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**REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF YOUTH  
IN SELECTED CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES**

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## **Acknowledgement**

This paper was prepared by the Economic Commission for Latin and America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean based on research undertaken by ECLAC consultants Dr. Godfrey St. Bernard and Ms. Monica Paul-McLean, and input from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

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## ABSTRACT

The report *The situation of youth in select Caribbean countries* presents the preliminary findings of a joint regional study undertaken by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) during the 2006 to 2007 biennium. The purpose of the project was to analyse the status of youth in a number of Caribbean and Latin American countries in terms of education, employment and sexual and reproductive health using available 2000 census data.

The joint initiative comprised two studies: The ECLAC study on *The Situation of Youth in Belize, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago*, and the UNFPA *Afro-Caribbean Youth and Reproductive Activity*, undertaken in Belize, Costa Rica, Jamaica and Nicaragua. Utilizing data collected during the 2000/2001 Round of Population and Housing Census in Belize, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, the ECLAC study attempted to construct a profile of young people (aged 10–24 years) in terms of their age-sex structure, ethnicity, religious affiliation, geographic place of residence, educational characteristics, economic activity and exposure to training. The UNFPA study aimed to produce a comparative analysis of the main cultural elements that affect aspects of the sexual and reproductive health of young, adolescent women of African descent in Belize, Jamaica, Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

The first section of the report provides a summary of the ECLAC study and an analysis of the key findings. Apart from general demographic trends, empirical data are provided for three main areas: (a) school attendance and highest level of educational attainment; (b) young persons' exposure to and participation in education and training; and (c) occupational groups in which young persons were employed, for Belize, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago.

The second section deals with the UNFPA study and also provides a summary and analysis of the key findings. General statistics on the youth target population are given, along with data on the beginnings of the youths' sexual relations, commercial and non-commercial sexual habits, and knowledge and awareness of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. The UNFPA study also provides a descriptive summary of governmental and non-governmental organizations that are involved in youth, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS.

The last section of the report suggests some possible implications and recommendations resulting from the findings of this regional initiative, including the need for further and more in-depth collaboration with other regional stakeholders.

# REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF YOUTH IN SELECTED CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

## Background

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) undertook a joint regional study during 2006 to 2007 biennium to analyse the status of youth in a number of Caribbean and Latin American countries in terms of education, employment and sexual and reproductive health using available 2000 census data. The initiative comprised two studies: (a) the ECLAC study on *The Situation of Youth in Belize, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago*, and (b) the UNFPA *Afro-Caribbean Youth and Reproductive Activity*, undertaken in Belize, Costa Rica, Jamaica and Nicaragua.

## I. THE SITUATION OF YOUTH IN BELIZE, SAINT LUCIA AND TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (ECLAC)

### A. Summary

Utilizing data collected during the 2000/2001 Round of Population and Housing Census in Belize, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, the ECLAC study attempted to construct a profile of young people (aged 10–24 years) at the time of the census in terms of their age-sex structure, ethnicity, religious affiliation, geographic place of residence, educational characteristics, economic activity and exposure to training. The general thrust was to generate statistical tables and information that could be used as descriptive and explanatory tools facilitating evidence-based decision-making. While a more in-depth analysis would have supported this thrust, the data items collected in accordance with the 2000 Population and Housing Censuses throughout the region imposed some restriction on the extent of analysis that could have been undertaken in the study. Some issues of specific importance to the situation of Caribbean youth included social construction of femininity and masculinity; family bonds; safety, crime and violence; sense of identity; self-worth and esteem; management of sexuality; and application of social justice, but for the purposes of this study, an attempt was made to describe and explain variations in outcomes associated with education, economic activity and training among young persons.

### B. Analysis and key findings

Through these studies, tables were generated in three main areas: (a) educational attainment of the youth population; (b) young persons' exposure to and participation in education and training; and (c) occupational groups in which young persons were employed for Belize, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. All data were sourced from the following two reports: "Social Outcomes and Characteristics of Youth in Trinidad and Tobago: An Analysis of the 2000 Population and Housing Census" and "Preparation of Tables Utilizing the 2000 Population Census on the Youth Population: Belize and Saint Lucia", produced by Dr. G. St. Bernard and Ms. Paul-McLean, respectively.

General demographic trends revealed that the ratio of youth to the entire population in each of the three countries was comparable, with Belize's youth accounting for approximately 33 per cent of its population, and the youth in Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago making up about 30 per cent each of their respective populations. Further analysis showed that the male to female distribution among the youth sub-populations in each country was also comparable. In Belize there were 37,956 males and 37,956 females, giving a male to female ratio of 1:1. The sex ratio Saint Lucia was 0.99 males to each female (21,216 males to 21,371 females) and the ratio in Trinidad and Tobago was 1.02 males to each female (169,634 males to 166,930 females). See table 1 below:

**Table 1**  
**Population 10 - 24 years by Five-Year Age Group and Sex for Belize, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago**

Age Group	Sex			Sex Ratio
	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Males/100 Females
<b>BELIZE</b>				
10-14	15,128	14,560	29,688	103.9
15-19	12,798	12,802	25,600	100.0
20-24	10,030	10,594	20,624	94.7
All Age Groups 10-24	37,956	37,956	75,912	100.0
<b>SAINT LUCIA</b>				
10-14	7,563	7,570	15,133	99.9
15-19	7,557	7,670	15,227	98.5
20-24	6,096	6,131	12,227	99.4
All Age Groups 10-24	21,216	21,371	42,587	99.3
<b>TRINIDAD &amp; TOBAGO</b>				
10-14	58,012	56,903	114,915	101.9
15-19	61,730	61,121	122,851	101.0
20-24	49,892	48,906	98,798	102.0
All Age Groups 10-24	169,634	166,930	336,564	101.6

Source: Census 2000 data.

