



MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND CULTURE

**Green Paper No.
National Youth Policy 2015 - 2030**

Government of Jamaica

April 9, 2015

Preamble

Jamaica intends to become by 2030 - “The place of choice to live, work, do business and raise families”. Jamaica’s youth are intelligent, ambitious and eager to succeed in life. All together, as a country in our differing but complementary roles, we must engage our youth meaningfully in all aspects of development – otherwise, we all stand to lose and leave the Vision unrealised.

The intention of this Green Paper is to present for discussion, what has emerged from a wide range of youth, technical, policy level consultations and review of pertinent studies as to the key issues relating to youth. In particular the situation of youth as related by the youth themselves, has sparked the development of the Vision, Goals and Strategies that are presented in the document. The strategic framework proposed, is intended to facilitate the collaboration necessary to advance the changes needed in the youth development sector. It is expected that this Green Paper will continue to trigger wide-ranging debate and facilitate continued dialogue to formalize the establishment of a revised and relevant policy and implementation framework for positive youth development within Jamaica.

The Green Paper presents the vision, guiding principles and the commitments of the government which will undergird the policy, a situation analysis of youth and the analysis of the policy and legislative environments. This is followed by the Policy Goals and main strategies. Subsequently, the general implementation strategies are presented. The document concludes with an outline of the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

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Our Youth Represent Vibrant Possibilities

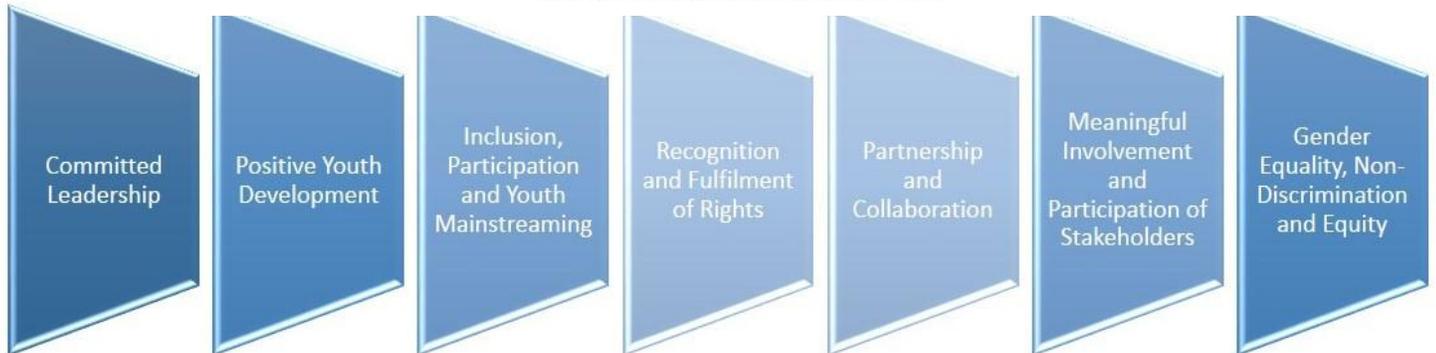
For development

NOW and in the FUTURE

JAMAICA NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY 2015 – 2030



GUIDING PRINCIPLES



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Jamaica has made commitments to youth development dating back to the 1980s when the first youth policy was drafted. This commitment to youth, and the understanding that youth are important agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation has been further underscored by the re-establishment of the National Youth Service in 1994¹. Further to this, the National Centre for Youth Development (NCYD) was established in September 2000 as the Youth Division of the then Ministry of Local Government, Youth and Community Development and transferred to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture in May 2001. As indicated by the National Youth Policy 2004, the NCYD was created to facilitate youth development in Jamaica by serving as an institutional focal point to ensure coordination of and collaboration on youth related programmes and research, and for the dissemination of relevant youth related information, while recommending and designing programmes to enhance and propel youth development in Jamaica.

Upon revision in 2004, the National Youth Policy sought to define a common vision and framework for youth development. The 2004 Policy called for a review every five years, to ensure that the goals of the Policy remain relevant to the situation of young people. Upon review, it is evident that despite investment, there is still need for additional/new programming and a coordinated approach to policy implementation to secure positive youth development. Accordingly, the government has committed to the development of a new National Youth Policy.

The new National Youth Policy 2015 is being developed against the background of three international and regional strategies for youth development: the *World Programme of Action*

¹ This was legislated in the National Youth Service Act of 1999.

for Youth Development, CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan and the *Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment*. The 2015 Policy will form the basis of collaboration and coordinated actions for advancing strengths and embracing diversity in Jamaica's youth by key partners - government agencies, the business community, civil society and development partners. The Policy will establish a framework within which each young person can be supported to pursue and achieve his or her goals, and contribute to the success of their local environment, country and the world. By establishing goals and areas for actions that are transformational and achievable, the new policy will build on the groundwork laid by previous National Youth Policies, and seeks to advance the overall development of Jamaican youth.

The process to revise the National Youth Policy (NYP) incorporates a significant input from Jamaica's young people as agents of their own development, which reinforces the importance of their individual responsibility and accountability. The Policy review process also benefited from consultations with policy makers and service providers in the youth development sector and was guided by a Technical Oversight Committee (Annex 1).

1.2 Policy Purpose and Rationale

Youth comprise approximately 20% of the Jamaican population, which translates to about 525,369 persons. Approximately 274,658 of the youth population are between the ages of 15 and 19 years. In addition, there are 226,480 in the 25 to 29 age-group which represents an additional 8 per cent of the total population that may also need to be considered in developing youth programming. Given their relative size in the population and youth role in the development of the society and economy, the situation of youth is therefore important in ensuring the sustainability of the society and broad based prosperity.

Overall, the National Youth Policy 2015, shows the Government of Jamaica's continued commitment to the young people of Jamaica. The Government recognizes the development of youth as an imperative for national development, but also as a complex, dynamic and iterative

process that requires the active involvement of a number of portfolio areas and actors. The government also recognizes that in partnership with stakeholders and the facilitators of youth development, a proactive approach is required, that will allow for anticipation of issues to be addressed and adaption of efforts to promote positive and sustainable youth development.

The National Youth Policy 2015 is being developed at a time when there are numerous environmental changes and serious national and global challenges. However, inherent within national and global challenges, are the opportunities for renewal, transformation, and the forging of long-term solutions for socio-economic development.

While Jamaica's economy is transitioning and restructuring for growth, it continues to work through several internal constraints and external volatilities that have impacted the country as a small island developing state.

Progress has been evident in some macroeconomic indicators, such as:

- A return to economic growth in July–September 2013;
- Generation of a fiscal surplus in FY 2013/14;
- Declining debt to GDP ratio;
- Job creation and a decreasing rate of unemployment;
- An improvement in Jamaica's ranking in the most recent Global Competitiveness Report (2014).

Stronger growth and further positive movements in these indicators are required to create economic opportunities and the ability to support youth development. The youth (age 15-24) sector which now constitutes 20 percent of the population has been severely impacted by the absence of robust inclusive economic growth. The impact is manifested through a diverse range of issues affecting youth development.

Research² reveals that a relatively high levels of crime and violence plaguing the society, poor family structures, intergenerational inequities, poverty, injustice, unequal educational opportunities, limited job opportunities and the increasingly high health risks associated with the spread of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are some of the many challenges that have placed a growing number of Jamaican youth at risk. Underpinning these issues is the present economic performance and the decline of opportunities for the population, but more specifically young people³. In light of this, the GOJ has committed to focus its attention on achieving economic growth in a manner that includes opportunities for meaningful youth participation, employment, and income generation activities.

Traditional deficit models of youth development focus on depicting young people as incapable of making good choices, beset by psycho-social problems and, in need of interventions. These deficit models assume that there is an inherent impairment in the condition of being a young person. The revised National Youth Policy will adopt the Commonwealth Youth Programme's (CYP) approach⁴ which indicates that a new concept of youth development and youth work should promote a positive youth development model rooted in human rights and emphasize the view that young people personify the vibrant hope and potential of any society.

The Policy takes into account the diversity in the youth population, and is therefore adaptive to the needs and aspirations of every young person, inclusive of all groups and categories, not limited to attached, unattached, vulnerable youth and youth with disabilities. The cognizance of the realities of the multiple environments and conditions within which youth development takes place – domestic (home), community, local, regional and international and the related social, economic, political and cultural realities – stand as a common agenda of the Policy. In so doing, the Policy aims at

² See The Youth Mainstreaming Strategy 2010 and the Situation Assessment of Jamaican Youth 2012.

³ See analysis of this issue in the National Youth Mainstreaming Strategy (2010).

⁴ This approach is detailed in the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment 2007 – 2015 last retrieved from http://www.thecommonwealth.org/shared_asp_files/GFSR.asp?NodeID=169313 on August 24, 2013.

addressing the gaps identified in the policy and legislative environment and in programming for youth.

These gaps include, but are not limited to:

1. the inadequate development and implementation of strategies for the mainstreaming of youth issues across a range of social policy areas;
2. the need to develop a data-driven culture, relevant and timely data collection systems to support the professionalization of the Youth Sector;
3. the need to improve the implementation of critical policy decisions pertaining to youth participation in national development, including youth with disabilities;
4. the need to develop institutional capacity at the local and national levels that will be able to lead and drive the execution of the policy.

To these ends, the purpose of the Policy is to:

1. Express and delineate national commitments to positive youth development that can be used as a basis for programming and funding.
2. Facilitate a shared vision for all stakeholders and identify goals and actions needed to position positive youth development as a key component of the national development agenda.
3. Address key gaps which currently exist in youth development approaches, coordination, policy and legislation.
4. Provide a national framework within which youth development programmes can be designed, funded and executed.
5. Strengthen coordinating mechanisms, which will ensure that policy intent is ultimately translated into programming action to the benefit of Jamaica's youth.

1.3 Key Policy Issue: The Definition of Youth

The statistical definition of *youth* varies across countries, organisations and instruments. The most common is the United Nation's (UN) definition of youth, which is the age cohort 15-24⁵. The terms '*youth*' and '*young people*' are typically used interchangeably. The African Union (AU), which represents 54 African countries, defines youth as the age cohort 15-35, in the African Youth Charter⁶. At the same time, the Commonwealth Secretariat uses the statistical definition of 15-29 years⁷.

The 2004 Youth Policy adopted the UN age range for youth of 15-24 years. In light of the Government's commitment to create mechanisms for reviewing and re-aligning relevant support services based on the needs, expectations and aspirations of young people and ensuring that young people have non-discriminatory access to all such services, this Policy adopts the same age range, but takes into account critical factors such as vocational opportunities, employability and financial readiness for those within the age range 25-29 years. At present, the economic condition stands as a challenge for this age range 25-29 years; as they are aligned to higher levels of unemployment and prolonged period of dependency in setting up independent household. Given the focal point of this policy to enhance positive youth development, programming for those persons within the age range 25-29 year will be provided to facilitate the needs and provide guidance to achieve both personal goals and the national goals. It is intended that activities at the national level will be implemented in a flexible manner to embrace the 25-29-age cohort in special and deserving circumstances.

The National Youth Policy 2015 has also retained the UN defined age for youth at 15-24 years, by taking into account the importance of comparative performance against counterparts regionally and internationally, and to ensure core strategies and standards are maintained, by

⁵ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) *Definition of Youth*

⁶ African Union (AU), *African Youth Charter*, 2006

⁷ Commonwealth Secretariat, *Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment*, 2007

use of comparative data to guide governments, civil society partners and youth.

2 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

2.1 Youth Development – A Historical Context

Internationally, a focus on youth development for economic and social transformation was evident from 1945 when the World Youth Conference was hosted in London, and the subsequent formation of the World Federation of Democratic Youth⁸. A thrust toward youth participation in decision making processes was further evidenced by the formation of the World Assembly of Youth in 1949. This initiative sought to promote the participation of youth in development processes in each country, through the sharing of ideas and action among youth leaders in United Nations member countries. Other initiatives such as the formation of the International Union of Students in 1946 and the World Festival of Youth and Students in 1947 represented commitments to youth empowerment and participation in decision making processes.

By 1965, the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples. The Declaration called on Governments, non-governmental organisations and youth-led groups to take appropriate measures to ensure that youth are able to maximise their potential, and are brought up within a spirit of peace, justice, mutual respect and understanding. Twenty years later, International Youth Year (IYY) was declared in 1985. IYY was commemorated under the theme *Participation, Development, Peace* and was intended to highlight the importance of direct youth participation for development. This participation was recognised as being critical in the study, decision-making processes and resolution of major national, regional and international challenges.

IYY was a defining period for youth development in the Caribbean. In responding to the UN mandate, CARICOM member countries sought to establish, expand and revitalise their

⁸ CCYD, *Eye on the Future Report*, (2010)

programming for youth. National Youth Councils were established in a number of CARICOM states, eventually leading to the Caribbean Federation of Youth (CFY) which was a representative body for National Youth Councils.

