

Youth in Jamaica: Meeting Their Development Needs

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Ministry of Education, Youth, and Culture, Jamaica*

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Map of Jamaica



Source: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~jamwgv/map1.htm>

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I. Introduction

Jamaican youth are key agents for social change, economic development, and technological innovation and are a major human resource for development. Youth ages 10 to 24 are also an important demographic group, comprising almost one-third of the population in the year 2000.

To better understand and address the challenges youth in Jamaica face, the National Centre for Youth Development (NCYD) recently commissioned two studies, *Situation Assessment Report, Youth in Jamaica, 2001* and *Adolescent and Youth-Serving Organisations in Jamaica: Results from the Youth Programmatic Inventory (YPI) Survey*.

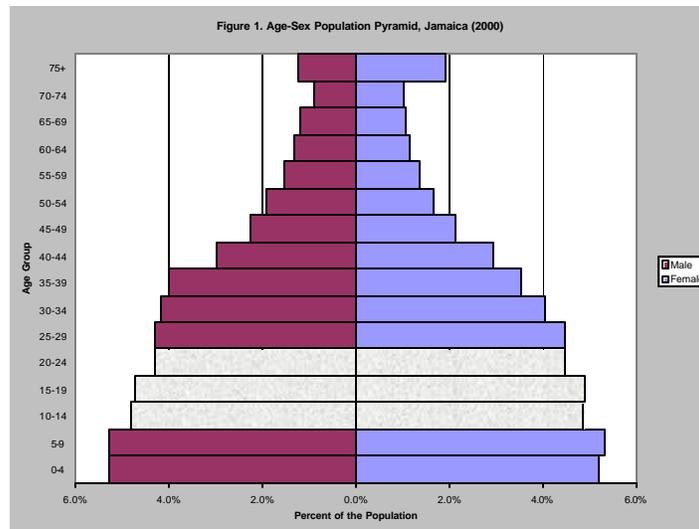
This document synthesizes information from the two studies to help in identifying important gaps and overlaps in the coverage of youth services, to inform the current review of the National Youth Policy, and to aid in the development of a strategic plan for implementing the national policy.

II. Profile of Youth In Jamaica¹

A. Population Size and Distribution

Adolescents and young adults represent a large, though slowly diminishing, percentage of Jamaica's population.

Currently at 28 percent, the proportion of the total population in the 10 to 24 age range is projected to fall gradually to 23 percent by the year 2020. In absolute terms, the size of the 10 to 24 age group is projected to fall from 750,000 today to about 675,000 in 2020. Rural areas, where about one-half the population



lives, tend to have more youthful populations, because of the migration of older youth to cities and because of larger family size. Based on these population figures, it is clear that youth will remain an important demographic group for many years to come, and that investing in their development remains a critical task. Programmes working across the

¹ This profile draws on a set of roughly 70 quantitative indicators obtained from the best sources available in Jamaica and elsewhere. For a full list of indicators and methods, see NCYD, FOCUS, and the POLICY II Project, 2002, *Situation Assessment Report, Youth in Jamaica, 2001*.

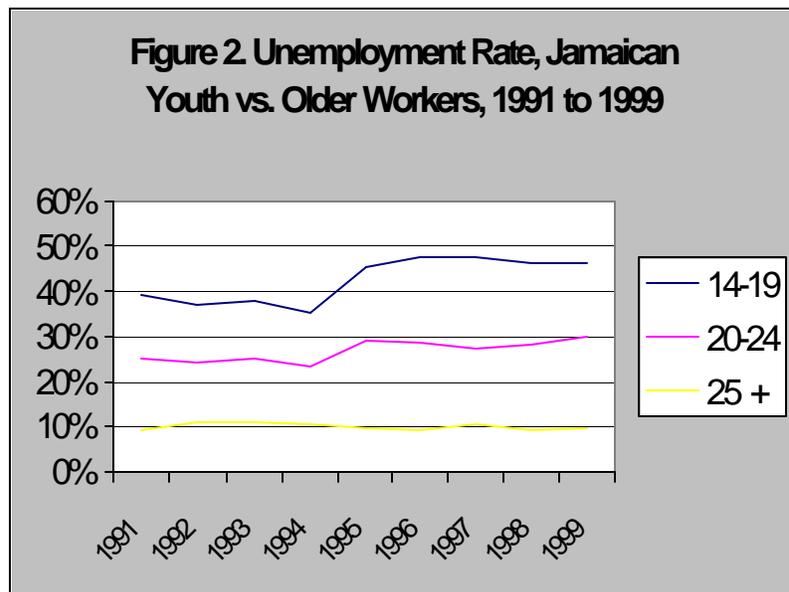
range of youth development issues will have to expend more effort to reach youth living in rural areas, while addressing the specific needs of youth who have migrated to the cities.

B. Social and Economic Context

Living Arrangements. Less than one-half of Jamaican youth live in households with both parents and nearly one in five under 18 live in households without either parent—placing such youth at greater risk for a range of negative outcomes. Furthermore, a small but potentially significant number of adolescents and young adults find themselves living on the street or in other precarious living situations. The policy and programme responses must recognize the complexity of the factors that contribute to single-parent, unstable households. While efforts must continue to address the root causes of such instability, policies and programmes for young people must acknowledge the variation in their living arrangement. Policies are needed to attack the underlying economic factors that put children on the street, while addressing their immediate needs.

Standards of Living. Mirroring an overall drop in poverty in Jamaica, the percentage of children under 18 living in poverty declined between 1991 and 1998 from 48 to 20 percent. As part of overall efforts to improve economic conditions, programmes and policies should focus on the specific needs of poor youth, including efforts to expand their livelihoods opportunities. To the extent that such programmes help prevent risky sexual behaviour and delay marriage and childbearing, they can also have important benefits for a wide range of youth reproductive health outcomes.

