



EYE ON THE FUTURE

Investing in YOUTH NOW
for Tomorrow's Community



Report of the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development
January 2010

CONTENTS

	<u>Page(s)</u>
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACROYNMS	viii-ix
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	x-xxvi
INTRODUCTION	] 1-10
1. THE GLOBAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT	] 11-17
Historical Context	] 11-14
Current Global and Regional Challenges	] 14-17
2. YOUTH AND THE CARICOM SINGLE MARKET AND ECONOMY (CSME)	] 18-28
CSME: History and Promise	] 18-21
CSME: Threat or Opportunity	] 21-22
Youth Knowledge and Perceptions of the Integration Movement	] 22-25
Citizenship and Regional Identity	] 25 -27
The Reality of Life in the Caribbean for Caribbean Youth	] 27-28
Conclusion	] 28-29
3. THE SITUATION OF CARIBBEAN ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH	] 30-89
Adolescent and Youth Dreams and Aspirations	] 31-32
Education	] 33
Adolescents, Youth and Education: An Overview	] 33
Poverty	] 33-34

	<u>Page(s)</u>
Attrition from the Education System	] 34
Gender Issues	] 35-36
Expenditure on Education	] 36
Participation and Performance at the Secondary and Tertiary Levels	] 37-41
Access to Secondary Education	] 41-42
Tertiary Level Education	] 42-43
Male Under-performance	] 43-44
Adolescent and Youth Perspectives on Education	] 44-46
Teaching and Leadership in the Education System	] 46-47
Youth, Labour and Employment	] 47-50
School and Employment in the OECS	] 50-52
Adolescents, Youth and Migration	] 52-55
Rethinking the Brain Drain	] 55
Insularity, Xenophobia and Institutionalised Discrimination: The Case of Haiti	] 56-58
Adolescent and Youth Health and Well-Being	] 59
Adolescent and Youth Health	] 59-61
Mental Health	] 61-62
Drug Use and Abuse	] 62-63
Sexual Reproductive Health	] 63-65
Adolescents, Youth, Crime and Violence	] 66
Crime and Violence – The Caribbean Experience	] 66-68
Crime and Violence – A Developmental Issue	] 68-71

	<u>Page(s)</u>
An Unsafe World	] 71-72
Sports and Recreation	] 73
The State of Sport in CARICOM	] 73-75
The Value of Sport	] 75-79
Caribbean Culture and Identity	] 80
Youth and Caribbean Culture	] 79-82
External Challenges to Cultural Values	] 82-83
Youth Culture	] 83-84
Youth, Creativity and Cultural Industry Development	] 84-87]
The Cross-cutting Nature of Culture	] 87-88
4. YOUTH GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATION	] 90-106
The Right to Participate	] 90-92
Governance, Politics and Youth Participation	] 92-94
The Regional Context for Youth Governance	] 94-95
CYAP	] 95-96
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	] 96-97
Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE)	] 97]
Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	] 97-98
The National Context for Youth Governance	] 98
Relevance, Functionality and Responsiveness of Youth Governance Structures	] 99]

		<u>Page(s)</u>
	Responses of DYAs	] 99-101
	Responses of Youth Networks	] 101
	National Governance	] 101-104
	Summary	] 104-106
5.	YOUTH AND CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT: THE COST OF NOT INVESTING IN YOUTH	] 107-126]]
	Understanding Adolescence and Youth	] 107-108
	Extending the Liminal	] 108
	The Peer Group	] 109
	Personhood, Sexuality and Identity	] 109-110
	Those Who Fail	] 110-112
	Creativity	] 112
	Agents of Change	] 112
	A Context of Adolescent and Youth Risk in the Caribbean	] ] 113
	Recognise the Contribution of Youth	] 114-116
	Invest More in the Youth	] 116-117
	Education	] 117-119
	Employment	] 119-121
	Health	] 121-124
	Crime and Violence	] 124-125
	The Cost-Benefit of Investing	] 125-126

		<u>Page(s)</u>
6.	TOWARDS A NEW ERA OF PARTNERSHIP, POLICY AND PARTICIPATION	] 127-134
	Recommendations	] 128
	Changing the Mindset	] 128-129
	The CSME	] 129-130
	Youth Governance Structures	] 130-131
	Human Resource Development	] 131-132
	Sports and Culture	] 132-133
	CARICOM Youth Development Goals	] 133-134
	REFERENCES	] 135-143
	ANNEXES:	
I	MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION	
II	THE COMMISSION'S RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	



Report Cover designed in-house at the CARICOM Secretariat

Graphic on Chapter dividers designed by Mr. Seon Thompson, CSEC/CXC award-winning, young artist, Trinidad and Tobago

LIST OF TABLES

	<u>Page(s)</u>
Table 1: CSEC % Pass Rate by Sex (Math) 1997 and 2009	37
Table 2: CSEC % Pass Rate by Sex (English) 1997 and 2009	39
Table 3: Economic Contribution of Diasporic Carnivals in 2000	83
Table 4: Caribbean Festival Tourism: Comparative Economic Impact in 2000	85
Table 5: The Cost of Early School Leaving (2004)	118
Table 6: The Cost of Early School Leaving by Gender (2004)	118
Table 7: The Cost of Youth Unemployment	120
Table 8: The Cost of Adolescent Pregnancy	121
Table 9: The Cost of Youth HIV and AIDS	123
Table 10: The Cost of Youth Crime	124

LIST OF FIGURES

	<u>Page(s)</u>
Figure 1: CARICOM Youth Population- 2020 Projections	3
Figure 2: CARICOM Youth Population- 2035 Projections	4
Figure 3: CSME- Expected Benefits	19
Figure 4: CSEC % Pass Rate (Math) 1997 and 2009	38
Figure 5: CSEC % Pass Rate (English) 1997 and 2009	40
Figure 6: UWI On-Campus Registrations 1980 – 2005	43
Figure 7: Youth Unemployment Rate by Gender (2000)	48
Figure 8: Prosecuted Crimes in Jamaica by Age Group As A Share of All Crimes (1988)	70
Figure 9: Adolescents and Youth Arrested for Selected Major Crimes in Jamaica (2008)	71

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAPE	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination
CAREC	Caribbean Epidemiology Centre
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCJ	Caribbean Court of Justice
CCHD	CARICOM Commission on Health and Development
CCYD	CARICOM Commission on Youth Development
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CICAD	Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission
COHSOD	Council for Human and Social Development
CONSLE	Council for National Security and Law Enforcement
COTED	Council for Trade and Economic Development
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CROSQ	CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
CSME	CARICOM Single Market and Economy
CVQ	CARICOM Vocational Qualification
CXC	Caribbean Examinations Council
CYAs	CARICOM Youth Ambassadors
CYAP	CARICOM Youth Ambassador Programme
CYDGs	CARICOM Youth Development Goals
CYP	Commonwealth Youth Programme
DYAs	Departments of Youth Affairs
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education
HRD	Human Resource Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund

IT	Information Technology
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MVA	Motor Vehicle Accidents
NYCs	National Youth Councils
NYP	National Youth Policy
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PANCAP	Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV and AIDS
PAYE	Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
RSYD	Regional Strategy for Youth Development
RYC	Regional Youth Caucus
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UTECH	University of Technology
UWI	University of the West Indies
WHO	World Health Organization
Y-AP	Youth-Adult Partnership





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Twenty-Seventh Meeting of CARICOM Heads of Government in July 2006, mandated the establishment of a Commission on Youth Development which was tasked with undertaking **“a full scale analysis of the challenges and opportunities for youth in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME); and making recommendations to improve their well-being and empowerment”**.

The following beliefs underpinned the Commission’s approach to its mandate: a) regional integration holds the key to the optimal development of the small developing countries of the Community and the regional citizenry; b) the CSME, as a social institution, is heavily dependent on the knowledge, skills, competencies, values and attitudes of young people for successful outcomes; c) young people are an under-utilised resource for the development of Caribbean communities, countries and the Region.

The Report argues that young people comprise the sector of the population best positioned by virtue of their creative potential to play the leading role in responding to the challenges of globalisation and, therefore, to the demands of regional integration and the CSME. However, despite various efforts to tap their participation, not only do they know little of the CSME, their commitment to the region is overshadowed by the multiplicity of problems with which they are confronted, including half-hearted attempts at meaningful governance structures. In outlining what needs to be done, the Report calls for four critical actions: understanding the transitional character of adolescents and youth; tangible recognition of their contribution to the Region; more investment in them for greater returns to both country and Region; and a radical shift towards partnering with them to tackle many of the burning issues confronting us.

The Commission placed priority on capturing the views of young people in and out of school and in informal institutions through a modular integrated research framework, and given the holistic and seamless transitioning promoted by the life-cycle approach, captured the perspectives of young people aged 10 to 14 (referred to in the report as adolescents) as well as those aged 15 to 29 (referred to as youth). Studies commissioned included the following:

- Literature Review: Issues Pertaining to Caribbean Youth (15 – 29) 1990 – present;

- The Relevance, Functionality and Responsiveness of Caribbean Youth Governance Structures (10 countries);
- Vision, Aspirations, Identity, Concerns and CSME Perspectives of a wide cross section of youth in and out of school and in informal institutions in 12 countries;
- Adolescent and Youth Risk, Vulnerability, Resilience and Protection (3 countries);
- Caribbean adolescent and youth perspectives of CARICOM and CSME (on-line survey);
- Experiencing Haiti through the voices of Adolescents and Youth;
- Benefits from Investing in Youth in CARICOM Member States.

UNICEF, a strategic partner of the Commission, conducted studies on the 10 to 14 age group in support of the Commission's work. This Report draws from a number of discrete regional reports on each research module and reflects regional issues and trends. The voices of adolescents and youth, strategically positioned throughout the Report, enable the reader to gain insight into the depths of their lives and their behavioural manifestations.

Regional Integration and the CSME

Young people under the age of 30 comprise 60 per cent of the Region's citizenry and are to be the main beneficiaries of the CSME over the next 20 years. The majority of those aged 15 to 29 have never heard of the CSME; and in each Member and Associate State there are some who have never heard of CARICOM.

To those who have, the CSME is widely perceived to discriminate against the average man or woman, unskilled workers and countries with few higher education opportunities and institutions. Few can identify concrete opportunities, benefits or implementation mechanisms. They perceive national and public information and marketing messages to be vague, excessively technical and largely ineffective.

Those who do understand the CSME, however, think of it as "the best thing to ever happen to the Caribbean".

Living in the Caribbean

Adolescents and youth, by and large, identify with the Region's natural beauty, pleasant climate, diverse cultures, festivals, parties and democratic traditions. The younger they are the more idealistic is their perception of the Caribbean as fair, pleasant, harmonious and equal for all. By the time they reach age 15 to 29, they are describing living in the Caribbean on a scale ranging from "O.K", "challenging", "hard", "difficult" and "boring" at one end, to "living in hell", "living without hope" and "living like dogs" at the other.

Believing the Community's rich cultural diversity to be the Region's greatest resilience factor, the Commission found it also a risk factor, as significant levels of insularity, xenophobia and discriminatory attitudes exist among the youth that could threaten the achievement of the goals of regional integration and, by extension, the CSME.

Dreams and Aspirations

Caribbean youth dream of being the best that they can be, but their dreams and aspirations, under the influence of family, friends and the communications media as well as their own knowledge and perceptions of the opportunities, rights and privileges available in developed countries, are oriented outside the Region. Some, in particular older youth, are afraid to dream because of the pain and frustration that comes from their social and economic reality and the acceptance of the fact that their dreams cannot be realised.

Most of the young people encountered, generally see themselves making progress towards their dreams and aspirations in 5 years, although those who grapple with survival on a day-to-day basis are so consumed with hopelessness and despair that they are either resigned to being dead, struggling or incarcerated in five years; or unable or afraid to envision tomorrow because today is so dark and uncertain.

Education

There are three critical issues that the Regional system of education has to contend with. One is the relatively high attrition rates, due to poverty, unemployment, adolescent pregnancy and male lack of motivation, notwithstanding relatively high rates of expenditure on education

and the policy of universal secondary education already achieved by some Member States. The second is the alarmingly steep fall in Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC, CXC) passes over the last thirteen years in Mathematics and English, two critical subjects in the face of the challenge of globalisation. And third is the low ratio of males to females at the tertiary level.

The expressed concerns of Caribbean youth aged 15 to 29 reflect these issues. They are:

- (i) Restricted access due to poverty, an inadequate number and enrolment capacity of schools and training institutions, particularly at the post-secondary level; and few scholarships and spaces at post-secondary institutions;
- (ii) Low relevance of education – curriculum options and delivery systems are unresponsive to their talents, skills, interests and needs; boring, limited and academic focused; ultra-traditional; unequally distributed; certificates and diplomas do not guarantee them a job or job security; and under-investment in rural schools;
- (iii) security – indiscipline and gang activities in schools organised around drug sales, guns, machetes, knives, politics, theft, sex, turfism and a homosexual culture.

Labour and Unemployment

Levels of youth unemployment in the Region are among the highest in the world. Many youth confirm what some experts conclude, namely that the system of education does not prepare them adequately for the regional and global labour market. Rapid advances in ICTs over the past few decades have created a serious mismatch between the education system and the world of work, and the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of young people in the work force lag behind those required by the private sector.

Many public and private sector agencies across the Region promote skills training and employment initiatives as well as micro-enterprises, as a means of solving high levels of unemployment among youth, male and female. These programmes assist in increasing productivity with the goal of achieving anticipated improvements in the social and economic welfare of Caribbean people.

However, their impact has been constrained in part by a primary focus on entry-level occupations; a lack of interest among persons trained, to continue in the same field; stringent criteria for obtaining start-up loan funds; the absence of an entrepreneurial culture; and the failure of schools to unleash the entrepreneurial spirit of youth. In addition, few skills training or entrepreneurial development agencies and schools expose students to concrete CARICOM and CSME concepts, principles and cross-border opportunities.

Migration

Eighty-five per cent of Caribbean nationals between the ages of 15 and 29 would migrate to more developed countries, if they had the choice and the necessary resources. Adolescents aged 10 to 14, although aware of and connected to their own communities: home, school, and geographic location, have limited interest in exploring, residing in or being part of any integration movement involving Caribbean communities.

Key issues of concern raised by adolescents and youth include:

- (i) involuntary repatriation from more developed countries of persons convicted of a criminal or civil offence (deportees) to countries in the Caribbean where they have few family ties;
- (ii) intra-regional or internal movement (trafficking) of children and youth by means of coercion, threats, or deception for the purpose of prostitution, sexual slavery, domestic servitude, begging, forced labour or other forms of exploitation; and
- (iii) parents who cannot afford to raise their children who send them to work for more affluent nationals as domestics, e.g. *Restavecs* in Haiti.

Health and Well-being

HIV/AIDS is the main cause of death among youth, followed by violence and motor vehicle accidents (Report of the CARICOM Commission on Health and Development, 2006). However, of growing concern is obesity, in addition to early sexual initiation and unprotected sex. Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) remains ineffective.

Adolescents and youth have the following health concerns –

- (i) **Health Care Facilities and Services:** limited access to hospitals/ clinics, medical personnel and health care, particularly HIV and AIDS and mental health patients; long waiting periods in emergency rooms; lack of confidentiality and “youth friendliness” in clinics providing sexual and reproductive health services.
- (ii) **Environmental Degradation:** over-development, deforestation and failure to preserve natural resources; climate change, hurricanes, flooding and other natural disasters; pollution; non-maintenance of bridges, roads and other civil infrastructure.
- (iii) **Road Accidents:** Among males 15 to 24 years old, motor vehicle accidents are the third leading cause of death in the Caribbean at 9.2 per cent, behind homicide (19.8 per cent) and HIV and AIDS (13.6 per cent). The main victims are males.

While not surprised by young people’s seeming lack of concern for physical health, the Commission was struck by an apparent decline in mental health indicators from a 2000 PAHO Study which found sixteen per cent or one in six adolescents and youth to be sad, irritable or angry. Of specific concern are:

- (i) high levels of anger, hostility, depression, suicide, alienation and hopelessness, in particular among the 15 to 29 age cohort ; and
- (ii) an incidence of parental and family neglect, crime and violence, sexual promiscuity, stigmatisation, poverty and victimisation which seem more common than previously believed.

Crime and Violence

This is the number one concern among adolescents and youth in the Caribbean Community, associated with poverty, unemployment, politics and social inequities. Constant exposure to crime and violence leads to emotional blunting, high stress, grief and a sense of loss. Young people across the Region spoke of fear, perceptions of lack of safety and concern for their

general well-being as a result of the increased crime and violence; of self-imposed curfews, diminished participation in community activities, restriction of night-time activities and changes in social practices as a consequence. Altogether, they wondered about the quality of life facing them.

Sport, Culture and Recreation

Sports and culture are two areas in which youth have contributed to Regional identity for which they need to be recognised.

Although often ignored and downplayed, Sport and Physical Education are gradually returning to their places in the school curriculum, and are being buttressed by new initiatives at the tertiary level as well. However, great inadequacies remain, including the lack of facilities for out-of-school youth and the need for year-long training support.

At the Regional level competitive sports – football, cricket, athletics, volley-ball, rugby, netball, hockey, squash and badminton – have been contributing to a sense of Regional identity and Regional integration. However, great disparities exist among Member States

The role of sports in enhancing economic development and social cohesion is yet to be realised within the Caribbean, which has a natural advantage in the outstanding talent of its youth.

As a Region, the Caribbean is also known and respected for its outstanding contributions in culture, and our young people identify strongly with the many cultural expressions that have distinguished the Region internationally – such as the literary arts, music, dance, art and craft, and the many world renowned music festivals and other events, all of which contribute to a sense of national and regional identity among youth in the Caribbean.

Although it is often not recognised, Caribbean youth are the backbone of evolving creative and cultural industries in the Region, in music, fashion, film and audio visuals, festivals, dance, drama and the visual arts. It is young people in the Caribbean who are the primary producers, artists, managers and consumers of the products and services developed in the creative economy. These industries are among the fastest growing sectors in the global

economy today; already contributing 7 per cent of the world's gross domestic product, and estimated to grow at 10 per cent per annum in the near future.

Greater and more strategic investments in youth, culture and sport, especially in the creation of the enabling environment necessary for these sectors to flourish, would significantly redound to the benefit of the Region's youth, while maximising the global impact of the Region.

Governance, Politics and Participation

Caribbean adolescents and youth continue to be seen only as the beneficiaries of services and products rather than as strategic partners in policy development and implementation. At the same time, the Commission is convinced that the absence of vibrant National Youth Councils, younger leaders and a *bona fide* democratic regional youth network from the youth governance landscape has removed healthy levels of youth "pressure" and influence from national and regional agendas and affected the strong advocacy, brokerage and catalytic role that is necessary for change.

Young people envision a transformed context for Caribbean governance in which they are afforded opportunities to contribute to and participate in political and socio-economic development at community, national and regional levels. Many feel marginalised, alienated and suspicious of the national and regional political process due to the remoteness of the political systems from their daily lives; disappointed with the ineffectiveness of the political system in meeting their needs; and desirous of greater access to the central decision-making apparatus at the national and regional level. Their apathy, suspicion and distrust of the political system is grounded in the actual realities of their political experiences.

Principal issues and challenges faced by Departments of Youth Affairs relate to outdated/absent youth policies, weak administrative and institutional base, lack of professionalisation of youth work and competition between Governments departments and with youth organisations. Issues facing youth organisations include disrespect and mistrust of youth in general, party politics and disconnect between formal and informal youth governance structures. The CARICOM Youth Ambassador Programme CYAP which is strategically placed to encourage an integrated approach to youth governance by linking national youth development strategies to broader regional development strategies is

hampered by challenges of internal structure and the forging of partnerships with other organisations.

What Needs To Be Done

Understand Adolescence and Youth: The Commission subscribes to a life-cycle theory of the in-between nature of adolescence and youth – in-between childhood and adulthood, in-between the dependency of the former and the independence of the latter. It emphasises the transitional nature of that particular period of life, requiring sensitivity and understanding.

Recognise the Contribution of Youth: Youth contribution to the identity, stability and economic development of their countries and of the Region, though not quantified and in some instances, not quantifiable, but should be recognised and rewarded regardless.

Increase Strategic Investment in Youth: Youth have been in transition all their lives, from infancy to childhood, and now to socially mature adulthood. The kind of mature adults they will become is significantly influenced by the timely inputs pertinent to each stage of their development. In this life-cycle approach, positive inputs at every stage lead to bright, well-adjusted, healthy, creative, balanced and confident adults. Lack of positive inputs leads to youth and mature adults who fall short of their potential, are socially maladjusted and negative in their behaviours. Not to invest in children and youth is therefore not an option.

The Report demonstrates authoritatively that manifestations of youth risk and vulnerability, such as dropping out of school, unemployment, adolescent pregnancy, HIV infection and crime, have a direct and indirect cost on the country's productivity when presented holistically as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product. For example, if all males were to complete the secondary level of school, the five Caribbean countries for which there were available data, would show growth of from 0.2 per cent in the case of Barbados to 1.8 per cent in the case of Jamaica; and in the case of females, 0.1 per cent and 1.2 per cent, respectively.

Reducing youth unemployment to the level of adult unemployment would propel growth of Saint Lucia's GDP by 2.5 per cent, Grenada's and St Vincent and the Grenadines' by 2.3 per cent. Postponing pregnancy to ages over 20 years, would see Belize's GDP grow by over 10 per cent over the young women's life time and Suriname's by over 17 per cent. Eliminating

youth crime would contribute over 4 per cent to the GDP of St Lucia, over 3 per cent to Dominica's and to Jamaica's, and 2.8 per cent to Guyana's.

All this is in addition to the greater returns to be had from investing in developmental programmes in sport and culture.

Recommendations

In making the following Recommendations, the Commission underlines the importance of embracing all categories of youth, irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, class, abilities, religious persuasion and sexual orientation, and wishes to reiterate the principles and overall philosophy that have guided its work in addressing its mandate. These are as follows:

1. Youth are a creative asset and a valuable human resource to be developed, and not a problem to be solved;
2. Youth should be seen as partners in the development of the Region and not only as beneficiaries;
3. Youth are the future but also the present – they can and do contribute to national and regional identity and development;
4. The majority of the youth transition successfully to adulthood. The failure of a minority to do so is largely attributable to the fact that adults and society have not adequately discharged their responsibilities for their development;
5. The dominant paradigm in which youth are viewed is problem-focused, and does not adequately take into account their assets, contribution and achievements.

The Commission posits that Youth Policies are weak, outdated and rarely implemented and concludes that current investments in structures and programmes for youth development – in education, health and well-being, culture, sports and job creation – such as they are, are just not enough and in some instances, are misdirected. No investment in youth, no Regional integration. No investment in youth, no CSME.

Accordingly, the Commission recommends as follows:

Changing the Mindset

Youth are in a developmental stage of life. The vast majority is making the transition to socially responsible and productive adulthood, but there is a minority that is not.

The first change in our thinking must be to refrain from using this minority to brand all youth. Secondly, with respect to the minority itself, the change in thinking must be to see them first as potential assets to be nurtured, not as a cancer to be repressed. **What is really required is more investment to provide them with additional opportunities to develop their creative and productive capacities;**

While efforts must necessarily be made to limit the negative impact of risk and vulnerability factors, the first line of thinking must be to allocate more resources to strengthen the institutions that should serve as protective factors – the family, the community, the school, the faith-based organisations.

The Commission further recommends that CARICOM States encourage more research on youth and crime, and to this end, improve their collection of crime statistics, disaggregated by age, sex and other relevant demographics and variables, using regionally agreed templates.

The Commission also further recommends that the Heads of Government in recognising the contributions of youth introduce a high level, high profile Regional Youth Awards programme.

The CSME

The Commission finds that there is wide-spread ignorance and growing cynicism among adolescents and youth about regional integration, CARICOM and in particular the CSME. It also finds that when engaged on these issues, youth express their vision for a unified community and a willingness to share the message of regionalism and CSME. Concluding that a major effort is needed to spread knowledge and change attitudes about regionalism and the CSME and that the education system has an important role to play in overcoming them, the Commission recommends that Heads of Government:

- (a) Implement a wide-scale youth-led Regional integration and CSME information, education and communication campaign that uses methodology and content relevant and attractive to youth that builds knowledge and awareness; strengthens Regional identity and erases negative perceptions of the CSME and Caribbean citizenship;
- (b) Introduce into the school curricula at all levels relevant, age-appropriate information and creatively-presented activities on CARICOM countries, regional integration, regional citizenship and the CSME;
- (c) Mandate the undertaking of research to increase understanding of youth in development issues including the experiences of youth who have applied for free movement as well as those who have migrated within the region under other circumstances; and
- (d) Institutionalise mechanisms to nurture and sustain a sense of Caribbean identity among youth in the Caribbean Diaspora, and to channel their skills, resources and talents into avenues for Caribbean development and integration.

Youth Governance Structures

In keeping with the democratic traditions that characterise the Region, the Commission concludes that Member States should commit to deepening the democratic culture by including the youth of the Region in these processes. The Commission therefore strongly recommends that:

1. the Heads of Government amend the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas to embrace a Human Resource Development paradigm in order to ensure that the role of youth in the integration process is explicitly recognised and provided for. Such roles should be reflected in national development strategies and be congruent with those enshrined in the Revised Treaty;
2. a broad based democratically-elected youth representative body be established to become the central national institutional body for development. Such a body shall be elected by a process which allows every young person the opportunity to vote or be

elected. The process shall be overseen by the National Electoral Departments in each Member State and should be enshrined in legislation. All youth representation must be managed through, and accountable to this nationally elected body;

3. the Heads of Government promote and support the establishment of National Inter-ministerial Committees in all member states which will, among other things, ensure that the decisions made at the regional level are implemented and that the youth agenda at the regional level, is linked to national development agendas; and
4. attention be paid to developing the capacities of the DYAs, and further recommends the expansion of the Youth and Community Development Programme within the CARICOM Secretariat, in order to deliver on youth development more effectively.

Human Resource Development

The Commission concludes that the empowerment of youth to participate in the CSME necessitates concerted action with regard to all facets of human resource development, in particular issues pertinent to education and training for social life and employment and overall well-being. Finding prevailing formal and informal structures and institutions lacking in relevance and effectiveness, the Commission:

1. recommends that in keeping with commitments to international conventions on child and human rights, the Heads of Government revisit the national legislative framework in order to ensure congruence with these commitments, in particular those relating to adequate access to health services in the areas of adolescent health, mental health and sexual and reproductive health;
2. recommends the elaboration of an integrated human resource development strategy that embraces in particular education, health, employment, gender, crime-prevention, culture, sport and youth leadership;
3. strongly recommends that serious efforts be made to prepare students to be socially well-adjusted critical thinkers, through curricular reform, the retooling of educators and educational leaders at all levels, and through the adoption of best practices, paying particular attention to gender;

4. also recommends that all CARICOM States invest in the development of technological literacy in order to reduce the digital divide among youth and prepare them for work and life in the information society and to take advantage of other new careers and opportunities in the regional and global environments;
5. further recommends that the Heads of Government address the lack of awareness and education with regard to environmental issues, in particular the effects of climate change;
6. that regional laws with regard to migration, including citizenship laws, be harmonised; and
7. that non-partisan mechanisms and strategies be developed to cushion the negative impact of migration and to investigate complaints about violations of human and civil rights within the context of the CSM.

Sports and Culture

Mindful of the world-wide acclaim and comparative advantage that the Region has in arts, culture and sports; mindful also of the concept of “Sport for All”, namely that every person has the right to engage in sport in the pursuit of excellence, wellness or friendships regardless of economic status, religion, or physical limitations, the Commission recommends that CARICOM States:

1. share their experiences of capacity building, institutional structures and practices, and alliances in order to identify, nurture and develop talent in culture and sports, in collaboration with the universities and other relevant institutions in the Region;
2. allocate resources to ensure adequate provision for sports and recreational facilities in communities and venues for the presentation of the arts;
3. invest more in the training and development of physical education teachers, coaches, sports and recreation administrators, and teachers of the arts;

4. place greater emphasis on creating After School Activity Programmes (ASAP) in schools and the increased use of school facilities to provide organised extra-curricular, recreational and sports activities for youth;
5. provide leadership and offer incentives for strengthening cooperation and partnerships between communities, sports organisations, and the private sector for the development of youth sports clubs and associations;
6. provide more opportunities for youth development in culture and sports for their general well being and to offer youth the possibility of new career pathways in sports, sports tourism and cultural industries;
7. strengthen the curriculum in sports, culture and technology at all levels – primary, secondary and tertiary;
8. put in place the necessary policies and policy framework for the development of vibrant industries in culture and sports tourism; and
9. strengthen regional integration, awareness and development through the unifying force of sports and culture, building on the strong foundations of regional events such as CARIFESTA and the CARIFTA Games.

CARICOM Youth Development Goals

In order that this Report finds an outcome in implementation, the Commission recommends to the Heads of Government, the adoption of the above Recommendations and the endorsement of the following CARICOM Youth Development Goals arising from them, along with a monitoring and evaluation plan:

Changing the Mind Set

Goal 1: Allocating more resources to targeted programmes to strengthen the protective factors – the family, the community, the school and faith-based organisations.

Goal 2: Increased participation of youth in the central affairs of the country and the Region.

CSME

Goal 3: Increased proportion of youth accessing entrepreneurial, employment and educational opportunities in the CSME.

Youth Governance

Goal 4: Increased youth participation and partnership through strengthened youth governance structures.

HRD

Goal 5: An integrated policy for youth development.

Goal 6: 30 per cent of qualified secondary school graduates accessing tertiary education.

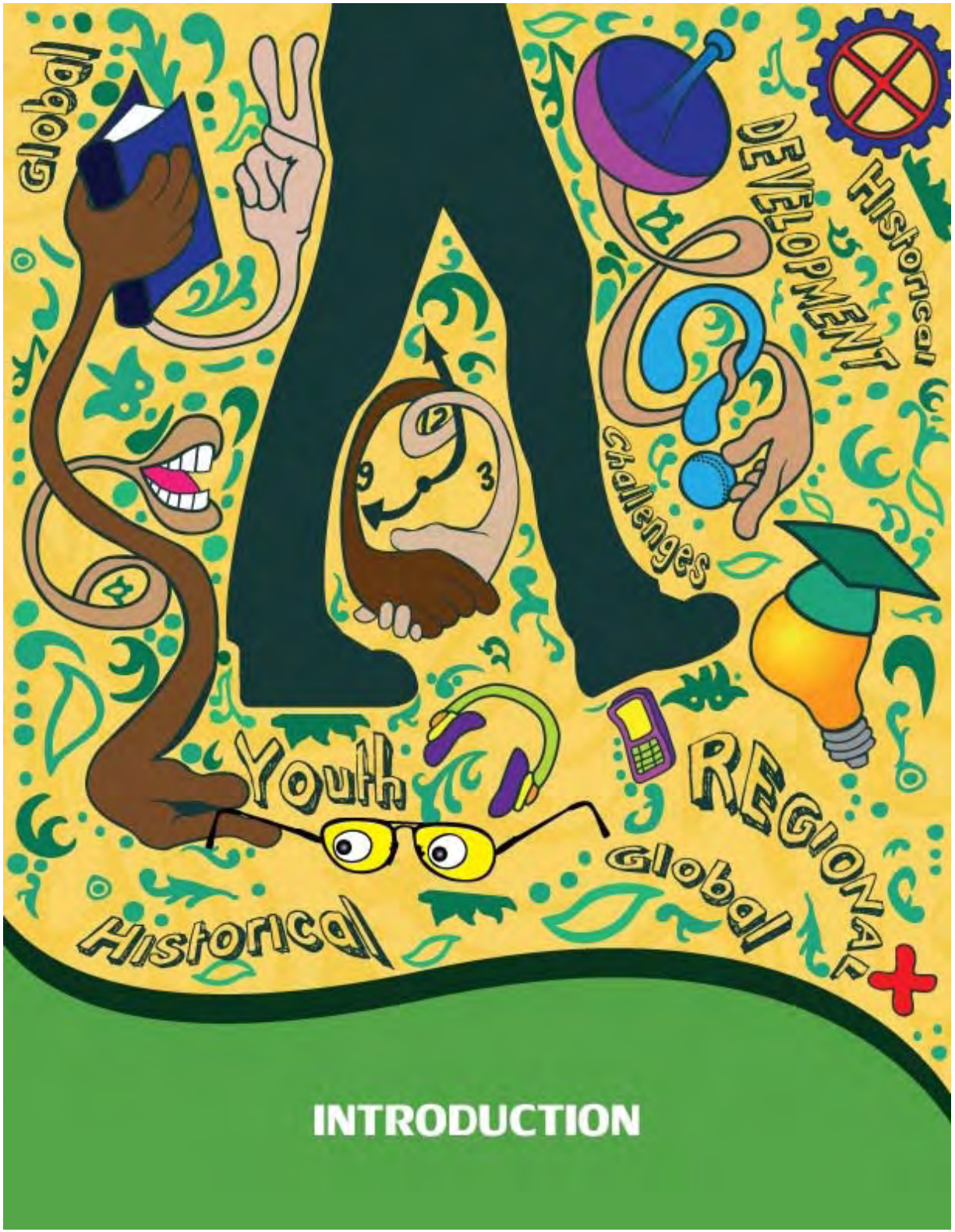
Goal 7: An environmentally-aware citizenry developed.

Sports and Culture

Goal 8: Sports for All Youth.

Goal 9: The Region's advantage in sports and culture optimised.





INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

CARICOM Commission on Youth Development

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is a multi-cultural, multi-lingual regional association of sovereign states aiming to enhance standards of living and work among small developing States¹ through cooperation in foreign policy, trade and economic integration, human and social development (e.g. health, education and youth development) and security.

The Twenty-Seventh Meeting of CARICOM Heads of Government held in July 2006 mandated the establishment of a Commission on Youth Development, tasked with undertaking “**a full scale analysis of the challenges and opportunities for youth in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME); and making recommendations to improve their well-being and empowerment**”. The CSME is the deepest form of regional integration, intended to counter the challenges posed by globalisation and trade liberalisation by increasing the Region’s productive capacity and citizens’ opportunities for greater employment, business development, expression, fulfillment and growth.

Following the West Indian Commission’s pronouncement on the importance of youth to Caribbean development (1995) below, the decision to establish the Youth Commission, is the clearest signal yet that decisive action is about to take place.

