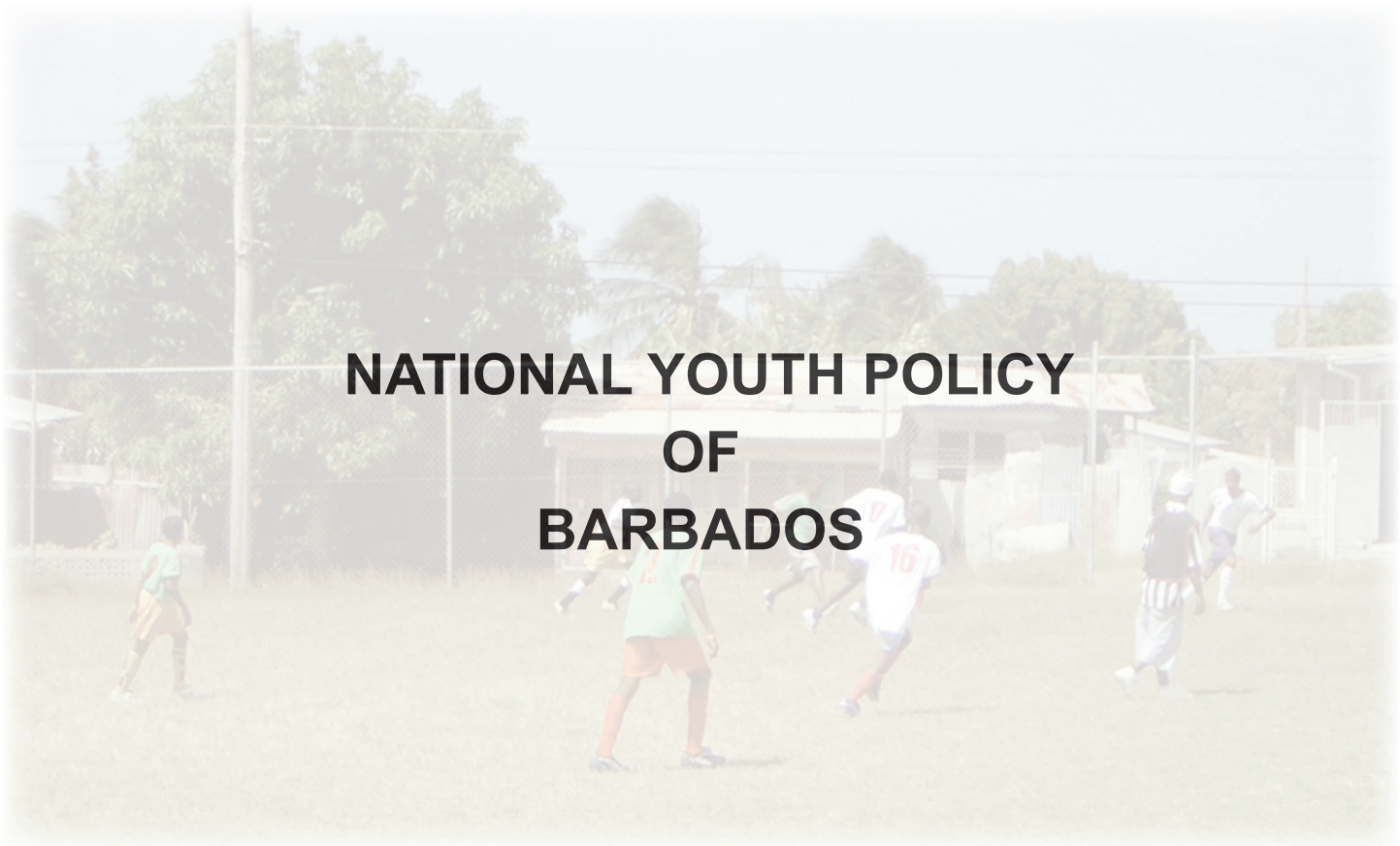




National Camp Sports Day, Sharon Juniors Steelpan.



National Camp Sports Day at the National Stadium.



**NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY  
OF  
BARBADOS**



**MINISTRY OF  
FAMILY, CULTURE, SPORTS AND YOUTH**

**OCTOBER 2011**



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(v) Websites, Social Networks and Other Mass Media

The Websites of the National Youth Forum and the Division of Youth Affairs, as well as Facebook and Twitter, were used as public arenas to discuss the Draft National Youth Policy and make recommendations. Throughout 2010 and during the first five months of 2011, the Draft National Youth Policy was discussed in all the Media Houses, and drew useful feedback from the public. Comprehensive written reviews and specific comments were received from the public.

(vi) Participant Observation

The Consultant and the other members of the National Youth Policy Co-ordinating Committee observed young people and interacted with them on a regular basis; and were able to make informed contributions on their behaviour, aspirations, expectations and plans.

11.4. MEMBERS OF THE NYP CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

The Members of the National Youth Policy Co-ordinating Committee were:

- i. Derek Alleyne – Chairman
- ii. Irvine Best - PS of MFCSY
- iii. Hally Haynes - Acting Director MFCSY
- iv. Ronald Brathwaite – Government Industrial School at Dodds
- v. Damien Griffith - UWI Students Services
- vi. Rhonnelle Smith - BYDC
- vii. Reggie Burke - CYEN
- viii. Damian Mascoll – BYDC

- ix. Carl Padmore - UWI Students’ Guild
- x. Christaneisha Soleyn - EGLB
- xi. Donna Greene - Ministry of Culture
- xii. David Kirton - Ministry of FCSY
- xiii. Othneil Lowe - Ministry of FCSY
- xiv. Ivan Henry – Consultant
- xv. Cleviston Hunte - the new Director of Youth Affairs joined the team in 2011.

11.5. MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH FORUM INTERIM STEERING COMMITTEE

The Members of the Interim Steering Committee of the National Youth Forum were:

- i. Alvin Mayers
- ii. Andre Craig
- iii. Anjanette Samuel
- iv. Asha Jones
- v. Damien Daniel, later replaced by Chetwyn Ryce
- vi. Dwaine Paul
- vii. Jamar Worrell
- viii. Karen McClean
- ix. Lisa Durant later replaced by Natalie Rowe
- x. Mariama Branker
- xi. Melissa Savoury-Gittens
- xii. Quincy Jones
- xiii. Rhea Mapp
- xiv. Richard Kennedy
- xv. A Cadet



Studies: “Gender Socialisation, Schooling and Violence”, 2005.

xxvii. West Indian Commission Report: “Time For Action”, 1992.

xxviii. World Bank: “Caribbean Youth Development”, 2003.

11.2. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- (a) Bashment: Entertainment taken to unacceptable levels; bordering on license.
- (b) Reasonings: Intense discussions of a topic.

11.3. METHODOLOGY

The following research methods were used to gather vital information for this study.

(i) Desk Research

The exercise began with a study of the copious literature on youth.

(ii) In-depth Interviews

Over 60 In-depth interviews were held with a variety of important stakeholders. These included the following:

- a) Young men and women, individually and in groups
- b) Parents and Parent-Teacher Organizations
- c) Religious Leaders
- d) Secondary School Principals
- e) Tertiary Level Educators
- f) Individual Employers and their Organizations
- g) Trade Unionists
- h) Opinion/Community/Sector Leaders (e.g. Sports)

- i) Senior Staff in Government Departments
- j) BYDC and other Youth Organizations

(iii) Focus Group Discussions

The primary tool for gathering information was Focus Group Discussions. At the first Business Meeting of the National Youth Forum, at the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2010, the 200+ delegates were split into 22 small groups to discuss the vision, goals and objectives of the National Youth Policy. At the second Business Meeting at the Barbados Community College on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2010, 9 groups placed the issues in order of priority and made recommendation on how the objectives could be achieved.

Members of National Youth Policy Coordinating Committee, the Interim Steering Committee of the National Youth Forum, the National Council of Parent-Teachers Association, the Students Guild of the Cave Hill Campus of University of the West Indies, all staff of the Division of Youth Affairs, Members of Constituency Councils, and unemployed youth also participated in Focus Group Discussions.

(iv) Town Hall Meetings

When the first draft of the National Youth Policy was completed, 4 Town Hall meetings were held – at the Solidarity House, Barbados Workers’ Union (20<sup>th</sup> November 2010), at the Steel Shed (13<sup>th</sup> May 2011), at the Hilda Skeene Primary School in St. Philip (14<sup>th</sup> May 2011) and at Alexandra School (17<sup>th</sup> August 2011) - to allow the public to discuss the proposed policy. After each gathering the document was revised.

PREFACE BY  
THE MINISTER OF FAMILY, CULTURE, SPORTS  
AND YOUTH



Hon. Stephen Lashley  
Minister of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth

Barbados is internationally renowned for the remarkable progress it has made since the escalation of the movement for social reform in 1937 which led to the Moyne Commission Report; the achievement of universal adult suffrage in 1951; the granting of universal free secondary education in 1961; and the gaining of independence in 1966. At each of these critical turning points in the recent history of Barbados, the aspirations of young people to participate more fully in the important sectors of society and to enjoy a higher standard of living featured prominently in the deliberations and added a sense of urgency to the demands for change. It is a history of increasing access to scarce resources by more and more Barbadians.

The mandate of every Government since 1951 has been that of increasing the opportunities for ordinary people to participate in the decision making process

and empowering them to help themselves through education and training. Succeeding generations of young Barbadians have seized these opportunities to improve their prospects of securing decent employment and a higher standard of living. In the process, Barbados has systematically moved from being a mono-crop colony to becoming one of the 42 countries of the world with a United Nations classification of “very high human development” by 2010.

However, by the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it had become clear that even though opportunities for social and economic advancement existed, increasing numbers of young people were becoming marginalized from the mainstream institutions of society. Whether by choice or from force of circumstances young Barbadians were less involved in the mainstream economic, political, religious, social, recreational and service organizations.

The situation was exacerbated by the financial melt-down in the USA in late 2007 and the subsequent global economic downturn, that is already considered the worst recession since the 1930’s and which threatens to become another Great Depression. However it is eventually classified, it has transformed the world in at least two fundamental ways.

Firstly, it has created the conditions for the emergence of new super-powers including China, India and



Brazil, which have the capacity to produce goods and services at prices considerably lower than those of local producers. Small producers of standard goods and services will not be able to compete successfully with these industrial giants in the same easily accessible global market place. This has serious implications for local jobs.

Secondly, both developed and developing countries have abandoned notions of increasing public spending to stimulate the economy and have resorted to austerity measures that include severe cuts in expenditure on social services. These fiscal constraints have serious implications for the public perception of Government as being able to create more and more jobs for its constituents.

The fundamental challenge now facing this small nation whose greatest asset is its people, is how to survive and prosper in a rapidly changing, highly competitive global market place. To follow established practice or to do nothing would be to consign the youth of Barbados to a future of ignorance, idleness and impotence even when the world economy recovers. In a vibrant democracy, no Government would allow this to happen. It is for this reason that the Government of Barbados will forge ahead with innovative policies based on rational discussion, extensive consultation, and consensus.

These issues were seriously addressed in the 2008 Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party. In Section (6), entitled “Empowering Our Young People” it was clearly stated:

*“We cannot improve as a society if a significant portion of our population opts out of our political and economic systems. At present there are a number of Barbadians living on the fringe not realizing their potential to contribute to the country’s development. These drop-outs, while not contributing, cost the country considerable sums of social expenditure. To ensure that all citizens participate fully and positively in this country’s activities it will be necessary to emphasize the development of certain life skills for our total population”.*

It then gave a commitment to:

- *Put special emphasis on skills training for children whom the present education system is failing;*
- *Broaden the scope and availability of adult education opportunities;*
- *Promote programmes to foster and support strong family units and relationships;*
- *Provide training and support in skills such as parenting, dispute resolution, effective communication;*
- *Develop and inculcate a relevant system of values at all levels of society;*
- *Eliminate the emergence of loutish behaviour in various neighbourhoods;*
- *Eradicate the scourge of illegal drugs wrecking our communities;*
- *Protect minors against indecency, vulgarity, illegal activity, and corrupt practices;*
- *Restore Barbados’ reputation of respect for authority, property, traditions, icons and symbols;*

(11) ADDITIONS

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x.	Erikson, E: “Childhood and Society”, New York Times, 1950.	xxiii.	The Barbados Human Resource Development Strategy, Government of Barbados, 2011.
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xiii.	Jones, R: “Quotations & Images of the	xxvi.	The National Strategic Plan of Barbados, 2005-2025.
			UWI Centre for Gender and Development



<p><b>Strategy 9: Preserving the Environment</b></p> <p>This Ministry will therefore:</p> <p>(a) Get young people involved in educational projects to demonstrate the importance of environmental protection in Barbados.</p> <p>(b) Train and encourage young people to ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recycle and reuse manufactured goods</li><li>• Reduce carbon emission into the environment</li><li>• Reforest Barbados</li><li>• Explore alternative, renewable sources of energy.</li></ul> <p>(c) Start a Green Campaign which focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Solid Waste Management</li><li>• Water resources management</li><li>• Sustainable consumption and production</li><li>• Popularizing Green Careers through career showcases in schools, places of work and communities.</li></ul> <p>(d) Help young entrepreneurs to contribute to the “greening of Barbados” as a means of creating employment and wealth.</p>	<p>The creation of 5 new environmental projects/ programmes each year.</p>
<p><b>Strategy 10: Targeting Mainstream Youth</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth recognizes that the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has changed dramatically. As has been shown above, the technological revolutions since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century have created a new socio-economic reality. Since the goalposts have been shifted, the players must change direction. In military terms since the enemy and the battlefield have moved, the whole army must change its strategy and tactics. The Ministry will therefore focus on convincing mainstream youth that they must embrace the new vision, pursue the new goals, adopt new strategies and change direction. Mainstream youth will henceforth be treated as one of the priority target groups of the Barbados National Youth Policy.</p>	<p>The establishment of the National Youth Service Programme within 18 months of the approval of the NYP by Parliament.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Devise and foster a value system, in consultation with community leaders, to influence the country’s outlook and behaviour;</i></li><li>• <i>Review the Barbados Youth Service with a view to introducing a comprehensive National Youth Service Programme to ensure that all young people are exposed to opportunities for empowerment and make a smooth transition to adulthood.</i></li></ul> <p>These commitments were reinforced and amplified in a separate Youth Manifesto. It spoke directly to young people and pledged to get youth more fully involved in the process of national development. It represented a comprehensive approach to the challenges faced by young people after a career of 11 or more years of free education. It promised to revisit the provisions for young people and to better equip them for success in a rapidly changing world. It reiterated that the new Democratic Labour Party Government would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Promote better family life;</i></li><li>• <i>Create more opportunities for young people in education and training;</i></li><li>• <i>Secure decent, sustainable employment for young people;</i></li><li>• <i>Help young people achieve and enjoy better health;</i></li><li>• <i>Use sports as a means of developing youth;</i></li><li>• <i>Empower Barbadian young people to assert their cultural identity, generate resources, and make a unique contribution to the emerging Caribbean civilization.</i></li></ul>	<p>These Manifestos gave clear directions for the formulation of a holistic National Youth Policy. In particular they stressed the need for innovative responses from young people at a time of dramatic global changes.</p> <p>The Government of Barbados hereby renews its commitment to provide the enabling environment for the empowerment of young people. To do otherwise would be to betray the trust developed during the past 50 years, to consign young people to the role of spectators in the creation of a new world order, and to turn back on the pathways to Progress.</p> <p>Hon. Stephen Lashley Minister of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth</p>
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Mr. Derek Alleyne  
Chairman of the National Youth Policy  
Co-ordinating Committee

The National Youth Policy (NYP) Co-ordinating Committee is grateful for the enormous contribution made to the formulation of the National Youth Policy by countless organizations and individuals over the past two years. It is inconceivable that anyone would question the need for a framework to guide society’s response to the challenges facing “the future of the nation”. However, social, political and financial constraints often prevent Governments from taking the next step of consulting widely with all stakeholders, distilling the knowledge gained and formally committing themselves to deliver on promises made, within a given timeframe.