Work. Labour force participation among youth rises rapidly with age and is higher for males than females at younger ages. Over the long-term, the trend towards falling youth labour force participation probably reflects increased educational opportunities. Meanwhile, rates of unemployment for youth are high—for example, 28 percent for the 20 to 24 age group—and more than double those of older age groups; young women face



higher rates of unemployment than do young men. Most youth occupy relatively low-skill, low-paying jobs and rates of *under*-employment are likely high. With so many young people in the labour force, the workplace is appealing as a place to reach youth not in school, or an added venue to reach those who both attend school and work. As the

wide differentials between unemployment rates by age show, youth unemployment is a phenomenon of its own and requires specific policy and programme initiatives. If further study shows under-employment to be a significant problem, government policy should be re-examined to determine whether educational and other training programmes are giving young Jamaicans the knowledge and skills commensurate with the realities of the job market.

C. Education

School enrolment for adolescents 14 and under has been nearly universal for at least a decade, and enrolment among older adolescents has increased notably in recent years. Currently, 83 percent of youth ages 15 to 16 are enrolled in school. Through age 16, males and females are equally likely to attend school; at older ages, female enrolment rates are significantly higher. Progression to secondary school is recently quite high, at 95 percent, yet one fifth of out-of-school youth ages 15 to 24 report never receiving any secondary education. Despite impressive enrolment rates, the quality of the school experience for many students is lacking. Although decreasing, an alarmingly high rate of Jamaicans—20 percent—is illiterate; student and teacher absenteeism are problems; and students have relatively low pass rates for both the regional Caribbean and local examinations. Continuing to expand educational opportunities while improving the quality of schooling are the challenges facing Jamaica. An expansion of upper secondary places, along with action to address the poor performance of boys relative to girls are key steps. At the same time, the school system must do more to encourage regular school attendance and reduce dropout due to economic factors.

D. Health, Marriage, and Childbearing

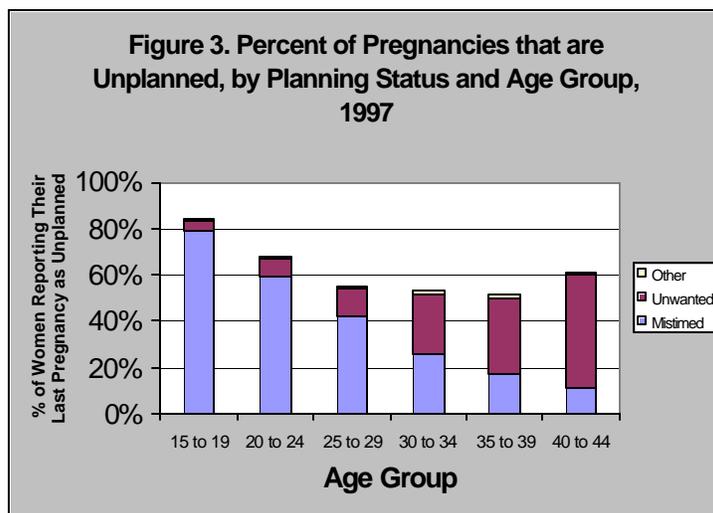
General Health Status. In general, adolescence and young adulthood is a healthy time of life. Less than 5 percent of 10 to 24 year-olds report being sick in the past month, about one-half the rate for Jamaicans overall. Health problems specific to youth include anaemia, which affects one in five youth, and suicide, whose rate doubled between 1996 and 1998. Young males have significantly higher death rates than young females, largely because of higher levels of violence and accidents. These statistics point out the need for programmes targeting the specific health problems of young people. Since many youth seek health care in the private sector, added attention should be paid to working with private health providers while continuing efforts to make public sector services more youth-friendly.

Sexual Activity. Median age at sexual debut for females has apparently changed little in Jamaica over the past three decades, remaining virtually constant at slightly over 17 years. Males start sexual activity earlier than females, with some studies showing that one-half of males have had sexual intercourse by age 14. For many Jamaicans, sexual activity is coercive, with one in four 15 to 19 year-olds reporting being forced to have sex at least once in their lives. Most older youth are currently involved in a sexual relationship, and about one-third of males ages 15 to 24 have multiple sexual partners. To maximise their preventive benefits, programmes that attempt to delay age at first sex

should begin in primary school—before young people reach puberty or become sexually active. Programmes also should focus on giving girls negotiation skills to avoid unwanted sex and work with boys to change negative attitudes that foster coercive sex. While promoting reduced sexual activity, fewer sexual partners, and abstinence, programmes also need to meet demand for reproductive health information and services among the high proportion of youth who are currently sexually active.

HIV/AIDS and Other Sexually Transmitted Infections. HIV prevalence among youth in Jamaica, roughly 1 percent, is still relatively low compared to other Caribbean nations. Most AIDS cases occur among young people ages 20 to 39, meaning most people are infected with HIV as adolescents and young adults. Adolescents and young adults also suffer disproportionately from other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). While knowledge of sources of treatment for STIs is high, knowledge of effective prevention methods—especially condoms—is significantly lower. Although HIV infection rates are still relatively low, the risk of an escalating epidemic is high. Prevention efforts should focus broadly on youth, and not only particular high-risk subgroups.

Pregnancy Prevention. Youth have good knowledge of many contraceptive methods, with knowledge of the condom, pill, and injectables nearly universal. Rates of contraceptive use among sexually active youth are high, with 71 percent of female youth and 80 percent of male youth reporting use of contraception with their last sexual partner. For males, both knowledge and use of methods is rising. Despite high levels of



contraceptive use, almost one in five women ages 15 to 19 have an unmet need for pregnancy prevention. Moreover, over three out of every four pregnancies among 15 to 24 year-old women are unplanned. Programmes need to maintain and continue to increase relatively high levels of contraceptive use by youth, with special attention on raising the proportion of youth who use a method the first time they have sex, and redoubling efforts to promote

the already popular condom—currently the only method that provides protection against both pregnancy and disease transmission. Expanding access to effective contraception—including emergency contraceptive pills—is one important way to reduce high levels of unwanted pregnancies and the abortions that result.