### 1. School attendance and highest level of educational attainment

As would be expected, the majority of young persons between the ages of 10 and 14 reported that they were attending school (90.4 per cent in Belize, 87.9 per cent in Saint Lucia and 96.3 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago), irrespective of sex, but in Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago there was a slightly higher percentage of enrolled females (88.5 per cent and 97.1 per cent, respectively) than males (87.2 per cent and 95.5 per cent, respectively). In Belize the reverse was observed, with 91.3 per cent male attendance to 89.5 per cent female. Also, among the 10 to 14 year cohort, almost all of them attended school full-time, with only 0.2 per cent, 1.4 per cent and 0.7 per cent attending part-time in Belize, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, respectively.

Among those 15 to 19 years old, there was a significant drop in school attendees in all three countries. In Belize only 40.6 per cent of their young people in that age group were attending school, and of these 39.9 per cent were male and 41.3 per cent female. However,

further analysis into full-time and part-time enrolment revealed a switch along gender lines, with slightly more males attending full-time (98.2 per cent males versus 97.9 per cent females) and females attending part-time (2.0 per cent females versus 1.7 per cent males). This trend was more pronounced among the 20 to 24 age cohort: while there was a slightly higher female enrolment in schools (7.0 per cent against 6.9 per cent males), full-time attendance by males accounted for 87.9 per cent versus 77.7 per cent for females, and part-time attendance by females accounted for 22.3 per cent as opposed to 12.1 per cent for males.

The same was true for Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago in both the 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 age groups. In Saint Lucia, in the 15 to 19 group, there was 59 per cent female attendance and 48.3 per cent male, with male enrolment at 97.2 per cent (full-time) and 2.8 per cent (part-time), and female enrolment at 2.8 per cent (full-time) and 3.5 per cent (part-time). Among those 20 to 24, there were 12.4 per cent females and 6.9 per cent males; 73 per cent of the males attended full-time and 27 per cent part-time, while 59.2 per cent of the females attended full-time and 40.8 per cent attended part-time. Trinidad and Tobago's figures for those aged 15 to 19 showed 66 per cent female attendance (88.4 per cent full-time and 11.4 per cent part-time) and 56.4 per cent male attendance (90.1 per cent full-time and 9.6 per cent part-time). Among those aged 20 to 24, 17.4 per cent school attendees were females (40.4 per cent full-time and 58.6 per cent part-time) and 12.1 per cent were males (48.4 per cent full-time and 50.5 per cent part-time). See table2 below:

**Table 2**  
**School Attendance (Percentage) by Sex and Five-Year Age Group for Belize, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago**

School Attendance	10-14 Years			15-19 Years			20-24 Years		
	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes
<b>BELIZE</b>									
Proportion Attending School	91.3	89.5	90.4	39.9	41.3	40.6	6.9	7.0	7.0
Full-time School Attendance	99.8	99.8	99.8	98.2	97.9	98.1	87.9	77.7	82.8
Part-time School Attendance	0.2	0.1	0.2	1.7	2.0	1.9	12.1	22.3	17.2
<b>SAINT LUCIA</b>									
Proportion Attending School	87.2	88.5	87.9	48.3	59.0	53.6	6.9	12.4	9.6
Full-time School Attendance	98.7	98.5	98.6	97.2	96.5	96.8	73.0	59.2	66.1
Part-time School Attendance	1.3	1.5	1.4	2.8	3.5	3.2	27.0	40.8	33.9
<b>TRINIDAD &amp; TOBAGO</b>									
Proportion Attending School	95.5	97.1	96.3	56.4	66.0	61.2	12.1	17.4	14.7
Full-time School Attendance	99.2	99.2	99.2	90.1	88.4	89.2	48.4	40.4	43.7
Part-time School Attendance	0.7	0.7	0.7	9.6	11.4	10.6	50.5	58.6	55.2

Source: Census 2000 data.

Analysing further to gauge the highest level of education attained by each age group, 10 to 14, 15 to 19 and 20 to 24, 5.7 per cent of youth aged 10 to 14 in Belize had received no formal schooling, compared to Saint Lucia's 3.5 per cent and Trinidad and Tobago's 0.5 per cent for the same age group. In the latter two cases there were more males than females with no formal education. The gap in this lack of educational attainment became more pronounced between Belize on the one hand, and Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago on the other, for the groups 15 to 19 and 20 to 24. Of Belizean youth aged 15 to 19, 21.2 per cent had not received any schooling, and 24.4 per cent aged 20 to 24 received no schooling. In Saint Lucia these figures were a mere 1.1 per cent and 0.8 per cent, respectively, and in Trinidad and Tobago the figures were even lower, at 0.7 per cent and 0.8 per cent, respectively.

At a higher level of educational attainment at secondary level, Belize again recorded significantly lower figures than Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. Only 6.4 per cent of those aged 15 to 19 and 24.3 per cent aged 20 to 24 reported that their highest level of educational attainment was at the secondary level. By contrast, 43.9 per cent of youths 15 to 19 and 46.4 per cent aged 20 to 24 in Saint Lucia had completed secondary school as their highest level of educational attainment, while 79.9 per cent of those aged 15 to 19 and 73.9 per cent of those 20 to 24 in Trinidad and Tobago had done so. The proportions of those receiving university schooling as their highest level of attainment in each country were more comparable: 1.7 per cent in Belize, 1.6 per cent in Saint Lucia and a threefold increase to 5.4 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago. See table 3 below:

**Table 3**  
**Highest Level of Education Attained (Percentage) by Sex and Five-Year Age Group for Belize, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago**

