Eastern and Southern Caribbean Youth Assessment (ESCYA)

Final Report

September 2013

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Eastern and Southern Caribbean Youth Assessment

Final Report

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ACRONYMS

ABICE	Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education
ADS	Automated Directives System
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AVEC	Advanced Vocational Educational Center
BEC	Barbados and Eastern Caribbean
CARE	Centre for Adolescent Development and Renewal
CAREC	Caribbean Epidemiology Centre
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARIMAN	Caribbean Male Action Network
CBB	Central Bureau Voor Burgerzaken
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CBSI	Caribbean Basin Security Initiative
CCYD	Commission on Youth Development
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategies
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CSME	Caribbean Single Market and Economy
CXC	Caribbean Examinations Council
CYP	Commonwealth Youth Programme
CYPCC	Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre
DEC	Development Experience Clearinghouse
DO	Development Objective
EC	Eastern Caribbean
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECSC	Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court
EDC	Education Development Center
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Program
ESC	Eastern and Southern Caribbean
ESCYA	Eastern and Southern Caribbean Youth Assessment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FG	Focus Group
GFATM	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria

GWMA	Guyana Women Miners Association
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FOTA	From Offending to Achieving
FY	Fiscal Year
GARD	Gilbert Agriculture and Rural Development Center
GATE	Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOPE	Helping Our People Excel (Nevis)
HQ	Headquarters
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IYY	International Year of the Youth
KI	Key Informant
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NEWLO	New Life Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHCS	Nevis Historical and Conservation Society
NICE	National Initiative to Create Employment
NYI	National Youth Institute
NOC	New Opportunities Corps
NSDC	National Skills Development Center
NSTP	National Skills Training Program
NYC	National Youth Council
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OJT	On-the-Job Training
PADF	Program Pan American Development Foundation
PAHO	Pan-American Health Organization
PEP	People's Employment Program

PEPFAR	U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PoA	Partners of the Americas
PYAG	Professional Youth Alliance Guyana
RDCS	Regional Development Cooperation Strategy
RISE	Respect, Reality, Initiative, Industry, Social Health, Society Building, Education, Enterprise and Empowerment
SASOD	Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination
SI	Social Impact
SIDS	Small Island Development States
SKN	Saint Kitts and Nevis
SKYE	Skills and Knowledge and Youth Employment Program
SOW	Scope of Work
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
SVG	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
T&T	Trinidad and Tobago
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
TVET	Technical Vocational and Education Training
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
U.S.	United States
USG	U.S. Government
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWI	University of the West Indies
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WPAY	World Plan of Action for Youth Development, 2000 and Beyond
YCT	Youth Coalition for Transformation
YES	Youth Empowerment through Skills
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Eastern and Southern Caribbean Youth Assessment (ESCYA) was designed to provide the United States Agency for International Development, Mission to Barbados and Eastern Caribbean (USAID/BEC), with a cross-sectoral analysis of the regional youth development landscape, paying particular attention to the needs of "at-risk" and vulnerable youth. Specifically, the report was intended to inform the development of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014–18 Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS) and a youth-specific Development Objective (DO) within the USAID/BEC Mission Results Framework. Findings from the assessment were used to present conclusions and recommendations that point out areas of urgent need and propose actionable changes be undertaken across the region and sectors assessed.

ESCYA focused on seven thematic issue areas prioritized by USAID/BEC; these were economic opportunities, education and training, health and well-being, social support systems, juvenile justice, crime and violence, and environment/climate change. While a wide range of stakeholders was included in the research, the study focused on the lived experiences and perceptions of youth ages 14 to 24 across 10 Eastern and Southern Caribbean (ESC) countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

An eight-person team of specialists from Social Impact (SI) conducted fieldwork over a seven-week period from June 24 to August 10, 2013. The team used semi-structured key informant interview guides; issue-rating and problem-analysis exercises; semi-structured focus groups with youth (including "at-risk" youth) and youth workers; and mini surveys. Stakeholders, especially youth workers and youth, were identified through the use of network and convenience sampling techniques to ensure the inclusion of "at-risk" and "hard-to-reach" youth.

During the data collection phase, the qualitative data from key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus groups (FGs) were analyzed on an ongoing basis, with interpretations and conclusions vetted by the team during regular check-ins held throughout the week. Following the completion of the fieldwork, the data was systematically analyzed at both the country and regional levels. KII, FG, and quantitative data were examined via trend analysis and coding, with particular attention paid to gender disaggregation. Quantitative data was triangulated with references from the desk review and qualitative data from KIIs, FGs, and open responses on the surveys to explore diverging/converging findings.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Since 2000, the case for Caribbean youth development has been set against an increasingly complex and challenging landscape. Prevailing global economic, social, and political factors, as well as encroaching influences of negative subcultures in many instances, have diminished the prevalence of traditional modes of socialization such as the family, church, schools, and community–based organizations. By 2006 the situation had become so dire that the Heads of Government of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and, subsequently, of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), mandated the establishment of the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development to undertake a thorough investigation of the situation facing young people in the Caribbean. The Commission compiled a report entitled *Eye on the Future: Report* of the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development[1] (published in 2010), which laid the foundation for a comprehensive rethinking, repositioning, and refocusing of the Caribbean youth development framework and strategy. Some work has already started, but there is a compelling need to accelerate the process.

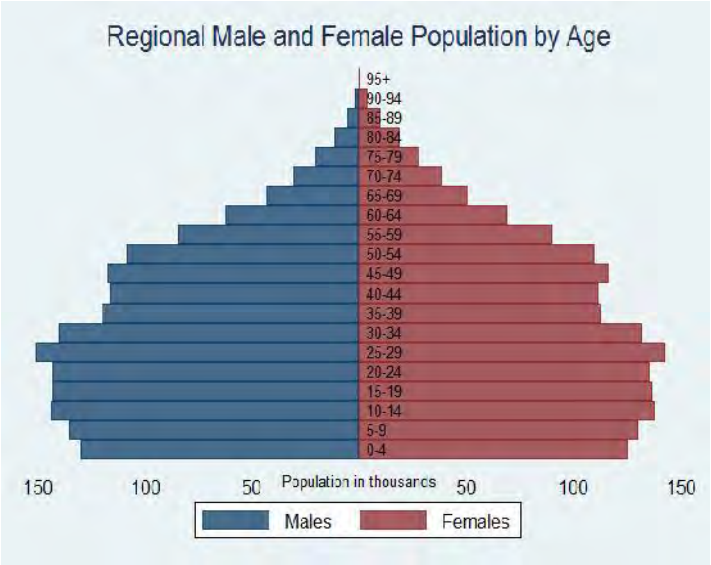

Figure A: Regional Male and Female Population by Age

The backdrop from past assessments coupled with this ESCYA shows that the overall landscape for youth in the ESC is as promising as it is alarming. The challenges are systemic: On the causal end of the spectrum, it is clear that the most influential societal system—economic, social support, and educational—are not meeting the needs of Caribbean youth. Structural deficiencies in these systems, paired with the dual challenges of an increasingly prominent drug trade and a prolonged economic recession, have led to a regional crisis. The corresponding effects—an uncertain socioeconomic climate and wide-ranging concerns regarding crime and violence—have in turn put additional strain on social structures and citizen security. In this complex and challanging context, youth and youth organizations presented great resilience and leadership in addressing the most pressing concerns of young people through community initiatives, political engagement, sports programming, and other methods to reach the most vulnerable.

[1] Draft Report of the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development—*Eye on the Future: Investing in Youth Now for Tomorrow's Community*, January 2010.

With the largest portion of the Eastern and Southern Caribbean (ESC) population comprised of youth between ages 15 and 35, it is critical that social and economic interventions refocus attention to enabling the livelihoods of young people. As shown in Figure A, 18.1 percent of the total BEC population is within the USAID-defined "youth" category (14 to 24), though, there is significant variance in the "youth" proportion at the national level as presented in Table A.

Table A: ESC Countries, Basic Demographics

Country	Area* (Sq. Miles)	Population† (Estimated 2012)	Youth* (% of Total)	GDP per Capita† (Est. 2011–12)
Antigua and Barbuda	171	89,070	18.3	13,207
Barbados	166	283,200	15.1	13,076
Dominica	290	71,680	18.7	6,691
Grenada	133	105,500	18.8	7,485
Guyana	83,000	795,400	23.2	3,584
Saint Kitts and Nevis	101	53,580	17.3	13,969
Saint Lucia	238	180,900	18.5	6,558
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	150	109,400	18.7	6,515
Suriname	63,251	534,500	19.5	8,864
Trinidad and Tobago	1,980	1,337,000	14.7	17,934

Sources: (*) www.census.gov (†) World Bank 2010; "Youth" indicates individuals aged 14–24

KEY REGIONAL FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Across the region, informants generally rated each issue as "very important" on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being most important. Foreseeing this issue, the team forced respondents to prioritize areas of most acute need (in this analysis, three additional issues were included—gender inequality, substance abuse, and lack of youth in political decision-making). The regional results of this analysis are presented in Figure B. The lack of economic opportunities consistently ranked as the most important problem across all 10 countries. Close behind in second and third were youth's concerns with the inadequate social support and education systems, respectively. The combined insufficiencies of these three areas were found to heavily influence the relationships between youth and all other problem areas depicted in the graph. The following analyses of each thematic area provides a deeper discussion of those relationships.

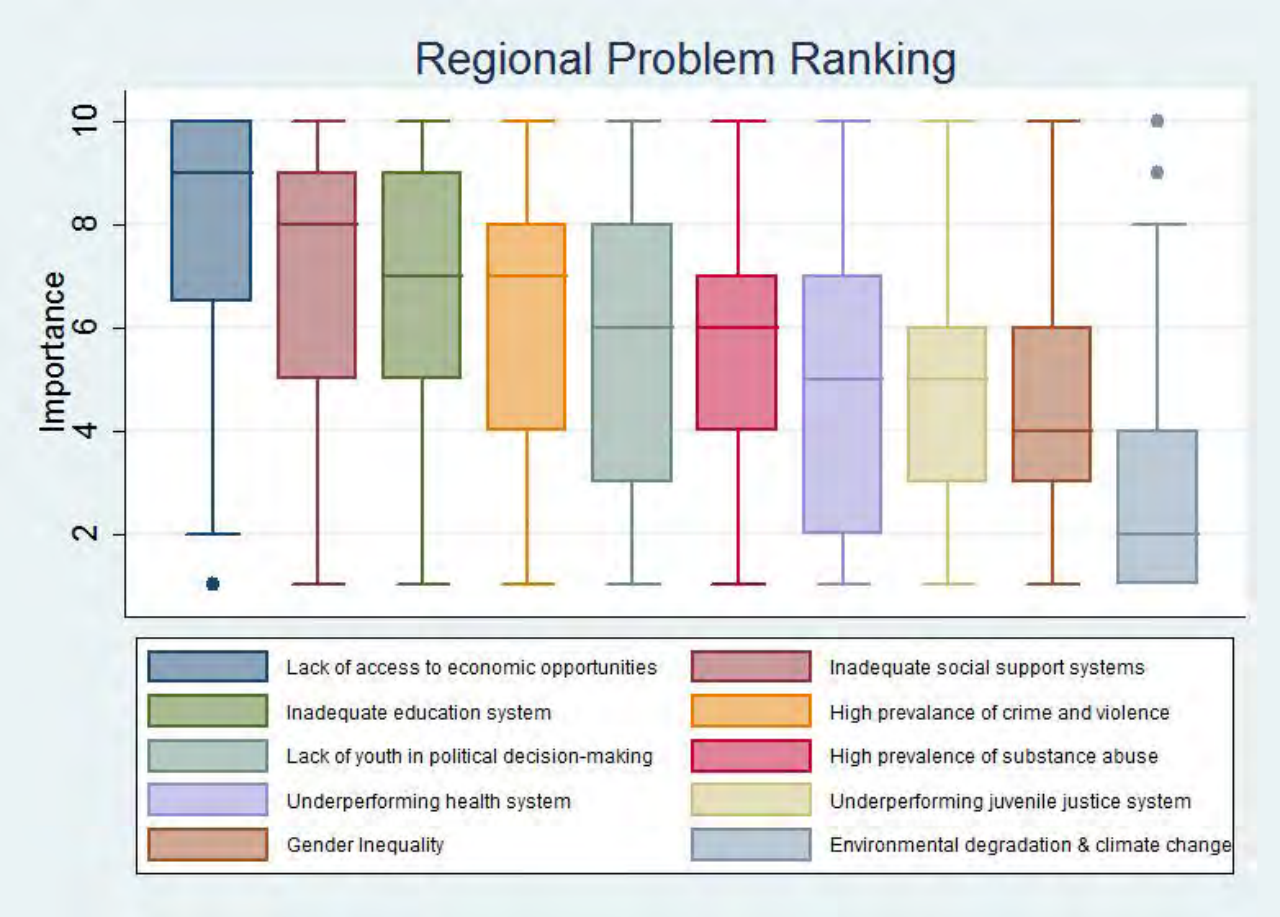

Figure B: Regional Problem Ranking Scores

Findings and Conclusions

Economic opportunities

- Youth struggle to secure jobs because of a lack of sufficient and diverse jobs opportunities. The imbalance between the supply and demand for employment has been a key contributing factor for "brain drain."
- The inability to access available economic opportunities reflects the inadequate education and training completed by youth.
- Young people indicated a critical need for job creation that would not only add more jobs to local economies but that would also diversify employment options.
- Youth lack the necessary financial resources to start their own businesses and lack property needed for economic ventures.
- Youth lack the necessary social and professional networks that help secure employment opportunities. This finding represents the critical influence that adequate social support networks play for young people in the ESC. Youth expect their social networks to protect them against potential stigmas that inhibit economic success. To this end, youth in the ESC can face stigmas and discrimination based on the location of their residence, gender, ethnic or racial identities, or disability.
- Combinations of barriers to engaging fully in local economies push youth toward life-long cycles of poverty. Strategic interventions to mainstream young people in economic activity would have the added benefit of injecting new and creative ideas that can contribute to renewing and transforming the economic landscape.

Education

- The educational system does not meet youth's needs, does not address the realities of today's labor market, and is not preparing youth to be more engaged and productive citizens or to take advantage of growth opportunities and technical areas where they can be competitive in the global economy. The team concludes that the education system in the Eastern and Southern Caribbean is, for the most part, hampered by resource limitations and outdated teaching methods.
- Access to education and training opportunities continues to be a challenge for youth in the ESC. Reasons were most often related to financial resources, transportation obstacles (especially in rural areas and the interior/hinterland regions of Guyana and Suriname), and lack of awareness of reachable resources.
- Students are increasingly alienated from their school environment because of ongoing issues with access to opportunities and a combination of cultural shifts and economic globalization.

Crime and violence

- Crime and violence are serious and growing concerns, are increasingly organized, involve both sexes, and are manifestations of serious shortcomings in social,

educational, economic, and law enforcement policy. Stakeholders readily draw a correlation between crime and the economic duress that is affecting their countries.

- Youth development workers report that besides economic pressures, deteriorating social support systems, lack of positive male role models, and the growing number of unattached males in age groups who tend to be less risk-averse combine to create opportunities for disorder and crime. Youth involved in gang activity are often in search of a social support network or sense of "belonging."

Juvenile justice

- The juvenile justice system is in crisis. It does not reduce juvenile crime or rehabilitate juvenile offenders. Juvenile crime has a negative impact on youth development and, by extension, economic growth, social cohesion, and stability.
- In general, there are not enough counselors in schools to meet demand. Unaddressed anger-management issues can result in disorderly or violent behavior and can lead to trouble with the law.
- There are few diversion programs, and evidence on their effectiveness is anecdotal. Recidivism rates are said by penal officials to be high, but data were not available for the assessment team to make a determination.

Social support systems

- The ESC is at a crossroads, as it possesses a youthful and talented population but lacks the quality and quantity of social and physical infrastructures to effectively transform the region.
- Family structures have deteriorated, often leaving youth with large amounts of unstructured, unsupervised time and an overall lack of guidance and positive role models, especially males.
- There is a critical need for access to certified (professional) social workers, guidance counselors, and mentorship programs to serve the needs of youth requiring additional social support.
- There is a need for safe spaces, such as community clubs with organized programs and recreational facilities offering swimming, football, and table tennis, and other programs such as homework help, computer-aided teaching and learning, job listings, coaching, help preparing curricula vitae, and activities to prepare the youth for the world of work.
- Many available programs and centers are quite influential at a grassroots/local level but warrant capacity-building to make them more efficient and effective.

Health and well-being

- The existing legislative frameworks that serve as barriers to youth access to the appropriate health services need to be reviewed and amended. The following are the two areas needing the most urgent attention:

- Access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services is lacking.
- The lack of mental health facilities or resources as a significant challenge facing youth in the Caribbean.

- Chronic, noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity are prevalent throughout the populations of the ESC.
- The high HIV prevalence rate among the adult population also has serious implications for the health of youth. The available research highlights several issues pertaining to youth sexual behavior including early sexual initiation, lack of condom negotiation and use, multiple partnering, and the "sugar daddy syndrome."[2]
- Teenage pregnancy was raised as one of the most urgent health challenges facing youth in the Caribbean.
- Youth reported either their own involvement or that of their peers in risky practices such as tobacco smoking, alcohol misuse, and the abuse of illicit drugs such as marijuana and cocaine.

Environment and climate change

- Youth do not prioritize the significance of environment and climate change issues in their own lives. It is not the case that youth do not care about the environment; they simply have more urgent concerns. Similar to what one would expect based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, ESC youth are primarily attentive to meeting their most immediate needs and are most aware of and focused on how to do this through economic, social, and education or training mechanisms.
- Youth who are involved with environment and climate change initiatives feel marginalized. In connection with the inclusion of youth in political and national-level strategic decision-making, youth voices and experiences are not considered to the extent that young people would like.

Cross-cutting themes

- The acute deficit of reliable and comparable data across these and other thematic areas is an overarching problem for the ESC region
- There are limited opportunities and mechanisms that exist for dialogue among youth as well as between youth and national policymakers. Inadequate social and economic

[2] (a) OECS Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Surveys, 2010, (b) CAREC/PAHO/WHO Behavioural Surveillance Surveys, 2005/2006, and (c) Bombereau, G. and Allen C., *Social and Cultural Factors Driving the HIV Epidemic in the Caribbean: A Literature Review*, 2008.

opportunities and a weak institutional policy environment severely limit the transformational contribution that youth can make to sustainable development.

Recommendations

Economic opportunities

1. Initiate a regional market assessment that can support human resource development and other national-level education and training strategies. This can determine labor market supply and demand (and demand trends) for different skillsets, and distribute findings widely among organizations working to enhance youth engagement in economic opportunities.

2. Strengthen current technical vocational and education training (TVET) programs such that strategies and program designs reflect the aforementioned market assessment. This can ensure that curriculum and services offered are aligned to current economic and market trends and demands.

Education

1. The current efforts of the OECS and its regional partners should be supplemented by USAID/BEC youth-specific interventions toward standardization and certification of technical and vocational skills programs. The OECS has made significant strides in identifying ongoing and potential programming efforts that better link education and TVET strategies to successful economic outcomes for ESC students.

2. While the OECS and the Commonwealth continue to review current education system offerings, it is possible that USAID could act as a partner in disseminating knowledge as well as develop an awareness among the key stakeholders and opinion makers that today's shortcomings in education will become tomorrow's shortcomings in their sectors. It is therefore recommended that USAID/BEC support a National Dialogue on Education in each country. The National Dialogue on Education would be a series of forums and conferences on the main TVET issues, each cosponsored with key civil society stakeholders, both private and public.

Crime and violence

1. Promote a Community Based Policing strategy. Community Based Policing is an approach to increasing security by creating partnerships between police officers and community members to identify and address the root causes of crime and disorder. Community members such as youth, teachers, and neighborhood businesses and organizations, such as sports clubs and churches, are important actors in Community Based Policing partnerships; they can help the police understand the needs and interests of the community while reciprocally serving as gateways through which the police can expand their communication and build trust with the community. Community policing approaches already supported by USAID in Latin American countries such as Honduras, have supported partnerships with local community organizations, youth, and

law enforcement to identify and address the causes of crime and disorder should be utilized. These extant programming strategies can be reviewed and contextualized to meet the needs of the ESC.

2. Develop a strategy that strengthens the Agency's role in addressing youth involvement in crime and violence such that causes and solutions are examined and addressed. Current USAID programming aims to address crime and violence involving youth outcomes or related to other sectors, such as education and training or youth employment.

Juvenile justice

1. It is recommended that USAID/BEC extend and expand the OECS Juvenile Justice Reform Project. The Project provides a regional framework within which many of the ESCYA's findings fit. It is recommended that the OECS Juvenile Justice Reform Project be continued and, if possible, expanded to cover the other countries in the Eastern and Southern Caribbean.

Social support systems

1. Support the development of safe spaces that provide tangible support to youth.

    a. A mentorship component that provides access to and knowledge about positive role models, especially males, should also be included at youth centers.

2. Promote parenting skills, utilizing creative media to inculcate positive values and ethical practices.

3. Raise public awareness about the programs that are available to youth. Support the increased availability of psychosocial support in the key institutions that cater to youth, i.e., schools, juvenile centers/homes, and health centers. This would include facilities that provide psychometric testing and support.

Health and well-being

1. Support national authorities with the development of targeted health education campaigns. These campaigns should be innovative and attractive to youth while providing information on issues related to nutrition and physical health.

2. Partner with agencies such as the United Nations Population Fund in order to scale up access to youth-friendly services to reduce youth involvement in risky behaviors and sexual and reproductive practices with negative consequences.

3. Strengthen the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) curriculum in order to better meet the information needs of youth in the ESC. Furthermore, advocacy is needed at national levels to highlight the importance of the curriculum and to ensure that it is implemented in all primary and secondary schools in the region.

4. Support research into and programs that address mental health issues that affect youth. Issues such as youth suicide (which exceeds the national average rate in some communities) and violence-related psychological trauma (which is a feature of high-crime neighborhoods) could affect the quality of life and socialization of young people, especially those from underserved communities.

Environment and climate change

1. Provide capacity-building support to youth environment networks in order to support national-level and regional-level campaign initiatives that build awareness of environment and climate change issues among ESC youth.

Cross-cutting themes

1. Collaborate with other donors already implementing efforts in the region (including the UN) to build capacities of local governments and regional agencies to collect, monitor, and evaluate youth-specific data that can be used to inform national programming, policies, and decision-making.

2. Invest in and support capacity-building programming to enhance the competencies of youth officers.

3. Encourage governments to modernize (or in some cases create) strategic youth development plans. While many countries included in the ESCYA already had National Youth Policies drafted, informants recommend that these must be revised and better implemented. Invest in programs that assist young people to reorganize and develop strategies for the sustainability and influence of National Youth Councils (NYC) and National Youth Parliaments.

4. Support civil society capacity-building initiatives to raise the level of civic participation among youth and to provide capacity-building training to youth advocacy groups.

In summary, the Eastern and Southern Caribbean faces great challenges that cannot be addressed with modest support through a set of unconnected initiatives. The needs are interconnected and significant, and require a cross-cutting approach that seeks systemic improvements and that gives greater voice to all stakeholders. The challenges will only be fully addressed by far-sighted action by its citizens, governments, regional institutions, and donors.

1. INTRODUCTION

ASSESSMENT PURPOSE

The Eastern and Southern Caribbean Youth Assessment (ESCYA) was designed to provide the United States Agency for International Development, Mission to Barbados and Eastern Caribbean (USAID/BEC), with a cross-sectoral analysis of the regional youth development landscape. Specifically, because it compiled empirically derived findings and actionable recommendations, the report was intended to inform the development of a youth-specific DO and the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014–18 Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS) for the USAID/BEC Mission.

ESCYA focused on seven thematic issue areas prioritized by USAID/BEC; these were economic opportunities, education and training, health and well-being, social support systems, juvenile justice, crime and violence, and environment/climate change. While a wide range of stakeholders was included in the research, the study focused on the lived experiences and perceptions of youth ages 14 to 24 in 10 Eastern and Southern Caribbean countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Given its prominence in the development context of the ESC, the assessment pays particular attention to the needs of "at-risk" and vulnerable youth, particularly in their quest to realize their full personal potentials, support themselves and their families, and contribute to their communities.

USAID/BEC allotted a budget of USD$435,381.27 for this assessment, which was conducted between June and October of 2013. This task order (No. AID-538-TO-13-00003) was awarded under the USAID Analytical Services Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC) (No. AID – OAA – I – 10 – 00003). The contract Scope of Work (SOW) can be found in Annex A.

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

An eight-person team of specialists from Social Impact, Inc. (SI) conducted fieldwork over a seven-week period from June 24 to August 10, 2013. To meet the deliverables schedule outlined in the contract, the SI team developed a fluid organizational structure: all team members met in Barbados, divided into sub-teams of four during the subsequent three weeks, and merged as a single team of four senior-most team members for the final four weeks. To prepare for the in-brief session in Barbados, team members participated in several virtual meetings, reviewed relevant reports, and drafted data collection tools. During the orientation session, the evaluation team met with the USAID/BEC Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) and other Mission officials, reviewed relevant literature, refined assessment tools, and finalized an assessment work plan. The assessment tools were standardized for use across the 10 country contexts, including mechanisms to allow for disaggregation based on age, gender, thematic areas, and country.

Data Collection

Desk review

The desk review began prior to fieldwork and continued throughout the assessment. In addition to specific literature referenced in the SOW, the assessment team referred to the following types of documents in reporting its findings, conclusions, and recommendations (see Annex F for a full bibliography):

- Recent USAID assessments and evaluations focusing on youth, gender, and relevant sectors;
- Existing studies and reference documents from other bilateral and multilateral organizations, including the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, Caribbean Development Bank, CARICOM Secretariat, and United Nations;
- Relevant Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) studies, evaluations, and reports; and,
- Relevant country-level statistics.

Key informant interviews (KIIs)

KIIs were conducted with the range of stakeholder types identified in the assessment SOW and proposed by the ESCYA team to provide diverse insights regarding resources, opportunities, and obstacles currently facing youth both at the country and regional levels.[3] To the extent feasible within the limited time in each country, key informants (KIs) included youth (including those vulnerable or "at risk"), government officials, law enforcement and juvenile justice personnel, religious leaders, youth leaders, and stakeholders working in education, health, and media.[4] The team used two data collection approaches during KIIs. A list of key informants can be found in Annex B.

- *Semi-structured KII guides* (Annex D) were used during meetings with informants to ensure the consistency of questions and mitigate bias. At the completion of fieldwork, the team interviewed 309 informants.

[3] In order to ensure that key informants were forthcoming about the realities of the situation in each country, persons were advised that their responses would be anonymous. Therefore, with the exception of high-level government ministers the names and/or titles of those interviewed are not included in the report. The perspectives shared, however, were incorporated into the report findings for each country and the overall level regional analyses.

[4] The original SOW and proposal included teachers, school leaders, and caretakers/parents in the anticipated list of key informants. However, the scheduling of the assessment posed a significant limitation to reaching these groups as schools and summer sessions were closed at the time of the assessment. As a result, the impressions of caretakers/parents were not included among the data collected as a separate stakeholder group. Rather, many KIs who provided perspectives in one of the thematic issue areas play dual roles as caretakers or educators, and their perspectives in these latter regards were captured during interviews.

- *Issue rating and problem analysis*: The team augmented KIIs and focus groups (FGs) with Issue Rating and Problem Analysis exercises. "Issue Rating" allowed respondents to identify or rate the level of importance of each thematic area to youth. Because the team recognized that multiple issues may be deemed important, the "Problem Analysis" tool prompted informants to "rank-order" a set of 10 predetermined problems most often faced by youth in the region. Problem analysis involved participants themselves making connections between problems and other environmental factors in order to identify potential causal relationships. Both techniques were particularly powerful in identifying differences between males and females that may have been missed during interviews. The team completed a total of 217 problem rating/ranking exercises across the 10 countries. The average number of respondents was 22 per country, with a range of 12 (Saint Kitts and Nevis) to 30 (Trinidad/Tobago). The sample[5] was skewed slightly in favor of females (59 percent) and adults (57percent).

Focus groups (FGs)

Focus groups were conducted primarily with groups of youth and, in some cases, with youth workers (refer to Annex C for a list of FGs). The team was most successful in securing focus groups through contacts with youth leadership councils and organizations currently partnering with USAID/BEC, but particular attention was paid to contacting and facilitating discussions with "at-risk" and vulnerable youth. This was done through contacts with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), courts, delinquency centers, and prisons. As stipulated in the SOW, the team aimed to include youth between the ages of 14 and 24. However, due to the lack of a standard definition of youth among the 10 countries, some participants were as old as 35. As will be discussed in more detail in Section 2, varying definitions of *youth* are utilized by different organizations and government agencies/ministries and for a multiplicity of purposes, even within the same country.

- *FG protocols:* As with the KIIs, the team used FG guides (see Annex E) to facilitate a semi-structured conversation with and between participants.[6] The team conducted a total of 37 FGs (approximately four in each country, except for Suriname which only had one FG), which invited the responses of over 354 participating youth (tool in Annex E).
- *Surveys:* Before the start of the FG, team members distributed a short three-page survey to each youth in attendance. The tools were comprised of four modules: demographic

[5] Approximately 88 percent of respondents who completed the issue-rating and problem-ranking exercise indicated that they resided in "urban" areas; however, geographic data was not captured for 45 percent of the instruments collected. Given the limited sample size, the assessment team could not make conclusive statements relative to the variable, urban versus rural or other.

[6] FG participants were reached through their membership or affiliation with a coordinating body with which the assessment team collaborated. Groups were not separated by gender, though, because of the nature of the coordinating bodies (e.g., homes for care/protection, youth centers, or prisons); some groups were comprised of only males or females.

information, goals and challenges, self-rated professional skills, and self-esteem.[7] Data from the surveys were analyzed and compared to qualitative information derived from the interviews. A total of 295 youth surveys were completed across the 10 countries. The average number of respondents per country was 30, with a range of 14 (Dominica) to 48 (Antigua and Barbuda). The sample was split evenly between males and females, and encompassed an age group from 12 to 31 (mean = 19).[8]

- *Problem analysis:* During FGs, the team conducted a problem-analysis exercise wherein youth were asked to rank the top five problems (or challenges) facing their peers from among a list of challenges compiled during the conversation. In some instances, that list extended beyond five problems due to perceptions surrounding the range of issues in each country and based on the composition of the focus groups (i.e., gender or "at-risk" versus "attached"). Often, focus group participants were then asked to determine what links existed between these challenges.

Canvassing

The team made efforts to collect data from "at-risk" populations of youth, as it was often challenging to make contact through formal channels (see more information on sampling below). As such, team members solicited responses to key assessment questions included in the FG protocol and youth survey from male and female youth in city centers, on street corners, in parks, and in other youth hangouts. Team members asked these youth about their basic demographic information, including age and employment status, and then conducted independent or group interviews focusing on the key challenges and opportunities for young people.

Sampling

In the absence of sampling frames from which to identify cases, the team utilized two types of sampling methodologies: network sampling (also called snowball sampling) and convenience sampling.

- *Network sampling* refers to the use of respondents' personal contacts to identify further cases for enumeration. In the field, this primarily took the form of using representatives (adults and youth) from governmental and non-governmental agencies and programs to identify "at-risk"/unattached youth.

[7] This module utilized the Rosenberg Scale, a 10-item instrument designed to measure self-esteem through Likert-scale questions. This tool has been used for decades in international research.

[8] Following the USAID definition of youth (14–24), the sample included 250 youth. However, the team included the wider age bracket because the age bracket defining "youth" varied across countries, with the regional range being 13–35.

- *Convenience sampling* involves enumerating cases that are readily available over the course of fieldwork and was used to ensure the inclusion of "at-risk" or hard-to-reach youth. This involved canvassing in locations such as street corners, sporting facilities, and places of entertainment, where "at-risk" or hard-to-reach youth are known to congregate. Some level of purposive sampling was used to reach out to youth in these areas who appeared to be most in line with the type of stakeholders (such as age or socioeconomic status) the team was looking to include in the assessment.

LIMITATIONS

The primary limitation experienced by the team was an expansive array of data collection activities paired with limited time in the field. As stated in the SOW, the team was required to visit each of 10 countries for a period of five days, with at least six countries to be covered within the first three weeks of fieldwork. With two sub-teams of four covering three countries each during the first three weeks of implementation, a significant amount of geographic coverage was reached within a short period of time. That stated, the short timeframe in each country made it difficult to schedule meetings with the full range of stakeholders to secure meetings while undergoing data collection.

One of the most significant limitations of the assessment was the difficulty in reaching "at-risk"/unattached youth. Following the sampling methods described above, the team used contacts made through KIIs and FGs to invite a sample of youth who are both "hard to reach," or "at risk," and those who have self-selected into relevant interventions. Most often, these youth included those "on the block" (reached via canvassing) or through the coordinating efforts of a local NGO, community-based organization (CBO), homes for boys/girls, or facilities for "at-risk" youth. However, due to time constraints, the internal approval process at institutions for youth, networking constraints, and collaboration with coordinating bodies, the team's sample of youth represents a larger sample of urban and "attached" youth (those who were in school and were members of a youth-focused organization/program) in each country context; rural and vulnerable and "at-risk" youth were under-represented.

The differential response rates encountered by the team also posed a key limitation to data collection and analysis. As outlined in the data collection section above, there was wide variability in the number of completed observations across the 10 ESC countries, including very different numbers of various respondent types. While the assessment was never designed to produce nationally representative data, this variability limits the ability to make comparative generalizations across the 10 countries.

Similarly, because the team was not able to randomly select respondents, data within this assessment cannot be considered representative of each country's population. Every effort was made to ensure participation by a wide variety of stakeholders from various age groups, geographic locations, and socioeconomic strata, but the small sample size compared to the youth population of each country means that the views of participants are not necessarily representative of the views of their peers or other groups the team may have missed.

The scheduling of meetings while in country occurred due to a condensed planning phase associated with the urgency of completing the ESCYA in time for the USAID planning cycle. The team employed a logistician and a headquarters-based backstop to schedule appointments, but the sheer volume of data collection necessitated scheduling of appointments by team members while in country. Other factors related to time included:

- Key focal points, such as national representatives, school-based stakeholders, parent-teacher associations, and some youth, were unavailable or difficult to secure meetings with due to the scheduling of the ESCYA over the summer months. Even in instances where stakeholders were willing to participate in the ESCYA, other commitments limited their ability to do so.
- Furthermore, time was also lost due to logistical issues associated with travel. This included the unavailability of flights and the significant amount of time spent travelling to sites (including road and community planning challenges) while in country.
- Other circumstances affecting the time allocated for fieldwork included events of national significance, such as Emancipation Day and Carnival season, as well as the passage of a tropical storm.

DATA ANALYSIS

During the data collection phase, qualitative data from KIIs and FGs were analyzed on an ongoing basis, with interpretations and conclusions vetted by the team during regular team check-ins held throughout the week. Following the completion of the fieldwork, the data was systematically analyzed at both the national and regional levels. Quantitative data from the Youth Survey and Issue Rating/Problem Analysis tools were entered into standardized intake forms. Upon return from the field, the data were merged, cleaned, and analyzed using Stata, a statistical software package. Quantitative analyses were disaggregated by gender and country. KII, FG, and quantitative data were examined via trend analysis and coding. Quantitative data was triangulated with references from the desk review and qualitative data from KIIs, FGs, and open responses on the surveys to explore diverging/converging findings.

2. REGIONAL CONTEXT

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: YOUTH IN THE CARIBBEAN

The engagement of youth as change agents has been considered a development priority since the *1965 Declaration on the Promotion Among Youth on the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples*.[9] Member states of the United Nations (UN) articulated the critical, transformational role that young people can and must play in the development ethos of their communities and countries. This declaration became a clarion call for countries to develop the appropriate institutional frameworks and programmatic agenda to harness the creative capacity and potential of young people. Consequently, the grouping of Commonwealth member countries moved to establish the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) in 1973 as a vehicle to promote the positive development of young people. The CYP was established with four regional centers, one of which is based in Georgetown, Guyana, and pioneered the formal training of youth development workers in the Caribbean.

Two decades after the historic 1965 declaration, the international community reaffirmed support for young people as a force for peace and development with the 1985 commemoration of the International Year of the Youth (IYY) under the theme of *Participation, Development, and Peace*. One accomplishment during this year was the proliferation of National Youth Councils and the formation of a regional umbrella body, the Caribbean Federation of Youth. Another outcome was increased advocacy for effective youth participation frameworks and an enhanced youth policy environment. One decade later, in 1995, member countries of the UN reaffirmed their earlier commitment to young people by adopting the *World Plan of Action for Youth Development, 2000 and Beyond (WPAY*). This document was envisioned as a policy framework and practical guide for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people by increasing their access to opportunities for constructive participation in society. Some significant milestones stemming from this initiative were improvements in the institutional framework and policy environment, more diversified programming content, and an expanding cohort of trained youth development workers.

Since 2000, the case for Caribbean youth development has been set against an increasingly complex and challenging landscape. Prevailing global economic, social and political factors, as well as encroaching influences of negative subcultures have diminished the prevalence of traditional modes of socialization, such as the family, church, schools, and community-based organizations. It is now well established that globalization and its pervasive socioeconomic consequences affected the youth cohort profoundly and disproportionately. Consequently, the

[9] United Nations. (1965). *Declaration on the Promotion Among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding Between Peoples*. Accessed September 2013 from http://www.un-documents.net/a20r2037.htm.