Union Status. Even among younger youth, a significant proportion is in union, rising from 19 percent of women in the 15 to 17 age group to 75 percent in the 23 to 24 age group. Rates are similar for young men. Programmes typically geared towards adult

women need to ensure that younger women in union are receiving adequate reproductive health care.

Childbearing. Adolescent fertility rates in Jamaica are the highest of any nation in the Caribbean, and appear to be rising. After falling from 137 per 1,000 in 1975, the birth rate for women ages 15 to 19 rose from 102 per 1,000 in 1989 to 112 per 1,000 in 1997. Almost one-quarter of all girls have had at least one child before the age of 18 and 40 percent have given birth before age 20. Men tend to become fathers at older ages, reflecting age differences among sexual partners. Although hospital birth with a trained physician or nurse is the norm, maternal death rates in Jamaica are high compared to neighbouring countries. Comprehensive programmes are needed to address the range of factors that underlie high rates of teen pregnancy, and more programme effort is needed to reduce rates of maternal death.

E. Drug Use and Abuse

Drug and alcohol use among adolescents and youth is of increasing concern in Jamaica, particularly given that use is a risk factor for many health and social problems. Youth live in an environment where drug use is pervasive and many drugs are increasingly easy to get. Over three out of four students report that cigarettes and alcohol are fairly or very easy to obtain, and 60 percent feel the same about ganja. Nearly one-half of students report that their close friends smoke ganja. Relatively few youth view use of drugs such as ganja and alcohol as risky. Not surprisingly given these perceptions, significant proportions of youth use drugs, including alcohol (29% used in the past month), ganja (11%), inhalants (10%), and tobacco (5%). Long-term trends in drug use, however, are mostly encouraging: between 1987 and 1997, use of alcohol, cocaine, and amphetamines fell significantly; only use of ganja (smoked) rose significantly. Given the pervasiveness of young people's exposure to drug use, programmes beginning in primary school should emphasise raising awareness of the health and behavioural risks of drug use and give students the negotiation skills to be able to resist implicit or explicit peer pressure from substance-using peers. A multisectoral effort should also focus on mitigating the family and community factors that increase the risk of drug use.

F. Violence, Crime, and Physical and Sexual Abuse

Violence—both in the community and within the home—is an unfortunate feature of Jamaican society. Youth both contribute to this violence and are victims of it. About 15 percent of students ages 10 to 18 carry a weapon to school, with similar proportions for boys and girls. Fourteen percent of boys and 5 percent of girls have ever been stabbed or shot in a fight, and 8 percent of all adolescents have been knocked unconscious as a result of a fight. Roughly one in six adolescents belongs to a gang at some point during their youth. Meanwhile, youth are arrested, jailed, and murdered at twice the rate of the general population. A category of violence to which young people are particularly vulnerable is physical and sexual abuse, which affects roughly one in 10 youth. Programmes to prevent violence should focus on youth exhibiting the early warning signs associated with violent acts and put in place mechanisms for youth to cope with their

anger and take responsibility for their actions. Programmes to prevent violence need to start early and focus on youth exhibiting the early warning signs associated with violent acts, including intense anger, extreme irritability, and impulsiveness. To address physical and sexual abuse, programmes need to focus on prevention, care, and treatment.

G. Community Participation

Strong community and social structure are important in providing the proper environment for socialisation of youth. Religious organisations comprise one institutional sector that is currently involved in youth development, with many youth regularly attending religious services. In addition, many youth belong to sporting or youth groups, church groups, or musical groups. Policies should continue to encourage youth participation in positive social, religious, and recreational organisations.

III. Services to Meet the Needs of Youth²

A. Profile of Youth-Serving Organisations

Approximately one-half of the organisations surveyed in the Youth Programmatic Inventory (YPI) are registered as NGOs, and nearly one-fifth of the organisations fall into the public sector category. However, NGO beneficiaries represent only one-fifth of the total youth beneficiaries served through all of the programmes registered in the YPI, and governmental organisations serve more than 60 percent of the number of total beneficiaries.

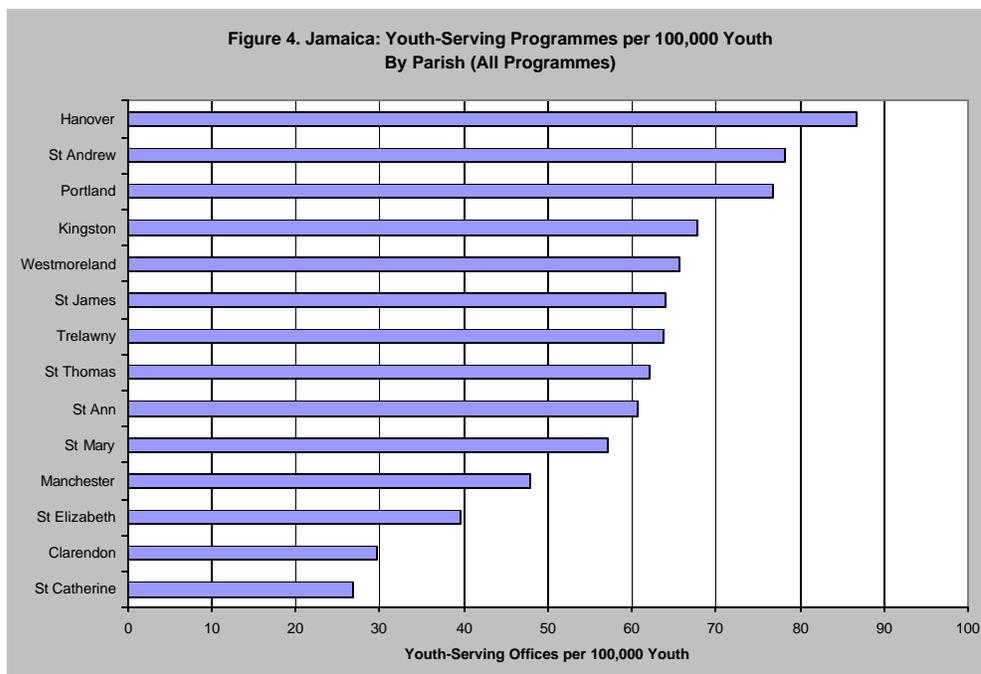
Employability, Parenting and Socialisation, and Health and Well-Being each represent the organisational mandate of one-fifth of all youth-serving organisations and together comprise more than one-half of the organisations in the YPI. Governmental and private sector youth-serving programmes are most likely to address issues of employability and economic opportunity whereas religious organisations are almost universally dedicated to issues of socialisation and parenting

Approximately 75 percent of the organisations inventoried reported that between 50 and 100 percent of their beneficiaries are adolescents or youth between the ages of 10–24. Organisations that focus on employability and economic opportunity appear to serve smaller proportions of youth than do the other youth-serving organisations.

