a variety of rice called British Guiana '79 (BG79). The entire community was involved in the rice production. There were those who owned the rice fields and others who harvested the rice. Harvesters would get $\frac{1}{4}$ of all rice harvested. Drying floors and threshers were in Barranco and then boats would come from Punta Gorda to collect the rice and take to the mill. However, sometime in the late 60s the government decided it would no longer accept BG79 at its mill. Farmers were expected to plant a new variety. Needless to say, the Garifuna were not able to adjust to the new policy, especially without any support from the government. The community eventually went into decline and many of the villagers had to move out of the village in search of work. Some men moved as Libertad in the north, to work in sugarcane farms.

Mr. Cayetano believes that many of these policies resulted in a de-indigenization, where the Garifuna people were forced to change their traditional ways. There is nonetheless a yearning to return to their traditional culture and so many of the community elders along with the National Garifuna Council are encouraging a return to their ways. One such effort is through the Hopkins Farmers' Cooperative Society Limited. The Cooperative owns 70 acres of land in which they plant a variety of tubers, which they then process into a cereal called Cerbuiti. The processing plant is currently being upgrading and the Coop hopes to be able to provide a healthy breakfast for school children with their traditional cereal. Additionally, the Coop is encouraging a resurgence of farming by buying crops such as yams, dasheen, corn, rice, cassava, and peanuts from community members.

Maya women in agriculture

Traditionally Maya women assisted their husbands on the farm. The husband would clear the land and the woman would help with the planting, watering, spraying, pruning, harvesting, and processing. Women generally have their own farms only when they are widowed or divorced and, in those cases, they tend to hold the farm in trust until their eldest son can manage it.

In Maya culture women only own property such as furniture, plants, chickens, and ducks that are gifted to her by her mother or mother-in-law when she marries (Murray, 2012). This is slowly changing, and we now see more women being given land by their fathers or acquiring their own lease. Since most women still don't own their own land however and they still have the primary responsibility of caretaker, they are forced to find suitable means of production near their home. This involves engaging in chicken and duck rearing, vegetable gardening, or planting high value crops such as cardamom and ginger. A few women partake in groups that own aviaries.

A major concern of Maya women is the ability to make an income to pay for their children's education. Although primary education is free in Belize most schools charge additional fees for such things as registration, maintenance, physical education, and ID card. Further, there is the cost of books, uniform, and supplies. Based on Voorend, Anker & Anker's (2021) research, the estimated total education cost per child is \$5,756.00¹⁷ (see Education costs). With slightly larger than the average household size and incomes well below a living wage for rural Belize (\$890.00)¹⁸, it is no wonder that women are seeking additional sources of income.

Several Maya women have expressed the desire to acquire land to pass down to their children. In Maya Center, the Village Council had bought land for village expansion, and many women had supposedly gotten pieces for themselves (Murray, 2012).

Maya communal lands

The Maya has a system of collective land ownership in which each village "hold land collectively, while individuals and families enjoy derivative, subsidiary rights of use and occupancy" (Murray, 2012, p. 667). The land is organized in a "tripartite geography" where the village center is surrounded by an agriculture and forest zone, which in turn is surrounded by a peripheral zone used for hunting, some agriculture, and the collection of forest products (Wainwright, Siguo & Liu, 2013). The land is managed and distributed by an elected village leader in consultation with the villagers. The individuals of the community have only usufruct rights. In this way a farmer could clear any land within the agriculture zone that is available, if he intended to work it. This land could be lent, inherited or rented; however, it could not be sold (Murray, 2012). Land that was no longer being used reverts to the community. The men from the village usually form work groups called *fajinas*¹⁹ to work the communal lands together.

¹⁷ Voorend et. al. actual calculation was \$5,046.00, however we note that they under count the number of years of primary school (Std. 1-6) by 2 years.

¹⁸ Voorend et. al. calculate a conservative monthly family expenses for rural Belize at \$1,382.00 for a reference family of 4. With father working full time and mother working 59% of the time (based on labour force figures for female), the researchers estimate that the father would need to be making \$890.00 monthly to afford a decent living.

¹⁹ Fajina means "coming together in one place to work for the good of the community" (Murray, 2012, p. 678).

Poverty and food insecurity

Table 3 below, shows a disturbing picture of poverty among the indigenous Mopan and Kekchi Maya population. This, however, is indicative of the cultural and geographic situation in the Toledo district mostly. The Toledo District is the least expensive place in the country to live. However, the food share expense in Toledo is an alarming 81% indicating that residents of Toledo spend almost all their monies on food. In addition, Toledo has the second highest Market Food Basket (MFB) cost (after San Pedro Town) in the entire country.

This detail would seem surprising as the Toledo District is home to one of the most fertile agricultural lands in the country. The situation, however, is an amalgam of different issues. First, as noted above, the Maya in the Toledo district engage in subsistence farming and not commercial farming, therefore there is no revenue coming in except for the occasional sale on the market which is done on a need-by-need basis. Secondly, the diet considered in the market basket equation is not case or ethnic group specific and would not have considered that the Mayas would have adjusted their diet to consider the foods that are available as well as their disposable incomes. Indeed, it is well known that the Mayas in Toledo are reluctant to grow non-traditional crops, even those that would provide for better sources in a balanced diet. Finally, the Toledo district is very sparsely populated and has only recently been the focus of infrastructure development. The lack of proper roads has made the distribution of food between villages in the Toledo district and from outside the district very costly.

Finally, the Garifuna, Kekchi and Mopan Mayas living outside of the Toledo district would not have this same experience of poverty. However, those assimilated indigenous peoples might still experience poverty as many times they live on the fringes of society due to social discrimination and barriers to full assimilation.

Table 3: Poverty levels among indigenous peoples

	Indigent	Poor	Not Poor
Garifuna	12.9%	25.4%	61.7%
Kekchi Maya	60.8%	23%	16.3%
Mopan Maya	49.1%	21%	29.8%

Source: National Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plan 2006-2010

While the cultural and geographic situation might account for what is arguably an inflated figure on poverty, the fact remains that many Maya still face food insecurity and most are not making a living wage (Voorend, Anker & Anker, 2021). Of all the ethnic groups, the Maya have the highest rate of food insecurity at 57.09%. According to the FAO (2021),

“People experiencing moderate levels of food insecurity will typically eat low quality diets and might have been forced, at times during the year, to also reduce the quantity of food they would normally eat, while those experiencing severe levels would very likely have gone for entire days without eating, due to lack of money or other resources to obtain food” (p. 7).

