

Outline Of Accomplishments

1999 - 2004

Elections and Boundaries Department

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Updated November 29, 2004

1. Accomplishments in Financial Management

Through strategies in the financial management, the Department realized savings of approximately **\$1,508,108.00** via purely opportunity cost. The figure **\$1,508,108.00** is conservative as it is too cumbersome to document **all** savings.

- Computerization
- Establishment of Record Room
- Office Enhancement
- Voter Education and Community Outreach
- Workshops and Training
- Preparation of Publications
- Expansion/Extension of Services
- Database System Upgrade
- EBC Software enhancement and upgrade
- Website creation and update

2. Institutional Strengthening

a) Capacity Building and Empowerment of Staff

Personal and career development is ongoing since August 1999. In-house training to enhance service delivery is facilitated by staff of the Ministry of The Public Service, Private Sector and Senior Staff of the Department. Topics range from several areas of the ROPA, to English and Report Writing, Supervisory Skills and Business Ethics, Conflict Management, Customer/Public Relations and software applications.

A two-day workshop was facilitated by the Belize Institute of Management (BIM) in 2002 in Leadership and Customer Service.

To date, 110 workshops and national staff meetings have been conducted, including 3 two-day Retreats and 2 one-day Retreats. 89% of staff members returned to formal education institutions since 2001:

➤ CXC English

- ✧ 2001, 2002—2 out of 3 successful
- ✧ 2003 – 1 out of 2 successful
- ✧ 2004 – 2 out of 2 successful

➤ English Course, Module II through UWI

- ✧ 5 completed in 2002

➤ College degrees

- ✧ 3 pursuing first degrees
- ✧ 1 completed first degree
- ✧ 2 pursuing graduate degrees
- ✧ 1 completed graduate degree

➤ Certificate in Public Administration (CPA)

- ✧ 2001—1 completed

- ✧ 2003—2 completed
- ✧ 2004 – 2 completed

➤ **Sixth Form Junior College**

- ✧ 2001—2 graduated
- ✧ 2002—5 graduated
- ✧ 2003—5 taking classes
- ✧ 2004 – 2 taking classes

b) Award System

An Award System was introduced in early 2000 as an incentive to boost initiative and production.

- **Merit Award** to one staff member in 2001
- **Staff of the year** since 2000
- **Most productive** since 2000
- **Most initiative** since 2000
- **Most enhanced** Office since 2000
- **Golden Torch Award** in 2004

c) Enhancement of Physical Environment to Offices

Improved physical condition of offices was a priority in 1999. Of nine district offices, five moved to more suitable environments, while others were upgraded by respective Landlords.

At the Central Office much of the enhancement resulted from the efforts of staff members, who painted the interior of the office in 1999. Since 2000 and 2001, there is a Reception Area, a Records Room, and a Conference Room.

Enhancements to the following were made in 2003:

- Central Office—creation of a Kitchenette and enhancement of Conference Room
- New Road Office
- Vernon Street Office
- Belmopan Office

Enhancements to the following were made in 2004:

- Dangriga Office by landlord
- Punta Gorda Office by staff
- Independence Office by staff
- New Road Office by staff
- Orange Walk Office by staff

d) Staff Communication and Planning

➤ *Produced and Provided*

- ◆ Monthly Staff Newsletter—2001 to present
- ◆ Conference call capabilities
- ◆ Annual Reports—1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003
- ◆ Annual Plan of Action—1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004
- ◆ Annual Objective and Performance Targets—2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004
- ◆ Minutes of meetings

➤ *Face-to-face Meetings*

- ◆ Regular national staff meetings – 3 times per year
- ◆ Staff Retreat—October 2000, December 2001, December 2002, December 2003, December 2004
- ◆ General Assembly—December 2001, December 2002, December 2003, December 2004

➤ *Self Evaluation*

- ◆ Evaluation of Organization
 - September 1999
 - September 2000
 - May 2001
 - December 2003
 - December 2004

e) Production of Manuals and Reports

➤ *Ten Manuals were produced*

- Policies and Procedures on The EBC Database System, 2001; Revised August 2003; Revised August 2004
- Administrative Manual, 2000; Revised August 2003
- Guide to Election Officials; 2002
- Election Day Guide to Political Agents; 2002
- A Guide for New Entrants; October 2003
- A Quick Reference for Registering Officers; December 2003
- Tips for Computer Users: A Guide for Staff; June 2004
- Creating a Basic PowerPoint Presentation: A Guide for Staff; June 2004
- Creating Form Letters Using Mail Merge: A Guide for Staff; June 2004
- Creating a Simple Spreadsheet: A Guide for Staff; June 2004

