



GOVERNMENT OF BARBADOS
Ministry of Youth & Community Empowerment

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Generation Unlimited: the Well-being of Young People in Barbados





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January 2020

Published by:

Ministry of Youth and Community Empowerment

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January 2020

Suggested citation:

Ministry of Youth and Community Empowerment and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), *Generation Unlimited: the Well-being of Young People in Barbados*, Ministry of Youth and UNICEF, Bridgetown, Barbados, 2020.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ART	anti-retroviral therapy
BCC	Barbados Community College
BSLC	Barbados Survey of Living Conditions
BSS	Barbados Statistical Services
BSSEE	Barbados Secondary School Entrance Examination
CALC	(Barbados) Country Assessment of Living Conditions
CAPE	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination
CCB	Child Care Board
CCCRA	CARIBSAVE Climate Change Risk Atlas
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
CEELAC	Climate, Environment and Energy Landscape Analysis for Children
CJRPU	Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
CXC	Caribbean Examinations Council
ECA	Eastern Caribbean Area
FCIU	Family Conflict Intervention Unit
GER	gross enrolment ratio
GIS	Government Industrial School
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GSHS	Global School-Based Student Health Survey
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HoH	head of household
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILO	International Labour Organization
JLS	Juvenile Liaison System
JMP	(WHO/ UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene
KABP	knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices (survey)
LFPR	labour force participation rate
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LPG	liquefied petroleum gas
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MESTI	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation*

* Renamed as the Ministry of Education, Technical and Vocational Training (METVT) in 2020

MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MYCE	Ministry of Youth and Community Empowerment
NAR	net attendance rate
NCSA	National Council on Substance Abuse
NEET	not in education, employment or training
NER	net enrolment rate
NILF	not in labour force
OPHI	Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
QEH	Queen Elizabeth Hospital
RBPF	Royal Barbados Police Force
SAF	Substance Abuse Foundation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMP	School Meals Programme
SJPI	Samuel Jackman Prescod Institute of Technology
STI	sexually transmitted infection
TLS	Textbook Loan Scheme
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UWI	University of the West Indies
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

Acknowledgements

This study on the well-being of young people in Barbados is the product of collaborative effort between the Ministry of Youth and Community Empowerment (MYCE) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Office for the Eastern Caribbean Area.

The Ministry of Youth and UNICEF acknowledge with gratitude the contribution of everyone who participated in the process culminating in this study, which provides for the first time a comprehensive analysis and disaggregated data on the situation of young people in Barbados.

We wish to acknowledge the technical inputs and guidance of the technical team: Cleviston Hunte and Andrea Titus from the Ministry of Youth, and Alexandru Nartea and Stephanie Bishop from UNICEF.

Our special gratitude goes to Joe Wood, who conducted the data analysis and supported the development of the study.

We are also grateful for the support of the government departments and agencies cited in this study, for granting access to data sets and reports.

Executive Summary

Adolescence and Youth

The age from 10 to 24 years¹ represents a transitional period in the life cycle: from dependence to independence; from childhood to adulthood; from primary to secondary school and then into the labour market; and from pre-pubescence to sexual maturity. Few are likely to pass through this period without some setbacks or feelings of uncertainty – for example, not doing well at school, examination failures, parental discord, problems with friends and partners, or difficulties in finding their first jobs. In most cases, these experiences will be short-lived and have little influence on their future lives. But for others, they can be more severe and have long-lasting impacts on their well-being, that of their families and, if widespread, on national social and economic development. In Barbados, as elsewhere in the world, there is growing awareness of the need to avoid these potential pitfalls in order not to compromise the life trajectories of the next generation.

Yet, advocacy and action on behalf of young people are often hampered by the lack of data and understanding of the risks that they may face in achieving their full potential. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to consolidate available statistical data on the characteristics and situation of young people in Barbados to provide an information base that can be used to: (i) facilitate and enhance policymaking; (ii) provide a baseline for monitoring changes in the situation and behaviour of adolescents and youth – particularly given the impact of the novel coronavirus; and (iii) raise awareness about the issues that they face.

Young people in Barbados

In 2016, there were around 54,000 young people (10–24 years) in Barbados and they accounted for one in five of the island's population. The population of Barbados is ageing and, as a result, there are some 1,600 fewer young people in the country than there were in 2010. Young persons are generally split equally between younger adolescents (10–14 years), older adolescents (15–19 years) and young adults (20–24 years). Around one third of households contain an adolescent or young adult; over half of households with young persons are headed by women.

Every young person has a fair chance in life

The phrasing of SDG1 is clear and unambiguous: “End poverty in all its forms everywhere.” Adolescence and young adulthood are times when growing up in poverty and deprivation can have a detrimental impact on physical, emotional and social development which can increase the risk of unemployment and lead to damaging behaviours such as substance abuse, involvement in criminal activities, and risky sexual practices – all of which can threaten life chances and risk the creation of intergenerational poverty.

¹ Defined as the target group for this study, in discussion with the Ministry of Youth and Community Empowerment (MYCE). For clarity, the collective term adopted in this report for this age group is ‘young people’. Note that those aged 10–17 years are legally defined as children.

Key messages

- In 2016, around one third of young people (10–24 years) in Barbados lived in poverty compared to one in four for the population as a whole.
- Since 2010, poverty rates have increased for all age groups. Allied to changes in the age structure of the population, this has led to a rise in the number of poor young people from 15,000 to 17,000.
- In contrast, indigence (severe poverty) amongst young people has decreased in absolute and relative terms since 2010. The number of indigent young people more than halved to under 3,000 while the rate decreased from 14 to 5 per cent.
- At present, the only social protection programme that has a wide coverage of young people is the School Meals Programme (SMP), which targets all primary and some secondary school students. Over 60 per cent of 10- and 11-year-olds received benefits from this programme, 46 per cent of whom were poor compared to 30 per cent who were not, indicating a significant pro-poor focus.
- To a large extent, reducing poverty amongst adolescents and young adults will depend on the success of measures to diminish overall poverty. There is, however, a need for specific programmes targeted at this group, particularly those in severe poverty, in order to improve educational performance, reduce youth unemployment, and alleviate negative poverty-related social issues.

Every young person learns

Access to quality education is one of the most effective interventions for young people to be empowered with the skills to function and contribute to the society. Experiences at school have broad effects on adolescent development and well-being, encompassing physical and mental health, safety, civic engagement and social development.

Key messages

- Primary and secondary school attendance in Barbados is almost universal for both boys and girls, and has been so for the last 20 years. Increasing attention, therefore, needs to be given to improving educational outcomes.
- Examination results for the Barbados Secondary School Entrance Examination (BSSEE) in 2019 showed that 85 and 73 per cent of students achieved a satisfactory score in English and mathematics respectively. Females have consistently outperformed boys in both subjects – although the differential in English is decreasing slowly, but consistently.
- The proportions of candidates sitting CSEC English A and mathematics have changed little over the last 20 years with around two thirds of all candidates sitting English A and just under half sitting mathematics. In 2019, respective pass rates for English A and mathematics were 84 and 54 per cent. Overall, the proportions of all candidates achieving passes at English A and mathematics were, respectively, 54 and 27 per cent.
- Gender variations in CSEC passing rates are relatively minor. However, there is a pronounced differential in sitting rates, which means that more females are taking, and therefore passing, CSEC examinations.
- The overall CAPE/ post-secondary education enrolment rate in 2016 was around 50 per cent for 17–19-year-olds and a little under 25 per cent for 20–24-year-olds. Of those enrolled, 28 per cent were studying for CAPE examinations, 49 per cent for degrees, and the remaining 22 per cent were enrolled in TVET courses.

- CAPE pass rates are high, around 90 per cent, and are similar for both sexes, but 60 per cent of candidates are female. Tertiary-level enrolment is also dominated by females, who account for 68 per cent of total enrolment. In contrast, TVET courses are male-dominated with females accounting for under 40 per cent of the total enrolment.
- Enrolments for CAPE examinations and SJPI (TVET courses) have changed little since 2014 and 2009 respectively. In contrast, enrolments at BCC and UWI have both decreased by around 30 per cent since 2010 and 2014.
- Poverty rates are lower for those enrolled on CAPE, TVET or degree courses, meaning that adolescents from poor households are less likely than those from non-poor households to be able to pursue their education after the CSEC examinations.
- Over the years, the education system has brought about an increasingly highly skilled population: almost half the population aged between 25 and 29 has obtained a CAPE/ post-secondary education qualification compared to around 40 per cent for older age groups. However, the gender disparity in respect of degrees has increased over time: almost 80 per cent of degrees achieved by 20–24-year-olds were by females compared to 68 per cent for those aged 45–49 years.

Of particular concern is the inferior educational performance of males, the low proportion of students achieving CSEC mathematics, and the recent decreases in enrolment for BCC and UWI degree courses. Unless these trends are reversed: (i) fewer students will acquire the skills needed to access higher-level jobs, especially those where CSEC mathematics is required; (ii) more boys than girls will not continue their education and will thus tend to be limited to low-skilled occupations and be at greater risk of unemployment, potentially leading to involvement in antisocial behaviour; and (iii) the long-standing up-skilling of the Barbados population could be curtailed, resulting in negative impacts on the ability of young people to achieve their full potential, and on future national, social and economic development.

Every young person participates²

Between the ages of 15 and 24, most young people will complete their education and enter the work environment. If this transition is not straightforward – i.e. if young people complete their schooling but are unable to find suitable jobs – unemployment will result. If the period of unemployment is prolonged, the risks to their well-being are likely to increase: their self-esteem and mental health can suffer, they can fall prey to antisocial behaviours, there can be financial strain on the household and it can affect their relationship with family members.

Key messages

- Over three quarters of 15–24-year-olds are either working or studying while 16 per cent are unemployed. Proportions vary markedly between older adolescents and young adults: whereas 70 per cent of 15–19-year-olds are studying, this proportion drops to 20 per cent for the 20–24-year age group.

² 'Participation' in this study is used in relation to the labour market (active/ inactive) and not in terms of the wider definition used in Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

- Around a quarter of the 15–24-year age group are not in employment, education or training (NEETs), with most concentrated among the 17–24-year age group. Males are more likely to be NEETs than females as they are less likely to continue their education. NEETs are more likely to be poor than those in education or employment; however, the majority of NEETs will not be poor.
- Between 2010 and 2016, the labour force participation rate of 15–19-year-olds decreased slightly. This applies to both sexes, indicating that there are higher proportions of both males and females who are engaged in CAPE/ post-secondary education. Female participation rates are lower than those for males.
- In 2016, the overall youth (15–24 years) unemployment rate was 30 per cent compared to the national rate of 10 per cent. Gender differentials for youth unemployment are generally small, implying that male–female differences in relation to the labour market are related more to labour force participation than unemployment.
- Unemployment rates decrease with age, from 45 per cent for 15–19-year-olds to 25 per cent for young adults; and from 13 per cent for 25–29-year-olds to less than 10 per cent for older age groups. This implies that for many, unemployment will be an essentially transitory phase. Nevertheless, 56 per cent of the unemployed had been without a job for more than six months or had never worked.
- Poverty rates are higher amongst unemployed youth as opposed to those who are employed. However, the most striking differences are that among unemployed youth: (i) almost two thirds are male; (ii) three quarters live in female-headed households; and (iii) 70 per cent do not have post-secondary qualifications.
- Youth unemployment remains a major concern in Barbados, as it does in many countries, because it poses a major threat to their well-being in the short, medium and long term and, by extension, to their families and wider society.

A continuing evaluation of existing interventions, and developing new interventions, to both increase the capacity of youth to successfully enter the labour market and mitigate unemployment's potential negative impacts is essential. However, such interventions cannot be expected to resolve the issue of youth unemployment. Of equal importance will be the success of measures to increase the overall labour demand.

Every young person thrives

Health and well-being during adolescence and young adulthood are a necessary precondition for a successful transition into adulthood. Yet, these age groups often mark the manifestation of issues that can cast a shadow over their short-, medium- and long-term development, such as unsafe sexual behaviour, early childbearing and substance misuse. These can result from a variety of factors including lack of success at school, prolonged unemployment and family breakdown. At the same time, adolescence and youth is the best time for interventions that promote improved lifelong physical and mental health.

Key messages

Living arrangements

- In 2016, 36 per cent of younger adolescents (10–14 years)³ lived with both parents, 45 per cent with just their mother, 9 per cent with just their father and 10 per cent with neither parent. In consequence, whereas 80–90 per cent of 10–14-year-olds lived with their mother, the proportion living with their father was little over 40

³ Data are not available for other age groups.

per cent. Many of those living only with their mother will not be receiving any financial or emotional support from their fathers.

- Poverty is associated with parental presence. Almost a third of younger adolescents who are living with just their mother are poor compared to around a quarter where both parents are present. This is closely linked to household type, because youth poverty rates in extended family households, which are mostly headed by women, are almost twice as high as those living in nuclear families or in single-parent/ single-adult households.
- Notwithstanding the fact that some family breakups can be amicable – some can indeed be beneficial if violence was involved – the high level of family breakdown poses a significant threat to the successful passage of the island's youth from childhood to adulthood.

Marital/ union status

- Over 40 per cent of 15–19-year-old females had been married or in a union (including visiting relationships). Of these, around 20 per cent were no longer in a marriage/ union at the time when the survey was conducted in 2012, indicating that the relationship had already broken down.
- Almost a third of 20–24-year-olds had been married or had entered a union before they were 18 (i.e. when they were legally children). This is higher than the marriage/ union rates for older age groups, implying that the trend is upward. The incidence of early marriage (before age 15) is much lower at around 6 per cent.

Teenage pregnancy and motherhood

- Adolescent pregnancy can be seen as the result of a combination of sexual activity, a lack of contraception and the absence of parental guidance.
- Although there has been a decrease in the proportion of births to under 18-year-olds, for over 25 years around 20 per cent of adolescents (15–19 years old) gave birth. Very few births are occurring to those under 15 years old.
- In 2010, around three quarters of teenage births were to girls who were single (i.e. separated, in a visiting relationship, or in no relationship), 20 per cent to girls who were co-habiting, and under 5 per cent to girls who were married. This result reinforces previous findings relating to the high levels of relationship breakdown and single motherhood, and it also implies that a significant proportion of pregnancies may have been unintended.

Sexual activity

- 36 per cent of 15–19-year-old adolescent girls were sexually active (had had sex in the last 12 months), increasing to over 80 per cent for 20–24-year-olds.
- Almost a third of 15–19-year-old females had first had sex before they were 16 years old – the age of consent. More positively, between 2010 and 2013 there were sharp decreases in the proportions of 15–20-year-old women who had: (i) sex in the previous year with a non-regular partner; and (ii) unprotected sex with a non-regular partner. Male proportions for these indicators also decreased, although they remained higher than for females.

- Notwithstanding these favourable trends, it is apparent that a significant minority of young women are engaging in potentially risky sexual behaviours (including multi-partnering and sex with partners 10 or more years older than themselves) that can increase the risk of: (i) unintended pregnancies; (ii) contracting STIs and HIV/AIDS; (iii) disruption to their education; and (iv) sexual exploitation.
- Compared to the group as a whole, the poorest 15–24-year-old females are more likely to have: (i) ever had sex; (ii) had sex before age 15; and (iii) had sex in the previous year.

HIV/AIDS

- HIV/AIDS indicators in Barbados are generally favourable: (i) annual numbers of new HIV cases, AIDS cases and AIDS-related deaths have all decreased considerably since 2000; (ii) virtually no children under the age of 15 years are living with HIV/AIDS – which was not the case in 2007; and (iii) the HIV prevalence rate for 15–24-year-olds is around half that for 15–49-year-olds, implying that the young are now less susceptible to HIV infection.
- Nevertheless, HIV/AIDS remains an important issue: (i) approximately 3,000 people (two thirds male) are currently living with HIV/AIDS, of which over 40 per cent of sufferers are not on ART; and (ii) 18 per cent of HIV sufferers have yet to be diagnosed.
- Knowledge about HIV/AIDS among women is high: (i) almost all 15–24-year-olds had heard of HIV/AIDS, and knew about mother-to-child transmission and the location of an HIV testing centre. Male knowledge of HIV/AIDS is generally similar to that of females.
- Acceptance of those living with HIV/AIDS by the wider society is essential if they are not to be excluded from social and economic activities. Over 90 per cent of respondents expressed a willingness to care for a family member. On the other hand, no more than a fifth said that they would be open about a family member having HIV/AIDS.

Substance use

- A substantial proportion of secondary school students first tried alcohol before they were 15 years old. This proportion is higher than those reported for older age groups, implying that the incidence of early initiation is on the increase – although many will not continue drinking on a regular or excessive basis throughout their lifetime.
- In 2011, around 15 per cent of 13–15-year-olds had used marijuana at least once, with usage being higher amongst boys. By 2016, usage was reported to have doubled. Around 80 per cent of marijuana addicts had first used marijuana when they were at primary or secondary school. This is a potentially serious issue as marijuana usage can be a precursor to cocaine use – the most common type of addiction on the island.

Nutrition and physical activity

- Just under a third of 13–15-year-olds (boys and girls) are overweight, while one in seven are categorized as obese.
- Risk factors relating to being overweight/ obese include poor early life nutrition, unhealthy diets during the school-age years, and insufficient physical activity. Over 70 per cent of 13–15-year-olds consumed carbonated drinks on a daily basis and two thirds were not doing enough physical exercise.

Every young person is protected from violence and exploitation

The protection of children from all forms of violence is a fundamental right enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). To this end, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contain a specific target (SDG 16.2) to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children. Violence, abuse and neglect can take many forms, occur inside and outside the home, and can be perpetrated by parents, other family members, intimate partners, peers, community members and others. Exposure to violence can have serious consequences for a child's mental and physical health lasting into adolescence, young adulthood and older age with indirect, but equally severe, impacts on their families, communities and wider society.

Key messages

- Reported cases of child sexual, physical and emotional abuse and neglect (around 800 annually), domestic violence (around 400) and juvenile crime (around 300) may be numerically small but the repercussions for their families, victims, communities and perpetrators can be severe and have indirect impacts on government expenditures. These types of abuse and violence engender a high potential risk of problems arising later in the victims' lives, including the transformation from victim to perpetrator and recidivism, thereby creating intergenerational cycles of violence, criminality and abuse.
- The most serious cases are the tip of the iceberg; the majority, usually less severe, will go unreported. The frequency of violent disciplining (over 70 per cent), teenagers involved in fighting (34 per cent attacked, 48 per cent seriously injured in previous year), bullying (13 per cent in the previous month) are all high. Yet less severe cases can often be precursors to more serious behaviours. A verbal remonstrance with a child can turn into a physical beating that can then become more frequent and mutate into a prima facie case of child neglect; a slight slap from a partner can become a full-fledged assault; a small fracas between teenagers can turn into assaults with weapons; and minor delinquency can turn into criminality.
- A generalized profile of perpetrators of neglect is that they are single mothers struggling to manage the triple burden of childcare, income generation and household chores with little or no income and often without (or with only limited) access to parents and other family members. Neglect should therefore be seen primarily as a consequence of these difficulties, along with a lack of knowledge about non-violent methods of disciplining. The single-parent emphasis is important as it reaffirms the strong impact relationship breakdown can have on violent disciplining.
- The negative effects of children and adolescents witnessing domestic violence have also been well documented. Specific to Barbados: (i) 29 per cent of juveniles brought before the Juvenile Court between 2006 and 2010 had come from violent homes; (ii) half of a sample of women and men experiencing domestic violence reported that their mothers had been beaten; and (iii) victims of violence in the home reported that their children experienced frequent crying, fighting at school, hitting back when being spanked, and being withdrawn and aggressive.
- As with child neglect, the incidence of domestic violence can be affected by factors such as unemployment, low incomes, lack of self-esteem, unstable relationships, and a previous history of violence. Noteworthy in this context is that 80 per cent of domestic violence perpetrators were a current or previous partner of the victim with the common law, visiting or separated partner being responsible for almost 90 per cent of these.

The majority of victims are female; the majority of perpetrators are male. The implication is that the risk of domestic violence increases with less formal and terminated relationships.

- Virtually all perpetrators of child/ adolescent sexual abuse were known to the victim – around two thirds were the victim’s ‘boyfriend’ or family members. Nearly all perpetrators of sexual abuse are male. Unlike child neglect, physical abuse and domestic violence, where social pressures can be seen as contributory factors, child sexual abuse essentially results from the actions of individuals betraying the trust of, and exploiting, weaker and often powerless victims.
- Perpetrators and victims of violent crime (assaults and murders) are disproportionately male youths – who are also more likely to be arrested and incarcerated. Barbados’ specific studies on the perceived causes of juvenile crime repeatedly identify the following factors: lack of parental control/ skills, absence of a father figure, peer pressure, poor living conditions and low socioeconomic status. These risk factors are not mutually independent: strong parental skills and a strong father figure can reduce the likelihood of peer pressure leading young people into wrongdoing; similarly, reduced unemployment or improved household conditions will likely decrease economic pressures to commit thefts and burglaries.
- However, the family situation appears to be crucial. “Among key agency stakeholders in the justice system, the most disconcerting risk factors for juvenile delinquency were closely associated with failures in parental and familial experiences of juveniles.”⁴
- If these unacceptable behaviours are to be eliminated, a range of multisectoral or multidisciplinary interventions are required. Many appropriate policies and programmes already exist. Hence, arguably, the overarching priority is to strengthen and continuously evaluate current interventions.

Every young person lives in a safe and clean environment

Environmental hazards related to climate change and biodiversity loss are likely to increase in the future with severe impacts on the population, young and old alike. At the same time, lack of access to clean water, basic sanitation, good hygiene and decent housing are crucial to socioeconomic well-being and good health. Addressing these issues is important if a young person’s ability to live in a safe and clean environment is not to be jeopardized.

Key messages

Climate change

- Barbados, although less prone to tropical storms and hurricanes than other Caribbean countries, is already experiencing the effects of climate change, which are predicted to intensify over time. The impacts of these changes, particularly those that affect the tourism sector, will negatively affect, directly and indirectly, the livelihoods and well-being of the entire population.
- Potential impacts which are specific to young people and should be incorporated into national climate change planning are: (i) disruptions to education due to school closures; (ii) outbreaks of infectious diseases; and (iii) increased risks of public disorder, delinquent behaviour and physical and sexual abuse following a major disaster.

⁴ Devonish, D. and S. Henry/ CJRPU, *A Comprehensive Research Report Assessing the Juvenile Justice System and Experience of Juvenile Offenders (16–18 years) in Barbados*, 2017.

Basic infrastructure and housing

- The great majority of Barbados' population lives in housing that has been built or renovated in the last 20 years. Overcrowding is negligible. They also have almost universal access to piped water, WC-flush sanitation, electricity for lighting and liquid petroleum or natural gas for cooking. From this perspective, the conclusion is that physical housing conditions do not currently pose a significant threat to the well-being of young adults and adolescents in Barbados. However, many young Barbadians continue living with their parents until they reach their mid-30s, implying that it is difficult for them to access housing and establish their own households.
- Vigilance is required to ensure that potential issues such as the deterioration of water quality due to groundwater contamination arising from the inadequate disposal or the treatment of sewage, and the susceptibility of older wooden houses to hurricane or storm damage are regularly evaluated to understand these risks, which can be amplified by the disasters.

Concluding remarks and priorities

Many positives emerge from this study of young people in Barbados. Almost all have access to basic water and sanitation services; attendance at primary and secondary school is almost universal; two thirds are either studying or working; a third of 17–24-year-olds are in CAPE/ post-secondary education; and there has been a progressive up-skilling of the nation's population over many years. Many of those currently unemployed are likely to find jobs before too long. Indicators of sexual exploitation are generally low, and some types of risky sexual behaviour show signs of decreasing. In short, most young Barbadians will negotiate the pitfalls of adolescence to emerge successfully into adulthood, obtain employment, form relationships and generally lead fulfilling lives to the benefit of themselves and society as a whole.

Unfortunately, this is not the whole story. This study has identified a number of threats to the well-being of young people in Barbados. A third are living in poverty. Around 60 per cent are living with just one biological parent, almost always the mother, so that over half are having to cope with an absent father. In 2019, the proportions of all CSEC candidates achieving passes in English A and mathematics were low, while tertiary enrolments have decreased. Indicators of male educational performance are almost always inferior to those for females and have been for many years. Around 30 per cent of the youth population is unemployed, with the majority being so for over six months. A minority of young women are involved in potentially exploitative or risky sexual practices. Drug use appears to be increasing. Around a third of young adolescents are overweight, with implications for their long-term health. Reported cases of child and adolescent sexual, physical and emotional abuse, and domestic violence and violent crime may be few, but impacts can be devastating.

Furthermore, Barbados is not immune to the potential negative impacts of climate change, especially the increased frequency of extreme weather events. Although the island is located outside the Atlantic hurricane belt, droughts and flash flooding have occurred, and there is little room for complacency. Projected climate changes will negatively affect, directly and indirectly, the livelihoods and well-being of the entire population irrespective of their age or sex. However, there are likely to be heightened risks to young persons in terms of education, health and social issues.

While all these threats need to be addressed, the following can be considered to merit the highest priority. Their cross-cutting nature means that they need to be formulated and implemented using a joined-up, multisectoral and multidisciplinary process:

- Strengthening social protection programmes for children and adolescents living in severe poverty.
- Addressing inferior male educational performance in order to maximize their ability to access higher-skilled jobs and reduce susceptibility to antisocial behaviour.
- Investigating and reversing the recent decreases in BCC and UWI enrolments.
- Continuously evaluating existing programmes, and developing new programmes targeted at unemployed youth.
- Developing interventions to tackle the issue of family breakdown, such as life skills and parenting classes, and measures to increase emotional and financial support from absent fathers.
- Reshaping male attitudes and behaviours through strengthened youth, social and probationary services to reduce delinquency and rehabilitate offenders.
- Increasing the availability of contraceptive services for sexually active adolescents to prevent both unintended pregnancies and the risk of HIV and other STIs.
- Develop and implement awareness-raising campaigns targeted at young people and parents covering the dangers of unprotected sex, drug abuse and unhealthy diets.
- Intensifying interventions to raise awareness about the need for zero tolerance of sexual abuse and domestic violence – especially increasing the level of reporting – and implementing support programmes for victims.
- Incorporating measures into national emergency planning to strengthen preparedness for potential impacts of climate change and disasters on young people in relation to their education, physical and mental health, and protection from violence.

The continuous collection, analysis and dissemination of information will be essential in order to formulate, implement and monitor effective interventions to prevent and mitigate threats to young people's well-being. This information will deepen the understanding of the issues, respond to the needs of practitioners and policymakers, and increase public awareness. Of particular importance will be data on the following topics, which have been identified as scarce or outdated: child and adolescent coverage of social assistance programmes, teenage pregnancy, the incidence of STIs, attitudes of absent fathers, child sexual and physical abuse, adolescent mental health and domestic violence.



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1

Introduction

Background

The Eastern Caribbean Area (ECA) is home to around half a million adolescents and young adults (10–24 years),⁵ who account for about 23 per cent of the total population.⁶ Experiences during the second and third decades of life form the foundation for physical, cognitive, emotional, social and economic resources and define life trajectories for the next generation. There has been a growing recognition of the importance of investing in this age group. Progress has been made in understanding the issues they face and the priority interventions needed to ensure that their rights are protected, respected and fulfilled; that they are able to benefit from opportunities; and that they make safe and productive transitions to adulthood.

With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), world leaders have pledged to take common action towards a more equitable world, calling for equity both within and between countries. In many cases globally, equity gaps have narrowed over the past 25 years, but in far too many other cases overall progress has done little to narrow deep and persistent disparities. It is often during adolescence and young adulthood that inequities appear most glaringly. Disadvantages can prevent poor and marginalized individuals in this group from successfully completing their secondary education and progressing onto CAPE/post-secondary education programmes, and hence restrict their entry into the labour market. Yet, it is also during adolescence and young adulthood that targeted interventions can effectively prevent inequity from passing on to future generations. The first step in addressing these inequities is to understand how they relate to issues such as poverty, education, employment, social behaviour, susceptibility to crime and violence, and access to basic needs such as water, sanitation and housing.

In this context, world leaders, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and other international agencies, the private sector, education and youth launched Generation Unlimited (GenU) at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2018. GenU is a global multisector partnership created to meet the urgent need for expanding education, skill development and employment opportunities for young people aged 10–24.

Box 1. Who are adolescents and young adults?

Adolescence and young adulthood represent transitional periods in the life cycle encompassing rapid physical growth and sexual maturation combined with emotional, social and cognitive development. While there are no universally accepted definitions of adolescence and young adults, defining a specific age span is essential for monitoring progress across contexts and across time. Remembering that many young people are children until they reach the age of 18 is also crucial, as they are protected by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

In accordance with UN definitions and those often used by other organizations, adolescents and young adults are defined as the age group from 10 to 24 years and are, together, referred to as ‘young people’ for the purposes of this report.

⁵ The 10–24-year-old target population group was agreed with the Ministry of Youth and Community Empowerment (MYCE).

⁶ Analysis of 2010–2012 Census data for Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The Government of Barbados is aware of the potential problems facing young people and has established various policies, programmes and interventions designed to both enable young people to avoid the threats to their well-being, and to improve the prospects for those who are marginalized. However, advocacy and action for young people are often hampered by a lack of data and understanding of their situation. Data on young people not only help to describe trends over time and identify differences across groups, but also to determine priorities for investments and monitor the effectiveness of those investments. Accordingly, the Ministry of Youth and Community Empowerment and the UNICEF Fund commissioned this study to provide a synthesis of available data and information on the situation of young people in the country.

Study objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To provide up-to-date information from multiple sources in order to further the understanding of the situation of young people in Barbados.
- To contribute to the initiation of Generation Unlimited partnership in Barbados and the development of the country's Youth Strategy.
- To support evidence-based policymaking on youth issues by the Government and development partners, for improving their well-being and social inclusion.
- To establish an information baseline against which: (i) the impact of the novel coronavirus on young people can be measured,⁷ and (ii) the effectiveness of policies and programmes targeted at adolescent and youth development can be evaluated.
- To furnish data needed for monitoring progress towards the SDGs and other regional and international goals as a basis for future action.
- To raise awareness about adolescent and youth issues among policymakers, practitioners and the general public.

Threats and risks to the well-being of young people

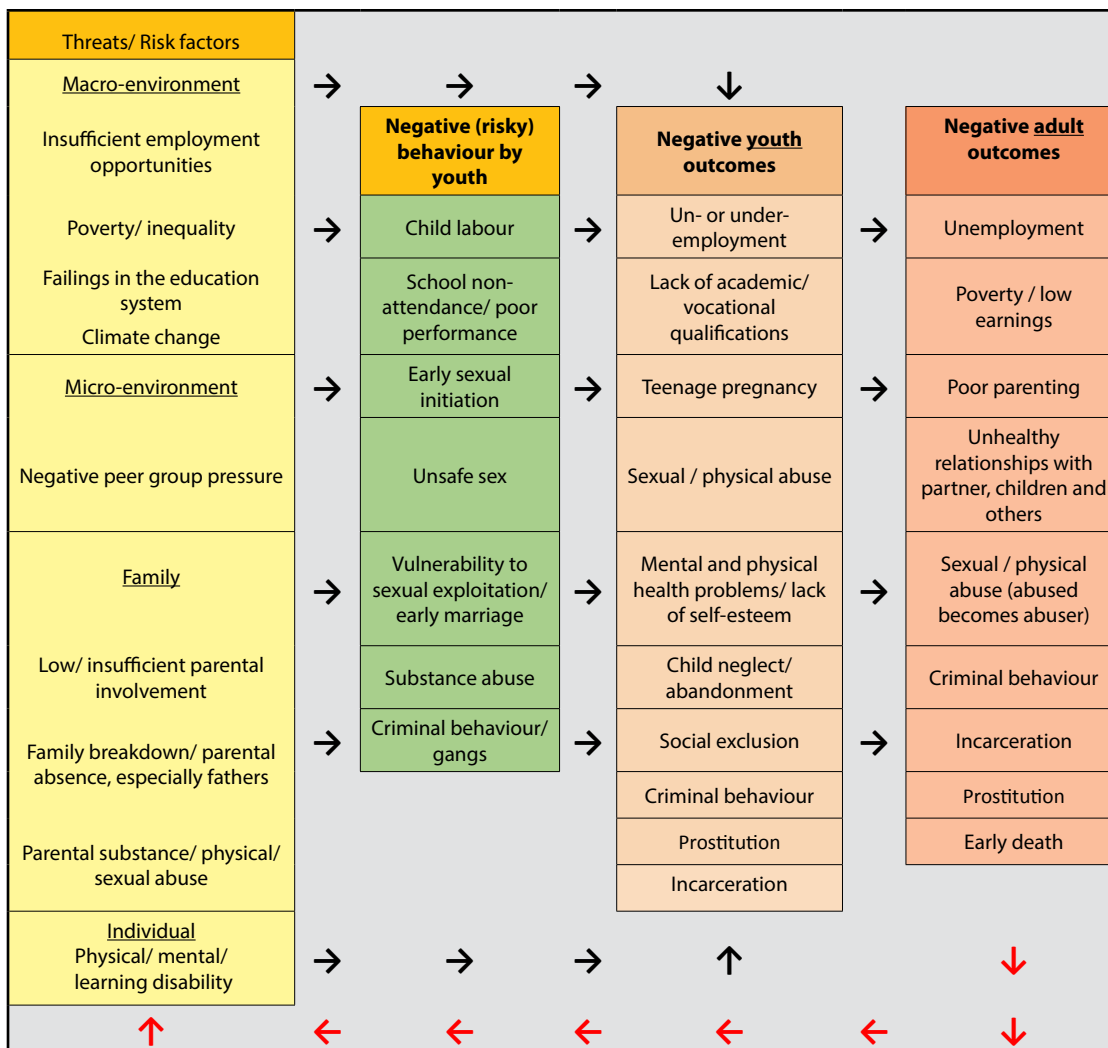
Figure 1.1 summarizes the often-complex linkages between economic, domestic, social and educational factors and their potential negative impacts on the well-being of young people. It also presents an overview of the topics which will be investigated in this report. The figure is an oversimplification as there are numerous other linkages and interrelationships between the threats and potential outcomes. For example, poverty and unemployment will often go hand in hand and, in turn, this will put pressure on family relationships. The reverse can also be the case, as family breakdown can lead to poverty. At the same time, these linkages and interrelationships are not set in stone: family breakdown, domestic violence and child sexual abuse are not confined to poor households. And, importantly, many families and young people will overcome difficult situations to thrive and lead productive and satisfying lives.

Increasingly, research internationally and, as will be seen, in Barbados, is showing that these linkages exist and can become self-perpetuating. They do not affect just the marginalized, the less successful, the victims of crime

⁷ This study was completed before the outbreak of COVID-19 reached Barbados and other Caribbean countries.

and abuse: outcomes relating to these threats can have lasting impacts both on young people and their families. Government will need to finance additional social welfare, health and safety costs and there can be a general loss of security and well-being for society as a whole.

Figure 1.1: Threats, risk factors and outcomes related to the well-being of young people



Source: Adapted from World Bank, Caribbean Youth Development: Issues and Policy Directions, 2003, Figure 2.3

Data sources and limitations

The focus of this study is on quantitative information that will complement the qualitative and institutional assessments contained in other recent studies.⁸ In order to provide a comprehensive assessment of the current characteristics and well-being of young people in Barbados, information has been derived from a number of

⁸ See, for instance, UNICEF/ G. Howe, *Sexual Violence Against Children in the Caribbean: Report*, 2012; UNICEF/ Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean / L. Blank, *Children and Families in Transition: Young parents and caretakers in the Eastern Caribbean*, Barbados, 2009. Other sources are referenced throughout this report.

sources that have data specific to the country. The most used of these are:

- The 2012 Barbados *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey* (MICS) (Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b): data on a wide range of topics of relevance to adolescent well-being including education, child protection and sexual behaviour as well as attitudes and experience related to violence, HIV/AIDS and health;
- The 2016 *Survey of Living Conditions/Household Budget Survey* (BSLC) (Barbados Statistical Service, 2018):⁹ information on young people living in poverty, educational, employment and other characteristics;
- Labour Force Surveys (LFS), various years:¹⁰ data on economic activity and unemployment;
- The 2011 Global School-Based Student Health Survey (GSHS) (Centers for Disease Control, 2011):¹¹ information on the 13–15 age group relating to, inter alia, sexual behaviour, use of alcohol and tobacco, unintentional injuries and violence, and mental health.

The following technical aspects and limitations should be noted:

- Young people, defined as persons age 10–24 years, include a number of distinct subgroups: children and adults, persons in primary and secondary school, pre- and post-pubescent children, individuals inside and outside the labour force and individuals under and over the legal age of sexual consent. These different categorizations are shown in Figure 1.2. The age groups relevant to different topics therefore vary. In this context, when analyses refer to the 10–19 and 15–24-year age groups, these will be collectively designated as adolescents and youth respectively.

Figure 1.2: Subgroups of the population aged 10–24 years

Age (years)	Terminology	Child/ adult	Schooling	Labour force	Age of consent	Stage in life cycle
10	Young adolescents	Child	Primary	No	No	Education, transition to adolescence, puberty, early manifestations of independence
11						
12						
13						
14						
15	Older adolescents	Adult	Secondary	Yes	Yes	Completion of education, entry into the labour market, sexual maturity, growing independence and individuality
16						
17						
18						
19	Young adults		CAPE/ post-secondary education			Relationships/children/work
20–24						

Source: Adapted from Ministry of Equity and UNICEF, *Adolescent Well-being and Equity in Saint Lucia*, 2019.

9 Data set downloaded from IDB website; Barbados Statistical Service, *Barbados Survey of Living Conditions: 2016, 2018*. The survey was undertaken in 2016–2017 and covered 2,362 households and 6,160 individuals. Unless stated, BSLC information cited in this report has been derived by UNICEF from analysis of the data set.

10 Data from Barbados Statistical Services (BBS) and downloaded from <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/bulk/>. Unless stated, all LFS information has been derived by UNICEF from this data set.

11 Centers for Disease Control, 'Global School-based Health Survey', Barbados Fact Sheet, 2011 <https://www.cdc.gov/gshs/countries/americas/barbados.htm>.

- The majority of the information comes from sample surveys (MICS, LFS, BSLC) and therefore the findings are subject to sampling error. Caution must be exercised in interpreting results where differences are small and relate to smaller age groups, such as variations between 10–14, 15–19 and 20–24-year age groups.
- In order to facilitate comparability and understanding, wherever possible time series and cross-sectional data have been presented. However, in some cases this has not been possible due to limited data availability. In these cases, the information presented represents ‘snapshots’ covering single points in time and specific age groups. Interpretation of these ‘snapshots’ can be limited as they may not indicate whether they represent a positive or negative result, or how the indicator has changed over time. This situation will improve as similar studies are undertaken for other ECA countries and territories, providing a more solid basis for drawing conclusions on the situation of young people in Barbados and across the region.
- Several of the indicators provided in this study relate to the SDGs. These have been identified throughout the study and constitute a source of data for monitoring the situation of young people in relation to specific indicators.
- The data sources used for this study provide information on the great majority of issues relevant to young people. There are, however, some data gaps, notably the limited information on male sexual activity and the young person’s mental health.

Structure of the study

The structure of this study has been adapted from the template provided by the MICS programme taking into account the availability of additional sources of information. It provides the most relevant basis for mapping the diverse characteristics of young people in Barbados:

- Young people in Barbados
- Every young person learns
- Every young person has a fair chance in life
- Every young person participates
- Every young person thrives
- Every young person is protected from violence and exploitation
- Every young person lives in a safe and clean environment.



2

The population of young people in Barbados

Young people in the population

Between 2010 and 2016, the population of Barbados remained almost unchanged – from 276,300 in 2010 to 275,400 in 2016¹² (Table 2.1). During this period, the population only increased in the older age groups (45 years and over) – a clear indication that the population of the island is ageing. In 2016, there were around 54,000 persons aged 10–24 years, about 1,600 less than in 2010. The adolescent population decreased by around 1,400, while the youth population remained virtually unchanged.

Table 2.1: Barbados: Population, 2010 and 2016

Age group	Description	2010	2016	Change (2010–2016)	
				No.	%
0–9 years	Young children	36,000	30,400	-5,600	-15.6%
10–24 years	Adolescents and young adults	55,300	53,700	-1,600	-2.9%
25–44 years	Younger working ages	78,100	67,100	-11,000	-14.1%
45–64 years	Older working ages	71,200	79,900	8,700	12.2%
65+ years	Elderly population	35,800	44,300	8,500	23.7%
TOTAL	All ages	276,300	275,400	-900	-0.3%
Subgroups					
10–19 years	Adolescents	37,300	35,900	-1,400	-3.8%
15–24 years	Youth	36,900	37,200	300	0.8%

Note: figures derived from Ministry of Labour/ BSS population estimates for 2010 to 2016 using 2010 Census and BSLC 2016 population age distributions.
Source: Census 2010; Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

The ageing of the population is shown in more detail in Table 2.2 and Figure 2.1. The share of the population aged over 44 years increased from 39 to 45 per cent between 2010 and 2016 while decreasing for all younger age groups. The decreases were greatest for younger children (0–9 years) and those in the main working age group (25–44 years). In contrast, the share of young people (10–24 years) remained essentially constant at around 20 per cent. In 2016, adolescents and youth each accounted for just over 13 per cent of the island's population.

