



At Risk Youth Issues and Challenges in Jamaica





Introduction

- Bouncing Baby, Nuclear family, Food on the table, Nanny, Early Stimulation, Education, Support, Homework, Proper Schooling, Love, Affection, Knowledge, Morals, Values

STOP! WAKE UP...

- Dead Bodies, Police Brutality, Hunger, Guns, Drugs, Prison, Rape, Sadness, illiteracy, Pain, Anger, Frustration, Hopelessness, Struggle, No Jobs, No Skills Abuse.....At Risk Youth Realities.



Overview

- Jamaica's population – 2.8 million persons
- Youth (10-24 years) numbers approximately 800,000, or some 30% of the total population.

(Source Population Reference Bureau, 2009)



Situation of Youth in Jamaica

- The Socio-economic realities of their families often result in a breakdown in the family unit
- This creates shifting households, and in some cases leads to involvement in illegal activities such as crime and violence, gang warfare, drugs and prostitution
- The families from which the majority of these youth emerge, live below the poverty lines



The Challenges

- In Jamaica, inner-city youths face major stigma and discrimination based on the communities in which they reside
- Young “unattached” youths meaning those not in school, unemployed and not participating in any training programme, comprise approximately 30% of the total youth population
- Unemployment rate amongst youth is 31% even though the national unemployment rate is 11 %



Educational Challenges

- Of youths 15-24 years, 26.2 %M and 7.9%F are illiterate
- Irregular attendance and under performance at school both at the primary and secondary levels
- About a quarter of unattached youth attain only a Grade 9 level or less of education



Educational Challenges

- Lack of proper nutritional support – even though this situation has drastically improved through the support of the Government's PATH programme
- Educational institutions not fully equipped to identify and offer support for children with special needs



Educational Challenges

- Inadequate educational opportunities which leads to limited academic achievement
- This results in challenges in matriculating to tertiary level of education, which impacts the quality of the labour force



Homicidal Violence

- Based on the recent crime statistics, youth within the 16-24 age group accounts for 49.4% of all major crimes, with males representing 98.7% of those arrested
- Homicidal violence is a leading social problem with - 77% by the gun
- It is male on male, youth on youth, poor on poor – sometimes reprisal killings
- *(Source: Economic and Social Survey Jamaica 2008)*



Violence

- Female youth are vulnerable to sexual exploitation and adolescent pregnancy
- 80% of students have witnessed violence by the age of 18 years
- 74% witnessed stabbing while 40% witnessed killing by the police
- *(National Committee on Crime and Violence)*

UNITY IN THE
COMMUNITY WE WANT
PEACE NOT WAR. TALK
IT OUT DONT FIGHT IT OUT
ONE LOVE.



31/8/06

Con...tion &
Peac...

hen you

Conflict Resolution & Peace
Building

Location of Games night

Games - Bingo, drama, monopoly
Card games and other games

Skills - team, bingo, first aid,
quick, light

Changes - No shouting
Praying at
7:30



Reproductive Health Challenges

- “Granny” and “Sugar Daddy” culture based on youth economic realities and their “survival strategies”
- Sex tourism
- Working in massage parlours
- Homosexuality



Reproductive Health Challenges

- Inability to negotiate condom use – which lead to
 - Teenage pregnancy
 - HIV and STI infections which sometimes goes untreated
- The unavailability and limited access to youth friendly reproductive health and other services



Other Youth Challenges

- The “intrusion” of the American Rap culture on our youth population where they are into the “bling bling” Culture – jewelry, name brand clothing and vehicles

- “Quick Money culture” – “Con-man-ship” or Extortion
 - Cash for Gold
 - Lotto Scam



Other Youth Challenges

- The influence of dancehall music “Gully-Gaza” Syndrome
- The myth that sex with a Virgin will cure an STI, places an additional burden on young girls
- Increased “forced” sexual encounters
- The demand by the “Dons” in some communities for particular child from a family to become his sexual partner



Amidst the myriad of challenges, there is still
HOPE

- Let us – all sectors of society – partner and strengthen our work to make a positive difference in the lives of young people





Thank You!!

Question and Answers