The voice of the youth has been recognised as an important dynamic in the evolution of these regional strategies and youth involvement in the process of seeking solutions is increasingly considered vital because the decisions made now will have an effect on the decisions of the future leaders. Viewed as catalysts of the development potential of the Region, youth participation has been increasingly reiterated as critical in the discourse on unity.
(West Indian Commission Report, Time for Action, 1995)

¹ Member States (15): Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, The Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago, Associate Member States (5): Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, and Turks and Caicos Islands.

Selection criteria for Commissioners included “a track record of outstanding leadership, excellent dedicated work of a high standard in youth work/social sciences, research and/or community interventions”. Commissioners were nominated by their peers and selected by the CARICOM Secretariat in consultation with youth work officials and development partners. The Commission was launched in March 2007 in Suriname by H. E. President Runaldo Venetiaan and a List of Commissioners **is at Annex I to this Report.**

The Commission’s structure and function outlined below reflect the application – and indeed testing - of regionally and internationally accepted principles of multi-sectoral and collaborative approaches, youth-adult partnerships, youth participation and agency collaboration. This systematic approach has made the Commission’s structure and function unique and a potential model of best practice.

CCYD at a Glance

Composition:	8 youth and 7 technocrats drawn from 8 Member States
Function:	Work plan development, implementation and review through team and individual efforts; engaged consultants; and a high degree of youth participation and partnership.
Research:	Qualitative and quantitative assessments of the views of a wide cross section of approximately 6,000 nationals between the ages of 10 and 29 in 13 countries.
Capacity Development:	Trained in gender sensitisation, communications and goal development. Experimental learning through short term attachments and multi-cultural exposure.
Administrative and Logistical Support:	CARICOM Secretariat and Departments of Youth Affairs;
Strategic alliances:	Youth networks and development partners, including UNICEF, UNIFEM, CYP, UNFPA, UNDP, CYAP;
Financial and other Resources:	Member States, Development Partners, UN System.

The Commission wishes to make clear from the beginning that its approach to operationalising the mandate of Heads of Government has been influenced by three important shared beliefs. The first is that regional integration holds the key to the optimal development of the small developing countries of the Community and the regional citizenry. Secondly, the CSME, as a social institution, is and will be heavily dependent on the knowledge, skills, competencies, values and attitudes of young people. Of the 10 million or 64 per cent below 30 years, 4,500,000

are between the ages of 18-30. Population projections indicate a continuing demographic significance of youth over the mid-term. By 2020, 58 per cent will be under 30 years and by 2035 fifty percent, as the following two graphs show.

Figure 1
CARICOM YOUTH POPULATION – 2020 PROJECTION

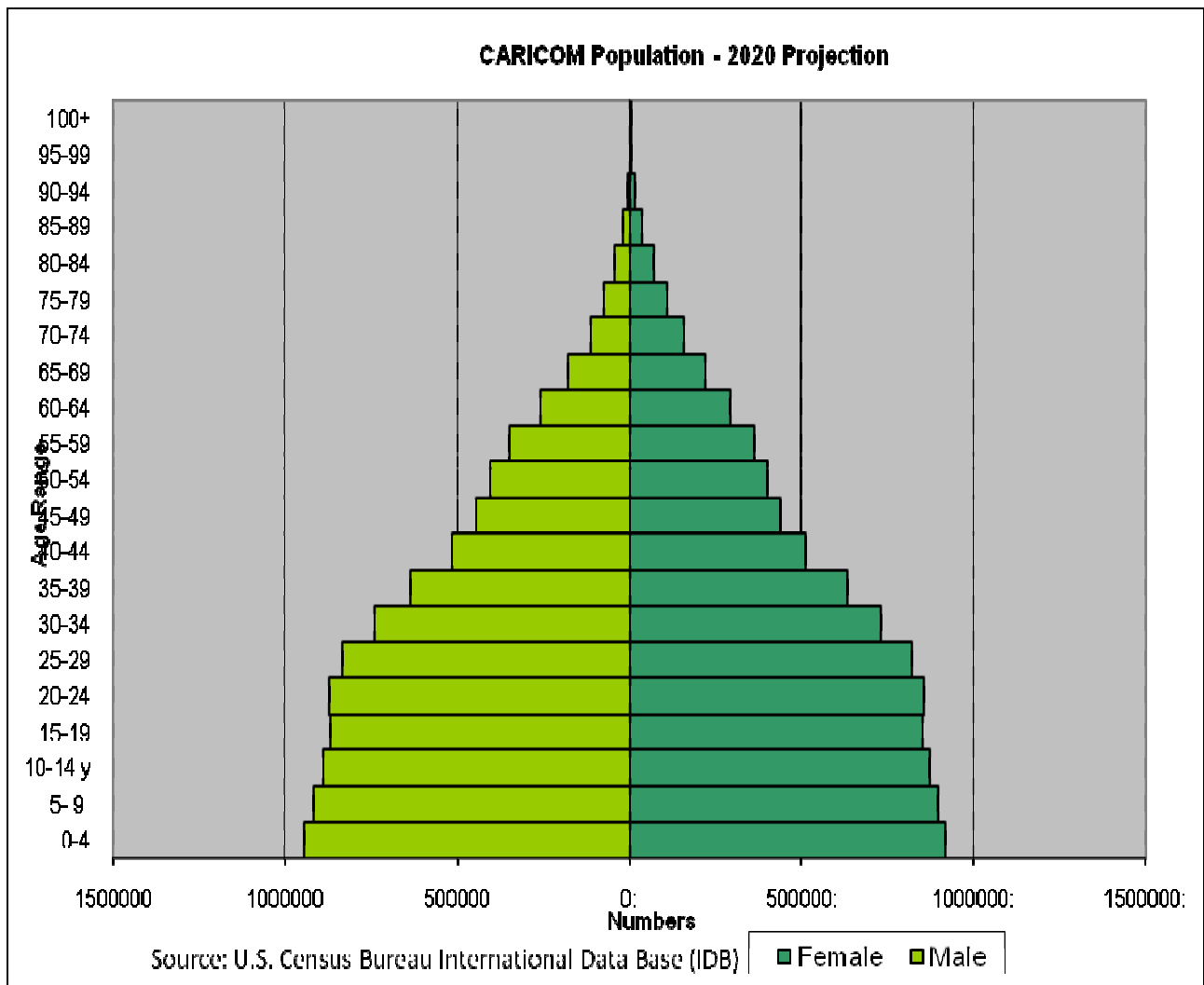
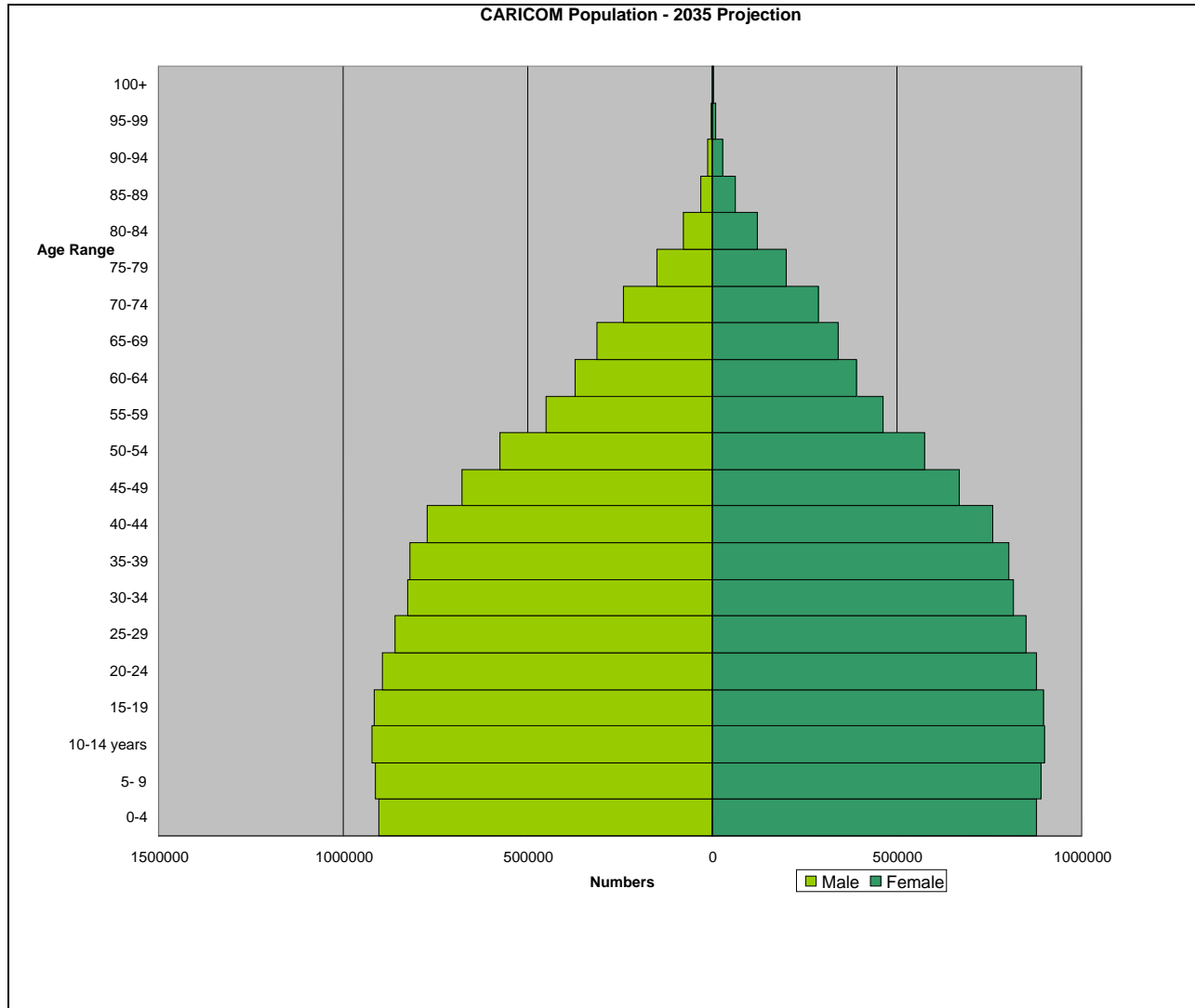


Figure 2
CARICOM YOUTH POPULATION – 2035 PROJECTION



Source: US Census Bureau International Data Base (IDB)

Finally, the Commission is convinced that young people are an under-utilised resource for the development of Caribbean communities, countries and the Region. They are bright, full of potential, creative and energetic and have a unique perspective. They are less committed to the status quo and more open to the influences of the external world than their elders. These characteristics have, from time to time, made them dynamic agents of social, technological, political and even economic change within the Caribbean. Especially in the current, technologically fast-changing environment in which innovations become obsolete almost as

quickly as they are introduced, it is to the youth that the mature adult generation has to look to learn new ways.

In summary, therefore, the Commission agrees with Girvan (2007) that young people are both beneficiaries and resources for economic and social development; that regional integration is an important issue in advancing the interests of youth; and that the advance of the interests of youth is critical to the advancement of economic integration. In this regard the region's human resource development plan must provide opportunities and incentives for ALL adolescents and youth to improve their standard of living and to actively participate in fashioning a Community that meets their needs. We offer four main imperatives for this view:

- ***The Political Imperative:*** Internationally accepted principles of good governance suggest that the marginalisation, exclusion and non-involvement of citizens have negative consequences for the social order. Experience has also taught that decisions made without the involvement of young people have little connection to their needs or interests.
- ***The Social Imperative:*** Young people bear a disproportionate burden of the main social problems and issues affecting Caribbean societies and hence have a special role to play in their resolution.
- ***The Demographic Imperative:*** Adolescents and youth are a demographic bonus and the beneficiaries of the CSME over the next 25 years. Optimal use should be made of their energy and talent in economic, social, cultural and structural transformation.
- ***The Cultural Imperative:*** Youth need to be imbued with a strong sense of national and regional identity and a deep appreciation of their unique cultural heritage. As creative and innovative catalysts of development, their willingness to challenge the status quo and push the boundaries of convention makes them important stakeholders in defining and building our Caribbean civilisation.

Contextualising Adolescence and Youth

Textbooks define adolescence as the stage between childhood and adulthood marked by intense physiological, sexual and intellectual changes – known as puberty - at the onset. Puberty tends to occur 2 years earlier in girls (around ages 10 to 11) than in boys and to be accompanied by changing roles, expectations and assumptions. It is at this stage that the influence of the peer group increases to a degree as great as if not greater than that of the family.

Adulthood is acknowledged as that stage of personal independence and social maturity marked by culturally determined developmental milestones which, in the Western world, include living in one's own home, being employed, married and/or raising a family. Youth is a sociological term referring to that stage of the life-cycle between middle adolescence (14 to 15) and adulthood – in other words when one is no longer a child but not yet an adult. It is difficult to determine when adolescence ends and adulthood begins, and the term “youth”, unless preceded by “entrepreneurial”, “artistic”, “in school” or other qualifying descriptors, can mean different things to different people. This issue is further complicated by the fact that a person aged 12 can be a parent, earning a living and living alone; or that an individual at 30 may be unemployed, living with and totally dependent on parents for support.

For programming purposes, policymakers and developmental agencies consistently use age criteria to define adolescents and youth. UNICEF, for example, defines a child as anyone between the ages of 0 to 18; and the United Nations and the Commonwealth define youth as that segment of the population aged 15 to 24 and 15 to 29, respectively. The absence of a regional definition for youth (in Guyana a youth can be 35 years old) as well as variations within and among Member States with regard to the age of majority, marriage, voting, alcohol consumption and other legal adult milestones, make it difficult to coordinate and harmonise regional policies and programmes.

Ultimately, however, it is the socio-economic and cultural contexts in which youth and adolescents live that largely determine the point in the life-cycle at which citizens are afforded legal and other rights and privileges. The Commission therefore cautions against using a strict chronological age definition for adolescence and youth and recommends instead, an approach that is sensitive to the transitional characteristics that mark their place in the life-cycle. This will

be more fully developed in Chapter 5, where the Commission argues on the importance of “Understanding Youth”.

Life Cycle Approach to Development

The Life Cycle Approach (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) acknowledges the lack of uniformity in human development processes during childhood and youth and highlights sensitive developmental periods as windows of opportunity for positive interventions in a range of sectors. Any significant harm that occurs during early critical periods is likely to produce particularly severe, often irreversible, and intergenerational effects which, though cumulative, may not manifest until youth. For this reason early childhood development programmes are critical for positive youth outcomes.

The life cycle provides a powerful framework for understanding the vulnerabilities and opportunities for investing in adolescents and youth. Two concepts are critical for this report. *First*, whether an adolescent makes the transition to adulthood safely or not is, to a large extent, determined by the power and effectiveness of the socialising agencies. All things being equal, the stronger the bonds nurtured by a functionally sound family, community and school environment, the more positive the outcome; the stronger the influences exerted by a negatively-led peer group when the bonds with family and school are weak, the more negative the outcomes. *Second*, in a society which makes little distinction between adolescents and youth, the life cycle approach allows for defined policy and programmatic interventions that target children, adolescents and youth without blurring the lines of demarcation. It is precisely because of the holistic and seamless transitioning promoted by the life-cycle approach that the Commission deemed it important to capture the perspectives of young people aged 10 to 14, whom we refer to in the report as adolescents, as well as those aged 15 to 29 whom we refer to as youth.

Research Methodology

The Commission’s research priorities for analysing the situation of youth were refined on the basis of the recommendations of a preliminary survey conducted by the CARICOM Secretariat in 2007. This preliminary survey found a heavy emphasis on theoretical and diagnostic data on education, employment, health and other sectors, but little data on

individual perceptions, values, attitudes, dreams and aspirations that drive behaviour. Accordingly, the Commission placed priority on capturing the views of adolescents and youth (10 – 29) through an integrated research framework comprising the modules below.

- A Literature Review: Issues Pertaining to Caribbean Youth 1990 – present².
- The Relevance, Functionality and Responsiveness of Caribbean Youth Governance Structures in 10 countries.
- Vision, Aspirations, Identity, Concerns and CSME perspectives of a wide cross section of youth in and out of school and in informal institutions in 12 countries.
- Adolescents and Youth Risk, Vulnerability, Resilience and Protection in 3 countries.
- An on-line survey of Caribbean adolescent and youth perspectives on CARICOM and CSME.
- Experiencing Haiti through the Voices of Youth.
- Benefits from Investing in Youth in the CARICOM Member States.
- Status of Implementation of the COHSOD mandates from 1999 to the present.

UNICEF, a strategic partner of the Commission, undertook studies on the 10 - 14 age group to complement and further the Commission's work, specifically a Literature Review and an analysis of the adolescent Vision, Aspirations, Identity, Concerns and CSME Perspectives. The latter study was conducted among in-school adolescents.

With the exception of the online survey, data were collected at the national level by youth leaders trained by the Commission and strengthened with technical support from national research coordinators. They were given logistical support by the CARICOM Secretariat and the Departments responsible for Youth Affairs. Research teams and regional youth networks also

² The Literature Review covered only the Anglophone Caribbean.

provided support for community based sensitisation initiatives promoting the Commission's work. The research methodologies are summarised below:

- (i) desk research into issues pertaining to regional development and integration, human resource development and adolescent and youth development;
- (ii) online and focus group surveys, interviews and rap sessions involving approximately 6,000 adolescents and youth in 13 countries; and youth workers and government officials in 10 countries;
- (iii) examination of additional secondary data available from a variety of technical and policy studies and reports on Caribbean youth and development issues.

It needs to be stated from the outset that important sectors of Caribbean youth were omitted from the desk research. These included the indigenous and tribal communities in Suriname, Guyana, Belize, Dominica and St Vincent and the Grenadines, because of the paucity of available research.

A more detailed summary of the Commission's Methodology can be found **at Annex II to this Report.**

While a more comprehensive analysis would have been preferred, conducting primary research on the situation of youth in the Caribbean would have been a more lengthy and costly exercise. Small sample sizes in participating countries and a reliance on available secondary data have restricted our ability to disaggregate the data by age or gender and to generalise the findings. However, a total sample size of approximately 6,000 respondents means that the perspectives gathered cannot be ignored.

Structure of the Report

This Report draws from a number of discrete regional reports on each research module, which compile national findings and distill regional issues and trends. The voices of adolescents and youth are strategically positioned throughout the report to enable the reader to gain insight into the depths of their lives and their behavioural manifestations. The Report

argues that young people comprise the sector of the population best positioned by virtue of their creative potential, to play the leading role in responding to the challenges of globalisation and, therefore, to the demands of regional integration and the CSME. However, despite positive measures to tap their participation, not only do they know little of the CSME, their commitment to the region is overshadowed by the multiplicity of problems with which they are confronted, including half-hearted attempts at meaningful governance structures. In outlining what is to be done, the Report calls for four critical actions: In addition to demonstrating a better understanding of youth and a tangible recognition of their contribution to the region, it calls for more strategic investment in the youth, demonstrating the benefits that would accrue to Member States and therefore to the Region as a whole, and for a radical shift towards partnering with them to tackle many of the burning issues confronting us.

The Report is structured in a manner designed to facilitate the development of this argument. By way of background, **Chapter I** locates youth development within the global and regional contexts. **Chapters II, III and IV** present the findings of the Commission with respect to youth and the CSME, the situation of youth in the Region, and the relevance, functionality and responsiveness of youth governance structures, respectively. They reveal major challenges facing the youth and deficiencies in the structures established to address their needs, and beg the question - what should be done. This is the subject of **Chapter V**. **Chapter VI** concludes with Recommendations to create an enabling environment for effective youth policy, partnership and development, and arising from these a set of proposed CARICOM Youth Development Goals (CYDG).

CHAPTER I

THE GLOBAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

1. The CARICOM Commission on Youth Development (CCYD) was commissioned on the eve of a global economic crisis that few suspected was about to engulf the entire planet, including, and especially, the largest economies. If the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) was designed to reposition the Region in an era of globalisation when competition for the flow of goods and capital made economic integration a necessity for our survival, then the impact of the current crisis, in the form of shrinking demands and inflows, makes the urgency of the CSME and the critical role that youth have to play in it, impatient of debate.
2. The Community continues to seek and implement shared solutions to the several crises which serve to erode the gains made over the past decades. In recent times, this has been evidenced for example, in initiatives which relate to crime and violence, and in particular the regional effort to develop a comprehensive crime prevention plan; in efforts to mainstream gender into policies and programmes; to address inequities in benefits accruing to both sexes in areas important to their development; and in the context of the recent global economic crisis cited above, the establishment by the Conference of Heads of Government in July 2009 of the CARICOM Task Force to address the Region's response to the global financial crisis.

Historical Context

1. The mandate to establish a Commission on Youth Development comes against the background of increasing attention being placed on youth in the highest fora in the world. Beginning in the years after the Second World War, both socialist and capitalist camps, realizing the power of the youth the struggle for peace, devoted considerable resources and propaganda to court the world's youth in the atmosphere of the Cold War. The World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) and the World Assembly of Youth were sponsored by the socialist and capitalist blocks, respectively. These initiatives were matched with similarly sponsored organisations competing for the youth intelligentsia and tertiary students across the world, and followed up with world gatherings, the better

known of which was the World Festival of Youth and Students, whose eleventh event in Cuba in 1978 was attended by youth and students from all the CARICOM countries.

2. In time, in 1965, the United Nations adopted a "*Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples,*" with similar aims as those projected by the two blocks, namely world peace and friendship among peoples; and twenty years later, declared 1985 the International Year of the Youth (IYY). On the tenth anniversary of IYY, the UN adopted the "*World Programme of Action for Youth to 2000 and Beyond,*" which provided Member States with a policy framework for action around ten areas: education, gender, poverty, drug abuse, environment, employment, health, delinquency, sports and leisure and participation in decision-making. In the twelve years that followed, the UN addressed by resolution, the promotion of youth issues no fewer than nine times. The world recognized the undoubted strength of young people and in 2006 a special United Nations Millennium Development Goals Youth Ambassadors Programme was established. The former Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Anan, underlined the importance of involving youth in achieving the so desired Millennium Development Goals.
3. The Caribbean was not to be left behind in feeling and seeking to harness the power of youth. Following the upheavals of the 1930s to which young workers brought energy and militancy, both the church and trade union movements began to establish youth segments, joined in the 1960s and 1970s by the political parties. The Black Power Movement that swept the Caribbean in the late 1960s and left-wing political movements that grew out of it, were essentially movements of the youth intelligentsia challenging the status quo. Youth began to exert their impact on national politics, and in instance after instance were decisive in the outcomes of national elections. The Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP), established in 1974, was an institutional response by the Commonwealth Governments to the youth dynamism of that period.
4. In the mid-1970s, the regional fusion of young people took on a more structured trajectory when agencies such as the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) and the newly established Commonwealth Youth Programme began to organize regional events bringing young people of the Region together. Coupled with events such as the regional Jamborees and entrenched programming of the uniformed groups, these agencies

planned numerous tours and youth exchange programmes, and young people from across the Region began to share with and learn from each other, thus establishing their own platforms of unity and integration across the Region.

5. The watershed period for youth development in the Region was the 1980s, when a hive of activities signaled the celebration of 1985 as “International Youth Year.” Most of the CARICOM Member States responded to the UN mandate by establishing, expanding and in some cases revitalising governments’ programming for youths. Youth Departments in CARICOM Member States began to receive greater attention and young people, sometimes without any direct support from governments, established, strengthened or reinvigorated their National Youth Councils (NYCs). Recognising the potential for increased youth representation and advocacy across the Caribbean, the NYCs came together in 1987 and formed the Caribbean Federation of Youth (CFY) which at the time served as the legitimate youth representative body for youth development in the Caribbean.
6. By making youth a development priority, the UN spearheaded a paradigm shift that ushered in the now fully embraced concept of youth development in which development practitioners view youth as assets and the term “youth and development” has taken on refreshed relevance as a development concept. Calls for youth mainstreaming have become increasingly incessant and more spaces and opportunities are being created for young people to actively participate in shaping policies that will impact on their lives both individually and as a demographic cohort. Whilst it cannot be stated categorically that young people themselves feel the sense of “ownership” and “empowerment” that this new direction was intended to usher, the evidence certainly points to greater sensitivity to youth mainstreaming and empowerment in official development plans and in the work of regional development agencies and youth agencies and Ministries in the Region.
7. The CARICOM Governments again took on board the “*1995 World Programme of Action*,” adopting a Regional Strategy for Youth Development (RSYD) in 2001 aimed at addressing several critical issues confronting Caribbean Youth. One of these was giving youth a voice in public policy-making, in recognition of their power to contribute at the highest levels. There is no better way of giving meaning to this in the current

circumstances, than by enlisting the creative intellect and energy of youth in facing the inexorable reach of globalisation.

Current Global and Regional Challenges

1. Globalisation, the interconnectedness of the world as a single marketplace, made possible by the invention and development of new technologies of communication - is different from the neo-liberalism which has taken advantage of its reach, but whose principles of unregulated flow of capital have been identified as a leading cause of the current global crisis. But even with the imposition of restraints upon free trade through regulation and state intervention, global interconnectedness will remain. It represents, as noted Caribbean economist Clive Thomas (2000: 12) reminds us, “an unmistakable paradigm shift, both in the way in which the world is conceived and how it is acted upon”. It is no longer possible to think productively except within the framework of a globally-interconnected world. The current global transformation in science and technology, the proliferation and trans-nationalisation of social problems such as narco-trafficking and terrorism, and the commercialisation of knowledge, are unprecedented in pace, scale and scope, Professor Thomas argues. They are, as well, global by definition and, in addition to the massive transfer of wealth effected by neo-liberalism from what Nettleford calls “the two-thirds world” to the more developed world, will remain serious challenges when the global financial system recovers.
2. Technology and free trade philosophy are not the only ways through which the world is interconnected. Global climate change due to carbon emissions from the use of fossil fuel now poses a serious threat not only to the pace of development, but to the entire planet and even to human life itself.
3. There never was a time in the history of the modern world when the countries of the Caribbean were not, for better or for worse, a part of an external if not a global economy. Today, with the loss of preferential markets and the movement of capital in search of cheaper labour, their economies have been exposed as fragile and largely dependent on natural resources for economic growth and stability. But the rise in temperatures, in sea-levels and other effects of global climate change such as the increasing frequency of hurricanes, floods and droughts, it can be reasonably expected, are bound to impact

both tourism and agriculture, on which Caribbean countries now place heavy reliance. If youth unemployment is as bad as the Commission finds (see Chapter 3), it is going to get worse unless decisive measures are taken to address these global issues.

4. Among those measures, will have to be the reform of our education and training systems. In the new global economy, the market for unskilled labour is becoming highly restricted and knowledge a major factor of production. Exponential advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have spawned the development of new industries based on 'weightless goods,' high in knowledge content. The job market is witnessing radical changes in occupational profiles, job design and content of occupation, and in both manufacturing and service sectors, the prospects for success are inextricably linked to the extent to which enterprises are able to incorporate knowledge into productive processes. The viability of the Region in the global economy is therefore tied to the development and retooling of human resources at technical and managerial levels in order to produce citizens for a knowledge economy, on which real competitive advantage is achieved. This has profound implications for our systems of education.

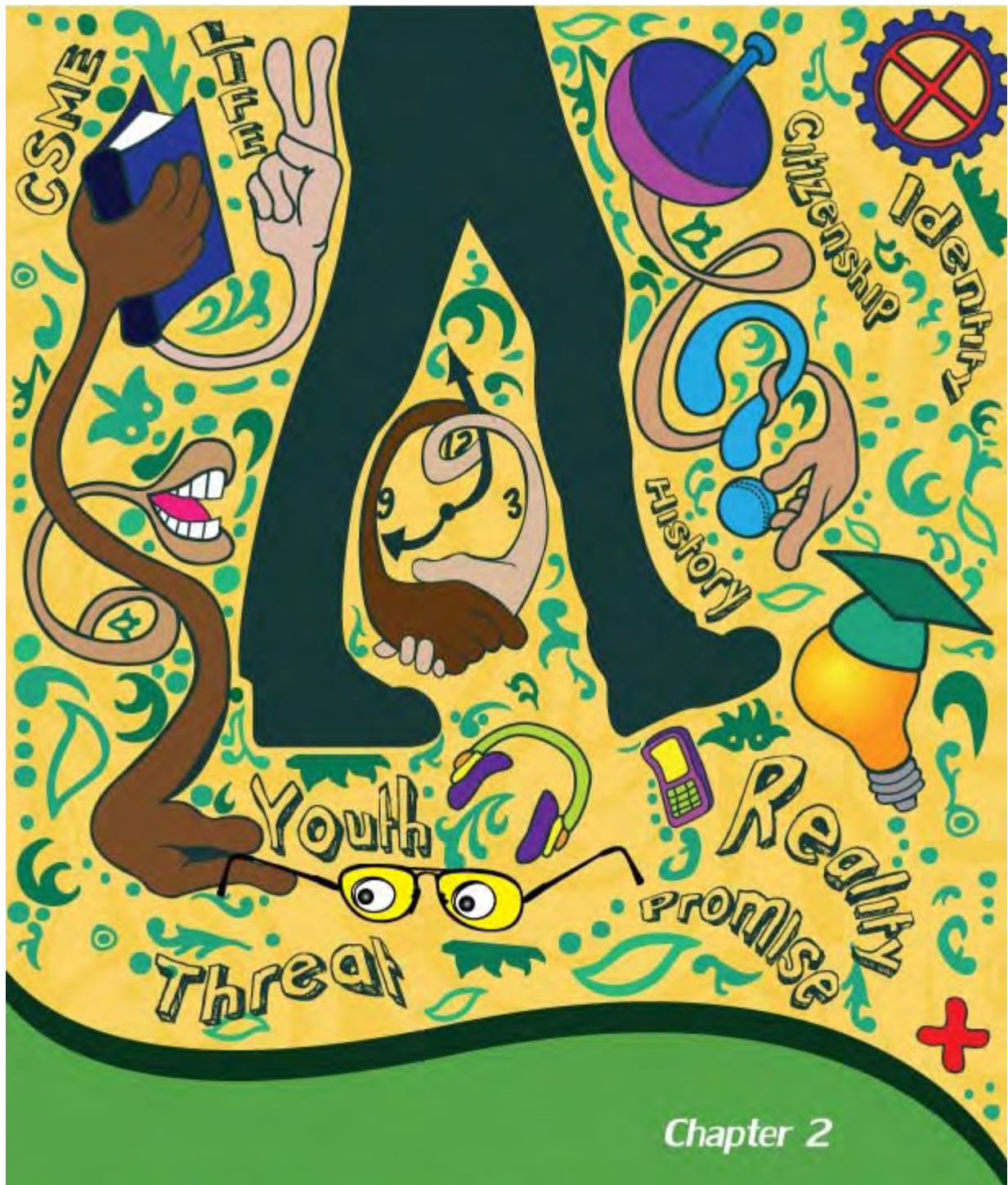
5. The impact of modern day globalisation on young people has rendered economic well-being increasingly dependent on the availability of a highly educated and highly skilled pool of nationals capable of being trained to meet changing demands. Young people, by virtue of their demographic size and proximity to and familiarity with the newest technological innovations and their applications to everyday life, are ideally positioned to be at the centre of any state- or private sector-driven development plan which has the creation of new technology platforms, research and innovation as a principal objective. However, as will be clearer in Chapter 3, Caribbean youth as a group, not only are under-performing in areas necessary for this Region to compete successfully in the global environment, but also carry greater portions of the burden of unemployment than their numbers warrant. The continuing mismatch between the existing state of resources and training initiatives, and the actual technological needs of the society, hampers their capacity to participate in the modern global economy and by extension, the CSME.

6. The challenges of globalisation have thus placed Caribbean youth at tremendous risk for social and economic dislocation. The new ICTs have opened up new opportunities for cultural diversification, social and economic development and increased competitiveness. At the same time, these same technologies have also aided and abetted more rapid and far-reaching shifts in traditional values and norms than the societies of the region can accommodate comfortably. The dreams, aspirations, attitudes and values of youth have been influenced by globalisation, and not all to the good, as the Region has been overtaken by a proliferation and trans-nationalisation of narco-trafficking and crime that are unprecedented in scale and scope. The impact has generally changed the way that young people live, access education, participate in society, interact with each other, do business and spend their time.
7. On the more positive side however, the fact that ICT is now offered within Anglophone countries for formal Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) certification at the secondary and post-secondary levels,³ creates the possibility for a far wider cadre of Caribbean youth to be exposed to its rudiments at a relatively early age and in significant numbers.
8. The ability of regional Governments to grapple successfully with, if not to overcome these challenges, has been compromised by a confluence of factors, such as failed models of development; higher and higher indebtedness and debt repayment; the fight against drug-trafficking and associated social problems, such as criminal gangs, escalating rates of violence and social dislocation, and the higher frequency of natural disasters linked to climate change.
9. The global and regional challenges awaiting the creative energy of our youth for resolution are many; but four interrelated developmental issues stand out: economic development, sustainable development, human and social development and environmental development. On what sustainable and environmentally-sensitive

³ The CXC is a regional institution of CARICOM which coordinates regional examinations and awards the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) to secondary school-leavers, and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE) to those preparing for matriculation to University.

foundations is the economic development of the Region to rest? How can it be assisted by, and in turn enhance the development of human and social capital?

10. In order to meet these challenges, one critical need is for the revamping of our education and training systems. It calls as well for a paradigm shift in the regional human resource development plan that effectively places young people at the centre as partners in the development enterprise. Partnership with the youth is one of four imperatives outlined in Chapter 5: Youth and Caribbean Development: The Cost of Not Investing in Youth.
11. In summary, globalisation presents the Region with many challenges. But it also presents the Region with significant opportunities. Already Caribbean youth are proving themselves capable of playing a leading role in seizing opportunities and turning challenges into advantages.