I would therefore like to start by thanking Dr. the Honourable Esther Byer-Suckoo who, as Minister of Youth, Family and Sports, started the process by appointing the members of the NYP Co-ordinating Committee and the Consultant in August 2008.

Special thanks must go to the current Minister of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth, the Honourable

Stephen Lashley, whose focussed approach was instrumental in taking this Draft National Youth Policy through all the necessary stages to a satisfactory conclusion.

I must also thank the NYP Co-ordinating Committee, which I chaired, for the tireless work carried out since its appointment. The representatives of the youth and other stakeholder organizations who sat on the Committee brought to the table considerable insights into the issues affecting young men and women in contemporary Barbados. These issues were debated at both formal and informal meetings of the Committee which took place at least once a month.

Credit must be given to the Consultant, Dr. Ivan Henry, who injected a passion and a sense of urgency in completing the task during one of the watersheds in the history of this island. Based on his profound knowledge and rich experience of dealing with young people in several parts of the Commonwealth, he gathered, processed, structured and presented the information into a readable, timely and potentially impactful document.

The NYP Co-ordinating Committee and the Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth are eternally indebted to the many stakeholders including parents, educators, religious leaders, employers, trade unionists, community leaders, civil servants, sector leaders, and law enforcement agents who individually and collectively shared information with the Consultant. Official representatives of the private sector were more than willing to give advice on their

<p><b>Strategy 7: Healthy Lifestyles</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth will therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help young people to develop healthy lifestyles based on eating wholesome and nutritional food, and getting regular exercise and recreation.</li><li>• Join forces with the HIV/AIDS Commission, the AIDS Foundation and other agencies to intensify education on HIV/AIDS.</li><li>• Encourage young people to get tested for the virus on a regular basis, in order to know their status and to behave appropriately.</li><li>• Explore additional means of communicating to young people the serious threats they face in engaging in unprotected sex.</li><li>• Encourage young people to practice sexual abstinence until they are ready to start a family.</li></ul>	<p>(a) A reduction in the number of young people contracting HIV.</p> <p>(b) A fall in the number of unwanted teenage pregnancies.</p>
<p><b>Strategy 8: Political Participation</b></p> <p>This Ministry will therefore:</p> <p>(a) Provide practical education and training in the political process for young people.</p> <p>(b) Establish a National Youth Forum that will provide a platform on which important issues will be discussed, crucial decisions made, and action taken by democratically elected leaders.</p> <p>(c) Enable the National Youth Forum to establish the infrastructure for the National Youth Parliament.</p> <p>(d) Assign members of the Youth Parliament to shadow Members of Parliament for mentorship and informal education.</p>	<p>Two hundred (200) new members of the National Youth Forum each year.</p>



<p><b>Strategy 5: Gangs, Drugs, Violence</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth will therefore try to reverse this trend towards anti-social behaviour by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) Promoting a collective approach to the challenges of youth.</li><li>(b) Providing technical and financial support to youth and community organizations.</li><li>(c) Offering incentives and giving rewards to young people who participate in wholesome organizations.</li><li>(d) Identifying youth at risk and providing counselling and personal development training for them.</li><li>(e) Monitoring the development of youth groups in Barbados to ensure that they have the capacity to meet the needs of mainstream youth.</li><li>(f) Working closely with rehabilitation and law enforcement agencies to reduce the incidence of substance abuse and violence.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) A 5-10% increase in the membership of youth and community organizations per year.</li><li>(b) A 5% reduction in youth crime per year.</li></ul>
<p><b>Strategy 6: Housing</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth will provide opportunities for young people to discuss and explore the whole range of housing solutions that are available in Barbados. It will work closely with the Ministries of Housing and Lands, and Finance and Economic Affairs to ensure that the needs of young people are taken into consideration. For example, rent concessions and incentives to purchase will be considered for families that contain young people. In particular it will give priority to young mothers and fathers who need space to bring up their families.</p>	<p>A 2-5% increase in enquiries for housing by young people.</p>

expectations of young workers and their readiness to help them achieve their goals. Many of these stakeholders went a step further in facilitating the process by becoming Partners and/or Sponsors.

The Partners included: All Departments of the Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth; the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development; the Ministry of Labour and Social Security; the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development; the Ministry of Industry, Small Business and Rural Development; the Ministry of Agriculture; the Diplomatic Corps; UNICEF; the Commonwealth Youth Programme Caribbean Centre; CARICOM Secretariat; the Management of Sheraton Mall; the Management of Olympus Cinemas; the Barbados Council of Churches; the Barbados Ecumenical Association; the Barbados Association of Principals of Secondary Schools; all Tertiary Level Institutions; the National Council of Parent Teachers Associations; the Barbados Employers Confederation; Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Barbados Youth Business Trust; FundAccess; Barbados Small Business Development Centre; Barbados Small Business Association; the Barbados Youth Development Council; Barbados Association of Non-Governmental Organization; the Boy Scouts Association; the Girl Guides Association; CBC Radio and Television, Slam 101 FM, Starcom Network, Nation News, the Advocate, Hello Magazine, and Mix FM.

Among the many Sponsors were: the Urban Development Commission, the Rural Development Commission, the Barbados Workers' Union, the Barbados Light and Power Company, Slam 101 FM, Hello Magazine, Paul Johnson Enterprises, Energy

Vibes, BNB Distributors, TeleBarbados, LIME, Digicel, Passion Network, Profiles Barbados, and Freek Customs (Vehicles).

Above all, the NYP Co-ordinating Committee is grateful to the young people of Barbados for responding positively to the call to participate in the process of formulating the National Youth Policy. Despite the facility of modern communication from a distance and the assumed decline in face-to-face interaction, young people came out in appreciable numbers to small group discussions and public meetings.

The launch of the National Youth Forum on July 4<sup>th</sup> 2010 marked a turning point in the development of the National Youth Policy. Thereafter Barbados had a permanent platform for hearing the views of young people and a means of motivating and empowering them to seek enterprising and innovative solutions to their problems. The NYP Co-ordinating Committee thanks the members of the National Youth Forum Interim Steering Committee and Sub-Committees for volunteering their time and energy to the cause of youth development in Barbados.

Finally, the NYP Co-ordinating Committee thanks the Permanent Secretary and staff of Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth, and the staff of related Ministries, many of whom went beyond the call of duty to do the preparatory work for events throughout the formulation period. That same commitment is expected of them during the crucial stages of implementation.

Derek Alleyne  
Chairman of the National Youth Policy  
Co-ordinating Committee



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A written National Youth Policy, a publicly approved framework for action on youth development, which is endorsed by a nation’s law-makers, is the greatest gift that a society could bequeath to its youth.

This document starts with the renewal of a political commitment to creating the conditions for youth empowerment during the far-reaching economic and social changes of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It then acknowledges the contributions of the various stakeholders to the wholesome development of Barbadian youth and solicits their ongoing support.

The document offers an overview of the context in which young people have been coming of age in the Caribbean during the past two decades. It contends that this understanding of youth is necessary before any intervention takes place. Hence, a working definition of youth is given, together with the perennial, poor perceptions of “the next generation”.

It is with this perception of youth that Youth Services in Barbados and throughout the Caribbean have developed. The apparent preoccupation with deviant youth and the mistakes that a minority of young men and women make during the transition from childhood to adulthood, has cast a long shadow over youth development in the region. Hence several writers have reached conclusions about young people that detract from an understanding of “youth” as an age of idealism, an age of experiment, and an age of discovery. The unwritten policy throughout the Caribbean has therefore been to contain and control

youth, “for their own good”. In this way, Caribbean societies have succeeded in reproducing themselves with all the punitive and enslaving historical baggage for which they are renowned.

The premise behind this policy document is that the majority of Barbadian youth are decent hard-working people striving to live up to the expectations of significant others in their lives. When they were consulted and fully engaged during 2010, the mood shifted from one of “hopelessness and despair” to optimism and a willingness to take responsibility for their own future. Their aspirations are clearly expressed in the Vision, Goals, Objectives and Recommendations for action recorded in this document.

These hopes and dreams of Barbadian youth were considered in light of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth, the National Strategic Plan of Barbados, the Medium Term Development Strategy, the Medium Term Fiscal Strategy and the Human Resource Development Strategy. It was found that the aspirations of youth were consistent with these national strategies. But in the present global economic downturn, their pursuit may be constrained by fiscal considerations.

On the other hand there were moral imperatives as well as universally acclaimed human and youth rights that impelled a caring and responsible Government to address the needs of youth urgently. Something had to be done in a situation that was creating new challenges for youth, such as high levels of

STRATEGY	TARGETS
<b>Strategy 1: Employment</b> This policy will therefore encourage and support young people to become more entrepreneurial in their approach to employment. The talents and energy of young people will be channelled towards the potential growth areas of ICT’s, Sports, the Cultural Industries and Agriculture.	(a) 500 new youth businesses every year. (b) At least 2 Youth Innovation Centres within the first 3 years.
<b>Strategy 2: Education</b> The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth will therefore focus on creating extra-curricular institutions and programmes to complement what is being provided in formal educational settings. These institutions for implementing the National Youth Policy will explore and develop other learning methodologies, such as “experiential learning”.	In addition to what is being done by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, the Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth will provide between 60 and 100 Holiday Camps with different non-academic themes every year.
<b>Strategy 3: The Family</b> This Ministry, being mindful of the dependence of the family on the community and the traditional function of the community in raising the child, will focus on strengthening the community in modern Barbados. It will try to reverse the trend towards isolation of individuals and family units in neighbourhoods.	(a) The delivery of at least one parenting course in every Constituency every year. (b) One new family support system in each constituency every year (e.g. nursery, co-operative)
<b>Strategy 4: Core Values</b> The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development will organize courses to help young people identify the core values that society needs to function effectively. It will also provide opportunities for young people to internalize these values through practical experience. Senior citizens will be encouraged to share their knowledge and experience with young people. The Ministry will also work closely with faith-based and other cultural organizations to provide training material and establish outreach programmes for young people in their communities.	(a) The production of a handbook on core values by faith-based organizations, the National Cultural Foundation and the Commission for Pan-African Affairs. (b) At least one practical workshop on core values in each constituency by Youth Workers every year.



Secondary schools. It is hoped that this education will improve the perception of politics as a noble career and political participation as a civic duty.

c) Better Co-ordinated Youth Programmes

This National Youth Policy will give direction to all youth programmes and projects run by Divisions and Departments of the Government as well as civil society. The outcome will be a more integrated and focussed intervention by those providing services for youth. In particular, as the entrepreneurial culture spreads, the resurgent and expanding private sector is expected to show corporate social responsibility by sponsoring more youth development projects and programmes.

d) Rite of Passage

It is anticipated that National Service will act as a modern rite of passage for the youth of Barbados. By the age of 29 young people should be able to demonstrate their willingness to give something back to their community and to be conscious of their ability to act as role models to the next generation.

e) Greater Responsibility by Youth

It is hoped that the involvement of youth in decision making positions in the main institutions of the society will lead young Barbadians to play their rightful part as nation builders in shaping their inheritance.

f) Measureable Achievements

In keeping with the agreed vision for Barbadian youth, it is anticipated that by the age of 30, every young man or woman should have:

- A recognized tertiary level qualification and/or vocational training certificate;
- A clear understanding of, and commitment to the society's core values;
- Become involved in a sport or other health-inducing pastime;
- Given voluntary service to a creative social, political, environmental or economic enterprise.

(10) MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The National Youth Policy should be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. This is one of the functions of the National Youth Forum. However, it is common practice for National Youth Policies to be evaluated by an independent agent every 3-5 years. The following measureable targets have been set to aid evaluation.

unemployment despite the achievement of higher education.

Before considering intervention, the Government endorsed the rights of youth. However, any contract with young men and women would require a reciprocal acceptance of responsibility on the part of youth. That responsibility was defined in terms of being held partly accountable for their own development; and voluntarily rendering service to their community.

The Vision, Goals, and Objectives of contemporary youth, that form a significant part of this document, also clearly identified the key strategy areas for intervention. These areas are:

- a) Employment
- b) Education
- c) The Family
- d) Core Values
- e) Gangs
- f) Housing
- g) Lifestyle Diseases
- h) Political Participation
- i) The Environment

Another precondition for successful intervention in these areas was the identification of priority target groups. This document makes a major departure from conventional analyses by including “mainstream youth” in the list of youth target groups. It argues that since the world has changed, since the goal posts have been moved, mainstream youth should also change direction in order to achieve their goals.

All agencies involved in the development of youth would be required to adopt the new policy. However,

the main, special mechanisms identified to spearhead the change of direction in pursuing these goals and realizing the vision of youth were listed as:

- i. An Inter-Ministerial Committee for Youth Development
- ii. The Youth Development Board
- iii. The National Youth Service
- iv. The National Youth Forum
- v. An Expanded Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme
- vi. Holiday Camps
- vii. The National Sports Council
- viii. The Constituency Councils
- ix. Barbados Youth Development Council
- x. The National Youth Parliament

A preliminary action plan has been suggested, which, when agreed, would determine the cost of implementing the National Youth Policy in the given time.

Due consideration was given to the cost of implementing the National Youth Policy. The primary constraint would be the resources allocated to the Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth in the current financial year. However, it has been repeatedly stated that an essential principle of this new National Youth Policy is collaboration. All stakeholders, from other Government Departments to the private sector and civil society organizations, are expected to make a contribution in one form or another.

The expected outcome of this intervention by the Government is the triggering of a youth movement



manifesting itself in an increasing number of projects and programmes managed by public and private sector organizations. These initiatives should contribute to the wholesome development of young men and women and their successful transition to adulthood.

In conclusion, a list of strategies has been drawn up with specific targets. This should aid the periodic monitoring and evaluation of the new National Youth Policy of Barbados.

B. Ivan Henry  
Consultant



National Youth Policy youth playing football.

**(8) OPERATING COSTS**

The fiscal constraints under which the Government is operating have led to the introduction of more stringent measures to justify all expenditure. However, the costs of implementing the National Youth Policy can be justified in terms of investment in the future of Barbados. The World Bank Report on youth development in the Caribbean, as shown above, has drawn attention to the cost to the nation when young people fall victims to the threats of delinquency, teenage pregnancy, criminal activities, and early death from violence, Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases and HIV/AIDS. In Barbados, a useful comparative cost is the \$12,000 it takes per year to maintain a young person under 18 years at the Government Industrial School and the considerably higher cost of incarcerating young people in Her Majesty's Prison.

The approved expenditure on Youth Affairs and Sports in 2005-2006 was \$26,462,708. This figure for Family, Culture, Sports and Youth rose to \$56,618,413 in 2010-2011. The Estimates for 2011 to 2012 were \$85,059,710.

It is anticipated that the availability of human resources through the National Youth Service will bring about significant savings for the Ministry in implementing the National Youth Policy.

