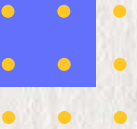


YOUTH
PEACE
& SECURITY

CASE STUDIES IN ACTION:

**YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FOR A
PEACEFUL CARIBBEAN**



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The creation of “Case Studies in Action: Youth Empowerment for a Peaceful Caribbean” involved a consultative process engaging 27 stakeholders from government and UN entities, regional organisations, youth networks and youth organisations, as well as civil society organisations. Sincere appreciation is extended to all who contributed to this knowledge product, whether through written submissions, interviews, or reviewing drafts and providing feedback.

The project began with a mapping and desk-research phase, followed by the collection of written contributions facilitated through the CARICOM Network of Youth Directors, subsequent to a briefing on the study’s aims and scope. This phase was supplemented by a series of ten interviews.

The team behind this compendium acknowledges the vital support and guidance provided by the 2023 Youth, Peace, and Security Support Group throughout the development process. Special thanks go to Ishmael Nicholson, Khaleem Ali, Lashante Sampson, and Tyrell Giles for their invaluable contributions.

SUMMARY

This compilation, titled “Case Studies in Action: Youth Empowerment for a Peaceful Caribbean” presents fourteen concise case studies highlighting (sub-)regional, national, and local initiatives that contribute to the operationalisation of the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agenda. It features a combination of initiatives led by government, regional organisations, the United Nations, youth organisations, civil society, and multi-stakeholder groups across the Dutch and English-speaking Caribbean. The primary objective of this overview is to enrich the knowledge base on meaningful youth engagement in peace and security issues within the region, shedding light on successful approaches, obstacles encountered, and lessons learned. Organised into five sections aligned with the pillars of the YPS agenda—prevention, protection, disengagement and reintegration, partnership, and participation—the case studies are accompanied by an introduction and a summary of recommendations.¹

1. The views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the views of UNESCO, the CARICOM Secretariat, any of its affiliated organisations, or their Member States.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CIYA	Cayman Islands Youth Assembly
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
CRC	Convention on the Rights of a Child
CSOs	Civil society organisations
C-TOC	Counter Terrorism and Organised Crime Investigation Branch, Government of Jamaica
CYA	CARICOM Youth Ambassador
CYDAP	CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FPA	Famia Planea Aruba
IGDS-RCO	Institute for Gender and Development Studies Regional Coordinating Office at the University of the West Indies
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LGBTQIA+	An evolving acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations

NCFC	National Commission for Family and Children of Belize
NPP	National Peace Programme of Barbados
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
TTYAN	Trinidad and Tobago Youth Advocacy Network
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
WFP	World Food Programme
YAG	The Barbados and Eastern Caribbean Youth Advisory Group
YAR	Youth As Researchers
YPS	Youth, Peace, and Security
YPS Support Group	Youth, Peace, and Security Support Group of the UNESCO Office for the Caribbean



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INTRODUCTION

Context: Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda

Over the last decade, there has been a significant increase in the recognition of the constructive role young people play in advancing global peace and security efforts. This transformative shift culminated in the adoption of [United Nations Security Council Resolution \(UNSCR\) 2250](#) in 2015, following years of tireless advocacy of young peacebuilders worldwide. Resolution 2250 signifies the formalisation of the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) Agenda and outlines five pillars for action:



PARTICIPATION: Increasing young people’s inclusive participation in decision-making at all levels in local, national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms.



PROTECTION: Protect the human rights and physical safety of young civilians, including their universal and fundamental rights of freedom of organisation, peaceful assembly, association, opinion and expression, and participation in public affairs through offline and online civic spaces.



PREVENTION: Facilitate an inclusive and enabling environment in which young people with diverse backgrounds are provided with adequate support to implement violence prevention activities and support social cohesion.



PARTNERSHIPS: Build intergenerational partnerships with young people, community actors, governmental and / or multilateral actors to foster mutual dialogue, trust, and collaboration.



DISENGAGEMENT & REINTEGRATION: Address the needs of young people in disengagement and reintegration strategies, including inclusive labour policies, youth employment opportunities, and education promoting a culture of peace.

The momentum behind the YPS agenda has continued to grow stronger with the introduction of subsequent resolutions such as [UNSCR 2419](#) (2018) and [UNSCR 2535](#) (2020). Resolution 2419 urges all relevant regional and sub-regional bodies to devise and implement policies and programmes tailored for youth, fostering their positive engagement. Meanwhile, resolution 2535 emphasises the urgent need for expediting the implementation of the YPS agenda at various levels—regional, national, and local. Additionally, resolution 2535 mandates the United Nations Secretary-General to present a [biennial report](#) to the Security Council, detailing the progress in implementing the three YPS resolutions.

Efforts to put the YPS agenda into action have focused on several key areas, including establishing an evidence base on youth-led peacebuilding, mobilising political support and financial investment for the agenda, crafting policy guidance and action frameworks at regional, national, and local levels, and strengthening coordination mechanisms and institutional capacities. Presently, four countries—[Finland](#), [Nigeria](#), the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the [Philippines](#)—have adopted national action plans to operationalise the agenda within their specific contexts.

YPS in the Caribbean

Approximately 63% of the Caribbean region’s population is under the age of 30, facing significant peace and security challenges stemming from barriers to participation in political and economic processes, elevated crime rates, gender-based violence, among other pressing issues.²

In response, the sub-regional consultation on Youth, Peace, and Security was convened in November 2021 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Office for the Caribbean. The consultation brought together youth representatives from English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean nations to share their insights and recommendations to contextualise and realise the YPS agenda. As a tangible outcome, a [YPS Roadmap](#) was formulated, in which participants envisioned a regionally united Caribbean as a youth-sensitive space where the agency of young people is supported.

Expanding upon previous initiatives, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat partnered with the UNESCO Office for the Caribbean and its Youth, Peace, and Security Support Group to host [workshops](#) in June 2022. These workshops were specifically designed for CARICOM’s Network of Directors and youth workers, which included policymakers and public officials from youth-related ministries of Member States. The sessions featured a thematic case study on the YPS agenda, aiming to deepen stakeholders’ understanding and involvement. In November 2023, UNESCO and CARICOM continued their collaboration by organising sessions focused on the YPS agenda and fostering meaningful youth engagement during the Caribbean Youth Summit.

The significance of youth in development was underscored in the [Declaration of Paramaribo on the Future of Youth in the Caribbean Community \(2010\)](#), which emphasised young people as assets and agents of change. At the Regional Symposium on violence and crime in April 2023, the CARICOM Heads of Government acknowledged the growing imbalance between human rights and societal safety concerns, stressing the imperative to empower and involve young people in addressing regional security challenges.

In 2018, the [Commonwealth Heads of Government endorsed UN Security Council Resolutions on Youth, Peace, and Security](#), acknowledging the crucial role of young people in peacebuilding across the Commonwealth. Member states, including twelve independent nations and five British Overseas Territories within the Caribbean region, are urged to prioritise youth inclusion in implementing UN Security Council Resolution 2250. This entails allocating resources for national action plans informed by youth input. Furthermore, there is a call to: empower youth in conflict prevention and resolution, support their engagement in peacebuilding efforts, and assist youth-led organisations in fostering social cohesion and understanding.

Considering the challenges and prospects in creating an enabling environment for the contributions of youth to peace and security within Small Island Developing States (SIDS), participants of the [Knowledge Café on Youth, Peace, and Security in the Caribbean](#) in February 2023 highlighted concerns such as migration-induced “brain drain” and insufficient capacities for knowledge production. These factors impact regional knowledge creation and hinder the visibility of Caribbean YPS priorities on the global stage.

This collaborative effort between the CARICOM Secretariat and the UNESCO Office for the Caribbean seeks to bridge these gaps and advance the YPS agenda in the region.

2. CARICOM (2014). [Youth involvement in ICT is key to regional integration](#)

Aim and Structure of the Compendium of Case Studies

This compendium of case studies serves to illuminate existing practices and examples that contribute to the operationalisation of the YPS agenda within the Dutch and English-speaking Caribbean nations. Its objectives are to:

- Raise awareness of the relevance of the YPS agenda in the Caribbean context;
- Provide short case studies of (sub-)regional, national, and local initiatives that contribute to one or more of the five pillars of the YPS agenda;
- Reflect on good practices, challenges, and lessons learned in support of meaningful youth engagement in peace and security issues in the region.

This overview is designed to assist national, regional, and international stakeholders engaged in peace and security endeavours, youth development initiatives, and sustainable development efforts in the Caribbean. This includes decision-makers, public officials, civil society organisations, as well as youth organisations and youth networks.

Moreover, this document may be of interest to other stakeholders engaged in the implementation of the YPS agenda at the global level and in other regions, including in other SIDS.

The fourteen case studies are categorised into five sections that correspond with the pillars of the YPS agenda: prevention, protection, disengagement and reintegration, partnership, and participation, complemented by an introduction and a summary of key recommendations.



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CASE STUDIES IN ACTION

PREVENTION





Photo credit: Freepik Premium

CASE STUDIES IN ACTION

1. PREVENTION

1.1 Uniting Communities in Saint Lucia for Violence and Crime Prevention through Sports

Prevention | Saint Lucia | Multi-Stakeholder Initiative

Context

Saint Lucia has seen gun violence and homicides increase in the past years, ranking in the top five countries with the highest homicide rates in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2021.³ Major drivers of the increased violence include drug trafficking, illegal trafficking of guns from the United States, and gang rivalry.⁴ The government passed controversial anti-gang legislation in 2014, which has been criticised by opponents for criminalising youth, widening the trust gap between young people and law enforcement, and failing to address the root causes of violence and crime.⁵

Cricket Tournament

The community of Canaries in Saint Lucia uses sports-based approaches to foster constructive engagement between security sector actors and the public. In November 2022, the Special Police Constable in partnership with ReThink Youth, a community-based youth organisation, and Nawii Tours, a private partner, co-hosted a four-week cricket tournament in Saint Lucia's western region. The objective of the initiative was to engage young people in healthy competition and promote values of teamwork, respect, fair play, and discipline. It also aimed to de-escalate tensions on blocks and in ghettos in the Canaries community.