Afro-descendants (Creole)

Belizean Creoles are people of African or mixed African and European descent. The people are a result of the miscegenation of British colonizers and their African slaves. The culture of Belizean Creoles also demonstrates the intermingling of traditions of both groups. African slaves were first brought to Belize from Jamaica by the 1720s to cut logwood (Shoman, 1994). The British themselves having arrived off the shores of Belize in mid-1600s as pirates, but later becoming buccaneers extracting logwood and then Mahogany trees

Geographical distribution

While Creoles can be found in every town, city and just about every village, there are a number of communities that are known to be traditional Creole communities. These include Belize City; most villages in the Belize River Valley, including St. Paul's Bank, Isabella Bank, Lemonal, Bermudian Landing, and Doublehead Cabbage; and the communities of La Democracia, Gales Point Manatee, and Mullins River along the Coastal Highway. Over half the population of Creoles (56.5%) live in the Belize district, while 22% live in the Stann Creek district, and another 18.5% in the Cayo district.

Demographics

At the last census in 2010, 83,460 people identified as Creole. This represented 25.9% of the total population, making Creoles the second largest ethnic group in Belize (SIB, 2010). Male to female ratio is 1:1 for Creoles. Sixty-one percent of Creoles are youths (0 – 29), a little under 32% are between the ages of 30 – 59, while 7.35% are over 60 years old.

Literacy rate

Among vulnerable groups, Creoles experience the second highest literacy rates in the country for adults (93.5%) and tie with Garifunas for the highest youth literacy rate (96.4%). Literacy rate for Creole females is higher than that of males. The literacy rate for adult women is 94.8% and for men 92.3%, whereas for girls it is 97.4% and boys 95.3%.

Language

The Kriol language serve as the lingua franca of daily life in Belize and is indispensable (McClaurin, 1996, p. 2). According to Menjívar & Salmon (2018), Kriol is the “irrefutable national language of Belize” (p. 25). It is used by all ethnic groups in Belize and is even spoken by the many Chinese shop owners throughout the country. Menjívar & Salmon (2018), cites two other studies where the researchers noted youth of various ethnicities were code-switching between Kriol, Spanish and English, but that younger speakers were beginning to employ more Kriol at the expense of the other languages and even code switching. The author

found that the Kriol vernacular rates high in solidarity and personal appeal but low in power as compared to English.

Myths about Creoles in Agriculture

There is a pervasive myth in Belize that Creoles are not inclined to engaging in agriculture. Researcher, O. Nigel Bolland (1988), traces this perspective back to the original treaty between the Spanish and British, which stipulated that Belize was not to be settled. Compliance with these terms and the nature of logwood extraction did not encourage any major farming at the time. Nonetheless, many families still engaged in backyard farming in Belize City, the Belize River Valley and the communities of the Coastal Highway. The remoteness of the rural communities however, stymied much of the growth in agriculture.

Women

Population and sexual demographic

The total female population in the country is 209,596, with 113,752 (54.3%) living in rural areas. There are more women living in rural areas of each district except for the Belize district, where urban women outnumber rural by 2.5 times. Fourteen percent of the women in the country were born abroad, with the highest percentage residing in the Cayo district.

Marriage/Union status

Over half of the population in the Belize (57.4%) have never been married, while around 1/3 of the population is married. An average of 5.8% of all marriages end in divorce, with the Belize district exhibiting the highest rate of divorces (6.7%). Countrywide 37.1%, or about 2 out of every 5 persons, are not in any type of union. More males among the 15 – 29 age group tended to be single, while more women were single after age 35. This trend continues for women in their older years (65 years and above), with 59.6% not in any union compared to only 32.9% of males at that age. Visiting-partner relationships are most frequent in the 20-24 age group.

Labor force

There are currently 158,188 women of working age in Belize, with 52.5% living in rural areas. However, only 42.9% of rural working age women are in the labor force, compared to 74.7% of rural men. Most working age women are in the 14-24 age group, followed by the 25-34 age group. Unemployment rates for rural women is 13.5% compared to 7.2% for the men. The largest unemployment rate for both genders is in the Maya community.

Governance structures

All villages in Belize have village councils that fall under the Local Government structure, which along with Central Government; make up the overall governance structure of Belize. There is no provision for local government in the Constitution of Belize, however, the Village Council Act, CAP. 88 (Rev. ed., 2011), sets out the powers of the council and responsibilities of its members. Ministerial oversight for village councils is by way of the Department of Rural Development, in the Ministry of Labour, Local Government, and Rural Development (MLLGRD). In 2009, GOB approved a national policy on local governance with the aim of enshrining local governance in the constitution of Belize; revising local government legislation to ensure greater clarity on the roles, responsibilities, powers, and rights of local government; formally demarcating boundary lines across all municipalities and villages; and building capacity for leaders.

Village council elections are held every three years with the most recent elections taking place in June and July 2019 and new elections happening currently. Chairpersons are elected in a separate vote alongside six other councilors using the first-past-the-post-system. Elections are open to all residents 18 years and older, however there is no voters list and no formal demarcation of village boundary. The strength of transparency within elections, rests on the scrutiny of other residents.

Women's representation in village councils, both at the level of chairperson and councilors, remain low. In the 2013-15 elections, 23/194 or 11.9% of chairpersons were female, while women made up 23.5% of all councilors (1,164). Noteworthy however, is that in following elections the number of female chairpersons increased, with 14% in 2016 and 19% in 2019.

Gender-based Violence

Reports of gender-based violence (GBV) are between 2,000 - 2,500 each year, with around 30 – 50% becoming active cases where “police have made an arrest or placed the matter under investigation” (Belize Crime Observatory, 2021). Seventy-five to eighty-five percent of the reports are made by women. GBV is more prevalent among rural women with approximately 70.34% of these women reporting having experienced episodes of intimate partner violence (Warren-Gordon, 2020).

In 2021 alone, there were 773 cases of domestic violence, 46 cases of unlawful sexual intercourse, 12 cases of rape and 11 females were murdered (Belize Crime Observatory, 2021). The Belize Crime Observatory indicates that those reports not resulting in active cases are classified as reports for “future reference”.