Highest Educational Attainment (School level last completed)	10-14 Years			15-19 Years			20-24 Years		
	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes
<b>BELIZE</b>									
None	5.3	6.1	5.7	21.3	21.1	21.2	24.4	24.4	24.4
Primary	3.2	4.2	3.7	33.1	29.8	31.5	43.8	39.4	41.6
Secondary	0.0	0.02	0.0	5.3	7.5	6.4	22.5	26.0	24.3
Post-Secondary	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.02	0.03	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.3
University	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.02	0.02	0.0	1.4	2.0	1.7
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.02	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
<b>SAINT LUCIA</b>									
None	3.9	3.2	3.5	1.3	0.8	1.1	1.0	0.6	0.8
Primary	61.3	59.0	60.2	47.6	37.8	42.7	38.7	24.2	31.4
Secondary	10.8	15.3	13.1	39.2	48.7	43.9	42.8	50.1	46.4
Post-Secondary	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	4.1	3.4	10.9	16.2	13.5
University	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.2	1.9	1.6
Other	0.4	0.4	0.4	2.9	1.9	2.4	3.6	4.2	3.9
<b>TRINIDAD &amp; TOBAGO</b>									
None	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.8
Primary	58.4	56.1	57.3	18.2	12.5	15.4	16.4	12.9	14.6
Secondary	40.0	42.7	41.1	76.8	83.0	79.9	73.1	74.6	73.9
University	-	-	-	0.7	0.9	0.8	4.4	6.4	5.4

Source: Census 2000 data.



Interestingly, in terms of the highest educational qualifications (as opposed to the highest educational attainment mentioned above), the data reveal that Belize had the lowest proportion of youth with no qualification (27.1 per cent aged 15 to 19 and 25.6 per cent aged 20 to 24), followed by Trinidad and Tobago (33 per cent aged 15 to 19 and 26.3 per cent aged 20 to 24) and Saint Lucia with the highest proportion of youth with no qualification (66.8 per cent aged 15 to 19 and 33.6 per cent aged 20 to 24). Further, Belize was on par with Trinidad and Tobago in terms on the proportion of youth 15 to 24 with a first degree or higher qualification, 2 per cent and 2.1 per cent, respectively, and although Saint Lucia had the highest percentage of youth with no qualification, they recorded the highest percentage with a first degree or higher, 5.3 per cent. See table 4 below:

**Table 4**  
**Highest Educational Qualification (Percent) by Sex and Five-Year Age Group for Belize, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago**

Highest Educational Qualification	15-19 Years			20-24 Years		
	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes
<b>BELIZE</b>						
None	27.9	26.3	27.1	25.6	25.6	25.6
Secondary	9.7	13.9	11.8	27.2	31.1	29.2
Post-Secondary	0.02	0.01	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.3
First Degree or Higher Qualification	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	2.3	2.0
<b>SAINT LUCIA</b>						
None	68.2	65.5	66.8	39.1	28.1	33.6
Secondary	23.3	25.2	24.3	45.3	53.0	49.1
Post-Secondary	0.2	0.3	0.3	2.0	3.7	2.8
First Degree or Higher Qualification	0.3	0.3	0.3	4.2	5.7	5.0
<b>TRINIDAD &amp; TOBAGO</b>						
None	40.2	25.3	33.0	31.9	20.5	26.3
Secondary	42.6	56.7	49.4	48.6	56.9	52.7
First Degree or Higher Qualification	0.1	0.0	0.1	1.6	2.5	2.0

Source: Census 2000 data.

## 2. Young persons' exposure to and participation in education and training

In Trinidad and Tobago, while more male (19.2 per cent) than female (15.1 per cent) youth aged 15 to 19 had been exposed to training, of these a higher percentage of females (53.4 per cent) had completed training compared to their male counterparts (44.9 per cent). These gaps were not seen in the older age group 20 to 24. Almost equal numbers of them had been exposed to training (44.6 per cent males and 44 per cent females) and had completed training (68.2 per cent males and 68.7 per cent females). Collectively, 38.3 per cent of youth 15 to 19 were undergoing training compared to 17.5 per cent of those aged 20 to 24. In Belize and Saint Lucia the proportion of youth exposed to training was markedly lower than for Trinidad and Tobago. Some 5.1 per cent of Belizean youth aged 15 to 19 and 10.9 per cent aged 20 to 24 were engaged in some form of technical or vocational training, and in Saint Lucia, 10.9 per cent aged 15 to 19

and 35.9 per cent aged 20 to 24 were exposed to training, of whom 5.7 per cent and 24.8 per cent respectively received training related to their jobs. See tables 5 and 6 below:

**Table 5**  
**Exposure to Training (Percentage) by Sex and Five-Year Age Group for Belize, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago**

Exposure to Training	15-19 Years			20-24 Years		
	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes
<b>BELIZE</b>						
Technical/Vocational	6.9	3.2	5.1	14.8	7.2	10.9
<b>SAINT LUCIA</b>						
Exposed to Training	12.3	9.4	10.9	37.3	34.6	35.9
Exposed to Job-related Training	7.1	4.3	5.7	27.1	22.5	24.8
<b>TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO</b>						
Exposed to Training	19.2	15.1	17.2	44.6	44.0	44.3
Not Exposed to Training	72.4	76.0	74.1	52.1	52.1	52.1
Completed Training	44.9	53.4	48.6	68.2	68.7	68.4

Source: Census 2000 data.

**Table 6**  
**Percentage Distribution of Population 15 - 24 Years and Exposed to Training by Training Status, Sex and Five-Year Age Group for Trinidad and Tobago**

Training Status	15-19			20-24		
	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes
Completed Training	44.9	53.4	48.6	68.2	68.7	68.3
Undergoing Training	42.0	33.6	38.3	17.5	17.4	17.5
Not Completed	7.8	7.1	7.6	6.1	4.8	5.5
Don't Know	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.2
Not Stated	5.1	5.8	5.4	7.9	9.0	8.5
<b>Total All Occupations</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Census 2000 data.

