NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
Ministry of Education, Youth & Culture

"Jamaican youth ...shaping di world"

A vision for Jamaica in 2015

A prosperous and dynamic Jamaica which upholds the fulfillment of human rights, dignity for all persons, and builds continual social progress based on shared values and principles of partnership. Minds are transformed and extraordinary results are produced in this the most caring and secure country in the Americas, where individuals fulfill their potential, are in control of their destiny, take responsibility for their lives and work always for the larger good.[1]

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[1] Jamaica 2015: A Framework and Action Plan for Improving Effectiveness, Collaboration and Accountability in the Delivery of Social Policy

Vision of the Jamaican Youth

...Jamaican youth realising our full potential, through access to opportunities, to develop, participate and contribute as responsible citizens, to a peaceful, prosperous and caring society.

FOREWORD

The National Youth Policy (1994) represented Jamaica's first comprehensive policy on youth. This was developed from the Draft National Youth Policy (1985) and the 1992 paper, "Vision of Youth." Among the priority areas identified by the 1994 Policy were the need for an institutional focal point to ensure effective coordination of and collaboration on youth related programmes and research and act as an information clearinghouse. Consequently the National Centre for Youth Development (NCYD) was established in 2000 to fulfill this mandate. The second major outcome of the 1994 Policy was the re-introduction of the National Youth Service (NYS), in 1995 with a programme that emphasizes development of leadership skills and enhancement of the social skills of youth. Other provisions of the 1994 Policy related to health, sports, education, and employment. In 2001, the findings of a review of the current situation among youth and a critique of the 1994 Policy by stakeholders pointed to the need for improvement in the Policy so as to better address the development of youth from a holistic perspective.

As a result a National Youth Policy Steering Committee with representatives from over thirty organizations was established in August 2001 and met monthly to guide the policy revision process. The process was informed by consultations with youth, youth-serving organizations and local and international development partners across Jamaica. This Policy, while targeting youth, recognizes the need to utilize the life-cycle approach to strengthen the development of Jamaica's human capital. Cognizant of the need to provide an environment suitable for the positive development of children, this Policy supports provisions for the care, development and protection of children as outlined in the National Policy on Children (1997).

This document is a collaborative effort between the Government of Jamaica, through the National Centre for Youth Development and the USAID funded project Futures Group International POLICY II Project, Aleph, S.A, UNICEF and the Commonwealth Youth Programme. This collaboration signals a new dimension in youth development and provides the framework for other international development partners to bring their resources to bear in a coordinated way. The Policy will be supported by a National Strategic Plan for Youth Development (NSPYD) which will act as the guide to its implementation over the next five to ten years.

This Policy provides a common framework for effectively developing our youth. It succeeds or fails on the strength of the nation's commitment to the future.

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF YOUTH

The National Youth Policy represents the Government of Jamaica's genuine commitment to place on the agenda, issues, programmes and projects relating to youth. It reflects the work of hundreds of organisations and thousands of individuals who have laboured diligently for almost two years to produce a document, which will guide youth development programmes over the next five years. The inherent proposals are not a panacea for all the challenges, which we presently face, but will act as a compass to give direction to the way forward at this critical time in our nation's history.

I would like to congratulate the youth, the youth-serving organisations in government, non-governmental organisations and those at the community level as well as the funding agencies, local and international who, through their collaborative effort have demonstrated the true meaning of multi-sectoral collaboration. Their work has produced a document of which we can be justly proud. The document will however, be meaningless unless we are able to craft in short order, and thereafter, implement the National Strategic Plan for Youth Development. This is the greater challenge to which we must now urgently turn our attention.

The challenges facing our youth will require short, medium and long-term solutions. In all that we do, it must be stated repeatedly that there can be no substitute for education and training, which must be the foundation upon which any successful programme will be built.

Strategic alliances must be strengthened with all youth serving agencies and organisations particularly the National Youth Service, HEART/NTA, the Child Development Agency and the Social Development Commission. Finally, we must do all within our power to ensure that our young people take ownership of this Policy. In it is represented a history of their struggles as well as their vision for a brighter future.

We must inform our youth about their responsibilities with the same energy and passion with which we inform them about their rights. It is now time to put meaning to the statement, *our youth are the future*. With God as our guide, the National Youth Policy will lead the way.

Donald Rhodd, Dr.
Minister of State
Minister of Education, Youth & Culture

12 August 2003

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LIST OF ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CDA	Child Development Agency
CXC	Caribbean Examination Council
CYP	Commonwealth Youth Programme
ESSJ	Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica
GOJ	Government of Jamaica
HEART/NTA	Human Empowerment and Resource Training/National Training Agency
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
JASPEV	Jamaica Social Policy Evaluation Project
MOEYC	Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture
MOH	Ministry of Health
NCYD	National Centre for Youth Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSPYD	National Strategic Plan for Youth Development
NSSC	National Secondary Students Council
NYS	National Youth Service
PIOJ	Planning Institute of Jamaica
SDC	Social Development Commission
STATIN	Statistical Institute of Jamaica
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Education Fund
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

YOUTH LEXICON

Adolescence: A period of developmental transition characterised by physical, biological and psychological development. It is a period of "critical opportunities for growth and development and where many of the skills necessary to lead a productive life and to overcome adverse situations are acquired. This period lasts typically from age 10 to 19.

Advocacy: To exhibit public support for a particular cause. Trying to convince other people because you are convinced yourself.

Barrel Children: This term describes children whose parents live overseas or away from the home and whose relationship with a parent is based solely or mostly on the provision of material possessions. Parental support is given from a distance and mostly tangibly felt through material items.

Behaviour change: Process of improving or influencing a positive change in attitudes, and lifestyle

Childhood: The period between birth and eighteen years. This is marked by physical, mental and psychological changes and marks the critical period for preparation for adulthood

Disabled youth: Youth who are mentally and physically challenged.

Empowerment: The process of increasing the capacity to influence behaviour, emotions, lifestyle. It is the process of magnifying ability by whatever means (For e.g. equipping with the knowledge, skills and competencies to survive in one's environment)

Incarcerated: Youth in prisons or remand centres, whose freedom of movement is circumscribed by law.

Inner-city youth: Youth who reside in ghettos, garrisons or extremely troubled communities which are often run by a "Don" or headman.

In-School: Youth who are enrolled in an institution of learning.

Institutionalised: Youth in places of safety and children homes. This group includes youth who are wards of the state.

Out-of–School: Youth who are not enrolled in any institution of learning.

Parenting: This is the process of being responsible for offspring; their maintenance and development.

Participation: To partake **FULLY** in any activity. It can be interpreted as **"FULTICIPATION"** because it requires the "full" being. It is to be completely immersed in decision-making related to the planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and activities, and **NOT** at a **"token"** level.

Positive Youth Development: The process of addressing the broad developmental needs of youth that are linked to cognitive, social, physical, emotional and moral growth. The process through which youths are assisted in building assets and competencies to ease their transition into adulthood. Youth development should only be positive!

Street People: Persons who live, or make their home on the streets. Such persons carry out all activities on the streets such as bathing, sleeping, eating and being. This group can be sub-divided as follows:
Street person   25 years and older
Street youth   15-24 year olds
Street children (kids) 0-18 years old

Unattached: Not affiliated with an organization (youth group, service club, church etc.), place of employment, institution of training or learning.

Urban/Rural Youth: Those individuals who reside in rural areas are referred to as rural youth and those who reside in urban areas are known as urban youth.

Working Youth: Youth who are working in the formal and informal sectors.

Youth: someone between the ages 15 –24 who has passed through the dependent stage of childhood, in the semi-independence of adolescence or who will soon acquire the maturity of adulthood.

Youth-at-Promise: The opposite of "at-risk", this term recognizes the assets, gifts, skills, potential, talents and opportunities inherent in and being applied by a young person.

Youth-at-risk (of): This popular term should **ALWAYS** be followed by "of". Whereas all people are at risk, some youth are at risk of or vulnerable to particular circumstances or situations because of their lifestyle and/or living conditions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Youth Policy serves to facilitate the development of an environment that optimizes the potential of each young Jamaican. Specifically, the Policy seeks to define a common vision and framework for youth development, articulate the roles and responsibilities of youth in their personal and national development and serve as a tool for advocating youth development issues. It is expected that the National Youth Policy will assist in fostering a culture of positive youth development and participation in decision-making around activities that affect the lives of youth and increase the capacity of service providers to provide accessible, relevant and high quality services for young people and their families.

Further it is expected that the National Youth Policy will facilitate a multi-sectoral approach to youth development, including the strengthening of mechanisms for coordination and collaboration among youth-serving organizations. The multi-sectoral approach requires services that are coordinated, meeting to the degree possible, the complete needs of each young person. The response must be tailored to different subgroups of the youth population, including young men and young women, rural and urban youth, and youth of different ages. This approach will facilitate and promote active youth and stakeholder participation throughout the process. This Policy accepts that a coordinated and collaborative response represents the most suitable strategic response in order to effect positive youth development, while fostering the active participation of the nation's youth in the process.