Through these actions youth development has been positioned as a global priority. At the level of CARICOM, a Regional Strategy for Youth Development (RSYD) was adopted in 2001. This strategy provided a framework for youth development, focusing on social and economic empowerment activities, adolescent and youth protection, adolescent and youth leadership, governance and participation, and adolescent and youth health and reproductive rights.

A greater sensitivity to youth development issues is therefore evident regionally and international, underscored by a paradigm shift which embraces the importance of youth as assets for development.

2.1 Global and Regional Youth Development Challenges

In recent years there has been increased international attention to the needs of young people, and an increasing commitment to youth development through public policy initiatives. As at April 2014, over 60 per cent of all countries have a national youth policy⁹. This figure represents a 50 per cent increase on the number of countries with a youth policy in 2013. These policies are primarily geared towards providing a framework for creating and implementing effective youth development initiatives.

In spite of this increased attention, youth across the world continuously face obstacles which negatively impact on their capacity to successfully transition into adulthood and the workforce. In developing countries, youth are confronted with limited opportunities for education and training,

⁹ Youth Policy Press, *The State of Youth Policy in 2014* (2014)

viable employment and health and social services¹⁰. Up to 60 per cent of youth in developing countries are not working, or in school, or have only irregular employment¹¹.

From a survey of Commonwealth governments and youth, the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) indicates that unemployment is the most severe issue affecting youth in all regions¹². Other challenges reported include violence and crime, lack of youth participation, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and inadequate access to education and training.

2.2 National Youth Assessment

Through various research interventions young people have expressed their hope and desire to improve their lives, and are using whatever means they see as available to reach their goals, despite the structural constraints that they face. For example, sixty-one per cent (61%) of the youth captured in the School to Work Transition Survey (2013) listed career and personal success as their most important aspirations. There has been an increase in enrolment in post-secondary education or training of the 19-24 age group from 7.5 per cent in 2000 to 28.9 per cent of the cohort in 2013. Additionally gross secondary enrolment has increased from 84.6 per cent in 2001 to 91.9 per cent in 2013. These increases represent almost-universal enrolment (ESSJ, 2013).

The most notable aspect of this increase has been the doubling of enrolment of youth (15-16 years old) from the poorest households over the last decade, from 21.7 per cent in 2001 to 42 per cent in 2010 (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2010). The 2007 Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey reports that 70 per cent of youth have someone at home who was interested in their school work and had high expectations of them.

Young people in Jamaica have also started making better decisions about their reproductive health. There has been a significant fall in the rate of teenage pregnancies from 112/1000 in 1997 to

¹⁰ UNFPA, *State of World Population* (2014)

¹¹ United Nations [UN], *World Programme of Action for Youth* (2010)

¹² Commonwealth Youth Programme, *The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment*, (2007)

72/1000 in 2012¹³. The National Family Planning Board¹⁴ attributes this to a combination of delay in first sex and the responsible use of contraceptives by sexually active adolescents, supported significantly by the HIV awareness and behaviour change campaign. Although reduced, this rate remains comparatively high in Latin America and the Caribbean and disguises the variations across the country.

The 2012 Situation Assessment (Moncrieffe, 2012) indicates that the gifted, and non-poor youth feel disconnected from the society and feel ignored by policy and programme interventions for a variety of reasons. They attribute this treatment to the perception that they are doing well, not overtly engaging in antisocial behaviours and therefore seemingly pose no immediate threat to social harmony. The reality is that these groups of youth report in the Situation Assessment that they face emotional issues and social challenges such as sexual assault and suicidal tendencies resulting from domestic and personal issues that they often feel they cannot express.

The complex nature of issues faced by youth indicates the critical use and application of the *positive youth development approach* in designing programmes. This allows for inclusion and broad-based approach in offering emotional and psycho-social support across the wide cross-section of youth.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned issues, according to the 2006 Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (Wilks and Younger et al, 2006), 67.9 per cent of youth were happy most of the time. The Survey reported that 84 per cent of households had adults who had high expectations of the youth and 53 per cent of households had adults who were perceived as providing a caring relationship within the home. This data indicates that there is some basis for a policy focus on the provision of support to youth in order to foster an environment that supports their positive development. Programmatic support in particular needs to be unconditional and, while responsive to their observed backgrounds, not designed to reinforce existing limitations.

¹³ State of the World Population Report 2014, published by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

¹⁴ See Reducing Adolescents' Fertility rates and incidence of STI by the Promotion of abstinence by Harriett M. Clarke in The Health Provider published by Jamaica's National Family Planning Board last retrieved from <http://www.jnfpb.org/pdf/newsletter/HealthProviderVol2No3.pdf> on August 24, 2013.

2.3 Youth Development

From a survey of Commonwealth governments and youth, the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) indicates that unemployment is the most severe issue affecting youth in all regions¹⁵. Other challenges reported include violence and crime, lack of youth participation, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and inadequate access to education and training.

National data coupled with the voices of young people in Jamaica reflect similar trends in the issues being experienced. Education and unemployment were noted as two key issues that most affect youth success; indicative of a high level of unemployment and poor education outcomes. Other issues noted are crime and violence, health, poverty, inadequate social protection, unstable family environment and lack of access to services.

The following section provides an analysis of the issues noted above and some the mechanisms being used by Ministries, Department and Agencies mitigate some of these issues. This analysis is being used to inform the development of key goals and strategies for the Policy.

2.3.1 Education

Although education remains a challenge for young people, the Caribbean has seen improvements in the quality of education at the early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Illiteracy is lower among youth than previous generations, and youth typically have higher levels of education than their parents. Despite this, the CCYD suggests that education systems across the Caribbean are underperforming. As a result, youth are often ill-equipped for the world of work and there is the need to ease the transition between education and employment.

Despite high rates of expenditure across CARICOM, the relatively high attrition rates from the education system still presents cause for concern. High attrition rates are attributed to poverty and unemployment, adolescent pregnancy and a male lack of motivation. Additional concerns expressed

¹⁵ Commonwealth Youth Programme, *The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment*, (2007)

by the CCYD include a fall in the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) passes in Mathematics and English, and a low male to female ratio at tertiary institutions.

Youth across the Caribbean have similarly expressed that they have limited access to education and training as a result of poverty and the inadequate number and enrolment capacity of schools and training institutions. Youth have also noted that curriculum options and delivery systems are not ideally geared towards their talents and interests, and the needs of the labour market. Security issues in schools, as evidenced by increased gang activity are also a concern of Caribbean youth.

The Jamaican education system, while delivering on the promise of universal access, has yet to bridge the quality gaps that have historically characterized the sector (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2009). The result has been an education system that provides universal access to education of a widely variable quality and the perpetuation of what has been described in the 2012 Situation Assessment of Youth (Moncrieffe, 2012) as ‘historical injustices’ that reinforce intergenerational social and economic exclusion and poverty. Based on the recommendations from the Situation Assessment of Youth, the education system needs to produce young people who are academically equipped to access existing tertiary education and post-secondary training opportunities. The Situation Assessment further suggests that there is a need for the education system to provide parallel, equally regarded, paths to success, which consider the different interests, gifts, abilities and aspirations of Jamaica’s youth.

The importance of education to Jamaica’s youth is clear from the findings of the National Youth Survey 2010 (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2010), which shows that while more than half of the sample had no academic qualifications, almost 70 per cent identified education as their major concern. Low levels of achievement at the primary level have serious implications for the quality of input to the secondary schools which ultimately influences performance in the Caribbean Secondary Examinations Council (CSEC) exams taken at the end of five years in secondary school. Despite the narrowness of this measure, solid secondary education achievements evidenced by the number of CSEC subjects obtain by students is considered the basis of a productive and successful professional life in Jamaica. Recognizing this, in 2004, The Task Force on Education Reform

established a target of 60 per cent of Jamaican students achieving at least five subjects inclusive of Mathematics and English Language by 2015.

The data shows that for the five years 2010-2014, an average of 17 per cent of students in the Grade 11 cohort passed five CSEC subjects including Mathematics and English Language¹⁶. With less than approximately one-third of students passing five subjects including Mathematics or English Language or both; it is unlikely that the Task Force target will be met by 2015. The data imply that almost two-thirds of the cohort failed to gain sufficient qualifications to move on to any post-secondary academic institution, which also compromises their ability to obtain sustainable employment.

The 2013 report on the Transition of Jamaican Youth from School to the World of Work (STATIN, PIOJ and ILO, 2013) indicates that at the time of the survey, in spite of 58.4 per cent of youth aspiring to complete tertiary education, approximately 65 per cent or 491,200 youth were not enrolled in a school or training programme. Less than 9 per cent had tertiary or higher education. Economic reasons were posited as the primary response for not completing education or training.

An equally important indicator of the performance of the secondary education system is the participation rate in the CSEC and how schools have generally been able to determine which students are able to sit the exam despite having attended school for five years. In 2014, 57.4 per cent of the Grade 11 cohort was entered to sit Mathematics and 64.9 per cent entered to sit English Language, highlighting the variation of opportunities open to young people based on the type of secondary school they attend and the internal policy of the schools. This substantively determines the course of their employment opportunities and future educational opportunities. Students attending most of the traditional secondary high schools are more than twice as likely as their counterparts in other schools to meet the tertiary level matriculation standards¹⁷. As noted above, these issues reflect a combination of inadequate student preparation for secondary school as well as variation in the quality of secondary level education.

¹⁶ Planning and Development Division, Ministry of Education 2015.

¹⁷ Ministry of Education, Planning and Development Division, 2013.

The underperformance of the students in the education system is the result of a complex mix of, school, family and socio-economic factors. Analysis of data collected by the National Education Inspectorate (2012), points to school leadership and the quality of teaching and learning as the two most decisive elements in school performance. Other research has shown that nutritional status of children (Walker et. al, 1998), parental involvement (Munroe, 2009) and socio-economic status (Samms-Vaughan, 2005), all influence students' educational achievement. In some areas, issues such as overcrowding, fewer contact teaching hours for students attending schools on the shift system and inadequate physical plants that preclude access to laboratories and technical education space, continue to compromise the quality of education to which students have access.

Being cognizant of the factors affecting performance, the Education sector has been developing and implementing policies and programmes designed to achieve the desired standard of performance and levels of accountability for the quality of delivery and outputs.

Among the strategies that are being implemented are: increasing access to education and training opportunities for disadvantaged groups including unattached youth and persons with challenges; increasing nutritional support, increasing access to, and use of technology; and ensuring increased access to post-secondary and tertiary education and training. The *Ministry of Education (MOE)* has also mandated that by the end of 2016 all students exiting the system at the secondary level should have a marketable skill, regardless of their academic inclination. *Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)* is being integrated into the education system to ensure that the system prepares fully rounded students equipped with the skills and competencies necessary for participation in a global economy. As a result of the TVET five new occupational skill areas have been introduced into secondary schools: Call Centre Operations, Digital Animation, Crop Production, Food and Beverage and Motor Vehicle (Air Conditioning) Repair. The MOE has sought to improve linkages between the education system and the workforce. To this end, additional skill areas will be added as dictated by the needs of the economy.

Although the passes in CSEC is used as the first indicator to measure academic success for further secondary achievement and sustainable employment, in recent times consideration has been given to the variability that exists within the society, of having some young people who were not provided with the opportunity to obtain academic certification through the formal high school education system. As such, attention has been given to those who have obtained essential skills training through City and Guilds and HEART/National Vocational Qualification, a certificate of competence recognized in the CARICOM and Commonwealth countries. The High School Diploma Equivalency (HSDE) offered by the Jamaica Foundation for Long-life Learning (JFLL) also provides another avenue for the youth to access education.

Educational access remains a challenge for some as financial resources form a barrier to obtain registration and continued enrolment at the secondary level. This condition resonates with the GOJ and through the *Ministry of Labour and Social Security*, in part, has attempted to assist many young people through the *Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education* (PATH). The programme registered 315,848 beneficiaries who were paid as at December 2014, with 9.5 per cent being students at the grades 10 to 13. In 2014, PATH transferred \$463.3M to student in grades 10-13 helping to keep 30,107 of these beneficiaries in school and off the unemployment statistics. The Programme also offered post-secondary grants of amounts ranging from J\$15,000.00 to J\$50,000.00; in continuing that aspect of the programme, J\$70m has been earmarked for the fiscal year 2015/2016. The Tertiary Bursary has also assisted with students at the tertiary level, 2013/2014 noted J\$33.7M was awarded to PATH Students in 2nd and 4th year pursuing tertiary education programmes across institutions accredited by the University Council of Jamaica. Each bursary is valued at J\$100,000.00.

This policy therefore, views improvement in education quality and the provision of acceptable alternative pathways to success as key pillars on which youth development initiatives must focus. Critically, this will require close collaboration between the MYC and MOE along with other key players, in advancing the key areas of the Education Transformation Programme.