Caribbean youth development landscape became populated with negative manifestations of youth socialization. As evidenced in the ESCYA desk review and findings, these include the following:

- Increasing hopelessness among young people.
- Increasing trends of risky behaviors among significant sections of the youth cohort.[10]
- Apathy and relative indifference to traditional civic and community-based activities.
- Escalating trends of youth poverty, unemployment, and underemployment.
- Alarming incidence of HIV and other sexually transmitted illnesses among young people.
- The devastating impact of crime, violence, drug abuse, and drug trafficking on the youth cohort.
- Disturbing trends of disrespect for and indifference to traditional symbols of authority and officialdom.
- Reported academic underachievement of young males.

A lack of sustained investment in youth, linked with global economic pressures and heightened drug trade throughout Latin America and the Caribbean region, resulted in the escalation of crime and violence. By 2006 the situation became so volatile that the Heads of Government of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and, subsequently, of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), mandated the establishment of the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development to undertake a thorough investigation of the situation facing young people in the Caribbean. The esteemed Commission undertook a comprehensive study and compiled a report entitled *Eye on the Future*,[11] which made profound observations and proposed a menu of far-reaching and strategic recommendations. The report was presented to and accepted by the CARICOM Heads of Government at a special meeting held in Paramaribo, Suriname, in January 2010.

Eye on the Future has laid the foundation for a comprehensive rethinking, repositioning, and refocusing of the Caribbean youth development framework and strategy. Some work has already started, but there is a compelling need to accelerate the process. Fortunately, the Caribbean is experiencing an upsurge in technical support and investment in the youth development landscape on the part of agencies such as USAID; UN agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations International Children's

[10] Risky behaviors are defined in this context as behaviors that have an adverse impact on the holistic development of young people—for example, substance abuse, engagement in violent activities, and unsafe sexual practices.

[11] Draft Report of the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development—*Eye on the Future: Investing in Youth Now for Tomorrow's Community*, January 2010.

Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); and the Caribbean Development Bank. These have joined traditional youth development partners such as the Commonwealth Youth Programme and the CARICOM Secretariat. This, and evidence of support from other governmental and non-governmental bodies, bodes well for the future direction of youth development in the Caribbean.

BACKGROUND ON YOUTH AND YOUTH AT RISK

Youth

"The absence of a regional definition for youth [...] makes it difficult to coordinate and harmonize regional policies and programmes."[12] The lack of a standard, region-wide definition of "youth" is problematic as it inhibits strategic programming and decision-making. *Childhood* and *adulthood* are designations that differ across the ESC region and are legally prescribed. For example, the definition of the age at which each country has its own clear-cut definitions for determining the age that criminal responsibility begins (i.e., the age threshold for criminal behavior prosecution, or the age threshold for trial as an adult) varies widely, with a reported range of 8 to 38.

While the definitions of *childhood* and *adulthood* are legal, the definition of "youth" still tends to be largely influenced by societal and cultural norms, sometimes differing within a country. For instance, Suriname uses UNESCO's age parameters of 12 to 25 years to define "youth," voter eligibility for Suriname's Youth Parliament is ages 12 to 24, and Suriname's Youth Development Strategy defines ages 10 to 21 as "adolescence." At the same time, the age range for membership in Suriname's Junior Chamber of Commerce is 18 to 40 years. At the regional level, CARICOM sets an upper age limit of 35 for youth, while the United Nations defines youth as those between ages 15 and 24.

However articulated, most definitions of *youth* recognize that it is a post-childhood transitional social status in which a person moves from a state of personal dependency on parents and caregivers to one of personal independence. The definition of *youth* is therefore centered primarily on social and economic factors and only secondarily on age parameters. Factors such as employment, education, legal freedoms (such as the right to own land, open a bank account, obtain a driver's license, sign a contract) and personal freedoms (negotiated with parents or caregivers) are issues that apply to the transition to personal independence across national boundaries and that from time to time connect youth to social and political transformations.

Despite such definitional idiosyncrasies, all 10 ESC countries in this assessment are parties to one or more supranational initiatives that provide standard definitions. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which all the countries in this assessment are signatories, provides a

[12] CARICOM. (2010). *Eye on the Future: Report on Youth*. p. 6.

standard definition of *child*. In addition, the governments of the OECS initiated an OECS Family Law Reform initiative to modernize the laws dealing with family matters, bring them in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and increase the capacity of the judicial system and related OECS institutions to improve the administration of law and quality of justice. Implemented through the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (ECSC), the initiative produced a set of Model Family Bills in 2007, all of which set the upper age limit for childhood at 18 years old. One of the Model Family Bills, the Child Justice Bill, sets the age of criminality at 12 years, and the Children Care and Adoption Bill establishes legal responsibilities of the state and of parents with respect to children. In addition, the *2010 Report of the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development* defines adolescence as including those who are between the ages of 10 and 14.

Youth At Risk

USAID defines youth at risk as "youth who face environmental, social, and family conditions that hinder their personal development and their successful integration into society as productive citizens."[13] Whether physical, political, social, or economic, the transition to personal independence always involves risk. Youth transitioning takes place in all of these spheres, often at the same time, with varying degrees of personal preparation and family support. There is a multiplicity of factors that mitigate the degree to which youth are exposed to "risk," including education, health, living conditions, interpersonal skills, cognitive skills, emotional coping skills, and self-control skills that are nurtured by caregivers, mentors, peers, or other adult leaders. With regard to the aggravating factors, a recent Inter-American Development Bank "News and Views" article on risk factors for Caribbean youth reported that alcohol and drug abuse, early and/or unprotected sex, low academic performance, school desertion, crime, and high levels of violence are all examples of risky behavior that at times exceed those anywhere else in the world.[14] In its article "At-Risk Youth: An Urgent Challenge for the Caribbean," the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) states: "Factors that contribute to [risky] behavior are known as risk factors and include poverty, lack of opportunities, no significant bonds with adults, lack of a connection with educational institutions, and the presence of cultural values that encourage and reinforce risky behavior. Factors that may reduce the onset of risky behavior, which are protective factors, include close emotional ties with at least one adult, a sense of safety and belonging to an educational institution, strong social skills, ability to solve problems, and a sense of purpose and independence." The article further states that "isolated and sporadic interventions are not effective in the prevention of risky behavior. In addition, solid sectoral interventions should be designed to guarantee an integrated approach for children and youth in order to achieve the results desired. This strategy requires the use of a common set of defined

[13] USAID. (2013). *State of the Field Report: Examining the Evidence in Youth Education in Crisis and Conflict*, p. iv.

[14] IDB. (accessed online 15 August 2013). "At-Risk Youth: An Urgent Challenge for the Caribbean," http://www.iadb.org/en/topics/education/at-risk-youth-an-urgent-challenge-for-the-caribbean,6649.html

indicators and criteria for areas of focus." However, no single factor can be identified as being responsible for putting youth at risk, and it would be fair to say that all youth, even those in middle-class households are at risk.

3. REGIONAL ANALYSIS

3A. OVERVIEW

The youth development landscape in the ESC is as promising as it is alarming. The challenges are systemic: On the causal end of the spectrum, it is clear that the most influential societal systems— economic, social support, and educational—are no longer meeting the needs of Caribbean youth. Structural deficiencies in these systems, paired with the dual challenges of an increasingly prominent drug trade and a prolonged economic recession have led to a regional crisis. The corresponding effects, an uncertain socioeconomic climate and wide-ranging concerns regarding crime and violence, have in turn put additional strain on social structures and citizen security. In this complex and challanging context, youth and youth organizations presented great resilience and leadership in addressing the most pressing concerns of young people through community initiatives, political engagement, sports programming, and other methods to reach the most vulnerable.

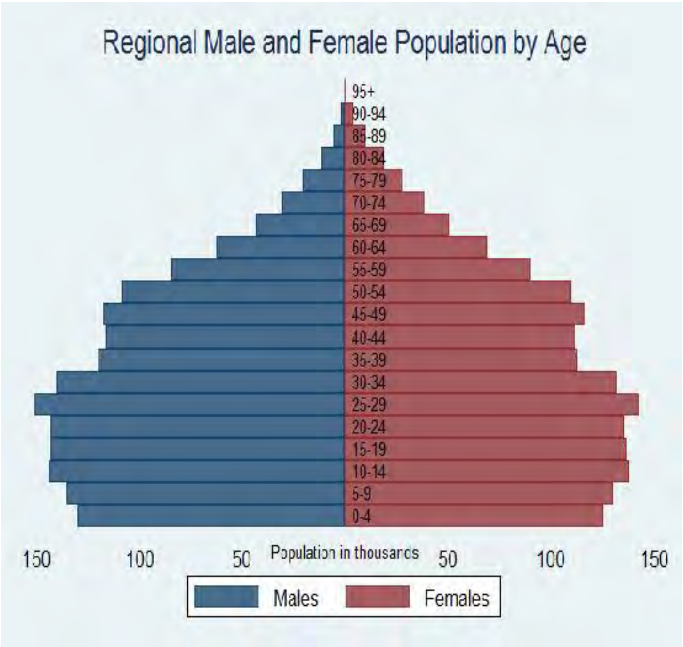

Figure 1: Regional Male and Female Population by Age

With the largest portion of the Eastern and Southern Caribbean (ESC) population comprised of youth between ages 15 and 35, it is critical that social and economic interventions refocus attention on enabling the livelihoods of young people. As shown in Figure 1, 18.1 percent of the total BEC population is within the USAID-defined "youth" category (14 to 24), though there is significant variance in the "youth" proportion at the national level as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: ESC Countries, Basic Demographics

Country	Area* (Sq. Miles)	Population† (Estimated 2012)	Youth* (% of Total)	GDP per Capita† (Est. 2011–12)
Antigua and Barbuda	171	89,070	18.3	13,207
Barbados	166	283,200	15.1	13,076
Dominica	290	71,680	18.7	6,691
Grenada	133	105,500	18.8	7,485
Guyana	83,000	795,400	23.2	3,584
Saint Kitts and Nevis	101	53,580	17.3	13,969
Saint Lucia	238	180,900	18.5	6,558
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	150	109,400	18.7	6,515
Suriname	63,251	534,500	19.5	8,864
Trinidad and Tobago	1,980	1,337,000	14.7	17,934

Sources: (*) www.census.gov (†) World Bank 2010; "Youth" indicates individuals aged 14–24

Section 3B divides the regional analysis by thematic area, discussing each area of interest and its relationship with youth in the ESC. Across the region, informants generally rated each issue as "very important" on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being most important. Foreseeing this challenge, the team forced respondents to prioritize areas of most acute need (in this analysis, three additional issues were included—gender inequality, substance abuse, and lack of youth in political decision-making). The regional results of this analysis are presented in Figure 2. However, when respondents were asked to rank-order the issues, clear preferential patterns emerged. Table 2 presents how respondents of each ESC country ranked these problems on a ten-point scale, with 10 being "most important" to youth. The lack of economic opportunities consistently ranked as the most important problem across all 10 countries. Close behind in second and third were youth's concerns with the inadequate social support and education systems, respectively. The following sections will present analyses of the relationship of each thematic area as it relates to experiences of youth across the ESC region. Subsequently, each country is presented as a stand-alone report that focuses primarily on divergent trends from the regional analysis.

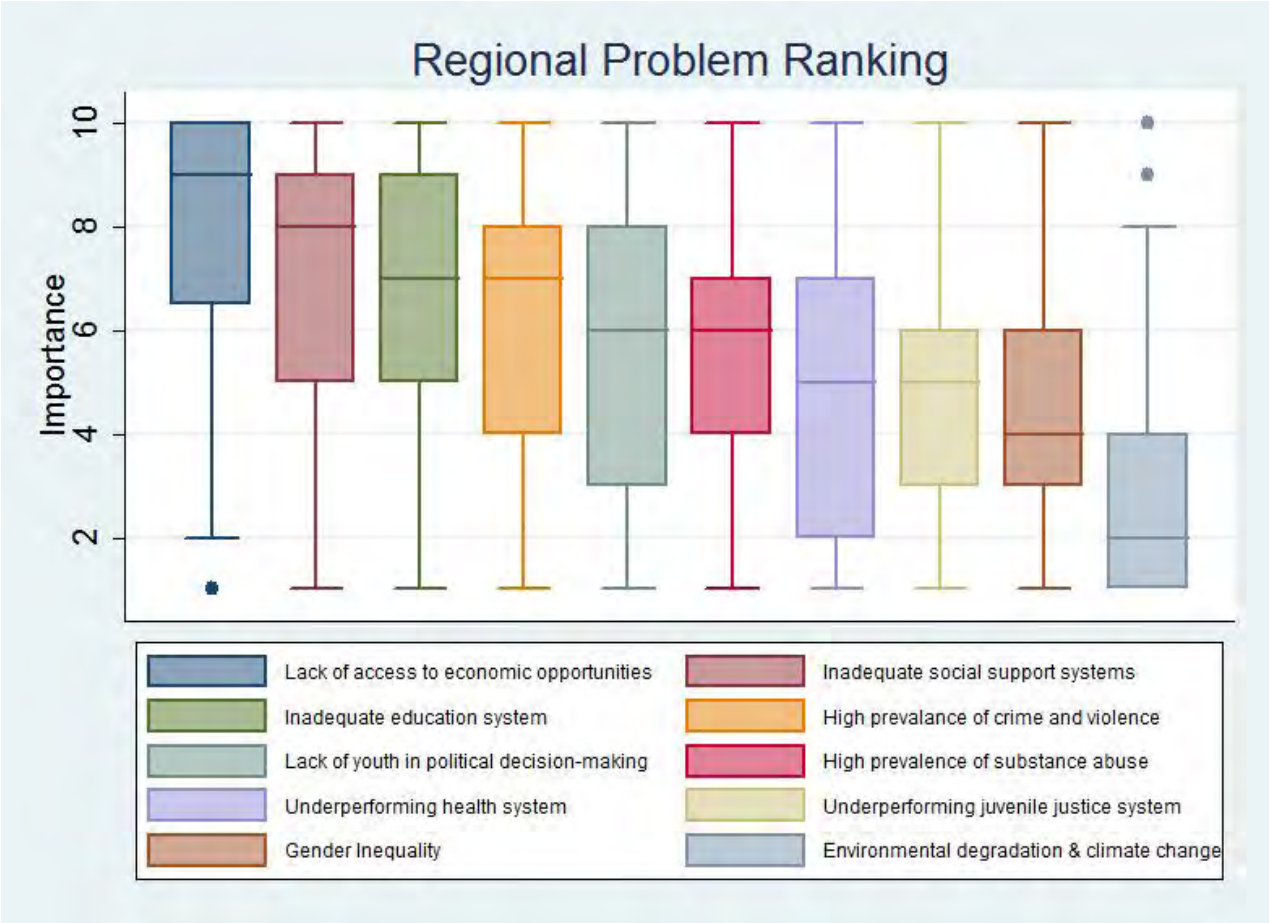

Figure 2: Regional Problem Ranking Scores

Table 2: Problem Ranking by Country and Region

Country	Lack of access to economic opportunities	Inadequate social support systems	Inadequate education system	High prevalence of crime and violence	Lack of youth inclusion in political decision-making	High prevalence of substance abuse	Underperforming health system	Underperforming juvenile justice system	Gender inequality	Environment and climate change
Antigua and Barbuda	7.1	6.9	6.4	6.5	4.9	6.9	4.9	4.0	4.9	2.8
Barbados	8.8	8.0	5.0	6.1	6.1	6.4	4.9	4.4	5.1	2.5
Dominica	8.4	8.4	7.7	6.6	6.3	6.3	5.2	5.5	4.5	5.1
Grenada	7.4	6.5	6.4	5.3	5.8	4.7	4.2	5.8	5.1	3.8
Guyana	7.5	6.8	7.1	6.3	5.9	4.7	4.9	4.9	4.0	2.8
Saint Kitts and Nevis	7.3	7.1	5.6	8.3	4.3	5.1	5.2	6.1	4.8	1.6
Saint Lucia	8.7	6.8	7.0	6.9	5.4	5.2	4.5	4.6	4.2	2.4
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	8.8	7.0	7.2	5.3	4.4	4.7	6.0	4.3	4.2	3.1
Suriname	7.4	6.5	8.0	4.2	6.5	4.7	5.6	4.6	5.1	2.4
Trinidad and Tobago	6.6	6.9	6.6	6.7	6.1	5.9	4.6	4.9	3.7	3.5
REGION	**7.8**	**7.0**	**6.7**	**6.2**	**5.7**	**5.5**	**4.9**	**4.8**	**4.5**	**3.0**

3B. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY THEMATIC AREA

Economic Opportunities

Findings and conclusions

Across the region, stakeholders rated "economic opportunities" as the most important of the seven thematic issues: the frequency at which respondents rated the issue as "very important" ranged from 56 to 100 percent (Figure 3).

When asked to prioritize problem areas in the problem-ranking exercise, respondents clearly demonstrated that a lack of economic opportunities was the most important of the 10 (see Figure 2). This finding held true for all subpopulations when data were disaggregated by age and gender (though females tended to place a higher premium on economic challenges than males).

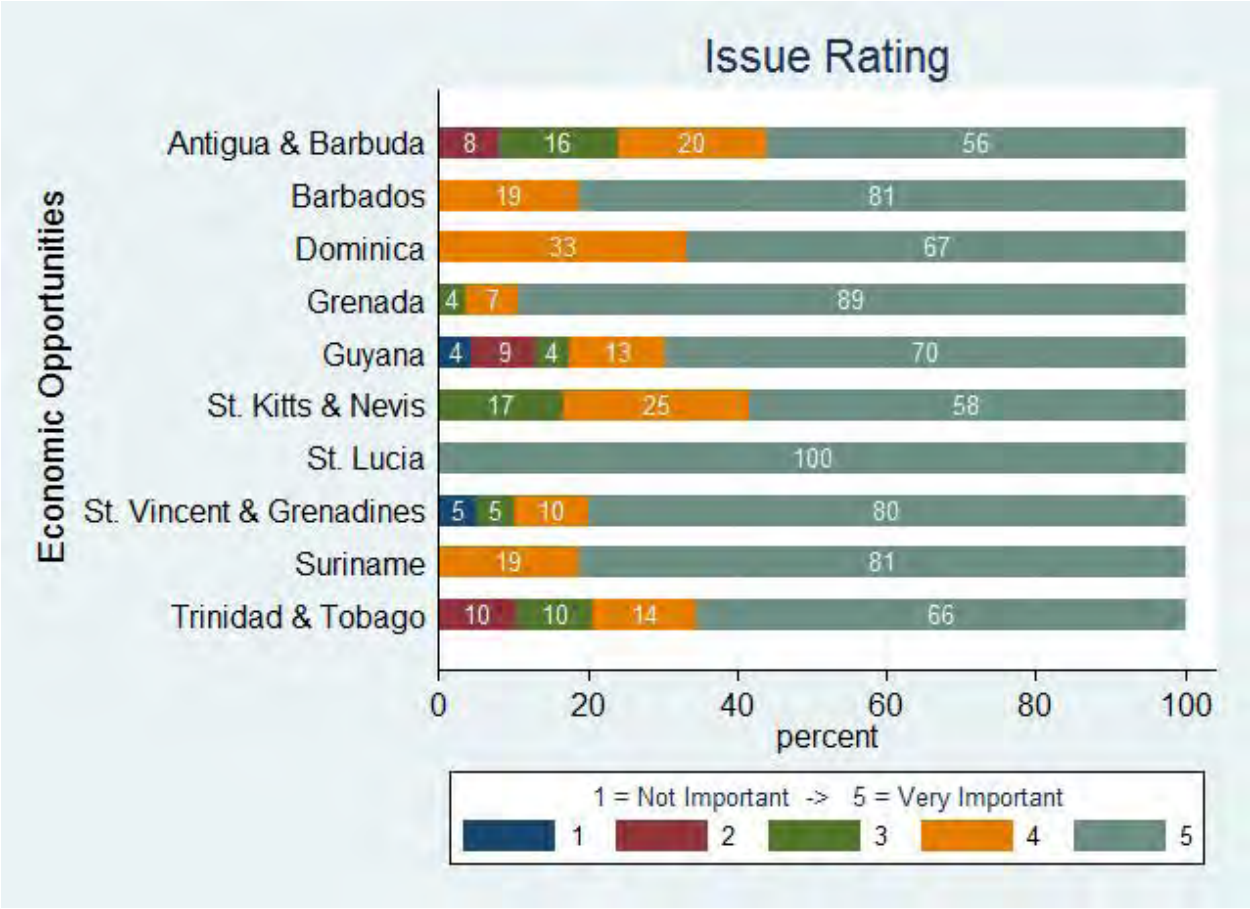

Figure 3: Issue Rating Scores by Country—Economic Opportunities

Given the macroeconomic shocks that the region has weathered and that are described in the 2010 *Youth Workforce Development Assessment* report[15], findings related to economic opportunities and challenges experienced by youth in the ESC are not surprising. The region has been struggling with a longer-term economic transition: A long tradition of preferential trading arrangements for commodity exports (mainly sugar and bananas) is being eroded, and only a few countries export petroleum and minerals. For most Caribbean small island development states (SIDS), tourism is the main service export. These factors together create a high level of susceptibility to external shocks, such as the recent financial crisis.[16] The economic erosion cited here from a 2010 United Nations report is experienced by youth in the region as a barrier to success and economic independence. The findings below highlight the economic challenges encountered by young people across the region.

Youth struggle to secure jobs because of a lack of sufficient and diverse jobs opportunities. Across the region, more than 50 percent of youth and adults identified the key factors leading to young people's challenge of finding and securing meaningful employment. Jobs currently available for younger and older youth tend to be limited to low-level positions within the tourism industry (particularly in the island states); the shrinking farming sector; mining activities (especially in the interior regions of Guyana and Suriname); or the informal market. Informants across the region explained the high degree of competition for the few formal sector jobs that are available, and the fact that employers often inflate the minimal qualifications for even menial jobs, even among the qualified. The imbalance between the supply and demand for employment has been a key contributing factor for "brain drain": university-level graduates report that the acute lack of quality jobs reflective of degrees offered at tertiary institutions in their countries was the primary push for their migration to seek work in other islands, in North America, Europe, or, in the case of Suriname, the Netherlands.

Young people indicated a critical need for job creation that would not only add more jobs to local economies but that would also diversify employment options. Historically, the economies of the ESC relied heavily on agriculture and mineral mining; however, today's young people are looking toward different economic opportunities that could potentially be generated through unexploited markets. For example, in the tourism industry, there is demand for the higher-level positions that are usually outsourced to foreigners despite the significant amount of local human capacity generated by hospitality training and management programs. In fact, the large majority of youth (79 percent of 295 respondents) who completed the assessment survey indicated that they had completed training programs in hopes of securing employment, and most thought that they had the skills necessary for their desired jobs (86 percent). An additional

[15] The *2010 Youth Workforce Development Assessment for USAID/Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean* addressed the challenges facing youth people in 4 of the 10 countries assessed in this report: Saint Lucia, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Antigua and Barbuda.

[16] United Nations. (2010). *Caribbean Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*. ECLAC – Studies and Perspectives series – The Caribbean. No.16.

venue for job creation and stimulation of economic growth is the creative sector. There exists a robust demand for local music, art, and film. While the talent is evident across the region, a shortage of equipment and training inhibits growth of the industry.

The combination of the low number of employment opportunities and the lack of economic diversity has led to high demand for entrepreneurship training among youth. In each of the 10 countries included in this assessment, young people voiced requests for programming or training that would teach them how to create, run, and sustain their own businesses. In fact, the ESC has long thrived on microentrepreneurship via primary economic activities; however, today's youth are looking forward to evolving that trend to higher-level economic undertakings.

Youth lack the necessary financial resources to start their own businesses and lack property needed for economic ventures. For youth entrepreneurs, resources—both in terms of adequate training and capital (including land for agribusinesses)—remain limited and in some cases unavailable. The issue of the lack of necessary resources was raised as a significant concern for youth in 22 percent of all KIIs and FGs across all countries. The most frequent difficulties encountered by youth in an attempt to secure a loan (including microloans) were minimum age limits, a preference to lend to people in older age groups, and the requirement that signatories (and co-signatories) be able to prove ownership of a large proportion of the total capital necessary to qualify for loans. In the ESC, where the top challenge for youth is the sheer lack of employment opportunities, the inaccessibility of seed funding for job-creating ideas poses a weighty barrier to economic independence and success, particularly in building entrepreneurship opportunities.

Youth lack the necessary social and professional networks that help secure employment opportunities. This finding represents the critical influence that adequate social support networks play for young people in the ESC. Beyond the socio-emotional support that relatives, extended family, and community members might contribute to a young person's well-being, youth indicated that their adult social networks could also limit or broaden their economic reaches. This is supported by the statement repeated by youth in several countries: "It's not what you know, it's who you know." Based on focus groups and key informant interviews, youth are often limited to the same network and economic opportunities as the adults in their lives if unable to access additional mentors or social connections. In 18 percent of these qualitative data collection sessions, respondents discussed the role of these "pull strings." Having a strong social support network is therefore characterized by the economic opportunities that might arise from a young person's connection with an adult, especially considering the heavy competition for few available jobs.

Additionally, youth generally feel that they are not as fully engaged in the economy as they would like to be. Because of the inadequacies of available education and training systems, youth have expected to gain practical insights through apprenticeships or practicums that would complement their studies and training. However, these opportunities are either limited or nonexistent. Especially for youth in rural communities that are not near many businesses or tourist destinations, the inability to gain authentic experiences to build their professional skillset is yet another significant hindrance to their employability.

Youth expect their social networks to protect them against potential stigmas that inhibit economic success. To this end, **youth in the ESC can face stigmas and discrimination based on the location of their residence, gender, ethnic or racial identities, or disability.** In less ethnically diverse ESC countries, discrimination can include gender, sexual preference, or disability status, as well as the notoriety of a person's neighborhood. Based on survey data, males were 10 percent more likely to be employed (a statistically significant finding) and showed a higher degree of job satisfaction (two-thirds were either happy or very happy) than female respondents. In analyzing survey data, there was a moderately strong and statistical relationship between gender and employment, but the small sample sizes preclude any large-scale investigation of the relationship in that males were more likely to work than females.[17] However, it is not clear whether this can be attributed to limited opportunities available for young women compared to young men. Discrimination is also still apparent in more diverse countries of the ESC but is reinforced by historical tensions among different ethnic groups.

Combinations of barriers to engaging fully in local economies push youth toward life-long cycles of poverty. Strategic interventions to mainstream young people in economic activity would have the added benefit of injecting new and creative ideas that can contribute to renewing and transforming the economic landscape. Youth will continue to face difficulties with finding and securing employment throughout the ESC as long as other factors that can enable their skills and access to resources are not addressed. According to the most recent data on youth employment in the region, youth unemployment in the OECS is high on a comparative global scale. The average youth unemployment rate in the OECS over a six-year period (1998–2005) is 32 percent, compared to a global rate of 14 percent.[18] A more recent report from the International Labor Organization (ILO) shows that youth unemployment across Latin America and the Caribbean is 13.2 percent, with a projection for gradually increasing unemployment over the next five years[19].

The inability to access available economic opportunities is reflective of the inadequate education and training completed by youth. This leads to the overreliance on social networks and personal "connections" to be hired for jobs. The demand for skilled labor should be regarded as an opportunity for countries to enhance their education and training systems. However, the skills mismatch in ESC's labor market has resulted in high levels of youth unemployment.[20]

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[17] Cramer's v = 0.108, p = 0.076

[18] USAID, Education Development Center, Education Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP 3). (August 2008). *Rapid Youth Assessment in the Eastern Caribbean.*

[19] International Labour Organisation. (2013). *International Employment Trends for Youth 2013: A Generation at Risk*. Accessed September 2013 from http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_212423.pdf

[20] USAID, EDC, EQUIP3. (August 2008). *Rapid Youth Assessment in the Eastern Caribbean.*

Recommendations

It is recommended that USAID/BEC do the following:

1. Initiate a regional market assessment that can support human resource development and other national-level education and training strategies. This can be done by updating the 2010 *Youth Workforce Assessment* and expanding the landscape to include all 10 countries of the ESC. The regional assessment can determine labor market supply and demand (and demand trends) for different skillsets, and distribute findings widely among organizations working to enhance youth engagement in economic opportunities.

2. Strengthen current TVET programs such that strategies and program designs are reflective of the aforementioned market assessment. This can ensure that curriculum and services offered are aligned to current economic and market trends and demands.

Education and Training

Findings and conclusions

The current education and training systems and programs available in the ESC do not adequately meet the needs of today's youth. As presented in Figure 4 below, respondents of all age groups frequently expressed disappointment in the formal education system, claiming that it does not produce engaged citizens, critical thinkers, innovators, and entrepreneurs. In 53 percent of the discussions during the KIIs and FGs, respondents stated that they believed the national education system to be outdated and unable to meet the needs of youth in their countries. Respondents claimed that education systems are based on an academic approach and archaic structure that produce a growing dropout population, who are often directed toward stigmatized technical "second-chance" programs at the end of which employment is far from certain. National and regional educational reforms have focused on revising some standardized tests and curricula and have made adjustments in indicators such as test scores to recalibrate how outputs are measured. One youth leader in Barbados stated, "There is a greater emphasis on school, but technical education and vocational education have been neglected. In school, if you haven't excelled academically, some people [are] like 'Okay, I'll never amount to anything,' or 'I've failed.'" Another youth worker in Saint Kitts and Nevis observes, "If you're not academically inclined, you're doomed."

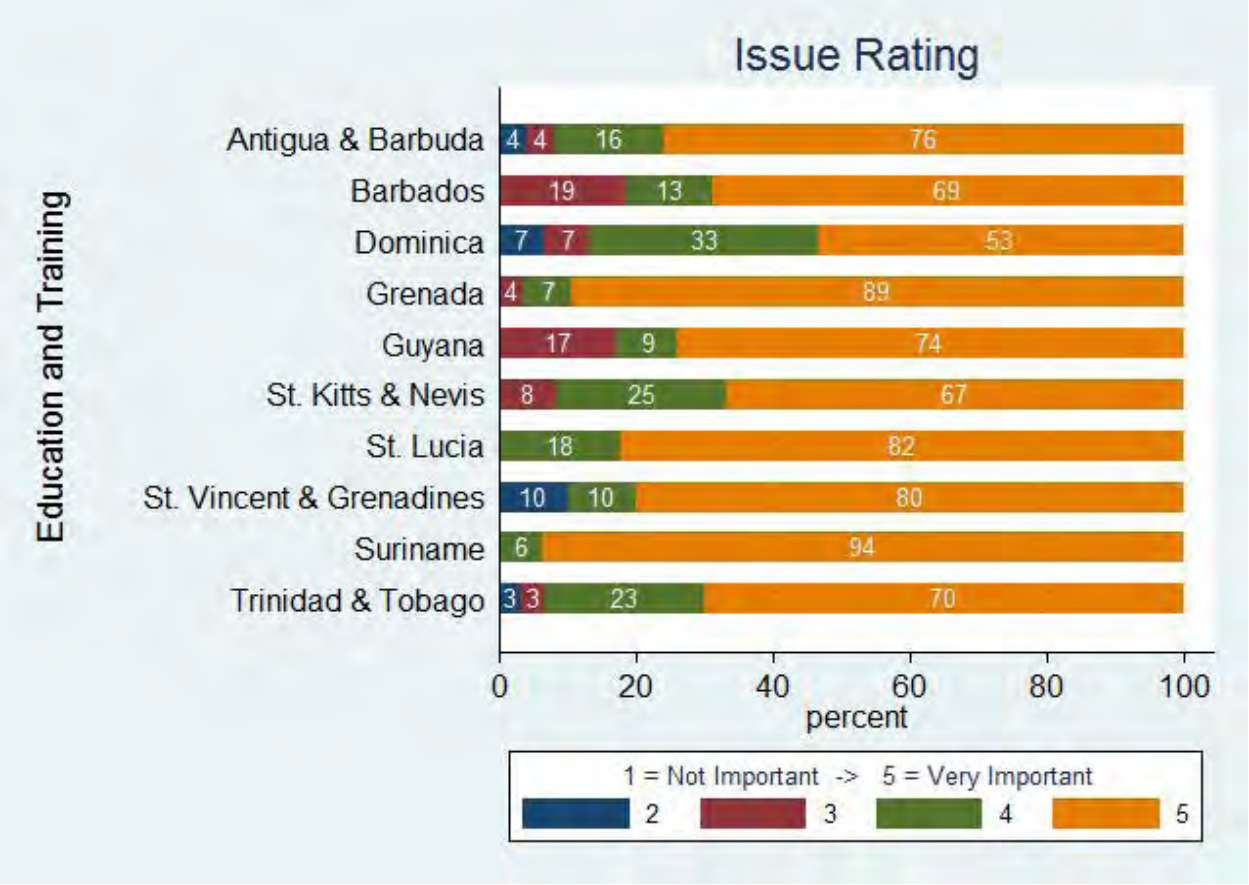

Figure 4: Issue Rating Scores by Country—Education and Training

While the second-chance programs aim to produce certified carpenters, mechanics, hospitality workers, and plumbers, they do not train for more diverse opportunities, such as those in the culture economy, telecommunications, electronics, boat maintenance, and the other levels of economic activities that today's evolving workforce and youth find attractive. Across all country contexts and despite the positive intentions of vocational-technical and second-chance programming, the social and economic outcomes for youth remain unreliable. Most youth who completed the surveys (79 percent) participating in the assessment reported that they had completed some type of training and that they have skills that qualify them for a desired job. However, qualitative findings show that most respondents still report that there is a lack of economic opportunities available for youth. As stated by a youth leader in Barbados: "It is heartbreaking in a sense, because they also say 'Go to school, work hard, and then get a job,' but so many people do that and then find it hard to get a job."
A youth in Nevis stated, "They go to school, and they hear 'you can be a doctor, you can be a lawyer,' but then they realize that this is not the case, and then their goals go down the drain, and then just do whatever it is they need to do to get their money."

Access to education and training opportunities continues to be a challenge for youth in the ESC. About 25 percent of KII and FG respondents discussed barriers to access (geographic, financial) to attending either traditional, second-chance, and/or vocational/technical schools. Reasons were most often related to financial resources, transportation obstacles (especially in rural areas and the interior/hinterland regions of Guyana and Suriname), and lack of awareness of reachable resources. Additionally, access was sometimes limited by gender biases that manifested in different consequences between both young men and women that result in marginalization and eventually dropout.

Few school teachers are male, especially at the primary school level, which can have influence over young men's engagement in the education system. Youth officials report that fewer than a third as many males as females graduate from secondary school. It was reported by respondents that failure and dropout rates among school-aged male youth have dramatically increased compared to those for females. Respondents often reported that males are also encouraged to leave school in order to enter the workforce at an earlier age than girls to supplement or be the sole provider of household income. There is also a gender bias against girls, though for different reasons. In cases of pregnancy, most countries in the region require that female students leave school for the duration; readmission to the same school after they have given birth is rare. In instances where a return to the school is permitted, it is at the discretion of the principal. Usually the young mothers are relegated to enrollment in second-chance educational programs. The 2010 *Eye on the Future: Report of the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development (CCYD)* reports that adolescent motherhood (or teenage pregnancy) can impede a nation's gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate over the lifetime of the mothers by between 3.9 and 17 percent. However, the CARICOM report fails to address what aspect of adolescent pregnancy causes the drop in GDP, whether it is the pregnancy itself or the practice of forcing the mother to leave school and limiting her options for resuming her education.

The educational system does not meet youth's needs, does not address the realities of today's labor market, and is not preparing youth to be more engaged and productive

citizens or to take advantage of growth opportunities and technical areas where they can be competitive in the global economy. The education system in the Eastern and Southern Caribbean is, for the most part, hampered by resource limitations and outdated teaching methods. As school dropouts (who tend to be mostly male) seek alternative and vocational/technical training, they find programs that produce trained carpenters, plumbers, and mechanics but that do not offer training for the growing opportunities in areas such as information technology, small vessel building and repair, or in the Caribbean's vibrant and lucrative cultural economy.

Students are increasingly alienated from their school environment because of ongoing issues with access to opportunities and a combination of cultural shifts and economic globalization. A fast-paced media environment has created young minds that thirst for more interactive and engaging teaching methodologies. Youth also demand more opportunities to couple the traditional learning space with practical experience to become better prepared to apply school-based knowledge and skills in the workforce.

Figure 5: Professional Competency Scores by Sex

More education leads to more and better jobs. While respondents often reported the perception that the education system is underperforming, surveyed **youth were largely positive about their professional competencies** (see Figure 5). While a causal relationship is impossible to determine given the sample size that completed the youth survey in each country, when analyzed alongside qualitative data, it suggests that the variables most associated with skills were education and employment. More than half of survey respondents were very comfortable with computer usage and professional conduct. Self-reported comfort was markedly lower for job-seeking and the ability to start a business, with only a quarter of respondents reporting feeling "very comfortable" for each of these items.

The investment of effort and finances in programs and education reform that enable youth to become independent thinkers and innovators will prepare them for the current economic trends

in the ESC. Much of the emerging literature on youth education emphasizes the sensitive relationship between relevant and high-quality youth education and the impact of youth on a region's economy and politics[21].