Youth development is a multidimensional process through which young persons are assisted to meet their basic developmental needs, and to build individual assets and competencies, which will assist them to function and succeed as adults. It embraces the process of human growth and development, as well as, activities, programmes and services provided to assist young people in the overall development process, and in making the transition to adulthood easier and more productive. The National Youth Policy, while targeting youth, recognizes the need to utilize the life-cycle approach to strengthen the development of Jamaica's human capital. It accepts that there is a continuum between the stages of physical, emotional and psychological development of human being. These changes are most pronounced in the early stages of life. Hence, positive and productive adulthood is the result of a process of development that passes through three major (dependent) phases; childhood, adolescence and youth. Positive youth development focuses on addressing the broad developmental needs of the young person, needs which are linked to cognitive, social, physical, emotional, and moral growth. In contrast, deficit-based models tend to focus solely on youth problems.

It is generally agreed that every young person needs a core of 5 basic things to survive and develop. These are:

"At least one adult who is irrationally committed to his or her well-being (parent, mentor, etc)

A safe place for sleeping, playing, learning, working and being,

A healthy start and a healthy lifestyle,

The chance to contribute and serve others,

Opportunities to learn values and marketable skills for adulthood."

The National Youth Policy recognizes and accepts that no one organization can successfully guarantee continued access to these five basic ingredients for all Jamaica's youth. It is therefore important that the Policy adopts and endorses a multi-sectoral approach to youth development in Jamaica. This has been the very foundation of the National Youth Policy and has impacted on the process of revision. The consultations were held island wide and included youth, members of the international and local donor communities, sector representatives and members of the public in general. This facilitated dialogue, broad based feedback and ensured the relevance of the resulting document.

Understanding the Focal Areas

The priority areas of the Policy take into consideration the myriad issues affecting youth. A litany of these issues was identified through research and the experts on the subject. This was further substantiated through the critical input of the young people, who participated in consultations across the island. These consultations took place in a variety of settings and included focus group discussions and the administration of questionnaires (see Appendix C for more information on the methodology of the consultations).

The youth identified unemployment and education-related issues (*including treatment by teachers and relevance of what is taught*) as the most critical issues affecting them. Other commonly cited issues include crime and violence, gender disparities, lack of national unity, the illicit drug trade and drug use, teenage parenting, ignorance of culture and the need for activities and opportunities for youth.

It is from these and a myriad of other suggestions that six main areas for the Policy were developed. These are:

- Living Environments
- Education and Training
- Employment and Entrepreneurship
- Health
- Participation and Empowerment
- Care and Protection

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Fundamental to the Government of Jamaica's plans for advancing adolescent and youth development is the assumption that improving coordination and collaboration in an inter-sectoral and multi-sectoral fashion, will improve the outcomes of our young people, which are of significant concern to Jamaican and international organizations working with young people. As a reflection of it's serious intent to carry out the National Youth Policy, the Government of Jamaica created the NCYD in November 2000. The NCYD provides intersectoral collaboration and coordination among various government and non-government organizations to fulfill youth development objectives.

Fig. 1 The National Centre for Youth Development

The National Centre for Youth Development 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. The NCYD is responsible for facilitating the co-ordination and integration of programmes, services and activities geared towards youth development, while recommending and designing programmes to enhance and propel youth development in Jamaica. In other words, this is the Agency that acts as the first point of contact for any young person, or any Agency interested in or already working on youth issues.

The primary functions of the Centre therefore are:

- Research and Policy Advice
- Programme design and development
- Programme co-ordination and monitoring
- Information dissemination

THE PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of the Policy is to facilitate the development of an environment that optimizes the potential of each young Jamaican.

Specifically, the Policy seeks to:

- Define a common vision and framework for youth development;

- Articulate the roles and responsibilities of youth in their personal and national development;

- Serve as a tool for advocating youth development issues.

POLICY GOALS AND STRATEGY
A. Overall Policy Goals

1. To foster a culture of positive youth development and participation in decision making around activities that affect the lives of youth
2. To increase the capacity of service providers to provide accessible, relevant and high quality services for young people and their families
3. To guide for the development of a multi-sectoral approach to youth development in Jamaica

B. Overarching Policy Strategy

The Policy will facilitate a multi-sectoral approach to youth development, including the strengthening of mechanisms for coordination and collaboration among youth-serving organizations. It has been accepted that such an approach guarantees the best possible outcome; the holistic approach to youth development, hence a positive youth. The multi-sectoral approach requires services that are coordinated, meeting, to the degree possible, the complete needs of each young person. The response must be tailored to different subgroups of the youth population, including young men and young women, rural and urban youth, and youth of different ages. This approach will facilitate and promote active youth and stakeholder participation throughout the process.

This approach recognizes that the issues affecting youth cut across several sectors and thus a multi-sectoral response becomes necessary. This Policy accepts that a coordinated and collaborative response represents the most suitable strategic response in order to effect positive youth development, while fostering the active participation of the nation's youth in the process.

DEFINITION OF THE STAGES OF THE LIFE CYCLE

There is a continuum between the stages of physical, emotional and psychological development of human beings. [Figure 1] These changes are most pronounced in the early stages of life. Hence, positive and productive adulthood is the result of a process of development that passes through three major (dependent) phases – childhood, adolescence and youth. This Policy will adopt the following definitions:

Childhood
The earliest years of a person's life characterised by rapid physical and mental development. In Jamaica children are legally defined as persons 0-18 years of age.

Adolescence
Adolescents are persons between 10 and 19 years of age. This period, adolescence, is critical "for growth and development and where many of the skills necessary to lead a productive life and to overcome adverse situations are acquired."[2]

Youth

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[2] "Enhancing Adolescent Development and Participation Programme"

Youth are persons between 15 and 24 years of age. This period can be described as that stage when persons pass from the semi-independence of adolescence into the increasing independence associated with adulthood. It is a time when young people confront "new life issues" including physical changes, new expectations, new social relationships and experiences."[3]

Figure 1: Phases of Human Development from Birth to Age 24
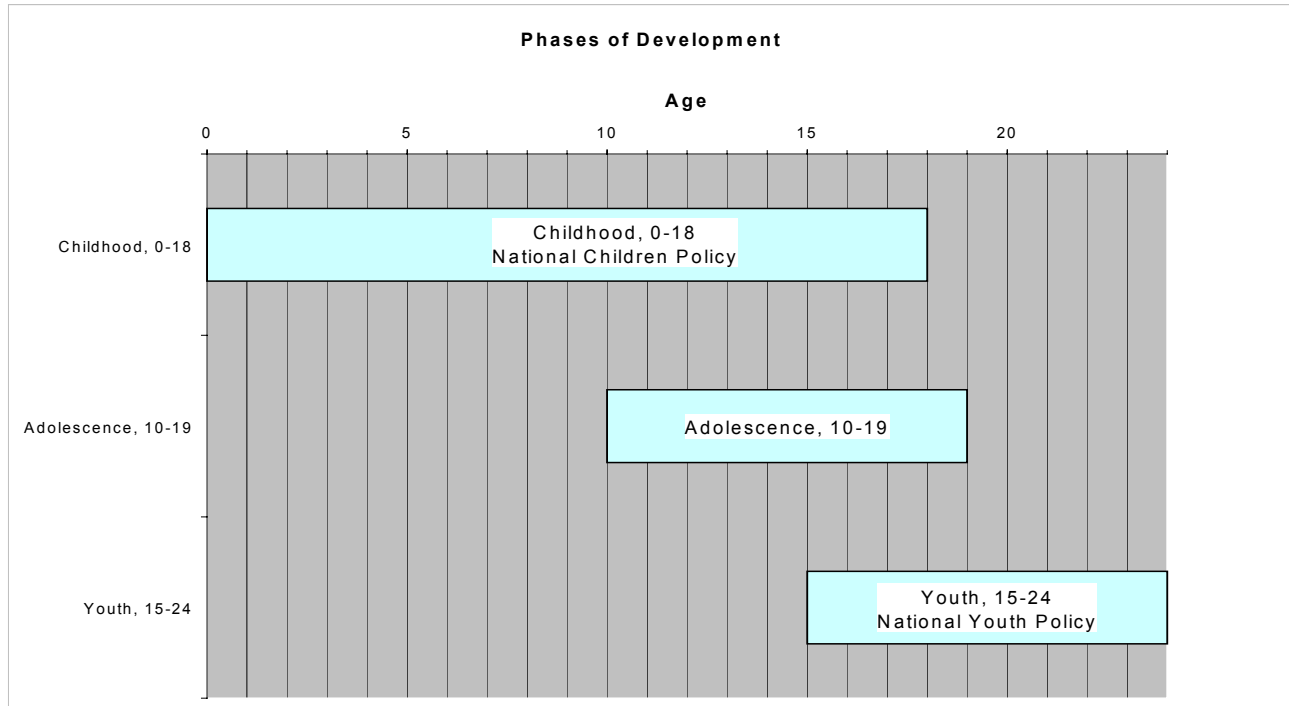
SITUATION ASSESSMENT OF YOUTH

The National Context

Jamaicans are the children of people Africans, Asians and Europeans who came to the Americas as labourers and managers of the plantation. Most Jamaicans are offspring of Africans who were forcefully removed from their societies, brought to the west, and stripped of their basic rights; a name, education and control of their person. This continued for most of the 307 years (1655 to 1962) of British rule, but especially the years of slavery (circa 1659 to 1838). Destruction of plantations, running away to the mountains and suicide were ways in which the Africans responded to the oppressive system, but these were always met (even after slavery) with the deadly force of the British militia. This was only a temporary deterrent however, as the cumulative effect of the rebellions (especially those of 1833, 1865 and the 1930s) was emancipation (1838), Universal Adult Suffrage (1944) and Independence (1962).

