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SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF YOUTH IN THE CARIBBEAN – A THREE COUNTRY CASE STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

Many Caribbean youth are doing reasonably well. They live in loving and caring families, attend school and are involved in various social activities in their communities. The health and well-being of the children and youth¹ in the Caribbean is, and has been, the centre of attention of many studies, meetings and policy directives set at the regional, subregional and national levels. Programmes have been put in place to address the basic needs of young children in the areas of health and education and to provide guidance and directives to youth and adolescents in the area of professional formation and transition to adulthood. Critical issues such as reproductive health and family planning combined with access to education and information on these topics have been promoted to some extent. And finally, the Caribbean is known for rather high school enrolment rates in primary education that hardly show any gender disparities.

While the situation is still good for some, growing numbers of children and youth cannot cope anymore with the challenges experienced quite early in their lives. Absent parents, instable care-taking arrangements, violence and aggression subjected to at home, in schools and among their friends, lack of a perspective in schools and the labour-market, early sexual initiation and teenage pregnancies are some of those issues faced by a rising number of young persons in this part of the world. Emotional instability, psychological stress and increased violence are one of the key triggers for increased violence and involvement in crime exhibited by ever younger youth and children. Further, the region is grappling with rising drop-out rates in secondary education, declining quality schooling in the classrooms and increasing numbers of students who leave school without formal certification. Youth unemployment in the formal labour market is high and improving the quality of professional formation along with the provision of adequate employment opportunities would be critical to enable youth to complete consistently and effectively the transition into adulthood and to take advantage of the opportunities to develop and use their human capital in the process.

On a rather general note, the region does not suffer from a shortage of policies and programmes to address the very specific needs of children and youth, but the prominent and severe lack of systematic analysis and monitoring of the situation of children, youth and young families in the Caribbean does not allow for targeted and efficient interventions that promise successful outcomes on the long term. In an effort to assist interested governments to fill this analytical gap, various initiatives are underway to enhance data collection and their systematic analysis². Population and household censuses are conducted every decade and a variety of household surveys, such as surveys of living conditions, labour force surveys and special surveys focusing on particular sub-groups of the population are conducted, dependent on the resources available, to a varying degree in the countries of the region. One such example is the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)-funded Multi-Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) that assess the situation of children and youth in a country. Over the past years and at present, UNICEF has

¹ Children are defined as spanning the age period between 0 and 9 years of age whereas youth is defined as spanning ages 10 – 24 years.

² Currently numerous initiatives are ongoing in the region to support Caribbean countries in their efforts to strengthen the collection, management and use of social statistics. These are the Support to Poverty Assessment and Reduction in the Caribbean (SPARC), various initiatives coordinated by UNDP and two projects currently implemented by ECLAC: 'Improving Caribbean Household Surveys' and 'Strengthening the capacity of National Statistical Offices in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States to fulfill the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs)'.

launched a series of surveys in a number of countries in the Caribbean³. But more needs to be done to ensure that the data available is analyzed to provide the empirical background information for evidence-based policy formulation and monitoring of the efficiency and effectiveness of the efforts undertaken.

Population censuses and the numerous household surveys provide a wealth of information on children and youth that quite often is not sufficiently accessed and used by the respective policy- and programme-shaping authorities in the countries. To fill this gap, the purpose of this paper is to analyse available and accessible census data (2000 census round) for three Eastern Caribbean countries with a focus on the situation of children, youth and young families. Special attention will be given to describe their circumstances related to living arrangements and household composition, religion, health and well-being, migration, education and professional formation, economic activities and civil status and reproductive patterns. Generally census data provide a profound empirical basis for a thorough analysis of the entire population as well as subgroups thereof. However, census data are of limited use in terms of in-depth analysis of particular circumstances of the specific population under review. Information on sensitive issues, such as disabilities, HIV/AIDS infections, income or early sexual relationships is generally underreported in a census setting and, if provided, it is quite often of questionable quality. Special surveys of quantitative and qualitative nature would be a more appropriate instrument to gather such delicate information with better quality⁴.

The main task of this study is to analyze census data; secondary data derived from various United Nations agencies and other international development partners will be applied as needed. Recent census data sets of only five countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago) are at this point in time available to the ECLAC sub-regional Headquarters. The justification for choosing Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada and Saint Lucia is merely based on the fact that this study serves as a background paper to a joint UNICEF/Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) conference that is focusing on Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean.

³ More information on the MICS can be found on the following website maintained by UNICEF: www.childinfo.org

⁴ The available census data show considerable undercount (up to 20%). While some countries apply weights to enlarge the census population, very little documentation is available as to how these weights are determined and to what extent possible selective undercount is compensated by such weights. Therefore the census data might not appropriately reflect the reality of the population under review.

I. DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Prior to going into the analysis of youth specific aspects of the census data for the countries selected, it is important to provide a brief overview of the main demographic trends in the Caribbean⁵. The years between 1975 until 2020 are and will be characterized by a dynamic demographic transformation from still youthful to rapidly ageing populations⁶. Important to note is that reasonably high fertility levels have contributed to a growth of the total population of the Caribbean⁷ from an estimated 27,741 persons in 1975 to a total of 38,617 in 2000. According to the figures provided by the United Nations, Caribbean populations are expected to continue to grow over the next decade, however at a much slower pace, with an estimated additional 7,000 persons added. While in 1975 almost two thirds of the population (59%) was younger than 25 years, in 2000 only a little less than half (47%) the population was found in that age-group and this share is expected to decline further to about 40% in 2020. Consequently, the absolute number as well as the percentage share of older persons in the Caribbean is expected to increase substantially over the years to come.