These changes emerge mainly from a reduction in the proportion of women in the principal childbearing age groups (20–34 years), which decreased from 20 per cent to 18 per cent between 2010 and 2016. Over the same period, the birth rate decreased from 13 live births per 1,000 in 2010 to 9 in 2016¹³ – a decline of almost 30 per cent. There has been little change in the fertility rate, which has increased minimally (around 1 per cent) since 2010.¹⁴

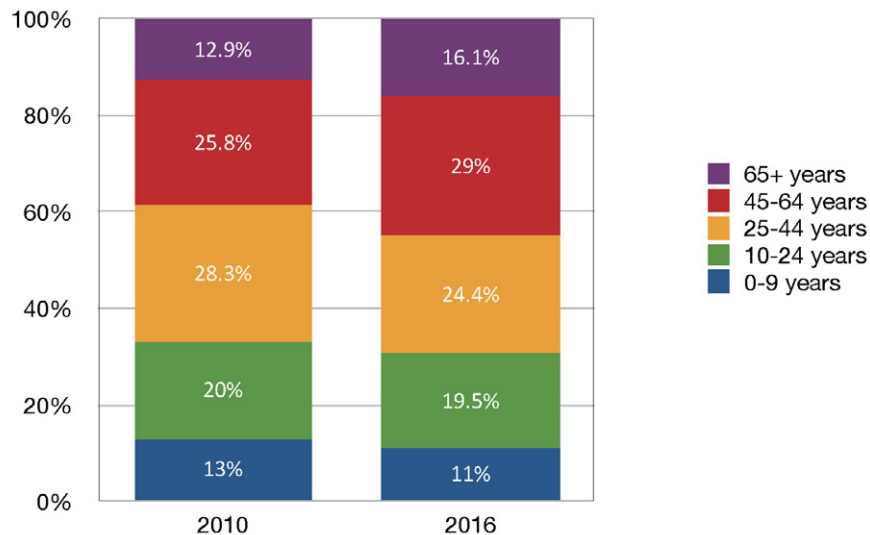
12 Ministry of Labour and Barbados Statistical Service, Barbados Labour Market Information System, 2019. The population peaked at 277,500 in 2013 and has decreased since then.

13 Ministry of Labour and Barbados Statistical Service, Barbados Labour Market Information System, 2019.

14 World Bank, 'Fertility rate, total (births per woman) – Liberia, Barbados', 2019 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?locations=LR-BB>

Table 2.2: Barbados population age structure, 2010 and 2016

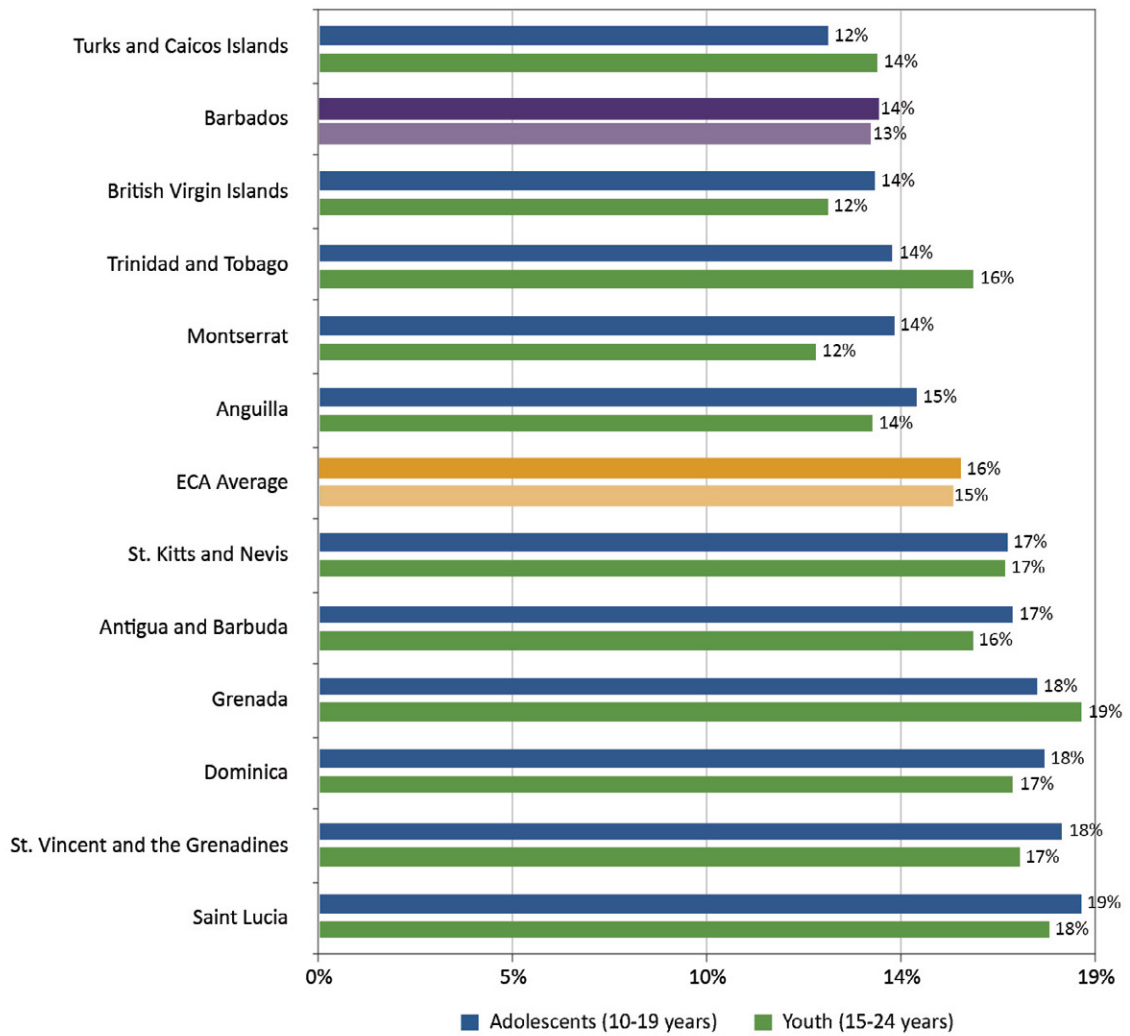
Age group	Description	2010	2016	Change (2010–2016)
0–9 years	Young children	13.0%	11.0%	-2.0%
10–24 years	Adolescents and young adults	20.0%	19.5%	-0.5%
25–44 years	Younger working age	28.3%	24.4%	-3.9%
45–64 years	Older working age	25.8%	29.0%	3.3%
65+ years	Older age groups	12.9%	16.1%	3.1%
Total	All ages	100.0%	100.0%	-
10–19 years	Adolescents	13.5%	13.1%	-0.4%
15–24 years	Youth	13.3%	13.5%	0.2%
20–34 years	Main childbearing age group	20.2%	17.9%	-2.3%

Figure 2.1: Population distribution by age groups

Source: Census 2010; Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

The proportions of adolescents and youth in the population of Eastern Caribbean countries in the early 2010s are shown in Figure 2.2. Barbados, with adolescents accounting for 14 per cent of its population, has the second lowest proportion amongst all ECA countries, while the regional average is 16 per cent. The equivalent proportion for the youth population is 13 per cent (compared to the regional average of 15 per cent), making Barbados the third lowest of the 12 countries. The likely explanation is a combination of low fertility levels and a reduction in the proportion of women in the main childbearing age groups.

Figure 2.2: Adolescent and youth shares of population, Eastern Caribbean, 2010–2012

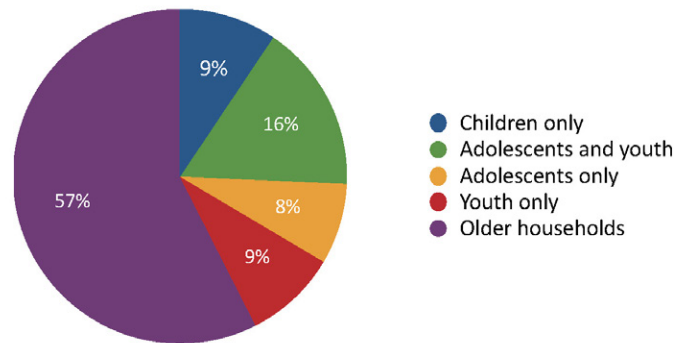


Source: UNICEF analysis of National Population and Housing Censuses 2010–2012.

Household characteristics

Around one third of households in Barbados contain young people (10–24 years). Of these, around half contain adolescents and youths, while the remainder are split roughly equally between those with an adolescent or a youth (Figure 2.3). The great majority of these households will also contain an older member of the family and over half will also have children under 10 years old. Fifty-eight per cent of Barbadian households contain no one under the age of 25 years. On average, each household with adolescents/youth has 1.5 persons aged 10–24 years.

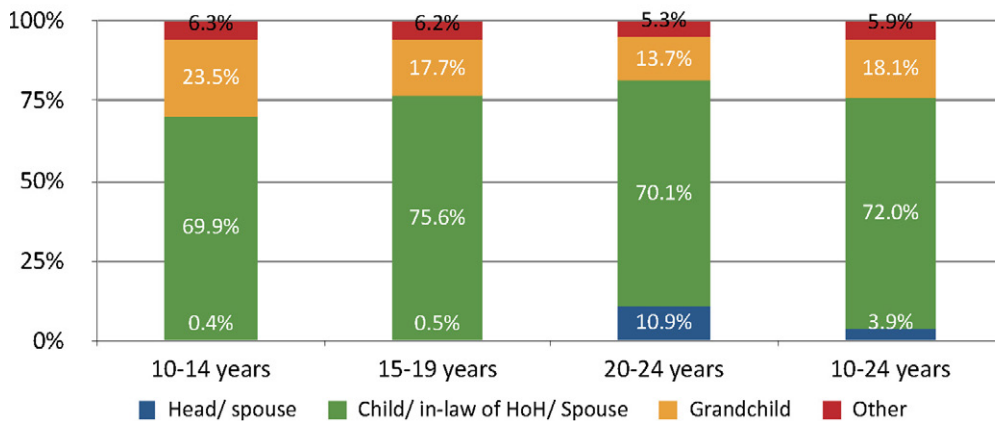
Figure 2.3: Households with adolescents and youth



Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Over 70 per cent of young people are children of the head of household, 18 per cent are grandchildren, and 6 per cent are other relatives or non-relatives – both of which indicate the continued importance of extended family households (Figure 2.4). The proportion of grandchildren is higher for the 10–14-year age group, with the likeliest explanation being that as grandchildren get older, the grandparents pass away and their parents become the heads of household. Also notable is that 11 per cent of young adults (20–24 years) are living as heads of household or their spouses as this group starts forming relationships and having children, and hence moving away from the parental home.

Figure 2.4: Relationship of young people to the head of household (HoH)

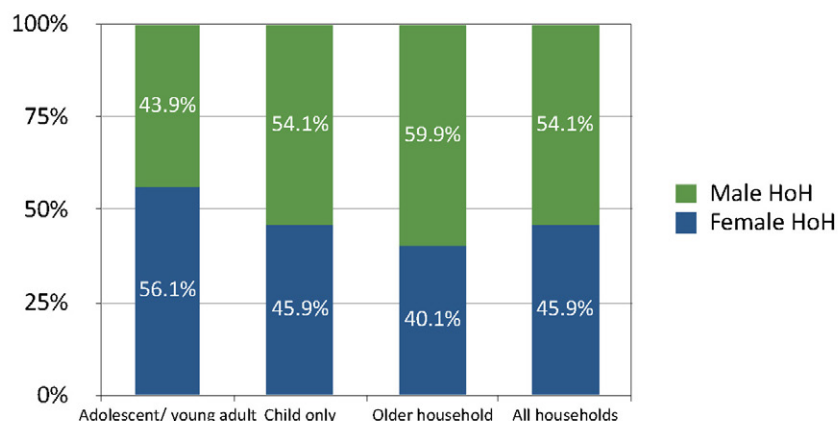


Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Just under half (46 per cent) of Barbadian households in 2016 were headed by women. However, households with adolescents or young adults are more likely to be female-headed (56 per cent).¹⁵ Households with younger (under 10 years) children only or no one under 25 years are more likely to be headed by men (Figure 2.5).

¹⁵ More detail on the living arrangements of adolescents and young adults and parental presence is provided in Chapter 6.

Figure 2.5: Sex of head of household



Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Key findings and implications

Between 2010 and 2016, the population of Barbados remained almost unchanged at around 276,000. The only increase was in the older age groups (45 years and over) – a clear indication that the population of the island is ageing. In 2016, the population of young people (10–24 years) in Barbados was around 53,700 – some 1,600 less than in 2010 – and they accounted for one in five of the island’s population. In 2010, Barbados had one of the lowest proportions of young people in the Eastern Caribbean. Young persons are split roughly equally between younger adolescents (10–14 years), older adolescents (15–19 years) and young adults (20–24 years).

During this period, there has been a sharp decrease in the birth rate but little change in fertility, indicating that the changing age distribution of the population rather than fertility is currently the major determinant of demographic change in Barbados. The proportion of women in the main childbearing age group (20–34 years) has decreased in both absolute and relative terms. These are long-standing trends, which are likely to persist in coming years.

Around one third of households contain someone aged between 10 and 24 years. Over 70 per cent of young people are children of the head of household. That a quarter of young people are either grandchildren or other relatives of the head of household indicates the continuing importance of extended family households. Very few, 4 per cent, live independently, with this proportion reaching 10 per cent for young adults (20–24 years). Over half of households with adolescents or young adults live in female-headed households, which is higher than the proportions for other age groups where male-headed households predominate.



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3

Every young person has a fair chance in life

The ending of poverty or its dramatic reduction was arguably the overarching objective of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and remains central to the SDGs. The phrasing of SDG1 is clear and unambiguous: “End poverty in all its forms everywhere.” Associated targets are “to eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere” (SDG1.1) and “to reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions” (SDG1.2). SDG1 and its targets have two important implications for this study. First, poverty should not be considered and assessed solely in terms of consumption-based measures but also needs to include non-income aspects of deprivation. Second, there is an explicit need to assess poverty for different groups of the population, including adolescents.

This is particularly important for adolescents and young adults who are in a transitional stage of their lives. Growing up in poverty and deprivation can lead young people to damaging behaviours such as substance abuse and involvement in gangs and other criminal activities, as well as affect their mental health. All of these can have a detrimental impact on their physical, emotional and social development and result in lifelong cognitive and physical impairment, thereby threatening their life chances and risking the establishment of intergenerational poverty. It is therefore critical to know and understand the extent and trends in poverty amongst young people.

Much of the literature identifies, quantitatively or qualitatively, associations between poverty and the different facets of well-being. This study has undertaken analyses of the relationship between poverty and key indicators of young Barbadian’s well-being. These analyses are presented in subsequent sections of this report.

Indigence amongst young people

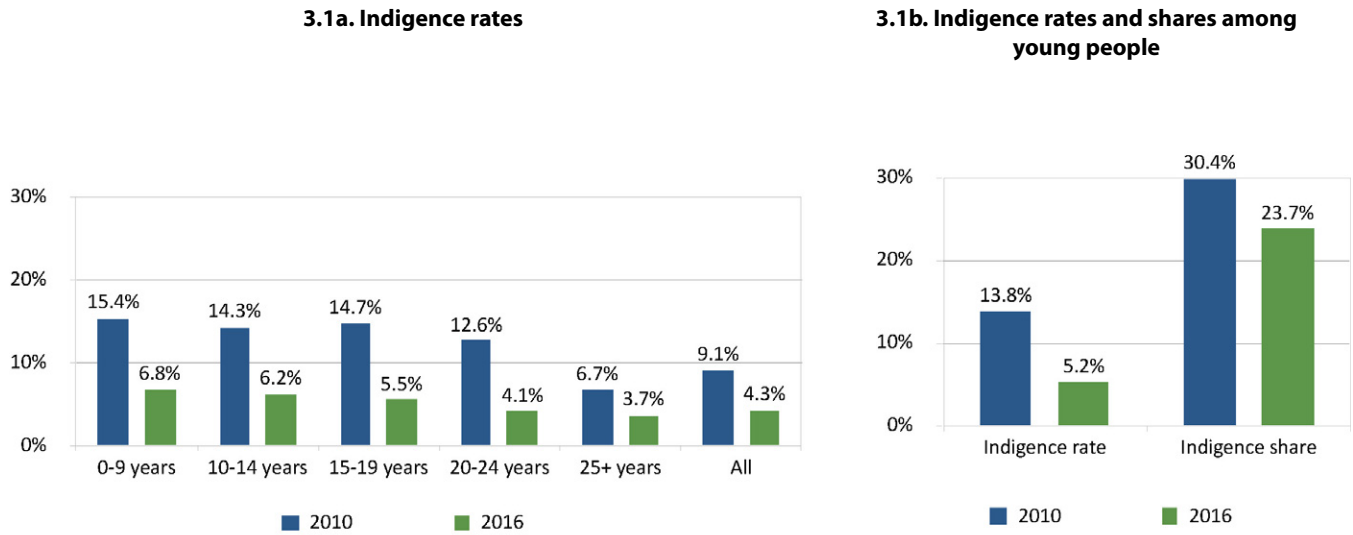
Between 2010 and 2016, the levels of indigence¹⁶ for the population as a whole more than halved from 9 per cent to just over 4 per cent¹⁷ (Figure 3.1a). Decreases have been much greater, over 60 per cent, for younger (under 25 years) age groups – from 14–15 per cent in 2010 to 6–7 per cent in 2016. In consequence, there is a much reduced differential in severe poverty rates between younger and older age groups.

Between 2010 and 2016, the indigence rate for young people decreased from 14 to 5 per cent. Furthermore, in 2016, young people accounted for 24 per cent of the total indigent population compared with 30 per cent in 2010 (Figure 3.1b).

¹⁶ Households whose income/ expenditure is less than that needed to maintain a healthy diet are defined as indigent, or living in severe poverty.

¹⁷ The results presented in this section relate to population and therefore differ from those presented in the Executive Summary of the report on the 2016 BSLC (Barbados Statistical Service, 2018), which contains household-level information. The latter figures are lower as poverty is almost always associated with large households, which constitute a smaller proportion of total households.

Figure 3.1: Indigence rates, 2010 and 2016



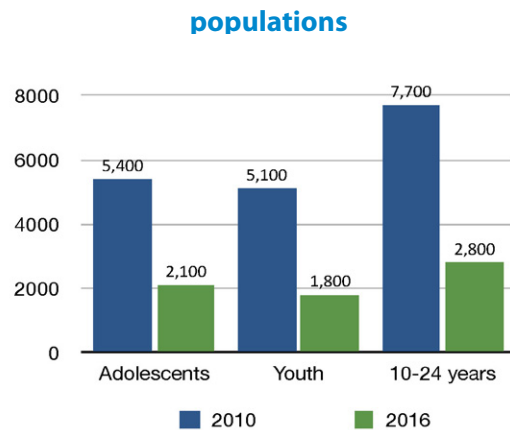
Source: University of the West Indies, *Barbados Country Assessment of Living Conditions 2010*, Cave Hill Barbados, 2012; Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Allied to the changing proportions of the population between younger and older age groups (see Chapter 2), the lower indigence rates resulted in a substantial reduction in the number of indigent young people from 7,700 in 2010 to 2,800 in 2016 – a fall of over 60 per cent. Decreases for the three constituent age groups and for the adolescents and youth are broadly similar (Table 3.1 and Figure 3.2). Despite these decreases, around 5 per cent of adolescents and young adults in Barbados are still living in severe poverty.

Table 3.1: Indigent populations, 2010 and 2016

Age group	Indigent population		Change (2016–2010)	
	2010	2016	No.	%
0–9 years	5,600	2,100	-3,500	-62.5%
10–14 years	2,600	1,000	-1,600	-61.5%
15–19 years	2,800	1,100	-1,700	-60.7%
20–24 years	2,300	700	-1,600	-69.6%
25+ years	12,400	7,000	-5,400	-43.5%
All	25,700	11,900	-13,800	-53.7%

Figure 3.2: Adolescent and youth indigent populations



Source: University of the West Indies, 2012; Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

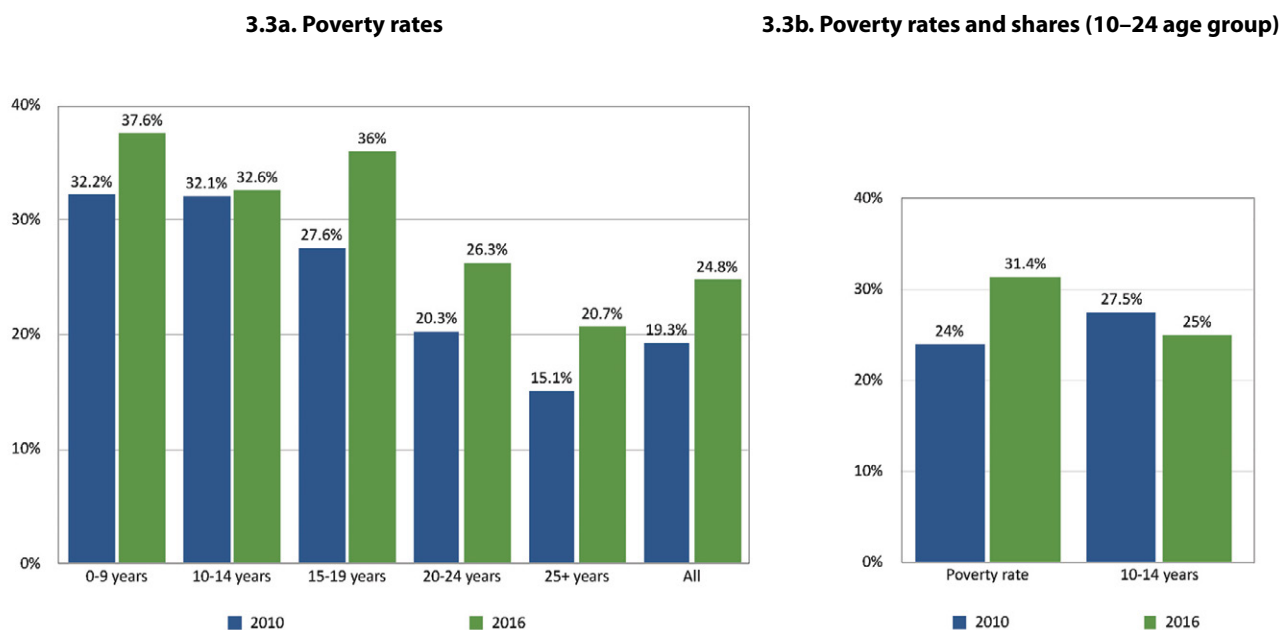
2018.

Poverty amongst young people

Unlike severe poverty, which declined between 2010 and 2016, the overall poverty rate increased significantly for all age groups – from 19 to 25 per cent, meaning that almost a quarter of the population are living in poverty compared to one in four in 2010 (Figure 3.3a). For all age groups, poverty rates have increased by around 5 percentage points. Although poverty rates among young adults are similar to the national level in both years, poverty for younger age groups is much higher: 38 per cent for children (under 10 years old) and 35 per cent for adolescents (10–19 years) – these rates are around two-thirds higher than the rate of 21 per cent for the older population (25 years and over). This reflects a worldwide pattern whereby poverty rates for the younger age groups are almost always higher than those for older groups.¹⁸

Thus, in 2016, over 30 per cent of young people in Barbados were living in poverty compared to 24 per cent in 2010. However, the higher increase in the poverty rate for older groups, allied to the demographic shift in the population towards these groups, means that young people now account for a slightly lower proportion of the island’s poor population than they did in 2010 (Figure 3.3b).

Figure 3.3: Poverty amongst young people



Sources: University of the West Indies, 2012; Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

The increase in poverty rates for all age groups has entailed a 25 per cent increase in the numbers of Barbadians living in poverty: from 54,300 in 2010 to 68,000 in 2016. However, due to the changing demographic structure of the population, the changes have affected younger and older age groups very differently, with reductions in the number of under-15s living in poverty and increases for all older age groups. The number of poor young people

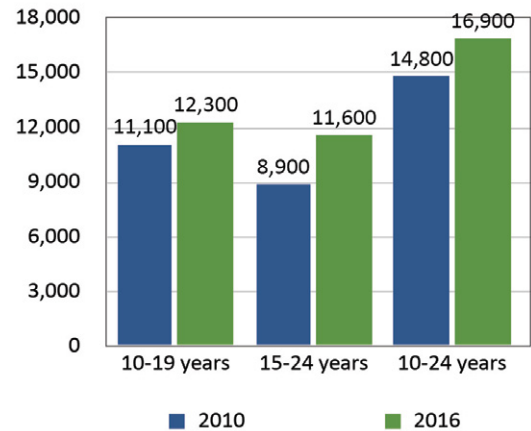
¹⁸ Likely explanations are that young people tend to increase household costs whilst often reducing household income as mothers’ incomes are curtailed. Exceptions tend to be countries with very high levels of social protection, such as child benefits, social welfare, tax credits, and subsidized childcare.

increased by just over 2,000 or 14 per cent; within this group, in absolute and relative terms, the increase was greatest for the 15–19-year age group where the poor population increased by 1,800 (Table 3.2 and Figure 3.4).

Table 3.2: The poor population, 2010 and 2016

Age group	Poor Population		Change (2010–2016)	
	2010	2016	No.	%
0–9 years	11,600	11,400	-200	-1.7%
10–14 years	5,900	5,300	-600	-10.2%
15–19 years	5,200	7,000	1,800	34.6%
20–24 years	3,700	4,600	900	24.3%
25+ years	27,900	39,700	11,800	42.3%
All	54,300	68,000	13,700	25.2%
10–24 years	14,800	16,900	2,100	14.2%

Figure 3.4: Adolescents and youth living in poverty



Sources: University of the West Indies, 2012; Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Overall, while the reduction in absolute and relative severe poverty amongst 10–24-year-olds is positive, this is counterbalanced by the increase in general poverty. In 2016, over 30 per cent – almost one in three – of this age group were living in poverty. Allied to the 14 per cent increase in the number of adolescents and young adults living in poverty, it is apparent that reducing poverty amongst these age groups needs to remain an important objective for the Government of Barbados.

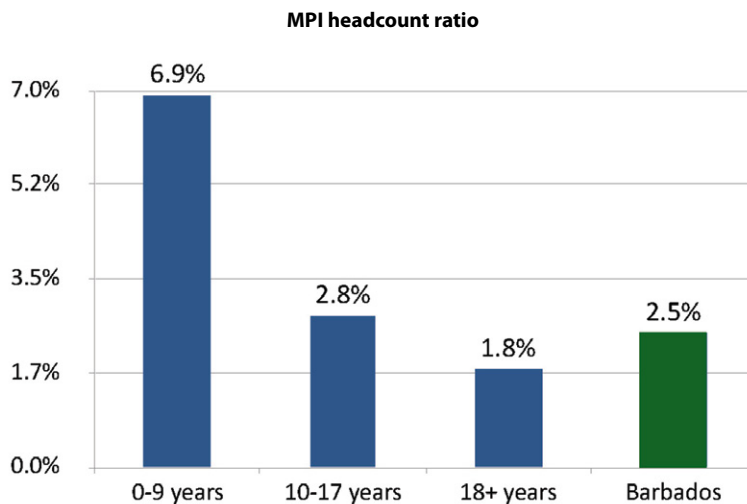
Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

The preceding analysis was based on poverty measured in terms of income and consumption levels. Although widely used and providing a broad understanding of populations living in poverty, income-based poverty measures give a limited picture of the non-income deprivations that lower income groups, including young people, may face. To overcome this shortcoming and in order to provide a more holistic approach to poverty assessment by measuring deprivations across a number of dimensions, the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) has developed a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) that combines 10 indicators of deprivation related to three dimensions: education, health (malnutrition and infant mortality) and living standards. A household, and everyone in it, is then categorized as MPI deprived if it experiences deprivation on more than three of the indicators.¹⁹

¹⁹ Comprehensive information on the global MPI can be found on the OPHI website at <<https://ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index/>>.

Figure 3.5 shows that, based on the indicators used in the computation of the index, under 3 per cent of the population of Barbados is experiencing multidimensional deprivation.²⁰ Out of 101 developing countries for which the MPI has been calculated, Barbados has the 20th lowest level of MPI deprivation with an MPI headcount deprivation ratio that is far below the median value of 20 per cent. The MPI for adolescents (10–17 years),²¹ 2.8 per cent, is close to the national average and is under half that for children. At the time of the survey, less than 1,000 adolescents were subject to MPI deprivation. These results are consistent with two previous findings: (i) poverty tends to be highest for younger age groups; and (ii) the low level of indigence (severe poverty) in Barbados.

Figure 3.5: Adolescents and MPI deprivation (global MPI)



Source: Alkire et al., 2018, using MICS 2012 data.

Social protection

Social protection is a crucial component of many poverty reduction strategies. Barbados has a wide range of social protection programmes ranging from social security (including maternity, sickness, pensions and survivor benefits), through social welfare, training programmes and educational assistance. However, coverage is generally low. Of the 21 programmes included in the BSLC questionnaire, only three achieved a coverage exceeding one per cent of the population; the highest coverage was for old age pensions (2.5 per cent²²). Furthermore, the highest coverage of social protection programmes mentioned by respondents aged 10–24 years was 0.9 per cent (social security survivors’ benefits). The resulting conclusion is that few adolescents and young adults benefit from social protection programmes, directly or indirectly. In particular, virtually no adolescents or young adults live in households receiving social welfare benefits.²³ There are, however, some exceptions to this picture.

20 Alkire S., U. Kanagaratnam and N. Suppa, ‘Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2018: Brief methodological note and results’, *MPI Methodological Notes* No. 46, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), University of Oxford, 2018.

21 The MPI has not been calculated for the 18–24-year age group.

22 Equivalent to 16 per cent of the population aged 65 years or more.

23 There are also a number of programmes targeted at those most in need, e.g. victims of sexual and physical abuse, abandonment and neglect, juveniles in trouble with the law, drug addicts and persons living with HIV/AIDS. Relevant information on these groups is provided later in this report. These programmes, although benefiting their target groups, are very small in terms of numbers.

The School Meals Programme (SMP)

The School Meals Programme (SMP), first established in 1963, is one of the Government’s headline social protection programmes and aims to provide healthy meals and snacks for children in all government primary schools, and some secondary schools and other educational institutions²⁴. Table 3.3 shows the coverage of the SMP for adolescents in the 10–16 age group.²⁵ The SMP was available to 40 per cent of adolescents in this age group, of whom 44 per cent received snacks or meals from the programme – equivalent to around 18 per cent of the age group as a whole. As the SMP’s main focus is on primary schools and the majority of 12–16-year-olds do not attend these, the more relevant results are for 10 and 11-year-olds. For this group, the SMP was available to over three quarters of 10–11-year olds and the take-up rate (those benefiting) approached 80 per cent. Overall, over 60 per cent of the age group benefited from the SMP, which represents a high level of coverage.

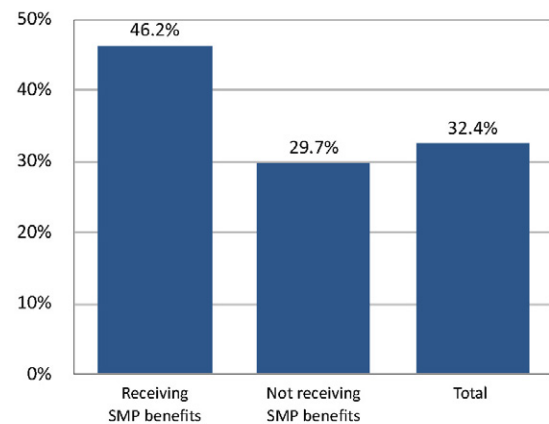
Worthy of mention is that the Barbados SMP has a significant pro-poor focus. The poverty rates of 10–16-year-olds receiving meals or snacks from the SMP are substantially higher than those who do not receive SMP benefits – 46 per cent compared to 30 per cent (Figure 3.6). These results suggest that emphasis on strengthening the effectiveness of the SMP could be directed at increasing firstly take-up rates where the SMP is already being provided and, secondly, for those who are in most need.

Table 3.3: Adolescents and the SMP

Age group	SMP availability ¹	Take-up rate ²	SMP coverage ³
10–11 years	77.7%	78.6%	61.0%
12–16 years	30.0%	20.2%	6.0%
10–16 years	40.0%	44.0%	17.6%

1. Percentage of age group who stated that SMP was available in their school.
2. Percentage receiving SMP snacks/ meals where SMP is available.
3. Percentage of all adolescents receiving SMP snacks/ meals.

Figure 3.6: Poverty status of SMP beneficiaries



Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

²⁴ More details are provided at the METVT website: <https://mes.gov.bb/Departments/School-Meals/>

²⁵ This group covers over 90 per cent of adolescents who stated that the SMP was available in their school and who received meals or snacks from the programme.

Government School Textbook Loan Scheme (TLS)

This scheme enables all public secondary school students to borrow the textbooks they need on payment of a nominal fee. Around two thirds of secondary school students access this scheme²⁶ which, like the SMP, represents a high level of coverage.²⁷ Overall, including those using the scheme, around 90 per cent of secondary school students have all the textbooks they need. However, in contrast to the SMP, this scheme does not have a pro-poor focus in that the poverty rate is lower amongst those using the TLS than those not using it – 26 compared to 37 per cent.

Health insurance

As part of the overarching objective of the SDGs to leave no one behind, Target 1.3 calls for nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all. Health insurance is one such tool for achieving equity, by preventing and reducing economic and social vulnerability resulting from poor health.

Analysis of the 2016 BSLC data reveals that almost 40 per cent of households with young people include at least one member with private health insurance or who is covered by an employee medical plan. This is slightly higher than the proportion of all households with health insurance, 36 per cent. It is important to note that the government provides most health services in Barbados, so the lack of health insurance does not mean lack of health care.

Key findings and implications

In 2016, around one third of young people (10–24 years) in Barbados lived in poverty. Since 2010, poverty rates have increased by 5–6 percentage points for all youth age groups. Allied to changes in the age structure of the population, this has led to a rise in the number of poor young people from 14,800 to 16,900 – a 14 per cent increase. In contrast, indigence (severe poverty) amongst this age group has decreased in absolute and relative terms. In 2016, there were under half the number of indigent adolescents and young adults than there had been in 2010, while the rate of indigence had decreased from around 14 per cent to around 5 per cent. Notwithstanding this reduction, the substantial increase in the number of young people living in poverty since 2010 means that the reduction of youth poverty should remain an important government objective.

One approach to reducing poverty is through social protection. The SMP and the TLS are the island's social protection programmes with the greatest coverage. The SMP is aimed at primary school children while the TLS targets secondary school students. Both achieve high coverage rates (over two thirds) of their target populations. However, whereas the SMP has a pro-poor bias, the TLS does not. These findings imply that the future emphasis should be on increasing the take-up rates by the students who are in most need of assistance.

Barbados has a wide range of other social protection programmes, the coverage of which is low in most cases. In respect of adolescents and young adults, very few receive benefits from these programmes; in particular none were recorded in the 2016 BSLC as living in households receiving social assistance benefits in cash or kind.

²⁶ Another 10 per cent said that they obtained books from their schools at no cost.

²⁷ Analysis of 2016 BSLC data.



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4

Every young person learns

Access to quality education is one of the most effective interventions to empower young people with the skills to function in and contribute to society. With the adoption of the SDGs, countries have committed to achieving universal completion of primary and secondary education by 2030. Experiences at school have wide-ranging effects on adolescent development and well-being, encompassing physical and mental health, safety, civic engagement and social development.²⁸ Education in various forms is a vital prerequisite for combating poverty, protecting adolescents from hazardous and exploitative practices, promoting human rights and democracy, and protecting the environment.

In Barbados, primary and secondary education is compulsory up to the age of 16. Children enter secondary school at age 11–12, after 7 years in primary school (starting at age 4–5), and complete 5 years in secondary school. Children aged 5–11 years therefore mainly attend primary school, while secondary school mainly caters for children aged 12–16 years.

Primary school enrolment/attendance rates

Figure 4.1 shows that primary school enrolment in Barbados has been high for many years, with enrolment ratios²⁹ now approaching 100 per cent. Differentials between male and female enrolments that existed in the early 2000s have largely disappeared. These administrative data³⁰ are confirmed by attendance data from household surveys undertaken in 2012 and 2016 (Table 4.1).³¹ Notwithstanding some differences, the survey data also indicate a very high level of primary school attendance in Barbados in recent years.³²

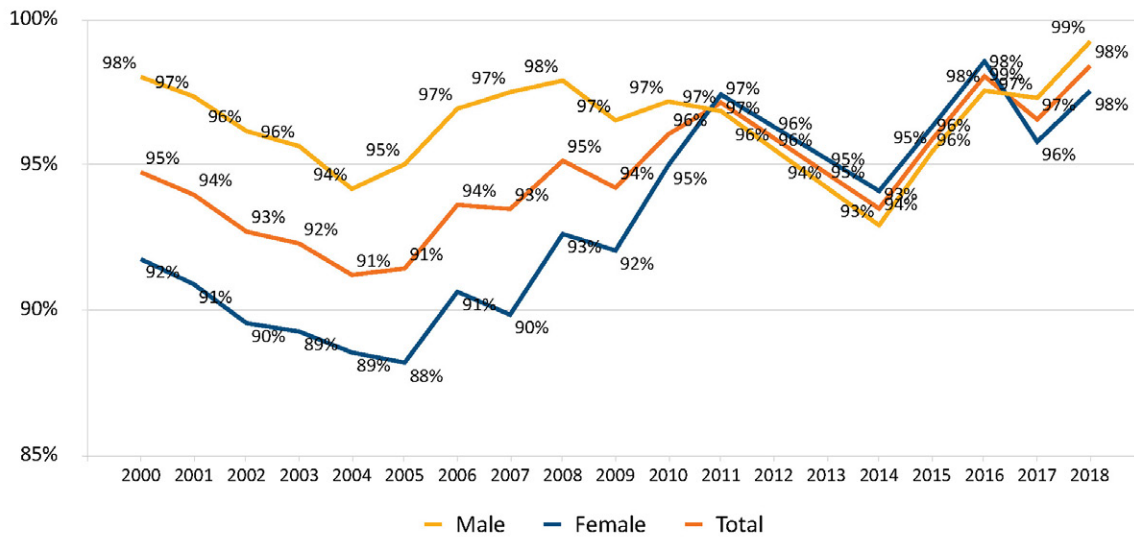
28 McNeely, Clea and Jayne Blanchard, *The Teen Years Explained: A guide to healthy adolescent development*, Center for Adolescent Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, MD, 2009.

29 The indicator used is the net enrolment rate (NER) (adjusted), which is calculated by dividing the number of primary school age children (5–11 years) enrolled at school (including those attending pre-primary or secondary schools) by the total population of this age group.

30 Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI)/ Government of Barbados, *Education For All 2015 Review – Barbados Report, 2015*; Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI)/ Government of Barbados, *Statistics On Education in Barbados At A Glance, 2013/2014 and 2015/16, 2014 and 2016*; UNESCO Statistics: <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>

31 Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b; Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

32 Both administrative and household survey-based sources are not without imperfections: (i) attendance data, being based on sample surveys, are subject to sampling errors; (ii) enrolment data are subject to recording inaccuracies and are also dependent on the accuracy of the age group population estimates. Definition of age groups is also complicated by: (i) children starting and finishing primary school between the ages of 5 and 6, and 11 and 12 years respectively; (ii) MESTI/ UNESCO using age at end of school year as the reference age while MICS and BSLC use age at time of survey; and (iii) the Flexible Transfer Policy which, depending on their performance, enables students to transfer to secondary school a year earlier or later. As a result some 5-year-olds are attending primary school and some 11-year-olds are attending secondary school.

Figure 4.1: Primary school net enrolment rates, 2000–2018

Sources: Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI)/ Government of Barbados, Education For All 2015 Review, 2015; UNESCO Statistics: 2014–2018; UNICEF estimates: 2012–2013.

Table 4.1: Primary school attendance

Indicator	Source	Year	Age Group	Male	Female	Total	GPI ³
NAR (adjusted) ¹	MICS	2012	5–10 years	99.5%	98.5%	99.0%	0.99
NAR (adjusted)	BSLC	2016	5–11 years	95.1% ²	95.7%	95.4%	1.01

1. Net attendance rate (NAR) (adjusted): As for NER but using attendance data from household surveys (MICS or BSLC).

2. Includes some children attending pre-primary school.

3. Gender Parity Index (GPI): ratio of female to male attendance rate.

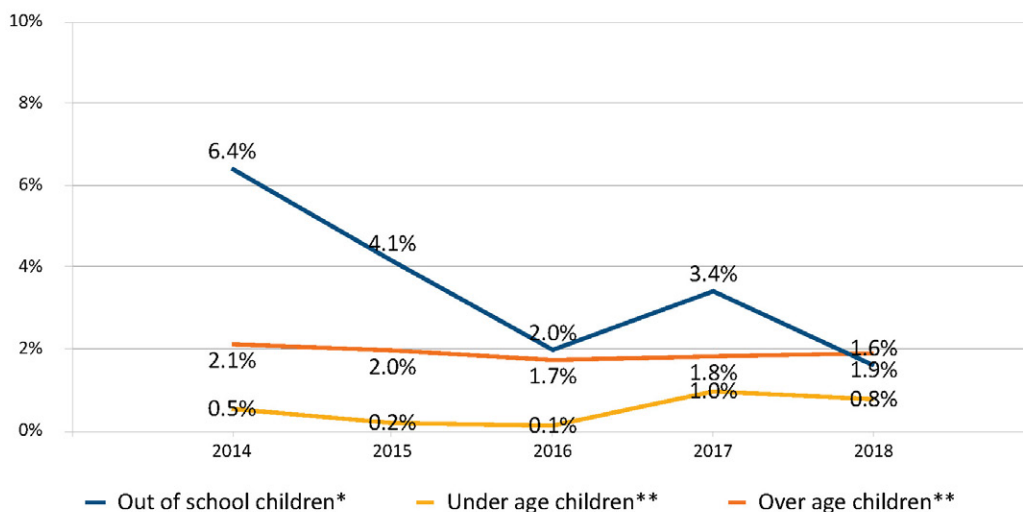
Sources: see table.

