

the CARIBBEAN YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM presents

INVESTING *in the* FUTURE

empowering young people

Youth Trends and Challenges in the Caribbean Cynthia Hobbs' Notes

Cynthia Hobbs
Sr. Education Specialist
Inter-American Development Bank



Youth in the Caribbean

- Over 60% of the Caribbean population under 30
- School completion rates 20% higher in Caribbean compared to LAC region, yet few complete tertiary programmes
- Highest rates of HIV/AIDS after Africa
- One of the highest levels of violence worldwide, directly impacting youth
- High rates of unattached youth (no work, no study) and youth unemployment (nearly three times the rate of adult unemployment)
- Even those students who have gone through skills training are not always well prepared to enter the work force

Young men between the ages of 15-29 are at most risk for homicide, and over half of all major crimes are committed by males between the ages of 15 and 24. The murder rate among young Jamaican males (180/100,000) is far higher than in many countries currently experiencing civil war.

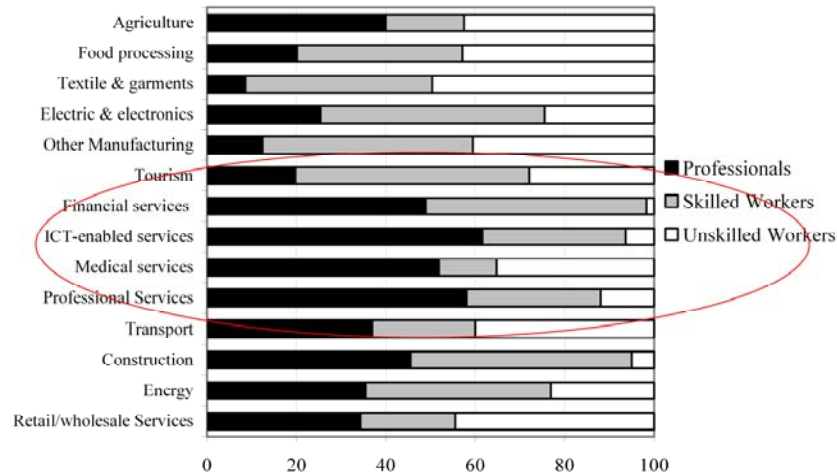
Crime and violence carries opportunity costs and direct expenditures: A World Bank study (2003) estimated total costs of crime in 2001 in Jamaica at J\$12.4 billion or 3.7% of GDP, and the cost of interpersonal violence in 2006 was estimated to be about 5% of GDP. [E. Ward and A. Grant: "Estimating the economic costs of injuries due to inter-personal violence in Jamaica" in *Manual for Estimating the Economic Costs of Injuries Due to Interpersonal and Self-Directed Violence*. Geneva: World Health Organization and personal correspondence with Dr. Ward.]

Youth (14–24 years) unemployment rate was 27.1% in 2009, while adult (25 years and over) unemployment rate averaged 8.9%. Estimated loss of production based on youth unemployment figures in St. Lucia in 2003 was @ US\$17.8 million. GDP could increase by 2.5% if youth were employed at the same rate as adults.

Skills training is not enough. Youth need to be taught how to dress for the work place, how to prepare for an interview, how to prepare a CV, work place behaviour – on time, responsible, able to communicate well, work with others, relate to their manager. Qualitative data resulting from a number of studies across LAC shows that these issues are as important as the skills training in ensuring success and ability to maintain a job.

New service jobs demand skilled workers

Workers by education level per economic sector (Caribbean)

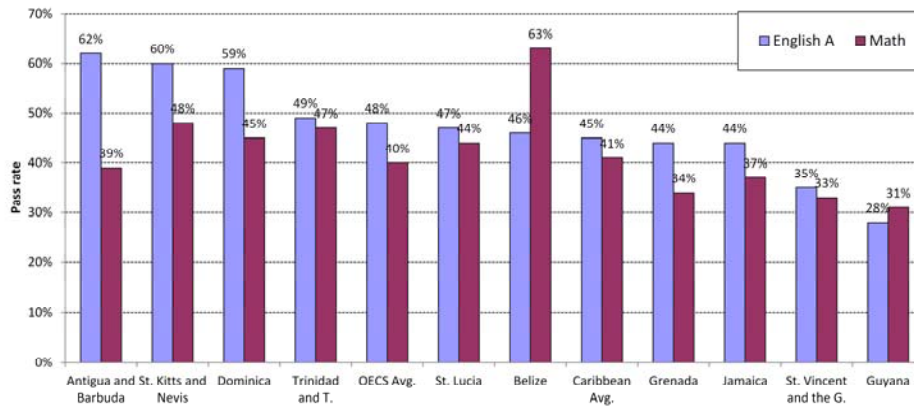


Skills required by the labour market are changing. For example, there has been a shift in the last 15 years from a more agriculture-based economy to a service-based economy. These recent shifts require greater numbers of skilled workers and professionals, and workers also need more general life skills to be able to adapt to new situations.