Recommendations

The assessment team recommends that USAID/BEC conduct the following activities:

1. The current efforts of the OECS and their regional partners should be supplemented by USAID/BEC youth-specific interventions toward standardization and certification of technical and vocational skills programs. The OECS has made significant strides in identifying ongoing and potential programming efforts that better link education and TVET strategies to successful economic outcomes for ESC students.
2. While the OECS and the Commonwealth continue to review current education system offerings, it is possible that USAID could act as a partner in disseminating knowledge as well as develop an awareness, among the key stakeholders and opinion makers, that today's shortcomings in education will become tomorrow's shortcomings in their sectors. It is therefore recommended that USAID/BEC support a National Dialogue on Education in each country. The National Dialogue on Education would be a series of series of forums and conferences on the main TVET issues, each co-sponsored with key civil society, private and public stakeholders.

[21] USAID. (2013) "*State of the field report: examining the evidence in youth education in crisis and conflict*." p. 5.

Crime and Violence

Findings and conclusions

On average, crime and violence across the region are listed as a significant and growing but not yet primary concern (see Figure 6). Respondents in 34 percent of the KIIs and FGs throughout the region had the perception that crime involving youth was becoming more common and more serious.

Key stakeholders readily draw a correlation between crime and the economic duress that is affecting their countries. As the Acting Commissioner of Police in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines pointed out, "Young people's drive to achieve their goals and excel leads some to break the law."

Youth development workers report that besides economic pressures, deteriorating social support systems, lack of positive male role models, and the growing number of unattached males in an age group that tends to be less risk-averse combine to create opportunities for disorder and crime.

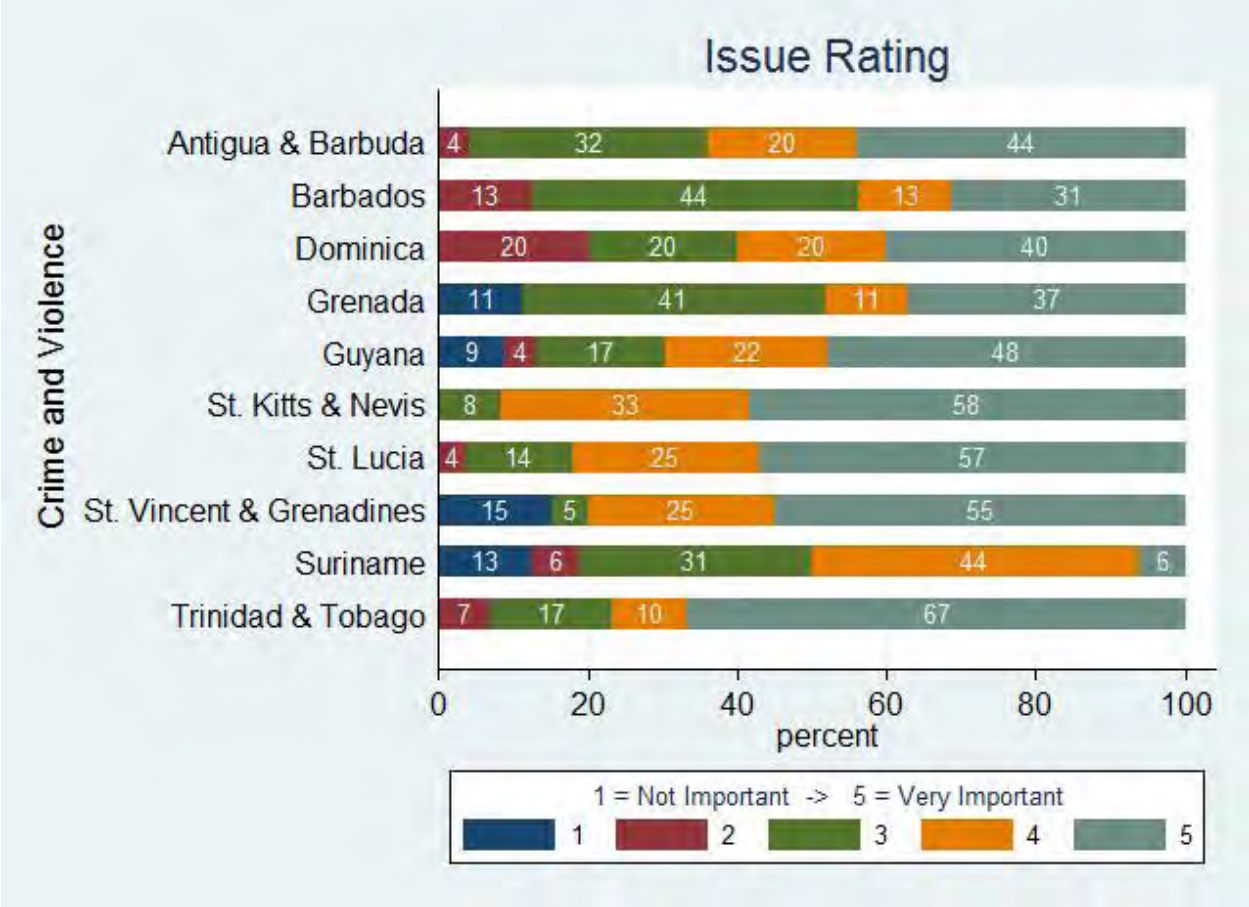

Figure 6: Issue Rating Scores by Country—Crime and Violence

The team's key informant interviews with law enforcement officials show that **there is a perception of heightened crime and violence involving youth throughout the region**, especially relating to robbery, drug trafficking, prostitution, and abuse. Impressionable young men who drop out of school and are frustrated with their financial situations are often attracted to criminal role models. One Dominican Youth Development Division staff member stated, "No longer do you view the teacher, the doctor, the policeman, as the person you want to be. Now you see the drug trader, with the money, the transportation, and that is a way to get money quickly. And the punishment is not a deterrent. They no longer look at him and see jail. They look at him and see something good to be."

Youth involved in gang activity are often in search of a social support network or sense of "belonging." This has become a recognized trend among social scientists worldwide, and youth in the ESC are not exceptions to this phenomenon. "You'd have some young men who wake up at seven o'clock and go out to the block, stay there all day. That is a form of bonding. That is a form of economic support [...] someone will ask them to go rob a shop or something, and because they don't want to lose that support, they will do it," stated a youth leader in Barbados. The relationships formed among gang members or youth "on the block" are often accepted as familial ties. One youth focus group participant in Saint Kitts and Nevis stated that youth don't hear "I love you" at home, but "A gang shows you love, so you join."

Youth development workers and law enforcement officials in several countries report that **thefts and housebreaking, the predominant youth crime, are to a significant extent conducted by rings rather than by lone operators**. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, and Saint Lucia, several key informants reported that stolen articles are often handed off to collaborators on boats for transportation to other islands, where they are sold. This suggests the existence of local and inter-island networks and a level of organization that is in keeping with a growing concern that gangs are on the increase.

Law enforcement officials express concern that widely occurring misdemeanors such as cell phone theft quickly become linked with criminal supply and marketing networks, and eventually with large criminal systems that move persons, illicit goods, money, and even weapons between countries.

Many citizens both in and outside of law enforcement use the extreme characterizations in the media of U.S. and Jamaican gangs to complacently deny the existence of a local gang problem. However, youth in most of the countries tend to more readily admit to the local existence of gangs than older people, and some youth (in Dominica, particularly) even describe how some of them are organized. Meanwhile, editorials in the press call on policymakers to demonstrate tougher and more punitive approaches to crime, not realizing that these tend to favor the rise of hardened networks, rather than "soft" prevention and rehabilitative strategies, even though these divert youth from such networks and tend to address the root causes of crime.

Crime and violence are serious and growing concerns, are increasingly organized, involve both sexes, and are manifestations of serious shortcomings in social, educational, economic, and law enforcement policy.

Recommendations

It is recommended that USAID/BEC do the following:

1. Promote a Community Based Policing strategy. Community Based Policing is an approach to increasing security by creating partnerships between police officers and community members to identify and address the root causes of crime and disorder. Community members such as youth, teachers, and neighborhood businesses and organizations, such as sports clubs and churches, are important actors in Community Based Policing partnerships; they can help the police understand the needs and interests of the community while reciprocally serving as gateways through which the police can expand their communication and build trust with the community. Community policing approaches already supported by USAID in Latin American countries (such as Honduras) have supported partnerships with local community organizations, youth, and law enforcement to identify and address the causes of crime and disorder. These extant programming strategies can be reviewed and contextualized to meet the needs of the ESC.

2. Develop a strategy that strengthens the Agency's role in addressing youth involvement in crime and violence such that causes and solutions are examined and addressed.

Juvenile Justice

Findings and conclusions

The juvenile's experience with justice frames the relationship with which the young person transitions into adulthood. Generally, youth's first impressions of law enforcement are based on encounters with officers on patrol in their neighborhoods or on stories and reports they hear about police officers from friends and relatives. If their friends and relatives are having negative or antagonistic experiences, youth develop a mistrust that can significantly affect how they behave during their own first encounter. Youth's relationships with the law are therefore greatly affected by their social circles and tended to be ranked as 'Important' or 'Very Important' among respondents (see Figure 7).

A serious problem in juvenile justice is the prosecution of status offenses. Status offenses are acts that are deemed offenses when committed by juveniles but not when perpetrated by adults. They include truancy, wandering, consumption of alcohol, immoral conduct, and refusal to obey parents and guardians. The presence of status offenses on the statute books in the region originate from the adoption of British common law. Regional legislation, following the UK's Children Act of 1908, empowered the courts to deal with children found guilty of status offenses by institutionalizing them in industrial schools. The UK's laws on status offenses have been eliminated or changed, many since the 1930s, but remain relatively unchanged in the Caribbean.

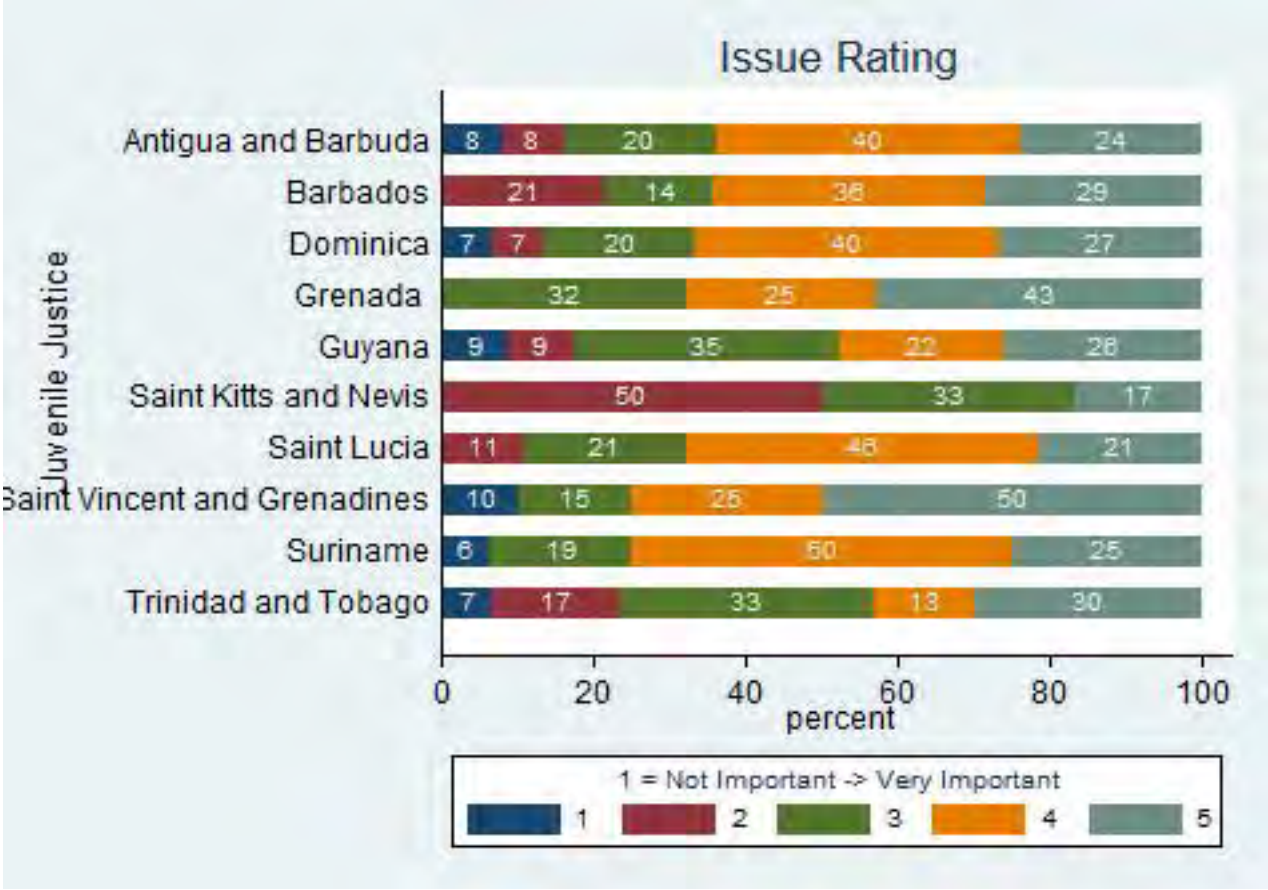

Figure 7: Issue Rating Scores by Country—Juvenile Justice

The team found that in general, there are not enough counselors in schools to meet demand. Unaddressed anger-management issues can result in disorderly or violent behavior and can lead to trouble with the law. Once youth get into trouble with the law, they generally have poor access to legal aid or counseling to help navigate the justice systems.

In 27 percent of the KIIs and FG held during this assessment, the respondents raised the issue that the juvenile justice system in their country was not currently meeting the needs of youth. In some jurisdictions, judges and police officers have some discretion in prosecuting status offenses, and are able to "divert" youth from having a criminal record and the experience of prison. There are two aspects to the principle of diversion: one involves early intervention in the lives of children deemed to be at risk to assist them in developing non-criminal attitudes, and the other refers to measures aimed at preventing juveniles actually accused of an offense from being subjected to criminal charges and having a criminal record. The concept of diversion, therefore, is both preventative and rehabilitative and offers opportunities to make a positive intervention in a young person's life. However, judges and police officers are generally given limited diversionary discretion, even for status offenses.

Interviews suggest that creating a children's court and giving judges and the police more authority (and the requisite training) to divert juveniles are essential to modernizing juvenile justice. There are other approaches and practices that are in need of revision. Youth in need of care and attention are sometimes housed with those who have committed criminal offenses. Prisons put impressionable young persons into criminal environments: Juveniles, both male and female, are usually incarcerated along with adult offenders. There are few diversion programs, and evidence on their effectiveness is anecdotal. Recidivism rates are said by penal officials to be high, but data were not available for the assessment team to make a determination. There are no clear reintegration policies for youth offenders. There is an absence of designated safe spaces for juveniles. There is an absence of facilities for young girls who are victims of abuse.

Prisons and delinquency centers (often referred to as boys' or girls' centers and homes) offer unacceptable facilities and poor treatment of youth who are serving sentences, in remand, or in cases when there are no other locations for youth in need of care and protection. Meetings conducted by the assessment team with youth in prisons or homes and centers affirmed reports from KIIs and FGs that young men and women are exposed to further traumas and poor treatment as a result of poor infrastructure of facilities, as well as the "mixing" of youth (and in some cases, adults) of different age groups and types of crimes committed.

The juvenile justice system is in crisis. It does not reduce juvenile crime or rehabilitate juvenile offenders. Juvenile crime has a negative impact on youth development and, by extension, economic growth, social cohesion, and stability. Furthermore, the treatment of youth in prisons and "delinquency" was often found to be in contradiction with the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child. These facilities are in immediate need of strategic reforms.

The ESCYA heard frequent positive mention of the importance of the USAID-funded OECS Juvenile Justice Reform Project. Based on previous research in the juvenile justice landscape across the region, the Project works toward four key objectives: 1. Improving the Legal and

Regulatory Framework of the Juvenile Justice System; 2. Capacity Building for Effective Administration of Juvenile Justice; 3. Modernization of Diversion, Detention, and Rehabilitative Processes in the Juvenile Justice System; and 4. Improved Linkages with Civil Society and Other Supporting Structures to Strengthen the Juvenile Justice System. These focus areas are also aligned to the major areas of need uncovered by the ESCYA.

Recommendations

It is recommended that USAID/BEC do the following:

1. Extend and expand the OECS Juvenile Justice Reform Project. The Project provides a regional framework within which many of the ESCYA's findings fit. It is recommended that the OECS Juvenile Justice Reform Project be continued and, if possible, expanded to cover all 10 countries of the region.

Social Support Systems

Findings and conclusions

The need for social support systems was ranked second only to economic opportunities throughout the ESC (see Figure 8), demonstrating the importance placed on these systems. A number of the respondents were of the view that the absence of social support was a significant contributor to the increase in juvenile delinquency and crime and violence in the region.

Respondents believed that traditional nuclear and extended **family structures have deteriorated in recent years, often leaving youth with large amounts of unstructured, unsupervised time and an overall lack of guidance and positive role models, especially males.** This issue arose during 46 percent of all of the individual and focus group interviews throughout the region. Only a third of the 295 respondents to the youth survey reported having married parents, and one out of five youth whose parents had been married at one time were separated by the time of the interview. Fifty-eight percent of respondents had a mother as head of household, and there were more grandparent-headed households than father-headed households. Seventeen percent of those surveyed listed themselves as head of household. The economic fallout is negatively impacting the socioeconomic stability of families and communities and is seen as a key factor contributing to the decline in quality support systems

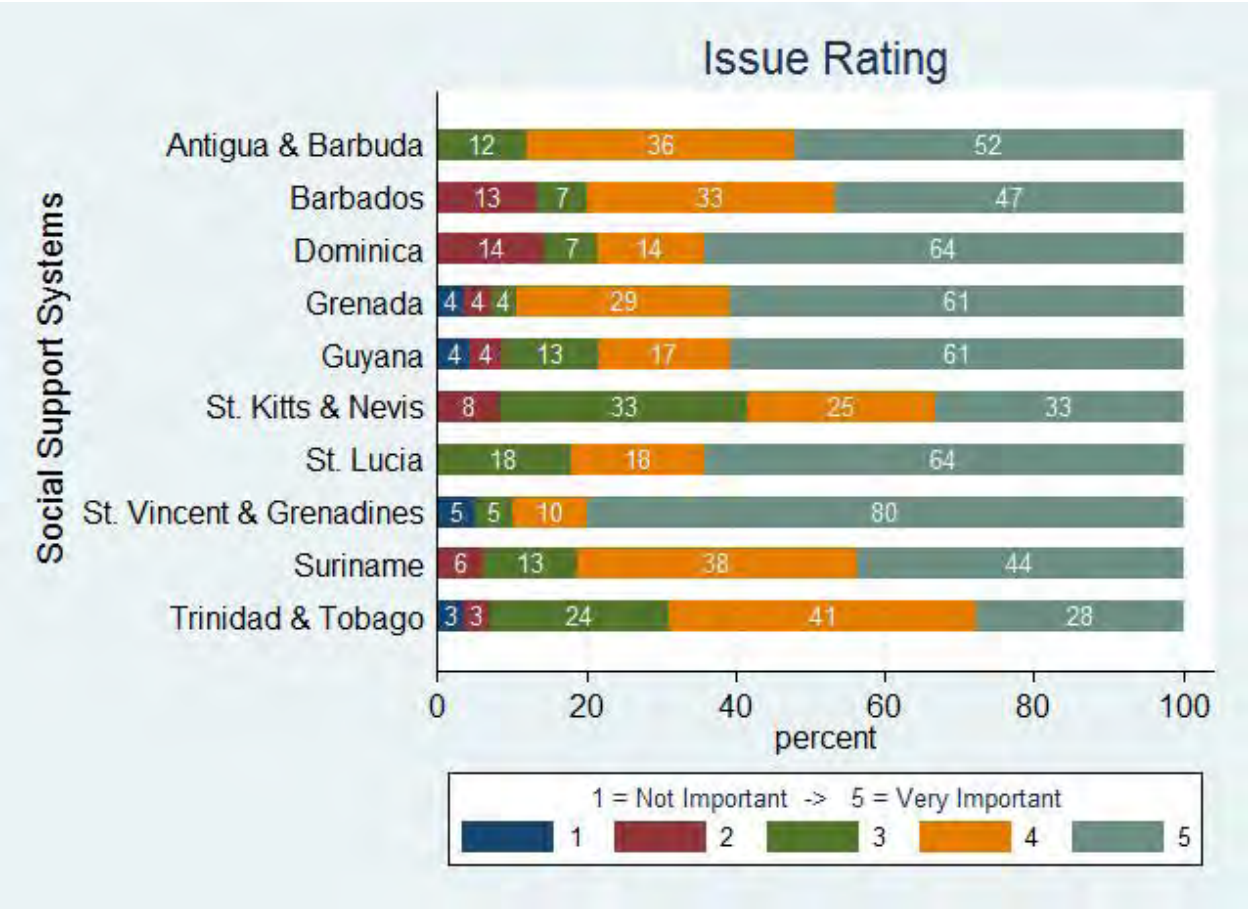

Figure 8: Issue Rating Scores by Country—Social Support Systems

and guidance by a variety of participating stakeholder groups. This situation is exacerbated further by the cycle of "babies having babies," who lack the resources and skills necessary to become parents. Twelve percent of the survey sample had children, with more than 9 out of 10 out of wedlock.

Conversely, **youth with strong family support were more inclined to stay in school and engage in productive endeavors.** This hypothesis is further supported by the responses from "at-risk" youth: When they were asked why they were not using drugs or why they stayed in school, nearly all respondents listed their family as a primary factor. The data support a correlation between social support and youth well-being, as young people who responded to the youth survey who were both unemployed and not attending school had parents who were not and had never been married. Youth and other stakeholders also spoke about the lack of mentorship, guidance, and examples of positive youth leaders. Outside of the family structure, the other noted social support systems included church groups, community groups, and guidance counselors. Findings also show that the presence and involvement of extended expatriate family is an important, albeit remote, source of social support. Almost a quarter of survey respondents reported receiving remittances, and half of these said the inflows were "very important."

Stigmatization and the lack of adequate infrastructure for recreational facilities and transportation options, particularly those from lower socioeconomic strata and marginalized communities—such as disabled persons and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons—inhibit youth participation in the few structured programs available. This is coupled with the high levels of sexual abuse and incest without appropriate interventions, which have fueled a sense of hopelessness and despair among youth. This manifests itself in low self-esteem, increased levels in the reckless use of alcohol and drugs, and a growing prostitution industry that involves trafficking in persons (TIP). KII and FG data suggest that this pervasive destruction of human capital is having a debilitating effect on the health and well-being, economic, and juvenile justice sectors.

There is a critical need for access to certified (professional) social workers, guidance counselors, and mentorship programs to serve the needs of youth requiring additional social support. In all 10 countries, many respondents felt there is significant room for improvement with respect to the availability of adults and older peers who might be able to mentor youth. Of note is that many of the NGOs engaged with youth are based within a church, and the overlap between community leaders and church leaders is extensive. However, though many young people are heavily involved in church activities and seem to benefit greatly from this support, several leaders of church youth groups conceded that participating in religious-focused activities is, on its face, not appealing to many youth, and so recruiting and retaining young people is a constant challenge.

Parents and teachers complained that **there are too few available facilities and programs that cater to the care of children when parents have to work long hours.** Respondents in 10 percent of the FGs and KIIs stated the need for more recreational opportunities, especially those involving sports or the arts, in their communities. Accordingly, a significant number of youth

reported that the opportunity to participate in sports clubs existed in some communities, and though less common and often less accessible because of fees, dance groups and other artistic programs were also available. Sports and music were the areas that were most often recommended by youth as attractive recreational activities that would most maintain their interest and participation. Of note is that these two hobby areas have strong career possibilities and are excellent tools for teaching life skills, as evidenced by the A Ganar program, which aims to combat youth unemployment through sports and which has been implemented by Partners of the Americas and their team of implementing associates across Latin America and the Caribbean[22].

There is a need for safe spaces such as community clubs with organized programs and recreational facilities offering swimming, football, and table tennis, and other programs such as homework help, computer-aided teaching and learning, job listings, coaching, help preparing curricula vitae, and activities to prepare the youth for the world of work. These could be after-school programs attached to schools and could be intensified during the vacation months. Planned Parenthood in Dominica is developing such a program with the assistance of the UNFPA.

The ESC is at a crossroads, as it possesses a youthful and talented population but lacks the quality and quantity of social and physical infrastructures to effectively transform the region. Concomitantly, there is a weak policy and institutional environment that does not take full advantage of the transformational contribution that youth—both those that are doing well and those that are on the fringe—can make to sustainable development. At best, the support systems are limited in their impact and contribution to youth development, and at worst, the lack thereof contributes to the involvement of youth in antisocial and negative behaviors.

Many available programs and centers are quite influential at a grassroots/local level, but warrant capacity-building to make them more efficient and effective. Others need technical assistance and resources to improve the extent and quality of their services.

Recommendations

It is recommended that USAID/BEC do the following:

1. Support the development of safe spaces that provide tangible supports to youth.
    a. A mentorship component that provides access to and knowledge about positive role models, especially males, should also be included at youth centers.
2. Promote parenting skills, utilizing creative media to inculcate positive values and ethical practices.

[22] More information about A Ganar can be found at the Partners of the Americas website, last accessed on September 27, 2013 here: http://www.partners.net/partners/History1.asp?SnID=160701299#.UkXxPZ3D-Ul

3. Raise public awareness about the programs that are available to youth. Support the increased availability of psychosocial support in the key institutions that cater to youth, i.e., schools, and juvenile and health centers. This would include facilities that provide psychometric testing and support.

Health and Well-Being

Findings and conclusions

Youth are a vital asset for sustainable development, a position that presupposes that they are healthy and productive citizens. Consequently, the emphasis on the overall health and well-being of youth is essential, and most often ranked as 'Very Important' by adult and youth respondents alike (see Figure 9). This assertion was tested during the recent ESCYA and the findings suggest that youth in the region are challenged in becoming productive citizens because of the health situation outlined below.

Chronic noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity are prevalent throughout the populations of the ESC. The situation is exacerbated by poor diets; there is wide availability of processed and convenience foods and a lack of information on good nutrition. These changes in dietary habits, particularly the lack of emphasis on fruits, vegetables, and locally produced foods has contributed to the nutritional habits of youth. Furthermore, when linked to a sedentary lifestyle, there is room for significant improvement in the health profile of Caribbean youth.

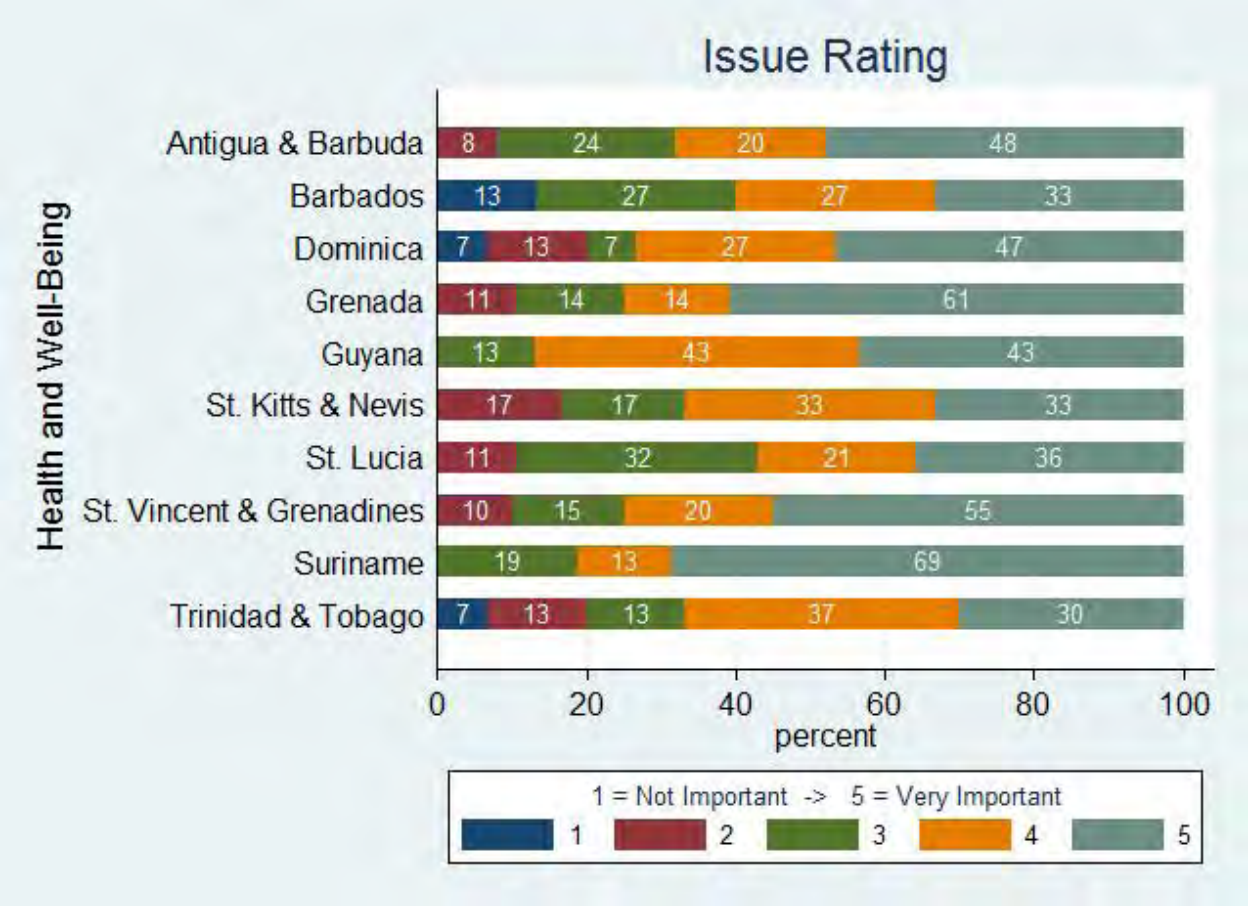

Figure 9: Issue Rating Scores by Country—Health and Well-Being

The sexual and reproductive health of youth is also another area for concern. The Caribbean region is second to sub-Saharan African in terms of the prevalence of HIV, and this rate is estimated at 1.00 percent. Even with the recent decline in the rate of new infections to 42 percent,[23] **the high HIV prevalence rate among the adult population also has serious implications for the health of youth.** The available research highlights several issues pertaining to youth sexual behavior including early sexual initiation, lack of condom negotiation and use, multiple partnering and the "sugar daddy syndrome."[24]

The urgency of the HIV epidemic has required national authorities to focus significant resources on tackling the disease, often with the assistance of international agencies such as the World Bank (WB), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), and the U.S. President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The response to HIV may have overshadowed *public perceptions* about the prevalence of other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). However, STIs such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis are still very much in existence, which emphasizes the need for ongoing, targeted health education campaigns.

During 31 percent of all of the KIIs and FGs conducted throughout the course of this assessment, **teenage pregnancy was raised as one of the most urgent health challenges facing youth in the Caribbean** by those interviewed (both adults and young people). The issue of teenage pregnancy is a complex one, but the contributing factors include early sexual debut, sexual relationships with older men (also known as the "sugar daddy syndrome"), sexual violence (i.e., child abuse, incest, and rape), the limited use of condoms and other contraceptives, and the general lack of awareness among youth about their own sexual and reproductive health (SRH).

Access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services is lacking. The health needs of youth should form the impetus for not only the provision of information but youth-friendly services within the respective countries. In many CARICOM states, proposals around the access to health services by youth are often framed within the context of SRH.

Efforts to educate children and youth about sexuality often face strong moral and religious opposition, along with public discourse fueled by fears concerning the early involvement of youth in sexual activities.[25] Other factors that limit the appropriate response to youth SRH include the reluctance or inability of parents to discuss matters pertaining to sexuality and sexual behavior with their children. Furthermore, the legal frameworks related to the age of consent and the age of majority often serve as barriers to access to appropriate services by

[23] UNAIDS Global Report, 2012.

[24] (a) OECS Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Surveys, 2010, (b) CAREC/PAHO/WHO Behavioural Surveillance Surveys, 2005/2006, and (c) Bombereau, G. and Allen C., *Social and Cultural Factors Driving the HIV Epidemic in the Caribbean: A Literature Review*, 2008.

[25] Draft Report of the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development—*Eye on the Future: Investing in Youth Now for Tomorrow's Community*, January 2010.

youth. As a result, youth are faced with inaccurate information and lack access to the appropriate services.

Generally, youth perspectives about the availability and access to services specific to their needs were not favorable. While acknowledging that health services were available in their respective countries, youth participating in the ESCYA and similar work expressed concerns about stigma, judgmental attitudes, and the disclosure of health information to their parents or others in the community.[26]

Positive views about services specifically targeting youth were expressed by several participants in relation to the work of UN agencies such as UNICEF and UNFPA. It was reported that the support of youth-friendly spaces and services in select communities in countries such as Guyana and Saint Lucia was a significant step in meeting the needs of youth. However, as these services were limited to specific locations, individuals expressed the need for country-wide coverage of these services.

The development of curriculum in the area of Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) has been part of the CARICOM response to fill the void in youth access to health information. The curriculum was designed to address four main themes: 1) sex and sexuality, 2) self and interpersonal relationships, 3) appropriate eating and fitness, and 4) managing the environment.[27] The target group for training in HFLE is primary and secondary school students. However, attempts to implement the HFLE curriculum have not been without limitations because "its delivery has not been mandatory, leaving some education systems without a comprehensive coverage of the material."[28]

Throughout the ESCYA, discussions with youth workers and practitioners on youth health and well-being centered on points that call into question the appropriateness of the HFLE curriculum. Some of those interviewed were uncertain of the adequacy and relevance of the curriculum when compared to the information needs of youth. As a result, a range of interventions such as age-appropriate health education programs, use of the mass media, and parent-child interactions must be employed in order to reach youth, particularly out-of-school and "at-risk" youth.[29]

The transition from childhood to adolescence to young adulthood is one marked by changes in cognitive, physical, and social development. It is perhaps one of the most confusing periods

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[26] PAHO/WHO, University of Minnesota and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. *A Portrait of Adolescent Health in the Caribbean*, 2000.

[27] UNICEF, CARICOM, and EDC. Health and Family Life Education Regional Curriculum Framework: For Ages 9–14.

[28] Draft Report of the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development—*Eye on the Future: Investing in Youth Now for Tomorrow's Community*, January 2010, p. 64.

[29] UNICEF. "Opportunity in Crisis: Preventing HIV from early adolescence to young adulthood," June 2011.

throughout the life cycle, as youth seek to develop constructs of self, seek independence from their parents or guardians, and fit into their ever-changing social environment.[30] While youth is a period of promise, it is also marked by the involvement in risky behaviors that can result in long-lasting effects.

Across all 10 countries included in the ESCYA, youth reported either their own involvement or that of their peers in risky practices such as tobacco smoking, alcohol misuse, and the abuse of illicit drugs such as marijuana and cocaine. A health worker in Saint Kitts and Nevis claims that according to a recent survey in schools on these islands, 60 percent of youth between 13 and 16 have had alcohol. "So many youth, especially young men, feel like, 'When I go to a party, if I don't have a beer, I'm a wimp, or something,'" she lamented.

Furthermore, because of the lack of delayed gratification it was reported that youth would engage in transactional sex for consumer items such as a snack box (i.e., fast food) or the latest cellular phone. In terms of sex work, it was reported that because of economic factors such as unemployment and underemployment, many youth (male and female) were engaging either by force or choice in sex work with locals and tourists in order to meet their needs.

Across all of the KIIs and FGs conducted in all countries, respondents in 30 percent of these discussions cited the **lack of mental health facilities and resources as a significant challenge facing youth in the Caribbean.** The mental health challenges highlighted in the ESCYA were twofold. The first relates to the inability to cope with social and home-related pressures, including traumas due to abuse and poverty. It was reported by some participants that youth were experiencing feelings of hopelessness, depression, suicide, and other forms of self-harm because of circumstances that they believed were beyond their control. It was also reported that these negative feelings manifested in bullying, physical violence, involvement in gangs, and other forms of criminal activity.[31]

The situation pertaining to youth and psychiatric disorders is worthy of further study. It was reported that several youth were involved in deviant behavior due to alcohol/drug abuse and undiagnosed mental health disorders. While there is a dearth of data specific to the CARICOM region on youth mental health, issues such as the lack of concern on the part of youth about health in general and cultural taboos surrounding mental health limit access by youth to the appropriate services.

The second challenge is the lack of access to mental health services and resources. Many youth indicated that the first place that they feel the dearth of support in this area is at school, where a lack of guidance counselors is apparent. Beyond school, the assessment team heard responses

[30] Turner, J. S. and Helms, D.B. *Life Span Development, Fifth Edition*, 1995.

[31] Pilgrim, N. A. and Bloom, R. W., *Adolescent Mental and Physical Health in the English-Speaking Caribbean*, Rev Panam Salud Publica. 2012; 32(1)62–69.

from informants that bolstered the claims of youth that there were no reliable resources or services for them to turn to for professional counseling or psychological support.

The full potential of Caribbean youth will not be realized if urgent attention is not paid to addressing their physical and mental health needs. This assessment highlights the need for targeted, behavior-change communication campaigns that not only is aimed at the provision of information but that also addresses the poor attitudes and harmful behaviors in which some youth are engaged.

