



Orange Walk Town
2017-2021 Child-friendly Municipality
Strategic Plan
and
2017-2018 Operational Plan



*Sustainable and Child Friendly
Municipalities of Belize*



**Ministry of Local Government and the Belize Mayors'
Association**

with

Technical and Financial Support from UNICEF and UNDP



April 2017



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

Orange Walk Town
2017-2021 Child-friendly Municipality
Strategic Plan
and
2017-2018 Operational Plan



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The commitment and dedication of the Orange Walk Steering Committee is hereby acknowledged; the Leadership and continued support of Mayor Bernard is also highly appreciated. To the many children and service providers who participated in the consultation and validation workshops, your contributions have been stellar and this Strategic Plan would not have been possible without you. The financial and technical support from UNICEF and UNDP is also highly appreciated and the technical and administrative support from the Ministry of Local Government, in particular the Director and Project Coordinator is hereby acknowledged.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS.....	iii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 BACKGROUND	1
1.2 SITUATION OVERVIEW	2
1.3 TECHNICAL APPROACH.....	4
1.3.1 The SCFMI Domains and the NRFCA are Mutually Reinforcing.....	6
CHAPTER 2: THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK.....	8
2.1 NARRATIVE OVERVIEW.....	8
2.1.1 Vision and Guiding Principles	9
2.1.2 Transformational Goals	9
2.1.2.1 Goal I: Supportive Parents.....	10
2.1.2.2 Goal II: Prevention and Early Intervention	11
2.1.2.3 Goal III: Listen to and Involve Children and Adolescents.....	13
2.1.3 National Outcomes.....	14
2.1.3.1 Outcome I: Children are Active and Healthy.....	14
2.1.3.2 Outcome III: Children are Safe and Protected from Harm.....	16
2.1.3.3 Outcome IV: Children Enjoy Economic Security and Have Access to Opportunities	17
2.1.3.4 Outcome V: Children are Connected, Respected and Contributing to their World	18
CHAPTER 3: GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS	20
3.1 MEASURING PROGRESS	20
3.2 THE DRIVE FOR RESULTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY	24
3.3 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	24
3.3.1 Central Government Commitment.....	26
3.3.1.1 Prioritized Municipal Action, 2017-2018	26
REFERENCES.....	27
ANNEX A: Orange Walk Strategic Framework and Operational Plan.....	28

ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS

BEL – Belize Electricity Limited

BOOST – Building Opportunities for Our Social Transformation

BVSC – Orange Walk Steering Committee

BVTC – Orange Walk Town Council

CAB – Child Advisory Body

ICT – Information and Communication Technology

LFS – Labour Force Survey

M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation

MHD – Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation, Poverty Alleviation

MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

NCFC – National Committee for Families and Children

NDACC – National Drug Abuse Control Council

NHI – National Health Insurance

NRFCA – National Results Framework for Children and Adolescents

NPT – National Parenting Task Force

NYC – National Youth Council

PUP – People’s United Party

SCFM – Sustainable and Child Friendly Municipality

UDP – United Democratic Party

UNDP – United Nation Development Programme

UNICEF – United Nation Children’s Fund

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Sustainable and Child Friendly Municipalities Initiative is a collaborative effort among the Ministry of Labour, Local Government & Rural Development, the Belize Mayors' Association, UNICEF, and UNDP. In 2014, The Mayors of the nine municipalities in Belize signed an agreement for achieving Sustainable and Child Friendly Municipalities. The nine municipalities are the cities of Belize and Belmopan and towns of Orange Walk, Benque, San Ignacio and Santa Elena, Corozal, Dangriga, Punta Gorda, and San Pedro.

The Child Friendly Municipality Initiative defines a child friendly municipality as “...any local system of governance, committed to fulfilling children’s rights. It is a municipality where the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are an integral part of public policies, programmes and decisions. It is, as a result, a municipality that is fit for all.” These policies and decisions are better for the municipality, and children are healthier, safer and better protected. The result is a municipality fit for children, and fit for all.

Furthermore, UNICEF has developed a broad range of criteria for a Child Friendly Municipality. A municipality is deemed to be “child friendly” if children and youth are able to:

- ✓ Be included in decisions about their municipality;
- ✓ Express their opinions about the municipality they want in a meaningful way’;
- ✓ Participate in family, community and social life;
- ✓ Receive basic services such as health care and education;
- ✓ Drink safe water and have access to proper sanitation;
- ✓ Be protected from exploitation, violence and abuse;
- ✓ Walk safely in the streets on their own’
- ✓ Meet friends and play;
- ✓ Have green spaces for plants and animals;
- ✓ Live in an unpolluted environment;
- ✓ Participate in cultural and social events’;
- ✓ Be an equal citizen of their municipality with access to every service, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability.

To this end, with support from UNICEF and UNDP, the Municipality of Orange Walk has commissioned the development of this five-year Strategic Plan and two-year Operational Plan as a road map and action plan to guide its interventions as it continues on the path to ensuring that the municipality of Orange Walk is Sustainable and Child-friendly.

1.2 SITUATION OVERVIEW¹

Orange Walk Town is an inland municipality located 54 miles along the Phillip Goldson highway north of Belize City. Orange Walk Town is the only municipality in the Orange Walk District, a district which is predominantly rural with 70% of its population residing in rural communities. It is the administrative and commercial centre of the district.

Population and Demographics: According to the 2010 population census count, Orange Walk Town experienced a 1% growth between 2000 and 2010, the lowest growth rate of the 9 municipalities. This is equivalent to an average annual growth rate of only 0.1%, far below the 3% average annual growth rate for urban areas between the intercensal period. At the 2010 population census count, the population was estimated to be around 13,700 persons. It is now the fourth most-populated municipality in Belize, having been outgrown by San Ignacio-Santa Elena Town and Belmopan between 2000 and 2010. The average household size also declined from 4.4 persons per household in 2000 to 4.1 persons per household in 2010. The low population growth in Orange Walk Town is likely as a result of population movement from urban to adjacent rural communities such as Trial Farm and San Jose Palmar.

Orange Walk Town is predominantly a Mestizo community, with history, language, and culture closely tied to neighbouring Mexico. Mestizos are by far the major ethnic group, comprising over 78% of the population in both 2000 and 2010. Spanish is by far the most widely spoken language, with over 79% of the population speaking Spanish. However, English is also spoken by 75% of the population, indicating that the majority of the population is bilingual (Spanish, English).

The male-to-female ratio declined from 0.98 in 2000 to 0.96 in 2010. Since the population census figures are based on a de-facto count of the non-institutional population, this may be as a result of a portion of male population temporarily residing in other areas of the country in pursuit of employment or higher education, or residing in institutions such as military camps.

The Age-Dependency ratio declined significantly from 73 dependents per 100 adults in 2000 to 53 dependents per 100 adults in 2010. This is mainly as a result of the actual decrease in the number of children and infants between the intercensal period. The foreign-born population in Orange Walk Town remained fairly constant at around 12% of the population between 2000 and 2010. The

¹ Source: Orange Walk Town Municipal Profile

foreign-born population in Orange Walk Town has traditionally been from Central America; however within the intercensal period, there has been increased immigration from India and China.