Another indicator that clearly illustrates the transition from a rather youthful population to a gradually ageing one is the median age⁸. That value, which was 20.1 years in 1975, has risen by almost seven years in 2000 and is expected to increase further to reach 32.2 years in 2020. While the developed world, which is further advanced in ageing, underwent this process at a much slower pace and with generally more resources available, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean are undergoing this rapid transition within a generation or two under far less favourable conditions of economic instability, increased social vulnerability and, often, the devastating impact of natural disasters. Also, given the tight financial situations of many SIDS, competition over already scarce resources needed to support children and youth are at the same time needed to assist the elderly with economic security, health care and other social services. To avoid intergenerational tensions and to ensure the provision of the services needed for the older generation, countries of this region now need to set the stage to prepare their youth for successful transition into the labour market, sustainable employment and provide initiatives to ensure sustainable livelihoods in old age.

⁵ Data for this analysis were retrieved from the Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, www.unpopulation.org, accessed on September 29, 2008 – World Population Projections, The 2006 Revision Population Database.

⁶ A more detailed demographic analysis of Caribbean populations can be found in ECLAC (2004, 2007a,b)

⁷ According to the United Population Division, the Caribbean comprises the following countries: Grenada, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, Montserrat, Netherlands Antilles, Puerto Rico, St Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, United States Virgin Islands. While Belize, Suriname and Guyana, that are ECLAC member countries and thus considered Caribbean, are, according to the United Nations Population Division, part of Central and South America, respectively. On the other hand, ECLAC does not include Guadeloupe and Martinique in its Caribbean country listing, since both are French territories.

⁸ The median age is an age “x”, such that exactly one half of the population is older than “x” and the other half is younger than “x”.

II. ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

Discussion of aspects of social development cannot happen without reviewing national, regional and global economic dynamics and their potential interrelationship with social development.

Overall, the Caribbean region has experienced positive growth with the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU) displaying continued positive growth rates for the sixth consecutive year⁹. However, this positive trend is currently threatened by the global financial crisis, the looming recession and the rising costs of living, particularly of food and other consumer goods. The extent to which Caribbean economies will be directly impacted by this crisis cannot be determined at this point in time. Since the majority of the countries are dependent on a rather narrow range of goods and services, it can be expected that the impact will be considerable, particularly on those countries that are to a large extent dependent on the service sector. While prices for oil and other natural resources have soared and thus provided substantial revenues for countries with resource-based economies such as Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Guyana, the recent drops in commodity and oil prices might be a sober reminder that adjustments need to be made to national budgeting and expenditure planning. Tourism is important in terms of productive capacity and employment creation and international competitiveness, foreign exchange generation and output growth for the economies of the Eastern Caribbean countries. An ECLAC analysis of the tourism sector over the past years has shown some evidence of a slow-down in Caribbean competitiveness in stay-over tourism. Further, for almost four decades the region has not made any significant gains in the total world market share in stay-over arrivals. While various factors, such as real exchange depreciation of Caribbean currencies, the availability of functioning phone-lines and domestic credit to the private sector, positively impact on the tourism sector, the study also suggests that Caribbean institutions need to become more cost and price competitive. This could be achieved by reducing vulnerability to natural disasters and reforming labour markets, maintaining a healthy and safe environment and investing in human development and capacity building.

Caribbean countries, and particularly Eastern Caribbean States, have been impacted by their high debt-to-GDP ratios. According to the ECLAC Economic Survey of Caribbean Countries, the majority of the countries exhibit levels of public indebtedness far above the 40% of GDP that is considered as the limit for fiscal sustainability. Debt-to-GDP ratios in the region range between 71.3% in Saint Lucia, to 109.0% in Antigua and Barbuda, and to 111.3% in Grenada. Approaches to public debt services quite often force governments to impose cuts on social services that might be beneficial to their fiscal sustainability in the short term but could possibly have long-term negative impacts on social aspects of development, such as health and education.

Further, the expiration of preferential trade agreements with the European Union (EU) regarding sugar and banana exports has brought down these industries in many countries of the Caribbean, raising unemployment and decreasing Government revenues from such exports. A new Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU has been signed by all CARICOM countries;

⁹ The analysis presented here has been drawn from the ECLAC (2008) Economic Survey of the Caribbean 2007 – 2008, LC/CAR/L.173, 28. July 2008 that provides an in-depth analysis of the economic performance of Caribbean countries.

however, the long-term consequences of these new agreements will only be seen in the years to come.

III. LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Available census data for the three countries show that the majority of all youth under age 24 lives with at least one parent. An interesting observation made in all countries is the fact that around one fifth of all children and youth are reported to live with either their grandparents or other relatives. One possible explanation for this could be that children and youth are left with family while their parents migrate or live elsewhere or, adolescent and teenage mothers do not have the resources to maintain their own household and thus continue to live with their parents or other relatives. The latter explanation is also supported by the finding that older children seem to be living less often with grandparents or other relatives, but more so with their parent(s) as head of household. It can be assumed that these young parents are then at older age more often able to establish their own household or take on headship of the household they live in. Since census data do not allow for further investigation into these living arrangements, further qualitative studies would be necessary to better understand household formation mechanisms of Caribbean youth and young families.

The proportion of young persons under age 25 reporting to be household head is considerable, with the highest rates observed in Saint Lucia. There 20 % of young men between age 20 to 24 and already about five per cent of young men between age 15 to 19 reveal to head a household. The data further point out for all three countries more young men than young women heading households. Table 1 shows the percentage of youth above age 15 by sex reporting to head their household.

Table 1: Percentage of household headship reported in 2000 census round by country (%)

Country	15-19		20-24	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Antigua & Barbuda	1.8	1.7	14.9	12.6
Grenada	3.8	2.4	18.0	13.4
St. Lucia	5.1	4.1	20.0	16.7

Source: Census data.

Country specific differences become visible comparing Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Lucia, the two countries with data available on household size. The analysis shows a clear trend towards larger families in Antigua and Barbuda where more than one third (35.8%) of all young persons live in households comprising six or more persons, whereas in Saint Lucia this share is less than one third (27.4%). Living alone seems more often an option for young men than young women with a slightly higher share of young men in Saint Lucia than in Antigua and Barbuda living by themselves (8.1% vs. 6.1%).

IV. RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

In comparison to the developed world where formal membership in religious organizations has been on the decline over the past decades, Caribbean youth in their majority report to be affiliated with a religious community. While Saint Lucia's population is in its majority Roman Catholic (67%), only less than half the population in Grenada (44%) and even a much smaller share of the population in Antigua and Barbuda (25%) reports to be member of the Catholic Church. The Anglican Church can count a quarter of the population of Antigua and Barbuda as its members, but is less dominant in the other two islands with about 10% in Grenada and a far smaller share (2%) in Saint Lucia. Moravians (10%) seem to be only represented in Antigua and Barbuda with barely a few members in the two other islands studied (less than 1%).

According to the data, religious affinity among young people seems to be, by and large, reflecting the patterns of the general population. A possible explanation for young peoples' strong affiliation with religion is the dominance of denominational schools in the primary and secondary education system. However, a closer look at religion among youth shows slight deviations from the distribution of religious identification among the total population. In the case of Saint Lucia for example, the most interesting finding is the fact that 10% of all young men between ages 15 and 24 report to be Rastafarian, a religion that mainly attracts young men. Rastafarians seem to be far less attractive among youth in Grenada (3.1%) and Antigua and Barbuda (5.3%).

While the data support the fact that membership of a church or religious group is still rather common in the Caribbean and also among young people, there is some indication in the data that young people more often than adults tend to no longer identify themselves with a religious belief. The data also point to the fact that in all three countries by far more young men than young women seem not to have a relationship with any religion. Table 2 shows the percentages of young persons by age-group and sex that do not identify themselves with a religious community:

Table 2: Percentage of young persons by age and sex not belonging to a religious community (%)

Country	15-19		20-24	
Sex	Male	Female	Male	Female
Antigua & Barbuda	5.1	2.9	6.8	5.4
Grenada	3.8	1.9	7.2	2.8
St. Lucia	6.0	3.4	10.7	4.8

Source: Census data.

According to the empirical findings, the country with the largest share of young persons not belonging to a religion seems to be Saint Lucia; and young Grenadian women show the highest rates of religious affiliation among the three countries studied.

The extent however, to which those who report to be a member of a religious community actually also practise their religion can not be captured in census data. Other surveys, such as the

International Social Survey Programme (ISSP)¹⁰ that offer a more in-depth coverage of such topics would provide richer data for a more comprehensive analysis.

V. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

A. DISABILITY

Caribbean children and youth are generally considered healthy. Nutritional levels are in most instances sufficient to prevent wasting and stunting, and improvements in access to basic health care services have ensured the eradication of major contagious and infectious diseases. In a census setting, self-reported conditions referring to health and well-being do not seem to reflect the reality on the ground. This seems to be pretty much the situation for the reported levels of disability in census data, since in all three countries only about less than two per cent of all children and youth are reported to suffer from a disability. According to estimates published by the World Health Organization (WHO), world wide some type of disability affects between seven and ten per cent of a population of a given country¹¹. The available evidence reveals that slightly more young men and boys suffer from disabilities than girls and young women, a finding that reflects rather common trends found in other parts of the world (ECLAC, 2007). Also, looking at the cause of disability, most disabilities occurred at birth, such as asthma and vision problems, and only to a lesser extent were related to an accident or due to illness later in life. While small numbers of reported incidences need to be interpreted with care, the fact that more boys than girls suffer from disabilities related to speech and learning capacities as well as asthma follows trends observed elsewhere (ECLAC, 2007). Stigma und discrimination around disabilities as well as the lack of recognition of a disability, particularly in regard to learning and mental disabilities might also explain the high levels of underreporting observed.