Furthermore, **the existing legislative frameworks that serve as barriers to youth access to the appropriate health services need to be reviewed and amended**. Some of the youth who participated in the ESCYA expressed concerns about the levels of adequacy of existing physical health services. Improvements in the health and well-being of youth will only be realized through access to and use of youth-friendly services with staff that are trained in adolescent/youth health issues and sensitive to the needs of this group. Therefore, the scale-up of youth-friendly services in the ESC should be a priority.

Recommendations

It is recommended that USAID/BEC do the following:

1. Support national authorities with the development of targeted health education campaigns. These campaigns should be innovative and attractive to youth while providing information on issues related to nutrition and physical health.

2. Partner with agencies such as the UNFPA in order to scale up access to youth-friendly services to reduce youth involvement in risky behaviors and sexual and reproductive practices with negative consequences.

3. Strengthen the HFLE curriculum in order to better meet the information needs of youth in the ESC. Furthermore, advocacy is needed at national levels to highlight the importance of the curriculum and to ensure that it is implemented in all primary and secondary schools in the region.

4. Support research and programs that address mental health issues that affect youth. Issues such as youth suicide (which exceeds the national average rate in some communities) and violence-related psychological trauma (which is a feature of high-crime neighborhoods) could affect the quality of life and socialization of young people, especially those from underserved communities.

Environment and Climate Change

Findings and conclusions

Caribbean economies, lifestyles, activities, practices, and operational cycles are intricately linked to climate, making them vulnerable to its variations and changes.[32] Despite this, across the 10 nations included in this rapid regional assessment, data show that concern for the environment and climate change ranks lowest of the 10 problems with which informants were presented. Dominica was an exception, which the assessment team attributed to the growing emphasis on ecotourism that might be influencing a greater interest in environmental issues among Dominican youth. Informants during KIIs and FGs rarely raised the issue of the environment unless prompted, and then usually had very little to say about its role in the lives of youth. There was also little to no difference between the perceptions of male and female respondents across the countries visited. However, this should not be interpreted as though youth do not think issues of environment and climate change are not important. To the contrary, perceptions of the importance of the environment and climate change issues to youth varied across islands (see Figure 10). Most informants pointed out that poverty and other social challenges that inhibit

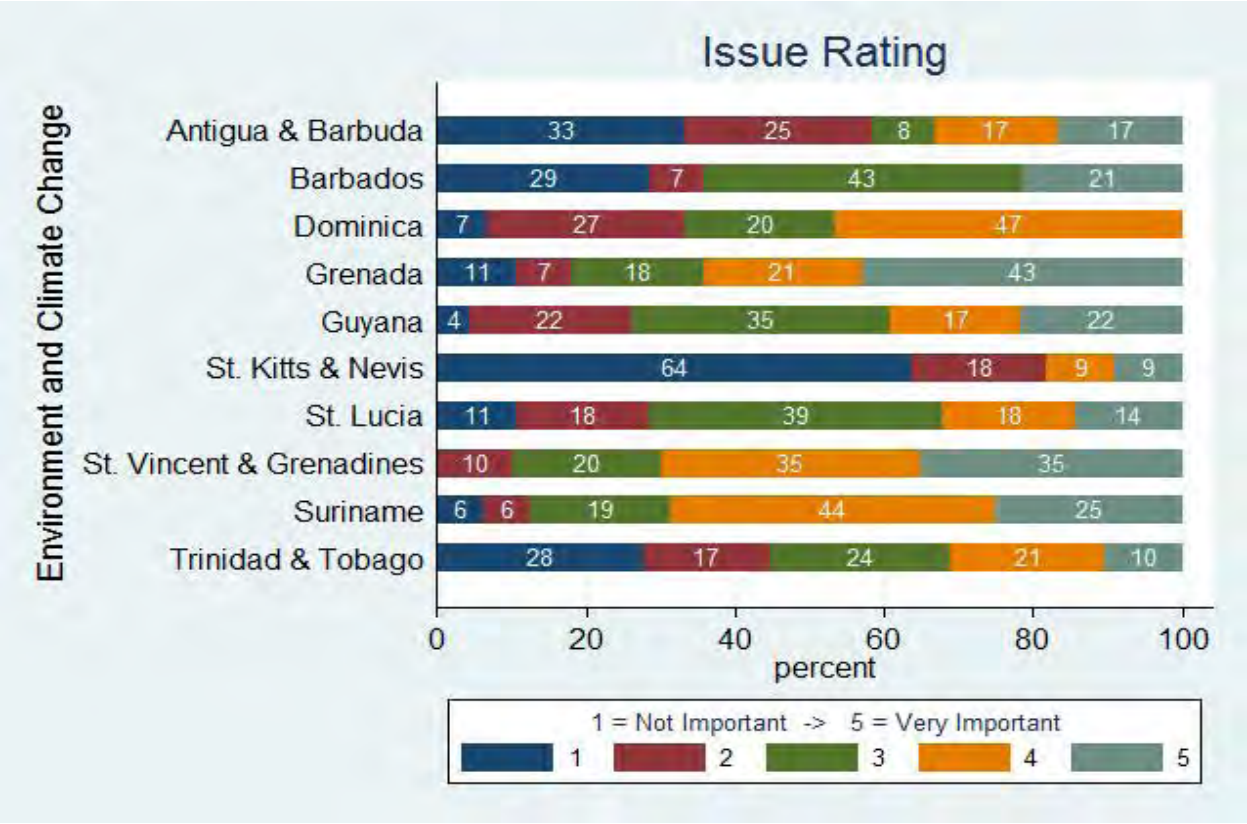

Figure 10: Issue Rating Scores by Country—Environment and Climate Change

[32] Taylor, M. A. and Stephenson, T. S. and Chen, A. A. and Stephenson, K. A. (2012). "Climate Change and the Caribbean: Review and Response." *Caribbean Studies* 40(2), 169–200. Institute of Caribbean Studies. Retrieved August 18, 2013, from Project MUSE database.

youth from meeting their basic human needs override their attention to environment and climate change issues.

Youth do not prioritize the significance of environment and climate change issues in their own lives. Similar to what one would expect based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, ESC youth are primarily attentive to meeting their most immediate needs and are most aware of and focused on how to do this through economic, social, and education or training mechanisms. It is possible that, with heightened awareness of environmental and climate change issues, and how daily livelihoods of youth and communities are affected, ESC youth will become more concerned with related roles and responsibilities. This can be accomplished through the successful dissemination of information among youth that will enhance their knowledge, ultimately preparing them for the challenges ahead.[33]

It is not the case that youth do not care about the environment, but they have more urgent concerns. Issues related to the environment and climate change are often acknowledged among ESC youth in relation to economic trends. For instance, tourism is highly vulnerable to developments in source countries such as the effects of climate change, including the loss of shoreline and more extreme weather conditions.[34] In low-level and flood-prone regions, young people might experience environmental and climate change challenges; however, these concerns are not widespread, as indicated by interviews with youth and problem-ranking data.

Youth who are involved with environment and climate change initiatives feel marginalized. In connection with the inclusion of youth in political and national-level strategic decision-making, youth voices and experiences are not considered to the extent that young people would like. While regional-level data presenting the opinions of Caribbean youth on the effects of environment and climate on their livelihoods remain limited, a 2010 UN-Habitat youth survey representing a Caribbean-based youth environment nonprofit presented the view that young people are continuously barred from the opportunity to address their concerns. Without a youth delegate sitting among decision-makers, the concerns of young people in the Caribbean will not be addressed as "[they] have been receiving such treatment for the longest time."[35]

Recommendations

It is recommended that USAID/BEC do the following:

1. Provide capacity-building support to youth environment networks in order to support national- and regional-level campaign initiatives that build awareness of environment and climate change issues among ESC youth.

[33] http://www.caribbeanclimate.bz/featured-articles/youth-forum.html
[34] United Nations Development Programme. (2012). *Caribbean Human Development Report*.
[35] UN-Habitat, Chawla, Ambika. (2010). *Youth Opinions on the COP 15 Climate Summit: A Report from UN-Habitat.*

Cross-Cutting Themes

Findings and conclusions

An overarching problem that affects all sectors is the deficit of data. Given that the youth landscape is affected by every sector, the data deficit is particularly alarming. Priorities and policies should be based on empirical evidence. However, in most of the ESC, the assessment team found that empirical data are generally neither consistently collected nor properly stored, managed, or shared. Even when accessible, data are rarely presented in ways that are readily understood by the average citizen. Public and private agencies alike make decisions, use resources, and operate with limited data. This increases their operational cost, makes it difficult for them to raise funds, reduces the effectiveness of their programs, weakens collaboration, and jeopardizes effective policymaking. Whether the subject is recidivism rates in correctional institutions, employment impact of credit decisions, success rates in employment programs, or return-to-school rates among teen mothers, data was consistently unavailable across the board in all of the countries visited; this is an extremely serious problem. Even basic population data is unavailable, affecting regional governance. For instance, the 2010 report from the CARICOM Commission on youth development acknowledges omitting "important sectors of Caribbean youth" including "the indigenous and tribal communities in Suriname, Guyana, Dominica, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, because of the paucity of available research."[36]

There are limited opportunities and mechanisms that exist for dialogue among youth as well as between youth and national policymakers. Inadequate social and economic opportunities and a policy environment that does not currently enable adequate youth engagement severely limit the transformational contribution that youth can make to sustainable development. Besides having little information about programs and opportunities that are available to them, youth have limited constructive outlets to express their opinions, concerns, and perspectives and to contribute to positive change. This lack of knowledge and constructive outlets can lead to increased frustration, helplessness, anger, and distrust of authority. This increased level of frustration and anger affects youth mental and physical health and well-being in a negative way. In the national context, this can lead to social and political instability, with implications for maintenance of democratic traditions.

This also leads to indifference to social and political processes. A case in point is the Youth Parliament, which in some countries represents an exciting opportunity to build the experience of citizenship among youth while also ensuring inclusiveness of youth opinion in national decision-making. The Youth Parliament system must be protected from attempts to exploit it for nefarious purposes that detract from its civic value. Such negative practices range from a top-down process of selecting youth parliamentarians that suggests clientelism or nepotism in some

[36] See page 9 of the 2010 CARICOM report.

countries to political party support for certain youth parliamentarians in exchange for partisan alignment in other countries.

The growing effect of global society has added cultural stresses to ESC youth. Caribbean youth face the challenges of self-realization in a world of shrinking distances, instantaneous communication, electronic social networking, and rapid cultural transformation. Values are being transformed by economic and ideological forces that are often driven by distant realities. Caribbean youth are painfully aware of the small size of the marketplaces in which they are trying to find work and the limits on their economic opportunities.

Recommendations

In addressing cross-cutting themes and findings discussed above, only some suggestions informed by respondents and developed by the assessment team are within the scope of USAID/BEC functions. It is therefore recommended that the Mission do the following:

1. Collaborate with other donors already implementing efforts in the region (including the UN) to build capacities of local governments and regional agencies to collect, monitor, and evaluate youth-specific data that can be used to inform national programming, policies, and decision-making.

2. Invest in and support capacity-building programming to enhance the competencies of youth officers.

3. Encourage governments to modernize (or in some cases create) strategic youth development plans. While many countries included in the ESCYA already had National Youth Policies drafted, informants recommend that these must be revised and better implemented. USAID/BEC can give this effort priority attention.

4. Invest in programs that assist young people to reorganize and develop strategies for the sustainability and influence of NYCs and National Youth Parliaments.

5. Support civil society capacity-building initiatives to raise the level of civic participation among youth and provide capacity-building training to youth advocacy groups.

4. COUNTRY-LEVEL ANALYSES

4A. ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Country Overview

Antigua and Barbuda is approximately 442 km^2 with an estimated population of 90,156. Youth between the ages of 14 and 24 account for 18.3 percent of the island's citizens. However, the definition of "youth" used by different government ministries and included in the National Youth Policy extends that age bracket up to 38. The population pyramid in Figure 11 shows that the largest portion of the country's population is composed of young people.[37] Antigua and Barbuda is home to 365 beaches, and these along with other landmarks have been the main impetus for the development of the island's tourism sector. The other sectors that contribute to economic development include services, agriculture, construction, and manufacturing.[38]

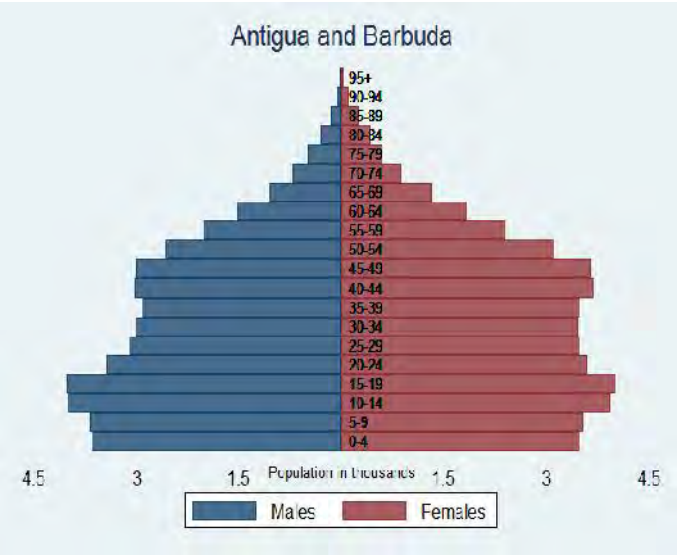

Figure 11: Population of Antigua and Barbuda

The tourism industry has been the main source of foreign exchange and as such the country was severely impacted by the global economic recession. Other negative shocks for the economy include the restrictions imposed on casino gambling and the fallout associated with the far-reaching effects of the financial wrongdoings of the former financier R. Allen Stanford. However,

[37] Through stakeholder interviews and a literature review, it was found that Antigua and Barbuda has no single definition of *youth* that specifies a standard age bracket across sectors. The drafted National Youth Policy, for instance, indicates youth can be considered as young people ages 0–15, but that this can also be extended to include young people up to the age of 35. During interviews with youth workers, the assessment team was told that even this ceiling may increase to the age of 38. Given this variation, the team's analysis of data derived from youth respondents from the age group specified in the SOW, ages 14–24.

[38] www.oecs.org/about-the-oecs/who-we-are/member-states/556-antigua-barbuda and www.caricom.org/jsp/community/antigua_barbuda.jsp

as a result of assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the economic outlook for Antigua and Barbuda has improved significantly in recent times.

The assessment team conducted key informant interviews and focus groups with 81 youth and adults in Antigua and Barbuda. The findings from these data collections sections are outlined by thematic area in the following section of the report.

Thematic Assessment Areas

Economic opportunities

Youth unemployment in Antigua and Barbuda is a major barrier to their full engagement in the economy. While there is no recent national-level data on the youth unemployment rate over the past decade, a ranking of problems across various sectors relevant to youth well-being and livelihood shows that there is great concern over the availability of economic opportunities available for young Antiguans (see Figure 12). Up to 63 percent of key informants, both adults and youth, highlighted several social and economic challenges all having to do with the lack of available employment opportunities.

In the UNDP Citizen Security Survey for 2010, in which youth from Antigua and Barbuda were asked to identify the three main problems facing the country, unemployment ranked highest at 30 percent (n = 1653), and this was followed by cost of living at 26 percent (n = 1543).[39] Youth unemployment is not simply due to limited job opportunities. Beyond these concerns, some youth indicated that, even when jobs are available, they are out of their reach because of requirements for formal certification and work experience. Some of those interviewed emphasized that youth with qualifications are limited from taking up the job of their choice because of the perception of "being overqualified." Underemployment is another problem faced by qualified youth in Antigua and Barbuda. Both the youth and adults interviewed stated that in cases where jobs exist, some of these openings may not be filled by young people. It was reported that this could be a result of the temporary nature of some job opportunities and the inadequate compensation packages, which do not meet the expectations of youth.

The readiness of youth for the world of work was also a main discussion point in key informant interviews. Several stakeholders who work directly with programs catering to youth expressed concerns that some youth did not display the appropriate attitudes and aptitude for the workplace. While some second-chance programs, such as those offered as part of the USAID/International Youth Foundation's Caribbean Youth Empowerment Program, include a curriculum to address these gaps, there were frequent requests for the scaling-up of programs that focus on providing young people with the requisite skills and competencies to become productive participants in the labor market.

[39] United Nations Development Programme, *Caribbean Human Development Report*, 2012.

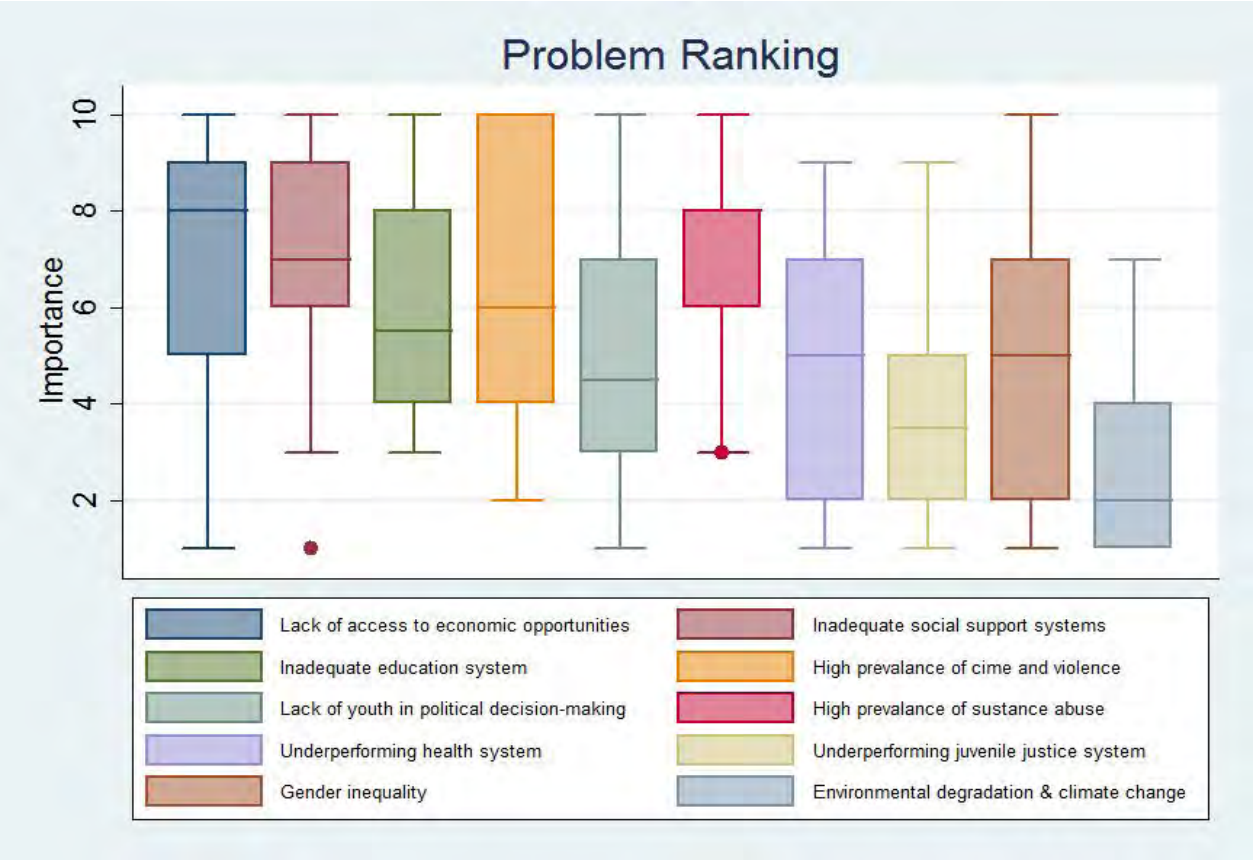

Figure 12: Problem Ranking Scores—Antigua and Barbuda

The availability of desired employment opportunities is also characterized by high competition for open positions. Some youth in Antigua and Barbuda expressed the sentiment that employment opportunities for young people were negatively impacted by the rehiring of retirees. As one youth noted, "You either have to wait for someone to retire or die [to get a job]." The influx of immigrants from regional and extra-regional sources has also emerged as a major economic issue for many of those youth interviewed. This finding is critical, especially in light of initiatives such as the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). This finding also indicates that there is a need for awareness campaigns among youth on issues pertaining to the CSME. These issues of migration and economic opportunities were aptly addressed in the 2010 Report from the CARICOM Commission on youth development, which concluded that several misconceptions existed surrounding those eligible to move throughout the region and that youth expressed several concerns about the impact on social, economic, and cultural systems in their respective countries.[40]

[40] Draft Report of the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development—*Eye on the Future: Investing in Youth Now for Tomorrow's Community*, January 2010.

Stakeholders in Antigua and Barbuda also expressed concern about the exclusion of specific groups of youth from employment opportunities. It was reported that in the absence of a national policy on employment rights, young people with disabilities experienced challenges not only in finding work but also with the limitations of the physical environment once employed. Youth with disabilities experience some of the same obstacles as their peers, but the situation is worsened because of negative perceptions about persons with disabilities.

Youth offenders, particularly those who had "brushes" with the law or had been incarcerated, experienced significant challenges in obtaining employment. This issue is not unique to Antigua and Barbuda, as respondents in countries such as Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago expressed concern that the stigmatization of youth offenders often leads to recidivism. Therefore, any reforms of the juvenile justice system in the region need to address the reintegration of youth into society once they complete their sentences.

Crime and violence

Youth in Antigua and Barbuda reported being influenced by crime both as victims and as perpetrators. Generally, those key informants interviewed stated that the settings for youth crime are schools, homes, and the community. These perspectives are also supported by the findings of the *UNDP Caribbean Human Development Report* for 2012.

In terms of crime within the school environment, several of those interviewed stated that some youth were subjected to bullying and physical violence while at school. While the situation in Antigua and Barbuda is based on anecdotal evidence, it has been suggested that criminal activity in schools could be tied to the existence of informal gangs within the system. The World Bank, in a 2003 study of youth development issues in the CARICOM region, notes that youth armed themselves and used weapons in physical altercations. Furthermore, the report also indicates that one in five school-age males and one in eight school-age females reported being a member of a gang at one point or another.[41]

The youth and adults interviewed indicated that some young people in Antigua and Barbuda were generally involved in all forms of criminal activity, including theft, vandalism, the use and trading of illicit drugs, gang violence, prostitution, assault, and murder. It was reported that males were more likely to be the perpetrators of crime, but in recent years there has been an increase in the number and levels of involvement of young girls and women.

The fact that youth perpetrate crime was seen by those interviewed as a result of a range of factors including peer pressure, excessive amounts of free time, and the lack of appropriate adult supervision. In addition, the absence of delayed gratification, declining morals and values, and poverty were reported to be some of the other push factors related to youth involvement in criminal activity.

[41] The World Bank, *Caribbean Youth Development: Issues and Policy Considerations*, May 2003.

A multi-sectoral, evidence-based approach must be used in order to tackle youth crime in Antigua and Barbuda. The U.S. State Department's CBSI has ongoing current programs for youth who are susceptible to becoming involved in crime and violence, especially as they relate to issues of national security. However, the reported lack of programming calls for more attention and efforts toward developing stronger youth programs for those who are on the fringe and those who have already demonstrated a propensity to engage in in deviant or antisocial behaviors.

Juvenile justice

The majority of youth in Antigua and Barbuda are actively engaged in positive pursuits. The challenge therefore is to cater to those youth who are in need of guidance, care, and protection, along with those who have broken the law. One key informant directly involved in youth-related activities expressed the view that the system appears to be criminalizing all youth who go before the police or law courts. It was further stated that there is a clear and urgent need for juvenile justice reform in Antigua and Barbuda, which should include alternative sentencing strategies and effective reintegration programs for those who have been previously incarcerated. This will require a huge effort in public awareness to address the prevalence of stigmatization and the lack of a culture of forgiveness.

Most of the key informants interviewed expressed concern about the treatment of juvenile offenders who are within state or quasi-state institutions. These concerns are related to the quality of accommodation and the competence and professionalism of employees, among other issues.

Education and training

Universal education (primary and secondary school levels) is available to citizens of Antigua and Barbuda. Post-secondary education can be attained through institutions such as the Antigua and Barbuda State College and the University of the West Indies Open Campus. In order to offset the costs of these studies, scholarships and loans are available to those who qualify for assistance.

The challenge for the country, therefore, is not access to education, but the quality and utility of the education received. The adequacy and relevance of the education provided in Antigua and Barbuda yielded intense discussions from the youth and adults interviewed. The main criticism of the educational system is its inability to prepare students for the labor force and to provide them with critical thinking skills.

In analysis of the education system through a gender perspective, the consensus in Antigua and Barbuda was that the needs of males have not been adequately addressed. Key informants noted that males prefer more interactive modes of learning, lacked positive role models in the classroom, and prefer to become engaged in income-generating opportunities. Therefore, these failings have contributed to truancy, dropouts, and males' involvement in antisocial behaviors.

"Second-chance" programs and technical/vocational training institutions such as the Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education (ABICE), the Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality

Institute, and the Gilbert Agriculture and Rural Development Centre (GARD) are available to fill the gap, but discussions around their organizational capacities show that these are under-resourced.

Health and well-being

There are no major differences in the health profiles of youth in Antigua and Barbuda when compared to the other islands in the ESC. Youth tend to be affected by lifestyle-related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity. The nutritional habits of some youth are driven by lack of information about their appropriate dietary needs and the relative accessibility of fast foods.

It was reported that some youth were also likely to engage in risky behaviors such as substance abuse, transactional sex, prostitution, and unprotected sex, as evidenced by the number of teenage pregnancies. The dearth of youth-friendly services and spaces was highlighted as one of the challenges related to the lack of access to health services by youth. This finding was also linked to the dearth of mental health services, facilities, and general resources. Up to 37 percent of informants reported that the mental health services in Antigua and Barbuda are inadequate in addressing the needs of the general population, and especially youth.

Other reasons reported for unsatisfactory access to available health services included unfamiliarity with the available services and perceptions surrounding the absence of confidentiality by health care professionals.

In order to adequately address the mental health needs of youth, there is a need for increased access to the services of social care professionals, such as counselors and psychologists, because of the current dearth in this field.

Social support

The social environment of youth, as described by respondents, is characterized by single-parent households, limited involvement of parents and the extended family, and the influence of peers. The responses of more than half of adult and youth informants supports the finding that the breakdown of the nuclear family leads to a lack of guidance, support, and positive role models (58 percent). The limited social support available for "at-risk" youth was also linked to the high prevalence of sexual abuse that begins at home. The combination of these significantly affects the overall well-being of youth in Antigua and Barbuda, who experience negative thoughts, anger-management challenges, running away from home, and generally poor social development, including the lack of appropriate life skills.

Environment and climate change

Youth in Antigua and Barbuda did not prioritize issues pertaining to the environment and climate change over any other in the problem-ranking exercise, which does not deviate from regional findings. While this thematic issue area was ranked low, it does not necessarily mean the youth in Antigua and Barbuda do not think that the environment and climate change issues are unimportant. Rather, it can be concluded that other needs take precedence due to other challenges experienced from day to day and a lack of awareness.

4B. BARBADOS

Country Overview

Barbados is the easternmost country in the Caribbean and also among the wealthiest, most developed countries in the ESC. Barbados has a total population of about 283,200, with youth between the ages of 14 and 24 accounting for 15.1 percent of the country's population (see Figure 13). Barbados has several governmental and non-governmental initiatives and organizations that work to address many of the issues identified, and there are strong foundations for continuing this work. As the regional hub for several economic and foreign-aid actors, Barbados benefits from strong infrastructure, robust programming, and facilities that serve as important opportunities in addressing youth needs.

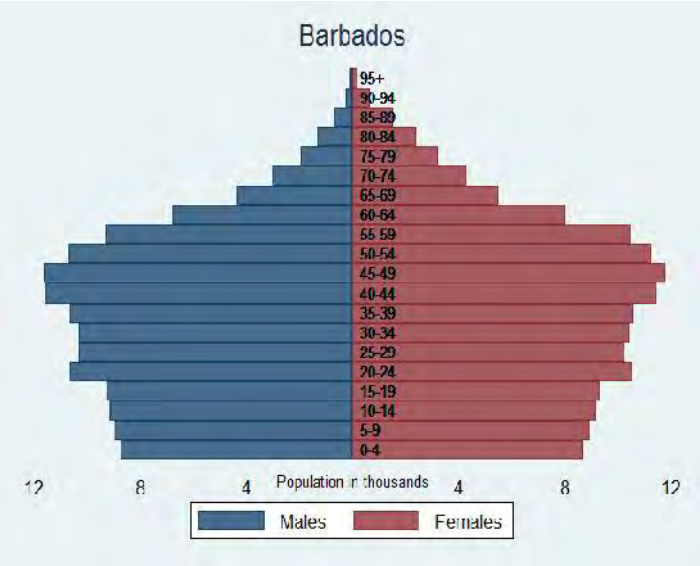

Figure 13: Population of Barbados

Like many of the other countries in the region, Barbados is heavily dependent on the tourism and service industries, and the economic downturn has corresponded with high levels of unemployment, particularly among young people. The Barbadian youth participating in the assessment tended to be confident that they had the skills needed to succeed, naming the lack of economic opportunities as the primary reason for high unemployment (see Figure 14). As such, the slowing construction and service industries are prompting many Barbadian youth to look abroad for opportunities, and many respondents feared the potential for brain drain. Informal networks and prior experience (via internships or part-time work) were viewed as instrumental in finding and keeping jobs; therefore, the assessment team found that the youth from lower socioeconomic strata were seen to be at a particular disadvantage in accessing job opportunities.

Barbados boasts one of the highest literacy rates in the world at more than 99.5 percent; education is compulsory until age 16. Despite this and the country's commendable effort enforcing the school attendance age, many believed the education system is, as was reported about other ESC countries, too focused on academia and lacking in vocational and technical training. Some training opportunities do exist, though they tend to be centralized in the capital and less accessible to those in rural or outlying communities. While the lack of economic opportunities was by far the most commonly identified challenge facing youth, respondents recognized some additional obstacles, including drug use and lack of support structures.

Nearly all respondents believed social support systems to be one of the most significant factors in determining whether or not young people would succeed. Gender inequities and the health care system were often stated to not be particularly problematic in Barbados, but perceptions varied widely between respondents. In general, young people did not view environmental issues, including climate change, as a priority, in part because Barbados has not been affected by as many natural disasters as some of its neighbors have. Young people's political involvement and juvenile justice systems were widely debated topics, with varying views regarding the level of importance and impact those aspects have on Barbadian youth. Both major political parties have youth arms, though when questioned, many believed youth involvement to be more of a showpiece and election strategy than an instrumental element in formulating policy.

A total of 36 key informants and 36 focus group participants informed the ESCYA in Barbados. The findings from these sessions are outlined below.

Thematic Assessment Areas

Economic opportunities

As with other countries in the region, youth and other stakeholders in Barbados consistently identified securing a job and a steady source of income as the biggest priorities for young

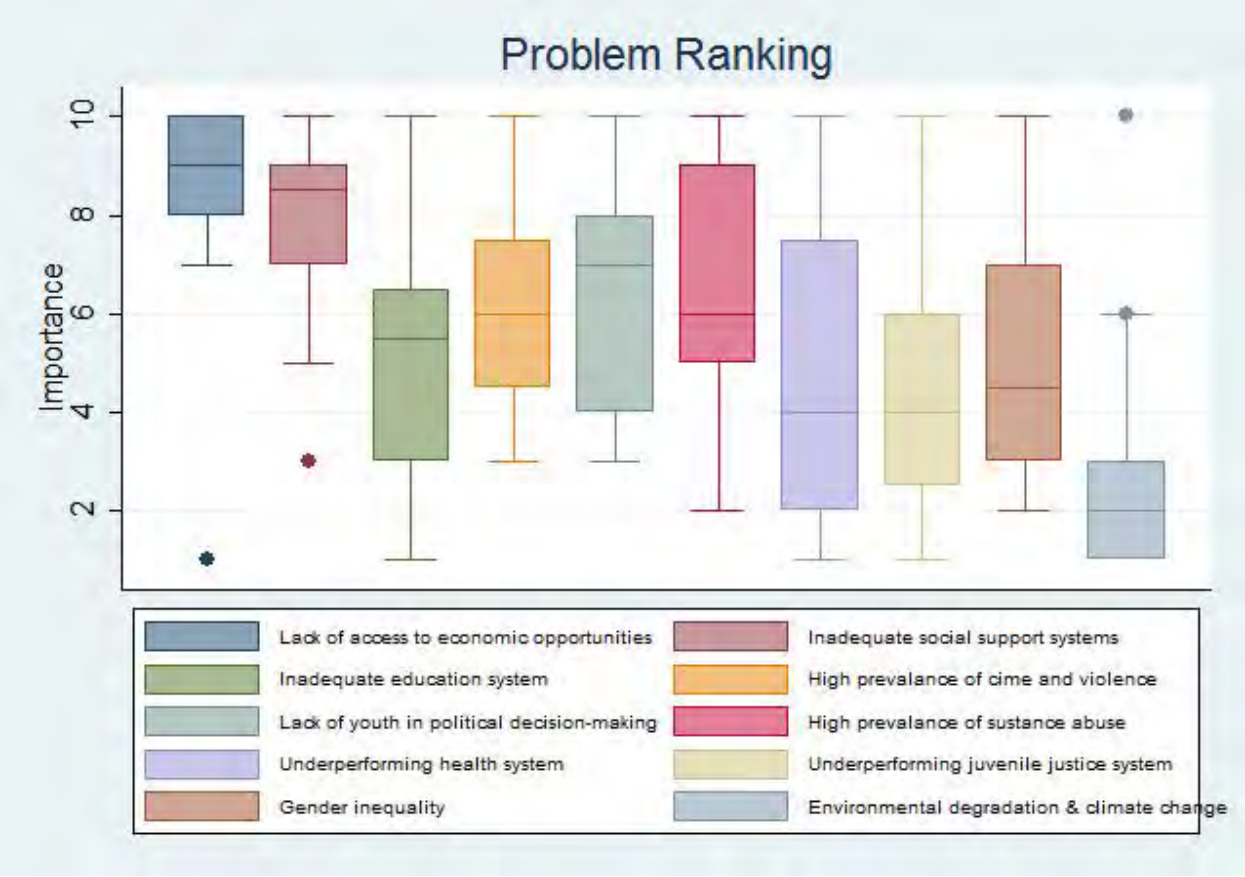

Figure 14: Problem Ranking Scores—Barbados

people. When asked to rank the importance of economic opportunities for young people, all respondents rated it a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the most important. Respondents believed entry into the job market to be the primary obstacle for young people, as job opportunities solicit experience that many youth lack. While the youth policy promotes volunteerism and internships as a way to gain this experience, most young people that the team spoke with were unwilling or unable to work without pay for extended periods of time. Not surprisingly, given the reliance on personal connections and need for prior experience, youth from lower socioeconomic strata often encounter the most difficulty entering the labor market. Youth in Barbados were more confident than youth in other countries that they had the skills needed to succeed, although some did not possess the requisite certification.

Education and training

Educational opportunities in Barbados are abundant, largely because of opportunities for government-subsidized access to education from the nursery level to the University of the West Indies (UWI). However, in its August 2013 Budgetary Proposal and Financial Statement, the Government of Barbados outlined a policy aimed at reducing the national debt. Once implemented, this policy will necessitate that from the 2014 academic year, students entering the UWI Cave Hill Campus will be required to pay tuition fees while government continues to pay the economic costs.[42] Despite the high literacy rate and high levels of educational access (particularly compared to some of the other countries in the region), approximately 33 percent of respondents believed that the education system lacks practical, technical, and vocational skills training. A few respondents stated that the pressure associated with performing well on the Common Entrance Examination (also known locally as the 11 Plus) causes a large number of people to believe that they will fail at a very young age, thus disincentivizing educational achievement.[43] While many believed the education system in Barbados to be an asset, some stakeholders believed that youth take the system for granted because it is free and easily accessible. As such, and corroborated by qualitative data collection, some youth assume that they should be guaranteed a job just by attending school and therefore don't fully appreciate the learning or work required to gain necessary skillsets.

As in other ESC countries, those who are less academically inclined often drop out after age 16, when attendance is no longer mandated by the government. While vocational and technical training programs in Barbados are abundant and often free of charge, stakeholders outside the capital stated that transportation to and from the trainings are not subsidized for those over 18 years of age and who are not full-time students. This has resulted in significant challenges in

[42] This is a fundamental shift in education policy because tertiary-level education in Barbados has always been fully funded by the Government of Barbados.

[43] The Common Entrance Examination, also known locally as the 11 Plus examination, is used as the system to determine entry from primary into secondary school. It is seen as being a stressful time for students due to the public perception surrounding the prestige and high academic performance of some schools as compared to others.

ensuring that more marginalized and rural populations are able to access training opportunities in Bridgetown and the surrounding areas. However, youth outside the capital reported attending some sort of training. Youth from rural parishes reported attending trainings located within reasonable distances of their residence, whether it was training aligned to their interests or needs. The lack of subsidies related to transportation for students not meeting the requirements previously noted caused many youth to avoid training programs in the capital and to focus on those closer to home. Similarly, young people expressed the view that attending trainings limited the number of opportunities available for earning money needed to support family. However, most respondents felt that the training programs were useful and easily accessible, but noted the lack of effective communication and/or advertisement regarding some of these opportunities to those most in need—particularly those in lower socioeconomic strata and those outside the capital.