➤ *Several Reports produced including:*

- Report on, March 5th 2003 Elections Report; April 2003
- Report on, By-election Cayo South Electoral Division; November 2003

➤ **Other Publications**

- Calendar 2003
- Bookmarkers
- Accomplishments in Financial Management to 2003 & 2004

f) Office Supervision

The Chief Elections Officer makes an average of forty-three physical visits per year to Offices countrywide. Due to the March Elections, supervision increased between January and March to an average of once per week.

g) Computerization Project

Launched on May 17, 2000, the National Computerization Project allows for each District Office and each desk at Central Office to have a full computer system for the storing and retrieval of data. New hardware was purchased and the current hardware repaired and upgraded. Staff members trained.

3. EBC Software

Each year, the software has been enhanced and automated.

a) Routines programmed for efficiency and enhancement

- Voters' Lists
- Automation to produce required reports
- Date-range batch control to verify data being entered
- Limitation of the date of birth field
- Automation of deletions
- Automation of data export
- Automation of male/female
- Automation of Report by "country born"

b) Enhancement of administrative functions to make application more secure

- Control of access levels restricts users to areas of responsibilities
- Improved backup system implemented
- Control age range
- Expand data field

c) Training of Staff on-site to be familiar with the new features

d) Changed the Operating System to Windows 2000 from NT 4.0

4. Database Systems

a) Data Integrity Project

Both manual and electronic systems have undergone massive “cleaning” (Ref. Annual Report 2000) and reorganization, and have moved from 37% reliability and accuracy in July 1999 to 96% reliability and accuracy presently. The data integrity project was conducted in conjunction with the regular day-to-day activities of the Department. Total opportunity cost of data integrity project for labour and supplies was approximately **\$350,834.00** at 2001. Maintenance and improvement is continuous.

b) Completion of Data Entry

- 2/3 of the data collected in 1997/98 had not been keyboarded at July 1999. This was completed early 2000.

- 2002, 2003
 - Replacing Registration Cards
 - Filing displaced ID Cards from 1997/1998
 - Correction of Male/Female

- 2004
 - Replacing Registration Cards
 - Re-filing Records Cards
 - Setting up files for Disqualified/ Deceased Record Cards

5. Electoral Administration

a) Increase in electoral registration to approximately 129,000

b) Provided off-the-counter service to approximately 29,000 individuals, including transfer of electors in 2003 and equal amounts in 2004

c) Supervised and organized seven elections to 2002

- Belmopan Referendum, November 1999
- Belmopan City Council, March 2000
- Municipal, March 2000
- General Village Council, April to May 2001
- By-elections, Village Council November 2001, 2002
- Toledo Development Corporation (TDC), December 2001

- By-election, Benque Viejo del Carmen Town Council, 2002; electronically enhanced dissemination of results

d) Organized the following elections in 2003

- March 5, 2003 Elections—Town, City and General in one day—a first for the CARICOM region; resulted in no recounts and no petitions
- By-election Cayo South Electoral Division October 29, 2003

e) Annual Revision

2001 to 2004, completed Annual Revision of electors as per ROPA—provided hard and electronic copies of Annual Divisional Registers to Political Parties represented in the House of Representatives.

f) Boundary delimitation

- Completed redistricting processes for Toledo East and Stann Creek West in 2002
- Participated as a member of a Task Force on the General Boundary Delimitation Project in 2003 and 2004

g) Supervised Village Council Elections 2004

6. **Community Outreach**

**a) New District & Sub-Offices
2001**

Belmopan: Provided services to surrounding communities in Cayo South including the City of Belmopan and surrounding communities; and also the following:

- Along the Hummingbird Highway to Mr. Gilly Waight’s farm
- West along the Western Highway, to Unitedville;
- East along the Western Highway to Jaguar Paw Area

Independence: Provided services to surrounding communities in Toledo East and Stann Creek West—Georgetown, Independence, Placencia, Seine Bight, Trio Farm, Big Creek, Bella Vista, Monkey River, etc.

