

# **YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY CASE STUDY, JAMAICA**

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***The content of this report does not necessarily represent the views of the United Nations.***

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Jamaica's peace and security issues are characterized by violence resulting from interpersonal conflicts, gang violence and organized crime. Violent crimes tend to be geographically concentrated in vulnerable lower socioeconomic communities with a weakened authority of the state, although, crimes have become more dispersed in recent times and still remains fluid. Currently, violence is the fourth leading cause of premature death in Jamaica after diabetes, stroke and heart disease [1]. Youth are the major segment of the population that are affected by crime and violence, both as victims and perpetrators.

In Jamaica, youth reported feeling most vulnerable to gun violence, rape and police-directed violence. They identified that there were key push factors including unemployment, unstable families, attraction to the 'fast life', exposure to violence and a negative community environment which drove youth to become perpetrators of violence. While the disproportional representation of youth has identified them as a key target group for focused interventions, this case study highlights that they are yet to meaningfully propositioned as key agents for change.

Jamaica has comprehensive security and youth policies, though the integration of the two has been limited. Most of the institutions, programmes, projects and initiatives which have emerged in Jamaica to address issues of crime and violence are not youth-led, although some initiatives have included young people input at different stages of the programme cycle. Mechanisms exist to move the country towards the objective of promoting greater multi-sectoral collaboration but still fall short of engaging citizens, particularly young people. This engagement is weakest at the community level where programmes to support them in violence prevention, conflict resolution and peace building initiatives are limited. The membership composition of many of these mechanisms remains selective and are either exclusionary to youth or is discouraging of youth deliberation on matters of peace and national security.

Civil society organizations have been effective because of their effective targeting of youth, particularly high-risk youth and their relatively higher inclusion of youth in the process and leadership. Their use of innovative methods of engagement including the arts and sports has allowed them to be more effective. Activities undertaken by youth-led initiatives similarly use alternative methods of engagement to attract and foster youth. Another strength is that youth-led initiatives tend to be community based – engaging young people and adults in activities – rather than only targeting "problem" youth as is customary in the government-led and sometime civil society-led initiatives.

Youth-led initiatives are generally low profile in Jamaica and are rarely associated with formal crime and violence responses. Informality is the hallmark of youth-led initiatives which makes them difficult to quantify and identify. The primary objective of this case study is to inform key policy and programming considerations for strengthening youth-led and

youth-based initiatives that are aimed at improving peace and security in Jamaica. The research highlighted the following key youth recommendations:

- Support and strengthen youth-led community engagement activities through local youth clubs: It was put forward that government should use youth clubs provide training to build the youth's capacity in organizational management and funding. Particularly in violence prone communities, youth clubs would be responsible for the organization of community activities which will attract and streamline youth.
- Increase collaboration with youth on the ground: Government and civil society were called to not only consult with youth more but to actively involve youth in the implementation of projects. It was put forward that local authorities should become active, on-the-ground resource persons, working more closely with the youth collaboratively to target and reduce violence and support their activities.
- Design intervention programming according to the needs of youth: Youth called for the following types of interventions to combat violence: Technical/Skills Training, Job Opportunities, Therapeutic interventions, Youth empowerment, Mentorship Programs, Entrepreneurial capacity building opportunities. Youth shared that they believed 'government intervention' (used to describe the work of politicians in their communities rather than the work of governmental agencies) and 'police intervention' were ineffective in reducing crime and violence.
- Increase availability of funding for violence prevention projects: The youth recommended greater ease in accessing funding and more funding opportunities for young people to apply for and channel resource into their projects geared towards violence prevention and youth development interventions.
- Youth recommended more discourse and focus on the issues facing youth is required in order to engender action. The youth believed that more advocacy is needed to create more exposure and response regarding the issues they face.

In addition to the youth recommendations, this case study concludes with the following additional key recommendations:

- A similar recommendation was made from government and the youth focus group discussions for state agencies to work closely with youth clubs to engage young people in violence prevention programmes. This suggests possible synergy between the government and non-government priorities. Recently, the government has re-branded the national youth club movement as a crime-fighting strategy. The intention to create a national youth club movement presents an opportunity to build on unrecognized community work (led by young people) and integrate them with formalized activity/responses at the national level as a way to tackle violence.
- The current framework of institutions, policies and programming needs to be more effective at engaging high-risk youth consistently.

- A sustainable framework which seeks to systematically incorporate youth involvement in high-level decision making in regard to security and violence prevention efforts is needed to heighten youth inclusivity. While Jamaica has an impressive list of national youth representative organizations which are organized and supported by the Government, the engagement of those groups with security issues is limited.

Relative to other Caribbean nations, Jamaica has a very vibrant youth sector and robust set of youth leaders but we need to harness the potential and vision and passion in these young people as it relates to peace and security and ensure they are being included beyond tokenism lest they become disenchanted.

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## **BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

Youth are the primary cohort of the population that are most affected by crime and violence in Jamaica, both as victims and perpetrators. Young males between the ages of 16 to 24 are the main victims and perpetrators of violent crimes while women and girls are the primary victims of sexual crimes [2]. Violence has had a profound social, behavioural, cultural and emotional impact on youth and the cycle of violence perpetration and victimization continues today. The youth have reported an increased frustration with crime and violence over the years and a deep yearning for the pacification of violence in Jamaica and lasting improvement in its safety and security [3].

For more than three decades, crime and violence has been a primary issue on the Jamaican governmental agenda and has resulted in the development of institutional frameworks to address these issues. The national agenda has mostly focused on strengthening policing and incarceration of offenders, although more recently, there has been a growing number of public health and citizen security approaches to violence.

Concurrently, youth development and inclusivity has been a priority for several years with the first commitments being made in the 1980s when the first youth policy was drafted. The government of Jamaica, particularly the Ministry of Education, has made a fair attempt to include youth in decision making around youth issues like education but rarely for security matters as youth are seen more as the perpetrator or victims than as solution makers. An effort to tap into the potential of youth to address peace and security has not been implemented or meaningfully delivered and is not an area of focus.

In light of the state of violence in the country, Jamaica was selected to become a Pathfinder country, joining the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children with a committed goal to end the abuse, exploitation and all forms of violence against children [4]. As a Pathfinder country Jamaica will use evidence-based, data-driven approaches and collaborative actions as the way forward to achieve safety for all children and share lessons learned with the rest of the world.

With this new agenda, Jamaica stands to move forward in the direction of greater youth inclusivity in its fight against crime and violence. There is much Jamaica stands to gain from the United Nations' newly adopted Security Council Resolution (SCR) 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. The resolution has the potential to do much to recognize the vital role of youth in peace and security issues and advocate for the inclusion of youth in such decision-making processes. In support of the work of the progress study, this contributing case study aims to demonstrate the potential of Jamaican youth to contribute to violence prevention and peace meaningfully. This case study aims to identify the threats which youth are facing, to highlight the ways that youth can and are contributing and to highlight the opportunities which exist to strengthen youth collaboration and contribution to violence prevention.



This study was prepared based on a mixed-method approach consisting of a combination of desk research and literature review to analyze the current status of youth violence in the country, and field work to collect empirical data on the role of youth in peace and security in Jamaica. Four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held in four of the most volatile parishes in the island (Kingston, St. James, Clarendon and St. Ann) and four (4) Key Informants Interviews (KII) were conducted with youth working in violence prevention and other individuals working closely within the scope of youth and violence. There were a total of fifty-seven participants FGD (36 male and 21 female) consisting of youth between the ages of 18 to 29. The main reason for using the Focus Group format was to quickly gather data on how youth, between the ages of 15 and 29, perceive and express themselves about issues affecting peace and security in their communities. Detail of the information captured is attached as Annex 1 to this document. Videography of youth and their contribution to violence prevention was carried out for four case studies to document the current contributions of youth in the Jamaica towards violence prevention.

***A youth from Kingston:***

***“We know the young people who are doing these bad things... let us tell you what would help them and let us help you drive the project.”***

## **SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS: UNDERSTANDING THE YPS CONTEXT IN JAMAICA**

### **KEY FINDINGS**

In 2016, Jamaica recorded 50 homicides per 100,000 people, ranking as the 4th highest homicide rate in Latin American and Caribbean [5] [6]. Crime and violence is also one of the principal development concerns of Caribbean youth [3]. In Jamaica, with young people under 30 years old representing almost 50% of the Jamaican population of 2.73 million, <sup>17</sup> the foregoing suggests the important role youth can and ought to play in development, including the promotion of peace and security. At the same time, the disproportional representation of youth in the statistics on involvement in violence (as victims and perpetrators) has also identified them as the key target group for focused interventions to reduce risk of violence rather than as the key agents of change.

Consequently, the peace and security sector, as this case study will show, is characterized mostly by government-led broad national security initiatives to reduce crime (including violent crime) which are largely focused on strengthening policing responses and incarceration of offender. The Government of Jamaica remains concerned that a significant amount of criminal activity has been associated with “gangs of youth involved in extortion, contract killing, money laundering and transnational organized crimes, such as lottery scamming, identity theft and fraud.” Concurrently, there are only very few established youth-led security initiatives, because the security has, hitherto, not been considered a sector in which youth can exercise leadership. The youth development sector tends to focus on what are perceived to be “soft” social issues such as education, health, sports and culture. Notwithstanding the existence of a recent National Youth Policy (Draft 2016) which emphasizes youth participation at all levels of society the political culture of Jamaican policymaking has not prioritized youth leadership in this sector [7]. Youth leadership was a key issue highlighted in the 2010 report of the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development [7]. Consequently, Jamaican youth typically are involved and participate at a community level, while at the same time expressing alienation from national and regional political processes.

### **Types of Violence Against Youth**

Recent analyses of the situation of youth identify increasing frustration among young people about the effect of violence on their livelihoods and family life [3] [7]. This was evident in the focus groups conducted for this case study with participants identifying the three main most pressing threats to peace and security in their communities within the past five years, being:

1. **Gun Violence:** Three of the four FGs listed “gun violence” as their very first answer.
2. **Rape:** All FGs identified rape as a form of violence that negatively impacted youth.

3. **Police-directed Violence:** All FGs identified police-directed violence as negatively impacting youth.

Additionally, other types of violence and violent crime mentioned included robbery, cyber bullying, gender-based violence, domestic violence and suicide.

The youth's frustration with gun violence is fitting given that 80% of murders in the island in 2016 were carried out by a gun [6]. In hospitals, gunshot wounds accounted for about 10% of the violence related injuries [8]. Homicide victims in Jamaica are disproportionately males (90% of homicide victims in 2013 were male) [2]. Youth are also overrepresented as homicide victims, particularly male youths. In contrast to the under 18 year olds that were less likely to be homicide victims, youth in the 18 to 25 and 26 to 35 age bracket were overrepresented, comprising 20% and 27% of homicide victims respectively despite only accounting for 15.3% and 14.8% of the population [9]. Overall, the 18-35 age groups represented 47% of homicides in 2013 even though this group only accounts for 30% of the population [9]. It is estimated that even more youth have been victims of homicides this year given the troubling 26% increase over the corresponding period last year [6].