2.3.2 Poverty

Globally, economic power tends to be lowest among youth. Poverty is most significant in the least developed countries, and in rural areas of developing countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. The UN points to ‘juvenilization’ and a ‘feminization’ of poverty, suggesting that youth and women are particularly affected by the situation. Poverty is characterised by hunger, ill-health and limited access to education and other basic services. For youth in developing countries, poverty is also manifested in homelessness, social discrimination, lack of access to, or control over resources such as land, and a lack of participation in decision-making processes. Within the Caribbean, poverty has resulted in high school drop-out rates, as youth seek to supplement family income. Poverty has implications for educational and economic opportunities, inequality and sexual exploitation and abuse, and risk of contracting and transmitting HIV/AIDS.

Poverty remains an important and real challenge to the positive development of young people. The causes and consequences of poverty are well researched and documented, and include low levels of educational attainment and skills development, lack of economic opportunities, unemployment, low wage employment, underemployment and inability to access some basic social services. Young people living in poor households suffer the consequences of their socio-economic condition, which is likely to undermine their social, emotional and mental development. Poverty has been recognized as a likely factor that may inhibit opportunities to young people, resulting in poor performance in school, poor attendance, and a reduced likelihood of graduation, which may later result in lifetime of underemployment, and risk of continuation of the cycle of poverty (Moncrieffe, 2012). Given the probability of the impact of poverty, young people living in poverty are in need of significant support from youth service providers and programming to help them overcome the ills of poverty, as part of the broader commitment to poverty eradication. Building the resilience of youth must be a significant part of the government’s youth development agenda.

Cognizance of this state of poverty in the country and its implication for social and economic growth, the GOJ sought to eradicate poverty by supporting and implementing programmes assist in advancing earning potential at the individual level and community level. As a holistic approach the

Jamaica's Policy Towards Poverty Eradication and the *National Poverty Eradication Programme* (NPEP) inclusive of an institutional framework for NPEP was approved by Parliament in 1997. The overall aim was eradicating absolute poverty and reducing the number of persons below the poverty line; emanating from this are a number of programmes that have sought to eradicate poverty.

The PATH programme being such, “seeks to rationalize the operations of three (3) then existing income transfer programmes in order to eliminate duplication, reduce administrative costs, streamline the use of resources, and increase the effectiveness of programme delivery to the poor”¹⁸. As part of the strategy to eradicate the Jamaica Social Investment Fund was established to assist in providing funding for programmes and projects that will improve the quality of lives of citizens. One such programme is the roll-out of the *Integrated Community Development Programme (ICDP)* in Steer Town, St Ann, and Barrett Town, St James. The project seeks to have dozens of youngsters introduced to entrepreneurship and trained in various market-driven skills. The project, which will run to May 2020, is financed by the World Bank for implementation in 18 communities island wide and is aimed at a sustainable improvement of the quality of life of residents in each area¹⁹.

In light of the current, National Vision 2030 to reduce the prevalence of poverty to less than 10% by 2030, a Cabinet Decision 06/15 of February 9, 2015 approved the development of a *National Policy on Poverty and National Poverty Reduction Programme*. The Cabinet Decision 06/15 also endorsed the establishment of a Poverty Reduction Unit, within the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ).

2.3.3 Health

The three leading causes of death among young people aged 15-29 years in Latin America and the Caribbean are external causes (homicides and traffic accidents), degenerative diseases, and communicable disease (HIV/AIDS, pneumonia among others)²⁰. The Caribbean has the second-

¹⁸<http://www.mlss.gov.jm/pub/index.php?artid=23>

¹⁹ <http://www.jsif.org/content/news/entrepreneurial-training-youngsters>

²⁰ UNICEF, *Adolescents and Youth in Latin America and the Caribbean*

highest prevalence of HIV in the world. Generally, in developing countries there is a lack of information and services available to adolescents to assist them in understanding their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health²¹.

Contraceptive knowledge is high among Caribbean youth, yet still, adolescent pregnancy rates remain high. At 70.5 births per 1000 women aged 15-19, Latin America and the Caribbean have the second highest 15-19 fertility rate in the world, second only to Africa²². Though the global rates have significantly been trending down, complications during pregnancy and childbirth remains the second leading cause of death among females aged 15-29 years²³. The leading cause of death for females 15-29 globally is suicide²⁴. The mental health of young people is increasingly recognized as a global problem. In the Caribbean, the Caribbean Commission on Youth Development (CCYD) also reports a decline in mental health indicators, with high levels of anger, hostility, depression, and suicide being reported by the 15-29 age cohort²⁵.

Underscoring this condition in the Caribbean, Moncrieffe (2012) reported that an increasing number of young people within the adolescence category are referred to Child Guidance Clinics for mental health and behavioral issues. These problems were traced back to factors such as exposure or victims of crime and violence within and/or outside of their families, illicit drug abuse, loss of one or two parents to violence or disease, child-headed households and lack of adequate psychosocial and remedial support.

Moncrieffe (2012) further reports that other health challenges experienced by youth are related to maternal health, lifestyle diseases, and intentional and unintentional injuries. Details on information related to intentional and unintentional injuries show that young males account for more than 60 per cent of the intentional and unintentional injury cases seen in Accident and Emergency Units of

²¹ UN, 2014

²² UN, *Regional Overview: Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2013

²³ UN, 2014

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ CCYD, 2010

Public Hospitals Incidences of falls, accidental lacerations and motor vehicle accidents are the most prevalent categories of unintentional injuries treated.

As it relates to intentional injuries, males accounted for the majority of stab wounds, gunshot and blunt injury cases. Adolescents accounted for 67 per cent of all sexual assault cases seen in public hospitals. Females were treated for the vast majority of sexual assault cases. Females also accounted for the majority of attempted suicides²⁶.

Due to their high level of dependence on adults and constraints to access to reproductive health services, youth are highly vulnerable to factors that promote negative reproductive health outcomes including early initiation to sexual activities, forced sexual relations, and insufficient protection during sexual relations. It is estimated that up to 80% of first pregnancies among youth aged 15-24 are mistimed, unplanned or unwanted. Girls that are poor, less-educated, or live in rural and remote areas are most at risk. This bear condition bears as a contributory factor to low birth weight, preterm births and developmental delays.

Youth continue to display a relatively high rate of HIV/AIDS infection, particularly among the 20-24 age group, despite their reported awareness of methodologies to reduce HIV infection [97% of survey respondents of the National Youth Survey (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2010) indicated use of condom] as well as where to go to get tested (94%). The 2012 KABP Survey suggests that HIV/AIDS knowledge is declining among youth as fewer young persons are endorsing correct preventive practices. When compared to 2008, there has been an increase in the number of youth who are endorsing abstinence. There is however a noticeable decline in the number of young males who endorse having one faithful uninfected partner. The number of females who endorse condom use as a HIV/AIDS preventive practice has also declined. These results indicate that awareness, though necessary, is not a sufficient condition to prevent infection.

²⁶ PIOJ, *Economic and Social Survey 2013*

Continued focus on the sexual and reproductive health of young people and an increase in attention to existing and emerging mental health issues are both addressed under the Health and Wellbeing goal of this policy.

2.3.4 Employment and Labour Market Opportunities

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that more than 100 million new jobs will need to be created over the next 20 years in order to provide suitable employment for the growing number of young persons in developing countries. Globally, youth unemployment is high, and has worsened in every region of the world since 2007. Youth are disproportionately affected by unemployment, with the global youth unemployment rate being 13.1 per cent. This figure is almost 3 times as high as the global adult unemployment rate. Approximately 74.5 million young people are unemployed, with the unemployment rates being highest in the Middle East, North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Though the global average is 13.1 per cent, more than half of CARICOM nations have youth unemployment rates above 30 per cent. In keeping with global trends, female youth unemployment rates in the Caribbean are higher than the male youth unemployment rates. The availability of decent employment is also a challenge, with more than 30 per cent of Caribbean youth being employed in the informal sector. High unemployment is one of the primary reasons why more than 85 per cent of Caribbean nationals between the ages 15 -29 years posit that they would leave their countries for more developed ones if they had the opportunity.

Data in Jamaica shows that as at October 2014, of all persons in the unemployed labour force, 38% fell within the age group 14-24 years. The rate of unemployment within this cohort, 36.0%, was more than twice higher than the national rate of 14.2%. Females in this youth cohort were also more likely to be unemployed with a rate of 48.8% compared to 27.3% for males²⁷. This trend dates back to data from 2002 that reveals situation was particularly pronounced among young women, whose average rate of unemployment was more than three times the rate for the total labour force, and

²⁷ Statistical Institute of Jamaica, October 2014

consistently approximately 40 per cent higher than male youth. Youth in the rural areas are also likely to be unemployed and to have fewer opportunities to secure employment than young people in the urban areas.

Table 1: National and Youth Unemployment Rates by Sex 2002-2011: Jamaica

Average 2002- 2011	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	Unemployment rate,
11.7	12.6	12.4	11.4	10.6	9.8	10.3	11.2	11.7	11.4	15.1	Total
8.1	9.3	9.2	8.6	7.3	6.1	7	7.6	7.9	7.8	10.6	Male
16.0	16.7	16.2	14.8	14.6	14.3	14.5	15.8	16.4	16	20.7	Female
27.4	30.1	30.8	27.1	25.9	23.7	23.6	25.5	26.4	29.9	30.8	Youth
21.3	23.9	25.2	22.5	19.8	17	17.4	19	20.6	23.5	23.6	Male Youth
35.4	37.9	37.8	33.2	33.6	32	31.6	34.1	34.2	39.6	39.7	Female Youth
37.8	32.6	32.1	32.4	36.3	39.8	38.6	39.5	39.2	39.5	47.9	Youth as % of Unemployed

Source: Calculated from Labour Force Survey, 2002 - 2011.

Also of note is the large share of the unemployed pool accounted for by youth. Table 1 also shows that on average, the share of the youth in the unemployed pool was 37.8%, declining from a high of 47.9% in 2002 to 32.6% in 2011. Again, female youth had a disproportionately high share of the unemployed pool, compared to their male cohorts. The disproportionate burden of unemployment borne by youth is also seen by recognizing that the average unemployment rate of youth has been much higher than their average share of the population for the past decade.

The 2013 School to Work Transition Survey indicates that employed youth worked primarily in the services sector (75%) of the economy as “Service workers and shop and market sales workers” (28%). Approximately 25% of youth were entrepreneurs, with 23.1% being own account workers, and 1.7% being employers.

Beyond traditional employment, approximately 27% of young people responding in the National Youth Survey of 2010 expressed an interest in establishing their own small business and 13% had attempted to do so (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2010). Ultimately, the major obstacles to young persons' establishing businesses are their low level of training, particularly in entrepreneurship, inadequate access to capital, lack of knowledge and low levels of collateral.

Several attempts have been made through the initiative of various MDAs to prepare young people for employability and entrepreneurship. As part of that initiative, the *Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce* has drafted the *MSME and Entrepreneurship Policy* to create employment, facilitate wealth creation and to form the backbone for private sector growth and expansion. Government of Jamaica (GOJ) places entrepreneurship and MSME development at the forefront of the country's economic policy agenda and as such, the MSME & Entrepreneurship Policy will provide the intervention framework that offers coordinated, coherent and targeted support to the sector in an effort to expand its contribution.

The *National Youth Services* (NYS) under the *Ministry of Youth and Culture* has implemented a number of programmes to foster holistic youth development, volunteerism and entrepreneurship. Specifically, the NYS has implemented programmes geared towards training thousands of youths across the island for job placement, and in personal and career development; an estimated 15,000 have been trained to date. The NYS Graduate Work Experience Programme (GWEP) has allowed over 300 hundreds of young university graduates to work as interns in public and private sectors organisations. The NYS launched an Entrepreneurship Programme and has accomplished the training of over 200 young people who have the desire, the drive, and ideas to form sustainable businesses that create jobs.

The *CSJP*²⁸ *III Intervention Programme* implemented through the *Ministry of National Security* is another means by which the government seeks to increase labour market attachment and employability among youth. The Programme aims at providing on the job training through partner

²⁸ CSJP - Citizen and Security and Justice Programme

agencies, and academic support for person at the secondary level and part funding for tertiary level. It is evident that employment is a critical issue for youth development and as such, a number of other programmes are being developed and continue to be implemented to affect the labor market and the preparedness of the young people in Jamaica.

As another mechanism and strategy to increase employment and entrepreneurship, the GOJ under the ambit of the *Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF)* has designed and implemented *Young Farmers Entrepreneurship Programme (YFEP)* to address the sustainability of the industry affected by an aging farmer population and the threat of food security in Jamaica. The objectives of the programme are: increased production and exports, a reduction in the importation of foreign produce and the bolstering of employment within the Sector. The targets for the programme include the establishment of at least one fully functioning farm every month.

Continued efforts have been made to heighten employability and entrepreneurial skills among the Jamaica young people. The *Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining* launched the *Youth Employment in the Digital and Animation Industries Project* in September 2014. The project has an estimated cost of US\$20 Million Dollars, and is being financed by the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development with a project lifecycle of five years. The main aim of the project is to foster entrepreneurship and employability among Jamaican youth and create a favourable and innovative ecosystem for the emergence and growth of youth-led startup enterprises. The Project aims at targeting approximately fifteen thousand youth in rural and urban areas with the main target group being youth between the ages of 15-30 years.