As of 2002, Jamaica's population was approximately 2.6 million people, 43 per cent of whom lived in the metropolitan area around the capital city, Kingston. Though very small geographically, Jamaica is a dominant force globally in the areas of music, sports, the arts, and academics. Jamaicans are ambitious and hard working and as such are highly sought after as employees worldwide. This,

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[3] National Youth Development Strategy 2000, Ministry of Local Government, Youth and Community Development

coupled with less than ideal socio-economic conditions, has contributed to a flight of human resources to industrialized countries. The country is heavily indebted and for much of the 1990s debt servicing accounted for over 60 per cent of total expenditures. Jamaica's main sources of revenue are overseas remittances, tourism, bauxite, agriculture and light manufacturing. The overall unemployment rates have remained fairly constant since 1995 at approximately 15.5%. However, the rate of female unemployment is twice that of males, despite the higher education attainment of females.

Jamaicans have a life expectancy at birth of 72 years and an infant mortality rate of 24.5 per 1000 live births. The island struggles with high levels of crime and violence and in the year 2001 there were 44 murders for every 100000 citizens, moving from 34 in the previous year[4].

History of Jamaica's Youth Movement

The Jamaican youth movement has a long and rich history; a history marked by fluctuations between periods of growth and drought. At its peak, the energy and vibrancy of youth bring every nook and cranny of the island to life with community projects, sporting competitions, cultural activities and other colourful spectacles. This in contrast to the days of drought and darkness when youth longed for opportunities to participate in activities that could contribute to their development or simply rescue them from boredom.

The earliest "organised" youth groups were among churches. The churches' interests were not necessarily to create organizations for youth, but more to provide access to services. Groups formalized around these activities or events over time and gave rise to the organizations. Church, from Bible lessons to reading classes, became the origin of formal groups. During the 1900s a number of international organisations - Boys Scouts (1910), Girl Guides (1912), Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) (1920s) – started offices in Jamaica.

The Garvey Movement of the late 1920s saw Jamaicans working for the development of their communities and their empowerment. This helped to lay the foundation for the nationalistic movements of the 1930s, a major feature of which, was the establishment of the Jamaica Welfare Movement. Under Jamaica Welfare, service groups including community organizations, co-operatives and credit unions took shape.[5]

One major programme under Jamaica Welfare was the Jamaica Youth Clubs Council. The Council was established in 1955 to work with youth groups throughout the island. It had representatives from the YMCA, YWCA, churches, Local Government, the Civil Service, the Business Sector as well as some co-opted members. The programmes of the Jamaica Youth Clubs Council included:

- A sports programme for the 11-25 age group in which friendly matches, sports rallies and games clinics became the centre of activities;

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[4] Economic and Social Survey Jamaica, 2000
[5] Robotham, D. "Vision and Voluntarism", 1998

- An all round youth development programme with existing clubs so they would become multi-activity groups. By 1964 all parishes were active in this movement.

Preceding the Youth Councils, however, was the Joint Island Council established by YMCA and YWCA. This established a youth clubs association in Kingston during the 1940s and in St. James and Trelawny between 1952 and 1954.

The 1960s were marked by the birth of independent Jamaica and the nationalistic fervour was reflected in the programmes of the era. A major highlight of the decade was the launch of the 100 Village Community Development Programme in 1964. The youth movement was boosted by increased number of community centres that functioned partly as venues for Youth Club meetings and other activities.

In 1965 legislation was passed to establish the Youth Development Agency. The Agency was set-up as a part of the Social Development Commission (SDC) and was given responsibility for administering youth clubs throughout the island. By 1970 there were 400 registered youth clubs island wide with a membership of 16,000 young people. This does not include the other youth organizations such as the Boys Brigade, political youth arms and the Jamaica 4H, which had broadened their network nationally.

The 1973 restructuring of the SDC resulted in the establishment of a Youth and Community Services Division that was given the responsibilities for all matters related to youth and community organizations. While the SDC and the youth portfolio were shifted from one ministry of government to another, the SDC maintained responsibility for community youth organizations until 2000, when this responsibility was transferred to the NCYD. In 1998 the SDC estimated that there were over 1600 youth clubs with an average of just under 40 members each. A major feature of the 1980s and 1990s was the increased number of school-based youth organization and the increased number of youth arms of service clubs.

In view of the critical role youth organizations play in youth and community development, no effort should be spared in encouraging the development of sustainable organizations. These can serve as intervention points for youth developmental programmes as well as community development programmes, a critical ingredient in the process of nation building.

Youth Profile[6]

Young people in Jamaica are doing well. For the most part, they are healthy, attend school, participate in sports, join youth groups, and engage in recreational activity. Young people volunteer and they are usually the first to adopt technological and other innovations that occur globally. Eight of every ten youth under eighteen say they have a positive view of their future while eighty-two percent participate in youth programmes and creative activities. [7]In many respects, Jamaican youth are better off than before. They are better educated, more knowledgeable about and more likely to use contraception, and less likely to use drugs than earlier generations. At the same time, their job prospects appear to be diminishing, they continue to practice risky sexual behaviours that put them at

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[6] This section draws heavily on the situation assessment carried by the NCYD in 2001. See NCYD, ALEPH, S.A., FOCUS, and POLICY II, 2002, *Situation Assessment Report: Youth in Jamaica 2001,* Kingston: NCYD.
[7] Youth Rising, 2001. Ministry of Health

risk for pregnancy and disease, and they are disproportionately the perpetrators and victims of violence. Given these worrying trends and the existing gaps, we must not rest until every youth is able to optimize his or her potential. This profile aims to help in determining the areas of youth development in need of greatest attention. Such an analysis is critical to achieving full development of Jamaica's youth.

Population Size and Distribution

Youth represent a large, though slowly diminishing, percentage of Jamaica's population. Currently at about 18 percent, the proportion of the total population in the 15 to 24 age range is projected to fall gradually to 16 percent by the year 2020. In absolute terms, the size of the 15 to 24 age group is projected to fall from 483,000 in the year 2000 to about 455,000 by 2020. Based on these population figures, it is clear that youth will remain an important demographic group for many years to come, and that investing in their development remains a critical task.

Social and Economic Context

Less than half of Jamaican youth live in households with both parents and nearly one in five under 18 live in households without either parent, placing such youth at greater risk for a range of negative outcomes. Furthermore, a small but potentially significant number of adolescents and young adults find themselves living on the street or in other precarious living situations. An estimated 3000 children are in foster care or children's homes. Lack of adequate monitoring systems make it difficult to determine the number of children in Jamaica who require care and protection measures, but the available data indicates a growing problem. The major categories of children in need of special care and protection in Jamaica include street children, abused children, working children, orphans, children with disabilities and those that come in contact or conflict with the law. A growing number of youth participate in the labour force to the detriment of their schooling. Recent studies are showing that the number of young people involved in commercial sex work (including prostitution, erotic dancing and massage services) is increasing, particularly in Kingston and tourist centres. There are approximately 2000 street children, mainly boys, aged 14-17 years. Street children are also at risk from physical and sexual abuse and are frequent witnesses to and victims of violence and child prostitution.

In Jamaica, children under 18 were over-represented among the poor. As a group, they made up 52.3 percent of the persons in poverty compared with 38.2 percent of the overall population. Some 61 percent of the poor were under 25 years.[8] Much of this poverty is concentrated in rural parishes such as St. Ann, St. Mary, and Westmoreland as well as in inner cities. Despite negative overall growth in the economy in the 1990s, Jamaica was able to reduce the incidence of poverty throughout most of the decade. The long-term trend toward falling youth labour force participation probably reflects increased educational opportunities. Meanwhile, rates of unemployment for youth are high, for example, 28 percent for the 20 to 24 age group and more than double the unemployment rate of older age groups; young women face higher rates of unemployment than do young men. Most youth occupy relatively low-skill, low-paying jobs and rates of *under*-employment are likely high.

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[8] Economic and Social Survey Jamaica, 2001

Education

Free primary education and access to secondary education and vocational training are rights that the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) has guaranteed its children.[9] Jamaica has done a good job providing the system through which these can be achieved and this is reflected in high enrolments at the early childhood level, universal access at the primary and lower secondary levels, and fairly high enrolment at the upper secondary level. Currently, 83 percent of youth aged 15 to 16 are enrolled in school. Through age 16, males and females are equally likely to attend school; at older ages, however, female enrolment rates are significantly higher, and they are more likely than males to be literate and to pass external exams, such as Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate.

Due to insufficient spaces at grades 10 and 11, approximately 10% of students graduate from grade 9 each year. The GOJ promise of five years of secondary education to the seventh graders of 2003 will go a long in stemming the annually growth of the Out of School Population. Needed to remedy the situation that already exists among the large numbers that are not in school are educational and training programmes that will absorb those that are of school age. There must also be radical steps taken to improve attendance, reduce dropout rates and improve enrolment. It is also important that the Ministry address the issue of the relevance of what is taught relative to the demands of present day society.