Chapter 2

YOUTH AND THE CARICOM SINGLE MARKET AND ECONOMY (CSME)

CHAPTER II

YOUTH AND THE CARICOM SINGLE MARKET AND ECONOMY

1. There is increasing recognition, among planners and policy makers, that the CSME is about the future of young people and that there can be no successful CSME unless young people are fully involved in the process, are fully knowledgeable of what it means for them and their futures, and are fully capable of grasping the opportunities which an integrated regional space will offer. The CARICOM Single Market is popularly perceived as an arrangement that is bound by inter-regional trade agreements and immigration statistics. Regional decision-making processes with regard to CSME policies and programmes are top-down and lack institutionalised arrangements for meaningful youth participation. The right to participate in regional decision-making processes is enshrined in the CARICOM Charter of Civil Society and the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. Despite tremendous strides over the past few decades, youth are not yet fully integrated into the national and regional decision making machinery. Young people under the age of 30 comprise 60 per cent of the region's populace; they are a demographic bonus but an under-utilized resource. This Chapter reports on the state of readiness of youth to benefit from and contribute to the Regional integration movement, especially the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

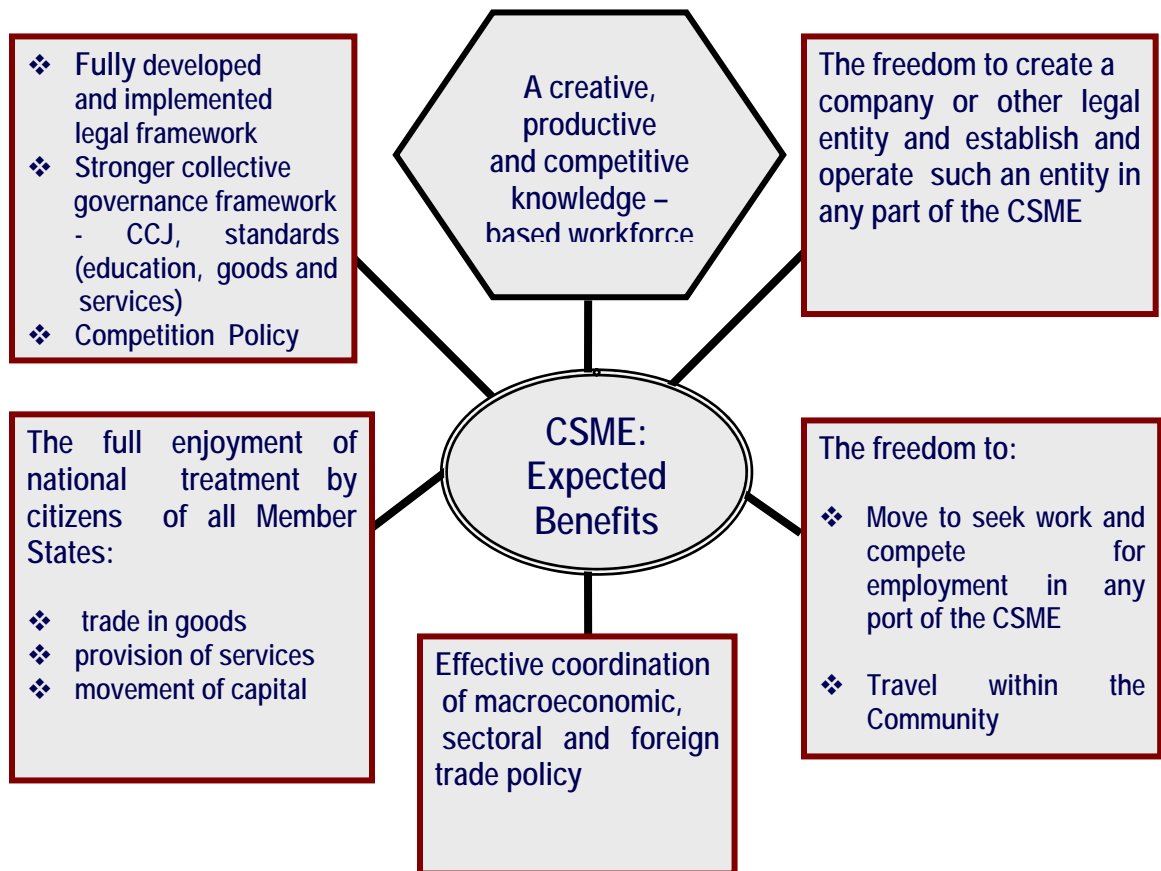
CSME: History and Promise

1. CARICOM Heads of Government, in the 1989 Grand Anse Declaration, discussed ways of improving the quality of life for all citizens across the region, and committed themselves to working expeditiously to deepen the integration process and strengthen the capacity of the Community to respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by the changes in the global economy. In particular, they agreed to work towards the establishment, in the shortest possible time, of the CSME as outlined in Figure 3 below; effectively creating a seamless economic space across twelve Member States;⁴ liberalising the movement of goods, services, capital and skilled professionals in the Region; and facilitating the establishment of businesses in

⁴ CSME participating Member States: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago

participating countries⁵. The Free Movement of Skills Policy is one of the major pillars of the CSME and is implemented through the use of Skills Certificates of Recognition⁶ (referred to as Skills Certificates) and facilitated by the removal of the requirement of work permits for certain categories of workers on a phased basis, starting with university graduates and ultimately including all categories. According to the CARICOM Secretariat, in 2008, an estimated 8,000 to 8,500 Skills Certificates were issued to University graduates, sports persons, media workers, nurses, teachers and cultural workers. The expected outputs of the CSME appear in the figure below:

Figure 3
CSME: Expected Benefits



⁵ All Member States with the exception of Montserrat, Haiti and The Bahamas

⁶ Referred to as Skills Certificates.

2. The CSME is supported by a number of policies and measures which are intended to facilitate an effective and seamless implementation. Selected CSME policies and facilitating measures are identified in the box below, all of which directly benefit to young people.

Key CSME Policies and Facilitating Measures

- Skills Certificates of Recognition issued by the Competent Authority of the Member State;
- Regional accreditation mechanism;
- Removal of the requirement of work permits for certain categories of workers on a phased basis;, starting with university graduates and ultimately including all categories;
- Transfer of social security benefits;
- Hassle-free travel: a CARICOM passport, CARICOM lines in immigration halls, common E/D forms
- Contingent rights policy;
- Regional public information and communication plan;
- CARICOM Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) – for establishing standards to ensure the quality of goods in the region;
- CARICOM Vocational Qualifications (CVQs).

(CARICOM Secretariat 2007)

3. Globalisation and rapid developments in technology have made the success of the CSME dependent on developing a healthy, highly skilled, creative, technologically savvy and competitive work force. Other pre-requisites include knowledge of country, Caribbean history and world affairs; a strong Caribbean identity, tolerance and respect for individual and cultural differences and a culture of peace. Of critical importance however, is that young people must be committed to regionalism and have confidence that their dreams and aspirations will be realised within this Caribbean Community. These pre-requisites are reflected in the regional profile of the ideal Caribbean youth developed by young people.
4. The inclusion of Suriname and Haiti as members in 1995 and 2002 respectively, broadened the Community's economic mass, but also raised challenges of language. Suriname, with its multi-ethnic diversity, mainly Dutch-colonial background, rich indigenous and maroon populations, bio-diversity and differing social and economic structures, presents new, exciting opportunities and challenges. A snapshot of Haiti, as the newest and least understood member of the community, is outlined in the box below.

Haiti – the newest Member of CARICOM

Haiti, with a population of approximately 10 million residents, became a full Member of the Caribbean Community in July 2002. The media tend to capture only those sensationalistic issues that reinforce the stereotype of a country that is politically unstable, on the precipice of social and economic collapse and marginalized due to de facto international, direct and indirect influences, overpopulation, impoverishment and an illiteracy rate above 50%. The Francophone language, lack of exposure and connectedness to the rest of the Community and visa requirements to visit the majority of CARICOM States, deepen existing political and social divides.

Through revolution, Haiti was the first state in the Western Hemisphere to abolish slavery in 1804 and the country served as a moral and physical vanguard for much of the successful anti-slavery movements in the region. It is the world's oldest black Republic and second oldest Republic in the Western Hemisphere, after the United States of America which gained independence in 1776. Its culture is rich and diverse, and the country has great investment potential. Media coverage also does not do justice to the synergy and resilience required to overcome natural disasters and the fortitude to return to the sanctity of normalcy.

While many Haitian youth are frustrated by the state of the social, political and economic circumstances of their nation, many of the Haitian youth expound positive, western values, in terms of the value placed on educational attainment, family bonds and successful careers. There is a resonance in their discourse of the hopelessness at their current state of affairs, and some Haitians view inclusion and integration into CSME and the Community as presenting welcomed opportunities. For them, their Caribbean citizenship was forged longed before their births. It was attained through a common history of co-dependence and reciprocal camaraderie within the region.

CSME: Threat or Opportunity?

1. Thirty-six years after the signing of the Treaty of Chaguaramas, the Region's oldest surviving integration movement is at the cross-roads. Newly elected political administrations question decisions taken by the previous ones, and query the utility of CARICOM and the CSME in the contemporary political architecture of the Caribbean (Jessop, 2008). Anthony (2008), notes the existence of chronic procrastination and apathy among the Heads of Government as evidenced by lack of progress on the establishment of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), disagreements among countries on the free movement of labour; cynicism and suspicion at the prospect of a political union between the OECS and Trinidad and Tobago and the ambivalence of the OECS to the CSME. Member States, faced with increasing food prices, higher energy costs, falling tax revenues, difficulties with funding health care and education and a dysfunctional regional integration process, appear to be increasingly turning to national solutions, focusing more on domestic issues and indulging in creeping protectionism (Jessop, 2008).

2. Furthermore, Professor Norman Girvan (2007) also notes that there is a huge ‘information deficit’ regarding the CSME among the ordinary citizens of the Community and a major ‘credibility gap’ regarding its completion. Many citizens are cynical about the slow pace of implementation, while others are apprehensive about the possible adverse effects of increased competition for jobs and markets.

“I believe that the CSME is at a delicate juncture in its short history. Its foundations have been severely compromised and weakened, not only because of internal differences and competing visions among the Heads of Government but also because the cohesiveness that is so vital to its viability has been shaken” (Anthony, 2008).

“The global crisis and climate change highlight for us the importance of working together as a unified entity” (CARICOM Official, 2009).

3. The policy on the free movement of skills is widely accepted but has brought into sharp focus, social and economic vulnerabilities and inequalities including poverty, unstable national economies, a lack of tolerance for cultural and ethnic diversity and feelings of insularity and territorialism. Nationals, both young and old, in lesser and more developed CARICOM states, have expressed concerns about the CSME resulting in an influx of Caribbean nationals (referred to as “foreigners”) seeking jobs, housing, education and other services that are in short supply; creating overcrowded conditions, displacing nationals, overburdening education and health systems and diluting cultures (CARICOM Secretariat, 2007).

Youth Knowledge and Perception of the Integration Movement

4. The Commission finds merit in the views expressed by Girvan (2007) with regard to the information deficit on CSME. We find the integration concept of CSME to be widely unknown, misunderstood and unappreciated, among adolescents and youth aged 10-29. In each Member State and Associate Members sampled, some have never heard of CARICOM. There were three different levels of information: those who knew nothing (the majority), those who knew a little, and those who knew enough to understand the promise of the CSME.

5. Very few of the young people aged 10-29, except for persons aged 10-14 in Barbados and Jamaica, know anything about CSME and CARICOM, and few could identify concrete opportunities and benefits. Generally speaking, adolescents aged 10-14 had limited interest in exploring or residing in any other Caribbean country or being part of the regional integration movement (UNICEF, 2009).

6. The views of adolescents are both positive and negative as can be seen from the box below:

“CSME is a good thing because everybody gonna be living in unity”
“I don’t agree because if we can’t live in unity, how can the people that come from other countries live in unity? We got to be robots or something”
“You know, when you got CSME you got all those people coming here from all over the world and things; and when they come here it is obviously difficult for we”.

7. A predominant perception among persons aged 15-29 was that only persons with degrees or skills are eligible for skills certificates. They held the view that the CSME discriminates against the average man or woman, and unskilled workers and places countries with few higher education opportunities and institutions at a disadvantage. They relate low levels of confidence in CARICOM and CSME to a lack of trust in the political directorate; the failure of the Federation; increasing divergence between national and regional interests; and lack of consensus among governments. The prevailing sense of pessimism and cynicism is most pronounced among Haitian youth, many of whom believe that CARICOM’s only purpose in Haiti is to take advantage of the country’s weak export capacity and large consumer market; believe that CARICOM has lost its identity and is unduly influenced by the United States; and strongly resent the need for visas to enter the majority of CARICOM countries.

8. Those who knew a little about the CSME could not identify concrete opportunities and benefits and could not explain its purpose.

9. In contrast, persons aged 15-29 who knew enough about the CSME, viewed it as “the best thing to ever happen to the Caribbean”. To them the CSME empowers youth to –

- (i) accomplish more, make more money and build regional relationships;
 - (ii) learn social and cultural history of other countries and better appreciate their own;
 - (iii) rise above mistakes made early in life (a second chance);
 - (iv) travel, work, establish business and access education opportunities not available at home and respond to labour and skill shortages in other countries;
 - (v) access better quality goods and services and enjoy an affordable standard of living.
10. They also see the CSME as enhancing the ability of countries to:
- (i) open up borders, unify the country and populate under-developed areas;
 - (ii) reduce the impact of the brain drain;
 - (iii) compete with trading blocks and have a bigger market space;
 - (iv) market the Caribbean and boost tourism levels;
 - (v) reduce inter-country discrimination and stigmatisation; and
 - (vi) increase productivity and prosperity.
11. The CARICOM Secretariat's public information programme includes the distribution of information kiosks, publications, a CSME spokesperson bureau and targeted campaigns for secondary students. These programmes are supported by national CSME focal points who are normally located in the Ministries responsible for Trade. These strategies tend to be broad and intermittent and have been assessed by young people as being largely ineffective, excessively technical and vague. The ineffectiveness of national strategies could be linked to limited resources and weak technical capacity. Levels of knowledge and awareness of CARICOM and the CSME vary according to age and country, with the widest gaps evident in The Bahamas, Haiti, Belize and the Turks and Caicos Islands. The main sources of information for youth have been identified as peers, communications media and school-based initiatives.

Good Practices:

The CARICOM Secretariat CSME Unit currently has a programme that moves post-secondary school students through CSME participating countries to experience the free movement process first-hand and to dialogue with immigration officers, trade officials and other key stakeholders.

The CARICOM Secretariat in collaboration with the Barbados Youth Business Trust has drafted a curriculum integrating principles of regionalism, CSME and entrepreneurship which is being used to sensitize young people in and out of school on a pilot basis in Barbados.

The CARICOM Youth Ambassadors Programme in Suriname, in collaboration with the national CSME focal point and other key stakeholders has published and widely disseminated a youth-friendly booklet on CARICOM and the CSME in Dutch.

12. In addition to the issues identified by CARICOM (2007), the Commission also found that most adolescents and youth were fearful that the CSME would result in reduced national cohesiveness, productivity and competitiveness; restricted upward social, educational and economic mobility; diminished quality of life of the people; and loss of cultural capital.

Citizenship and Regional Identity

1. Caribbean youth have articulated a vision of the Community in which they would like to live which mirrors the vision first articulated in 1998 at the CARICOM Youth Explosion in The Bahamas, but which places additional emphasis on cultural preservation, technology, safety and security. The initial vision was shared with CARICOM Heads of Government in a special face-to-face exchange of views in the same year and has since been updated by the CARICOM Secretariat periodically through regional youth meetings. The Regional Youth Vision of the Ideal Caribbean Community is set out in the box overleaf.

Regional Youth Vision of the Ideal Caribbean Community (abridged)

A productive, knowledge-based and diverse society that:

- Is united, strong, stable, recognized and respected by First World countries;
- is sensitive to the problems of other countries in the Caribbean, assists each other, is conscious that what concerns one concerns all;
- exploits a unique niche, is self sufficient, fair, open-minded, friendly, caring;
- is safe, secure and free from discrimination, corruption, drugs and HIV and AIDS;
- provides all nationals a good quality of life and reasonable cost of living; affordable inter-island travel with no restrictions; quality education and decent employment for all;
- protects the interests of smaller states and affords all the same rights, privileges and benefits;
- recognizes, appreciates and keeps the power of culture alive;
- empowers youth to be politically aware and involved in development;
- puts in place foundations for economic, political and social unity.

(CARICOM Commission on Youth Development, 2009)

2. This vision of a “united, strong and stable” society is in stark contrast to the cynicism and apathy found among adolescents and youth. In seeking to identify young people’s sense of citizenship and regional identity, the Commission asked young people whether they felt “Caribbean”. The majority of adolescents and youth expressed strong nationalistic sentiments. However, the vast majority considered themselves Caribbean because their countries were situated in the Caribbean Sea. Moreover, they did not fully understand the concept of being Caribbean and explained the absence of a sense of a shared destiny and identity, as shown in the box :

3. Young people attribute the absence of a sense of shared destiny and identity to greater influence and exposure to North America, as well as the factors identified below:

- (i) **Lack of exposure:** limited cultural, political, social and economic affiliation among some countries; high cost of regional travel and accommodation.

“I know that I am a pure Caribbean citizen because I know my history...”

“I am proud to be Caribbean, I love being ---- the best part is because if you know two languages you are two persons, if you only know one you are one person”

“We know too little of the Caribbean to consider ourselves citizens”

“My island first, Caribbean second. It’s only when we are outside the region that we consider

- (ii) **Lack of influence:** the interests of some countries with greater size, natural resources and economic development seem to take precedence over those less fortunate.

- (iii) **Lack of connectedness:** language barriers, invisibility of CARICOM and CSME at the national level, visa requirements to enter some CARICOM countries, differential and sometimes hostile treatment at immigration points because of national origin, religious belief and sexual orientation.

The Reality of Life in the Caribbean for Caribbean Youth

- 4. The Commission asked adolescents and youth what it was like to live in the Caribbean. From the responses it is clear that both groups, by and large, valued the region's democratic traditions, natural beauty, pleasant climate, diverse cultures, festivals and parties. There was, however, one striking difference where the majority of youth aged 15–29 described their experiences as ranging from “O.K.”, “challenging”, “hard”, “difficult” to “boring”, “living in hell”, “living without hope” and “living like dogs”.

- 5. This reality has given rise to deep feelings of frustration, uncertainty, hopelessness, despair, anger and hostility which increase the volatility of the Caribbean's social and political environments and fuel high levels of outward migration (CARICOM Secretariat 2007; CARICOM Commission of Youth Development, 2008).

- 6. Adolescents aged 10–14, on the other hand, despite signs of discontent and burden, had a less negative and perhaps more idealistic perception of the Caribbean as fair, pleasant, harmonious and equal for all. This perspective became more negative in adolescents aged 13–14 (UNICEF, 2009). Examples of adolescent perspectives of living in the Caribbean are shown in the box.

“Stop crime, stop poverty, help the poor and the needy and take off all the vagrants off the streets”

“Everyone should be given a fair chance to work and make a living and have proper shelter and so on”

“Conditions aren't the same some countries have free education, travelling is a problem for many Jamaicans; if these problems exist we are not unified”

“I know very little about CARICOM and the Caribbean... because of my own interest or because you don't get the information. I just feel like a world citizen.”

7. Particularly from those living in rural areas, these perspectives are based largely on information derived from music videos, the internet and television (*UNICEF, 2009*). It is clear therefore that efforts to instill cultural appreciation should start at an earlier age. Adolescent perspectives on moving to, or visiting another CARICOM country are in the following box.

"I went to Jamaica and when you reach the airport it was a disaster. Those people kind of get me scared because of the way they dress; they talk another language and they are poor".

"I can't remember seeing a piece of paper on the part or road corner in Barbados; the place is just clean, the environment clean...and they adhere to the law... they don't have all a de problems that neighbours have in Guyana".

"Trinidad getting just like Jamaica and in certain places you can go in and just buy guns and things. So police and law enforcement, they can't really control dat".

"You cannot go in Haiti. If you go, you cannot come back; it is poor and ruled by a dictator; too much voodoo".

Conclusion

1. It is significant that the perceptions of youth about Caribbean citizenship were shaped more by lack of knowledge of regionalism and in particular CARICOM and the CSME, rather than concrete evidence of its failure to deliver.
2. The CSME is predicated on a strong sense of commitment to the goals of regional integration and on a belief in the ability of the region to fulfill one's dreams and aspirations. The extent to which young people can grasp opportunities under the CSME and realise their dreams and aspirations will depend a great deal on the pace at which Caribbean societies can build bridges of intra-regional appreciation and understanding; develop among young people, a strong sense of awareness and commitment to the integration movement from an early age; and a strong sense of citizenship and regional identity. Equally important is the need to equip adolescents and youth with appropriate

information, skills, competencies, attitudes and values; and to create opportunities for them to be meaningfully involved in fashioning a CSME that meets their needs.



Chapter 3

THE SITUATION OF CARIBBEAN ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

CHAPTER III

THE SITUATION OF CARIBBEAN ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

1. This Chapter describes the situation of Caribbean adolescents and youth in terms of their vision, dreams and aspirations and distils regional issues and trends in areas which determine the opportunities available to them. These include education, labour and employment, health and well-being, crime and violence, migration, culture, sports and recreation, environment and free movement. The voices of adolescents and youth provide insight into the manifestations of their behaviour.
2. A 2003 World Bank country study titled *Caribbean Development Issues and Policy Directions*, reported the widely-held belief that Caribbean youth are “generally happy, healthy, attending school, participating in social and cultural events, enjoying the loving support of family and peers, and planning for the future. Further, they played a critical role in the birth of the politically independent Caribbean, many continuing to overcome remarkable odds to achieve lofty personal and professional goals”.
3. The Commission agrees with this perspective, but two things stood out from the many focus group sessions conducted across the Region. One was the importance which young people of all walks of life attached to being given an opportunity to express their views. A tap had been opened, and from adolescents and youth of diverse backgrounds who were unsure of what to expect at the beginning of the group sessions, out flowed sentiments of surprise and delight that anyone wanted to hear what they had to say, that they found it “fun”, and that there should be future opportunities to share their views.
4. But as they spoke, what also stood out was the expression of negativity, hopelessness and frustration that would tend to overshadow the belief that the majority of adolescents and youth were the beneficiaries of a good education, a protective family and a supportive, if at times insecure environment.

Adolescent and Youth Dreams and Aspirations

1. Young people define a dream as “**something that you would like to come to reality... a great desire for something, something you want to do.**” With the exception of a few who had not given much thought to this before, they all wanted to be something, even those who were most desperate; they all dreamed of being the best that they could be. In addition, their dreams and aspirations tended to be influenced by stories told by family, friends and the communications media and by their own knowledge and perceptions of the opportunities, rights and privileges available to young people in developed countries.

“if a young person doesn't have aspirations and determination, it will be very hard for him to be someone tomorrow”.

“Nothing is going to stop me and get in my path. I am going to be a great person”
2. For many, dreams and aspirations represent personal goals, which drive behaviour at either the conscious or subliminal level. Others, in particular older youth, are afraid to dream because of the pain and frustration that comes from their social and economic reality and the resignation that their dreams cannot be realized. They feel conflicted and angry about doing things that they know are in direct opposition to their dreams and aspirations. This dynamic interplay of external stress and personal conflict consumes or releases creative energies; hampers or facilitates the capacity to dream; and constrains or enhances their ability to think of the future.

“It's not realistic to dream - there are no opportunities to fulfill them”

“My dream is illusory, it makes me suffer. Life is a jungle - every man for himself, God for all, young people are excluded. I dream to save my skin”.
3. Adolescents, in particular, are very concerned about family relationships as illustrated in the adjacent box.

“Some parents are very supportive but others say the hurt fullest of things and they do something that would make you think they hate you and ... so you would end up hating too and you won't want them in your life”

“Most of the time things happen it affects us from the home. You get this bad behaviour because you deh round the quarrelling and fighting everyday and it affects us and destroys our hopes and dreams”

“If I had a free wish out of all those three wishes, I would wish my father to stop go to bars at nights and don't have any time for me”.

4. The adolescents' vision of what life *should be* is still very pure; hence they are distressed about things that have become common to older youth but are not at all for them – guns, shooting, death, robbery, rape, beatings. They fail to understand how adults are unable to see and rectify those elements that cause their lives to be in such distress. The aspirations, concerns and things that matter to adolescents and youth are summarised below.

Adolescent and Youth Aspirations and Concerns: A Snapshot

Aspirations: (10-29): *to be the best that I can be – secondary and tertiary education qualifications; a home, marriage and family; happiness, world-wide travel, financial security and wealth; my own business; successful careers, e.g. astronaut, actor, super model, fashion designer, pilot, choreographer, chef, barber, beautician, veterinarian, information technologist, journalist, engineer, footballer, cricketer, sports agent/ practitioner, physiotherapist, cosmetologist, musician, architect, computer technician, singer, artisan.*

Concerns (10-14): *harsh and insensitive teachers, dysfunctional families and communities, limited access to education, exploitation by older people e.g. drugs, rape; unsupportive society, parents; crime, violence; juvenile justice; powerlessness; voicelessness; social exclusion; identity crisis..”*

Concerns (15-29): *Discrimination, marginalization and uncertainty about the future. poverty and inequality; poor health and well being; lack of participation; unemployment, no job security; poor education and training; crime and violence; juvenile justice; lack of personal responsibility and positive action; lack of mentorship, guidance; poor governance, dysfunctional family; voicelessness; exclusion; identity crisis, ineffective youth development programmes.*

What is important (10-14): *family, safety, friends, Food, music, TV, education, shelter, cell phones and the internet.*

What is important (15-29): *safety, friends, food, music, TV, shelter, fashion, cell phones, the internet, partying, sex, materialism.*

5. Youth aged 15-29 generally see themselves making progress towards their dreams and aspirations in 5 years, although those who grapple with survival on a day-to-day basis are so consumed with hopelessness and despair that they are either resigned to being dead, struggling or incarcerated in five years; or unable or afraid to envision tomorrow because today is so dark and uncertain.

“I can't say what I will be....You never know, you will never know. You see how this world is like a roller coaster”.

“When I was living in ... they joint up my cousin eleven years old boy, I leave my relatives because ... I didn't want to be the next one so I told my mom that I not going to stay there”

Education

1. The Commission believes that the cost of NOT providing a people with quality education is too great. Not only does the Region run the risk of setting up road blocks to development by having an illiterate population, but the feelings of despair and consequent behaviors that can materialise are formidable.

Adolescents, Youth and Education: An Overview

2. Successful implementation of the CSME requires a highly skilled, knowledge-based workforce that is morally stable, healthy, productive, creative and competitive. Developing such a workforce is the responsibility of the education and other social systems in the Region, whose role must be to unlock and nurture the potential of Caribbean youth. In keeping with an understanding of the life-cycle approach, it has to begin with quality Early Childhood Development (ECD), continuing through the primary and into the secondary and tertiary levels. The Region has produced excellent graduates, capable of holding their own anywhere in the world, but it is an already acknowledged fact that such quality is not the norm; that the education systems are performing well below acceptable standards, turning out adolescents and youths who are ill-equipped not only for the Twenty-First Century world of work but also for social life.

A number of critical structural issues confront us:

Poverty

3. Of the 25,883,099 people estimated to be living in the CARICOM Region in 2010, approximately 5,098, 657 are between the ages of 10 and 24 (United States Census Bureau International DataBase). Although net enrolment rates at both primary and secondary levels have steadily increased in most countries for the past ten years, for both sexes, dropout rates have also increased. This, combined with high unemployment among young people and limited opportunities for personal development, characterise the lives of many youth in the Region. Poor families continue to count more children than better-off families, and many adolescents grow up in single-parent households, which tend to be poorer than those with both parents present. Unemployment particularly increases the

vulnerability of young women between 15 and 19, as it fuels their dependency and limits opportunities for personal development.

4. Poverty exposes young people to a variety of challenges. Boys and girls often drop out of school to supplement family income. Poor educational and economic opportunities, gender inequality and sexual exploitation and abuse are considered to be important factors in the high levels of adolescent pregnancies, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. Adolescent girls are faced with few choices, opportunities and resources, they are especially vulnerable to risks from unprotected sexual activity. Typically poorly informed about ways to protect themselves, young people in the Caribbean are increasingly at risk of contracting and transmitting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Often, the scope of many of the programmes is constrained by insufficient funding and trained human resources. The Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) curriculum used by most CARICOM member countries is an important step in the direction of universal education in this area. However, while HFLE has been introduced as part of the school curriculum at primary and secondary levels, scheduling priority given to the subject and the comfort levels of the teachers delivering the curriculum still remain important challenges.

“
We don't lack creativity, talent or ideas. I go down the street and see things manufactured by gifted street kids using simple juice boxes - give them education. Give me the means to express what is inside of me, set up my own enterprise—give me training and guaranteed financial support; a legislative framework to break down monopolies, oligarchies. When you believe in people's capabilities we can bring wealth out of ourselves”

Attrition from the Education System

5. Both males and females experience some attrition from the public education system. Although the Caribbean has achieved universal primary education (UNECLAC 2005), a number of countries are lagging with enrolments below 90 per cent. At the secondary level, net enrolment in the region drops to 70 per cent with between 53 per cent and 58 per cent of the population having primary as their highest level of education. Many OECS countries have low primary enrolment, and secondary access is still limited because of cost and space. Williams (2004) endorses this, noting that although education expansion is a reality in the Caribbean, access remains a major concern because many find the costs at the secondary and tertiary levels prohibitive.

Gender Issues

6. The concern for male under-achievement has been pervasive across the Caribbean, with the issue of males dropping out of school being more evident at the secondary levels. According to the UNECLAC Report of 2007, “Boys are more likely to fail, to develop behavioural problems, to experience isolation and rejection, and to drop out of the school system without certification or labour for skills”; which transforms into an apparent feminisation of education, according to Bailey and Charles (2008). A closer look at gender disparity in schooling in the Region in the Report on Gender Differentials, indicates that there are many variables to be considered before generalisations on male under-achievement should be inferred. The variables include differences in entry into schools, the school curriculum and the methods of paedagogy these are followed by the difference in performance and achievement between boys and girls. In addition, more females than males are recruited into the teaching force itself. Thus, while it is true that enrolment favours males in early primary schooling but the pattern changes towards the end of the primary school years, many factors may combine to provide an explanation, including socialisation and poverty, with boys being prompted to drop out from the system for economic reasons. A similar pattern with a similar result obtains at the secondary level where with male enrolment declining steadily, girls were more likely to complete the secondary years.
7. Bailey (2008), in discussing gender differentials in secondary and tertiary education in the Anglophone Caribbean notes that it is the intersection of sex with other factors that explains these differentials and highlights in particular the significance of variables such as ethnicity and socio-economic status. She therefore urges “a paradigm shift in research and policy formulation away from a focus on negative outcomes related to single univariate issues and interventions to treat symptoms and to avoid repetition of the event, to a focus not only on factors at the individual level but [on an approach that]

Males are considered to be the underachievers as compared to young women. The situation is at present that boys are more likely to fail. They are more likely to develop behavioral problems, experience isolation and rejection, and drop out from the school system without certification or labor force skills (UNECLAC 2007).

takes into account the broader social, institutional and structural context of youth development and inter-related risk antecedents operating in these spheres”

Expenditure on Education

8. Higher proportions of the labour force with only primary level education are correlated with higher unemployment; a point which is reinforced in the UNECLAC Report of 2005: *The region spends relatively more than other more developed regions on education, yet it is seemingly unable to reap the rewards of doing so.* The Report concludes that despite seemingly adequate funds overall, measured relative to GDP, expenditure on education needs to be more carefully targeted as a large proportion of unskilled labour, proxied by low educational achievements, clearly limits the types of industries that countries can attract, diminishing their growth potential.
9. Chaaban (2009) in illustrating the benefits of investing in education (See Chapter 5) notes for example, that adolescent motherhood cost The Bahamas 0.9 per cent of the country’s GDP, and 3.9 per cent of GDP over the lifetime of the mothers. The country would, therefore, have grown by 3.9 per cent over the mothers’ lifetime, had they all postponed pregnancy until their twenties. For Belize, the growth would be of the magnitude of over 10 per cent, and for Suriname 17 per cent.

The Region needs to give consideration to policy or legislation with regard to the reintegration of adolescent mothers into the school system and to the systematization of second chance opportunities for youth who drop out of school

10. The cost of dropping out of school before the due time shows Jamaica, for example sustaining serious impact from non-completion of primary education,(0.78 per cent of GDP). Guaranteeing full primary education to all would increase Jamaica’s GDP by less than 1 per cent. With full secondary enrollment, the Jamaican economy would grow by 1.37 per cent of GDP, and by 5.47 per cent with a 30 per cent enrollment at the tertiary level. Chaaban notes additionally that the returns on investment are slightly higher for males than females.

Participation and Performance at the Secondary and Tertiary levels

11. Table 1 below compares CSEC passes in 1997 and 2009, disaggregated by sex. It shows a decline among both males and females over the twelve years for all countries for which there are available data. Generally, in Mathematics, males have always done better than females and this is largely confirmed for both years compared. In 1997 eight countries achieved male pass rates of 50% or more; in 2009 only two did. In 1997, only one country realised a male pass rate below 40%, but in 2009 ten did. In 1997 nine countries achieved female pass rates in excess of 40 per cent; in 2009 there were seven. In 1997 only one country realized a female pass rate below 30 per cent, but in 2009 five did. Of note however, is the fact that in 2009, the female pass rates exceeded that of males in six countries whereas none did in 1997.