The Project has also been designed to foster collaboration and participation from youth institution working with youth in low-income communities and vulnerable target groups such as youth with disabilities and will provide need-based scholarship funding to facilitate the participation of the “bottom 40%” of the youth population in the training programme.

2.3.5 Crime and Violence

For young males across the world, violence, primarily from gang activity and civil conflict claims the most lives. Among youth in the Caribbean, crime is the number one concern, and youth associate the phenomenon with poverty, unemployment, politics and social inequalities. Globally, the evidence suggests that there is an increase in juvenile criminality, particularly in marginal sections of urban centres. Youth offenders are have typically been exposed to violence as observers or as victims, have basic education, and come from a poor socioeconomic background.

The Caribbean has some of the highest homicide rates in the world, with the male 15 – 29 years homicide rate being more than three times the global average. Additionally, estimates suggest that young men between 15-35 years commit 80 per cent of crime in the Caribbean. Youth are also the main victims of crime in the Caribbean, and youth have perceptions of lack of safety and a general concern for their wellbeing.

Jamaica currently has one of the highest per capita levels of violent crime in the world (Ministry of National Security, 2012). This extremely high rate of crime has been blamed, in part, for the poor economic performance over the last 30-40 years. One of the most disturbing features of this high rate of crime is its persistence. Few countries in the world have experienced such high levels with such consistency over a long period of time, as Jamaica.²⁹

Much of this criminal activity is driven by gangs of youth involved in violent transnational organized crimes such as lottery scamming, cyber-crimes, money laundering, trafficking of narcotics and people, as well as identity theft and fraud. The National Security Policy identifies these as ‘tier 1 threats’, crimes which are a ‘clear and present danger’ to the society. According to Smith and Green (2007), this is consistent with the global trend that young men between 15 – 29 years of age are disproportionately represented both as victims and perpetrators of violence.

Based on the data, issues relating to crime appear to be linked to a combination of the high level of unemployment, high rate of poverty, disparities in wealth, education and opportunity. These are all

²⁹ See Harriot A. D., (2008).

issues identified as barriers to positive youth development. In the National Youth Survey (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2010), 96 per cent of young people felt that the only way to reduce crime was to create more jobs and improve the education system. This view is supported by the UNDP in its 2012 Caribbean Human Development Report, which points out that youth involvement in crime is largely linked to the other development deficits such as poor education, lack of employment and is the result of inadequate attention to youth development and youth empowerment (UNDP, 2012, p. 45).

GOJ continues its support the effort in reducing crime and violence; through the *Ministry of National Security* (MNS) in recognition of these issues have employed several programmes to address the psycho-social, vocational, educational state of young people. Among these programmes are the *OAS Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme*, funded by USAID provides service (vocational, psychological, educational, job opportunities and mentoring) for girls and post release support for both children at South Camp and Metcalfe Street. This programme will run for a period 28mths, with an allocated budget of USD \$1.9mil.

To reduce crime and violence among young people, the **MNS & MOE** have created a joint initiative called the *Safe School Programme (Anti-Gang Initiative)*. This programme allows for Police Personnel to be placed in selected (at risk) schools as School Resource Officers, to reduce incidents of violence and respond promptly where it occurs. Programme includes a psycho-social component that will help in changing the behaviours of the youth involved. Among the other programmes being implemented to reduce crime are *Educational and Vocational Training, Jamaica Combined Cadet Force, Police Youth clubs, Peace Management Initiative* and *BACK 2 Life Rehabilitation and Reintegration Project*.

2.3.6 Family and Supportive Environments

Families are important in influencing youth development and outcomes. The Situation Assessment (Moncrieffe, 2012), depicts an emergence of fractured families, neglectful and unsupportive parents (deep seated resentment towards fathers) and youth left to fend for themselves from an early age. These situations may lead to criminal behaviour – including violence, fraud, and prostitution –,

early pregnancies and self-harming. In more benign, but equally important cases, the result is despair, self-loathing and withdrawal – a certain recipe for intergenerational transmission of disadvantage.

Challenges are also present in the way in which young people are perceived and treated by adults in their general environment at school and in their communities. In their own voices, they recount instances of disrespect, exclusion, abuse and discrimination (Moncrieffe, 2012). This is particularly so for young people who are homeless, teenage mothers, and those who belong to minority groups³⁰ or are seen as ‘different’. Harsh and condemnatory communities and service providers who they say do not respect them and understand their real needs, comprise the environment in which some Jamaican youth live.

In recognition of this, the Government of Jamaica has committed to support better parenting and to improve parenting practices through prevention, awareness, skill development and support for better parenting through the establishment of the *National Parenting Support Commission*. However, the supportive environment required for positive youth development extend beyond the family to the environments that influence youth, for example, the media, church, culture and the community. Strengthening the support for families and working with key stakeholders to re-vision the possibilities for young people, their contribution, their needs and their potential is expected to be among the major outcomes of this policy.

2.3.7 Youth Participation

Increasingly, countries across the world are making efforts toward increasing the economic, social and political participation of youth. Caribbean youth typically express involvement and participation at a community level, while at the same time expressing alienation from national and regional political processes. Though internationally, young people are generally excluded from decision-making processes, the evidence also suggests that youth do not always take advantage of opportunities for civic participation. Internationally, youth voter turnouts are low, compared to the adult voter turnout and to the youth turnout in past years.

³⁰ This can include minorities based on: religion, ability and sexual orientation.

Youth organisations are seen as one means through which youth can effectively participate in societal processes. The CCYD however indicates that there is a general absence of vibrant National Youth Councils across the Caribbean, and youth still require additional opportunities to contribute to and participate in community, national and regional political and socio-economic development.

The *Ministry of Youth and Culture* continues to support the *National Youth Council* that acts as an umbrella organisation for youth clubs across Jamaica, which fosters youth participation at the community level, and advocate for youth participation in all levels of governance through providing assistance in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of government policy regarding youth. At present, the Ministry is facilitating the process of revising the Constitution to ensure that the Council remains current in championing the rights of Youth.

The increasing demand for effective student representation and the need for students' involvement in the decision making process in schools at all levels, resulted in a *National Secondary Students Council (NSSC)* that was legitimized through the Education Act of 1980. The programme was revamped and was later adopted by the MYC, where the Ministry continues to facilitate student leadership and governance by supporting capacity building workshops, mentorship and entrepreneurship among other training. Since the revamping of the programme, the NSSC has since experienced a significant increase in its membership. In 2014, the Council had over 100 schools participating in the elections for executive membership, registering an increase of 24 per cent compared with the previous year.

2.3.8 Sport

Despite the unceasing youth participation in various sports games locally, regionally and internationally, sufficient emphasis was not place on sports as a mechanism for national and youth development. Nonetheless, an appreciation has emerged, as there is now growing understanding around the world that sports programmes are powerful avenues for achieving youth, and broader national development goals. Sport offers a transformational tool for youth empowerment, as it can strengthen physical, psychological, emotional and social well-being and development. Jamaica has

sought to prioritise the role of sports in national development, as evidenced by the Vision 2030 Sector Plan for Sport and the National Sports Policy (2013).

As a tool for youth participation and empowerment, sport plays a significant role in sustainable human development. The Vision 2030 Jamaica Sector Plan for Sport seeks to strengthen the role of sport in national development by: broadening opportunities for participation in recreational and competitive sports for persons of all age groups; increasing facilities for sporting events at the national, community and school levels; increasing the number of trained coaches, administrators, and other personnel; strengthening the institutions for sport education and administration; and establishment of appropriate and effective policies, legislation and regulations to promote sport participation.

Through its strategies and actions, Vision 2030 Jamaica also plans to increase the growth of sport as a business and commercial activity with potential to contribute to Jamaica's economic development, and to ensure the consistent production of elite athletes who can compete at the highest levels of international sport.

The National Sports Policy also recognises the essentiality of sports to human and economic development. The implementation of the National Sports Policy will contribute to youth empowerment by promoting intellectual and physical health and enhancing social and economic well-being. The Sports Policy is expected to stimulate greater avenues for economic development while fostering a society of social cohesion and social integration at the community and national levels.

The implementation of the National Sports Policy will allow Jamaica's youth to realise significant physical benefits, and will contribute to building the capacity of youth to lead healthy lives, improve their wellbeing, and reduce risk of several major non-communicable diseases. Sports can also be seen to provide psychosocial benefits such as fostering social integration, while promoting active community involvement and building social capital.

2.3.9 Globalisation

Globalisation has presented new and increased opportunities for economic growth. In the Caribbean, ICTs have opened up opportunities for social and economic development. In addition to opportunities, globalisation also presents challenges for Caribbean youth. Many youth in developing countries are marginalised from the global economy, and unable to access the opportunities presented by globalisation. This marginalisation primarily results from inadequate education and limited skills.

Among CARICOM countries, the majority of youth between 15 and 29 years have never heard of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME). Even among those who have heard of the CSME, few can identify concrete opportunities or benefits to be derived. Across the Caribbean, most youth express strong nationalistic sentiments, and cynicism and apathy to the concept of a regional identity.

Globalisation although advantageous, brings with it a number of innuendoes that in some circumstances can be regarded as benefits through the facilitation and interaction of mixed identities and cultures that permeate one large open space. However, in another sense, globalisation may also contribute to the “erosion of national cultures and historical traditions”³¹. The value and contribution of youth to national building resonates with the GOJ, and as such, effort to preserve Jamaica’s culture through its young people is being enacted through the National Culture Policy under the remit of the *Ministry of Youth and Culture*. The Culture Policy seeks to, inter alia, create a framework for education in culture, through curricula and programmes to heighten cultural awareness in order to help preserve the Jamaican culture over the long term. The first initiative being undertaken by the Ministry is the piloting of the *Culture Card*, created to broaden the exposure of high school students to the Jamaican culture. The *Card* facilitates easier access to cultural venue and activities, to enhance their appreciation of different genres within the cultural sphere and lessen cultural barriers that exist.

³¹ Lemish, Drotner et al. 1998 as cited in Gidley, 2001. p.2

Another strategy being employed by the GOJ to capitalize on the benefits and opportunities of globalisation, is borne through cognizance of the change in the global market. The GOJ is seeking to establish Jamaica as the fourth node in the Global Logistics Chain along with Singapore, Rotterdam and Dubai. A multi-pronged approach involving MDAs is being employed in implementing the Logistics Hub Initiative (LHI); this initiative is driven through the “Business Ministry” *Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce* (MIIC). This initiative will not only benefit the country at the macro level, but on a citizen and meso level, as it is *able to create additional jobs*, improve road conditions, reward entrepreneurship and spur innovation and create a platform to make industries more globally competitive. This essentially will open gateways for young people to gain meaning employment and capitalize on entrepreneurial opportunities.

The effects of globalisation continue to dictate the management and execution of changes occurring within societies. The need and cries for youth inclusion and input in decision making have horde the social and political space over the past years. The *Ministry of Foreign Affairs* being responsive to national development through youth inclusion, initiated the process of establishing a Diaspora Policy that will, as one of its dictates form a framework to maximize youth engagement of all categories of youth between Jamaica and the Diaspora. The key strategies emanated from the goals of draft Diaspora Policy attempts to address the many facets of youth inclusiveness and participation, with an aim to concatenate that of Jamaica’s youth and that of the Diaspora. To achieve this, the Policy will employ the Diaspora Youth Connect (DYC) Project aimed at developing a new approach for engagement that involves the younger generations of the Diaspora in the socio-economic development of Jamaica³².

In an effort to capitalize on this level of youth involvement and inclusion with Jamaica and the Diaspora and in providing an expansive avenue for youth development, the National Youth Policy 2015 will take into account this existing framework through which to drive some of its strategies and activities.

³² Jamaica Draft Diaspora Policy

2.4 Institutional and Sector Arrangements

Youth development is implemented via a network of agencies – public, private and non-government organisations, and through partnerships with International Development Partners and faith-based organisations. The MYC plays an active role in coordinating the efforts of the sector; however whilst the MYC develops, reviews and monitors policy implementation, the partnership with International Development Partners and non-governmental and faith-based organizations, plays a key role in the implementation of the youth programmes.

The consultative process identified that one of the main weaknesses in implementing previous policies was the weak coordination and low levels of capacity in the youth sector. Additionally, although there are numerous programmes being implemented by various MDAs for youth, the platform to sustain strong partnership and synergy is lacking. This was compounded by the absence of a suitably resourced lead agency to drive the process. The analysis and consultations have indicated the absence of a legally constituted mechanism that has the authority, capacity and resources to: a) coordinate the sector; b) monitor and evaluate progress in relation to the targets and; c) garner resources for the implementation of the policy. These findings are also confirmed in the Youth Mainstreaming Strategy and point to the need to strengthen the mechanisms via which youth development initiatives are coordinated.