¹⁰ The ISSP is a continuing annual programme of cross-national collaboration on surveys covering topics important for social science research. The ISSP brings together pre-existing social science projects and coordinates research goals, thereby adding a cross-national, cross-cultural perspective to the individual national studies. It covers topics such as religion, social networks, social inequality and work orientation. More information is available on the following website: <http://www.issp.org/index.shtml>.

¹¹ Several United Nations agencies have also attempted to estimate the global prevalence of disability. In 1981, the WHO projected the number of disabled persons to be somewhere between 7 and 10% of the total population of each country. A 1992 report from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) states that the figure is probably lower than the WHO estimate, approximating the number of moderately to extensively disabled persons to be around 5% (Elwan. The UNDP estimates the disability prevalence to be 9.9% in High Human Development (HHD) countries, 3.7% in Medium Human Development (MHD) countries and 1% in Low Human Development (LHD) countries. UNDP, 1997)

B. HIV/AIDS PREVALENCE RATES

Identifying recent trends of HIV/AIDS prevalence rates is a challenge due to inadequate HIV/AIDS surveillance systems in many countries. In a census certainly underreported are HIV/AIDS prevalence rates. In the countries analyzed, less than one per cent of the entire youth population reports to be either HIV positive and/or to suffer from AIDS. This high level of underreporting is definitely to be explained with fear of repression, stigmatization or other discriminatory reactions towards a carrier of HIV or a person admitting suffering from AIDS. According to the latest figures published by United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) (UNAIDS, 2008), HIV/AIDS prevalence varies among countries and among populations. Generally, the smaller Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries seem to experience far less severe epidemics than Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago or Haiti, which report among risk populations (female sex-workers, men who have sex with men, and those who have regularly unprotected sex with non-regular partners) prevalence rates as high as seven per cent. However, this report does not provide any figures for the countries studied, nor are there data on youth living with HIV¹².

C. USE OF MEDICAL FACILITIES

Census data provide some insight into the use of medical facilities. In the Caribbean Governments are generally providing access to primary health care, however, timely availability and quality of such services is by many of its users often not considered to reach satisfactory levels. Consequently those who have the financial means often prefer to frequent private practices. In many countries in the Caribbean, the public health system suffers from lack of resources and, even more, from insufficient staffing levels and overburdening of the available workforce. Out-migration of health care service providers over the past decades as well as insufficient attention to the establishment and maintenance of a viable primary health care system have turned the provision of primary health care for many public administrations into a major challenge. As discussed earlier, the rising needs of ageing populations and the wide spread of costly lifestyle related chronic diseases has begun to put pressure on the often already stretched health care facilities and their professionals. This might even jeopardize the strides made in the advancement of health and well-being of the peoples and particularly of children and youth of the region.

The three countries differ in the reported use of medical facilities. While Saint Lucia and Antigua and Barbuda show similar percentages of young persons who have accessed some form of health care services, these levels are generally much lower in Grenada. Almost one third of all children under age five in Antigua and Barbuda as well as in Saint Lucia are reported to have seen a medical professional whereas less than 15% of the children in that age-group in Grenada have done so. Children and youth between the ages 10-14 years seem to be reasonably healthy with rather low numbers of health care facility visits observed for both sexes in the three countries analyzed. With the onset of puberty, the data show a noticeable gender-gap in the reported use of medical services with obvious higher rates for girls and young women over age

¹² Estimated numbers of persons living with HIV are only available for all persons over age 15 (not disaggregated by age) (2007) for the following countries: Bahamas (6,200), Barbados (2,200), Belize (3,600) Cuba (6,200), Dominican Republic (62,000), Guyana (13,000), Haiti (120,000), Jamaica (27,000), Suriname (6,800) Trinidad and Tobago (14,000).

15 than for their male counterparts. In most instances twice as many young women than young men between age 15 – 24 report to have obtained services from a medical facility with Grenada consistently showing the lowest percentages and Saint Lucia the highest (see table 3). A more in-depth study that would also review the specific national health care system, its accessibility as well as availability and costs would be needed in order to understand the differences between the countries' health care service access and use.

Table 3: Percentage of young persons by age and sex visiting a medical facility (%)

Country	15-19		20-24	
Sex	Male	Female	Male	Female
Antigua & Barbuda	8.7	13.6	10.7	21.4
Grenada	5.4	8.6	6.6	14.5
St. Lucia	9.2	15.9	10.5	23.4

Source: Census data.

The type of medical facility frequented varies from country to country. In the case of Grenada, the majority of such services were rendered either by a public health care centre or a private doctor and public hospitals seem to be the least attractive option for most youth. In Antigua and Barbuda, however, public health centres seem not to be available to the same extent as in Grenada, thus more young people frequent public hospitals, private doctors and family planning clinics, the latter rendering the majority of services to young people in all age groups in that country. Generally more young men go to public hospitals and young females visit more often family planning facilities or a private doctor.

D. INSURANCE COVERAGE

Health insurance coverage is limited for all age-groups and both sexes. Given the nature of National Insurance Schemes (NIS), most young children are covered through their parents, whereas older youth are only covered when they enter the formal labour market (50% coverage for youth over age 20). Coverage through individual insurance is even more limited with a slight gender bias in favour of women. Long-term investments into life insurances seem not to be an option for almost all, since on the one hand, the often rather small salaries do not allow putting more aside, and on the other hand, many youth are most probably not aware of the long-term benefits of such investment schemes.

