



FINAL REPORT: CARIBBEAN YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

October 1, 2008 – December 31, 2013

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The International Youth Foundation (IYF) invests in the extraordinary potential of young people. Founded in 1990, IYF builds and maintains a worldwide community of businesses, governments, and civil society organizations committed to empowering youth to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens. IYF programs are catalysts of change that help young people obtain a quality education, gain employability skills, make healthy choices, and improve their communities.

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Financial form FFR or SF425 is attached to this report as Annex 5.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On October 1, 2008, the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the Caribbean Youth Empowerment Program (CYEP) to provide young people with positive youth development opportunities across the region. Initially a two-year, US\$1.5 million program in Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, and Jamaica, by 2011, it had grown into a five-year, US\$5 million initiative with programming expanded into Saint Lucia.

CYEP offered vulnerable youth ages 17 to 25 a second chance to gain the life skills and technical knowledge they needed to enter the job market. As CYEP participants, young men and women learned to build their resilience and bounce back from hardship by training for local jobs, starting microenterprises, and developing skills that enabled them to fulfill their dreams of playing productive roles in their communities. CYEP offered three tracks – vocational, entrepreneurship and career guidance - through 13 projects. The total value of the projects is US \$4,173,641, of which 60% represents USAID funds.

Youth on the vocational track trained for entry-level jobs in specific vocations, such as computer maintenance and networking, fiberglass (boat) repair, construction, culinary arts, and tourism. The trainees were also provided with internships, enhancing their employability through on-the-job experience, and job placement services. Other youth explored self-employment through the entrepreneurship track, which equipped them with the skills to initiate and manage their own microenterprises. They learned how to develop successful business plans and identify resources for financing, and they received business support to operate and grow their enterprises. All youth in these two tracks received life skills, ICT training, remedial education and psychosocial counseling. Other support services, such as assistance with child care and transportation, aimed to remove barriers to program completion. Youth who enrolled in the career guidance project were led to explore their interests, talents, and dreams. They received life skills and information about local job markets and viable opportunities to earn their livelihoods. They also learned how to plan for the future and develop a career plan, including any education or training they would need to qualify for their chosen careers.

In all, 2,644 young men and women enrolled in the CYEP program, and 1,992 graduated. CYEP successfully targeted youth at risk – at baseline, 85% of beneficiaries were unemployed or inactive; 91% were identified as poor or extremely poor; 40% had less than a secondary education and; 49% had completed secondary school but lacked the qualifications to continue their education or apply entry level jobs. The program also reached near gender parity. In Saint Lucia, CYEP piloted and then expanded a vocational training program tailored to reach young people in conflict with the law, some of whom needed to find jobs and rebuild their lives following incarceration.

While preparing young people for sustainable employment remained the primary focus, CYEP also aimed to develop the capacity of partner organizations to deliver quality services to vulnerable youth, as well as to facilitate the development of strong networks among youth-serving organizations and their public- and private-sector partners. Partners made important connections with private employers and strengthened their collaboration with government entities and other stakeholders.

The following key factors contributed to the program's success:

A dual customer approach. CYEP sought to address the needs of two primary customers: young people who need jobs and employers who need skilled workers. The program prepared youth for decent entry-level jobs by working closely with employers to determine their workforce needs, assessing the capacity of the youth workforce, and then delivering training tailored to close the skills gap. CYEP kept employers and other stakeholders engaged throughout training and internships to ensure programming stayed relevant and met expectations.

Public–private partnerships. Working across different sectors, CYEP was instrumental in creating the integrated conditions that promote employability, ensuring that program benefits reached not only vulnerable youth, but also businesses and society as a whole. Through CYEP, employers gained access to workers possessing the specific skills their organizations or companies needed while experiencing reduced recruitment costs, deepened community connections, and enhanced corporate citizenship opportunities. CYEP also worked with public sector staff to deliver effective employability services and scale up programming. More than 490 entities, such as Goddard Catering Group, Sandals, and LIME, have supported CYEP by offering graduates mentoring, internships, and jobs. Ninety four percent of employers reported satisfaction with their CYEP interns and entry-level hires. Beyond the \$5 million awarded by USAID, CYEP leveraged more than \$3.5 million in partner contributions or in-kind donations, amounting to 71 percent of the original award.

A consortium model. In Saint Lucia and Antigua, IYF established formal partnerships with an implementing partner while other organizations contributed complementary services. The consortium organizations played an important role in nurturing relationships and building trust among employers, service providers, and others, helping local stakeholders work effectively together on behalf of vulnerable youth. They refined their service delivery capacities, established new professional linkages, and gained exposure.

Comprehensive and integrated approach to training. CYEP used a comprehensive and integrated approach, training youth for wage employment or entrepreneurial endeavors; supplementing basic literacy, numeracy, and IT skills; and providing psycho-social support. The program worked to ensure young people graduated from the program with a solid foundation of life skills that would serve them on and off the job and throughout their lives.

Proven and standardized life skills training. As a CYEP partner in the Goddard Catering Group said, “The right employee is not determined solely on the basis of certificates and experience.” Life skills are an essential part of an integrated approach to youth development, but quality is key. IYF’s life skills curriculum, Passport to Success®, was adapted for, tested, and proved successful in meeting the local needs of the Caribbean region.

Enhanced local capacity to serve youth. An array of resources is needed to provide effective employability training to youth. Labor market assessment, employer relations, marketing, project management, and data analysis are just some of the skills required to make youth development programs successful. CYEP strengthened the capacity of its partners to provide quality services, develop strong networks, and secure the funding that allows local entities to sustain youth programming. Partners reported that they improved on a range of professional skills, including budgeting, monitoring &

evaluation, fundraising, and record keeping. Various materials were developed to support the projects and were extremely well received. They remain useful beyond the end of the program.

Monitoring & Evaluation. CYEP programming was rigorous. Partners set targets for youth training and internships, job placement, and other measures; received training in the program's M&E system; and monitored progress throughout implementation. IYF regularly visited implementing organizations and supported programs through bi-weekly or monthly calls and webinars. Project staff were coached and provided with technical training on issues pertinent to each organization's individual issues and concerns. Workshops provided opportunities to address issues across organizations, such as financial and operational management.

Sharing Best Practices. IYF developed several case studies to share best practices and lessons learned gathered through the various projects. In addition, on June 25 and 26, 2013, IYF held a successful conference in Saint Lucia which brought together key stakeholders and decision makers from international, regional, and Caribbean public, private, and civil society sectors to discuss "what works" in skills development for youth at risk; to hear directly from young people their perspectives on youth employment; and to exchange experiences and lessons learned from public and private sector engagement in youth employability initiatives. The conference was a forum for sharing learning, fostering discussions and facilitating networking among the participants while at the same time offering successful approaches and models that can be replicated.

In the face of worsening poverty and violence in the Caribbean, there is an increasing need for public, private, and civil society organizations to work together to ensure that all youth have positive, healthy options to improve their lives. CYEP successfully models how to train and gainfully employ young people from communities challenged by an under-skilled workforce, high unemployment, and household poverty. CYEP's approach to youth development builds local capacity to equip young men and women with skills that will help them overcome hardship, launch viable careers, and move into their futures with dignity.

LESSONS LEARNED, FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Lessons Learned

During the implementation of CYEP, key lessons learned were gathered. These lessons guided the projects in addressing areas of concerns and making improvements. Below are some of the key learnings that will inform future programming, as IYF continually looks to improve and refine its approaches and strategies.

Vocational. Taking into account the target group of youth at risk, many of whom had not completed secondary school and/or had weak literacy and numeracy skills, CYEP projects offered remedial education to equip participants' with the Math and English skills necessary to succeed in technical training and internships. While great strides were made given the implementing partners' limited experience in this area, this component could benefit from continued reinforcement. Hence, IYF will continue to deepen the work in this area in its future programs in the Caribbean.

Entrepreneurship. The inclusion of entrepreneurship training in Grenada and Saint Lucia in Phase 2 brought to light several lessons learned regarding implementing entrepreneurship programming in the region. First, an entrepreneurial culture has not yet taken hold in these countries, so dependent employment is typically more highly regarded than self-employment. Youth who may have had a business idea and a desire to start a business in the future, did not always have their families who were supportive of this career path and discouraged them from taking out loans, which require a co-signer and collateral.

Secondly, the age criteria contributed to a mismatch between the youth selected and the projects' objective of creating business start-up. The age range of 18-25 meant that several of the youth enrolled lacked the maturity and self-knowledge to persevere in completing a business plan and take on the responsibility of running their own business. CYEP implementing partners' experience showed that youth on the higher end of the age range were more committed to starting a business and had more self-confidence in their ability to succeed as entrepreneurs, compared to their younger peers. Also, the targeting of unemployed and under-employed youth at risk with economic hardships led to some participants abandoning their business plan in favor of seeking dependent work, even if it was low-paying, in order to meet their and their families' immediate needs.

Another notable lesson is that entrepreneurship programming for youth at risk, compared to adults or youth without risk factors such as poverty and low educational attainment requires a customized approach and intensive, individualized support. This is true particularly during the phases of business plan development and accessing finance. As a result, entrepreneurship programs working with youth at risk tend to be small in scale.

Career Guidance. The Career Guidance model piloted in Phase 2 with IYF's implementing partner provided a comprehensive approach to assisting youth in defining their future goals and determining the necessary next steps to achieve them. Young people who completed the program developed a career plan with advising from counselors or a career coach. However, the project required numerous partnerships and linkages to other education/training institutions and programs that would allow youth to implement their career plans. A key example of this was the need for youth to pass more CSECs in order to access higher education and certain employment opportunities as was noted in many participants' career plans;

however, lack of funds to pay for courses to adequately prepare for the CSEC exams prevented many youth from carrying out this important step. Hence, addressing participants' financial needs, including through partnerships and scholarships, to cover these costs would help young people move forward with their plans of furthering their education.

The following lessons learned focus on cross-cutting issues that spanned the three training programs (vocational, entrepreneurship and career guidance):

Continuing Education. CYEP partners shared information with youth regarding opportunities for continued education and training relevant to their areas, and encouraged them to pursue these opportunities. Unfortunately, given participants' economic challenges, most were unable to pursue their education after completing CYEP due to their limited funds and the relatively high costs of CSEC preparation courses, further technical training, higher education and other education and training options. Hence, provision should be made in the future to support youth in this area by removing a critical barrier to furthering their education.

Retention. From Phase 1 to Phase 2, there was marked improvement in retention of youth across all projects. This was achieved by identifying gaps in support services, carrying out better case management of participants, and improving the selection process. Detection of factors that could have contributed to the drop out of each trainee was incorporated into the selection process and throughout training. For instance, staff flagged economic and personal issues such as the need for support with transportation, meals or childcare as youth were selected and worked to address the particular issues of each young person quickly during the training. Also, staff followed up with each trainee absent from class immediately through phone calls and sometimes home visits. Case management systems, such as the GARD Center's *Trainee Live* online system and participant databases, proved to be important tools in supporting project staff's monitoring of youth's attendance.

Future Challenges

The following are issues that the program had to contend with and adapt to whenever feasible. They are important aspects that need to be taken into consideration and guide the development of future strategies and programs. While the first three are more structural in nature and beyond the control of any program, the last one, which relates to capacity building, is one which CYEP successfully addressed.

Constrained economic environment. Several countries in the Caribbean have small economies, which translate into small formal markets that are very vulnerable to economic shocks. Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada and Saint Lucia were greatly affected by the global economic recession, leading to a contraction of their economies with investments slowing and even halting, businesses closing and large numbers of employees being laid off – plus a hiring freeze. This proved to be a particularly challenging environment for youth employability programs such as CYEP which had to contend with limited employment opportunities and a competitive labor market where youth were competing with large pools of experienced but unemployed adults.

Seasonal nature of employment in tourism. The tourism sector in the Caribbean is a major, and on some islands, the main driving engine of the economy. However, it is a sector that is seasonal with the tourism season technically starting in November and extending until March/April of the following year.