Although the initiative welcomed participants of all ages, genders, and backgrounds, it specifically focused on empowering at-risk youth residing in areas marked by high levels of



The programme provided a change to **eliminate stigma** and **humanise each other**

3. UN Office on Drugs and Crime's International Homicide Statistics database (2021).

4. InSight Crime (2022). [St. Lucia's Soaring Murder Rate Equals Other Caribbean Nations](#).

5. NevisPages (2013). [Effectiveness Of St Lucia Anti-Gang Legislation Questioned](#).

alcohol and drug use, as well as gambling. Young people actively participated as players, volunteers, and event organisers. Young women were also an integral part of the programme, with each team including women players while others were keeping scores, providing catering services or sponsoring the event. To accommodate those with less sporting experience, underarm delivery of the ball was permitted.

Partnerships

The tournament strengthened social bonds within the Canaries community, as it was organised through the joint endeavours of local businesses, law enforcement, schools, and community leaders. In instances where youth participants and police representatives had previously crossed paths in court, the programme provided a chance to eliminate stigma and humanise each other. Hotels that had faced challenges with youth on the beach now actively encouraged their positive engagement. Shops offered incentives to the young participants such as vouchers for food, barbering services, construction blocks, and football jerseys. One business owner sponsored a team and would close her seaside bar during practices to motivate the young clientele to join the sports tournament.

Organisers hesitated to involve political parties, parliamentarians, and local councils so as not to politicise the event. Eventually, the Parliamentary Representative joined the endeavour by providing lights for the playing field. The Deputy Commissioner of the Royal St. Lucia Police Force, Mr. Wayne Charlery also offered words of encouragement to the community, emphasising the role of the police to provide services to the public and encouraging residents to reach out to the police for any support.

Next Steps

The tournament's success resonated for months, with young people from the community inquiring about the next edition. The plan to replicate the programme has been hindered by financial constraints. In the meantime, one of the partners has redirected their efforts toward organising a commercial cricket tournament, unfortunately without the same emphasis on social impact. The cricket tournament is part of a broader youth resilience strategy, which also offers young people with opportunities for skill development and online learning on topics such as CV writing, digital softwares, and recovering sustainable forms of traditional agriculture such as the cultivation and processing of vetiver grass.

“
The tournament's success resonated for months, with young people from the community inquiring about the next edition”



Photo credit: David Henry



1.2 Just Medz It Campaign to End Violence in Jamaican Schools

Prevention | Jamaica | Government-led Initiative

Context

The Ministry of Education and Youth in Jamaica has launched the “Just Medz It” campaign in 2022 to address alarming statistics regarding violence in and around schools. The well-being of young people in Jamaica faces a significant threat due to the pervasive violence they encounter, particularly in places traditionally considered safe such as in school, at home, and in their neighbourhood.

Approximately 80 percent of Jamaican children endure some form of psychological or physical violence as a disciplinary measure. School environments contribute to this distressing scenario, with about 65 percent of students falling victim to bullying. Moreover, 79 percent of children bear witness to violence either within their communities or homes, painting a grim picture of the challenges faced by the country’s youth.⁶ The COVID-19 pandemic may have worsened these challenges, as students were absent from school for two years, resulting in missed on-site orientation programmes and heightened psycho-social issues during lockdown.⁷

Just Medz It Campaign

Launched in October 2022, the year-long “Just Medz It” campaign sought to transform the culture of violent confrontations among students and equip them with conflict-resolution strategies. The campaign’s title, “Just Medz It” is designed to resonate with the intended audience, encouraging young people to pause, reflect, and consider the best course of action that does not escalate into violence. This message also extends to educators and school staff, emphasising the importance of maintaining a constructive approach and calm composure, even in challenging situations. By overcoming the tendency to react impulsively, this campaign strives to cultivate a safer and more peaceful school environment for all.

In response to incidents in 2022, including a fatal stabbing in the Kingston Technical High School, Education Minister, the Hon. Fayval Williams raised alarm regarding the escalating violence in Jamaican schools. Minister Williams emphasised the urgency of addressing psychosocial issues affecting children, such as family problems, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and sexual abuse. The Minister revealed a plan to reduce school violence by 50% in the span of a year, acknowledging the need for collective action beyond existing support structures, including guidance counsellors, deans of discipline, and school resource officers.⁸

The campaign has the following objectives:

- Enact a cultural shift by calling the whole-of-society, including parents and families, to promote non-violence and peace at home, school, and in the community.
- Pool the Ministry of Education’s financial and human resources to provide a targeted, coordinated, and consolidated intervention.
- Enhance physical school infrastructure to create a safer environment.
- Provide support to students and parents through training, counselling, and other psychosocial services.
- Utilise the creative arts for public engagement and communication of the campaign message.

Partnerships and Initiatives

The campaign actively invites collaboration from key ministries and departments of government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector, community-based, and faith-based groups to collectively address the issue. In November 2022, during Anti-Gang Week, the Ministry partnered with the Counter Terrorism and Organised Crime Investigation Branch (C-TOC) and Community Safety and Security Branch of the Jamaica Constabulary Force to deliver a capacity development session for principals, deans of discipline and guidance counsellors in hundreds of schools nationwide to educate stakeholders, on identifying and addressing gang-related activities in schools.

The campaign also partnered with the Ministry of Justice to provide a two-day restorative practices training to thousands of students, educators, and parents from public schools island-wide. In January 2023, a jingle competition was organised by the Ministry’s Children Affairs and Policy Division to showcase the talents of students and promote non-violent conflict resolution. Students from primary and secondary levels were encouraged to create videos demonstrating creativity and originality in conveying the campaign’s theme. The Vere Technical High School in Hayes, Clarendon was selected as the winner of the competition.

6. United Nations Children’s Fund (2018). [Situation Analysis of Jamaican Children - 2018](#)

7. UN Women (2021). [Measuring the Shadow Pandemic: Violence Against Women During COVID-19](#)

8. Jamaica Observer (2023). [School Violence Epidemic](#)

Lessons Learned

The campaign faced several challenges, including inadequate resources for communication, leading to difficulties in making the campaign more visible to the average Jamaican. There is a need for a strategic communications plan, and utilising social media and mainstream media for more targeted messaging and consistent outreach. The structural issue of absenteeism and difficulties in tracking students who are not attending school persists. Pre-campaign commitments need to be implemented, including the introduction of digital applications for tracking students' attendance effectively.

Furthermore, state resources should be provided to parents grappling with challenges regarding their children's school attendance and performance.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will play a crucial role in determining the success and follow-up of the campaign and the achievement of its objectives. The Ministry cannot ascertain if the campaign has contributed to achieving the goal of reducing violence in and around schools by 50%, as there was no baseline established at the time. Nevertheless, the campaign has spurred momentum to broaden the scope of existing plans to carry out a perception survey on safety and security. In 2023, this survey was conducted nationally in 331 schools, with 11,981 respondents, including secondary public school students, primary public school students in grades 4 to 6, as well as their parents, principals, teachers, and staff from public schools.

The survey provides the following insights:

- Though 45% of students indicate that they do not feel safe at school, most students feel the safest at school in comparison to other spaces in their communities.
- A majority of the students feel the least safe when commuting to and from school.
- 1 in every 2 females, and 1 in every 6 males expect that they will encounter sexual harassment during their school commute.
- Nearly 40% of students indicated that students are always being bullied at their school.⁹

“
Though **45%** of students indicate that they **do not feel safe at school**, most students feel the safest at school in comparison to other **spaces in their communities**”

Next Steps

The research outcomes not only provide a basis for monitoring future developments but also shed light on a crucial aspect: students who carry weapons to school do so not due to fear of violence within school premises, but rather because they feel insecure during their journeys to and from school. As a result, the Ministry has committed to conducting this survey biennially and has made addressing the issues of bullying and cyberbullying a priority within its strategy and programmes. The “Just Medz It” campaign has thus paved the way forward in fostering a more peaceful school environment, where every student feels safe, supported, and valued.

9. Ministry of Education and Youth and Ministry of National Security of Jamaica (2023). National Assessment of Perception of School Safety and Security, 2023.



Photo credit: Freepik Premium

1.3 Empowering Youth in Aruba to Take Control of their Body, Life, and Future

Prevention | Aruba | Civil Society Initiative

Context

Addressing the sexual and reproductive health needs of young people can reduce their vulnerability to conflict and violence, while also tackling gender-based disparities in access to decision-making power and services. When young people have access to sexual and reproductive health services, they are more likely to complete their education, participate in the workforce, and engage positively in their communities - thus enhancing social stability. Empowered youth are also more likely to engage constructively in society, advocate for their rights, and contribute to peacebuilding efforts within their communities.

This interconnectedness highlights the significance of initiatives such as the civil society organisation [Famia Planea Aruba](#) (FPA), which provides young people with the knowledge and services that allow them to take control of their body, life, and future.