Health, Sexual Activity and Childbearing

Adolescence and young adulthood are generally a healthy time of life. Health problems specific to youth include anaemia, which affects one in five youth, and suicide, whose rate doubled between 1996 and 1998. Violence and accidents which affect males disproportionately are the leading cause of illness and death among adolescents and older youth.

The median age at sexual debut for females has apparently changed little in Jamaica over the past three decades, remaining virtually constant at slightly over 17 years. Males start sexual activity earlier than females, with some studies showing that half of males have had sexual intercourse by age 14. For many young Jamaicans, sexual activity is coercive, with one in four 15 to 19 year-olds reporting being forced to have sex at least once in their lives. Most older youth are currently involved in a sexual relationship, and about one-third of males ages 15 to 24 have multiple sexual partners.[10]

HIV prevalence among youth 15 to 24, roughly 1 percent, is still relatively low compared to the regional average of over 2 percent. However, the majority of AIDS cases occur in the 20 to 39 age group, meaning most people are infected with HIV as adolescents and young adults. Moreover, the risk of an escalating epidemic is high. Adolescents and young adults also suffer disproportionately from other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). While knowledge of sources of treatment for sexually transmitted infections is high, perception of individual risk and use of preventative methods is significantly lower.   Almost one in five women ages 15 to 19 have an unmet need for pregnancy prevention. Moreover, over three out of every four pregnancies among 15 to 24 year-old women are unplanned.

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[9] These rights are guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child which Jamaica has a signed.
[10] Adolescent Condom Survey

Among younger women, a significant proportion are in conjugal unions, rising from 19 percent of the 15 to 17 age group to 75 percent in the 23 to 24 age group. Rates are similar for young men. Adolescent fertility rates in Jamaica, at 112 per 1000, are the highest of any nation in the English-speaking Caribbean. Almost one quarter of all girls have had at least one child before the age of 18, and 40 percent have given birth before age 20. Men tend to become fathers at older ages, reflecting age differences among sexual partners. Early childbearing predisposes women to greater risk. This contributes to the maternal death rates in Jamaica, which are high compared to neighbouring countries.

Drug Use and Abuse

Drug and alcohol use among adolescents and youth is of increasing concern in Jamaica, particularly given that use is a risk factor for many other health and social problems. Youth live in an environment where drug use is pervasive and many drugs are increasingly easy to get. Over three out of four students report that cigarettes and alcohol are fairly or very easy to obtain, and 60 percent feel the same about ganja. Nearly half of students report that their close friends smoke ganja. Relatively few youth view use of drugs such as ganja and alcohol as risky. Not surprisingly given these perceptions, significant proportions of youth use drugs, including alcohol (29 percent used in the past month), ganja (11 percent), inhalants (10 percent), and tobacco (5 percent). Long-term trends in drug use, however, are mostly encouraging: between 1987 and 1997, use of alcohol, cocaine, and amphetamines fell significantly; only use of ganja (smoked) rose significantly.

Violence, Crime and Physical and Sexual Abuse

Violence, both in the community and within the home, is an unfortunate feature of Jamaican society. Youth both contribute to this violence and are victims of it. About 15 percent of students ages 10 to 18 carry a weapon to school. Fourteen percent of boys and 5 percent of girls have been stabbed or shot in a fight, and 8 percent of all adolescents have been knocked unconscious as a result of a fight. One in six adolescents belong to a gang at some point during their youth. Meanwhile, youth are arrested, jailed, and murdered at twice the rate of the general population. Over 400 youth are in Juvenile Correctional facilities with another large percentage in the general correctional services. A category of violence to which young people are particularly vulnerable is physical and sexual abuse, which affects roughly one in ten youth.

Community Participation

Strong community and social structure are important in providing the proper environment for socialization of youth. Religious organizations comprise one institutional sector that is currently involved in youth development, with many youth regularly attending religious services. In addition, many youth belong to sporting or youth groups, church groups, or musical groups. The creativity and talent of Jamaican youth continue to astonish the world. From academics to athletics, to technology to theatre, Jamaican youth can be found breaking new ground.

The Legislative Framework

The Policy adopts a rights-based approach consistent with international conventions of which Jamaica is a signatory. This approach is also reflected in national legislation and policies. The Human Rights Conventions speak to the universal principles of human rights that are also enshrined in the Jamaican constitution. These give every person in Jamaica fundamental rights and freedoms, regardless of race, colour, place of origin, political persuasion, creed or sex.

International treaties or agreements ratified or signed by Jamaica include:
- The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which outlines the rights to which children are entitled.

- The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, which mandates the equal treatment of girls and young women in areas such as education and employment and its general recommendations on violence.

- The *Programme of Action* of the 1994 *International Conference on Population and Development*, which addresses the rights of young people to reproductive health information and services.

- The 2001 *Declaration of Commitment* of the UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, which sets specific targets for reducing HIV infection in young people and increasing their access to information and services.

National laws and policies that impact youth development include:
- The *Draft Child Care and Protection Act*, which seeks to consolidate approximately twenty pieces of legislation, related to children.

- The *National Policy on Children* (1997), which addresses the survival, protection, development and participation rights of children.

Other legislations and policies critical to youth development include the *Domestic Violence Act*, the *Status of Children's Act,* the *Children Guardianship and Custody Act,* the *Adoption of Children Act,* the *Affiliation Act, Education Act* (1980), the *Housing Act*, the *Maternity Leave Act*, the *National Policy on Persons with Disabilities*, the draft *HIV/AIDS Policy*, the *National Population Policy* (1995), the *Juveniles Act*, the *Inheritance Provisions for Family and Dependents Act*, *Offences against the Persons Act,* the *Incest Punishment Act* and the reproductive health guidelines. These policies and pieces of legislation outline the nation's approach to these issues and must be duly considered in planning for our youths' development.[11]

The Institutional Framework

Planning and implementing programmes for Jamaican youth are primarily the responsibility of the government. Budgetary allocations are made through the ministry with responsibility for youth and agencies implementing programmes targeting youth. Most ministries have programmes targeting youth. Co-ordination among these ministries is insufficient and, as is the case among the NGO providers, there is significant waste of resources due to overlap and duplication in services.

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[11] A detailed discussion of the national policy environment is presented in 'Meeting the Development and Participation Rights of Jamaican Adolescents" UNICEF/UNFPA

Since the 1960s, the youth portfolio has been a part of at least eight ministries including being twinned with Education and Culture, and Community Development twice in the 1990s. One result of this frequent movement is a loss of institutional memory and uncertainty among those working with youth. In 2000, the NCYD was launched as Jamaica's first youth development secretariat. Its mandate includes coordinating, planning and monitoring youth development nationally. The NCYD plays a limited service delivery role but works closely with other government agencies – NYS, Human Empowerment and Resource Training/National Training Agency (HEART/NTA) and the SDC - to implement programmes. These organisations have field offices and staff, and in the case of the SDC and HEART/NTA, a national network of institutions that is used to implement programmes. Implementation is further enhanced through partnerships with a vibrant and effective network of community organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international funding agencies.

Cabinet has given its approval for the Children's Services Division, the Adoption Board and the Child Support Unit of the Ministry of Health to be merged and converted into an executive agency, the Child Development Agency (CDA). The CDA is the sole body in Jamaica responsible for child welfare service delivery and programme development. It will consequently provide leadership to the process of implementing the National Policy on Children and facilitate the development of the National Plan of Action for Children. It is further expected that the CDA will bring about improvement in the planning, decision-making processes and intervention strategies relating to children coming into the care of the State; ensure the provision of quality care for children in facilities of care and protection; facilitate the protection of the nation's children and develop programmes to support its mission and values.

There is an overlap between youth (15-24) and childhood (0-18) during the period of adolescence (15-18). It is therefore critical for the NCYD to establish and strengthen strategic alliances, especially with the Child Development Agency. This partnership will facilitate increased dialogue and improved coordination.

OPTIMIZING THE FUTURE

Principles and Values Underpinning the National Youth Policy

Jamaicans are a people of high ethical and moral standards, with love and respect for liberty, equality and justice. The Policy is based on the belief that the entire nation must coalesce around the highest of Jamaica's ideals. These are reflected in the following principles and values.

> - Respect for cultural, religious and political views
> - Equity and accessibility
> - Gender inclusion
> - Good governance
> - Active participation
> - Youth empowerment
> - Partnerships
> - Honesty
> - Justice

Rights and Responsibilities of the Jamaican Youth

- **The Rights of Youth**

Jamaica agrees with the internationally defined rights of young people as presented in the UN *Declaration of Human Rights* and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. These are reinforced by the youth who see these rights as critical for their participation as citizens. The rights of youth are as follows:

> **All Jamaican youth have the right to:**
> - Life
> - Freedom from discrimination
> - An identity, name and nationality
> - Freedom of expression, culture and religion
> - Basic healthcare and education
> - Protection from abuse – physical and psychological
> - Participate in decision making that affects their wellbeing
> - Opportunities to optimize their growth and development
> - Access to services and information that will enhance their development

Every effort will be made to promote these rights to ensure greater understanding by the populace and to foster advocacy for legal and social initiatives needed to promote positive youth development.