Table 1 – CSEC % Pass Rate by Sex (Math) 1997 and 2009

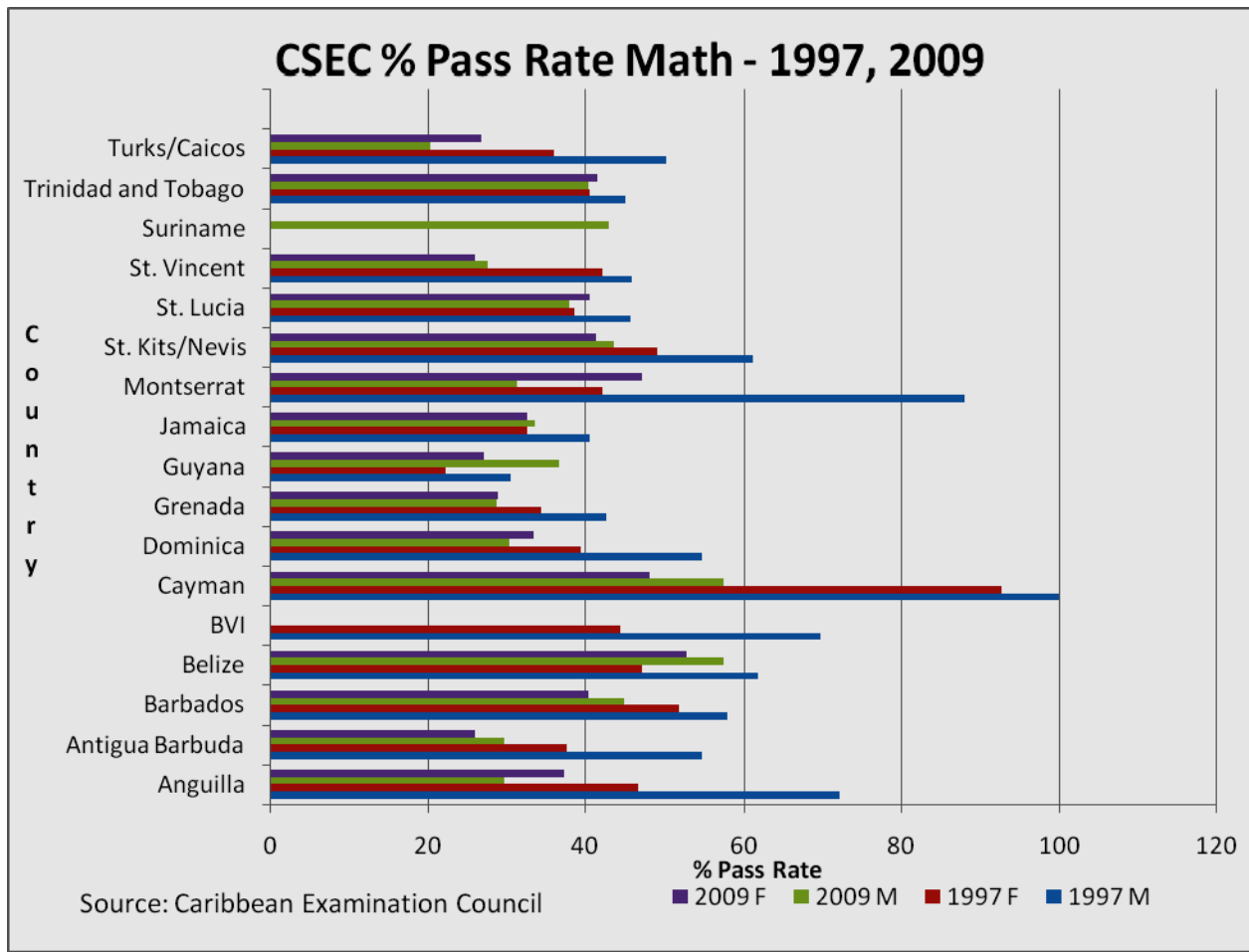
CARICOM Member State	1997		2009	
	M	F	M	F
Anguilla	72	46.67	29.69	37.27
Antigua Barbuda	54.59	37.64	29.7	25.97
Barbados	57.83	51.62	44.89	40.26
Belize	61.77	47.16	57.27	52.58
BVI	69.57	44.44		
Cayman Islands	100	92.59	57.28	48.04
Dominica	54.58	39.29	30.35	33.39
Grenada	42.53	34.4	28.73	28.84
Guyana	30.47	22.11	36.59	27.11
Jamaica	40.5	32.62	33.45	32.59
Montserrat	88	42.11	31.25	47.06
St. Kitts and Nevis	61.04	49.01	43.52	41.26
St. Lucia	45.7	38.48	37.94	40.43
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	45.83	42.05	27.56	25.93
Suriname			42.86	0
Trinidad and Tobago	45.04	40.43	40.33	41.52
Turks and Caicos Islands	50	35.9	20.17	26.67

Source: Caribbean Examination Council Reports, 1997 and 2009

12. Guyana is the only country showing some improvement over 1997, but the pass rates are so low that the margin of improvement is negligible.

These data are presented graphically in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: CSEC Percentage Pass Rate Math – 1997,2009



With regard to English Language, the picture looks just as dismal, although the CSEC pass rates are generally better than for Mathematics, as Table II shows.

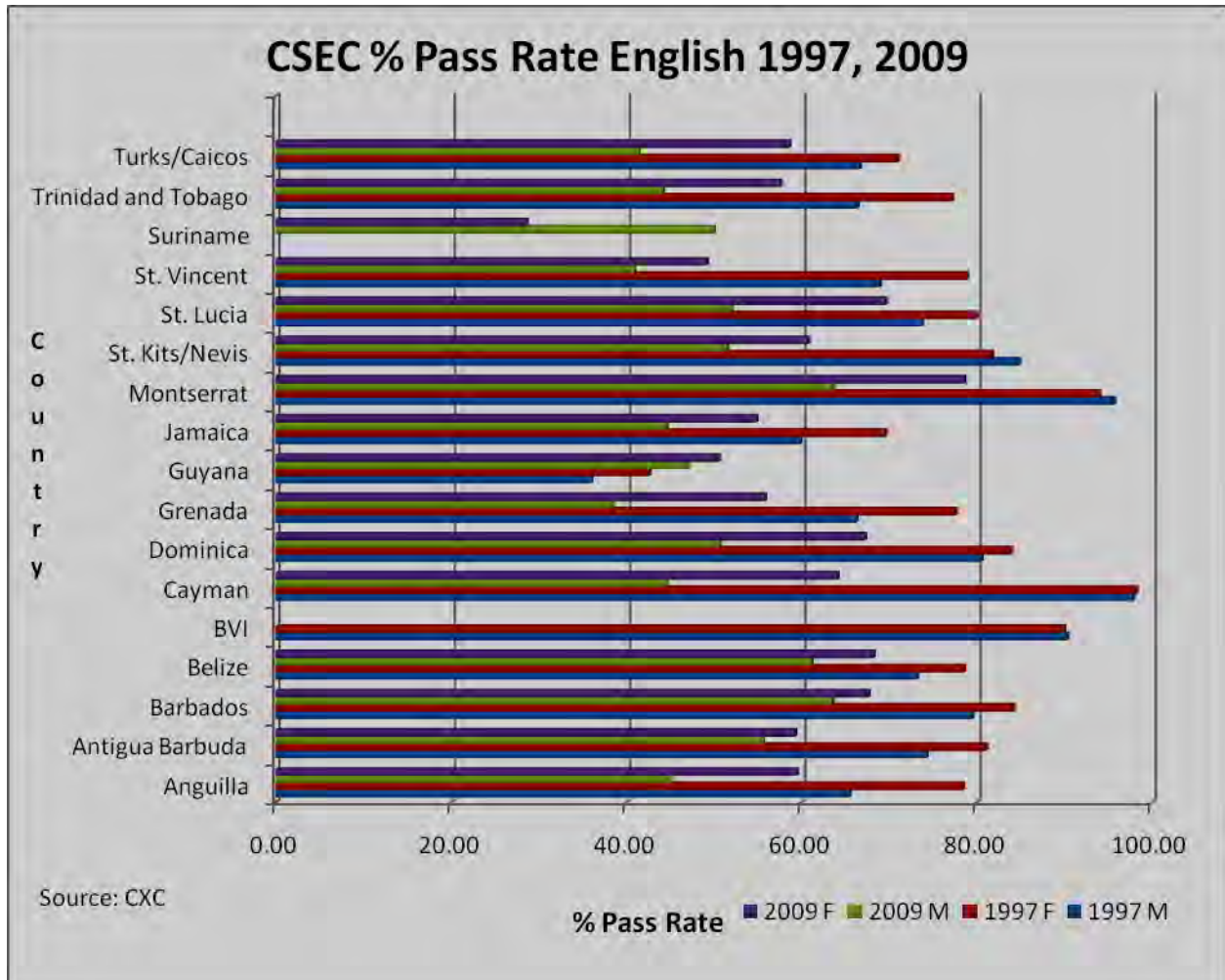
Table 2 – CSEC % Pass Rate by Sex (English) 1997 and 2009

CARICOM Member State	1997		2009	
	M	F	M	F
Anguilla	65.52	78.46	45.07	59.48
Antigua Barbuda				
	74.30	81.09	55.62	59.31
Barbados	79.54	84.19	63.53	67.67
Belize	73.21	78.52	61.13	68.24
BVI	90.32	90.00		
Cayman	97.87	98.23	44.55	64.16
Dominica	80.55	83.91	50.68	67.27
Grenada	66.29	77.59	38.48	55.88
Guyana	36.03	42.66	47.10	50.57
Jamaica	59.90	69.62	44.64	54.88
Montserrat	95.65	93.94	63.64	78.57
St. Kitts/Nevis	84.82	81.73	51.56	60.77
St. Lucia	73.80	79.97	51.98	69.63
St. Vincent	68.97	78.91	40.88	49.19
Suriname			50.00	28.57
Trinidad and Tobago	66.43	77.17	44.21	57.61
Turks/Caicos	66.67	71.05	41.41	58.62

Source: Caribbean Examination Council Reports, 1997 and 2009

13. In English Language, females generally perform better than males, and this difference is upheld in the two years compared. But the decline is stark. In 1997 there were only two countries achieving less than 60 per cent male pass rates; but in 2009 two became ten. In 1997 only one country achieved a male pass rate lower than 50 per cent, but in 2009 eight did. In 1997 female pass rates in English were generally high among Member States -, only two countries achieving rates below 70 per cent; in 2009, however, there were 15. In 1997 only one country realised a female pass rate below 60 per cent; in 2009 there were nine. These data are presented graphically in Figure 5 overleaf.

Figure 5: CSEC Percentage Pass Rate English – 1997,2009



14. The pattern is quite clear: the majority of Caribbean students - our hope as we confront the global and regional challenges- lack general proficiency in Mathematics, the foundation of logical thought and the sciences, while a significant number of the Region’s students lack proficiency in English, the *lingua franca* of the Twenty-First Century. The figures for English are even more disconcerting when it is recognised that one of the characteristics of the Ideal Caribbean Person identified by the youth is someone skilled in more than one language. If there is difficulty in gaining proficiency in one language, then it becomes even more formidable to operate in two or more languages.

15. With such high failure in competence, it is little wonder that students are leaving high school ill-prepared for the job market. There is considerable evidence that the education system in the Anglophone Caribbean tends to focus more on the acquisition of academic as opposed to labour market competencies; with students lacking exposure to activities that promote innovation and creativity. These are conclusions of the World Bank Report of 2006, which recommends linking education with labour market demands. UNECLAC (2007) was more blunt: the education system has failed to prepare young persons adequately for the skilled jobs in the new global economy. Although youth may have received up to 11 years of formal education, school leavers had no diploma or marketable skills and were taking a long time to find employment. In addition, students and families were not receiving career guidance to select careers in high demand. For example, while traditional fields such as the medical and legal professions had been over saturated, information technology had opened a new arena for youth seeking innovative, lucrative, and a high demand alternative, but few were being prepared to enter.

Access to Secondary Education

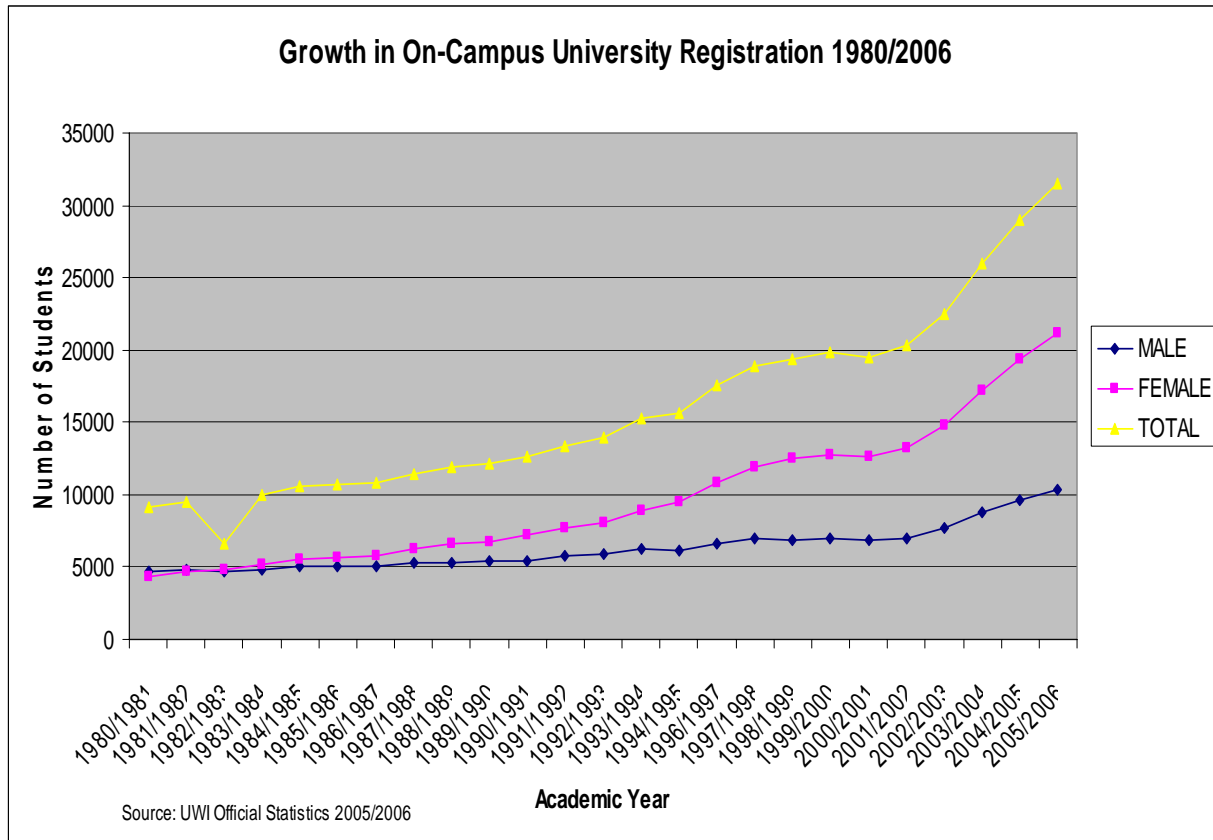
16. Caribbean Governments, mindful of the imperative to respond to the needs of students and to empower them for life and work, have mandated CXC to develop new and responsive secondary level assessment programmes designed to prepare and certify a larger percentage of the secondary school cohort. They need to be mindful, however, that even as they seek to improve the quality of secondary education, one important goal has remained elusive in far too many countries, and that is **universal** secondary education.
17. In 1997, the Conference of Heads of Government set a target date of 2005 for the achievement of universal secondary education in the region. Since that time, many Member States have either achieved that target or have moved much closer to it. Unfortunately, in many instances, the move towards universal provision at this level has translated to provision of places in a secondary school without rethinking with regard to the necessary systemic changes to accommodate the wide range of aptitudes and abilities of students making the transition from primary to secondary schooling.

18. The assessment systems range of curricular offerings and teaching methodologies have very often not been addressed. This is often compounded by the fact that many of the students now entering secondary school have not acquired the basic literacy, numeracy and other skills to benefit optimally from secondary education. The practice of automatic transition of students through the system without reference to achievement and remediation is one which requires attention. The development and revision of regional standards for literacy and numeracy and other areas at the primary level and accompanying assessment practices should be actively considered.
19. This challenge is one experienced by most if not all countries in the Region. In some instances children perceived as 'academic underachievers' are shunted into Technical and Vocational Education and training programmes, perpetuating the perception that such training does not require pre-requisite knowledge, literacy and numeracy skills. Technical and Vocational Education and training programmes also need to move beyond the traditional crafts to empower students for the opportunities in ICT related fields such as graphic arts, and support services for cultural industries.
20. Some Member States have established Employment Centres which provide career guidance, training in employability skills and other services to youth. The documentation and sharing of these models can benefit other Member States.

Tertiary Level Education

21. In 1997, The Conference of Heads of Government also set a target enrolment of 15% of the post secondary cohort in tertiary education by 2005. While some countries have already achieved the CARICOM target of 15 per cent of eligible secondary school graduates enrolled in tertiary institutions, the overwhelming majority of these are females, making the lower enrollment levels of males a cause for concern. At the University of the West Indies, gender enrollment ratios have been steadily widening, from parity in the early 1980s to current levels of 2:1 female to male, as Figure 6 demonstrates.

Figure 6: UWI On-Campus Registration 1980-2006



Male under-performance

22. Lower male performance in the education system is the result of lower male participation in it. There is little evidence in the CSEC results to conclude that girls are any brighter than boys. Apart from the general tendency for boys to gravitate towards vocational-type subjects, in contrast to girls who gravitate towards liberal arts studies, there is little gender difference. CSEC's Most Outstanding Students in the five year period 2001 to 2004 and in 2006 were four males and one female, while the top performers in Business Education, Humanities, Science, Technical and Vocational, Short Story Writing, Two-dimensional Visual Arts, and Three-dimensional Visual Arts were eighteen boys and seventeen girls. At the University of the West Indies, while the number of male graduates with first class honours is smaller than the similar number for females, the ratio is often greater.

23. Among the explanations for male under-participation are the system of socialization which, according to Figueroa (1997), privileges boys with less responsibility, thus ill preparing them to cope when they enter school; the non-interactive, rote-learning methods of pedagogy that still prevail (Evans 2006), and the availability of easier, quicker and more lucrative alternatives to masculine power than through education, such as sports, music and the informal economy (Chevannes 1999). Where boys lack a sense of connection to school, they perform below their potential. Thus, while CSEC performance is generally unacceptably low, it is lower for boys than for girls. If, as a World Bank study finds, a strong feeling of connectedness to and staying in school correlates with lower levels of violent crime in society, it correlates as well to higher achievements in school. School thus functions as an arena not only for the acquisition of knowledge but also for the internalisation of sound values.
24. In this regard, the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) curriculum used by most CARICOM Member States is an important reminder of the added role that the education system must also play. However, while HFLE remains a low priority subject and the comfort levels of the teachers delivering the curriculum are also low when it touches on critical issues such as sex, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS, there is insufficient appreciation that all teachers have that additional role to play as mentors, providing the connectedness to school for those who need it more, namely the males. Once this is recognised, appropriate training should be introduced in the teacher-training institutions, paying attention to emotional intelligence, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and other issues that could impact behaviour and teacher-student interaction.

Adolescent and Youth Perspectives on Education

25. Young people participating in the Commission's survey were extremely vocal about education and their views, many of which were touched on in earlier paragraphs, bear repetition. Caribbean youth aged 15-29 value education but are concerned about the following issues:
- (1) Restricted access: was a point emphatically made, due to poverty (the challenge of meeting the cost of transportation, school supplies books, uniforms and meals,

private tuition; and hidden fees imposed by free public institutions). They also felt the number of schools at the secondary level and training institutions and their enrolment capacities were inadequate. At the tertiary level, their concerns focused on the paucity of scholarships and spaces.

(2) Low relevance of education: Here their concern was with the unresponsiveness of the curriculum options and delivery systems to their talents, skills, interests and needs. For them, education was boring, limited and academic-focused and ultra-traditional.

“this is garbage education”

“... to be a professional plumber ... I work at the water company and only make enough to pay bills. I cannot afford to pay for school”

“... a lack of opportunities (educational) at home, it so hard to get into UWI and UTECH ... a lot of schools abroad, you could go, further yourself, come back and make some money.”

(3) Poor quality of education: certificates and diplomas do not guarantee them a job or job security; there is also under-investment in rural schools.

(4) Outdated curriculum that does not foster knowledge of the region, CARICOM and the CSME.

(5) Insecurity in the form of indiscipline and gang activities in schools organized around drug sales, guns, machetes, knives, politics, theft, sex and turfism, the presence of police and metal detectors in some schools.

(6) There was also concern about what some saw as “a homosexual culture”.

“Schools got a stigma, they say that the children that go to this school, they ain't well educated and half the time children that does go to them higher schools ... does end up working for the ones like we ...”

(7) Teachers falling short of their roles.

“Most of the teachers that like they are going to say okay like I don't care about you I'm just here because they are paying me to”

(8) Stigmatisation of certain schools based on where they are located.

“ teachers would tell you about you mother and curse you and thing and if I curse back and tell she about she mother they gone want tell me I wrong and you get send home”

26. Finally, for those aged 10-14 years, the primary educational concerns, by contrast, were with peer pressure as it

“Girls mostly drop out for teenage pregnancy or drugs and alcohols but mostly it will be boys... my teacher says that girls are going up and boys are going down because they don't—they don't want to continue study”

relates to educational achievement, violence in schools, teacher quality, interaction and discipline, social exclusion and voicelessness (UNICEF 2009).

27. In summary, the Regional education system that stood the CARICOM countries in good stead over many decades is showing signs of strain. Academic standards are falling; schools, once the safe space where order and civility prevailed, are now experiencing gun violence and disorder; young males have been turning away from education as a self-actualising path; and the curricula, many youth believe, are outdated and unresponsive to their needs.

Teaching and Leadership in the Education System

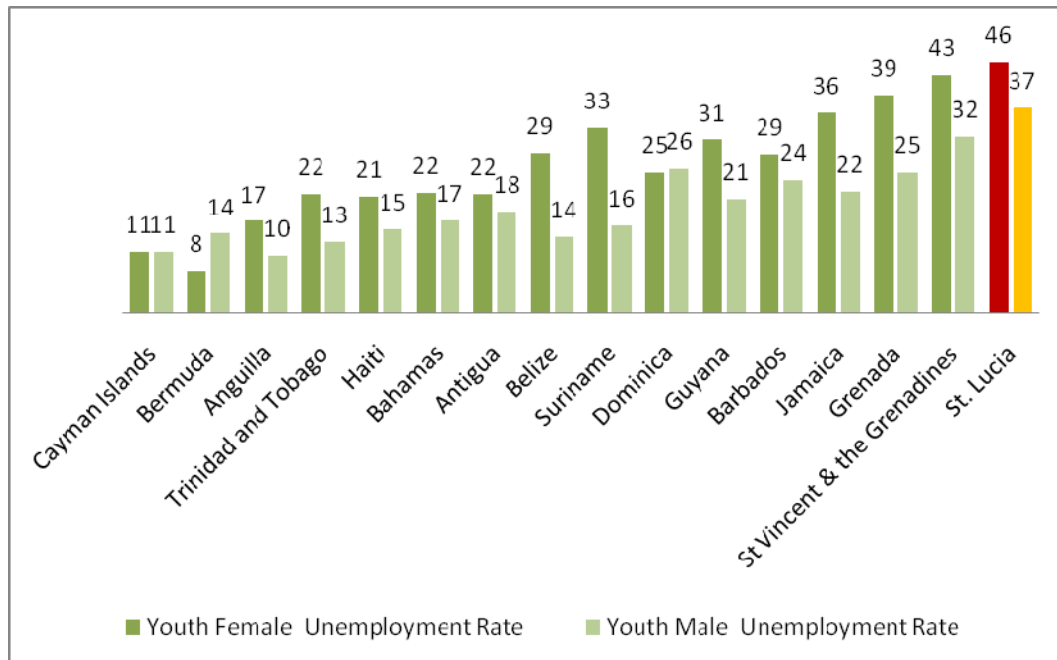
28. It is well established that the quality of the teaching force impacts significantly on the quality of education and consequently on the achievement of students at all levels. The challenges noted throughout the education and training systems in the region highlight not only the mismatch between the cognitive and affective skills acquired by students, but also the fact that teachers are often ill prepared to address the existing and emerging personal and societal challenges faced by youth. Teachers are now called upon to facilitate learning by youth who are growing up in a fundamentally different environment from that in which they did. In particular the rapid integration of the new technologies into all aspects of their lives has transformed the way in which they think, receive and process information and view the world in general. Rethinking and redefining education in the Caribbean context in order to prepare youth for the Information Society is an imperative which we cannot afford to ignore.
29. The voices of youth heard above, emphasise the need for the leadership of schools and institutions to be responsive not only to issues of methodology and content, but also to issues of respect for the fundamental rights of students. These factors have serious implications for the development and delivery of learning experiences at all levels if the important objectives of education for the emerging economy and information society are to be achieved.
30. Specific attention needs to be given to the systematic retooling of educators at all levels of the system, including classroom teachers, lecturers, teacher educators, curriculum

developers, administrators and managers, from pre-primary to tertiary levels, and also policy makers. In addition, education systems should seek to take responsibility for appropriate orientation and education of parents to be effective partners in the education and training of youth.

Youth, Labour and Employment

1. The successful implementation of CSME requires a pool of youth who are equipped with entrepreneurial and specialised knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that expand the Region's manufacturing and services sector in a manner that increases individual and market competitiveness, creates new jobs and overall enhances the quality of life. Youth unemployment in the Caribbean is high, gendered and dangerous to social stability. More than a quarter of the Region's unemployed is between 25 and 34 years of age, including graduates of secondary and tertiary institutions. College graduates resent the fact that they are asked for 3 to 5 five years experience to qualify for a professional job (USAID, 2008). Females, despite their increased presence in the labor force, have higher unemployment rates, encounter greater barriers to entering the workforce, earn lower wages, and perform a higher proportion of insecure, vulnerable and unpaid jobs than their male counterparts. (UNECLAC, 2005).

Figure 7: Youth Unemployment Rate by Gender (2006)



Source: ILO

2. Of the sixteen countries identified in Figure 7, half of them show unemployment rates above thirty per cent, with Saint Lucia recording the highest at 46 per cent among females. The graph confirms higher female unemployment rates in all countries except Bermuda, where male unemployment stood at 14 per cent in 2006 compared to female unemployment which stood at 8 per cent. In The Cayman Islands and Dominica, the rates were on par.

3. Many young people want and need to work and may be lucky enough to find entry-level jobs in the informal and tourism, agricultural, construction and service sub-sectors or, in the case of females, in the service, sales and white collar sectors (UNECLAC 2007; USAID, 2008). Others, in the absence of “decent” work, turn to alternative and sometimes illegal or socially unacceptable means of income generation

“You’re doing your best, but when you’re graduated you can’t find a job. You ask yourself why others can get a job and you can’t. Only because your name is B and not A, you don’t get a chance”

“I’m working for nothing, because they call the Filipinos here to work for nothing so I can’t demand more money”

“We are in a situation where parents are not working and the children are going to be raised badly, some will need to eat and can’t so they would get a gun”

such as marijuana production, gun violence, sex work, theft, drug sales and extortion for safe passage.

4. Rapid advances in ICTs over the past few decades have created a serious mismatch between the education system and the world of work, and the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of young people in the work force lag behind those required by the private sector. Academic qualifications are no longer a guarantee of good long-term employment and job security is increasingly linked to employability rather than employment. The dwindling market for unskilled labour has increased the demand for more than basic primary education for entry level jobs. As a result suitably qualified workers are displaced by those who are over qualified (UNECLAC, 2005)
5. Significant numbers of Caribbean youth live in poverty, lack basic necessities and try to survive on a day-to-day basis in an uncertain future – a situation which they blame on the irresponsible behaviour of parents and political leaders. High unemployment is associated with widely unequal distribution of income, and generates a host of personal, social and economic issues including hunger, inadequate housing, and single parent-headed households.
6. Many public and private sector agencies across the Region promote skills training and employment initiatives as well as micro-enterprises as means of solving high levels of unemployment among youth and women. These programmes assist in increasing productivity as a means of achieving anticipated improvements in the social and economic welfare of Caribbean people. However, their impact has been constrained in part by a primary focus on entry-level occupations; a lack of interest among persons trained to continue in the same field; stringent criteria for obtaining start-up loan funds; the absence of an entrepreneurial culture; and the failure of schools to unleash the entrepreneurial spirit of youth. In addition, few skills training or entrepreneurial development agencies and schools expose students to concrete CARICOM and CSME concepts, principles and cross-border opportunities. In this regard, the implementation of Caribbean Vocational Qualifications in

We are in need of money, food, clothes and shelter...no jobs to support family members, to make yourself feel valuable...to have things in life...to have things in life, some youth are not qualified for a job"

"some youth who can't find jobs make fast money by selling drugs, guns, sex work, theft, etc."

all countries would go a long way in enabling youth to take advantage of job-opportunities across the Region. The further elaboration of the regional qualifications framework is necessary for ensuring that youth can take advantage of opportunities for advancement in their chosen fields. The establishment of the Regional Accreditation Agency is also of paramount importance.

7. The lack of relevant labour market information is a contributory factor to the mismatch between education and employment. The imperative of close linkages among education and training institutions, employers and labour cannot be over-emphasised.
8. Combining school with work experience, job-search skills and career guidance programmes are becoming increasingly important and necessary for the smooth school-to-work transitions. What is emerging is a pattern of young people moving in and out of employment in search of a “good job” but becoming unemployed or underemployed while the search continues.

School and Employment in the OECS

9. The following excerpts of statistics from the recent World Bank Report (2007), *School and Work: Does the Eastern Caribbean Education System Adequately Prepare Youth for the Global Economy?* illustrate many of the problems discussed above.

79% of GDP is produced by the service economy in the countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). This signals the importance of training people to work in this crucial sector of the economy.

79% of expected new jobs in St. Kitts and Nevis in 2006 were in the tourism sector. The training and education systems need to groom school leavers and unemployed youth to fill these vacancies.

100% transition rate from primary to secondary education in St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, with other OECS governments taking steps to achieve similar rates. These are strong indicators of a strong commitment to education by the governments of these Member States.

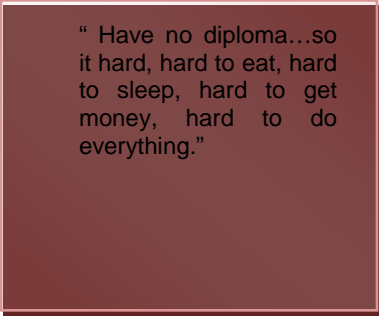
41% of business firms in Grenada rate workers with lack of skills and education as a severe obstacle to their competitiveness; an indication that the education and training systems are not grooming school leavers and the unemployed for the available jobs.

88% of employers in St. Kitts and Nevis rate “attitude to work” as very important; an indication of the importance of employee behavioural life skills among employers in the Eastern Caribbean.

14 months is the average time needed in St. Vincent and the Grenadines for a high school graduate with adequate CSEC passes to find his or her first employment, evidencing the difficulties school leavers face in the transition from school to work;

56% is the youth unemployment rate in Dominica;

149 is the number of those enrolled in training programmes for the textile industry in Saint Lucia in 2005, where that industry is not only small, but declining;



“ Have no diploma...so it hard, hard to eat, hard to sleep, hard to get money, hard to do everything.”

48% of business firms provide training to their employees in Grenada, suggesting that the incidence of job training and further education of the OECS labor force is low by comparison to international data.

10. Although the OECS countries are well on their way to universal secondary education, a goal on which they place high premium, the data suggest that there may still remain serious gaps between the system of education and training and the labour market which having undergone a shift from light manufacture to tourism, now requires a work force with attitudes and behavioural skills that are appropriate to providing a range of services to people. However, one cannot infer from the data that this is responsible for the high youth unemployment.
11. Unemployment and under-employment impact the quality of life of adolescents and youth; increase their frustration and hopelessness, decrease productivity and heighten

vulnerability to social dislocation, exploitation and poverty. This, in turn, decreases the likelihood of attaining the goals of regional integration and, by extension, the CSME. Yet, paradoxically, it is the CSME that is “the best thing that could ever happen to the Region”, in the words of those youth who know about the CSME, because of its promise of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities waiting to be embraced by energetic and creative youth willing to stake their claim to the Region as their own.

Adolescents, Youth and Migration

1. The Commission is mindful that the contemporary Caribbean with its majority African and Indian populations, was born out of migration and has functioned as a source of migration to other parts of the world. Except for small indigenous groups, we are descended from migrants who came by force to work, or of their own volition in search of opportunities for self-actualisation.
2. The Caribbean loses large numbers of students, technicians, professionals and other young people to North America, the United Kingdom, Holland and other parts of the developed world each year in predominantly back-and-forth migratory patterns as opposed to permanent one-way movements (World Bank, 2008).
3. An average of 3 per cent of the Caribbean population is considered migrants (ECLAC (2005) and in most host countries are currently within the third and fourth generations of migration. Jamaica, Grenada, Guyana, and St. Kitts and Nevis lost between 85 and 90 per cent of their most skilled populations and over 30 per cent of their skilled workforce over the thirty-five year period from 1965 to 2000 (IMF, 2006).
4. Intra-regional migration is the cornerstone of the CSME and a part of the Caribbean’s history. Extensive kinship ties have developed throughout the Region, binding nationals of one country with emotional ties to nationals of other countries.
5. The impact of migration on nationals varies according to the circumstances (legal or illegal) under which it occurs. Those migrating extra-regionally, face special challenges of adjustment in balancing Caribbean values, attitudes and culture with the host cultures. These challenges include:

- (i) Discrimination and stigmatisation;
- (ii) Psychological impact of separation from family, friends or partners;
- (iii) Interpretation of “Caribbean” ways of behaving (such as corporal punishment) as maladaptive, counter-productive or illegal; often requiring referral for counselling and remedial services;
- (iv) Rejection by or ostracism from peers when they return home.

“It’s the only way of ensuring that my children would have a better future”

“If (better tertiary education facilities) existed in Trinidad I would not leave, I have needs, wants and desires that cannot be met here”

“If we want to become really good at something we have to leave Barbados to do it. No professional tennis player has ever been from

6. Patterns of contemporary Caribbean migration and the implications for youth are summarised overleaf.

7. The Commission is disturbed to find that more than 85 per cent of Caribbean nationals between the ages of 15 and 29 would leave their countries for more developed ones, if they had the choice and the necessary resources. We believe that this desire is influenced, in part, by stories of riches and opportunities told by the media and by networks of contemporaries, family and friends, living outside the Region who maintain regular contact through advanced communication technologies (*UNICEF, 2009*).

Contemporary Migration Patterns

Patterns

- (i) rural-urban migration driven primarily by a search for economic opportunities. Usually unplanned and associated with overcrowding, high population density, unemployment, poverty and social decay;
- (ii) Intra-regional migration - nationals moving from country to country in search of opportunities.