Nearly two-thirds of all youth-serving organisations surveyed have only one location, and nearly three-quarters of the main offices of the organisations in the YPI are clustered in St. Andrew's parish. Among the 54 organisations responding to have more than one

² The data were collected and analysed at two distinct levels: the organisational level and the level of programmes directed at young people. There are 141 organisations included in the YPI database that includes 451 programmes in 358 locations serving approximately 1.3 million young people. For more information on the methodology, see NCYD and POLICY II Project, 2002, *Youth-Serving Organisations in Jamaica: Results from the Youth Programmatic Inventory (YPI) Survey*.

branch office, there are a total of 217 branch locations. When including additional branch locations, there is a more even distribution of overall presence of youth-serving organisations by parish, although there is still a clustering in St. Andrew’s parish. Taking into account the different population sizes of the parishes, relatively large imbalances in the coverage of youth services emerge (see Figure 4 below). The best-served parishes (Hanover, St. Andrew, and Portland) have more than three times the number of offices per 100,000 youth as do the worst-served parishes (St. Elizabeth, Clarendon, and St. Catherine). When examining service coverage according to programme objective, similar geographic imbalances appear.



Ninety percent of the organisations surveyed had fewer than 80 paid staff members, but a handful of organisations reported more than 200 staff. Eleven of the 141 organisations included in the YPI report having no paid staff. These organisations tend to be NGOs or religious organisations, with volunteer instead of paid staff. There is virtually no distinction between voluntary staff dedicated to youth programmes and overall voluntary organisation staff, suggesting that all volunteer staff spend at least a portion of their time dedicated to organisational youth programmes. However, approximately 40 percent of the 141 organisations surveyed had no voluntary staff. Volunteer staff members do not add much to the median numbers of total staff dedicated to youth programmes in public sector programmes.

Some 50 of the 141 organisations surveyed chose not to share budget information or did not have that information easily available. Among those organisations that reported, budgets dedicated to youth programmes range from modest to substantial. The smallest budget reported was \$150,000 Jamaican dollars and the largest was \$2.1 billion. Public sector organisations have by far the largest budgets for their activities. NGO and private

organisations follow in terms of overall size of budget, with academic and religious institutions having comparable and smaller organisational budgets.

B. Profile of Youth-Serving Programmes

More than one-quarter of the programmes registered have been in existence for five years or less, and one-half of all programmes have been in existence for 10 years or less. Welfare/Institutional care programmes are among the older programmes included in the YPI.

Programmes in the YPI targeting the younger end of the age group scale are relatively few, while almost one-half the programmes target the 10–19 year old age group, and nearly 20 percent target older young adults 20–24. Additionally, youth-serving programmes are serving significantly more young women than young men, with young women accounting for two-thirds of all programme beneficiaries. NGOs and private sector organisations seem to address both males and females fairly equally. However, public sector, religious and academic organisations show a clear tendency to be serving more young women than men, with young women representing from approximately two-thirds to three-fourths of all beneficiaries of these types of organisations. When examining the breakdown of programme beneficiaries by sex and by primary programme objective, the distribution of young men and women by programme objective is somewhat more balanced, with the exception of the Youth Development Category of Education, where young women still predominate.

With regard to involvement of youth beneficiaries, youth tended to be involved in programme implementation and evaluation, but were less likely to be involved in programme design and planning. The most participatory type of programmes are those that address environmental issues, and the least participatory are those programmes with educational/informational objectives, followed by health, welfare/institutional care, and employment/economic opportunity programmes. One-third of the public sector organisations report that youth are not involved in any of the four elements of participation whereas almost two-thirds of religious organisations reported that youth are involved in three or four elements of participation.

IV. Matching Demand and Supply

This section brings together information on the demand for and supply of youth services, in order to analyse potential gaps and overlaps. The analysis is organised according to four main groups of youth-serving programmes:

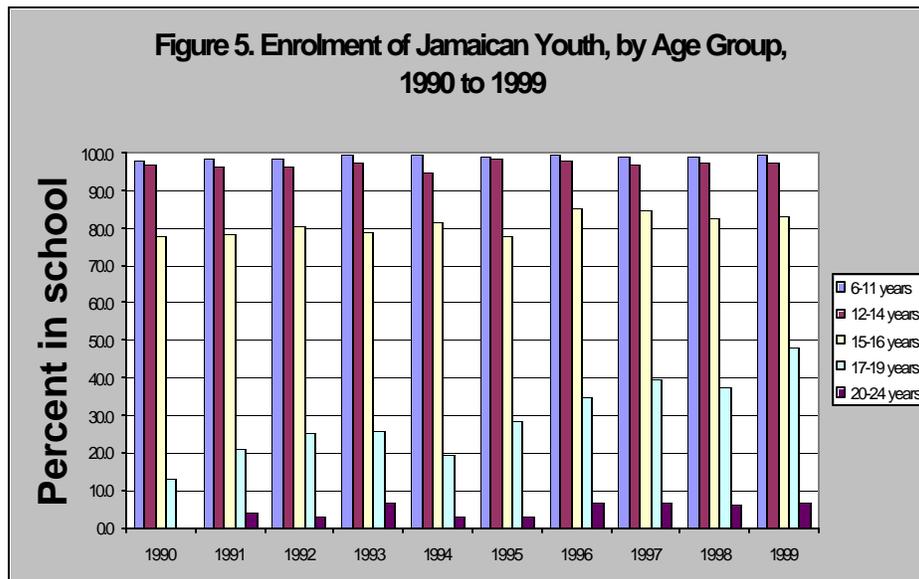
- Education/Information Provision;
- Employability/Economic Opportunity;
- Health; and
- Parenting/Socialisation; Welfare/Institutional Care; and Youth Development.

