

Women's Agenda

#planBelize



PUP
PEOPLE'S UNITED PARTY

FAMILY

STRONG FAMILIES FOR PRODUCTIVE, PROSPEROUS AND PEACEFUL COMMUNITIES

Meaningful Engagement and Empowerment
of the Belizean Women:

Women's Agenda 2020
People's United Party

SEVEN POINT AGENDA

1. Secure women's access and affordability to proper healthcare services throughout their life cycle (girls, adolescents, child bearing, and older women)
2. Empower women through creation of economic opportunities
3. Increase women's access to and ownership of affordable land and housing
4. Achieve gender equality and equity and end discrimination against women and girls
5. Promote Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
6. Guarantee the equitable participation of women in leadership and governance
7. Strengthen and expand measures to ensure the safety and security of women and girls

Building a Belize that
Works for Everyone



1

Secure women's access and affordability to proper healthcare services throughout the life cycle (girls, adolescents, child bearing, senior)

- Ensure that quality health care is accessible to all Belizeans and that it provides appropriate health programs geared towards the life course of women
- Implement maternal and child healthcare programs nationwide for better management of birthing to prevent maternal and infant mortality.
- Incorporate health promotion and lifestyle changes across all government sectors for the prevention of non communicable diseases
- Strengthen and promote sexual and reproductive health in all stages of women and girl development to decrease teenage pregnancy, unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections including HIV and cancer
- Eradicate the stigma surrounding mental health by promoting educational programs and mental health professionals

Empower women through creation of economic opportunities

a) Foster entrepreneurship

- ⊕ Develop entrepreneurial curriculum from upper primary through high school
- ⊕ Provide ongoing skills and capacity building programs through the existing training centers and institutions in the districts
- ⊕ Create a credit window within existing government lending institutions (low interest and limited collateral)
- ⊕ Facilitate market access where necessary or applicable
- ⊕ Actively encourage saving schemes through financial institutions (credit unions or banks)

b) Create employment opportunities

- ⊕ Improve labour rights (increase minimum wage, equal pay for work of equal value)
- ⊕ Foster accessible and affordable child care facilities (day care and after school care)
- ⊕ Promote investments in industries that will facilitate employment opportunities especially in rural communities
- ⊕ Promote occupational health
- ⊕ Energize cottage industry

equality + equity



3

Increase women's access to and ownership of affordable land and housing

- Ensure that land and housing opportunities are made accessible and affordable to women
- Prioritize access to affordable land and housing for single mothers
- Ensure at least 50% of all land and housing made available go to women
- Provide fiscal incentives to businesses and financial institutions which contribute to the construction and financing of affordable housing for women.

4

Achieve gender equality and equity and end discrimination against women and girls

- Upgrade the National Women's Commission to serve as an independent advisory body for Monitoring and Evaluation of actions to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls
- Develop and/or strengthen legislation to address equality for women in employment, including equal pay.
- Support the increased participation of women and girls in education, arts, sports, STEM, leadership and employment

5

Promote Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

- a) Promote STEM through Educational Partnerships
 - Promote the development of engineering programs at University of Belize
 - Negotiate with donors for scholarship in the fields of STEM
 - Ensure that at least 50% of these scholarships are granted to women
- b) Build a Workforce for the Future
 - Incorporate basic STEM concepts in the Primary Education Curriculum in order to improve computational thinking, and to become digitally literate.
- c) Advocate for Women in STEM through a Women in STEM Ambassador
 - this person will work on a national level to advocate for gender equity in STEM, raise awareness of gender imbalance issues, pursue the case for change and build visibility for women in STEM

6

Guarantee the equitable participation of women in leadership and governance

- Enforce a quota of at least 30% women as Board Chairpersons, Chief Executive Officers, and other leadership roles in the public sector
- Conduct awareness and capacity building campaigns of men and women in governance on the role and significance of women in governance
- Support capacity building initiatives for women in politics

7

Strengthen and expand measures to ensure the safety and security of women and girls

- Hold a zero tolerance position on violence against women
- Financially support the operation of emergency shelters and transitional homes for women and their children
- Implement the domestic violence and sexual violence laws and protocols for the protection of women and children
- Provide free counseling and legal aid service for survivors of violence
- Provide free self-defense instructions for girls in all primary and secondary schools and for women
- Enforce mandatory counseling for perpetrators of domestic violence and violence against women

Nurturing and developing strong families for productive, prosperous and peaceful communities.

FAMILY

The family is one of the oldest and the most indispensable institutions of any civilization and for very good reasons. When families are threatened and weak, the children are neglected, their education is compromised, and society will suffer the consequences for generations to come.