Gun violence in Jamaica is intricately linked to gangs and organized crime. The presence of gangs in the Caribbean dates back prior to the 1970s but their proliferation has been especially prevalent since the early 2000's in the Caribbean region. According to the JCF, 70% of murders for the year to date can be attributed to gangs<sup>1,2</sup> [10]. This is consistent with high proportions of gang -related murders in 2016 and 2013 which indicated that gangs were responsible for 65 and 79 percent respectively of all murders during that year [2] [6]. It was of note that approximately 30% of gang-related murders this year were attributed to acts of revenge or reprisal (30%), a key area for intervention [10]. There is not much data on the socio-demographic characteristics of gang members in terms of their age although the gang population is known to be mostly young males.

The issue of sexual violence and rape was another concern across focus groups. The 2008 Reproductive Health Survey (RHS) found that 12% of female respondents reported being physically forced to have sexual intercourse, half before the age of 20 [11]. Further, 46% of females described their first experience as unwanted but, "it happened anyway" [11]. Of the recorded victims of rape in 2013, 74% were below the age of 25 with 56% of victims between the ages of 10 and 19 [11]. While 814 cases of rape were reported to the police, the Jamaica Injury Surveillance System (JISS) recorded an additional 411 cases of sexual assault for the same year, displaying the significant underreporting of these cases [2]. It was found

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<sup>2</sup> According to JCF "Gang-related refers to any homicide or shooting incident that: A. Is committed by known gang members or by persons who are actively, associated with such gang members through their habits, lifestyle or criminal, activities or; B. In which the victims or intended victims are associated with members of a gang or; C. In which the victims are innocent by-standers during the course of an incident or; D. That are attacks on gang-related premises by rival groups or by internal feud."

<sup>2</sup> This data pertains to the January 2017 to June 17, 2017 period

that approximately 33% of women experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime with 17% having experienced this within the last 12 months [11].

Violence-Related Injuries (VRI) remains the main cause of youth visits to accident and emergency hospital and treatment centres island-wide. The 10-29 age groups accounted for 52% of all hospital VRI visits in a year [8]. The primary mechanism of injury was blunt injury (40.7%) followed by stab wounds (23.3%), sexual assaults (16.8%), gunshot wounds (14.8%) and attempted suicide (4.4%) [8]. In a recent IDB study, it was found that youth prevalence rates for assault are particularly high in Kingston (8.6%) compared to other regions in the Caribbean [9]. The study also found that youth were found to be one-and-a-half times as likely to be victims of assault in Kingston compared to other age groups (8.6 percent versus 5.3 percent) [9].

Concerns of the youth included both violent and property crime. According to victimization studies, 15.2% of Jamaicans were victims of violent crimes in their lifetime [12]. Victimization rates for property and violent crime show 18% of Jamaican youth island wide reporting victimization [9]. While many youth may not be directly victimized, they are still exposed to the aftermath of violence. For example, the lifetime prevalence of losing someone close to you to violence in the Kingston Metropolitan area was 48.8 % [9].

## **YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN VIOLENCE**

A look at most recent crime data and youth involvement shows that over 45.6% of males arrested for serious and violent crimes in 2015 were youth between 15-24 years [6]. While the percentage of youth arrested in 2009 compared to 2015 remained at the same level, the percentage of youth who were victims of major crime doubled from 11% to 21.2% [6]. In Jamaica (2014) the odds of being imprisoned for a homicide compared to their population proportion were 1.2 for youth 17-25 years and 2.3 for the 26-35 age group [9]. Youth are not only victims of violence but are also disproportionately involved in violence perpetration, although, it must be noted that the majority of youth are non-violent [13].

## **PUSH AND PULL FACTORS**

The social conditions surrounding youth play a significant role in influencing youth's involvement in violence. Across the country, youth are growing increasingly frustrated with violence. Though many are taking steps to avoid a path of crime and violence but they feel that their attempts are neither recognized nor supported [7].

The respondents to the FGDs and interviews mentioned several factors that they believed pushed youth to become involved in violence. The most common answers across the FGDs pointed to:

1. Unemployment
2. Unstable families

3. Attraction to the ‘fast life’ and,
4. Negative community environment.
5. Exposure to violence

Repeatedly, youth pointed to ‘idle hands’ and lack of youth engagement as a push factor for violence and crime. This was reported to be related to unemployment and poor high school retention. In 2015/2016 academic year high rates of enrolment in primary schools (99.5% for males and 99.1% for females) were recorded while attendance rates in primary schools were 83.7% for males and 85.6% for females. The issues then arise regarding retention, attendance and qualifications on completion that become more marked at the secondary level [14]. In the 2015/2016 cohort enrolment figures in secondary school were 96.2% for males 98.7% for females. Attendance figures for secondary schools fell to 79.8 % (77.6 % for males and 81.8 % for females) [14]. Analysis of the enrolment data show that 24% of the student cohort, the majority of whom are boys, are no longer enrolled in secondary school by grade Nine. Another 25% of students complete high school grade 11, but leave without any qualifications and reports indicate they serve to increase the number of unattached youth [14].

Inequality among schools in Jamaica is evident by the differences in performance of students. Analysis by the Planning Institute of Jamaica in 2016 showed that the top ten performing schools have an average 94.7% of their students obtaining 5 or more CXC – the basic entry requirement into tertiary education - while the 10 lowest performing schools had just 2.7% meeting this prerequisite [15]. Overall, students attaining at least 5 CXCs only represent 29% of the grade 11 secondary school cohort. The link between poor education and violence is robust. Studies of five volatile communities in Kingston showed that 86% of gang members in these areas had dropped out of school by grade 9 [16].

In 2016, the unemployment rate for the Jamaican population was 13.2% compared to 31.8% among the youth (15-24yrs) [17]. Unemployment disproportionately affects young females in Jamaica of which 37.8% are unemployed while the proportion of unemployed males is 27.0% [17]. These statistics represented a rise in unemployment levels for both male and female youth increasing from the 2010 level.

Mention of “unstable families” in the FGDs were mostly referring to those with absentee fathers. Respondents identified that father absenteeism causes male youth to have to step into a mature role at an early age and become involved in gang violence and criminal activity as a means of providing for or ‘protecting’ their family. Secondly, the absence of fathers placed more responsibility on mothers to support the family, which often resulted in having to place their children in another’s care and/or cause neglect or abuse of the child.

The community environment fosters violence in youth when organized criminal activities are promoted by leaders in those communities. Individuals claimed that once youth reach a certain age, they are coerced into participating in activities to ‘defend’ their areas. Compounding this, the stigma surrounding a community can also push its members into

criminal activity and violence because of job discrimination regarding their place of residence. Where one lives affects the chances of getting employment.

Exposure to violence - especially as a child or youth- has been known to influence people to adopt violence themselves and create a troubling and futile cycle. This is a concerning issue in Jamaica. The 2008 RHS found high levels of family violence in Jamaica such as children witnessing or experiencing parental violence. Prior to age 15, nearly 1 in 5 (18 per cent) Jamaican women witnessed physical abuse between their parents and two-thirds (61 per cent) were physically abused by their parents. Among young men, 14 per cent had witnessed parental violence and 58 per cent were physically abused by their parents [11].

Exposure to Adverse Childhood Experience experiences include; abuse (whether physical, sexual or emotional), neglect or if child grows up in a dysfunctional household where mother is treated violently, where substance abuse, mental illness, parental separation or divorce or incarceration occurs. These children in adult life were more likely to experience increased anxiety (2.4 times as likely), severe obesity (1.9), alcoholism (7.2), illicit drug use (4.5) and to become perpetrator of violence (3.5) [18]. The study found that children and youth who witnessed and experienced parental abuse were factors that correlated with emotional and behavioural problems during childhood, child and adolescent violent behaviour that often led to forming abusive adult relationships [18].

*JR, a 26-year-old male tells his story of how he left behind crime and violence. While a young boy, JR's family moved from an inner city community riddled by violence with incidents of friends killing friends and family feuds. Violence followed his family and indeed started to invade his school and saw his brothers being drawn into gang violence. Guidance from his mother, his older brother, fellow students and the church helped him turn around from the "badman" culture and JR is now a second-year scholarship student at one of Kingston's leading universities."*

## **RESPONSES TO CRIME AND VIOLENCE**

### **Assessment of Youth Mainstreaming and Inclusiveness of National Policy Responses**

Jamaica has comprehensive security and youth policies, though the integration of the two has been limited. The strength of the youth policy is its inclusiveness – given extensive consultations with young people in the formulation phases; while the security policy's strength is its fair attempt to address the concerns of young people and the priority area of intervention.... (see Table 1 below). However, a concerted policy which seeks to systematically incorporate youth involvement in the consultation, implementation and leadership of security and violence prevention efforts is lacking.

**Table 1: Youth Mainstreaming and Inclusiveness of the Jamaica Policy Framework**

POLICY FRAMEWORK	YOUTH MAINSTREAMING IN SECURITY HIGH MODERATE LOW	YOUTH INCLUSIVENESS IN PROCESS	EFFECTIVENESS
<p><b>National Security Policy</b></p>	<p><i>Moderate</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair attempt to ensure youth concerns addressed in terms of perpetration and victimization</li> <li>• Based on review of evidence etc</li> </ul>	<p><i>Unknown</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extent of inclusion of youth in consultation processes uncertain.</li> <li>• Youth leadership in addressing these issues is not prioritized</li> </ul>	<p>To be determined</p>
<p><b>National Youth Policy</b></p>	<p><i>Moderate</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on youth development with limited inclusion of youth security.</li> <li>• Calls for improved education and training, employment, social inclusion and entrepreneurship but no direct reference to addressing youth’s concerns of perpetration and victimization as currently written</li> <li>• Evidence-based</li> </ul>	<p><i>High</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide national and local consultations held with youth</li> </ul>	<p>To be determined</p>

### National Policy Framework

The National Security Policy 2013 document lays out a strategic policy framework for development of Jamaica’s economy. Included in the framework is the need for security safeguards and interventions to protect against threats to the State, concurrent with the programmatic building up of capacity to meet the welfare, safety and survival needs of the population.

*“The vision is to establish a safe and secure environment for the people of Jamaica, so that together we can build a prosperous and progressive society, founded on democracy and liberty, justice and the rule of law, responsibility and respect for human rights and dignity. The highest priority is to reduce the level of crime and violence, and the associated fear and Insecurity”.*

*(National Security Policy 2013, p.8)*

In recognition of the current and near-term situation, NSP2013 identifies an urgent need to disrupt organised criminal gangs that are responsible for the high levels of violence occurring in the country. The document shows that widespread violence occurring in Jamaica has a

negative influence on the growth of the national gross domestic product (GDP). Additionally, this threat reduces the country's ability to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and tourism, which is a major contributor to foreign exchange earnings.

Another dimension to violence is its effects on the public perception of the viability of the state as a place to meet the National Vision of making "Jamaica, the place of choice to live, work, raise families and do business" (Vision 2030 National Development Plan 2009).<sup>3</sup> Of equal concern is how the rule of law can be upheld under the prevailing high crime rate.

The National Security Policy (NSP) was formulated through a consultative process which included civil society and non-governmental organisations that work with young people, but the extent of youth participation in the policy consultations is unknown. What is known, however, is that a sustainable framework for youth participation in the formulation of high-level policy responses to crime and violence has never been attempted in a meaningful way. Even with successive governments having had "youth" being designated as a portfolio responsibility ministers at cabinet level, there is a common misconception that youth, as a cohort, may represent a threat to national security rather than assets and partners in the pursuit of violence reduction, peace and security. Some evidence that supports this observation is the high number of youth who die from criminal violence and police killings. Also, the consistent reporting across focus groups about cases of police violence.