A. Education/Information Provision

Demand for Services

Existing data suggest that youth from poor, rural households are less likely to be enrolled in school and also have lower rates of attendance. It is also likely that schools in poorer rural areas may not be of the same quality as those found in wealthier urban areas.

The large majority (83%) of Jamaican youth ages 15 to 16 reported being currently enrolled in school. However, those who are not enrolled in school tend to belong to certain demographic groups. Data included in the Situation Assessment indicate that those youth



who stop attending school do so for economic reasons. The demographic profile of premature school-leavers (generally poor, male, and from rural areas) suggests that they leave school for

economic reasons (insufficient funds for school expenses, in search of employment opportunities, etc.)

Further, regular school attendance remains a problem for a large proportion of students. Some 20 percent of students miss more than one-quarter of school days, with higher rates among rural and poor students. Greater effort is needed to encourage children to regularly attend school. The quality of education is also a problem as one-fifth of the Jamaican population (20.1%) was illiterate in 1999.

There are also large sex differentials in school enrolment at older ages, with boys being much less likely to continue their education compared with girls.

Even within the large majority of youth who are still in school when they are 15–16, many youth in this group do not continue their education. School enrolment drops off sharply among youth ages 17 to 18, to 48 percent. There are also substantial sex differentials that should be considered. Through 16 years of age, males and females are equally likely to attend school. Beginning at age 17, however, females are much more likely to attend school. Female enrolment of 17 to 18 year olds is 57 percent versus only

40.4 percent of males. In the 19 to 24 year-old category, the percentage of females enrolled (7.7%) is almost 50 percent higher than the percentage of males enrolled (5.2%).

Supply of Services

A large number of youth-serving programmes are focused on education.

A little more than one-half of the services provided to youth that are reported in the YPI fall into the educational category and thus constitute the category that provides the largest number of services for youth.

The data in the YPI suggest that there is a good deal of cross-sectoral involvement in educational programmes.

As expected a large proportion (60%) of the academic organisations registered in the YPI reported that education was their primary mandate. Also, a fifth of the private sector organisations reported that education was their primary mandate although the sample size of private sector organisations was small (15). NGOs do not appear to be very involved at the organisational level, but almost one-fifth of programmes implemented by NGOs focus on education. The extent of public sector involvement in education programmes is also more visible at the programme level with 30 percent of public sector programmes focusing on education. It is also important to note that organisations related to the Ministry of Education were not included in the YPI.

There is substantial inequality in the geographic distribution of educational programmes.

Educational programmes exist in all the parishes, but coverage is substantially higher in some parishes than in others. Hanover, St. Thomas, and Portland have a relatively high ratio of educational programmes per 100,000 youth population—between 16 and 24 compared with Clarendon, Kingston, and St. Catherine, where the ratio is about 6 per 100,000. Such levels of geographic imbalance are relatively similar to those seen for other sectors.

The beneficiaries of educational programmes are more likely to be younger adolescents and female. Levels of youth participation are low.

Organisations whose primary mandate is education tend to be very youth-focused as the large majority of their clients are youth, particularly younger adolescents. However, less than one-quarter of the beneficiaries of educational programmes are male whereas three fourths are female. The level of participation of youth in organisations with an education mandate is also low compared with the other categories of organisations in the YPI.

Additionally, the level of human resources is better than average for this category whereas financial resources for educational organisations are fairly representative of all organisations listed in the YPI.

Gaps and Recommendations

There appear to be some large gaps between the demand and supply of educational services for youth in Jamaica.

- Steps should be taken to rectify the geographical inequities that characterise the current distribution of education and information services.
- Poverty alleviation programmes should be established to cover school fees, books, uniforms and other supplies for youth from (rural), impoverished households.
- Programmes should also stress the importance of education and regular school attendance.
- Despite the great need for educational programmes for male adolescents, the bulk of the educational services are geared towards females. Organisations focusing on education-related programmes should be strongly encouraged to target adolescent boys, so that a larger proportion of boys will continue their education at older ages.
- Social norms also need to shift, so that boys understand that education will provide them with greater opportunities.

B. Employability/Economic Opportunities

Demand for Services

1. The Economic Situation of Youth

Poverty, on its own, is an important measure of the status of youth. Poverty is also related to a number of negative outcomes for youth, including poor health, greater risk of physical and sexual abuse, suicide, early sexual debut and childbearing, in addition to diminished school and job opportunities. Between 1991 and 1998, the percent of children under 18 living in poverty declined from 48 to 20 percent. *Overall, fewer youth are living in poverty, but poverty levels remain high, and an adverse economic environment prevailed in Jamaica during the 1990s.*

2. Employment Opportunities and Labour Force Participation of Youth

Many youth are in the labour force, although the proportions are very different for younger and older youth. Only 1 percent of youth ages 14 and 15 are in the labour force, but 58 percent of 18 and 19 year olds and 89 percent of 20–24 year olds are working. *Labour force participation for males is much higher than for females in the younger age groups, but this difference vanishes by the time youth reach the 20–24 year old age group.* Of youth 6.6 percent (18,500) are of school age, including 1,100 males ages 14–15. Over time, rates of youth labour force participation have fallen. A slight decline in the overall Jamaican labour force between 1995 and 1999 has been concentrated among youth). This continues the long-term trend towards declining youth labour force participation, seen since 1980.