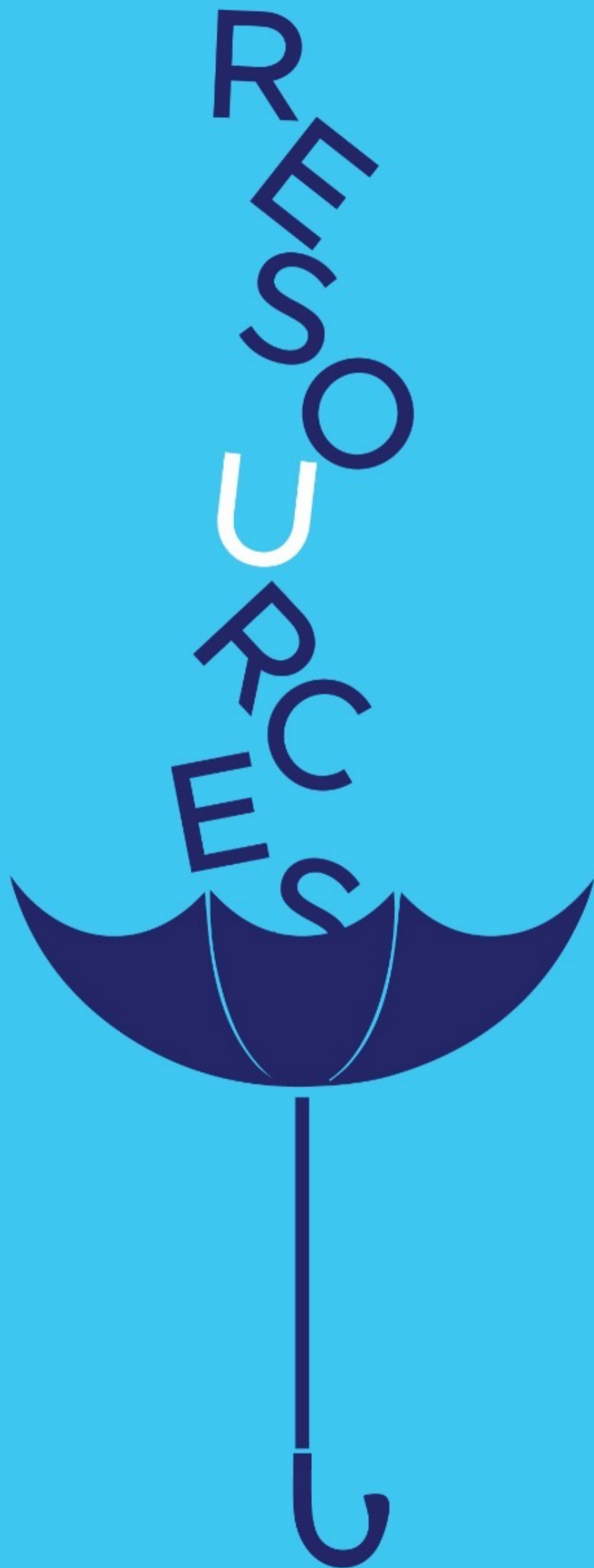
Children need virtues, good values, knowledge and skills to secure a prosperous future, and if the present generation does not have them, it is because their parents did not provide them, which means that neither will the next generation have them. Any lack of virtues, values, knowledge, and skills in our youth is a tragedy for our society and leads to a vicious cycle that deserves urgent attention.

In Belize, dysfunctional families are inextricably tied to most of the socio-economic problems we face today in our communities, such as poverty, unemployment, drug addiction, delinquency, violence against women, and homicides.

That is why the PUP perceives the family as the bedrock of our communities, and we are deeply committed to families in our vision for a better Belize. **“As the Family goes, so goes the Nation”** is, for the PUP, no mere slogan. The family is so strategic to our development that all our national policies and strategies will not succeed if we do not nurture and develop strong families as the main avenue to achieve productive, prosperous and peaceful communities in Belize. The well-being of the family unit is central to the development and wellness of the community and, indeed, the nation. Whether the family is the traditional nuclear family or the increasingly more common extended family or the single parent family, the impact remains the same.

The PUP is convinced that the family in the wider community and in the experience of our culture are all inextricably linked, so our actions and programs need to reflect the confluence of these social realities. We must ensure strong families for the sustainable development of our communities and for a vibrant cultural landscape.

With these justifications in mind, we present this policy statement on the family, keeping in mind at all times gender parity, special attention to differently-abled citizens and a deep focus on the psycho-social health and well-being of all Belizeans. This policy will complement and strengthen the foundations of the PUP’s people-centered strategy.