Acknowledging the vulnerability of children and young people in settings of poverty, unstable families, and trauma associated with exposure to violence and victimisation, the NSP recommends that state agencies work closely with school and youth clubs to engage young people in violence prevention programmes and social interventions as part of a priority focus on "at-risk individuals and communities" (p.53). The fact that participants in the focus group discussions for this case study also made this recommendation suggests synergy between the government and non-government priorities; while also suggesting a gap in implementation of the commitments already made in the NSP.

The 2003/4 National Youth Policy was Jamaica's first comprehensive policy on youth. The government is currently developing the revised National Youth Policy 2016-2030 (November 2016)<sup>4</sup>. The legislation is aiming to fill a gap in the current youth policy environment which has a notable absence of specific legislation to streamline youth development as an important component of the national development agenda. The Draft National Youth Policy currently

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<sup>3</sup> A CARICOM Report on the situation of youth in the Caribbean estimated that the cost of youth involvement in crime was 3.21% of GDP based on a composite of direct costs to the government for dealing with 1959 youth 915-24 convicted in 2005 and estimations of the foregone economic/employment earnings and foregone tourism revenue for that year (CARICOM Commission on Youth Development 2010, p. 124).

<sup>4</sup> The Cabinet of Government Ministers approved the Draft Policy in October 2017 paving the way for its submission to the Jamaican Parliament (as a White Paper) for approval. The Draft Policy outlines six priority areas for action as follows: education and training; health and well-being; employment and entrepreneurship; youth participation; social inclusion and reintegration; and institutional and youth sector arrangements.



prioritises “heightened youth mainstreaming and participation in nation building” and “strengthened capacity and partnership in the youth sector”, alongside goals for the “establishment of safe, nurturing and secure environments for youth to thrive”. Its assessment of the youth situation in relation to crime and violence draws heavily on the assessment made in the NSP in relation to youth gangs, for example; but also identifies a risk-reduction orientation which recommends approaches to address the socio-economic conditions of young people’s living conditions, including their exposure to violence and experience of abuse. The NYP focus on mainstreaming, participation and partnership, holds great potential for the advancement of a holistic and preventative approach to peace and security. In the current draft, it is unclear what specific frameworks will be developed to heighten youth participation in nation building and to strengthen partnership with the youth sector in regards to national security matters. However, the institutional mechanisms will require capacity-building for integrated programming – which has been a longstanding challenge in the Jamaican political and administrative context.

### **Assessment of Youth Mainstreaming and Inclusiveness of Government Institutions and Programmes**

As outlined above, most of the institutions, programmes, projects and initiatives which have emerged in Jamaica to address issues of crime and violence are not youth-led, although some initiatives may include young people at different stages of the programme cycle. Government agencies are considered the lead implementers of Security policy and programmes with special focus on the role for the Jamaica Constabulary and Defence Forces and the arms of the national justice system. However, civil society is identified as a potential partner to provide advisory and monitoring support through structured mechanisms at local government and community levels. Table # below outlines a summary of key institutions and programmes seeking to respond to crime and violence and an assessment of the extent to which young people are included and their concerns and needs are mainstreamed within the initiative.

There are few institutional mechanisms which have emerged at the national level to guide national responses to crime and violence. The mechanisms in place move the country towards the objective of promoting greater multi-sectoral collaboration (Inter-Ministerial Committee) but still fall short of engaging citizens, particularly young people at the local community level to support them in violence prevention, conflict resolution and peace building initiatives. The membership composition of many of these mechanisms remains elitist and are either exclusionary to youth or is discouraging of youth deliberation on matters of national security. Popular knowledge among youth of these mechanisms is likely to be low, while parallel and unrecognised community and non-governmental efforts continue to promote peace.

While Jamaica has an impressive list of national youth representative organisations which are organized and supported by the Government (Advisory Council, Youth Parliament, National Youth Council and Parish Councils, Secondary Students Council and Ambassadors Programme), the engagement of those groups with security issues is limited. For example, considering the priority accorded by Jamaican youth to the crime and violence situation (their

frustration and concern with high levels of violence), it is surprising that the first National Youth Parliament excluded a discussion of these issues which remains a priority for discussion in the national parliament.

All the FGDs highlighted the value of youth clubs at community level in promoting community cohesion and social integration. Youth across the FGDs spoke of the value of sporting, recreational activities and other community engagement activities in playing a role in youth violence prevention by promoting a sense of unity and togetherness. These youth clubs can play a role in the organization of community activities to attract and streamline youth. In the past youth clubs have not been recognized as direct contributors to the national security response. They therefore receive limited or no financial or technical support. The intention to create a national youth club movement presents an opportunity to build on unrecognized community work (led by young people) and integrate them with formalized activity/responses at the national level. They are currently being rebranded as a crime-fighting strategy where youth can be engaged in community development projects. Youth called for training to build their capacity in organizational structuring, fundraising, bookkeeping and leadership. In other words, they want the assistance to set-up the framework so that it can function effectively and finance their ideas.

Relative to other Caribbean nations, Jamaica has a very vibrant youth sector and robust set of youth leaders but we need to harness the potential and vision and passion in these young people as it relates to peace and security and ensure they are being included meaningfully and beyond tokenism lest they become disenchanting.

**Table 2: Youth Mainstreaming and Inclusiveness of National Jamaican Institutions and Programmes**

INSTITUTION or PROGRAMME	YOUTH MAINSTREAMING IN SECURITY	YOUTH INCLUSIVENESS IN PROCESS	EFFECTIVENESS
<b>GOVERNMENT</b>			
Inter-Ministerial Security Committee	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aims to coordinate security initiatives between multiple government ministries, departments and agencies.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth not engaged on a routine basis at the national level.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>To be determined</b></p>
National Safe Schools Programme – Ministry of Education	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Moderate-High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aims to reduce criminal and anti-social behaviours in youth through fostering positive behaviour in secondary and primary schools using specially trained members of the Jamaica Constabulary Force</li> <li>School-wide Positive Behaviour in Schools (SWPBIS).</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Moderate-Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth are not represented in leadership positions but are included in the administration and Student Council</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SWPBIS was reported to see improvements in attendance, behaviour, frequency of fights and academic achievement [19].</li> <li>Currently in 56 pilot schools.</li> </ul>

INSTITUTION or PROGRAMME	YOUTH MAINSTREAMING IN SECURITY	YOUTH INCLUSIVENESS IN PROCESS	EFFECTIVENESS
Community Renewal Programme	<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broad programme which operates in high risk communities. It does include a focus on youth development and crime and violence reduction.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth are not represented on steering committees or given distinct positions for inclusion</li> </ul>	<p><b>To be determined</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing activity reports available.</li> </ul>
Citizen Security and Justice Programme	<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Aims to prevent violence in high risk communities through social interventions, socio-economic opportunities for youth and community development</li> <li>Engagement of high-risk youth</li> </ul>	<p><b>Moderate-Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth are not represented in leadership positions but are included in the administration</li> </ul>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation reports have shown reduction in crime and violence in intervention communities versus non-intervention communities</li> </ul>
Youth Information Centres	<p><b>Moderate-Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth-friendly spaces to 10-24 yr olds to access information on health, counselling, training and education. There is no specific emphasis on violence. Recent restructuring will focus on using YICs to promote entrepreneurship.</li> </ul>	<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth are involved in leadership positions as Youth Empowerment Officers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential is not fully actualized</li> <li>All parishes except St. Thomas and Kingston have centres</li> <li>YICs can be strengthened as a venue for trainings or meetings</li> <li>Limited funding for intervention programs</li> <li>Greater leverage with National Youth Service and to be developed with HEART/NTA training institute.</li> </ul>
National Parenting Support Commission (NPSC)	<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indirectly relates to youth violence through targeting young parents</li> </ul>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A youth representative is on NPSC board</li> </ul>	<p>Regular reports available but no external evaluation</p>
HEART	<p><b>Moderate-High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indirectly relates to youth violence through enrolling students with low qualifications in skills training.</li> <li>Extensive reach to youth, particularly high-risk youth due to their merger with Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning and the National Youth Corps</li> </ul>	<p><b>Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth are not represented on the board</li> </ul>	<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extensive island wide outreach</li> <li>Special emphasis on engagement of high-risk youth</li> <li>Locally and internationally recognized</li> <li>Recently implemented the Labour Market Information Portal</li> </ul>

INSTITUTION or PROGRAMME	YOUTH MAINSTREAMING IN SECURITY	YOUTH INCLUSIVENESS IN PROCESS	EFFECTIVENESS
H.O.P.E. Programme	<p><b>Moderate-High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High prioritization of addressing needs of youth in regards to employment, though not directly focused on youth security issues</li> <li>• Targeting unattached youth between 18 to 24 years</li> <li>• Evidence-based</li> </ul>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth are not specifically included in the administration but play a role as mentors</li> </ul>	<p><b>To be determined</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recently implemented</li> </ul>
<b>YOUTH-LED (GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE)</b>			
National Youth Advisory Committee (NYAC)	<p><b>Moderate-Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYAC places emphasis on youth development and programming of which the issue of violence has not been put at a high priority for the NYAC to work on.</li> <li>• NYAC represents the youth opinion in decision-making, programme implementation and oversight in the government.</li> </ul>	<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All participants are under youth.</li> </ul>	<p><b>To be determined</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recently implemented</li> </ul>
National Youth Parliament (NYP)	<p><b>Moderate-Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence was not explicitly selected as one of the discussion topics for the current youth parliament</li> <li>• The youth addressed some push factors for violence such as youth unemployment and lack of psychosocial care.</li> <li>• This is currently being restructured to allow one year training of youth followed by development of an advocacy platform of their recommendations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All youth parliamentarians are between the ages of 15 -24.</li> <li>• Led by the NYAC which is entirely comprised of youth.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Moderate-Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recently restructured</li> <li>• NYP has been restructured recently to include more training Efficacy is to be determined.</li> <li>• Prior constraints of NYP included limited training, limited time given to prepare and present topics and that no response was obligated from relevant authorities on youth recommendations [20], [21]</li> </ul>
National Secondary Students Council (NSSC)	<p><b>Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main aim of NSSC is for youth to advocate to ensure the rights of students are upheld at school</li> </ul>	<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The president, executive and secretariat are all composed of youth.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Moderate-Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive members hold positions on the board of several educational oversight bodies however they are not typically included in any security bodies [22].</li> </ul>

INSTITUTION or PROGRAMME	YOUTH MAINSTREAMING IN SECURITY	YOUTH INCLUSIVENESS IN PROCESS	EFFECTIVENESS
National Youth Club Movement	<p><b>High-Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth clubs have recently been rebranded as a crime-fighting strategy where youth can be engaged in community development projects.</li> </ul>	<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership are usually youth</li> </ul>	<p><b>To be determined</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact of recent efforts to revitalize will need to be assessed</li> </ul>
Jamaica Youth Ambassadors (JYA)	<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some youth ambassadors have chosen topics of violence as their issue of concern.</li> <li>Youth chose their own topics of concern. Youth are not typically engaged to consult on security matters.</li> </ul>	<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All participants are youth except program manager.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth are consulted in youth-based legislative and programming decision making</li> <li>Constraints include that youth are not consistently primary consultants, insufficient time is given for them to review and canvas the opinion of young people and there are limited resources to implement projects [20].</li> </ul>

### Assessment of Youth Mainstreaming and Inclusiveness in Civil Society or Private Sector-led Initiatives

Civil society organisations have strong connections to communities and youth organisations and tend to have more inclusive approaches to programming which has led to significantly positive outcomes in relation to youth resilience, peace building etc and community cohesion. The most prominent/ well-known (see Table # below) have significant youth involvement but are not youth-led.