3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND NATIONAL COMMITMENTS

The Youth policy is guided by the following principles:

1. **Committed Leadership:** Strong leadership and solid commitment at all levels and in all sectors, are essential to create and maintain a society safe and secure for the nation's youth and for enhancing democratic processes.
2. **Positive Youth Development:** Positive youth development is a philosophy that promotes a set of guidelines on how families and communities can support young people so that they can grow up competent, healthy and develop to their full potential. Examples of desired

youth development outcomes are competence (academic, social, technical and vocational skills); self-confidence, connectedness (healthy relationship with community, friends, and family); good character (integrity, moral commitment); caring; and, compassion. This approach requires an emphasis on achieving positive outcomes in contrast to an approach that focuses on reducing negative outcomes.

3. **Inclusion, Participation and Youth Mainstreaming:** Youth mainstreaming is a strategy for ensuring that the needs and interests of the youth are considered in the development of all national policies, programmes, plans and legislation and is most likely to happen where there is full participation and inclusion of young people in decision making. In keeping with the National Youth Mainstreaming Strategy, this policy requires that all Ministries, Departments and Agencies assess their policies, plans and programmes to ensure that issues affecting the youth are explicitly considered and integrated.
4. **Recognition and Fulfillment of Rights:** Positive youth development is threatened when child and human rights are not recognized and upheld. Duty bearers such as the state, parents and service providers are responsible for the upholding the rights of youth and are accountable when these rights are infringed. Inherent in this principle is the premise that while the state and duty bearers have responsibilities to ensure that all rights of youth are upheld, young people have responsibilities also. Namely, they should, take their rights seriously, do not abuse them or infringe on the rights of others, use their opportunities responsibly, and contribute to and participate in family, community, school and society.
5. **Meaningful Involvement and Participation of Stakeholders:** This is both a principle and a key strategy. The participation of youth is a right, but is also a critical success factor in the design, development, delivery and evaluation of programmes for young people as well as a necessary step for young people to mature and become active citizens. The involvement and participation of other key stakeholders, such as parents, schools, NGOs, the church,

service providers and the media is also critical for the successful implementation of the policy.

6. **Partnership and Collaboration:** Every person and every sector of society needs to be actively involved in ensuring the development of a socio-economic environment that supports our youth. The creation of this environment involves building on existing opportunities for synergies in service provision, creating effective partnerships, collaborations, consultations and coordination with all stakeholders in the design, implementation, in monitoring and evaluation of youth-focused services.
7. **Gender Equality, Non Discrimination and Equity:** All programmes and projects developed and implemented should take into account the different circumstances, and therefore the different needs, of young people. In the spirit of the non-discrimination provision in the Bill of Rights of the Jamaican Constitution, no young person or group should be excluded from accessing services as a result of race, gender, age, (dis)ability, religious or other beliefs, socio-economic status, and geographic location, level of literacy or capacity to understand.

THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENTS

Led by these guiding principles, the Government of Jamaica commits that it will:

1. Make youth development a national priority and ensure the allocation of sufficient resources and services to support key sector goals.
2. Focus on achieving economic growth in a manner that includes opportunities for meaningful youth participation, employment, and income generation activities.
3. Provide support for parents and caregivers, helping them to create an environment where children and youth feel loved, respected and valued.
4. Continue to work towards improving and equalising the quality of education and training across all institutions so that all youth can benefit.

5. Improve the accountability of national institutions that provide an environment within which youth can progress on the basis of merit as opposed to access to networks of influence and privilege.
6. Pursue policies and programmes which can correct historical injustices, and break the inter-generational cycles of exclusion and disadvantage which deny youth opportunities for advancement.
7. Take all necessary steps to build a society that is just, with safe and secure communities, where young people are free from violence and abuse.
8. Preserve the natural and cultural environments for current and future generations.
9. Continue to provide services to promote good health and healthy lifestyles, ensuring that young people have non-discriminatory access to all such services.
10. Create mechanisms for reviewing and re-aligning relevant support services based on the needs, expectations and aspirations of young people.
11. Respect the potential and contribution of youth.

In line with these national commitments, the government, through focus on the main pillars of this policy, will provide an environment that is adaptive, accommodating and supportive of youth surviving, thriving and achieving their dreams and aspirations.

4 VISION STATEMENT AND POLICY GOALS

Policy Planning Framework	Priority
National Development Plan – Vision 2030	<u>National Goal #1:</u> Jamaicans Are Empowered To Achieve Their Fullest Potential
Medium Term Socio- Economic Policy Framework (MTF) 2012- 2015	<u>National Outcome # 1:</u> A Healthy and Stable Population (Youth)
National Youth Policy 2015- 2030	Complete and Implement the National Youth Policy and an Action Plan to ensure <i>positive youth development</i>

Figure 2: Policy Planning Framework

In order to achieve the national goal and its outcomes - “*Jamaicans Are Empowered To Achieve Their Fullest Potential*”, and by creating “*A Healthy and Stable Population (Youth)* -, it is imperative that the positive aspects of youth development be maximized, while addressing challenges. It is important to ensure that programmes are developed that will meet the needs of all young people at each stage of development.

In crafting the Policy Vision for Youth, the National Vision 2030, and the Vision for Children (overlap ages 15-18) were taken into account:

National Vision 2030:

“Jamaica, the place of choice to live, work, raise families, and do business”,

Vision for Children:

“Jamaican children realizing their full potential, with their rights to survival, protection, development and participation guaranteed in a peaceful, nurturing, protective and child-friendly environment.”

4.1 Vision Statement

National Youth Policy Vision:

“All Young people in Jamaica to achieve holistic development and optimal potential, empowered to innovate and compete globally, being respectful of diversity and the rights of self and others, while contributing to the National Development and Growth.”³³

4.2 Policy Goals

In achieving the goals of the Policy, a multi-sectoral approach, partnership and collaboration with key stakeholders will be warranted that would capitalize on existing programmes, as well as the development of new programmes that will address the needs of young people.

Policy Goal 1: Increased Educational Access and Benefits to All Young People to Improve Capacity and Capability to Enter the World of Work

The policy views education as an indispensable tool in achieving positive youth development. Through partnership with MOE and other key stakeholders the policy will seek to improve the quality, diversity and relevance of education; young people will be better prepared for the world of work and have more opportunities to develop holistically.

³³ This Vision was developed based on issues raised at consultations and research emanating from Situation Assessment of Youth in Jamaica (2012).

Broad Objectives:

1. Increase the efforts to improve and equalize the quality of education and training across all institutions so that all youth can benefit;
2. Expand second chance opportunities for out-of-school youth to complete their education and acquire a marketable skills;
3. Improve equitable opportunities to secondary, post-secondary and tertiary educational and other training platforms;
4. Expand extracurricular activities in schools, youth clubs and community-based and youth-led organizations;
5. Improve education and vocational training, to be responsive to the changing demand for skills in the labour market and the economic development strategy of the country;
6. Enhance the capacity of schools and teachers to effectively deliver sports educational programmes;
7. Strengthen collaboration with learning and training entities, to develop and provide specific programmes that will use a holistic approach (community, school, family and youth) to garner self-resilience.

Policy Goal 2: Improved Health Access and Services to Ensure the Holistic Wellbeing of Young People

Positive and holistic development is dependent on access to adequate health services, particularly sexual and reproductive health support and the provision of social protection programmes for both young people and their families. The policy will guide the efforts in designing programme in conjunction with the Ministry of Health and other relevant stakeholders to address the health and wellbeing needs of young. All young people should have access to basic youth friendly and appropriate health services to maintain their physical, mental and emotional well-being.

Broad Objectives:

1. Increase access to basic youth friendly, gender sensitive and appropriate services, education and information to maintain their physical, mental and emotional well-being;
2. Improve the targeting of health resources and interventions to those with special needs and or disabilities, including to those in need of mental health services;
3. Improve advocacy for and contribution to the design and delivery of health services to respond to youth issues in a non-discriminatory manner;
4. Increase awareness and understanding of all categories of young people on health related information such as sexual, reproductive and mental health;
5. Support active youth involvement in the design and implementation of services and information geared towards their health and well-being;
6. Increase awareness and access to opportunities to develop and express an enhanced appreciation for multi-cultural diversity, heritage and culture;
7. Increase awareness of sports as a means of building the whole person.

Policy Goal 3: Improved Employment and Entrepreneurial Opportunities for Youth.

The challenge of youth employment requires an *integrated* policy mix, and interventions at the macro- and micro-economic levels to improve labour demand and supply, and the quantity and quality of employment. Reflecting this, the policy must address issues related to training for global environment, employment and entrepreneurship, including access to resources for business development. It must create a framework to support young people in exploring opportunities in areas of potential growth. The collaborative efforts of key stakeholders (public, private and international) is vital for the success of this goal.

Broad Objectives:

1. Increase access to decent employment through educational and training platforms;
2. Create an enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship;
3. Promote youth employment and skills development in the context of globalization and technological innovation;
4. Promote the designation of funds to enable employment among vulnerable groups including youth with disabilities, young women and street youth;
5. Provide expanded training programmes for youth in priority growth-related industries, and new including logistics, business process outsourcing, information and communication technologies, cultural and creative industries, agribusiness and energy;
6. Improve coordination and expansion of current efforts to engender creative innovations in entrepreneurship business start-up at supporting business start-ups among youth in areas of sport, cultural industries, ICTs, community and medical tourism, agro-industries/food sector, and other relevant sectors that emerge;
7. Promote the Decent Work Agenda to ensure employability of the youth and adequate protection of young workers;
8. Increase labour market information and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that education and vocational training is responsive to the changing demand for skills in the labour market and the economic development strategy of the country.

Policy Goal 4: Establishment of a Safe, Nurturing and Secure Environment for Youth to Thrive

The context and environment in which young people live are critical to their success. Safe, nurturing families, schools and communities are indispensable elements of positive youth development, and as such, will be one of the foundation goals of the policy. Improved parenting, reduction in crime and violence, protection from physical, sexual and verbal abuse in their homes and communities will undergird this focal area. The integration and partnership among key MDAs should address the existing policies and programmes to ensure this goal.

Broad Objectives:

1. Strengthen institutional enforcements and collaborative interventions to protect youth from exploitation, violence, abuse, social exclusion, harmful traditional practices and discrimination;
2. Promote civic education, regional integration and the formation of a sense of Caribbean identity through multiple channels to preserve their national and cultural identity, and expand youth holistic development;
3. Increase awareness and understanding of youth about their role and responsibilities in making their schools and communities safe;
4. Develop and implement sustained behaviour modification and public education campaign aimed at stemming youth involvement in crime and violence, and promoting positive and transformational core values;
5. Support the efforts in the fight against trafficking in persons especially as it affects youth;
6. Strengthen the participation of youth in the protection, preservation and improvement of the environment.

Policy Goal 5: Heightened Youth Mainstreaming and Participation in Nation Building

The GOJ embraces the importance of youth as assets for development. Societal commitments to youth – to respect their rights – and their commitments to themselves to fully exploit their opportunities while respecting the rights of others form the core of this goal. It incorporates key issues such as young people’s rights to participation in all facets of society, to leisure, to full citizenship and to express their diversity inter alia.

Broad Objectives:

1. Increase youth awareness of their responsibilities to self, family, community, school and country;

2. Promote active contribution and participation from young people to their own development and to societal change at community, national and regional levels;
3. Support the mechanisms that support youth participatory rights on all relevant platforms;
4. Expand structures that facilitate youth participation in formal governance structures and processes;
5. Increase awareness of youth to recognised, rewarded and promoted for their excellence, volunteerism and contributions to development at all levels;
6. Improve the process and platforms for youth engagement in decision-making, and as partners in democracy and development.

Policy Goal 6: Established Support Equitable Provisions for Young People in Special Circumstances

There are groups of young people whose wellbeing is severely compromised by the circumstances, often beyond their control. These young people in care of the state and others in conflict with the law (among others) require special focus under the National Youth Policy 2015. The collaborated efforts of MDAs is integral in realising this goal.

Broad Objectives:

1. Improve programming and provide nurturing environments for youth in state care;
2. Improve case management approach to addressing issues affecting youth in need of care and protection;
3. Increase and provide equal and effective access to education, training, health care services, employment, sport and cultural and recreational activities for youth with disabilities;
4. Improve facilitation for educational and recreational activities for continued development for youth in conflict with the law;
5. Develop mechanisms to provide oversight for youth in correctional facilities and to ensure their rehabilitation and reintegration into society;

6. Support in the prioritization of preventative policies and programmes aimed at juvenile delinquency;
7. Develop and implement a family reintegration strategy, which will focus on strengthening families to provide in-family care and protection for vulnerable children, where this is a viable option;
8. Support the Social Protection System in its ability to identify and intervene on behalf of vulnerable youth.