During the high season, hotels and other tourism providers are catering to a large number of tourists, which is reflected in their staffing needs. However during the low season, many of the hotels and related services are operating at low capacity and employers generally reduce their staff by either putting them on temporary leave or letting them go. This was particularly acute during the past few years when the tourism industry was greatly affected by the global economic recession. As a result of the seasonal nature of the tourism sector, youth who are trained to work in this industry often have periods where they are put on temporary leave or even laid off.

Competing government youth employability programs. As public awareness of youth unemployment and concerns about security grew in the target countries, government investment in youth employability programs steadily increased, particularly in Grenada and Saint Lucia. This translated into several government-led and implemented programs that targeted youth at risk. While this was a positive development, these programs posed challenges to the implementation of CYEP in Grenada and Saint Lucia, as they typically cover all costs associated with young people's participation in the program and provide a generous stipend. This further exacerbated the sense of dependency and entitlement prevalent among youth. Additionally, the immediate financial benefit that came with participation in these government programs deterred some youth who had applied to CYEP from enrolling in the program, and even led to a few youth enrolled in CYEP to drop out in order to 'earn' money by participating in a government program. To some critics, these government programs do not offer comprehensive and integrated strategies, provide little effective monitoring and are perceived as a way to garner support during elections or provide support to specific constituents.

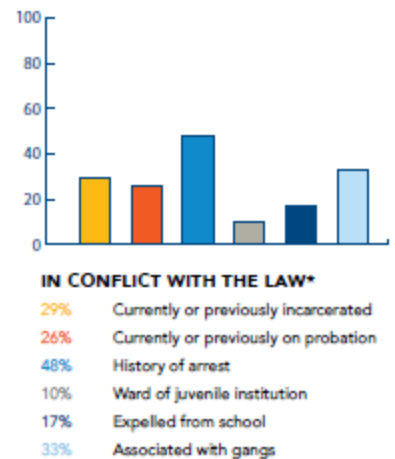
Limited capacity of youth-serving organizations. Overall, the capacity of youth-serving entities in many Caribbean countries is limited as these organizations often lack the necessary resources (human and financial), capacity and infrastructure to implement rigorous youth programs. As a result, many entities, especially NGOs, undertake activities that tend to be on a small scale, are not comprehensive and integrated, and are difficult to sustain without donor funding. Future work in most countries in the region will require expanding the number of partner organizations, working with a variety of entities from different sectors to reach some scale, and investing significantly in capacity building as was done by CYEP.

Future Opportunities

Drawing on the rich experience of and learnings from CYEP, the following are key elements that offer opportunities for making a significant contribution locally and merit expansion.

Youth in conflict with law. Youth are both the primary perpetrators and victims of the violence, at great cost to them and to their communities. According to UNDP's Caribbean Human Development Report 2012, crime and violence is costing the Caribbean between 2.8% and 4% of GDP annually in terms of direct expenditure on fighting crime and lost revenues due to youth incarceration and declines in tourism revenue. Arrest - and especially incarceration - can further add to the challenges that many vulnerable young people face, and undermine their efforts to redirect their lives in a positive way. Detained youth lose opportunities to complete their education, learn marketable skills, earn a living, and develop the life skills that lead to constructive relationships. After reentry into society, many must deal with the stigma of having a criminal record.

As the UNDP report highlights, effective programs to help youth reenter society and lead productive lives include training tailored to the special needs of these youth and alternative routes into employment, such as apprenticeships. This is precisely what CYEP's vocational project in Saint Lucia offered – an integrated, comprehensive job training package that included technical and IT skills, internships and job placement services, as well as psychosocial and other support services which targeted youth in conflict with the law. Based on the success of the program and growing interest among government officials in other Eastern Caribbean countries, there is not only a need but opportunities to expand this model regionally, as well as target youth who are on remand or incarcerated for longer periods of time with an adapted program.



* Some of these statistics overlap so will not add up to 100%

The consortium model. As highlighted in Section III. B below, in Saint Lucia and Antigua and Barbuda, IYF established formal partnerships with an implementing partner while other organizations contributed key and complementary services. These organizations, which came together as a consortium, played an important role in nurturing relationships and building trust among service providers, educators, employers, and others, helping local stakeholders work effectively together on behalf of vulnerable youth. Consortium organizations refined their service delivery capacities, established new professional linkages, and gained exposure. The consortium model allowed these organizations to contribute their expertise toward large, concerted efforts to improve the lives of vulnerable young people in the Caribbean. Based on the success of the model, IYF sees the value and potential of extending this model to other islands.

Career guidance support including youth-friendly career guidance centers. The experience in establishing a career guidance center for youth in Saint Lucia, the first on the island and possibly the Eastern Caribbean, highlighted the demand for and importance of this service among young people, especially those from vulnerable backgrounds. As youth are facing major difficulties in making career decisions and navigating the changing labor market, the experience in Saint Lucia shows that providing career guidance services in a youth-friendly, accessible space is a model that deserves investment. An integrated package – including a comprehensive life skills curriculum oriented toward employability, career planning and coaching, and educational development and job readiness training – can allow vulnerable and marginalized youth to take concrete steps on the path to completing their education and finding meaningful work. For more details on this experience, please refer to the case study titled *“Preparing Youth for the 21st Century Workplace”*.

While out-of-school youth targeted in the program clearly benefited from career guidance, working with youth in school on this topic would be extremely valuable and would facilitate school to work transition. With the support and participation of key stakeholders, career guidance services should be made available to the fullest extent possible to in and out of school youth to allow them to set and achieve their career goals and successfully navigate the world of work.

RESULTS BY COUNTRY AND SUMMARY OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Jamaica

From September 2009 to January 2011, People's Action for Community Transformation (PACT) oversaw the implementation of CYEP in Jamaica. The project benefitted 416 disadvantaged young men and women, by providing them training in marketable and life-coping skills, and allowing them to obtain formal jobs or start their own businesses. Activities were implemented in five locations (Spanish Town/St. Catherine Negril/Westmoreland, Seaview and Waltham Gardens/Kingston and St. Andrew, and Montego Bay/St. James) through four local organizations: Children First, Church Action Negril, St. Patrick's Foundation and Western Society for the Upliftment of Children (WSUC). The project was implemented at a time when the crime rate had sky rocketed and community gang activities were at its highest levels in the island's history. This affected the project's achievement of its set targets. While the percentage of youth who applied and enrolled exceeded the targets by 6% and 40% respectively, the number of youth who completed the entire training (including internships) and received certification was 52%. Ex-post data showed lower than expected job placement among graduates, and PACT was unable to provide any information on the percentage/number of youth who prepared a viable business plan and re-enrolled in educational programs. The project did, however, have success in targeting vulnerable youth, and although the official job placement rate was below target, it was better than the national trend for employment.

PACT

Achievements. Overall, the results of the project were positive, given the management and coordination challenges PACT experienced during the first year of the program and which were noted in the reports submitted to USAID. A total of 632 youth applied and 446 were enrolled in PACT's training program. The majority of the trainees were women (72%); 96% of youth were between the ages of 17 and 24 and were predominantly from urban areas; 95% of the trainees were poor or extremely poor; 53% had less than secondary education and 43% had successfully completed secondary education; and 65% of the youth were at greater risk because they had more than one special risk factor (early school leaver, handicapped, etc). The courses offered were Cosmetology, Customer Service, Data Operations, Food Preparation, Housekeeping, Lifeguard Services, Videography and Photography -- and were all level 1. Of the number of youth enrolled, 236 graduated from the program. Of this number, 208 completed the HEART Level 1 and 28 Level 2 certificates.



The external evaluation found that the employment rate of the CYEP trainees increased from about 17% to about 26% among graduates from the training, while unemployment in Jamaica increased by 3% at the time of the study. While the evaluation noted that the employment rate of male trainees was 29% and of female trainees 24%, this disparity was narrower than the disparity nationally. Female employment disparity among CYEP trainees was much narrower for two key reasons: the project recognized that more women were unemployed and thus 1) focused its recruitment efforts on this group, and 2) training

focused on skills needed in high growth sectors where women had the best opportunities for securing jobs. The evaluation also found that the quality of work and employment benefits improved significantly with over 90% of those working at the time receiving some form of social benefits from their employers while none got such benefits prior to the project. The study found that individual pay improved markedly, with average monthly income having increased 17.5% and the hourly rate of pay having increased by 38.5%. Employer satisfaction with CYEP trainees was high, with 85% saying they were satisfied with the trainees who interned for them and 90% satisfied with the trainees they had hired.

Learning. Violence was a factor that greatly affected several of the communities where the program was being implemented and consequently many trainees. This was corroborated by the external evaluation which highlighted the impact of violence on the trainees and more specifically suggested that most youth dropped out of the course due to violence in their communities or financial and personal hardships, like pregnancy. The evaluation also noted that, had the project offered services such as meals and childcare to youth, as well as suspended classes during spikes of violence, retention of trainees may have been higher. However, a large percentage of the dropouts (both male and female) stated that there was nothing the project could have done differently in order for them to stay in the training.

Although not originally included in the project design, parenting workshops were offered, as PACT recognized the necessity of providing them to trainees, many of whom were already parents themselves. These workshops provided guidance on how parents can more effectively care for and engage their children even as they made attempts to advance their education. PACT considers the inclusion of a structured parenting training component as essential for future programming with this target group. In addition, two of the implementing partners that PACT had selected did not have the necessary capacity and physical infrastructure to provide a wide range of training. It proved challenging for them, despite the support provided, to effectively provide comprehensive training and target larger number of youth.

Sustainability. When the project concluded on January 31, 2011, PACT was in dialogue with the government and funding agencies to support the delivery of services to a target group similar to that of CYEP and was preparing a proposal in which the model would be modified and replicated. The implementing partners continued to use some of the tools and approaches that they acquired through CYEP. Though the Obra program, an IYF initiative supported by the State Department from 2009 to 2012, IYF continued to work with Children First.

Antigua and Barbuda

The Gilbert Agricultural & Rural Development Center (GARD Center) implemented CYEP between April 2009 and October 2013 in two phases. In the second phase, and based on the success of this approach in Saint Lucia, a consortium was created which included the GARD Center, the Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute (ABHTI), the Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education (ABICE) and the Directorate of Gender Affairs. Together they implemented the project and created a group that would advance a youth development agenda in the country and convene other relevant stakeholders. Throughout implementation, Antigua and Barbuda faced serious financial and economic problems, first as a result of the global recession which greatly affected its tourism sector, followed by continued contraction of the economy until the project's conclusion. Despite these challenges, the project was successful in reaching its target group of vulnerable youth, meeting its job placement target,

positioning the GARD Center as a recognizable authority on youth employability in the country, and establishing a consortium that provided a foundation for sustainability and advocacy.

GARD Center

Achievements. A total of 782 youth applied, and 473 were enrolled in the GARD Center's training program in both phases. The GARD Center successfully targeted youth at risk, with 98% identified as poor or extremely poor. Some 372 youth graduated from the comprehensive vocational training program, which included life skills, basic ICT, remedial education, and internships. Technical training was offered in areas in demand by the market, such as yacht maintenance, culinary arts, food and beverage service, welding, office administration, gardening technician, and computer repair.



In Phase 2, increased private sector involvement resulted in assistance with course development in tour guiding and yacht maintenance. A certified tour guide operator co-developed and facilitated the tour guiding course, in partnership with the Museum of Antigua and Barbuda. The CEO of Woodstock Boat Builders and members of the Antigua and Barbuda Yacht Workers Association worked closely with the GARD Center to develop the yacht maintenance curriculum and facilitate technical training. Based on this successful experience, these partnerships will continue beyond CYEP.

Despite the economic crisis and its enduring effects on the country's economy, 258 employers and organizations supported the project in a variety of ways including offering internship and employment opportunities to CYEP youth and providing cash or in-kind donations. These supporters included many leaders in the tourism sector, such as Grand Pineapple Resort (a brand of Sandals), and public sector entities. The Employer Outreach Kit, developed by IYF, was key to the success of the GARD Center's employer outreach efforts, as it provided prospective employers with highly relevant and specific information on the program, the GARD Center, and its graduates.