The Jamaican NGO Community continues their efforts to promote peace and has provided a specialised programme to at-risk and high-risk youth. This report highlights below evidence-informed programmes that address the problem including the Peace Management Initiative, Children’s First, Sistren, Child Resiliency Programme (CRP), Kingston Young Men Christian Association (KYMCA), RISE Life Management, Dispute Resolution Foundation (DRF). The interventions of these initiatives have been effective because of their effective targeting of youth, particularly high risk youth and their relatively higher inclusion of youth in the process and leadership. The innovation in their approach is through their use of alternative methods of engagement: Children First through music and dance; Sistren

Edutainment through its use of theatre and the Peace Management initiative through its use of sporting competitions and other community engagement activities.

Key components of these types of programmes include: 1) **Blue-Green therapy** which involves outdoor activities in green or blue water; 2) **Life skills** which enables adolescents to set goals, handle differences, manage conflict and build self esteem; 3) **Academic achievement** which builds self esteem, 4) **Nutrition**; 5) **Counselling** for treatment of Post Traumatic stress, management of fear, anxieties, insecurity; and 6) **Enhanced Mindfulness** [23].

The call for such types of alternative methods of engaging youth to improve the efficacy and reach of interventions was heard loudly from the Jamaican youth in the FGDs.

**Table 3: Youth Mainstreaming and Inclusiveness in Civil Society or Private Sector-led Initiatives**

INSTITUTION/PROGRAMME	YOUTH MAINSTREAMING IN SECURITY	YOUTH INCLUSIVENESS IN PROCESS	EFFECTIVENESS
Children First	<b>High</b> Emphasis is placed on protecting youth from violence by offering social and educational programmes for at-risk 10 to 24 years old.	<b>High</b> Youth participate in board decisions and largely comprise the Children First's edutainment team- the "Bashy Bus Kru"	<b>High</b> Internationally and locally recognized as an effective programme [24]
Sistren Edutainment	<b>High</b> Targets at-risk youths through discussions, creative arts and psychosocial services	<b>High</b> Youth are represented in leadership roles	<b>High</b> 'Groots International' reports some success in confronting domestic and sexual violence [2]
Child Resiliency Programme	<b>High</b> Aims to prevent children from engaging in violence by using a preventative holistic approach for 8-12 year old.	<b>Moderate</b> Youth representation on the board is small but present	<b>High</b> Evaluations showed reduced aggression and fighting, improved literacy and increased resilient attitudes in children [25]
Kingston Young Men's Christian Association (KYMCA)	<b>Moderate</b> Aims to promote the welfare of young people through spiritual, social, intellectual, and physical activities. Not directly focused on youth security.	<b>High</b> Youth do serve meaningfully in leadership roles. Youth are front and centre in providing input into the programme components.	<b>High</b> Significant reduction in aggressive propensity and aggressive behaviour even several years after programme completion [26].
Rise Life Management	<b>High</b> Hosts engagement activities and other programming for youth to improve social inclusion and assists youth to set up community based organizations	<b>High</b> Youth are trained as youth development officers to teach healthy lifestyle education to their peers. Not significant youth on board.	<b>Moderate High</b> Reported to have made a significant difference in violence reduction in participants reach. Limited geographic reach [27]

INSTITUTION/PROGRAMME	YOUTH MAINSTREAMING IN SECURITY	YOUTH INCLUSIVENESS IN PROCESS	EFFECTIVENESS
Dispute Resolution Foundation (DRF)	<p><b>High</b></p> <p>Aims to advocate, train, and deliver services for violence prevention through conflict resolution</p> <p>Has an outreach, youth and community services division</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <p>Youth do not hold leadership positions but are included in the management of the programme.</p>	<p>Widespread reach and community involvement</p> <p>Arbitration skills well recognized [28]</p>
Peace Management Initiative	<p><b>Very High</b></p> <p>-Extensive focus on reducing violence against youth and youth perpetration</p> <p>Effective engagement of high-risk youth</p>	<p><b>High</b></p> <p>Significant participation of local youth as ‘violence interrupters’</p>	<p><b>Very High</b></p> <p>Reported to have significant sustained effect on reducing homicidal violence in high risk communities [16].</p>
Youth Upliftment through Employment (YUTE)	<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <p>While not directly targeting violence among youth, YUTE aim to tackle crime by improving employment opportunities for young men and women aged 16 to 29 years.</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <p>Youth are not represented on the board however there is a youth council which serves to carry out community projects for YUTE</p>	<p><b>To be determined</b></p>
Digicel Foundation	<p><b>High</b></p> <p>The foundation directly and indirectly addresses crime and violence prevention through initiatives targeting at-risk youths, youth entrepreneurship programmes, and construction of recreational and sports facilities</p>	<p><b>Low</b></p> <p>High media visibility and involvement in community sports</p> <p>Grass root football</p>	<p>Widespread reach through partnership</p> <p>The long-term impact yet to be determined [29]</p>

### **A NOTE ON THE PEACE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE (PMI): A CASE FOR MEANINGFUL COLLABORATION WITH YOUTH**

The PMI originally based in Kingston was established by the Government in 2002 with a mandate to mitigate and diffuse community violence. The PMI was established with bipartisan participation chaired by a prominent church leader, has academic involvement, participation of community police which engendered wide scale community support. The Government expanded its reach from 15 communities in one parish to 30 communities in four parishes to intervene in emerging conflicts in a wider range of communities but has not been

provided with the staffing and financial resources required. The PMI organization<sup>5</sup> which is a unique combination of government funding and civil society support is charged with the responsibility to head off and reduce community violence. The PMI has a well published, four-pronged strategy to reducing violent crime in a community. These are as follows:

1. Mediation and dispute resolution
2. Counselling and therapy for people affected by violence
3. Mainstreaming unattached youth
4. Involving the wider community in building a culture of peace. (Levy 2012)

Many of the young people targeted by PMI are young men involved in multiple and repeated killings and its impact on the culture of violence in these marginalized communities is not significantly understood and is evolving quickly as younger and less conscious youth assume leadership of these gangs [30]. A number of other developments such as lottery scamming have also impacted greatly on violence in especially Western Jamaica where young men have been able to acquire fire arms at an alarming rate. Many rural communities in the West 15 years ago had few gun related conflicts. Today the proceeds of lottery scamming have catapulted 18 to 20 year olds to head of households and families as they become the main breadwinners [30].

This scenario has disrupted family and community life as principles and core values have been dethroned by the proceeds and the excesses of scamming which has spread across Western and Central Jamaica. Every area where scamming has taken root has experienced serious episodes of gun and gang violence. The resilience of communities and the ability of young people to resist becoming recruited into this lifestyle are of national concern. Unlike traditional gang recruitment, scamming also attracts young women and the criminalization of entire families getting involved in this activity has further eroded families. This the context and current environment in which the Peace Management Initiative (PMI) operates. The challenges of improving youth security are enormous and always evolving the solutions have to be innovative, flexible and sustainable.

PMI's programmes are largely aimed at stabilizing communities by supporting and sustaining ceasefire initiatives, deepening the integration in once polarized communities through sports and other community engagement activities, implementing counselling and therapy programmes to heal the pain of losing family members and providing young men involved in gang activity with immediate opportunities to change their lifestyle. This is encouraged through participation in our behaviour change, life skills workshops, residential retreats, educational assistance and income generating programmes. The PMI liaison officers are now known as Violence Interrupters who work at the community level to intervene in community conflicts. PMI has developed a process of working with key persons of influence in the

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<sup>5</sup> There is however another arm of the PMI in St James and Westmoreland, PMI West but that body operates independently



communities who show the potential to change. This programme has recorded a sustained fall in homicide rates in the target communities. The risk level of youth reached is very high.

### **PMI's Peace Building Formula**

After years of work by the PMI, the Kingston communities of Mountain View and August Town both achieved zero homicides in 2016. These communities were once two of the most volatile areas across the Kingston Metropolitan Area. Here, we document the PMI's peace building formula in these communities and the important role which youth played.

#### **1. Sustained Peace Building Work by the Peace Management Initiative**

The PMI has worked extensively in these two areas where a counter culture of peace building was engendered, taken root and adopted by both communities. A sustained, long-term effort was essential to reaping the results attained. The core components include the use of residential therapeutic workshops and sports. PMI uses unorthodox football leagues requiring communities in conflict to come together, form a team and play against other such teams. The objectives of the games are to teach young men how to become problem solvers to encourage self-belief and pride in these young men, teaching young men how to solve conflicts and express themselves teach young men how to build better relationships. This approach was much more difficult than asking one rival community to play against another.

#### **2. Establishment of Peace Councils**

The PMI worked with the communities to establish a Peace Council in Mountain View in 2003 and one in August Town in 2008. Both communities located in the Kingston Metropolitan area had multiple districts of varying political and alliances in conflict with each other. The Peace Councils changed the landscape in both communities and cross district conflicts became less frequent leaving only internal district conflicts continued to plague the communities. These internal district conflicts were easier to manage and allowed peace building and law enforcement actors to target them in a sustainable way.

#### **3. Youth as Community Champions**

Importantly, PMI communities have several 'violence interrupters', often these are reformed youth, who work on the ground with community members to resolve conflicts and maintain the peace. The approximately 125 violence interrupters (VI) island wide undergo training in conflict management, mediation and behavioural change among other interventions. The PMI provided these Champions with the platform to mobilise the community to break the cycle of violence.

Collaborating with youth groups has also been an integral part of PMI's work. In Mountain View, T3M, a recording studio, is just one of several organisations collaborating with the PMI [31]. It is operated by youths who see their music as both a profession and a vehicle for change within the community [31]. These youths act as positive role models for younger persons and help to engender a culture of peace and positivity [31].

#### 4. Stakeholder Support

It was important in both communities to have local and external stakeholders with interest and responsibility for the communities to support the peace process. Keeping the peace is harder than making it and part of the work provides the opportunity for residents to be empowered. This is the role which the University of the West Indies played for August Town through their Township programme and Excelsior through their Community Empowerment Programme. The CSJP also provided extensive social investment and training support for hundreds of persons in both communities. The Minister's fraternal organized to also meet the social and psychological needs of residents in both communities.

#### 5. Political Maturity

Both areas were previously beset by extreme levels of political violence. The work of political leaders and the maturity they exhibited in seeking to change the culture of political violence in both Mountain View and August Town was very important.

#### 6. Army of Peace Builders

The PMI and other organizations such as the Dispute Resolution Foundation invested significant amount of time and energy in training and empowering an army of community peace builders who were spread across both communities.

The PMI understands the complex and evolving nature of violence in Jamaica on a community standpoint. PMI believes that the challenges of improving youth security are enormous and that the solutions have to be innovative, flexible and sustainable [30].

### YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES: ASSESSMENT OF THEIR INCLUSIVENESS AND EFFECTIVENESS

**Table 4: Youth-led Initiatives - Assessment of their Inclusiveness and Effectiveness**

INSTITUTION/PROGRAMME	YOUTH MAINSTREAMING IN SECURITY	YOUTH INCLUSIVENESS IN PROCESS	EFFECTIVENESS
Life Yard	<i>High</i> Community-based organization which aims to create changes in the community of Parade Gardens through art, craft making, agriculture and academics.	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i> Fleet Street, where Life Yaad is located, has seen a significant reduction in crime and violence which has been largely attributed to their activities.
Inner-city Development Youth Association (IDYA)	<i>High</i> Community-based initiative which hosts several community engagement activities including track and field.	<i>High</i>	<i>Moderate</i> This foundation operates on a small scale but has been successful in attracting and engaging at-risk youth in regular activity.