VI. MIGRATION

Only a small minority of all youth report to have ever lived abroad and among those who did, there are more females than males. Most former migrants indicate to have spent some time in either the United Kingdom or the United States. Fewer migrants have lived in other Caribbean countries or other countries abroad. Interesting, however, across youth from all countries studied, the fact that the family lives back home seems to be the major driving force to return to their country of origin. While the issue of deportation is in some circles labelled as one of the major contributors to crime, according to the census data, only less than a handful of young people report having been deported to their country of origin.

VII. EDUCATION

One of the major findings of the analysis is the fact that generally school enrolment rates are high in primary education for both, boys and girls, with an overall slightly higher percentage of girls than boys attending school. While the majority of children and youth, regardless of their sex, between ages five and 15 are in school, this seems not to be the case for Saint Lucia where about 13 % of youth under age 15 (both sexes) report not to attend school. Enrolment rates decline noticeably with age for both sexes and the data show a sizable gender gap with increasing age, particularly among those between ages 15–19. Regardless of their sex, very few youth over age 20 seem to be still in the formal education system. About half of all young males between ages 15–19 are still found to be in school, but only around 5% of those between 20–24 years of age. Slight variations can be observed reviewing country specific data, with Saint Lucia having generally lower school enrolment rates for both sexes and both age-groups than Grenada¹³ (see table 4). While school enrolment rates are high in the Caribbean, there is growing evidence that those students who are enrolled do not attend school. However, school attendance is not reflected in school enrolment data. To gain further insight into attendance, administrative records from educational institutions would need to be further analyzed and specialized surveys would need to be conducted.

Table 4: Percentage of young persons by age and sex attending school fulltime (%)

Country	15-19		20-24	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Grenada	61.3	68.0	4.6	5.1
St. Lucia	47.0	56.8	5.2	7.3

Source: Census data.

With regard to young children, about one third of all children under age five spend some time in a nursery whereas almost two thirds of the older young children are signed up in a pre-school.

A look at the type of school attended, the data clearly show that boys and young men seem to fail their grades more often and consequently spend more time in primary and secondary education than young girls. On the other hand, girls seem to advance faster and so more girls than boys in this age-group could be found in secondary education. Among the older students (over age 15), on the average three quarters of all students report to be in secondary education, with again slightly higher percentages for females than for males in both countries reviewed. Comparing both countries, higher secondary school enrolment rates are found in Saint Lucia than in Grenada for both sexes. A reflection of the severe gender-gap in education is the finding that in Grenada 15% of all young men and only 7% of the young women between ages 15–19 are still found to be in primary education. The situation in Saint Lucia seems to be less drastic, with 7% of all male and 3% of all females in that age category still in primary school. Reviewing the situation of older students, the data reveal that about three quarters of all males between ages 20–

¹³ Data on school attendance for Antigua and Barbuda are unreasonably high (95% for both sexes between ages 15-19 and still 62% for ages 20-24). Also the data show slightly higher schooling rates for males than for females. Both findings are rather contrary to the common trend in other countries in the Caribbean and no justification has been found to explain these unusual trends. Therefore the data for Antigua and Barbuda are not included in the analysis of this variable.

24 still in school attend some type of professional or technical institute and about one fifth of those still in school report being a university student. Similar trends can be observed for females of these age groups with their majority (about one third) undergoing some form of professional or technical training and one fifth attending university.

The analysis of the highest level of education received will only discuss the situation for youth over age 15, since this is the time when the majority of Caribbean students leave school (see table 5) whereas younger students under age 15 can be expected to continue their education.

Table 5: Percentage of young persons by age and sex according to highest level of schooling received (%)

Country	15-19		20-24	
Sex	Male	Female	Male	Female
<i>Primary (4-7 yrs)</i>				
Antigua and Barbuda ¹	48.6	51.9	16.6	8.2
Grenada	35.0	19.0	45.2	27.4
St. Lucia	45.0	36.3	36.3	22.9
<i>Secondary</i>				
Antigua and Barbuda	27.0	25.5	56.0	56.1
Grenada	50.2	64.5	37.2	51.3
St. Lucia	39.5	48.9	43.2	50.2
<i>Post secondary</i>				
Antigua and Barbuda	9.8	14.5	23.9	34.4
Grenada	7.6	12.2	12.5	18.3
St. Lucia	2.1	4.2	12.4	18.1

Source: Census data. 1) Data for Antigua and Barbuda are presented. However, since they differ substantially from the figures for Grenada and Saint Lucia, they are not further analyzed. No additional information is available that could explain these high rates. However, it is assumed that these numbers reflect errors in data collection and data entry.

In the case of all three countries reviewed, the majority of the students indicated secondary education to be the highest level of education received, however, with noticeably higher percentages of higher education for young females than for young males. Rather sizable are the gaps between young men and women regarding primary education reported as the highest level of education received. On average a good third of all young men from both countries attained only primary education, whereas far less young women fall into this category; with a wider gender gap observed in the case of Grenada than Saint Lucia. Post-secondary education is not very common with about 10% of the young persons between ages 20–24 reported. Noticeable are again the observed differences between Grenada and Saint Lucia with the former showing higher levels of advanced education than the latter. A justification for this could be the easier availability of post-secondary educational institutions in Grenada.