Additional data on primary school attendance are provided in Figure 4.2. The data on out-of-school children gives an indication of school dropouts. The salient results are that the rate for out-of-school children decreased considerably between 2014 and 2018 – from 6.4 per cent of all primary school children to under two per cent, split equally between boys and girls. The low proportions for this indicator corroborate the high enrolment levels for primary school in Barbados.

Figure 4.2 also shows the proportion of under- and over-age children attending primary school – who are outside the official age range for primary school. The under-age percentage is extremely low and does not exceed one per cent. The over-age rate is around two per cent and provides an indication of the level of class repeaters. The fact that both these indicators are very low shows that primary schools are overwhelmingly providing education to children in the official age range.

Notwithstanding some inconsistencies, all the data show primary school attendance now approaching 100 per cent and with consequent low levels of dropouts or non-attendance. As a direct consequence of the high attendance rates, there is little difference between female and male enrolment/ attendance rates.

Figure 4.2: Children out of school, under- and over-age children



* Children in the official primary school age range who are not enrolled in either primary or secondary schools.

** Children who are at least two years outside the official age for the form that they are attending.

Source: UNESCO, UIS.Stat, 2019.

The 2015 Review of Education in Barbados reports that there was an effective primary to secondary transition rate of 100 per cent in 2011.³³ Corroboration is provided by data for the 2013/2014 and 2015/2016 school years, which show that the number of enrolled 12- and 13-year-olds is virtually the same as the number attending primary school two years before (Table 4.2). The fact that it is slightly higher for the older cohort reflects a combination of the Flexible Transfer Policy, repetition of the school year and possibly recording inaccuracies.

Table 4.2: Primary to secondary school transition

2013/2014 School year		2014/2015 School year	
Age (years)	Enrolment	Age (years)	Enrolment
10	3,500	12	3,437
11	3,600	13	3,852
10 and 11	7,100	12 and 13	7,289

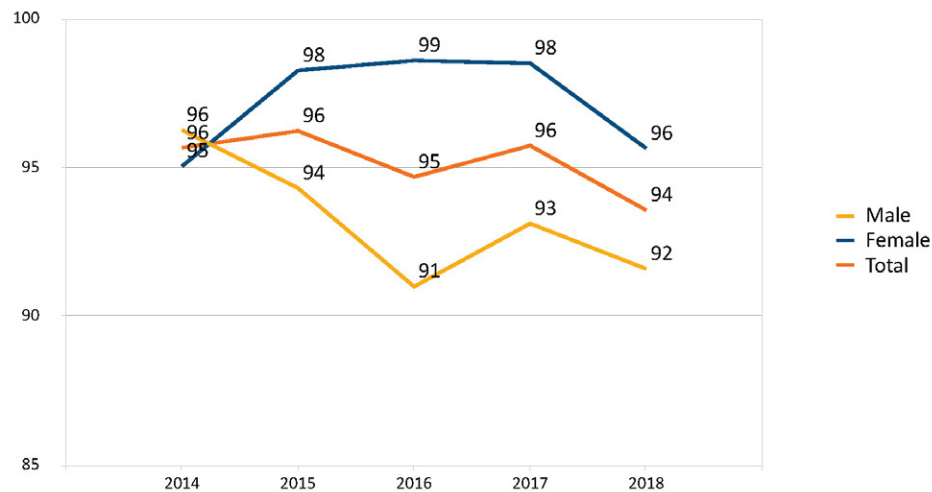
Source: MESTI, 2014 and 2016, Education Statistics at a Glance.

33 Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI)/ Government of Barbados, 2015.

Secondary school enrolment/attendance rates

The high secondary school attendance rates shown in Figure 4.3 are to be expected given high primary school enrolment and transition rates. While there are fluctuations, the NER has remained constant at around 95 per cent. The male NER is lower than that for females but always remains above 90 per cent. The GPI in 2016, when the variation was greatest, still indicates that males constitute 48 per cent of primary school enrolment.

Figure 4.3: Secondary school net attendance rates, 2014–2018



Source: UNESCO, UIS.Stat, 2019.

The high secondary school enrolment rates are corroborated by information from other sources (Table 4.3). Apart from the MICS information which shows slightly lower rates,³⁴ the data reveal that upwards of 95 per cent of 12–16-year-olds are in education; there are thus few non-attenders or dropouts. As with primary education, gender differentials are small, being slightly higher for females. MESTI data also reveal that 90 per cent of secondary school students are in the 12–16-year age range, indicating few over- or under-age pupils. Being over-age at secondary school is, in any case, less problematic than at primary school as entry to CAPE/ post-secondary education courses is more flexible than the transition from primary to secondary school.

Table 4.3: Secondary school attendance

Indicator	Source	Year	Age group ⁶	Male	Female	Total	GPI
GER ¹	MESTI, 2015	1999-2011 average	12–16 years	99%	109%	104%	1.10
NAR (adjusted) ²	MICS	2012	11–15 years	93.4%	90.9%	92.1%	0.97
NAR (adjusted)	BSLC	2016	12–16 years	94.3%	96.7%	95.4%	1.03

1. GER = Gross enrolment ratio: total secondary enrolment divided by population aged 12–16 years. GERs tend to be higher than NERs as they are more likely to include over/ under-age students.

2. For definition see Table 4.1.

Sources: see table.

³⁴ Possibly due to the different age group definition.

Learning outcomes

The twin achievements of a high transition rate from primary to secondary school and high secondary attendance rates are laudable and have resulted in a literacy rate exceeding 99 per cent for youth (15–24 years).³⁵

The overall goals of the education system are twofold: (i) to provide students with the skills necessary for them to maximize their life chances; and (ii) to provide the country with the expertise needed for its future sustainable development. Neither of these can be achieved through high school attendance rates alone but depend to a large extent on educational outputs. Education system outputs are best examined through trends in grade-specific examination results, particularly in English and mathematics, which lay the foundation for achieving a sound education.

Primary school examinations

Although the focus of this study is on adolescents and young adults, achievement at secondary school will be heavily determined by performance at primary school. Table 4.4 presents information on performance at the Barbados Secondary School Entrance Examination (BSSEE), which is normally administered to 11-year-olds³⁶ in their last year of primary school. It consists of standardized test components in mathematics, English and an essay. Figure 4.4 presents the following key findings:

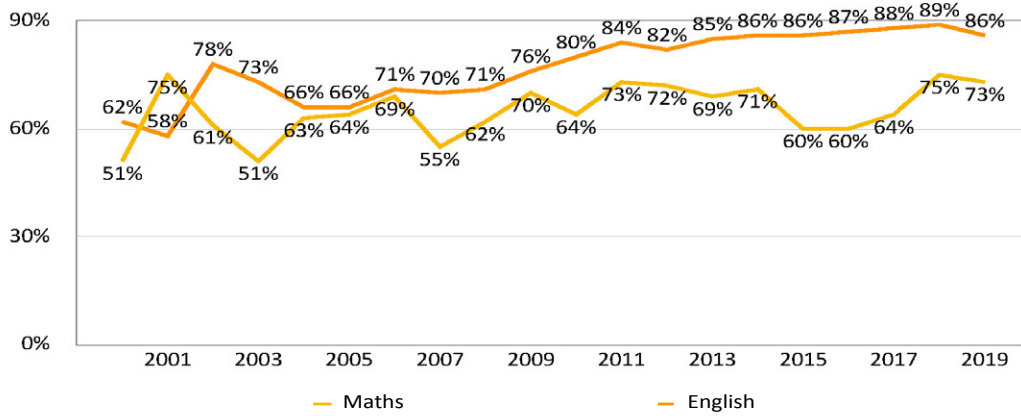
- Performance in English is almost always higher than that in mathematics.
- English results have improved consistently over the last 20 years and have exceeded 85 per cent since 2013.
- In 2018, around three quarters of students achieved a satisfactory score (40+ per cent) in mathematics, a significant improvement since 2015. This still means that over a quarter of primary school students will enter secondary school without the numeracy skills needed to make the most of the second cycle of their education.
- Females have outperformed males in both subjects over the last 20 years.
- In English, the gender variation between male and female performance has declined significantly from around 18 percentage points in 2000 to 10 percentage points in 2019.
- In contrast, the gender variation in mathematics has changed little since 2000 and remains slightly above 10 percentage points.
- Notwithstanding the reduced gender differential in English, more girls than boys will have the literacy and numeracy skills to make the most of their secondary education.

³⁵ Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b; Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI)/ Government of Barbados, 2015.

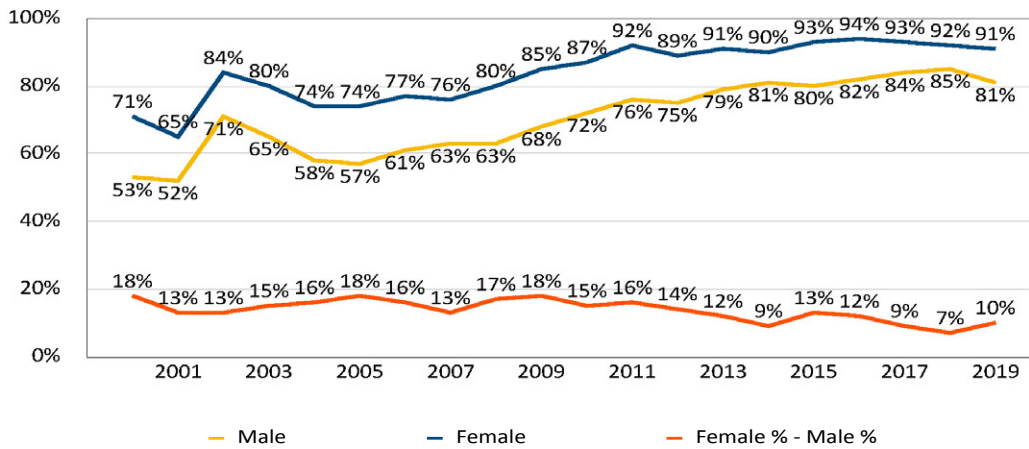
³⁶ As the BSSEE is taken by virtually all children, the numbers of boys and girls sitting them are, to all intents and purposes, equal.

Figure 4.4: BSSEE passing rates, English and mathematics, 2000–2019

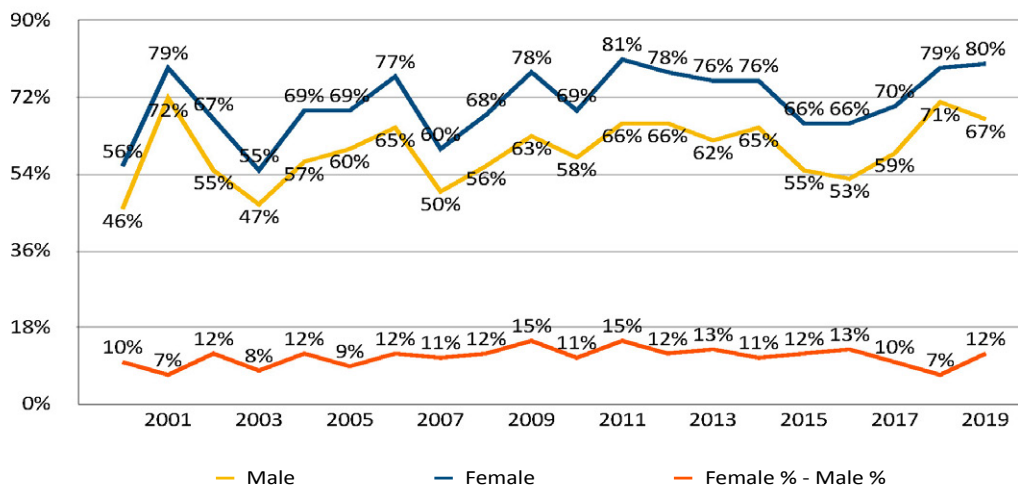
a. Students achieving a satisfactory score (40+ per cent) – both sexes



b. BSSEE English – gender variations



c. BSSEE Mathematics – gender variations



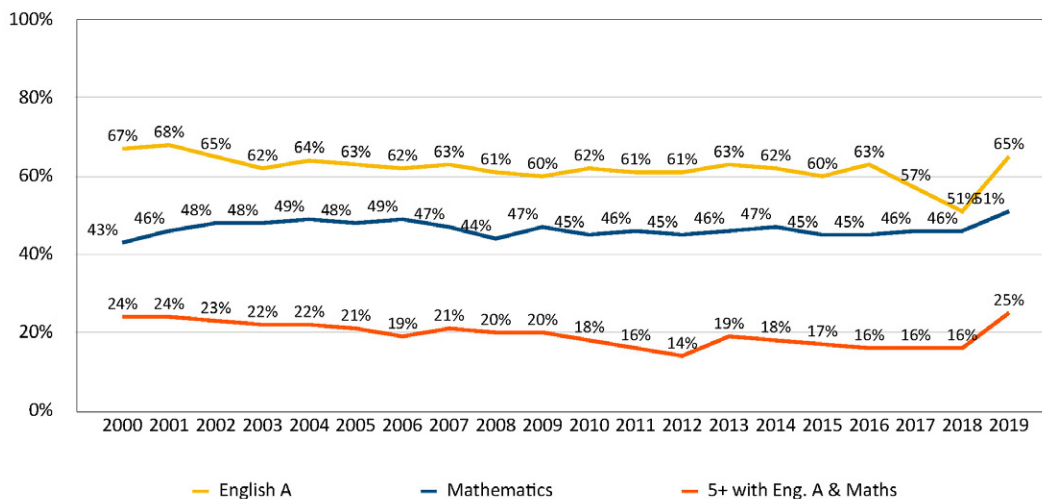
Source: METVT, 2019, data provided to UNICEF.

Secondary school examinations

The assessment examination for secondary school pupils is the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC), generally taken by 16-year-olds at the end of Form 5. Available information is summarized in this section.

CSEC candidate sitting rates,³⁷ which is the proportions of candidates sitting CSEC English A and mathematics, have changed little over the last 20 years (Figure 4.5) with around two thirds of candidates sitting English A and just under a half sitting mathematics. In 2019, a quarter of candidates sat these two examinations with at least three other CSECs subjects – the highest proportion since 2000.

Figure 4.5: CSEC sitting rates, 2000–2019



Source: METVT, 2019, data provided to UNICEF.

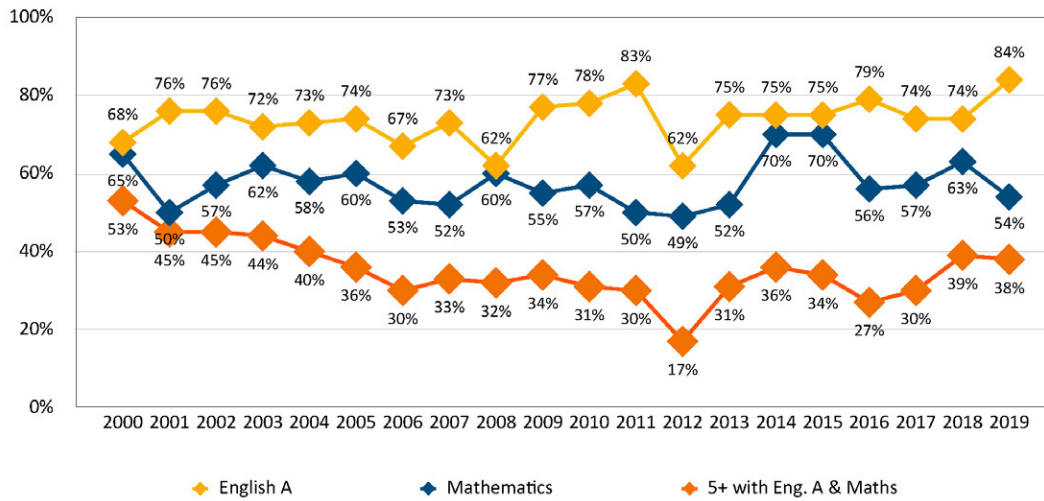
CSEC passing rates (Figure 4.6): English A passing rates³⁸ are always higher than those for mathematics, while those for 5+ CSECs are substantially lower as they are largely dependent on passes in both English and mathematics. In 2019, the respective pass rates were 84 per cent (English A), 54 per cent (mathematics) and 38 per cent (5+ with English A and mathematics). It is notable that while English pass rates are similar to those for BSSEE, those for mathematics are lower.

Although English A pass rates have increased consistently since 2012, the long-term trend has been erratic. The trend for mathematics has also been erratic, but has oscillated between 50 and 60 per cent for most of the last 20 years. Pass rates for 5+ CSECs with English A and mathematics have improved since 2012 but remain below those achieved prior to 2005. Note that some of these fluctuations could be due to changes in curricula and the format of the examinations and not be directly related to student performance.

37 Candidates sitting specified subject as percentage of all candidates.

38 Achieving grades I–III.

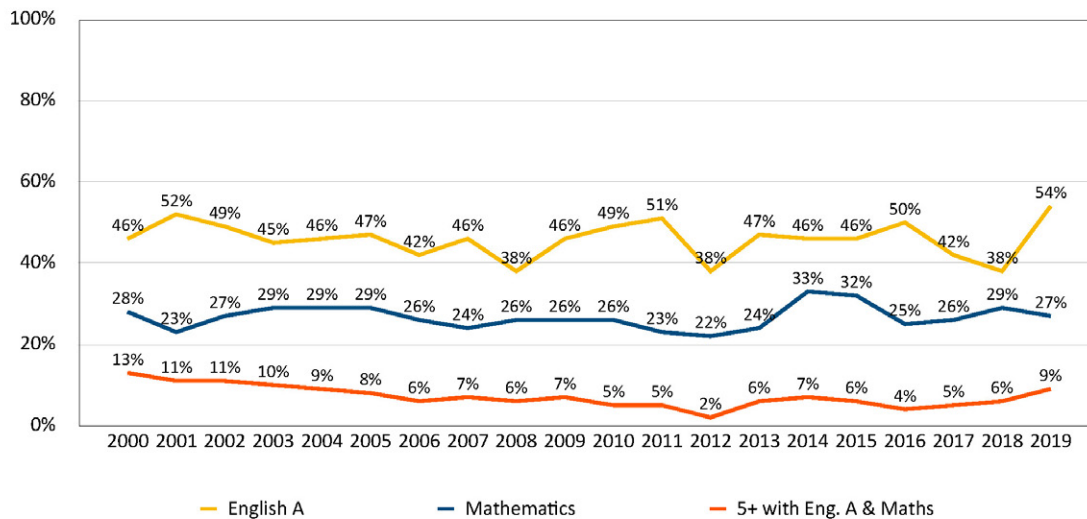
Figure 4.6: CSEC passing rates, 2000–2019



Source: METVT, 2019, data provided to UNICEF.

CSEC achievement rates³⁹ (Figure 4.7): in 2019, the respective proportions of all CSEC candidates who had achieved passes in English A, mathematics and 5+ CSECs with English A and mathematics were 54 per cent, 27 per cent and 9 per cent. These proportions are generally similar over the last 20 years. There is thus little discernible as a long-term trend – although in all cases, there has been some improvement since 2012. Overall, these achievement rates give cause for concern, as they will restrict the numbers of students who will be able to study for the CAPE examinations and pursue tertiary education courses.

Figure 4.7: CSEC achievement rates, 2000–2019

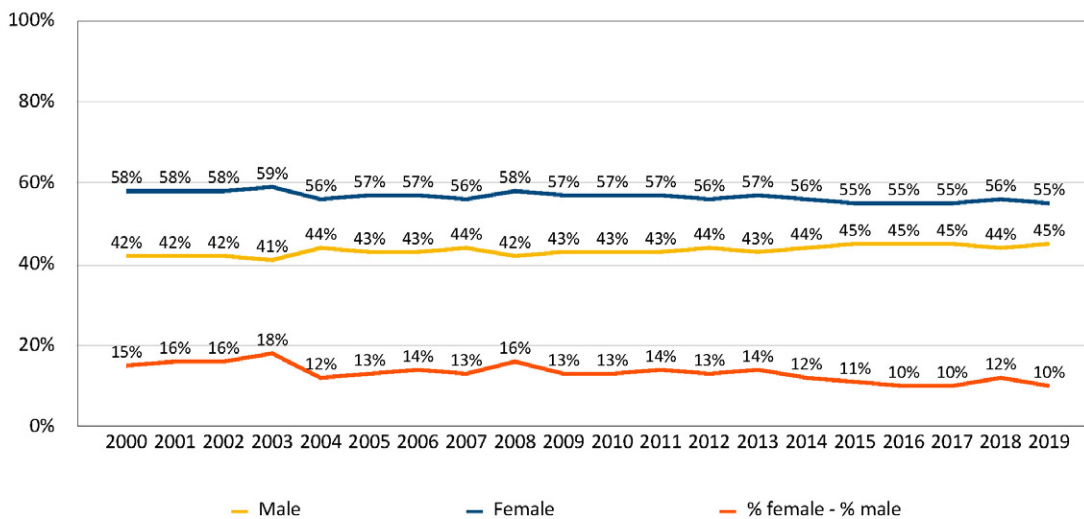


Source: METVT, 2019, data provided to UNICEF.

³⁹ Candidates passing CSEC examinations as proportion of total candidates.

Gender differentials are readily apparent in the CSEC sitting rates (Figure 4.8). In 2019, females accounted for 55 per cent of total CSEC candidates. In the last 20 years there has been a slight, but consistent, decline in this proportion, indicating that the gender differential in CSEC candidates is decreasing. Further analysis revealed that: (i) females always account for 55–59 per cent of CSEC candidates in English A, mathematics and 5+ with English A and mathematics; (ii) the gender differential for English A exhibits a gradual decrease since 2000 but has remained essentially unchanged in mathematics – both these changes replicate the trends in BSSEE performance; (iii) since 2015, the gender differential in 5+ CSECs with English A and mathematics has also decreased.

Figure 4.8: Gender variations in CSEC sitting rates (all examinations), 2000–2019



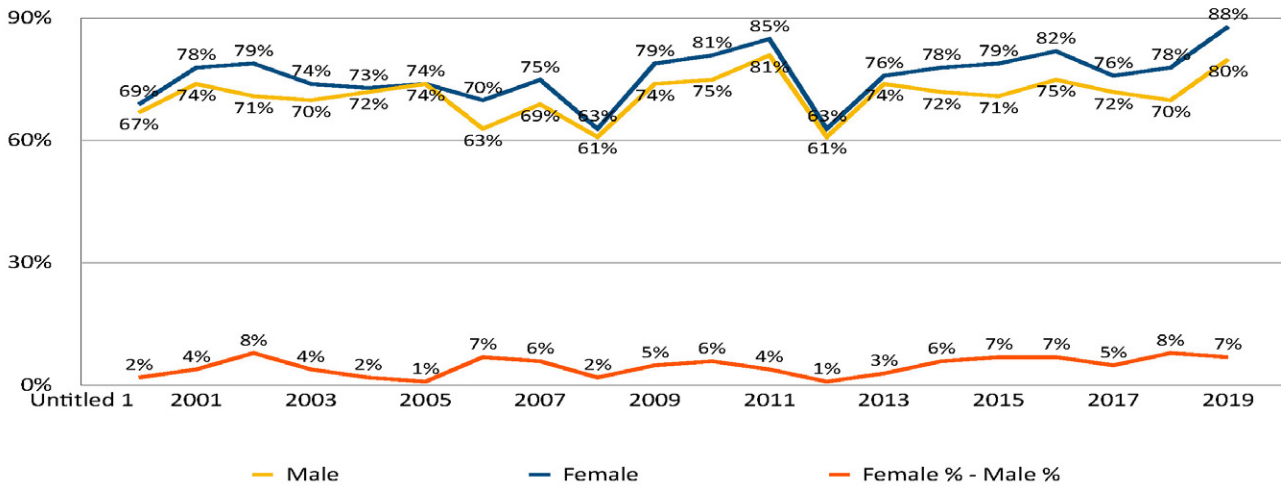
Source: METVT, 2019, data provided to UNICEF.

The previously identified gender differentials in BSSEE performance in favour of females are far less apparent at CSEC level (Figure 4.9). While females tend to do better in English, the reverse is true in mathematics – although more females than males are taking this examination. These differentials are significantly lower than those for registration rates (see Figure 4.8), and never exceed +8 or -8 percentage points.⁴⁰ There is no clear trend in these passing rate differentials in the last five years.

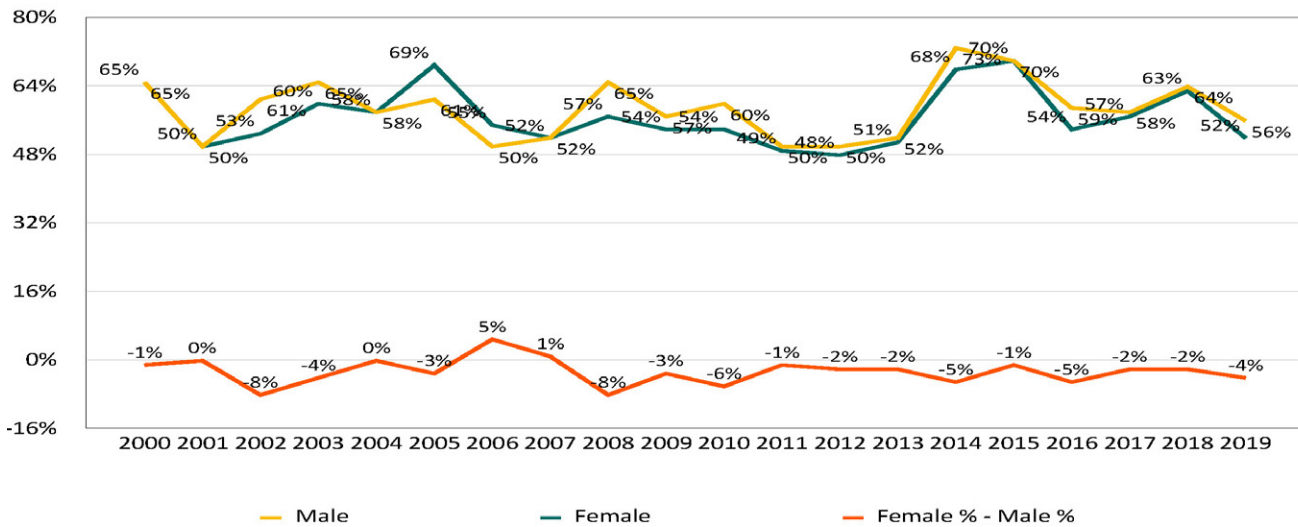
⁴⁰ Gender differentials for 5+ CSECs (including English A and mathematics) reflect the differing relative gender performance in the two subjects, and are also low, but the trend is much more erratic varying from +11 to -6 percentage points.

Figure 4.9: CSEC gender differentials in CSEC passing rates, 2010–2019

English A



Mathematics



Source: METVT, 2019, data provided to UNICEF.

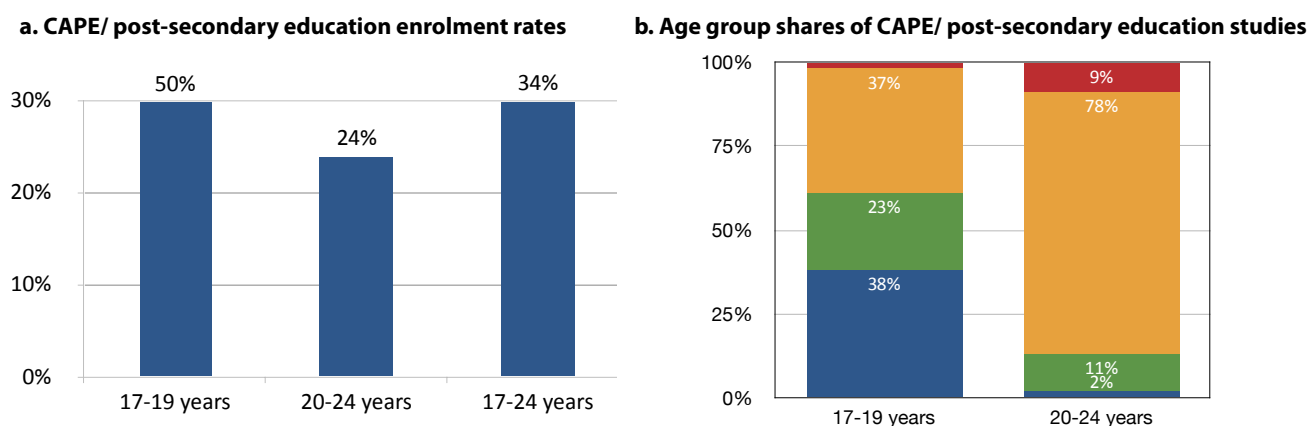
CAPE and post-secondary education

Continuing their studies following the completion of CSEC examinations is vital for those students with the capacity for further learning if they are to achieve their full potential. It is also a crucial component in developing the skills necessary for a country to reach its full development potential. In addition to the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) courses, the Barbados education system also offers technical and vocational education and training (TVET) courses covering a wide range of topics at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Institute of

Technology (SJPI), and tertiary (degree-level) education at the Barbados Community College (BCC) and University of the West Indies (UWI).⁴¹

In 2016, there were between 10,000 and 11,000⁴² students aged 17–24 years in CAPE/ post-secondary education of which 49 per cent were in tertiary education, 28 per cent were studying for CAPE examinations and the remainder, 22 per cent, were enrolled in TVET courses or other forms of post-secondary education. Overall, around 34 per cent of the 17–24-year age group were in some form of CAPE/ post-secondary education (Figure 4.10a). However, as the figure shows, enrolment rates vary widely by age: around half for the 17–19-year age group and around a quarter for 20–24-year-olds. While the younger group are studying for CAPE examinations, TVET qualifications or degrees, the great majority of young adults are enrolled on tertiary courses at the BCC or the UWI (Figure 4.10b).

Figure 4.10: Enrolment in CAPE/ post-secondary education, 17–24-year age group, 2016



Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

NB. 15–16-year group omitted due to low sample.

A review of enrolment trends of CAPE/ post-secondary education since 2000⁴³ indicates the following:

- The number of CAPE candidates increased from 1,250 in 2010 to 1,500 in 2013 (20 per cent) and has since stabilised at 1,500–1,600.
- SJPI annual enrolment levels fluctuated between 2,500 and 3,000 students from 2000 to 2015.
- After gradually increasing since 2000, enrolment at BCC peaked in 2009/2010 at around 5,000 students. Since then, there has been a 30 per cent decrease to the 2000–2012 average of around 4,000 annually.
- Enrolment at UWI also increased steadily from 2000 to 2014 but has since declined sharply due to the imposition of full tuition fees on Barbadian students – who account for around three quarters of UWI enrolment. In 2017, enrolment was over 35 per cent lower than in 2014,⁴⁴ with the decrease being greatest amongst mature students.

41 UWI offers primarily degree programmes, as well as certificate and diploma courses, whereas BCC offers a mix of degree and associate degree programmes, along with certificate and diploma courses. TVET courses are delivered by the SJPI along with other private institutions in partnership with the TVET Council. However, data on enrolment by type of course are not available.

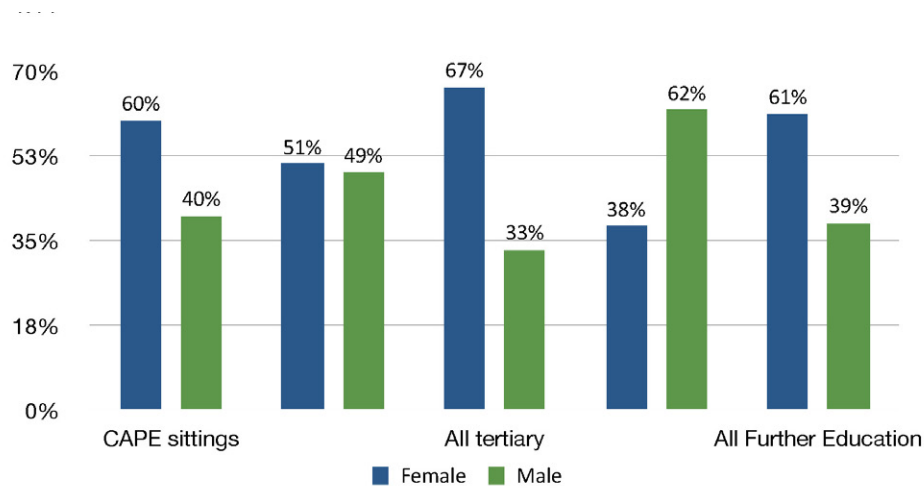
42 Estimates derived from analysis of BSLC and adjusted to be consistent with overall population estimate of 275,400; and excludes non-Barbadian students at UWI. MESTI information is not disaggregated by age and could not therefore be used to estimate youth enrolment rates; however, totals are generally consistent by category.

43 Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI)/ Government of Barbados, 2015 and Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), various years, Annual Reports <https://www.cxc.org/category/annual-reports/>

44 University of the West Indies, *Annual Report to Council, 2015/16, 2017*.

A recurring feature of CAPE/ post-secondary education in Barbados is the disparity between males and females. With the exception of TVET courses at SJPI, where males are in the majority, enrolment on further courses is dominated by females. Females account for over 60 per cent of total further enrolment: (i) two thirds of tertiary enrolment and (ii) 60 per cent of CAPE candidates (Figure 4.11). CAPE pass rates (Grades I–V) differ little, meaning that males who take the examinations are just as likely to get a satisfactory result as females. In contrast, TVET courses at the SJPI are dominated by males. Furthermore, a review of time series data reveals that these differentials have not changed significantly since 2000. They are thus long-standing trends.

Figure 4.11: CAPE/ post-secondary education: Gender differentials



Note:

All tertiary includes courses at BCC, the Erdiston Teacher's Training College and UWI, gender differentials for which are similar to the overall average.

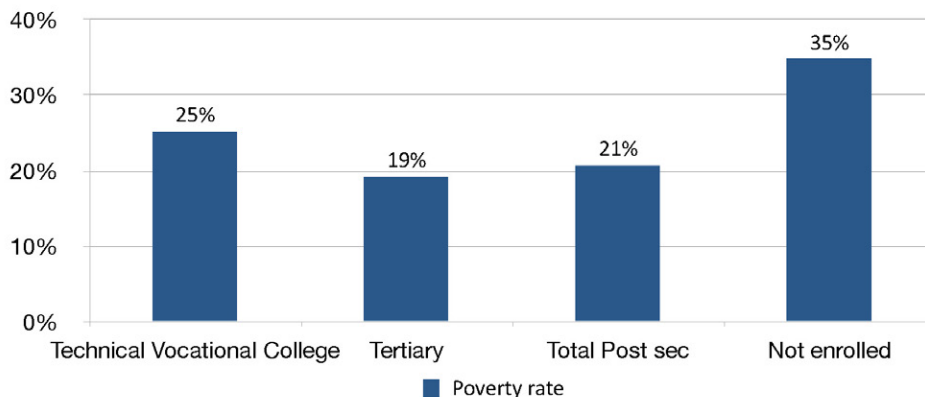
Sources: Caribbean Examination Council (CXC), various years, *Annual Reports*; MESTI, 2014 and 2016; University of the West Indies, *Annual Report to Council, 2015/16, 2017*.

The dominance of females in CAPE/ post-secondary education replicates previous findings: (i) BSSEE pass rates favour females; and (ii) more females than males take CSEC exams. Male and female CSEC pass rates are, however, broadly similar with females doing better in English and males better in mathematics. The implication is that if CAPE/ post-secondary education gender differentials are to be reduced, male performance in the BSSEE and CSEC exams will first need to be enhanced.

Enrolment in CAPE/ post-secondary education and poverty

Figure 4.12 shows the poverty rates of Barbadians aged between 17 and 24 years who are engaged in CAPE/ post-secondary education at different levels compared with those who are not. The conclusion is that the poverty rates for those engaged in CAPE/ Post-secondary education are appreciably lower than for those who are not – 21 per cent compared to 35 per cent. This holds true for students undertaking TVET or university courses. As a direct corollary, this means that youth from poor households are less likely to pursue their education after completing secondary school compared with those from non-poor households.

Figure 4.12: Poverty and CAPE/ post-secondary education enrolment, youth 17–24 years



Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Educational attainment

The highest level of educational attainment is a measure of the achieved learning levels of the population. When disaggregated by age group, it is evident how these have changed over time. Data for the 15–24-year age group show that the proportion of this group who have completed CAPE/ post-secondary education courses increased consistently between 2000 and 2010 for both males and females (Table 4.4). The improvement has, however, been more marked for females, indicating that the gender disparity in educational attainment was more evident in 2010 than it was in 2000.

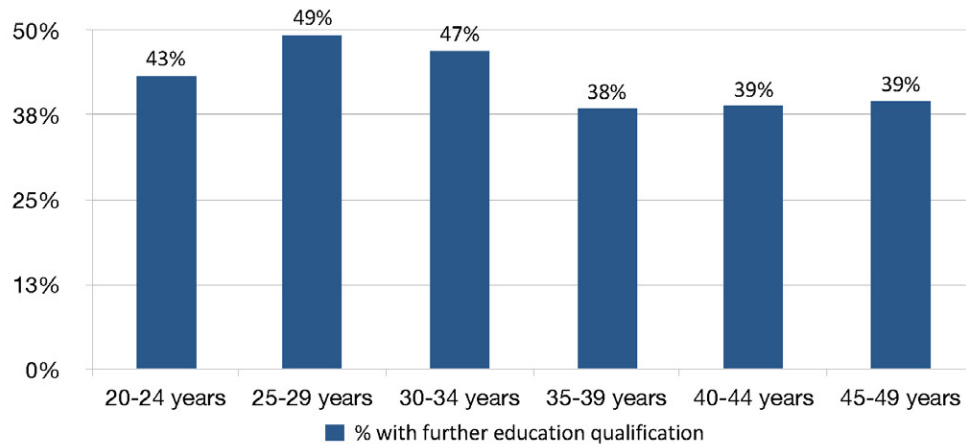
Table 4.4: Completion of CAPE/ post-secondary education courses, 15–24-year-olds

Year	Male	Female	GPI
2000	20%	23%	1.15
2010	30%	40%	1.33
Change	+10%	+17%	-

1. Percentage of age group having completed a CAPE/ post-secondary education course.

Source: Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI)/ Government of Barbados, 2015.

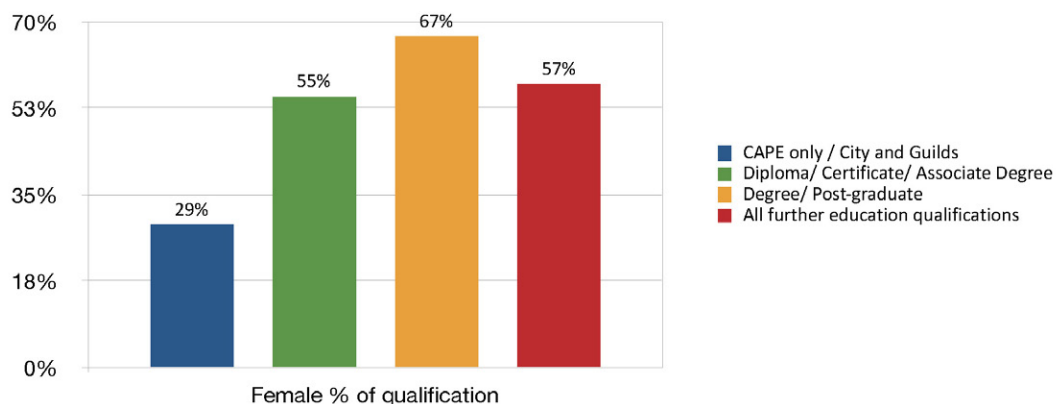
As most 15–19-year-olds are still in education and may thus acquire a more advanced qualification, it is more revealing to look at how the pattern varies between the older age groups (Figure 4.13). Over the last 20 years, there has been a steady increase in the proportions of the population with a further qualification (CAPE, degree/ associate degree, diplomas/certificates). The proportion of 25–29-year-olds with CAPE/ post-secondary education qualifications (born in the late 1980s) is almost 50 per cent, which is significantly greater than the equivalent proportion for 45–49-year-olds (born in the late 1960s), at 39 per cent. This result shows that, over the last 20 years, the Barbados education system has led to a significant upgrading of the education qualifications of its population. Also noteworthy is the high proportion of the 35–49-year age group with a CAPE/ post-secondary education qualification, indicating that Barbados has a long-standing trend of providing higher-level education to a substantial proportion of its population.