### 3. Occupational groups in which young persons were employed

Due to the absence of value labels on the occupation tables for Belize and Saint Lucia, it was not possible to determine the type of occupation engaged in by youth. However, it was determined that in the week prior to the census in Belize, 3.5 per cent of all youth aged 15 to 24 had been engaged in economic activity (with twice as many males as females); 1.1 per cent of youth had a job that week (again, twice as many males as females). In Saint Lucia, 25.2 per cent of youth aged 15 to 19 and 63 per cent aged 20 to 24 had a job and worked the week prior to the census. 0.7 per cent of both age groups had a job but did not work, and 22.6 per cent of them

sought work that week. In Belize, the major reasons given by males for not seeking employment were “school attendance” and “no reason”, whereas the females’ main reasons were “school attendance” and “home duties”. In Saint Lucia, both male and female youth cited “school attendance” and “home duties” as the major reasons why they did not look for work.

In Trinidad and Tobago, 17.3 per cent aged 15 to 19 and 55.7 per cent aged 20 to 24 had a job and worked, while 2.5 per cent had a job but did not work,; 14.7 per cent of them sought work that week. Further analysis revealed that most of the male labour force aged 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 pursued work-related activities associated with elementary occupations (35.5 per cent and 26 per cent respectively) and craft and related activities (28.5 per cent and 25.4 per cent respectively), while most of the females pursued clerical activities (27.6 per cent and 35.3 per cent respectively) and service and sales (33.6 per cent and 26.7 per cent respectively). See tables 7 and 8 below:

**Table 7**  
**Percentage Distribution of Population 15 - 24 Years by Economic Activity,**  
**Sex and Five-Year Age Group for Belize, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago**

Economic Activity	15-19 Years			20-24 Years		
	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes
<b>BELIZE</b>						
Engaged in economic activity last week	2.0	1.0	1.5	2.6	1.4	2.0
Had a job last week	0.4	0.2	0.3	1.0	0.6	0.8
<b>SAINT LUCIA</b>						
Had a job, worked	30.4	20.0	25.2	70.0	56.0	63.0
Had a job, did not work	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.6
Seeking work	12.3	7.4	9.9	13.6	11.8	12.7
<b>TRINIDAD &amp; TOBAGO</b>						
Had a job, worked	23.8	10.7	17.3	66.6	44.7	55.7
Had a job, did not work	0.7	0.4	0.6	2.1	1.7	1.9
Seeking work	6.0	5.0	5.5	9.5	8.9	9.2

Source: Census 2000 data.

**Table 8**  
**Percentage Distribution of Population 15 - 24 Years in the Labour Force by Occupational Group, Sex and Five-Year Age Group for Trinidad and Tobago**

Occupational Group	15-19			20-24		
	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes
Agriculture	4.3	0.7	3.0	3.8	0.4	2.4
Clerical	4.7	27.6	12.7	7.4	35.3	18.9
Craft and Related	28.5	3.4	19.8	25.4	3.6	16.4
Elementary	35.5	12.5	27.5	26.0	10.3	19.6
Legislator	1.1	1.7	1.3	2.2	2.6	2.3
Plant & Machinery Operators	4.4	1.3	3.3	8.3	1.6	5.5
Professionals	0.3	0.6	0.4	1.6	2.5	1.9
Service and Sales	9.6	33.6	17.9	13.6	26.7	19.1
Technicians	2.1	4.7	3.0	5.8	10.1	7.6
Not Stated	9.5	13.9	11.1	5.9	6.9	6.3
<b>Total All Occupations</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>37.0</b>	<b>37.4</b>	<b>50.4</b>	<b>42.7</b>

Source: Census 2000 data.

Data elements captured for Trinidad and Tobago also allowed analysis of the type of worker in the youth labour force population and their monthly income. Both males and females in both age cohorts 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 were predominantly employed in private enterprise: 66 per cent males aged 15 to 19 and 64.9 per cent between 20 and 24; and 67.3 per cent females between 15 and 19 and 67.9 per cent aged 20 to 24; 6.7 per cent of youth between 15 and 19 and 7.8 per cent of those aged 20 to 24 reported that they worked for no pay. The second largest employer of youth 20 to 24, was the government, at 9.4 per cent. In terms of monthly income, all youth earned less than TT\$500.00 a month, but there was some disparity along gender lines in both age groups. In the 15 to 19 group, males accounted for 68.3 per cent and females, 81.8 per cent; while in the 20 to 24 group, 28.7 per cent males and 49.6 per cent females earned less than TT\$500.00. With so many more females represented in the lowest income group, and in spite of the relatively high non-response rate for this particular question, the apparent gender bias continued up through the other income groups. In the cohort 15 to 19, males outnumbered females about two to one in the groups \$500-\$999, \$1,000-\$1,999, \$2,000-\$2,999 and \$3,000-\$3,999 (ratio 1.5:1), and in the highest grouping, over \$4,000, there were three times as many males as females. This is important to note given the fact that in Trinidad and Tobago there are about the same number of males aged 15 to 24 as there are females. The gap was not as wide in the 20 to 24 group, but there were significantly higher numbers of males than females in all the income groupings. See tables 9 and 10 below.

**Table 9**  
**Percentage Distribution of Population 15 - 24 Years in the Labour Force by Type of Worker, Sex and Five-Year Age Group for Trinidad and Tobago**

Type of worker	15-19			20-24		
	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes
Statutory Board	0.6	0.9	0.7	1.1	1.8	1.5
State Owned	2.4	2.4	2.4	5.2	4.3	4.8
Government	4.1	8.2	5.5	7.8	11.9	9.4
Private Enterprise	66.0	67.3	66.4	64.9	67.9	66.2
Unpaid Worker	0.9	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.5
Learner/Apprentice	6.0	1.4	4.4	1.4	0.5	1.0
No Paid Help (Own account operators)	8.2	3.8	6.7	10.2	4.4	7.8
With Paid Help	1.3	0.7	1.1	1.6	0.8	1.2
Not Stated	10.5	14.7	12.0	7.3	8.0	7.6
<b>Total All Occupations</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Census 2000 data.