INSTITUTION/PROGRAMME	YOUTH MAINSTREAMING IN SECURITY	YOUTH INCLUSIVENESS IN PROCESS	EFFECTIVENESS
Rose Heights Youth Club	<p><i>High</i></p> <p>Community based youth group which runs a youth marching band striving to promote peace and togetherness in the community.</p>	<p><i>High</i></p>	<p><i>High-Moderate</i></p> <p>This youth club has been effective at engaging high-risk youth in the creative arts and sports.</p>

The youth-led initiatives analyzed in this case study are amongst those which could be identified as having some objective related to addressing risk factors for youth involvement in crime and violence and building youth resilience.

These initiatives are able to engage the youth, offer non-traditional approaches using arts, media, music and other self-expression methodologies that amplify youth voice and advocacy for peace and cohesion. These types of methodologies were well advocated for by the youth in the FGDs. They emphasized the value and effectiveness of these alternative methods. One example was intervention through music which allowed youth access to recording studios to record uplifting content. A FGD participant offered, “the thick book that existed 20 years ago cannot solve the problems of today because it is our people that are causing the problems ... if I’m going to help you to fix it, you have to listen to me ... yes, you do it with guidance because we (youth) tend to be exuberant but do not take us and say let’s talk about it and the implementation gets warped into something else”.

The activities undertaken by these youth-led initiatives are community based – engaging young people and adults in activities – rather than strictly targeting “problem” youth as is customary in the government-led and sometime civil society-led initiatives. In the FGD’s youth expressed a number of creative ways that they could contribute to violence prevention. Holding community engagement activities to improve community cohesion and unity was the most frequent response. Youth believed this method was effective, “*in my community, the youth groups actually bring back the community together, sports a supmn weh [is something which] draw the community completely together*”. Yet, they acknowledged, “*we cyah [cannot] do it on our own, remember the whole a we [of us] are youth, most a we [us] are unemployed*”.

Short video documentaries were made to capture the aforementioned youth-led organizations and their contributions to peace and security in Jamaica. Their contributions are described below in brief:

1. **Life Yard** is the first income-generating eco-village in the city of Kingston, Jamaica. The youth-led social enterprise and community based organization situated on Fleet Street in downtown Kingston is creating changes in the community of Parade Gardens through art, craft making, agriculture and academics. In collaboration with Paint Jamaica, Life Yaad has beautified the surroundings on Fleet Street with art murals to

form what is now one of the largest art spaces in the Caribbean. As a result of their activities, the once marginalized and violent community has become transformed into one of the most crime and violence-free in downtown Kingston.

2. **Inner-city Development Youth Association (IDYA)** – Kevaughn Ellis is an active member of Jamaica’s ‘Talk Up You’, an organization which works to develop, support and highlight programmes that encourages adolescent development and participation. As a youth from Allman Town in downtown Kingston, Kevaughn Ellis began his own youth-led charity called the IDYA which hosts several activities geared towards community cohesion in and around his community. His initiative ‘Track On Streets’ is a back-to-school sports day on a main street in Allman Town where all children who participate are given back-to-school materials and scholarship opportunities. Funded by youth from the community and local businesses, the small community-based initiative has supported several underprivileged youths to attend school through the provision of scholarships.
  
3. **The Heights Youth Club** was born in July 2005 out of several of the crime-stricken and volatile communities in Montego Bay, Jamaica: Rose Heights, Capital Heights, Green Pond and Norwood along with other surrounding communities. The Youth Club has a very active youth marching band striving to promote peace and togetherness in the community. They are given the opportunity to learn music which is shared with the public at civic ceremonies, hotels and other venues across the island and internationally. By engaging youth and providing them with opportunities to band together the Height’s Youth Club marching band has helped to reduce the level of juvenile delinquency in and around these communities by instilling positive value and discipline as well as by providing a safe place for youth to thrive.

Youth-led initiatives are generally low profile in Jamaica and are rarely associated with formal crime and violence responses. Informality is the hallmark of youth-led initiatives which makes them difficult to quantify and identify. For example, our last case study focuses on one young woman who shared story of how she translated support from her own family into an informal mentorship of young girls in her community.

*Natalie Williams of the Middleton District in St. Andrew, Jamaica shares the story of how the protective role of her uncles has caused her to now serve an informal protective role of other children in her community, keeping them away from crime, violence and abuse. Natalie shares the issues of sexual harassment, abuse and rape of young girls in her community. The issue of fatherlessness compounded this problem, leaving many young children without a protective father figure and this is where Natalie’s uncles took on paternal role for her and other young girls in her community. Natalie, herself has now taken on a similar informal protective role for young girls in her community.*

## **Efficacy of Existing Interventions**

Respondents in the FGDs identified that the creation of skills training programmes, parental guidance programmes, employment opportunities, good education, peer mentorship and social interventions, were effective in streamlining youth away from crime and violence by creating alternative paths.

Respondents across FGDs identified ‘government intervention’ and ‘police intervention’ as mostly ineffective. In St. Ann, a participant said government interventions were ineffective because heads of government were seen not to truly care about the people of the communities, but rather themselves and that of their families. Several participants agreed, saying that they have heard promises of employment and opportunities for the community, all to no end, or real change.

It was understood from the discussions that the term ‘government’ in the focus groups was used to describe the work of politicians in their communities rather than the work of governmental agencies. Indeed, there was a lack of awareness from youth of the presence of several governmental social development agencies operating in their communities such as the Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP) and Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF).

Similarly, police intervention and the justice system were perceived to be ineffective methods for violence reduction and protection of community residents. Respondents shared the negative stigma which they perceive police attach to youth in the poorer communities. “Dealing with youth in inner cities, there is a presumption that everyone is a criminal, so some police hesitate to help. If threatened community members feel they cannot turn to police”. Other respondents recounted incidents of persons giving information to the police and this information not being kept confidential. The lack of faith in police and the justice system has led to the creation of ‘jungle justice’ - an informal system of punishment for acts of wrongdoing carried out by community members themselves, often using violence as a solution.

## YOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Support and Strengthen Youth-led Community Engagement Activities

**Capacity building and maintenance of youth clubs:** Particularly in violence prone communities, youth clubs will be responsible for the organization of community activities which will attract and streamline youth. It was put forward that government should provide training to build the youth's capacity in organizational management and funding. The current challenges for youth in this regard include lack of sustained funding, local authority support and difficulty acquiring permits for their activities.

### 2. Increase Collaboration with Youth

**Consult and include youth in the implementation of violence prevention projects:** Government and civil society were called to not only consult with youth more but to actively involve youth in the implementation of projects. Youth felt strongly that the use of therapeutic interventions and self-expression methodologies such as through the use of the arts media, music were essential to interrupt violence and streamline youth.

**Increase political support and collaboration with local youth-led activities:** It was put forward that local authorities should be active, on-the-ground resource persons, working more closely with the youth collaboratively to target and reduce violence and support their activities.

### 3. Design intervention programming according to the needs of youth

**Prioritize youth development and training interventions as a strategy for violence prevention.** Youth called for the following types of interventions to combat violence:

- Technical/Skills Training
- Job Opportunities
- Therapeutic interventions
- Youth empowerment - The group remarked that while Jamaican youth have the capacity and potential, there are limited options for their development.
- Mentorship Programs
- Entrepreneurial capacity building opportunities

### 4. Increase availability to funding for violence prevention projects

**Increase Ease and Opportunities for Funding of Violence Prevention Projects:**

The youth recommended greater ease to access funding and to have more funding opportunities for their projects geared towards violence prevention and youth development interventions.

**5. Raise awareness of Issues of Youth Violence**

*Using Public Education to raise awareness of youth violence issues:* Youth recommended that more discourse and focus on the issues facing youth is required in order to engender action. The youth believed that more advocacy is needed by political authorities to create more exposure and response regarding the issues they face.

***A Note To Media From The Youth***

***(a) Increase opportunities for the youth voice to be heard on a national scale***

***(b) Report a more balanced view of marginalized communities***

*Across all focus groups, there was a call for balanced reporting on the poorer and more stigmatized communities. Participants agreed that the media only focuses on their community for negative reasons- typically because of crime and violence- and they believe the media should also cover positive news to highlight the good things that are happening in the community.*

***(c) Hold government accountable for their promises***

## **WAY FORWARD**

### **VIOLENCE MITIGATION**

Violence is an extreme behaviour that an individual, or group of individuals engage in to do physical harm, cause fear and intimidation of another individual, or individuals. The youth cohort can benefit from mitigation efforts in homes, schools and communities. Youth across communities in Jamaica are offering ways to heal and to save lives and limbs through offering their views on how they can help and be helped to contribute to their communities.

### **SERIOUSNESS OF THE VIOLENCE PROBLEM**

According to UNICEF's 2015 Under-5 Mortality Rate (U5MR) measure, a critical indicator of the wellbeing of children, Jamaica had an average of 16 deaths per 1,000 infants that derives from natural causes, nutritional deficiencies, accidents, among others [6]. The data also showed that in 1990, infant mortality rate stood at 31 per 1,000 births in the infant age group of 0-4 years, but was almost reduced to half its frequency by 2015, which is a significant improvement [6].

### **PROACTIVE MITIGATION**

The information set out below captures, among others, the reasons why some of the untapped potential of our youth to serve as assets and partners in the pursuit of peace and security in their communities are being wasted.

In examining the potential of youth to involve themselves as effective change partners in peace and security in their communities, the case study seeks to:

- Offer a positive lens on youth contributions to youth peace and security, highlighting best practices from Jamaica (while acknowledging areas for strengthening).
- Use focus groups to highlight various experiences which help to explain features of the threats and challenges:
- Outline the ways in which evidence of youth-lead initiatives can contribute to peace in inner-city communities affected by violence [e.g., Case of Life Yard and Paint Jamaica].
- Identify which are known to be the best youth-inclusive processes that engage children (Children's First), rural communities, as well as offer mediation training [DRF], and peace management, using comprehensive and tested approaches.



- Review in what ways intersectoral/multi-stakeholder partnerships have worked and have proven effective.

Additionally, a significant consideration was to assess the effectiveness of state-led initiatives in attracting young people, particularly in sport, such as football, activities of uniformed groups and youth clubs. At more formal policy level activities, such as the Inter-Ministerial Security Committee and youth parliament, to name two such consultative and deliberative bodies, note has been made that sometimes youth are absent from security settings. Or the reverse occurs in which security and peace building is absent from youth-led settings

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## **ANNEXES**

Annex I: Focus Group Report

Annex II: Description of National Jamaican Institutions and Programmes

Annex III: List of Civil Society or Private Sector-led Initiatives

## **ANNEX I: FOCUS GROUP REPORT**

### **FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION: ROLE OF YOUTH IN PEACE AND SECURITY**

The 36 males and 21 females who participated in the four Focus Groups showed determination to change the status quo by offering concrete advice on how to reduce violence and other threats within their communities. They identified ways and means for direct action to help change behaviours, reduce tensions and introduce safeguards that could facilitate sustainable community development.