**(9) EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

Social intervention in a tightly knit, small island society like Barbados can have both intended and unintended consequences. At worse, this National Youth Policy could lead to the release of conservative

forces and negative energy dedicated to resisting and frustrating its implementation in an effort to maintain the status quo. At best it could lead to the liberation of powerful forces among the best educated generation of Barbadian youth, the overcoming of the last hurdles to economic emancipation and the ushering in of a more caring, responsible and just society in Barbados. The specific outcomes expected from the implementation of the National Youth Policy include:

**a) A New Youth Movement**

One anticipated outcome from the implementation of the National Youth Policy is the motivation and mobilization of large numbers of idealistic young people who believe that Barbados can do better. This movement will give young people a voice and will channel their creative energy into programmes and projects to meet both the perennial needs of youth and the new challenges they face in the first quarter of the 21st century.

**b) National Youth Forum and Parliament**

The National Youth Forum will be closely linked to the National Youth Parliament and together they will provide a platform for young people to discuss relevant issues and make a contribution to the decision-making process at the highest level of governance. Young people elected to the National Youth Parliament will shadow Ministers and other Members of Parliament and learn first-hand how the Westminster system of Government works. It is expected that this interest in, and knowledge of political institutions will cascade down into secondary schools and beyond. For example, these institutions should stimulate and support Debating Societies in



(7) NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

	ESTABLISHMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS	Already Exists	Created or up-graded by Dec 2012	Created or up-graded by April 2013
1	An Inter-Ministerial Youth Development Committee			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	The Youth Development Board			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3	The National Youth Service			
4	The National Youth Forum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5	An expanded Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6	Specialist Holiday Camps	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
7	The National Sports Council	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
8	The Constituency Councils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9	Barbados Youth Development Council	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10	National Youth Parliament			

PART ONE:  
UNDERSTANDING YOUTH –  
A PRECONDITION FOR INTERVENTION  
  
THE CONTEXT OF FORMULATING A NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY  
FOR BARBADOS

Introduction

At the Commonwealth Youth Ministers’ Meeting in Trinidad and Tobago in May 1995, it was agreed that all member Governments of the Commonwealth would formulate or update their National Youth Policies by the year 2000. Since then the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) has been doing pioneering work in providing assistance to countries in formulating and implementing their National Youth Policies. In CYP’s Diploma Course module on “Policy, Planning and Implementation” (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1998) the term youth policy is defined as “a national framework that gives form and direction to government through which it promotes a particular philosophy and set of programmes for a cohort called youth”. It further explained that in order for a National Youth Policy to be successful, it should relate directly to the historical, political, cultural, social and economic context in which young people come of age. It should also be consistent with other policies and strategies for national development.

1.1. Definition of Youth

In modern society it is difficult to define “youth”. Youth is considered one of the most important stages in the human life cycle, simply because it is an age

of exploration and any mistakes made during one’s youth, could cast a long shadow over the rest of one’s life. Social scientists have drawn heavily on Erik Erikson’s mapping of 8 psychosocial development stages and depicted youth as spanning Adolescence and Young Adulthood. (E. Erikson, 1950)

However, all are agreed that youth represent “the next generation” of adults. A generation is roughly 30 years among human beings. Every generation of young people has to negotiate its entry into adult society. The process of preparing for this passage starts at birth and continues through informal socialization and formal education to the point at which the individual is considered an adult.

In traditional societies, young people had to undergo a “rite of passage” which, within a short period of time, transformed them from children to adults. Young men, in their age cohorts, withdrew from society at the appropriate time and underwent education and training to test their bravery, reliability and solidarity. Young women also went through initiation rituals where they were isolated from the rest of society for a period. After a specified period, the initiated young men and women returned to their communities to



have bestowed upon them the status of adults, with clearly defined rights and responsibilities.

Modern society prolongs the period of transition and as a result young people make the transition almost imperceptibly. It is therefore difficult to know when an individual ceases to be a youth. Hence definitions of “youth” are incredibly difficult to agree on. The criteria often used include:

- Age;
- Completion of formal education;
- Economic independence;
- Readiness to start and to provide for a new family.

The Commonwealth Youth Programme and affiliated Governments agreed that in normal circumstances, a young person should successfully make the transition from child to adult before the age of 30. **After considerable deliberation since the establishment of the Commonwealth Youth Programme in 1973, countries of the Commonwealth have used the chronological age span 15 to 29 years as a working definition of youth.**

It is often argued that young people still crave for a socially accepted rite of passage in modern society. Was this the function of the “apprenticeship” that young Barbadians served in the recent past? Is this what “boys on the block” currently seek?

In many parts of the world it was believed that one of the acceptable functions of military service and war was the “rite of passage” it offered to young people.

Young men went away as boys and returned as men. However, Donald Eberly and Reuven Gal (2006) argued that as young people became more educated and enlightened they refused to render military service. An increasing number of them have been seeking alternative forms of service to demonstrate their patriotism and sense of civic responsibility. **Most young people preferred to render such service voluntarily and resisted being compelled to do so.**

**1.2. Perceptions of Youth**

Similarly, perceptions of youth vary according to circumstances. There is a tendency for adults to perceive youth as “becoming” and therefore not quite “ready”. In stable societies where traditions persisted, older people assumed responsibility for transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations. The inevitable power and status that derived from being the custodians of knowledge predisposed them to disparage younger people. The classic quotation, attributed to Socrates by Plato, about children in Greece in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC, portrays the standard perception of the younger generation:

***The children now love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love to chatter in place of exercise. Children now are tyrants, not the servants of their households. They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up dainties at the table, cross their legs, and tyrannize their teachers. (Plato, 1955)***

mechanisms in its own order of priority based on several social, political and economic considerations.

National Youth Policy will affect both the structure and operation of other agencies that have similar aspirations for youth.

No doubt these mechanisms for implementing the



Rev. Al Sharpton at the Sir Garfield Sobers Gymnasium with a student from Coleridge & Parry Secondary School.



(3) To encourage the exchange of ideas and improve the relationships with other groups, clubs, organisations, associations or institutions locally, regionally and internationally.

Hence, every effort will be made to strengthen the capacity of this umbrella youth organization to service its members more effectively. Among other things BYDC will be required to reach out and give greater support to youth organizations in collaboration with the Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth and the National Youth Forum.

6.10. THE NATIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT

The National Youth Parliament of Barbados will be based on the best practices of existing National Youth Parliaments such as the United Kingdom, Scottish, Surinamese and CYP models, in which young leaders identify and prioritize critical issues affecting young people, and lobby for resources for their resolution. However, since it will be used as a tool for educating young people on the functioning of the Parliament of Barbados, it will draw heavily on the established Westminster model of governance.

The National Youth Parliament will have a Lower House or a House of Assembly and an Upper House or Senate. The Members of the Lower House will be elected by young people who live in their respective constituencies. Each member of the Lower House of the National Youth Parliament will be elected at one of the General Meetings of the National Youth Forum. He/she will shadow a designated Member of Parliament of Barbados. The Members of the Senate will be nominated to

represent existing, sectional Youth Parliaments and Assemblies as well as categories of youth such as disabled youth, and ethnic minority youth.

The National Youth Parliament will therefore emerge out of the activities of the National Youth Forum. The work of both the NYF and the National Youth Parliament will serve as means of educating students of Civics at secondary and tertiary educational institutions.

ORDER OF PRIORITY

At several public meetings people were asked to prioritize the implementation of these mechanisms. The aggregate recommendations were as follows:

- (1) An expanded Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme
- (2) The National Youth Service
- (3) The National Youth Forum
- (4) The Youth Development Board
- (5) An Inter-Ministerial Committee for Youth Development
- (6) Holiday Camps
- (7) Barbados Youth Development Council
- (8) The Constituency Councils
- (9) The National Sports Council
- (10) The National Youth Parliament

However, the Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth reserves the right to implement these

Interestingly enough, the same young Greeks who were dismissed by Socrates and Plato were responsible for laying the foundations of the much vaunted Greek civilization under the leadership of Alexander the Great, who became King at age 19 and died at the age of 32.

Many of the adults who were interviewed during the fieldwork for this assignment to formulate the National Youth Policy of Barbados expressed similar views of today's youth, stressing their bad manners, their anti-social behaviour and their love of the easy life.

1.3. Background to the Development of Youth Services in Barbados

In Barbados, as in all societies, the challenge is how to prepare young people for adult life. Whether it is done formally or informally, consciously or unconsciously, a considerable amount of effort is expended on this task. All the major familial, religious, educational, political, employment, recreational, community and social institutions that make up society are required to devote varying amounts of time and other resources to the socialization of newcomers.

Two schools of thought exist with respect to the nature of this socialization. Functionalist Theory argues that youth undergo a period of induction that is designed to transmit certain values to them and engender socially approved patterns of behaviour. Hence, many Caribbean intellectuals and social commentators conclude that, by and large, Caribbean societies, with the glaring exception of Cuba, managed to successfully reproduce themselves over long periods, through the education they give to their children.

On the other hand, Conflict Theory argues that conflict, often manifesting itself in violence, is essential for change. Starting with the premise that capitalist society is oppressive, the politically correct response of the conscious actor is to resist all efforts to induct newcomers into the dominant ways of thinking and behaving. The ultimate goal is revolutionary change (Haralambos and Holborn, 2000).

In the Caribbean context, where there has been a systematic attempt to legitimate the oppression of black people during slavery and to justify the subordination of their off-spring after emancipation, conflict and resistance are portrayed in some quarters as heroic. Certain popular ideologies argue that to do anything other than reject the dominant culture and defy authority figures is to "prop up the foundations of Babylon" (Chevannes, 1994).

These differing theoretical perspectives, and related notions of cultural continuity or discontinuity, have been invoked in "reasonings" for years, particularly since Independence in 1966.

One popular assumption was that since victory in the battle to control the state apparatus was won through the ballot box, there was no need for naked, political violence in Barbados. Several leaders argued that if the nation was to develop from colonial dependence to true independence then it had to do so through education and training. Hence, several types of Youth Development programmes were designed and discussed. Many names associated with the different models for development have been mentioned. These ranged from all the post-Independence Prime



Ministers of Barbados and their respective Ministers responsible for Youth Affairs, as well as activists like Dennis Hunte and Cleveland Mayers of the Barbados Youth Council in the 1960's, Delroy Chuck in the 1970's, Glenroy Straughn in the early 1980's, and Ronald Jones, Gordon Parris, Selvin Holder, Everton Cumberbatch, David Denny, Wanda Reid, Lionel Clarke, Ralph Walker, Cleviston Hunte and Derek Alleyne leading up to the period when the Barbados Youth Service was introduced in 1991. (Oral and unpublished, written reports on the history of the Barbados Youth Service.)

These developments reached another climax soon after the change of Government in Barbados in 1994. The new Barbados Labour Party Administration established a Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs. A fully fledged Division of Youth Affairs was created as the primary governmental agency responsible for implementing Government's mandate as it related to the development of youth. Its role was primarily facilitative and it worked with governmental and non-governmental organizations, international agencies, the private sector and individuals to create and sustain the positive environment needed for "building tomorrow today". From the inception the Division sought to promote the holistic development of young people and in so doing contributed to the process of national development.

The Division was headed by a Director and operated through the following programming channels:

**(a) Youth Development Programme (YDP) including Project Oasis**

- (b) Barbados Youth Service (BYS)**
- (c) Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES)**
- (d) Youth Mainstreaming Programme (launched in 2008)**

**(a) The Youth Development Programme** was headed by a Principal Youth Development Officer, with four Senior Youth Commissioners supervising work in the 4 zones into which the country was divided. Each zone was covered by an average of 8 Youth Commissioners who catered to the needs of about 2,500 young people in each of the 32 districts. The objective of YDP was to address the concerns, issues, aspirations and prospects, of all young people within the mandated 9 to 29 years age group. It used a wide range of activities intended to lead to the social, economic and cultural development of youth. Those who did not belong to organized groups were reached through Project Oasis. This programme conducted periodic surveys and drew up and maintained a Directory of Youth and Community Organizations. It established itself as a research-driven response to the needs of young people at the grassroots level.

Highlights of the YDP achievements in the financial year 2008-2009 included:

- The approval of 39 community projects attracting a total contribution of \$457,513.
- 26 HIV/AIDS projects which received \$185,742 in funding.
- National Sports training which benefited 1,083 persons.
- 40 Summer Camps attracting over 3,000 participants.

technological skills, as well as to provide greater exposure to business enterprise, sports, the visual arts, the performing arts, the culinary arts, with emphasis on music, literature, drama, dance, film, and agriculture. Young people will be encouraged to consider careers in a range of new industries.

Staff will be carefully selected and trained to ensure that the stated objectives are achieved. Young people with the relevant skills and interests will be able to give National Service through the Holiday Camps.

The children of Barbadians living abroad will have access to Holiday Camps in Barbados. For decades, members of the Barbadian Diaspora, particularly those involved in the "Barbados Diaspora Network" have been bringing/sending their children to Barbados during the summer holidays to get some exposure to the culture of Barbados. Their willingness to make a contribution to the cost of this service creates an opportunity for generating significant sums of foreign exchange.

**6.7. THE NATIONAL SPORTS COUNCIL (NSC)**

The National Sports Council will work closely with the Youth Division to achieve the agreed goals and objectives, particularly the development of sports industries. This will undoubtedly require the retraining of staff and the development of a new culture within the NSC. It will also require strengthening the capacity of the organization to expose young people to the widest possible range of sports. It will definitely require the up-grading of facilities and the establishment of a Sports Academy.

**6.8. CONSTITUENCY COUNCILS**

The Constituency Councils will be given the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring the National Youth Service in each constituency. They will be required to work closely with the Division of Youth Affairs, the National Youth Forum and the Barbados Youth Development Council to carry out regular research on the needs of youth in their constituencies. Each Constituency Council will give representation to youth by reserving a seat on the Council for a local representative of the National Youth Forum and establishing a Youth Sub-Committee. It will invite Youth Development Officers and Youth Leaders to give periodic reports on the progress being made to achieve the stated goals and objectives of this policy.

**6.9. BARBADOS YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (BYDC)**

The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth will give support to the Barbados Youth Development Council (BYDC) to fulfil its mandate. The Constitution of BYDC states that its aims are:

- (1) To conduct research in and document areas of interest and concern to the Barbadian community, and disseminate such findings by pursuing an enthusiastic plan of action to support and implement programmes consistent with such findings.
- (2) To develop a plan of action to embrace all aspects of individual and total community development by nurturing the spiritual, moral, socio/cultural, educational and physical development of all young people of the Barbadian community.



- Sponsorship/Enterprise
  - Special Projects/Event Plan-ning
- e) An Advisory Committee.

The National Youth Forum will give representation to existing youth leaders such as the Parish, CARICOM, and Commonwealth Ambassadors and the leaders of youth, sporting and community organizations. It will also create the conditions for new young leaders to emerge. Hence, it will be the forum in which the members of the National Youth Parliament will be elected.

At the public meetings, it was strongly recommended that the National Youth Forum should focus on its primary objective of “reaching out to young people wherever they live, study, work and play” and convincing them of the benefits of getting more involved in the activities of NYF. It should also build and up-date its database on young people, particularly their needs. This is the only way it can “give representation to all categories of youth”.