Policy Goal 7: Strengthened Capacity and Partnership in the Youth Sector

The successful implementation of the revised National Youth Policy is heavily dependent on the ability of the main coordination mechanism to effectively build partnerships among key stakeholders in the public and private sector and civil society. Building these partnerships, engaging multi-stakeholder support and monitoring the implementation of the policy require strong institutional mechanisms to ensure that each stakeholder is able to play a substantive role. It is imperative that this goal be achieved to effectively realize the other 6 goals outlined in the Policy

Broad Objectives:

1. Strengthen the operational relationship between all Ministries, Departments and Agencies of the Government of Jamaica impacting youth development;
2. Develop the capacity of the Ministry of Youth and Culture and relevant agencies to implement, monitor and evaluate the Policy and support the implementation of programmes and activities in the sector;
3. Implement an inter-ministerial coordinating mechanism to ensure the continued evaluation and achievement of strategic development for the sector;
4. Foster the development of meaningful partnerships and regular consultations with and between state and non-state agencies, and the private sector to ensure the provision of needed services for young people;

5. Strengthen measures to ensure youth mainstreaming throughout all sectors and ensure youth issues are mainstreamed throughout national planning.

5 ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT

5.1 Economic Context

Perhaps the single most important and most studied characteristic over the past 4 decades is the Jamaican economy and its very low rate of growth, which presently averages slightly less than 1% per annum. The rate of growth of the population has also been slow – 0.36% per annum, according to the 2011 population census³⁴ – which has kept the average per capita rate of growth from falling. The weak growth is one factor explaining the lack of employment opportunities for both the youth and the “adult” components of the labour force. The most commonly cited reasons for the poor economic performance have been:

- The burden of debt that has tended to force up the rate of interest and force down public investment, especially in physical infrastructure
- Monetary policies have not been sufficient to stimulate economic growth, due to the poor market conditions associated with the slow global recovery
- Low labour productivity has also frequently been cited as a principal factor in the lack of competitiveness of Jamaican producers, and that in turn has often been attributed to the high share of unskilled persons, upwards of 70%³⁵, in the labour force

³⁴ See National Census Report (2011).

³⁵ See National Report of Jamaica on Millennium Development Goals for the UNECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (2009) pp. 14 last retrieved from <http://www.jm.undp.org/files/GOJ%20National%20Report%20to%20UNAMR-Final.pdf> on August 24, 2013.

- Crime drove up the cost to businesses that had to make greater provisions for security, discouraged multiple work shifts, and undermined the confidence of potential investors, especially from overseas

5.2 Policy Environment

The National Youth Mainstreaming Strategy (2011) has pointed to weaknesses in Youth Policy coordination and implementation as an important deficit in the youth sector. The Strategy highlighted the need for greater co-ordination at the ministerial and institutional levels in order to avoid overlap and duplication of youth services and programmes, as well as ensuring a more efficient and cost-effective use of available resources. In such a scenario the national youth policy must adopt best practices that maximize the likelihood of attaining the desired positive results. Such best practices emphasize youth development as an enduring, overarching purpose. The youth development process, which the policy supports, should entail the creation of a range of contexts that promote youth development. The youth development policy cannot be developed in isolation and the nexus between the youth policy and other public policies such as education, crime prevention and diversion, justice reform, health, entrepreneurship, labour market development and with the national framework development plan of Vision 2030 Jamaica must be clearly established.

A key limitation of the existing policy environment is **the notable absence of a specific legislation to streamline youth development as an important component of the national development agenda**, requiring special focus, regulation, planning and oversight in the same way that housing or education is treated as important platforms or pillars of national development. One detrimental outcome of this situation is the inability to firmly position the sector as one of national priority and to garner the resources that it requires.

However, the issues facing the nation's youth have not gone completely unaddressed. The fact is that activities in support of youth development is being implemented in an evolving policy environment where much of social and economic policy provisioning in the last decade has been concerned with improving the lives of the youth, either directly or indirectly.

Vision 2030 Jamaica National Development Plan, The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the National Education Strategic Plan, the Programme for Advancement through Health and Education (PATH), the Justice Reform Policy Agenda Framework of 2009, and the National Parenting Policy and Commission 2012 are just some of the major interventions which identify the young people as central to national development. The Growth Inducement Strategy (2012), outlines a framework for short to medium term economic growth that acknowledges that all underutilized human resources – of which the youth is a major component- must be mobilized to make productive contributions to the economy. The Strategy further recommends the provision of additional funding to cater to at-risk youth populations, and promote the expansion of training in high-demand, skill areas and for entrepreneurship.

Additionally, in 2014 the Government of Jamaica passed the Disabilities Act which seeks to protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment by persons with disabilities of privileges, interests, benefits and treatment, on equal basis with others. The Act seeks to ensure the full and effective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in society, through achievement of the main objectives: reinforcing and promoting the recognition and acceptance, within Jamaica, of the principle that a person with a disability has the same fundamental rights as any other person; and promoting individual dignity and autonomy, including the freedom of choice and independence of a person with a disability.

Vision 2030 Jamaica speaks to the development of a globally competitive workforce that can meet the country's development needs. Issues pertinent to the youth are addressed in the National Development Plan, with emphasis on this group in the Population Sector Goal 3 which is ***'Empowerment and protection of adolescents and youth to enable them to fully realize their social, cultural and human rights and fulfill their physical, economic and social aspirations'***.

The specific targets/ desired outcomes of this goal for 2030 are:

1. Adolescents and youth are numerate and literate by age 19.
2. Programmes exist to identify, treat and rehabilitate adolescents and youth at risk of abuse and neglect.

3. Existing institutions are strengthened to more effectively coordinate adolescent and youth development programmes.
4. Human and infrastructural capacities for programme delivery are strengthened.
5. Access to services and skills training are provided for adolescents and youth with special needs.
6. Employment opportunities are provided for youth including those with special needs.

To accomplish these outcomes, the Vision 2030 Jamaica – National Development Plan outlines the following strategies:

1. Educate and sensitize adolescents and youth about their rights and responsibilities, and provide awareness for social development, self-expression and involvement in national development.
2. Strengthen programmes that provide for the reproductive health and rights of adolescents and youth.
3. Provide adequate funding for youth programmes.
4. Target adolescents and youth for social development, entrepreneurial, education and training opportunities.
5. Promote work in youth development as a viable career choice.
6. Increase availability and access to services for adolescent and youth development.
7. Increase opportunities for recreational activities including sports and culture by establishing green spaces, and adolescent and youth facilities.
8. Build awareness of existing training opportunities.

Vision 2030 Jamaica also addresses youth development in both its Education Sector Plan and Training and Workforce Development Plan. The Education Sector Plan envisages that the average beneficiary of ‘our education and training system will have completed the secondary level education, acquired a vocational skill, gained proficiency in the English Language, a foreign language, Mathematics, a science subject, Information Technology, participated in sports and the

arts, gained awareness and pride in our local culture and possess excellent interpersonal skills and workplace attitudes.’³⁶

Additionally, the training plan is built on the understanding that changes in the global economy make knowledge and skills acquisition among the most important long-term economic investment a country can make. Shifts in production modalities, products and services and the impact of these changes on competitiveness, essentially dictate the focus of Jamaica’s workforce development and training strategies. Young people are key to these changes and the country’s ability to grow its economy and compete globally. Further, the Medium Term Socio-economic Policy Framework (MTF) 2012-2015, includes a specific set of strategies and actions for youth under National Outcome No. 1.

Beyond national plans, Jamaica currently has several sector specific plans/policies, some of which were either non-existent or in draft stages when the 2004 National Youth Policy was approved. The most pertinent of these are:

1. The National Culture Policy of Jamaica 2003
2. The National Strategic Plan for Education (NESP) 2011
3. The National Policy for the Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles in Jamaica (2004)
4. The National Parenting Policy 2010
5. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) and Entrepreneurship Policy- 2013
6. The National Plan of Action for Child Justice 2010-2014
7. The National Security Policy 2012
8. The National Crime Prevention and Community Safety Strategy 2010
9. Information and Communications Technologies Policy 2011
10. The National Restorative Justice Policy 2012
11. National Sport Policy 2013
12. Justice Reform Policy Agenda Framework of 2009
13. National Population Policy revised in 1995

³⁶ Vision 2030 Jamaica Education Sector Plan (2009) pp.4.

14. National Policy for Gender Equality 2011
15. Reintegration of School-Aged Mothers into the Formal School System Policy 2013
16. National Infant and Young Child Feeding Policy 2013
17. Draft National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence
18. Social Protection Strategy 2014
19. National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development in Jamaica 2008-2013

It is apparent that there now exists a fertile environment to support this policy on youth, as there is significant focus on some of the key issues identified as critical to positive youth development. These include economic growth, parenting, national security, education reform, employment and entrepreneurship and health.

This revised policy through its guiding and instructive mechanisms will provide a cohesive framework within which the national combined goals and strategies to foster youth development will be pursued and implemented.

5.3 Legal and Governance Environment

The National Youth Policy (2004) adopted a rights-based approach consistent with international conventions to which Jamaica is a signatory. The United Nations, through its many agencies and the programmes, is the main source of these international instruments and has therefore contributed to the development of an international standard for youth development policy. Thus, to some extent these instruments helped to prescribe the legal framework for the 2004 National Youth Policy and the policy adopted a number of guidelines espoused in other regional and hemispheric instruments.

Subsequent to the 2004 Policy, Jamaica has enacted the Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA) 2004, which strengthened the legislative/regulatory framework for the care and protection of children by introducing new standards for their treatment while removing the fragmentation of legislation relating to their welfare. The Act brings under one umbrella, measures concerning children previously embedded in the Juvenile Act (which was effectively repealed with the enactment of the CCPA), as well as provisions in over 20 other laws. It also draws on provisions

applicable to children under the Offences of the Person Act. The Child Development Agency (an Executive Agency) was established to amalgamate the Children's Services Division, the Adoption Board and the Child Support Unit of the Ministry of Health with the objective to coordinate and regulate childcare bodies and services within a single entity.

Apart from the CCPA 2004 there is no single legislation for youth (15-24) in Jamaica. Neither is there a specific legislation to streamline youth development as an important component of the national development agenda, requiring special focus, regulation, planning and oversight in the same way that housing or education is treated as important platforms or pillars of national development. However, there are several domestic pieces of legislation and policies that impact youth development and serve to outline the nation's approach to youth and the issues. These must be duly considered in planning for the development of Jamaica's youth. Several subsidiary pieces of legislation (Regulations) also impact youth development programmes across Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government. The key legislative frameworks include:

1. The Child Care and Protection Act (2004), which consolidated approximately twenty pieces of legislation, related to children;
2. Domestic Violence Act (amended 2004);
3. Status of Children Act (1976) (amended 2005);
4. Children Guardianship and Custody Act (1957);
5. Criminal Records (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act (1988);
6. Adoption of Children Act (1958);
7. Education Act (1980);
8. Maternity Leave Act (1979);
9. Inheritance Provisions for Family and Dependents Act (1930);
10. Offences Against the Person Act (1864);
11. Incest Punishment Act (1948);
12. Sexual Offences Act (2009);
13. Criminal Justice (Reform) Act (1978);
14. National Youth Service (NYS) Act.(1999); and

15. National Parent Support Commission Act (2012)
16. Age of Majority Act (1979)
17. The Women (Employment) Act

Since the development of the National Youth Policy 2004, there has been progress in reforming the legal environment in which youth development programmes are implemented. However, there are notable gaps to be addressed. The Justice Reform Policy Agenda Framework of 2009, indicated that “the legal framework in Jamaica requires extensive law reform to bring the system into compliance with various human rights and international legal norms and standards. Specifically, changes are required to deal with new and emerging forms of crime, to adopt, with necessary modifications, the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Children Deprived of their Liberty (1990), to make legislation gender neutral, change current sexual offences legislation that recognizes only male offenders and female victims in sex-related crimes, and to harmonize national legislation with international standards so as to facilitate internal cooperation in fighting various forms of transnational crime”.

The main legal reforms proposed in the Justice Reform Policy Agenda framework will impact the national youth sector and in fact, outline a number of measures directly and indirectly influencing youth development and youth rights. The proposed framework for legal reforms has seven output areas with a number of key activities identified for implementation in the short, medium and long terms. These seven output areas are:

- 1) Fair and Timely Case Resolution.
- 2) Improved Access to Justice.
- 3) A strong Judiciary and Workforce.
- 4) Strengthened linkages between justice sector institutions.
- 5) Establishing a sound court infrastructure.
- 6) Implementing a social component to the delivery of justice; and
- 7) Strengthened public trust and confidence.