**Table 10**  
**Percentage Distribution of Population 15 - 24 Years by Monthly Income Group, Sex and Five-Year Age Group for Trinidad and Tobago**

Monthly Income Group	15-19			20-24		
	Male	Female	Both Sexes	Male	Female	Both Sexes
Less Than \$500	68.3	81.8	75.0	28.7	49.6	39.0
500 - 999	4.4	2.4	3.4	6.8	6.5	6.6
1000 - 1999	9.6	4.2	6.9	25.5	16.0	20.8
2000 - 2999	1.8	0.9	1.3	10.8	7.4	9.1
3000 - 3999	0.3	0.2	0.3	3.1	1.9	2.5
Over \$4000	0.6	0.2	0.4	4.1	2.5	3.4
Not Stated	15.0	10.3	12.7	21.0	16.1	18.6
<b>Total All Occupations</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Census 2000 data.

## II. AFRO-CARIBBEAN YOUTH AND REPRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY (UNFPA)

### A. Summary

The overall objective of the UNFPA study was to produce a comparative analysis of the main cultural elements that affect aspects of the sexual and reproductive health of young, adolescent women of African descent in Belize, Jamaica, Costa Rica and Nicaragua. There were two survey questionnaires: one used to interview the young women of African descent and the other to interview counsellors from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with young women. The former contained 67 questions divided into four parts: (a) personal information; (b) initial sexual relations; (c) commercial/non-commercial partners; and (d) knowledge of sexual diseases and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus/acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS). Also, focus group discussions were conducted in Jamaica, the analysis and discussions of which could be found in the larger report prepared by UNFPA.

All data tables for the Belize study were sourced from the research report, “Sexual Attitudes and Behaviours of Young Women of African Descent in Belize City”, prepared by UNFPA consultant Dr. Michael Rosberg of Galen University, Belize. The data tables for the Jamaica study were sourced from “Reproductive Health and the Fight Against AIDS in Afro-Caribbean Women”, prepared by UNFPA.

### B. Analysis and key findings

For the Belize study, 29 young women and two NGO youth counsellors identified by six NGOs were interviewed. All the young women were between the ages of 15 and 18 (primarily in-school youth), of Creole descent and came from Belize City, Belize’s largest population centre. They were considered to be representative of young Belizean Creole women facing difficult circumstances. For the Jamaican study, 37 young females of African descent between the ages of 9 and 19, all from the Kingston area, were interviewed.

#### 1. General information on youth

Of the Jamaican respondents, 86.5 per cent were at least 12 years old, with the highest percentage (18.9) being 16 years old. Of all the Jamaican respondents, 51.3 per cent had achieved kindergarten or primary school as their highest education level, compared to 65.5 per cent for Belizean respondents. In Jamaica, 48.6 per cent had completed secondary school and in Belize that figure was 27.6 per cent. In the case of Belize, 6.9 per cent of young women had completed university or superior studies. See table 11 below.

In terms of academic involvement of the Jamaican sample, 76 per cent of respondents were studying to sit Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) examinations and the remaining 24 per cent were studying for the Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT) examination. Data revealed that 78.4 per cent of the respondents had their mother present in the home, compared to 24.3 per cent who lived with their father, 10.8 per cent had a step-father present, and 56.8 per cent lived with either a sister and/or brother. Some respondents lived with extended family (uncle, aunt,

cousin, grandmother and/or grandfather); in the case of each relation, less than 30 per cent reported living with relatives who were not immediate family members.

As seen in table 12, with respect to activities of respondents, 75.7 per cent of the adolescents sampled in Jamaica were studying and 5.4 per cent of them worked. Those that neither studied nor worked accounted for 18.9 per cent, and were engaged in other activities such as reading, watching television, visiting relatives and friends, baby sitting, doing household chores and gambling. Further analysis revealed a possible connection between those engaged in sexual activity and recreational activity. Acknowledging the small sample size ( $n = 37$ ), 18 of the 34 respondents (52.9 per cent) who reported being involved in recreational activities were not engaged in sexual activity, while two of the three (66.73 per cent) respondents who were not involved in recreational activities were engaged in sexual activity. Again, in support of this apparent trend, 18 of the 28 respondents (64.3 per cent) who were studying were not engaged in sexual activity while six of the seven respondents (85.7 per cent) who were neither working nor studying were engaged in sexual activity. In the case of Belize, 58.6 per cent of the young women were studying and 3.4 per cent of them worked. Those that neither worked nor studied accounted for 37.9 per cent. Further analysis revealed that half of the young women's time was spent studying (51.7 per cent). The second greatest amount of time was spent doing chores at home (17.2 per cent). Socializing and sports accounted for 17.3 per cent of their time.

Finally, regarding household structure, data revealed that nearly half of the young women in Belize (48.3 per cent) were living in households not headed by either mother or father, 27.6 per cent were headed by the mother and just under a quarter (24.1 per cent) by the father.

**Table 11**  
**Highest Education Attainment (Percent) of a sample of Young Women**  
**of African Descent in Belize and Jamaica**

Level of school completed	Percent
<b>BELIZE (n=29)</b>	
Kindergarten or Primary	65.5
Secondary	27.6
University / Superior Studies	6.9
<b>JAMAICA (n=37)</b>	
Primary	51.3
Secondary	48.6
University	0.0

Source: UNFPA.

**Table 12**  
**Primary Activities of Young Women of African Descent in Belize and Jamaica**

Primary Activities	Percent of respondents
<b>BELIZE (Women aged 15 – 19)</b>	
Study	58.6
Other activities	37.9
Work	3.4
<b>JAMAICA (Women aged 9 – 19)</b>	
Study	75.7
Other activities	18.9
Work	5.4

Source: UNFPA.