Figure 4.13: CAPE/ post-secondary education qualifications by age group**Notes:**

1. Excludes around 5 per cent of students who are currently studying, over half of whom are in the 20–24-year age group.
2. Lower values for 20–24-year-olds result from a significant proportion of this age group not having completed their education yet.

Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

The data on educational attainment further corroborate that the previously observed differential in male and female educational performance is a long-standing trend. For all age groups, females are more likely to have obtained CAPE/ post-secondary education qualifications. In 2016, 57 per cent of those who had a CAPE/ post-secondary education qualification were female (Figure 4.14). The disparity is greatest for those with degrees, where two thirds are female. Females are also more likely to have diplomas, certificates, associate degrees or non-degree qualifications but the differential is much reduced, with 55 per cent of these qualifications held by females. In contrast, males are more likely to have City and Guilds⁴⁵/CAPE as their highest level of educational attainment.

Figure 4.14: Female proportions of highest CAPE/ post-secondary education qualifications, 20–49 years, 2016

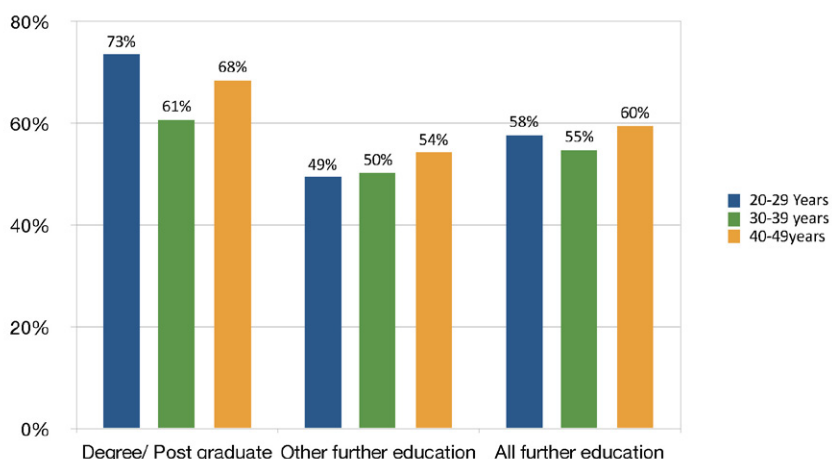
Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

⁴⁵ Vocational/ technical qualifications and apprenticeships.

Furthermore, over the last 25 years, there has been a trend of females increasing their proportion of degree-level qualifications. For the 20–29-year-olds, 73 per cent of degrees had been awarded to females, compared with 68 per cent for 40–49-year-olds (Figure 4.15).

For non-degree qualifications, the reverse appears to be the case with the female proportion decreasing to just below 50 per cent, indicating that male enrolment over the years has increased faster than it has for females. As non-degree qualifications account for the majority of CAPE/ post-secondary education qualifications, the overall proportion of females with CAPE/ post-secondary education qualifications has also decreased slightly, although it still approaches 60 per cent. What is, however, certain is that females continue to dominate degree-level education – which provides access to the highest-skilled jobs – and there is little sign that this long-standing trend is changing.

Figure 4.15: Female proportions of CAPE/ post-secondary education qualifications by age group, 2016



Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Access to computers, internet and mass media

Access to computers, internet and mass media is an essential component of modern life. In addition to providing information on the world at large, these means of communication can facilitate learning for schoolwork, act as sources of information on topics such as HIV/AIDS, puberty, sexual behaviour and violence prevention, and provide a means of establishing and maintaining social contacts. Table 4.5 presents information on females’ access to computers, internet and mass media and gives rise to the following conclusions:

- Almost two thirds of 15–24-year-old females read a newspaper, watched television or listened to the radio at least once a week. The proportion is lower than for all 15–49-year-olds, reflecting the fact that the younger generation is more attuned to satisfying their information needs through computers and the internet.
- Usage of computers and the internet is high for 15–24-year-olds, at around 80 per cent.
- There is little variation in usage between the 15–19 and 20–24 age groups in terms of any of these indicators.

Table 4.5: Access to computers, the internet and mass media

Age group (women only)	Mass media ¹	Computer	Internet
	% using at least once per week	% using at least once per week in last month	
15–19	61.5%	77.0%	85.6%
20–24	68.2%	78.2%	82.4%
15–24	64.8%	77.6%	84.0%
15–49	73.7%	NA	NA

1. Newspapers, radio, TV.

Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b.

The high levels of access to modern media are confirmed by the BSLC which shows that: (i) over 90 per cent of households have at least one mobile phone, with 30 per cent having 3 or more; and (ii) over 60 per cent of households have a computer.

Key findings and implications

Primary and secondary school attendance in Barbados is almost universal and has been for many years. In consequence, virtually all young people, boys and girls, aged between 10 and 16 years attend school. High primary and secondary enrolment rates for both sexes allied to a basic literacy level approaching 100 per cent are laudable achievements.

Examination results for the BSSEE (taken in the final year of primary school) show improvements in performance in English since 2000 and, since 2015, over 85 per cent of students have achieved a satisfactory score. Performance in BSSEE mathematics has consistently been lower than that for English – in 2018. Around a quarter of students will enter secondary school without the requisite numeracy skills to make the most of their secondary education. Females have consistently had higher passing rates than males in both subjects, although the differential in English exhibits a clear downward trend.

CSEC examinations are taken at the end of secondary school. The proportions of candidates sitting English A and mathematics have changed little over the last 20 years with around two thirds of candidates sitting English A and just under a half sitting mathematics. In 2019, the respective pass rates (grades I–III) for English A and mathematics were 84 and 54 per cent. Mathematics passing rates are always 15–20 percentage points lower than for English A. Overall, in 2019, the proportions of all candidates achieving passes at English A and mathematics were 54 and 27 per cent, respectively.

Gender variations in CSEC passing rates are relatively minor. There is, however, a pronounced, and long-standing, gender differential in terms of sitting rates which means that more females are taking, and thus passing, CSEC examinations.

In 2016, around 11,000 young persons (15–24 years) were enrolled on CAPE/ post-secondary education courses, representing an overall enrolment rate of around 28 per cent. Forty-nine per cent of CAPE/ post-secondary education students were studying for degrees, 28 per cent for CAPE examinations and the remainder, 22 per cent, were enrolled on TVET courses or other forms of post-secondary education. Around half of 17–19-year-olds and a quarter of 20–24-year-olds are enrolled on CAPE/ post-secondary education courses. Enrolment in TVET courses has changed little since 2000 but there have been sharp decreases in enrolment at BCC and UWI in the last 3–4 years which, in UWI's case, likely reflects the Government's introduction of full tuition fees for Barbadian students.

As with other features of the education system, CAPE/ post-secondary education enrolment is dominated by females, who account for 60 per cent of total enrolment. The differential is especially marked for tertiary education where females account for two thirds of students. The equivalent proportion for CAPE exams is 60 per cent and although pass rates are similar for both sexes, more girls will be achieving this level of education. Participation in SJPI/ TVET courses is, however, male-dominated with females accounting for under 40 per cent of enrolment. There is a clear association between CAPE/ post-secondary education enrolment and poverty in that young people from poor households are less likely than those from non-poor households to pursue their education after the CSEC examinations.

Over the years, the education system in Barbados has created an increasingly highly skilled population. Almost half the population aged between 25 and 29 years has obtained a CAPE/ post-secondary education qualification compared to around 40 per cent for older age groups. Also apparent is that the previously observed differential in male and female educational performance is a long-standing trend with more females of all ages up to 49 years having obtained a CAPE/ post-secondary education qualification. Furthermore, the gender disparity in respect of tertiary education is increasing, as almost 80 per cent of degrees achieved by 20–24-year-olds were by females compared to 68 per cent for those aged 45–49 years.

In summary, the foregoing analysis has identified both positives and negatives in the performance of the Barbados education system. The positives relate to: (i) almost universal attendance at primary and secondary school levels; (ii) a high performance rate in BSSEE English, and a significant, recent, improvement in mathematics; (iii) pass rates in CSEC English A exceeding 70 per cent since 2013; (iv) similar CSEC and CAPE examination results for males and females; (v) enrolment rates of almost 50 and 25 per cent on CAPE/ post-secondary education courses for 17–19 and 20–24-year-olds respectively; and (vi) a long-term increase in the proportion of the population achieving CAPE/ post-secondary education qualifications, indicating a progressive up-skilling of the Barbadian workforce.

These successes are, however, counterbalanced by the following concerns: (i) the inferior performance of boys at BSSEE, notwithstanding a gradual improvement in English; (ii) low CSEC mathematics sitting and passing rates (around 45–55 per cent) which together mean that less than 30 per cent of CSEC candidates achieve a mathematics pass; (iii) the gender imbalance whereby more girls than boys are sitting CSEC and are enrolled for CAPE examinations and degree courses; (iv) the long-standing nature of these imbalances, which shows little sign of decreasing; (v) the negative association between poverty and educational attainment; and (vi) recent decreases in enrolments for BCC and UWI degree courses.

Unless these trends are reversed, fewer students will progress to further their post-secondary education and acquire the skills needed to access higher-level jobs. More boys than girls will not continue their education and will therefore tend to be limited to lower-skilled occupations and be at greater risk of unemployment. The progressive up-skilling of the Barbados population which has taken place over many years could be curtailed, resulting in negative impacts on the ability of young people to achieve their full potential, and on future national social and economic development.



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5

Every young person participates⁴⁶

⁴⁶ 'Participation' in this study is used in relation to the labour market (active/ inactive) and not in terms of the wider definition used in Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). No information on participation in youth groups, youth service and statutory boards was available for this study.

Between the ages of 15 and 24, most young people will complete their education and enter the work environment. If this transition is not straightforward – i.e., adolescents complete their schooling but cannot obtain employment – their well-being can be affected: self-esteem and mental health can suffer, they may become involved with antisocial behaviour, and it can impose financial strains on their family. These risks increase if the time taken to obtain gainful employment extends to months or even years. The converse is equally true: if young people successfully gain employment soon after completing their education, their life chances in most cases will be improved. No study of young people can therefore be complete without a consideration of their economic participation status and employment situation. Key indicators are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Economic activity indicators

Indicator	Definition
Working age population	Population 15 years and over.
Labour force (active population)	Employed and unemployed persons (defined as those not in employment and seeking work) 15 years and over.
Inactive population	Working age population minus labour force.
Labour force participation rate (LFPR)	Labour force as percentage of working age population as a whole or for specific age sex groups.
Unemployment rate	Unemployed population as percentage of labour force.
Persons not in employment, education or training (NEET)	Persons not working, studying or training as percentage of working age population.

Economic activity status

Economic activity status of male and female adolescents and young adults is shown in Table 5.2.⁴⁷ The principal findings are:

- Just under half (47 per cent) of youth were studying, 31 per cent were working, 16 per cent were unemployed and 7 per cent were inactive due to reasons such as sickness, disability or household duties (including childcare).
- There are very pronounced differences in the economic status of older adolescents (15–19 years) and young adults (20–24 years).
- Over 70 per cent of older adolescents were studying at either secondary or CAPE/ post-secondary education levels compared to just over 20 per cent⁴⁸ of young adults. This reflects the fact that all secondary education and many CAPE/ post-secondary education courses will have been completed by age 20. In contrast, over half of young adults were working compared to little over 10 per cent of older adolescents.
- Variations in the proportions of those employed are also marked: young adults are much more likely to be employed than older adolescents: 51 per cent compared to 12 per cent.
- Females are more likely to be out of the labour force than males – 56 per cent compared to 52 per cent.

⁴⁷ This table and the following figure use the 2016 BSLC data as the Labour Force Survey data do not provide age-disaggregated information on the population currently in education.

⁴⁸ Slightly lower than presented in previous section as those in part-time education and employed have been classified as employed.

This ensues from the higher proportions of females in education and 'other' (which includes household and childcare activities). This variation is more pronounced for the younger age group.

- Also notable is that females are less likely to be unemployed than males – 11 per cent of them are unemployed, which is almost half the corresponding figure for males, 20 per cent. This is largely explained by the abovementioned variations in labour market participation. The variation is greater for young adults, where the male unemployment rate is double that of females.

Table 5.2: Economic activity status of youth, 2016

Age Group	Sex	Labour force (active)			Not in labour force – NILF (inactive)			Working age population
		Employed	Unemployed	Labour force	Education*	Other**	NILF	
15–19 years	Male	13.0%	16.1%	29.1%	66.9%	4.0%	70.9%	100.0%
	Female	10.3%	9.6%	19.9%	74.6%	5.5%	80.1%	100.0%
	Both sexes	11.8%	13.0%	24.8%	70.5%	4.7%	75.2%	100.0%
20–24 years	Male	48.2%	24.8%	73.0%	18.2%	8.8%	27.0%	100.0%
	Female	54.0%	12.5%	66.5%	21.9%	11.6%	33.5%	100.0%
	Both sexes	51.3%	18.1%	69.5%	20.2%	10.3%	30.5%	100.0%
15–24 years	Male	28.3%	19.9%	48.2%	45.7%	6.1%	51.8%	100.0%
	Female	32.8%	11.1%	43.9%	47.5%	8.6%	56.1%	100.0%
	Both sexes	30.6%	15.5%	46.0%	46.6%	7.4%	54.0%	100.0%

* SDG indicator 4.3.1.

** Sick, disabled or household duties.

Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

The relationship between labour force participation and education is shown more clearly in Figure 5.1, which distinguishes between those working or in education, and those who are unemployed or at home due to other reasons. This latter category is termed the NEETs: those not in education, employment or training.⁴⁹ NEETs can be seen as the group most likely to be susceptible to threats to their well-being, as they are neither gainfully employed nor studying.

Twenty-three per cent of 15–24-year-olds fall into the NEET category, two thirds of whom are unemployed.

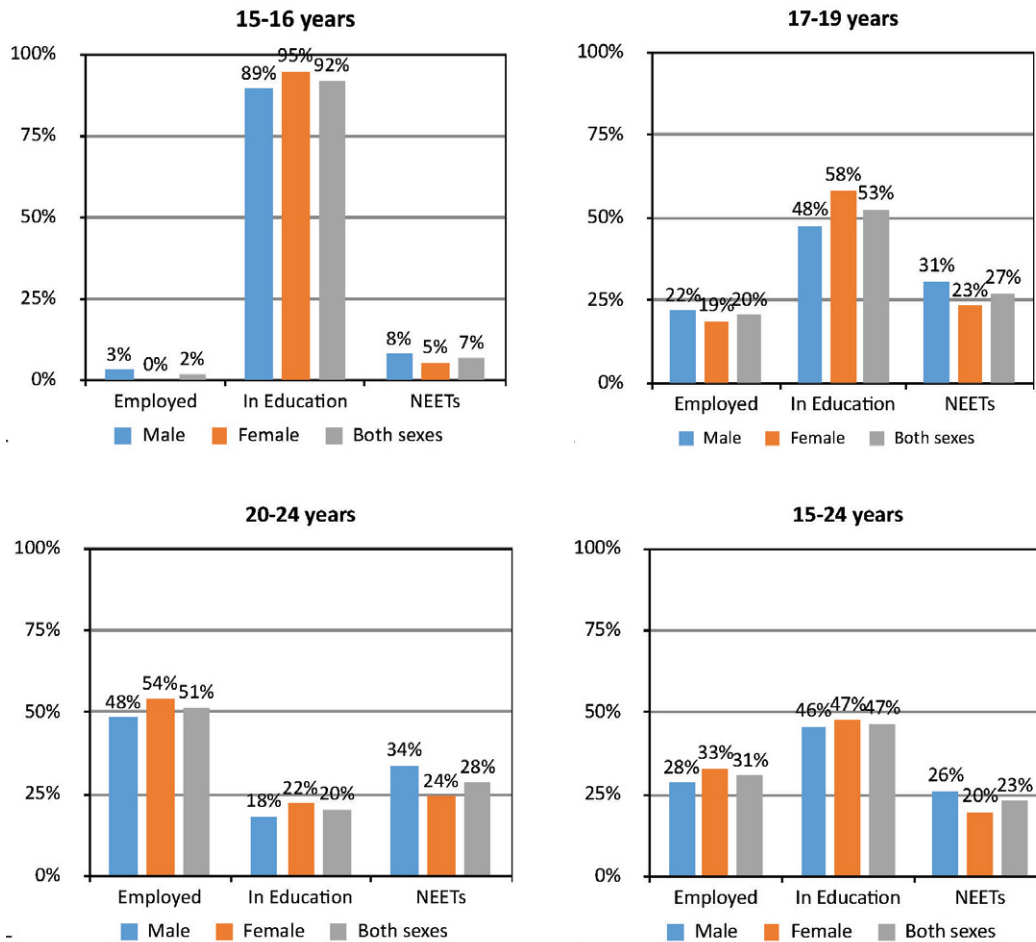
The proportions of NEETs vary markedly by age group, as do those who are studying or working. Almost all 15–16-year-olds are in education and, in consequence, under 10 per cent are NEETs and very few are employed. Over half of 17–19-year-olds are also in education, studying for either CAPE examinations or tertiary qualifications,⁵⁰ a fifth are employed and just over a quarter, 27 per cent, are NEETs. By the time they become young adults, half are employed, just under a third are NEETs, and the proportion in education has reduced to around 20 per cent. These variations reflect the transition of youth from being schoolchildren to adulthood and entry into the labour market.

49 SDG indicator 8.6.1.

50 There will also be a few over-age secondary school students in forms 4 and 5.

Female proportions of NEETs are always lower than those for males, reflecting both a higher propensity for women to continue their education, and interestingly, greater success in securing employment once they emerge into adulthood.

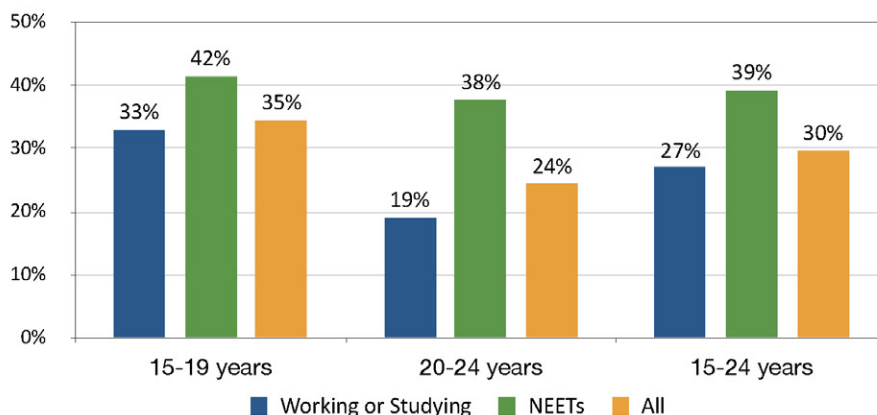
Figure 5.1: Economic activity status of youth by age and gender, 2016



NB. Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

NEETs are more likely to be poor than those who are studying or working: 39 per cent compared with 27 per cent. The difference is particularly marked for the 20–24-year age group (Figure 5.2) where the NEET poverty rate is around double that for those who are studying or working. However, it is important to note that the majority of young people will not be poor irrespective of their activity status.

Figure 5.2: Poverty rates by activity status and age group

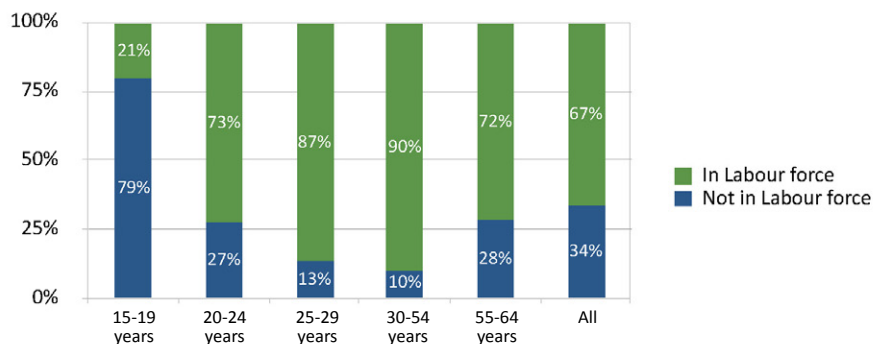


NB. Percentages shown are poverty rates.
Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Labour force participation

Figure 5.3 shows the variation in labour force participation rates (LFPR) by age.⁵¹ The results further underline the transitional nature of the period from 15 to 24 years. Older adolescents (15–19 years) have a low LFPR as the majority are studying. By the time they become young adults (20–24 years), the LFPR has increased to over 70 per cent as most have completed their education. By their late 20s, the participation rate has risen to 87 per cent, which is close to that achieved by the older working age population (90 per cent). This level is maintained until people start retiring from their mid-50s onwards.

Figure 5.3: Labour force participation rates by age, 2016



NB. Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
Source: ILO/LFS 2016.

51 This and subsequent tables and figures, use data from the Barbados Labour Force Survey. The data have been extracted from the ILO database as the published information does not provide information separately for the 15-19 and 20-24-year age groups.

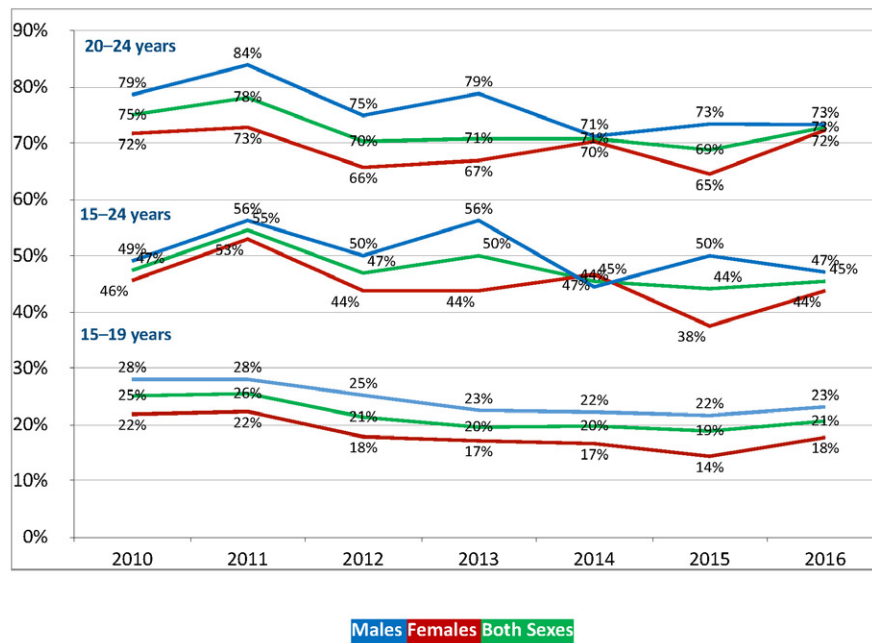
Participation rates in a single year give only a partial picture as they do not reveal the trends – are the rates increasing or decreasing? These trends are presented Figure 5.4 for the relevant age groups disaggregated by sex. Between 2010 and 2016, as expected, young adult participation rates were around three times higher than for older adolescents. Also evident is that, for the reasons given previously,⁵² female rates always tend to be lower than those of males.

The trend for the younger age group is clear: a steady and gradual decrease from 25 per cent in 2010 to 21 per cent in 2016, with similar decreases for males and females, indicating in both cases an increasing likelihood of them remaining in education for longer. The male–female differential, at 5 percentage points, has changed little during this period.

The LFPR for young adults (20–24 years) also decreased between 2010 and 2016; however the change is small, from 75 to 73 per cent. Male LFPR decreased consistently from 79 to 73 per cent while the equivalent female rate, despite some fluctuations, changed little. A reason for the observed fluctuations could be changes in the overall supply of employment opportunities.

During 2010–2016, the overall LFPR for 15–24-year-olds, which is dominated by that for 20–24-year-olds due to the much higher proportion of this group being in the labour force, decreased slightly from 47 per cent to 45 per cent. However, fluctuations in intervening years make it difficult to determine a long-term trend.

Figure 5.4: Adolescents and young adults LFPRs, 2010–2016



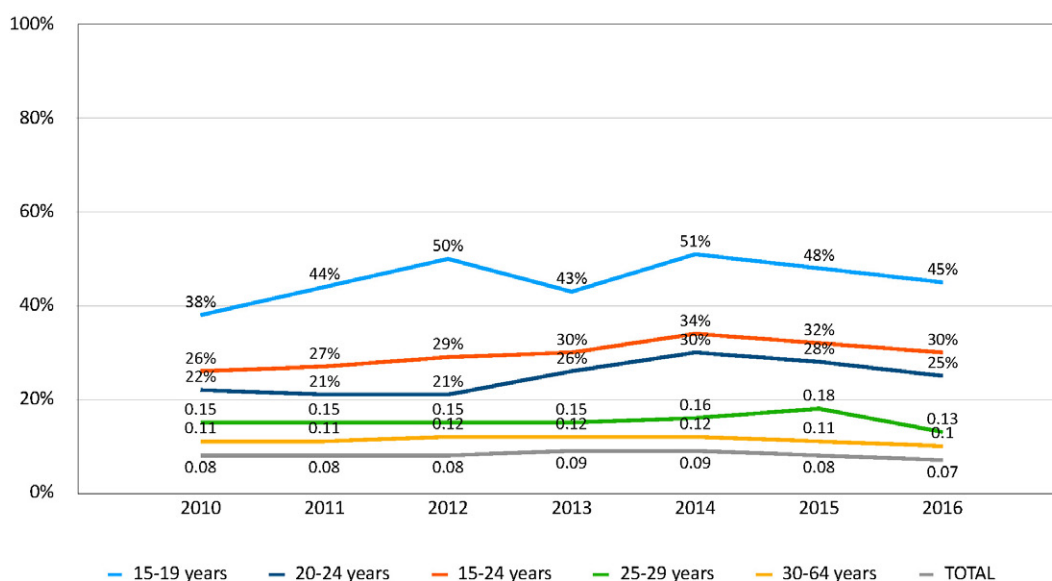
Source: ILO/LFS 2010–2016.

⁵² An additional explanation for females is that the lack of job opportunities can lead to women describing themselves as inactive, i.e. outside the labour force, rather than unemployed.

Youth unemployment

Youth unemployment, where young people are looking for work but not finding it, is a great concern. In 2016, there were around 5,000 unemployed persons in the 15 to 24-year age group in Barbados. The youth unemployment rate was 30 per cent – three times the national rate of 10 per cent, and six times the rate for older adults, 7 per cent (Figure 5.5). The unemployment rate for the 15–19 age group was 45 per cent – four and a half times the national rate; while that for young adults was 25 per cent – two and half times the national average. These high rates of youth unemployment are not unexpected as new, young and inexperienced job seekers often have difficulty accessing their first jobs, especially if opportunities are in short supply due to the general economic situation.

Figure 5.5: Youth unemployment, 2010 to 2016



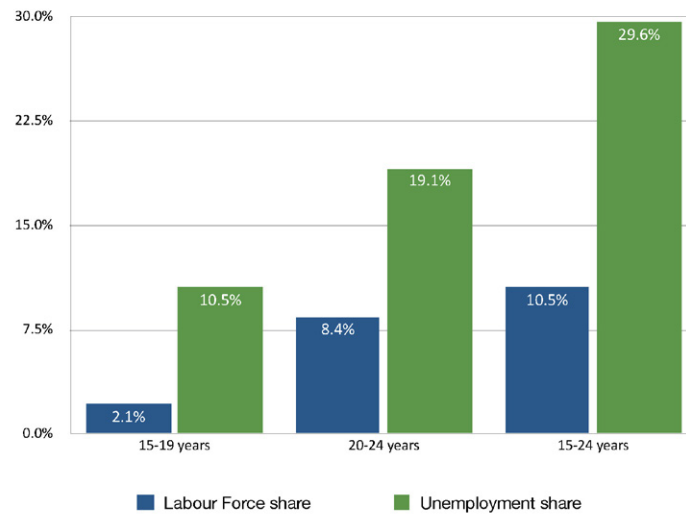
Notes:

1. SDG Indicator 8.5.2 relates to youth unemployment.

2. Data for 2011 and 2012 for age groups were missing hence used some BSS data and interpolations.

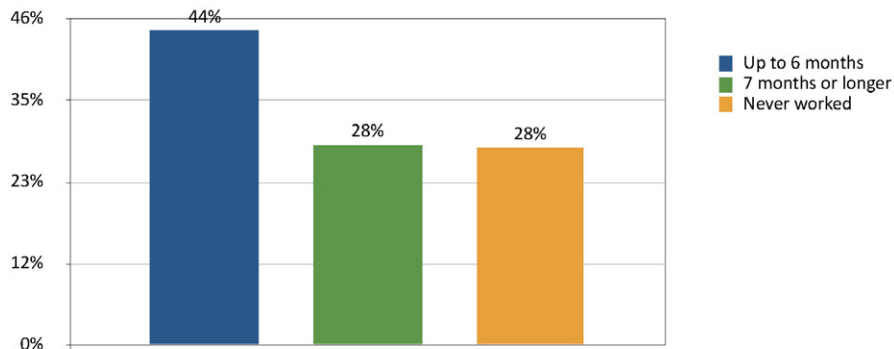
Source: ILOStat, various years (uses Barbados LFS data).

The results presented in the Figure 5.5 should not be seen as entirely negative. Firstly, while unemployment for all age groups increased between 2010 and 2014, it has since decreased, again for all age groups, and by around 5 percentage points for the younger age groups (under 30 years). Secondly, the fact that unemployment rates for 25–29-year-olds are generally around half those of youth implies that, for many, unemployment will be an essentially transient phase. Corroboration for this conclusion is that while 38 per cent of 15–19-year-olds were unemployed in 2010, this cohort’s unemployment rate had reduced to 28 per cent in 2015 when they were five years older. Similarly, the unemployment rate for young adults in 2010 had decreased from 22 per cent in 2010 to 18 per cent in 2015. Furthermore, unemployment amongst the over-30s is much lower than for 25–29-year-olds.

Figure 5.6: Youth: Labour force and unemployment shares, 2016

Source: ILO/LFS 2016.

These positives are not, however, enough to outweigh concerns about the level of youth unemployment. Firstly, unemployment rates for 15–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds, despite the recent decline, were both higher in 2016 than they were in 2010. Secondly, due to their much higher unemployment rate, the youth population accounts for a disproportionate share of total unemployment, almost 30 per cent, despite comprising little more than 10 per cent of the labour force (Figure 5.6). This pattern had changed little since 2010. In other words, nearly one in three unemployed Barbadians are under the age of 25 years. With similar patterns found around the world, it is not surprising that youth unemployment is a major policy issue for many governments.

Figure 5.7: Duration of youth unemployment

NB: figures are percentage of unemployed youth.

Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Also important in this context is the duration of unemployment. Periods of unemployment will frequently occur between the completion of education and entry into the labour market and when changing jobs. If these periods are short-lived, the effect is unlikely to be significant; if they are prolonged, the impact can be severe. In 2016, 56 per cent of unemployed youth had never worked or had been unemployed for over 6 months (Figure 5.6). Further analysis revealed that almost half of unemployed 15–19-year-olds had never worked, indicating the difficulties encountered by school leavers in gaining employment. In contrast around 90 per cent of unemployed 20–24-year-olds had previously worked.

Notwithstanding some atypical results, gender differentials in youth unemployment rates are generally small with those for females tending to be around four percentage points higher than those for males (Table 5.3). These differentials largely disappear for older age groups. The implication is that gender differentials associated to the labour market are more related to labour force participation than to unemployment.

Table 5.3: Youth unemployment – gender differentials, 2010–2016

Age group	Sex	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
15–24 years	Male	27%	24%	26%	28%	30%	32%	28%
	Female	25%	31%	32%	32%	39%	33%	32%
	Diff (F-M)	-2%	7%	6%	4%	9%	1%	4%
25+ years	Male	9%	8%	9%	10%	10%	10%	7%
	Female	9%	10%	10%	9%	10%	8%	8%
	Diff (F-M)	0%	2%	1%	0%	0%	-2%	1%

Note: SDG Indicator 8.5.2.

Source: ILO/ LFS, various years.

Selected characteristics of the unemployed youth are presented in Table 5.4, which shows that: (i) they are more likely to be in the 20–24-year age group; (ii) almost two thirds are male⁵³; (iii) over a third are from poor households; (iv) three quarters live in female-headed households; and (v) 70 per cent have no post-secondary qualifications. The table also shows that relative to the overall youth population, the most pronounced variations in the characteristics of unemployed youth relate to sex of the head of household, education level, and their sex.

⁵³ The gender variation is greater than that shown by the unemployment rates (Table 5.3) as it takes into account the lower female participation rate.

Table 5.4: Characteristics of unemployed youth

Age Group	Unemployed	All
15–19 years	44%	52%
20–24 years	56%	48%
Total	100%	100%
Sex	Unemployed	All
Male	64%	50%
Female	36%	50%
Total	100%	100%
Poverty Status	Unemployed	All
Poor	36%	31%
Not Poor	64%	69%
Total	100%	100%
Sex HoH	Unemployed	All
Male	23%	39%
Female	77%	61%
Total	100%	100%
Highest level of education completed	Unemployed	All
Secondary	71%	61%
TVET/ Tertiary	29%	39%
Total	100%	100%

Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Child labour (10–14 years)

Young adolescents can be routinely engaged in paid and unpaid forms of work that are not harmful to them. However, those who work excessive hours or in hazardous conditions are unlikely to be able to complete their education, severely curtailing their ability to engage in productive economic opportunities in adulthood, and thus may face risks to their physical, mental or social development. While the prevalence of child labour globally is steadily falling, most of this reduction is among younger children who are increasingly attending primary school. For those who must work, it is essential to combine schooling and work. Otherwise, adolescents will enter the workforce ill-prepared for jobs that ensure a decent standard of living.

The incidence of child labour for children under 14 years, available from the 2012 MICS, is extremely low in Barbados at no more than 2.3 per cent (Table 5.5). Almost all these children attend school and there is little in the way of gender variation. 2016 BSLC data, which uses a different methodology, suggests a higher level of child labour with around 7 per cent of 10–14-year-olds having undertaken paid or unpaid work in the previous 30 days. There is no indication of hours worked and hence it represents a looser definition of child labour than do the MICS criteria.

Significant proportions of children contribute to the running of the household through household chores: 41 per cent of 5–11-year-olds and 54 per cent of the 12–14-year-olds. These proportions tend to be slightly higher for girls. However, the level of effort is less than 28 hours per week and therefore does not constitute child labour.

Table 5.5: Child labour

Age/ school group	Definitions of child labour (per week)	Involved in child labour ¹		
		M	F	All
5–11 years (primary school age)	At least one hour of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work per week.	3.1%	2.9%	3.0%
12–14 years (secondary school age)	At least 14 hours of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work.	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%
All (5–14 years)	-	2.5%	2.1%	2.3%

1. SDG indicator 8.7.1.

Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b.

Key findings and implications

Around three quarters of 15–24-year-olds are either working or studying while the remainder are defined as NEETs. Proportions in education and employment vary markedly between the two age groups older adolescents and young adults. Seventy per cent of older adolescents are students (either completing the final two years of secondary school or pursuing CAPE/ post-secondary education) while 12 per cent are employed. In contrast, over half of young adults are employed and a fifth are continuing their education. Females are more likely to be in education than males.

Those not in employment, education or training (the NEETs) are particularly susceptible to risk factors that can affect their future well-being. Around a quarter of the 15–24-year age group are NEETs (unemployed, engaged in home duties, including childcare, sick or disabled). Most NEETs are in the 17–24-year age group as almost all 15–16-year-olds are still completing secondary school. Due to the differential in educational attendance, males are more likely to be NEETs than females: 26 compared to 20 per cent. The gender differential is highest for young adults, where the respective male and female proportions of NEETs are 34 and 24 per cent. The poverty rate amongst NEETs, 39 per cent, is substantially higher than for young people who are working or studying, at 27 per cent.

Due to the high level of adolescents in education, the overall LFPR for 15–19-year-olds is low with only around one in five either working or seeking work. Unsurprisingly, labour force participation is much higher for young adults, over 70 per cent of whom have entered the labour market. While there has been little change in the overall participation rate for 15–24-year-olds since 2010, there has been a small, but steady, decrease for 15–19-year-olds. This applies to both sexes, indicating that higher proportions of both are engaged in CAPE/ post-secondary education than previously. For both age groups, female participation rates in the labour force are lower than those for males.

In 2016, the overall youth unemployment rate was 30 per cent compared to the national rate of 10 per cent. After peaking in 2013, youth unemployment rates have since decreased, as they did for all age groups. Unemployment rates tend to reduce sharply with age – from 45 per cent for 15–19-year-olds, to 25 per cent for young adults, 13 per cent for 25–29-year-olds and to less than 10 per cent for older age groups. This implies that for many 15–19-year-olds unemployment will be a transient phase. Youth unemployment gender differentials are generally small, implying that male–female differences in relation to the labour market are related more to labour force participation than to unemployment.

Nevertheless, youth unemployment among young people remains a major concern, as it does in many countries. In 2016, unemployed youth accounted for little more than 10 per cent of the labour force but around a third of total unemployment. Unemployment, especially if prolonged, can result in financial stress for themselves and their families and lead to a variety of antisocial behaviours. In 2016, around 30 per cent of unemployed adolescents had been without a job for more than six months and 28 per cent had never worked. The implication is that if they are unsuccessful in obtaining a job in less than six months, many adolescents can become trapped in long-term unemployment.

Youth unemployment is primarily determined by the demand for labour. Where an economy is struggling, as the Barbados economy has done for much of the last 10 years,⁵⁴ young people with no previous job experience have to compete with a large number of older, more experienced job seekers. In consequence, measures to reduce youth unemployment will largely depend on the success of actions taken to reinvigorate the national economy. Yet even where an economy is growing, the level of youth unemployment will also be dependent on the ability of school leavers and unemployed youth to fill available job opportunities. In this context, measures to improve the skills of school leavers, promote CAPE/ post-secondary education and strengthen programmes targeted at unemployed youth are all crucial components of a comprehensive strategy to reduce youth unemployment.

The level of child labour in Barbados is very low, around 3 per cent for those under 12 years old and virtually non-existent for young adolescents (12–14 years old). No child in either group does work that surpasses the child labour criterion of more than 28 hours per week involvement in domestic chores. Furthermore, all children involved in child labour are attending school.

54 World Bank, 'GDP, PPP (constant 2017 international \$) – Barbados', 2019 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.PP.KD?locations=BB>



6

Every young person thrives

Health and well-being during adolescence and young adulthood lay the foundation for health trajectories across the life course and are a necessary precondition for children to successfully transition into adolescence and then adulthood. Yet, these stages in the life cycle often mark the first manifestations of issues, such as unsafe sexual behaviour, early childbearing, substance misuse and criminality. All these can prevent young people from thriving and can have a long-lasting negative impact on their well-being. Susceptibility to these threats can be exacerbated by factors such as family breakdown, poverty and unemployment. At the same time, adolescence is the best time for interventions that promote improved lifelong health and well-being, such as measures to improve sexual awareness, increase the availability and use of contraception, and early screening for mental health and depression,⁵⁵ as well as reduce the likelihood of substance abuse and antisocial behaviour. This chapter synthesizes the findings from available information on these topics.

Living arrangements of young people

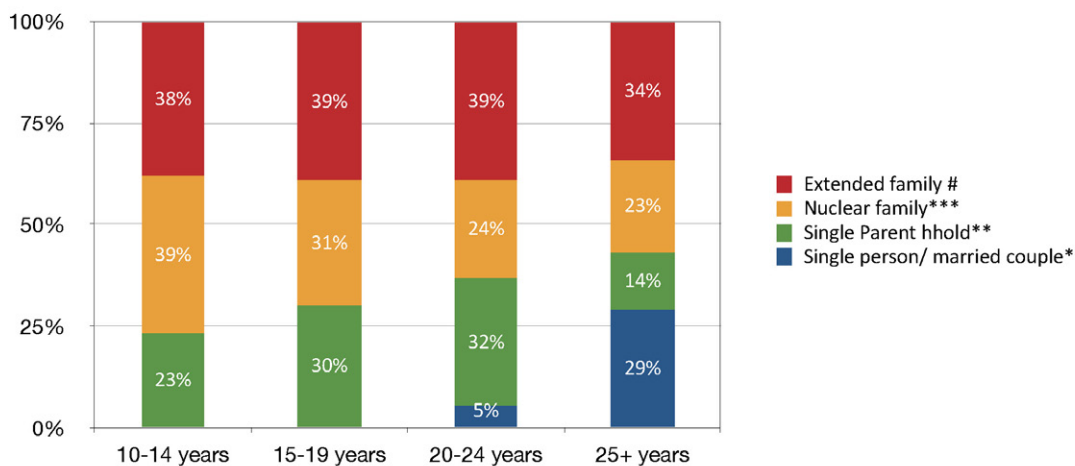
For both psychological and financial reasons, family breakdown and premature parental deaths can have a severe impact on young people's future life chances. Quite apart from the potential detrimental impact of family breakdown on young people's lives prior to the actual departure of a parent, nearly always the father, the absence of a father can have major negative consequences for children, both girls and boys. Available literature indicates that "children from fatherless homes are more likely to be poor, become involved in drug and alcohol abuse, drop out of school, and suffer from health and emotional problems. Boys are more likely to become involved in crime, and girls are more likely to become pregnant as teens."⁵⁶ Understanding the living arrangements of adolescents and young adults provides necessary information to guide policymakers and practitioners tasked with countering the adverse impacts of family breakdown and deceased parents.