Cumulatively between both phases, ex-post results of the project showed that the job placement rate of graduates was 41%, with 83% of employed youth working under a formal contract and 48% of employed youth receiving employment benefits. The average wage of employed youth was \$1,346 per month. Satisfaction of employers was high with 94% expressing satisfaction with the youth who worked with them as interns or entry-level employees. According to the data, internship was the most effective path for youth to secure employment, with 66% of employed youth offered jobs where they interned. Additionally, in Phase 2, 44% of participants had improved their educational situation through CSEC passes, additional certification or enrollment in formal education or training.

Learning. The GARD Center's two phases of implementation demonstrated continuous learning and improvement. In Phase 2, the GARD Center strengthened the recruitment and selection process. These improvements resulted in higher enrollment and higher retention compared to the previous phase. Another important improvement made in Phase 2 was the creation of the position of Principal, who worked closely with the trainees to understand their needs, detect potential problems among youth before they escalated, and provide rapid follow-up on trainees.

More intensive support to instructors was provided which led to major improvements in the quality of the training throughout the second phase. Staff held orientation training for all instructors and conducted classroom observation and provided feedback to them. Additionally, IYF designed a package of services to improve the capacity of instructors, which included a two-day workshop facilitated by an expert trainer and university professor on experiential learning, classroom management and lesson planning; a follow-up session to the workshop which reinforced learning from the workshop; and an instructional strategies handbook. This support was well received by the 44 instructors who benefited, and their evaluations indicated high marks for the value of the material presented.

Despite the ABICE director's commitment to the project and the CYEP Consortium, lack of support on the part of instructors and staff at that institution and the absence of mechanisms to ensure that they complied with the project's requirements resulted in insufficient numbers of youth enrolled, lack of monitoring of youth, and the eventual suspension of all but one training course. This affected overall project targets, as ABICE had committed to training 60 youth. These challenges highlighted the difficulties of working with some public institutions where entrenched interests and the status quo can be significant barriers.

The creation of *Trainee Live*, an online portal developed by the Center's Project Coordinator/volunteer was an excellent case management tool. Its ability to document trainee profiles and their performance during the program allowed for more efficient tracking of key data, better case management and ultimately, learning. Due to its success and interest among IYF programs, IYF will make this portal available for use and adaptation by other programs and partners.

Sustainability. The implementation of CYEP and its partnership with IYF have developed the capacity of the GARD Center to design and implement projects. As a result, the GARD Center has been successful in securing funding from other donors and has positioned itself as a national leader in empowering vulnerable youth. Of particular note is the GARD Center's grant from the European Union in the amount of EUR 380,003 (US\$ 511,384) to implement a project for vulnerable women based on the CYEP model and the Center's experience with entrepreneurship.

The planned expansion of the Consortium to include the National Training Agency (NTA) is a positive sign that key aspects of CYEP will continue to be implemented and adopted. The NTA will be an important partner in the accreditation process as well as with linkages with resource persons in curriculum development and training opportunities for trainers and staff. The partnership is expected to be established in early 2014. In addition, CXC has designated the GARD Center as the key partner in the training and accreditation in certain vocational areas.

Grenada

CYEP was implemented in Grenada between 2008 and 2013, first with T.A. Marryshow Community College (TAMCC) to provide comprehensive vocational training and job placement services to youth at risk. In a later phase, the Grenada Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) provided youth at risk with entrepreneurship training and business support services and the New Life Organisation (NEWLO) implemented the CYEP's vocational training and job placement model. To carry out their work, partners in Grenada collaborated with a broad array of private and governmental organizations, including:

Grenada Chamber of Industry and Commerce (GCIC), the Government of Grenada's Market Access and Rural Enterprise Programme (MAREP) and the Ministry of Finance's Office of Private Sector Development. Together, they collectively promoted the project, channeling potential participants to apply for the training, and identifying business owners to give motivational presentations to prospective youth entrepreneurs. The Grenada Development Bank provided loans to qualifying entrepreneurship graduates; LIME provided mass promotional text services, computers for IT training and discounted internet packages to youth entrepreneurs; and the National Training Agency (NTA) of Grenada, the Grenada Employers Federation, the Camerhogne Foundation and the Ministry of Youth supported vocational training.

Despite the difficult economic environment in Grenada, by the close of the program in 2013, CYEP had achieved encouraging results. The program successfully targeted youth at risk, with 94% of participants identified poor/extremely poor. A total of 715 youth enrolled in the program, of which 461 graduated from vocational training and 136 graduated from comprehensive entrepreneurship training. At ex-post, 50% of graduates were employed or poised to start a business within 2-6 months. Additionally, 100% of employers expressed satisfaction with the youth they had hosted as interns or hired as entry-level employees and interns.

TAMCC

Achievements. By the project's conclusion on December 31, 2011, 513 youth had applied to the project, 376 youth were enrolled, and 294 successfully completed the training, which included competency-based vocational training, life skills, job readiness and an internship. Graduates received a certificate from TAMCC in their respective field of training. Ex-post results showed that 23% of youth were employed at the time of follow up. However, exit surveys suggest that job placement rate improved as the project continued to be implemented, as the surveys revealed that 117 of the 294 graduates found full-time employment. The evaluation also found that feedback from employers was positive, with 89% employers reporting satisfaction with their interns' or entry level employees' workplace behavior.



Lessons Learned. The dropout rate decreased significantly as the project progressed, and as TAMCC addressed the main factors that contributed to dropout: lack of access to transportation and a mismatch of youth with their assigned training areas. Trainees with financial difficulties began to receive stipends for transportation, and TAMCC strengthened its selection process to include career guidance and assessment of literacy and numeracy skills, interests and motivation. The result was a significant decline in dropout rates from 34% in initial cycles to 15% later on.

Piloting competency-based training worked well for the project. Prior to CYEP, TAMCC had conducted skills training using its own outlines and standards. However, the project highlighted the need for TAMCC to focus more directly on the use of regional industry standards which favored portability of skills throughout the region. TAMCC used a competency-based model in which methods of instruction involve mastery of learning, based on not only the participant's knowledge and attitude but also his/her actual performance of the competency. Participants progress through the instructional program at their own rate

by demonstrating the attainment of specific competencies. This competency-based approach has allowed TAMCC to make history in Grenada as the first training institution to satisfy the requirements for the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) through the National Training Agency (NTA).

As this project represented the first time that TAMCC had targeted youth at risk, its instructors lacked experience working with this target group, and consequently, initially delivered training in a traditional way, rather than using interactive approaches and methods to engage youth. To address these issues and provide the trainees with a more stimulating environment, TAMCC trained the instructors on better understanding of what it takes to work with youth at risk, and contracted a psychotherapist to help facilitators understand the situations that a young person might face that lead to precarious behaviors and how different behaviors should be handled. Another workshop that benefited TAMCC instructors was training in implementing IYF's "Planning for Life" Reproductive Health lessons, which use an experiential methodology and have a similar structure as IYF's Passport to Success® life skills curriculum. The Training of Trainers workshop, facilitated by IYF and NSDC trainers (from Saint Lucia), provided tips for creating effective presentations, successfully structuring small groups, and equipping facilitators with skills in delivering sensitive reproductive health topics to the project participants.

Sustainability. CYEP's emphasis on using data to make decisions about the training and the overall project marked an important shift for TAMCC. Prior to CYEP, TAMCC did not rely much on empirical data as a management tool. Based on this experience with CYEP, the Dean of the School of Continuing Education, which implemented the project, was able to secure the recruitment of an M&E staff person for the school. This has improved TAMCC's ability to demonstrate impact and to advocate for its programs to a wide range of stakeholders, which will contribute to the sustainability of the CYEP program model.

GIDC

Achievements. By the end of the project on August 30, 2013, the GIDC met or surpassed key targets related to the number of youth applications, enrollment and graduation. As a result of an effective promotional campaign, which included media coverage and community outreach to parents, 503 youth applied to the project, exceeding the target of 250 applications. The project also successfully targeted youth at risk. Of the 146 youth who enrolled in the project, 98% were identified as poor/extremely poor, and 79% had an additional risk factor (e.g. single mother, early school leaver, rural poor, gang associated). Upon successful completion of training in life skills, ICT, remedial education and entrepreneurship, 116 youth graduated, of whom 102 completed business plans approved by GIDC. By the end of the project, a total of 46 microenterprises were launched, 42 without funding from a financial institution and four with loans from the Grenada Co-operative Bank and the Public Service Credit Union Ltd.



Ex-post results of the project showed that 38% of graduates were working or studying at ex post with an additional 21% of graduates poised to start a business within 2 to 6 months. Some 55% of youth who were working were in dependent employment. However, of this group, 75% were still working towards opening a business. Of those who had launched a business, 80% were operating at a profit and 75% above

minimum wage. With regard to education outcomes, 19% of participants had improved their educational situation through CSEC passes, additional certification or enrollment in formal education or training, which is positive given participants' limited resources to pursue further education. In addition, 98% of youth expressed satisfaction with the training and the support services they received (e.g. individualized support to finalize business plans, assistance with loan applications, or business advising).

A Project Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from the Grenada Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Ministry of Youth, NEWLO, Market Access and Rural Enterprise Programme (MAREP), Office of Private Sector Development and the Grenada Development Bank, was established. The committee provided guidance and oversight for project implementation. It also served as an important resource for the project team for addressing unexpected issues affecting the project such as the lack of financing for youth committed to starting a business, and helped disseminate the CYEP program and best practices.

Learning. Built into the project design was to facilitate youth accessing financing from the Grenadian government's Small Business Fund, the Grenada Youth Enterprise Initiative and the Grenada Development Bank (GDB). However, during implementation, the former two programs were no longer able to provide loans to CYEP youth, since they were being reviewed and modified. Additionally, the GDB was only willing to provide loans to youth with collateral. However, more than 90% of youth in CYEP did not have any collateral. In response to this unexpected challenge, GIDC focused efforts on youth with business ideas which were easy to start and who also indicated that they could source small funds from family and friends to start. GIDC staff advised these youth on how they could start their business on a very small scale with little or no funding, and in some cases how to run the business from home or to use a phased approach for start-up and expansion. This approach, combined with the youthful passion and energy of the staff, resulted in the start-up of 46 microenterprises (compared to the target of 48) despite very limited access to financing.

The Competency Based Economies through the Formation of Enterprise (CEFE) curriculum was very effective in keeping youth engaged in entrepreneurship training, by far the most technical training component. The experiential learning methodology utilized by CEFE facilitated the transfer of business knowledge, concepts and skills by providing participants with rich practical real-life experiences. GIDC also adapted CEFE to the group by dividing the curriculum into introduction to entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship skills development and business plan development.

Sustainability. Participation in CYEP and partnership with IYF resulted in improved staff capacity and the adoption of best practices which will benefit GIDC well beyond the end of the project. As a result of the project, there is increased public awareness of GIDC and the services it provides to entrepreneurs and GIDC's staff is more knowledgeable about working with youth at risk (a new target group for the institution) and providing life skills training. GIDC also set up a new staffing structure for program implementation which is now being replicated by the GDB; GIDC adopted best practices from the project including CYEP's monitoring and evaluation system and the recruitment of business plan officers to support clients in preparing business plans. GIDC also intends to include life skills in its general entrepreneurship program. Moreover, GIDC plans to secure funding to replicate the CYEP model to implement a similar youth project in the future, though with modifications which may focus on youth at a more advanced educational level, for example with more than 4 CSEC's.

NEWLO

Achievements. By the end of the project on October 31, 2013, NEWLO exceeded key targets related to number of youth applications and enrollment, with 422 youth applying to the project, of which 193 were enrolled. The project achieved the target gender distribution of 50:50 male to female and successfully targeted youth at risk, as 88% were identified as poor/extremely poor, and 87% had an additional risk factor (e.g. single mother, early school leaver, rural poor, gang associated).



A total of 167 graduated after having completed training in life skills, ICT, remedial math and English, and technical training and internship in one of the following vocational areas: commercial food preparation, restaurant services, bar services, early childhood development, general construction, plumbing, electrical installation, customer service, and computer hardware and software. Fifty-six graduates trained in electrical installation, commercial food preparation, general construction, bar and restaurant service, and agro-food processing passed NTA assessments to receive CVQs, while 12 graduates from customer service were assessed and are waiting results. In addition, 15 graduates trained in computer hardware and software gained certification in Cisco IT Essential and CompTIA Strata Fundamental.