Famia Planea Aruba (FPA)

Founded in 1970, FPA emerged to tackle the prevalent issue of unwanted pregnancies, which accounted for about 30% of all births in Aruba. Initially, family planning served as a vital tool in addressing household poverty and socio-economic challenges. Over time, FPA has pivoted its focus from promoting birth control methods and distributing contraceptives to empowering Aruban youth to cultivate safe and positive sexual experiences. This shift is manifested through comprehensive sexuality education programmes both within and outside of schools, personalised guidance, round-the-clock online counselling services, and public awareness campaigns held during carnival period.

Although not initially established by young people, youth are central to FPA's operations. The organisation's Board of Directors and Supervisory Board receive support from a volunteer-based Youth Committee, currently comprising two young women with plans for expansion. The Committee is in the process of reviewing 24 applications from the community's youth. Its mandate is enshrined within the FPA Constitution, specifying that members must be between 18 and 25 years old, with at least half being women.

The objectives of the Youth Committee include advocating for FPA and promoting youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, fostering diverse perspectives to enhance FPA's youth-centred model, and actively participating in community service initiatives. Furthermore, the youth group can establish various committees aimed at assigning specific responsibilities, such as conducting research and formulating targeted proposals.

Key Initiatives

FPA ensures active youth representation in crucial international and regional processes, such as the first Caribbean Congress on Adolescent and Youth Health in Trinidad and Tobago, which brings together professionals and young people to focus on adolescent and youth health in the region. In 2022, a member of the Youth Committee served as a panellist in a roundtable discussion at the Second Caribbean Congress on Adolescent and Youth Health held in Jamaica. Moreover, in 2023, another member contributed to the regional meeting of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, the Americas and the Caribbean Regional Office (IPPF ACRO) held in Panama.

During the carnival period, youth from the community engage in the advocacy campaign "Ami ta Dicidi" (I Decide), prominently featured on FPA's social media platforms. This year, two young local artists performed the campaign jingle and starred in the accompanying music video. Among FPA's prominent services is its 24-hour Online Counselling, offering support to young people and community members on various matters, from practical inquiries to more complex cases requiring referrals. This service witnessed significant growth during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. In 2023, FPA's outreach connected with 2670 young individuals, reflecting the organisation's impactful engagement within the community.



When young people have access to sexual & reproductive health services, they are more likely to **engage positively in their communities & contribute to enhanced social stability**



Photo credit: Famia Planea Aruba



CASE STUDIES IN ACTION

PROTECTION 



Photo credit: Freepik Premium

2. PROTECTION

2.1 The Caribbean Heroines Initiative: Empowering Caribbean Youth for Gender Equality

Protection | Regional | UN-Initiative

Background

The [Caribbean Heroines Initiative](#), aimed at empowering Caribbean youth for gender equality, addresses the pervasive issue of violence against women in the region, with close to 40% of Caribbean women experiencing violence from their partners.¹⁰ Recognising the enduring power imbalances perpetuated by traditional social norms, UNESCO, in collaboration with the Institute for Gender and Development Studies Regional Coordinating Office (IGDS-RCO) at the University of the West Indies, launched the Caribbean Heroines Initiative in 2021.

Through a multifaceted approach encompassing capacity development, knowledge management and networking, the Caribbean Heroines Initiative provides an avenue for reflection on dismantling harmful norms and behaviours to support societal shifts and reimagine more equitable roles among men and women. At its core is the annual Caribbean Heroines Academy for Gender Equality, Advocacy, and Development, a sub-regional platform designed to provide young advocates with the knowledge and skills needed to advance gender equality and social justice.

Scope

The Caribbean Heroines Initiative uses an intersectional approach to uncover the diverse vulnerabilities experienced by women and girls, stressing the importance of considering social factors including class, ethnicity, ability, and sexuality. Its curriculum allows participants to explore how these factors intersect, shaping unique experiences of marginalisation and resilience within

10. UN Women (2019). [Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Data Hub: Caribbean Women Count.](#)

Caribbean communities.

Drawing from the training methodology of the annual Caribbean Sheroes Academy and Regional Trainings, a [Training Manual for Gender Equality, Advocacy and Development](#) was developed. Comprising seven modules on topics such as masculinities and the Leaving No One Behind approach, it prioritises interactivity, applicability, and effective monitoring and evaluation. Additionally, a [Knowledge Toolkit](#) was created to strengthen the advocacy work of civil society organisations (CSOs).

Across its various editions, the Caribbean Sheroes Initiative focuses on a range of issues related to gender equality. For example, in 2022, the Academy aligned with UNESCO's Transforming MENTalities Initiative, aiming to involve men and boys as allies in promoting gender equality and challenging harmful norms, beliefs, and practices associated with masculinity.

2023 Sheroes Academy

Building upon the success of previous editions, UNESCO and IGDS-RCO intensified their efforts in 2023. The theme of the Caribbean Sheroes Academy was "[Leaving No One Behind](#)," emphasising the importance of addressing various forms of exclusion, discrimination, and rising inequalities within and among countries. This edition attracted 39 young participants from 17 countries and territories across the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. The Academy unfolded through a series of four virtual sessions, supplemented by tailored mentoring sessions and opportunities for participants to craft their own advocacy campaigns. Throughout the programme, attendees were able to network with leading scholars, activists, and experts dedicated to promoting women's rights and gender justice in the Caribbean.

The Academy provided a platform for participants to collaborate with their peers from Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS), pooling their collective expertise to develop project ideas aimed at promoting gender equality and driving meaningful social change. The resulting advocacy campaigns encompassed a wide spectrum of initiatives, ranging from empowering marginalised women and advocating for equality for all to promoting financial autonomy among women and establishing an inter-Caribbean anti-sex trafficking force.

Lessons Learned

The Academies and Regional Trainings have been conducted online due to budgetary constraints, however face-to-face sessions would contribute to strengthening group cohesion and regional networking. Initially conducted over a period of a week, the following editions were conducted over at least two weeks to allow participants to work on assignments and their group projects. The partnership with IGDS-RCO has been able to successfully link pedagogical expertise with academic considerations regarding gender equality, gender-based violence, and masculinities grounded on Caribbean realities.

Next Steps

In the next phase of the Initiative, UNESCO is tailoring and adapting the methodology of the Caribbean Sheroes Academy to national contexts across the region. Previous Sheroes Cohorts from 2021 to 2023 will be brought together to enhance peer-to-peer exchange and offer mentoring to ongoing youth-led projects. The aim is to establish an Alumni Network, ensuring continued support and insights into how participants apply learnings from the Sheroes Academy. Furthermore, the Training Manual and its seven modules will continue to be distributed and utilised throughout the region. The Caribbean Sheroes Initiative has nurtured a new generation of over 300 young advocates, equipping them with the knowledge, tools, and support system needed to drive gender equality and foster transformative change within their communities.

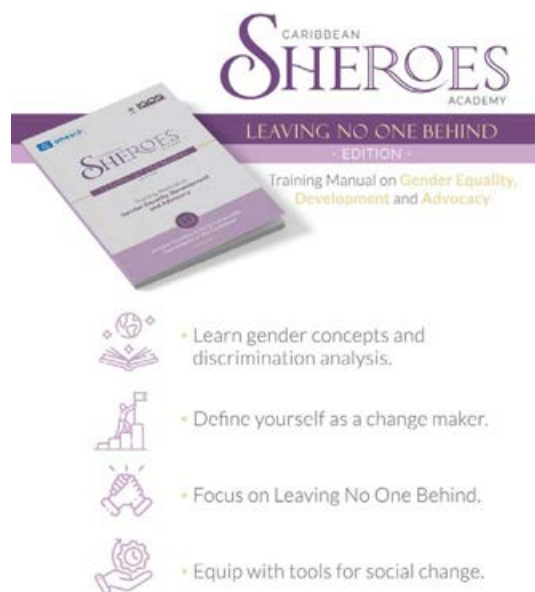


Photo credit: UNESCO

2.2 Youth-Led Advocacy to Promote Human Rights and Equality in Trinidad and Tobago

Protection | Trinidad and Tobago | Youth-led Initiative

Founded in 2020, [Trinidad and Tobago Youth Advocacy Network](#) (TTYAN) develops and implements initiatives aimed at empowering young people in Trinidad and Tobago. Through strategic partnerships and targeted campaigns, TTYAN has focused on promoting human rights, addressing gender-based violence, advocating for sustainable development goals (SDGs), and enhancing civic engagement among youth.

Voter Education for Youth

Launched in July 2023, the “Inked: Know Your Rights Campaign” was a multifaceted initiative aimed at educating and empowering young individuals to responsibly exercise their voting rights. Through a combination of social media campaigns, walkabouts in youth spaces, and partnerships with national youth organisations, the campaign aimed to raise awareness about the local government elections process, promote youth engagement, and increase voter participation. The campaign laid the foundation for a more informed and engaged youth population crucial for the future of local governance in Trinidad and Tobago.

“**The “Inked: Know Your Rights” campaign aimed to raise awareness about the local government elections process, promote youth engagement, and increase voter participation**”

Campaigning for Human Rights and Inclusion

TTYAN commemorated Pride Month in June 2023 through a virtual campaign aimed at fostering awareness of issues facing queer youth, their fundamental rights, and celebrating LGBTQIA+ community in Trinidad and Tobago. Through social media posts, written pieces, and creative expressions, the campaign highlighted the importance of equality, respect, and non-discrimination, contributing to a more inclusive and tolerant society. On Human Rights Day, TTYAN spearheaded a campaign to reinforce the significance of human rights principles and inspire collective action to uphold them. By organising youth gatherings, examining human rights as outlined in the national constitution and producing an animated video, the campaign aimed to promote understanding and awareness of human rights issues among youth in Trinidad and Tobago.