Figure 6.1 shows the distribution of population (10 years and over) by the type of household that they are living in. Just under 40 per cent of adolescents and young adults are resident in extended families, i.e. with grandparents and other relatives. This proportion is little different from older age groups. On the other hand, as one would expect, few adolescents and young adults are living on their own or as married couples. The more significant variations are: (i) lower proportions of young adolescents living with a single parent relative to older age groups – 23 per cent for 10–14-year-olds and just over 30 per cent for 15–24-year-olds, implying that some relationships break down with time as children pass into adolescence; and (ii) concomitant decreases in the proportions living in nuclear families – declining from 38 per cent for young adolescents to 24 per cent for young adults. These opposing trends, which are both marked, imply a significant degree of relationship breakdown, as neither is 'compensated' by the increase in the proportion living on their own or with their spouse/ partner. In contrast, the proportion living in extended families changes little between age groups.

55 Adolescent mental health is an increasingly important issue in the United Kingdom for example; see National Health Service, 'Many Teenagers Reporting Symptoms of Depression', 2017. It is also explicitly referred to in SDG target 3.7.

56 National Center for Fathering, 'The Consequences of Fatherlessness', 2018 <<http://www.fathers.com/statistics-and-research/the-consequences-of-fatherlessness/>>.

Figure 6.1: Type of household by age, 2016



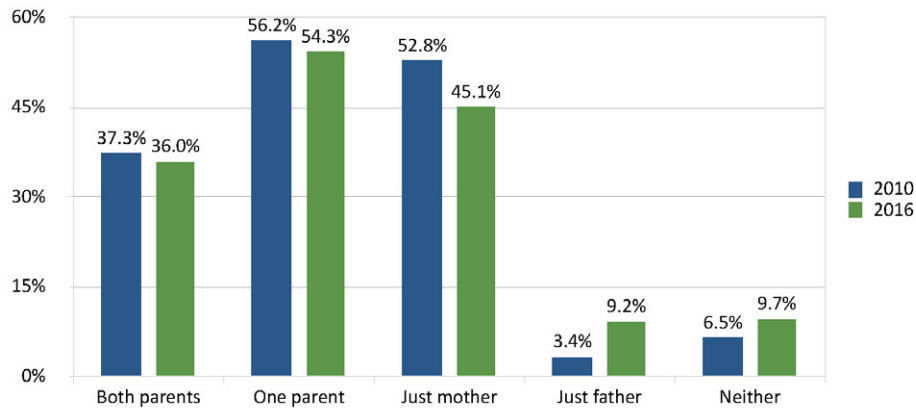
* Married couple includes those in a union or visiting relationship.
 ** 1 parent and their children only.
 *** 2 parents and their children only.
 # All other households, i.e. those including grandparents, in-laws, siblings, other relatives and non-relatives.
 NB. Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
 Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

The relationship between young people and the types of household in which they live only gives a partial picture of their living arrangements. More important is the presence of their parents in the household. Figure 6.2 shows that in 2016, 36 per cent of younger adolescents (10–14 years)⁵⁷ were living with both biological parents and 54 per cent were living with a single parent. Both proportions have decreased slightly since 2010 while the proportion living with neither parent⁵⁸ increased from 6.5 to almost 10 per cent. Over the same period, the proportion living with just their father increased from 3 to 9 per cent, with a similar decrease in those living with just their mother.

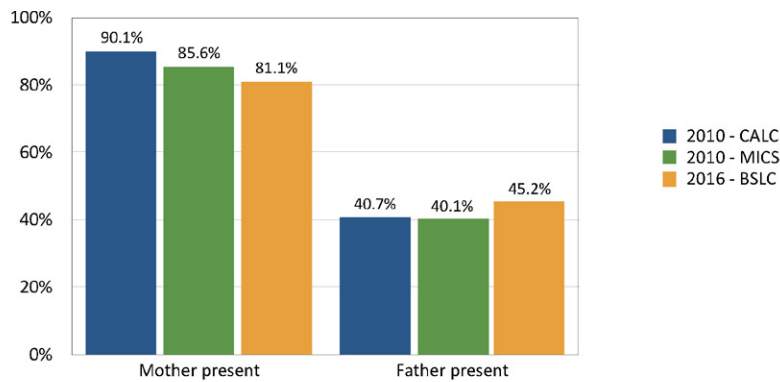
MICS data from 2012 give a slightly higher proportion of 10–14-year-olds living with a single parent: 63 per cent compared with 57 per cent from Country Assessment of Living Conditions (CALC) with concomitant lower proportions for those living with both parents or with neither parent. MICS data for older adolescents (15–17 years) show a broadly similar pattern to that for younger adolescents, albeit with a lower proportion of single-parent households (57 per cent). This source also showed that no more than 5.5 per cent of young adolescents had a deceased parent and virtually none had both parents deceased – there are consequently very few orphans in Barbados.

57 Data for older age groups are not available.

58 It is not possible to say what proportion of this group results from a consensual agreement between parents and other relatives, but the likelihood is that many will result from family breakdown.

Figure 6.2: Living arrangements of younger adolescents, 10–14 years, 2010 and 2016

Note: Just mother/just father categories are subsets of adolescents in one-parent households.
Sources: University of the West Indies, 2012; Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Figure 6.3: Parental presence, 10–14-year age group

Sources: University of the West Indies, 2012; Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b; Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Also important are the gender variations. CALC, BSLC and MICS all found that over 80 per cent of single-parent households are headed by women. As a result, there is a substantial imbalance in the proportions of adolescents living with mothers or fathers present (Figure 6.3). Irrespective of the data source, whereas between 80 and 90 per cent of 10–14-year-olds are living with their mother, under half are living with their father.

The situation can, however, be more nuanced. Family breakups do not always have deleterious consequences, especially if the relationship was abusive, single parents have a reliable source of income, and fathers support and maintain contact with their children. Similarly, new partners may accept and form good relationships with their stepchildren. As shown in Figure 6.2, single parenthood is not a new trend, making it easier for children to adapt to having single parents and for society to accommodate single parenthood. Last but not least, extended family households can strengthen family connectedness, which has been identified as a protective factor in reducing risky behaviours.⁵⁹

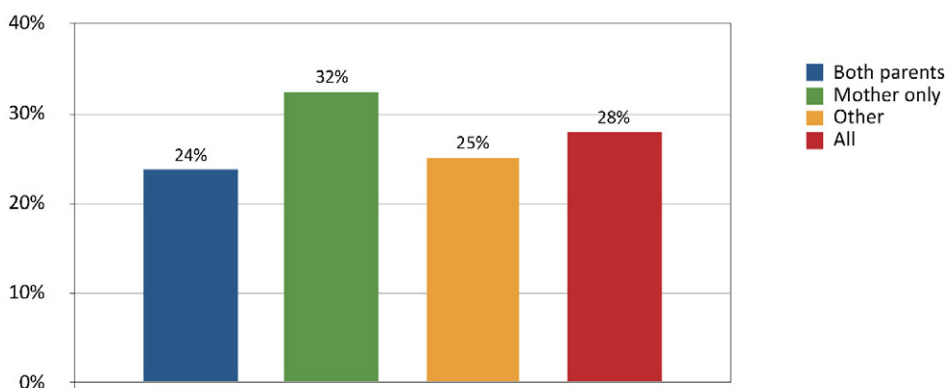
⁵⁹ See, for instance, Blum et al., 'Adolescent Health in the Caribbean: Risk and protective factors', *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 93, no. 3, 2003.

Notwithstanding some variation between the data sources, the fact remains that only around a third of younger adolescents are living with both parents. Around 60 per cent are living with a single parent, almost always the mother; under half are living with their father; and almost 30 per cent of 10–19-year-olds are living with just one parent (usually the mother). The high level of family breakups, resulting in single parenthood and fatherlessness, has the potential to negatively affect the future of a substantial proportion of adolescents and young adults in Barbados.

Poverty and living arrangements

Poverty rates vary depending on the parental presence in the household. Almost a third of the 10–14-year age group⁶⁰ who are living with just their mother are poor compared to around a quarter where either both parents are present, only the father is present or neither parent is present⁶¹ (Figure 6.4).

Figure 6.4: Poverty rates by parental presence, 10–14-year age group

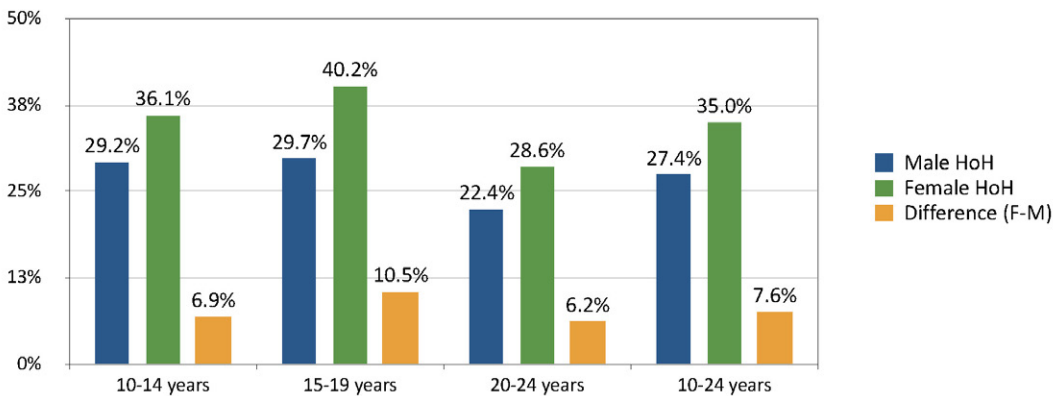


NB. Other includes 'just father' and 'neither parent'. These two categories have been grouped to provide a reasonable sample.
 Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

A similar pattern is observed when the analysis is undertaken by the sex of the head of household (Figure 6.5). For all age groups, poverty rates are around 7–10 percentage points higher in female-headed households than in those headed by men. The differential is greatest for older adolescents, possibly due to the greater costs associated with caring for older adolescents as opposed to younger children. Note that in the majority of cases, the mother will be present in male-headed households while the father will be absent in female-headed households.

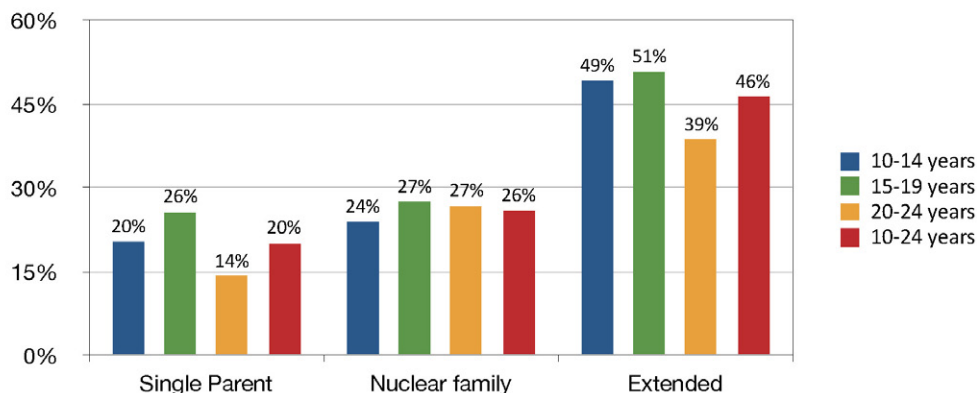
⁶⁰ Data are not available for other age groups.

⁶¹ The poverty rate for all, 28 per cent, is lower than that shown previously due to a small number of observations for which parental presence could not be determined, almost all of which are poor households.

Figure 6.5: Poverty rates by sex of the head of household, 10–24-year age groups

Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Figure 6.6 shows the association between poverty rates for young people living in different types of households. There are two important findings. Firstly, poverty rates for all age groups are much higher for those living in extended family households, where the majority are headed by women. This reflects a combination of a higher average household size and an increased number of dependents, young and old. The second important finding is the much lower poverty rate in single-parent (with only one adult present) households, which runs counter to perceived wisdom. It is not, however, implausible as operating a single-parent household requires a degree of financial independence. Single parents without financial security are, therefore, more likely to live with parents or other family members, or be compelled to remain in unsatisfactory relationships. But financial security does not necessarily lead to well-being with the pressures on the mother to generate income and housekeeping, making it difficult for her to give to the children, especially adolescents, the attention they need. This is essentially the reverse of the situation in extended families where the support from other family members can, to an extent, compensate for a straitened financial situation.

Figure 6.6: Poverty rates by household type, 10–24-year age groups

NB. A few single-person and married couple households have been excluded.

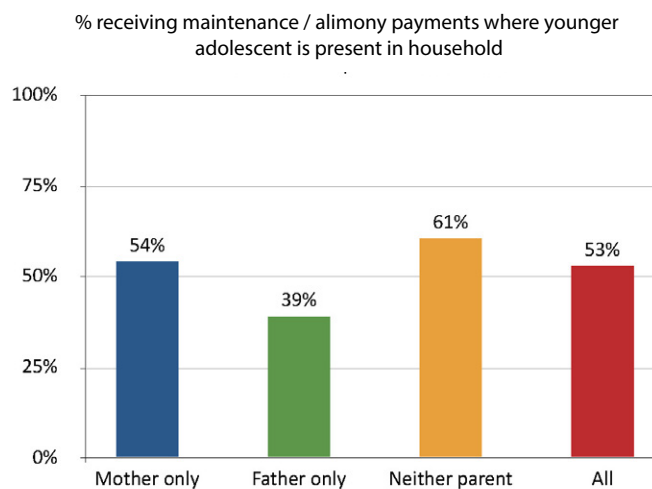
Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018

Role of fathers

The absence of fathers was highlighted in the preceding paragraphs. The issue then becomes what level of support is being provided by absent fathers. Support can be either financial or emotional. A previous UNICEF report concluded that “most fathers are involved with their children, emotionally if not financially, but many fathers fail to meet their financial obligations to children”.⁶²

In the context of financial support, BSLC data reveal relatively high levels of maintenance and alimony payments (Figure 6.7), with over half of single mothers with a child aged 10–14 years receiving this type of support. The proportion is similar for non-parental caregivers, and almost 40 per cent of singles father receive some support.⁶³ Although these results are higher than might have been expected, they still indicate that almost half of single parents and non-parental caregivers are not receiving this support. There is also no information on the adequacy of these payments relevant to the costs of bringing up younger adolescents.

Figure 6.7: Maintenance/ alimony support for 10–14-year age group by parental presence, 2016



Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Information on the emotional support provided by fathers in the upbringing of their children is limited and is mostly qualitative. In this context, the abovementioned report found that:

- “About 70 per cent of male adolescents and about 75 per cent of females said that they could talk to their fathers about their problems.”
- “Caribbean fathers are active in bathing, playing with and reasoning with their children and in helping with homework. Fathers also indicate that they feel they have an important responsibility to develop social values, moral principles, a sense of discipline and work, and an attitude of self-confidence in their children.”

62 UNICEF/ Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean / L. Blank, *A Situation Analysis of Children and Women in the Eastern Caribbean*, Barbados, 2007. Unless stated this information is not specific to Barbados.

63 These latter results are from low samples (25–30) and need to be treated with caution.

- “Focus group participants in several countries pointed to the fact that young fathers seem to be more involved with their children than was the case in the past.”
- “Social norms dealing with whether men need to take care of their children are mixed. For some men there is the expectation that they will be the breadwinners, even if they are unable to play that role. For others, child support seems to be discretionary.”
- “Legal systems to enforce child maintenance are weak and women are often reluctant to go to court... For example, in Barbados in 2004, 1,600 child support cases were filed, but only 250 agreements were reached. More than 90 per cent of claimants were women and 65 per cent were single. The compliance rate was 75 per cent.”
- “The data suggest the extent to which fathers are not fulfilling their responsibilities, but they also speak to the difficulties in resolving cases and in actually collecting support from fathers.”
- “Parenting education programmes attempt to reach fathers, but stakeholders note that fathers rarely attend.”

Note that this information does not distinguish between whether fathers are, or are not, living with their children, or the fathers’ ages. The latter point is important, as previous findings suggest that fathers are less likely to be present when children are older, i.e. when they are adolescents and subject to a variety of new pressures.

The two conclusions that emerge are that: (i) attitudes and behaviour of fathers vary considerably; and (ii) intent appears stronger than action. Arguably, the most positive finding is that younger fathers are more likely to be engaged with their children than older ones – a conclusion which is partly corroborated by the increase in single-parent male-headed households since 2010. Nonetheless, around half of fathers provide little in the way of financial or emotional support to their children.

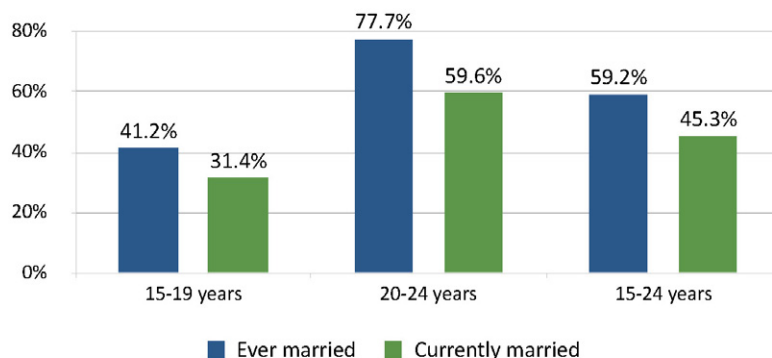
Early marriage

Adolescence is often the time when young people start to embark on emotional relationships with members of the opposite sex. These are not harmful in themselves, but girls who marry young, especially if they bear children, will often face a disrupted education thereby compromising their entry into the labour market as well as separation from family and friends and a lack of freedom to participate in community activities, resulting in numerous consequences for their mental and physical well-being.

In 2012, just under 60 per cent of 15–24-year-old girls had been married or in a union⁶⁴ (Figure 6.8). As one would expect, the equivalent proportion for 20–24-year-olds is much higher – 78 compared to 41 per cent for older adolescents. The proportions for those currently married are lower: around a quarter of both age groups were no longer in a relationship, indicating that the marriage/ union had terminated.

⁶⁴ Unless stated, ‘marriage’ includes unions (living together as if married) and visiting relationships.

Figure 6.8: Marital/ union status



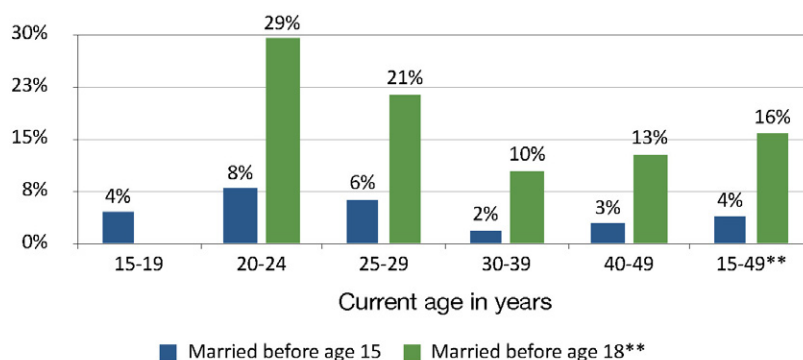
Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b.

Child marriage

The threats to well-being apply particularly in the case of child marriage – a fundamental violation of human rights. Child marriage also carries an increased risk of exploitation and sexual and physical abuse, potentially leading to a lifetime of disadvantage and deprivation. In Barbados in 2012, less than 5 per cent of current 15–19-year-olds had been married before the age of 15.⁶⁵ This is lower than the proportions for the 20–24 and 25–29-year groups but higher than for older age groups (Figure 6.9). The trend over the last 15 years therefore appears to be downward – a positive result indicating that marriage before age 15 is becoming less frequent.

This is not the case for those married before they were 18 (when they were legally children).⁶⁶ Almost a third of 20–24-year-olds were married or entered a union before they were 18 – almost half of all married women in this group. This is higher than the rates for all older age groups, thereby implying that the trend in this indicator is upward. On the other hand, the incidence of polygamous unions is negligible for younger women at less than one per cent.

Figure 6.9: Trends in early marriage by current age of mother



** Calculated as proportion of age group who were married/ in a union before they were 18.
Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b

65 SDG indicator 5.3.1.
66 SDG indicator 5.3.2.

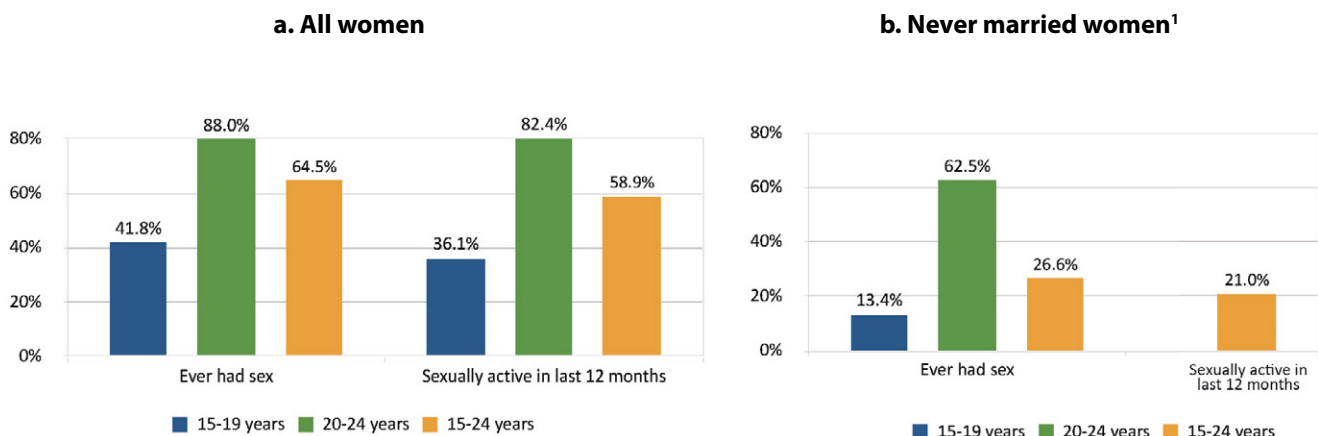
Sexual activity

Adolescence often marks the initiation of sexual activity. Like early marriage, the sexual activity is not harmful in itself, but its early onset can increase the likelihood of unintended early childbearing, which adolescents are inadequately prepared for, and can disrupt their education and have deleterious consequences for their mental health.

Figure 6.10a shows that, in Barbados in 2012, over 40 per cent of 15–19-year-old girls had ever had sex⁶⁷ and 36 per cent had been sexually active in the last 12 months. Unsurprisingly, among 20–24-year-olds, the percentages were much higher at 88 per cent and 82 per cent, respectively.

Sexual activity is predictably lower amongst never married young women, a quarter of whom had had sex with a fifth being sexually active (Figure 6.10b). The subgroup proportions are again very different, at 13 per cent for 15–19-year-olds and 63 per cent for 20–24-year-olds, implying that sexual activity outside marriage/ unions is a feature of young adulthood rather than adolescence.

Figure 6.10: Sexual activity and marital/ union status, 15–24-year-old women



1. Data for those sexually active are not available by age group.
Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b.

Teenage pregnancy and motherhood⁶⁸

Teenage pregnancy is a concern in all countries of the sub-region and raises a number of human rights issues... It results in health problems for the mother and a disproportionate share of maternal deaths, in part because adolescents are less likely to seek appropriate care. In addition, teenage pregnancy is more likely to result in health problems for the baby. Meeting the MDGs for infant and maternal mortality is integrally linked to reducing teenage pregnancy. In addition, pregnancy interferes with the teen mother's right to education and development.

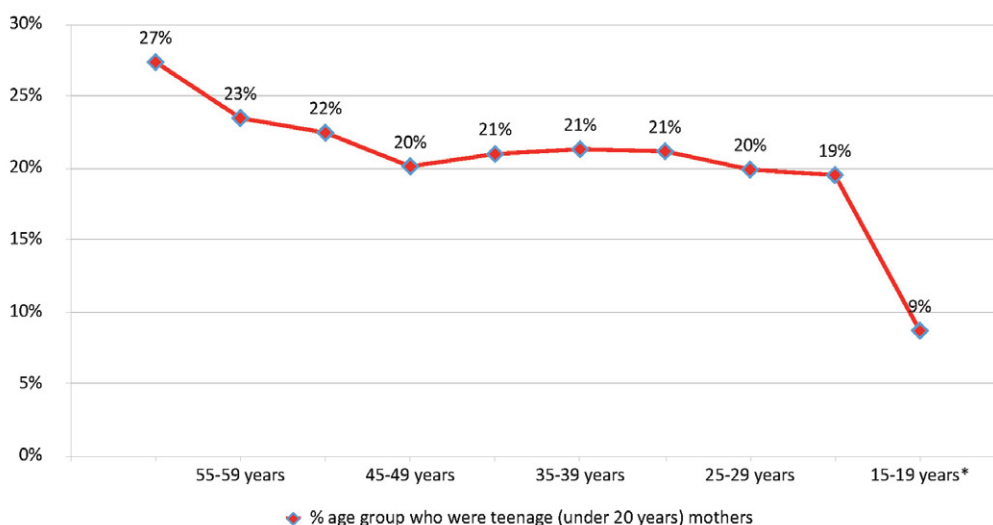
67 A similar result, 50 per cent, was obtained in a 2013 survey. See Barbados National HIV/AIDS Commission, *National Youth Knowledge Attitudes Beliefs and Practices (KABP) survey on HIV: Family Health International Indicators (2009-2013)*, 2014.

68 In this report, the terms 'teenage' and 'adolescent' pregnancy/ motherhood are used interchangeably as they are in much of the literature.

Stakeholders report that when a girl becomes pregnant, more frequently than not her education stops.⁶⁹ The economic cost of adolescent pregnancy – both the immediate costs related to the birth period and the long-term financial costs related to lower lifetime earnings of the mother – is significant. Adolescent mothers tend to have larger families, are more likely to be poor (they work more and earn less) and are more likely to have children who themselves become teenage parents.⁷⁰

Data on the number of births by age of mother in Barbados in recent years were not available for this study, and hence it has been necessary to rely on other sources. Figure 6.11 presents information on the proportions of women in different age ranges who were teenagers (under 20 years) when they gave birth to their first child. In 2016, 19 per cent of 20–24-year-old females had become mothers when they were teenagers. This proportion has changed little over the last 25 years. In 2018, the teenage fertility rate was 31 per 1,000 females (15–19 years).⁷¹

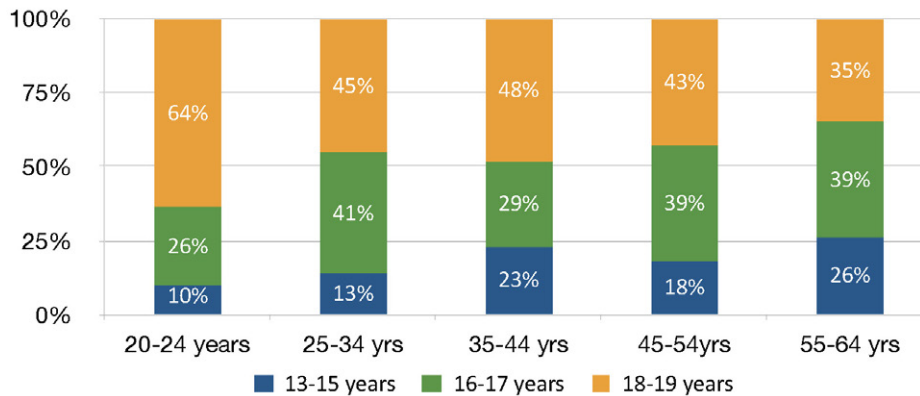
Figure 6.11: Teenage motherhood by current age of mother



* Indicative only as some members of this age group will have given birth for the first time since 2016 when the data were collected.
Sources: 2010 Census, 25+ years; Barbados Statistical Service, 2018, 15–24 years.

Some corroboration that the trend in teenage births is downward is provided by the age distribution of teenage mothers over the last 55 years (Figure 6.12). Two thirds of young (20–24 years) teenage mothers were 18 or 19 when they became mothers while only 10 per cent had given birth before they were 16 years (the age of consent). The corresponding proportions for the oldest group were 35 and 26 per cent respectively, indicating that the average age of teenage mothers is increasing. From 2010 to 2016, the teenage fertility rate was in the order of 33 per 1,000 women.

69 Due to exclusion and lack of childcare facilities.
70 UNICEF/ Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean / L. Blank, 2007. See also: UNICEF/ Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean / L. Blank, 2009. and UNICEF/ Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean / Governments of Barbados, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines, *A Study of Child Vulnerability in Barbados, St. Lucia and St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Barbados*, November 2006.
71 World Bank, 'Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15–19)', 2019 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT>

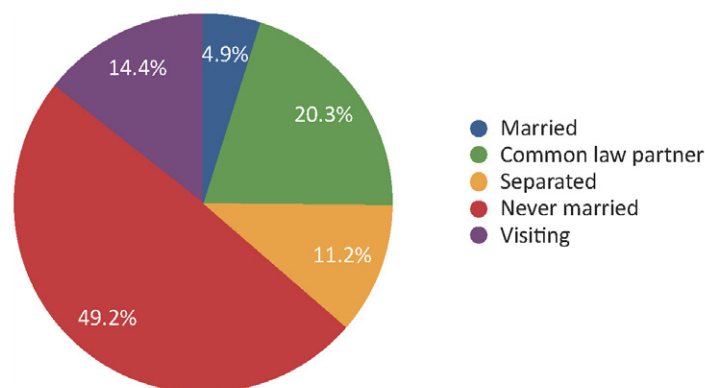
Figure 6.12: Age distribution of teenage mothers by current age of mother

NB. 15–19-year age group not shown as data are incomplete (see note to preceding figure).
Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Also noteworthy is that no females under the age of 16 years (the age of consent) were reported to have given birth in either the BSLC or MICS surveys while no more than 5 per cent of under 25-year-olds had given birth before they were 18 years old (when they were legally children).

Although trends in teenage motherhood are hard to ascertain with current data availability, it appears probable that: (i) the trend is downward, albeit very gradual; (ii) births before age 16 are negligible; and (iii) the majority of teenage childbearing occurs at ages 18 and 19.

The 2010 census also provides information on the union status of mothers between the ages of 15 and 24 years who first gave birth when they were teenagers (Figure 6.13). What is striking is that only a quarter are in what can be termed a permanent relationship (married or living with a common law partner). In contrast, around three quarters are essentially single (separated, visiting relationship, no relationship). This result reinforces previous findings relating to the high levels of relationship breakdown and single motherhood. It also implies that a significant proportion of pregnancies were unintended.

Figure 6.13: Union status of teenage mothers (15–24 years), 2010

Source: Census, 2010.

Contraceptive need

In this context, the SDG target 3.7 – which calls for countries to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health services by 2030 – is crucial to reducing adolescent birth rates. As adolescents develop, their health needs change, yet many face barriers to receiving quality, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and care. Access to appropriate contraceptive methods is a critical component of sexual and reproductive health for adolescents, who may be at an increased risk of unintended pregnancy and subsequent health consequences.

Table 6.1 shows that just under a third of currently married female adolescents and young adults have an unmet need for contraception, which is around double the equivalent proportion for older age groups. Including those who did not currently need contraception, just under two thirds of this group had a met need for contraception. There is little variation between the 15–19 and 20–24-year age groups.

Table 6.1: Met/unmet need for contraception

Age group (women)	Currently married/ in union	Contraception use		
		Using	Unmet need ²	Not needed ¹
	% of age group	% of women married or in union		
15–19 years	31.4%	54.7%	37.3%	8.0%
20–24 years	59.6%	53.2%	33.7%	13.1%
15–24 years	45.3%	53.7%	35.0%	11.3%
25–49 years	70.9%	60.4%	16.8%	22.9%

1. Likely relates to those not using contraception either due to a recent pregnancy or a desire to have children.

2. SDG indicator 3.7.1.

Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b.

Sexual behaviour that increases the risk of HIV infection

Aside from the risks of unintended pregnancies and the consequent negative impacts of these on female youth, the early onset of sexual activity and other sexual practices can also create, increase or perpetuate the risk of exposure to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).⁷² Promoting safer sexual behaviour is therefore critical for reducing the prevalence of HIV and STIs.⁷³ In many countries, over half of new HIV infections are among young people (15–24 years), thus a change in behaviour among this age group is critical. The use of condoms during sex, especially with non-regular partners, is important for reducing the spread of HIV and STIs.

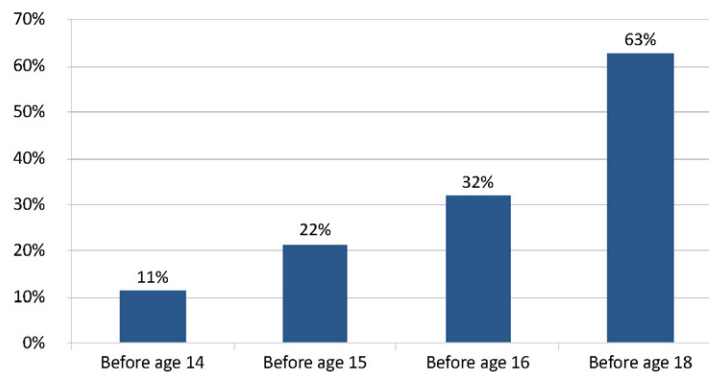
72 See, for instance, Allen, Caroline, 'Situation Analysis of Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV in the Caribbean: Executive Summary', Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Washington DC, 2013.

73 Although sources rarely refer to STI prevalence, the likelihood of being infected with STIs is implicitly related to these types of sexual behaviour.

Early sexual initiation

Figure 6.14 shows that by age 18, almost two thirds of female 15–19-year-olds had had sex, with 11 per cent having started before they were 14, and 32 per cent by age 16 (the age of consent).⁷⁴ These results are comparable to those obtained in the GSHS survey,⁷⁵ which also shows that 44 per cent of boys aged 13–15 years had started their sex lives by age 15 – almost twice as high as the figure for girls. These data represent high levels of early sexual initiation. Also relevant is that over a third of initiations involved a degree of persuasion by the male partner including 7 per cent of respondents who stated “that they did not want to have sex”.⁷⁶

Figure 6.14: Female early sexual initiation



Source: Drakes et al., Prevalence and Risk Factors for Inter-generational Sex: a cross-sectional cluster survey of Barbadian females aged 15-19, *BMC Women's Health*, vol. 13, 2013.

Risky sexual behaviours

Information on sexual behaviours that are known to increase the risk of HIV/AIDS and STIs is presented in Figure 6.15. Between 2009 and 2013, the incidence of sex with non-regular partners decreased sharply for both sexes: from 23 per cent to 5 per cent for females; and from 36 per cent to 25 per cent for males.⁷⁷ There were also substantial decreases in the incidence of unprotected sex in these relationships. Around 80 per cent reported using a condom the last time they had had sex with a non-regular partner.⁷⁸ These findings imply a reduction in risky sexual behaviour for both sexes. As with previous findings, male sexual activity is substantially higher than for females.

⁷⁴ Drakes et al., 'Prevalence and Risk Factors for Inter-generational Sex: a cross-sectional cluster survey of Barbadian females aged 15–19', 2013.

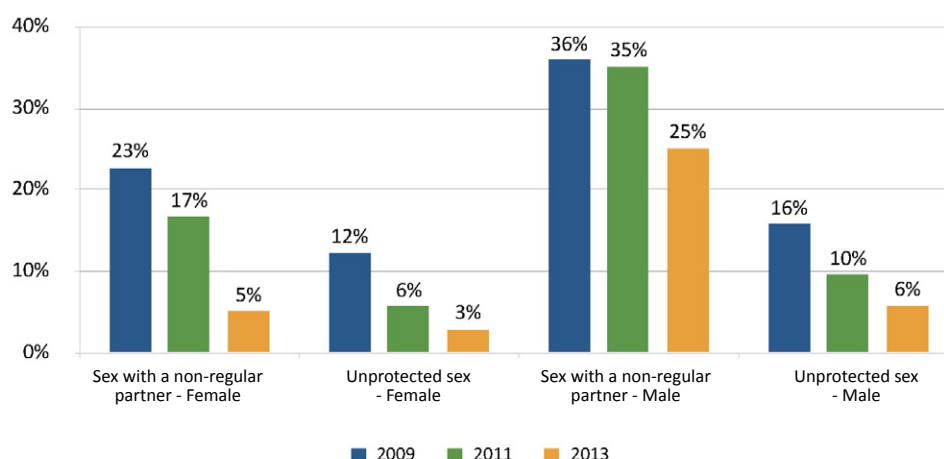
⁷⁵ Centers for Disease Control, 2011.

⁷⁶ Drakes et al., 2013.

⁷⁷ Barbados National HIV/AIDS Commission, *National Youth KABP Survey on HIV: Family Health International Indicators (2009–2013)*, 2014; Barbados National HIV/AIDS Commission, 2014, *National Youth KABP Survey on HIV: Fact Sheets 2009, 2011 and 2013*, 2014.

⁷⁸ Data only refer to condom use and not about other types of contraception that would protect against unintended pregnancy but not HIV or STI infection.

Figure 6.15: Indicators of risky sexual behaviour in last 12 months by 15–24-year-olds



Source: Barbados National HIV/AIDS Commission (NHDAC), 2014, National Youth KABP Survey on HIV: Fact Sheets 2009, 2011 and 2013, 2014.

Additional information is presented in Table 6.2 and shows that over a third of female 15-19-year-old had had sex in the last 12 months, rising to over 80 per cent for the older age group. Data on the incidence of multi-partnering and intergenerational sex (where there is a higher risk of an exploitative relationship) varies considerably between the two available data sources, thereby precluding any definitive conclusions on these two types of risky behaviour. It is, however, noteworthy that the prevalence of both multi-partnering and intergenerational sex is much higher amongst 20-24-year old females.

Table 6.2: Indicators of risky sexual behaviour in last 12 months, women 15–24 years old

Age group	Had sex in last 12 months ¹		Sex with multiple partners		Sex with man 10+ yrs older ²	
	MICS	Drakes et al.	MICS	Drakes et al.	MICS	Drakes et al.
15–19 years	36.3%	41%	0.3%	16%	2.3%	13.2%
20–24 years	82.3%	na	5.9%	na	11.7%	na
15–24 years	59.0%	na	3.0%	na	8.8%	na

1. Defined as sexually active.

2. Defined as intergenerational sex.

Sources: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b.; Drakes et al., 2013.

Interpretation of these results is hampered by variations, sometimes wide, between data sources. What does appear clear is that: (i) a significant minority of young women are engaging in potentially risky sexual behaviours that increase the risk of HIV infection or STI and exploitation; and (ii) on the positive side, the incidence of non-regular partnering and unprotected sex is decreasing while condom use is increasing.

Knowledge and acceptance of HIV/AIDS

SDG target 3.3 is to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030. The United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS called on governments to improve the knowledge and skills of young people to protect themselves

from HIV. This is particularly important as adolescents and young people represent a growing share of people living with HIV worldwide. Additionally, AIDS-related deaths among adolescents have increased globally over the past decade while decreasing among all other age groups, which can be attributed to a generation of children infected with HIV prenatally who are growing into adolescence.

HIV/AIDS indicators in Barbados are generally favourable: (i) annual numbers of new HIV cases, AIDS cases and AIDS-related deaths have all decreased considerably since 2000 – by around 40, 60 and 40 per cent respectively; (ii) HIV transmission from mothers to children has virtually been eliminated, and virtually no children under the age of 15 years are living with HIV/AIDS – which was not the case in 2007; (iii) around 60 per cent of those diagnosed with HIV/AIDS are on antiretroviral therapy with over 80 per cent of these exhibiting suppressed viral loads; (iv) the HIV prevalence rate for the 15–24-year age group, 0.6 and 0.9 per cent for males and females respectively, is around half that for 15–49-year-olds, implying that adolescents and young adults are now less susceptible to the disease. Corroboration of this finding is that, in 2016, the median ages for those dying of, and being diagnosed with, HIV were 39 and 49 years old respectively. In both cases, males accounted for around 60 per cent of cases.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, HIV/AIDS remains an important issue in the country with approximately 3,000 people (aged 15 years and above) currently living with HIV/AIDS – two thirds of whom are males. The prevalence rate is around 1.6 per cent, which puts Barbados on a par with other small Caribbean small states. Furthermore 18 per cent of cases remain undiagnosed, and there are around 100 new cases of HIV and 50 new cases of AIDS annually. Over 40 per cent of sufferers are not on ART.

In 2016, UNAIDS reported that “Barbados is one of the countries in the Caribbean closest to achieving control of its HIV epidemic and is currently being validated by the Pan American Health Organization for eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Barbados is also on track to achieving the 90–90–90 targets of 90% of people living with HIV knowing their HIV status, 90% of people who know their HIV-positive status accessing treatment and 90% of people on treatment having suppressed viral loads.”⁸⁰ A more recent assessment, however, concludes that additional effort is required if this target is to be achieved by 2020, particularly in respect of ART coverage.⁸¹

One of the most important prerequisites for further reducing the rate of HIV infection, increasing acceptance of those living with HIV/AIDS and improving their care and well-being, is accurate knowledge about how HIV is transmitted and strategies for preventing transmission. Correct information is the first step towards raising awareness and giving adolescents the tools to both protect themselves from infection now and later in life and reduce stigma towards those living with the disease.