COMMUNITY

FAMILY

Policy Goals and Objectives

A PUP led government will strengthen the family as a vehicle for improving the delivery, effectiveness and efficiency of social services offered to Belizeans across the country. This policy will enable the participation of families in their community to promote their own nurturing and development through self-help measures founded upon the sense of purpose, responsibility, and communality of their members in order to address their own problems.

The specific objectives of this policy are as follows:

1. Build family unity, commitment and resilience – Promoting the virtues, values and attitudes of family life can enable parents to build strong families, realize their visions and dreams, and manage stress well. They can function when they are faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma. Parents can manage and bounce back.
2. Provide social connections – Positive relationships provide emotional, informational, spiritual support for parents. Parents have friends and supporters.
3. Increase knowledge of parenting and child development – Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social, and emotional development helps parents. Parents know how children grow and learn.
4. Solve problems in the family - Access to concrete support and timely services that can address the family's problems, whether they are social, financial and/or emotional, is essential to help minimize stress caused by challenges and allow the family to move forward. Parents know where to turn for help.

COMMUNITY

Proposed Policy Actions

This PUP-led Government will work to ensure that families and communities are prepared for a changing and technologically driven environment. This will be done by taking into consideration the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015 by all UN member states that “share a blueprint for peace and prosperity of people and the planet for now and in the future”. A PUP Government will position our citizens and family at the center of its vision, strategy and action.

This PUP-led Government will implement the following specific actions to deliver on its family strengthening policy:

- 1) One Ministry of government will be charged with the mandate to coordinate, implement and monitor this policy, beginning with an empirical analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) of families across our nation, taking into account the diversity of cultures, communities and development potential. This analysis will be complemented by:
 - the thorough review of present policies that impact Families and Community Development
 - the review of current legislation and regulations that positively and negatively affect the lives of families
 - the development of more modern and concrete strategies that will aid family development in all communities
 - the assurance that all strategies encompass the use of technology for the delivery of services.

- 2) The National Committee for Families and Children will be revitalized and empowered to provide guidance and direction to the Government regarding the modernization and upgrading of the social services offered to families. The Committee’s responsibilities will include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - Devise a strategy (framework) that will drive the enhancement, effectiveness and modernization of human services delivered by a PUP government;
 - Implement a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) program to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the services offered to the public;
 - Recommend ways and means to improve the delivery of the services that will ensure the effective and sustainable participation of families and communities in their own nurturing and development, in order to achieve poverty reduction and self- reliance based on the sustainable exploitation of available resources.

- 3) The Ministry responsible for the family will invest in and support programs and projects in the following areas.

COMMUNITY

Economic development:

- Create training programs to encourage non-traditional careers
- Invest in skills training and entrepreneurship
- Promote cultural commerce
- Encourage small business collaborations
- Depoliticize the Boost, Pantry and other promising public programs designed to assist poor households subject to specific conditions
- Create an enabling environment for the promotion of art, sports and cultural activities
- Develop industries to use culture and sports as tools for advancement
- Focus on families in rural communities by creating empowerment/special development zones to better target specialized assistance and strengthen the capacities of families and communities
- Establish gender-balanced and culturally diverse, well-trained development units to assist in these endeavors.

Social Development:

- Promote organization of and access to cultural events, sports, and healthy activities
- Organize Big Sister/Big Brother or similar mentoring programs across schools and organizations
- Provide training and counseling services, for example, in the form of parenting programs or male mentorship
- Establish support groups and/or safe spaces for Wellness/ Self Care groups, including AA, Gamblers Anonymous, Survivors of Domestic Violence, etc.
- Educate the community to inspire support and acceptance of persons with special needs and diverse abilities
- Invest in long term support and solutions for caring for persons with special needs and diverse abilities
- Encourage social groups such as baby play groups, sports and health (walking groups), community watch, Dominoes or Bingo game groups, etc.
- Promote safe neighborhoods by supporting these initiatives through the Police Department and other relevant government departments.

Environmental development:

- Promote the creation and maintenance of clean, attractive spaces; enforce fines or penalties for littering
- Encourage sustainable recycling efforts across schools and businesses
- Provide tax breaks or other economic incentives to businesses engaged in environmentally friendly practices, e.g. using solar energy or actively recycling
- Work along with the various municipal bodies and the Ministry of Local Government to promote and keep child friendly municipalities.

Good Governance:

- Promote and strengthen community leaders
- Provide opportunities and training for youth leaders
- Encourage democratic participation, advocacy, and self-reliance.

Partners

The Ministry responsible for families will seek partnerships and develop collaboration with the Council of Churches, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, NGOs, and community based organizations at the district level to ensure that every village and community is engaged in the execution of the Government policy on the family.

**EVERYBODY
FI WIN!**

#planBelize

**TODOS
GANAMOS!**