Education: Currently there are 7 Primary schools, 4 High schools, and 1 sixth form established in Orange Walk Town. The Gross Enrolment rate in primary school increased from 122% in 2004 to 133% in 2010. The gross enrolment rate is significantly above 100% which may be largely due to children from adjacent rural communities attending primary schools in Orange Walk Town. The ratio of boys to girls enrolled in primary school decreased from 1.09 in 2000 to 1.06, indicating that more boys than girls are enrolled in primary school. The Gross Enrolment rate in secondary school increased significantly for both males and females between the intercensal period, from 61% in 2000 to 80% in 2010 for males, and from 66% in 2000 to 84% in 2010 for females. The ratio of boys to girls enrolled in secondary school increased from 0.92 in 2000 to 0.96 in 2010, indicating that more girls than boys are enrolled in secondary school.

The Youth Literacy rate (15 to 24 years) increased for both males and females, from 87% in 2000 to 95% in 2010 for male youth, and from 87% in 2000 to 96% in 2010 for female youth, indicating similar levels of literacy among youths by sex. Technical and Vocational training also experienced significant growth as the number of trainees increased by 73% in 2010 compared to 2000. The Orange Walk ITVET has developed a strong vocational and technical training program over the past 5 years.

Utilities: Bottled water is the main source of drinking water for households in Orange Walk Town, with the proportion of households using bottled water doubling from 42% in 2000 to 85% in 2010. Flush toilet piped to septic tank is the main type of toilet facility for most households in Orange Walk Town. The proportion of households with flush toilets increased from 61% in 2000 to 80% in 2010. Meanwhile, households using traditional pit latrines have declined by half from 38% in 2000 to 19% in 2010. Orange Walk Town is among the six municipalities in the country without an established sewer system for waste water disposal and treatment.

The vast majority of households in Orange Walk Town use electricity as the main power source for lighting. The proportion of households with electricity has remained steady at around 97% of all households between 2000 and 2010.

Employment: Results from the annual Belize Labour Force Survey show that there were 5,233 employed persons, and 325 unemployed persons, comprising a total labour force of 5,558 persons in Orange Walk Town in April 2014. The total unemployment rate declined from 9.6% in April 2013 to 5.8% in April 2014. In April 2014, the male unemployment rate was 5.5%, while the female unemployment rate was slightly higher at 6.4%. Youth unemployment in April 2014 was 20.7% among males and 23.5% among females, about 5 times higher than the corresponding total male and female unemployment rates in April 2014.

1.3 TECHNICAL APPROACH

The National Results Framework for Children and Adolescents (NRFCA) 2017-2030 is a 14-year outcome focussed national development agenda for Belize. Commissioned by the National Committee for Families and Children in 2016 and endorsed by the Government of Belize in 2017, this national policy framework sets out the Government's agenda and priorities in relation to children and adolescents aged 0 – 19 years. The long-term framework is structured along 6 Transformational Goals and 5 National Outcomes each with 4 associated aims, Figure 1.

Decision of the Sustainable and Child-friendly Municipality Project Steering Committee and the Orange Walk Steering Committee to align the municipality strategic plans with this national agenda is a strategic move and offers a number of benefits, inter alia:

- ✓ a common strategic framework for social development;
- ✓ an opportunity for improved vertical coordination [Central and Local Government] and horizontal coordination [across government, private and civil society active at the municipal levels];
- ✓ it is embedded within a child-rights framework and places equal emphasis on key results and supporting processes;
- ✓ it has an established monitoring framework;
- ✓ it is grounded in a consultative and inclusive process with children & adolescents and service providers;
- ✓ it is well aligned with the Sustainable and Child-friendly Municipalities Concept/Domains; and importantly,
- ✓ it enjoys bi-partisan (UDP and PUP) political support.

VISION

Belize is the best nation in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and adolescents are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and they are supported to realise their maximum potential

PRINCIPLES

- Children's Rights ■
- Family-Centred ■
- Equality and Equity ■
- Accountability and Resource Efficiency ■
- Evidence Informed and Outcomes Focused ■

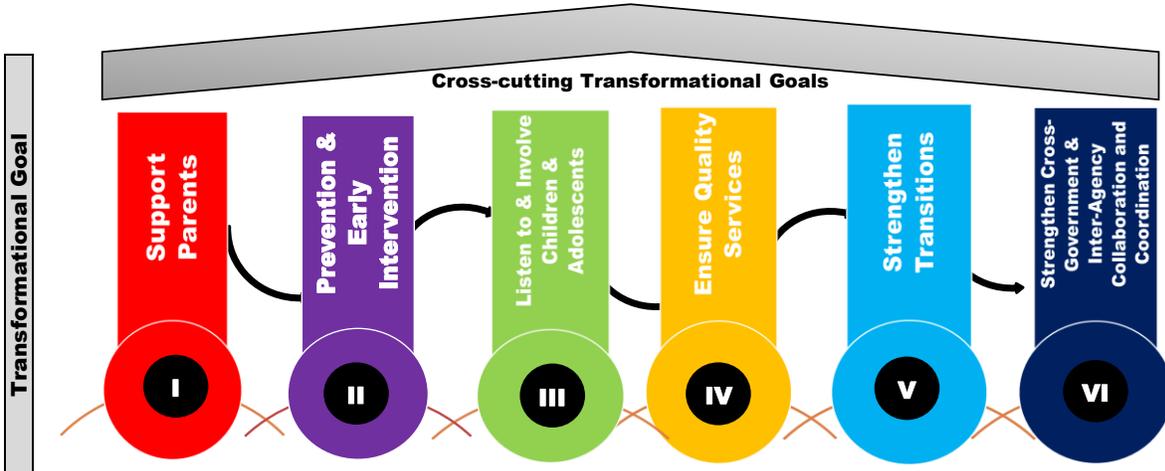
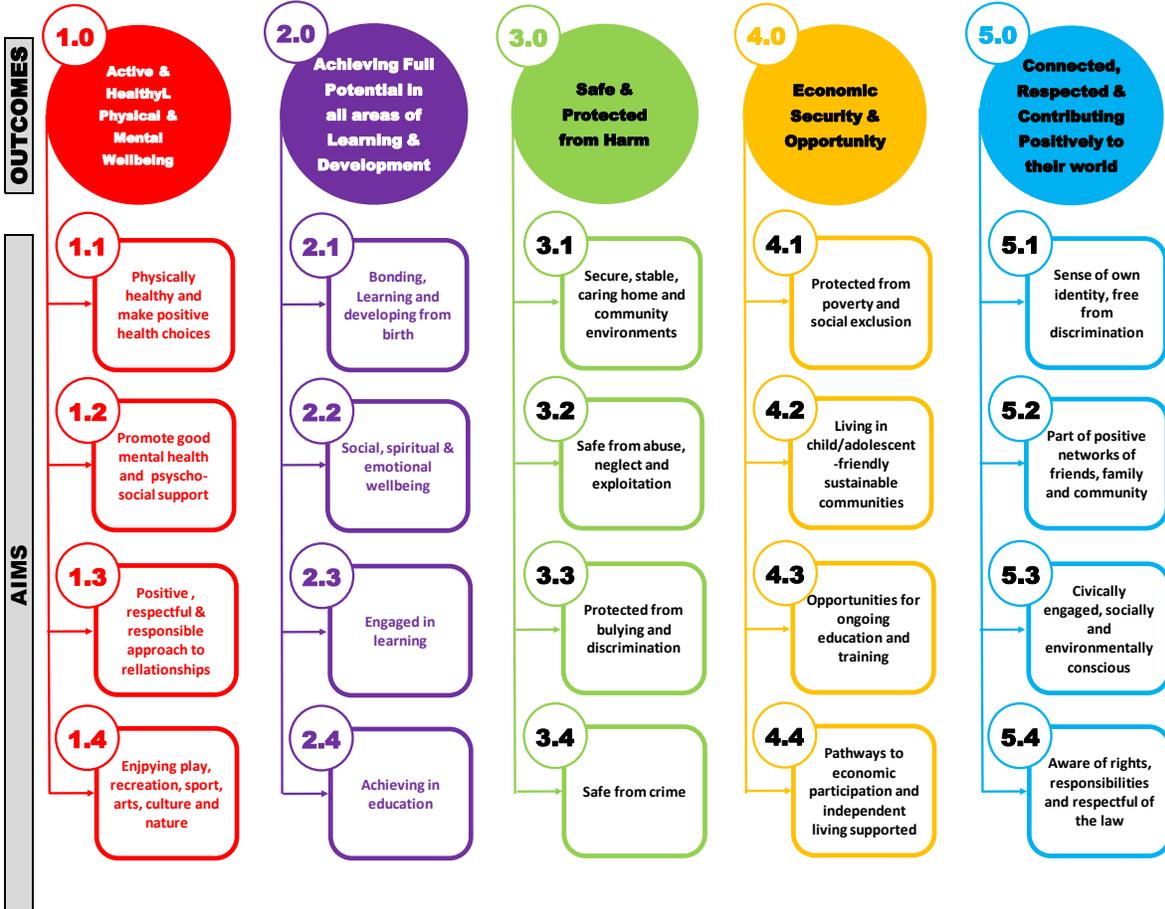


