



Michele Irving Belize

Michele Irving has been a community worker and advocate for over 25 years. This community activist and human rights defender resides in Dangriga, Belize. In 2019 she received the MBE award in recognition of her community work with POWA (Productive Organization for Women in Action) the organization she coordinates and helped found in 2003. POWA is a community based women's group born in 2003 to fight for the rights of

women and girls to exist peacefully, free from genderbased violence and gender discrimination.

Under Michele's leadership the group has grown into a very vibrant peer to peer education women's group reaching far into communities and working to transform the lives of women and their families. Under Michele's leadership POWA has developed projects and programs based on principles of respect, human rights and equity to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS and all forms of violence against women. These objectives are achieved through education, advocacy and services that POWA provides directly and through linkages with other organizations.

In 2010 POWA received the USAIDS Red Ribbon Award and the award for the empowerment of women and girls. In 2011 Michele and her daughter founded and coordinate GirlPOWA the girl/youth arm of POWA. In 2018 the group received an award for its work from Star Foundation "With and for Girls"- GirlPOWA is a member of UN Foundation GirlUp Club.

POWA is one of the women's group that pioneered advocacy and support for LGBTIA rights, supporting and networking with UNIBAM early on as well as others such as PETAL and EMYSM