The Focus Group discussions were held in four parishes across the island: Kingston, St. James, St. Ann, and Clarendon in that order. These parishes were selected to allow for a diverse group of focus group participants to be gathered.

#### **Kingston Focus Group**

The Kingston participants were mobilized by Andre Marriott-Blake, CARICOM's Jamaican Youth Ambassador and met on 5 September 2017. Participants comprised 12 females and 8 males, who were between the ages of 21 and 29. They represented several different communities and were made up of university students and young professionals working in the private and public sectors. The group also included a participant from the deaf community, who was provided with an interpreter.

#### **St. James Focus Group**

The St. James participants were mobilized by Dr. Ashburn Pinnock, former principal of Sam Sharpe Teachers' College and met on 8 September 2017. Participants comprised 10 males and 4 females, between the ages of 17-29 years old, who met in Montego Bay. Representatives were from communities in Granville, Lilliput, Grange Pen, Flankers, Farm Heights, and St Ann's Bay. Of the 10 males, 5 were unattached and 5 were tertiary students. Of the females 1 was unattached, and 3 were tertiary students.

#### **St. Ann Focus Group**

The St. Ann participants were mobilized by Dr. Sidney McGill, a family therapist and Yvonne Small, a community leader. Participants comprised 1 female, mother-to-be and 10 males between the ages of 18 and 28, who met at Runaway Bay on September 16, 2017. One at-risk, unattached youth was among the group.

#### **Clarendon Focus Group**

The Clarendon participants were mobilized by 3 Violence Interrupters who worked for the Peace Management Initiative (PMI). Participants, who comprised 4 females, including one young mother and 8 males, were between the ages of 18 and 28, met in Canaan Heights on September 25, 2017. One at-risk, unattached youth was among the group.

All participants were also advised of confidentiality protocols, and it was agreed that individual speakers would be not be identified by name.

#### Threats to Youth

1. The Focus Groups (FGs) independently identified “gun violence” as one of the three forms of violence that impacted negatively on youth in the past five years. The most prominent one being, “*gun violence*”. Three of the four focus groups listed gun violence as the first form of violence in their discussions.
2. All FGs identified rape as a form of violence as negatively impacting youth in the past five years.
3. All FGs identified police-directed violence as negatively impacting youth in the past five years.
4. The Kingston FG was alone in identifying cyber bullying, gender-based violence, domestic violence and suicide, as being most prevalent forms of violence within their age group. They also identified the most prevalent forms of violent crime affecting them to be robbery.
5. The Clarendon and Kingston FGs focus groups also identified robbery as being of concern.
6. Kidnapping was also viewed as a threat in Clarendon and St. James by their respective FGs.
7. Additionally, there was unanimity from the FGs that “gun violence” was understood to mean any gun-related violence that resulted in homicides and shootings.
8. The St. Ann FG also stated that gun violence also overlapped with “gang violence”. Speakers mentioned that the causes of gun violence were related to gang warfare over turf, or leadership, as well as community infighting.
9. In St James, the FG associated gun violence as being linked to lottery scamming, due to the parish being the hub for this type of advance-fee fraud. Such killings were believed to be reprisals among participants in lottery scamming groups. Income from scams that participants perceived were not shared fairly, or other forms of injustices, have triggered internecine killings.
10. The other FGs also identified reprisal killings as prevalent within the areas they were responsible for. For example:
  - A Kingston respondent stated that many youth and children were susceptible to this form of violence by being associated with individuals who were being targeted by violence producers in the community. Killing indirect participants is seen as a form of revenge, particularly when it is easier to get to an associate of the target.

- In connection with “police violence”, which FG contributors deemed as prevalent, this behaviour has created fear and distrust among youth of the police. Besides being violent towards youth, police were said to be generally disrespectful and seen as bullies. Speakers shared examples of police being particularly disrespectful to youth from lower socioeconomic class, as compared to other segments of society. Many personal anecdotes were shared about youth bruising encounters with police-directed violence. A quote shared stated: “*You don’t trust gunmen because of what you’ve seen them do. And you don’t trust the police because of what police do to people within the community and to you*”.
- A consequence of the general distrust youth hold for the police reflects the prevailing standards in the community. Persons are reluctant to come forward as a witness, or to report crimes due to the perceived threat to his/her life, or that of family members. This pathology is so engrained in communities and households across the country that it serves to facilitate incidents of violence, as well as facilitates the already tense relationship between security forces and citizens.
- A St. Ann youth stated that he was fearful to give information to the police because, eventually, the police will have to release the suspect back into the community. He expected that that person would come back to him about what he had told the police. He concluded that the best course of action would be to see and hear nothing as a means of self-preservation.

## **Stress and Fear**

1. When asked about the effect of all these forms of violence on youth, participants from St. Ann, Clarendon and St. James, referred to the stress and fear which it instils in youth. Participants explained that violence made them afraid to travel late at night, or go to school.
2. Respondents elaborated that violence causes them to feel mentally strained and hopelessness about life. They also explained the crippling effect violence has on their mental health and a keen awareness of its consequence on themselves and their peers.
3. The Kingston FG did not mention fear and stress, likely not due to less exposure to violence in Kingston, but rather because the participants in this group comprised low-risk, attached youth who were either young professionals or tertiary students. While they are almost certainly impacted by fear, their fear is likely not as profound as the at-risk youth who are more intimately exposed to the violence.
4. Across the FGs, the participants felt that males were said to be more likely to fear death while females especially feared rape, or kidnapping.
5. The St. James FG mentioned that substance abuse was used as a coping mechanism by many youth, including drinking alcohol, or smoking to manage the stress.

## Youth Perpetuating Violence

1. All FGs spoke about the violence in society perpetuating more violence. Exposure to violence acts as an inducement for youth to become perpetrators of violence themselves. One quotation stated: “*We have a generation of youth now who are a lot more violent and aggressive than previous years ... because of the types of violence they have been exposed to ... [including] beatings and neglect*”.
2. Participants showed agreement that exposure to violence made youth want to commit violent acts. Several participants observed that, compared to older generations, young people have become numb to violence. They have come to view it as normal, making it more difficult to take action until the violence gets close to home or more heinous.

## Circumstances Pushing Youth to Crime and Violence

1. When asked what combination of circumstances pushes young people to turn to violence, the most common answers across the groups pointed to unemployment and unstable families.
2. Youth also identified the ‘attraction to the fast life’ and a negative community environment as significant contributors to crime and violence.
3. Unemployment was raised in every focus group, except for the young professionals from the Kingston focus group. The Kingston group was likely aware of the impact of unemployment, but as young professionals, this challenge may be less threatening to them as a cohort.
4. In the agricultural parish of Clarendon, youth unemployment was a recurrent theme throughout the discussion and there was an especially strong call in this focus group for more employment opportunities. Participants felt that said they believed that if youth had greater opportunities for employment, most youth involved in crime and violence would probably choose an alternative livelihood.
5. Closely linked to employment, skills training and high school retention were identified as other important protective factors for youth. Several participants expressed a desire to go back to school, or gain a skill. Indeed, high school drop-outs in Jamaica are said to be particularly at risk for resorting to violence. A case study of four of the most volatile communities in Kingston in 2012 showed that 86% of gang members had dropped out of school by grade 9<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Levy, Horace (2012). Youth, gangs and organized crime. The University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica



6. The FGs described unstable families as those with absentee fathers, or single- mother-headed households. These configurations were said to contribute to youth involvement in violence.
7. The effect of absent fathers was viewed as multipronged. Respondents identified that father absenteeism causes male youth to have to step into a mature role at an early age, which was said to cause young males to become involved in gang violence and criminal activity as a means of providing for their family. Secondly, the absence of fathers placed more responsibility on mothers to support the family, which often resulted in having to place their children in another's care and/or cause neglect of the child.
8. A male youth added that neglecting a child would cause that child's mindset to change to one in which his main priority will be to care for himself and to do what it takes to accomplish his goals.
9. Attraction to the 'fast life' was said to be another strong influencer of youth. This was particularly explored in the St. James focus group. Youths were said to be attracted to making easy money, and the influence of becoming a 'don' or area leader. Compared to other parishes in the island, lotto scamming activities are well established in St. James and scammers can earn exorbitant income. Some scammers are known to lead ostentatious lives off of these earnings<sup>7</sup>.
10. The same opinion was shared by the Clarendon focus group. Youth who have found ways to earn easy money are reluctant to give that up and drop down to a lower-class lifestyle.

### **Community Incubated Violence**

1. The community environment fosters violence in youth when organized criminal activities are promoted by leaders in those communities. Individuals claimed that once youth reach a certain age, they are coerced into participating in activities to defend their areas.
2. Additionally, the stigma surrounding a community can also push its members into criminal activity and violence because of the difficulty of finding employment, due to job discrimination. Where one lives also affects the chances of getting employment.
3. Other factors mentioned were drugs, peer pressure, poor education and dropping out of school, sexual abuse and violence in music.

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<sup>7</sup> Walker, K. (2012, May 13). Lotto scammers living large. Retrieved from [http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Lotto-scammers-living-large\\_11448148](http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/Lotto-scammers-living-large_11448148).

## **What Works and What Does Not?**

This question was included after the Kingston and Montego Bay focus groups wanted to explore those interventions that benefitted youth. Responses were recorded from the Clarendon and St. Ann FGs.

1. When asked what they believed was or was not working in preventing youth from [participating in] violence. Beneficial interventions would include: skills training programmes, parental guidance, employment opportunities, and good education.
2. Additionally, some youth did offer that ‘social interventions’ and peer mentorship could also be effective.
3. As far as what did not work, both groups universally identified ‘government intervention’ and ‘police intervention’ as ineffective. In all four FGs, the lack of trust or faith in meaningful government intervention was unmistakable.
4. In St. Ann, a participant said government interventions were ineffective because heads of government were seen not to truly care about the people of the communities, but rather themselves and that of their families.
5. One participant stated that talk without follow actions was part of this problem. Several participants agreed, saying that they have heard promises of employment and opportunities for the community, all to no end, or real change.
6. The Facilitator commented that there seemed to be a lack of awareness from youth of the presence of several governmental social development agencies operating in their communities such as the Citizen Security and Justice Programme (CSJP) and Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF). More broadly, the facilitator lamented the missed opportunities resulting from their inability to access resources- albeit for a variety of reasons. It was perceived that the term ‘government’ in the focus groups was used to describe the work of politicians in their communities rather than the work of governmental agencies.
7. Similarly, police intervention and the justice system were perceived to be ineffective methods for violence reduction and protection of community residents. Across all four FGs, respondents shared the stigma which they perceive police attach to the poorer communities where violence is rampant.
8. In St. James, the youth shared that the police treated them as “scammers” and “criminals”. In St. Ann, one participant said the police treated persons from poorer communities as if they were hooligans by talking to them in a disrespectful and rough manner. Similar sentiments were shared in Kingston and Clarendon.

9. A Kingston FG youth explained that in the inner cities, there is the presumption that everyone is a criminal, giving the perception that some police personnel hesitate to help. If threatened, community members felt they cannot turn to police.
10. Following from the perception in No. 9 above, all FGs concluded that the formal justice system had failed the persons it was meant to serve and that this has led to the creation of 'jungle justice' - an informal system of punishment for acts of wrongdoing carried out by community members themselves, often using violence as a sanction. One Kingston respondent offered insight into the appeal of 'jungle justice'.
11. Other respondents recounted incidents of persons giving information to the police and this information not being kept confidential and how this action could have endangered the individual's life. On a whole, persons were unanimously disappointed with the police and justice system but while some believed all police were bad, it must be said that several participants did offer that there were good police personnel doing meaningful work.