Issues impacting on youth

- (i) migrants entering a country illegally or over-extending their stay, e.g. women and girls who are trafficked as commercial sex workers;
- (ii) involuntary repatriation of persons from developed countries following conviction of a criminal or civil offence (deportees) to countries where they have few family ties and existing opportunities to continue criminal activities;
- (iii) intra-regional or internal movement (trafficking) of children and youth by means of coercion, threats, or deception for the purpose of prostitution, sexual slavery, domestic servitude, begging, forced labour or other forms of exploitation. The US Trafficking in Persons report,(2008), classifies CARCIOM countries as sources, destinations and transit areas;
- (iv) the practice of parents who cannot afford to raise their children sending them to work for more affluent nationals as domestics, e.g *Restavecs*, as it is called in Haiti. The expectation is that the child would be exposed to a better quality of life and thus able to financially support the family, but the result is invariably abuse.

8. Equally disturbing is the finding that adolescents aged 10 – 14, although aware of and connected to their own communities: home, school, and geographic location, have limited interest in exploring, residing in or being part of any integration movement involving *Caribbean* communities. This is mainly due to (i) their fairly strong bonding to family homes and countries of residence; (ii) a much stronger pull from the wider world from ICT messages, especially for studying and living; (iii) fears of regional crime; and (iv) insufficient knowledge about Caribbean countries, CARICOM, and the CSME (UNICEF 2009).
9. Few have travelled in the Region and their perspectives on remaining in the Region are not encouraging, as can be seen in the following box. Yet they do retain a sense of loyalty in the wish to return, should they travel, to develop their countries.

Adolescents aged 10 to 14 prefer to stay at home. Those who wish to migrate are:

- alienated by extreme violence or other negative experiences in or around their own spaces or country;
- dissatisfied with education and employment opportunities;
- demotivated by their perception of the Caribbean; and
- committed to returning to help develop their countries after their goals have been accomplished

Youth aged 15 and 29 : 85 per cent would leave if they had the choice and resources. The majority would go to the United States, Canada, England, Spain, Japan and Paris. Their main reasons for migrating are:

- the experience of hostile immigration and customs officers, nationals;
- the search for employment, education and business opportunities;
- escape from poverty, alienation, lack of security, abuse, neglect, marginalisation and ineffective youth development support structures;
- to take up scholarships, jobs and residency offers from Mexico, Cuba, Latin America, the United States and other countries.

Rethinking the Brain Drain

10. The Region has been experiencing a serious drain of brain and brawn since the first opening up of migration opportunities in the late nineteenth century. The Caribbean diaspora, depending on their economic circumstances, makes a significant contribution to the Region's economies through remittances sent to kinsfolk left behind – in Haiti remittances double export earnings and represent the primary source of foreign exchange. Caribbean migrant communities, particularly in metropolitan countries, are increasingly being recognised by CARICOM Governments as assets in the home country's development trajectories.
11. There is every reason therefore to avoid viewing extra-Regional migration as completely negative and instead to imbue in our young people that sense of national and Regional identity that will make them good ambassadors abroad and great assets for Regional economic, political and social development.

Insularity, Xenophobia and Institutionalised Discrimination: The Case of Haiti

12. Haiti is the Community's newest member and its largest potential market. In an effort to assess how efforts to transition to another CARICOM country in search of opportunities not readily available at home impacted on the health and well-being of young people, the CCYD in 2008 partnered with Haitian nationals living in The

"I'm growing older. My mom and dad died and I didn't want to be dependent on anyone, so I took to the waters. I would like to achieve something,... I look for work and can't find any. I would like to live like a person"

Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands⁷ to conduct focus group interviews with young male and female Haitians and their parents. Many of the participants were illegal immigrants who were so anxious to share their story that they risked being arrested to meet with interviewers. The Commission was totally unprepared for the revelations of personal, social and economic exploitation and human rights violations meted out to them.

13. In presenting this case study, the Commission wishes to make it clear that it does not condone illegal migration. We feel, however, that it is our duty to give voice to the emotional trauma, deep humiliation and shame being experienced by our Haitian brothers and sisters within the Community and to place the spotlight on the corrosive extremism of xenophobia, institutionalised discrimination and insularity.

14. Haiti has a population of approximately 10 million and is socially and economically classified as the second poorest state in the Western Hemisphere. Boat-loads of Haitians brave the open sea with regular frequency to The Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands, in search of employment and education opportunities, a better quality of life and a means of helping family back home. Some never make it and drown at sea, others are intercepted and deported, but many more do succeed and must, of necessity, run and hide from immigration authorities. Illegal Haitians are normally employed as casual domestics or construction/hotel workers, regardless of their qualification; and live in deplorable conditions *'under the bush'* without running water, electricity, safety and permanence. They face high levels of unemployment and under-employment and often skip meals in order to send remittances to the family back home.

⁷ These countries do not participate in CSME

15. All Haitians, legal and illegal, nationalised or born in the countries sampled, report experiencing an unaccustomed culture of discrimination and lack of respect that cause them deep humiliation and shame; and socio-economic conditions often worse than in Haiti. Those who are illegal must, of necessity, run and hide from immigration authorities. Many express a desire for self-repatriation but are determined to remain until they have fulfilled their dreams.

16. The Turks and Caicos and Bahamian laws make citizenship for children of non-nationals a privilege to be applied for at the age of 18, rather than a right of birth. The fact that the application can be contested⁸ effectively renders a large number of Haitian youths in those countries stateless until such time as they receive a passport. It also restricts their social, educational and economic mobility and diminishes their quality of life. They resent the suggestion of applying for Haitian citizenship as a fallback position.

17. Inner conflicts pertaining to Haitian identity and culture versus mainstream culture predispose Haitians to an identity crisis, and passive-aggressive responses mask potentially explosive feelings of deep anger, frustration, resentment, hopelessness and desperation. The following is a summary of issues identified:

“Don’t ever give up your Haitian culture to become someone else. Some are not proud to be Haitian, they pretend to be someone else. We have a self esteem problem, mostly teenagers who sometimes just accept what they see, don’t stand up and say no, it’s wrong.”

“A lot of discrimination. I feel bad that some Bahamians don’t appreciate Haitians – some do.”

“In The Bahamas you can walk down the road and you would hear a little child say, “Carry your Haitian self!” like it’s a curse. It’s like, when I was at school I would rather you tell me the F word than to call me a Haitian—that’s how painful it was. It’s like ‘You’re a Haitian, carry your Haitian self, you smell like a Haitian, you look like a Haitian’.”

“When they arrest Haitians, they send them back without clothes or anything. Even a thief dresses up, acts like an immigration officer and comes in and does as he pleases with you. The consul that should serve us don’t really pay attention to our complaints. It seems that they forget where they are from.”

“I was born here and I know nothing about Haiti - I don’t understand why Haiti would issue a passport to someone who was not born there.”

“The Government refused to issue me a passport on my 18th birthday saying that I need to get a Haitian passport first – they gave me a piece of newspaper ... and told me “use this”. It’s like give us a sense of identity”.

⁸ One focus group participant born in The Bahamas was 27 years old and had not yet been granted citizenship.

Physical Health: Increased susceptibility to malnutrition, HIV and AIDS and drug and alcohol abuse as a result of extreme poverty, hard work, hunger and poor living conditions

Human Rights: Inconsistent deportation practices, often without due process; alleged persecution, abuse and procedural misconduct by immigration officials, including confiscation of valuables, destruction of work permits and deportation without access to decent clothing, food, official representation or formal proceedings;

Civic Rights: Legally documented Haitians are routinely stopped by the authorities and can be arrested if they do not have proof of citizenship on their person. Academic achievers are unjustly denied earned scholarships and valedictorian status. Many are stateless, due to complex citizenship laws.

18. The Commission was profoundly moved by the report of the treatment of Haitians, more so because it came against the background of the recent bicentenary of the Haitian nation state and the bicentenary of the abolition of the trade in Africans, on which the triumph of the Haitian revolution had had a profound impact. We consider the experiences of the Haitians in The Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands to be an extreme example of attitudes manifested elsewhere throughout the Region towards other Caribbean nationals from countries with struggling economies or surpluses of labour. Left unaddressed, these attitudes will reinforce insularity, stymie regional integration, and frustrate the objectives of the CSME.

“we are like weeds – we bend but we do not break”

Adolescent and Youth Health and Well-Being

1. WHO defines health as a “*state of complete physical, mental and social well-being*”. A United Kingdom Whitehall Well-being Working Group (2006) developed the following statement of *common understanding* in respect of well-being:

Wellbeing is a positive physical, social and mental state; It is not just the absence of pain, discomfort and incapacity. It arises not only from the action of individuals but from a host of collective goods and relationships with other people. It requires that basic needs are met, that individuals have a sense of purpose, and that they feel able to achieve important personal goals and participate in society. It is enhanced by conditions that include supportive personal relationships, involvement in empowered communities, good health, financial security, rewarding employment, and a healthy and attractive environment.

2. The CARICOM Heads of Government Declaration that ***the Health of the Region is the Wealth of the Region (2001)*** effectively makes the link between human advancement and material progress. Good health increases an individual’s productivity, and leads to long-term economic growth through channels such as better nutrition, greater life expectancy, and increased savings for retirement. Ill health has the opposite impact – lower productivity, lower life expectancy and economic loss, and is associated with homelessness, sub-standard living conditions and pockets of poverty.

Adolescent and Youth Health

3. Recent PAHO/WHO research on Adolescent Health in the Caribbean in a number of territories,⁹ addressed general health issues such as health care, nutrition, sexual history, drug use, mental health, violence, family characteristics, and relationships with others. In general, the youth surveyed claimed to be in good health; however 10 per cent of the sample reported a disability or other significant health problem. In the PAHO publication *Health in the Americas (2007)*, the age group 15 to 24 in the Caribbean reported experiencing a number of health conditions; homicide; injury from physical assault and accidents, including traffic accidents, diseases

“I worry about my life, my health because without health one can do nothing. When there is life, there is hope”

⁹ Countries sampled were Antigua, The Bahamas, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, and Saint. Lucia

of the urinary system; tuberculosis and respiratory infections; poisoning, suicide, accidental drowning, abortion, maternal death, and malignant neoplasms.

4. The PAHO study cited HIV and AIDS as the leading cause of death among Caribbean youth and identified obesity - attributed to a growing 'fast foods' culture and insufficient physical exercise - as an emerging problem. According to the CARICOM Commission on Health and Development, (CCHD), obese children become obese adults. The observation that almost half of the adult Caribbean population is overweight and that many children are at increased risk of obesity, strengthens the case for a population approach to obesity control rather than a strategy merely targeting at-risk individuals and groups. A worrying incidence of juvenile diabetes has appeared in a 2006 newspaper report from Jamaica and is now gaining attention in other Caribbean territories. Interestingly enough, the *Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework 2008-2012*, developed by the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP) as a regional response to HIV and AIDS highlights many of the issues above as contemporary challenges in a section captioned "Cultural and Lifestyle Issues" affecting the HIV and AIDS epidemic in the Caribbean. The PANCAP report also places attention on the importance of gender roles and the expressions of gender identities in driving the epidemic.

5. During the Commission's research, adolescents and youth shared the following health concerns:
 - **Health Care Facilities and Services:** limited access to hospitals and clinics, medical personnel and health care, particularly HIV and AIDS and mental health patients; long waiting periods in emergency rooms; lack of confidentiality and "youth friendliness" in clinics providing sexual and reproductive health services.

 - **Environmental Degradation:** over-development, deforestation and failure to preserve natural resources; climate change, hurricanes, flooding and other natural disasters; pollution; non-maintenance of bridges, roads and other civil infrastructure.

- **Road Accidents:** Among males 15 to 24 years old, motor vehicle accidents (MVA) are the third leading cause of death in the Caribbean at 9.2 per cent, behind homicide (19.8 per cent) and HIV and AIDS (13.6 per cent); the main victims being males (*CCHD 2006:56*).

Mental Health

6. While not surprised by young people's seeming lack of concern for physical health the Commission was struck by an apparent decline in mental health indicators from a 2000 PAHO Study which found sixteen percent or one in six adolescents and youth to be sad, irritable or angry. Of specific concern are –

- dangerously high levels of anger, hostility, depression, suicide, alienation and hopelessness, in particular among the 15 to 29 age cohort ; and

- an incidence of parental and family neglect, crime and violence, sexual promiscuity, stigmatisation, poverty and victimisation more

“ (crime and violence) really hard to deal with...every night now is shots ringing out, gotta watch your back twice; your mind have to be made up every minute because anything can happen in the streets... sometimes when I'm studying and the men firing shots I just can't concentrate on my school work; ... the police, he not even educated on how to help you because he only trained to deal with you under aggression”

“Living on the street, even though it may lead to incarceration, is an option to survive”

when I look on my future I don't--you aren't really happy to grow up anymore....”

“...as a young man it is very hard growing up without a father...”

“ The foreigners come to our land and they buy us out and when they get where they want they kick us and treat us like dogs, you understand, that's why 'nuff the youth nowadays we so violent if we see a foreigner we would be killing um”

common than previously believed.

7. The quotations highlighted in the accompanying box provide insight into youth mental health issues. In many urban communities, for example, gang violence creates a condition of sustained mental stress that takes a heavy toll on young people.

8. It is not customary to think “youth” when one thinks of “mental health”, but the reality facing many youth requires that one should.
9. Although there are limited data, the prevalence of mental health issues among youth is reflected in the high incidence of depression, abuse of alcohol and other substances, and other high risk behaviours. In the Americas, 18 per cent of suicides is attributed to persons aged 18 to 24 years.. Countries with the highest suicide rates for males in this age group are, in descending order: Canada, the United States of America, El Salvador, Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba, Uruguay, and Venezuela.
10. The Caribbean Health Survey reported that 10 per cent of those 10 to 12 years old, 17 per cent of those 13 to 15 years, and 23 per cent of those 16 to 18 years reported having a friend who had attempted or committed suicide. Drug overdose and the ingestion of agricultural chemicals were the most frequent mode.

Drug Use and Abuse

11. The escalation of drug abuse over the last three to four decades, particularly among the adolescents and young people, has created major public health and socio-economic problems and challenges. The 2000 Global Youth Tobacco Survey, a school-based study supported by the World Health Organisation that collected data from adolescents aged 13 to 15, showed that 19 per cent of adolescents in Trinidad and Tobago smoked their first cigarette before they were 10 years of age, with no significant difference between sexes in the representative sample from all secondary schools, 40 per cent of students had smoked cigarettes at least once in their life, which is 5 per cent higher than the number found in a similar prevalence study conducted in 1988.
12. Biennial school surveys on substance use conducted by the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) have shown a persistent pattern of alcohol, tobacco and marijuana as being the most abused substances and in that order. They reveal no significant difference between male and female alcohol use but find a significant use of inhalants among females when compared with males. Although considered a soft non-addictive substance, the use of which has been sacralised by the Rastafari movement,

marijuana can have a crippling effect on school-aged youth, diverting their minds from their pursuits.

13. While used to a lesser extent, crack-cocaine use has been identified among adolescent and youth. The abuse/misuse of alcohol, marijuana and other substances is directly related to HIV and AIDS infection, motor vehicle accidents and violent behaviours including gender-based violence.

Sexual Reproductive Health

14. Reproductive Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being *in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes*. It implies that people have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. Reproductive health care also includes sexual health, the purpose of which is the enhancement of life and inter-personal relations. The rights associated with sexual and reproductive health include the right to quality information and education, the right to comprehensive services, and the right to counselling services.
15. From the largest English-Speaking Caribbean Youth Health Survey to date carried out among 15,695 in-school youth aged 10 to 18 in 1997 to 1998 in nine countries, it was learned that 34 per cent had had sexual intercourse. Over half of sexually active boys and about a quarter of sexually active females said that their age of first intercourse was ten years or younger (Halcon et al, 2003), in many cases forced. Almost two-thirds had had intercourse before the age of 13 years. Males were three times more likely than females to have had five or more sexual partners. Only one-quarter of the sample reported always using some method of contraception.
16. The estimated percentage of unsafe abortions among women in the Caribbean was at 44 per cent in 2000, with those aged 20 to 29 years accounting for more than half and all those under 30 years old for almost 70 per cent. This is a matter of grave concern.
17. Young people are also concerned that the free movement of persons policy under CSME will usher in an influx of sex offenders and other undesirables creating

overcrowded conditions, spreading HIV and AIDS, overburdening health systems and reducing benefits.

18. A thrust to provide Sex and Sexuality Education in the past has been thwarted by views, especially from religious groups, that it should be provided mainly by parents. The thrust has now regained momentum with the awareness of the rapid spread of HIV in the age group 15-19 across the Caribbean, with a higher incidence among girls. Parents themselves require communication skills for providing the information to their children. The Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) curriculum, a CARICOM initiative since the 1980s, has been upgraded and re-launched. However, its delivery has not been mandatory, leaving some education systems without a comprehensive coverage of the material. The HFLE Curriculum covers Sex and Sexuality, Self and Interpersonal Relations, Eating and Fitness and Managing the Environment. Critical to this framework is the inclusion of **social and interpersonal skills** such as communication, refusal, assertiveness and empathy skills; **cognitive skills** such as decision-making, critical thinking and self evaluation skills, **emotional coping skills** such as stress management skills and skills for increasing internal locus of control; **communication skills** such as verbal and non-verbal communication, refusal, negotiation and conflict management; advocacy, and relationship building skills; and **values analysis and clarification skills** such as skills for understanding different norms, beliefs, cultures etc.; and self assessment skills for identifying what's important, influences on values and attitudes, and aligning values, attitudes and behaviours.
19. In August 2008, Ministers of Health and Education from Latin America and the Caribbean strengthened the response to the HIV epidemic through the *Mexico City Declaration on Sex Education in Latin America and the Caribbean*, which outlines the goals to implement, and reinforce the multi-sectoral strategies of comprehensive sexuality education and sexual health promotion as a fundamental means of preventing the spread of HIV and other STIs.
20. Some of the Declaration's highlights include the requirement that comprehensive sexuality education should:

- have a broad perspective that is based on human rights and respects the values of a democratic, pluralistic society where families and communities thrive;

- promote respect for differences, reject any form of discrimination, and promote among youth responsible and informed decision-making regarding their sexual debu;

- be complemented by health services to provide effective access to: counseling and testing for HIV/STI; comprehensive clinical care for sexually transmitted infections; condoms and education in their correct and consistent use; counseling about reproductive decisions, including for people with HIV; and counseling and treatment for drug and alcohol abuse, for all, especially for adolescents and young people.

21. Youth voices clamoured for health policies that would be in keeping with their current realities. In fact, legislation still prevents certain age groups from accessing health care without being accompanied by parents or guardians. There are variations in legislation and age requirements on issues like the age of consensual sex, acquiring a drivers' license, national identification cards, among others, which all need to be harmonised across CARICOM Member States.

22. In some sectors, it is the sentiment that Sex and Sexuality Education should be a stand-alone curriculum and should not be subsumed under the HFLE themes, but that the HFLE should be elaborated to include issues on learning disorders as well as emotional intelligence, autism and hyperactivity. An inter-sectoral group, with international, regional and national representation is currently compiling data toward a Policy on Sex Education in all schools across the Caribbean. Policies proposed through PAHO, already derived for Adolescent Health should also be reinforced; policies were to be supported through upgraded legislation on age of consent, and confidentiality of youth health information. In support of these initiatives, health care providers were to be appropriately informed and educated as an aspect of providing quality services to adolescents and youth, with new information, approaches to puberty, sexual abuse, counseling, and suicide, in an evidence –based context. In support of these ventures, Sexual and Reproductive Health Services can be provided in Safe Youth Friendly Places by trained youth and or providers who can be held accountable for its delivery.

Adolescents, Youth, Crime and Violence

1. Crime and violence is the number one concern among adolescents and youth in virtually all Member States within the Caribbean Community. In this Section, the Commission will share the reality and consequential impact of youth initiated crime and violence on the Community in general, but on young people themselves in particular. In doing so, however, the Commission is hamstrung by the fact that for all but one Member country data collection is not disaggregated by age. A consultant engaged to prepare the cost-benefit analysis on youth crime discussed in Chapter IV, had to rely on “different papers and studies prepared by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), The International Center on Prison Studies and the World Bank.”
2. The relative recency of the concerns with crime and violence has also seen increased focus on the law enforcement agencies. However, notwithstanding the need for a robust law enforcement strategy as part of the criminal justice system, the Commission supports the call for a social and development crime prevention initiative, which was mandated at the 12th Special Session of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) in March 2008, supported by The Council for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE) and endorsed by the CARICOM Heads of Government who at their Twentieth Inter-sessional Meeting in March 2009, “directed that the Action Plan on Crime Prevention be treated with the utmost urgency”.

Crime and Violence – The Caribbean Experience

3. The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines violence as “*the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a higher likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation*”¹⁰.

¹⁰ (WHO Global Consultation on Violence and Health. Violence: a public health priority. Geneva, World Health Organization, 1996 (document WHO/EHA/ SPI.POA.2). http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2002/9241545615_chap1_eng.pdf

4. Youth criminal violence often arises from complex, high-priority, high-visibility forms of risky and risk-taking behaviour that leave long lasting scars and rob societies of creative potential and energies. They breed fear, corruption and mistrust; obstruct the functioning of health, police, education and media; erode faith in government's capacity to protect life and property; rob societies of creative potential and energies; and cause investments to be redirected to Ministries of Social Security and Health, that could be better used to advance community and national development. In the Caribbean, crime and violence are associated with poverty, unemployment, politics and social inequities; and the reduction in social capital through, *inter alia*, restriction of physical mobility, reduction in employment and educational opportunities, and limited business investment and construction or repair of houses in affected communities. Constant exposure to crime and violence leads to emotional blunting, high stress, grief and loss.

5. Crime and violence in the Caribbean occur in urban communities, homes and schools and involve guns, knives and other sharp instruments, gangs, marijuana, cocaine trafficking and kidnapping. There are reports of children aged 5 possessing home-made guns, bullying, beating teachers and using alcohol and ganja (*CARICOM Secretariat, 2007*). Similar patterns of crime and violence can be found in the rest of the world but levels in the Caribbean are among the highest, particularly among the urban poor. Compared to the towns and cities, the incidence of crime in rural communities is lower but gradually increasing.

"Crime and violence is very hard to deal with when you are exposed to it every minute of your life"

"Them bandits just approaching and want my car more than I want it. I may give the keys... I may want to respond with violence and not see his gun or the way he steps to me may be with violence first but there is just no telling what will happen at the most unexpected time"

6. Latin America and the Caribbean Region has the highest homicide rate in the world, of men between the ages of 15 to 29 (68.6 per 100,000); more than three times the global average of 19.4. Furthermore, it is estimated that young men in the 15 to 35 age group commit 80 per cent of the crime in the Region.

7. Leading the Region in this is Jamaica, where youth under the age of 25 were responsible for 51 percent of all murders and 56 percent of all major crimes in 2000. In 2005 the rate of

homicide reached an all-time high of 64, with males aged 16 – 35 years accounting for approximately 80 per cent of all murders. In 2007, 78 per cent of those arrested for murder, 68 per cent of those arrested for shooting and 69 per cent of those arrested for major crimes (murder, shooting, robbery, burglary, rape and carnal abuse) were aged 30 years and younger. Even in the OECS rising levels of violence are already a serious social problem. In St. Kitts and Nevis, a country with a population size of approximately 45,000, juveniles had committed 1.2 per cent of all crimes in 1990, and 17 per cent by 1998. By 2007, the homicide rate had shot up to 59, mainly as a result of the activities of criminal gangs; some of them emulating the notorious Cripps and Bloods of California. In St Vincent and the Grenadines, the homicide rate in 2004 was 24.

8. To the extent of available knowledge, youth are not only the main perpetrators of criminal violence; they are also its main victims. In 2005 young Dominicans aged 11-30 years, representing 30 per cent of the general population, made up 46 per cent of homicide victims. In Jamaica, the main victims of homicide are males. In 2005 males aged 16 to 35 years comprised nearly 80 per cent of the victims.
9. Such is the new reality facing the Caribbean. The Commission considers the incidence of such violence to be a serious public health problem that requires an equally serious intervention at all levels of society. The increased involvement of young people as both victims and perpetrators of violent crime including homicide, is a disturbing feature of the profile of crime and violence in the Region.

Crime and Violence - A Developmental Issue

10. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank 2007 report *Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean* refers to crime and violence as developmental issues with both direct effects on human welfare in the short-run and longer run effects on economic growth and social development. The report also indicates that while levels of crime and associated circumstances vary by country, narcotics trafficking is one of the main explanations for the relatively high rates of crime and violence rates in the Region—and their apparent rise in recent years. The drug trade drives crime in a number of ways: through violence tied to trafficking; by normalising illegal behavior; by diverting criminal justice resources from other activities;

by provoking property crime related to addiction; by contributing to the widespread availability of firearms; and by undermining and corrupting societal institutions.

11. In general, there has been an over-reliance on the criminal justice approach to crime reduction in the Region, to the detriment of other complementary approaches which can be effective in reducing certain types of crime and violence. Several countries in the Region are, however, investing in various crime prevention; approaches such as social crime prevention; prevention through environmental design or situational prevention, integrated citizen security approaches and public health approaches. At the very highest level, it is believed that reducing poverty, unemployment and social inequality – issues which affect youth, women and children disproportionately - may reduce incentives for people to turn to violence, property and drug-related crimes.

12. Violence is often carried out or inspired by membership in gangs, a sub-culture of fascination with the gun. The gun has become a symbol of strength, coercive power and masculinity, and in Jamaica, the simulation of gunshots, using the hand, fingers and voice has become a way of expressing approval and support at public entertainment events.

“We form gangs to protect ourselves from gangs”

“I walk with friends who are quick to defend me”

‘stay strap’ always walk with a weapon

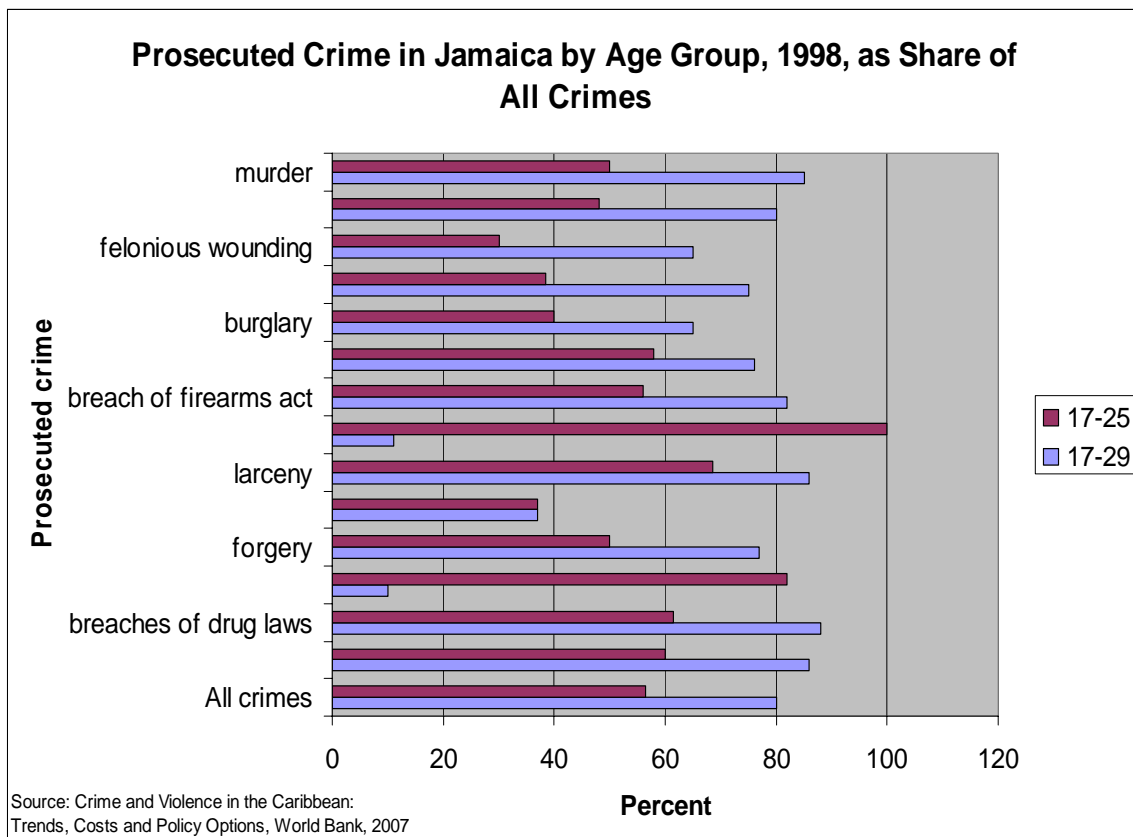
13. Gang-related violence is one development that many countries, including those in the more developed world, have had to grapple with. In this sense it is new only to the Caribbean. When, however, it spills over into the school, the situation can only be described as grave. There, in addition to traditional issues of bullying and physical fighting, there is an increasing trend of carrying dangerous weapons to school, such as guns, knives, ice-picks and scissors. According to the World Bank (2003), 20 per cent of all male students had carried a weapon to school in the previous 30 days - nearly as many as had been in a fight using weapons. In Jamaica (2000, 2003, and 2004) many students had witnessed violence in school (79 per cent); been directly involved in causing harm (29 per cent) or experienced harm (20 to 34 per cent); or had a family

member victimised (60 per cent); and 78 per cent were concerned about their safety in going to and from school.

14. Other CARICOM Member States with long cherished traditions of tranquility and calm have begun to experience the epidemic in youth crime and violence that Jamaica has been experiencing for the last two to three decades. The following two charts show what awaits them unless the urgent far-reaching measures are taken to address the poor socialisation, rage and alienation that a too large proportion of male youth are experiencing.

Figure 8

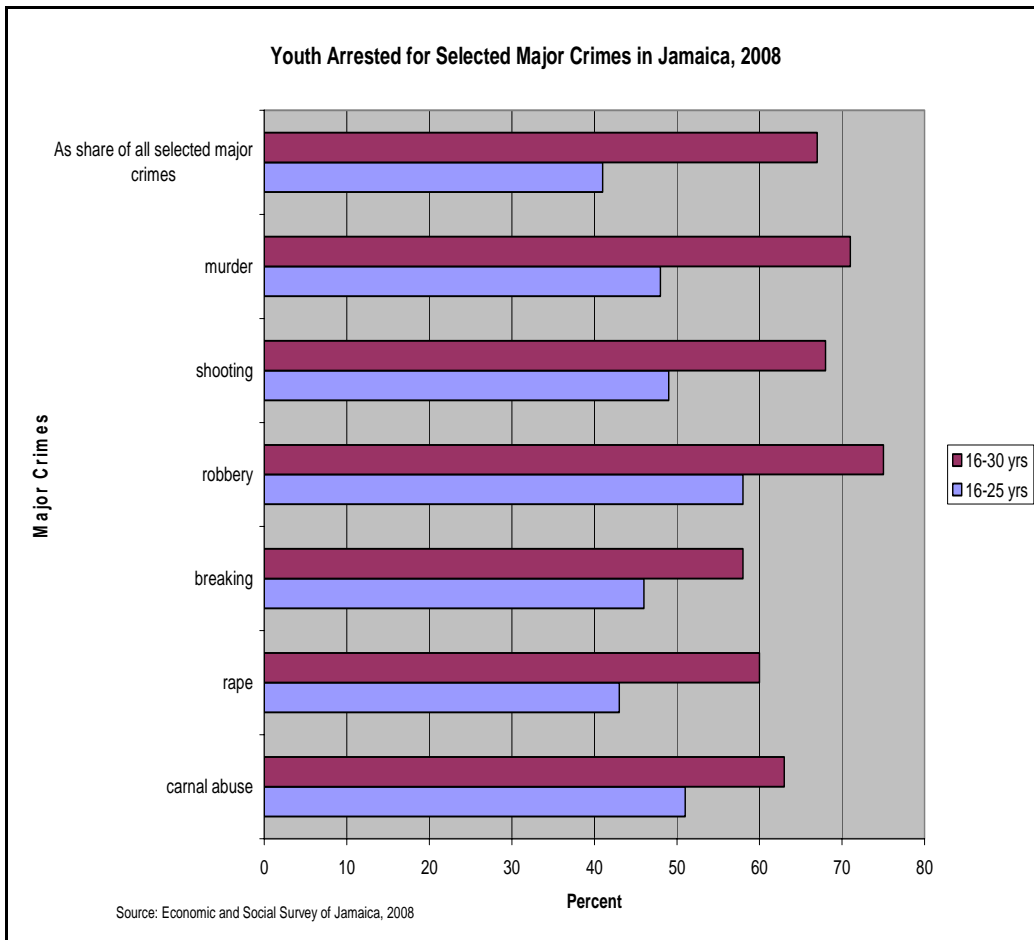
Prosecuted Crime in Jamaica By Age Group As A Share Of All Crimes



15. In 1998, youth were responsible for over 80 per cent of murders in Jamaica, unlawful possession of firearms and breaches of the Firearms Act; 80 per cent of acts of

manslaughter; 63 per cent of wounding; and 100 per cent of shootings with intent. Ten years later, the picture remains little different, as shown in the following chart; where youth 16 to 30 years old were responsible for over 70 per cent of murders, and nearly 70 per cent of shootings.

Figure 9
Adolescents and Youth Arrested for Selected Major Crimes In Jamaica, 2008



An Unsafe World

16. Adolescents and youth sampled by the Commission unequivocally spoke of fear, perceptions of lack of safety and concern for their general well-being as a result of the increased crime and violence – indeed, this was the single most pervasive and important concern expressed. Young people spoke of self-imposed curfews, diminished

participation in community activities, restriction of night-time activities and changes in social practices as a consequence. Comments such as “being dead, struggling or incarcerated” were offered as possible life situations, and in some cases seen as imminent reality, in another five years. Altogether, they wondered at the quality of life facing them, what with the fear of injury or death by motor vehicle accidents, diseases and other unnatural deaths, as well as high levels of insecurity.