Utilization of the Employer Outreach Kit developed and provided by IYF contributed significantly to NEWLO's employer outreach. The kit captured the interest of employers, who expressed their satisfaction with its presentation and content. The use of this tool in meetings with prospective employers contributed to over 80% of those who hosted CYEP youth as interns or hired them as employees being new to NEWLO's employer network.

Ex-post results show that 36% of graduates were working or studying six months after completing training, of which 94% of those working were salaried, 50% were under formal contract, and 31% received one or more benefits. These results are commendable, taking into account the very difficult economic environment in Grenada, characterized by economic contraction and 40% unemployment. All employers surveyed expressed satisfaction with the youth who had interned for them or who they had been hired as entry level employees. With regard to educational outcomes, 20% of participants had improved their educational situation through CSEC passes, additional certification or enrollment in formal education or training. Additionally, 96% of youth expressed satisfaction with the training and services, such as transportation, meals, and job placement services.

Learning. The opportunity to earn a Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ), which is recognized through the Eastern Caribbean, was a key benefit of the project. However, NEWLO's dependency on the National Training Agency (NTA) to arrange assessments and the NTA's shortage of assessors caused delays in the completion of assessments. The NTA has since trained more assessors, so for future training programs, assessments will be continuous and conducted during the classroom portion of training or during internships.

Given the target group, the project team recognized the need to make psychosocial support available to youth who need it. NEWLO partnered with the Ministry of Education to have two of its counselors provide this support to 45 trainees who struggled with emotional and behavioral issues. This added support contributed to the program's high retention of participants.

Sustainability. Participation in CYEP and partnership with IYF resulted in improved staff capacity and the adoption of best practices which will benefit NEWLO well beyond the end of the project. For example, NEWLO has incorporated PTS into its regular training program for youth at risk; the job placement plan and employer databases developed for CYEP will continue to be used and updated; and the lessons learned through the “*Learning by Doing*” Training of Trainers workshop, as well as the instructional strategies handbook, will continue to benefit both current and new instructors. An updated organizational structure for NEWLO has been designed to include positions that NEWLO did not have before the start of the project such as Project Coordinator and M&E Officer; and financial and administrative policies and procedures, such as those related to travel and expense reimbursement, that were developed to comply with CYEP requirements will continue to be used by NEWLO.

As part of a partnership with the Ministry of Social Development, which has received funding from the European Development Fund, NEWLO will implement a nine-month vocational skills training program similar to CYEP for women between the ages of 18 and 60, who are unemployed, underemployed and have limited skills.

Saint Lucia

CYEP was implemented in Saint Lucia between 2010 and 2013 in two phases. In the first phase, a consortium was established between the National Skills Development Centre (NSDC), the Centre for Adolescent Renewal and Education (C.A.R.E.) and RISE (Saint Lucia) Inc. to implement the vocational training project. This consortium was expanded in the second phase to include The James Belgrave Micro Enterprise Development Fund Inc. (BELfund) and Saint Lucia Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture. The second phase also marked the addition of two types of interventions in addition to vocational training: entrepreneurship and business support services implemented by BELfund, and career guidance implemented by C.A.R.E. A total of 1,010 youth enrolled in CYEP across all three projects, of which 405 graduated from comprehensive vocational training, 116 graduated from comprehensive entrepreneurship training, and 381 graduated from career guidance and support services. Despite Saint Lucia’s prolonged economic contraction, 59% of graduates from vocational training were employed ex-post, and 100% of employers expressed satisfaction with CYEP youth who they hosted as interns or hired as employees. One particularly interesting aspect about the project implemented by NSDC in Phase 2 was its focus on youth in conflict with the law.

NSDC

Achievements. NSDC implemented CYEP between July 2010 and October 2013 in two phases. Between the two phases, a total of 822 youth applied, and 450 were enrolled in NSDC’s training program in both phases. The project successfully targeted youth at risk, with 71% of youth identified as poor or extremely poor, 49% in conflict with the law (100% in Phase 2), and 73% with an additional risk factor (e.g. single mother, early school leaver, rural poor). 337 youth graduated from the comprehensive vocational training program, which included life skills, basic ICT, remedial education, internship and technical



training in one of the following areas in demand by the market: auto mechanics, bartending/food and beverage service, beauty therapy, computer maintenance and networking, culinary arts, football coaching, general maintenance, and office administration.

Ex-post results were very positive: 59% of youth were working; 91% of those working were salaried and under formal contract; and 65% received one or more benefits. These results are particularly positive, given that the overall unemployment rate in Saint Lucia climbed from 17.4% in 2009 to 27% in 2013. Youth unemployment, in particular, was a significant concern, with 37.0% of women and 35.6% of men between the ages of 15 and 24 years unemployed in 2013. With regard to education, 20% of participants had improved their educational situation through additional certification or enrollment in formal education or training. In addition, 100% of employers expressed satisfaction with the youth they had hosted as interns or hired as entry level employees, and 92% of youth were satisfied with the training and support services (e.g. extracurricular activities, counseling) they received from the project.

In the second phase, as recognition of the quality of training of CYEP and its impact on youth at risk grew, opportunities to gain additional qualifications arose. Namely, 15 participants trained in the areas of General Maintenance, Bartending, Food and Beverage Service, and General Maintenance earned three college credits at Monroe College, an accredited American university with a branch in the country, by successfully completing additional training in their respective areas. Jus' Sail, a sailing tour company, trained four participants in auto mechanics and general maintenance training in first aid, sail boat construction, swimming, boat engines, and navigation, and later interned at Rodney Bay Marina. In addition, 67 graduates will be assessed by the Ministry of Education in February to have the opportunity to earn a Caribbean Vocational Qualification certification (CVQ).

Learning. NSDC's two phases of implementation demonstrated continuous learning and improvement. Higher than expected dropout in earlier training cycles signaled the need to make economic support available to youth with very limited resources for transportation and food, in order to allow them to continue participating in the training. This became a key strategy for preventing dropouts in Phase 2, especially given the target group.

The consortium's experience in successfully piloting vocational training with a small group of incarcerated youth in Phase 1 led to Phase 2 solely focusing on youth in conflict with the law (including incarcerated youth). However, it was clear that certain adjustments needed to be made in order for this target group to fully participate and be successful in the technical training and internship components of the program. First, life skills training was extended and intensified compared to Phase 1 to help these youth address the difficult social and emotional challenges that many of them face, as well as ensure that they have the soft skills that employers would expect from them in the workplace (e.g. positive work ethic, good time management, teamwork, problem solving, respect, tolerance toward others). Remedial training was also extended for those with low literacy and numeracy skills. Lastly, psychosocial support continued to be available to youth in Phase 2; however, given that the target group was youth in conflict with the law, many of whom struggled with poverty, drugs, abandonment, and domestic violence and abuse that have inflicted deep psychological harm, even more psychosocial support was required for these youth than for those in Phase 1. The limited number of available psychotherapists in the country, however, made increasing the accessibility of psychosocial support in Phase 2 challenging.

Sustainability. The implementation of CYEP and its partnership with IYF have resulted in strengthened capacities of consortium member organizations to provide vulnerable youth with training opportunities. By implementing CYEP, these organizations have a greater level of awareness about the critical issues that need to be addressed when providing holistic employability programming to youth at risk. Specifically, NSDC noted that institutional experience and staff capacity have increased particularly with regard to working with youth at risk (especially youth in conflict with the law), working with both public and private sectors, integrating experiential learning methods into training, developing comprehensive proposals and budgets, and managing complex or internationally-funded programs. These strengthened capacities have positioned NSDC and the consortium well for future employability programs for youth at risk.

The consortium is committed to build on the support from government and private sector stakeholders to secure funding from national and/or international funders to continue implementing vocational training, entrepreneurship and career guidance programs, similar to the models developed through CYEP. Psychosocial support would be included in these programs, and IYF's Passport to Success® life skills program would continue to be used to deliver life skills training.

BELfund

Achievements. By the end of the project on August 30, 2013, a total of 334 youth had applied for training, and 124 enrolled. The project successfully targeted youth at risk, with 100% of participants identified as poor/extremely poor, and 80% with an additional risk factor (e.g. single mother, early school leaver, rural poor). Upon successful completion of training in life skills, ICT and entrepreneurship, 116 youth graduated.



Ex-post results of the project were very positive. With regard to employment outcomes, 56% of youth were working or studying at ex post with an additional 18% of graduates poised to start a business within 2 to 6 months. Nearly 70% of those working are in dependent employment with an average monthly wage of \$1,346 (more than double the minimum wage), while the great majority (78%) were still working on opening a business. Of those who have launched a business, 50% were operating at a profit. In terms of education outcomes, 44% of participants had improved their educational situation through CSEC passes, additional certification or enrollment in formal education or training, which is commendable particularly given their limited resources to pursue further education. In addition, 85% of youth expressed satisfaction with the training and support services they received (e.g. support to finalize business plans, receipt of loans from BELfund, business advising).

Lessons Learned. Creative methods for promoting the project resulted in higher than expected numbers of applications. In addition to ads in newspapers and a youth-oriented magazine, BELfund promoted the project in target communities. Through linkages with key community members and Ministry of Social Transformation officers, the project team would gain access to communities to hold meetings with parents and prospective participants. Additionally, in partnership with Planned Parenthood, BELfund used a brightly-decorated bus donated by the Rotary Club to visit communities. This method was particularly effective in communities that have a high number of inactive youth who

'hang on the block', as well as those where BELfund did not have prior connections. The use of the bus for community outreach resulted in more than double the number of applications received previously.

Business plan development was sluggish throughout the project, the main underlying factor being that the process was not sufficiently integrated into the small business management training course. Although trainees acquired knowledge relevant to business plans during the training, there were insufficient opportunities for youth to work on their business plans during the training. Instead, trainees were expected to revise and finalize their business plans during the month after completing the training, with support from BELfund business support officers. This proved too challenging for many trainees, many of whom did not have the means to go to BELfund to work one-on-one with a business support officer or did not have access to computers to revise their business plans on their own. In response, midway through project implementation, BELfund adjusted the training timeline to increase the time spent in class on business plan development and intensified support to trainees committed to completing their business plans, including meeting with youth in their communities. This resulted in an increase in the number of business plans submitted to BELfund for approval. However, for future similar programs, BELfund would incorporate business plan development as a formal and structured part of the training, in which trainees would attend practical sessions to actively work on their business plans under the guidance of facilitators or business support officers. In this way, trainees would see this component as an integral part of the training program, rather than an optional step after completing the classroom portion of training, and they would have the time, space and support to complete their business plans in a timely manner.

Sustainability. Participation in CYEP and partnership with IYF resulted in BELfund's adoption of best practices. For example, BELfund plans to continue using CYEP's M&E and tracking tools, financial reporting template, and programmatic report format for future programs. Should the opportunity to submit a proposal for a relevant program arise, BELfund plans to utilize CYEP's proposal guidelines and budget template. Additionally, they are considering using Passport to Success®, including sexual and reproductive health lessons, for future life skills training. With respect to capacity building, BELfund's staff capacity has been strengthened in the following areas: working with youth at risk (a new target group for BELfund), offering new training areas (i.e. life skills, ICT), partnering with other local public sector organizations, and managing a complex, internationally-funded project. The adoption of CYEP best practices and improved capacities have better positioned BELfund to implement youth employability programs with local partners and international donors in the future.

C.A.R.E.

Achievements. By the end of the project on October 31, 2013, a total of 570 youth had applied for enrollment in the career guidance project implemented at the CYEP Career Guidance Center in Castries and in the communities of Dennery, Marigot, Micoud, Soufriere and Vieux-Fort. The project successfully targeted youth at risk, with 88% of participants identified as poor/extremely poor, and 81% with an additional risk factor (e.g. single mother, early school leaver, rural poor, disabled, gang associated). A total of 381 youth graduated, having completed the core program consisting of life skills training, life planning and career testing, of which 369 also participated in workshops on educational development



and job readiness. All participants benefited from one-on-one career guidance provided by counselors or a career coach.