Advocating for Justice to end Gender-Based Violence

The organisation has also actively collaborated with stakeholders to advocate for justice concerning issues of gender-based violence. By partnering with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, Ministry of National Security, and other organisations, TTYAN worked to raise awareness and prevent gender-based violence through initiatives such as advocating for proper law enforcement and judicial procedures. Key initiatives for prevention included urging the judiciary to exercise heightened discretion when assessing bail for recurring charges and convictions related to rape, assault, and kidnappings. Additionally, the department advocated for a police service that is well-trained and educated, capable of enforcing the law in an informed manner to ensure proper and legal collection of evidence for use in judicial assessments of bail. The objective was to guarantee that charges lead to a convicted verdict, as determined by the jury beyond a reasonable doubt.

Lessons Learned

Youth involvement posed a challenge initially, with limited participation and volunteerism due to apparent disengagement and lack of interest in addressing certain societal issues and gaps. This dynamic began to shift gradually with the initiation of an Innovative Solutions project. This project aims to identify the interests and passions of young individuals, tailoring projects, campaigns, and initiatives to their interests and passions - encouraging them to be a part of something greater than themselves.



Photo credit: Arianna Beeray, Trinidad and Tobago Youth Advocacy Network

Recognising the urgent challenge of socio-economic disparities among youth, TTYAN remains committed to empowering young individuals and fostering lasting peace in Trinidad and Tobago. Through educational programmes, advocacy initiatives, and collaborative efforts with government and civil society, TTYAN strives to create a supportive environment where youth can actively participate in decision-making and contribute to positive change in their communities.

2.3 J-FLAG: Advocating Equality for All in Jamaica

Protection | Jamaica | Youth-led Initiative

Origins of the Organisation

J-FLAG, also known as the Equality for All Foundation Jamaica (EFAF), is a human rights and social justice organisation which advocates for the rights, livelihood and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Jamaica. Founded in December 1998 in a context marked by an ongoing HIV epidemic and a violently homophobic and transphobic environment for LGBT people in Jamaica.

On 10th December 2023, the organisation celebrated its 25th anniversary. The organisation's work has sought to build a Jamaican society that respects and protects the rights of everyone. J-FLAG is committed to promoting social change, empowering LGBT people and building tolerance, respect and acceptance of LGBT people. Through the implementation of different projects and programmes, the organisation has seen the establishment of three partner organisations each focusing on different populations within the larger LGBTQ+ community.

Context

Jamaica is one of numerous countries where LGBTQ+ individuals face challenges due to widespread adherence to anti-queer sentiments supported by restrictive laws and policies.¹¹ For example, in Jamaica, same-sex intimacy is criminalised under sections 76-79 of the 1864 Offences Against the Person Act (OAPA). This legal framework is often misinterpreted to imply that being gay is illegal in Jamaica, leading to its use against gay, bisexual, and other individuals, as well as transgender people.¹²

In 2019, J-FLAG conducted an LGBT Community Experience and Needs Assessment Survey, revealing that a significant majority of the 301 respondents (76%) expressed a wish to leave Jamaica, with 76% of those persons interested in leaving citing concerns related to their sexual orientation or gender identity. While a considerable number of respondents felt neutral or somewhat safe residing in Jamaica (40%), those who reported feeling unsafe identified public and faith-based spaces as particularly hazardous. Additionally, instances of violence, particularly verbal assault and harassment, were prevalent, with approximately 73% of respondents reporting some form of violence during their lifetime.¹³

Key Priorities

Employing a human rights based approach, the organisation's core priorities include advocating for:

- Increased public tolerance and understanding of LGBT peoples;
- Inclusive healthcare provisions;
- Legal reforms that foster a more enabling environment for community inclusion;
- Youth empowerment to help achieve these overarching goals.

These advocacy efforts are grounded in an evidence base established through numerous research activities conducted by the organisation.

Initiatives

Notable achievements in health and wellness include training over 600 healthcare practitioners in Jamaica on LGBT inclusivity. Since 2020, mental health services have increasingly become a priority for the organisation, carrying out a community need assessment among 220 LGBTQ+ Jamaicans and 200 mental health practitioners. This research highlighted a gap in awareness of available services and a lack of uniform capacity among providers to offer non-discriminatory and responsive care.

Research highlighted a **gap in awareness of available mental health services** & lack of uniform capacity among providers to offer **non-discriminatory & responsive care**

Since its inception, J-FLAG has been a staunch advocate for national legal and policy reforms aimed at safeguarding the fundamental rights of LGBT people. A key strategy in pursuit of this goal involves making submissions to parliament, as exemplified by recent contributions to the amendment discussions surrounding Jamaica's abortion laws. In 2011, J-FLAG contributed to the diversity policy of the Jamaica Constabulary Force, which establishes guidelines for respectful engagement with individuals from various backgrounds, including the LGBTQ+ community and people with disabilities. J-FLAG has, for several years, been invited to

11. Carla Moore and Michelle Williams (J-FLAG, 2023). Final Report: Consultancy to Assess LGBT Inclusivity and Diversity in Select Government Based-Youth Programmes

12. Idem

13. Carla Moore (J-FLAG, 2019). The Jamaican LGBT Community Experience and Needs Assessment: Survey Results

nominate members of the community to participate in the National Youth Parliament of Jamaica, offering yet another avenue to strengthen the participation of LGBTQ+ youth in decision-making processes.

J-FLAG serves as the primary organiser of Pride in Jamaica, leading the inaugural public pride event in 2015, though local pride activities were acknowledged prior to this milestone. Jamaica Pride stands as a vital platform for amplifying community visibility, with recent advancements allowing for public announcement of event locations, the promotion of Pride activities through social media channels, as well as no reported incidents of attacks on community members during the Pride. Moreover, J-FLAG endeavours to further enhance community visibility by participating in broader social impact initiatives, such as 5K walks and runs, donations to educational and housing facilities, and supporting Jamaican social causes. Such engagements also cultivate opportunities for partnerships with private sector entities.

Lessons Learned

The Equality for All Foundation operates primarily in urban areas but reaches rural LGBTQ+ people through community-driven initiatives. Despite these considerable accomplishments, J-FLAG continues to encounter persistent challenges, including slow advancements in legal reforms and funding shortages. Additionally, resources to sustain the continued growth and operations of the organisation are limited, and so its ability to sustain programmes at the end of donor projects is limited. As it continues to advocate for LGBT rights, the organisation remains committed to amplifying marginalised voices and advancing social justice in Jamaica and beyond.



Photo credit: Freepik Premium

CASE STUDIES IN ACTION



DISENGAGEMENT & REINTEGRATION



3. DISENGAGEMENT & REINTEGRATION

3.1 The National Peace Programme of Barbados

Disengagement & Reintegration | Barbados | Government-led Initiative

Origins

In October 2022, the Government of Barbados initiated the National Peace Programme (NPP) under the leadership of Prime Minister Mia Motley. Hon. Mr. Corey Lane was appointed as the Minister of State in the Office of the Attorney General, tasked with the mandate of crime prevention. The main goal of the National Peace Programme is to reduce the rates of homicides, foster community development, and improve a sense of safety and well-being for the people of Barbados.

“”
The National Peace Programme aims to **reduce the rates of homicides**, foster community development, & improve a sense of **safety & well-being of the people of Barbados**

Peace Agreement between Two Rivalling Gangs

The Programme's inception witnessed a direct intervention to put an end to gun violence stemming from a decade-long conflict between rival gangs. Collaborating with the NGO Inspire, dialogue was facilitated between opposing gang members, resulting in the development and sign-off of a peace treaty between the two conflict parties. There has been no incidence of gun-related crime between the two gangs since the adoption of this treaty, fostering ongoing cooperation and joint community activities such as musical performances.

Mandate and Objectives

The Programme operates on six pillars and encompasses 150 initiatives, primarily targeting youth aged between 11-35. Key objectives include:

- Reinforcing positive social norms by building stronger families and communities – By improving delivery of core social services, interventions focusing on emotional intelligence and interpersonal relations, as well as mentorship programmes.
- Increasing opportunities for economic empowerment by expanding avenues for training and income generation – Through training focusing on development of marketable soft and technical skills.
- Enhancing the delivery of the criminal justice system and protective services of institutional and judicial reforms – Strengthening relations and building trust between communities and law enforcement.
- Disarmament, decreasing the number of firearms on the island and streets – Through improved detection, monitoring and technical strategies.

Prison Work and Other Innovative Approaches

A pilot project, “Touring a Prison,” offered a stark reality check to 500 at-risk youth, highlighting prison conditions and the consequences of criminal behaviour.

“”
“If we can tell them to put down the gun or put down the knife, we have to give them something to pick up.”

**Minister
Corey Lane**

The “Flip Your Script Aftercare Programme” provided an extensive eight-week training curriculum to 60 young individuals. This curriculum encompassed various subjects including financial literacy, arts and crafts, business plan development, job application writing, fashion design, and basic etiquette. The programme's objective goes beyond merely enhancing practical skills; it also aims to nurture participants' emotional well-being and instil positive values. Ten standout participants from this cohort were selected for an exciting opportunity: a trip to Canada in January 2024, as part of the NPP's New Horizon Youth Portal.

The NPP employs creative methods to connect with the target demographic beyond academically-minded youth. For instance, they combine accessible activities like hiking trips and crab fishing with personalised coaching. A key strategy for engaging “hard-to-reach youth” involves enlisting respected community figures who may have prior records or a history similar to those they mentor. These role models and community leaders leverage their own experiences to guide younger members away from violence, effectively transforming their past into a source of wisdom and mentorship.