In Barbados, virtually all females aged 15–24 years had heard of HIV/AIDS and knew about mother-to-child transmission (Figure 6.16). On the other hand, the proportions having comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS⁸²

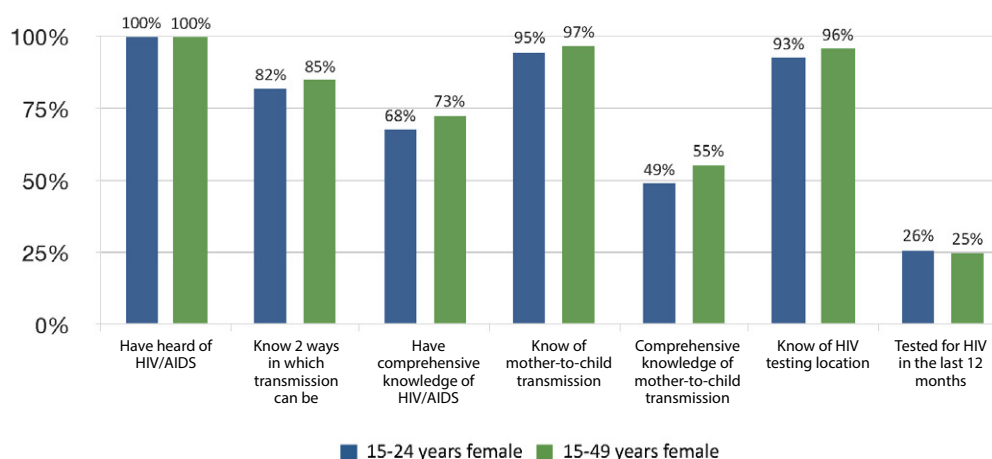
79 Data sources for this paragraph are: (i) Ministry of Health and Wellness/ Government of Barbados, 'Barbados HIV Surveillance Bulletin, 2016', 2018; (ii) UNAIDS, 2018, UN AIDS Data; (iii) UNAIDS, 'Country Factsheet – Barbados', 2018 <https://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/barbados>; (iv) UNICEF/ Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean / L. Blank, A Situation Analysis of Children and Women in the Eastern Caribbean, Barbados, 2007; (v) World Bank, 'Health, Nutrition and Population', 2018 <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/health/available-indicators>.

80 UNAIDS, 'Barbados World AIDS Day Man Aware Campaign raises HIV awareness among men', 2016 <https://www.unaids.org/en/keywords/barbados>
81 Ministry of Health and Wellness/ Government of Barbados, 'Barbados HIV Surveillance Bulletin, 2016', 2018.

82 Defined in MICS as: (i) being able to identify two ways of preventing HIV transmission (using condoms and limiting sex to one faithful and uninfected partner); (ii) knowing that a healthy-looking person can have HIV; and (iii) rejecting two common misconceptions about HIV transmission (from mosquito

and of mother-to-child transmission⁸³ are lower at 68 and 49 per cent, respectively. The great majority of this age group are aware of an HIV testing location. Around a quarter had been tested in the previous year, including 40 per cent of sexually active females under 25 years, and almost all knew their test results. Variations in these indicators between youth and all women of childbearing age are minor. From the above, one can conclude that virtually all young females have heard of AIDS, most have a good knowledge of the disease and knew where to obtain an HIV test. These are positive results. Potentially less positive is the low proportion of sexually active females who have been tested for HIV, bearing in mind that 59 per cent of 15–24-year-olds had been sexually active in the previous year.

Figure 6.16: Knowledge of HIV/AIDS



Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b.

The Barbados KABP surveys provide additional information on these topics⁸⁴:

- Male knowledge of how to prevent HIV/AIDS transmission and where to obtain an HIV test is similar to that for women.⁸⁵
- Although 80 per cent of males were aware of the possibility of mother-to-child transmission, only around half were aware that this could take place during breastfeeding – compared to 70 per cent of females.
- A higher proportion of males appear to have taken an HIV test in the previous 12 months: one in three males compared with one in four females.
- The 2016/2017 KABP survey reports decreases in the knowledge of transmission through breastfeeding and a lower take-up rate for HIV tests compared to the earlier survey.

Acceptance of those living with HIV/AIDS by the wider society is essential if they are not to be stigmatized and excluded from social and economic activities. Virtually all young females interviewed expressed at least one accepting attitude towards people living with HIV/AIDS (Figure 6.17). In particular, they expressed a high degree of willingness to care for a family member with the disease (over 90 per cent) and for teachers with HIV/AIDS

bites, supernatural means and sharing food with someone with AIDS).

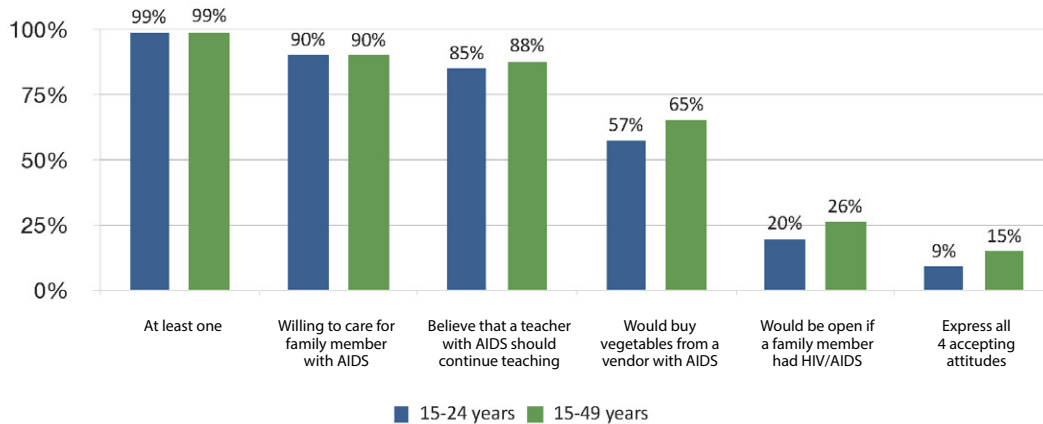
83 Know that mother-to-child transmission can occur during pregnancy, delivery and through breastfeeding.

84 Drakes, N., 2014, 'Knowledge, Attitudes, Beliefs & Sexual Practices Survey among Men aged 15-49 in Barbados, Presentation of Findings', 2014.

85 Only partial results are available and relate to the 15–49-year age group as a whole. They are not always disaggregated by sex and questions posed sometimes differ from those used in the MICS.

to carry on teaching (85 per cent).⁸⁶ The proportions for ‘willingness to buy vegetables from vendors’ was also around 60 per cent. On the other hand, only around a fifth of 15–24-year-olds would be open about a family member having HIV/AIDS, and less than 10 per cent agreed with all four HIV/AIDS acceptance criteria. In general, young people’s attitudes were similar, albeit slightly lower than those of older women.

Figure 6.17: Accepting attitudes towards people living with HIV/AIDS (females)



Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b.

Results for males (15–49 years) from the 2013/2014 KABP survey were similar to those shown above. The exception was that less than 30 per cent of males were willing to make food purchases from an HIV positive seller – far less than the female proportion. Also noteworthy is that the 2016/2017 KABP survey showed a much higher willingness by all respondents to be open about household members who were HIV positive, 44 per cent compared to 26–27 per cent in the earlier surveys (KABP and MICS). Nonetheless, there is a need to further increase openness about household or family members living with HIV/AIDS.

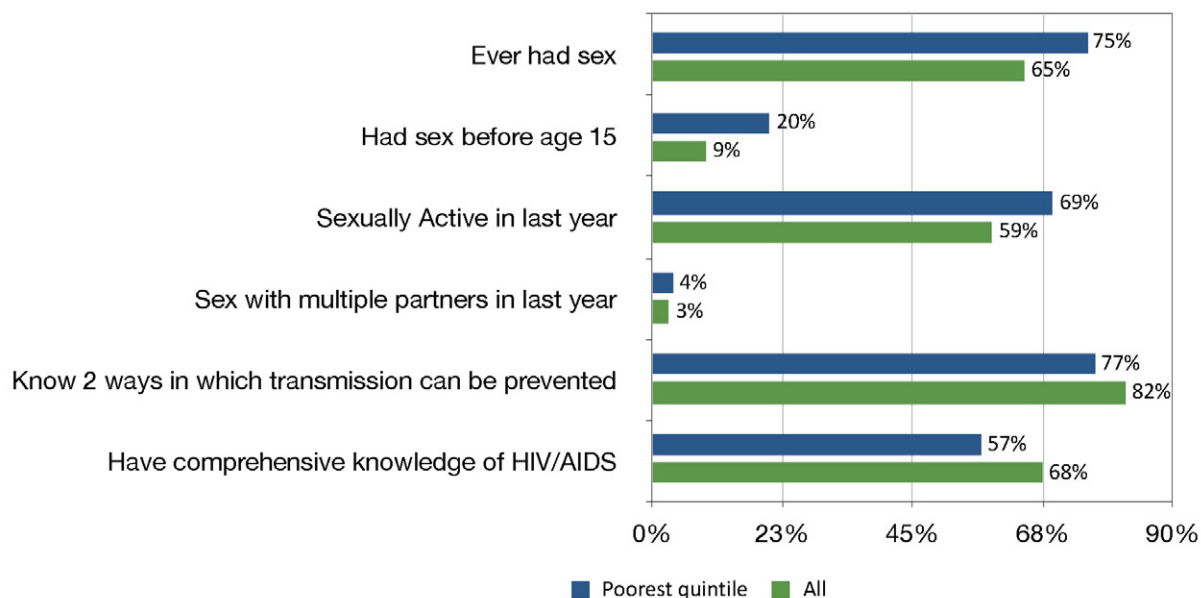
Poverty and sexual activity and knowledge of HIV/AIDS

Figure 6.18 shows how indicators of sexual activity differ among the poorest⁸⁷ women aged 15–24 years compared to the overall group. The indicators selected are those for which MICS tabulations are available for this group separately, and for which samples are large enough (over 50 observations) to produce representative results.

The most important finding is that, compared to the group as a whole, the poorest 15–24-year-old females are more likely to have: (i) ever had sex; (ii) had sex before age 15; and (iii) had sex in the previous year. The poorest 15–24-year-olds also have less knowledge about HIV/AIDS. On the other hand, there is little variation among those having had sex with multiple partners. In consequence, poor female adolescents and young adults are more at risk than those who are more affluent from practices that can lead to: (i) unintended pregnancies; (ii) contracting STIs and HIV/AIDS; (iii) disruption to their education; and (iv) sexual exploitation.

⁸⁶ Assuming that they were healthy enough to be working.

⁸⁷ The MICS assesses poverty by developing a wealth index based on a combination of material assets, housing conditions and access to basic infrastructure. Households are then ranked according to their scores on the index and then dividing households into five equal groups (quintiles). The ‘poorest’ are thus the 20 per cent of households with the lowest wealth indexes.

Figure 6.18: Poverty, sexual activity and knowledge of HIV/AIDS

Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b.

Substance use

Adolescence and young adulthood are the times of heightened risk-taking, independence-seeking and experimentation. Substance use can be tempting to some adolescents for social, psychological or cultural reasons. At the same time, youth are less able to anticipate the negative effects of substance use and are more vulnerable to certain adverse consequences of drinking alcohol and using tobacco.⁸⁸ Alcohol, tobacco and drug use typically have their onset in adolescence and are major risk factors for adverse health and social outcomes as well as for non-communicable diseases later in life.⁸⁹

Alcohol

Information on alcohol consumption by young people is available from various sources.⁹⁰ In terms of lifetime usage, Figure 6.19 shows that around two thirds of 15–19-year-old females had tried alcohol, rising to over 80 per cent for those in their twenties and levelling off thereafter. However, lifetime usage gives no indication of regular drinking, which is the potentially more serious issue. In this context, the figure shows that around a quarter of 15–19-year-old females had had at least one drink in the previous month, rising to over 40 per cent for the 20–24-year age group. Drinking a few times in a month is very different from drinking several times a week or to excess.

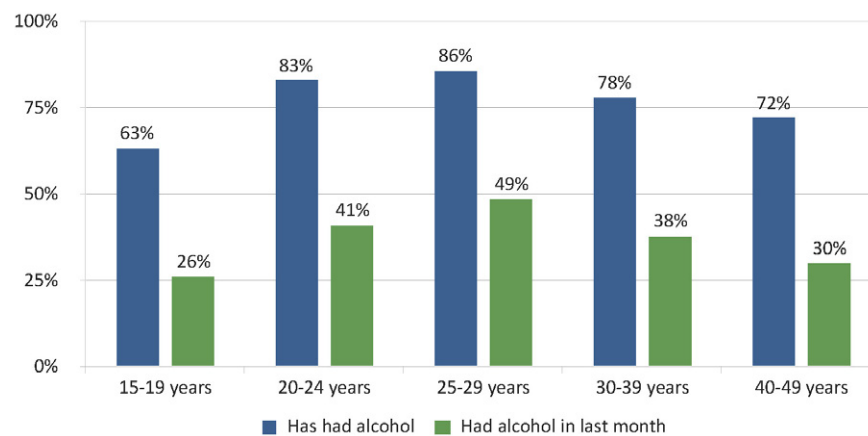
88 Degenhardt, Louisa, Emily Stockings, George Patton, Wayne D. Hall and Michael Lynskey, 'The Increasing Global Health Priority of Substance Use in Young People', *The Lancet Psychiatry*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2016, pp. 251–264.

89 Patton, George C. et al., 'Our Future: A Lancet commission on adolescent health and wellbeing', *The Lancet*, vol. 387, no. 10036, 2016, pp. 2423–2478; United Nations Children's Fund, *State of the World's Children 2011: Adolescence – An age of opportunity*, New York, 2011.

90 Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b: females 15–24 years; GSHS, 2011: 13–15 years; National Council for Drug Abuse (NCSA), 2006/ 2013: 10-11 years (2006 only), 12-16 years (2006 and 2013) reported in Henry A., 'Concern over high use of alcohol and illicit drugs among school children', *Barbados Today*, January 2019.

In this context, the GSHS reports that around a quarter of 13–15-year-olds had been seriously drunk at least once in their lives, with males having a higher incidence than females – 29 per cent compared to 19 per cent.

Figure 6.19: Female alcohol use



NB. SDG indicator 3.5.2 is related to alcohol consumption.

Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b.

There is a high level of early initiation in the use of alcohol among adolescents (Table 6.3). Although interpretation is hampered by differences between sources, a substantial proportion of teenagers will have first imbibed alcohol before they were 15. Alcohol use at teenage social events is also reported to have increased between 2006 and 2013.⁹¹ The information on excessive drinking is insufficient to fully assess the impact of alcohol use on the well-being of young people in Barbados; however, the warning signs are there.

Table 6.3: Early initiation of alcohol use

Reporting age group	Source ¹	Year of survey	Had drunk before age ...	% of respondents
12–16 years	NCSA	2013	< 9 years	20%
12–16 years	NCSA	2006	<11 years	50%
13–15 years	GSHS	2011	<14 years	42%
15–19 years	MICS	2012	<15 years	22%
20–24 years	MICS	2012	<15 years	8%

1. NCSA and GSHS surveys were undertaken in schools and were self-reported; MICS was an interview survey in households. MICS was only conducted among females.

Sources: various, see table.

Tobacco

Tobacco usage is generally low. Under 20 per cent of 15–24-year-old females have ever smoked, and under 7 per cent of 13–15-year-old females had smoked a cigarette in the last month. Boys (13–15 years) are more likely to have smoked recently than girls. Furthermore, the equivalent proportions for older age groups are higher, implying that few adolescents continue smoking after first trying the substance (Table 6.4).

91 National Council for Drug Abuse (NCSA), 2006/ 2013: 10–11 years (2006 only), 12–16 years (2006 and 2013) reported in Henry, A., 2019.

Table 6.4: Tobacco use

Age Group	Tobacco Use ¹		
	Has had Tobacco	Had Tobacco in last month	
	Females	Females	Males
13–15 years	na	6.6%	12.7%
15–19 years	14.0%	1.7%	na
20–24 years	18.0%	3.8%	na
25–49 years	26.2%	2.8%	na

SDG indicator 3.a.1 relates to tobacco usage.

Sources: CDC, 2011 (13–15 years old); Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b (other age groups).

Drug Use

In 2011, around 15 per cent of 13–15-year-olds had used marijuana at least once. Marijuana usage was higher amongst boys – 18 per cent compared to 11 per cent for girls.⁹² By 2016, usage was reported to have doubled,⁹³ with most users obtaining marijuana at social events and from friends, rather than from the block, indicating both greater availability and usage.

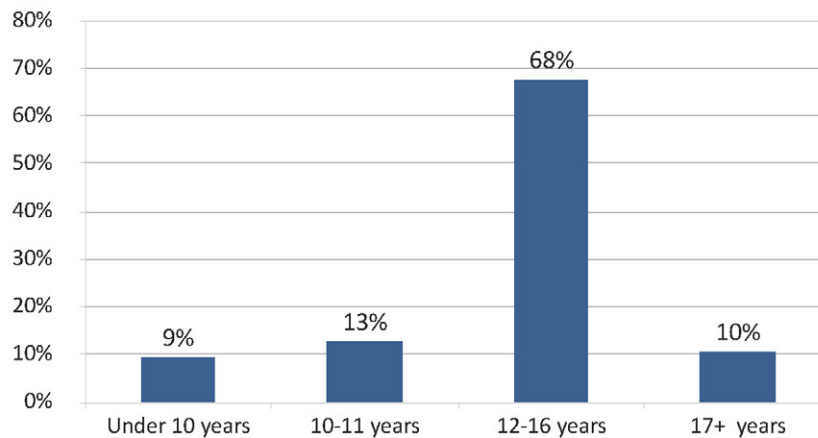
Information on the age of first use of marijuana is presented in Figure 6.20. The data relate to 182 male addicts treated at the Substance Abuse Foundation's (SAF) Verdun House addiction centre between 2011 and 2014⁹⁴ and shows that around a fifth of addicts started using when they were at primary school and two thirds of users when they were at secondary school. Overall 80 per cent started between the ages of 10 and 16 years. This data about early onset based on treated addicts is partially corroborated by the NCSA data which report that 75 per cent of users had started by age 14. The majority of those treated were aged over 25 years. However, SAF reports an increase in the number of younger addicts being treated⁹⁵ – 20 per cent of new patients in 2017 and 2018 were aged 18–25 years.

92 Centers for Disease Control, 2011.

93 National Council for Drug Abuse (NCSA), 2006/ 2013: 10–11 years (2006 only), 12–16 years (2006 and 2013) reported in Henry, A., 2019.

94 Substance Abuse Foundation, 'Marijuana Usage Onset' <http://thesafinc.com/research-education>. Data refer to 2011–2014. A second, smaller, centre, Marina House, was opened for female addicts in 2015.

95 Substance Abuse Foundation, Annual Review 2018 <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56ec49b0555986b05c6b80b7/t/5d3768cff6994b00014ee3a6/1563912418545/Annual+Report+2018+%28web+view%29+Final.pdf>

Figure 6.20: Onset of marijuana use – male addicts, 2011–2014

Source: Substance Abuse Foundation, 'Marijuana Usage Onset'.

As with other types of substance abuse, while intermittent usage is unlikely to be problematic, prolonged and frequent usage potentially leads to addiction, and risks leading to the use of cocaine (by far the most prevalent type of addiction treated at Verdun House⁹⁶) and other more dangerous substances. In summary, the available data indicates that: (i) a high proportion of users start when they are of school age; (ii) marijuana availability and addiction has increased; and (iii) these factors are leading to an increase in cocaine use and addiction.

Nutrition and physical activity

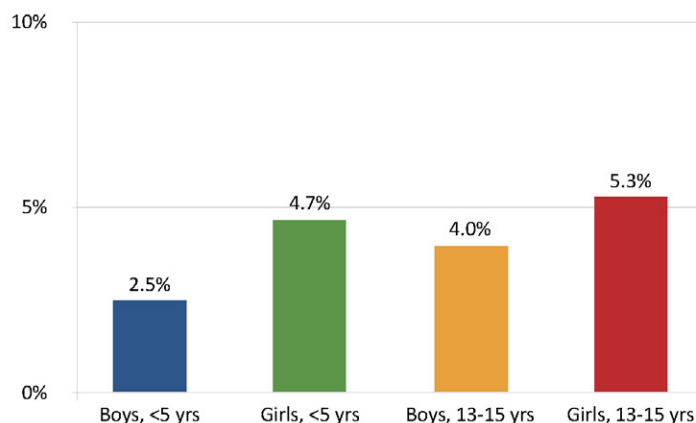
Good nutrition, in both quantity and quality, and regular physical activity are crucial for the healthy physical development and development of children and adolescents. Key indicators of nutrition status are the proportions of children who are under- or overweight. For these indicators, information for young children is of relevance as often, these characteristics first manifest themselves at a young age.

Figure 6.21 shows that less than 5 per cent of children in either age group were classified as underweight. These proportions are close to those for severe poverty.⁹⁷ There are negligible variations between the two age groups or between boys and girls.

⁹⁶ Between its opening and 2013, there were 720 admissions for cocaine addiction.

⁹⁷ Defined as not having enough income to afford a healthy diet (see Chapter 3).

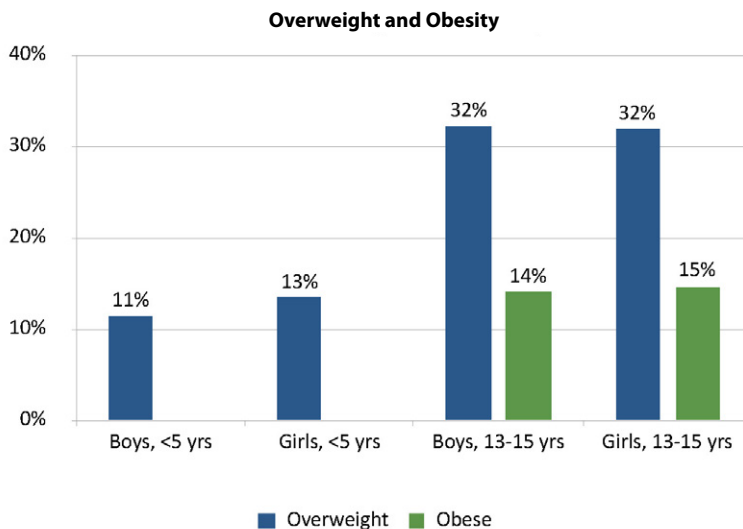
Figure 6.21: Underweight children, 2012



NB. An underweight child is one whose weight is more than 2 standard deviations (SD) lower than the median for that age.
 Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b.

Information on overweight children is less positive (Figure 6.22) with almost a third of 13–15-year-olds in 2011 found to be overweight and around one in seven categorized as obese. Comparisons between age groups are complicated due to the different criteria used in the GSHS and MICS surveys.⁹⁸ While overweight issues can start early in life, they can also be exacerbated by poor diets for school-age children. Over 70 per cent of the 13–15-year age group had consumed carbonated drinks on a daily basis in the previous month, which is one cause of excessive weight gain. As with underweight children, there are negligible variations between boys and girls.

Figure 6.22: Overweight and obese children, 2012

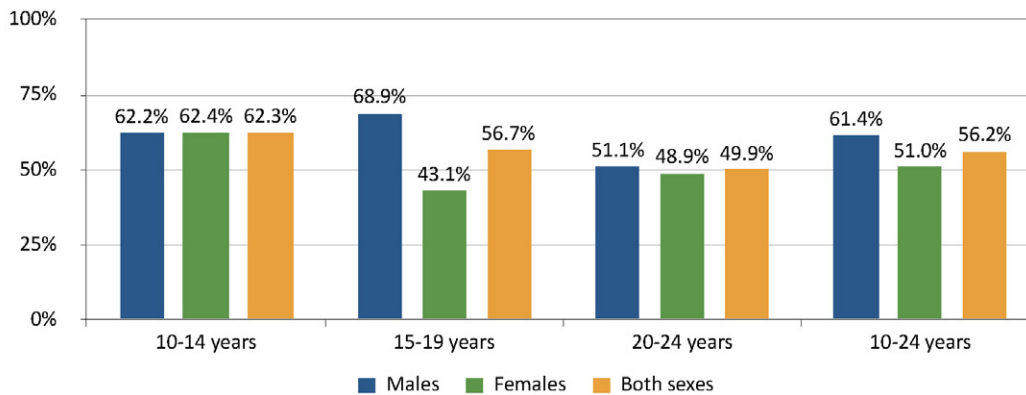


NB. Overweight and obese defined according to survey definitions (see footnote).
 Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b, <5 years; Centers for Disease Control, 2011, 13–15 years.

98 MICS uses a criterion whereby an overweight child is one whose weight for height is more than 2 standard deviations (SD) higher than the median for that age group; an obese child is one whose weight is more than 3 SDs higher than the median. The GSHS criteria are less restrictive: overweight: > 1 SD from the median; obese: > 2 SD from the median.

Regular physical activity is a major protective factor to becoming overweight or obese. In 2011, no more than a third of boys and a quarter of girls aged 13–15 years had been physically active in the week⁹⁹ preceding the survey. Further information on physical activity is available from the BSLC (Figure 6.23). Specified types of activity included going to a gym, playing sports, riding, jogging, walking or ‘other’. The main findings are that around half of females and 60 per cent of males were engaged in physical activity in the week preceding the survey¹⁰⁰; and that the incidence of physical activity is lower for the 20–24-year age group. Gender variations are only noticeable for the 15–19-year age group where over 50 per cent more boys participate than girls.

Figure 6.23: Physical activity in the last 7 days by age and sex, 10–24-year-olds



Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Additional analysis revealed that: (i) the most popular activities were sports (26 per cent for all ages), walking (16 per cent) and going to the gym (9 per cent); (ii) walking and going to the gym increased in relative popularity as age increased; and (iii) around 80 per cent of the physically active participated in at least one of the specified activities.

Notwithstanding the differing criteria for physical activity in the two surveys, the data are indicating that a substantial proportion of young persons are engaging in little or no regular physical activity. This can only increase the likelihood of them remaining, or becoming, overweight or obese.

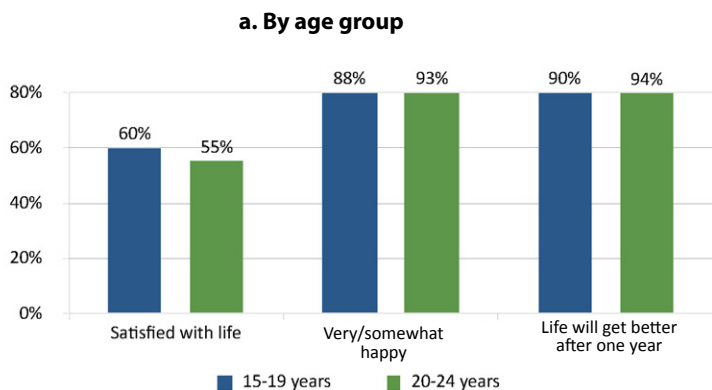
Life satisfaction

Just under 60 per cent of females aged 15–24 years describe themselves as being satisfied with life, with a similar proportion saying that life had improved during the last year (Figure 6.24). Satisfaction with family life, friendships, school, health, looks, living environment, and treatment by others, exceeded 80 per cent. Lower satisfaction levels were observed in terms of their current job and income. Furthermore, over 90 per cent stated that they were ‘happy/ somewhat happy’ and that they believed that life would be better in a year’s time. These results are virtually identical for poor and non-poor households.

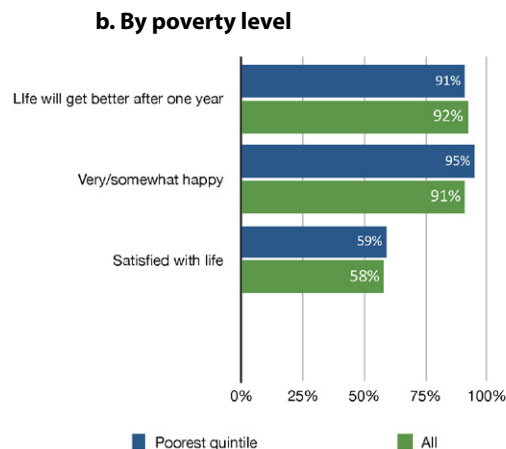
⁹⁹ Centers for Disease Control, 2011. Criterion is “at least 1 hour on 5 or more days in the previous week”.

¹⁰⁰ BSLC uses a looser criterion (at least once in last 7 days) than GSHS where physical activity had to take place at least 5 times in the previous week, hence the higher result for 10–14-year-olds compared with that for 13–15-year-olds.

Figure 6.24: Life satisfaction



Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b.



Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b.

These results are partially corroborated by the GSHS survey of 2011, which found that about four per cent of 13–15-year-old females ‘had no close friends.’ The male proportion, 8 per cent, was double that for females but still indicates a low level of loneliness.

Well-being: Protective and risk factors

A detailed cross-country study¹⁰¹ using GSHS data analysed the relationship between indicators of problem behaviour (such as delinquency) of 13–17-year-old teenagers and potential risk and protective factors. The risk behaviours were sexual intercourse, drinking, getting into trouble while drunk, fighting and drug use. The risk factors were skipping school, suicidal thoughts, and poverty (hunger). The protective factors were friendships and parental engagement. When the risk factors are low and the protective factors are high, they imply increased satisfaction with school and a stronger bond and understanding between children and their parents. In turn, both were found to be associated with a lower level of delinquency.

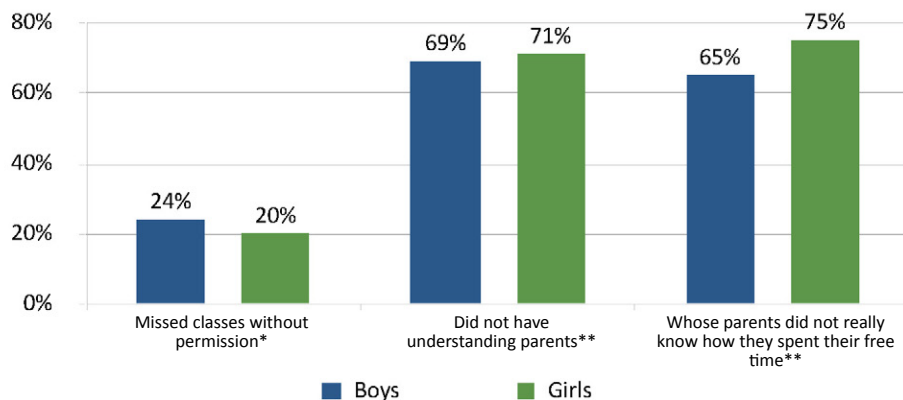
The headline finding was that “having parents engaged in raising their children is associated with significantly reduced problem behaviours in adolescents.” This effect was weaker, but still statistically significant,¹⁰² in Caribbean as opposed to Latin American countries, where the incidence of problem behaviours was generally lower and parental engagement generally higher. In Barbados, lower levels of parental engagement were statistically related to their children’s early sexual activity, drinking and causing trouble when drunk. It also found that, in nearly all countries (including Barbados), problem behaviours were much more likely to be associated with male teenagers; and teenagers who skipped school without permission. The authors of the study note that “these findings are consistent with an existing body of international literature on the effects of home environments and parent-child relationships on problem behaviours”.

101 Sutton, H., M. Sierra and I. Ruprah/ IDB, ‘Sex, Violence, and Drugs Among Latin American and Caribbean Adolescents – Do Engaged Parents Make a Difference?’, IDB Working Paper Series N° IDB-WP-664, 2016.

102 At 5 per cent probability levels.

In this context, Figure 6.25 presents the results for those factors which have data available. These results provide a less straightforward perspective of well-being than Figure 6.24. Around one in five 13–15-year-olds had missed classes without permission in the previous month, and around two thirds had parents who either were not particularly understanding or mostly unaware of what they did with their free time. Given the results of the abovementioned study, the low level of parental engagement, allied to the previously identified high level of fatherlessness, is a cause for concern. Increasing parental engagement will not eliminate teenage delinquency; but, based on this study's findings, it will reduce it.

Figure 6.25: Adolescents (13–15 years) – risk and protective factors



Notes:

*In last 30 days.

**Most of the time in last 30 days. Both were used to create the 'parental engagement' indicator used in the referenced analysis.

Source: Centers for Disease Control, 2011.

Key findings and implications

Living arrangements

In 2016, 36 per cent of younger adolescents (10–14 years) lived with both parents, 45 per cent with just their mother, 9 per cent with just their father and 10 per cent with neither parent. These data reveal a high level of family/relationship breakdown which can have serious direct and indirect impacts on the well-being of young people in the short, medium and long term. There is also an important gender variation. Whereas 80–90 per cent of 10–14-year-olds lived with their mother, the proportion living with their father was little over 40 per cent.

Poverty is associated with parental presence: almost a third of the 10–14-year age group who are living with just their mother are poor compared to around a quarter where both parents are present. Furthermore, for all age groups, poverty rates are around 7–10 percentage points higher in female-headed households. Youth poverty rates are also closely linked to household type. Poverty rates in extended family households, which are mostly headed by women, are almost twice as high as those living in nuclear families or single-parent/ single-adult households.

Adolescents' living arrangements are not by themselves a determinant of their well-being. Living in a well-functioning single-parent household is preferable to living in a dysfunctional nuclear family, especially if violence was involved. Family breakups can be amicable, with absent fathers continuing to contribute both financial and emotional support to their children. Likewise, a stepfather can become a substitute father figure, and support from grandparents and other relatives in extended families can go some way to making up for the departure of a parent. Information on the role of fathers indicates that while "most fathers are involved with their children, emotionally if not financially, but many fathers fail to meet their financial obligations to children".¹⁰³ Overall, given the levels of family breakdown and fatherlessness in Barbados, this factor has been identified as a major potential threat to the successful passage of adolescents from childhood to adulthood.

Marital status

Over 40 per cent of 15–19-year-old females had been married or in a union. Of these, around 20 per cent were no longer in a marriage/ union at the time of the survey, indicating that the relationship had already broken down. In 2012, less than 5 per cent of current 15–19-year-olds had been married before the age of 15, and the trend appears to be downward. This is not the case for those married before they were 18 (when still legally children). Almost a third of 20–24-year-olds were in a union before they were 18. This, being higher than the rates for older age groups, implies that the trend is upward.

Teenage pregnancy and motherhood

Adolescent pregnancy can be seen as the result of a combination of sexual activity, a lack of contraception and the absence of parental guidance. Available information shows that the level of adolescent (15–19 years) childbearing has been around 20 per cent for the last 25 years with very few births occurring to under-15s. The teenage birth rate between 2010 and 2016 was around 30 per 1,000 and has changed little in recent years.

In 2010, around three quarters of teenage births were to girls who were essentially single, i.e. separated, in a visiting relationship, or in no relationship. This result reinforces previous findings relating to the high levels of relationship breakdown and single motherhood and it also implies that a significant proportion of pregnancies were unintended.

Sexual activity

Just over a third of 15–19-year-old women were sexually active. Over a quarter of unmarried women (who are more likely to be at risk from the negative consequences of sexual activity than those who are in a relationship) were sexually active.

Almost a third of 15–19-year-old females first had had sex before they were 16 years old (the age of consent). More positively, the proportions of women who had sex in the previous year with a non-regular partner decreased from 23 to 5 per cent between 2009 and 2013, while the incidence of unprotected sex with non-regular partners

103 UNICEF/ Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean / L. Blank, *A Situation Analysis of Children and Women in the Eastern Caribbean*, Barbados, 2007.

decreased from 12 to 3 per cent. Indicators of male sexual activity are higher than those for females. However, these too declined between 2009 and 2013.

Overall, it is apparent that a minority of females aged 15–24 years engage in risky sexual practices that can increase the risk of unintended pregnancies, contracting STIs and HIV/AIDS, disruption to their education, and sexual exploitation. These risks increase for poorer young females who are more likely to have had sex, had their first sexual experience earlier, and had been active within the last 12 months. Some indicators are positive. Sex with non-regular partners appears to be on the decrease, as does unprotected sex with non-regular partners.

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS indicators in Barbados are generally favourable: (i) annual numbers of new HIV cases, AIDS cases and AIDS-related deaths have all decreased considerably since 2000; (ii) virtually no children under the age of 15 years are living with HIV/AIDS – which was not the case in 2007; (iii) the HIV prevalence rate for 15–24-year-olds is around half that for 15–49-year-olds, implying that young people are now less susceptible to the disease. Nevertheless, HIV/AIDS remains an important issue in the country with approximately 3,000 people (aged 15 years and above) currently living with HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, 18 per cent of cases remain undiagnosed and over 40 per cent of sufferers are not on ART.

In Barbados, virtually all females aged 15–24 years had heard of HIV/AIDS and knew about mother-to-child transmission. Around 95 per cent knew the location of an HIV testing place and 37 per cent of sexually active females under 25 years had been tested in the previous year. Male knowledge of HIV/AIDS is generally similar to that of females.

Acceptance of those living with HIV/AIDS by the wider society is essential if they are not to be stigmatized and excluded from social and economic activities. Virtually all female adolescents and young adults interviewed expressed at least one accepting attitude towards people living with HIV/AIDS. In particular, over 90 per cent expressed a willingness to care for a family member with HIV/AIDS. On the other hand, no more than a fifth of 15–24-year-old females would be open about a family member having HIV/AIDS.

Substance use

Information on alcohol use is limited. However, based on the available evidence it appears that: (i) substantial proportions of secondary school students first tried alcohol before they were 15 years old; and (ii) these proportions are higher than those reported for older age groups, implying that the incidence of early initiation is on the increase. Around a third of 12–19-year-old adolescents had consumed alcohol in the previous month. Although most will not continue drinking on a regular or excessive basis, the apparent increase in teenage usage is a matter of concern.

In 2011, around 15 per cent of 13–15-year-olds had used marijuana at least once, with usage being higher amongst boys. By 2016, usage was reported to have doubled. Around 80 per cent of registered addicts had started using when they were at school. Notwithstanding the data limitations, the indications are that: (i) a high proportion of

marijuana users start when they are of school age; (ii) marijuana availability, usage and addiction have increased; and (iii) these factors are leading to an increase in cocaine use and addiction.

Nutrition and physical activity

In 2011, less than 5 per cent of 13–15-year-old adolescents were underweight. The incidence of overweight among 13–15-year-olds is much higher at just under a third, with one in seven being obese. Around one in seven children under five years are also overweight. While overweight issues can start early in life, they can also be exacerbated by poor diets for school-age children. For both under- and overweight children, results are virtually identical for boys and girls.

Risk factors relating to being overweight/ obese include the consumption of carbonated drinks and insufficient physical activity. Over 70 per cent of 13–15-year-olds consumed at least one carbonated drink daily and around two thirds of teenagers were not taking enough physical exercise. These factors can increase the likelihood of them remaining, or becoming, overweight or obese.

Life satisfaction and well-being

Over 90 per cent of 15–24-year-old females stated that they were 'happy/ somewhat happy' and that they believed that life would be better in a year's time. Satisfaction with family life, friendships, school, health, looks, living environment, and treatment by others, exceeded 80 per cent. Lower satisfaction levels (around 60 per cent) were obtained in terms of their current job and income.

Recent research has identified statistically significant relationships between parental engagement and different facets of teenage delinquency in several Caribbean countries. Relevant results for Barbados are: (i) around one in five 13–15-year-olds had missed classes without permission in the previous month; (ii) around two thirds had parents who either were not particularly understanding or mostly unaware of what they did with their free time; and (iii) males were particularly prone to delinquent behaviour. The authors of the study note that "these findings are consistent with an existing body of international literature on the effects of home environments and parent-child relationships on problem behaviours". Allied to the previously identified high level of fatherlessness, these results imply that interventions to improve parental engagement should be strengthened, especially from absent fathers.