Social support systems

Many respondents (25 percent) attributed youth challenges to a breakdown in family structures and social support systems, and rated the importance of these systems second only to economic opportunities. Many young people felt they did not have enough positive role models, mentors, or guidance. This was particularly true for more marginalized youth, such as those in the LGBT community, those with mental health issues, and those who came from nontraditional households. All of the young people who responded to the youth survey in Barbados who were both unemployed and not attending school have parents who were not and had never been married.[44] When asking engaged and productive "at-risk" youth about why they were not using drugs or why they stayed in school, nearly all youth listed their family as a primary factor.

Other social support systems included church groups, community groups, and guidance counselors. Respondents believed that both the quantity and quality of counselors and social workers available to youth could use bolstering. Similarly, more than 20 percent of respondents noted the need for productive activities available to certain youth in after-school and weekend hours, particularly in the areas of sports and music.

Crime and violence

Approximately 33 percent of informants reported the perception of heightened crime and violence involving youth, in large part because of difficulties finding work and the lack of social support systems. Respondents listed marijuana use and the drug trade as the most common crimes. They attributed this to the allure of fast cash and block culture. Respondents often felt that most violent acts occurred between people who knew one another. These took the form of gang-related violence and violence within families (domestic abuse or child abuse). However, most Barbadians acknowledged that the country does not like to talk about crime, as the culture promotes low levels of crime and violence as a selling point for tourism. The team noted that

[44] While this is an interesting finding, the results cannot be generalized to the broader population given the small sample size and sampling methods used in this assessment.

many respondents dismissed crime and violence as irrelevant issues when asked directly but referenced these issues when speaking about other themes.

Juvenile justice

Many respondents felt that there is significant room for improvement regarding the juvenile justice system in Barbados, with up to 21 percent indicating that the current system is inadequate in meeting the needs of youth. Interestingly, participants rated juvenile justice highly in the regional analysis of the issues-rating exercise in importance to youth (shown earlier in Figure 3) but ranked it relatively low on the problem-ranking exercise. This may be in part because of biases in the types of respondents, as many lacked personal experience in the juvenile justice system. Participants noted that while there is a general respect for law enforcement in Barbados, "only the poor go to jail," with 17 percent describing the perception of law enforcement among youth as untrustworthy. Youth and other stakeholders noted that there are too few programs working on youth rehabilitation and that there are high recidivism rates in the country. As in other countries, offenders suffer from a stigma that follows them throughout their lives and makes it difficult to reintegrate into society.

Health and well-being

Barbados provides relatively high-quality and free or low-cost physical health care services to its citizens, and most respondents felt that the system functions well for the majority of young people. Teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections were listed as common health concerns for young women, though perceptions regarding trends of these issues varied.

On the other hand, approximately 25 percent of respondents perceive the mental health care system in Barbados to be inadequate in providing resources and facilities targeting youth, particularly in the areas of counseling and rehabilitation.

Environment and climate change

Respondents consistently scored environment and climate change as the lowest priority and least important concern of those outlined above for young people in Barbados. The few respondents who named environment as an issue on their own were involved in environmental organizations; others had to be asked directly about their thoughts. When prodded, it was evident that most Barbadians do not feel that environmental degradation directly affects them. This was in part because of the sentiment that "God is a Bajan" and that environmental disasters have not affected the island the way they have affected other countries in the region. There are organizations and projects aimed at environmental awareness and cleanup in the country, and youth seem to be marginally more engaged than older generations. Overall, other concerns were more pressing.

4C. DOMINICA

Country Overview

Dominica's small island population of 71,680 includes a significant portion of youth in which about 20.1 percent are between the ages of 14 and 24, though if that definition were to reflect the age bracket indicated in the National Youth Policy of 15 to 30, that proportion would increase dramatically, as shown in Figure 15. With respect to youth challenges, economic opportunities and social support systems continue to be the highest priorities. Dominica's lack of infrastructure and transportation outside the capital city poses a significant challenge to those living in the secondary cities and rural areas. This situation presents difficulties in enabling access to training, education, and youth programming. In addition, the agricultural sector has suffered in recent years, and export regulations have made it difficult to generate new economic activity within the country. The government is promoting ecotourism as a source of future development, but further skills and development are needed to take full advantage of this potential.

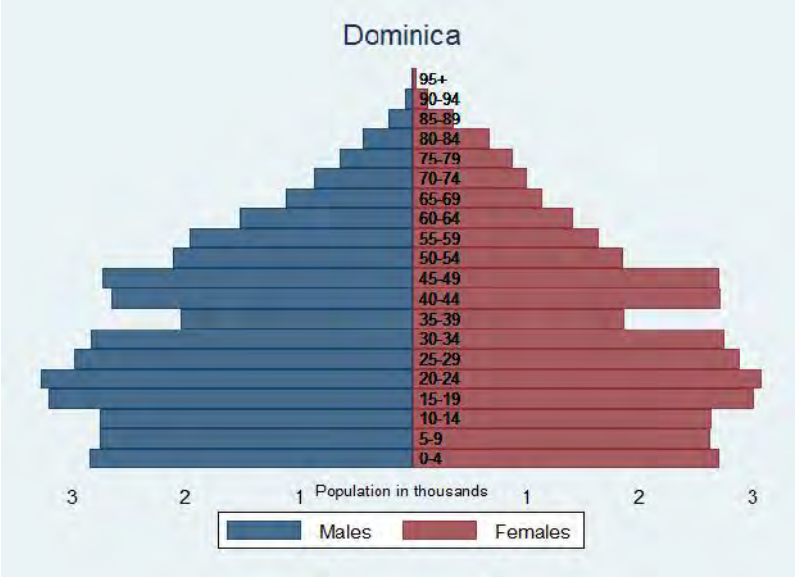

Figure 15: Population of Dominica

Government support and programming permeates the youth landscape, and the small scale of the country ensures that most actors are aware of one another and may communicate regularly. The small scale of the country also contributes to difficulties with stigma—both with respect to rehabilitation and reintegration of criminal offenders, as well as with comfort levels of youth in seeking counseling and social support. Environmental awareness is higher in Dominica than in other countries, but still ranks low on youth's list of priorities because of other more direct and pressing concerns related to their basic needs. A comparison of the problem-ranking averages (Figure 16) to the rating of the seven thematic issue areas of interest to USAID/BEC (Figure 3) shows that there is a consistent view of the most pressing issues facing Dominican youth. For instance, economic opportunities and social support systems are also rated, on average, as very important issues for young people in Dominica.

The following section presents findings across the seven thematic assessment areas. The SI team interviewed 78 people in Dominica, including 40 key informants and 38 focus group participants.

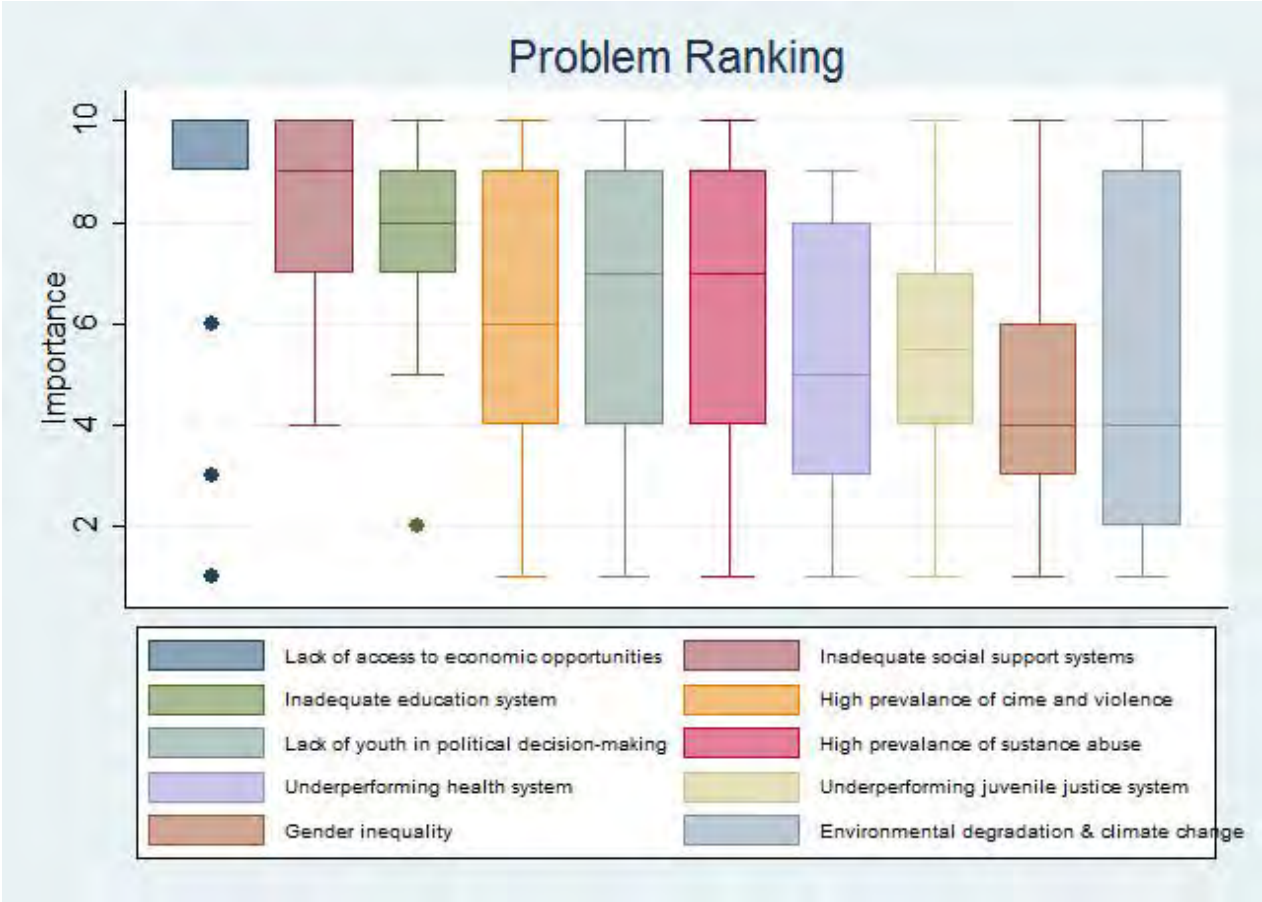

Figure 16: Problem Ranking Scores—Dominica

Thematic Assessment Areas

Economic opportunities

As with other countries in the region, economic opportunities consistently scored very high on the ranking and rating exercises in Dominica. Most youth listed finding stable income and jobs as their highest goals or markers of success, with about 25 percent indicating a lack of sufficient economic opportunities as a significant challenge. That stated, both youth and adults reported that the ability to enter the job market often depends on having the right personal connections, known locally as "pulling strings," as opportunities are extremely limited and are therefore highly competitive. Similarly, as with neighboring countries, stakeholders noted the existence of a culture of immediacy and youth feeling that they are entitled to have a job, regardless of the associated skill or responsibility.

As dependence on agriculture in the country shifts increasingly towards tourism and ecotourism, youth and employers acknowledged that there may be economic opportunities in the service sectors and in artisan crafts that youth may be able to better take advantage of.

Education and training

While Dominica provides inexpensive and relatively high-quality education to its young people through the secondary level, more than 30 percent of informants reported the perception that the current education system does not adequately meet the needs of today's youth. Furthermore, limited opportunities exist for tertiary education within the country; however, some students attend programs at the state college. Key obstacles to youth access to both educational and training opportunities were infrastructure and transportation challenges, insufficient resources for books and food, and low levels of awareness about the available opportunities, particularly for those youth outside the capital city and the disabled. At the tertiary level, these obstacles are even more problematic and are often made more acute by the lack of sufficient resources for transportation, meals, and other basic needs. Youth and adults stated that vocational and technical training, while available, is inadequate to meet the needs of Dominican youth. Additional training needs identified included computer and Internet use, technical skills for building maintenance, plumbing, agricultural value chains, and hospitality trainings.

Social support systems

Social support systems ranked as highly as economic opportunities in Dominica on the ranking exercise, demonstrating the importance placed on these systems. Fifty percent of respondents believed that family structures have deteriorated in recent years, often leaving youth with large amounts of unstructured, unsupervised time. Parents and teachers complained that there were few available daycare facilities for children of working mothers. Youth and other stakeholders complained about the lack of mentorship, guidance, and role models for youth. Many felt that there were not enough examples of positive leadership. Many respondents also felt there was room for improvement with respect to the availability and professionalism of social workers, guidance counselors, and other people available who might be able to mentor youth.

Crime and violence

Dominica has a relatively low crime rate compared to other countries in the ESC, though 44 percent of respondents still perceive an increase in crime involving youth. As in neighboring countries, drug use and the drug trade have become more pervasive in recent years. Alleged drug traffickers seem more tolerated in communities out of fear or because they provide financial support for their families and neighbors. Respondents also highlighted petty theft as another common crime and noted that items such as stolen cell phones were allegedly transported to neighboring islands as part of an intra-regional illicit trade. Sexual violence, including child sexual abuse and incest, was raised consistently by informants as another tragic and important aspect of crime and violence on Dominica, though they also felt it often went unreported to authorities. A few stakeholders, including teachers and youth, believed that young female victims were more likely to report abuse than their male counterparts, and that the lack of counseling available to or accessed by these young people contributed to problems later in life. Violence was viewed as a secondary problem, primarily happening between people who know one another and are involved in the drug trade.

Juvenile justice

Many respondents viewed the primary issue concerning juvenile justice to be the lack of effective rehabilitation and reintegration programs and support for offenders, with up to 56 percent of respondents reporting the perception that the current system is inadequate in meeting the needs of Dominican youth. The From Offending to Achieving (FOTA) program was seen as a positive example of how this could be done, but stakeholders noted there were few other resources available addressing this need. The lack of available facilities for juvenile offenders was also seen to be a problem by 50 percent of the informants interviewed, as was the stigma attached to ex-offenders, particularly given the small population size. One magistrate has made several efforts to identify and create alternative sentencing options for youth offenders, such as participation in artistic and community service programs. In addition, an official at the state prison recognized that there is a backlog in cases and that this creates delays in the dispensation of justice. The government of Dominica is currently working on a juvenile justice policy in recognition of some of the issues currently being encountered.

Health and well-being

While most respondents believed health and well-being to be important, they often ranked it lower than other problems currently being encountered by young people. This lower level of urgency, as compared to other thematic areas, is likely due to the fact that most young people do have access to basic health care services. The challenges, despite great access to services and care, are linked to the fact that these services are not specifically geared toward youth. As such, alcohol abuse and other forms of drug abuse, casual sex, and teen pregnancy were seen as the greatest issues in this sphere, often impacting the other sectors and priorities listed above.

Environment and climate change

Respondents were much more conscious of the importance of the environment and climate change for the well-being of youth in Dominica than they were in other countries the team visited. While still not viewed as a top priority, many youth and government officials noted the potential impact of environmental degradation on economic opportunities without being directly asked by the interviewer. This increased awareness is probably in part because of the recent introduction of an environmental curriculum into schools, the recent damage caused by tropical storms and hurricanes, and the push towards ecotourism as a viable economic opportunity for the country. Stakeholders noted that young people were more engaged in environmental issues than their parents were, and there were individual initiatives to conduct cleanup and promote environmental protection by tour operators and other stakeholders who recognized the direct impact of environmental degradation on their work. Still, as in other ESC countries, other issues were considered far more pressing to youth, and many “at-risk” youth did not see the environment and climate change as a priority.

4D. GRENADA

Country Overview

Grenada is the southernmost country of the Windward Islands. The population of Grenada is 105,500, with a youth between the ages of 14 and 24 comprising about 18.8 percent (see Figure 17). As a significant asset to the country, youth constitute part of the country's best hope for social renewal and the economic diversification of a society that has been traumatized by natural disasters and, more recently, by the global economic crisis. Based on focus group discussions with youth, the younger Grenadian generation has set the goal of becoming a highly educated, skilled, economically empowered, and socially connected group. Many have accessed the limited opportunities and transcended the many challenges, and are well on their way to becoming active citizens. However, a growing percentage of this cohort experiences difficulty coping with the negative impact of economic challenges, a misaligned education system, the declining prevalence of traditional support systems, and inadequate psychosocial support services. Some manifestations of how this situation has impacted youth are captured in the findings under specific thematic areas section of this report. Suffice it to say that the Grenada youth development landscape, especially as it relates to the 14-to-24 cohort, is very challenging yet full of opportunities.

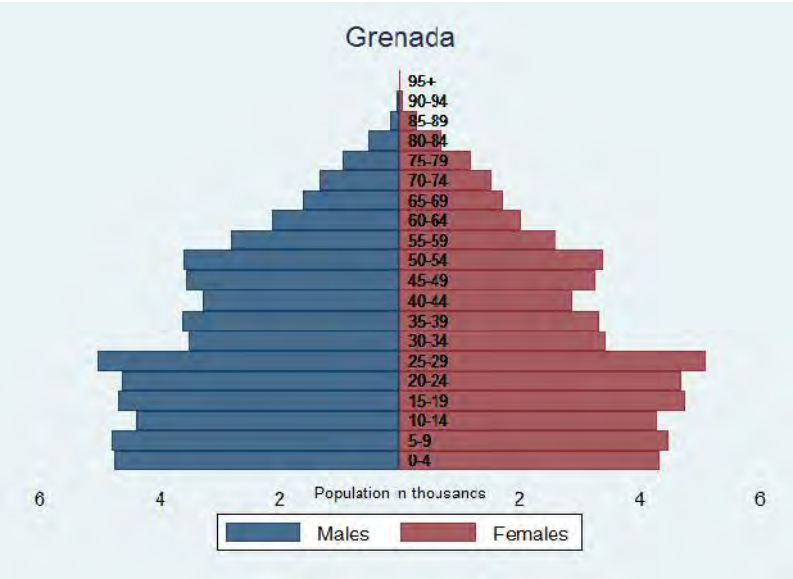

Figure 17: Population of Grenada

The new Government seems sensitive to these realities and has entrusted the management of the country's youth development strategy. It has been tasked with the responsibility of revamping the youth development framework and strategy. Their task includes development of a new National Youth Policy, formulation of a strategic Youth Development Plan, and a strategic repositioning of the Ministry of Youth, inclusive of capacity-building for youth officers. The goal is to enhance the quality and delivery of youth development services and to position Grenada as an international best practice model of youth development.

Pursuant to these objectives, the relevant Ministries have identified improved stakeholder engagement, strategic partnerships, and more dynamic mechanisms and processes to facilitate effective youth participation for priority attention. In essence, the task of establishing an

enabling environment for youth empowerment has begun as policy-level stakeholders are assiduously working to reverse increasing rates of unemployment, apathy, hopelessness, and antisocial behavior among the youth cohort.

Presented in Figure 18 below, are the key findings for Grenada, Carriacou, and Petite Martinique from 13 key informant interviews and 34 focus group participants.

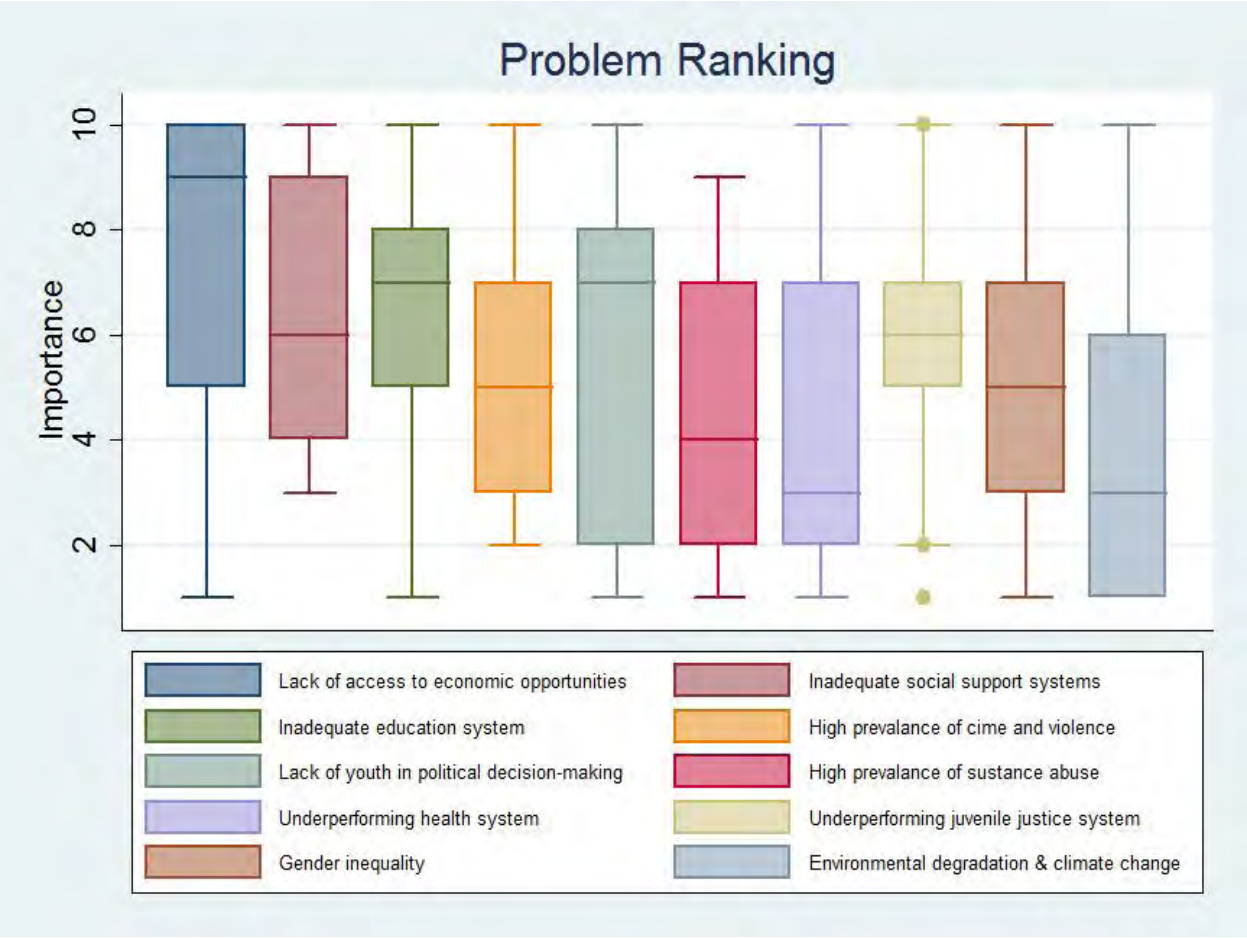

Figure 18: Problem Ranking Scores—Grenada

Thematic Assessment Areas

Economic opportunities

Availability and access to economic opportunities emerged as the most important issues for 92 percent of respondents. Both young people and the majority of adults expressed the need for economic opportunities for young people in general but most specifically for recent graduates from secondary and tertiary-level institutions. In addition to a lack of employment available for young people with varying levels of education, 62 percent of informants also indicated that a limited availability of resources to finance and establish microenterprises and small businesses further poses a challenge to young entrepreneurs. Serious concerns were also expressed by respondents regarding the absorptive capacity of the labor market.

Crime and violence

Crime and violence is a major development issue within the Caribbean context. In Grenada, approximately 31 percent of informants indicated that they think incidents involving young people have increased. Many of those interviewed expressed concern about the potential impact of crime and violence on youth, but such concerns were tempered by the reported low tolerance level for criminal behavior and activity among the Grenadian citizenry.

Education and training

Education and training was ranked as the second most important issue by respondents in Grenada. The general view among respondents is that education as a tool for economic empowerment and social mobility is highly valued, though more than 20 percent of respondents did indicate the perception that the current system is not adequate in meeting the needs of today's youth. Respondents also expressed concerns about the accessibility of tertiary-level education for many Grenadians because of their economic status. Twenty-three percent of respondents revealed that there are still challenges with access to schools, namely the difficulty to pay transportation costs and even to provide meals to facilitate their children's attendance at school. Respondents also expressed concerns regarding the quality of the education and the relevance of their curriculum to the country's development needs.

Juvenile justice

Issues related to juvenile justice were identified as being very important to the respondents. While most respondents did not believe there existed a crisis of juvenile offenders, serious concerns were expressed about the absence of a functional juvenile rehabilitation center[45] and a

[45]A key informant interview with the Honorable Emmalin Pierrie, Minister of Sport, Youth, and Ecclesiastical Affairs, highlighted the Government of Grenada's recognition of the urgent need for a juvenile rehabilitation center. The Honorable Minister noted that since the administration's successful

modern, progressive system of juvenile justice. Indeed, there was much consternation, even among senior government officials, regarding incidents of juvenile offenders being "locked up" at the Richmond Hill prisons with adult offenders.

Health and well-being

Issues related to the health and well-being of youth were frequently highlighted, suggesting that these are a significant aspect of the youth development landscape, especially with regard to teenage pregnancy and drug and alcohol abuse. Specific concerns were raised among 54 percent of respondents about the growing trend of alcohol abuse on the part of young females. Respondents also expressed alarm at the prevalence of teenage pregnancies and multiple STIs during 69 percent of interviews conducted. The incidence of noncommunicable diseases among young people was also a grave concern.

Social support systems

Social support systems were among the top considerations for respondents. There was much concern that economic challenges negatively impacted the capacity of many households to function as effective family units. There were also concerns about the capacity of many parents to cope psychologically with their responsibilities. The absence of safe spaces and the availability of psychosocial support services specifically tailored to address youth needs in a timely manner were a high priority. Informants noted, with much concern, the relative decline in support from and influence of faith-based organizations and other traditional communal support systems.

Environment and climate change

Issues related to youth, the environment, and climate change were not primary areas for concern for respondents in Grenada. However, given the country's recent traumatic experiences with natural disasters and the strategic importance of the tourism industry, there is an opportunity to enhance youth engagement in issues related to the environment and climate change. It may open up new opportunities for employment.

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return to office in the February 2013 general election, work on the center has recommenced and is near completion.

4E. GUYANA

Country Overview

Located in northern South America, Guyana's geography and cultural history allows for an interesting comparison with other ESC states. Like many, it is a former British colony (British Guiana). However, it has the second largest population in the assessment's set of countries, but an urban population of only 29 percent. Its society and politics are heavily influenced by ethnic factors. Guyana ranks among the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere and among CARICOM member states, only ranking above Haiti, Honduras, and Guatemala on the 2012 Human Development Index (HDI).[46]

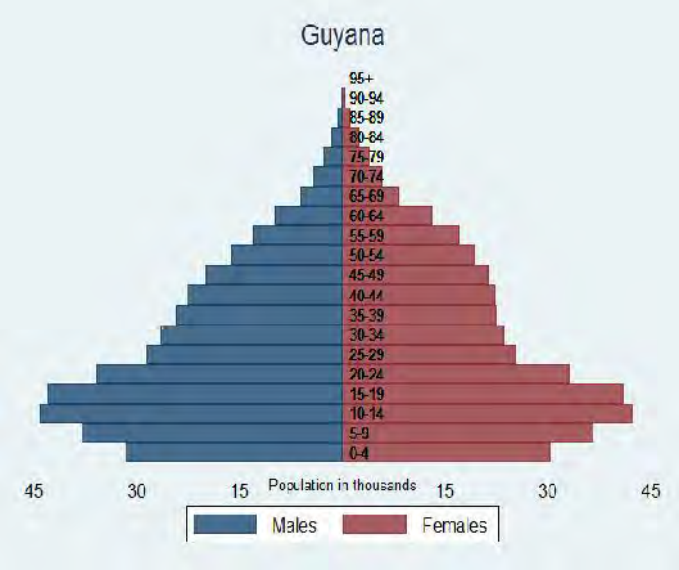

Figure 19: Population of Guyana

Unlike the countries included in this assessment, Guyana is not dependent on the tourism industry, nor is tourism a significant sector of the economy. Instead, the country is known for its natural resources, which have supported both its agricultural and mining economies. The transportation infrastructure within the country is poor, contributing to high rates of poverty.

The population of Guyana is almost 750,000, with slightly more than half under the age of 25 (see Figure 19). The largest ethnic group is East Indian, with slightly less than half the population, followed by Afro-Guyanese, with almost one-third. Guyana has one of the highest emigrant populations in the world, facilitated by English-language connections throughout the Caribbean and North America. Political parties are based on ethnic groups.

[46] http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/

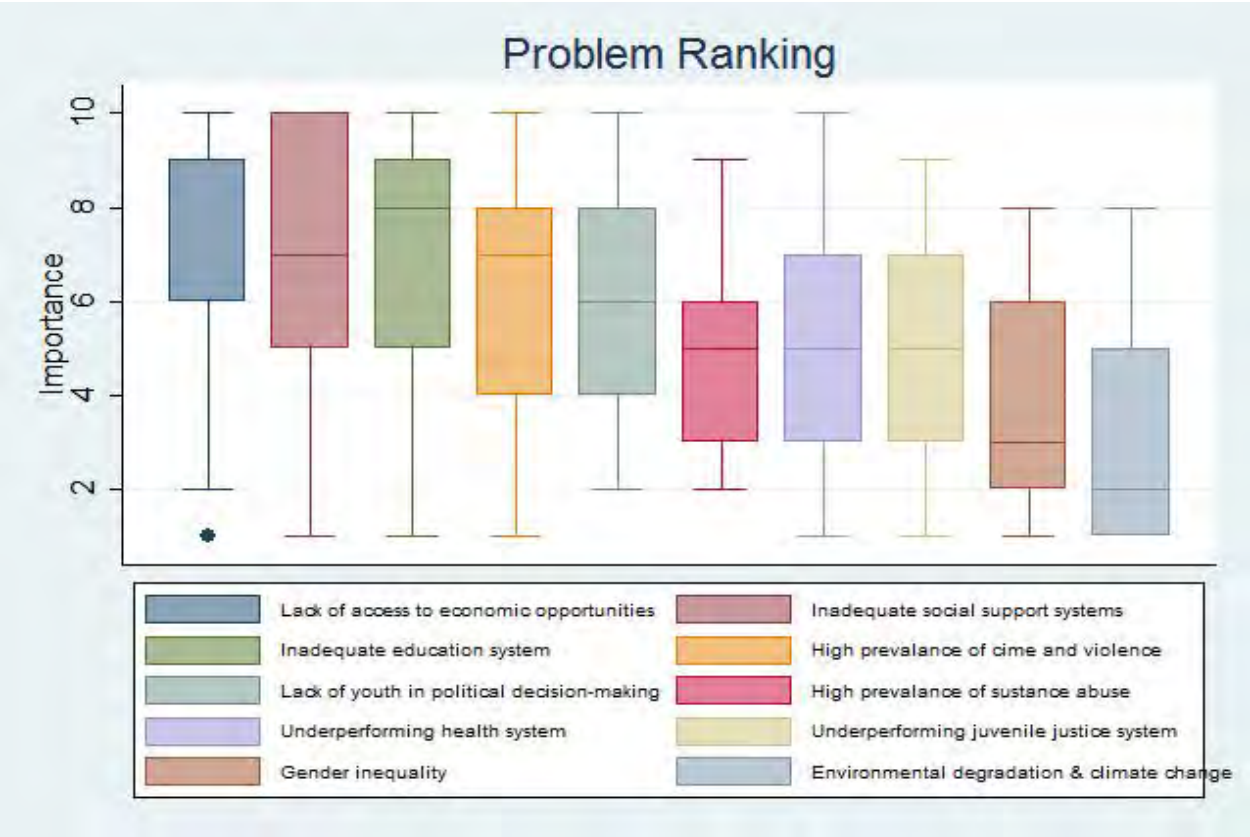

Figure 20: Problem Ranking Scores—Guyana

Guyana has a National Youth Policy from the 1990s that no longer reflects current conditions. Adults and youth both expressed significant frustration and negative impressions of the realities facing young people in Guyana, and especially pointed to the need for more national attention to the needs of youth (see Figure 20 for a ranking of sectoral problems). One informant stated that there is "no infrastructure for youth. There are entitlements for citizens but not [specifically for] youth." Recognizing the urgency for better support of the youth population, the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports has partnered with the Commonwealth Youth Program (CYP) and UNICEF to begin drafting a new policy by September 2013.

Another potential resource for youth development in the country is domestic and foreign NGOs and inter-governmental agencies that are attempting to address youth needs. However, many are driven by external funding or stakeholder incentives, do not have consistent plans, and have sustainability challenges. In addition, most of these resources can be found only in urban areas. There may be a great opportunity for partnership among these private organizations and the youth-centered training programs that exist under a number of the Ministries.

Thematic Assessment Areas

Findings were gathered from approximately 36 key informants and 54 focus group participants. As with the other countries assessed, economic opportunities and education were ranked as the top two problem areas. Where Guyanese youth differ from the regional counterparts was in the explicit connection to geography as a factor inhibiting youth in rural and "interior" regions from seeking and securing quality employment or education. This result is consistent with the findings of the *2012 Caribbean Human Development Report*, which ranked the top three youth problems as unemployment, cost of living, and poverty.[47] In contrast to the regional picture, health and well-being in Guyana was viewed as the sixth of seven areas.

Economic opportunities

Among youth focus group participants, a prominent feature used to describe a successful Guyanese adult included "securing a good-paying job." Participants (56 percent) distinguished between available opportunities and employment prospects, connecting the latter to the education system. Although respondents pointed to ambitious aspirations and the rising number of university graduates with advanced degrees, there remain significant challenges in the form of the limited number of formal positions and access to start-up capital for entrepreneurial ventures. Emigration rates are high and are most often influenced by economic factors, as evidenced by the approximately 40 percent of informants who indicated a plan to migrate to other countries in the region or to North America in order to secure jobs. This was highlighted especially among college graduates and young professionals.

Respondents also readily connected the economic challenges for youth and their families to ongoing (and potentially increasing) incidences of child labor and trafficking in persons. Youth are often lured by peers or adult recruiters into working at a very young age, which contributes to the high number of "at-risk" youth. In some cases, youth are lured into prostitution and drug rings with the promise of "fast cash." The team found that it is not uncommon for caretakers themselves to push their children into working in these informal (and illegal) outlets. It was noted on several occasions that the mining regions continue to be prime locations for child labor and TIP.

Education and training

The second-ranked problem identified by respondents was the inadequate education and training systems and programs currently available, with 67 percent of interviewed informants

[47] United Nations Development Programme. (2012). *Caribbean Human Development Report*. http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hdr/caribbean-human-development-report-2012-l.html

frequently declaring that the Guyanese "education system has failed the youth." Statements illustrating a stark gap between the education system and the ability to secure employment because of poor academic qualifications or lack of applicable experience is supported by decreasing literacy rates, decreasing achievement among young men and women in math and science, and increasing dropout rates (especially among males).

Many youth felt marginalized in school, especially because of a curriculum heavily skewed toward an academic track that is misaligned with current global economic trends and practical interests. Adult informants also described marginalization as inclusive of infrastructural and organizational disparities, including poor facilities (i.e., old school structures, shared classrooms, and large classroom sizes), high teacher absenteeism, and poorly trained teachers. As reported by more than half of the respondents interviewed, these challenges are instigated by ongoing issues of access to schools and training programs. Access is inhibited by the high cost of attending school because of fees, food, and travel/transportation.

The Ministry of Education in Guyana has recognized the nuanced challenges facing academic and training opportunities extant in the youth development landscape. Through the 2008–2013 Strategic Plan, the Ministry has listed an approach to improving the system through strengthened monitoring and evaluation, improved management capacities, and effective training of teachers, among other measures. As the strategic plan is developed for the next five years and stronger partnerships with other relevant Ministry offices are formed, there will be great opportunity to continue improving the education system for youth.

Social support systems

Social support systems, like the economy, are weakened by the high levels of emigration of caretakers leaving Guyana for economic opportunities elsewhere. Single-caretaker/parent households have become normalized, including households led by an older sibling due to both parents emigrating; respondents generally pointed to the lack of parenting skills among caretakers. As household or familial ties fail, many youth build relationships through other, often "risky," means, including through gangs and promiscuous behaviors. The "Drop-In Centre," under the Ministry of Human Services, is available for youth in need of shelter or care and protection, though it was widely acknowledged among informants that peer-to-peer abuse still occurred within the facility.

One "bright spot" frequently pointed out by adult informants was that religious-based institutions have been successful in engaging "at-risk" youth, especially boys. Youth respondents noted that many youth have formed clubs and youth councils that range in influence and organizational development.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth also face additional layers of discrimination and stigma because of their sexual orientation. According to an organization working with LGBT youth and similar associations, LGBT youth especially have weak social support from family and community members. Resources available to offer basic needs (including shelter and work) are limited for LGBT youth and non-existent in more rural areas.

Crime and violence

Crime and violence was ranked fourth among respondents on the problem-ranking exercise and characterized by 44 percent of informants as incidents related to getting "fast cash" to fulfill basic needs. For instance, transactional sex was indicated as a primary draw especially among young women. Regarding organized crime that involved primarily young people, 33 percent of respondents reported that youth are often used by adult perpetrators as front-line workers, especially in drug trafficking and prostitution rings.

Emerging issues were TIP and physical abuse at the household level. This is most prevalent in the mining regions of the hinterlands, with Amerindian communities especially exploited. One organization dedicated to exposing TIP activities in mining areas said their records show involvement of young boys as young as 8 and 9 and young girls 11 and 12 years of age in the sex trade and as child laborers—one informant indicated that trafficking of children and youth for labor and sex has become "so common it is unnoticed."

