

## NCA Planning and Review Retreat

On February 10, 2003 the National Council on Ageing (NCA) was formed as the National Mechanism advocating for the rights of older persons. In order to address key areas of concern the National Plan of action was drafted and established for a five year period (2003-2008). At the beginning of 2008 the NCA was very cognizant of the fact that the time for evaluating and re-strategizing the Plan of Action was fast approaching.

On November 26, 2008 the board of the NCA along with representatives of affiliated organizations ( a total of 18 persons) arrived at the Indian Creek Lodge for a two day review and planning session. This session was facilitated by ageing specialist Mrs. Martha Pelaez of FAVACA. The official planning and review sessions did not start until Thursday, 27 November, 2008.



The Review and Planning session opened with an overview of the work that had been done by the NCA over the past five years; including the publication of several informational booklets and pamphlets, the creation of the official NCA website, the establishing of the Golden Years radio program, the launching of VOICE and several other events and activities that have taken place. Although there were several areas in which the NCA had made progress it was impossible to ignore the fact that even though we have come a long way we still have a long way to go before every older person in Belize is able to access the benefits they are due.

Once we were brought up to date on what had been done by the council the real work began. The workshop participants were separated into three groups; each group was given one or two policy areas from the existing plan of action to address and make recommendations.



For the assigned policy each group was to uncover a gap and an area of priority, identify methods to bridge the gap and achieve the area of priority. The process was long but interesting, each person attending the Review and Planning retreat was invited to actively participate in this process through voicing their opinions, concerns, and observations.

Each group produced substantial set of recommendations and strategies to help the NCA achieve its overall goal of ensuring the continued involvement in and contribution of the older person to the society and creating an environment of independence, dignity and integrity. This review and planning retreat was the first step in the re-strategizing of the NCA's Plan of Action.

each others' company. We look forward to working together as this process continues.

We would like to make special mention of Mr. Amos Pacheco who was an intern at the Ministry of Economic Development and accompanied us on this workshop. He brought a new dimension to our discussions and his input was much appreciated. We wish him all the best on his future plans.