- **The Responsibilities of Youth**

Responsibilities are critical in promoting and achieving the rights as there is an integral relationship between rights and responsibilities. The responsibilities of all Jamaica's youth are as follows:

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All youth have the responsibility to:

- Take ownership of their future and decision making that affects their well-being
- Take advantage of opportunities to develop and contribute
- Acquire the best education possible
- Respect themselves, others and the environment
- Be good citizens and contribute to social and economic development
- Care for, support and protect those less well off
- Advocate for their development

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These responsibilities shall be promoted by all agencies and individuals involved in the process of youth development and it is incumbent on the government to facilitate the provision of support to youth, to ensure they understand and accept their responsibility.

Rights and Responsibilities of Stakeholders

The success of this Policy and it's impact on the process of youth development is largely dependent on the ability of all stakeholders to fully participate in strengthening coordination and planning efforts for youth development. A crucial component is participation in the development of a National Strategic Plan for Youth Development (NSPYD) in order to contribute to the development of an environment which fosters holistic youth development. Each stakeholder has the responsibility to contribute to the achievement of the vision by following through on their commitments and providing quality services for youth in their area of focus. (A detailed list of the specific roles of each stakeholder is in Appendix E.)

PROMOTING POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: JAMAICA'S PRIORITIES

The priority areas of the Policy take into consideration the myriad issues affecting youth. A litany of these issues was identified through research and the experts on the subject. This was further substantiated through the critical input of the young people, who participated in consultations across the island. These consultations took place in a variety of settings and included focus group discussions and the administration of questionnaires (see Appendix C for more information on the methodology of the consultations).

The youth identified unemployment and education-related issues (*including treatment by teachers and relevance of what is taught*) as the most critical issues affecting them. Other commonly cited issues include crime and violence, gender disparities, lack of national unity, the illicit drug trade and drug use, teenage parenting, ignorance of culture and the need for activities and opportunities for youth.

It is from these and a myriad of other suggestions that six main areas for the Policy were developed. These are:

- Living Environments
- Education and Training
- Employment and Entrepreneurship
- Health
- Participation and Empowerment
- Care and Protection

Youth, like other population categories, have particular concerns and problems, which ought to be given specific responses. Further, youth concerns and problems, as well as, their contributions must be integrated into social and economic policy and political decision-making. It is critical therefore that policies and programmes devised and implemented focus on ensuring the development of the various categories of young people. Such policies and programmes must ensure that young people (the nation's major social asset and human resource) acquire the necessary competencies and skills which would enable them to become active, responsible and productive citizens. In Jamaica, as elsewhere, these areas of concern are closely inter-related. The life of a young person is not divided into neat compartments; one area affects the other in a variety of ways. Those linkages require a creative, holistic and multi-sectoral response at both the policy and programme levels. The following sections elaborate on the six main areas. After a brief review of the importance of the focus area to youth outcomes, the Policy sets forth an overall goal. Then, the Policy identifies those groups that should receive highest priority in its implementation, while not excluding attention to the broader youth population. The designation of priority groups was based in large part on the results of the NCYD's Youth Programmatic Inventory and Gap Analysis carried out in 2001 and 2002.[12] Following

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[12] See: NCYD, ALEPH, S.A. and Futures Group International. 2002. *Adolescent and Youth Serving Organisations in Jamaica: Results from the Youth Programmatic Inventory Survey of the National Centre for Youth Development*. Jamaica: NCYD; and NCYD, ALEPH S.A. and Futures Group International. 2002. *Youth Services in Jamaica: An Analysis of Gaps and Overlaps*. Jamaica: NCYD

the description of priority groups, the Policy sets forth key strategic objectives, each accompanied by recommendations for specific actions.

Figure 2. <u>**NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY FOCAL AREAS, GOALS, PRIORITY GROUPS, & STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**</u>

GOAL	PRIORITY GROUPS	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
Living Environments		
To foster the development of supportive families and communities that provides youth with an environment conducive to their positive development and well-being.	• Youth exposed to domestic violence • Youths living on the streets • Youths living alone • Single-parent households headed by youth • Youth in rural, underserved parishes	To promote the strengthening of families to provide a supportive environment for youth development. To promote strengthening of community programmes to support families. To advocate for a culture supportive of youth development
Education and Training		
All youth completing secondary level education and acquiring the skills to enable them to be prepared for livelihood, self-development and citizenship.	• Out of school youth • Teen mothers • Youth with disabilities • Boys, especially in poor rural areas • Gifted students	To promote universal access to quality secondary education To advocate for an education system that is relevant to the needs of youth and potential employers. To foster participation of students in the administration of their institutions. To facilitate increased access to quality training opportunities in skills relevant to the global market place and use of cultural and indigenous products. To develop and implement a programme for identifying and supporting gifted children To develop and implement strategies to improve male performance up to the secondary level and matriculation to the tertiary level. To promote schools as community empowerment points and safe zones. To advocate for full implementation of the White Paper on Education (2001)

GOAL		STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
Employment and Entrepreneurship		
To facilitate the creation of opportunities for employment and an environment that promotes entrepreneurship.	- Rural Youths - Young women - Youths with disabilities - Youth infected and affected by HIV/AIDS - Youths working on the streets - Youth with certification from HEART/NTA and other training agencies	To increase the employability of youth To increase the number of employment opportunities for youth To foster an environment conducive to creation of opportunities for self-employment.
Health		
To foster an environment where young people embrace healthy lifestyles and enjoy optimum physical and mental health	- Youth at risk of early pregnancy, substance misuse, HIV and other STIs - Younger and underserved rural youth - Youth in institutional care - Adults influential in young people's lives and responsible for the implementation of youth focused health activities	To create through advocacy networks, a supportive policy environment that fosters positive health outcomes. To improve knowledge, influence attitudes and selected priority health practices and behaviours. To improve access to and quality of health services.
Participation and Empowerment		
To foster a culture that allows for the full participation of youth in the social, spiritual, economic and political processes of the society.	- Youth not affiliated - Youth with disabilities - Youth infected and affected by HIV/AIDS	To enhance the capacities of young people to participate in societal processes To provide spaces and opportunities to increase participation To enhance cultural dynamism through enhanced opportunity for creative expression and unique Jamaican talents.
Care and Protection		
To promote a society that provides care and protection to those youth whose care and protection rights have been compromised.	- Street Youth - Youth in regulated services (foster care, children's homes, places of safety, correctional or other) - Youth at risk of juvenile delinquency - Youth with special needs, physical and mental disabilities - Rural disadvantaged youth	To prevent those at risk from needing care and protection To advocate for the provision of the highest quality services for those that are in need of care and protection To facilitate the successful reintegration of all youths who are in special care with their family and the society. To advocate for full implementation of the provisions of the National Plan of Action for Juvenile Justice in Jamaica

LIVING ENVIRONMENTS

All positive outcomes as well as difficulties facing youth are associated with the environments in which they live. Within the family, youth begin to build their identities and acquire characteristics which are further influenced by the wider society. The family's provision of a good start for the child is inextricably linked to the household head's education and socio-economic status as well as the society's ability to provide a safe and supportive environment. Behaviors learned in the family environment are influenced by experiences in school and other community settings. The social support systems which exist at these levels are important in protecting the youth and ensuring positive development. Unfortunately, not all Jamaican youth have the support of an intact, stable family. Far too many live in households without one or both parents, without a suitable male role model and within impoverished communities, which cannot contribute to their development. Still others live on the street or in precarious situations.

Thus, the youth's living environment – cultural practices, the media, the natural environment, housing, shelter, access to safe places and spaces to play and "BE", opportunities to participate – must be consistent in the messages it sends to those it moulds. The Policy seeks to promote an enabling living environment for all Jamaica's youth.

GOAL: *To foster the development of supportive families and communities that provide youth with an environment conducive to their positive development and well-being.*

PRIORITY GROUPS

- Youth exposed to domestic violence
- Youth living on the streets
- Youth living alone
- Single parent households headed by youth
- Youth in rural, under-served parishes

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. **To promote the strengthening of families to provide a supportive environment for youth development.**
- Through public and private sector support for programmes that provide parenting skills, and counseling services for youth and their families, and;
- By promoting the provision of safe living environments for all youth, including housing, recreational space, air and water.

2. **To promote strengthening of community programmes to support families.**
- Through public and private sector support for mentoring programmes and community support groups for teen parents and families with domestic violence
- By encouraging programmes that help boys form positive notions of gender relations.
- By promoting family participation in the design and delivery of community programmes.

3. To advocate for a culture supportive of youth development

- Though support for a critical review of the role of the media
- Through the development and full enforcement of policies and laws to reduce domestic violence and abuse of children

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Education is critical to the process of young people developing and achieving their full potential. It is the means by which knowledge, skills and competencies are acquired for survival in one's environment. It is through education, formal or otherwise, that people learn cultural and social values, acquire a better understanding of themselves and their environment, and improve their standard of living and social status. It is thus a powerful tool in our efforts to foster the creation of the individuals and the society which we desire.