17. The Commission’s researchers indicated that it was impossible to adequately or fully describe the extent to which virtually all adolescents and youth in the countries sampled were petrified of real or imagined threats from crime and violence.
18. The Commission notes that a CARICOM Social and Development Crime Prevention Action Plan developed with the assistance of the UNODC, aims to reduce the levels of violence and crime in Member States through a cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach focused on –
 - (i) groups at risk of engaging in violent behaviour and criminal activities - already exposed to high levels of violence; and groups in conflict with the law - in particular children and youth, and
 - (ii) institutional responses to crime and violence from a prevention perspective.
19. This Action Plan is underpinned by the following five pillars, namely –
 - Reduce Violence
 - Foster Social Inclusion
 - Promote Reintegration
 - Empower Victims, and
 - Protect the Environment and Economic Resources.
20. This is one issue calling for the immediate intensification of measures, beginning with children, in keeping with the life-cycle approach, but attending to adolescents and youth as well.

Sports and Recreation

1. The important role of sport in development and its potential to positively modify behaviour have received increased regional and international attention over the years. The General Assembly of the United Nations (November 2003) adopted resolution 58 / 3 entitled “Sports as a means to promote Education, Health, Development and Peace” in recognition of the value of sport to contribute to human development. Throughout 2005, much emphasis was placed on the promotion of sport and in persuading governments to recognise the significance of sport in their national agendas for development. Attention was placed on the four key areas of: Sport and Education, Sport and Health, Sport and Development and Sport and Peace, as well as the potential value of sport in contributing towards the Millennium Development Goals. Article 31, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, recognises the critical role of sport and physical play in children’s lives by identifying sport and play as a child’s right.

The State of Sport in CARICOM

2. It is no secret that Sport and Physical Education (PE) were traditionally regarded as “non-essentials” and the subjects were taught by largely untrained enthusiasts whose approach to the teaching of these subjects was generally unstructured. To some extent, this situation still exists within the Region, but some progress has been made in the delivery and promotion of PE and Sport. The efforts of regional educators in putting the subject of PE back in the formal educational systems and for ensuring that the subject is offered at the secondary level must be commended. Outside of Cuba, which undeniably boasts the most developed systems and institutions for the training and advancement of Sport and PE, the GC Foster College of Physical Education and Sport in Jamaica, established in 1980 with assistance from Cuba, is the most specialised teacher training institution for the training of personnel in PE and Sport-related fields in CARICOM.
3. The University of the West Indies established a Sport and Physical Education Centre at its St Augustine campus in 2003, while its Mona campus recently unveiled plans for the development of 40 acres of its Mona Bowl, including programmes in sports management and an 8-lane Mondo track and other state of the art facilities for a variety of sports. The University of Technology, Jamaica signed an agreement with the IAAF which led to the

establishment of a High Performance Sports Centre and is also collaborating with the Jamaica Football Federation to establish advanced training programmes in football. Cave Hill Campus, UWI has had a functioning Regional Centre for Cricket Research since 1993. The University of Trinidad and Tobago now offers professional programmes in Sports and PE. Notwithstanding these realities, there is evidence to suggest that grassroots sport-based initiatives, particularly with respect to facilities and infrastructure, generally receive little attention from Regional governments.

4. The Region now boasts regional competitions in several sport disciplines, including football, cricket, volleyball, netball, hockey, rugby, squash, and badminton, among others. The CARIFTA Games caters for athletes in track and field at the junior level (Under 20), and the multi-sports UWI Games have been a feature of the regional sports calendar for some forty years.
5. In spite of this, the inadequacies of sport development and the disparities existing between CARICOM Member States countries are evident. An informal investigation into the status of cricket in schools was conducted by the CARICOM Sports Desk in 2007. The results confirmed the general lack of infrastructure and facilities required for the development of sport in schools in many Member States. The investigation pointed to the negative effects of the “seasonal approach” to the honing of talent, where for example, cricket training comes to a halt during “football season”, due primarily to the sharing of playing fields. However, the schools that had a separate all-weather concrete pitch or access to such a facility, had a greater record of achievements in cricket. The coaches interviewed conceded that year round access to such facility would increase significantly the pool of talent in the sport.
6. Opportunities for engaging out of school youth in sport-related programmes are generally limited. Inclusion in this regard, revolves around the talented players who are drafted into the club system. There is a noticeable lack of opportunities for youth who fall outside of the elite circle, to engage in structured sport programmes within their communities. The opportunity to experience greater social and moral inclusion for youth otherwise marginalised by cultural and social obstacles caused by gender, disability and other forms of discrimination is thus hindered.

7. Although CARICOM countries over the last 20 years have promoted non-professional sports as a mechanism to mobilise youth and address challenging social and developmental issues, limited access to sporting facilities and activities is a concern of young people in all countries sampled by the Commission.

“Bad boys like sports too. Where I live, it have real fellahs involved in sports. But you might not want to go up on the court because somebody might pass and shoot up the place. Your mother don’t want you to go on the court But you have to try.”

The Value of Sport

- 8 The value of sport in promoting health, raising educational standards and building equitable communities is well documented. In addition, the benefits for individuals, countries and the Region are well established, as highlighted below.
- 9 *National and regional unity and pride:* Every cricket-loving person in the entire Anglophone Caribbean in 1994 can give an account of where they were and how they felt when Brian Charles Lara broke the world record for the highest test score in an innings. He was only 24 years old. That this record had been held for 36 years by another great Caribbean national - Sir Garfield Sobers - was another source of great pride. Sir Gary was himself a youth only 22 years old when he set the record. The achievement and maintenance of dominance among the cricketing nations of the world for all of two decades from the 1970s to the 1990s is ever a source of great pride for all our peoples.
- 10 In per capita terms, the Caribbean has been holding its own internationally in the field of athletics for decades. In the post-war years, West Indians have held the foremost place among the winners of Olympic medals (*Report of the West Indian Commission*, p. xi). No Caribbean country has had its national anthem played six times in a single game, as Jamaica did at the Beijing Games in 2008, where its Olympians, led by Usain Bolt and Veronica Campbell brought such honour to their country and the Region. Whether Bahamian, Surinamese, Jamaican, Trinidadian, Vincentian or simply Caribbean, young

people “have given name, character and identity to the people of the Region” through sport.

11. *Economic development:* Sport is a catalyst for economic development. At the global level, there is substantial evidence that demonstrates the potential of sport to generate income and provide alternative means of livelihood. This is also evidenced in the emergence of the Sports Tourism industry which, according to reports, is responsible for some 2.5 per cent of world trade. Some of the key players of the global sports tourism industry have made significant investments in order to realise lucrative returns. A critical part of this investment is in providing training opportunities for developing capacity among especially the youth. This would serve to prepare youth for career opportunities in sport and the *business of sport*. The merger of sport with tourism has resulted in the development of new niche markets under the umbrella of Sports Tourism and has proven to be a profitable venture for several countries across the globe.
12. Within the Caribbean, several success stories have demonstrated the immense attraction of world class sporting events to visitors. The Cricket World Cup (CWC) in 2007, the World Junior Championships in Jamaica (2002) and the Under 17 World Cup Football in Trinidad and Tobago (2001), attest to the vast potential for sport-inspired tourism within the region. Among CARICOM Member States, Barbados emerges as the leader of sports tourism initiatives, with a full calendar of attractive sporting events – international and national -- aimed at boosting arrivals from the traditional tourist markets as well as from within the Caribbean. This achievement is by no means accidental, but rather was fashioned through deliberate policy structure and governmental support. The Secondary Schools Athletics Championships held annually in Jamaica has consistently prompted increased visitor arrivals, especially of persons from the Diaspora, the international media, and scouts from the various colleges and universities of the USA.
13. The 2007 CWC generated a surplus of over half-a-billion USD¹¹, “believed to be the highest event surplus in the history of the CWC”. As a direct result of hosting the CWC 2007, the Region now has sport facilities and infrastructure of international standard located in several CARICOM Member States.

¹¹ (<http://www.caribbeanpressreleases.com/articles/2955/1/CWC-2007>).

14. In addition to the direct revenue brought in by sport from visitor arrivals and expenditure, the economic potential of sports is also realised through the media market value generated from sporting events; branding and endorsements of successful athletes; and collaborations in the cultural industries, as in the case of Jamaica's bob sled team that was immortalized in the film "Cool Runnings". More recently, the remarkable accomplishments of young athletes from the Region in the Beijing Olympics (2008), the World Athletics Championships held in Berlin, Germany (2009) and the recent World Club 20/20 cricket tournament, have drawn further attention to the Region as a whole.
15. The Region however, has hardly begun to tap the enormous potential of the sport tourism market with its potential to generate jobs, provide income and contribute to economic development of societies. Economic development of societies through sports must also be viewed through the potential savings accrued from fewer demands on health budgets brought about by healthier populations and extended life expectancy. The findings of the Caribbean Commission on Health and Development regarding the alarming increase in obesity in children and youth, across the Region is of grave concern.
16. *Social cohesion:* The integral values of sport – tolerance, respect, cooperation, fair play – make it most suitable for conveying and promoting desirable social attitudes and skills and has been used extensively to unify people across boundaries, cultures and religions. It should be noted for example, that it was table tennis that set the tone for the resumption of diplomatic ties between the USA and China in 1971. North and South Korea brought their athletes together for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.
17. According to the President of the Jamaica Football Federation, football is a useful tool in building peace between communities in the city of Kingston. For a fact, several communities that had pursued bitter enmity against each another, immediately struck peace accords when Jamaica qualified for the 1998 World Cup. According to the Jamaican police, the only days in 2008 in which no murders were committed anywhere in that country of 2.6 million people, were those on which Jamaica copped three gold medals at the Beijing Olympic Games.

18. While such contributions cannot be weighed or otherwise measured and given monetary value, they would be far greater if young people were not stymied by problems of class and gender and if greater investment was made in sport both as a developmental tool and as a tool for development. The case of Jamaica, arguably the country within the Region with the highest level of achievement in athletics, is instructive, in terms of what can be achieved with comparatively low levels of investment.

Jamaica – a Global Model of Youth Excellence in Sport

Talent aside, Jamaica's success in track and field is built upon a historically-rooted structure, a culture of intense competitiveness, some investment, and a high level of volunteerism. Both at the primary and secondary levels, annual sports events allow for the selection of the best to represent the school at regional and national competitions and produces national champions. These events attract overseas University-level coaches looking for talent, followed by international exposure of the best in the Penn Relays in the United States.

Until the very recent past, most athletes of promise were recruited by U.S.-based universities, where they developed their talent to international standards. But with the opening of the High Performance Sports Centre at the University of Technology and the formation of athletic clubs, Jamaican athletes have the option of developing both their skills and academic careers at home in Jamaica. G.C. Foster College, a tertiary-level college of physical education and sport, built with the help of the Cuban Government, and which opened its doors to the first set of students in 1980, has played an invaluable role in the training of specialist teachers of physical education and sport, administrators and coaches. The graduates find employment in the schools, hotel industry and other private sector organizations. By thus staffing and funding G.C. Foster College and the coaches employed by the schools, the Government has invested in the development of athletics, although the level of investment can be significantly enhanced.

The mind boggles to contemplate what heights of achievement in athletics Jamaica, on a per capita basis is the leading country in the world at the last two Olympic Games, could rise to, were the majority of its youth not hamstrung by poverty. Thus, Jamaica's successes in athletics, such as they are, could be increased and extended to other sport disciplines, were there adequate early and continued financial and social support for developing and honing talent, male as well as female.

19. The realisation that sport, recreation and leisure were powerful influences on the development of youth prompted the General Assembly of the United Nations to declare 2005 as the *International Year of Sport and Physical Education* in a bid to encourage governments and other institutions to re-direct focus and resources, on these areas and

on the support services which offer leisure activities inside and outside of the school environment. The Caribbean has an advantage in its rich endowment of naturally gifted youth, who despite a dearth of adequate resources have given the Region much to be proud about. We can only imagine how much more they could achieve were more invested in youth and sport.

Caribbean Culture and Identity

Youth and Caribbean Culture

1. Culture which is often defined as “a way of life” is common to all human beings that describe themselves as a people. It binds them together by giving meaning to their lives and an identity that distinguishes them from other peoples with their own “ways of life”. But at the same time, culture is also dynamic, which accounts for the changes that cultures sometimes undergo. We share a common Caribbean culture by virtue of our history as a people and the mutual influences we exert on one another, while at the same time able, each island, each territory, to claim our own unique “way of life”.
2. That culture cuts across all facets of our lives, impacting on the development of the Caribbean Region has long been established though not always recognised. The many facets of Caribbean culture are manifested in the unique cultural expressions and identity of the people; in the richness of the Region’s cultural diversity, traditions and customs; and culture forms the basis of our spiritual and moral values and kinship patterns. Culture is also the foundation and an effective tool in regional integration, as it is central to the promotion of a sense of regional identity or “Caribbeanness”, of family, community and connectedness that are essential to the effective implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy. It is also well established internationally, that the use of cultural interventions can contribute to social cohesion, stability and the maintenance of peace and security.
3. As a Region, the Caribbean is known and respected for its outstanding contributions in culture, and most young people in the Caribbean identify strongly with the many cultural expressions that have distinguished the Region internationally – including Rastafarian religion and culture; a variety of musical forms such as reggae, soca, dancehall and zouk;

the steel pan and carnival traditions from Trinidad and Tobago and the Eastern Caribbean, The many successes of the Region's writers, artists, fashion designers, and dancers, and the many world renowned music festivals and other events that are held in the Caribbean annually, contribute to a sense of national and regional identity among youth in the Caribbean.

4. This may be well-known. But what is not so well known, let alone recognised, is the fact that many of the artistes and intellectuals who brought international acclaim to the Region were in fact youth when they peaked in terms of their contribution. As far back as the early twentieth century, when it was the universally accepted belief that Africans and their descendants in the diaspora were inferior to all other races in skin colour, phenotype, intelligence and cultural achievement, it took a youth to set about changing all that. Marcus Garvey of Jamaica was twenty-seven years old when he founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), the Pan-African Organisation that gave pride to millions of black people in Africa and the African Diaspora, and laid the foundation for Caribbean nationalism and independence.
5. In literature, and closer to our times, George Lamming of Barbados was twenty-six years old when his celebrated *In the Castle of My Skin* was first published, and U.S. Naipaul of Trinidad and Tobago, twenty-five when he published *The Mystic Masseur*, which won him the John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize. By the time Naipaul turned twenty-nine, he had already published four novels, including the *tour de force* *A House for Mr Biswas*, and had won another coveted prize, the Somerset Maugham Award. Derek Walcott of Saint Lucia was eighteen years old when with *25 Poems* he launched his literary career, and a twenty-one year-old student at the University College of the West Indies when he wrote *Henri Christophe* and *Poems*, respectively. Both Naipaul and Walcott have gone on to win the Nobel Prize for Literature.
6. In the performing arts, the steel pan was invented by Port-of-Spain youth, many of them regarded then as roughnecks and trouble-makers, while reggae's international reputation would be nowhere but for the constellation of young Jamaican artistes, none of greater brilliance than Robert Nesta Marley (Bob Marley), whose popularity, great as it was during the last six years of his career, has been greater since his death in 1981 at age 36. His music is heard in virtually every corner of the world. But there are other Caribbean artistes

and performers whose fame extends far beyond the shores of the CARICOM countries, including contemporary greats such as David Rudder, Rihanna, Sean Paul and Damian Marley, all of whom achieved international acclaim in the flower of their youth. The fact that the Caribbean has a share in the global music industry – *albeit* a small one - is largely a contribution of our young artistes and musicians.

7. The sharing of a sense of Regional identity is also a major if quiet contribution being made by our youth artistes and musicians. The Region, from The Bahamas in the north to Suriname and Guyana in the south, is saturated with Jamaican reggae and dance hall. In similar ways Trinidadian steel pan has followed in the wake of calypso and soca, which have had a long history of saturation and embrace in other countries of the Region. The dominance of Jamaica's and Trinidad and Tobago's artistic output is a reminder of the disparities in the levels of development of the arts among Member States. Both these countries have invested in developing strong institutions and programmes. In Jamaica the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC) administers an Annual Festival of the Arts, while in Trinidad and Tobago a number of institutions, including the National Carnival Commission (NCC), the Entertainment Company of Trinidad and Tobago and the Best Village Competition help to manage and organise the arts sector. Similarly in Barbados, there is the National Cultural Foundation (NCF) which organises *Crop Over*.
8. CARIFESTA is the Region's largest arts festival of youth. It is a roving, multidisciplinary event that showcases the cultural expressions of primarily young artists from over 30 countries in the Caribbean region. It was established as a result of an appeal from Caribbean writers to West Indian politicians, to introduce a cultural festival to highlight the excellence of the Arts in the Region. The objectives of the Festival were to celebrate the arts, foster a vision of Caribbean unity and to positively advance Caribbean culture regionally and internationally. The Festival was first presented in 1972 in Georgetown, Guyana, and since then has been staged nine (9) times in seven (7) Member States.
9. CARIFESTA is another area in which the contribution of youth and in particular young artists, must be recognised. Although the Festival faces many developmental challenges, it is through the outstanding performances and expressions of young artists, their commitment to the ideals of the Festival and their creative energy that CARIFESTA has developed as an important innovation in the regional cultural context. CARIFESTA has

made a significant contribution to the development of regional identity and to raising public awareness of the value and importance of artists and the arts. The Festival has also served as a catalyst for the development of new cultural institutions, as well as the upgrading of venues and other infrastructure for the arts, particularly in the host countries.

External Challenges to Cultural Values

10. Many leaders and intellectuals (Williams 2004; Girvan 2007) warn of the threat to Caribbean cultural identity posed by cultural influences from North America and other more developed societies. There is a fear that traditional morals and values and an appreciation of Caribbean heritage, are being eroded by the cultural homogenisation believed to accompany globalisation. The media are perceived as the main means through which Caribbean people, and especially the youth, are being socialised into a new world order. The reasons cited why Caribbean youth are taken with the cultures and values of other societies, include the fact that post-colonial Caribbean societies have not only failed to deliver economic security, but have also failed to imbue young people with an ideology of “Caribbean-ness” that can withstand the materialism and individualism embedded in the culture beamed in, especially from the North (Carter 2008). However, respondents in the Regional Youth Dreams survey felt that they were not the ones to blame for naturally gravitating towards foreign cultures, and insisted that indigenous culture within the Caribbean was not being sufficiently developed to meet their needs.

11. It needs to be acknowledged that this threat from external cultural forces however, is not going away and will always remain as long as the United States remains the world power that it is. Additionally, it is precisely the openness to external influences that has led to, and enabled the development of new cultural forms that have made the Caribbean unique. Further, Caribbean nationals abroad, far from losing their identity, find ways of asserting if not imposing their sense of being Caribbean on their host communities. Notting Hill Carnival in the United Kingdom, Caribana in Toronto, and Labour Day Carnival in New York, are the largest street festivals in Europe, Canada and the United States, respectively. The significant economic contribution of these festivals in 2000, are highlighted in Table 3.

Table 3: Economic Contribution of Diasporic Carnivals in 2002

FESTIVAL	ATTENDANCE	VISITOR/ AUDIENCE EXPENDITURE
Notting Hill (London)	2 million	£93 M
Labour Day (New York)	3.5 million	\$300 M
Caribana (Toronto)	1 million	Cnd\$200 M

Source: The Cultural Industries in CARICOM: Trade and Development Challenges, Study prepared for the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery, 2006.

12. The concern, therefore, should be less about the influence of the North, *per se*, and more about the processing of this influence into new forms, as well as developing a comprehensive strategy to continue to influence the global cultural landscape with a plethora of creative Caribbean expressions.

Youth Culture

13. Youth in the Caribbean like youth in other countries across the globe, are engaged in a sub-culture of activities that the older generation mostly fail to understand, and dismiss as being of little value. The most overt form of engagement is in the use of technology. Young people acquire the digital language, skills and know-how at a very early age, to operate a litany of technological gadgets, including video games, ipods, computers, cameras and cell phones, without the need to reference manuals and access other “help” and support services that the majority of the older generation would find indispensable. Instant messaging and texting; downloading music, videos and games; and connecting to online social networks like Facebook, are indispensable everyday activities for young persons.

14. The influence of the lifestyle associated with music and entertainment is also very evident among most youth, in terms of dress, attitude and activities. Pants worn way below the waist, an obsession with the latest fashion, “bling”, cutting edge dance moves, and idolising celebrities in entertainment are some of the manifestations.
15. However, the seemingly mindless technological engagement and immersion in a culture of entertainment, actually present opportunities for a region like the Caribbean, which has made its mark on the world stage because of the appeal and quality of its cultural expressions. The natural affinity towards and dexterity with technology, when combined with the diversity and excellence of Caribbean cultural forms, opens up possibilities for new career pathways in entertainment, innovation and new forms of intellectual property; and the development of cultural industries in a unique Caribbean context. This argument will be further developed below.

Youth, Creativity and Cultural Industry Development

16. Although it is often not recognised, Caribbean youth are the backbone of evolving creative and cultural industries in the Region, in music, fashion, film and audio visuals, festivals, dance, drama and the visual arts. It is the young people in the Caribbean who are the primary producers, artists, managers and consumers of the products and services developed in the creative economy. Cultural and creative industries are among the fastest growing sectors in the global economy today; already contributing seven (7) per cent of the world’s gross domestic product, and estimated to grow at ten (10) per cent per annum in the near future. The term “cultural industry” refers to “the production, distribution and consumption of copyrightable identity and aesthetic goods, services and intellectual property embodied in film, television, books, music, theatre, dance, visual arts, works of *mas*, fashion, multimedia, animation and so on” (*CRNM Study, 2007*). Other activities relevant in the Caribbean context that should be included in the cultural industry category are museums, sports, amusement parks and festivals. The cultural industries comprise a set of knowledge-based activities that produce tangible goods and intangible intellectual or artistic services with creative content, economic value and market objectives.

17. The cultural industry sector was estimated by Pricewaterhouse Coopers as having a global trade worth US\$1.2 trillion in 2003, with a projected growth to US\$2.2 trillion by 2012 (*Nurse 2009*). In the United States, a world leader in cultural industries, the sector accounts for six (6) per cent of GDP and 4.7 million jobs. Within the Caribbean, Jamaica is the only country for which data on the overall contribution of cultural industries to GDP are available. This is five (5) per cent in the case of GDP, and an employment rate of three (3) per cent. Global music sales are estimated at US\$42 billion, but the Region's share is less than 1 per cent. In 2000, the Trinidad and Tobago Carnival generated revenues of US\$17.7 million, while the Saint Lucia Jazz Festival generated US\$4.8 million from visitor and other expenditure. See Table 4.

Table 4: Caribbean Festival Tourism: Comparative Economic Impact in 2003

	Visitor Arrivals	Visitor Expenditure
Trinidad Carnival	38,537	US\$26.2 M
Saint Lucia Jazz Festival	12,164	US\$17.3 M
Barbados Cropover (in 2000)	3,485	US\$3.2 M
St. Kitts Music Festival	2,562	EC\$3.1 M
Dominica World Creole Music Festival	2,294	EC\$2.4 M

Source: *The Cultural Industries in CARICOM: Trade and Development Challenges*, Study prepared for the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery, 2006.

18. The cultural industries are increasingly being recognised for their tremendous earning potential, as non-traditional sectors in which the Region has comparative advantage and is best known for, and which are rooted in indigenous talents and resources. These industries are seen as sustainable and renewable because they are driven by the creativity of the Region's youth.

19. There is a growing appreciation in the region that Caribbean lifestyle and culture has global appeal, evident in the use of Caribbean expressions, sounds and images in films, commercials, fashion and music produced by major entertainment conglomerates. The region has barely begun to tap into and benefit from the appeal of what can be described as a “Caribbean brand.”

20. The Region should now focus on developing the necessary policy framework for these industries to develop and flourish by developing appropriate intellectual property and ecommerce legislation and a regional incentives regime; through product and service development and export facilitation; and most importantly, by developing the human resources necessary for the success of these industries. In this regard, arts education in schools at all levels needs to be significantly strengthened; so too must teacher education as it relates to the arts. Business, law and technology programmes at the secondary and tertiary levels also need to address the development of cultural industries in their curricula, and programmes in intellectual property management need to be developed.

21. As a result of the growing recognition of cultural industries on the part of Caribbean governments, the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD), and the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) both mandated the establishment of a Regional Task Force on Cultural Industries to develop a Regional Strategy and Action Plan for the development of the cultural industries in CARICOM, which is anticipated by July 2010.

The Cultural Industries in CARICOM

Did you know that.....

- There are over 70 diasporic Caribbean carnivals throughout North America and Europe;
- There were approximately 900 artists and performing arts companies in singing, dance and theatre in CARICOM in 2005; and 79 venues for the performing arts;
- Cultural and creative industries in Jamaica accounted for 5.1% of GDP and 3% of employment in 2006 (WIPO);
- The estimated size of the international market for reggae music is US\$60-75 million (Witter, 2002);
- In 2005, Dominica earned US\$18 million over 6 months from the filming of the Disney hit film: *Pirates of the Caribbean – Dead Man Chest*;
- The top selling Caribbean artists in the United States are: Bob Marley, Shaggy, Billy Ocean, Baha Men, Wyclef Jean, Sean Paul, Juan Luis Guerra, Celia Cruz, Harry Belafonte, Rihanna, Peter Tosh, Eddy Grant.

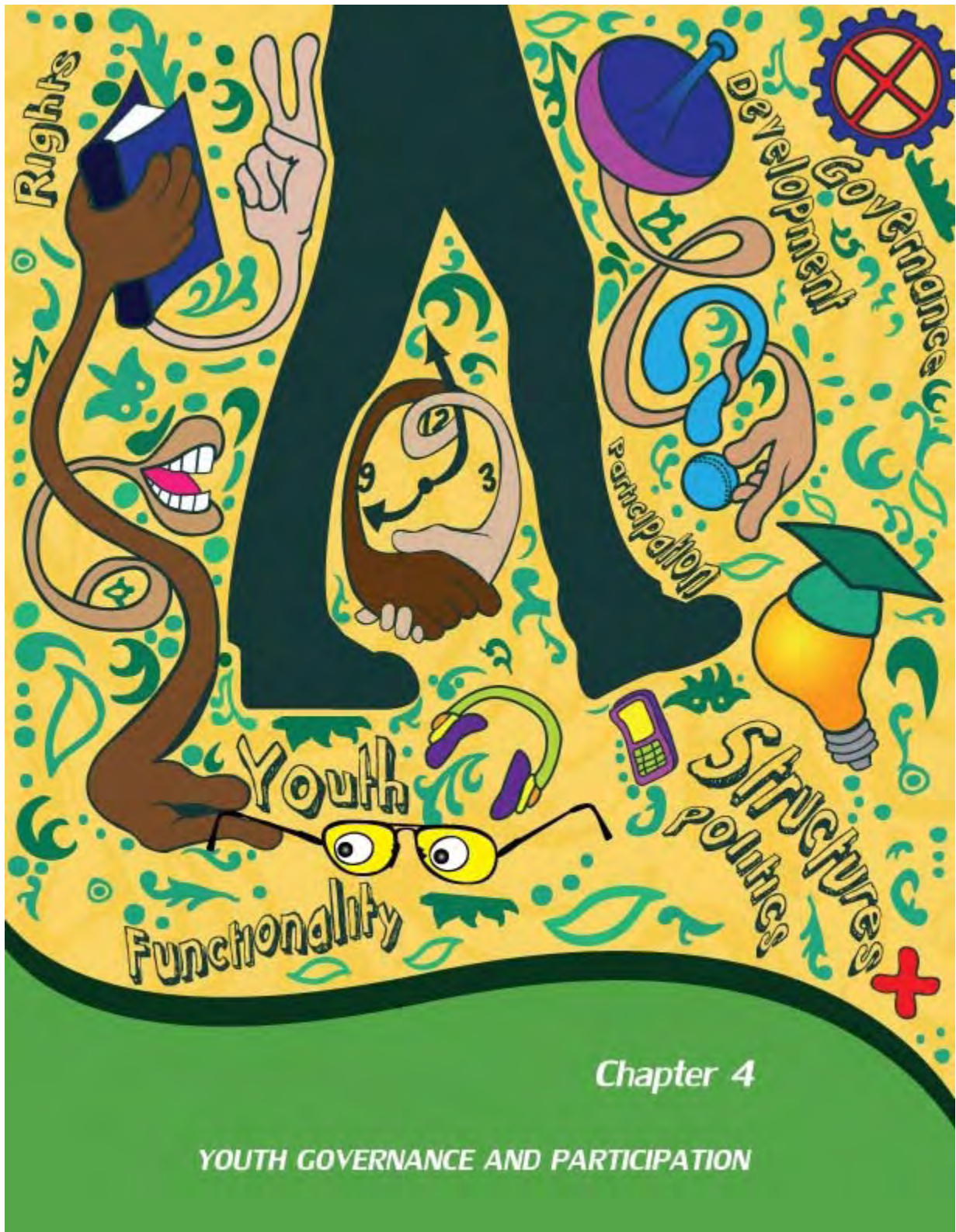
The Cross-cutting Nature of Culture

22. As we emphasise the powerful role of the arts in the hands of youth, we should not miss the role of culture in shaping the many other aspects of our lives. Many of the educational issues identified in earlier sections of this Chapter, in particular the gender differential performance rates, may be explained by cultural norms; in this case the expectations governing male and female identities. The violence ripping communities apart is underpinned by the culturally-determined sense of masculinity as defined by power, a feature of the socialisation process pursued to its extreme. If the drive to migrate in search of a better life is fuelled by economic necessity, as has been the case of the Caribbean peoples for well over a century, it is their clinging to a sense of cultural identity that make them now a vibrant and promising part of a Diaspora, whose potential is being recognised by many Member States.
23. Culture influences health in many ways: in the health-seeking behaviours of Caribbean women and the health-avoidance behaviours of Caribbean men; in the rate of male mortality as a result of motor vehicle accidents; in the recent rise of fast-food outlets as socialising spaces and the preference for fatty and sweet foods leading to obesity and other lifestyle or non-communicable diseases. Early sexual initiation is also a cultural reality, through a tradition of early marriage in the case of the Indo-Caribbean peoples,

and in the case of the African-Caribbean peoples through practices that reveal a de-linking of sex from marriage and from procreation. Hence the higher rates of HIV/AIDS.

24. If culture shapes many of the practices now deemed to be dysfunctional, it holds the promise of being the source of generating solutions, or making them more effective. Informing all the cultural achievements of which the Region boasts is a bold, extraordinary spirit that has never bowed to oppression or accepted second-class status. It is truly remarkable that a people who still carry clear legacies of slavery and indenture in so many ways are still able to shine in spite of themselves and gain the respect and admiration of the world. We forget to our peril that it is our youth primarily that embody this spirit.

25. The newly realised urgency throughout the Community for investments in the development of our cultural industries is welcomed by the CCYD, insofar as it promises to address the development of the enabling environment that the culture sector has been calling for, in order to maintain and maximise the global impact of the Caribbean.



CHAPTER IV

YOUTH GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATION

- 1 This Chapter provides a framework for understanding participatory youth governance and youth leadership as mechanisms for strengthening policy formulation and youth empowerment. In addition, it provides insight into the situation of key national and regional youth governance structures based on qualitative research on their relevance, functionality and responsiveness¹².
2. Providing young people with opportunities to participate in regional decision making towards improved standards of living, is one of the key pillars of the integration effort. In as much as it represents a departure from the previously dominant paradigm of treating youth as beneficiaries of adult determined social goods, the approach recognises the contribution young people can make, and embraces them as true partners in matters of development. Such a participatory approach acknowledges youth as assets in the efforts towards deepening integration and efforts towards the achievement of regional development goals¹³. In spite of international acknowledgement of youth rights to participation¹⁴ and increased demands from Caribbean youth for opportunities to participate, the creation of appropriate youth governance structures remains a challenge.

The Right to Participate

3. “No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts off from its youth severs its lifeline.” Kofi Anan, former Secretary-General, United Nations.

“It is important that everyone of the governed has a voice in the government...” (John Stuart Mills in Hoover 1999).

¹² Interviews took place with 8 DYAs, 3 NYCs/NYP and 8 youth organisations in 10 Member States and with the CYAP.

¹³ The 1992 report of the West Indian Commission acknowledged the importance of involving youth who feel alienated from traditional normative structures.

¹⁴ The right has gained significant recognition from the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

4. In order for youth governance to be effective, it must provide opportunities for young people to become empowered and make a contribution to development through participation in decision-making generally, but more specifically on matters in which they have an interest and that affect them. Their demands on the society for greater involvement, is manifested by their incessant call for greater participation in political decision-making. They have persistently called for increased opportunities to become formally engaged - not only at election time - but throughout the lifespan of a government's political process. Facilitating youth participation is therefore a major pillar in determining the society's embrace of a governance system that treats young people as trusted partners in the development process.

5. The establishment of mechanisms to facilitate, promote and enable youth participation invariably contributes to a policy environment that is stakeholder oriented. It counters youth cynicism of the political process 107

6. **(Commonwealth Secretariat, 2005; CCYP,2006; Haid et al. 1999) and treats youth as partners whose contribution is essential to meaningful people-centered development. Enabling factors for youth participation appear in the table overleaf.**

Empowerment: “ when youth acknowledge that they have or can create choices in life, are aware of the implications and make informed decisions freely, take action based on that decision and accept responsibility for actions” (Commonwealth Youth Programme 2006)

Summary of Enabling and Inhibiting Factors of Youth Participation

Enabling Factors	Inhibiting Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for adolescent and youth rights to participate; • Active listening and respect for ideas and opinions; • Supportive environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Space to conceptualise programmes; ○ Training resources for youth implemented projects; ○ Accountability structures to ensure satisfactory completion; ○ Creation of youth-friendly spaces; • Opportunities to develop self-confidence and leadership skills; • Responsibility assigned according to age and interests; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of respect for and denial of right to participate; • Perpetuation of negative attitudes about youth contributions; • Manipulation of children, adolescents and youth; • Tokenism; • Lack of commitment shown to youth issues; • Lack of supportive environment; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of training time, space and resources;

Governance, Politics and Youth Participation

7. In assessing adolescent and youth perceptions towards governance, participation and politics, the Commission found that young people envision a transformed context for Caribbean governance; one in which they are afforded opportunities to contribute to and participate in political and socio-economic development at community, national and regional levels; and in which –

- politics is not viewed as being synonymous with storytelling and lies;
- not only government ministers benefit and live comfortably but also average citizens.