While the situation of abused women in Belize cannot be generalized, several qualitative studies of rural women (McClaurin, 1996; Warren-Gordon, 2020) paint a common picture where a teenage girl becomes pregnant, is kicked out of school²⁰, cohabits with her partner and

²⁰ Most high schools in Belize had a policy of permanently expelling pregnant female students. While many have changed this policy, pregnant students are still required to leave school and wait for a year before applying for readmission

has more children, and then finds herself trapped in an abusive relationship. A few girls eventually get legally married, but many others get caught in cycles where the partner leaves and they must then rely on another “visiting” partner (McClaurin, 1996).

Gender-based abuse is compounded by male chauvinistic thinking which is particularly prevalent in rural areas where many individuals still ascribe to “traditional systems and structures rooted in patriarchy and male dominance” (Huggins, 2016, p. 1). These patriarchal ideologies reinforce traditional gender roles and posit women as minors and hence under the control of men. Many women have also internalized their own oppression to the point where at least 5.2% of women (5.4% of men), believe that a man is justified in beating or hitting his wife if she goes out without telling him; she neglects the children; she argues with him; she refuses sex with him; or she burns the food (SIB & UNICEF Belize, 2017).

Several ideological and physical factors keep women trapped in abusive relationships. For example, abuse in Belize is usually kept a secret because it comes under the purview of “private family business”. Women are usually admonished for disclosing their private business and allowing for the “gossip and sensationalism” in the community (Warren-Gordon, 2020: 236). Further, many face additional beating for making their partner “look bad” in society, thereby damaging his masculinity.

Abused women also encounter a general lack of support. Many families are reluctant to get involved because of the prevalent machismo idea that the man is the head of the household and what he says goes (Warren-Gordon, 2020). This machismo is also carried over to the community police whom many women find untrustworthy (Warren-Gordon, 2020).²¹

Finally, the context of rurality in Belize affects a woman’s ability to leave an abusive relationship. Many communities are in remote geographical areas with limited health care or legal resources, limited access to phone, internet or other communication device; and limited transportation options (Warren-Gordon, 2020).

Male chauvinistic thinking can be an impediment to women’s participation in the project, particularly as the project seeks to empower women. While the project’s main goal is to foster sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable women through the development of enterprise, this process will indirectly contribute to a woman’s autonomy and independence resulting in male jealousy and subsequent abuse.

²¹ There has been an initiative by the Police Department to train some police officers in dealing with intimate partner violence, but due to financial constraints, many police officers, especially in rural areas, have not yet received that training (Warren-Gordon, 2020: 239).

Main Sociocultural Risks and Impacts

Indigenous Peoples

Customary and indigenous peoples' rights

The GOB and IDB recognize that the indigenous people of Belize have the right to the protection of their territorial homelands and their cultural integrity. These groups, particularly the Maya, have certain structures in place to ensure that their rights are being protected, these include but are not limited to FPIC and the protocols for engaging the community, including women and the management of the traditional lands. While these rights are being elaborated in the Indigenous People Plan of this document, it is nonetheless imperative that indigenous peoples are consulted and included in all aspects of the project planning that will involve them.

Loss of culture and social cohesion

It is important to understand that indigenous communities tend to organize themselves in terms of a singular communal unit. When project proponents are not aware of the intricacies of indigenous people's distinct cultures and identities within the community, they may run the risk of disrupting cultural and social organizational structures. Further, while indigenous peoples may welcome improvement and development it is advisable that these are not rushed so that both communities and proponents can work through the potential benefits and disadvantages together. A fundamental characteristic of indigeneity is a system of direct democracy where all members of the community participate in the decision making. This process takes more time than what proponents might be used to in a representative democracy.

Dependency on external support

A common complaint of indigenous peoples is that the government or various other well-meaning organizations have come into their communities and have initiated development projects intended to address only one aspect of a process, such as a value chain, without consideration for their wherewithal to maintain the other aspects of the project. For example, the Hopkins Farmer's Cooperative Society Limited, told of an experience in which they were encouraged to grow peanuts, which they did, only to find out that there would be no support to find a market once their crop had been harvested (Personal communication, May 17, 2022). Indeed, this was the genesis of the Cooperative's current cereal manufacturing initiative. One female farmer in Barranco, describe a project in which her land was cleared with a bulldozer and then the project left, and she was at a loss of what to do next (Franklin, 2017). Here, dependency may result when vulnerable people find difficulty engaging the market economy through alternative livelihood activities or when they lack sufficient income to further the initiatives of a project. In this regard, technical assistance in developing farm and business plans must be realistic and consider the entirety of a farmer's lived experience.

Matrix of assessment of potential social and cultural impacts

Proposed interventions / activities	What are the socio-cultural situations/characteristics that could generate exclusion of vulnerable group	Mitigation actions = how to adapt the intervention and/or methodology to the situations/characteristics encountered, to limit the risk of exclusion of vulnerable group
Indigenous Peoples		
Project Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of culture and social cohesion may result when there is insufficient opportunity for indigenous peoples to participate in the planning of the project or when projects are rushed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow representation from indigenous people's groups on committees that will make decisions that will affect them. Ensure ongoing and meaningful engagement with communities. Allow for sufficient time for communities to discuss and think through proposed interventions.
Project information campaign (possibility of being a beneficiary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clarity on the specifics of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure participation of Representative groups such as the NGC, MLA and TAA, as well as the village councils and Alcalde in each community. Ensure informational and advertisement is also done in Spanish & Maya (Kekchi & Mopan). Also use plain and direct language (avoid acronyms). Focus on getting the message across and avoid being overly centered on bureaucratic details.
Eligibility criteria for beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-dominant land tenure arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Maya may provide a letter from the Village Council and Alcalde certifying that the beneficiary lives in the village and has been assigned use of X land for X number of years.
Issue of expression of interest to be a beneficiary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals who live in remote villages might not have access to collection agents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For remote or distant villages designate a local collection agent or determine a pickup date in which the project's proponent would visit the community to pick up all applications.
Technical assistance to develop a farm plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interventions supporting alternative livelihoods and new institutional structures may lead to indigenous communities' dependency on continued support, for example when farmers are encouraged to increase production but have no viable markets. Poorly planned changes in natural resource use. For example, when farmers are advised to move away from the milpa/slash-and-burn system for more controlled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TA should consider the entire context of the farmer before providing advice. Preferences in land use should be taken in account. Consideration must be given to the additional costs that might be borne by farmers when there are changes to how they currently use their natural environment. These costs could include additional fertilizers, additional pest management, etc. This could lead to adverse social