## 2. Beginning sexual relations

Just under half of the Jamaican respondents (18.49 per cent) reported that they have had sexual relations, and of these, 55.6 per cent had their first sexual encounter by age 14. The next most frequent age at which respondents engaged in sexual activity was 15 years (27.8 per cent) and 17 years (11.1 per cent). Interestingly, 11.1 per cent of them also had their first sexual encounter by age 12 years and the same number by age 13 years. Approximately 13 (71 per cent) of those who reported having sexual relations did so out of love and five (11.8 per cent) said they were forced into it. In Belize, it appeared that a greater proportion of young women had been exposed to sexual activity, 69 per cent had reported that they had sexual relations, and of these, 44.8 per cent did so out of love while 13.8 per cent said they were forced to have sex. Of those in the Belize sample who had already engaged in sex, only nine (31 per cent) had had sex in the last 12 months, with one of them having had sex with two partners. Further, bivariate analysis in the Belize study revealed that there seemed to be a positive connection between the level of school completed and being sexually active. The percentage of young women completing primary



school and having sex was higher than those who had completed secondary school and had not engaged in sex. Of the 19 who had completed only primary school, 84.2 per cent had engaged in sex, while of the eight who had completed university, 75 per cent had never had sex. Thus, higher levels of education appeared to reduce a young woman's chances of engaging in sex at an early age, but whatever may be the factor affecting both the level of sexual activity and the ability to complete high school cannot be determined from this study.

Table 13 below shows the age of the Jamaican respondents' and their partners at their first sexual encounter. These figures were not available for the sample from Belize.

**Table 13**  
**Age of Jamaican Respondents and Their Partners at First Sexual Encounter**

		Age of respondent's partner at first sexual encounter							Total
		12	13	16	17	18	19	20+	
Respondents' age at first sexual encounter	12	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
	13	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
	14	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	6
	15	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	5
	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	17	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18</b>

Source: UNFPA.

As can be observed in the above table, only one respondent age 12 in Jamaica had sex with a partner of the same age; all other respondents, including the other 12 year old, had sex the first time with a partner at least one year older.

With regard to condom use, table 14 below shows the respondents' condom use during their first sexual encounter and their reasons for using/not using condoms.

**Table 14**  
**Respondents' Condom Use During First Sexual Encounter and Reasons**  
**for Using or Not Using Condoms**

Condom Use During First Encounter	Frequency	Percent
<b>Belize</b>		
Used condom	13	72.2
Did not use condom	5	27.8
<b>Jamaica</b>		
Used condom	15	83.3
Reasons for using:		
Prevent pregnancy	6	42.9
Prevent STDs	1	7.1
General Protection	8	50.0
Did not use condom	3	16.7
Reasons for not using:		
Trust	1	33.3
Unsure	2	66.7

Source: UNFPA.

Of the 18 respondents in Jamaica who reported engaging in sexual relations, 15 (83.3 per cent) used a condom during their first sexual encounter. Of these, 50 per cent used for general protection, 42.7 per cent used a condom to prevent pregnancy and 7.1 per cent used it to prevent contracting a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Of the 16.7 per cent who did not use a condom during their first sexual encounter, 33.3 per cent said that they did not use one because they trusted their partner, while the remaining two thirds were unsure as to why they did not use a condom. More in-depth analysis of age of first sexual encounter and condom use revealed that the three respondents who did not use a condom at their first encounter were a 12 year old, a 14 year old and the 16 year old. Further, it would appear that the lack of a father figure or male role model in the home did not affect promiscuity of the sample population. Although both respondents who had their first sexual encounter at age 12 did not live with such a figure, one each of those aged 13 and 17 did live with such a role model, and so too did two thirds of those aged 14 and all of those aged 15 and 16. In Belize, 72.2 per cent of the young women reported that they used a condom during their first sexual encounter.

### 3. Commercial/non-commercial sex

In the last 12 months prior to the study, of the 18 respondents who had sexual relations, 11 per cent had engaged in commercial sex (two respondents) and 73 per cent in non-commercial sex (13 respondents). Those who had commercial sex used a condom every time, compared to only 38.5 per cent (five respondents) of those who used a condom every time they had non-commercial sex. Both adolescents who engaged in commercial sex in the last 12 months said that during that time they did not have any sexual encounters with their most recent partner, while of those who engaged in non-commercial sex, 46.2 per cent (six respondents) refrained from having sexual encounters with their most recent partner. Of those engaging in non-commercial sex and sex with their most recent partner in the past year (seven respondents), all reported that when having sex with their most recent partner they used a condom.

Respondents were asked to identify where they could purchase/obtain or have purchased/obtained male and female condoms and most of the young women in Belize and Jamaica indicated that they could get these at a pharmacy (see table 15). Other places where respondents thought condoms could be obtained were at local shops and clinics or hospitals. Most of the unsure responses were for the female condoms: in Jamaica only two did not know where to get male condoms, compared to six who did not know where to get the female condom.

**Table 15**  
**Respondents' Knowledge of Where Condoms Could Be or Have Been Purchased or Obtained**

Place where condom could be obtained	Male condom		Female condom	
	Frequency	per cent	Frequency	per cent
<b>Belize (no. of respondents = 20)</b>				
Pharmacy	11	55.0	Data not reported	
Shop	10	50.0		
Clinic or Hospital	6	30.0		
Family Planning Centre	10	50.0		
Bar, Motel, Boarding House	1	5.0		
<b>Jamaica</b>				
Pharmacy	10	55.6	11	61.1
Shop	4	22.2	0	0.0
Clinic or Hospital	2	11.1	1	5.6
Don't Know	2	11.1	6	33.3
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: UNFPA.

