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**LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT
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Private Sector Involvement in the Response to HIV in Belize

“Hand in Hand Ministries can serve as an example to other private sector organizations to recognize the value of supporting and protecting their employees and clients through the implementation of an HIV Policy”

- Abel Vargas, Director



Hand in Hand Ministries, Day Care Center for children infected and affected by HIV.

- Photo Courtesy HHM



Hand in Hand Ministries Support Group for young persons infected and affected by HIV

- Photo Courtesy HHM

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In March of 2013 Hand in Hand Ministries, a private sector entity completed its HIV Workplace Policy. In so doing, they became the first non-public agency to commit to an HIV Policy as a part of the USAID/PASCA “Strengthening the Private Sector Involvement in the HIV Response in Belize” Project. HHM is a faith-based organization that provides care and support for HIV pediatric cases and their families in Belize.

Fr. Joseph and his brother, Wayne Fowler in 1999, founded Hand In Hand Ministry. In 2002 its first international office was established in Belize with several programs and initiatives focused on its mission to build strong communities by engaging individuals and families in transformational life experiences; by providing life's essentials in the areas of health, nutrition, shelter, education and support. One of the key initiatives includes an outreach program for children affected and infected by HIV/AIDS as well as a treatment center for children marginalized by poverty and disease complete with a daycare and pre-school, and a support group for teenagers and young adults living with HIV and AIDS.

As pioneers in the provision of comprehensive treatment, care and support to children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS within the national response, HHM chose to be a part of the USAID/PASCA Private Sector initiative to encourage others to do the same. The policy is instituted within the organization in order to encourage other organizations to do the same. Having an established, accepted and institutionalized document ensures consistency and continuity in the quality of service provided to those most in need. HHM sees its policy as a viable, living document that can serve as an example to other agencies and companies seeking to support and safeguard their employees and clients.

USAID/PASCA LMG will continue to work with other agencies and enterprises to ensure the completion and implementation of their policies. To date, 10 companies are engaged in the project and Hand in Hand serves proudly as mentor and role model within this project.