Figure 1: NRFCFA 2017-2030 Strategic Intent

To this end, a Sensitization session on the NRFCA 2017-2030 with the Orange Walk Project Steering Committee was conducted and subsequently after further review the decision to align with the Strategic Plan taken.

Subsequently, and underpinned by further literature review a Stakeholder Sensitization and Consultation Workshop was conducted with rights holders (CAB members, children and youth representatives from urban schools) and duty bearers (OWTC, Steering Committee, central government service providers present in Orange Walk, NGOs) to validate and prioritize the goals, outcomes and commitments for Orange Walk for the period 2017-2021 and identify priority actions for the 2027-2018 Operational Plan. Table 1 summarizes the number of goals, outcomes, aims and commitments prioritized against the NRFCA.

Table 1: Summary Goals, Outcomes, Aims and Commitments

	Transformational Goals	Commitments	National Outcomes	Aims	Commitments
NRFCA 2017-2030	6	55	5	20	71
Orange Walk Strategic Plan 2017-2021	3	14	9	8	14

Having prioritized the goals, outcomes and commitments and identified the priority actions, the DRAFT 2017-2021 Strategic Plan was developed and subjected to validation by the Orange Walk rights holders and duty bearers. Subsequently, the DRAFT Strategic Plan 2017-2021 was subjected for further technical review by the Project Coordinator, the National Project Steering Committee and the OW Town Council prior to finalization.

1.3.1 The SCFMI Domains and the NRFCA are Mutually Reinforcing

The NRFCA 2017-2030 is an excellent fit with the Sustainable and Child-friendly Municipality Conceptual Model and Domains; to this end, adoption and effective implementation of the rights-based NRFCA mutually reinforces and underpins achievement of the desired results under SCFMI. Figure 2 provides a visual of the mapping of the NRFCA unto the SCFM domains..