By partnering with the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) and the Nita Barrow Unit at the University of the West Indies, the NPP strives for gender equity, offering specific interventions tailored to at-risk women, ensuring equal participation in parental programmes, and addressing issues such as domestic and gender-based violence.

Strengths and Challenges

The Programme’s success is attributed to several key factors, including the team’s adeptness at immersing itself within target communities, pioneering innovative approaches that surpass traditional services, utilising influential role models, securing buy-in and support from senior leadership, and cultivating partnerships with relevant Ministries. Additionally, the team’s composition, comprising numerous young professionals, is also seen as a valuable asset in facilitating meaningful youth participation in peace and security programming.

At times, tensions arise between traditional approaches to disengagement and reintegration processes and the NPP’s diverse intervention methods for addressing youth violence and crime. To mitigate these challenges, the team conducts information sessions to raise awareness of the programme rationale and impact, advocating for interventions that acknowledge the complex social, economic, and psychological factors that contribute to youth involvement in violence and crime.

The National Peace Programme of Barbados represents a multifaceted approach to tackling youth violence and crime. From brokering peace agreements between rival gangs to innovative community engagement strategies, the Programme demonstrates a commitment to holistic solutions. Challenges persist but through collaboration, innovation, and a focus on youth empowerment, Barbados endeavours to build a safer and more resilient society.



Photo credit: National Peace Programme Barbados





CASE STUDIES IN ACTION

PARTNERSHIPS



Photo credit: CARICOM

4. PARTNERSHIP

4.1 Advancements in CARICOM’s Regional Integration and Youth Development Agenda

Participation | Regional | Regional Organisation Initiative

CARICOM’s Youth Mandate

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is a regional integration movement focused on improving standards of living and employment across its fifteen Member States and five Associate Members through collaborative efforts at the regional level. Guided by the [CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan \(CYDAP\)](#), first adopted in 2012 and presently undergoing revision, CARICOM’s approach to youth engagement diverges from previous problem-centric and homogenous views of youth found in earlier reports and regional strategies. These earlier initiatives dictated top-down decision-making processes while receiving limited attention from national governments.¹⁴

In contrast, the Youth Development Action Plan recognises the immense potential of young people as key contributors to peace, good governance, and sustainable development at both regional and national levels. The inception of the CYDAP followed the formation of a Commission on Youth Development, which included eight young people as Commissioners alongside seven adult technocrats, with co-chairmanship shared between a youth and an adult Commissioner. While the practical implementation of this partnership involved a learning curve for all stakeholders, it established a benchmark for the anticipated role of youth within the Community.¹⁵

Multiple years of consultation by the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development culminated in a comprehensive report submitted to Heads of Government in 2010. In response, the Caribbean Community’s Heads of Government issued the [Declaration of Paramaribo on the Future of Youth in the Caribbean](#), affirming their commitment to explicitly acknowledge and integrate youth into development agendas. This declaration emphasised the importance of mainstreaming youth perspectives in national and regional development strategies, including provisions for youth mainstreaming, youth-adult partnership and youth participation across all sectors.

“
The Youth Development Action Plan recognises the immense potential of young people as key contributors to peace, good governance, and sustainable development at both regional and national levels
”

14. CARICOM Commission on Youth Development (CCYD, 2010). Eye on the Future: Investing in Youth NOW for Tomorrow’s Community

15. Dr. Terri-Ann Gilbert-Roberts (2014). ‘CARICOM Governance of Youth Development: Prospects for Regional Citizenship’ in Social and Economic Studies 63: 3&4, pp. 59-106

The Declaration of Paramaribo paved the way for the adoption of the CYDAP in 2012, which outlines a set of six CARICOM Youth Development Goals. Among these goals, the “Protection, Safety, and Security” objective prioritises the creation of protective environments to foster resilience and ensure adolescent and youth safety and security. Complementary frameworks for implementation, communication, and monitoring accompany the CYDAP to facilitate its effective execution.

Suriname is one of three Member States selected to pilot monitoring and evaluation processes for the implementation of the CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan, presently undergoing revision. In Jamaica, an intra-ministerial youth focal group was inaugurated in January 2024 at the national level, with plans for expansion into Belize underway.

CARICOM Network of Youth Directors

The national implementation of the Youth Development Action Plan is coordinated and overseen through the CARICOM Network of Directors of Youth Affairs in accordance with the proposed regional institutional arrangements in its implementation matrix. This network comprises focal points for youth development from each Member State and Associate Member, who are technocrats within the public sector. By protocol, the network convenes annually in person as a senior official group. However, this practice has been impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic and exacerbated by limited financial resources at both the Secretariat and national levels. The group convenes virtually on a quarterly basis and as needed for specific purposes.

The Youth Directors Network plays a crucial role as a conduit for the CARICOM Secretariat to remain informed about developments at the country level, enabling the identification of specific needs, relevant programmes, and initiatives. Moreover, it functions as a Community of Practice, fostering the exchange of best practices and lessons learned among its members. A structured system pairs Youth Directors to provide each other with mutual support and insights.

At the same time, the network faces challenges, such as frequent turnover resulting from changes in government administration. This has not only disrupted the effectiveness of the network but has, in many cases, hindered the implementation of national youth policies. Consequently, this has stymied the progress of the CARICOM Youth Development Plan (CYDAP), highlighting the need for strategies to ensure continuity.

Capacity Strengthening and Partnerships

In June 2022, the UNESCO Office for the Caribbean, in collaboration with its Youth, Peace, and Security Support Group (YPS SG - see case study 5.1) and the CARICOM Secretariat, organised a series of workshops aimed at fostering meaningful youth engagement. These workshops included a thematic case study on the Youth, Peace, and Security agenda specifically tailored for policymakers and public officials from youth-related ministries of CARICOM countries. Following the workshops, youth representatives who co-created and co-facilitated the workshops were able to connect with the Youth Directors of their respective countries. The partnership also led to the organisation of two sessions on youth-driven peacebuilding at the 2023 Caribbean Youth Summit led by the CARICOM Secretariat.



Photo credit: CARICOM Secretariat



CARICOM Youth Ambassadors Programme

CARICOM has a set of programmatic initiatives aimed at fostering youth participation, such as the CARICOM Youth Ambassador Programme. As of 2024, there are currently twenty-eight CARICOM Youth Ambassadors across fourteen countries, whose priorities align with the six areas of the Youth Development Action Plan. Recently, these Ambassadors formulated proposals in response to a CARICOM Call for Proposals addressing climate change and health concerns. They are also engaged in consultations on crime and violence prevention, under the auspices of the Crime and Security Department of the CARICOM Secretariat.

The CARICOM Secretariat serves as a key partner for multilateral cooperation at the service of Caribbean countries. In this regard, enhanced intra-UN coordination is essential for more effective engagement with the CARICOM Secretariat and its Member States and Associate Members. Given the limited staffing of the Youth Development Programme at the CARICOM Secretariat, comprising one focal point, improved coordination would facilitate more efficient interaction with UN entities. This collaborative approach can amplify the impact of initiatives and better address the diverse youth-related challenges and opportunities within the CARICOM region.

4.2 Empowering and Safeguarding Young People: Inter-Ministerial Collaboration and Policy Reform in the Cayman Islands

Partnership | the Cayman Islands | Government-led Initiative

Context

Although the Cayman Islands maintain low levels of crime and violence in contrast to neighbouring Caribbean countries, the safety and security concerns of young people encompass issues related to housing, climate change, environmental sustainability, drug use, unemployment, and the high cost of living, which can exacerbate existing social problems. These concerns were highlighted in youth consultations conducted in January and March 2024 by the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Heritage of the Cayman Islands.

Issues concerning youth intersect with multiple ministries and government departments, requiring a coordinated approach to guarantee coherent, effective policies and programmes while minimising duplication of efforts. The Cayman Islands Government has two key entities that are focused on the empowerment and safeguarding of youth: the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Heritage and the Ministry of Investment, Innovation and Social Development. Both ministries work closely together to ensure a continuum of care for young people in the Cayman Islands.

Mandates

The Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Heritage of the Cayman Islands places a high priority on the “Enhancement and Empowerment of Youth.” Under this mandate, the National Youth Commission, an independent body overseen by the Ministry, takes charge of monitoring the implementation of the National Youth Policy and advocating for youth-related issues in legislation. A key objective of the commission is to foster youth engagement in both governmental and non-governmental programmes, projects, and activities that affect young people directly.

Youth participation in the Cayman Islands is facilitated through two main programmes: the Cayman Islands Youth Assembly (CIYA) and the CARICOM Youth Ambassador (CYA) programme. CIYA brings together representatives from high schools, colleges, and districts across the country, supported by the Youth Services Unit (YSU) and the government. They address youth and community concerns by formulating articles and position statements, and engaging in dialogues with various stakeholders. Topics have included: bullying, drug abuse, child neglect, teenage pregnancy, transportation, suicide, amongst others. Meanwhile, the CYAs, composed of two ambassadors and two alternates, represent youth interests and engage with the community through youth dialogues, delivering presentations to local youth organisations or schools, and volunteering at YSU Special Events or Summer Camps.

The Ministry of Investment, Innovation, and Social Development seeks investment to boost economic growth and ensure efficient government service delivery to new investors and residents through innovative technology and modern business processes. Additionally, the Ministry seeks to assist and uplift vulnerable Caymanians, including young people, through reform of the Government’s social development policies and programmes, aiming to enhance impact and efficiency.



“
Ministry of Youth,
Sports and Heritage and
the Ministry of Investment,
Innovation and Social
Development work closely
together to **ensure a
continuum of care
for young people in
the Cayman
Islands**”

Policy and Legislative Reform

The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Heritage’s ongoing revision of the Cayman Islands National Youth Policy prioritises inclusivity and seeks to amplify youth participation in decision-making processes at all governance levels through targeted programmes and engagement initiatives.