**6.5. EXPANDED YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP SCHEME**

The Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES) will be expanded to give more young Barbadians exposure to the culture of enterprise, particularly business enterprise. YES will work closely with the Barbados Vocational Training Board, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the Barbados Community College, the University of the West Indies, the Barbados Youth Business Trust, FundAcces etc. to equip potential young entrepreneurs with the

necessary skills, to expose them to successful business persons, to help them acquire and share business incubation units, and to organize periodic youth business exhibitions. It will collaborate with the Barbados Entrepreneurial Foundation to pursue the goal of making Barbados the number one entrepreneurial hub by 2020.

This Ministry will help to establish Innovation Centres to encourage and support a problem-solving approach to the challenges facing young people. Every year targets will be set for the emergence of new entrepreneurs in the key strategy areas. Innovative methods of business organization, investment, production and marketing will be used to help young people make the transition to self-employment. Success stories will be vigorously promoted in the mass media.

**6.6. HOLIDAY CAMPS**

Holiday Camps have proven to be a popular and effective means of exposing young people to new learning experiences. In the 2010 summer holidays, 62 holiday camps provided safe learning experiences for 10,307 young people. Children under 15 years of age participated fully in these extra-curricular and extra-mural activities, and will continue to do so.

Henceforth, holiday camps will be further used to provide learning experiences for children and young people in those disciplines which have been earmarked for creating the new Barbados economy. Holiday camps will therefore specialize in giving young people opportunities to acquire life skills and

- Training for staff, youth leaders and sports coaches.

**(b) The Barbados Youth Service (BYS)** catered to the needs of youth at risk. It offered a one-year development programme that included a 6-month residential component. On average 36 members of staff provided training for 78 trainees aged 16 to 22, the majority of whom were male. These participants were referred to BYS by parents, young people themselves, youth workers, social service agencies, or correctional institutions. Emphasis was placed on Personal Development Courses that included Gender Studies, Conflict Resolution, Substance Abuse Awareness, Health and Family Life, Civics, Leadership, African Studies, Comparative Religion, Arts and Craft, Counselling. In addition to this they were offered an Academic Programme, Sports Training, Skills Training and Disciplinary Training. Towards the end of the course they received work experience with public service employers as well as private enterprises. Every participant was required to give 44 hours of voluntary community service.

**(c) The Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES)** is the Ministry’s agency responsible for fostering Youth Entrepreneurship. Over the years it has delivered a package of business development services including:

- General business counselling and mentoring
- Entrepreneurial development training lasting 6 months
- YES Juniors Programme in primary and secondary schools

- YES Summer Camp Enterprise Programme
- Direct technical assistance
- Facilitation of access to financial assistance
- Outreach and promotion
- Production of YES Magazine and the YES Business Directory
- Development of a database on small and micro-enterprises
- Entry to Trade Shows – local and regional
- Organizing YES National Trade Fair and YES Enterprise Expo
- On-going Staff Training

Additionally, Accounting and Marketing services were offered to YES clients on a cost-sharing basis.

Between 2003 and 2010 YES interfaced with at least two hundred (200) young people per year who were interested in self-employment. Forty percent (40%) of those persons started up a new venture or expanded an existing enterprise.

**(d) The Youth Mainstreaming Programme** was launched in June 2008 to replace Project Oasis. Its primary objective was to expand the opportunities for unattached youth to develop skills and use them productively. It pursued this objective by strengthening partnerships with the Barbados Community College, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the Barbados Vocational Training Board. The strategy was to recruit young people with aspirations to acquire technical skills and to help them onto the first rungs of the ladder to achieve their desired careers.

All these programmes were established without a written, publicly debated and endorsed, National Youth



Policy: and they undoubtedly served the purposes for which they were designed. However, they were severely tested at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) penetrated and dominated nearly every area of social life.

The benefits of ICT's to society were enormous. However, the implications for young people were both positive and negative; and certainly serious. One implication was the phenomenon of cultural penetration and related cases of violence. The new technology enabled foreign cultures to penetrate the most private areas of life in Barbados. The mass media of communication gave Barbadians access to information originating from all parts of the world. Children growing up in modern Barbados were exposed to uncensored material drawn from cultures alien to the Barbadian way of life. The fact that television sets, computers, cell phones, VCRs and music centres were considered by parents to be good means of spending spare time and that on average children spent six hours a day watching television/surfing the net/listening to music, the opportunity for other cultures to be internalised was ever-present.

Richard Carter's extensive research on Barbadian youth has shown a clear link between the increasing incidence of anti-social behaviour and the erosion of core values that have traditionally ensured peace and held the society together. One of these traditional values was respect for elders. Historically, it was believed that the older a person got, the wiser s/he became. The new technology turned this value system on its head. No longer were older people the

source of knowledge or masters of the instruments used to access this knowledge. As a result, young people had less respect for them and their values. Disregard for the old values by some segments of society eroded value consensus and increased the possibility for conflict.

This research also showed that some young people were growing up without a sense of belonging and concern for others. The erosion of the structure and function of the primary agencies of socialization was closely associated with emerging individualistic lifestyles and anti-social behaviour. Richard Carter's research showed that 45.1% of a sample of school children did not belong to any club or group. (See R. Carter's Report on Violence in School and Community, 2006). It was also found that an even larger proportion of young offenders – 77% - did not belong to any formal organizations. (Task Force on Crime Prevention, "Report on Criminal Risk Factors", 1997)

Another study on "Gender Socialisation, Schooling and Violence" conducted by the Centre for Gender and Development Studies of the University of the West Indies found an increasing incidence of violence among both young men and women. Aggressive expressions of manhood and womanhood were having a negative influence on gender relationships. (UWI Centre for Gender and Development Studies, 2005)

By 2002 the situation had reached the point at which it was thought necessary to set up a National Commission on Law and Order. It was clearly stated

It is anticipated that many of the young people giving National Service will be deployed to Youth Development Programmes such as the Holiday Camps, youth and community groups and sports and service clubs. This will bring about considerable savings for Government.

It was strongly recommended that the first year should be spent marketing the National Youth Service programme and vetting, registering and equipping organizations to receive young volunteers.

6.4. THE NATIONAL YOUTH FORUM

The National Youth Forum which was officially launched on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2010 to facilitate the on-going participation of young people in the implementation and review of the National Youth Policy. The objectives of the National Youth Forum are:

- i. To reach out to young people wherever they live, study, work and play;
- ii. To mobilize young people for constructive engagement with their peers, their community and the wider society;
- iii. To give representation to all categories of youth;
- iv. To provide opportunities and support systems for young leaders to emerge;
- v. To provide a permanent platform for young people to be heard and to be taken seriously;
- vi. To enable young people to analyze and discuss issues of relevance to them and their society;
- vii. To empower young people to seek enterprising and innovative solutions to the problems

they face and to explore new pathways to progress;

- viii. To showcase the talents and achievements of young men and women in every area of life, thereby offering positive role models;
- ix. To enable young people to work closely with stakeholders as equal partners in their own development;
- x. To facilitate consultation with young people, on an on-going basis, on matters of national importance;
- xi. To offer opportunities for young people to participate fully in the formulation and implementation of National Youth Policies and programmes for their own development and that of their nation within a Caribbean context.

The draft constitution suggests that the National Youth Forum will become a democratically run institution with the following structure:

- a) Four General Meetings per year, one held in each of the four zones into which Barbados has been divided.
- b) Four Zonal Management Committees, each made up of 15 representative youth leaders from the area.
- c) A 15-member Executive Committee drawn from the four zones.
- d) Several Sub-Committees with responsibility for, among other things:
  - The Constitution of the NYF/ Education
  - Information Management
  - Public Relations/Mobilization



- (iii)

This service will be known as “National Service” to distinguish it from the “community service” meted out by the criminal justice system.

(iv)

Young people will have a choice of the kind of service they wish to give to their community or to society in general.

(v)

They will be adequately prepared for this service to ensure that “experiential learning” takes place, involving exposure to disciplines and careers in which they have an interest and a level of competence and wish to sharpen their skills through practical experience.

(vi)

All organizations offering opportunities for National Service will be carefully vetted and certified to ensure that experiential learning takes place and abuse prevented.

(vii)

These organizations will include the uniformed services, youth groups and other civil society organizations.

(viii)

Contracts will be drawn up and signed by both parties beforehand.

(ix)

Organizations addressing those issues and goals identified in the National Youth Policy will be given priority for the placement of young volunteers.

(x)

The capacity of youth, community and service organizations will be enhanced with resources from the Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth.

(xi)

The selection of participants, as well as the management and monitoring of young volunteers will be the responsibility of Youth Development Workers/Youth Commissioners employed by the Youth Development Board.

(xii)

Both Government Agencies and Non-

Governmental Organizations, including community-based organizations, youth organizations and the private sector will be fully involved in the management of NYS.

(xiii)

The management of NYS will be decentralized to defined geographical districts, coinciding with constituencies in order to address local needs and strengthen communities.

(xiv)

Positive sanctions, rather than force or compulsion will be used to persuade young people to give National Service.

(xv)

Certificates will be issued to young people who have successfully completed their National Service.

(xvi)

National Service rendered will have currency within educational and training institutions, among employers, and international agencies offering opportunities to young people to travel abroad, etc.
- Several responses at public meetings expressed concern that young people were defined as aged 15 to 29 years. They argued that young people should have access to the provisions of the National Youth Policy - especially the opportunity to render National Service - from as early as 9 years. They overlooked the fact that each nurturing institution and each Ministry has its own jurisdiction and responsibility. However, the functions of the Inter-Ministerial Youth Development Committee and the Youth Development Board are to facilitate co-operation between Ministries and other agencies. It is therefore hoped that agreement would be reached with the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development to introduce Civics and related activities at Secondary Schools to prepare school leavers for National Service.

in this Commission’s Report in June 2004, that “the decline in law and order results from a decline in values” (p42). The Commission argued that the traditional agencies of socialization, especially the family, the school, the church and the community, had failed to transmit the core values of **“respect, good manners, honesty, integrity and discipline”**. Since no society could survive without such commonly held values, there was a need for action to be taken to ensure that all children were exposed to opportunities to internalise these values.

1.4. The Escalation of Issues Affecting Young Men and Women

The 1990’s was a period of intensive research on Caribbean youth, partly due to anxiety about the new millennium and partly due to vigorous response of the Commonwealth Youth Programme’s Caribbean Centre to the needs of Caribbean youth. For example, in 1991, the overall conclusion reached by Linden Lewis was that Caribbean societies, characterized by the residues of race-based slavery, ethnic jealousies, class oppression and gender conflict, were successfully reproducing themselves after several decades of Independence (University of the West Indies, 1991). Ramesh Deosaran (1992) concluded that young people felt like “tenants in their own country”. At about the same time the authoritative West Indian Commission Report (1992) observed “a credentials and experience inflation spiral” that was preventing the average youth from finding legal employment. Similarly the ISER Report (1993) found “a sense of hopelessness, despair and powerlessness” among youth.

In 1996, a situation analysis was carried out among Caribbean youth by the Commonwealth Youth Programme (Danns, Henry and LaFleur, 1997). It reported that despite the overwhelming evidence that young people were being systematically marginalized from the mainstream of society, most of the official responses were reactionary attempts to “contain and control” them. Hence young men and women felt ignored by Governments and were sceptical of politicians and politics.

In May 2003, the World Bank published a document entitled “Caribbean Youth Development”. It addressed the many issues confronting Caribbean youth. But more important it tried to quantify the cost of risky anti-social behaviour among youth. For example it found that the economic output that is forgone due to AIDS deaths in Barbados was US\$4.3 million; and the economic cost of adolescent pregnancy relative to adult pregnancy was US\$6.4 million per cohort over a lifetime. The estimated total cost of youth crime in Jamaica was J\$2.5 billion. The Report argued that expenditure on youth development should be considered as an investment to prevent these unnecessary costs.

In 2006 a major piece of research was carried out for the Government of Barbados by independent Consultants on the proposed National Youth Service model. For this public consultation, they used a multi-pronged and comprehensive approach aimed at reaching as wide a cross-section of the stakeholders and interest groups as possible. A quota sample of 1,531 people completed questionnaires. The most commonly mentioned challenges were Drugs (44.4%



from the first 3 answers), Crime (22.4%) and Peer Pressure (20.8%). Sex and Unemployment were also mentioned by a significant number of respondents.

Then in 2008, a National Youth Consultation funded by the Commonwealth Youth Programme and conducted entirely by young people, including CARICOM Ambassadors, was carried out. It found that the proportion of young people, defined as aged 15 to 29 years of age, had fallen to 25% compared to 30% in 1995. However, the incidence of substance abuse, HIV/AIDS and other lifestyle diseases, inadequate education, unemployment, crime and violence had risen significantly since 1995 and had become the most pressing youth issues. (Report on the National Youth Consultation, “Giving Young People a Voice”, 2008)

In early 2010 the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development published a report entitled “Eye on the Future”. This Report found that there was little knowledge of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy among Caribbean youth and as a result insularity, xenophobia and discriminatory attitudes abounded. The most pressing issues for youth were: unemployment, health, crime and violence, sport, culture, and recreation. Even though 11 out of the 15 CARICOM states had written National Policies, they were weak, ineffective and out-of-date. The Report found that 85% of the sample would migrate out of the region if given a chance.

In the second half of 2010, the mass media highlighted the prevalence of gangs among youth in Barbados. In an article in the Barbados Advocate of Friday July

30, 2010, Faith Marshall-Harris, a Magistrate in the Juvenile Court, was quoted as saying that they had received reliable reports on the existence of four gangs and informal reports on at least two, but she believed that they were more. These included the Bloods, the Crisps, the Young Guns, the Country Boys, the Celebrities as well as the Gothics. She defined a gang as “a group which is formed with the specific purpose and intent of criminal activity”. The Celebrities gang was reputed to be aggressively recruiting school girls for lesbian and criminal activities; and the Gothics were said to drink blood.

The operation of gangs in a society, actively recruiting members while the positive peer groups that have traditionally satisfied the need to belong and to follow socially acceptable rules and norms of behaviour are declining, is cause for major concern in Barbados. This has serious implications for the proposed National Youth Policy.

**However, even when confronted by these accounts of youth and the issues that disempowered them, it is necessary to remember that the vast majority of Barbadian youth are decent hard-working individuals pursuing the unstated but paramount goals of reproducing society and maintaining the status quo.**

**1.5. Youth Profile**

Barbados has the demographic profile of a developed country. Successive UN Human Development Indices, based on the three criteria of national income, education and health, ranked Barbados among the most progressive of the more than 170

**6.1. THE INTER-MINISTERIAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Under the guidance of the Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth all Ministries involved directly with the development of youth will work more closely together in order to bring about synergy, greater efficiency and effectiveness in their work. These Ministries have been listed as:

- The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development
- The Ministry of Labour
- The Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development
- The Ministry of Home Affairs
- The Ministry of Health
- The Ministry of Agriculture
- The Ministry of Commerce and Trade

In order to better implement the decisions of the Social Policy Committee of Cabinet, this Inter-Ministerial Youth Development Committee made up of representatives of the relevant Ministries will be established to reduce duplication and conflict in serving the same constituency of clients. Representation should be at Permanent Secretary level and the Committee should meet quarterly.