Ex-post results related to education showed that 54% had identified the schools and resources for continuing their education, 22% had taken concrete steps toward further education or training, and 8% of participants had improved their educational situation through CSEC passes, additional certification or enrollment in formal education or training. With regard to employment and although the project was not designed to provide job placement services, 17% of youth were working at ex post, 100% of whom were salaried and under formal contract. Additionally, 94% of youth expressed satisfaction with the training and support services they received from the project.

An important achievement of the project was the establishment of Saint Lucia's first-ever Career Guidance Center, which provided a youth-friendly environment for career guidance activities. The center served as an accessible, safe and comfortable space for youth to take part in trainings and one-on-one coaching and counseling sessions. It also included computers and phones that youth used to research information on educational and career opportunities or carry out a job search. To make full use of this resource, project staff provided participants with limited computer skills support to use the internet, send emails, and put together a CV in Microsoft Word, although this was not included in the training curriculum.

Lessons Learned. Partnerships with RISE and the Ministry of Education's Guidance Counseling Unit confirmed the importance of building alliances across sectors. RISE played a key role in identifying prospective participants and provided a training space and resources just steps away from the Career Guidance Center for the project to utilize. Counselors employed by the Ministry of Education were directly involved in implementation in the communities, while public schools provided facilities for training to take place.

For future implementation of similar career guidance programs in Saint Lucia, it is recommended that linkages also be built or expanded with other education and training institutions, and that resources be secured to support youth in taking the necessary next steps to implement the career plans, particularly in terms of pursuing further education. As the external evaluation noted, the project instilled within participants the desire to improve their educational situation; however, youth indicated that they did not have the money to continue their education by preparing for and taking CSEC examinations, which are required for tertiary education.

Although the project was designed to offer participants support for education development or career development, C.A.R.E. found that it was necessary to provide support to youth in both areas. Many youth aspired to continue their education in order to achieve career goals, but due to financial hardship they needed to find work as quickly as possible to support themselves and their families, as well as to save money for pursuing an education or taking CSECs. The combination was ideal as it was important that all participants were aware of the different opportunities that existed with regard to pursuing an education as well as understand the job market in which they would be working in order to make better informed decisions about their futures.

Initially, the project team planned to only offer psycho-social support to youth who had been identified by life skills instructors as possibly requiring this support. However, in an effort to overcome participants'

initial resistance to therapy and help remove the stigma associated this type of service, all participants at the Career Guidance Center benefited from at least one counseling session with the team's counselor whose field of specialization was psycho-social support. Youth who had unresolved psychological, emotional or behavioral issues attended additional sessions. Making psychosocial support accessible to participants proved to be important in enabling them to participate fully in the project.

Sustainability. Participation in CYEP and partnership with IYF have yielded improvements in the capacity of C.A.R.E. and its staff, which will benefit the organization in its future programming. Specifically, approaches utilized in implementing CYEP, such as partnership with other youth-serving agencies, promotion strategy and selection process to identify participants, and education development and job readiness workshops, will become part of C.A.R.E.'s regular skills training program. Policies and procedures established to comply with CYEP requirements, such as timesheets and financial reporting, have been adopted by C.A.R.E. In addition, although C.A.R.E. had implemented the Adolescent Development Programme (ADP) to provide life skills training in its regular program, C.A.R.E. hopes to secure funding to enter into a licensing agreement with IYF to continue using Passport to Success® with its beneficiaries.

With regard to the continuation of the CYEP career guidance program model developed and tested in this project, the Ministry of Education's Coordinator of Guidance Counselors has begun work on a plan to incorporate aspects of the model in the country's public secondary schools. Also, C.A.R.E. and the Bordelais Correctional Facility are in discussions about providing life skills training to youth at the prison.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAM RESULTS/ACHIEVEMENTS

Objectives and Expected Results

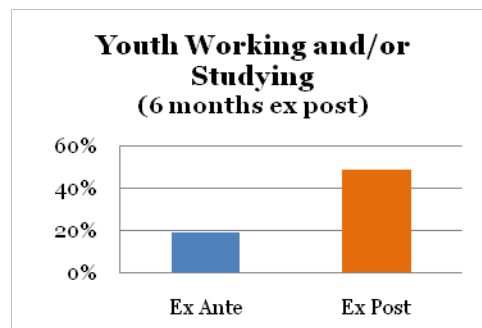
As per the cooperative agreement, the CYEP objectives were:

- To provide 1,100 young people with career counseling, remedial education, job training in life skills, information technology, market driven vocational areas and/or entrepreneurial skills that respond to the needs of selected high growth industries such as tourism, music, entertainment, and arts and culture. This phase will bring the total program beneficiary target up to 2,200 youth. CYEP initially targeted 700 youth in Jamaica, Antigua and Grenada. A modification added an additional 400 youth from those countries in addition to Saint Lucia.
- To target youth in communities having a high proportion of vulnerable youth.
- To ensure that at least 40% of those who complete training are placed in decent jobs, or in their own business start-ups.
- To ensure that 50% of participants who have left school are re-enrolled in an educational training program or have gained additional schooling credentials at the time of follow up.
- To ensure that 90% of employers report satisfaction with their entry-level employees.
- To ensure that partner organizations have increased capacity to implement and lead quality employability projects targeting at-risk youth.

- To create sustainable networks of stakeholders from the public and private sector that address the employability needs of vulnerable youth.

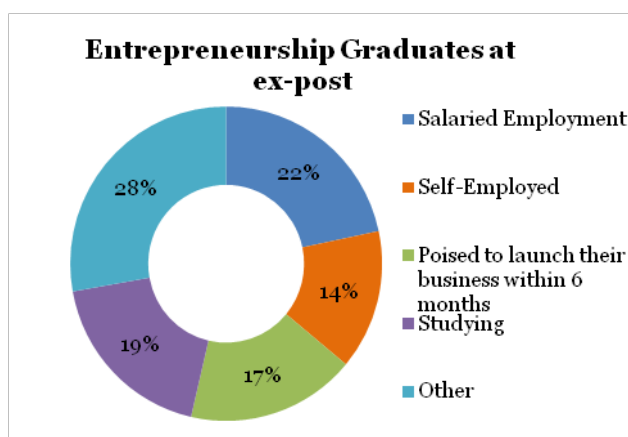
Results and Achievements

Results. CYEP exceeded its target of 2,200 by reaching 2,644 young men and women through technical, vocational or entrepreneurship, and life skills needed to build their marketable assets and secure livelihoods. Seventy-five percent of enrolled youth graduated, thereby successfully completing training, which included an internship. Those who did not graduate were still able to access many of the services offered and benefit from various aspects of the program.



External follow-up studies conducted six to nine months after graduation showed that, on average, 49% of CYEP youth were working or studying. Factors that contributed to the difficulty in finding employment include contracting economies that were deeply affected by the global recession, and a highly competitive labor market as youth were competing with those who had been laid off but had significantly more experience opportunities. At the time of the evaluations, an average of 35% of graduates was employed (across all countries and through two phases), with some countries showing employment rates as high as 60%. The seasonal nature of employment in the tourism/hospitality sector, one of the main areas which offer employment opportunities, greatly affected employment results for the vocational training graduates surveyed at ex-post during the low season.

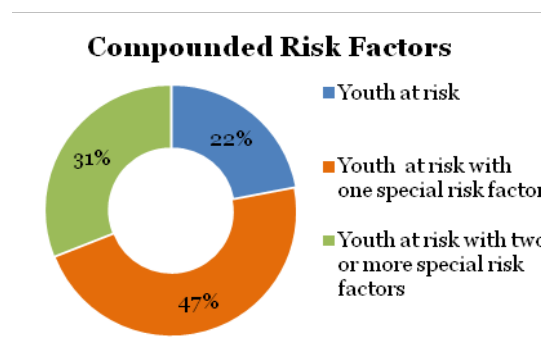
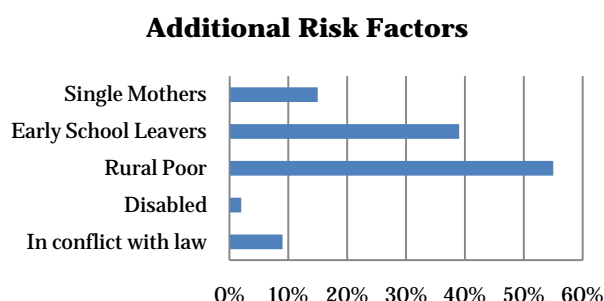
Among those working, 84% were in wage jobs and 16% were self-employed. Youth working in the formal sector averaged 40 hours of work per week; 64% had formal contracts, and 47% had benefits. Ninety-four percent of employers reported satisfaction with their CYEP interns and entry-level hires. The youth who were self employed at follow-up also fared well. They worked an average of 45 hours per week, and 71% had profitable businesses. Due to pressing financial need, many choose to take salaried employment. However, the majority of these youth are still actively working on launching a business.



Nine percent of CYEP participants were enrolled in school at baseline. Following the program, and as highlighted in the follow-up studies, 15% of graduates were currently enrolled at the time of the surveys and an average of 24% of youth had gained additional qualifications after graduating from CYEP such as CSEC passes and further vocational certification.

Although the educational results fell short, it is important to understand the results in context. CYEP launched just as the effects of the global economic crisis were beginning to be felt in the Caribbean: economies stagnated or contracted, unemployment rates soared, and youth were the first and hardest hit. By 2009, more than one in five young people in the region were not engaged in work, education, or training.¹ CYEP's target population, whose economic opportunities were meager even before the crisis, were then confronted with still greater odds. For young people living in poverty, finding a job remained their primary concern and while they may understand the importance of pursuing their education, it was not an investment they felt they could make, and in many cases, did not have the resources needed to cover these costs.

CYEP successfully targeted youth at risk ages, 17 to 25. It achieved near gender parity with a particular focus on young men, which are harder to reach, enroll and retain in training programs. At baseline, 85% of beneficiaries were unemployed or inactive; 91% were identified as poor or extremely poor; 40% had less than a secondary education and; 49% had completed secondary school but lacked the qualifications to continue their education or apply entry level jobs. A very small percentage (6%) had more than secondary education, and this was due primarily to the fact that they had enrolled in a vocational training at the community college before enrolling in the CYEP entrepreneurship projects. The program's ability to reach vulnerable youth is further illustrated by the fact that 78% of the beneficiaries had one or more additional risk factors and nearly a third had two or more.



Other key program achievements include:

Improved Capacity Building. Throughout the program, IYF sought to maximize the institutional capacity of the implementing partners and strengthen their services, thereby ensuring the quality of the offerings, and positioning them to secure additional funding to replicate and expand the CYEP model. A learning agenda was developed to address partners' capacity building needs and was based on the commitments made to USAID for Phase 2. As part of this agenda, IYF launched the CYEP Learning Platform, which allowed partners to easily access information and share resources. The Platform can be accessed at www.cyepip.com (username: CYEPviewer, password: lp@cyepv1ew). A total of 19 webinars were held on key topics ranging from youth selection process to case management, PTS implementation,

1. ECLAC/ILO, 2012. *The Unemployment Situation in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Publication 2012-808, no. 7. Paris: ILO.

psychosocial support and M&E. In addition to thematic workshops held by *entra21* in which CYEP Phase 1 partners participated, in Phase 2 the CYEP team organized workshops designed to improve partner staff capacity in areas critical to the successful implementation of their projects, namely life skills training, experiential teaching methods, internship and job placement, and youth entrepreneurship. IYF also produced several publications, tools and resources (e.g. employer outreach toolkit, instructional strategies handbook, organizational development assessment tool, youth entrepreneurship quality standards, and youth in conflict with the law case study) that are not only of immediate benefit to partners for the implementation of CYEP, but also for their long-term institutional development and future programming. (Please refer to Annex 1 for the various products.) Lastly, during regular monitoring visits, IYF provided tailored technical assistance to partners, such as conducting the organizational development assessment and youth employability quality standards assessment, coaching life skills trainers, and developing communications and leverage plans.

Partners' feedback on these activities, as well as the capacity building they have received in general through CYEP, has been very positive. Partners have noted that they have built and/or improved their capacity to work with vulnerable youth, offer job placement services, partner with private and public sectors, use experiential teaching methods and manage complex projects, among other areas. NEWLO's Executive Director appreciated the high standards to which CYEP holds partners, stating, "Having to be accountable for everything has helped NEWLO to initiate the process of looking into our organizational policies and procedures to see where changes can be made". All partners have also adopted tools created and provided by IYF for use in other programs.