The Ministry is currently revising the National Sports Policy, emphasising sports’ significance in Caymanian heritage and as a unifying force. The aim is to empower young individuals in the sports sector, particularly through Talent Identification and Development initiatives. Anticipated to be completed by the end of 2024, the updated policies will be accompanied by a monitoring and implementation plan.

Recognising the importance of protecting the human rights and physical safety of young people, particularly those with disabilities or in care, the Ministry of Investment, Innovation and Social Development of the Cayman Islands spearheads the development of national standards, legislative framework and the development and review of policies. These standards serve as a comprehensive

framework to ensure the delivery of high-quality care and support services across the Cayman Islands, thereby safeguarding the well-being of vulnerable persons including children.

Central to the Ministry’s endeavours is legislative reform aimed at enhancing child protection and child advocacy. Proposed legislative reform of the Adoption of Children Act (2021 Revision) and the Children Act (2012 Revision) are geared towards aligning national laws with international standards and international conventions, notably enhancing the legislative framework to be aligned with the already ratified United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.

Through extensive consultations with key stakeholders, including children and young people who have experienced the care system first-hand, the Ministry actively solicits feedback to inform legislative decisions and policy development. This includes consultations with young people in residential care facilities, facilitated by counsellors to ensure a safe space for sharing. Essential points highlighted include aspects such as the transition to aftercare, covering support for housing, opportunities for further education or employment, and addressing mental health issues, including trauma assistance.

Lessons Learned

The Ministries’ experiences underscore key areas of focus. Funding constraints and the need for sufficient human resources emerge as significant challenges. In response, the Ministries are actively seeking ways to tap into private sector investments. Moreover, tackling emerging social issues requires a reimagining of social development within the unique context of the Cayman Islands. This entails updating legislation to meet evolving societal needs, offering clear guidance for sustained action beyond political terms. Achieving harmony between policy creation and operationalisation requires active engagement with stakeholders responsible for executing policies and programmes on the ground.

By adopting a whole-of-government approach, where ministries collaborate toward shared objectives, the effectiveness of interventions and policies is maximised. Through the development of national standards, legislative reform, community partnerships, and support programmes, the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Heritage and the Ministry of Investment, Innovation and Social Development are working together to create a safer and more supportive environment for young people and the broader community across the Cayman Islands.

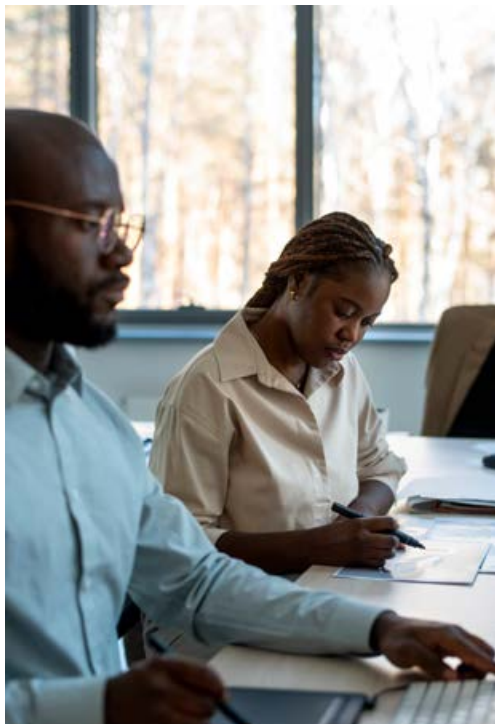


Photo credit: Freepik Premium

4.3 Youth As Researchers and Knowledge Creators

Partnership | Jamaica and the Bahamas | UN-led Initiative

Introduction

Increasingly, young people are the focus of research studies, involving them through consultations, surveys, and focus group discussions. Their potential as researchers and creators of knowledge is frequently overlooked. By embracing youth as researchers, a more participatory and inclusive approach to research is adopted, enabling young people to assert their agency and ownership. By actively participating in data collection, analysis, and interpretation, young people ensure that research outcomes are more authentic, representative, and reflective of their diverse realities.

Engaging young people in participatory research not only improves the quality and relevance of research but also offers them valuable opportunities for skill development. This is exemplified by the [Youth As Researchers](#) (YAR) initiative conducted by the UNESCO Office for the Caribbean. The project was conceived under the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) project titled "Amplifying Youth Voice & Action" to address citizen security and safety in Jamaica.



Methodology and Objectives

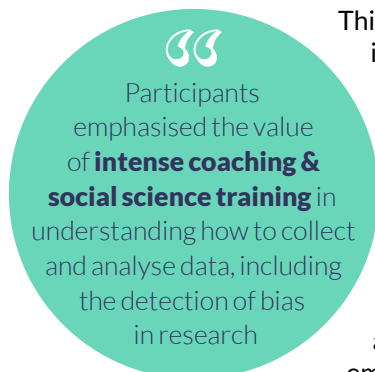
Originally developed by the UNESCO Chairs at the National University of Ireland Galway and The Pennsylvania State University, the YAR methodology aims to contribute to positive youth development by enhancing technical capacities of young people to conduct research and strengthening intra- and interpersonal skills such as critical thinking, strategic thinking and teamwork. In Jamaica, the YAR initiative aimed to achieve the following objectives: reinforce the capacity of youth as researchers, generate youth-owned knowledge on youth engagement and citizen security, and raise awareness among decision-makers and other stakeholders on peacebuilding and citizen security. Throughout a span of five months, UNESCO delivered intensive training in basic social science methods, sessions on concepts related to Youth, Peace, and Security, and mentoring and coaching for three distinct groups comprising individuals aged 18-30 from Jamaica.

Key Achievements

A total of eighteen participants were supported to conduct youth-led research resulting in the elaboration of research reports on the following topics: government programmes on peace and security; youth-centric policy design for peace, citizen safety, and security; as well as youth and civil society engagement in the realm of peace, citizen safety, and security.

The research findings and policy recommendations were presented at the Amplifying Youth Voice and Action project's close-out event and a technical working group meeting, and further summarised into three factsheets. Furthermore, two researchers were invited to share their research findings and policy recommendations on Jamaican national television, Sunrise at CVM, while another young researcher presented the research findings at the Latin American and Caribbean Conference of Social Sciences organised in Mexico in 2022. Concrete and actionable recommendations from Jamaican YAR participants were provided to strengthen meaningful youth engagement in Youth, Peace, and Security in Jamaica.

Lessons Learned



This initiative was fully implemented online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which posed challenges in creating group cohesion. Additionally, some participants dropped out due to competing demands despite initially indicating their commitment, highlighting the need for careful planning and support mechanisms. Lessons include the importance of co-creation to generate ownership and engagement among young participants, managing expectations, and fostering partnerships with academia to ensure methodological alignment and ethical standards.

Participants reflected on the programme and highlighted their key takeaways. Among these were insights into the importance of flexibility in the research process and the necessity for structuring research according to the needs of those being researched. Developing teamwork skills and training to meet deadlines were also underscored as key competencies acquired. Participants emphasised the value of intense coaching and social science training in understanding how to collect

and analyse data, including the detection of bias in research. One participant remarked, “I learned that focus groups and interviews would have been better data collection tools for the research topic and target group, as opposed to questionnaires.”

The Youth As Researchers methodology provides youth-driven insights into key issues and challenges that young people face in their communities and across society. As the YAR methodology expands to the Bahamas, these lessons serve as invaluable guidance in ensuring its continued success in strengthening the research skills of young people, facilitating positive youth development, advancing inclusive research, and building an evidence base on Youth, Peace, and Security in the Caribbean region.



Photo credit: UNESCO



CASE STUDIES IN ACTION



PARTICIPATION





Photo credit: Freepik Premium

5. PARTICIPATION

5.1 Youth, Peace, and Security Support Group, UNESCO Office for the Caribbean

Participation | Regional | UN-led Initiative

Origins of the YPS Support Group

Initiated by the UNESCO Office for the Caribbean in 2022, the Youth, Peace, and Security Support Group (YPS Support Group) emerged following a recommendation outlined in a regional Youth, Peace, and Security Roadmap. This roadmap, a culmination of insights gathered from a regional consultation in 2021, encapsulated the perspectives of twenty-five young individuals from both English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean nations.

Comprising initially of four members hailing from Dominica, Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, the first cohort of the YPS Support Group laid the foundation for its subsequent expansion. The second cohort, expanded to six members, encompassed representatives from the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, Sint Maarten, and Trinidad and Tobago. Members were selected through an open and thorough process to ensure diversity and inclusivity. This included striving for gender balance, geographical representation, actively encouraging the participation of younger individuals within the age range of 18 to 24, involving representatives from youth-led organisations, and encouraging participation from underrepresented communities such as the LGBTQIA+ community, individuals with migrant backgrounds, and youths from rural areas.

Mandate and Selection Process

The mandate of the YPS Support Group is to be a sounding board for the UNESCO Office on matters relating to youth participation, peaceful co-existence, living without fear of violence, and regional cooperation. This has included:

- Learning how to advocate and create partnerships with national, regional, and international actors to advance young people's participation in peace and security.
- Researching the experiences and views of fellow young people in their countries, and translating these insights into recommendations and suggestions for UNESCO's work on youth, peace, and security in the Caribbean.
- Developing personal projects to promote a better understanding of and support for youth, peace, and security in the region.



The YPS Support Group will provide an **opportunity to see some of the amazing work youths** in other Caribbean territories are doing and make new friends as I have done."