**6.2. THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

The Youth Development Board will be given the responsibility for managing all the activities of the Youth Affairs Department/Division. This statutory Board will be made up of representatives of stakeholder bodies such as the Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth, young people, parents, educators, employers,

faith-based organizations, youth and community groups. This Board will be given more autonomy and flexibility to respond expeditiously to the rapidly changing circumstances under which young people currently come of age in Barbados. It will be required to develop and demonstrate the culture of enterprise which this Ministry wishes to cultivate among young Barbadians. The best practices from the private sector will be adopted to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

**6.3. NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE**

A comprehensive National Youth Service Programme will be introduced to absorb and augment the achievements of the Barbados Youth Service (BYS). The best practices of the BYS will be taken forward into the NYS. For example, provision will be made for those young people who need a residential programme, and external discipline.

The structure and operation of the new National Youth Service will draw heavily on the recommendations of the Final Report on the public consultation on the model National Youth Service of Barbados which was submitted in October 2006. The details of this new National Youth Service model include:

- (i) The new National Youth Service will encourage every young person (aged 15 to 29) in Barbados to voluntarily give a minimum of 200 hours of voluntary service spread over two years.
- (ii) Young people studying abroad will also be encouraged to give voluntary service upon their return to Barbados.



This has led the World Bank Report to conclude that in some countries mainstream youth feel neglected. They quietly reproduce the society they inherited. The current socio-economic crisis triggered by the prolonged recession is forcing young people to ask fundamental questions about their inheritance.

Strategy 10

The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth recognizes that the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has changed dramatically. As has been shown above, the technological revolutions from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century have created a new socio-economic reality. Since the goalposts have been shifted, the players must change direction. In military terms since the enemy and the battlefield have moved, the whole army must change its strategy and tactics.

The Ministry will therefore focus on convincing mainstream youth that they must embrace the new vision, pursue the new goals, adopt new strategies and change direction. Mainstream youth will henceforth be treated as one of the priority target groups of the Barbados National Youth Policy.

(6) IMPLEMENTING MECHANISMS

Having taken into consideration the context of youth development during the last two decades, the principles and values of crucial stakeholders, the national vision and aspirations for youth, as well as the social and economic constraints under which the current political administration is operating, the Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth has adopted 10 Strategies to achieve the Goals and Objectives listed above. Furthermore, after careful

consideration of existing provisions, it will strengthen, reconfigure, expand or put in place at least 10 government and civil society institutions to spearhead the implementation of the new National Youth Policy. Other institutions, particularly those related to the clearly identified growth areas of the economy, such as the National Cultural Foundation, will receive the necessary support from the Government to make a greater impact on youth empowerment.

The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth, its statutory Councils and Boards, and their staff will support and co-ordinate all activities for the wholesome development of youth. Emphasis will be placed on co-ordination and collaboration to avoid duplication, wastage, inefficiency and conflict. It will do so through and with the following bodies, which have been identified by young people, by staff of the Ministry and by the public as having the capacity to speed up the process of realizing the vision for Barbadian youth.

- (1) An Inter-Ministerial Youth Development Committee
- (2) The Youth Development Board
- (3) The National Youth Service
- (4) The National Youth Forum
- (5) An expanded Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme
- (6) Holiday Camps
- (7) The National Sports Council
- (8) The Constituency Councils
- (9) Barbados Youth Development Council
- (10) The National Youth Parliament

countries surveyed. It has recently been reclassified as a “developed country”. However defined, it has been the highest placed black-majority and black-led country in the world for many years.

The Barbados Economic and Social Report of 2008, drawing on the data from the 2000 Census, provided demographic information showing the youth profile to be:

Age Group	Male (000)	Female (000)	Both Sexes (000)	% of total
15 – 19	10.2	10.0	20.3	7.5
20 – 24	9.7	9.5	19.2	7.1
25 – 29	10.6	10.7	21.3	7.9
Total			60.8	22.5

In the financial year 2008-2009 the budget for education and training was \$485.8 million. Enrolment at primary and secondary schools was almost 100%. The total number of students pursuing courses at the tertiary level – at the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies, the Barbados Community College, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and Erdiston Teachers’ Training College – was 13,662. This figure represented over 22% of young people, assumed to be in the age band 15 to 29.

At the same time, the expenditure on Health was \$471.2 million. In keeping with its high Human Development Index, Barbados has a comprehensive health care system for all its people. There were however serious health challenges related to obesity and HIV/AIDS, as shown below.

With the onset of the recession/depression, the major concern of youth became the need for financial independence, either as an immediate, medium-term or long-term goal. At the end of 2009 the national rates of unemployment rose to 10.2 per cent, compared to 8.1 per cent in 2008. This was marginally higher than the 9.9 per cent rate at the end of 2001. The rate of unemployment among youth is normally much higher

than the national average.

Data from the School Leavers’ Tracer Surveys carried out by the Division of Youth Affairs annually up to 2007 showed that young people approached school-leaving with great expectations. In 2007 over 86% wanted to continue studying or training and the vast majority saw no obstacles to achieving their goals. By September of the same year 12.8% were unemployed and 4.1% could not be traced.

1.6. Reference to Other Relevant Policies and Documents

Before intervention could be considered it was necessary to look at other documents that were relevant to youth development in Barbados. Five important documents were chosen, namely:



(a) The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE), 2007 to 2015

During the first few years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the Commonwealth Secretariat, through the Commonwealth Youth Programme and in collaboration with Ministries of Youth and youth organizations developed “The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment”. When it was launched in September 2007 and formally endorsed by Ministers of Youth in the 54 countries of the Commonwealth, it became the guiding framework for Commonwealth Cooperation on Youth Affairs. Thenceforth it has been vigorously promoted as a model strategic plan for youth development in Commonwealth countries. It adopted an asset-based approach to youth development, with three important components:

- Recognition of young people as an asset to their societies;
- Building on young people’s capacities and agency to overcome poverty;
- Engaging young people in decision making as partners in democracy and development.

It then listed 13 action points for Governments and other stakeholders in the development of young men and women, namely:

- (i) Develop and implement measures to promote the economic enfranchisement of young people.
- (ii) Strengthen social support systems and collaboration between key stakeholders in youth empowerment.
- (iii) Strengthen Ministries, Departments and legal frameworks for Youth Affairs.

- (iv) Promote the participation of young people in decision-making.
- (v) Promote positive role models and foster young people’s self-esteem.
- (vi) Take action for equality between young women and men, and for youth in special circumstances.
- (vii) Promote peaceful and democratic environments in which human rights flourish.
- (viii) Provide quality education for all.
- (ix) Improve access to information and communication technology (ICT).
- (x) Promote health, development and values through sports and culture.
- (xi) Engage Young People to Protect the Environment.
- (xii) Professionalise the youth work sector.
- (xiii) Monitor and evaluate progress in Youth Development.

(b) The National Strategic Plan of Barbados, 2005 to 2025

This comprehensive plan was drawn up to transform Barbados into...“a fully developed society that is prosperous, socially just and globally competitive” by 2025. It clearly recognized that the future of the nation rested with the youth, “its most precious asset” and that it was necessary to formulate and implement effective policies for their future development. Objective 1.4 of Goal 3 is devoted to the development of youth. The strategies it recommended included:

- Strengthen the appropriate institutions to deliver greater and more efficient services for

activities ranging from intellectual debates to selling goods and services of all types in order to earn a living.

Two major government programmes have been established to equip boys on the block with useful skills to earn a living by participating in the mainstream economy. Project Oasis was the first programme that targeted boys “liming” on the block. It was recently replaced by the Youth Mainstreaming Programme, a title which clearly reveals the goal of this exercise.

5.2. Young Mothers

In a society that is committed to gender equality, attempts have been made to target young mothers. It is now established that girl children and young women whose compulsory education is affected by unwanted pregnancy have the right to complete their education after giving birth. In addition to this, some innovative projects have been created to help young mothers help themselves. For example the Young Mothers’ Collective of St. George has been encouraging young mothers to meet regularly to discuss their needs, to pool resources, to share responsibilities in such a way as to enable members to sequentially pursue further education, seek training and produce goods and services for sale.

5.3. Disabled Youth

Disabled Youth have also been earmarked for attention. Indeed considerable progress has been made in advocating for the rights of youth who are differently able. The Barbados Council for the Disabled and Challenor Creative Arts and Training Centre have been credited for providing essential education,

training and employment for disabled youth. The Ministry will work closely with these organizations to ensure that disabled youth are not marginalized from the mainstream institutions of the society.

5.4. Youth at Risk

Some Social Workers have recognized the need to focus on those youth who are at risk of offending. They acknowledge that every day young people come to a crossroad at which they must make a decision whether to go left, right or straight on. At such times they may select inappropriate role models, succumb to peer pressure, and make a decision for which they would have to pay for the rest of their lives. In the modern world in which cultural penetration is an-ever present danger, all young people are at risk. It is for this reason that professional Youth Workers try to equip young people with core values and effective role models during adolescence to ensure that they can resist the temptation to indulge in anti-social behaviour. Effective youth work is to provide young people with survival kits to help them navigate safe pathways to adulthood.

5.5. Mainstream Youth

A content analysis of the popular newspapers, radio and television broadcasts indicate clearly that the mass media are preoccupied with deviant youth. This near obsession with anti-social behaviour has led a vocal body of concerned citizens to draw attention at public meetings to the growth of a youth underclass that is creating a counter culture in Barbados.

However, it must not be forgotten that the vast majority of young people unobtrusively pursue their goals.



Strategy 9

This Ministry will therefore:

- (a) Get young people involved in educational projects to demonstrate the importance of environmental protection in Barbados.
- (b) Train and encourage young people to...
  - Recycle and reuse manufactured goods
  - Reduce carbon emission into the environment
  - Reforest Barbados
  - Explore alternative, renewable sources of energy.
- (c) Start a Green Campaign which focuses on:
  - Solid Waste Management
  - Water Resources Management
  - Sustainable consumption and production
  - Popularizing Green Careers through career showcases in schools, places of work and communities.
- (d) Help young entrepreneurs to contribute to the “greening of Barbados” as a means of creating employment and wealth.

These strategies constitute the central thrust of the intervention of the Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth in the lives of young people to help them achieve their goals and objectives. Implicit in these strategies are the kind of implementation mechanisms that will be required.

(5) PRIORITY TARGET GROUPS

The development of youth services throughout

the Commonwealth and beyond has been driven by a desire to integrate young people fully into the process of nation building. Eberley and Gal (2006) observed that countries like Malaysia and Nigeria, with large and distinct ethnic groups have formulated National Youth Policies with goals, programmes and institutions to inculcate a common national identity. Other countries like India, Ghana and Jamaica have focussed on literacy campaigns to raise the levels of literacy among their youthful populations. In Botswana, students were required to spend a year in remote villages before going off to university. Other countries, like Zambia and Trinidad and Tobago have reached out to marginalized individuals and categories of youth. In England students spent their “Gap Year” as Community Service Volunteers or with Voluntary Service Overseas. In the USA students gave service through the Peace Corps. Their priority target groups have invariably included deviant youth, juvenile delinquents, young offenders, street kids, pregnant teenagers, and school drop-outs. These policies often brought benefits to the recipients as well as the volunteers. However, most of them have been made obsolete by the far-reaching changes that have taken place during the last decade.

In Barbados the following priority groups have been identified and targeted over the years.

5.1. Boys on the Block

A considerable amount of research and resources have been devoted to Boys on the Block. Every Youth Commissioner has from time to time carried out research on those young men - and women - who assemble in communities to engage in a variety

the development and protection of the youth.

- Improve the use of information and communications technology in youth education programmes.
- Undertake greater initiatives to attract and retain more young persons in entrepreneurship programmes.
- Create strategic partnerships with the private sector and civil society to undertake mentoring and counselling programmes for the youth.
- Implement programmes that will see marginalized young people being re-integrated into the mainstream of society.
- Develop more structured programmes to enhance education, self-awareness and health among the youth.
- Develop innovative partnerships with the private sector to retool and re-habilitate the unemployed and those who are marginalized as a result of imprisonment.
- Develop programmes that promote the prevention of juvenile delinquency by providing immediate and effective interventions (early screening and assessment) through the implementation of comprehensive community approaches.

(c) Medium Term Development Strategy, 2010-2014

In January 2008 there was a change of Government in Barbados. It was elected at a time of serious concern about the implications of the global financial crisis and the consequent economic downturn. The Government therefore drew up a Medium Term Development Strategy (MTDS) which set out a broad framework

of policies and programmes, to be pursued over the period 2010–2014. The MTDS reiterated the country’s long-term vision of becoming “a fully developed and people-centred society, through new development pathways”. The plan was designed to guide the country towards recovery from the current global recession. With the theme “Recovery, Adjustment and Sustainable Development” it highlighted both existing economic sectors and future areas of growth.

With respect to the country’s flagship industry, **tourism**, it recognized that immediate action was necessary to expand and diversify the tourism product with focus on the development of special areas, market expansion and airlift. In **agriculture**, emphasis would be placed on greater use of technology in an effort to put land resources to good use, to save foreign exchange, and ensure food security. The **energy**, sector would be targeted for the advancement of alternative sources of energy such as wind, waste matter and solar.

The plan promoted the need for new areas of economic growth using foreign and domestic savings. These new areas were most likely to be found in services such as health, education, sports, and culture.

A precondition for this kind of development was the significant expansion of the **small business sector** through the formulation of effective policies and the systematic provision of technical support to assist small business persons.

The plan also spoke to a number of special development challenges such as stressing the importance of the cultural industries, increasing competitiveness



and productivity, using science and technology and highlighting foreign and trade policies.

**(d) The Medium Term Fiscal Strategy, 2010-2014**

At the same time, for the fiscal period April 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009, the overall fiscal deficit stood at \$480.4 million or 6.6 per cent of GDP at market prices. This represented a worsening of the fiscal position when compared to the corresponding period 2008-2009 when the deficit stood at 3.3 per cent of GDP.

The resulting Medium Term Fiscal Strategy was drawn up to enable Barbados to make the transition from crisis to recovery without expanding fiscal deficits. Its primary objectives were to:

- i. Put Barbados's public finances back on a more sustainable footing.
- ii. Ensure that a balanced budget is obtained by 2014/15 and a small fiscal surplus by 2015/16.
- iii. Reduce central government's debt to GDP ratio to near 70 per cent by 2017/18.
- iv. Improve the investment grade rating for Barbados.
- v. Provide a stable fiscal framework that would enable the Government to better achieve national goals and the objectives of its Medium Term Development Strategy.
- vi. Maintain macroeconomic stability through sustainable management of the fiscal deficit and debt.
- vii. Increase productivity and international competitiveness.

- viii. Return real GDP growth to the sustainable annual average rate of approximately 3 per cent by 2012.
- ix. Ensure that Government's social policy objectives are not compromised in any way that will jeopardise the social welfare and well-being of citizens, and the most vulnerable persons/sectors in the society.

The new fiscal policy involved regular review of the efficiency of government's expenditure programmes, reductions in spending, and improvement in service delivery. Ministries would be required to reprioritise their programmes in order to reduce costs. Where possible, government would encourage the private sector to become involved in the provision of some public goods where this was likely to lead to reduced costs.

Basically the Government of Barbados, like most developing and developed countries, faced a medium term future in which expenditures would have to be controlled to avoid further deterioration in the public finances.

**(e) The Barbados Human Resource Development Strategy, 2011-2016**

At the same time that the National Youth Policy was being formulated, the Government of Barbados, through the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, drew up and approved a Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy. This multi-year project, sponsored by the European Union was a specific response to the same rapidly changing, global socio-economic environment that confronted youth.

conferring of authority on individuals and groups, is the lifeblood of society. It is inescapable because it determines how scarce resources are distributed in most progressive societies. To opt out of this process is to forfeit one's right to participate and benefit from publicly owned goods and services.