### **Youth Can Help Prevent Violence**

After discussing the issues of violence facing youth, participants were encouraged to think about solutions for the problems they faced.

- ***Youth-group led community engagement activities***

Youth from all focus groups spoke about the role of youth groups in organizing, carrying out and participating in community engagement activities including sports competitions, back-to-school treats, parties and other entertainment events. Each of the focus groups identified that such community engagement activities assist in youth violence prevention by promoting a sense of unity and togetherness. These activities, however simple, could help to interrupt the criminalisation process which occurs when there is a feeling of social exclusion instead of inclusion.

A participant from St. Ann remarked that the youth groups and sport helped to bring the community together. Similarly, when asked what has helped to maintain the peace in Canaan Heights, Clarendon, a small community which has been homicide-free for the past two years, the answer was that parties, domino, football and netball tournaments helped to keep the community peaceful. People had fun being together.

Participants also explained that the lack of sustained funding and political support for such activities had hindered their ability to host these events. Youth from the focus groups also shared that they had difficulty with attaining the relevant permits to host events and that they often have had events shut down by the police.

Another organizer for a youth group explained, that often, a local person connected to a political party had helped them to host a fundraiser for one activity, but afterward offered not

further help. Also, without the support of local politicians for planned activities, not only to raise funds, but also the organiser could be wrongly accused of being labelled an 'area don', or a lead gang member if events were held in the community without having political representatives support the initiative.

- ***Mentorship Programmes/Peer Groups/Tutoring Programs***

A Kingston youth shared the importance of using youth from volatile communities who have overcome their circumstances to guide and mentor other high-risk individuals. This participant shared that she was the recipient of such an intervention at her high school, which had a lasting, positive effect on her path he took in life. She believed in using those who have succeeded to mentor other youth.

Additionally, youth agreed that offering homework help to younger individuals would help youth do well in school by keeping them off the streets and away from the lure of violence.

The challenges which youth shared included lack of support and sustained funding. One participant who convenes a weekly evening homework class in his community centre shared that after his program gained popularity, the community centre began to request payment which, as a youth who is not employed, he was unable to provide.

- ***Providing Alternative Livelihoods***

The call for employment opportunities was heard across all FGs as being an effective way to reduce crime and violence. Suggestions were made for youth to play a role in reducing unemployment in their communities by starting their own businesses.

A participant from August Town, Kingston, once a very volatile community, remarked that they have seen more peace in their community due to income-generating enterprises. They shared an insightful perspective that when members of the August Town community saw the value of starting small business that led to reduction in crime in the community, everybody acknowledge that all persons benefitted.

- ***Role of Guardian Children and Youth***

Advice from the FGs also included individuals playing the role of informal guardians/mentors for neglected or abused children or youth. Helping to instil positive values in them, such as the importance of education from a young age. On speaker stated that a lot of young people are open to people speaking to them in August Town. Persons from outside the community could help to have open exchanges with youth on a variety of topics. These interventions would help to open the minds of youth to help them make decisions about their future.

The facilitator of the Kingston group, a supervisor of Violence Interrupters for the Kingston-based Peace Management Initiative (PMI), explained that the reason this approach have been successful sometimes was because to young person was given the space to have their views heard.

### **Focus Group Recommendations to Government**

- ***Increase Collaboration with Youth***

In some communities, Member of Parliament and councillors are not seen regularly, only when there is a major crisis. There is also a reported lack of political support for youth-led activities and so the youth recommend that the councillors and caretakers should be active, on-the-ground resource persons, working with the youth collaboratively to target and reduce violence. These officials are not reaching out often enough to connect with elders and youth.

- ***Establish and Maintain Youth Groups***

The youth believe government should seek to support the establishment and maintenance of youth clubs in troubled communities. These youth clubs will be responsible for the organization of community activities which will attract and streamline youth. The youth – and by extension the community, have always recognized this as a ‘partnership.’ The government should assist with laying the proper foundation for these ‘youth groups’ by providing support in critical ways – e.g., a formal meeting space (a community centre). In addition, they believe that the government should provide training to build their capacity in organizational structuring, fundraising, bookkeeping and leadership while assisting with, *inter alia*, developing models of parenting groups. In other words, they want the assistance to set-up the framework so that it can function effectively.

- ***Provide Financial Support for Community Engagement Projects***

Youth from all focus groups spoke about the role of community engagement activities in youth violence prevention. The challenges for youth in this regard include lack of sustained funding which hinders their ability to successfully carry out activities. Thus, they recommend that the government should help to financially support these projects to be carried out either through youth clubs or other groups.

- ***Establish Mentorship Programs***

The youth recommend that the government provide financial support for mentorship programs where youth from a similar background who have overcome their circumstances can encourage and guide at-risk youth to benefit from advice and experience.

- ***Support Youth to Start Their Own Businesses***

To provide alternative livelihoods for youth, it was recommended that the government create more opportunities for youth to open their own small businesses. This would also allow for youth to create employment opportunities for others.

- ***Raise Awareness About Violence in Jamaica***

Raise awareness by using public education and sensitization with involvement/participation of higher level ministerial representatives. This will allow for more exposure, discourse and focus on the issues leading to youth violence and complement violence prevention initiatives.

- ***Increase Accessibility to Funding for Violence Prevention Projects.***

The youth recommended greater ease in the funding application process while still maintaining accountability.

- ***Implement Programmes that Focus on Technical/Skills Training and provide Job Opportunities and/or Technical/Skills Training***

The youth have put forward that government should play a role in providing alternative livelihoods for youth.

### **Focus Group Recommendations to International Agencies**

- ***Provide more opportunities for youth empowerment in Jamaica***

Whether through introducing projects or offering more funding opportunities, there was a call for more youth empowerment projects to tap into the potential of young people in Jamaica, “we have so many geniuses in prison; they have so much potential, they use it to do the wrong things”. It was shared that there is a need for more avenues and alternative projects to encourage youth empowerment including through sports and the creative arts. The group remarked that while Jamaican youth have the capacity and potential, there are limited options for their development.

- ***Play an oversight and lobbying role to hold the government accountable***

The youth recognised that funding is always an issue for sustaining programmes, but they noted that the Jamaican government tends to respond to the international community when the latter holds government accountable through oversight and lobbying.

- ***Prioritize social progress interventions for Jamaica to aid in violence prevention***

Both the Kingston and St. Ann focus group identified the need for government to tap into funding geared towards the social development of its people above other priorities. One participant contributed, with much support that the prioritization of certain projects is out of sync with what is most needed in the country. In St. Ann, for example, she recounts seeing more infrastructure projects than social development projects, such as, building a skills bank).

- ***Greater access to resources to implement projects targeting youth violence.***

## Focus Group Recommendations to Media

- ***Increase opportunities for the youth voice to be heard on a national scale***

A participant spoke positively about the Jamaican television show, ‘Talk up Yout’, which broadcasts the views of youth each week on a topic. The sense being conveyed that more outlets for youth views would bring awareness and other social benefits.

- ***Report a balanced view of the community***

Across all focus groups, there was a call for balanced reporting on the poorer and more stigmatized communities. Participants agreed that the media only focuses on their community for negative reasons- typically because of crime and violence- and they believe the media should also cover positive news to highlight the good things that are happening in the community. An example of giving communities direct help would be to give free advertising to promote community-run events.

- ***Censorship of offensive lyrics which are violent or promote gang culture***

- ***Hold government accountable for their promises***

Contributors felt that media can play a role in holding politicians accountable for their promises. One way would be to expose those who make promises and fail to follow through.

## Focus Group Recommendations to Civil Society Organizations (CSO)

- ***Assist the development of community programmes***

The role of civil society was seen to be one of assisting in the development of community programmes. The group acknowledged that funding is at the heart of sustainable interventions and suggested that NGOs must partner with the Government. PMI was mentioned as a good NGO, but they are not consistently present, mainly in the short term. It was also noted that some community-based organizations (CBO’s) may have operated in a biased manner at times and closer monitoring is needed.

- ***Consult and involve youth in the implementation of violence prevention projects***

It was put forward that CSO’s should utilize the suggestions and strategies put forward by youth meaningfully, but also place young persons who provide solutions in a position to help with the implementation of projects. Youth in communities know the persons who are involved in violence and those who come forward to help with advice and offer solutions should be heard.

- ***Provide therapeutic interventions and community engagement activities***

The focus groups shared views on interventions that should offer therapeutic interventions for youth as part of the community recovery process. They recommended that interventions must include an element of psychosocial support and use the creative arts as a means for youth to express themselves. Many participants agreed that music plays a powerful role in supporting

and inspiring violence. There are several Jamaican entertainers which are known for their use of violent lyrics and songs about gang culture. It was suggested that the creative arts and specifically music should facilitate and inspire youth to find ways empower themselves. One participant encouraged the setup of a studio with the necessary recording equipment where youths can record music for little or no fee given that would promote uplifting lyrics and content.

- ***Provide more projects and funding opportunities geared towards youth empowerment*** in Jamaica that can tap into the potential of youth to develop skills and livelihood.
- ***Greater access to resources to implement projects targeting youth violence.***



## **ANNEX II: DESCRIPTION OF NATIONAL JAMAICAN INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMMES**

### **1. Inter-Ministerial Security Committee**

Established in 2016 to coordinate the efforts of all government agencies involved in national security matters. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information as well as the Child Development Agency are represented on the Committee but youth representation is limited. The inaugural meeting in January 2016 raised the issue of the potential threat of radicalisation of Jamaicans by terrorist ideologies and the discussion centred on concerns about the vulnerability of Jamaica's youth. The Committee sought to learn from the regional action plans for security and youth development which do not speak to issues of radicalisation but aim to promote youth resilience<sup>8</sup> (see note on regional frameworks below). The regional framework seeks to establish a National Inter-Ministerial Committee on Youth which would complement the activities of the Security Committee.

### **2. National Safe Schools Programme, Ministry of Education – The Safe School Programme**

The initiative, which began in several schools across the island in 2004, is a coordinated approach between the Ministries of National Security, Health and Education, non-governmental agencies, and members of the private sector to reduce the incidence of violence in schools.<sup>1</sup> Police personnel in the form of a school resource officer and Deans of Discipline have been appointed to the schools. International evaluations have shown that in order for these school programmes to have significant impact, there needs to be a comprehensive range of interventions.<sup>9</sup> These interventions, with a focus on the grade 7 & 8 students, should be guided by effective leadership; a team approach, organizational change addressing the interests of students and teachers, and involve parents and communities. The programmes need to incorporate literacy and other supportive components such as parenting, mentorship, structured supervised afterschool activities and social support in the form of PATH.

### **3. National Youth Advisory Committee (NYAC)**

Operating under the Youth and Adolescent Policy Division of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, NYAC is intended to facilitate youth engagement in youth development policy and programming decisions by the Jamaican government. The NYAC fulfils goal VI of the CARICOM Youth Development Goals (CYDGs), which seeks to improve youth participation in decision-making, implementation and oversight. Launched in

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<sup>8</sup> In spite of global attention (adoption of UNSC Resolution 2250) and regional attention (at CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting in June 2015), discussion of radicalisation and violent extremism has been limited in the Jamaican context up to this point. Increasingly, with the experience of Trinidad and Tobago citizens joining international extremist groups, there is increasing interest in discussing whether existing resilience models for crime and violence prevention will support efforts to prevent radicalisation towards violent extremism.