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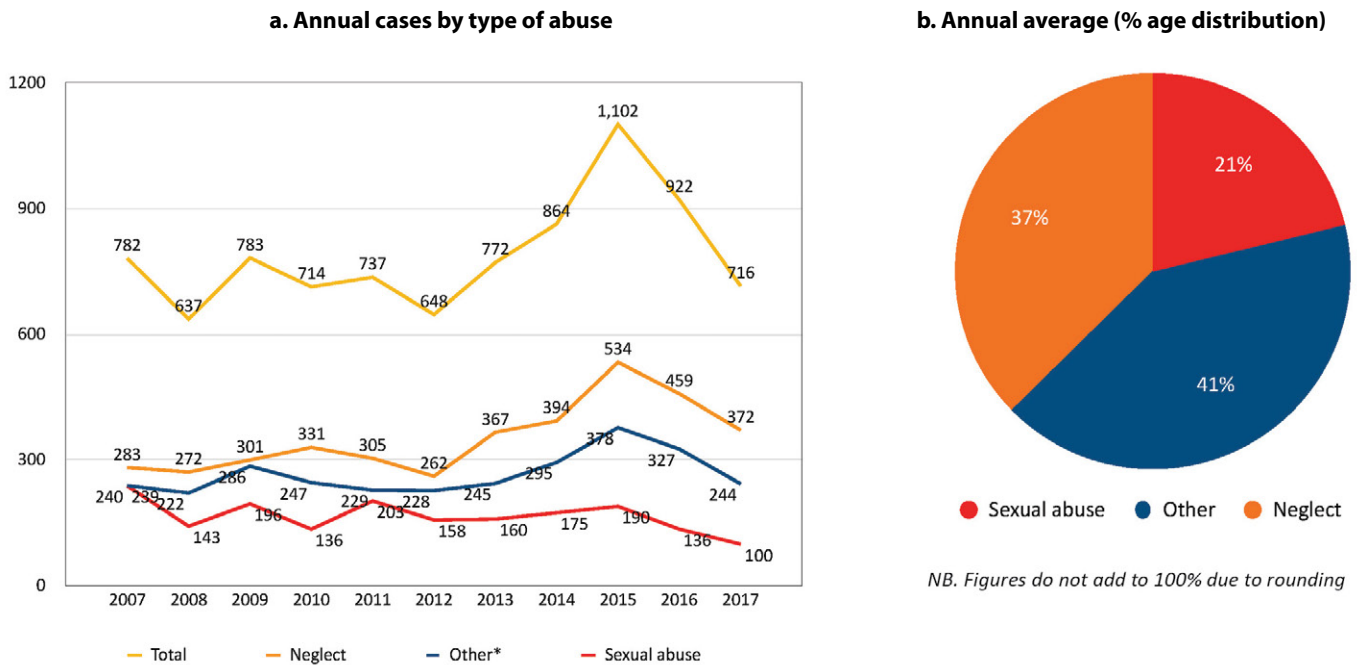
**Every young person is protected
from violence and exploitation**

The protection of children and young people from all forms of violence is a fundamental right enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The SDGs contain a specific target (SDG 16.2) to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children. Violence, abuse and neglect can take many forms, occur inside and outside the home, and can be perpetrated by family, peers, community members and others. Exposure to violence can have devastating impacts and affect their mental and physical health lasting into adolescence, young adulthood and older age with indirect impacts on their families, communities and wider society. This chapter presents information on the types of violence and exploitation experienced by, committed by, and with potential repercussions for children, adolescents and young adults. The information has been compiled from a diverse range of surveys, reports and administrative data.

Child neglect and sexual abuse

The abandonment, neglect, sexual and physical abuse of children and adolescents can have serious implications, over and above the immediate trauma, for the long-term well-being of the victim. Figure 7.1 shows the number of cases of child abuse referred to the Child Care Board (CCB) between 2007/2008 and 2017/2018. The following should be noted: (i) the data refer to substantiated cases which, on average, account for around 70 per cent of those reported; (ii) the categories of abuse shown are those on which the referral was based although, in practice, many will have involved more than one type of abuse.

Between 2007 and 2017, the average number of cases of child abuse referred to the CCB annually was around 800. As referred cases often relate to more than one child, the number of children affected is higher – around 1,100 annually. A fifth of cases involved sexual abuse, with the remainder split almost equally between neglect and other causes (primarily physical abuse). Between 2007 and 2013, the number of cases of all types of abuse remained roughly constant. Numbers rose sharply over the next two years and have declined since then to around the long-term average. Since 2013, the numbers of sexual abuse and neglect cases have remained relatively stable; however, the number of physical/ emotional abuse cases has increased in both absolute and relative terms.

Figure 7.1: Child abuse cases, 2007–2017

* Approximately three quarters of these relate to physical abuse, with nearly all the remainder involving emotional abuse.
Sources: 2007–2012: CCB cited in UNICEF/ ECAO, 2015; 2013–2017: CCB, data shared with UNICEF.

Child sexual abuse

Between 2007 and 2017,¹⁰⁴ a total of 1,837 child sexual abuse cases – 167 annually – were referred to the CCB; around 2,000 children were involved. In 2017, half the victims were adolescents aged between and 12 and 16 years; 30 per cent were aged between 5 and 11 years¹⁰⁵; approximately 90 per cent were girls. Information on perpetrators is shown in Figure 7.2. The principal findings are:

- Out of 842 perpetrators of sexual abuse to children between 2008 and 2013, 85 per cent were identified.
- In around 90 per cent of cases (excluding unknowns), the perpetrator was known to the victim.
- The most frequent perpetrator was the girl's 'boyfriend' – 23 per cent of cases.
- Over 40 per cent of perpetrators were from the victim's family, with over two thirds of these being parents, step-parents or other close relatives.
- 17 per cent were family friends or neighbours and a similar proportion, 19 per cent, were either members of the public or school-related.

The fact that many perpetrators knew the victim represents a gross betrayal of trust by the perpetrators as well as a cynical exploitation of weaker and often powerless victims.

104 Unless stated, the following information has been extracted from UNICEF/ Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Barbados: Child Protection Statistical Digest, 2015, 2015 https://www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean/ECAO_BARBADOS_Child_Protection_Statistical_Digest_2015.pdf.

105 Child Care Board, Statistics on Child Abuse, personal communication, 2019.

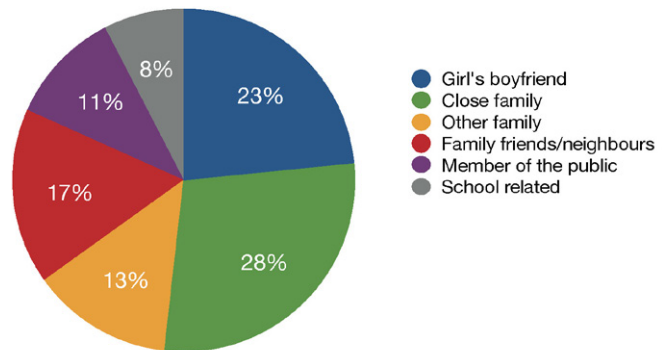
Figure 7.2: Perpetrators of sexual abuse, 2008–2013

a. Total cases, 2008/2009-2012/2013

Perpetrator	No.	Description
Girl's boyfriend	170	
Close family	207	Parents/ partners, siblings, step-parents/ siblings, guardians
Other family	97	Cousins, uncles, grandparents
All family	304	
Family friends/ neighbours	121	
School-related	55	Teachers, students
Member of the public	78	
Unknown	114	No information
Total	842	

Source: UNICEF/ Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, 2015.

b. Annual average (% age distribution)



NB. Percentages recalculated excluding 'unknowns'.

Child neglect

Between 2007 and 2017, referred child neglect cases averaged around 300 annually and involved 450–500 children. Neglect cases accounted for 37 per cent of all child abuse cases over this period – over half as many as the number of sexual abuse cases. Victims were split evenly between boys and girls. A detailed assessment of 113 randomly selected cases of substantiated child neglect between 2007 and 2011¹⁰⁶ revealed that:

- 22 per cent of victims showed signs of physical abuse (violent disciplining).
- Of the 218 children involved, 68 (31 per cent) were aged between 10 and 16 years, and the remainder were under 10 years.
- 17 cases (15 per cent) involving 78 children (36 per cent) were from single-parent female-headed households with over 4 children.
- Almost all neglect occurred in the home, especially between the end of the school day and parents returning from work.
- Around 80 per cent of the perpetrators were the mothers, nearly all of whom were single parents or divorced/separated, and under half had an employment income.
- Evidence of poverty was observed in 80 per cent of cases.
- The following manifestations of neglect were observed: physical neglect – 78 per cent of cases; emotional abuse – 59 per cent; supervisory neglect – 81 per cent; medical neglect – 31 per cent; environmental neglect – 66 per cent.

106 CCB/ UNICEF, *Child Neglect in Barbados: a Review of Neglect Cases presented to the Child Care Board, 2007-2011, 2012* https://www.unicef.org/ECAO/Child_Neglect_in_Barbados.pdf. Unless stated the information in this section comes from this source.

The overall profile that emerges from these findings is that many perpetrators of neglect are single mothers living with little or no income, often without (or with only limited) access to parents and other family members and who are struggling to manage the triple burden of childcare, income generation and household chores. Relationship breakdown, therefore, appears to be a major underlying cause of child neglect.

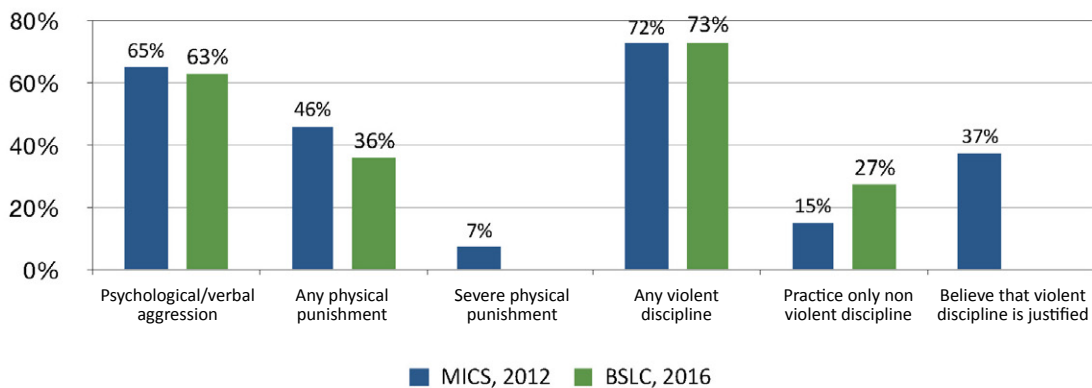
Violent discipline and physical abuse

Discipline is an integral part of child-rearing that teaches children self-control and acceptable behaviour. Yet all too often children are raised using methods that rely on physical force or verbal intimidation to punish unwanted behaviours and encourage desired ones. Research has found that violent forms of discipline have negative impacts on children's and adolescents' mental and social development, as does being a victim of violence outside the home and bullying. The consequences range from immediate effects to long-term damage that carries well into adulthood.¹⁰⁷

Figure 7.3 shows that, in 2016, over 70 per cent of 10–14-year-olds experienced violent discipline in their home.¹⁰⁸ In over a third of these cases, 36 per cent, there was physical punishment; and the great majority of these children were also subject to psychological aggression. Less than 30 per cent of 10–14-year-olds were disciplined using non-violent methods. Within this group, two thirds were subject to the withdrawal of privileges or being sent to their room, and in the remaining cases, ill-discipline was discussed with the child.

These results are similar to those obtained in the 2012 MICS (shown in Figure 7.3) in terms of the levels of verbal aggression and overall violent discipline. The MICS data, however, identified a higher level of physical punishment: 46 per cent, with 7 per cent of children being subject to a severe beating. There is also a disparity between behaviour and belief in that the proportion of women who believed that violent disciplining was justified, 37 per cent, is much lower than the proportion of women whose children had been subject to violent discipline: 72 per cent.

Figure 7.3: Child discipline (10–14 years)



NB. The severe physical punishment category is a subset of those experiencing 'any physical punishment'.
Sources: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b; Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

¹⁰⁷ UNICEF, *Child Disciplinary Practices at Home: Evidence from a range of low- and middle-income countries*, UNICEF, New York, 2010.

¹⁰⁸ Including shouting and yelling at the child as well as physical (corporal) punishment.

The BSLC data also show that girls were more likely than boys to experience only non-violent discipline (33 per cent as opposed to 22 per cent) and were less likely to experience verbal aggression (56 compared to 68 per cent). They were, however, just as likely to experience physical discipline.

In the most extreme cases, children experiencing violent discipline and maltreatment are brought to the attention of the Child Care Board. Since 2013, physical and emotional abuse cases have averaged over 400 annually, involving around 500 children evenly split between males and females (Figure 7.1). Since 2013, this category has become the most common form of child abuse – potentially indicating a growing intolerance to this practice if this is related to increased reporting.

In a minority of cases of substantiated child abuse, children are admitted into residential care. Between 2009 and 2013, on average, 56 children were admitted, equivalent to around 5 per cent of the total number of cases. The figure for 2017/2018 was similar – 46 admissions. The majority are aged 5 to 11 years¹⁰⁹ and around 55 per cent are male.

Domestic violence

Adolescents and young adults can be seriously affected by domestic violence as they are far more likely than older persons to be living at home when the violence occurs. The negative effects of children and adolescents witnessing domestic violence are well researched in the international literature and there is corroborative evidence from studies undertaken in Barbados¹¹⁰:

- A study of 274 case files of juveniles who had been brought before the Juvenile Court between 2006 and 2010, found that 79 (29 per cent) had come from violent homes with the majority having witnessed a sibling or a parent being physically, emotionally, verbally, and/or sexually abused by a parent or close relative. Nineteen of these children were charged with violent crimes such as assault and wounding.
- Half a sample of women and men experiencing domestic violence reported that their mothers had been beaten. The same study found that 30 per cent of women had been beaten as adults.
- Barbadian victims of violence in homes reported that their children experienced frequent crying, fighting at school, hitting back when being spanked,¹¹¹ and being withdrawn and aggressive.
- Around one fifth of murders committed in Barbados between 2009 and 2013 were acts of domestic violence; in all these cases, the victims were women.
- A study of hospital data on victims of intimate partner violence revealed that of the 78 cases studied, the majority were committed by boyfriends with many of the others committed by fathers and brothers.

109 Sheria Brathwaite, 'More adopting children than fostering', Nation News, April 2019 <https://www.nationnews.com/nationnews/news/239574/adopting-children-fostering>

110 Unless stated, the information in this section has been extracted and paraphrased from Bailey, C./ IDB, 2016, where the sources of the cited studies can be found.

111 The beaten mother uses violence on her child who then fights back – a clear example of both the transition from victim to perpetrator and the intergenerational transfer of violent behaviour.

Although these studies provide telling results, they only represent snapshots of the prevalence and impact of domestic violence in Barbados. While there are no Barbados-specific data on the overall prevalence of domestic violence, a recent survey of this issue in Trinidad and Tobago gives some idea of the potential magnitude of the problem where a quarter of women aged 20–24 years responded that they had been beaten while in a relationship.¹¹² Some data are, however, available on reported cases of domestic violence. In 2013, the Family Conflict Intervention Unit (FCIU) was established within the Royal Barbados Police Force (RBPF) to both strengthen police response to domestic violence and improve the information base. The findings from the FCIU data from mid-2013 to end 2014 are:

- 643 cases of domestic violence were reported to the police, i.e. approximately 400 per annum.
- 80 per cent of cases of domestic violence were perpetrated by a current or previous partner of the victim, 70 per cent by a common law or visiting partner, and only 10 per cent by a husband or wife. Over 40 per cent were committed by a separated partner. This implies that the risk of domestic violence is higher in less formal and terminated relationships, and that it is also a cause of relationship breakdown.
- Around 90 per cent of perpetrators were male.
- Assaults constituted the majority of the type of violence reported. These assaults accounted for 18 per cent of all assaults reported to the police in 2014 (similar to the percentage of murders).

Between 2009 and 2013, an average of 70 women sought refuge in the shelter operated by the Business and Professional Women’s Club for reasons of emotional/ verbal abuse or having been assaulted. This is equivalent to around one in six of domestic violence cases reported to the police.

MICS assessed the attitudes of young women (15–24 years) towards wife beating by asking the respondents whether they thought that husbands/partners were justified to hit or beat them in a variety of situations.¹¹³ Results showed little tolerance for domestic violence under any circumstances with less than 6 per cent of young women considering that domestic violence was justifiable in some instances. Tolerance amongst older women (25–49 years) was 5 per cent, indicating that female tolerance of domestic violence in Barbados is low across all age groups. Additional and confirmatory information on this topic is contained in another recent report¹¹⁴ which also shows a low level of approval for domestic violence related to infidelity¹¹⁵ (Figure 7.4) by both sexes, albeit slightly higher for males. Note however that over a quarter of respondents would ‘understand’ if another person committed a violent act due to a partner’s infidelity.

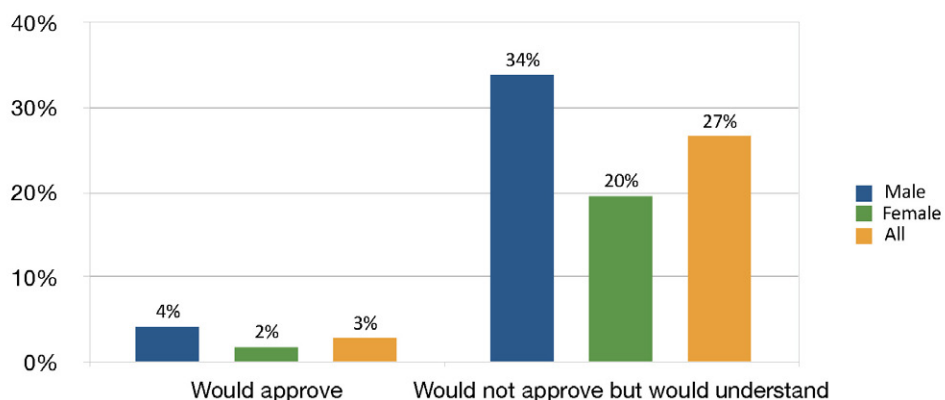
112 Pemberton, C. and J. Joseph for Inter-American Development Bank, *National Women’s Health Survey for Trinidad and Tobago – Final Report*, 2018.

113 The purpose of these questions is to capture the social justification of violence as a disciplinary action when a woman does not comply with certain expected gender roles.

114 Sutton and Alvarez/ IDB, 2017.

115 Infidelity is the reason for which domestic violence is most likely to be deemed acceptable.

Figure 7.4: Tolerance of domestic violence if wife is unfaithful, Barbados, 2014/15

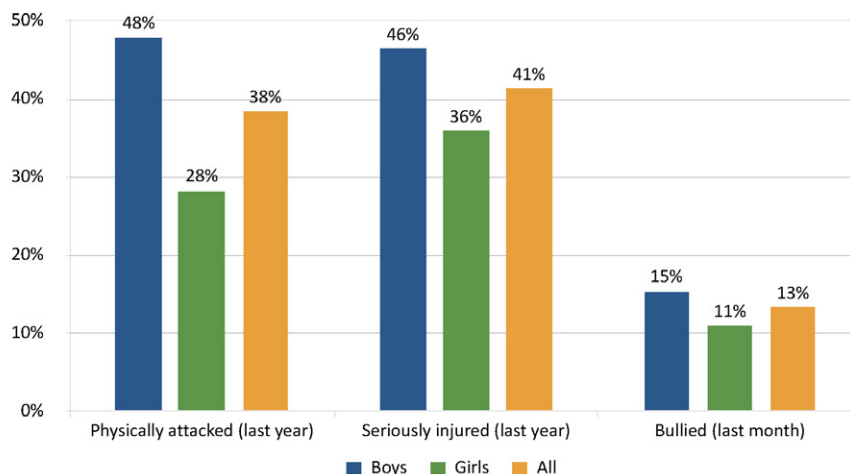


NB. Data refer to adults 18 years and above.
 Source: Sutton and Alvarez/ IDB, 2017, using data from 2014/2015 Latin American Public Opinion Project Survey.

Violence outside the home

Living in a safe environment extends beyond the home, particularly as adolescents begin to spend more time outside the house in different social settings. High proportions of 13-15-year-olds have been attacked (38 per cent) or seriously injured (41 per cent) in the 12 months preceding the survey. In both cases, rates are significantly higher for boys than girls (Figure 7.5). Although these proportions appear high, they are comparable to results obtained in the same survey carried out elsewhere in the Eastern Caribbean. Around 13 per cent of boys and girls in this age group had been bullied in the last month.¹¹⁶

Figure 7.5: Experience of violence outside the home, 13–15-year-olds



Source: Centers for Disease Control, 2011.

116 International research has shown that victims of bullying are more likely to experience mental health and other behaviour problems. See Sutton, H. and I. Ruprah, 'Youth Violence and Delinquency: Reducing Risk and Enhancing Protection', in *Restoring Paradise in the Caribbean – Combating Violence with Numbers*, edited by H. Sutton and I. Ruprah, DB Monograph 513, 2017.

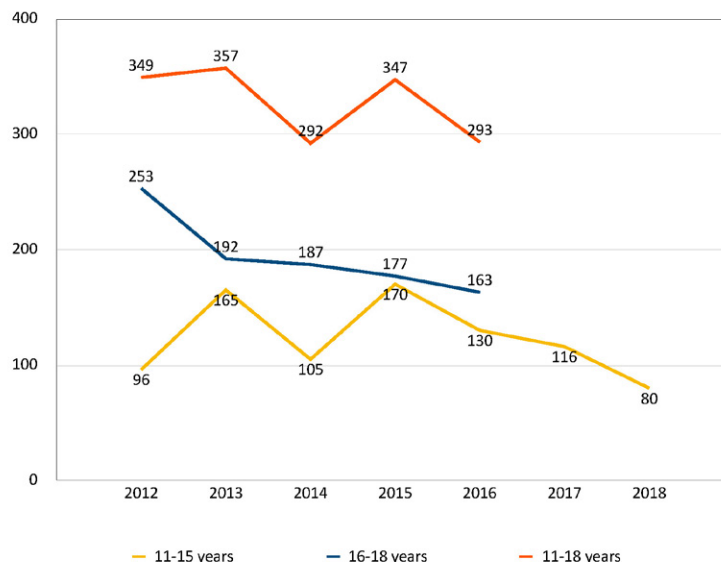
However, actual experience of violence outside the home is not the entire story. Also important are the perceptions of safety and fear of crime. 2016 BSLC data revealed that around 40 per cent of youth (15–24 years) answered ‘Yes’ to the question “Are you more fearful of being a victim of crime than you were two years ago?”¹¹⁷ These results show that although actual experience of crime may not be that common, it is sufficient to generate a significant level of fear and unease. While this encourages the taking of precautions, high levels of fear can lead to loss of trust and community cohesion.

Young people and crime

Juvenile crime levels¹¹⁸

As with child abuse, juvenile involvement in criminal activity may be small in terms of numbers but the repercussions for themselves, their families, victims and communities can be severe. Data on juvenile crimes reported to the police since 2012¹¹⁹ shows that (Figure 7.6): (i) the majority of youth crimes are committed by 16–18-year-olds; (ii) the number of crimes committed by this group shows a downward trend since 2012; (iii) the trend for crimes committed by the 11–15-year age group is more erratic but has been downward since 2015; and (iv) the great majority, 80–90 per cent, of youth crimes are committed by males.

Figure 7.6: Juvenile crime levels, 2012–2018



NB. Data for 2017–2018 are not available for 16–18-year-olds.

Sources: RBPF cited in CJRPU, 2019 and Devonish and Henry, 2017.

¹¹⁷ SDG indicator 16.1.4.

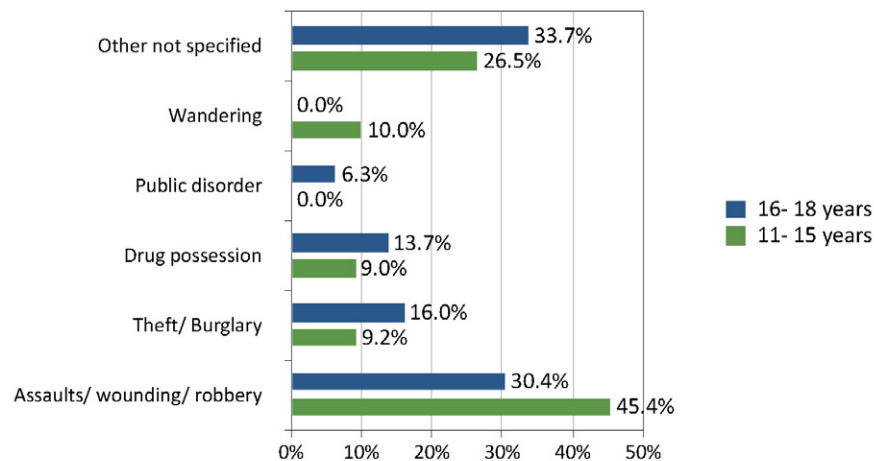
¹¹⁸ This is the term for youth crime adopted by the Royal Barbados Police Force in the presentation of their statistics. It refers to crimes committed by persons aged 11 to 16 years, although some of the data include 17- and 18-year olds. The data relate to crimes referred to the police and, due to underreporting, may understate the actual incidence of juvenile crime, especially for less serious crimes. In this context, reporting rates for assaults, robbery and burglaries are described as high (Bailey, C./ IDB, 2016).

¹¹⁹ Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit, Government of Barbados, Summary Statistics on Juvenile Crime, personal communication, 2019.; Devonish and Henry/ CJRPU, 2017.

Types of crime

The principal types of juvenile crime reported to the police are shown in Figure 7.7. While the high proportion of unspecified crimes complicates interpretation, it is apparent that, for both age groups, the most common offences were assaults and other crimes against the person.¹²⁰ These accounted for around 30 and 45 per cent of offences for older and younger juveniles respectively. Drug possession and thefts/ burglaries accounted for 30 per cent of offences for 16–18-year-olds compared to under 20 per cent for 11–15-year-olds, and wandering offences¹²¹ make up 10 per cent of offences for this group. The implication is that older juveniles are more likely to be involved in crimes likely to bring them material benefits (e.g. drug possession and theft), whereas for under 16-year-olds, the largest proportion result from disputes getting out of control.

Figure 7.7: Categories of juvenile crime, 2012–2018



Source: Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit, 2019, using RBPF data.

Violent crime

Between 2010 and 2016, crimes against the person committed by juveniles (11–18 years) averaged around 150 annually; over 80 per cent were assaults.¹²² Forty per cent were committed by 11–15-year-olds and 60 per cent by 16–18-year-olds. But juveniles are also the victims of violent crime. Between 2010 and 2013, juvenile victims of assaults averaged 159 each year – similar to the number reported to the police. They accounted for 12 per cent of all assaults requiring hospitalization (Figure 7.8). More striking is the disproportionate presence of young adults (18–25 years) amongst the victims of serious assaults. Despite comprising only 12 per cent of the population, this group accounted for a quarter of victims between 2010 and 2013, around three quarters of whom were male. Another quarter of victims were between 26 and 35 years old. Similarly, information from the IDB’s 2014/2015 Caribbean Crime Victimization Survey¹²³ showed that young adults (18–24 years) were twice as likely as the population as a whole to have experienced assaults.

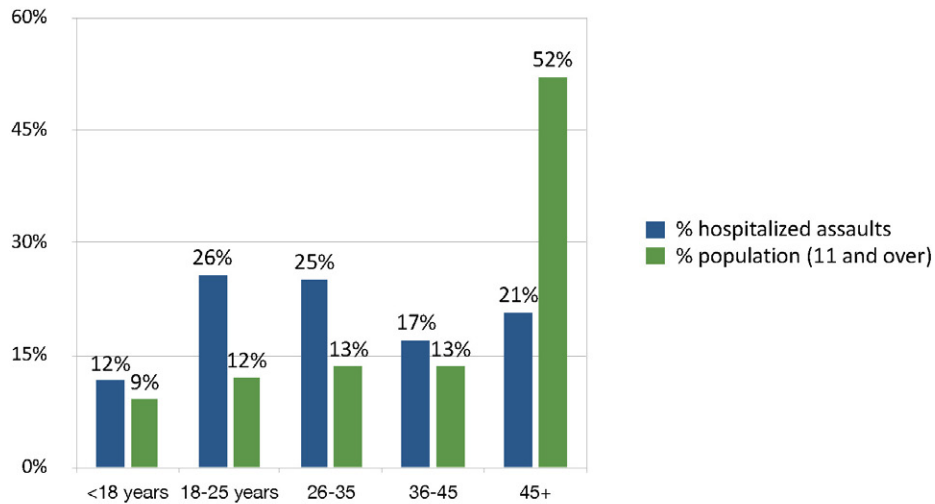
¹²⁰ Including sex crimes.

¹²¹ These include having no fixed abode, begging, prostitution, destitution with no known carer.

¹²² Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit, Government of Barbados, Summary Statistics on Juvenile Crime, personal communication, 2019

¹²³ Cited in Sutton and Ruprah, 2017. Data are for five Caribbean cities including Bridgetown.

Figure 7.8: Victims of assaults requiring hospitalization by age group, 2010–2013

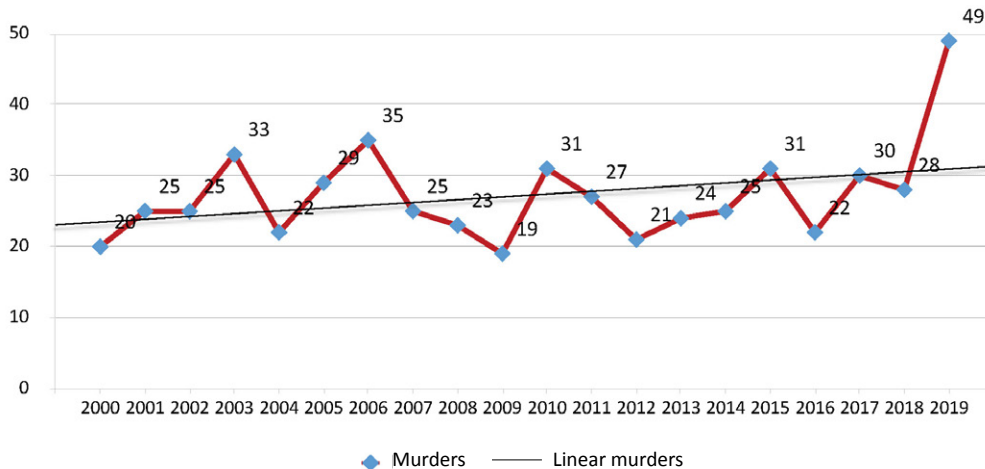


NB. Columns do not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Sources: Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) cited in Bailey, C./ IDB, 2016; Barbados Statistical Service, 2018 (population estimates).

The trend in murders appears to be upward. Notwithstanding substantial fluctuations, 2019 appears the worst year in terms of number of murders in the last 20 years (Figure 7.9). A similar pattern is observed among murders,¹²⁴ with young adults accounting for around a quarter of murder victims (2009–2013). Furthermore, almost half of murders were perpetrated by this age group. Virtually all murder victims and perpetrators were male. The data on assaults and murders indicate that young people are disproportionately involved in violent crime as both victims and perpetrators.

Figure 7.9: Murders, 2000–2019



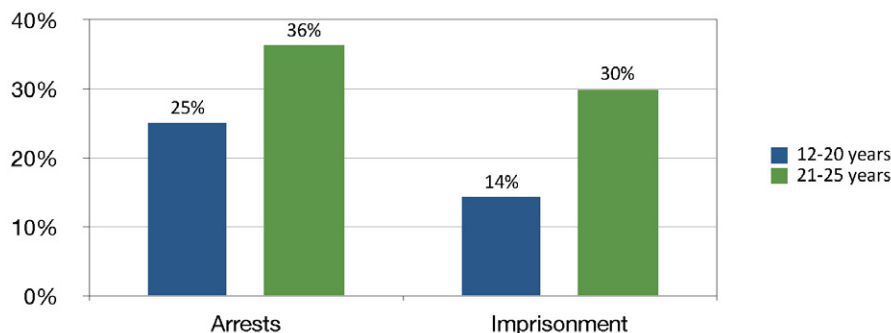
Source: 2000–2017: Statista, 'Homicide rate in Barbados from 2000 to 2017', 2019, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1040926/homicide-rate-barbados/>; 2018/2019: press reports.

124 Bailey, C./ IDB, 2016.

Recidivism

Reducing recidivism (repeat offending) is one of the objectives of the Barbados justice system,¹²⁵ as it is for justice systems worldwide. There is, however, limited information on its prevalence in Barbados. Figure 7.10 using 2004 data¹²⁶ shows that around one third of 21–25-year-olds arrested or imprisoned are repeat offenders. Proportions for those under 21 years are lower – which is to be expected given that, being younger, they are less likely to have committed more than one crime.¹²⁷

Figure 7.10: Recidivism¹²⁸



Source: UNICEF/ Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean/ Sealy-Burke, J., 2015.

Perceived causes of juvenile crime

Table 7.1 summarizes perceptions of the principal risk factors underlying juvenile crime obtained from two reports.¹²⁹ What is striking about the results is their general consistency irrespective of differing methodologies, respondent groups and time frames. Factors such as lack of parental control/ skills, absence of a father figure, peer pressure, poor living conditions and low socioeconomic status are repeatedly mentioned.

125 See Bailey, C./ IDB, 2016, and Devonish and Henry/ CJRPU, 2017.

126 National Task Force on Crime Prevention, *Barbados Youth Crime and Lifestyle Survey, 2004*, cited in UNICEF/ Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean/ Sealy-Burke, J., 2015.

127 These data refer to arrest and imprisonment and thus the most serious crimes (excludes previous minor infractions).

128 Percentage of those arrested/ imprisoned who are repeat offenders.

129 Devonish and Henry/ CJRPU, 2017, and UNICEF, *Views on Juvenile Offending: Barbados, Dominica and Saint Lucia – Report of National Surveys undertaken in 2010, 2012*.

Table 7.1: Principal risk factors of juvenile delinquency

Rank	Key Agency Stakeholders in Justice System ¹	Male Juvenile Residents (Prison & GIS)	Female Juvenile Residents (GIS)	Barbados Juveniles ²
1	Dysfunctional families (breakdown)	Lack of positive male role models (or strong father figure)	Poor parental skills	Peer pressure (65%) ³
2	Poor parental skills	Peer pressure	Breakdown in family/abuse in homes	Materialism (34%)
3	Home environment/living conditions/socioeconomic status	Breakdown in family/abuse in homes	Lack of positive male role models (or strong father figure)	Lack of parental control (26%)
4	Use of illicit/harmful drugs	The home environment/living conditions/socioeconomic status	The home environment/living conditions/socioeconomic status	Unemployment (14%)
5	Peer pressure	Financial pressure/needs	Financial pressure/needs	Drug abuse (8%)
6	-	-	-	Absence of role models (8%)

NB. Highlights show frequency of references to: (i) the **family situation**; and (ii) **poverty**.

1. Including police officers, probation officers, judicial officers, rehabilitation and social workers, etc.
2. Questionnaire survey of 500 randomly selected juveniles (16–19 years).
3. Percentage of respondents citing factor (multiple response).

Sources: Devonish and Henry, 2017, except for juveniles: UNICEF, *Views on Juvenile Offending: Barbados, Dominica and Saint Lucia – Report of National Surveys undertaken in 2010, 2012.*

Also striking is the high proportion (65 per cent) of juveniles mentioning ‘peer pressure’ as the reason for their delinquency. In contrast, this factor is only the fourth reason cited by key stakeholders. Arguably this reflects that stakeholders tend to identify what they see as the root causes for delinquency while, for juveniles, peer pressure is the principal direct cause of delinquency. Also notable is that peer pressure is not mentioned by female respondents, who also lay greater stress on the family/ home environment, perhaps because they are less likely than males to be involved in antisocial group activities such as drug dealing and criminality.

In any case, the risk factors cited in Table 7.1 are not independent of one another. For instance, strong parental skills and a strong father figure will likely reduce the potential for peer pressure to lead young people into wrongdoing. This is a similar result as obtained previously in relation to teenage delinquency. At the same time, reduced unemployment/ improved household conditions will decrease economic pressures to indulge in thefts and burglaries.

Overall though, it is the family situation which appears to be crucial. According to Devonish and Henry, “among key agency stakeholders in the justice system, the most disconcerting risk factors for juvenile delinquency were closely associated with failures in parental and familial experiences of juveniles – a finding consistent with other findings from international sources among developed and developing territories across the globe. Risk factors cited by male and female juvenile residents were generally comparable, revealing that (1) poor parental skills, (2) breakdowns/conflicts in the family environment, and (3) lack of positive male figures in the home were principal drivers for both male and female juvenile offenders.”¹³⁰ Further observations reinforce this conclusion:

¹³⁰ Devonish and Henry / CJRPU, 2017.

- “Of the 274 cases of gang violence examined, 113 of the perpetrators came from single-parent families. In 97 of the cases, they had been raised by single mothers.”
- “The YMCA argues that youth from low-income neighbourhoods growing up in single-parent homes with absentee fathers are at risk for criminal involvement.”
- “Relative to the risk factors before the Juvenile Liaison Scheme, ... 27 per cent were raised by both parents, 68 per cent were raised by a single female parent.”¹³¹
- 43 per cent of respondents considered that “more parental control and involvement” was needed to address the most serious offences committed by juveniles in Barbados. This was the most frequently mentioned option followed by incarceration/ punishment (30 per cent) and rehabilitation/ counselling (26 per cent).¹³²
- “Of the 88 children [11–15 years] committed [to custodial care] over a five-year period (2009–2013), 26 (15 males, 11 females) or 29.6 per cent were from the Child Care Board/ children’s homes.”¹³³

Juveniles in the criminal justice system

The Juvenile Liaison Scheme

The Juvenile Liaison Scheme (JLS), established in 1983, is designed for children at risk between the ages of 7 and 16 years known to be engaged in criminal activity and children suspected of exposure to the risk factors of criminal activity. The programme aims to intervene among youth before they are brought before the Court. It is a preventive measure seeking to avoid children being charged for criminal activity. Children are referred to the scheme by parents, schools, the police and social agencies (the Child Care Board, the Welfare Department). Services provided include parental education (e.g. visits to older people and residential homes), community outreach, summer camp. These services are available for up to six months.¹³⁴

Between 2011 and 2013, referrals to the JLS averaged around 220 annually. Two thirds were males and two thirds were for behavioural reasons (e.g. wandering). The average age of those referred was 13 years. The most common criminal offence was theft, representing between a quarter and a third of all criminal referrals.¹³⁵

Juvenile arrests and committals to custodial care

Between 2011 and 2013, 386 juveniles (12–18 years) were arrested. Around 80 per cent of them were males. The number of arrests increased sharply between 2012 and 2013, from around 100 to 180.¹³⁶

Although the age groups differ, there is an overlap between the JLS (7 to 16 years) and those arrested (12–18 years). It is noteworthy that JLS referrals outnumber arrests: 220 on average compared to 130 during 2011–2013. However, if only criminal-related JLS referrals are considered, the number of arrests is around double the number of referrals (130 compared with around 70), implying that the JLS is diverting around half of those involved in criminal behaviour from the mainstream legal system.

131 These three quotes cited in Bailey, C./ IDB, 2016.

132 UNICEF/ Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean/ Sealy-Burke, J., 2015.

133 Cited in UNICEF, *Views on Juvenile Offending: Barbados, Dominica and Saint Lucia – Report of National Surveys undertaken in 2010, 2012.*

134 Bailey, C./ IDB, 2016. Some older children also benefit from the JLS.

135 UNICEF/ Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean/ Sealy-Burke, J., 2015

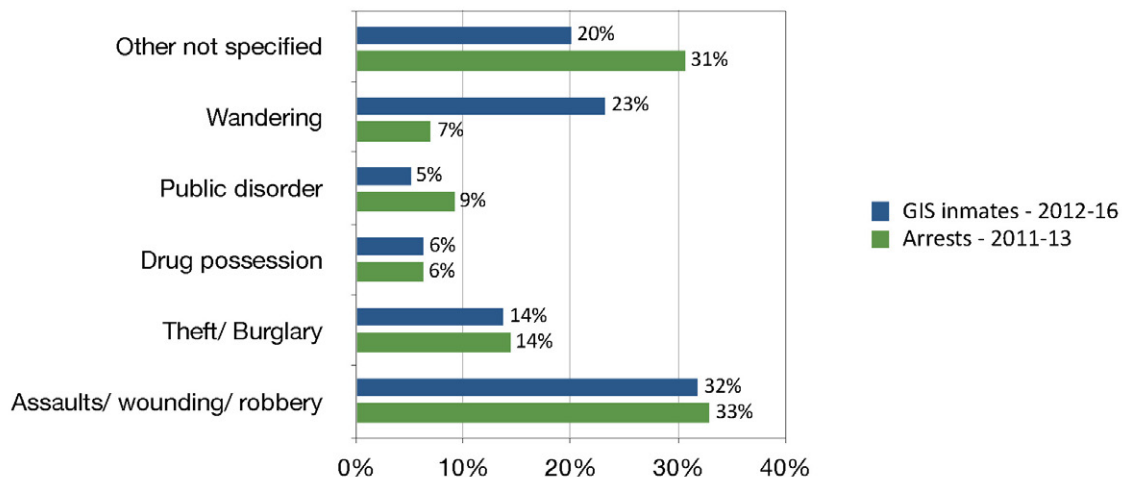
136 Ibid.

The Government Industrial School

The great majority of juveniles requiring detention are sent to the Government Industrial School (GIS). Annual remands committals into custodial care at GIS are approximately 140, of which around two thirds were males.¹³⁷

Figure 7.11 shows the types of crime for those arrested and committed to custodial care at GIS. The patterns are broadly similar, with the principal difference being the higher proportion of GIS inmates who have been sentenced for wandering. Wandering is the most common offence for girls to be incarcerated: 60 per cent compared to 16 per cent for boys. Assaults and other crimes against the person account for just under a third of all offences. These are much more prevalent amongst boys, 40 per cent, compared to 11 per cent for females. There is a similar variation for thefts: 18 per cent of male offences comparing to under 5 per cent for females. Males are also more likely to have drug offences. The patterns observed are broadly similar to the distribution for reported juvenile crimes (Figure 7.7).

Figure 7.11: Types of offences for juvenile arrests and GIS incarcerations (11–16 years)



Source: UNICEF/ Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean/ Sealy-Burke, J., 2015.