	environments where maybe water might be better managed through irrigation.	consequences such as food insecurity.
Technical support to register for BAIMS	None	None
Participation in Farmer Field Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel – distance, time and cost • Some indigenous people might not be literate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that indigenous people are able to access training opportunities by organizing them at venues that are convenient, or by providing safe transportation. • Have sessions at convenient times • Focus on oral sessions in the preferred language
Participation in Sustainable Agriculture Training Program		
Use of the voucher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply stores not located in the south 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize for a vendor fair in which farmers could talk to vendors and arrange for their equipment to be accessible to them.
Women & other vulnerable groups		
Project information campaign (possibility of being a beneficiary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional dissemination channels are usually controlled by men who seldomly inform women and youth. This includes village council chairs, alcaldes, lead farmers, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform women and youth groups, contact potential women and youth farmer beneficiaries directly, inform women at places where they congregate, such as grocery stores, farmers market, schools, and hospitals, inform children of women and potential youths in high schools and universities. Use a range of media channels to advertise. Ensure informational and advertisement is also done in Spanish & Maya (Kekchi & Mopan). Also use plain and direct language (avoid acronyms). Focus on getting the message across and avoid being overly centered on bureaucratic details.
Eligibility criteria for beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women, youth and migrants might not be farming on a large scale (backyard farming) and as such might not consider themselves "farmers". Furthermore, many backyards are smaller than the 1/2 acre eligibility requirement, yet they may be producing a considerable amount. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a profile of eligible female/youth/migrant farmer in advertisements. • Assess the backyard farm to determine whether the woman/youth/migrant is a legitimate farmer.
Issue expression of interest to be a beneficiary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women, youth and migrants who live in remote villages might not have access to collection agents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For remote or distant villages designate a local collection agent or determine a pickup date in which the project's proponent would visit the community to pick up all applications.
Technical assistance to develop a farm plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm plans TA might need to be conducted in groups of women and facilitated by a woman so that they are safe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that women are safe by facilitating working groups headed by a female technical assistant.

Technical support to register for BAIMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notions of land tenure might restrict women, youth and migrant eligibility to register 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply subjective criteria of “legitimate farmer”
Participation in Farmer Field Schools Participation in Sustainable Agriculture Training Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel - distance, time, and cost. • Women are primary caregivers. • Some women might not be literate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that women are able to access training opportunities by organizing them at venues that are convenient, or by providing safe transportation. • Have sessions at convenient times • Allow participants to bring their children and provide entertainment for the children, such as books to read, toy to play with, etc. • Focus on oral sessions in the preferred language.
Use of the voucher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women, youth and migrants might lack transportation and therefore not be able to easily access supply stores. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize for a vendor fair in which farmers could talk to vendors and arrange for their equipment to be accessible to them.

Indigenous Peoples Plan²²

Culturally appropriate consultation protocol

Obtaining broad community support

While broad community support is usually associated with the Free, Prior and Informed Consultation/Consent (FPIC) protocol, which is not being triggered for this project, neither as part of local indigenous peoples nor the bank’s requirements, broad community support is nonetheless recommended as best practice in working with vulnerable peoples. This is particularly so, as “the notion of ‘community’ as a homogenous and unified entity has been challenged so that wide-ranging and conflicting local interests are now acknowledged an obstacle to beneficial change if they are not somehow reconciled or accommodated” (Lewins, 2004, p. 44).

Institutional and legal framework

Following are the institutions that have responsibility for development in indigenous communities.

Village councils

The local governance system for all villages in Belize is the Village Council. The Village Council Act, CAP. 88 (Rev. ed., 2011), gives councils limited authority to govern their communities.

²² This IPP draws on the IPP framework for the “Management and protection of key biodiversity area in Belize project” (2014).

Particularly, they are responsible for the general wellbeing of their communities including the care and maintenance of public property and to advancement of the quality of life of residents. Ministerial oversight for village councils is by way of the Department of Rural Development, in the Ministry of Labour, Local Government, and Rural Development (MLLGRD).

Alcalde system

Apart from the village councils, all Ketchi and Mopan Maya communities in the Stann Creek and Toledo districts elect an Alcalde Council. The Alcalde system is a traditional governance system of indigenous peoples, officially recognized under Chapter 77 of the Laws of Belize. The Alcalde Council is elected every two years, with the last election being held in 2021. The Council is comprised of five members, the Alcalde along with four other member who act as village police officers. The Alcaldes belong to the Toledo Alcalde Association.

The Alcalde Council has responsibility for two areas. The councils have oversight for judicial matters in their communities and act as an inferior court, maintaining law and order and adjudicating on petty crimes and disputes. The councils also have authority to manage community lands where they perform such duties as mandating the cleanup of the community (fajina), act as school officers, and make determinations as to who can reside in the village.

Community Consultations

The consultation process will provide a review of the findings all environmental and social impact studies and assessments along with proposed mitigation measures. Beneficiaries and stakeholders must be fully aware of the activities of the project and the potential impacts and must support the mitigation measures being proposed.

Objectives of the Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement Process

The objectives of the consultation and stakeholder engagement process are as follows:

- To ascertain the views and perceptions of potentially affected persons to inform the project design.
- To serve as a means of triangulating data for greater reliability and validity.
- To provide stakeholders with an overview of their rights and responsibilities as it relates to the project.
- To allow for inclusiveness that will foster greater trust, project acceptance and local ownership, which are necessary components for the sustainability of the project.
- To keep stakeholders apprised of the progress of the project.

Elements of a Meaningful Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement Process²³

²³ Inter-American Development Bank. (2017). *Meaningful stakeholder consultation: IDB series on environmental and social risk and opportunity*.