There are fewer and fewer options for youth who are dropping out of school or leaving school without secondary school completion exams. In Jamaica, many of the young people moving into the labour market are unskilled. A 2007 Jamaica Labour Force Survey found that 68% of unemployed youth had no academic qualification; almost 90% of youth outside the labour force had no skills training; and 70-75% of all unattached youth would need remedial education as a first step.

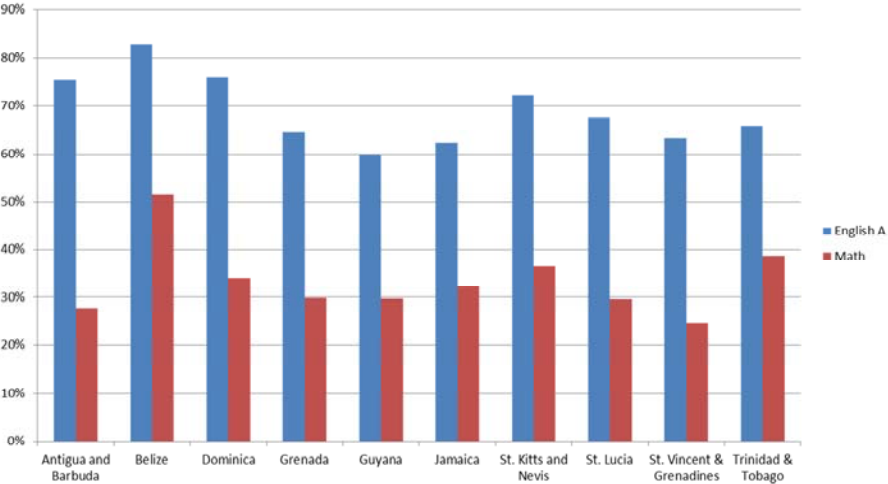
Proficiency in literacy and numeracy skills is key

CXC General Proficiency Test Pass Rates, 2008



Jobs are more readily available to those with strong literacy and numeracy skills, cognitive thinking skills, and life or social development skills. Yet CXC results reveal that language and math skills across the region are low.

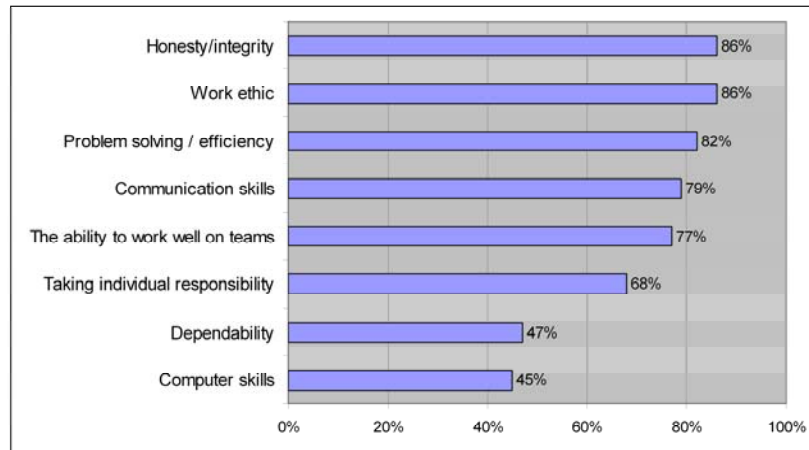
2011 CSEC Exam Results



Although English language skills are improving, math skills are still very low across the region.

Life skills for jobs

Caribbean: Employers' assessment of most desired skill set



Source: Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network: Labor Market Survey, 2006

In a Caribbean **Employers' assessment of most desired skill set**, they identified honesty/integrity, work ethic, problem solving, communication skills, and ability to work on teams as the top skills. Until recently, these types of skills were rarely taught in school.

Examples of TVET programs that offer these:

- JM Career Advancement Programme (CAP) offers English, Maths, Personal Development (self-development, conflict management, family life management, career development, civics) and a skill (NVQ). Each school offers an average of 4 to 6 skills. Overall there are about 50 NVQs (30+ Level 1 and 20+ Level 2, so about 30 skills). Subjects are selected by school based on an audit by HEART to ensure the schools have the equipment, facilities and trained staff to offer the courses up to certification.

CAP serves about 12,500 students now in 77 centers. About 4,700 students are in their second year. Some centers are identified by the MOE (focusing some on "hot" spots with high crime and violence), and some centers request permission to include CAP in their program.

HEART implements CAP and is also responsible for the vocational curriculum. The Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning (JFLL) supports students who test below Grade 6 levels. The National Youth Service (NYS) is responsible for the Personal Development and work experience placement. NYS has already developed a framework for students to go out into the community to provide a service, based on the Personal Development and skills areas.