The adult prison

The primary focus of the GIS is on juveniles aged under 16 years. If committed before they were 16 years old, they would be expected to complete their sentence at the GIS. Juveniles over the age of 16 would normally be committed to the adult prison.

The prison population in 2015 was 911, around 40 per cent of whom were on remand. Under 3 per cent of the prison population was female. In 2015 there were 68 inmates under the age of 21, of whom 17 were aged between 15 and 18 years.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Bailey, C./ IDB, 2016. Note that the data refer to those on remand as well as those committed to custodial care. The number sentenced to custodial care is lower, around 20 per annum.

¹³⁸ UNICEF/ Office for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean/ Sealy-Burke, J., 2015.

Key findings and implications

Child neglect, sexual and physical abuse

Every year, around 800 cases (involving 1,100 children) of child abuse are referred to the CCB. A fifth of cases involved sexual abuse with the remainder split roughly equally between neglect and other causes (primarily physical abuse). In 2017, half the victims of sexual abuse were adolescents aged between 12 and 16 years and around 90 per cent were girls. Virtually all perpetrators were known to the victim: around two thirds were the victim's 'boyfriend' or family members; a quarter were family 'friends', neighbours or school-related; only 11 per cent were described as members of the public. The fact that so many perpetrators of sexual abuse knew their victim represents a gross betrayal of trust on their part as well as a cynical exploitation of weaker and often powerless victims. While these numbers are generally small, the following should be noted: (i) although the data relate to all children, the majority of sexual abuse cases are likely to have involved adolescents; (ii) many cases will have gone unreported; and (iii) these types of violence lead to a high potential risk of problems arising later in the victims' lives.

Over 70 per cent of 10–14-year-olds had experienced violent discipline in their home – whether physical punishment (present in about half the cases) or psychological aggression. The proportion of adolescents experiencing physical punishment was some 10 percentage points higher than the proportion of respondents who believed it was justified, indicating a contradiction between attitudes and behaviour. Rather than being a deliberate disciplinary choice, such violent methods often arise from adult anger, stress, frustration or lack of knowledge about non-violent disciplining methods. In the most extreme cases, children experiencing violent discipline and maltreatment are brought to the attention of the Child Care Board; since 2013 these cases have averaged over 400 annually, evenly split between males and females.

Between 2007 and 2017, referred child neglect cases averaged around 300 annually (450–500 children). Just under a third were adolescents (10–16 years) and a significant proportion showed signs of physical abuse. The generalized profile of perpetrators of neglect is that they are single mothers struggling to manage the triple burden of childcare, income generation and household chores, with little or no income and often without (or with only limited) access to parents and other family members. As with the use of physical discipline, in many cases, neglect is a consequence of the difficulties being faced by the perpetrators, in this case, often, single mothers. Therefore, relationship breakdown appears to be a major underlying cause of child neglect.

Domestic violence

643 cases of domestic violence were reported to the police in the 18 months from mid-2013 until the end of 2014. Almost all perpetrators were male and 80 per cent were a current or previous partner of the victim. Of these, over half were committed by a separated partner, a third by one half of a visiting relationship/ common law union, and one in eight by a husband or wife. Assaults constituted the majority of the types of violence reported. This is an important finding as it implies that the risk of domestic violence increases with less formal and terminated relationships. Domestic violence related assaults and murders accounted for around 20 per cent of the national totals of these crimes.

The negative effects of children and adolescents witnessing domestic violence have been well researched internationally. Studies undertaken in Barbados found that: (i) 29 per cent of juveniles brought before the Juvenile Court between 2006 and 2010 had come from violent homes; (ii) half a sample of women and men experiencing domestic violence reported that their mothers had been beaten; and (iii) victims of violence in the home reported that their children experienced frequent crying, fighting at school, hitting back when being spanked, and being withdrawn and aggressive. Tolerance of domestic violence is however low. Ninety-four per cent of young women considered that domestic violence was not justified under any circumstances.

Violence outside the home

Young adolescent (13–15 years) experience of violence outside the home is high. A third have been attacked and just under half seriously injured in the previous 12 months. In both cases, boys were more likely than girls to have been the victims. Around one in eight of both sexes had been bullied in the previous month. These violent experiences among adolescents indicate that many have an increased risk of developing mental health problems during their teenage years.

Young people and crime

As with child abuse, juvenile criminal activity may be small in terms of the numbers involved, but the repercussions for perpetrators, their families, victims themselves and communities can be severe. In 2016, 300 such crimes were reported to police. Forty-five per cent were committed by 16–18-year-olds and the remainder by the 11–15-year age group. Between 80 and 90 per cent of juvenile crimes were committed by males. Types of crime vary by age group, with 45 per cent of them committed by 11–15-year-olds (consisting of assaults) compared to 30 per cent for the older age group. Thirty per cent of the crimes committed by this group involved drug possession and thefts or burglaries.

Young adults (18–25 years) are disproportionately represented amongst both victims and perpetrators of murders. This group, which comprises around 12 per cent of the population, accounted for around a quarter of murder victims and almost 60 per cent of perpetrators. 2019 was the worst year on record for the number of murders, while it is not possible to assess whether the involvement of young adults, as victims or perpetrators, has also increased. Serious assaults exhibit a similar pattern, with around a quarter of victims being from the 18–25-year age group.

Studies on the perceived causes of juvenile crime repeatedly identify the following causal factors: lack of parental control/ skills, absence of a father figure, peer pressure, poor living conditions and low socioeconomic status. These risk factors are not independent of one another. Strong parental skills and a strong father figure can reduce the likelihood of peer pressure leading young people into wrongdoing. Similarly, reduced unemployment/ improved household conditions will tend to reduce the financial pressures to commit thefts and burglaries. However, the family situation appears to be crucial and this replicates the previous finding that lower levels of parental engagement are associated with increased teenage delinquency.

Juveniles in conflict with the law

Between 2011 and 2013, 386 juveniles 12–18 years old were arrested and around 80 per cent of them were males. A quarter of those arrested had previously been arrested, indicating a significant level of recidivism. The JLS aims to intervene among youth before they are brought before the Court. It is a preventive measure seeking to avoid children being charged for criminal activity. Between 2011 and 2013 referrals to the JLS averaged around 220 annually. Two thirds were males and two thirds were for behavioural reasons (e.g. wandering). The average age of those referred was 13 years. The most common criminal offence was theft, representing between a quarter and a third of all criminal referrals. The number of JLS referrals is around 56 per cent of all the arrests, implying that the JLS is diverting over half of those arrested away from the mainstream legal system.

The great majority of juveniles requiring detention are sent to the GIS. Annual committals into custodial care at GIS are around 140, of which around two thirds are males. The patterns for reported juvenile crime, those sent to the GIS and those arrested, are broadly similar with assaults and theft accounting for over 40 per cent of all offences. In 2015, the adult prison had 68 inmates under the age of 21, which was around 7 per cent of the total.

Overview

For almost every category, the numbers of cases of reported violence and crime are low – rarely rising above 500 cases a year. Yet these offences engender a high risk of seriously affecting victims' well-being in the short, medium and long term as well as those of family members, local communities and society as a whole. Such impacts range from mental health problems, difficulties in leading normal lives, costs to government and, the possibility of a repeating cycle of abuse, violence and criminality.

Males are far more likely than females to be involved in fighting with their peers and violent criminal activity – both as victims and perpetrators. They are also primarily responsible for cases of child sexual abuse and domestic violence. However, they are as likely as females to be victims of violent disciplining in the home. And women, often single parents, are most likely to be the perpetrators of child neglect largely due to the combination of coping with childcare, household activities and financial pressures.

The single-parent emphasis is important as it reinforces one crucial underlying theme – that family/ relationship breakdown is a crucial factor in the physical abuse of children and adolescents, domestic violence, teenage delinquency and criminality. Other recurring and linked root causes are poverty and unemployment. The latter applies less to the issue of sexual abuse, where male attitudes need to be profoundly reshaped so that they refrain from abusing, exploiting and betraying the trust of their child and adolescent victims.

Yet the latest situation in Barbados also displays some positives: (i) there is little evidence of any upward trend in juvenile crime; (ii) the increased reporting of instances of physical abuse of minors can indicate a reducing tolerance of this type of violence; and (iii) tolerance of domestic violence is low.

The types of abuse and violence described in this chapter represent the most serious consequences of several recurrent issues throughout this report – poverty, unemployment, risky sexual activity, family breakdown, and low parental engagement, especially by fathers. The implication is that to reduce the incidence of violence and abuse that can imperil the well-being of young people with ensuing impacts on society, action needs to be taken on these issues.

Arising from this analysis, priority actions to protect children, adolescents and young adults from abuse and violence are: (i) parental counselling, especially of the fathers, to increase their engagement and promote non-physical disciplining; (ii) support to poor single mothers, particularly those with several children; (iii) general and targeted (adolescents and parents) awareness campaigns about the unacceptability of violence and abuse and the importance of reporting; (iv) school-based programmes on the potential implications of delinquency and criminality, especially among males, and the importance of individual responsibility; (v) increased police efforts to bring cases of child sexual abuse and domestic violence to justice; (vi) support programmes for victims; and (vii) rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators to reduce recidivism.



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8

**Every young person lives in a safe
and clean environment**

Environmental hazards related to climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution kill over 8 million people each year.¹³⁹ These hazards are likely to increase in the future with severe impacts on national populations, young and old alike. At the same time, lack of access to clean water, basic sanitation, good hygiene practices and decent housing are crucial to socioeconomic well-being and good health. Addressing these issues is crucial if young people's ability to live in a safe and clean environment is not to be jeopardized.

Climate change and young people

"Climate change is a serious and substantial threat to the economies of Caribbean nations, the livelihoods of communities and the environments and infrastructure across the region."¹⁴⁰ Barbados is not immune from these impacts. Most importantly, sea levels are expected to rise between 1.5 and 2 metres by the end of the century. Furthermore, climate modelling projections for Barbados predict: an increase in average atmospheric temperature; reduced average annual rainfall; increased sea surface temperatures (SST); and the potential for an increase in the intensity of tropical storms.

The CARIBSAVE Climate Change Risk Atlas (CCCRA) analysed the potential threats to livelihoods and well-being of the Barbados population arising from these changes. These are summarized in Table 8.1. The headline findings are:

- Barbados is already experiencing the effects of climate change.
- Impacts fall into two principal categories: gradual changes, and short, sharp shocks resulting from the increasing frequency and intensity of tropical storms.
- Due to their nature, information on the actual and future impacts of the gradual changes resulting from sea level rise, increased surface temperatures and altered rainfall patterns, is currently very limited.
- In contrast, impacts from tropical storms and associated storm surges can be severe and are immediately apparent and quantifiable.
- In both cases, impacts are likely to increase in the future.

The nature of climate change means that the Barbados government has limited scope to prevent or reverse them. The focus therefore needs to be on adaptation and preparedness, particularly in regard to tropical storms. As the CCCRA report concludes "decision makers should adopt a precautionary approach and ensure that measures are taken to increase the resilience of economies, businesses and communities to climate-related hazards".

¹³⁹ See United Nations Office of Human Rights, 'Environmental hazards kill 8 million a year: UN expert urges global recognition of the human right to a healthy environment', press release, 2019 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23782&LangID=E>

¹⁴⁰ CARIBSAVE, Barbados Country Profile, Climate Change Risk Atlas (CCCRA), 2012 <https://www.caribbeanclimate.bz/2009-2011-the-caribsave-climate-change-risk-atlas-cccra/>

Table 8.1: Potential Impacts of climate change in Barbados

Sector	Causal Factor(s)	Potential impacts/ threats	Comments
Tourism	Sea level rise/ storm surges. International measures to reduce carbon emissions.	8–32 per cent of tourism properties will be affected by 1 and 2m SLR respectively. Loss of beaches (prime tourist attractions), especially on West Coast (e.g. Holetown and Sandy Lane). Reduced demand for travel and increased costs.	Tourism is pivotal to the Barbados economy: 13 per cent of GDP, 41 per cent total contribution (similar for employment) and around two thirds of exports. ¹ These are the greatest climate change threats to its future economic and social development.
Water quality and availability	Reduce average annual rainfall. Increase in average atmospheric temperature.	Saline intrusion. Reduced water availability due to more prolonged drought conditions. Higher intensity of periodic rains which increases surface runoff and reduces aquifer replenishment.	Barbados is ranked among the top 10 most water scarce countries in the world. Saline intrusion already observed in some locations. Aquifer replenishment also affected by poor maintenance of drainage gullies and greater coverage of hard surfaces which increase surface runoff. ²
Agriculture and food security	Increase in average atmospheric temperature. Increased intensity of tropical storms.	Reduced yields due to fungal and bacterial infestation resulting from increased soil temperatures. Impacts on livestock mortality and dairy yields. Losses due to flooding.	Sector is in long-term decline and currently represents under 1.5 per cent of GDP compared to 11.5 per cent in 1975 ³ due to high labour costs, cheap imports and changing quota regimes. Potential climate change impacts will exacerbate this situation and further increase dependence on imports. 230 farmers lost crops and livestock due to tropical storm Tomas.
Human health	Changing weather patterns. Increased intensity of tropical storms.	Increased risk of diseases related to drought conditions, periods of heavy rainfall. Outbreaks of disease following flooding / destruction due to tropical storms.	CCCRA report notes that it is currently difficult to identify such impacts and to separate them from other factors.
Marine biodiversity	Rising sea surface temperatures.	Continued bleaching and destruction of coral reefs with consequent impacts on fish stocks.	There has been a substantial deterioration in reefs in recent years.
Community livelihoods	Flooding and storm surges (and severe winds).	Damage to housing and infrastructure. Oistins is particularly vulnerable given its dependence on fisheries and low-lying topography. Indirect impacts relating to downturns in the tourism sector.	Barbados' location outside hurricane belt (the last hurricane was in 1955) has spared it from the recent (2017) extreme hurricanes. However tropical storm Tomas struck in 2010, causing "widespread roof loss, downed power lines and trees ... Approximately, 500 homes have been damaged. 75 to 80 per cent of the electrical service ... disrupted and water supply was significantly reduced in many areas." ⁴ In 2011, flooding affected northern parishes.

1. World Tourism and Travel Council, *Travel & Tourism Economic Impact – 2018 Barbados*, 2018, <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/archived/countries-2018/barbados2018.pdf>

2. See also *Water and sanitation* section below.

3. World Bank data cited at *Global Economy.com*, 'Barbados: GDP share of agriculture', https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Barbados/Share_of_agriculture/

4. Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), *Situation Report #4 Hurricane Tomas*, 2010 https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A22037038C6405D7492577D00001F735-Full_Report.pdf

Source: Adapted from CARIBSAVE, 2012 unless stated in notes.

To a large extent, the impacts of climate change will negatively affect, directly and indirectly, the livelihoods and well-being of the entire population of Barbados, young, middle-aged and old. Recent research¹⁴¹ has, however, identified a number of impacts that will either affect young people more acutely or will be materially different from those affecting other age groups. Note that this analysis concentrates on impacts due to climate change. Other impacts not related to climate change, or tangential, have been addressed earlier in this study.

As with the potential impacts of climate change shown in Table 8.1, impacts on young people fall into two distinct categories (Table 8.2): (i) those related to severe weather events which are sudden, short-term and often devastating; and (ii) those related to gradual, long-term changes in weather patterns, air temperature, and rising sea levels. In both cases, the well-being of young people will primarily depend on the formulation and implementation of comprehensive national strategies, policies and programmes of adaptation to, and mitigation of, climate change impacts, and, in particular, the threats posed to the pivotal tourism sector. There are some issues which are specific to young people; these are presented in Table 8.2 and are summarized below:

- Education: disruptions to education through damage to schools and closures, sometimes prolonged.
- Health: potential outbreaks of water- and vector-borne diseases.
- Social issues/ poverty: increased levels of poverty and unemployment; heightened risks of physical and sexual abuse and criminal activity resulting from public disorder.
- Health: increased frequency of diarrhoea outbreaks, respiratory diseases, dengue and other infectious diseases.

Measures to reduce these potential impacts should be incorporated into national planning at strategic and programme levels.

¹⁴¹ Pegram, J. and D. Knaute /UNICEF ECAO, *Caribbean children facing the climate crisis – UNICEF Climate, Environment and Energy Landscape Analysis for Children (CEELAC) – Eastern Caribbean*, 2019. Unless stated the information in this section has been derived from this source.

Table 8.2. Vulnerability of young people to climate change

Impact Sector	Issue affecting young people	Causal Factor(s)	Potential Impact(s) of Climate Change	Empirical Evidence ¹
Health	Vulnerability to water-, vector- and air-borne diseases.	Tropical storms/hurricanes. Changing weather patterns. Increased droughts and high-intensity rainfalls.	Potential increasing disease outbreaks including diarrhoea, respiratory infections (especially asthma), dengue (projected to increase by 300 per cent), chikungunya and (potentially) malaria.	Outbreaks of diarrhoea in Dominica following hurricane Maria. Dengue spread correlated to rainfall and humidity; substantial increase since 2012; children up to 16 years are especially vulnerable (Barbados). Chikungunya: first reported in the Caribbean in 2013 and could become endemic; disproportionately affected children under 10 years (Dominica). Asthma is endemic in the Caribbean, affecting almost one third of the population in some countries. The incidence of asthma in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago increased 17-fold between 1973 and 1996 and has been associated with pollen concentrations and atmospheric conditions (Trinidad and Tobago, 2006/2007). Increased respiratory infections during droughts (Barbados).
Education	Disruption to education.	Tropical storms/hurricanes. Increased frequency of drought.	Destruction of school buildings, equipment and teaching materials. Insufficient water during periods of drought.	Occurred across five islands following 2017 hurricanes. School closures lasted between one and three months. Disruption to school infrastructure and examinations (Saint Lucia, 2010). ² School closures due to drought (Barbados).
Young people living in poverty	Poverty. Unemployment.	Tropical storms/hurricanes.	Poverty increases with major disasters and poverty is above the national average in households with young people. The destruction of business premises increases unemployment. Youth unemployment accounts for around 30 per cent of total unemployment (Barbados).	The poverty head count could have increased by 14 percentage points following hurricane Maria; the number of people in extreme poverty could have doubled (Dominica). Unemployment tripled between 2000 and 2016 due to the impacts of hurricane Ivan and the financial crisis (Grenada). Job layoffs following Irma (BVI). Poor and vulnerable populations were twice as likely to need their house rebuilt following hurricane Irma (various affected countries).
Social issues	Vulnerability to physical, sexual abuse. Involvement in antisocial behaviour and crime. Mental health.	Tropical storms/hurricanes.	Social risks increased due to large-scale damage to livelihoods, property, physical and social infrastructure, food supply and unemployment.	Public disorder and looting (several islands). Heightened risk of suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts and increased substance abuse (worldwide). Heightened levels of aggression towards children (Puerto Rico). Increased sexual abuse (Dominica). Increased sexual violence towards young women (Trinidad and Tobago). Increased visibility of child sexual abuse (Grenada). Increased antisocial behaviour due to school closures or reduced hours (Dominica).

1. Unless stated all references have been summarized from Pegram, J. and D. Knaute /UNICEF ECAO, *Caribbean children facing the climate crisis – UNICEF Climate, Environment and Energy Landscape Analysis for Children (CEELAC) – Eastern Caribbean, 2019*. Mentions of specific countries are not intended to imply that they are unique and that the cited impacts would not apply elsewhere in the Eastern Caribbean, including Barbados.

2. Government of Saint Lucia, *Education Statistical Digest, 2015*.

Source: Adapted from Pegram and Knaute, 2019, unless stated above.

Water supply, sanitation and hygiene

Access to clean water, basic sanitation and good hygiene practices are considered core socioeconomic and health determinants and are essential for child survival, maternal and child health, family well-being and economic productivity. The importance of this issue is highlighted in SDG 6: “ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”.¹⁴² While young people are less susceptible than younger children to morbidity and mortality due to inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene, access to these services and facilities have critical implications for their well-being.

Water supply

SDG target 6.1 calls for universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030. Recent survey data show that virtually all households in Barbados have access to piped water (Table 8.3). Furthermore, over 95 per cent of households have water piped into their homes.

Table 8.3: Water supply (households)

Water supply	2010	2012	2016
Piped water into dwelling	96.0%	96.3%	96.6%
Piped water into yard	2.6%	1.9%	1.6%
Other piped water ¹	1.3%	1.2%	1.0%
All piped water ²	99.9%	99.4%	98.2%
Other	0.1%	0.6%	0.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

1. Received from neighbour or standpipe.

2. SDG indicator 6.1.1

Sources: 2010: Census, 2012: MICS; 2016:

The quality of the water supplied is also important, as sub-standard water can impact health, particularly that of children. Compared to adults, children require more water per unit of body weight, are less able to cope with attacks of diarrhea and are more prone to absorb greater proportions of certain waterborne chemicals¹⁴³.

Data on water quality in Barbados are limited. However, nitrates have been a major concern for Barbados' groundwater for some time.¹⁴⁴ The WHO's limit of 10 mg/L has been exceeded in certain areas of the island with one sample in St Michael showing a reading of 18.1 mg/L in 2009. According to the Barbados Water Authority, levels have been rising throughout the island.¹⁴⁵ Further evidence comes from eutrophication of the country's

142 United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals – Knowledge Platform; 2019 <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg6>

143 World Health Organization (WHO), Inheriting a Sustainable World? Atlas on Children's Health and the Environment, 2017 <https://www.who.int/ceh/publications/inheriting-a-sustainable-world/en/>

144 Burnside, 2011 cited in D. Ewing-Chow, "The Barbados Sewage Crisis Explained, Construction Caribbean, 2018 <https://medium.com/@constructcarib/the-barbados-sewage-crisis-explained-568e7ce38ec1>

145 Ibid.

marine waters which is due to the enrichment of water by nutrient salts resulting from untreated sewage being discharged into the sea.¹⁴⁶

In this context, it is relevant that Table 8.4 shows that over a third of households improve the quality of their tap water, through either boiling or the use of water filtration. This finding implies that many households do not have full confidence in the supply of water that they receive. Furthermore, more affluent households are more likely to treat their water than poorer ones, which usually contain more young people, implying that this group will be more susceptible to ill health if water quality seriously deteriorates.

Table 8.4: Domestic water treatment (households)

Treatment Method		% households
No treatment		64.2%
Treat water	Boiling	17.2%
	Water filter	19.7%
	Other	1.2%
Total		102.3% ¹

1. Some multiple responses.

Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b.

Sanitation

The relevant SDG target (6.2) is “by 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations” and the associated indicator (6.2.1) is the “proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, and a hand-washing facility with soap and water”.¹⁴⁷ The World Health Organization (WHO)/ UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene defines improved (i.e. acceptable) toilet facilities as those with water flush systems that discharge to a sewer, septic tank or pit, and pit latrines surrounded by a slab.¹⁴⁸

Recent survey data show that around 95 per cent of Barbadian households have flushing WCs (Table 8.5). The great majority of toilets are linked to pits/ wells; only around 7–15 per cent of households have toilets flushing to sewers or septic tanks. Although households with pit latrines have a much higher poverty rate than the average, 37 compared with 15 per cent, there is little variation between poor and non-poor households for other categories of toilet.

146 Ibid.

147 United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals – Knowledge Platform, 2019 <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg6>

148 World Health Organization/ UNICEF, Improved and unimproved water and sanitation facilities (Archived), WHO, Geneva and UNICEF, New York, 2012

Table 8.5: Sanitation (households)

Household Sanitation Method		2012	2012	2016
Water flush toilet linked to:	Sewer	4%	5%	2%
	Septic tank		10%	5%
	Pit/ Well ¹	92% ²	80%	88%
	Other		1%	0%
	All³	96%	95%	95%
Other	Pit latrine	4%	5%	4%
	Other/ none	0%	1%	1%
Total		100.0%	100%	100%

Terminology used in MICSS and BSLC; an alternative description is soakaway.

No further disaggregation.

SDG indicator 6.2.1

Source: 2010: Census, 2012: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b; 2016: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

The widespread use of pits/soakaways can lead to the contamination of the groundwater resources and the spread of waterborne diseases, particularly following heavy rainfall and flooding, and is inadequate in terms of managing conventional water pollutants such as nitrogen. Much of the waste disposed in this way contributes to groundwater contamination and ends up in the marine environment.

Hygiene

Teeth cleaning and hand-washing (especially after using the toilet) are cost-effective ways of maintaining oral health and reducing the incidence of both diarrhoea and pneumonia in children under five.¹⁴⁹ Information on these practices in Barbados indicates that almost all young adolescents brush their teeth regularly and wash their hands after using the toilet (Table 8.6). Differentials between girls and boys are small. Latest statistics¹⁵⁰ indicate that all primary and secondary schools in Barbados have basic drinking water supplies, improved sanitation and facilities for hand-washing (SDG indicators 4.a.1.e/f/g). Additional information from the MICS revealed that 97 per cent of households where washing facilities were observed had both water and soap available while soap was seen in almost all those where washing facilities could not be checked.

149 Cairncross, Sandy and Vivian Valdmanis, 'Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene Promotion', in *Disease Control Priorities in Developing Countries*, 2nd ed., edited by Dean T. Jamison et al., World Bank, Washington DC, 2006.

150 World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP), 'WASH in Schools: Country files', 2018.

Table 8.6: Hygiene, 13–15-year age group

Indicator	Sex	Less than daily	Yes ¹
Usually cleaned their teeth on a daily basis	Male	4.5%	95.5%
	Female	2.6%	97.4%
	All	3.6%	96.4%
Hand-washing after use of toilet	Sex	Never/rarely	Yes
	Male	2.0%	98.0%
	Female	1.5%	98.5%
	All	1.8%	98.2%

1. Related to SDG indicator 6.2.1.

Source: Centers for Disease Control, 2011.

Energy

Lack of access to electricity dramatically affects and undermines health, limits opportunities for education and development and can reinforce the cycle of poverty. For adolescents and young adults, access to electricity can greatly improve their ability to complete schoolwork and offers them the opportunity to use technology in the home. The SDGs call for universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services by 2030. In 2016, electricity was used for lighting by 97 per cent of households in Barbados and access to clean fuel (gas or electricity) was universal (Table 8.7).

Table 8.7: Source of lighting and type of cooking fuel (households)

Lighting	2016	Cooking Fuel	2012	2016
Electricity	97.2% ¹	LPG/ gas	95.0% ²	94.7%
		Electricity	4.5% ²	5.0%
Other	2.8%	Other	0.5%	0.3%
Total	100.0%	Total	100.0%	100.0%

1. SDG indicator 7.1.1.

2. SDG indicator 7.1.2.

Sources: 2012: Barbados Statistical Service, 2014b; 2016: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

While access to energy is high, Barbados, like most countries in the region, is almost entirely dependent on imported fossil fuels for power generation. This dependency, combined with outdated and inefficient power systems, has resulted in some of the highest electricity costs in the world.¹⁵¹ These challenges present a disproportionate burden for poor families, which are more likely to contain young people.

151 International Monetary Fund (IMF), 'Caribbean Energy: Macro-Related Challenges', 2016.

Housing conditions

As with basic infrastructure, good quality housing is critical to the well-being of young people. This is reflected in SDG target 11.1: “by 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums”.

Houses in Barbados have traditionally been constructed in wood and this infrastructure is still visible across the island. Over the years, the majority of these dwellings have been replaced either by concrete or masonry buildings. In 2016, over 60 per cent of dwellings had masonry/ concrete walls and floors, far more than those which still had wooden walls and floors at 25 per cent. Noticeable proportions were also in the process of upgrading with mixed masonry walls and/or floors. Almost 95 per cent of dwellings had metal (corrugated sheeting) roofs. Very few (2 per cent) dwellings still had roofs constructed of traditional wooden shingles (Table 8.8).

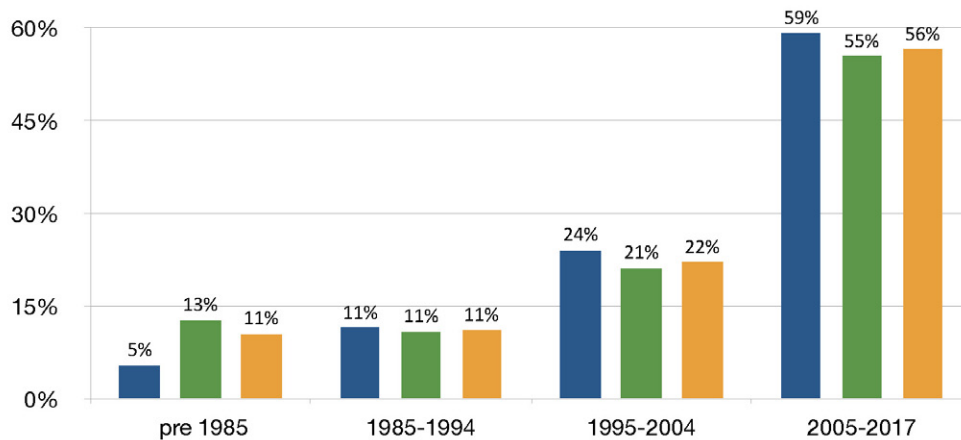
Table 8.8: House construction materials

Material	Outer walls	Floor	Material	Roof
Masonry ¹	61.3%	65.1%	Corrugated sheets	94.8%
Wood	23.5%	25.6%	Wooden shingles	2.3%
Wood/ masonry	14.9%	8.9%		
Other	0.3%	0.5%	Other	2.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	Total	100.0%

1. Includes cement boards, of which there are few.
Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

The continuous upgrading of the housing stock is even more apparent in Figure 8.1, which shows that over 55 per cent of dwellings have been built or renovated¹⁵² since 2005 and almost 80 per cent since 1994 (in the last 20+ years). Conversely, only a little over 10 per cent of dwellings have not been built or renovated in the last 30 or so years. The presence of a young person in the household has little effect on this pattern.

¹⁵² Renovations can include: new rooms, additional floors, complete or partial rebuilds, reconstruction of existing walls/ roofs/ floors.

Figure 8.1: Age and upgrading of the Barbados housing stock (households)

NB: Data refer only to owner-occupied households – 70 per cent of all households.
Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Overcrowding in Barbados is minimal; 96 per cent of dwellings are occupied at under two persons per bedroom and under two per cent at three or more persons per bedroom.¹⁵³

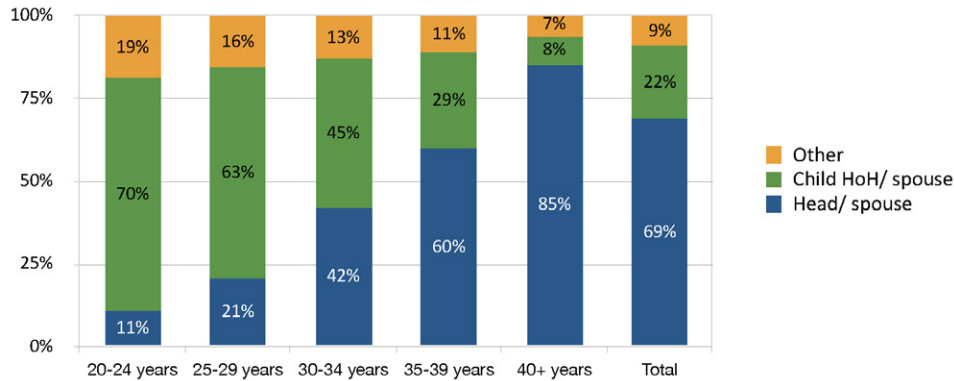
Overall, these results indicate a steady improvement in the standard of construction of dwellings in Barbados – an important consideration given its susceptibility to tropical storms and the possible increased frequency and severity of these due to changing weather patterns resulting from climate change. This is not to say that the housing situation in Barbados is perfect. A recent press report highlights that pockets of very inferior housing exist in the private rented sector.¹⁵⁴ However, the evidence suggests that such housing accounts for only a small proportion of the overall stock.¹⁵⁵

There are also concerns about the access of young people to housing whereby the lack of affordable housing limits their ability to establish their own independent households. That this is a valid concern is shown by Figure 8.2, which gives the proportions of each age group who are either heads of household or their children, by age group. Over two thirds of young Barbadians still live with their parent(s). While one would not expect large proportions of young people to be heads of household (or their spouses) as many will have yet to establish themselves in their careers, the fact that there is little difference in the headship rate for 25–29-year olds implies that there is a problem with accessing housing once they do so. This is corroborated by the result that, while over 40 per cent of 30–34-year-olds are heads of household, 45 per cent are still living with their parents. It is not until they reach their mid/late 30s that the majority become heads of household.

¹⁵³ This is the criterion used in the formulation of the previously mentioned Multi-dimensional poverty index.

¹⁵⁴ M. Bradshaw, 'Poor Housing', Nation News, 2011 <https://www.nationnews.com/nationnews/news/38795/poor-housing>

¹⁵⁵ The private rented sector accounts for 16 per cent of all dwellings. It is however predominantly occupied by high-income inhabitants (poverty rate under 9 per cent), implying that the proportion of substandard housing will be small, around 3 per cent of all households (calculations using BSLC, 2016).

Figure 8.2: Relationship to head of household by age group

Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018.

Key findings and implications

Climate change

Barbados is fortunate in that it is less prone to tropical storms and hurricanes than other Caribbean countries due to its location below the main Atlantic hurricane belt. Nevertheless, the island is already experiencing the effects of climate change in terms of changing weather patterns, rising air and sea temperatures and sea levels – all of which are predicted to intensify in the future. The impacts of these changes, particularly those related to the tourism sector, will negatively affect, directly and indirectly, the livelihoods and well-being of the entire population of Barbados, young, middle-aged and old. The mitigation of these impacts will depend on the formulation and implementation of comprehensive national strategies, policies and programmes to address climate change.

Impacts specific to young people arising from major climatic disasters have the potential to: (i) disrupt their education; (ii) heighten the risk of infectious diseases (especially for younger age groups); and (iii) lead to increases in delinquent behaviour and the physical and sexual abuse of young people. Measures to prevent and mitigate these potential impacts need to be incorporated into national climate change and disaster planning and should include:

- Measures to increase resilience and minimize school closures.
- Strengthening preparedness to: (i) maintain services crucial to child and maternal health; and (ii) deal with outbreaks of water-, air- and vector-borne diseases.
- Develop initiatives to reduce the risk of increased antisocial behaviour: (i) public awareness campaigns and emergency measures to prevent outbreaks of public disorder and increased delinquency; (ii) prepare emergency social assistance and short-term employment programmes (as part of relief efforts); and (iii) increase the availability of mental health services.

Water, sanitation, hygiene and housing

The great majority of Barbados' population live in houses that have been built or renovated in the last 20 years. They also have almost universal access to piped water, WC-flush sanitation, electricity for lighting and LPG/ natural gas for cooking. Overcrowding is minimal. This applies to the entire population including adolescent and young adults.

However, vigilance is required to ensure that potential issues such as the deterioration of water quality due to groundwater contamination arising from the inadequate disposal or treatment of sewage, high energy costs, and the susceptibility of older wooden houses to the increase in the ferocity of tropical storms due to climate change do not become a significant threat to the well-being of young people in Barbados. At the same time, there is a need to further investigate the issue of access to housing for older age groups (25–34 years) as currently high proportions of these age groups continue to live with their parents until they reach their mid-/late 30s.



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9. Concluding Remarks

Many positives emerge from this study of young people in Barbados. Almost all have access to basic infrastructure (sanitation, water and electricity) and good quality housing: two thirds are not living in poverty; attendance at primary and secondary school is almost universal; two thirds are either studying or working; over half of older adolescents and a quarter of young adults are in CAPE/ post-secondary education; there has been a progressive up-skilling of the nation's population over many years; many of those currently unemployed are likely to find jobs before too long; the level of child labour is low. Teenage births for the under-18s are reducing while indicators of sexual exploitation are generally low, and some types of risky sexual behaviour show signs of decrease. Tolerance of domestic violence is low, and many parents disapprove of physical disciplining. In short, most young Barbadians will negotiate the pitfalls of adolescence to emerge successfully into adulthood, obtain employment, form relationships and generally lead fulfilling lives to the benefit of themselves and society as whole.

Unfortunately, this is not the whole story. This study has identified a number of threats to the well-being of young people in Barbados: a third are living in poverty; around 60 per cent are living with just one biological parent, almost always the mother, and over half are having to cope with an absent father. Male BSSEE performance is consistently lower than that of females. In 2019, the proportions of all CSEC candidates achieving passes at English A and mathematics were low at, 54 and 27 per cent respectively. Although CSEC pass rates in these subjects are similar for males and females, fewer boys than girls are sitting these examinations or are enrolled in CAPE and degree courses. In consequence, males are less likely to access higher skilled jobs and tend to confine to lower skilled, and lower paid, occupations. Enrolment in degree courses has decreased. Around 30 per cent of the youth population is unemployed, with the majority being so for over six months. The trend in marriage/ unions (including visiting relationships) before 18 years is increasing, and a minority of young women engage in risky sexual practices. Significant proportions of school-age children are overweight or obese. Reported cases of child and adolescent abuse and neglect, as well as of domestic violence and violent crime may be few in numbers but impacts can be devastating.

While these threats are specific, the following cross-cutting themes have emerged:

- Poverty: young people from poor households are less likely to progress into CAPE/ post-secondary education, more likely to be NEETs, more likely to be living in single-parent households, and more likely to have first had sex before age 15 and be sexually active. Poverty is also associated with child neglect and involvement in criminal activity.
- Relationship breakdown or poor parenting is associated with poverty, poor diet, child neglect and abuse, domestic violence, delinquency and criminal behaviour.
- Gender imbalances: male indicators of educational performance are generally inferior to those of females. Males are also more likely to be NEETs. They are the principal perpetrators and victims of criminal behaviour by under 25-year-olds and are more likely to be drug users. These factors contribute to negative adult behaviours: avoiding parental responsibilities, being the primary perpetrators of sexual abuse and domestic violence, as well as continued criminal behaviour. On the other hand, victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence are predominantly female.

Barbados is not immune to the potential negative impacts of climate change. While the island, due to its location outside the Atlantic hurricane belt, has been spared the devastating impacts of recent hurricanes, there is little room for complacency. Projected climate changes will negatively affect, directly and indirectly, the livelihoods and well-being of the entire population of Barbados: young, middle-aged and old. However, there are likely to be heightened risks to young persons in terms of education, health, poverty levels and social issues.

While all these threats need to be addressed, priorities will need to be set. The following are those considered to merit the highest priority. Their cross-cutting nature means that they need to be formulated and implemented using a joined-up, multisectoral and multidisciplinary process:

- Strengthening social protection schemes for children and adolescents living in severe poverty.
- Making a concerted effort to raise BSSEE mathematics pass rates and male performance in these examinations – both of which will have a knock-on impact on secondary school performance.
- Investigating and reversing the low proportions of students achieving passes in CSEC English A and mathematics, and the gender disparity in sitting rates. These will affect the take-up of CAPE/ post-secondary education.
- Investigating and reversing the recent decreases in tertiary-level enrolments.
- Continuously evaluating existing programmes and developing new programmes targeted at unemployed youth.
- Developing a range of interventions to tackle the issue of family breakdown where children and adolescents are involved, such as life skills and parenting classes. These should incorporate topics related to positive disciplining, the avoidance of delinquency, violent behaviour and criminality, and individual responsibility; and increasing emotional and financial support from absent fathers.
- Reshaping male attitudes and behaviours through life skills and parenting classes and strengthened youth, social and probationary services to reduce delinquency and rehabilitate offenders.
- Developing and implementing awareness-raising campaigns covering the dangers of HIV/ STI, unprotected casual sex, alcohol and drug abuse, and unhealthy diets, targeted at both young people and parents.
- Increasing the availability of contraceptive services for sexually active adolescents (married and unmarried) to prevent both unintended pregnancy and the risk of HIV/ STI.
- Intensifying interventions to raise awareness about the need for zero tolerance of sexual abuse and domestic violence – especially increasing the level of reporting – and implementing support programmes for victims.
- Formulating measures to address the adverse impacts of major weather events on young people in terms of disruption to their education, risks to health and vulnerability to increased poverty, physical and sexual abuse, criminal activity and mental health issues.

Notwithstanding the extensive range of sources consulted, the study has identified a number of data gaps with regard to youth issues: teenage births, child and adolescent coverage of social assistance programmes, male adolescent sexual behaviour, attitudes of absent fathers, incidence of STIs, mental health issues and drug use, domestic violence, participation in organized activities and youth organizations. All these issues are becoming of increasing concern in middle- and high-income countries as other issues relating to the provision of access to

basic needs (infrastructure, health and education) are resolved, as they have essentially been in Barbados. Ways in which these gaps could be filled include the following:

- Strengthening the collection and timely dissemination of administrative data relating to social issues such as child abuse and neglect, domestic violence and juvenile crime.
- Conducting key surveys (SLC, LFS, MICS, KABP and GSHS) at regular intervals to track changes over time, with the inclusion of additional modules to provide information on topics where data are currently lacking. Accelerate the reporting of these surveys to provide timely information.
- Building partnerships for statistical development and data collection that respond to the needs of policymakers and maximize the use of data to deepen the understanding of issues faced by young people.

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Generation Unlimited: the Well-being of Young People in Barbados
January 2020



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