1. Identification of priority issues – What are the likely risks and opportunities arising from the project?
2. Stakeholder analysis and consultation plan – Who is affected by the project, and who has an interest that can influence outcomes? How will the project engage with them?
3. Prior information – How will information be provided to stakeholders prior to consultation and consultation events in a meaningful way?
4. Appropriate forums and methods for the consultation and engagement process – How should consultation events be organized?
5. Grievance redress mechanisms – How can stakeholders seek remedy if they feel the project is causing harm to them or the environment?
6. Design and implementation decisions considering stakeholder perspectives – How will stakeholder concerns and recommendations be addressed in project decision-making and the overall management system?
7. Feedback to stakeholders and transparency in decision-making – How will the stakeholders be informed about project decisions and how their view and inputs have been incorporated?
8. Baseline data, action plans, and management systems – What are the action plans that the project will implement to reduce risk and enhance benefits for project stakeholders? How will the project establish and maintain a suitable management system to address environmental and social issues?
9. Documentation and public disclosure – What are the mechanisms established to document and disclose relevant project information?
10. On-going stakeholder consultation and engagement during implementation – What are the mechanisms established to ensure that stakeholders are kept informed and involved throughout project implementation?

Language: The process will be culturally appropriate using the predominant language of the community, for example, Ketchi Maya, Mopan Maya or Spanish, as well as the official language of the country, English.

Vulnerable groups: All effort will be made to be gender and intergenerationally inclusive according to the customs of the community.

Communication: Communication in rural communities is best done through the Village Councils, as well as the Alcalde Council in Maya communities. Additionally, the MAFSE can deliver messages through their extension officers and farm leaders. In the Toledo district, the Toledo Cacao Growers Association has buying centers in most villages that are an excellent avenue of communication. Messages can also be passed on by school children, village bus drivers and via local grocery stores.

Printed and visual resources: The use of PowerPoint presentations in villages are often not practical however flipcharts can be used, and handouts should be provided. These media must also be culturally appropriate.

Steps and protocol for consulting indigenous Maya communities

Steps and protocol for consulting indigenous Maya communities

(As per TAA approved Consultation Framework and recommendations made during community consultations)

STEP 1 – MAKING CONTACT

Contact with the Toledo Alcaldes Association: The TAA must be notified and involved when major development is being proposed that will affect villages and Maya people's well-being. The President of Toledo Alcaldes Association must be contacted first. The President will then inform the Executive Committee of Association. The Association will then contact all other Alcaldes in all Mayan communities at an Alcaldes assembly. They noted here that if Executive members are individually contacted without the knowledge of the President, then they are in no position to honour an invitation or request.

Contact at the village level: If the development is focused on a particular village then the Alcalde is the access point to the village. It is the Alcalde that convenes the village for a village meeting. Chairmen and Alcaldes keep each other informed. Chairmen cannot call village meetings. When chairmen need a village meeting, they notify the Alcalde who calls the meeting.

Contact with women: At the wider indigenous community consultation held in Forest Home, Toledo, the village leaders and community stakeholders mentioned that to convene meetings with women, contact must be made with Alcaldes and Chairmen of the village. Contact can be made through the Toledo Maya Women Council and through established women's groups. Meetings to be conducted with women must be facilitated by a female.

STEP 2 - INFORMATION SHARING

All correspondence to the President of the Alcaldes Association and to individual Alcaldes must be in writing. This initial communication should include: a full description of the action or project, including scope, timelines and duration; reports of environmental, social and cultural impacts; clear analysis of risk and benefits to the affected villages; a description of proponents of the action or project; and identification of the contact person who will liaise with the TAA.

Environmental, Social, Cultural & Economic Impact Assessments (ESCEI) should be conducted in a transparent, detailed manner. It should be written in plain language and presented in the language(s) understood by the affected Maya people. The ESCEI should be conducted in consultation with the Maya people.

STEP 3 – TIMING OF NOTICE

Any notice of meetings and other events must be given at least 21 calendar days in advance, especially for major developments or initiatives. This is to allow the association or the Alcaldes time to plan, manage their

attendance and seek technical assistance where necessary. At the community level, some communities have designated time and dates for community meetings which can range from weekly, biweekly, monthly or bimonthly, as a result, only issues that the chairman is duly informed are tabled at these meetings.

STEP 4 – VENUE OF MEETINGS

The meeting or consultation event must be held at the community center or where not available in a public place where attendance by community members is not inhibited by the location of the venue.

The delivery of messages and information during consultation events must be in the local language (Q'eqchi or Mopan). The purpose of the meeting/workshop or event must be clearly stated in the letter to the Chairman of the Association or Alcalde of the village of interest. Supplemental materials should be included along with the correspondence. IPs have the right to choose their own technical support and relevant information must be promptly shared so that leaders have the proper time to understand all relevant information.

If there is any reason to video or audio record meetings, this must be done in a culturally sensitive manner with prior consent from convening body. The Alcades must be informed with enough anticipation of the intent.

The proponent shall bear the costs of the consultation process; fair compensation for damages that may result from any of the impacts of the project; the technical and legal expenses incurred by the Maya people to ensure their effective participation. This includes but not limited to reimbursement of logistical expenses associated with travel, or provide a chartered bus especially to and from communities that do not have regular public transportation; and costs for use of venue if necessary.

STEP 5 – DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES – “Se Komonil”

Decisions on behalf of the community in indigenous communities are done collectively at Village Meetings called by the Alcalde. The Village Meeting is the fundamental decision making authority that is usually by consensus or majority decision. This process is called ‘se komonil’. When the Alcalde receives information or request he passes it on to the community members and they in turn tell the Alcalde what to do. The collective decision of the community is transmitted back to the external agency by the Alcalde. Decisions of the communities must be recorded in writing.

Decisions can only be made if a quorum is present. Quorum at any meeting should be half of the villagers 16 years and older. Except in the case where the decision to alienate lands held by customary title, an affirmative vote of at least three quarters of the all villagers sixteen years of age is required.

Source: Management and protection of key biodiversity areas in Belize project, 2014.

Grievance Redress Mechanism

Purpose

A grievance redress mechanism (GRM) is important in preventing and managing environmental and social risk. It is therefore necessary and good practice to address the questions, concerns and grievances of project affected individuals as well as stakeholders in a transparent, fair and equitable manner. The GRM shall therefore include:

- Provision for the establishment of a grievance redress body that is socially inclusive

- A reporting and recording system
- Procedure for the assessment of the grievance
- A timeframe for responding to the grievances received
- The mechanisms for adjudicating grievances and appealing judgments

Guiding Principles of a GRM

The following are the IDB's guiding principles for the development of a GRM:

- The grievance mechanism is expected to address concern promptly and effectively, in a transparent manner that is culturally appropriate and readily accessible to all project-affected parties, at no cost and without retribution.
- The mechanism, process, or procedure will not prevent access to judicial or administrative remedies or to the IDB's Independent Consultation and Investigation Mechanism.
- The Borrower will inform the project-affected parties about the grievance process, including access to the IDB's Independent Consultation and Investigation Mechanism, during its community engagement activities and will make publicly available a record documenting the responses to all grievances received.
- Grievances will be handled in a culturally appropriate manner and be discreet, objective, sensitive, and responsive to the needs and concerns of the project-affected parties. The mechanism will also allow for confidential or anonymous complaints to be raised and addressed.
- The Borrower will address allegations of retaliation, abuse, or discrimination and take appropriate remedial measures.