Juvenile justice

The justice system in Guyana can be described as a "hybrid" or mix of former Dutch and English legal structures, and certain rights and processes are different for those prosecuted here compared to those in other CARICOM member states. For example, Guyana limits legal aid to capital murder cases, whereas Barbados offers it to all minors.[48] Interviews with informants showed that the majority of youth have identified challenges in the juvenile justice system intended to defend and protect their rights. Nearly all informants described the juvenile justice system in Guyana as "poor" and "inadequate" in addressing the needs of youth. In addition to the lack of government support in providing aid to help youth and families navigate the system, there is little provision of rehabilitation. According to one informant, "payoffs" between defenders and prosecutors are still widely (though informally) accepted, thereby disabling the system in providing adequate protection for children and youth, especially against perpetrators of sexual abuse. Young people can also find themselves entangled in the system for minor offenses and grouped with perpetrators of more serious crimes; a 2010 register of the population in one youth facility recorded 57 percent of the population committed to the facility for the offense of "wandering."[49] There is a single women's prison where girls under the age of 16 are separated from the general population and after 16 accommodated in adult facilities.[50] For LGBT youth, the justice system's penal code still includes laws against expression of sexuality and therefore is seen as an obstacle rather than a resource for their needs.

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[48] *Ibid*.

[49] USAID and EQUIP3. (November 2011). *Skills and Knowledge or Youth Employment (SKYE) in Guyana: Assessment Report and Program Design.*

[50] *Ibid*.

Health and well-being

Though health and well-being ranked sixth among the seven issues, it was frequently explained that resources and facilities are limited or completely lacking, though the demand for these is quite high. Challenges to the health and well-being of Guyanese youth include both physical and mental needs often brought on by high incidence of "risky" sexual behaviors, psychological scarring due to abuse, substance abuse, and other medical needs brought on by poverty.

In addition to the lack of support for victims of sexual abuse through the justice system, respondents also perceived a severe lack of facilities available for youth in need of physical and mental care. Stigmatization of young people who have experienced sexual abuse also poses a hurdle in addressing the needs of victims, especially in terms of access to resources and services.

The gender dynamic around young girls and men also highlights a need for more health education regarding both mental and physical health. The suicide rate among young women is higher than among young men, and highest among East Indians compared to other ethnic groups. Among boys, alcohol and drugs are abused at a higher rate than among young women.

Environment and climate change

In Guyana, the issue of environment and climate change was ranked as the least important for youth. Indeed, most informants did not volunteer perspectives about the issue unless directly asked, whereas nearly all other thematic areas were presented organically in interviews and focus groups.

4F. SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

Country Overview

With around 51,000 residents on two islands, the Federation of Saint Christopher (Saint Kitts) and Nevis (SKN) is in many ways defined by its scale. A national initiative such as the People's Employment Program (PEP, described below) can have an immediate and dramatic effect on the lives of the approximately 8,000 youth between the ages of 15 and 24, representing approximately 15 percent of the population (see Figure 21). At the same time, the reality that "everyone knows everyone else" can also cause youth and their family members to avoid seeking the help they need, for example, for mental health issues, out of fear that someone will recognize them walking in or out of the clinic. Similarly, youth who are touched by the juvenile justice system, even if only by an investigation, which is then reported in the local newspapers, can find themselves stigmatized and informally barred from opportunities such as job offers in the future.

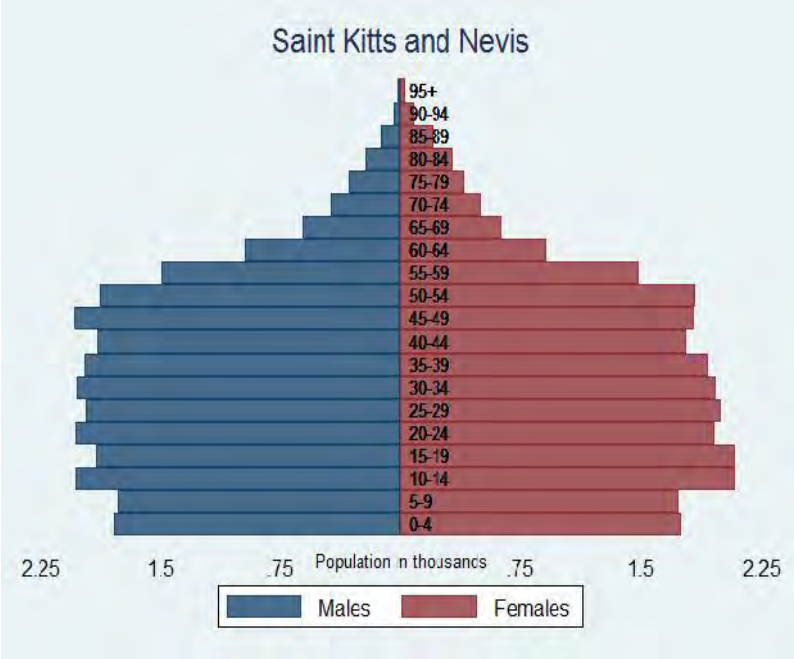

Figure 21: Population of Saint Kitts and Nevis

Despite its smaller scale, SKN shares many of the challenges facing its larger neighbors. Informants frequently identified lack of economic opportunities as one of the greatest challenge facing youth, second to only crime and violence, and were quick to draw connections between economic difficulties and weaknesses in the public education system. There are several organizations and programs seeking to provide support to young people, especially those who have left the formal education track and who are currently looking for employment, but their effectiveness, especially as a long-term solution, is unclear. SKN is not immune to the growing prevalence of violent crime in the region and, as in other countries, these incidents are often associated with trafficking in illicit drugs. The SKN government has taken several recent steps to reform the juvenile justice system in order to better meet the needs of youth involved in it. They have also been working to combat drug abuse, unplanned pregnancy, STIs, and domestic and sexual violence, including incest. Government initiatives related to youth are led by a Department of Youth Empowerment. There currently is no national youth policy, as the draft version is currently still awaiting signature by the parliament, and there is also currently no

central repository for data related to youth, making the planning and evaluation of these types of programs difficult.

The following section presents findings across the seven thematic assessment areas, as well as synthesized conclusions (see Figure 22). Subsequent sections below take into account the average ranking of problem areas and ratings of issues as presented in the two graphs above. The SI team interviewed 58 people in Saint Kitts and Nevis, including 44 key informants and 14 focus group participants.

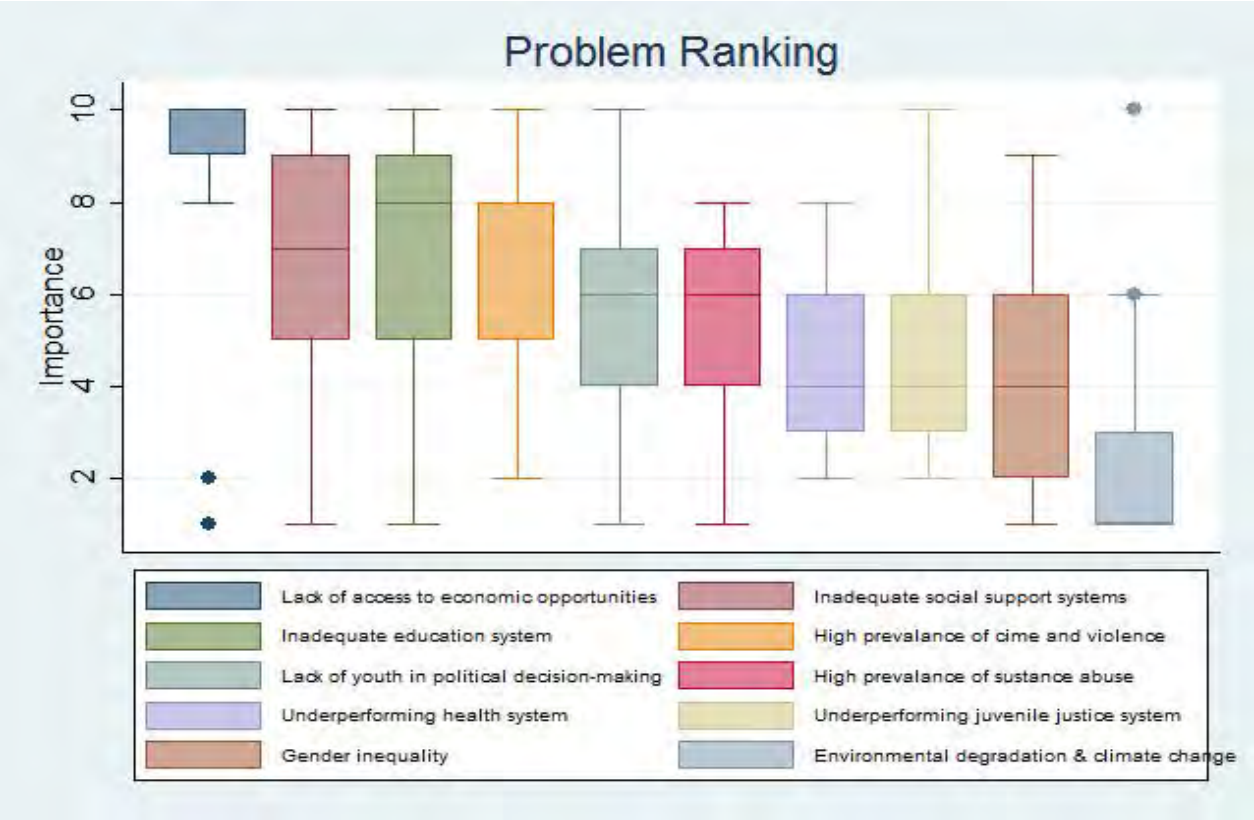

Figure 22: Problem Ranking Scores—Saint Kitts and Nevis

Thematic Assessment Areas

Economic opportunities

Young people in SKN consistently identified securing a source of income as the highest priority among their reported goals, and 40 percent of respondents related this to a lack of economic opportunities. Many key informants felt there was a societal bias in favor of white-collar jobs, such that parents and teachers would encourage children to look forward to jobs as doctors, lawyers, and bankers, with the implied message that other types of careers were less respectable and less desirable. Also during these discussions, an emphasis within the public school system on strictly academic skills, to the neglect of more practical or technical skills, also contributed to a situation in which many youth are ill prepared, in terms of expectations, skills, or both, for the

types of jobs they are likely to find. As discussed in the regional section, underemployment and the desire to "get rich quick" can easily push young people into illegal and risky forms of making money.

There are opportunities for training and support leading to employment on SKN, as discussed in the following section. There are also some credit unions and government programs designed to help entrepreneurs foster their business ideas, though none of these included in the assessment specifically targets youth; in general, informants reported that it was difficult for young people to secure loans for start-up capital.

Education and training

As mentioned above and echoed in other country summaries, many stakeholders felt the education system was not fully meeting the needs of all of the students in SKN. Informants expressed this opinion in 50 percent of the FGs and KIIs on SKN. In particular, opportunities for students with special needs, both physical and cognitive, are very limited. Special Education Units do exist, but current capacities pose a challenge in serving students with an extremely wide range of needs simultaneously and in the same spaces. No technical or vocational programs on the islands cater specifically to young people with disabilities.

For those who have left the formal public education system, there are opportunities for vocational training and support finding jobs on SKN. The National Skills Training Program (NSTP) is funded by the Government and provides short-term technical training targeted to meet the needs of specific employers, along with basic employability skills. They accept most if not all first-time applicants and, before the launch of PEP, provided a modest weekly stipend (less than EC $100) to participants. After the training, the program links trainees with employers for a month-long job attachment. The Advanced Vocational Educational Center (AVEC) provides structured classes following the normal school year and caters to those students who have left the public school system without attaining the final certifications. They require students to pay a relatively small fee, about EC $250 a year, and have strict requirements for attendance and conduct while there. Most of the funding for its operating costs comes from the Government. Its primary goal is to help students secure a job upon graduation, though some students also pursue higher education in the form of a university degree.

PEP is by far the most high-profile government initiative currently in place in SKN. It offers a range of different services, from paid internships for recent high school and college graduates to entrepreneurship training for women in agribusiness and infrastructure improvement, all with the goal of improving the job prospects for participants. PEP is undoubtedly having an impact on the youth environment and the SKN economy, if for no other reason than through the scale of the program and the weekly stipend of EC $320 it provides to every participant.

Social support systems

During more than 50 percent of the KIIs and FGs in SKN, informants expressed concern about the breakdown of the family and the resulting lack of guidance for youth. However, the strong role of the church within many communities has shown to have a significant influence in providing a social safety net for young people in SKN. Many of the NGOs engaged with youth

are based within a church, and the overlap between community leaders and church leaders is extensive.

Youth reported that the opportunity to participate in sports clubs existed in most communities, as well as dance groups and other artistic programs. Other clubs, such as the Lions Club, Rotaract, and the Saint Kitts and Nevis Youth Parliamentary Association, are also open to SKN youth. However, young informants on both Saint Kitts and Nevis reported that some youth might be less likely to participate in these organizations for fear of being stigmatized as an overachiever, or "trying to be better than other people." Operation Future, partially funded by the Canadian government and run by a dedicated Kittitian police officer in his spare time, provides an outlet for youth in the Grasslands area outside downtown Basseterre, and was well known and highly regarded by both youth and adult informants. It provides tutoring and life skills courses, as well as recreational activities, including sports and access to musical instruments and digital recording studios.

Crime and violence

Crime and violence was ranked, on average, above all other concerns by the youth and adult informants on SKN. After gaining the dubious distinction of having the highest murder rate in the region in 2009, with 27 homicides on the two small islands, the numbers have since fallen to 18 total in 2012, with informants reporting comparable numbers so far in 2013.[51] Most of these homicides are gun-related, and most involve young men as both the perpetrators and the victims. Assault, theft, and robbery are other crimes that young people reported witnessing in their communities, often also committed by their peers. These types of crimes are also linked, at least in the minds of the informants, to drug trafficking and gang activity. Gangs are present, especially in the lower-income communities of SKN, and can impact all aspects of a young person's life. One young man related an incident involving a young participant in the PEP program who was affiliated with a gang and was not able to complete his job attachment because the employer he was assigned to was located in an area controlled by a rival gang.

Juvenile justice

As in other countries in the region, there is a consensus among most stakeholders, including those within the Government, that more needs to be done to meet the needs of young people who become involved in the criminal justice system. First, there is a seemingly pervasive mistrust among the public, and especially among the youth, of the police force. On the occasions when members of the armed forces are called upon to serve in policing roles, they are viewed with even more suspicion than are the regular police, as they are perceived to have even less training in civilian law enforcement and too often abuse their power when given the opportunity.

[51] 2009 Data: UNODC, http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/homicide.html; 2012 data: http://www.thestkittsnevisobserver.com/2012/12/28/murder-rate.html.

The jail in Basseterre, SKN's primary detention facility, was built in 1840 and intended to house up to 60 people. It currently houses over 350 inmates, many of them youth. One stakeholder mentioned that the Government's probation unit is seeking to launch a diversion program called "Step Up" in September 2013 to provide alternatives to juveniles in conflict with the law. It will provide counseling to youth participants, along with training in hydroponics, videography, music, and parenting and other life skills. As part of this program, juvenile offenders will be assessed by guidance counselors, who will then work with the youth to develop a personalized treatment plan. In addition, a new facility called the New Horizon Youth Rehabilitation Center recently opened and it is anticipated that it will eventually house 20 male and 10 female juvenile offenders. Staff at this facility will focus more on rehabilitation and reintegration of young people.

Health and well-being

Health care is available to residents of SKN for free or for a relatively small fee, but, according to a representative of the Ministry of Health, many young people on SKN do not give a lot of thought to their own health. When asked, young people identified unplanned pregnancies as a serious concern, especially among young women. Similar to regional trends, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, and mental health issues were also identified as challenges facing the youth on SKN. As mentioned above, the small population also prevents some young people from seeking help for mental health issues because they are fearful that the people treating them may not keep their information confidential, or that even the act of walking into a mental health clinic would cause others in the community to speculate and stigmatize them. Finally, one-fourth of the FGs and KIIs included a discussion of how intimate-partner violence and child abuse, including sexual abuse and incest, are serious problems on SKN, to which not enough attention is currently being paid.

Environment and climate change

Both adults and young people consistently ranked the environment and climate change as the lowest priority. Youth did report receiving some messages through school and other public media related to environmental protection, and also mentioned that some youth did occasionally participate in related service projects, especially beach cleanings. However, youth participating in a focus group in Saint Kitts pointed out that although they were encouraged not to litter, garbage receptacles are extremely hard to find in public places. The Nevis Historical and Conservation Society is probably the most prominent organization working on environmental issues in SKN and provides opportunities for youth to get involved with related activities; however, their impact is primarily limited to the island of Nevis.

4G. SAINT LUCIA

Country Overview

Saint Lucia is an island state heavily dependent on the tourism industry, agricultural exports, and, to a lesser extent, light industry. Youth make up about 18.5 percent of the estimated total population of 180,900, and as such make up a significant portion of a country affected by economic fluctuations that impact their hopes and plans for healthy livelihoods (see Figure 23). Saint Lucia has been beset by several economic challenges. The nation's banana industry, which used to employ thousands[52] and had been the key contributor to development, has been greatly weakened in the wake of the 1997 World Trade Organization ruling that eliminated preferential trading access to the European Union market for former colonies in the Caribbean. In light of this phenomenon, the political and economic leadership of Saint Lucia decided to invest in tourism as an alternative. Since the beginning of the global recession in 2008, however, the numbers of tourists and accompanying economic benefits have been well below projections. These economic disruptions have led to large-scale underemployment and have called into question the economic direction of the country.

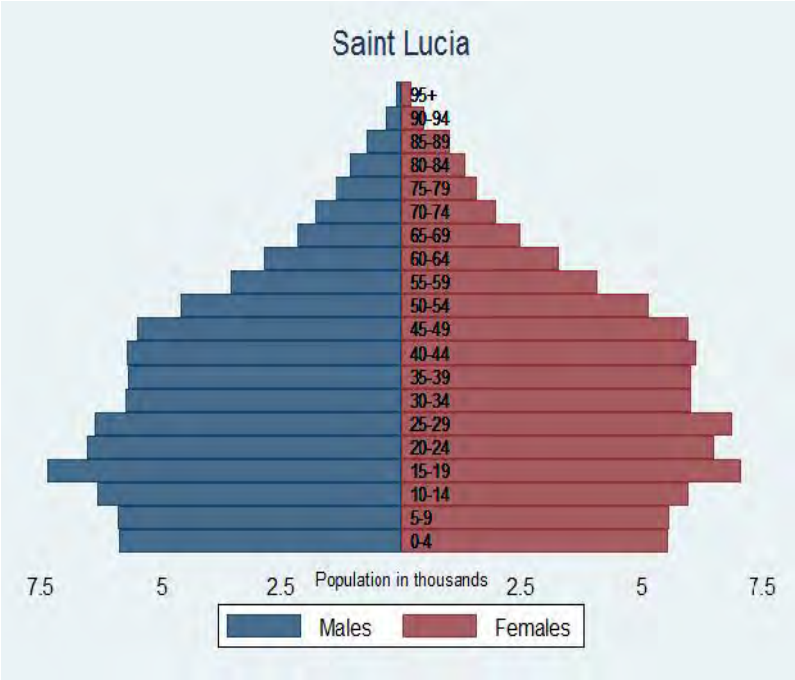

Figure 23: Population of Saint Lucia

Key informant and focus group respondents consistently expressed concern for youth development, with similar sentiments expressed across much of the ESC: breakdown of the family unit and community, an inadequate education system that does not meet the demands of today's youth, rising crime and violence, and increasing rates of substance abuse. As evidenced in the problem-ranking graph below, the persistent economic challenges were far and away the issue foremost on respondents' minds.

[52] Bananas make up 41percent of Saint Lucia's export commodities. www.cia.gov

While Saint Lucia may not have the extent of youth programming found in some of the more affluent ESC states, many government and non-government organizations working on various aspects of youth development exhibit a high degree of organization through the Saint Lucia Youth Advocacy Alliance.[53]

The following section presents findings across the seven thematic assessment areas, as well as synthesized conclusions and country-specific recommendations. The SI team met with 57 youth and adults in Saint Lucia through 29 key interviews and 28 focus group participants.

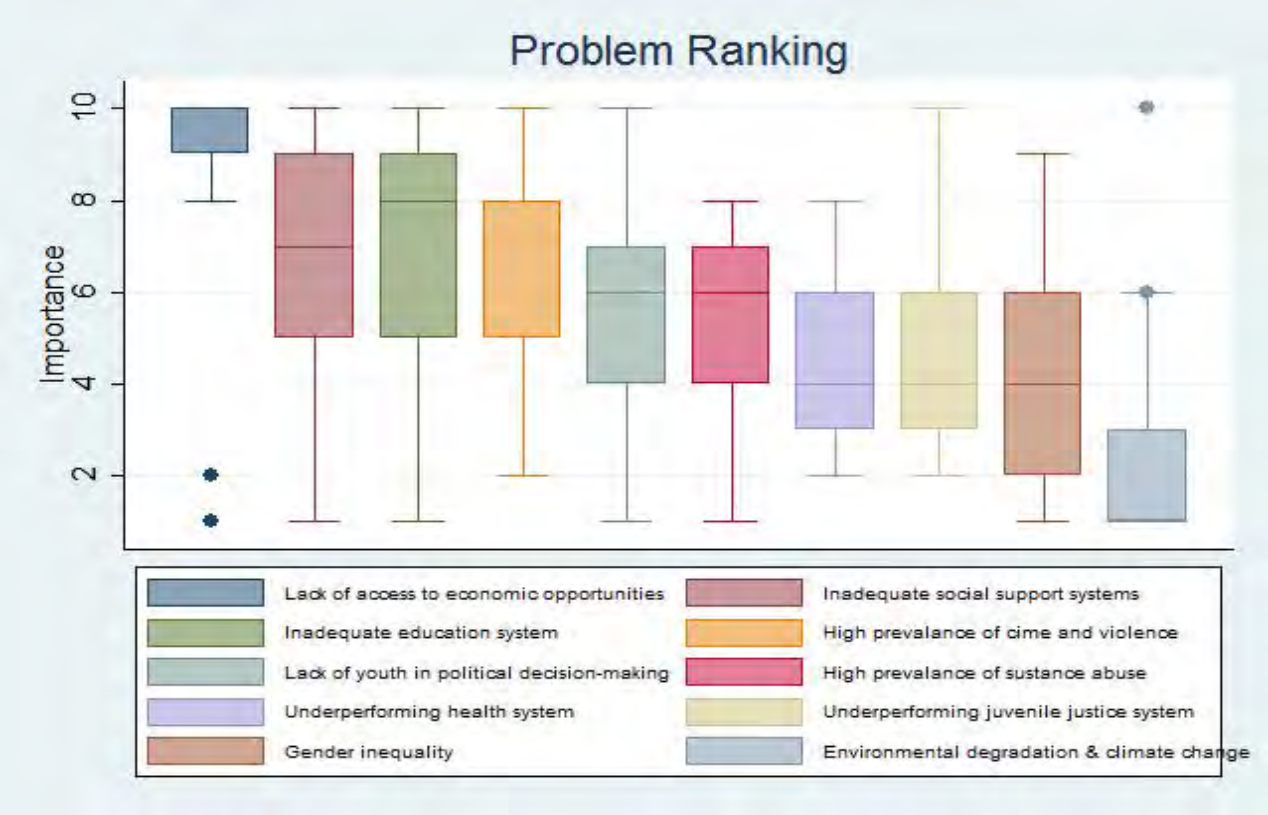

Figure 24: Problem Ranking Scores—Saint Lucia

[53] Members include the Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Transformation, National Youth Council, RISE Saint Lucia, CARE, Sacred Sports Foundation, and others.

Thematic Assessment Areas

Economic opportunities

There is an acute lack of jobs across Saint Lucia and approximately 47 percent of stakeholders interviewed reported that youth struggle to secure employment or start their own ventures due to a lack of sufficient economic opportunities. Respondents described a shrinking economy, with resorts and private businesses closing, resulting in high youth unemployment. According to youth respondents, the most desirable jobs are those affiliated with the tourism industry: hotel clerk, cruise ship employee, etc. The limited number of jobs in this field, particularly in a time of global economic downturn, results in a very competitive labor market. Employers are in a position to demand high levels of academic credentials as well as previous work experience. High demand for jobs has driven wages down, oftentimes below that of the minimum wage (of which there is observably limited enforcement). Other sectors of the economy that employ large numbers of youth are fishing, agriculture, and, to a limited extent, light industry. Saint Lucia is an entrepreneurial society, with scores of microbusinesses associated largely with agricultural and service sectors. Nevertheless, access to capital for adults and youth alike is extremely limited.

All 31 respondents who filled out the issue-rating exercise rated economic opportunities a 5 (the highest possible score). None of the other thematic areas was so consistently rated. As illustrated in Figure 24, economic opportunities were rated by a wide margin as the most important problem facing youth (60 percent of respondents ranked it as the most important, and 22 percent placed it as second). Females were significantly more likely to rank economic opportunities as the most important problem (mean for males = 8.00; mean for females = 9.06), triangulating the qualitative finding that females have a much more difficult time finding quality employment.

Education and training

The challenges reported to be facing Saint Lucia's education system are similar to those of other ESC states. The assessment team heard from 65 percent of youth and adult respondents that the formal education system "has failed youth." Although the Education Act of 1999 enacted free and compulsory education for everyone between the ages of 5 and 15, the team heard testimonials of Saint Lucians unable to pay for the suite of costs associated with education (facility fees, books, transportation, etc.). For those able to attend school, an overemphasis on academic skills paired with outdated teaching methodologies has reportedly led to disenchantment and many students falling behind as they progress from grade to grade. Realizing that they will not be able to pass their Caribbean Examination Council exams (CXCs) and confronted with a host of push (household poverty, school violence, etc.) and pull factors (fast cash in the informal economy, peer pressure, etc.), many youth drop out of school.

Even those students who succeed in school struggle to find work and engage productively with society. Though statistics show that literacy rates for youth 15 and over is 90.1 percent,[54] informants reported that youth finish secondary school without the skills and knowledge needed for the workforce. These skills include basic literacy and numeracy, life skills (such as communication and conflict resolution), and critical thinking. According to youth workers, while females are more successful in school than males, they have lower wages and employment rates.

Education and training was ranked by respondents as the second most important problem area. This prioritization supports the finding that, while availability of jobs is constrained, youth do not have the skills necessary to take advantage of the jobs that exist. There are several training opportunities available to young people, most notably through the National Skills Development Center (NSDC),[55] though they are highly concentrated in the capital city of Castries. As with the other ESC countries, technical/vocational training is seen by society as inferior to traditional education.

Social support systems

Sentiments around the breakdown of the family and community support systems were very similar to that of other ESC countries. The themes of the "broken family" and a decreasing sense of community, with the same set of causes and adverse effects on the lives of youth, were often repeated.

Crime and violence

Crime and violence was reported to be a large and growing concern. Organized criminal activity has been rising, as evidenced by a series of failed high-profile "peace treaties" that the national government attempted to broker between warring gangs. Though it is not possible to measure definitively, informants spoke of an influx of drugs and weapons as driving factors. The economic downturn and corresponding unemployment rates have certainly contributed to both petty theft as well as violent crime. World Bank statistics (2004 estimates) show that of the entire Saint Lucian population of youth between 15 and 24, 40.8 percent are unemployed. As with the other ESC countries, the allure of fast cash and the status that criminal activity offers are powerful pull factors for youth detached from the formal instructions of the state.

Juvenile justice

Juvenile justice was described by advocates working in the field as a "penal system" that offers little to no alternative sentencing for youth.[56] Courts have two basic options for juveniles: either they are imprisoned or they are given "alternative sentencing" in the form of probation or

[54] www.cia.gov

[55] Other training resources include Belfund, National Initiative to Create Employment (NICE), and Saint Lucia Social Development Fund.

[56] Current options include Boys Training Center, Upton Girls Home, Court Diversion Program (which will be closing this year), Second Step Program, and Second Chance Program (through CARE).

lashings. The lack of alternative sentencing options is a leading factor explaining the high rates of juvenile incarceration. Furthermore, with so many youth in the system, the legal infrastructure is overwhelmed. In speaking with the nine youngest inmates of the Bordelais Correctional Facility, eight were on remand (awaiting trial). Of these, two had been waiting for more than two years. According to a high-level government official, "having remanded detainees for five years is not unusual."

Saint Lucia has one juvenile detention facility for boys ("The Center") and one for girls. As in many of the ESC countries, the commingling of violent offenders with youth locked up for minor transgressions creates a criminalization of the population. The center offers various types of training activities, though they do have formal rehabilitation or reentry programming. As in other ESC countries, recidivism is a large problem in Saint Lucia; according to the same official, 70 to 80 percent of the inmates in maximum security have spent time in the Boys Training Center.

As reported by multiple informants, there is a large difference in the way the juvenile justice system treats male and females. The legal system imparts magistrates with a high degree of autonomy. As perceived by respondents, these magistrates are much less likely to sentence women, particularly those who have children, to prison or even to juvenile detention centers. Criminal organizations have taken notice of this gap in the legal system and have begun using women in drug trafficking and other crimes.

Health and well-being

The health challenges faced by Saint Lucian youth are similar to those in other ESC countries. These include early sexual initiation and the corresponding problems of sexually transmitted infections, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, diabetes, obesity, and undiagnosed and untreated mental illnesses. Of these issues the two most prevalent reported by key informants and focus group respondents were drug and alcohol abuse (41 percent of respondents) and teenage pregnancy (24 percent of respondents). Regarding access to and adequacy of mental health care, 35 percent of these respondents reported that there is a lack of facilities and resources available for youth. Also related to psychological well-being, the same percentage of respondents claimed that there are no adequate services to provide care and protection for youth attempting to escape abusive or unsafe homes.

Environment and climate change

Environmental issues were not a high priority for respondents. While some noted that the tourism industry and environmental health are interlinked, the issue was consistently scored as the least important in the rating/ranking exercise.

4H. SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Country Overview

The multi-island state of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), situated in the southern Windward Islands, has an estimated population of 109,400, with youth between the ages of 14 and 24 accounting for 18.7 percent (see Figure 25). Young people in SVG contribute immensely to social, economic, cultural and political development of their country and have also excelled in sports, the arts, and culture. However, as in other ESC countries, there are many challenges that impact young people. In some instances, these challenges stymie their quest for self-actualization; in other instances, they contribute to antisocial and risky behaviors among significant numbers of youth. The latter has necessitated the emergence of Police Youth Clubs across the country and projects such as the Marion House. In an effort to address the former concern, the Government has committed to providing substantial support for tertiary education and is considering the establishment of a land bank to assist young farmers in earning a decent living.

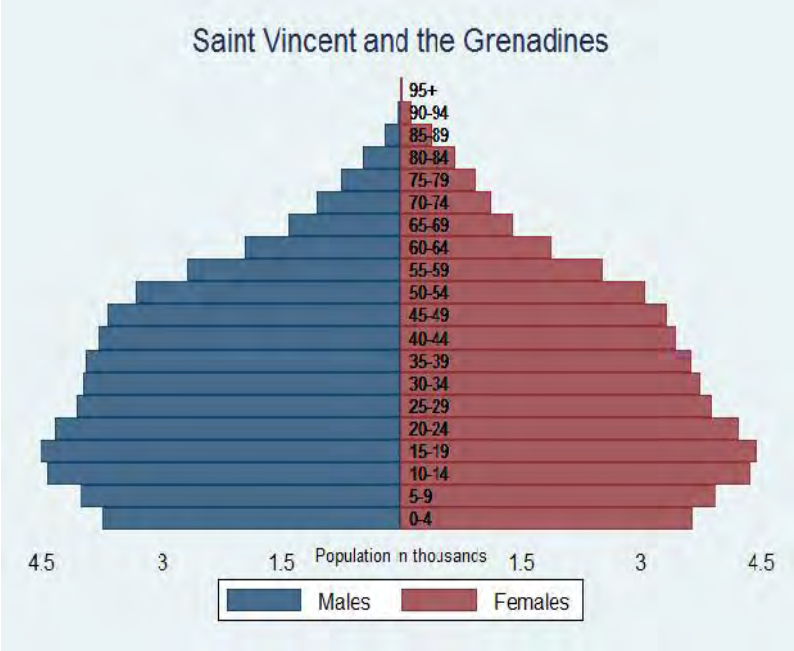

Figure 25: Population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Saint Vincent has a rich history of youth participation at the community and national levels, even though according to key stakeholders there has been a visible decline in the viability of major youth organizations. A veteran youth development worker also confirmed this. Nonetheless, all is not lost, as a new generation of youth leaders is anxiously seeking technical and resource support to revitalize community clubs and the comatose SVG National Youth Council.

Both the youth and adults interviewed in SVG expressed concern for the social and economic development of the country. As evidenced by the problem-ranking exercise below, key informants felt that the lack of access to economic opportunities and inadequate social support systems were the most pressing challenges. These problems should not be viewed in isolation, since deficits in one area can have significant negative impacts on another.

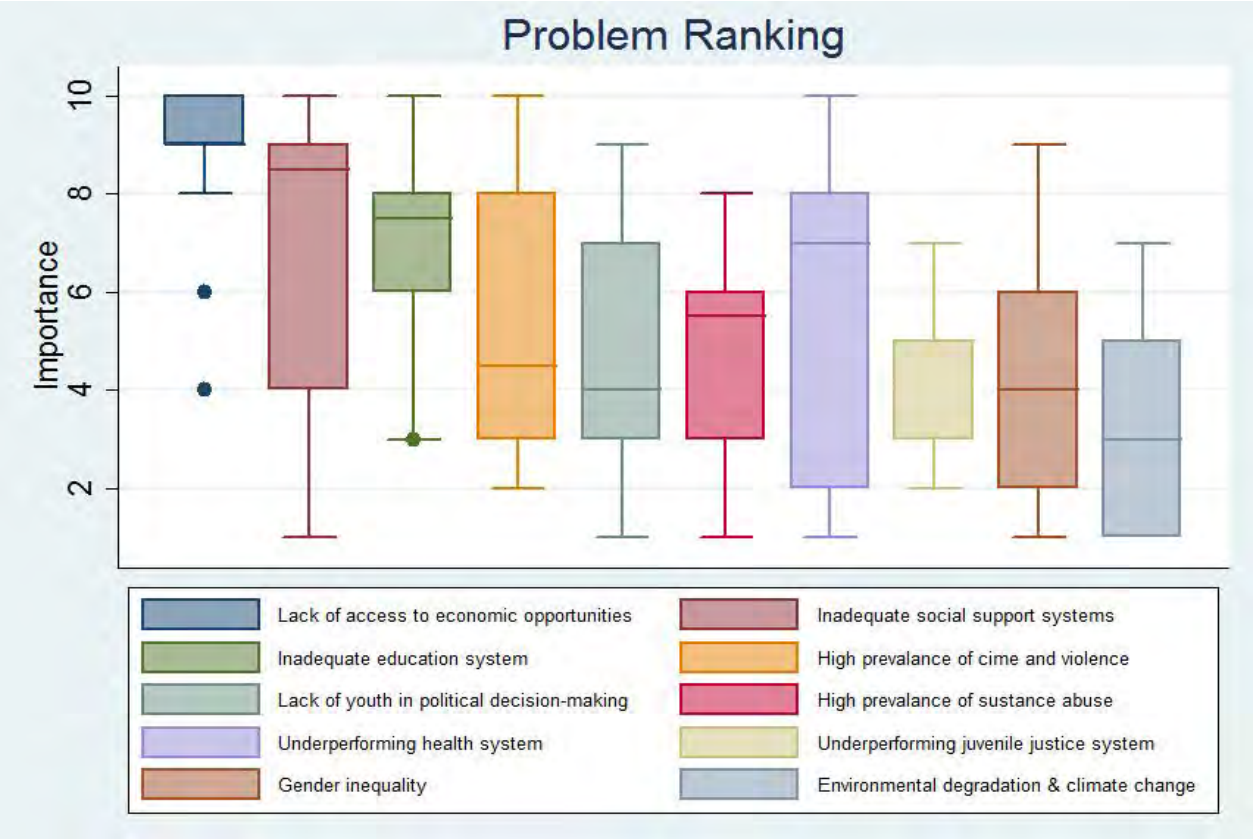

Figure 26: Problem Ranking Scores—Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Several respondents noted that owing to limited economic opportunities, there has been an increase in migration, which has also given rise to a phenomenon termed "barrel children," a generation of young people without the requisite family and community support.

The perception is that this lack of effective familial and community social support systems is one of the contributing factors to the reported decline in the ability of many young people to cope with the psychosocial challenges of growing up. The consequences are varied and pervasive, including poor school attendance and performance, involvement in harmful practices such as substance abuse, and increasing criminogenic behavior.

The assessment team conducted key informant interviews and focus groups with 51 stakeholders in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The following section of the report provides the findings from these data collection sessions and as related to the ranking of problems shown in Figure 26 above.

Thematic Assessment Areas

Economic opportunities

Bananas and other agricultural products remain the staple of this lower/middle-income country's economy. Although tourism and other services have been growing moderately in recent years,[57] the country's economy has been negatively impacted by liberalized trading arrangements for bananas in the European market and, more recently, the 2008 global economic and financial crisis. Unfortunately, published vital statistics including recent GDP and unemployment rates were not readily available.