The need to reform the school and certification system is reflected in the data concerning school leaving certificates. While a considerable percentage of young people report to be in some type of formal education until their early 20s, the majority of those students seem not to have received any type of formal certification. The data for Saint Lucia show that two thirds of all young men and women in the age group 15 – 19 years and about one third among those aged 20 - 24 have no formal educational certification, with the situation being slightly worse for young

men than young women. The situation is even worse in the case of Grenada where according to the census data 79% of all young men between ages 15 – 19 report not to have any formal education certificate and still more than half of those in the age-groups 20-24. The situation is slightly better for young women with 72% versus 41% without education in the respective age groups. Of those who do have a formal certificate the majority has passed O-level exams. A summary of these findings is presented in the table 6 below.

Table 6: Percentage of young persons by age and sex according to their highest certification accomplished (%)

Country	15-19		20-24	
Sex	Male	Female	Male	Female
<i>None/school leaving</i>				
Grenada	83.3	75.4	60.4	44.3
St. Lucia	77.8	71.7	45.3	39.1
<i>O-levels</i>				
Grenada	13.5	20.3	27.5	38.8
St. Lucia	13.2	17.9	28.0	35.0
<i>Other</i>				
Grenada	3.2	4.3	12.1	16.9
St. Lucia	2.0	3.0	11.3	17.5
<i>Not stated</i>				
Grenada	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
St. Lucia	7.0	7.4	8.2	8.4

Source: Census data.

VIII. PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

A. PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Given the fact that the many young people in the countries reviewed have not earned any form of formal education certificate, one can almost expect that this trend of rather limited formal education extends itself to the field of professional and vocational training. The available census data support this assumption showing that less than one third of all young people between ages 15 and 24 reports to have ever received training for a specific occupation or profession. The data show minor differences for the three countries studied as well as some gender gaps (see table 7).

Table 7: Percentage of young persons ever trained for specific occupation/profession (%)

Country	15-19		20-24	
Sex	Male	Female	Male	Female
Antigua & Barbuda	18.8	12.5	46.8	45.2
Grenada	14.3	12.3	34.7	36.8
St. Lucia	12.6	9.6	37.6	34.9

Source: Census data.

Generally distinctly more young men than young women state to have received some type of professional training, with the exception of Grenada, where the opposite seems to be the case for the age-groups between 20 and 24. Youth in Antigua and Barbuda seem to display somewhat higher percentages of being trained for a specific profession than youth from Grenada or Saint Lucia, the latter exhibiting the lowest share of professionally trained youth.

Working on a job that is related to the professional training received seems to be more often the case for older than for younger youth and generally more of a reality for young men than young women.

Table 8: Percentage of young persons presently in a job related to professional training received (%)

Country	15-19		20-24	
Sex	Male	Female	Male	Female
Antigua & Barbuda	34.0	28.7	60.7	55.1
Grenada	46.7	41.8	68.6	63.7
St. Lucia	58.0	45.5	72.5	65.0

Source: Census data.

The share of young people with jobs related to the training they received seems to be highest in Saint Lucia and lowest in Antigua and Barbuda.

A look at the data concerning the type of training received reveals that most youth seem to have been trained on the job (between one third and 50%) and only a smaller percentage ever underwent some type of more formal professional training. Generally more men than women are trained on the job with the exception of Grenada, where more young women than men are reported to have been trained on the job. Comparing the three countries, Saint Lucia displays the highest levels of on the job and Grenada the lowest. Vocational training as well as attending a technical institution appears to be more common for young men whereas young women are more often found undergoing commercial/secretarial training and business/computer education.

Regarding the duration of their training, about 50% of the youth in all three countries report to have spent less than one and a half years in training and generally less time is spent in training in the case of young females than in the case of young males.

To summarize the findings with regard to professional training according to the data available, very limited professional training seems to be provided and most of it in a rather informal setting on the job. Formal professional training and advanced capacity-building seems only to be an option for a few. This, in combination with low education levels in schools, puts

Caribbean youth at a considerable disadvantage in a globalized world and in an increasingly competitive and globalized labour market, where simple manual work is either outsourced or automated. In order to enhance competitiveness and productivity, Caribbean governments need to make quality school education and professional and vocational training the utmost priority of their national development agendas. Also, limited formal qualification does not provide access to advanced professional careers and, thus, young people will continue to become easy prey to activities related to drugs and guns and other illegal activities that promise quick wealth and a way out of poverty and destitution. A culture of appreciation of high quality education and professional excellence needs to be instilled (again) in youth, but also in their families and those who are responsible for the educational and professional training.

B. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Reviewing the main activities during the week prior to the census shows that the majority of young people either worked (20 – 24 years) or went to school (15- 19 years) in the week prior to the census. The census question ‘what did you do most in the week prior to the census’ collects information on work in rather general terms, thus employment in the formal as well as informal sector is reported. Inclusion of informal and short-term jobs shows more young persons working than if only formal labour market data would be considered. More young men than young women report to have worked in both age groups and the main reason mentioned for not working is home duties in the case of young women over age 20. Special surveys focusing on the labour force, such as the Labour Force Surveys can provide a more thorough picture of the employment situation of young people. More detailed information on the main activities involved in the week prior to the census can be taken from the table below¹⁴:

¹⁴ Data for Antigua and Barbuda seem to be erroneous thus they are not included in the analysis of this variable. This is based on the rather unreasonable finding that the majority of the youth report having a job but not to work. Also the rates concerning home duties for young women aged 20-24 are considerably smaller than in the other two countries studied (less than 1%) with no justification than possibly coding and/or data entry errors.

Table 9: Main activity in the week prior to the census, by age, sex and country (%)

Country	15-19		20-24	
Sex	Male	Female	Male	Female
<i>Work</i>				
Grenada	20.7	11.4	70.0	53.1
St. Lucia	29.6	20.1	64.2	51.6
<i>School</i>				
Grenada	60.1	67.0	4.1	4.3
St. Lucia	43.7	54.9	4.3	7.0
<i>Home duties</i>				
Grenada	5.3	11.7	5.8	26.9
St. Lucia	7.0	14.3	6.7	24.5
<i>Other</i>				
Grenada	13.1	9.9	20.1	15.7
St. Lucia	18.5	10.3	23.7	16.6
<i>Not stated</i>				
Grenada	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
St. Lucia	1.2	0.4	1.1	0.3

Source: Census data.

With regard to their type of employment, a considerable majority of young people report being employed in the private sector and only a smaller proportion works for the government, with a slight bias towards women.

Data for income earned is only available for Grenada. There the majority of youth did not report how much they earned. However the information available shows that the salary levels reported seem to be almost equal for men and women, with only a slight bias in favour of men. In order to identify gender specific aspects of employment and remuneration a more thorough analysis of the labour market would be necessary that would also need to take into consideration variables such as the type of occupation, employment tenure or hours worked. With regard to their payment schedules, younger youth seem to be more often paid fortnightly whereas older youth report to generally get a monthly pay-cheque.

Reviewing the main sources for financial support, the majority of youth over age 15 reports deriving income from own work. A rather surprising finding is that even among the younger youth (15-19) who appear in their majority to still live with their families and to attend school, parental support seems to play a minor role. Generally very few can draw on investments, remittances, savings or some form of governmental support or help from guardians. Due to marriage in younger years in the case of females, support from their spouse also contributes to some extent to the livelihood of young women, more so than in the case of young men.

IX. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY FORMATION

A. MARRIAGE PATTERNS AMONGST YOUTH

Almost three quarters of all youth between ages 15 to 24 years report not to be in a relationship. These empirical findings might sound contradictory to the well-known fact that the Caribbean is one of the regions worldwide with the earliest sexual initiation. However, these data might as well present two sides of the same coin. As in other parts of the world, stable relationships also in the Caribbean are only formed later in life and thus only reported then, whereas early sexual acquaintances and casual relationships seem to be the dominant form of partnership in younger years and thus not reported under the category “relationship”. With the majority of the young people living with their parents and/or other family members and the predominant role of churches and religious communities, young people also might not feel comfortable to report on their partnerships in a census setting where the questionnaire is often completed in the presence of parents and/or other family members. Other surveys¹⁵ with a special focus on partnerships and reproductive behaviour, where in-depth interviews are conducted in a more confidential setting, would provide a much better vehicle to learn more about topics of such sensitive nature.

Comparing the figures for the three countries, Grenada seems to have the largest percentage of young persons who are not in a union, whereas Saint Lucia seems to have a generally slightly higher percentage of young persons in a union regardless of their age and sex.

A closer look at the data reveals the expected age and gender differences with generally more young women than young men forming (and reporting) formal partnerships earlier in their lives and more partnerships are reported for youth over age 20 than under age 20 (see table 10).

¹⁵ Surveys that focus more specifically on partnerships and reproductive behavior are: Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), Contraceptive Prevalence Surveys (CPS), Family Health Survey (FHS) and to some extent the earlier mentioned Multi Cluster Surveys (MICS).

Table 10: Marital status by country, age and sex (%)

Country	15-19		20-24	
Sex	Male	Female	Male	Female
<i>Antigua & Barbuda</i>				
Not in a union	90.1	84.3	63.9	50.7
Married/common law	1.0	3.8	9.6	21.0
Visiting partner	6.3	9.9	22.9	25.8
Other	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.7
No info	2.5	2.0	3.6	1.8
<i>Grenada</i>				
Not in a union	93.8	86.7	73.3	51.0
Married/common law	2.3	6.2	11.0	26.7
Visiting partner	3.7	6.7	15.4	21.7
Other	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.6
No info	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
<i>St. Lucia</i>				
Not in a union	90.5	82.7	65.4	46.4
Married/common law	1.9	5.8	13.4	27.2
Visiting partner	6.6	10.6	19.6	25.2
Other	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.7
No info	0.9	0.4	1.6	0.5

Source: Census data.