Roles and Responsibilities

The implementation of the GRM is the direct responsibility of the MAFSE. It is being recommended that a Project Steering Committee be established at kickoff, with responsibility for overseeing the GRM.

It is being recommended that representatives from the following ministries and bodies, sit on the Project Steering Committee:

- The Project Coordinator
- CEO or a Department Head of the MAFSE
- CEO or Department Head of the Ministry of Education
- CEO or Department Head of the Ministry of Economic Development
- CEO or Department Head of the Ministry of Finance

- CEO or Representative of the Department of Environment
- Representatives of the Toledo Alcalde Association
- Representatives of the National Garifuna Council

The Project Steering Committee will be responsible for receiving and resolving all concerns and complaints, raised by Project Affected Persons (PAPs), in a fair, objective and constructive manner. More specifically, the committee will:

- Fine tune and publicize the grievance redress procedures
- Receive, review, investigate and keep track of grievances
- Adjudicate grievances
- Monitor and evaluate the decisions for action taken by the committee

The Project Coordinator will act as the point of contact for PAPs, inhabitants of the project area and project employees to lodge their concerns/complaints. The Project Coordinator is responsible for taking grievances to the Steering Committee and for ensuring that the recommendations of the committee are implemented.

Grievance Redress Procedures

A complaint or grievance can be submitted via a grievance form (see Annex) or verbally.

A grievance form may be submitted in any of the following ways:

- To the Project Coordinator (address on form).
- To any of the MAFSE's offices (address on form).
- Directly to the Project Steering Committee (address on form).

Verbal complaints may be made to the Project Coordinator or directly to the Steering Committee, via telephone or face-to-face. All contact information will be provided to stakeholders.

Grievances and complaints will be dealt with in the following manner:

- All grievances received will be recorded in a register by the Project Coordinator (who also sits on the Steering Committee).
- If grievance can be corrected with an immediate action, complainant will be immediately informed, action will be taken, the date will be recorded, and the case will be closed.
- If grievance requires long term action, complainant will be informed of proposed action or why no action is required (within 7 days), the action will be implemented (if applicable), follow-up will be carried through, complainant will once again be informed, the date will be recorded, and the case will be closed.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Grievances

Monitoring and evaluation of the GRM is the direct responsibility of the Project Coordinator who will provide monthly reports to the Steering Committee. Semi-annual reports will be made available to the public.

Monitoring and Evaluation

All consultations with indigenous people along with the nature of their participation in the consultation should be fully documented. This includes the number of consultations held, participants, logistics and all arrangements and agreements made. Picture evidence must be included with all documentation.

An evaluation of each consultation should be made with a view to implementing lessons learned in subsequent consultations. Evaluations and the particulars of such evaluations must also be documented.

References

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Annexes

Stakeholders consulted

Name	Organization
Christina Garcia	Ya'axche' Conservation Trust
Ishelly Williams	Humana People to People
Emerson Baptist	Humana People to People
Dr. Victoriano Pascual	MAFSE
Jose Novelo	MAFSE
Justaquio Tush	MAFSE
Fred Roches	MAFSE
Clyde Martinez	Hopkins Farmers' Cooperative Society Ltd.
Mario Augustine	Hopkins Farmers' Cooperative Society Ltd.
Roy Cayetano	National Garifuna Council
Noreen Fairweather	Toledo Maya Land Rights Commission (2016)

Indigenous Communities

Maya Communities

	Community	District	Total Population	Kekchi Maya	Mopan Maya	Sex Ratio (M/F)	Avg. Household Size
1.	Aguacate	Toledo	369	343	14	1:1.07	5.7
2.	Big Falls	Toledo	845	494	89	1:1.05	5.0
3.	Bladen	Toledo	466	302	20	1:0.88	4.2
4.	Blue Creek	Toledo	365	92	153	1:1.13	5.6
5.	Boom Creek ^{*24}	Toledo		34	0		
6.	Conejo	Toledo	209	205	<10	1:0.89	6.1
7.	Corazon	Toledo	188	184	<10	1:0.96	4.8
8.	Crique Jute	Toledo	223	12	195	1:1.2	4.5
9.	Crique Largo*	Toledo		0	46		
10.	Crique Sarco	Toledo	328	322	<10	1:0.95	5.1
11.	Crique Trosa	Toledo		48	30		
12.	Dolores	Toledo	460	457	<10	1:1.06	5.7
13.	Dump	Toledo	198	48	<10	1:1.15	4.7
14.	Golden Stream	Toledo	349	150	196	1:0.98	6.7
15.	Graham Creek	Toledo		109	0		
16.	Hicattee*	Toledo		94	<10		
17.	Hicattee (Southern Highway)	Toledo	458	278	36	1:1.1	5.5
18.	Indian Creek	Toledo	722	666	14	1:0.91	5.4
19.	Jalacte	Toledo	769	689	30	1:1.04	6.5
20.	Jordan	Toledo		82	32		
21.	Jute*	Toledo					
22.	Laguna	Toledo	257	239	<10	1:1.25	5.6
23.	Mabil Ha*	Toledo		201	0		
24.	Machakil Ha*	Toledo					
25.	Maya Centre	Stann Creek	386	12	296	1:0.95	4.5
26.	Maya Mopan	Stann Creek	632	16	603	1:1	5.7
27.	Medina Bank	Toledo	237	229	<10	1:1.17	7.0
28.	Midway	Toledo	240	236	0	1:1.08	5.7
29.	Na Luum Ca*	Toledo		0	63		
30.	Otoxha	Toledo	263	263	0	1:1.06	5.0
31.	Piebra*	Toledo					
32.	Pueblo Viejo	Toledo	432	14	407	1:1.12	5.5
33.	Red Bank	Stann Creek	1,201	546	497	1:0.93	6.0
34.	San Antonio	Toledo	1,204	16	1,139	1:1.09	4.7
35.	San Benito Poite	Toledo	542	537	<10	1:0.85	6.0
36.	San Felipe	Toledo	353	281	<10	1:1.06	6.0
37.	San Isidro	Toledo	374	296	13	1:0.86	5.1
38.	San Jose	Toledo	849	46	752	1:1.11	4.9
39.	San Lucas	Toledo	326	120	0	1:1.02	6.3
40.	San Marcos	Toledo	623	581	<10	1:0.95	6.5
41.	San Miguel	Toledo	537	496	<10	1:1.01	5.6
42.	San Pablo	Toledo	250	234	15	1:0.97	6.2
43.	San Pedro Columbia	Toledo	1,703	1,149	113	1:0.95	5.4
44.	San Roman	Stann Creek	894	168	560	1:1	5.3
45.	San Vicente	Toledo	441	405	<10	1:0.89	5.7
46.	Santa Ana	Toledo	290	287	0	1:0.87	6.0
47.	Santa Cruz	Toledo	387	43	339	1:1.02	5.8
48.	Santa Elena	Toledo	200	<10	188	1:0.98	5.4
49.	Santa Rosa	Stann Creek	542	87	356	1:0.91	6.1
50.	Santa Teresa	Toledo	369	354	<10	1:1	6.0