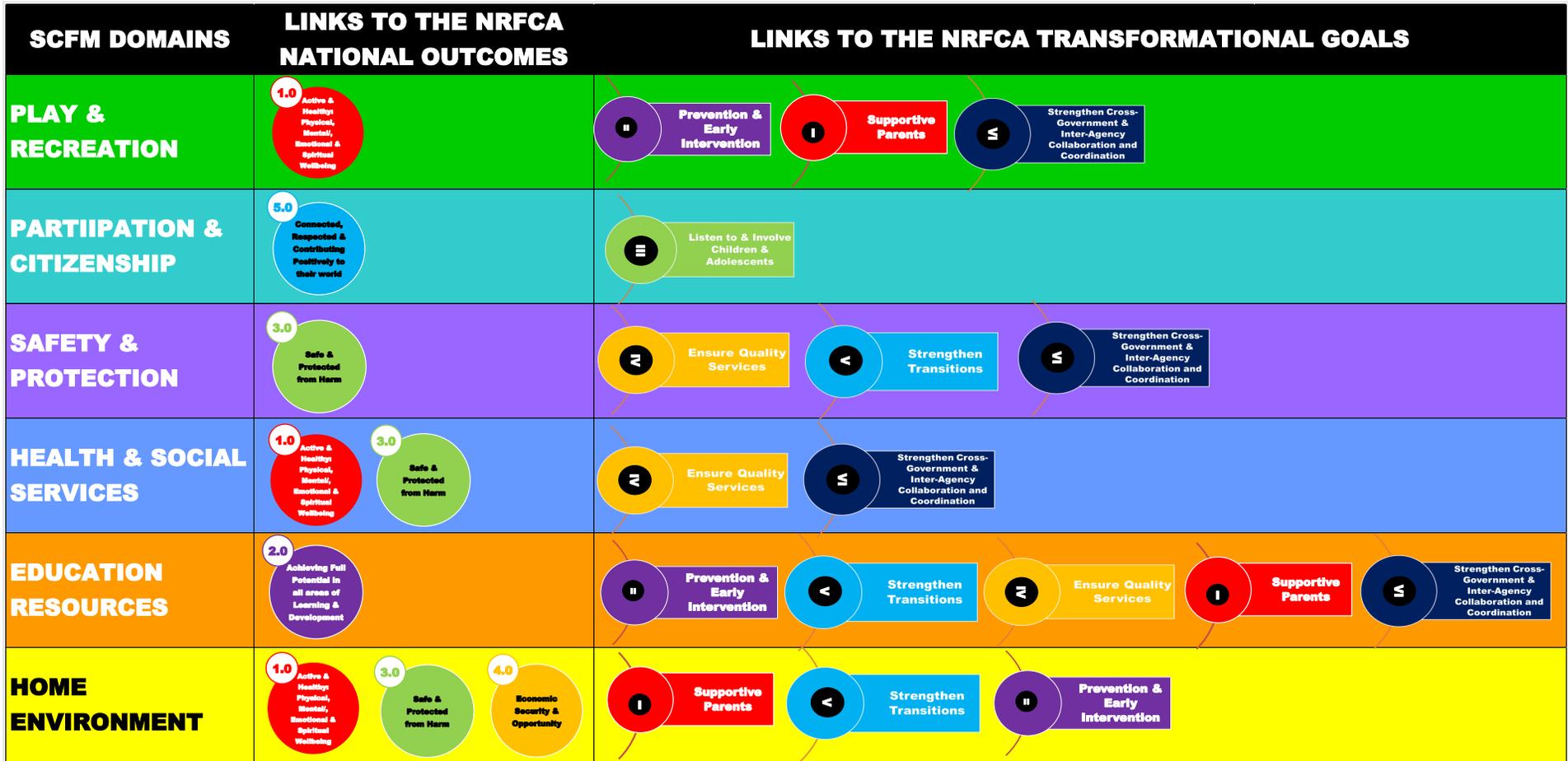


Figure 2: Mapping of the NRFCA 2017-2030 unto the SCFM Domains

CHAPTER 2: THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

2.1 NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

As earlier noted, the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan is adapted from the 2017-2030 National Long Term Results Framework for Children and Adolescents commissioned by the National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC).

The following section outlines the adopted Vision, Transformational Goals and Commitments and National Outcome, Aims and Commitments along with prioritized Municipal Actions for Orange Walk. *While the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan is based on prioritized goals and outcomes adapted from the NRFCA 2017-2030, it is by no means exhaustive and it is understood that successive iterations of strategic plans for Orange Walk, i.e. SP 2022-2026 and SP 2027-2030 will reflect other priorities drawn from the 2017-2030 Framework and build on the successes of the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan.*

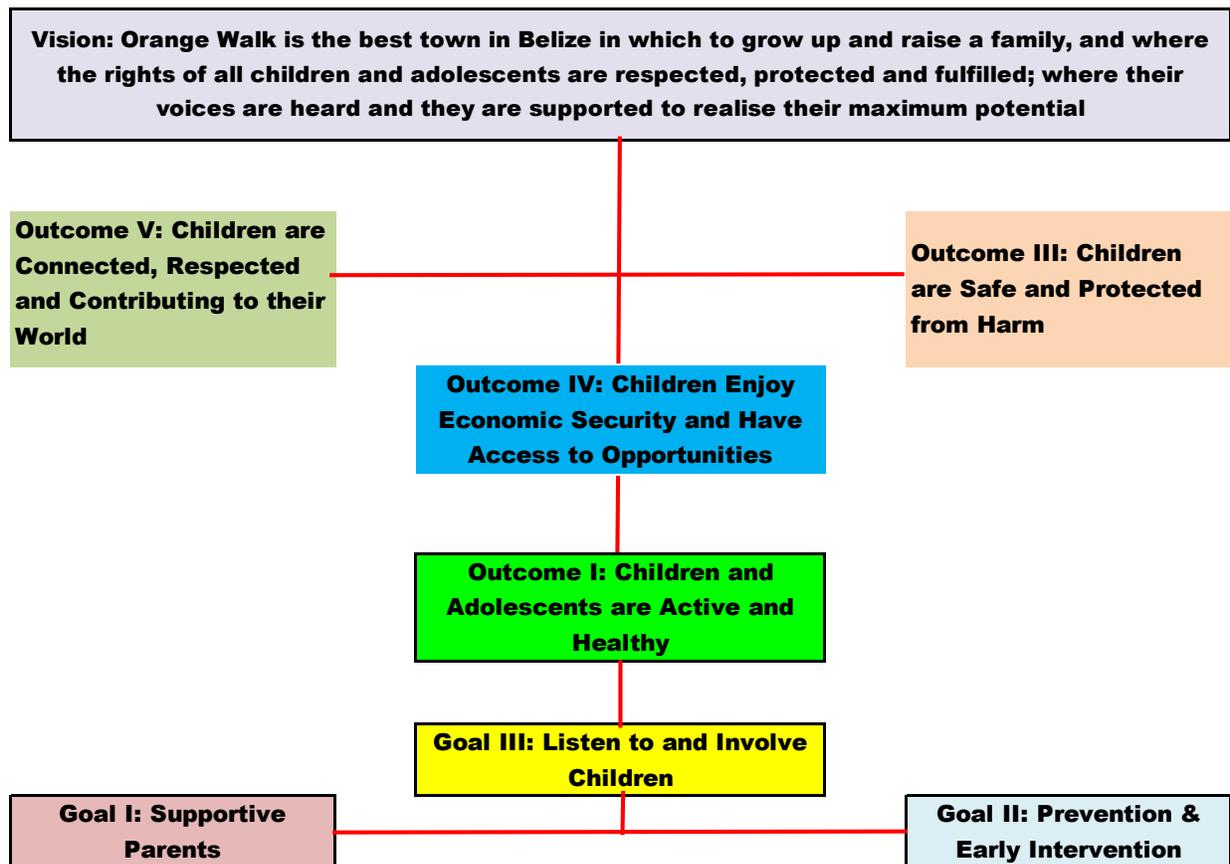


Figure 3: Orange Walk Strategic Plan, Priority Goals and Outcomes

2.1.1 Vision and Guiding Principles

The Vision aspired for through the successful implementation of the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan is for Orange Walk to be *the best town in Belize in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of its children and adolescents are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realize their maximum potential.*

The effective implementation and monitoring of the Strategic Plan is guided by the following principles:

Child Rights: The rights of children as specified in the UNCRC are recognized and child-centred approaches are adopted, including the development of laws, policies, and services which take into account the needs, rights and best interests of children and adolescents;

Family-Centred: The family is recognized as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and wellbeing of children; and while external interventions support and empower families within the community, children are only taken into care as a measure of last resort, to secure the child's safety and welfare;

Evidence Informed and Outcomes-focussed: Policies and services must be evidence-informed and outcomes-focussed to be effective by placing the needs of children and adolescents at the centre of government decision-making;

Accountability and Resource Efficiency: Clear implementation, monitoring and accountability mechanisms and lines of responsibility for delivery are in place to drive timely and effective policy implementation; and

Equality and Equity: As a means of improving outcomes and achieving greater social inclusion, the diversity of children's experiences, abilities and cultures is acknowledged and the Strategic Plan promotes the reduction of inequalities across all sectors, inter alia health, education, justice and social protection.

2.1.2 Transformational Goals

In order to increase the number of children and adolescents who achieve across the prioritized national outcome/s identified, three cross-cutting themes that require strengthening have been identified and prioritized in the Strategic Plan. These are termed 'transformational goals' because

they are core to ensuring that policies and services are made more effective in achieving better outcomes. These goals will be a core focus for collective attention and improvement over the lifecycle of the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan. The three transformational goals prioritized are: Goal I: Supportive Parents; Goal II: Prevention and Early Intervention; and Goal III: Listen to and Involve Children and Adolescents; these are further elaborated on below.