Despite impressive enrolment rates, there still are issues with the quality of the school experience for many Jamaican students. Moreover, not all those students who want to complete their secondary education are able to, because of lack of space. As the major place for formal educational activities, schools (including training institutions, universities and colleges) must play a central role in seeing to the effective socialization of children, adolescents, and youth into positive and productive citizens. The responsibility must extend beyond teaching literacy and technical skills to include the teaching of life skills, culture and heritage, and social responsibility.

GOAL: All youth completing secondary level education and acquiring the life skills to enable them to be prepared for self-development and citizenship.

PRIORITY GROUPS

- Out of school youth,
- Teen mothers
- Youth with disabilities
- Boys, especially in poor, rural areas
- Gifted students

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To promote universal access to quality secondary education

- Through advocacy for an increase in the number of spaces and the quality of education at the secondary level
- By encouraging regular school attendance and reducing dropout rates due to economic factors
- By supporting the strengthening and implementation of Health and Family Life Education; values, attitudes and life skills and technical/vocational training according to students' aptitude and interest.

2. To advocate for an education system that is relevant both to the needs of youth and to their potential employers.

- By conducting a thorough review of the existing formal education system and assessing its relevance to the needs of Jamaican youth
- By facilitating the refining/establishment of standards, indicators and an information system to monitor the delivery of formal and non-formal secondary, vocational and tertiary education.

3. **To foster participation of students in the administration of their institutions.**
- By strengthening the capacity of student councils to fulfil the provisions of the Education Act.

4. **To facilitate increased access to quality training opportunities in skills relevant to the global market place and use of cultural and indigenous products.**
- By increasing the number of HEART/NTA Academies and diversifying the areas of training

5. **To develop and implement a programme for identifying and supporting gifted children**
- Through programmes designed to challenge and support these children
- Encouraging training of relevant practitioners in order to identify these children.

6. **To develop and implement strategies to improve male performance up to the secondary level and matriculation to the tertiary level.**
- Through programmes designed to help convince boys of the value of education to their future

7. **To promote schools as community empowerment points and safe zones.**
- By promoting the use of school premises for community development activities

8. **To advocate for full implementation of the White Paper on Education (2001) plus…**
- Grade nine literacy of 95% by 2006
- HEART/NTA level one certification100% of secondary graduates by 2006
- Mandatory placement of all secondary graduates in educational/training, employment, or voluntary service by 2008.

EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Approximately one in every three youth in the labour force is unemployed and thus unable to earn an income. This has been identified as a factor contributing to the high levels of crime and violence and feelings of hopelessness and despondency among youth. Given this situation, a priority area for the nation is improving the opportunities for gainful occupation available to youth. This cannot be achieved simply by improving the macro-economic conditions, as youth unemployment is different from general unemployment. Instead, this demands the development of specific strategies to target this issue.

Self-employment is an area deserving of critical attention in light of the high level of creativity that exists among our youth and the untapped potential in culture and technology – two areas in which our youth have excelled.   Another area which requires critical attention is the agricultural industry as its earning potential remains relatively unexplored.

GOAL: *To facilitate the creation of opportunities for employment and an environment that promotes entrepreneurship.*

PRIORITY TARGET GROUPS

- Rural Youth
- Young women
- Youth with disabilities
- Youth infected and affected by HIV/AIDS
- Youth working on the streets
- Youth with certification from HEART/NTA and other training agencies

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To increase the employability of youth
- Through advocacy for relevant educational and skills training opportunities in the formal and NGO sectors;
- By promoting on the job training opportunities, work experience and placement programmes;
- By encouraging research and planning for training and qualifications that are relevant to the job market, and;
- By fostering direct linkages between the education and employment sectors.

2. To increase the number of employment opportunities for youth
- By promoting incentives for employers who employ inexperienced youths;
- By promoting youth innovations in the agricultural, cultural and technological industries in Jamaica

3. To foster an environment conducive to creation of opportunities for self-employment.
- By advocating for the strengthening of loan programmes to facilitate access to youth friendly credit;
- By fostering training in the areas of entrepreneurship and enterprise development for youth (in and out of school), and;
- By promoting self-employment as a viable alternative to traditional employment.

HEALTH

Although Jamaican youth generally enjoy good health, they suffer from a number of health problems, many of them preventable. Alarming levels of drug use and youth violence are also a concern to Jamaican society. These problems are often the result of cultural practices and beliefs that have been perpetuated for generations. It is important to provide information to youth but it is just as critical that society demonstrates a commitment to practicing the ideals it teaches. Young people's behaviour with regard to sex and reproduction, and the paths they take in other critical areas of their life, will largely determine the size, health and prosperity of the Jamaican future population. Behaviour patterns which are established during this period of their lives, such as drug use or non-use and sexual risk taking or protection, can have long-lasting positive and negative effects on their well being as well as that of the society. The healthy youth will only be realized if the environment and the culture facilitate it.

GOAL: *To foster an environment where young people embrace healthy lifestyles and enjoy optimum physical and mental health*

PRIORITY TARGET GROUPS

- Youth at risk of early pregnancy, substance misuse, HIV and other STIs
- Younger and under-served rural youth
- Youth in institutional care
- Adults (parents, teachers, health care providers) influential in young people's lives and responsible for the implementation of youth focused health activities

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To create through advocacy networks, a supportive policy environment that fosters positive health outcomes

- Review and revise existing legislation around youth health, such as the age of consent to sexual intercourse, marriage and for accessing health services
- Support the review of legislation on penalties around drug, weapons, violence and sexual offences against youth.
- Support the establishment of youth-focused advocacy coalitions to promote positive youth policies

2. To improve knowledge, influence attitudes and selected priority health practices and behaviours.

- Collaborate with other agencies to develop a cohesive set of programme strategies for targeting selected priority behaviours.
- Expand access to information on risk and protective factors which influence healthy behaviours.
- Conduct broad-based community initiatives to raise awareness of specific negative health behaviours, whether substance misuse, early initiation of sexual intercourse or unprotected sex.
- Promote gender equity and the transformation of societal norms and cultural practices of masculinity and femininity
- Work with the media and through popular culture to promote healthy youth behaviours and reduce depictions of violence
- Support the work of respective partners to increase knowledge of the efficacy of condoms in prevention of sexually transmitted infections and prevention of pregnancy
- Support programmes which emphasize raising awareness of the health and behavioural risks of drug, alcohol and early sexual initiation and give youth the negotiation skills to be able to resist pressure from peers.

3. To improve access to and quality of health services.

- Build on the concept of youth-friendly services by expanding in non-clinical settings

- Expand access to counseling and effective contraception as a way to reduce unwanted pregnancies and abortion.
- Support the provision of services that are sensitive to and appropriate for the needs of youth;
- Advocate for an increase in the number of facilities providing support to youth who misuse drugs or are parents, and;
- Advocate for the full implementation of the Jamaica HIV/AIDS/STI National Plan of Action
- Work through programmes that address mental health problems at the community level
- Support programmes designed to assist with the development of parenting skills and strengthen programmes designed to address antecedents of negative behaviors

EMPOWERMENT & PARTICIPATION

In recent years, Jamaica and most other countries of the world have been putting greater emphasis on the empowerment of youth. Youth empowerment equips youth with the knowledge, skills and competencies to manipulate their environment. The promotion of youth empowerment has increased dramatically in recognition of the importance of youth to the development of any nation. Empowerment is a process and is achieved in part through participation in activities that allow for learning and skills development. Youth participation is thus concerned with allowing youth to act on their own behalf. Active participation in a variety of settings and activities builds self-esteem and commitment to the future. Therefore, it is very important to provide spaces and opportunities for youth to participate as part of their physical, mental and psychological preparation for citizenship.

GOAL: *To foster a culture that allows for the full participation of youth in the social, spiritual, economic and political processes of the society.*

PRIORITY TARGET GROUPS

- Youth not affiliated
- Youth with disabilities
- Youth infected and affected by HIV/AIDS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. **To enhance the capacities of young people to participate in societal processes**
- Through support for programmes to build capacity of young people to participate in societal processes;
- By strengthening programmes for mentorship and volunteerism among youth, and;
- By promoting the development of mechanisms to allow youth greater access to information and opportunities to express their perspectives and have input into planning and decision-making.

2. **To provide spaces and opportunities to increase participation**
- By supporting the participation of young people in planning and the process of making decisions about their own futures;

- By creating opportunities for young men and women to participate in statutory, private and voluntary boards and organisations at the decision-making level
- By facilitating inter-island, regional and international youth exchange opportunities.
- Through programmes and activities aimed at recognizing youth who have achieved.
- By endorsing the use of sports as an avenue to foster increased participation, develop leadership skills and build character

3. **To enhance cultural dynamism through enhanced opportunity for creative expression and unique Jamaican talents.**
- By advocating for the development of localized and comprehensive cultural development spaces
- Through programmes and activities aimed at supporting and recognizing youth who have an interest in cultural development.
- Through support for after-school programmes focusing on values and attitudes, sports, culture etc.