46

Workshops, trainings, and
learning events held

184

Practitioners trained

An innovative approach – the Consortium model. As noted in Section I.C. Future Opportunities,

"While we have worked together with other groups across the sectors to focus on a shared or common goal before, CYEP was the first time we had institutionalized the consortium model in Saint Lucia". *Dr. J. Bird, Founding Director, RISE (Saint Lucia) Inc.*

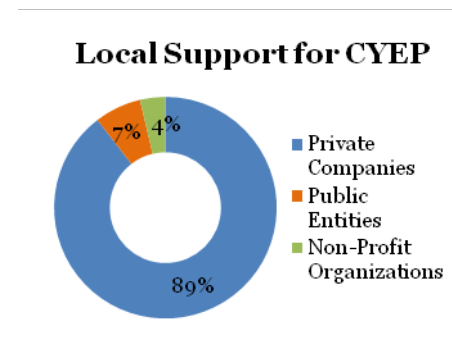
in Saint Lucia, IYF brought together several key organizations to work closely on CYEP in Saint Lucia and Antigua under a consortium. These organizations were involved in the management and implementation of the program, thus maximizing resources and expanding the program's impact. As the partners noted, it was the first time that they were all coming together to collaborate on a program.

Such collaborative strategies are not always the traditional approach and so CYEP charted a new course for entities to engage with each other. This model successfully leveraged the necessary resources, support, and expertise needed for the sustained success of CYEP. For more information on this approach, please refer to the case study titled "*Consortium Building—A Caribbean Case Study*". Now that CYEP has ended, these organizations are still closely working together, which is a testament to the sustainability of this approach.

Public-Private Partnerships. The CYEP experience highlights the potential and power of alliances to create an enabling environment to address the employability issues of youth at risk. The public and private sectors play a critical role in addressing development challenges and in ensuring the long-term sustainability of tested models and solutions. Youth programs in particular benefit greatly from the support, input and involvement of these two sectors. The CYEP model has as one of its core principles the

dual client approach, which are the youth on the one hand and the employers on the other. Hence, IYF worked with the partners and supported their efforts to reach out to the public and private sectors and develop strong partnerships. For the most part, the CYEP partners were well connected to the public sector though they did not necessarily advocate effectively and jointly to the government. However, their relationships with the private sector was often limited and in some cases nonexistent. They often did not know how to approach local businesses successfully and explore the wide range of collaborative opportunities that can be developed. So IYF worked closely with the partners, supporting and guiding them in their outreach efforts. As part of this, IYF developed country brochures that highlighted key aspects of the program in each country and encouraged public and private stakeholders to support the projects. IYF also designed an *Employer Outreach Kit* to support the partners in making the business case to companies. The kit was designed with this specific target group in mind and includes one-pagers on the program, making the business case and features success stories and a company who recruited CYEP trainees. The feedback from employers and partners on this tool has been very positive.

A total of 545 entities supported the program. Of that number, 488 were companies who offered support ranging from internships, employment, mentoring and facilities for events or training to sharing their expertise as guest speakers and contributing financial resources. These companies were both large and small and included those with a regional reach such as Goddard Catering Group, Sandals, and LIME.



In addition, CYEP established many successful partnerships with the public sector. For example, the partnership that NSDC, and the rest of the consortium, developed with the Bordelais Correctional Facility, was fundamental to the success of the project. Following this experience, the Bordelais Correctional Facility is keen to pursue and expand the collaboration in the future. Another critical source of support was the Government of Saint Lucia which contributed EC\$500,000 (US\$188,679) to the project. For more details on the project, access the case study titled *“Preparing Youth in Conflict with the Law for Success”*.

Leverage. IYF made great strides towards achieving 1:1 leverage and at the end of the program, had achieved 70.3% of the goal of US \$5 million, which represents US \$3,516,892. This was a significant achievement given the Caribbean context where resources are scarce and Corporate Social Responsibility is fairly nascent. To reach its target, efforts were undertaken both at the IYF and partner levels. IYF leveraged resources from the MIF through the *entra21* program, including a grant contribution to the project in Jamaica, the only MIF country of the CYEP portfolio. IYF also successfully leveraged resources for the regional youth employability conference that took place in June 2013, including from Sandals, the Bay Gardens Hotel and National Youth Council staff and members who volunteered their time. At the partner level, the six grantees provided a minimum contribution of 25% of the value of their grants and in the case of NSDC, the percentage was as high as 61%, which included US\$188,679 from the Government of Saint Lucia as noted above. In addition, IYF supported the partners in developing a leverage plan to identify, pursue and secure leverage and provided a tracking form to record and document the leverages. In the cases of Grenada and Saint Lucia, where there were more than one CYEP partner, the plans were developed jointly in order to identify points of convergence, avoid competition and determine how to best approach potential donors in common.

The table below summarizes leverage contributions raised through CYEP.

Donor	Description of contribution	Cash	In-Kind	Total
IDB	Staff time, M&E and Grant resources	424,294		424,294
GARDC	Local contribution	219,213	196,671	415,884
PACT	Local contribution	279,527	54,645	334,172
TAMCC	Local contribution	75,762	81,459	157,221
NSDC	Local contribution	267,310	372,378	639,688
GARDC II	Local contribution	572,288	24,534	594,229
NEWLO	Local contribution	41,730	46,584	88,313
GIDC	Local contribution	57,378	56,581	104,956
BELFUND	Local contribution	287,996	2,358	289,355
NSDC II	Local Contribution	355,931	22,909	378,841
CARE	Local Contribution	23,067	10,383	33,450
Portillo Consulting Int'l	Staff Time		20,000	20,000
Sandals Resorts - St. Lucia	Facilities Rental and meals		12,013	12,013
National Youth Council (NYC) - St. Lucia	Volunteer Time		6,603	6,603
Bay Gardens Hotel	Hotel rooms and food services		5,278	5,278
Total		2,604,497	912,395	3,516,892

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System. The program included an M&E system which was rolled out with each partner. The rigorous implementation of this system enabled CYEP and its partners to successfully measure progress toward and achievement of the objectives of the program. IYF regularly visited implementing organizations and supported programs through bi-weekly or monthly calls and webinars. IYF also provided orientation and ongoing technical support and monitoring on the M&E system to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data. The data collected through the baseline and exit surveys, which were administered to all beneficiaries, was aggregated, shared and analyzed with the partners on a quarterly basis to facilitate programmatic and management decisions. External follow-up studies conducted by local evaluators provided a level of objectivity of the results valuable insight into the effectiveness and impact of the program.

In addition to these achievements, CYEP initiated other key activities:

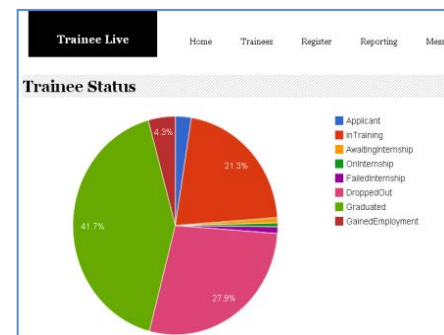
Regional Conference. On June 25-26, 2013, CYEP convened “*Investing in the Future: Empowering Young People*”, a two-day regional conference of business, government, NGO, and youth leaders from across the



Caribbean to discuss both the challenges and opportunities facing the region's youth as they seek to find employment and become fully integrated into the local economy and the broader society. His Excellency Dr. Larry Palmer, U.S. Ambassador to Barbados and Eastern Caribbean and Peter Shiras, IYF Executive Vice-President for Business Development, welcomed the participants on the opening panel. The Honorable Kenny Anthony, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, opened the conference with an impassioned keynote address on how to improve the lives and prospects of the region's young people. He underscored, that "high quality education and training are essential to enable all individuals to acquire the skills that are relevant not only to the labor market but also for social inclusion and active citizenship", and added: "I hope that the dialogue at this conference can help build up a different outlook that can project hope for the future."

The event attracted over 110 participants – including top representatives from national and international organizations such as USAID, the IDB, the WB, the ILO, UNDP, the Commonwealth Secretariat, as well as government, private sector, civil society, juvenile justice and youth leaders from Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Young people also played a key role in the conference – leading panel discussions, adding their voices to the ongoing dialogue and assisting conference staff as volunteers. Several former inmates from the Bordelais Correctional Facility in Saint Lucia, who graduated from the CYEP job training program and were employed, read poems they had written as part of the initiative. Subsequent to this successful event, IYF had been following up with several entities present to discuss potential partnerships.

Case Management Tool. Chris Lacey, an experienced computer programmer and the volunteer who managed the GARD Center's project in Phase 2, developed a web-based case management system, called *Trainee Live*, which greatly improved the overall management of the project and monitoring of youth. This user-friendly system allows multiple staff to simultaneously enter and update key information on each trainee, such as a photo, identification, enrollment status, attendance and performance in training courses. Standardized forms for commendations, incidents and formal warnings can also be generated from the system, and additional notes about trainees can be entered by instructors, counselors and other pertinent staff as needed. As importantly, the system allows data analysis of cohorts of trainees according to selection criteria (e.g. target community, gender, etc.) and status (e.g. number awaiting internship placement, numbers placed in jobs). There is also a messaging function via SMS that the GARD Center utilized effectively to support job placement services to youth by sending information on vacancies and gathering quick info on the employment status of youth. The benefits and adaptability of *Trainee Live* have attracted great interest from other IYF programs and partners to adopt. As such, IYF plans to disseminate the tool widely through its global partner network, with technical support from Mr. Lacey.



IMPORTANT RESEARCH FINDINGS, COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

The Caribbean was significantly affected by the 2009 global economic crisis. Because of the small size of many of these economies, the impact was not only deep but prolonged and its effects are still being felt to date as the region is experiencing low levels of investments, high levels of unemployment, and increased cost of living, which is compounded by the introduction of the Value Added Tax (VAT). However, as the global economy continues to recover, it is expected that the region will see slow but steady growth in the near future.

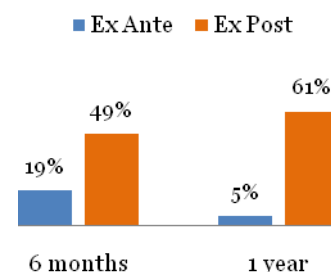
Comments

The following are important comments and considerations related to the impact of CYEP beyond the targeted countries and working with vulnerable youth in the region.

CYEP's contribution extends beyond targeted countries. During the regional youth employability conference that IYF organized in Saint Lucia in June 2013, IYF shared CYEP's approaches, experiences and best practices to a broad audience of international, regional and local institutions and entities, which elicited much interest. Following the event, IYF has been pursuing the discussions and exploring partnerships. It is also exciting to note that several of the products, including tools and case studies, developed by CYEP are being used by IYF programs in other regions. These include the Organizational Development and Entrepreneurship assessment tools, the *Employer Outreach Kit*, the *Learning by Doing* guide and the *Instructional Strategies Handbook*. In addition, the Passport to Success® (PTS) entrepreneurship lessons that were developed for implementation in the Caribbean have been adopted and incorporated into the global PTS curriculum; and the *Trainee Live* case management tool used under CYEP in Antigua will be made available to other programs.

The full impact of youth programs should be measured over time. Initiatives such as CYEP work intensely with youth for a period of several months, ranging from six – nine months, depending on the vocational training area. However the full impact of the program and its long-term effect on the youth beneficiaries should be assessed over a longer period of time. Youth in particular need time to fully absorb the learnings that many of them have not previously received. It is often over time that youth are able to reflect on their experience and appreciate the full benefit of what they have learned. In addition, studies have shown that it takes several months for an individual to secure employment, let alone young people in the current economic environment. This is evidenced in the graph at right looking at youth after a year versus six months clearly shows improved numbers.