With respect to pregnancy, six (35.3 per cent) of the 17 in the Jamaica sample who responded to the question on whether they have ever been pregnant indicated that they had been (none of them younger than 16 years old), and two of them had children: one had one child and the other had two. Only one of them said that she had planned on having children; however, both respondents indicated that they had received support for the children from the respective fathers. In the Belize sample, only two (10.5 per cent) of the 19 young women who answered this question had ever been pregnant. None of them had any children.

#### 4. Knowledge of STDs and HIV/AIDS

Of all the symptoms experienced by men and women suffering from an STD, the two most well-known by respondents were genital secretion and ulcerations/abrasions in women, and ulcerations/genital abrasions in men (data for this latter part was not reflected in the Belize report). See table 16 below for the detailed breakdown.

**Table 16**  
**Respondents' Awareness of Symptoms of STDs in Women and Men**

Belize			Jamaica		
Symptoms in women:	Frequency	Percent	Symptoms in women:	Frequency	Percent
Genital secretion	11	37.9	Genital secretion	8	21.6
Ulcerations/genital abrasions	10	34.5	Ulcerations/genital abrasions	4	10.8
Abdominal pain	0	0.0	Abdominal pain	2	5.4
Strong odour secretion	4	13.8	Strong odour secretion	2	5.4
Urinary irritation	0	0.0	Urinary irritation	2	5.4
Swelling in groin area	0	0.0	Swelling in groin area	2	5.4
Itchiness	3	10.3	Itchiness	2	5.4
Vomiting	Not reported		Vomiting	1	2.7
Symptoms in men:	Frequency	Percent	Symptoms in men:	Frequency	Percent
Ulcerations/genital abrasions	Not reported		Ulcerations/genital abrasions	4	10.8
Urinary irritation			Urinary irritation	3	8.1
Genital secretion			Genital secretion	2	5.4
Swelling in groin area			Swelling in groin area	2	5.4
Abdominal pain			Abdominal pain	1	2.7

Source: UNFPA.

In terms of symptoms experienced by Jamaican respondents in the last 12 months prior to the survey, three (8.1 per cent) had experienced ulcerations or genital abrasions and two (5.4 per cent) had experienced genital secretions. Reporting on these respondents' medical examinations, nine of them (24 per cent) had had a gynaecological examination and one (2.7 per cent) received a Pap smear test. Four (10.8) of them always examined their breasts, six (16.2 per cent) conducted that procedure sometimes and two (5.4 per cent) hardly ever did. Among the Belizean sample, 11 of the 29 respondents (37.9 per cent) had a gynaecological examination and three (10.3 per cent) had received a Pap smear test. Two (6.9 per cent) always did breast examinations, one (3.4 per cent) did it sometimes and 26 (89.7 per cent) never did.

Regarding respondents' awareness of HIV/AIDS, 36 of the 37 respondents in Jamaica (97.3 per cent) reported that they knew of the existence of HIV/AIDS, and 20 of them (54.1 per cent) knew someone who was either infected with or had died from the disease and 14 (39 per cent) had a family member or friend who had died from the disease. This appeared to have had little or no impact on sexual behaviour of female adolescents in Jamaica since exactly half of those who knew someone infected with HIV/AIDS were engaged in sexual activity and half were not; and again, five of eight persons who knew someone infected with the virus still engaged in unprotected sex. In Belize, 23 of the 29 respondents (79.3 per cent) knew someone who was infected with HIV or had died from an AIDS-related disease, and 13 (44.8 per cent) had a family member or close friend infected with the virus disease or who had died from it.

In terms of protection, at least 75 per cent of respondents in Jamaica believed that persons could avoid becoming infected with HIV/AIDS by using a condom, having one faithful sexual partner and/or abstaining from sex. Most respondents (17:45.9 per cent) reported that one could become infected with the disease from an infected partner, 29.7 per cent attributed infection to not using a condom and 16.2 per cent to condom breakage. In Belize the figures were

comparable, 79.3 per cent of respondents believed that using a condom could prevent the spread of HIV, 100 per cent of them believed that having a faithful partner would protect them from contracting HIV and 82.8 per cent of them knew that one could prevent the spread of HIV through sexual abstinence. See table 17 for the full list of perceptions for sources of HIV transmission.

**Table 17**  
**Perception of the Sources of HIV Infection among Young Females sampled in Belize and Jamaica**

Sources of infection	Frequency	Percent	Sources of infection	Frequency	Percent
<b>Belize</b>			<b>Jamaica</b>		
Unprotected sex	15	51.7	Infected partner	17	45.9
Mother to child at birth	4	13.8	Unprotected sex	11	29.7
Blood transfusion	3	10.3	Condom breakage	6	16.2
Contaminated needle usage	3	10.3	Blood transfusion	4	10.8
Oral sex	1	3.4	Person injected	2	5.4
Breast feeding	1	3.4	Unsure	2	5.4
Cuts or sores	1	3.4	Needle usage	1	2.7
Multiple partners	1	3.4	Someone hit person in the head	1	2.7
			Saliva	1	2.7
			Touch of infected person	1	2.7

Source: UNFPA.

With respect to mother-to-child transmission, 83 per cent of the Jamaican sample believed that an infected woman could transmit HIV/AIDS to her baby, and 90 per cent believed that this could occur through breast feeding. It would appear from the above results that the sample members in Belize and Jamaica had a better understanding of HIV transmission than the transmission of STDs.

When asked about doing HIV tests and receiving the results, only four respondents (10.8 per cent) in Jamaica had ever done an HIV test and received the result. These persons were all required to do the test for one reason or another (it was not done voluntarily). In Belize the figures were slightly higher, 10 (34.5 per cent) had been tested for HIV and, of these, eight (80 per cent) had received their test result. Combining this data with household structure of the sample population in Belize, there was some indication that young women living with one or both parents were less likely to be tested for HIV and AIDS, and perhaps, less likely to be sexually active. It could be that the ones not being tested were the same ones who were not sexually active. However, cross-tabulation of the data suggested that some of the sexually active young women were not being tested and may have been living with parents.

