

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 of their families of ten 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



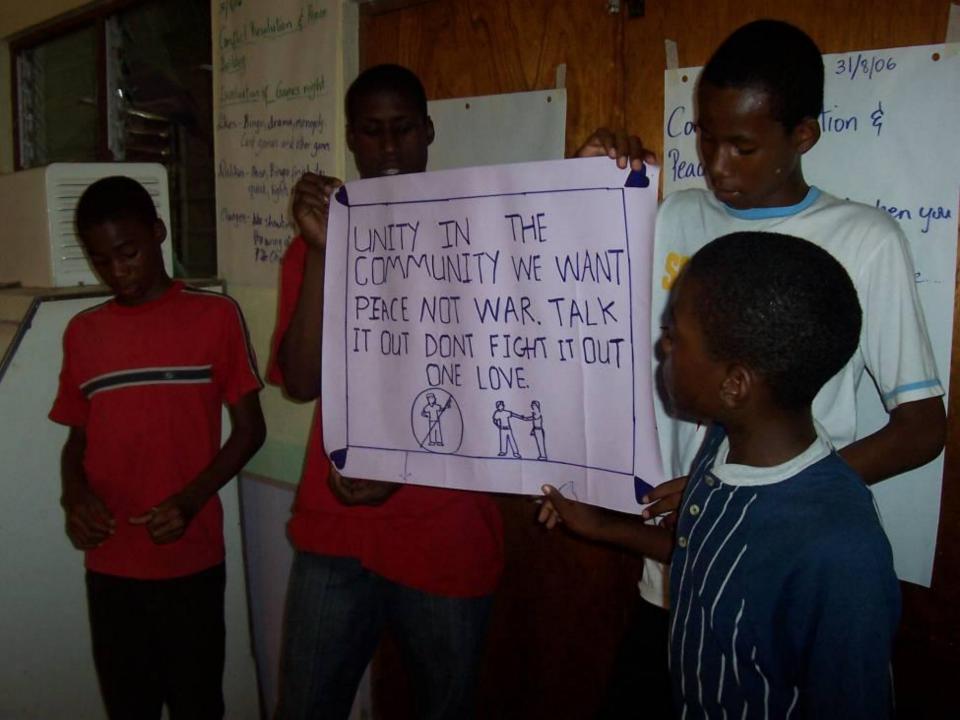
Homicidal Violence

- 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)





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