Youth Working and/or Studying



Working with youth who have high levels of vulnerabilities requires some adjustments and significant investments. Youth who faced particular challenges such as being a single mother, on probation or

incarcerated benefited from comprehensive training program. However, working with these youth necessitates adjusting the model to address their various needs and expanding the services to be offered, which requires increased levels of investment. While every effort is made to leverage additional expertise and resources, these are not always available, and when they are, they are not always adequate. For example, it is hard for a youth with drug issues to get assistance. Of the three CYEP countries, Saint Lucia is the only island that operates a drug rehabilitation center. As a result, there is a high demand for this service, including from other islands. In addition, several incarcerated youth noted their concern and reluctance to return to their communities for fear of being pulled back into a life of crime and drugs yet there are no halfway houses in Saint Lucia.

Civic engagement and leadership training is critical to youth development efforts. Working with youth offers an opportunity to develop their civic engagement and further build their leadership skills. This work, which can be carried out as a complement to Passport to Success®, can also be offered as stand-alone services to the youth. IYF has developed a curriculum called I-Serve which is designed to help youth become engaged civic leaders as well as spark a passion for social entrepreneurship. Through this program, youth have the opportunity to acquire and practice leadership, service learning, and personal development skills.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on learnings from CYEP, including input shared by the partners, and are provided to guide and inform future programs. A few of the recommendations refer to more structural issues that are beyond the purview of a youth employability program such as CYEP and may be more relevant to a donor.

Expand the age range of youth at risk to be targeted. CYEP demonstrated the importance of providing a second chance to youth who have dropped out of school, are unemployed or underemployed - as well as those who face particular challenges such as incarcerated youth - through integrated and comprehensive program. However, as data show, working with youth who have not yet “fallen through the system” but who are at risk of doing so is equally important. Therefore, IYF recommends that the age range of future programs targeting youth at risk be extended to also support younger people who are still in the school system but are at risk of dropping out. Such an approach will ensure that these youth increase their chances to remain in school, and for those who dropout, that they are better equipped to move forward with their lives by making positive choices. By the same token, the recommendation is to expand the age limit of the youth beyond 25 as many would benefit from such a program at a stage in their lives where they may be more committed to change their future in a positive way.

Revise the target group for the entrepreneurship programs. Through CYEP, entrepreneurship projects were implemented in Grenada and Saint Lucia, which provided valuable lessons learned. As noted previously the youth in the program, who were between the ages of 17 and 25, were at an age where many were unsure of their interests and/or knew little about entrepreneurship. Once they understood what is required in order to establish a business and secure a loan, many decided not to pursue this track. However, youth who tended to be older and who were interested in entrepreneurship demonstrated a greater commitment to and interest in pursuing this track seriously. In addition, in environments where there is not an entrepreneurial culture, working with youth who have higher levels of education would

expand the pool of youth who are truly vested in becoming entrepreneurs. Hence, the recommendation is that the age range and education level for youth targeted in the entrepreneurship track be revised to include older youth and those with higher levels of education.

Support the development of an enabling environment for entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is seen as a viable option and creative solution to address the high rates of youth unemployment and provide young people with alternatives to formal employment. However as noted previously, in some Caribbean countries, there is not a strong entrepreneurial culture – and people tend to be reluctant to take out loans. In these environments, it would be important to support initiatives and programs that encourage youth entrepreneurship and in particular provide seed funding to programs that focus on youth. Access to funding is a major obstacle that many young people face and some of the existing funding have requirements that many youth from vulnerable backgrounds simply cannot meet. Of the few programs that are available to this target group, they are, for the most part, managed by governmental institutions, which tend to be bureaucratic, have high delinquency rates, do not encourage innovations and the adoption of new approaches, and do not provide the support required to assist young people in setting up and managing their business. Hence, one recommendation would be for donors to provide seed funding as part of the youth entrepreneurship programs they support and encourage loaning institutions to review their programs and reduce barriers to financing.



Support governments' efforts to invest in the economy. As discussed previously, one of the major structural limitations in implementing employability programs in several Caribbean countries is the constrained formal market. As a result, despite young people being skilled, the employment opportunities are very limited. This is further compounded by the fact that youth are competing with more experienced adults who are also searching for employment. Hence, one recommendation would be for donors to a) work with the governments to provide incentives to businesses and companies to hire youth for internships or full-time employment and b) support governments to encourage investments aimed at expanding and growing the economy.

FINANCIAL REPORT (EXPENDITURES BY CONTRACT BUDGET CATEGORY)

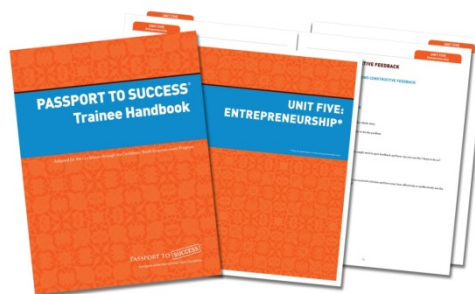
See Annex 5 for financial form FFR or SF425.

Please note that the annexed financial form FFR or SF425 is the final report with IYF's provisional indirect cost rates. Once IYF receives its negotiated indirect cost rate (NICRA) from USAID with the final rates for year ended December 31, 2013, IYF will submit the final financial report with final indirect cost rates. IYF expects that by the end of Quarter 2 2014 it will have its negotiated indirect cost rates.

Annex 1 ~ CYEP Products

Project Information

1. [Caribbean Youth Empowerment Factsheet](#)
2. [Antigua and Barbuda Country Brochure](#)
3. [Grenada Country Brochure](#)
4. [Saint Lucia Country Brochure](#)
5. [CYEP Projects Quick Guide](#)



Curricula and Tools

6. Passport to Success® (PTS) life skills curriculum adapted to the Caribbean including 10 new entrepreneurship lessons
7. Passport to Success® (PTS) Student Handbook adapted to the Caribbean
8. “Learning by Doing” Training Follow Up Guide
9. “Learning by Doing” Instructional Strategies Handbook
10. Youth Entrepreneurship Quality Assurance
11. Organizational Development Tool
12. [CYEP Employer Outreach Kit](#)
13. [Trainee Live](#)

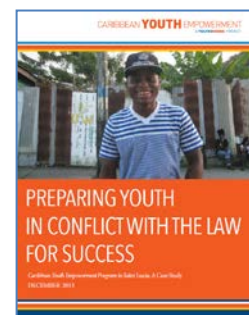


Learning

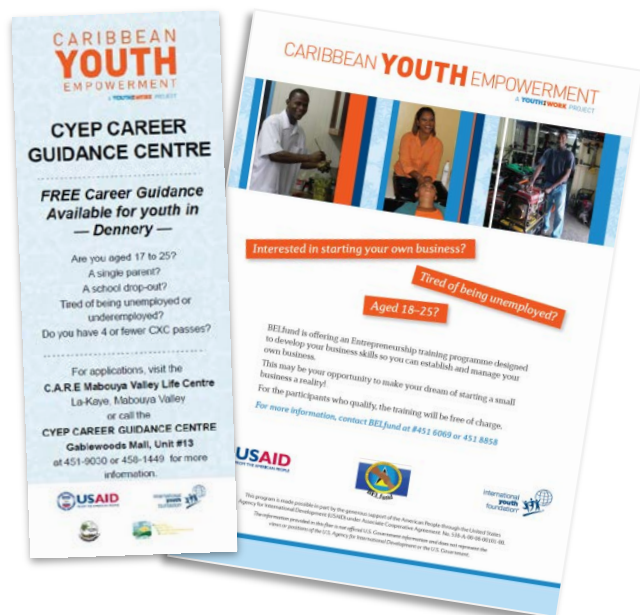
14. [Preparing Youth In Conflict with the Law for Success: A Case Study of the Caribbean Youth Empowerment Program](#)
15. [CYEP Career Guidance Case Study: Preparing Youth for the 21st Century Workplace](#)
16. [Consortium Building—A Caribbean Case Study](#)
17. [Second Chances For Youth At Risk: The Caribbean Youth Empowerment Program](#)
18. [“Investing in the Future: Empowering Young People” Regional Conference](#)

Ex Post Studies

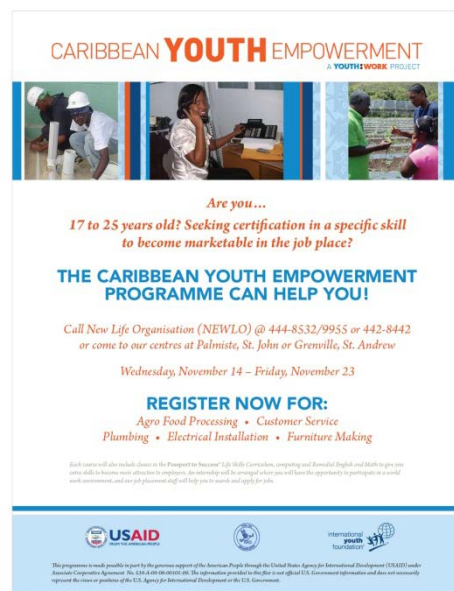
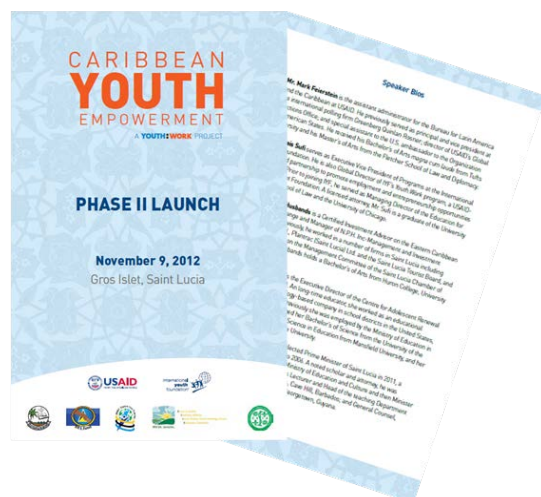
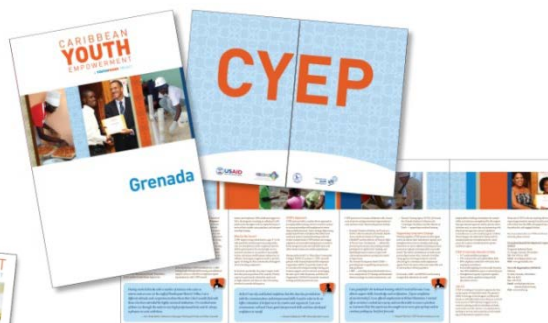
1. Antigua and Barbuda Phase 1, Trevor Hamilton and Associates, April 2011
2. Jamaica Phase 1, Trevor Hamilton and Associates, July 2011
3. Grenada Phase 1, Trevor Hamilton and Associates, April 2011
4. Saint Lucia Phase 1, Julius James, May 2013
5. Antigua and Barbuda Phase 2, Dr. Susan Lowes, November 2013
6. Saint Lucia Phase 2 – Entrepreneurship, Augustus Cadette, December 2013
7. Saint Lucia Phase 2 – Career Guidance, Mary Wilfred, December 2013
8. Grenada Phase 2 – Entrepreneurship, Stephen Fletcher and Claudia Nicholson, December 2013
9. Grenada Phase 2 – Vocational, Stephen Fletcher and Claudia Nicholson, December 2013



Annex 2 Promotional Materials



GARD Center gardening technician video
[Link](#)



Annex 3 Pictures of Launch and Graduation Events



Antigua and Barbuda

Eric Charles: “From the worst can come the best.”

Twenty-four-year old Eric Charles is a natural born leader, influencer and motivator. Dominican by birth, he came to Antigua as a toddler and was raised by his mother along with 5 other siblings. His father was never a part of their lives – a fact that would have consequences for Eric later in his life.

“I am a cool person and I get along well with almost everyone. I like to smile, laugh and free up, but I don’t like ignorance -- hypocrisy, dishonesty, and bullying” says Eric of himself. An outspoken young man, he is not afraid of saying it as he sees it. It was a trait that as a teenager he would have difficulty controlling. This was especially true during secondary school, when most of his teachers labeled him as rude and disrespectful, because he spoke his mind, challenging them when he felt them to be wrong or unfair in their judgment. But it is also this characteristic that made him respected by his peers. Among the students, he had a reputation of defending those who were being bullied and instilling fear in those doing the bullying.