Just as how the economic and social development of Barbados during the past 60 years depended on increasing numbers of people participating freely and fully in the economic and social institutions, the further development of the nation requires the full participation of the remaining marginalized citizens in the political process not only at election time every five years, but every day.

**Strategy 8**

This Ministry will therefore:

- (a) Provide practical education and training in the political process for young people.
- (b) Fully establish the National Youth Forum to provide a platform on which important issues will be discussed, crucial decisions made, and action taken by democratically elected leaders.
- (c) Enable the National Youth Forum to establish the infrastructure for the National Youth Parliament.
- (d) Assign members of the Youth Parliament to shadow Members of Parliament for mentorship and informal education.

**(I) THE ENVIRONMENT  
TOP PRIORITIES FROM OBJECTIVES LISTED ABOVE:**

- (i) Integrate environmental studies into the school curriculum.
- (ii) Implement training programmes that would focus on Green Careers rather than traditional jobs and professions, as a means of creating the new diversified economy of Barbados.

The preservation of the environment is no longer an esoteric issue. A succession of natural disasters has convinced the public that climate change is currently posing dangerous threats to humanity. Tsunamis in Asia, drought in East, West and North Africa, earthquake in Haiti, melting icecaps in the Arctic, forest fires in Russia and floods in Pakistan, have shown how vulnerable the world is to devastating natural disasters.

In the Caribbean there is the perennial threat of hurricanes. Hurricanes of the magnitude of Katrina and Ivan threaten the area every year. Low-lying Caribbean countries, scattered over large areas of water, are particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels, high winds and flooding. The threat becomes more serious when it is realized that the primary industry in these islands is tourism; and that these islands are increasingly dependent on imported food. A hurricane can not only destroy the economy but also threaten the very survival of the people if air and seaports are damaged and remain closed for a prolonged period.

How prepared are the people of Barbados for mass involvement in the preservation of their environment? How organized are they for survival and recovery in the aftermath of a hurricane or other natural disaster? How ready are they for the "Greening of Barbados"?



programmes in support of wellness, healthy life-style changes, improved self-management of CNCD's and embracing the role of the media as a responsible partner in all our efforts to prevent and control CNCD's".

However, HIV/AIDS remains a major threat to young people in Barbados. The fact that an almost equal number of males and females have contracted the disease implies that it is transmitted primarily through heterosexual activity. And because young people aged 15 to 29 years are at the prime child-bearing age, and hence most sexually active, they run the greatest risk of catching the virus. The real tragedy of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is that sexually active people engage in sexual intercourse without knowing the status of their partners. So, in the act of creating life they run the risk of causing death.

Barbados has made considerable progress in screening pregnant women and providing them with anti-retroviral medication when they are found to have the disease in order to prevent mother-to-child transmission. It has also provided medication and counselling for those infected with the virus. The National HIV/AIDS Commission, the private sector AIDS Foundation and international agencies like UNICEF and the Red Cross have targeted youth as a means of stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Strategy 7

The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth will therefore:

- Help young people to develop healthy lifestyles based on eating wholesome and nutritional food, and getting regular exercise

- and recreation.
- Join forces with the HIV/AIDS Commission, the AIDS Foundation and other agencies to intensify education on HIV/AIDS.
- Encourage young people to get tested for the virus on a regular basis, in order to know their status and to behave appropriately.
- Explore additional means of communicating to young people the serious threats they face in engaging in unprotected sex.
- Encourage young people to practice sexual abstinence until they are ready to start a family.

(H) POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

TOP PRIORITIES FROM OBJECTIVES LISTED ABOVE:

- (i) Educate young people formally and informally about what politics is and the processes associated with it.
- (ii) Politicians should interact with young people on a regular basis.

In the 2008 General Elections the turnout was about 63%. That meant that over one third of the electorate did not bother to exercise their constitutional right to choose their Parliamentary Representative. Many of them were young people who refused to participate in the political process due to suspicion, apathy or ignorance.

Contrary to popular perceptions of politics and politicians held by young people, the process of decision making, the distribution of power and the

The mission of the HRD Strategy was stated as: *“To develop national, institutional and human capacity so that the potential of all Barbadians is fully realised”*. In practical terms its primary objective was to increase the number of secondary and tertiary level students with the appropriate knowledge, skills and competencies to either successfully enter the job market or to actively pursue an opportunity for self-employment.

Like the proposed National Youth Policy, it adopted a multi-sector approach, and emphasized the need for collaboration between the public and private sectors as well as civil society organizations committed to the development of the most vital resource Barbados has at its disposal.

It is an attempt to strengthen the links between education and the world of work. It therefore identified key areas for development such as Technical and Vocational Education, Financial Services, International Business, Information and Communication Technology, Health and the Hospitality sectors.

The HRD Strategy clearly identified five (5) critical activities known as the five pillars which it considered essential to the realization of its objectives. These have been listed as:

- (1) **Enabling Environment for Human Resource Development**, inclusive of the institutional strengthening and capacity building of leading human resource development agencies.
- (2) **National Qualifications Framework** to increase standardization and quality assurance of educational programmes.

- (3) **Demand-Driven Professional Development and Training**, whereby all employees in the public and private sectors would be provided with opportunities for continual professional development and educational opportunities that are in keeping with industry standards and aimed at developing appropriate skills, competencies, and attitudes.
- (4) **Knowledge Management Systems**, created to ensure that effective knowledge management practices and procedures are followed in the public and private sectors.
- (5) **Research, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship Capacity**, enhanced through the development of a new culture of enterprise within secondary and post-secondary institutions.

The over-riding objective is to enable Barbadians to respond to the changed global situation in imaginative and creative ways that would make Barbadian workers more competitive; and also lead to increasing numbers of small and medium size enterprises contributing to the development of a new, more competitive economy.

1.7. Philosophical Moorings, Principles and Values

Before articulating and responding to the needs of Barbadian youth, it is essential to reassert the fundamental philosophical foundations on which this policy is built. Once again it draws heavily on the insights and experiences of the Commonwealth Youth Programme, an internationally recognized authority



on youth development. The relevant principles and values are enshrined in the Harare Declaration of 1991 in which Commonwealth leaders pledged to work with renewed vigour to:

- Protect and promote democracy and human rights
- Strive for equality for women
- Gain universal access to education
- End apartheid and build a new South Africa
- Pursue sustainable development and alleviate poverty
- Extend the benefits of development within a human rights framework
- Protect the environment
- Combat drug abuse and trafficking as well as communicable diseases
- Help small states with their economic and security concerns
- Promote peace, disarmament and effective arms control.

Specific principles and values were expressed in the form of a Commonwealth Youth Charter, which recognizes that:

*“Young men and women are a vital part of society, not only as participants in the economy, citizens and parents, but also by virtue of their youthfulness – their dedication, passion, creativity, new ideas and questioning can contribute greatly to the dynamism of the wider society. In many ways, the future of each country and the Commonwealth rests with young women and men, and their vision,*

*commitment, enthusiasm, skills and ability to manage change and grasp opportunities to fulfil their potential”.* (The Commonwealth Youth Charter, Commonwealth Secretariat, 2000)

According to the Commonwealth Youth Programme, in its modules for the Diploma in Youth in Development Work, the over-riding goal of youth services is the transference of a set of principles and values to youth. The assumption is that once these standards are internalized they would guide the behaviour of young people for the rest of their lives. These include:

- Community
- Discipline
- Equal opportunity
- Good manners
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Leadership
- Participation
- Patriotism/citizenship
- Pursuit of high standards
- Respect for others
- Respect for the environment
- Tolerance
- Volunteering/selfless service

The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth wholeheartedly endorses these values. However, philosophical convictions, historical evidence and the current social reality in Barbados have led to the identification of 8 fundamental principles that have informed the proposed National Youth Policy and

In more developed countries, acquiring independent accommodation is considered one of the clearest indicators of successful transition from youth to adulthood. As Barbadian society changes, more and more young people are opting to leave the family home and to seek their own accommodation. Market conditions, in particular supply and demand, dictate the price of both land and housing. Young people, as new entrants into the employment and housing markets, are therefore placed at a disadvantage.

Strategy 6

The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth will provide opportunities for young people to discuss and explore the whole range of housing solutions that are available in Barbados. It will work closely with the Ministries of Housing and Lands and Finance and Economic Affairs to ensure that the needs of young people are taken into consideration. For example, rent concessions and incentives to purchase will be considered for families that contain young people. In particular it will give priority to young mothers and fathers who need space to bring up their families.

(G) LIFESTYLE DISEASES

TOP PRIORITIES FROM OBJECTIVES LISTED ABOVE:

- (i) Align the age of access with the age of consent and marriage so that young persons have the right to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Infections without their parent’s consent from age 16.
- (ii) Young people living with HIV/AIDS should be

able to learn how to cope from older people living with the disease.

It is self evident that health is essential for the development of a nation. The statistics show that during the past decade Barbados has spent an increasing amount of money on health services. Expenditure has risen from \$253 million in 1999-2000 to \$369 in 2007-2008. And yet young people remain prone to illness and disease.

The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth is particularly concerned about the increasing incidence of preventable illnesses among young people in Barbados and throughout the region. It recognizes that these lifestyle diseases include obesity, hypertension, high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, heart attack and cancer. The growing awareness of the effect of these illnesses galvanized the Heads of Government of CARICOM states to hold a Special Summit on Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (CNCD) in Trinidad in September 2007. It was revealed that the incidence of CNCD’s in the Caribbean region was the highest in the Americas. In 2005, according to figures from the World Health Organization, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and other CNCD’s accounted for over 60% of all deaths in the region, compared with 29.2% from infectious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, and 9.3% from injuries. It was agreed that the best approach was to address the causal risk factors of unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, tobacco use and alcohol abuse; and to strengthen health services. The resulting Port of Spain Declaration argued that the best way to address this issue was to... “provide incentives for comprehensive public education



Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development will organize courses to help young people identify the core values that society needs to function effectively. It will also provide opportunities for young people to internalize these values through practical experience. Senior citizens will be encouraged to share their knowledge and experience with young people. The Ministry will also work closely with faith-based and other cultural organizations to provide training material and establish outreach programmes for young people in their communities.

(E) GANGS, DRUGS, VIOLENCE

TOP PRIORITIES FROM OBJECTIVES LISTED ABOVE:

- (i) Support and strengthen the work of social groups in all educational institutions from primary to tertiary level. E.g. 4H, Brownies, Scouts, Guides, Cadets, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Healthy Heart Clubs, Sports Clubs.
- (ii) Provide counselling and personal development training for at-risk youth.

The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth is fully aware of the important role of organizations in providing young people with a sense of belonging, and opportunities to learn to respect others and take responsibility for one's action. It has observed the decline in participation in service organizations by young people over the years. At the same time it has observed the strong correlation between the decline in membership of youth groups and an increase in deviant behaviour among Barbadian youth. It is

generally believed that gangs have emerged to satisfy the need to belong to a group.

Strategy 5

The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth will therefore try to reverse this trend towards anti-social behaviour by:

- (a) Promoting a collective approach to the challenges of youth;
- (b) Providing technical and financial support to youth and community organizations;
- (c) Offering incentives and giving rewards to young people who participate in wholesome organizations;
- (d) Identifying youth at risk and providing counselling and personal development training for them;
- (e) Monitoring the development of youth groups in Barbados to ensure that they have the capacity to meet the needs of mainstream youth.
- (f) Working closely with rehabilitation and law enforcement agencies to reduce the incidence of substance abuse and violence.

(F) HOUSING

TOP PRIORITIES FROM OBJECTIVES LISTED ABOVE:

- (i) Educate young people on the different housing solutions available.
- (ii) Young mothers and fathers, and people with special needs should be given priority access to housing.

which will drive its implementation. These principles are:

- i. **Participation:** The involvement of the greatest number of participants in decision making and other activities of the significant institutions of society, from the peer group to the economy.
- ii. **Reciprocity:** Giving back something to the society that nurtured its citizens.
- iii. **Changing the direction of mainstream youth:** Acknowledging that young people have been socialized for a world that no longer exists, and instead of focusing on getting marginalized youth to join the mainstream, attention should also be paid to the needs of the mainstream youth.
- iv. **Rapid Response:** Enhancing the capacity of youth organizations for timely, efficient and effective response to rapid cultural, social, economic, political and environmental change.
- v. **Core Values:** Ensuring that all Barbadian children and young people are exposed to opportunities to inculcate core values in an age of cultural penetration, rampant individualism, dysfunctional families, over-crowded curricula, and dormitory neighbourhoods.
- vi. **Practical Education:** The provision of practical, technical and vocational education in both formal and informal settings that impart life skills and other essential skills for success in the modern world.
- vii. **Volunteering:** The use of alternative means of providing essential services without incurring unbearable costs and exacerbating the fiscal crisis.

viii. **Responsibility:** Acknowledging that the movement from a pre-occupation with Rights to embracing Responsibility is the hallmark of reaching adulthood.

(2) ASPIRATIONS OF AND FOR YOUTH

There were two clear messages from the analysis of the historical, cultural, social, political, and economic context of youth development in Barbados. One was that there was a preoccupation with marginalized youth, leading to false and invariably negative perceptions of youth. Hence considerable effort was expended on trying to bring them back into the mainstream, often overlooking what was happening to mainstream youth. The other was that the challenges facing Barbadian youth were so varied, deep-rooted and inter-connected that any response should be holistic, well co-ordinated, innovative and directed at mainstream youth as well as troubled youth. No longer would piecemeal, random intervention suffice.

However, a precursor to such a response was an up-to-date review of the aspirations of Barbadian youth. In the second half of 2010, young people and other stakeholders were consulted using appropriate modern methodologies.

2.1. VISION STATEMENT

The Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) advocated that a National Youth Policy must begin with a vision of youth that expresses faith in the future, especially by young people. A vision is a statement of hope that gives direction and energy to those who subscribe to it. It should be an idealistic expression of the aspirations for the youth of a country. (CYP, 1996)



Towards this end, several Focus Group Discussions were held among young people and other stakeholders in Barbados in 2010. In addition to this, over 40 in-depth interviews were conducted among parents, educators, employers, and other civil society leaders.

The resulting vision statement for Barbadian youth was as follows:

**“Well educated, confident, healthy, responsible, progressive, creative and enterprising young men and women who are fully involved in the sustainable cultural, political, economic, social and physical development of their Caribbean nation.”**

This vision locates Barbadian youth at the centre of the process of nation building. It defines a reciprocal relationship between youth and the rest of the society. It assumes a commitment by the state to provide adequate education and training to its youth that would equip them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to develop their country in a sustainable way.

2.2. GOALS

During the process of gathering data for the National Youth Policy, a structured mechanism was sought to enable young people to discuss youth issues and to make recommendations on how best to address them. From the beginning it was realized that using traditional methods of consulting young men and women on an ad hoc basis would confirm the suspicion

that young people were still not being considered as serious partners in national development. It was therefore decided that if the National Youth Policy of Barbados was to do justice to the modern challenges facing young people in a rapidly changing environment then there needed to be a national platform on which young people could, **on a regular basis**, express their views, participate in the process of making decisions that affect their lives and showcase their talents. This need became more pressing in the contemporary climate of near-hysteria about the deviant behaviour of a small segment of the youth population.