²⁴ Communities denoted with an * were not included in the Belize National Population and Housing Profile (disaggregated) data for 2010. Some of these communities might be newly settled.

51.	Silver Creek	Toledo	476	457	<10	1:0.94	5.7
52.	Sunday Wood	Toledo	285	285	0	1:1.03	5.5
53.	Yemery Grove	Toledo	265	115	<10	1:1.03	5.1

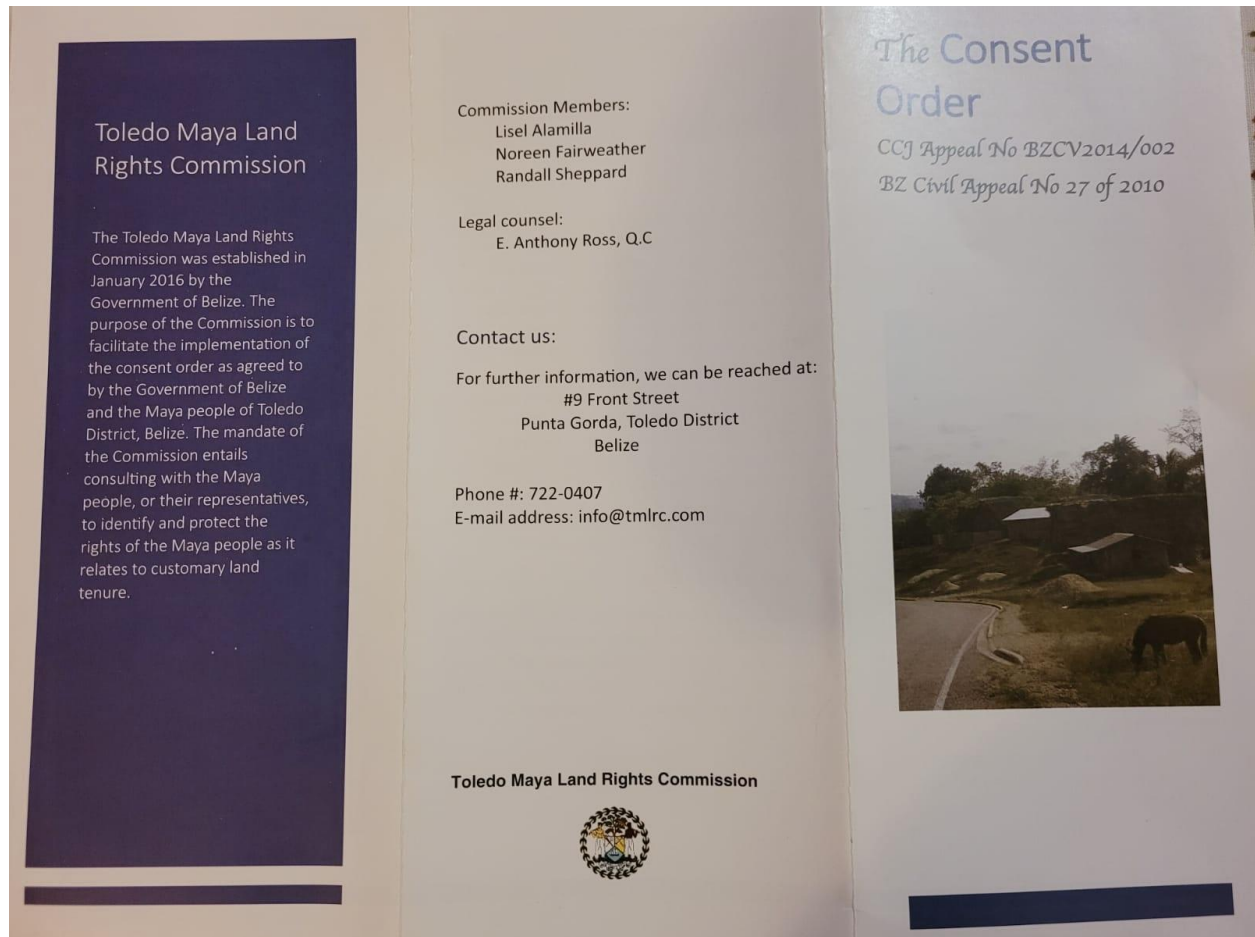
Source: Elaborated from SIB, 2010

Garifuna Communities

	Community	District	Primary Ethnic Group	Total Population	Sex Ratio (M/F)	Avg. Household Size
1.	Barranco	Toledo	Garifuna	157	1:0.96	2.9
2.	Dangriga Town	Stann Creek	Garifuna	9,580	1:1.08	3.7
3.	Georgetown	Stann Creek	Garifuna	473	1:0.96	4.9
4.	Hopkins	Stann Creek	Garifuna	1,610	1:1.07	3.8
5.	Punta Gorda Town	Toledo	Garifuna	5,351	1:1.12	3.9
6.	Seine Bight	Stann Creek	Garifuna	1,310	1:0.96	4.0

Source: Elaborated from SIB, 2010

Consent Order (Brochure)



1. The judgment of the Court of Appeal of Belize is affirmed insofar as it holds that Maya customary land tenure exists in the Maya Villages in the Toledo District and gives rise to the collective and individual property rights within the meaning of sections 3 (d) and 17 of the Belize Constitution.