As in many other countries in the region, both the public and private sectors do not have the capacity to provide decent work for all. This places a serious burden on policymakers to address increasing unemployment among an increasingly impatient youth cohort. Some key informants noted that with fertile soil and high levels of rainfall, the potential contribution of agriculture to economic development has not been fully explored. Other stakeholders lamented the fickle nature of the tourism industry and have suggested the need for a strategic repositioning of the economic strategy, including the exploration of new economic frontiers. One key informant opined, "Essentially, we are at a crossroads; we cannot just mark time."

In order to stimulate the economy and to create opportunities for citizens, there has been a plethora of programs in recent years including the UNDP-funded training in business development for agriculture-oriented businesses. Other initiatives include the Youth Americas Business Trust; support from the European Union for private-sector development, including youth businesses; the National Development Foundation; and the Youth Empowerment through Skills (YES) program.

Education and training

The Prime Minister revealed that he wanted his legacy to be "The Education Prime Minister" as a salute to his Government's efforts to transform SVG into a highly educated labor force. Despite his efforts, nearly 60 percent of respondents indicated a key failure of the education system is that it does not equip participants with the requisite skills and competencies to match labor market requirements nor provide sufficient business or entrepreneurial acumen. Some key informants also expressed concern that the education system did not provide youth with the critical thinking skills and historical perspective necessary to forge a better understanding of self, country, and civic responsibility.

The majority of respondents interviewed are of the view that the current education system does not adequately prepare citizens for the world of work and needs to be thoroughly reviewed and repositioned to prepare students for the challenges and the opportunities of the 21st century and to accentuate their role as active citizens.

[57] *Ibid*.

Social support systems

Most of those interviewed (47 percent of respondents) stated that traditional family structures are transitional and in some instances dysfunctional, leading to a lack of guidance, support, and positive role models for youth. Many respondents expressed grave concern with the trend of young girls becoming mothers before maturation/adulthood. This phenomenon reflects socioeconomic and psychosocial challenges. The Ministry of Social Services provides some assistance, but the educational system, social stigma, and financial consequences on these young mothers are harsh, and even more so on their children.

The Government has also supported various national initiatives related to youth development including Men as Partners, Peer Counselling, Liberty Lodge Boys Training Facility, and the Guadeloupe Home for Girls. Other forms of social support in SVG include after-school programs (mainly for school-age children in select communities) and the Children Against Poverty Programme for children from disadvantaged households. Non-governmental organizations are actively involved in the implementation of programs with groups such as the Garifuna, Caribs, and the Rastafarian community. Other notable initiatives include the "Break the Silence" campaign in partnership with UNICEF, which encourages young people to expose sexual abuses.

Crime and violence

Crime and violence remains an issue of growing concern; almost 60 percent of respondents perceive incidents involving youth to be on the rise. Most of the criminal activity is related to the illegal drug trade and the theft of electronic and luxury items, reportedly to supply a cross-border trade in stolen goods. Most violent crime is attributed to disputes related to the marijuana trade.

Juvenile justice

In the area of juvenile justice, key informants noted that reform of the sector is ongoing, and legislation has been drafted and ratified by Parliament. These include the Child Care Adoption Act of 2010 and the Status of Children Act of 2011. Other relevant pieces of legislation awaiting enactments are the Juvenile Justice Act and the Domestic Violence Act.

Key informants characterized the relationship between youth and the police as one that has improved over time, but there is still mistrust because of allegations of police brutality and poor professional conduct. It was reported that Rastafarians are usually profiled by the police.

Environment and climate change

Though the importance of environment and climate change issues ranked fairly low compared to the other thematic issue areas, youth do participate in activities that disprove indifference. Groups such as the Inivershall Rastafarian Movement, Inc. encourage young people to focus on environment and promote environmental stewardship through participation in International Coastal Cleanup Day and by continuing environmental cleanup activities.

4I. SURINAME

Country Overview

Lying on the northeast coast of South America with Guyana to the west, French Guiana to the east, and Brazil to the south, Suriname is one of the smallest countries on the continent. It has an estimated population of 534,500, of which youth between the ages of 14 and 24 make up approximately 20 percent (see Figure 27). Suriname's 2004 census reports that 70 percent of the population resides in urban areas, such as Paramaribo, the capital city.

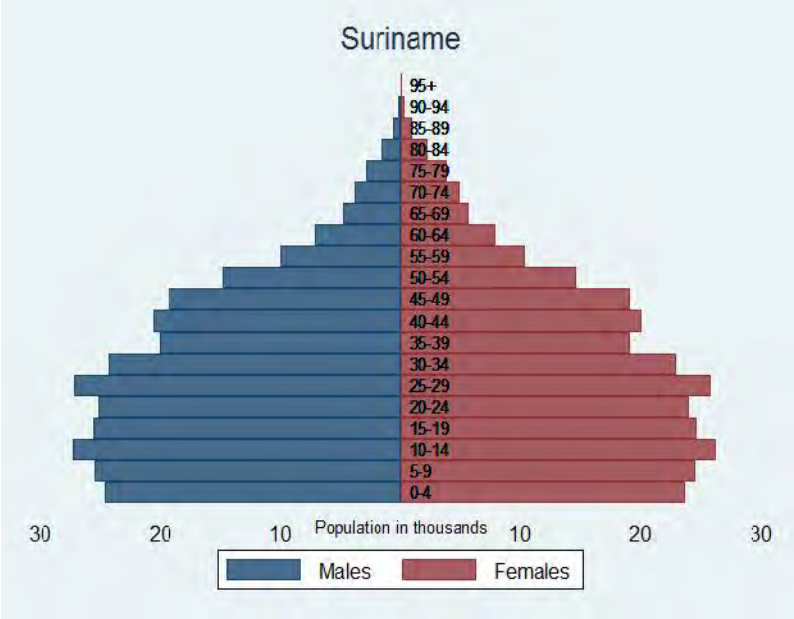

Figure 27: Population of Suriname

Unlike other ESC countries included in this assessment, Suriname is a former Dutch colony with brief periods of British and U.S. administration. Suriname became independent in 1975 and a member of CARICOM in 1995. The country is a constitutional parliamentary republic with independent executive, legislative, and judicial branches, and in which the head of state and head of government are both vested in the president. Suriname's ethnolinguistic diversity differs from that of other CARICOM countries in terms of the sheer number of groups and the lack of a majority group. This lack of an ethnic majority enables consociationalism, a power-sharing system where each of the political groups or parties is too small to hold a majority position. Suriname's modern political stability is often attributed to the fact that its political roots are in consociational democracy.

According to the World Bank's Interim Strategy Note for Suriname for FY 2013–2014, "Suriname is an upper-middle-income country with relatively strong economic performance compared with regional peers. Supported by prudent fiscal and monetary policies over the past decade, Suriname has experienced sustained economic growth, averaging 4.1 percent since 2006. Mining is the largest explored sector, with alumina, gold, and oil representing more than 90 percent of total exports and 30 percent of GDP. At 18.5 percent of GDP in 2010, the country's total public-debt-to-GDP ratio is the lowest in the Caribbean. The outlook for Suriname is favorable, with economic growth projected at 4.5 to 7 percent per annum over the medium term."

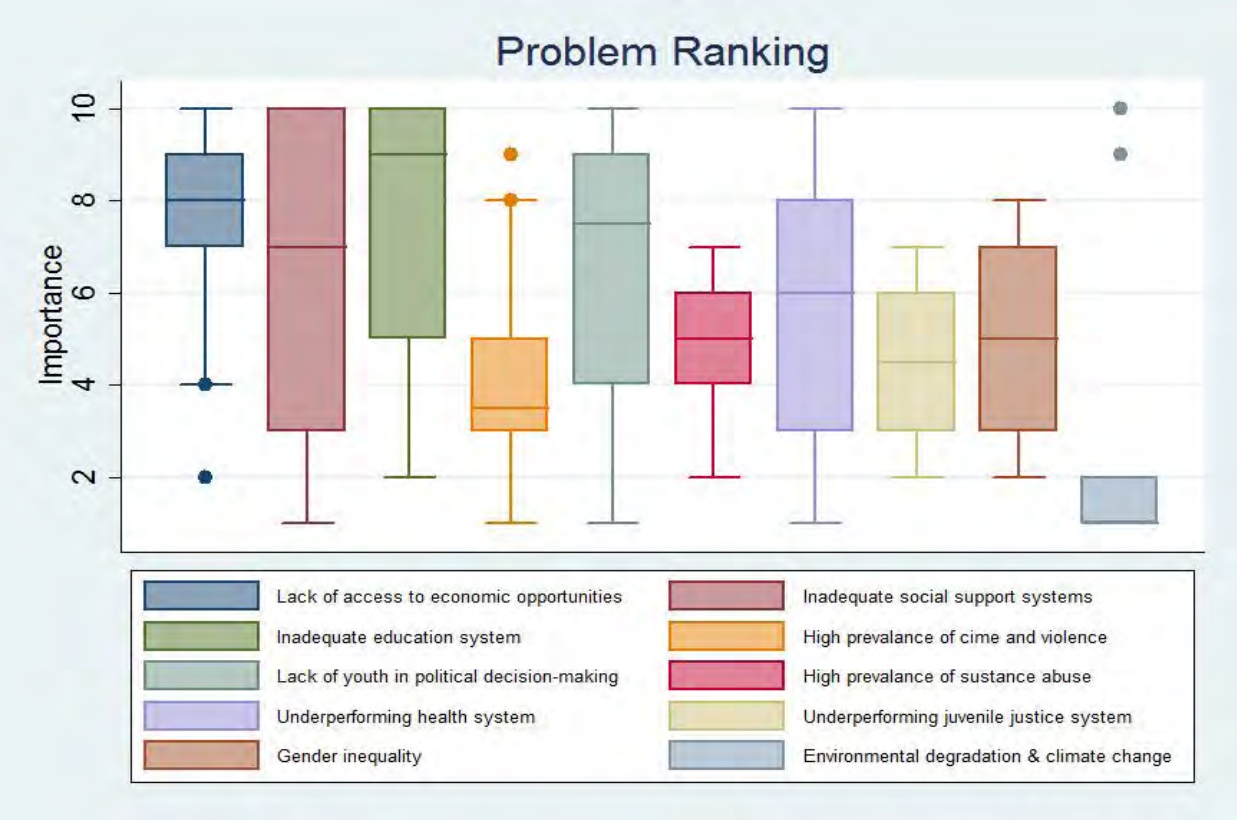

Figure 28: Problem Ranking Scores—Suriname

In addition to organized youth groups that exist within temples, churches, and so on, and focus on sports and cultural life, Suriname's formal structures and traditions of youth governance grew out of the country's support for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Suriname ratified the convention in 1993, and launched several efforts to implement and facilitate youth participation in governance, including the creation of a National Youth Institute (NYI) in 1998. At the NYI youth congress the following year, a National Youth Council was created to advise the Government on child-related issues; the Council became the Youth Parliament in 2004 and has four cycles of elections. Suriname also has two UN Millennium Development Goal Ambassadors and two CARICOM Youth Ambassadors. Both sets of ambassadors are nominated by the Government of Suriname's Cabinet.

The following section of the report outlines the findings by thematic area based on reports from 47 total informants in Suriname and elaborates on the ranking of problem shown in Figure 28.

Thematic Assessment Areas

Economic opportunities

The largest number of respondents put education and economic opportunities in first place, as they are perceived to have a causal relationship to each other. According to interviews and focus groups, more than 40 percent of respondents relate their economic challenges to a lack of sufficient job opportunities and the same percentage of those respondents perceive the current education system, including training/vocational programs, as misaligned with economic trends and demands.

Most of the school dropouts are male, and graduating secondary school classes are reported to be over 70 percent female. However, as noted in a 2011 World Bank Enterprise Survey, this gender disparity in Surinamese education is not yet reflected in the business world. The survey reported a small difference in the percentage of firms owned or managed by women in Suriname as compared to the rest of the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region, and an even smaller difference in the percentage of full-time female workers, but half the regional percentage of firms is owned by females.

Education and Training

The World Bank's Enterprise Survey for Suriname reports that the problem identified by the largest number of small and medium-size enterprises as their main obstacle is the country's "inadequately educated workforce." This is supported by the link between economic opportunities and education that was consistently established in the key informant interviews conducted by the team. Suriname's education system features national examinations that serve to eliminate students as they move up a ladder and does not prepare students for the increasingly competitive requirements of the work force. Furthermore, Suriname's linguistic isolation makes it difficult for students to enroll in regional educational institutions. The limitations of the education system and the unpreparedness of Suriname's youth for the workplace are two sides of the same coin in Suriname. Unsurprisingly, the overwhelming majority of Suriname youth rated education and training as very important.

Some gender issues are also apparent. According to a high-ranking official directly involved in the Presidential Task Force on Youth, government statistics reported in *Demografische Data Suriname 2010 en 2011*, Ministere Van Dinnen Landse Zaken, Central Bureau Voor Burgerzaken (CBB), which was shown to the ESCYA interviewers, indicate that most school dropouts are male, and graduating secondary school classes in some schools are reported to be over 70 percent female. The same official also pointed out that one of the key issues that drives a sizeable portion of the female school dropout rates is teen pregnancy, which is prevalent in communities where women traditionally marry at an early age.

Health and well-being

As seen throughout the assessment countries, data on health and well-being are collected, but the main challenges relate to the analysis, presentation, dissemination, and use of the data. Suriname implemented in July 2013 a health insurance program that enrolls every child up to age 16, which is expected to facilitate improved tracking of data on vaccinations, school enrollment, social factors, child growth indices, and so on.

Sixty-nine percent of the Surinamese respondents consider health and well-being to be the issue of primary significance to youth. Team interviews and discussions with youth and youth development workers indicate a wide appreciation that health and counseling services for youth, including adolescent-friendly services related to sexual and reproductive health, are in short supply and badly needed; this echoed past Youth Parliament policy statements. There is a shortage of adequate alternative care and counseling services for abused children. Respondents rated this area third overall.

Boys and girls engage in dangerous work and risky activities—for example, mining and prostitution in the gold industry. Depression is common due in varying degrees to the level of domestic violence, the stress of passing school exams, and social and cultural tensions in some communities. There are reportedly two suicide attempts per day among adolescents, with Nickerie (a large East Indian population) experiencing the highest youth suicide rate.

Various NGOs work with the Youth Department of the Police to handle reported child rights violations. For example, the NGO Foundation for the Child manages a crisis center that provides medical care and counseling for abused children—even counseling services to help reestablish family relationships. Data could not be obtained on the effectiveness or results of this program.

Social support systems

Forty-four percent of the Surinamese respondents considered social support systems to be the issue of primary significance to youth and just over 25 percent related this to a breakdown in family structures and social support systems. Traditional role models and support systems are fewer in number, and community-based organizations and government are not replacing them with alternative structures or programs such as safe spaces, after-school programs, clubs, and youth counseling. The absence of counseling, anger management, and mediation in schools is often cited as contributing to the breakdown in resilience and social support. This relates to the matter of health and well-being with regard to mental health, which over 30 percent of respondents say is a severely lacking service for youth.

Juvenile justice

The challenge of reintegrating ex-offenders into society requires work with the ex-offender as well as his or her recipient family. Suriname's juvenile justice facilities include three prisons where male and female prisoners are separately held, in addition to temporary detention centers in police stations throughout the country. One juvenile detention facility, Opa Doeli, is for boys and girls under the age of 18 who are awaiting trial, and it has a separate wing for boys under

the age of 18 who have been convicted of serious crimes. Detainees at Opa Doeli have access to educational and recreational facilities.

Key informants linked high recidivism rates to inadequate reintegration support, arguing that recidivism rates could be reduced if juvenile justice could be made more responsive to the rehabilitative needs of youth offenders ages 15 to 24. Mentorship and internship programs for "at-risk" youth, coupled with rehabilitation programs for incarcerated youth and reintegration programs for ex-offenders, could address the "before, during, and after" phases of criminal experience.

Crime and violence

Youth development workers interviewed by the team reported that the most common youth crimes were theft and burglary, and that the latter tended to be committed by youth in groups.

The World Bank's Enterprise Survey (2010) reports that firms in Suriname spend about 0.8 percent of revenue on security, in contrast to almost 1.5 percent in the rest of the LAC region, and revenue lost to theft, robbery, and vandalism was also half the regional rate. This suggests that Suriname has a relatively low incidence of crime and violence, but sexual and domestic abuses are not captured by the Enterprise Survey. These are said to occur widely, but the team was unable to obtain data. Human trafficking for sex and child labor are frequently encountered in mining areas and are often linked with trans-border criminal elements in Guyana and French Guiana.

Environment and climate change

In Suriname, youth do not rate environment and climate change highly on their list of concerns. However, those respondents who stated a concern for the environment spoke of the unregulated use of mercury and other practices in the mining industry.

4J. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Country Overview

Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) is the southernmost island nation state in ESC, with an estimated population of 1,337,439,[58] of which approximately 20.7 percent is made up of youth between ages 15 and 24 (see Figure 29).[59] Due largely to its offshore oil and gas reserves and the associated petrochemical industry, T&T is by many measures the wealthiest state in the ESC region. High per-capita GDP notwithstanding, the economic benefits of the extractive and industrial sectors are not shared by all. Respondents reported that while there were sufficient jobs in the national economy, access to quality employment was a major issue. The two explanatory factors most commonly perceived by informants are an education system that inadequately prepares youth for employment, as well as discrimination by employers of young applicants based on race, age, and residence (geography).

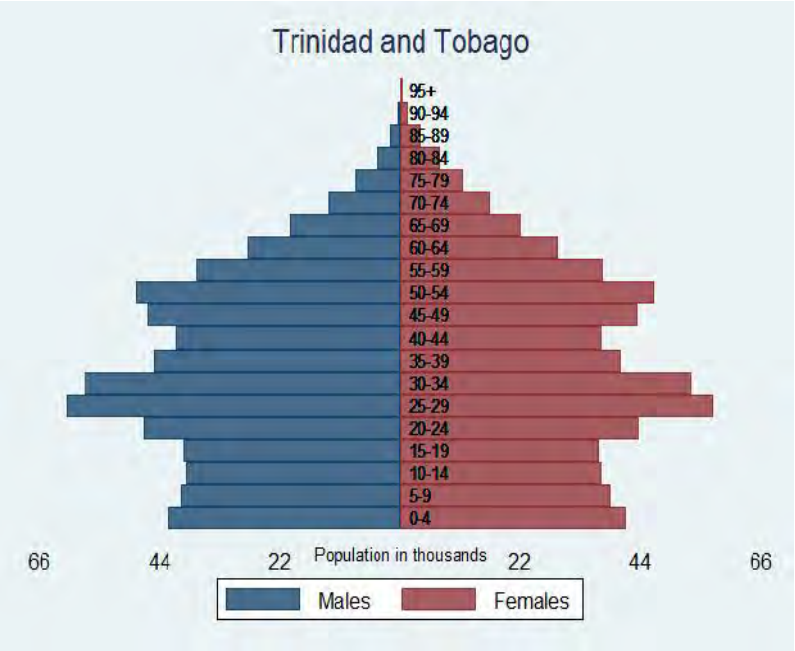

Figure 29: Population of Trinidad and Tobago

[58] World Bank 2012 estimate.

[59] United Nations Development Programme. (2012). *Caribbean Human Development Report.*

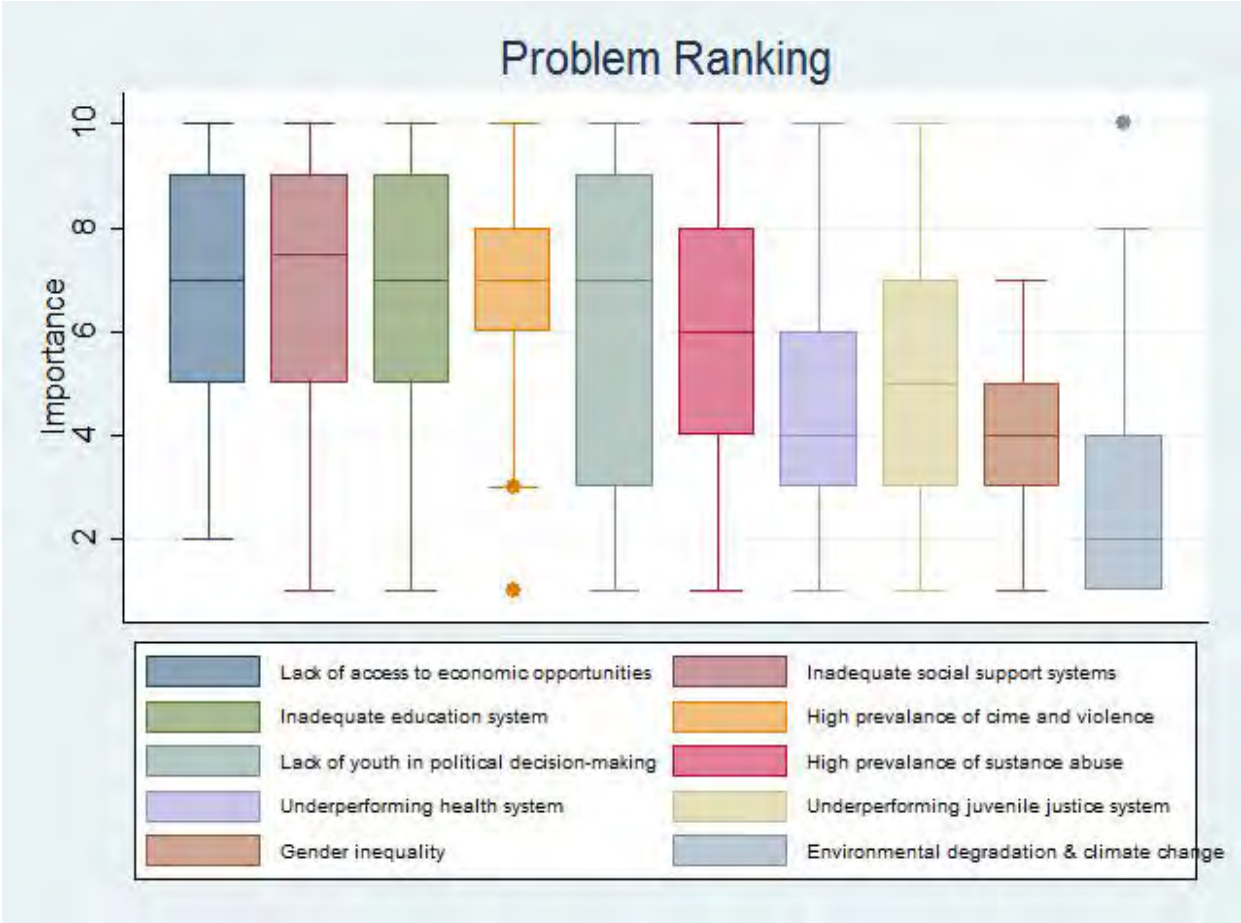

Figure 30: Problem Ranking Scores—Trinidad and Tobago

In light of this challenge, the Government has financed an expansive net of social programs directed at enhancing youth employment. The largest of these programs includes universal free education through the tertiary level; two-year, government-sponsored On-the-Job Training (OJT); and free laptops for all students in secondary school. While these and other programs are largely popular, multiple stakeholders expressed concern regarding mismanagement and lack of coordination between responsible entities, as well as insufficient input from youth in their design and delivery. Implementation issues notwithstanding, the programs are a tremendous resource for the nation's youth. The primary issue, as with employment, is not one of existence but of access. According to multiple stakeholders, large segments of the population are either unaware of the programs or are not able to benefit from them because of the program costs and the need to travel, particularly to urban areas, to access the programs of interest. Another reason for limited interest in accessing the program relates to perceptions of stigma by members from communities in Trinidad known to be high-risk. Furthermore, individuals from these communities may be unwilling to travel outside their immediate area because of the possible threat of physical violence from "opposing" communities.

The proliferation of gangs, violent crime, and substance abuse is a large and growing problem. While the country has benefited from offshore oil reserves, geography has been a mixed

blessing. Located 6.8 miles off the northeast coast of Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago has become a major transit point in the international drug trade.[60]

Though it is difficult to substantiate, the assessment team encountered widespread perceptions of corruption in public institutions. This phenomenon was expressed in the form of graft, impunity in the face of law, and even leadership in criminal activities. Despite the absence of data to rationalize the general mistrust of government and law enforcement, these beliefs have led to an erosion of trust between the public (especially youth) and these public institutions.

The SI team conducted research on both islands, where the mix and severity of issues related to youth development is very different. Though the two islands make up one country, Trinidad has a broader and more varied employment and educational base, more robust government facilities and programming, and a larger pool of non-governmental organizations working on youth issues. The city of Port of Spain in particular has much higher rates of crime and violence and more acute problems with the breakdown of social support systems. Tobago's economy is much more dependent on tourism and transfers from Trinidad. While social support systems are reported to be healthier and crime and violence is less endemic, many youth (and potentially entire families) have to move to Trinidad for higher education and employment opportunities not equally accessible in Tobago (see Figure 30 for a ranking of problems across sectors affecting youth).

With regard to the youth development landscape, every respondent and stakeholder group expressed concern regarding a host of problems facing young people. In the broadest sense, there is a perceived breakdown in the two most important institutions of socialization: the home and the school. The byproduct of these dysfunctions is that a significant proportion of youth are ill equipped to function as productive members of society. Denied access to quality employment through a dearth of schooling, unrefined life skills, and discrimination, many youth detach from the institutions of society and enter into a life of crime, perpetuating a cycle of broken families and underutilized potential. In the midst of this process, respondents report depression, hopelessness, and "a severe lack of self-esteem among the young people."

The following section presents findings across the seven thematic assessment areas, as well as synthesized conclusions and country-specific recommendations. The SI team interviewed 82 individuals through 27 key informant and 55 focus group participants in Trinidad and Tobago.

[60] Trinidad and Tobago is a transshipment point for South American drugs destined for the U.S. and Europe. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2086.html

Thematic Assessment Areas

Economic opportunities

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago offers numerous employment programs, and even on Tobago there are "many unfulfilled jobs" in the construction, tourism, and management sectors. Across the country, the primary economic impediment is not insufficiency of employment opportunities but limitations in access. Because of several deficiencies faced by the family unit and schools (both elaborated below), large numbers of youth are ill equipped to work in the formal economy: Many of these young people lack basic literacy and numeracy skills, academic credentials, marketable hard skills, and the soft skills necessary to find, acquire, and keep quality jobs. Aside from individual qualifications, many respondents identified discrimination as a key barrier to taking full advantage of the country's economic opportunities. In Trinidad and Tobago, as in most of the ESC countries, there are multiple forms of discrimination. These include geographic (reluctance to hire youth from neighborhoods considered "troublesome"), socioeconomic, political, sexual, and racial forms.

Across both the rating and ranking exercises, respondents reported economic opportunities as the third most important thematic area. Females were slightly more likely to prioritize this issue as a problem, whereas adults reported economic opportunities as being significantly more important than did youth.

Education and training

The education system in Trinidad and Tobago offers free public school for all students from primary through the secondary level; textbooks are provided free of charge; a personal laptop is provided to each student at the secondary level (through an IADB loan); and the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) program covers 100 percent of undergraduate and 50 percent of graduate education. Substantial investments in the education system notwithstanding, it is generally agreed that the public school system is inadequate in preparing youth to seek out and hold employment. Of the 30 respondents who filled out the problem-rating/ranking sheet, education and training had the highest rating score and the fourth highest ranking (behind social support systems, crime/violence, and economic opportunities).

Government education data and interviews with a wide range of stakeholders describe an education system where females consistently outperform males, with more than 40 percent of dropouts accounted for by males by second form.[61]The underlying reasons for this high rate of male dropout stem from five primary causes. First, for some youth, household poverty either presents an insurmountable financial hurdle for attending school or necessitates that they opt out of school to contribute financially to the family. Second, the phenomenon of "broken homes" (discussed at length below) leads to a lack of support for and undervaluation of

[61] http://www.moe.gov.tt/media_pdfs/publications/Statistical%20Digest.pdf

education. Third, the absence of adult supervision paired with a lack of after-school programming and recreational activities leads to youth spending large portions of the day idle and susceptible to risk behavior. Fourth, the allure of instant gratification causes many youth to engage in the formal and informal economic activities. Last, academic institutions themselves are a push factor for youth dropouts. High rates of school violence including bullying, teacher underperformance and absenteeism, and the lack of appeal of outdated teaching methodologies (relying on recall rather than practical skills and application) instead of the wide-scale use of the available technologies contribute to dropout rates.

Among youth as well as adults, the dysfunction of the formal education system was a running theme. Even for those youth who succeed in school, there was a pervasive sense that "the education system does not prepare youth for life." As with educational systems across the ESC (the only exception being Suriname), the Trinidad and Tobago model is largely derived from the British colonial system. Regardless of its merits at that time, the instructional method is fundamentally out of touch with modern realities. From a pedagogical perspective, the rote learning "talk and chalk" approach that treats all pupils equally regardless of ability is an anachronism being updated globally to include differentiated, participatory, and critical thinking methodologies. The content and focus of instruction is similarly outdated, with schools prioritizing academic successes over that of life skills, technical/vocational skills, and basic literacy and numeracy. One informant declared, "The system is preparing youth for tests, not life." This focus on higher-order subject matters causes many youth to fall behind and eventually drop out of school, without having grasped basic skills necessary for successful engagement with society. In fact, the Trinidad and Tobago education system promotes youth through the system without requiring them to master the requisite skills. This approach leads to many youth in secondary schools being functionally illiterate, a finding triangulated through interviews with youth and adults alike. While the content and environment of instruction are critical elements in a functioning educational system, the critical link is always the teacher. Perceptions about teacher underperformance were a common sentiment expressed by youth respondents and adult informants, particularly with regard to lack of training and teacher absenteeism.

While universal free education is assured by the Government, the testimony of practitioners, parents, and youth indicated that many young people either underperform or drop out of school. The causal chain as elucidated by the respondents of the assessment has a primary source—limited economic means—which leads to: 1) youth being hungry at school and being unable to concentrate, 2) de-prioritization by family, leading to early engagement in work or alternating which child attends school, 3) lack of access to schools (poor roads and lack of public transportation in rural areas), and 4) lack of money for school expenses, including transportation.

Despite challenges of access and awareness of available resources, Trinidad and Tobago has a rich landscape of education programming and alternative training. The largest program is the OJT program, which aims to train young people for public service jobs. While the program does provide professional experience, respondents reported that youth felt exploited in these positions, doing full-time labor for a fraction of the cost of an employee. Programmatic

shortcomings aside, the Government does not view it as a replacement for employment, simply an employment safety net.

Social support systems

The breakdown of the traditional support networks—the family unit, in particular—was a constant and central theme in the interviews. Rated as the single most important factor by respondents of the problem-ranking exercise, social support systems are perceived by youth and adults alike to be weak and getting weaker.

The "broken family," a concept mentioned by many respondents, is a byproduct of multiple interrelated factors. The incidence of single-parent households, particularly those headed by females, is very high in Trinidad and Tobago. Respondents reported several factors leading to this phenomenon, including philandering by males, early sexual activity on the part of females, and death of fathers. With only one source of income, many of these parents have to work long hours, often at multiple jobs, leading to a lack of supervision and engagement with children. Furthermore, without a father figure, many of the youth (particularly males) grow up without a positive male role model, a problem further compounded by the fact that most teachers are women. With limited positive role models at home, at school, or within broader society, boys have problems in the socialization process. Even in instances where both parents are present, respondents reported a dearth of parenting skills caused by the young age of parents, as well as the fact that many parents have not completed the full set of developmental stages and that they themselves came from broken families.[62] The missing parenting skills are reported to include an understating of the nurturing needs of children and youth as well as poor communication skills that sometimes lead to anger and abuse.

In addition to a lack of financial and emotional support at home, the traditionally strong community support systems have also undergone atrophy. Due in part to changing social/cultural norms, fear of violent or legal reprisal, and lack of availability, members of the extended family and the community are not engaged in the care and supervision of children and youth. Respondents noted the fact that even grandparents are often too young and have to focus on their own interests. Without any adult engagement or after-school programming, youth are confronted with many unstructured, idle hours every day. Many respondents identified this idle time as a primary risk factor leading to engagement with drugs, gangs, crime, sex, and other risky behaviors. As youth participate in these risk factors and start having children of their own, the intergenerational cycle of family breakdown perpetuates.

There are differences in family structures both in terms of race and geography. Indo-Trinidadians are more likely to live in two-parent households and have the support of extended families. The same is true of youth living in Tobago and rural areas more generally. Whereas the

[62] Respected developmental psychologist, Erik Erikson explained that people experience eight psychosocial developmental stages through their maturity from childhood into late adulthood.

Afro-Trinidadian, urban population is faced with single-parent and otherwise dysfunctional homes, the Indo-Trinidadian rural population has had to deal with what are described as "overly paternalistic" families. Tobago is reported to have a stronger social fabric with more adult supervision of children, owing largely to the small size of the island where "everybody knows everybody."

Crime and violence

Trinidad and Tobago is second only to Saint Kitts and Nevis with regard to homicide rate in ESC, a statistic skewed by the latter's small population.[63] Crime and violence are extremely prominent issues in Trinidad and Tobago society, with stories of violent crime often appearing in the national news. Respondents ranked the issue second only to inadequate social support systems. The pervasive sense of violence that exists in Port of Spain was encapsulated by a youth advocate, who reported that even when youth try to avoid criminal acts of violence it is impossible to escape. In response to a story where youth were robbed and killed playing soccer, he said, "Tell me, what are the safe activities?"

As outlined in the economic opportunities section above, criminal and illicit activities are a major pull factor for youth unconvinced with the payoff for an investment in education. These are manifest in four ways: 1) youth are targeted with advertisements portraying an unattainable consumerist culture, creating "unrealistic wants," 2) aside from materialist desires, young people are faced with needs for basic survival and oftentimes have to make money quickly, 3) with a lack of positive male role models, they see the images of rich and influential gang leaders as appealing, and 4) they see involvement in criminal organizations as providing a sense of identity missing from normal life, where parents and support systems are absent.

Due largely to cultural norms that dictate that men are supposed to be the providers of material well-being, males have become much more likely to drop out of school to engage in criminal activity. The risk of this choice is well known: According to a youth worker, many men put money aside for their funeral when they enter criminal organizations. It was reported that these youth accept the notion that "by 25 they will be dead." The easy access to guns facilitates both the perpetration of crime as well as the phenomenon of young people arming themselves to feel safe and to boost their self-esteem and sense of control. In some instances, participation in gang and criminal activity is not a choice. This is particularly the case in "closed communities" (because of neighborhood or family tensions/rivalries) that are effectively run by gangs.

Males tend to be involved in firearm-related crimes and the drug trade and as perpetrators of domestic violence: Multiple informants stated that women influence males to participate in crime, primarily by way of desire for material goods. While they are widely viewed primarily as victims of crime, particularly sexual and domestic abuse, women have been known to be organizers and agents of criminality. Multiple informants were quoted as saying "women can be

[63] 35.2 per 1000 in T&T; 38.2 in Saint Kitts and Nevis. UNODC 2010

as dread as men." Even when not actively perpetrating criminal activity, according to a high-ranking official within the girl's juvenile detention facility, girls are used as decoys/diversion for set-ups and are also involved in kidnapping, theft, and arson.

There were large reported variations with regard to the geography in the patterns of crime. In rural communities, and particularly among Indo-Trinidadians, violence tends to manifest in domestic (both child and intimate partner) violence (physical, sexual, and verbal abuse) and alcohol-related crimes. In these communities there are also fewer support systems, and, because of poor infrastructure, the time and efforts necessary to assist rural families are significant. Afro-Trinidadians tend to be involved more in the drug trade and violent crime. The differences were attributed by respondents to differences in the extent and nature of family support.

Juvenile justice

As with many of the ESC countries, Trinidad and Tobago does not have sufficient capacity throughout the stages of the juvenile justice system. The system does not differentiate between violent offenders, youth held for minor transgressions, and those who are wards of the State because of cases of neglect and abuse. This pooling leads to incidences of abuse among the incarcerated and reportedly also by staff, as well as to the radicalization/criminalization of the population. While training opportunities are offered, resocialization efforts are insufficient, leading to high rates of recidivism. It is not uncommon to find inmates at the prison who spent time in both St. Michael's home and the Youth Training Center.

Many youth in juvenile detention facilities (St. Jude's for girls and St. Michael's and the Youth Training Center for boys) are sent to a home because they are deemed "beyond control," a label imposed by courts, accepted by families, and oftentimes internalized by the youth themselves. Aside from the large portion of the population that is interned because of criminal behavior, many of the youth end up in the homes because of problems within the household. Children are "sentenced" to a home for fleeing abuse, because their parents brought them to the court for help and counseling support.

Youth are not educated about laws and sometimes do not know they are in violation (e.g., the age of sexual consent). Legal knowledge is oftentimes unattainable, as laws are not taught in school, and at least in Tobago are held under "lock and key in the library." There are no juvenile courts or juvenile centers in Tobago; all youth are taken to Trinidad.

Health and well-being

The health challenges faced by Trinidad and Tobago youth are similar to those of other developing countries. Young people experience sexual initiation at a young age, leading to high rates of STIs and teenage pregnancy. This fact is not helped by the abstinence-only method of instruction in school. Mental illness is stigmatized by society, and the prevalence of youth mental health issues is unknown. According to health care and youth workers, the most common illnesses include depression, self-harm, and suicide. The mental health infrastructure is weak within government, school, and non-government institutions. Lifestyle diseases stemming from lack of physical exercise and poor nutrition, namely diabetes and obesity, are a big and growing problem.