Johnoi Eliston, member of the 2022 YPS Support Group

The onboarding process of the 2023 cohort was organised virtually across four 90-minute sessions focused on informal team building activities, introducing and jointly contextualising the YPS agenda, learning more about UNESCO and the broader UN system, as well as a series of exercises for priority setting, drafting a work plan, and determining working methods. YPS members carried out reading and other preparatory assignments in between sessions. The onboarding process was wrapped up with learning exchanges with the 2022 cohort of the YPS Support Group and the UN Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

Contributions and Initiatives

Through their personal projects, the YPS Support Group effectively promoted the YPS agenda at national and local levels. These initiatives encompassed community-based peace talks, hosting a knowledge cafe on Youth, Peace, and Security in the Caribbean, engaging with national and local media, conducting school visits and discussions, and convening online campaigns. The YPS Support Group played a crucial role in shaping the direction of the UNESCO Office for the Caribbean's efforts on YPS, as well as contributing to amplify the voices of Caribbean youth regionally and globally on peace and security issues. This involvement included contributions to mapping YPS efforts in the region as a basis for this Knowledge Product, providing input for the launch of a regional coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security, co-designing and co-facilitating YPS training sessions, participating in meetings of the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security, and authoring opinion pieces and blogs.

Members of the 2022 YPS Support Group co-facilitated a case-study on Youth, Peace, and Security as part of a training session on meaningful youth engagement for the Network of Youth Directors of the CARICOM Secretariat (see case study 4.1). In 2023, the YPS Support Group supported the programme development, promotion, and facilitation of a virtual training on Youth Power for Peace in the Caribbean (see case study 5.4).

Reflections and Lessons Learned



Members of the YPS Support Group believe that the **platform has enabled them to forge connections & foster collaboration with peers from diverse backgrounds across the region**

To successfully pilot the new structure, obtaining buy-in and support from senior leadership within the Office was crucial. Their endorsement was key in lending legitimacy and credibility to the YPS Support Group, ensuring the allocation of adequate financial and human resources for its establishment and coordination, addressing potential barriers during implementation, and fostering sustained commitment over the long term. Initial concerns stemming from internal bureaucracy were addressed by positioning the YPS Support Group as an informal platform. It was imperative to communicate clearly to youth members that their participation was voluntary and non-contractual, emphasising that they were not authorised to extend the use of UNESCO beyond the group's mandate.

Another notable takeaway involves the importance of dedicated efforts to mobilise future members in the Dutch-speaking countries, as this was a challenge faced across the two mandates. YPS members suggested that the Office strengthen its network and entry points in these countries and consider translating outreach materials into languages beyond English. Additionally, there was a strong recommendation for organising face-to-face gatherings, despite the logistical challenges posed by the region's dispersed island geography. Furthermore, finding solutions to overcome administrative hurdles in securing modest budgets for the implementation of personal projects was emphasised.

Members of the YPS Support Group believe that the platform has enabled them to forge connections and foster collaboration with peers from diverse backgrounds across the region. This opportunity proves especially valuable within a context where regional connectivity and access to global exchange and partnership are limited. Furthermore, the YPS Support Group serves as a catalyst for personal growth, offering young individuals in the region the chance to expand their skill set beyond their comfort zone. Through engaging in activities such as advocacy planning, public speaking and facilitation, participants were empowered to develop practical skills essential for their personal and professional advancement.

The YPS Support Group stands as a testament to the tangible impact of youth participation initiatives, highlighting the invaluable contributions of young people in shaping regional efforts towards peace, cooperation, and sustainable development.



Photo credit: Members of the 2023 YPS Support Group

5.2 Belize Children's Parliament

Participation | Belize | Multi-Stakeholder Initiative

Introduction

The Belize Children's Parliament traces its roots back to 2019, with key stakeholders including the National Commission for Family and Children (NCFC), UNICEF Belize, the National Assembly of Belize, and the Government of Belize. The initiative arose in response to a call from youth for increased participation in decision-making processes. The Children's Parliament is composed of young people aged between 14 and 18, aiming to mainstream children's participation and foster dialogue on various topics decided by the youth parliamentarians.

The Parliament has expanded to include over 50 members, emphasising diverse representation as a fundamental goal. Outreach efforts extend to every school nationwide, focusing on involving youth with disabilities and those from indigenous communities. Promotion of the initiative is widespread, utilising mediums such as radio broadcasts, news outlets, and direct engagement campaigns. Live sittings of the Children's Parliament feature sign-language interpretation, ensuring accessibility for young individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Initiatives

The process involves face-to-face training, followed by parliamentary sessions where children share their views and vote on proposed bills. Proposals are then sent to special committee drafters, reviewed by the youth parliament, and advocated to the government for incorporation into existing legislation. Recent discussions within the Children's Parliament have covered a wide array of topics, including education reform, road safety, and healthcare. Notably, the Children's Parliament undertook the revision of an Education Act, extending compulsory school enrollment from 12 to 16 years, a measure successfully endorsed by the National Parliament in January 2024. The Children Parliamentarians are also actively engaged in crafting legislation aimed at safeguarding young individuals from sexual grooming, which is being reviewed by relevant Ministries.

“
The Children's Parliament undertook the revision of an Education Act, extending compulsory school enrollment from 12 to 16 years, a **measure successfully endorsed by the National Parliament**”

The young parliamentarians are contributing to an initiative aimed at enhancing data collection on child poverty, as nearly half of Belizean children reside in multidimensional poverty¹⁶. Led by UNICEF Belize in collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, and the Statistical Institute of Belize, this effort seeks to address poverty issues comprehensively. The Children's Parliament plays a pivotal role in promoting the newly established multi-poverty index and advocating for strategies to combat poverty.

“
The significance of the Children's Parliament lies in offering youth first hand exposure to governmental processes, **fostering debate, strengthening of negotiation skills, & media engagement**”

Lessons Learned

While progress has been made, challenges persist, including bureaucratic delays and the necessity for further integration of the Children's Parliament within the governmental framework. Nevertheless, ongoing endeavours seek to strengthen relationships with governmental bodies. Given that this is a relatively new structure, the Children's Parliament has yet to engage extensively at the regional level and is currently prioritising domestic matters.



The significance of the Children's Parliament lies in offering youth first hand exposure to governmental processes, fostering debate, strengthening of negotiation skills, and media engagement. Former members have transitioned to secure international scholarships, occupy positions within governmental agencies, and mentor subsequent generations of Children Parliamentarians. The Children's Parliament not only addresses pressing social issues but also serves as a platform for youth empowerment and leadership development in Belize.

As 2024 marks the fifth cohort of the Belize National Children's Parliament, the Children's Parliament is looking forward to a more inclusive and diverse cohort. At the same time, the Children's Parliament of Belize celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC), culminating in their official sitting in the National Assembly in November to honour this significant anniversary.

16.UNICEF BELIZE (2016). Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2015: Key Findings

5.3 The Barbados and Eastern Caribbean Youth Advisory Group (YAG)

Participation | Regional | UN-led Initiative

In response to the adoption of the UN's Youth 2030 Strategy, the UN Barbados and Eastern Caribbean Office formed the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) in 2021. This initiative aims to empower youth leaders in the Eastern Caribbean to actively contribute to sustainable development within the sub-region. The YAG collaborates closely with the UN Sub-Regional Team (UNST) to lead joint efforts towards this goal. The YAG members emphasise the importance of youth voices in driving policy approaches, citing the relevance of lived experiences and diverse perspectives. They highlighted the need for direct youth participation in setting agendas and decision-making processes, particularly in issues affecting young people.

Priority Areas and Initiatives

The 2023 cohort of the YAG identified nine priority areas in its work plan, including: UN advocacy and engagement, innovation and technology, youth employability and entrepreneurship, youth engagement and partnership, health, education, climate change, gender equality, and human rights. Throughout their tenure, the group spearheaded various initiatives and campaigns aligned with these thematic areas.

For example, the “Youth Unite! Empower, Educate & Elevate” campaign aimed to promote youth engagement and awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Events included Instagram live panel discussions aiming to enhance young people’s understanding of the SDGs in the sub-region, featuring YAG members. Additionally, there was a showcase of stories from youth leaders across the region, highlighting their work and inspiring others. The campaign also encouraged youth to use the #YouthLead and other relevant hashtags to join the conversation and share their experiences.

Engagement with UN Stakeholders

YAG members envision a pivotal role in advising and supporting UN stakeholders in the region, offering diverse thematic expertise and skills. However, they initially faced challenges due to limited awareness among UN partners about the YAG. The on-site training workshop in the second year significantly bolstered relations and collaboration with UNST members, including FAO, ILO, IOM, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOCHA, UN Women, and WFP. Held in Barbados, the workshop provided orientation on meaningful youth engagement and the Youth 2030 Strategy for all twelve YAG members. This training proved crucial in charting the course for the second YAG Cohort, offering insights into the youth development focus of UN agencies as well as opportunities for interaction and inquiry.

“YAG members envision a pivotal role in advising and supporting UN stakeholders in the region, offering diverse thematic expertise and skills”

Strengthening Representation of Eastern Caribbean Youth

The improved ties to UN entities resulted in increased opportunities for YAG members to represent the views and interests of young people in the Eastern Caribbean in international forums and processes, such as at the UN SDG Action Week and UN SDG Summit 2023 in New York, Biennial UN Global Indigenous Youth Forum in Rome, and the Crime Symposium in Barbados.

Reflections and Lessons Learned

“Coming from Anguilla, a country unknown to many, it was a valuable experience to speak at the ECOSOC Youth Forum 2023, & to put my country and my region on the map.”