2.1.2.1 Goal I: Supportive Parents

Parents are the primary carers of children and adolescents. Effective parenting can provide a loving, secure home; encourage learning and healthy living; promote the child's development and social networks; and support young people in taking steps toward greater independence and engagement in the world around them. Ensuring all parents are appropriately supported and resourced to care for their children is central to realising the rights of all children and adolescents, and preventing child abuse and neglect. Supporting parents to parent confidently and positively is one of the primary, universal and most effective supports that can be provided for the parents living in Bemque.

2.1.2.1.1 Central Government Commitments

GC-1: Develop and implement a national policy, strategy and curricula on Parenting and Family Support to guide the provision of universal evidence-informed parenting supports. This should address parental and familial factors impacting on parenting capacity and family functioning (e.g. mental health and substance abuse) and identify responses required for 'at risk' children, families and communities;

GC-2: Ensure planning and coordination of parenting supports at sub-national level;

GC-3: Continue to support parents with the cost of rearing children through the prevention of various means-tested social benefits, inter alia BOOST, Food, Pantry, Education Assistance, Public Assistance and skills training and enhancement;

GC-3: Develop and implement national strategies which promote responsible fatherhood and strengthen family relationships;

GC-4: Evaluate current policy in relation to maternity and parental leave with a view to giving consideration to the introduction of paid paternity leave.

2.1.2.1.2 Prioritized Municipal Actions, 2017-2018

In relation to Goal 1 and the prioritized Central Government Commitments, the following Municipal Actions have been identified and validated by the Orange Walk stakeholders and as such forms in part the basis of the 2017-2018 Work Plan.

MA-1: Request of the National Parenting Taskforce (NPT) to present National Strategy and Curricula to the Steering Committee and wider Orange Walk Stakeholders

MA-2: Request a copy of the Parenting curricula Implementation Plan

MA-3: Develop an inventory of parenting supports available to the residents of Orange Walk

MA-4: NPT and BVTC sign MOU agreeing to coordinate any/all parenting training in Orange Walk Town

MA-5: Request information on the various family support programmes in place

MA-6: Work with MHD to carve out quota for children and families in Orange Walk Town

MA-7: Promote available social programmes to families at-risk and advocate/lobby for their inclusion

MA-8: Request periodic reports from MHD on the number of children/families/HH benefiting from the social programmes

MA-9: Celebrate mother's, father's and family day

MA-10: Engage in discussion at local and national level with Social Security and Ministry of Labour on current policy in relation to maternity and paternity level

2.1.2.2 Goal II: Prevention and Early Intervention

This requires intervening at a young age, or early in the onset of difficulties, or at points of known increased vulnerability such as school transitions, adolescence and parenthood. To this end, Goal II places emphasis on the commitments to ensure that all children achieve their developmental milestones, especially children and adolescents that are at-risk.

To this end and as required by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, emphasis is placed on the prevention of discrimination, child abuse and other forms of exploitation, and to develop preventive healthcare and education services. Early intervention is often a determining factor in the realisation of children's rights. For example, a successful early intervention which keeps a child in school will help fulfil their right to education and may also protect them from drug misuse and entering the justice system.

2.1.2.2.1 Central Government Commitments:

GC-5 Accelerate efforts towards rebalancing of resources to place a greater emphasis on prevention and earlier intervention;

GC-6 Provide and commission both universal and targeted evidence-informed parenting supports and ensure early identification of ‘at risk’ children and families to strengthen families and reduce the incidences of children coming into, and remaining in, care;

GC-7 Continue to increase investment in high-quality early years care and education for all children, prioritising families on low incomes (below the poverty line). Promote and ensure compliance with quality standards for preschool and introduce free pre-school within the lifetime of this Framework

GC-8 Continue to roll out NHI and promote early diagnosis and treatment of ill-health;

GC-9 Ensure and support quality youth work, both as a protective factor contributing to the adolescents’ overall development and in reaching out to young people at risk of crime or engaged in behaviours which do not contribute positively to Belize’s and their own development;

GC-10 Continue training and up-skilling of professionals across formal and non-formal educational settings to be in a position to identify potential child protection and mental health issues and to provide preventative and early intervention support as a key component of the Early Warning System;

GC-11 Implement integrated area-based childhood programmes to address the impact of child poverty and improve child outcomes in areas of disadvantage and mainstream the learning from the programme to services throughout the country.

2.1.2.2.2 Prioritize Municipal Actions, 2017-2018

In relation to Goal 2 and the prioritized Central Government Commitments, the following Municipal Actions have been identified and validated by the Orange Walk stakeholders and as such forms in part the basis of the 2017-2018 Work Plan.

MA-11 Advocate/lobby for greater investments in early childhood development

MA-12 Develop or expand existing youth programs targeting at-risk youth within municipality

MA-13 In the interim, Advocate/lobby for a pro-poor preschool subsidy (low income families)

MA-14 Promote NHI services as a key component of the available family supports with emphasis on family health

MA-15 Develop an inventory of youth services/gaps for Orange Walk Town

2.1.2.3 Goal III: Listen to and Involve Children and Adolescents

Listening to and involving children and adolescents is a fundamental social inclusion process through which they are empowered to become actors in the decisions that affect their lives and to be socially included, active citizens in their own right. As a general principle of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the child's view must be considered and taken into account in all matters affecting him or her, in accordance with their age and maturity. Better outcomes for children and adolescents require that they are listened to, and involved, in relation to decisions that affect them. To this end, the Orange Walk Municipality commits to ensuring children and adolescents are empowered to become actors in the decisions that affect their lives and so as to become socially included and active citizens in their own right.

2.1.2.3.1 Central Government Commitments

GC-12 Consult with children and adolescents on policies and issues that affect their lives;

GC-13 Support mechanisms to provide children and adolescents with the opportunity to be heard in primary and post-primary schools and centres for education through student councils or other age-appropriate mechanisms

2.1.2.3.2 Prioritized Municipal Actions, 2017-2018

In relation to Goal 3 and the prioritized Central Government Commitments, the following Municipal Actions have been identified and validated by the Orange Walk stakeholders and as such forms in part the basis of the 2017-2018 Work Plan.

MA-16 CAB receives requisite technical and financial support

MA-17 NYC (Cayo District) supported as a key children and adolescence participation mechanism

MA-18 Develop using ICT approaches, user friendly interfaces through which children and adolescents can be effectively engaged and consulted

MA-19 Create child and adolescent friendly brochures or videos that provide an overview of the Municipal Governance Structure, roles, responsibilities as well as how community members can become involved in civic issues

MA-20 Engage children and adolescents in media based programming promoting children and family awareness days

2.1.3 National Outcomes

The Strategic Plan identifies four national outcomes necessary to pursue and progress our vision for children and adolescents. The four (4) prioritized national outcomes are, children and adolescents are Active & Healthy; Safe & Protected from Harm; Enjoy Economic Security and Have Access to Opportunities; and are Connected, Respected & Contributing to their World. Each Outcome has a variable number of prioritized aims. The outcomes and associated aims are interconnected and reinforcing.