<sup>9</sup> Moser (1999) Cohen and Rubio (2007), Hawkins (2007), Soul City

2016, the council has sixteen youths between the ages of 19 and 28 to assist with development, implementation and monitoring of government policy.

#### **4. National Youth Parliament**

The National Youth Advisory Committee serves as the steering committee for the National Youth Parliament. Youth are recruited from across the island, trained in parliamentary procedures and then engage in dialogue for four main issues of concern comprising of sexual and reproductive health, climate change and environmental protection, youth unemployment and psychosocial care. Subsequent to the sitting, they engage in projects to implement some of their proposals and then the other proposals were submitted to government as recommendations for consideration.

*“There are many (young) persons that become engaged but are not empowered to remain committed in their contributions. For example sometimes people make recommendations which are quite valid but how those are treated by the powers that be might be something that deters others from being involved in the process, which really is the process that will affect change.”*

- Sean Davies, National Youth Advisory Committee member

#### **5. National Secondary Students Council**

The youth-inclusive frameworks at the national level (Council, Parliament and Advisory Board) engage young leaders but are not youth-led/youth-initiated and do not appear to have extensive independence from the government. Members of the council trained youth in leadership, advocacy, policy development, drafting of position papers, public speaking and social media management. In addition, given the weaknesses of youth clubs and associations at local community levels which have been disappearing from the Jamaican landscape, these national mechanisms are not connected to individual young people or local groups to be truly representative on issues of national security. Support to community level initiatives will be key to enhance Jamaica’s effectiveness on peace and security initiatives.

#### **6. Community Renewal Programme (CRP)**

CRP was initiated in 2011 after a major security incident<sup>10</sup> aimed at coordinating efforts at regeneration of volatile urban communities. Has a special component on the social inclusion of youth. The Programme is coordinated by the Planning Institute of Jamaica, the central arm of the government involved in supporting the research, design and resource mobilisation processes for policymaking and programme implementation. Though its placement in the PIOJ was intended to secure full coordination, seems to lack authority over other Ministries, Departments and Agencies who have developed parallel initiatives to engage the public in taking responsibility for security in their communities but not under the umbrella of the CRP

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<sup>10</sup> A military incursion into an inner-city community to capture a man wanted for extradition to the United States to face criminal charges.

or in coordination with the CRP. Since 2016 PIOJ has been working with the SDC interagency parish network. This has seen the development of a framework for interventions and coordinating matrices.

## **7. Citizen Security and Justice Programme**

CSJP's Operational Plan has the following components. Currently CSJP under CSJP III serves 50 volatile and vulnerable communities in eight parishes; Kingston; St Andrew, St. James, Westmoreland, St Ann, St Mary, Clarendon and St Catherine. The project has 3 main components: Culture change and community governance, Labour market attachment and employability and community justice services. For culture change and governance the services provided are violence interruption, CSJP's Men with a Message, Parenting Initiatives, Psychological Services and Counselling, Gender Sensitization Workshops, Social Marketing Campaigns for Behaviour Change, Community Infrastructure and Capacity Building of Community Development Committees For labour market attachment, vocational Skills Training, Tuition Assistance, Employment Internships, Job Readiness Workshops, on-the-job Training are provided. For Community justice services, the services provided include but are not limited to: Restorative Justice, Victim Services, Dispute Resolution, Child Diversion and Legal Aid.

## **8. National Youth Clubs**

The expansion, coordination and targeting of existing clubs will lead to a National Youth Club Movement geared towards building the communities' social capital, reaching the unattached youth and strengthening of the Community Development Committees (CDC) of which the local youth clubs will become members. These CDC linked to Parish Development committees (PDC) would need to be supported by Local Authorities namely the Parish Councils whose structures need to be strengthened to deal with youth organizations. Uniformed groups fall within the MOEYI that identifies its support to cadet forces and other collaborations with the Jamaica Defence Force, as being among its priorities for youth development. The state's emphasis on quasi-military interventions with youth reflects the conceptualisation of young people, especially boys and young men, as threats to safety and security rather than as peace builders.

Similarly, the emergence of the Policy Youth Clubs – a longstanding and well-known youth inclusive and quasi-youth-led initiative plays on this conceptualisation of militarised discipline as being the foundation for youth involvement in violent criminal activities. At the same time, the localisation of the activities of the Police Youth Clubs, has made some progress in building trust between young citizens and police. The Safety and Security in Schools' Unit of MOEYI is currently conducting an audit of Uniform groups in school. The process is far from completion, but we can confirm that there are approximately 14 uniformed groups<sup>11</sup> impacting over 130,000 students in schools islandwide. Currently the 4H

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<sup>11</sup> Jamaica 4H, Jamaica Combined Cadet Force, Caribbean Merchant Maritime Corps, Boys Brigade, Girls Brigade, Scout Association of Jamaica, Police Youth Club, Pathfinder Club, National Inter school Brigade,

Clubs run 1,072 clubs and reach over 43,000 youth aged 15-24 years. The other thirteen uniformed groups reach an estimated 130,000 youths each year.

The marching bands (see YPS Video Clifton Reid Farm Heights) are not linked to the uniformed groups and do not receive regular government funding. Targeted resources would improve the programmes offered by existing groups and help to restart activities in inner city communities. Over 40% of the 10-19 age groups are not involved in any structured group activities.<sup>12</sup> To increase the impact of youth activities; youth engagement, community based activities should originate in the youth clubs; youth empowerment officers (YEO) based in each community would coordinate and support the activities of the local youth clubs. The local youth clubs would be responsible to implement community activities locally and nationally will be primarily in the areas of: Sports Activities working closely with SDC and INSPORTS, Cultural Activities, Educational Activities, Parenting, Life Skills behaviour change, Personal development programmes including rights and responsibilities of youth. “**Sports for All**” approach should be geared towards achieving certain levels of discipline and act as a mobilizing force to keep the community united around developmental issues and activities.

Involvement in youth clubs will engage idle youth and can provide hope, purpose, and build character and stronger identities. There is a need for ongoing support to staff and to run the programmes for these youth clubs. Uniformed groups must be an active part of the developmental process which begins at the primary level. They must be formed both in schools and in youth groups within the community to pull youths away from a life of crime.

## **9. Jamaica Youth Ambassadors**

The Jamaica Youth Ambassadors work under the Youth and Adolescent Policy Division of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information. There are generally six ambassadors appointed by the Governor General of Jamaica with two being assigned to the Commonwealth, two to the United Nations General Assembly and two assigned to CARICOM. The intention is to promote youth advocacy and leadership aiming to increase youth participation in decision making.

## **10. Youth Information Centres**

The centres operate at the parish level to provide information and act as a development space for youth.

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Royal Mission Cadet Corps, Girl Guides Association of Jamaica, Jamaica Red Cross, St. John's Ambulance Cadet Division, Dynamic Cadet Corps

<sup>12</sup> (Fox 2007, Wilks 2006)

### **11. National Parenting Commission, the National Parent Teachers Association and the Early Childhood Commission**

Through its parenting subcommittee these organizations rolled out Parents Places aiming to serve over a million parents and provide counselling services, which will be required for 5-10 % of the child and adolescent population. The commission needs to allocate resources to establish and manage centres in each parish and provide services for high risk children. *Parenting programmes would need to address strengthening of families by addressing the issues of single parent homes. Worldwide, home visiting programmes have been shown to be the most effective intervention to reduce risk. A local evidence based programme REACH UP has now been implemented in counties worldwide. Resources to support implementation by expanding the existing Community Health Aid programme need to be allocated.* Each youth club must have a parenting group as one of its components. The executives of the youth club must work along with the YEO to implement parenting workshops and training. Family life projects must be a major activity in every parenting group that is established.

### **12. HEART High Risk Youth Programmes**

Training provided by HEART/NTA provides avenues for youth (aged 17-29) targeting those whose education ended at grade 9. These programmes include the National Unattached Youth Programme, Steps to Work reaching Programme Conditional Cash Transfer (PATH) beneficiaries, Community Training Interventions, National Youth Corps and the Ministry of National Security (MNS) Inmate programme.

### **13. Housing, Opportunity, Production and Employment (HOPE) Programme**

The government-based Housing Opportunity Production and Employment (HOPE) Programme (HOPE) is in part a training and apprenticeship programme to provide an avenue for the development of fully rounded individuals, through a system of National Service Corps. HOPE is targeting 15,000 youths 18-24 year old to enter a value based training programme with a one-year employment placement. Started in 2017 over 1,952 youth have been engaged. While this programme is taking a meaningful step toward unemployment and alternative livelihoods for unattached youth, it is catching small proportion of the estimated 130,000 unattached youth in Jamaica. The HOPE programme also consists of a peer mentorship component which pairs participants with other youth throughout the one-year period.

## **ANNEX III: LIST OF CIVIL SOCIETY OR PRIVATE SECTOR-LED INITIATIVES**

### **1. Children First -Edutainment and Music to Communicate Behaviour Change**

Children First provides social, educational and health programmes for children and adolescents between the ages of 10 to 24, while empowering their parents and guardians to overcome poverty and enhance family life through successful skills training and small business projects. Youth are very involved in its decision making even up to the board level which is also one of its core beliefs and practices.

### **2. Sistren Edutainment- Street Theatre**

SISTREN uses the creative arts as a tool to explore issues of women's oppression in Jamaica, increase the awareness of gender issues, build regional networks and to encourage grassroots cultural expression and to encourage people to challenge the forces oppressing them. The organization provides psychosocial services for students in public schools within the Kingston Metropolitan Region, facilitates street theatre productions to raise public awareness and to mobilize communities across borders and conducts 'corner reasonings' or discussions with unattached male youth.

### **3. Child Resiliency Programme- Cutting the Pipeline to Youth Violence**

The Child Resiliency Programme is an afterschool programme for high-risk children in primary school with severe behavioural problems. Academic support is provided along with life skills training, mentoring, spiritual development, parenting and family support, sports (football, netball, karate, swimming), nutrition, creative expression (arts, crafts, dance, drumming, drama). These are reinforced by community support services and referrals.

### **4. Kingston Young Men's Christian Association (KYMCA)**

This street boy programme uses mentorship, remedial education, sports and leadership training to change the lives of high risk youth. A recent World Bank review identified KYMCA as a best practice programme. The programmes build values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. KYMCA focuses on parental involvement, sporting activities, leadership training, schoolwork, socialization, recreation, remedial work, counselling, guidance and discipline.

### **5. Rise Life Management**

RISE Life Management Services caters to the needs of the young at-risk population, particularly those living in inner-city communities. Services offered by RISE includes the prevention and treatment of addictive disorders; community-based health and education interventions i.e. violence, drug, and HIV/AIDS prevention programmes for at-risk youth and

family members; remedial educational programmes; life skills training, parenting programmes, and HEART/NTA accredited vocational skills training.

## **6. Dispute Resolution Foundation (DRF)**

DRF works with corporations and other organizations within a democratic and restorative justice framework to provide a platform where citizens, communities and other groups can employ mediation and other effective methods of preventing and resolving disputes. They established Peace & Justice Centres and implemented mediation programmes in the Resident Magistrates, Petty Sessions and Family Courts. Risk level of youth reached by the programme is moderate.

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