New Road, Belize City: Provided services to the three Belize Rural Divisions

2004

San Pedro: Provided services to the Belize Rural South Division.

b) AKA Amnesty Project

Through a partnership with the Vital Statistics Unit, a six-months AKA Amnesty Project was launched on May 2, 2001. The primary objective was to give electors the opportunity to legally change their surnames to the surname of choice via Deed Poll, free of cost. These are electors who registered in 1997/98, with AKA's or with the mother's maiden name.

c) Extended registration services on the Islands of San Pedro Ambergis Caye and Caye Caulker

- April 19 and 20, 2002
- August 31, 2002
- December 6 and 7, 2002
- February and August 2003

d) Street Names Project

- Collected street names from Municipal Bodies in 2000 and 2001 for both existing and new communities for standardization of street names on database

7. Voter Education

a) Provided Training to Organization

- Two hundred and sixty-eight (268) schools and organizations were visited to lecture on the Registration and Voting Processes and to apprise on the Role of the Department.

b) Voter Appreciation Day held countrywide on the following dates:

- November 1999
- May 2000
- March 2000
- March 2002
- May 2003
- May 2004

c) Workshops for Stakeholders

(i) Organized workshops entitled National Dialogue for a Culture of Democracy

- The Role of Stakeholders; June 2002
- Registration Process; September 2002
- Revision Process; November 2002
- Boundary Delimitation; October 2003
- Distributed Governance: Widening the Sphere of Accountability; October 2004

(ii) Dialogue on Boundary Delimitation

Discussion with students at tertiary level institutions in September and October 2003 to:

- UB Toledo
- Stann Creek Ecumenical Sixth Form
- UB Belize City
- St. John's Junior College
- Adventist Junior College
- Muffles College
- Corozal Community College
- Wesley College Sixth Form

d) Produced Five Brochures

In 2001:

- All About Us
- Voter Registration—All You Want to Know

In 2002:

- Referendum Act
- The Election Process

In 2003:

- Boundary Redistricting

e) Library Corners in Sub-Libraries

In 2002:

- Corozal Town
- San Joaquin
- Benque Viejo del Carmen
- Orange Walk Town
- Punta Gorda Town

In 2003:

- Leo Bradley Library, Belize City
- Thurton Library, Belize City

f) Media Presentations

- Guest on KREM—2000,2001,2002, 2003
- Guest on LOVE FM—1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003
- Guest on FM 2000—1999

g) Golden Anniversary Celebration Countrywide – 50 years under Universal Adult Suffrage; April 2004

8. Training for Public Officers

a) Clerical Promotional Programme 2003

The Ministry of the Public Service offers courses to Second Class Clerks for professional development. The programme was for 6 weeks culminating with an examination.

- At the initiative of staff, one of the courses taught was on the Election Process and the Role of Public Officers. This was wholly organized and taught by staff members. An evaluation via a questionnaire instrument was done and the analysis shared with the Ministry of the Public Service.
- Two Assistant Registering Officers participated as students.

b) Orientation Training Sessions

Department's Staff

In 2003, orientation training was implemented for new entrants to the Department. Topics covered were:

- General information on the Department, Public Service Regulation and Government Workers Regulations
- Departmental processes and procedures

Other Public Officers

In 2004, the department participated in two orientation-training sessions for new entrants to the Public Service.

c) Preparation for Election Management

- Six hundred eighty-nine (689) Public Officers trained in preparation for the conduct Elections—City and Town Councils, February 2000
- Two hundred forty-three (243) Public Officers trained to conduct Village Council Elections in 2001 and 2002
- 931 Public Officers trained in preparation for possible Referendum; October 2002
- Approximately 823 Public Officers trained to conduct Municipal Elections in 2003; November and December 2002
- Approximately 1200 Public Officers trained to conduct March 5 2003 triple Elections; February 2003
- 61 Public Officers trained to conduct Cayo South by-election October 2003

d) Training for Police Recruits

A two-hour presentation to police recruits in Belmopan on *Voter Registration and The Election Process* in June 2003. An evaluation was conducted via a questionnaire instrument at the end of the session. This was shared with the Ministry of The Public Service.

A two and one-half hour presentation was held in November 2004, on *The Role of the Elections and Boundaries Commission/Department, The Role of Public Officers in the Election Process, Voter Registration and Boundary Delimitation*. A discussion followed the presentation.

