



## **STAKEHOLDERS MEETING WITH THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, MR CHESTER WILLIAMS**

February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019

The meeting was an informal platform to discuss issues related to community policing, and rule of law. The meeting also explored wider issues in relation to community policing, and a mechanism for engagement to ensure there is open, transparent and effective way of collaborative working between the Belize Police Department (BPD), CSOs, and the populations we serve, in order to restore the integrity of our working relationships.

### **Statement from Chester Williams, ComPol:**

“Thank you for being here today. The Police Department is here to assist anyone who seeks our assistance. While homophobia is real and unfavourable events may occur, all my Officers are instructed to treat people how they want to be treated. All our Officers are trained and have been sensitized to dealing with most populations. Since the public discussions surrounding LGBT rights in Belize, no recruits have been trained; however, we would be open to reaching out to the appropriate CSOs to assist us in developing an inclusive Human Rights package for recruits, as well as at our Senior Officers’ Meetings.”

### **Issues raised and discussed by delegates around the table:**

- agreed that the mistreatment of persons by the front liners in the BPD have been trained; however, there seems to be a level of complacency which results in lack of dedication to protecting and serving the community
- that the meeting itself is a proactive response rather than a reactive one. The ComPol was applauded for agreeing to this meeting
- a lack of trust in the police can create barriers to effective work and engagement with the police. This was attributed both to perceived and historical experiences
- need for better Monitoring and Evaluation Plan related to the mechanisms in place in order to measure their effectiveness and identify ways to improve the system as well as to establish a system which ensures the accountability of each member of the BPD
- the BPD are upholders of the law and will therefore act in accordance with the law; this means that the Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) and the systems in place can only be afforded to what the law defines as “couples”. Same-sex couples will be offered services; however, it will be dealt with as assault or the appropriate charge based on the impact or effects as outlined in the Laws of Belize



**OUR CIRCLE**  
Making a Difference Together!



- until something is otherwise legally documented and circulated; transgender persons will be treated in accordance to their sex as opposed to their identified gender
- important to push for the Laws, Policies and Acts, which exclude LGBT persons, to be revised; once these are revised the BPD will ensure that they are acted on to the fullest extent
- concerns were brought up about the Belize City focused programs for youth and DV survivors; the ComPol agrees that these structures, while effective, need to be spread across the country; however, the lack of resources limits their reach. ComPol welcomes any assistance with identifying resources to be able to replicate these programs
- CSOs were challenged to encourage people to highlight and report any human rights violations through the Local Unit Commanders where the violation occurs

#### **Next steps:**

1. Circulate notes from the meeting,
2. Arrange a follow up meeting with other CSO representatives to explore how some of the points raised could be translated to an action points
3. Arrange a follow up meeting with the ComPol