2.1.3.1 Outcome I: Children are Active and Healthy

Being active and healthy is a significant contributor to overall wellbeing. For the most part, children and adolescents in Orange Walk enjoy good health; however, we need to build on this through better education, health literacy, building personal resilience and promoting protective factors, as well as empowering children and adolescents to be responsible for their own good health. From the consultations, it is clear that they are concerned about the consumption of alcohol, pressure to smoke and the use of drugs.

Children born with, or who later develop, poor health must be supported to achieve the highest attainable standard of health possible; it is acknowledged that poverty, social exclusion and sub-standard living conditions may significantly impact on a person's health outcomes. In addition, attaining good mental health may be hindered by traumatic life experiences or personal stress.

Increasing the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life requires addressing risk factors and promoting protective factors at every stage of life – from pre-natal through childhood, adolescence, adulthood and into old age, to support lifelong health and wellbeing. A key part of achieving this outcome is to recognize the role of children and adolescents themselves as active agents in shaping and protecting their own health and wellbeing, and that they should be supported and encouraged to take action to improve their own health.

Ensuring that children are physically healthy and make positive health choices; exhibit good mental health and enjoy psycho-social support; exhibit positive, respectful and responsible approaches to relationships; and enjoy play, recreation, sports, art, culture and nature are the main focus of Outcome 1..

2.1.3.1.1 Aim 1.1: Children and Adolescents are Physically Healthy and Make Positive Health Choices

Physical health is an essential part of an individual's overall health and wellbeing. One can be born with ill-health and life-limiting conditions, or one can develop ill-health or acquire a disability through illness, accident or injury. It is possible to protect and improve one's health through a good diet, plenty of exercise and a healthy lifestyle. Protecting our physical health, preventing illness and early diagnosis of health difficulties are critical for healthy outcomes

2.1.3.1.1.1 Central Government Commitment

NO1-GC2: Support children, young people and their parents to make healthier choices through education, addressing food poverty and ensuring that all educational and State institutions providing food and drink to children, whether directly or through franchised commercial services on-site, have a healthy foods policy and provide food that meets basic nutritional standards.

NO1-GC3: Continue to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the School Feeding Programme and consider expansion to schools not currently benefiting under the programme, subject to resources becoming available.

2.1.3.1.2 Aim 1. 2: Children and Adolescents Have Good Mental Health

Mental health is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. Children and adolescents' mental health is the most important aspect of their social and cognitive development. Good mental health is a necessity if they are going to reach their full potential and truly live a life that is filled with positive experiences. The recent rise in demand for mental health services and the incidence of self-harm and suicide among children and adolescents is of significant concern.

2.1.3.1.2.1 Central Government Commitment

NO1-GC7: Improve access to psychosocial and early intervention mental health services and coordination of service supports for adolescents, with a focus on improving mental health literacy and reducing incidents of self-harm and suicide.

2.1.3.1.3 Aim 1.3: Children and Adolescents have a Positive and Respectful Approach to Relationships and Sexual Health

Having good friends and positive relationships is an important protective factor for emotional wellbeing throughout childhood and the teenage years. The individual's experience during childhood and adolescence of positive relationships with family, other significant adults and their peer group will underpin their ability to go on to make successful and emotionally satisfying relationships as an adult, both with a partner and future children, as well as at work and in the community. Learning how to develop and nurture positive friendships is an important part of growing up. These skills can make coping with life's hardships easier. Sexual health is a state of physical, mental and social wellbeing in relation to sexuality. It requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility with maturity of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.

2.1.3.1.3.1 Central Government Commitments

GC10: Continue to implement the Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy as a strategic framework for the sexual health and wellbeing of the population, ensuring access for young people to age-appropriate information and services about relationships and sexual health inclusive of the need for legal reform to ensure young persons are able to access these services without parental consent.

2.1.3.2 Outcome III: Children are Safe and Protected from Harm

Children enjoy secure, stable, caring home environments; are safe from abuse, neglect and exploitation; are protected from bullying and discrimination; and are safe from crime.

2.1.3.2.1 Aim 3.1: Children and Adolescents are Safe From Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

Childhood and adolescence is a very precious developmental period. Experiencing the trauma of neglect, abuse or exploitation may have a significant and permanent detrimental impact on an individual. It may alter their life trajectory and that of their family. Abuse may involve neglect (intentional or unintentional), sexual, physical or emotional. Abuse can also arise from family substance misuse, the witnessing of parental substance misuse or domestic violence, exposure (even if inadvertent) to age-inappropriate or harmful material (particularly on the Internet) or being subjected to physical chastisement. Children and adolescents are also at risk of exploitation through pornography, prostitution, human trafficking and labour exploitation.

2.1.3.2.1.1 Central Government Commitments

NO3-GC1: Learn from investigations and reviews on child protection*, implement relevant recommendations and continuously adapt policies and laws to ensure they meet required standards of child protection.

NO3-GC6: Support efforts to limit exposure by children to age-inappropriate material (including material of a sexual or violent nature, online gambling, etc) on the Internet, including via smartphones.

NO3-GC10: Support all efforts, to combat child sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking in all contexts, including through support for an online filtering system in relation to blocking online child abuse material and measures targeted at reducing the abuse and exploitation of children and adolescents through prostitution and labour exploitation

2.1.3.3 Outcome IV: Children Enjoy Economic Security and Have Access to Opportunities

Children are protected from poverty and social exclusion; are living in child/adolescent friendly sustainable communities; have opportunities for on-going education and training, and are supported to travel pathways to economic participation and independent living.

2.1.3.3.1 Aim 4.1 Children and Adolescents Are Protected From Poverty and Social Exclusion

Protecting children and adolescents from poverty and social exclusion is about ensuring that they have adequate income and resources, are living in decent houses, have access to quality affordable food, good quality education and healthcare, and have the opportunities necessary to develop and participate as equals in society.

2.1.3.3.1.1 Central Government Commitments

NO4-GC1: Adopt a multidimensional approach to tackling child poverty, building on the life cycle approach and informed by the Social Protection Diagnostics Report, MHD 2016.

NO4-GC2: Determine the optimal design of child and family supports to maximise their effectiveness and efficiency in reducing child poverty(Wraparound Service Model Programme), while improving employment incentives.

NO4-GC4: Ensuring that single parents have access to a range of supports and services designed to provide them with pathways to work while acknowledging their caring responsibilities

NO4-GC3: Set a national child-specific social target to lift over 6000 children out of consistent poverty via the Wraparound Service Programme by 2030 (i.e. a reduction of three-fourths on the 2016 level).

2.1.3.3.2 Aim 4.2 Children and Adolescents Have Opportunities for On-Going Education and Training

Opportunities for on-going education and training are part of a commitment to lifelong learning. Access is critical for both parents of children and for young people themselves to facilitate their active participation in the economy and their ability to build economically secure lives for themselves and their children.