9. International Electoral Missions

a) Presentations:

- Second Conference of the Global Electoral Organization (GEO) Network; Presented Paper entitled “*Voter Education—Belize’s Experience 1999 to 2003*”; Mexico City; March 2003
- Workshop on Voter Registration, Chaired session on “*Voter Registration—The Challenges*”; Mauritius; June 2002

b) Administrative:

- Member of 5-person Commission of Inquiry in to the work of Elections and Boundaries Commission of Trinidad & Tobago; February to May 2002
- Elected Member of Executive Board, Association of Caribbean Electoral Organization; July 2001

c) Voter Registration Observation:

- Commonwealth Secretariat Observer Group, Antigua & Barbuda’s Voter Registration, July and August 2003

d) Election Observation:

- CARICOM Observer Team to Antigua and Barbuda; March 2004
- Funded by IFES to Curacao in May 2003
- Commonwealth Secretariat Observer Group to Sierra Leone; May 2002
- CARICOM Observer Group to Trinidad & Tobago; December 2001
- CARICOM Team to St. Vincent; April 2001
- CARICOM Team to Guyana; March 2001
- Commonwealth Observer Group to Trinidad & Tobago; December 2000

10. CEO's Publications and Presentations

Publications:

- *A Framework for Voter Education* launched February 2004
- *“A Framework for Voter Education” (Draft)*, November 2003
- *“The Garifuna of Belize—A Situational Analysis”*; The Second Gathering; Trinidad and Tobago, Ministry of Culture and Gender Affairs; August 2000
- *“Selecting Our Leaders Past and Present”*; November 1999

Presentations:

- National Dialogue for a Culture of Democracy—Workshop presented on Boundary Delimitation—*“The Socio Political Situation”*, Belize City, Belize; October 2003
- *“The Electoral Process”*, presented to students of SJC Junior College in Belize City; March 2003
- *“An Overview of the History of Elections”*; Rally sponsored by the students of University of Belize (UB); Belize City, Belize; November 2002
- *“Referendum Act”*; Workshop for Reporters of all Media Houses; Belize City, Belize; October 2002
- *“The Referendum Act”* and *“The Functions of the Elections and Boundaries Department”*; presented to Staff of SPEAR, Belize City, Belize; October 2002
- National Dialogue for a Culture of Democracy—Workshop; presented on the *“Registration Process—The Practice”*, Belize City, Belize; September 2002
- National Dialogue for a Culture of Democracy Workshop; presented on the *“Roles and Functions of Elections and Boundaries Department”*, Belize City, Belize; June 2002
- *“Dangriga Belize or USA?: Out-migration Experiences of a Garifuna Community in Post/independent Belize”*; presented at a Conference on Belize, **Beyond Walls: Multi-disciplinary Perspectives**; Belize City, Belize; November 2001

- *“Democracy, Parliament and Electoral Systems”*; Conference, Wilton Park, Wiston House Conference Centre—Rapporteur to discussion on *“Transporting the Westminster System in the Caribbean”*; Steying, West Sussex, London UK; June 2001
- *“Media as Change Agent in the Protection of Our Families and Children”*; presented at a Conference on Child Abuse, Belize City, Belize; May 2001
- Exhibition entitled *“Man at Work: Culture as a Tool for Development”*; presented at the opening ceremony *“Culture as a Tool for Development”*; House of Culture, Belize City, Belize; May 2001
- Rotary Club, San Ignacio—Guest Speaker at a breakfast meeting on *“The Role of Elections and Boundaries”*, San Ignacio, Cayo; February 2001
- *“Food Security and The Poverty Puzzle at the Local Level: The case of North/South Belize”*; presented at the International Food and Nutrition Conference, Tuskegee University; October 2000
- *“National and International Migration –The Case of Belize”*; presented at the ECLAC/CDCC Expert Group Meeting on Interregional Migration; November 2000

11. Swearing In of Elections and Boundaries Commission

The Department organized swearing-in ceremony for newly appointed Chairman and Members; Tuesday, June 17, 2003. Justice Troadio Gonzalez conducted the ceremony, on behalf of the Chief Justice.

The Department organized swearing-in ceremony for a new member of the Commission October 21, 2004. Chief Justice Abdulai Conteh conducted the ceremony.