Environment and climate change

Most respondents stated that environmental activism is nonexistent and that there is a low level of awareness about environmental and climate change issues. In both the problem-rating and -ranking exercises, this issue was consistently rated as the least important. Through qualitative interviews, it was clear that while many respondents hold an interest in environmental issues, many have much more pressing issues to confront.

ANNEX A. SCOPE OF WORK

STATEMENT OF WORK

C.1 Background

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is a major partner in the U.S. Government's assistance efforts in the Eastern Caribbean region, comprised of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Since 2005, USAID/Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean (BEC) has managed more than $125 million in assistance designed to achieve a wide-ranging set of development results including: strengthening systems responding to HIV/AIDS, supporting improvements in the economic enabling environment, reforming juvenile justice systems and education policies, advancing country responses to climate change, enhancing democracy and accountable governance, and creating opportunities for youth. Throughout its operations, USAID/BEC has stressed the importance of reliable performance information to support effective and informed decision-making.

Since 2005 USAID/BEC has provided significant technical assistance to countries in the Eastern and Southern Caribbean. In 2010 the U.S. Government initiated the CBSI, which allowed USAID to expand activities in support of "at-risk" and vulnerable youth. CBSI-funded initiatives include support for workforce development and reform to juvenile justice systems. USAID programs primarily target youth between the ages of 14 and 24 who have dropped out of school, have had encounters with local law enforcement, or are otherwise vulnerable. Workforce development projects support school-to-work transition, career development, and entrepreneurship through partnerships between host country governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. Education reforms for vulnerable youth include improving numeracy and literacy as prerequisites for competitive and life skills development. In order to minimize the number of incarcerated youth and to promote the use of rehabilitative measures, USAID supports reforms of juvenile and related family court operations through technical assistance to redesign remand and detention processes, capacity-building initiatives, and the development and implementation of sentencing options.

Since CBSI started, USAID has budgeted approximately $28 million supporting crime prevention through the promotion of citizen security by the creation of opportunities for the region's youth population. Findings from the "*Rapid Youth Assessment in the Eastern Caribbean, August 2008*" and the "*Skills and Knowledge for Youth Employment in Guyana, Assessment Report and Program Design, November 2011*," both of which were conducted under the Educational Quality Improvement Program, Out of School Youth, Learning, Earning (EQUIP3), informed the Mission's programmatic interventions. Other informative documents include, from the UN Office of Drugs and Crime/World Bank, "*Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in*

the Caribbean" (2007) and, from the World Bank, "*Organization of Eastern Caribbean States: Towards a New Agenda for Growth*" (2005).

C.2 Statement of Need

Regional trends, initially evident in 2008, indicate a continued increase in young people's involvement in gang activity and crime, teen pregnancy, and dropping out of school (particularly among males). Under the Mission's previous strategy (2005–2009), USAID's support for youth focused primarily on improving economic competitiveness and addressing the spread of HIV/AIDS in vulnerable groups. In 2009, USAID/BEC developed a strategic plan for 2011–2015 that is now being revised in accordance with new Agency policies involving Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS). In the case of USAID/BEC, the CDCS guidance is being adjusted to take into account the unique nature of the Mission's programs and develop a Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS).

The existing strategic plan for 2011–2015 aims to increase the ability of vulnerable youth to participate in emerging market opportunities, enhance their healthy lifestyles, and obtain quality education and/or training. The ESCYA will reexamine and expand upon these issues and support the development and implementation of the Mission's RDCS for FY 2013–2017. ESCYA deliverables should be completed in time to inform and contribute to the draft RDCS, due by the end of September 2013. Although youth represent a cross-cutting issue for the Agency as a whole, USAID/BEC anticipates the creation of a specific DO to address challenges faced by youth in the region, particularly in the quest to realize their potential, support themselves and their families, and contribute to their societies.

In conducting work under this contract, it is expected that the Contractor shall engage and include input, technical contributions, and other pertinent experience and information from relevant local stakeholders. These stakeholders may include youth and their families, partner government officials, NGOs, civil society organizations, academic institutions, religious leaders, employers, international and local donors, UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations (i.e., the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), CARICOM) and other public or private individuals and organizations active in working and/or supporting youth. Special attention should be paid to opinion makers and those influencing the attitudes and opinions of youth.

C.3 Statement of Work

USAID/BEC desires to increase the Mission's, partner countries', and donor's knowledge base of the situation and challenges faced by youth in each nation and across the region. The primary purpose of this award is: 1) to conduct a comprehensive cross-sectoral regional assessment of the situation of youth, with particular focus on those at risk and vulnerable, and 2) to draft a concept note for the Mission to use for further program design. Sectors likely to be involved in the assessment may include, but are not limited to: economic opportunity, microfinance, psychosocial, education, juvenile justice, political participation, civil society, and vocational training. The expectation is that the first deliverable will be a definitive reference work for

partner governments, donors, and implementing agencies on the situation and challenges faced by "at-risk" and vulnerable youth in the region.

The contractor will conduct this assessment for USAID/BEC according to a schedule established by Mission management and maintained by the General Development Office. The assessment will comply with ADS 203 and the latest USAID Assessment, Evaluation, and Data Quality policies. The contractor will conduct the assessment, designed to focus on country and sector context, to inform project design and implementation of strategic priorities.

Deliverable 1: Technical assessment of youth

The contractor shall travel to each of the 10 countries covered by USAID/BEC to conduct on-the-ground assessments of the situation facing youth and gather data that can be compared across countries. The contractor shall carry out the following tasks:

A. Desk review of existing studies and reference documents indicated in this solicitation as well as other relevant studies and publications (i.e., World Bank Country Assistance and/or Poverty Reduction Strategies; CBSI studies and reports; Caribbean Development Bank assistance programs; Inter-American Development Bank assistance programs; United Nations Development Program, Caribbean Human Development Report 2012, http://www.undp.org.gy/web/documents/bk/Caribbean_HDR_Jan25_2012_3MB.pdf).

B. Identify an assessment methodology. Technical approaches to consider include: focus groups, roundtable discussions, one-on-one interviews, key informant interviews, and surveys.

C. Develop an assessment tool that, in addition to other factors (including, but not limited to, the impact of gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, and existing political and governance structures), also takes into account the following:

    1) Opinions of youth about the quality of their education, their views on education, employment options, ideas/thoughts for their future, their role in their families, their role in their society, attitudes toward entrepreneurship, and where they get information.

    2) Opinions of parents, grandparents, and other familial opinion makers about the quality of education, how well the education system prepares youth for life and employment, their hopes/aspirations for youth, what values they believe youth currently hold, what they think youth want, attitudes toward entrepreneurship, and what additional support they believe youth need.

    3) Opinions of government officials (from the executive, legislative, and judicial services) about the challenges facing youth, what programs exist to support youth, examples of success and lessons learned from support programs, areas where technical assistance or reform are necessary, what would be required for those reforms to occur.

4) Opinions of religious leaders, academia, and non-governmental organizations working with young people about youth, the quality of education and training available, the challenges youth face, and areas for reform.
5) Review of justice systems processes and regulations, including training of judges and law enforcement personnel, regarding youth, and an examination of the system transitioning of juvenile delinquents from juvenile to adult facilities.
6) Review of education statistics, including the number of children entering kindergarten, entering and completing primary school, entering and completing secondary school, entering and completing vocational training programs, and entering and completing college/university.
7) Opinions of employers and the private sector regarding youth, the education system, and skills gaps in the economy.
8) National and regional economic development plans and how governments are integrating and providing relevant skills to youth to achieve their goals.
9) How well educational and training systems support private sector investment and growth.
10) Opinions of international donors and UN agencies about the situation and needs of youth.

D. Conduct rapid organizational and capacity assessments of current and potential service providers.

E. Develop a matrix or other tool to compare the gathered data across countries and the region. Data should be disaggregated by juvenile and adult as well as by gender. (*Note:* The age at which an individual is legally recognized as an adult may vary by country. For comparative purposes of policies affecting youth, the assessment should determine a method to capture similarities in how juveniles are treated versus how adults are treated in terms of each country's judicial system and support programs available.)

F. Analyze and compile all of the gathered data into one written assessment report. This report will be for public dissemination and should at a minimum include the following:

1) Findings, statistics, and analysis for each country, including urgently identified needs.
2) Findings, statistics, and analysis across the region, including urgently identified needs that regional standards could address.

Deliverable 2: Annex of local capacity assessments (partner recommendations)

An Annex to the public report should be drafted for internal USAID and U.S. Government (USG) use only, and should include:

A. Short summaries of the results of the rapid assessments of service-providing organizations in each country.

B. Recommendations for potential local USAID partners in each country and at the regional level. USAID/Forward guidance should be referenced when making these recommendations. Information on USAID/Forward may be found at: http://transition.usaid.gov/press/factsheets /2010/fs101118.html.

Deliverable 3: Program recommendations for USAID youth project

Once USAID/BEC has decided which type of mechanism to engage, the Contractor shall develop a Concept Note, consistent with and meeting all of the requirements indicated in USAID's *Project Design Guidance (December 9, 2011)*. The concept note, outlining the Contractor's recommendations for a project to support "at-risk" and vulnerable youth, should be drafted and submitted to the Mission for review. The concept note should meet all USAID requirements as indicated in the *Project Design Guidance* and ADS 201. ***Note that completion of this deliverable may result in the Contractor being ineligible to bid on the designed project.***

Deliverable 4: Midpoint draft report

Social Impact, Inc. will submit to USAID a Midpoint Draft Report on or before August 1, 2013, consolidating the analysis of the findings in the countries visited during the first four weeks of the assessment.

All deliverables should be completed by the end of the contract.

The Contractor will collect and submit to the contracting officer's representative (COR) supporting materials (such as Conflict of Interest forms signed by each evaluation team member), data sets, interview questionnaires, focus group detailed notes, etc. The Mission will submit the final draft of the public assessment to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) immediately after final clearance from USAID.

C.4 Schedule

The assessment is expected to span seventeen (17) weeks, with at least one week spent in each cooperating country. USAID anticipates a schedule similar to:

A. Desk review of assessments and other materials available and development of a draft assessment tool.

B. Meet with USAID/BEC in Bridgetown, Barbados, and conduct initial assessment meetings on Barbados.

C. Travel to each of the remaining nine countries covered by the Mission (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago), to conduct assessments. (One week per country).

D. Deliverable preparation/finalization and consultations with USAID/BEC.

The Contractor will be required to have a finalized, approved project data collection and drafting plan included in the initial work plan submitted within 15 calendar days after signing the contract. The initial work plan should cover the entire assessment period as well as a timeline for drafting and finalizing all three deliverables. The work plan is subject to review and approval by the COR. USAID/BEC staff will assist the assessment team with suggesting organizations and individuals for participation in the assessment, introductions, and arranging meetings. The Mission may also offer advice as to accommodation and travel options for the team. The organizations and individuals identified by the Mission should not be considered to be an all-inclusive list of those that should inform the assessment or be consulted by the assessment team.

The contractor will also be expected to be in regular contact with the COR to resolve any questions that may arise.

Weekly verbal status updates will be held with the Mission. These discussions, if not possible in person, may be conducted via telephone, are not anticipated to take longer than 30 minutes, and should identify highlights from the information gathered as well as inform the Mission on the status of the written deliverables.

All work performed to meet the deliverables requirements specified above shall be ordered, in writing (email is an acceptable format) by the COR, subject to the COR's approval of projected budget expenditure for such purposes.

C.5 Security

Security for the Contractor's personnel is the responsibility of the Contractor. The Contactor shall assess the security situation and institute appropriate measures. The Contractor is responsible for establishing a security protocol that facilitates safety of all staff and allows completion of required tasks and activities in the prevailing operating environment. If security factors are expected to disrupt implementation or to cause delay in attaining established targets, it is the Contractor's responsibility to immediately notify USAID.

C.6 Gender Considerations

This assessment and any surveys, studies, and reports used to support the findings must, where feasible, include gender-disaggregated data. As far as practicable in various locations, the Contractor shall include specific assessments of perceptions, attitudes, and values of women and men and the impact of activities on women and men in target areas.

The Contractor shall pay attention to and highlight gender-based constraints and issues in connection to the conduct of all deliverables. The contractor should also identify gender trends that materialize from evaluations and assessments.

ANNEX B. LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS

Institution or Organization	Title
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	
Police Department	Corporal
Antigua Observer	Journalist/Producer
The Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education	Principal
	Deputy Principal
Gilbert Agriculture and Rural Development Center	Executive Director/Founder
	Organizational Development Specialist
	Program Coordinator
	Principal
Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute	Director of Academic Affairs
	Executive Director
Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Gender Affairs	Senior Youth Development Officer
Ministry of Social Information	Creative Arts Specialist
Ministry of Culture	Event Coordinator
Cottage of Hope	Founder and Coordinator
Ministry of National Security and Labour	Representative
Red Cross, Antigua and Barbuda Chapter	Agency Representative
	Agency Representative
Antigua and Barbuda National Youth Ambassadors	National Youth Ambassador
	National Youth Ambassador
Volunteers United	Founder, Marketing Executive
Sunshine Home for Girls/ Salvation Army	Administrative Director
Department of Social Transformation and Community Development	Assistant Director
Antigua Association for Persons with Disabilities	Director
Mustardseeds	Founder
Total Number of Key Informants Interviewed in Antigua and Barbuda: 24	

BARBADOS	
Caribbean Broadcasting Media Partnership on HIV and AIDS and the Live Up Campaign	Executive Director and Youth Representative (1)
Psychotherapist	Gender and Youth Advocate
Barbados Youth Development Council	Youth Leader and Former President
	President
Bureau of Gender Affairs	Director and Program Officer
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	Senior Development Officer
United Nations Women Civil Society Group	Mental Health Counselor and Youth Leader
Business and Professional Women's Club and Shelter	Volunteer
Government of Barbados	Senator Andre Worrell
Barbados Youth Service	Member
Barbados Vocational Training Board	Director
	Assistant Director
	Training Officer
Barbados Manufacturers' Association	Vice President
Caribbean Youth Environment Network	Executive Member
Youth Development Division	Youth Commissioners (5)
Cave Hill School of Business	Faculty Member
Barbados Youth Alliance	Youth Director
A Ganar	Program Coordinator
b.G.L.A.D.	Founders (2); Program Coordinator and Secretary
Young Democrats/Democratic Labour Party	President and Secretary
	Youth Members (2)
Pinelands Creative Workshop	Executive Director
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Program Manager, Governance
Young Socialists League/Barbados Labour Party	Assistant Secretary
Total Number of Key Informants Interviewed in Barbados: 36	

DOMINICA	
National Youth Council	President
	Former President
Dominica Youth Business Trust	Acting Youth Officer
Partners of the Americas (Dominica Branch)	Representative
Prison Service, Youth Division	Deputy Superintendent of Prisons
Dominica State Prison	Representatives (3)
National Development Foundation of Dominica Limited	Executive Director
	Human Resource/Training Officer
	Business Development Officer (2)
	Financial Manager
Child Fund	National Director
	Program Manager
Police Department	Deputy Chief of Police, 3 Senior Police Officers and 1 Prosecutor
Love One, Teach One	Founder/ Director
National Youth Ambassador/CARICOM Programme	Youth Ambassador
Dominica Association for Persons with Disabilities	Executive Director
Children of Grace Foundation, Inc.	Founder, Director
Dominica National Council of Women	President Peace Corps Volunteer
Social Centre	Adolescent Skills Coordinator
	FOTA Coordinator
	Administrator
	Coordinator
Youth Advocacy Movement	Youth Member
Planned Parenthood Association	Executive Director; Former Executive Director; Family Life Educator
Ministry of Tourism and Legal Affairs	Permanent Secretary
Posse Pan Cultural Group	Director
Magistrate Court	Magistrate
(not stated)	Volunteer Child Advocate

Dominica Youth Business Trust	Acting Youth Officer
	Youth Development Officer
Total Number of Key Informants Interviewed in Dominica: 40	

GRENADA	
New Life Organization (NEWLO)	Executive Director
Grenada Industrial Development Corporation	Vice President Business Development and Representatives (2)
None Stated	Youth Leader
Imani Programme	Programme Manager and Representative (1)
Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Ecclesiastical Affairs	Honorable Emmalin Pierre, Minister
	Senator Sheldon Scott, Parliamentary Secretary
	Assistant Youth Coordinator
Richmond Hill Prison	Commissioner of Prisons
Caribbean Association for Youth Development	Executive Director and Director
National Development Foundation	Executive Director
Total Number of Key Informants Interviewed in Grenada: 13	

GUYANA	
UNICEF Guyana	Youth and Adolescent Development Officer
SKYE Project	Chief of Party, Program Officer, Nonformal Adult Education Specialist, Workforce Development and Private Sector Specialist, and the Juvenile Justice and Gender Specialist
Catholic Relief Services	Program Manager
Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre (CYPCC)	Regional Director (Ag), Programme Manager and an Intern

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat	Deputy Program Manager, Youth; Programme Manager for Culture and Community Development; Consultant, Deputy Programme, Education; and the Deputy Programme Manager, Sport and Development
Youth-In	Project Officer
Guyana Women Miners Association (GWMA)	Founder/ Executive Director
	Vice President
	Executive Members (2)
United National Development Programme (UNDP)	Programme Analyst, Governance and Poverty
Professional Youth Alliance Guyana (PYAG)	Founder/ Executive Director
	Volunteer Program Coordinator
Streets	Founder/Executive Director
Youth Coalition for Transformation (YCT)	President, Executive Members (2), Policy Advisor, and Secretary
Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security	Business Development Officer
Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports	Acting Director, Youth
	Permanent Secretary
Help and Shelter	Coordinator
Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination (SASOD)	Programme Coordinator, Board Member, and Secretary
Total Number of Key Informants Interviewed in Guyana: 36	

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS	
Business and Professional Women's Club	President
Ministry of Youth	Permanent Secretary
	Youth Development Officer
	Senior Youth Officer
The Ripple Institute	President
	Executive Director

	Executive Assistant
Department of Labour	Program Officer
National Youth Parliament	President
A Ganar	Director
Zion Moravian Church	Secretary, Youth Arm
Legacy International/Youth Think Tank	Representative
Saint Kitts and Nevis Association of Persons with Disabilities	Coordinator and Director
Eagle Boys Club	Coordinators (2)
Saint Kitts and Nevis Football Association, FIFA	Coordinator
Operation Future	Director
Saint Kitts Wesleyan Holiness Men's Group	President, Youth Congress
Ministry of Community Development	Community Development Officer
Basic Needs Trust Fund	Project Manager
Department of Probation	Director and 1 other Staff Member
Advancement for Vocational Education Center	Director
Rotaract (Rotary) Club	President
Ministry of Education	Youth Skills Building Coordinator
Ministry of Health	HIV Program Coordinator
Foundation for National Development	Executive Director
Nevis Historical and Conservation Society (NHCS)	Executive Director and Members (2)
H.O.P.E. Nevis	Director and Members (4)
Project Strong	Director
Ministry of Social Development, Social Services Department, Youth Division	Youth Development Coordinator
	Social Worker
National Youth Ambassador/CARICOM Programme	Youth Ambassador (2)
Change Center	Director
Hope Tears	Executive Director
Government People's Employment Project	Program Officer
Total Number of Key Informants Interviewed in Saint Kitts and Nevis: 44	

SAINT LUCIA	
RISE Saint Lucia Inc.	Founders (2) and Social Worker
Sacred Sports Foundation	Founder/Executive Director
	Coach
James E. Belgrave Social Investment Fund (Belfund)	Director and Graduate
Bordelais Correctional Facility	Director and Program Coordinator
Ministry of Health, Well-Being, Family, and Gender	Honorable Alvina Reynolds, Minister
National Skills Development Centre (NSDC)	Program Coordinator
	Facilitator
Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General's Office	Permanent Secretary
Probation Department and the Court Diversion Programme	Director of Probation and Probation Officer
	Program Officer
OECS Secretariat	Education Specialist
	Programme Officer
Chief Tree	President and 2 others
Media, Untold Stories	Journalist/Media
Media, The Flogg Blog	Journalist/Media
Chamber of Commerce	Program Coordinator, Youth Business Trust
National Initiative to Create Employment	Deputy Coordinator
Peace Corps	Country Director
	Program Coordinator
	Placement Coordinator
Centre for Adolescent Development and Renewal (CARE)	Executive Director
Total Number of Key Informants Interviewed in Saint Lucia: 29	

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	
Government of Saint Vincent the and the Grenadines	Prime Minister Dr. the Honorable Ralph Gonsalves
Ministry of Education, Adult and Continuing Education Unit	Youth Officer, Clerical Officer
Division of Youth	Acting Youth Officer and the Assistant Youth Officer
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines National Youth Council	President
	General Secretary
Marion House	Executive Coordinator and Coordinator of the Marion House, Component of the A Ganar Programme
Peace Corps	Associate Director
Partners of the Americas (PoA)	Washington, D.C. Office; Director, Sports-for-Development
Inivershall Rasta Movement	Director
National Development Foundation	Executive Director and Financial Controller
Non-State Actors Panel	Executive Director
Police Department	Acting Commissioner of Police; Acting Deputy Commissioner of Police
Police Youth Club	Corporal
Community Development	Community Development Officer/Supervisor
Center for Enterprise Development	General Management
Total Number of Key Informant Interviews Conducted in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: 20	

SURINAME	
Pan American Health Organization	Country Representative
	Consultant
	Administrative Officer

A Ganar	Country Officer
	Two Facilitators
Rumas Foundation	Director and Representative
Ministry of Youth Affairs	Permanent Secretary
	Directors of Youth Affairs and Sports (5 staff members)
Inter-American Development Bank	Senior Health Specialist
Junior Chamber International	National Vice President and Executive Officer
Program Pan American Development Foundation (PADF)	Director of Youth, Gender, and Partnerships
	Director of Capacity Building and Education
Women's Business Group	Members (2) and the Coordinator of the Women's Business Group, Component of the A Ganar Programme
Presidential Task Force on Children and Adolescents	Coordinator
United Nations Country Team	UN Resident Coordinator UNDP Country Director UNFPA Assistant Representative UNICEF Program Manager PAHO/WHO Suriname Representative FAO Country Representative (based in Trinidad and Tobago) UNEP SIDS Officer (based in Panama) UNAIDS Country Coordinator for Guyana and Suriname (based in Guyana) UNWOMEN Representative for the Caribbean (based in Barbados)
Embassy of the Netherlands	Resident Ambassador, and First Counselor
Micro Kredieten Unit	Executive Director
Boks/Sur	Correspondent and Representatives
Youth Think Tank	Representative

Man-Mit-Man	Director and Co-Director
Total Number of Key Informants Interviewed in Suriname: 40	

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	
Eternal Life Vocational School	Principal and Executive Member
Ministry of National Security, Citizen's Security Programme	Community Action Officers (3)
Trinidad Youth Council	Member and Youth Leader
Children's Authority	Chairman of the Board
	Director
Swaha International	Board of Directors (4)
Trinidad YMCA	Project Coordinator, Youth Outreach Services; Director, Youth Outreach Services; and Representative
Regional Youth Caucus	Deputy Chair
St. Jude's Hostel for Girls	Coordinator
(not stated)	UWI Student/ Youth Leader
Caribbean Sport for Development Agency	Executive Director and 1 staff member
Tobago YMCA	Director
Tobago Youth Council	Coordinator
Tobago Assembly	Secretary of Settlements and Labour
CARIMAN	Communications Officer and Member
Tobago Ministry of Youth and Sports	Program Coordinator
Tobago Roxborough Police Youth Club	Program Coordinator and Assistant Superintendent of Police
Total Number of Key Informants Interviewed in Trinidad and Tobago: 27	

ANNEX C. FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Location	Coordinating Organization	Type	Number of participants	Male	Female
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA					
St. John's	Youth Ambassadors	Youth	8	5	3
St. John's	Antigua and Barbuda Rotoract Club	Youth and older	24*	–	–
St. John's	Police Youth Intervention Unit	Youth	9	5	4
St. John's	Youth Council	Youth	8	4	4
St. John's	Youth Leader	Youth	8	4	4
BARBADOS					
Bridgetown	A Ganar	Youth	7	2	5
St. John	"on the block"	Youth	4	4	0
St. John	"on the block"	Youth and younger	9	4	5
St. John	"on the block"	Youth	9	7	2
Bridgetown	University Guild	Youth	7	4	3
DOMINICA					
People's Park		Youth	4	2	2

* Data for these particular groups was not disaggregated by sex.

Eggleston Youth	Roseau Youth	Youth	13	7	6
Portsmouth		Youth	6	4	2
Youth Development Division		Youth workers (youth and adults)	15	6	9

GRENADA					
Grenada Boys Secondary School	Imani Programme	Youth	10	5	5
Youth Members of Community Organizations	Ministry of Youth	Youth	12	8	4
Coyaba Beach Resort	Youth Leader	Youth	5	2	3
Grenada Investment and Development Corporation (Graduates)	Staff	Youth	7	2	5

GUYANA					
Georgetown	Youth Coalition for Transformation	Youth	7	3	4
Georgetown	Commonwealth Youth Programme and UNICEF Staff	Youth	20	10	10
Georgetown	Streets	Youth	6	0	6
Georgetown	Ministry of Youth and Sports	Youth workers (youth and adults)	21*	–	–

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS					
Saint Kitts	Organized by a key informant	Young adults (25–35)	5	3	2
Nevis	Organized by a key informant	Youth	6*	–	–
Nevis	Organized by a key informant	Youth	3	0	3

SAINT LUCIA					
Castries	Sacred Sports Foundation	Youth	8	1	9
Dennery	Bordelais Correctional Facility	Youth	5	2	7
Castries	RISE	Youth	9	2	7
Castries	Court Diversion Program	Youth	6	0	6

SAINT VINCENT AND GRENADINES					
Kingstown	Adult Continuing Education Center, Ministry of Education (Current Students)		8	2	6
Kingstown	Adult Continuing Education Center, Ministry of Education (Past Students)		6	1	5
Barrouallie	Barrouallie Police Youth Club		17	13	4

SURINAME					
Ministry of Youth Affairs	National Youth Parliament and National Youth Ambassadors	Youth Ambassadors and Representatives	7	3	4

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO					
Port of Spain, Trinidad	E-Mentor	Youth workers (youth and adults)	7	3	4
Port of Spain, Trinidad	St. Jude's Home for Girls	Youth	11	0	11
Port of Spain, Trinidad	St. Michael's	Youth	11	11	0

	Home for Boys				
Tobago	Tobago Ministry of Youth and Sports	Youth	10	5	5
Port of Spain, Trinidad	Eternal Life Vocational School	Youth	16	8	8

ANNEX D. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Key Informant Interview Protocol:

Thank you for meeting with us today. I am _____ and this is my colleague _____. Our team has been asked by USAID to carry out an assessment on the situation of youth across the Eastern and Southern Caribbean. We hope to gather information from a variety of perspectives regarding youth livelihoods, especially regarding the opportunities and challenges they face in their development. This assessment is intended to inform the Agency on current trends facing youth today and will provide recommendations for future youth programming over the next five years.

It would be most appreciated if your responses were as open and honest as possible. This interview is not an evaluation of your organization or program. Your responses today will be incorporated into a final report for public distribution. Your answers will be anonymous. Your name and any identifying information will not be included in the body of the report without your permission.

Do you have any questions before we proceed?

**Respond to participant's questions before the interview begins.*

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Position: _____

Sex: Male Female Other

Group: Youth Adult

(For youth only)

Age:

Location: Urban Rural

Highest Level of Schooling Achieved: _____

Currently in school? Yes No

Employment status: Full-time Part-time Self-Employed Unemployed

SECTION 1: YOUTH LANDSCAPE

1. Briefly describe your impression of the youth development landscape.
    a. What are the most pressing challenges faced by youth?
    b. What are the most important opportunities for improving the lives of youth?

Instructions to Interviewer(s): Based on the respondent's function, his/her answer to the first question, and his/her responses to Section 2, prioritize the one to three main cross-cutting themes (and/or the policy environment questions) for the respondent to answer. Skip sections that are less relevant to each respondent. Please note that **questions in bold** should be the priorities. Make sure to leave enough time in the interview to allow for the Next Steps questions and the problem ranking at the end of this protocol. When finished, make sure to thank the interviewee, allow him/her to ask any questions, and ask whether or not it would be all right to follow up if needed.

SECTION 3: POLICY ENVIRONMENT (if relevant)

1. What are the most important government policies aimed at youth?
    a. Is there a National Youth Policy?
        i. Is there an implementation strategy?
            1. Is it being followed?
            2. Is it in need of revision?
        ii. What are the key strengths of the Policy?
        iii. What are the key weaknesses of the Policy?
        iv. How can it be improved?
        v. Is the National Youth Policy linked to the National Development Strategy?
        vi. How were young people engaged in the development of the Policy?
    b. Are there other important youth-focused policies in the areas of education, environment, health, crime and violence, gender, social support systems, juvenile justice, and/or economic opportunities?
    c. Do you have enough empirical data to inform youth development programming?

SECTION 4: THEMES (Select most appropriate ones)

1. **Economic opportunities:**
    a. **What is the status of youth engagement in the economy?**
        i. How do youth earn their money?
    b. **What are key factors leading to successful youth engagement in the economy?**

c. **What do you think are the primary challenges for youth engagement in the economy?**

d. **To what extent are young men and women affected differently with regard to economic opportunities?**

e. Do you know of any youth-focused initiatives that the government, private sector, and/or other donors are involved in relating to economic opportunities?

f. **What more can be done to improve youth engagement in the economy?**

   i. What industries do you think more young people could be employed in?

2. **Crime and Violence:**

   a. **How would you characterize the relationship between youth and crime/violence?**

      i. What do you think are the most important impacts of crime on youth?

      ii. What do you think are the most important factors driving youth to commit crimes?

      iii. What are the most important factors in reducing crime and violence and its impact as they relate to youth?

   b. **To what extent are young men and women affected differently with regard to crime and violence?**

   c. Do you know of any youth-focused initiatives that the government, private sector, and/or other donors are involved in relating to crime and violence?

   d. **What more can be done to help victims of crime and violence?**

   e. **What more can be done to prevent youth from becoming victims of crime and violence?**

   f. **What more can be done to prevent youth engagement in criminal and violent activity?**

3. **Education and Training:**

   a. **To what extent do you think education and training are meeting the needs of youth?**

   b. **What are the most successful aspects of education and training as they relate to youth?**

   c. **What do you think are the primary challenges faced by young people with respect to education and training?**

   d. **To what extent are young men and women affected differently with regard to education and training?**

   e. Do you know of any youth-focused initiatives that the government, private sector, and/or other donors are involved in relating to education and training?

f. **What more can be done to improve youth education and training?**

4. **Juvenile Justice:**
   a. **How would you characterize the relationship between youth and the justice system?** (including police, courts, correctional officers, prisons, etc.)
   b. **What are the most successful aspects of the justice system as it relates to youth?**
   c. **What are the challenges to an effective justice system as it relates to youth?**
   d. **To what extent are young men and women affected differently with regard to juvenile justice?**
   e. Do you know of any youth-focused initiatives that the government, private sector, and/or other donors are involved in relating to juvenile justice?
   f. **What more can be done to improve the juvenile justice system?**

5. **Health and Well-Being:**
   a. **What is the status of youth's *mental and physical* health and well-being?**
      i. What are the key factors that contribute to youth health and well-being?
      ii. What do you think are the primary challenges to youth health and well-being?
   b. **To what extent do young men and women's health and well-being differ?**
   c. Do you know of any youth-focused initiatives that the government, private sector, and/or other donors are involved in relating to youth health and well-being?
   d. **What more can be done to improve youth health and well-being?**

6. **Social Support Systems:**
   a. **What is the status of non-governmental social support systems as they relate to youth?** (friends and family, relationships, authority figures, religion, sports, clubs, etc.)
      i. **What are the most successful aspects of social support systems as they relate to youth?**
      ii. **What do you think are the primary challenges faced by young people in regard to social support systems?**
   b. **To what extent are young men and women affected differently with regard to social support systems?**
   c. Do you know of any youth-focused initiatives that the government, private sector, and/or other donors are involved in relating to youth social support systems?
   d. **What more can be done to improve youth social support systems?**

7. **Environment/ Climate Change**:
   a. **What role do youth currently play in the political and social arena regarding the environment and climate change?**
      i. In what ways is the engagement of youth in environmental issues successful?
      ii. What are the challenges to successful engagement in environmental issues?
   b. **To what extent do young men and women engage differently with the environment and climate change?**
   c. Do you know of any youth-focused initiatives that the government, private sector, and/or other donors are involved in relating to environment and climate change?
   d. **What more can be done to improve/increase the role of youth in environment and climate change issues?**

SECTION 5: NEXT STEPS

8. **If you were in our position, what would be the most important thing to communicate to USAID/BEC about youth development in your country?**
9. **If you were in our position, what youth-focused programs or policies would you most recommend that USAID/BEC implement?**

ANNEX E. ISSUE RATING/PROBLEM ANALYSIS

COUNTRY: _____

SECTION 2: ISSUE RATING

Please rate each area in terms of its ***IMPORTANCE TO YOUTH***.

SECTORS	**RESPONSES (1–5)** 1= NOT IMPORTANT, 5 = VERY IMPORTANT)
Economic Opportunities	
Crime and Violence	
Education and Training	
Juvenile Justice	
Health and Well-Being	
Social Support Systems	
Environment and Climate Change	

SECTION 6: ISSUE RANKING

Please rank the following problem statements in terms of their ***IMPORTANCE TO YOUTH.***

- 1 is the most important problem and 10 is the least important problem.
- Please include *only one problem statement per rank.*

PROBLEM STATEMENT	**MOST IMPORTANT → LEAST IMPORTANT**									
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Inadequate social support systems (family, friends, clubs…)										
Lack of youth inclusion in political decision-making										
High prevalence of substance abuse										
Gender inequity										
Underperforming juvenile justice system										
Inadequate education system										
Lack of access to economic opportunities										
High prevalence of crime and violence										
Environmental degradation and climate change										
Underperforming health system										

ANNEX F. FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction:

Good afternoon! My name is _____, and I will be guiding our conversation today. My colleague's name is _____, and she/he will be helping to take notes.

Thank you for being here today and for talking with us. We have been asked by the United States Agency for International Development, or USAID, to come and speak with you today. USAID is trying to find out more about the situation of young people in [country name] and in the Caribbean. They will then use this information to help choose what kinds of youth programs to support and conduct in the Caribbean over the next five years.

This discussion will be most useful for us, and most interesting for everyone, if we are all able to share our thoughts as openly and honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers; we just want to know about your opinions and the lives of young people in [country name]. Also, after we've finished today, we will incorporate the information from our conversation today into a report, but we will not share your names or any other identifying information with USAID or with anyone else.

We would like for everyone here to participate actively in the discussion, and everyone's opinion is important. It's okay if you disagree with someone else in the group, and we should always be respectful of everyone else during the conversation.

Finally, you should know that your participation today is completely voluntary. You will not receive any form of payment for participating, and you can choose not to participate if you do not want to. If you do choose to participate, you will help USAID to better understand the situation of youth in the Caribbean and help them to choose and design more effective programs in the future.

Do you understand these expectations, or do you have any questions?

[*Wait for confirmation or questions from the participants*.]

Do you agree to participate?

[*Wait for confirmation or questions from the participants*.]

Great. Let's start by introducing ourselves. We'll go around in a circle, and please tell everyone your name, how old you are, and your favorite thing to do in your free time. [For adult participants, facilitator can ask instead: "Please tell me one thing about the young person you are closest to."

Focus Group Interview Questions

1. [YOUTH] **What does "success" look like for you?**

   [ADULTS] **What do you think "success" looks like for young people in your community?**

2. **What kinds of opportunities or resources are available to young people in [*country name*] today to achieve that kind of success?**

3. **Are all young people able to take advantage of this opportunity? Why or why not?**

   - *Prompts (based on context)*: gender, ethnic, religious, geographic, or other disparities?

4. **"What are the greatest challenges facing young people today in [country name]? If you would please say them one at a time, I will write them down on these cards."**

   As people say different topics, write down each on a separate index card. Ask if similar challenges can be combined onto one card, especially if they match one of the previously identified challenges listed below.

   "These are the challenges we have so far; are there any other important challenges facing youth today in [country name]?"

   Continue with this question until participants no longer identify additional challenges.

5. **"Now, please look at these challenges we have identified, and think about which ones you think are the most urgent. On the piece of paper we have given you, please find the place marked 'Challenge Ranking.' Please make a list of the challenges we have identified, and put them in order from most urgent to least urgent, with #1 being the most urgent, and #__ being the least urgent."**

6. **"Now we are going to create a ranking based on the opinions of the whole group. What did you write down as the most urgent challenge on your list?"**

   Facilitate a discussion to reach consensus as a group about the ranking of the challenges.

7. **"Now I would like to talk about resources and opportunities. What resources and opportunities are available to young people in [*country name*] to help address [*Challenge #1*]?"**

8. **What kinds of resources or opportunities would you like to have available in [*country name*] to help young people address [*Challenge #1*]?**

   - *Follow-up:* **"Why do you think that this is important?"**

   [*Repeat Questions #5 and #6 based on each challenge identified as important by the group*.]

9. **Is there anything else related to the situation of youth in this country that you think is important for us to know?**

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