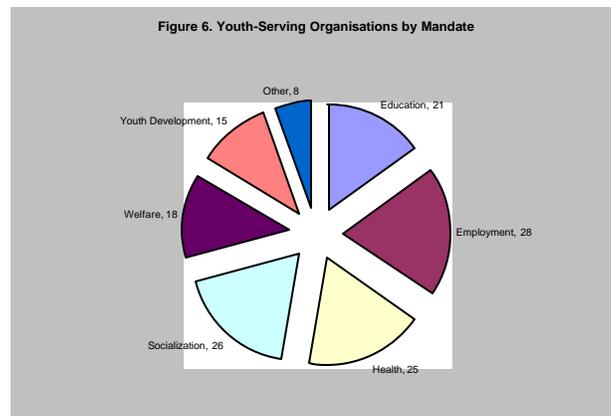
Rates of unemployment are significantly higher for youth than for the general population. Although significant proportions of Jamaican youth seek work, not all are employed. Unemployment rates for young people 14–19 (46%) and 20–24 (30%) are more than triple those of older age groups. In addition, unemployment rates have increased significantly since 1994, while remaining roughly constant for older Jamaicans.

Moreover, the employment prospects of young women are even more dismal, with rates of unemployment for young women almost double those for young men.

Most youth occupy relatively low-skill, low-paying jobs. Only 7 percent of employed male youth hold professional or technical occupations, while young women were slightly more likely to hold such occupations, with 6 percent of 15–19, and 12 percent of 20–24 year-old females in this category. It is also quite probable that under-employment among youth is significant, although data on this phenomenon are lacking.

Supply of Services

This category represents the largest group of youth-serving organisations (with the second and third largest categories represented by parenting/socialisation and health) with 28 of 141 (19.9%) of all youth-serving organisations in the Employment/Economic Opportunity category.



However, when looking at the percent of all clients served who are 10–24 years old, organisations in the employability sector are the second least likely to serve 10–24 year olds, with only 28.6 percent reporting 75 percent or more of their clients to be in this age group and 35.7 percent saying that less than 25 percent of their clients are 10–24. The employability sector is also most likely to report that less than one-quarter of their clients are in this age group followed by health with 24 percent saying less than one-quarter of their clients are in this age group.

Of all the programme types, employability and economic opportunity programmes are the most evenly spread across the island. All parishes have such programmes. Taking into account population size, the number of programmes per 100,000 youth ranges from eight to 24, with St. Catherine, St. Thomas, and Clarendon having the least coverage, and St. Ann, Hanover, and Trelawny having the best programme coverage.

The financial resources available through organisations working in this sector are quite substantial with a median organisational budget (15,000,000 Jamaican dollars) twice that of the median of 6,500,000 for all youth-serving organisations.

At the programme level, it is interesting to note the distribution by type of organisation for those addressing issues of employability or economic opportunity. Private sector organisational programmes are much more likely to address issues of employability or economic opportunity than any of the other target areas (with 41% of all private organisational programmes addressing this key target area). This target area represents

an important segment of public sector programmes with 29.1 percent of all public sector programmes addressing this area. Although the number of CBO programmes is small (only 23), 41 percent of them address this target area.

Programmes with the primary objective of improving employability or economic opportunity for young people actually provide only a small percentage of total number of services in 2001 of all those provided by youth-serving organisations. However, the distribution of services provided to boys versus girls shows a fairly egalitarian distribution with 49 percent of services to beneficiaries to males and 51 percent to females.

When looking at the distribution of the targeted age groups for programmes addressing employability, they are more likely to target older clients—youth 20–24 years old—than are youth-serving programmes on average (28.5% vs. 19.3% in general).

Employability programmes are about average in terms of the number of elements of youth participation reflected. While slightly less likely to report no elements of youth participation than all youth-serving programmes (17.9% vs. 23%) and slightly more likely to report 1–2 elements (57.1% vs. 53%) they are not among the leaders in reporting 3–4 of the four elements of youth participation.

Although an important proportion of youth-serving organisations and programmes addresses issues of employability and/or economic opportunities for youth, and significant financial resources are available for this purpose, a number of identifiable gaps remain.

Gaps and Recommendations

- Although programmes for this sector are the most evenly distributed, more needs to be done to ensure that youth in all parishes have roughly similar access to programmes that promote economic opportunity.
- Only a small proportion of the overall services provided to beneficiaries in 2001 were for employability/economic opportunity. This is likely due to the fact that it is a time and resource intensive endeavour to provide young people an adequate support service in this area. Additional organisations should be encouraged to address employability/economic opportunities for youth, as the need is great.
- Of those organisations in the YPI that do address these sectoral issues, many of them do not focus predominately on the youth clientele, and those that do focus on youth tend to focus on the older age group of 20–24 year olds. Organisations already serving youth should be encouraged to expand the numbers of youth they serve, and perhaps try and increase the proportion of their client population represented by youth, given that unemployment is much higher in this age group than any other.

- While organisations in this sector seem to be providing equal attention and proportion of services to young men and young women, they should be encouraged to direct perhaps even more attention to young women, since young women are more likely to be unemployed.
- Private sector organisations should be encouraged to address issues of youth employability and economic opportunities to an even greater extent than they are currently doing. These organisations are uniquely placed to facilitate young people's insertion into the labour market, especially in the professional and technical areas that youth need to access.
- Youth participation in programme planning, design, implementation and evaluation must be emphasized to a greater extent than is currently occurring.

C. Health

Demand for Services

Youth face a variety of different health-related problems such as early sexual debut, coercive sex, risk of acquiring HIV and other STIs, unmet need for contraception, unwanted pregnancy, and drug abuse.

Supply of Services

A relatively small number of programmes in the YPI are focused on health.

Just over 10 percent of the programmes represented in the YPI are focused on health and little over 15 percent of the organisations registered in the YPI report health as their primary mandate. Involvement in health programmes appears to be fairly cross-sectoral with minimal involvement from private sector and particularly religious organisations. Twenty percent of the NGOs included in the YPI report that health is their organisation's primary mandate.

Health programmes do not appear to be youth focused. Rather, health programmes serve people from a broad age range that also includes youth. The age distribution within the group of youth beneficiaries of health programmes also appears to be evenly spread.