8. Youth opinions on the politics of the Caribbean reveal a high level of idealism but also deep disappointment that their expectations are not matched by reality. They are not satisfied with tokenistic forms of participation, nor are they content merely with access to political involvement at the local and community levels. The general sentiment expressed

by young people is that governments or (politicians) are unfair, unjust and only interested in political power and financial gain at the expense of the citizens. Poor leadership and corrupt politicians were seen as setting bad examples for youth and contributing to moral decay and the overall lack of confidence in leaders.

9. Whilst many of the youth are satisfied with their level of involvement and participation at the community level, a large proportion feels marginalised, alienated and suspicious of the national and regional political process. Youth expressed disappointment with the ineffectiveness of the political system in meeting their needs and are desirous of greater access to the central decision-making apparatus at the national and regional levels. Their apathy, suspicion and distrust of the political system is therefore grounded in the actual realities of their political experiences as reflected in the voices of youth in the inset.

“We supposed to be the future and yet we’re in jail, we’re dead, we’re home, unemployed not doing nothing for ourselves.”

“our rights are in place but adults either do not know they exist or just don’t respect them”.

10. It is noteworthy that a slightly younger cohort of Caribbean citizens – adolescents - mainly felt they did have a “voice”, but with barriers. They could not access governments, they knew of few other institutions giving such access or working on their behalf, and what they had to say was rarely regarded as important by parents, teachers and other adults (UNICEF, 2009).

11. The disenfranchisement and disempowerment expressed by young people have led to a sense of **exclusion** that is sometimes reinforced by a real or perceived lack of financial resources; inadequate coaching or mentoring, time or technical expertise; and by the general absence of a supportive environment in which youth

“As a youth I feel as if I do not have freedom of speech, as my parents and other adults do not want to hear my opinions and concerns”

They have to realize we live in this country too and what they do affects us in the future so they should ask us”

“Sometimes we think ... the adults would not listen to .. our ideas, they think that they are in charge and we are supposed to listen to them all the time”

can voice their opinions and concerns in a free and open manner. **Exclusion** has led to a feeling of **voicelessness and despair** which, in turn, contributes to growing levels of

frustration among some youth and apathy among others, as exemplified by the quotations in the box.

12. Despite its importance, the widening opportunities for youth participation are still insufficient, given the real gaps in accountability and transparency and the weaknesses in the political system which allow for easy violation of democratic norms and standards of good governance. The opening of wider avenues for youth participation, must, therefore be buttressed by accompanying measures to strengthen and deepen Caribbean democracy. Many Caribbean governments have embarked upon such a process with various levels of success and commitment. Thus, the issues of establishing Integrity Commissions, the passage of Integrity in Public Life Acts, and the engagement in constitutional modernisation processes, have all engaged the attention of Caribbean governments in the last few years. However, the record of actual implementation of such initiatives is mixed. In many cases, while manifesto pledges announce the establishment of such measures, the actual pace of implementation of such initiatives, and the commitment to their realisation, have been inadequate.

The Regional Context for Youth Governance

1. CARICOM governments have committed to deepening the participation of Caribbean people in the democratic process and have endorsed The Charter of Civil Society for the Caribbean Community as the avenue for institutionalising the voice of civil society. In addition, the CARICOM Youth Ambassador Programme (CYAP) was launched in 1993 as part of the 20th Anniversary celebration of the signing of the Treaty of Chaguaramas. The CYAP is the highest youth governance structure for CARICOM Youth which seeks to involve a cadre of young people in a variety of national and regional activities, in an effort to equip them with skills and knowledge about the regional integration movement. CYAs assist in educating their peers about CARICOM and the CSME, and in so doing, help to build a sense of Caribbean identity. In keeping with their international commitments, regional governments have signed on to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which makes provision for giving special consideration and support to children and youth - including the disabled and most vulnerable among them (*Article XXIV*) – and recognises the need to for youth to participate meaningfully in matters that affect them (*Article XII*). Of significance to young people is their participation in the political decision-

making structure, and the Commission notes young people's view of the significant inadequacies that exist as it relates to their participation in such a process. The young people have opined that they are only taken seriously as a group when a general election is imminent. This perception has led to a diminishing level of youth participation in the political process and a resultant loss of the innate potential of youth.

2. It is noteworthy that the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas is silent on the role of youth in the integration process. The Commission considers this to be a critical omission and together with the absence of institutionalised arrangements, youth participation in the development, implementation and management of policies and programmes pertaining to trade and economic integration and functional cooperation, remain elusive.
3. The Community's collaborative Youth Agenda and Regional Strategy for Youth Development (RSYD), provide governments with a coordinated framework within which to reorient youth development approaches. They are underpinned by a philosophy that places multiple stakeholder participation at the centre of decision-making. Both instruments recognize the deficit that currently exists in the youth development paradigm, and promote investment in youth as assets in the process of social change, national economic development and technological innovation. The RSYD envisions ***“empowered, healthy and free young people in a united and safe Caribbean” (RSYD, 2005, 2008)***
4. The youth development agenda of CARICOM Member States is therefore shaped both by local demands and a commitment to regional and international conventions and agreements such as the CYAP, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Millennium Development Goals and the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE).

CYAP

5. The CARICOM Youth Ambassador Programme (CYAP) - an institutional arm of the Community - plays a strategic role in mediating or bridging the gap between regional and national levels of decision-making and strategy implementation. Specifically, CARICOM Youth Ambassadors (CYAs) are appointed to:

- **Advocate** for and educate young people about regional priorities for actions on youth issues;
 - **Bring** national issues to the attention of the region's policymakers and planners; and
 - **Advocate** for effective youth participation in the formulation and implementation of all policies and programmes that affect young people.
6. In general, the CYAP has functioned well in respect of the three main objectives identified for the Corps. It has been successful in mobilising funds for action research, advocacy, community outreach and project planning – especially in respect of the Mini-Grants Programme on HIV and AIDS - and has been involved (on an ad hoc basis) with decision-making of some Community organs such as the Inter-Agency Advisory Committee and the COHSOD. The involvement of Youth Ambassadors in regional decision-making needs to be more formally institutionalised. As a youth network, CYAs have had a positive influence on their peers in Member States, and have displayed positive, personal behaviour change, and developed their own leadership skills.
7. The CYAP is strategically positioned to encourage an integrated approach to youth governance which links national youth development strategies to broader regional development strategies including the CSME. Indeed, CYAs were the only youth organisation from our sample which emphasised a concern for the need to prepare young people to take advantage of the CSME. The extent to which this has been achieved, however, has been hampered by challenges which have affected the Programme's internal structure and the inadequate number of strong partnerships with other organisations at the national level.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC)

8. The rights of children and youth to participate in personal, national and regional development can be found in the UN CRC. Member states of CARICOM have used the CRC to integrate children in decision making by securing the participation of young people and children in various discussions particularly in the social sectors. It is not uncommon for governments in the region to include young people on official delegations to meetings primarily related to youth in CARICOM, the Commonwealth or the UN, and the region has

a positive record of facilitating youth participation in national, regional and international events. Structures such as school councils, have been embraced by some Member States and young people have seized these opportunities to advocate on behalf of their peers and to bring attention to the various matters affecting them.

Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE)

9. The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE) provides an enhanced framework within which governments, civil society, young people, agencies and institutions of the Commonwealth and other development partners can enhance their approaches and advance their commitment to empower young women and men aged 15 to 29 years. The PAYE (2000-2005) served as the overarching framework for all of CYP's strategic programmes. In keeping with MDG targets up to 2015 and the changing global environment impacting upon youth development in the Commonwealth, the CYP updated the PAYE and ensured that it was aligned to the MDGs. The PAYE establishes the rationale and context for youth empowerment and development as rights-based and evidenced-based. There are thirteen (13) Action Points with corresponding descriptors for programming and projects, as well as performance indicators which are aligned to MDG targets. Many of the CARICOM Member States have utilised the PAYE as a guiding document in formulating National Youth Policies and have also benefited from effective guidelines for designing their youth mainstreaming strategies.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

10. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are an internationally agreed set of targets which *inter alia* are aimed at improving the lives of young people. Goals such as universal education, gender equality, improved maternal health, HIV prevention and employment, all relate to investments in young people. In 2006, an MDG youth participation programme was established by the UN and the Caribbean participated actively in the first ever UN Global Youth Leadership Summit. The opportunities afforded through this avenue have placed CARICOM youth advocates at the centre of the decision making and young people continue to be advocates for the implementation of the MDGs at the national levels.

11. Notwithstanding the aforementioned achievements, progress has been slow in translating regional and international “statements of philosophical principles and intent” into strategic and effective action (*Charles, 2007*). The limited impact of the RSYD, CYAP, PAYE and CRC on the lives of ‘ordinary youth’ has weakened the perception of their relevance to the contemporary challenges facing Caribbean young people. In that regard, new institutional arrangements need to be pursued to ensure greater awareness and relevance of these instruments and strategies to all young people, irrespective of their socio-economic status or educational attainment. Significantly, the young people engaged in many of the interventions are those who are already protected from the vagaries and vulnerabilities that permeate our society. Invariably, many youth participation interventions target high school students, employed youth and young people who have already committed themselves to civic participation.

The National Context for Youth Governance

1. CARICOM Member States have a long history of public sector support to youth governance structures. The history of public sector support to youth governance has its roots in Welfare Departments and Departments of Social and Community Development. With the advent of the UN declaration of the 1980s as the Decade for Youth and the subsequent celebration of 1985 as International Year of Youth, many of the Member States either established, restructured or strengthened their Youth Departments. Today, all Member States have Youth Departments which provide public options for youth development. These Departments have been assigned specific responsibility for youth affairs and the development and oversight of youth policies. **In all cases, the Youth Department is one of several units within a wider Ministry**, and is charged with the responsibility to provide leadership in policy design, evidence based programming and the coordination of the activities of community based youth organisations. The Youth Departments are also charged with the responsibility to coordinate events related to the RSYD, PAYE and other regional and international youth strategies.
2. That such national and regional structures exist is commendable. They represent a good beginning in national and regional effort to advance the participation of youth in governance and to realise their partnership with adults.

Relevance, Functionality and Responsiveness of Youth Governance Structures

3. The Commission assessed the Relevance, Functionality and Responsiveness of Departments of Youth Affairs (DYA's), National Youth Councils (NYCs) and the CARICOM Youth Ambassador Programme. The responses are summarised below –

Responses of DYAs

4. The Commission found policy development, youth protection and development and information to be core departmental roles across the region. Services and functions vary, and the regional public generally appears to lack an appreciation for the true scope and nature of the work of Youth Departments and the linkage to the national development agenda. In fact, many perceive the Department to have a political role.
5. Despite pockets of creative developmental and evidence based programming, there continues to be a preponderance of short term, reactionary, *ad hoc*, sometimes high visibility and low impact events focused on sports, culture, summer camps and skills training. Essentially, Youth Departments are preoccupied with planning and executing events with little evidence of effective evidence based programming. The ability of DYAs across the region to perform their role effectively is constrained by overly bureaucratic procedures and by insufficient capacity to analyse and address changing value systems, as well as deliver information and programmes to differently able, disadvantaged, unattached and rural youth.
6. The youth portfolio in the majority of cases, is invariably assigned to under-resourced, low priority Ministries, which often result in counter productive outputs or low impact interventions. Such under resourcing of Youth Departments often result in an inability to respond effectively to the needs of youth – including protection of their rights to participate and capacity development for optimal participation in decision-making. Limited budgets, relative to the proportion of the youth population, are a source of frustration for staff, who interpret the limited financial investment as an indication of the low priority assigned to the youth portfolio.

7. Unfortunately, the image of the DYA being a ‘political football’ whose structure and objectives alter with changes in government administrations, was a common theme in our discussions; one which the Commission views as a disservice to the commitment displayed by the many committed youth workers in these Departments. The perspectives cited below on the DYA in The Bahamas, are reflective of the majority of the DYAs sampled:

“The Division is currently within the Department of Youth and Sports in the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture. It has had seven name changes and been attached to various ministries over the years. When linked with culture and sport there was a common youthful population – the staff gelled, worked well together with youth as the lead Department. Ideally, the system fits. In actuality, the treatment suggests that youth may not be high on the list of government priorities despite a large youthful population. The Division sees itself as a political football – our structure, focus and objectives change depending on the priorities/ promises of the government of the day; staff are disgruntled and upset, productive workers leave for more sustainable employment” (The Bahamas, 2007)

8. The Commission’s discussions with DYAs revealed the following four principal issues and challenges in relation to youth governance and development –
- **Outdated/absent youth policies:** Eleven of the fifteen CARICOM Member States¹⁵ and four of the five Associate Members¹⁶ in CARICOM have developed a National Youth Policy. Most are over five years old and some of them are considerably older (developed in the late 1990s) and are in need of updating. The limited en-action of these policies into appropriate national legislation is perhaps one of the principal challenges to the implementation process.
 - **Weak administrative and institutional base:** DYAs generally agreed that disadvantages of structure far outweighed the benefits; in particular non-vertical communication flow and competition for scarce resources. Entry requirements for public sector employment as a youth worker vary; salaries are non-competitive; and the majority of staff are hired on a contractual basis without security or benefits. Institutional

¹⁵ Based on information available at the time of drafting.

¹⁶ There is no evidence of NYP for Bermuda

strengthening needs assessed included policy and legislative reform and programme harmonisation; evidence based approaches to policy and programme formulation and evaluation; access to a regional best practice and best practice clearing house; reduced bureaucracy to facilitate rapid response to youth needs; sustainable mechanisms for sustained partnerships, networks and longer term rapid community based responses; and guidelines for supporting autonomous institutions.

- **Professionalisation of Youth Work:** The low propriety accorded to the youth portfolio has given legitimacy to a general confusion of youth work as a non-professional and, largely voluntary pursuit; and the consequent lack of financial and political investment is complemented by an inadequacy of human resource support. DYAs deem the support of professionally trained staff as a resilient factor, and identify the professionalisation of youth work – including the certification of youth workers – as important to addressing the implementation capacity of DYAs and the perception of the youth portfolio.
- **Competition between Government Departments and with Youth Organisations:** While it is clear that youth policy and programming is not within the sole purview of a Youth Department or Ministry, many Departments find themselves unable or unwilling to forge the necessary partnerships necessary to oversee, implement and monitor policy objectives.

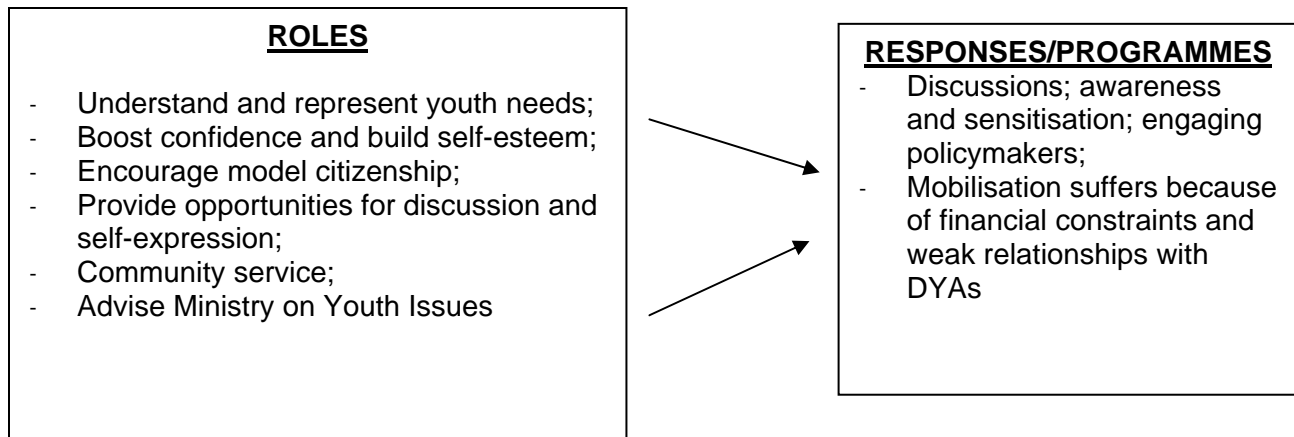
Barbados Best Practice: Barbados reported an increased annual budgetary allocation as a result of their use of an evidence-based approach to making proposals and submissions. Politicians seemed to respond positively to this approach which demonstrated the value of investing in youth and the cost of non-attention to youth development issues.

Responses of Youth Networks

National Governance

1. In general, national youth organisations have been successful in their advocacy campaigns and in convening various fora for voicing youth issues. The peer-to-peer approach to education and sensitisation on youth issues, has reaped some significant

success. The main roles and objectives and corresponding responses identified by youth groups were –



2. The challenges facing NYCs and youth organisations in meeting their objectives relate to limited support from partners; competition between and among youth organisations and lack of genuine support from governmental structures; contending (negative) messages which impinge on youth volunteerism and commitment; political challenges; weak administrative capacity and financial unsustainability.

3. In our discussions with youth organisations, the following three issues emerged as priorities for improving youth governance capacity, namely –

- ***Disconnect between Formal and Informal Youth Governance Structures:*** The relationship between formal governmental structures and informal youth networks is often weak. For example, DYAs across the Region provide some measure of support to youth organisations, projects and plans in terms of funding, meeting space, access to the Minister and corporate sponsors, advice and mentorship; but are less responsive to the priority issues identified by youth. Over two thirds of the youth organisations sampled felt that 'voicelessness' or lack of opportunity to participate was a priority issue while none of the DYAs identified it as such. This suggests that there is a need for development of a stronger partnership between formal and informal structures, though mindful of the fact that youth networks – if they are to be effective advocates – must maintain a level of autonomy from government but also be collaborating in governance.

Youth Organisation Descriptions of Relationship with DYAs

“Not what it should be. Unresponsive”
“Too sports-oriented”
“Elitist focus on profile organisations. Competitive”

- ***Disrespect and Mistrust of Youth:*** The disconnect has resulted in a negative perception of youth organisations in relation to transparency and accountability. While youth networks are cognisant of their limited capacity in respect of administrative project management, they feel that these weaknesses have encouraged DYAs in particular, to ignore their rights to be involved in decision-making. This perceived lack of respect for youth was summed up by one young person, who when asked what he felt he could achieve if he were a Head of Government, said:

“Nothing. Because governments would not take me seriously because I am young!”

- ***Party Politics and Youth:*** The connection between the demographic imperative and party politics has not been lost on youth. They have indicated that they feel that their networks and organisations are often caught up in partisan political conflicts, when their organisations are mobilised by one party or another, with promises of immediate financial and technical support, without a sustained political commitment to continuity and results in youth development. Young people have expressed a strong desire for opportunities to be provided for all youth to be involved in decision-making regardless of their socio-economic status, physical or mental ability, race or religion; for a youth governance framework which is inclusive of representatives of all Member States of CARICOM; and for a truly democratic and representative regional forum for discussion of youth and development issues.

4. The Commission views the decline of the CFY and many of the older and historically vibrant NYCs with grave concern, and has identified the following as contributing factors:

- (i) deficits in leadership and succession planning capacity;
- (ii) an aging central executive;
- (iii) lack of evidence-based responses;

- (iv) ineffective responses to the expressed needs of a heterogeneous group of adolescents and youth in their communities;
- (v) low levels of transparency and accountability; and
- (vi) failure to adapt to the changing context for youth development in an era of globalisation, partnership and youth-adult participation.

Suriname Best Practice: Suriname has reported a high level of youth participation at the national and regional level. The National Youth Parliament (NYP) replaced the National Youth Council in 2004. Through general elections, young persons between the ages of 12- 25 choose their representatives in the National Youth Parliament. The NYP is the voice of young people and mainly advises policy makers on issues related to youth. The CARICOM Youth Ambassadors are elected by the National Youth Parliament. Through government and private sector support, both the National Youth Parliament and the CARICOM Youth Ambassador Programme have made a significant difference in national and regional policy. Suriname was recognised and commended by the COHSOD in 2004 for institutionalizing youth involvement at all levels of national decision-making, and its implementation of the CYAP was referred to as a best practice to be emulated.

Summary

5. It is clear that an important mechanism for reversing the deep levels of youth suspicion and distrust in the political process is to widen the avenues for their participation and involvement. The Commission is disappointed to find that in spite of structural changes in the arrangements for youth development over the past four decades, Caribbean adolescents and youth continue to be seen only as beneficiaries of programmes and services, rather than a strategic partner and actor in policy development and implementation. We believe that greater investment and commitment are required to establish youth work as a professional occupation; to elevate the profile and status of Departments responsible for Youth Affairs; effectively link youth development to the national and regional development agenda; and to guarantee health, well-being and sustainable livelihoods for young people in the context of the CSME.

“As a youth I feel as if I do not have freedom of speech, as my parents and other adults do not want to hear my opinions and concerns”

They have to realize we live in this country too and what they do affects us in the future so they should ask us”

“Sometimes we think ... the adults would not listen to .. our ideas, they think that they are in charge and we are supposed to listen to them all the time”

6. At the same time, the Commission is convinced that the absence of vibrant National Youth Councils, younger leaders and a *bona fide* democratic regional youth network from the youth governance landscape, has removed healthy levels of youth “pressure” and influence from national and regional agendas and affected the strong advocacy, brokerage and catalytic role that is necessary for change. In this regard, we urge governments to engage in discussions on practical ways in which they can enlist the creative intellect and energy of youth in facing the challenges of globalisation and the CSME.
7. Notwithstanding the challenges, the Commission acknowledges and is encouraged by evidence of positive trends towards addressing some of the problems identified by the review. In particular we wish to recognise the efforts of the Commonwealth Youth Programme towards the professionalisation of youth work, through a number of human resource initiatives including sub regional and regional workshops, and the introduction of certificate and diploma programmes in Youth and Development. The Commission looks forward to the launching of the under-graduate degree programme which is currently being developed in collaboration with the University of the West Indies (UWI); and to the completion of Competency Standards and Training and Certification Programmes for Youth Development Workers in the areas of strategic planning, participatory research, counselling and working with youth with respect and understanding.
8. The Commission also wishes to acknowledge the commitment of DYA staff and youth representatives in meeting the needs of youth, despite the various constraints of the institutional context. Some DYAs have begun to build their capacity for strategic planning, evidence-based/research-driven programming, creation of youth-friendly spaces, providing support for peer-to-peer initiatives, building harmonious relationships across ministries, and forging partnerships with NYCs and Student Councils. There is also talk about efforts towards establishing a regional youth governance network, and the first CARICOM Youth Forum will be launched in Suriname in January 2010.
9. Finally, there is need for the development of regional capacity to coordinate regional youth development. The CARICOM Secretariat’s Youth Programme must be strengthened. It should be endowed with the requisite human and technical resources to enable it to function as an effective coordinator of development activities in 15 Member States and 5 Associate Members, and must also be able to provide research and information support to

Member States. The Secretariat must develop a research depository for information on youth development in CARICOM.



Chapter 5
YOUTH AND CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT:
THE COST OF NOT INVESTING IN YOUTH

CHAPTER V

YOUTH AND CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT: THE COST OF NOT INVESTING IN YOUTH

1. In Chapter 2, the CCYD presented its findings on the lack of knowledge and mainly negative attitudes among adolescents and youth towards the CSME. This was followed by a more detailed description in Chapter 3 of the gaps in the capacity of the youth of the Region to contribute optimally to the CSME, even though they, as the mature adults of tomorrow, are the intended beneficiaries. That Chapter described the many well-documented shortcomings, echoing their concerns and fears and even acknowledging their own complicitous role in some. The Commission then went on in Chapter 4 to describe the structural and policy framework for youth governance at the national and regional levels.
2. Descriptions are easy enough - they tell *what is*. *What should be* is more challenging, because it speaks to what is not yet, but which requires faith in the youth, fresh ways of thinking about policy implementation, resources that we know are in short supply, and political will in the face of competing demands and traditions of regular accountability.
3. The Commission is strongly of the view that a frank and honest assessment of the situation of the youth of the Region with respect to the CSME leads to one compelling conclusion: the necessity of investing in the youth. *No investment, no CSME*. Investing in the youth is the theme of this Chapter, approached from the angle first of having a sensitive understanding of the peculiar transitional characteristics that set youth apart as a special category, and second of respecting them - not merely because they are the promise of our future - but because of the unique contributions they have made, are making and will continue to make, as youth, to the identity and development of the Region.

Understanding Adolescence and Youth

1. There are two important features to note about all transitions through the life-cycle. One is that because transitions take place seamlessly, in a manner in which the earlier stages impact the current and later ones, interventions in the earlier stages are critical to outcomes in the later. The other feature is that transitions are by nature, fraught with

danger; safe completion is not automatically guaranteed, even when the transition is carefully managed. Tradition-bound societies manage this second feature through carefully designed rituals or rites of passage, which, according to Arnold van Gennep, are structured in three stages: separation from the group, a limited period of liminality generally lasting a few days or weeks, and reintegration into the group with a new status.

2. The puberty ritual accomplishes within a few days or weeks, the status change from childhood to adulthood. During those few days or weeks, however, the boy or girl undergoing the ritual exists in a liminal state, with neither the identity of a child nor the identity of a man or a woman. The word “liminal” deriving from *limen*, the Latin word for threshold, describes the position of being neither inside nor outside, or of being both inside and outside at the same time, a position of ambiguity - man, but not yet man; boy, but no longer boy; woman but not yet woman, girl but no longer girl.
3. Within Caribbean societies, puberty rituals are now observed only by some members of the twice-born castes in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, where the overwhelming majority of Indians who came under the indenture programme, constitute large segments if not the majority of the populations. Among descendants of the Africans, however, the formal ceremonies that were integral to African village life and which provided the eligibility for marriage have been lost, without ever being replaced. The transition is informal.

Extending the Liminal

4. For the Indo- and African-Caribbean, as well as for the Amerindian populations, the social status of adulthood has been pushed back way past puberty by the social requirement of having to undergo a minimum number of years of education, not to mention the legal age of majority, before one is legally eligible to join the labour force.
5. One unintended consequence is the extension of the liminal, ambiguous existence of youth in their adolescent phase. Physiological and psychological changes at puberty signal to them their maturity as adults to reproduce as well as perform some adult roles, but the social requisites of adult behavior are consistently denied them. Nature says one thing, society another.

The Peer Group

6. With the onset of puberty, the peer group is at its strongest as a socializing agent, whose influence may be as great as if not greater than that of family, neighbourhood, school or church; primary institutions which up to now have been the main agencies shaping a child's formation and character. This new development has more far-reaching consequences for boys than for girls, since a girl will remain more closely protected until she becomes fully independent, whereas a boy's masculinity could be jeopardized, so it is thought, if he remains too closely tied to the house. As the Guyanese saying goes, "*Tie your heifer, but loosen your bull*". Boys, therefore, are given greater freedom to socialize with their peers, and for this reason are at greater danger of failing the transition. However, experience shows that excessive restriction on girls, especially without recognising and adjusting to their pubescence, sometimes has the opposite effect of a "breaking-out," sexual experimentation and unplanned pregnancy.

7. The peer group is not an age set, but an informal group of persons of close but differing ages. Because age differences take on greater magnitude the younger the persons being compared, the four-year difference between an eighteen year-old and a fourteen year-old, both members of the same peer group, allows the former to exert greater influence as a source of knowledge, skill and experience over the latter, than would be the case ten years later. This is the context in which risk-taking behaviours are learned. In this period of liminal existence, the peer group and the family are, in too many cases, at odds over the outcome of three issues of identity confronting the adolescent: personhood, sexuality and the future.

Personhood, Sexuality and Identity

8. Who am I, am I handsome or pretty, am I liked, do I look good? Why do I perspire so much, why am I so dark-complexioned, why nobody likes me? These are some of the questions that face an adolescent and often remain unresolved well into their young adult life. Concerns with the body, its height, weight, odour, shape, skin tone, the face, its facial hair and complexion, cause the adolescent to spend more time in front of the mirror and on attire, and more money on cosmetics and grooming. In the societies of the Caribbean, still suffering one of the obscene legacies of slavery and colonialism, namely the

valorisation of racial phenotype and skin colour; under a stronger influence of the peer group, black youths, male and female, are particularly susceptible to the phenomenon of skin-bleaching and hair treatment in an attempt to resolve some of these concerns.

9. In the Caribbean also, where traditionally, sexual initiation begins early, between twelve and fourteen years of age for males and between sixteen and eighteen years of age for females, the postponing of sexual initiation in order to fulfill the demands of the third issue of identity, namely one's career as a fully responsible adult, runs up against peer pressure—in the case of males, to prove one's heterosexual pedigree; and, in the case of females, to prove one's womanhood. The adolescent is not helped by the reluctance, often bordering on aversion, of parents, teachers and other care givers to impart sound sex education, a gap easily filled by the older members of the peer group, often with unintended results—early fatherhood and pregnancy and STIs, including HIV and AIDS.

10. The third issue of a future identity is determined by the ability to stay in school. One World Bank study argues that staying in school is statistically correlated with lower rates of violence in society, while another focusing on Latin America and the Caribbean clarifies that the matter is not so much being in school, as being connected with someone in the school that cares. The greater such connectedness, the less repeating, drop-out, early sex, violence and substance use (*World Bank 2008*).

Those Who Fail

11. A safe transition is not guaranteed, which is to say that all transitions involve the risk of failure. In that sense, all youth are at risk. For the majority of adolescents, peer group socialisation may be quite beneficial - more effective social skills, a developed sense of judgment, self-discovery and greater self-control and self-confidence - especially where they are well-anchored in a caring family or school setting. Others, however, may not be so fortunate. They become the victims of misinformation and misdirection, leading to poor judgment, school drop-out, early sexual initiation leading to too early pregnancies, substance abuse, violence and other anti-social, and even criminal, behaviours. Poor and ineffective socialisation, including physical and sexual abuse, however, is not the only factor that may produce such outcomes. Understood from a life-cycle approach, poverty

that deprives children of proper nutrition in their early years of development may also be the early cause of their later social maladjustment and even certain forms of aggression.

12. Whether an adolescent makes the transition to adulthood safely or not is, thus, to a large extent determined by the power and effectiveness of the socializing agencies. All things being equal, the stronger the bonds nurtured by a functionally sound family, community and school environment, the more positive the outcome; the stronger the influences exerted by a negatively-led peer group when the bonds with family and school are weak, the more negative.
13. Exposure to risks then, is not a bad thing as such, and Caribbean youth themselves recognise the need for it. In a qualitative tri-country survey prepared for the Commission, some youth recognized that risk-taking was a “natural inclination in development”, necessary in one’s striving to better oneself, and that excessive protection from risks retarded psychological growth and stymied the readiness to assume responsibility. If risk is defined as intended action based on the probability of desired outcome, then the critical input in helping youth make a safe transition is not so much protection from all risks, but protection from making faulty judgments on the probabilities of the outcomes. In the words of one participant, “We don’t see beyond ourselves, and we need to see how things affect things on a grander scale; like selling drugs that come from somewhere and the money goes somewhere else”. It was this failure to have seen the “grander scale” that caused another participant, a deportee, to ask sadly “Will lost opportunities ever come again? Will I overcome my mistakes? Will I ever go back to the U.S.?”
14. Provided they are not irreversible, mistakes are often effective ways of learning. The youths surveyed credited good education and strong connection to family and to religious faith with their ability to avoid behaviours that had a high probability of irreversible mistakes. No less than for everyone else, they acknowledged that risks were a part of the normal course of daily life where they lived –

“limin’ too late”; “just coming out of the house where I live”; “swiping your card in the bank [where] somebody could come and rob you”. But by exercising good judgment, “you don’t eliminate the joy but you take precautions to be as safe as possible”.

Creativity

15. In physical strength and agility, the human organism peaks in the mid-twenties; in mental power around the same age. Globally in all the physically demanding sports, such as football, tennis and athletics, at twenty-nine years of age, the best would have reached their best and are looking to retire. The Region is no exception, and it is the rare cricketing genius that goes beyond the age of thirty. The most successful people in the performing arts began their artistic careers as youth. Some wane as quickly as they wax, but many maintain their reputation for excellence well into mature, middle-aged life.

Agents of Change

16. Their creative power at its peak but their commitment to the *status quo* at its weakest, the youth are the soft underbelly of society, more open to the influences of the external world than their elders, whose verities they question and often debunk. It is on account of these dispositions that they have been in the forefront of social, political and even economic change within the Caribbean, and why society neglects them at its peril.
17. Viewed thus, young people are a source of intergenerational learning. Especially in the current, technologically fast-changing environment, in which innovations become obsolete almost as quickly as they are introduced, it is to the youth that the mature adult generation have to look to learn the new ways.

A Context of Adolescent and Youth Risk in the Caribbean

1. Another important aspect of understanding youth is to perceive concepts of risk, vulnerability, resilience and protection through their eyes. For the Commission, researchers interviewed a cross-section of Caribbean youth in Jamaica, Haiti, and Trinidad and Tobago, and used their perspectives to develop the conceptual framework below –

Adolescent and Youth Perspective of Youth Risk and Vulnerability

- **Adolescence** is a period of risk-taking and experimentation for all regardless of sex, race, social class or educational status.
- **Risk** is a necessary and desirable element of growth and development that is influenced by levels of maturity and maturation.
- **Vulnerability may** stem from exposure to hazards and a range of social, economic, political, cultural, biological, environmental factors; detrimental actions that youth engage in; and actions that are forced on them. The outcomes may be positive or may contribute to a vicious cycle of negative development.
- Anyone engaging in a behaviour that exposes him or her to negative consequences of risky behavior is at risk.
- **Resilient and protective traits** are internal or external factors that provide a nurturing and supportive environment for shaping the ideal Caribbean Youth, for example spirituality, peer support, self worth, desire to be good, education attainment, lessons learned by others, problem solving and decision making skills;

Risky and risk-taking behaviours can –

- (i) represent defiance, run counter to societal norms and the law;
- (ii) be adventurous, impulsive, reactionary, brave, hazardous, mindless, lawless, pleasurable, negligent or inappropriate;
- (iii) be influenced by a number of factors such as gender, age, societal values and norms, security/survival and group membership needs; individual perceptions, dreams and aspirations; pressure from peers, influence of adults, role models, etc; fear, thirst for power; feelings of resignation and hopelessness.

Outcomes of Exposure to Risk and Vulnerability may be:

- (i) positive, such as greater security from peer group, progress, wealth or growth;
- (ii) a learning process that shapes the lives of individuals and others;
- (iii) inconsequential such as regret for not knowing what might have been; or
- (iv) harmful to physical, mental or emotional well-being such as the replication gang wars in schools

Common Coping Strategies:

- (i) Avoid dangerous neighbourhoods or being on the streets late,
- (i) Always travelling in groups, engaging in religion and prayer; getting involved in pleasurable or developmental activities such as sports and culture; consuming alcohol and drug use; partying and sex, always carrying a weapon.