2.1.3.3.2.1 Central Government Commitments

NO4-GC8: Promote vocational education and training through the ITVETs, encouraging the development of entrepreneurship skills among young people, promoting the development of in-school internship programmes and strengthening the links between local businesses, schools and youth organisations

2.1.3.3.3 Aim 4.3 Children and Adolescents Have Pathways to Economic Participation and Independent Living

Young people want to work and secure employment, to pursue a career and contribute to society. The best guarantee of economic security is a well-paid, secure job and failure to find employment greatly increases the risk of poverty and social exclusion. Training, volunteering, job placements, internships and support for entrepreneurship are all helpful in increasing employability.

2.1.3.3.3.1 Central Government Commitments

NO4-GC10: Draw on the strengths and reach of youth work services and local development businesses in working with public agencies and employers to promote the training, employment and entrepreneurship of young people.

2.1.3.4 Outcome V: Children are Connected, Respected and Contributing to their World

Children have a sense of their own identity free from discrimination; they are part of positive networks of friends, family and community; they are civically engaged and are socially and

environmentally conscious; and they are aware of rights, responsibilities and are respectful of the law.

2.1.3.4.1 Aim 5.1 Children and Adolescents Are Aware Of Their Rights, Responsible and Respectful Of the Law

Children and adolescents should be aware of and informed of their rights, as well as feeling confident and able to affirm those rights. All children and adolescents have rights as individuals as set out in the Constitution of Belize and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Belize in 1990. The UN Convention commits Belize to promoting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights of all children and adolescents. Children's rights take into account the vulnerable situation of children in that they are largely dependent on adults for their care and are often powerless to vindicate their own rights. Children's rights also recognize the evolving capacities of the child throughout their childhood. As children grow up, they take on more responsibility for their own actions. As members of their community, they have a responsibility to respect the law, engage in democratic processes and be respectful of others, their property and the environment.

2.1.3.4.1.1 Central Government Commitments

NO5-GC7: Ensure that Belize's laws, policies and practice are compliant with the principles and provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols which Belize has ratified. To this end, draft and ensure the passage of a comprehensive children's code.

NO5-GC10: Work with children and adolescents to help them contribute to their own community and safety.

CHAPTER 3: GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 MEASURING PROGRESS

The Municipality of Orange Walk will assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the commitments in this Strategic Plan through tracking of progress over time. In addition to tracking and reporting on the specific commitments set out in this Plan, improvements in the national outcome areas prioritized will also be monitored; to this end, a select number of key indicators have been identified. Some indicators are measured annually; particularly those to be derived from administrative records; however a few are only reported on every 3-4 years as they are derived from more expensive and infrequent surveys. It is recognized that the indicators, Table 1, do not provide an exhaustive picture of the lives of all children and adolescents 0 – 19 years; rather, they allow for measurement of progress in key outcome areas over the 5 years of the Strategic Plan and into successive iterations leading up to 2030.

The outcome-level indicators identified are drawn from the MICS and LFS and existing administrative data sources. In a few instances, arrangements will be required to ensure that data for a few of the select measures be in place, as they are not currently being captured by the national statistical system.

To this end, the NCFC Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-Committee will work closely with the Municipality of Orange Walk, the Steering Committee and the Children’s Advisory Body to ensure effective monitoring of the result areas defined in this Strategic Plan. As noted, the indicators will be tracked annually, or as appropriate, and the results will form the basis of an annual State of the Municipality Children’s Report to be prepared by the Municipality of Orange Walk and Steering Committee and the Children’s Advisory Body with technical support from the NCFC.

Table 2: Indicator Framework

Outcome		Core Indicator	Baseline (year)	Source	2030 Target	National Benchmark
Active & Healthy, Physical & Mental Wellbeing	1.1	Early antenatal visitation rate		MOH		34.8 (2012)
	1.2	Low birth weight		MOH MICS_SIB		11.1 (2012) 12.1 (2015)
	1.3	Breastfeeding initiation rate (within 1 hour of birth)		MICS_SIB		68.5 (2015)
	1.4	Overweight or obese children (< 5 yrs; 11 yr olds)		MICS_SIB		7.3 (2015)
	1.5	Suicide and intentional self-harm death rate per 100,000 15-19 year olds		MOH		
	1.6	Reported incidents of STIs for 15-19 year olds		MOH		
	1.7	Alcohol volume consumed last drinking day among alcohol consumers aged 15-19		NDACC		
		Alcohol use in past 30 days among adolescents aged 15-19		NDACC/MICS		
	1.8	Cigarette use in past 30 days among adolescents aged 15-19		NDACC/MICS		
	1.9	% of 15-19 year olds who have ever used cannabis		NDACC		

Outcome	Core Indicator		Baseline (year)	Source	2030 Target	National Benchmark
Achieving Full Potential in all areas of Learning & Development	2.1	ECD Index		MICS_SIB		82.5(2015)
	2.2	Participation in early childhood education		MICS_SIB MOE		54.8(2015)
	2.3	Early school leaving rate: Primary-level(school dropout rate) Secondary-level(school dropout rate)		MOE MICS_SIB		
	2.4	Academic Performance: Math: BJAT, PSE, CSEC English: BJAT, PSE, CSEC Science: PSE, CSEC		MOE		

Outcome	Core Indicator		Baseline (year)	Source	2030 Target	National Benchmark
Safe & Protected from Harm	3.1	Adolescents who report being bullied at school		MOE		TBD
	3.2	Adolescents involved in a physical fight at least once in the last academic year		MOE		TBD
	3.3	Children in care in full-time education		MHD		TBD
	3.4	Children's living arrangements		MICS_SIB		7.3(2015)
	3.5a	Violent Discipline		MICS_SIB		65.1(2015)
	3.5b	Severe Physical Punishment				6(2015)
	3.6	Sex before age 15 among adolescents aged 15-19		MICS_SIB		F: 5.8; M: 14.9(2015)
3.7	Marriage before age 18		MICS_SIB			

Outcome	Core Indicator	Baseline (year)	Source	2030 Target	National Benchmark
Economic Security & Opportunity	4.1 Child Poverty: Headcount(Money Metrics) Child Poverty: Headcount(MDI)		LSMS_SIB MICS_MHD		
	4.2 Children living in jobless households		LFS_SIB		
	4.3 Adolescents aged 15-19 not in education. employment or training		LFS_SIB		

Outcome	Core Indicator	Baseline (year)	Source	2030 Target	National Benchmark
Connected, Respected & Contributing to their world	5.1 % of adolescents involved in youth groups/clubs/community projects		DYS		
	5.2 Number of adolescents in prison/detention		MOP-MHD		
	5.3 % of adolescents reporting an interest in political issues within their local community		DYS		

3.2 THE DRIVE FOR RESULTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The most significant challenge over the 5 year period [2017-2021] lies in the effective implementation of the Strategic Plan to realize the ambition behind our vision for children and adolescents. There is considerable consensus on the systemic barriers, the problems facing children and families and an improved understanding of more effective solutions to bring about better outcomes. Bridging implementation gaps requires ensuring that policy, research and strategy are meaningfully implemented in practice. The challenge lies in re-orienting the system and implementing changes to the services and how we work to deliver improved outcomes and services for children and adolescents. This requires cross-Government and inter-agency collaboration and coordination at national and local level. It also requires, inter alia: leadership; people working in different ways; changing the way resources are allocated and services funded; and reconfiguration of services, decommissioning some and commissioning more of others or completely new ones.