2. The Court accepts the undertaking of the Government to adopt affirmative measures to identify and protect the rights of the Appellants arising from Maya customary tenure, in conformity with the constitutional protection of property and nondiscrimination in sections 3, 3(d), 16 and 17 of the Belize Constitution.

3. In order to achieve the objective of paragraph 2, the Court accepts the undertaking of the Government to, in consultation with the Maya people or their representatives, develop the legislative, administrative, and/or other measures necessary to create an effective mechanism to identify and protect the property and other rights arising from Maya customary land tenure, in accordance with Maya Customary laws and land tenure practices.

BY CONSENT IT IS ORDERED AND DECLARED THAT:

4. The court accepts the undertaking of the government that, until such time as the measures in paragraph 2 are achieved, it shall cease and abstain from any acts, whether by the agents of the government itself or third parties acting with its leave, acquiescence or tolerance, that might adversely affect the value, use or enjoyment of the lands that are used and occupied by the Maya villages, unless such acts are preceded by consultation with them in order to obtain their informed consent, and are in conformity with their hereby recognized property rights and the safeguards of the Belize Constitution. This undertaking includes but is not limited to, abstaining from:

- a) issuing any leases or grants to lands or resources under the National Lands Act or any other Act;
- b) registering any interest in land;
- c) issuing or renewing any authorizations for resource exploitation, including concessions, permits or contracts authorizing logging, prospecting or exploration, mining or similar activity under the Forests Act, the Mines and Minerals Act the Petroleum Act or any other Act.

- 5. The constitutional authority of the Government over all lands in Belize is not affected by this order.
- 6. The Court shall determine the remaining issue in this case, namely the Appellants' claim for damages.
- 7. There shall be liberty to apply.
- 8. The Appellants' costs of this appeal and in the courts below shall be agreed by 30th April or taxed.
- 9. The Court retains jurisdiction to oversee compliance with this order and sets 30th April 2016 for reporting by the parties.



Data on poverty

District minimum food basket costs for an adult male

District	Daily Cost ²⁵	Annual Cost
Corozal	\$5.35	\$1,953.00
Orange Walk	\$5.32	\$1,942.00
Belize	\$5.36	\$1,958.00
Cayo	\$4.91	\$1,791.00
Stann Creek	\$5.99	\$2,186.00
Toledo	\$6.12	\$2,234.00
Country	\$5.50	\$2,005.00

Source: Country Poverty Assessment, Final Report 2010

District general poverty line

District	MFB Annual	Food Share	Annual General Poverty Line
Corozal	\$1,952.00	64%	\$3,041.00
Orange Walk	\$1,941.00	59%	\$3,308.00
Belize City & surrounding	\$1,920.00	50%	\$3,810.00
San Pedro Town	\$2,354.00	45%	\$5,279.00
Belmopan & surrounding	\$2,088.00	56%	\$3,730.00
San Ignacio/Santa Elena & surrounding	\$1,621.00	54%	\$3,537.00
Stann Creek	\$2,186.00	56%	\$3,906.00
Toledo	\$2,233.00	81%	\$2,753.00
Country	\$2,005.00	58%	\$3,429.00

Source: Country Poverty Assessment, Final Report 2010

Extent of poverty in Belize

Category	Indigent	Poor/Not Indigent	Total Poor	Vulnerable	Not Poor	Total Not Poor	Grand Total
Households	8,539	16,852	25,390	10,583	45,927	56,510	81,900
	10.4%	20.6%	31%	12.9%	56.1%	69%	100%
Population	52,185	84,455	136,640	45,614	148,460	194,074	330,715
	15.8%	25.5%	41.3%	13.8%	44.9%	58.7%	100%

Source: Country Poverty Assessment, Final Report 2010

²⁵ The market basket (MFB) is determined by calculating the minimum cost of a balanced diet, within a particular community, for an adult male consuming 2,400 calories/day.

Food insecurity

Estimated prevalence of food insecurity by district in Belize

	Moderate + Severe	Severe only
Total sample	41.4	5.4
Corozal	51.07	4.56
Orange Walk	46.37	4.73
Belize	29.44	5.26
Cayo	48.56	4.7
Stann Creek	40.47	7.65
Toledo	52.08	7.05

Source: FAO (2021). Prevalence of food insecurity in Belize - 2021

Estimated prevalence of food insecurity in the urban vs rural population

	Moderate + Severe	Severe only
Total sample	41.4	5.4
Urban	33.8	4.26
Rural	48.45	6.46

Source: FAO (2021). Prevalence of food insecurity in Belize - 2021

Estimated prevalence of food insecurity by ethnic group

	Moderate + Severe	Severe only
Total sample	41.4	5.4
Creole	35.61	7.15
Garifuna	31.58	6.64
Maya	57.09	8.73
Mestizo/Hispanic	45.63	4.36
Mennonite	21.1	1.56

Source: FAO (2021). Prevalence of food insecurity in Belize - 2021




Education costs

Type of expense	Kinder (3-4 years)	Primary (infant 1-2, standard 1-6)	High School (Form 1-4)
Registration fee	25	52	256
Yearly fees (monthly fees x 10)	450	150	0
Materials (pens, pencils, notebooks, uniforms, shoes, schoolbag)	125	153	173
Yearly education cost per child	\$600.00	\$355.00	\$429.00
Number of years in each level	2	8	4
Total education cost per child per level	\$1,200.00	\$2,840.00	\$1,716.00
Total cost of education per child			\$5,756.00

Source: Voorend, et. al., 2021

Grievance Form

Grievance Redress Form (Sample)

Grievance #:	
Date:	
Full Name of complainant:	
Address:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Signature:	
Description of grievance: (What happened? Where did it happen? Who did it happen to? What is the result of the problem?)	
Date of Incident/Grievance:	<input type="checkbox"/> One-time incident/grievance (date _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Happened more than once (how many times? _____) <input type="checkbox"/> On-going (currently experiencing problem)
What would you like to see happen to resolve the problem?	
For Official Use Only	
Steps taken to address grievance:	
Please return this form to one of the following addresses:	 Project Coordinator (address required)  MAFSE's offices (address required)  Project Steering Committee (address required)