The Government had repeatedly assured the nation that it considered young people one of the most valuable assets available for riding out the economic downturn, recovering from the global recession and building the nation in a sustainable way. But the decisive intervention by the new Minister of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth, Hon. Stephen Lashley, and the launch of the **National Youth Forum (NYF)** of Barbados on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2010 sent the clearest possible message to the nation that the Government was committed to honouring and empowering Barbadian youth.

The youth of Barbados responded positively to this initiative by attending two Business Meetings, at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus on 17th July 2010, and the Barbados Community College on 14th August 2010, to identify the most pressing issues and the best approaches to their resolution.

In addition to this, Focus Group Discussions and in-depth interviews with key decision makers were

The Caribbean Family is a unique institution. It has been subjected to the destructive forces of chattel slavery under which families were ruthlessly broken up for security and commercial reasons. Consequently the “nuclear family unit” made up of parents and their children, has never been the norm nor the mode. Statistics from the 2000 Census show that in modern Barbados, only 46% of the 83,026 households can be classified as nuclear families. A variety of social units have emerged with several people playing the role of surrogate parents and offering a sense of belonging. Indeed from a sociological perspective, Caribbean people have shown tremendous creativity in family structures. What they all have in common is the support of neighbourhood communities.

Strategy 3

This Ministry, being mindful of the dependence of the family on the community and the traditional function of the community in raising the child, will focus on strengthening the community in modern Barbados. It will try to reverse the trend towards isolation of individuals and family units in neighbourhoods.

In particular this Ministry will give maximum support to families within communities, ranging from education in parenting to organizing events to bring together family groups for meaningful interaction. This is the mandate of the Division of Family, within the Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth.

It will also work closely with Constituency Councils to generate training and economic activities using co-operative models to create wealth and employment based on using local resources and meeting local needs.

(D) CORE VALUES

TOP PRIORITIES FROM OBJECTIVES LISTED ABOVE:

- (i) Identify the core values that hold society together, such as: sense of self, honesty, integrity, love, respect, discipline, good manners, caring for others, responsibility.
- (ii) Mentorship should be used to cement core values.

This Ministry is convinced that one of the greatest needs of children in Barbados is an authentic identity, based on fundamental values that are reinforced by social interaction. The resulting culture, defined as a way of life, would reveal what people consider valuable and important, influence their behaviour and hold the society together. This culture would provide those who subscribe to it with the self esteem and the confidence for success in life.

The many cultural industries that have been identified as capable of creating the new economy for Barbados are totally dependent on these cultural values and traits.

The Commission for Pan-African Affairs and Codrington College, in collaboration with other faith-based organizations, are already spearheading courses on core values for Teachers and Youth Workers.

Strategy 4

The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Social



of knowledge and also for the improvement and empowerment of human beings. This country cannot and should not try to escape the impact of technology and change on the lives of its citizens. It must therefore provide opportunities for training and continuous development for all citizens according to their aptitude and the needs of the economy.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development has recently received a report from the National Advisory Commission on Education (NACE). The objectives of NACE were to:

- Address the relevance of the present education system of Barbados.
- Ensure adequate and affordable educational opportunities for every Barbadian.
- Make school a rewarding experience for every child.
- Ensure that every school child benefits fully from the education system.
- Help every child to realize his/her potential through education.

The recommendations indicate that the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development is fully aware of the changes it must undertake to modernize the education system of Barbados and will no doubt fashion an appropriate policy to address the issues.

In August 2011, the Government of Barbados, through the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Management and the Ministry of Labour, adopted a Human Resource Development Strategy to prepare Barbadians at school and at work to realize their

potential as productive employees and successful entrepreneurs.

However, the Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth is mindful of the packed curriculum in all schools. It recognizes that while the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development is introducing changes to equip young people to succeed in the modern world, there is much that other Ministries and civil society organizations can do to in both formal and informal educational settings.

Strategy 2

The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth will therefore focus on creating extra-curricular institutions and programmes to complement what is being provided in formal educational settings. These institutions for implementing the National Youth Policy will explore and develop other learning methodologies, such as “experiential learning”.

(C) THE FAMILY

TOP PRIORITIES FROM OBJECTIVES LISTED ABOVE:

- (i) Provide social/infrastructural support such as: Well managed community centres; Village fairs; Family outings; Sporting and other activities; Peer Support groups; “Big Brother/Sister” programmes; Inter-community relations.
- (ii) Formulate a new economic policy to aid business development revolving around families within communities, partly driven by Constituency Councils.

held to ascertain the main issues affecting Barbadian youth and preventing them from realizing the vision. In the context of the fundamental changes associated with globalization during the past two decades, nine interrelated issues were identified as being of major significance for the development of young people in Barbados in the near future. These were listed as:

- a) Unemployment
- b) Education
- c) The Family
- d) Core Values
- e) Gangs
- f) Housing
- g) Lifestyle Diseases
- h) Political Participation
- i) The Environment

These discussions helped to shift the emphasis away from endlessly analysing the “problems” to clarifying the aspirations of young people and expressing them as goals. The Goals were subsequently disaggregated as discrete objectives.

**GOAL (A): To Reduce UNEMPLOYMENT by ensuring that young people are “gainfully occupied” after leaving school.**

OBJECTIVES IDENTIFIED AND RECOMMENDED BY YOUTH:

- (1) Provide aptitude tests at an earlier age to point children in the direction of appropriate careers.
- (2) Establish specialized educational centres to meet the needs of children with a range of different talents.

- (3) Provide training in creative disciplines such as sports, entertainment, the arts, craft and other areas they are passionate or excited about.
- (4) Design educational and training programmes to meet the changing needs of the workforce - to include activities geared towards better customer service, creativity and entrepreneurship in service-oriented societies.
- (5) Expand or increase the number of tertiary level institutions to accommodate more school leavers.
- (6) Make it easier to access funding from lending institutions for entrepreneurs.
- (7) Lower the retirement age and provide incentives to enable older people with skills, experience and contacts to become entrepreneurs.
- (8) Provide Job Attachments and relevant Internship Programmes for youth.
- (9) Develop Mentorship and Apprenticeship programmes for young people, using people who are gainfully employed.
- (10) Increase the minimum wage for some jobs to get unemployed people to do them.
- (11) Focus on Agriculture and use modern techniques to attract young people and use the land more productively.
- (12) Identify alternative opportunities outside of Barbados e.g. CARICOM, Canada.

**GOAL (B): To Improve EDUCATION by ensuring that our education system provides “equal opportunities” for all our children with different talents.**



OBJECTIVES IDENTIFIED AND RECOMMENDED BY YOUTH:

- (1) Carry out regular teacher assessment to determine whether or not they are motivating children.
- (2) Follow up this assessment with training to help teachers better encourage learning.
- (3) Continuous assessment of all children undergoing education.
- (4) By whatever means get parents more involved.
- (5) Provide more diversified subject choices in the curriculum, catering to those who may be more creatively inclined.
- (6) Use modern technology to transform schoolwork into more child-friendly formats and to get youth to participate more fully in the learning process at home and school.
- (7) Develop career programmes in schools to expose children to other jobs outside of traditional occupations.
- (8) Organize training seminars/workshops to assist children, at 3<sup>rd</sup> form level especially, with choosing subjects which would better suit their aptitudes, talents, and skills.
- (9) Ensure that more scholarships are provided for those who excel in non-traditional fields such as dance, fine art, drama, etc.
- (10) Provide opportunities for student participation and leadership throughout the education system.

GOAL (C): To Strengthen THE FAMILY within the community and raise children more successfully.

OBJECTIVES IDENTIFIED AND RECOMMENDED BY YOUTH:

- (1) Acknowledge that the family is in crisis, as manifested by:
  - Fatherless/single-parent families
  - Domestic violence
  - Persistent poverty/unemployment
  - Isolated families and the lack of synergy between families, school and community.
- (2) Provide a spiritual foundation for the family (for example ancestor veneration drawn from traditional African religions).
- (3) Provide social/infrastructural support such as:
  - Well managed community centres
  - Village fairs
  - Family outings
  - Sporting and other activities
  - Peer Support groups
  - “Big Brother/Sister” programmes
  - Inter-community relations.
- (4) Improve Family-School relations, through:
  - The use of PTA’s to advocate good parenting habits
  - Greater Family-School interaction
  - Curriculum Review and Reform
  - Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) programmes in schools and community centres

- To reduce the import bills and save valuable foreign exchange.
- To lower the cost of living by growing more food locally.
- To ensure food security in the event of a major natural disaster.
- To create employment, not only in the agricultural sector but also in related growth industries like tourism and the manufacture of food products and beverages.
- To improve the health of the nation.

The Ministry of Agriculture has launched a campaign to get young people back to the land. It has targeted young people through the 4H Movement. Even though this movement has seen increases in numbers in recent years, the Ministry recognizes that it will have to use science and technology to attract significant numbers of young people into agriculture.

Indeed it is an established policy of Government to modernize the sector. This will be done by providing relevant education and training from primary to tertiary level. Emphasis will be put on research and development. Modern technology will be used extensively to take the “slave work” out of farming. A modern investment framework will be developed to enable the public to buy shares and/or government bonds to finance developments in the sector.

The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth, will join forces with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs in mobilizing young people and preparing them for

employment in agriculture and its related industries. Together, these three Ministries have earmarked Hope Plantation as the Centre for educating and training young professional farmers in Barbados. The Ministry will, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, also seek to identify other vacant lands in St. Philip and Christ Church for youth agricultural projects.

(B) EDUCATION  
TOP PRIORITIES FROM OBJECTIVES LISTED ABOVE:

- (i) Develop career programmes in schools to expose children to other jobs outside of traditional occupations. (Career choices)
- (ii) Ensure that more scholarships are provided for those who excel in non-traditional fields such as dance, fine art, drama, agriculture, industrial arts, etc. (Incentives)

Barbados has traditionally relied on education to propel its social and economic development. Its achievements are universally acknowledged. Over the years Barbados has spent as much as 20% of the National Budget on education. But in the current economic crisis, questions are being asked about the returns on this huge investment.

Reports have shown that many young persons leave school lacking basic skills for effective living and for the job market. It is argued that greater effort is needed in making education more relevant to the country’s developmental needs. It is recognised that education must be organised for the enlargement



This Ministry will therefore highlight and preserve the positive elements of traditional Barbadian culture and values; educate and train young people to pursue careers in music, dance, drama, visual and culinary arts; and provide support systems to help them develop cultural and creative industries.

It will strengthen and restructure the National Cultural Foundation which was established in March 1983 “to fuel the development of culture through training, research, and the creation of opportunities in cultural industries”.

It will further develop and refocus the Community Independence Celebrations Secretariat in pursuit of its goal of “...exposing and further developing the island’s enormous sporting, creative, artistic talents and abilities through organized community activities”.

The Ministry will also further develop and invigorate the National Independence Festival of Creative Arts (NIFCA). NIFCA is composed of a number of creative arts competitions which are open to all Barbadians. The competitions allow participants to showcase their skills and talents in trying to achieve the highest degree of excellence in music, dance, drama, speech, culinary arts, literary arts, visual arts and photography.

The climax of the cultural year will be the “Crop Over” Festival. Young people will be prepared to participate fully in this major cultural event in Barbados. They will highlight the enormous range of talent and skills of Barbadians from all walks of life.

The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth will work with established bodies that operate in the nascent cultural industries and help them to professionalize the work of artistes. For too long cultural artistes in Barbados have been pouring out their talents, with little recognition for their gifts and less remuneration for their efforts. The Ministry will, for example, work with the Copyright Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (COSCAP) to provide support for the organization’s 1,200 members. The Foundation is designed to assist in the financing of musical education, training and professional development for young musicians and other artistes, while enhancing their long-term social well-being. Such education and training will be undertaken through an ongoing series of scholarships, grants, workshops, seminars and other opportunities in Barbados and abroad.

The Ministry will also work with the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development to ensure that facilities for the arts are incorporated into the design of new schools in Barbados.

(IV) AGRICULTURE

Fifty years ago most Barbadians relied on the land for employment and/or as a means of providing food and supplementing their income. Today, most Barbadians purchase food in the supermarkets, much of which is imported. Food imports have increased dramatically and currently stand at over half a billion Barbados dollars (US\$250 million in 2007).

There are several compelling reasons why Agriculture has been earmarked as a key strategy area. These include:

- Minimizing the expression of social/class prejudice.

- (5) Formulate a new economic policy to aid business development revolving around families within communities, partly driven by Constituency Councils.

**GOAL (D): To Restore CORE VALUES by ensuring that children are given the opportunity to develop a sense of right and wrong in modern Barbados.**

**OBJECTIVES IDENTIFIED AND RECOMMENDED BY YOUTH:**

- (1) Identify the core values that hold society together, such as: sense of self, personal development, caring for others, honesty, integrity, love, respect, responsibility.
- (2) Highlight and develop those ingredients of our culture that manifest and reinforce these values.
- (3) Acknowledge that cultural penetration destroys core values that hold a society together.
- (4) Provide some form of censorship of the mass media to reduce exposure to violence and other anti-social behaviour.
- (5) Core Values should be taught in the home and this should be facilitated through Family Planning and should involve parents.
- (6) These same core values should be reinforced in schools.
- (7) Revive the concept that it takes a village to raise a child.
- (8) Youth Commissioners, Guidance Counsellors, Welfare Officers and Social Workers should work together to provide

these services to communities, fully utilizing community centres.

- (9) Children should be exposed to environments where they can see the consequences of their actions and those of others. E.g. prison tours and television shows.
- (10) School children should be involved in mandatory, extra-curricular activities that reinforce the core values.
- (11) Mentorship should be used to cement core values.

**GOAL (E): To prevent the spread of GANGS, and all they represent by helping young people to join positive groups.**

**OBJECTIVES IDENTIFIED AND RECOMMENDED BY YOUTH:**

- (1) Educate children and society in general about gangs and gang warfare and their negative impact on society.
- (2) Involve the church and all faith-based organizations in reaching out to young people.
- (3) Support and strengthen the work of social groups in all educational institutions from primary to tertiary level. E.g. 4H, Brownies, Scouts, Guides, Cadets, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Healthy Heart Clubs, Sports Clubs.
- (4) Introduce children to different social groups through incentives and rewards. E.g. cadets, skills training, family planning, sports clubs, performing arts - which should be available in every community.