Succeeding in the implementation of this Framework is going to be challenging. The approach to implementation, in particular the whole Government approach, has been drawn from international experience and evidence of what works. The Plan contains a number of commitments, both current and new, of varying levels of complexity, action and intent. Driving implementation and ensuring monitoring and accountability are two separate, yet connected functions. There is also a third function – that of stakeholder engagement, which supports both implementation and accountability functions. In designing the supporting mechanisms and structures of the Plan, all three functions are addressed.

3.3 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Implementation of the Strategic Plan necessitates the establishment and/or activation of clear and efficient structures to ensure accountability, drive implementation and provide a forum for stakeholders continued engagement.

The structures outlined will have a clear function and specific terms of reference² in relation to the Strategic Plan. In addition, these structures/groups will interact in a systematic and structured manner via an established Planning Cycle designed and maintained by the Municipality of Orange Walk and Steering Committee with possible technical support from the NCFC as required to ensure that the broad range of stakeholders are working on a shared outcomes-focussed agenda for children

² TORs to be developed by the Technical Secretariat for approval by the Steering Committee and Town Council

and adolescents living in Orange Walk. The key components of the structure to effect implementation include, but are not limited to:

Table 3: Structures to Effect Implementation

	Structure/Sub-Structure	Chairperson/Leadership	Membership	Core Function
1	Ministry of Local Government	Minister & CEO		Political Accountability, National-level
2	Orange Walk Town Council	Mayor & Councillors	Elected Mayor and Councillors	Political Accountability, Municipal-level Drive Whole Council & cross-government and inter-agency approach
3	Orange Walk Steering Committee	Rapporteur CAB President	Town Council; CAB President; MOE Rep; Labour Rep; NDACC Rep; MOH Rep; MHD Rep; Private Sector Rep; etc.	Technical Oversight and drive cross-Government and inter-agency collaboration and coordination
4	Technical Secretariat	Technical Coordinator	Technical Coordinator & Programme Assistant	Technical Coordination & Implementation support
5	NCFC Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-Committee	Chairperson	Statisticians/data analyst/M&E/quality assurance officers from MOH, MOE, MHD, MOP, SIB, ...	Technical support for the design, implementation and maintenance of the M&E plan Technical support in M&E to the Orange Walk Steering Committee & Technical Secretariat
6	Social Planning Sub-Committee	Chairperson	Director of planning units/Social planners: MOEYS, MOH, MHD; MED,	Technical support for the design and maintenance of the annual planning cycle Identification and analysis of policy gaps

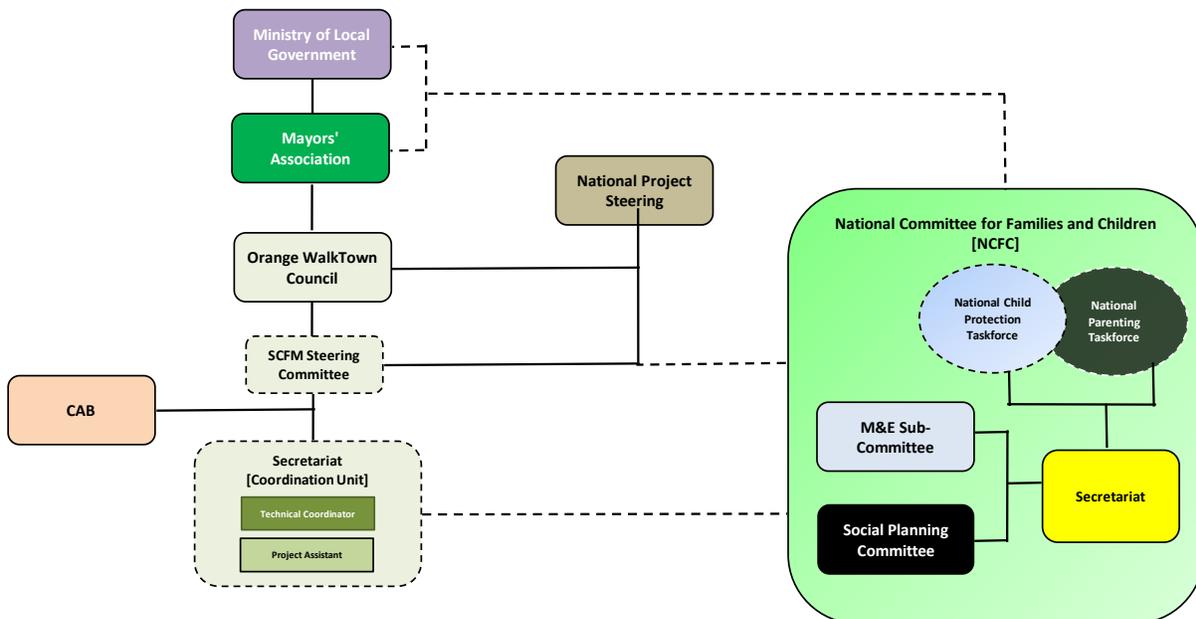


Figure 4: Technical Support, Oversight and Implementation Structures

3.3.1 Central Government Commitment

Cross-government and Inter-agency Coordination: Implementation of the Strategic Plan necessitates the establishment and/or activation of clear and efficient structures to ensure accountability, drive implementation and provide a forum for stakeholders continued engagement. [NRFCA Outcome VI GC 6.1]

3.3.1.1 Prioritized Municipal Action, 2017-2018

MA-1 Formalize the SCFM Steering Committee (BVSC)

MA-2 Validate TOR and expand membership of the Steering Committee to include private sector and core central government agencies in addition to existing community leaders.

MA-3 Design and implement an annual planning cycle [Plan-Implement-Review] for the SCFM Initiative [conduct annual work planning and quarterly/annual implementation review]

MA-4 Establish a technical secretariat within the Orange Walk Town Council to support the work of the Steering Committee, to include a minimum of Technical Coordinator and a Project Assistant

MA-5 Develop and implement a resource mobilization strategy to support resourcing of the 5-year Strategic Plan, inter alia BVTC budgetary support, leveraging of Central Government allocations to line ministries, Private Sector Contribution and grant funding (proposals)

MA-6 Coordinate with the NCFC for effective monitoring and reporting on the Strategic Plan

REFERENCES

Belize Population and Housing Census 2010. Statistical Institute of Belize. 2013. Retrieved 15 March 2017.

Country Poverty Assessment (2010), Government of Belize

National Youth Development Policy of Belize (2012) Department of Youth Services

Mid-Year Population Estimates by Area and Sex 2010-2016. Statistical Institute of Belize. Retrieved 15 March, 2017.

ANNEX A: Orange Walk Strategic Framework and Operational Plan

Kindly refer to separate Excel File