In terms of Jamaica respondents' substance abuse, only 30 per cent reported using alcohol and 5 per cent the use of cigarettes. Of the Belizean sample, only 13.8 per cent had even used drugs, and there was very little feedback on the use of alcohol and cigarettes.

## 5. **Descriptive summary of governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in youth, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS**

Finally, the study in Jamaica included research on seven governmental and non-governmental organizations to determine their role in reproductive health and the fight against HIV/AIDS. All seven organizations worked closely with the adolescent population, and were located in Kingston, Jamaica. Five of the seven served interests other than reproductive health and HIV/AIDS; objectives of all organizations ranged from conflict resolution to protecting HIV/AIDS victims to improving the quality of youth. The majority of the institutions had objectives that targeted adolescents of both sexes and adults, and fewer than half had goals that were directed to sex workers and pregnant women. In terms of goal achievement, two organizations reported that they had achieved 90 per cent of their goals and achievements related to reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, and both of these had programmes geared towards influencing adults and adolescents. More specifically, these goals included improving the quality of youth and street children, reducing mother-to-child transmissions and encouraging safe sex practices. Four organizations reported that their programmes achieved between 50 per cent and 90 per cent of established goals, and these four targeted adolescents, adults and sex workers. Only four organizations carried out publishing and prevention activities such as promotion of healthy lifestyles, educational programmes and development of communication programmes.

Although only two organizations reported having operations in countries other than Jamaica, five of them received international donations. Only three organizations provided information on their allocation of funds, and it was observed that the majority of funds were usually directed towards the prevention of HIV/AIDS. Organizations also provided information on their vision and mission regarding reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. In terms of problems encountered in implementing strategic plans, three of the four respondents to this question stated that they encountered problems in the area of promotion of health and prevention of new infections, and half of them said that they had problems in the areas of organization and management, epidemiological vigilance and human rights. Organizations also shed light on those factors which they believed contributed to the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Due to the passage of two hurricanes and severe flooding, only two of the six planned interviews with the NGO counsellors were completed, and as such no meaningful results were included in the research report.

### **III. POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS RESULTING FROM THE FINDINGS OF THIS REGIONAL INITIATIVE**

This working paper (report) is meant to provide a background on ECLAC and UNFPA research to date in the area of youth, education, employment and sexual and reproductive activity, highlight the key findings from the research studies undertaken and make recommendations on the way forward for future research endeavours, policy initiatives and production of a 'meta' report on all the completed studies. One of the first acknowledgements resulting from this joint initiative is that more research is needed in order to provide decision makers with the data and information they need to develop and implement effective policies on youth. It is expected that this joint initiative between ECLAC and UNFPA would continue beyond the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) meeting to include other Caribbean countries and to finalize the studies currently underway in Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

In spite of the primarily descriptive analyses presented herein, the findings are useful for informing policy initiatives that demand of technocrats the establishment of measurable targets for different sub-populations of youth in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Issues surrounding youth are becoming more visible on the public agenda, and this is increasing the general knowledge and awareness of the relevance of these issues to socio-economic development and social cohesion in the Caribbean. As such, measurable indicators must be included in national youth policies and other initiatives such as national population policies, for example, for expanding exposure to training as a critical objective of national youth policies in order to enhance sustainable livelihood options available to young persons.

Sustained political will and strong policy directives are needed from governments in their thrust towards an integrated approach to national youth development. In support of this thrust it is also necessary to commission more diverse and in-depth research activities to explore all situations of youth for determining the causes and contributing factors to the problems plaguing youth in the Caribbean and effecting remedies to overcome these. Further, governments should embark on critical analyses of existing youth policies and programmes and, as far as possible, involve youth as active participants in determining development priorities.

Keeping in mind the fact that small sample sizes (and in particular, taken from one racial grouping) limit the extent to which findings could be generalized to the larger population, and that, in general, census-taking activities limit the coverage of thematic issues that ought to be central in understanding the experiences of any specific target population, this report still attempts to put forward some broad implications for the key findings on youth by considering in tandem the results on school attendance, educational attainment, use of time, training, labour force/employment, household structure, sexual relations, sex partners and knowledge of sexual diseases and HIV/AIDS.

A cross-sectional description of the experiences of young persons in the countries under investigation (Belize, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago) is provided below.

In terms of school attendance and completion, and attainment of educational qualifications, generally there was a greater likelihood of young women attending school than young men, probably due in part to the high rates of school dropout among the latter group. Interestingly enough, however, more females were enrolled in part-time study compared to males, most of whom were enrolled full-time. This is in keeping with the fact that many young women, while still in school, are expected to work in the home and care for younger siblings while their parents go off to work. In spite of these challenges faced by young women in the region, the data for all countries revealed that more of them completed higher levels of education and training than their male counterparts (gender disaggregated data were not available for Jamaica). Apart from having implications on youth's sexual behaviour at an early age, and the ways in which they reported using their time every day, these findings also suggest the need for further analysis into the links between education, crime and violence among youth populations across Latin America and the Caribbean, a region known for the highest per capita crime rates in the world. Also important in the analyses would be household structures (in particular the heads of households to which youth belong) and opportunities for decent work available to them.

The findings on sexual behaviour/practices among youth in Latin America and the Caribbean also shed light on the fact that for the most part, youth are becoming more and more marginalized and vulnerable. Early engagement in sexual activity (often unprotected), engaging in commercial sex, having multiple partners and a general lack of knowledge and awareness of sexually transmitted diseases and their prevention further complicate their situation.

Governmental and non-governmental organizations need to channel adequate resources into improving the economic and social situations of youth from as young as nine years old to young adults of 25 to 30 years. It is anticipated that the findings from these studies would guide the direction of further necessary research and the creation and implementation of policy initiatives across the region.



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