- SERVOL offers TVET for youth in T&T. All youth entering the programme are required to participate in the Adolescent Development Programme (ADP), which is about improving attitude, confidence, essential life skills; and they offer parenting skills as well. A small study revealed that those in the program attribute much of their success to the ADP part of the program. [T&T participants pointed out that their national framework also includes these life skills, and so this is not an isolated example.]

- Barbados National Initiative for Service Excellence (NISE) supports youth in developing appropriate skills for the workplace, including life skills.

21st Century Skills

Ways of Thinking

- Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking, problem solving, decision making
- Learning to learn, metacognition

Ways of Working

- Communication
- Collaboration (teamwork)

Tools for Working

- Information literacy (includes research on sources, evidence, biases, etc.)
- ICT literacy

Living in the World

- Citizenship – local and global
- Life and career
- Personal & social responsibility – including cultural awareness and competence

Reference: Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills (www.atc21s.org)

In “Survey: Learning '21st-Century Skills' Linked to Work Success” (a study released on 30 May 2013 by the polling firm Gallup Inc.), respondents who had a comparatively high degree of exposure to such skills in their last year of school were twice as likely to strongly agree that they are successful and valued in their current jobs. Overall, the majority of the respondents (59 percent) said that the skills they use in their current jobs were developed outside of school entirely.... And in general, the **respondents who were high school graduates were far less likely to be exposed to 21st century skills in school than those with higher-level degrees** ...while the vast majority of all respondents reported having used technology in school, relatively few (14 percent) said they did so for purposes of collaboration, which Gallup calls a key aspect of "today's highly virtualized work environment."

Why is this an issue? Because in the English-speaking Caribbean, most youth do not access the higher-level degrees where they would be most likely to acquire these skills. In Jamaica in 2011, only 15.5% of the cohort leaving secondary school attained passes in five CSEC exams including Math and English, which is the minimum requirement for entry into tertiary education programs.

On-the-job training

Low training of work force



Source: Caribbean Investment Climate Assessment, World Bank (2005)

On-the-job training varies widely from country to country. The Caribbean falls well below the LAC average. Employers tend to hire workers who are already trained. This is largely because when smaller firms train workers, they are often “poached” or lured away by larger firms who offer better wages and benefits, either in country or overseas. So firms tend not to invest in training. [Some of the international hotel chains like Sandals, for example, are an exception.]

How to Empower Young People

- Socio-emotional and 21st century skills are as important as cognitive/academic skills
- Informal networks are important in the job search
- Internships are important to connect youth to the labour market, and mentors are important to help at-risk youth sustain employment
- Changing skills required by the labour market demand adaptability to different kinds of jobs and life long learning opportunities

Studies showing pt. 1 include:

- *Disconnected: Skills, Education and Employment in Latin America*, IDB, 2011

- *School and Work in the Eastern Caribbean: Does the Education System Adequately Prepare Youth for the Global Economy*, World Bank, 2008

- *"Measuring the impact of second chance education on youth crime and violence in Jamaica using a new survey instrument"*. Walker, I. and Guerra, N., 2012 Study of a JM YMCA programme showed positive results from life skills training and social-emotional competencies (positive sense of self, self control, decision-making skills, moral system of belief, and pro-social connectedness). Pro-social connectedness - being in a social network that provides role models and guidance

- Evaluations of T&T's SERVOL and Barbados National Initiative for Service Excellence (NISE).

- EQUIP3. 2012. *EQUIP3 Lessons learned: Experiences in livelihoods, literacy, and leadership in youth programs in 26 countries*. Washington, DC: Education Development Center. Retrieved from:

http://idd.edc.org/sites/idd.edc.org/files/EQUIP3%20Lessons%20Learned%20-%20Book_0.pdf.

Perhaps the most important finding from the extensive focus on livelihoods and employment under EQUIP3 is that there is no single element of service, but rather it is an integrated continuum of education (most often starting with literacy and numeracy for early school leavers), supports, and experiences that shows the greatest results. While this point is widely known, it is not always consistently applied in youth program designs.

Training in and of itself is not sufficient. Several international studies have shown that mentoring/accompaniment are critical to help youth at risk to sustain their jobs once they're in them (with basic assistance and coaching in things like organizing transportation, child care, dressing appropriately, getting there on time, going every day, etc.).

Many of those who do not go on to tertiary enroll in short-term training programs (government or NGO, or HEART TVET). But a Level 1 or 2 certificate is not enough to guarantee a livelihood, the success rate for those programs who are tracking is low (Jamaica's National Youth Service placed youth in internships following training, but a recent study showed that only 20% ever received certification and less than 5% were retained in the jobs where they were placed), and very few of the programs actually track the results of their training in these terms.

THANK YOU!!

cynthiah@iadb.org