Tyeisha Emmanuel,
Chair of the YAG
2023/2024

To boost the YAG’s effectiveness, members recommend further improving communication and collaboration with UN agencies and external partners, and raising awareness of the YAG’s mission and presence. Hosting a handover ceremony may facilitate a smooth transition between outgoing and incoming cohorts. Moreover, incorporating Q&A sessions alongside explanations of the work plan and appointing co-leads of priority areas will allow new YAG members to fulfil their duties effectively.

Like many youth advisory bodies, the YAG lacks a specific budget, while the UNST communications team faces constraints in fully supporting the YAG’s outreach efforts due to limited staff capacity. Allocating dedicated resources is crucial when establishing youth participation mechanisms.

Members shared their hopes of continuing to contribute to youth empowerment and sustainable development, both within their communities and on a global scale. As YAG members serve on a voluntary basis, they stressed the importance of the supporting organisation recognising each member's motivations and assisting them in attaining their personal learning objectives to make it a truly meaningful experience.

The young advisors expressed their personal reflections on their experiences with the YAG, emphasising the value of friendships made, lessons learned, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. They highlighted the importance of the initial stages of the YAG in laying down a foundational framework to unlock the significant potential this platform offers for promoting meaningful youth engagement in the UN's activities in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean.



Photo credit: UN Sub-Regional Team and the Barbados and Eastern Caribbean Youth Advisory Group (YAG)



5.4 Youth Power for Peace in the Caribbean

Participation | Regional | UN-led Initiative

Introduction

The Youth Power for Peace training, held virtually from September 2nd to 21st, 2023, marked a collaborative effort between the UNESCO Office for the Caribbean and its Youth, Peace, and Security Support Group (see case study 5.1). With a focus on empowering youth from diverse Caribbean nations, the initiative sought to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and networks necessary to tackle issues of exclusion, violence, and conflict within their communities and the broader region. Through the lens of youth power and agency, the programme aimed to foster proactive engagement and meaningful contributions to peacebuilding efforts.

Throughout the training, participants delved into the multifaceted nature of power, moving beyond conventional understandings of control and dominance. Instead, they explored positive expressions of power that facilitate more equitable relationships and collective action. “Power To” was highlighted as the recognition of people’s inherent potential to shape their own lives and environments. This potential is further enhanced by “Power With,” which emphasises collective solidarity and collaboration to address shared challenges and promote inclusive relations. Additionally, “Power Within” underscored the importance of self-awareness, resilience, and dignity in driving personal fulfilment and agency.

By exploring their power within, outside, and around formal decision-making processes, participants developed a nuanced understanding of their agency and potential to effect change across multiple levels of society.

Selection

Out of 79 applicants from 14 Caribbean countries, 41 participants were selected based on their motivation to participate and previous experience in youth-led organisations or volunteer work. Efforts were made to ensure gender balance and representation from underrepresented countries, such as Dutch-speaking countries and smaller islands in the region. The support of the YPS Support Group played a crucial role in achieving a balanced representation.

Programme

The training comprised a preparation phase, live sessions, and a follow-up session, all conducted online. Designed with participants at the forefront, the programme utilised a mix of presentations and interactive assignments, integrating non-formal education methods. The live sessions featured activities such as networking sessions, group discussions, and simulations aimed at exploring various aspects of youth power and peacebuilding. Participants had the opportunity to learn from guest speakers and draft action plans to address peace and security challenges in their communities. Developed in close collaboration between the lead trainer and the YPS Support Group, the methodology benefited from extensive input on thematic content and module design.

On the first day, participants took part in a networking session organised by Keeping Hope Alive, a youth-led organisation. This session facilitated exchanges about participants’ respective countries and initial thoughts on training topics in an informal setting. Moreover, participants had the opportunity to explore various approaches for exercising youth power, including engaging with young representatives from the National Peace Programme in Barbados (see case study 3.1) and the “Pretty Trashy” public campaign in Sint Maarten. Through role-playing exercises and discussions, participants familiarised themselves with the structures and dynamics of civic engagement, learning how to effectively advocate for their interests, influence policy agendas, and hold decision-makers accountable.

Lessons Learned

The training revealed challenges such as time constraints during the planning phase, underscoring the importance of delegating logistical and content preparation tasks and considering co-trainers for larger groups. Participant feedback emphasised the value of connecting young people from different Caribbean countries and called for more dedicated time within the programme to discuss and strategise on key regional challenges and issues.

Follow-Up

Following the training, a follow-up session was conducted on the day after the International Day of Peace. During this session, participant groups presented their action plans and received feedback from peers and the training support team. Discussions were held to explore the establishment of a regional network of young peacebuilders in the Caribbean, with active contributions from participants. One tangible outcome from the training is the formation of a group of participants developing their action plan into a full-fledged project proposal focused on destigmatising young people's mental health issues in Belize. This group is being mentored by the training organisers during the follow-up phase in order to mobilise funds and identify potential partners. Furthermore, leveraging the established methodology, a condensed version of the training was delivered at the Caribbean Youth Summit in partnership with the CARICOM Secretariat. Hosted in Jamaica in November 2023, the session reached over 60 young leaders from across the Caribbean.



Photo credit: Freepik Premium





RECOMMENDATIONS

The insights from the fourteen case studies offer a range of recommendations and entry-points for national governments, regional organisations and UN entities to jointly strengthen meaningful youth engagement in peace and security issues within the Dutch- and English-speaking Caribbean:

1. Implement existing policy commitments and strategies on youth development and the Youth, Peace, and Security agenda

- Translate frameworks such as the CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan, UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security, Commonwealth Heads of Government endorsement of UNSCR 2250, and National Youth Policies into actionable steps at regional and country-levels. This includes implementing outlined principles and objectives, as well as integrating youth-specific provisions into regional and national development plans, legislation, and peace and security programmes to address the needs and aspirations of young people in the Caribbean region.

2. Reinforce the constructive role that young people can play as peacebuilders in their communities and at the regional level - This entails engaging with youth not solely as beneficiaries, but actively promoting their meaningful involvement in decision-making and policy discussions related to peace and security. Fostering a more inclusive and empowering environment encompasses shifting away from narratives that stigmatise youth and perpetuate negative stereotypes.

3. Allocate sufficient financial and human resources to youth participation mechanisms - Allocate dedicated resources to support youth participation mechanisms such as youth advisory groups. This commitment involves earmarking funds including for their personal or joint projects, staffing, and logistical support to enable these youth platforms to effectively carry out their mandate and activities.

4. Enhance training and support mechanisms for engaged youth - Provide comprehensive training and support mechanisms for youth participants involved in various programmes and initiatives. This includes providing coaching and mentorship, opportunities for capacity development, and fostering a positive environment for learning and development.

5. Allocate resources and dedicate efforts to facilitating face-to-face gatherings for young individuals across the Caribbean region, recognising the logistical challenges posed by geographical dispersion - Advocating for and prioritising in-person interactions whenever feasible is crucial, as they serve as vital platforms for nurturing team unity, intercultural dialogue, cross-context learning, and joint solutions to the shared obstacles confronting youth in the Caribbean.

6. Ensure inclusive representation of young people beyond usual suspects from capital cities, youth enrolled in higher education, and those already engaged in similar initiatives - This entails actively seeking out and involving youth from diverse backgrounds, including rural areas, marginalised communities, and those with varying levels of education and experience.

7. Develop and implement effective communications strategies - Develop and implement a robust communications strategy tailored specifically to engage young people in issues related to peace and security. This strategy should leverage both social media and mainstream channels to effectively reach the target audience and amplify key messages. Allocate adequate resources to support the implementation of the strategy and maximise its impact.

8. Reinforce platforms for regional coordination and collaboration, such as the CARICOM Youth Directors Network and

UNESCO's Youth, Peace, and Security Support Group, to enhance collective efforts in promoting youth participation in peace and security initiatives - Explore the possibility of establishing a multi-stakeholder platform, such as a Regional Coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security, to strengthen partnerships and collaboration between governmental and multilateral actors, civil society organisations, youth-led initiatives, and other stakeholders.

9. Engage in global processes and networks focused on Youth, Peace, and Security to amplify the visibility of Caribbean youth's concerns, initiatives, and aspirations regarding peace and security issues - This may include engagement with platforms like the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security and further participation in other UN processes linked to peace and security.

10. Strengthen intra-UN coordination to promote coherence among UN entities working on youth, peace, and security issues in the Caribbean - Promote collaboration and synergy among UN entities to reduce fragmentation and duplication of efforts, harnessing the unique strengths of each agency to achieve maximum impact. A coordinated approach not only streamlines support for governmental, regional, and youth partners but also minimises the burden of multiple requests from various UN entities, facilitating more efficient and cohesive engagement in peacebuilding endeavours.

11. Secure endorsement and support from senior leadership for Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) initiatives, ensuring their legitimacy, credibility, and long-term commitment - This buy-in is vital to ensure allocation of sufficient resources, overcoming administrative hurdles that may impede the implementation of programmes or initiatives, and sustaining dedication beyond one-off activities.

12. Monitor progress, document outcomes and extract lessons learned: Establish solid monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the progress and success of policies, programming and projects. Regular assessments are essential for identifying areas of improvement and realising objectives. Thorough documentation and knowledge production play a vital role in informed decision-making and needs-based programming.

Further resources:

- Global Coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security (2022) Implementing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda at Country-level: A Guide for Public Officials. New York: Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. [Accessible here](#) in English, Arabic, French, Spanish.
- UNESCO (2023). Because youth perspectives matter: UNESCO toolbox for youth policy and programming. [Accessible here](#) in English.

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