In addition, since the Justice Reform Task Force Report of 2007, a wide range of contemplated legislative interventions that will have an impact on the justice system is in train at this time. Some of these legislative interventions are:

1. Coroners (Amendment) Bill;
2. Corruption Prevention (Special Prosecutor) Bill;
3. Independent Investigative Commission;
4. The Jury (Amendment) Bill;
5. The Bail (Amendment) Act;
6. The Bail (Interim Provisions for Specified Offences) Act; and
7. The Offences against the Person (Amendment) Act.
8. The Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Act

Added to the above list are other new or relatively new legislation including:

1. **Charter of Rights Bill (2011)** - There is a new Charter of Rights Bill that has repealed and replaced Chapter III of the Jamaica Constitution and came into effect in 2011. Clause 13(3) (h) of the Bill essentially recognizes a right to freedom from discrimination on a number of specified grounds, including sex. In the future, therefore, constitutional redress could be sought where there has been an infringement of a person's right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of sex.
2. **The Maintenance Act (2005)** obliges spouses or partners in a common-law union to maintain each other and also obliges parents or guardians to maintain the child.
3. **The Domestic Violence Act (2004)** provides protection for women and children who are victims of domestic violence, enables a third party to initiate proceedings on behalf of the woman, and stipulates that damage to property is also a form of domestic violence.

4. **The Children's Home Regulations (2007)** gives power to the responsible government agency to monitor private children's homes and places of safety and bring action when they fail to meet designated standards for childcare and protection.
5. **The Sexual Offences Act (2009)** establishes a legal gender-neutral definition of rape and stipulates that a boy under 14 years is capable of rape and other forms of sexual abuse. The Act deals with 'sexual grooming, touching or interference' between an adult and child or among children. It defines the responsibilities of household heads to children (under 16 years) who are in their charge and addresses child abduction and provides for a Sexual Offenders Register (Section 29).
6. **The Trafficking in Persons: (Prevention, Suppression & Punishment) Act (2007)** stipulates that trafficking in persons is illegal and makes provisions for preventing and punishing the crime and its connected offences.
7. **National Parenting Support Commission Act (2012)**: The legislation has established a National Parenting Support Commission that will assist parents by increasing their access to quality information and services. Parents will also learn about their responsibilities under the law and the consequences of not fulfilling them, particularly as it relates to abuse or neglect. The Commission will oversee the implementation and operation of the National Parenting Policy, which defines effective parenting from a Jamaican perspective and sets out the Government's approach to supporting and strengthening positive parenting practices.
8. **Proposed Criminal Justice Suppression of Criminal Organizations Act (2013)**: This act has been approved by the legislative committee of Parliament and tabled in the House of Parliament.

5.4 Key Legal Constraints

The Situation Assessment of Youth in Jamaica (2012) proposed that youth development requires a purposeful agenda that is underpinned by principles of equality, equity, rights, corrective justice and accountability and governed by commitments to (a) address the underlying and root causes that differing groups of youth are encountering; (b) advance the fundamental rights and equality of all categories of youth; (c) correct historic injustices; (d) stem harmful emerging practices among youth; and (d) tackle ways of working that are inimical to the development of all categories of youth.

On the basis of an objective analysis, the report lists a number of legislative actions which are deemed necessary to address the critical issues affecting youth. These legislative actions span a fairly wide area including education, housing, domestic violence, employment among others. These together with other proposed legislative actions are reproduced at Annex 2.

It should be noted that the bulk of the recommendations concern the enforcement of existing laws and support the widely held view that the major concern is not the absence of laws but the fact that many of these are not properly enforced to have their intended impacts. The list is not exhaustive of all the potential problems and issues that may arise in the future. Cognizance must be taken of the fact that the legal reforms process is often exhaustive and lengthy especially given the large legislative agenda of the government. To the extent that there will be new legislation in the future that may impact youth, it ought to be embraced through an ongoing, consultative policy review process and reflected in the action plans, operational mandates of the key institutions and the mechanisms for coordinating the activities of the agencies.

6 ROLES, RESPONSIBILITY AND OBLIGATION OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The Youth and Adolescent Policy Division within the MYC:

The Division needs to be fully established within the Ministry of Youth and Culture, and will be primarily focused on sector policy development, and related activities such as strategic programme development, standards development, research, monitoring and evaluation. This is in accordance with the modernisation thrust of the Government of Jamaica to create policy focused core Ministries, supported by performance based institutions responsible for operational programme implementation outside the Ministry. It is expected that this Division will be technically competent and have the appropriate level staff to provide leadership for the youth sector.

Priorities for the Division

1. Leadership of the Youth Sector
2. Policy and programme development and guidelines for programme implementation through the agencies of the MYC
3. Monitor and evaluate implementation of Youth Policy
4. Develop formal partnerships with other MDAs, the private sector, NGOs and international partners to ensure effective youth development and promote synergistic actions
5. Advocacy activities
6. Conduct specialised research to guide policy development and programmatic response and become a research and knowledge management centre for the sector
7. Developing and maintaining a database for all youth serving entities nationally (registered and unregistered)
8. Mapping the youth population to understand the current needs, priorities and position of youth in relation to their development goals, and to identify and address systemic exclusion of groups of young people
9. Identify and disseminate national and international best practices for youth development
10. Promote understanding of and adherence to the guiding principles for national youth development and facilitate an environment nationally that is aware, is youth friendly and responsive to changing the historical injustices that affect youth and their development.

11. Promote the understanding of the rights of young people to participate in their development and their right to be treated with respect and dignity by all youth serving entities including those within the Ministry with responsibilities for youth in the care of the state and children age 15 -17 years olds
12. Develop programmes in collaboration with local regional and international bodies to facilitate reflection and learning among youth stakeholders
13. Conduct monitoring and evaluation of the programmes being implemented through the national youth development entity
14. Develop and conduct monitoring and evaluation activities to assess the status of achievement of planned activities and the adherence to standards and agreements with partners
15. Developing relationships with national regional and international partners and stakeholder to advance youth development priorities
16. Develop accountability frameworks for programme implementation by agencies and youth serving entities.
17. Ensure good governance and professionalism (by standard development and monitoring) of the youth sector
18. Ensure on-going capacity building of the sector in accordance with best practices and international standards.

Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs):

1. Under each MDA's mandate, and in fulfillment of the goals of the National Youth Policy 2015, it is expected that relevant policies and programmes will be established.
2. Ensure that youth matters are placed as a Strategic Objective within each Strategic Plan of MDA.
3. Partnership with the MYC to support the establishment and execution of programmes and projects that will enable positive youth development.
4. Develop and implement relevant programme and activities to ensure accomplishment of National Youth Policy goals.

Human Resource Committee of Cabinet:

1. Ensure policy coherence for youth development across the relevant portfolio Ministries, and advise the Cabinet on such matters.
2. Ensure reporting to Parliament in keeping with the timeframe as stipulated by the Youth Development Act
3. Oversight to ensure national youth development is in accordance with national priorities, regional and international obligations
4. Ensuring that the various governance, accountability, transparency, performance management, monitoring, evaluation and service delivery frameworks are incorporated within the various Ministries, agencies and departments addressing youth development matters
5. Review proposed linkages and relationships with private sector, universities, NGOs, international bodies and faith-based organisations involved in youth development initiatives.

The Overall Purpose of the Youth Development Act is proposed as, inter alia:

1. Establish legal framework for action in the sector;
2. Provide the legal context for planning, action, coordination, regulation, management and oversight of the youth sector;
3. Provide for the establishment of a National Youth Development entity;
4. Codify the responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation of the youth sector
5. Stipulate that youth issues be mainstreamed throughout the public sector and non-state sectors and require youth sensitive budgeting and appropriate levels of financing for youth development;

Proposed National Entity for Youth Development:

A new National Youth Development Entity will be established to address the changes within the youth agenda to a more positive developmental focus. This entity should have specific responsibilities to ensure, inter alia,

1. Specialised training of the youth population who are outside of the regular school system.
2. Be the driving force to ensure innovative training in new and emerging areas for the national and global markets, without duplicating training offered by other public sector training institutions.
3. Provide accreditation for its training programmes and ensure continued upgrading of the programmes offered to youth.
4. Work closely with the private sector to ensure that changes in the labour market are being met in respect of its target groups.

The activities related to the operations and management of the Youth Information Centres would be incorporated into the work of the new national youth development entity, as would those of the National Youth Service (NYS). In respect of activities related to student governance and youth leadership, these will be also placed under the new youth development entity and these activities upgraded to ensure certification of youth in leadership and youth governance.

The priorities and objects of this new entity should also reflect current youth development paradigms. This agency will incorporate the new thrust of the current NYS and NCYD programmes and be repositioned within the youth development landscape. This will require the re-orientation of the staff, policies and procedures to take on the expanded role of the Youth Development Entity, and youth development experts with knowledge of a youth centred approach to programme management and implementation.

7 IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM

As noted in the situation analysis, “weak coordination and low levels of capacity in the youth sector” proved a challenge. The issue of how the youth sector is to be coordinated and monitored is critical to the success of the Policy. The coordinating mechanism needs to be robust, respected, and

responsive to emerging needs based on accurate data, and positioned to offer recommendations for change to high level decision makers.

The implementation of the revised National Youth Policy 2015 will occur within **ministries and agencies** of the public sector, and will require the involvement of a **wide range of stakeholders**, including the **private sector, local and international development partners, non-governmental organizations**, communities and the media.

The Policy therefore requires:

1. Strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Youth and Culture to provide the policy, planning, administrative and oversight functions as appropriate, and to ensure sufficient authority and credibility.
2. Through a comprehensive Stakeholder Analysis an **Inter-ministerial Committee** will be established through the MYC and led by the Minister. The Committee will consist key stakeholders within the Youth Sector. The Committee will provide oversight for the implementation of the Policy and monitoring and evaluation of the Implementation and Strategic Plans that will guide the implementation.
3. The establishment of a national public sector entity with responsibility for the implementation of Youth Development programmes. This agency /entity would be established through an Act of Parliament –The National Youth Development Act. This entity will be responsible for the implementation of programmes for youth development. The Act will also stipulate that the Ministry of Youth and Culture, under the direction of the Minister of Youth and Culture will be responsible to ensure the overall development of

youth within Jamaica.³⁷ In this respect, youth development issues will be strengthened with appropriate support and positioned within the national development landscape as a priority of the Government of Jamaica.

- 4. The Ministry of Youth and Culture will be modernised into a Policy-Focused Ministry with responsibilities for the Youth sector, and the required institutional and related matters to ensure governance, monitoring and evaluation of the sector, setting standards and registration of youth serving entities, while providing empirical data through research for the development of strategic policies and programmes.

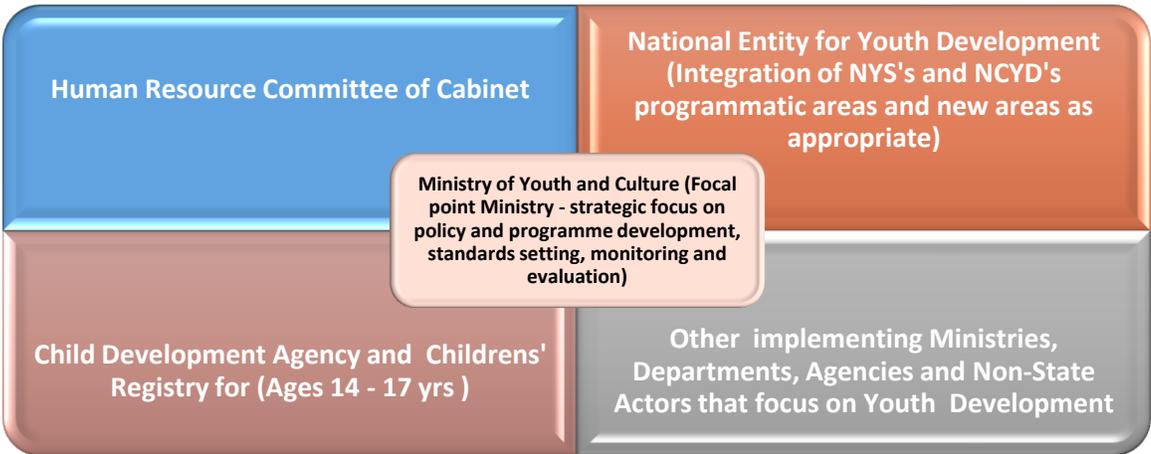


Figure 1: Partnership in the Implementation of the National Youth Policy

The integrated structure recommended above, reflects a holistic approach to youth development and shows the critical inter-relationships of all the agencies. It also shows the need for these entities to work together if the goals and strategies of the revised National Youth Policy are to become a reality.

Proposed Timelines for Implementation January 2015 – March 2018:

³⁷ The Act will be supported by appropriate legislation developed to ensure the legal framework to support the thrust for youth development.