(5)	Reform the education system to prevent young persons from falling through the cracks.	(4)	Deal with the grievances of tenants.
(6)	Publicize the positive activities of young people and their groups/organizations in the mass media.	(5)	More concessions and contracts should be given to young people to own their homes.
(7)	Provide opportunities for entrepreneurship to enable young people to satisfy their need to explore and grow.	(6)	Make better use of unoccupied land.
(8)	Encourage employers to provide work experience and jobs for young people to keep them occupied.	(7)	Young mothers and fathers and people with special needs should be given priority access to housing.
(9)	Provide counselling and personal development training for at-risk youth.	(8)	Provide housing solutions to suit the various income brackets, particularly low-income houses.
(10)	Bridge the gap between the young and the elderly – through relationships at work, mentorship and community work.	(9)	Promote the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the free movement of people to ease the pressure on housing.
(11)	Introduce a mandatory National Youth Service programme.	<b>GOAL (G): To enable young people to tackle LIFESTYLE DISEASES, especially HIV/AIDS.</b>	
(12)	Strengthen the capacity of Youth Councils.	<b>OBJECTIVES IDENTIFIED AND RECOMMENDED BY YOUTH:</b>	
(13)	Provide stronger policing to restrict negative influences in society.	(1)	Equal emphasis should be placed on prevention and coping with lifestyle diseases.
<b>GOAL (F): To Help young people to acquire decent, affordable HOUSING SOLUTIONS.</b>		(2)	A legal framework should be developed to prevent discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS.
<b>OBJECTIVES IDENTIFIED AND RECOMMENDED BY YOUTH:</b>		(3)	Align the age of consent with the age of access so that young persons have the right to get tested for HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) without their parent's consent from age 16.
(1)	Educate young people on the different housing solutions available.	(4)	Revamp the Health and Family Life Education
(2)	Strengthen the legislation to regulate rent.		
(3)	Better enforcement and collection of rent		

to service the many high technology appliances that abound in Barbados.
<b>(II) SPORTS</b>
Barbados has a National Sports Council that was established in 1978. Its mission was “to create avenues for the development of programmes which will promote and facilitate participation in recreational, competitive, and high performance sport for all Barbadians, according to their individual abilities and aspirations, at local, regional and international levels”. Its goals include “...the promotion of mass participation in the pursuit of excellence in sports”.
The Mid-Term Development Strategy acknowledges the tradition of excellence in sport by Barbadians and argues that the time is ripe to take sports to the next level of becoming a major industry. It insists that everyone needs to be aware of the contribution that sports can make to the mental, physical, social and economic well-being of the nation. It observes that sporting activities have also been instrumental in the marketing of Barbados internationally. This powerful influence of sports has been greatly fostered by the development of a number of world-class facilities for various sports played in Barbados. The facilities include the National Stadium, the Sir Garfield Sobers Sports Complex, Kensington Oval, the Aquatic Centre and several world-class golf courses. Barbados successfully hosted the International Cricket Council (ICC) World Cup Tournament and World Cup of Golf in 2007, as well as the World Twenty20 Cricket Tournament and the AIBA Women's World Boxing Championship in 2010.

This policy will focus on the development of Sports as an industry that creates employment and wealth for athletes. It will also encourage people to consider the range of satellite occupations that support sports, from sports medicine, to sports management, facilities maintenance, catering, transport and accommodation. It will work closely with the Ministry of Tourism to develop sports tourism in Barbados.
Underpinning this innovation in sport will be the enactment of a Sports Development Act to provide a structured legislative approach to incentives and other means of support to this emerging industry.
<b>(III) CULTURAL INDUSTRIES</b>
The Cultural industries are the fastest growing industries in the world. They currently represent 7% of the world's GDP. At a time when competition for standard goods and services is intensifying in the global marketplace, more and more small economies have to find niches in order to survive and prosper. Nations with unique and vibrant cultures have an absolute advantage over others in marketing their cultural products. It is estimated that Caribbean cultural events like the Notting Hill Carnival in London annually generate £93 million, Labour Day in New York \$300 million and Caribbana in Canada \$200 million, a considerable amount of which accrues to Caribbean artistes. (CARICOM Commission Report on Youth Development, 2010)
The Mid Term Development Strategy acknowledges the enormous potential of the cultural industries to stimulate and nurture the innate creativity of people, to assert a national identity and to make a significant contribution to the national economy.



Strategy 1

This policy will therefore encourage and support young people to become more entrepreneurial in their approach to employment. The talents and energy of young people will be channelled towards the potential growth areas of ICT's, Sports, the Cultural Industries and Agriculture.

Immediately after gaining Independence in 1966, and long before globalization, a succession of writers including The Right Excellent Errol Barrow (Mirror Image Speech 1986), Councillor Maxine McClean (1986), Dr. Colin Hudson (1989), and Dr. Niara Sudarkasa (1992) have been advocating the need for Economic Enfranchisement through the cultivation of entrepreneurship. Since then a school of thought has been developed to support these arguments, and a number of institutions such as the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme and the Barbados Youth Business Trust have been established to target potential young entrepreneurs.

This Ministry will work closely with the Ministries responsible for Economic Affairs, Investment, Small Business Development, International Business, Commerce and Trade to sensitize and educate young people to take advantage of opportunities for innovation. It will embark on a programme to expose young people to opportunities to work in new, previously unpopular and stigmatized areas as a means of creating wealth and employment, as shown below.

(I) INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The hallmark of the Information Age is the widespread use of modern technology. As shown above, young people have an aptitude for mastering this technology. This mastery is due to the adoption of the methodology of "experiential learning".

The concept of "experiential learning" has been used extensively by Eberly and Gal (2006) in their analysis of youth development in several countries around the world. For them, experiential learning is about taking responsibility for learning, and moving from passive learning to active learning. It requires the learner to take action, then reflect on what was done and finally to do it better next time, in an endless pursuit of excellence.

In Barbados increasing numbers of people are becoming totally dependent on modern tools and equipment that are driven by micro-chip technology. When these gadgets malfunction they are at a loss, simply because they do not know how to repair them.

The Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth believes that every Barbadian should learn how to operate the computer and as many as possible should learn how to repair them.

To achieve this objective it proposes the establishment of a number of Technology Centres to augment the existing Resource Centres across the country whereby young people who are interested in pursuing careers in this sector could gain useful experience. Not only will this prepare them for employment in other sectors, but also help to produce more "computer mechanics"

- (HFLE) programme to comprehensively address the relevant issues, using well-trained personnel.

(5) Go further up-stream by beginning the process of HFLE in primary schools.

(6) Use community centres/institutions as places where young persons can get information on HIV/AIDS, where people living with the disease can speak to other young people, and conduct workshops, etc.

(7) Develop a comprehensive Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) programme.

(8) Involve the media in promoting HFLE and BCC in a sustained way.

(9) Unemployed young persons living with HIV/AIDS should receive special assistance.

(10) Young people living with HIV/AIDS should be able to learn how to cope from older people living with the disease.

(11) A national hotline should be set up where young people can call and get advice and encouragement from trained Counsellors.

(12) Establish an institution similar to Alcoholics Anonymous where people living with the disease can go to get advice from professionals, to network, and to find and develop support systems.
- (1) First, educate young people formally and informally, about what politics is and the processes associated with it.

(2) Make unbiased information available through the mass media, particularly the internet, and social networks like "Facebook", to correct the stereotypes of politics and politicians.

(3) Groups of young people should be invited to attend constituency branch meetings.

(4) Politicians should interact with young people on a regular basis.

(5) All political Parties should make youth part of the Government's Strategic Plans by publishing Youth Manifestos.

(6) A National Youth Council, giving representation to all youth organizations, should be equipped to strengthen the capacity of youth organizations and help to implement Government policies.

(7) The National Youth Forum should be the organ through which young people are given a voice, a face, and a platform to address youth issues.

(8) The National Youth Forum should establish a National Youth Parliament to shadow Members of Parliament.

GOAL (H): To facilitate more adequate participation by young people in the POLITICAL PROCESS.

OBJECTIVES IDENTIFIED AND RECOMMENDED BY YOUTH:

GOAL (I): To get young people to better protect our ENVIRONMENT.

OBJECTIVES IDENTIFIED AND RECOMMENDED BY YOUTH:

- (1) Integrate environmental studies into the school curriculum.

(2) Use popular and influential persons in



society to promote healthy practices through lectures and hands-on examples of protecting the environment, such as community clean-ups and planting trees.

- (3) Implement training programmes that would focus on Green Careers rather than traditional jobs and professions, as a means of creating the new diversified economy of Barbados.
- (4) Introduce Mentorship programmes and partnerships with Environmental Officers.
- (5) Develop community environmental competitions.
- (6) Organize anti-littering campaigns to be led by youth, as part of their National Service.
- (7) Put incentives in place to encourage recycling on a larger scale – at home, at school, at work and in the community.
- (8) Link environmental protection to other areas of life such as culture, economics, enterprise, sports, recreation, etc.
- (9) Amend the legislation on illegal dumping.
- (10) Enforce fines and police the environment better.

The issues that these nine (9) Goals reflected were somewhat similar to those expressed by young people during the past two decades. A major difference however, was the replacement of hopelessness and despair by optimism that the society, led by the Government and other stakeholders, could solve the problems.

Another difference was the order in which today's young people thought that their issues should be

addressed. As expected, unemployment loomed as the most pressing need. Family, Core Values, Education, Gangs and Healthy Lifestyles featured prominently. The Environment, Housing and Political Participation were considered less of a priority.

At the public meetings some other issues surfaced as worthy of serious consideration. The faith-based communities led the charge on the following issues:

- Spirituality
- National/Collective Identity
- Homosexuality
- Social Responsibility
- A more just and caring society

It was contended that in the UN Year for People of African Descent, more attention should be paid, and henceforth more resources devoted to spirituality and collective identity which are important values among the majority of Barbadian citizens. These specific issues will be dealt with under Core Values.

These inter-related aspirations of youth, by youth and for youth constitute a yearning for healthy lifestyles for personal fulfilment and by extension, national development. In a situation in which resources are scarce, priorities have to be drawn up and strategies designed to achieve them. That is the essential purpose of this National Youth Policy.

**(3) RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUTH**

The above aspirations of young people in contemporary Barbados are not unreasonable. Indeed they are part of the package of rights which the Government and people of Barbados promised to them.

**PART TWO: INTERVENTION**

**(4) KEY STRATEGY AREAS**

As shown above, a National Youth Policy is essentially a statement of the action that will be taken to achieve particular goals in pursuit of a vision for youth. However, the Ministry responsible for Youth Affairs, or the Government, cannot be all things to all youth. Because of finite resources it must carefully select areas and modes of intervention. At best it can be a catalyst for change, providing the sparks that motivate young people and other stakeholders to join forces to ensure that policies are implemented.

After careful consideration of the many options available, and in keeping with the recommendations of the NYP Co-ordinating Committee, the National Youth Forum and the various other stakeholders, the Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth believes that the vision for Barbadian youth can be achieved by undertaking the following activities in the nine clearly identified areas.

**(A) EMPLOYMENT  
TOP PRIORITIES FROM OBJECTIVES LISTED ABOVE:**

- (i) Design educational and training programmes to meet the changing needs of the workforce - to include activities geared towards better customer service, creativity and entrepreneurship in a service-oriented society.
- (ii) Provide Job Attachment, Internship, Mentorship and Apprenticeship

Programmes for young people, using people who are gainfully employed.

- (iii) Focus on Agriculture and use modern techniques to attract young people and use the land more productively.

All stakeholders acknowledge that in the present economic circumstances Barbadian young people cannot expect to find jobs readily available when they come on to the job market. If the economy continues to be affected by the recession and the Government continues to offer job security to those already employed, it logically follows that newcomers to the labour market may be disadvantaged. In addition to this, if technological advances continue and enable emerging superpowers to produce goods and services at lower costs and to despatch them quickly and economically all over the world, it is highly likely that for some countries there will be a "jobless recovery". This crisis is already manifesting itself in the growth in the number of unemployed young people and more poignantly, the phenomenon of increasing numbers of "unemployed graduates" in Barbados. In 2009 the Barbados Statistical Department estimated that of the 11,700 people registered as unemployed, 1,500 (13%) had received University/College education.

At the same time there are certain essential goods and services that are in great demand in Barbados. The problem is that over the years a particular culture has developed that predisposes young people to value certain occupations highly and makes them reluctant or unable to consider other forms of employment.



Rights on their own can never guarantee the wholesome development of a nation's youth. In the final analysis, the responsibility to take advantage of the available opportunities lies firmly on the shoulders of young people. They have to take a measure of responsibility for their own personal development. This in effect is the

clearest possible indication that the child has successfully made the transition to adulthood. They have to take a measure of responsibility for their own personal development. This in effect is the clearest possible indication that the child has successfully made the transition to adulthood.



Youth expressing himself in open youth forum.

(A) RIGHTS

Young people in Barbados have both citizenship and human rights which are enshrined in the Constitution of Barbados and buttressed by several legally binding international conventions.

Section 11 of the Barbados Constitution states clearly:

"Whereas every person in Barbados is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, that is to say, the right, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, to each and all of the following, namely:

- (a) life, liberty and security of the person;
- (b) protection for the privacy of his home and other property and from deprivation of property without compensation;
- (c) the protection of the law; and
- (d) freedom of conscience, of expression and of assembly and association,

the following provisions of this Chapter shall have effect for the purpose of affording protection to those rights and freedoms subject to such limitations of that protection as are contained in those provisions, being limitations designed to ensure that the enjoyment of the said rights and freedoms by any individual does not prejudice the rights and freedoms of others or the public interest".

More specifically Section 23 protects the individual from discrimination as follows:

"Subject to the provisions of this section –  
(a) no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect; and  
(b) no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person acting by virtue of any written law or in the performance of the functions of any public office or any public authority".

These rights were reinforced when Barbados became a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights soon after Independence in 1966. This Declaration consists of a preamble and 30 articles, setting forth the human rights and fundamental freedoms to which all men and women, everywhere in the world, are entitled, without any discrimination.

Article 1, which lays down the philosophy on which the Declaration is based, boldly states that:

*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.*

Article 2, which sets out the basic principle of equality and non discrimination as regards the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, forbids "distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status".



In Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, UNICEF has been an unrelenting champion for the rights of the child, defined as a human being under 18 years of age. This organization has provided systematic education and promotion of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This legally binding document, which was ratified by Barbados in October, 1990 serves as an excellent guide to the provision of services to children. After reiterating that children are entitled to the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it states specific rights which are extremely relevant to those young people aged 15 to 18 years who are the targets of this National Youth Policy. These include several important rights listed in Articles 24 to 36 including:

- States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of **health** and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. (24)
- States Parties shall recognize for every child the right to benefit from **social security**, including social insurance, and shall take the necessary measures to achieve the full realization of this right in accordance with their national law. (26)
- States Parties recognize the right of every child to a **standard of living** adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. (27)
- States Parties recognize the right of the child to **education**, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

- Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
- Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
- Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children. (28)
- States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:
  - The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
  - The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
  - The development of respect for the natural environment. (29)
- States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age

of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

- States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity. (31)
- States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. (32)
- States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as defined in the relevant international treaties, and to prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances. (33)
- States Parties shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare. (36)

The **Commonwealth Youth Programme** has been another dynamic international organization advocating the rights of youth aged 15 to 29 years, since 1973. It has drawn heavily on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, up to the age of 18 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights thereafter. It

has highlighted specific rights such as:

- To have their views considered in all decisions that affect them;
- Protection from economic and sexual exploitation, neglect and abuse;
- Support for those with disabilities;
- Protection during situations of armed conflict.

**(B) RESPONSIBILITIES**

For every right there is a responsibility. A human being cannot enjoy his/her fundamental rights to life, liberty and security unless other people recognize their responsibility to help create and sustain life, to allow him/her to choose, and to protect him/her from danger. Vulnerable and dependent members of society cannot survive unless parents and care givers carry out their responsibilities to provide the necessities of life. Children's rights to health, education, employment, recreation and an adequate standard of living cannot be guaranteed unless parents, teachers and members of the community carry out their responsibilities to provide these social goods.

**The essence of a society is the reciprocal relationships people have with each other and the obligations to help each other through the various stages of the human lifecycle. Enjoyment of rights in the dependent stages must be matched by taking responsibility for guaranteeing the rights of others when in the more independent stages of life. Where civil society fails to ensure that this happens, then it is the responsibility of a caring government to take action to make sure that it occurs.**