The geographic distribution of health programmes is highly uneven. Four parishes—Hanover, St. Catherine, St. Elizabeth, and Trelawny—have no health programmes. Meanwhile, over 60 percent of health programmes are concentrated in just two parishes, St. Andrew and Kingston.

The distribution of beneficiaries appears to be almost evenly distributed across male and female adolescents. Human and financial resources for youth-serving organisations are about average for those listed in the YPI. Organisations reporting a health mandate appear to have low rates of youth participation in their programmes, perhaps partly because their programmes are not youth focused.

Gaps and Recommendations

This analysis of the demand and supply of health-related services for youth suggests that:

- Health programmes need to increase their efforts to target younger adolescents in order to prevent problems such as early sexual debut, coercive sex, and drug abuse. At present, health-related programmes do not appear to target younger adolescents.
- Programmes should be implemented in the parishes currently lacking health services for youth.
- Further, it may be useful to encourage religious institutions to get involved in health programmes. Although religious organisations may be currently involved in dealing with the underlying issues surrounding health problems, few of the programmes implemented by religious organisations focus on health issues. Since a large proportion of youth in Jamaica attends church regularly, religious organisations have the potential of playing an effective role in youth health programmes.

D. Parenting/Socialisation /Welfare/Institutional/Youth Development

Demand for Services

Strong community and social structures are important to ensuring positive youth development. It has been found in Jamaica and elsewhere that “...the relationship between poverty and violence is mediated...through social institutions, ranging from the family through local organisations such as sports clubs and dance halls to formal institutions such as church, schools, and the police.”

Unfortunately, many Jamaican youth live with only one parent, and a significant proportion live without either parent. In fact, less than one-half of Jamaican youth live in households with both parents, and nearly 20 percent of Jamaican youth live in households without either parent. Finally, a sizeable proportion of older youth are heads of households, with more than one-fifth of youth 20–24 stating that they are household heads or the spouse of a household head.

Many youth regularly attend religious services, although this practice is slightly more common amongst females than males, and declines with age. Many youth in Jamaica belong to sports clubs and other types of youth clubs. Youth clubs are critical not only for recreational purposes, but also as a means of creating trust and cohesion both among youth themselves and between them and their elders. They also help youth resist peer pressure to join street gangs. Forty-two percent of adolescents say that they belong to a sporting or youth group; 14 percent say they belong to a church group; and 15 percent say they belong to a musical group.

Supply of Services

Information on supply of services is presented for three categories of the YPI below. Parenting and Socialisation, Youth Development, and Welfare and Institutional Care are grouped together. These three categories of services are hard to separate as together they address issues of values, connecting young people to their communities and caring adults, and providing valuable support services when families are unable to cope. When combined, these three categories represent nearly 45 percent of the organisations registered in the YPI.

1. Parenting/Socialisation

Nearly 20 percent of the organisations in the YPI primarily address these issues, second only to those addressing employability. These organisations primarily serve youth, with more than 50 percent of them stating that more than 75 percent of their clients are 10–24 years of age. Although there are only seven religious organisations in the YPI, it is important to note that nearly 90 percent of them are addressing socialisation and parenting issues; in addition, 11.5 percent of public sector and 14 percent of NGOs also address these issues. At the programme level, the distribution is fairly similar, and total services provided represent approximately 18 percent of all youth services registered in the YPI for 2001. Interestingly, these services seemed to be skewed slightly more towards girls than boys, with girls reported to have received nearly 60 percent of the services. These programmes address the 0–14 and adolescent age groups more than the older age groups, which is appropriate given that values and family skills are best learned early. Socialisation programmes do better than most other sectors, except youth development and environmental programmes in involving youth in programme planning, design, implementation, and evaluation.

Table 1
Geographic Distribution of Parenting/Socialization Programmes

Parish	Offices per 100,000 Youth
St Catherine	4.9
St Elizabeth	4.9
Clarendon	6.3
St Ann	6.7
Manchester	7.7
ST James	8.0
Westmoreland	8.2
St Andrew	13.1
Portland	14.4
Trelawny	14.7
St Thomas	16.5
St Mary	16.8
Hanover	21.7
Kingston	25.8
Nationwide Average	10.4
Ratio Highest to Lowest	5.3

Although parenting/socialisation programmes exist in all parishes, the geographic distribution is unequal. On a population basis, Kingston has over five times the programme coverage of St. Catherine.

Human resource availability for these organisations is greater than for the majority of youth-serving organisations, with a median staff of 35, although the median organisational budget is somewhat lower than most.

2. Youth Development

Fifteen of 141 (10.7%) of all youth-serving organisations fall into this category. This category represents only the sixth largest group of youth-serving organisations, *but of all the organisational categories in the YPI is the most youth-serving*. Nearly one-half (46.7%) state that more than 75 percent of their clients are in the 10–24 year age group, with another 40 percent stating that between 50–75 percent of their beneficiaries are in this age group. None of the organisations in this category report that less than 25 percent of their clients are 10–24 years of age.

Youth-development programmes are more likely to be targeting young people of all ages in the 10–24 year range, with a slight emphasis on young people 20–24.

Youth-development programmes represent approximately 12.1 percent of all youth-serving programmes for the organisations in the YPI. Nearly 18 percent of academic institutional programmes are found in this category, and 17.4 percent of religious organisations' programmes are youth-development oriented. Approximately 15 percent of NGO organisational programmes are youth-development programmes, with much lower levels of public and private sector programmes directed at youth development (6.3 and 7.7%, respectively). Overall however, these programmes provide a very small percentage of total number of services in 2001 of all those provided by youth-serving organisations (5.9%). Of these services provided, the distribution by sex of beneficiaries is fairly egalitarian with 45.1 percent representing services to young men and 54.9 percent to young women.

Youth-development programmes are also spread very unevenly across the island. Programmes in just two parishes—St. Andrew and Manchester—account for over one-half of all such efforts. Youth-development programmes are nonexistent in another five parishes—Portland, St. Elizabeth, St. Mary, St. Thomas, and Trelawny.