TIMEFRAME	KEY ACTIONS
Years 1 – 3	Building out the Youth and Adolescent Policy Division (MYC)
Year 1	Table the National Youth Policy (2015) in Parliament
Year 1	Development of an Implementation Plan, Strategic Plan & Action Plan
Years 1 – 2	Establish a new National Entity for Youth Development
Year 1 – 3	Develop a Youth Development Act and Supporting Legislation
Year 1 - 4	Legislative Changes completed

7.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

The situation of youth and youth development is not static. Consequently the National Youth Policy recommends that key issues for youth development be subject to a systematic review. These reviews should be conducted in an effort to evaluate the Policy’s effectiveness and take note of new initiatives concerning youth development that may emerge. The reviews will take different forms at different levels, and will be outlined in the Monitoring and Evaluation strategy to include:

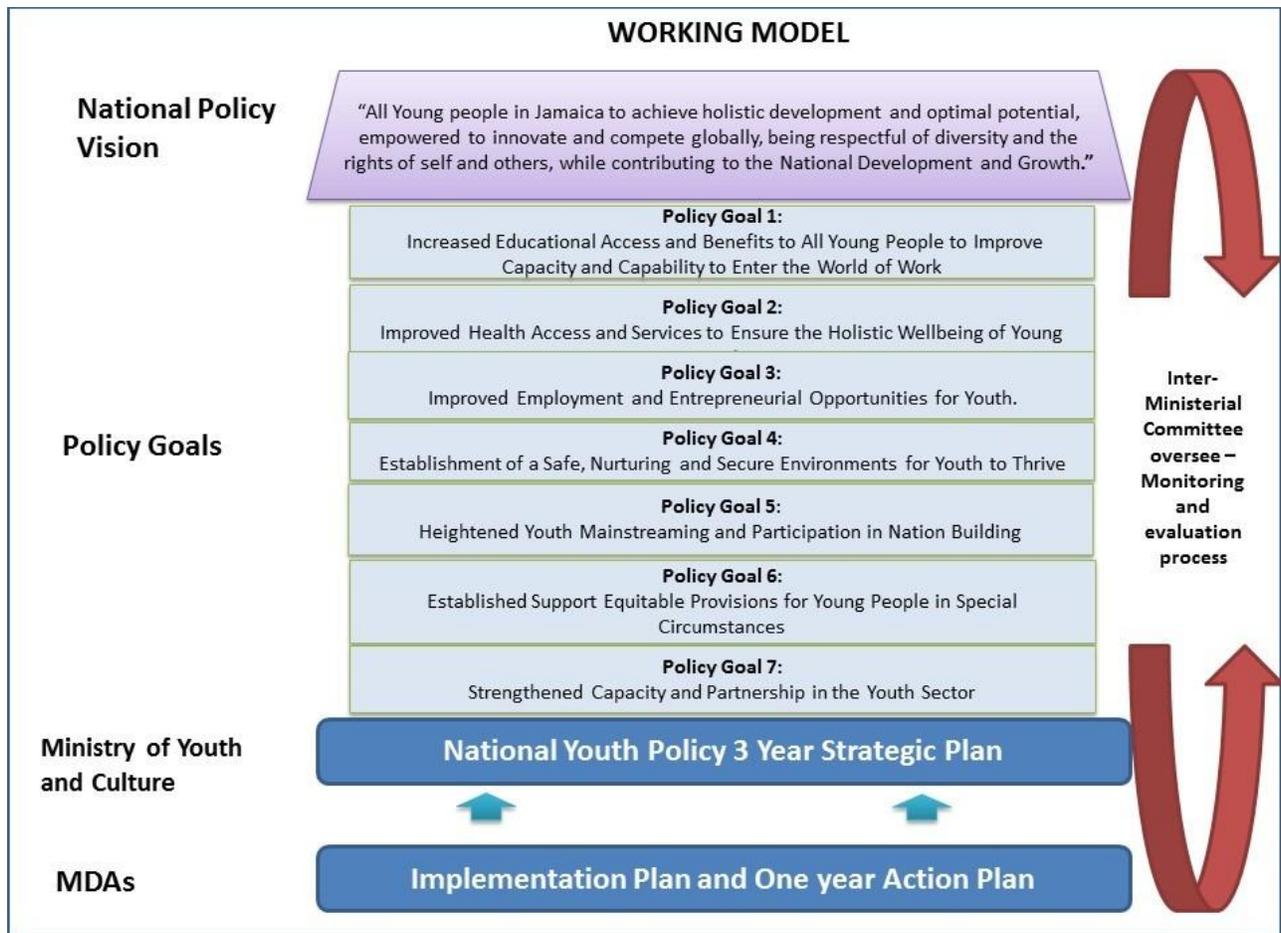
1. Annual reviews leading to the development of the annual, work plans
2. Planned comprehensive evaluations resulting in the development of a new strategic plan
3. Evaluation of pilots to recommend next actions
4. Monitoring of short-term and long-term indicators of all partner agencies to ensure programmes objectives are being achieved and to explore and agree corrective actions

The Youth and Adolescents Division of the Ministry of Youth and Culture will be tasked with the responsibility to continuously monitor and oversee the periodic evaluation of the implementation of the National Youth Policy and provide strategic reports for corrective actions.

7.2 Policy Review

The vision for the revised Policy extends to 2030, but requires review every five years. The implementation of the revised Policy will be supported by an Inter-Ministerial Committee that will ensure the development of a Strategic Plan, which will be aligned with the government's National Development Plan and medium term socioeconomic planning frameworks. The policy will also be reviewed, monitored and evaluated by the Ministry of Youth and Culture (MYC) to ensure the relevance of the strategies and programmes being executed by the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), with defined responsibilities in the implementation of the revised NYP.

IMPLEMENTATION WORKING MODEL



8 CONCLUSION

The Government of Jamaica is committed to supporting the development of the country's youth. It recognizes that the translation of this commitment into action is a key national development strategy. The government considers the achievement of the six policy goals outlined above as critical, not only to the development of the country's youth, but also to the development of the country as a whole. Accordingly, it considers the implementation of a revised National Youth Policy one of its main priorities and as a mechanism for ensuring that young people in Jamaica are supported to reach their highest aspirations.

The National Youth Policy therefore seeks to adopt/adapt best practices which maximize the likelihood of attaining the desired positive results. Such best practices emphasize youth development as an enduring, overarching purpose and not a goal that is ever finally achieved. The youth development process, which the policy supports, will entail the creation of a range of contexts or settings, including people and activities that promote youth development. These in turn will be inclusive, sustainable, connected to each other, and connected to the larger macro-system that surrounds them. In this context the youth development policy takes into consideration the important roles of other public policies such as education, justice reform, health, entrepreneurship, labour market development and the Vision 2030 Jamaica: National Development Plan in building the enabling environment for positive youth development.

The revised policy places emphasis on the need for greater coordination of the implementation of youth development programmes to enhance efficiency in service delivery as well as to establish agreed standards for such services. The successful implementation of this policy will only be possible with coordinated effort of multiple stakeholders who are involved in the youth development sector, and those whose work have a significant impact on the environments in which youth thrive.

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10 ANNEXES

10.1 Annex 1: Technical Policy Oversight Committee

NAME	ORGANISATION
Hon. Lisa Hanna	Ministry of Youth and Culture
Mr. Sydney Bartley	Ministry of Youth and Culture
Ms. Andrene Blackwin	National Centre for Youth Development
Mrs. Hyacinth Blair	Cabinet Office
Mr. Ohene Blake	c/o Ministry of Youth and Culture
Ms. Thompson Bronhil	Youth Entrepreneurs Association
Mr. Courtney Brown	Ministry of National Security
Mr. Alric Campbell	People's National Party (PNP) Youth Organization
Ms. Ruth Carey	Ministry of Justice
Ms. Deidra Coy	Planning Institute of Jamaica
Miss Gloria Goffe	Combined Disabilities Association
Mr. Floyd Green	Generation 2000 (G2K)
Mrs. Mellodene Henry-Davy	Ministry of Education
Dr. Deborah Hickling	Office of the Prime Minister
Mrs. Vivienne Johnson	Ministry of Education

NAME	ORGANISATION
Ms. Simone McKenzie	Ministry of Labour and Social Security
Mr. Owen McKnight	Ministry of Finance
Mr. Randy McLaren	Youth Ambassador, c/o National Centre for Youth Development
Ms. Danielle Moffatt	Cabinet Office
Ms. Yvonne Munroe	Ministry of Health
Ms. Jodian Pantry	Student, c/o National Centre for Youth Development
Mrs. Jodi-Kay Petgrave	Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment
Mrs. Collette Roberts-Risden	Office of the Prime Minister
Mr. Melvin Smith	National Youth Service
Mr. Douglas Webster	Ministry of Industry, Investment & Commerce
Mrs. Tatiana White-Johnson	Jamaica Employers Federation
Mrs. Winsome Wilkins	Council for Voluntary Social Services
Mr. Miguel Williams	National Centre for Youth Development
Mr. Easton Williams	Planning Institute of Jamaica
Mrs. Vivienne Williams-Thompson	IDB/GOJ Youth Development Programme, Ministry of Youth and Culture

10.2 Annex 2: Key Policy and Legislative Actions

Key Legislative Actions	Key Policy Actions for addressing underlying and root causes affecting youth development
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand the scope, efficiency and effectiveness of legislation to address varying forms of abuse, ensuring special protection for those least able to protect themselves. 2. Enforce the 2000 Victims Charter Strengthen the application of the restorative justice process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergenerational Abuse (Emotional, Mental, Physical, Spiritual, Sexual)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Strengthen and enforce the law (including the Children’s Guardianship and Custody Act) in cases of parental neglect and abuse 4. Expand the scope of legislation to ensure that young people currently beyond the reach of the CCPA also have recourse in cases of parental abuse. 5. Enforce legislations (Sexual Offences Act), so as to combat the normalization of Incestuous relationships. 6. Enforce 1948 Incest (Punishment of) Act Enforce 2005 Maintenance Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor/Inadequate Parenting • Family Breakdown
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Ensure the adequacy of laws to protect against stigma and discrimination 8. Enforce laws, particularly as those pertain to employment practices, education provision and treatment of youth with disabilities, youth living with or affected by HIV/AIDS etc. 9. Enforce legislations against gender based violence, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internalized and External Stigma • Skewed Belief Systems and Core Values • Lack of spiritual development

Key Legislative Actions	Key Policy Actions for addressing underlying and root causes affecting youth development
ensuring that these also check female on male violence	
<p>10. Enforce Early Childhood Act – 2004, Early Childhood Regulations 2005, and the Early Childhood Commission Act-2005</p> <p>11. Ensure that sanctions are levied where youth in care are denied high quality education comparable to the best in the public system Require (through policy and law) that underage youth who fall pregnant and who are no longer attending their own schools attend an educational facility and are, subsequently, reintegrated within schools. This requires amending the Education Act (See Education Regulations 1980, Page 21, Section 31, paragraph 2 and 3) Consider Act to address specific needs of Dis-advantaged youth.</p> <p>12. Stipulations for buildings to allow easy access by the disabled – revision in building codes/standards</p> <p>13. Teacher training to be reflective of changing needs within the local and international context. Utilisation of Appropriate technologies to facilitate teaching and learning</p> <p>14. The Act does not reflect efforts in transforming the sector- such as rights of children to be treated with respect and be central to the teaching and learning process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Disadvantageous and non-transformative) Education
15. Enforce provisions of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health, mental health
16. Advocate for full implementation of the provisions of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Non-transformative) Social

Key Legislative Actions	Key Policy Actions for addressing underlying and root causes affecting youth development
<p>National Plan of Action for Youth Justice in Jamaica</p> <p>17. Ensure that youth with intellectual disabilities are treated as children, where the intellectual age is consistent with those of a child</p> <p>18. Amend laws to establish standards for male rape</p> <p>19. Increase the age of consent to 18 years</p> <p>20. Consider Youth Care and Protection, such as obtains in New Zealand. Under such an Act, make provisions for disadvantaged youth and their families whose needs cannot be addressed under CCPA</p> <p>21. Enforce 2007 Children’s Home Regulations</p>	<p>Protection</p>
<p>22. Enforce Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act.</p> <p>23. Expand Act to include provisions for male victims of violence.</p> <p>24. Enforce 2002 protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children</p> <p>25. Enforce 2007 Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment Act.</p> <p>26. Enforce child labour legislation</p> <p>27. Enforce Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflicts</p> <p>28. Strengthen the 1996 Broadcasting and Radio Re-diffusion Act</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gender Relations and Violence ● Substance Abuse ● Cultures of Materialism and Quick Gain ● Sexual Promiscuity ● Allegiance to the Occult ● The Burgeoning Underground
<p>29. Consider appropriate amendments to the Housing Act 1969 to improve both access and affordability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access to Housing - Access to financing for young people to purchase homes. Many do not qualify under Housing Trust

Key Legislative Actions	Key Policy Actions for addressing underlying and root causes affecting youth development
	Scheme
30. National Youth Service (NYS) Act. Needs review to make it more relevant to current needs. The provision for garnering resources to enhance programming should be implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of the National Youth Service Programme and thrust and the overlap of its functions with those of other agencies
<p>31. Enact a Youth Development Act.</p> <p>32. Establish a Co-Management mechanism to enhance inter-Ministerial Coordination as well as the inclusion of youth organizations and other NGOs in decision making</p>	<p>Institutional Coordination for implementing Youth Policy and adhering to the principles to ensure positive youth development in all areas.</p>