Age at first marriage was collected in the census in all countries. However, since only a small percentage of the youth is married, many who are married did not provide this information and the data available showed a number of data-entry/coding errors¹⁶; data on age at first marriage were not considered to be at a level of quality to be considered representative for the youth of this country.

B. FERTILITY PATTERNS IN CARIBBEAN YOUTH

Early sexual initiation and teenage-pregnancies are one of the major challenges youth in the Caribbean are facing today. Following global trends, fertility levels also in the Caribbean have dropped decreased noticeably from 3.6 children per woman in 1975-1980 to an average of 2.4 children per woman for the period 2005 – 2010, with some of the lowest rates found in Barbados and the overseas territories of the Netherlands and the United States that have reached below replacement levels (United Nations 2008). Teenage fertility in the Caribbean seems not to have followed these general trends according to the limited information available¹⁷. Empirical data available on teenage fertility show that fertility levels in this age-group have been reasonably stable and have in some countries even slightly increased over the past decade. More comprehensive data on teenage-fertility will be available from the recently conducted MICS in the Caribbean.

¹⁶ For example the data show age at first marriage to be beyond age 25 for a number of cases reported.

¹⁷ Data on adolescent fertility is available from a survey conducted in the framework of the ICPD @10 review and appraisal exercise in 2003. ECLAC/UNFPA (2003).

Fertility data from the census are only useful for further analysis in the case of Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada¹⁸. Reported fertility under age 20 is found to be low in both countries with a little less than 10% of all women in this age-group reporting to have at least one child. As expected, fertility levels reported in the census increase noticeably for young women over age 20 with almost every second woman between ages 20 – 25 years reporting to have at least one child.

X. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The following provides a summary of the major findings of the study:

1. While still youthful, Caribbean societies are in the midst of a demographic transition process that has already begun to affect the age and sex composition of the majority of the countries. Population ageing along with a shift from infectious to chronic diseases will affect the allocation of resources towards various population sub-groups.

2. While the economies of the countries of the Caribbean have shown strong positive and sustained growth over the past years, the current financial crises along with the rising costs of living are expected to considerably impact on this so far positive development trajectory. However, efforts on the ground to enhance productivity and increase competitiveness through better education and improved work-ethics could possibly contribute positively to this otherwise rather negative outlook.

3. With regard to living arrangements, the majority of young people seem to be living with their parents and to a lesser extent with grandparents or other relatives. Youth household headship is found to be unexpectedly high in some instances, with about one fifth of all young men, and a little less in the case of women, reporting to be in charge of a household. An interesting finding is that generally slightly more young men than young women report to be living alone.

4. Religious identity among youth follows pretty much the patterns of the overall population. The majority of the population in this part of the world is Catholic, followed by Anglican and membership in various Protestant churches. An exception to this is Saint Lucia, where a sizeable percentage of young men declare themselves Rastafarian. Also, as elsewhere, a rising number of youth do not identify themselves with a religion and amongst those are more young men than young women.

5. The findings concerning health and well-being show that Caribbean youth are generally healthy. However, it needs to be stated that sensitive indicators, such as disabilities and HIV/AIDS infections were severely underreported in a census setting. With regard to the use of health services available, the analysis shows that while some access the public sector, those who have the financial means seem to prefer visiting a private doctor. Also family planning clinics play a considerable role in health care provision where available. Insurance coverage is generally

¹⁸ Census data sets available from Saint Lucia do not provide information on women without children and thus the data will not be included further into the analysis.

low, with mainly NIS membership either through parents or when formally employed. Other schemes are uncommon in the countries reviewed.

6. Census data provide only limited information on migration. Generally more females than males have lived abroad and, amongst those, the majority either lived in the United States and the United Kingdom or had temporarily lived in another Caribbean island. Interesting, however, remarkable is the finding that for all youth who came back, the fact that the family lives back home seems to have been the main driving force for their return.

7. Census data confirm that school enrolment rates are high for both sexes in primary school. Secondary school enrolment ratios are found to be lower with a strong gender bias in favour of young women. Regarding the type of school attended, the findings clearly identify a strong gender bias with more young women than young men attaining secondary education and young men generally spending more time in primary education than young women. A matter of serious concern is the finding concerning formal school graduation certification in so far as at least half of all students leave school a formal certificate, again, with a significant gender bias favouring women.

8. Transition from school to work-life seems to be mainly through informal avenues and hands-on training on the job. Very few report to have received formal professional training for a specific occupation and, if such training was received, it was generally short (less than one and a half years). While the majority of youth between ages 15 and 19 are still found to be in some type of educational institution, the majority of the older youth between 20 to 24 reports to work. Amongst those who do not work home duties, in the case of women, prevent them from joining the formal labour market whereas unemployment seems to be the main reason for young men not to be employed.

9. Information on formal partnerships and reproductive behaviour seems not to provide a complete picture on sexual activity among Caribbean youth. Reported percentages of youth not having a partner are unexpectedly high, possibly because unstable relationships are not considered formal partnerships and thus not reported, and the possibility that young persons do not report on a relationship in a census setting with often other family members around. Data on reproductive behaviour seems to be more realistic, with reasonable figures for the ages over 20 years. Since the census does not collect data on fertility under age 15 such information is consequently not available.

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