CARE & PROTECTION

In Jamaica, the number of youth in need of special care and protection is significant and growing. This high-risk group consists of street children, abused children, working children, orphans, children with disabilities, youth engaged in commercial sex and those that come in contact or conflict with the law. Recognizing the threats to youths' care and protection and the lack of enforcement of the present law, this section of the National Youth Policy seeks to address the needs of these youth with a view to preventing those at-risk from needing care and protection, ensuring that those in need, receive care of the highest quality, and ensuring systems are in place to facilitate the smooth re-integration of wards of the state with their families and communities.

GOAL: T*o promote a society that provides care and protection to those youth whose care and protection rights have been compromised.*

PRIORITY GROUPS

- Street Youth
- Youth at risk of juvenile delinquency
- Youth with special needs, physical and mental disabilities
- Rural disadvantaged youth
- Youth in regulated services (foster care, children's homes, places of safety, correctional facilities, etc.)

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. **To prevent those at risk from needing care and protection**
- Through support for institutions and programmes that will instill positive values and attitudes in parents and youth;
- By reinforcing and implementing public and private sector programmes for youth who are at high risk of becoming neglected and uncared for, and;

- By supporting the strengthening of early detection systems and implementing community-based prevention programmes.

2. To advocate for the provision of the highest quality services for those that are in need of care and protection
- Through the implementation and review of standards of care for youth who have been abandoned, abused, neglected or in conflict with the law;
- By supporting efforts to increase collaboration and coordination among youth organizations;
- By supporting the development of standards to monitor and evaluate youth facilities to ensure friendliness for youth with special needs, and;
- By supporting programmes that provide capacity building of staff who work with youth in need of care and protection.

3. To facilitate the successful reintegration of all youth who are in regulated services with their family and the society.
- By promoting the development of programmes to regulate provision and termination of care, and;
- By promoting the strengthening of programmes that equip wards of the state with skills to allow them to re-enter society and the capacity of families, communities and institutions to receive wards of the state on termination of care.

4. To advocate for full implementation of the provisions of the National Plan of Action for Juvenile Justice in Jamaica.
- By endorsing the establishment of a Youth Arm of the Juveniles Advisory Council
- By advocating for the continued training of law enforcement professionals in order to effectively address the needs of youth in juvenile facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

A multi-sectoral approach, similar to that used in developing the Policy, will be applied to its implementation. Two national strategic plans should be developed to accompany this Policy. One plan will cover the 10-19 age group (adolescents) and will be built on this Policy as well as the National Policy on Children. The NSPYD will focus primarily on the 19-24 age group, as the Adolescent Plan will cover the 15-18 age group. A National Plan of Action for Children is being developed and with the other two plans will provide coverage for the entire 0-24 age group.

The Plans will define how the Policy goals will be realized, establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, provide estimates of the costs associated with the Policy's implementation, the sources of funding, and the timeframe within which each aspect will be achieved.

Implementing the NSPYD will require mechanisms at the local, national and regional levels to ensure coordinated implementation and to foster collaboration among all stakeholders. Monitoring and coordinating the implementation should include the formation of adequately resourced and empowered committees at each level and further should foster the active participation of youth at all levels.

National Level Co-ordination

National oversight of the implementation of the Policy will be the responsibility of the NCYD. The NCYD will facilitate the formation of a National Youth Development Steering Committee comprising youth, the PIOJ, critical government ministries and select youth development organizations. This committee will have responsibility for:

- Facilitating the design of the NSPYD
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation process;
- Fostering coordination and collaboration among the stakeholders, and;
- Advocating for resources needed to implement the Policy.

Budgetary Support

The Government pledged 20 per cent of the national budget to Human Priority Needs at the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen 1995). The Government shall commit 10 percent of this amount to the implementation of the National Youth Policy annually. This will be supplemented by the provisions of other stakeholders consistent with their roles and responsibilities (outlined in Appendix E).

MONITORING & EVALUATION OF THE POLICY

The National Youth Policy shall be reviewed every five years, a process that should take place at the same time as the review of the NSPYD. The review will examine progress made in achieving the indicators defined by the Plan of Action. The goals will be reviewed to ensure relevance to the situation of young people.

The Government shall establish a multi-sectoral standing committee (the National Youth Development Steering Committee) and empower it to continuously monitor the implementation of the National Youth Policy. The Committee will report to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry which hosts the NCYD.

APPENDICES

A. National Steering Committee Members for Drafting of National Youth Policy

ORGANISATION	REPRESENTATIVE
Boys Brigade	Mr. George Somers
Boys Brigade	Mr. Easton Daley
Child Development Agency	Ms. Allison Anderson
Combined Disabilities Association	Mr. Michael Thorney
Department of Sociology, UWI	Dr. Pat Anderson
HEART/NTA	Mr. Robert Gregory
Jamaica Council of Churches	Rev. Harris Cunningham
Jamaica Cultural Development Commission	Mr. Andrew Brodber
Jamaica Youth Ambassador Programme	Ms. Janielle Spence
Jamaica Youth Ambassador Programme	Mr. Joseph Farquharson
Media	Mr. Omar Anderson
Ministry of Agriculture	Mr. Hugh Blackwood
Ministry of Education, Youth & Culture	Mrs. Valerie Been
Ministry of Education, Youth & Culture	Mr. Sydney Bartley
Ministry of Health	Dr. Deanna Ashley
Ministry of Health	Mr. Winston Bowen
Ministry of Justice	Mr. Juswyn Jarrett
National Centre for Youth Development	Miss Amory Hamilton
National Centre for Youth Development	Mr. Kenneth Russell
National Centre for Youth Development	Miss Natalie Campbell
National Family Planning Board	Dr. Olivia McDonald
National Secondary Students Council	Miss Samantha Smith
National Youth Service	Rev. Adinhair Jones
National Youth Service	Mrs. Heather Lamb
Office of the Prime Minister	Mrs. Ann-Marie Bonner
Office of the Prime Minister	Mrs. Donna Moncrieffe
Organisation for the Centralisation of Rastafari	Mr. Junior Allwood
People's Action for Community Participation	Ms. Angela Grey
Planning Institute of Jamaica	Ms. Cheryll Messam
Planning Institute of Jamaica	Ms. Mary Clarke
Planning Institute of Jamaica	Ms. Norma Newman
PNP Youth Organisation	Mr. Basil Waite
Private Sector Organization of Jamaica	Mrs. Jem Woolery-Davis
St. Thomas Association of Youth Organisations	Mr. Dwight Campbell
UNFPA	Mr. Derven Patrick
UNICEF	Ms. Penelope Campbell
USAID	Mrs. Claire Spence
Young Jamaica	Ms. Sophia Deer

B. List of Stakeholders Consulted for Drafting of National Youth Policy

3Ds Project
Addiction Alert Organisation
Advanced Training & Research in Fertility Management
Unit
AFS Intercultural Services
Anchovy High
Anglican Mother's Union
Arcadia Police Youth Club
ALEPH, S.A.
Bamboo Police Youth Club
Bank of Nova Scotia Foundation
Berry Hall Progressive Youth Club
Bureau of Women's Affairs
Bishop Gibson High
Black River High School
Black River Police Youth Club
Bluefields People's Community Association
Boys Brigade
Boys Town
Brimmervale High School
British High Commission
Bucknor Police Youth Club
Calabar High School
Campus for Christ
Canadian International Development Agency
Caribbean Christian Centre for the Deaf
Caribbean Conference of Churches
Central High
Children First
Churches Cooperative Credit Union
Citizen's Advice Bureau
Clarendon Group for the Disabled
Coalition for Better Parenting
Combined Disabilities Association
Comfort Hall Police Youth Club
Cottage Police Youth Club
Credit Organisation for Pre-Micro Enterprise
Department for International Development
Department of Education, UWI
Edwin Allen High School
Enchanted Youth Organisation
Environment Foundation of Jamaica
Epping Forest Youth Club
Ethiopian Ortodox Fenote Berhain Youth Association
FAMPLAN
Father's Incorporated
Ferncourt High School
Four Paths Police Youth Club
Generation 2000
Girl Guides Association of Jamaica
Girl's Brigade
Girls Town
Golden Line Youth Club
Grace and Staff Community Development Foundation
Grace Kennedy Foundation

GTZ
Hanover Parish Library
Happy Grove All Age
Happy Grove Police Youth Club
Haughton United
HEART Trust/NTA
Help for Parents
Herbert Morrison High School
Higgin Town Police Youth Club
Holland Police Youth Club
Hope for Children Development Company
Hunt's Pen Police Youth Club
Infofun
Inter-American Development Bank
Iona High School
Island Sports Trust
Jamaica 4-H Clubs
Jamaica Association for Children with Learning
Disabilities
Jamaica Association for Persons with Mental
Retardation
Jamaica Association for the Deaf
Jamaica Baptist Women's Federation
Jamaica Coalition on the Rights of the Child
Jamaica Employer's Federation
Jamaica Foundation for Children
Jamaica Information Service
Jamaica Junior Chamber
Jamaica Library Service
Jamaica Movement for Adult Literacy
Jamaica Red Cross
Jamaica Social Investment Fund
Jamaica Social Policy Evaluation Project
Jamaica Society for the Blind
Jamaica Special Olympics Association
Jamaica Youth Ambassadors Programme
Jamaica Youth for Christ
Japan Karate Association of Jamaica
Jesse Kerridge Continuation School
Joyst Caribbean Services
Kingston & St. Andrew Football Association
Kingston Restoration Company
Kingston School of Nursing
Kingston Technical High School
Kiwanis Club
Knox Community College
Lancaster Youth Club
Leith Hall Police Youth Club
Lionel Town Police Youth Club
Llandewey Police Youth Club
Manchester Anglican Youth Council
Manchester High School
Manchester Parish Library
Mandeville Church of Christ
Mannings High School