Recognise the Contribution of Youth

1. Despite the common perception of youth as an “at-risk” category, prone to delinquency and deviance, and generally perceived as a burden and cost to Caribbean states, Caribbean youth have been making significant contributions to the development of the region. It is the growing realisation of this contribution that has given greater credence to the demands that the traditional approaches to youth development be redefined to treat youth as assets and not liabilities. Where youth are perceived as sources of societal problems, the responses of the state to youth development will reflect such an interpretation. On the other hand, where the role of youth is identified as positive and developmental, a different approach to the challenges of youth development is carved.

2. It is ironic that the contribution of the Region’s youth to development has not been given the kind of recognition, respect and attention that it deserves, in a context where the Region’s most dominant contributions to global development have been in the areas of sport and culture. Many forget that the West Indies cricket team, one of the most successful and globally recognised West Indian institutions, is peopled by young Caribbean persons. Similarly, the Region’s most successful musical icons, of which Bob Marley is foremost, have been young persons. Usain Bolt, the world’s premiere sprint athlete, is twenty-three years old. Brian Lara and Dwight Yorke were also young persons at the height of their careers. They are however, only the most outstanding, of the hundreds of Caribbean youth who have made such contributions to the development of the Region.

3. If an assessment were to be undertaken of the economic contribution of the sports and culture industries to the Region, it would no doubt identify this as a significant niche area which is set to grow even bigger with the further evolution of Caribbean economies into tourism and services. It is only upon such an assessment that the value of the Region’s youth as innovative entrepreneurs, creative producers, marketable personalities and “ambassadors” (in the broad sense of familiarising the world with the knowledge of the Caribbean Region, its peoples and its cultures) can be understood.

4. However, an assessment of the contribution of the Region's youth to development should also be guided by the fact that the vast majority of the Region's youth make their contributions to the region away from the glare of the global spotlight. Indeed, the young persons in CARICOM, when invited to highlight their contributions to regional development, measured their contributions not only in terms of their involvement at the community levels, but also in terms of their own personal choices, which they see as "setting an example" for others to follow. In addition, many of them see their positive choices as saving the society from the cost of the remedial action which would have been undertaken had their individual choices been more detrimental.

5. This self-awareness of their contributions to development was reflected clearly by the youth when invited to list their contributions to development in the Youth Dreams Study. Among their contributions offered were –
 - Being a good role model and setting good examples. e.g. mentoring younger children, giving talks and encouraging youth to be positive;
 - Educating youth about issues such as HIV and AIDS, sexually transmitted infections;
 - Not migrating from their home country;
 - Coaching youth in sports and helping them with schoolwork;
 - Ensuring that their environment was clean by participating in beach clean ups and by disposing of litter properly;
 - Running errands for neighbours, the elderly;
 - Promoting culture;
 - Staying out of trouble and cooperating with the police by giving evidence to fight crime;
 - By working in their respective careers, which entailed helping people, e.g. teachers, fire-fighters, nurses;
 - Grasping educational opportunities in order to be law-abiding citizens;
 - Growing local produce and thereby reducing the high import bill;
 - Paying taxes;
 - Creating employment from having a business;
 - Encouraging young people to start businesses and become self-sufficient.

6. It is significant to note that several of the examples offered by the youth, recognise the costs to the society, had they not pursued positive activities. The emphasis on this approach is a tacit insistence that adult society needs to recognise youth as integral contributors to national development. A more exhaustive economic study than that commissioned for this Report, needs to be done to quantify the cost to the countries of CARICOM of not investing in youth development, and to quantify the contribution of youth to development. The results of such a study would go a long way in confirming in the minds of Regional government officials, the importance of investing heavily in youth development.

Invest More in the Youth

1. The human beings we call youth have been in transition all their lives, from infancy through to childhood, and from childhood to this, their final stage to socially mature adulthood. The kind of mature adults they will become is strongly influenced by the timely inputs pertinent to each stage of their development, inputs of nutrition, caring and socialisation from family, community, school, religious group, peers and the wider society through the communications media. In this life-cycle approach, positive inputs at every stage leads to bright, well-adjusted, healthy, creative, balanced and confident adults; their neglect or, worse, negative inputs, lead to youth and mature adults who have fallen far short of their potential, are socially mal-adjusted and susceptible to negative behaviours. Not to invest in children and youth is therefore not an option. All Member States provide for the health and education of the very young as a matter of rights, all are committed to their responsibilities under the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which they are signatories, and, as mentioned in Chapter I of this Report, all are to be commended for giving shape to a Caribbean approach to youth development.
2. However, if there is one single lesson to be drawn from the description of the situation of Caribbean youth contained in Chapter III, it is that for all the investment in education, in employment, in health and well-being, it is just not enough, -the outcomes are falling far short of what is required for a functioning CSME and a Caribbean to which the youth are committed.

3. By way of showing that greater investment in youth will yield greater dividends to a country, the CCYD commissioned a cost-benefit analysis of social exclusion of and non-investment in youth in the Member States. Using a methodology developed by the World Bank, the study attempts to measure “the productive value of the individual and the measurable costs associated with the risky youth behaviour” (*Chaaban 2009:2*). It assumes that negative youth behaviours, such as dropping out of school, unemployment, adolescent pregnancy, HIV infection and crime, “have an indirect cost on the country’s productivity”, since they imply forfeiting the opportunity to be economically productive; not to mention the direct costs associated with medical treatment, the criminal justice system and so on. To calculate the costs of each negative behaviour, the study draws on available data to locate the average youth-specific contribution to wage income, making further assumptions and extrapolating on the opportunity costs (**see Attachment I**). The result is a convincing and conservative profile of the minimum losses to Member States, which, when presented as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product show how much a country stands to gain by reducing or eliminating the behaviour in question.

Education


4. Our review of the status of youth in education identified the fact that there was less than full enrollment at the primary school level, and decreasing enrollment at the secondary level. The review further identified that males demonstrated greater rates of absence from school than females, the higher the level within the education system. The cost of dropping out of school before the due time is presented in Table 5 for the five countries for which data were available. It shows Jamaica sustaining the most serious impact of all from non-completion of primary education, namely 0.78 per cent of GDP. Another way to say the same thing is that guaranteeing  primary education and completion to all would increase Jamaica’s GDP by less than 1 per cent. With sustained full secondary enrollment and completion the Jamaican economy would grow by 1.37 per cent of GDP, and by 5.47 per cent with a 30 per cent enrollment at the tertiary level.

Table 5 - The Cost of Early School-Leaving (2004)

Total (Females & Males)	Cost of early school leaving, %GDP			Percentage increase in lifetime earnings		
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Primary over no education	Secondary over primary	Tertiary over secondary
Barbados	0.02%	0.13%	1.04%	3%	7%	10%
Dominica	0.00%	0.26%	1.24%	0%	11%	17%
Grenada	0.24%	0.97%	4.65%	4%	10%	20%
Jamaica	0.78%	1.37%	5.47%	20%	16%	20%
Trinidad and Tobago	0.12%	1.23%	3.00%	6%	21%	21%

Notes: Data were not available to estimate the costs for the remaining CARICOM countries. A 30% target tertiary enrollment rate is assumed.

5. Table 5 disaggregates the data by gender. It shows that keeping the males in school would produce a bigger impact on GDP than females would: over 1 per cent growth in Jamaica's GDP as against 0.7 per cent at the primary level, and 1.8 per cent to 1.2 per cent at the secondary level. Comparable projections for Grenada are 0.4 per cent as against 0.3 per cent at the primary level, and 0.66 per cent as against 1.3 per cent at the secondary.

Table 6 - The Cost of Early School-Leaving by Gender (2004)

FEMALES	Cost of early school leaving			Cost of early school leaving		
	USD PPP			%GDP		
Country	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Barbados	1,395,714	4,558,604	204,344	0.030%	0.098%	0.004%
Dominica	-	617,589	31,325	0.000%	0.102%	0.005%
Grenada	2,566,099	5,788,609	170,966	0.294%	0.664%	0.020%
Jamaica	128,349,469	223,400,523	4,507,537	0.685%	1.192%	0.024%
Trinidad and Tobago	21,639,736	180,680,401	2,391,518	0.115%	0.958%	0.013%
MALES	Cost of early school leaving			Cost of early school leaving		
	USD PPP			%GDP		
Country	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Barbados	1,671,389	8,978,310	278,752	0.04%	0.19%	0.01%
Dominica	-	1,086,617	43,645	0.00%	0.18%	0.01%
Grenada	3,345,974	11,042,202	235,434	0.38%	1.27%	0.03%
Jamaica	196,557,297	345,744,013	5,959,740	1.05%	1.84%	0.03%
Trinidad and Tobago	29,243,978	282,566,944	3,271,157	0.16%	1.50%	0.02%

Notes: Data were not available to estimate the costs for the remaining CARICOM countries.

6. These estimates are put at the minimum and do not include such consequences of dropping out of school as unemployment and poorer health.
7. Concern was also raised in Chapter III on the relative weakness in Mathematics and English throughout the region. Competence in these two disciplines is a requirement for being functional in the global economy, let alone the CSME. The problem is not gender-specific, though males have a slight advantage in Mathematics.
8. The CCYD considers this an untenable position for the region to find itself in, while at the same time implementing the CSME as an economic strategy for meeting the challenges of globalisation. Existing evidence suggests that the developing countries making the greatest strides in the global economy, particularly in ICT, are also those that have built a solid foundation in education.
9. The issue is sufficiently urgent for CARICOM to address at least at the level of the COHSOD.

Employment

10. Reducing youth unemployment to the level of adult unemployment would, as Table 6 projects, significantly increase GDP. In 2006 unemployment in Saint Lucia stood at 20 per cent among adult females and 12 per cent among adult males - the highest in CARICOM. Among the Saint Lucian youth population 15 to 24 years old, however, the unemployment figures were 45.5 per cent females to 37 per cent males. A reduction in youth unemployment to the adult levels would contribute a growth in the Saint Lucian economy of 2.46 per cent of GDP. For St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the growth would be of the order of 2.3 per cent, for Haiti 1.3 per cent and for Belize 1.1 per cent.

Table 7 - The Cost of Youth Unemployment

CARICOM Member States	Latest year available	Female Youth Unemployment, Cost million USD PPP*	Male Youth Unemployment, Cost million USD PPP	Female Youth Unemployment, cost % GDP	Male Youth Unemployment, cost % GDP	Total cost, % GDP
Antigua	2006	4.93	5.94	0.36%	0.44%	0.80%
Bahamas	2006	32.85	38.12	0.44%	0.51%	0.95%
Barbados	2006	15.92	25.41	0.34%	0.55%	0.89%
Belize	2006	11.50	13.08	0.51%	0.58%	1.09%
Dominica	2006	2.97	5.24	0.46%	0.81%	1.27%
Grenada	2006	9.42	13.35	0.95%	1.35%	2.31%
Guyana	2006	9.06	17.81	0.36%	0.70%	1.06%
Haiti	2006	64.16	82.56	0.57%	0.74%	1.31%
Jamaica	2006	116.71	148.62	0.60%	0.76%	1.36%
St. Lucia	2006	14.34	25.15	0.89%	1.56%	2.46%
St Vincent and the Grenadines	2006	8.19	10.36	1.01%	1.28%	2.29%
Suriname	2006	9.47	14.55	0.27%	0.42%	0.69%
Trinidad and Tobago	2006	95.81	113.69	0.42%	0.50%	0.92%
Associate States						
Anguilla	2001	0.43	0.24	0.41%	0.23%	0.65%
Bermuda	2000	2.20	5.40	0.10%	0.25%	0.35%
Cayman Islands	2007	2.18	2.44	0.11%	0.13%	0.24%

Notes: Data were not available to estimate the costs for Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, British Virgin Islands and Turks and Caicos Islands. *PPP: Purchasing Power Parity.

11. As in the case of Education, these estimates are costed at the lowest level. In real terms high youth unemployment generates costs to the country other than severe loss of productivity. Crime, with which it is strongly associated, carries additional costs which are not taken into account in this assessment of opportunity costs. In other words, the gains that would accrue to Member States that reduced youth unemployment to adult levels, are understated in the projections set out in the Table.

Health

12. Any discussion of health-related costs must take into account both the lost opportunity costs and the direct costs of health care. In this section, consideration will be given to the costs of adolescent pregnancy (see Table 8) and youth HIV and AIDS (see Table 9).

Table 8 - The Cost of Adolescent Pregnancy

	Year	Total Adolescent Births per year	Financial costs			Opportunity costs		
			Average Cost per Year USD PPP	Total Cost per Year, million USD PPP	TC %GDP	Average Cost per Year USD PPP	Total cost of Lifetime, million USD PPP	TC life %GDP
Bahamas	2005	757	4,362	3.3	0.9%	7,669	290.3	3.9%
Barbados	2005	422	2,914	1.2	0.6%	4,383	92.6	2.0%
Belize	2005	1,256	1,536	1.9	1.8%	3,718	233.4	10.3%
Guyana	2005	2,172	741	1.6	1.3%	1,506	163.5	6.4%
Haiti	2005	25,934	241	6.3	1.2%	460	596.3	5.3%
Jamaica	2005	10,452	1,195	12.5	1.3%	3,239	1,692.6	8.7%
Suriname	2005	2,100	1,637	3.4	2.1%	5,680	596.4	17.1%
Trinidad and Tobago	2005	2,373	2,931	7.0	0.6%	5,729	679.9	3.0%

Notes: Data were not available to estimate the costs for the remaining CARICOM countries.

13. According to the projections in Table 8, adolescent motherhood cost the Bahamas 0.9 per cent of the country's GDP, and 3.9 per cent of GDP over the lifetime of the mothers. The country would, therefore, have grown by 3.9 per cent over the mothers' lifetime, had they all postponed pregnancy until their twenties. For Belize, the growth would be of the magnitude of over 10 per cent, and for Suriname, 17 per cent.

14. Again, these costs are underestimated. The direct costs, for example, are calculated on “the sum of annual governmental child support, government income transfers and subsidies to adolescent mothers, and medical care costs for mother and child” (*Chaaban 2009*). Experience from Jamaica’s Women’s Centre shows that pregnant adolescents who lack the kind of quality intervention that that institution offers, give birth to significantly more children than those who go through the Women’s Centre programme. Their opportunity costs are more severe than those who postponed their second pregnancy. Delaying pregnancy in favour of further development of human resources, increases the economic and social prospects of a country over the course of the mother’s lifetime.

Table 9 - The Costs of Youth HIV and AIDS

Country	Year	Incidence youth HIV	Present Value of	Present value of losses as % of GDP	Estimated	Financial cost USD PPP/year	Financial cost % GDP	Total cost million USD PPP
			future earnings losses due to aids deaths, million USD PPP		annual losses from current AIDS deaths, USD PPP			
Antigua and Barbuda	2006	74	2.9	0.2%	3,249	94,868	0.007%	2.98
The Bahamas	2007	1,363	76.3	1.0%	77,895	797,404	0.011%	77.17
Barbados	2007	412	11.5	0.2%	69,203	423,060	0.009%	11.95
Belize	2007	585	13.9	0.6%	45,763	357,678	0.016%	14.28
Dominica	2001	65	2.2	0.3%	3,110	24,999	0.004%	2.20
Grenada	2007	90	3.3	0.3%	4,486	30,127	0.003%	3.30
Guyana	2007	1,310	12.9	0.5%	94,644	1,259,565	0.050%	14.26
Haiti	2007	20,732	75.4	0.7%	146,945	9,303,474	0.083%	84.82
Jamaica	2007	6,767	144.8	0.7%	298,386	2,331,317	0.012%	147.46 2.55
St. Kitts Nevis	2007	54	2.5	0.4%	2,205	33,973	0.005%	
Saint Lucia	2007	198	4.3	0.3%	9,429	49,998	0.003%	4.33
Suriname	2007	1,769	52.0	1.5%	117,837	467,289	0.013%	52.54
Trinidad and Tobago	2007	1,767	76.8	0.3%	302,385	1,661,472	0.007%	78.79

Notes: Data were not available to estimate the costs for the remaining CARICOM countries.

15. Table 9 presents the value of losses due to AIDS-related death plus the annual expenditure on healthcare for youth victims, expressed as percentages of GDP. It shows that on an annual basis for every youth who lives instead of dying from AIDS, the Bahamas would save US\$78 000; Barbados, US\$70 000; Grenada, US \$4 486; Guyana, US\$ 95 000; Haiti, US\$147 000; Jamaica, US\$300 000; St. Kitts and Nevis, US\$ 2 205; Suriname, US\$118 000; and Trinidad and Tobago, US\$302 000. The annual loss to GDP ranges from 0.2 per cent for Barbados to 1.5 per cent to Suriname.

Crime and Violence

16. The data presented in Table 10 are also based on the direct costs incurred by the State as a result of youth crime, plus an estimate of foregone earnings both to the individual criminals and to tourism, the latter on the assumption that high levels of criminal violence impacts the tourism sector.

Table 10 - The Cost of Youth Crime

Country	Year	Number of youth (15-24) convicted, per year	Total direct cost USD PPP/year	Total forgone earnings USD PPP/year	Total forgone tourism revenue, USD PPP/year	Total opportunity cost, USD PPP/year	Total cost USD PPP/year	Total cost % GDP
Dominica	2002	393	17,528,671	953,113	2,880,000	3,833,113	21,361,783	3.44%
Guyana	2002	425	68,717,820	289,678	1,665,000	1,954,678	70,672,498	2.79%
Jamaica	2005	1,959	529,098,000	4,262,815	91,125,000	95,387,815	624,485,815	3.21%
St. Lucia	2005	663	43,485,580	1,935,977	17,100,000	19,035,977	62,521,557	4.01%
Trinidad and Tobago	2005	786	616,983,450	2,792,403	35,415,000	38,207,403	655,190,853	2.88%

Notes: Data were not available to estimate the costs for the remaining CARICOM countries.

17. Table 10 shows that youth crime costs the five Member States between a low of 2.9 per cent of GDP in the case of the twin-island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and a high of 4 per cent in the case of Saint Lucia. Jamaica, with the highest rate of violent crime would experience economic growth of more than 1.5 per cent were it able to halve the rate of youth crime. If to these costs could be added the medical, psychological, moral,

property and other economic costs to the victims and their families, the gains in reducing youth crime would be shown to be significantly greater.

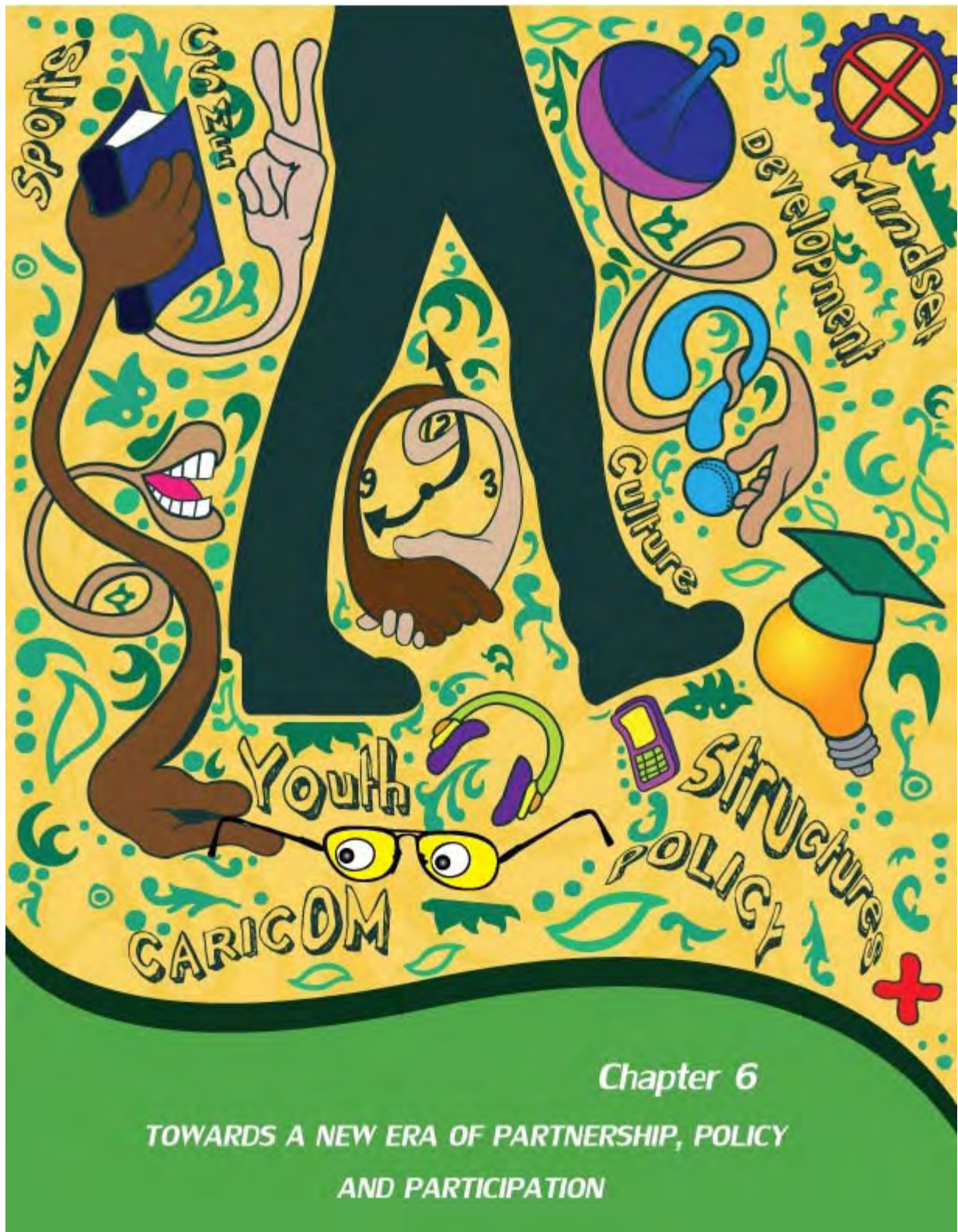
The Cost-Benefit of Investing

1. The above data show how much of a drain on their economies Member States bear as a result of being unable to address successfully the identified social issues facing the youth. That is one way to look at it. Another, more fruitful way, is to see how much Member States would gain by successfully addressing them. In light of the fact that the study does not say how much a government should input to obtain a desired outcome, the question may therefore be asked whether the benefits would be greater than the cost of tackling each of these problems. In other words, how much would it cost a Member State to reduce its youth unemployment rate to its adult unemployment level, or how much more should it expend in order to get full primary and secondary enrollment and attendance? And would the benefits be greater than the expenditure?

2. There are several good projects and programmes across the world directed at youth, from which the Region could learn and adapt, and many within the Region that could be generalized. Wendy Cunningham *et al.* in their *Youth at Risk in Latin America and the Caribbean* (2008) found 23 policies and approaches that worked to address all or some of five outcomes or risks to which youth are subject, namely youth unemployment, adolescent pregnancy, reproductive health and HIV and AIDS, school drop out and crime, violence and drug abuse. The following eight policy approaches were successful in reducing all of these outcomes and behaviours –
 - investing in early childhood development;
 - ensuring youth complete secondary education;
 - investing in effective parenting;
 - investing in collecting and analysing data on youth;
 - providing youth with financial incentives to avoid risky behaviour;
 - integrated investing in high violence communities to make them safe;
 - media campaigns to spread anti-violence messages; and
 - providing birth certificates to the undocumented.

3. The remaining approaches were more target-specific; for example making health and pharmaceutical services youth friendly was effective in reducing adolescent pregnancy and HIV and AIDS, but not school drop out or youth unemployment. Similarly, strengthening the juvenile justice system was effective in reducing crime, violence and drug abuse, but nothing else.

4. Focusing on youth development programs with high benefit-cost ratios and proven impact, can be done in a cost-effective manner. The numbers indicate the potential increase in earnings and productivity if the concerns of young people are addressed accurately. They “also call for broadening the culture of measurement and assessment of youth interventions in the region, as policymakers should systematically undertake impact assessments for all programs, and be ready to shut down programs that have low social returns” (Chabaan 2009).



Chapter 6

TOWARDS A NEW ERA OF PARTNERSHIP, POLICY
AND PARTICIPATION

CHAPTER VI

TOWARDS A NEW ERA OF PARTNERSHIP, POLICY AND PARTICIPATION

1. The Commission is struck by the similarities between the Regional Youth profile of the Ideal Caribbean Youth below and Prof. Girvan's (2007) human resource development priorities for driving Caribbean economies. The original Regional youth profile below was drafted by the CARICOM Youth Ambassador Programme (2005) and refined over the years on the basis of widespread regional youth consultations.

Regional Profile of the Ideal Caribbean Youth

- Naturally charismatic, proactive, with strong leadership qualities
- Knowledgeable of country, Caribbean history and world affairs
- Endowed with strong Caribbean identity, capable of living anywhere in the world
- Patriotic, actively involved in the development of country and region
- Ambitious, confident, well rounded, well informed/read
- Strong believer in culture, exposed to sport, cultural arts
- Creative, industrious, well educated, technologically savvy, ambitious and qualified to fulfill career/vocational aspirations
- An entrepreneurial spirit, somewhat of a risk taker, exploring the world market in search of different avenues to advance self, country and region
- Good deportment and attitude, a spiritual and moral dimension
- Tolerant and respectful of others, a team player
- Articulate, multi-lingual, excellent networking, inter-personal and communication skills
- Acting responsibly to benefit self, community and society
- Understanding and embracing cultural differences
- Assertive, determined to persevere in a competitive environment

2. This Chapter points the way forward based on a clearer understanding of desirable outcomes for the well-being and empowerment of adolescents and youth in CARICOM. This involves supporting adolescents and youth not only for their personal well-being and a better quality of life, but also for optimising their talents, knowledge and potential; and engendering national identity, participation and positive engagement of the largest demographic in the Community towards sustained social and economic integration.

3. In making the following Recommendations, the Commission underlines the importance of embracing all categories of youth, irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, class, abilities, religious persuasion and sexual orientation, and wishes to reiterate the principles and overall philosophy that have guided its work in addressing its mandate.
4. These are as follows:
 - (i) Youth are a creative asset and a valuable human resource to be developed, and not a problem to be solved;
 - (ii) Youth should be seen as partners in the development of the Region and not only as beneficiaries;
 - (iii) Youth are the future but also the present – they can and do contribute to national and regional identity and development;
 - (iv) The majority of the youth transition successfully to adulthood. The failure of a minority to do so is largely attributable to the fact that adults and society have not adequately discharged their responsibilities for their development;
 - (v) The dominant paradigm in which youth are viewed is problem-focused, and does not adequately take into account their assets, contribution and achievements.
5. The Commission posits that Youth Policies are weak, outdated and rarely implemented and concludes that current investments in structures and programmes for youth development – in education, health and wellbeing, culture and sports and job creation – such as they are, are just not enough and in some instances, are misdirected. No investment in youth, no Regional integration. No investment in youth, no CSME.

Recommendations

6. Accordingly, the Commission recommends as follows:

Changing the Mindset

Youth are in a developmental stage of life. The vast majority is making the transition to socially responsible and productive adulthood, but there is a minority that is not.

The first change in our thinking must be to refrain from using this minority to brand all youth. Secondly, with respect to the minority itself, the change in thinking must be to see them first as

potential assets to be nurtured, not as a cancer to be repressed. **What is really required is more investment to provide them with additional opportunities to develop their creative and productive capacities;**

While efforts must necessarily be made to limit the negative impact of risk and vulnerability factors, the first line of thinking must be to allocate more resources to strengthen the institutions that should serve as protective factors – the family, the community, the school, the faith-based organisations.

The Commission further recommends that CARICOM States encourage more research on youth and crime, and to this end, improve their collection of crime statistics, disaggregated by age, sex and other relevant demographics and variables, using regionally agreed templates.

The Commission also further recommends that the Heads of Government in recognising the contributions of youth introduce a high level, high profile Regional Youth Awards programme.

The CSME

The Commission finds that there is wide-spread ignorance and growing cynicism among adolescents and youth about regional integration, CARICOM and in particular the CSME. It also finds that when engaged on these issues, youth express their vision for a unified community and a willingness to share the message of regionalism and CSME. Concluding that a major effort is needed to spread knowledge and change attitudes about regionalism and the CSME and that the education system has an important role to play in overcoming them, the Commission recommends that Heads of Government:

- (e) Implement a wide-scale youth-led Regional integration and CSME information, education and communication campaign that uses methodology and content relevant and attractive to youth that builds knowledge and awareness; strengthens Regional identity and erases negative perceptions of the CSME and Caribbean citizenship;
- (f) Introduce into the school curricula at all levels relevant, age-appropriate information and creatively-presented activities on CARICOM countries, regional integration, regional citizenship and the CSME;

- (g) Mandate the undertaking of research to increase understanding of youth in development issues including the experiences of youth who have applied for free movement as well as those who have migrated within the region under other circumstances; and
- (h) Institutionalise mechanisms to nurture and sustain a sense of Caribbean identity among youth in the Caribbean Diaspora, and to channel their skills, resources and talents into avenues for Caribbean development and integration.

Youth Governance Structures

In keeping with the democratic traditions that characterise the Region, the Commission concludes that Member States should commit to deepening the democratic culture by including the youth of the Region in these processes. The Commission therefore strongly recommends that:

1. the Heads of Government amend the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas to embrace a Human Resource Development paradigm in order to ensure that the role of youth in the integration process is explicitly recognized and provided for. Such roles should be reflected in national development strategies and be congruent with those enshrined in the Revised Treaty;
2. a broad based democratically-elected youth representative body be established to become the central national institutional body for development. Such a body shall be elected by a process which allows every young person the opportunity to vote or be elected. The process shall be overseen by the National Electoral Departments in each Member State and should be enshrined in legislation. All youth representation must be managed through, and accountable to this nationally elected body;
3. the Heads of Government promote and support the establishment of National Inter-ministerial Committees in all member states which will, among other things, ensure that the decisions made at the regional level are implemented and that the youth agenda at the regional level, is linked to national development agendas; and

4. attention be paid to developing the capacities of the DYAs, and further recommends the expansion of the Youth and Community Development Programme within the CARICOM Secretariat, in order to deliver on youth development more effectively.

Human Resource Development

The Commission concludes that the empowerment of youth to participate in the CSME necessitates concerted action with regard to all facets of human resource development, in particular issues pertinent to education and training for social life and employment and overall well-being. Finding prevailing formal and informal structures and institutions lacking in relevance and effectiveness, the Commission:

8. **recommends** that in keeping with commitments to international conventions on child and human rights, the Heads of Government revisit the national legislative framework in order to ensure congruence with these commitments, in particular those relating to adequate access to health services in the areas of adolescent health, mental health and sexual and reproductive health;
9. **recommends** the elaboration of an integrated human resource development strategy that embraces in particular education, health, employment, gender, crime-prevention, culture, sport and youth leadership;
10. **strongly recommends** that serious efforts be made to prepare students to be socially well-adjusted critical thinkers, through curricular reform, the retooling of educators and educational leaders at all levels, and through the adoption of best practices, paying particular attention to gender;
11. **also recommends** that all CARICOM States invest in the development of technological literacy in order to reduce the digital divide among youth and prepare them for work and life in the information society and to take advantage of other new careers and opportunities in the regional and global environments;
12. **further recommends** that the Heads of Government address the lack of awareness and education with regard to environmental issues, in particular the effects of climate change;

13. that regional laws with regard to migration, including citizenship laws, be harmonised; and
14. that non-partisan mechanisms and strategies be developed to cushion the negative impact of migration and to investigate complaints about violations of human and civil rights within the context of the CSM.

Sports and Culture

Mindful of the world-wide acclaim and comparative advantage that the Region has in arts, culture and sports; mindful also of the concept of “Sport for All”, namely that every person has the right to engage in sport in the pursuit of excellence, wellness or friendships regardless of economic status, religion, or physical limitations, the Commission recommends that CARICOM States:

10. share their experiences of capacity building, institutional structures and practices, and alliances in order to identify, nurture and develop talent in culture and sports, in collaboration with the universities and other relevant institutions in the Region;
11. allocate resources to ensure adequate provision for sports and recreational facilities in communities and venues for the presentation of the arts;
12. invest more in the training and development of physical education teachers, coaches, sports and recreation administrators, and teachers of the arts;
13. place greater emphasis on creating After School Activity Programmes (ASAP) in schools and the increased use of school facilities to provide organised extra-curricular, recreational and sports activities for youth;
14. provide leadership and offer incentives for strengthening cooperation and partnerships between communities, sports organisations, and the private sector for the development of youth sports clubs and associations;

15. provide more opportunities for youth development in culture and sports for their general well being and to offer youth the possibility of new career pathways in sports, sports tourism and cultural industries;
16. strengthen the curriculum in sports, culture and technology at all levels – primary, secondary and tertiary;
17. put in place the necessary policies and policy framework for the development of vibrant industries in culture and sports tourism; and
18. strengthen regional integration, awareness and development through the unifying force of sports and culture, building on the strong foundations of regional events such as CARIFESTA and the CARIFTA Games.

CARICOM Youth Development Goals

In order that this Report finds an outcome in implementation, the Commission recommends to the Heads of Government, the adoption of the above Recommendations and the endorsement of the following CARICOM Youth Development Goals arising from them, along with a monitoring and evaluation plan:

Changing the Mind Set

Goal 1: Allocating more resources to targeted programmes to strengthen the protective factors – the family, the community, the school and faith-based organisations.

Goal 2: Increased participation of youth in the central affairs of the country and the Region.

CSME

Goal 3: Increased proportion of youth accessing entrepreneurial, employment and educational opportunities in the CSME.

Youth Governance

Goal 4: Increased youth participation and partnership through strengthened youth governance structures.

HRD

Goal 5: An integrated policy for youth development.

Goal 6: 30 per cent of qualified secondary school graduates accessing tertiary education.

Goal 7: An environmentally-aware citizenry developed.

Sports and Culture

Goal 8: Sports for All Youth.

Goal 9: The Region's advantage in sports and culture optimised.



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