Youth-development programmes are run with scarce human and financial resources. With regard to human resources, organisations addressing issues of youth development have the lowest median number of paid and volunteer staff dedicated to youth programmes (16.0) of all youth-serving organisational categories. Even the mean number of staff of 96.3 is one-half that of the mean number of paid and volunteer staff for all youth-serving organisations. Similarly, in terms of their organisational budgets, for those youth-development organisations that did report budget figures, the median budget (J\$3,100,000) was less than one-half that of the median of 6,500,000 for all youth-serving organisations.

Youth-development programmes are doing very well at including young people in all elements of participation with 35.2 percent reporting that young people participate in 3–4

elements of programme planning, design, implementation, and evaluation as compared with only 24 percent of all youth-serving programmes achieving this level of participation.

3. Welfare, Institutional Care

Eighteen of 141 (12.8%) of all youth-serving organisations fall into this category. This category represents the fifth largest group of youth-serving organisations. There are actually fewer programmes with primary mandates directed at welfare/institutional care than at the organisational level with only seven programmes classified in this category. These programmes fall into the organisational classifications of NGOs and Other (mainly CBOs). None of the programmes in this category are offered by public, private, religious, or academic organisations. Because there are very few programmes with the primary objective of welfare/institutional care of young people, they also provide a small percentage of total number of services in 2001 of all those provided by youth-serving organisations (0.2%). Of these services, in spite of the overall tendency of youth-serving programme services to be directed at young women, the programmes in this category actually served mainly young men (85.1%)

However, when looking at the percentage of all clients served who are 10–24 years of age, *those organisations in the welfare/institutional sector are the most likely to serve 10–24 year olds with 55.6 percent of the organisations stating that more than 75 percent of their clients are in this age group.* This type of programme is more likely to be targeting young people in their adolescent years (48.8%) than youth-serving programmes overall.

Welfare/institutional programmes are unevenly distributed geographically. Such programmes are found in every parish on the island, but coverage per 100,000 youth population is five times higher in parishes such as Trelawny and Hanover as in Kingston and Manchester.

With regard to human resources, organisations addressing issues of welfare or institutional care have the highest mean number of paid and volunteer staff dedicated to youth programmes (709.5 vs. and overall average of 182.1). This mean number of staff clearly represents a wide range of staff numbers for the 18 organisations in this category however as the median number of staff of 20 is lower than the overall median of 27 for all youth-serving organisations. However the total numbers of staff in the category of welfare and institutional care (12,771) do represent nearly one-half the total of 25,670 staff of all youth-serving organisations. The median organisational budget (J\$6,800,000) is quite close to that of the median of 6,500,000 for all youth-serving organisations.

Welfare/institutional care programmes are about average in terms of the number of elements of youth participation reflected. While slightly less likely to report no elements of youth participation than all youth-serving programmes (15.4% vs. 23%) and more likely to report 1–2 elements (61.5% vs. 53%), this sector is not among those most likely to report 3–4 elements of youth participation.

Welfare/institutional care programmes have a median duration of 21 years of operation, more than twice the median duration of 10 years for all youth-serving programmes.

Gaps and Recommendations

- Need for more public sector support to socialisation, youth development and welfare/institutional care. Religious institutions and NGOs provide the bulk of the programmatic activities, in this important developmental area, but more resources should be directed at these activities. In addition, the government of Jamaica should provide strong public support for efforts in this critical area.
- More attention needs to be paid to boys' socialisation, given the lack of male role models in single parent households, and young men's greater propensity to be engaged in acts of violence and homicide.
- It is unclear whether girls need more welfare/institutional support than is currently being received, but the high proportion of young men receiving services suggest that perhaps not all institutions providing such services have been included in the YPI.
- As is the case with other sectors, steps must be taken to remedy the existing inequalities in the geographic distribution of services.

V. Conclusions

Generalising about the state of Jamaican youth is no easy task, especially given the divergent nature of the indicators of youth development and the highly variable quality of the data. In some respects, youth today are better off than before. They are better educated, more knowledgeable about and more likely to use contraception, and less likely to use drugs than earlier generations. At the same time, their job prospects appear to be diminishing, they continue to practise risky sexual behaviours that put them at risk for pregnancy and disease, and they are disproportionately the perpetrators and victims of violence. Jamaican youth do not appear to be too different in their status from youth in neighbouring nations, although their propensity for violence and drug use appears to be higher. Among young men and young women, important differences in status exist.

Effectively addressing youth concerns requires a multisectoral response that tailors efforts to different subgroups of the youth population, including young men and young women. Such efforts must start at young ages—beginning when children enter primary school or even earlier—and be conducted through a variety of institutions that are important to youth, including schools, the work place, churches, and recreational groups. All efforts should recognise the key link between poverty and many of the youth risk behaviours. The many programme efforts already targeting youth in all sectors need to be strengthened and expanded to reach larger numbers of youth.

Furthermore, youth-development needs are many, and varied and cut across the traditional sectoral distinctions. Addressing these needs effectively requires a great deal of coordination. Surveys such as the YPI demonstrate that much work is being done, particularly in education and employment and socialisation and parenting. While efforts exist in the area of health and in youth development, more attention should probably be paid to these important sectors.

Moreover, the obvious geographic imbalances in the provision of services must be remedied. High priority should be given to establishing services in parishes currently lacking such efforts and in reducing the large gaps in coverage among parishes.

Clearly, the work being accomplished depends largely on a volunteer work force and some sectors seem to be under-funded relative to others, and to be reaching smaller proportions of youth than others. There is a clear need for more focus on key areas, more involvement from public, private and religious organisations in certain sectors, but much is being done as evidenced by the breadth of the programmes registered in the Youth Programmatic Inventory. The skewed focus on services on young women overall, and particularly in certain sectors should be addressed, especially given the difficulties young men are facing in completing their educations and getting skilled employment and, by most accounts, in their socialisation and parenting skills.

Finally, few sectors seem to be effectively involving young people in all aspects of the programmes designed to serve their needs, and the few that do should probably be examined more closely so that the other sectors can learn from them in this critical area.