Marcus Garvey Technical High School
Mary Mount High School
May Pen Police Youth Club
Mayday High School
Mel Nathan Institute
Merlene Ottey High School
Mico College CARE Centre
Micro Enterprises Development Agency
Mike Town Sports Club
Ministry of Education, Youth & Culture
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Commerce, Science & Techology
Ministry of Industry & Tourism
Ministry of Justice
Ministry of Labour & Social Security
Ministry of Land and Environment
Ministry of Local Government, Community
Development & Sport
Ministry of National Security
Ministry of Water & Housing
Moneague College
Montego Bay Community College
Montego Bay High School
Morant Bay Police Youth Club
Moravian Youth Council
Mt. Alvernia High School
Muffett Youth Club
Munro College
National Council on Drug Abuse
National Development Foundation of Jamaica
National Environment and Planning Agency
National Family Planning Board
National Housing Trust
National Initiative for Street Children
National Tools and Engineering Institute
National Youth Service
New Market Citizen's Association
New Market Police Youth Club
Northern Caribbean University
Oberlin High School
Ocho Rios High School
Office of the Prime Minister
Operation Friendship
Oracabessa High School
Overcomers Christian Fellowship
PALS Foundation
Pan-American Health Organisation
Paymaster Jamaica Ltd
Peer Counselling Association of Jamaica
Peoples Action for Community Transformation
Planning Institute of Jamaica
PNP Youth Organisation
Police Community Relations
Port Morant Police Youth Club
Portland Environment Protection Association
Porus Youth Pioneers
Princess Margaret Police Youth Club

Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica
Prospect Police Youth Club
Race Track Police Youth Club
Reading Laboratory
Runnaway Bay Police youth Club
Rural Family Support Organisation
Scouts Association of Jamaica
Seaforth Police Youth Club
Self Start Fund
Shortwood Teachers College
Siloah Cluster
Sistren Theatre Collective
Social Development Commission
Somerset Youth and Community Organisation
Special Education Unit
Sports Development Foundation
St. Andrew Settlement
St. Ann Health Department
St. Elizabeth Parish Library
St. Hugh's High School
St. Jago High School
St. James Health Department
St. John's Ambulance Association
St. John's Methodist Skills Training Centre
St. Mary's Rural Development Project
St. Paul of the Cross High
St. Thomas Association of Youth Organisations
St. Thomas Technical High School
Student Environmental Network C/O JET
Students Christian Fellowship & Scripture Union
Students Loan Bureau
Sunning Hill Police youth Club
Survivors Police Youth Club
Technology Innovation Center
Teen Challenge Jamaica
Teen Herald
The Gleaner
The Job Bank
The Patriots
Titchfield High School
Tivoli Gardens High School
Treadlight Youth and Community Organisation
Trelawny Parish Library
United Nations Children's Fund
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Population Fund
United States Agency for International Development
United Way of Jamaica
University of the West Indies
US Peace Corps
Violence Prevention Programme, UWI
Vision Makers World Reach
Walkerswood Community Development Committee
Waterloo Apostolic Church
West Help
West Indies Union of Seventh Day Adventists
Western Regional Health Authority

Western Society for the Upliftment of Children
Westmoreland Parish Library
Wildlife & Environmental Conservation Action Now
Women's Centre Foundation of Jamaica
Women's Media Watch
Women's Construction Collective
Woodside Police Youth Club
World Bank
Yallahs Police Youth Club
York Castle High School
Young Jamaica

Young Men's Christian Association
Young Women's Christian Association
Youth Advocacy Movement
Youth Enhancement Service
Youth Opportunities Unlimited
Youth.now

C. Youth Policy's Methodological Approach

In August 2001, the NCYD invited over 100 stakeholders to review the 1994 National Youth Policy in order to determine whether or not the document should be revised. All respondents indicated that there was need for review and further that the new Policy should have a strategy for implementation. The NCYD embarked on the process of revision using a three-fold mechanism. In September, a National Youth Policy Steering Committee was formed to monitor the revision process. Later in that year the NCYD contracted the services of Briget McDonald –Levy to draft the Policy and thirdly it embarked on a series of consultations. First, there were consultations with youth in 5 regions across the island, and also with youth in institutions, inclusive of children's homes and juvenile correctional facilities. Early in 2002, there were sector consultations with stakeholders representing donors, NGOs, the Church and the government. Again in November 2002, the NCYD had a second set of regional consultations focusing on the general public culminating with a Youth Convention on Sunday, December 1, 2002.

These Consultations provided in the first instance, the guidelines for the policy by identifying the specific issues to be addressed and secondly identifying and ratifying strategic responses. This process has been inclusive and has sought to ascertain the views of all Jamaicans through various means. At each stage, the NCYD was guided by the information from the consultations and further by the knowledge and expertise of the Steering Committee. The Policy recognizes that the issues affecting the Jamaican youth are not limited to one sector and thus the response cannot be successfully devised by any one Ministry or agency. In recognition of this, the Policy revision process deliberately adopted a multi-sectoral approach involving representatives from all sectors of society at all levels. In doing this, we are confident that the views of the Jamaican youth have been adequately represented and as stakeholders in the process of youth development we recognize the importance of working together in order to foster the most positive outcome.

D. Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation

Size of youth population 15-24 years
Youth population (15-24) by parish
Youth 15-24) as percentage of the population
Sex ratio of youth population
Number of births for females 15-24 years
Proportion of total births for females 15-24
Youth population (15-24) for the KMA
Youth population (15-24) for other towns
Youth population (15-24) for rural areas
Contraceptive prevalence rate for females (in union) 15-24 years
Knowledge among females (15-24 years) of at least one modern method of contraception
Knowledge among females (15-24 years) of at least one modern method of contraception by parish
Knowledge among females (15-24 years) of at least one modern method of contraception by KMA
Knowledge among females (15-24 years) of at least one modern method of contraception by other town
Knowledge among females (15-24 years) of at least one modern method of contraception by rural areas
Proportion of total emigrants classified as youth 15-24 years
Proportion of total emigrants (15-24) classified as females
Proportion of total emigrants (15-24) classified as males
Proportion of youth completing primary education
Proportion of youth completing primary education by gender
Proportion of youth population classified as literate
Proportion of youth population classified as literate by parish
Proportion of female population (15-24 years) classified as literate
Proportion of male population (15-24 years) classified as literate
HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate for youth population 15-24 years
HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate for females 15-24 years
HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate for males 15-24 years
Death rate due to HIV/AIDS for youth population 15 –24 years

Death rate due to HIV/AIDS for females 15-24 years
Death rate due to HIV/AIDS for males 15-24 years
Death rate due to external causes for youth population 15-24 years
Death rate due to external causes for females 15-24 years
Death rate due to external causes for males 15-24 years
Number of suicides for youth population 15-24 years
Number of suicides for females 15-24 years
Number of suicides for males 15-24 years
Proportion of total suicides committed by youth 15-24 years
Proportion of youth (15-24 years) employed
Proportion of females (15-24 years) employed
Proportion of males (15-24 years) employed
Proportion of youth (15-24 years) employed as a percentage of total employed labour force
Unemployment rate among youth 15-24 years
Unemployment rate for females 15-24 years
Unemployment rate for males 15-24 years
Proportion of youth (15-24 years) classified as poor
Proportion of females 15-24 years classified as poor
Proportion of males 15-24 classified as poor
Proportion of youth (15-24 years) classified as poor in urban areas
Proportion of youth (15-24 years) classified as poor in other towns
Proportion of youth (15-24 years) classified as poor in rural areas
Proportion of females 15-24 years classified as poor in urban areas
Proportion of females 15-24 years classified as poor in other towns
Proportion of females 15-24 years classified as poor in rural areas
Proportion of males 15-24 classified as poor in urban areas
Proportion of males 15-24 classified as poor in other towns
Proportion of males 15-24 classified as poor in rural areas

E.   Details of Roles and Responsibilities

STAKEHOLDER	ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES
Government	Fostering coordination and collaboration Monitoring Promote research Technical guidance in development and implementation of programmes Advocacy
Non-Governmental organizations, Church and Community Based Organisations	Awareness building and mobilization Coverage of issues under specific mandates Integrate youth in programmes Credit and training opportunities Resources for youth programmes Support entrepreneurship Moral and spiritual guidance Life skills
Private Sector	Opportunities for employment Credit schemes Training and work-study opportunities Entrepreneurship
Donors	Advocacy Technical support Financial and logistical support
Parents, Families and Adults	Promote responsible parenthood Provide basic needs Guidance, counseling and mentoring Train and socialize young people Provide financial support Empowerment and participation at all levels
Jamaicans in the diaspora	Remittance of technical and financial resources Serve as good ambassadors of Jamaica