Outside of school, he also exerted a heavy influence over the informal ‘gang’ of which he was a member. Simply a group of young guys from his village who were all friends, relatives and neighbors, many of the boys in this ‘gang’ had absentee fathers and lacked the fatherly love and guidance needed to mold them into responsible men. They therefore found refuge in each other.

After leaving school in fourth form, Eric continued with gang life and hanging out at the corner, making money on the side. But common sense and the knowledge that he was living a life that would get him no-where continued to plague him. He often reflected on memories of one of his brothers Earl, who had died tragically in 2006. Earl had often beseeched Eric to turn his life around and Eric wanted to prove to him, even though he was gone, that he could do that.

One day at the corner, Eric opened the newspaper and spotted an ad from the GARD Center that advertised CYEP courses including carpentry and plumbing. The next morning, Eric decided: “This is the day,” and he headed to the GARD Center to make enquiries.

Eric speaks of the strong positive influence of the GARD tutors over not just him but his entire cohort. He began to feel his attitude and behavior changing for the better because he was a part of a positive organization and a group of young people wanting positive change in their lives. By the end of the 16 week course, Eric felt totally different. People were now viewing him in a positive light. He felt proud to ‘dress up’ and prouder yet when people whom he passed would now address him as “Mr. Charles.” This made him feel good, for now he had their respect and he could hold his head up high.

As part of his training, Eric interned at the Blue Waters Hotel. Situated on the north coast it is one of Antigua’s top luxury resorts and has partnered with GARD in its internship and job placement programme. Having successfully completed his internship, Eric was offered full time employment at the resort and is now working in the Maintenance Department where he has been for about two years. “I get along well with most co-workers and disrespect no one” he says. He makes every effort to perform well and for that has been awarded Most Improved Employee of the Month.

Eric continues to grow and transform and is using his strengths as an influencer and motivator to shift the mindset of his friends. Through his efforts, many in the gang have gone on to attend GARD and other similar institutions while he has convinced others to keep off the streets. And, he continues to talk to those still wrapped up in gang life and feels that eventually more will come around. In all, he has positively influenced approximately 15 gang members.

Eric also represented Antigua and Barbuda at the Caribbean Youth Employability Conference, held last June in St. Lucia under the auspices of the International Youth Foundation and USAID. Eric spoke about his life and his transformation. A clip of his story can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/74236696>. Eric is committed to living a positive life. He intends to excel at whatever he does and to be an example to others that they too can change. He says: “I am the living experience that you can change and for people to see you in a different light.”

He often asks individuals, tradesmen, business owners, government and other organizations to be more supportive of struggling of the youth. “Young people need a light to shine, to guide, motivate and support them” he says. “Many want to do better but they need more molding and mentoring and be given a chance.” And to our youth he says: “No matter what anybody tells you, stay focused and keep your head high. People will judge you, but know your focus which is to do positive. Always remember from the worst can come the best.”

Grenada

From Hopeless to Hopeful: Sherene Dominique

“My name is Sherene Elizabeth Dominique and I am twenty years old. I live in the small village of Tempe, a suburb of St. George’s, Grenada, with my other brothers and my sister. I am a well rounded person and a single mother. I completed my secondary level education then went on to enroll in the Caribbean Youth Empowerment Program (CYEP), with interest in the skill of Customer Service.

As I reflect on the training, I can honestly say that I enjoyed every aspect of the program. PTS was my favorite part. I learned how to care for my child in a better way. I especially used the lessons in stress management because my mother died suddenly during the course of the training. It took a lot of dealing with stress for me to even cope with the thought that she would never be there for me again. On completing Life Skills, I was then ready for my skill of choice: Customer Service. It was a bit challenging at first because I had a lot of misconception as to what customer service was all about. I learned about different types of customers, anger management, dress code and the way I should carry myself.

After formal training I commenced my internship at Courts Grenada Ltd. as a Customer Service Representative where I was able to apply all that I learned and acquired more experience. I was then given a part-time job at the same establishment after my internship. In September the NEWLO CYEP team chose and prepared me for an interview at the Sandals La Source where I am now fully employed. I am proud to be able to provide for my child and my siblings.

This is probably one of the best decisions that I have taken in my life. Starting as a young single mother with little hope, I have made a major transition through CYEP. Many would have said that I would not make it but with determination and drive I have shown everyone that I can succeed. Thanks also to my family who had to sacrifice a lot while I was enrolled in the program. I am now empowered with a skill which has given me a job and helped me to move out of the bracket of being unemployed.”

Expanding Opportunities: Christon Joseph's Story

After being expelled from school, liming on the block with nothing to do and being involved in criminal activities along with other gang members, Christon Joseph was in search of change. For the 23-year-old from Sauteurs, St. Patrick, Grenada, the Caribbean Youth Empowerment Program implemented by GIDC offered him this opportunity. He called to inquire about the entrepreneurship training program and then eagerly applied. Christon was invited to attend an interview where he also completed an entrance math and English exam.

Two weeks later he was surprised by a call from a GIDC representative inviting him to enter the program which would include training to operate and manage his own business as well as life skills, ICT and remedial math and English. Without hesitation, Christon accepted the opportunity, because he saw that this program would assist him in pursuing his dream of opening his own bar.

Christon engaged wholeheartedly in class and began believing in his dream. While in training he had to be excused for two weeks to serve a penalty for gang violence. Because of his commitment, the project team allowed him to rejoin training after the two weeks. When he came back he expressed how moved he was for being given an opportunity. He was determined to prove it was well deserved and applied himself to the remaining training and business plan development.

With a completed business plan in hand and constant support from the Business Support Officer, Christon faced the challenge of finding funding to open his business. However, this challenge was mitigated with assistance from his family members who saw the change in him and his willingness to succeed at his new business venture. Today, he is operating his own business selling drinks as well as a few grocery items to persons within the community of Rose Hill, St. Patrick's where he lives. He intends to expand his business in the future by offering a larger range of items.

Christon feels the program transformed his life and placed him on a better path.

Saint Lucia

Allyne Phillp: Confidence becomes a Career

Allyne Phillp, age 21, is from the urban area of Castries in Saint Lucia. Allyne's mother heard about the CYEP Career Guidance Program and suggested he apply. He was unemployed and felt it might be useful in helping him to move forward. Having made the commitment, he participated fully in all activities, and presented himself as a disciplined and confident young man.

For Allyne, the Job Readiness Workshop was the component of the training that had the biggest impact on him. He felt that this not only prepared him for the interview process, but for the world of work, and for developing as a professional. While nearly all trainees are terrified of the mock interviews at the end of the Job Readiness Workshop, Allyne was not. In fact, he was the first trainee who ever asked to be interviewed; he wanted the experience. At the end of the interviews, it was determined that he had received the highest score. He was complimented for displaying confidence, and the interviewer felt that he had done his research and prepared well. Goretti Lawrency, the Regional Human Resource Manager from LIME, who serves as interviewer, said that if there was an opening he would have been hired immediately.

Mrs. Lawrency could not get Allyne out of her mind, so less than a week after the interview she contacted the Career Coach to offer Allyne a training position without pay. When asked why the offer was made, Mrs.



Lawrency said, “Allyne was selected for training at LIME as he demonstrated some of the qualities that we would like to see more of in our youth. His energy, positive attitude, interest in self development and a desire to learn is what initially caught my attention and I wanted to help nurture that.”

After three months as a trainee, Allyne signed a contract with LIME and as of December 1, 2013, has been employed as a member of the sales team. He says the Career Guidance Program gave him the start he needed and LIME has given him the opportunity to develop a career. For the foreseeable future, he plans to stay with LIME and work his way up the professional ladder. He says he likes working in the communications industry.

Vernessa Joseph: A Successful Entrepreneur

Vernessa Joseph, affectionately known as Vern, currently lives in L’Abayee Bexon, Saint Lucia with her two children. She attended the George Charles Secondary School but did not write the Caribbean Examination Council Exams (CXC). She dropped out of school in the fifth form because, at that time, all she was concerned about was having fun. She says, “I was not interested in getting an education or writing the exams, I just wanted to have a good time.” After getting pregnant at age 19 with her first child and at age 20 with her second child, all fun and games stopped. Reality struck, and she realized that she had to take care of her responsibilities and her children.



Vernessa, from a very young age, was skilled in hair dressing. In her spare time she would braid or try different hair styles for family, friends and neighbors. After separating from her children’s father, and with the encouragement of family members, she enrolled in a three-month hair dressing course which was being administered by the National Skills Development Center (NSDC). After the completion of the training, she began operating from home because she lacked the finances and resources to open her own hair salon.

A few years later, the opportunity to get trained in Life Skills, ICT and Small Business Management with BELfund offered her the chance to submit a business plan with the hope of receiving funding. With the idea in mind of becoming an entrepreneur, she signed up for the six-week training program. “Since enrolling in the training, I have become a better person,” she stated, “the *Passport to Success* component taught me how to better deal with everyday life situations.”

After completing the CYEP training, Vernessa submitted a business plan to BELfund in order to obtain funding for the purchase of equipment, stock and building renovations to establish a hair salon. She secured a loan of EC\$20,000 (about US\$7,400) in order to set up the business. Vern’s Heritage Salon is a sole proprietorship owned by Vernessa Joseph. The salon is located in L’Abayee Bexon quarter of Castries. Vern caters to the needs of every client by rendering excellent service at an affordable price in a comfortable location. She has over five years hair dressing experience and intends to be the number one leading salon in the Bexon community as well as surrounding areas. “Since the salon is located downstairs from my home, I have no set operating hours because I am there all the time,” noted Vernessa, “Whenever a client comes to the establishment, I offer my services, because I want to ensure that everyone is satisfied at the end of the day. I offer a wide variety of services from cuts, relaxers, perms, colors, braiding and weaving.”

Vernessa is proud that she attended the training program because she is able to incorporate some of the management techniques learned within the small business management component training into her establishment. She is now in a better position to provide financially for herself and her children. With the continued assistance of BELfund and the training officers, she believes that her business will be successful.

Transformations: Miah Paul

Miah Paul's problems with delinquent behavior during his early teenage years started when his family moved from the village of Laborie to a community in the town of Vieux Fort known as La Ressource. "This is where the street life began," Miah said. "In the community of La Ressource the majority of young men were unemployed and involved in gang activities. One of the major gang activities was the trafficking of narcotics. Gang life is what I saw on a daily basis and after a few months in the community I joined one of the local gangs, and the block became my second home,"



He dropped out of school with the firm belief that drug dealing would be his career. He strongly believed that educating oneself was simply a waste of time when he could generate such significant amounts of cash with very little sweat. "I was one of the main minds around and there was always someone to take the fall. I saw myself as a leader. But it all hit me that this was the worst life to live when my best friend, who is also my younger cousin, got arrested for taking the blame for what was mine. I felt like a user and someone who was to afraid to take responsibility for my actions," Miah said.

"So I then took a break from everything around me which I knew was negative and started paying more attention to society, and what was happening around me. I then heard of the NSDC programme, and thought I should apply," he explained, "It was one of the best decisions of my life."

At age 22, Miah came into the CYEP training resenting authority. In the classroom setting he was no longer the leader and efforts to get him to conform to rules and regulations were always met with resistance. "My attitude started to take a turn for the better after a long conversation with the counselor during the third week of the programme. For the first time in a long time I felt committed to doing what was right," he said. Miah transformed from one of the most challenging trainees to the most helpful and dedicated trainee, who also served as a mentor to a number of trainees in his class.

"The life skills lessons became very interesting once I learned the practical application. I can never forget the lesson on anger management which suggested taking a time out when in heated situations. This has helped me deal with my temper," he said. "I also learned how to resolve conflict in a positive manner and how to deal with my negative emotions by having a positive reaction. During the training I also learned how to take my responsibilities more seriously, because if I didn't, there was no way I would be able to finish the programme."

"What I loved the most about the NSDC programme is the fact that it kept me away from the block and negative activities. This is why I made a promise to myself that I would do the best in my class and I did. I even got an award for being the most outstanding trainee of the Computer Repair and Networking class," he boasted.

"The award I received in the program was my first and only award, and it means the world to me. I have now graduated with my University of West Indies endorsed certificate and I am working as a technician. I never imagined I could be here. Now, the sky is the limit!"